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MARZENA SOKOŁOWSKA-PARYZ

Diagnosing Discourse: Poetry and Cancer in Peter Reading's *C*

Abstract: The paper proposes to analyze Peter Reading's *C* (1983), an entire poetic collection devoted to cancer and the ways of speaking about cancer. The significance of this work has been largely underestimated by critics, frequently hostile to Reading's innovative attitude to poetry, yet the collection remains unprecedented in its ambitions to highlight both the potential and the danger of any attempt to contain cancer within a chosen discursive structure, be it scientific or literary. The analysis of Reading's collection is embedded in a theoretical frame constituted by Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*, Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, Jacques Revel and Peter Jean-Pierre's "The Body: The Sick Man and His History," and Clifford Geertz's "Ideology as a Cultural System." The thematic axis of the collection is constituted by the history of the poet-narrator's illness, though the narrative also includes stories of other cancer patients, as well as fragments from medical journals and dictionaries. The characters in the collection are distinguished not by individual personality traits but by the distinctive language in which they express their predicament. In relation to language that attempts to appropriate disease, Reading creates a fundamental opposition between poetry (health and life) versus prose (illness and death). This distinction explains why the narrator, who has cancer, chooses the form of prose units in order to express his predicament, but also "tries out" various poetic forms which constitute his desperate hold on life. Reading draws a similarity between the hospital surgeon and the poet – the former dissecting human bodies, the latter dissecting poetic kinds and poetic meter. Reading's narrator becomes ultimately the surgeon-poet, carrying out his experimentations in "amputated" rhetoric. It is precisely in this quest for a more down-to-earth, prosaic poetry that Reading is truly an inheritor of the war poets – in the case of both war and cancer, poetry must sacrifice its figurative potential, because any type of linguistic defamiliarization of cancer destroys the true nature of the illness.

"Cancer is a rare and still scandalous subject for poetry, and it seems unimaginable to aestheticize the disease."
Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*

Death is one of the most traditional literary themes and, therefore, it is not surprising that terminal illness has also been a recurring topic. Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor* provides examples of nineteenth- and twentieth-century fiction which take as their subject tuberculosis or cancer, the two diseases which, in her opinion, have been the most susceptible to fantasies and misconceptions across time. "Literature, Arts, and Medicine Database" from *Medical Humanities: Re-*

sources of NYU School of Medicine gives titles of over a hundred literary texts which focus exclusively on cancer. The list shows that prose writing on cancer (novels, short stories, journals) clearly outnumbers verse devoted to this specific subject matter. Of course, there exists a specialized field of cancer poetry represented by individual sequences (Alicia Suskin Ostraker's "The Mastectomy Poems" in *The Crack in Everything*; Marilyn Hacker's *Cancer Winter*) and anthologies (*Her Soul beneath the Bone: Women's Poetry on Breast Cancer*, ed. L.H. Lifshitz); but in the general canon of poetry, cancer has not been a dominant topic and there are few titles one can mention in this context: W.H. Auden's "Miss Gee," Seamus Heaney's "Out of the Bag," Harold Pinter's "Cancer Cells." Hence, the exceptional standing of Peter Reading's *C* (1983), an entire poetic collection devoted to cancer. The significance of this work has been largely underestimated by critics, frequently hostile to Reading's innovative attitude to poetry. This paper begins with a short recapitulation of Sean O'Brien's arguments as a starting point for an analysis of the problematic correspondence between literature and cancer, a correspondence which lies at the very heart of Reading's work. Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*, Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, Jaques Revel and Peter Jean-Pierre's "The Body: The Sick Man and His History," and Clifford Geertz's "Ideology as a Cultural System" will constitute the main frame of reference for *C* in order to highlight both the potential and the danger of any attempt to contain cancer within a chosen discursive structure, be it scientific or literary.

Sean O'Brien's essay, "The Poet as Thatcherite," included in *The Deregulated Muse*, both summarizes and responds to the diverse critical approaches to Peter Reading's poetry. In the course of his argument with frequently polarised views, O'Brien discloses his own scepticism regarding the poetic status of Reading's achievement. Though he agrees that Reading breaks with the prevalent "evasive miniaturism" (123) of contemporary poetry by daring to address such issues as old age, mental illness, terminal disease, violence in society, history and politics, the manipulative power of the media, ecological disaster, nuclear threat, and the impact of science on man's life, O'Brien nevertheless asserts that "subject-matter and contemporaneity in themselves cannot supply gravity to poetry: it is the manner of a thing's doing which will determine its status" (124). For Isabel Martin the seventeen collections written in the period 1970-1996 constitute a unified poetic narrative about the irrevocable self-annihilation of the human species, O'Brien finds behind this epic façade a disturbing void: the complexity and diversity of human experience is reduced to a point where the world becomes no more than a "flat canvas" (130); the intricacy and the potential of human nature is cut down to mere "silhouettes" of people – a polyphony of vacant voices (130); social and political issues are embedded in a "desperate eloquence" – a transparent veil over "a huge hole where causality ought to be" (130). The critic, who himself is a poet, remains equally unimpressed by Reading's technical virtuosity which he sees as superficially substituting the traditional trademarks of poetry: "metaphor and the visual and loco-descriptive components" (127). S.T.

Coleridge's distinction between Fancy and Imagination allows O'Brien to make his point all too clear: poetry must take its beginning from "the power of imaginative production" (125).

Interestingly, the passage in which O'Brien maintains that Reading's "imaginative power seems [...] limited [by his gloom and despair]" is directly followed by a citation of Martin Seymour-Smith's negative opinion of the 1984 collection, *C*: "100 prose poems of 100 words each, displays him at the least effective: the pieces are supposed to be composed by a man dying of cancer, and are no more horrible or interesting than clinical notes would be: it works to no point" (125). One is tempted to ask whether both critics would have been more favourable in their views if Reading had attempted a creative transformation of his topic rather than inclining towards a reportage-like objectivity. Wouldn't there emerge an ethical clash of subject matter and form? Because the whole problem with O'Brien's theory of poetry is that cancer doesn't fit into it. In the case of this particular disease it is extremely hard to accept the romantic position that "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty." In his essay, O'Brien formulates the artistic precepts of poetry, yet he does not raise the question of the adequacy of poetic discourse in relation to any one of the disasters of the modern age or the fears of contemporary man. In contrast, Peter Reading believes in a constant examination and re-evaluation of poetic discourse; and *C*, as well as his other collections, is an acute analysis of its powers and limitations.

Ostentatiously, the first unit of *C* begins in an exceedingly poetic manner: "The brass plate polished wordless. Stone steps hollowed by the frightened hopeful ascending, the terrified despair descending" (1995, 277). "Brass plate" and "stone steps" are images of a memorial for the dead, yet the usual engravings have been obliterated. There is a deliberate contrast between the formal poeticality of the lines (use of metaphor, strong rhythm, alliteration) and the wordlessness of the depicted monument, which bears similarity to Tony Harrison's "Book Ends," where the second sonnet speaks about, but cannot fill, the empty space on the mother's gravestone ("The stone's too full. The wording must be terse"; (49). Reading depicts the human frame of mind in face of death on a spatial dimension: hope "ascends" and despair "descends," and their meeting point creates an emotional stasis. These opposing trajectories touch because they are driven by the same physical sensation: the hopeful ascending is "frightened," the descending despair is "terrified." The latter adjective is semantically stronger, indicating that despair overpowers hope. Wordlessness is, therefore, implied to be the condition of man forced to accept the inevitability of his own death in "probably between three and four months, perhaps one hundred days" (unit one¹, 277). Wordlessness is also a judgement upon language, incapable of subjugating human suffering caused by terminal illness. That is why the condemned speaker-poet uses the word "incongruously" when announcing his plan of "100 100-word units" (unit one, 277), one unit for each day of life left. The adverb is

¹ The units in Peter Reading's *C* are untitled and unnumbered. Therefore, for practical reasons, I ascribed successive numbers to the poems.

repeated at the end of the collection when, despite all the horrors of his cancer condition, the narrator desperately gropes for a frame to encompass an experience threatening to destroy the integrity of his self: “But some structure still? / Why? Dignity / – bollocks, / But some structure still, / incongruously” (unit ninety-eight, 316).

The first unit sets the thematic scope for the collection, introducing the main character of the poet-narrator. His story does not, however, proceed chronologically because his experiences, despite the desperate attempt to find order and meaning by means of imposing a coherent structure of 100 100-word units, cannot be fully controlled: for example, a recollection of the narrator’s boyhood fascination with “that section at the end of Book V where shipwrecked Laertides crawls under two close-growing olives, one wild one cultivated, exhausted and finds shelter” (unit five, 279) is followed by an emotional outburst with as yet no apparent cause: “I don’t want to ... Oh help me please I don’t want to die” (unit six, 279) and an impassive description of a possible overdose of tablets: “Twenty of them. Should be sufficient. Comforting rattle from the brown plastic bottle” (unit eight, 280). Though the symptoms of the disease appear in unit thirteen (“Special Laundry Services deal with his sheets and blankets – the soiling too foul for acceptance by normal laundries,” 282) and cancer patients appear in units four and nine, the name of the narrator’s illness is not specified until units seventeen and eighteen where we learn he is suffering from bowel cancer (284). The stages of the narrator’s illness not only are described in random order (his hospitalisation is dealt with in units fifty-two to fifty four; the treatment including colostomy and colotomy are the subject of earlier units twenty-four, and thirty-nine; while both the symptoms of bowel cancer and the side-effects of its treatment are described in separate units throughout the entire collection), but the narrative is also interspersed with histories of other cancer patients, fragments from medical journals and dictionaries, as well as anecdotes of various misfortunes not necessarily befalling victims of cancer, contributing to an overwhelming sense of chaos which is, however, a deliberate strategy: “Reading orchestrates his continually changing perspectives, tones, registers and voices, as well as different text-genres (excerpts from letters, medical dictionaries, lists, anecdotes etc.) into a cacomorphous polyphony, generating in the reader a degree of disorientation, tension and shock that intensifies the portrayal of what the victims are undergoing” (Martin, 114).

Neil Roberts has noted that “the narrative of *C* is the inevitable one of individuals moving painfully, humiliatingly and remorselessly towards death” (172). Units thirty-nine (which is a visual image of the hospital) and eighty-eight (which is an *ubi sunt* prose unit) recapitulate the various characters who appear throughout the collection. The characters divide into those who speak in their own voice and those who are spoken about; the subjects versus the objects of discourse. The former group includes primarily the cancer victims (the narrator who calls himself “C” in unit twenty-three or “Master of the 100 100-word units” in unit eighty-eight, the micropaleontologist with *C* ventriculi, the man diagnosed with

bladder carcinoma, the man with spinal carcinoma, the lady with breast cancer) and secondly, the hospital personnel and the family relatives who come to visit. The types of cancer chosen by Reading are not coincidental. The title of the collection: *C* stands for both cancer, carcinomatophobia, i.e. "constantly anticipating cancer" (unit forty-six, 295), and death ("Char," unit two, 277); and these meanings, combined with the horrific but also discomfoting symptoms suffered by each of the cancer victims conform with what Susan Sontag acknowledged to be the most common assumptions about the disease: firstly, that "cancer equals death" (7), secondly, that cancer is "obscene – in the original meaning of the word: ill-omened, abominable, repugnant to the senses" (9), and thirdly, that in contrast to tuberculosis, "a disease of the lungs [which] is metaphorically, a disease of the soul," cancer is "a disease of the body" (18) degrading the patient from a spiritual being to a strictly physiological existence: "cancer is notorious for attacking parts of the body (colon, bladder, rectum, breast, cervix, prostate, testicles) that are embarrassing to acknowledge" (17). Hence each cancer victim in Reading's collection represents what is usually the most unspeakable aspect of the disease. The second group of characters in the collection are the silent protagonists of histories told by others, including for instance the lance-corp killed by a sniper (unit seven, 279) or the twenty-three year old woman addicted to barbiturates (units forty four, forty-five, and forty-six, 294-95). There is, however, always a connection between the anecdote and the main narrative: like the cancer patients, the silent protagonists either die or are doomed to die.

Death appears as an individual character in Reading's collection, named "Tucker," alias "Mort," alias "Char," and taking on different, often contradictory guises. He is the morbid trickster in a macabre anecdote about the Head of Art, who liked taking snuff (death substituted his snuff with itchy powder; the Head of Art took a sniff while driving his car, got into a sneezing fit, caused an accident and was killed, unit twenty-six, 285). He treats a "passenger" from the world of the living with extreme contempt: "[he] leered, between thumb and grimy palm grasped the yellow lardy chin and shook it with hatred" (unit sixty-three, 301). Death also appears, however, as a close acquaintance of *C*: "He addressed me one evening in the bar of the Whale with importunate familiarity, remarking that I might henceforward know him as 'Char' (short for 'Charlie?') or 'Mort' (short for 'Mortimer?')" (unit two, 277). The paradox of death is that he is both an enemy and a friend of man and this duplicity is particularly explicit in the cancer cases: he makes the healthy terminally ill, like in the instance when "Tucker" was allowed to "enjoy huge firm 18-year old malleable boobs" by a woman who subsequently loses her breasts "at 42 by surgeon's scalpel and radium treatment" (unit forty, 293), but then transforms into the only hope for the diseased, as in the case of this woman patient suffering from radiotherapy: "Terrible terrible pain. No one to care. Energy gone. Tired. So weak. Hair falling out. [...] Of course Mr. Tucker comes to help. A real help" (unit ninety-six, 314). The names given to death such as "Char" with "the palm of his hand constantly grey from receiving pennies" (unit two, 277) or "Mort" who has a pale horse

(unit twenty-one, 285) obviously allude to classical and biblical rhetoric, to the ways that man tried to encode death in language, giving it shape and meaning. In Reading's collection, death does not speak but is spoken about, seemingly enclosed in various anecdotes or tales of other people. Concomitantly, however, death is the thematic axis of the patients' discourse, the controlling force over their destiny and their narrative. Death constitutes, likewise, the structural axis of the entire collection: the "arbitrary structure is functional insofar as it highlights the arbitrariness of [cancer] itself" (Martin, 114), the randomness of death in its choice of victims. Death seems to be one constant in the collection, and a particularly powerful metaphor is provided in unit thirty-nine which presents a visual image of the hospital: on the third (top) floor lies the "Master of the 100 100-word units" seemingly above and in control of what lies beneath him: the other patients who, even if they speak in their own voice, are nevertheless part of his narrative, and death occupying the lowest place – the basement. Yet, this "master" is after "newly performed colotomy and the first letters of each line read "in the same vertical column" with death as the "loathsome old stoker" who shovels "coke / onto the furnace" and "unfolds the Sports Page, / Marks with an X some / Nag for the next Meeting" (292) – in this vision of the hospital that may represent life in general, cancer (which is death itself) is a democratising power, subjecting all to the same anguish.

In his analysis of the collection, Neil Roberts has called attention to the typically Reading-like strategy of creating a "peculiar self-cancelling dialogic impersonality" (169) where, instead of psychologically convincing human portraits, the reader is offered an array of "overtly fictive voices" (172). In other words, the characters in the collection are distinguished not by individual personality traits but by the distinctive language in which they express their predicament. If the subject matter of the collection is cancer, it is cancer distanced from the "real experience" due to the focus on its possible discursive representations. This interest in language is emphasized in the form of the title: instead of "cancer" – the disease itself, only the initial letter is provided – a signifier that offers no easy access to the signified. *C* means cancer (specifically, *C*'s colon cancer) and carcinomatophobia, it is death (*Char* as *Charon*), but the possibilities of this one letter are indefinite even in a restricted semantic field, as exemplified by unit twenty-seven which lists more than twenty medical words starting with "c." The irony of this unit lies in the image of "unfortunates looking up their maladies [in medical dictionaries]" (288): seeking comprehension of their disease in what they consider the most reliable source and ending up with more diseases and treatments than they can manage. Similarly, unit three which comprises a list of words denoting pain discloses a typically Derridean "rebounding or overflowing of signification: Rather than controlling meaning, defining it, making it present, words are inundated by signification. Words mean both not enough and too much" (Payne 121). The issue at stake is that cancer cannot be separated from language, an assumption that lies at the very foundation of medical practice:

if one pinpoints the nature of illness, one concomitantly arrives at the principle of this illness concealed in the body. Whatever hints at the kind of illness, it can also facilitate the removal of this illness. [It] designates a place wherein suffering will be transformed into discourse, signs into words, wherein a single and opaque fact will be incorporated into scholarly nomenclature, wherein illness will receive its linguistic sanction and become utterable. (Revel and Peter, 252, my translation from Polish)

Reading does not accept this supposition at face value, adopting a tentative stance to the capacity of language to carry the physiological and psychological truth of cancer. His attitude is that of a surgeon dissecting a body with an experimental method, uncertain whether the source of the disease can actually be removed. This fundamental uncertainty derives from the seemingly irreconcilable opposition between the spoken language of the human mind that desires order and comprehension versus the unspoken language of the sick body:

The body is a frontier post [...] where all discourse [...] stumbles. The body utters speech. The latter, however, is inexpressible. Assuredly, one can hear it. But by no means can one bend it to the specificity of some "I" – charge it to one's own account, utter it, tell about it. Because language is born of desires which seethe within the body, it exists only in order to create a distance which would uphold the body's requests and make those requests thinkable. However, this distance, conversely, prevents their utterability. [...] If suffering were to reach its extreme, the impossibility of avoiding it would be tantamount to the impossibility of telling about it. And the speech of the body, whose gentlest whisper undermines the order of the world, as it reaches our ears, is silence, albeit shot through with noises: murmurs, complaints, passionate confessions, and agonized gurgles – and this is speech, but unnameable. When in suffering and illness one, who feels one's body to be infinitely mortal and always already dead, tries to express this, one can only point to the measure of distance between one and what one lives by. Death – the death of others, which we read in archives as if it were our own – is the other side of language. (Revel and Peter 261-63, my translation from Polish)

Linguistic utterances about a particular human body are always belated for two reasons: first, because of the nature of referential language which does not capture phenomena but rather their traces, and second, because of constant discursive clashes, between, let us say, the literary, scientific, religious discourses geared at providing a permanent definition, description (and diagnosis) of various states of the human body.

First and foremost, cancer has been conventionally appropriated by medical discourse and therefore the hospital constitutes a central discursive terrain with regard to the topography of the collection: it is the place where traditionally subjective emotions – pain, fear, depression, reckless hope are supposed to be controlled by objective medical knowledge, where the sick body is supposed to be controlled by the healthy scientific mind. The hospital is, in Foucault's terms, the "institutional site" from which medical discourse "derives its legitimate source and point of application":

[it is] the site of systematized, homogeneous observations, large-scale confrontations, the establishment of frequencies and probabilities, the annulation of individual variants, in short, the site of the appearance of the disease, not as a particular species, de-

ploying its essential features beneath the doctor's gaze, but as an average process, with its significant guide-lines, boundaries, and potential development. (51-52)

Isabel Martin has emphasized Reading's "meticulous research" for his *C* (112); the studied material becomes an integral part of his text, as in the case of Elizabeth Kübler Ross, whose "six emotional states" suffered by terminally-ill patients: "(1) Denial, (2) Isolation, (3) Anger, (4) Bargaining, (5) Depression, (6) Acceptance" are recapitulated in units thirty-three to thirty-eight (290-91) or John Hinton's *Dying* quoted in unit fifty; both authors were mentioned by Reading in an interview as two particularly influential sources. Likewise, the collection incorporates citations from medical journals and treatises (*Journal of American Medical Association, The Physician and the Total Care of the Cancer Patient, Pharmacological Reviews, Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine, Current Surgical Techniques*), as well as medical dictionaries and statistical analyses, all of which represent a typically Foucauldian "documentary field" (51). All these examples, together with the contrived scientific opinions of the doctor-characters in *C*, signify the "ordered, reflective, institutionalised speech" (Revel and Peter, 247) which deliberately "disregards the patients' imagination for the sake of the objectivity of symptoms" (250). Such discourse apparently de-demonises the disease and its treatment: the horror of telling the patient the truth about his condition is transformed into a question of statistics: "I seldom tell them. Some of my colleagues disagree; many are of the same opinion as myself. According to Oken ('What to tell cancer patients' [...]), about 80% of us rarely, if ever, tell them" (unit fifteen, 283). For the doctor, the unpleasantness of colostomy and its embarrassing and disgusting aftermath of vomiting and smelling with excrement is no more than a necessary operation in colon cancer with unavoidable side-effects: "colostomies, short-circuiting the bowel to open the frontal abdomen, can cause distress at first [...]. Soon after surgery, it seems, some soiling from the new colostomy is unavoidable" (unit twenty-four, 286); "He seems free of pain and nausea but vomits periodically whilst remaining comfortable. He describes the sensation as being similar to defecating [...]. Unfortunately, he has developed fungating growths and draining fistulae" (unit ninety, 311). The uncomfortable loss of taste in the cases of malignant tumors is defined in medicine as an expected and controllable condition: "He is a patient with dysgeusia and severe dysphagia and a fairly advanced tumour for whom adequate hydration and nutrition are maintained by frequent small feedings of liquids. The insertion of an intraluminal esophageal tube is considered helpful" (unit ninety-four, 313).

Susan Sontag has written extensively on the necessity of transforming the ways we speak about cancer: "the healthiest way of being ill – is the one most purified of, most resistant to, metaphoric thinking" (3). It seems that medical discourse manages to achieve one obvious aim – it translates all that is embarrassing, shameful, and revolting about cancer into something acceptable and speakable. Medical discourse appears to offer some aura of dignity (the impact of vocabulary devoid of negative connotations) for patients subjected to daily anguish of being enslaved by their sick bodies: "Last night I had to get up frequently

and stagger to the bathroom at the end of the ward. Pain unendurable. Rocked back and forth on lavatory seat, groaning" (unit twenty-two, 286), "I was given a suppository and told to keep it in for twenty minutes. I got cramp up the arse and shat after 5 minutes" (unit sixty, 300), "They forced something into him through a tube stuck into his penis hole. [...] It caused him to have a hard-up all the time it was in" (unit eighty, 308). Yet, when Reading contrasts the discourse of medical science with the voices of cancer patients, he discloses what is lost in the process: the truth of the patients' experience. It may sound more dignified to speak of "expelling the stomach contents" (unit ninety-one, 312), however, in the patient's experience what he is expelling is "vomit of discoloured filth, swarmjuice of rank-cancered gut" (unit ninety-three, 313). The point behind Reading's obsessive emphasis on what is the most repulsive in cancer is that, once we lose the extent of this repulsiveness, we lose the comprehension of the patient's suffering:

Here is the sick person, stripped of their humanity, disinherited from unhappiness which pesters them, and from their proper identity – so that someone else can, in their stead, talk about this with language, which is a secondary disappropriation, and subject them to a strategy, which does not acknowledge the person and which the persons themselves cannot acknowledge. (Revel and Peter, 253, my translation from Polish)

The clash between what the medical staff sees and what the patient feels is the theme of unit four, in which the patient with spinal carcinoma states his condition quite unemotionally: "I have lost all control and movement of / the abdomen, legs, feet and back"; "The growth [...] on the spine / prevents my lying on the back," "The open bedsores suppurate and stink." He adds "I am abusive to a social worker" and the reason is provided by the Caregiver whose voice we hear next: "[the patient] is withdrawn and craves attentive sympathy," "my ability to bear his poor responses helps him contain his desperation. So there is much comfort." There is a complete miscomprehension of the patient's needs on the part of the Caregiver; though he (or she) claims to be prepared to help the ill: "We, trained Caregivers, can identify symptoms like this" (278), this knowledge paradoxically widens rather than narrows the gap between the helper and the patient.

In medical discourse, "the body becomes a neutral space which opens to gaze and knowledge. Freed from its individual history, it is an object" (Revel and Peter, 246). Unit twenty-eight quotes doctors' casual conversations in which the patients are defined in terms of their disease or treatment: "The three sterilisations went OK, except for the advanced C. uterine cervix" (288). In unit fifty-two, the narrator describes his arrival at the Harley Ward: "I was labelled: a plastic strap was snapped round my wrist and inside its waterproof sheath was my name and number and what I was in for – colotomy" (297). The discursive transformation of an individual into an accumulation of malfunctioning bodily parts has its "real" representation in the hospital wards: the standardized appearance of the patients: "the same hopeless pyjamad cases" (unit fifty-three, 297), and the various acces-

sories (bedpans) and equipment (tubes) which de-humanise the individual. If doctors are distanced from their patients by their learned language, the relatives and visitors are distanced from the patients by what they see: “we were visiting someone [...] in the next bed was this, you can only call it ‘thing’, – no bed-clothes, just an official nightdress thing – and while we were telling lies to our one, it started up a sort of whining gurgling wheezing noise” (unit nineteen, 285). In both medical discourse and medical institutions, illness and death are “unnatural.” They sound artificial: “the dysphagia is due to an obstruction in the esophagus and hypopharynx” (unit ninety-four, 313); and they are surrounded by a variety of procedures and drugs which completely take control over the patient’s physiology and psychology: “we prepare, in our pharmacy, an artificial saliva containing methyl-cellulose and glycerin which eases thirst and dry mouth” (unit twelve, 282), “the anaesthetist arrived, tampered with heart and lungs [...] He seemed desirous I should sleep and prescribed a soporific” (unit fifty-eight, 299), “I was given a sachet of concentrated disinfectant to put in the water and told to immerse to the ears and wash the face with it” (unit sixty-four, 302), “opium-derived analgesics exert their principal not on the original pain but on the psychological processing of that pain” (unit eighty-two, 308). In unit ninety-two, a patient compares his earlier “clean, simple life” with “Mastectomy, Metastases, Dyspnoea” (312); but the most powerful contrast is made between nature and civilisation: “complicated human dying is contrasted, if not shown up, by silent dying in nature. [...] Artificial saliva and colons, oxygen flasks, sleeping pills and narcotics are counter pointed by the un-ostentatious disappearance of cancer-infested birds [in unit twelve]” (Martin, 124-25).

The hospital represents the space of conflict between the voices of the cancer patients and the voices of the doctors and relatives. This opposition of ill/healthy overlaps with the contrast between poetry and prose:

Verse is for healthy
arty-farties. The dying
and surgeons use prose.

The opposition between poetry – health – life and prose – illness – death forms the core of the entire collection; yet there is an ironic twist as the rejection of verse is carried out within the rigid structure of the haiku. On the one hand, poetry is constantly abused as an inadequate means of conveying the truth of cancer: “Poetry all weak lies, games” (unit six, 279), “I used to pepper my poetics with sophisticated allusions to *dear* Opera and *divine* Art [...]. Where is the European cultural significance of tubes stuck up the nose, into the veins, up the arse?” (unit nine, 280), “snot, gore, filth, suppuration of the arse-gut – for these *no* metric is vindicable” (unit twenty-five, 287), “Write verse about this: a Left Inguinal Colostomy. Shit, blood, puke and a body no longer dependable” (unit thirty-seven, 291).” On the other hand, C’s narrative includes an amazing diversity of strictly literary discourses (including the pastoral, stream of consciousness, and an epic invocation) and, more specifically, various poetic forms. It is typical of the narrator-poet to claim that “verse unvindicable; therefore sublate”

and continue with a versified "The Ballad of Tucker's Tale" (unit seven, 279), to declare the inadequacy of tetrametre in tetrametre: "Quasi sham / tetrametre, // sub Corneille, / sub Racine, / is too grand, / is too weak, // for this slow / tragedy" (unit sixty-nine, 303), or to describe a situation: "the woman who has just relinquished Stedman has marked faintly in pencil C. of uterine cervix. We are beyond verse here. No one wants to write 'On Last Looking Into Stedman's Carcinoma'" (unit twenty-seven, 288) and then, subversively, to write what allegedly cannot be written: "Nevertheless, I have invented the 13-line sonnet for unlucky people" (units twenty-seven & twenty-eight, 288).

This paradoxical simultaneous rejection of and adherence to poetry can be easily explained by the initial distinction between poetry (life) and prose (death). *C*'s plan of 100 100-word prose units was supposed to chronicle the experience of a man dying from cancer, yet the very nature of this disease defied order and reason hence the disorganisation of the units which mirrors the gradual collapse of a stable psyche. In an attempt to withstand this process, *C* tries to transform his experience into poetry: "*C*'s obsessive, repetitive attempts to connect up poetry [...] goes with his irrational instinct to hold on to life. With the help of a metrically stable framework, he tries to oppose his disintegration" (Martin, 116). Yet, because *C* is not healthy and never will be, his artistic endeavour frequently appears as superficial as a life-supporting machine:

Even though sometimes I talk about this abdominal cancer,
my mental case demands lie, comfort of make-believe games –
such as this one that I play now in distich, almost pretending
verse has validity. No. Verse is fuck-all use here, now. (unit seventy-three, 305)

The ambiguous attitude to literary discourse has also another source. The conscientious dissection of poetic discourse is part of a more general quest for language that could carry the overwhelming horrors of the terminal illness; this quest involves asking the question whether poetic discourse in particular possesses the capacity to convey this harrowing truth. The answer seems obvious enough when one considers the units which (deliberately) disclose the clash between subject matter and form: the Limerick and Adonic about haemorrhage (unit eleven), the Limerick and Choriamb about vomiting (unit ninety-one), the elegiac distich used to describe the breathing through an oxygen mask (unit thirteen). Despite all the apparent indisputable drawbacks, however, Reading does not pronounce the death of poetry. In unit ninety-seven, *C* imagines his death and it is art's "soft anaesthetic, benign soporific, arcane analgesic" which allows *C* to accept the finality of his fate with dignity (unit ninety-seven, 315). In unit ninety-eight, *C* declares that "something more prosy [is needed] for this job" (316), and the very last line of the collection reads: "My wife patiently washes my faece-besmirched pyjamas for prosaic love," 317). *C*'s ultimate choice is, therefore, not exactly prose and not exactly poetry, rather a discourse that hovers somewhere in-between.

Reading draws a similarity between the surgeon and the poet: "just as the surgeon examines with a scalpel parts of *C*'s abdomen, testing their remaining

working order so as to determine further treatment, C scelethises his verse forms” (Martin, 116). Medical and literary discourses are purposely made to overlap, as in unit twenty-four where medical information about colostomies is provided in metrical notation, and the last line diagnoses that: “pentameters, like colons, inadequate” (286). The most vivid comparison is established in units relating the case of breast cancer: mastectomy is placed side by side with truncation: “Cold truncating surgeon’s blade / razes what was St Tropezed” (unit forty-three, 294). Truncation (or catalexis), as unit forty-one explains, is “frequent in trochaic verse, where the line of complete trochaic feet tends to create monotony” (293). In other words, both mastectomy and truncation are forms of amputation, which becomes an important concept in the analysis of poetry: one can mention in this context the shortened sonnets in units twenty-eight (the thirteen-line sonnet for unlucky people) and sixty-two (the Japanese sonnet which is a combination of tanka and haiku). The experimentation in “amputated” forms and rhetoric, and, generally, a more “prosaic” poetry is exactly what Reading’s collection is all about. Carol Rumens has stated in her review:

C’s philosophy seems to be [that] there are certain areas of human experience which poetry cannot and should not attempt to reach, since by its innate powers of transformation it will make the unbearable bearable. However, he simultaneously demolishes such an objection by creating a ‘poetry’ that does not transform its subject matter, that is, in effect, anti-poetry. (Martin, 122)

The analysis of discursive practices in the field of disease allows Reading to draw conclusions in accord with contemporary theories on the correlation of discourse and ideology. Reading’s views are very close to those Susan Sontag expressed in her 1967 essay, “Against Interpretation,” where she writes of “transparence [as] the highest, most liberating value in art – and in criticism [...]. Transparence [means] experiencing the luminousness of the thing in itself, of things being what they are” (659), a view which is repeated in *Illness as Metaphor* in the context of tuberculosis and cancer. Reading’s disclosure of the innate conflict between such “transparence” and poetic discourse in particular echoes the observations of Clifford Geertz, for whom “arts” and its figurative language is always ideologically-charged, “casting personal attitudes into a public form” and “establishing the cognitive power of distortion” (280). Geertz provides the example of a metaphor, showing its capacity of “transform[ing] a false identification [...] into an apt analogy” (281), though he warns that “the bulk of [ideological] expression consists of quite literal [...] assertions [...] difficult to distinguish from properly scientific statements” (292). This is precisely Reading’s point in converging the discourses of poetry and medicine – to show the stratification in the discursive mechanism: there is no objective “layer” that tells the truth because there is no pure discourse (as Sontag observes, when doctors speak of “the patient [being] invaded by alien cells,” they are using metaphor, 14).

In his quest for an “amputated” poetry that does not creatively transform reality, Reading is truly an inheritor of the war poets. The analogy between war

and disease is by no means far-fetched, and one may quote Sontag's examples on the ways the language of war has traditionally infiltrated the discourse on cancer:

The controlling metaphors in descriptions of cancer are, in fact, drawn [...] from the language of warfare: every physician and every attentive patient is familiar with, if perhaps inured to, this military terminology. Thus, cancer cells do not simply multiply; they are "invasive." ("Malignant tumors invade even when they grow very slowly," as one textbook puts it.) Cancer cells "colonize" from the original tumor to far sites in the body, first setting up tiny outposts ("micrometastases") whose presence is assumed, though they cannot be detected. Rarely are the body's "defenses" vigorous enough to obliterate a tumor that has established its own blood supply and consists of billions of destructive cells. [...] However "radical" the surgical intervention, however many "scans" are taken of the body landscape, most remissions are temporary; the prospects are that "tumor invasion" will continue, or that rogue cells will eventually regroup and mount a new assault on the organism. [...] Treatment also has a military flavor. Radiotherapy uses the metaphors of aerial warfare; patients are "bombarded" with toxic rays. And chemotherapy is chemical warfare, using poisons. Treatment aims to "kill" cancer cells (without, it is hoped, killing the patient). Unpleasant side effects of treatment are advertised, indeed overadvertised. ("The agony of chemotherapy" is a standard phrase). (64-65)

In Reading's collection, the connection between cancer and war is established through the figure of death: "The Ballad of Tucker's Tale" describes an incident from the First World War when a lance-corps "jumped the queue [to shag a goat]" and then "his head split suddenly apart leaking grey and crimson. Sniper" (unit seven, 279). The way death reaches a soldier in the most unexpected manner corresponds to the haphazard way death (in the form of cancer) "chooses" his victims. A link with war poetry in particular is provided in unit twenty-five, in which C imagines Tucker finding his corpse:

The vagrant Tucker found it, partly rotted;
Eyes gouged by corvids, puffed blue meat, wet, stinking,
Blown lips serrated (nibbled as if pinking –
Shears had been at them), maggoty nose besnotted. (287)

The morbidity of the description recalls such First-World-War poems as Robert Graves's "A Dead Boche," Arthur Graeme-West's "The Night Patrol," Siegfried Sassoon's "Counter-Attack," or Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est," the aim of which was to shock the reader in a realization of the truth of war. This truth demanded a radical change of poetic form and rhetoric: from the ear-catching rhythm and high-sounding expressions typical of the early war poetry (e.g. Rupert Brooke's sonnet sequence) to a language that spoke directly of the soldiers' predicament: "the white eyes writhing in his face, / [...] the blood / Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs" (Owen, 68), "he scowled and stunk / With clothes and face a sodden green, / [...] Dribbling black blood from nose and beard" (Graves, 70) "naked sodden buttocks, mats of hair, / Bulged, clotted heads slept in plastering slime" (Sassoon, 68-69). These examples are representative of "an alternative [war] rhetoric [...] of pure description, without metaphors and without abstractions" (Hynes, 192); which of course required also a revolution in poetic structures (the rejection of the ordered sonnet in fa-

your of a looser stanzaic organisation, frequently including narrative fragments and dialogue; one should also mention the imagist experiments with form by Herbert Read and Richard Aldington). A similar focus on revolting details recurs in the descriptions of cancer and cancer treatment in Reading's collection; a horrific content that is deliberately inserted into an unacceptable structure: "It is a most terrible *bore* / to haemorrhage, spewing up gore" (unit eleven, 281), "My fistulae ooze blood-and stink, / I vomit puce spawn in the sink" (unit ninety-one, 312), in order to make the need for new forms of expression the more urgent.

In her review of *C*, Carol Rumens compared Peter Reading with Wilfred Owen, claiming that, unlike Owen, Reading was unable to "shift from physical disgust to moral disgust" (Martin, 120). This may be explained by the fact that, whereas Owen wrote about combat from the standpoint of a soldier in the front-line, Reading writes about a disease he does not suffer from and thus lacks the authority for moral judgment. There exists an interesting sphere of convergence between writing about war and writing about cancer, namely, in both cases the most important criterion by which such literature is judged is first-hand-experience. An immense quantity of poems written during the First and the Second World War hold a prominent place in the canon of war literature due to their documentary value rather than artistic merit; this is particularly true of poems written in concentration camps and ghettos. The same phenomenon can be observed with regard to cancer: it is enough to browse the internet to find numerous poems written by cancer patients which are mostly embarrassing in their technique and the sentiments they express: "Then by accident I found that lump / Not really that big, merely a bump," "The surgery scheduled, off came the breast / Waking to bandages tight on my chest" ("Scared" written by a breast cancer patient), "You spent 41 years on this earth for your end to be like this?? / I just don't understand it and I hope the angels / keep watch over you" ("Patty," written for a cousin who died of cancer). Despite the obvious flaws, such texts possess a documentary and therapeutic significance which cannot be ignored.

In *C*, Peter Reading does three things that safeguard him from attacks on the grounds that only cancer victims can speak of the truth of the disease: firstly, he fictionalises the voice of the first person narrator; secondly, his subject is less cancer itself (the experience he does not possess) but the relations between scientific and literary discourses and cancer, and thirdly, the subject of the disease is part of a wider issue: the gradual demise of an entire civilisation. These strategies become the more obvious when analysed in the context of Reading's entire output. From the earliest collections, Reading endeavoured to prevent any associations between himself and the lyrical subject. This meant making the "author" one of the many voices (characters) in the collections: in "Diptych," a painter discusses art with a poet "that little bloke / (what was his name [...] / Reading or something" (1995, 109). The "author" is also part of a postmodern metafictional play: in "Fiction," there is Donald – "a fictitious character" – who writes a fictitious novel about a poet Don with a nom de plume "Peter Reading" (1995, 137-

38); in "Mystery Story," a "scarcely-known poet" receives a letter addressed to "Mr R****g and which he answers signing himself "Donald Donaldson (per procuracionem P****r R****g)" (1995, 163). Reading would carry this game to the point of reaching Roland Barthes's "death of the author": the 1994 collection, *Last Poems* contains an introductory note that the texts have been edited and published posthumously by John Bilston (1995, 246). In *C*, the fictionality of the narrator is achieved by distancing himself from his own subjective personal responses: when *C* undergoes a breakdown, he frames his own spontaneous feelings in third-person narrative: "[He breaks down and sobs embarrassingly]," "Just to stay on stay on living. Just to stay on living, oh, why can't I? Stupid childish helpless poor little frightened [pusillanimous drivell] frail poor me" (unit six, 279). A further strategy employed by Reading as a means of depersonalising his work is the incorporation of sophisticated vocabulary (in *C*, there is an abundance of highly specialized medical terminology). The effect is that it is difficult to feel empathy with the speaker due to this linguistic barrier, therefore the attention shifts to the discourse itself: "as with Brechtian 'alienation,' the language of [Reading's] poem[s] works to keep the reader in a state of alertness both to what is depicted and the means of that depiction" (Kennedy, 135). Despite all the harsh criticism showered on Reading's *C*, it is a very honest text in the sense that it refrains from "redemptive synthesis with which art 'cures' reality" (Rumens, in: Martin, 122), and centres round a Foucauldian "archeological analysis [which] does not treat discourse as a document, as a sign of something else, as an element that ought to be transparent [but] it is concerned with discourse in its own volume, as a monument" (138-39).

What many readers may see as provocatively offensive in *C*, i.e. the descriptions of soiling the bed with excrement and vomiting, have a double-edge. On the one hand, their impact is lessened when viewed in a wider perspective: the palaeontologist diagnosed with cancer views his situation with scientific stoicism since, from his standpoint, an individual human death does not matter in the process of evolution ("I am dying (Carcinoma ventriculi) but what is 450 years here or there on the chronostratigraph?," unit sixty-five, 302). On the other hand, however, the constant emphasis on filth and slime and rot becomes the more disturbing when the reader becomes aware that individual deaths in *C* are depicted as indicators of an approaching mass extinction; in a sense the hospital functions as a microcosm of what is happening to "H. sap" (homo sapiens) and the world. The grief of the cancer patients' wives mirrors the grief of the women who "writhe unconsolable in the dirt of Ulster and the Holy Land" (unit fifty-nine, 299); the puke and faeces that accompanies colon cancer has its equivalent in the decay of civilization: "Not just me, but also out there, the cities whose shit / surges into the sea in tsunamis / and Shopping Precincts whose shit of canines and rolling / Coke tins and paper and fag ends / [...] a shoddy, incontrovertible burial in shit," and finally, the oncoming death of *C* is a harbinger of the demise of mankind: "me, me, suppurating to death, / not just on my own but with us all, with us all" (unit seventy-one, 304). Cancer represents for Reading two contra-

dictory things: a disease that defies figurative transformation, and, concurrently, a disease that is the metaphorical representation of what is happening to the urban environment: “the city was seen as itself cancer – a place of abnormal, unnatural growth, and extravagant, devouring, armoured passions” (Sontag, 74) and what is happening to the entire planet: “cancer signifies the rebellion of the injured ecosphere: Nature taking revenge on a wicked technocratic world” (Sontag, 69-70). In Reading’s first collection, *For the Municipality’s Elderly*, there appears the figure of Solomon Eagle “denouncing of judgement on / the City” (“Easter Letter,” 1995, 55), an image borrowed from Daniel Defoe’s *A Journal of the Plague Year* which describes the Great Plague of London in 1665. The theme of “pestilence” will gradually expand from collection to collection, taking on the meanings of poverty, violence, ecological disaster, nuclear waste, until, in *Last Poems* and *Eschatological*, Reading creates a macabre vision of a mankind: “fatal the spread of pestilence / [...] putrid black blood through bolocked nostrils,” “city and country vile heaps / bile slime cadavers piles stink” (“Lucretian,” 1996, 287), “maggots mumble between ribs” (“[Untitled],” 1996, 293). One can easily recognize the similarity in the morbidity of cancer in *C* and pestilence in these later collections; what is more, lines from *C* are reiterated almost word for word: “Pain, not oblivion, hurts” (*C*, unit seventy-five, 1995, 306) – “[Only pain, not oblivion, hurts]” (*Eschatological*, “Lucretian,” 1996, 288). When analysing *C*, it is important to remember that Reading’s collections constitute an entity with the primary theme of the threat of the extinction of our planet. The bleakness of his vision does not allow him to adopt the complacent viewpoint of Sean O’Brien that poetry, by means of “[its] power of imaginative production” will provide the reader with an enlarged “sense of the world’s possibilities” because “poetry of necessity preserves something of itself from the general wreck” (125). For Reading, poetry must constantly prove itself a valid medium in an “uncompromising confrontation with a savagely complex world” and what he manages to show in *C* as well as in his other collections is that poetry can survive this confrontation, providing it reveals “an ability to transgress genres and the bounds of conventional sensibilities” (Martin, 14).

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PETER KRAHÉ

**‘Living on a woman’:
Zum Verständnis der Geschlechterrollen
in sozialkritischer Literatur der Zwischenkriegszeit**

Abstract: This article examines conflicts of gender relations during the interwar period in Britain. It centres on a discussion of Walter Greenwood’s successful novel *Love on the Dole* (1933) as a representative case study of working-class coping strategies in the face of unemployment and dearth. While the interwar period has sometimes ambiguously been named *The Age of Illusion*, even *The Long Week-end*, the 1930s with their consistently high unemployment rates in the industrial north have been termed *Devil’s Decade*, *Pink Thirties*, or, quite plainly, *The Hungry Thirties*. Gender relations could not remain unaffected by these constraints on everyday life: Whereas it had been a commonly shared view in the working classes that the husband had to be the breadwinner and the wife’s place was at home, these established gender roles could no longer be taken for granted. Increasingly, they were reversed: Men who lost their jobs stayed at home, while their wives went out to work to support the family. As a result, notions of gender identity, self-respect, and morality had to be redefined. British rearmament and the outbreak of the Second World War created a fundamentally different prospect by mobilizing the entire workforce of men and women alike. The resulting full employment provided a precondition for Labour’s postwar welfare state, which brought with it a return to traditional gender roles by the 1950s.

Uxori nubere nolo meae.¹

Mit einer Arbeitslosenzahl, die zwischen 1921 und 1938 nie unter 1,4 Millionen lag,² waren die 1930er Jahre auch für Großbritannien eine sozial und wirtschaftlich schwierige Zeit. Die Lebensgrundlage großer Teile der arbeitenden Bevölkerung wurde durch den Niedergang der alten *staple industries* des 19. Jahrhunderts von Kohle, Stahl, Schiffbau und Baumwolle zunehmend gefährdet, eine Erschütterung, die bis in die traditionelle Rollenverteilung innerhalb der Familien zwischen Mann und Frau, Eltern und Kindern reichte: “[T]here were many homes

¹ “Das Weib meiner Frau will ich nun einmal nicht sein.” Martial, *Epigrammata* 8.12.3; Martial, *Epigramme*, ed. H.C. Schnur (Stuttgart: Reclam, repr. 1994) 76.

² Bernard Harris, “Unemployment and the Dole in Interwar Britain,” in: *Twentieth-Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, ed. Paul Johnson (London: Longman, ³1996) 203-20; 205.

in which the bread-winning role was reversed.”³ Das Verhältnis der Geschlechter zueinander scheint dennoch weitgehend auf dem traditionellen Rollenverständnis seit dem viktorianischen Zeitalter zu fußen, jedenfalls soweit die *working classes* betroffen sind. Während es bis zur Industriellen Revolution keine ausgeprägte Trennung der Geschlechterrollen im Arbeitsbereich gab,⁴ bestimmt dieses Rollenverständnis seither eindeutig, wie die Arbeitsteilung der Geschlechter auszusehen hat. Es gibt feste Vorstellungen von der Verschiedenheit der Arbeit der Geschlechter, “man’s work” und “woman’s work,” die als zeitlich konstant eingeschätzt wird. Arbeitslosigkeit des Mannes wird deshalb jenseits des Materiel-len zu einer besonderen psychischen Belastung für alle Beteiligten, selbst wo das Familieneinkommen durch außerhäusliche Arbeit der Frau sichergestellt werden kann. Die eigenständige Berufstätigkeit von Frauen hat erst seit dem substantiellen Anteil der weiblichen Bevölkerung an den Kriegsanstrengungen des Ersten Weltkriegs einen großen Aufschwung genommen: Vorher hatte es – in den Worten von H.G. Wells – geheißen: “They could work in the household, but they could not ‘work for a living.’”⁵

Vorstellungen der *gender roles* sind bekanntermaßen mit Normen sozialer Schichtzugehörigkeit korreliert. Laut Orwell ist die Arbeiterschicht stark patriarchalisch auf den Familienvater hin ausgerichtet,⁶ während in der Mittelschicht Frau oder Kind im Zentrum stehen. Selbst die bedrückende Arbeitslosigkeit der 1930er Jahre in den nordenglischen Arbeiterregionen ändert hieran nicht grundsätzlich etwas: “the man being out of work while the woman’s work continues as before – has not altered the relative status of the sexes. In a working-class home it is the man who is the master and not, as in a middle-class home, the woman or the baby.”⁷ Damit erscheint das Verhältnis der Geschlechter in diesen Kreisen auch von der wirtschaftlichen Notlage nicht im Kern betroffen. Es ist jedoch zu überprüfen, ob diese Einschätzung angesichts der ansonsten konstatierten Verwerfungen haltbar, ob mithin das Verhältnis der Geschlechter bei gewandelter oder sogar vertauschter wirtschaftlicher Kompetenz unangetastet bleibt. Dagegen sprechen sozialhistorische Befunde wie: “Die Arbeitslosigkeit des Mannes bei fortdauernder Erwerbstätigkeit der Frau stellt die Ehe als ‘Wirtschaftsbündnis’ auf den Kopf.”⁸ Da dem männlichen Anteil als Ernährer und Versorger an

³ Trevor May, *An Economic and Social History of Britain 1760-1970* [1987], repr. (Harlow: Longman, 1992) 336.

⁴ Frank O’Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1832* (London: Arnold, 1997) 347.

⁵ H.G. Wells, *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*, (London: Heinemann, ³1932) 523-62: “The Rôle of Women in the World’s Work,” 525.

⁶ Das wird in der sozialgeschichtlichen Forschung gestützt: “Working-class culture has been particularly male dominated.” John Kingdom, *Government and Politics in Britain: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, ¹1999) 179.

⁷ George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* [1937], in: *The Penguin Complete Longer Non-Fiction of George Orwell* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983) 155-299; 205.

⁸ Gérard Vincent, “Eine Geschichte des Geheimes?,” in: *Geschichte des privaten Lebens*, eds. Philippe Ariès und Georges Duby [1985-87], repr. (Augsburg: Bechtermünz, 1999) 5 Bde., V, 153-343; 258.

diesem Bündnis stets ein gewichtiges Moment von persönlicher Würde beige-mischt wird, kann eine solche Umkehrung der Verhältnisse schwerlich als konfliktfrei angenommen werden.

Im folgenden Beitrag soll dieser Entwicklung im Verhältnis der Geschlechter zwischen krisenhafter sozialer Wirklichkeit, Neuorientierung, Umkehrung oder Wiederherstellung anhand von Quellen der Zwischenkriegszeit nachgegangen und gefragt werden, inwiefern sie zu bleibenden Veränderungen bei beiden Geschlechtern führten. In einem repräsentativen und vielbeachteten Roman der 30er Jahre, Walter Greenwoods *Love on the Dole*,⁹ bald nach Erscheinen auch als Theaterstück adaptiert und erfolgreich, jedoch ob seiner sozialkritischen Brisanz erst 1940 verfilmt,¹⁰ wird ein zeittypischer Sonderaspekt der Geschlechterproblematik analysiert: Der arbeitslose Mann lebt von den Einkünften einer Frau.

1. Broterwerb und Haushalt: Geschlechtstypische Arbeitsteilung

Frank McCourt bringt in seinen Erinnerungen den polarisierenden Konflikt der Geschlechter auf eine prägnante Formulierung: "Dad says a factory is no place for a woman. Mam says, Sitting on your arse by the fire is no place for a man."¹¹ Solche Vorbehalte gegenüber der außerhäuslichen Erwerbstätigkeit von Frauen und der Existenzform des Hausmannes gelten nicht nur in dem im Vergleich zur übrigen westlichen Welt ländlich-rückständigen Irland der 30er Jahre.¹² In den Vereinigten Staaten gilt anscheinend die herkömmliche Rollenteilung als Weg zur Konfliktlösung mit anhaltender wirtschaftlicher Misere um so stärker: "Als die Wirtschaftskrise andauerte, schien den Amerikanern der Weg zum sicheren Heim über traditionelle Muster zu führen."¹³ Man muß nicht die strikten Geschlechtsrollenzuweisungen der nationalsozialistischen Ideologie in Deutschland bemühen: Die herkömmliche Trennung der Sphären gilt auch für Großbritannien, wie das vergleichsweise aufgeschlossene Werk des Fabiers H.G. Wells unter dem Titel "The Rôle of Women in the World's Work" ausdrückt: "[...] a large part, if not the larger part, of human operations are, and will remain, definitely assignable as men's jobs or women's jobs."¹⁴

Mit solcher Bestimmtheit postuliert, kann diese Rollenteilung damit leicht für ein Naturgesetz gehalten werden, das nur in Ausnahmefällen übertreten wer-

⁹ Walter Greenwood, *Love on the Dole* [1933] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, repr. 1984). Alle weiteren Nachweise folgen als eingeklammerte Seitenzahlen im Anschluß an den Beleg.

¹⁰ Stephen Constantine, "'Love on the Dole' and Its Reception in the 1930s," in: *Literature and History*, 8, 1982, 232-47; 233-34.

¹¹ Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir of a Childhood* [1996] (London: Fontana, 1997) 248.

¹² Vgl. Terence Brown, "The 1930s: A Self-Sufficient Ireland?," in: *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922-85* (Glasgow: Collins Fontana 1987) 141-70.

¹³ Elaine Tylor May, "Mythen und Realitäten der amerikanischen Familie," in: *Geschichte des privaten Lebens*, V, 557-602; 578.

¹⁴ Wells, 524.

den darf. Unter geordneten Verhältnissen böte sich eine klare Zweiteilung von Zuständigkeiten an, wie romanhaft von Orwell beschrieben:

The shop was Father's business, it was 'the man's work,' and even about the money side of it she hadn't very much curiosity. Her job, 'the woman's work,' was to look after the house and the meals and the laundry and the children. She'd have had a fit if she'd seen Father or anyone else of the male sex trying to sew on a button for himself.¹⁵

Deutlich wird, daß es sich nicht allein um aufoktroyierte männliche Dominanz handelt, sondern diese Einteilung auch von weiblicher Seite als nicht einseitig auflösbar betrachtet wird: "if he does help much he is doing it in place of the woman whose job it should be; the household chores are not joint responsibilities."¹⁶ Über Arbeitsleben und Haushalt hinausgehend, prägt das jeweilige Rollenverständnis auch das Freizeitverhalten, wobei die Trennung zwischen Arbeit und Muße für den männlichen Verhaltenskodex schärfer normativ bestimmt ist: "Men who did not frequent public houses or drink at home were usually sneered at by other males, but not by women, as 'tight-fisted,' 'hen-pecked,' 'miserable' or 'not proper men at all.'"¹⁷ Wenige Jahre später, während des Zweiten Weltkriegs, wird jenseits des *people's war*, charakterisiert durch die Einbeziehung aller Kreise der Bevölkerung in Kriegsanstrengungen wie -auswirkungen, auch die geschlechtstypische Rollenteilung den veränderten Zeitläuften angepaßt: Aus männlicher Arbeit wird die Pflicht zum Kampfeinsatz. Über den satirischen Kontext hinausgehend, mag Evelyn Waugh's Feststellung zutreffen: "*man's work*. At a time like this you ought to be *fighting*."¹⁸

2. Staatliche Bedürftigkeitsprüfung: Erniedrigung, Denunziantentum und Resignation

Die staatlichen Verhältnisse, die den übergeordneten Rahmen für die Lebensbedingungen der 30er Jahre bilden, bleiben von den Umschichtungen zwischen den Geschlechtern und innerhalb der Familie nicht unberührt und seien zunächst als Hintergrund skizziert,¹⁹ bevor die Fallstudie zu betrachten ist. Eine besondere Belastung des Familienlebens als einer Verbindung von Menschen in gegenseitiger Solidarität bedeutet die Bedürftigkeitsprüfung für Familien, der *family means test*, der im Jahre 1931 gemeinsam mit einer zehnpromzentigen Kürzung aller Sozi-

¹⁵ George Orwell, *Coming Up For Air* [1939], in: *The Penguin Complete Novels of George Orwell* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983) 458.

¹⁶ Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy. Aspects of Working-Class Life, with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957) 49.

¹⁷ Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* [1971] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, repr. 1987) 121.

¹⁸ Evelyn Waugh, *Put Out More Flags* [1942] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, repr. 1978) 142.

¹⁹ Vgl. Tony Mason, "'Hunger ... is a Very Good Thing': Britain in the 1930s," in: *From Blitz to Blair: A New History of Britain Since 1939*. ed. Nick Tiratsoo (London: Phoenix, 1998) 1-24.

alausgaben von der Koalitionsregierung eingeführt wurde.²⁰ Es wirkt, als hätte der Staat die Umgewichtungen der Geschlechter- und Familienverhältnisse in gegenseitiger Verantwortung statt der hergebrachten männlichen Versorgerrolle zum Vorbild für die neue Maßnahme gewählt. In dieser Bedürftigkeitsprüfung wurde das gesamte Einkommen von Familien gegen Arbeitslosen- und Sozialhilfeansprüche gerechnet. Was aber zunächst wie eine verstärkte Mobilisierung des familiären Gemeinschaftsgefühls im Rückgriff auf die viktorianische *self-help*-Tradition und damit harmlos genug aussah, entpuppte sich in bürokratischer Durchführung wie atmosphärischer Auswirkung auf Familienleben und *working-class communities* als geradezu traumatische kollektive Erfahrung, die von Zeitzeugen zwischen Greenwood und Orwell eindrucksvoll beklagt wird. Eine der ersten Bedingungen der Labour Party zur Mitwirkung an Churchills Kriegskoalition bestand dementsprechend 1940 in der Forderung nach Abschaffung dieser Bedürftigkeitsprüfung.²¹ Mittelfristig führten die Auswirkungen zur Wahl des Universalitäts- gegenüber dem Selektivitätsprinzip beim Aufbau des *welfare state* unter der Labourregierung seit 1945, um den Rechtsanspruch Bedürftiger gegenüber dem zuvor als stigmatisierend erlebten Almosencharakter von Sozialleistungen hervorzuheben.²² Bis zur Mitte der 70er Jahre gab es aber erneut fünfundvierzig verschiedene *means tests*, und das System war wieder ähnlich komplex wie in den 30er Jahren.²³

Es bedarf der genaueren Ausmalung, um der Phantasie Nachgeborener bei der Gewichtung dieser Maßnahme in der alltäglichen Praxis nachzuhelfen, die dem oberflächlichen Blick vielleicht als sinnvoll und angemessen erscheinen mag. Bezeichnenderweise sind sich sozialgeschichtliche Forschung wie essayistische und narrative Literatur in Präsentation wie Bewertung einig. Das Prozedere des *means test* hat etwa folgendermaßen ausgesehen:

[...] after an unemployed man had exhausted his insurance stamps he was turned over to a Public Assistance Committee which demanded to know details of all monies going into his house. Even if his son had a 3s.-a-week paper-round or if his wife had managed to put a few pounds by into the Post Office, he had to declare these details and the Public Assistance man would vary his dole accordingly.²⁴

Auch wenn das nicht substantiell verschieden von heutigen Verfahren erscheint, so war es den Menschen der 30er Jahre in ihrer Notlage doch eine neue und damit potentiell bedrohliche Erfahrung. Ist der vorherrschende Eindruck hier der einer die Grenze zur Pfennigfuchserie überschreitenden Genauigkeit, die sich stets gegen den Betroffenen auswirkt, so sagt das allein wenig über die tatsächliche Pra-

²⁰ Harris, 207.

²¹ Ronald Blythe, *The Age of Illusion*, repr. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983) 160.

²² Rodney Lowe, "Postwar Welfare," in: *Twentieth-Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, 356-73; 362. Edward Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750-1985* (London: Arnold, 1987) 206: "The major difference between the pre-1939 and post-1945 benefit systems is that the former was still based on the negative and selective concept of *means* while the latter concentrated on relief according to the positive principles of universality and *need*."

²³ Lowe, 363.

²⁴ Blythe, 160.

xis der Durchführung und deren Auswirkungen auf Familien- und Sozialleben aus. Zur besseren Erfassung und Kontrolle beraumt das Amt Lokaltermine an:

The family Means Test was enforced with great exactitude and its officers would stand in the front rooms of poverty-stricken homes asking endless deeply personal questions, while their prying eyes flickered over the furniture, the clothes, the pets and the food of the family being interrogated. Tale-bearers thrived. A child from a 'Public Assistance' home might be seen with a new overcoat or a bicycle, and the Means Test man would arrive to ask where these things came from.²⁵

Die sozialgeschichtliche Forschung kommt nach teilweise wörtlicher Übernahme dieser eher essayistischen Quelle zu einem vernichtenden Urteil über dergleichen sozialpolitische Maßnahmen, die einem engstirnig-totalitären Staatswesen mit formellem wie informellem Überwachungsapparat besser angestanden hätten als dem "Land of Hope and Glory" der populären Hymne: "The test was an encouragement to the informer, the gossip, and the writer of anonymous letters. It led to all sorts of un-neighbourliness, and stimulated petty tyranny on the part of many minor civil servants."²⁶ Worauf sich solche Zusammenfassungen im Alltag konkret bezogen, schildert Orwell in *The Road to Wigan Pier* und läßt ebenfalls das Motiv des anonymen Denunzianten nicht aus. Armut ist weder pittoresk noch komisch, doch wird die Entrüstung des Beobachters durch Züge bitterer Groteske womöglich noch gesteigert: "The favourite joke in Wigan was about a man who was refused relief on the ground that he 'had a job carting firewood.' He had been seen, it was said, carting firewood at night. He had to explain that he was not carting firewood but doing a moonlight flit. The 'firewood' was his furniture."²⁷ Es liegt in der Natur der Sache, daß Betroffene die als unzumutbar empfundenen Bedingungen des *means test* zu unterlaufen trachteten. Kann dies einerseits von Findigkeit und Schlitzohrigkeit zeugen, wie im Falle junger Männer, die Scheinadressen abseits des Elternhauses unterhielten, um in den Genuß eigener Sozialhilfe zu gelangen, so berichtet Orwell andererseits von deprimierenden und beinahe zwangsläufigen Folgen für den Familienzusammenhalt, wenn verwitwete alte Leute als die Schwächsten die größte Last zu schultern haben:

The most cruel and evil effect of the Means Test is the way in which it breaks up families. Old people, sometimes bedridden, are driven out of their homes by it. An old age pensioner, for instance, if a widower, would normally live with one or other of his children; his weekly ten shillings goes towards the household expenses, and probably he is not badly cared for. Under the Means Test, however, he counts as a 'lodger' and if he stays at home his children's dole will be docked. So, perhaps at seventy or seventy-five years of age, he has to turn out into lodgings, handing his pension over to the lodging-house keeper and existing on the verge of starvation. I have seen several cases of this myself. It is happening all over England at this moment, thanks to the Means Test.²⁸

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ May, 345-46 Vgl. auch Martin Pugh, *State and Society: British Political and Social History 1870-1992* (London: Arnold, 1994) 202.

²⁷ Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, 203.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 203-04.

Es sind die staatlichen Maßnahmen, die die Familienstrukturen schwächen.²⁹ Die Zeitklage über diese unwürdigen Verhältnisse in England ist nicht selten in den 30er Jahren zu hören; auch J.B. Priestley hatte sie bereits in seiner 1933 verfaßten *English Journey* angestimmt.³⁰ Während solche Darstellungen entweder die wissenschaftliche Autorität im zeitlichen Abstand oder die Authentizität unmittelbarer Augenzeugen beanspruchen, versucht Greenwood in *Love on the Dole* mit künstlerischen Mitteln, die Situation weiter Kreise der Arbeiterschicht in ihrer psychischen und emotionalen Wirklichkeit zu erfassen und sein Lesepublikum, eine regional entfernte, weitgehend unbeteiligte und unwissende Mittelschicht der sich etablierenden Wohlstandsgesellschaft, darüber aufzuklären.³¹ Harry Hardcastles Beobachtungen und persönliche Erfahrungen mit dem *means test* zielen auf die Empathiefähigkeit des Lesers:

The manager ordered a clerk to look up the man's particulars; the clerk handed over some documents after a search in a filing cabinet. His superior, after perusing some notes written upon the forms, looked at the applicant and said: 'You've a couple of sons living with you who are working, haven't you?

'Aye,' the man answered: 'One's earnin' twenty-five bob an' t' other a couple o' quid, when they work a full week. An' th' eldest...'

'In view of this fact,' the manager interrupted: 'The Public Assistance Committee have ruled your household's aggregate income sufficient for your needs; therefore, your claim for transitional benefit is disallowed.' He turned from the man to glance interrogatively at Harry.

The man flushed: 'The swine,' he shouted: 'Th' eldest lad's getting' wed... 'as 'e t' keep me an' th' old woman?' raising his fist: 'Ah'll. ...' But the attendant policeman collared him and propelled him outside, roughly, ignoring his loud protestations.

Harry learnt that, in the opinion of the Public Assistance Committee his father's dole and Sally's wages were sufficient to keep him. No more dole would be forthcoming. And when he asked whether he could re-state his case the manager informed him that there was no appeal. He didn't argue; went outside, dazed. (195-96)

Die Familie, auch in Großbritannien gemeinhin von Staats wegen zur grundlegenden Einheit allen Miteinanders erklärt,³² wird damit von dessen Ausführungsorganen zur Abweisung vitaler Ansprüche der einzelnen instrumentalisiert. Der Kontrast von Bürokratenjargon und Dialekt, Aufbegehren und Verzweiflung einerseits, die Strategie von Gleichgültigkeit, besserwisserischem Unterbrechen und nachdrücklichem Einsatz der Staatsgewalt andererseits, geben bei Verneinen jeder weiteren Möglichkeit ein intensives Bild von Ausweglosigkeit, die im Falle

²⁹ "On the whole the Conservatives were the party most ready to praise the nineteenth-century virtues of thrift and home life; their policies had rather a different effect." T.O. Lloyd, *Empire to Welfare State: English History 1906-1985* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986, repr. 1991) 185.

³⁰ J.B. Priestley, *English Journey: Being a Rambling but Truthful Account of What one Man Saw and Heard and Felt and Thought During a Journey Through England During the Autumn of the Year 1933* [1934] (London: Heinemann, repr. 1936) 411: "The Labour Exchanges stink of defeated humanity: The whole thing is unworthy of a great country that in its time has given the world some nobly creative ideas. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves."

³¹ Cf. Constantine, 240-41.

³² "Families are the core of our society." *New Labour: Because Britain Deserves Better* (Labour Election Manifesto 1997) 25.

des jungen Hardcastle zu völliger Benommenheit führt. Die Episode stellt damit in aller Kürze eine eindrucksvolle synoptische Illustration zur Thematik von “Unemployment and Mental Health” mit den markanten Phasen von “shock,” “distress” und “broken attitude” dar.³³

3. Verkehrte Welt: Variationen der Frau als Ernährerin

Vor diesem Hintergrund der *hungry thirties* und bestimmt von Familien-, Gefühls- oder Interessenbanden agieren die zentralen Charaktere in *Love on the Dole*. Die Konfiguration des Mannes, der von einer Frau ernährt wird, kommt nicht nur mehrfach vor und bestimmt die Handlungsstruktur, sondern wird gewissermaßen in Variationen durch alle gängigen Möglichkeiten geführt. Sie betrifft Eheleute und *common-law marriages*, Schwester und Bruder sowie Vater und Tochter und überschreitet damit auch die Generationengrenze. Mit Ausnahme eines Melodramenschurken, der skrupellos den Weg der Ausbeutung verfolgt, wird dieses Motiv von allen Männern als problematisch empfunden und innerhalb der Arbeiterschicht als nicht der Weltordnung entsprechend angesehen. Eine Welt, die den Männern nur noch durch Bewährungshelfer oder Justizgeistliche Arbeitsplätze vermitteln kann, als Resozialisierungsmaßnahme oder gewissermaßen Lohn der durch Arbeitslosigkeit und Armut verursachten Kleinkriminalität,³⁴ wirkt wie auf den Kopf gestellt: “Allus y’ve got to do is t’ get y’self pinched and sent to quod, do y’ time, an’ when y’ come out Probation Officer or Court Missionary does rest. It’s th’ on’y way t’ get a job nowadays” (232).

Alle angesprochenen Möglichkeiten des “living on a woman” werden am Beispiel der Familie Hardcastle vorgeführt, die allein insofern für die Bevölkerung von Hanky Park in Salford atypisch ist, als sie nur zwei Kinder zählt, gerade damit jedoch dem neuen Trend der Zwischenkriegszeit zu kleineren Familien entspricht.³⁵ Nach Wells’ Begrifflichkeit wäre sie damit entgegen den kinderreichen Familien und unter Bezug auf die Etymologie als eine Inversion des herkömmlichen Proletariats zu betrachten: “These new types constitute a sort of negative proletariat which contribute few or no children at all.”³⁶ Der Normalfall der Erwerbslage wäre, daß der Familienvater einziger *breadwinner* ist und erst durch den Zuverdienst heranwachsender Kinder entlastet wird. Im Verlaufe von *Love on the Dole* ergibt sich jedoch die ungewöhnliche Situation, daß mit um sich greifender Arbeitslosigkeit die gesamte Familie Hardcastle zunehmend und am Ende ausschließlich vom Verdienst der Tochter Sally lebt.

³³ Cf. Harris, 217-18.

³⁴ Cf. Roger Webster, “‘Love on the Dole’ and the Aesthetic of Contradiction,” in: *The British Working-Class Novel in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jeremy Hawthorn (London: Arnold, 1984) 49-61; 58.

³⁵ Cf. Pugh, 201.

³⁶ Wells, 533.

Für Harry, den Bruder, ändern sich nach dem Zwischenspiel einer Lehre in der örtlichen Fabrik nur die Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse: Vom Vater wegen einer Mißsehe hinausgeworfen, lebt er von den Einkünften seiner Frau, die bis zur Entbindung weiter arbeitet. Sally hingegen hätte ihren Verlobten ohne den Druck der Verhältnisse gern geheiratet. Als Larry Meath jedoch wegen politischer Aktivitäten arbeitslos wird, hätte auch er von ihrem Lohn leben müssen. Während Harry passiv aus einer Abhängigkeit in die nächste übergeht, hätte Sally aktiv für ihren Mann die Verantwortung übernommen. In diesen Konstellationen wären unter dem Druck der Arbeitslosigkeit die traditionellen Geschlechterbeziehungen komplett vertauscht. Larry Meath aber, allein unter allen Figuren mit einem weiteren Horizont und um politisches Verständnis und Veränderung bemüht, beugt sich den Zwängen nicht. Weder möchte er mit Sally unverheiratet zusammenleben, noch will er sich von einer Frau aushalten lassen. Er bricht sein Eheversprechen und weigert sich anders als Vater und Bruder Hardcastle kategorisch, eine als parasitär verstandene Lebensform zu ergreifen: “D’y’ think I’m going to sponge on you. What the devil d’y’ take me for?” (193). Das ist mehr als implizite Kritik an jenen, die solche Skrupel nicht teilen: Neben persönlichem Mannesstolz und der Verbindlichkeit übernommener Rollenvorstellungen drückt sich in seiner Entrüstung auch die Wertschätzung ihrer Person aus.

Die Abhängigkeit ihrer Familie aber wird von Sally noch auf eine neue Ebene gehoben. Als sie sich der Hoffnung auf eigenes Lebensglück durch Larrys unzeitigen Tod beraubt sieht, gibt sie den Nachstellungen des reichen Sam Grundy schrittweise nach. Nutznießer sind wiederum Vater und Bruder, die durch diese materielle Zweckbindung gegen jede Hoffnung dauerhafte Anstellungen bei der städtischen Busgesellschaft erhalten. Das Motiv des “living on a woman” erscheint damit ausgereizt: In Zukunft können Vater und Bruder ihren Lebensunterhalt selbst verdienen, doch nur um den Preis einer letzten Anstrengung der Tochter und Schwester. Die neue Existenz zweier Generationen von Hardcastles weist den Geburtsfehler eines Bruchs mit den bürgerlichen Moralvorstellungen auf. Sally prostituiert sich und wird “one of Sam Grundy’s whores” (56). Von einem Happy-End kann deshalb nur sehr eingeschränkt oder ironisch die Rede sein. Auch die Kreissymbolik des Romans hebt hervor, daß sich an Situation und Problemen der Bevölkerung von Hanky Park insgesamt nichts geändert hat. Der Schlußabschnitt stellt jedenfalls eine nur geringfügig veränderte Wiederholung der Genreszene morgendlichen Erwachens aus dem zweiten Kapitel dar und die Geschichte könnte wieder von vorn beginnen.

Während damit ein Panoramablick auf Hanky Park in Salford, dem *classic slum* von Engels und Roberts, keine Veränderungen zu ergeben scheint, haben unter dieser kollektiven Oberfläche dramatische Entwicklungen von Einzelschicksalen stattgefunden, zwischen dem als endgültig erlebten Verlust von Lebensglück und dem Bewußtsein, einer schier ausweglosen Lage dennoch entronnen zu sein. *Love on the Dole* läßt sich als Folge von Variationen zum herkömmlichen Verständnis der Geschlechterrollen lesen, die durch die Figuren und ihre Handlungsweisen wie durch Passagen und Kommentare des allwissenden Erzählers

vorangetrieben werden. Fast alle Personen sind durch die wirtschaftliche Notlage der Zwischenkriegszeit fremdbestimmt, so daß, um Arbeit und Arbeitslosigkeit kreisend, alles Sinnen und Trachten im engsten Kreis von Familie oder Partnerschaft gefangen bleibt. Für beide Generationen der *Hardcastles* ist nur einmal im Leben überhaupt eine Abwesenheit von Hanky Park in Gestalt eines kurzen Urlaubs möglich. Auf ironische Weise ist der Tag der Eheschließung für die Frauen vom gemeinhin postulierten 'schönsten Tag des Lebens' zu einem ungunstigen Wendepunkt degeneriert, den jede einzelne erlebt:

Marriage scored on their faces a kind of preoccupied, faded, lack-lustre air as though they were constantly plagued by some problem. As they were. How to get a shilling, and, when obtained, how to make it do the work of two. Though it was not so much a problem as a whole-time occupation to which no salary was attached, not to mention the side-line of risking life to give children birth and being responsible for their upbringing afterwards. (31)

In nuce enthält dieser Abschnitt bereits die Geschlechterproblematik und die durch äußere Notlage aufweichenden Rollenvorstellungen. Eine ihres Kinderreichtums wegen als abschreckendes Beispiel angeführte Frau kommentiert ebenso desillusioniert wie lebensklug die staatstragende Institution der Ehe: "Marriage, eh? Yaaa. Y' wed for love an' find y've let y'sel' in for a seven day a week job where y' get no pay" (244). Diese Kritik ist bemerkenswert, weil antizyklisch, da für Großbritannien als Ganzes gilt, daß zwischen den 1920er und 1970er Jahren die Ehe eine zunehmend erstrebenswertere Einrichtung wurde,³⁷ wogegen es im 19. Jahrhundert stets einen hohen Anteil Unverheirateter – *odd women* oder *surplus women* und Junggesellen – gegeben hatte. Wird hier der herkömmlich-weibliche Bereich der Hausarbeit als unbezahlte Ganztätigkeit umgewidmet, so kommt als zweiter die Betreuung der Kinder hinzu. Frauen pflegten im viktorianischen Zeitalter vor dem Kindbett ihr Testament zu machen, und das Lebensgefährliche des Gebärens ist noch in den Jahren nach 1925 in England statistisch ausgeprägt, bevor sich die Verhältnisse mit der günstigeren Wirtschaftslage ab dem schlimmsten Jahr 1934 rasch entspannen.³⁸ Wie in einer Vignette zeigt dieser Abschnitt die spezifischen Geschlechterverhältnisse in *Love on the Dole*, wobei die komplementäre männliche Perspektive eher implizit bleibt. Gerade die Knaben und jüngeren Männer behaupten eine Illusion von Unabhängigkeit, die sich auf eine für ihre Gruppe nicht untypische Weise recht robust äußern kann: "Girls make him sick" lautet dementsprechend eine Kapitelüberschrift (42), die sich jedoch dann als indirekt-ironischer Erzählerkommentar erweist, wenn Harry von diesen Mädchen nicht nur emotional, sondern auch existentiell abhängig wird.

Ist in der zitierten Textpassage bereits der Einbruch der Frauen in eine traditionell männliche Domäne der Arbeit erfolgt, wenn auch weniger dank gewan-

³⁷ Pat Thane, "Women since 1945," in: *Twentieth-Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, ed. Paul Johnson (London: Longman,³1996) 392-410; 392-93.

³⁸ Cf. John Stevenson and Chris Cook, *Britain in the Depression: Society and Politics 1929-39* (London: Longman, ²1994) 52: "1934 with 4.6 deaths per 1,000 live births in England and Wales."

deltem Rollenverständnis als der Not gehorchend und unter dementsprechend hohen Kosten, so beharren die Männer auf ihren überkommenen Rollenvorstellungen. Es gibt von ihrer Seite aus eine Unterscheidungslinie zwischen dem, was männlich und weiblich ist, deren Überschreitung stets als Identitäts- oder Würdeverlust erlebt wird. Geschlechterrollen und soziale Rollen überschneiden sich hier. Bereits die jüngste der Romanfiguren, der Schulabgänger Harry Hardcastle – vielleicht suggeriert der Nachname das Festhalten an überholten Vorstellungen – sucht sich dementsprechend zu verorten. Eltern wie Freundin möchten ihn in einer Bürotätigkeit sehen, in ihren Augen ein sozialer Aufstieg gegenüber den traditionellen *blue-collar jobs*: “going to an office where gentlemen worked” (45). Entsprechende Vorhaltungen und Vorschläge vonseiten Helens tut Harry obenhin ab, wobei die Betonung des Dialekts seine selbstgewählte *working-class*-Identität unterstreicht: “Ah know.... Tart’s job. But not for me,’ staring up into the sky and adding, fervently: ‘I want proper man’s work,’ [...]” (45).³⁹ Diese herabwürdigende Ausdrucksweise zur Zuordnung von Büroarbeit ist nicht so extrem, wie sie zunächst klingen mag. Eine “Author’s Note” von 1941 stellt klar: “In the North of England [...] ‘tart’ is a general term for all femininity.”

Zweiteilung wie Prioritätensetzung der Arbeitswelt sind nicht aufrechtzuerhalten: Es gehört zum Zeitklima, daß in dieser Region für kaum jemanden auskömmliche Arbeit zu finden sein wird, bevor die Rüstungsanstrengungen des sich ankündigenden Zweiten Weltkriegs noch einmal nachhaltigen Bedarf bei den alten Industrien von Kohle und Stahl anmelden. Diese Zukunft liegt jedoch außerhalb der Perspektive des Romans. Andererseits hat die jüngste Geschichte Spuren hinterlassen, wenn Larry Meath Harry unter Hinweis auf den Weltkrieg 1914-18 belehrt, daß seinem Verständnis einer geschlechtlich segregierten und hierarchisierten Arbeitswelt keineswegs der Status eines Naturgesetzes zukomme: “The women who took the places of the engineers who’d all served their time. The women picked up straightaway what Marlowe’s and the others say it takes seven years’ apprenticeship to learn” (47). Der Einsatz angelernter Kräfte erklärt vielleicht das Dilemma von Harrys Arbeitslosigkeit nach sieben Lehrjahren, überbewertet jedoch den Stellenwert weiblicher Industriearbeit während des Krieges.⁴⁰

Bereits in der vorangehenden Generation hat sich durch den Katalysator der Armut die Aufweichung der Geschlechterrollen bemerkbar gemacht und zu einem Verlust männlicher Selbstachtung im Familiengefüge geführt. Die Situation von Vater Hardcastle erscheint in einem emotionalen Zwischenfazit zusammengefaßt: “Here he was, a man, married to a woman, father to a couple of grown children, working hard and had always worked hard, yet couldn’t afford to dress his children respectably. Blimey, didn’t either of them ever think how he must feel

³⁹ Cf. Orwell, *Wigan Pier*, 227: “[The working-class boy] wants to be doing real work, not wasting his time on ridiculous rubbish like history and geography.”

⁴⁰ Jon Lawrence, “The First World War and its Aftermath,” in: *Twentieth-Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, 151-68; 159: “[Women] were not acquiring skills that would allow them to compete equally with male craftsmen after the war.”

about it?” (93). Obwohl das Stigma des Verlierers bereits auf ihm lastet, steht dem alten Hardcastle die schwerste Erniedrigung bevor, wenn er selbst arbeitslos wird: “Living on a woman, his daughter, whom he had just dismissed for living on a man!” (248).

Während er diese Abhängigkeit als besonders demütigend empfindet, indem sie die Männer- wie Vaterrolle unterminiert, erscheint der jüngeren Generation das Angewiesensein auf die Arbeitskraft von Frauen zunehmend als Normalzustand und avanciert geradezu zum Motiv der Eheschließung, eine Inversion der herkömmlichen Versorgungsehe. Das auf den Kopf gestellte Wirtschaftsbündnis wird akzeptiert: “Why don’t t’ get wed. They’re all doin’ it. Tarts go out t’ work, nowadays, while th’ owld man stops at home...” (230). Wie weit diese Praxis in der Zwischenzeit verbreitet ist, wird sichtbar im Mißbrauch vorgetäuschter weiblicher Arbeitslosigkeit und erlangt damit strafrechtliche Relevanz. Das örtliche Arbeitsamt präsentiert eine “warning to the unemployed, telling how a local man who had drawn benefit for his employed wife whom he had represented not to be working, had been sentenced to ‘THREE MONTHS’ HARD LABOUR” (156). Verkehrte Welt: Wo viele freiwillig gearbeitet hätten, ahndet der Staat in seiner Hilflosigkeit die Vergehen der Arbeitslosigkeit ausgerechnet mit Zwangsarbeit. In dieser Haltung finden sich Nachklänge der viktorianischen Einschätzung von Arbeitslosigkeit als moralischem Dilemma des einzelnen, wogegen sich erst allmählich die Erkenntnis durchsetzt, daß es zumeist um ein übergreifendes ökonomisches Problem geht. Diese Fehleinschätzung ist einer der Gründe für die unzulängliche Arbeitsmarktpolitik der Zwischenkriegszeit, die auf Selbstregulationsmechanismen der Wirtschaft hoffte. Jenseits seiner Drohgebärde weist der Staat alle Verantwortung von sich und empfiehlt Arbeitswilligen die Emigration in die Dominions.

4. Geschlechterrollen im Generationenkonflikt: Aufbegehren und Kontinuität

Wenn Sally Hardcastle durch ihre Berufstätigkeit und als Geliebte Sam Grundys die Familie vor dem Ruin rettet, dann verkörpert sie eine neue Generation von Frauen im Gegensatz zu ihrer nicht berufstätigen Mutter, die niemals diesen Handlungsspielraum erreichen konnte. Sally wird nicht Mrs. Grundy, ein Name, der im Englischen die sprichwörtliche Verkörperung von Spießbürgerlichkeit bezeichnet. Dem möglicherweise implizierten Fortschrittsgedanken und Vorbildcharakter wird jedoch von Anbeginn entschieden ein Riegel vorgeschoben: “Oh, she couldn’t take all the world’s troubles on her shoulders” (169). Jenseits moralischer Bedenken werden Sallys Möglichkeiten auf ihre Jugend beschränkt sein, daran läßt der Erzähler bei der Beschreibung ihres Äußeren keinen Zweifel und weiß sich in dramatischer Ironie mit dem Leser einig: “A face and form such as any society dame would have given three-quarters of her fortune to possess. Sally wore it carelessly as though youth’s brief hour were eternal; as though

there was no such thing as old age" (15). Ihre Arglosigkeit gegenüber der Bedrohung durch die Zeit wird in ihrer Ablehnung der alten Frauen unterstrichen und gewissermaßen ins tragische Unwissen der *condition humaine* gehoben: "It did not occur to her that they had been as she now was, young, once upon a time" (143). Das ist ein kryptischer Hinweis auf das geläufige *Memento mori* von Grabsteinen. Gegen Ende aber wird Sally mit ihrer Verantwortung der unabwendbare Verlust der Jugendfrische und der freudlose Niedergang des Alterns in quälenden Polysyndeta und – durch das Präteritum – bereits wie eine vollendete Tatsache bewußt: "Parents dependent on her; scratching and scraping until the distraught brain shrank and retarded and the mouth sagged and the eyes lost their lustre" (242). Sallys gegenwärtige Erfolge aber resultieren nicht aus jugendlichem Leichtsinn, sondern aus einem melodramatischen Fatalismus nach dem Scheitern ihrer persönlichen Glückserwartungen: "The worst was over; life could hurt her no more" (242).

Bildet Sally einerseits durch Rollentausch und Generationswechsel den Mittelpunkt der Familie Hardcastle, so steht sie andererseits zentral zwischen drei Männern, die sich aus verschiedenen Motiven und mit unterschiedlichem Erfolg um ihre Gunst bewerben: Ned Narkey verachtet sie, Larry Meath liebt und verliert sie, Sam Grundy gibt sie aus finanziellen Erwägungen nach: "But Ah knows what money means, now. An' he's got it an' by God Ah'll mek him pay" (245). Auch diese drei Männer verkörpern Varianten des übergeordneten Themas von "living on a woman." Narkey, Bühnenbösewicht und dumpf-animalische Existenz, nutzt Frauen aus – "Ah'd have a harem b' now" (150) –, ohne aber im pekuniären Sinne abhängig zu sein. Stellt er somit eine unappetitliche Spielart des Befürworters herkömmlicher Machtverteilung zwischen den Geschlechtern dar, so besteht das Innovative seines Verhaltens darin, daß er die von ihm geschwangerte Kate Molloy auf Sallys Druck hin nur heiratet, um sich ihrer Arbeitskraft zu versichern: "But, if he married Kate he could send her to work after her confinement!" (168). Auch in seinem neuen Wirkungskreis als Polizist gibt Narkey während einer Protestdemonstration seiner rücksichtslos-frauenverachtenden Haltung schlagkräftig Ausdruck (205). Sam Grundy nutzt die eigene finanzielle Potenz und die Not der anderen zur Befriedigung seiner sexuellen Interessen. Da er der einzige wohlhabende Charakter des Romans ist, trifft für ihn der Sachverhalt des "living on a woman" nicht unmittelbar zu. Eine der älteren weiblichen Randfiguren stellt ihm sogar ein recht günstiges Zeugnis aus: "He ain't a bad feller at heart, y' know" (216).

Das Thema des "living on a woman" beweist Geltung über den Geschlechterdualismus hinaus, indem Sally auch für ihre Geschlechtsgenossinnen eine Identifikationsfigur darstellt. Die kurze Phase ihrer Liebe dient der Mutter, eigenen Glücks entwöhnt, als "vicarious enjoyment" und trägt mit deren verstoßener Teilhabe zum Problematischen der Generationenbeziehungen bei: "It wasn't that she wished to interfere: she only wanted to steal a little of Sally's pleasure second-hand. Would Sally understand?" (95) Sallys Komplementärfigur aber ist weniger die Mutter als Kate Molloy, deren Unterwürfigkeit selbst um den Preis persönli-

cher Würde ihren entschiedenen Widerspruch findet: “Hangin’ round after a feller. Y’d catch me doin’ it... Not for best man alive” (144). Doch dieser Protest wird sich als geradezu Shakespearesches Beispiel des *equivocating* erweisen, und es gehört zu den ironischen Zügen des Romans, daß sie eine vergleichbare Loyalität gegenüber dem sterbenden und toten Freund an den Tag legen wird. Als weiteres warnendes Beispiel steht ihr Helen vor Augen, deren vorzeitiges Mutterglück trotz aller Einschränkungen Neid in ihr wecken wird.

Obwohl Sally den Mikrokosmos ihrer Familie stabilisiert, ist sie die einzige, die rebelliert, nicht nur gegen die herrschende Sexualmoral, sondern gegen die traditionelle Frauenrolle schlechthin. Die Rollenzuweisung der Geschlechter beweist sich somit noch in den Bereichen des Aufbegehrens: Larry revoltiert im öffentlich-politischen Raum, Sally im persönlichen der menschlichen Beziehungen. Ihre Klimax erfährt diese Auflehnung in der grundsätzlichen Absage an die Wertvorstellungen des Vaters: “You’d have me like all rest o’ the women, workin’ ‘emselves t’ death an’ gettin’ nowt for it. Luk at me ma” (246). Impliziert ist hier das gemeinsame Wissen um die gegenüber den Männern größeren gesundheitlichen Belastungen der Frauen.⁴¹ Unmißverständlich aber wird auf das Versagen in der Rolle des Versorgers hingewiesen, sieht sich Hardcastle grundsätzlich in Frage gestellt, verfällt als Ersatzhandlung auf physische Züchtigung und verweist Sally, einer griechischen Tragödie nicht unähnlich, unter den Klagen eines weiblichen Chores des Hauses. Damit wird das Eingeständnis des Scheiterns seines Lebensentwurfs für alle offenbar, dem bereits vorher verstoßenen Sohn ist er “Him wot’s livin’ on our Sal” (222). Ihm selbst sind die eigene Abhängigkeit und der daraus resultierende Autoritätsverlust bewußt: “She was independent. Nay, financially, he and his wife were her dependents” (250).

Das Motiv des “living on a woman” wird in *Love on the Dole* keiner Lösung zugeführt und erfährt keine innere Entwicklung. Soweit dieser Zustand wie im Falle der beiden Hardcastles ein Ende findet, geschieht es durch einen erzählerischen Kunstgriff. Die Formulierung selbst bezieht ihren Sinn aus einer Inversion der üblichen Geschlechterverhältnisse; eine komplementäre Bildung “living on a man” würde kaum Sinn ergeben, da es den postulierten Normalfall bezeichnet. Die männlichen Figuren leiden unter der wirtschaftlichen Abhängigkeit von einer Frau als unter einem unnatürlichen oder unwürdigen Zustand, wofern es sich nicht um eher zwielichtige Personen handelt, die darin eine günstige Gelegenheit erblicken, einen persönlichen Vorteil wahrzunehmen. Da die Haltung der Frauen demgegenüber nicht ausführlich erfaßt ist, wird nahegelegt, daß es sich insgesamt um ein Problem des männlichen Selbstverständnisses handelt.

Mit der Geburt von Helens und Harrys Kind wird das zentrale Thema von Existenznot und Geschlechterrollen in die nächste Generation fortgeschrieben und wiederum auf die Schultern der Frauen gebürdet: “It’s a gel” (241). Auch dieses neue Leben verhartet im Typenhaften; keinen Namen wird der Leser mit

⁴¹ Mason, 6: “Women’s health suffered more than men’s. Women ate less and in general had less money to spend on themselves. Married women suffered all the physical stresses and strains of child-bearing and rearing and having to make ends meet [...]”

dem kleinen Mädchen verbinden, wohl aber die Warnung der erfahrenen Frauen, es klüglich mit diesem Kind genug sein zu lassen, um die Not nicht größer zu machen, als sie schon ist: “An’ if y’ tek my advice, lass, y’ ll mek this one y’ last” (254). Ohnehin haben Bestrebungen der Geburtenkontrolle nach den Büchern und Initiativen etwa von Marie Stopes in der Zwischenkriegszeit große Bedeutung gewonnen. Familienbegrenzung ist im wohlhabenderen Teil Großbritanniens aber auch durch die Setzung konsum-orientierter Prioritäten begünstigt worden: Abseits von Hanky Park geht es zunehmend um die Entscheidung zwischen “a baby or a Baby Austin.”⁴²

5. Restauration und *permissive society*: Geschlechterbeziehungen in der Nachkriegszeit

Mit zwei Jahrzehnten bleibt die Zwischenkriegszeit Episode, in vieler Hinsicht nur eine Unterbrechung des historischen Alltagsverlaufs, wie markante Bezeichnungen wie *Age of Illusion* oder *Long Week-end* verraten.⁴³ Aufgrund der Erfahrungen zweier Weltkriege wie der Zwischenkriegszeit wandelt sich das Verhältnis der Geschlechter zueinander, doch ist es dynamisch und nicht im Sinne von linearen Begriffen wie Entwicklung oder Fortschritt zu verstehen. In den Weltkriegen wurden dem weiblichen Bevölkerungsanteil zusätzliche Aufgaben auferlegt, die neue Fertigkeiten und indirekt mehr Unabhängigkeit und ein größeres Selbstbewußtsein mit sich brachten. Anschließend versuchte die offizielle Politik jeweils, zum *status quo ante* und zu dem zurückzuleiten, was sie als wünschenswert an den Verhältnissen von Ehe und Familie ansah. Der Vater des *welfare state* fand sich selbst nach der Zwischenkriegszeit mit ihren Erfahrungen der Infragestellung von Geschlechterrollen nicht allein mit seiner Bewertung des *marital status*: “The great majority of married women,’ declared Beveridge, ‘must be regarded as occupied on work which is vital but unpaid, without which their husbands could not do their paid work and without which the nation could not continue.’”⁴⁴ Zwar hatte das Wahlrecht für Frauen 1918 und 1928 keine revolutionären Veränderungen mit sich gebracht, aber zur viktorianischen Familienmoral ließ sich trotz aller Sehnsucht nach häuslicher Geborgenheit nach den großen Erschütterungen von zwei Weltkriegen und einer unruhigen Zwischenkriegszeit auch nicht zurückkehren. Eine Regierungskommission sprach 1945 von der ‘*companionate*’ marriage, doch dem Ehemann blieb weiterhin die Rolle des “principle wage earner” zugeordnet: “Research in the 1950s suggested that the companionate marriage was an ideal rather than reality for most women.”⁴⁵ Erst nach und nach und im Kontext anderer gesellschaftlicher Veränderungen wie dem

⁴² May, 363.

⁴³ Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The Long Week-end: A Social History of Great Britain 1918-1939* [1940] (London: Hutchinson, repr. 1985).

⁴⁴ Pugh, 266.

⁴⁵ Mark Donnelly, *Britain in the Second World War* (London: Routledge, 1999) 44.

Rückzug aus dem Empire und dem Entstehen eines multikulturellen und sich allmählich Europa zuwendenden Großbritannien wurde auch das Verhältnis der Geschlechter neu definiert. Mit der Heraufkunft von *affluent society* und *permissive society*, den 60er Jahren mit ihren gewandelten Vorstellungen, neuen Möglichkeiten der Empfängnisverhütung und einem reformierten Scheidungsrecht auf der Grundlage des Zerrüttungsprinzips haben sich die Geschlechtsrollen erkennbar verändert. Heutzutage würden Helen und Harry nicht mehr wegen einer Schwangerschaft heiraten: 1998 wurden 38 Prozent aller Kinder in Großbritannien außerehelich geboren,⁴⁶ und insgesamt ist die Bereitschaft zur Eheschließung weniger regulierten Formen des Zusammenlebens gewichen.⁴⁷ Doch obwohl seit Mitte der 70er Jahre analog zum *Race Discrimination Act* ein *Sex Discrimination Act* und ein *Equal Pay Act* in Kraft sind, ist der durchschnittliche Verdienst von Frauen erst auf etwa vier Fünftel des Wertes für Männer angestiegen.⁴⁸ Der bedeutendste Wandel aber liegt im Anstieg der Berufstätigkeit unter verheirateten Frauen: Während über viele Jahrzehnte nur jede zehnte verheiratete Frau einer Berufstätigkeit nachging, war es zu Anfang der 50er Jahre etwa jede fünfte und zu Beginn der 80er Jahre bereits fast jede zweite.⁴⁹ Dagegen gehen die Zahlen berufstätiger Männer langsam zurück. Vielleicht ist diese Verschiebung am Ende ein Hinweis darauf, daß unter äußeren Zwängen die *companionate marriage* im Zunehmen und die männlichen Vorbehalte gegenüber der Vorstellung des "living on a woman" im Rückzug begriffen sind, gemäß einem Vorschlag Sallys aus *Love on the Dole*: "There's nowt t' stop us. You'd get your dole, and I'm working" (192).

⁴⁶ Britain 2000. *The Official Yearbook of the United Kingdom*, prepared by the Office for National Statistics (London 1999) 109.

⁴⁷ Zur sinkenden Heiratshäufigkeit vgl. *Geschichte der Familie*, eds. André Burgière et al. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996/97) 4 Bde., 4, 245.

⁴⁸ Britain 2000, 119. Gegenüber zwei Dritteln in den 30er Jahren: Stevenson, Cook, 47.

⁴⁹ Pugh, 267.

MARIANNE FLASSBECK

Infiltration statt Konfrontation: Weibliche Komik in Sylvia Townsend Warners *Lolly Willowes*

Abstract: With reference to the theoretical controversy about gender-specific humour this essay intends to explore the various expressions of female humour in Sylvia Townsend Warners novel *Lolly Willowes*. On the understanding that the established studies of humour have traditionally been studies of male humour (without being defined as such) and so have either disregarded or belittled female humour, this essay illustrates how the subversive tendencies of female comedy have worked out comical effects different from those of male writings, and consequently require different standards of criticism. In *Lolly Willowes*, a novel which continuously oscillates between realism and the imaginary, the obscure laughter accordingly manifests itself as 'giggling' and therefore (in the terms of Plessner) marks an indefinable 'space between.' The reader's comic sensations, stimulated by this muted laughter, originate less from the traditional effects of comedy such as burlesque comparisons, or the comical effects of the unexpected, but much rather from a thrilling and tickling awareness of insecurity.

Why 'male' and 'female' comedy? Why make it gender-specific? Why not see comedy as the last frontier of the universal, humor as that glorious patch of hallowed ground where we all meet and laugh with equal joy? A charming thought, but dangerous in its attempt to seduce the reader into a belief that we all laugh at the same things, even when we happen to laugh at the same time; that we all see the same things when we happen to stand next to one another. Comedy, out of all the textual territories explored, is the least universal. It is rigidly mapped and marked by subjectivity.¹

Gender-orientierte Erzählforscherinnen machen seit den 1980er Jahren eine der letzten Bastionen des traditionell als 'allgemeinmenschlich' bzw. geschlechterunspezifisch geltenden ästhetischen Ausdrucks unsicher – nämlich diejenige des literarischen Lachens.² Unter dieser Prämisse soll mit *Lolly Willowes* (1926), einem in Grenzbereichen zwischen Alltagsrealität und übersinnlicher Magie ange-

¹ Regina Barreca, "Untamed and Unabashed: Towards a Theory of Women and Humor in British Literature," in: *Untamed and Unabashed: Essays on Women and Humor in British Literature* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1994) 12.

² In Bezug auf die englischsprachige Literatur leisteten etwa Regina Barreca, Judy Little, June Sochen, Nancy Walker oder auch Stefanie Köhler maßgebliche Forschungsarbeiten.

siedelten Roman von Sylvia Townsend Warner, das Terrain eines weiblichen ‘house of mirth’ erkundet werden. Es handelt sich dabei um eine Autorin, die in den Zwischenkriegsjahren in englischen Literaturkreisen einige Beachtung erfahren hatte, jedoch dann erst in den 1980er und 1990er Jahren wieder in vereinzelt Fällen für die literaturwissenschaftliche Forschung interessant wurde.³ Um die Behauptung eines *gender*-spezifischen Lachens im vorliegenden Text zu belegen, ist es zunächst erforderlich, die Ansätze jener alternativen Humortheorie vor dem Hintergrund der konventionellen Humorthorien kurz zu umreißen.

1. Witzbold, Clown und ‘Bruder Lustig’: Männlich perspektivierte Erklärungsversuche des Lachens in den klassischen Humorthorien

Aus der Sicht der Gender-Forschung stellen Humorthoretikerinnen immer wieder fest, dass in der Frage eines geschlechterdiffernten literarischen Lachens, so kontrovers sie auch diskutiert werden mag, zumindest eines unbestreitbar ist: Humoristische Aspekte der weiblichen Literaturproduktion sind de facto bisher höchst selten zum Gegenstand literaturwissenschaftlichen Interesses geworden. So führt etwa Helga Kotthoff mit einiger Ironie an, dass in einem dreibändigen “Hausbuch zur literarischen Hochkomik” von Ernst Eilert aus dem Jahre 1987 bei einer Summe von 366 aufgeführten Texten nicht mehr und nicht weniger als vier Texte erwähnt werden. Während diese Anthologie keine Mühen scheue, Autoren wie Adalbert Stifter oder Botho Strauß auf ihre Komik hin zu untersuchen, gäbe es andererseits offensichtlich nichts Komisches bei Virginia Woolf und vielen anderen Autorinnen “nah und fern” zu entdecken.⁴ Auch durch die Beiträge eines literaturwissenschaftlichen Symposions aus dem Jahre 1995, welches es sich zum Forschungsziel machte, der bisherigen Vernachlässigung der historischen und kulturspezifischen Dimension des Lachens entgegen zu wirken, um damit – so in der von Lothar Fietz formulierten Einleitung – der “historischen Vielfalt des dargestellten und intendierten Lachens Rechnung zu tragen,” wird das besagte Defizit nicht verringert. Denn ungeachtet dieser Zielsetzung werden in den nachfolgenden, insgesamt vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart reichenden Beiträ-

³ Der Roman *Lolly Willowses* fand unmittelbar nach seinem Erscheinen ein positives Echo beim Lesepublikum. Später wurde Sylvia Townsend Warner für ihr literarisches Schaffen mit der Mitgliedschaft bei der englischen ‘Royal Society of Literature’ geehrt. Seit den achtziger Jahren ist wieder in vereinzelt wissenschaftlichen Beiträgen von der Autorin die Rede, so u.a. in den Arbeiten von Annis Pratt, Jane Marcus, Elizabeth Maslen oder Marion Gymnich, auf die unter anderem noch Bezug genommen werden soll.

⁴ Vgl. Helga Kotthoff, “Von gackernden Hühnern und röhrenden Hirschen: Zur Geschlechterspezifik von Humor, Witz, Gelächter,” in: Thomas Vogel (ed.), *Vom Lachen: Einem Phänomen auf der Spur* (Tübingen: Attempto-Verlag, 1992) 193. Eine ähnlich traurige Bilanz in Bezug auf weibliches humoristisches Schreiben ist etwa auch zu verzeichnen in der von Manfred Pfister herausgegebenen Anthologie: *A History of English Laughter: Laughter from Beowulf to Beckett and Beyond* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002).

gen ausschließlich männlich verfasste Texte zur Interpretation herangezogen.⁵ Eine Ausnahme in dieser mageren Bilanz stellen vielleicht noch ein paar vereinzelte Romane solcher Autorinnen wie Jane Austen oder Elizabeth Gaskell dar. Wenn aber Literaturkritiker nicht umhin konnten, die literarische Ausdrucksweise dieser der Kanonliteratur zugerechneten Autorinnen als eine humorvolle wahrzunehmen, so wurde selbst deren Lachen mitunter als "feminine small potatoes" heruntergespielt.⁶ Eine ähnliche Bagatellisierung weiblichen humoristischen Schreibens wurde von mir etwa auch in meiner Monographie über die englische Autorin Elizabeth von Arnim beanstandet.⁷

Auch für maßgebliche Humortheoriker wie Helmuth Plessner, Martin Grotjahn oder Arthur Koestler gibt es kein oder nur ein geringes Bewusstsein über weibliche Komik und deren Diversität. Wenn Grotjahn in einem kurzen Exkurs über die sogenannte 'moderne Komikerin' mutmaßt, sie spreche uns vor allem aufgrund ihrer männlichen Verkleidung an, welche ihr eine Infragestellung der streng vor dem Verlachen geschützten Mutterbeziehung ermögliche,⁸ so legt diese Deutung eine geistige Verwandtschaft mit Freuds männlich perspektivierten Denkmustern nahe. Dies zeigt sich etwa darin, dass Grotjahn vom Unvermögen der jungen, sexuell unerfahrenen Frau auf dem Gebiet der Komik spricht, weil sie zu sehr unter dem Eindruck ihrer sexuellen Unterlegenheit gegenüber dem männlichen Geschlecht leide. Dieser dem Humor abträgliche Minderwertigkeitskomplex der jungen Frau könne sich erst durch die Mutterschaft zu einer Art humorvoll-realistischer Überlegenheit gegenüber dem Mann entwickeln. Angesichts solcher Prämissen ist es nicht verwunderlich, dass andere denkbare und ebenso reizvolle Maskierungen der Spaßmacherin, eventuell auch abzielend auf eine Infragestellung der Vaterbeziehung, in Grotjahns Abhandlung ignoriert bleiben.

In Plessners anthropologischer Untersuchung über das Lachen und Weinen wird bei aller Vielfalt der Beschreibungen des Lachens die Frage nach einer Geschlechterdifferenz erst gar nicht aufgegriffen. Allerdings werden bei meiner Analyse von Lolly Willowses Plessners Ausführungen über den Kitzel und dessen Ausdrucksgebärde des Kicherns als eines zwiespältigen Lachens die These einer geschlechterdifferenten Komik unterstützen.⁹ Auch Arthur Koestler glaubt in *Der göttliche Funke*, einer philosophischen Ergründung des schöpferischen Akts, Lachen von einem allgemeinmenschlichen Blickwinkel zu betrachten, redet dabei aber ausschließlich von 'dem Spaßmacher,' 'dem Sonderling' und 'dem Clown,'

⁵ Vgl. Lothar Fietz, Joerg Fichte und Hans-Werner Ludwig (eds.), *Semiotik, Rhetorik und Soziologie des Lachens: Vergleichende Studien zum Funktionswandel des Lachens vom Mittelalter zur Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996).

⁶ Diese Einschätzung stammt von J.B. Priestley und ist zitiert in: Regina Barreca, *Last Laughs: Perspectives on Women and Comedy* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1988) 4.

⁷ Vgl. Marianne Flassbeck, *Gauklerin der Literatur: Elizabeth von Arnim und der weibliche Humor* (Rüsselsheim: Christel Göttert Verlag, 2003).

⁸ Vgl. Manfred Grotjahn, *Vom Sinn des Lachens: Psychoanalytische Betrachtungen über den Witz, den Humor und das Komische* (München: Kindler, 1974) 50-54 und 82-89.

⁹ Vgl. Helmuth Plessner, *Lachen und Weinen: Eine Untersuchung nach den Grenzen menschlichen Verhaltens* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1961) 97-100.

womit im gleichen Atemzug auch schöpferische Kreativität männlich veranschlagt wird.¹⁰

Eine *gender*-perspektivierte Literaturwissenschaft liefert plausible Gründe für diese Ausgrenzung weiblichen Lachens aus Kultur und Literatur. So bietet etwa Stefanie Köhlers Beitrag *Differentes Lachen* einen ideengeschichtlichen Hintergrund über die im abendländischen Denken verankerte Aufspaltung von Körper und Geist und die damit einhergehende Marginalisierung weiblichen Lachens.¹¹ Hemmungsloses Lachen – jenen binär strukturierten abendländischen Denktraditionen zufolge als ein ‘Ausbruch des Körpers’ gewertet und damit in die Nähe zum Schmutzigen und Hässlichen gerückt – wurde aufgrund solcher kultureller Kodierungen den schreibenden Frauen verwehrt oder war ihnen nur in damenhaft verschleiertem Habitus möglich. Umso mehr als Lachen auch als getarnte Feindseligkeit gegen die Institutionen der Macht interpretiert wurde, unterlag weibliches Lachen in einer patriarchalischen Geschlechterordnung noch stärkeren Sanktionierungen als männliches Lachen. Daraus lässt sich ableiten, dass das subversive Potential weiblicher humoristischer Texte anders in Erscheinung treten muss und anders zu bewerten ist als dasjenige männlich verfasster Texte.

Auch klassische, von einem geschlechtsneutralen Lachen ausgehende Erklärungsansätze über die Entstehung von Witz und Komik wie diejenigen von Immanuel Kant oder Jean Paul sind einem binären, auf dem Ausschlussprinzip basierenden Denken verpflichtet, wenn sie etwa in der Wahrnehmung von Plötzlichkeit (im Sinne von Konfrontation) oder von Kontrast (im Sinne des Vergleichs) den Ursprung aller Komik sehen.¹² Dieser Humortradition folgend herrscht auch in Freuds Studie *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten* eine neutrale, implizit jedoch männliche Sichtweise vor: Der Witz weist infolge seiner Herkunft aus dem Unbewussten nach Freuds Ansicht eine Lustpotenz auf und ist also libidinöser Natur. Hierin aber liegt für Freud offensichtlich die Unmöglichkeit eines subjekthaften weiblichen Lachens, denn das dem weiblichen Witz “im Wege stehende Hindernis ist eigentlich nichts anderes als die der höheren Gesellschaft entsprechend gesteigerte Unfähigkeit des Weibes, das unverhüllte Sexuelle

¹⁰ Vgl. Arthur Koestler, *Der Göttliche Funke: Der schöpferische Akt in Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Bern: Scherz Verlag, 1966).

¹¹ Vgl. Stefanie Köhler, *Differentes Lachen: Funktion, Präsentation und Genderspezifität des Lachens im zeitgenössischen englischen Roman* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1997) 213-63. Köhler beschreibt hier die aus dieser Dichotomie ableitbaren ideellen Konsequenzen für das weibliche Lachen. Aus der sogenannten *double bind* – einer weiblichen Zwischenposition in der herrschenden Ordnung – folgert Köhler, dass weibliches Lachen zwangsläufig häufiger ertönen müsse, woraus sich auch die Zuordnung eines unkontrollierten, ‘hysterischen’ Lachens ableiten lasse.

¹² Vgl. Wilhelm Weischedel (ed.), *Immanuel Kant: Kritik der Urteilskraft*. Werkausgabe Bd. X. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977) 273. Jean Paul hinterfragt allerdings die Kantische Definition des Lächerlichen als eine sich in Nichts auflösende Erwartung. In seiner Sicht entsteht das Lächerliche (als das “unendlich Kleine”) vielmehr durch den Kontrast zum Erhabenen – womit es sich auch als dessen “Erbeind” erweise. Vgl. Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, ed. Norbert Miller (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1990) 102-05.

zu ertragen.“¹³ Die männliche Veranschlagung des Lustempfindens in Freuds psychologischem Ansatz macht plausibel, weshalb auch bei ihm keine Frauen – zumindest nicht Vertreterinnen höherer Gesellschaftsschichten und damit auch keine schreibenden Frauen – als nennenswerte Urheberinnen von Witz, Komik oder Humor zu Wort kommen.

Freud bezieht sich bei seinem Erkunden der Wirkungsweisen des Komischen denn auch auf klassische Humortheoriker wie Kant oder Jean Paul und übersetzt deren Thesen bezüglich der ästhetischen Wirkung von Plötzlichkeit und Kontrast in seine psychoanalytische Sprache. So werden bei ihm Plötzlichkeit und Kontrast als “Durchkreuzung eines seelischen Erwartungsaufwands” beschrieben¹⁴ – als eine spannungsvolle Erwartung, die sich im kontrastiven Vergleich mit der eintretenden Situation als unangemessen erweist.¹⁵ Damit lässt Freuds Analyse diverser Witz- und Komikmechanismen gleichfalls einen binär strukturierten, auf Hierarchien und Kontrasten beruhenden Denkansatz offenbar werden. Bezeichnenderweise sieht er im degradierenden Vergleich, wie er etwa in der Lachhaftigkeit von Nachahmung und Parodie, von Übertreibung, Typisierung, Kontrastierung oder Inversion zum Ausdruck kommt, einen entscheidenden Entstehungsgrund von Witz und Komik.

2. Hexengekicher in *Lolly Willows* als Ausdruck einer weiblichen Lachfrequenz?

Parodierende Vergleichskomik und Komikeffekte des Unerwarteten im oben beschriebenen Sinne klassischer Humortheorien scheinen auf den ersten Blick auch in Sylvia Townsend Warners Roman *Lolly Willows* eine gewisse Rolle zu spielen. Bei genauerer Betrachtung jedoch werden diese Mechanismen hier durch andere, subtilere Darstellungsverfahren unterwandert. Zwar löst auch dieser Text aufgrund von Umschwüngen komische Empfindungen aus, jedoch überrumpeln diese die Lesenden nicht plötzlich und völlig unerwartet – etwa in der Art einer witzig-geistreichen Attacke – sondern resultieren eher aus einer sukzessiven Leserbeeinflussung. Diese Behauptung wird im Folgenden genauer zu überprüfen sein – wobei von Anfang an zu fragen ist, ob in diesem Roman von einer geschlechterdifferenten Leserwahrnehmung ausgegangen werden kann und ob die Komik vielleicht sogar bewusst ein weibliches Lesepublikum ansprechen will. Der obligatorische Terminus des ‘Lesers’ soll aus diesem Grunde ersetzt werden durch den (zumindest nicht männlich veranschlagten, sondern beide Geschlechter umfassenden) Begriff ‘die Lesenden’. Auf dieser Basis wird sich bei genauerer

¹³ Sigmund Freud, *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten. Der Humor* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993) 115.

¹⁴ Vgl. Freud, *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*, 200 und 211.

¹⁵ Im Gegensatz zu Freud relativiert allerdings Plessner den komikauslösenden Effekt einer durchkreuzten Erwartung, indem er die Schockwirkung des Witzes anzweifelt. Vgl. Plessner, *Lachen und Weinen*, 138.

Analyse zeigen, ob das implizite Lachen in *Lolly Willowes* tatsächlich einen an weibliche Leserinnen adressierten ‘Geheimcode’ aufweist. Diese These lässt sich auch abstützen durch Nicola Humbles Forschungsergebnisse in Bezug auf die sogenannte *middlebrow novel* der 1920er bis 1950er Jahre. Humble weist nach, dass die in diesem Zeitraum von Frauen verfassten Romane – mit Ausnahme derjenigen Virginia Woolfs – generell als *middlebrow* (als Unterhaltungsliteratur mit unterschwelligem Bildungsanspruch) verortet und in erster Linie für eine weibliche Leserschaft konzipiert wurden. Humble stellt darüber hinaus fließende Übergänge zwischen den *feminine middlebrow novels* zu einem ‘para-modernistischen’ Schreiben¹⁶ fest, was sich etwa auch in der Erzählweise von *Lolly Willowes* nachvollziehen lässt.

Zunächst wird über mehr als ein Drittel dieses Romans die Leseerwartung einer herkömmlichen, psychologisch realistischen Erzählung aufgebaut, wenn hier der betrübliche Wandel der Protagonistin Laura Willowes von einer jungen Frau mit ausgeprägten Interessen und Neigungen zu einer verzagten, eingeschüchterten alten Jungfer beschrieben wird, die im Hause ihres Bruders nur noch ein stilles und kümmerliches Schattendasein führt. Seit der Zeit, als ihr die Kinderbetreuung sämtlicher Nichten und Neffen anheim fiel, wird Laura von der Familie nur noch Lolly gerufen – und in Analogie zu dieser Namensverstümmelung hat sie auch alle ihre Persönlichkeitsrechte (einschließlich ihres bescheidenen Eigenkapitals) an die Familie ihres Bruders abgetreten. Nur ein oder zwei kaum nennenswerte Verhaltensauffälligkeiten dieser Heldin stören das realistisch dargebotene Bild einer mittelständischen englischen Familie: So leidet Laura in ihrem eingegengten Londoner Leben etwa an einem “recurrent autumnal fever” (*Lolly Willowes*, 77)¹⁷ – einer rätselhaften Sehnsucht nach dem Okkulten, die sie insbesondere an nebeligen Herbsttagen in die dunkelsten Ecken Londons und auf die entlegensten Friedhöfe treibt. Gerade zu diesen letzten von den Errungenschaften des Verstandes und der Kultur unberührten Winkeln menschlicher Erfahrung scheint es also Laura in ihrem sonderbaren, alljährlich wiederkehrenden ‘Herbstfieber’ hinzuziehen. Eine weitere, ebenso etwas verwunderliche Extravaganz Lauras besteht darin, trotz ihrer bescheidenen Mittel immer wieder dem Luxus kostspieliger Treibhausblumen zu verfallen.

Merkwürdig, aber noch keineswegs alarmierend ist es auch, dass Laura eines Tages auf einem ihrer Botengänge geradezu magnetisch vom Anblick eines Blumenladens angezogen wird, welcher insofern etwas aus dem Rahmen fällt, als

¹⁶ Den Terminus des “para-modernism” übernimmt Humble von Gillian Hanscombe und Virginia L. Smyers, die damit auch eine Ausweitung des wissenschaftlichen Interesses auf bislang unbeachtete Autorinnen der Moderne anstreben. Darüber hinaus argumentiert Humble, dass auch männlich verfasste ‘middlebrow novels’ vor allem für ein weibliches Lesepublikum konzipiert wurden. Sie belegt dies etwa durch George Orwells *Bookshop Memories* (1936), in denen er die zeitgenössischen Leserinnen aufgrund ihrer (von ihm unterstellten) unkritischen Lektüreauswahl als vorrangiges Publikum des *middlebrow* deklarierte. Vgl. Nicola Humble, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) 7-56.

¹⁷ Dieses und alle weiteren Romanzitate beziehen sich auf folgende Ausgabe: Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Lolly Willowes* (London: Virago 2000).

dort neben eleganten Schnittblumen auch prosaischere Gärtnerprodukte wie Rüben, Äpfel, Birnen oder sogar Eingemachtes und Kompottgläser in kuriosem Durcheinander angeboten werden. Die Leserirritation erhöht sich, als Laura mit dem hier erworbenen Riesenstrauß leuchtender Chrysanthemen, die angeblich aus dem Hügelland der Chilterns stammen, Hals über Kopf in den nächsten Buchladen stürzt, um dort wie in Trance eine Landkarte nebst geographischer Beschreibung dieser ziemlich rauen, abgelegenen englischen Region zu kaufen. Noch stärker geschürt wird dieser Zustand stauender Ungewissheit, als Laura am gleichen Abend anlässlich einer der obligatorischen Familienzusammenkünfte erklärt, sie plane eine gravierende Veränderung ihres Lebens, die auch eine Übersiedelung erfordere. Dies entfacht zumindest bei jenen Lesenden, die Lauras Ankündigung als ein Signal weiblichen Unabhängigkeitsstrebens interpretieren, eine leise Vorfriede auf den wohl unmittelbar bevorstehenden Aufstand der Angehörigen – vor allem bei den zeitgenössischen Rezipienten dürfte es sich dabei überwiegend um weibliche Lesende gehandelt haben. Lauras fixe Idee, ausgerechnet nach ‘Great Mop’ zu ziehen (einem Dorf in jenem unfreundlichen Landstrich der Chilterns), ist erneut mit einem zwischen Neugierde und Skepsis schwankenden Gefühl aufzufassen. Dennoch wäre es nach den bisherigen erzählerischen Warnsignalen nicht zureichend, die durch Lauras Auftritt hervorgerufenen Empfindungen als pure Überraschungskomik zu beschreiben.

Mit jenem geradezu halluzinatorisch anmutenden Entschluss Lauras wird sachte ein neuer Weg des Erzählens beschritten, der das Romangeschehen immer mehr zwischen einer realen und einer irrealen Erzählebene oszillieren lässt. Bevor jedoch Laura ihre Familienfesseln vollends abstreifen und damit am Ende vielleicht ganz in jene andere, imaginäre Ebene eintreten kann, müssen erst noch einige unlegbar reale Hindernisse aus dem Weg geräumt werden.¹⁸ Analog zur Gestaltung der Handlung, die sich zunächst kaum wahrnehmbar einer Schwelle zwischen Real-Erfahrbarem und Imaginärem annähert, stellt auch die Komik eine Art Gratwanderung dar. Dies soll anhand einer Szene illustriert werden, deren Komikmechanismen im Sinne Freuds etwa mit den Wirkungsweisen infantilistischer Komik erklärt werden könnten, hier aber auf verwirrende Weise Freuds hierarchisch strukturierte Denkschemata unterlaufen.

So zeigt sich Laura am Morgen nach ihrer erstaunlichen Enthüllung völlig ahnungslos gegenüber der Tatsache, dass ihr Wunsch, sich aus den Familienbanden zu befreien, für das Werteempfinden ihrer Anverwandten zum einen moralisch bedenklich ist und auch in anderer Hinsicht höchst ungelegen kommt. Lauras Ahnungslosigkeit wäre im Sinne Freuds insofern lachhaft, als sich die Er-

¹⁸ Elizabeth Maslen argumentiert, dass Townsend Warner, die auch in anderen Romanen mit dem realistischen Erzählmodus experimentierte, sich in *Lolly Willows* bewusst vom feministischen Realismus der Jahrhundertwende entfernt. Durch das Überblenden von Alltagswirklichkeit und Imagination – hier repräsentiert durch die Macht des Übersinnlichen – kann sie auf innovative Weise eine alternative feministische Wirklichkeitserfahrung transparent werden lassen. Vgl. Elizabeth Maslen, “Sizing up: women, politics and parties”; in: Sarah Sceats, Gail Cunningham (ed.), *Image and Power: Women in Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (London: Longman, 1996) 195-204.

wachsene wie ein unwissendes Kind gebärdet, welches nicht die leiseste Ahnung von den herrschenden Anstandsregeln hat. Diese Regeln gebieten einer unverheirateten Frau ihrer Zeit, unter der Obhut der Familie zu verbleiben. Ebenso kindlich-ahnungslos scheint sie über die finanziellen Aspekte ihres geforderten Auszugs zu sein. Lauras Bruder Henry muss unter dem Druck der naiven, aber zugleich insistierenden Fragen seiner Schwester schließlich damit herausrücken, dass er ihr persönliches Kapital in riskante Aktienkäufe investiert und weitgehend verloren hat. Seine Beschwichtigungen werden von Laura jedoch nicht mit Verständnis, sondern im Gegenteil mit immer aufsässigerem, ja geradezu kindlichen Trotz quittiert. Damit zwingt ihr naiv erscheinendes Verhalten den Bruder, sich selbst und damit auch die Fadenscheinigkeit seines Anspruchs als treusorgender 'Paterfamilias' zu entlarven – ein komikerzeugender Effekt, den man im herkömmlichen Erklärungsschema als Entlarvungskomik bezeichnen müsste. Dieses Kind/Erwachsener-Schema wird aber hier durchkreuzt durch die Tatsache, dass jene ahnungslos-naive 'Lolly' ohne weiteres dazu imstande ist, scharf zu rechnen und noch schärfer von ihrem Bruder das verbliebene Geld einzufordern – also frappierend 'erwachsen' denkt, wenn die Umstände sie dazu zwingen.

Nur in ebensolch trügerischer Weise mag der Effekt eines "ersparten Mit-leids" in der Komik dieses Dialogs vordergründig mit im Spiel sein. Es handelt sich dabei um eine von Freud zu den Wirkungsweisen des Komischen gerechnete psychische Reaktion auf die Situation des Pechvogels, der nicht Bedauern, sondern erleichterndes Lachen beim Betrachter auslöst. In der geschilderten Szene jedoch erscheint dieser Ersparnis-effekt aufgrund der Wehrhaftigkeit der Heldin viel ungesicherter. Erst recht unpassend wäre es, diese Komik mit solchen von Freud beschriebenen Komikeffekten wie etwa dem tapfer-entsagungsvollen Heldenhumor oder gar dem schneidigen Galgenhumor zu vergleichen.¹⁹

Freuds These einer seelischen Aufwandsersparnis, die auf einem hierarchischen Verhältnis von lachendem Subjekt und verlachtem Objekt beruht, kann also die von dieser schillernden Heldin ausgehende Komikwirkung nicht erschöpfend erklären. Lauras provokative Forderung, die den Anschein erweckt, als ob sie sich keinerlei Regeln bewusst wäre – oder höchstens in der sorglosen Art, in der sich Kinder einer Regelübertretung bewusst sind – löst einen ähnlich zwiespältigen Kitzel aus wie etwa ihr Schuldgefühl nach dem Kauf der teuren Chrysanthem. Auch hier lässt sich nicht mit Sicherheit sagen, ob es das verantwortungsvolle Schuldbewusstsein einer Erwachsenen ist, das Laura mit den Blumen heimlich die Treppe in ihr Zimmer hinaufschleichen lässt, oder ob sie auch deshalb den Blumenkauf verheimlicht, um sich in 'kindlich-verantwortungsloser' Weise Ärger zu ersparen. Es bleibt also in der Schwebe, ob es tatsächlich nur die Lesenden sind, die sich der Dreistigkeit von Lauras Forderung und der damit verknüpften gesellschaftlichen Hemmnisse bewusst sind – oder nicht auch sie

¹⁹ Freud veranschaulicht diese komischen Effekte anhand mehrerer männlich verfasster Texte oder konversationeller Witze, die insgesamt auf dem 'großartigen' Humor tapferer oder forsch-fröhlicher Selbstüberwindung beruhen. Vgl. Freud, *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*, 242-43.

selbst. Mit einer Diskrepanz zwischen Lauras Naivität und den wissenden, 'erwachsenen' Lesenden wird also nur gespielt, womit der eigentliche Lustgewinn nicht aus der Diskrepanz, sondern aus einer Scheindiskrepanz entsteht, welche einen gewissen Raum offen lässt für die eigene Deutung der Lesenden. Dieser offensichtlich als reizvoll erlebte Freiraum weist auch eine gewisse Übereinstimmung auf mit Plessners Beschreibung des Spiels als einer dem Lachen verwandten Befindlichkeit. Seiner Meinung nach schreibt das Spiel einen Sinn fest und lässt gleichzeitig Raum für die eigene Gestaltung, fügt sich also keinem eindeutigen Entweder/Oder und verwischt die Grenze zwischen Ernst und Unernst.²⁰ Umgemünzt auf das hier vorliegende weibliche humoristische Schreiben könnte Plessners Beobachtung über die Ambivalenz des Spiels aber auch jene von Köhler erläuterte *double bind* weiblichen Lachens erhellen, welche den Frauen einerseits die Produktion von *Ridicula* untersagt und ihnen andererseits Humorlosigkeit vorwirft.²¹

Naive 'Kindfrauen' in der Art von Lolly/Laura finden sich in weiblichen humoristischen Texten in der Tat so häufig, dass man auch darüber spekulieren könnte, ob es sich hierbei – unter patriarchalischen Gegebenheiten – sogar um ein spezifisch weibliches Ausdrucksmittel von Komik handelt.²² Freuds Argumentation bezüglich der infantilistischen Komik ist für die Analyse solcher 'Kindfrauen' in der weiblichen literarischen Komik immerhin in einem Aspekt interessant: Freud leitet den Lustgewinn daraus ab, dass das Kind komisch wirkt, weil es den Erwachsenen *mimt*. Dieser Lustgewinn, der in den Augen Freuds ganz auf der Seite des Erwachsenen liegt, der sich über das altkluge Kind amüsiert, wäre jedoch in der Komik von *Lolly Willowes* nicht derartig monokausal zu definieren – existiert doch hier, wie gezeigt wurde, die Hierarchie zwischen Kind-Frau und (männlich) definierter Erwachsenenwelt nur vordergründig. Auch hier könnten Plessners Ausführungen, insbesondere seine Beschreibung des Kitzels und dessen Ausdrucksgebärde des Kicherns als ein Sich-Verkriechen bzw. Sich-kleiner-Machen – wenn auch bei ihm ohne jeglichen geschlechterspezifischen Hintergedanken – bei der Erforschung dieser Art von Komik ergiebiger sein. Das Oszillieren des Kitzels zwischen angenehmen und unangenehmen Empfindungen, zwischen Anziehung und Abstoßung, Beherrschtheit und Unbeherrschtheit, wird von Plessner als ein ambivalenter Reizzustand definiert, den er mit Flirt, Sinnlichkeit, oder gar mit mangelndem ethischen Ernst assoziiert – also mit kulturell weiblichen Zuschreibungen. Für die undefinierbare Zwischenposition dieser kulturell weiblich kodierten Ausdrucksform des Lachens spricht auch, dass Plessner das Kichern von der stoßweisen, eruptiven Qualität des Lachens unterscheidet und es als ein "noch nicht Lachen" bewertet.²³

²⁰ Vgl. Plessner, *Lachen und Weinen*, 102.

²¹ Vgl. Köhler, *Differentes Lachen*, 219-27.

²² Vgl. dazu auch meine Ausführungen in *Gauklerin der Literatur*, 244-47.

²³ Vgl. Plessner, *Lachen und Weinen*, 99. Ähnlich betrachtet auch Jean Paul den Wechsel des Kitzels zwischen Lust und scheinbarer Unlust als ein "Element des komischen Genusses." Vgl. Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, 123.

Gerade hinsichtlich des Komikphänomens der Kindfrau im weiblichen humoristischen Text ließe sich aber auch mit Irigarays Begriff eines weiblichen ‘Mimesis-Spielens’ etwas anfangen, mittels dessen sie einen spielerisch adoptierenden, imitierenden Umgang der Frau mit der männlich geprägten Kultur umschreibt. Aufgrund einer Sprachkonzeption, die auf dem Ausschluss des Weiblichen beruht, kann die Frau nach Irigarays Ansicht nur dann zum Subjekt werden, wenn sie so tut wie ein Mann, bzw. wenn sie männliche Inhalte und Darstellungsverfahren sowie auch männliche Vorstellungen von Weiblichkeit *mimt* – also vor-täuscht, dass die von ihr gemimte kulturelle Wirklichkeit auch ihrer gänzlich eigenen Wirklichkeit entspricht. Wenn allerdings Frauen nach Irigarays Argumentation “so gut mimen, dann deshalb, weil sie nicht einfach in dieser Funktion aufgehen. *Sie bleiben ebensosehr anderswo.*”²⁴ Dieses ‘Anderswo’ ist für Irigaray auch der Ort des wahren, verschütteten Lustempfindens der Frau – eines Lustempfindens, das für die Leserin von *Lolly Willowes* etwa aus der reizvollen Undefinierbarkeit der ‘mimenden’ Heldin Laura entsteht. Die adäquate Ausdrucksgebärde für die in diesem Text evozierten Lustgefühle – und damit bekäme Plessners Theorie eine geschlechterspezifische Auslegung – kann gerade im Falle Lauras zutreffend als ‘Gekicher’ beschrieben werden.²⁵

Die unterschwellige Leserunsicherheit, die von der Figur der Protagonistin ausgeht, greift nach und nach auf die Glaubwürdigkeit des gesamten Handlungsgeschehens über. So gibt etwa auch das abgelegene Dorf Great Mop Rätsel auf. Es kommt hier zu keinem gemütlichen “dropping in, leaning over fences, dawdling at the shop or in the churchyard” (*Lolly Willowes*, 125). Die verschlossenen und kauzigen Bewohner dieses Dorfes scheinen erst nachts zum Leben zu erwachen. Auch Lauras Hauswirtin Mrs. Leak – schon ihre Namensgebung könnte als ironische Anspielung auf die sachte betriebene Infiltration realistischen Erzählens gelesen werden – ist nicht gerade gesprächig und dabei dennoch erstaunlich gut in die mysteriösen Vorgänge und Querelen des Dorfes eingeweiht. Die immer noch realistisch eingestellte Lesewahrnehmung wird neuerlich dadurch provoziert, dass sich die Protagonistin über die Schrulligkeiten des Dorfes nicht im mindesten zu wundern scheint – ja dass dieses absonderliche Dorf sogar exakt ihren eigenen Wünschen entspricht. Als Laura aus einem unerklärlichen Impuls ihre solide englische Wanderkarte in einen von Dickicht umgebenen Waldtümpel wirft, ist die rationale Leseerwartung allerdings schon etwas stärker alarmiert. Es keimt der Verdacht auf, dass Laura künftig mit allen sinnvollen Einrichtungen der Zivilisation ähnlich unüberlegt verfahren könnte, oder dass ihre spontane Tat vielleicht gar als ein symbolisches Opferritual an das Reich der Wildnis zu deuten ist. Auch diese besorgniserregende und zugleich feministisch

²⁴ Luce Irigaray, *Das Geschlecht, das nicht eins ist* (Berlin: Merve-Verlag, 1979) 78.

²⁵ Kotthoffs Feststellung, dass weibliches Witzeln weniger monologisch (wie häufig bei Männerwitzen der Fall) sondern eher dialogisch strukturiert sei und sich nicht in Einzeldarbietungen, sondern vielmehr in Ketten von witzigen Äußerungen – quasi als ‘Gekicher und Gegacker’ – äußere, könnte diese These anhand des literarischen Textes untermauern. Vgl. Helga Kotthoff, *Das Gelächter der Geschlechter: Humor und Macht in Gesprächen von Frauen und Männern* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1996) 124-41.

erheiternde Spekulation nährt sich eher aus einer sukzessiven erzählerischen Unterwanderung des Wirklichkeitssinns als aus dem plötzlichen Umschlagen vom Rationalen ins Irrationale. Plötzlichkeit oder Kontrast im Sinne von Kant, Jean Paul und Freud erweisen sich also einmal mehr als unzulänglich, um die Wirkksamkeit dieser zwielichtigen Komikmechanismen zu beschreiben.

Immer tiefer werden die Lesenden nun in ein Geflecht aus Alltagsrealität und Okkultem hineingezogen. Als zu Lauras großer Bestürzung ihr Neffe Titus die Idee hat, ausgerechnet in der 'romantischen' Abgeschiedenheit von Great Mop Quartier zu nehmen, um hier seiner vermeintlichen literarischen Berufung nachzukommen, mehren sich die kuriosen Vorfälle. Dass es sich bei seinem ehrgeizigen Vorhaben ausgerechnet um eine Biographie des romantischen Malers und Schriftstellers Heinrich Füßli handelt, der als ein Pionier in der Erforschung des Irrationalen und als Vorläufer surrealistischer Kunst gilt, birgt eine hintersinnige Ironie, die an anderer Stelle noch deutlicher zutage treten wird. Die kurz nach Titus' Auftauchen einsetzende Serie komischer Pannen, wie etwa ein verstauchter Knöchel des jungen Autorentalents, könnte vorerst noch als 'Künstlerpech' abgetan werden – durchaus vergleichbar mit einer alltäglichen körperlichen Lächerlichkeit wie dem Stolpern. Dann aber eilen der verzagten Laura, die vom Neffen bereits als Schreibkraft ausersehen wurde, gewisse Kräfte zu Hilfe, die sich nicht mehr als harmloser Zufall abtun lassen. Eher beiläufig taucht ein mysteriöser kleiner Kater aus der Dunkelheit auf, den Laura auf den ersten Blick als einen Abgesandten des Teufels identifiziert. Ohne Worte – besser gesagt durch einen Katzenbiss – wird ein Pakt geschlossen, und von diesem Augenblick an betrachtet sich Laura unwiderruflich als Hexe. Den elektrisierten Lesenden, die infolge biederer Lesegewohnheiten die Handlung des Romans im nüchternen England des Jahres 1922 verortet hatten, stellen sich für kurze Momente buchstäblich die Haare auf.

Gelegentlich entsteht inmitten dieser befremdlichen Art von Heiterkeit der flüchtige Eindruck, als begebe sich die Komik auf konventionelles Terrain zurück, wenn etwa durch das Spiel mit der Informationsdiskrepanz zwischen wissenden Lesenden und unwissender Figur Lachlust erzeugt wird. So ermuntert der arglose Titus seine Tante, den fremden Kater doch als neuen Hausgenossen zu behalten und versichert dabei noch ritterlich galant, dass "a woman looks her best with a cat on her knees" (*Lolly Willowes*, 180). Die mit dieser Unbedachtsamkeit des Neffen einhergehende Häufung komischer 'Unglücksfälle' spiegelt bei oberflächlicher Betrachtung ein ebenso gängiges Muster, nämlich das Verlassen eines Pechvogels – so etwa wenn Titus im 'Folly Wood' in ein Wespennest stolpert und sich daraufhin, durch die gehäuften Zwischenfälle geschwächt und nervlich am Ende, nur allzu bereitwillig von seinem Vorhaben einer epochalen Füßli-Biographie verabschiedet. Durch die zeitgleich voranschreitende Infiltration des Übersinnlichen erhalten aber auch diese altvertrauten Komikeffekte eine surrealistisch verfremdete Dimension – die man vor diesem Hintergrund wiederum auch als Parodie eines männlich geprägten Surrealismus lesen könnte.

Insbesondere ein nächtlicher Hexensabbat, zu dem Laura von ihrer Hauswirtin eingeladen wurde, markiert einen gewissen Wendepunkt in diesem Ablösungsprozess vom reallogischen Erzählen ins Übersinnliche. Allerdings wird auch dieses Manöver unterlaufen, denn inmitten jenes nächtlichen Hexentreibens reagiert die Heldin durchaus vernünftig und bodenständig, obgleich die Ereignisse um sie herum einer irrealen Traumlogik zu folgen scheinen. Laura bleibt höflich reserviert gegenüber dem nächtlichen Hokuspokus und weigert sich, dem glamourös auftretenden Teufel die erwarteten Respektsbezeugungen zu zollen. Sie findet – plötzlich wieder ganz nüchterne und pragmatische Engländerin – die Art und Weise, mit der sie dieser satanische ‘Showmaster’ willkommen heißt, schlichtweg geschmacklos. Aufgrund dieser überraschenden Rückkehr der Vernunft glaubt man auch hier für kurze Momente die Mittel traditioneller Überraschungskomik ausfindig zu machen. Aber auch dies erweist sich als Fehlanzeige, denn eine komische Erleichterung im herkömmlichen Sinne tritt nicht ein, auch wenn Laura – schon seit jeher etwas eigenbrötlerisch – zunächst dem irrationalen Hexentreiben indigniert den Rücken kehrt. Fast übergangslos werden nämlich die Nerven der Lesenden erneut auf die Probe gestellt, als Laura noch in der gleichen Nacht einem weiteren geheimnisvollen Wesen in Gestalt eines Wildhüters begegnet. In ihm nun erkennt sie endlich den wahren Leibhaftigen. Dass Laura zwar gebührenden Respekt, aber erneut keine Angst vor dieser Begegnung verspürt und den Teufel später in ihrer altjüngferlichen Phantasie (die auch diesmal einer gewissen Vernunft nicht entbehrt) gar zum heimlichen Bundesgenossen aller frustrierten englischen Hausfrauen erklären wird, trägt zum schillernden Reiz dieses geheimnisvollen Unbekannten bei.

Die mit solchen Ereignissen insinuierte Nähe zum ‘Unheimlichen,’ in dem Freud auch das Nicht-Vertraute erkennt,²⁶ wird auf prickelnde Weise in Schach gehalten durch Anspielungen auf herkömmliche *Ridicula* wie dasjenige der Hexe, die vertraulichen Umgang mit dem Teufel pflegt. ‘Erleichtertes Lachen’ im herkömmlichen Sinne eines *comic relief* oder als Ausdruck erfüllter Erwartungen wäre aber ein unpassender Ausdruck für die auf diese Weise erzeugten Lustempfindungen der Lesenden: Sie mögen zwar erleichtert sein über Lauras Furchtlosigkeit und die damit verbundene Erfüllung gängiger Klischees, können sich aber nicht sicher sein, ob die Erzählung vielleicht doch irgendwann ins Bedrohliche umschlagen wird. Besser als Erklärung geeignet für den auf diese Weise erzeugten, kontinuierlich an- und abschwellenden Kitzel wäre etwa die bereits erwähnte Feststellung Kotthoffs bezüglich einer Tendenz zu kettenartigen Aneinanderreihungen im weiblichen ‘Witzeln.’

Dieses ambivalente Komikempfinden speist sich noch aus einer weiteren verborgenen Lustquelle. Durch das Ineinanderfließen der Erzählebenen des Real-Erfahrbaren und des Okkulten werden hier in unbedenklicher Weise – so wie es

²⁶ Freud legt in seiner Analyse des Unheimlichen ein Augenmerk auf die begriffliche Nähe zum Heimlichen als einem durchaus Vertrauten, das aber im Verborgenen bleiben muss. Vgl. Sigmund Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” in: *Der Moses des Michelangelo: Schriften über Kunst und Künstler* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993) 160-61.

vergleichsweise im Traum geschieht – Situationen und Gedankeninhalte ohne die geringste kausallogische Verknüpfung nebeneinandergestellt, wodurch sich jedoch in der Tiefe des Textes ein Sinn enthüllt, der einer gewissen (subversiven) Logik nicht entbehrt. So erscheint etwa der Protagonistin nachts im Traum Johann Heinrich Füssli, jener Maler des Düsternen und Phantastischen. Vor dem unterschwellig suggerierten bildungsbürgerlichen Wissenshintergrund, dass eines der bekanntesten Gemälde Füsslis einen unheimlichen ‘Nachtmahr’ (1781) darstellt, welcher bezeichnenderweise auf der Brust einer von nächtlichen Alpträumen gequälten Frau hockt, bekommt Lauras Traum eine schillernd ironische Note.²⁷ In diesem Traum nämlich treibt Füssli in einer Geflügelfarm außerhalb des Dorfes sein Unwesen, erwürgt alle Hühner und baut deren Freigehege zu einem Golfplatz um. Im Hinblick auf Lauras weibliches Unabhängigkeitsstreben nimmt dieser geträumte Unsinn durchaus reale Züge an, indem er einem ausschließlich männlich assoziierten Geniekult der Romantik – wie er etwa im Dunstkreis Füsslis propagiert wurde – in gespenstisch kichernder Weise den Boden entzieht.

Ähnlich verschlüsselt und subversiv wird in *Lolly Willows* auch das Klischee der ‘spinster’ ins Spiel gebracht. Wie die feministische Erzählforschung belegte, wird in der englischen Literatur die Vorstellung der ledig gebliebenen Frau nicht nur mit altjüngferlicher Nutzlosigkeit und Schwäche, sondern auch mit bedrohlicher Magie und Hexenkunst assoziiert.²⁸ Anlässlich des oben beschriebenen Hexensabbats etwa wird der ganze klischeehafte Mummenschanz eines häufig negativ assoziierten weiblichen Okkultismus heraufbeschworen. So könnte diese zentrale Textstelle wohl auf Rimskij-Korsakows ausdauernden Publikumserfolg *Die Nacht auf dem Kahlen Berge* (1886) anspielen, in welcher der Komponist es darauf anlegt, das Triebhafte mit dem Geist auszusöhnen – was sich klanglich durch den erlösenden Schlag der Kirchturmuhre und das sanft einsetzende Morgenrot theatralisch vermittelt.

²⁷ Unter den von Humble beschriebenen Voraussetzungen erweist sich der Roman durch derartige Anspielungen auch als beispielhaft für den unterschweligen Bildungsanspruch der *middlebrow novel*.

²⁸ Das misogynie Bild der ledigen ‘old maid’ war im Laufe des 19. Jahrhunderts tiefgreifend erschüttert worden. Reale Lebensumstände wie etwa die alarmierende Zahl unverheirateter Frauen in England, aber auch aufsehenerregende literarische Verkörperungen dieses Frauentypus und reale zeitgenössische Vorbilder wie Florence Nightingale trugen zu dieser Verunsicherung bei. Dies führte gegen Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts zu einer verstärkten Polarisierung der Rolle der ‘spinster’ – einerseits als einer Art hilfreichen, anspruchslosen Hausgeist und andererseits als einer nutzlosen, vielleicht sogar gefährlichen Schmarotzerin. Zum Paradigmenwechsel der ‘spinster’ in der Zeit der Viktorianer siehe etwa Nina Auerbach, ‘Old Maids and the Wish for Wings,’ in: *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (London: Harvard UP, 1982) 109-49. In Bezug auf *Lolly Willows* untersuchten Pratt oder auch Marcus den Aspekt der kulturellen Assoziation von Magie und Hexenkunst mit der alleinstehenden ‘spinster.’ Vgl. Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1981) 122-24; oder Jane Marcus, ‘A Wilderness of One’s Own: Feminist Fantasy Novels of the Twenties: Rebecca West and Sylvia Townsend Warner,’ in: Susan Merrill Squier (ed.), *Essays in Feminist Literary Criticism* (Knoxville: UP of Tennessee, 1984) 134-60.

In Bezug auf *Lolly Willowes* steht jedoch eines fest: Im Hexendorf Great Mop gibt es keine versöhnlichen Glockenschläge von Kirchturmuhren und somit auch kein reuevoll-melodramatisches Relativieren der heidnischen nächtlichen Exzesse. Die Komik – und dies umso mehr vor dem oben skizzierten zeitgenössischen Hintergrund einer allgemeinen Hexen-Obsession – rührt erneut aus einem kitschigen Schwebestand her: Infolge der vordergründigen Bestätigung jener emotional aufgeladenen Klischees werden die Lesenden quasi in Scheinsicherheit gewiegt und gleichzeitig mit einer Protagonistin konfrontiert, die in keines der gängigen Hexenschemata so recht passen will.

3. Necken, Verschleiern, Sich-Entziehen – weibliches Lachen als Versteckspiel mit der Sprache

Wie bereits erwähnt, werden in *Lolly Willowes* mittels latenter Widersprüchlichkeiten kulturelle Denkschemata wachgerufen, die auf der Geschlechterdichotomisierung des Mannes als ‘Verstandeswesen’ und der Frau als ‘Naturwesen’ beruhen.²⁹ Demnach ist auch die Sprunghaftigkeit von Lauras Handlungsweisen, oder etwa ihr magisches Angezogenensein von der unzivilisierten Natur, als Resonanz auf dieses Stereotyp weiblicher Irrationalität mit doppeltem Blick zu lesen. Es sollte nicht unterlassen werden, hier auf einen ähnlichen Denkansatz feministischer Theoretikerinnen und Vertreterinnen einer weiblichen Ästhetik hinzuweisen. So prägte Elaine Showalter mehr als vierzig Jahre nach dem Erscheinen von *Lolly Willowes* den Begriff einer weiblichen ‘wild sphere’ und wendete mit ihrer These eines von der herrschenden Kultur verdrängten außersprachlichen Raumes, welcher sich nur einem weiblichen Verständnis erschließe, das misogyne Stereotyp ins Positive.³⁰

²⁹ Feministisch orientierte Forschungen belegen, dass in vielen Kulturen eine Assoziation von Natur und Weiblichkeit existiert, der auf der anderen Seite eine männlich-rationale Wissenschaftsgläubigkeit gegenübersteht. Ebenso wie die Unterdrückung der Frau als ‘Naturwesen,’ so eine häufige Argumentation dieser Forschungsrichtung, fuße umgekehrt auch die Unterdrückung und Ausbeutung der Natur auf diesem hierarchischen Denken. Vgl. u. a. Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980). Dieses polarisierende Stereotyp bewusst aufgreifend, wurde unter dem feministischen Forschungsaspekt einer geschlechterdifferenzierten Ästhetik gerade die Symbolik der ‘unbeschriebenen,’ unergründeten Wildnis als Ausdruck einer stummen, unterdrückten, weiblichen Kultur außerhalb der dominierenden maskulinen Kultur gesehen. Vgl. Elaine Showalter, “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness,” in: *The New Feminist Criticism*: (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985) 243-70.

³⁰ Anders als etwa Kristeva betrachtet Showalter diese weibliche “wild sphere” als ein Reservoir, welches der weiblichen Kreativität zusätzlich zu den Impulsen aus dem Bereich der normierten Kultur zur Verfügung stehe. Auch bei Kristeva hat der künstlerische Schöpfungsvorgang seinen Ursprung im sprachlich unstrukturierten Irrationalen, welches von ihr mit dem Begriff des ‘Semiotischen’ umschrieben wird. Einer weiblichen ‘wild sphere’ misst sie dagegen im Hinblick auf die literarische Produktivität wenig Bedeutung zu – infolge einer kulturell männlich dominierten Ästhetik wird bei ihr eine innovative Schöpferkraft überwiegend männlich definiert. Vgl. Julia Kristeva, “Produktivität der Frau.” Interview mit Eliane Boucquoy, in: *al-*

Dieses in der theoretischen Diskussion bei Showalter und Kristeva erörterte schöpferische Reservoir einer außersprachlichen ‘wild sphere’ lässt sich auch in *Lolly Willows* mittels zwiespältiger Anspielungen, Metaphern oder Vergleiche als Ursprung weiblicher Kreativität rekonstruieren. Gerade mit Lauras mysteriösen, nicht selten in die Nacht hinein verlagerten Erkundungsgängen und Streifzügen werden Assoziationen in Richtung einer derartigen unstrukturierten weiblichen ‘wilderness’ evoziert, welche sich dem klar strukturierten Bereich von Kultur und Sprache entzieht. Laura fühlt sich gerade im Unheimlichen erst richtig heimelig und findet etwa das Rascheln des Windes anregender als verbale Kommunikation. Vor dem Hintergrund des anzitierten Stereotyps weiblicher Unbezähmbarkeit erhält Lauras Spontanentschluss, ausgerechnet ein so abseitiges Dorf wie Great Mop zu ihrem Domizil zu machen, eine lachhafte Plausibilität. Dies bestärkt nebenbei auch die Vermutung, dass sich hinter dem ungewöhnlichen Ortsnamen nichts anderes als eine Anspielung auf den Hexenbesen verbirgt. Bei ihrer Suche nach Unabhängigkeit scheint Laura mit traumwandlerischer Sicherheit auf eine Art Niemandsland gestoßen zu sein. Andererseits ließe sich ihre spontane Ablehnung des nächtlich-schauerlichen Hexenspuks derart lesen, dass sie gegen jegliches Klischeehafte und kulturell Überfrachtete ‘instinktiv’ gefeit ist.

In einer außersprachlichen Grauzone scheinen in *Lolly Willows* auch manche subtil komikerzeugenden Situationen besonders gut zu gedeihen. So bietet etwa die nicht besonders wortreiche Kommunikation zwischen Laura und ihrer Hausherrin Mrs. Leak des öfteren Anlässe für eine derartige non-verbale Komik. Bezeichnenderweise baut sich zwischen den beiden Figuren gerade an jenen Abenden eine Art schweigendes Einverständnis auf, wenn die Hausarbeit erledigt und Mrs. Leaks Ehemann zu Bett gegangen ist. Beim behaglichen Austausch ihrer kleinen Geheimnisse bezüglich der Likör- oder Branntweinherstellung – gekrönt von einem selbstgebrannten Gläschen Beerenwein – kommen die Frauen dann in ein stilles Sinnieren. Die Bildersprache und intime Farbigkeit solcher Szenen evoziert eine zugleich häuslich biedere aber auch schaurig-geheimnisvolle Domäne des Weiblichen und umschließt die beiden Frauen in einem geradezu magischen (Hexen)Kreis:

The lamplight shone upon the tidy room and the polished table, lighting topaz in the dandelion wine, spilling pools of crimson through the flanks of the bottle of plum gin. It shone on the contented drinkers, and threw their large, close-at-hand shadows upon the wall. When Mrs. Leak smoothed her apron the shadow solemnified the gesture as though she were moulding an universe. Laura's nose and chin were defined as sharply as the peaks of a holly leaf. (*Lolly Willows*, 118)

Das Lachen ist hier – analog zu Irigarays Vorstellung eines fließenden und nicht penetrierenden weiblichen Lustempfindens³¹ – ein höchst diffuses, schwer fassbares, quasi ‘einsickerndes’ Lachen. Auf diese Weise werden herkömmliche Denk-

ternative 108/109 (1976) 170-71; oder “Kein weibliches Schreiben? Fragen an Julia Kristeva,” in: *Freibeuter* 2 (1979) 81.

³¹ Irigaray spricht von einem fließenden weiblichen Lustempfinden, bei dem sich penetrierende “Härte nicht durchsetzen” kann. Vgl. Irigaray, *Das Geschlecht, das nicht eins ist*, 221.

schemata von genügsamer weiblicher Häuslichkeit bei trautem Lampenschein mit dem Klischee einer unerklärlichen, angsteinflößenden weiblichen Andersartigkeit überblendet. So beschwören etwa die flackernden Schattenspiele an der Wand oder die am Rande der Legalität angesiedelten Geheimrezepte über das Branntweinbrauen bei aller häuslichen Traulichkeit die Vorstellung eines subversiven Hexenzirkels herauf. Das so entstandene Weiblichkeitsbild entzieht sich jeder sprachlichen Festlegung – analog etwa zum wortlosen Einverständnis der beiden Frauenfiguren, das nur durch Gesten wie das Glätten der Schürze signalisiert wird. Der komische Kitzel rührt daher, dass keine der angedeuteten stereotypen Weiblichkeitszuschreibungen widerlegt wird – ja dass sie geradezu bestätigt scheinen – womit sich quasi angenehme und unangenehme Reize beim Lesen die Waage halten. Das stufenlose Oszillieren zwischen Klischeehaftem und Authentischem wird dabei ebenso zwiespältig komisch erlebt wie dies auch bezüglich der Erleichterungslust über das Befolgen bzw. Nicht-Befolgen der strengen Gesetze des reallogischen Erzählens bereits festgestellt wurde – hat doch auch die ‘Erleichterung’ über das Verlassen einer trist realen Erzählebene in diesem Text ebenso wenig Bestand wie andererseits der Grusel nie ins ernsthaft Bedrohliche ausarten kann, da die Heldin förmlich auflebt in diesem Metier. Wieder einmal kann weder von einer eindeutigen Überraschungskomik noch von einer herkömmlichen Erwartungskomik gesprochen werden.

Aber auch die traditionelle Kategorisierung in ein lachendes Subjekt und ein verlachtes Objekt erscheint auf diese Weise geradezu unmöglich. Implizite Lächerlichkeiten wie etwa die männliche Panikvorstellung von der schauerlichen ‘old maid,’ die sich hier übergangslos ins Positive wendet, sind infolgedessen nicht eindeutig an einem Objekt festzumachen – und damit lässt sich auch kaum feststellen, aus welcher Ecke das Lachen kommt. Besser für die Deutung dieses Lachens geeignet als konventionelle Erklärungsansätze wäre vielleicht Judy Littles Theorie eines weiblichen “humoring the sentence,” eines Sprechens, das aufgrund der weiblichen Anpassung an die ‘geliebte’ Sprache ständig seinen Standort wechselt. Little wählt diesen Begriff, um damit den Prozess der Karnevalisierung der Sprache durch die Frau zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Auf Bachtin anspielend, hat sie damit jedoch nicht eine geschlechtsneutrale, sondern eine spezifisch weibliche Lizenz zum mutwilligen Imitieren, Nachäffen, Umstülpen und Dekonstruieren von Sprache vor dem Hintergrund einer männlichen sprachlichen Vorherrschaft und eines männlichen Deutungsmonopols im Auge.³² Hier ließe sich mit Irigarays Argumentation anknüpfen, die besagt, dass der Ort weiblichen Lustempfindens immer aufs neue in ein unkalkulierbares ‘Anderswo’ verlagert werde. Gerade im Sinne dieses weiblichen ‘Anderswo’ ist Lauras eigenbrötleri-

³² Little spielt mit diesem Gedanken auf die Bachtinsche Terminologie des Karnevalesken der Literatur sowie auf dessen Auffassung von Literatur als einer Art Kommunikationsspiel an, welches Bachtin zufolge aus einer “speech diversity,” einem dynamischen Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Literatur und Gesellschaft, entsteht. Vgl. Judy Little, “Humoring the Sentence: Women’s Dialogic Comedy,” in: June Sochen (ed.), *Women’s Comic Visions* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1991) 19-32.

scher Selbstfindungsprozess, der sie weder in die Rolle der braven Tante Lolly zurückfallen noch zur sklavischen Teufelsanbeterin werden lässt, sondern sich jeglicher wie auch immer gearteten Zuschreibung entzieht, als ein lustversprechendes Adressat an die weiblichen Lesenden zu deuten. Der maßgeblichste Grund dieser Erheiterung mag es sein, dass das sogenannte 'Weibliche' sich in diesem Text stets aufs neue den überfrachteten Vorstellungen von weiblicher kultureller Andersheit entzieht und jeder Versuch einer Definition von Weiblichkeit am textinhärenten Lachen scheitert.

Das offene Ende des Romans stellt den Inbegriff einer solchen unendlichen, ins Leere führenden Parodie dar. Laura ist nun bereit, ihr christliches Seelenheil vollends in den Wind zu schreiben und verhandelt in dieser Schlussepisode mit dem Teufel um nichts geringeres als um ihre zukünftige Selbstbestimmung, während sie sich im Gegenzug seiner Rückendeckung vergewissert. Erneut taucht schemenhaft das misogynen Ridiculum der alten Jungfer auf, die nicht einmal den Teufel fürchtet, der seinerseits auch zu ihr vorsichtige Distanz hält. Durch die Überblendung von Imagination und Realität erscheint der Satan in seiner Rolle als Emanzipationshelfer in diesem weiblichen humoristischen Text als kitzelnd gefährlicher und zugleich freundlicher 'Verderber.' Zwiespältige Komik entsteht etwa aus dem Geschäftsgebaren dieses Herrschers der Dunkelheit, welches am ehesten als höflich-unaufdringlich bezeichnet werden kann. Mit ebenso zwiespältiger Loyalität akzeptiert Laura seine Konditionen, bietet ihr doch der Pakt mit dem Teufel den einzig möglichen Freiraum vor den Restriktionen der Gesellschaft. Mit einem derartigen Freibrief ausgestattet, kann sie sich endlich auf den Weg machen. Wohin allerdings dieser selbstbestimmte Weg sie führen wird, bleibt auch in Bezug auf das Romanfinale im Dunkeln – eben im *Anderswo*.

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HANS OSTERWALDER

Dreamscapes: Harold Pinter's *The Room* and Franz Kafka's "Auf der Galerie"

Abstract: The kinship between Pinter and Kafka is patently obvious and has been pointed out by numerous critics, the dreamlike quality of the texts of these two masters of menace and mystery being one of the aspects of their work on which there is a critical consensus. Therefore Freud's trail-blazing early work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) provides tools for shedding light on some of the obscurities of the two writers. This essay picks out Pinter's first play *The Room* (1957) and Kafka's short story "Auf der Galerie" (1917) to demonstrate that the basic dream mechanisms of displacement and condensation are the creative principles underlying these two surrealist texts. The Lacanian angle of these two concepts is taken into account, but the reading stops short of Lacan's radical conclusions about the 'free-floating signifier' and 'impassable primordial difference.' The other extreme avoided here is the neat Freudian pigeon-holing indulged in by some early psychoanalytical critics. Freudian concepts do contribute to an understanding of this kind of text, but there is always a residue of ambiguity.

Comparisons between Franz Kafka and Harold Pinter, the two great masters of omnipresent menace and inscrutable metaphysical mystery in their respective languages, have become standard fare in literary criticism. In fact, the two adjectives 'Kafkaesque' and 'Pinteresque' are used synonymously in German and English, and a number of critics have pointed out the deep impact of Kafka's work on Pinter's mind (cf. Esslin, 36; Billington, 18, 127).

The specific issue I want to address in this essay is the crucial importance of another giant figure of 20th-century culture for the two authors: Sigmund Freud, especially his landmark work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). I shall compare two texts by Pinter and Kafka, *The Room* (1957) and "Auf der Galerie" [Up in the Gallery] (1917) in the light of the psychoanalytic methodology of interpreting dreams, basically in its 'prelapsarian' shape before it fell into Jaques Lacan's deconstructionist hands. However, the poststructuralist angle will not be totally 'repressed.' Since both Pinter and Kafka present a world dominated by an often unaccountable anxiety and rationally inexplicable behaviour patterns, their work can be seen as the fictional equivalent of Freud's scientific attempts to chart the deep waters of the human unconscious. Indeed, hosts of critics have used Freud's insights to shed some light on the dreamlike semiconscious landscapes depicted by Pinter and Kafka.

In Kafka criticism, psychoanalytical readings of the stories as dreams abound (cf. Foulkes, 59-71, Sokel, Krusche, 84-87). In the little commented story, "Auf der Galerie," the last sentence likens the protagonist's consciousness to a dream state: "[...] da dies so ist, legt der Galeriebesucher das Gesicht auf die Brüstung, und im Schlussmarsch wie in einem schweren Traum versinkend, weint er, ohne es zu wissen" [since this is how things are, the visitor to the gallery puts his face on the railing and, sinking into the final march as if into a difficult dream, weeps, without realizing it].¹ The application of Freudian tools from *The Interpretation of Dreams* is actually called for by the text itself. In Pinter's case, Gabbard (1976) shows that Freudian dream analysis yields a great deal of insight into Pinter's most surrealist, unwieldy first dramatic efforts, namely *The Room*, *The Dumb Waiter* and *The Birthday Party*. I shall show how the basic dream mechanisms of displacement and condensation are the unconscious creative principles underlying all these intractable, surrealist texts.

A word of caution may avoid deconstructionist quibbles about an overly naive belief in a univocal reading of a text: as highlighted by Lacan, "the dream-work follows the law of the signifier" (quoted in Leitch, 11), so the Freudian view of the dream bears in it the seeds of deconstruction:

Dreams frequently seem to have more than one meaning. Not only may they include several wish fulfillments one alongside the other, by a succession of meanings the wish fulfillments may be superimposed on another, the bottom one being the fulfillment of a wish dating from earliest childhood. (Freud, 1953, 4:219)

Gabbard points out that this kind of ambiguity is overdetermination, the keyword of her psychoanalytical reading of Pinter's plays as dreams. Doubtless this is the equivalent of the deconstructionists' notion of undecidability or indeterminacy, Lacan's 'floating signifier' and 'sliding signified' being the most obvious progeny of the Freudian father-text. However, in line with Freud, I stop short of Lacan's celebration of "primordial difference as impassable": as V.B. Leitch puts it, "the Lacanian signifier need not signify at all, it may float free" (Leitch, 12).

Let me first demonstrate how this prelapsarian psychoanalytical approach helps unearth the various determinations in Pinter's plays. I single out *The Room*, his first play, because it illustrates the unconscious mechanisms which are operative most clearly. In the course of his artistic development Pinter moved towards realism: *The Caretaker*, for example, can be read on a purely realistic level. None of the actions or characters needs to be accounted for by recourse to the murky world of the unconscious mind. However, if we look at the subconscious motivation of the characters, a whole new dimension opens up: the cracks in the roof Aston wants to tar over, as well as the shed he intends to put up, stand for his search for a cure for his mental scars and a new sane mind, while the cluttered place he inhabits represents his present mental state after his electroshock treatment. Davies' unwillingness to find shoes that fit and his inability to get down to

¹ Franz Kafka, "Auf der Galerie," *Das Urteil* (f.p. 1935; Frankfurt: Fischer, 1952) 80. All subsequent quotations from Kafka refer to this edition and this page. "Up in the Gallery" trans. by Ian Johnston [<http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/kafka/uninthegallery.htm>].

Sidcup in order to get hold of his papers have the quality of symbolic dream images for his lack of a secure foothold in life and his loss of identity. This shows that even Pinter's most realistic play stands to gain a great deal from a psychoanalytic decoding of its images. The dim unconscious world of dreams constantly intrudes into Pinter's dramatic universe, up to his latest efforts *Moonlight* and *Ashes to Ashes*: the third area of the stage in *Moonlight* reserved for the appearance of Bridget, the dead daughter, the echolalia of the cries for the lost baby at the end of *Ashes to Ashes*, are both ample evidence of this. However, the unrealistic, surreal elements are most prominent in Pinter's earliest plays, especially in *The Room*. Many central questions defy purely rational analysis: who is Riley, why does Rose turn blind at the end, why does Bert kill Riley? Answers can come only from decoding the images and actions of the play as dream images and actions.

The psychoanalytic critic's temptation is to bundle the characters' unconscious motives into the neat Freudian categories of oral, anal and oedipal wishes and anxieties. Gabbard's reading of the *The Room* is a typical example: she sees the "oral content of the play" (26) as "Rose and Bert together hid[ing] in the womb" (26). Rose's fear of the outside, her dread of intruders are typical of the "separation anxiety and oral fantasy that pervades this play" (26). The obvious struggle for dominance is assigned to the anal period (cf. 27), while Bert's aggressiveness (evidenced by bumping other cars on the road and killing Riley) is the sadistic part connected with the infant's "pinching off of the feces" (27). The characters' fear of punishment for oedipal wishes can be perceived in the sense of menace which haunts the play: "Rose has apparently repressed her erotic feelings for her father" (29). In the scene with Riley "she reveals affection when her initial insults well into tender touching of [Riley's] head and face," (29) which shows that she projects her oedipal wishes onto him, regardless of whether he is only a messenger of the father or the father himself.

This is a highly fruitful approach to the play. It does account indeed for the strange figure of Riley and for Rose's sudden blindness. To corroborate her view, Gabbard quotes Norman Holland, who states that "amputations, mutilations, blindings, and the like symbolize this earliest fear of punishment [for oedipal wishes]: castration" (Gabbard, 29). Rose is scared of her sexual feelings, which are repressed to the highly symbolic location of the basement, the id, from where they rise in the form of the displaced father figure. When confronted with her own desires, her superego punishes her by symbolic castration, i.e. blindness. In the same vein she turns her husband Bert into an impotent baby by constantly mothering and thus infantilizing him, which is another mode of symbolic castration. His erotic desires are displaced onto the van. Bert's account of driving "her" is replete with sexual overtones.

In spite of the credit one has to give to Gabbard's skilful application of the psychoanalytical apparatus to the play, one is left with a sense of unease: there is too much emphasis on pigeonholing the characters' actions into neat Freudian bundles in her reading. Occasionally she lapses into exaggerated Freudian sym-

bol-hunting, for instance when interpreting the Sands' argument about sitting down as harking back to "the young boy's learning to stand up to urinate and the young girl's concomitant sense of penis envy" (27). This is the type of thing which has given psychoanalytical criticism a bad name. I want to focus my reading of *The Room* on the fact that, in contradistinction to realistic plays, many of the characters' actions need explanations derived from the realm of the unconscious and that the succession of images in the play has a crucial element in common with the stream of images in dreams: they are all results of condensation, (or in Lacanian parlance, metaphor), i.e. they have more than one meaning, they are overdetermined. Gabbard's interpretation of the title image shows this convincingly:

A room, a vagina, a womb, a tomb, a conscious mind – all are open spaces that can house what enters, even if it is only thoughts, as it is in the case of mind. The contradictions and differences – such as between birth and death, body and mind – are glossed over and ignored. Each becomes a determination condensed under the one symbol. No one meaning is any more accurate than the other. The ambiguity of the symbol provides its depth and its wonder. (Gabbard, 22)

This aspect of Freudian theory is the main reason why poststructuralists quote him as one of their patron saints (cf. Leitch, 30, 271; Derrida). The other mechanism of the dreamwork which is also operative in the play is displacement: blinding is displaced castration, which itself is displaced from the oedipal father figure onto Rose and Riley; Bert displaces his sexual feelings onto his van. Using the same tools when reading the play as when interpreting a dream, one can discern meaning in what previously seemed just a loose end. Gabbard's summing up reveals the fruit of such (psycho-)analytical labour:

These dream images of the play reinforce the intellectual meaning already determined. In each of these interpretations, Rose, or the central consciousness, fears the outside while she nurtures the violence within her own room. Even though she refuses to see it, it is there, as silent as Bert, waiting to erupt at some subrational signal. At this point, however, we also have some feasible explanations for the mysteries of Riley's identity and the reasons for Bert's killing him. Riley is a repressed father image come to reclaim Rose or dispossess and punish Bert. Bert kills him to protect his room or to fulfill the oedipal wish. (Gabbard, 35-36)

But again, despite of being a woman, Gabbard falls victim to Freud's patriarchal view of the Oedipus story. Taking up Elizabeth Bronfen's insight that blinding, i.e. self-mutilation, can also be the displaced desire for the killing of one's mother to elide intimations of mortality (cf. Bronfen, 116), I should argue that, on another level, Riley is also a figure of death, the messenger of the death-drive rising from the id, which Bert tries to fight off through violence. What is to be imposed on him and his wife is metonymically displaced onto the harbinger. In this reading the room/tomb association acquires more meaning. Rose's first words "It's very cold out [...] It's murder" (Pinter, 85) point to her fear of death. However, symbolically the death-threat is firmly ensconced in her own unconscious.

Let me now turn to Kafka's "short prose fiction" (Hanson, 7) "Auf der Galerie." Again, the text seems to defy rational explication. Most critics have

tried to find solutions clinging to the level of discursive logic, a lead given by the fact that the text consists of only two complex, longwinded sentences whose logical coherence is signposted by syllogistic devices such as the conditional conjunction 'wenn' in the first sentence. The extraordinary length of the two meaning sentences (excessive even by the standards of the German language) calls for a strict hierarchical ranking of the various clauses in terms of hypotactical subordination. But instead of this clear logical structuring we get an almost endless stream of paratactic clauses, one followed by the other. As a result, the reader loses track of the logical "wenn ... dann ... da aber" [if ... then ... but since] structure on which the whole construct hinges. So even syntactically the reader is led to lose clear rational vision and drift into a bewildering world of lateral thinking or fantasy. The hypothetical rescue of the suffering artist in the first sentence is left dangling in mid-air in the realm of mere possibility: "vielleicht eilte dann ..." [perhaps then ... might rush]. The subjunctive mood strongly suggests an unreal world of hallucination rather than the conscious world of clear perception and hard fact. This impression of vagueness is reinforced by the epithet "irgendeine Kunstreiterin," [some lady circus rider] (my emphasis) which runs counter to the presentation of a specific, clear, conscious reality.

In his detailed analysis of the overall logical structure of the text Jörgen Kobs points out the lack of a clear causal structure in the second sentence:

Man wird diesen Übergang zwischen den beiden parallelen Kausalsätzen als wenig organisch, als hart empfinden. Es wäre zu erwarten, dass die Konjunktion "da" nochmals aufgenommen würde, zumal nach einem Semikolon, das doch einen deutlichen Einschnitt markiert. Aber diese Befestigung bleibt aus. *Diskontinuierlich* setzen die Einzelbeobachtungen ein, lösen sich von dem Rahmen des kausalen Gefüges ab und streben danach, Eigenwert zu gewinnen. (83, my emphasis)

[This transition between the two parallel causal clauses feels inorganic, hard. One would expect the conjunction "da" to be taken up once more, especially after a semicolon marking a clear break. But this corroboration is not given. The individual observations begin in a *discontinuous* fashion, breaking away from the framework of the causal construction, thus aiming for an independent status. (my translation)]

The fact that the eleven finite verbs of the second sentence all depend on a subject ("Herr Direktor") which occurs only once, increases the impression of "jene Schweben, jenes In-der-Luft-Hängen der Einzelbeobachtungen" [this floating, this dangling in mid-air of the individual observations] (Kobs, 84), another element going against the grain of the clear conscious logic of rational, wide-awake life. The feeling of a vicious circular motion is suggested by the woman artist being mercilessly driven round in a circle, the way obsessive fantasies go in circles through an anxiety-driven mind. The linear logical structure of "wenn ... dann ... da aber" vanishes into the background under the onslaught of obsessive anxiety. Freud's concept of repetition compulsion comes to mind, or as Lacan shrewdly observed, "Freud derives any accession to the object by the dialectic of return [...] on that other stage of which he speaks as the dream place" (98). Freud has recourse to a "Deus ex machina only less derisory for the fact that the machine directs the director" (Leitch, 98). Lacan's metaphor for the realm of the

unconscious surfacing in dreams is an apt description of the principle underlying “Auf der Galerie” (and, even to a larger degree, “Die Strafkolonie” [“The Penal Colony”]). In the first part, the observer/dreamer fantasizes about himself being in the role of the *deus ex machina* flying to the rescue of the suffering artist. In point of fact he is driven by the machine of his own unconscious desires, the suffering woman artist being the substitute for his primary object.

Another typical feature of dreams paramount in the story is the heavy use of paradox. As Kobs noted, the liveried lackeys display a cold, proud attitude towards the young beautiful artist of the second sentence, a superciliousness quite unbecoming to their humble station in life. The director, the representative of power, on the other hand, fawns on her “in Tierhaltung” [behaving like an animal]. In Pinteresque fashion (in fact highly reminiscent of Pinter’s *The Servant*) the master-servant relationship is inverted: “Die Verhältnisse von Herrschaft und Knechtschaft, so können wir sagen, sind hier vertauscht, der Diener zu stolzer Unnahbarkeit emporgehoben, der Herr zum Tier herabgestossen” (Kobs, 90) [We can state that the relationship between master and servant has been inverted, the servant is raised to proud inaccessibility, the master reduced to animal status].

To my mind the upshot of Kobs’ painstaking analysis is that the text is not construed according to the principle of waking life, the “reflektierende Bewusstsein” [reflecting consciousness] (Kobs, 90). He states that the text leads to the “Nichts” [nothingness] (88). However, he fails to recognize the key to the fathoming of this illogical abyss of the *nihil*, the deconstructionist *abîme*, adducing the specious argument that the last line reads “wie in einem Traum” [as in a dream]. Kobs dismisses this textual pointer as a mere simile, which for him is “nicht mehr als eine Analogie” [no more than an analogy] (93). A critic with an awareness of the main currents of literary theory of the last twenty years cannot but find fault with this rather naive conclusion, since the distinction between figure and ground, the figurative and the literal level of a text, can no longer be ascertained with confidence. It seems to me that this simile provides the very key for a reading of the entire text: all the elements listed above belong to the wilful illogicality of the unconscious world of dreams. Any attempt at finding a determinate, pervasive logical structure is doomed to failure. But if we apply the two fundamental mechanisms of the dreamwork to the text, meanings flash up.

What has struck most critics as a salient feature of the text is the focus on the observer in the gallery, which is highlighted by the title (cf. Petr 137). However, the reason why he starts to cry at the end, after witnessing the triumphant “schöne Dame” [beautiful lady], remains hidden. Only specious arguments can lead to Pavel Petr’s conclusion that this is one of Kafka’s “heitere Abschiede” [merry goodbyes]. But if one reads the two women artists as displaced anxieties and wishes of the observer/dreamer, which surface from his own unconscious, one gets much closer to a possible latent meaning: it is not overly biographical to suggest the observer’s kinship with Kafka the consumptive failed artist, who found relationships with women tantalizingly difficult and life-threatening. The first displacement is the projection of the male observer/artist’s anxiety of being

mercilessly hounded to death by his environment onto a suffering female figure. The second part represents a repressed wish, whose unfulfillment in real life is anticipated by the dreamer's unconscious weeping. On top of the displacement from observer to agent there is the additional shift from the male to the female sex: the observer/artist's wish for artistic success is coupled with the *male* observer's wish for the favour of women, or his own *feminine* side. In the second part of the dream, the male master is subservient to a female mistress: at one level this represents in displaced, inverted form the male dreamer's wish for the subservience of the unreachable, all-powerful women to his weak male ego. In a pun characteristic of dreams, the director (the subservient father-figure) puts the beautiful lady "vorsorglich" on the white horse. As Kobs rightly points out (cf. 90), the adjective warranted by the context of paternal care is "fürsorglich," a nuance which is difficult to render in English, since 'providently' covers both German words. "Vorsorglich" points to the father-figure's awareness of imminent disaster. But to avoid the "Salto mortale" [the great jump] he should not lift her onto the horse at all, since this desire-driven ride exposes the dainty granddaughter-like creature to potential havoc. Bearing in mind the fundamental displacement of the sexes, we realize that the latent meaning of the dream points to the observer/artist's fear of being driven, of being taken for a ride by his urges for the admiration of the world and the favours of beautiful women, which is perfectly in keeping with Freud's notorious dictum on the nature of the artist: "Der Künstler ist im Ansatz auch ein Introvertierter, der es nicht weit zur Neurose hat. Er wird von überstarken Triebbedürfnissen gedrängt, möchte Ehre, Macht, Reichtum, Ruhm und die Liebe der Frauen erwerben" (296) [The artist is basically an introvert close to neurosis. He is driven by excessive libidinal needs, he would like to acquire honour, power, fame and the love of women (my translation)].

As opposed to the second part, the first sentence contains only one role reversal in the manifest dream: the battered artist (whose suffering condition is highlighted by the simile "Hände, die eigentlich Dampfhammer sind" [hands which were really steam hammers]) is cast in the female sex.² The whole text is a condensed dream image allowing or rather calling for a number of readings, the woman artist being a similarly multilayered image as the room in Pinter's play: she represents both the anxiety and the wishes of the observer/artist; she is also an ambivalent symbol of the male observer's desperate struggle with women. There are other ambiguous symbolic elements in this dreamscape: the indefatig-

² The comment from Kafka's diary on the genesis of "Auf der Galerie" bears out what the dream imagery suggests: "Unberührt aber von diesem spielerischen Glauben, der sich wahrscheinlich nur von einer schon ungesunden Sexualität nährte, blieb die Überzeugung, dass ich die übrige Welt durch die Offenbarung einer unerhörten Unfähigkeit mit einem Male überraschen werde." [Untouched by this playful belief which was presumably nurtured solely by an already unhealthy sexuality, the conviction remained that I would surprise the world once more by this incredible ineptitude (my translation)]. (Quoted from Petr 138) However, the recourse to "external evidence" (Wimsatt/Beardsley, 339) is not necessary for my approach; it simply corroborates what is inherent in the text itself.

able audience whose ambivalent homage has the quality of the steam hammers of an engine; the janus-faced figure of the merciless boss of Part One who literally has the whiplash; the subservient, animal-like director of part two, whose breathing “in Tierhaltung” suggests serfdom and possibly also sexual expectation rather than the “Vorsorge” of a grandfather for his granddaughter; the supercilious liveried lackeys who clearly rise above their preordained station in life; the “Salto mortale,” the fatal jump, from which the caring director/grandfather wants to prevent his charge, whom he warns “mit englischen Ausrufen.” “Englisch” is associatively connected with ‘Engel,’ a metonymic displacement typical of the way language appears in dreams, the adjective being displaced from the object of care to the language of the carer. All these symbols contain the element of paradox, making an univocal reading of the latent meaning of the manifest dream impossible. Deconstructionists like Hillis Miller argue that any text is “alogical,” “undecidable” (Miller, 285) due to the very nature of language. I would suggest that this potential of language manifests itself most obviously in texts which are organized according to the subconscious mechanism of dreams, which, as Freud stated long before his deconstructionist epigones (or “parasites” in Hillis Miller’s sense [cf. Miller, 278-81]), is “das Reich der Unlogik” (*Abriss*, 27) [the realm of the illogical], where “jedes Element auch sein Gegenteil bedeuten kann” (27) [every element can also mean its opposite], which is also a feature of the oldest languages and even partly of Latin (cf. *Abriss*, 27-28).

In conclusion, allow me to rehearse some methodological arguments to distinguish my particular brand of psychoanalytical approach to Kafka from previous attempts with a similar bent. In contradistinction to Kate Flores’ notorious psychoanalytical reading of “Das Urteil” I am not trying to give a determinate, univocal reading of my text. Admittedly, limited recourse is made to Kafka’s biography; the observer/dreamer’s identification with the “lungensüchtige Kunstreiterin” [tubercular lady circus rider] is partly suggested by the biographical background. But Dietrich Krusche’s deconstructionist caveat against using biographical material to arrive at a univocal reading along psycho-analytical lines is heeded in my analysis:

So führt die Deutung, die ihre einzige Aufgabe darin sieht, den Text in der Kausalität seines Zustandekommens, hier in der Kausalität der Mechanismen des Unterbewusstseins des Autors, zu erhellen, zu einer Destruktion des Textes als eines literarisch-fiktionalen: der Text wird in seinen Möglichkeiten des Erscheinens vor dem Leser nicht gefördert, sondern beengt. (87)

[Thus the interpretation which sees its only task in illuminating the genesis of the text, in this case the causality of the mechanisms of the author’s unconscious, leads to the destruction of the text as literary fiction: the text’s range of possible readings is not enhanced, but reduced.]

As Gabbard convincingly demonstrated in her reading of Pinter’s early plays, a psychoanalytically correct application of the Freudian tools from *The Interpretation of Dreams* reveals the overdetermination of dream symbols. Krusche’s objection to Flores’ reading of “Das Urteil” cannot be levelled at my way of apply-

ing the mechanisms of dreamwork to the text. Furthermore I do not fall victim to the biographical fallacy of equating the "monadisch Ich" [monadic I] (Krusche, 78) with Kafka the man. Following Seymour Chatman's lead, I only go as far as to suggest the proximity between the "implied author" and the narrator, thus excluding the possibility of an unreliable narrator, i.e. an ironic distance between the implied author and the narrator. This seems to be implied in Pavel Petr's categorization of "Auf der Galerie" as one of Kafka's "heitere Abschiede," a view which seems to me totally untenable if one applies narratological principles accurately to the text.

Both Pinter's and Kafka's texts are in Walter Sokel's words fictions which "resemble ... a dream in that [they] compel interpretation, but, again like a dream, [they] seem to resist interpretative effort" (Quoted in Foulkes, 59). If the interpretative effort is made the results are inevitably ambiguous, multilayered, indeterminate.

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WALTER C. METZ

Breaking the Cycle: *Die Another Day*, Post-Colonialism, and the James Bond Film Series

Abstract: This paper develops a post-colonial reading of the latest James Bond series entry, *Die Another Day* (2002), a film directed by Lee Tamahori, the New Zealand artist most famous for his international art cinema hit, *Once Were Warriors* (1994). The paper argues that the film shifts away from the colonialist ideological position of the Cold War-era films in the Bond series. This argument is supported by two methodologies derived from critical theory. First, the film is read intertextually against *Once Were Warriors*, the Cold War Bond films, and the academic literature on these films. Second, since the film's villain is a North Korean colonel who has become Caucasian through a radical surgical procedure, Richard Dyer's approach to whiteness studies is used to assess the film's surprising position on racial difference.

1. Introduction: The Post-Cold War James Bond

On the surface, the latest James Bond installment, *Die Another Day* (2002), delivers the expected for a film in this, the most popular film series in cinema history: exotic locales, witty one-liners, and explosions. The film begins with a stunt-filled sequence in which Bond (played by Pierce Brosnan) surfs on twenty-foot waves to land on a beach in North Korea. Bond, we learn, is investigating the trading of African conflict diamonds for hovercrafts. In a plan concocted by Colonel Moon, the rebellious son of a top-ranking North Korean general, the hovercrafts are to be used to glide over the land mines ("America's cultural contribution," as the villain labels them) in the demilitarized zone. When Bond is exposed as a British spy and captured, the film's credit sequence begins, to the tune of a heavily synthesized Madonna song.

At the end of the credit sequence, which features a montage of North Korean soldiers torturing Bond, Lee Tamahori is listed as director over a close-up of the face of a female North Korean dominatrix with a predilection for scorpions. The credit comes unexpectedly: what was an international art director, famous for the beautiful post-colonial character study, *Once Were Warriors* (1994), doing by directing an entry in the decidedly pro-colonial James Bond cycle? While cynics might reply "selling out" and "making money," Tamahori's post-colonial influence on the Bond formula is discernible if we look at *Die Another Day* more closely.

Once Were Warriors depicts the social effects of post-colonialism in New Zealand on the Heke family, descended from Maori warriors, but who now live in the city. The family's patriarch, Jake (played by Temuera Morrison), has become an abusive alcoholic, self-destructively channeling his violent rage into fighting in bars, and against his family and himself. The film eloquently studies the attempts of his wife Beth (played by Rena Owen) to keep the family together despite the hardships of poverty, culminating in a temporary escape to her impossibly green Maori village near the film's end. The scorpions that torture Bond in a North Korean prison in *Die Another Day* also signify abusive violence in *Once Were Warriors*; Jake's tattoo of a scorpion on his arm is visible constantly during his bouts of domestic violence.

This intertextual connection between *Once Were Warriors* and *Die Another Day* positions the latter film as a post-colonial reworking of the colonialist politics of the Bond series. To explore this idea this article uses a semiotic approach to intertextuality, derived from the work of Gerard Genette. In *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*, Robert Stam, Robert Burgoyne, and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis (1992, 203) review the development of intertextual criticism. The authors emphasize the way semiotics theorizes the function of art, seeing it as a discourse, not as a stable and discrete creative enterprise. As a discourse, semioticians argue, art works like films respond, "not to reality but to other discourses" (203). My present article sees the representation of colonialist discourses in *Die Another Day* in intertextual contact with current post-colonial cinematic practices, as well as with the previous colonialist discourses of the rest of the films in the Bond series.

Other Bond critics – notably Thomas Price (1992, 17), Jason Mulvihill (2001, 225), and Jeremy Black (2002/2003, 106) – have studied in detail the Cold War politics of the Bond series, and its subsequent destabilization in the post-Cold War era. However, none of the academic literature details the post-colonial implications of the loss of the Cold War as a stable representational grid for the action-adventure cinema. In his concluding remarks on *Die Another Day*, for example, Jeremy Black laments the film's continuing post-Cold War sanitization of Bond, removing his sexism and his smoking and drinking: "All that is left is near-continuous violence, as the newest Bond release, *Die Another Day*, shows. Having once saved Bond, America is now in the process of making him into a stylish automaton – not quite yet on the order of a Schwarzeneggerian terminator, but then the series is not yet finished, is it?" (2002/2003, 112). Rather than lamenting the loss of the sexist, carnal, and I would add racist, components of the Cold War Bond, as Black does, this article proposes that the post-Cold War re-writing of the Bond discourse has had unnoticed effects on the series' more basic representational parameters, in this case its engagement with issues of colonial liberation.

2. Colonialism and the James Bond Film Series

The Cold War films in the Bond series do not have a good track record in post-colonial terrain. The montage opening of *Diamonds Are Forever* (Guy Hamilton, 1971), in which Bond (played by Sean Connery) beats up men and women from around the world while looking for the criminal Blofeld (played by Charles Gray) culminates in a scene in which Bond rips off a woman's bikini top in order to strangle her with it. Such a scene seems a perfect match for Robert Stam's and Louise Spence's definition of colonialist cinema, in their article, "Colonialism, Racism, and Representation":

The magic carpet provided by these apparatuses flies us around the globe and makes us, by virtue of our subject position, its audio-visual masters. It produces us as subjects, transforming us into armchair conquistadores, affirming our sense of power while making the inhabitants of the Third World objects of spectacle for the First World's voyeuristic gaze. (1983: 4)

Although their example is a non-Bond Roger Moore vehicle, *The Wild Geese* (Andrew V. McLaglen, 1978), this analysis describes perfectly the *modus operandus* of not just *Diamonds Are Forever*, but every Bond film. High gloss, First Cinema Bond films celebrate the white spy's ability to make the world a better place for corporate capitalism, and never question the West's culpability in Third World poverty. As one example, *Diamonds Are Forever* uses an ironic disjunction between sound (a British official stating how trustworthy the black workers in South Africa's diamond mines are) and image (black workers smuggling diamonds out of the mine) to argue that it is unreliable black people who are threatening the British economy by destabilizing the diamond market. If ever there existed a process of Otherization, this is it. While in reality, it is white Western capitalism that oppresses black Africans via the diamond trade, the film in essence blames black Africans for oppressing Britain!

Crucially, *Die Another Day* directly reworks the plot of *Diamonds Are Forever*. In the earlier film, Bond takes a hovercraft to cross the channel from Britain to the Netherlands in an attempt to expose Blofeld's plan for using diamonds to create satellite weapons to destroy the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers. As I have already mentioned, *Die Another Day* returns to the hovercraft motif: now they are used to float over the mines in the Korean demilitarized zone, as a precursor to the deployment of the villain's satellite weapon to destroy the zone altogether.

The racist position of the earlier Bond films is most egregiously flaunted in *Live and Let Die* (Guy Hamilton, 1973), about a Caribbean voodoo cult led by powerful (and within the sensibility of the film, therefore dangerous) black people. The film begins with a white spy in New Orleans being murdered by a group of African-Americans pretending to have a funeral in the French Quarter. After they murder the agent, they surreptitiously place his body in a coffin and begin a jazzy celebration, complete with viciously stereotypical wild dancing and riffs on brass instruments. It seemed inconceivable that Tamahori, known for his sensiti-

vity to post-colonial viewpoints, would continue such representations of minority peoples in directing a Bond film.

Not very far into *Die Another Day*, it becomes clear that the film is skillfully able to satisfy Bond fans with the usual genre conventions while at the same time subtly refusing their attachment to colonialist ideology. Bond chases Zao (played by Rick Yune), one of the escaped North Korean rebels, to a gene therapy clinic in Cuba. The clinic, whose purpose is ostensibly to increase Fidel Castro's life expectancy, is revealed to actually be in the business of racial transformation. Bond discovers Zao halfway through the process of whitening his skin so that he will be morphed from an Asian soldier into a white-skinned European aristocrat.

What is to be made of a film, purportedly endorsing colonialist ideology, which has its villains trying to become white like James Bond? Whereas *Live and Let Die* used black skin as a marker of villainy, *Die Another Day* presents a complex engagement with the politics of whiteness. This is perhaps best expressed after the film's opening torture sequence, in which a brutalized Bond emerges out of the North Korean prison as a caveman-like hairy ape. In no other Bond film is his idealized white body susceptible to such animalization. Both by showing Bond's "animal" side and having the villains covet whiteness, *Die Another Day* parts with its Bond predecessors in refusing to present whiteness as a normative category of superiority.

3. The Whiteness of Bond

This essay, then, proposes to see *Die Another Day* in another light, to produce what Stam and Spence label an "aberrant reading" of its racial and colonialist politics. Whereas the film is (like many recent Bond films) a post-modern pastiche of references to its predecessors, I believe it also represents a different sort of post-modernity, a coherent post-colonial parody of the racial politics of these films. While I am deploying these terms from Frederic Jameson's "Post-modernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" in different ways than he originally did (1984), I will use them to demonstrate *Die Another Day's* continuities with the previous films in the Bond cycle, while simultaneously demonstrating a textual realignment of these motifs in the direction of a critique of colonial treatments of whiteness. The details of this argument involve seeing *Die Another Day* as a hybridization of two particular Bond films: it follows the plot of the last Broccoli-produced Sean Connery film, *Diamonds Are Forever*, but reworks the racial imagery of the very first entry in the series, *Dr. No* (Terence Young, 1962).

In *White* (1991), his groundbreaking study of the representation of whiteness in cinema, Richard Dyer suggests that we look for films – his examples are *Jezebel* (William Wyler, 1938), *Simba* (Brian Desmond Hurst, 1955), and *The Night of the Living Dead* (George Romero, 1968) – which render whiteness visible, and therefore analyzable as a category of racial identity. I believe *Die Another Day* is

just such a film, one which uses whiteness as a metaphor to unhinge the generic conventions of Hollywood. In Tamahori's film, the white privilege expressed in James Bond movies is unhinged from its colonialist moorings. The clearest example of this is the trajectory of the film's villain, Colonel Moon (played by Asian actor Will Yun Lee), who successfully completes the racially transformative gene therapy to not just impersonate, but to actually become, the Caucasian Gustav Graves (played by white actor Toby Stevens).

Significantly, as a now white entrepreneur, Graves runs a mine in Iceland which serves as a front for laundering African conflict diamonds. He has not only changed race, but political sensibilities as well. As the Asian Colonel Moon early in the film, he critiques the First World for subjugating other peoples. He first tells Bond that he studied at Oxford and Harvard, where "I majored in Western hypocrisy," and then angrily rants, "It's pathetic that you British still feel you have the right to police the world." Once transformed into the Western Graves, however, he presents a colonialist, capitalist worldview. He is not worried about the exploitation of African workers, but only interested in the power and money he will gain in selling diamonds. He gives the exploitation of the Third World an explicitly white face, as in reality the African diamond trade does funnel money into a white Western Europe.

Even Gustav's name, Graves, resonates with whiteness studies: Dyer claims, sarcastically, in analyzing *The Night of the Living Dead*, that "If blacks have more 'life' than whites, then it must follow that whites have more 'death' than blacks" (1988: 59). Graves, like the zombies in Romero's film, is not only a *deathly* white, but a *deadly* white.

The African conflict diamond plot in *Die Another Day* echoes the story trajectory of the earlier Bond film, *Diamonds Are Forever*. In this earlier film, Blofeld uses diamonds to construct a satellite for focusing the sun's rays to destroy the superpowers' nuclear arsenal. In *Die Another Day*, Graves uses the diamonds to finance the construction of a satellite capable of focusing the sun's rays to destroy the American land mines protecting the Korean demilitarized zone.

In another similarity, both plots center on the plastic surgical transformation of the villains' faces. Blofeld has a number of clones of himself constructed in order to protect himself from Bond the assassin. Colonel Moon has plastic surgery to become the white Westerner Gustav Graves. Yet in the case of *Diamonds Are Forever*, race is not a factor in the villain's transformation, whereas in *Die Another Day* it most certainly is.

Graves' white face is explicitly linked to the colonialist project of other James Bond movies. When Bond finally discovers that Graves and Colonel Moon are one in the same person, Graves/Moon argues, "I chose to model the disgusting Gustav Graves on you [Bond]." Thus, the film presents the villain as psychotic, not for wanting to rule the world as does Dr. No (another Asian "troublemaker"), but for wanting to look like James Bond! In a film cycle devoted as almost no other to ego identification in its audience (we watch Bond because we fantasize about being Bond), this indictment of wanting to look like James Bond

is quite an ideological turn. *Die Another Day* is also the first film in the series to explicitly suggest that Bond is hated not just because he is a spy who will put the villain out of business, but specifically because he is Western and white.

Die Another Day's other source text, *Dr. No*, is also a quintessentially colonialist film. Like *Live and Let Die*, it begins with the murder of a white agent by black people. Its first image is a vicious, racist one: three black men, pretending to be blind (and "comically" accompanied by the song, "Three Blind Mice"), walk through Kingston, Jamaica, entering the grounds of the Queen's Club, where they proceed to murder Strangways, a white British secret service operative. They then shoot his secretary in the chest, leaving a red blood stain on her white shirt. This opening first ridicules the black men with emasculating Stepin' Fetchit racial stereotyping, but then reveals them to be dangerous murderers of white women. The moment thus contradictorily spans the gamut of colonialist treatments of black men – Coon and Buck – but coherently forwards a vision of colonialism as an ordered, beneficent system threatened by the chaos perpetrated by its charges.

This is, of course, inaccurate history: Jamaica became independent on August 6, 1962, two months before *Dr. No*'s London premiere on October 5, 1962 (Chapman: 2000, 78 and 88). In his cultural history of the Bond series, James Chapman aptly captures the absurdity of *Dr. No*'s plotline: "Bond's intervention in Jamaica saves this colonial outpost from the potentially subversive threat of a sinister secret organization – a reaffirmation of white, British superiority at a time when, in reality, Britain was beating a hasty retreat from empire" (78).

As detailed in Cynthia Baron's excellent essay (1994: 68), *Dr. No*'s treatment of the black men on the side of the British is hardly any better. Quarrel (played by John Kitzmiller), a Jamaican fishing boat captain, agrees to take Bond out to the radioactive island Crab Key to investigate. This is Dr. No's lair: to protect it from local incursions, his men have been patrolling it with a flame-throwing tank, which Quarrel believes to be a dragon. Frightened to be on Crab Key, Quarrel drinks rum out of an enormous jug: the film makes fun of his drunkenness with comic music. After Quarrel has served his narrative purpose – getting Bond to Dr. No's island – the film summarily dispatches him, having the dragon immolate him in a fiery death.

It is in Bond's encounter with Dr. No himself, however, that the colonialist politics of the film best contrast with the post-colonialism of *Die Another Day*. After Bond has been captured by Dr. No's men, he is led to dinner with the mysterious terrorist. There, Dr. No (played by the white actor Joseph Wiseman) tells Bond that, "I was the unwanted child of a German missionary and a Chinese girl of good family." Dr. No is thus established as an extortionist tragic mulatto figure. His evil is driven by his unstable racial identity. In his own mind, however, Dr. No believes himself to have overcome this problem. He gloats, "And yet I became treasurer of the most powerful criminal society in China." Bond is surprised by this, again invoking fixed racial categories, "It's rare for the Tongo to trust anyone who isn't completely Chinese." The film confirms its support of

stereotyping, as the racial generalization Bond mentions proves to be right. Dr. No was not to be trusted, since he indeed betrayed the Chinese and stole \$10 million in gold in order to finance his entry into global terrorism.

This sequence's racial binary – Bond's racial purity versus Dr. No's mulattoism – serves as the solid foundation of the film series' racism that *Die Another Day* unhinges. Whereas the dinner scene works to establish Bond's difference from Dr. No, Tamahori's film works to establish the connections between Bond and the villain Graves. In Graves' first appearance, he is given a James Bond moment from a previous film.

About to be knighted by the Queen, Graves produces a spectacular arrival, parachuting onto the front steps of Buckingham Palace. Since he lands using a parachute made out of the British flag, this scene quotes almost directly James Bond's escape at the opening of *The Spy Who Loved Me* (Lewis Gilbert, 1977). Perversely, Chapman reads this opening scene in *The Spy Who Loved Me* to excuse the film's colonialism:

The sexist and patriotic values of the Bond films, therefore, rather than being criticized for their lack of political correctness, should be seen as the essential ingredients which make the Bond films so distinctive. Certainly the foregrounding of patriotic motifs – so brilliantly exemplified in the Union Jack parachute jump of *The Spy Who Loved Me* – has played an important role in the Bond series. (273)

While there is little evidence for such critical irony in the earlier film, *Die Another Day*'s intertextual reference of it is laced with it. For example, Graves arrives to the tune of punk band The Clash's "London Calling" rather than the traditional Bond theme which accompanied Roger Moore. Whatever the politics of the moment, however, it is nonetheless remarkable in a Bond film when someone besides 007 gets to do the glitzy, celebratory stunts usually exclusively associated with the super spy.

The instability of the racial identification between Bond and the villain in *Dr. No* and in *Die Another Day* can be traced through the films' differing treatment of the torture of the white body. In "The White Man's Muscles" chapter in *White*, Richard Dyer analyzes films like *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (George P. Cosmatos, 1985) and *Conan the Barbarian* (John Milius, 1982), which use images of the naked, tortured white body in pain to emphasize the moral transcendence of whiteness. Fairly shocking for a Bond movie, *Die Another Day*'s credit sequence, normally devoted to Bond's phallic gun pleasuring (or torturing, depending on your feminist position) naked women's bodies, is devoted to an Asian woman's torture of Bond's body.

This graphic depiction of torture – Bond's head is thrust into ice water, he is stung repeatedly by scorpions – contrasts to that in *Dr. No*. In the earlier film's most complicated camera movement, we are spared the details of Bond's torture at the hands of Dr. No's men. We begin with a long shot of Dr. No standing above Bond, seated at the dinner table. As Dr. No tells his men, "Soften him up – I haven't finished with him yet," the camera pans left as we follow Dr. No walking away from the table. Once he arrives in the background of the image,

Dr. No turns and begins walking right toward the door. As we follow him, in the foreground, we catch a brief glimpse of Dr. No's men punching Bond. We suddenly dissolve to Bond in his cell, without any discernible bruises.

The film is thus elaborately choreographed to protect the white heroic body from pain, despite the fact that the film's sadism did not earlier spare us from watching Bond shoot Dr. No's white spy, Professor Dent (Anthony Dawson), in the back, after he was disarmed. Conversely, *Die Another Day* builds an equally elaborate montage sequence, but this time to emphasize the white heroic body in pain. Significantly, Tamahori's scene stops short of stripping Bond and fetishizing his torture *à la* Rambo. In this way, *Die Another Day* produces a critique of the two poles of the treatment of the white body in pain: it neither protects the white body magically, as *Dr. No* does, nor does it torment the white body so much that it transcends into the terrain of moral superiority, as happens in the films studied by Dyer.

The linkage between the Bond and Graves characters continues to be developed as *Die Another Day* proceeds. One trope of the Bond films is that the spy must have an inconclusive battle with the villain early in the film. Here they test each other's powers without lasting consequence. In the scene fulfilling this genre requirement, Graves and Bond are revealed to be equally barbaric. Graves' lover, Miranda Frost (played by Rosamond Pike), frequents a fencing club where Graves and Bond first come to blows. The at-first civilized fencing match between the two increases in brutality and finally devolves into caveman-like brawling, reminiscent of Jake's barroom scuffles in *Once Were Warriors*.

The sequence begins with the veneers of civilization intact. Both men wear protective fencing outfits and are connected to electronic sensing equipment that judges their prowess with foils, without the risk of injury. Realizing that Bond and Graves are about to engage in a pre-pubescent battle over manhood, Frost's fencing instructor, Verity (played by Madonna) leaves in a huff, exclaiming "I don't like cockfights." With that comment, Verity lives up to her name; the fencing match indeed gradually devolves into a street fight. The men complete a few half-hearted passes with the foils, then up the stakes by switching to heavier swords. Graves takes off the wires and his shirt to detach himself from the machinery of civilization, and soon the two are tumbling through the fencing club, destroying priceless artwork and furniture as they go. They then switch to fighting with medieval broadswords, crash out of the club, and finally come to fisticuffs in a fountain outside. A thin veneer of civilization returns only when Miranda angrily stops them. Bloodied and battered, they reluctantly shake hands to end their first encounter.

In other Bond films, this initial encounter between Bond and the villain is used to establish the psychosis of the villain and the civilized control of James Bond. For example, in *Never Say Never Again* (Irvin Kershner, 1983), the villain Largo (played by Klaus Maria Brandauer) challenges Bond to a computer game that simulates the economic and military control of the world. As the stakes of the game increase, greater electric shocks are delivered to the game players' hand

controls. When the pain becomes unbearable, the loser of the game is forced to let go of the controls, lest he be seriously injured. Bond loses the first round of the game, but once he learns how to play, he coolly defeats the villain, forcing him to let go of his controls and fall to the floor, writhing in agony.

In the swordfight in *Die Another Day*, there is no distinguishing the behavior of the supposedly civilized Bond and the ostensibly psychotic Graves. At this point in the film, it has not been revealed to the audience that Graves is indeed Moon, who the film has clearly established as psychotic. In the opening North Korean sequence, we see Moon kicking a bag stuffed with a human being. When he stops, he tells his assistant Zao to “get [him] a new anger management therapist.” Thus, with the fencing club brawl, the connection between Bond and Graves has been made; when we learn later that Graves and Moon are one and the same, it becomes difficult to dismiss that Bond can be just as barbaric as the criminal he is trying to thwart.

The tension between criminal and hero that Tamahori draws out in *Die Another Day* is in keeping with the defensiveness of the recent Bond films about 007’s sexuality and his proclivity for violence. The newly female M (played by Judy Dench) finds Bond a dinosaur relic from a now passé Cold War machismo, and tells Bond after he’s been released from North Korean captivity: “You’re no use to anyone now.” This of course forces Bond to once again demonstrate his current and lasting potency.

As if to attenuate this total collapse between hero and villain, the film presents a black man with dreadlocks at the end of the swordfight to soften the effects of Bond’s destructive behavior. After Bond and Graves have destroyed the club, the concierge (played by Oliver Skeete) says to Bond, “The place needed re-decorating anyway.” While clearly meant to have us side with Bond, and against the fencing club’s (and by extension Graves’) phony civilized stuffiness, the comment by Skeete does not actually make a distinction between Graves’ and Bond’s barbaric behavior. The casting of Skeete in the role of wry commentator on the destruction of the exclusive club is particularly apt. A Rastafarian equestrian show jumper who has minor celebrity status in Britain, Skeete is very much a post-colonial figure.

Such is one among many of the deliberate post-colonial interventions in *Die Another Day*; here the film fills its subsidiary roles with an attention to racial difference. Certainly not all of these interventions are liberational: one of Graves’ henchmen, Mr. Kil (played by the Maori actor Lawrence Makoare) is as problematic a racial stereotype as Oddjob (played by Harold Sakata), the hat-throwing murderer from *Goldfinger* (Guy Hamilton, 1964). Mr. Kil comes to a vicious demise: the CIA spy Jinx (played by Halle Berry) cuts off his arm and uses his dead limb to open a handprint lock within Graves’ compound.

As is true of more dystopian cinema – for example, *Batman* (Tim Burton, 1988) – the villains of *Die Another Day* are associated directly with the heroes, muddying the usual distinctions between them. These villains have gadgets every bit as good as Bond’s. For example, during the climactic car chase between Zao

and Bond, Zao has a car that in another Bond movie would only be driven by 007. This results in a stalemate: when Bond fires his car's rockets, Zao fires his, and the rockets blow each other up, harming neither person's car.

Even Bond's charming wit is matched by the villains. Earlier, as Moon and Zao capture Bond in Iceland, Bond quips to Zao, "I've missed your sparkling personality" (Bond's actions resulted in an accident in which diamonds were blown up and implanted into the right side of Zao's face). Zao responds by punching Bond in the stomach, but is also given his own quip: "How's that for a punch-line?"

But it is Moon's trajectory, from an Asian colonel to the white Gustav Graves, around which the film builds its strongest post-colonial critique. Not only does Moon transform into a successful white aristocrat, but toward the end of the film, he dons a cybernetic suit so that he may control Project Icarus, a satellite designed to harness the power of the sun as a weapon against the Earth. The cyborg motif is, of course, another return to *Dr. No*: in the earlier film, the madman's arms were so badly burned during his experiments with radiation, he has replaced them with black iron mechanical ones, capable of squashing metal icons of Buddha, but not of lifting himself out of the vat of boiling coolant where he ends up during the climactic fight with Bond. Again, Graves and Dr. No are similar (both cyborgs) but different (Dr. No is forced to accept cybernetic limbs, while Graves dons the suit of Western technological dominance willingly).

As Bond fights Graves in the cybernetic suit, Moon has followed the full Western trajectory away from his originary Third World identity. Born in North Korea, a country broken in two due to no small part by the actions of Western ideologues, he leaves to attend university at Oxford and Harvard. Moon then begins a relationship with Miranda Frost, a blonde Olympic fencer. When neither of these gestures allows him acceptance in the West, he whitens his skin genetically. Now, after all that, he still needs to fully embrace Western technology, by enveloping himself in it.

On the 747 jetliner from which he controls Icarus, Graves/Moon confronts his father, General Moon (played by Kenneth Tsang), from whom he has taken control of the North Korean military. Shocked to see both his son's white and cybernetic skins, the father responds to his son's monstrosity: "My son. What have you done to yourself?" The general is appalled at the depths to which his son has fallen. The father taught his son pride in an Asian tradition: Moon quotes *The Art of War* for his father's pleasure. Whereas Moon's cultural reference is to Asian military power, Dr. No's is to British power: as Bond enters Dr. No's dining room, he passes Francisco Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington, one of the long-standing jokes in the Bond series. At the time of the filming of *Dr. No*, the portrait had recently been stolen. The film's joke was that Dr. No was the thief. The gag continued in later films. In *Diamonds Are Forever*, for example, the portrait appears in the penthouse apartment of Willard Whyte (a.k.a., Blofeld), another split villain motif which is racialized in *Die Another Day*.

Furthermore, in *Die Another Day*, the general sent his son to the West in the hopes of defeating the North Korean hardliners, of building “a bridge with the West.” The General laments bitterly that all the West did “was to corrupt him.” The temporality of the film is important here: if one traces back from the film’s release date in December 2002, back through the 14 months during which Bond was purportedly in captivity, his capture by the North Koreans would have taken place in October of 2001, during the crisis immediately following the terrorist attacks on September 11.

This timeline is certainly supported by M’s comments to Bond upon his return. In discussing his uselessness in an equally abandoned London Underground station, M tells Bond, “the world has changed while you’ve been away.” Clearly *Die Another Day* is a film concerned with the issues that surround 9/11. Tamahori has positioned General Moon as a hero for trying to build a meaningful relationship with the West, and yet also gives the character angry lines about the corruption that is found there. In a world where George W. Bush was saberrattling against North Korea – Bush of course later moved on to bombing Afghanistan and invading Iraq – Tamahori has painted a portrait, not of straightforward imperialism, but of a complicated post-colonial understanding of international relations.

A return to the film’s opening offers another way of understanding its interest for post-colonial criticism. 007’s surfboard entrance in the film references several other Bond films. In *A View to a Kill* (John Glen, 1985), Bond rescues microfilm material from a compound in Siberia by skiing to freedom. Mid-way, as his skis are blown off his feet, he pulls the runner off a demolished snowmobile, and uses it as a snowboard accompanied by Beach Boys surfer music.

More similar in tone to the opening of *Die Another Day*, however, is the opening of *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* (Peter Hunt, 1969), which also begins with geopolitical conflict played out on the beach; while Bond (played this one time by George Lazenby) does not surf in this film, he does knock out one of his opponents with a surfboard. The use of surfboards gives these films a further inflection, perhaps to *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979), where Western arrogance against the people of a different Asian peninsula was also signified by the incongruity of a tourist activity – surfing – in the midst of a war.

Films that represent the conversion of warfare into tourism, including *Apocalypse Now* and the more recent, *The Beach* (Danny Boyle, 2000), made by Westerners, tend not to critique colonialist uses of post-colonial locales. The conversion of warfare into post-colonial tourism allows for an intertextual comparison that distinguishes between *Apocalypse Now* as a colonialist text and *Die Another Day* as a post-colonialist one. For despite its Vietnam-as-madness motifs, *Apocalypse Now* suffers from Chinua Achebe’s critique of Western liberal modernism as exemplified by Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Achebe argues that whatever the white European’s feelings about colonialism, one cannot build a critique of its madness without the representation of people living directly under the

heels of its project. In his speech on Conrad, delivered in 1975 at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Achebe argues:

The point of my observations should be quite clear by now, namely, that Conrad was a bloody racist. [...] A Conrad student told me in Scotland last year that Africa is merely a setting for the disintegration of the mind of Mr. Kurtz. Which is partly the point: Africa as setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as a human factor. Africa as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril. [...] And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot. (788)

Both *Heart of Darkness*, and Coppola's film version of it set in Vietnam, suffer from this imperialist vision: these texts do not take seriously the representation of African and Vietnamese people, respectively. Once focused on the complex representation of the racial identities of the villains in *Die Another Day*, the same cannot be said of Tamahori's film.

For example, the effects of white oppression on people of color is indicted directly by the film. During the sequence in Cuba, the ugliness of the white tourist is deliberately exposed. An obnoxious Australian violently threatens the Third World people who serve him at the hotel where he awaits passage to the gene therapy clinic (where we can only assume he's *not* going to be changed into a person of color: the desire for racial change is not a two way street, alas). At one point, the Australian sticks a gun into a Cuban waiter's crotch, threatening to turn him into "Fidel Castrato." His white companions laugh hysterically at this "joke."

Clued into the Australian's nasty behavior by the African-American spy Jinx, James Bond the next day breaks into his hotel room, knocks him unconscious, and steals his ticket for passage to the clinic. Bond gently says hello to a Cuban prostitute in the Australian's room. Knowing that the racist bully is not worth making a fuss over, she responds to Bond's violence against her john with complete and utter indifference.

In the film's most celebrated intertextual reference to the Bond film cycle, Jinx, as 007's American CIA partner, emerges out of the ocean, bikini-clad with knife at her side, as an homage to Ursula Andress' similar appearance in *Dr. No*, the first film in the Bond series. The original scene with Andress was recently voted the "Sexiest screen moment of all time" in November 2003 by a popular opinion poll conducted in Great Britain. This scene is *Die Another Day*'s most problematic "update" of the Bond sagas: it argues that while Bond's partners in the early films always had to be white, the modern Bond is permitted a multicultural sampling of lovers. Bond can now use his sexual prowess to seduce all women, not just the white ones.

Bond, of course, has had sex with women of color before. Most significantly, he goes to bed with May Day (played by Grace Jones), the African-American villainess of *A View to a Kill*. Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott end their cultural studies book on the Bond series, *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero*, with a study of this relationship in *A View to a Kill*, which was

the last Roger Moore Bond film. May Day, a muscular black woman, is both lover and partner-in-crime of the villain Zorin (played by Christophen Walken).

The sequence begins with May Day teaching Zorin karate. As they fight, they fall over, and Zorin thrusts himself on top of May Day. They begin to make love. They are interrupted by an intruder alert alarm as Bond infiltrates their compound. They go looking for him, only to find him naked in May Day's bed. Zorin instructs May Day to take care of Bond. She enters the bedroom, strips, and gets into bed with him. As Bennett and Woollacott describe it: "When Bond leans over to her, however, she roughly thrusts him aside and – with his pliable acquiescence – places herself on top of him leaving the viewer with little doubt as to who is going to do the lovemaking to whom. In brief, Bond's sexuality, like his Englishness, is little more than a damp squid" (1987: 292). Thus, *A View to a Kill* has Bond's encounter with an African-American woman take place within the confines of a delicate ballet of power, where she is merely a surrogate for the white fascist's (he's a genetic superman created in a Nazi concentration camp) desire to dominate Bond.

The casting of Halle Berry as the African-American Jinx in *Die Another Day*, on the heels of her Oscar-winning performance in *Monster's Ball* (Marc Forster, 2001), is crucial for interpreting Tamahori's film's differing representation of race in terms of Bond's sexuality. In both the films, Berry is drawn into a relationship which includes rough, animalistic sex with the white protagonist. Whereas *Die Another Day* is interested in post-colonial complexity for its male characters, this cannot be said of its female ones. Compared with her character in *Monster's Ball* (and with Grace Jones' in *A View to a Kill*), Berry's character's sex with Bond is romanticized and normalized. In the midst of their hyper-passionate embraces, she asks coyly, "Are you always this frisky?" to which the recently imprisoned Bond replies, "I've missed the touch of a good woman," referring of course to the bad touch of the North Korean scorpion woman from the credit sequence.

Comparatively, the sex in *Monster's Ball* is so desperate it cannot be said to be romantic or normalized. Berry's character has been alone because her husband was executed, while Billy Bob Thornton's racist prison-guard character pays a diffident prostitute to have sex in which their bodies hardly ever touch. In *Die Another Day*, on the other hand, Bond is presented as a distinctly non-racist lover, and the nature of Jinx' racial identity is muted as much as possible. Unlike *A View to a Kill*, there are no diegetic differences in power to remind us of the inherent differences in cultural power that race is meant to signify in racist American culture.

This does not change, however, the latent meanings of race in the images that the film deploys. In perhaps the film's most resonant scene in this regard, the black Jinx fights the icily white Miranda Frost with samurai swords. Frost's white skin is emphasized by her costume: black spandex exercise bra and trunks. Jinx wins the battle by sticking a knife through *The Art of War* and into Frost's heart. In this way, the film deploys tensions between white, black, and Asian

identities, but only to paper them over. It suggests that Jinx won the battle because of her loyalty to truth and justice, and therefore whiteness, whereas Frost lost because she betrayed her racial heritage and sided with villainous Asians.

4. Conclusion

As the Bond/Jinx romantic subplot indicates, in forwarding this argument about the post-colonial engagements in *Die Another Day*, I am by no means suggesting that Tamahori's is a monolithically progressive film. Its villains are still Third World lunatics while Bond and the Americans still win the day.

However, the tonalities of the film are much more nuanced than the other films in the Bond series; I believe this is how the film and *Once Were Warriors* cohere as projects chosen by Lee Tamahori, a very talented director. As a post-colonial subject himself (his father is Maori and his mother is British), Tamahori has complexly negotiated a career which encompasses both traditional success in Western media (as a commercial photographer, as a director of television commercials, and as the Hollywood film director of 1996's *Mulholland Falls*, 1997's *The Edge*, and 2001's *Along Came a Spider*) as well as in the counter-ideological, post-colonial cinema of liberation (of which *Once Were Warriors* is an excellent example).

Die Another Day takes established Bond conventions and tweaks them in the direction of a more compelling political complexity. Colonel Moon is at once the film's villain, but his villainy is not exclusively carried by his Asian identity: it is also conveyed by his affinity for Western hyper-technological whiteness. The Madonna song's lyrics best capture, perhaps, Tamahori's film's methods: "I'm gonna break the cycle ... I'm gonna shake up the system ... I'm gonna avoid the cliché." This engagement with *Die Another Day* has argued that, in terms of the colonialist project of the James Bond film cycle, Tamahori has accomplished just such a cycle-breaking, system-shaking, cliché-avoiding project, and action cinema is much the better for it.

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Buchbesprechungen

Gunter Lorenz. Adjective Intensification – Learners versus Native Speakers: A Corpus Study of Argumentative Writing. Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999. xii, 321pp. Hb. € 89.00. ISBN 90-420-0528-9.

In order to be communicatively successful messages have to be interesting. As Gunter Lorenz argues in his study, the communicative significance of intensification lies in the fact that it invests messages with sufficient interest to catch the recipients attention by signalling “personal commitment as well as truth and value judgements” (24). However, while adjective intensification in English is grammatically fairly straightforward, it is also riddled with intricacies on the semantic-collocational level. Given the communicative importance of adjective intensification Gunter Lorenz’s study is a welcome contribution towards an adequate description and systematisation of this complex field.

As the title *Adjective Intensification – Learners versus Native Speakers* suggests, the study not only aims to describe the use of adjective intensifiers by native speakers (NS) but also contrasts it with that of non-native speakers (NNS) and discusses the pedagogical implications of the findings. It takes its inspiration from British linguistics, most notably British Contextualism (Firth, Halliday, Sinclair) and the London school around Randolph Quirk. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the study is essentially empirical and corpus based in orientation (chapter one).

The four subcorpora used are collections of English argumentative writing of British and German secondary school pupils and university students. Since German NNS were either university students who majored in English or secondary school pupils between 16 and 18 years of age who had taken part in the *Bundeswettbewerb Fremdsprachen*, Lorenz’ description of them as “advanced learners” (13) seems fair. Furthermore, by taking data from pupils and students of the NS and NNS population respectively, the study aims to establish a proficiency gradient ranging from German pupils (least proficient) to British university students (most proficient).

Given the essential gradience character of English word classes and the high level of innovation and creativity which can be found in the field of adjective intensification, it does not come as a surprise that a considerable part of the study is dedicated to the question of what actually counts as an instance of an intensifier-adjective construction. Thus chapter four discusses the delimitation of adjectives from other word classes and chapters five to seven are dedicated to a discussion of items which serve as adjective intensifiers. Lorenz argues in favour of an open-ended approach which does not depend on preconceived notions or a priori lists of possible candidates.

With respect to what counts as an adjective (chapter four) Lorenz casts his net wide; occasionally, one might argue, too wide, as when he asserts that “where *Ved* occurs attributively, it can safely be regarded as adjectival” (42). Instead of classifying the bold item in *no clearly defined project* as an adjective, one might just as

well see it as the past participle of the verb *define*, a view which is maybe supported by the stability of the intensifier-Ved-collocation in the sequence *they did not clearly define the project* → *the project was not clearly defined* → *no clearly defined project* as well as by the fact that *defined* is non-gradable, does not collocate with the central adjective intensifier *very*, but combines with the adverb *well*, which freely modifies verbs but with the notable exception of *well aware* and possibly *well worth* hardly modifies adjectives. While for the purposes of a descriptive study like the one under review it is certainly better to err on the side of generosity, it has to be pointed out that this generosity has consequences elsewhere in the study. Thus, in chapter five Lorenz includes *much* in the list of closed class adjective intensifiers, arguing that it combines with participial adjectives as in *much needed* (64-65). However, since *much* is predominantly a verb intensifier (as in *he talks too much*) and – with the exception of comparative forms – never occurs with adjectives other than participial ones, one might take the combination *much needed* as evidence for the (participle of) verb status of *needed* rather than the adjective intensifier status of *much*.

Adjective intensifiers are broadly subclassified into closed class intensifiers such as *very* or *rather* (chapter five) and open class intensifiers such as *absolutely* or *remarkably*, i.e. items which are regularly derived from adjectives by adding *-ly* (chapters six and seven). Clearly, the latter group is linguistically more interesting, not only because it is collocationally more complex but also because the items in this group show a general move towards grammaticalisation. Lorenz lucidly discusses grammaticalisation in terms of the transition between modal adverb and intensifier; he takes *very* as an example of a formerly modal but now fully grammaticalised intensifier (85-87) and *really* as an item which is just in transition, dis-

playing both intensifier uses (*This is a really surprising question*) and modal uses (*Hongkong is not really Chinese anymore*) (103-08). Since grammaticalisation is a gradient phenomenon, Lorenz argues in favour of a wide conception of open class intensifiers (87-89) and while this plea is generally convincing, he can occasionally be criticised for overstating his case. For example, he argues that *blatantly clear* can not be meaningfully paraphrased as “clear in a blatant way” but is rather just a variant of *perfectly clear* or *absolutely clear* (87-88). However, the top five adjectives which follow *blatantly* in the BNC are *obvious*, *political*, *unfair*, *racist* and *false*. Especially the last three items can be seen as evidence for the negative semantic prosody of *blatantly*. Furthermore, a look at the concordance data for the most common collocation *blatantly obvious* suggests, that it typically appears in contexts of negative judgement expressed by the speaker / author: “*The Beauty Myth casts bright light on the ugly facts about woman’s current situation and social identity – facts which are blatantly obvious, but to which women seem to remain blind and submissive*” (BNC). “*As news of the result came through, it was blatantly obvious to most people that underhand tactics must have been used against the Tory rebels*” (BNC). “*It is blatantly obvious here that Mitch has been taken in by Blanche’s deception*” (BNC). From this it should be clear that *blatantly* is nothing like a neutral intensifier; rather it still carries with it the negative load of its adjective base *blatant*. While *blatantly* must therefore be located on the gradient between manner adverb and intensifier (without having reached full intensifier status, yet), it is doubtful whether *possibly* or *probably* should be seen as intensifying adverbs at all. Lorenz puts them in a class of adverbs on the gradient between modal and scalar (or intensifying) meaning along with items such as *clearly* or *obviously* (101). It is

easy enough to see, how (epistemic) modality and intensification go together with respect to *clearly* or *obviously* – if someone is obviously annoyed, he must be quite annoyed; otherwise his annoyance would not be obvious – but establishing this connection is much harder with respect to *probably* or *possibly*. Thus a phrase like *a possibly harmful ingredient* says something about the likelihood of the ingredient's harmfulness but does not say anything about the degree of harmfulness. This can be easily demonstrated by the fact that it is possible to insert another intensifier such as *very* (*a possibly very harmful ingredient*). If *possibly* actually acted as a diminisher, as Lorenz claims, it should clash semantically with a booster such as *very* (cf. the clash in **a slightly very harmful ingredient*). This criticism, however, does not affect Lorenz' general notion of the gradience character of open class intensifiers and once again it must be said that for the purposes of the present study it is certainly better to err on the side of generosity.

Having established the fact that the class of intensifiers draws some of its members from other semantic adverb classes via gradual grammaticalisation, a semantic classification of those adverbs which involve some intensifying force seems in order (chapter 7). Lorenz subdivides open class intensifiers into five semantic groups: scalar adverbs such as *absolutely*, *enormously* or *barely* function solely as degree adverbs whereas the other four groups do not function primarily as degree adverbs, but involve the notion of intensification in a secondary way. Thus, modal adverbs such as *certainly*, *plainly* or *surely* have a primary epistemic function, evaluative adverbs such as *awfully*, *remarkably* or *ridiculously* primarily express speaker stance, comparative adverbs such as *especially*, *comparatively* or *relatively* involve reference to a standard, and semantic feature copying (SFC) adverbs such as

expertly (*trained*), *lavishly* (*heaped*) or *heavily* (*loaded*) contain semantic features which are also present in the modified adjective. This classification is not so much the result of theoretical considerations, but rather seems to be driven by the data contained in Lorenz' corpora. Judging from the adverbs given as illustrations, the classes are quite convincing.

In chapter eight Lorenz discusses deviant intensifier-adjective-constructions in the NNS corpora. Deviations concern morphology (**detailly organised parties*, 142), position (**the danger of a too rapid progress*, 149) and collocation (*seriously guarded*, 152). Whereas morphologically and positionally deviant constructions are mostly straightforwardly wrong, collocational deviations are more usually stylistically awkward rather than just wrong. Lorenz explains the stylistic awkwardness of certain combinations in terms of a misapplication of the semantic classes discussed in chapter seven. Thus, the combinations *seriously guarded* and *desperately covered* can be seen as a failed attempt to employ an evaluative adverb for intensification (153). In the end, however, the awkwardness of these combinations simply boils down to the fact that it is barely possible to interpret them in a natural unforced way. After all, in what sense can the guarding of a place be considered serious? It is therefore not quite clear whether the semantic classes employed are pedagogically useful. This is different with respect to what Lorenz calls "scalar incompatibility." Drawing upon the Quirkian classification of intensifiers, Lorenz convincingly points out that a combination such as *absolutely easy* is awkward, because as a maximiser *absolutely* combines with non-gradable adjectives such as *impossible* or *true*, but not with gradable adjectives such as *easy* (155-56). The latter combine with boosters such as *very* or *extremely* and predictably a combination such as *extremely easy* is quite acceptable. In the

light of these problems Lorenz advises against learners' attempts to be too original and witty in their contribution as these attempts often misfire. After all, he argues, it is the cumulative effect of stylistic errors, which creates the effect of "foreign-soundingness" (165). One can see this point well enough, although it is somewhat at odds with other judgements of learner language in the study, as when the author talks about "the 'functional reduction' in learner language" (80) or "the often observed impression of a 'lack of originality' in German learners' intensification" (132).

While there is statistical information to back up and enrich the points made throughout the study, it is chapter nine which uses statistics most extensively to explore differences between NS and NNS. It emerges that NNS use a higher number of standard closed class intensifiers in comparison to NS, who are more varied and choose more open-class items (169-70). Whereas this may have been expected, the fact that NNS overuse adjective-intensification in general (167) is more of a surprise. Since this is equally true for amplifiers as well as downtoners (190), Lorenz suggests that NNS show a general tendency to be "wordier," of "too much communicative effort" (199-200). This is well in line with another statistical finding: NNS use intensified adjectives in positions where NS generally avoid them, most notably attributively in subject NPs (which commonly act as theme and reiterate given information) (203-06). The resulting effect is thus one of "information overcharge" (206).

In sum, the study impresses by its wealth of descriptive detail and analytic insight. Where it can be criticised, this happens in areas of gradience, which naturally leave some room for disagreement. Since the study is not only well argued but also well written, it can be recommended without reservations. A rewarding read.

Michael Klotz (Erlangen)

Jan Svennevig. Getting Acquainted in Conversation: A Study of Initial Interaction. Pragmatics & Beyond, New Series 64. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2000. x, 383pp. Hb. € 114.00. ISBN 90-272-5078-2.

Wenn zwei Menschen miteinander ins Gespräch kommen, dann hängt ihr kommunikatives Verhalten ganz wesentlich davon ab, ob sie sich schon kennen oder nicht. Untersuchungsgegenstand dieses Buches sind Gesprächsanfänge von (sozial gleichgestellten) Erwachsenen, die sich zum ersten Mal begegnen, einander kennenlernen und miteinander vertraut werden wollen. Es geht um die sprachlich-kommunikativen Bedingungen, unter denen bilaterale soziale Beziehungen entstehen. In der Regel laufen Erstbegegnungen nach folgendem Muster ab: Auf eine, gleichsam expositorische Phase, in der man völlig unverfängliche Informationen austauscht (Name, Herkunft), folgt das Stadium des 'Beschnupperns' ("feeling out," 235). Behutsam, immer bereit, das Selbstwertgefühl und das Selbstbestimmungsrecht des anderen nicht zu beschädigen, tastet man sich über neutrale, also sichere, Themen (Wetter) zu allgemein-enzyklopädischen (Kultur) und persönlichen (Familienstand) vor. Gewöhnlich entscheiden diese ersten Minuten des Zusammenseins darüber, ob man sich sympathisch, umgänglich und freundlich findet oder nicht, anders gesagt, ob 'die Chemie stimmt.' Woran liegt das und, die wichtigere Frage, hat man einen Einfluß darauf? Svennevig bejaht dies und vertritt die These: Wie sich die sozialen Beziehungen im Laufe des erstmaligen Zusammentreffens entwickeln, hängt entscheidend vom *sprachlichen* Verhalten ab und weniger vom kinesischen (Mimik, Gestik, Körperhaltung, Blickkontakt). Ausschlaggebend ist die Wahl der Strategien des sprachlichen Handelns und der damit kompatiblen sprachlichen Mittel.

In der Forschung hat sich bislang vorwiegend die Sozialpsychologie mit Erstbegegnungen befaßt (die ja durch einen intensiven Informationsaustausch auf der Beziehungsebene geprägt sind). Die vorliegende, genuin linguistische Studie füllt somit eine bedauerliche Lücke. Sie basiert auf einem *Textkorpus* von fünf dreißig- bis sechzigminütigen Gesprächsanfängen in norwegischer Sprache. Die Beteiligten treffen sich nicht nur in einer 'natürlichen' Umgebung (z.B. im Restaurant und nicht im Labor), sondern auch aus einem 'natürlichen' (über das arrangierte Experiment hinausgehenden) Anlaß (z.B., um sich kennenzulernen, da sie zukünftig beruflich miteinander zu tun haben werden).

Svennevig richtet sein Augenmerk auf drei *sprachliche Strategien* des Ablaufmusters von Erstbegegnungen: *Vorstellung* ("self-presentation"), *Themaeführung* ("topic introduction") und *Nebenbeiträge* ("side sequences"). Die Vorstellung, in der man (nicht allzu) Persönliches mitteilt und erfährt, hat die Funktion, die anfängliche Unsicherheit zu beseitigen und den Boden für die Entwicklung eines thematischen Gesprächs zu bereiten. Mit der Wahl eines bestimmten Themas und der Art, wie sie es (eivernehmlich) einführen, versuchen die Gesprächspartner, ein Gefühl der Vertrautheit und Zusammengehörigkeit zu erzeugen. Nebenbeiträge tragen zur allmählichen Entstehung einer gemeinsamen Wissensgrundlage bei; Fremde bewegen sich ja zunächst phatisch wie thematisch auf dünnem Eis und müssen daher erst Schritt für Schritt Ansichten, Einstellungen und Kenntnisse des Anderen ausloten.

Svennevigs Analysen sind *methodisch* von erhellender Komplexität. Auf die *Beschreibung* der sprachlichen Manifestation der drei konversationellen Strategien folgt stets in einem zweiten Schritt die (hermeneutische) *Erklärung*, in der die beschriebenen Phänomene dem Ziel des Vertrautwerdens und der sozialen Annäherung

zugeordnet werden. Dazu greift er auf die Theorien der ethnomethodologischen *Konversationsanalyse* und der linguistischen *Pragmatik* zurück, die sich, leicht modifiziert, in idealer Weise für seine Zwecke ergänzen. Die Konversationsanalyse ist formorientiert, empirisch und in erster Linie an der Strukturierung kommunikativer Abläufe interessiert. Hingegen befaßt sich die linguistische Pragmatik in Gestalt der klassischen Sprechakththeorie von Austin und Searle sowie der Kommunikationstheorie von Grice mit Funktion und Bedeutung sprachlicher Äußerungen, ohne jedoch ihren interaktionalen Charakter zu berücksichtigen. Um dieses Manko zu beheben, wählt Svennevig eine modifizierte, empirisch ausgerichtete Variante der Pragmatik. Auf der Basis eines hermeneutischen Verständnisses nimmt er an, daß die (kommunikativen) Ziele, Funktionen (Sprechhandlungen), Themen und Bedeutungen gemeinsam (und permanent) von den Gesprächsteilnehmern ausgehandelt werden. Nicht die kognitiven Prozesse sind Gegenstand der Beschreibung, sondern ihre Auswirkungen bzw. die Spuren, die sie im Redewechsel hinterlassen. Ergänzt wird das Erklärungsmodell durch die (nun schon klassische) *Höflichkeitstheorie* von Brown und Levinson, die allerdings strikt kontextbezogen interpretiert wird: Höflichkeit und *face* gelten nicht als Eigenschaften sprachlicher Äußerungen, sondern hängen von den jeweiligen Gesprächsumständen ab und werden ebenfalls ständig neu ausgehandelt. Es zeigt sich rasch, daß diese methodische Konzeption dem Erkenntnisinteresse des Autors auf ideale Weise angepaßt ist.

Die analytischen Kernkapitel sind den drei erwähnten konversationellen Strategien gewidmet. Die erste manifestiert sich in einer dreiteiligen *Vorstellungsfolge* ("self-presentational sequence"), bestehend aus (a) Eingangsfrage (*where are you from?*), (b) Antwort (*Tynset*) und (c) Bestätigung (*I see*), Nachfrage (*are you really?*)

oder Mitteilung (*I've never been to Tynset, I'm from Bergen*). Diese Vorstellungssequenzen sind restriktiv und erlauben nur bestimmte Handlungen und Inhalte: was man erfragen darf und was nicht, was man von sich selber preisgeben sollte und was nicht, wie der Redewechsel zu regeln ist und wie erstmals erwähnte Informationen zu potentiellen Themengegenständen werden. Svennevig ist allerdings weniger an der speziellen sprachlichen Füllung dieser Sequenzen interessiert, als vielmehr an der Frage, welche Rolle sie für die weitere Gesprächsführung, für die Vorbereitung der ersten Themaeführung, für die Selbst-Charakterisierung und nicht zuletzt für die Entstehung eines Gefühls von Vertrautheit, Zusammengehörigkeit, Sympathie, kurz von Bekanntschaft spielen. Der Übergang von dieser Expositionsphase zur thematischen Entfaltung des Gesprächs wird typischerweise durch Handlungen der *Themaeführung* bewerkstelligt. Im ersten (theoretischen) Teil des entsprechenden Kapitels übernimmt Svennevig den inzwischen weithin akzeptierten Vorschlag, *Thema* nicht als ein statisches, invariables, im Text gegebenes Produkt zu beschreiben, sondern als einen dynamischen, variablen, dem Gesprächsverlauf immer wieder gemeinsam anzupassenden Prozeß. Im zweiten (angewandten) Teil werden die Mechanismen der Themaeführung herausgearbeitet. Abschließend erfährt man, wie sich Einführung und Behandlung von Themen auf die Beziehungsentwicklung auswirken. Das nicht unerwartete Fazit lautet: "The choice of different neutral and personal topics is determined by the two competing goals of saving face on the one hand and developing familiarity and solidarity on the other" (255). *Nebenbeiträge*, die dritte konversationelle Strategie des Vertrautwerdens, sind vorzüglich dazu geeignet, den Wissensstand des Gesprächspartners zu eruieren und den eigenen zu demonstrieren, und zwar, während

man sich bereits themabezogen äußert. Auf diese Weise erhält man ein genaueres Bild des Partners, gibt dem eigenen Bild schärfere Konturen und stärkt das Gemeinschaftsgefühl. In einem abschließenden Kapitel wird das zuvor erarbeitete Instrumentarium an zwei (auf den ersten Blick unterschiedlichen) Gesprächsanfängen in toto erprobt, mit dem Ziel, "to show, on the one hand, to what degree the conversations are routinized, constrained, and thus *similar* to each other. On the other hand, [...] to show their flexibility and idiosyncracies, and thus the *variation* between them" (317).

Das Buch ist gut geschrieben. Svennevig weiß, wie man eng am Text argumentiert und mit Geschick und Sprachgefühl die sprachlichen Strukturen den unmittelbaren Funktionen und übergeordneten Kommunikationszielen zuordnet. Nicht ganz von der Hand zu weisen ist allerdings der (auch von ihm selbst erwähnte) Einwand, daß die Beschreibung zumindest der allgemeinen Handlungsstrategien und ihrer sprachlichen Muster genau dem entspricht, was man intuitiv erwarten würde. Wir haben es hier mit einem Charakteristikum zu tun, das die neuere Korpuslinguistik insgesamt zu prägen scheint: Die heute mögliche (und inzwischen übliche) Analyse riesiger Wortmengen führt nicht automatisch zu grundsätzlich neuen Erkenntnissen, sondern untermauert linguistisch das bereits vorhandene Wissen. Daß man dabei einen unverhältnismäßig großen Aufwand betreibt, der in keinem vernünftigen Verhältnis zum Ergebnis steht, ist eine Gefahr, der auch Svennevig an einigen Stellen erliegt. So ist nicht immer für den Leser zu erkennen, welchen Erkenntnisgewinn eine Analyse bringt, "which pays more attention to the details of interactional procedures than is common" (334), oder eine (Über-)Klassifizierung wie die der Kategorie *side sequence* in die Neben- und Unterkategorien *repair sequence*, *monitor sequence*, *digressions*, *misplaced sequence*, *resource scan-*

ner, insert expansions und aside. Manche terminologischen Unterscheidungen bleiben unscharf, etwa die zwischen *cohesion*, *coherence*, *local coherence*, *neutral coherence*, *topical coherence*. Bedenkt man darüber hinaus, daß nicht alle (z.B. in den Forschungsübersichten des zweiten und dritten Kapitels) angesprochenen Punkte für das Thema der Studie relevant sind, kommt man während der Lektüre schon früh zu dem Schluß, daß das Buch ohne Substanzverlust hätte gekürzt werden können. Der Verfasser hätte dann Platz gehabt, wenigstens kurz auf einige andere interessante Fragen einzugehen. Etwa darauf, ob sich sozial nicht Gleichgestellte in Gesprächsanfängen strategisch und sprachlich anders verhalten, oder darauf, inwieweit die Analyseergebnisse kulturspezifisch, hier also durch die Traditionen und Konventionen der norwegischen Gesellschaft festgelegt sind. Insgesamt gesehen ist dies jedoch eine empfehlenswerte Studie. Sie ist aus meiner Sicht vor allem deshalb lesenswert, weil Svennevig am Beispiel der Gesprächseingangssequenzen überzeugend demonstriert, wie (analytisch und explikatorisch) leistungsfähig ein methodisches Vorgehen sein kann, das auf der Verbindung eines genuin textanalytischen und eines empirisierten pragmatischen Ansatzes beruht.

Wolfram Bublitz (Augsburg)

Denis Donoghue. Adam's Curse: Reflections on Religion and Literature. Erasmus Institute Books. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001. x, 178pp. Hb. \$ 24.95. ISBN 0-268-02009-4.

Adam's Curse, subtitled *Reflections on Religion and Literature*, is the published record of the Erasmus Lectures held in 2000 at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. Yeats's poem provides the initial fo-

cus for Denis Donoghue's explorations of the relationship of religion, or morality, and literature, or aesthetics. Donoghue takes Yeats's lines "there is no fine thing / Since Adam's fall but needs much labouring" to be the signature of literature under the condition of the Fall of Man: of an all-pervasive feeling of "suspicion undermining trust" (Josipovici), or "the shadow that falls between the potency and the existence" (Eliot), or the writer's distrust in his own craft seen in the later works of Shakespeare, in Wordsworth and Coleridge, Kafka and Beckett.

In each chapter Donoghue takes as his starting point a phrase from a key text. In chapter 2, "God without Thunder," John Crowe Ransom's book of 1929 provides the author with an opportunity to discuss, from a Roman-Catholic standpoint and enlisting the authority of Karl Rahner, the doctrine of the Trinity and to examine the representation of God in literature, in particular the tendency, as he says, inherent in any form of narration to anthropomorphize God: "Language is a changer of natures, it changes every nature into human nature. God has to put up with the indignity" (23). "Restoring the thunder" means avoiding to "assimilate God to ourselves." While Donoghue's strength lies in his analysis of literary texts, his theological argument appears one-sided. A different, and more positive, perspective on language in literature could have been developed on the basis of the doctrine of the incarnation.

Chapter 3, "Church and World," in which Donoghue traces the rise and fall of the authority of the Church, takes its title from a book by Hans Urs von Balthasar, but its main reference is Henry Adams's book *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* from which Donoghue quotes extensively, beginning with Adams's analysis of the role of the Church in the twelfth century and ending with the vision of an empty church at the beginning

of the twentieth. Against all pressures of 'aggiornamento' Donoghue pleads for the Church "to have a mainly antagonistic relation to the world" (46-47) in order to maintain its influence in the world.

Chapter 4, "Otherwise than Being," discusses "the ethical turn in criticism and philosophy"; it represents the author's struggle with Emmanuel Levinas' books *Totality and Infinity*, and *Otherwise than Being, or, Beyond Essence*. Levinas stands for the turn from ontology to ethics in philosophy, but Donoghue finally parts company with him because "he is hostile to art, literature, and aesthetics" (61), returning after many pages to the initial question of the ethical turn in criticism. Not unexpectedly, in a brief concluding passage Donoghue pits the aesthetic dimension of literature against the ethical: "A work of literature does not consist of lives transcribed; it consists of lives imagined and brought severally to the condition of form. Form is the making of sense among the lives" (67).

Chapter 5, "Christ and Apollo," takes its cue from a book by William Lynch and Allen Tate's distinction of the symbolic imagination and the angelic imagination. Whereas in Tate's view the first – "Christ" – takes as its starting point concrete human experience ("the body of the world") connecting the human and the divine by way of analogy, the latter – "Apollo" – is characterized by a purely spiritual interpretation of the world. Rejecting "angelism" Donoghue enters into a wide-ranging discussion of the principle of analogy, exploring its function in poetry and its relation to metaphor both in literature and theology and showing its continued relevance from the Church Fathers until the 20th century – e.g. in Eliot or Wallace Stevens. (*Analogical*, however, is mistakenly taken to be the fourth category in the "fourfold medieval system of interpretation," which is, in fact, "*anagogical*.") Donoghue's critique of Lynch opens the

way for a concentration on literary form, in particular on the function of metaphor. Conflating, however, metaphor and synecdoche ("[...] a variant of metaphor by which the part stands for the whole," 81) rather than systematically keeping metaphor and metonymy apart disregards a crucial distinction (similarity vs. contiguity) established e.g. by Roman Jakobson as two distinct semantic operations.

Chapter 6, "Beyond Belief," with its double reference to Wallace Stevens's poem "Flyer's Fall" and a book with the same title by Robert Bellah undertakes a two-pronged critical assault on Stevens's reduction of theology to humanism or aesthetics, and on Bellah's analysis of civil religion in the USA. What is called civil religion Donoghue denounces as "politics masquerading as religion" (109).

In Chapter 7, "After Virtue," Donoghue discusses Alasdair MacIntyre's thesis of the loss of a moral consensus and its consequences in literary criticism, taking as his test case the use of the term 'life' in the hands of literary critics. He defends Larkin's poem "Aubade" against Czeslaw Milosz's charge of nihilism – "being opposed to life" – as well as Heaney's association of "Aubade" with "negation and defeatism" (119), finding fault both with Milosz' assumption that poetry "has always been 'on the side of life'" (116) and Heaney's insistence that "the vision of reality that poetry offers should be transformative." While Donoghue denounces both as "emotivists" who "assert their merely personal preferences while trying to present them as objective and impersonal" (119) he praises F.R. Leavis's "unequivocal" approach to the vocabulary of life. Instead of ideology-ridden slogans he advocates a sense of 'Empsonian' ambiguity, a sober, if modest stance: "to remain in efforts of particularity, analysis and irony" (129).

The title of the last chapter, "The Death of Satan," is taken from a line from

Wallace Stevens's poem *Esthétique du mal* and the title of a book by Andre Delbanco. Milton's Satan is here seen as a real presence and not just as a personification of evil, but despite of a brief revival in the nineteenth century and especially in Baudelaire, Satan's days were numbered from the Enlightenment onwards. Donoghue is concerned about the reduction of evil to an epistemological problem or, as in Wallace Stevens's poem, to a mere stimulus for the imagination. He voices his disapproval of present-day American culture which no longer accepts evil as a radical force and thus refuses to believe in the Devil but rather explains away evil as "deficiency, misfortune, disadvantage" (147). In what are in fact his last words, Donoghue staunchly defends the reality of "the Evil" maintaining against Walter Benjamin a sense of tragedy in literature: "But we still have 'to think the evil' [...] There is nothing to prevent our doing so, using religious terms or terms from religious myths. [...] There is no reason to capitulate to what we are told is the *Zeitgeist*, secular through and through" (152).

Among the critical debates of today Donoghue's book seems strangely out of place. Discussing such notions as the Fall of Man, the representation of God in human language, the position of the Church in the world, or the Devil against the backdrop of present-day American civil society could well appear as anachronistic. The occasion of these lectures at the University of Notre Dame has provided its author with a sympathetic Catholic audience. It would be no surprise if outside this audience Donoghue's conclusions were met with a more critical reception. Even so this book by such a learned author who ranges magisterially over the whole panorama of Western philosophy, theology and literature, will provide ample food for thought. This in itself is no small achievement.

Hans-Werner Ludwig (Tübingen)

Patricia Crain. **The Story of A: The Alphabetization of America from *The New England Primer* to *The Scarlet Letter***. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. xiii, 315pp. Hb. £ 35.00, US \$ 45.00. ISBN 0-8047-3147-8.

The reader of Crain's copious and magnificently produced *The Story of A* witnesses American culture as it pictures itself in its evolving relation to literacy. Crain analyzes representations of the alphabet from 1650 to 1850, focusing on the alphabet as the most basic technology by which American children were taught and 'symbolically formed.' In doing so, Crain adds a new dimension to American cultural studies. On the one hand, her book recovers the development of literacy in the formative period of American culture, persuasively demonstrating how elementary literacy has helped to inform ideas of childhood, womanhood, and authorship. On the other hand, her meticulously researched archive of early educational treatises, ABC books, literary manuals, and novels explores the alphabetization of America in terms of a material history that sheds new light on the ways in which word, image, and literary text interact.

According to Crain, alphabetization refers to a "constellation of activities and practices [...] that surrounds the learning and teaching of the alphabet" (7). Crain points out that children in colonial and antebellum America have learnt the alphabet with the help of the "image-letter-text" (65). *The New England Primer* (1650) is a good case in point. As an elementary reading textbook, it works through letter, image, and text (cf. 38-52). Its most-quoted couplet – "In Adam's fall / We sinned all" – comes with a small woodcut in which the young student can see the scene from the Bible. The verbal and visual figuration of the letter A thus

fulfills a didactic as well as a cultural purpose. While the rhyme helps children to memorize the letters of the alphabet, the particular representations of each letter endow them with the basic tenets of New England Puritanism. Crain maintains that the diverse representations of letters have particular textual, tropic, and cultural characteristics. Furthermore, as an object of representation, "the alphabet is an androgyne, moving back and forth between the text and image" (7). Moreover, Crain understands the alphabet as a historically specific phenomenon as well as an artifact. The alphabetic text constantly intertwines high culture and folk tradition. Crain treats primers and manuals as "low genres" (74) that unite literate and folk culture, letters, and popular iconography. These hybrid texts or miniature "spectacles" (95), as she calls them, often 'scavenge' from such visual artifacts as tavern signs and such oral/aural artifacts as folk rhymes, rhyming slang, and broadsides. Contrary to the widely held opinion that alphabetic education simply functions as an orthodox tool of instruction, Crain's study therefore gives more emphasis to the subtle contestations and negotiations within Reformation, Enlightenment, and Romantic pedagogy.

The five chapters of the book follow a rough chronological order and can be divided into two parts. The first three chapters recount the ways in which the alphabet has been represented to beginners. Chapters 1 and 2 ("Alphabetical Order: The Genre of the Alphabet from the Christ-Cross Row to *The New England Primer*" and "The Republic of ABC: Alphabetizing Americans, 1750-1850") illustrate the shift from religious to secular alphabets. Crain claims that the advent of the image in pedagogy draws the student's attention to books and the printed page, away from oral training. This marks the beginning of a new bond between book and child. Crain shows how alpha-

betization gradually supplants rhetorical instruction not only as "mode of communication but as a primary structuring of subjectivity" (5). Chapter 3 ("That Mother's Kiss: The Alphabet, Gender, and Narrative") focuses on women, especially the mother, as someone whose pedagogical activities impart the cultural significance of the alphabet to the child. The remaining chapters ("WWW: *The Wide, Wide World's Web*" and "The Story of A: Alphabetization in *The Scarlet Letter*") pursue the alphabet into the realm of the novel at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In a highly suggestive reading of Susan Warner's sentimental novel *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), Crain argues that antebellum novels center around alphabetization. Contrary to the European *Bildungsroman*, which chronicles the hero's struggle to map and navigate the world, in Warner's "novel of alphabetization" (149), the protagonist has to read and write herself into existence. In her chapter on Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Crain criticizes the predominance of rhetoric in literary studies as well as the focus on the novel as the sole catalyst of new forms of perception. For instance, she contends that *The New England Primer*, as the reading manual of Anglo-America, contributed decisively to the formation of a literacy which the novels of the "American Renaissance" depended on.

Crain's study is impressive in its wide survey of verbal and visual representations of alphabets that range from sixteenth-century educational treatises to recent TV-ABCs. Nevertheless, despite her concise examination of the "poetics of alphabetization" (96), Crain ultimately laments the "linguistic and representational revolutions of twentieth-century art and literature" (212). In her epilogue, Crain maintains that "postmodern alphabetic representations" (216) have lost their connection to "everyday practices and to cur-

rent visual culture" (221). Since postmodernism empties all signs, television workshops, such as *Sesame Street's* TV-ABCs, communicate "dead letters" (223). To read the "alphabet in motion" (223) simply in terms of a flow of random data "outside" of "human spaces" (223) neglects the fundamental changes in pedagogy that the advent of television has brought about. The book closes in opposing the meaningful circulation of letters in the nineteenth century to postmodernism's verbal and visual randomness. Thus it ignores, however, contemporary practices and activities (i.e., hypertext, computer, internet) that condition the learning and teaching of the alphabet in the media age.

The Story of A is an ambitious book. It charts the transformation of a pedagogy based on oratorical training, to one increasingly immersed in print culture and focused on textual learning. Moreover, the book brings into dialogue the work of material and visual history (Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes, and Friedrich Kittler), thus merging historical analysis and literary close readings into a refreshing and highly accessible style of scholarship. Locating the changing morphology of alphabetic education within an informing context of history, literature, art history, and education, this book will be welcomed by students and scholars across disciplines.

Oliver Scheiding (Tübingen)

Kevin J. Hayes. Poe and the Printed Word. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. xvi, 145pp. Hb. £ 30.00, US \$ 49.95. ISBN 0-521-66276-1.

Die Rezeptionsgeschichte Edgar Allan Poes gibt wie kaum eine zweite Aufschluss über die Paradigmenwechsel in der modernen Literaturtheorie. Vom strikt biografisch ausgerichteten Deutungsansatz psychoanalytischer Kritiker

wie Marie Bonaparte und Joseph Wood Krutch über die formalistischen und textimmanenten Interpretationen von Floyd Stovall und James W. Gargano bis hin zu Charles Feidelsons und David Halliburtons symbolistischen und existenzialistischen Lesarten haben verschiedene theoretische Schulen in Poes Werk immer wieder ein ausgezeichnetes Anwendungsgebiet für ihre literaturwissenschaftlichen Methoden erkannt. Auch Roland Barthes vollzog den Schritt vom Strukturalismus zum Poststrukturalismus mit einer Analyse von "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," und wer in den achtziger Jahren die Binnendifferenzierungen des poststrukturalistischen Theoriefeldes nachvollziehen wollte, kam an einer Lektüre von "The Purloined Letter" und der sich gegenseitig überbietenden Interpretationen Jacques Lacans, Jacques Derridas und Barbara Johnsons nicht vorbei. John Carlos Rows Aufsatz über Rassendiskurse in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* setzte daraufhin eine Entwicklung in Gang, bei der poststrukturalistische Ansätze zunehmend durch politische und postkoloniale Erkenntnisinteressen akzentuiert wurden. In der gegenwärtigen Poe-Forschung wird somit erneut die Frage nach den historischen Bedingungen der Poeschen Literatur gestellt, was die bislang oft inopportune Frage nach Poe als einem "amerikanischen" Autor explizit miteinschließt. Vielversprechende Resultate des sich hier ankündigenden Paradigmenwechsels sind, zum einen, ein verstärktes Interesse an Poes *publizistischen* Aktivitäten innerhalb der literarischen Öffentlichkeit der 1830er und 1840er Jahre und, zum anderen, die wiederentdeckte Relevanz *biografischer* Fragestellungen für die amerikanistische Kulturwissenschaft (so wie sie jüngst durch Louis Menands *The Metaphysical Club* in einem anderen Zusammenhang eindrucksvoll belegt wurde).

Kevin J. Hayes' Buch beansprucht schon über seinen Titel, an den genannten

Entwicklungen teilzuhaben. Das Vorwort kündigt "a focused biography" an (xii), wobei der Fokus auf Poes Verhältnis zur "print culture" liegen soll. Was folgt, ist allerdings weder als Biografie noch als Studie zur literarischen Öffentlichkeit wirklich bedeutsam. In acht kurzen Kapiteln springt Hayes zwischen einem Referat biografischer Fakten und diversen Informationen zur "Printkultur" hin und her, wobei sich letztere meist in Einflussstudien und Lektürekonstruktionen erschöpfen. Deren Ergebnisse bringen selten Überraschendes: "[As a student] Poe [...] read a variety of schooltexts [...] and gave serious attention to the ancient classics" (xiii).

Theoretisch aufgerüstet wird dieser konventionelle – und eigentlich obsolete – Ansatz durch buchwissenschaftliche Fragestellungen, die sich mit Poes Haltung zu unterschiedlichen literarischen Publikationsformen sowie mit seinem Verhältnis zu diversen Textgestaltungsmerkmalen und konkurrierenden Buchbinde-techniken auseinandersetzen. Interessante Anregungen für kommende Studien liefert hier vor allem das zweite Kapitel, das Poes Gebrauch von Manuskripten (etwa während seiner Zeit in West Point) als soziale Distinktionsstrategie deutet, die ihm im folgenden vollkommen unterschiedliche Formen der Veröffentlichung erlaubte. Aber auch hier stoßen Hayes' buchwissenschaftliche Interessen genau dort an ihre Grenzen, wo eine Interpretation der Literatur Edgar Allan Poes erforderlich gewesen wäre. Fast unfreiwillig komisch ist in diesem Zusammenhang das sechste Kapitel ("Poe's Library"), das sich erneut um eine Rekonstruktion der Poeschen Lesebiografie bemüht und dabei die zahlreichen – und einigermaßen unheimlichen – Bibliotheken und Büchersammlungen, die in Poes Texten auftauchen, umstandslos als Wunscherfüllungsfantasien des Autors deutet, ohne die Differenz zwischen Erzähler und Autor in

Rechnung zu stellen: "In a way, it is a little sad to think that Poe, a man with such a passionate interest in books who was such an important part of America's literary scene, could never afford a good library of his own; but we need not grieve for Poe. Perhaps if he had been able to assemble a fine library, he would not have imagined such wonderful ones as those in 'The Philosophy of Furniture,' 'Berenice,' 'The Fall of the House of Usher' and 'The Sphinx'" (86).

Aufschlussreicher sind Hayes' Bemerkungen zur Frage, warum sich Poe nach *Pym* vom Genre des Romans abwendet und auf kurze Formen spezialisiert. Der verdienstvolle Überblick über Publikationsmedien im frühen 19. Jahrhundert mündet allerdings abermals in einer höchst exzentrischen Lesart der Literatur selbst. Hayes glaubt nämlich, dass Poe sein zweites literarisches Großprojekt, *The Journal of Julius Rodman*, einen fiktiven Reisebericht über den amerikanischen Westen, deshalb abbrach, weil er vom *westward movement* erfolgreicher in einer Kurzgeschichte erzählen konnte, nämlich in "A Descent into the Maelström" – einem Text, der von einer Seefahrt vor der Küste Norwegens handelt und unbemerkt von Hayes grundlegende Fragen zum Unterschied mündlicher und schriftlicher Sprache thematisiert. Konkrete Textanalyse interessiert Hayes aber nur sekundär; stattdessen ist er von seiner Auslegung von "A Descent into the Maelström" so fasziniert, dass er sie innerhalb weniger Zeilen (70-71) dreimal wiederholt.

Die durchaus problematische Indifferenz gegenüber literarischer Textinterpretation, die Hayes' Buch auszeichnet, ist möglicherweise für den wissenschaftlichen Ansatz, der hier zum Tragen kommt, insgesamt symptomatisch. Deutlicher nämlich als einem lieb sein kann zeigt *Poe and the Printed Word*, dass Buchwissenschaft eine antiquarische An-

gelegenheit bleibt, wenn sie nicht zugleich auch Textwissenschaft ist. Ähnliches ließe sich über Hayes' Gebrauch biografischer Informationen sagen. Anders nämlich als Louis Menand begreift Hayes Biografie nicht als kulturgeschichtliches Geflecht aus Diskursen, Institutionen und zufälligen Subjektkonstellationen, sondern im konventionellen Sinn als das Nacherzählen der Taten und des Wollens eines mehr oder weniger freien Entscheidungs- und Empfindungsträgers. Stilistisch führt dies zu jenen spekulativen Passagen, an denen die biografische Literatur seit jeher krankt, die im vorliegenden Fall aber durch den Einsatz von Mitteln wie direkter Leseransprache und erlebter Rede besonders zweifelhaft werden. Über einen literarischen Festakt in New York, an dem Poe teilnimmt und dem Hayes ein ganzes Kapitel widmet, heißt es: "Imagine Poe's journey home from the City Hotel [...]. [He] could not help but feel good about his decision to come to New York. How faraway and insignificant his former haunts now appeared" (56-57).

Anhand solcher Passagen wird deutlich, weshalb biografische Ansätze in den Geisteswissenschaften gemeinhin verpöht sind – und es auch bleiben sollten, wenn sie nicht den Weg in die gegenwärtige Kulturtheorie finden und die Bedeutung des Subjektiven aus einem Verständnis dessen ableiten, was selbst nicht subjektiv ist und was sich wohl weiterhin am Besten mit dem Begriff *Diskurs* beschreiben lässt. Zu diesem Schritt bedarf es allerdings mehr als des Nachweises, wer wann welche Autoren gelesen und in welcher Art und Weise in seinen eigenen Texten "verarbeitet" hat. Auch reicht es nicht aus, das Zusammentreffen oder die Rivalitäten großer Persönlichkeiten im Sinne einer Einflussstudie zu konstatieren, ohne sich um die Strukturen öffentlicher Kommunikation und um lokale (nationale wie regionale) Distinktionsmechanismen zu kümmern. So tauchen in Hayes' Buch zwar alle

Namen auf, die man in einer Studie zur amerikanischen Printkultur des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts erwarten darf – wir lesen von John Pendleton Kennedy und Evert Duyckinck, von Nathaniel P. Willis und James Kirke Paulding –, aber eine wirkliche Theorie dessen, was Öffentlichkeit, zumal literarische Öffentlichkeit, bedeutet, gibt es ebenso wenig wie eine Reflexion über den unterschiedlichen Status gesprochener, geschriebener und gedruckter Sprache. Ohne diese Grundlagen lässt sich aber auch kein Einblick in Poes sehr spezielles, zwischen Abschätzigkeit und Anerkennungssucht schwankendes Verhältnis zum literarischen Betrieb seiner Zeit erlangen.

Insgesamt liegt der Hauptwert der vorliegenden Studie auf ihrer Material- und Faktensammlung. Die im Titel des Buches anklingende Chance, zu einer spezifisch amerikanistischen Neubewertung Poes zu gelangen, wird vergeblich. Der längst überfällige Paradigmenwechsel hin zu einem "American Poe" – nicht im Sinne nationalisierender oder allegorisierender Lesarten, sondern im Sinne diskurshistorischer und kulturgeographischer Differenzierungsarbeit – steht weiterhin aus. Fruchtbar für diesen Zweck bleiben aber die beiden Gebiete, auf die Hayes' Untersuchung zumindest nominell verweist: das Gebiet biografischer Kulturgeschichte und das Gebiet der amerikanischen Printmedien in den 1830er und 1840er Jahren. Wahrscheinlich wird sich hierbei die Funktion des *Southern Literary Messenger* für die Herstellung einer literarischen Öffentlichkeit im Süden – und Poes Rolle in diesem Zusammenhang – künftig als ein besonders ergiebiges Untersuchungsfeld erweisen.

Frank Kelleter (Göttingen)

Ulfried Reichardt. Alterität und Geschichte: Funktionen der Sklavereidarstellung im amerikanischen Roman. American Studies: A Monograph Series, 86. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 2001. x, 344pp. Hb. € 50.00. ISBN 3-8253-1077-9.

This volume can be read, simply, as a history of the representation of slavery in the American novel, from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) to *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967). But in line with Ulfried Reichardt's conception of history as plural and heterogeneous, it is composed along a variety of axes that makes for a much more complex and compelling read. The tone is set by the first word of the book's title, *alterity*, which theorizes the aspects of both temporal and racial/cultural difference. Convincingly, Reichardt stresses the interdependence of these two alterities, in which race is historicized and history is raced. Furthermore, he thoroughly discusses the hermeneutics of alterity and their inherent systemic recursivity, pointing to the moments where self and Other mirror one another, and problematizing the representation of radical alterity.

Reichardt's *historical* axis focuses on the communication between the historical moment of a novel's production and the time(s) to which it refers through setting, metaphor, fictional retrospects, and the dynamics of time-levels. He reconstructs the historical consciousness with which the novel engages through a close reading of both the texts and their cultural backgrounds. The third word of the title, finally, points to Reichardt's interest in the cultural *functions* of the texts under consideration, their negotiation of past and present, slavery and freedom, blackness and whiteness.

With these objectives, Reichardt progresses, first, from two Northern views

on slavery that both date from the same period (Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Herman Melville, "Benito Cereno") to two not-so-distant retrospects by Southern authors whose representation of the South and of slavery is informed by the "Northern" perspectives they embraced (Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*; George Washington Cable, *The Grandissimes*). After Emancipation, Reichardt states, Northern authors' interest in slavery wanes: in their estimate, the problem is "solved." Southern writers, however, if they do not romanticize the period, grapple with the heritage of slavery, which Reichardt documents in his subsequent analysis of William Faulkner's novels *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Go Down, Moses*. *The Confessions of Nat Turner* is the last white American novel on slavery, again written by a Southerner (William Styron), and the last book discussed here. All of these texts receive an admirable historical treatment. Reichardt analyzes their cultural contexts, reconstructs the problems they "seek" to solve, discusses their narrative strategies (in particular questions of genre, perspective, the treatment of time, and self-reflexivity) and their reception. He reveals the cultural work of these texts as an interpretation of their respective cultural situations, as analyses of whiteness rather than of blackness, and as reflections of the cultural mechanisms and boundaries that characterize the recognition of alterity.

One of Reichardt's most interesting points is his differentiation between the concepts of slavery and race. While these two categories are frequently mixed both in public understanding and in the novels under consideration, Reichardt stresses the importance of the recognition that two different kinds of Otherness are at stake: that of social and that of racial difference. Although both are communicated through the difference "black/white," they refer to two different "guid-

ing differences" (Leitdifferenzen, 3): that of "free/unfree" and that of "equal/unequal." *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for instance, is identified as a text that attacks slavery, not racism. In order to make her argument, Reichardt argues, Stowe had to resemanticize the slaves, endowing them with moral values with which white readers could identify. This operation, however, precluded the representation of cultural alterity. Only Topsy displays this kind of difference, which, however, is annihilated through her education and emigration to Africa. By contrast, Melville's "Benito Cereno" focuses on racial difference rather than on slavery. Delano, the character whose perspective guides the text, cannot see through the disguise on board the slave ship because his perception is organized by the racial difference of "equal/unequal," whereas the interaction of the (rebellious) slave Babo and his (apparent) master Captain Cereno is organized by power-relations ("free/unfree"). Reichardt argues that Melville exposes this misunderstanding and thus reflects and dramatizes his culture's racial ideology. Another analysis where this differentiation is useful is that of Styron's *Confessions*. Here Reichardt argues that the author's "mistake" lies in confusing categories when he translates the description of a slave revolt that was based on the difference "free/unfree" into the difference guiding his own times, namely that between "equal/unequal."

Reichardt's analyses of temporal structures and other narrative techniques are similarly compelling. He demonstrates the novels' dramatizations of conflicting time-levels (for instance, in *Absalom, Absalom!*, through Sutpen's modern, future-oriented concept of time that is juxtaposed with Quentin's memory loops and obsession with the past). Furthermore, Reichardt's readings connect narrative time to history to great effect: Tom Sawyer's and Huck's reluctance to "free" Jim

is read as a satirical depiction of the strategy of gradualism, which expected black Americans to be patient until white Southerners were ready to grant them their rights. The stasis in Faulkner's novels is interpreted along similar lines.

As for literary form, Reichardt painstakingly reconstructs the interdependence of form and function, be it in the typology in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the multi-linguality of Cable's *The Grandissimes*, or the modernist techniques of Melville or Faulkner. Reichardt's own position is clearly echoed in his quotation from Richard Gilman's review of *The Confessions of Nat Turner*: "[...] if you are going to try to imagine yourself into an alien phenomenon, into a new tradition, so to speak, then you are going to have to find new *literary means*" (229). But while Reichardt shows how the novels develop stylistically through increasing self-reflexivity (Styron's traditional narrative being the exception), their cultural functions show little development. Consequently, his conclusions can be summarized by the following two observations: 1) the Other is used as a medium to discuss the authors' own culture, 2) the novels cannot transcend their cultural situatedness, but they can lay open the cultural preconceptions of race and (in some cases) describe solutions *ex negativo*. These tenets may sound general, but through the originality, astuteness and historical precision of the analyses, they illuminate each text in specific, singular ways.

Reichardt deliberately focuses on the white perception of slavery, and on the mechanisms that the novels disclose, namely the presuppositions on which these perceptions are based and their function in the construction of whiteness. Given the complexity of his approach, the consideration of texts by black writers would probably have gone beyond the scope of this project. It is also apparent that Reichardt's reading of white literature through a frame that owes much to black

theory and postcolonial criticism (Fanon, Morrison, Bhabha) is a considerable theoretical achievement. Still, the fact that Reichardt has decided against the reconstruction of a dialogue between black and white writers has its shortcomings. The difference between black and white conceptualizations of the Other would lend a further modification to a hermeneutics of alterity, and it might pose an interesting challenge to the aspect of recursivity. Besides, with the inclusion of black voices, Reichardt would have better fulfilled his own theoretical demand for plurality in history. However, such objections should be understood as a call for further studies, rather than as a fundamental criticism of this book. *Alterität und Geschichte* presents a new and much-needed discussion of canonical texts, equipping readers with a theoretical frame that will continue to engage American Studies.

Dorothea Löffermann (Berlin)

Günter Leypoldt. Casual Silences: The Poetics of Minimal Realism from Raymond Carver and the New Yorker School to Bret Easton Ellis. Mosaic: Studien und Texte zur amerikanischen Kultur und Geschichte, 12. Trier: WVT, 2001. 307pp. Pb. €28,00. ISBN 3-88476-449-3.

Die Studie, die auf die Dissertation des Vf. an der Universität Tübingen zurückgeht, faßt unter dem Begriff "minimal realism" Werke US-amerikanischer Autoren der siebziger und achtziger Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts zusammen, die auf den ersten Blick sehr unterschiedlich scheinen: Erzähltexte von Raymond Carver, Ann Beattie, Bobbie Ann Mason, Jay McInerney und Bret Easton Ellis. Gemeinsam ist den untersuchten Texten, daß sie durch ihre realistische 'Oberfläche' – Leypoldt spricht von "representationalist

rhetoric" –, einerseits "the fullness of meaning typical of orthodox realism" erwarten lassen, eindeutige Bedeutung aber andererseits durch ihren Reduktionismus verweigern. 'Silence' ist die Metapher, mittels derer der Vf. in Anschluß an Ihab Hassan den ästhetischen Effekt der untersuchten Werke faßt. Er macht in diesen Texten eine paradoxe Struktur aus: "[an] unusual combination of absence and presence, of silence and voice" (12).

Leypoldts Kritik an 'minimalism' als dem herkömmlichen Begriff zielt vor allem darauf, daß mit dieser Bezeichnung eine Festlegung auf Form- und auch Stilmerkmale einhergeht. Wichtiger als formaler Reduktionismus ist nach seiner Ansicht die 'Minimalisierung' des Materials. Folgerichtig bezeichnet nun 'minimal realism' eine nur vordergründig am traditionellen Realismus orientierte Schreibweise. Die Relativierung der Bedeutung formaler Minimalisierung – welche die Kurzgeschichte als die eigentliche Ausdrucksform des literarischen Minimalismus und Raymond Carver als den prototypischen Minimalisten erscheinen läßt – erlaubt es, auch Romane von McInerney, der freilich als "a borderline case" (218) bezeichnet wird, und von Ellis in die Untersuchung einzubeziehen. Leypoldt erkennt eine 'tiefenstrukturelle Familienähnlichkeit' zwischen "Carveresque and bratpacker fiction" (34). Insbesondere Ellis führt einen "long-winded minimalism" fort, der bereits in einzelnen Texten Carvers angelegt ist (250).

Im kenntnisreichen theoretischen Teil der Studie wird die Vorstellung von einer die Künste umfassenden minimalistischen Ästhetik einer Kritik unterzogen; der literarische Minimalismus wird – da "far from open rebellion against [...] tradition" (43) – im Vergleich zu minimalistischer Musik und bildender Kunst als eigenständiges Phänomen bestimmt. Er wird aus dem literaturgeschichtlichen Kontext erklärt und neben dem experimentellen Realismus und dem Neorealismus als

Spielart einer umfassenderen Reaktion auf das experimentelle, selbstreflexive Erzählen der Postmoderne verstanden. Unterschiede zum Neorealismus werden an Tom Wolfes Roman *The Bonfire of the Vanities* als Vergleichstext in einem eigenen Kapitel aufgezeigt. Im Rückgriff auf Sklovskij betrachtet Leyboldt experimentelles Erzählen zur Entstehungszeit des Minimalismus als bereits so 'konventionalisiert,' daß eine Rückkehr zum Konventionellen – dem Realismus – nun einer Innovation gleichkommt. Dieser 'neue' Realismus stellt allerdings nicht einfach eine Wiederauflage des traditionellen Realismus dar. "Minimal realism," so Leyboldt, wahrt gleichermaßen Distanz zu "metafabulism and realism: to the former by reconventionalization, to the latter by minimalization" (60-61). Den Neuigkeitswert und Erneuerungseffekt des 'minimal realism' sieht Leyboldt dann zu Beginn der neunziger Jahre selbst wieder verbraucht.

Der Gliederung des textanalytischen Teils nach Autoren entspricht die Herausarbeitung einer Entwicklung des 'minimal realism' zu einer expansiveren Schreibweise, die zusammengeht mit einem Generationswechsel und einer Verlagerung von Kurzformen hin zum Roman. Mittels gründlicher Textanalysen, die sich vor allem Auslassungs- und Reduktionstechniken und deren Rolle bei der Erzeugung von Ambiguität zuwenden, werden die Spielarten des 'minimal realism' überzeugend herausgearbeitet. Wenn man als Leser auch nicht allen Einschätzungen folgen mag (wie der Betonung der Komplexität von Ellis' Roman *American Psycho*) und Vergleiche insbesondere mit englischer Literatur mitunter weit hergeholt sind, ist die Lektüre doch in jeder Hinsicht anregend, zumal sich die Studie durch einen lebendigen und anschaulichen Stil auszeichnet und der Verfasser Freude an der zugespitzten Formulierung hat und temperamentvoll zu argumentieren weiß.

Eva-Maria Orth (Jena)

Jeffrey Folks. From Richard Wright to Toni Morrison: Ethics in Modern and Postmodern American Narrative. Modern American Literature, 24. New York etc.: Peter Lang, 2001. x, 199pp. Pb. €28.10. ISBN 0-8204-5105.

In his twelve essays on the work of Richard Wright, James Agee, Ernest J. Gaines, Henry Roth, Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy, Richard Ford, William Styron, Thomas Keneally, Kaye Gibbons, and Toni Morrison (nine of which have been published between 1993 and 1999 in various journals), Jeffrey Folks presents a distinct but programmatically narrow conception of the relation between ethics and literature. He is looking, on the level of content, for "a transmission of ethical knowledge" (58) and an explicit opposition to the "posture of disdain for traditional sources of belief" (2), a disdain he finds typical of a twentieth century of lapsed faith. "The basis for an ethics of literature is the recognition that a shared knowledge of moral conduct exists, that this ethical knowledge is necessary to the survival of human societies, and that the function of literature is to hold this knowledge clearly before our sight" (6). Folks' introductory credo reveals to what extent his explicitly anti-elitist understanding of literature – not as art, but as serious reportage directed against ethical confusion – clashes with the widely accepted idea that, within the context of the process of modernization, the genre of the novel in particular is a product of the disintegration of transcendently anchored and generally valid norms.

Folks is actually much more interested in the authors' ethics than in the ethics that might emerge from their texts. His own convictions mix with those he identifies as the texts' and their authors' main message in statements like the following in his essay on Gaines's *A Gathering of Old Men*: "It is the young men and

women who grow up with the secure support of [a close-knit] primary community who are best prepared, and more apt, to establish lives outside their local community" (57).

Folks cites recent work on literature and ethics, notably by George Steiner, Geoffrey Galt Harpham, Andrew Delbanco, Wayne Booth and Martha Nussbaum, but it remains irrelevant to his own work – except as an ultimately mismatched legitimization for his interest in ethics as a literary but undistorted articulation of an author's morally responsible convictions. Folks rejects what he calls "formalist" assumptions, namely "the idea that the 'value' inherent in a literary work rests in the 'craft' or skill of its author" (an idea he attributes to Wayne Booth) and embraces the conviction that it is not an author's craft, but his or her personal moral integrity which accounts for what Folks values in literature: its "effective moral training" (5). To this end Folks consciously disregards formal considerations and is "more concerned with narrative content in itself and with its representation in terms of ethical meaning" (5). Unfortunately, this tends to lead to a disquieting inattention to textual detail: the few decontextualized quotations (occasionally Folks even speaks of "certain passages" [24] or quotes via secondary sources [27]) from the texts under consideration are read either as direct biographical sources, or prose narrators and lyrical voices are identified as direct representations of the authors' individual consciousness. To the extent that some of the more text-centered essays of the book are at least in part an exception in this respect, they also question the explicit project of unearthing a historically universal and ethically coherent vision from underneath a literary text. This becomes most apparent in Folks' last essay on Toni Morrison's 1992 novel *Jazz*, in which he argues that in all of the author's fiction "there appears less urgency to restore ethical boundaries

and communal moral identities than to protect a conception of indeterminacy and personal freedom against inflexible ethical judgement and definition" (176).

Folks presents, on the occasion of a dozen literary texts from the 1930s to the 1990s, a set of biographically informed essays on Southern, African-American and immigrant writers. Those who turn to these essays in hope of sustained readings of particular textual ethics will be disappointed; those looking for observations on the relationship between biography and politics of the writers under consideration on the one hand and their writing on the other will find a wealth of valuable bits of information.

Antje Kley (Kiel)

Thomas Claviez and Maria Moss, eds.
Mirror Writing: (Re-)Constructions of Native American Identity. Glie-necke and Cambridge, Mass: Galda+Wilch Verlag, 2000. 290pp. Hb. \$ 55.00. ISBN 3-931397-25-9.

This collection of essays owes its existence to a conference on de- and reconstruction of Native American identity at the John F. Kennedy-Institute for North American Studies in November 1999. The Berlin Museum for Ethnology opened the exhibition of their collection of Native American Art and Artifacts the day before the conference started. The result of the two events, along with the lecture series "Native Americans" during the fall semester 1999 at the Kennedy-Institute, is the collection of essays *Mirror Writing: (Re-)Constructions of Native American Identity*, edited by Thomas Claviez and Maria Moss. Rethinking ethnic identities and stereotypical representations of ethnic minorities has become a special focus of literary and cultural studies in recent years. The reflection seen in a mirror is an appropriate image for thinking about Na-

tive American identity since studying representations of Native Americans always includes the reflection of one's self in the object/subject of one's inquiry; bearing in mind that scholarly writing does not only represent but also actively construct ethnic identity.

The challenge of assembling the diverse body of essays presented at the conference was aptly met by the meaningful division into three thematic concerns. The editors chose three different perspectives on the larger issue at hand: ethnography, cultural history, and literary studies. Throughout the collection the multifaceted approaches to these topics are brought together in a dialogic manner. The focus of the book is on the issue of whether to regard Native Americans as objects of research or/and as subjects with their own methods and perspectives; both sides are represented in this collection.

In the first part, "Approaching the Other: Ethnology and Cultural Contact," scholars from the field of anthropology analyze representations of Native Americans in various contexts and from different perspectives. Peter Bolz, the curator of North American Ethnology at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, draws on his field research on reservations such as Pine Ridge and Rosebud, and on studies on the Sun Dance of the Lakota, which is the focus of his essay "The Lakota Sun Dance Between 1883 and 1997: The Outlawing and Revival of a Cultural Symbol." Outlining the fascinating history of the Lakota Sun Dance, Bolz emphasizes the cultural contact between Indians and non-Indians and, in particular, the influence of non-Indians, to which the Lakota have always reacted very flexibly; one of the main reasons, Bolz argues, why the Sun Dance as cultural practice survived.

Karin Berning's essay titled "The Messenger Feast: Myth and Cultural Identity" is concerned with the relationship between

a similar cultural ritual, which, in contrast, has not been practiced since the 1920's, except for one celebration in 1989. The author sets out to show that the Messenger Feast, based on the myths of the Inupiat-Eskimo of Alaska, ethnographies, and legends, was a ritual not devoid of religious implications, as prominent scholars of the Inupiat have maintained. In fact, she convincingly argues that the Messenger Feast was originally a religious feast.

In a more self-reflexive argument Hans-Ulrich Sanner critically describes his own field research and his doubts in the essay "Confessions of the Last Hopi Fieldworker." The hundred-year-old academic tradition of Hopi field research ended around 1990 because of active Hopi politics. The main part is focused on his last research on Hopi clowning and Kachina dolls he conducted in 1989, and his "integration" into the Hopi community of Kykotsmovi. His self-reflexive stance and musings on his own role as a fieldworker are the more interesting passages in the essay since he warns the readers that ethnographers are prone to misrepresentations of a culture and often pry into religious secrets in order to present so-called objective data, all too often eliminating "the life out of their stories" (54) during this process.

Marin Trenk's essay does not belong to traditional ethnography in the sense of studying myths or presenting fieldwork. In fact, it offers a mixture of historical and cultural research on the phenomenon of crossing cultural boundaries in early America. "White Indians' and 'Red Euro-Americans': Crossing Cultural Boundaries in Colonial North America" deals with those white people who became 'indianized' and joined Native American tribes, and those Native Americans who, by force or by free will, came to be members of the white settler communities. According to Trenk, the crossing of culture did not always result in alienation,

marginalization, and a state of 'inbetween,' but led to a sometimes problematic life of different roles and a bi-culturalism that many of these people have benefited from.

The following essay, which concludes Part I, is mostly concerned with the history and the results of the cultural contact between Native Americans and Christian missionaries. Christian F. Feest's essay on "Native Americans and Christianity" explores the relationship between traditional Native American religions and Christianity, which is characterized by a constructed and deeply ingrained opposition between these two. The brief and very informative survey ends by looking at the contemporary situation, including Native American evangelists who believe that "Jesus knew what it's like to be an Indian" (117).

Part II – "Listening to the Other: Native American Myth and Storytelling" is concerned with another crucial aspect for the study of Native American cultures and identities; without Native American myth there would be no distinct Native American identity, and storytelling passes on the traditional myths, therefore guaranteeing the survival of Native American identities. Canadian scholar Dominique Legros takes on the *leitmotif* of the disappearance of the real Indian and shows how the representations of First Nations developed by non-natives have posed several problems, especially in the fields of anthropology and ethnohistory. Legros strongly opposes the dichotomy between a First Nation past that is and was supposedly "authentic" and the Native American present, believed to be far less "authentic" since it is characterized by acculturation or by being in the process of reinventing tribal traditions. His call for research *for* the Other instead of *on* the Other is mainly convincing, yet, the way he states his case is at times very personal and confusing as, for example, in his usage of different terms for non-native people

who are sometimes termed non-natives and at other times Caucasians, Euro-Canadian, or white settlers.

Julie Cruikshank's "The Social Life of Texts: Keeping Traditions 'Oral' in a Time of Textual Studies" again draws from the author's field work, recording life stories of First Nation communities in the Yukon Territories. The transformation that takes place when oral stories are written down is one of the central questions Cruikshank tries to answer. She presents two female storytellers and their stories who, in those stories, reflect on how to tell stories and on how oral storytelling shapes identity.

Thomas Claviez' focus on "Narrating Environmental Ethics: N. Scott Momaday and Walter Benjamin" offers a cross-reading of Momaday's seminal essays "The Man Made of Words" and "Native American Attitudes to the Environment" with the essay "The Storyteller" by Walter Benjamin, in order to gain insight into their attitudes towards myth, storytelling, nature and man. Claviez' essay is well-informed and ties together not only Momaday and Benjamin but also Gerald Vizenor's theories on the trickster, Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment*, and Dominique Legros' *The Story of Crow*; coming to the conclusion that environmental ethics are only possible if nature finds a voice in storytelling and in myth.

The next contribution is equally innovatively interested in myth and how myth is transformed into literature and further how oral literature is transformed into the written word. Maria Moss concentrates on Native American novels, from the Native American Renaissance to the current generation of writers, and how these authors employ different strategies within ritualistic and traditional narrative patterns in "The Achilles' Heel of Absolute Power." Her reading of these authors is informed by German philosopher Hans

Blumenberg's concept of a mythic survival strategy called "Weltbewältigung," leading her to concentrate on the "ritualistic" and "unfamiliar rhetoric" of Native American literature.

Part III – "Reading/Seeing the Other: Literature, Photography, and Cultural Identity" starts with an essay of one of the most well-known literary scholars in the field of Native American literature, Arnold Krupat. He critically investigates and evaluates three different approaches to Native American literature: Nationalism, Indigenism, and Cosmopolitanism. Seeing the advantages and disadvantages for Native American texts of all three positions, Krupat's own stance calls for an engagement in what he calls "a-criticism-against-colonialism" (231) by carefully using Western and Native tools as mixed-blood strategies.

David Murray's "Cultural Sovereignty and the Hauntology of American Identity" again takes on the ways in which Native Americans have been misrepresented and how cultural and political sovereignty have been denied to them. Murray is rightfully critical of hybridity and syncretism, yet his insistence on hauntology as a means of replacing ontology is provocative but not altogether convincing.

The last contribution is by Mick Gidley who discusses the problems and issues involved in "Modern Indian American Photography." Gidley compares photographs taken of Native Americans by white photographers and photographs taken by Indians, asking whether "it is [possible] to create 'authentic' Indian photographs?" (264). Again, the focus on representation and misrepresentation of the last essays is the whole collection's underlying theme.

The collection is particularly interesting because of its diversity which is never confusing or annoying. The single essays are worth reading in themselves and in

their co-existence they shed light onto each other and are engaged in a fruitful dialogue between anthropology, literary studies, and cultural studies.

Fabienne Quennet (Marburg)

Dominic Head. J.M. Coetzee. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 (repr. 2001). xvi, 192pp. Hb. £ 40.00, US \$ 65.00. ISBN 0-521-48232-1.

The novels produced by a *doctus poeta* like John M. Coetzee have proved to be grist for the academic critic's mill, combining as they do the right amount of autotelic self-awareness on the part of the author, especially when it comes to the finer points of literary theory, with the almost irresistible fascination exerted by their strangely defamiliarized narrative worlds and the aesthetic qualities they undeniably possess. This has so far resulted in a host of critical writing, mostly in the form of essays dealing with individual novels or isolated aspects of several of them. With the appearance of each new novel the author's increasing critical acclaim has led to the effect that with the years a vast body of secondary texts has accrued that surrounds the relatively small core of Coetzee's *oeuvre* after the fashion of the ever-widening annual rings of a tree-trunk. In view of this it is surprising that few critics should so far have attempted to synthesize all the accumulated knowledge in the form of monographs: Teresa Dovey (1988) interpreted the early novels as Lacanian allegories of the colonial unconscious; Armin Mennecke (1991), whose study – because it is written in German – has been undeservedly neglected by the provincial Anglophone world, places the novels' concern with postcolonial themes within the ambit of postmodernist modes of writing; David Attwell (1993) is the first one to correlate

the succession of the various novels, in spite of all due critical awareness of their obliquity, with the political discourses prevailing in South Africa at the moment of their respective appearance. In the same vein Dominic Head emphasizes Coetzee's intermediary status within the wider context of South African fiction: on the one hand, like so many other writers from his county, he is fully cognizant of a history 'out there' that cannot be ignored, while at the same time, in a sort of secondary move, turning away from it by engaging with the discourses that caused that history to come into being in the first place.

Accordingly, in an introductory chapter, Head sketches the key theoretical issues which all of Coetzee's novels revolve around: His postmodernist *écriture* whereby conventional notions of reality as well as the making of meaning are deconstructed, counterbalanced by a strange kind of surface realism (which one could also designate as a realism of the signifier whose signified is endlessly deferred); his specific blend of post-modernist technique and post-colonial concerns, with the Foucaultian concepts of discourse as an instrument of power that has to be de-essentialized as a mere text acting as a link between the two theoretical approaches; his idea of history as a construct that has no ontological anchorage in reality (which, of course, is no original insight of Coetzee's because it chimes with Hayden White's narratological view of history or Althusser's notion of history as the always absent cause to which we only have access via the texts we produce); finally, it is Coetzee's positionality as a white post-colonizer, who, by sharing the language and the culture of the former colonizers, is capable of speaking to the world at large while remaining committed to his own South African context without, however, venturing to speak for the colonized Other.

These theoretical concerns form the guideline for the ensuing novel-by-novel analyses of Coetzee's fictional texts in their chronological order of appearance, starting with *Dusklands* (1974) and closing with *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), to date his last novel but one. Each of the seven chapters, all of which are devoted to discussing one novel at a time, is informed by the key issues isolated above, and yet it is in every instance one specific discursive or theoretical feature that is foregrounded in discussing each individual novel: The chapter "Writing violence" thematizes the discourse of colonial conquest underlying *Dusklands*; "The wrong kind of love" addresses the problematics of the colonial pastoral and the attendant issue of colonial desire in *In the Heart of the Country*; the chapter entitled "An ethical awakening" deals with *Waiting for the Barbarians* and traces the protagonist's growing awareness that the barbarian Other is nothing but a projection of the colonizers; in "Gardening as resistance," which is about *Life and Times of Michael K*, highlights the irreducibility of being, i.e. an existentialism beyond all essentializing discourses; the chapter "The maze of doubting" analyses the complex overlay of intertextual references which cause *Foe* to resemble an echo-chamber where meanings, in this case the veracity of the Crusoe myth, slide from signifier to signifier; in "A true confession" the focus is on the demise of colonialism and the ambivalent position of the postcolonizer as problematized in *The Age of Iron*; finally, in the chapter "Producing the demon," which is devoted to *The Master of Petersburg*, the extent is analyzed to which the author, in this case Dostoevsky, is immersed in discourses over which he has no control, thereby rendering his texts into exercises in dialogicity which defy any monological concept of reality or history.

Head admirably manages to realize his intention, as indicated in the preface, to be understandable to the non-specialist without sacrificing any of the complexities inherent in Coetzee's novels. Accordingly, by incorporating the vast body of criticism already produced, he succeeds in deftly teasing out from the texts the various layers of meaning they are capable of generating, and this he achieves by drawing on the wide spectrum of theoretical insights which he brings to bear on his material. This, however, gives rise to one fundamental problem that remains unmentioned in his study, i.e. that of the ontological status of all the intertextual references, strata of meaning, metafictional stratagems etc. identified in the novels: If they are assumed to be the result of authorial intent and purpose, this poses the problem of the intentional fallacy on the part of a writer like Coetzee who is thereby constantly providing implicit comments on his *oeuvre* while at the same time disavowing authorial control; if they are seen as being 'present' in the texts themselves, in the formalist or structuralist sense, this would be an essentialist concept that does not sit well with the deconstructivist ideas on the deferral of meaning shared both by Coetzee and his critic: Such an understanding would furthermore necessitate a critical approach that engages more closely with the linguistic as well as narrative texture of the novels, which is not the case in the study at hand because of its predominantly thematic focus. If, however, they are supposed to be the result of the analyzer's critical acumen, as seems to be the case, this presupposes a Riffaterrean 'super reader' who, because of his familiarity with all kinds of literary and/or theoretical codes, is capable of providing the necessary input which, in a strangely circular move, is then regarded as the output of the text under analysis. In view of the interpretive subtlety evinced by Head

throughout his monograph, Coetzee's novels seem to construct such a reader for themselves, a reader who is able to pick up even the most recondite references to current postmodern or postcolonial theory. It is precisely this quality which has made Coetzee, who himself is both a writer and a critic, into a writer much beloved among critics, or more pointedly, into a critic's writer.

Another slightly critical note seems to be in order with regard to the textual disposition of the present book: With his novel-by-novel approach, Head is superimposing on Coetzee's *oeuvre* a narrative scheme somewhat at odds with the author's theoretical concerns that pervade all his novels: In spite of the varying themes under which each novel is dealt with, it is evident that the majority of the theoretical presuppositions which inform Coetzee's writing remain stable throughout the body of texts produced so far. Therefore, instead of a succession of themes such as developed here, one would welcome an approach that engages more systematically with some of the key issues to be found – of course in varying degrees – in all of the novels: the opposition between textuality and referentiality, the opacity of language, the allegorical obliquity, the Hegelian master-slave dialectic, the deconstructivist view of history, the colonial Other as a semiotic challenge, the metafictional technique of generating meaning while at the same time subverting it, the role of intertextuality in all its various manifestations, and finally the aesthetic choices made in terms of narrative style in order to lend to all these problematic areas their proper novelistic form.

The fact that these systematic aspects are relevant to all of the novels discussed makes for a certain degree of redundancy of the present study because these key issues have to be invoked again and again with regard to each individual text. But such criticism apart, Dominic Head's

monograph on J.M. Coetzee is an excellent in-depth study of the novels, from which specialists and more general readers alike are stand to gain important insights into the complex make-up of the author's texts.

Erhard Reckwitz (Duisburg-Essen)

Eberhard Kreutzer und Ansgar Nünning, eds. **Metzler Lexikon englischsprachiger Autorinnen und Autoren**. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2002. 666pp. Hb. €74.90. ISBN 3-476-01746-X.

The mega-language English is first language to 375 million people and second language to another 375. If the 750 million speakers of English as a foreign language are added, there are 1.5 billion with a reasonable competence in English, as compared with "only" 1.2 billion Chinese speakers. Moreover, English is the international *lingua franca* in business, politics, tourism, and entertainment. Anglophone literature from countries other than the UK and the US has gained international fame and recognition, of which the Ter-ranglian laureates of the Nobel Prize in Literature are indicative: Samuel Beckett (Ireland) 1969, Patrick White (Australia) 1973, Wole Soyinka (Nigeria) 1986, N-dine Gordimer (South Africa) 1991, Derek Walcott (Saint Lucia) 1992, Seamus Heaney (Ireland) 1995, V.S. Naipaul (Trinidad) 2001 and J.M. Coetzee (South Africa) 2003. The only British laureate in the last 40 years was William Golding, in 1983.

Taking account of this development, the *Metzler Lexikon englischsprachiger Autorinnen und Autoren* presents 631 portraits of Anglophone authors from the early Middle Ages to the present, written by 220 German, Austrian and Swiss specialists. It does not include Americans because a *Metzler Lexikon Amerikanischer Autoren* already exists, published in 2000. The selection is excellent: The classical

British canon is represented, and also some authors whose fame rests on philosophy (J. Bentham, G. Berkeley, D. Hume, T. Hobbes, J. Locke, J.S. Mill, A. Smith), popular literature (A. Ayckbourn, B. Cartland, D. du Maurier, R. Haggard, J.K. Jerome, E. Lear, R. Pilcher), crime fiction (A. Christie, L. Deighton, A.C. Doyle, I. Fleming, K. Follett, P.D. James, J. le Carré, R. Rendell, D. Sayers, E. Wallace), children's books (R.M. Ballantyne, E. Blyton, L. Carroll, R. Dahl, A.A. Milne, E. Nesbit, J.K. Rowling) and autobiographies (M. Kempe, J.H. Newman). Winston Churchill, Nobel Prize in Literature laureate in 1953, is not in the *Lexikon*, though. Quite a few feminists and authors rediscovered by feminist criticism can be found; for example A. Behn, M.E. Braddon, V. Brittain, M. Brunton, F. Burney, E. Cary, M. Cavendish, C. Churchill, S. Daniels, C.A. Duffy, M. Duffy, S. Fielding, E. Figes, P. Gems, S. Grand, R. Hall, E. Haywood, J. Kogawa, C. Macaulay, D. Manley, N. Mitchison, D. Richardson, C. Rossetti, C. Smith, M. Warner, F. Weldon and D. Wordsworth.

Numerous "international authors" are included whose biographies and subject matters are located in more than one country, such as Dionne Brand, Fred D'Aguiar, Katherine Mansfield, Rohinton Mistry, Timothy Mo, V.S. Naipaul, Michael Ondaatje, Salman Rushdie, or Vikram Seth. Finally there is a representative selection of writers from Africa, Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, Ireland, New Zealand, Samoa and South Asia.

Of course, a one-volume lexicon has to be selective; among the authors whose exclusion I regret are: from South Africa, the prominent representatives of Black literature, Peter Abrahams and Dennis Brutus, as well as the Jewish short story and essay writer Dan Jacobson; Elechi Amadi from Nigeria, who gained recognition with novels in the tradition of

Achebe; from Kenya, the outstanding social critic and author of popular novels Meja Mwangi, and Grace Ogot whose fame rests on short stories and her novel, *The Promised Land*; Khushwant Singh, one of the early Indian writers in English and a representative of Sikh literature whose novel *Train to Pakistan* has become one of the classics of modern Indian fiction, and Bharati Mukherjee, the Grande Dame of diasporic Indian Literature who focuses on the phenomenon of migration, the status of new immigrants and the feeling of alienation often experienced by expatriates; Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) from Ireland, founder of the 'romantic' tradition in Irish literature, whose 'national tale' *The Wild Irish Girl* was a cult book in her time and has become a focus of interest for contemporary critics; Edwin Muir from Scotland, Hugh MacDiarmid's contemporary and rival, whose work has won recognition both in and outside Scotland and whose omission seems strange in view of the fact that a Scottish poet such as Norman MacCaig is included; Caradoc Evans from Wales, the founder of modern Anglo-Welsh literature; finally, from England, Henry Green, the novelist; Michael Hamburger, one of the greatest living poets with 20 volumes of

poetry to his credit (most of which is also available in German); and V.S. Pritchett, the renowned short story writer.

The bibliographical information at the end of the articles is very basic. It is restricted to collected works by the author plus a few – in many cases only one or two – titles of secondary literature. The book employs the old German spelling. There are a few misprints: John Le Carré, Be-rnard (V), *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (11, Armah's title actually uses *Beautyful*), Seamus Heaney received the Nobel Prize in 1995, not 1996 (266), Strathdyde (406), Kamau Braithwaite (429). Sarah Daniels' birthplace was left out – it is London. [Lael Louisiana] Timberlake Wertebaker, whose place and time of birth are supposed to be unknown, was born in the US (not Canada), in 1951, according to several biographies that are available on the Internet.

Overall, this volume offers a very good overview of authors from Britain and Teranglia. The print is larger than in most lexicons and the style less factual and more readable, so that the user is invited not only to look up facts about one author but to go on reading related articles.

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ANNE-JULIA ZWIERLEIN

**‘Poor Negro-Girl,’ ‘Little Black Boy’:
Constructing Childhood in Eighteenth-Century
Slave Narratives, Abolitionist Propaganda and
Postcolonial Novels**

Abstract: This article examines how eighteenth-century black writers and white abolitionists used the image of the slave child for their respective political purposes. (Auto-)biographies written by and about slaves abducted as children from Africa such as *The Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw* (1772) and *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789) contrasted the ‘white’ bourgeois narrative of infantile development with a tale of loss and deprivation. Their conventional narrative patterns constructed Africa as a pastoral idyll; Rousseauian ideas of innate goodness were combined with the topos of the noble savage. White abolitionists, too, turned the black orphan child into a sentimental icon; examples can be found in the writings of James Montgomery, Ann Taylor, Thomas Clarkson, Laurence Sterne and William Blake. Eighteenth-century educational and colonial policies were articulated in markedly similar terms; infantile and lower-class “ignorance” was juxtaposed with the mental “darkness” of the colonial subject. The article ends with a look at a late-twentieth-century transformation of the ‘slave child’ motif, David Dabydeen’s novel *A Harlot’s Progress* (1999), which focuses on the figure of the black slave child in the second picture of William Hogarth’s eponymous cycle of paintings (1732). The novel discusses the problem of the narrative construction of ‘black childhood’ itself, rewriting the eighteenth-century sentimental tradition in postmodernist fashion.¹

When, in 1773, the black slave Phillis Wheatley describes how she was kidnapped from Senegal as an eight-year-old girl and sold to the merchant John Wheatley in Boston, New England, she commemorates her parents’ imagined sorrow, presenting her own childhood as a story of disruption and loss:

I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatch’d from *Afric*’s fancy’d happy seat:
What pangs excruciating must molest,
What sorrows labour in my parent’s breast? (Wheatley: 1773, 74)

¹ This article was originally presented at the conference “Fashioning Childhood: Age and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Europe,” Bamberg, June 19-21, 2003. I am grateful to the organizers, Christoph Houswitschka and Anja Müller-Muth, and to the conference participants for a stimulating discussion.

Yet Wheatley deliberately undermines her own role as a victim, insisting that slavery was really her salvation: her fate was only “seeming cruel,” and the West African motherland was only a “fancy’d happy seat.” Her poem values the ‘re-birth’ in Christ opened up to her in New England higher than the natural birth by her African parents. Issuing her *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* during her travels to England, under the patronage of the Countess of Huntingdon and numerous English subscribers, Wheatley was the first black woman and the first black poet to be published in England. She returned to Boston in September of the same year as a free woman. Her over-reliance on classical poetic idioms resulted in heavily derivative poetry, westernized in terms of genre, style and content. This obviously links her poetry with other contemporary ‘slave narratives,’ for instance by Ignatius Sancho (1782) or Olaudah Equiano (1789), which follow established European narrative patterns, most prominently the conversion narrative, replacing an African childhood with western and Christian modes of experience. Vincent Carretta has compared this standardized structure of slave narratives to the biblical topos of the “fortunate fall” (Carretta: 1996, 2).

In this article I propose, firstly, that the loss and renunciation of childhood is one of the distinctive features of eighteenth-century slave narratives: Slave identity is characterized by stunted growth, by interrupted childhood. I will, secondly, analyse how a stereotyped image of childhood reappears in white abolitionist writings, where the little black child becomes a sentimental icon and an instrument of abolitionist propaganda. And, indeed, educational discourses about English (especially lower-class) children and abolitionist plans for educating freed slaves were in some respects strikingly similar. Alan Richardson has rightly called our attention to the later eighteenth century’s “colonization of childhood” and the parallel “infantilization of the colonial subject” (Richardson: 1994, 155). Thirdly and lastly, I will turn to late-twentieth-century attempts at rewriting the lost black experience, to reconstruct black childhood – and, along with the identity of the child, the identity of the adult.

I.

Having won the *Asiento* (the right to carry African slaves to the Spanish colonies of the New World) as part of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the British had by the late eighteenth century become “the pre-eminent slave traders of the western hemisphere” (D. Richardson: 1998, 440), depending on the slave trade to restock their West Indian plantations. Colonial slavery had already become hereditary, i.e. racialized, by the end of the seventeenth century, as is evident from contemporary colonial decrees that abolished the custom of manumitting black persons after their conversion to Christianity. Colin Kidd observes that “the basis of slavery became progressively more racialist” (Kidd: 1999, 24 n. 51). By the 1780s, British ships were carrying over 30.000 slaves from Africa to the Americas yearly. The horrors of the ‘Middle Passage’ across the Atlantic were augmented

“by such spectacular acts of cruelty as the *Zong* affair of 1781, when a slaver threw a shipload of diseased slaves into the sea in order to claim the insurance on them” (D. Richardson: 1998, 460).

As a consequence, the British movement for the abolition of slavery was gaining influence; the publication of anti-slavery pamphlets peaked in 1788 (Richardson: 1994, 157). In 1807 Parliament passed the Abolition Bill, putting an end to British participation in the slave trade. Yet British ownership of slaves in the Caribbean continued until emancipation in 1833. Today, there is an intense debate about the motives of abolitionism; generally, enlightenment thought and evangelical movements are cited alongside purely economic reasons.² Moreover, John R. Oldfield and Igor Kopytoff have demonstrated that the abolitionist campaign heavily depended on western middle-class notions of personal liberty and property: “slavery did present an intellectual and moral problem in the West, but almost nowhere else” (Kopytoff: 1986, 84; see also Oldfield: 1995).

The genre of the British slave narrative – the texts are most easily accessible in Sukhdev Sandhu and David Dabydeen’s volume on ‘Black Writers’ in the *Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation* anthology, supplemented by Vincent Carretta’s anthology *Unchained Voices* – is an interesting but problematic outgrowth of the British abolition movement. Heavily sentimentalized, these writings filter the slaves’ “first-hand experience” through western genres and styles (A. Richardson: 1998, 462); in most cases the result of a ‘collaboration’ between a black person and a white benefactor, they are a mixture of “authentic testimony” and “abolitionist fiction” (Sommer: 2001, 151). References to childhood tend to be brief in these texts which usually proceed from capture and deportation to the hardships of slavery, the pursuit of literacy, the conversion to Christianity and, in some cases, the attainment of freedom. Ottobah Cugoano, in his account of 1787, allows us a brief glimpse of his childhood games in Africa, such as excursions into the woods “to gather fruit and catch birds,” but quickly turns to his capture by slave traders, which “brought [him] from a state of innocence and freedom [...] to a state of horror and slavery.” In slavery, however, he learns to read and write, accomplishments which meet his own “strong desire to learn” (Cugoano: 1787, 151; 152; 155; 157). In Olaudah Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative*, by contrast, the scene of learning is already located in his African childhood – his mother took “pains” “to form [his] mind,” and Equiano was also trained in the “art of war”: “In this way I grew up till I was turned the age of eleven, when an end was put to my happiness” by slave traders (Equiano: 1789, 32). This conversion narrative ends with Equiano’s buying his own freedom. Talking about his African people, he shifts between an inside and an outside, even ‘ethnographic’ view. His final plea for abolition is supported by a vision of prosperous trade with a freed Africa childishly and “insensibly adopt[ing] British fashions, manners” – and products

² Eric Williams notoriously claimed that “abolition of the slave trade and emancipation of the slaves in the British colonies were driven not by philanthropy or humanitarianism but by economic forces within England” (Williams: 1944, 35). See for counter-arguments Williams: 1966, 278-79 and Ward: 1998, 428.

(Equiano: 1789, 249). It is important to note, however, that the authenticity of Equiano's African childhood story was challenged even in his own lifetime; two 1792 newspaper articles asserted that he was, in fact, a native of the West Indies, and from the fifth edition of the *Interesting Narrative* onwards, Equiano included in his front matter a number of letters written by himself and others to refute these attacks (repr. in Equiano: 1995, 5-14). Carretta, although personally accepting the childhood story as true, suggests that Equiano may have "invented an African identity for rhetorical and/or marketing ends" (Carretta: 1996, 16 n. 13). If this were so, it would demonstrate even more forcefully how important the narrative structure of disrupted childhood and western-style conversion was for the ideological work of these texts.

Even the earliest slave narrative – and the most interesting in our context –, the *Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, An African Prince, As Related by Himself* (1772), turns the catastrophe of deportation into the source of salvation in the same way that Wheatley and Cugoano do. Gronniosaw's childhood is styled proleptically as a phase of lack, of yearning for an unknown God:

I had, from my infancy, a curious turn of mind; was more grave and reserved in my disposition than either of my brothers and sisters. I often teased them with questions they could not answer: [...] it being strongly impressed on my mind that there was some GREAT MAN of power which resided above the sun, moon and stars, the objects of our worship. [...] I was afraid and uneasy and restless, but could not tell for what. I wanted to be informed of things that no person could tell me; and was always dissatisfied. – These wonderful impressions began in my childhood, and followed me continually 'till I left my parents, which affords me matter of admiration and thankfulness. (Gronniosaw: 1772, 3-4)

Gronniosaw's feeling of lack is finally answered when his third master, a minister, not only teaches him to read but also converts him to Christianity: "There, says I, I always thought so when I liv'd at home! Now if I had wings like an Eagle I would fly to tell my dear mother that God is greater than the sun, moon, and stars; and that they were made by him." His homesickness and yearning for his childhood companions – "my father liv'd at BOURNOU, and I wanted very much to see him, and likewise my dear mother, and sister" – is now finally replaced by his longing for heaven. The narrative ends with Gronniosaw, a "very poor Pilgrim," waiting for death and his "HEAVENLY HOME" (Gronniosaw: 1772, 14; 40). With their nearly identical structure, these slave narratives forestall any inquiry into their factual authenticity; like Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, which according to Carretta "marks the culmination of the Afro-British tradition of the eighteenth century," these narratives are generically and topically over-determined. They are, simultaneously, "spiritual autobiography, captivity narrative, travel book, adventure tale, narrative of slavery, economic treatise, and *apologia* (justification and vindication of one's life)" (Carretta: 1996, 14). In all of these narratives, white religion and 'enlightened' ways of life completely supplant a brief and 'ignorant' African childhood.

II.

White abolitionists' texts, by contrast, typically construct even grown-up black people as children, referring to them as "Afric's sable Children" (Savage: 1737, 16),³ "the swarthy children of the sun" (Blake: 1989, 175),⁴ "sad Afric's injur'd sons," or "the waifs and foundlings of mankind" (Montgomery: 1807, 15). James Montgomery's poem *The West Indies* (1807) pities Africans for being "doom'd to slavery by the taint of birth" (Montgomery: 1807, 6). In fact, this taint of birth had been connected to original sin ever since the Church Fathers, who interpreted the famous Old Testament story of a child's crime against his father, Ham's punishment by Noah for filial disobedience (*Genesis* 9:24), as the origin of the 'African race' – and of slavery: One commentator notes in 1765 that the African continent was "peopled by the posterity of Ham, who bear his curse to this day; for they have been always slaves to other nations." He further claims that "Ham, the youngest son of Noah, [...] was cursed for his disrespect and contempt of his father [...]. The old Carthaginians, Grecians, and Romans, and all the nations of Europe, made slaves of the Africans" (Milton: 1765, *ad* 1.585 and *ad* 12.101).

In addition to these images of tainted childhood, conventional abolitionist narratives also draw on Rousseauian ideas of children's innate goodness, combined with the topos of the noble savage. Africans are "innocent, from home and comfort torn"; Africa is a wild and beautiful "world of wonders," a lost paradise (Montgomery: 1807, 17). The abolitionist Elizabeth Benger, writing in 1806, concentrates her empathy on the slaves' irrevocable loss of childhood and motherland:

Is there a spell the Negro's soul to wean
From childhood's lov'd traditionary scene?
No – long estrang'd, through slow revolving years,
The exile pours his unexhausted tears:
E'en he, the favour'd man, from thralldom free,
Yearns to behold his tutelary tree,
And those dear hills by summer ever blest,
Where the great spirit makes his hallow'd rest. (Benger: 1806, 119)

The exile's life is spent in yearning for lost childhood days, in helpless "unexhausted tears," and his infantile state of mind is foregrounded by his tenacious belief in a "great spirit." As in John Bicknell and Thomas Day's poem *The Dying Negro* (1773), abolitionists employed what Richardson calls "a sentimental lexicon of tears and sighs," portraying their black protagonists "as passive, chained and weeping, raising a weapon not in revolt or revenge but in self-slaughter" (A. Richardson: 1998, 461). In Montgomery's *West Indies*, personified Africa, immobilized by grief, stands "entranced with sorrow," while activity is assigned ex-

³ "Afric's sable Children", Savage comments, are "[v]ended for Slaves, tho' formed by Nature free."

⁴ The quotation is taken from *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*: "Stamped with my signet are the swarthy children of the sun; / They are obedient, they resist not, they obey the scourge" (1.21-22).

clusively to Britannia, who waves her sceptre majestically, “crying to weeping Africa – ‘Be free!’” (Montgomery: 1807, 40; 20). In such depictions, the Africans remained child-like, passive recipients of British mercy.

In abolitionist writing, accordingly, the black child became a sentimental icon symbolizing the helplessness of the African race, designed to rouse the British reader into action. Infant mortality in the colonies was an all-too-real problem, of course; committee reports and medical pamphlets discussed – and often tried to deny – the high number of infant deaths among slaves. Thomas Trapham, in his *Discourse of the State of Health in the Island of Jamaica* (1679), for instance, tries to play down the evidence: “It’s evident that [Jamaica] abounds with Children, as who so when he lands at Port-Royal, may convince himself at the easie rate of his first sight. It’s true, among so great a crowd of young many will drop, as all the world over, ere they arrive their riper age” (Trapham: 1679, 17-18). A *Parliamentary Enquiry* of 1789 was somewhat more critical, stating that of the “Infant Brood” in Jamaica, “[o]ne-third die of the Tetanus or Locked Jaw, before the Ninth Day from their Birth, and of those who survive this Period, One-half too frequently perish by Worms, or the Yaws, before they attain the Age of Five Years.” The report goes on to admit that the ratios are probably better for “the Children of Free Negroes” and definitely better for the “Children of the White Inhabitants” (*Parliamentary Enquiry*: 1789, 189). Rather than dealing with demographic realities, however, abolitionists considered sentimental stories about black children the most effective means of gaining public attention. An especially drastic example is Ann Taylor’s poem for children, “The Little Negro”:

Ah! the poor little blackamoor, see there he goes
And the blood gushes out from his half frozen toes,
And his legs are so thin you may see the very bones,
As he goes shiver, shiver, on the sharp cutting stones.

He was once a negro boy, and a merry boy was he
Playing outlandish plays, by the tall palm tree;
Or bathing in the river, like a brisk water rat,
And at night sleeping sound, on a little bit of mat. (qtd. Richardson: 1994, 165)

The present victimized condition of the “negro boy” is here contrasted with his past “outlandish plays,” which evoke the comfortable fantasy Africa of popular literature. In a similar vein, Thomas Clarkson’s *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1788) keeps returning to stories of “negro girls” who become mad with grief “for the loss of [...] friends and country” or commit suicide to prevent being sold (Clarkson: 1788, 47; 46). To impel his mostly female readers to action, John Newton in his *Thoughts on the African Slave Trade* (1788) recounts the horrid story of a ship’s mate throwing over board a black baby whose crying annoyed him at night: “I am persuaded, that every tender mother who feasts her eyes and her mind, when she contemplates the infant in her arms, will commiserate the poor Africans. – But why do I speak of one child, when we have heard and read a melancholy story, too notoriously true to admit of contradiction, of more than a hundred grown slaves, thrown into the sea [...]”

(Newton: 1788, 94-95). Why, indeed? Because the black child was most likely to arouse pity in a sentimental audience.

Laurence Sterne intentionally used this appeal in an episode of *Tristram Shandy* that he himself, in his correspondence with the black writer Ignatius Sancho, had called "a tender tale of the sorrows of a friendless poor negro-girl" (letter, July 27, 1766, qtd. in Aravamudan, ed.: 1999, 1). In this passage, a black girl is found in a shop, flapping away flies but not killing them; in the ensuing discussion between uncle Toby, Trim and the corporal, she becomes an emblem of mercy in the face of injustice: "she had suffered persecution, [...] and had learnt mercy" (Sterne: 1759-67, 446-47).⁵ Her innate goodness – "She was good [...] by nature" – has not been prejudiced by her hardships. After persuading the corporal that "a negro has a soul," uncle Toby concludes that the girl's very weakness "recommends her to protection," along with her "brethren" (Sterne: 1759-67, 447). The episode is very short indeed, and interrupts the bawdy tale of the corporal's wooing of a Jewish widow. The girl's past is summarily passed over in the usual vein: Trim hints at the fact that "there are circumstances in the story of that poor friendless slut, that would melt a heart of stone," but he tellingly defers this account until some unspecified "dismal winter's evening, when your honour is in the humour" (Sterne: 1759-67, 446-47). But at least the corporal feels "an embarrassment" about proceeding with his trivial tale, and needs two attempts to call back the "sportable key of his voice" (Sterne: 1759-67, 447). Similarly, Sterne himself staged his own emotion after writing the episode in his letter to Sancho: "my eyes had scarce done smarting with it, when your Letter [...] came to me." And the episode did have a strong sentimental impact – Wilbur L. Cross in his *Life and Times of Sterne* reports that "in the years that followed, it became the fashion among the tender-hearted to rid themselves of flies, not by torturing or killing them, but gently brushing them aside" (Cross: 1929, 390). This slave girl obviously recommended herself as a perfect victim by not fighting back.

There was the odd exception, such as the black child in Montgomery's *West Indies* whose mother incites him, Hannibal-like, to revenge: "Son of my widow'd love, my orphan joy! / Avenge thy father's murder, O my boy!" This child's subsequent conquest of the world as the uncontested "Jenghis Khan of Africa" is a rare vision of horror which abolitionists set out to nip in the bud (Montgomery: 1807, 44; 45). On the whole, however, the image of the little black child as constructed in abolitionist writing uncannily resembled the 'pet' black child *en vogue* in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English and Dutch aristocratic society, often represented as an alternative to a lapdog in fashionable portraits.⁶ As Dabydeen concludes from his analysis of a range of examples, in such paintings "the black and the dog are mirror images of each other" (Dabydeen: 1987, 26). In Anthony van Dyck's *Henrietta of Lorraine* (1634), for instance, the depicted boy's blackness throws into relief the lady's whiteness, and his upward gaze of

⁵ The same episode without the closing paragraph is reprinted in Aravamudan, ed.: 1999, 3-7.

⁶ Compare William Wissing, *Mary of Modena*, c. 1685 (lady with lapdog) and Pierre Mignard, *Dutchess of Portsmouth*, 1682 (lady with black boy), reprinted in Dabydeen: 1987, 24-25.

adoration her superiority (repr. Dabydeen: 1987, 22). As Dabydeen notes, this use of the black child as an aesthetic foil is also evident from numerous “For Sale” / “To Be Sold” advertisements in contemporary English newspapers which routinely emphasized that the coveted servant must be of an intense black skin colour. *Williamson’s Liverpool Advertiser* of 20 April 1756 announces: “Wanted immediately a Black Boy. He must be of a deep black complexion [...]” And the black boy offered for sale in 1771 at a public auction at Lichfield is described as “friendly, officious, sound, healthy, fond of labour, and for colour, an excellent fine black” (Dabydeen: 1987, 30). P.J. Marshall reminds us that although “slavery was not a condition recognized by English law,” it is certain that “several thousand slaves were being held in Britain at any time in the eighteenth century” (Marshall: 1998, 15).⁷ On the whole, the above-described paintings, with their iconography of dominance and inferiority, reflected the political relation between ‘mother country’ and ‘infant colony,’ the little black boy’s “diminutive stature” standing for the “real physical and psychological emasculation” of the black people in contemporary colonialist societies (Dabydeen: 1987, 36).

Abolitionist writers continued this symbolic infantilization in their plans for educating freed slaves after abolition. Coleridge, an outspoken abolitionist, in 1809 compared slaves to “Children in the *first Form*” (Coleridge: 1980, 224). The freed “negro,” the abolitionists promised, would gladly accept white “Instruction,” which he had spurned in the state of slavery (Grahame: 1809, 85; 88). James Ramsay was even convinced that “West Indian children, educated in England, improve not only in complexion, but in elegance of features: an alteration arising, perhaps, equally from change of climate, of diet, and of education” (Ramsay: 1784, 6). And finally, Edmund Burke’s ‘Negro Code’ (1792; drafted in 1780) explained how an education programme could ‘civilize’ the slaves. As Burke wrote to Henry Dundas, “the minds of men being crippled with [a state of slavery] can do nothing for themselves; everything must be done for them” (Burke: 1792, 173).

Richardson has argued that eighteenth-century educational and colonial policies were articulated in markedly similar terms: “a number of anti-slavery poets were associated as well with educational innovation and writing for children [...]. Like the children’s literature of the era, anti-slavery writing [...] propose[d] needed reforms while condescending to those on whose behalf those reforms were advanced” (A. Richardson: 1998, 461). Indeed, infantile and lower-class “ignorance” was routinely juxtaposed with the mental “darkness” of the colonial subject. Pope’s *Essay on Man* (1733-34) endeavoured to excite compassion for the ‘poor African’ by pointing to his “untutor’d mind” which “sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind” (qtd. in Clarkson: 1808, 53), and in Montgomery’s *West Indies*, Africa is a place where “Man grows wild” and the “negro” displays his “untutor’d grace” (Montgomery: 1807, 13-15). The popular stage developed the stock figure of the loyal and likeable, yet dumb and childlike slave – mostly called ‘Mungo’ (see A. Richardson: 1998, 466). The juxtaposition of the British

⁷ Even the famous Somerset case of 1772, according to Marshall, “did no more than lay down that a slave might not be forcibly removed from England” (15).

lower classes and/or children with African slaves that became proverbial with William Booth's *In Darkest England* (1890) was already germinally present in Blake's parallel structuring of the story of "The Little Black Boy" with that of the little "Chimney-sweeper" in *Songs of Innocence* (1789).

Blake's "The Little Black Boy" is, however, a special case in "critically address[ing] the racist and colonialist attitudes informing both anti-slavery writing and children's literature alike during the Romantic era" (Richardson: 1994, 154):

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but oh, my soul is white;
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And sitting down before the heat of day
She took me on her lap and kissed me,
And pointing to the east began to say:

"Look on the rising sun: there God does live
And gives his light, and gives his heat away;
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning joy in the noon day.

"And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love,
And these black bodies and this sun-burnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learned the heat to bear
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear his voice,
Saying: 'Come out from the grove, my love and care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'"

Thus did my mother say, and kissed me;
And thus I say to little English boy:
When I from black and he from white cloud free
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him and he will then love me.

In its general movement, the poem seems to abolish the initial polarities between the white child, "white as an angel" (l. 3) and the black child, "as if bereaved of light" (l. 4): The text recodes "sunburnt" black skin as a sign of God's special grace. Moreover, this black child is emphatically not "untutor'd" – four whole stanzas are spent on his early education in Africa: "My mother taught me underneath a tree" (l. 5). The black child is then able to hand on his knowledge, becoming the English boy's instructor. However, whereas the black boy uses perfect standard English elsewhere, he falls back on 'nigger speech' as soon as he addresses the white boy: "And thus I say to little English boy" (l. 18). And whereas it is true, as W.H. Stevenson emphasizes, that "the black boy leads the

white boy to God, not vice versa” (Blake: 1989, *ad loc.*), still the black child keeps imagining himself as the other’s servant: “I’ll shade him from the heat till he can bear, / To lean in joy upon our father’s knee” (ll. 21/22). Moreover, he remains in need of the English boy’s approval, desiring to become “like him” (l. 24). One might recall that heavenly redemption was indeed a typical coda of abolitionist poetry, displacing the final abolition of racial inequality into another world, the Great Beyond (see also Richardson: 1994, 163).

III.

Late-twentieth-century postcolonial novels pick up on the ‘slave child’ motif and give it a twist of their own. A prominent example is David Dabydeen’s novel *A Harlot’s Progress* (1999), which centres around the little black boy in the second picture of William Hogarth’s eponymous cycle of paintings (1732) and discusses the problem of the narrative construction of ‘black childhood’ itself (Dabydeen: 1999). In a familiar postmodern strategy of rewriting, Dabydeen turns a marginal figure into his protagonist: Hogarth’s stereotyped little black boy, attired in a fine if decidedly exoticist livery, looking on with large eyes as the old Jew discovers Molly’s adultery, has in Dabydeen’s version become an old man named ‘Mungo,’ recently liberated by the “Abolition Committee.” Molly, the central figure of Hogarth’s cycle, appears only briefly and already in her death throes (Dabydeen: 1999, 265). The slave’s lost childhood can only be recovered through reconstruction, through archaeological work: Here, Mr Pringle, a young abolitionist whose name alludes to the historical Thomas Pringle,⁸ is sitting at Mungo’s bedside in a small London flat, eager to produce a classical slave narrative, “a record of the Negro’s own words (understandably corrected in terms of grammar, the erasure of indelicate or infelicitous expressions, and so forth)” (Dabydeen: 1999, 3). Yet Mungo maliciously delivers a parody of Pringle’s white stereotypes about African childhood:

Mungo says that he cannot recall the name of his village but “it sound like Barambongdodo.” “It be somewhere in Africa.” Question: tell me something about the landscape of your birth? Answer: a hot place. The only feature of the country imprinted in his mind is its heat. To variations of my question, designed to provoke his memory, he merely repeats, “Hot-hot place.” Apparently no birds, no wild animals, no trees existed; which is impossible to believe. He is, I opine, in the initial stages of dementia, brought on by the tribulations of a Negro’s life as much as by his advanced years. (Dabydeen: 1999, 2-3)

Finally Pringle, “realizing that Mungo is a ruined archive, resolves to colour and people a landscape out of his own imagination, thereby endowing Mungo with the gift of mind and eloquence” (Dabydeen: 1999, 3). The life he plans to write is “an epic [which] he has already constructed in his mind” as a series of neat chapter headings:

⁸ Thomas Pringle wrote the preface to *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave. Related by Herself* (1831) as well as several abolitionist poems, among them the sonnet “Slavery” (1823).

- 1 Africa.
- 2 Voyage to the Americas in Slave Ship.
- 3 Plantation Labour.
- 4 Voyage to England with Captain Thistlewood.
- 5 Service in the Household of Lord Montague.
- 6 Purchase of Mungo by Mr Gideon, a Jew.
- 7 Debauched by Service to Moll Hackabout, a Common Prostitute.
- 8 Descent into the Mire of Poverty and Disease.
- 9 Redemption of Mungo by the Committee for the Abolition of Slavery.
(Dabydeen: 1999, 6-7)

Here, Dabydeen has Pringle follow the traditional westernized construction of black childhood which had already become ossified in the narratives of Wheatley and Equiano. Compare Equiano's summary for his second chapter:

The author's birth and parentage – His being kidnapped with his sister – Their separation – Surprise at meeting again – Are finally separated – Account of the different places and incidents the author met with till his arrival on the coast – The effect the sight of a slave ship had on him – He sails for the West Indies – Horrors of a slave ship – Arrives at Barbadoes, where the cargo is sold and dispersed. (Equiano: 1789, "Table of Contents")

When Mungo later seems to be telling the story himself – thereby, however, merely adding one more story to the considerable number of narratives competing in the novel –, his English is excellent, very different from what Pringle assumes. The reader is presented with several alternative versions of his African childhood and abduction: "I had many beginnings [...]" (Dabydeen: 1999, 27). Pringle, for his part, tries to cast his information in the form of a traditional conversion narrative, an abolitionist fiction rewriting the 'original sin' of slavery, whose mode of emplotment is a given before Mungo has opened his mouth: He will "reveal Mungo in his unfallen state. He will wash the Aethiop white, scrubbing off the colours of sin and greed that stained Mungo's skin as a result of slavery" (Dabydeen: 1999, 6). Yet Mungo himself tells a different tale: This little black boy was, even before his enslavement, anything but the innocent and harmless creature that westernized accounts habitually depicted; nor was he a noble savage. His contact with 'civilization' was not an entirely wholesome experience either: Captain Thistlewood, commander of the slave ship, introduced him to Christianity but also to depraved sexuality. In Lord Montague's London household⁹ Mungo's only function was to replace the Lady's deceased pet monkey – incidentally, just such a pet monkey appears in Hogarth's picture (Dabydeen: 1999, 204), and I have earlier discussed the topos of the little black 'pet' boy in eighteenth-century paintings. The final result of Mungo's western education is that he all but accepts his own status as a commodity, advertising himself as

a Christian already and with a hidden store of the classics. You have to pay fifty guineas for your normal nigger, and he comes with nothing but sadness in his eyes. You have to beat out of him all his pining, till he break and be new, and even then you have to pay for him to learn English, learn manners, learn to call you Ma and Pa and no more

⁹ See Ignatius Sancho's biography: his master was John, second Duke of Montagu (Sandhu and Dabydeen, eds.: 1999, 65).

dream of another place. But with me, I already done forget. "Forget the land! Forget the land!" Thistlewood done teach me. (Dabydeen: 1999, 247)

Scholars still debate to what extent Hogarth himself was aware of such mechanisms of reification. While Roy Sommer maintains that Dabydeen's novel uncovers the sexist and racist stereotypes implicit in Hogarth's paintings (Sommer: 2001, 157), Dabydeen, at least in his 1987 monograph on *Hogarth's Blacks*, claims more optimistically – and plausibly – that Hogarth's paintings themselves explicitly gesture at the "economic root causes" of prostitution and slavery, and at the link between injustice in the colonies and at home (Dabydeen: 1987, 110).¹⁰ In any case, the little black boy, a passive "surprised spectator" (Dabydeen: 1987, 51) in Hogarth's painting, has here been transformed into an active, spiteful, and eloquent figure – a forceful rewriting of both the eighteenth-century Afro-British conversion narrative and abolitionists' romantic tale of the poor little slave child.

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¹⁰ See also Dabydeen: 1987, 108 on the connection between prostitution and colonial trade.

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CHRISTOF DECKER

**Das Ende der republikanischen Maschine:
Technik und Fortschritt in Edward Bellamys
Looking Backward (1888) und *Equality* (1897)**

Abstract: Edward Bellamy's utopian novels are usually regarded as important albeit controversial contributions to the political discourse in American culture. However, the crucial role of technology, its impact on Bellamy's political philosophy, theory of the subject, and concept of fictionality, has not been adequately acknowledged in recent critical discussions. This essay sets out to examine the wide range of machines and inventions introduced in Bellamy's fiction as an essential aspect of his utopian imagination. On the one hand, technology takes on a metaphorical function by transforming the principles of cooperation and efficiency into a fascinating spectacle; on the other, it opens up a new realm of public entertainment shifting the notion of individuality into the context of an industrialized popular culture. Most importantly, technology contributes to the sense of ambiguity and anxiety noticeable in Bellamy's novels. Even though the author advocates a republican ideal of technology where machinery should serve the common good by advancing use and beauty, his main character Julian West also comes to appreciate its potential for the creation of transgressive modes of experience. Thus, in a crucial shift indicative of Bellamy's modern sensibility, the power of technology serves both to embody but also to destabilize and undermine his utopian vision.

Edward Bellamys im Jahr 1888 veröffentlichter Roman *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* wurde in der Vergangenheit immer wieder kontrovers diskutiert, doch es herrscht weitgehend Einigkeit, daß er eine raffinierte Erzählsituation entfaltet, die für das utopische Denken in der amerikanischen Kultur sehr einflußreich war: Der Ich-Erzähler Julian West berichtet einem fiktiven Publikum von einer Zeitreise, die ihn nach einem 113 Jahre währenden Schlaf in einer unterirdischen Kammer aus dem Jahr 1887 in das Jahr 2000 katapultiert hat und damit in eine Gesellschaft, in der die sozialen Mißstände des 19. Jahrhunderts auf wundersame Weise behoben sind. Sein Bericht wird zum Zeugnis einer langsamen Eingewöhnung in die neuen Verhältnisse und gewinnt Spannung aus den Kontrasten, die zwischen Erinnerung des Vergangenen und Erfahrung des Neuen an Form gewinnen.

Ungeahnter Wohlstand, eine größere Gerechtigkeit seiner Verteilung, reduzierte Arbeitszeiten und eine allgemeine Aufwertung des kulturellen und geistigen Lebens kennzeichnen das neue Amerika des Jahres 2000. An die Stelle der wirtschaftlichen Monopole des 19. Jahrhunderts ist die Nation getreten. Als *Great Trust* reguliert sie alle Lebensbereiche der Menschen, während diese eine Haltung der Selbstlosigkeit und Bescheidenheit angenommen haben. Die Lebensformen

sind dadurch einheitlicher geworden und folgen nicht selten dem leuchtenden Beispiel armeeähnlicher Pflichterfüllung. Julian West, der durch kundige Begleiter – Dr. Leete und dessen Tochter Edith – im Rahmen eines Frage- und Antwortspiels in die Geheimnisse der neuen Welt eingeführt wird, begrüßt nach heftigen, aber kurzen persönlichen Krisen diese radikalen Veränderungen.

Das Raffinierte der Erzählweise bestand darin, daß das historische Lesepublikum im späten 19. Jahrhundert eine gespaltene Position einnehmen mußte, die der auf Kontrasten beruhenden Struktur des utopischen Romans entgegenkam: Es wurde als Teil des fiktiven Publikums im Jahr 2000 angesprochen, hatte demnach die Transformation zur utopischen Gesellschaft bereits hinter sich, und es war in seiner tatsächlichen historischen Situation Teil der beschämenden Vergangenheit, die die Transformation noch bewerkstelligen mußte (vgl. Seeber: 1982, Pfaelzer: 1988). An Julian West ließen sich die Spannungen und Ängste dieser im Übergang eingefrorenen Position hautnah nachvollziehen und zugleich die Suggestion wecken, der Bauplan für eine bessere Zukunft stehe vor seiner unmittelbaren Verwirklichung. Der Erfolg des Romans gründete daher in wesentlichen Teilen darauf, daß er demokratische Ideale der Gleichheit, Visionen materiellen Wohlstands und die moralische Legitimität von Lebensformen auf eine Weise zu verbinden verstand, die der sozial und ökonomisch zerklüfteten amerikanischen Gesellschaft des späten 19. Jahrhunderts diametral entgegenstand.

Gleichermaßen schien er Karl Mannheims (1995, 169) Vorstellung zu stützen, daß nur solche Formen von 'Wirklichkeitstranzendenz' als utopisch gelten dürfen, die die bestehende 'Seinsordnung' teilweise oder ganz zu sprengen vermögen. Denn Bellamys Roman hatte unmittelbare politische Auswirkungen und wurde zum impliziten Manifest der *Populist Party*, die sich in den 1890er Jahren gründete. Neun Jahre nach *Looking Backward* legte Bellamy mit *Equality* eine umfangreiche Fortsetzung seiner utopischen Vision nach, mit der er nicht nur seinen früheren Entwurf präziserte, sondern auch auf Kritik an seinen Ideen zu antworten versuchte (vgl. Roemer: 1989). Im Vergleich zu *Looking Backward*, wo er sich um eine plausible Fiktionalisierung des didaktischen Lernprozesses der Hauptfigur bemüht, hatte *Equality* über weite Strecken den Charakter eines Traktats. Dennoch müssen beide Texte zusammen betrachtet werden. Erst mit *Equality* läßt sich der kapitalismuskritische Impuls des utopischen Denkens von Bellamy in seiner eigentümlichen Mischung aus demokratischen, materialistischen, christlichen und technokratischen Elementen vollständig überblicken. Stärker als *Looking Backward* formulierte der Text eine spezifische Parteinahme:

While in one sense, economic equality brought an equal blessing to all, two classes had especial reason to hail it as bringing to them a greater elevation from a deeper degradation than to any others. One of these classes was the women, the other the farmers. (*Equality*, 304)¹

¹ Alle Zitate der Primärtexte von Edward Bellamy werden mit Kurztitel gekennzeichnet und beziehen sich auf die folgenden Ausgaben: *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (New York: Signet Classic, 1960); *Equality* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897); *The Religion of Solidarity* (London, Santa Barbara and New York: Concord Grove Press, 1984).

Im Folgenden soll allerdings weniger die politische Bedeutung der beiden Romane untersucht werden als ein Aspekt, der von Mark Seltzer (1992) als 'Psychotopographie' der Maschinenkultur bezeichnet worden ist. Besonderes Interesse gilt der Frage, wie sich im utopischen Denken des späten 19. Jahrhunderts das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Natur und Technik, zwischen Körper und Maschine für die amerikanische Kultur darstellte. Im Unterschied zur jüngeren Bellamy-Forschung soll gezeigt werden, daß Technikmotive in seinem Werk keine Randphänomene im Sinn einer technischen Wunderwelt repräsentieren, die allein dem Vergnügen dient, sondern daß sie von entscheidender Bedeutung für drei unterschiedliche Ebenen sind: die sozialphilosophischen Annahmen Bellamys, seine Theorie des Subjekts und sein Fiktionsmodell.²

1. Edward Bellamy: Demokrat oder Technokrat?

Wenn man die Rezeptionsgeschichte von Bellamys Werk betrachtet, fällt auf, daß seine utopischen Ideen wie auch die damit verbundene politische Programmatik von Anbeginn umstritten sind. *Looking Backward* wird zu einem weltweiten Bestseller, aber der utopische Entwurf polarisiert die Leser. In Amerika stellt sich eine enthusiastische Rezeption ein. Zahlreiche Bellamy-Clubs entstehen, in denen die programmatischen Aspekte in politische Realität umgesetzt werden sollen. Auf der anderen Seite fühlen sich viele Leser angegriffen oder zu Repliken herausgefordert. Einige Autoren – in England etwa William Morris – verfassen Gegenentwürfe oder Fortsetzungen des Romans, die den Vorstellungen Bellamys zuwiderlaufen (vgl. Strauss: 1988, Morris: 1993).

Auch in der Sekundärliteratur kommt es zu einer zeittypischen Polarisierung. Wird Bellamy in den fünfziger Jahren als liberaler Humanist bezeichnet, der demokratische Ideale zu bewahren versuchte, erscheint er späteren Generationen als Vertreter eines militaristischen Totalitarismus, der die Entwicklungen postindustrieller Gesellschaften vorwegnimmt. Für die starke Polarisierung in der unmittelbaren Rezeption wie auch in der Sekundärliteratur ist zumeist eine divergierende politische Analyse ausschlaggebend (vgl. Aaron: 1951, Lipow: 1982). Aber auch dem Stellenwert technischer Errungenschaften gilt die Aufmerksamkeit, und hier scheint eine eindeutige Zuordnung schwieriger: Bellamys Romane *Looking Backward* und *Equality* verdichten den Technikdiskurs des 19. Jahrhunderts auf eine Weise, die gegenläufige Lesarten einlädt. Aber sie werden durchweg als Versuche gewertet, ein Spezifikum der amerikanischen Gesellschaft – ein zeitgenössisches Dilemma im demokratischen Selbstverständnis – erfassen und mit fiktionalen Mitteln bearbeiten zu wollen.

Dieses Dilemma hat der Kulturhistoriker Leo Marx vor vielen Jahren auf die suggestive Kurzformel *The Machine in the Garden* gebracht – die Maschine im Garten: Fremdkörper oder integraler Bestandteil, Gegenpol oder Voraussetzung der zivilisatorischen Entwicklung. Er umschreibt damit einen für die amerikani-

² Zur jüngeren Bellamy-Forschung vgl. Segal: 1994, Fluck: 1997, Tumber: 1999.

sche Kultur im 19. Jahrhundert aufbrechenden Konflikt zwischen der pastoralen Tradition, die aus der ländlich-agrarischen Lebensform ihre Normen und Werte bezogen hatte, und einer Industrialisierungserfahrung, die mit der Umgestaltung des ländlichen Raums den demokratischen 'Nährboden' der jungen Republik zu unterminieren droht. Kulturell prägende Figuren wie Thomas Jefferson oder Benjamin Franklin hatten mit der Entwicklung von Wissenschaft und Technik einen aufklärerischen Kampf gegen politische Unterdrückung verbunden, doch in den ersten Dekaden des 19. Jahrhunderts scheint sich der Fortschrittsgedanke zunehmend von politischen Idealen abzulösen. Jene imaginäre Maschine, die Leo Marx dem ländlichen Idyll oder dem Gartenmotiv gegenüberstellt, gerät zur Bedrohung republikanischer Werte, obwohl sie ursprünglich als Mittel der politischen Emanzipation *und* als demokratisches Kunstwerk angesehen worden war (vgl. Marx: 1987; 2000).

In der Tat veranschaulichen Lobgesänge wie Walt Whitmans "Song of the Exposition," daß poetische Inspiration und technischer Erfindungsreichtum sich nicht ausschließen müssen, sondern im Gegenteil, daß sie als Kennzeichen einer neuen Kunst der amerikanischen Demokratie verstanden werden. Die emphatische Wahrnehmung von Maschinen geht nicht nur auf die Vorstellung zurück, daß Technisierung einen Teilaspekt des *pursuit of happiness* darstellen, mithin zur Verwirklichung des individuellen Glücksversprechens beitragen kann. Sie wendet sich auch gegen ein Kunstverständnis, das praktische Alltagsbedürfnisse geringschätzt und aus diesem Grund als europäisches Erbe abgelehnt wird. Die Maschinen des anbrechenden Industriezeitalters sollen modellhaft für eine praktische Kunst der jungen Demokratie werden, indem sie ästhetische und funktionale Elemente integrieren und sich durch ihren moralischen Zweckbezug – das heißt ihre Nützlichkeit – auszeichnen (vgl. Kasson: 1999, 139-72).

Auch für Edward Bellamy besteht ein enger Zusammenhang zwischen technischen Entwicklungen, kultureller Eigenständigkeit und dem politischen Gemeinwesen. Die Vorstellung einer 'republikanischen Maschine' bildet sich in seinen utopischen Schriften auf zwei Ebenen heraus: Zum einen entlastet technische Innovation das Individuum von harter, auszehrender oder schmutziger Arbeit. Sie ermöglicht ihm damit eine Entwicklung, die für eine echte, originelle Individualität ebenso dienlich sein soll wie für einen aufgewerteten Beitrag zum *common good*. Zum anderen wird sie zum Vorbild für die neuen Funktionsprinzipien der Gesellschaft. Bellamys zentrale Forderung nach Gleichheit soll die Stärkung des Gemeinwohls im Ökonomischen und Sozialen durchsetzen. Veranschaulicht wird dieses utopische Ziel jedoch zumeist anhand einer religiösen oder technischen Metaphorik: Die politische Revolution in *Equality* wird *Great Revival* genannt, und sie erweist sich am fortgeschrittensten, wo Julian West die Resultate einer radikalisierten Industrialisierung vorgeführt bekommt und er zum Zeugen einer perfekt austarierten Maschinenwelt wird.³

³ Bellamys politische Referenz für die Idee der Gleichheit ist die *Declaration of Independence*: "the true American constitution – the one written on the people's hearts" (*Equality*, 332). Ihre stärkste kulturhistorische Legitimation erfährt die Gleichheitsidee jedoch durch bestän-

2. Eine neue Ästhetik der Maschine

Walt Whitmans hymnischer Gesang auf das moderne amerikanische Zeitalter hatte seine Inspiration aus der ersten amerikanischen Industrieausstellung, der New Yorker *Crystal Palace Exhibition* von 1853, bezogen. Bei der 1876 in Philadelphia stattfindenden *Centennial Exposition* erweist sich eine von George H. Corliss erbaute Dampfmaschine, die alle anderen Exponate der Halle mit Strom versorgt, als große Sensation. Zeitgenössische Darstellungen zeigen eine überwältigende, die Besucher überragende Apparatur, vor der sich ein interessiertes Publikum zusammengefunden hat, um dem Spektakel beizuwohnen. Die furchteinflößende, imposante Größe der Maschine ist ihr zentraler Reiz. Und dieses Reizpotential verdeutlicht, daß neben der unmittelbaren Funktion auch der ambivalente Schauer im Angesicht des Erhabenen mittlerweile mit dem Erfahrungsgehalt des Maschinenzeitalters assoziiert wird (vgl. Kasson: 1999, 139-72, Orvell: 1989, Orvell: 1996).

Vor diesem Hintergrund preist Walt Whitman den *spirit of invention*, und er ist bemüht, die Zukunft der amerikanischen Nation aus der Ästhetik der Maschine abzulesen. Gleichzeitig kündigen sich jedoch spezifische Vermittlungsprobleme der neuen 'praktischen Kunst' an. Mag die Maschine dem Publikum des 19. Jahrhunderts als demokratisches Kunstwerk erscheinen, das Aspekte der Nützlichkeit mit Vorstellungen des Schönen verbindet, so ist offensichtlich, daß ihre tatsächlichen Funktionsmechanismen immer komplexer und für den Laien unverständlicher werden. Je stärker sich die wissenschaftlichen Prämissen und technischen Abläufe ausdif-



Corliss Engine (Wilson: 1954, 216)

dige Rückbezüge auf das Christentum, insbesondere die Lehren von Jesus Christus: "To come down nearer, it might be said that Jesus Christ stated the doctrinal basis and practical purpose of the great Revolution when he declared that the golden rule of equal and the best treatment for all was the only right principle on which people could live together" (*Equality*, 305).

ferenzieren, umso deutlicher zeichnet sich daher ein Vermittlungsdefizit zwischen den inneren und äußeren Dimensionen der Maschine ab – ihrer technisch-funktionalen Struktur und ihrer Erscheinungsform (vgl. Kasson: 1999, 139-72).



Minnehaha (Wilson: 1954, 215)

bindung von Nützlichkeit und Schönheit – und damit Kernanliegen des republikanischen Ideals – in eine Zeit hinüberzuretten, in der Technologien zunehmend komplexer und undurchschaubarer werden. Wie die Maschine von Corliss vor allem als Spektakel der Energieerzeugung wahrgenommen wird, so ergötzt sich das Publikum an einem Sodawasser-Automaten namens *Minnehaha*, dessen ornamentale Formgebung das populäre Schönheitsempfinden der Ausstellungsbesucher trifft, wengleich die zeitgenössische Kritik bereits für eine größere Schlichtheit der Gestaltung zu plädieren beginnt (vgl. Kasson: 1999, 139-72).

An den Exponaten der *Centennial Exposition* ist zu erkennen, daß die praktische Kunst der amerikanischen Demokratie unterschiedliche Strategien entwickelt, um diesem Defizit zu begegnen. So wird versucht, durch Ornamentierung der äußeren Hülle eine Aufwertung der Erscheinungsform vorzunehmen, ohne einen Bezug zu den Funktionsabläufen im Inneren herzustellen. Oder man lenkt die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Resultate technischer Abläufe, die in ein sinnlich wahrnehmbares Spektakel transformiert werden und auf diese Weise Eindrücke der Magie oder Zauberei als Resultat wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse und ihrer technischen Anwendung präsentieren (vgl. Slater: 1995). Ästhetisierung der äußeren Hülle und spektakulärer Effekt können in diesem Sinn als Versuche verstanden werden, die Ver-

3. Technikmotive im utopischen Roman

Seit den Anfängen der industriellen Revolution im 18. Jahrhundert hat der von Whitman besungene Erfindungsreichtum das utopische Denken beflügelt. Geprägt durch evolutionäre Entwicklungsmodelle und einen emphatischen Fortschrittsbegriff wird die Bedeutung von Technik und Wissenschaft im späten 19. Jahrhundert zum konzeptionellen Fixpunkt des utopischen Romans, an dem sich die Prämissen und Erscheinungsformen der imaginierten Zukunftsgesellschaft ablesen lassen (vgl. Frye: 1966). Dennoch sind Romane von Mark Twain, William Dean Howells oder Edward Bellamy in den 1880er und 1890er Jahren von ambivalenten Eindrücken durchzogen. Obwohl zu dieser Zeit herausragende Figuren wie Thomas Edison ihre Erfindungen machen, nationale Monumente wie die *Brooklyn Bridge* (1883) entstehen oder Industrie-Ausstellungen zu Publikumserfolgen werden, ergibt sich für das utopische Denken in der amerikanischen Kultur eine zwiespältige Ausgangslage.

Noch deutlicher als zu Beginn des Jahrhunderts zeichnet sich nun die politische und ästhetische Bedeutungsverschiebung technischer Entwicklungen ab: Je stärker sie die Industrialisierung vorantreiben, umso grundsätzlicher bedrohen sie die Normen und Werte der pastoralen Tradition. Je komplexer die Maschinenwelt aufgebaut ist, umso schwieriger wird es, den Zusammenhang zwischen Funktionsweisen und Formkriterien, mithin den Bezug zwischen inneren Abläufen und äußerer Gestalt herzustellen. Eine Gesellschaft, die im republikanischen Selbstverständnis Nützlichkeit als praktische Umsetzung christlicher Grundsätze verstanden hatte, droht die moralische Fundierung ihres Fortschrittsdenkens *und* ein wichtiges Kriterium für die Ästhetik der Maschine zu verlieren.

Vor diesem Hintergrund darf es nicht verwundern, daß der utopische Roman des späten 19. Jahrhunderts in seiner amerikanischen Ausprägung Fragen der evolutionären Entwicklung und Technisierung mit Möglichkeiten einer religiösen Neuausrichtung zukünftiger Gesellschaften verknüpft, daß er mit anderen Worten die Überzeugungskraft seines utopischen Denkens häufig aus der Rückbesinnung auf eine als genuin amerikanisch verstandene christliche Tradition abzuleiten versucht (vgl. Hall: 1997, Tumber: 1999).⁴ Dies gilt in besonderem Maß für Edward Bellamy, der wie William Dean Howells mitunter als *Christian Socialist* bezeichnet wird. Im Jahr 1850 in Chicopee Falls im neu-englischen Massachusetts geboren, wächst Bellamy in einer alt-ehrwürdigen Familie auf, deren Linie sich bis zu den ersten Siedlern an der Ostküste zurückverfolgen läßt. Sein Elternhaus führt einen rigiden Calvinismus mütterlicherseits und einen liberalen Puritanis-

⁴ Die Revolution erscheint in *Equality* als ökonomisch und politisch motivierte kollektive Erhebung. In ihrer ethischen Fundierung wird sie jedoch vollständig einer christlichen Rhetorik untergeordnet: "The Great Revival was a tide of enthusiasm for the social, not the personal, salvation, and for the establishment in brotherly love of the kingdom of God on earth which Christ bade men hope and work for. It was the general awakening of the people of America in the closing years of the last century to the profoundly ethical and truly religious character and claims of the movement for an industrial system which should guarantee the economic equality of all the people" (*Equality*, 340).

mus des Vaters zusammen, der als baptistischer Geistlicher tätig ist (vgl. Bowman: 1986, Morgan: 1944). In den frühen Schriften Bellamys sind darüber hinaus deutliche Spuren der transzendentalistischen Philosophie zu erkennen, deren Vertreter eine Generation zuvor die Umwälzung pastoraler Ideale durch Industrialisierung, Urbanisierung und ein neues, materialistisches Ethos zu beklagen begannen.

Gilt Bellamy angesichts dieser biographischen Prägungen einigen Autoren als Nostalgiker, der dem Lebensstil der protestantisch-angelsächsischen Elite Neu-Englands nachtrauerte, soll hier argumentiert werden, daß er seine Ideale des einfachen Lebens zwar aus pastoralen Vorbildern ableitet, daß er aber nur durch ein genuines Interesse an den Errungenschaften von Wissenschaft und Technik imstande ist, einen breitenwirksamen utopischen Entwurf zu entwickeln.⁵ Gerade in seinem Versuch, die Widersprüche und Ambivalenzen, aber auch das Verheißungsvolle der technischen und sozialen Entwicklungen aufzugreifen, erweist sich seine über Nostalgie oder Rückwärtsgewandtheit hinausgehende Bedeutung. Anders ausgedrückt: Das Oszillieren des utopischen Denkens zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit erweist sich bei Edward Bellamy als Spannungsverhältnis, das gleichermaßen modern und traditionsbewußt gelesen werden kann und daraus sein ambivalentes Wirkungspotential bezieht. Der utopische Entwurf korrigiert, was in der bestehenden Gesellschaft als defizitär gesehen wird, aber der Zeitsprung in die neue Welt trägt die alte in sich: Die zukünftige Entwicklung wird durch den Rückgriff auf Ideale der Vergangenheit legitimiert, die Angst vor dem Neuen als Optimierung des Alten oder als erstmalige Umsetzung früherer Ideale gemildert. Nicht die Wiederherstellung der vormodernen Republik liegt Bellamy demnach am Herzen, sondern die Integration republikanischer Normen und Werte in ein technologisch fortgeschrittenes Gemeinwesen (vgl. Kasson: 1999, 183-234). Der Technikdiskurs folgt aus diesem Grund zwei zentralen Repräsentationsstrategien: Zum einen propagiert Bellamy hinsichtlich der Maschinenwelt eine neue Einfachheit. Für Julian West sind die Details technischer Abläufe weit weniger bedeutend als ihre praktischen Auswirkungen. Zum anderen unterliegen alle Maschinen dem Primat ihrer moralischen Zweckmäßigkeit. Was dem Ideal der Gleichheit nicht dient, ist den Weggefährten des Ich-Erzählers suspekt.

An Julian West wird ein vielschichtiger Umgang mit Technik entfaltet, der moralische Anliegen, Vorstellungen perfekter Effizienz sowie ein kindliches Staunen zusammenführt. Es ist nicht – wie in Mark Twains *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* (1889) – der Blick des Erfinders oder des Feldherrn, der die Unterwerfung von Natur genießt; auch nicht die Perspektive des vergeistigten Intellektuellen, dem die Technisierung der amerikanischen Gesellschaft profan und für ästhetische Belange wertlos erscheint, wie William Dean Howells sie in *A Traveller from Altruria* (1894) beschreibt. Julian West ist vielmehr von den beeindruckenden Folgen der neuen Maschinenwelt überwältigt und offenbart damit einen populären Hang zum Spektakel. Gleichzeitig sind auch die Funktions-

⁵ Zur Kritik am nostalgischen Zug Bellamys vgl. Cantor: 1988.

mechanismen der Maschinenwelt von Interesse. Denn sie werden zum Vorbild eines Weltentwurfs, in dem die Gleichheit der Menschen durch ein Ausbalancieren von Kräfteverhältnissen gesichert und ihr Zusammenleben am neuen Effizienzdenken ausgerichtet werden soll. Was nicht mit maschinengleicher Effizienz funktioniert, muß verändert werden.⁶

4. Technik als Modell von Effizienz und als vermittelte Nähe

Die konkreten Erfahrungen, die Julian West in *Looking Backward* und *Equality* mit den utopischen Maschinen macht, finden in zwei unterschiedlichen Sphären statt: im Bereich der Öffentlichkeit und in privaten Zusammenhängen. Je nach Bezugskontext betonen die Texte soziale oder individuelle Funktionen. Auf der sozialen Ebene repräsentieren technische Abläufe den Eindruck vorbildlicher Effizienz und Funktionalität; sie werden – neben der Armee – zum wichtigsten Bezugspunkt der utopischen Ordnung. Auf der individuellen Ebene dienen sie verheißungsvollen Visionen von Komfort und entspanntem Vergnügen. In der Öffentlichkeit überwiegt eine Analogie zwischen Formen der Technisierung und der neuen Gesellschaftsstruktur; im privaten Kontext begegnet die Hauptfigur den neuen technischen Möglichkeiten vor allem mit ungläubigem Staunen.

Als Julian West und Edith beispielsweise gemeinsam das Warenhaus der Zukunft aufsuchen, verfolgen sie die Funktionsabläufe eines Röhrensystems, in dem die Aufträge bearbeitet werden, als transparentes Schauspiel der neuen Ordnung. Nachdem Edith – sehr zum Erstaunen von West ohne aufdringliche Verkäufer – ihre Wahl getroffen hat, bewegt sich ihr Auftragsbeleg durch ein komplexes, pneumatisch betriebenes System von Röhren zur entsprechenden Abteilung, wo er sofort bearbeitet wird. Sie erklärt:

The system is certainly perfect; for example, over yonder in that sort of cage is the dispatching clerk. The orders, as they are taken by the different departments in the store, are sent by transmitters to him. His assistants sort them and enclose each class in a carrier-box by itself. The dispatching clerk has a dozen pneumatic transmitters before him answering to the general classes of goods, each communicating with the corresponding department at the warehouse. He drops the box of orders into the tube it calls for, and a few moments later it drops on the proper desk in the warehouse, together with all the orders of the same sort from the other sample stores. The orders are read off, recorded, and set to be filled, like lightning. (*Looking Backward*, 84)

West bewundert die Einsparung an Energie und Arbeitskraft, die mit diesen zentralisierten Warenhäusern einhergeht und sich so wohltuend vom Konsumzwang des 19. Jahrhunderts absetzt. Die Geschwindigkeit und der reibungslose Ablauf, mit denen die Waren ihre Abnehmer finden, werden zum Inbegriff perfekter Effizienz, zum Vorbild optimalen Funktionierens. Noch wichtiger ist: Sie veranschaulichen jenes Prinzip der Kooperation, das den verschwenderischen Egoismus des 19. Jahrhunderts abgelöst hat. Zur technischen Kernmetapher so-

⁶ Zum Effizienzdenken in der amerikanischen Kultur vgl. Tichi: 1987.

zialer Verhältnisse und Kommunikationsformen wird bei Bellamy demnach die Vorform eines kybernetischen Netzwerks: ein durch gegenseitige Abhängigkeit und permanente Rückkoppelung gekennzeichnetes System von Beziehungen, das jede Veränderung in den anderen Teilen registriert und zu konstanten Anpassungen der gesamten Statik führt.⁷

Im Warenhaus signalisiert der Blick auf das Innere der Maschinenwelt die modellhafte Effizienz technischer Funktionsmechanismen. Dies ist in *Looking Backward* und *Equality* allerdings eher die Ausnahme. Insgesamt überwiegt der Wunsch nach Verhüllung innerer Abläufe, um die Aufmerksamkeit ganz den moralischen, körperlichen oder geistigen Resultaten ihrer Anwendung zu widmen. Die überlegene Produktivität technischer Abläufe wird herausgestellt, aber alle negativen Begleiterscheinungen wie Lärm oder Schmutz sollen in der Öffentlichkeit abgeschwächt, ausgeblendet und in ein harmonisches Ganzes – eine schmückende Oberfläche – integriert werden. Fabriken, Landwirtschaft, Abwassersysteme oder Energieerzeugung – wo immer abstoßende Sinneseindrücke entstehen könnten, hat das utopische Gemeinwesen effektive Gegenmaßnahmen ergriffen. So werden die Abwasserkanäle der Zukunft chemisch gereinigt: “They convey only water which has been chemically purified and deodorized before it enters them by an apparatus connected with every dwelling. By the same apparatus all solid sewage is electrically cremated, and removed in the form of ashes” (*Equality*, 40). Und auch in den Fabriken herrscht eine neue Ideologie der Reinheit, die – ganz im Sinn einer unverholten um Auslese bemühten “betterment of mankind from generation to generation” (*Looking Backward*, 194)⁸ – auf Körper und Geist der Arbeiter ausstrahlt:

I need not tell my readers what the great mills are in these days – lofty, airy halls, walled with beautiful designs in tiles and metal, furnished like palaces, with every convenience, the machinery running almost noiselessly, and every incident of the work that might be offensive to any sense reduced by ingenious devices to the minimum. Neither need I describe to you the princely workers in these palaces of industry, the strong and splendid men and women, with their refined and cultured faces, prosecuting with the enthusiasm of artists their self-chosen tasks of combining use and beauty. (*Equality*, 54)

In der Öffentlichkeit unterliegt Technik demnach einer Ästhetik der Verhüllung. Wichtiger ist jedoch ihre metaphorische Funktion: Sie veranschaulicht die Höherwertigkeit des auf Kooperation beruhenden Arbeitsbegriffs. In der priva-

⁷ In *Equality* wird die Faszination an pneumatischen Systemen durch die neuen Möglichkeiten elektrischer Energie überlagert; die Idee einer ausgeklügelten Selbststeuerung bleibt hingegen erhalten. West wird in ungläubiges Staunen versetzt, als er eine große Anlage mit Gewächshäusern aufsucht, in denen alle natürlichen Parameter kontrolliert werden können: “The wonders of intensive culture which I saw in that great structure would of course astonish none of my readers, but to me the revelation of what could be done with plants when all the conditions of light, heat, moisture, and soil ingredients were absolutely to be commanded, was a never-to-be-forgotten experience” (*Equality*, 301).

⁸ Bellamys sozialdarwinistischer Zug zeigt sich noch deutlicher in der historischen Übersicht von *Equality*: “Soon after the war the character of immigration began to change, and during the eighties and nineties came to be almost entirely made up of the lowest, most wretched, and barbarous races of Europe – the very scum of the continent” (*Equality*, 313).

ten Sphäre dient sie demgegenüber vor allem dem Eindruck eines komfortablen Müßiggangs. In der Zukunftsgesellschaft muß die Kleidung aus Papier nicht mehr gewaschen werden, alle schweren Arbeiten im Haushalt sind durch elektrische Energie erleichtert, und zum Zweck des Vergnügens kann man sich ins heimische Musikzimmer zurückziehen. Obwohl zeitnah im Entstehen, spielt das öffentliche Spektakel des Kinos für den utopischen Entwurf Bellamys keine Rolle. Leitmedium ist vielmehr die Telefonanlage, die Julian West im Haus seiner Gastgeber kennenlernt und die in *Equality* um visuelle Fähigkeiten im Sinn eines Fernsehgeräts ergänzt wird. Tag und Nacht überträgt sie die unterschiedlichsten Musikdarbietungen, aber auch die Sonntagspredigt, zu der sich die Familie versammelt.

Meanwhile the doctor explained to me that not only the telephone and electroscope were always connected with a great number of regular stations commanding all scenes of special interest, but that whenever in any part of the world there occurred a spectacle or accident of particular interest, special connections were instantly made, so that all mankind could at once see what the situation was for themselves without need of actual or alleged special artists on the spot. (*Equality*, 205)

Staunend gibt West sich einer Form des Genießens hin, die das Spektakel der Sinne im Komfort des heimischen Musikzimmers erlaubt. In Morgenrock und Hausschuhen dem Geschehen in aller Welt folgen zu können, wird zum Fluchtpunkt des zivilisatorischen Fortschritts:

To-day, I need not tell you how it is: you stay at home and send your eyes and ears abroad to see and hear for you. Wherever the electric connection is carried – and there need be no human habitation however remote from social centers, be it the mid-air balloon or mid-ocean float of the weather watchman, or the ice-crusted hut of the polar observer, where it may not reach – it is possible in slippers and dressing gown for the dweller to take his choice of the public entertainments given that day in every city of the earth. (*Equality*, 348)

Werden Maschinen in der öffentlichen Sphäre mit reibungsloser Kooperation assoziiert, so repräsentieren sie im Privaten Annehmlichkeiten und Komfort. Doch was auf den ersten Blick wie ein harmonisches Zusammenspiel erscheinen mag, erweist sich bei genauerem Hinsehen als fragile Konstruktion. Anhand technischer Mittel eröffnet sich den Figuren ein Bereich von Erfahrungen, der als destabilisierender Subtext den ambivalenten Charakter von Bellamys Utopie begründet. Es ist ein Bereich der Transzendenz und Selbstüberschreitung, eine Grauzone der plötzlichen Transformation. Hier – in dieser ‘psychotopographischen’ Grauzone – findet eine Überschneidung des Technikdiskurses mit Aspekten des Fiktionalen und dem Zeithorizont von Bellamys Utopie statt, die um eine gemeinsame Grundfigur organisiert ist: das Schwanken zwischen dem Eindruck struktureller Stabilität und einem plötzlichen, eruptiven Ausbruch.

Am deutlichsten wird diese Grauzone mit ihren gegenläufigen Eindrücken im Musikzimmer, als Julian West ein Gefühl der vermittelten Nähe empfindet. Die Bilder und Töne, die aus der ganzen Welt übertragen werden, erscheinen ihm so wirklichkeitsnah, daß er sich nicht mehr sicher ist, ob er sich hier oder dort, innerhalb seines Körpers oder jenseits davon befindet: “I can stand no more of this just now! I am beginning to doubt seriously whether I am in or out of the body”

(*Equality*, 205). Technische Verbindungen lassen den Raum schrumpfen und schaffen neue Formen der vermittelten Nähe, aber gleichzeitig lösen sie einen körperzentrierten Kommunikationsbegriff auf. Der Radioprediger Mr. Barton bezeichnet dieses Verhältnis zwischen scheinbarer Nähe und einsiedlerhafter Rezeption als *curious paradox*, doch weder Julian West noch sein Lehrmeister Dr. Leete greifen den Selbstwiderspruch auf, der damit für das utopische Gemeinwesen entsteht.

It is a curious paradox that while the telephone and electroscope, by abolishing distance as a hindrance to sight and hearing, have brought mankind into a closeness and sympathetic and intellectual rapport never before imagined, they have at the same time enabled individuals, although keeping in closest touch with everything going on in the world, to enjoy, if they choose, a physical privacy, such as one had to be a hermit to command in your day. (*Equality*, 255)

Bellamy entwickelt die Vision einer im unmittelbaren öffentlichen Kontakt vereinten Nation, aber die prognostizierte technische Entwicklungslogik hat diese Vorstellung bereits ad absurdum geführt. Denn obwohl der Gemeinschaftsbegriff – zusammengefaßt im Konzept der Nation – als oberstes Gebot etabliert wird, das individualistische Regungen überstrahlen soll, führen die technischen Neuerungen eher zu einer Vereinzelung der Individuen und damit korrespondierend zu einer Aushöhlung des öffentlichen Lebens. Julian West erfährt zwar, daß die kulturelle Vielfalt und Pracht des 20. Jahrhunderts in der Öffentlichkeit entfaltet wird, aber die meisten Eindrücke davon sammelt er in der privaten Abgeschlossenheit des futuristischen Musikzimmers (vgl. Kasson: 1999, 183-234).

Eine zentrale Ambivalenz in Bellamys Utopie geht daher auf die Frage zurück, wie es zwischen dem Öffentlichen und dem Privaten zu einer Verbindung kommen kann. Daß Julian West seine Erfahrungen der neuen Welt aus zweiter Hand macht und diese vermittelte Nähe zur vorherrschenden Kommunikationsform geworden ist, unterstreicht eine zwiespaltene Bedürfnislage: Die überwältigende Sehnsucht nach Bindung und Einigkeit fällt mit dem ebenso starken Bedürfnis nach Abgrenzung und Abgeschlossenheit zusammen. In einem frühen Text von 1874 mit dem Titel *The Religion of Solidarity* hat Bellamy den ähnlich gelagerten Konflikt zwischen einer niederen und einer höheren Sphäre des Subjekts durch die Denkfigur eines Kanals gelöst, mit dem eine Verbindung der beiden Sphären möglich sein soll. Nun wird deutlich, daß dieser für spirituelle Belange durchlässige Kanal den Charakter eines technischen Mediums angenommen hat. Die Verbindung zwischen Individuum und Gemeinschaft ist im utopischen Entwurf von *Looking Backward* nicht mehr über unmittelbare Begegnungen oder – wie im frühen Text – über eine intensive Naturerfahrung möglich, sondern nur mehr über technische Verfahren. Mit den Mitteln der Kunst und der Religion soll im utopischen Amerika der Zusammenhalt der Nation gesichert werden, aber ein direkter Kontakt der Menschen wird vermieden: Es überwiegt die vermittelte Nähe in der eigenen Häuslichkeit.⁹

⁹ Selbst die religiöse Praxis wandelt sich angesichts dieser kontinuierlichen Transformation von Primär- in Sekundärerfahrungen. Das Zeremonielle der direkten Begegnung verliert an Be-

5. Das gespaltene Subjekt

Um diese Denkfigur besser nachzuvollziehen, muß man etwas ausführlicher auf *The Religion of Solidarity* eingehen. Mit jugendlichem Überschwang und in bekenntnisthafter Manier verfaßt, lassen sich hier bereits religiöse und sozialphilosophische Grundsätze erkennen, die für Bellamys utopisches Denken wegweisend sind. Der Text konstatiert einen Riß zwischen Individualismus und Gemeinschaftlichkeit in der amerikanischen Kultur, der die Kohäsion des Gemeinwesens insgesamt zu gefährden scheint. Bellamy beschreibt eine Suche nach neuen Formen von Solidarität, die dem Bedürfnis nach Bindung und Integration des Einzelnen Ausdruck verleihen. Daß diese Solidarität natürlichen Gesetzmäßigkeiten folgen soll und gleichzeitig den Status einer Religion beanspruchen kann, belegt den komplexen Erwartungshorizont: Sowohl in wissenschaftlich-technischer Hinsicht als auch im Sinn einer spirituellen Regeneration gilt es, neue Bindungskräfte zu aktivieren.

Zum Kernstück des Textes wird eine vom Transzendentalismus inspirierte Unterscheidung von Selbstkonzeptionen, die von einer strikten Zweiteilung, einem bei Bellamy immer wieder zu beobachtenden Dualismus ausgeht. Auf der einen Seite sieht er den Bereich des Individuellen: einen atomisierten, abgespaltenen, fast gefängnishaften Ort, in dem sich das *lesser self* einrichten muß. Auf der anderen Seite siedelt er den Bereich des Universellen an; topographisch dem Höheren zugewandt, sind hier Gefühle des Erhabenen und Großartigen zu Hause – es ist die Heimat des *greater self*. Während der Blick durch das Mikroskop für Bellamy die Winzigkeiten des *lesser self* offenbart, eröffnet das Teleskop die Perspektive auf die Unendlichkeit des *greater self*. Beide Bereiche gehören zum Subjekt, aber sie stehen sich als antagonistische Kräfte gegenüber, und es gilt, eine fragile Balance zwischen ihnen aufrecht zu erhalten. Bellamy veranschaulicht diesen Antagonismus mit einer Metapher aus dem Gebiet der Astronomie: Die zentrifugalen, auf Abstoßung beruhenden Kräfte der Individualität müssen durch die zentripetalen, auf Anziehung zielenden Kräfte von Solidarität und Kohäsion eingedämmt werden. Im einzelnen Subjekt bildet sich die Statik des übergeordneten, aus Individualität und Universalität bestehenden Ganzen ab, und dort müssen ihre gegenläufig-antagonistischen Kräfte in einem Gleichgewicht gehalten werden.

Bei diesem basalen Kampf argumentiert Bellamy gleichermaßen gegen einen überzogenen Egoismus wie auch einen zwanghaften Altruismus, gegen Selbstsucht wie Selbstverleugnung, aber letztlich besteht für ihn die 'Religion der Solidarität' in einer Form der Selbstlosigkeit, die sich in den Dienst des *greater self* stellt.¹⁰ Die Emphase, mit der in späteren Werken – vor allem in *Equality* – an ei-

deutung: "The time has now fully come which Christ foretold in that talk with the woman by the well of Samaria when the idea of the Temple and all it stood for would give place to the wholly spiritual religion, without respect of times or places, which he declared most pleasing to God" (*Equality*, 258).

¹⁰ Er führt dazu aus: "Perhaps it may well be said here that unselfishness according to the religion of solidarity is as inconsistent with undue self-abnegation as with undue self-assertion. It requires in all cases the fulfilment of the instinct of the whole, which may indifferently coin-

ner radikalen, alle Lebensbereiche betreffenden Gleichheit festgehalten wird, läßt sich auf diese Theorie des Subjekts zurückführen, für die jede Störung des Gleichgewichts zwischen den Ebenen des Selbst notwendig als existentielle Bedrohung des Ganzen erscheinen muß, das entweder implodieren oder explodieren würde.

Wenn die beiden Sphären des Selbst nur mühsam über Prozesse der Anziehung und Abstoßung in einer Balance gehalten werden, stellt sich allerdings die Frage, ob zwischen ihnen eine Verbindungsmöglichkeit, eine Form des Kontakts bestehen könnte. Die Unterscheidung in höhere und niedere Ebenen des Subjekts scheint dies auszuschließen. Doch Bellamy ist bemüht, mit dieser Topographie keine Wertigkeit festzulegen. Die übergeordnete Statik benötigt schließlich beide Sphären des Selbst, um ein stabiles Gleichgewicht einrichten zu können. Die individuelle Persönlichkeit solle daher, so der jugendliche Autor, nicht abgelehnt werden, sie übernehme vielmehr die Funktion, ein Kanal, eine Ausdrucksmöglichkeit des Universellen zu sein. Erscheint dem frühen Bellamy das Individuelle demnach prinzipiell als Gefängnis, so kann es mit spezifischen Mitteln für die höheren Regionen des *greater self* geöffnet werden. Wird es im Sinn eines Kanals verstanden, bekommt es den Charakter eines Mediums beigegeben, das für eine spirituelle Größe durchlässig ist und auf diese Weise innerhalb des *lesser self* eine Grauzone einrichtet, die mit dem *greater self* verschmilzt und ein Gefühl der Transzendenz evoziert.

Mit der Vorstellung eines durchlässigen Kanals, über den die beiden Sphären des Selbst verbunden sind, weist das dualistische Denken Bellamys demnach ein zentrales Motiv auf, mit dem die Verbindung der antagonistischen Kräfte möglich wird. Unweigerlich entstehen jedoch auch gegenläufige Implikationen. In der Grauzone kann zwar das Gefängnis des *lesser self* im Sinn einer Selbstüberschreitung überwunden werden. Aber zugleich droht auch eine entgrenzende Verschmelzung mit dem *greater self*, die einer Entindividualisierung gleichkäme. Das Verbindungsstück der beiden Sphären wird auf diese Weise zum bedrohlichsten, aber auch zum reizvollsten Bezugspunkt von Bellamys Subjektkonzeption und zum Kernstück seiner utopischen Texte. In *The Religion of Solidarity* fungiert es als technische Metapher, in der die Gespaltenheit des Subjekts markiert und partiell aufgehoben werden kann. In *Looking Backward* weitet sich seine Bedeutung von der technischen Ebene in den Bereich des Fiktionalen aus: Die Schlafkammer, in der Julian West seine Zeitreise unternimmt, ist nicht nur eine unterirdische 'Raumstation,' hier prallen auch unterschiedliche Typen von Fiktionalität aufeinander.

cide with the assertion or abnegation of any particular individuality. A bias in favour of altruism is as obnoxious to its principles as the contrary bias in favour of the self" (*Religion of Solidarity*, 22).

6. Technik und Fiktionalität: Die unterirdische Schlafkammer

Am Anfang von *Looking Backward* beschreibt Julian West die unterirdische Schlafkammer:

[In] this subterranean room no murmur from the upper world ever penetrated. When I had entered it and closed the door, I was surrounded by the silence of the tomb. In order to prevent the dampness of the subsoil from penetrating the chamber the walls had been laid in hydraulic cement and were very thick, and the floor was likewise protected. In order that the room might serve also as a vault, equally proof against violence and flames, for the storage of valuables, I had roofed it with stone slabs hermetically sealed and the outer door was of iron with a thick coating of asbestos. (*Looking Backward*, 34)

Die Schlafkammer wird im weiteren Verlauf zum Dreh- und Angelpunkt der Handlung und verbindet – wie West selbst – die utopische Gegenwart mit der Vergangenheit. Sie beherbergt Wertgegenstände des vergangenen 19. Jahrhunderts und ist zugleich ein Anachronismus der neuen Zeit. Abgeschildert gegen den Lärm der Außenwelt erscheint sie wie eine Grabstätte, doch ohne die solide Bauweise wäre die Zeitreise nicht möglich. Kurz: Die Schlafkammer ist unschwer als Bellamys Gefängnis des Individuums zu erkennen, ermöglicht aber gleichzeitig eine Überwindung der beengenden Dimensionen endlicher Lebenszeit sowie eines vergänglichen Körpers. Sie wird zur futuristischen Raumkapsel, in der die Zeitreise ohne Blessuren vonstatten geht, so daß die alte und neue Gesellschaft zusammentreffen können. In und mit ihr wird West zum 'Kanal' für die zeitgenössische Leserschaft zur utopischen Welt des *greater self*.

Auf der anderen Seite ist die Schlafkammer allerdings auch der Ort, an dem die Hauptfigur die heftigsten persönlichen Krisen austrägt. Verwirrende oder verunsichernde Erfahrungen, die Julian West in dieser ambivalenten Grauzone macht, versucht der Text auf der Wirkungsebene auch für die Lektüre von *Looking Backward* und *Equality* selbst zu aktivieren. Der Zusammenprall von Zeitdimensionen stürzt die Hauptfigur in Gefühle der Selbstaflösung und des Identitätsverlusts, bis ihm seine Begleiterin Edith wiederholt zur Hilfe eilt:

In my mind, all had broken loose, habits of feeling, associations of thought, ideas of persons and things, all had dissolved and lost coherence and were seething together in apparently irretrievable chaos. There were no rallying points, nothing was left stable. There only remained the will, and was any human will strong enough to say to such a weltering sea, 'Peace, be still'? I dared not think. Every effort to reason upon what had befallen me, and realize what it implied, set up an intolerable swimming of the brain. The idea that I was two persons, that my identity was double, began to fascinate me with its simple solution of my experience. (*Looking Backward*, 67)¹¹

Vor allem in seinen Traumsequenzen, Doppelungen von Figuren und Identitätskonfusionen läßt der Text die Leser im Unklaren darüber, in welcher historischen Zeit – an welchem Punkt zwischen Utopie und Vergangenheit – sie sich

¹¹ Diese Erfahrungen wiederholen sich im Verlauf des Romans. In einem späteren Kapitel bemerkt West zu seiner Doppelidentität: "The past was dead, crushed beneath a century's weight, and from the present I was shut out. There was no place for me anywhere. I was neither dead nor properly alive" (*Looking Backward*, 197).

befinden (vgl. Gardiner: 1988). Für den Eindruck des Taumels oder der schwindelerregenden Zeitreise zieht Bellamy damit eine Parallele zwischen den Effekten der Technik und der Fiktion (vgl. Khanna: 1988). Denn das Schwanken zwischen struktureller Stabilität und plötzlichem Ausbruch ist Kennzeichen technischer Prozesse wie auch der Textstrategien. Es macht sie zum Inbegriff von Ordnung *und* zum Mittel ihrer Überschreitung. Was in technischer Hinsicht zwischen Magie und Effizienz oszilliert, stellt sich hinsichtlich der fiktionalen Wirkungsstruktur als Spannung zwischen Elementen des Traums und des Lehrgesprächs dar. Durch literarische Konventionalität kann die Fiktion Ordnung, Stabilität und Berechenbarkeit suggerieren; in Augenblicken der plötzlichen Wahrnehmungs- und Identitätskrise trägt sie hingegen zur Verunsicherung der Leser bei.

Auch der Zeithorizont von Bellamys Utopie bezieht aus der Wirkungsdynamik dieser Gegensätze einen besonderen Reiz. Denn die Frage, wie die Transformation in den utopischen Zustand vonstatten gehen wird, erscheint in der Begrifflichkeit Karl Mannheims (1995) als eine Mischung chiliastischer und liberaler 'Gestalten': als Überschneidung einer ekstatischen Plötzlichkeit, mit der das Alte abgestreift wird, und der kontrolliert-planbaren, evolutionären Entwicklung im Sinn eines kontinuierlichen Fortschritts. Auch hier entsteht die Ambivalenz aus dem Zusammenprall gegenläufiger, sich ausschließender Qualitäten: dem abrupten Sprung ins sinnerfüllte Jetzt und dem stetigen Fortschreiten. Schließlich stabilisiert sich allerdings die Position von Julian West. Visionen der Effizienz und des evolutionären Fortschritts überwiegen, wenngleich Erfahrungsreste von Magie, Identitätskonfusion und einer chiliastischen Ekstase als Gefühlsambivalenzen in der Hauptfigur zur Anschauung gekommen sind.

Wie hinsichtlich der Technik und der Fiktion das Chaos des Kontrollverlusts nur von kurzer Dauer ist und der Text auf die Stabilität einer höheren Ordnung hinarbeitet, so mündet also auch die Zeitkonzeption in einen Zustand der kontrollierten Selbstdisziplin. Vor allem in *Equality*, wo die Revolution explizit als *Great Awakening*, als religiöse Aufwallung des Millenarismus beschrieben wird, werden Gefühle der Rache ausgeklammert. Das Bedrohliche einer plötzlichen Entgrenzung, die in der chiliastischen Ekstase herbeigesehnt wird, geht mit einer strikten Gewaltlosigkeit einher. Wie die Romanstruktur als betont konventionelle *romance* endet und die technischen Geräte als Ausdruck rationaler Effizienz erscheinen sollen, wird hinsichtlich der utopischen Transformation das evolutionäre Modell privilegiert.¹² Dennoch: Was als harmonische Zukunftsvision Bellamys interpretiert worden ist, offenbart immer wieder eine unterschwellige Verlustangst, die im Nachwirken des Irrationalen, Unerklärlichen und Ekstatischen ihren Ausdruck findet.

¹² Über den Charakter der demokratischen Revolution berichtet West: "But in a democratic state like America the Revolution was practically done when the people had made up their minds that it was for their interest. There was no one to dispute their power and right to do their will when once resolved on it. The Revolution as regards America and in other countries, in proportion as their governments were popular, was more like the trial of a case in court than a revolution of the traditional blood-and-thunder sort. The court was the people, and the only way that either contestant could win was by convincing the court, from which there was no appeal" (*Equality*, 346).

7. Ambivalenzen im utopischen Denken von Edward Bellamy

Es wurde oben argumentiert, daß Edward Bellamy die Integration republikanischer Normen und Werte in ein technologisch fortgeschrittenes Gemeinwesen propagierte. Dieses Anliegen mag ihn auf die Perspektive des naiven Staunens gebracht haben: den Versuch, eine neue Einfachheit der Verhältnisse zu entwerfen, in der das Wesentliche demokratischer Ideale und technischer Vorgänge leichter zu erkennen ist und gegen die Zustände des 19. Jahrhunderts gewendet werden kann. Doch zwei Elemente seines utopischen Denkens tragen dazu bei, daß die Rückbesinnung weniger eindeutig ist, als man auf den ersten Blick vermuten könnte.

Zum einen dominiert bei Bellamy eine Utopie der Ordnung – ein Fortschrittsdenken, das seine Analogien aus einem Effizienzbegriff ableitet, der eine deutlich technokratische Einfärbung angenommen hat. Bellamy versucht zwar, einen republikanischen Einsatz von Technik zu denken, in dem die Anliegen der Individualisierung und Demokratisierung aufgehoben wären, aber er arbeitet unweigerlich auf einen mechanistischen Begriff reiner Funktionalität hin. Die Perfektionierung von Technologien erscheint für sich genommen bereits als Anzeichen gesellschaftlichen Fortschritts und macht eine darüberhinausgehende zivile Funktionsbestimmung immer weniger relevant. Ähnlich wie das Konzept der Öffentlichkeit an Bedeutung eher verliert als gewinnt, können sich politische und moralische Werte, aber auch Formen von Spiritualität nur noch aus der unmittelbaren Funktionsweise des perfektionierten Systems selbst ergeben, nicht mehr aus den aufklärerischen Konzepten der frühen amerikanischen Demokratie (vgl. Marx: 1987). Obwohl eine neue Einfachheit – der Lebensformen und der sozialen Verhältnisse – eingerichtet worden ist, bedeutet dies keine Rückkehr zu einem naturnahen Leben. Die Vorstellungen von Balance und einem harmonischen Miteinander werden vielmehr vollständig aus den Funktionsmechanismen der technischen Welt abgeleitet.

Zum anderen evozieren die Romane Bellamys eine Fantasie, die den vordergründigen Ordnungsvorstellungen diametral entgegensteht, aber zugleich den modernen Charakter seiner Ideen veranschaulicht: das Begehren, sich dem Zugriff eines übermächtigen Systems schlechthin entziehen zu können. Die wirkungsästhetisch reizvollsten Stellen der Romane bilden jene Krisenerfahrungen, in denen sich die Figuren mit dem Gefühl eines plötzlichen Ausbruchs ihrer körperlichen und psychischen Grenzen nicht mehr sicher sein können. Zumeist sind diese Sinesindrücke mit der Nutzung technisch fortgeschrittener Kommunikationsmittel verbunden. Und wie die vermittelte Nähe des Musikzimmers zur zentralen Paradoxie der schrumpfenden Öffentlichkeit wird, läßt sich in der Lust an der Grenzüberschreitung auch der Wunsch erkennen, aus einem gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhang vollständig auszuscheiden und das Weltgeschehen nur noch vom heimischen Sessel aus mitzuvollziehen. Bellamy zeigt eine utopische Gesellschaft, in der technische Vorgänge moralische Höherwertigkeit und modellhafte Effizienz ausdrücken. Gleichzeitig unterlaufen sie die festgefügte, auf strenger Hierarchie

beruhende Ordnung. Denn jede neue Maschine scheint auch eine neue Form der Transgression – der lustvollen Selbstüberschreitung – zu eröffnen.

Obwohl Bellamy einen emphatischen Begriff der Nation und des politischen Zusammenhalts entwirft, fördert er mit seiner utopischen Vision technischer Erzungenschaften also das gegenläufige Wunschbild einer abgeschiedenen, komfortabel-heimeligen, aber weitgehend apolitischen Passivität. Vielleicht entfernt er sich damit am weitesten von pastoralen Idealen. Denn durch die Technizität der Medienvermittlung werden Bedürfnisse nach Transzendenz und Selbstüberschreitung nicht mehr im Rahmen einer unmittelbaren Naturerfahrung eingelöst, sondern allein mit den Mitteln der Technisierung – das heißt mit einem Instrumentarium, dessen Dominanz das utopische Denken in der amerikanischen Kultur des späten 19. Jahrhunderts gerade zu überwinden bemüht ist. Neue Formen der Spiritualität und Moral ergeben sich nicht mehr aus höheren Konzepten und Sinesindrücken, sondern nur noch aus der Funktionsweise der perfektionierten Maschinenwelt selbst.

Der durchschlagende Erfolg von *Looking Backward* im späten 19. Jahrhundert, aber auch seine bis heute andauernde Wirkung lassen sich demnach nur vor dem Hintergrund einer Technikrepräsentation verstehen, die Paradoxien und Selbstwidersprüche im damaligen Fortschrittsdenken auszudrücken vermochte. Offensichtlich lag eine verwirrende Wirkung von Bellamys Denken in dem Umstand, daß er radikal gegenläufige Denkmuster gleichermaßen zu bekräftigen verstand: Er plädierte für einen freigesetzten Individualismus und entwarf zugleich das Bild einer streng hierarchisch geordneten Gesellschaft; er suchte nach neuen Quellen religiöser Spiritualität, propagierte aber vor allem eine neue Stufe des Säkularisationsprozesses; er begrüßte ein reichhaltiges öffentliches Leben und zeigte doch nur, wie sich die Individuen gemächlich in ihre global vernetzten Privatgemächer zurückzogen. Indem Bellamy den umfassendsten Versuch unternahm, technische Funktionsweisen mit demokratischen Idealen zusammenzuführen, wurde er zum wichtigsten Bezugspunkt der utopischen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts. Gleichzeitig veranschaulichte er aber auch den Übergang von republikanischen zu technokratischen Vorstellungen des Maschinenzeitalters: Daß die enthusiastisch gefeierte Dynamik des technischen Fortschritts eine Rückbesinnung auf demokratische Ideale bereits unterminiert und unmöglich gemacht hatte, erwies sich als zentrale Aporie in Bellamys utopischem Entwurf. Die Komplexität dieser Situation vereinfachen und in ihrer Bedrohlichkeit eindämmen zu können, war ein besonderer Reiz seiner Denkspiele; zugleich machte sie ihn zum ambivalenten Vorboten einer modernen Konstellation, in der sich die technische Entwicklungslogik endgültig zu verselbständigen begann.

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FRANZ K. STANZEL

Otto Gross Redivivus – Lady Chatterley Revisited

Abstract: Otto Gross (1877-1920), psychiatrist from Graz and apostle of free love in a modern matriarchal utopia, had a short but very intensive affair with Frieda Weekley, née Richthofen, before she met D.H. Lawrence. This experience affected profoundly Frieda's relation with Lawrence. Brenda Maddox thinks that Frieda "UnEnglished" young Lawrence's sense of sexuality. This finds expression in his late novels, particularly in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, where Otto Gross evidently supplied the model for Connie's lover Mellors. Considering the far-reaching consequences the acquittal of this novel from the charge of pornography in the much publicized trial of 1960 had on the presentation of sex in the modern novel, the role played by Otto Gross in this context deserves at least a footnote in the history of literature.

Als vor einem Vierteljahrhundert Nicolaus Sombart¹ die "postume Okkultierung" des Otto Gross und die gleichzeitige "Heroisierung" von Max Weber beklagte, erschien das wohl den meisten Lesern des *Merkur* eine etwas ungleichgewichtige Parallelaktion. Es mag sein, daß seither Max Weber tatsächlich etwas an Statur verloren hat. Otto Gross konnte jedenfalls im Vergleich zu ihm gewaltig an Publizität zulegen. So gibt es heute eine international agierende Otto-Gross-Gesellschaft, in welcher sich neben Feministinnen vor allem moderate Anarchisten und Sympathisanten libertinistischer Lebensformen, aber auch Gefolgsleute der Psychoanalyse zusammenfinden. Graz, seine Heimatstadt, hatte Otto Gross im Ausklang des Europäischen Kulturhauptstadtjahres eine Ausstellung gewidmet. Unter dem Titel "Die Gesetze des Vaters" wurde dort vor allem der Vater-Sohn Konflikt mit flankierenden Freud- und Kafka-Exponaten in den Mittelpunkt gerückt.²

Es scheint geraten, hier noch einmal ganz kurz ein paar Lebensdaten zu rekapitulieren: Otto Gross (1877-1920) war der Sohn des angesehenen Kriminologen und Strafrechtsreformers der Universität Graz, Hans Gross. Dem Wunsch des Vaters folgend studierte er Medizin in Graz, verdingte sich einige Zeit als Schiffsarzt auf der Südamerikaroute, kam dabei mit Kokain in Kontakt. Zurück in Graz begann er sich mit Freud zu beschäftigen und wurde zunächst aktiver Verfechter der Freudschen Tiefenpsychologie. Nach seiner Habilitation für Psychopathologie an der Universität Graz kam es bald zum Bruch mit Freud, der ihn zunächst als

¹ Nikolaus Sombart, "Gruppenbild mit Dame," *Merkur* 30 (1976): 983.

² Gerhard Dienes und Ralf Rother, eds., *Die Gesetze des Vaters: hans gross/otto gross/sigmund freud/franz kafka* (Graz: Ausstellungskatalog Stadtmuseum Graz, 2003).

Schüler geschätzt hatte, sich später aber von den radikalen Ideologien des Otto Gross (Bachofen, Mutterrecht, Nietzsche, Demokratie des "letzten Menschen") distanzierte. Otto Gross wendet sich immer mehr einer alternativen Lebensphilosophie zu, die für freie Sexualität und die Wiederbelebung von Ritualen des matriarchalischen Astarte-Kultes warb. In der Bohème von München-Schwabing und unter den Zivilisationsflüchtlingen auf dem Monte Verità bei Ascona fand er Gesinnungsgenossen, z.B. Erich Mühsam und Franz Jung.³ Die Utopie einer Mutterrechtsgesellschaft mit freier Liebe soll an die Stelle des in der kapitalistischen Welt vorherrschenden Patriarchats und der Monogamie treten. Ideengeschichtlich läßt sich Otto Gross mit dieser Ideologie zwischen Max Stirner und Wilhelm Reich lokalisieren.⁴ Anders als bei diesen führt jedoch das hemmungslose Ausleben sexueller Freizügigkeit, verstanden als wesentliche Voraussetzung für die Befreiung des Individuums, bei Otto Gross bald zu schweren psychologischen und existentiellen Krisen. Mehrere Male muß er sich Therapien wegen seiner Kokainsucht unterziehen, die aber zu keiner dauerhaften Entwöhnung führen. Auch wird Otto Gross Beihilfe zum Suizid von zwei Partnerinnen auf dem Monte Verità vorgeworfen. Seinem einflußreichen Vater gelingt es, den Sohn vor gerichtlicher Verfolgung durch Einweisung in eine psychiatrische Anstalt zu bewahren. Die zwangsweise Überstellung von Berlin in ein niederösterreichisches Sanatorium hat 1913 literarische Protestaktionen in Berlin, München, Wien zur Folge, aus deren Ausmaß zu erschließen ist, welche Publizität mit seiner Person damals verbunden war. So erschienen Protestaufrufe von Franz Jung, Franz Pfemfert u.a. in mehreren Zeitungen und Zeitschriften.⁵

Welche Faszination Otto Gross ausstrahlte, ist auch aus der Zahl der fiktionalen Charaktere, die nach seiner Person gestaltet sind, nachzuweisen.⁶ So läßt Johannes R. Becher im Roman *Abschied* einen heroinsüchtigen Dr. Hoch, der auch von freier Liebe schwärmt, auftreten. Franz Werfel führt in seinem Roman *Barbara* einen Dr. Gebhart ein, der gegen Patriarchismus und Monogamie wettet. In seinem unvollendeten Roman *Die schwarze Messe* sollte ein Doktor Grauh, dessen äußere Erscheinung jene von Otto Gross abbildet, eine der Hauptgestalten werden. In Max Brods *Das große Wagnis* erscheint Otto Gross in der Gestalt des über eine utopische Welt herrschenden Diktators Dr. Askonas. Hermann Hesse, der Otto Gross auf dem Monte Verità kennenlernte, verleiht in seinem *Weltverbesserer* einem Dr. Knölge manche Züge, die an Otto Gross erinnern. Daneben finden sich Gross ähnliche Figuren in den Werken von Leonhard Frank, Gerhart Hauptmann, Frank Wedekind, Else Lasker-Schüler, Erich Maria

³ Harald Szeemann, ed., *Monte Verità: Berg der Wahrheit. Lokale Anthropologie als Beitrag zur Wiederentdeckung einer neuzeitlichen Topographie* (Locarno: Armando Dado und Milano: Electa, 1980) 37 und 108-09.

⁴ Emanuel Hurwitz, *Otto Gross: Paradies-Sucher zwischen Freud und Jung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988).

⁵ Vgl. Franz Jung in Franz Pfemferts Sondernummer der *Aktion* 51 (1913), Brenda Maddox, *The Married Man: A Life of D.H. Lawrence* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994) 178.

⁶ Jennifer E. Michaels, *Anarchy and Eros: Otto Gross' Impact on German Expressionist Writers*, Utah Studies in Literature and Linguistics, Vol. 24 (New York: Peter Lang, 1983).

Remarque, und nicht zuletzt von D.H. Lawrence. Letzterem soll sich unsere besondere Aufmerksamkeit zuwenden, da im Werk dieses englischen Autors die Präsenz des Otto Gross zwar nur auf indirekte Weise, dafür aber mit umso größerer epochaler Nachhaltigkeit wirksam geworden ist.

Otto Gross und der englische Autor D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930) sind einander nie persönlich begegnet und doch hat Gross auf den Inhalt des späteren Romanwerks dieses Autors einen ganz entscheidenden Einfluß ausgeübt. Sein letzter Roman *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) konnte in Amerika erst 1959 und in England 1960 nach einem aufsehenerregenden Gerichtsverfahren, in dem das Werk schließlich vom Vorwurf der Pornographie freigesprochen worden war, erscheinen. Die Kausalkette, die sich von Otto Gross zu D.H. Lawrence und schließlich hin zu den beiden Hauptfiguren in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Constance (Connie) Chatterley und Mellors, dem Wildhüter auf dem Landsitz von Sir Clifford Chatterley, verfolgen läßt, hat etwas Romanhaftes an sich. Eigentlich könnte man darüber staunen, daß heute, da Romane, in denen die Handlung aus einer Verbindung von historischen Fakten und literarischen Fiktionen so viel Anklang finden (Wolfgang Hildesheimer, *Marbot*; A.S. Byatt, *Possession* u.a.), noch kein Romanautor diese Geschichte, die für die neuere Literatur eine beinahe paradigmatische Bedeutung hinsichtlich der Relation von Fakt und Fiktion beanspruchen kann, aufgegriffen hat.

Der historische Teil dieser Geschichte beginnt 1907 in München-Schwabing.⁷ Dort begegnen zwei Töchter aus der preußischen Offiziersfamilie von Richthofen, Else (geb. 1874), verheiratete Jaffé, und Frieda (geb. 1879), verheiratete Weekley, Otto Gross.⁸ Beide waren bereits Gattinnen von Professoren: Else vom Nationalökonom Jaffé in Heidelberg, Frieda vom Philologen Weekley in Nottingham. Beide waren auch schon Mütter von zwei, respektive drei Kindern. Die persönliche Verbindung zu Otto Gross lief vermutlich über dessen Gattin Frieda, geborene Schloffer, mit der Else Jahre in einer Freiburger Internatsschule verbracht hatte. Elses Bekanntschaft mit Otto Gross entwickelte sich sehr bald zu einer intimen Beziehung, aus der auch ein Kind hervorging. Anlässlich eines Besuches bei ihrer Schwester in München lernte Frieda Otto Gross kennen. Auch sie verfiel sogleich, wie ihre Schwester und andere Frauen, der persönlichen Attraktion dieses ungewöhnlich virilen Mannes. Frieda Weekley muß in dieser kurzen, aber umso leidenschaftlicheren Kohabitation mit Otto Gross eine ihr ganzes Wesen prägende Initiation in eine Form der intensiv ausgelebten freien Sexualität erfahren haben. Offensichtlich war sie dafür durch ihre offene, sinnenfreudige Veranlagung und ihre Verachtung für alles, was an spätviktorianische Respektabilitätsmoral erinnerte, vorbereitet. Die Prägung ihrer Persönlichkeit durch Otto Gross war gewissermaßen die "Mitgift," die sie in ihre Beziehung und spätere Ehe mit D.H. Lawrence einbrachte. Friedas Biographie ist in ihren Briefen

⁷ Maddox, *The Married Man: A Life of D.H. Lawrence*, 99.

⁸ Martin Green, *The von Richthofen Sisters: The Triumphant and the Tragic Modes of Love* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974) 58-59.

und jenen von D.H. Lawrence gut dokumentiert.⁹ Ihre eigenen autobiographischen Aufsätze neigen jedoch sehr stark zur Fiktivierung.¹⁰ Dem wenig erbaulichen Ende von Otto Gross – er ging 1920 in Berlin an Drogensucht und Verwahrlosung zugrunde – verleiht sie nachträglich Würde, indem sie ihn als Folge seines Kriegerlebnisses sterben läßt.

Die Verbindung mit D.H. Lawrence beginnt nach Friedas Rückkehr von der Münchner Begegnung mit Otto Gross, die in einer zunächst hoch-emotionalen Korrespondenz zwischen beiden eine Fortsetzung findet, bis Frieda sie schließlich abbricht. Ein Grund dafür ist ihre Begegnung mit einem früheren Studenten ihres Gatten, einem um erste literarische Anerkennung ringenden Jungautor, D.H. Lawrence, im März 1912. Ihre Beziehung zu D.H. Lawrence stand offensichtlich von Anfang an im Zeichen der Initiation in das dionysische Mysterium des Sexus, die sie von Otto Gross erfahren hatte. Schon kurze Zeit nach der ersten Begegnung entführt D.H. Lawrence eine offensichtlich nicht unwillige Frieda aus der bürgerlich monotonen Geborgenheit eines Professorenhaushalts an einer englischen Provinzuniversität. Der hohe Preis für diese Flucht, den sie – die letzten Folgen zunächst nicht abschätzend – zu bezahlen hat, ist der Verzicht auf ihre drei noch unmündigen Kinder mit Ernest Weekley.

Für Frieda und Lawrence beginnt nun ein unstetes Wanderleben, zunächst auf dem Kontinent, später auch in Australien und Neu-Mexiko. Nach der Scheidung von Ernest Weekley, dem, wie zu erwarten war, das Sorgerecht über die drei Kinder zugesprochen wurde, heiraten Frieda und Lawrence 1914 in London. Die Ehe blieb, trotz mehrerer Ausbrüche beider Partner, vor allem Friedas, bis zum Tod Lawrences 1930 bestehen. Auf dieses dürre Handlungsgerüst reduziert mag die Geschichte Friedas wie die Handlung eines Groschenromans anmuten; sie hatte aber in Wirklichkeit literarhistorische Folgen, die ihresgleichen in der neueren Literatur suchen.

Das sprichwörtliche Beziehungsdreieck hat zwischen Otto Gross – Frieda – D.H. Lawrence gleichzeitig nie existiert, da Frieda zur Zeit ihrer Verbindung mit Otto Gross Lawrence noch gar nicht kannte. Dennoch muß in der Imagination Friedas und des Autors eine solche Konstellation existiert haben, denn sie hat in seinem Werk, vor allem in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, einen, wenn auch indirekten, Niederschlag gefunden. Wenn Frieda einmal erklärt, auch sie habe zu diesem Roman etwas beigetragen,¹¹ dann hat sie sehr wahrscheinlich an ihre intensive leidenschaftliche Erfahrung mit Otto Gross gedacht. Diese Annahme wird neuerdings auch durch einen zwar fiktionalen, aber nach Ausweis der biographischen Quellen ungewöhnlich authentischen Bericht darüber bestätigt, wie wir uns den Transfer der Paarerfahrung Otto-Frieda auf Frieda-Lawrence vorzustellen haben. Sie findet sich in dem quasi-autobiographischen Roman *Mr Noon*, den

⁹ James T. Boulton, ed., *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, The Cambridge Edition of the Letters and Works of D.H. Lawrence, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 403-25.

¹⁰ Frieda Lawrence, *Not I, But the Wind ...* (Santa Fe, NM: Rydal Press, 1934). Vgl. dazu E.W. Tedlock, ed., *The Memoirs and Correspondence*, 1964.

¹¹ Maddox, *The Married Man: A Life of D.H. Lawrence*, 419.

Lawrence, vermutlich seines autobiographischen Inhalts wegen, zu Lebzeiten nie veröffentlicht hat. Er ist im Zuge der neuen Cambridge Gesamtausgabe 1972 erschienen.¹² Manche Kritiker meinen, der Roman stelle die tatsächlichen Umstände ihres gemeinsamen Lebens authentischer dar als ihre Briefe. So ist etwa aus *Mr Noon* zu entnehmen, daß sich Lawrences erotische Erfahrung vor Frieda nicht von jener eines durchschnittlichen jungen Mannes aus einer mittelländischen Bergbau-Kleinstadt unterschieden zu haben scheint. Das jugendliche Liebesgeplänkel in den frühen Kapiteln von *Mr Noon* wird als "Spooning"¹³ beschrieben, was im nordenglisch-mitteländischen Dialekt dem geläufigeren amerikanischen Begriff des "Petting" entspricht. Die leidenschaftlichen Episoden der großen Romane *The Rainbow* und *Women in Love* weisen dagegen auf die Liebeserfahrung des Autors mit Frieda, und über Frieda wohl auf Otto Gross zurück. Am deutlichsten aber wird das Gross-Erlebnis in den Aktszenen in Lawrences letztem Roman *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Lawrences Biographin Brenda Maddox beschreibt Friedas Effekt auf Lawrence in *eroticis* als ein "UnEnglishing" des Autors.¹⁴

In diesem Zusammenhang ist eine Begebenheit von größerem biographischen Interesse, als ihr auf den ersten Blick zuzukommen scheint. Auf der zum Teil zusammen mit Frieda unternommenen Fußwanderung von Bayern nach Südtirol gibt sich Lawrence in einer Gaststätte am Zürchersee als Grazer aus: "I said I was from Graz; that my father was a doctor in Graz [...] I said this because I knew a doctor in Graz [...] I would have stayed the night at this house: I wanted to. But I had developed my Austrian character too far."¹⁵ Läßt diese völlig unprovizierte Identifikation mit Otto Gross auf eine unter- oder halbbewußte Präsenz dieser Person in Lawrence schließen? Der Sachverhalt verliert etwas Ominosität, wenn in *Mr Noon* Gilbert (= Lawrence) das Gespräch mit Joanna (= Frieda) auf ihre frühere Liaison mit einem gewissen Eberhard lenkt, hinter dem unschwer die reale Gestalt von Otto Gross zu erkennen ist. Joanna/Frieda beginnt sogleich von der Anziehungskraft dieses Eberhard zu schwärmen. Er sei ein weißer Dionysos gewesen, dem keine Frau widerstehen hätte können. Zwei Wochen mit ihm hätten ihr ganzes Leben verändert. Gestört habe sie nur, daß er gleichzeitig immer zwei Frauen beglückt habe. Aber er war ihr großer Lehrmeister in der Liebe:

He made me believe in love – in the sacredness of love. He made me see that marriage and all those things are based on fear. [...] And then there can't be love without sex. Eberhard taught me that. And it is true: Love is sex. But you can have your sex all in your head, like the saints did. But that I call a sort of perversion. Don't you? Sex is sex, and ought to find its expression in the proper way – don't you think. And there is

¹² D.H. Lawrence, *Mr Noon*, The Cambridge Edition of the Letters and Works of D.H. Lawrence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹³ Ebd., 297.

¹⁴ Maddox, *The Married Man: A Life of D.H. Lawrence*, 113.

¹⁵ D.H. Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, The Phoenix Edition of D.H. Lawrence (London: Heinemann, 1956) 147.

no strong feeling aroused in anybody that doesn't have an element of sex in it – don't you think?¹⁶

Dieses Geständnis, von Joanna/Frieda an Gilbert/Lawrence – nichts weniger als eine *in-nuce*-Fassung von Otto Gross' Credo an die freie Liebe – klingt in dem Gedankenbericht Connies über ihre Stimmung nach der "night of sensual passion" mit Mellors an, wenn es dort u.a. heißt: "In the short summer night she learnt so much."¹⁷ Aus den beiden Textstellen ist zu erschließen, daß der Prototyp des Mannes, der in diesem Roman Connie in das Mysterium der sexuellen Leidenschaft einführt, zwar Mellors heißt, aber eigentlich Otto Gross ist. Joanna/Frieda bringt in *Mr Noon* zum Ausdruck, was die Grundthese, die Lawrence mit Gross teilte, ausmacht: Sexualität, die nicht ungehemmt ausgelebt werden kann, verursacht physischen und seelischen Verfall.

Es ist auch die Kernaussage von *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, die noch ein halbes Jahrhundert Zensur und Sittenwächter in England und Amerika beunruhigen wird. Als Lawrence 1927/28 mit der Abfassung dieses seines letzten Romans begann, war sein Gesundheitszustand schon stark in Mitleidenschaft gezogen. Umso erstaunlicher ist, daß er in diesem Roman dem sexuellen Erlebnis, das zwar in allen seinen Erzählungen und auch seinen Gedichten eine Rolle spielt, mit solcher Intensität eine so essentielle Bedeutung beimißt. Man muß annehmen, daß Frieda ihre Episode mit Otto Gross freimütig mit ihrem Gatten geteilt hat.

Das hier nachgezeichnete reale und in der Fiktion zum Teil unverändert nachvollzogene Beziehungsgeflecht verdiente nicht unsere Aufmerksamkeit, bildete es nicht die Basis für einen literarhistorischen Umbruch, der sich unmittelbar an Hand der Rezeptionsgeschichte des Romans *Lady Chatterley's Lover* nachvollziehen läßt.

Die Handlung von *Lady Chatterley's Lover* hat von Anfang an die Leser schockiert, denn mit solcher Offenheit war der Geschlechtsakt mit seiner sich von Episode zu Episode noch steigenden Intensität in der modernen Literatur bis dahin nicht dargestellt worden. Es dauerte daher eine ganze Generation – eine Generation, die sich ihrer moralischen Werte nach der Katastrophe der beiden Weltkriege erst wieder vergewissern musste – bis dieser Roman in England und Amerika ungekürzt erscheinen konnte.

Da keine Aussicht auf seine Veröffentlichung in England oder Amerika bestand, mußte Lawrence seinen Roman 1928 als Privatdruck in Florenz erscheinen lassen. Man wird an die Finte, die 1922 den Erstdruck von James Joyces *Ulysses* ermöglichte, erinnert. Joyce übergab das Manuskript des *Ulysses* französischen Druckern in Lyon, die den Text nicht lesen konnten. Die italienischen Setzer werden wohl auch den Text von *Lady Chatterley's Lover* nicht verstanden haben. Die deutsche Literatur hat meines Wissens keinen ähnlichen Fall der fremdsprachigen Zensurumgehung aufzuweisen. Bald nach der in Florenz gedruckten Ausgabe gelang es Lawrence auch in Frankreich, seinen Roman zum Druck zu

¹⁶ *Mr Noon*, 127.

¹⁷ D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961) 258.

bringen. Obgleich auf dem Postweg von Italien und Frankreich nach England und auch nach Amerika der Zoll zahlreiche Exemplare beschlagnahmte und vernichtete, gelangten doch genügend Exemplare in die Hände von englischen Lesern, um eine, wenn auch auf literarische Zirkel beschränkte Diskussion über den Roman in Gang zu bringen.

1959 wurde vom englischen Parlament ein neuer "Obscene Publications Act" beschlossen. Einige Neuerungen in diesem Gesetz waren so weitreichend, daß sich der Penguin Verlag 1960 ermutigt sah, das Risiko einer Publikation dieses in seiner Lawrence-Gesamtausgabe noch fehlenden Romans einzugehen. Der für Kritik, Literatur-, Geschmacks- und Sittengeschichte höchst aufschlußreiche Prozessverlauf wurde von C.H. Rolph auf sehr ansprechende Weise für den Penguin Verlag dokumentiert.¹⁸ Im Kreuzverhör der 35 von der Verteidigung aufgebotenen Kritiker, Professoren und auch Kleriker, darunter ein Bischof, kam der Vertreter der Anklage immer wieder auf die Frage zurück, ob nicht die beanstandeten Wörter durch Sternchen im Druck hätten ersetzt werden können. Die Antwort darauf lautete stets, das wäre der Absicht des Autors, auch diesen Wörtern eine wertfreie Verwendung zu ermöglichen, genau zuwidergelaufen. Man hätte dabei auch auf die Praxis von Laurence Sterne in seinem Roman *Tristram Shandy* verweisen können, dessen Druckseiten mit Auslassungszeichen dieser Art geradezu übersät sind, wodurch die ausgelassenen Wörter erst recht hervorgehoben werden. Die markierte Auslassung eines Wortes oder Satzes, als Aposiopesis der Rhetorik seit der Antike vertraut, dient in der Tat mehr der Hervorhebung als der Verhüllung.

Wie sehr noch postviktorianische Moralvorstellungen die Haltung der Anklagevertretung bestimmten, wird auch aus der wiederholt an die Literaturkritiker gestellten Frage deutlich, ob sie den Roman als Lektüre auch für ihre Gattinnen oder für ihr Dienstpersonal geeignet hielten. Solche Fragen mußten unweigerlich das viktorianische Frauenbild der "sheltered lady," der keine Sexualität zuzumuten war, bzw. die moralische Verantwortung einer viktorianischen Herrschaft gegenüber ihrem Dienstpersonal in Erinnerung rufen. Nicht direkt ausgesprochen aber impliziert waren in solchen Fragen auch gesellschaftliche Bedenken gegenüber intimen Verbindungen über Klassengrenzen hinweg.

Erst in ihrem Abschlußplädoyer wagte sich die Verteidigung an eine etwas konkretere Interpretation der "night of sensual passion" gegen Ende des Romans, beschränkte sich aber auch jetzt darauf nur anzudeuten, daß es sich hier um einen recht ungewöhnlichen Vollzug des Geschlechtsaktes handle, der auch das Vorstellungsvermögen des Vertreters der Anklage übersteige, so daß er es den Mitgliedern der Jury überlassen müsse, sich darüber ein Urteil zu bilden. Die Verteidigung erkannte, daß durch das ausführliche Zitat des Anklägers aus Lawrences Schilderung der letzten Begegnung zwischen Connie und Mellors bei den Juroren möglicherweise ein Meinungsumschwung ausgelöst werden könnte. Wie ernst die Situation kurz vor dem Ende des Prozesses für die Verteidigung war, geht

¹⁸ *The Trial of Lady Chatterley* (Regina v. Penguin Books Limited, 1961).

aus dem sehr energisch vorgebrachten Einspruch der Verteidigung gegen die ausführliche Verlesung dieser Stelle hervor, mit der Begründung, daß es sich hier um vorher nicht thematisiertes Beweismaterial handle. Dieser Einspruch wurde jedoch vom Richter zurückgewiesen. Tatsächlich kam durch dieses überraschende Eingehen auf diese Passage der Prozess kurz vor seinem Abschluß noch einmal in eine für Verteidigung und Verlag sehr kritische Phase. Worum ging es hier?

Bald nach Prozessende hat John Sparrow, Oxford, in einem *Encounter*-Artikel¹⁹ darauf hingewiesen, daß es die Anklage unterlassen habe, die Juroren entsprechend deutlich darauf aufmerksam zu machen, es handle sich bei dieser Episode um eine "penetratio per anum." Ein solcher Akt wäre nach englischem Strafrecht damals noch als schweres Vergehen zu ahnden gewesen. Hätte die Anklage diesen Sachverhalt im Prozess ausreichend konkret dargestellt, dann hätte die Jury mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit keinen Freispruch fällen können, meint Sparrow.

Die 35 Kritiker-Spezialisten, die von der Verteidigung in den Zeugenstand gerufen wurden – die Anklage hat darauf verzichtet, von der im neuen Gesetz gebotenen Möglichkeit, Fachleute zur Meinungsbildung der Jury vorzuladen, Gebrauch zu machen – hatten es nicht ganz leicht, ihre Aussagen immer so zu formulieren, daß sie damit der Sache des Autors und Verlages nicht eventuell auch schadeten. So versuchte die Anklage immer wieder, den literarischen Rang des Romans in Zweifel zu ziehen. Darauf lautete die Antwort stereotyp: *Lady Chatterley's Lover* ist nicht der beste Roman des Autors, kann aber einen relativ hohen Stellenwert in der neueren Romanliteratur beanspruchen. Dieser wurde ihm dann meist auf Grund seines "moral content" zuerkannt. Dabei ist zu berücksichtigen, daß der Begriff "moral" im Englischen einen weiteren Bedeutungsumfang besitzt als "moralisch" im Deutschen, wie schon aus der im Englischen geläufigen Bezeichnung der Geisteswissenschaften als "moral sciences" zu ersehen ist. Nicht ganz so überzeugend klang das Urteil der Kritiker, wenn die formale und stilistische Gestaltung des Romans zur Debatte stand, was übrigens nur selten im Detail geschah.

In diesem Punkt wäre für die Anklage ein Vergleich mit dem Prozess gegen Flaubert und seinem Roman *Mme Bovary* vermutlich ergiebig gewesen. Auf eine im Fall des *Mme Bovary*-Prozesses (1856) mit großem Erfolg eingesetzte Strategie mußte die Verteidigung von Lawrences Roman nämlich verzichten. Gegen den Anklagepunkt "Verklärung des Ehebruchs" konnte Flauberts Verteidigung vorbringen, daß die inkriminierte Stelle – Emma betrachtet selbstgefällig ihren nackten Körper im Spiegelbild, im Gedanken noch ganz versunken in die Erinnerung an ihr letztes Liebeserlebnis mit Léon – nicht dem Autor anzulasten sei, da es sich an dieser Stelle um die Darstellung der Gedanken und Gefühle der Romanfigur Emma Bovary handle. Mit einer solchen Argumentation wäre in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* nicht zu reüssieren gewesen, da in diesem Roman die auktorialen Aussagen selten ganz scharf von den Gedanken und Gefühlen der Hauptcharak-

¹⁹ John Sparrow, "Regina v. Penguin Books Limited: An Undisclosed Element in the Case," *Encounter* (February 1962): 35-43.

tere, im besonderen Connies, zu unterscheiden sind.²⁰ Der auktoriale Erzähler läßt nämlich oft seiner missionarischen Neigung zur Rechtfertigung seiner libertären Sexualphilosophie die Zügel schießen, so daß es schwer fällt, eine dieser (auktorialen) Rechtfertigungen von Connies Ehebruch nur Connie anzulasten. Auch in der vergleichbaren Spiegelszene in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (72) meldet sich unüberhörbar der auktoriale Erzähler, hier offensichtlich Sprachrohr des Autors, zu Wort. Wenn Connie glaubt, an ihrer Figur Spuren des Alterns erkennen zu müssen, erklärt der Erzähler diesen Zustand mit der Connie seit Jahren aufgezwungenen sexuellen Entsagung.

Das Wien des Fin-de-siècle erscheint heute manchen Kulturhistorikern als veritable Brutstätte für revolutionäre Ideen und Theorien auf dem Gebiet der Kunst und Literatur bezüglich Erotik und Sexualität. Einen Brennpunkt bildet offensichtlich die Psychoanalyse von Sigmund Freud. Neben Wien war es Graz, wo dieser Vorstellungsbereich in Wissenschaft und Kunst rege Beachtung fand. Dort schrieb Sacher von Masoch jene Erzählungen, die uns den heute vielgebrauchten Terminus 'Masochismus' bescherten. Zu seiner Verbreitung hat unmittelbar vor der Jahrhundertwende der Inhaber der Lehrkanzel für Psychiatrie an der Universität Graz, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, mit seiner *Psychopathia sexualis*²¹ beigetragen, einer Studie, die auf Vater und Sohn Gross starken, wenn auch entgegengerichteten Einfluß ausübte. Otto Gross' psychiatrische Laufbahn begann aber als Bewunderer Freuds. Allerdings geht Otto Gross mit seinen psychopathologischen Schlußfolgerungen aus der Psychoanalyse bald weit über Freud hinaus, was Freud veranlaßte, sich vom sozialrevolutionären Überschwang seines Bewunderers zu distanzieren: "Wir sind Ärzte und wollen Ärzte bleiben."²² Es war eine unmißverständliche Abgrenzung von dem utopischen Eifer, mit dem Otto Gross sich anschickte, der Emanzipation des Menschen in Richtung auf eine matriarchalische Gesellschaftsordnung mit dionysisch ausgelebter freier Liebe den Weg zu bereiten.

Einen auffälligen Gegenpol zu Otto Gross und seiner Idee einer matriarchalischen Utopie bildet, was bisher kaum beachtet worden ist, der Wiener Philosophiestudent Otto Weininger, dessen *Geschlecht und Charakter*,²³ kurz vor seinem spektakulären Suizid im Sterbehaus Beethovens in Wien 1903 erschienen, sofort

²⁰ Franz K. Stanzel, *Theorie des Erzählens*, Uni-Taschenbücher, Vol. 104 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989) 177-78.

²¹ Michael Turnheim, "Deportation, Bio-Politik und neue Gemeinschaft," in: Dienes und Rother, eds., *Die Gesetze des Vaters*, 210-221.

²² Mit diesen Worten soll Freud auf dem Internationalen Kongress der Psychoanalytiker 1908 in Salzburg Otto Gross nach dessen Vortrag zurechtgewiesen haben, wie mehrere Biographen von Otto Gross übereinstimmend berichten. Vgl. Emanuel Hurwitz, "Otto Gross – von der Psychoanalyse zum Paradies," Harald Szeemann, *Monte Verità*, 113, und Gerhard Dienes, "Der Mann Moses und die Foltermaschine," in Dienes und Rother, eds., *Die Gesetze des Vaters*, 20.

²³ Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Wien: Braumüller, 1903). Zur Entstehung des Werkes vgl. Hannelore Rodlauer, *Otto Weininger: Eros und Psyche. Studien und Briefe 1899*, Sitzungsberichte der Phil. hist. Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vol. 559 (Wien, 1990).

viel Aufmerksamkeit auf sich zog. Versucht Otto Gross das weibliche Geschlecht im Rahmen einer matriarchalisch geordneten Gesellschaftsordnung über die Ebene des Mannes zu heben, so findet sich das "Weib" bei dem patriarchalisch orientierten Weininger, wegen seines von ihm behaupteten Mangels an echter künstlerischer Kreativität und defizitärer geistiger Kapazität, tief unter dem Mann. Andererseits sind die beiden Geschlechter M und W durch die Bisexualität ihrer Veranlagung – den Begriff hat Weininger von Fließ und/oder Freud entlehnt – aneinander gekettet, denn jedes der beiden Geschlechter hat einen männlichen und weiblichen Anteil in seiner Veranlagung. Es war der Begriff der Bisexualität, den Weininger vermutlich wirkungsvoller noch als Fließ/Freud der Literatur vermittelte. Wenn z.B. Leopold Bloom im *Ulysses* einmal als der Prototyp des "neuen weiblichen Mannes" definiert wird, so weist das offensichtlich auf Weininger zurück.²⁴ Bloom ist in der Tat in seinem Auftreten "weiblich," stets sehr höflich, Kontrahenten gegenüber nachgiebig und tolerant, äußerlich gepflegt, und, allem Anschein nach, als Mann semi-impotent. Die Fähigkeit zum orgiastischen (außer-ehelichen) Ausleben der Sexualität wird bei Joyce ausschließlich der weiblichen Hauptperson, Molly Bloom, zugeordnet. Eine vergleichende Rezeptionsgeschichte von Otto Gross und Weininger in der Literatur der ersten Hälfte des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, ein Desiderat der Forschung, wäre eine sehr reizvolle Aufgabe.

Kehren wir noch einmal zu D.H. Lawrence und *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, also zu dem Roman, in dem Otto Gross einen Teil seines sexologischen Erbes hinterlassen hat, zurück. In der umfangreichen Diskussion über diesen Roman ist eine Frage bisher nicht gestellt und daher auch nicht beantwortet worden: Welche Folgerungen ergeben sich für die Interpretation aus seinem offenen Schluß? Werden Connie und Mellors nach Überwindung der konkreten Schwierigkeiten, die sich in der gegenwärtigen Lage ihrer Verbindung entgegenstellen, eines Tages doch zu einem gemeinsamen und dauerhaft erfüllten Leben finden? Weiters, wird das Kind, das Connie von Mellors empfangen, aber in der vermutlich dann noch immer aufrechten Ehe mit Sir Clifford zur Welt bringen wird, von Sir Clifford, der sich einen Erben für den Stammsitz der Chatterleys wünscht, freigegeben werden? Und die für das Thema des Romans vielleicht wichtigste Frage: Wie wird sich das gemeinsame Leben von Connie und Mellors gestalten, wenn einmal sexuelle Potenz und sinnliche Lust am Geschlecht nachlassen oder vielleicht überhaupt schwinden?

Es fällt schwer, betrachtet man alle die hier angeschnittenen Unbestimmtheiten, die Frage zu beantworten, wie der offene Schluß eventuell aufzulösen wäre. Es ergeben sich auch erzähltechnisch betrachtet Probleme bei der Auflösung dieses offenen Schlusses. Offene Erzählschlüsse – sie häufen sich in der modernen Erzählliteratur seit Tschechow, Joyce, Hemingway u.a. immer mehr – sind immer ein Appell zur wiederholten Lektüre. Bei der zweiten Lektüre kann sich dann die Aufmerksamkeit des Lesers im besonderen auf jene Aspekte richten, die mit dem offenen Schluß zu einer Klärung herausfordern. Dabei erweisen sich häufig

²⁴ Vgl. Franz K. Stanzel, "Der weibliche Mann: Eine rückläufige Spurensuche von James Joyce zu Otto Weininger," *Poetica* 29.1-2 (1997): 141-57.

die Gedanken und Gefühle führender Charaktere, besonders dann, wenn sie unmittelbar, also in einem Reflektormodus präsentiert werden, als besonders ergiebig. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* gibt Lawrence einer vorherrschend auktorialen Erzählweise, und damit dem Erzählermodus, den Vorzug. Hier ist eine Zweitlektüre nicht immer sehr ergiebig, da durch die auktorialen Kommentare Unbestimmtheitsstellen in der Sinnggebung meist schon bei der Erstlektüre beseitigt werden.

In Lawrences Schilderungen der "bouts," um noch einmal an die mißverständliche Terminologie der Anklage zu erinnern, fällt auf, daß das Erlebnis der Vereinigung von Connie und Mellors, nicht wie von einem Teil der Kritik behauptet wird, auf den sexuellen Akt als solchen beschränkt bleibt. Für Lawrence kann sogar in Anspruch genommen werden, schon Jahrzehnte bevor Sexhandbücher den Markt zu überschwemmen begannen, aufgezeigt zu haben, wie verschieden das Kontinuum des Ablaufs von Vorspiel, Höhepunkt und Nachklang gestaltet werden kann. Daß bei Lawrence noch der männliche Partner dominiert, ist wahrscheinlich nicht ausschließlich mit der vorgegebenen Handlungssituation, sondern wohl auch mit der maskulinen Voreingenommenheit des Autors selbst zu erklären. Hier kommen sich D.H. Lawrence und Otto Gross sehr nahe, denn auch bei Gross dominiert, seinen wiederholten matriarchalischen Gelöbnissen zum Trotz, doch immer noch der Mann, wie den Zeugnissen seiner Partnerinnen zu entnehmen ist.²⁵

Es mag den historischen Ablauf, den in Wirklichkeit noch mehrere, hier nicht erwähnte Faktoren mitbestimmt haben, etwas vereinfachen, zugleich ihn der Anschauung zugänglicher machen, wenn man den Freispruch von *Lady Chatterley's Lover* vom Vorwurf der Pornographie durch ein englisches Gericht als eine kultur- und literaturgeschichtliche Wendemarke bezeichnet. Mit diesem Urteil hat – nicht nur die englischsprachige – Literatur einen Freiraum für die Darstellung der Sexualität gewonnen, der ihr bis dahin immer wieder streitig gemacht worden war. Daß sich damit auch die Schleusen für kommerziell ausgebeutete Permissivität in Literatur und Medien aufgaben, soll nicht übersehen werden. Das ist der Preis, den die Massenmedienwelt für jeden Zugewinn an Liberalität heute einfordert. Beschränken wir uns aber auf die "Höhenkammliteratur," dann kann man heute schon eine weitreichende Folge dieser Wende erkennen. Das Thema Ehebruch bestimmt von alters her die ganze Skala der literarischen Darstellungswerten von skurriler Komik bis hin zu düsterer Tragik. Es scheint, daß das tragische Ende dieser Skala, das im 19. Jahrhundert durch klassische Werke von außerordentlichem Rang auffällig stark besetzt wurde, – man denke an *Mme Bovary*, *Effie Briest*, *Anna Karenina* (und als psychologisch sehr komplexe Variante wären auch die *Wahlverwandtschaften* in diese Reihe zu stellen) – seit der genannten Wende praktisch leer geblieben ist.

²⁵ Maddox, *The Married Man: A Life of D.H. Lawrence*, 101.

INGO BERENSMEYER

Opening the Gates of Pandemonium: Simulacra of Apocalypse in Nathanael West's *A Cool Million* and *The Day of the Locust*

Abstract: Nathanael West's last two novels, *A Cool Million*, or *The Dismantling of Lemuel Pitkin* (1934) and *The Day of the Locust* (1939), thematize the mass-cultural impact of simulation in ways that point forward to post-World War II American literature. They do so most notably by establishing a connection between the twentieth-century economic culture of consumption (the ideology of consumerism) and apocalyptic traditions of Western thought, a connection they explore through the figure of the simulacrum and the structural motif of unveiling. This article intends to demonstrate that West's literary analysis of simulacra transcends the boundaries of traditional readings of 'modernism' and that, contrary to a number of interpretations, his texts do not offer a straight repetition of but a critical commentary on apocalyptic modes of thought and reading.

The gates of pandemonium are open [...];
Nathanael West, *A Cool Million*, 233¹

I.

In what Jean Baudrillard has called the 'agony of the real,' the signifying regime of the classical models of representation and illusion, characterized by a dualism of appearance and reality, loses its validity and is replaced by 'simulacra,' simulations of simulations that no longer require any basis of reference except themselves. Simulation is now said to be 'pure' and therefore 'true' in the sense of 'no longer falsifiable.' Controlled by codes, it replaces the dominant reality schemata of the renaissance (the fake) and the age of industry (production) – simulation becomes 'hyperreal.'² Simulacra, if unveiled, reveal no deep structure of an underlying reality but merely their own impenetrable surfaces. And yet they are nonetheless real, if we define the real with Lacan as beyond the symbolic and imaginary or, indeed,

¹ All quotations are from *The Complete Works of Nathanael West* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1957, 4th printing 1960). Page numbers will be cited in parentheses in the text.

² Cf. Jean Baudrillard, *Agonie des Realen* (Berlin: Merve, 1978); *Simulacres et simulation* (Paris: Galilée, 1981); *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1983); *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1993); *Fatal Strategies* (New York: Semiotext[e]; London: Pluto, 1990).

with Philip K. Dick, as “that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn’t go away.”³ Simulacra perpetually frustrate the apocalyptic urge to lift the veil, to ‘dismantle’ the surface and uncover the secret of reality which lies underneath ideology’s thick layers. Instead of a vertical, intensive, or apocalyptic surface/depth binarism, some modernist and many postmodernist texts are therefore structured according to a different strategy: a horizontal, extensive or cartographic approach, a more or less “random cannibalization” – or carnivalization – “of all the styles of the past”⁴ that frustrates any apocalyptic vision. Apocalyptic desire, such as Thomas Pynchon, in *The Crying of Lot 49*, embodies in the character of Oedipa Maas, is also the presumptively ‘natural’ approach of the reader as a consumer of the literary text, a desire that is regularly thwarted in and by (post)modernist narrative.

Progressively, Nathanael West’s last two novels turn into what Philip K. Dick has called ‘fake fakes’: by adopting the conventional formal façade of literary artefacts in a culture of consumption, they engage with an apocalyptic modernity that is beginning to be superseded by the logic of simulacra. By pretending to function as entertainment in a consumerist popular setting, they spring the trap on the reader who is forced to realize that apocalyptic reading may be an inappropriate approach to these texts or, for that matter, any literary text in a post-apocalyptic modernity.

Read as a quasi-picaresque novel, or an inversion of such a novel, the journey of *A Cool Million*’s ‘hero’ Lemuel Pitkin is set against the backdrop of a society in economic decline, increasing anomie, and ideological turmoil. The conventions of the genre might lead readers to expect a social satire presented through the eyes of a *pícaro* or ‘rogue’ who, from an initially low status, is shown to rise in social status through luck, opportunity, and the weakness of others. But the world of this novel owes more to the anti-picaresque of Thackeray’s *Barry Lyndon*, in that its society is largely immune to satire: its operation has become as blind as fortune itself, and the gullible hero is mostly at the mercy of the machinations of others.

In this society, both the production and consumption of simulacra and the rise of competing apocalyptic movements stand out as decisive cultural factors, forming the two “millstones” between which Lemuel Pitkin is progressively “ground out of existence” (188). The narrator reports on Lem’s progress from an aloof point of view that is comically contradicted by the events of his narrative. West thus allows his narrator’s language to ring hollow and exposes his genteel phrases, his high moral tone and his ideological convictions as inept and inappropriate to the story. The narrator’s language is a simulation that can be easily deconstructed. In *A Cool Million*, style has become a kind of extremely flexible mechanism of narration and meta-narrative that the reader needs to realize as constituting a separate level of the literary text, a level that s/he has to engage

³ Philip K. Dick, “How to Build a Universe That Doesn’t Fall Apart Two Days Later” (1978, 1985), Lawrence Sutin, ed., *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick: Selected Literary and Philosophical Writings* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995) 259-80, here 261.

⁴ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991) 18.

and work with, and to work against – a technique that owes more to eighteenth-century narrative (Smollett, Fielding, Sterne) than to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ‘naturalist’ novels.

At the very beginning, this is illustrated by the narrator’s formulaic description of the “humble dwelling” of Lem and his mother, Mrs. Sarah Pitkin, in the following phrase: “An antique collector, had one chanced to pass it by, would have been greatly interested in its architecture” (143-44). This is proved literally true in the same initial chapter when the narrator complacently notes, in parentheses, that he “was right in [his] surmise” and that “[a]n interior decorator, on passing the house, had been greatly struck by its appearance” (145). The consequence of this is that the house is foreclosed on Mrs. Pitkin, then is literally dismantled and displayed in the window of Asa Goldstein’s store of “Colonial Exteriors and Interiors” on New York’s Fifth Avenue (*ibid.*), where Lem will find it again in chapter 10. The hero’s “humble” home is converted into an artefact, transformed into a luxury commodity that acquires an ideal value much greater than its former use value. The narrator, who presents the sale of the house as a “tragedy” (145), never comments on the irony of this transformation of Lemuel’s birthplace into an antique from the time of the War of Independence. When Lem sees it as an “exhibit” in the shop window, the house has been transformed into a piece of decorative art:

At first the poor boy could not believe his eyes, but, yes, there it was exactly as in Vermont. One of the things that struck him was the seediness of the old house. When he and his mother had lived in it, they had kept it in a much better state of repair. (178)

Exactly the same and yet different, the house has become hyperreal. The ‘seedy’ nature of such commodification is highlighted and intensified by the reader’s knowledge that Mr. Asa Goldstein, the antique dealer, is also the outfitter of Wu Fong’s brothel, where he has created “a perfect colonial interior” with whose “designs or furnishings [...] even Governor Windsor himself could not have found anything wrong” (170). Later, when economic depression forces Wu Fong to scale down and turn his former multi-ethnic establishment, a “House of All Nations” (169, 202), into “an hundred per centum American place” (202), the same dealer helps him construct a kind of sexual themepark in different historical US styles: “a Pennsylvania Dutch, Old South, Log Cabin Pioneer, Victorian New York, Western Cattle Days, California Monterey, Indian, and Modern Girl series of interiors” (202).

The narrator appears to connive at this bowdlerization of American history, unmasking himself as not particularly knowledgeable in the process: “Governor Windsor” (170) is a rather crude mistake for John Winthrop (1588-1649), first Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.⁵ Colonial and post-colonial Ameri-

⁵ It is also a reference to the English colonial background of the United States, and, on a more richly meaningful level, a reference to the artificiality of names and the constructed nature of traditions generally: “Windsor” is the name the British Royal Family adopted during World War I, severing their too obvious ties to the German house of Hanover by adopting the name of their

can history is transformed into a commodified and sillified travesty, providing indiscriminate background settings for a bordello. Yet the Americanization of Wu Fong's brothel also heralds a more directly political and ideological trend of 1930s society: an increasing trend toward xenophobia and an isolationist monocultural bias which the narrator also appears to commend. The novel's language imitates the discourses of antisemitism and resurgent fascism, without apparently noticing its intrinsic contradictions. It seamlessly reproduces an ideological formation in which the concept of 'America' turns into the cliché of the American dream and the Gospel of Success, caricatured in the Dickensian character of Nathan "Shagpoke" Whipple, Lem's unlikely mentor, father figure and, even more unlikely, former President of the United States. Whipple, like Lem, undergoes a series of career changes throughout the novel, to which he responds with unflagging optimism: from President of the United States to president of the Rat River National Bank, and later to Fascist agitator and, finally, dictator, with dead Lemuel ("All hail, the American Boy!" 255) playing the part of the movement's crucial martyr. Whipple's political preaching turns from homespun exhortations to self-reliance and the belief in the success of capitalist economic virtues, as embodied in the figures of Rockefeller and Ford, to more and more hate-filled accusations of other parties, creeds, and cultures. In the character of Whipple, the populist schemer, West viciously portrays the decline of political culture in 1930s America and the transformation of democratic ideals into demagoguery.

At the beginning, Whipple refuses to lend Lemuel money because, although "the youth of a nation is its only hope" (148), this youth had better fend for himself: "Don't be discouraged. This is the land of opportunity and the world is an oyster" (149). He delivers a setpiece of a speech to Lemuel in order "to reassure him" (150), though his actual motivation may be to make Lemuel feel better about signing his mother's cow over to him for thirty dollars – this being the only valuable property their family still possesses. Whipple's use of the cliché of the world as an oyster is particularly telling in this respect, as its origins can be tracked back to Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*, where the context is given by Falstaff's refusal to lend money to Pistol ("I will not lend thee a penny"), to which Pistol replies: "Why then, the world's mine oyster, which I with sword will open."⁶ Both Whipple's thievish intentions and his militant aggressiveness, which will become visible only later in the novel, are prefigured in this allusion. Whipple goes on to deliver the following sermon:

"America," he said with great seriousness, "is the land of opportunity. She takes care of the honest and industrious and never fails them as long as they are both. This is not a matter of opinion, it is one of faith. On the day that Americans stop believing it, on that day will America be lost.

"Let me warn you that you will find in the world a certain few scoffers who will laugh at you and attempt to do you injury. They will tell you that John D. Rockefeller

residence, Windsor Castle. – In Homer Simpson's house in *The Day of the Locust*, there is "a Windsor chair" and "a Governor Winthrop dresser painted to look like unpainted pine" (288).

⁶ *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 2.2, Stephen Greenblatt, gen. ed. *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York and London: Norton, 1997) 1250.

was a thief and that Henry Ford and other great men are also thieves. Do not believe them. The story of Rockefeller and of Ford is the story of every great American, and you should strive to make it your story. Like them, you were born poor and on a farm. Like them, by honesty and industry, you cannot fail to succeed." (150)

Whipple here rehearses the poignant simplicity of traditional American political rhetoric. Especially striking are the female personification of America ("She"), the Christian undertones (not opinion, but faith), a hint at his fervent anti-Communism ("a certain few scoffers") and the mythic synecdoche of Rockefeller and Ford (their story "is the story of every great American"). Their mythic significance in capitalist culture is strengthened further by the title and epigraph of the novel: "'John D. Rockefeller would give a cool million to have a stomach like yours.' – OLD SAYING" (142). In the epigraph, as in Whipple's sermon, the emphasis is on the 'likeness' between "every [...] American" and these pseudo-mythic figures, whose legendary and popular status is confirmed by the classification of the epigraph as an "old saying." Striving to be like them, trying to make their story his own, Lem's journey becomes readable as a quasi-religious pilgrimage in search of success and meaning in life, a kind of *imitatio Ford* in a replica of Thomas a Kempis's *imitatio Christi*. The culmination of the *imitatio Ford*, ironically, is an imitation of Christ, when Lem becomes the Fascist party's 'Savior' by giving his life, in their interpretation, as a sacrifice to their cause. Like his family home, he becomes a pseudo-sacralized exhibit, his body de-naturalized and 'dismantled' into a series of relics.

In Whipple's final speech, the religious undertones are openly connected with his Fascist ideology as he enumerates Lemuel's "rewards" (254): jail, poverty, violence, and death. Lem's story is given millennial significance as a new kind of gospel:

"Simple was his pilgrimage and brief, yet a thousand years hence, no story, no tragedy, no epic poem will be filled with greater wonder, or be followed by mankind with deeper feeling, than that which tells of the life and death of Lemuel Pitkin. [...] But he did not live or die in vain. Through his martyrdom the National Revolutionary Party triumphed, and by that triumph this country was delivered from sophistication, Marxism and International Capitalism. Through the National Revolution its people were purged of alien diseases and America became again American." (255)

In the process of transformation that occurs as the novel unfolds, political action increasingly turns into mere symbolism and the tautology of an 'American America,' which in itself is already a contradiction, negating the diversity on which America has been constructed. Whipple's promise of a better life to Lemuel and the rest of his followers is cast in the terms of an apocalyptic transformation of society that is both revolutionary and revelatory, and which, at the novel's end, is envisaged in the symbolic transformation of Lemuel Pitkin, who is not merely physically 'dismantled' but reconfigured into a pseudo-religious political martyr of the Leather Shirts' movement; but, as we know, having read Lemuel's life story, this apocalyptic symbolism is a forced construction, empty of actual content. Lemuel, like his birthplace, has been physically deconstructed and symbolically reconstructed, transfigured into a copy of himself with a different

meaning, dramatized or narrativized into a “story,” “tragedy,” “epic poem,” perhaps even an “old saying.”

West illustrates how, in a politicized society marked by the conflict of competing ideologies, whatever happens is not only registered but transformed by language until it becomes *mere* language. The cliché-ridden, disinterested and dehumanized narrative of *A Cool Million* emphasizes this point; in its calculatedly obtuse simplicity and callousness, it carefully replicates and critically deflates the ideological fictions it presents, from the inversion of the Horatio Alger success story formula to the inclusion and prophetic enhancement of elements of American political reality of the 1930s. The fascist rally at the end of the novel is no less theatrical, if less funny, than the “Chamber of American Horrors” in which Lemuel, before his death, plays the role of a stooge. What is more difficult to assess is the novel’s own stance in relation to its diagnostic and prognostic discoveries. As a textual artefact, it underlies the same cultural logic of representation and consumption that it denounces. Parody is thus neither necessary nor possible. In fact, the text appears to satirize and denounce its own moral and satirical pretensions in the figure of the poet-cum-pickpocket Sylvanus Snodgrasse, whose “desire for revolution was really a desire for revenge” and who, “having lost faith in himself, [...] thought it his duty to undermine the nation’s faith in itself” (238). Likewise, *A Cool Million* has lost faith in the reconstructive power of satire, and satirizes satire by reflecting upon the representational and epistemological foundations of satirical form. It is certainly significant in this context that Snodgrasse, while keeping “the crowd amused” with his speech in the park, has his “confederates” (his brothers in faith) pick the audience’s pockets (184). As in Whipple’s case, faith and fraud go hand in hand, and language is the medium of their correlation. Language and rhetoric, it appears, are now no longer serious means of political discussion and moral inquiry, but have become the tools of confidence men. They do not serve the purpose of mediating but of abolishing reality.⁷ In any case, they are, as the novel demonstrates in its final chapters, losing their persuasive appeal and political efficacy to more visual and superficially more immediate theatrical forms of representation that directly address and involve their audience. West’s turn to the ‘culture industry’ of 1930s Hollywood in his next novel may well be a response to this greater trend toward the medialization of society.

II.

Whereas *A Cool Million* presents an array of (pseudo-)apocalyptic ideological constructions, establishing distance from these constructions – including, precariously enough, the construction of satire itself – by means of comedy, *The Day of the Locust* no longer offers an accessible perspective *ab extra* to the ubiquitous, constructed reality that is its setting, its world. Together with the formal elements

⁷ Cf. Brigitte Pichon-Kalau v. Hofe, *Krisen: Kontrollen und Kontingenzen: Nathanael West und die dreißiger Jahre* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1990) 171.

of parody and satire, the subject of politics and the agenda of political change have vanished from this novel, at least from any explicit level. Instead, West turns from mass politics to mass culture and mass hallucination, and to the question of art's role within mass culture. Again, this question is first cast in apocalyptic terms, as the title of the novel implies, but the opacity of a world of simulacra no longer allows for an apocalyptic critique, a critique that gains its leverage from the ontological dualities of reality and appearance, truth and lie, authenticity and inauthenticity, genuine and false consciousness, being and non-being.

As a textual artefact, *The Day of the Locust* is superficially much more coherent and traditional, less fractured and experimental than any previous West novel. But it is not a mere return to naturalist or realist fiction, nor is it less self-conscious and self-reflexive with regard to its formal construction and narrative strategies. Instead, it continues West's ongoing critique of literary language not by being more anti-mimetic, but by being pseudo-mimetic. *The Day of the Locust* is in some respects a simulacrum of traditional narrative fiction that plays by the rules. But it also offers its readers – especially those who approach this text with some knowledge of its predecessors – the possibility to see these rules for what they are. Yet this does not come about because of ruptures, juxtapositions, and an unreliable narrator, but more or less in spite of their absence. In this respect, *The Day of the Locust* replicates or imitates, in a literary form, the subversive strategies of a Hollywood film that has to be acceptable and marketable within the studio system and that succeeds by fulfilling presumptive audience expectations with a vengeance.

The problem it thematizes is precisely this: what are the possibilities of art and the artist under the conditions of mass consumer culture? Hollywood is the perfect setting and synecdoche for this problem because it constitutes the main interface between artistic talent and corporate control, or between individual creativity (romanticism) and mass consumption (modernity). In the character of Claude Estee, West presents a successful screenwriter who provides the movie industry with narratives of “amour and glamor” (277) for the average entertainment consumer, the semi-proverbial “barber in Purdue” (276). The writer Estee is someone who has adapted to the conditions of modern mass media, making money out of other people's dreams. Yet he is significantly less important for *The Day of the Locust* than Tod Hackett, the painter and set designer whose aesthetic responses to the mechanized culture of simulacra that surrounds him structure the novel. In a culture of images, writing is a mere accessory, creating stencils from which potent moving images can then be created – as is demonstrated by Tod's own brief attempt at screenwriting based on the tawdry dreams of Faye Greener. Estee makes clear that writing is no longer of aesthetic interest, but a matter of ‘remembering the audience’ (cf. 276) and guessing at the barber's (the average customer's) desires.

The visual arts assume a predominance over writing, but this predominance is ambivalent: the conflict acted out by Hackett is the conflict between the visual artist's production of illusions and his ability to generate, in visual form, a com-

mentary upon these illusions. The function of literary writing is not directly thematized by any character in the novel, unless we read Tod's aesthetic development as a meta-commentary on *The Day of the Locust* as a text, a somewhat familiar critical maneuver⁸ that is not completely safeguarded from falling into one of West's literary traps. Tod may be the protagonist of this novel, but his opinions, problems, and solutions should not be too readily identified as reflecting those of the narrator or author. On the other hand, the narrator's comments on Tod might be literary meta-commentaries: if West's narrator describes him as "despite his appearance [...] a very complicated young man with a whole set of personalities, one inside the other like a nest of Chinese boxes" (260), he may at the same time be describing the complex, nested and elusive structure of his own narrative. West's critique of 1930s society and mass media culture coincides with a critique of different responses to that society and culture, a critique that does not lead to an unequivocal solution, but perhaps to "a whole set" of solutions, "one inside the other" (260). The simple binary logic of substitution: illusion vs. reality; sign vs. referent; stimulus vs. response; superstructure vs. base, and so forth, is replaced by a more complex logic of polyvalence: an unnamed number of tiers or levels that are not connected in a surface/depth relation, but in a heterarchical order in which any level can comment on any other one at any time. One of the possible responses to modernity that West critiques in *The Day of the Locust* can be called the 'apocalyptic' response, and this is the one I will examine in the following paragraphs. By way of the novel's title, it promises to be significant also for an estimate of the relation of the text itself to the modernity it describes, and to the possible function of literary communication within this modernity.

If the language of West's novel is often apocalyptic, insofar as it alludes to certain texts of the Bible, certain religious metaphors, and a general tradition of Western and specifically American culture "conflating the metaphoric dualities of millennium and cataclysm," this has usually been read from within a mythological perspective of archetypal criticism à la Northrop Frye as a straight engagement with this tradition rather than a meta-commentary on its strategies and functions. But does West employ "the demonic imagery of apocalypse" simply "to give metaphoric definition to the social disintegration which he portrays," in order to present "actual secular chaos" without envisaging "a promised new world to counterbalance the destructive upheaval of the old"? In other words, is it justified to call *The Day of the Locust* a "brutally pessimistic vision"?⁹

Although such straight readings appear motivated by West's title – an allusion to *Revelation* 9:3,7 – and a pervasive presence of Biblical references from Jeremiah

⁸ See, for instance, Charles Sherry, "Keeping One's Balance: Nathanael West's Equilibrists," *American Studies / Amerikastudien* 21.1 (1976), 75-88; cf. Pichon-Kalau v. Hofe, 185-88, on Tod as a "reflector figure."

⁹ All quotations in this paragraph are from Lois Parkinson Zamora, "The Myth of Apocalypse and the American Literary Imagination," Lois Parkinson Zamora, ed., *The Apocalyptic Vision in America* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1982) 97-138, here 125, 126.

to St. John of Patmos,¹⁰ I would argue that they constitute a severe reduction of the novel's potential meaning. *The Day of the Locust* is less a description of 1930s Hollywood as a microcosm of the United States or of Western civilization in apocalyptic terms (but without the possibility of redemption) than it is a critique of the possibility of describing 1930s society and (mass)culture in apocalyptic terms. The latter reading may not render this novel less 'pessimistic' but, on the contrary, expose an even greater negativizing potential vis à vis a culture in which the mythic and symbolic metaphors of apocalypse have themselves become (too) widely available clichés and have entered the cultural logic of simulacra in the mass media of which West is one of the first great critics in the twentieth century. In a society that continuously and, as it were, strategically conflates traditional epistemic distinctions of reality and fake, animate and inanimate, living and dead, sign and referent, in the monistic artefactual ubiquity of the simulacra that it produces and that produces it, the applicability of apocalyptic metaphors and the readability of signs as symbols and portents of an approaching, and approachable, higher order of reality becomes, to say the least, questionable. There is no longer a stable basis of meaning or a viable critical tool for interpreting this society – which has become a media society – in any unambiguous way.

A Cool Million had already revealed the essential link between politics and theater in mass culture and opted for a sarcastic, folkloristic denial of the feasibility of political activism in a proto-Fascist America. This perspective is radicalized in *The Day of the Locust*. West's working title for this novel, "The Cheaters and the Cheated," may have assumed a clear political and moral dividing line between victims and perpetrators but, just as plausibly, it may have been intended as a blurring of that very line. The final title, like the novel as a whole, could be read as an evasion of the political and social questions asked by *A Cool Million*, but also as their transformation. The political and the social do not disappear but are translated into other concerns: aesthetic, media-related, sexual, moral. *The Day of the Locust* does not sketch the downward trajectory of one character who becomes the victim of a medialized reality, but the different, and differentiated, responses to this reality by a number of characters who are related in complex ways.

In this respect, the apocalyptic resonances serve less to present this reality in its cataclysmic and 'pessimistic' inevitability, but work on mainly two levels: 1) They serve as an immanent critique of apocalyptic patterns of thought which had become inadequate for describing the cultural logic of simulacra prevalent in 1930s mass media culture, and 2) perhaps even more importantly, they underline this reality's potential of transformation, and the characters' potential to transform themselves with or against it, or their inability to do so. This might be seen as the novel's most important and pervasive theme. Characters are constantly becoming, are on the verge of becoming, are trying or failing to become some-

¹⁰ See Gloria Young, "The Day of the Locust: An Apocalyptic Vision," *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 5 (1986): 103-10, rpt. in Ben Siegel, ed., *Critical Essays on Nathanael West* (New York: G. K. Hall; Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1994) 177-83.

thing else, to transcend their present conditions, to discover or to reveal their 'true' being, or to reinvent a different 'truth' about themselves. In its frequent descriptions of animate beings in terms of inanimate objects, and vice versa, the text replicates this movement of transformation. It is a descriptive technique that derives immediately from St John's *Revelation*, a fact curiously overlooked by most 'apocalyptic' critics of West. In the locusts passage of the *Revelation*, note the rich and confusing comparisons of these insects with both human, animal, and inanimate objects, and the repeated emphasis on "appearance" that both allows for epistemic doubt and for the poetic license to dispense with a clear dividing line between fact and fiction:

In appearance the locusts were like horses equipped for battle. On their heads were what looked like gold crowns; their faces were like human faces and their hair like women's hair; they had teeth like lions' teeth and chests like iron breastplates; the sound of their wings was like the noise of many horses and chariots charging into battle; they had tails like scorpions, with stings in them, and in their tails lay their power to injure people for five months.¹¹

In *The Day of the Locust*, trees and hills glow like Neon tubes (262), a man is like "a piece of iron" (357) or "like a badly made automaton" (412), a woman "like a cork" (406), and so forth. Even more resonant, with regard to West's novel, are the lines that immediately precede the Biblical passage just quoted: "During that time people will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them" (*Revelation* 9:6). In West's text, the loiterers who populate Hollywood Boulevard at night, wearing clothes "bought from mail-order houses" (261), "had come to California to die" (261; cf. 334, 420). They are waiting for an apocalyptic moment that never arrives. And, even if it came, we can learn by referring back to the Biblical source that nothing would be changed. Here St John of Patmos seems to anticipate West even in his tone:

The rest of mankind who survived these plagues still did not renounce the gods their hands had made, or cease their worship of demons and of idols fashioned from gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk; nor did they repent of their murders, their sorcery, their fornication, or their robberies. (9:20-21)

Even stranger than the apocalyptic (mis-)reading of *The Day of the Locust* are the readings of its final chapter, the riot scene. A large number of critics have read the riot as a cataclysmic finale, as "the moment when the pent-up oppositional forces of the outmoded, the excluded, and the superannuated are explosively released."¹² Contrary to such a positive interpretation of the novel's last chapter as depicting an apocalyptic event, I agree with Jonathan Veitch in reading the riot in front of Kahn's Persian Palace Theatre as an anticlimactic commentary on the idealized destruction in Tod Hackett's painting. Instead of displaying the "gala air" (334) that Tod imagines for "The Burning of Los Angeles," the actual riot is

¹¹ *Revelation* 9:7-10, *The Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford UP; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989) 227; italics mine. Further citations in parentheses in the text.

¹² Rita Barnard, *The Great Depression and the Culture of Abundance* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1995) 164.

characterized by “an utter lack of gaiety” and “a vicious banality.”¹³ The revolution does not take place, and it certainly is not fun.

The riot, and Tod’s perception of it, are carefully prepared and prefigured in the novel: there is, at the very beginning, the costumed army of extras moving “like a mob [...], as though fleeing from some terrible defeat” (259); there is “the mock riot” that erupts when, at Mrs. Jennings’s “callhouse” (277), the erotic film *Le Predicament de Marie* is interrupted, “[u]nder cover” of which Tod “sneak[s] out” (281); and there is Tod’s artistic imagination of an apocalyptic painting about the destruction of Los Angeles, which, as the text makes clear repeatedly, serves as a kind of escape from actual life for him. When the actual riot happens, it is markedly different from any of these preparatory prefigurations, all of which are to some degree removed from ‘real life’: a part of movie-making, a staged pseudo-riot, or a work of art. Real life, compared to all these, is unbeatably more grotesque, brutal, and banal – “[s]adistic humor and cheap thrills,” “the sullen fury of the petit-bourgeois” instead of “the cosmic aspiration of sacred violence.”¹⁴ Perhaps, then, it is this realization that drives Tod into madness at the end, or, as the case may be (critics are divided on this point also, and the ambiguity of Tod’s siren-like laugh is difficult, perhaps impossible, to solve) into the opposite of madness: the ultimate realization of contingency that enables him to see the tragic in terms of farce.

Death, destruction, violence, and release are key elements of Tod Hackett’s mental make-up; they structure his perceptions of reality. For instance, as the narrator reports Tod’s thoughts, he notes that “[o]nly dynamite would be of any use against” the “truly monstrous” buildings in LA that cannot be distinguished from movie props: “the Mexican ranch houses, Samoan huts, Mediterranean villas, Egyptian and Japanese temples, Swiss chalets, Tudor cottages, and every possible combination of these styles” (262). It is, above all else, Tod’s own ‘apocalyptic vision’ that West uses to criticize apocalyptic interpretations of modern reality. For this reason, when the narrator reports that Tod (whose name means ‘death’ in German and is perhaps intended as an allusion to Oswald Spengler’s somber vision of *The Decline of the West*¹⁵) “knew” that the middle- and lower-class people of Hollywood “had come to California to die” (261), he does not necessarily subscribe to this interpretation. In fact, the narrator may be playing a sophisticated game with his readers, who are brought to realize – if they remember or look up the text of the *Revelation* – that death, the envisaged moment of release, will not come, at least not in the form of the great cataclysmic release that Tod imagines in his painting “The Burning of Los Angeles.” Tod fails to laugh at the houses, although, as the narrator notes, they are “comic” (262). Unlike Faye

¹³ Jonathan Veitch, *American Superrealism: Nathanael West and the Politics of Representation in the 1930s* (Madison, WI, and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997) 129.

¹⁴ Veitch, 130.

¹⁵ West would have appreciated the wordplay on his assumed name. His familiarity with Spengler is evident in Chief Israel Satinpenny’s speech in *A Cool Million*: “The day of vengeance is here. The star of the paleface is sinking and he knows it. Spengler has said so; Valéry has said so; thousands of his wise men proclaim it” (233).

Greener, he appears unable to laugh at himself (cf. 316). Throughout the novel, his escape into art becomes more and more desperate and intense: He searches for clues in the form of symbols (282); he regards the dissociated fragments that make up the reality of a Hollywood studio back lot in the light of Italian mannerist painting (352); he envisages his painting as a “release” (321), himself as a “prophet” of “doom and destruction” in “the role of Jeremiah” (335); he visits various churches and cults, equating Los Angeles with “decadent Rome” (366), anticipating the destruction of “civilization” (366). Finally, his vision of a Fascist movement led by the “raw-foodist” cult of the unlikely “Dr. Know-All Pierce-All” (361-62, 420) offers a brief glimpse of the dystopian social prophecy of *A Cool Million*, although now this vision is relegated to the apocalyptic – and somewhat delusional – imagination of one of the characters.

The difference between Tod’s apocalyptic imagination and the actual riot cannot be accentuated enough. In the actual riot, there is no release, no renewal, no transformation. It is not a phenomenon for the benefit of art, but rather for the media. The role of the priest or prophet is played by the radio reporter, whose “rapid, hysterical voice was like that of a revivalist preacher whipping his congregation toward the ecstasy of fits: ‘What a crowd, folks! [...] Can the police hold them? Can they? It doesn’t look so, folks ...’” (409-10). Tod realizes that the “boredom” and “resentment” (411) in the mob, nurtured by a “daily diet” of media violence (“lynchings, murder, sex, crimes, explosions, wrecks, love nests, fires, miracles, revolutions, war,” 412), cannot be transformed by an outbreak of violence into something other than violence: “Nothing can ever be violent enough to make taut their slack minds and bodies” (412). Their desire for transformation is bound to remain unfulfilled. In order to protect himself amongst the mob, which does not allow him to escape either physically or spiritually because he cannot establish the necessary distance of a detached observer, he has to remember to laugh with the crowd: “He knew enough to laugh with them” (410). Only later on, when the riot subsides and the mob begins to disperse, does he find an occasion to “escape” (420) again into his painting, which he is finishing in his mind when the police pick him up. The ekphrasis of the painting is now significantly different from previous descriptions. Tod now depicts himself and the other main characters (Faye, Harry, Homer, Claude) escaping from the mob; he clearly no longer celebrates the idea of destruction to the same extent as before, no longer sadistically imagines Faye’s “complete, unthinking panic” as she is stoned by the mob in the earlier version (321), but imagines her running “proudly” and himself throwing a stone back at the mob (420). Like Faye, he may now have learned to laugh not only at or with others, but also at himself. His imitation of the “scream” of the siren which he first confuses with his own voice and which “[f]or some reason” (421) makes him laugh, can be read as the laugh of one who has realized the limitations of apocalyptic thinking and learned

to accept, if not to appreciate, the ‘comic’ aspects of modern reality – instead of wanting to use art as a final escape from it.¹⁶

III.

In *A Cool Million*, West uses a parody of the picaresque novel to present a darkly comic array of depression-era ideologies, apocalyptic movements, and chiliastic visions. With deadpan seriousness, an ostensibly omniscient and obtrusively obfuscating narrator leads the reader through the misfortunate journey of poor Lemuel Pitkin, a young man forced to make his fortune in 1930s America who pursues the promises of the American Dream and encounters nothing but fraud, failure, injustice, sheer bad luck, and successive stages of physical dismemberment, losing first his teeth, then his right eye, his thumb, his scalp, and a leg before he is finally shot dead. Significantly, the narrator does nothing to provide a counterweight to the ideological forces that continuously act upon and propel Lemuel forward on his journey. On the contrary, the narrator appears to underwrite and assert the validity of those hegemonic forces. The comic effects that West achieves by having Lemuel’s story told by a bigoted and pretentious narrator are mainly the result of a discrepancy or clash between the story and its telling, between the gruesome events that befall young Lemuel and the uplifting moralistic tone of the narrative. The result of this clash is a gap in the text that highlights the vacuity of the narrator’s pretensions and, by implication, the questionable validity of the ideological precepts upon which his narrative is constructed.

In what, compared to West’s previous novels, seems on the surface to be a more conventional literary effort, the author pursues the same routine or *spiel* with his readers that he employed in *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* and *Miss Lonelyhearts*: the construction of a literary form that actively invokes the readers’ participation and forces its readers to modify, expand, or indeed abandon their expectations and conventional responses to a literary text. In these texts, ‘the novel’ itself has finally joined the ranks of those simulacra of American cultural and political life that West ‘dismantles’ or rather forces the reader to dismantle by reading beneath, against, or through the surface text and to realize that, underneath this surface of convention, there is a ‘pandemonium’ of literary, historical, and political signifiers.

¹⁶ For a more detailed analysis of West as a comic writer, see Pichon-Kalau v. Hofe, 199-214, who reads West’s description of a mechanized and medialized visual culture as a prerequisite for establishing a comic attitude to the “life-world” insofar as the experience of mechanization and medialization serves to check “the immediacy of emotions” (200), enabling laughter as a constructive situational intervention that can be experienced as “natural” (201; my translations). Although this interpretation may seem too ‘optimistic’ in reducing West to anthropological and ultimately humanist categories, reinstating the ‘sovereignty’ of the subject (if only in transitory instances, cf. 209), it is extremely valuable in its analysis of the negativizing function of West’s “reflexive” comic strategies (209) vis à vis ideological constructions and mediations, strategies that transcend a ‘modernist’ literary agenda and anticipate the ‘post-modernism’ of Pynchon, Hawkes, and Coover.

The essential and haunting difference between West's last two novels is that, in *A Cool Million*, the surface is still transparent and, as it were, filled with holes that allow direct glimpses of what lies underneath, whereas in *The Day of the Locust* the surface has become opaque, absolute, and near impenetrable. The turmoil of competing significations, rampant in *A Cool Million* on virtually every page, has given way to a muted and restrained stillness in the later novel with its eerie atmosphere of an imminent catastrophe that never quite manages to break loose. In the story of Lemuel Pitkin, disaster is physical and immediate but also, in its grotesque absurdity, abstract and vaguely harmless, stylized, superficial and satirical, without any real horror for the reader. In *The Day of the Locust*, however, Homer Simpson's furious outbreak of brutality at the end is all the more shocking because, significantly, nothing else really happens and the great conflagration of Los Angeles remains an apocalyptic fiction by the artist, Tod Hackett. Whereas *A Cool Million* stylizes violence to achieve a comic effect, and to illustrate drastically (but somehow ineffectively) the impact of social forces on a powerless and gullible individual (Lemuel Pitkin), *The Day of the Locust* is all the more effective in the end as a portrayal of the same forces because it shows their utter disconnection from, and disinterest in, the powerless and gullible individual (Harry Greener, Homer Simpson). When the individual finally reacts to a series of insults and acts of injustice from various parties with a sudden eruption of violence, by trampling on a child like Stevenson's Mr Hyde, this act only intensifies Homer's powerlessness and isolation and, by transforming him into a mere monster, excludes him all the more effectively from the impenetrability of the symbolic social order as embodied in the mob, whose members do not know and have no control over what they are doing. The mob's activity is "demonic" (409) because there is no way of controlling it and no perspective from which to observe it at the idealizing distance that would be necessary for the artist who could depict the riot as a socially liberating 'happening.' The artist finally has to include himself in his picture, physically defending himself against the crowd who are not united by a common cause, but dissociated in manifold ways and for numerous reasons.

By developing the story of Tod's painting as a kind of artistic *bildungsroman* against the backdrop of what Adorno and Horkheimer would only a few years later call 'the culture industry,' West achieves an interrogation of the purposes and possibilities of art, including literature, under the conditions of an increasingly simulacral modernity. The result of this interrogation is the recognition that modernity can no longer be sufficiently described or explained in apocalyptic terms and patterns of thought. But as long as new terms and patterns have not yet been developed, it seems inevitable to refer back to the traditional language of apocalypse – though these acts of reference cannot remain within the traditional mold, but will assume a different, a simulacraly inflected character: fragmented, incomplete, ironic, constructed, deconstructive, comic.

Review Article

ECKHARD AUBERLEN / ADOLFO MURGUÍA

Testing Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism

Abstract: While New Historicism is spreading into other disciplines and continues to produce valuable studies, Greenblatt's politics, methodology and scholarly standards have come increasingly under attack. This essay endeavours to review and contextualize the various contributions to this debate in *Critical Self-Fashioning: Stephen Greenblatt and the New Historicism*, an anthology edited by Jürgen Pieters (Frankfurt a.M. et al.: Peter Lang, 1999). Among other things, it is remarkable that, in this interesting anthology, the role of the imagination in constructing the past and the importance of the aesthetic dimension in the reception of a literary work, which has been so sadly neglected by the non-poetic branch of New Historicism, once more enter the field of critical discussion.

“Natürlich gebrauchen wir die Wörter mit unserem Wissen von den Dingen, meinen damit aber die Dinge selbst und nicht die begrenzten Kenntnisse, die wir von ihnen haben.” This remark by Eugenio Coseriu (201) may serve to indicate the reason why, after the obsessive concern of poststructuralism with texts as mere systems of signs without an assured access to the referent, a return to the study of texts in their social context was inevitable. Stephen Greenblatt (1982) coined the term ‘New Historicism’ for his own endeavour and that of a group of literary critics and cultural historians who approach the study of history with a poststructuralist awareness that meanings are social constructs and with a Foucauldian sensibility to the fact that ‘knowledge,’ far from always being a liberating force, often enough serves the purpose of social control by conceptualising reality in a manner which upholds power structures in society. The New Historicists claim to trace out and articulate suppressed ‘other voices’ and challenge the traditional literary canon without constructing a new one. They relish to surprise the reader by showing unthought-of connections between apparently minor episodes or anecdotes and the larger course of what traditional historians have constructed as ‘public history.’

Although Stephen Greenblatt, the leading figure of the movement, prefers to call New Historicism a practice rather than a theory, he has made the major contributions to the development of a number of key-concepts. There has been very little of a discussion among New Historicists themselves, Louis Montrose being the only other practitioner who has written a repeatedly anthologized essay on theory. Nearly all the impulses for the heated debate on New Historicism came

from the outside, partly from scholars who were sympathetic to the movement (Howard, Gallagher), but also from scholars who were hostile to it (Pechter, Liu, Vickers). In a perceptive article, Alan Liu shows that Greenblatt projects his own dissatisfaction with the Reagan Administration on the Tudor period without considering the pros and cons of his anachronistic procedure. Brian Vickers deplores that the New Historicists abandon all efforts to achieve anything in the direction of a 'disinterested' inquiry into the past or to enter into a hermeneutic self-reflection about their 'Erkenntnisinteresse.' Unabashed, they set out to appropriate the past, "having an ideology that needs to assert itself [and] prove its validity as a system" (Vickers, 223). Vickers and Tom McAlindon (1995a) reject Greenblatt's notion of omnipresent 'Machiavellian' surveillance in Elizabethan society as well as his implicit assumption that there was a whole host of "disaffected subjects," who were supposedly cajoled by writers and dramatists into subservience to the government, after subversive thoughts and emotions had temporarily been given vent in transitional passages of the texts. In "Invisible Bullets," Greenblatt (1988) assumes that, since the Tudor period saw the dissolution of feudalism and the rise of the 'modern state,' its government must have been highly oppressive. His attempt to enlist Thomas Harriot's account of the Virginia Plantation and Thomas Harman's *A Caveat for Common Cursitors* as evidence for such a view is utterly misguided. In another article of the same year, McAlindon (1995b) also challenges what may be called the English branch of New Historicism, the more Marxist and Raymond-Williams-oriented school of Cultural Materialism, by criticising Jonathan Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* for ascribing a much later philosophical and political radicalism to a wide range of Jacobean tragedies. Since "so much of New Historical writing cannot ever forget the present and its discontents" (Vickers, 222-23), it differs widely from the Old Historicism described (and criticised) by Friedrich Meinecke, which emphasised that each epoch had its own values and therefore could not be used as in humanist historiography to teach morals to later generations. The whole question of moral universalism vs. historical relativism remains unconsidered by the New Historicists. Brook Thomas (Veeser, 182-203) and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (Veeser, 214) questioned whether New Historicism was historical at all. Moreover, Vickers and McAlindon (1995a) launched a devastating attack on Greenblatt's scholarly standards, blaming him for the incoherence of his arguments, his inaccurate use of sources, unargued assertions, "irrelevant contextualisation" (Vickers, 240, 238) and his penchant for generalizations on slender evidence.

Despite these passionate and largely well-founded attacks, there is a widening interest in New Historicism. In a deep-searching study, Claire Colebrook (1998) investigates the special features of New Historicism in comparison with the construction of literary history in other approaches since the 1950s. Moritz Baßler's *New Historicism* (2001) offers the German reader a selection of New Historicist essays and considers why German philology was so slow to respond to this movement although there has been a long and respectable tradition of historical

scholarship in this country. In *Moderne Literaturtheorie und antike Texte: Eine Einführung*, Thomas A. Schmitz (2002) dedicates one chapter of his review of new directions in literary theory to New Historicism, cautiously envisaging (rather limited) areas in which he believes that this approach could prove useful in classical philology. The purpose of our paper is to investigate in what manner Jürgen Pieters's collection of essays delivered at a conference at Ghent in Belgium in April 1997, contributes to the widening reception and discussion of New Historicism. Special attention will be paid to areas in which, because of similarities and differences in their approach, the contributors could enter into a discussion with each other.

Two of the articles in the volume take up the defence of Greenblatt against charges of "arbitrary connectedness" (Cohen). David Schalkwyk emphasises the similarity of Greenblatt's approach to Clifford Geertz's 'thick description' in his renowned anthropological studies of Balinese culture. According to Schalkwyk, Greenblatt's procedure is characterised by a synchronic investigation of culture, which amounts to a mapping of conceptual connections, instead of a search for causal explanations. According to Schalkwyk, Geertz and Greenblatt do not reduce distance and wonder by integrating the studied phenomenon into the storehouse of 'secure knowledge.' Schalkwyk maintains that Geertz's ways of establishing synchronic connections is derived from Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance as a way of describing related cultural phenomena. Unfortunately, Schalkwyk does not show in what manner the concept of family resemblance can be made operable in practical criticism of literary texts or in cultural studies. At first sight, the concept of family resemblance looks very promising, for instance when applied to the theory of literary genres, since it allows for variety within a framework of resemblances between members of the same genre. But once we realise that designations of degrees of kinship such as brother, sister, uncle, aunt etc. are hardly suited to classify the members of a literary genre, the concept of family resemblance looks more like a dead end than a new opening for further research.

Sonja Laden maintains that, in Greenblatt, coherence is established by poetic forms of representation such as the use of anecdotes, metaphors, and chiasmic connections (cf. "the forms of power and the power of forms," Greenblatt, 1982). Both Laden's and Schalkwyk's articles suffer from a misguided conception about 'normal' procedures in literary criticism: they maintain that traditional literary criticism is characterised by a search for causal explanations. They disregard Wilhelm Dilthey's famous distinction between 'understanding' as a method in the humanities and 'explanation' as a method in natural science. No doubt, Laden's approach to Greenblatt's form of representation as 'poetic' is in tune with Greenblatt's own view of New Historicism as a form of 'cultural poetics.' But this does by no means justify that she restricts herself entirely to describing aspects of Greenblatt's approach without submitting them to a scrutiny of whether or not these procedures are conducive to the goals of literary or cultural criticism.

Another area for a debate between the contributors to the volume, left unused by the editor, is the question of the role of imagination in the scholarly construction of images of the past. Schalkwyk shares Geertz's view that empathy is not necessary for the study of foreign cultures. No doubt, in poststructuralist theories there is next to no room left for empathy as a mode of the imagination, for the universe is conceived of as an archive of discourses. Ann Rigney, however, emphasises that empathy and imagination are greatly required in the business of the cultural historian. She maintains that poststructuralist approaches to history resemble those of the Romantics in various ways: like Wordsworth and Scott, the New Historicists endeavour to recapture the past "as it was experienced by contemporaries, particularly those on the margins of society, who did not subsequently get to write the official record" (24). Moreover, the Romantics preferred an evocative use of a deliberately fragmented style to the system-building of the Enlightenment. In a perceptive analysis of Walter Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel," Rigney also shows that Scott was particularly interested in older forms of poetry since the imitation of former epistemological modes of representing and interpreting 'reality' helped to evoke the past. For Rigney, the New Historicists' method is characterised by the endeavour to enter into a dialogue with the dead by the use of historical 'sources' as springboards for the imagination. One may indeed wonder how Schalkwyk and Geertz arrive at an understanding of foreign cultures after a supposed total exclusion of empathy. Nevertheless, an awareness of the strangeness of a studied phenomenon, as desired by Schalkwyk, is no doubt highly conducive to further a spirit of investigation. In fact, both capacities of empathy and distantiation are required in historical research.

While Rigney maintains that the New Historicists make practical use of their imagination and therefore – one should assume – cannot be hostile to aesthetic features of a text, Benjamin Biebuyck deplores that their studies suffer from an utter lack of awareness of the importance of the aesthetic dimension in the reception of a literary work. Aesthetic artefacts are seen by the New Historicists as products of "an underlying or encompassing social development" (174). This has resulted in a total neglect of the cultural impact, which a work of art may have on the dynamics of the social and cultural environment because of its "aesthetic realisation" (175). Biebuyck investigates what opportunities "for a plausible recontextualisation of aesthetic experience" are offered by the otherwise widely divergent historicising approaches of Greenblatt and René Girard. According to Biebuyck, Greenblatt fails to clarify why the sense of 'wonder' aroused by a work of art heightens what he calls the 'resonance' of a text. Biebuyck distinguishes between two phases in the reading process: the first, the aesthetic phase, is characterised by "a dialectics between the appropriation of fictional reality and the expropriation of one's personal background." Citing de Man, Biebuyck maintains that this leads to the reader's temporary distantiation from the discursive patterns that often enough remain unquestioned in everyday life. The second phase of the reading process is defined as the 'reception' or integration of the newly acquired insight into the reader's system of beliefs and attitudes. Whenever a

reader embarks on this adventure, a text becomes indeed very much 'part of the empirical world' and discloses "its modest, mostly negative, social potential" (179). Biebuyck conceives aesthetic practice as "historically (and geographically) variable," since it is "a rule-governed habitus which is the product of a process of culturalisation." Nevertheless, for Biebuyck, 'aesthetic suspension' (192) is a constant in the reading of all texts that are perceived as fictional. Greenblatt is criticised for disrupting the two phases of the reading process in a self-contradictory manner: although he claims that 'wonder' as aesthetic experience increases social 'resonance,' he also maintains that it "blocks out all circumambient images, stills all murmuring voices" (Greenblatt: 1990, 179). Thus, strangely enough, for Greenblatt, the aesthetic experience does not further, but obstructs the appreciation of a work of art. In fact, Greenblatt's remark contradicts his earlier view that "great art is an extraordinarily sensitive register of the complex struggles and harmonies of culture" (1980, 5). By contrast, in Girard's history of the evolution of a non-sacrificial world-view, in which scapegoats are no longer put to death in reality, aesthetic experience acquires an important cathartic function in the renunciation of communal violence: it "wards off the dangers of collective reciprocity and destructuration, since it presupposes individuality, inwardness, isolation, alienation from one's cultural background, and depersonalisation, which makes the stimulated conflict harmless (on a social level)" (189). Thus in Girard, the aesthetic experience of a work of art is far from a mere additional gratification in the reading process, nor is it an impediment to the appreciation of its social relevance, for it alters the reception fundamentally in a liberating and civilising manner. Biebuyck reminds the New Historicists that they could and should learn something from a confrontation with Girard.

It is disconcerting that New Historicists are so reluctant to see their own method in historical perspective. Greenblatt introduced the term 'New Historicism' in opposition to the unhistorical approach of New Criticism and to positivist studies of history. He ignored the history of Old Historicism (Meinecke). Studies dealing with New Historicism from a historical point of view – including Claire Colebrook's – start as late as the 1950s. It is therefore very commendable that Rigney's and Biebuyck's articles considerably expand the historical perspective.

As already indicated, another area attracting much attention in debates on New Historicism ever since Liu's seminal article is Greenblatt's containment thesis implying that subversive elements in Elizabethan literature and culture "serve to consolidate rather than disrupt the apparatus of English power" (Harris, 167). The articles by Jonathan Gil Harris and Koenraad Geldof make important contributions to this debate. Harris shows that George F. Kennan, the initiator of the US containment policy after the Second World War, held a very similar view. But more important, Greenblatt adopts the paradigm of modern functionalist anthropology of Durkheim and Parsons maintaining that "pathological behaviour can contribute to rather than disrupt 'the normal operation of the social functions'" (158). Furthermore, Harris points out that Greenblatt has difficulties similar to that of functionalist sociology in accounting for social

change, since every deviance is seen as merely helping society to pull together and contain subversive forces. Lacking other means of accounting for historical change, the functionalist anthropologists posit “the encounter between ‘civilised’ and ‘primitive’ cultures as paradigmatic of social upheaval and transformation” (163). According to Harris, Greenblatt likewise maintains that “social change is, in effect, a contagion contracted from an external, invading foreign body,” as “European culture infects, literally and metaphorically, that of the New World” (163). Shrewd as Harris’s analysis undoubtedly is, he fails to point out that Greenblatt and Durkheim hold opposite views concerning the idea of a healthy state of society. For Durkheim and Parsons, ‘deviance’ contributes to the ‘health of the social organism,’ whereas the contribution of subversive voices to containment policies of the ruling class is something greatly annoying and frustrating for Greenblatt.

Geldof blames Greenblatt’s containment thesis for being “an iron cage where no one really escapes from the effects of the cunning of power“ (211). He compares it to Adorno and Horkheimer’s pessimistic thesis of a self-defeating ‘dialectics of the Enlightenment.’ Adorno and Horkheimer reject the fervent belief of the philosophers of the Enlightenment that, by the use of critical reason, humanity will ultimately liberate itself from its self-imposed chains. They see this optimism as ill-founded and replace it by a “gloomy vision of modernity as total domination by instrumental and formal reason” (199). According to Geldof, Greenblatt is even more of a pessimist because he does not share Adorno and Horkheimer’s belief in the power of literature to overcome the alienation by a ‘negation of the negation’ and a liberating ‘excess.’ In contrast to Greenblatt, Geldof does not believe that an all-pervasive manipulation of discourses in the service of containment is possible. He views society “as a complex and ambiguous field of power and counter-power, of discourse and counter-discourse” (203). The many spaces in between, which Homi K. Bhabha calls the “Third Space of enunciation,” provide sufficient potential for social change and liberation from centralised control. Literature is particularly suited to explore these gaps and problematic areas. This, of course, does not mean that it is always engaged in this kind of pursuit. Greenblatt may indeed be criticised for seeing subversion in all likely and unlikely places and then ascribe its articulation to a desire to contain it. But there are texts which do support containment policies, as for example the depiction of Shylock as a usurer who is condemned for the breaking of taboos of economic morality at a time when not only Jews were inclined to break them and when the collapse of traditional morality caused considerable anxiety. Greenblatt’s paradigm of containment literature should certainly not be applied to all Elizabethan texts or to all literature, but it enriches the scale of prototypical texts formulating attitudes to social change such as conservative texts, escapist texts, revolutionary texts etc. Whether or not the application of the Greenblatt thesis is justified must be decided in each individual case.

At first sight, Nadia Lie’s article on the problematic identity of the author of *La Celestina* seems to be out of place in a volume containing New Historicist

studies and better suited to figure in postcolonial studies dealing with hybridity. But it is summarized and discussed here since its accidental inclusion may draw attention to blind specks in the New Historicist paradigm. Lie investigates the cryptic manner in which de Rojas, a converted Jew, hides his name by remaining anonymous, but also makes use of an acrostic in a paratext in order to reveal and 'claim' his authorship of the major part of *La Celestina*. Lie criticises Stephen Gilman's view that Rojas uses the mask of a (rather unconvincing) moralist in order to shield himself from the Inquisition, whereas a different voice, emerging in the paratexts, is viewed rather arbitrarily as revealing "his own deepest feelings" (49). Lie suggests instead that de Rojas' authorial identity in *La Celestina* is characterised by cultural hybridity: "there is the orthodox Catholic and there is the former Jew" (51). Thus, for Lie, de Rojas is as much present in the moralistic stance as in the picaresque *Celestina*, the matchmaker, mediator and hymen-mendster, who cites sententiae and creates identities for her customers in which she does not believe herself, but which the various characters think they need in order to survive in society. However this may be, Lie points out that in the final monologue of the play, Pleberio expresses the view that in fact "the only remedy for the suffering of this world is [...] 'not being born,' being without an origin, [...] dissolve in the flux of Heraclitus" (56). Unfortunately, Lie does not show how this 'hybrid identity' reveals itself in the formal structure of the text, as she claims (48). Moreover, she does not use the opportunity to plead for a revision of the rather naive concept of identity underlying most New Historicist studies. Greenblatt's concept of literature as 'negotiation' implies that literature is the result of an interaction between the author and society in which the former acquires institutional facilities from society in acts of appropriation, purchase or symbolic acquisition. The author pays back in catering to the needs of social groups which figure as consumers in the cultural institutions. Although in his early *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* Greenblatt viewed identity formation as a highly complex social process, his image of the author as depicted in the theoretical introduction to *Shakespearean Negotiations* seems to be derived from a liberal market economy where self-assured partners enter into a negotiation between equals. Nadia Lie's image of de Roja's insecure identity is well-suited to shatter this image of a stable identity. Much of New Historicist criticism is in need of opening itself up to a more multi-faceted view of the genesis and sustainment of identity, as it may be found in postcolonial studies.

In fact, Jan R. Veenstra's study of the "Bal des Ardents" and the production of the demonic in Medieval culture does not only test the validity of Greenblatt's concept of a circulation of social energy, as Veenstra announces, but it works with a concept of hybridity in an analysis of exorcism, which belongs to the traditional areas of New Historicist studies: after organising and taking part in a dance of wild men in order to heal his insane brother according to a pagan ritual of exorcism, Louis d'Orleans had thrown a torch at the dancers – an act of aggression, which caused the death of four of the dancers. Veenstra explains the Duke's ambivalent behaviour as a clash of his pagan belief in the healing force of

the rite, and his Christian demonisation of these pagan rites. Veenstra sees this strange story as the ‘renegotiation’ of an earlier cultural practice, the pagan ritual, in a new cultural context, the Christian struggle for supremacy over the uneradicable continuation of pagan practices. One may add that the behaviour of the Duke of Orleans is as typical of an insecure hybrid identity as the author’s de-centred presence in de Roja’s *La Celestina*. Veenstra has two other interesting points to make: he reminds us that Johan Huizinga had already used a similar concept of social energy in his study of ‘emotional history’ in his *Waning of the Middle Ages*. Veenstra also warns against taking “this process of circulation to be universal and ineluctable” (234); there are also those who merely stand aside.

In another essay on exorcism, the feigned madness of Edgar in *King Lear*, Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen criticises Greenblatt for adopting a stance of scientific scepticism; we should “start reading *King Lear* in the light of [the] possession tracts” (112) and approach exorcism as a social institution. Moreover, according to van Dijkhuizen, Greenblatt’s study of Harsnett is too much in the spirit of the traditional study of ‘sources.’ A broader notion of intertextuality including ‘quotations without quotation marks’ is required since “anonymous discursive patterns, cultural scenarios and stereotypes crop up in literary texts” (108). The result of van Dijkhuizen’s approach is a more comprehensive and more convincing reading of *King Lear* than Greenblatt’s since it makes better sense of what in Greenblatt looks like a rather strained argument that the theatricality of exorcism proved that drama was a form of exorcism (Vickers, 239-42; Greenblatt, 1988). Van Dijkhuizen sees the play as a kind of metaphorical ‘exorcism’ of all metaphysical meanings ascribed to the body either in the form of Poor Tom’s being possessed by evil spirits or by the king’s mystical body. Lear does not respond to Edgar’s devil lore at all, but sees Poor Tom as an emblem of ‘unaccommodated man.’ Thus, in *King Lear* the demonic is not merely unmasked as a fraud as in Harsnett and Greenblatt, but it is reduced to an image of human helplessness and suffering (120). Likewise, nothing remains of the mystical body of the king but the misery of ‘unaccommodated man,’ and finally the royal blood-line is reduced to mere matter, as Lear agonises over the dead body of his daughter in words which ultimately also apply to himself: “Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life, / And thou no breath at all?” (V.iii.260). We cannot wholly agree with this total reduction of the king’s mystical body in the play. When Lear claims that he is “every inch a king,” this is not wholly disproved by his madness. His kingship becomes a metaphorical expression of his human dignity, even when all royal insignia are taken away from him and when he is overwhelmed by madness.

Paul Franssen’s essay on the different metaphorical meanings which the pound of flesh acquires for Antonio and Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* is wholly dedicated to a practical analysis and worth reading for that purpose. Nevertheless, in our context it is interesting to see what critical premises of New Historicism are brought into action in this interpretation. Franssen applies Greenblatt’s concept of symbolic acquisition. Antonio’s giving his heart away for his friend draws on a rich tradition of *schola cordis* emblems, but his self-sacrifice is shown as

morally ambiguous, not only because of his attempt to coerce Bassanio's love, but also in the light of Calvin's emphatic distinction between the Passion of Christ and the death of human martyrs: fallible human beings should not imitate Christ, but humbly receive Christ's self-sacrifice for their salvation. For Shylock, the pound of flesh has an entirely different meaning. He desires to punish Antonio for his insults by acquiring the right 'by due process of law' to cut a pound of flesh nearest his enemy's heart like an authorised public executioner. In a Foucauldian sense, "he wants to hijack the state mechanism of instilling terror to acquire power for himself" (100). What Franssen's essay depicts is an interesting case of a dramatisation of two contrasting symbolic acquisitions attached to the pound of flesh. Indeed, this kind of dramatisation happens often enough in literary texts, but does not figure anywhere as a theoretical concept in Greenblatt's catalogue of cultural 'negotiations.'

The articles in this volume focussing on practical analysis show that New Historicism, freed from an obsessive search for subversion and its containment, may lead to important insights. The articles dealing with theoretical issues are undoubtedly an important contribution to debates on New Historicism, but – with the exception of Biebuyck's reconceptualisation of 'wonder and resonance' and Veenstra's study of a 'renegotiation' as a refunctioning of pagan rites – they do not go very far in supplying us with an improved set of tools of critical analysis. New Historicist concepts such as 'context,' 'circulation of social energy' and 'negotiations' remain as vague as ever. Greenblatt's distinction between 'appropriation,' 'purchase,' and 'symbolic acquisition' as forms of cultural negotiation are insufficient to describe the various 'hidden transactions' he investigates himself. The term 'symbolic acquisition' is far too comprehensive to serve as an instrument of analysis. So one may hope that the debate will continue and enrich the possibilities of cultural and literary research.

Such a debate should also submit the term 'New Historicism' to further scrutiny. Schalkwyk is right in pointing out that Greenblatt's approach is predominantly synchronic, and Harris shows that New Historicism runs into difficulties when trying to account for change. A more deep-searching comparison between New Historicism and older historicisms would quickly reveal that the term 'New Historicism' is a misnomer, since it is a sociologism rather than a historicism. Far from being dedicated to a genetic approach, New Historicism is predominantly focussed on a synchronic study of culture. It is therefore not wholly accidental that its central concept of social energy coincides with Auguste Comte's 'énergie sociale.' For the New Historicists, a poetic text – or, in fact, any text – is embedded in contemporary society in a manner that this society does not merely provide the framework for the genesis of this text, but it produces the energies which are channelled in the text. Thus the text is seen as the product of its immediate surroundings and not as the product of a creative act at a given moment in history. In this sense the New Historicism is no more than a variation of Old Positivism, the problem being not merely that the term 'New Historicism' is a misnomer, but that this misnomer suggests that older historical

approaches have become outdated. The diachronic approach still has its value. Many problems of the present are unresolved conflicts of the past. In literary history, patterns of perception and conceptualisation are also often conditioned by earlier works and genres. Writers sometimes feel impeded by tradition and struggle for a new language, or they feel inspired by the past and adapt older forms to respond to urges and needs of the present moment. In fact, a combination of diachronic and synchronic approaches, as practised in 'Rezeptionsgeschichte' with its investigation of the various uses of the past for a constantly changing 'present,' would better deserve the name of New Historicism.

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Buchbesprechungen

Manfred Görlach. Eighteenth-Century English. Sprachwissenschaftliche Studienbücher. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 2001. xv, 392pp. Pb. €50.00. ISBN 3-8253-1072-8.

The eighteenth century is not a definable language period in the sense that Early Modern English was, and Görlach himself mentions the alternative of starting the period treated here in 1660 because of the literary highlights before 1700, but in view of a continuous language development and rapidly increasing communication procedures it is justified and pertinent to look at calendar periods in their bearing on the development of modern English. It was in the 18th century that the ruling tradition of neo-classical attitudes and prescriptive grammar “brought conscious and rational discipline to bear upon taste” (R. Quirk in the ‘Foreword,’ xi) and laid the foundations for a certain concept of linguistic correctness on various levels of English.

In order to introduce this period and to make it more accessible to students, Manfred Görlach’s university textbook brings together and sums up in a monograph the numerous studies on the language development between Early Modern English and the industrial society of the nineteenth century. He gives a wide-ranging survey of the status of English in that century and outlines the various fields. Like the author’s *Introduction to Early Modern English* and partly his *English in Nineteenth-Century England* the present survey is a proper workbook.

A general introduction into linguistic methods and structures surveying the status of English in that century and touching

upon speakers and readers as well as norms is followed by six main chapters giving a description on all individual levels. This comprises varieties, spelling and pronunciation, inflection, syntax, lexis, text (syntax, text types and style). More than 250 extracts from various genres included in the description illustrate the linguistic phenomena and serve as a basis for analytic exercises and topic papers encouraged by 100 study questions. 111 longer extracts present selected passages from major characteristic eighteenth century text types on language and linguistics, on literature, on cultural history and on the English language outside England. Bibliography and indexes complete the book. In view of the transitional character of the eighteenth century language, Görlach presents statements on its features in relation to similarities and dissimilarities for (a) linguistic categories in general, (b) the language use prior to this period (EME), and (c) PDE (and partly nineteenth century E).

The basis of description and illustration is as wide-ranging as a pioneering book of this type can be for a period of which no comprehensive and unified linguistic portrayal exists. Besides many individual studies and reports Görlach was able to utilise the elaborate chapters in volume III (1476-1776) of the *Cambridge History of the English Language* (1999). The author’s effectual experience in textbook work is felt throughout: general findings are outlined for each topic and sub-topic and supported by details taken from a thorough knowledge of the literature on the subject. Problem areas and gaps where adequate studies are lacking are pointed out.

One of the author's aims is to supply more than an introduction as he did in the case of EME and instead "to show how fruitful a study can be that combines both approaches, extending the traditional field of philological interpretation beyond the end of the ME period" (xiii). The attempt to overcome the traditional division of English studies into literature and linguistics is bound to fall short on several counts: (1) No adequate theory for this is at hand, and the old philology referred to is an ad-hoc array of unorganised or 'dissorted' aspects. (2) Out of the sheer volume of texts available, the need to be selective, the aim to include more 'real' areas (from Bible translation via private letters to advertisements and pub jokes) Görlach ends up with a mixture that is interesting but not representative. Desirable additions are easy to name, e.g. technical fields, mercantile communication, political tracts (sermons and political speeches are simply equated, 204). Literature is excluded, but texts on literature get a wide coverage (text group B, 275-95). (3) The contemporary obsession with language and language policy in the eighteenth century leads to two versions of over-emphasis in this workbook: One is the inclusion of 40 text extracts on language and linguistics (text group A). The other is the repeated although cautionary reference to – mainly prescriptive and formal – statements from grammar-type books of that century which contrast markedly with the reality of language use (cf. chapter 5 on syntax, or 3.1.3 on orthography). This impression of a hybrid is intensified by the fact that those writers on language often base their judgements on literary texts of the time. Clearly this mixture also impedes the treatment of the topic itself. Most texts from that period will for instance deviate in some way or other from the principles of punctuation outlined in 3.3 (84ff.). Even the unrestricted statement that the dash was an eighteenth century innovation (85) can be

disproved by the author's own text samples in the *Einführung ins Frühneuenglische* (1978, 220), which had specimens of such dashes in Dryden's poetry. In such a wide and complex field, the application of tools like electronic corpora should not be rejected (2). A brief corpora check yields for example a ratio of 1:2 for 'do not know' vs. 'know not' in Swift's works, but 1:1 in other non-literary sources. More findings of this type could make pronouncements – here on the use of 'do' (109) – more precise.

The complexity of description, text quotes, tasks, and text extracts makes the technical side of this book very demanding. Unfortunately it does not live up to these demands. Some bibliographic references are either missing or faulty, all of them are cumbersome to use. Most of the longer extracts contain omissions, so that the user may be tempted to look at the unabridged versions. Since the references have been split up into primary sources, secondary sources, and index C, finding the origin of an extract can turn into a mini-puzzle. Random checks exhibit some defects. Examples: page 37 refers to the Earl of Chesterfield T15 (one of the major extracts in the text section), which in fact is T14, page 56 the same Earl is quoted with an extract of his letters from 1737 – no indication anywhere. The entry for Coxon about Chesterfield page 368 refers to page 165, which should be page 164. John Walker (1791) is pre-dated page 84, page 195 and page 205 to 1785 and post-dated page 96 to 1796 plus a wrong EL number (144 instead of 116). The analysis of a text by Johnson page 85 refers to 1912 without any name at all. Ogilvie (1774) remains unaccounted for. Fig. 21 (146) mentions GSL, which is not included either in the list of abbreviations (xiv) or the secondary sources (366ff.). John Glanvill (161) is robbed of the final 'e' in his name. The edition of Swift's prose works (226) is by Temple Scott, not

Scots. Three of the cultural texts (122-24) have been taken from Madame Johnson's instruction for young women, but in no case a definable source is given. Two of these texts have mutilated references, and M. Cooper 1754 is not mentioned in any of the lists. Exercise 68 (153) directs the student to a recipe in T72, but T72 (310) is a collection of epitaphs.

The great achievement of this unique book is to draw attention to the English language use of the eighteenth century and to provide students and scholars with an overview and a stimulating approach to a hitherto less regarded period. This should also help further progress in linguistic studies. The sidelines on cultural history and English outside England widen the perspective and are indispensable. It is to be hoped that a revised edition will make it more accurate and reliable.

Gottfried Graustein (Leipzig)

J.K. Chambers, Peter Trudgill and Natalie Schilling-Estes, eds. **The Handbook of Language Variation and Change**. Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002. xii, 807pp. Hb. £ 85.00. ISBN 0-631-21803-3.

The general volume on *Sociolinguistics* in the series *Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics* has now been supplemented with a survey of the study of *Language Variation and Change* as "the core of the sociolinguistic enterprise" (1). Its authors had been invited to concentrate on current issues of research in this field, "to discuss the ideas [...] that drive their branch of the discipline, and to illustrate them with empirical studies [...] that not only demonstrate their applications but also their shortcomings and strengths" (1). A retrospective, historical view of the problems discussed was to be included only implic-

itly and therefore remained largely restricted to an introductory chapter by J.K. Chambers, in which he sketches "an informal epistemology of sociolinguistics by outlining its development as a social science [...], its place among the linguistic sciences and its basis in cognition" (3).

The main body of the book consists of 29 contributions by well-known and recognized experts in their respective branches of sociolinguistic research. They are arranged in five major parts with several subsections, each beginning with a short introduction by one of the editors.

Part I (Methodologies) focuses on the methods used in the study of linguistic variation and change and is divided into two subsections: "Field Methods" and "Evaluation." The former has chapters by C. Feagin on fieldwork concerning data collection, by D.R. Preston on "sociolinguistic investigations of non-linguists' attitudes toward various languages, language varieties, and specific features of these varieties" (18), as well as by E.W. Schneider and by L. Bauer on a description of language variation and change based on written documents, or on "public corpora," i.e. generally available and now usually electronically searchable text databases (cf. 97-99). The subsection "Evaluation" includes chapters by R. Bayley, J.R. Rickford and E.R. Thomas on the quantitative analysis of language variation, on "implicational scales," depicting "hierarchical co-occurrence patterns in the acquisition or use of linguistic variables by individuals or groups, such that x implies y but not the reverse" (143), and on the use of instrumental phonetics in the study of language variation.

Part II (Linguistic Structure) deals with "the levels of linguistic structure that have been the main foci of work in linguistic variation and change studies" (2) and is intended to show "that variation is also conditioned by INTERNAL FACTORS, such as phonology, morphology, syntax,

and the lexicon" (206). Their impact is discussed in chapters by A. Anttila, M.J. Gordon, A. Henry and R. Macaulay on "variation and phonological theory [esp. Optimality Theory]," on "chain shifts and mergers" as alternative types or outcomes of sound change, on "variation and [Chomskyan, i.e. non-variationist] syntactic theory," and on "discourse variation."

Part III (Social Factors) would have more aptly been entitled "External Factors." It starts off with a subsection on "time" as an extralinguistic factor that is central to the study of language variation and of language change in particular. The effects of this factor on linguistic structure are described in chapters by G. Bailey on changes in "real and apparent time," i.e. "differences between two time periods" and "across different generations of speakers" (309), by J. Roberts on "child language variation," and by J.K. Chambers on "patterns of variation including change" with special reference to the linguistic reflection of differences in social class, sex and gender, and age as "the three overriding social categories in modern industrial societies" (349).

The second subsection of Part III deals explicitly with the "social differentiation" of language and includes chapters by N. Schilling-Estes on "stylistic variation" and by Sh. Ash, J. Cheshire and C. Fought on the relationship between language variation and "social class," "sex and gender," or "ethnicity."

The third and last subsection of Part III turns to the linguistic impact of "domains," i.e. of "relational arenas within which variable linguistic behavior takes place" (473). It opens with a chapter by N. Mendoza-Denton on "language and identity," in which the term "identity" is used to refer to "the active negotiation of an individual's relationship with larger social constructs, in so far as this negotiation is signalled through language and other semiotic means" (475). In the fol-

lowing two contributions, K. Hazen discusses the effects of the "family" on language variation, while M. Meyerhoff describes the linguistic outcomes of "communities of practice," i.e. of "aggregates of individuals negotiating and learning practices that contribute to the satisfaction of a common goal" (530). In addition, this subsection contains a chapter by L. Milroy on "the relationship between language variation and social network structure" (553), and one by P.L. Patrick on problems of language variation and change related to the "speech community," which, however, would have more appropriately been termed "communicational community" since it is defined by the author as "a socially-based unit of linguistic analysis" rather than as "a language-based unit of social analysis" (577).

Part IV (Contact) is devoted to outcomes of "contact-induced language change" (695). It comprises chapters by D. Britain, G. Sankoff and P. Kerswill on "language variation across [geographical] space" (603), on phonological, lexical, syntactic or pragmatic, and morphological borrowing and substratum influence in second-language acquisition, and on contact-induced "koinization and accommodation," with special reference to immigrant koines or "new dialects" (Trudgill) as, e.g., New Zealand English. No specific mention, however, is made here of the growing differentiation of English into national varieties or of the development of urban dialects.

The final part of the book (V: Language and Societies) includes three chapters "that provide different perspectives on the relation between society and language" (705). In the first of them P. Trudgill deals with "contact, and social network structure and stability" as "social determinants of linguistic patterning" (708-09). In the other two chapters, S. Tagliamonte and W. Wolfram discuss "methods for comparing linguistic processes from one community to another"

(706), and problems of the sociolinguistic process of obsolescence, i.e. of “language death and dying,” as “part of the natural life cycle of language” (764).

Each chapter is followed by a rather long list of references, though largely restricted to publications in English. In spite of the general frame indicated by the title of the book, languages other than English have only been considered marginally as objects of description.

The book ends with a detailed index of subjects and authors, in which, however, some entries are not easy to find as they have been subsumed under more general headings not always adequately chosen (cf. e.g. *linguistic and social typology*).

Irrespective of some minor shortcomings, this *Handbook* may be recommended as a comprehensive, thorough and very instructive description of the current state of the art in the study of language variation and change which will stimulate and support further research in this field.

Klaus Hansen (Berlin)

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. 4th edition. München: Langenscheidt-Longman, 2003. xvii, 1949pp. Hb. with CD-ROM € 29.95. ISBN 3-526-50822-4.

Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. xii, 1550pp. Pb. with CD-ROM £ 19.95. ISBN 0-521-53106-3.

The intense competition on the lucrative market for EFL dictionaries has recently resulted in the publication of two new editions of well-established reference works. The fourth edition of the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE)* and the second edition of the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (CALD)*, both available with a supple-

mentary CD-ROM, are the latest contributions from two of Britain's leading publishers in this field. Both dictionaries can definitely be recommended to intermediate and advanced learners of English, though not unreservedly.

Nine years have passed since the publication of the corresponding previous editions, enough time for substantial innovations and improvements. Longman states in the introduction to *LDOCE* that example sentences and collocations are the information categories which have received most lexicographic attention. The number of examples, most of which are now corpus-based, has been increased by 40 per cent. This focus is certainly justified from the users' point of view, as many learners are known to prefer verbal illustrations to explicit grammatical specifications, i.e. grammar codes (cf. Lemmens, *Grammar in English Learners' Dictionaries*, Tübingen 1986, 11). Cambridge claims a similar number of example sentences as Longman, namely 90,000 compared to some 88,000 in *LDOCE*, and the examples are also taken from a corpus.

Collocations are a major obstacle for language learners since they are often unpredictable. Longman's most notable innovation in this respect is the introduction of so-called 'collocation boxes.' The dictionary lists the most important recurrent combinations of selected headwords in blue boxes at the end of the entries, which significantly facilitates their location. In the great majority of headwords, however, collocational patterns continue to be given in bold letters within the entry, usually in the example sentences. *CALD* uses the same method of highlighting collocations, but otherwise clearly lags behind its competitor; the dictionary merely provides 25,000 collocational patterns as compared to 63,000 in *LDOCE* (cf. blurbs).

A definite improvement can be noted in connection with visual illustrations, as

both dictionaries provide more attractive and accessible information than their predecessors. Longman has, for the first time, exclusively relied on full-colour drawings and photographs, giving the dictionary a very lively appearance. Although studies have shown that black and white illustrations are commonly recognised equally well as coloured ones (cf. Hausmann et al., *Wörterbücher, Dictionaries*, Berlin 1989, 709), most learners will welcome this innovation. Cambridge provides 16 coloured full-page pictures in the middle of the dictionary, whereas the illustrations in the a – z section are kept in black and white. Like its predecessor, *CALD* merely includes *thematic* drawings for some lexical fields and related terms, which means that individual headwords are not illustrated. *LDOCE* gives a nice blend of drawings and photographs, a melange that appears arbitrarily selected on some occasions though. Some illustrations in *LDOCE* are electronically generated and look slightly artificial (e.g. ‘organic farming’ at ‘environmental solutions’), but the computer has also been employed very profitably to remove visual noise (i.e. disturbing elements) from the photographs.

Unfortunately, not all innovations in the present editions prove effective and the publishers have missed the opportunity to add some necessary refinements. Cambridge, for example, has omitted its defining vocabulary list, making it impossible for learners to familiarise themselves with the terms used for defining. Longman continues to use a small number of unsuitable terms like ‘scatter,’ ‘wrist’ or ‘sideways’ for this purpose, and sometimes definitions in *LDOCE* unintentionally include words from outside the restricted vocabulary (e.g. ‘verruca’). Cambridge still fails to provide frequency information – incomprehensible in the age of electronic corpora – and Longman again gives this information for the 3,000 most common words in spoken and writ-

ten English only; Longman’s target audience, i.e. intermediate and advanced learners of English, can be expected to know these terms anyway, and information on a greater number of headwords would have been desirable. *LDOCE* uses the colour red to additionally mark these most frequent terms, a feature that could arguably have been employed more profitably, e.g. to highlight style labels and thus warn the user of possible restrictions in terms of usage. Cambridge has, in this context, introduced some new labels which appear inappropriate, e.g. ‘Northern English,’ ‘male’ and ‘female’ without explaining the reference of the latter two; and Longman’s distinction between ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘old use’ is unnecessarily subtle and presumably unclear to many learners.

Like in past editions of learners’ dictionaries, definitions are amongst the information categories that are most in need of improvement. The compilation of adequate explanations is, mainly due to space restrictions and the limited defining vocabulary, a demanding and laborious task, though the problems involved ought not to be regarded as an excuse for the various shortcomings learners are supposed to cope with. The two dictionaries under review repeatedly provide insufficient, inaccurate and irrelevant information in their definitions, and related explanations are often compiled in an incoherent style, to mention only the most common deficiencies (cf. Heuberger, *Mono-lingual Dictionaries for Foreign Learners of English*, Wien 2000, 14-35). Both Longman and Cambridge have copied a sizeable number of definitions from the corresponding previous editions, not seldom in cases where amendments would have been necessary (cf. the inappropriate explanations for ‘greyhound,’ ‘gazelle’ or ‘slave’ in *LDOCE* and those for ‘wasp’ and ‘apparition’ in *CALD*). The total number of definitions in *LDOCE* and *CALD* is difficult to compare as the pub-

lishers have used different methods for counting their entries. Longman claims 106,000 entry words and phrases whereas Cambridge states that the dictionary includes 170,000 "words, phrases and examples" (cf. blurbs). As regards definitions, the current generation of learners' dictionaries still leaves a lot to be desired, and the expectations in this regard have not been fulfilled.

This is, fortunately, not the case with grammatical information which is conveyed quite effectively in both dictionaries reviewed. Longman and Cambridge have, by and large, retained their coding systems from the previous editions; this means that *LDOCE* spells out grammatical information in full, rather than using pattern codes, and *CALD* includes transparent abbreviations. For example, in *LDOCE* a pattern of the verb 'permit' is marked as 'permit sb to do sth' in bold letters, while *CALD* provides the code [+ obj + to infinitive] before the example. The greatest advantage of Longman's approach is obviously that users do not have to learn and remember various codes, thus accommodating occasional dictionary users as well as those who only reluctantly read the guides. Cambridge has significantly reduced and simplified its codes in the present edition of *CALD*, ensuring that the dictionary is more user-friendly than its predecessor.

Explicit information on grammar and usage, which is mainly required for productive purposes, is not only provided by means of grammar codes, but also through so-called 'word focus boxes,' 'language notes' (*LDOCE*) or 'common learner error notes' (*CALD*), etc. The usefulness of these information categories is unquestionable, though the notes are selected rather arbitrarily and learners cannot always expect to find a corresponding entry. Similarly, both dictionaries provide helpful appendices, focussing, for example, on irregular verbs, geographical names,

word formation patterns, etc. Learners are often unwilling to familiarise themselves with the content of the appendices however, and this is also true of the prefatory material. Both Longman and Cambridge have reacted to these reading habits and strongly reduced the size of their guides, limiting them to six and four pages respectively. Phonetic transcriptions continue to be given by means of the IPA, a well-established notational system that is used in the great majority of EFL reference works.

Another major evaluation criterion is the accessibility of the dictionaries, in particular the clarity of their entry structure. Both publishers introduced a pioneering feature in their 1995 editions which has in the meantime also been adopted by their competitors, namely the so-called 'signposts' or guidewords that facilitate locating a certain sense in longer entries. This method of structuring the entries has proven most helpful, and state-of-the-art learners' dictionaries can no longer be imagined without it. Cambridge, however, needs to be criticised for maintaining its rather obscure way of separating (morphologically) related lexical items. For example, the adverb 'economically' is treated within two different entries, and learners are likely to overlook the second match. *CALD* is currently the only dictionary that provides an 'idiom finder,' helping users to find longer idioms, though Longman's straightforward policy of including idioms under the first important word of the phrase makes such a feature redundant in most cases. The two-colour layout of both dictionaries also contributes to a greater accessibility and user-friendliness compared to the previous editions.

In conclusion, both *LDOCE* and *CALD* are major lexicographic reference works that will definitely be appreciated by their users. The former, however, surpasses its competitor in several respects

and is arguably one of the very best dictionaries on the market. Longman's focus on examples and collocations seems fully justified, and *LDOCE* also leaves a strong impression regarding most other information categories. Cambridge has, unfortunately, missed the opportunity to introduce notable innovations, *CALD* often being (too) similar to the previous edition. Nevertheless, the dictionary can also be recommended from a didactic point of view and will rightly find its clientele. The 2003 generation of EFL reference works can thus be regarded as an important step forward on the way to the ideal learners' dictionary, though the scope for improvement is still considerable.

For a small surcharge, both dictionaries come with a CD-ROM that includes the entire printed reference works as well as many helpful additional features. These extra features in *LDOCE* and *CALD* are remarkably similar, and it seems that the lexicographers have reached some agreement on what electronic learners' dictionaries should reasonably provide. Both Longman and Cambridge deserve great praise for their selection; shallow multimedia gimmicks which characterised early editions of CD-ROM dictionaries have been replaced by genuinely useful innovations which make the reference works invaluable tools for receptive and productive purposes.

Production is facilitated by sophisticated word finders that allow the search for synonyms and other related terms. One of these features in *CALD* is called *SMARTthesaurus*, offering synonyms and related words for every single entry in the dictionary. The Cambridge CD-ROM includes an even more advanced function, entitled *SUPERwrite*, which gives related words, collocations, common mistakes, etc. The *LDOCE* CD-ROM, on the other hand, stores an electronic version of the *Longman Language Activator*, a dictionary compiled specifically to address

the needs of learners regarding language production. Furthermore, the CD-ROM is enhanced with a phrase finder and a database with more than one million additional example sentences that can be analysed in a special corpus mode. All functions mentioned have been designed in a very user-friendly and effective way, offering satisfying results in the great majority of cases.

Intended mainly for reception, Cambridge's *QUICKfind* hyperlinks texts in word processing programs or the internet to the dictionary proper, providing definitions when the mouse pointer is moved over a word on screen. Longman's *POP-UP MODE* works in a similar way and gives instant explanations also within a separate window. These functions are not only useful from the learners' point of view, but also desirable from a didactic viewpoint as they encourage the use of monolingual dictionaries. In addition to the above-mentioned special features, both reference works have subtle standard search engines which entail great advantages in terms of accessibility. A detailed description of the capabilities of these search tools would be beyond the scope of this review, but it can be stated that both *LDOCE* and *CALD* allow very sophisticated searches, e.g. for idioms, lexical fields, collocations, etc.

Recorded pronunciations are already a standard feature in electronic learners' dictionaries, and *LDOCE* and *CALD* provide this information for British and American English. Similarly, both dictionaries include visual illustrations, sometimes allowing the user to click on labelled parts to get additional information. In the case of *LDOCE* on CD-ROM, the pictures are not identical with the print edition. Hundreds of useful exercises on a variety of language areas make the dictionaries valuable tools for self-study purposes. A unique feature in *LDOCE* on CD-ROM are the 7000 en-

cyclopaedic entries, taken from the *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*, as well as information on word origins. *LDOCE* is thus the first learners' dictionary to provide (simplified) etymologies, an innovation that has its didactic pros and cons but ought to be welcomed in its present form.

Even though the core texts of the electronic EFL dictionaries are essentially an adaptation of the book versions, both CD-ROM reference works clearly surpass their printed counterparts thanks to their sophisticated search engines and multimedia features. Learners with a PC at their disposal are therefore strongly recommended to obtain the CD-ROM editions of *CALD* and *LDOCE*, both of which make an outstanding overall impression.

Reinhard Heuberger (Innsbruck)

Susanne Mühleisen. Creole Discourse: Exploring Prestige Formation and Change across Caribbean English-Lexicon Creoles. Creole Language Library 24, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2002. xiv, 332pp. Hb. € 110.00. ISBN 1-58811-297-7. US\$ 99.00. ISBN 90-272-5246-7.

Susanne Mühleisen examines in this published version of her doctoral thesis socio-historical and epistemological factors in the prestige formation of Caribbean English-lexicon Creoles (CELCS). She suggests that the micro-structures of CELCS undergo considerable functional shifts while being constantly negotiated in social practice, in discursive actions in particular. At the same time, the macro-structures of the respective societies have remained relatively untouched by these changes, whose dynamism contributes to a prestige formation associated with 'Creole.'

In the theoretical part of her study, Mühleisen proposes a dynamic, interdisciplinary framework in which changes 'from below' are the relevant factors in both the (re-)shaping of Creole languages and their prestige in the post-colonial present. In pointing out the traditional low prestige of Creole languages in contrast to the 'pure' standard, she shows that this normative opposition was formed discursively in colonial times. Until today, it has been continuously re-evaluated according to the zeitgeist.

The principal value of the study, however, is the empirical part. Here, the author analyses data from CELCS in three discursive 'force fields,' namely the use of CELCS by speakers in the London diaspora (a), and the representation of CELCS in literature, both primary (b) and translated (c).

With respect to (a): Mühleisen skillfully reveals the diverging development of overt positive attitudes towards Creole ('staging identity') and its actual use ('performing identity') in the social networks of the London diaspora setting. She concludes that Creole has become a positive marker of identity nowadays, much more than it was some decades ago. This transformation even spreads among discourse communities whose members are not Afro-Caribbean by descent. Regrettably, a description of distinctive features of the contact variety – often referred to as *London Jamaican* – is kept very brief.

With respect to (b): As an example of the problems connected to the representation of languages in writing, Mühleisen discusses the choice of an orthographic system for the CELCS. In this, she favours an increasing distance to standardized English (StE). Further, she states that the traditional orality/literacy divide does not apply to the current usage of CELCS. Rather, new genres and registers are being spread via Creole writing. Her

analysis of excerpts from novels by Caribbean authors convincingly shows the diachronic changes of Creole usage, ranging from expressive to increasingly referential function. Reflecting (and contributing to) changes of language prestige, writers using CELCs have been able to reach new audiences, which thus become part of prestige negotiation themselves. Research on Tok Pisin, for example, confirms the author's conclusion: in gaining autonomy, Creole languages (here: CELCs) are more and more used as 'voices of authority' rather than as mere mimetic 'badges of authenticity.'

With respect to (c): As regards CELCs in translation (both source and target), an adequate linguistic as well as sociocultural rendering is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. In discussing different translation strategies, Mühleisen shows that a lack of sensitivity on the part of the translators has often not only led to functional and qualitative loss, but also contributed to the maintenance of (post-)colonial notions. Thus, translators have even reinforced the asymmetrical attitudinal relationship between CELCs and StE. However, the author does not claim 'equivalent' translations. In her view, it is rather the social practice of translation itself that raises the sociopolitical power – and thus the prestige – of Creole.

By and large, the analysis of exemplary oral and written samples supports the author's hypothesis that diachronic changes in the attitude towards CELCs are due to constant and productive negotiation in the above-mentioned interacting discursive 'force fields.' Here, mutual effects between the (conflicting) linguistic form and social meaning of Creole come to light. However, these fields are not the only playgrounds for language prestige. For example, the important factor *language policy* could have been given more room, especially in the standardization context.

Nevertheless, the study is characterized by compelling arguments. Mühleisen conclusively demonstrates for CELCs how social norms help to legitimize a language as autonomous. Moreover, she fervently supports an enduring presence of (prestigious) Creole in oral and written discourse. Thus, the author gives an optimistic, though idealized, picture of the future of CELCs. She goes even further: Code choice in speech and writing/translation is seen as a conscious social process which influences the representation of the self and of culture as a whole. In sum, *Creole Discourse* is a clear plea in favour of a general move towards the discursive in academic research.

Timo Lotbmann (Aachen)

Loewenstein, David and Janel Mueller, eds. **The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002. xi, 1038pp. Hb. £ 100.00, US\$ 140.00. ISBN 0-521-63156-4.

Loewenstein and Mueller's new history of early modern English literature, volume 2 of the first comprehensive history of English literature since Ward and Waller's *Cambridge History* from 1907-27, combines the merits of a major work of reference with an innovative approach towards its subject matter. Its five parts cover the major historical developments in the field of English literature from the Reformation to the Restoration; they also reflect recent discoveries and methodological developments in the field of literary studies. Section 1 deals with "Modes and means of literary production, circulation and reception," focussing on the material conditions of literary and cultural production, such as literacy, education, patronage and reading habits. The four subsequent sections are ordered chronologically, "The

Tudor Era from the Reformation to Elizabeth” being followed by “The Era of Elizabeth and James VI,” “The Earlier Stuart Era, and “The Civil War and Commonwealth Era.” Within these historical sections, the chapters are structured more or less uniformly, dealing with “Literature and national identity,” “Literature and religion/the church,” “Literature and the court/the household,” “Literature and London,” “Literature and the theatre.” Repetitive as this structure seems, it allows the reader to follow one theme or topic through its historical development and thus contributes to the accessibility of the book as a work of reference. Rather than providing chapters on single authors and/or major genres, this synoptic structure focuses on sites of cultural productivity as they surface under changing historical circumstances; it thus emphasises the interdependence of cultural production with both political and religious developments and the material conditions at the heart of all cultural production.

Literature, as the editors point out in their introduction, is employed here as an inclusive term, in the sense in which the early modern period used the word, i.e. the “domain of knowledge that has been preserved and transmitted in written form” (6). The majority of the 26 articles in this volume maintain the view that literature defined in this sense functions as both an agent and a product of culture, in that its representations, records and expressions contribute to the production of cultural knowledge. In a more ‘exclusive,’ contemporary sense of the term, the methodological approach of this book casts early modern poetry, romance and drama (to name but the most conspicuous literary genres of the time) as media of cultural self-awareness that provide readers with a self-distancing gaze at their own cultural practices and at the same time function as social compromise formations that can assuage cultural conflict.

Both senses alert readers to the fact that, as David Loewenstein and John Morrill point out in their article on literature and religion during the civil war era, literature provides the stage for a “war of words and images” (664) that proved to be as formative for the English nation as the war that was, at the same time, fought with swords and muskets.

All contributors have published widely in the field of Early Modern English literature and their articles provide highly readable overviews over a broad range of texts. Their narrative accounts of the developments in the field of English literature are complemented by an appendix consisting of an extensive chronology of events, texts and manuscripts, a select bibliography and a comprehensive index, making the new *Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* a highly accessible critical reference work and a valuable resource for scholarly, graduate and undergraduate readers.

Susanne Scholz (Frankfurt/M.)

Ruth Freifrau von Ledebur. Der Mythos vom deutschen Shakespeare: Die Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft zwischen Politik und Wissenschaft 1918 - 1945. Köln, Weimar und Wien: Böhlau, 2002. ix, 294pp. Hb. €35.50. ISBN 3-412-14101-1.

If you had thought that there could not possibly be anything more parochial, self-obsessed, and boring than a history of the German Shakespeare Society, think again, or even better, read Ruth von Ledebur's book. By picking the epoch between the wars the author not only complements her own 1974 book on German Shakespeare reception after 1945, but she also fills in with Christa Jansohn's quite recent documentation about another *Zerreißprobe*, the 1963 schism of the Society into a

West and an East section. Only, von Ledebur's period is even more embarrassing, not to say humiliating, as a chapter of German scholarship and its relation to Shakespeare.

Ironically, in spite of its cherished home at Weimar, the years of the Weimar Republic seem least to have affected the Society politically; similarly after 1941, near-bankruptcy made the Society's activities less damaging. So it is the post and the pre-war periods which generate most of von Ledebur's material. Enter, in the role of arch-villains among her *dramatis personae*, the surviving or re-emerging nationalism after the end of World War One, and later, of course, the rising Nazi regime in the decade before World War Two. First, in "Germany's darkest hour," the post-WWI inferiority complex sadly leads into some rather unsavoury or stubborn misjudgments, also among scholars, as to the "crimes against Germany and the shame of the extortionist Treaty of Versailles." Later from the thirties on, Nazi megalomania had to be accommodated in the Society's history.

Not unexpectedly, von Ledebur's time span also coincides with German Shakespeare hubris wreaking havoc. Together with Goethe and Schiller, "der deutsche Shakespeare" becomes one of the three German worthies, worshipped annually in Weimar's Ilmpark. Soon there was one "worthy" more: One of the Society's darkest hours came when statements like the following by the vice-president of the Gesellschaft Hans Severus Ziegler, were heard at a head committee meeting: Shakespeare is usurped as "die Kraftquelle für unser Volk und unsere Jugend [...] Die Tatsache, daß Shakespeare uns ganz und gar gehört, und daß wir uns zu ihm bekennen, können wir durchaus verantworten als Goethe-Menschen und als Zeitgenossen Adolf Hitlers [the power resource for our people and our youth, [...] Shakespeare belongs entirely to us

and we profess our faith in him; this we are entitled to as compatriots of Goethe and as contemporaries of Adolf Hitler]." The commonplace, however shameful it may be, that intellectuals did little to withstand the vicious and remorseless seizure of power by Nazi ideologists resonates from von Ledebur's book.

However, it would be quite wrong to assume that she paints all in one colour. Her skill in differentiation is best shown by her treatment of one of the key players, the president of the Society, Werner Deetjen whose "reign" from 1921 to 1939 more or less covers the whole range of her book. Never easily apologetic, but sensitive to the difficulties which Deetjen had to face, and to his personal qualities as well as his shortcomings, she creates the portrait of a typical intellectual of the times. His two faces reveal, on the one hand, the idealistic scholar with a classicist turn of mind come somewhat too late into this world. He dreams of a comforting, classical Shakespeare and, consequently, is quite hostile to "modern" trends e.g. in directing the plays on stage, be it the renowned (and vilified) "Hamlet im Frack" by Leopold Jessner, or Marxist infiltration as introduced by the Moscow Vakhtangov Theatre in the same play. (Incidentally, as history repeats itself, the self-same discussion features again prominently during and after the Society's split in the sixties). Deetjen's view of the arts is holistic, conservative, and therefore critical of all experimentation. So, in unison with the anti-republican spirit within the Society at large, is his politics. On the other hand, here is the versatile communicator; his numerous official posts allow him contacts with many people whose "say" becomes more and more domineering. His conservatism emerges both as a blindfold, and at the same time as a strong instigation to stand up courageously against personal harm done to Society members. In von Ledebur's final judgment Deetjen is

anything but blameless; yet within certain limits he stands out positively against the unwholesome mixture of naivety and arrogance which – in view of the increasing ideologisation – is pitifully true of the Society as a whole, and of intellectuals in general who refused to admit defeat where long since it had taken place.

This becomes most evident in three notorious “case histories,” which hold the mirror up to Deetjen’s presidency and which are allowed ample space in von Ledebur’s study. How, then, does the honour of the Shakespeare Society emerge from the proceedings around Wolfgang Clemen, Hans Rothe, and Levin L. Schücking? In an order of increasing abomination: some of the plots laid concerning the financing of Clemen’s now world-famous dissertation on Shakespeare’s imagery may appear as too readily criticized from hindsight. The condemnation of Rothe’s Shakespeare translations/adaptations, resurfacing after the last war, at least contains some justification, however much the procedures caused human suffering and are therefore reprehensible. Quite detestable are the squabbles that went on in relation to Schücking: Both his sociological approach to Shakespeare and political steadfastness displeased the dignitaries long before he became *persona non grata* and resigned. Obviously in none of these cases did the Society and its representatives live up to their claim of integrity.

Before running entirely out of space I wish to finish with a short description of the actual set-up of von Ledebur’s remarkable book. She has thoroughly investigated the archives of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft. She has painstakingly studied correspondence, minutes, reports etc. – a task not made easier by the physical state of these papers, after some knight-errantry and unprofessional storage. Even more difficult must have been the decoding and evaluating of a jargon which, with political danger on the increase, either became

more slogan-like, or more secretive every year. To have succeeded in this is an enormous achievement in its own right. She then distilled her labour into three main parts. These are: the Society searching for its place in society (Verortung einer literarischen Gesellschaft); the continuous skirmishes with the political powers (Verhandlungen mit den politischen Autoritäten); and an evaluation of the Society’s publications, mainly *Jahrbuch* and *Schriftenreihe* (“Das wertvollste Organ der Shakespeare-Forschung [The most valuable voice of Shakespeare scholarship]”). It is within these boundaries that von Ledebur tells her tragical-comical-historical story so full of sound and fury.

Klaus Peter Steiger (Berlin)

Russell West. Spatial Representations and the Jacobean Stage: From Shakespeare to Webster. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002. x, 276pp. Hb. £ 45.00. ISBN 0-333-97373-9

Before Gerhard Mercator borrowed the name of a mythical Greek giant to invent the genre of the *atlas* in 1595, systematic collections of topographical maps were generically known as ‘theatres’ – Abraham Ortelius, for instance, who published the first world atlas in the history of mapmaking (in 1570), called his book of maps *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, ‘Theatre of the Whole World.’ The identity between atlas and theatre – and by extension between map and stage – is not simply gratuitous; there are deep conceptual and structural links between the representation and exhibition of space in cartography and drama. If it has so far been less obvious that the impact of stage plays on the massive changes in contemporary spatial consciousness was as significant as the role played by Mercator’s and Ortelius’s

'new' cartography, I am certain that Russell West's comprehensive exploration of the different theatrical forms of spatial representation on the early seventeenth-century stage will soon put matters right on that score.

West takes the complex spatial dynamics of Jacobean drama as his theme, and proceeds to read plays from Shakespeare to Webster back into their historical contexts, emphasising at each point how the space of the stage often mirrored, and intervened in, the various public and private spaces through which Jacobean society defined itself. In doing so, the study is a fresh incursion into a field that has been mapped out in recent years by scholars such as Steven Mullaney, Richard Helgerson, John Gillies, Tom Conley, Garrett Sullivan, and others, whose work has changed the ways we look at the link between literature and the cultural history of space. West's book builds on this scholarship and takes it a step further. It is perhaps less a specific case study than a systematic survey of the different forms of spatial representation that the stage developed in response to the rapid social change happening all around the theatres, both at local and global level.

West begins by drawing attention to the way in which Antony's emphatic "Here is my space" (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 1.1.36) fuses in one deictic statement spatial references to the classical world of the play and to a very specific corner of a very specific Jacobean theatre, thus producing a 'stereoscopic vision' which, West claims, "is typical of the early modern theatre" (2). He moves on from there to argue that the Jacobean theatre, "as an ostentatiously spatial art-form" (3), created dramatic spaces in text and performance that both participated in, and were critical of, wider social transformations. It is the emphasis on the various spaces created in theatrical performance

that sets this study apart from other recent inquiries into the role of space in early modern literature, which proceed largely by reinserting the texts into their various contexts but tend to ignore what West describes as "the internal functioning of the dramatic space of Jacobean plays" (7).

That this promises something useful is confirmed by the seven main chapters of the book. West opens his analysis with a lucid assessment of how the spatial language of contemporary discourse could encompass divergent strands of social experience in early modern England; these modes of mental spatialization were translated into the signifying processes of the theatre, which was experienced by contemporaries not as a static verbal art form but as a "dynamic spatial process" (23). In a society where identity was defined by place and rigid hierarchies, the performative use of the space of the stage – including aspects such as the movement of actors, the visual and physical contact between players and audience, the different levels of seating within the theatre, the uses of acting space, etc. – could confirm as well as revise these ascriptions, as West shows in many exemplary readings of scenes from plays by Middleton, Jonson, and others.

The remaining six chapters each look at a different area of social life in early modern England, showing theatrical space to be both a product of, and participant in, many of these social, political, and economic contexts. Chapter 2 ("The Sun King") deals with the court masque and the idealized spatial hierarchies it employed – both in text and on stage – which mirrored James' political ambitions but were increasingly at odds with the social and political conflicts that began to emerge so forcefully in his reign. The theatres beyond the court were products of economic transformations that were set in motion not by the sun king but by

“The Dumb God” (title of Chapter 3): money. The many ways in which the stage was caught up in the social and cultural vicissitudes brought about by the new economy – to which it owed its own existence – are explored by focusing on representations of spatial mobility, the market, money, land as property, and more generally mechanisms of exchange. The logic of exchange is shown to be “clearly a spatial logic” (87) that challenged an ancient spatial order in which people and objects were still fixed in their respective places. The theatre traded on this logic of exchange not only by weaving fictions around issues of spatial mobility (and by exchanging these fictions for the money of paying spectators), but also by making the stage-space itself – where actors constantly exchange places in what West suggests we might refer to as a “positional economy” (98) – a key site of that economic fluidity of which many characters in the plays were otherwise embittered moral critics.

One of the strengths of the book is West’s systematic approach, which is extremely helpful given the complexity of many of the contexts he discusses; Chapter 4, for instance (on social mobility), does not merely pronounce growing mobility and the fragmentation of kinship structures as new factors of social life in early modern England but runs systematically through the various social groups and networks – merchants, gentry, lawyers, family, etc. – to briefly gloss their changed circumstances and then show how these are addressed by playwrights. The point where general social mobility and the rituals of the stage most visibly intersected was in the wearing of costume to assume new identities: “In the body of the actor, the possibility of social movement and mutability was paraded before the spectator” (137). The space of the stage thus helped to undermine even further the transparency of social status,

which the state attempted to control beyond the stage by sumptuary legislation. The increasing number of vagrants and “masterless men” (topic of Chapter 5) caused similar concerns as the misuse of dress; here the stage was again deeply implicated in another form of spatial change – demographic mobility – most notably through the “shared identity of actors and vagabonds in the minds of contemporaries” (165).

Chapter 6 moves beyond the shores of England to look at the theme of travel on the Jacobean stage. There were frequent admissions by playwrights that the stage did not really have the means to represent a voyage, being more suited to the representation of a particular place; however, West shows, the spatial means of the theatre allowed the production of “similar epistemological effects to those engendered by the real experience of voyages” (173). Given that overseas expansion was still largely a dream on paper in the early seventeenth century, West here confirms the findings of most recent research on travel writing by showing how travel drama was less concerned with dramatic evocations of foreign locations than “with using travel as a foil for reflections on the English nation itself” (190). The final chapter looks at contemporary notions of subjectivity and argues that “transformations of identity in that period” were not always rooted in language but frequently “grounded in the decisive spatial transformations of society” (217).

The book does an excellent job of synthesising what are divergent realms of social experience, arguing persuasively that these were interlinked for contemporaries through discrete spatial forms. While his approach requires West to cross some familiar ground, it also allows him to develop exciting readings that are fresh and original. The focus on the space of the stage in relation to other spatial transformations in culture and society produces

genuinely fascinating insights, which only such an excellent fusion of cultural history and theatre studies as West offers us here could hope to achieve.

Bernhard Klein (Essex)

Dustin Griffin. Patriotism and Poetry in Eighteenth-Century Britain. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 316pp, 7 Fig. Hb. £ 40.00, US\$ 60.00. ISBN 0-521-81118-X.

Dustin Griffin's *Patriotism and Poetry in Eighteenth-Century Britain* is a pleasure to read for its seamless linking of the literature and history of the period. The subject – patriotism and poetry – may appear a little unusual at first, since patriotism itself is frequently suspect, and never more so than in the present period after the 9/11 attack on the United States. Samuel Johnson's adage that patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel will certainly spring to mind for most readers, and there will probably be a tendency to write off patriotic poetry of the period as mere "Whig panegyric." Yet as Griffin demonstrates, the subject of patriotism proved surprisingly important to eighteenth-century poets. Moreover, it turns out that Griffin has a much larger agenda in mind, one that involves our basic understanding of the period itself. He argues that we continue to see the period as divided into two parts: with the early decades still sometimes called the Augustan age, dominated by the satirists, and the years from the 1730s onwards, the "age of sensibility," developing a more personal poetry. Through his study of patriotic poetry, Griffin believes he can show that the writing of public poetry continued throughout the period, and that, therefore, we have to revise our understanding of the eighteenth century.

Some of the more intriguing discussion is in the early chapters where Griffin

explores what is meant by patriotism in the period and where he differentiates patriotism from later ideas of nationalism. He notes that earlier critics have tended to view patriotic poetry as being self-evidently transparent, poetry that praised Britannia and "Great" Britain, ignoring the ways in which poets of the period interrogated the meaning of patriotism. As Griffin reminds us, in the time of Walpole the very idea of patriotism became hotly contested when the opposition took up the cause of patriotism in opposition to the government. As a result, many later poets questioned what they meant by patriotism and indeed, what role, if any, they could play in the nation's affairs. Was it loyalty to the political status quo or to an idealized version of the country? – what Benedict Anderson in our time would term an "imagined community"?

Griffin is often at his best in tracking the different historical forces that led poets to want to write patriotic verse. Here he draws on the recent work of Linda Colley and others for the ways in which the country, after the Act of Union with Scotland in 1707, set about developing a new sense of identity, a *British* identity through loyalty to the crown. While Griffin agrees with Colley that there was a burgeoning sense of self confidence, he notes that in many quarters the country felt much anxiety about a number of perceived threats – such as the wars with France, the two Jacobite risings, the war with the United States, the increasing commercial ethos and, at the end of the century, the export of the French Revolution – and this anxiety pushed writers of different stripes to draw on and create different patriotic stances to meet these threats.

At the outset, Griffin locates patriotic poetry mostly in odes that praise Britain's victories at home and abroad. Thus he discusses the praise of such national warrior leaders as Marlborough and Admiral

Vernon. Here the poet is serving in three areas: as a recording muse (so that the events are not forgotten), as the source of fame (granting the laurels), and finally as a kind of legislator who legitimizes the actions. Griffin's major interest, however, is not with the early decades but with the poets of the mid- and late-eighteenth century. He devotes a chapter each to James Thomson, Mark Akenside, William Collins, Thomas Gray, John Dyer, Oliver Goldsmith and Ann Yearsley with another chapter devoted to Christopher Smart and William Cowper together.

Thomson is an interesting test case for Griffin, in that he sets the tone and challenges for many of the poets who followed in his steps. While not neglecting Thomson's overtly patriotic poems, Griffin argues that Thomson, in his descriptive poems, developed an extremely important topos in his connecting of a generic rustic country scene with a particular kind of Britishness, imbuing it with a "progression" of liberty migrating from classical Greece and Rome northwards to take up its home in Britain. At the same time, however, he worried that the increasing naval and commercial power could be a danger to civic virtue, because of its emphasis on power, wealth and individualism.

From Thomson onwards, there is a growing tendency for the poets to question whether there could be a role for the poet as patriot. A number of poets began to feel that they were themselves agents of imperial expansion, standing in the shadow of the slave trade. The Georgic was clearly one genre of poetry that eighteenth-century poets could and did draw upon, but many (like Thomson) were acutely aware of the fact that they were themselves without property, and thus saw themselves at times as cheering vainly from the sidelines. With a poet like Akenside, one senses in his later poetry that he loses confidence in his ability to

play the role of the recording muse and chooses to become an imperious creator who rules his own imagined world of poetry.

In his chapter on Ann Yearsley and other women poets who were beginning to assume the role of patriot poets, Griffin deplores the tendency of recent critics to denigrate their patriotic verses as jingoism and to overlook that, as women, they now felt it possible to tread on formerly male ground. A good point, but it does not make the poetry any stronger. Indeed, this is the weakness of Griffin's argument: while he shows us that patriotic verse was important to the poets of the eighteenth century, and that they wrote a good deal of it, one is sometimes left feeling that this is a sociological finding, not a literary one. Griffin is on stronger ground when he argues that the poems we normally think of as falling into the "sensitivity" mode frequently carry a strong public and patriotic intent.

Polemical though it may be in part, Griffin's book adds much to our knowledge of the period. Cambridge University Press is to be commended for the book's fine typographic design and also for returning the notes to the foot of the page, where they are much more useful than at the end of the book. The seven black and white prints also add substantially to the book, as does the fine index. I found few typographical errors: on page 251, the Cowper quotation contains an obvious error; on page 259 the date of Archibald Bruce's *True Patriotism* is incorrect; and the title of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is incorrectly spelled. Griffin's use of "comprised" with the preposition "of" is also annoying. However, these are small blemishes on an otherwise splendid book.

Ronald B. Hatch (Vancouver)

Hans Werner Breunig. Verstand und Einbildungskraft in der englischen Romantik: S.T. Coleridge als Kulminationspunkt seiner Zeit. Anglistik – Amerikanistik, 11. Münster, etc.: LIT, 2002. 352pp. Pb. €25.90. ISBN 3-8258-6244-5.

In the anglophone world there have been some powerful recent reinterpretations of Romanticism from a cultural perspective (McGann, Butler) yet to be incorporated into a comprehensive survey in German. Feminist reconsiderations have considerably expanded our ideas of what is termed Romanticism (Mellor, Jacobus). This book also aims at a larger perspective by interpreting not only Coleridge's works themselves but reading them in their literary context. Apart from its discussion of well-established influences on Coleridge (Rousseau, Kant, Schelling and close associates like Wordsworth), the study also makes a connection to Jane Austen, who is in turn placed in relation to David Hume. The attempt to take into account the interaction with and continuity of enlightenment ideas, however, remains firmly within the Romantic canon and (with the exception of a brief acknowledgement of Anna Seward) does not acknowledge feminist revisions of literary history.

Breunig starts at the Romantic rediscovery of the living universe as, in part, the *animus mundi* of Platonism, a well-known idea that the poet's vision is reconciled with an outer world informed by a greater spirit than his/her own. The author wanted to avoid adding just another study to the already vast body of scholarship on Coleridge. He was instead interested in concentrating on a specificity of Romantic thought, namely the relationship between intellect and imagination; this concern necessitates the incorporation of some consideration of the complex relationship between Romanticism and Neo-Classicism.

Breunig shows that the emphasis on emotions which is traditionally defined as a characteristic of Romanticism is not new but grounded in the enlightenment thought of Hume and continued during the Romantic period by Austen. Thus the achievement of the first phase of Romanticism, according to Breunig, is not a privileging of feelings but a separation of feeling from reason, in which Coleridge is discovered to be the epitome of the philosophical development because of his idea that the faculties of the human mind and especially the imagination are not just receptive but constructive. Breunig finds this constructivism anticipated in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's representation of the gaze (for which he uses the peculiar German term "Hinstarren") as an activity which transcends pure perception and elevates the observer into a spiritual realm.

The study is divided into two parts: In the first the literary context is discussed in a rather cursory manner; the second – which is concerned with Coleridge himself – goes into more detail. What emerges in the first part is not so much a critical investigation of the respective roles of intellect and imagination in Romanticism but an overview of the basic positions during the period of Coleridge's early work. In spite of its scope and well-phrased summaries, Breunig's book is unsurprising in its first half largely because of its dependence on the most well-known texts and their existing interpretations ("Daffodils," "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge," "Preface" to the Lyrical Ballads, *Pride and Prejudice*). Breunig contrasts Austen's manner of coping with reality as involving communication and dialogue with Wordsworth's solitary conversations with nature without referring to their distinctly different genres in any way.

The second part is by far the more interesting and substantial one, investigating comparative influences on Coleridge's thought such as Kant and Schelling. The

central question posed by the study as to the role of intellect and imagination is then answered with an account of the spiralling complexities of Coleridge's concept of the imagination which in its latest stage included reason as access to divine truth. The abandonment of the understanding as the arbiter of how inner and outer reality correspond is of course a standard explanation of what was revolutionary in English Romanticism. Breunig modifies this definition of Romanticism in his assertion that the transcendental states of the Romantics did not allow a return to empirical reality. This definition in the end excludes Austen again, for whom any elevation of the self involved the intellect or understanding. Breunig delivers a definition of Romanticism ex negativo: "Das Resultat dieser Untersuchung war ein wesentliches Kriterium zur Bestimmung der romantischen Haltung, nämlich ein negatives Kriterium, dass der Romantiker nicht zu den Bestimmungen der Verstandeswelt zurückkehren möchte (wie Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats) oder, wenn er dies doch tut (wie Byron und Shelley), dass er diese Bestimmungen lächerlich findet (Byron) oder gegen sie revoltiert (Byron und Shelley)" (12). Coleridge on the other hand then becomes the epitome of Romanticism because he provided the philosophical foundation for an enlarged idea of the imagination not only as capable of going beyond mere observation and reasoning, but as part of divine power.

This book admirably demonstrates the drawbacks of a German Habilitation thesis. Its author is conversant with the large body of secondary literature that has built up around Coleridge and Romanticism and he tries to include everything he knows, so that much space is given to a faithful repetition of the most securely established arguments. Thus, while the study is largely descriptive, it is at the same time not addressed to beginners, be-

cause of its cumbersome and digressive style and its appeal to prior knowledge of much philosophical and literary background. Breunig's book brings to bear no theoretical framework on the material investigated. His reviews of Romantic viewpoints and arguments consistently operate within the given terminology, as defined by Coleridge and his contemporaries only. This may be an advantage in terms of verisimilitude but it also lacks distance and focus. Breunig estimates the respective weight given to reason and imagination but he is not interested in following up the epistemological implications or in the consequences for the concept of representation. In spite of these limitations he certainly provides an adequate and scholarly account of Coleridge's philosophy concerning the relationship of self and consciousness to outer reality.

Renate Brosch (Potsdam)

Andrew Higson. English Heritage, English Cinema: Costume Drama Since 1980. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. xi, 282pp. Hb. £ 55.00, Pb. £ 16.99. ISBN 0-19-925902-X.

In 1995, the publication of Andrew Higson's monograph *Waving The Flag: Constructing a National Cinema* stimulated a fruitful debate about his approach to heritage film. Higson saw the 1980s wave epitomized by the producer/director team Ismail Merchant and James Ivory, predominantly in the context of a reactionary Thatcherite traditionalism and a formulaic, static pictorialism for bookish "people who don't like movies" (Andy Medhurst). Since the mid-nineties, however, approaches to the heritage film have shifted towards a more polysemic, pluralistic agenda, which was, above all, initiated by revisions focussing on the categories of gender and

genre. After a long phase of gestation, Andrew Higson has now responded with a guarded reformulation of his critique, allowing for a wider spectrum of responses than his predominantly political reading seemed to suggest.

Higson argues that since *Howards End* (1992), the film industry has refined and expanded its production and marketing of quality costume dramas. Seeking to tap into the splintered audience target groups of New Hollywood, the industry – and Higson poignantly continues to view cinema as an industrial apparatus – arrives at a series of much more irreverential “crossover” films such as *Elizabeth* (1999). In two extended case studies, Higson focuses on both of these films as cornerstones to mark the transition. According to his deliberately loose, but ultimately class-based definition of “heritage films” as “films set in the past, telling stories of the manners and proprieties, but also the often transgressive romantic entanglements of the upper- and upper middle-class English, in carefully detailed and visually splendid period constructions” (1), he finds about 120 movies to fit into this category, which he alternatively calls “costume drama” or “period film.”

While Higson acknowledges overlaps into the category of “literary adaptation,” he rejects the clear-cut distinction between “historical film” and “costume drama” (12) and casts doubt on the term “post-heritage” used by Claire Monk and others. His final remarks about this “relatively eclectic group” reflect the precarious flexibility of the categories ‘costume’ and ‘heritage’ for films as diverse as *Prospero’s Books* and *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*. For his corpus, he draws “artificial” (4) lines against the classic TV serial and films set after World War II. Higson’s introductory account discusses the problems of ‘labelling’ and acknowledges the relative importance of ‘historicity,’

‘writing,’ ‘Englishness’ and class, or, more precisely, “the privileged, white, Anglo-Saxon community who inhabit lavish properties in a semi-rural southern England” (26).

Higson addresses the revisionists in the second chapter, tentatively dissociating himself from “the leftist cultural critique”, with some nods to Raphael Samuel and even to his harshest critics such as Monk. He rejects, however, Stella Bruzzi’s distinction between ‘looking at’ eroticized, foregrounded clothes (*The Age of Innocence*) and ‘looking through’ merely diegetically accurate costumes (*Howards End*, *Sense and Sensibility*, cf. 41) as “overstated.” Instead, Higson usefully adopts and revises the concept of pastiche to explain – against the static “nostalgia”-theorem à la Jameson – how past and present mingle in polysemic hybridity. At the same time, he insists that his former reading is not “wrong”. Renewing his case for an overlap between heritage culture and conservatism (35), he analyses the “cult of heritage” (53) in industrial terms and costume drama as part of the “big business” (58) of heritage tourism. His study is particularly valuable in a 60-page chapter devoted to investigating the commercial make-up of the heritage film (lottery funding, European involvement) and the marked American commercial interest.

I strongly recommend, therefore, Higson’s rich, comprehensive and lucid overview, which is full of methodologically sound scholarship. His fact-based account of mainstream heritage commodities may indeed “provoke debate” (261), as Higson predicts in his postscript. Higson’s approach admirably synthesizes the current debate, but it might be complemented by adopting Rick Altman’s flexible generic model of “regeneration” and also by revaluing the private sphere (as suggested recently by Beate Rössler’s *The Value of Privacy*). Finally, it seems necessary to

view the heritage films as a special case of constructivist retrovision which might be usefully discussed in terms of a circulated, functional, strategic memory (cf. Aleida and Jan Assmann). This perspective, which is curiously absent from the English debate, would lend further weight to Higson's welcome rejection of the split between historical films and costume dramas.

Eckart Voigts-Virchow (Gießen)

Christine Gerhardt. *Rituale des Scheiterns: Die Reconstruction-Periode im amerikanischen Roman.* American Studies – A Monograph Series, 96. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 2002. 235pp. Hb. €32. ISBN 3-8253-1301-8.

Daniel Aaron was quite wrong when he called the American Civil War *The Unwritten War* in his 1973 study: More than 1.000 novels out of a total of over 50.000 books, mostly histories and biographies, have so far been written about this uncivil war, with no end in sight. If any conflict in American history deserves Aaron's epithet, it is the post-histoire to the Civil War, that unhappy period called "the Reconstruction Period." Even the current, much-acclaimed one-volume history by James B. McPherson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom*, starts significantly with the early prehistory of the Civil War, unravelling in full detail the whys and wherefores of the bloodiest war in American history – and then it abandons the war in the summer of 1865, as if the surrender and return home of the last beaten Confederate troops did in fact end it all.

It did not. The last military actions of the Civil War were fought in 1876, when post-confederate paramilitary forces, including the so-called "Red Shirts" supported and brought about the violent overthrow of the last reconstruction government in the South. 1876 reconstituted

the Old South, by and large, minus the institution of chattel slavery. The results of this return to power of the old elites stayed with the Southern States well into the twentieth century, necessitated the Civil Rights struggle, and still imbue some parts of the Old South with that ill-ease that comes with a conflict not quite past, not quite solved. Not a very attractive part of American history, even more so since to this day all parties present and participating can lay claim to having been grievously wronged and mistreated.

Christine Gerhardt's award-winning doctoral dissertation (Dortmund, 2001) is one of the first ventures to evaluate the major trends as well as some of the main individual works in the literary history of the (re-)United States dealing with this Reconstruction Period. Among her hypotheses, two are of particular importance: 1) the Reconstruction Period is not a historical but a thematic unit; after all, the same period is called 'The Gilded Age' from a different perspective; 2) the Reconstruction novel is not a mere continuation of the Civil War novel, but constitutes a subgenre of the American historical novel. As such, the Reconstruction novel must concentrate on developments, situations and conditions within the Reconstruction period, which Gerhardt defines along the lines determined by Eric Foner's *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988). The beginning before the end of the war is unusual, but comprehensible in that political reconstruction started in those secession areas already retaken by the Union armies as early as 1863/4. The exclusion of the post-1880 period as 'New South' may appear more problematic, considering that few texts dealing with the late nineteenth century are set in one period only.

The list of novels covers 34 texts from John Esten Cooke, already written in 1870, via Ellen Glasgow, Joel Chandler

Harris and Thomas Nelson Page to the racist ramblings of Thomas Dixon (*The Leopard's Spots*, 1902; *The Clansman*, 1905, and *The Traitor*, 1907), and from the inevitable blockbuster *Gone With the Wind* via Frank Slaughter to Frank Yerby and finally to Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* (1966), the most recent novel dealt with in detail. The analysis is arranged into four chapters in chronological order, and the chapter incisions signal significant shifts in the thematic coverage of the period and in the realignment of Reconstruction Novels with the then current state of affairs in the post-reconstruction period (1870-1892), the Progressivist Era (1898-1917), the crisis and the New Deal years (1933-1943), and World War II to the Civil Rights Era (1944-1966).

There is a curious ambivalence. On the one hand, it becomes apparent that no single major author has ever thematized the Reconstruction Period (Gerhard discounts Morrison's *Beloved* for dealing almost exclusively with the period of slavery), yet that most of the novels on the list are certainly 'popular' fiction if not formula novels, a term coined by John Cawelti and a feature shared with the literature of the Civil War. On the other hand it is already quite obvious from the list that the postulated subgenre is torn into irreconcilably different directions by the political ideologies carried into the texts by the various authors – which again, by their focus on their own ideological correctness, usually lead to a neglect of form, and quality in general. To construct, as she tries to do in the third part of her thesis, an encompassing 'supertext' (Cawelti again) for the subgenre 'Reconstruction Novel' means attempting almost as much as a reconciliation of Unionists and Secessionists that is thematized so often in these novels.

The Reconstruction novel quite often provided a mouthpiece for either reconciliationists or unreconstructed post-con-

federates, as Nina Silber already illustrated. It is one of the merits of Gerhardt's book to point out that technically and thematically using and touching the same bases, the Reconstruction Novel, other than the history book at least until the Civil Rights period, also offered the possibility of a revisionist record to women and African-American writers. Union army veteran Albion Tourgée and black woman Frances Harper, Howard Fast and Margaret Walker unite an emancipatory vision that historians adopted only after the 1960s.

One shadow of doubt: John Esten Cooke, whose "Confederate lies" (Mary Jo Bratton) did a lot to resurrect ghosts of an 'Old South' that never was, appears here on a par with Albion Tourgée as a reconciliationist – a classification that I find doubtful, to put it mildly. And one grievance: Since the geographization of the War of the Rebellion was one of the results of the Reconstruction Period, and in itself constitutes a covert confederate myth, one should by all means avoid speaking of "Nordstaaten" vs. "Südstaaten." More than 100.000 white and more than 150.000 black 'Southerners' fought for the Union. It should always be 'Union' vs. 'Secession'; 'Federal' vs. 'Confederate'. Other than that, Gerhardt's study is a fine and well-crafted book.

Wolfgang Hochbruck (Freiburg)

Caroline Rosenthal. Narrative Deconstructions of Gender in Works by Audrey Thomas, Daphne Marlatt and Louise Erdrich. Rochester, NY, etc.: Camden House, 2003. 193pp. Hb. £ 40.00, US\$ 60.00. ISBN 1-57113-267-8.

Rosenthal's study combines a narratological approach with a focus on the ways in which gender is constructed and deconstructed in fictional texts by contem-

porary women writers. Within the framework of recent feminist and genre theory, the book aims to analyze the cultural, ideological, and aesthetic implications of specific forms of women's writing which have evolved in the late twentieth century in response to the postmodern crisis of traditional gender roles and forms of narrative. It is the intention of Rosenthal's dissertation to show how these writings "deconstruct the fiction of a factual, a given gender," and instead "bring to the surface a multiplicity of unrepresented possibilities of women's identities" (1). Moreover, according to Rosenthal, a fundamental parallel can be discovered between the ways in which the breaking up of traditional narrative corresponds to the breaking up of fixed gender identities. The book exemplifies its thesis in selected works by three authors who write from different cultural minority perspectives: the Canadian writer Audrey Thomas, the Lesbian writer Daphne Marlatt, and the Native American Louise Erdrich. In their disruption of conventional patterns of narrative, all three novelists, according to Rosenthal, share a de-essentializing view of identity, gender, and genre, and from this act of deconstruction gain new ways of exploring the inescapable contradictions as well as the virtually unlimited possibilities of redefining women's identities within a postmodern and postcolonial culture.

On the whole, Rosenthal's study admirably succeeds in achieving its goals. It puts forward an innovative and interesting thesis – that narratological and gender-specific issues are intrinsically interrelated in the novels she discusses –, and manages to substantiate the validity of this thesis both on a theoretical and on a textual-hermeneutic level. The notion of conceptual and discursive instability, and the aesthetics of relativity and boundary-crossing which Rosenthal identifies in the three women writers, implies a transitional, 'factual' sphere between 'fact' and 'fic-

tion' and an emphasis on a plurality of partial perspectives, from which the authority of the cultural center is subverted in significant epistemological and ideological ways. In the first part of the book, Rosenthal discusses what she calls "Framing Theories," from which she derives the methodological tools and analytical categories of her investigation. Though not claiming to be innovative in itself, her presentation of theoretical positions on "Identity," "Gender," and "Gender and Narrative" is useful for establishing a differentiated theoretical context for her main thesis and for her subsequent analysis of the primary works. Rosenthal successfully carves out a space for her own argument by consistently combining the available theoretical models (e.g. Foucault, Butler, DeLauretis, Hutcheon) with her own double focus on gender *and* narrative, ideology *and* aesthetics, and by always keeping her attention on the authors and works under investigation.

Conversely, in the second and main part of the book, in which she offers detailed and insightful analyses of selected novels, Rosenthal takes recourse to those aspects of theory which seem to be most appropriate for the specificities of the texts under discussion (intertextuality in Thomas, *écriture féminine* in Marlatt, 'trickster discourse' in Erdrich). Through this dialogue between theory and text, Rosenthal's book manages to bring into relief a specific aesthetic and ideological dimension of recent women's writing which is not always described in such a clear and differentiated way. Moreover, by bringing together these three authors, who are often subsumed under separate categories (national, sexual, ethnic), Rosenthal moves beyond the assumptions of identity politics of whatever kind and gains the discursive space for developing her own approach and perspective. And while she convincingly describes what the three writers have in common, she also

points out the differences between them: Whereas Thomas emphasizes the ruptures and inner contradictions of traditional female identity concepts without offering any solutions, Marlett goes beyond the mere linguistic and conceptual level by subverting the symbolic order itself on which patriarchal notions of fixed gender identities are based, and by exploring lesbian alternatives to established heterosexual subject positions; Erdrich, undoubtedly the most important novelist of the three, goes still one step further by resisting definite representations of women's identities altogether, and creating female trickster figures who, like the comic 'trickster discourse' of her narrative itself, disrupt all conventional patterns of gender, identity, and genre.

Rosenthal's book is clearly written as a response to the anti-realist and, in part, anti-aesthetic assumptions of radical post-modernism. On the one hand, her study reflects to some degree the omnivorous anti-essentialist impulse towards the dissolution of all available categories of thought, identity, reality and art into self-referential textuality, which was characteristic of much of literary criticism of the 1980s and well into the 1990s. At the same time, it is remarkable to what extent the book nevertheless manages to transcend the limitations of those epistemes by confronting them with the very questions of identity, of aesthetics, and of referentiality they tend to exclude, thus reintroducing these questions in a non-dogmatic way into the critical discourse about narratology and gender.

Hubert Zapf (Augsburg)

Lawrence Buell. Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001. 365pp. Pb. US\$ 18.95. ISBN 0-674-00449-3.

Lawrence Buell today stands out as the most erudite and imaginative voice in the study of literary environmentalism. In his first book on the subject, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (published in 1995), he set out to define an as yet largely unplowed field of literary studies, namely, the representation of nature, place, and the environment in literary texts. Though landscape and nature have loomed large in a number of core studies on nineteenth-century American literature and culture, environmental issues have often been taken by these critics as a mere setting or backdrop against which the more important drama of nation building unfolds. Even in Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* (1964), perhaps the best book ever written about the dichotomy of nature and culture in early American literature, one can find, according to Buell, an anthropomorphic attempt to stress the figurative role of the natural (rather than its ecological meaning) in American literary texts. That the bulk of critical studies on the formative years of American literature is marked by a glaring indifference as to the environmental imaginings of writers such as Thoreau, Melville, Whitman, or Twain, to name just the more obvious cases, is actually quite astounding. Not only has the rhetorical appropriation of nature been exposed as crucial for the exploration and eventual settling of the American continent itself (see, for example, Annette Kolodny's ground-breaking study *The Lay of the Land*), but what is now called 'classic' American literature is particularly known for having adopted nature as its preeminent theme: in many "great American novels" of the nineteenth century, nature figures as a cultural resource that drives both the narrative plot and the progressive establishment of America as one nation.

As Buell argues in *The Environmental Imagination*, "American literary history

thus presents the spectacle of having identified representation of the natural environment as a major theme while marginalizing the literature devoted most specifically to it and reading the canonical books in ways that minimize their interest in representing the environment as such" (8). To 'unearth' the hidden ecological meaning of much of nineteenth-century American fiction, Buell not only took to task the canonicity of particular texts (by either shifting the emphasis within the oeuvre of a specific writer or by opening up the canon to include non-fictional texts thereby creating new and exciting trajectories of environmental literary history) but also questions traditional assumptions about the nature of representation, reference, metaphor, characterization, personae, etc. Its wide range of genres, authors, and topics notwithstanding, this magisterial study is tightly knit around two crucial concerns: first, the ideology of American pastoralism, and, second, the life and work of America's over-towering ecological writer, Henry David Thoreau. Returning to the off-beat philosophy and environmental inquiry of *Walden* in almost every chapter, Buell manages to keep his meandering observations focused on and cross-fertilizing with his discussion of nineteenth-century American fiction.

Not quite so in his recent follow-up *Writing for an Endangered World* (WEW). While studying basically the same issues as in his first book, Buell does not appear as focused on one coherent argument as he is in *The Environmental Imagination*. Concerned primarily with ecological writing of the twentieth century, WEW extends, on the one hand, earlier discussions of literary environmentalism to include such issues as toxic discourse, the symbolic representation of beasts or the politics of environmental justice, yet, on the other, it clearly lacks a central argument that ties together the large bulk of different texts and contexts under scrutiny. If

Buell conceived *The Environmental Imagination* as a "broad study of environmental perception, the place of nature in the history of western thought, and the consequences for literary scholarship and indeed for humanistic thought in general of attempting to imagine a more 'ecocentric' way of being" (1), his recent and more far-reaching claim holds that environmental crisis is not merely the result of dwindling economic resources but also of a crisis of the mind, a lack of a coherent vision of common environmental dependency. In fact, he sees WEW as an attempt to provide such an environmental vision or at least to read American twentieth-century literary history as repeatedly dealing with, if often only between the lines, the issue of human-environmental relations.

Since Buell occasionally has to do a lot of arm-twisting to convince his readers of the environmental orientation of a particular text, he introduces the concept of an "environmental unconscious" as, paradoxically, both a negative manifestation and a potential breakthrough in environmental thinking. Even though this may lead to new and quite astounding results (as in the case of Richard Wright's *Native Son*, that Buell reads against the theories of the Chicago School in urban planning and ecological organization), it reveals itself, by and large, as a heuristically 'soft' and, rather, problematic term: because it allows to group together texts that are either deficient of any environmental concerns if not even inimical to them (which thus makes them negative manifestations of the environmental unconscious) or represent nature in such a way that they eventually activate ecological considerations (i.e. potential environmental breakthroughs), the term loses its descriptive and imaginative power. As it stands, it provides a very thin cover for an assemblage of diverging and – often digressing – discussions of fictional and non-fictional texts that have no more in common than

an interest in the environment. Since environment may refer to the 'natural' (as in the chapters on Faulkner and conservationist writer Aldo Leopold), to highly organized forms of 'culture' (such as urban environments and their determinist effects on the modernist fictions of Dreiser, Sinclair, Wright, etc.), or even to economic conditions at large (toxic discourse and the exploitation of oceans and whales), Buell's project stands in need of an encompassing, analytical tool that allows us to read the different chapters as, for example, the story of increasing environmental awareness in modern and post-modern America.

While this may not have been what the author had in mind, a more detailed look at how aesthetic and political discourses on the environment link up and cross-fertilize each other could have helped readers to navigate the huge amount of information provided by Buell's meticulous research. The brilliantly written final chapter "Watershed Aesthetics" is a case in point. Here close readings of writers as diverse in time and theme as Wordsworth, Joseph Conrad, William Carlos Williams, John Wesley Powell, Mary Austin, Ted Hughes, Derek Walcott, and Gary Snyder are shown to participate in an ongoing discourse on "watershed" or, more generally, the idea of rivers as sites of contact and convergence between differentiated socio-ethnic groups, economic conditions, and bioregional topographies. Although it may be easier, as Buell cautions, "to appeal to watershed consciousness than it is to define what it means with any specificity" (249), the juxtaposition of the paradigm in contemporary bioregional politics and its development in early modern, modern, and postmodern literary history marks a riveting instance where ecological decision-making and environmental imagination truly meet. Watershed aesthetics spell out a modified version of Deleuze's and Guattari's idea of the "rhi-

zome," while at the same time being rooted in the actual experience of people living along rivers throughout the world. Insofar as it hinges on the impossibility of "cordoning off country from city [because] everywhere is either upstream or downstream (or both) from somewhere else" (264), watershed consciousness would have served better than the somewhat blurry term 'environmental unconscious' to bind together these eight important, trans-disciplinary readings against the grain of established literary history by America's foremost ecological critic.

Klaus Benesch (Bayreuth)

Laurent Milesi, ed. **James Joyce and the Difference of Language**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. x, 232pp. Hb. £ 40.00, US\$ 60.00. ISBN 0-521-62337-5.

After Saussure, Barthes, Derrida, Lacan and Kristeva (to name but these), the turn to the writer's language was logical and inevitable in Joyce criticism. The paradigm shift from *signification* and *œuvre* to *signifiante* and *écriture* (see 9) replaced the reading of Joyce's works as conventional representations of character psychology or mythical encodements of the *condition humaine* with careful poststructuralist examinations of the cultural and political contexts and intertexts and/or the stylistic and linguistic features of the narrative. The book edited by Laurent Milesi is a major new contribution to this modernized output of the Joyce industry.

In his "Introduction," charting the methodological and theoretical changes over the last twenty-odd years, Milesi drafts a succinct panorama of the linguistic configuration of Joyce criticism, including its impact on the study of gender, history and nation in Joyce's works. In this way, his survey convincingly engages

in a covert controversy with recent traditionalist reactions to poststructuralist approaches, which appear as suffering from blatant misrepresentation in their contention that deconstruction operates with a neglect of meaning, reference and ethics.

Milesi negotiates, instead, the *politics* of Joyce's linguistic poetics. He emphasizes that Joyce's experiments in literary language must be seen "as a discrete continuum" (1), oscillating between ongoing innovation and the re-appropriation of earlier narrative practices. Milesi re-affirms recent critical readings which have exhibited the correspondences between what he calls "a highly particularized literary idelect" (4) and the political implications of the literary texts. In other words, Joyce's radical, polyvalent, versatile linguistic turns must be seen as the fundamental technical means of his "constant probings into the mechanics of authority and ideology" (9).

Stressing the stylistic strategies of "defamiliarization and babelization" (4), beginning with *Dubliners*, Milesi convincingly argues that the "joint poeticization and foreignization of normative English" (5) unmasks both the coercive power of English and the nationalist orthodoxies of Gaelic. He demonstrates most rigorously that, in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce eschews privileged conceptions of universal validity and organicity through "his all-round linguistic relativism and undermining of theories by subversive literary counterpractices" (6). What Milesi astutely brings to light throughout is the correlation between the techniques of Joyce's literary linguistics and the programmatic 'philosophical' territory they demarcate.

Milesi's decision to give the lead position among the contributors to Fritz Senn is judicious. Senn, the Zurich Cardinal of Joyceans, adds another pearl to his string of inimitable essays, which start

from seemingly eclectic probings into textual details (in the present case mostly from *Ulysses* 16, 8 and 13) and invariably arrive at a deep knowledge of the secrets of the Joycean text. His essay testifies to the fact that Senn is much closer to deconstruction than he at times pretends to be, dismissing, as he does, in public and private, the incomprehensibility of "jargon." Tackling the differences of and in language, he focuses on the particular grammatical means of "syntactic glides" and scrutinizes what he calls 'sents' (rudimentary or deficient sent-ence-s, plus Lat. *sentire*), detecting and defining "semantic displacements," "inchoate associations," "misconstructions," "grammatical aberrations," "lexical excesses" and "troubled syntax."

Next, the editor juxtaposes Senn's lucid pragmatic venture with a paper on the relationship between Joyce's linguistic operations and contemporary linguistic theories. Bernoit Tardié's main concern is with the landslide from classical to modern conceptions of language. Methodologically, the literary corpus chosen from Joyce appears to be derived from the corpus of linguistic theories chosen by Tardié. Although Tardié imparts valuable (though sometimes overdetermined) insights into the literary texts, by comparison Senn's approach is much more convincing and to the point.

Beryl Schlossman's pattern of (often elliptical and allusive) discussion is concentric. Drawing on a wide historical range of literary, religious and philosophical writings, she focuses on the concept and the signifier *Madonna*, closely attending to its implications of virginity and womanhood, reverence and debasement, erotics and poetics. Diane Elam's spirited and exciting reading of two passages in "Lestrygonians" is closer to the Sennian style, though her penetrating analysis is extensively linked up to theoretical questions, in particular to a topical problema-

tizing of the philosophical and artistic (mis-)representation of woman in the arts. Elam raises innovative feminist issues, proposing that the investigation of linguistic manoeuvres exposing “the status of the particular” aims at moving us “as readers closer to ethical responses than to epistemological discoveries” (91). In inverse proportion, Marie-Dominique Garnier considers Joyce the prime example of Deleuzian theory put into a “micro-reading” (99) of linguistic units – a very intelligent and self-authorizing, but in many respects forced and overstrained case of the critical gaze through theoretical glasses.

Thomas Docherty focuses attention on the problem of infancy as writing’s anathema. His reading of the beginning of *A Portrait* widens into a seminal historical and theoretical discussion of Romantic, Realist and Modernist representation, the incommensurabilities of linguistic/stylistic autoreflexivity with experiential mimesis, and the paradoxes of both Joyce’s negation of and his reliance on empiricism. No reader who is interested in theoretical debates should miss this essay – nor the articles that follow. Derek Attridge persuasively investigates the multiple suggestiveness of single words (found in *PA*), fluctuating from analysis to linguistics and back in order to uncover hidden meanings. Designing a revisionist conception of nationalism, Ellen Carol Jones (with reference to *U* 14) brilliantly substantiates her general claim that *Ulysses* is a linguistically performative project that transgresses the bordering by constitutive representational outsides (“*dé-bordement*”), creating “the untranslatable supplementary space of the other, beyond representation” (145).

Finally, three contributions relate to *Finnegans Wake*. In an exemplary (both model and representatively selective) and complex exegesis of selected passages, Patrick McGee anatomizes the parono-

masiac acts of encoding and decoding, based on what he calls the “trace-structure of the letter” (163), charting the wider issues of nationalism, the social condition and the desires of women, patriarchal authority, property and, finally, an ethics of difference contained in these acts. Lucia Boldrini gives a fascinating account of the intertextual force of Dante’s *De vulgari eloquentia* behind the *Wake*’s linguistic technique (corroborated by a magisterial reading of three episodes) and argues in summary that “self-textualization” must be conceived as an “intentional” and “historically grounded practice in which artistic choices reveal political/ideological implications” (193). Sam Slote sheds light on one particular sample of “Wakean peregrinism” (195), the Babel passage at the close of *FW* II.1, in particular on the phrase “And he war” (*FW* 258.12). Drawing on Derrida’s essay “Deux mots pour Joyce” and Heidegger’s “The Anaximander Fragment” as foils to his compellingly argued analysis, he unearths a complex order of multiple layers of meaning. Slote’s extraordinary exploration of the eccentricity and meaningful saturation of Wakean language is a potent conclusion to the present book.

At the end, the reader realizes that Milesi’s introduction, however hard to read, profoundly summarizes and theorizes what is to follow. In other words, the book stands out as a whole, which paradigmatically covers the territory of (distinct) deconstructionist enquiries into the difference of language in Joyce’s fiction. Under the surface, one might even notice a subtle undercurrent of methodological self-criticism in the book – a very Joycean quality, indeed.

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C.L. Innes. A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain, 1700-2000. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xxi, 308pp. Hb. £ 45.00. ISBN 0-521-64327-9.

Lyn Innes's book is advertised in its blurb as "the first extended study of black and Asian writing in Britain over the last 250 years." Strictly speaking, this is just as misleading as the time span indicated in the title since, as Innes writes in her introduction, "the main body of this study concludes with 1948" (2), that is, the beginning of post-war immigration on a large scale from the West Indies and, somewhat later, Southern Asia. The considerable output of Black and Asian *British* literature which this wave of immigration was eventually to spark is surveyed only cursorily in this history's "epilogue." It is precisely through its focus on earlier texts, however, that Innes's study fills a gap in current research. While most of this research focuses on the most recent and so impressively successful phase of Black and Asian writing in Britain, Innes provides a much needed historical perspective for this writing, commencing with texts of the mid-eighteenth century.

Hardly any of these early texts were produced by writers born in Britain. Innes's "criteria for inclusion" are rather that a writer "has spent a good proportion of his or her writing life in Britain", i.e. at least five years and often considerably longer, and "appears to be at least in part addressing his or her work to a British audience" (4). Also, Innes strives not to be exhaustive but highlights the exemplary and representative, which contributes significantly to the book's readability and leaves the author room to quote generously from the texts she discusses, many of which are now unknown.

Black writing in the eighteenth century is inextricable from the circumstances of slavery and the anti-slave-trade

movement, like the letters of Ignatius Sancho and the narrative of Olaudah Equiano, published 1782 and 1789 respectively. Both are among the better-known examples discussed by Innes, who devotes detailed attention not only to the texts themselves but also to their (critical) reception. In their own day, the writings of Sancho and Equiano, like those of other black authors, enjoyed wide popularity with a British readership. When they were rediscovered by critics in the later twentieth century, they were often read in the light of favoured ideologies. Thus while Equiano could be "slotted into the category of forceful black spokesmen" of the 1960s and 70s, Sancho appeared to many critics "as an 'Uncle Tom'" (31). Only recently have critics developed a position to which Innes also subscribes: "castigat[ing] earlier ahistorical critiques and seek[ing] to place Sancho in a more complex literary, cultural, and historical perspective" (33). Sancho can now be seen, for instance, as a writer who positioned himself in a contemporary English tradition of literary letter-writing – like his acquaintance, Laurence Sterne – in which the adoption of shifting viewpoints and stances was part of a general genre concept: "the age did not demand or expect an essential self to be revealed [...]. Sancho's readers, many of them like him great addicts of the theatre, would have appreciated his skill at role-playing" (34). To the late-twentieth century's tastes and preconceptions of black culture, Equiano's construction of a self that is a more straightforward hybrid of African and English identities is easier to accept than Sancho's oscillating personae.

The chapter around these two central eighteenth-century black figures is complemented by a portrait of Sake Dean Mahomed, the author of *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* (1794) and "the first Indian author to take up residence in Britain" (46). For most of the period covered in this book, Asian writers were outnum-

bered by their black contemporaries in Britain, and their work has also suffered critical neglect. It is a particular merit of Innes's endeavour that she introduces us to a significant number of writers from the Indian subcontinent and thus permits comparison with renderings of the black experience in Britain.

The chapter reviewed so far is representative for the book's general approach: Writers and writings are introduced and contextualised in knowledgeable detail, and the presentation is informed throughout by current theoretical positions. The subsequent chapters cover a wide range of other black and Asian voices, including, among others, the history which Mary Prince, a slave who ran away from the owner who brought her to London, dictated to a later pioneer of Canadian literature, Susannah Moodie, née Strickland; the account of the black 'Florence Nightingale', Mary Seacole; the Indian poet and reformer of Hindu marriage customs, Behramji Malabari, whose *The Indian Eye on English Life* (1893) provides an interesting comparison to 'native' discussions of *fin de siècle* London life; the stories and novels of the Sorabji sisters, Cornelia and Alice, which complemented end-of-the-century Anglo-Indian perspectives; the work of journalists during the first half of the twentieth century (like that of Duse Mohamed Ali); Una Marson's activities for the BBC; or the work of C.L.R. James during the 1930s and 40s, to name just a few examples.

All in all, Innes provides a most valuable survey not only of a rich black and Asian literary scene from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century, but also the way in which it relates to other scenarios. In the writing of escaped and liberated slaves published in Britain, for example, Innes locates an attitude significantly different from comparative publications in America: Faced with a sympathetic audience, black writers in

Britain found it possible to construct "an imaginary community of free and equal citizens" (125). Innes's look at programmes of the BBC before the Second World War permits her to point out how closely black and Asian cultural activity in Britain was woven into the general cultural landscape: "A photograph taken in 1942 as record of BBC monthly radio programme *Voice* shows Una Marson seated in the centre, flanked on either side by T.S. Eliot and the Indian novelist Mulk Raj Anand. Others in the picture include M.J. Tambimuttu, editor of *Poetry London*, George Orwell, the Indian writer Nayayana Menon, and William Empson" (217).

With the panorama of writing it unfolds and its excellent scholarship, this study is essential reading. It belongs in every university library, and its users should generously overlook the fact that the name of the French writer George Sand is consistently misspelt (134 and index).

Barbara Korte (Freiburg)

Thomas Duddy. A History of Irish Thought. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. xviii, 362pp. Hb. US\$ 19.95. ISBN 0-415-20692-8.

One hundred years ago Lady Gregory termed Ireland a land of *Poets and Dreamers* (Dublin: Hodges and Figgis, 1903). She and other Irish Revivalists proclaimed a long continuity of Irish poets, mystics, and bards, trying to write the first history of the Irish soul. They were unconscious of merely repeating a long established Victorian stereotype; what the Victorians had called 'irrational,' the Revivalist now labelled 'poetic'. Forty years later, Seán O'Faoláin had enough of such "fairy-tales" ("The Gaelic Cult," *The Bell* 9.3. [1944]: 185-196), and later Revision-

ists demanded to review the myths of the Revivalists in the “cold light of history” (T.W. Moody, “Irish History and Irish Mythology,” *Hermathena: A Dublin University Review* CXXIV [1978]: 7-24).

This is exactly what Thomas Duddy is doing. Instead of searching in the mist for poets, dreamers, bards, and saints, he brings rationalistic and analytic philosophers, scientists, and thinkers to light. Central to his history of Irish thought are John Scottus Eriugena, William Molyneux, John Toland, George Berkeley, Francis Hutcheson, Edmund Burke, and a number of less well known figures of the 19th and 20th century. Duddy’s portrayals of these diverse thinkers from various disciplines over thirteen centuries are astute, easily accessible and mostly free of jargon; the correctness of his representations can only be judged by an army of specialists. His book comprises nine chapters, which work their way chronologically through history from the seventh-century “Irish Augustine” to “Irish Thought in the Twentieth Century”. The first six chapters concentrate on one to three thinkers, present their central thoughts and works, and situate them in their historical and discursive context. The last three chapters on the 19th and 20th century present a greater variety of thinkers, but keep to the presentation of situated knowledge.

Duddy is careful not to construct another stereotype of Irishness, eager to follow Seamus Deane’s famous credo to reread and rewrite the Irish past, “unblemished by Irishness, but securely Irish” (*Heroic Styles: The Tradition of an Idea* [Derry: Field Day, 1984]). He does not repeat the imperialist’s notion of history by trying to find a continuity of thought that might equal that of the hegemonic power, which calls such a tradition into question – as the Revivalists apparently did. Rather, Duddy affirms the discontinuity of colonial history: “Instead of a

history of shared vocabularies and shared frameworks continually exploited by like-minded individuals of talent and genius, there will be a history of conflicting vocabularies and shattered frameworks sporadically and irregularly exploited by gifted individuals” (xii). As a consequence, the connection between the thinkers in this history is less close than it might be in other nations’ histories. Neither are they all born Irish, nor all born in Ireland, nor all Irish patriots, nor do they all predominately live in Ireland, nor do they all see themselves as Irish. It has to be counted as one of the many merits of this book that Duddy has the courage to bring together a group of people which is as illustrious as it is heterogeneous, their only commonality being the contingencies of history.

But the choice is not as indeliberate as is first suggested. While the ‘Irish’ in the title is interpreted as loose as possible, “thought” has a very specific meaning in Duddy’s work. He opposes “thought” with the “imaginative,” leaving room for only one mode of knowledge, of *techné*, only one way of confronting and constructing reality. While for him the Revivalists accepted “Mathew Arnold’s notion that the Celts are distinguished by a sensuous nature and a determination to reject ‘the despotism of fact’” (xiv), Duddy himself is searching for a tradition of “reason and intellect” (xv). Therefore, his history has no place for poets and dreamers: Joyce and Beckett are only mentioned once, Heaney and Sterne not at all. When Duddy allows poets into the realm of Irish thought – even though none of them is a “philosopher or ‘thinker’ in the stricter sense of those terms” (146-47) – as in the case of Swift, Wilde, and Yeats, he turns them into the “nagging conscience of all ‘enlightened’ moderns” (167).

The Irish philosopher Richard Kearney, who delivered the first attempt of a history of Irish thought, understands the

Irish mind as a “counter-movement to the mainstream of hegemonic rationalism,” which remained untouched by the “linear, centralising [...] Platonic-Aristotelian logic” (“Introduction: An Irish Intellectual Tradition? Philosophical and Cultural Contexts,” Richard Kearney, ed. *The Irish Mind: Exploring Intellectual Traditions* [Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985] 7-38). However, Duddy sees the Irish thinkers in direct line with the founding fathers of Western rational thought. His religious thinkers are anti-mystics, his scientists are experimentalists, his philosophers Neo-Platonists and Aristotelians; most of them are freethinkers, universalists, and Protestants. Instead of proclaiming a hidden Ireland that defied the mainstream of British, protestant, rationalistic thinking, Duddy locates Irish thought in the middle of European modernity, taking part in the Occidental ascendancy of reason.

One of the greatest achievements of Duddy’s book is the overcoming of the traditional two-nations theory which has prevailed for so long in Ireland. He makes no obvious distinctions between a Celtic-Catholic and an Anglo-Saxon-Protestant

tradition, which apparently developed separately over the centuries. Instead, he sees all thinking on the Hibernian Island as part of a larger context that leaves no room for isolated traditions. All his thinkers are either actively furthering this development, or, as in the case of Swift and Yeats, actively opposing it.

Duddy’s vision of Irish thinking is surely not “inhibitory, inbred, and isolationist,” as O’Faoláin had denounced the Revivalists’ sixty years ago. For Duddy, “intellect travels, goes abroad, spreads its wings” (xv). His book brings together a range of original thinkers who have left their mark in Ireland and beyond its narrow borders, and provides easy access to their complex lives, ideas, theories, and their entanglement with the world of thought. But the book evades the central questions such a work ought at least try to answer: How much Irish is there beneath Irishness? How Irish can an emancipated, rational mind be?

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**“A Woman Could (Not) Do It” – Role-Play
as a Strategy of ‘Feminine’ Self-Empowerment in
L.M. Alcott’s “Behind a Mask,” “La Jeune,”
and “A Marble Woman”**

Abstract: Alcott’s sensational stories about actresses and female artists provide the perfect field for experiments with alternative gender roles as women of these professions do not seem to fulfill ordinary female roles in the first place. While literary scholars generally agree on the emancipating use of disguises in Alcott’s sensational fiction, the various purposes gender roles are exploited for have not yet been investigated in any detail. This essay shows that, through their subversive play with established gender categories, some of Alcott’s female characters determine their own social identities as women. Their ‘unfeminine’ deceptions of others explicitly serve their ‘feminine’ virtues and, thus, eventually help to empower these figures as ‘true women.’ In these morally hybrid and sensational female characters, Alcott expands the established repertoire of oppositional female types such as the ‘true woman’ and the *femme fatale* by introducing the alternative, more complex and individualistic gender category of a ‘feminine *femme fatale*.’

In nineteenth-century American literature, women were mostly depicted according to the then prevalent female gender stereotypes. Yet, as David S. Reynolds has shown in his groundbreaking study *Beneath the American Renaissance*, mid-century American literature cannot be reduced to sentimental novels featuring the ‘true woman’ as moral exemplar (cf. 339). On the contrary, sensational fiction offered a great variety of female character types including the adventure woman, the female victim, or the *femme fatale*; the latter was often depicted in variations of the feminist criminal or the fallen woman (cf. 339-65). This ‘extended’ repertoire of female gender categories was employed, for instance, by Louisa May Alcott in her sensational stories as a means of exploring alternative variations of female behavior.

For Alcott, her sensational fiction,¹ which she published either anonymously or under the pseudonym of A.M. Barnard, had various functions. Her sensational stories and novelettes have generally been interpreted as, on the one hand, a relatively easy source of income for Louisa, when she was the family’s major

¹ Alcott’s sensational and thriller stories were made widely available in Madeleine Stern’s 1976 and 1998b and Elaine Showalter’s 1988 collections.

bread-winner, and, on the other hand, as a personal means of “psychological catharsis” (Stern, 1976, xiv): Alcott considered herself “a wretched victim to the respectable traditions of Concord,” trapped in “a chain armor of propriety” – with which she readily complied in *Little Women*. In her sensational stories, however, she followed her “natural ambition [...] for the lurid style” (Alcott, cit. in Stern, 1998b, 192).² The female protagonists in these texts are predominately “passionate and angry” (Stern, 1976, xvi) and are, therefore, generally considered “lush, exotic [and revengeful] femmes fatales who manipulated the men they beguiled” (Stern, 1998b, 94; cf. MacDonald, 1983, 83; Showalter, 1988, xxx). However, this categorization proves too simplistic and inappropriate, for it reduces some of Alcott’s psychologically and morally complex heroines to one-dimensional demons, while, in fact, they often remain morally ambivalent; take Jean Muir in “Behind a Mask; Or, A Woman’s Power,” for instance. Accordingly, Alcott writes in her diary in 1862, “my sinners always have a good spot somewhere” (cit. in Stern, 1998b, 98). When these protagonists deceive other characters unscrupulously by masking their own identity, they reveal how gender roles shape one’s social persona without being ‘substantial,’ ‘natural,’ or ‘authentic.’ While literary scholars generally agree on the emancipating effect of disguises and role-plays in Alcott’s sensational stories, the various ways the established gender roles are employed and exploited for different purposes have not been investigated in any great detail yet. The following analysis will show that, through their subversive play with established gender categories, characters such as Jean Muir gain the emancipating power to determine their own social identity as women. In “La Jeune; Or, Actress and Woman” and “A Marble Woman; Or, The Mysterious Model” the heroines’ deceptions of others explicitly serve their ‘feminine’ virtues and eventually help to sustain their ‘true womanhood’ – their ‘unfeminine’ deceptions are justified by their purpose to serve ‘feminine’ aims while, at the same time, they empower themselves as ‘true women.’ In these morally hybrid and sensational women characters, Alcott expands the established repertoire of oppositional one-dimensional female types such as the ‘true woman’ and the *femme fatale* by introducing the alternative, more complex and individualistic gender category of a ‘feminine *femme fatale*.’

In Alcott’s sensational stories, two different sorts of social performance may be distinguished. On the one hand, the respective heroine performs a deliberate and manipulative role-play in which she acts in her social realm as if she were on stage: She freely picks certain roles from a repertoire of female stereotypes such as the meek, naïve girl clinging to a knightly hero for protection, the accomplished lady, the graceful ‘angel in the house,’ or the romantic *belle*, while the

² Many literary scholars, especially Leona Rostenberg, 1984, Karen Halttunen, 1984, and Madeleine B. Stern, 1998b, focus on Alcott’s own role-play as the popular author of children’s books and sensational fiction. A remark of Alcott’s to LaSalle Corbell Pickett seems to suggest that she ‘masked’ her own subversive impulses by publicly acknowledging only those of her works that fulfilled the expectations of ‘proper’ society: “I wish that I dared inscribe [my fancies] upon my pages and set them before the public” (Alcott, cit. in Pickett, 1984, 42).

other fictional characters function – without knowing – as both her fellow actors and her audience.³ On the other hand, Alcott's alternative female character type of the 'feminine *femme fatale*' can be understood as a category emerging from a tense dialogue between established gender norms and Alcott's literary experiments in sensational fiction. In this process of cultural interaction, neither Alcott nor her fictional protagonists act in a completely autonomous manner. According to Judith Butler's concept of the performativity of gender identity, the range of possibilities for constituting an identity is bound by culturally and conventionally established gender roles. Even alternative performances of 'womanhood' inevitably depend on established categories inasmuch as they either deviate from them only partially or refer to them at least *ex negativo*.⁴ Alcott's alternative category of a 'feminine *femme fatale*,' in fact, proves to be a combination of two nineteenth-century female stereotypes: the 'sanctified,' self-sacrificing 'true woman,' on the one hand, and the cool and ruthlessly calculating *femme fatale*, on the other. Butler's concept of performativity does not imply a 'subject behind the role.' Instead, the subject is, first of all, paradoxically constituted in, and by, the act of performing a certain identity – while Michel Foucault describes this process as 'assujettissement,' Butler calls it 'subjection' (cf. Butler, 1997, 1). Thus, in Alcott's stories, the performative constitution of the alternative category of a 'feminine *femme fatale*' takes place by way of 'subjection.'

In "Behind a Mask; Or, A Woman's Power" (1866; Mask), the protagonist Jean Muir deviates only slightly from the stereotype of the egoistical *femme fatale*. At first sight, "the divorced wife of a disreputable actor" (Mask, 209) seems to be the typical "feminist criminal," that is, "the abandoned woman who avenges wrongs against her sex by waging war against society, especially against men and against proper women" (Reynolds, 1989, 363). Having been exploited by unscrupulous men and despised by respectable women, Jean takes 'unfeminine' revenge by deceiving and manipulating the Coventry family according to her own wishes: She makes the two adult sons fall in love with her – only to drop them eventually for the rich and elderly Sir John, whom she marries for his money; in addition, she humbles proud Mrs. Coventry and her arrogant niece Lucia. On the other hand, however, Jean also displays certain genuine virtues and has an undeniably positive effect on the members of the family when she piques the indolent master of the house, Gerald, into 'manly' action and responsibility, when she teaches the aristocratic family a lesson of their own unjustified snobbery and the accomplishments of people of lower social rank, and when she proves a brilliant governess to the family's daughter Bella. In fact, due to her morally ambivalent character, Jean represents neither the typical *femme fatale* nor

³ The social role-play as Alcott depicts it in her fiction provides a vivid example of the constructivist concept much later proposed by the sociologist Erving Goffman. He discusses social interaction in terms of deliberate social role-playing; cf. Goffman, 1959.

⁴ Butler states clearly that "there can be no pure opposition to power, only a recrafting of its terms from resources invariably impure" (1994, 39).

the ‘true woman,’ but something in between that is indefinable by nineteenth-century female gender standards.

Except for Jeanne F. Bedell (1980, 9) and Christine Doyle (2000, 55-56), however, literary scholarship has so far ignored Jean’s morally ambivalent status and has simply dismissed her as a stock character of the sensational genre.⁵ The crucial moral difference between characters such as the imposter Virginie in Alcott’s “VV; Or, Plots and Counterplots” (1865; VV), for instance, and Jean Muir in “Behind a Mask” is often overlooked; unscrupulous Virginie even puts up with her victims’ death to achieve her mercenary goals and she is frequently depicted as “hallow-hearted” (VV, 84) and “selfish” (VV, 87); furthermore, she is explicitly condemned by both the other characters and the narrator; poetical justice has her commit suicide in the face of “the [punishment] prepared for her” by other characters (VV, 143). Jean Muir, however, instead of being punished for her deception of others and her materialistic motives, eventually achieves her goal of securing a husband and comfortable home for herself. In the end, her immoral behavior seems counterbalanced, if not justified, by her genuine feelings, her fidelity to Sir John and her corrective impact on the Coventries. Unlike the typical *femme fatale* Virginie,⁶ Jean Muir remains a morally ambivalent character to the very end.

Apart from Jean’s morally ambivalent status, her manipulative role-play performatively exposes the repertoire of Victorian gender roles as a cultural and conventional construction. Seemingly ‘genuine’ and ‘natural’ womanhood and manhood function only as inessential, arbitrary, and unreliable codes of behavior for both men and women, whose one-dimensional stereotypes are predominantly defined by men. Jean’s autonomous exploitation of the established female gender roles, her continuous switching of roles, as well as her subversive recombination of originally incompatible aspects of various types of womanhood renders her indefinable within the range of established gender categories. Her active and self-constitutive role-play becomes an act of empowering self-definition defying men’s sovereignty to define ‘proper’ womanhood.

What makes it so easy for Jean Muir to manipulate the various members of the Coventry family are their stereotypical ideas of ‘manly’ and ‘womanly’ behavior, their snobbish expectation of lower social classes to be culturally inferior, and their self-assured opinion that they thoroughly understand others, especially women’s character. Jean Muir enters the household as the governess of young Bella. In her meek, virtuous and seemingly innocent conduct, Jean reminds the

⁵ Cf. MacDonald, 1983, 83; Showalter, 1988, xxx; Martha Saxton, however, takes a middle position here: On the one hand, she clearly juxtaposes Jean’s roles to the ‘real’ and ‘evil Jean,’ on the other hand, she sees Jean’s negative and positive features integrated in one when she marries Sir John (Saxton, 1984, 257).

⁶ Jeanne F. Bedell, however, considers “Virginie Alcott’s most complex character” and emphasizes her victimization by others as the true origin of her murderous manipulations of others (Bedell, 1980, 10). In contrast to other sensational stories by Alcott, however, this aspect remains rather implicit in “VV,” while Virginie’s intrigues are made very prominent.

reader of Charlotte Brontë's then well-known *Jane Eyre*,⁷ who implicitly sets the standard of the family's hopes for a governess' character. The young master's opinion of governesses, however, is quite set: "I have an inveterate aversion to the whole tribe. [...] I am sure, she is a bore" (Mask, 361). While *Jane Eyre* essentially possesses the characteristics of a morally integer 'true woman,' Jean Muir uses this model of 'femininity' as a means of shaping and manipulating her own social image. She proves Gerald's prejudice against governesses in the wrong by even exceeding his and the others' ideal of 'feminine' virtue and accomplishment when she caters to their respective personal vanities:

Nothing could be more *unobtrusive and retiring* than her manners. She was *devoted* to Bella, who soon adored her, and was only happy in her society. She *ministered* in many ways to [invalid] Mrs. Coventry's comfort, and that lady declared there never was such as *nurse*. She *amused, interested* and won [the family's younger son] Edward with *her wit and womanly sympathy*. She made Lucia [the eldest son's, Gerald, designated wife] respect and envy her for *her accomplishments*, and piqued indolent Gerald by her persistent avoidance of him, while [the elderly uncle] Sir John was *charmed* with *her respectful deference and the graceful little attentions she paid him in a frank and artless way*, very winning to the lonely old man. The very servants liked her; and instead of being, what most governesses are, a forlorn creature hovering between superiors and inferiors, Jean Muir was *the life of the house*. (Mask, 377; my italics; cf. 384)

By fulfilling the Victorian standards of a 'true woman's' virtues, Jean affirms the other characters' impression of knowing her by the established codes of female behavior. She excels in playing the piano and singing in a superb but 'femininely' dilettante way (cf. 363-64); although she delicately faints from physical and emotional exhaustion, she soon afterwards assumes her 'feminine' duty of skillfully serving tea to the family and thus exhibits the "modest, domestic graces" of a 'true woman' (365); as she seems "well-bred, unassuming, and very entertaining" (372), she is quickly considered a "treasure" (365). Gerald, therefore, expects to be easily able to categorize Miss Muir, once he gets to know her better, as "belong[ing] to the moral, the melancholy, the romantic, or the dashing class" (371).

Both her knowledge of how she herself is perceived and categorized by others according to the established gender stereotypes, and her keen insight in others' dispositions or interests enable Jean Muir to win everybody's confidence and to exploit her knowledge for her own purposes. She flatters old Sir John when she praises his estate, she wins Edward's admiration by gracefully taming his favorite horse, she delights Mrs. Coventry by arranging pretty bouquets of flowers, she praises a portrait of proud Lucia's mother, she obliges Bella by vividly interesting lessons of French, and she awakens the curiosity of indolent and vain Gerald by ignoring him. Later she strategically fulfills Gerald's expectations of a virtuous woman's helplessness when she flees from Edward, who thinks himself desperately in love with her, into his arms "to claim his protection" and to appeal

⁷ For a summary of the parallels and intertextual references between Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* and Alcott's "Behind a Mask," see Christine Doyle, 2000, 4.

to his 'manly chivalry' "with a faint cry" (382-83). Her way of speaking to Gerald with "a sweet, submissive intonation which made it expressive of the respect, regard, and confidence which men find pleasantest when women feel and show it" (389) serves the same purpose. Finally she charms skeptical Gerald into acting the caring nurse and "mov[ing] about the room in the quiet way which made it a pleasure to watch her" (386). Jean's role-play can be described as an iterative 'citation' from a range of culturally available female gender roles which define her as 'feminine' and 'attractive' in the eyes of the other characters. Jean thus manages to make both sons passionately fall in love with her. By Jean's pretense of being in love with them and by her making various men believe themselves in love with her, love as the traditional safeguard of a happy home (cf. Bedell, 1980, 10) is turned into a dangerous threat to private bliss. Woman's primary power – love – becomes an unreliable sham.

By freely switching between different female gender roles, Jean enacts and thus exposes the performative constitution and social constructedness of gender identities, as they are described by Judith Butler with respect to travesty (cf. 1990, 137-39; 1993, 312-13). Butler repeatedly refers to parodistic travesty as an example of subversive transgressions of gender lines, here those of hegemonic heterosexuality. In acts of travesty, anatomy and performance of clothes, voice, and gestures on the one hand, and sexual identity or orientation on the other, clearly contradict each other. This difference in transvestite performance reveals the fundamental theatricality of the gender dichotomy (cf. Butler, 1990, 137-39; 1993, 312-13): Subversion, therefore, becomes a matter "of *working the weakness in the norms* [...]. Hence it is not that drag *opposes* heterosexuality" (Butler, 1993, 237-38); rather, it exposes the cultural constructedness of the norm, while the established order is claimed to be 'natural.'⁸ The unconventional performances of characters such as Jean Muir may, therefore, be considered a form of travesty *within* the range of female gender categories, not one of switching between the different genders. Miss Muir appropriates alternately – sometimes even at the same time – mutually exclusive versions of 'womanhood.' Her transgressive performances make it clear that the supposedly 'natural' repertoire of types of womanhood cannot account for her behavior, as Lucia's exclamation, "Impossible! A woman could not do it" (Mask, 425), proves.⁹

Furthermore, in her self-dramatization as the embodiment of virtuous 'femininity,' she exposes the fundamental paradox at the core of the concept of 'true womanhood' – that the moral exemplar 'naturally' pleases everybody within her realm without ever realizing what she is doing: "Sentimentalists [...] insisted that true women were constitutionally transparent, incapable of disguising their

⁸ Direct opposition to the established order is impossible as all types of sexual behavior and orientation occur, at least *ex negativo*, only within that order. The fact that even parodistic performances are bound by the range of possible forms of gender identity is also pointed out by Moya Lloyd, 1999, 206.

⁹ While the regular transvestite hopes to establish his own non-heterosexual identity as a 'third' gender, Jean does not aim at an alternative to female gender, but rather at an expansion and pluralization of the repertoire of female identities.

feelings" (Halttunen, 1982, 57). The young master of the house, Gerald, understands that Jean Muir "must be an observing as well as an energetic young person, to discover [everybody's] chief weakness[es] and attack [them] so soon" (Mask, 371), but he overlooks the fact that this is true for *all* women who endeavor to please others. Although 'feminine' women are supposed to delight everybody in a 'natural,' naïve, and spontaneous way, there is hardly any way to fulfill this standard without closely and covertly observing the whims and vanities of the people surrounding them and deliberately catering to their wishes. Society, therefore, plays an important part in constituting the image of a 'feminine' woman; Jean involves the Coventries as both fellow actors and audience in her continuous role-play without their ever realizing it.¹⁰ Her role-play becomes valid only when it is witnessed and acknowledged as meaningful by others. Any 'true woman' thus depends on, first, the affirmation of her 'femininity' by others, and, second, her own strategic calculations and tactic placement of certain 'feminine' virtues in her behavior:

Jean must continually act as if she was not acting and pretend that she is not pretending [...]. More difficult still, the character Jean must impersonate is the exact opposite of who she must be to survive. To be a good "little woman," one must possess acute consciousness, consummate acting ability, psychological strength, self-control and a capacity for hard work. Yet the role of little woman demands that the person playing it appears to be totally un-self-conscious and even unconscious, completely "natural," weak, timorous, out of control, and passive. (Fetterley, 1983, 7)

Here, the Victorian woman's supposedly 'natural' and 'spontaneous' virtuousness appears less a woman's essential identity than her reputation which primarily depends on male affirmation, on which she has to rely for her social position. Jean's complaint about Sidney's slandering of her person might be ill-founded in her special case, but her line of argument holds true for women's dependence on their social reputation in general (cf. Keyser, 1993, 54):

If he menaced my life, I should not fear; but he menaces that which is dearer than life – my good name. A look, a word can tarnish it; a scornful smile, a significant shrug can do me more harm than any blow; for I am a woman – friendless, poor, and at the mercy of his tongue. (Mask, 399)

A woman's identity is thus performatively constituted by the person's own conduct and the affirmation of her social co-actors and audience.

¹⁰ Elizabeth L. Keyser considers only Lucia and Gerald as an audience to Jean's role-acting, while the other characters function primarily as her fellow actors (cf. 1993, 51). However, Jean puts all characters under her spell of illusion. There are only a few exceptions where single family members function as audience 'only,' such as the scene when Sir John watches the governess through a window and interprets her as an innocently misused girl in need of his protection (cf. Mask, 376). Gerald does not trust Jean's virtuousness at first and seems to look through her role-play when he calls her fainting and her brilliant play on the piano theatrical "move[s]" (371) and comments on them mockingly: "Scene first, very well done" (364). Later, when he falls in love with Jean, however, he becomes just as much involved in her deceptive role-play as the other characters.

It is only the perusal of Jean's letters that opens the deceived Coventries' eyes for the active role they played themselves as audience to and fellow-actors in an illusionary drama put on by the retired professional actress Jean Muir. Here men's behavior proves just as stereotypical and culturally constructed as their expectations of women's conduct. It is these male stereotypes that allow Jean to manipulate Edward, Gerald, and Sir John and show them "[w]hat fools men are" (427): Typically, both idle Edward and indolent Gerald feel insulted when Jean accuses them of effeminacy. Their indignation follows the cultural standard that women "don't mind" idleness, while "it frets" men deeply (374). Gerald's lethargy does not fit in with notions of men's 'natural' activism and exposes the ideal of energetic manhood, at least in his special case, as a cultural construct. When he finally becomes active and accepts his responsibilities as master of the house, he does not, in fact, follow his natural inclinations as a man but rather his romantic notions of 'manly' conduct and his snobbish family pride, which he sees threatened by Edward's 'imprudence' to fall in love with a governess. In fact, his core motive is his wish to sustain the 'honor' of being considered 'manly' (cf. 380).

The subtitle of the story proclaims "a woman's power," but it fails to clarify whether this power is a positive or a negative one, and even the ending of the story does not offer a clear answer to this question. While the Coventries vent their indignation of being thus deceived, Jean's immoral and 'unfeminine' role-play remains unpunished, contrary to Edward's wish that "fate will [...] overtake her" (428). On the contrary, Jean achieves all her aims when she not only teaches the family a bitter lesson on snobbery and humbles their pride, but also when she marries the rich uncle in the end, thus winning a comfortable home and a loving husband for herself. Lucia, disgusted with Jean's crafty deceptions, disguises her unconcealed egotism, condemns her as utterly 'unfeminine': "It is impossible. A woman could not do it" (425). However, Jean only requires the same independence and inconsiderateness that the male Coventries practice every day: Gerald is a vain, irresponsible and snobbish master and keeps insulting the feelings of his *de facto* fiancée Lucia; jealous Edward even attempts to murder his brother. While such misbehavior is, if reluctantly, tolerated in the male characters, similar misbehavior in women is considered to be scandalous.¹¹

Jean's power over the other characters proves to be not entirely destructive. She brings new life into the family that readily gathers around her:

Jean Muir kept much in Bella's study and soon made it a pleasant little nook that Ned and his mother, and often Sir John, came in to enjoy the music, reading, or cheerful chat which made the evenings so gay. (376; cf. 375)

¹¹ Ann Douglas justifies deceptive role-play for 19th-century women as a way to independence: "For Louisa May Alcott, deception can be a means for women to infiltrate a closed world and get some of what they want from it. And if nothing else, deception allows women to manipulate and make excitingly perilous their one culturally sanctioned area of expertise: the creation and display of emotion. [...] For Alcott, as for many of her literary contemporaries, deception was most compelling when used in cold pursuit of an object; a kind of literary calisthenics of the will" (Douglas, 1984, 236).

By open criticism and contempt, Jean manages to induce indolent Gerald to arrange for a military commission for his brother Edward, who craves for an active, 'manly' life (cf. 380). With her ridiculing Gerald's lack of 'manliness' – "[e]nergy is more attractive than beauty in a man" (374) – she calls the young master to his duty. Jean's contempt for the Coventries' snobbery gives not only expression to her own social inferiority, but she herself moves freely between the social ranks of lords and servants (cf. 376) – her mobility introduces a democratic alternative into an otherwise rigidly aristocratic society. Finally, she even manages to break through the social barriers by marrying Sir John. After having achieved her goal, she renounces her former dishonest life and promises to honor, respect and love Sir John, "[which] she faithfully performed in after-years" (415). It becomes clear that her various masks do not only hide a bitter and revengeful "witch" (362; 379; 418),¹² but also a sensitive, 'feminine' woman who is quite capable of genuine emotions such as "genuine remorse" (414), "real humility" (*ibid.*), "a tear or two of sincere happiness" (423), as well as a "grateful warmth" (429). Her marriage with Sir John revalorizes her character decidedly, for her love and respect for the elderly man appear real and are, in fact, well-earned by him as he has overcome all his former prejudices and loves his bride uncompromisingly:

I will look at nothing, hear nothing, believe nothing which can in any way lessen my respect and affection for this young lady. [...] We all have committed faults and follies. I freely forgive Jean hers, and desire to know nothing of them from your [i.e. his family's] lips. (428)

Lord Coventry's refusal to look at the truth may be naïve, but his forgivingness is the only means to offer Jean the opportunity to stand the test of the faithful 'true woman.' Sir John's generosity constitutes Jean's 'hybrid womanhood' as acceptable, if not respectable.

Jean's appropriation of 'masculine' autonomy and calculation does not turn her into "a man herself," as Judith Fetterley claims (12). In fact, Jean's double-play is more complex, for, in spite of her unscrupulousness, she still possesses 'feminine' features. As a one-dimensional *femme fatale* she would simply be the stereotypical female villain of sensational literature, as Virginie in "VV."¹³ By integrating 'feminine' features into the *femme fatale* or 'masculine' features into her 'femininity,' however, she eventually does not belong to either category. Instead, she oscillates between the two opposite roles and occupies a so far undefined position on the spectrum of conceivable forms of 'womanhood.' The gender difference is thus softened and pluralized. In "Behind a Mask," 19th-century gender roles are generally exposed as something non-essential in the respective persons. The reader cannot be sure to find the 'real Jean' in the thirty-year-old bitter

¹² "She had been lovely once, happy, innocent, and tender; but nothing of all this remained to the gloomy woman who leaned there brooding over some wrong, or loss or disappointment which had darkened all her life" (Mask, 367).

¹³ Here the literary conventions of the sensational and gothic novel serve Alcott as intertextual points of reference (cf. MacDonald, 1983, 83; Stern, 1976, xviii).

woman as her personal individuality disappears between and ‘behind’ her ever-changing roles – “[s]o systematic is the confusion between mask and self that the concept of identity becomes meaningless” (Fetterley, 1983, 13). Jean is quite correct when she doubts that “actresses ever are themselves” (Mask, 367). As the Victorian woman who wants to please others cannot help to be a plotting actress, at least to a certain degree, Jean’s doubt holds true for all women. Eventually, it remains impossible to look ‘behind the masks’ of gender categories, even for a woman like Jean, who understands the general social role-play. Even when she has removed her false braids, teeth, and make-up (cf. 367), she embodies female stereotypes such as the embittered woman victim and always remains related to them – at least *ex negativo* – in her deviations from and modifications of such stock characteristics. She substitutes only one social gender role for another without ever escaping cultural definition. Butler’s concept of a ‘subjectivating’ performativity can explain the dependence of alternative gender categories on a given framework of gender possibilities, which no one can ever entirely leave behind.¹⁴ Both in moments when she feels unobserved by other characters and when acting certain roles, Jean constitutes herself differently over and over again, and thus (re)iterates her identity as something unfixed, discontinuous, inessential and constructed; at times she is a man-hating avenger, and at others, the sensible, misused victim who laments her wasted life and the ambitious autonomous ‘self-made’ woman who actively designs her own fate. Jean’s free and flexible choice from a wide-ranging repertoire of ‘feminine’ and ‘unfeminine’ roles prevents her from being clearly definable as a ‘proper woman.’ Instead her flexible changing of roles becomes an effective means of self-definition and self-empowerment.

In other stories by Louisa May Alcott, such as “La Jeune” and “A Marble Woman,” the protagonists manipulate other characters, especially men, and employ an ‘unwomanly’ deceptive role-play in service of their self-empowerment, too, but these women are less selfish and egoistical than Jean Muir. Their self-staging as varying personae is morally justified by their genuine ‘femininity’ and their ‘womanly’ virtues of love and self-sacrifice for their respective husbands. While these highly melodramatic and sensational stories merely seem to be typical examples of a standardized trivial genre, Alcott’s subversive play with character stereotypes propagates a gender politics of emancipation: The supposed *femmes fatales* are, in fact, ‘true women’ employing the means of a *femme fatale* for their self-empowerment as ‘feminine’ women. The traditional concept of submissive, dependent ‘true womanhood’ is thus modified and expanded by including women’s autonomous self-definition, sober calculation with the effects

¹⁴ Elaine Showalter argues along the same lines when she points out that “the ex-actress Jean Muir [...] can never be offstage; she always acts the feminine parts that her society allows her” (1988, xxx). Showalter does not, however, explain Jean’s dependence on established gender categories. She reduces the real complexity of the relation between Jean’s role-plays and established gender norms, when she assumes an autonomous subject ‘behind’ Jean’s supposedly ‘real’ identity and thinks the governess consciously “overact[s]” her roles (1988, xxx).

of one's behavior, and even manipulation of that of others – these strategies are justified by their morally acceptable purpose.

Alcott's short story "La Jeune; Or, Actress and Woman" (1868; Jeune) is a case in point. At first glance, the title character seems to affirm the prejudices and clichés about frivolous actresses and an immoral life on stage: She seems to be a typical *femme fatale*, for as a professional actress she does not only expose herself to the eye of the public, but she also seems to be a prostitute, an opium-eater, and a gambler. However, she turns out to be none of all these but rather a virtuous, loving, caring, and self-sacrificing wife. In fact, it is only the somewhat 'dishonorable' profession of an actress that enables her to live up to the ideal of the 'true woman' – being an actress and leading a virtuous, 'feminine' life appear no longer mutually exclusive. Apart from that, La Jeune's social role-play in the story serves the purpose of teaching the arrogant narrator a lesson about his own self-deceptions and prejudices against La Jeune's 'class.' The cultural images of women – innocent angel or coquette, even devil – are so much standardized that they may easily be feigned by La Jeune, while they provide the narrator with ready interpretations.

When the narrator first hears about the celebrated actress La Jeune, he has already set his mind as to what to think of her, and gives his young friend, who has desperately fallen in love with her, the following warning:

She will marry you for your money, spend it like water, and when tired of the respectabilities, will elope with the first rich lover that comes along. [...] I know her class; they are all alike, mercenary, treacherous, and shallow. (Jeune, 625)

While the narrator believes he is testing La Jeune when he decides to observe her closely for four weeks, it is, in fact, the narrator and his assumption to know people's characters thoroughly that are tested. He thinks himself to be very well-experienced in human nature: "I *never* am deceived; I read men and women like books, and no character is too mysterious for me to decipher" (630). He feels sure he easily looks through La Jeune's social masks, when she, for instance, acts the celebrated, slightly coquettish Parisian actress: "She smiled graciously, received compliments tranquilly, and conversed wittily; but her heart evidently was not there, and she was still playing a part" (629). However, the narrator's prejudices against La Jeune's professional 'class' so much precondition his deductions from his observations that he finally comes to the false conclusion that she is a prostitute or has an affair, that she gambles regularly, and that she is an opium-addict (cf. 633).

La Jeune never loses control over her image as a 'woman' neither in public and society nor with special respect to the narrator. In the end, she has fascinated the narrator to such a degree that he has fallen in love with her and is even ready to graciously overlook all her 'vices' and marry her against his own prejudices. La Jeune, however, rejects his proposal of marriage and opens his eyes to his repeated misconceptions about her person and character: "You [...] needed humbling. I [...] resolved to teach you a lesson. You flatter yourself you know me thoroughly, yet you have not caught even a glimpse of my true nature" (635).

When she tells him her highly melodramatic life story, he has to realize that her supposed lover is, in fact, the physician of her invalid husband and that the opium had been used as medication. She herself is fatally ill from consumption, and has only a few more months to live. Her care and love for her husband had been her utterly 'feminine' and virtuous motive for earning enough money, without regard to her own failing health, only to ensure a comfortable life for her husband when she would be dead: "if I live three months and am able to play on, I shall leave [my husband] Florimond secure against want, and that is my only desire" (636-37). Her supposed passion for gambling turns out to be a verbal misunderstanding by the narrator, who had mistaken one of her comments on having played well and earned a considerable sum of money – but not by playing cards, but by her professional acting on stage. Instead of the superficial, vicious, frivolous girl of the theater milieu, La Jeune proves to be a self-sacrificing, loving, faithful and morally integer wife and 'true woman.' When the narrator learns her story, he pays her his honest respect: "I admired the actress, I adored the woman" (636).

La Jeune is neither a conventional 'true woman' nor a conventional *femme fatale*, but integrates in herself aspects of both types. This new concept of womanhood is in her case justified as 'feminine,' for even her disguise as a young coquette is part of her social role as celebrated actress and serves her over-all project of being a faithful and supportive wife to her husband. The supposedly clear-cut borderlines between the contrary female categories of 'true woman' and *femme fatale* are thus blurred. As with Jean Muir's, La Jeune's switching of masks and roles may be considered a 'gender-internal form of travesty' which exposes the established female categories as arbitrarily constructed patriarchal norms which are by no means the immediate expression of women's innermost 'nature.' The narrator's continuous misinterpretations both re-enact and reveal these arbitrary categorizations of women's behavior as man-centered and man-directed attributions and misperceptions. La Jeune's performances on stage, in society and in private, however, constitute her as both a brilliant actress and a virtuous 'true woman.' The spectrum of conceivable woman types is thus expanded by the addition of the 'calculating true woman.'

The alternative category of the 'calculating true woman' is no exception in Alcott's sensational fiction. In "A Marble Woman; Or, The Mysterious Model" (1865; MW), the 'calculating true woman' Cecilia manages to counteract a man's attempt to control her and reduce her to an exaggerated version of the 'true woman.' She is forced to comply with a very rigid version of 'feminine' purity and aloofness of the world. By means of 'unfeminine' role-play and deception as well as exaggeration, she proves this form of womanhood to be absurd and inhumane and thus deprives her male counterpart of any power over her. After the seemingly clear-cut domestic hierarchy of male dominance and female dependence has thus got out of balance, it becomes obvious that their relationship can only be stabilized in an egalitarian marriage.

When the sculptor Bazil Yorke accepts the guardianship of his former fiancée's daughter although that woman had left him for another man, he is a misogynist *par excellence*. He is so disappointed with women and hurt in his feelings that he tries to control any emotion both in himself and young Cecilia. He brings her up as a woman who displays only outward beauty without the slightest emotional depth, love, or humanity: "A marble woman [...], with no heart to love you [i.e. Bazil], only grace and beauty to please your eye and bring you honor" (MW, 188). By means of these restrictions Bazil not only wants Cecilia to repay for her mother's faults but also hopes to save the girl from emotional suffering: "I would have you beautiful and passionless [...], a creature to admire with no fear of disturbing its quiet heart, no fear of endangering one's own" (188). When he restricts and reduces Cecilia to the traditionally 'feminine' virtues of remoteness, meekness, passivity, beauty, grace, and passionless serenity (cf. also Keyser, 1993, 34), he not only deprives the young woman of her individuality but also of her human vivacity (cf. Bedell, 1980, 13). She becomes a dependent ornament and object of Yorke's male vanity. Even in calling her 'Cecil,' instead of Cecilia, he tries to ignore her 'femininity.' Yorke himself leads an almost 'feminine' life, passionless, remote and inactive, away from society and publicity and without the slightest economic or artistic ambition, which was generally expected of a 'masculine,' virile man in the mid-nineteenth century.

Cecilia, who becomes a sculptor herself, seems to submit entirely to Bazil's instructions, since she calls him 'master' not only in their studio but seems to consider him the master of her whole identity as a woman too. However, beneath her outward coldness, submissiveness, and self-abnegation, she nurses strong emotions, especially for Yorke, whom she loves passionately. In fact, it is less his than her own will that effects her transformation into a 'marble woman':

She [...] seemed to *cherish some purpose*, that soon showed its influence over her, for her face daily grew more cold and colorless, her manner quieter, her smiles fewer, her words briefer, her life more unlike than ever. (MW, 189; my italics)¹⁵

In retrospect it becomes clear that Cecilia fulfills the wishes of her guardian only because she is in love with him and does not dare to confess her feelings. When he proposes to marry her, his professed motivation is not love but his desire to protect her reputation as a respectable woman living under the same roof with a bachelor. In agreement with her role as a 'marble woman,' she accepts a fictitious marriage with Yorke excluding any emotional bonding or responsibility. At the same time, however, she decides to beat him with his own weapons: "That night I resolved to show you your mistake, to prove to you that you had a heart" (249), she explains to him retrospectively. After that decision she fulfills Yorke's peculiar idea of inanimate womanhood in every single way, avoiding even the slightest expression of emotion. She turns into lifeless 'marble' whenever he is present:

¹⁵ While Elizabeth L. Keyser thinks that Cecilia's rebellion starts only much later (cf. 1993, 43), there are various indications of her secret independence, such as this, throughout the story.

Something was gone that once made her beauty a delight to heart as well as eye; some nameless but potent charm that gave warmth, grace, and tenderness to her dawning womanhood. [Yorke] felt it, and for the first time found a flaw in what he had thought faultless until now. (202)

When Yorke takes her into society, he and other onlookers are likewise “chilled by her coldness” (206). Others’ criticism of Cecilia cuts him, the ‘creator’ of her female persona, to the quick: “As a work of art she is exquisite, but as a woman she is a dead failure. [...] Why in heaven’s name didn’t Yorke marry one of his marble goddesses and be done with it?” (209). Differently from Pygmalion, Bazil Yorke does not possess the power to invest “his best work” (206) with life. In order to make up for her lack of humanity he asks Cecilia to *play* ‘feminine’ loveliness and vivacity and hopes thus “to animate his statue” (210). In her seemingly absolute obedience, she imitates the delightful liveliness of other women and charms everybody, including her husband. Like this, however, she only acts when in society, not when back at home with Yorke: “In public she was the brilliant, winning wife, in private, the cold, quiet ward” (220). While she appears to obey him with great exactness, she evades him personally and emotionally as the serene, dehumanized ‘marble woman.’

By means of Cecilia’s creative appropriation of Yorke’s idea of femininity as a mask, which she may put on and off as she pleases, Cecilia empowers herself as a sovereign subject and individual. The more Bazil realizes that he needs her as a human, lively and emotionally responding companion, the more she gains power over him: “he called himself a fool for losing his old power [over her ...]. She ruled him” (224). In their ‘married’ life, Cecilia becomes a manipulative, powerful stage director: She not only stages her own social persona as the charming wife, but she also eventually gains so much power over Bazil to form his character, to animate and pique his repressed emotions by acting the unreachable, cold lady; in the end, it is Cecilia, and not Yorke, who proves to be the Pygmalion character in this story.¹⁶ Finally, Bazil realizes that he loves her and he tries to win her love in return – but he fails to overcome her emotional coldness which he had formerly demanded of her. Paradoxically Cecilia’s love for him expresses itself in her refusal to display love; the typically ‘feminine’ power of love is thus given a new function.

In spite of Cecilia’s seeming power, her relationship with Yorke is, in fact, held in a highly precarious balance that none of them really controls. Although Cecilia has much influence over Yorke, her autonomy is rather questionable, for she can hardly bear her unnatural state of denied emotions: “I find it hard to tame myself to the quiet lonely life” (216). In order to discipline herself and subdue her feelings, she takes opium and becomes addicted – this makes her independent and dependent at the same time. Yorke’s initial patriarchal hegemony

¹⁶ Cecilia’s subtle, but powerful influence on Yorke may be seen as part of the tradition of the “moral, redemptive quality of [a true] woman’s love,” as Martha Saxton suggests (1995, 283). Cecilia’s manipulative role-play, however, goes far beyond the ‘true woman’s’ redeeming power; the moral exemplar would never be capable of deception.

drives her into taking opium, with which she fulfills his wishes; her addiction, however, induces her to leave the house against his explicit orders when she needs to get more of the drug. Furthermore, the opium enables her to manage her manipulative, empowering role-play so that Yorke's concept of femininity turns against himself. Yet, Cecilia's power, which she gains from her opium-based self-staging, proves self-destructive when she narrowly escapes death after taking an overdose. The couple actually live neither in a traditional, clearly structured domestic hierarchy, nor does either of them possess absolute autonomy. Only much later, when Yorke admits "the wrong" he has done in claiming superiority over Cecilia and asks her to forgive him (247), she has reached her goal in her masquerade: Her husband gives up his overarching patriarchal hegemony and admits their human dependence on emotions and mutual support. After this triumph, she can give in to her long-repressed love – "her heart fluttered like a caged bird" (248) – and live an egalitarian marriage with her husband.

Yorke, who has over-emphasized the 'masculine' feature of emotionless rationality, is convicted of his own inhumanity by Cecilia's staged coldness. He is finally induced to integrate 'masculine' activism and wooing into his over-'feminine' passionlessness on the one hand, and 'feminine' love and warmth into his 'manhood' on the other.¹⁷ As 'marble woman' with the exaggerated single 'feminine' characteristic of serenity, Cecilia exposes the latent imbalance of Victorian gender categories. In a similar way to Jean Muir's and La Jeune's, Cecilia's sovereign play with different modes of 'femininity,' such as the cool ladylike beauty or the lively and charming wife, reveals the performative constructedness of these types, especially when isolated instead of being included in an embracing, holistic humanity.¹⁸

In Louisa May Alcott's sensational fiction, deceptions, manipulations, disguises, and role-plays enable the female protagonists to empower themselves in a 'masculine' society, where women are primarily defined by men. In texts such as "Behind a Mask," Jean Muir would fall only little short of the typical *femme fatale*, did she not gain human and moral stature from her somewhat hidden, but nevertheless genuine virtues. In other cases, the supposedly 'unfeminine,' deceptive role-players are justified by their utterly 'feminine' motives, be they their self-sacrificing care for their husbands as in "La Jeune" or their self-denying love for and desire to be loved by their husbands as in "A Marble Woman." When these women freely employ various standardized female gender roles to reach their respective goals, they subvert the supposed 'naturalness' of a 'true woman's' behavior. The result of their strategic exploitations is a new combination of sup-

¹⁷ Elizabeth L. Keyser considers the integration of characteristics of the respective 'counter-gender' into one's own gender as "androgynous" (1993, 32). The fundamental gender dichotomy, however, remains intact, as only the two protagonists' integration of contrary gender features finally enables them to fulfill their traditional gender roles in their marriage.

¹⁸ According to Madeleine Stern, Alcott was primarily a humanist; from this moral stance she derived her feminist attitude: "she embraced the cause of woman because she embraced the causes of humanity" (1998a, 144).

posedly incompatible features of the 'true woman' and the 'unfeminine' avenger leading to the new category of an 'autonomously calculating true woman' or a 'feminine *femme fatale*.'

Many of Alcott's sensational woman protagonists who engage in deceptive role-plays are professionally involved in artistic creativity. In "Behind a Mask" Jean Muir is a retired actress picking her different roles from her wide-ranging stage repertoire; in "La Jeune" the protagonist is a celebrated professional actress in Paris; "A Marble Woman" Cecilia is a sculptor, who creatively forms her own social persona as well as her husband's character. While art in general allows room for creativity, experiments, and autonomy in all three stories, the theater milieu in "Behind a Mask" and "La Jeune" offers a legitimate stage for not being oneself, for role-plays, deception, stereotyping, and free switching between contradictory roles; the borderlines between reality and fiction, between real and assumed identity become blurred. Sensational stories about actresses and artists, therefore, provide the perfect ground for experiments in alternative gender roles.

The author herself acts a similarly autonomous part as her subversive protagonists when she freely employs and combines various female gender roles; as the author of both sensational fiction and sentimental adolescent literature such as *Little Women*, she creates alternative types of female authorship. Both the creative self-fashioning of the characters and the author's literary creativity expose the fundamental performativity and social constructedness of gender identities in the process of 'subjection.' The artistically or theatrically creative characters reflect the author's self-empowering act of making supposedly 'unfeminine' women the heroines of her work and, at the same time, designing and performatively introducing alternative female character types that are neither traditionally 'feminine' nor 'unfeminine' and that subvert, modify, and pluralize the established repertoire of conceivable types of womanhood.

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IAN ALMOND

The Darker Islam within the American Gothic: Sufi Motifs in the Stories of H.P. Lovecraft

Abstract: This article has two purposes: in the first section, the socio-political place of Islam as *topos* in the stories of Lovecraft – the various Daemon-sultans, Oriental figures and Arab sages we encounter in his work – is examined, given the already extant research available on Lovecraft’s own reactionary, racist views. The article examines the possibility that Lovecraft’s dark Cthulhu gods, with their secret, subversive plan to invade our human reality, is actually a resurrection of a familiar Christian Urangst of the Terrible Turk at the gates of Vienna; this time, however, re-enacted against a background of New England, rather than Tours or Lepanto. In the second section, we consider a single tale of Lovecraft’s, “Through the Gates of the Silver Key,” from a Sufi perspective, seeing how the various references to the Guide Lovecraft calls the *Umr at-tawil* can be placed and re-interpreted in the context of Islamic Mysticism.

Medieval Jews and Arabs were represented in profusion, and Mr Merritt turned pale when, upon taking down a fine volume conspicuously labelled as the *Qanoon-e-Islam*, he found it was in truth the forbidden *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred, of which he had heard such monstrous things whispered some years previously [...]

“The Case of Charles Dexter Ward,” 161¹

The moment is a curious one; Mr Merritt, perusing a library of somewhat daunting esoterica (demonology, magic, cabala), suddenly muddles up his sacred and profane in a most Oriental fashion, thinking to find a “fine volume” of monotheistic religion in his friend’s library, but actually discovering its arcane inverse, “the forbidden *Necronomicon*” in its place. Inside one Islam, Lovecraft’s Englishman finds another – not the acceptable Orient of Avicenna and Averroes, the High Islam of geometry and learning, but a darker *Morgenland* lying much closer to madness and monstrosity.

In fact, Lovecraft’s “mad Arab,” whose work (we are always told) explains and elucidates some of the universe’s darker truths concerning the monstrous,

¹ H.P. Lovecraft, *Omnibus 1: At The Mountains of Madness* (London: HarperCollins, 1994). Unless otherwise stated, all references will be to this edition. Special thanks to Burcu Ozdemir for her help in the preparation of this article.

secret Elder Things and their primordial history, is a central text alluded to in almost every major story of Lovecraft's. From "The Dreams in the Witch House" to "At the Mountains of Madness," at least some passing reference is made to the Muslim elucidator of Lovecraft's universe. In some stories, such as "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward," the Arab's book is actually proffered as a help and guide, an Oriental aid to control and command forces whose provenance is also clearly non-Western. Despite Lovecraft's real-life, notoriously racist views on "beady-eyed, rat-faced Asiatics,"² the author's inherent racism did not prevent him from placing an Arab as one of the key epistemological sources of his world-picture. That the source of such arcane knowledge might be Eastern should come as no surprise – indeed, Orientalists abound in Lovecraft's stories, protagonists whose level of awareness of the darker cosmic reality of this earthly illusion coincides almost always with some kind of Oriental experience. The elusive Joseph Curwen of "Charles Dexter Ward," for example, had made "at least two voyages to the Orient" before returning to his New England parish,³ the books in Harley Warren's library, we are told, are mostly in Arabic (354), whilst "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" begins with de Marigny's excessively oriental office – Boukhara rugs, turbans and hieroglyphic-inscribed clocks.

The Arab's *Necronomicon* is the *Urtext* which lies at the heart of Lovecraft's fictitious universe. In over sixty stories and novellas, written for the most part during the Twenties and Thirties, Lovecraft unfolds his fantastic ideas of an ancient alien race, lying hidden and dormant beneath the illusion of contemporary life, to manifest their effects on present-day humanity inexplicably in moments of madness, bizarre occurrences and monstrous visitations. There is something curiously apophatic about the horror we find in Lovecraft, one which never quite manifests itself but, rather like the God of the *via negativa*, is all too often *alluded* to or *induced* from its peripheral, secondary effects. The horror in Lovecraft's stories is consequently a horror of the possible, the almost-manifest, a grotesque fascination with the potentially imminent:

[...] but I shall never sleep calmly again when I think of the horrors that lurk ceaselessly behind life in time and space, and of those unhallowed blasphemies from elder stars which dream beneath the sea, known and favoured by a nightmare cult ready and eager to loose them on the world whenever the earthquake shall heave their monstrous stone city again to the sun and air.⁴

Of course, the sociological implications of such hidden mythologies of the lurking unnameable have already been fleshed out by numerous commentators – Clive Bloom, perhaps, showing most effectively the connection between Lovecraft's work and his conservative, reactionary politics, revealing a writer whose "personal traumas are [...] the social traumas of the group from which they

² Cit. in Clive Bloom, "This Revolting Graveyard of the Universe" in Brian Docherty, ed., *American Horror Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1990), 63.

³ Lovecraft, *Omnibus 1*, 159.

⁴ Taken from "The Call of Cthulhu," in H.P. Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*, ed. S.T. Joshi (London: Penguin, 1999), 164.

emerged.”⁵ What this brief essay will attempt to do is articulate some of these ideas concerning Lovecraft’s ideological/textual anxieties in an Islamic context. Such an interpretative gesture is by no means exaggerated – a number of moments in the Lovecraftian *oeuvre*, quite apart from the “mad Arab” and his *Necronomicon*, seem to cite a clear origin for the followers of the Cthulhu elder Gods:

Of the cult, he said that he thought the centre lay amid the pathless deserts of Arabia, where Irem, the City of Pillars, dreams hidden and untouched. It was not allied to the European witch-cult, and was virtually unknown beyond its members.⁶

The idea of an alien race, lurking on the edge of civilization, waiting to rise up in the Orient and take over our reality is by no means unfamiliar. In many ways, Lovecraft’s tales re-enact in a New World setting the ancient European fear of the Terrible Turk, looming before the gates of Vienna, waiting to storm in and enslave all of Christendom – only this time the landscape of New England, rather than Tours or Lepanto, forms a backdrop to the conflict.

Lovecraft’s gesture – that of directly locating the Orient as a source of arcane knowledge and distinctly unwholesome *sophia* – is also by no means recent; the linking of the Arab Orient with sorcery and demonology goes back to at least Porphyry, and certainly early medieval Christian responses to Islam saw the Islamic East as a place of profane magic and unholy arts.⁷ The stereotype offered by Lovecraft’s “mad Arab author of the *Necronomicon*” also exists in its positive, though more esoteric version: the common Rosicrucian belief (Lovecraft was fond of attributing the translation of the fictitious *Necronomicon* to John Dee) that Christian Rosencreutz had obtained the essentials of his wisdom from the Arab East. Here, Arabs are seen not so much as spawners of Satanic heresies but rather as distant sages, offering alternative sources of wisdom.

The false cover of the Islamic book Mr Merritt takes down from the library – conventional religion on the outside, dark secret truths on the inside – epitomises the dilemma of Islam in Lovecraft’s stories, and its problematic proximity to the dark reality of Cthulhu. In many ways, the two possible genealogies available for Lovecraft’s “mad Arab” – on the one hand, a positive Rosicrucian understanding of the Arab Orient as a place of Enlightenment and learning, juxtaposed against a medieval Christian demonisation of the East as a spawner of Satanic arts and unholy heresies – reflect the ambiguities of Lovecraft’s use of the Islamic Orient. Through a detailed Sufi study of some of the mystical motifs in “Through the Gates of the Silver Key,” we shall try to articulate this dilemma in clearer terms. Exactly what place does the *topos* of Islam – its minarets, its Ara-

⁵ Bloom, 68.

⁶ Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu*, 156.

⁷ See John C. Lamoreaux, “Early Christian Responses to Islam,” 10-11, in John V. Tolan, ed., *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2000). As late as the seventeenth century the term ‘Averroist’ would always have some immoral, un-Christian connotation (see, for example, Leibniz’s remarks on “those Averroists and certain wicked Quietists who imagine that the soul is absorbed into and reunited with the sea of divinity” – from the Preface to Leibniz’s *New Essays on Human Understanding* [London: Cambridge UP, 1997] 59).

bic, its daemon-sultans – have in the Lovecraftian oeuvre? Is it just another version of the aesthetic Orient, alongside the “Hindoo idols” (311) and Buddhist temples, just another colour on Lovecraft’s palette of exotica? Or is there something specific about Abdul Alhazred and his feared entity the ‘*umr at-tawil*’ (the Most Ancient), something which suggests – at least in one story – an exclusively Islamic understanding of the Cthulhu mythos, and the multi-dimensional travel the protagonists seem to embark upon?

There is no doubt that an indebtedness to standard Orientalist images lies in Lovecraft’s work, particularly in the bizarre science-fiction fantasy “The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath,” whose landscape appears to feature nothing other than ruined temples, minaret-filled cities, Oriental shopkeepers and crescent moons. When the protagonist Carter meets merchants in turbans who “took only gold and stout black slaves” (374), it is difficult not to think of Arabs as the intended race-type. When the narrator speaks of the “Basalt pillars of the West,” beyond whose “ordered universe [...] the daemon-sultan Azathoth gnaws hungrily in chaos” (377), it is equally hard not to see Lovecraft’s Spengleresque race-views coming to the surface once more, this time in a fantasy map where the ordered West forms a familiar territory for Carter – and the final frontier for an east which proffers nothing other than “awful voids” and “hellish dancing” (377).⁸ Like many writers in the Orientalist genre before and after him (Byron, Poe, Borges,⁹ Barth), Lovecraft’s storehouse of images has an early childhood acquaintance with the *Arabian Nights* as its origin, an influence Lovecraft often referred to and one whose effects were to persist throughout his *oeuvre*. And yet any attempt to read Lovecraft’s daemon-sultans and Arab sorcerers as modern resurrections of medieval Christian stereotypes of Islam quickly become problematised not merely by the author’s own rejection of Christianity, but also by an enthusiastic appreciation of what he clearly considered to be a more Romantic faith. In recollection of his own Sunday school experiences as a child he writes:

The absurdity of the myth I was called upon to accept and the sombre greyness of the whole faith compared with the Eastern magnificence of Mahometanism, made me definitely agnostic [...].¹⁰

And in another letter, somewhat in the manner of the Byron who claimed to have converted to Islam in Istanbul,¹¹ he declares:

⁸ See S.T. Joshi’s *H.P. Lovecraft: The Decline of the West* (Mercer Island, WA: Starmont House, 1990) for a philosophical treatment of Lovecraft which considers, amongst other perspectives, Spengler’s *Untergang des Abendlandes* as a possible context for reading Lovecraft’s work. See also F. Rottensteiner’s slightly negative review essay of the above, which throws doubt upon how much philosophy Lovecraft actually knew first-hand from primary sources (“Lovecraft probably only knew the really first-rate minds from the writings of others”) – in *Science Fiction Studies* 19 (1992), 117-20.

⁹ For more on Borges’ preoccupation with Islam in his stories, see my “Borges the Post-Orientalist: Images of Islam from the Edge of the West” in *Modern Fiction Studies* 50.2 (Summer 2004): 435-59.

¹⁰ Cit. in L. Sprague de Camp, *Lovecraft: A Biography* (First Ballantine Books Edition, 1976), 22.

At one time I formed a juvenile collection of Oriental pottery and objets d'art, announcing myself as a devout Mohammedan and assuming the pseudonym of "Abdul Alhazred" – which you will recognise as the author of that mythical *Necronomicon* which I drag into various of my tales [...]. (letter to Edwin Baird, February 3, 1924)

"[D]evout Mohammedan," "Eastern magnificence": despite the tone of self-parody and provocative exaggeration, there is something disconcertingly paradoxical about Lovecraft's adoption of the Islamic Orient. On the one hand, there is a Christian form and provenance, if not a Christian content, to such motifs as the daemon-sultans and Arab sorcerers, a Christian origin underlined by Lovecraft's persistent use of the word "unwholesome" to describe any religious site connected with them ("The dead temples on the mountains [...] could have glorified no suitable or wholesome gods" 379). In Lovecraft's very secular borrowings from Christian imagery, age-old associations of the Muslim Other with madness, terror, monstrosity and apocalypse (Luther, we will recall, saw the Turks as unconvertible and a sign of the end of the age¹²) would preserve the impression of a fairly conventional use of Islamic motifs in the Western literary text. On the other hand, a standard Saidesque dismissal of Lovecraft as just another Orientalist caricaturist would overlook three subtle yet significant points: first of all, that Lovecraft's disavowal of his own faith – its "sombre greyness" and "absurdity" – and even his aesthetic privileging of Islam over Christianity forces us to reconsider his use of mad Arabs and encroaching Forces in a different light. Secondly, that the central role of the Orient and Abdul Alhazred certainly discounts any marginalization of Islam in Lovecraft's texts – on the contrary, in a slightly perverse parody of Christendom's reliance on Avicenna and Averroes for its knowledge of Aristotle, practically all of Lovecraft's invariably Anglo-Saxon protagonists have to refer to Arab science (albeit not logic or algebra but necromancy) in order to understand their situation. In other words, there is an epistemological dependence of the West on the Orient. In a sense, this also leads to the third problem with any straightforward dismissal of Lovecraft's stereotypes: that of the ambiguous status of the "Old Ones" in Lovecraft's stories, monstrous forces which certainly provide horror and terror in abundance, but which also enjoy a superior status – in terms of knowledge, intelligence, age and power – with respect to "puny, war-exhausted mankind."¹³ In many ways, this ambiguity provides one of the most enigmatic aspects of Lovecraft's fiction, a simultaneous elevation and belittling of American identity. Moments of indulgent nostalgia for the AngloSaxon landscape (when Randolph Carter is king of the other-dimensional kingdom of Ooth-Nargai, we are told he would still give "all the thousand minarets of Celephais for the sleepy homely

¹¹ Byron, returning from his Turkish travels in 1810 is reported to have said: "I was very near becoming a Mussulman." See Muhammad Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism* (London: L.B. Taurus, 1994), 224.

¹² See R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1965), 27, 105.

¹³ From "Dagon" in H.P. Lovecraft, *Omnibus 2: Dagon and Other Macabre Tales* (London: HarperCollins, 2000), 17.

roofs of the village near his home”¹⁴) lie interspersed with pseudo-messianic hopes “for a glorious resurrection [...] of mighty Cthulhu [...] when the stars and the earth might once more be ready for them.”¹⁵ What Lovecraft does, in effect, is mix his tropes; talking about the return of the “Old Ones” as a restoration of some primordial Aryan state of affairs,¹⁶ but using a very Lutheran vocabulary concerning the “Turk at the door” in order to express them. The Old Ones as a lurking, vile, unspeakable menace (“unspeakable” in the most psychoanalytical sense of the word¹⁷), but also as the return to a former state of prehuman glory, a bizarre, almost cosmically Rousseauistic yearning for one’s ultimate racial origins. In this understanding of Lovecraft’s texts as an attempt to return to something Bigger and Other than oneself, it will be useful to look at one of Lovecraft’s most Oriental pieces, “Through the Gates of the Silver Key,” in an attempt to understand what manner of appropriation Lovecraft’s texts actually make of an Islamic- and specifically, a Sufi-vocabulary.

“Through the Gates of the Silver Key”: A Sufi Interpretation

Carter, he said, had told him that this key had come down from his ancestors, and that it would help him to unlock the gates to his lost boyhood, and to strange dimensions and fantastic realms which he had hitherto visited only in vague, brief and elusive dreams. (506)

Although the only Arabic term in “Through the Gates” is the name for Abdul Alhazred’s demonic entity ‘*Umr at-tawil*’ (“The Most Ancient One” – in Arabic literally ‘the longest life’), the story of the absent Randolph Carter – and the worried meeting of his colleagues who attempt to decide whether to enact a will or not at his demise – is strewn with Sufi motifs: not just terms such as gate (*maqam*), mystery (*sirr*), veil (*hijab*), guide (*bud*), loss of identity (*fana*’), but also such ideas as the radical unspeakability of God (*tanzih*), the world as illusion (*bayal*) and the central significance of dreams (*ru’ya*). Certainly, Carter’s trip through time and its multiple dimensions is no religious quest in any conventional sense – and yet one of the most surprising aspects of Lovecraft’s text is the way the author deliberately implicates the Islamic Orient, and in particular a

¹⁴ From “The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath” in *Omnibus I*, 424.

¹⁵ Lovecraft, *Call of Cthulhu*, 155.

¹⁶ The ethnic implications of this awareness of ancestral identity are interesting to follow in Lovecraft. Note, in particular, the oddly mystical way he talks about the landscape of his native Vermont in “The Whisperer in Darkness”: “[...] an unspoiled, ancestral New England without the foreigners and the factory smoke [...] There would be odd survivals of that continuous native life [...] which keeps alive strange memories, and fertilises the soil for shadowy, marvellous and seldom-mentioned beliefs.” *Call of Cthulhu*, 239.

¹⁷ Lévy has already written on the psycho-sexual, repressed nature of Lovecraft’s horrors: “The Lovecraftian monster [...] is less frightening than repugnant. His attributes seem singularly vivid. He is characterised in a specific fashion by his *viscosity* (he is gummy, sticky and in occasions secretes greenish humors), his *inconsistency* (he is soft, flabby, gelatinous), the intense *stench* that he releases [...] and his swarming *multiplicity*.” Maurice Lévy, *Lovecraft: A Study in the Fantastic*, trans. S.T. Joshi (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1988), 60.

series of key terms from the Islamic mystical tradition, in order to narrate this tale of an explorer who tries to go back in time and recover “the lost boyhood for which he had never ceased to mourn” (513). In many ways, the age-old Edenic associations of the Orient – of the Morgenland with metaphors of birth, origin and renewal – may explain why Lovecraft’s most Oriental of tales is also the story of a man who wishes to return to his childhood.

Lovecraft’s 1932 tale, a collaborative piece with E. Hoffman Price, is immersed in the Orient from beginning to end. Whether it is (as we have already seen) the decorative excesses of De Maigny’s office, with its Turkish carpets and hieroglyphic clocks, or the figure of De Maigny himself, “distinguished Creole student of mysteries and Eastern antiquities” (509), or even the absent protagonist – Randolph Carter, clearly a cross between the famous Egyptologist Howard Carter of the 1922 expedition and the Victorian explorer Richard Burton. “Through the Gates” is also one of the few Lovecraft stories to actually feature an Oriental character – the Swami Chandraputra (really Carter in disguise), whose “bushy black beard, Eastern turban and large white mittens gave him an air of exotic eccentricity” (510). However, what is most striking about Lovecraft’s story is the way it connects its tale of multi-dimensional travel, sometimes indirectly, sometimes quite explicitly, with the language of Sufi mysticism.

In the most standard versions of Sufism, the soul (*nefs*) embarks upon a journey – a journey not really of departure, but rather of return (*ruja*), a return to the divine source from which it came. Because this source is utterly transcendent (*tanzih*), beyond all names and attributes, the soul has to gradually leave the world of multiplicity and return to God through a series of stations or levels (*maqam*), slowly shedding its identity before it can render the veil aside and join in union (*ittisal*) with the divine One (*al wahd*). Once the individual soul has realized its latent divinity by returning to its provenance, it acquires the joyful, ultimate knowledge – that (to paraphrase Ibn ‘Arabi) all is in the One, and the One is in all.

What we see in Lovecraft’s story is actually a dark rendering of the above vocabulary. The meeting and union with an unknown and ineffable deity in Lovecraft is no joyful culmination of the soul’s journey, but rather an experience filled with risk and danger. One of the longest passages from the Necronomicon ever quoted in a Lovecraft story appears in “Through the Gates,” where Abdul Alhazred warns his readers of the perils that await any who try to inquire too much into the origins of the species:

“And while there are those,” the Mad Arab had written, “who have dared to seek glimpses beyond the Veil, and to accept HIM as guide, they would have been more prudent had they avoided commerce with HIM; for it is written in the Book of Thoth how terrific is the price of a single glimpse. Nor may those who pass ever return, for in the vastnesses transcending our world are shapes of darkness that seize and bind. [...] all these Blacknesses are lesser than HE WHO guardeth the Gateway: HE WHO will guide the rash one beyond all the worlds into the Abyss of unnamable devourers. For He is ‘UMR AT-TAWIL, the Most Ancient One, which the scribe rendered as THE PROLONGED OF LIFE.” (517)

There are a number of Sufi echoes in this passage – first and foremost being that of the Veil (*bijab*). In Sufism, veils are often seen as temporary signs which, in an attempt to dilute, diffuse and even hide the unspeakable magnitude of God, ‘stand in’ for the deity. As one thirteenth century Sufi thinker, Ibn ‘Arabi, puts it:

The Prophet said: “God has seventy veils of light and darkness; were He to remove them, the glories of His face would burn away everything perceived by the sight of His creatures” [...] while these veils exist, they prevent us from seeing Him in this mighty nearness.¹⁸

What is interesting is how Lovecraft carries over into his own work this religious idea of the overwhelming truth, a truth so extraordinary, so intense that it requires a veil to preserve the sanity of the observer. To rend this veil aside – as Carter does in the story – is indeed to risk madness. This has probably been one of the most well-known features of Lovecraft’s stories – the more his protagonists learn about the Old Ones, the more they see/hear/read of their monstrous truth, the closer they come to losing their minds. So many classic Lovecraft stories end in this madness – characters who end up as sobbing or hysterically giggling heaps for having looked one second too long or read one passage too far. It should come as no surprise that ‘madness’ (*majnun*) also has a place in Sufism, usually to describe what happens when a soul tries to acquire more knowledge of God that it is spiritually prepared for. And yet the consequences of such madnenses are rarely as sinister in Sufism as they are in Lovecraft – the familiar Sufi suspicion of rationality as that which keeps us from truly seeing God (mystics such as Ibn ‘Arabi often punned on the root meaning of the word ‘reason’ [*‘aql*], which in Arabic can also mean ‘chain’ or ‘fetters’) would lead them to see intoxication, madness and confusion as allowing them to glimpse a Divine which eludes all rational understanding.

In many ways, this darker re-iteration of the unspeakable forms part of a general strategy in most weird fiction – taking the conventional idea of God as something which transcends any name or thought, and converting its ineffability into a malevolent mystery, “a horror beyond all human conception or calculation” (“Charles Dexter Ward,” 181-82). The idea that one might need a Guide in order to find this unspeakable truth also has its echoes in Islam. One of the most common names of Allah is “He Who Guides” (*al-hud*), and in many Sufi writings the idea of guidance (*biddaya*) is a divine one – God guides the truth-seeker as they progress through the stations, sometimes taking him farther, sometimes holding him back, as He sees fit. Ibn ‘Arabi writes:

What God does is to give some of His servants enough of the light of guidance so that they can walk in the darkness of the secondary causes [...]. The veils of the secondary causes are lowered down and will never be lifted, so wish not for that!¹⁹

¹⁸ Taken from Ibn ‘Arabi’s *Futubat al-Makkiyah* II.159.11, Cit. in William G. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: SUNY, 1989), 364.

¹⁹ Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 179 – from section III, 249.

Lovecraft's Guide, the alien entity who is leading him through multiple dimensions towards "the unknown and formless cosmic abyss beyond the Ultimate Gate" (526), displays a similar concern for the welfare of his travelling human escort. At several points the 'Umr at-tawil warns Carter that he may always go back if he wishes: "I am ready to show you the Ultimate Mystery, to look on which is to blast a feeble spirit, yet before you gaze full of that last and first of secrets you may still wield a free choice, and return if you will through the two Gates with the Veil unrent before your eyes" (529). In both cases, knowledge not only brings with it responsibility, it also becomes associated with terror – at least for those who are not prepared to deal with it. And it is in the nature of this 'it' – what Lovecraft's Guide calls "that last and first of secrets," what Sufis call the *sirr al-sirr* or "Secret of secrets" – that "Through the Gates" offers its clearest associations with the Sufi tradition. What the 'Umr at-tawil leads Carter to, in effect, is selflessness – or rather, the awareness that he is infinitely selved, a component piece of billions of other selves, human and inhuman, throughout the infinite universe. The realization is not a happy one.

He knew that there had been a Randolph Carter of Boston, yet could not be sure whether he [...] had been that one or some other. His *self* had been annihilated. No death, no doom, no anguish can arouse the surpassing despair which flows from a loss of *identity*. Merging with nothingness is peaceful oblivion; but to be aware of existence and yet to know that one is no longer a definite being distinguished from other beings – that one no longer has a *self* – that is the nameless summit of agony and dread. (527)

"His self had been annihilated." Lovecraft's tale, it could be said, conceals a much starker horror than the usual versions of the unspeakable we encounter – no nameless things in crypts or fungi from Yuggoth, but rather the much greater horror of the illusion of identity. Carter's quest for the "Ultimate Mystery," his desire to draw back the final Veil, leads him to the anguishing discovery that his 'Carterness' has been nothing more than an illusion, a dream, a trick all along. The passage offers a rather mystical moment – Carter discovering that he is part of the universe, and that the universe is part of him. There are also some interesting political implications in Lovecraft's repeated political emphasis on the horror of losing one's Bostonian, Anglo-Saxon identity; for a writer as convinced of racially-structured hierarchies as Lovecraft, the idea of being "no longer a definite being distinguished from other beings" clearly skirts close to the unspeakable. And yet, Lovecraft's racial-political worldview to one side, what is most interesting about Carter's Ultimate Mystery is that it replicates almost exactly the Sufi notion of *fana'* (annihilation of Self) and *hayal* (illusion).

In Sufism, the soul carries within it a secret – the secret of its divinity, of its heavenly origins. This secret is cloaked by God under the guise of selfhood: "God prevents the real secret from being known, namely that He is the essential Self of things. He conceals it by otherness, which is you."²⁰ In effect, God is the

²⁰ From the *Fusus al-Hikem*, trans. as "The Bezels of Wisdom" by Ralph Austin (New Jersey: Paulist, 1980), 133.

secret of the self, a secret many unenlightened souls go through their whole lives without discovering. What Carter experiences, as he crosses the threshold that the ‘*Umr at-tawil*’ leads him to, runs in approximate parallel to the Sufi description of the final (re)joining of the soul to God:

Through being joined (*ittisal*) to God, man is annihilated (*fana*) from himself. Then God becomes manifest so that He is his hearing and sight [...]. God is nothing of these organs until they are burned up by His being, so that He is there, not they.²¹

Just as the individual soul loses control of its hearing and sight as God takes them over, so that the believer becomes one of the millions of God’s omnipotent organs; similarly, Carter realises with horror as he feels his identity slip away from him that he is one of billions of Carter facets, without an original. Ironically, the metaphor of burning – the idea that the unveiled divinity “burns away” the individuality of the soul so that it may participate wholly in its re-absorption without any hindrance – also takes place in “Through the Gates,” as the nameless Being which Carter finally encounters addresses him “in prodigious waves which smote and burned and thundered” (528). In both cases, this notion of hidden, unknown, unearthly origins lying buried within the shell of the familiar accounts for an analogous understanding of illusion in the Sufi/Lovecraftian universes. The Ibn ‘Arabi scholar Izutsu begins his study of the Arab thinker with a key passage from the *Fusus al-Hikem*:

The world is an illusion; it has no real existence. And this is what is meant by “imagination” (*hayal*), for you just imagine that it (i.e. the world) is an autonomous reality quite different from and independent of the divine Reality, while in truth it is nothing of the sort [...]. Know that you yourself are an imagination. And everything you perceive and say to your self, “this is not me”, is also an imagination. So that the whole of existence is imagination within imagination.²²

“The world is an illusion.” The unenlightened consider things to be independent and rooted in themselves, while their God is utterly transcendent and separate from the ‘reality’ around them; those who truly have *gnosis*, however, have comprehended the truth of the matter – that everything in existence, including their own selves, is in effect God, an extension of the divine. Similarly, Carter undergoes a mind-expanding realization of our everyday conceptions of dream and reality as the Guide leads him across the threshold:

Though men hail [the world] as reality, and brand thoughts of its many-dimensional Original as unreality, it is in truth the very opposite. That which we call substance and reality is shadow and illusion, and that which we call shadow and illusion is substance and reality. (531)

Carter, like so many of Lovecraft’s protagonists, has been able to grasp this Platonic truth because of his innate curiosity – a curiosity born of skepticism towards the world of the everyday: “Had his whole quest not been based on a faith

²¹ Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 328 – from section III, 298.

²² T. Izutsu, *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Taoism and Sufism* (Tokyo, 1967), 1.

in the unreality of the local and the partial?" (532). It is in this refusal to accept the quotidian not as something in itself, but as a signpost towards a higher reality, that the two vocabularies share a common hermeneutical ground. Critics such as David Vilaseca have already examined the metaphysical implications of this desire (to use Vilaseca's words) for "a hidden, transcendent truth beyond language and understanding."²³ What is of interest to us, however, is how such mystical terminologies and motifs in Lovecraft's stories lead not to divine union with a God of Love and Mercy (as they do in their original traditions), but rather to an altogether more ambiguous, at times even monstrous state of affairs. In "Through the Gates" the Old Ones appear relatively benign, but in stories such as "Charles Dexter Ward" the world appears, at best, to be a mendacious illusion innocently covering over something far more malevolent: "the farm was only the outer shell of some vast and revolting menace, of a scope and depth too profound and intangible for more than shadowy comprehension" (172). The illusion of the reality of the world is maintained through an ignorance – in Sufism, it is ignorance of the fact that we are all, in some way, God, and that everything we see is connected to Him. For Lovecraft, the nature of this cosmic illusion is darker but structurally the same – an unawareness of our true origins. In stories such as "The Whisperer in Darkness," the "vast masses of uninformed laymen" have no idea of the cosmic origins of man's prehistory and the "pits of primal life" from whence he emerged.²⁴ Indeed, in some places Lovecraft even suggests mankind has been a clumsy error or plaything for these entities – in "At the Mountains of Madness," for instance, where we read of "the Great Old Ones who filtered down from the stars and concocted earth life as a joke or mistake" (39).²⁵ The illusion of homely, everyday domestic life lies like a veil across the unspeakable truth of Lovecraft's universe – for the minority of truth-seekers who push too far, a darker reality soon comes to the surface.

So Mr Merritt picks up a book which, at least according to its outside cover, appears to be a holy, religious text on the faith of Islam, only to discover the arcane *Necronomicon* lying inside it. Even Islam, it would appear, belongs to the inside/outside, surface/reality dichotomy which pervades Lovecraft's universe; even Allah, it should be remembered, is dismissed by the agnostic Lovecraft alongside Christ and Jehovah as "the little Earth gods" whose "tinsel emptiness" provides "their petty human interests and connections – their hatreds, rages, loves and vanities" (530). Any exhaustive study of the place of Islam and the Islamic Orient in Lovecraft's work would have to extend well outside the scope of

²³ David Vilaseca, "Nostalgia for the origin: Notes on Reading and Melodrama in H.P. Lovecraft's "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward," *Neophilologus* 75 (1991), 487.

²⁴ Lovecraft, *Call of Cthulhu*, 239, 214.

²⁵ Oddly enough, in Sufism there is also a tradition of believing in the purpose of mankind to function not as a joke but certainly as a form of solace and comfort for the Creator – as in the famous Sufi saying: "I was a hidden treasure that yearned to be known, so I created Men in order to be known by them." For more on this, see Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1969), 94, 112-14.

this essay – there lies yet to be explored, for example, the central significance of dreams in both Islam and Lovecraft. In the Koran, prophets often receive messages from God in the form of dreams (*ru'ya*), and the interpretation of dreams in Sufism was a science as important as scriptural exegesis. When we read in Lovecraft of “the First Gate, where ‘*Umr at-tawil* dictates dreams to the Ancient Ones” (531), or indeed any of the moments in practically every Lovecraft tale where dark cosmic forces make their presence felt in the dreams of the protagonists, it is difficult not to have the Islamic echo of this motif in mind. The prohibition of representation in Islam – and how this has its counterpart in the infrequent depiction of the Old Ones and their creations in Lovecraft’s texts (“[...] for Shoggoths and their work ought not to be seen by human beings or portrayed by any beings,” 125) could also be examined, not to mention the much more textual question of Lovecraft’s Orientalist predecessors. Given Lovecraft’s admiration for Beckford, Moore and Poe, one wonders why the representation of Islam in their works did not have more effect on Lovecraft’s own treatment of the faith. Certainly, the influence of Lovecraft’s childhood reading of the *Arabian Nights* can certainly be seen in “The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath” and its daemon-sultans. However, the humour of the Orient in texts such as Poe’s “Thousand and Second Tale of Scheherazade,” the romance of the Orient in Thomas Moore’s *Lalla Rookh*, not to mention the essential *morality* of Islam we find in Beckford’s *Vathek* [...] none of these previous representations of the East appear to have had any visible effect on the make up of Lovecraft’s own Orient. Indeed, the only feature which seems to persist in this essentially Romantic genealogy of texts is the extra-normal place allotted to Islam – unsurprisingly, in the work of a science-fiction/horror writer such as Lovecraft, any mention of a monstrous, supernatural, invasive reality was always going to have such unconscious, socio-cultural connotations.

JÜRGEN WEHRMANN

Irish Tradition or Postdramatic Innovation? Storytelling in Contemporary Irish Plays

Abstract: Storytelling in Irish drama has traditionally been perceived as evidence for a continuity between Irish theatre and a pre-modern, distinctly Irish oral culture. Hans-Thies Lehmann's theory of Postdramatic Theatre, however, allows one to describe the exhibition of the act of narration in contemporary Irish plays as a break with both Epic Theatre and the drama of the Irish Literary Revival. In contrast with the alienation effects of Epic Theatre, contemporary Irish theatre texts create intense relationships between narrator and story on the one hand and between narrator and audience on the other. Yet the acts of narration also differ from those in the drama of the Irish Literary Revival in that oral storytelling takes the form of intimate confessions and focusses not on collective but individual memory. At the same time, the Irish example casts a critical light on some of Lehmann's concepts, particularly the avant-garde character of the so-called 'post-epic' narration and its inherent criticism of the mass media.

1. The Irish Dramatic Tradition and Hans-Thies Lehmann's Theory of Post-dramatic Theatre

One of the most interesting formal tendencies in contemporary Irish theatre is the exhibition of the act of narration in numerous plays since the 1970s. Plays like Tom Murphy's *Bailegangaire* (1985) only show characters telling each other stories and commenting on them. In Brian Friel's *Faith Healer* (1979) and *Molly Sweeney* (1994), in Mark O'Rowe's *Howie the Rookie* (1999) and in most of Conor McPherson's and Donal O'Kelly's plays, the narrators directly address the audience so that there is no 'inner' communication system and no scenic action whatsoever apart from the act of narration. These are formal devices which are quite different in both structure and effect from those of the Epic Theatre. Irish critics, however, tend to emphasise the innovative less than the traditional character of storytelling in drama. Anthony Roche, for instance, links Friel's texts to ancient forms of Irish oral culture and calls them "a strong cultural reminder that Irish drama arguably had its origins as much in the communal art of *seanchaí*, the act of oral storytelling, as in a more formal written script performed on a proscenium stage in an urban centre" (1994, 115; also cf. Corbett, 2002, 114). Yet while the significance of oral storytelling for the Irish dramatic tradi-

tion cannot be questioned, their relationship and the different transformations it has undergone since the Irish Literary Revival still remain to be mapped out.

In order to understand the peculiarities of the act of narration in contemporary Irish plays, Hans-Thies Lehmann's theory of Postdramatic Theatre can offer some orientation. Although he largely ignores the developments on the British Isles, Lehmann describes a similar exhibition of storytelling in Jan Lauwers' performances and proposes the slightly self-contradictory term "post-epic narration" for this phenomenon (1999, 195). The notion of a Postdramatic Theatre postulates a radical departure from the traditional form of drama. Since the 1960s and early 1970s, according to Lehmann, new forms and functions of theatre have emerged in response to the increasing importance of information technologies in Western societies. Records, film, radio, television and the internet have reduced theatre to the praxis of a minority, and, at the same time, the pervading presence of these media in everyday life poses questions about the construction of 'reality' and the processes of communication with a new urgency. While film and television have taken over its former task of imitating and representing life, the theatre has set out to explore its own forms, materials and historical conditions with a heightened reflexivity. Postdramatic Theatre breaks with the predominance of the written text and the "complicity" with *logos* and dialectics which has been characteristic of European theatre since the Renaissance. Drama as a fictional representation identifies human subjects (characters) and arranges their actions and the events occurring to them in a meaningful sequence (plot). In spite of its criticisms of Aristotelian poetics, the Epic Theatre does not question this basic "para-logical order" of drama but, on the contrary, preserves it by introducing communication systems which mediate between the audience and the action on stage and help to organise the experience of modern society (Lehmann, 1999, 62). In Postdramatic Theatre, however, characters, dialogue, plot and the construction of a fictional world vanish, or, at least, they no longer form the constituent elements of theatre. The traditional hierarchy of theatre, with the text as the dominant semiotic system and all other systems in only an illustrating, supporting function, is discarded. The mimetic performances of dramatic theatre are replaced by an analytical performativity which, instead of transmitting information, concentrates on exposing the parallel processes of encoding and decoding within the theatre (Poschmann, 1997, 45-47). Postdramatic Theatre aims at an open, fragmentary perception and sensuality which frustrates and deconstructs all longing for closure and wholeness. On the one hand, it integrates the new media into its performances, investigates and criticises them. On the other hand, it creates alternative experiences in which signification and representation are superseded by the presence of the performance and its performers, the unique events in a shared time and space that can neither be reproduced nor totally defined. Correspondingly, the human body is assigned a central place within Postdramatic Theatre: not the ideal, sexualized but the extreme, idiosyncratic, suffering body.

One of the formal elements Lehmann describes as characteristic for Postdramatic Theatre is the so-called 'post-epic narration.' In Postdramatic Theatre, the act of narration is no longer used to complement and alienate the scenic action, but replaces it. By solely presenting the act of storytelling, the act itself and the relationship it establishes between narrator and audience become the focus of attention instead of the story and the events occurring in it. The presence of the act of narration overshadows the significance of the story told:

While the Epic Theatre changes the representation of the staged fictive events and intends to distance, remove the audience from itself in order to turn the spectator into an expert, a politically critical observer, the post-epic forms of narration aim at the foregrounding of the personal, not the mediating presence, the self-referential intensity of this contact, the closeness in the distance, not the distancing of the close. (1999, 198; my translation)

Again, Lehmann ascribes a compensatory role to this formal device. Exhibiting the act of narration, the theatre furnishes the age of mass media with an almost lost experience: the listening to storytellers (1999, 197).

Obviously, Postdramatic Theatre has not become the ruling paradigm on the Irish stage. Since the foundation of the Abbey Theatre by three writers, the dominance of neither the dramatist nor the written text has seriously been challenged in Irish theatre. In contrast with the experiments of Heiner Müller or Elfriede Jelinek, Irish writers have never discarded the basic elements of drama fiction, characterisation or plot. Still, the concept of post-epic narration allows us to highlight significant differences in the usage of storytelling in the Irish dramatic tradition. Instead of postulating an unproblematic continuity with an oral culture, it becomes possible to distinguish various phases in which different acts of narration appear in distinct ideas of theatre. I would like to propose three phases: firstly, the simulation of an oral culture and its parody within the conventional dramatic form in the Irish Literary Revival and the Counter-Revival respectively; secondly, the usage of narration as a distancing epic element since the late 1950s; and thirdly, the emergence of a post-epic narration since the late 1970s. All of these forms of narration are connected with different modes of memory. I will sketch the role of oral narratives at the beginning of an independent Irish dramatic tradition, before focussing on two contemporary authors, Brian Friel and Conor McPherson. Friel and McPherson represent two generations of Irish playwrights. While the transition from epic to post-epic narration can be traced in Friel's works, McPherson is the writer to have made this device astonishingly popular.

2. Under the Spell of the Dramatic Form: Oral Narratives in Plays of the Irish Literary Revival

Undoubtedly, the founders of the Abbey theatre, William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and John Millington Synge, attempted to connect their drama with Irish oral traditions by adapting Irish folk-tales and legends. Yeats believed that

the invention of the printing-press had severely damaged literature. In his essay "Literature and the Living Voice," published in the Abbey Theatre's house-journal in 1906, he proposed to turn the theatre into a place in which the revival of an oral presentation of literature could be started. Apart from the performance of plays, this project also included storytelling:

We must have narrative as well as dramatic poetry, and we are making room for it in the theatre in the first instance, but in this also we must go to an earlier time. Modern recitation is not, like modern theatrical art, an over-elaboration of a true art, but an entire misunderstanding. It has no tradition at all. [...] We must go to the villages or we must go back hundreds of years to Wolfram of Eschenbach and the castles of Thuringia. [...] The reciter cannot be a player, for that is a different art; but he must be a messenger, and he should be as interesting, as exciting, as are all that carry great news. He comes from far-off, and he speaks of far-off things with his own peculiar animation, and instead of lessening the ideal and beautiful elements of speech he may, if he has mind to, increase them. [...] His art is nearer to pattern than that of the player. It is always allusion, never illusion; for what he tells of, no matter how impassioned he may become, is always distant, and for this reason he may permit himself every kind of nobleness. In a short poem he may interrupt the narrative with a burden, which the audience will soon learn to sing [...]. (1962, 213-15)

Several aspects are interesting in this passage: the distinction between an actor performing a play and a recitor telling a narrative, the distance between the story and the narrator, the association of the oral narrative with verse and music, and the participation of the audience.

Yeats' project was never realised as it was conceived in the programmatic statement. Nevertheless, oral traditions are continuously evoked in the plays of the Irish Literary Revival. The drama of Lady Gregory in particular focusses on problems of the authority and continuation of traditions. Not the folk-tale or legend but the ballad is the paradigmatic form in which Irish oral culture appears in plays like *The Rising of the Moon* (1904), *The White Cockade* (1905), or *Devorgilla* (1907). The ballad is a specially communal form; it can be sung together, easily learned and passed on with comparatively little loss in form and content. Moreover, the narrative in ballads tends to be very condensed. The form of Lady Gregory's plays indicates an unwillingness to interrupt the course of action with longer narratives or songs. Usually, only one stanza at a time is inserted into the ongoing dialogue; the existing short narrative passages are dramatised with questions from the listeners. The narration in verse or prose is generally heterodiegetic: Since the stories owe their authority to the belief that they have passed from mouth to mouth and become the product of the community as a whole, a distance between the narrator and the story must be established. Still, a frequent motif in these plays is that accepting the authority of the traditional narrative involves its imitation in the character's own life. The communal narrative also has to become that of the individual, and the traditional story does not only deal with past but equally with future events. In Yeats and Lady Gregory's *Cathleen ni Houliban* (1902), for instance, the protagonist first listens to the story of Ireland's great martyrs, then repeats their sacrifice and thereby becomes the hero of new stories. Cathleen, as the personification of Ireland the only truly

confident first-person-singular narrator of oral traditions, always tells the same story and can use both the past and the future tense when she enumerates the men who have died and will die for her:

There was a red man of the O'Donnells from the north, and a man of the O'Sullivans from the south, and there was one Brian that lost his life at Clontarf by the sea, and there were a great many in the west, some that died hundreds of years ago, and there are some that will die tomorrow. (Yeats, 1966, 224-25)

The act of oral narration, the heroic deed and the story form a perfect circle and together constitute the cyclical time of myth. Thus, in Lady Gregory's and in Yeats' early plays, there is a strong tension between form and content in the treatment of traditional narratives. On the level of content, oral narratives are the ultimate source of authority, whereas on the level of form, they are reduced to a minimal scope that will not endanger the coherence of the dramatic form. Longer ballads or songs are never included. Nor does the performance as a whole adopt the form of a ritual repetition of traditional narratives. The cyclic oral tradition is integrated into and subordinated to a closely knit linear plot and a mimetic performance. The spectators are not only confronted with a myth but can also observe a tradition in historical time: *Cathleen ni Houliban*, for instance, is set during the revolt of the United Irishmen, and Cathleen's enumeration of martyrs cited above alludes to historical knowledge that was common at the time of the first performance of the play. The audience is supposed to relate the seemingly timeless mythical pattern of martyrdom to an historical narrative from which the myth obtains much of its force and legitimacy.

Accordingly, studies that look for the origins of Irish drama in oral storytelling are not totally convincing. Walter J. Ong argues that the drama was the first literary genre whose structure was deeply influenced and only made possible by written communication. The unity of action in conventional drama, its continuously ascending plot with a climax and a denouement could not be constructed before the invention of writing. Oral cultures are not able to tell longer stories in a linear temporal sequence; Homer's *Iliad* is the paradigmatic example for a predominantly orally conceived text that starts *in medias res* and spreads out into *analepses* and *prolepses*. Oral narration is non-chronological, episodic and repetitious (Ong, 1982, 142-44). At the time of the Irish Literary Revival, the insertion of long narratives and songs was still incompatible with the intricate and dynamic emplotments demanded of a dramatic script, and the emerging Irish theatre followed the European tradition of playwriting instead of the Irish tradition of storytelling. That Lady Gregory's plays represented a vivid oral tradition without imposing its forms of communication on the audience was probably one of the reasons for their success. In contrast, Yeats' later experimentation with the Noh theatre, in which he introduced a ballad singer as the central mediating and organising subject of the performance, did not have much immediate impact on the Irish dramatic tradition.

The drama of the following decades, especially Sean O'Casey's and Denis Johnston's, tended to parody the simulation of oral traditions in the plays of the

Irish Literary Revival but maintained the subordination of narration to the dramatic form. While fragments of stories and songs were very often included in Irish drama from the 1920s to the 1950s, these narratives only gained length with the adoption of epic forms of theatre by Brendan Behan,¹ Brian Friel and others from the late 1950s onwards. Therefore, I would like to turn to the late 1970s directly, when a change becomes perceptible in Brian Friel's work, a shift which seems to correspond with Lehmann's thesis of a transition from epic to post-epic forms of narration.

3. From Epic to Post-Epic Narration in the Theatre? Brian Friel's *Living Quarters* (1977) and *Faith Healer* (1979)

In Brian Friel's *Living Quarters*, first performed in 1977, one of the characters functions as both narrator and director of the scenic action. This character has no name but is always referred to as "Sir." Sir introduces himself to the audience as a product of the imagination of the other characters, the members of the Butler family. They conceived him as the impartial custodian and interpreter of the "ledger," a perfect record in which all the actions and incidents leading to the downfall of the family are registered. Sir enables the other characters to relive and re-examine the tragic events without distortions by their own defective memories. Thus, the scenic action is a repetition of past situations performed by the people who once experienced them. Sir's authority stems from the accuracy of his ledger and from his absorption in his function. He has no characteristics other than competence and neutrality. Often, his narration is actually a reading and citing of what is written in his perfect chronicle. Not only does he mediate between stage and audience but also between the written text of the ledger and the performance. He chooses situations from the ledger to be repeated, and, like a director, he arranges and controls the acting of the characters who play their own former selves. Although Sir's version of the Butler tragedy is occasionally challenged by some characters, they all accept it as objective truth in the end.

Without diminishing its originality in certain aspects, it can be stated that *Living Quarters* is a typical specimen of Epic Theatre.² Narration in Epic Theatre is used to disrupt the theatrical communication. Usually, the narration has a metatheatrical function and exposes or openly thematises the fictionality of the performance. Thus, the act of narration is located on a secondary level of fiction. Since Epic Theatre interrupts and contrasts the scenic action with the narration, it tends to minimise the performativity of the act of narration, which can be achieved by different means: While Thornton Wilder chose a conversational,

¹ Many critics assume that the director Joan Littlewood was responsible for the introduction of epic elements in *The Hostage* (1958), but in any case Behan endorsed these changes; cf. Murray, 1997, 158-59.

² Here, as throughout my paper, the term "Epic Theatre" is not only used for the theatre of Brecht and his successors, but is applied to all theatre which is dominated by the introduction of epic elements and aims for a distancing effect; cf. Szondi, 1994, and Kesting, 1989.

even casual tone for his stage manager in *Our Town* (1938), other epic dramas depict narration as the intrusion of another medium: the written text. In many productions of Brecht's plays, scene titles or whole texts were projected on screens, superimposing the individual act of reading on the communal, seemingly effortless theatrical experience. Like Friel, Brecht in *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* and Max Frisch in *Biographie* linked their narrators to written records which they cite from and refer to. All of these narrators resemble officials who serve their function neutrally and impartially. Their impersonality should allow the spectator to enter into an equally anonymous and technical relationship with the narrator and with the text of which he is the mouthpiece. Yeats and Lady Gregory depicted narration as essentially communal, uniting both narrator and listener in one ritualistic activity. In contrast, Epic Theatre emphasises the difference and distance between acting, narrating and listening; it intends to isolate the individual spectator as a critical observer and judge of the scenic action. The plays of the Irish Literary Revival simulated oral traditions; the Epic Theatre has an affinity to written communication. Correspondingly, Brecht asked of the spectator the relaxed attitude of a reader who leafs through a book and compares different passages (1967, 987), and Walter Benjamin called Brecht's revolution of the dramatic form a "literarisation" of the theatre (1977b, 525).

While in *Living Quarters*, Sir's narration frames and structures the scenes depicted on stage, in *Faith Healer*, first performed two years later in 1979, the whole action consists of four monologues. The first and the last of them are spoken by Frank Hardy, who worked as a faith healer and tried to cure illnesses by supposedly magic means. On his tour through the rural areas of Scotland and Wales, Frank was accompanied by his manager Teddy and his wife or mistress Grace, the other two narrators in the play. These three characters give quite contradictory accounts of their miserable past life together which ended in catastrophe: Frank was murdered by the enraged friends of an invalid he was unable to heal. Like *Living Quarters*, *Faith Healer* is set in a fantastic limbo of memory which allows Frank to tell the story of his own death.

The detached view of the heterodiegetic narrator Sir, who is not involved in the family tragedy of the Butlers, is replaced in the later play by homodiegetic narrators who try to understand events in which they are inextricably entangled. The naked presentation of narratives is too radical a rupture of dramatic tradition not to result in some kind of alienation. Yet since narration is no longer contrasted with traditional scenic action within the play, the performativity of the act of storytelling itself is brought to the foreground. The act of narration does not expose and multiply the fictionality of the performance, but establishes a sustained connection between narrator and audience. Moreover, the close existential relationship of the narrators to their story lends these narratives a great intensity and immediacy. The characters' difficulties in recollecting the past and coping with it find expression in non-chronological, associative, fragmentary and obviously unreliable stories. Witnessing the act of narration as a problematic and very personal endeavour while trying to find out what might really have hap-

pened, the audience is involved in a more intimate relationship than in both Epic Theatre and the ritualistic storytelling envisaged by Yeats and Lady Gregory: They become the listeners to private confessions. Although the act of narration itself thus creates suspense, this is not merely achieved by its intense presence but also by the search for meaning it triggers.

In the strict definition of Gerda Poschmann, who limits the term to texts without narration, figuration and fictionality, *Faith Healer* cannot be called a postdramatic theatre text, of course.³ Narration is simply transferred from a scenic to a merely verbal mode, the narrators develop into particularly round characters through their long monologues, and, although they often directly address the audience, their fictional frame remains intact.⁴ In contrast, Lehmann does not think that a Postdramatic Theatre necessarily has to move beyond representation. He perceives the difference between Postdramatic and dramatic theatre rather as one of emphasis; conventional formal elements of the drama can be used as the material for a Postdramatic Theatre when they are newly combined and connected with new functions. Lehmann's concept of a 'post-epic' narration can be applied to *Faith Healer* in that the acts of narration in the play lead to an involvement rather than a distancing of the spectators. The heightened presence of the act of narration in Brian Friel's *Faith Healer*, however, does not dominate or supersede the significance of the narrated. On the contrary, the presence and meaning of the narration mutually increase each other's effects.

The transition from epic to post-epic narration in Friel's work did not come as sudden as the temporal proximity of the first performances of *Living Quarters* and *Faith Healer* might suggest. In fact, it can at least be partly explained by Friel's preoccupation with memory and the drift of his thoughts on this subject. During the 1970s, Friel explored the forms, functions and pathologies of both collective and individual memory, and he demonstrated the deficiencies of one type of memory by contrasting it with the other. In *The Freedom of the City* (1973), various official narratives of an event presented by different epic figures in the drama are confronted with the scenic representation of this event and the oral narratives of individuals about their life. Thus, *The Freedom of the City* is an epic drama that is critical of written discourse. Rather than using epic devices to expose the fictionality of the scenic action, the drama questions the epic voices and the official discourse they represent in the play by contrasting them with the scenic action. Conversely, *Living Quarters* introduces a perfect historian as an epic narrator who is able to ascertain the distortions of the past by individual memories, which attempt to determine the scenic action. Friel was highly sceptical of both individual and collective memory, but the conventional dramatic form as well as the form of Epic Theatre did not allow a consistent critique of

³ The more limited usage of "drama" in a theory of Postdramatic Theatre demands the introduction of a new generic term for texts performed in the theatre. "Theatre text" has been proposed as such a term, under which both drama and the postdramatic forms are subsumed (cf. Poschmann, 1997, 40-42).

⁴ Cf. Poschmann's discussion of the monodrama (1997, 230).

these modes of memory. Both conventional drama and Epic Theatre had to presuppose the adequacy of one narrative form to reality in order to expose the inadequacy of other narratives to the past. By reducing the scenic action to acts of narration, *Faith Healer* escaped this paradox. In the storytelling, the past is present through the guilt of the narrators, the traces of bodily and psychological harm, and the indubitable reality of death. But simultaneously, the past eludes all attempts to make sense of it and remains irretrievable.

At the time of its first production and well into the 1980s, *Faith Healer* could appear as an isolated curiosity within Irish literature. In his next plays, Brian Friel himself returned to the traditional realistic dramatic form, which has always dominated the Irish theatre. Although epic devices were used in some plays in the 1980s and the 1990s, it is remarkable that generative narrators⁵ – i.e. narrators who frame and organise a scenic action – tended to be homodiegetic more often than heterodiegetic. In Stewart Parker's *Northern Star* (1984), Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), Tom Murphy's *The Patriot Game* (1991) and Marina Carr's *The Mai* (1994), the narrators play an important part in the stories they relate. Homodiegetic generative narrators may create a more intense relationship to their audience than heterodiegetic generative narrators, but insofar as they are still used to disrupt the scenic action and to expose its fictional character, they remain closer to epic than post-epic narration. It was not until the early 1990s that several younger writers adopted the form of the narrative monologue: Dermot Bolger might have been the first with *In High Germany* and *The Holy Ground* (both 1990),⁶ but Donald O'Kelly and particularly Conor McPherson established themselves as the most important representatives of this formal tendency in the course of the 1990s.

4. Narrating the Nineties: Conor McPherson's *The Good Thief* (1994) and *The Weir* (1997)

Conor McPherson was twenty-one when he directed his first play at University College Dublin in 1992. Like most of McPherson's plays, *Rum and Vodka* is simply a narrative with no stage directions at all; even the attribution of the text to a character is missing. Apart from the paratextual declaration of its genre and the references to its first performances, the text differs from a short story or novella only in the oddly short paragraphs, which often contain no more than one sentence. While *Faith Healer*, though highly esteemed by the critics, does not belong to Brian Friel's commercially successful plays, Conor McPherson's meteoric rise to fame is entirely owed to the popularity of his narrative monologues.

The Good Thief, first performed in 1994, is the story of a small-time gangster from Dublin whose routine job of scaring a businessman develops into a full-scale shoot-out with IRA terrorists. The only survivors, the gangster, the busi-

⁵ A term adopted from Brian Richardson, 2001, 685, although I do not restrict it to heterodiegetic narrators but use it for all narrators who seem to generate the scenic action.

⁶ Not every monodrama is a narrative monologue; cf. Frank McGuinness' *Baglady* (1985).

nessman's wife and her little daughter, have to flee to the west of Ireland since the gangster's organisation wants to eliminate them as potential witnesses. After an idyllic interlude, in which the gangster catches a glimpse of a fulfilled life, his colleagues find them.

Two quite interesting stories are attached to *The Good Thief*. Not only a storyteller in playwriting, McPherson seems to love relating anecdotes about the production and performances of his plays. The first story is about McPherson's most memorable and perhaps favourite performance:

Garrett [the actor giving the narrative monologue] always had a whiskey bottle on stage while he performed and drank from it regularly. It contained apple juice. It looked like whiskey and it was easy to drink. But when we arrived in Derry our stage manager, Philip, couldn't find any apple juice in the shops. Garrett said he had to drink something. The show was starting in like ten minutes: We thought about what might work. Cold tea? No, disgusting. Red lemonade? No, too much fizz. What then? Garrett sighed and reached into his pocket. He handed me a ten. 'Get me a bottle of whiskey,' he said. And I did.

When I handed it to him he went to open it. 'No,' I said. 'Open it on stage in front of the audience. Let them hear the seal break. Let them know it's real.' And that's what happened. He opened it on stage and the mad bastard drank about half the bottle. Was he pissed? Well, let's just say there were a right few pauses towards the end of the show. But he did it and it was fine. (McPherson, 1999, 183)

In this anecdote, heavy drinking appears as the Irish equivalent of body art. Like the self-mutilations of some performance artists, the physiological act of getting drunk on stage foregrounds the bodily presence of the performer and blurs the boundaries between the 'real' and the theatrical. McPherson's story exemplifies an interest in an even more immediate act of narration than was achieved in Brian Friel's *Faith Healer*. Whereas in both *Living Quarters* and *Faith Healer* a fictional space is still created that is different from the 'real' space shared with the audience, Conor McPherson's narrative monologues generally attempt to erase this distinction. If there are any stage directions at all, the act of narration is set on a bare stage as in *St. Nicholas* (1997). In some productions which created a space other than the theatre – an *urban* pub – the spectators were included in this space as if they were just listening to somebody telling his story in an everyday life situation. Thus, McPherson's plays are consciously staged as communal events, but the informal and urban context as well as the personal, confessional character minimise the ritualistic quality of storytelling.

The other anecdote connected with *The Good Thief* is that upon watching a performance of the play, the Irish film director Paddy Breathnach invited McPherson to write a screenplay for him. McPherson accepted. His affinity to the cinema contradicts Lehmann's thesis that there is necessarily a critique of the mass media inherent in forms of post-epic narration. *I went down*, Breathnach's film based on McPherson's screenplay, came out in 1997 and deals with people on the road like *The Good Thief*. Since then, McPherson has repeatedly worked as both scriptwriter and director for the cinema (Renner, 1998, 21). For instance, he adapted his play *This Lime Tree Bower* (1995), which, like Friel's *Faith Healer*, consists of the narrative monologues of three characters, for the screen. Actu-

ally, there are various elements in his narrative monologues that highly facilitate their translation into films. The plot is usually very eventful and, in the case of *The Good Thief*, obviously influenced by gangster films. Moreover, the narrative is generally chronological; the speed of narration is almost constant; there are no extensive reflections or comments by the narrator, no complex descriptions of psychological states and hardly any summaries of iterated actions or long-time developments. In contrast with those in *Faith Healer*, the narrator appears to be reliable; even in *This Lime Tree Bower*, the different voices do not contradict but complement each other. Although the narrative is homodiegetic, it sometimes approaches the impression of a neutral camera eye. It is not only due to the intensity and presence of the act of narration that McPherson's narrative monologues are popular but also because his stories are so accessible and gripping.

One of McPherson's plays explicitly refers to traditional oral storytelling. *The Weir*, first performed in 1997, is set in a country pub in the west of Ireland where a group of old bachelors gathers to relieve their loneliness with a little chat and a few pints. The arrival of a young woman from Dublin results in a contest among the old boys of telling supernatural stories. Then, the evening takes a sudden turn when the woman herself relates a very personal experience. Her small daughter died in an accident. Unable to go on with her usual life, the woman stayed at home for weeks. One day the phone rang, and the woman heard the very distant voice of her child begging to be picked up.

As in the plays of the Irish Literary Revival, there are only narrators internal to the scenic action in *The Weir* who tell their stories not to the audience but to each other. The emphasis is thus as much on the depiction of the atmosphere and context of storytelling as on the exhibition of the act of narration. Formally, *The Weir* could be called a conventional drama apart from the fact that there is no action other than the chat leading up to the narratives. Though especially the first story told resembles traditional narratives, the play presents oral traditions in a stage of dying or becoming mere folklore. An outsider is needed to initiate the storytelling, and the narration is part of an acting of the bachelors as picturesque countrypeople who are still rooted in their traditions. The alienation of the bachelors from traditional supernatural beliefs is demonstrated by the rapidity with which they distance themselves from their stories when confronted with the woman's account of her supernatural experience. Also the development from heterodiegetic to homodiegetic narration in *The Weir* is different from that in the plays of the Irish Literary Revival. While in the drama of Lady Gregory, the communal narrative is adopted by the individual, in *The Weir*, the communal story is *replaced* by individual confessions.⁷ After the woman's narrative, one of the bachelors tells the central episode of his life story. Interestingly, a similar shift from heterodiegetic, ritualistic to homodiegetic, confessional narration also forms the central event in the other contemporary Irish play that stages oral storytelling within the conventional dramatic form: Tom Murphy's *Bailegangaire* (1985).

⁷ Scott T. Cummings has pointed out that the search for individual identity is at the core of all of McPherson's narrative monologues (2000, 303).

Instead of a collective Irish identity, individual identities are negotiated in *Bailegangaire* and *The Weir*, and this observation can be generalised with reference to all of the Irish contemporary plays discussed in this paper. Although contemporary Irish theatre continues to explore and criticise national historiography and collective identities, it does not depict oral storytelling but rituals, memory spaces, and written texts as the primary media of collective memory. Whereas the Irish Literary Revival attempted to absorb historical memory into a ritualistic oral storytelling, thus turning history into myth, contemporary Irish theatre tends to distance oral storytelling from both ritual and history and to regard it as an alternative, liberating mode, particularly suitable for the expression of the individual. Orality still possesses a utopian function which, however, is very different from that in the Irish Literary Revival. The development may be described with Walter Benjamin's distinction between "memory" and "recollection" in his famous essay on the narrator: "[The memory] is dedicated to the *one* hero, the *one* quest and the *one* fight; [the recollection] to the many scattered facts."⁸ While memory looks for the typical and connects every event with the network of all existing stories and the mythical patterns governing them, "recollection" attempts to capture the particular and individual in homogenous and abstract time and space.⁹ Benjamin ascribes "memory" to oral cultures and "recollection" to cultures dominated by written communication. Ironically, it could thus be argued that storytelling in contemporary Irish theatre with its emphasis on the individual confession reflects the continuity of Irish oral traditions less than the completed transition to a culture dominated by literacy and mass media.

5. Conclusion

Storytelling of some length could only enter the Irish stage with the introduction of epic forms of theatre. If there is in existence a particularly strong Irish disposition for oral narratives, it was dependent on Japanese, European and American models to find full expression in the theatre. Yet it is questionable as to whether the development from an epic to a post-epic narration in Irish theatre was intended or perceived as a radical breakthrough beyond traditional theatre. Although contemporary Irish theatre texts share some interests and forms with those of the loose international artistic movement that Lehmann calls Post-dramatic Theatre, post-epic narration is not used to establish an avant-garde, and the popularity of Conor McPherson's narrative monologues demonstrates that such a form of narration has quite easily achieved a compatibility with a large audience's habits of reception. This is partly due to a general process of familiarisation with narration in the theatre. The alienating effects of Epic Theatre have certainly weakened somewhat with the years. But post-epic narration is also more easily accessible than Epic Theatre because it does not disrupt or multiply

⁸ "[Das Gedächtnis] ist dem *einen* Helden geweiht, der *einen* Irrfahrt oder dem *einen* Kampf; [das Eingedenken] den *vielen* verstreuten Gegebenheiten" (Benjamin, 1977a, 454; my translation).

⁹ Cf. Ong's thesis that round characters presuppose literacy (1982, 152).

the primary fiction of scenic action with a secondary fiction in which the act of narration is located. While narration in Epic Theatre alienates the scenic representation, post-epic forms familiarise us with the act of narration on stage by creating intense relationships between narrator and story on the one hand and between narrator and listeners on the other. Narrative monologues cling to conventions which are known to the spectator from other contexts like fiction, film and everyday situations. Furthermore, the Irish authors of these texts have not stopped writing conventional drama but on the contrary, as in the case of McPherson, have re-integrated the act of narration into the traditional form. Perhaps, the so-called post-epic forms of narration in contemporary Irish theatre text should not be described as an avant-garde movement but as the creation of a new genre.

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NORBERT H. PLATZ

Reconciling Humans with Nature through Aesthetic Experience: The Green Dimension in Australian Poetry

Abstract: This essay considers how the aesthetic appreciation of nature can enhance environmental bonding and caring, and contribute to engendering a reconciliation of humans with their natural environment. After a brief examination of Judith Wright's view of Australia's ecological predicament, some core constituents of the aesthetic experience of nature will be outlined to serve as a philosophical underpinning of Wright's aesthetico-ethical concept of reconciliation. Major arguments taken from her essays are meant to throw some new light not only on Wright's own poetry but on the reconciliatory character of Australian nature poetry in general. Short analyses of individual poems by John Shaw Neilson, Douglas Stewart, John Blight, Judith Wright and Ruby A. Penna focus on specific themes such as "aesthetic wealth and well-being," "translating nature into a work of art," "science-based aesthetic perception," "the symbolic reversal of human ascendancy," and "exposing ecological damage." In my conclusion, I claim that poets could take a high profile on reconciling humans with nature. Their insights need to be put on the agenda of interventionist action. My specific concern, here, is to consider how an aesthetic appreciation of nature might enhance our practice of bonding with, and caring for, the environment.

... creatures like flowers and jewels wait dumbly
for my eyes' translation [...] Lord, how the earth
and the creatures look at me.

Judith Wright, "The Encounter"

1. Australia's Ecological Predicament

Australian literature contains a substantial body of knowledge that could be used to constitute the core of an environmental ethic. A great many Australian literary texts could be studied with the purpose of helping usher in the desirable concept of an environmentally literate community.¹

¹ This essay originates in a research project sponsored by the German Volkswagen Foundation. The title of this project is "The Green Dimension in Australian Poetry: A Bibliographical Guide for Study and Research." I have here attempted to compile a bibliography of Australian poems whose thematic focus is nature and the natural environment. Although this bibliogra-

There is considerable agreement that the Australian continent has been severely exploited and consequently suffered enormous damage since the arrival of white settlers. That Australia is a most vulnerable continent has been pointed out by many a specialist such as, for example, George Seddon: "No other Western highly urbanized and industrial country is as ecologically vulnerable as Australia. Advanced technology makes massive demands on natural systems" (Seddon, 1997, 67). One may also consider William Lines' comment on the Australian settler culture's future-oriented lifestyle as a potential cause of its conspicuous alienation from the natural environment:

Australians have transformed the continent so rapidly and extensively that the land has never had a chance to become a home. Australians have lived and continue to live in the future and so cannot possibly respect or even notice the present. The jarrah and karri forest exist only to be exploited for that future. (Lines, 1998, 3)

As is well known, Judith Wright (1915–2000) offered an unsystematic, yet eager and extensive view of Australia's ecological predicament in her many talks and essays. Evidence of this can be found in the two collections *Because I Was Invited* and *Going on Talking*. Those who are familiar with her work will not be surprised by a stark accusation like this: "Our history isn't reassuring. We have been predators on this country. Few of us ever thought it necessary to learn from our mistakes and care for, maintain and restore raped landscapes [...]" (Wright, 1992a, 117). Judith Wright refers to the unacknowledged causes and effects of what might be called an 'environmental war' which Australians have waged on their country. At bottom, the causes come down to a widely practised consumer egoism. Describing the latter, Wright uses the terms "private exploitation and uncontrolled use of land ... in the interests of profit." These factors, she argues poignantly,

have left us with a country whose soils are depleted, eroded, salinised and piled in our waterways and estuaries, whose water itself is chemically and organically polluted, whose forests are disappearing and no longer profitable, and whose income drops yearly as the effects of our waste and greed sink deeper. (1992b, 83)²

In her essay "Conservation as a Concept," Wright places Australia's predicament in a global context by pointing to the "accelerating exploitation of the resources of this planet" (1975a, 189) as triggered off by the scientific and technological powers that are available all over the world. Yet the uncontrolled use of these powers, she claims, is destructive not only for nature but also for humans. Implicitly Wright subscribes to E.F. Schumacher's widely accepted conclusion that

phy is still under construction, it has already been published on the worldwide web to make it accessible for research (cf. <http://www.uni-trier.de/platz2/greend/australia>). What I am basically concerned with, in pursuing this bibliographical project, is to facilitate access to a corpus of texts that lend themselves to putting nature and the natural environment again on the agenda of literary discussion.

² In the same essay she also states: "All through our history, Australia has meant nothing to us but the short-term dollar. But the real costs of the dollar are yet to come home to us" (1992b, 90).

humans have “built a system of production that ravishes nature and a type of society that mutilates man” (Schumacher, 1987, 246).

Considering the philosophical and cultural history of the West, Wright diagnoses “the separation of man from nature” (1975a, 190) as the major psychological cause of Australia’s ecological crisis. In more general terms, this “separation of man from nature” could also be identified as an epistemological, existential and behavioural rift that alienates humans from the biosphere on which their lives depend. Like other human dwellers on planet Earth, Australians too indulge in repressing environmental urgencies.

What solution does Wright envisage – both for Australia and the world as a whole? How can people reconcile themselves with Nature? In order to “remedy” the results of our ruthless exploitation, she claims we would have “to revise most radically [not only] our exploitative techniques, but [also] a whole attitude of mind and feeling that are very deeply rooted in our whole history of our dealings with the natural world” (1975a, 189). Therefore she strongly recommends: “What we have to do now is to change the way we look at the world” (1992c, 220). Such a change of “the way we look at the world” could be accomplished through a (re)discovery of the aesthetic experience of nature as was proposed and explored by the English Romantics.

2. Remedying Environmental Blindness through Aesthetic Experience

Over the last two decades of the 20th century, environmental philosophy has become a lively and prolific field of research.³ In the wake of and in fruitful cooperation with this increasing intellectual embrace of environmental issues, ecocriticism has established itself as a new branch of literary criticism (see e.g. Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996; Coupe, 2000). Although the latter has not yet developed a coherent methodology, the practitioners of ecocriticism all share an orientation towards a new world picture: “The starting point for the ecocritic is that there really is an unprecedented global environmental crisis, and that this crisis poses some of the great political and cultural questions of our time” (Kerridge, 1998, 5). Significantly, both environmental philosophy (in particular its branch of environmental ethics) and ecocriticism have discovered in the aesthetics of the environment a major topic worth investigating (see e.g. Benson, 2000; Pratt, 2000; Carlson, 2000). What is important for our present argument is the agreement shared by many environmental specialists that a positive aesthetic response to nature is a vital prerequisite for a positive moral response (cf. Eliot, 1997, 71). In addition, ecofeminism has also provided important insights into the relationship between nature-responsiveness and moral responsibility.⁴

³ An early survey is provided by Zimmermann, 1993.

⁴ See e.g. Warren, 1999. Murphy submits the idea of rendering nature as a “speaking subject” (1995, 12-14).

For the orientation of the reader who may not be conversant with aesthetic theory and practice, let me sketch out a few basic points and ideas. From a historical point of view it is important to note that after the key categories of *the picturesque* (Joseph Addison), *the sublime* (Edmund Burke), and *disinterestedness* (Immanuel Kant) were developed in the 18th century and cultivated during the period of Romanticism (Pratt, 2000, 143-45), the aesthetic appreciation of nature went into decline during the course of the 19th century (Carlson, 2000, 4). Since the 1990s, the Romantic mode of perceiving and interpreting nature has been reinstated as a legacy encapsulating a good many valuable ideas about how to translate “nature” into meaningful patterns for behavioural adjustment (Coupe, 2000, 6).

At a fundamental level, the core constituents of the aesthetic experience of nature may be sketched out as follows:

i. The natural world appears to us as an *aistheton*, that is, a given sensuousness (Böhme, 1992, 91).

ii. Poets and artists respond to, and appreciate, nature’s self-appearance. There is a distinct emotional component in their response. This emotional component was explored and emphasised by the Romantic poets (especially by William Wordsworth). From a modern point of view it has been argued: “Feelings were important for the Romantics partly because they thought of them as the way in which nature manifests itself to us. Therefore, in heeding feelings people heed the promptings of nature” (Pratt, 2000, 32). From a modern stance it may be convincingly argued that it is through feelings and emotions that humans can also develop an awareness of nature’s intrinsic values.⁵ The issue of nature’s intrinsic values has been moved into a prominent position by Arne Naess and other representatives of Deep Ecology.⁶

iii. Very often the “engagement model” of response is predominant. According to Carlson, “the engagement model beckons us to immerse ourselves in our natural environment in an attempt to obliterate traditional dichotomies such as subject and object, and ultimately reduce to as small a degree as possible the distance between ourselves and nature. In short, aesthetic experience is taken to involve a total immersion of the appreciator in the object of appreciation” (2000, 7). The specific ethical benefit of such a total immersion consists in the suspension of the spectator’s utilitarian interest. Very often the spectator is struck by a sense of wonder about what s/he perceives. This “attitude of wonder is notably and essentially *other-acknowledging*” (Hepburn, 2000, 203). The spectator does not want to destroy what he sees but wants to keep it preserved and have it available for further enjoyment. Thus, human exploitative desires are halted (at least for the moment). Being emotionally absorbed into a natural scene, humans are

⁵ Goodin mentions a natural-resource-based theory of value which “links the value of things to some naturally-occurring property or properties of the objects themselves” (1991, 64).

⁶ Here is a brief definition: “The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent worth). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes” (Naess, 1993, 197).

also prepared to abandon the attitude of superiority and dominance that has been deeply ingrained in Western cultural consciousness since the Enlightenment.

iv. Nature has much spectacular scenery, such as the Great Barrier Reef, for example, but many less spectacular natural qualities are concealed. Nature's concealed (or background) qualities, however, can be revealed by acts of creative perception. The Romantics emphasised the concept of the imagination when describing the creative fusion of our sensory intake, on the one hand, and our active mental patterning that gives shape and meaning to what we see and hear, on the other. It is through such acts of active imaginative perception that the aesthetic qualities of natural objects and their ethical concurrences are revealed to our mind. Apart from this, our imaginative perception also grants us varying degrees of freedom and happiness. Admiring what we creatively see, we are able to enhance our own well-being since we feel free from the compulsion of material need and self-interest (cf. O'Neill, 2000, 208-09). We come into our own, enjoying a pleasurable state of contemplation. It is this state which poets are concerned with when creating nature poems.

v. The spectator/poet/artist interprets what s/he perceives and translates it into culturally-conditioned patterns of understanding. Therefore, both the act of translation and its embeddedness in the perceiver's cultural background must be taken into consideration. Different patterns of responding to nature are conditioned by the specific time, place and needs of the perceiver's cultural set-up. This cultural matrix requires attention if one is dealing with representations of nature that have their origin either in the Western world or in Asia, or have been produced by white or Aboriginal people.

3. A Thumbnail Sketch of Judith Wright's Aesthetico-Ethical Concept of Reconciliation

This explanation enables us to see more clearly what Judith Wright has in mind when she invites us to reform our attitude towards nature. The specific mental capacity we should employ when encountering the natural environment is, in her prose works, specified clearly as the faculty of 'imagination.' Implicitly, she seems to subscribe to Wordsworth's discovery that "nature and human consciousness were splendidly adapted to one another" (Kroeber, 1994, 12). We are on safe ground, therefore, if we assume that Judith Wright shares "the romantic premise that the imaginativeness essential to poetry is the primary human capability enabling us to interact in a responsible manner with our environment" (Kroeber, 1994, 21). Like Wordsworth, she, too, emphasises the vital connection of imagination and feeling: "Value is conferred, of course, not by objective rationality but by the feeling and imagination of man ..." (1975a, 194). In practice this means that we should open ourselves to the cognitive appraisals inherent in our feelings and emotions. If we want to "change the way we look at the world" (1992c, 220), we cannot do so by repressing our feelings and emotions but by

deliberately acknowledging the affective qualities of the natural phenomena we see. When, in a further step, we engage in “a conscious mental struggle towards a new attitude to the world and our relation with it” (1992d, 105), we shall be prepared to acknowledge the intrinsic value(s) that reveal themselves to us when watching nature and natural processes. Our awareness of the values inherent in nature will allow us to discover “the capacity to change our values” (1975b, 256) at a more fundamental and revolutionary level. For “the capacity to change our values” is emphasised by Wright as “a human resource which is at present ... unrecognised as among our important properties” (*ibid.*). Since we are meant to “discover values and meanings to act as the basis for a new environmental ethic” (1992d, 105), the power of creative perception will grant us the opportunity to empathise with what we see, and, ideally, to abandon our attitude of superiority or power-consciousness. Involved in imaginative perception, we become disinterested in and hence disregard utilitarian considerations. We operate outside market conditions. The economic drive, which in Wright’s diagnosis has contributed so much to Australia’s ecological crisis, slackens: we don’t want to sell and buy. With respect to nature, we do not define ourselves primarily as greedy consumers. Our enlightened aestheticism endows the perceived natural object with the meanings and values which nature manifests in its own right. We reach a more enlightened epistemological stance, since creative *aisthesis* enables us to bridge the gulf between dissecting intellect and holistic feeling. Considering these arguments, we can make sense of Judith Wright’s stipulation:

[...] if we are to get beyond the impasses into which Western masculine linear-thinking – the ideal of Material Progress – has led us, ... we need above all to cultivate, not just our intellects, but our poetic faculties of feeling and emotion. (1992e, 24)

An ethical implication of cultivating “our poetic faculties” is: We do not any longer seek governance over what we see. Here a brief comment is in order to illustrate that Judith Wright was indeed a progenitor of vital ideas that have gained momentum in more recent ecological thought. As is well-known, the dichotomy between ‘self’ and ‘other’ plays an important role in many branches of contemporary philosophical, social and cultural theory. Historically, nature has very often been constructed as the ‘other,’ representing a subordinate antithesis to the ‘human.’ As the downgraded *other*, this construct of nature could easily be submitted to human domination.⁷ This has led to the questionable and dangerous “claim that humans by their very nature are superior to other species” (Taylor, 1993, 70). However, if we practise an aesthetic perception of the natural environment, we tend to discard the idea of human ascendancy, while acknowledging an egalitarian relationship between human selfhood and nature-based alterity, or

⁷ “Historically, one finds the self/other dichotomy being translated into the mind/body, male/female and humanity/nature dichotomies, with woman and nature both embodied as the antithesis of spirit, mind, and culture. [...] What we find repeatedly is the construct of alienated Other being used to repress or suppress the relationship, the otherness between groups in order to objectify and distance one group or culture from another in the service of some form of domination” (Murphy, 1998, 41).

in more concrete terms, an egalitarian relationship between us and the natural phenomena that surround us.⁸

Up to this point, I have been quoting selectively from only a couple of Judith Wright's essays, but in her prose work there are many more useful passages which could be cited to support my argument. However, I do not intend to focus on Wright exclusively. The major arguments taken from her essays are merely meant to outline in more general terms how poetry might be conducive to those attitudinal changes which would promote human reconciliation with nature. What I have been driving at so far is a tentative conceptualisation of the ethical potential enshrined in poetry. The insights provided can be applied not only to Wright's own nature poetry, but also to nature poems written by a great many other Australian authors.

4. Case Studies: Australian Nature Poems

In the following section I should like to turn theory into practice and test the usefulness of the outlined considerations by analysing a few selected poems. On the basis of these examples, some conclusions may be drawn as to the reconciling effects embodied in the specific aesthetic experiences which the poems convey.

4.1 Aesthetic Wealth and Well-Being in John Shaw Neilson's "The Poor, Poor Country"

In "The Poor, Poor Country" (1986, 23), John Shaw Neilson (1872-1942) explicitly focuses on a significant evaluation that underpins a good deal of Australian nature poetry – the aesthetic wealth and well-being that can be experienced in nature.

Oh 'twas a poor country, in Autumn it was bare.
The only green was the cutting grass and the sheep found little there.
Oh, the thin wheat and the brown oats were never two foot high,
But down *in the poor country no pauper was I.*⁹

My wealth it was the glow that lives forever in the young,
'Twas on the *brown water*, in the *green leaves* it hung,
The *blue cranes* fed their young all day – how far in a tall tree!
And the poor, *poor country made no pauper of me.*

⁸ In this connection, Shirley Walker's astute observation deserves mention: "To redress this over-emphasis upon the power of the mind, Wright urges the return to a belief in both an exterior world of value, and a creative imagination, conferring value and meaning, and the interdependence of the two. In any such reconciliation the poet must play a crucial role, for poetry, Wright states, is 'a reconciling force where self and outer image can come together in understanding'" (1991, 10).

⁹ Here, and in the following quotations, the emphases in italics are mine.

Throughout the six stanzas of the poem, aesthetic wealth and well-being are axiomatically contrasted with economic wealth. Aesthetic well-being compensates for social poverty in such a way that the speaker is able to redefine his living conditions in acceptable terms. Of course, there is no denial that he was born and grew up in the “poor country” of South Australia. A compensation, however, is provided by the natural phenomena he observes – “the brown water,” “the green leaves,” “blue cranes,” and, in the following stanzas, the singing of the swans and mountain ducks. In the refrains of each stanza the speaker asserts: “in the poor country no pauper was I.” Even when the “blue cranes” fly out of his sight (in the final stanza), he does not feel poor because he has stored his aesthetic wealth in his memory. His personal existential choice liberates him from social constraints.¹⁰

4.2 Translating Nature into a Work of Art in Douglas Stewart’s “The Snow-Gum”

In “The Snow-Gum” (1994, 64) by Douglas Stewart (1913–1985) we participate in an epiphanic “translation” of a piece of landscape into a work of art.¹¹

It is the snow-gum *silently*,
 In noon’s blue and the silvery
 Flowering of light on snow,
 Performing its slow *miracle*
 Where upon drift and icicle
Perfect lies its shadow.

The speaker is “grabbed” immediately by a striking phenomenon in the landscape he beholds. The central object in this landscape is a snow-gum in a winter setting. In Stewart’s text the snow-gum is “silently” performing its “perfect” “miracle” for the beholder. In the course of the poet’s visual interaction, the snow-gum is endowed with expressive qualities that yield pleasure. This emotional element of pleasure is ratified in Western cultural history as an end, and value, in itself. As an unsurpassable value, pleasure is the constitutive criterion of what in traditional aesthetics is called “aesthetic pleasure” (Sheppard, 1987, 64). In the context of the philosophy of art, we cannot overlook the fact that the notion of “perfection” is referred to four times in Stewart’s text as a whole. This is significant, insofar as ‘perfection’ and ‘harmony’ have been regarded as basic formal prerequisites of ‘pleasure’ since classical antiquity. What strikes us is that “the arrangement of shapes and colours” in Stewart’s real landscape can be appreciated in the same way as “we can appreciate a similar arrangement in a painted landscape” (Sheppard, 1987, 59).¹²

¹⁰ Whether or not a Marxist would approve of Neilson’s existential choice is something which, for the moment, is left out of consideration. Yet it is interesting to note that the 19th century social critic John Ruskin also gives pre-eminence to one “[class] of precious things in the world” being “those that God gives us for nothing – sun, air and life” (2000, 30).

¹¹ For the landscape painting model of representing the environment see Carlson, 2000, 6.

¹² For a similar kind of pleasure-yielding aesthetic perception one could also examine Stewart’s “Spider Gums” (1991, 138–39).

What is important from an ecocritical perspective is that poetry is capable of sensitising us to the benefit of cost-free pleasure. There is, as might be expected, an ethical concomitance of the pleasure principle. If we have a refined awareness of the kind of pleasure we can enjoy in a natural scene, we do not want to have the latter damaged or destroyed. There is a lot of good sense in a basic insight provided by the philosophy of aesthetics, that we have “a desire to continue or repeat the experience” (Sheppard, 1987, 64) that has pleased us. When we enjoy a vintage wine on one occasion, we want to have many occasions to enjoy it again.

An abundant variety of plants, birds, fish etc. have provided topics for poetry. Browsing through Australian poetry anthologies, one can find countless poems that translate selected objects from natural scenery into textual representations which remind us of paintings. The aesthetico-ethical message that can be distilled from such poems is to preserve species diversity.

4.3 Science-Based Aesthetic Perception in John Blight’s “Crab”

“Crab” (1991, 132) by John Blight (1913-1995) has been chosen because this sonnet is typical of another feature of Australian nature poems: It shows a science-based critical probing¹³ into the process of evolution.

Shellfish and octopus, and all the *insane*
Thinking of the undersea, to us is lost.
 At most is *food, in our higher plane.*
 But, what of this submarine ghost –
 Life, without its meddling monkey? Can
 The crab regenerate into prototype *merman*?
 Sea, of nightmare pressure and mask –
 Green faces in the gloom – *what is your task*
In creation; or is it over? Has space
 Such aquariums of planets trapped? *Was*
Eden thus? Oh, pressures which the lace
 Sponge of the brain survives. What has
 The life of the sea of *my ignorance*,
 But such creatures; much of this wild-shaped chance!

The crab fascinates the person who watches it. The speaker is at a loss as to how the crab’s position and function in the natural world can be defined. The science of biology has a simple answer to this, by categorizing the crab in the Linnean hierarchical system. Here, on the other hand, the crab is approached by a speaker who has changed his vantage point. He first ascribes to the crab a facetious position as a “meddling monkey.” Then he considers alternatives: could the crab climb up on the ladder of evolution and become a “merman”? The very existence of the crab, whose habitat is the gloomy darkness of the sea, causes the speaker to ask provoking questions about the purpose and current state of evolution, e.g.

¹³ For a science-based model of presenting natural phenomena see Carlson: “... we must appreciate nature in light of our knowledge of what it is, that is, in light of knowledge provided by the natural sciences, especially the environmental sciences such as geology, biology and ecology” (Carlson, 2000, 6).

“what is your task / In creation; or is it over? Has space / Such aquariums of planets trapped?” The climax of this disconcerting questioning is: “Was / Eden thus?” The speaker’s ignorance of “all the insane / Thinking of the undersea” (referred to at the beginning) is disclosed in the final lines of the text:

What has
The life of the sea of *my ignorance*,
But such creatures; much of this wild-shaped chance!

The poem imaginatively ‘transfers’ the crab, which for the consumer is “food, in our higher plane,” into the deep mystery of earth history by tentatively focusing on the evolutionary potential underlying the lower plane in which the crab lives. The text thus creates provocative “new cognitions and emotions” (Shibles, 1995, 165)¹⁴ concerning the uncertain human stance in the biosphere. In a poem like this, anthropocentrism and human ascendancy are questioned. Numerous other Australian poems also underline our myopic awareness of the creative potential of evolution. They claim both the cognitive and moral need to redefine the human position in the universe.

4.4 A Symbolic Reversal of Human Ascendancy in Judith Wright’s “Swamp Plant” (1976)¹⁵

The subject of this poem is an inconspicuous little plant, “Half-size to a grasshopper,” that lives on “swamp-edges.” There is nothing striking about this little plant. It is less impressive than the narcissus which in Greek mythology the goddess “Persephone could have gathered.” So far it has been noticed only by science which gave the plant its “dog-Latin” name *Mazus Pumila*, *pumila* meaning “very little,” “dwarf-like”:

Only science, then, has noticed you, not poetry.
It’s that way round in this country,
upside down as ever.
Living on swamp-edges
turning your face down shyder than Wordsworth’s violet,
no words but *dog-Latin*
have tagged you.

Science cannot ascribe any value or meaning to this little plant, emphasising its unimportance by imposing the epithet *pumila* on it. The lyrical I, on the other hand, uses her imaginative and empathic powers on it. What is interesting is that the persona first discovers some barely noticeable features of this little plant, and then encircles them with a subtle verbal contour:

small earth-hugging rosette,
stem like a thread and downward-turning bell
of meditative blue.

¹⁴ Here I am quoting a phrase used in another context.

¹⁵ In Wright, 1994a, 367.

Needless to say, the cognitive interest in the little plant is triggered off by a feeling of compassion and wonder. Significantly, the persona then enters into a dialogue with the little plant, in the course of which it is addressed as though it were a human partner:

Half-size to a grasshopper,
what insect is small enough
to drink from *you*?

This dialogue is maintained throughout the poem. Repeatedly the speaker uses the second-person singular: “But for *your* colour;” “to *your* less-than-a-finger’s height;” “Leaving *you* there, I take *you* home with me.” Thus the non-human other is constituted as a speaking subject rather than constituted merely as an object of our speaking.¹⁶

What is also striking is another detail which throws into relief the persona’s revised concept of the relationship between the human and non-human world: The persona kneels down in order to look at the tiny plant more closely. In doing this, she deviates from the normal response characteristic of the average Australians, who would not do this. “Nor do our people go / down on their knees at swamp-edges,” Wright states. In a symbolic gesture the speaker deliberately reverses the culturally-ratified human ascendancy typical of Western thought by lowering herself to gaze at the tiny plant. This contact is becoming increasingly relevant to her. What she takes home with her is a new awareness of this plant’s intrinsic worth that has been revealed to her through her humble dialogic interaction with it.

4.5 Exposing Ecological Damage

When browsing through anthologies, one can find legions of poems that expose the ecological mismanagement of the Australian continent. The major characteristic of these poems is not a poetic embodiment of reconciling attitudes (as is the case with the texts we considered above) but a rhetorical attack on the violent ecological treatment inflicted on the land. These poems are also based on the sensory input experienced by the personae. However, the afflicting input does not yield beneficial feelings but, on the contrary, arouses righteous anger, indignation and sadness. Some of these poems lament the loss of something gone for ever, as is the case in Judith Wright’s “Eroded Hills” (1994b, 81). Other, sometimes less sophisticated texts, express a kind of criticism that invites action and intervention, as is the case in Ruby A. Penna, “The Usurpers” (1980, 48).

“Eroded Hills” is one of Wright’s first poems to deal explicitly with environmental issues. It is remarkable that as early as 1953, when environmental

¹⁶ To render nature as a speaking subject, “not in the romantic mode of rendering nature as object for the self-constitution of the poet as a speaking subject, but as a character within texts with its own existence” (Murphy, 1995, 14) is a representational mode strongly advocated by recent ecofeminist criticism.

concerns did not yet worry people, Judith Wright focused on the settlers' destructive practices. The first stanza refers to her grandfather's ecological atrocity:

These hills my father's father stripped;
and, beggars to the winter wind,
they crouch like shoulders naked and whipped –
humble, abandoned, out of mind

In the lines that follow, the persona indulges in fond memories of the integrity of nature and an undisturbed relationship between humans and the natural environment. But there is also the awareness of an imminent process which might lead to the further extinction of plants and animals. This becomes obvious at the very end of the poem, when the possibility of the disappearance of "the last leaf and bird" is mentioned: "When the last leaf and bird go / let my thoughts stand like trees here."

Penna's "The Usurpers" shares with Wright the theme of the irresponsible clearing of native trees from the Australian landscape. Whereas Wright criticises the settlers' attempt to gain usable land for agricultural purposes, Penna attacks the logging industry for its profit-oriented cutting down of native trees such as jarrah, sandalwood, wandoo and marri. (The devastating logging practices are of course also a major theme in Judith Wright's essays; cf. 1992b, 90). The disappearance of these trees has put an end to irreplaceable ecosystems. Reafforestation programmes could not supply comparable ecosystemic equivalents. These deficiencies have considerably threatened the survival of native species of flora and fauna.

Gone are the old hollow logs of the forest
Where shy native creatures found refuge or home;
Gone, too, the hollows for possum and parrot –
Pines have but clean trunks and feathery domes.

Penna's "The Usurpers" drives home its moral message in the final rhetorical question:

Must everything living
Be subject to use or to balance of trade
While so much of beauty and fragrance forever
Lies smothered in pine leaves in pine forest shade?

5. Conclusion

"Life on planet Earth is no longer guaranteed by a divine order; it now rests in the weak and fumbling hands of us all" (Melucci, 1996, 128). What can the poets' "fumbling" words do to reconcile us with a better way of living that would enhance the chances for human survival? As we have seen, an aesthetic experiencing of nature grants us an immediate awareness of its intrinsic values. Thus one is entitled to conclude that the aesthetic insights to be gained by interacting with natural phenomena also have a political dimension. Aesthetic insights basically

question the ideology of consumer capitalism and its monopolistic assumption that 'value' is identical with profit and money. Unlike the power-crazy users of Australia, Australian poets are aware of the so-called "intangible"¹⁷ benefits of the natural environment, benefits that can be enjoyed in hearts and minds.¹⁸ They manifest what in the words of Tim Winton could be called "a respectful curiosity" (Winton, 1999, xxviii) about the natural world, and thus widen our understanding of it.

An impressive contingent of Australian nature poems does not just constitute an isolated sanctuary of its own. On the contrary, these poems widen our knowledge of nature and thus deserve consideration in a modern knowledge-based society. Since poets have accumulated a good deal of environmental wisdom, their voices should be respected when decisions concerning the future of the natural environment are to be made. If under the given circumstances "human culture must learn to circumscribe again the territory where silence and respect are due to whatever exists purely because it exists" (Melucci, 1996, 128), the aesthetic experience embodied in poetry can vitally contribute to this learning process. Poets take a high profile on reconciling humans with nature. Their insights ought to be put on the agenda of interventionist action. Therefore let us give nature poems a chance to unfold their cognitive power by reading and teaching them.

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¹⁷ Term used by Goodland and Ledec, 1998, 555.

¹⁸ Allusion to Pollak and MacNabb's title *Hearts and Minds*, 2000.

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CHRISTOPH REINFANDT

‘Putting Things up against Each Other’: Media History and Modernization in Adam Thorpe’s *Ulverton*

Abstract: This article examines Adam Thorpe’s novel *Ulverton* (1992) as a prime example of what literature can achieve from its increasingly marginalized position in an unfolding media culture. It traces in detail how the novel combines a thematic focus on the history of the fictional village of Ulverton from the 17th century to the present with a formal staging of unfolding conditions of mediality which are in turn utilized as a medium of narrative progression. The novel’s self-reflexive engagement with the interrelation between media history and modernization is based on a flexible post-modernist poetics of “putting things up against each other” which establishes the genre of fiction as a kind of ‘meta-medium’ for storing and communicating information as well as for processing cultural relativity.

In an essay called “Is Nothing Sacred?”, written in 1990 in response to the “affair” to which his name has become chained, Salman Rushdie points out that there are good reasons for considering the novel “the crucial art form [...] of the post-modern age” (1992, 424). At the heart of his argument lies an insistence on the freedom that is opened up by literature’s old-fashioned, “low-technology” mediality. “Literature,” Rushdie writes,

is the art least subject to external control, because it is made in private. The act of making it requires only one person, one pen, one room, some paper. (Even the room is not absolutely essential.) Literature is the most low-technology of art forms. It requires neither a stage nor a screen. It calls for no interpreters, no actors, producers, camera crews, costumiers, musicians. It does not even require the traditional apparatus of publishing, as the long-running success of samizdat literature demonstrates. (*ibid.*)

A similar argument, though slightly more on the defensive with regard to contemporary literature’s precarious position in media history, can be found in Jochen Hörisch’s monograph with the punning title *Ende der Vorstellung: Die Poesie der Medien* (1999). Hörisch acknowledges that the book as the characteristic medium of literature is moving to the periphery of an unfolding media age, and that the relationship between the private and the public sphere as structured and presupposed by modern ‘bourgeois’ literature and evoked by Salman Rushdie is changing accordingly. But, Hörisch wonders, does this peripheral position not offer a better

view of the tumultuous processes at the centre of today's media culture?¹ There are indeed a number of recent literary texts (Rushdie's novels among them) which emphatically reject today's fashionable denigration of literature's relevance. These texts recognize that the seeming weakness of literature's outdated mediality does still offer advantages that are specific to literature (and literature only), and these texts try to make use of the privileged vantage point of observation and reflection that results from the newly found 'ex-centricity' of modern literature in its advanced age (Hörisch's pun).²

One of these texts, and a most interesting one with regard to literature's position in an unfolding media culture, is Adam Thorpe's novel *Ulverton*, which was published in 1992.³ In spite of the fact that *Ulverton* breaks with realistic conventions, the novel has found an astonishingly wide readership,⁴ and it has also found a secure place in the emerging canon of late 20th-century fiction as defined by literary scholarship. In fact, the novel has been singled out as an exemplary case of a literary engagement with problems of 'Englishness' (cf. Steinhage, 1999 and Griem, 2000) and as a typical example of hybrid tendencies in contemporary fiction (cf. Nünning, 1995, 341-43, 349-58 and Galster, 2002, 329-56). In this paper, I will trace in detail how the novel combines a thematic focus on the history of the fictional village of Ulverton in the South-West of England from the 17th century to the present with a formal staging of unfolding conditions of mediality. Accordingly, I will begin with an analysis of the novel's complex narrative form, which rejects traditional linear modes of narration and utilizes media history as a medium of narrative progression instead. I will then trace the interrelation between media history and modernization as staged in the novel. All these aspects combined will result in a reading of Thorpe's novel which paradigmatically illustrates my introductory remarks about contemporary literature's specific potential and function in today's media culture.

1. Media History and Narrative Form

The most striking feature of *Ulverton* is the novel's formal discontinuity, which is counterbalanced by a continuity of place. While the first chapter, a first-person

¹ Cf. Hörisch, 1999, 130: "Zusammen mit der klassischen Öffentlichkeit (und ihrem Komplement: der Privatsphäre), zu deren Strukturierung es entschieden beitrug, wandert das Buch an die Peripherie des entfaltenen Medienzeitalters. [...] Aber läßt sich von der Peripherie her nicht besser beobachten, was im tumultösen Zentrum vor sich geht?"

² Cf. Hörisch, 1999, 112: "Ermöglicht doch gerade die Ex-zentrität des alten Mediums seine privilegierte und überlegen(d)e Beobachterposition."

³ Page numbers given in the text refer to the following paperback edition: Adam Thorpe. *Ulverton*. London: Vintage, 1998. In addition to his (so far) five novels (*Ulverton* 1992, *Still* 1995, *Pieces of Light* 1998, *Nineteen Twenty-One* 2001 and *No Telling* 2003) Thorpe, who was born in 1956 in Paris, has published one collection of short stories (*Shifts* 2000) and three volumes of poetry (*Mornings in the Baltic* 1988, *Meeting Montaigne* 1990, *From the Neanderthal* 1999) as well as five radio plays for the BBC and one play for the theatre. Cf. <http://www.contemporarywriters.com>.

⁴ Cf. Thorpe's remark "*Ulverton* is selling well and is continuing to" (Hagenauer, 1996, n.p.).

narration by the shepherd William who recounts events which took place in 1650, introduces the reader to the village of Ulverton in a fairly conventional novelistic way, it turns out that this chapter is the only conventional literary narrative in the book. The following chapters present episodes from provincial life in Ulverton, jumping (roughly) from one generation to the next one,⁵ and they do so in all kinds of genres and forms. A passionate confessional sermon by the parish preacher, the Reverend Crispin Brazier, set in 1688, is followed by the diary of a well-to-do farmer written in 1712. The letters written in 1743 by the young and newlywed Mistress of Ulverton Hall to her lover William Sykes in London – letters obviously modelled on the contemporary fashion for epistolary novels – are followed by the letters from an illiterate Ulverton mother called Sarah Shail to her son who awaits his execution in London in 1775 – these letters are written by the only slightly less illiterate village tailor John Pounds. In 1803 the old joiner Samuel Daye tells a gentleman passing through Ulverton in a pub about a practical joke he played upon his former master Abraham Webb when he was young, and in 1830 a bored clerk moves swiftly between taking down the depositions of the townsfolk during a trial against Luddites in Ulverton on the one hand and long rambling letters to his fiancé on the other. In 1859 a woman photographer puts down brief comments on her photographic plates depicting scenes from Ulverton and, most strikingly, Egypt. Chapter 9, an interior monologue, charts the stream of consciousness of the old field worker and gardener Jo Perry while he is wandering about in Ulverton in 1887. The year 1914 is represented by an excerpt from the memoirs, written in 1928, of the colonial civil servant Fergusson who has retired to Ulverton after years of service in India, and the year 1953 is evoked through entries in the diary of Violet Nightingale, longtime secretary of the egocentric cartoonist and self-styled artist Herbert Bradman, among these the transcript of a radio broadcast by Herbert Bradman on the end of rationing in England. The novel finally comes to a close in the year 1988 in chapter 12, which comprises the post-production script of a TV-documentary on the history of estate agent Clive Walters's failed development project in Ulverton ("*A Year in the Life: Clive's Seasons*"). The following table provides a survey of this complex structure:

⁵ The years singled out by the text tend to imply more or less prominent events from British history: ch. 1/1650: beginning of Commonwealth, ch. 2/1688: the Glorious Revolution, ch. 3/1712: last witch trials/executions, ch. 4/1743: England's involvement in the War of the Austrian Succession, ch. 5/1775: beginning of the American War of Independence, ch. 7/1830: Luddism, ch. 8/1859: Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. 10/1914: beginning of WW I, ch. 11/1953: coronation of Elizabeth I, ch. 12/1988: The Thatcher era. Cf. Galster, 2002, 330. However, these events do not figure prominently or are not even mentioned in the text, except for ch. 7, which deals explicitly with Luddites on trial.

ch.	title	year	
1	<i>Return</i>	1650	shepherd story (first-person narration)
2	<i>Friends</i>	1688	confessional sermon by village priest
3	<i>Improvements</i>	1712	farmer's diary
4	<i>Leeward</i>	1743	letters by young mistress of Ulverton Hall (→ epistolary novel)
5	<i>Dissection</i>	1775	letters by illiterate Sarah Shail, written by village tailor
6	<i>Rise</i>	1803	old joiner's anecdote related in pub to gentle- man
7	<i>Deposition</i>	1830	trial transcripts, letters to fiancé by clerk
8	<i>Shutter</i>	1859	descriptions of photographic plates
9	<i>Stitches</i>	1887	interior monologue of old field worker (→ modernist fiction)
10	<i>Treasure</i>	1914	excerpts from memoirs of retired colonial civil servant
11	<i>Wing</i>	1953	diary of secretary, transcript of radio broadcast
12	<i>Here</i>	1988	post-production script of TV-documentary

Thorpe's novel, as much should be clear by now, is a historical novel that programmatically rejects the conventional realistic modes of representing a seemingly pre-existent reality characteristic of historical novels in a traditional sense. Instead, the synthetic narrative imitation of reality at large has been replaced by an analytic pseudo-documentary imitation of the language use of the past. Thorpe himself confirms this orientation when he comments in an interview that "in order to get into the mindset of a period you can't really do it without using the language of the period" (Hagenauer, 1996, n.p.).⁶ However, what has been passed down to us of the language use of the past has been, if at all, passed down in writing, and so it is not surprising that long stretches of *Ulverton* are well researched imitations of historical sources.⁷ The sermon in chapter 2, the journals in chapters 3 and 11, the letters in chapters 4, 5, and 7, the trial transcripts in chapter 7, the descriptions of photographs in chapter 8, the memoirs in chapter 10 and finally the transcripts of radio and television broadcasts in chapters 11 and 12, are examples of 'historicising period-pastiche' (cf. Galster, 2002, 346) and suggest quite plau-

⁶ See also Adam Thorpe, "The Squire's Treasure," an early version of what became chapter 10 of *Ulverton* ("Treasure 1914") which does not yet display the complete linguistic immersion in the period that is so poignant in the later version.

⁷ Cf. Thorpe's acknowledgements where he singles out documents on the Luddite uprisings in the early 19th century accessible in the Public Record Office, Major B. Lowsley's *A Glossary of Berkshire Words and Phrases* (1888) and Edward Lisle's *Observations on Husbandry* (1757). In fact, the diarist in chapter 3, ever interested in agricultural improvements, reports that he has met 'Mr Lisle, Esquire' on the road and engaged him in mutually fruitful conversation (48).

sibly that they are authentic and therefore non-literary and non-fictional historical sources.

However, the plausibility of this simulated documentary character that dominates most of the novel is put to a test in those chapters which are made up of instances of oral communication or even the 'content' of a protagonist's consciousness. In what way, the reader could ask him- or herself against the backdrop of the surrounding chapters, could an anecdote related colloquially and in dialect in a pub in 1803 possibly have found its way verbatim into chapter 6 of Thorpe's novel? A similar question applies to the rambling thoughts of field worker Perry, wandering about in *Ulverton* on a non-specified day of the year 1887, thoughts that make up chapter 9 of Thorpe's novel. Obviously, these chapters rely upon conventionalized literary modes of representation, and it is one of the implicit reflexive ironies of the novel that these non-documentary chapters with their staged orality create an impression of even greater immediacy and authenticity than the chapters based on seemingly authentic historical sources (for a general assessment of this phenomenon cf. Goetsch, 1985). As Thorpe himself points out, chapter 9 is particularly important in this respect:

One of the ironies of the book is that the long dialect chapter is [...] uttered by a peasant but in a copy of the great modernist text, Joyce's Molly Bloom monologue at the end of *Ulysses*. [...] Normally the peasant figure in English literature has a walk-on part, and he's laughed at, he's simple, and it is he who cannot understand the speech or the language of the other, the higher classes. So that's why giving him the most elusive and difficult chapter was very important; [...] I was trying to show that the peasant figure in the novel can have a language as rich and complex as great modernist texts. (Hagenauer, 1996, n.p.)

This is what Thorpe's *Ulverton* is most centrally concerned with: the novel employs all kinds of literary devices in order to make marginalized voices of history 'visible' and to reflect upon the precarious relationship between these voices on the one hand and the complex interwovenness of media history and the emerging historical records on the other.

It is this basic orientation which motivates the novel's highly characteristic utilization of media history as a framework for facilitating narrative development behind the protagonists' backs, as it were, a narrative development which represents the evolution of modern culture: In *Ulverton* the conventional narrative re-presentation, mediation and integration of a sequence of events is replaced by a sequence of examples for specific modes of mediation between orality and literacy in their respective historically specific socio-cultural embedding. The inaccessibility of the oral component in this medial continuum is compensated by a self-conscious and self-confident deployment of modes of representation that have been conventionalized in the course of the evolution of modern fiction from the 18th century to the present. At the same time, it is this self-consciously literary level which provides the means for an integration of the otherwise heterogeneous material in the novel, an integration which in turn is, as it were, beyond narrative. The most important factor in this respect is the novel's metafictional frame.

As mentioned earlier, the beginning of Thorpe's episodic history of the village of Ulverton is marked by the first-person narration of the shepherd William, set in 1650. As a starting point for the sequence of examples for specific modes of mediation between orality and literacy outlined so far one would expect this first-person narration to be recognizably in the oral tradition of storytelling. In contrast to the old joiner's story related in an Ulverton pub in chapter 6, however, there are no markers of orality and dialect in the opening story. What is more, chapter 1 is the only chapter that is unaffected by the mode of 'historicising period-pastiche' so characteristic of the rest of the novel.⁸ Instead it seems to be a narrative written in late 20th-century English, and this impression is supported by the enigmatic note "[Reprinted by kind permission of *The Wessex Nave*]" (19) at the end of the chapter. An explanation for all this is at last provided in the final chapter of the novel: Here we learn that it was the "LOCAL AUTHOR & PERFORMER" (330) Adam Thorpe, a resident of Ulverton in 1988, who wrote the story reprinted as chapter 1 and published it originally in the local newspaper, *The Wessex Nave* (379-81). The story, it turns out, is based on a local legend which the fictional Thorpe unearthed during his research in regional history for a projected book.

However, the expectation that the novel *Ulverton* by the real Adam Thorpe turns out to be the book written by his fictional counterpart, an expectation likely to be formed by readers well-versed in the conventions of postmodernist metafictional play, is disappointed: the fictional Adam Thorpe describes his book project in the TV-documentary on estate agent Clive Walters as "a whole series of stories on shepherds" (381), and from the preceding remarks about *Ulverton* it should be clear that the novel as a whole does not conform to this description. Thus, the metafictional turn at the end of the novel describes only one example for a (narrativizing) engagement with (local) history, an example which the novel at large does not embrace. Instead, the literary (and narrative) representation of history in chapter 1, as set against the documentary character of chapters 2 to 12, turns out to have next to no relevance for an assessment of historical reality in the year 1650. It is rather, like the post-production script in chapter 12, a (fictional) historical source text from the year 1988, a text which could teach future historians about the attitudes to the past prevalent in the late 20th century. This frame, then, focuses and integrates the novel's engagement with the historicity of the media and the medial conditioning of historiography,⁹ and it positions the novel *Ulverton* as an outstanding example of the typically postmodernist genre of historiographic metafiction.¹⁰

⁸ Thorpe comments on the special position of chapter 1: "I thought of the first story as a story complete in itself and indeed one of the problems [in the composition of *Ulverton*] was to incorporate the first story, to explain it; it is explained in the last chapter, although very subtly, why it is not written in the authentic manner, the authentic text and style of the period" (Hagenauer, 1996, n.p.).

⁹ Cf. "Die Historizität der Medien und die mediale Bedingtheit der Historiographie" (Nünning, 1995, 349).

¹⁰ Cf. on this general trend Hutcheon, 1988; Hutcheon, 1989; Nünning, 1995.

2. Media History and Modernization

In spite of the novel's emphasis on aspects of mediality and historicity there is still a story hiding behind the layers of reflexivity and the episodic structure of *Ulverton*. In fact, as Christin Galster has pointed out in her very detailed reading of the novel, there is even a 'hero,' whom she describes as a 'collective protagonist':

Im Falle *Ulvertons* manifestiert sich der kollektive Protagonist in der Dorfgemeinschaft, die sich selbstverständlich im Laufe der Jahrhunderte im einzelnen wie im ganzen verändert, dennoch aber durch die Konstanz des Raums und die Zugehörigkeit zu diesem als eine Einheit aufgefaßt werden muß. Wie bunte Fäden in einem Gewebe tauchen an verschiedenen Stellen des Romans immer wieder die gleichen Familiennamen auf. Auf diese Weise kann der aufmerksame Leser aus den verstreuten Referenzen in jedem Kapitel ganze Genealogien erstellen und nachvollziehen, wie sich das Leben der Familien von Ulverton im Spannungsfeld von Tradition und Fortschritt verändert. (Galster, 2002, 344-45)

In terms of media history the novel suggests that there is, metaphorically speaking, 'behind' or 'beneath' its discontinuous structure a continuum of oral communication as experienced by the village community of *Ulverton*. The sequence of episodes, however, illustrates the dynamics of, among other aspects, medial modernization which nevertheless modifies this continuum with, in the long run, drastic results. As we have seen, the novel's framing construction puts the oral beginnings of this process of medial modernization in brackets, as it were. But with this literary stylization of unrecoverable origins the full range from oral traditions via the intrusion of writing into the everyday life of an increasing number of villagers to the emergence of new media like photography, radio and television is representatively covered for the given period from 1650 to 1988. The various episodes can then be read as exemplary illustrations of the effects that these developments had on village life.

At the beginning of this historical process Reverend Crispin Brazier in chapter 2 relies heavily on the position of power provided by his exclusive literacy. Preaching to his parish in 1688 he uses all available resources of theological discourse in his sermon to wash his hands off the death of the dissenter Simon Kistle, but today's reader detects hints at an intentional denial of assistance or perhaps even manslaughter or murder. The cultural emergence of individual subjectivity hinted at in Brazier's description of Simon Kistle's death finds its medium of expression in the diary, written in 1712, of the well-to-do farmer in chapter 3. Here, the validity of Christian rules and guidelines is questioned without recourse to religious dogma strictly on the basis of daily experience and personal circumstances of living. The medium of this questioning is the transformation of experience into writing, and the answers are more concerned with secular 'Improvements' than matters of religion. They legitimize, for example, the replacement of the farmer's ailing and barren wife by the vivacious and, as it soon turns out, fertile maid. That this weakening of a traditional religious framework is not only limited to written reflections but finds its outlet in everyday life is then illustrated in the oral pub anecdote in chapter 6, in which an old joiner reminisces in 1803 about the day

when, as a young man some sixty years earlier, he successfully assumed the role of God in order to make his deeply religious master shorten the working hours.

As the travelling gentleman passing through the village and listening to the joiner's tale indicates, the secluded rural world of Ulverton comes to an end in the early 19th century. The earlier stages of this process of dissolution with its serious consequences for all walks of life are illustrated by the numerous letters sent to London in chapters 4 and 5, which are set in the 18th century. Writing as an emerging medium of private communication that bridges large distances destabilizes the social order of the village and increases mobility, and the 'outsider' lover of the young mistress of Ulverton Hall and the fate of the poor woman's son who is waiting for his execution in London for stealing a hat can be taken as representative cases. This mobility, which the novel presents as an effect of the spread of literacy, brings new people to Ulverton, people who see the village from the outside in most of the remaining chapters. The first of these outsiders is the clerk of the court transcribing the hearings of a Luddite trial in Ulverton in 1830: he has no sympathy whatsoever for the existential problems of the rural populace and does not even refrain from improving upon the depositions of the public hearings, not for the sake of truth but because he wants to go home.¹¹ It is clear that from this perspective the actual conflict at the heart of the trial, a conflict revolving around the social consequences of modernization in agriculture, appears completely unimportant, while the novel at large acknowledges its importance by making it the focus of three chapters (3, 7, 9) and, implicitly, its ending.

In chapter 8, however, set in 1859, the focus is clearly back on media history, and one of its decisive evolutionary steps at that: photography is the first medium that suggests the possibility of an immediate visual 'transcription' and fixation of images from reality.¹² The resulting documentary orientation is strongly reminiscent of the novel's own poetics of textual documentation (cf. Nünning, 1995, 349-50), but the comments of the anonymous female photographer on her work are full of reflexive passages which leave no doubt that documentary objectivity is unattainable even in the medium of photography. Thus her detailed account of the genesis of her plates casts an implicitly metafictional light on the genesis of the seemingly objective representation of historical sources in chapters 2 to 12 of the novel. Somewhat parallel to the range of texts 'documented' in *Ulverton* the range of photographic plates described in chapter 8 comprises pre-arranged scenes as well as 'spontaneous' snapshots, landscapes as well as social studies and representative (in its double sense) portraits, poetic object studies (of an icy thatched roof, for example) and the scientific documentation of excavations in Egypt. It is important, then, that the reader of the novel realizes that in spite of

¹¹ Cf. "round and round again, the identical histories – or histories I must hope are identical, else the mismatch might prolong the Prosecution to a tedious extent. I nudge here and there [...]" (158).

¹² Cf. on the background in the history of photography Frizot, 1998, and von Brauchitsch, 2002, 29-70.

her self-professed sober professional gaze the photographer's perspective of *Ulverton* is by no means free of conventional poetic sentiment and nostalgic idealization. The chapter illustrates convincingly the extent to which the appearance of new media is affected by pre-existent cultural frames of meaning.¹³

However, the reverse is obviously also true: the emergence of new media induces change in long-standing cultural frames of meaning. Against this backdrop chapter 9 testifies to the competition between novelistic realism and photography in the late 19th century (cf. Armstrong, 1999, and North, 2001). In direct comparison to the new immediacy of photography, the conventions of realistic writing lose their aura of authenticity, and one possible reaction is to shift the focus of fiction towards invisible realities which cannot be photographed. Thus, one strand of late 19th-century and early 20th-century fiction strives for a quasi-photographic depiction of human consciousness, and the fact that this invisible and ungraspable 'object' is not depicted but discursively produced in writing is camouflaged by the fundamental continuity of mimetic conventions from realism to modernism. This is the reason why the overall illusion of a documentary orientation in *Ulverton* is not severely disturbed by the artificial literary character of chapter 9. In spite of the fact that the staged orality of Jo Perry's interior monologue has a tendency to tip over into formal defamiliarization in writing, it can still fulfill its function of evoking an oral dimension of culture which cannot be accessed by non-literary forms of writing.

Ulverton's collective memory, however, which draws upon centuries of oral tradition, becomes increasingly marginalized by an influx of newcomers in the late 19th century. Increasing mobility results in increasingly cosmopolitan attitudes which are beyond the reach of the collective memory of the village, and so the novel suggests that Perry's stream of consciousness is one last storehouse of many of collective memory's central motives. It is a pity, then, but also symptomatic, that this integrative fund, which provides many links between the chapters of *Ulverton*, is in its written form extremely hard to read for today's readers, as even a cursory glance at the beginning of the chapter, which goes on for 19 dense pages, demonstrates:

gate ope now maunt lope about in Gore patch wi' they crusty bullocks yeeeeeeeeow bloody pick-stickin them old hooks jus yowlin out for grease haaf rust look yaa that old Stiff all pinch an screw all pinch an blood screw aye shut he fast now hup ram-shackle old bugger see med do with a stoop spikin onto post wi' that hang yaa a deal more years nor Hoppetty have a-had boy eh why Mr Perry why ah well they says [...].
(191)

¹³ In the real year 1859 the English photographer William England produced his sequence *America*, the first photographic images of the New World commercially available in Europe. Many of England's chosen sujets find an equivalent in the plates described in chapter 8 in *Ulverton*. The medium, it seems, operates within pre-existent cultural modes of meaning ("Arcadia") in order to assimilate the unknown (America) to the known and to exoticise the known (*Ulverton*) in terms of the unknown. The title of Ian Jeffrey's introduction to his edition of England's sequence is "Utopia 1859: William England's America" (cf. Jeffrey, 1999).

It is also clear, however, that this formal complexity pays tribute to the actual inaccessibility of this dimension of culture, which can only be made 'visible' with the help of literary techniques (for a detailed analysis cf. Galster, 2002, 343, 353-54). Against the backdrop of the final shift from oral to written modes of knowledge transmission, which the novel locates in the late 19th century, the old field hand Jo Perry, who later becomes a gardener, is considered "a rather tiresome rambling fellow" (247) by the next generation, and it is safe to say that many of the novel's readers will share this opinion. Furthermore, the contrast between the lived, 'timeless' history of a rural culture revolving around questions of fertility and productivity within the seasonal cycle as represented by Jo Perry on the one hand, and the change towards an archeological interest in the remnants of history as induced by media history on the other hand, is accentuated in the novel when the narrator of chapter 10, the retired colonial civil servant Fergusson with his strong interest in local history, finds out to his annoyance that Jo Perry has used the photographic plates described in chapter 8 for building a greenhouse in his garden (247-48).

In the 20th century the archeological interest in history which is, the novel suggests, the result of the unfolding media culture of modernity, becomes the dominant attitude towards the past, beginning with the upper circles of society and then working its way down. In chapter 10, for example, the Squire of Ulverton Hall is completely absorbed by his archeological excavations and pays no attention whatsoever to the unfolding 'real' history of World War I, at least until his diggers are conscripted by history, as it were. Conversely, the egocentric artist figure Herbert Bradman in chapter 11 buries or, as he himself puts it, 'plants' his autobiography with great pomp on the occasion of the coronation of Elisabeth II in 1953, depositing written instructions for the steel container with this profound document of 20th-century life to be excavated and opened on the 2nd of June in the year 4953. In both cases 'history' seems to be just an aristocratic or artistic game that is completely removed from the present, while on the other hand ever increasing numbers of people are affected by the democratization of access to information brought about by radio and television with their daily updates on the complexity and the historical import of the present moment. Herbert Bradman's secretary Violet Nightingale, for example, sees through the reductively rhetorical character of the coronation as an 'official' historical event when she annoys the members of the Ulverton Coronation Committee with the remark that "one had to think in bigger terms than our Sovereign's Coronation: what with atomic and hydrogen bombs, the Reds, 70,000,000 homeless, refugees, world hunger and so forth" (262).

At the end of the novel we have finally reached our own multiply mediated late 20th-century present. The final two chapters suggest that one of the characteristic features of our present state is the intrusion of oral elements in written communication. Even Violet Nightingale's mid-20th-century diary and her ultimately doomed attempt at preserving her view of things under the title "[M]y Life under Herbert E. Bradman" (267, 274) are marked by this re-assertion of

orality, which seems to be an effect of the material technical foundations of the available media:¹⁴ Having been a secretary all her life, Violet Nightingale writes everything, even her private diary, on the typewriter, which is effective, but prevents her from cancelling or erasing mistakes or false starts. Frequently the reader finds passages like this:

I should really
 I really ought
 Mr Bradman is not a 'la
 Although
 I ought to say at this point that our professional relationship while clo intimate, has never impinged on our private domains. I am quite I am well aware of the 'Freudian' implications of an employer and his female 'assistant' living toge living under the same roof, but [...]. (290)

Here it is the typewriter (and not, as in chapter 9, a literary convention) which reveals a character's state of mind to the reader, and this state of mind becomes increasingly agitated in the case of Violet Nightingale who finds out that in spite of her own unacknowledged love for Herbert Bradman she had no part whatsoever in his life – she was just a human typewriter. Consequently she destroys Bradman's historical project in a highly symbolic scene by stealing his autobiography from its container and burning it on the pyre of history erected on the occasion of the dawning of the second Elizabethan Age. There it burns with many other old-fashioned commodities which would have been, it turns out in chapter 12, much sought after in 1988 for their authenticity in a context of increasing nostalgia.

The last chapter, finally, presents a culture in which writing finds itself in a subordinate position to another medium, a position which restricts it to two very limited functions: The primary text of the TV post-production script that makes up chapter 12, transcribes the spoken word with all redundancies and disturbances, and the secondary text consists of highly condensed descriptions that avoid full sentences completely and favour abbreviations of all kinds instead. This mediated secondary orality, which short-circuits orality, visuality, writing and printing, is the site where the various threads of the novel are pulled together: When estate agent Clive Walters, who is ironically also a sheep farmer and shepherd in his spare time and whose family goes back a long way in Ulverton, tries to modernize the village by developing attractive flats and offices which include the latest amenities and local colour at the same time, he finds that the traditional pragmatic, indifferent, and resigned attitude of the few remaining descendants of the older village population has been supplemented by a much more militant resistance to change on the part of recent newcomers who defend 'their' rural idyll against all latecomers. Walters's project fails in the end when the remains of a dead body are discovered on the building site. Both to the villagers of Ulverton (who are apparently regular readers of *The Wessex Nave*) and to the readers of Thorpe's novel (who have obviously read chapter 1) it seems highly likely that

¹⁴ In the sense of Friedrich A. Kittler's notion of *Aufschreibesysteme* (discourse networks); cf. Kittler, 1985/1990.

these are the remains of the soldier Gabby who was murdered by his wife and her second husband Thomas Walters in 1650. In spite of the fact that the fictional Adam Thorpe who wrote the story points out that he took the name Walters from the oldest tombstone on the churchyard, that he simply considered it a typical name for the region and thus used it more or less arbitrarily in his retelling of a local legend (381), the public insists on linking the story to estate agent Clive Walters (379) who finds himself confronted by a hostility rooted in unacknowledged superstition which he cannot overcome.

3. "Putting Things up against Each Other"

This final turn of affairs indicates that Adam Thorpe's novel *Ulverton* is a prime example for contemporary literature's insistence on its relevance as outlined in the introductory passages of this paper, even if the re-oralisation of culture brought about by the new media in an unfolding media age seems fundamentally hostile to literary concerns (cf. Griem, 2000, 213-14). As the novel as a whole indicates, literature's relevance (or fiction's relevance in particular) cannot be equated with the accidental topicality of the fictional Adam Thorpe's shepherd story, which is then used for propagandistic and political purposes. What is more important is the persistence of a cultural space for reflecting upon cultural processes *in writing*. In this respect the literary coherence of *Ulverton* as facilitated by many recurrent themes¹⁵ and a number of leitmotifs¹⁶ does not seem to be predicated first and foremost on traditional narrative closure or on a modernistic ideal of the integrated work of art that transcends history but rather on a reflexive "putting things up against each other" *within* history, as Thorpe himself indicates in an interview (Hagenauer, 1996, n.p.). The medium of this reflexive "putting things up against each other" is the post-modernist evolutionary state of the genre of modern fiction, which has shed all generic formal restraints and is thus open for processing all kinds of discursive practices between orality and literacy *in writing*. "That's what postmodernism is all about," Thorpe comments, "borrowing, putting models together in a collage of things of the past or contemporary things, and the two sort of jangle together" (*ibid.*). In this sense, the novel is a kind of 'meta-medium' for storing and communicating information¹⁷ as well as for processing cultural relativity. And perhaps it can even generate new information from what Salman Rushdie in *The Satanic Verses* calls "fusions, translations, conjoinings,"¹⁸ i.e. the "fusions, translations, conjoinings" facilitated by the perma-

¹⁵ Cf. Nünning, 1995, 356, who mentions sheep breeding, infant mortality, sexuality, the tension between religion and morality on the one hand and between religion and individuality on the other, and the interplay between progressive and traditional forces.

¹⁶ Most importantly 'bedwine' and 'red ribbons,' the latter of which supports the reader's identification of Gabby's corpse in the end; cf. Galster, 2002, 347-49.

¹⁷ This double function could be described in terms of Aleida Assmann's distinction between *Speichergedächtnis* and *Funktionsgedächtnis*; cf. Assmann, 1999.

¹⁸ Rushdie, 1988, 8, coins this formula in response to the question "How does newness come into the world?"

nence of writing in a highly flexible structure. Adam Thorpe's *Ulverton* realises this potential impressively.¹⁹

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¹⁹ Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Universities of Darmstadt and Tübingen on February 7 and July 19, 2003, respectively. Thanks are due to Antje Kley for drawing my attention to Thorpe's novel and for a number of helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

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RÜDIGER HEINZE

**‘History is about to crack wide open’:
Identity and Historiography in Tony Kushner’s
*Angels in America***

Abstract: This paper suggests that beyond the overt – and abundantly discussed – concern with history, Tony Kushner’s famous play *Angels in America* represents – in the phrasing of Walter Benjamin – a figurative ‘shooting at the clocks’ not in order to end history but to instigate new histories. The main characters, one of them modeled after the infamous historical Roy Cohn, employ different performative strategies to cope with their infection with AIDS and the impending millennium. Through constantly transfiguring their identity by subverting the names given them and the according discursive power structures, the characters 1. manage to invest the names given them with alternative/new meanings, 2. are able to maintain/obtain individual agency and 3. thus escape the fate that an apparently pre-ordained (i.e. teleological, fixed and heteronomous) history has in store for them. Accordingly, they write their own histories in the new millennium, inverting the assumption that history determines identity by making their identity determine history. This paper will examine how this is achieved, and through which performative strategies.

A Disclaimer: Roy M. Cohn, the character, is based on the late Roy M. Cohn (1927-1986), who was all too real; for the most part the acts attributed to the character Roy [...] are to be found in the historical record. But this Roy is a work of fiction; his words are my invention, and liberties have been taken.¹ (I, 7)

1. Cracking History

The popularity and success of Kushner’s play have engendered a resurgence of interest in the historical figure who reached the apex of his infamy during the prosecution, trial and eventual execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg: Roy Cohn. Situated before the actual beginning of the play, the disclaimer quoted above illustrates not only the play’s concern with history, but also with the processes that inextricably bind any person to their historical context. In the course of the play, Kushner uses his characters, in particular Roy Cohn, in order to il-

¹ References to the two volumes of Kushner’s *Angels in America* will be distinguished by the Roman numerals I and II.

illuminate how conventional concepts of representation and identity may be confronted and subsequently discarded and disrupted. These processes reveal strategies of performative subjectivization, which may lead either to denial or to tentative liberation. In as much as individuals are part of historical structures and contexts, their performative agency endows them with a political responsibility that transcends distinctions of public and private. Considering the impact of Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" on Kushner's play, I want to argue that in the play itself, the disruption of conventional modes of self-representation and identity simultaneously necessitates and implements the undermining and rejection of conventional representations of history. Thus, the individual's agency and cognition assume powerful, historically disruptive effects by creating new communities, new discourses, new power relations and new histories.

In addition to being a remarkably successful epic play, Kushner's rendering of Cohn follows on the heels of an autobiography as well as a biography of Hoover's right hand man, hence creating another narrative layer around this figure. Moreover, the play has also engendered serious academic and critical attention in the form of numerous essays and interviews, which in turn have investigated the character of Cohn as he is portrayed in the play. As a result, the historical person Cohn is enveloped in a series of multilayered narratives whose efforts at circumscribing the "real" Cohn, grounded in the belief of reliable historical data, effectively set adrift and shroud the identity of that person in a pastiche of contradictory writings. Thus, any notion of authenticity is inadvertently refuted and, considering the fact that Cohn's autobiography, written by yet another author, exists in the same narrative space, the authorship of identity is likewise called into question. But while these narratives seldom concede that their investigation of the character is impinged upon by their own performativity, Kushner's play by its very nature creates its own performative space, and any character's identity (per)formed within that space subsequently constitutes itself as performative. Consequently, the distinction between the play and reality, between the character Cohn and the person Cohn becomes difficult to distinguish in the examination of the processes of identity formation. The mimetic premise of this argument can be bracketed since the characters as well as the play are subjected to analysis only in so far as they are performed through language.

2. Performing Identity: Evil Surfaces

Within the play, the character of Roy Cohn is juxtaposed to Prior Walter, an antithesis which is ironically echoed in their names: while Prior's name overtly refers to the office of a priest in a monastery, Cohn's name can be traced etymologically to the Hebrew word "cohn" which means "priest."² Establishing a con-

² Jewishness, particularly Cohn's and Louis', poses an important subtext to the play. See also Jonathan Freedman's essay on intersections of queer and Jewish identity.

nection between the two characters becomes pertinent in view of the fact that they both employ similar processes in order to (re)define themselves. While the attribution of negativity or positivity to these strategies does not aid in their examination, the categories of "good" and "evil" constitute a significant aspect of the identity formation of the two characters, even if these notions are constantly deconstructed and utilized in order to vitiate their mythological premise.

Even outside the play and its critical discourse, Cohn is frequently referred to as "evil incarnate," "demonic" or simply "Satan," all of which allude to the alleged millennial manifestation of the adversary of Christ. Evidently, Cohn's subsumption under this category precedes and implicates all further considerations regarding his race, gender, etc., especially since the principle of evil and its embodiment, Lucifer, is itself internally conflicted. The original meaning of the word "demon" connotes an "influencing spirit," an entity with the power to affect and *transform* a human's mind, without any allusion as to the quality of this influence. In this regard, demons possess a strong affinity to angels and were only later imbued with negativity, as servants of Lucifer or Satan. The name "Lucifer" denotes "Lightbringer" or "Fallen from Light" and constitutes an extremely heterogeneous principle throughout Western religious and literary history. While, contrary to the widely held misconception, the name of Satan is never mentioned in Genesis,³ he appears with increasing frequency in later books such as Ezekiel, Daniel and Job; his most significant description, however, is found in Isaiah. Here, Satan is revealed as a creature of God, a former angel who defied his progenitor by attempting to instigate a heavenly revolution:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. (Isaiah 14: 12-13)

Throughout the entire Bible, Lucifer is portrayed as the eternal tempter trying to divert humans from the "right" course. His character and deeds are marked by frequently ambiguous and occasionally contradictory descriptions, a circumstance which evidently prompted Milton and Goethe's rendering of a fascinating and alluring figure, equally attractive and repulsive. By being described as the manifestation of evil, Cohn is brought into line with a concept traditionally contradictory and elusive. At this point in the play the investigation of Cohn must commence. The play's predominant concern with the formation of identity in a post-structuralist world of Derridean *différance* and Baudrillardian simulacra, of theories conceptualizing a decentered and non-unitary identity, is displayed in all of Kushner's characters, but most vividly in Roy Cohn. All efforts at placing him within essentializing categories are continually thwarted by his persistent reinvention and reformation of himself. Instead of subjecting himself to questionably stable notions of race or sexuality, Cohn empties those categories of reference at his own will and whim. He habitually performs himself into new or re-

³ It is the snake, one of God's creations, that tempts Eve.

fashioned classifications emptied of their former significations.⁴ At any given instance, he assumes a subject position deemed suitable to his situational needs, illustrating Judith Butler's phenomenological approach to performativity and identity formation:

If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts. (Butler, 271)

Butler's elaboration of gender representation can also be expanded to encompass the processes of identity formation along the axes of ethnicity and sexuality. The emphasis here must be put on the performative aspect of such repetitive and differential acts. Rather than assuming an independent agency preceding the body as the site of such acts, "one is not simply a body, but [...] one does one's body [...]. In other words, the body is a *historical* situation" (272; emphasis mine). During the first appearance and performance of Cohn, this principle is condensed into a specific metaphor: "I wish I was an octopus. A fucking octopus. Eight loving arms and all those suckers" (I, 2). Thus, while the identity constitutes itself through a series of acts, none of these acts are exactly the same, so that any attempt at a unifying category inevitably eliminates the difference between these acts. Simultaneously, an actor who is always already on stage must be assumed to have an identity that establishes itself diachronically as well as synchronically. Obviously, any attribution of falsity or truth, reality or distortion to these acts becomes unfeasible, since there is no center against which to measure such attributes. The fact that these acts are performative as well as historical also necessitates their communal nature: such an act "is clearly not one's own" (276). Roy Cohn's identity is thus verified through incessant subject positions across the lines of extrinsically imposed and constructed categories, enabling him to name and re-name himself, acts which are not only personal but also *political*. Indeed, such a distinction is rendered redundant due to the fact that the performative space of the stage does not allow for a reprieve, or a "private" area into which to recede. The invisible space off-stage remains the domain of the unconscious (Green, 138-39). The most impressive demonstration of these strategies can be witnessed in an exchange between Cohn and his doctor:

Roy: Your problem [...] is that you are hung up on words, on labels, that you believe they mean what they seem to mean [...]. Because *what* I am is defined entirely by *who* I am. Roy Cohn is not a homosexual. Roy Cohn is a heterosexual man [...] who fucks around with guys. (I, 31-32)

Clearly, Cohn repudiates his subjugation to labels by either rejecting them completely or infusing them with new meanings. Figuratively, he skims over a pastiche or collage of one-dimensional names, which brings into play the – only temporarily useful – concept of surfaces. In order not to regress into essentialism, acts constituting subject positions cannot be conceived of as three-dimensional or

⁴ As Werbner points out, even racism is performative, illustrated powerfully in Cohn's anti-semitism, while being himself Jewish; see Werbner, 234.

as offering access to a deep structure “behind” the surface. There may exist an overlapping and criss-crossing of surfaces, a collage, but the endeavor to uncover a veiled or hidden center, a unified “I,” repeats the frustrated crusade for a logos, for the pristine relation of signifier and signified. These surfaces mark the “ever fragmenting articulations of subjectivity” (Lutterbie, 122), or, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, the body without organs:

The body without organs is an egg: it is crisscrossed with axes and thresholds [...] traversed by gradients marking the transitions and becomings, the destinations of the subject developing along these particular vectors. (Deleuze/Guattari, 19)

Consequently ethnicity, gender, sexuality etc. can be regarded as the wedges with which an individual may carve longitudinal and latitudinal axes across the egg-shell of its identity, evading the pitfall of constituting an interiority by claiming that this particular body does not have any organs. This would lend substance to the claim that Cohn has “no interior to speak of,” only a powerful gaze (Posnock, 67). Consistently, the efforts of critics to separate Cohn’s sexual from his political identity are deprived of their premise. The acts manifesting Roy’s subject position are governed by a libidinal economy that circulates around one pole of intensity rather than moving from one distinct domain into another. In his own words, Cohn equates politics with being alive, both inseparable from each other:

Roy: This is ... this is gastric juices churning, this is enzymes and acids, this is intestinal is what this is, bowel movement and blood-red meat – this stinks, this is *politics* [...] the game of being alive. (I, 50)

Evidently, being alive implies being politically conscious; political rules exist to be transgressed, serving as a framework within and against which to affirm one’s own identity (I, 84). Therefore, politics functions as another field across which identity-formation occurs; politics is bodily, and since the body also constitutes the site for sexuality-formation, politics inevitably are and have to be sexual. Furthermore, since the rules of politics, according to Cohn, may operate as the other, through the transgression of which one affirms oneself as “being alive,” the following relations becomes not only reasonable but inevitable:

Subjectivity : Sexuality : Politics⁵

All of these serve as surfaces across which Cohn enacts his performative gestures, and relying on Butler’s argument that each act is simultaneously historical, each of these surfaces likewise becomes historical. Consistently, individual identity-formation and representation assume historical relevance: an individual could just as soon escape its historical context as its identity.

In this regard, political subjectivity becomes of paramount importance. Political power is manifested in terms of the power to name – to name oneself as well as others – as seen in the acts of Cohn. Rather than a process of identification, which would imply a restrictive subjection to categories, the realization of

⁵ See also Peter Cohen on love and politics in the play.

one's political consciousness is constituted in a process of subjectivization, the "formation of a one that is not a self but is the relation of a self to an other. [...] We could act as political subjects in the interval or the gap between two identities, neither of which we could assume" (Ranciere, 66-67). And, furthermore:

The logic of subjectivization [...] is a heterology [...]. First, it is never the simple assertion of an identity; it is always, at the same time, the denial of an identity given by an other [...]. Second, it is a demonstration, and a demonstration always supposes an other. (Ranciere, 68)

3. Performing Identity: Evil Depths

At this point it becomes unavoidable to abandon the concept of the body without organs, of surfaces without an underneath. These concepts may affect the analysis of the processes disrupting categorization and conventional self-representation; however, the investigation of Cohn's motivation and agency – the existence of which is implicitly presumed in Butler's and Ranciere's argument – requires a return to the guttural and visceral aspects mentioned above, in this instance by means of the discussion of skin. Even in view of a non-unitary and de-centered identity, the theoretical concepts utilized so far have proposed the existence of a subject with the capacity to act and/or with the property of agency, proposals that spring from the mutually perceived need for politically *active* individuals. The emphasis, though, rests on the processual, relational and situational aspects of identity formation, aspects which the play's characters display and engage, but which Kushner instills with a visceral depth that the theoretical approaches lack or disavow. At first glance, Lutterbie's insistence on the existence of intrinsic psychological processes, which canalize and solidify external environmental responses to an individual's varied internal drives into habitual passages and channels of dealing with these responses, seems to provide a conceptual depth beneath the bodily surface, i.e. the skin. This perspective, however, fails to account for Kushner's stress on bowels and guts. The latter emphases constitute the premise for being alive and, in Cohn's terms, for acting and performing politically as well as sexually. On the premise elaborated earlier, viscera and abdomen form the bodily depth over which the surfaces of libidinal and performative gestures are drawn out. It follows that there exist, at least in Kushner's view, bowels underneath the egg shell, intestines that inform and are informed by the traversing axes across the surface. Within the bodily metaphor, the friable egg shell is replaced by the skin, a site of struggle and contention in the play. The skin is the initially visible location of another being, the first sight of contact whose significance cannot be overemphasized in the perennial controversy over the consequences of its color. It serves as a protective layer insuring integrity, posing as the physical boundary of the body, but also as the location for interrelation and connection between characters, a potential source of pleasure. Simultaneously, the skin is vulnerable and susceptible to pain and attacks from the outside as well as from the inside:

If the snake sheds his skin before a new skin is ready, naked he will be in the world, prey to the forces of chaos. Without his skin he will be dismantled, lose coherence and die. (II, 14)

Metaphorically as well as metonymically, the skin carries the first marks – lesions – that the immune system of a body has lost the first battle against AIDS, which constitutes a prominent theme of the play. As a consequence of the skin's identity-forming capacity, AIDS as well as illness in general, become conflicted categories of performing identity, a fact particularly relevant for the later discussion of Prior Walter.

This play on surface and depth pervades all of the characters' actions, but most markedly, of course, Roy Cohn's. Not only does the skin become invested with sexual and political pertinence, but Roy's desire to assume the shape of an octopus elucidates his concept of skin: an active device for grabbing and clutching objects as well as subjects, a tough layer offering protection against, as well as gratification from, the "raw wind":

Roy: Love; that's a trap. Responsibility; that's a trap too [...]. Life is full of horror; nobody escapes [...]. Whatever pulls on you, whatever needs from you, threatens you [...] don't be afraid to live in the raw wind, naked, alone. (I, 42)

To summarize, then, one could be tempted to say that Cohn manifests the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, the superior individual who has succeeded in discarding all societal and moral constrictions, the true "outsider" oblivious of, and invulnerable to, any extrinsic forces in the constitution of its identity. This assumption, however, not only does injustice to the character, but also neglects the fact that Kushner stresses the individual's responsibility to the community in which he or she lives, a responsibility which repudiates the possibility of "stepping outside" of that system. This is not to say that Cohn in any way feels a responsibility towards his fellow human beings; nevertheless, despite rejecting the categories imposed on him, he defines himself *against* others, by enacting power over others through naming, manipulating or killing them. Without others for whom to perform, and from whom to elicit recognition, his identity is shattered and disintegrated. Cohn acts as a cyborg without morals, but his fear of disbarment renders him vulnerable. Even at his most insidious, Cohn remains human. His craving for recognition ultimately eliminates the possibility of his liberation; instead of transcending the categories he so violently contests, he denies them. He may have accomplished the reconfiguration of some of these names and labels, but he has failed to challenge their constitutive structures and relations. In the end, he resembles Nietzsche's "last men" more than the *Übermensch*.

Roy Cohn's antithesis is found in the character of Prior Walter, an opposition echoed not only in their names but also in the strategies they employ in order to act and perform, in the processes of naming. Prior functions as the play's protagonist. Himself a homosexual WASP, he is chosen as the prophet who is supposed to promulgate the Angels' divine ordainment of stasis; as a sign of this divination, he contracts AIDS. Nonetheless, he instantly rebels against his appointment, utilizing strategies similar to those of Cohn. He finds himself sub-

ject to the same conflicted categories that govern, however insufficiently, all the play's characters: race, sexuality, politics and, as demonstrated, illness. Instead of disavowing these categories, though, he recognizes their status as artificial and arbitrary constructions, the semantic voids that are only situationally filled with content. He challenges their relational power-base rather than futilely disputing the constantly deferred content. This approach enables him not only to ignore his past heritage, in the form of visitations by his forefathers, but also his purported future destiny. Although he immediately becomes aware of the powerful influence of AIDS on his identity through his skin,⁶ he denies his illness the power to determine him as fatally ill or soon-to-be-dead. This he achieves by rejecting the angels' project even in the face of pain and sexual pleasure. Aware of the same historical relevance and responsibility of his performative acts that influenced Cohn's identity-formation, he does not deny his position as a prophet, but infuses it with his own design. Re-enacting the biblical Joseph, Prior (temporarily at least) forces his way into heaven by wrestling with the angel, subsequently arguing that the angels suspend the fatality of his illness. Again, rather than denying that he has AIDS, Prior refuses the alleged fatality with which that category is conventionally filled. Instead of staying in the heavenly and implicitly metaphysical realm, as Cohn does as God's attorney, Prior descends to earth in order to continue his work as a prophet, acknowledging the historical responsibility inherent in performing his subjectivity. Instead of attempting to place himself outside societal confines – an attempt which constitutes the main reason for the failure of Cohn's liberation – Prior struggles from within Plato's cave, from within the mirrors of representation and from within the historical processes in which he is bound up. At this point, the consequences of the individual's struggle within historical representation become most evident.

4. Shooting at the Clocks

As has previously been discussed, the identity and subjectivity of the characters in the play is inextricably linked, not in a unilateral, but in a reciprocal manner. As much as the historical surface influences the individual's performance across it, so does each performance, each act, shape and alter that surface. Since that surface is largely determined by the conceptualized representation of history within a given society, Kushner's concern with identity requires a simultaneous elaboration of historical concepts. In the course of the play, it becomes conspicuous that Kushner endorses Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" while discarding and ridiculing the teleological concepts of Hegel and Marx. Benjamin utilizes Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus* in order to illustrate his stance on history:

This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling

⁶ Prior claims, "I'm a lesionaire" (I, 11).

wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (Benjamin, 257-58)

This metaphor illuminates a concept that describes history as non-linear, non-teleological, and beyond any efforts at constructing a cause-and-effect relationship between the events in which humans are entangled. Being persecuted as a Jew by the Nazi regime and later committing suicide, Benjamin clearly discerned the conceptual premises upon which the Third Reich built its claims both to superiority and to its alleged destiny as the model for other nations. Linear concepts of history imply a predetermined chain of progression towards the inevitable, utopian state of perfection. In such views, history could be imagined as the unfolding of a rolled carpet. With the assumption of a teleological chain of cause-and-effect relationships, however, the past can be subjected to manipulations by a present power in order to vindicate its status and ideology. In Orwellian terms, whoever controls the past controls the present, and hence controls the future. The very real Third Reich attempted to explicate its ideology and practices by seeking out evidence in the past to establish, however spuriously, the inevitability and preordainment of its existence. If history is conceived as a process with a point of completion or possible closure, a prevailing government could lay claim to its ideology as the "state of perfection" on a political level, while human beings in general could be perceived as able to escape the binds of history.⁷ Benjamin's concept is directed precisely against the pitfalls of such representations of history. There only exists a pile of wreckage and debris, the past consists of chaos, and the future hence remains inaccessible and unpredictable.⁸ As regards revolutionary forces striving to disrupt such teleological representations of history, Benjamin cites an interesting incident during the July-Revolution in Paris. Throughout the city in various locations, revolutionary forces simultaneously directed their bombardment against the tower clocks. Clearly, this was done not simply to destroy the mechanics of the clocks as such, but to bring to a standstill the concepts that those clocks represented, namely the progression of time and with it the ideological representation of history valorized by such an uninterrupted progression. Literally and figuratively, the revolutionaries strained to crack history open, an act in many ways analogous to the performance of Prior Walter. Kushner's frequent endorsement of Benjamin's theses is most vividly suggested by the prevalence of angels throughout the play.

⁷ Unless the "end of history" also marked the end of humankind.

⁸ There is a continual allusion to the looming possibility of the apocalypse and the millennial age (a period of one thousand years before the final judgment day) in the play. In fact, one might wonder whether the apocalypse is not insinuated as already taking place. For an elaboration of apocalyptic and millenarian aspects in the play, see also Michelle Elkin-Squitieri and James Fisher.

The term “angel” derives from the Greek *angelos* and the Hebrew equivalent meaning “messenger.” In Christianity as well as in Judaism and other religions, angels are believed to be benevolent messengers serving God’s design by conveying divine revelation to human beings. As such, their presence in *Angels in America* alludes to the notion of a divine scheme, a master plan for the advent of the Millennium. In addition, the play’s treatment of Mormons introduces their belief that an angel appeared to their church founder, Joseph Smith, with the revelation of the eventual reinstatement of paradise on the American continent. All through the play, however, the conventional representation of angels is deconstructed and satirized. They are depicted as powerful, but conservative and incredibly dumb. God has abandoned them, and heaven resembles San Francisco after the big quake. They have elected Prior to disseminate their promotion of Stasis, since every progression of humankind causes another quake in heaven. In other words, they advocate the eternal perpetuation of the existing power relations. Hence the play is quite obviously not a Messianic project, as some critics would have it. On the contrary, Kushner calls into question the entire philosophical concept of a metaphysical entity governing earthly affairs as well as the idea that there exists a utopian realm upon which to displace the responsibility to act as a political individual (Laclau, 96-97). If paradise constitutes the location of stasis, earth must serve as the site for constant change, for the potentiality of a utopian society precariously erected on the ruins of the past. In Benjamin’s view, teleological theories propagate the possibility of closure or stasis; the revolutionary impulse to shoot at the clocks, to halt time, hence does not imply the desire for a standstill so much as a realization of the violence inherent in conventional representations of history. The clocks must be stopped in order to open up the discourse to new conceptualizations of history.

Consistently, Hegel’s and Marx’s philosophies of history are similarly ridiculed and deconstructed. The futility and insufficiency of Hegel’s teleology is illustrated by Louis, who abandons his AIDS-stricken boyfriend Prior and fails to incorporate the idea of illness into the formation of his identity:

Louis: Maybe because this person’s sense of the world, that it will change for the better with struggle, maybe a person who has this neo-Hegelian positivist sense of constant historical progress towards happiness or perfection or something [...] maybe that person can’t [...] incorporate sickness into his sense of how things are supposed to go. (I, 14-15)

Evidently, notions of illness or, for that matter, sexuality and race, cannot be affiliated with Hegel’s *Höherer Geist*. Indeed, for Hegel history had already ended in 1806 with the widely accepted validity of the democratic principles promoted during the French Revolution.⁹ The resort to Hegel, then, equals the denial of the necessity of change and the responsibility of continually redefining one’s identity across a historical surface.

⁹ There appears to be no end to the claims of the ‘end of history.’ Compare Francis Fukuyama’s notorious essay of the same title.

In a similarly amusing yet sophisticated style, the second prominent Western teleology is unraveled. At the beginning of the second part of the play, the words of the World's Oldest Living Bolshevik are unveiled for their philosophical foundation by his telling name *Antedilluvianovich Prelapsarianov*, the Latin basis of which denotes "before the flood" and "before the lapse;" thus his name alludes to the idea of a falling away from a state of perfection that must be recovered, instead of displacing hope towards prospective perfection:

The Great Question before us is: Are we doomed? [...] Will the Past release us? [...] Can we change? In Time? [...] How are we to proceed without *Theory*? What System of Thought have these Reformers to present to this mad swirling planetary disorganization, to the Inevitable Welter of fact, event, phenomenon, calamity? (II, 13-14)

On the one hand, these words summarize the motivation and aim of the angels in the play, their dread of progressing without a theory that would ostensibly allow a prediction of the future based on the past. On the other hand, the Bolshevik's name refers back to Marxism, which relies upon a reworked Hegelian teleology. Contrary to Hegel, who posits a superior consciousness that eventually transcends its material bounds through a dialectical sublation, Marx described consciousness as subject to influences by the modes of production. Nevertheless, Marx also announced an inevitable utopian state, that would be brought about by the revolution of the proletariat. At the approach of the new millennium, the collapse of most of the socialist states has demonstrated at least the difficulty of a practical implementation of Marxist or socialist ideals without stumbling into a totalitarian form of government that diminishes individual agency.

In terms of identity and representation, the consequences are readily apparent: it has been shown that identity formation and the enactment of subjectivity and representation are inextricably linked, shaped and informed by their historical context. Accordingly, a disruption in the representation of identity possesses the potential for undermining and rejecting conventional representations of history, each act a figurative shooting at the clocks. Roy Cohn failed to secure himself a place in history because he wedged himself into the static representation of the prevailing ideology, into the "history [...] about to crack wide open." In contrast, Prior becomes his own prophet, the messenger whose work is just beginning in a precarious world, where one lives past, but not without, hope,¹⁰ and where one remains rooted in the bleakest moments of the past (Savran, 25). At least in this regard, the play seems to offer a way out of the Baudrillardian anti-apocalyptic postmodern world: it is not beyond the historical, but skimming on the surface of a continually altering history.

¹⁰ 'Living past hope' is also the subtitle of James Fisher's recent monograph on Kushner; cf. Fischer, 2002.

5. Conclusion

It should be noted that at this point in the play, critics have accused Kushner of being too overtly optimistic, of promising hope where there should be none. I would agree that the conclusion of the play strikes a rather doubtful tone, but for a different reason: taking my argument to its logical conclusion, one individual's cognition may assume the power to affect historical representation, to act with the authority of a political community and not with that of one individual. The threat of totalitarianism and authoritarianism is imminent: what if Cohn had succeeded rather than Prior Walter? For that reason the challenge rests in the perpetual (re)formation of a politically responsible identity with the capacity to contest categories and power relations, but also with the innate cognizance that history cannot reach a closure which an individual might transcend.

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Buchbesprechungen

Henning Andersen, ed. **Actualization: Linguistic Change in Progress**. Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, Series IV – Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, 219. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2001. 250 pp. Hb. € 85.00. ISBN 90-272-3726-3.

This volume evolved from a workshop on “Patterns of Actualization in Linguistic Change” held at the Fourteenth International Conference on Historical Linguistics in Vancouver, B.C. in 1999. It comprises ten contributions, framed by an introduction and a short general index.

The editor, Henning Andersen, is the author of the introduction, as well as two articles. His “Position paper: Markedness and the theory of change” (21–57) is intended to provide a theoretical reference point for the whole volume. Andersen begins by outlining the proliferation of uses to which the Jakobsonian notion of markedness has been subjected in recent years, serving as a cover term for a range of distributional, substantial and conceptual asymmetries observable within and across linguistic systems, as well as in text organization and even in ritualized, non-linguistic aspects of behaviour. However, Andersen argues against viewing markedness statements as generalizations about differences in frequency and/or structural complexity within a set of items of same ontological type. Instead, he posits that they describe a relationship arising “between any concept that is formed (M) and the conceptual space that surrounds it (U)” (45). This cognitive approach is then illustrated, with examples mainly from

lexical semantics. Unfortunately, some non-trivial issues in Andersen’s theory, such as its extension to evaluations within non-binary sets or within sets of phonological features, fail to be addressed.

Andersen’s second article discusses “Actualization and the (uni)directionality of change” (225–48). Taking a speaker-based perspective, Andersen distinguishes different kinds of “change scenarios”. For each scenario, he points out regularities in the actualization of change, which, on higher levels of abstraction, establish diachronic universals such as those postulated by grammaticalization theory. Since cognitive markedness subconsciously influences speakers’ individual linguistic choices, it also guides invisible-hand processes which, eventually, may lead to changes in grammar.

Apart from Michael Shapiro’s “Markedness, causation, and linguistic change: a semiotic perspective” (187–201) – a philosophically oriented paper that fits in only loosely with the rest of the collection and does not discuss a single linguistic item – all the other contributors offer beautiful analyses of intra-linguistic determinants of gradual changes:

Kristin Bakken, in her “Patterns of restitution of sound change” (59–78), investigates data from southern Norwegian dialects, in which two earlier phonological processes (loss of postvocalic *l* before consonants and the ‘hardening’ of *l*: to *d*:) have been partially reversed. She convincingly argues that, while the loss and hardening applied across-the-board, their restitution proceeded on a lexical diffusion basis, under the influence of neighbouring dialects. Bakken’s discussion on the role of word frequencies is particularly inter-

esting, although no reference to (cognitive) markedness is made – and it is not clear how it could have been made.

In “The role of markedness in the actualization and actualization of linguistic change” (79–93), Alexander T. Bergs and Dieter Stein describe the genesis of English periphrastic *do* in contrastive uses and the spread of *wh*-relatives, which initially were restricted to antecedents such as God or saints, but were later extended to noblemen and good friends before becoming grammaticalized for all human referents. In this case study, the reference to ontological markedness scales seems particularly natural.

Vit Bubenik, in his article, “On the actualization of the passive-to-ergative shift in pre-Islamic India” (95–118), discusses contact-induced change within diglossic speech communities as evidenced in Prakrit texts. He interprets the decline of passive constructions as a gradual extension of the new construction from the most marked to the most unmarked linguistic contexts.

Next is “The use of address pronouns in Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets” (119–42) by Ulrich Busse, who identifies a range of intersocial and textual factors influencing the use of *you* or its stylistically marked variant *thou*. Busse argues that an investigation of such distributional patterns can help to establish a typology of texts.

Marianne Mithun, in her article, “Actualization patterns in grammaticalization: from clause to locative morphology in Northern Iroquoian” (143–68), impressively illustrates how spatial verbs in Mohawk have reached different points on the path to grammeme status, with the most general and cognitively most basic marker having evolved the furthest.

With Lene Schøsler’s study, “From Latin to Modern French: actualization and markedness” (169–85), the reader is offered another meticulous examination

of change *in actu*, namely the step-by-step loss of the Old French two-case nominal declension system. Schøsler deliberately refrains from invoking markedness to explain the observed progression of this loss, since semantic features such as [+human] or the syntactic environment, such as subordinate clauses, cannot be consistently evaluated as marked or unmarked with respect to the change under discussion.

John Charles Smith, in his article, “Markedness, functionality, and perseveration in the actualization of a morphosyntactic change” (203–23), describes the gradual impoverishment of agreement between direct objects and past participles in Catalan, with a view towards other Romance idioms. Smith discusses not only several morphosyntactic hierarchies, but also phonological and stylistic factors. He concludes that it is not so much markedness scales, but rather the disambiguating potential of agreement markers, which is decisive for their resistance to loss in general.

In conclusion, all seven empirical contributions offer fine diachronic data, and all papers have enlightening discussions of change in many areas of grammar. However, the reference to a cognitive notion of markedness, intended as a kind of *leitmotiv*, does not seem equally attractive in all cases. Moreover, given the growing interest in (co-)occurrence frequency as an *explanans* of linguistic change (see especially work by Joan Bybee), Andersen’s view that statistical data are at best epiphenomenal on cognition might underestimate the role of performance factors in the spread of innovations. Clearly, analysing such generalizations of (previously) ‘marked’ innovations as ‘markedness shifts’ does not explain anything; instead, we are left wondering how such changes in linguistic input affect the formation of concepts in speakers’ minds. Despite these theoretical objections, this

carefully edited volume provides stimulating although sometimes rather compact insights for anyone who is interested in the Hows and Whys of linguistic change.

Andreas Dufter (München)

Marianne Flassbeck. Gauklerin der Literatur: Elizabeth von Arnim und der weibliche Humor. Rüsselsheim: Christel Göttert, 2003. 286pp. Pb. € 19.80. ISBN 3-922499-61-9.

The cover of Flassbeck's book is eye-catching. A photograph of Elizabeth von Arnim split into two halves and placed against the background of a William Morris wall-paper design suggests a contorted perspective on the late-Victorian cult of the beautiful woman and the house beautiful. Marianne Flassbeck's study of Elizabeth von Arnim does not specifically deal with these connotations, but examines four of von Arnim's novels – *Elizabeth and Her German Garden* (1898), *The Enchanted April* (1922), *Vera* (1921), *Love* (1925) – in their multiple dialogic implications. Parody, puns and witty dialogues are shown as serving von Arnim's subversive engagement with patriarchal culture, symbolised either by eminent Victorians, by the 'Man of Wrath' or profit-making businessmen. In seven chapters, Flassbeck (re-)situates Elizabeth von Arnim both in the context of the Edwardian era and in connection with a tradition of writing which she defines as gender-specific: that of humour. For this purpose, Flassbeck combines critical approaches of *écriture féminine*, gynocriticism, gyn/ecology, and gender studies, whilst equally taking into account male theories of laughter: Immanuel Kant, Jean Paul, Erich Kästner, Sigmund Freud, Mikhail Bakhtin.

It is one of Flassbeck's great merits that she neither universalises nor essen-

tialises feminine laughter – a "queer imp that sits in a detached corner of one's mind refusing to be serious just when it most should be" (as von Arnim writes in *Love*). Instead, she illustrates its subversive potential in a given cultural environment as well as its dynamic, polyphonous, and (necessarily) protean nature. The quality of von Arnim's laughter, launched from a minority position in culture and targeted against social hierarchies, changed in the course of her work. Flassbeck shows with great skill how von Arnim rebelled against existing gender roles and patriarchal concepts of love, against domestic brutality, male reason and prejudice by simultaneously drawing on and undermining conventional images of femininity. Thus Elizabeth's 'German garden' is turned into a polyvalent metaphor, harking back to a rich tradition ranging from Marvell's "The Garden" and Milton's *Paradise Lost* to James Thomson's *Seasons*. A symbol of fecundity and growth, it carries associations of wilderness and unlimited space, both of which are conducive to the formation of the subject beyond the boundaries of the house and the hearth. Elizabeth's garden is a 'herland,' a 'room of her own.' Described as her 'kingdom of heaven' it also serves the creation of a feminine counter-spirituality, emancipated from Protestant piety, religious fervour, and self-denial. Flassbeck's reading brings to light the many nuances of von Arnim's *Mutterwitz*: its parodistic, carnivalesque strain, its grim gothicism, its angry as well as disrespectful tones.

While Flassbeck minutely contextualises Elizabeth von Arnim's *oeuvre* in connection with the New Woman question and convincingly describes her as a forerunner of Modernism, she pays surprisingly little attention to von Arnim's cosmopolitan background and its potential effect on the destabilising quality of her writing. Occasionally one wonders what

distinguishes her laughter, especially in its lighter aspects, from a particularly *British* vein of humour? Or is it *British feminine*? The question suggests itself because Flassbeck highlights the particular appeal of von Arnim's early garden diary to a British audience, and because she refers to a variety of female British writers who ventured into parodistic, gothic or subversive genres (Jane Austen, Maria Edgeworth, Emily Brontë, Virginia Woolf, Fay Weldon). There are, of course, many others she might have cited. A comparative reading of von Arnim's and Sylvia Townsend Warner's novels, published about the same time, or in connection with writers like Stevie Smith and Ruth Pitter might shed yet more light on the feminine quality of her humour and its (gender-)specific function. (Like von Arnim's *fantaisie déréglée*, Pitter's humour, too, unfolds within the domestic realm of the garden, and she, too, rebelled against 'standards' and pleaded for a toleration of weeds and vermin).

Tracing Elizabeth von Arnim's writing career in terms of a pattern of success and silence, typical of many women writers who fell into oblivion after their death and were only recovered in connection with the rise of feminist literary criticism in the 1970s, Flassbeck's book closes a gap in the study of this female, feminine, or feminist line of wit, undervalued for such a long time. It is sure to kindle further critical interest – partly because it offers shrewd insights into traditionally feminine territories: the (wild) garden, sisterhood, cyclical time, love, death, and 'natality'; and partly because Flassbeck's own language is remarkably fresh. Those who have not read Elizabeth von Arnim will want to do so after reading Flassbeck's study.

Sabine Coelsch-Foisner (Salzburg)

Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds. **The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. x, 343pp. Pb. £ 15.95. ISBN 0-521-78652-5.

Peter J. Kitson, gen. ed. **Nineteenth-Century Travels, Explorations and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Consolidation 1835-1910**. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003. 4 vols. xiii + 406 pp. (vol. 1), xxi + 451 pp. (vol. 2), xii + 445 (vol. 3), xviii + 448pp. (vol. 4). Hb. £ 350.00, US\$ 525.00. ISBN 1-85196-760-5.

Hulme and Youngs's volume from CUP's established Companion series prays tribute to the fact that travel writing – i.e. writing emerging from its author's actual travel experience – has become an increasingly topical area of research and academic teaching. In English Studies, it has gained a particular relevance in cultural and postcolonial studies, but, as the editors point out in their introduction, travel writing is in principle a field of multi- and interdisciplinary interest. Accordingly, contributors to this volume have been recruited not only from literary and cultural studies, but also anthropology and history, though not geography, which is another discipline in which the study of travel writing has traditionally been considered. The scope of the volume is restricted to travel writing in English since about 1500 and published in Britain; the majority of writers discussed are sprung from the British Isles, but American writers are considered in greater numbers in the chapters devoted to travel in and to California and to post-war travel writing. Despite this restriction, the textual terrain to be mapped in this companion is immense, and all in all, editors and contributors emerge as competent surveyors.

The editors' introduction addresses basic issues such as travel writing's genre-defining negotiation of fact and fiction, or

its relationship to the history of travel, in which the emergence of modern mass tourism has habitually been seen as a watershed. The volume is subsequently divided into three parts: in "Surveys," five essays map the most important phases in the evolution of English travel writing (chapter overlaps acknowledge that the major types of travel and travel writing develop along separate lines); the essays in "Sites" are devoted to travel in specific geographical areas; "Topics" assembles three essays on theoretical and cultural dimensions. While the first part outlines genre history, the second demonstrates how this history intersects with and is always influenced by the changing modes of travel, the natural and cultural circumstances of the areas travelled and, above all, the ideological 'baggage' with which a traveller necessarily sets out on his or her journey.

William H. Sherman traces the "Stirrings and Searchings" in the area of travel writing between 1500 and 1720, focussing on important writings about discovery, exploration, commercial travelling, colonisation and later scientific exploration which were so essentially involved with England's growing national desire to "play a role in the apprehension of the wider world" (18). The chapter is rather mechanical where it merely lists the various figures involved in this project of travel writing (Haklyut and Purchas as eminent editors, or Raleigh as an explorer with dreams of colonisation who also still embodied the medieval type of the errant knight); it succeeds, however, in establishing a line of travel and travel writing which flourished with the growth of the British Empire and which is still influential as a pattern to be revised and 'written back' to in postcolonial times. A well-known historian of tourism, James Buzard, then surveys another culturally significant branch of travel and travel writing. The educational Grand Tour, which also originates in the early-modern period, was one

of the eighteenth century's most influential paradigms for travel, complemented by the romantic paradigm of picturesque travel and eventually superseded by the rise of modern tourism. What Buzard here presents in a nutshell has of course been observed before (among others, by himself), and the same can be said for Roy Bridges's overview of "Exploration and Travel Outside Europe" between 1720 and 1914, when "[t]rade, diplomacy, missionary endeavour, and scientific exploration" all contributed to Britain's economic and political control of the world and "each produced its own travel writing" (53). Since they trace less-trodden paths, the subsequent chapters on "Modernism and Travel" (by Helen Carr) and travel writing between 1940 and 2000 (by Peter Hulme) are of particular merit and interest also for the more initiated reader. Carr shows how a growing awareness of the anxieties of late imperialism and doubts about the value of modern Western civilisation caused writers of the early twentieth century to explore new modes of travel writing. In particular, they turned to more subjective modes, so that travel writing came to be increasingly practised and appreciated as *literary* writing and an alternative to the novel. In recent decades, a great number of renowned (Bruce Chatwin or V.S. Naipaul) and new writers have kept the genre alive and further expanded its potential, working in both more experimental forms (inspired by a postmodernist aesthetic) and more mainstream, journalistic modes of writing. Postcolonial and gender awareness have also given rise to a distinct new line of counter-travel writing. Taken together, these period chapters mention the most important representatives of travel writing from the British Isles, including, among many others, Daniel Defoe, Dr Samuel Johnson, Wilfred Thesiger, Evelyn Waugh or D.H. Lawrence. Systematically, the famous women travellers are

also considered with the attention they deserve, including Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Isabella Bird, Mary Kingsley, Gertrude Bell, Freya Stark or Dervla Murphy. Since many of these women feature prominently also in several of the 'geographical' chapters (notably in Billie Melman's discussion of travel in the Middle East), the volume manages to represent female travellers and travel writers not as an 'exception' but as participants in mainstream travel traditions and contemporary discourses about travel.

The geographical chapters are all focussed on a specific "site" within a wider region: Middle East/Arabia, South America/Amazonia/Pacific/Tahiti, Africa/The Congo, The Isles/Ireland, India/Calcutta, The West/California. One wonders why Italy as a central site of the Grand Tour has not received similar attention. Arguably, English travel to Italy has been studied quite extensively, but so has Africa; rather, the areas chosen seem to reflect the editors' special involvement in colonial and postcolonial studies. This is, of course, a legitimate option, but Manfred Pfister's annotated collection *The Fatal Gift of Beauty: The Italies of British Travellers* (1996), would at least have deserved a place in the bibliography's list of anthologies. Focus on particular sites permits the authors in part two to relate texts from different periods to each other and thus to show how, in the course of time, travellers' attitudes towards the same travelled area have undergone significant change – or not. As Neil L. Whitehead shows for Amazonia, for instance, this region has remained a place of 'marvel' from the sixteenth through the twentieth century; Kate Teltscher demonstrates for a broad range of texts (which include V.S. Naipaul's India books) how "images of Calcutta are endless repeated, elaborated, challenged, and revised" (204-05).

Compared to the two preceding parts, the book's "Topics" section seems more

selectively and randomly assembled. However relevant the dimensions of gender and ethnography are in current research on travel writing, they do not exhaust the contemporary range of important issues; postcolonial and alternative modes of travel writing, for example, might have been candidates for another topics chapter. Susan Bassnett's gender chapter is distinguished by a well-reasoned position of anti-essentialism. She argues that "much early feminist scholarship suffered from a tendency to see 'woman' as a unitary category, and to make assumptions based on that undifferentiated categorisation" (227), the result being an over-generalisation of alleged differences between male and female travel and travel writing. By contrast, Bassnett presents Jan (formerly James) Morris's travel writing as an obvious challenge to "the idea of binary oppositions – between home and other, present and past, masculine and feminine" (239). Joan Pau Rubiés concludes his survey of travel writing and its various modes of describing peoples and their ways of life with the perspective that globalisation and cultural hybridisation will increasingly determine ethnographic description in travel writing and will hence become increasingly important in the study of that writing.

The volume closes with a survey by Mary Baine Campbell of "Travel Writing and Its Theory" which identifies prominent texts and topics. Campbell, herself a specialist in early-modern travel writing, comes across as somewhat dismissive about literary-critical studies of travel writing and obviously favours the cultural approaches in which she is widely read. Theorisers covered include Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt, James Clifford, François Hartog and Michel de Certeau, to name only a few. Campbell provides a competent mapping of relevant approaches, but undergraduate students might find this contribution more demanding than

the preceding ones. For students, it is suitable that the useful bibliography of "Further Reading" (which considers only texts published in English and thus excludes a tradition of Continental research about English travel writing) has been limited in its recommendations of titles on the history and sociology of travel and critical studies of travel writing.

Considering its necessarily limited scope and acknowledging that in a collection of this type some essays will always be more original or seminal than others, this is an informative, well-written and attractively illustrated companion for anyone who seeks basic orientation in a vast territory and wants suggestions for more intensive study.

Since travel writing has become such an active field of research, it is welcome that primary sources are also made available in far greater numbers than they used to be. The four volumes of *Nineteenth-Century Travels, Explorations and Empires [...] 1835-1910* follow an earlier quartet devoted to the Romantic period, and another four volumes are projected. Each volume provides an introductory survey of the respective travel activities and their cultural contexts as well as the contemporary reception of travel writing. Individual writers and texts (most of which are British and many of which would otherwise be difficult to obtain) are introduced in detail and with suggestions for further reading. All texts are printed as facsimile reproductions. This presumably helped to keep costs as low as possible and also creates a certain period sense. Unfortunately, it also makes some of the texts straining to read.

As Kitson emphasises in his general introduction, the student of Victorian and Edwardian travel writing is intimidated by the "sheer quantity of the material which was published in substantial tomes" (x). In an expanding Empire and as a consequence of the transport revolution, opportunities for travel and travel writing

proliferated – not only for those who administrated, explored and christianised the Empire, but also the new type of the 'globetrotter,' including a substantially increased number of female travellers. Their written output became a significant cultural commodity.

Indira Ghose's collection of writings about travel in India (vol. 3) is the volume most directly related to imperial consolidation. Ten texts exemplify the "vast project of cultural information accumulation" (x) connected with British rule over the subcontinent. This project involved, for instance, a travel celebrity like Richard Burton, who combined ethnographic interest with heroic adventure, but also the famous reporter of the *Times*, William Howard Russell, who was despatched to India in 1858 to report on the consequences of the Mutiny. Women, as Ghose points out, were "not bound up with the administrative machinery or involved in the Great Game" (xviii). Nevertheless, they made important contributions to British imaging of India. Emily Eden is counted among the 'classics' of travel writing, and Fanny Parks is to be particularly noted for the insights she gained and reported about the secluded life of women in the *zenana*.

Susan Schoenbauer Thurin also assembles ten texts for her *Far East* volume (vol. 4). They demonstrate how colonial strategies and modes of perception worked even in areas not under direct Western rule. Infamously, it was the opium trade which permitted the West to hold its grip over China's vast territory, and not surprisingly, the opium problem is a central interest of most Western travellers. To Britons, coming from the world's modern centre of power, China provided "the spectacle of a once-great nation [...] now fallen sadly into decay" (x). While China rejected Western influence and travellers, Japan opened itself more willingly, thus providing a completely different experi-

ence of the Far East, as Thurin's selection illustrates. British visitors report, for example, on enjoyable spas and the phenomenon of a country that was "rapidly modernising in ways parallel to the West" (*ibid.*).

William Batten's collection of travel writing about North America (vol. 2) includes 25 texts, among others by the famous Isabella Bird, which exemplify how the British perceived a lost colony. North America offered natural beauties, space for continuing exploration and adventure as well as an opportunity to encounter and describe an indigenous 'other.' Above all, however, the United States were of interest as a country undergoing massive social, political, urban and industrial transformation, especially in the years following the Civil War. Where China was fascinating for its past, the United States appeared to point toward the future of human civilisation.

The Arctic, by contrast, appeared to offer an opportunity to study 'pre-civilised' man. In his introduction to the volume about *Arctic and Antarctic Exploration* (vol. 1), Peter J. Kitson characterises the Poles as "a place for gender and racial 'polarisation'" (xxviii): this was still a territory into which men only ventured forth, and where Britons appeared to be faced with a 'barbarian' indigenous population. It was also a territory, however, where standards of modern civilisation were easily undermined. Kitson's selection includes texts related to Sir John Franklin's final and disastrous quest for the Northwest Passage. When news reached Britain that the last surviving men had apparently committed cannibalism, this shook the foundations of British culture. The Franklin disaster virtually stopped British interest in the Arctic, which was then directed to the South Pole, where Robert Falcon Scott would eventually find a similarly tragic though more heroic end.

Together, these four volumes unfold an impressive panorama of British travel activities in the seven decades before the outbreak of World War I. These travels and the men and women who performed them were diverse, and yet their texts also reveal a shared value and knowledge system of the imperial age. This is accordingly a series which deserves its place in academic libraries not only as documentation of the history of travel, but also for its more general relevance in the field of British cultural studies.

Barbara Korte (Freiburg)

Irene Gammel, ed. **Making Avonlea: L.M. Montgomery and Popular Culture.** Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2002. xii, 347pp. Hb. £ 45.00. ISBN 0-8020-3558-2.

Irene Gammel's collection of 24 essays originates in a 2001 conference at the University of Prince Edward Island, the place where Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942) was born and wrote some of her central works – including her widely known orphan-story, *Anne of Green Gables* (1908). In addition to the 15 selected best conference papers, nine more were solicited to achieve as wide a scope as possible in the editor's attempt at examining Canada's "most important celebrity author as a case study" (13) of popular (inter)national cultures. Montgomery is thus investigated as a national icon, her characters as part of Canada's cultural heritage. Operating at the nexus of well-tried scholarly assessments and less formal but informative approaches, *Making Avonlea* offers a large spectrum of pieces combining literary criticism, social survey, iconography, historical record, travel narrative, media studies and personal reflection. These contributions are all enriched

by illustrations that testify to the high degree of romanticization and commodification to which Montgomery herself, her native island, and her fictional characters have been and are subjected, both at home and abroad. Accordingly, editor Gammel – who likes to pursue questions of gender politics and of cultural transfers (see her *Baroness Elsa*, 2002) and who co-edited *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture* (1999) with Elizabeth Epperly – structured her new book into three major parts: “Mapping Avonlea: Cultural Value and Iconography”; “Viewing Avonlea: Film, Television, Drama, and Musical”; “Touring Avonlea: Landscape, Tourism, and Spin-Off Products.” The first essay is a reception study by Carole Gerson, a specialist on early Canadian women writers. Gerson discusses Montgomery’s consistently high popular appeal throughout the twentieth century vis-à-vis the fact that her official “literary value [...] has altered considerably” (18): The author was demoted, e.g., by mid-century modernists and all-male representatives of middle-brow Canadian culture before second-wave feminism brought more positive evaluations in the 1970s. In her essay “‘It’s all mine’: The Modern Woman as Writer in Sullivan’s *Anne of Green Gables* Films,” Eleanor Hearsey debates Kevin Sullivan’s film adaptations (1985, 1987, 2000) and their having been criticized for betraying the author’s concept by focusing too much on romance, by turning Anne into a writer who as a woman – like Montgomery herself – is denied fundamental rights. Though the films present a character different from the author’s idea, Hearsey points out “that popular texts inevitably send conservative political messages to the masses” (143), and suggests that Sullivan’s films work as a corrective. One of the most surprising aspects of the reach of Montgomery’s fiction is traced in the third section: In “*Snapshot: My Life as Anne in Japan*,” P.E.I.-born Tara Nogler

narrates how she came to impersonate Montgomery’s famous orphan in the Canadian World theme park in Hokkaido, where she felt like a “cultural ambassador [and] promoter of products” in a setting reminiscent of nineteenth-century Canadian life; citing scholars D. Baldwin and Y. Akamatsu, Nogler reasons that the “desire for nature and innocence explains aspects in Anne’s appeal to the Japanese” (290-91). Similarly, Danièle Allard describes her experience with the very popular Anne Clubs in Japan as part of “*Taishu bunka*” – a concept that has an egalitarian meaning, referring to “the culture shared by every single Japanese individual” (297). A five-part bibliography completes the book. *Making Avonlea* demystifies and reinstates Montgomery as an exceptional writer. It is a slightly uneven but entertaining contribution to studies at the crossroads of current concepts of culture, of (our perceptions of) gender, history, and media.

Markus M. Müller (Trier)

Astrid Erll, Marion Gymnich and Ansgar Nünning, eds. **Literatur, Erinnerung, Identität: Theoriekonzeptionen und Fallstudien.** ELCH, 11. Trier: WVT, 2003. ix, 328pp. Pb. € 27.50. ISBN 3-88476-611-2.

With *Literatur, Erinnerung, Identität*, Astrid Erll, Marion Gymnich and Ansgar Nünning present a volume that sets out to systematically chart and probe into the interconnections of literature, memory and identity. As the editors state in their introductory remarks, they perceive literature to be involved in a three-dimensional model inspired by Paul Ricoeur’s “circle of mimesis” (proposed in the first volume of his seminal *Time and Narrative*): In this model, literature relies on and refers to extra-literary *prefigurations* of identity and

memory; in a second step, literature represents mnemonic contents and strategies in various performative *configurations* of identity and memory, which may, in a third step, again restructure the extra-literary context (*refiguration*). On the basis of these premises, the essays in this volume address two kinds of questions: How, and with recourse to which prefigurations, does literature construct its own conception of identity and memory? And how, and to what extent, do literary configurations of identity and memory in turn affect extra-literary social and cultural discourses?

The first part of the study comprises four essays which intend to cover the theoretical and methodological groundwork. Arstid Erll and Ansgar Nünning's "Gedächtniskonzepte der Literaturwissenschaft: Ein Überblick" tries to chart the extremely heterogeneous field of research devoted to possible interconnections between memory and literature. Erll and Nünning propose a distinction between five different critical approaches; these alternatively conceive of a (self-referential) memory of literature (particularly in an intertextual sense), genres as mnemonic spaces, literary histories and canons as institutionalised memories, the (performative) mimesis of memory, and finally of literature as a vessel of collective memory in historical cultures. The merits of Erll and Nünning's explorations are to be seen less in conceptual newness, but rather in their informed comprehensiveness. This holds also true for Marion Gymnich's essay on individual memory and identity, which provides an update on the latest research in the psychology of identity and most notably in narrative psychology. On these grounds, Gymnich postulates associations between conceptions of identity and several categories of narratology and drama theory; how these are to be conceptually as well as practically conceived of, however, remains rather shady.

Brigit Neumann's essay on "Literatur als Medium (der Inszenierung) kollektiver Erinnerungen und Identitäten" investigates the theoretical presuppositions of literature's potential to configure mnemonic contents and to perform as memory and identity, as well as literature's presumed power to restructure extra-literary discourses. Doing so, she reviews the cultural conceptions of Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora and Aleida Assmann, and poignantly points out their shortcomings: She is particularly convincing when she tackles the assumption of a singular collective memory implied in all three approaches, which she instead wishes to replace by a notion of overlapping, heterogeneous and differentiating constructions of memory and identity ("heterogene und sich differenzierende Identitäts- und Gedächtniskonstruktionen, die einander überlagern und wechselseitig perspektivieren", 64). Hanne Birk's essay on metaphors of memory, finally, is largely a synopsis of the relevant sections in Aleida Assmann's study *Erinnerungsräume*.

While the first part of the volume provides a helpful overview of the issues at stake and provides the newcomer to relevant theories of memory with a solid basis and, in Neumann's case, constructive criticism, the imaginatively daring part of this book consists of its case studies. The volume takes a comparative perspective by not only investigating texts that are written in English, but also in German and Spanish, and offers access to cultural contexts both in Europe and the Americas (a perspective certainly most welcome, but slightly at odds with the volume's publication in WVT's ELCH [Studies in *English* Literary and Cultural History] series). Detailed analysis is devoted to individual writers as diverse as Wilkie Collins and Bram Stoker (Eckbert Birr), Charlotte Brontë (Marion Gymnich and Andrea Lazarescu), Kazuo Ishiguro and Eva Figes (Dorothee Birke),

Toni Morrison and Alice Walker (Michael Bassler), Christa Wolf (Nadyne Stritzke), A.S. Byatt (Henning Peters), Wolfgang Köppen and Arno Schmidt (Ansgar Warner), Friedrich Hölderlin (Monika Sproll) and José Sanchis Sinisteras (Rowena Sander), or to generic issues such as biography (Nikola Herweg), 'fictional metabiography' (Julijana Nadj) and the chronicle (Rowena Sander, with an inspiring analysis of the indigenous chronicle *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*). The case studies, without exception, live up to a high academic standard and, taken together, cover all approaches to literature and memory as presented by Nünning and Erl in their survey article without neglecting the aspect of identity. The numerous projects probing into the conceptual trio of memory, identity and literature reveal the productiveness of such an interconnection, yet also implicitly point out problems and limits when it comes to the practical analysis of specific texts. With regard to the two central questions that this volume sets out to address, the case studies imply that the assessment of performative configurations of identity and memory in creative writing is fairly unproblematic. The specific effects these configurations have on extra-literary discourses of memory and identity (Ricoeur's 'refiguration'), however, are easily stated, but infinitely harder to actually assess.

Lars Eckstein (Tübingen)

Tobias Döring, Markus Heide and Susanne Mühleisen, eds. **Eating Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Food**. American Studies, 106. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 2003. vii, 284pp. 4 Fig. Hb.€ 38.00. ISBN 3-8253-1519-3.

Taste is a sense and, like other senses, it provides a primary form of input into our mental system. Through taste we encoun-

ter aspects of the physical world. At the same time, the language of taste is the language of aesthetics and social sciences *par excellence*. Although cooking and eating were not included in the realm of fine arts when the concept developed in the seventeenth century, today there exists a poetics, psychology, politics and philosophy of food. Informed by this fact, Tobias Döring, Markus Heide and Susanne Mühleisen organised an international symposium, *Eating Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Food*, held at the University of Frankfurt/Main in 2000. The volume under review consists mostly of a selection of papers presented at this conference.

The First Part ("Culinary Politics: Creolization and Identification") offers interrelated essays investigating various eating habits and social history. Sidney W. Mintz analyses problematic relations between food and the understanding of nationhood, Berndt Ostendorf focuses on a particular case of the food cultures of New Orleans, and Ching Lin Pang writes about Chinese immigrant cuisine in Belgium. The editors suggest in the Introduction that the tripartite division of the volume is based on particular focal points, i.e., politics, poetics and visuality. This is not quite true, even though it offers convenient labels and facilitates editorial work. The categories constantly overlap, as they indeed must, and, for instance, the last two essays in the First Part deal with linguistics as much as with politics. Susanne Mühleisen concentrates on food history and cultural semantics, while Shirley Tate investigates complex issues concerning the relationship between linguistic performance, food and cultural identification: on the basis of Black British spoken discourse, she identifies significant hybrid moments – talk of food is used to locate ethnic boundaries.

Essays forming Part Two ("Edible Fictions: Food Writing and Translation") seem to be inspired by similar premises:

Food choice frequently delineates boundaries between communities and the experience of eating encounters may thus either corroborate existing prejudices or help negotiate between cultures. Exemplifying the former aspect Heike Paul presents a nineteenth-century German critique of American culinary habits where the analysed texts offer an example of condescension from the vantage point of European high-culture standards, but also reveal to what extent and how uneasily the element of race creeps in when German writers are confronted with the Black servant – a necessary component of the American eating spectacle. Also focusing on the socio-political, Sarah Moss analyses Jane Austen's *Emma* where the protagonist uses food as an instrument of social power. A similar approach is taken by Mark Stein, Rüdiger Kunow and Susanne Reichl in their discussions of colonial and postcolonial texts such as Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*, Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*, as well as films like *Mississippi Masala*. Looking at literary representation of food from the semiotic and the political standpoint, the authors undertake an analysis of what food represents in extra-literary terms and what food signifies for members of today's various diasporas which try to define themselves culturally and politically: What function is performed by food metaphors and how they unleash their polysemic potential, what parallels can be drawn between food and language as ethnic signs?

The essays forming the third part ("Visual Pleasures: Food Images and the Hungry Gaze") delineate the relationship between the visual and the 'kitchenesque.' Philosophers like Riegl, Wittgenstein and Lacan murdered the concept of the "innocent eye" of apperception and already for Wordsworth the eye was the most

despotic of our senses. But the field is promising not only because we all suffer from *le regard déjà codé*. It is promising because – especially in the context of food – the metaphorically devouring and voracious eye has a special power: If misapplied, it becomes the principal organ of mastery, penetration and takeover. Renate Brosch concentrates on visual art while Julika Griem and Kevin Dwyer analyse films. What is confirmed in all three essays is the relevance of the critique of the narcissistic imaginary, Lacanian psychoanalytic formulation of the equivalence between the act of the visual perception and sexual impulses, the postcolonial insight of the imperial ordering eye, the Todorovian concept of a travelling eye, the most magical of the senses. Equally pertinent is a feminist viewpoint discrediting the fraudulent objectivity of the male gaze.

It would be easy to criticise the volume for what it lacks: Religious aspects of culinary practices are strangely absent, as well as psychological insights dealing, for example, with eating disorders, but this criticism would be somewhat unfair because the editors themselves are aware of such gaps (14). It would be easy to grudge about technical mistakes: In a volume about food a "dessert" should not be mistaken for a "desert," especially if the authors of the introduction intend a pun (2), and one would wish there were no misprints in the table of contents (vi). One might also ask why the study is published in the series "American Studies" if the editors are at pains to avoid strict compartmentalisation, offering instead what they call themselves "a transdisciplinary volume." Such criticism, however, is purely formal. What the volume offers – informative, rich and well-researched essays – more than amply compensates minor imperfections.

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GÜNTER H. LENZ

Irreconcilabilities and Transgressions: Edward W. Said's Idea of a Wordly Criticism – An Introduction

I.

Orientalism, begun by Edward W. Said after the Six Days War of 1967 and published in 1978, is a study that combines Foucault's analysis of knowledge and power with Gramsci's reflections on the workings of hegemony. It is a study of the construction of the "Orient" as Europe's "Other," of a discursive regime that, at the same time, is "an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture" (Said 1978, 2). Said's book met with a lot of polemical criticism, but was crucial for a critique of Eurocentrism in the humanities and social sciences and for the development of postcolonial criticism in the United States and other parts of the West.

The special issue of *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, "Between Worlds: The Legacy of Edward W. Said," is mainly based on a workshop on the genealogy of *Orientalism* and its impact on American Studies organized for the annual meeting of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Amerikastudien* at Mannheim in June 2004. I would like to make some introductory remarks on the scope and the direction of Said's work and begin by taking up a sentence by Said himself at the beginning of his essay "Orientalism Reconsidered" (1985) which will structure my observations (for a monographical essay on Said's work until 1990 see Lenz 1991). Said argues that he will use his essay to reflect critically on his book *Orientalism* in the wider context of four important general issues:

- 1) "the representation of other cultures, societies, histories,"
- 2) "the relationship between power and knowledge,"
- 3) "the role of the intellectual," and
- 4) "the methodological questions that have to do with the relationships between different kinds of texts, between texts and contexts, between text and history" (Said 2000, 198).

Let me refer to a few of Said's crucial ideas on these four dimensions of his work.

The representation of other cultures, societies, histories: In his critique of anthropology's representation of other cultures, "Representing the Colonized: Anthro-

pology's Interlocutors" (1988), Said points to the history of imperialism, the imperial context and contest, as "the true defining horizon, and to some extent, the enabling condition, of such otherwise abstract and groundless concepts like 'otherness' and 'difference,'" and he also emphasizes the disruptive force of counter-narratives (cf. Said 2000, 295, 302, 306-7, 312-4). Our relationship to others – "other cultures, other states, other histories, other experiences, traditions, peoples, and destinies" – is a "profoundly perturbed and perturbing question" that forces us to realize that "there is no vantage *outside* the actuality of relationships between cultures, between unequal imperial and non-imperial powers, between different Others" (Said 2000, 306). Said discusses some of the more recent efforts by American anthropologists to explore the strong, though often hidden "relationship between anthropology as an ongoing enterprise and, on the other hand, empire as an ongoing concern" (Said 2000, 307) by self-critically reflecting on the Western ethnocentric bias in constructing "other" cultures as inferior and in writing ethnographical texts (though he does not acknowledge the innovative power of their new ethnographic methods). He also points out that the notion of "the colonized" has expanded considerably to "include women, subjugated and oppressed classes, national minorities, and even marginalized and incorporated academic subspecialties," i.e. that the notion of "cultural difference" or "cultural otherness" has been recognized, in an "anthropology at home," as characterizing U.S. American, Western culture(s) as inherently "hybridized" (Said 2000, 295). But he also emphasizes that this critical awareness is often turned into a new version of an academic "exceptionalist" approach that "fetishizes" and "celebrates" "difference" and "otherness" without taking into account the imperial context in which anthropologists work (302-3). If "orientals, blacks, and other 'natives' made enough noise that they were paid attention to, and asked in, to speak," the intellectual, critical reaction often was to transform the "continuing, protracted, and sustained adversarial resistance [of the native point of view] to the discipline and the praxis of anthropology [...] itself" into an "ethnographic fact" or a "hermeneutic construct." Or it was transformed into a notion of "postmodernism" as an "aesthetic of quotation, nostalgia, and indifferenciation" (Lyotard) that ignored the crisis of modernism and of the "great narratives" of the Enlightenment which "foundered" to a large extent on the "disturbing appearance in Europe of various Others, whose provenance was the imperial domain" (298, 310, 312-3). What Aimé Césaire, C.L.R. James, and Frantz Fanon show us is that the "full situation of postmodernism" forces the European and American metropolis to "think its history *together with* the history of colonies awakening from the cruel stupor and abused immobility of imperial dominion," (314) to analyze the "overlapping territories, intertwined histories" (the title of ch. 1 of Said's *Culture and Imperialism*), the discrepant experiences of Western and non-Western narratives. This also means that the fixed ideas of "settled identity and culturally authorized definition" of a cultural and political "nationalism" have to be abandoned, also by the colonized people in their struggle for liberation (Césaire, Fanon). In the globalizing world of today the old models of understand-

ing and “representing” “other cultures” have to be replaced by a new understanding of the interaction of cultures seen as “permeable,” as complex intercultural flows that meet and clash in multiple encounters and contact zones under conditions of unequal power, as historically constituted and open to change: “Exile, immigration, and the crossing of boundaries and experiences can therefore provide us with new narrative forms or, in John Berger’s phrase, with *other* ways of telling” (315). It was this continuous, and discontinuous, project and quest for new narrative forms, other ways of telling the complex, hybridized and hybridizing, multi-faceted, exploratory stories of “cultures and imperialism” in the contemporary world that over the years led Said again and again to productive contradictions, revisions, extensions, and new beginnings.

Power and knowledge: Said further developed and – also spatially, geographically – extended his argument of *Orientalism* in his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). The study is about the complex relationship between imperial ideology and the workings of culture, but also the response and resistance to Western dominance which culminated in the great movement of decolonization all across the Third World. *Culture and Imperialism* particularly focuses on the British empire and the role and workings of “classic” Victorian fiction in England and its imperial world, but it also explores other historical and geographical contexts, including the United States, and the different ways in which “culture” and “empire” interrelate. The scope of “Orientalism” is extended by drawing on European writings on Africa, India, parts of the Far East, Australia, and the Caribbean, and analyzing the anticolonialist movements. Again, Said is fully aware of the complexity, of the dynamics, of the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in the workings of culture and imperialism, of the crucial role culture has played in the history of imperialism, of “culture” as a “sort of theater where various political and ideological causes engage one another,” a “battleground” on which the encounter and clashes of cultures happen and on which cultural differences are often suppressed or displaced in the mechanics of unequal power differentials. Said pursues the different ways in which the cultural terrain and histories of different groups, cultures, or nations co-exist and battle one another in social and cultural discourses and in the cultural performances of the narratives of works of fiction. Responding to the debate about multiculturalism in the U.S. and the complaint about the “disuniting of America” (Arthur Schlesinger), Said addresses the specific quality of American culture and society, emphasizing that “American identity is too varied to be a unitary and homogenous thing,” that

the United States contains so many histories, many of them now clamoring for attention, [that it] is by no means to be suddenly feared since many of them were always there, and out of them *an* American society and politics (and even a style of historical writing) were in fact created. (Said 1993, xxv-xxvi)

Yet, Said does not claim something like an “American exceptionalism” of cultural difference(s), but takes the United States as a particularly challenging case study of the crucial insight that “because of empire [and one would now add,

globalization], all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogenous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic" (xxv; cf. Said 1993, 58 and Said 2000, 587).

Said develops a notion of imperialism as a historical force that "consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale," but also, unfortunately, produced the beliefs in people that "they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, Black, or Western, or Oriental," that they were "purely *one* thing" (Said 1993, 336). Obviously, Said's definitions of the terms "imperialism" and "colonialism" and their applicability to the dynamics of the globalizing (and relocalizing) world at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, as well as his primary focus on the tradition of the European realistic novel and on uncovering the imperial (or subversive) subtexts of great canonical Western texts raise some important questions (Said 1993, 12, 66). Also, even though he increasingly acknowledged the important pioneering work of "feminism or women's studies, black or ethnic studies, socialist and imperialist studies" and referred to literary works of a wider-ranging multicultural American literature or the "disjunctive formations and experiences such as women's history, popular culture, post-colonial and subaltern material," Said's engagement with these literary and critical "other" "voices," especially gender analysis, remained rather intermittent and occasional, his engagement with the wide range of American literatures rather sketchy (Said 2000, 200, 380, 458, 578-9; Said 1994, xvii; see John Carlos Rowe's suggestive essay on Said and American Studies, Rowe 2004). Yet, his firm rejection of all kinds of theoretical systems and dogmas, *including* revolutionary and anticolonialist ones, his fight against separating cultural and literary theorizing from their imperial context and political horizon, even in the name of deconstruction, New Historicism, neo-pragmatism, neo-Marxism, or postcolonialism, and his commitment to the politics of a critical approach that sees historical experiences as dynamic and complex and cultural forms as "hybrid, mixed, impure" have opened up a revisionary understanding of the interrelation of power and knowledge, of modernism and its legacies, of a plurality of different modernities and hybrid, intercultural modernisms (Said 1993, 14, 56, 60, 188-90, 242-5, 303).

The role of the intellectual: At the beginning of *Culture and Imperialism* Said points out that the book is written from the position of "an exile," from in-between cultures, by someone who always felt that he "belonged to both worlds [the Arabic and the European], without being completely *of* either one or the other" (Said 1993, xxvi). Said continues the work of a "liberationist anti-imperialism" that sees "Western and non-Western experience as belonging together because they are connected by imperialism," that is energized by an "imaginative, even utopian vision which reconceives emancipatory (as opposed to confining) theory and performance," and that invests "neither in new authorities, doctrines, and encoded orthodoxies, nor in established institutions and causes, but in a particular sort of nomadic, migratory, and anti-narrative energy" (Said 1993, 278-9). *Culture and Imperialism* takes up these theoretical reflections by postcolonial critics such

as Aimé Césaire, C.L.R. James, Frantz Fanon, and Homi Bhabha *as well as* by Theodor W. Adorno and Antonio Gramsci in order to redefine the role of the intellectual in the world of today. For Said, the vocation of the intellectual is oppositional, the commitment as a public intellectual who is not de-fined by an ideological position of whatever kind, but self-reflexive, self-critical, and radically exploratory, never “at home.” In his many years of an active involvement in the cause of the Palestinians and in his extensive publications on “the question of Palestine” and the “struggle for Palestinian self-determination” (to take up the titles of two of his books), he brought all his intellectual power to the complicated issues, controversies, and activities, always responding to the changing situation, never sticking to ideological programs or positions. For him, as a Palestinian born in Jerusalem, who grew up in Egypt and lived in the United States since 1951, the experience and the positioning of *exile* is paradigmatic for the critical intellectual. “Exile,” a sense of homelessness, of displacement, of diaspora, for Said, is, on the one hand, a “painful,” terrible experience, “inevitably secular and unbearably historical,” a characteristic situation in our age of refugees, displaced persons, and mass migration (Said 2000: 174). If life in/as exile, on the other hand, is “nomadic, decentered, contrapuntal,” as he puts it in his “Reflections on Exile” (1984), it also, drawing on Theodor W. Adorno’s *Minima Moralia*, permits a “plurality of vision [that] gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is *contrapuntal*” and manifests itself in “contrapuntal juxtapositions,” in which the unsettling force erupts anew (Said 2000, 186).

Text – intertextuality – context – history: Said argues for what he calls “secular criticism” and the form of the essay as a “radically skeptical form” for analyzing both the colonial encounters and postcolonial interrelationships as well as the plurality of minority and border discourses in the United States. In *Culture and Imperialism*, he describes this form of criticism as *contrapuntal criticism*, a radically committed *and* open form of discourse that works out “what might be called a decentered consciousness, not less reflective and critical for being decentered, for the most part non- and in some cases anti-totalizing and anti-systematic” (Said 2000, 214). Said’s oppositional criticism is permeated and empowered by his ideal of producing “noncoercive knowledge [...] in the interests of human freedom,” “on behalf of those alternative acts and alternative intentions whose advancement is a fundamental human and intellectual obligation” (Said 1983, 29-30). It is a form of exploratory counter-knowledge, an “investigative, open analysis,” placed in “the context of problems such as globalization, violence, the politics of identity, the end of the Cold War,” that realizes that it cannot “reconcile” the “antinomies” in any kind of new synthesis (Said 2000, 214; Said in Bayoumi and Rubin 2000, 436). Instead, the intellectual has to confront them, “make them more apparent,” to “clarify and dramatize the irreconcilabilities of a particular situation” or experience (Said in Bayoumi and Rubin 2000, 437). As in his use of the term “contrapuntal criticism,” Said here explicitly

draws on “exiled” Theodor W. Adorno’s philosophy of music and his “negative dialectics,” on Adorno’s suggestive analysis of Schoenberg’s ascetic and “intransigent” logic of “new music,” on his “notion of tension, of highlighting and dramatizing what I call irreconcilabilities.” Said concludes: “[I]t seems to me that the role of the intellectual is to give these situations a voice, to try to articulate them, try to clarify them so that one knows on what ground one is treading” (Said in Bayoumi and Rubin 2000, 437-8; on Adorno see Said 1994, 54-9).

Thus I think the legacy and provocation of Said’s work, in spite of, or because of, the shortcomings, contradictions, and gaps in his arguments, lies in the radical questioning, articulation, and openness for revision in his critical and theoretical thinking as well as in his political commitment. In his essay “Traveling Theory Reconsidered” (1994), he acknowledges his earlier failure to realize that a radical theory need not be “domesticated” when it travels, but that it can *also* attain new power as radical critique in different contexts. That is to say, theory as a fixed body of analytical concepts and methods should be supervised by a “critical consciousness,” a sort of “spatial sense [...] for locating or situating theory,” a “resistance” to “theory,” an awareness that is always dialogical, changing, transgressive, never complete (Said 1983, 241; Said 2000, 451; see my reflections on the “dialogics of international American Culture Studies” in Lenz 1999). Said writes: “The work of theory, criticism, demystification, deconsecration, and decentralization” which intellectuals like Lukács, Adorno, or Fanon imply

is never finished. The point of theory therefore is to travel, always to move beyond its confinements, to emigrate, to remain in a sense in exile. Adorno and Fanon exemplify this profound restlessness [...]. (Said 2000, 451)

In his last book, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004), Said confirms this notion of a radical humanism that is “a process of unending disclosure, discovery, self-criticism, and liberation” and that is always “radically incomplete, insufficient, provisional, disputable and arguable” (Said 2004, 12, 21-2).

II.

The following essays are conceived as critical studies of major aspects and problematics of Said’s work that reconsider some of the crucial concepts of his career and set out to revise and extend his critical thinking in facing the different challenges of the globalizing world at the beginning of the new century. In her essay, “The Literary Presence of Atlantic Colonialism as Notation and Counterpoint,” Gesa Mackenthun takes up two analytical concepts Edward W. Said elaborates in his seminal book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) to uncover and discuss the often hidden or displaced presence of colonialism and empire in antebellum American literary texts. She suggests that “geographical notions,” “space,” and the “geographic dimensions of plot” played a much more crucial role in American culture and literature than in the works of British literature of the 18th and 19th centuries analyzed by Said. Through “strategies of topographical displacement” of

American territorial engagements before the Civil War, American fiction often generated a national narrative that “disarticulat[ed] the actual links between American colonial (Atlantic) and imperial (continental, Pacific) activities.” Other texts, however, dramatized and critiqued these territorial engagements, the American involvement in slavery, in the slave trade, and in imperialist expansion more explicitly. Said’s critical strategy of a comparative, “contrapuntal” reading of literary texts helps to reveal the hidden “colonialist” and “imperial” subtexts in works of American literature in pursuing their complex interplay of different voices. Mackenthun emphasizes the close interrelationship in Said’s approach between the negotiations of empire in the literary works he discusses and their aesthetic complexity as well as his emphasis on the changing “structure of location and geographical reference” of literary theory. In her readings of 18th and 19th century American fiction, she shows, taking up and “transculturating” transnational critical approaches pursued in their dynamics and their ambiguities by recent postcolonialist criticism, how the strategies of “disarticulations of locations and geographies beyond the national and continental boundaries of North America” work. In her reflections on Said’s concept of “counterpoint” and “contrapuntal reading,” Mackenthun explores its genealogy in musical theory (Adorno) and its potential as well as its limitations for a critical, “worldly” reading of American literature that is aware of the power differential and the inequality of voices in the literary documents of a colonizing and imperial world. Whereas she finds the metaphor of “counterpoint” less useful as a *positive* description of the geographical and ideological ambivalence of colonial texts and cultures and of the “tensions, ruptures, inequalities, and dissonances created by the colonial situation,” she acknowledges its powerful analytical potential as a *critical perspective*, a “processual” and “comparative” notion that dramatizes the *critical, counterhegemonic activity* of retrieving the imperial subtext of “classic” Western novels in a “decolonizing critique” as well as the dialectic of texts that expose their contrapuntal qualities. Drawing on Bakhtin’s distinction between different forms of “hybridity” of/in texts and more recent versions of postcolonialist criticism, Mackenthun concludes by taking up Said’s demand to “locate” and “situate” theory in “critical consciousness” and the critic in the “awareness [...] that no system or theory exhausts the situation out of which it emerges or to which it is transported.” She reclaims the challenge that his open, self-critical “humanism” poses through the critical reflection of the intellectual as an “exile, an unhoused figure who ‘will not make the adjustment, preferring instead to remain outside the mainstream, unaccommodated, uncoopted, resistant.’”

Susan Winnett, in her essay “Writing in Place: Edward Said’s Constructions of Exile,” analyzes “certain motifs in Said’s autobiographical self-presentation that might illuminate the work that he needs the term ‘exile’ to perform in his thinking.” For Said “homelessness” already “begins at home; the counterpoint of all-encompassing love and precipitous rejection that constitutes his mother’s relation to him gives him both the experience of and longing for a ‘safe haven’ and the knowledge of its impermanence.” His experience of ‘exile’ “began *within* his

relation to his mother,” whereas the “distancing enforced by his father” provided the “impetus for the intellectual project devoted to the study of exile and homelessness that bears the name ‘Edward Said.’” The examination of *Out of Place* shows an ambivalence that permeates the meaning of “exile” that is constructed in Said’s work. This exile needed “to be both brutally real and figurative” and was employed by Said, Winnett points out, as “a metaphorical condition” to construct a “genealogy of intellectuals that includes himself.” It may be difficult to challenge Said’s notion of the “‘intellectual as outsider,’ but his blurring of the distinction between real exile and the ‘metaphoric sense’ that he ends up foregrounding is both troubling and misleading.” Winnett insists that “[t]here is a difference between a restless, unsettling, unaccommodating exile and a restless, unsettling, unaccommodating intellectual misfit.” Although Said himself has objected to the use of exile as a metaphor for general alienation and estrangement, his life and work provide ample evidence of the “seductiveness of such blurred distinctions” and can be seen as a perpetuation of “a romantic appropriation of the pathos of exile for forms of intellectual alienation – his own included – that demand more rigorous examination.”

Winnett elaborates some implications of these ambivalences in Said’s use of the concept of exile in a critical reassessment of his “contrapuntal reading” of *Mansfield Park* that, as he writes in *Culture and Imperialism*, is to interrogate “positive notions of home, of a nation and its language, of proper order, good behavior, moral values” (Said 1993, 81). But Said’s contrapuntal reading, in its “blindness” to the constructions of “gender,” fails to realize Jane Austen’s “meta-language of dissent.” Following a number of feminist critiques of the novel, Winnett argues that it can be read, in contrast to Said’s analysis, as

a demonstration more devastating than a more direct critique of the force of empty forms, of the ability of a dominant ideology to determine the course of affairs, even those affairs intent on exposing and resisting it.

In particular, she focuses on the similarities between Fanny Price’s strategies in moving from an exile status into a position that endows her with social power within the community of *Mansfield Park* and Said’s ambivalent positioning towards the cultural production of Western civilization, whose inherent complicity with the structure of imperialism he criticizes from an ‘exilic’ point of view while cherishing its aesthetic quality as one of its most influential academic representatives. Despite Said’s warnings against an uncritical usage of the notion of exile,

[i]t is difficult to escape the suspicion that Said’s investment in a ‘modern culture’ of whose historical constitution he is bitterly critical necessitates this ambivalent construction of exile: he can only partake of this culture to the extent he requires if he declares himself essentially in exile from it.

Alfred Hornung, in his essay “Out of Place: Extraterritorial Existence and Autobiography,” likewise focuses on Said’s self-declared status as an intellectual exile in his autobiography *Out of Place* (1999) and reads it in conjunction with autobiographical texts by two other postcolonial authors, Michelle Cliff and Feridun Zaimoglu. He characterizes these texts as very different versions of

“extraterritorial autobiographies” in postcolonial times that “seem to request a bicultural context for the construction of a national frame of reference in the same way in which it seems to require a hybrid literary form.” Hornung argues that Said’s gesture of imaginatively locating himself beyond the confines of any national identity, claiming an ‘exilic’ identity instead, “serves to accentuate the uncertain national status of many autobiographers as well as the extraterritorial space of the genre of autobiography.” Like Michelle Cliff’s autobiographical novels *Abeng* (1984) and *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987), Said’s autobiography *Out of Place* recollectively formulates a postcolonial identity that also posits a challenge to conventional literary forms: “Generic and geographical border crossings form the basis of the autobiographical enterprise and represent definitory features of major autobiographical texts.” Hornung suggests the term “extra-territorial” for assessing the texts of Said, Cliff, and the German-Turkish writer Feridun Zaimoglu whose creative efforts, in his books *Kanak Sprak* (1995) and *Kopf und Krage* (2001), to “elevate the language of German Turkish people to a literary status” and to contribute to a reconceptualization of German society as an increasingly multiethnic and multicultural society he discusses at the end of his paper. In focusing on Cliff, Hornung points out the crucial significance of memory and of “geographical locations” as “sites of memory which exist in lieu of and besides the historiography of the colonizers.” The explicit spatial organization of Cliff’s texts, which reconfigures the colonial world as a “triangulated” postcolonial space, is then set off against Said’s quite different extraterritorial self-positioning and his discovery of an Arab identity between the twin poles of the foundation of Israel and the Six Days War of 1967. It is this imagined extraterritoriality, Hornung argues, which explains Said’s emphasis on the cultural work of music which, “next to the motif of displacement [...] represents a sort of a leit-motif in *Out of Place*.” Referring to Said’s dissertation on Conrad, Hornung concludes that already this early text displays the major themes – home, exile, geography – that would stay with Said throughout his intellectual life:

From the perspective of his autobiography, which now after his death appears to be his legacy, all of his critical work has an autobiographical ring to it. In the Conradian sense, autobiography is the secret sharer of his life work. When he characterizes the work of Western orientalis in *Orientalism* as lacking representative quality and being defined by exteriority, this also seems to pertain to his own status of extraterritoriality.

Uwe Schulenberg’s essay, “Humanistic Criticism, Prophetic Pragmatism, and the Question of Antifoundationalism – Remarks on Edward Said and Cornel West,” addresses the question how a “worldly” and “oppositional criticism” can be conceived in our present time, how the antifoundationalist and antiessentialist thrust in American neopragmatism can be transformed from a questionable move “against theory” into a viable, radical cultural criticism. Schulenberg sees Said’s work as a crucial contribution to this worldly, oppositional criticism and black philosopher Cornel West’s “prophetic pragmatism” as its extension that mediates different theoretical and political discourses on behalf of a multicultural creative democracy. Schulenberg’s notion of an “antifoundationalist and anti-

essentialist worldly and oppositional leftist criticism” draws on Said’s strong concern for defining the function of criticism, a radically self-critical humanism, and the worldliness of the public intellectual, an antidogmatic, open philosophical approach he characterizes as “almost Adornian” in its “vigor and tension-ridden complexity.” In pointing out the differences between theory and critical consciousness, “Said argues that the latter is synonymous with an awareness of the resistances to theory.” Critical consciousness radically historicizes and situates theory and opens it up toward historical reality and contingency, which always means to the articulation of resistance and the desire for change. Said’s commitment to the concepts of resistance, hope, and social change is crucial within a “dialogical, nondogmatic, and dialectical theoretical framework” that situates literary texts and worldly criticism in the force-field of the contexts from which they arose and the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted, pursuing the “social goals [of] uncoercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom.” Cornel West’s “prophetic pragmatism” envisions a “post-universalist cosmopolitanism” that is “critique *and* praxis, theory *and* practice, rhetoric *and* struggle or resistance,” as Schulenberg puts it, an “attempt to create adequate mediations between these poles.” In contrast to Rorty’s neopragmatism, it strives to have political, ethical, and social consequences and to connect with “black, feminist, single-issue, and third-world oppositional social movements.” As West writes, these specifically American processes of “mediation” happen in a “discursive space” which is “a *dramatic site* of dialogical contestations and clashing narratives over which blood, sweat, and tears flow.” Its subversive worldliness, its dialogical, experimental, nondogmatic quality that keeps it open to changes is permeated by a “commitment to polyphonic inquiry and improvisational conversation,” to a “self-styled allegiance to American pragmatism and American jazz,” as West has characterized it, that organizes his texts in their “jazz-like quality [of] the polyphony of voices,” all of which strive, as Schulenberg puts it, “after the goal of a multiracial creative democracy.”

Holger Rossow, in his essay “Orientalism, Globalism and the Possibility of Alternative Systems of Representation,” pursues the question in how far and in which way Said’s concepts of Orientalism and imperialism and his methodological framework can be used to grasp and analyze the contemporary processes of globalization and the uses and functions of the ideological construct of globalism. Following major theorists of “globalization,” Rossow distinguishes between the “materially founded relations of power and domination” of globalization and globalism as a “culturally constructed discourse,” as a complex “hegemonic discourse” that “claims to provide a description and an explanation for the current processes and phenomena commonly subsumed under the term “globalization.” Globalism is a (neoliberal) discourse that conceals the relations of power and domination and claims that the processes of globalization have to be seen as unavoidable, quasi-natural, agentless processes in the economy and in communication that have long-term positive effects.

Rossov's paper focuses on those aspects of Said's work that might help provide a better understanding of the workings and the implications of the discourses of globalism and envision and produce "alternative systems of representation." He shows that Said's notions of Orientalism and imperialism can illuminate the "overlapping territories" of "intertwined histories," their continuities with the processes of globalization and the discourse of globalism, but that they fail to account for their new and specific aspects in the contemporary world. Rossov points out that Said corrected the geographic limitations of *Orientalism* in his book *Culture and Imperialism* by extending the analysis to describe the general pattern of adversarial relationships between the modern metropolitan West and the "Orient," but he argues that Said fails to take into account that globalism as a hegemonic discourse is "based on discursive inclusivity and not exclusion." Also, Said's extension of the notion of imperialism or neocolonialism does not enable us to grasp the repercussions of the impact of today's major non-state actors, the IMF, the World Bank, etc. Still, Said's reflections on the problems of representation, the role of the critical, oppositional intellectual, the question of the (re-)constitution of knowledges and the perspectives and modes of *alternative* systems of representation provide productive challenges for analyzing the contradictory and complex dynamic of globalization and its critical discourses. Said's awareness of the problematics involved in representation, in representing others and the ideological character of knowledge production can enable us to understand the complex and highly contradictory processes of globalization and to project alternative, "more inclusive, participatory, collaborative and non-coercive knowledges," as Rossov puts it. Said's more recent work rearticulates the role of the "secular," oppositional intellectual in the contemporary world, but he leaves it to us to work out more concretely what the sources and the strategies of knowledge production and political involvement in achieving more participatory, multicultural, and equitable social and cultural structures in the globalizing world of today could be.

Finally, Gisela Welz, in her essay "Transnational Cultures and Multiple Modernities – Anthropology's Encounter with Globalization," engages the concept of the "pluralization of modernities," its potential for interdisciplinary research agendas, and its methodological consequences and repercussions. She analyzes the implications of Said's critique of anthropology in his essay "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors" (1989) for redefining the Western project of modernity, the revisionary insights of recent anthropological work on the cultural dimensions of globalization, and the objectives and the methods of a future anthropology. Said's book *Orientalism* had a powerful impact on anthropologists; it made them aware of the intricate interrelations of power and knowledge and of the complicity of their discipline with colonialism and imperialism and the project of "othering" non-Western cultures as "primitive," different in the negative sense, and lagging behind Europe and America in their development towards "modernity." When, during the 1990s, globalization became a central topic of anthropologists' research agenda, they found that the common notion

that it was a normative, universal process of “modernization” that inevitably leads to an increasing homogenization of the world, is fundamentally mistaken, that it is the expression of a shortcircuited, reductive, ideological Western ethnocentrism. Instead, they showed that “globalization” comprises a *plurality* of (de-centered) versions and processes of “modernity” and “modernization,” a plurality of different processes of transculturation and relocalization of the “worldwide diffusion of commodities, technologies and media products, as well as the increase of immigration and other forms of transnational mobility.” Welz shows how the turning away from established patterns of doing fieldwork and writing ethnography and the critical engagement of anthropology with these challenges of globalization and of transnational processes of migratory individuals, kinship groups, or social movements led to important insights into the *increasing cultural diversity* all over the world that results from the various processes of globalization: “The globalization of modernity has produced both sameness and difference; uniformisation and differentiation are evolving side by side.” The global cultural economy, as Arjun Appadurai and other scholars have pointed out, links globalization with modernity and projects a new pluralized, decentered social theory of modernity that reconstitutes anthropology as an “anthropology of modernity,” beyond the traditional study of other cultures as relics of pre-modern traditions. Welz reads these complex, hybridizing, and discontinuous processes of the “globalization of modernity” as showing that “modernization and globalization are but two sides of the same coin.” Talking of multiple, plural, or alternative modernities acknowledges the fact that in each society there is a “social and discursive space in which the relationship between modernity and tradition is reconfigured” (quoting Bruce Knauft). If the notion of multiple modernities means to “explore the possibility of a heterogeneous account of the emergence of colonial modernity,” to look at the local sights “where the modern is realized and continually translated, in its articulation with and production of the non-modern” (quoting Timothy Mitchell), anthropologists must not, however, fall into the trap of merely celebrating the “hybridity” that is generated by local-global encounters, as this would reconfirm the older habit of “essentializing non-Western cultures as ‘others.’” Instead, anthropologists must “historicize and cross-culturally compare their very own versions of modernity,” a project that can be seen as redefining Said’s challenge of exploring the complex and demanding relationship between “anthropology as an ongoing enterprise and [...] empire as an ongoing concern.”

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GESA MACKENTHUN

The Literary Presence of Atlantic Colonialism as Notation and Counterpoint

Abstract: In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said demonstrates how many of the classical literary texts of Europe wrestle with the historical realities of colonialism and imperialism. The two analytical tropes he uses for discussing this ‘ornate absence’ (Morrison) of empire in the European novels of the nineteenth and twentieth century – the concepts of “geographical notation” and “counterpoint” – are both taken from the analysis of music. This essay seeks to adapt Said’s analytical figures to the analysis of nineteenth century American literature’s disarticulation of the nation’s residual involvement in the slave-based Atlantic economy and the links between America’s colonial (Atlantic) and imperial (continental, Pacific) activities. It argues that the geographical and meteorological notations of American texts differ from those of British novels because of the general foregrounding of spatial aspects in the early literature of the United States. Due to the vast and inherently diverse nature of American territorial engagement in the years before the Civil War (both at land and sea), American literature’s historical and geographical notations can at times be seen to include strategies of topographical displacement which endow it with an almost ‘contrapuntal’ quality.

Imperialism’s culture was not invisible, nor did it conceal its worldly affiliations and interests. There is a sufficient clarity in the culture’s major lines for us to remark the often scrupulous notations recorded there, and also to remark how they have not been paid much attention. Why they are now of such interest [...] derives less from a kind of retrospective vindictiveness than from a fortified need for links and connections. One of imperialism’s achievements was to bring the world closer together and, although in the process the separation between Europeans and natives was an insidious and fundamentally unjust one, most of us should now regard the historical experience of empire as a common one. The task then is to describe it as pertaining to Indians *and* Britishers, Algerians *and* French, Westerners *and* Africans, Asians, Latin Americans, and Australians despite the horrors, the bloodshed, and the vengeful bitterness.

Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

This essay wants to assess two of Edward Said’s critical concepts – in particular his notions of “counterpoint” and “geographical notation” – which he developed in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), with the purpose of testing their adaptability to the study of the ‘oceanic’ context of antebellum American literature. Written almost exactly a year after his death, it would be foolish to deny that the present text is also an attempt to pay homage to the work of an exceptional critic whose

comments on modern Western empires and their cultural ramifications have accompanied me throughout my academic life – without whose intellectual courage, critical spirit and moral honesty the critical production of a whole generation of scholars, including my own, would be unthinkable. Although he opposed the idea of forming academic schools of thought and was suspicious of the intellectual ‘cults’ that his own work helped produce, it is important in my view to regard Said’s work on literature and empire as part of a larger movement toward the pluralization of literary canons and a growing awareness for the historical and geographical connections of texts and cultures. Ten years ago these facts were less widely accepted than today, and *Culture and Imperialism* aimed at, and greatly contributed to, a broader dissemination of these ideas formerly discussed in more or less discrete academic circles. This *general* orientation of his book toward a wider educated and liberal audience has to be borne in mind when discussing its theoretical impact.¹ As the above quote testifies quite clearly, Said combines the analytical tools he inherited from critics like Raymond Williams, Georg Lukács, and Antonio Gramsci – tools which enable him to read the classic texts of Western literature against their silencing of the imperial ‘margins’ – with a conciliatory gesture, an appeal for respecting equally the two sides of the former colonial divide for the benefit of a shared future in a globalized world. The metaphorical expression which Said finds for this vision of reconciliation – the “fortified need” he sees “for links and connections” – is that of the “counterpoint,” a complex ensemble of voices in which harmony is reached only by giving full expression to each individual voice. With its choice of the musical figure of counterpoint as its leading critical concept, *Culture and Imperialism* lacks the confrontational tone of much of Said’s earlier writing, especially *Orientalism* (1978).²

Written under the – as he saw it later, slightly irrational – expectation of impending death (Said 2001a, 190), *Culture and Imperialism* itself deploys a somewhat repetitive and circular structure. It moves from a territorial or geographical view of the “intertwined histories” of colonialism, to the “consolidated vision” of major Western texts articulating an involvement with the colonies, to “resistance and opposition,” predominantly an assessment of the counter-imperial work of Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James, Aimé Césaire, and other writers and critics from the former colonies, to a final vision of “freedom from domination,” even under the immediate impact of the eruption of a new kind of American imperialism during the first Iraq War of 1991. This progression of themes takes the reader from critical interventions into predominantly monological and homogenous

¹ As Said specifies in an interview, *Culture and Imperialism* is directed at a general readership (Said 2001a, 196).

² Said states his move from the more combative style of his earlier work to the reconciliatory style of *Culture and Imperialism* in Said 2001a, 202-3. In the same interview he associates his desire for developing a “model of reconciliation” with his use of a “contrapuntal” approach to literary analysis. The contrapuntal approach, he writes, enables the critic to “reconcile the history of the colonized and the history of the colonizer without an attempt to ‘be impartial,’ because there’s always the question of justice” (204).

views of world history and literature, through a myriad of major and minor historical figures raising their voices in an ever more complex colonial and post-colonial chorus, to a final evocation of exile and migrancy as those experiences best suited for developing the kind of critical consciousness necessary to encounter the challenges of the globalized world. Indeed, if this immense chorus of voices were viewed in contrapuntal terms, Said's book would comply less to the very strict and spare form of a Bach fugue than the enormous orchestras and operas of the mid- to late nineteenth century (some of which he, of course, discusses).

On the pages to follow, I want to explore some of the implications of Said's concept of the counterpoint and its practical equivalent, contrapuntal reading, as well as his concept of geographical notation. Both, I believe, can be made fruitful for an analysis of early American literature, which uses similar ways of disarticulating the economic and political significance of the slave-based Atlantic as the texts British presented by Said. In addition to the *imperial* dimensions of American history in the first half of the nineteenth century, I am interested in the frequently underestimated involvement of American citizens, ships and capital in the circum-Atlantic *colonial* economy. This involvement, which gradually went underground because of the abolition of slavery in the British colonies and the subsequent declaration of the slave trade as piracy, took place as the United States was actively employed in the expansion of its continental empire, as well as preparing its growth beyond the continental confines into the Pacific.³ Due to the vast and inherently diverse nature of American territorial engagement in the years before the Civil War, American literature's historical and geographical notations can be seen to include strategies of topographical displacement. These, I argue, are a fictional response to the ideological pressure of generating a national narrative, thereby disarticulating the actual links between America's colonial (Atlantic) and imperial (continental, Pacific) activities.

1. Geographical Notation

Said exemplifies the two concepts under discussion here – counterpoint and geographical notation – with a reading of Jane Austen's novel *Mansfield Park* (1814). Claiming that literary interpretation of the novel as a genre has been predominantly preoccupied with the notion of temporality, he underlines the necessity of giving equal attention to the characters' movements in space, to the geographical dimensions of plot. He reads *Mansfield Park* as a novel delineating various dislocations and relocations in space, with the manor house of the Bertram family occupying the "centre of an arc of interests and concerns spanning the hemisphere, two major seas, and four continents" (Said 1993, 101). More precisely, the novel makes it clear that the rural estate in England, which serves as the setting for the social rise of the heroine, is economically tied to an unnar-

³ An extended version of this argument, as well as my comments on early American novels, can be found in Mackenthun 2004.

rativized colonial plantation in Antigua, which the absentee owner Sir Thomas Bertram travels to in order to set his finances in order. Something is amiss at Antigua – considering the time of setting, Said assumes that the plantation is suffering from “economic depression, slavery and competition with France” (103). Brian Southam supplements Said’s reading in giving further evidence for the interpretation that the plantation system was at that time, only seven years after the prohibition of the transatlantic slave trade by the British Parliament, and three years after the passing of the Slave Trade Felony Act which declared illegal slaving a crime to be punished with penalties up to fourteen years of transportation (Southam 1998, 496), in a state of severe crisis. Southam also gives further support for Said’s claim that Austen was very aware of these political developments, as her own family had various ties to colonial ventures in the West Indies, an Antigua plantation amongst them (496-7). Said regards the language of domestic order and authority of Austen’s novel as mirrored by the authority exerted over the foreign domain: “What assures the domestic tranquillity and attractive harmony of one is the productivity and regulated discipline of the other” (Said 1993, 104). Antigua thus holds “a precise place in Austen’s moral geography [...] The Bertrams could not have been possible without the slave trade, sugar, and the colonial planter class” (112). Referring to *Mansfield Park* as an example *par excellence* for what he terms the “geographical notations” of Western literature (Said 1993, 69), Said is at the same time interested in why these notations have not received the attention from literary criticism they deserve in his view. That the relation between rural domestic center and colonial periphery, crucial to the turns in the characters’ fates, had so far been overlooked by criticism is owing, Said states, first to the marginality of the Antiguan site in the narrative – although it is “absolutely crucial to the action” it is “referred to only in passing” (106) – and, secondly, to the conventions of literary criticism which traditionally privileges temporality over spatiality in the analysis of novelistic writing. Said points out that leading scholars writing on the emergence of the novel as the dominant literary mode of modernity (among them Georg Lukács and Ian Watts, even Erich Auerbach) have concentrated on issues of temporality and identity, with the protagonists’ mental development being less sustained by their movement in space than by their movement in time.⁴ He contrasts this view of “temporality as resolving the threats to identity” with a “radically different tradition” which he identifies with the work of Antonio Gramsci and, above all, Raymond Williams (Said

⁴ This may be true for general studies of the novel but certainly is not to mean that the spatial organization of novelistic discourse has heretofore gone unnoticed by literary criticism. Let me just recall the whole study of mythical quest structures in literary discourse in the light of T.S. Eliot’s writing (frequently referred to in *Culture and Imperialism*). What is more important is how these spatial markers were read by literary criticism – whether they were seen, as Said and other ‘postcolonial’ critics do, to point to a socio-economic reality outside the text that nevertheless crucially determines the structure of the text, or whether they were seen in universal mythical terms – as was frequently the case even with the generally more historically-minded American myth and symbol school. – As David Harvey notes, time and development have traditionally been privileged in sociological discourse (Harvey 1990, 20).

2000a, 463-4). Thus the concept of “geographical notation” is inspired by Gramsci’s emphasis on the geopolitical situatedness of knowledge and by Williams’ view, elaborated, for example, in *The Country and the City* (1973), that novelistic discourse is crucially concerned with a “social contest over territory,” both in the more narrow sense of rural against metropolitan interests, but also in a wider sense of struggles over “work, profit, dispossession, wealth, misery” (Said 2000a, 469). It is this “difficult mobility” between diverse cultural centers which interests Said, the way in which “the literature of the country house is different from that of the poorhouse, the factory, or the dissenting churches,” but above all the way in which novels deploy the “counterpoint between England and the overseas territories” (472).

Said’s reading of the geographical notations of *Mansfield Park* could be extended to other European and American texts of the nineteenth century. Indeed some writers of fiction and many critics of colonial discourse have before and since the publication of *Culture and Imperialism* been employed in the task of excavating Western literature’s ambivalent and often contradictory involvement with colonialism’s culture (of which the sumptuous mansions and the conspicuous consumption deployed in *Mansfield Park* or *Jane Eyre* form a major part). What distinguishes Said’s readings from those of most other critics is his insistence on the high literary quality of the texts he discusses: he considers *Mansfield Park* as a “brilliant” text, a text to be distinguished from “lesser works” which wear their historical affiliation more “plainly” and directly, at times jingoistically. Austen’s novel, by comparison, “encodes experiences and does not simply repeat them” (Said 1993, 116; emphasis added). The reader’s task, Said writes, is to lose neither a true historical sense of the colonial context nor a full enjoyment of the domestic tale. What is important is to view both of them together (116). Said’s aesthetic conservatism is certainly more than a benign nod to his potentially conservative reading public (the implied reader of *Culture and Imperialism*, it seems, is trained in simplistic, at best New Criticist, views of the mutual disconnectedness of literature and life); a survey of the novels he discusses at length quickly reveals that his sympathies rest with the texts of the old Western canon. But contrary to politically conservative critics for whom the admission of texts by women and people of color to university curricula foreshadows the *Götterdämmerung* of Western culture – a culture that must be protected by teaching the sacred texts of the literary tradition –, Said insinuates that these sacred texts at least in part owe their aesthetic complexity to their “difficult mobility” between the metropolitan center and the colonial periphery, that it is their negotiation of empire which gives them their aesthetic complexity in the first place.

I want to further explore Said’s notion of the “geographical notations” found in mainstream texts. Most readers will instinctively think of other novels which could be analyzed along similar lines. The most striking, and most frequently quoted, example is probably *Jane Eyre* (1847), with Rochester’s magnificent country estate Thornfield Hall being entertained at the cost of keeping his raving West Indian wife locked up in the attic. The connection which Brontë draws between

the splendor of British country mansions and the exploitation of the West Indies is at once more explicit than in Austen's novel and richly associated within various romantic discourses. Employing the discourse of female insanity, the novel justifies Rochester's immoral actions – keeping his wife shut up like a beast, attempting bigamy. Yet the representation of Bertha Mason is overdetermined with another, racial, layer of meaning: her actions are represented as cannibalistic,⁵ and her madness is couched in a discourse of sexual and tropical temptation. Here is Rochester's metaphorically luxurious description of a wild West Indian night:

“One night I had been awakened by her yells – (since the medical men had pronounced her mad, she had, of course, been shut up) – it was a fiery West Indian night; one of the description that frequently precede the hurricanes of those climates. Being unable to sleep in bed, I got up and opened the window. The air was like sulphur-streams – I could find no refreshment anywhere. Mosquitoes came buzzing in and hummed sullenly round the room; the sea, which I could hear from thence, rumbled dull like an earthquake – black clouds were casting up over it; the moon was setting in the waves, broad and red, like a hot cannon-ball – she [the moon] threw her last bloody glance over a world quivering with the ferment of tempest. I was physically influenced by the atmosphere and scene, and my ears were filled with the curses the maniac still shrieked out: wherein she momentarily mingled my name with such a tone of demon-hate, with such language! – no professed harlot ever had a fouler vocabulary than she: though two rooms off, I heard every word – the thin partitions of the West Indian house opposing but slight obstruction to her wolfish cries.” (Brontë 1985, 335)

Confronted with such united force of savage femininity, Rochester decides in this moment to leave this West Indian “hell” and return to Europe. His decision is reinforced by a sudden meteorological intervention into the sulfurous tropical atmosphere:

“A wind fresh from Europe blew over the ocean and rushed through the open case-ment: the storm broke, streamed, thundered, blazed, and the air grew pure. [...] The sweet wind from Europe was still whispering in the refreshed leaves, and the Atlantic was thundering in glorious liberty; my heart, dried up and scorched for a long time, swelled to the tone, and filled with living blood – my being longed for renewal – my soul thirsted for a pure draught.” (335-6)

Like elsewhere in the novel, the difference between Europe and America is here expressed in a series of dualistic terms. True to the conventions of Romantic symbolism, Brontë uses the natural scenery as a mirror to the human mind. But her geographical, and meteorological, notation of the fresh breeze of Atlantic liberty unwittingly points to the history of the *Black* Atlantic that the novel keeps at bay: meteorologically, of course, the trade winds which lift up Rochester's spirits come not from Europe but from Africa; it is the predominant current used by the transatlantic merchant marine, slavers included. At the time of the novel's publication, 1847, the Atlantic world indeed sounded with a cry of lib-

⁵ Shortly before Jane's crucial encounter with the beastlike and crouching Bertha, Mr. Mason emerges from her den with blood on his throat, exclaiming “She sucked the blood; she said she'd drain my heart” (Brontë 1985, 242).

erty due to recent emancipation; on the other hand the period between 1830 and 1860 is known as the peak of the illegal slave trade which was only insufficiently inhibited by British cruisers and largely carried out under the American flag.⁶

In viewing *Jane Eyre* alongside Austen's earlier novel, there emerges what Said calls a "distinctive cultural topography," a "structure of location and geographical reference," displayed in the

cultural languages of literature, history, or ethnography, sometimes allusively and sometimes carefully plotted, across several individual works that are not otherwise connected to one another or to an official ideology of 'empire'. (Said 1993, 61)

Avoiding the terminology of discourse analysis, Said uses geographical metaphors for describing a discursive phenomenon. And, as he argued in his earlier essay "Traveling Theory," discourses, whether theoretical or aesthetic ones, constantly adapt to new geopolitical situations. To give an example of how the geographical and meteorological notations of *Mansfield Park* and *Jane Eyre* are rearticulated in a different historical setting, we may take a look at Mary Tyler Peabody Mann's recently republished novel *Juanita. A Romance of Real Life in Cuba Fifty Years Ago*. Like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Clotel*, and other abolitionist novels, *Juanita* uses a romance plot in order to alert the readers to the cruelties and inhumanity of slavery. Like the former two, it uses the figure of the tragic mulatta in order to show the seemingly inescapable fate dictated by the characters' racial identity. (The very light-skinned and beautiful mulatta Juanita dies because she returns to Cuba out of love for her white master and is executed along with a group of antislavery rebels.) The protagonist of the novel is not Juanita but the New Englander Helen Wentworth who visits her schoolfriend on her Cuban plantation in the 1830s and becomes a witness of the cruel system of plantation slavery on the Caribbean island. When her friend dies, Helen returns to New England with her friend's children. The text ends with the remaining plantation family's removal to Switzerland, where Helen joins them.

Based on Mann's personal sojourn to Cuba from 1833 to 1835 and partly written in the late 1850s, *Juanita* was not finished and published until 1887, the year in which Mann died and when Cuba finally abolished the institution of slavery. It transports us back to a period in which the United States and the Spanish colonial regime in Cuba were on close terms due to their common interests in the slave trade. However, Mann's initial acknowledgement of the centrality of the illegal transatlantic slave trade and the complicity between Cuban slavery and the commercial interests of Yankee entrepreneurs (Mann 2000, 9) gradually gives way to a domestic tale of the devastating psychological impact of plantation slavery on the women and children of the plantation household. This rhetorical process is accompanied by another, in which Cuba increasingly comes to stand

⁶ Due to bilateral agreements, the US flag enjoyed legal protection against British boarding crews. See Du Bois 1986, 144-6. On *Jane Eyre*, see also Meyer 1990, revised in Meyer 1996, chapter 2.

for the evil of slavery, whereas New England emerges as the seat of equality and freedom.

In a crucial scene, Helen and her friends visit a neighboring sugar plantation whose mansion has been turned into a natural science collection by its eccentric inhabitant, the French naturalist Larimon. The plantation at first offers itself as a what Pratt calls a fiction of anti-conquest,⁷ a welcome relief from endless tales of cruelty against Africans, but it soon turns out to be the ultimate circle of hell, where both children and adults are being worked and starved to death in order to finance the aesthetic enjoyments of the plantation owners. From the “hell” of the sugar mill, the visitors then pass into the “bland and perfumed air of the gardens,” where the naturalist (who is also a horticulturist) displays an abundance of exotic fruits and flowers. Although his labor force, as he claims, has been ‘thinned out’ by disease and starvation, which necessitates the employment of small children, his gardens are wonderfully maintained. He leads his guests through a botanical labyrinth, where, from the highest elevation, they can observe the “glorious sea” in the distance. The sight causes great emotional stress in the American visitor, “for was it not the only path by which she could regain the lost heaven of home.” Helen then couples the idea of her New England ‘heaven’ with that of the Cuban ‘hell’ in which she is caught when we read that

Helen loved the sea, but the childish voices that sounded across the cane-fields from the pandemonium of the sugar-house drowned to her ear the gentle plashing of the waters on the beach. (Mann 2000, 130-2)

Contrasted with the colonial garden which, due to its geographical vicinity to the scenes of torture, appears like a dark travesty of Mansfield Park, the figuration of the ocean in this scene as a pathway to freedom evokes the very similar imagery used by Brontë in *Jane Eyre* – with the difference that the ocean’s message of freedom is now associated with the supposedly free and democratic United States. But of course we encounter a difficulty here as the novel seeks to straddle the historical gap between the decade before the outbreak of the Civil War, with its increasing attacks on the legal sanction of slavery and the Cuban slave trade, and the 1880s, when slavery has long been abolished, taking the optimistic spirit of Reconstruction along with it. The ‘freedom’ America offers to black people and mulattos is at worst a dubious social and legal status, at best the comfort of a society increasingly animated by the spirit of racial segregation. Accordingly, as the plot moves from the scene of international slavery to domestic New England, we soon learn that the United States are not such a ‘heavenly’ resort for colored people after all. The formerly established antithesis between Cuba and the United States is at the point of collapse as the mulatto woman Juanita is denied a happy end because the racial barrier is retained even in the land of freedom

⁷ Mary Louise Pratt defines as “anti-conquest” the representational “system of nature” which, as a descriptive paradigm, claimed no transformative desire but created a “utopian, innocent vision of European global authority” purportedly free from “imperial articulations of conquest, conversions, territorial appropriation, and enslavement” (Pratt 1992, 38-9).

and equality. It is perhaps this fact which necessitates the final removal to 'neutral' Switzerland.⁸

Inspired by Said's thoughts on geography and novelistic representation, we may be tempted to conclude that the formal and aesthetic beauty of a work of fiction dwindles proportionately to the decrease of spatial distance between domestic bliss and colonial violence – that the lack of an ocean between the sites of 'culture' and 'imperialism' turns the characters into exiles and emigrants who ironically flee to that continent where the historical process from which they suffer was initiated (though certainly no blame can be levelled against Switzerland!).

Unlike her compatriot Mark Twain, Mary Tyler Peabody Mann did not envision the American West as a safe haven for her fictional family. *Huckleberry Finn*, of course, bridges roughly the same periods before and after the Civil War. Taking up Said's notion of "counterpoints," Jonathan Arac has suggested ways of "putting the River on new maps" (Arac 1997, 210). He identifies as the immediate historical moment of Twain's novel the advent of the 1890s with their various acts toward the "closing of the frontier." But, as Arac further suggests, the novel, in addition to looking ahead to new frontiers (Huck's plan to "light out for the Territory"), aestheticizes the former political conflict over the Mississippi River as an 'imperial route' (its recent purchase from France, the inhibition of river travel during the Civil War).⁹ The effect of this process of aestheticization is that it anesthetizes the reader against a recognition of the uncertainties and complexities of imperial expansion: "By putting historical study to new, contrapuntal use," Arac concludes, "the element of *Huckleberry Finn* most frequently considered anti-political, anticonventional, oppositional, or primordially natural, Huck's rafting, comes obliquely against, and is modified by, the national-imperial possession of 'our' continent" (Arac 1997, 211). Taking *Huck Finn*'s geographical discourse one step further, Amy Kaplan has recently explored "the unsettling presence, or telling absence, of Hawaii in [Twain's] corpus, as a text that cannot be written or a forgotten language that might possess him only at the risk of breakdown" (Kaplan 2002, 56). As Kaplan shows in a very intricate and persuasive reading, Twain's observation, in 1866, of the ravages of colonialism in Hawaii "threatened to shatter the coherence of his national idiom" later deployed in *Huck Finn*. For Mark Twain, Kaplan goes on, "Hawaii [...] became a site of what Ernest Renan called the necessary forgetting, which is a 'crucial factor in the creation of a nation.'" In the era following Reconstruction, it was necessary for Twain and his nation "to forget the interconnections between slavery and imperialism," the link that existed between the domestic space and 'areas of interest' outside the national and continental boundaries of the United States (57).

⁸ The removal imitates the endings of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Clotel*. In both novels, the promise of safety can only be fulfilled outside the United States.

⁹ For the Mississippi as "imperial route," see Kaplan 2002, chapter 2.

As these examples testify, Said's suggestion to plow the literature of the colonial powers for geographical ambivalences can lead to fertile results. Early American literature contains numerous instances of more or less domestic settings being both disrupted and determined by events outside the national borders of the United States. Charles Brockden Brown's use of the crisis-ridden Caribbean as a source of foreign capital and fatal disease in *Arthur Mervyn* comes to mind (see Mackenthun 2004, chapter 3). Even the plot of *Edgar Huntly*, itself a novel predominantly concerned with literally laying out new territories for the emerging national discourse, cannot thrive without infusions of foreign capital (the lost revenue from a transatlantic trade venture by Weymouth which Edgar expects to earn after marrying his sister) and capitalists (Mrs. Lorimer). Then again, if one looks at American literature in the first half of the nineteenth century, a different picture from that painted by Said with respect to the British novel emerges. Because both the literature itself, in particular the frontier novel, and the literary criticism of the American Studies School, are predominantly concerned with issues of space – with literary and cultural metaphors such as the frontier and its various mutations like the “errand into the wilderness,” the “virgin land,” the “machine in the garden,” the “fatal environment,” “the West” and so on. These critical concepts deploy a very strong territorial sense.¹⁰ And yet, I think, a close analysis reveals their, and literature's, frequent disarticulation of locations and geographies beyond the national and continental boundaries of North America.

Moreover, and contrary to Said's diagnosis of the European novel, many early American works of fiction can be seen to articulate a confused *temporal* sense, a historical, rather than geographical, blindness. Charles Brockden Brown again provides an example, as the protagonists of both *Edgar Huntly* and *Arthur Mervyn* are frequently haunted by fits of amnesia and sudden bursts of remembering. Poe's work, apparently oblivious of both time and space, elsewhere betrays an obsession with geography. But the sheer hybridity and metaphorical overkill of his geographical symbolism, for example, in *Arthur Gordon Pym*, has the effect of removing the action from any possibility of chronotopical reconstruction. These texts, written in a context of internal and second-degree colonialism (plantation slavery, continental expansion, America's own transatlantic trade network before the Civil War), requires a different critical approach than that of the European classics analyzed by Said, an approach that asks anew the question of temporality, of memory and forgetting, and that detects behind the obvious latitudes of the text the longitudes of other, transoceanic, geographies.

While the spatial dimension in its *continental* form seems to be well researched in American Studies,¹¹ American literary criticism has only recently begun to

¹⁰ In more recent times, this becomes most obvious perhaps in the contemporary literature by Native Americans, in which geographical symbolism and setting frequently predominate over all other structural features.

¹¹ I stress continent instead of national because the frontier precisely demarcated the borderline between the political sovereignty of the United States and that of indigenous tribes – with more than 300 treaties testifying to the fact that their domains were indeed regarded as autonomous and not part of the American national sphere.

transgress the continental borders and explore the manifold relations (sociopolitical and fictional) between the United States and realms across the seas – in particular Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Said's emphasis on this transoceanic aspect is congenial and coterminous with the work of other scholars, notably Paul Gilroy, who revisits the Atlantic ocean as a formative site in the development of British and American culture (see Gilroy 1993, Linebaugh and Rediker 2000, Bolster 1997; also the essays in Klein and Mackenthun 2004). The Atlantic Ocean, far from being merely an empty space to be traversed or a metaphor for romantic evocations of the sublime, is filled with very real historical meaning, which would in turn make its appearance, however marginal and underarticulated, in American fiction before the Civil War. Said's metaphor of the notation offers a welcome opportunity for describing this ambiguous presence of the Atlantic – especially the Atlantic of slavery and the slave-based colonial economy – in fictional texts written within the United States.

The work of Herman Melville demonstrates that such a 'notational' approach was in part generated in direct response to the historical forgetfulness of the antebellum period. As many critics have shown, Melville dissects the commonplace and non-reflective Yankee mind in his novella *Benito Cereno* by making the reader see the hermeneutic limitations of Delano's point of view, whose lack of historical insight and whose attachment to popular racial preconceptions blind him toward the real events on the Spanish slaver *San Dominick*. As we know, Melville produces a narrative situation in which the reader, exposed to Delano's free indirect discourse, necessarily shares his limited perspective, even though the metaphorical language of the text, as Bruce Franklin, Carolyn Karcher and others have argued, enables the reader to perceive this event within a much larger geographical and historical framework, as part of a continuum of New World slavery that spans the whole western hemisphere (see Franklin 1992, Karcher 1992 and, for a long and superb historical reading, Sundquist 1993, chapter 2). Melville's carefully executed associative network of historical and geographical markers – allusions to the life of Columbus and Las Casas, the beginnings of the slave trade in the Caribbean, the anticolonial revolution of Haiti, the nascent ethnographic and archeological knowledge about African high cultures –, as well as his use of a circular structure of repetition and thematic variation, indeed give his text the character of a complex musical piece. In *Benito Cereno*, then, the historical and geographical notations, unlike those in the other novels mentioned so far, form a conscious narrative pattern of their own, a pattern not unlike that of a counterpoint.

2. Counterpoint

In an interview Said explains the origin of his use of the concept of "counterpoint": he borrowed it, he says, from Bach's Goldberg Variations:

it's that structure that I found tremendously useful in writing *Culture and Imperialism* [...] I wanted [...] to try to organize it in a way that was modeled on an art, rather

than a powerful scholarly form – the idea of a kind of exfoliating structure of variation which, I think, is the way this book was, in fact, organized. (Said 2001a, 184)

Equipped with this “homemade” method (201), he applies it to the interplay between empire and culture:

As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally but *contrapuntally*, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts. In the counterpoint of Western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work. In the same way, I believe, we can read and interpret English novels [...]. (Said 1993, 59-60)

This formulation, which at first sight seems to grossly misrepresent the equality of voices in the documents of imperialism – making their equality a matter of competent reading rather than an objective feature – is followed by a rather astounding passage: “We are not yet at the stage,” Said writes,

where we can say whether these globally integral structures are preparations for imperial control and conquest, or whether they accompany such enterprises, or whether in some reflective or careless way they are a result of empire. We are only at a stage where we must look at the astonishing frequency of geographical articulations in the three Western cultures that most dominated far-flung territories. (Said 1993, 61)

The “we” of these sentences excludes a large number of literary critics working on similar projects as Said himself when *Culture and Imperialism* was published, critics, many of them named in his book, who devised various theories of representation that try to explain the complex interaction between the fields of politics and culture. One may refer to various studies written in a Marxist tradition (including those of Raymond Williams whom Said claims as a model) or the more recent theoretical articulations of new historicist and postcolonial scholars who combine methodologies from various theoretical traditions (including marxism, psychoanalysis, feminism, deconstruction, discourse analysis) in their attempts to theorize the relationship between culture and politics. The reason why Said prefers a “homemade” method to an active engagement of these more theoretically informed theories and analyses probably has to do with his general suspicion toward monolithic and doctrinaire ways of thinking.¹² Thus, while the notion of

¹² With eloquent belligerence, Said attacks the tendency among intellectuals to shed a sense of moral responsibility in favor of adhering to the style of certain theoretical schools. American intellectuals, he writes, have “been almost swallowed up” by the professionalization of academic life, their “critical sense” being “conveniently jettisoned”: “As for intellectuals whose charge includes values and principles – literary, philosophical, historical specialists – the American university, with its munificence, Utopian sanctuary, and remarkable diversity, has defanged them. Jargons of an almost unimaginable rebarbateness dominate their styles. Cults like post-modernism, discourse analysis, New Historicism, deconstruction, neo-pragmatism transport them into the country of the blue; an astonishing sense of weightlessness with regard to the gravity of history and individual responsibility” (Said 1993, 336-7). Phrased in such a sweeping way which denies the important work that has come out of these

counterpoint may be regarded as a “defanged” version of dialectics, it is worthwhile taking a closer look at it.

Said’s definition of counterpoint is indebted to the contrapuntal harmonies of Bach and to Adorno’s rephrasing of the classical counterpoint in his theoretical texts on Schoenberg. In both cases, it is a crucial quality of a contrapuntal musical piece that the overall effect reached by the strictly ordered polyphony is that of harmony.¹³ As a positive description of the geographical and ideological ambivalence of colonial texts or colonial culture, however, the metaphor seems less useful. It is ultimately unfit for expressing the tensions, ruptures, inequalities, and dissonances created by the colonial situation. The musical aesthetics of Jazz may have done a better service – and they were indeed put to the task by African American writers such as Langston Hughes and Toni Morrison. It is important to understand that Said thinks of counterpoint less as a positive quality of texts or culture but rather in terms of a critical activity. Because as a positive description of colonial cultures, Said’s harmonious notion comes dangerously close to ‘conservative,’ e.g. New Criticist, notions of a ‘good’ text’s complex unity or, similarly, the later Foucault’s evocation of power as a complex but unified ensemble of discourses which gives equal room to dominant and oppositional voices – a theory which Said harshly critiques in “Traveling Theory” for its abandonment of a place for resistance and which caused his break with Foucauldian thought (Said 1983, 243-7, Said 2001b, 214). As a critical perspective, however, the concept of counterpoint serves as a synonym for “comparative”:

A *comparative* or, better, a contrapuntal *perspective* is required in order to see a connection between coronation rituals in England and the Indian durbars of the later nineteenth century. That is, we must be able to think through and interpret together experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development, its own internal formations, its internal coherence and system of external relationships, all of them co-existing and interacting with others. (Said 1993, 36; emphasis added)

In two interviews, Said underlines the processual nature of “counterpoint” by explaining his intention to “*make them* [the novel and the ‘historical experience of domination’] work together contrapuntally” and to “*transform* the works into the enabling conditions of a decolonising critique” (Said 2001a, 193, Said 2001b, 211; emphasis added). Said’s move of turning (or tuning) the counterpoint into an analytical tool, a comparative perspective, resonates with Adorno’s description of Schoenberg’s use of counterpoint:

fields (as well as his own indebtedness to some of these studies), this harangue is symptomatic of Said’s aversion against the formation of schools of thought and their internal pressures, against the ossification of thinking as a result of theoretical abstractions (see his famous critique of the later work of Foucault in “Traveling Theory” (Said 1983, 244-7). He always conceived of the true intellectual as a free-thinker and of the critic as a skilled craftsman whose choice of tools is always subject to a moral sense in the humanistic tradition.

¹³ Adorno describes the classical contrapuntal procedure as “eine in sich relativ homogene, statische und geschlossene Gesellschaft, die sich im vielstimmigen Gesang repräsentiert und diszipliniert” (Adorno 1978, 149) – thereby interestingly using a sociological language for describing a musical phenomenon while Said retranslates the musical concept into the social realm.

Aller Kontrapunkt hat auch eine analytische Funktion, die Zerlegung des Komplexen in distinkte Teilmomente, die Artikulation des Gleichzeitigen nach dem Gewicht seiner Bestandstücke und nach Ähnlichkeit und Kontrast. (Adorno 1978, 153)

As a metaphor for the critical activity of retrieving the imperial subtext of classical Western novels and for claiming its thematic equality within the larger field of culture, counterpoint is the name given to a counterhegemonic analytical practice otherwise known as colonial discourse analysis.

And yet it seems important to differentiate between colonial texts that have themselves contrapuntal qualities and those that lack this level of historical reflection. It may be useful in this context to associate Said's counterpoint with Bakhtin's concept of hybridity. In "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin distinguishes between an "organic" form of hybridity (or heteroglossia), an unconscious mixing of languages that is not recognized but effects change, and "intentional" hybridity, the conscious construction of semantic conflict employed in most forms of narrative, especially the novel. Bakhtin draws a line between monological or authoritative discourse which forecloses hybridisation and dialogical discourse in which two "socio-linguistic consciousnesses [...] come together and consciously fight it out on the territory of the utterance" (Bakhtin 1981, 358-60). The need to distinguish between different kinds of texts and their dependence on specific socio-linguistic circumstances is crucial to Bakhtin's thinking but frequently gets lost in modern adaptations of his work. Bakhtin is less explicit than Said about the impact of the critic on the hybridity of a work of art. Certainly the marginal ("unconscious"?) references to empire in *Mansfield Park* or *Jane Eyre* require a more skillful contrapuntal reading than the "intentional" reference to empire in *Heart of Darkness*. By the same token, the oblique mention of transoceanic trade relations in Brown's novels, although they can be shown to be more than a dispensable plot ornament, are certainly less significant features of the novel to most readers than the pervasive thematic presence of colonial slavery in *Benito Cereno*. Thus, while Brown's novels must be read contrapuntally against their grain to reveal their position within a transnational cultural and historical setting, Melville's novella, which is itself organized quasi-contrapuntally, forces the perceptive reader to take a 'contrapuntal' view on American history. Or, to give yet another example, Poe's *Arthur Gordon Pym* will only give away its colonial subtext to those readers able and willing to cut through its layers of ethnographic and geographic symbolism and to read its claustrophobic fantasies in larger historical (not just biographical) terms. Martin Delany's novel *Blake; or the Huts of America*, by contrast, displays a dialectical plot structure *par excellence*, thus suggesting the multiple connections between southern plantation life, northern capitalist ventures, and the illegal slave trade to Cuba, as well as establishing a link between the domestic concerns of American citizens and the revolutionary and anti-colonial activities of Cuba's multicultural creole society. Geographical mobility is a dominant feature of both Poe's and Delany's novels, but in contrast to Poe's geographical meandering, Delany's very precise geographical notations cut to the heart of America's amnesiac narrative of national identity. Some

American texts are indeed so obsessed with spatial relations that they explode the category of contrapuntal reading. Barely held together by plot lines of oceanic travel, both *Moby-Dick* and *Arthur Gordon Pym* ultimately defy the conventions of novelistic plot structures and expose the reader to a cacophony of geographical and historical allusion that would seem to demand an altogether different method of analysis.¹⁴

Even within a literature as concerned with space as that of the United States, then, Said's model of reading a text geographically and contrapuntally offers new perspectives on American fiction by placing it within other spatial coordinates. Again and again we encounter within and between the lines of early American fiction, purportedly dealing with the imaginative conquest of continental space, the traces of the oceanic past and present – sometimes neatly separated into different kinds of novels as in the case of Cooper (the founder of both the American frontier romance and sea fiction), but more often 'fighting out' their semantic antagonism 'on the territory of the utterance,' as Bakhtin has it.

3. The Contrapuntal Critic

Said's metaphor of the counterpoint as a critical method for analyzing Western literary texts prepares the scene for the postcolonial critic. It makes her unpack her analytical tools designed to excavate cultural meanings which the text is unwilling to reveal. The method Said proposes and practises is quite close to the symptomatic readings of colonial discourse by Peter Hulme who, in *Colonial Encounters*, is relentlessly aware of the geographical notations of these texts, or to the evocation of the ornate absences of American writing stated by Toni Morri-

¹⁴ An extraordinary, though less oceanic, example for the fusion of discrepant geographies and semantic domains is Poe's short story "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" (1844), which merges a domestic setting of the protagonist's trip into the American wilderness with the history of anticolonial struggle in India. In this story the mentally frail Augustus Bedloe, physically filled with morphine and mentally under the telepathic command of his doctor, seeks diversion in a stretch of wilderness called the Ragged Mountains (and strongly reminiscent of Irving's Catskills, whose fantastic qualities it shares) but then is transported back to India through time and space to become witness of the death of his antonymic namesake Oldeb, his doctor's former friend, who was killed during Cheyte Singh's rebellion in Benares in the 1770s. Poe's (as John Carlos Rowe calls it) "dreamlike, psychic topography" (Rowe 2000, 67) condenses two spatially and chronologically remote colonial sites – the American wilderness of the contemporary frontier romance and the heavily orientalised Benares of the previous century. On the way from one to the other, however, the mesmerized Bedloe apparently passes through Africa: he hears the "loud beating of a drum," he observes a "dusky-visaged and half-naked man" flitting by through the mist, who all the while vigorously shakes "an assemblage of steel rings." As it turns out, the savage man is hunted by a hyena. It is after this experience that Bedloe, feeling like a "new man," steps onto the oriental scene (Poe 1998, 242). The tale is an example of Poe's "fantastic imperialism" and filled with precise historical detail (Rowe 2000, 67 and 69). Far from presenting the two divergent geographical sites as related in any dialectical sense (the connection is the mind-controlling doctor, together with a suggestion of a transubstantiation of souls), it nevertheless displays an awareness for the connectedness of the larger colonial world.

son, a quotation from whose *Playing from the Dark* provides the motto to the first chapter of *Culture and Imperialism*. Like Hulme and Morrison, Said is interested in breaking through the silences of colonial texts and the critical tradition which has taught us to disregard their worldly references. In one of his last essays, Said points out that the question about the real America “and who can lay claim to represent and define it” is now much more at the center of academic debate than it was ten years ago when *Culture and Imperialism* was published (Said 2000b, 579). This is obviously the result of a heightened awareness among ‘contrapuntal’ critics for the ideological affinities of literary texts.

For Said, the most important task for this form of contrapuntal criticism is that the reader seeks to stay adrift between comfortable shores and remain aware of the dangerous lure of landed fundamentalisms and theories. Again and again Said emphasizes his ideal of the critic as an intellectual in exile, an unhoused figure who “will not make the adjustment, preferring instead to remain outside the mainstream, unaccommodated, uncoopted, resistant” (Said 2000c, 373). This resonates with his much earlier description of critical activity as a movement between worlds in his influential essay “Traveling Theory.” As Said outlines here, he conceives of the work of the critic as a spatial activity, a capacity for

locating or situating theory, and this means that theory has to be grasped in the place and the time out of which it emerges as a part of that times, working in and for it, responding to it; then, consequently, that first place can be measured against subsequent places where the theory turns up for use. The critical consciousness is awareness of the differences between situations, awareness too of the fact that no system or theory exhausts the situation out of which it emerges or to which it is transported. (Said 1983, 241-2)¹⁵

Clearly taking ‘exile’ to be a “*metaphorical* condition” rather than necessarily a real one (Said 2000c, 373), Said can thus be seen to pave the way toward an internationalization of literary studies, toward a *mutual* kind of literary and cultural criticism conducted from points outside one’s home culture – a need that has similarly been formulated by Günter Lenz, Paul Bové and others. As Bové noted some time ago (but the situation has not changed much since then), “‘American Studies’ [...] has not yet reached the point of ‘exile’ in relation to itself and its nationalist projects” (Bové 1992, 63).¹⁶

¹⁵ Theory, according to Said, should be able to account for the “the essential untidiness, the essential unmasterable presence that constitutes a large part of historical and social institutions” if it does not want to become an ideological trap (Said 1983, 241).

¹⁶ Günter Lenz argues along similar lines when he states that “[r]aising the question of post-national narratives cannot mean only referring to a reconceptualization of the workings of national identity and counter-identities in the United States, but must also mean asking for a much more elaborated critical redefinition of the meaning of ‘America’ and of the transnational effects and entanglements of United States culture(s) on a global scale” (Lenz 1999, 14). John Rowe portrays Said as one of the instigators of post- and transnational scholarship such as the New American Studies (Rowe 2004).

4. Coda

In the light of the emergence of a greater internationalization, multiperspectivity, and sophistication in the analysis of British and American literature, it seems preposterous (as Said may have said) to observe the largely unscathed survival of fundamentalist thinking among leading representatives of the political elite. As Huntington's influential theory of the "clash of civilizations" seems to adopt the character of a self-fulfilling prophecy (which is probably what it was intended to be), it becomes more and more important to remember the message of humanism which Edward Said promoted until the very last, both in prose and deeds – not unaware of its shortcomings and the "tragic flaw" of its incompleteness and provisionality (Said 2004, 12), yet convinced that the humanist ideal is really the only weapon we have against fundamentalist fanaticisms of all kinds. In an early response to the catastrophe of 9/11, Said reminds us that the Western world is the result of a century-old process of cultural interaction and cross-fertilization – that for the past 1000 years or so Islam has never been "at the fringes of the West," as Huntington's static cultural geography would make us believe, but at its very center. If Huntington's model gained the upper hand, the victims of this partly self-produced "clash of ignorance" between Arabian jihads and Christian crusades will be "stranded in the middle of the ford, between the deep waters of tradition and modernity" (quoting Eqbal Ahmad). "But," Said concludes,

we are all swimming in those waters. Westerners and Muslims and others alike. And since the waters are part of the ocean of history, trying to plow or divide them with barriers is futile. These are tense times, but it is better to think in terms of powerful and powerless communities, the secular politics of reason and ignorance, and universal principles of justice and injustice, than to wander off in search of vast abstractions that may give momentary satisfaction but little self-knowledge or informed analysis. 'The Clash of Civilizations' thesis is a gimmick like 'The War of the Worlds,' better for reinforcing defensive self-pride than for a critical understanding of the bewildering interdependence of our time. (Said 2001c, n.p.)

Even when surrounded by adversarial forces of all kinds, Edward Said has always stood his ground (admirably for a self-declared exile). Apprehensive of the many dangers of postmodernity – "the pauperization of most of the globe's population," the revival of ethnic and religious fundamentalisms, the "decline of literacy" due to electronically based modes of communication, "the fragmentation and threatened disappearance of the grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment," Said never tired to evoke "[our] most precious asset in the face of such a dire transformation of tradition and of history" which is "a sense of community, understanding, sympathy, and hope" (Said 2000b, 589). Edward Said dedicated the last years of his life to helping to realize this sense of community and hope by calling into being, together with Daniel Barenboim, the West East Divan Orchestra, which unites young musicians from Palestine, Israel, Germany and different Arab countries. In their book *Parallels and Paradoxes*, the two talk about the initial difficulties in bringing these diverse artists together and about how the common fascination with music and the rehearsals together trans-

formed the young people, how it made them overcome their former prejudices (Barenboim and Said 2002, 9-10). Said was well aware that the activities of just one orchestra could not substantially contribute to the peace process in Palestine. He quite modestly believed with Aimé Césaire that “the work of man is only just beginning / and it remains to man to conquer all / the violence entrenched in the recesses of his passion” (Said 2000b, 589). There is much to be learned from such a lifelong commitment.

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SUSAN WINNETT

Writing in Place: Edward Said's Constructions of Exile

Abstract: This essay examines the notions of place and self-placement central to Edward Said's autobiographical memoir, *Out of Place*, and discusses their relation to the notion of exile that is so crucial to his intellectual legacy. In his theoretical writings, Said needs exile to be both literal and figurative: On the one hand, exile is the ultimate historical obscenity that cannot be made to stand for anything but itself. On the other hand, it is "a metaphorical condition" that characterizes the intellectual, such as himself, whose homelessness allows him to do independent and courageous thinking. The implications of this double agenda are manifest in Said's critical practice. A discussion of Said's reading of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* illuminates his exilic investment in certain aspects of the culture to which he sees himself in opposition.

Many years ago, a Columbia colleague and I were hurrying through the crowded Parisian Métro station, Châtelet. When a familiar male voice hailed us, we looked up and found that we had just missed bumping into Edward Said. Thrilled by the coincidence as one is when one finds a landmark of one's home territory in the midst of Parisian rush-hour anonymity, we all three blurted out the same question: "What are you doing here?" In response to Nancy's and my "We're here at a conference," Edward replied, "But *I'm* here at a conference." When I pointed out that there were probably more than even our two conferences being held in Paris that week, Edward remained embarrassedly – and hence, touchingly – puzzled as to how *we* could be at a conference in Paris if *he* was at a conference in Paris. But was he really in Paris, or was he simply "here"? So intimately had he invested Paris with his sense of his own purpose there that he seemed at least temporarily unable to imagine it consecrated to other uses, other agendas, other invasions. In fact, it was almost as though the specificity of the place blurred in relation to the fact of his being there: In the midst of the Parisian rush-hour, Edward was at a conference. This was not simple egotism, which is why it was so touching. Many years later, reading this encounter through the lens of his 1999 memoir, *Out of Place*, I see it as exemplifying a complicated relation to place and to his own self-placement that pervades Said's work, and especially informs the notion of exile that is so central to his intellectual legacy. In the following pages, I want to interrogate certain motifs in Said's autobiographical self-presentation that might illuminate the work that he needs the term "exile" to perform in his thinking.

Out of Place presents Edward Said as existentially displaced – linguistically and geographically. Said writes of the “basic split in my life [...] between Arabic, my native language, and English, the language of my education and subsequent expression as a scholar and teacher” (Said 1999, xi). While he is able to manage the linguistic split in his life through his use of language, maintaining an ongoing, uneasy dialogue between the claims represented by Arabic and English,¹ he cannot address his geographic displacement in an analogous manner – that is, by inhabiting the places whence he has been displaced – first, because some of them are off-limits to him, and second, because even those to which he can return are no longer what they were. Furthermore, as he himself admits, it is not clear whether “Edward Said” would be well served in and by the places whence he is exiled:

The sheer gravity of my coming to the United States in 1951 amazes me even today. I have only the most shadowy notion of what my life might have been had I not come to America. [...] To this day I still feel that I am away from home, ludicrous as that may sound, and though I believe I have no illusions about the “better” life I might have had, had I remained in the Arab world, or lived and studied in Europe, there is still some measure of regret. (Said 1999, 222)

Said’s construction of “exile” entails mourning for the places through which he defines himself and never quite defining himself through the places where he is:

The fact that I live in New York with a sense of provisionality despite thirty-seven years of residence here accentuates the disorientation that has accrued to me, rather than the advantages. (Said 1999, 222)

“Disorientation,” in this formulation, is something that happens to one (“accrued to me”); the process of mourning the loss of orientation becomes Said’s active response to this passive condition that he also terms “exile”²: “The fact that I was never at home, or at least [...] out of place in nearly every way gave me the incentive to find my territory, not socially but intellectually” (Said 1999, 231). That this intellectual search for “orientation” finds its apogee in Said’s treatise on “Orientalism” can hardly be accidental. Intellectual activity becomes “the territory” that compensates for “disorientation;” in *Orientalism*, Said maps on to this “intellectual [...] territory” the split that, in *Out of Place*, he documents within himself.

¹ In *Out of Place*, Said writes, “the two [languages] have always been together in my life, one resonating in the other, sometimes ironically, sometimes nostalgically, most often each correcting, and commenting on, the other. Each *can* seem like my absolutely first language, but neither is. I trace this primal instability back to my mother [...]” (Said 1999, 4).

² See, for instance, Said’s account of his return to Jerusalem in 1998: “One of the routine questions I was asked by Israeli officials (since my U.S. passport indicated that I was born in Jerusalem) was exactly when after birth I had left Israel. I responded by saying that I left *Palestine* in December 1947, accenting the word ‘Palestine.’ ‘Do you have any relatives here?’ was the next question, to which I answered, ‘No one,’ and this triggered a sensation of such sadness and loss as I had not expected. For by the early spring of 1948 *my entire extended family had been swept out of the place, and has remained in exile ever since*” (Said 1999, x, my emphasis in final sentence).

If, in *Orientalism*, Said calls himself an “Oriental subject” (Said 1994b, 25), in *Out of Place*, he portrays his schoolboy self in terms that recall his description of the nineteenth-century Orientalist’s “distillation of essential ideas about the Orient” with its stereotypical “sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness” (Said 1994b, 205). Said recalls that “[a]t age five or six I knew that I was irremediably ‘naughty’ and at school was all manner of comparably disapproved-of things like ‘fibber’ and ‘loiterer’” (Said 1999, 4). Said writes, for instance, that upon his family’s return to Cairo after his father’s nervous breakdown during World War II,

I was encouraged by my mother in particular to believe that a happier, less problematic period had ended. I sank more and more into generalized truancy – ‘You’re very clever,’ I’d be told over and over, ‘but you have no character, you’re lazy, you’re naughty,’ etc. – and was made aware of an earlier Edward, sometimes referred to as ‘Eduardo Bianco,’ whose exploits, gifts, and accomplishments were recounted to me as a sign of pre-1942 early promise betrayed. (Said 1999, 27)

“White Edward” has degenerated into a characterless, lazy, naughty boy whom his father subjects to the prophylactic discipline that produces “Edward,” who

over time [became] a demanding taskmaster, registering lists of flaws and failures with as much energy as accumulated obligations and commitments, the two lists balancing and in a sense canceling each other. (Said 1999, 12)

As we know, this “Edward” has recovered the preternatural musical and literary skills of his “cute, preternaturally fast and smart [...] early Edward” (Said 1999, 27). Yet, Said hints at an implicitly more genuine “non-Edward part of myself” that resists the parental – and especially paternal – efforts to mold him into what amounts to a “Western” male subject. He seems, however, entirely ambivalent about the contours and status of this other self (Said 1999, 4).³

The structure of this ambivalence emerges in his recurring juxtapositions of the extreme self-discipline that he deems his father’s legacy and the combination of brilliance, sensitivity, and neurosis that he sees himself as sharing with his mother:

Even now, I feel imprinted and guided by several of her long-standing perspectives and habits: a paralyzing anxiety about alternative courses of action; chronic, mostly self-inflicted sleeplessness; a deep-seated restlessness accompanied by an unending supply of mental and physical energy; a profound interest in music and language as well as in the aesthetics of appearance, style, and form; a perhaps overelaborate sense of the social world, its currents, delights and potential for happiness and grief; and finally a virtually unquenchable, incredibly various cultivation of loneliness as a form both of freedom and of affiliation. (Said 1999, 12)

³ Said never goes into much detail about this more genuine part of himself (although I suspect that his love of music is a part of it), but writes of a “stunning American woman [...] a Diana figure, infinitely attractive to me and at the same time infinitely unattainable” (Said 1999, 282), who “seemed to speak directly to that underground part of my identity I had long held for myself, not the ‘Ed’ or ‘Edward’ I had been assigned, but the other self I was always aware of but was unable easily or immediately to reach [...]” (Said 1999, 284).

In fact, in Said's articulation of his relation to his mother, we find a model for his various articulations of the relation between the exile and the home he has lost. The previous passage continues:

Were my mother to have been only a simple refuge, or a kind of intermittent safe haven, from the day's passage, I cannot tell what the results might have been. But she had the most deep-seated and unresolved ambivalence toward the world, and me, I have ever known. Despite our affinities, my mother required my love and devotion, and gave them back doubled and redoubled; but she also could turn them away quite suddenly, producing in me a metaphysical panic I can still experience with considerable unpleasantness and even terror. Between my mother's empowering, sunlike smile and her cold scowl or her sustained frowning dismissiveness, I existed as a child both fortunate and hopelessly miserable, neither completely one nor the other. (Said 1999, 12-3)

Said's "homelessness" begins at home; the counterpoint of all-encompassing love and precipitous rejection that constitutes his mother's relation to him gives him both the experience of and longing for a "safe haven" and the knowledge of its impermanence. Said sees his exile from the maternal "odd family cocoon" as beginning when his father sent him to the United States for his education: "[T]he more I think about it, the more I believe he thought *the only hope for me as a man* was in fact to be cut off from my family" (Said 1999, 294, my emphasis). Yet, if we heed his own articulations, we see that Said's exile began *within* his relation to his mother; the distancing enforced by his father was, in this formulation, the impetus for the intellectual project devoted to the study of exile and homelessness that bears the name "Edward Said":

My search for freedom, for the self beneath or obscured by 'Edward,' could only have begun because of that rupture, so I have come to think of it as fortunate, despite the loneliness and unhappiness I experienced for so long. (Said 1999, 294)

* * *

The ambivalence I have explored in my examination of *Out of Place* colors the construction of "exile" that is so crucial to Said's oeuvre. Said needs exile to be both brutally real and figurative: the ultimate historical obscenity, "neither aesthetically nor humanistically comprehensible" (Said 1994a, 138), lends its force to "a metaphorical condition" (Said 1994c, 53) that he appropriates for a genealogy of intellectuals that includes himself. In an essay entitled "Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals" (1994), Said invokes "those different arrangements of living and eccentric angles of vision that [exile] can sometimes afford, which enliven the intellectual's vocation, without perhaps alleviating every last anxiety or feeling of bitter solitude" (Said 1994c, 59), and equates the exile's point of view with that of the true intellectual:

[W]hile it is an actual condition, exile is also [...] a metaphorical condition. By that I mean that my diagnosis of the intellectual in exile derives from the social and political history of dislocation and migration [...] but is not limited to it. Even intellectuals who are lifelong members of a society can, in a manner of speaking, be divided into insiders and outsiders: those on the one hand who belong fully to the society as it is,

who flourish in it without an overwhelming sense of dissonance or dissent, those who can be called yea-sayers; and on the other hand, the nay-sayers, the individuals at odds with their society and therefore outsiders and exiles as far as privileges, power, and honors are concerned. The pattern that sets the course for the intellectual as outsider is best exemplified by the condition of exile, the state of never being fully adjusted, always feeling outside the chatty, familiar world inhabited by natives, so to speak, tending to avoid and even dislike the trappings of accommodation and national well-being. Exile for the intellectual in this metaphorical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others. You cannot go back to some earlier and perhaps more stable condition of being at home; and, alas, you can never fully arrive, be at one with, your new home or situation. (Said 1994c, 53)

It is hard to take issue with Said's portrait of the "intellectual as outsider," but his blurring of the distinction between real exile and the "metaphoric sense" that he ends up foregrounding is both troubling and misleading. There *is* a difference between a restless, unsettling, unaccommodating exile and a restless, unsettling, unaccommodating intellectual misfit.⁴ Even those intellectuals who are "at odds with their society and therefore outsiders and exiles as far as privileges, power, and honors are concerned" have a *claim* to enfranchisement and authority of which the exile, regardless of the worldliness with which s/he compensates for homelessness, has been divested. Said himself was a prime example of a class of intellectuals "at odds with their society" whose personal history and political convictions cause them to feel like "outsiders and exiles," but who, nevertheless, enjoy considerable "privileges, power, and honors." The kind of dissident he describes here speaks from within the society to which s/he feels marginal, and speaks to a society to whom s/he claims membership. The exile, on the other hand, speaks from the elsewhere of banishment to whomever will listen with an authority born of disenfranchisement.

Although Said blurs the distinction between the experience of exile and experiences that are registered as being 'like' exile,⁵ he has argued elsewhere against using exile as a metaphor for general alienation and estrangement. In "Reflections on Exile" (1984), he writes that "exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience," and insists that

exile cannot be made to serve notions of humanism. On the twentieth-century scale, exile is neither aesthetically nor humanistically comprehensible: at most the literature about exile objectifies an anguish and a predicament most people rarely experience at first hand; but to think of the exile informing this literature as beneficially humanistic

⁴ This figure might be more accurately described as a "nomad." The plea for the intellectual "nomad" has been made recently, with reference to Nietzsche and Deleuze, by Rosi Braidotti. She distinguishes the "nomad" from both the migrant and the exile: "The nomad does not stand for homelessness, or compulsive displacement; it is rather a figuration for the kind of subject who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity" (Braidotti 1994, 22).

⁵ See Ian Buruma's review of *Out of Place*: "The hero emerging from his memoir is not the Palestinian activist so much as the alienated intellectual. The modern image of the heroic intellectual is that of a marginal figure, the lonely champion of the truth, the deconstructionist of official 'narratives,' the 'exile.' One finishes his book with the strong impression that Said presses the suffering of the Palestinian people into the service of his own credentials as an intellectual hero" (Buruma 1999, 10).

is to banalize its mutilations, the losses it inflicts on those who suffer them, the muteness with which it responds to any attempt to understand it as 'good for us.' (Said 1994a, 138)

Here, Said distinguishes between the possible knowledge to be gained from the actual experience of exile and the application of the name "exile" to experiences that communicate or make use of such knowledge. The exile's experience forces him or her to confront the fact that "homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons and are often defended beyond reason or necessity" (Said 1994a, 147). An intellectual whose observations, reading, conversations, and processes of thought teach him or her the same lesson is not, however, therefore an exile. Rather s/he is someone who, having become aware of disjunctions similar to those experienced by the exile, "cultivate[s the] scrupulous [...] subjectivity" that, Said argues, is also the intellectual attitude of the exile (Said 1994a, 147). Here, the distinction between 'being an exile' and 'feeling like' or 'thinking like an exile' remains in place as a kind of bulwark against what Said terms the "pallid notion that non-exiles can share in the benefits of exile as a redemptive motif" (Said 1994a, 145).

While Said warns against a conflation of "exile" and intellectual attitudes derived from its lessons, his own practice is evidence of the seductiveness of such blurred distinctions. Even where he is most intolerant even of well-meaning domestications of what is "neither aesthetically nor humanistically comprehensible" (Said 1994a, 138), he excuses such appropriations if the exile-by-choice is an artist or intellectual. Said writes of James Joyce, for instance, that although he "*chose to be an exile, [... he] perfectly understood its trials*" (Said 1994a, 145, my emphasis). Said is capable of recognizing that Joyce's exile was voluntary and even briefly wonders whether it might indeed be of "a more benign variety," but fails to see that what we read in Joyce's works is less the "perfect understanding" of exile than a perfect performance of an existential alienation that the expatriate Joyce insists on calling and staging as "exile." Hélène Cixous regards Joyce's "exile" as a "metaphor" and reflects upon what is at stake in his deployment of this metaphor:

Exile [for Joyce] is no longer simply a separation from a world which he finds intolerable and which will not tolerate him, but becomes over the years an absolute exile mindful of its origins, though quite detached from them. In fact the exile is effective even if he happens by chance to find himself again in the country he has denied. (Cixous 1972, 438)

Although the word "exile" expresses the pathos with which Joyce adorns his alienation, it does not describe his situation. Expatriation rather than exile is the gesture through which the individual plays out his or her alienation – be it founded or unfounded – by choosing to leave his or her native country. By resisting this distinction, Said perpetuates a romantic appropriation of the pathos of exile for forms of intellectual alienation – his own included – that demand more rigorous examination.

It is curious that, given his preoccupation with exile and his tendency toward a perhaps overly generous application of the term, Said overlooks the issue in his controversial reading of *Mansfield Park* that sets out to interrogate “positive notions of home, of a nation and its language, of proper order, good behavior, moral values” (Said 1993, 81) through a “contrapuntal” reading that attends to and assesses Austen’s allusions to Sir Thomas Bertram’s business interests in Antigua. Said’s brilliant exposure in *Culture and Imperialism* of the complicity between the institution of the novel and institutions of European imperialism has, of course, made it impossible and irresponsible to overlook the imperial subtext in *Mansfield Park*.⁶ Yet *how* he reads *Mansfield Park* – and especially what his analysis overlooks – is indicative of Said’s own complicated relation to some of the “Western,” hegemonic institutions to which he considers himself an outsider.⁷ Said claims that “within Jane Austen’s work,” *Mansfield Park* “carefully defines the moral and social values informing her other novels” (Said 1993, 62). He sees the novel’s ratification of Sir Thomas Bertram’s values, property, and colonial enterprises as confirming its individual and institutional complicity with British Imperialism. Said rightly calls our attention to Austen’s claim that *Mansfield Park* is “about ordination,” and concludes that “the right to colonial possessions helps directly to establish social order and moral priorities at home” (Said 1993, 62). But Said underestimates Austen’s critical faculties when he claims that Austen follows Fanny Price in “subscribing” to Sir Thomas’s values (Said 1993, 61). Like those critics who understand Austen’s words as upholding Edmund Bertram’s pastoral calling and the book’s somber Protestantism, Said sees *Mansfield Park* as unironically championing the results of the process of ordination – and hence the social, familial and imperial institutions – that the novel represents. Yet, by saying that the novel is “*about* ordination,” Austen seems to be suggesting that, far from simply and uncritically repeating the acts of ordaining performed by its characters, *Mansfield Park* is taking on “ordination” as a subject of critical speculation.⁸

⁶ Said summarizes his reading thus: “More clearly than anywhere else in her fiction, Austen here synchronizes domestic with international authority, making it plain that the values associated with such higher things as ordination, law, and propriety must be grounded firmly in actual rule over and possession of territory. She sees clearly that to hold and rule Mansfield Park is to hold and rule an imperial estate in close, not to say inevitable association with it. What assures the domestic tranquillity and attractive harmony of one is the productivity and regulated discipline of the other” (Said 1993, 87).

⁷ Said writes, for instance: “[L]ike [Salman Rushdie] I feel outnumbered and outorganized by a prevailing Western consensus that has come to regard the Third World as an atrocious nuisance, a culturally and politically inferior place. Whereas we write and speak as members of a small minority of marginal voices, our journalistic and academic critics belong to a wealthy system of interlocking informational and academic resources with newspapers, television networks, journals of opinion, and institutes at its disposal” (Said 1993, 28). Without wanting to minimize the importance of Said’s “minority” position on the issues he championed, I want to suggest that he somewhat underrates his own implication in the “informational and academic” institutions to which he refers.

⁸ Tony Tanner, in his 1966 “Introduction” to the Penguin Edition of *Mansfield Park*: “In a letter Jane Austen said the subject of this book was ‘ordination;’ and certainly Edmund’s choice

“Ordination,” the OED (1971) tells us, is

- the action of ordaining, arranging, or disposing in ranks or order: the condition of being ordered or arranged; and arrangement of disposition; arrangement in orders or classes; classification in orders;
- the act of ordaining, or conferring holy orders; appointment to any office or position;
- the action or fact of ordaining or decreeing, esp. as a divine action;
- destination (to an end or purpose); destined or ordained function or disposition;
- that which is ordained; an ordinance, decree, statute, law; a prescribed observance.

This series of definitions, all of which were current in Austen’s time, does indeed summarize the concerns and capture the mood of the novel, which, as Nina Auerbach has pointed out, is characterized by the recurrence of the word “ought”: “‘Ought’ tolls constantly, its very sound bringing a knell of absolutism. [...] As a barometer of feelings, morals, and institutions, the word seems an immutable touchstone [...]” (Auerbach 1983, 219-20). From Sir Thomas’s rather too harsh family discipline to Mrs Norris’s officious pronouncements, from Rushworth’s and Henry Crawford’s projects to reorganize Sotherton and Thornton Abbey to Edmund’s and Fanny’s adherence to prescribed observances, Mansfield is a community obsessed with “the action or fact of ordaining or decreeing,” with the classification, arrangement and hierarchy we associate with the word “ought.” But, Auerbach argues,

[the word] has no objective validation. Its authority in the novel is entirely, and alarmingly, self-generated. The word recurs anarchically, for there is no objective code to endow it with consistency. (Auerbach 1983, 220)

Auerbach adduces the “anarchic” recurrence of the word “ought” from the following instances:

Sir Thomas says of a Fanny who is brewing rebellion, ‘She appears to feel as she ought’ [...]; for Mary, the party with which Maria Rushworth inaugurates her miserable marriage finds everything ‘just as it ought to be’ [...]; Maria herself avoids only the word in seeing her mercenary marriage as a ‘duty’ [...]. Even Edmund, who has transmitted its value to Fanny, abuses the word throughout the novel, beginning with his myopic pressure on Fanny to live with her hated Aunt Norris: ‘She is choosing a friend and companion exactly where she ought’ [...]. (Auerbach 1983, 220)

If we feel these pronouncements to “recur anarchically,” this is due not to the absence but to the ineffectuality of the authority to which they refer, to its inability to lend to the auxiliary verb “used to express duty, moral obligation, moral rightness, justice, propriety, appropriateness, probability or natural conse-

of the profession of clergyman is a serious issue – Mary despising it and trying to entice him into the world, Fanny admiring it and giving Edmund all the support she can. *But we can see that there are also other very important issues in this book*” (Austen 1983, 31, my emphasis).

quence" (Random House Dictionary) the force of "ordination." Each of the instances of incoherence Auerbach invokes refers to an authority imputed to Sir Thomas that he borrows from those patriarchal arrangements that are synonymous with society itself. These, however, represent a fiction of power far more substantial than the power itself; Sir Thomas's reputation for authority is repeatedly belied by the inefficacy of his attempts to exercise it, and any discussion of *Mansfield Park's* relation to the socio-political order whose ratification it is taken to represent needs to evaluate the terms in which this representation is accomplished. And if, as I am suggesting, the novel calls into question the legitimacy and efficacy of Sir Thomas's powers of ordination, then might it not also be extending its critical talons to scratch some dissenting graffiti on the monument to imperialism that Said sees the British novel as constituting?

In her interrogation of the process of "ordination," Austen is seriously challenging the authority of authority itself – the authority, that is, that constitutes and enforces "the social order and moral priorities at home" that Said sees the novel as affirming. In the course of *Mansfield Park*, both the quality and the efficacy of Sir Thomas's authority are put to the test. When, for instance, Sir Thomas determines that Fanny should go to live with Mrs Norris after her husband's demise, he is deftly outmaneuvered by his sister-in-law. The text informs us:

The time was now come when Sir Thomas expected his sister-in-law to claim her share in their niece, the change in Mrs Norris's situation, and the improvement in Fanny's age, seeming not merely to do away any former objection to their living together, but even to give it the most decided eligibility; and as his own circumstances were rendered less fair than heretofore, [...] it became not undesirable to himself to be relieved from the expense of her support, and the obligation of her future provision. In the fullness of his belief that such a thing must be, he mentioned its probability to his wife [...]. (Austen 1983, 49)

Sir Thomas's sense of expedience is matched only by his assumption that his "expectations" and "beliefs" will be obliged at whichever "time" he appoints. Without consulting Mrs Norris, he imaginatively divests himself of the responsibility for Fanny's "support" and the "obligation of her future provision," and allows the all-but-fait-accomplis to circulate as gossip before he has consulted with the parties most closely affected. A casual reading of the novel is likely not to detect Sir Thomas's unjust treatment of Mrs Norris, first, because the text stresses Fanny's emotional predicament, and second, because Sir Thomas's assumption of his 'ordination' prerogative is presented not as a personal idiosyncrasy but as definitive ("The time was come [...]"). Moreover, Mrs Norris's odiousness effectively prevents our reading the episode with her interests at heart; to the extent that we let our sentiments guide our reading of the novel, we will prefer Sir Thomas's stuffy – and seemingly impersonal – paternalism to Mrs Norris's officious self-interest. Yet we must note how Mrs Norris is forced to pit her interest against that of her no more altruistic brother-in-law:

Mrs Norris had not the smallest intention of taking [Fanny]. It had never occurred to her, on the present occasion, *but as a thing to be carefully avoided. To prevent its being*

expected, she had fixed on the smallest habitation which could rank as genteel among the buildings of Mansfield parish. (Austen 1983, 62, my emphasis)

That she beats Sir Thomas at his own game has perhaps less to do with her particular skill than with the fact that he rather recklessly takes his authority for granted.

Austen's presentation of Mrs Norris's deliberations underscores the difference between her manipulation of appearances and Sir Thomas's. Whereas her intentions are every bit as firm as her brother-in-law's, her deliberations take an entirely different shape. Unlike Sir Thomas, who assumes he must only determine when "[t]he time [has] come" to realize his expectations, Mrs Norris needs an active and effective defense. It is not that it has "never occurred to her," that she would be called upon to take Fanny, although the phrasing of the sentence would lead us to anticipate such a conclusion. Rather, it has "never occurred to her" not to "avoid carefully" the burden of her niece. Nor can she simply refuse the request when the time comes. Whether Mrs Norris exhibits prescient understanding of the Mansfield family, reads the world through the lens of her own parsimoniousness, or simply always anticipates the worst, she is prepared. We discover she has taken the White House with malice aforethought: "To prevent its being expected, she had fixed on the smallest habitation which could rank as genteel among the buildings of Mansfield parish [...]." Crowding Fanny out in advance turns out to have been a reason more compelling than economy for her choice of abode. And when the time for negotiation arrives, Mrs Norris takes full and calculating advantage of the situation prepared by Sir Thomas's negligence. By leaving to his wife the business of spreading the news of his 'decision,' he provides Mrs Norris with a far-less-formidable interlocutor than he himself would represent. While his position alone might have intimidated Mrs Norris into submission or compromise, Mrs Bertram proves no match for her sister's vigorous will. The arguments of the

poor desolate widow, deprived of the best of husbands, [her] health gone in attending and nursing him [...] with barely enough to support [her] in the rank of a gentlewoman, and enable [her] to live so as not to disgrace the memory of the dear departed (Austen 1983, 63),

persuade Mrs Bertram as they might not have her husband. The fact that she takes "early care to make *him* [...] understand that whatever she possessed was designed for their family" (Austen 1983, 64, my emphasis) demonstrates the subtlety both of her understanding of the limits of her power and the strategy she devises for functioning within these limits.

Although I find it difficult to go so far as to regard Mrs Norris as an unambiguously positive character, I would like to suggest an analogy between the guerilla tactics with which Mrs Norris attacks the citadel of Mr Bertram's power and Jane Austen's own relation to the patriarchal institutions that dominate the world that she represents. In the figure of Mrs Norris as well as in her own use of irony and sporadic, strategic first-person narrative intrusion, Austen offers her reader a primer for deciphering the language in which she speaks truth to

power. For all his attention to the “contrapuntal” reading that enables the “simultaneous awareness both of the [...] history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts” (Said 1993, 51), Said remains innocent of Austen’s metalanguage of dissent. Susan Fraiman has brilliantly exposed how in “vigorously arguing for [*Mansfield Park*’s] active role in producing imperialist plots, Said also in effect replays the story of its author’s passivity regarding issues in the public sphere.” Fraiman concludes that “Said’s Austen is a veritable Aunt Jane – naive, complacent, and demurely without overt political opinion” (Fraiman 1995, 807). She points rightly to Said’s almost naive assumption that “*Mansfield Park* epitomizes moral order and right human relations” (Fraiman 1995, 809) and his blind subscription to the identity of Jane Austen’s and Sir Thomas Bertram’s “values” (Said 1993, 62). Fraiman documents the “moral blight underlying *Mansfield*’s beauty,” aligns it with the “gender struggle central to *Mansfield Park*,” and concludes that Said’s gender-blindness prevents him from being able to read Austen’s powerful counter-text:

Austen deliberately invokes the dumbness of *Mansfield Park* concerning its own barbarity precisely because she means to rebuke it. The barbarity she has in mind is not literal slavery in the West Indies but a paternal practice she depicts as possibly analogous to it: Sir Thomas’s bid [...] to put female flesh on the auction block in exchange for male status. (Fraiman 1995, 812)

Fraiman convincingly exposes Sir Thomas’s complacency about a power that he wields simply because no one questions it, and demonstrates Said’s complacent acceptance – via a kind of readerly male bonding – of a social order that the novel excoriates. By exposing the bankruptcy of the authority assumed by and invested in Sir Thomas at the same time as she demonstrates its power of survival, Austen is engineering a critique of her society that resembles but is ultimately more comprehensive than Said’s. We can extend Fraiman’s line of thinking and interrogate Said’s uncritical treatment of Fanny Price, the refugee from poverty whose internalization of the values of a world that has done everything in its power to reject and abuse her would seem to demand and deserve the attention of the student of exile.

If we read Austen and Said contrapuntally, attending to moments of uncanny similarity between Austen’s characterization of Fanny Price and Said’s invocation of the plight of the exile, we begin to see what is at stake in his blindness. Austen writes:

The little visitor [...] was as unhappy as possible. Afraid of every body, ashamed of herself, and longing for the home she had left, she knew not how to look up, and could scarcely speak to be heard, or without crying [...]. Her consciousness of misery was [...] increased by the idea of its being a wicked thing for her not to be happy. (Austen 1983, 50)

For Said,

exile [...] is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. [... I]n a very

acute sense exile is a solitude experienced outside the group: the deprivations felt at not being with others in the communal habitation. (Said 1994a, 137, 140)

In Said's reading, the material comforts of Mansfield swiftly compensate for Fanny's devastating sense of displacement. Indeed he sees these material comforts as representing a moral order, and Fanny's comprehension of the moral order as resulting from her appreciation of the comforts. Said overlooks, however, how often Fanny is reminded that she may be *at* Mansfield, but is not *of* Mansfield: The class distinction between the Bertrams and the Prices determines the terms of her sojourn there; both her aunts treat her as a servant; her attic room remains unheated for the first ten years of her tenure at Mansfield. It is through internalizing the Bertrams' notion of her "faults of ignorance and timidity" and declaring herself grateful beyond measure for every kindness begrudged her that Fanny "learn[s] to transfer in [Mansfield Park's] favour much of her attachment to her former home" (Austen 1983, 56). In the course of the novel, Fanny masters the arts of accommodation that ensure her survival and comes to identify with the values for which upper-class manners are supposed to stand. When three of her four cousins disgrace the family and discredit the proprieties superficially promulgated by Sir Thomas, Fanny rescues the fourth cousin, Edmund, from his infatuation with the worldly Mary Crawford just in time to preside over his ordination and, as a kind of saving remnant, consoles her uncle for his rightful disillusionment with a system that, in her union with Edmund, she will perpetuate. "Exiles feel," Said writes elsewhere, "an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people" (Said 1994a, 140-1).

Nothing gets destroyed or overturned in *Mansfield Park*; in fact, its heroine gets exactly what she wanted: "Much of the exile's life is taken up with compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule" (Said 1994a, 144). And by giving Fanny Price what she wants, Austen forces us to examine what conjunction of interests has prevailed to bring it about. We find that Mansfield has dealt with all the real and historically significant challenges to it by repudiating their morality and expelling them. The marriage of its saving remnant (Sir Thomas is "chiefly anxious to bind by the strongest securities all that remained to him of domestic felicity" [Austen 1983, 455]) transports Mansfield back to the future; populated by Fanny and Edmund's ménage, the debilitated Tom, the aging Bertram parents, and whichever Price children their mother chooses to farm out to rich relatives, Mansfield has successfully repressed the present. But *Mansfield Park* has not failed to make its reader aware of how its resolution depends upon these crucial repressions, thereby inviting a reading that uncovers and condemns its closural strategies rather than embracing them. According to such a reading, Fanny Price's triumph, a product of her ability entirely to identify with "Man's-field," is a demonstration more devastating than a more direct critique of the force of empty forms, of the ability of a dominant ideology to determine the course of affairs, even those affairs intent on exposing and resisting it.

Such a reading of *Mansfield Park* would not diminish Said's thesis that "Austen reveals herself to be *assuming* [...] the importance of an empire to the situation at home" (Said 1993, 89, emphasis in original). It would, however, alter our view of the "situation at home," and by extension, demonstrate that the corruption of empire is necessarily duplicated in any situation whose prosperity is based on slavery, exploitation, racism and sexism. Said's deafness to Austen's irony, and his reliance, for all his critical worldliness, on a radically conservative assessment of the scope of Austen's mind, might be a result of his own attraction to certain institutions of "home" that simultaneously construct and mitigate experience of what he calls "exile." Despite his warnings, in "Reflections on Exile," against redemptive, metaphoric appropriations of exile, he succumbs repeatedly to the temptation to transform this "condition of terminal loss" into "a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture" (Said 1994a, 137). It is difficult to escape the suspicion that Said's investment in a "modern culture" of whose historical constitution he is bitterly critical necessitates this ambivalent construction of exile: he can only partake of this culture to the extent he requires if he declares himself essentially in exile from it.

In *Out of Place*, Said describes his first days at Mount Herman School in a manner that recalls both Fanny Price's first reactions to her removal to Mansfield and Said's own reflections on exile: "Why, I remember asking myself [...] had I been sent so far away to this dreadful, godforsaken place?" (Said 1999, 228). Said's stillborn attempt to establish a bond with a teacher at Mount Herman who he has been told comes from Cairo first, by claiming a common Cairo acquaintance and then, by switching into Arabic, has a painful upshot similar to Fanny Price's "shameful" insistence that one gets to Ireland by crossing to the Isle of Wight. Said learns the strategic importance for his future in America of "leaving" Arabic "behind," much as Fanny gratefully subjects herself to Edmund's plan for her improvement. Both survive in exile by internalizing the values of one of their societies' elite institutions and excelling in its terms. Said's conquest of the "intellectual territory" he discovered to be his own enabled him to find his home in exile in the American university: "To my mind, the Western university, certainly in America, still can offer the intellectual a quasi-utopian space in which reflection and research can go on [...]" (Said 1994c, 82). And he furnished this home well, coming and going according to the demands of his intellectual – and political – agenda.⁹ Unlike his own mother, "Alma Mater," the "nurturing

⁹ Another personal anecdote may serve to document Said's rather touching assumption (in both senses of the word) of his privilege: One late afternoon in the late 1980s, he wandered into my office at Columbia and began to chat. Noticing the Mont Blanc fountain pen on my desk, he remarked, "I have a Mont Blanc pen, too. I can't write with anything else. I have to write everything out with a fountain pen." When I answered that I used to write out everything longhand, but had trained myself to compose at the computer, he expressed troubled surprise, as if I had committed an aesthetic violation: "How could you do that? I couldn't bear to write with anything but a fountain pen! I couldn't possibly write on a computer!" I answered to the effect that, unlike him, I had no secretary – much less a secretary with a Ph.D. – and that the computer saved me the time of typing and retyping my manuscripts after I had written them. Said looked bewildered and admitted, "I'd never thought of it in that way."

mother” whose statue is the central feature of the Columbia University campus, never made demands that he was incapable of meeting, and offered him a home whence he could live up to his ideal of the intellectual exile whose calling it is to

imagine and investigate in spite of barriers, and always to move away from the centralizing authorities towards the margins, where you see things that are usually lost on minds that have never traveled beyond the conventional and the comfortable. (Said 1994c, 63)

When Said traveled to Paris – or anywhere else for that matter – he was, in a sense, always in the university: “here.”

Like those places to which Said was more critically attuned, the “American university” has its slaves, its exiles, and its imperial colonies. Yet Said preferred to regard the university as a space of cherished and rare intellectual freedom, “for individual and subjective intellectual representation, for asking questions and challenging the wisdom of a war or an immense social program” (Said 1994c, 82). He was certainly aware of the relation between his own freedom and privilege and his dazzling proficiency in all phases of the university’s game, but perhaps less so of the implications of this game for those students and colleagues who had not played it with the same skill or fortune as he.¹⁰ Like Austen’s Fanny, for whom the *price* of survival in exile is a cultivated blindness to certain aspects of what she knows about Mansfield (“Did not you hear me ask [Sir Thomas] about the slave trade last night?” [Austen 1983, 213]), Said paid rent for his “quasi-utopian space.” This rent amounted to a cultivated innocence of the price of his own privilege that becomes manifest in his lack of discomfort with his own metaphoric appropriation of “exile” as well as in the blind spots in his reading of *Mansfield Park*. Said was fond of citing a passage from Theodor Adorno’s *Minima Moralia* that reads, “In his text the writer sets up house. [...] For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing [even] becomes a place to live [In seinem Text richtet der Schriftsteller häuslich sich ein. [...] Wer keine Heimat mehr hat, dem wird wohl gar das Schreiben zum Wohnen]” (Said 1994c, 58; Adorno 2001, 152). Perhaps, Said occasionally underestimated the hidden costs of the “text” in which he reconstructed his “Heimat” in exile and demonstrated, yet again, the justice of Audre Lorde’s admonition against trying to destroy the master’s house with the master’s tools. Perhaps, like Jane Austen, Said was doomed to express his oppositional position within the confines of an institution that – at least to a certain extent – co-opted it.

¹⁰ Tim Brennan cites Said’s reflection on the split between the professor of literature and the political “other person, like Dorian Grey [sic], who did these quite unspeakable unmentionable things.” Said goes on to mention his friendship with Lionel Trilling with whom, apparently and wisely, he avoided discussing his political views: “but we never once, in the fifteen years that we were friendly, let these other matters come up; and I trained myself to live that way” (Brennan 1992, 76, emphasis in Brennan’s original).

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ALFRED HORNUNG

Out of Place: Extraterritorial Existence and Autobiography

Abstract: Edward Said's *Out of Place* serves to address the double nature of a person's extraterritoriality in life and in autobiographical texts whose subjects have migrated from their place of origin in the East to the West and define themselves with reference to American culture and politics. The African-Caribbean writer Michelle Cliff, a naturalized American citizen, uses her first two autobiographical novels, *Abeng* (1984) and *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987), to reconnect with her Caribindian past and her native island of Jamaica through stays in the US and England. The Turkish-German writer Feridun Zaimoglu, often labeled the "Malcolm X of German Turks," creates from his extraterritorial existence a new cultural space in *Kanak Sprak* (1995) or *Kopf und Krage* (2001) whose political platform derives from the situation of American minority groups. Edward Said, in turn, provides in *Out of Place* (1999) the biographical data behind his theoretical discussions of extraterritoriality and cultural imperialism and reconceptualizes the 'Orient' from his position as comparative literary critic in New York. All three writers seem to find a place in the genre of autobiography which they remodel commensurate with their extraterritorial existence.

The title of Edward Said's autobiography *Out of Place* serves to accentuate the uncertain national status of many autobiographers as well as the extraterritorial space of the genre of autobiography. The political and legal implications of such an extraterritorial existence point to the hybrid nature of the subject and the genre of autobiography concerned with the representation of a self in a country where the allegiance to a nation state exists on paper only and is constantly contested or challenged. The most distinguished canonical models of such extraterritorial autobiographies, Saint Augustine's *Confessions* (397-8) and Jacques Derrida's *Circonfessions* (1991), span the parameters of extraterritorial autobiography from the fourth century to our time in the Western hemisphere. The cases of the Catholic Church Father of the Middle Ages and that of the deconstructivist critic in the postmodern age define the set of criteria relevant for autobiographers and their narrative medium. Both the medieval and the poststructuralist autobiographer start out in the diaspora of North Africa and move to the centers of learning in the Roman Empire or France where they develop in contact with another culture their own theological or deconstructive thought. Outside of their place of birth they challenge the hierarchies and authorities of empires with new ideas.

In this paper I would like to relate the extraterritorial status of these two major writers to the genre of autobiography in general, but more specifically to autobiographical texts in postcolonial times. In most theories of the three literary genres of drama, poetry and prose, autobiography does not figure and could hence be considered an out-of-place, or lawless genre. In this formal sense, autobiography conforms to the often lawless and out-of-place existence of most postcolonial writers.¹ The recollective formulation of a postcolonial identity seems to require a bicultural context for the construction of a national frame of reference in the same way in which it seems to require a hybrid literary form (see Durczak). Generic and geographical border crossings form the basis of the autobiographical enterprise and represent definitory features of major autobiographical texts. The unfolding of a national identity in autobiographies is hence connected to generic and geographical transgressions and begins outside of one's country of birth.

For this phenomenon I use the term "extraterritorial" not in the strictly legal sense as being beyond local territorial jurisdiction, but to indicate the status of persons resident in a country where their allegiance to a national frame of reference is formulated, contested or challenged. As such, the term is related to the correlative pair of deterritorialization and reterritorialization used in postcolonial criticism to refer to an uprooted existence, a subject-in-transit (Ghosh-Schellhorn 1998). This transgressive or outlandish existence, not subject to the laws of their environment, also applies to the laws of the autobiographical genre. My initial pair of autobiographers, Saint Augustine and Jacques Derrida, as well as their autobiographies, *Confessions* and its poststructuralist echo *Circonfessions*, stand for such transgressive and outlandish self-writing with a focus on the confessional mode (see Spivak).

I would like to address this double nature of extraterritoriality in autobiographical texts whose subjects have migrated from their place of origin in the East to the West and define themselves with reference to American culture and politics. My three examples of contemporary postcolonial writers are the African-Caribbean writer Michelle Cliff, the Palestinian-American critic Edward Said and the German-Turkish writer Feridun Zaimoglu. The forced immigration of Africans as slaves to the Caribbean, consciously evoked as a precursor to Michelle Cliff's own migration to the US and to Europe, is seen in analogy to the voluntary immigration of intellectuals from the Arab world to the United States and the invited immigration of Turkish guest workers to Germany for Zaimoglu. All three writers take up the topic of their translocation at different points in their careers in autobiographical works whose common fate is captured in the title of Said's autobiography *Out of Place*.

For the Jamaican-born African-Caribbean writer Michelle Cliff, out of place has a twofold meaning: from her Jamaican perspective it refers to her African ancestors, who were brought to the New World, as well as to her pre-Columbian

¹ See Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, who call all of American writing 'postcolonial' (1989 *passim*). Mary Rowlandson, Benjamin Franklin, Gertrude Stein, or the authors of slave narratives are cases in point (see Hornung 1995).

ancestry, the Arowak and Carib Indians resident in the island; from her American perspective it refers to her departure from Jamaica, her residence and eventual citizenship in the United States of America. This extraterritorial position is the topic of most of her works, the early poetry, essays, and especially the first two autobiographical novels linked by the same protagonist Clare Savage. Both *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven* follow closely the autobiographical script of Michelle Cliff's own migration from the Caribbean island to the North American continent and occasional visits to the motherland Great Britain.

The trajectory of Clare Savage's journey is the structural net of the narrative and situates the autobiographical persona in the New York area from which all events of the life-story must be seen. The extraterritorial state of existence motivates the arrangement of the scenes in the textual rendition. Apparently in compensation for the loss of the land and of her own African-Caribbean self which the colonizers "taught her to despise" (Cliff 1980), she revisits in recollective imagination the Jamaica of her childhood days spent between school in the city and vacations on her grandmother's farm in the country. In a double move, this story reconnects the autobiographical self with the genealogy of her family and the history of her native island. Both the personal past and Jamaica's geographical past are contained in the choice of her name: Clare Savage. It clearly refers to the hybridity of her heritage as a descendant of white Jamaicans, African slaves and the native tribes of the Arowaks and Carib Indians. History here is not so much an aspect of time but rather one of geography (see Boelhower). Cliff addresses this aspect in her poem "Obsolete Geography" and her volume of essays *The Land of Look Behind* (1985). These textual reconstructions with her native land empower Cliff in her powerless extraterritorial position in the United States.

Her short story "Monster," collected in *The Store of a Million Items*, relates an episode from the narrator-protagonist's childhood in New York after having moved there with her family from Jamaica: "We live in America, as we will always call it, but are children of the Empire. St. George is our patron, his cross our standard. We are triangular people, our feet on three islands" (Cliff 1998, 22). The weakness of her subject position emerges behind the nautical term of triangulation. While America and the British Empire are mentioned by name in the story, the third component, or the third island, her native Jamaica, is left out as an empty space, only present under the umbrella term of the British Empire. Her Jamaican self is covered over by the former colonial authority and the present American host society which has become the new commercial colonizer in the Caribbean.

The recollection of her native Caribbean past in *Abeng*, the history of the rebellious Maroons, who fled into the interior of the land to organize their opposition to the colonizers, and their indigenous means of communication by the sound of Abeng (African for conch shell) which "the Maroon armies [used] to pass their messages and reach one another" (Cliff 1984, epitaph) endow the autobiographical self with a rebellious spirit fuelled in the extraterritorial existence. This becomes the topic of the sequel *No Telephone to Heaven*.

Like *Abeng*, *No Telephone to Heaven* draws on the power of memory shared by the indigenous people on and off the island. The geographical locations are the sites of memory which exist in lieu of and besides the historiography of the colonizers (see Hebel 2003). The recent reevaluation of memory in postcolonial literature offsets Hegel's long-held depreciative use of memory, which he attributes to premodern peoples of Asia, Africa and the Americas as a sign of inferiority because they have no history and have not yet attained self-consciousness (Klein 2000, 127). Today Hegel's devaluation of memory is counteracted by the more modern re-enchantment with memory. Klein relates this mysterious aspect of memory, on the one hand, to a "weak appropriation of Freudian language to valorize sentimental autobiography," on the other hand, to the postmodern appeal to the ineffable, the excess, the unsayable, in short the avant-garde (136). Hegel's hegemonic association of memory with premodern peoples in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, the therapeutic function of autobiographical discourses, and postmodern practices conform with Werner Sollors's idea that the emergence of memory as a category of academic discourse is a healthy result of decolonization: "What is called 'memory' (and Nora's *lieux de mémoire*) may become a form of counterhistory that challenges the false generalizations in exclusionary 'History'" (qtd. in Fabre and O'Meally 1994, 7-8). More specifically, Thomas Laqueur specifies in his "Introduction" to the special issue of *Representations* "Grounds for Remembering" that memory is "not primarily about monuments, memorial practices, pictures, or texts but about space, often empty space that bears little sign of the history it has witnessed" (Laqueur 2000, 1).

Two such grounds of memory constitute significant moments in *No Telephone to Heaven* (see Agosto 1999). The first one is Clare Savage's encounter with the Statue of Pocahontas. Her wish to find and explore her "mother country" (Cliff 1989, 109) had led her from the United States of America to England where at the end of her stay the sight of the statue of Pocahontas on the graveyard of Gravesend in Kent turns into an almost classic site of memory which sets off the process of identification with her native Jamaica. The example of the seventeenth-century Native American woman helps Clare to rediscover her ethnicity and her origin (see Birkle). She begins to use the Jamaican creole language and acknowledges – for the first time – the "African, English, Carib" in her (Cliff 1989, 189), the association with the original inhabitants of the island the Carib Indians, with African slaves, and the resistance to the English colonialists. All of these ancestral lines converge in her grandmother's house on the island, the final destination of her return to the roots. In her essay "Clare Savage as a Crossroads Character," Michelle Cliff emphasizes the importance of this reconnection as a description of Clare's "fragmentation as well as her movement toward homeland and wholeness" (Cliff 1990, 265). The process of triangulation will eventually lead her back to her grandmother's home as the ur-site of memory.

It is the grandmother's home in Jamaica which forms a kind of gravitational center, the third point in Cliff's triangular writing. This house, where Clare Savage spent her holidays as a school-child, is connected with happiness and her grand-

mother's unwritten tradition. It is not surprising that Cliff's writing consciously and unconsciously circles back to this place of home, away from home. In line with the importance of the geographical location, the memory of the house is, however, not temporal but spatial and emotional. Thus the short story "Monster," set in New York, begins with a reference to her native Jamaica: "My Grandmother's house. Small. In the middle of nowhere. The heart of the country, as she is the heart of the country. Mountainous, dark, fertile" (Cliff 1998, 20). Her Grandmother is inseparably linked to the island and to the spatial dimensions of the island which Cliff evokes programmatically at the beginning of the novel *Abeng*: "The island rose and sank. Twice. During periods in which history was recorded by indentations on rock and shell" (1984, 3). This confirms Cliff's idea of "Obsolete Geography" as a reference to pre-colonial times in the Caribbean before the advent of Christopher Columbus, to the time of the Carib and Arawak Indians on the island. Rejecting her father's model of the "white negro" (Cliff 1985, 62), she reconnects with the matrilinear, the African part of her family.

Clare slithered beneath her grandmother's house drawing her head through widow's webs, pulling herself through the hard black leavings of rats, hands scraping against fragments of shells embedded in the ground, which signaled the explosive birth of the island. [...] Under this house she found solace from the rest of the company. She found her mother's things from childhood – schoolbooks, thread-spool dollies, vehicles with wheels of shoe-polish tins. Her mother's schoolbooks – history, literature, geography – opened their wormed pages to a former world. Things, beings, existed in their rightful place – destiny, order were honored. God's impatient hand feared. Clare wiped the remains of the scorpion from the book and gathered her mother's girlhood into a crocus sack. Working a broad piece of shell free of earth, she began to scrape the packed ground. (Cliff 1989, 199-200)

This scene of the emotional reconnection with the ground of her Jamaican island prefigures the eventual reunification with the landscape when Clare as a member of a party of revolutionaries is gunned down by military forces and metaphorically melts into the ground.

For Edward Said, the situation of extraterritoriality presents itself from an entirely different point of view. The writing of his autobiography *Out of Place* in 1994 is motivated – as in many autobiographies – by his fear of death after having been diagnosed with leukemia. Contrary to Michelle Cliff, who started her career as a young writer with autobiographical texts, Said's life-story comes at the height of an internationally acclaimed career as a Palestinian intellectual teaching comparative literature at Columbia University in New York and it provides in his own words "a record of an essentially lost or forgotten world [...] a subjective account of the life I lived in the Arab world, where I was born and spent my formative years, and in the United States, where I went to school, college, and university" (1999, ix). The description of the life ranges chronologically from his birth in Jerusalem in 1935 to the departure for America in 1951 and his graduation from Harvard University in 1962. But the life in the Middle East is framed more decisively by the gravity of two political events: the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the Six Days War in 1967. While the first date meant the displace-

ment of Said's family from Jerusalem and their move to Cairo in Egypt and subsequent trips between Egypt and their summer home Dhour in Lebanon, the latter stands for Said's "shock of the total Arab defeat" by the Israeli army (268). In-between these dates Said's political consciousness awakens. Thus his first trip to the United States in 1948 coincides with the fall of Palestine, and he gradually realizes President Truman's "crucial part in handing Palestine over to the Zionists" (141). At the time of the Suez crisis he volunteers "to write a column about the war from the Arab point of view for the [Princeton] university newspaper" which represents his "first piece of political writing" (279).

The relatively late political awareness of the Arab point of view must be attributed to a phenomenon for which Said has become famous, namely "orientalism." In the following I will argue that *Out of Place* per se is an extraterritorial act and reproduces in its representation the attitude of the West toward the Orient described and analyzed in *Orientalism*. Thus the Orient appears as a form of imagined geography of European colonizers followed by a cultural hegemony over the Arab world which operates in the world of discourse distant from and exterior to the material reality of the Orient. In the last few decades the European dominance has shifted to the United States: "Orientalism hence means the exercise of Euro-Atlantic power over the Orient" (1979, 5 *et passim*).

Said's autobiography documents this state of affair throughout and reveals in the recollection of his early years in the Middle East a pattern of orientalism. His early life, upbringing and education as a Christian Arab conform to the model of European colonizers, the English in Palestine and Egypt, the French in the Lebanon. In retrospect he reflects upon the discomfort about his name, a Christian first name in memory of the English prince Edward and the Palestinian surname Said. The photographs inserted in the book show all members of the family dressed in Western style. The occasional Palestinian garments appear as folkloristic costumes. In addition to the Anglophile attitude on his mother's side he inherits his father's American citizenship given to him after his service in the American army during WWI. The orientalizing aspect is also reflected in the confusion about his first language or mother tongue. Only late in life he acquires a more intimate familiarity with the Arab language: "Only now can I overcome my alienation from Arabic caused by education and exile and take pleasure in it" (198). The dislocation of his family and friends in 1948 (see 114), the first time of his experience of being out of place, could also be a motivation for the adoption of a lingua franca like English which is not bound to a specific area of national allegiance.

Along this line of an out-of-place existence and an extraterritorial status, it seems to be logical that the English-language training as a non-native transnational form of communication finds its equivalent in Said's love of classical music. Next to the motif of displacement and alienation, music represents a sort of a leitmotif in *Out of Place* and in Edward Said's life. Among the most important experiences in his young life count the performances of the Berlin Symphony Orchestra under the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler in Cairo. This form of abstract communication

with its transnational reach spans Said's personal and professional life (see Barenboim and Said 2002).

From this perspective it is also not surprising that the premed student at Princeton eventually chooses the field of the humanities, the world of the mind over matter. Not belonging to a specific home or being out of place corresponds to the choice of comparative literature, the modulation between different languages and literatures. This comparative and practically transnational interest does however have political consequences. In *Orientalism* Said distinguishes between the conventional assumption of pure knowledge and the political nature of the humanities (5). His dissertation at Harvard on "Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography" (1966), which is the endpoint of his own autobiography, is an example of postcolonial criticism *avant la lettre*. Like Joseph Conrad before him, Edward Said moves from the East to the West embracing its culture and language which however can not replace the origin. "Along with language, it is geography – especially in the displaced form of departures, arrival, farewells, exile, nostalgia, homesickness, belonging, and travel itself – that is at the core of my memories of those early years," he writes in the preface to *Out of Place* (xii). From the perspective of his autobiography, which now after his death appears to be his legacy, all of his critical work has an autobiographical ring to it. In the Conradian sense, autobiography is the secret sharer of his life work. When he characterizes the work of Western orientalists in *Orientalism* as lacking representative quality and being defined by exteriority, this also seems to pertain to his own status of extraterritoriality:

To me, nothing more painful and paradoxically sought after characterizes my life than the many displacements from countries, cities, abodes, languages, environments that have kept me in motion all these years. (1999, 217)

Extraterritoriality of a different kind determines the lives of Turkish citizens living in Germany. As a consequence of the German economic miracle ("Wirtschaftswunder"), Turkish people among many other South and East European nations were invited to come to Germany and join the work force in the 1960s. To the surprise of German authorities, these guest workers did not return to their native countries but most of them stayed on. It is the second, and even more so the third generation of former Turkish guest workers who have passed the German educational system requesting their place as Germans of Turkish descent within German society. Their acceptance or integration into German society meets with many difficulties which mostly derive from the allegedly non-European provenance of Turks who as Muslims come from outside of the Christian hemisphere and hence are not considered to be members of European civilization.² While many of these Turkish citizens feel out of place in Germany, they experience a similar form of displacement during visits with their relatives in Turkey.

This is the background of the German-Turkish writer Feridun Zaimoglu, who was born in Anatolia in 1964 and came as a child with his parents to Germany

² Cf. the present debate about Turkey's application to become a member state of the European Community.

where he has lived for over thirty years. After passing the German gymnasium, he has become the spokesperson for the generation of Turkish people in Germany who have a Turkish passport but are denied German citizenship.³ His first publications can be regarded as collective autobiographies of displaced people in search of a cultural home. This cultural home is a defiance of the German discriminatory perception of Turks who – because of their often partial competence of the German language – are called *kanak*⁴ – a composite derogatory term used for people from remote and “backward places.” In a counteractive move, Zaimoglu embraces the special language of the socially, culturally and linguistically displaced young Turkish people in Germany which he calls “Kanak Sprak” in order to make a literary and political statement (Zaimoglu 2000, 2001, 2002). Like the Austrian writer Peter Handke, who in his rebellious mode as a young writer shocked the literary establishment of German writers and readers after the war with his famous *Publikumsbeschimpfung* (insulting the audience in words not considered proper literary language), Zaimoglu wants to elevate the language of German Turkish people to a literary status and reveals its creative potential. In a series of interviews, he reproduces curses and four-letter words as well as pejorative names for the Turks and their different language and culture in order to uncover the discriminating attitude of Germans and to turn their discrimination against themselves. The politically not correct terminology becomes a strategy of offense, which caused the Social Democratic Prime Minister of the State of Schleswig-Holstein, Heide Simonis, to call Zaimoglu a “Schnapsnase” (coll. for drunkard) during a nationally broadcast TV Talkshow (1998; see also Röttger 2003).

This kind of unintentional deconstruction of the politically correct movement, often preached but not practiced by its liberal proponents, resembles the situation of minority groups discriminated against in the USA, especially African Americans and Native Americans. Against the agenda and myth of a seemingly homogeneous culture, called “Leitkultur” in Germany, Turkish Germans set the reality of a multi-ethnic society which questions and undermines the dominance of white culture. It is no coincidence that most of the young Turkish Germans interviewed by Zaimoglu evoke the discrimination and suffering of African Americans or Native Americans with whom they identify as German “niggers” or “kanaks.” The influential liberal weekly *Die Zeit* consequently called Feridun Zaimoglu the “Malcom X of German Turks” (Lottmann 1997, 88). In his creative re-writing of these interviews as a collective autobiography Zaimoglu time and again reconnects his cause with similar emancipatory efforts in the world. Thus he sees in his young unwanted and displaced compatriots the real representatives of the “Generation X” who were denied individualization and ontogenesis (Zaimoglu 2000, 13). The collective group identification has links to artistic efforts in folklore and music as part of the creolization of Western cities and a subsequent

³ A new law granting dual citizenship to the children of immigrants is in effect, but at age 18 they have to decide and choose one passport over the other.

⁴ The term “Kanak” is derived from Kanaka, originally a native of the South Sea islands, and used depreciatively for guest workers, especially Turks.

restructuring of their societies. Today, the impact of African-American rap music on the very popular Turkish-German Rap, enriched with elements of Oriental music, represents one of the most creative and politically effective means of creating a different German culture (see Ickstadt 1999). Both he himself as a successful German writer as well as his sister as an actress have overcome their parents' underdog existence. Their conscious decision to stay in Germany was based on their out-of-place existence which provided them with a special basis for their part in the creation of a multi-ethnic society in Germany in which elements of the East and the West meet (see Zaimoglu 2001, 21). One of the latest examples of this new kind of autobiographical achievement for re-making culture from an extraterritorial position is the film *Gegen die Wand* (Against the Wall) by the Turkish-German director Fatih Akim which won the first prize at the international film festival Berlinale in 2004. Both the director and his actress enact their own out-of-place existence and stress the creative potential derived from it.

Returning to my initial pair of extraterritorial autobiographers, Saint Augustine and Derrida, I would like to conclude that they stand for a form of life and a form of writing which is perennial but particularly prominent in our own time. The formulations and presentations of original ideas in the autobiographical works discussed here were contingent upon their authors' out-of-place existence and the use of an out-of-place genre, inhabiting multiple worlds (see Huddart and Hornung 1997, 1998a and 1998b). Rather than deploring this extraterritorial state of affairs in life and autobiography, we should recognize the cultural achievements derived from it. This recognition allows Michelle Cliff to avoid her protagonist's self-destructive definition of a reunification with her native Jamaica, it helps Feridun Zaimoglu to contribute to the emergence of a new culture in Germany and it confirms Edward Said's wisdom formulated at the very end of his autobiography: "With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place" (295).

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Humanistic Criticism, Prophetic Pragmatism, and the Question of Antifoundationalism – Remarks on Edward Said and Cornel West

Abstract: One of the most important aspects of Edward Said's literary and cultural theory is undoubtedly that he always attempted to return criticism to the world. In spite of numerous attacks on worldly theorizing by proponents of formalist criticism, it seems that the notion of a worldly and oppositional criticism still is crucial for leftist literary and cultural theory. However, this is not enough. This article wants to direct attention to the significance of what could be termed an antifoundationalist and anti-essentialist worldly and oppositional leftist criticism. It is argued that while Said has prepared the ground for the development of a sophisticated worldly criticism, the black philosopher and cultural critic Cornel West illustrates even more clearly the complexity and suggestiveness of the phrase antifoundationalist worldly criticism. The pragmatist West has understood the lessons of antifoundationalism and antirealism, yet at the same time he makes clear that a radicalization of neopragmatist antifoundationalism is less productive than dialectically using it as a kind of corrective of still prevailing vulgarizations of oppositional theory. While it is argued that both versions of worldly and oppositional criticism, Said's as well as West's, are valuable and useful with regard to contemporary counterhegemonic theory, this article also underscores that a sophisticated worldly criticism ought to prove that it is capable of entering into a dialogue with other theoretical approaches.

After the prevalence of theory on the academic and intellectual scene in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, American neopragmatists and antifoundationalists like Stanley Fish and Richard Rorty have argued for a move 'against theory.' This strong reaction against theory is only natural in view of the theory boom of the last three decades, but unfortunately it has produced only a few interesting and fruitful results. The Rortyan demand that we should move against theory and toward narrative (or conversation or even sentimental storytelling), and Fish's insight that we simply do not need theory since everything we need is offered by the world of practice, are provocative and stimulating gestures, but they do not adequately describe the potential and the complexity of what they vehemently reject. Fish has underscored numerous times that while antifoundationalism teaches us a lot, we should not expect too much of it. Above all, we are not supposed to expect any consequences of it. Antifoundationalism is a thesis about how epistemological foundations emerge; it tells a story in which it becomes obvious that those foundations are not simply out there, something natural, transhistori-

cal, and neutral waiting to be found, but that they have been established by rhetorical persuasion. Foundations are part of our final vocabularies, they are cultural and contextual since they are made by us language-users (see Schulenberg 2003). Anti-foundationalism as an account of how we got our beliefs, as a new belief about beliefs, will never free us from these beliefs or cause us to question them. Our practice is always already principled, and theory thus has to remain without consequences. It is simply not needed. For our purposes, it is crucial to realize that Fish declares theory an impossible project, a nonstarter, a project which will never succeed. He defines theory as an attempt to govern practice. There are two senses in which theory tries to do this. First, it attempts to *guide* practice from a position above or outside it, that is, it wishes to define itself as transcendental and transhistorical. Second, theory tries

to *reform* practice by neutralizing interest, by substituting for the parochial perspective of some local or partisan point of view the perspective of a general rationality to which the individual subordinates his contextually conditioned opinions and beliefs. (Fish 1989, 319)

Fish, as a localist without principles and a lover of rules of thumb, advances the argument that the project of theory is doomed from the start.

Considering that even Derridean deconstruction has become somewhat more 'worldly' since the early 1990s, the question arises as to whether this move toward worldliness has more positive than negative consequences for a counter-hegemonic literary and cultural criticism. In this article, I shall argue that the notion of a worldly and oppositional criticism still is crucial for leftist literary and cultural theory. However, this is not enough. A worldly and oppositional literary and cultural criticism has not necessarily to appear as somewhat old-fashioned or even obsolete, but it can also present itself as antifoundationalist and antiessentialist. Thus, in my article I want to underscore the significance of what could be termed an antifoundationalist and antiessentialist worldly and oppositional leftist criticism.

First, I shall discuss Said's understanding of the function of a worldly and oppositional criticism, and of humanistic criticism in general. It is crucial to recognize that I read Said as a leftist critic. Always a self-proclaimed conservative as far as his literary and cultural tastes were concerned, Said's contention was that criticism ought to be understood as an act of political and social engagement. I think of Said as a critic on the Left not because he presented himself as a Marxist, a socialist, an adherent of Communism, a defender of class politics, or as someone who sought to abolish the late-capitalist system in its entirety – all this was of course completely alien to him. However, there are only a few thinkers who have reflected upon the crucial nature of notions such as resistance, opposition, history, hope, antithetical knowledge, dialectical criticism, demystification, noncoercive knowledge, future change, and the idea of critique as a technique of trouble, all central to leftist thinking, with the same rigor and tension-ridden complexity as Said. In addition, in an almost Adornian manner, Said always maintained that every theoretical approach had to be self-critical, that is, he warned against vul-

garizations of oppositional thinking and thereby strengthened it. As a critic influenced by Gramsci, Lukács, Adorno, Chomsky, and Williams, he did this not as a conservative, a moderate liberal, or a traditional humanist (in the sense of someone exclusively governed by the ideas of philological humanists and Romance scholars such as Erich Auerbach, Leo Spitzer, and Ernst Robert Curtius), but as someone who never unequivocally identified himself with leftist thought, yet who always called attention to the fact that his position was more towards the Left than the Right. Hence, one purpose of this article is to argue that Said's literary and cultural criticism may have been more important for the formation of leftist cultural criticism than hitherto acknowledged.

While Said partly demonstrates the impact of antifoundationalism on a worldly kind of theorizing, I shall argue in the second part that Cornel West's version of pragmatism illustrates even more clearly the complexity and suggestiveness of the phrase antifoundationalist worldly criticism. In other words, in his best texts, West goes further than Said in his thinking. West is a philosopher and cultural critic who is influenced by pragmatism and postanalytic philosophy and who has therefore learned the lessons of antifoundationalism, antiessentialism, anti-representationalism, and antirealism, yet at the same time he makes clear that a radicalization of neopragmatist antifoundationalism is less productive than using it dialectically as a kind of indispensable corrective of still prevailing vulgarizations of oppositional theory.

What Edward Said teaches us, among other things, is that any kind of dogmatic and monologic theory has to be radically questioned. This also applies to worldly criticism, of course. It seems that the idea of a worldly and oppositional criticism sometimes appears as somewhat clumsy, inelegant, or anemic because it is often associated with materialist thinking in its most vulgar form (think of Georg Lukács' so-called middle period in this context). The program of a worldly criticism has survived various versions of formalist critique, from New Criticism and structuralism to de Manian deconstruction and the most esoteric poststructuralisms, but I think for it to remain an effective force in the field of contemporary theory it has to prove that it is capable of entering into a dialogue with other theoretical approaches. For that reason, I want to contribute to the elucidation of that dialogue by discussing the possibility of a conceptual mediation between a worldly and oppositional leftist criticism and neopragmatist antifoundationalism.

1. Worldly Gestures – Edward Said's Oppositional Criticism

From *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983) to *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994) and *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004), the question of the function of criticism, and of the worldliness of the critic or public intellectual, was one of Edward Said's primary concerns. The best way to approach his understanding of the function of criticism is surely by discussing his most important theoretical text, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. In this collection of essays

Said develops his notion of a worldly and oppositional criticism. It is not easy to specify Said's vantage point in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* since he fights on numerous fronts. He argues against the idea of critical noninterference and a philosophy of pure textuality. In other words, he attacks any kind of formalist, functionalist and technical criticism which utterly ignores political and social responsibility. Moreover, he underscores the depoliticization of French poststructuralism in American deconstruction (e.g., de Man), and he maintains that leftist literary studies in the U.S. are no longer oppositional but on the contrary tend to confirm prevailing values, structures, and institutions. Following Said, a clear break can be detected between the American radical movement that ended with the McCarthy era, for which the passionate rhetoric and decidedly leftist political position governing F.O. Matthiessen's "The Responsibilities of the Critic" was typical, and the obvious incapability, or rather unwillingness, of contemporary critics to develop an oppositional, worldly, and revisionist critique of American capitalist culture. However, not only does he criticize the American 'new New Criticism' for its shortcomings and inadequacies, he also argues against the notorious hypostatizations of Foucault and Derrida: power and writing/textuality.

At the end of his discussion of Derrida's texts in "Criticism Between Culture and System," Said states: "My interest is to reinvest critical discourse with something more than contemplative effort or an appreciative technical reading method for texts as undecidable objects." On a more general level he explicates: "Criticism cannot assume that its province is merely the text, not even the great literary text. It must see itself, with other discourse, inhabiting a much contested cultural space" (Said 1983, 224 and 225). From this it already becomes obvious that the essays collected in *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, which were written from 1969 to 1981, should be seen as an attempt at a redefinition of the role, the forms, and the tasks of literary and cultural criticism. Undoubtedly, this is a truly demanding project. In order to tackle the issue of criticism's function and role, Said of course cannot avoid the question of the status of theory. I argued in my introduction that Stanley Fish claims that theory is simply not needed since our practice is always already principled and that the project of theory is a non-starter because its goals are illusory. In contrast, Said does not subscribe to this radical neopragmatist dismissal of theory.

Concerning his attitude toward theory, his essay "Traveling Theory" is particularly valuable. Said elucidates his notion of traveling theory by discussing Georg Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) and Lucien Goldmann's *Le Dieu caché* (1955), as well as texts by Raymond Williams and Michel Foucault. On Said's account, Lukács' early and most important text illuminates what happens when consciousness moves from the capitalist world of reified objects into the world of theory. That is, when it leaves behind the world of isolated empirical givens, it frees itself from the power of capitalist reification and commodification, and thereby starts comprehending history and society as a whole. This also concerns the centrality of the concept of totality for Lukács' text, of

course (think of Fredric Jameson's reading of Lukács in this context). For our purposes, however, it is crucial to recognize that Said interprets this refusal of consciousness to be confined to the reified and fragmented world of objects as an "insurrectionary act." The will and the desire to go beyond empiricity, to leave the world of practice and its distortions, and to seek the plane of theory is "an act of political insurgency." Said writes: "To attain to theory is to threaten reification, as well as the entire bourgeois system on which reification depends, with destruction" (Said 1983, 233). As regards the early Lukács, and Said's suggestions are pertinent here, the act of theorizing can be termed an act of resistance.

Theory for Lukács "was what consciousness produced, not as an avoidance of reality but as a revolutionary will completely committed to worldliness and change" (Said 1983, 234). This commitment to worldliness and change is precisely what Said was missing in the American theoretical landscape of the 1980s, and what he was desperately missing with regard to the state of literary and cultural criticism in general. It is important to understand that Said does not advocate abstract and totalizing theory in this essay (grand theory as the straw man of many neopragmatists), but that he, on the contrary, underlines that "theory must never lose touch with its origins in politics, society, and economy" and that it moreover ought to be regarded as "a response to a specific social and historical situation" (235 and 237). In contrast to a materialist theorist such as Jameson, who often comes close to presenting himself as a paradigmatic grand theorist, Said, not identifying himself as a Marxist, draws attention to what could be called a certain theoretical modesty (on Jameson, cf. Schulenberg 2001). Although "we certainly need theory," he emphasizes "that there is no theory capable of covering, closing off, predicting all the situations in which it might be useful." Theory, in other words, "can never be complete" (Said 1983, 241). Differentiating between theory and critical consciousness, Said argues that the latter is synonymous with an awareness of the resistances to theory. Critical consciousness prevents theory from losing contact with the time and place from which it emerges, it situates theory, historicizes it, and measures its effectiveness and limitations with regard to certain situations and tasks. As far as the job of the worldly critic is concerned, Said explicitly states that this is

to provide resistances to theory, to open it up toward historical reality, toward society, toward human needs and interests, to point up those concrete instances drawn from everyday reality that lie outside or just beyond the interpretive area necessarily designated in advance and thereafter circumscribed by every theory. (242)

Instead of clinging to basic dichotomies such as foundational vs. non-foundational theory, Said seeks to demarcate a discursive space which can function as a kind of mediation between theory and practice. Theory is necessary, but theoretical closure (system-building as an extreme form) has to be anathematized. Said radically historicizes theory, opens it up toward historical reality and contingency, and thereby illustrates that theory, *pace* Fish, Walter Benn Michaels, and Steven Knapp, does not always necessarily intend to govern and dominate practice from an external position but that it can also present itself, in a Westian manner, as re-

visible, provisional, fallible, and heuristic (see Knapp and Michaels 1985). In spite of the fact that Said was not influenced by antifoundationalism, antiessentialism, antirepresentationalism, or antirealism to the same degree as Cornel West, their gesture of holding on to theory and their simultaneous awareness of its productive limitations are similar. In addition, both return the text of criticism to the world by demonstrating its situatedness and by stressing that the critic has to operate within various networks of worldly affiliations, just like the literary text. Criticism, as Said and West make clear, is an act of political and social engagement that takes place *in* the world and that tries to prepare the ground for future change.

In the context of his discussion and critique of Foucault's somewhat excessive and partly undifferentiated use of the term *pouvoir*, Said offers an interesting opportunity to contrast his worldly criticism with Fish's thought. Whereas Fish holds that we are governed by our interpretive communities or systems of intelligibility, and that we are incapable of reaching an outside to these systems with their rigid norms and standards, Said repeatedly underscores in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* that the theorizing of resistance and difference, that is, the allowance for counterhegemony, is possible because there *is* such an outside. Leftist worldly and oppositional criticism needs to demarcate precisely this outside to hegemonic systems in order to articulate its notion of resistance and its desire for change. Said points out:

In human history there is always something beyond the reach of dominating systems, no matter how deeply they saturate society, and this is obviously what makes change possible, limits power in Foucault's sense, and hobbles the theory of that power. (246-7)

This indicates that Said's oppositional criticism seeks to revitalize concepts such as resistance, social change, and hope (in a non-Rortyan sense) in order to initiate the resuscitation of leftist critique in the U.S. and late capitalism in general. Resistance, for instance, is "a matter of central relevance" to his argument in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (27; cf. also Said 1993, 252-65 and 288-340). In this context, it is interesting to note that the act, and theorizing, of resistance is also an important aspect of *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, where Said elaborates on the fact that his version of a worldly and oppositional humanism cannot be imagined without the concept of resistance (see Said 2004, 70-8). It is crucial to consider the status of my suggestions: I am not primarily asking whether Said's notions of (local) resistance and social change ought to be considered as potentially effective means of a radical cultural politics. Also, I am not elaborating on theory's 'real' chances of connecting with and opening up toward historical reality and society. It goes without saying that these are incredibly complex questions that ask for book-length studies. For my purposes in this article, I simply wish to call attention to Said's gesture of holding on to the venerable concepts of resistance, hope, and social change. This gesture, within a dialogical, nondogmatic, and dialectical theoretical framework, is still of importance, I propose, with respect to the contemporary situation of theory in the U.S. One

should also think of the interchanges between the fields of American Studies, postcolonial studies, and transnational cultural studies in this context (cf. Rowe 2004). The aforementioned gesture could be seen as a common point of reference for these fields.

Said's understanding of worldly criticism becomes especially obvious in the first two essays in *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: "Secular Criticism" and "The World, the Text, and the Critic." He repeatedly underscores the literary text's worldliness and circumstantiality, as well as its historical embeddedness and contingency. All this is incorporated in the text. In other words, "texts have ways of existing that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society – in short, they are in the world, and hence worldly" (Said 1983, 35). Said maintains that one must avoid isolating literature and literary studies from the world, and that one instead ought to accentuate the materiality of those strands which link the literary text to society, author, culture, and historical circumstances. Instead of focusing on the text's undecidability, self-referentiality, its allegedly self-reflective and autotelic nature, the critic is supposed to recreate or reconstruct the historical, institutional, and social circumstances from which the text arose. Strongly influenced by Raymond Williams' version of cultural materialism (cf. 177), Said's contention is that literary texts, in their worldliness, are, to a certain degree, "events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted" (4). Regarding the worldliness of the literary text, the beginning of "Secular Criticism" contains a passage which is worth quoting in full length since it nicely summarizes Said's ontology of the text, as it were:

Each essay in this book affirms the connection between texts and the existential actualities of human life, politics, societies, and events. The realities of power and authority – as well as the resistances offered by men, women, and social movements to institutions, authorities, and orthodoxies – are the realities that make texts possible, that deliver them to their readers, that solicit the attention of critics. I propose that these realities are what should be taken account of by criticism and the critical consciousness. (5)

Undoubtedly, this program for literary studies forces us to historicize the insights and suggestions of the radical historicist Said. While radical formalist deconstruction, pure philology and a philosophy of pure textuality, that is, of critical noninterference, were clearly dominant in the late 1970s and early 1980s, they are no longer of central importance for today's theoretical discourses. Nonetheless, while his opponents have lost their influence and power, I would suggest that the position Said developed by fighting against them is still of value for contemporary counterhegemonic theory. If we follow Said, worldly texts ask for worldly criticism. While he advocates an interdisciplinary and transcultural analysis of the complex links which materially connect texts to authors, societies, histories, and cultures, he is radically opposed to all forms of orthodoxy, authority, dogma, refinement, reverence, noninterference, totalization, system-building, and political quietism. Said, as a leftist theorist who is influenced not so

much by Marxism but rather by Marxists and who is an ironist in a non-Rortyan sense, unequivocally states that his version of literary and cultural criticism, as a secular version of criticism driven by the idea of amateurism, has to be understood as oppositional:

Were I to use one word consistently along with *criticism* (not as a modification but as an emphatic) it would be *oppositional*. If criticism is reducible neither to a doctrine nor to a political position on a particular question, and if it is to be in the world and self-aware simultaneously, then its identity is its difference from other cultural activities and from systems of thought or of method. (29; cf. Said 1994, xvii-xviii, and Denning 2004, 187-91)

There is one crucial point which I would like to call attention to in this context. In view of the above, one could argue, and many (anti-)theorists have done so, that neopragmatism as an (anti-)philosophy of little steps, of small patchwork solutions, temporary stopgaps, and small experimental ways of problem-solving is all we actually need and that we therefore had better stop all this somewhat old-fashioned talk about resistance, counterhegemony, and oppositional criticism. This temptation certainly cannot be ignored. However, although leftist thought needs (neopragmatist) antifoundationalism, it should not get stuck in its radicalization, but should rather strive to go beyond it by dialectically using it as a kind of corrective. What makes Said's literary and cultural criticism valuable for leftist thinking, among other things, is that he radically dismisses vulgarizations and simplifications of left theory and at the same time feels free to hold on to some traditional (humanist) notions of critique. He writes, for instance, that

criticism must think of itself as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse; its social goals are noncoercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom. (Said 1983, 29; cf. Bayoumi and Rubin 2000, 433-5)

Said has prepared the ground for the development of an antifoundationalist worldly criticism or a fallible and antiessentialist humanism. Cornel West, one may insinuate, would subscribe to the Saidian understanding of humanistic criticism without hesitation.

Said's emphasis on the contemporary relevance and future of humanism becomes especially obvious in *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*. In this book, the last one he completed before his death, he contends that it is possible to fashion a different kind of humanism, free of Eurocentrism, nationalism, and feelings of exceptionalism. Said, in a very typical formulation, states that the core of humanism

is the secular notion that the historical world is made by men and women, and not by God, and that it can be understood rationally according to the principle formulated by Vico in *New Science*, that we can really know only what we make or, to put it differently, we can know things according to the way they were made. (Said 2004, 11)

Said sees humanism "as a process of unending disclosure, discovery, self-criticism, and liberation" (21-2). Further, he holds that one ought to attempt to "situat[e] critique at the very heart of humanism," and he maintains that the worldly prac-

tice of humanism should be considered “a technique of trouble” (47 and 77). At the same time, and this leads us to Cornel West’s version of pragmatism, the Vichian Said underscores that one must not try to turn humanism into some kind of neutral science which delivers absolute and transhistorical truths, objective knowledge, and firm certainties. Said, it can be said, urges us to see the link between humanism and fallibilism:

So there is always something radically incomplete, insufficient, provisional, disputable, and arguable about humanistic knowledge that Vico never loses sight of and that, as I said, gives the whole idea of humanism a tragic flaw that is constitutive to it and cannot be removed. (12)

2. Cornel West’s Prophetic Pragmatism, or, Toward an Antifoundationalist Worldly Criticism

In *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, Cornel West’s contention is that the American evasion of philosophy, that is, the pragmatists’ radical critique and evasion of epistemology-centered philosophy, has led to a profound change in the conception of philosophy. Because of this evasion, philosophy has slowly but steadily turned into a kind of cultural criticism in which the meaning of America is continually questioned and debated. What this means is that this swerve away from epistemology or abstract pure philosophy in general has led not to a radical dismissal of philosophy but to its reconception as a form of cultural criticism which is politically engaged and, at least in its Westian version, can be understood as a kind of American leftist critique. By emphasizing the political and moral aspects of American pragmatism, West illustrates that he regards his genealogical account as an explicitly political endeavor. To put it differently, his cultural commentary wants to explain America to itself from a decidedly leftist vantage point. *The American Evasion of Philosophy* is an attempt to resuscitate radical politics in the U.S.

In a Deweyan manner, the radical historicist and fallibilist West rejects a spectator theory of knowledge, the quest for certainty, and the search for immutable foundations, and attempts to contribute to the promotion of an Emersonian culture of creative democracy. It is important to note, however, that West’s neo-pragmatism strives to go beyond the tradition of pragmatism, that is, it builds on the tradition which reaches from Emerson to Rorty and, at the same time, radicalizes it. Combining insights of theorists as varied as Emerson, James, Dewey, Du Bois, Hook, Mills, Niebuhr, and Trilling, West argues that his prophetic pragmatism makes the “political motivation and political substance of the American evasion of philosophy explicit” (West 1989, 213). Four main characteristics of West’s prophetic pragmatism should be mentioned. Firstly, it is a form of cultural and social criticism. Secondly, it sees itself as part of an emancipatory political project and as an emancipatory social experimentalism. Thirdly, it is religiously inspired, that is, strongly influenced by the Christian tradition and by African-American liberation theology (cf. West 2002, 101-12 and 131-47). Hence, it has

a mediating function between Protestant Christianity and leftist romanticism. Finally, it presents itself as a form of tragic thought. Since his early texts, West's blues sensibility has been a crucial aspect of his thinking. Firmly rooted in the tradition of African-American liberation theology and its understanding of suffering, pain, resistance, and struggle, he emphasizes that there is always hope and the possibility of human (collective) agency in the confrontation with the tragic. As a form of "third-wave left romanticism," West's prophetic pragmatism "tempers its utopian impulse with a profound sense of the tragic character of life and history" (West 1989, 228).

However, it does not succumb to this tragic character, but rather presents itself as a philosophy of struggle, a philosophy of praxis – a cultural criticism that draws its strength from an American and African-American tradition of leftist resistance. With respect to the notion of struggle, West points out: "Human struggle sits at the center of prophetic pragmatism, a struggle guided by a democratic and libertarian vision, sustained by moral courage and existential integrity, and tempered by the recognition of human finitude and frailty" (229). As far as the utopian and revolutionary gestures underlying prophetic pragmatism are concerned, West maintains: "It calls for utopian energies and tragic actions, energies and actions that yield permanent and perennial revolutionary, rebellious, and reformist strategies that oppose the status quos of our day" (229). West drives his point home when he concisely explicates that "the praxis of prophetic pragmatism is tragic action with revolutionary intent, usually reformist consequences, and always visionary outlook" (229). The vehemence and intensity of West's sentences remind one of his most radical book to date, *Prophesy Deliverance!: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (1982). Although he speaks of 'reformist consequences' in the last quotation, these passages unequivocally indicate that pragmatism and liberalism do not necessarily have to go hand in hand, that they do not always have to be intimately interwoven. What we read here are not the words of a nonchalant bourgeois pragmatist who desperately tries to rhetorically convince us that we had better refrain from wanting anything other than a late-capitalist liberal bourgeois society. Rather, it becomes repeatedly obvious in his text that West intends to build coalitions that involve various oppositional social movements ranging from racial, ethnic, religious, class, and gender to gay and lesbian movements. Within the theoretical framework of his post-universalistic cosmopolitanism, West attempts to prepare the ground for the coming together of various leftist groups (a discursive space where difference and particularity could be articulated freely).

Many proponents of de Manian deconstruction and many disciples of Fish's version of neopragmatism have advanced the argument that rhetoric goes all the way down. Inevitably, this has affected their understanding of the materiality of praxis. While Said constantly underscored the materiality of the literary text, which differs profoundly from that of de Man, West stresses that his prophetic pragmatism as oppositional cultural criticism desires to be "a material force for individuality and democracy." By this he means "a practice that has some po-

tency and effect or makes a difference in the world” (West 1989, 232). In other words, West refuses to reduce the political to a rhetorical agon and instead constantly forces his readers not to ignore “the irreducible predicament of unique individuals who undergo dread, despair, disillusionment, disease, and death *and* the institutional forms of oppression that dehumanize people” (228). The anti-foundationalist and radical historicist West knows about the importance of rhetoric. Moreover, presumably nobody would think that this lay preacher and frequent lecturer is rhetorically innocent and that he is not well aware of the power of rhetorical persuasion. In contrast to the above-mentioned theorists, West does not hypostatize the power of rhetoric. He, in a sense, proposes a more moderate and worldly version of pragmatism. A conception of pragmatism, that is, which demonstrates the crucial nature of antifoundationalism, antiessentialism, conventionalism, and contextualism, but which refuses to radicalize these concepts to a degree that would render this kind of thinking utterly ineffective in the field of the political. Prophetic pragmatism is critique *and* praxis, theory *and* practice, rhetoric *and* struggle or resistance, and it is the attempt to create adequate mediations between these poles. Sophisticated (anti-)theory, in West’s case, does not preclude the possibility of moral (collective) action, acts of liberation, and gestures of political resistance.

In *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, West Americanizes leftist theory and practice; he seeks “to accent the specificity of American left possibilities” (West 2001, 358). Prophetic pragmatism, as West makes clear, considers itself the culmination of the major American progressive tradition of cultural criticism, and it is shaped by the American intellectual and political situation of the 1980s. Relating prophetic pragmatism’s American roots and the question of postmodern difference, West writes:

Prophetic pragmatism arrives on the scene as a particular American intervention conscious and critical of its roots, and radically historical and political in its outlook. Furthermore, it gives prominence to the plight of those peoples who embody and enact the “postmodern” themes of degraded otherness, subjected alienness, and subaltern marginality, that is, the wretched of the earth (poor peoples of color, women, workers). (West 1989, 237)

Prophetic pragmatism, as mentioned above, wants to contribute to the resuscitation of left politics in the U.S., and it tries to function as a means of empowering formerly marginalized voices in postmodern times. Clearly, it is strongly influenced by European theories such as Marxism, structuralism, discourse analysis, and to a certain extent poststructuralism, but “it remains in the American grain” (239).

It is interesting to see that West uses Richard Rorty’s brand of neopragmatism in order to further outline his own version of prophetic pragmatism (cf. 194-210). By illustrating the alleged weaknesses and inadequacies of Rorty’s thought, West can present his own theory as being capable of plugging these gaps and of driving (neo)pragmatism back to the radical emancipatory potential of Deweyan pragmatism. West’s prophetic pragmatism, in contrast to Rorty’s neopragmatism, does have, or rather strives to have, political, ethical, and social consequences,

and it moreover seeks to connect with black, feminist, single-issue, and third-world oppositional social movements. This means that neopragmatists as prophetic pragmatists should build on the insights of antifoundationalism, historicism, antirealism, and the antimetaphysical gesture of avant-garde (anti-)theory in general

by conjoining them to the best of recent refinements in social theory, cultural criticism, and historiography *and* rooting them in possible social movements or social motion, those with efficacious strategies and tactics for fundamental social change. (210)

Although the themes of social change, (creative) democracy, freedom, and liberation lie at the core of West's cultural and social criticism, he does not advocate the idea that a radical dismissal of theory is necessary in order to reach these goals. He is thus highly critical of Rorty's turn against theory and toward narrative. Rorty's distrust of theory, West contends, is damaging to the idea of pragmatism; equally problematic is his "preoccupation with transient vocabularies" (209). West unequivocally states that pragmatism's antifoundationalism does not necessarily have to entail a resistance to theory. He convincingly differentiates between grand theory and provisional or revisable theories which carefully attempt to analyze differences, alterities, and particularities and which aim at an understanding of experience within a historicist and genealogical framework. Abstract and totalizing theory must be radically criticized, because theory, trying to effect change, ought to be concerned with concrete political and social events. In "Theory, Pragmatism, and Politics," West comments on his attitude toward theory as follows:

On the level of theory, to be against theory *per se* is to be against inquiry into heuristic posits regarding the institutional and individual causes of alterable forms of human misery and human suffering, just as uncritical allegiance to grand theories can blind one from seeing and examining kinds of human oppression. Therefore I adopt strategic attitudes toward the use and deployment of theory, a position more charitable toward grand theory than are the ultratheorists and more suspicious of grand theory than are the grand theorists themselves. (West 1991, 36)

The subversive worldliness of West's thinking marks pragmatism as a discursive space in which theory is given the possibility of attacking nondiscursive operations of power and in which it thus contributes to the development of effective oppositional strategies and tactics. In contrast to Rorty and Fish, it seems, West does not ignore those nondiscursive operations of power ("such as modes of production, state apparatuses, and bureaucratic institutions" (West 1989, 209)). He is too much influenced by Lukács and above all Gramsci to forget about the demands of a philosophy of praxis. Here it would be interesting to ask whether Said would have agreed with West as far as those nondiscursive operations of power are concerned. If one recalls Foucault's influence on Said, primarily in *Orientalism*, one might advance the argument that such a notion of nondiscursivity would have been problematized by the latter. Due to limitations of space, however, this question cannot be discussed in this article. The last sentences of his article "The Limits of Neopragmatism" nicely summarize West's warnings and hopes with regard to contemporary versions of pragmatism:

The tradition of pragmatism is in need of a mode of cultural criticism that keeps track of social misery, solicits and channels moral outrage to alleviate it and projects a future in which the potentialities of ordinary people flourish and flower. The first wave of pragmatism foundered on the rocks of cultural conservatism and corporate liberalism. Its defeat was tragic. Let us not permit the second wave of pragmatism to end as farce. (West 1990, 187)

Especially West's 1980s texts were governed by the attempt to mediate between pragmatism, progressive Marxism, and prophetic Christian thought. Fearing reductionism, premature closure, and intellectual stasis, West showed that leftist theory had to be dialogical, experimental, nondogmatic, and open to changes of purpose and direction. As a neopragmatist, West knows very well that dogmatic and monologic (leftist) theory will never be capable of adequately understanding and conceptually grasping the contingency and historicity of our lives, the fragility of human constructs in general, and the multilayered complexity of our narratives and vocabularies. You need many tools to do this. In the new preface to the twentieth anniversary edition of *Prophesy Deliverance!*, West states that his "self-styled allegiance to American pragmatism and American jazz is first and foremost a commitment to polyphonic inquiry and improvisational conversation." He also underscores that the centrality of dialogue in his texts has always put "a premium on imaginative narratives and dynamic stories that connect subversive memories and inseparable traditions to lived experiences" (West 2002, 8). In the introduction to *The Cornel West Reader*, the mediator, as a storyteller, describes himself as a genuinely modern thinker who "weave[s] disparate narratives in ways that result in novel forms of self-exploration and self-experimentation" (West 1999, xvii). There is indeed a jazz-like quality to the polyphony of voices in West's texts. He wants to organize, or orchestrate, these varied groups/voices so that they all strive after the goal of a multiracial creative democracy. As far as the crucial question of mediation is concerned, it seems that West's insights are somewhat more fruitful than Said's. It does not seem far-fetched to maintain that Said never showed a profound interest in the use of the conceptual instrument of mediation. One reason for this is surely his critical attitude toward Marxism. Another could be that he associated mediation with the process of Hegelian sublation and hence with theoretical closure and system-building. This apparent lack of mediation is one of the central weaknesses of the Saidian theoretical framework. Many elements of his theoretical approach, and this has been repeatedly pointed out, had to remain unmediated.

3. Conclusion

It should have become clear in this article that both versions of worldly criticism, Edward Said's as well as Cornel West's, are still valuable and useful with regard to contemporary left theory. Although West turned into a tame defender of American liberalism in the late 1990s (see West and Unger, *The Future of American Progressivism: An Initiative for Political and Economic Reform*, 1998),

he went further in his thinking than Said in the 1980s. This is due to the fact that as a thinker influenced by pragmatism and postanalytic philosophy, he had understood the lessons of antifoundationalism, antirepresentationalism, and anti-realism, yet at the same time felt the necessity of propagating the idea of a worldly and oppositional criticism. To put this somewhat differently, in his best texts West demonstrates the power and complexity of an antifoundationalist worldly and oppositional criticism. Both Said and West have underlined on several occasions that their worldly criticism is strongly opposed to theoretical closure.

Although the Lukácsian West, in contrast to most of today's non-Marxist theorists, is not willing to radically reject the concept of totality and still has use for a modified understanding of totality, he insists at the same time that his synthesis of various theoretical approaches must not be seen as a gesture of Hegelian closure. Rather, he prefers to speak of "an articulated assemblage of analytical outlooks" which furthers "more morally principled and politically effective forms of action to ameliorate the plight of the wretched of the earth" (West 1991, 36). The term 'bricolage' could be applied to this assemblage if it did not sound a bit too playful. Because we have to realize what we are talking about here – the Westian discursive space where mediation acts is "a *dramatic site* of dialogical contestations and clashing narratives over which blood, sweat, and tears flow" (West 2001, 352). As a Chekhovian Christian, a Pascalian, and a Kierkegaardian, West's attempt at mediation is not only a conceptual, theoretical, and political, but also a deeply existential gesture.

Mediation in West's thought is dialogical, experimental, open-ended, and future-oriented. Further, it is a precarious, constantly endangered, and provisional theoretical endeavor. Mediation in West, in other words, is a genuinely American theoretical activity. In contrast to Jameson, who is a master of mediation but who is also a strong Hegelian, West, it seems, shows us the power of *American mediations*. To be American, following West,

is to be part of a dialogical and democratic operation that grapples with the challenge of being human in an open-ended and experimental manner. Although America is a romantic project in which a paradise, a land of dreams, is fanned and fueled with a religion of vast possibility, it is, more fundamentally, a fragile experiment – precious yet precarious – of dialogical and democratic human endeavor that yields forms of modern self-making and self-creating unprecedented in human history. (West 1999, xviii)

Clearly, this comes close to another version of American exceptionalism. However, West never forgets the dark side of (American) modernity, his vision is a tragic one. But, at the same time, he demonstrates that conceptual mediation between different theories is a crucial component of this fragile experiment which centers on the ideas of self-making, self-creation, self-experimentation, and self-transformation. West does not stop there since his ultimate goal is the establishment of an Emersonian creative democracy. Hence, his ultimate concerns are communal concerns. If one is not willing to accept a neopragmatist radical dismissal of theory, in its Fishian version or in the form of Rorty's private-public split which consigns theory to the realm of our private idiosyncratic fantasies (e.g., the 'En-

vois' section of Derrida's *The Post Card*), one could argue with Said and West that leftist theory is still of central importance in the attempt to achieve this goal of a creative and multiracial democracy. The idea of an antifoundationalist worldly criticism will hopefully play a crucial role in this endeavor in the future.

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HOLGER ROSSOW

Orientalism, Globalism and the Possibility of Alternative Systems of Representation

Abstract: Orientalism and globalism refer to materially founded relations of power and domination and culturally constructed discourses that simultaneously conceal these relations and justify behavioural patterns or specific actions that sustain them. Drawing mainly on Said's notions of representation, the role of the critical intellectual and the question of knowledge, this paper focuses on those aspects of Said's work that either relate more immediately to the current concerns of an increasingly globalised world or are particularly useful methodologically or theoretically to provide a better understanding of the current discourse of globalism. Although globalisation cannot be simply perceived as the latest stage of imperialism, and globalism not as the most recent version of Orientalism, there are "overlapping territories" and "intertwined histories." But there are also new questions and limits of Orientalism that need to be investigated. The main criterion for the consideration of certain aspects is not the centrality to Said's work, but their relevance for the analysis of the hegemonic discourses of globalism and the possibility of producing alternative systems of representation.

The major task [...] is to match the new economic and socio-political dislocations and configurations of our time with the startling realities of human interdependence on a world scale [...] The fact is, we are mixed in with one another in ways that most national systems of education have not dreamed of. To match knowledge in the arts and sciences with these integrative realities is, I believe, the intellectual and cultural challenge of the moment.

Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

When Said wrote this, the diverse processes commonly subsumed under the term globalisation had become widely acknowledged phenomena and the term itself a buzzword in political rhetoric and scholarly discourse. Although Said acknowledged the existence and relevance both of globalising processes and the corresponding discourse of globalism, he did not and, as I will argue, could not take it much further than *within* the framework of Orientalism and imperialism.

It seems advisable to make two preliminary remarks. The first concerns the terminology I am using. In view of the fact that my usage of the term *globalism* is neither generally accepted nor self-explanatory, I would like to give a working definition: Globalism here is understood not to be interchangeable with *global-*

isation but as a system of ideas or a discourse that claims to provide a description and an explanation for the current processes and phenomena commonly subsumed under the term globalisation. The discourse of globalism, however, is not monolithic but rather consists of a number of recurrent core convictions, assumptions and predictions. The following could be given as typical examples: free-market economies necessarily work in the interest of the general public; free trade is a panacea for almost all economic problems; globalisation is a fairly novel phenomenon; the long-term effects of globalisation are positive because, although negative consequences do exist, they are not systemic; the problems and the respective solutions are basically the same for all countries; national governments have lost the power to determine policies in many areas because of pressures and restraints of globalisation; the world is becoming a community (an argument usually accompanied by lip service to global responsibility or as a pretext for interventionist policies); and, finally and perhaps most importantly, changes are unavoidable and quasi-natural – globalisation is not a choice but a reality.

The second preliminary remark is meant to position my own analysis in relation to the work of Edward Said. This paper focuses on those aspects of Said's work that either relate more immediately to the current concerns of an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, or are deemed particularly useful, methodologically or theoretically, to provide a better understanding of the current discourse of globalism. The main criterion for the selection of certain aspects is not the centrality to Said's work but their relevance for the analysis of the hegemonic discourse of globalism and the possibility of producing alternative systems of representation.

The paper concentrates on four closely related aspects that were of major concern for Said throughout his life – the problem of representation, the role of the critical intellectual, the question of knowledge, and the possibility of alternative systems of representation – and relates them to the discourse of globalism. In view of the centrality of the issue of representation in Said's work and in this analysis, I let, wherever possible, Said speak for himself. Some of the quotations are therefore longer than what might be deemed to be appropriate in a different paper.

1. Globalisation or Imperialism, Globalism or Orientalism

It seems to be clear that globalisation can neither be perceived simply as the latest stage of imperialism nor globalism as the most recent version of Orientalism but there are a number of connections and similarities. This becomes particularly apparent if the analysis is focused on what Said describes in his introduction to *Orientalism* as the third meaning of Orientalism: "Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said 1995, 3). Both Orientalism and globalism refer, on the one hand, to materially founded relations of power and domination and, on the other, to culturally constructed discourses that, at least partly, conceal those relations of power and domination and justify behavioural patterns or specific actions that sustain those relations.

The continued intellectual force and practical applicability of Said's critique of Orientalism to important aspects of the contemporary situation are specifically located in those areas that he characterises as "overlapping territories" and "intertwined histories." These are discernible in the manifold historical, structural and discursive continuities between our globalised world and the era of imperialism. It is therefore not surprising that apologists of globalisation tend to play down these continuities and rather emphasize the novelty of the phenomena subsumed under the term globalisation – thus they are de-historicized, de-contextualized and, finally, disconnected. It may be tempting to follow Said's reasoning which seems to consider most of the phenomena that others commonly perceive as globalisation as, basically, a continuation of imperialism or, more specifically, American imperialism. But globalisation also raises new questions and can therefore neither be fully comprehended by Said's concept of Orientalism nor by his notion of American imperialism. It is when the territories no longer overlap and the histories cease to be intertwined that the limits of his critique become visible.

The problematic relationships between, on the one hand, globalisation and imperialism and, on the other, globalism and Orientalism can be addressed on two levels. First, it is necessary to more clearly establish the continuities between the imperial era and current forms of globalisation. Second, the differences between the two phenomena and the new quality of specific aspects of globalisation need to be identified. What seems to be an analytical imperative, however, throws up almost insoluble problems that would require a much more detailed analysis than can be provided here. I can address only two of those questions that require further investigation: first, terminological problems and, second, the historical, structural and discursive continuities and discontinuities between, on the one hand, imperialism and globalisation and, on the other, Orientalism and globalism. This would enable us to more fully appreciate the contemporary opportunities but also the spatial, methodological and conceptual limits of Said's critique of Orientalism.

Any attempt to demarcate imperialism from globalisation almost immediately has to face the fact that both concepts are similarly problematic and often contentious. With regard to globalisation, Nederveen Pieterse, for example, argues that

we may well conceive of globalizations in the plural. Thus in social science there are as many conceptualizations of globalization as there are disciplines. [...] Accordingly, globalization may be understood in terms of an open-ended synthesis of several disciplinary approaches [...]. Another way to conceive of globalizations plural is that there are as many modes of globalization as there are globalizing agents and dynamics or impulses [...]. We can further differentiate between globalization as policy and project [...] or as unintended consequence. (Nederveen Pieterse 1995, 45-4)

It is very difficult to discern any clear notion of globalisation in Said's work. There are, however, scattered references to phenomena, especially in his more recent work, that others might consider to be instances or manifestations of globalisation. The contexts in which Said refers to globalisation differ as much as

the respective meanings he implies. The following examples illustrate this. In an interview in 2000, Said expressed the view that globalisation exacerbates social inequities:

There's been a widening gap between the rich and the poor in Middle East society. Globalization, with its transformation of economies into vast consumer markets for venture capitalism, has made things worse. (Barsamian and Said 2003a, 61)

In an interview in 2001, Said criticised the increasing commodification of information and the negative role of the mass media on the individual consciousness and the oppositional role of intellectuals following that:

The individual consciousness in our age is bombarded, if it isn't also stifled, by vast amounts of organized and packaged information. Its main goal is to generate a kind of accepting, unquestioning, collective passivity. Most of the time we are bombarded with images that ask us to submit to them and in the end buy them, whether through news or commodities or travel or whatever. Everything is packed and up for sale. This is the meaning of the neoliberal market economy, which globalization has foisted on the world, leaving very little room for individual challenge and questioning, whereas large organizations, whether governments or corporations, pursue policies that are virtually blind in many instances, causing widespread environmental destruction, widespread genetic destruction, and the possibility for powerful groups to pursue profit without responsibility. In such a context, the role of the intellectual is to oppose, and I would have thought it an absolutely, perhaps even a desperately needed role. (Barsamian and Said 2003b, 98-9)

Elsewhere in the same interview, Said seems to equate globalisation with the perpetuation of the hegemony of the United States through the fight against terrorism on a global scale:

Since the United States is the only global superpower, has or pretends to have interests everywhere, from China to Europe to southern Africa to Latin America and all of North America, terrorism becomes a handy instrument to perpetuate this hegemony. Terrorism is now viewed as resistance to globalization. That connection has to be made. (Barsamian and Said 2003b, 89-90)

That Said's usage of the term globalisation was neither particularly lucid nor consistent might be explained by the fact that it was not central to most of his literature-based analyses in *Orientalism*, *Culture and Imperialism* or elsewhere. The same, however, obviously cannot be said about the term imperialism. Said left no doubt that he was fully aware of the terminological problems. Imperialism, he writes in *Culture and Imperialism*, is

a word and an idea today so controversial, so fraught with all sorts of questions, doubts, polemics, and ideological premises as nearly to resist use altogether. To some extent of course the debate involves definitions and attempts at delimitations of the very notion itself: was imperialism principally economic, how far did it extend, what were its causes, was it systematic, when (or whether) did it end? (Said 1994a, 3)

Elsewhere, also in *Culture and Imperialism*, he overcomes that resistance and defines his usage of the term imperialism in contrast to colonialism:

As I shall be using the term, 'imperialism' means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; 'colonialism,'

which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory. [...] In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism [...] lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices. (Said 1994a, 8)

In chapter one of *Culture and Imperialism*, “Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories,” Said emphasises the continuities between imperialism and the actualities of the contemporary world. With reference to classical nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European imperialism, he argues that this

pattern of dominions or possessions laid the groundwork for what is in effect now a fully global world. Electronic communications, the global extent of trade, of availability of resources, of travel, of information about weather patterns and ecological change have joined together even the most distant corners of the world. This set of patterns, I believe, was first established and made possible by the modern empires. (Said 1994a, 3-4)

The historical continuities are made sufficiently clear but what remains rather fuzzy is whether there is not only continuity but also discontinuity and difference between Said’s “fully global world” and his notion of imperialism. At the end of the same chapter, Said seems to be more strongly aware of the differences but gives a reason for his emphasis on continuities when he writes that he has

insisted on integration and connections between the past and the present, between imperializer and imperialized, between culture and imperialism [...] not to level or reduce differences, but rather to convey a more urgent sense of the interdependence between things. (Said 1994a, 72)

Against the background of certain developments in the early 1990s (USA as the only superpower, Yugoslavia, the Gulf War, etc.), Said seemed to argue that imperialism was actually returning. In an interview in 1993, Said expressed the view that at the time when he was writing *Culture and Imperialism* it was “not ‘after imperialism’; there’s a late-twentieth-century renewal of it” (Said 2001b, 191).

2. Limits of Said’s Orientalism

A further step to assess the possibilities of applying Said’s version of Orientalism to certain phenomena and processes at the beginning of the twenty-first century would be to identify the different levels on which specific limits are located. This would enable us to aim at two things simultaneously. Firstly, the lasting applicability of Said’s concept of Orientalism to certain problems could be brought out more clearly. Secondly, the identification of *specific* limits would also enable us to consider the possibility of revising and further developing Said’s approach. The following remarks are only meant to indicate some of the limits of Said’s Orientalism when applying it to globalisation and globalism; they should not be read as an attempt to reflect the scope of other criticisms of Said’s work.

The most obvious limit of his critique, the spatial, was fully acknowledged by Said himself. In an interview in 2001, he said that

Orientalism didn't really cover Asia at all. So, I wanted [in *Culture and Imperialism*] to extend the analysis to include further and different places than the Arab and Islamic Near East. (Said 2001b, 183)

In *Culture and Imperialism*, which can be read, at least partly, as a response to criticism levelled against *Orientalism*, Said states that he tried

to expand the arguments of the earlier book [*Orientalism*] to describe a more general pattern of relationships between the modern metropolitan West and its overseas territories. (Said 1994a, xi)

Large areas of the world remain, in spite of the spatial expansion of Said's concept of Orientalism, necessarily uncovered. Arguably, they cannot be covered, because what would be necessary to make this step is not just a wider geographical coverage but a different conceptual scope.

Said's Orientalism is further characterised by methodological limits when certain aspects of globalisation and globalism are analysed. Two should be mentioned here. The first problem has been identified by many of Said's critics and is related to the character of the material analysed by Said in his search for alternatives to orthodoxies. Kennedy says that this search is

characterized by two contradictory tendencies: the radical impulse to link literature, politics and culture on the one hand, and the fundamental conservatism of Said's literary tastes and loyalties on the other. (Kennedy 2000, 97)

The problems arising from this contradiction become, not surprisingly, most apparent in the final chapter of *Culture and Imperialism* which clearly shows that Said also encountered methodological problems when trying to study the most recent period. It could be argued that his preferred material, the novel, was simply not relevant anymore for the study of the link between literature, politics and culture in the same way as it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Said seems to be aware of this when he writes that

[t]heoretically we are only at the state of trying to inventory the *interpellation* of culture and empire, but the efforts so far made are only slightly more than rudimentary. And as the study of culture extends into the mass media, popular culture, micropolitics, and so forth, the focus on modes of power and hegemony grows sharper. (Said 1994a, 71-2)

Cochran sees even more dramatic changes and holds that the importance of literature for the overall production of culture in general has undergone dramatic changes:

In the twentieth century, the place of literature in the overall production of culture has undergone radical transformation, and the literary premises of modernity are under increasing scrutiny. [...] literature and the literary tradition no longer single-handedly dominate cultural production, and the economic force of the cultural commodity has upset the well-policed conjunctures of literature, universalism, and humanism. Without this privileged ideological investment, writing – shorn of its grandiose literary claims – takes its more modest place alongside other sectors of culture. (Cochran 2001, 217)

Said's preference for the 'canonical' should not be dismissed as mere prejudice, however, but rather has to be viewed against the background of his biography and cultural identity. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia argue that

[p]ersonal experiences, and the particular nature of personal history, have the power to dictate that certain interests are embedded so deeply in one's cultural identity that they cannot be dislodged. (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 1999, 10)

The second and arguably more important methodological limit is the pervasive reliance both of Orientalism and Said's critique of it on the construction of difference between the West and the 'Orient.' Said argues that Orientalism "aided and was aided by general cultural pressures that tended to make more rigid the sense of difference between the European and Asiatic parts of the world" (Said 1995, 204). His analysis of the relationships between Occident and Orient leads him to the conclusion that

what seems to have influenced Orientalism most was a fairly constant sense of confrontation felt by Westerners dealing with the East. The boundary notion of East and West, the varying degrees of projected inferiority and strength, the range of work done, the kinds of characteristic features ascribed to the Orient: all these testify to a willed imaginative and geographic division made between East and West, and lived through during many centuries. (Said 1995, 201)

Said's view could be interpreted, at least partly, as a logical consequence of his method of analysis. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, for example, point out that Said's use of the concept of discourse "emphasises dominance and power over cultural interaction" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 2001: 70). Such constructions of difference, division and adversity, which are typical of Orientalism, cannot be maintained in the same way for the analysis of globalism unless you represent and reduce the world at the beginning of the new millennium, as Said repeatedly does in the final chapter of *Culture and Imperialism* and in later works, as a kind of globalised American imperialism. This reduced contemporary actuality then enables Said to study it within the conceptual framework of imperialism and Orientalism again. Globalism, however, in order to function as a hegemonic discourse – in contrast to Orientalism – is based on discursive inclusivity and not exclusion. It is this discursive inclusivity that needs to be challenged against the backdrop of the exclusive political, social and economic realities of globalisation.

The most critical limit of Said's critique of Orientalism – if applied to the late twentieth century – is of a conceptual nature. It is, however, also more difficult to ascertain for different reasons. One reason is Said's foregrounding of what he perceives as American imperialism, for example, in chapter four of *Culture and Imperialism*, "Freedom from Domination in the Future," which helps him to sidestep, among other problems, the question of new politics in a globalized world and to contain his analysis within the framework and terminology of imperialism and empire. Nederveen Pieterse, by way of contrast, sees the need to develop new conceptual tools to study the situation at the end of the twentieth century when he cautions that the term imperialism "may no longer be adequate to address the present situation. It may be adequate in relation to US actions in

Panama or Grenada, but less to describe the Gulf War” (Nederveen Pieterse 1995, 59). Interestingly, he also refers to Doyle’s definition of imperialism and empire, the same source that Said quotes when defining imperialism in *Culture and Imperialism*:

Empire [...] is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire. (Doyle 1996, 45)

In contrast to Said, Nederveen Pieterse seems to be more aware of or willing to acknowledge the problems of applying the concepts of empire and imperialism to certain phenomena and processes at the end of the 20th century. This becomes apparent when he argues with regard to the same quotation that such terminology is not adequate to characterize certain phenomena like the activities of today’s major non-state actors, the IMF, the World Bank, transnational corporations and regional investment banks or the emergence of regional blocs:

The casual use of terms as recolonization or neocolonialism to describe the impact of IMF conditionalities on African countries remains just that, casual. The situation has changed also since the emergence of regional blocs which can potentially exercise joint foreign policy (for example, the European Community) or which within themselves contain two or more ‘worlds’ (for example, NAFTA, APEC). Both these situations differ from imperialism in the old sense. (Nederveen Pieterse 1995, 59)

Another phenomenon that reflects the material differences between imperialism and globalisation can be discerned in industrialised countries – in many cases former colonial powers. The common lack of domestic resistance in the metropolitan societies to the concept and practice of imperialism is now notably absent in the context of certain aspects of globalisation, i.e. with regard to changes that also negatively affect an increasing number of people in metropolitan societies. The spectrum ranges from environmental problems to increased pressures on wage levels due to increased global competition and supply-side policies of national governments. Admittedly, this resistance to globalisation is not as widespread or vocal as far as quasi-imperial relations are concerned that continue to benefit the majority of the population in industrialised societies as, for instance, in the case of cheap coffee – the retail prices of which are only possible due to starvation wages paid to the producers in former colonies.

4. The Possibility of Alternative Representations

To argue that Said’s concept of Orientalism cannot contain all aspects of a globalised world does not, however, mean that his more general notions of representation, the role of the critical intellectual and the question of knowledge cannot be usefully employed anymore. In “Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories,” Said outlines his notion of the complex nexus of representation, authority, knowledge and the role of the critical intellectual:

Modern thought and experience have taught us to be sensitive to what is involved in representation, in studying the Other, in racial thinking, in unthinking and uncritical acceptance of authority and authoritative ideas, in the socio-political role of intellectuals, in the great value of a sceptical critical consciousness. Perhaps if we remember that the study of human experience usually has an ethical, to say nothing of a political consequence in either the best or worst sense, we will not be indifferent to what we do as scholars. And what better norm for the scholar than human freedom and knowledge? (Said 1995, 327)

Said was fully aware of the problematic character of the processes which are involved in representation – perhaps more so than some of his anti-representational critics. He argues that

representation, or more particularly the *act* of representing (and hence reducing) others, almost always involve violence of some sort to the *subject* of the representation, as well as a contrast between the violence of the act of representing something and the calm exterior of the representation itself, the *image* – verbal, visual, or otherwise – of the subject. Whether you call it a spectacular image, or an exotic image, or a scholarly representation, there is always this paradoxical contrast between the surface, which seems to be in control, and the process which produces it, which inevitably involves some degree of violence, decontextualization, miniaturization, etc. The action or process of representing implies control, it implies accumulation, it implies confinement, it implies a certain kind of estrangement or disorientation on the part of the one representing. (Said 2001c, 40-1)

In the context of imperialism, it is not only the act of representing or the representation that is produced but rather the instrumentalization of that representation which is critical. Said maintains this because

above all, representation involves consumption: representations are put to use in the domestic economy of an imperial society. In the case of *Orientalism*, I was speaking of an economy whereby the manipulation and control of colonies could be sustained. (Said 2001c, 41)

The instrumental nexus between representations and imperialism is reflected in and affects the process of knowledge production and the character of the knowledge itself. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia assume – along the same lines of Said's position – that there is a *direct* and *active* connection between representations and political processes, and that there can be no neutral knowledge in the context of colonialism and imperialism. For them 'Knowledge'

is always a matter of representation, and representation a process of giving concrete form to ideological concepts, of making certain signifiers standing for signifieds. The power that underlies these representations cannot be divorced from the operations of political force, even though it is a different kind of power, more subtle, more penetrating and less visible. (Ashcroft und Ahluwalia 2001, 65)

Said's conviction that there is a *direct* and *active* relationship between political, socio-economic and cultural domination and systems of representation that produce and sustain each other applies both to Orientalism and globalism. It is therefore not surprising that a comparison between the discourses of Orientalism and globalism shows similarities in terms of means, methods, structures and objectives. Globalism, for example, is often characterised by totalising theories,

historical reductionism, ignorance of diversity and seemingly neutral assessments of specific aspects of the current situation that, at closer observation, often serve very specific purposes and concrete group interests. Central to this discourse are the different representations of what is allegedly 'going on,' the decisive trends, the causal structures behind those trends and the ensuing consequences and necessities. The non-industrialised countries, for example, are represented as being in need of modernisation in order to enable them to partake in the global economic and social progress, which is considered to be a function of the free-market economy, free trade and liberal democracy. The latter, however, does not seem to be essential as long as stability can be maintained, i.e. the safety of property and foreign investments is guaranteed. There is also very little acknowledgement of historical circumstances, cultural specificities, different sets of traditions, values, beliefs and needs that characterise those countries. Although lip-service is often paid to the distinctiveness of the countries affected by globalisation, there seems to be a widespread and potentially dangerous belief that the same measures applied to completely different contexts may lead to similar results. Tony Blair signifies this problem when he argues that

even as between developing and developed nations, it is the similarities in the economic and social issues that often mean more than the differences. And as for within the developed world, the challenges are virtually identical. (Blair 2000, n.a.)

It would obviously not require too much of an effort to critique Blair's or similarly simplistic arguments but that would not solve the underlying problem. Assuming that hegemonic representations and discourses can and should be challenged, the more intriguing question is whether the establishment of just another reductionist and exclusive discourse can be avoided and how more inclusive, participatory, collaborative and non-coercive knowledge can be produced. The problem can be addressed for analytical purposes on three distinct but, in practice, closely interwoven, levels: first, the methodological level, second, the character of the representational system and the knowledge it is based on and, third, the role of the intellectual in the production or critique of this knowledge.

The opportunity to challenge the domination of different systems was one of Said's central concerns. In an interview in 1993, he said that the question of domination

has always interested me most. I mean how – given the domination of one or another powerful system, whether economic, social, or political – one can break through. That is the most interesting thing, I think, about human behaviour – that and the way people try to build on it, that oppositional quality. (Said 2001e, 169)

The acknowledgement of the need to challenge dominant systems, material or immaterial, does not, however, automatically provide us with the means to do so in practice. Said insists with regard to the methodological level that

[w]e must expand the horizons against which the question of *how* and *what* to read and write are both posed and answered [...]. Instead of the partial analysis offered by the various national or systematically theoretical schools, I have been proposing the

contrapuntal lines of global analysis, in which texts and worldly institutions are seen working together [...]. (Said 1994a, 385)

Said believed that, despite all the intricate problems involved in the process of their production referred to above, representations cannot be avoided. Consequently, the character of the system of representation and the knowledge on which it is founded need to be foregrounded:

What we must eliminate are systems of representation that carry with them the kind of authority which, to my mind, has been repressive because it doesn't permit or make room for interventions on the part of those represented [...] The alternative would be a representational system that was participatory and collaborative, noncoercive, rather than imposed, but as you know, this is not a simple matter. We have no immediate access to the means of producing alternative systems. Perhaps it would be possible through other, less exploitative fields of knowledge. But first we must identify those socio-cultural-political formations which would allow for a reduction of authority and increased participation in the production of representations and proceed from there. (Said 2001c, 42)

In other words, the *primary* question is which socio-cultural-political formations "would allow for a reduction of authority and increased participation in the production of representations." In view of the fact that the production of alternative systems of representation crucially depends on "socio-cultural-political formations," it is somewhat disappointing that Said does not address this question in detail.

Elsewhere, Said reflects methodological problems with specific reference to the new challenges at the end of the twentieth century and argues that they cannot be addressed by the polemical and oppositional models of the past but

rather, you provide models of reconciliation by which you can situate yourself and the other in a territory or in a space that isn't all about fighting, that isn't all about polemics and oppositional politics in the crude and reductive sense of the word. [...] There are overarching problems [...] there's the whole problem of north and south now. There's the whole problem of the environment. There's the whole question of the fractious quality of identity politics. All of these things require new ways of thinking that can't be served and can't be advanced by the polemical and oppositional models of the past [...]. (Said 2001b, 203-4)

Central to the question of the possibility of alternative representations for Said is also the role of the intellectual. Throughout his life Said never tired to voice his view of the role of intellectuals and their positioning towards authority, common sense and power: "The intellectual always has a choice either to side with the weaker, the less well-represented, the forgotten or ignored, or to side with the more powerful" (Said 1994b, 24). At the same time, he was fully aware of the obstacles that have to be faced not only in authoritarian societies but also in democracies:

The great problem in essentially administered societies, the Western democracies, is precisely the drowning out of the critical sense. That has to be opposed by the secular intellectual and the critical sense revised for various audiences, various constituencies. (Said 2001d, 223)

He was similarly clear about the fact that his insistence on the oppositional function of the intellectual should not be mistaken as advocating opposition as an end in itself. For Said it means “asking questions, making distinctions, restoring to memory all those things that tend to be overlooked or walked past in the rush to collective judgment and action” (Said 1994b, 25). This understanding of the function of the intellectual entails a specific notion of the concept and practice of criticism which he defines as ‘secular’ criticism:

It is not practicing criticism either to validate the status quo or to join up with a priestly caste of acolytes and dogmatic metaphysicians [...] The realities of power and authority – as well as the resistances offered by men and women, and social movements to institutions, authorities, and orthodoxies – are the realities that make texts possible, that deliver them to their readers, that solicit the attention of critics. I propose that these realities are what should be taken account of by criticism and the critical consciousness. (Said 1991, 5)

There is, however, another problem, arguably the most important one, which Said tends to evade in his discussion and celebration of the role of the secular intellectual. Robbins is acutely aware of it when he says that the

secular ideal of the intellectual who ‘speaks truth to power’ [...] pays no explicit attention to the decisive question – the same question in another form – of *why power would listen*, what might *make* it listen, what makes *anyone* listen. That is, it has nothing explicit to say about the source of *counter-authority* that intellectuals must be assumed to counterpose to ‘power.’ (Robbins 1997, 77)

The character of the knowledge produced by secular criticism and the underlying perception of the relationship between knowledge, truth, objectivity and politics almost necessarily clashes with scholarly conventions about the character of knowledge in the contemporary West in general and the United States in particular. One problem for Said therefore was to expose how

the general consensus that ‘true’ knowledge is fundamentally nonpolitical (and conversely, that overtly political knowledge is not ‘true’ knowledge) obscures the highly if obscurely organized political circumstances obtaining when knowledge is produced. No one is helped in understanding this today when the adjective ‘political’ is used as a label to discredit any work for daring to violate the protocol of pretended suprapolitical objectivity. (Said 1995, 10)

In this context, it is important to bear in mind that Said was convinced that certain fields of knowledge are characterised by a higher degree of political importance than others. This is, I would argue, equally true for the production of knowledge about imperialism and globalisation because of their close relations to questions of economic and political power. Said maintains that to

some extent the political importance given a field comes from the possibility of its direct translation into economic terms; but to a greater extent political importance comes from the closeness of a field to ascertainable sources of power in political society. (Said 1995, 10)

Admittedly, Said’s notion of the character and function of representations, his understanding of the role and the responsibilities of the intellectual, and the

problems involved in the production of knowledge are not always consistent, sometimes fairly vague, and often contentious. But Said, says Kennedy, was aware “at least intermittently, of the problems associated with the issue of representation” and he “has chosen to make use of his persuasive powers as a public intellectual and to shoulder the responsibilities nonetheless” (Kennedy 2000, 148 and 149).

4. Conclusion

There is, in my view, no doubt that Said’s work can still provide us with useful insights into the history, character and operations of imperialism and the accompanying discourse of Orientalism. But one also has to state clearly that certain processes of globalisation and aspects of globalism at the beginning of the twenty-first century, although *historically related to* are not simply *a continuation of imperialism*. They can therefore not be comprehended fully within Said’s critique of Orientalism and imperialism.

Important remnants and persistent effects of imperialism cannot be denied nor can the framework of imperialism provide a sufficient basis for the analysis of many aspects of a globalised world. Specific relations can still be analysed and interpreted as imperialism but what is also necessary are historically aware and contextualized studies of global processes that must draw upon studies of imperialism but also go beyond them.

The challenges of an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world can only be addressed if the whole political, economic and social process becomes more participatory, representative and equitable than today’s arrangement. This is equally true for the process itself and the production of knowledge about that process. The divergent priorities, objectives, values, concerns and cultures of those concerned – nation-states, international institutions, non-governmental organisations, multinational corporations, global social movements, religious groups – have to be actively involved in the production of more inclusive, participatory, collaborative and non-coercive knowledge – but, to quote Said again, “this is not a simple matter” (Said 2001c, 42).

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Transnational Cultures and Multiple Modernities: Anthropology's Encounter with Globalization

Abstract: In the 1970s, anthropology began to examine its role in the establishment and expansion of colonial rule in non-Western societies and its continuation in new forms of economic and political domination exerted by the West after the disbanding of colonial administrations. Said's book *Orientalism* (1978) proved to be immensely influential in this context. Today, globalization has emerged as the domain in which anthropologists critically recast their relationship to the post-colonial field. Anthropologists increasingly study the cultural effects of the worldwide diffusion of commodities, technologies and media products, as well as the increase of immigration and other forms of transnational mobility. Faced with a surge of greatly increasing cultural diversity worldwide as a consequence of these intensified exchanges, anthropology has been forced to revise its earlier notion that globalization would inevitably bring about a culturally homogenized world. This article addresses the concept of the pluralization of modernities, explores its potential for interdisciplinary research agendas, and also inquires into problematic assumptions underlying this new theoretical approach.¹

Anthropology emerged as a scholarly enterprise inquiring into pre-modern societies. Historically, the discipline of anthropology emerged as a systematic attempt to learn about traditional cultures which often did not possess written records of their history and cultural heritage. The specific methodology of ethnographic research – fieldwork and participant observation – was developed to meet this challenge. Throughout much of the 19th and 20th century, anthropologists were intent on recording and salvaging traditional cultures before they crumbled under the onslaught of modernization. Edward W. Said claimed that anthropology “has been historically constituted in its point of origin during an ethnographic encounter between a sovereign European observer and a non-European native” (Said 1989, 211). It was not until the 1960s that anthropology started to critically examine its role in the establishment and expansion of colonial rule in non-Western societies and its continuation in new forms of economic and political domination exerted by the West after the disbanding of colonial administrations. Said's book *Orientalism* (1978) proved to be immensely influential in this context, feeding into the growing discomfort among anthropologists with their complicity, real or imagined, with colonial powers. More so, with its poignant analysis of Western hegemonic

¹ This essay is based on a paper presented at the conference “Transcultural English Studies,” Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe University Frankfurt, May 19-23, 2004.

exoticism, it provided anthropologists with a vocabulary in which to analyze the past endeavors of their discipline and to unmask them as emerging from and also constituting an unequal relationship between Western anthropologists and the imperialized others they produced in their ethnographic representations (see Fabian 1983). The incorporation of the concept of alterity into anthropology and the subsequent move to make colonialism and the production of anthropological knowledge into objects of study in their own right² led to a heightened sense of introspection and an awareness of how anthropology even today stands the risk of unwittingly contributing to legitimizing power asymmetries of the modern geopolitical order. Said was especially influential in introducing the Foucauldian-derived concepts of power and knowledge into anthropological theorizing, paving the ground for a systematic de- and reconstruction of anthropology's modes of knowledge production and its prominent genre of representation, ethnography (see Marcus and Fischer 1986, Clifford and Marcus 1986). Interestingly enough, in a sweeping assessment of anthropology's attempts to come to terms with its colonial legacy that Said delivered at the 1987 meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago, he admitted to being impatient with what he then called the "aesthetic response" of the so-called Writing Culture movement, spearheaded by James Clifford and George Marcus. Rather than retreating into the "politics of textuality" (Said 1989, 209), anthropology should respond to the political challenges posed by a post-colonial world.

In his speech, Said himself was hesitant, however, when it came to a prognosis of a future for anthropology:

I cannot say whether it is now possible for anthropology as anthropology to be different, that is, to forget itself and to become something else as a way of responding to the gauntlet thrown down by imperialism and its antagonists. (Said 1989, 213)

At that point in time, neither he nor his colleagues in anthropology could have predicted that globalization would emerge as the domain in which anthropologists would critically recast their relationship to the post-colonial field. During the 1990s, globalization processes started to become prominent objects of anthropology. In particular, migration, mobility and the social groups they produce – refugees, tourists, labor migrants – were put on anthropology's research agenda. Today, anthropologists increasingly study the cultural effects of the worldwide diffusion of commodities, technologies and media products, as new communication and transportation technologies bridge huge distances in ever briefer intervals of time, and release people from geographically restricted communities of interaction. Cultural artifacts – not just material things but also political ideas, scientific knowledge, images of the future and interpretations of the past – travel further and more swiftly than ever before. They are available simultaneously almost everywhere, but, of course, their accessibility is restricted to those social actors who have the economic means or the cultural capital to make use of them.

² For assessments of the influence of Said's Orientalism on anthropology, see Rapport and Overing 2000 and Ortner 1999.

1. Reconfiguring the Concept of Culture

As a consequence of these transformations, anthropologists have abandoned established notions of how culture relates to territory. Swedish social anthropologist Ulf Hannerz suggests that the well-established anthropological concept of cultures as “packages of meanings and meaningful forms, distinctive to collectivities and territories” was put to a test when anthropologists started to take a closer look at the

increasing interconnectedness in space. As people move with their meanings, and as meanings find ways of traveling even when people stay put, territories cannot really contain cultures. (Hannerz 1996, 8)

Originally, the anthropological concept of culture referred to the way of life of a bounded social group in a fixed and clearly-defined geographical location or territory. Both the increased mobility and worldwide dispersal of populations, forming diasporas far from home, and the interpenetration of societies by things and ideas from elsewhere challenged the unspoken anthropological assumption that “culture sits in places” (Escobar 2001). With globalization, cultures ceased to be static objects. They would no longer hold still for ethnographers to portray them, as James Clifford, American historian and critical theorist of anthropology, so aptly put it:

Twentieth-century identities no longer presuppose continuous cultures or traditions. Everywhere individuals and groups improvise local performances from (re)collected pasts, drawing on foreign media, symbols, and languages. (Clifford 1988, 14)

As a consequence, cultural boundaries are much more difficult to fix, let alone map onto territorial divides, as communication channels transgress and migrant communities routinely cross them.

In anthropology, the term ‘transnationalisation’ was adopted in order to capture those cultural processes that flow across the borders of nation states. ‘Transnational’ has increasingly become a blanket-term in anthropology to describe any cultural phenomenon that extends beyond or cross-cuts state boundaries and is an effect of the diffusion or dispersal of people, ideas and artifacts across huge distances, often in such a way that they stop being identified with a single place of origin. Anthropologists distinguish transnational processes from globalization. The latter they define as world-encompassing in scale, and embodied in economic and political processes whose protagonists are multinational corporations, national governments and supranational organizations (see Hannerz 1998). Conversely, the use of the term ‘transnational’

draw[s] attention to the growing involvement of other kinds of actors – individuals, kinship groups, ethnic groups, firms, social movements, etc. – in activities and relationships that transcend national boundaries. (Hannerz 1998, 237)

Aihwa Ong, a US-based anthropologist whose studies analyze the changing societies and cultures of contemporary Southeast Asia, asserts that transnationality as a term is best suited to symbolize the “condition of cultural interconnected-

ness and mobility across space” which has been intensified under late capitalism. According to Ong, the prefix “trans”

denotes both moving through space or across lines, as well as changing the nature of something. Besides suggesting new relations between nation-states and capital, transnationality also alludes to the transversal, the transactional, the translational, and the transgressive aspects of contemporary behavior and imagination that are incited, enabled, and regulated by the changing logics of states of capitalism. (Ong 1999, 4)

The new concept of transnationalism in anthropology is not meant to reify a view of the world as “composed of sovereign, spatially discontinuous units” (Malkki 1992, 27) but rather intends to destabilize the very notion that cultures and societies are contained and indeed defined by the nation state.

2. Homogenization and Diversity

Many of the new research concerns of anthropology – not just migration and mobility, but media and computer mediated communication, statehood and supra-national governance, commodities and consumption, science and technology – today entail a turn away from the more established patterns of doing fieldwork and writing ethnography. Yet, what remains unchanged about ethnographic fieldwork and what gives it its special advantage over other, less engaged and more distant methods of research is that field-workers immerse themselves in the everyday lives of the people they study, becoming participant observers of social practices as they unfold. Anthropologist James Watson states that

[i]n fieldwork you live where people live, you do what people do, and you go where people go [...] increasingly, all over the world, people are going to McDonald’s; they are also going to shopping malls, supermarkets, and video stores. If anthropologists do not start going with them, we will soon lose our *raison d’être*. (Watson 1997, viii)

Watson, along with a team of East Asian colleagues in anthropology, decided to do just that, to accompany people going to McDonald’s in five Asian metropolitan areas, Taipei, Hong Kong, Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing. The anthropologists Yunxiang Yan, James Watson, David Wu, Sangmee Bak and Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney contributed to the book *Golden Arches East* which contains five case studies, exploring “how McDonald’s worldwide system has been adapted to suit local circumstances in five distinct societies” (Watson 1997, ix). The team found out that East Asian consumers have managed to transform McDonald’s into local institutions and that this localization process has led to a proliferation of McDonald’s restaurants that not only differ from those in the US or in Germany, but also show considerable variation between the East Asian cities studied. What consumers actually do when they frequent the hamburger restaurant is very different from city to city, as are the cultural meanings that they are afforded: a popular after-school place for high school students where they do their homework, a place for three-generation-family outings on a weekend, or else the equivalent of a high-priced restaurant where *nouveau riche* couples go for din-

ner. The book is an enjoyable read and quite convincing in presenting evidence that the spread of fast food does not necessarily undermine the integrity of indigenous cuisines, nor can fast food chains simply be called agents of global cultural homogenization. The study can be criticized, of course, for not paying sufficient attention to socioeconomic inequities within the societies studied, to problematic labor relations within McDonalds, or to the detrimental ecological effects of food production for hamburger empires. However, the special achievement of the study is that it takes the term McDonaldization literally and examines the empirical value of the term. In popular social science discourses this had become a synonym for the negative dimensions of globalization, for Americanization and cultural imperialism. Yet, instead of finding cultural standardization, the researchers were confronted with a new cultural diversity as McDonalds is adapted and effectively indigenized in the various settings.

Anthropology had started to study globalization with the expectation and indeed fear that globalization would bring about a culturally homogenized world. Instead, the discipline witnessed a surge of greatly increasing cultural diversity, an observation that contradicted everything that anthropologists were led to believe. The global transformations underway today – the increase of transnational migration, the intensification of economic exchanges, and the global reach of media and consumer culture – are in a sense the epitome of the process of modernity writ large, a global expansion and intensification of modernization. What modernization had fallen short of, the production of a single unified world culture, globalization for sure would achieve. This is what anthropologists assumed, as for decades they had observed the incursion of monetary economies and capitalist markets into tribal life worlds and indigenous social systems, turning them inside out and mangling them beyond recognition, leaving populations adrift in the rapidly growing urban slums of Third World mega-cities, bereft of their identities and cultural meanings. Globalization has intensified these modernization processes. In its wake, there has not been a significant alleviation of poverty in many post-colonial societies, and the social inequalities within these societies, and between them and the prosperous and powerful societies of the West, have deepened. Meanwhile, new links of economic and political relations have been forged which often are called neo-colonial.

Yet, cultural difference has not disappeared, on the contrary. Culturally, globalization has produced some unexpected and indeed contradictory effects. It has not led to the emergence of a single, unified world culture. Of course, we can observe the worldwide diffusion of modern institutions – the bureaucratic state, formal education, mass media and telecommunications, health systems and military infrastructures. The globalization of the capitalist economy has left no society on earth untouched. However, the consequences of these processes are – in spite of all prognoses and prophecies – not the same everywhere (see Eisenstadt 2000). The globalization of modernity has produced both sameness and difference; uniformisation and differentiation are evolving side by side. Even though globally standardized institutions and practices are being introduced and adopted

all over the world, the increased interaction between societies does not automatically lead to any significant leveling of cultural contrasts. Rather, when local cultures interact with global imports, new amalgamations of tradition and modernity are produced that are unique to the time and place in which they occur.

3. The Global Cultural Economy

Thus, new cultural forms grow out of historically situated articulations of the local and the global:

The trappings of globalization – world markets, mass media, rapid travel, modern communication [...] have had the effect of greatly increasing cultural diversity because of the ways in which they are interpreted and the ways they acquire new meanings in local reception. (Ong 1999, 10)

In his attempt to theorize the global cultural economy for anthropology, Arjun Appadurai stresses the importance of mass mediated products – radio, television, music videos, movies – which in conjunction with migration processes come to the fore as forces “that seem to impel (and sometimes compel) the work of the imagination” (Appadurai 1996, 4). This has been explored ethnographically by a number of anthropologists in their research on the audience reception of popular media formats. Sarah Dickey’s study of the significance of popular cinema for moviegoers in South India (1993), Purnima Mankekar’s work on television in India (1999), and Lila Abu-Lughod’s (2000) interpretation of how Egyptian audiences respond to television serials show that viewers use “crucial moments of the serial to confront their own positions in their family, community, and class” (Herzfeld 2001, 301) and by doing so, diverge from intended interpretations. The new readings they create vary within an audience of viewers at one single location, as their responses are gendered and also specific to social classes and generations. Michael Herzfeld, in his highly informative overview of anthropological work on media reception, points to the new unexpected effects of cross-cultural media reception, such as the popularity of Indian films in Nigerian Hausa culture (see Larkin 1997), and to the ways in which media consumption fuels a “creative retooling of social identities in interaction with media” (Herzfeld 2001, 308). His assessment resonates with Appadurai’s assertion that

the consumption of mass media throughout the world often provokes resistance, irony, selectivity, and in general agency [...]. It is the imagination, in its collective forms, that creates ideas of neighborhood and nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labor prospects. The imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape. (Appadurai 1996, 7)

For Appadurai, this is what links globalization with modernity. He claims that globalization marks an era where modernity is, as he puts it, “at large.” According to him, anthropology challenges conventional assumptions about modernization and has the potential to contribute to a new social theory of modernity. Once anthropology starts to systematically address as ‘sites of modernity’ precisely

those cultural situations it once sought out because they appeared to harbor relics of tradition, the discipline will reinvent itself as an anthropology of modernity. With this change, anthropology also abandons its earlier self-appointed task of documenting and salvaging traditional cultures before they succumb to modernization. It is not, however, giving up its role as a prime witness and quite often also a plaintiff, accusing colonial powers and neocolonial actors of “transforming colonized peoples into alienated human beings, as commodity relations dissolve pre-existing cultural relations among people, uprooting them from former ways life” (Ong 2001, 9945) and eroding their subsistence bases. In an essay on the anthropology of modernity, Aihwa Ong asserts that thus “a strong anthropological tradition [emerged] to study the varied impact of the capitalist juggernaut on native social forms, subjectivity, and social change” (Ong 2001, 9944).

Anthropologists, then, have always been close observers of what is actually happening when Western institutions make incursions into non-Western societies. One of the most prominent voices in anthropology, Clifford Geertz, who is well known for revolutionizing anthropological epistemology with his approach to cultural interpretation, namely thick description, is also most knowledgeable and critical of so-called development in Third World countries. Four decades of fieldwork engagement with communities in Morocco and Indonesia have given him unique insights into how social change plays out on the ground, how ‘progress’ impacts on the everyday lives of communities, and what choices local people actually make when confronted with new options. In his book *After the Fact*, Geertz weaves a rich, ethnographically informed tale of this change, a change that is not so much a “parade that can be watched as it passes” (Geertz 1995, 4), following prescribed stations – traditional, modern, postmodern, or feudal, colonial, independent –, but a discontinuous and disjunctive process. It progresses by leaps and halts rather than smoothly, and, in its course, spawns surprising and largely unintended effects. Modern life in Morocco is totally unlike that in Indonesia, and both bear little semblance to France or the United States. Geertz is at his best when he gives a thick description of an improvised and quite innovative ceremony in an Indonesian community (143ff.). The public event he selects is a graduation ceremony for adult students of an English language course. The course was organized and marketed by the enterprising leader of a Muslim school of religious instruction. As if this concurrence was not incongruous enough, the ceremony described by Geertz turns out to be a hybrid event, hardly able to contain the contradictory cultural currents it tries to combine, some local, some national, some global, some Muslim and some Western. Geertz reports how this event generates ironic self-reflection and puzzlement in the audience and, by extension, he evokes these responses in the readers of his book.

Poetic insights such as the ones afforded by a master like Geertz resonate with many other situations around the world, where cultural diversity, hybridity and ironic effects are generated when local populations appropriate globally distributed commodities and media products – even if these are only hamburgers or music videos. Modernization and globalization are but two sides of the same

coin. Observations of the contradictory and highly productive cultural effects of globalization can be fruitfully linked to a theory of modernity that incorporates the anthropological attention given to everyday life, social agency and the ways in which people give meaning to the circumstances in which they find themselves. The globalization of modernity that we experience today indeed has, from its inception, been part and parcel of the trajectory of modernity which has always been inherently global in scope and intent.³

4. Multiple Modernities

Anthropology engages itself with the place that cultural difference and cultural diversity occupy in the modern world. Ulf Hannerz, with his lively interest in the to and fro of cultural flows between the centers and peripheries of the world, and the resulting hybrid and creolized cultural expressions, asks the question outright: "How does modernity go with cultural difference?" He himself subscribes to a view of "modernity as a civilizational complex, spreading globally, affecting the cultures of ever more societies, and at the same time being itself reshaped in those locations," (Hannerz 1996, 48) resulting in a heightened degree of diversity within interconnectedness, new cultural forms, expressions and interpretations that are unique to the societies that employ them and can no longer be classified according to simple dichotomies such as non-Western tradition vs. Western modernity.

Hannerz suggests two perspectives that may address this state of affairs:

As the civilization of modernity enters into contact with other cultures, changes and refractions result, so that one may see it alternatively as one increasingly internally diverse civilization or as multiple modernities. (Hannerz 1996, 44)

While Hannerz himself has been leaning towards the former notion that modernity forms a framework in which cultural diversity manifests itself, an increasingly vocal group of his colleagues in anthropology have opted for the latter notion, proposing that each society or social group generates its very own version of modernity that is unlike any other. So wherever we go, there are particular regional forms of modernity. These cannot simply be explained by the presence of relics of tradition that co-exist with modern elements. Rather, this recent theoretical innovation in anthropology, talking of multiple or plural modernities, of the 'alternatively' (Knauff 2002) or 'otherwise' modern (Trouillot 2002), attempts to solve the

paradox that people in different world areas increasingly share aspirations, material standards, and social institutions at the same time that their local definition of and engagement with these initiatives fuels cultural distinctiveness. (Knauff 2002, 2)

³ Obviously, colonialism shares many important characteristics with modernization and globalization. It has been suggested that both colonial subjects and representatives of power have already been modern for centuries as they were part of the world-encompassing story-and-map of modernity. See Taylor 1999.

To talk of multiple modernities effectively collapses any contradiction or conflict between being modern and adhering to local cultural practices and beliefs. Rather, the notion of “alternative modernity” acknowledges the fact that in each society there is a “social and discursive space in which the relationship between modernity and tradition is reconfigured,” as Bruce Knauft points out against the backdrop of his many years of ethnographic work in Melanesia. He adds that this “reconfiguration is forged in a crucible of cultural beliefs and orientations on the one hand, and politicoeconomic constraints and opportunities on the other” (Knauft 2002, 25). In a brilliant survey essay, Joel Kahn summarizes recent moves in anthropology to pluralize the modern. As an illustration, he employs his own ethnographies of Malaysian and Indonesian society and points out that today these countries can easily be interpreted as “wanting: modern perhaps, but incompletely modern at best,” particularly according to standards set by conventional modernization theory which inevitably raises points such as the “incomplete separation of public and private,” meaning incomplete secularization and the strong role of religion in public life, or the “failure of differentiation of economic and political spheres” (Kahn 2001, 657), referring to social relations labeled from a Western perspective as patronage and nepotism. “Measured against the yardstick of modernist narratives,” Kahn continues,

Malaysia and Indonesia become ‘other to the modern’ in significant ways, forcing us back into the language of a liberal social evolutionism in which otherness was constituted as historically anterior to and, as a result, an incomplete or immature version of the modern, civilized self [...]. Southeast Asia appears at best perversely modern, or to manifest various perverse forms of modernity. These may be explained away as pre-modern survivals or invented traditions, but neither explanation does much to come to grips with what is apparently unique to such places. (Kahn 2001, 658)

One possible answer to this predicament is to reconceptualise modernity in the plural. Multiple modernities are about “alternative constructions [...] in the sense of moral-political projects that seek to control their own present and future” (Ong 1999, 23), as Aihwa Ong succinctly puts it. These can no longer be denigrated as lacking or labeled non-modern, pre-modern, or traditional. This conceptual pluralization of modernities has been welcomed as a liberation within anthropological theoretical debates, breaking down the divide between tradition and modernity. It allows anthropologists to acknowledge as modern those cultural practices that co-exist with capitalist modernity but do not conform in any narrow way with the Western European or US American model of a modern way of life. The Indian historian Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000a, 2000b) points out that it is not sufficient to explain such forms as “inventions of tradition” or through the idea of “the modernity of tradition” because such “invocations of the restored, contrived, or resistant powers of a tradition accept the notion that there is a universal narrative of modernity, against which local variations can be measured” (Mitchell 2000, xvi). However, these are not residual elements or fragments of the past, nor simply an absence of modernity or indicators of its incomplete fulfillment. To talk of multiple modernities, then, means to explore the possibility of a heterogeneous account of the emergence of colonial modernity,

as Timothy Mitchell points out in the introduction to the anthology *Questions of Modernity*. Chakrabarty's work has been especially evocative of how

colonialism has made European narratives a global heritage that inevitably structures any subsequent account of this modernity [...]. A theme that emerges from studies of this kind is that in the production of modernity, the hegemony of the modern over what it displaces as 'traditional' is never complete. As a result, modernizing forces continuously re-appropriate elements that have been categorized as non-modern, such as religious elements, in order to produce their own effectiveness. [...] failures do not indicate the inability of modern secular politics to delimit the traditional powers of religion. They show that producing a colonial modernity requires the production of groups and forces designated as non-modern yet able to contest the hegemony of the modernist politics that called for them. (Mitchell 2000, xix and xviii)

The different versions of modernity that are generated in different places, then, are no longer to be seen as mere aspects of the emergence of the 'real' modernity, on the sidelines of the one plot that really counts. Rather, anthropologists stress the fact that modernity is emerging outside or on the margins of the geography of the West. These developments are not to be assessed as to what "their contribution to the singular history of the modern" (Mitchell 2000, xii) is. Rather than gazing at the grand designs of colonial power and modernizing states, anthropology starts looking at the local sites "where the modern is realized and continually translated, in its articulation with and production of the non-modern" (Mitchell 2000, xxvi). And this may happen at a neighborhood grocery, a village school, a video store, a fast food establishment, but also in a government office, a conference room, or a research lab. Anthropology's fieldwork approach leads us to look closely at sites where we can observe modernity as it is socially produced, in the actual social practices of people who are engaged in the making of modernity.⁴

5. Post-Colonial Critiques

In adopting this stance, social theory has come a long way from the 1960s and its conventional modernization theory, the epitome of which were standardized sociological measurements of the percentage degree of modernity acquired by individuals in so-called Third World countries (see Inkeles and Smith 1974). To conceptualize modernity in the plural also implies stressing that each society has the right to determine how and to what end it wants to modernize. Yet, some cautions are in order. If the conceptual switch from emphasizing a divide between tradition and modernity to acknowledging a multiplicity of modern cultures entails merely a celebratory attitude towards the hybridity that is generated by local-global encounters, then anthropology would fall back into older habits of essentialising non-Western cultures as 'others.' Also, to indiscriminately declare contemporary cultural expressions as modern does not make sense, as it renders the designation meaningless. Joel Kahn warns that if we "reject any gen-

⁴ For exemplary case studies, see for instance Burawoy 2000.

eral understanding of modernity,” this may well be an “escape route out of modernity altogether.”⁵ By the same token, to suggest that all social practices are legitimate as long as they can be explained as expressions of ‘alternative modernity’ implies an irresponsibly relativist stance that uses the multiple modernities paradigm as an excuse to evade the responsibility of dissent, critique and engagement. To talk of multiple modernities cannot simply mean to recognize everybody as modern. If we do not at the same time make visible and critique the inequalities and power asymmetries that are being produced by a globalizing economy and the new geopolitical world order, then the designations ‘otherwise modern’ or ‘alternatively modern’ are simply another way of saying ‘backward,’ or of replacing the older labels ‘pre-modern’ or ‘traditional.’

As much as anthropology welcomes the paradigm shift, we cannot – and at our own peril, must not – ignore the fact that, of course, Western centers of power continue to consider themselves more modern than anybody else. At the same time, a number of supranational institutions continue to claim the right to assess the accomplishment of modernity by political systems, economies, and cultures around the world, and whether they deserve benefits, support and attention, or else are to be fined, sanctioned and boycotted for their lack of ‘good governance’ and ‘best practices.’ Post-colonial scholar and social anthropologist Vassos Argyrou asserts that through the process of modernization, non-Western societies do not acquire a Western identity, rather, “they constitute themselves as Western subjects” while at the same time, “the West essentializes itself as the only true source of legitimate culture so that the practical manifestations of [non-Western] claims to modernity seem a poor version of the ‘original’” (Argyrou 1996, 178). For Argyrou, it matters little whether we continue to use the term modernity in the single or plural mode if we do not pay attention to the mechanisms of domination and governmentality at work in the modern world order (see Argyrou 2002). Timothy Mitchell has pointed out that modernity of the Western type always requires the non-universal, non-Western against which to define itself. The mode of production of modernity depends on “what remains heterogeneous to it” as its constitutive outside:

Yet in the very processes of the subordination and exclusion, it can be shown, such elements infiltrate and compromise that history. These elements cannot be referred back to any unifying historical logic or any underlying potential defining the nature of capitalist modernity, for it is only by their exclusion or subordination that such a logic or potential can be realized. Yet, such elements continually redirect, divert, and mutate the modernity they help constitute. (Mitchell 2000, xiii)

⁵ Joel Kahn suggests viewing modernity as a product of contradictory cultural processes rather than, as liberal modernization narratives and also their critiques imply, “a single cultural movement of liberty or discipline.” Kahn asserts that these cultural processes entail a conflict between “autonomy” and “rationalization,” rather than between tradition and modernity. He gives examples from his fieldwork among Malay Muslims that show that “the theme of reconciling the apparently contradictory processes of rationalization (‘globalization’) and expressive meaning (understood as the expressive values of a particular people that were wont to call their culture)” is central here as well. See Kahn 2001, 662.

The adoption of Mitchell's notion allows us to "acknowledge the singularity and universalism of the project of modernity" (Mitchell 2000, xiii) and, at the same time, to view modernity as "something concrete, embedded in particular institutions and cultural formations, but also a singular process that is global and multi-cultural from its inception" (Kahn 2001, 664). Ultimately, this calls on anthropology not only to reveal the many versions of modernities in non-Western societies, but rather, to apply this research perspective to ourselves, to our own position as German, British, Swiss or American scholars. Anthropologists need to historicize and cross-culturally compare their very own versions of modernity. As Joel Kahn points out, this new anthropology of modernity "compels us towards an ethnographic engagement with modernity in the West" (Kahn 2001, 664) and, incidentally, picks up again some longstanding research interests, especially among anthropologists of Europe, who have been exploring the distinct formations of European modernities and their historical and cultural specificities (see Faubion 1993, Frykman and Löfgren 1987, Herzfeld 1992, Rabinow 1989). This resonates strongly with Dipesh Chakrabarty's intention of unmasking the particular historical trajectory and power formation that has made it possible for Europe to make the claim of being everybody's heritage. Chakrabarty asserts that the

phenomenon of 'political modernity' – namely, the rule of modern institutions of the state, bureaucracy, and capitalist enterprise – is impossible to *think* of anywhere in the world without invoking certain categories and concepts, the genealogies of which go deep into the intellectual and even theological traditions of Europe. (Chakrabarty 2000a, 4)

He suggests engaging in an operation he calls the provincializing of Europe, as

European thought is at once both indispensable and inadequate in helping us to think through the experiences of political modernity in non-Western nations, and provincializing Europe becomes the task of exploring how this thought – which is now everybody's heritage and which affect us all – may be renewed from and for the margins. (Chakrabarty 2000a, 16)

Chakrabarty – and the adoption of his theoretical stance among Western and non-Western anthropologists – may well be successful in redefining what Said once called "the relationship between anthropology as an ongoing enterprise and [...] empire as an ongoing concern" (Said 1989, 217). Anthropology – as Aihwa Ong puts it (2001, 9944) – is both an extension of modernity and a potential instrument for its undoing. As Edward Said asserted, the realization of anthropology's critical potential ultimately rests on its ability to reconcile

the almost insuperable discrepancy between a political actuality based on force, and a scientific and humane desire to understand the Other hermeneutically and sympathetically in modes not always circumscribed and defined by force. (Said 1989, 217)

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