

Polish Journal for American Studies

Yearbook of the Polish Association for American Studies

Vol. 16 (2022)



Thematic Section
Focus on American Cinema
Edited by Beata Zawadka



American
Studies
Center



INSTITUTE OF ENGLISH STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

Polish Journal for American Studies

Yearbook of the Polish Association for American Studies

Vol. 16 (2022)

Thematic Section

Focus on American Cinema

Edited by Beata Zawadka

Warsaw 2022

MANAGING EDITOR

Marek Paryż

EDITORIAL BOARD

Justyna Fruzińska, Izabella Kimak, Mirosław Miernik, Łukasz Muniowski, Jacek Partyka, Paweł Stachura

ADVISORY BOARD

Andrzej Dakowski, Jerzy Durczak, Joanna Durczak, Andrew S. Gross, Andrea O'Reilly Herrera, Jerzy Kutnik, John R. Leo, Zbigniew Lewicki, Eliud Martínez, Elżbieta Oleksy, Agata Preis-Smith, Tadeusz Rachwał, Agnieszka Salska, Tadeusz Sławek, Marek Wilczyński

REVIEWERS

Ewelina Bańka, Michał Choiński, Brygida Gasztold, Jacek Gutorow, Katarzyna Jaworska-Biskup, Paweł Jędrzejko, Anna Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska, Zbigniew Mazur, Arkadiusz Misztal, Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis, Alicja Piechucka, Elżbieta Rokosz, Irmina Wawrzyczek, Justyna Włodarczyk

TYPESETTING AND COVER DESIGN

Miłosz Mierzyński

COVER IMAGE

Jerzy Durczak, "Intrusion." By permission. [flickr.com/photos/jurek_durczak/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/jurek_durczak/)

ISSN 1733-9154

eISSN 2544-8781

Publisher

Polish Association for American Studies

Al. Niepodległości 22

02-653 Warsaw

paas.org.pl

Nakład 120 egz.

Wersją pierwotną Czasopisma jest wersja drukowana.

Printed by Sowa – Druk na życzenie

phone: +48 22 431 81 40;

www.sowadruk.pl

Table of Contents

ARTICLES

THEMATIC SECTION

Focus on American Cinema Edited by Beata Zawadka

Beata Zawadka

Contemporary American Cinema: Thrills to Narratives and Back 5

Constante Gonzáles Groba

Is It Gender or Is It Race? *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Its Film Adaptation 11

Małgorzata Martynuska

Intertextuality in Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown* 29

Grażyna Zygałdo

"We're missing the Latino attorney or astronaut as the hero": Latinx Presence in Hollywood in the 20th and 21st Centuries 43

VARIA

Justyna Fruzińska

Becoming Real to Oneself: Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne 61

Deniz Bozkurt-Pekár

The Hero Who Disappointed: Images of Lajos Kossuth and the Hungarian Revolution of 1848/49 in Livermore's *Zoë; or the Quadroon's Triumph* 71

Jacqueline Victoria Woroniec

We Have Always Lived in the Mind: The Freudian Topographic Model of the Mind as Depicted in Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962) 93

Łukasz Muniowski

How Much Do Bench Players Matter in the NBA? A Case Study of the Seattle SuperSonics/Oklahoma City Thunder 103

Paulina Ambroży and Alicja Kozłowska

Native American Gothic as Third Space: Stephen Graham Jones' *The Only Good Indians* 115

REVIEW ESSAYS

Elżbieta Wilczyńska

The Power of the Gaze and of the Lens: Britta Muszeika's Look at Sarah Winnemucca, Zitkala Ša, and Charles Eastman through the Critical Race Theory Magnifying Glass 135

Katarzyna Macedulska

A Walk in the White Spaces 149

REVIEWS

John Berryman, *The Selected Letters of John Berryman*;
Eric Hoffman, editor, *Conversations with John Berryman*
(Anna Warso)..... 157

Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich, *Między Freudem a Bogiem. Życie i twórczość Anne Sexton* [Between Freud and God: The Life and Work of Anne Sexton]
(Joanna Mąkowska) 160

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands. La Frontera: The New Mestiza. The Critical Edition*,
edited by Ricardo F. Vivancos-Pérez and Norma Elia Cantu
(Grażyna Zygałdo) 164

Jarosław Hetman, editor, *David Foster Wallace*
(Arkadiusz Misztal)..... 167

Łukasz Muniowski, *Narrating the NBA: Cultural Representations of Leading Players after the Michael Jordan Era*
(Tomasz Jacheć) 170

CONTRIBUTORS 177

Contemporary American Cinema: Thrills to Narratives and Back

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.01

When *The Life of an American Fireman* by Edwin Stanton Porter was released in 1903¹, the audience was still unprepared for the visual “tricks” this film offered and which later on became foundational for successful cinematic storytelling.² The 7-minute-long film depicts the rescue by a fireman of a woman and a child from a burning building. After showing the street action, the camera cuts several times from exterior to interior and back, thus demonstrating the workings of cross-cutting, at present one of the most common (continuity) editing devices.³ For Porter’s audience, however, the fact of the “street suddenly disappearing from the screen and being magically replaced by... the room” (Cousins 37) was confusing as, unlike in the theater, it required following the flow of action from one space to another. Thus, *The Life...* became a cinematic landmark in that it facilitated the transition of cinema (and cinematic reception), so far conceived in tableau-like terms, into a medium of pure kinetic action. In time, the conceptual scheme of this particular cinema would receive global recognition as “purely American.”

There is no doubt that the American cinema understood in the above terms occupied a special place in the global audiovisual culture of the twentieth century. American cinema owed its special place in the world of film to its peculiar storytelling style, today referred to as classical Hollywood narration, and commonly known as “zero style.”⁴ It defines the type of narrative logic which follows a cause-and-effect course and is therefore spatially and temporally coherent as well as continuous, linear, uniform, and psychologically motivated at that. The objective of such a narration is to provide the viewer with a representative image of reality, and thus to advance the illusion that spectators can directly partake of

-
- 1 The other film which Porter shot and released in the same year was the much acclaimed *The Great Train Robbery*; a production within the director’s oeuvre so far the most extensively examined in the literature on the subject. For an extended discussion of the film see e.g. Syska 148-54.
 - 2 The film’s total of nine shots is inclusive of several innovative cinematic techniques; a close-up or a tracking shot among them. In this Introduction, however, I am referring to only one of them, namely, cross-cutting, for this particular filmmaking device is believed to have revolutionised the new medium as a narrative platform (rather than a technological gimmick).
 - 3 Typically for the silent cinema, there exist several versions of the film: earlier versions show the street action in one shot only to move on to the interior action sequence. After Porter’s alleged having tuned the film, the latter offered itself as an intercut version, temporarily coherent yet fragmented spatially (Cousins 37-38). All of them, however, use cross-cutting as a continuity editing- (i.e. an equivalent of the verbal “and then”) and not parallel editing (“in the meantime”) device.
 - 4 The seminal work on this aspect of cinema still remains Bordwell’s *Narration in the Fiction Film*, see especially 156-204. In the Polish context, Ostaszewsk or Przylipek.

the fiction onscreen as if it were an extension of real life (Ostaszewski 31)—a very “literary” perception of audiovisuality. Hence, the global success of twentieth-century American cinema stemmed from the ability of its narrative style to perform cinematic reception as a “comfortably familiar”—for another medium-tested and, therefore, easy—practice.

This culturally snug, as it were, style of what may be approached as “global American” cinema, however, was not without its critics. For one, the overall unambiguity of classical Hollywood narration, evoking, on the part of the viewer, almost all-too-smooth an identification with the image projected could—and did—raise concerns about cinema’s possibilities of ideological manipulation. Suffice it to mention the in/famous 1915 production *The Birth of a Nation* by D.W. Griffith whose (allegedly) racist interpretation of the American North-South conflict of 1860 and its after effects contributed to the further limitation of African-American (and Jewish) cultural representation, and not only in cinema.⁵ The accusations of stereotyping in turn brought forth the far weightier critique of American cinema as unrealistic, this being visible via, for example, the temporal limitations—chronology and retrospection *only*—that the classical Hollywood narrative depended on.⁶ In time, therefore, American cinema began to be identified with an efficient colonizing force, in need of a compliant viewer so as to maintain its position of a cultural superpower on the global arena; a position on the wane since the end of the Cold War in the early 1980s.

Digital technology, changing both the aesthetics and the ethics of audiovisual culture, managed to reinvent a negative perception of American cinema as well. Computer generated image (CGI), eliminating representation as a basis for cinematic identification with diegesis, has introduced the viewer to the concept of film as a total world: a melange of unendingly manageable “tricks” which, taken together, advance cinema as one huge special effect, as it were. In such a world the efficacy of the cinematic medium as regards the presentation of its “(self-)sculpting” possibilities matters more than the photographic faithfulness to the “original”—which, in turn, also reinvents the reception concerns of contemporary cinematic audiences. Watching a film’s digital “motions,” chameleon-like and therefore always spectacular, viewers of contemporary American cinema are no longer in for the contemplation that the realistic cinema imposed. The depth of texture or the density of visual information and sound, mandatory in the digital cinematic context which favors immersion as a reaction from its audiences, prevents such a rational approach to films. Instead, viewers are supposed to get sensually engaged in the digital cinematic diegesis so as to be able to affectively establish how (virtually) real their corporal sensations are.

5 For a fine discussion of racism as slanted through melodrama which *The Birth...* uses to appease its ideological message see e.g. Williams 96-135. For a discussion of racism in the service of antisemitism which Griffith’s film propounds see e.g. Robinson 112-14.

6 Until the 1980s, the commencement of the postmodern revolution in cinema, only a few film productions, e.g. French New Wave director Alain Resnais’s films *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959) or *Last Year in Marienbad* (1961), experimented with the cinematic use of alternative, future, indefinite or simultaneous time.

Digitalization, therefore, has enabled American cinema to let go of its erstwhile “essence” i.e. being a global para-reality and begin functioning as the global reality’s primary styler. Hinged on the idea of a stylistically diversified (to the point of posing as transcultural) show, contemporary American films often appear to be all-impressive performances. It is, particularly, this cinema’s appeal directly to the senses, hence the body, that calls for acknowledging the medium in corporeal terms as well—and for responding to it accordingly, namely, also on the level of instincts and emotions rather than merely intellectually. The role of contemporary American cinema in the global cultural context is, in effect, not to be overestimated because it seems to linger there as para-humanity or else, to paraphrase the words of film theoreticians Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, a “meta-reflection on [post/human] agency” (185) as such.

*

This thematic section includes three texts which discuss various perceptions of American cinema. “Is It Gender or Is It Race?: *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Its Film Adaptation” by Constante González Groba shows how the silver screen version of Harper Lee’s timeless novel, filmed by Alan Pakula in 1962 in accordance with all the principles of a classical Hollywood story, actually reveals its unruly potential. Groba successfully demonstrates that each and every element of the film adaptation of the said book, for example, the way the characters are drawn, certain episodes of the main story, even the omitted parts of Lee’s novel, have been performed so that they appear different than in the original. Cinema adaptation, to be effective, must always crop up as divergent from its literary “original”; yet, with reference to Pakula’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which consciously shifts the book’s racial or gender focus, such divergence is also suggestive of a call for a greater cultural tolerance. The subtlety of this message, realized within the frames of zero-style narration, may also have been the reason why the film has been (mis)criticized as too timid as regards its views on culture.

Małgorzata Martynuska’s article “Intertextuality in Quentin Tarantino’s *Jackie Brown*” confirms the subversive potential of a Hollywood-made film adaptation. Martynuska shows how Tarantino’s film adaptation of Elmore Leonard’s crime novel *Rum Punch* (1992), realized as “semi-noir” and hence ambiguity-oriented, uses the characteristics of this particular cinematic style to cleverly reinvent the image of African-American culture. She claims that even though *Jackie Brown* seems to reproduce the clichés of the blaxploitation genre, back in the 1970s considered a bulwark of “true” African-American culture but actually continuing the devaluation of blackness, the film does so self-consciously. As such, it is more a tribute and a farewell to the cinematic blackness of the bygone days of classical Hollywood (and white power behind it); a form of creating the tension between oppositional cinematic “currencies” (in this case classical and postmodern), rather than a filmic advancement of any “objective” reality.

7 This, now all too obvious, rule of adapting literature to film cleverly demonstrated Gus Van Sant via his in/famous 1998 remake of Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960). Van Sant realised his film in the shot-for-shot manner—and earned a Golden Raspberry Award for it, thereby confirming cinematic adaptation (of literature) as not at all a recreative format.

That American cinema's capacity for transformation encompasses the entirety of its film-making context, from production to reception, is demonstrated in Grażyna Zygałło's article "We're Missing the Latino Attorney or Astronaut as the Hero": Latinx Presence in Hollywood in the 20th and 21st century." Zygałło looks at the history of the Latinx presence in the Hollywood cinema in order to discuss how American film industry retroactively copes with the stereotypes it once helped to spread. Regardless of the still existing gaps in the Latin participation in American cinematic culture, Hollywood has eventually embraced this ethnic group, as the author sees it, as a "fully-fledged members of American society telling their stories and wanting them to be heard and recognized." This, curiously, brings to mind the example of *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1996), the first fully digitalized filmic narration which allegorizes the transformation of cinema from the analogous medium to electronic. *Toy Story* begins with a Western-like scene, only it is toys that *act* there⁸; in Elsaesser and Hagener's view, such a scene performs as a confirmation, on the part of the film that, despite the cultural change the digital revolution brings about, the medium will stay the same (171). In view of Zygałło's article, therefore, does the instance of *Toy Story* suggest that that the contemporary—vast—Latinx representation in Hollywood is, too, a ruse? Or does that mean that Latinos/as and other ethnic groups act out the significance of contemporary Hollywood and, by extension, American cinema in the global context because it is the only way they are able to secure their own cultural interests? Zygałło leaves these questions open, thus suggestively pointing to our need to accept, as viewers, the shifting power relations within American cinema as its most tangible present-day cultural quality.

Works Cited

- Bordwell, David. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. Routledge, 1985.
- Cousins, Mark. *The Story of Film*. Pavilion, 2008.
- Elsaesser, Thomas and Malte Hagener. *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses*. Routledge, 2010.
- Ostaszewski, Jacek. "Nowe kino, nowa narracja". *Historia kina*. Vol. 3: "Kino epoki nowofalowej," edited by Tadeusz Lubelski, Iwona Sowińska, Rafał Syska, Universitas, 2015, pp. 23-63.
- . *Historia narracji filmowej*. Universitas, 2018.
- Przylipiak, Mirosław. *Kino stylu zerowego. Dwadzieścia lat później*. Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, 2018.
- Robinson, Cedric J. *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning. Blacks and the Regimes of Race in American Theatre and Film Before World War II*. U of North Carolina P, 2007.
- Syska, Rafał. "Początki kina amerykańskiego." *Historia kina*. Vol. I: "Kino nieme," edited by Tadeusz Lubelski, Iwona Sowińska, Rafał Syska, Universitas, 2009, pp. 148-154.

8 The word "act" provides the key to this interpretation; the toys in the film seem to be manipulated by a little boy—until he leaves the play room. It is only then the viewer realizes the toys have a life of their own. For a brilliant discussion of *Toy Story* in the context of digital cinema, see Elsaesser and Hagener 170-87.

Williams, Linda. *Playing the Race Card. Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson*. Princeton UP, 2002.

Films

The Birth of a Nation, dir. David Wark Griffith, 1915.

The Great Train Robbery, dir. Edwin Stanton Porter, 1903

Hiroshima Mon Amour, dir. Alain Resnais, 1959.

Jackie Brown, dir. Quentin Tarantino, 1997.

Last Year in Marienbad, dir. Alain Resnais, 1961.

The Life of an American Fireman, dir. Edwin Stanton Porter, 1903

To Kill a Mockingbird, dir. Alan Pakula, 1962.

Toy Story, dir. John Lassiter, 1996.

Is It Gender or Is It Race? *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Its Film Adaptation

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.02

Abstract: This article begins by exploring the national climate in which Lee's novel appeared, at the height of the civil rights movement in the South, which had a crucial impact on its composition and reception. The major film studios were not initially interested in the novel, but independent filmmakers Alan Pakula (producer) and Robert Mulligan (director), influenced by existentialism, felt attracted to stories with strong dramatization over the spectacular. The film is famously characterized by the voice-over narration of the adult Scout, which embodies a paradoxical duality of perspective: the events are seen from the perspective of the young Scout but described in the language of a mature and articulate adult Scout. In the novel, the destabilization of gender norms is the central theme, and the protagonist is clearly Scout going through the pains of growing up female in a South with very strict definitions of gender roles. This dimension is not prominent in the film version, which gave in to the demands of the Hollywood star system and made the girl's father, played by Gregory Peck, the main character, and made racism the main issue. The article concludes with a necessary reconsideration of Atticus Finch, subjected in recent years to the complaint that both the novel and the film convey the historically inaccurate message that heroic whites, instead of blacks, were the leaders of the anti-racist movements of the twentieth century. Atticus Finch no doubt remains tied to the accommodating values of his class and he never openly questions the structural racism of which he himself is part, but moral horizons of previous eras are often narrow in comparison with our own, and we should avoid the excesses of presentism and maintain the historical perspective that allows us to celebrate the courage and success of fictional white liberals like Atticus and real ones like Harper Lee herself, who could only speak as whites, not as black victims. Despite all its limitations, *Mockingbird* did contribute to making hearts and minds reconsider race in America, and it remains a socially and historically important film. Thus, we should at least acknowledge its merit in taking a stand during a period when many films avoided controversial racial matters.

Keywords: Harper Lee; *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Atticus Finch; Scout Finch; southern gender roles; race

Introduction: Reception and Historical Context

Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* became an instant success when it was published in 1960, and it has enjoyed continued popularity ever since. A year after its publication it had sold 500,000 copies and had been translated into ten languages. In the period from 1895 to 1975, *Mockingbird* was the seventh best-selling book in the US, and the third best-selling novel. It has never been out of print, and it remains highly popular in languages other than English. By 1982, more than 15,000,000 copies had been sold, and today the book remains popular among students and the general public. According to a survey of reading habits conducted in 1991 by the Book-of-the-Month Club and the Library of Congress, *Mockingbird* was second only to the Bible in being "most often cited as making a difference" in people's lives (Johnson 13-14). It won a number of important prizes, including the 1961 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. The novel was selected by three American book clubs for their readers: Readers' Digest

Condensed Books, the Literary Guild and the Book-of-the-Month Club (Shields 200). In a recent poll of both men and women conducted in Britain by the Bailey's Women's Prize for Fiction, *Mockingbird* topped the list of the twenty novels by women "that have most impacted, shaped or changed readers' lives" (Flood).

The national climate in which the novel appeared, at the height of the civil rights movement in the South, is of great historical significance and had a crucial impact on its composition and reception. Lee wrote the novel between about 1955 and 1958, during the beginnings of the civil rights era. As she started writing, the Supreme Court's decision on the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* case, in May 17, 1954, had provoked both dismay and excitement by declaring the policy of "separate but equal" in classrooms across the country to be unconstitutional. The ruling was perceived by many whites as a significant threat to the southern way of life and generated widespread opposition across the South. The arrest of Rosa Parks in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955, for refusing to give up her seat to a white person in a segregated bus was seen by many historians as the beginning of the end of segregation in the South. Her action generated a boycott of the Montgomery public transportation system that went on for more than a year and made the young local minister Martin Luther King Jr. nationally famous. Buses became fully integrated in Montgomery on December 21, 1956.

In the spring of 1956, when Harper Lee was writing about the problematic relations between blacks and whites during the Depression in Maycomb, Alabama, and the bus boycott by blacks was going on in Montgomery, Alabama, the nation's attention was attracted to the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, which Lee herself had attended. Two black women, Pollie Ann Myers and Autherine Lucy, were excluded from the university when it was discovered that they were black. The courts ordered that Autherine Lucy be readmitted, only to be expelled by the Board of Trustees (Johnson 12).¹

Over twenty years earlier, on March 25, 1931, nine black men were arrested in Scottsboro, Alabama, accused of raping two white women on a train. The Scottsboro trials would become famous in the history of civil rights and constituted one of the resonant events that focused the nation's attention on racial discrimination in the South. The women were poor whites of dubious virtue (at least one, Victoria Price, was a prostitute) who accused the black men of rape to avoid being arrested for vagrancy, as they and their two male companions and lovers had stowed away on the train. In spite of the overwhelming lack of physical evidence, the nine black men were convicted and one of them was subsequently shot by a deputy, like Tom Robinson in *Mockingbird*. The action of *Mockingbird*, as with the Scottsboro trials, takes place in the 1930s, when the South was still ruled by the tradition that its white women were to be protected from violation by an "inferior race." For many critics, such as Joseph Crespino, there is no doubt that "the Scottsboro trial's false accusations of rape influenced Harper Lee's depiction of Tom Robinson's trial" (12). She in fact denied that the novel had been influenced by the Scottsboro trials, although in a 1999 letter to Hazel Rowley she wrote that the case "will more than do as an example (albeit a lurid one)

1 The first black student to graduate from University of Alabama would not do so until 1963 (Palmer 58).

of deep-South attitudes on race vs. justice that prevailed at the time” (in Shields 118).² Patrick Chura has rightly pointed out the impossibility of *not* reading *Mockingbird* in the context of the struggle for civil rights. He highlights “the novel’s participation in racial and social ideology that characterized not the Depression era but the early civil rights era,” adding that “the novel is best understood as an amalgam or cross-historical montage, its ‘historical present’ diluted by the influence of events and ideology concurrent with its period of production” (1). According to Chura, “There is a long list of similarities both circumstantial and deeply ideological between the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till and Lee’s account of the conviction and murder of Tom Robinson” (2). Emmett Till was a 14-year-old black boy from Chicago who was brutally murdered by two white men in the Mississippi Delta on August 28, 1955, for allegedly whistling at a white woman in a store. An all-white, all-male jury declared the two murderers innocent after a 67-minute deliberation. The centrality of the trial of Tom Robinson in *Mockingbird* is inseparable from all the political passions in the air as Lee was finishing the novel in the late 1950s. The legal proceedings of the Scottsboro Boys case began in 1930 and ended in 1950, and the unsuccessful prosecution of the Emmett Till killers took place in 1955. As audiences were flocking to see *To Kill a Mockingbird* on the screen, in the summer of 1963, the civil rights movement reached another watershed. In June, Governor George Wallace attempted to oppose the enrolment of two black students, Vivian Malone and James Hood, at the University of Alabama (Shields 233), and in August the whole nation would see the March on Washington, culminating in the epoch-making “I have a dream” speech by Martin Luther King.

The story is told by Scout, an adult woman, as she looks back on her childhood during the period between her last summer before entering school and the Halloween of her third year in school. Scout is “almost six” (6) when the novel opens, and her brother Jem is ten. The action begins in 1933 and takes place primarily in 1935, during the Great Depression. The point of view is restricted to the child’s consciousness—the events of the past are related as the child Scout experiences them. The events are seen through the mind of a child, but the writing and reminiscing are done through the mind of an adult. As William Going says, “The reader comes to learn the true meaning of Maycomb through the eyes of a child who now recollects with the wisdom of maturity” (61). Maintaining a consistent narrative voice was a significant challenge for the author, and this was the main reason for her completely re-writing the manuscript three times.

Adapting *Mockingbird* to the Screen

The major film studios were not interested in *Mockingbird*, in spite of the enormous, instant success of the book. As Charles Shields says, it “lacked the tried-and-true ingredients that attracted movie audiences: shoot-’em-up action, a love story, danger, or a clear-cut ‘bad guy’” (192). Also, *Mockingbird* lacked the sensational spectacle of southern decay and sexual repression and dysfunction that had proved so appealing to audiences in southern films of the previous decade, such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958) and *The Long Hot Summer* (1958).

2 Hazel Rowley is the author of *Richard Wright: The Life and Times*.

Lee's literary agent, Annie Laurie Williams, sold the rights to Alan Pakula and Robert Mulligan who were in the process of forming a production company. They were both members of the post-war generation of filmmakers, sometimes called the "New York school," which included figures like John Frankenheimer and Sidney Lumet (Palmer 123). Schooled in directing for the theatre and television and with a worldview influenced by post-war existentialism, they felt attracted to stories with strong dramatization and showed a preference for intimate drama over the spectacular, with characters who face moral dilemmas while navigating tragic situations. Palmer places *Mockingbird* among the "small films" of the first two postwar decades that were the precursors of today's independent productions and which "were showcases not only for topical themes, but also for subtle forms of naturalist acting and literate scripts" (140). Pakula and Mulligan had recently teamed up for the successful *Fear Strikes Out* (1957), another film noted for its human interest and its emphasis on individuality and non-conformism.

Pakula insisted on getting Gregory Peck to play Atticus, and the actor, fascinated by the book and the role, joined the partnership with his own Brentwood Productions. Harper Lee declined the courtesy invitation to write the screenplay and Pakula chose the Texas-born playwright Horton Foote, urging him to compress the novel's three years into one. Another important change Foote made was to heighten the intensity of the book's critique of racism. Foote would later write, "I felt I understood the world of Harper Lee's novel and its people. The town of the novel was not unlike the town I was born and brought up in, and the time of the novel, the depression era of the 1930s, was a period I had lived through" ("Foreword" *xii*). In spite of all the necessary changes, like the elimination of episodes, minor characters and subplots, as well as the fundamental decision to compress the time scheme of the novel from three years to one, the film emphasized the two major story lines—the increasingly complex relationship of the children with the reclusive Boo Radley, which dominates the first half, and the trial of Tom Robinson, which dominates the second half. Lee was delighted with Foote's screenplay: "If the integrity of a film adaptation is measured by the degree to which the novelist's intent is preserved, Mr. Foote's screenplay should be studied as a classic" (in Shields 206).

With the exception of Gregory Peck, the chosen Hollywood star for the lead and whose role as Atticus would become inseparable from the man, Pakula and Mulligan preferred little known actors, who would be unrecognized by most audiences, "to retain the sense of discovery, which is so important in the novel," as Pakula said (Shields 210). For the roles of the Finch children two completely unknown actors were chosen, in keeping with Pakula and Mulligan's search for naturalness: Mary Badham and Phillip Alford, both from Birmingham, Alabama.³ Moreover, two new actors were selected, Collin Wilcox Paxton in the role of Mayella Ewell and Robert Duvall in the role of Boo Radley.⁴

3 Mulligan would say years later: "I did not want to work with Hollywood actors because the kids just lose their sense of childhood very quickly when they become professional actors at age 8 or 7 and I said, 'Let's find real kids'" (commentary to the 1998 Universal Home Video release).

4 To prepare for the role of the reclusive Boo, Duvall stayed out of the sun for six weeks and dyed his hair blonde, hoping it would give him an angelic look (Shields 211).

Much of the appeal and success of both the novel and the film is a result of the point of view of the child Scout. Foote acknowledges that in his dramatization he was influenced by R. P. Blackmur's review "Scout in the Wilderness" in which *Mockingbird* is compared to *Huckleberry Finn* and Scout to Huck: "His review strengthened my own feelings that we should discover the evil and hypocrisy in this small southern pastoral town along with and through the eyes of the children" ("Foreword" *xii-xiii*). Novels often exist in a state of conversation with other works, and the comparison of *Mockingbird* to novels like Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* and McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding*, in which we contemplate the incongruities of our society through the eyes of the child "outsider," is most pertinent here. If McCullers channeled through the tomboyish Frankie Addams her opposition to the white South's rigid dichotomies of race and gender, Harper Lee does very much the same through the fresh eyes of Scout.⁵ As Joseph Crespino observes, "Lee's decision to report Atticus's heroics through the perspective of his nine-year-old daughter is crucial in reinforcing the moral impulse that it is children who ultimately have the most at risk in the nation's struggle to end racial segregation" (20). The project of a future of racial and gender tolerance seems to be more effective and promising when it is supported by the stronger moral weight of the innocent child's voice.

In the film the unifying voice of the first-person narrator ties together the two narrative strands, thus expressing a clear intention on the part of the filmmakers to connect closely to the novel by providing an equivalent of the book's greatest formal achievement. This voice is conveyed though the use of the "voice-over" technique, which suggests the presence of somebody like the novel's narrator. The film opens with Scout and the first thing we hear is her adult voice speaking words which are very close to those in the novel. The voice-over narration of Jean Louise Finch, the adult Scout, is performed by actress Kim Stanley. Palmer remarks on "the paradoxical duality of perspective embodied in that voice, which sees events from young Scout's point of view but describes them in the language of the mature, articulate Jean Louise." As a result, "the narrator's precise location in time is undecidable, certainly psychologically impossible, as she appears to occupy some indeterminable space between her experiencing and her narrating selves, somehow bridging the gap of many years that separate them" (177).

The film premiered in Hollywood on Christmas Day of 1962 and in New York on Valentine's Day of 1963, and most reviews were favorable. In his review for the *New York Times*, Bosley Crowther objected to the handling of point of view: "It is, in short, on the level of adult awareness of right and wrong, of good and evil, that most of the action in the picture occurs. And this detracts from the camera's observation of the point of view of the child... [I]t leaves the viewer wondering precisely how the children feel. How have they really reacted to the things that affect our grown-up minds?" (Crowther). The film was nominated for eight Academy Awards and won three: best actor for Gregory Peck, best adapted screenplay for Horton Foote and best black and white art direction for Alexander Golitzen and Henry Bumstead. Not only was Atticus the role that gave Gregory Peck his only Academy Award as best actor, but also his most memorable role in a long and distinguished career, which included

5 Charles Shields informs that the press had likened Lee's Scout to McCullers's Frankie (192).

leading roles in action films like *The Big Country* (1958) and *The Guns of Navarone* (1961).⁶ In 1998 the American Film Institute ranked *Mockingbird* 34th in the list of the “100 best American films of all time” (Holcomb 35).⁷

The Mockingbird Image

In both the novel and the film the central image is the mockingbird, and Tom Robinson and Boo Radley are the prominent metaphorical mockingbirds alluded to in the title. Unable to mock the roles society prescribes for them, they suffer the consequences of their marginal position in society. Mockingbirds are here symbols of innocence and goodness. They do no harm, so it would be a sin to kill them, as Atticus tells Scout and Jem when he gives them air-guns for Christmas: “I’d rather you shot at tin cans in the back yard, but I know you’ll go after birds. Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit ’em, but remember it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird.”⁸ This is the first time that Scout has heard her father say it was a sin to do something, so she goes to Miss Maudie Atkinson for an explanation, and the latter says, “Mockingbirds don’t do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don’t eat up people’s gardens, don’t nest in cornercribs, they don’t do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That’s why it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird” (98).⁹ Miss Maudie’s explanation illuminates the symbolic significance of the mockingbird in a novel about kindness and tolerance. One of the things the children discover is that the supposed monster Boo Radley is actually the kind “mockingbird” who metaphorically sings his heart out for his “children” when they need him and is the opposite of the “evil” person he is thought to be. At the end, Scout will become conscious of the connection between Boo and the mockingbird when Sheriff Tate refuses to put Boo on trial for killing Bob Ewell. He thinks this would be “a sin” and Scout understands: “Well, it’d be sort of like shootin’ a mockingbird, wouldn’t it?” (302). The ironic Gothic of Boo Radley, rendered a potential Frankenstein’s monster by gossip and the children’s fantasy, has effectively saved those children from the really dangerous Gothic threat of Bob Ewell’s redneck depravity. Ewell and his violent racism are the true monsters, but the children are more attracted to the supposed monstrosity of Boo, more appealing because it remains for them a secret and a mystery to discover.

In the film the children see Ewell for the first time when they go to the courthouse, drawn there by the fantasy of the “bat-infested” basement where they imprisoned Boo after he attacked his father “and he almost died from the mildew”

6 After reading the novel, at Pakula’s suggestion, Peck felt that Atticus was the character he was most suited to play by inclination and experience: “In twenty years of making movies, I never had a part that came close to being the real me until Atticus Finch” (in Palmer 161). After *Mockingbird* it became impossible to separate Peck from the role, because he had become Atticus. This was not a role in which he was simply a star playing a handsome lover or a man of action, but one in which he could best express his own character.

7 In 2001 *Mockingbird* was listed as the 29th best film of all time in a poll by the Internet Movie Database (Ebert).

8 Harper Lee. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. London: Vintage, 2005, p. 98. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

9 In the film it is Atticus who says these words (see Foote 33).

(Foote 20). Boo's heroic intervention at the end is a decisive turning point for Scout and it persuades her permanently of the benign resources present in even the most wounded human nature. Scout, Jem and Dill¹⁰ have always seen their neighbor Arthur Radley, whom they re-name Boo, as a stereotype, as one of the character types in the Gothic literature they read. By the end of the novel and the movie, he has shed his role as this stereotype to become a real human being, and consequently the name Boo is dropped together with the one-dimensional image of the stereotype. Thus Scout now addresses him respectfully as Mr. Arthur. He is no longer the Other that simultaneously attracts and horrifies, the one on whom the children project those dark forces and desires that they do not recognize in their ordinary lives but in which they are somehow implicated, as they unknowingly share in their society's impulse to hurt and exclude others. But in the novel Boo returns to his secluded marginality for ever: "I never saw him again" (304), Scout says. Through their obsession to see into the secrecy of Boo, whose presence is so important in the film despite not being physically present until the very end, the children learn about themselves and about their society. As Rebecca Best says, "Through Boo and their quest to understand him and why he stays shut up inside, the children come to understand more of their own society, the society that created Boo by ignoring the abuse to which his father subjected him" (550). Unfortunately, Boo's mockingbird status does not afford him a place in a classist society.

Tom Robinson is another kind, innocent mockingbird, and the title of the novel refers to him most specifically. He is convicted in spite of being ostensibly innocent, later to be unfairly and senselessly killed, which makes his marginality irrevocable and absolute. Mr. Underwood, another man of the New South who sides with Atticus, and one of the characters missing from the film, describes Tom's death in the *Maycomb Tribune* as "the senseless slaughter of songbirds by hunters and children" (262). The imagery of the mockingbird develops the theme of inhumanity and lack of compassion in the society of Maycomb and reveals an adult world of cruelty that the children are initiated into; it also helps to show the best in heroic individuals like Atticus who shows understanding of the plight of these mockingbirds and tries to liberate human birds trapped in a cage of conventions that oppress and destroy. Ironically, it is the implausibly stereotypical goodness and kindness of Tom Robinson that seals his fate in the courtroom when he imprudently acknowledges, "I felt sorry for her [Mayella]" (Foote 65). The look of Atticus in this scene clearly expresses his realization of the consequences of the "crime" of feeling sorry for—and potentially superior to—a white person.

Fighting Racism

Although the reader perceives Atticus's heroism from the beginning, he is initially not quite a hero in the eyes of his children. Affected by their own society's obsession with rigid gender roles, early in the novel Scout and Jem are worried about the manliness of their middle-age widowed father. Atticus has not remarried, he does not hunt like other men, nor does he "play poker or fish or drink or smoke," and he never physically

10 Dill Harris is a six-year-old boy from Meridian, Mississippi, who comes to spend his summers in Maycomb with his Aunt Rachel, who becomes Aunt Stephanie in the film. He is generally thought to be based on Truman Capote, who had been Harper Lee's friend since childhood.

punishes his children. As Scout tells, “Atticus was feeble: he was nearly fifty,” and he did not “do anything that could possibly arouse the admiration of anyone” (97). In both the novel and the film the crucial turning point in this respect is the scene in which Atticus shoots the rabid dog—he stands alone confronting madness to save his family and his town, just as he will do later on when he defends Tom Robinson from the racial madness of Bob Ewell and his kind. By shooting the mad dog, which symbolizes southern white racism, Atticus becomes a hero in the eyes of his children and asserts the power and the manliness that he will later prove when he risks his life in facing a lynch mob and his social reputation in defending a black man.

In both the novel and the film, the point of view is Scout’s, and in all the events related to the trial of Tom Robinson she learns about race relations, the major issue in the second half of the film. African Americans are stereotyped as inferior, immoral and lazy in a community that will not give them status as full human beings and responsible adults. As Atticus says in his exhortation to the all-white jury, the entire prosecution of Tom Robinson is based on “the assumption, the evil assumption, that all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral beings, all Negro men are not to be trusted around our women” (Foote 67). This assumption is the flip side of the racial coin that establishes the absolute principle that all white women are virtuous and always to be trusted when a black male is accused of sexual malfeasance.

The Maycomb community is united by assumptions and rituals in which common scapegoats are attacked. They denounce Hitler’s use of the Jews as scapegoats in Germany but they remain blind to their own use of blacks as scapegoats who carry the blame for all the ills in their society. Tom Robinson is convicted of rape in a trial which constitutes a mockery of justice and then shot by a guard, and whereas the white society completely forgets about him, it remains worried about injustice abroad. In chapter 26, Scout’s teacher Miss Gates talks to the students about the damage of prejudice against the Jews in Germany and writes “DEMOCRACY in large letters” (266) across the blackboard, telling her students that “We are a democracy and Germany is a dictatorship” (267). Unable to perceive that the motive behind Hitler’s persecution is racial, she says that the Jews “are a deeply religious people.... [S]o maybe [Hitler] doesn’t like them for that reason” (267). Scout is perceptive enough to realize that her school is teaching hypocrisy and uncritical conformity rather than authentic knowledge, and she associates the episode with a conversation she overheard earlier in which Miss Gates tells Miss Stephanie Crawford that “it’s time somebody taught ’em [blacks] a lesson, they were gettin’ way above themselves, an’ the next thing they think they can do is marry us” (268). Scout cannot understand “how can you hate Hitler so bad an’ then turn around and be ugly about folks right at home?” (268). During the 1930s and early 1940s southern racial practices and policies led many to associate the South with European fascism. A great deal of discourse argued explicitly that racial oppression in the South implicated the whole nation and rendered inconsistent its claims of opposing fascist racism. The writer and activist Lillian Smith, a contemporary of Harper Lee’s from Georgia, did all she could to shock white southerners into the realization that in the end they were no different from the Nazis. She wrote that in both cases the mythic mind, when it is “uncontrolled by self-criticism, uncontrolled by ethical ideas, and instead urged on by primitive myths of blood and sex and race” (82), produces only

rigid barriers that deny many people their humanity. Smith persistently exposed the hypocrisy of a culture that put so much energy into keeping blacks “in their place” while sending them to fight racial hatred in foreign countries. And, as the racial agenda of the Nazis became more blatant, some southern white supremacists, including the Ku Klux Klan and the infamous Mississippi senator Theodore Bilbo, expressed their support for the policies of Hitler, which confirmed the accusations of Melvin Tolson, a columnist for the *Washington Tribune*, that the U.S. harbored “anti-Negro fascists” (123).¹¹

In the American South, gender and sexuality have always been entangled with racial issues. In the novel, famous for its defense of social tolerance, we find a sustained parallel between the resistance to rigid racial boundaries and the opposition to drastic differentiations between the sexes, as well as a rejection, especially on the part of Scout, of authority figures who impose rigorous definitions. Generally the characters who are intolerant of sexual otherness are the most rigid enforcers of racial discrimination. In the novel, the destabilization of gender norms is a central theme and the protagonist is clearly Scout going through the pain of growing up as a female in a South with very strict definitions of gender roles and of the behavior acceptable for girls. This dimension of the novel is not prominent in the film version, which gave in to the demands of the Hollywood star system and made the girl’s father, played by Gregory Peck, the main character, and made racism the main issue. Only 15% of the novel deals with Tom Robinson’s trial, whereas it occupies 30% of the 129-minute film. According to Dean Shackelford, this is “not surprising considering it was made during what was to become the turbulent period of the 1960s when racial issues were of interest to Hollywood and the country as a whole” (103).

Scout’s Tomboyism

Scout consistently prefers overalls to dresses, and for Christmas she wants an air-gun rather than a doll. In the novel, one of the main problems she faces is the oppressiveness of the conventional conceptions of what a girl and a lady should be. The pressure begins fairly early, when both her aunt Alexandra and her teacher insist that Scout should use her gender-specific name Jean Louise instead of the boyish and gender-neutral Scout. Throughout she is seen to be engaged in a fight against the scrutiny and discipline of the community and part of her extended family, who try incessantly to make her abandon her tomboyish ways and to take up forms of behavior more appropriate for a young southern girl of the 1930s. The full feminist energies of the novel, although merely hinted at in the film, were clearly perceived by Mary Badham, the actress who played Scout: “Scout was definitely not the little girl type. She was very out there and not the little southern demure little creature that everyone wanted her to be. She was fire and brimstone out there and spoke her mind. And Atticus was willing to let her be who she needed to be” (“Scout Remembers”).

Aunt Alexandra, the paragon of white southern femininity, does not feature in the film. In the novel she moves into the Finch household during the summer of

11 As Stephen Whitfield notes, “The film adaptation makes no reference whatsoever to Nazism and therefore muffles the issue of double standards when the topic of persecution comes up” (67).

Tom Robinson's trial, to give the motherless Scout "some feminine influence" (138) and to directly take charge of her socialization into a proper lady. Scout deeply resents the threat of the walls of this "pink cotton penitentiary" (148) closing in on her. Scout's overalls are in fact a point of continuous friction, as Aunt Alexandra enforces normative mappings of gender onto biological sex: "Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breaches: when I said I could do nothing in a dress, she said I wasn't supposed to be doing things that required pants" (88). Later in the novel, Scout ratifies that "I would never be interested in clothes" (138). She never agrees with her aunt's ideas that little girls should play with tea sets, and she never plays with girls, likes to fight with her fists, and takes part in the kind of games that require physical out-of-door activity and which are traditionally associated with boys, like tree climbing and tire rolling. From the boys she plays with, Scout learns that "being a girl" is something negative, not the role she would like to assume. In the scene from the film in which Scout goes with Jem and Dill to see through the window of Boo Radley's house, she is forced to repress her fear and caution, due to Jem's humiliating observation, "I swear, Scout, you act more like a girl all the time" (Foote 24). Being a girl is the equivalent of inferiority and exclusion from the interesting things in life.

Aunt Alexandra exists in counterpoint with the widow Miss Maudie Atkinson, who does appear in the film, though in a diminished role. She is present in the highly significant scene in which we see Scout uncomfortably wearing a white dress for her first day of school and "feel[ing] very awkward in it" (Foote 30). Jem laughs at her but Atticus and Miss Maudie feel sympathy for the anguished awkwardness of the tomboy forced to squeeze her body into the clothing of conventional femininity, and exclaiming, "I still don't see why I have to wear a darn old dress" (Foote 30). Miss Maudie is the novel's most sympathetic white adult female character, and Scout's preferred model of southern womanhood. Described as "a chameleon lady who worked in her flower beds in an old straw hat and men's coveralls, but after her five o'clock bath she would appear on the porch and reign over the street in magisterial beauty" (46), Miss Maudie is both masculine and feminine, and always tolerant of transgressive performances of gender. She instructs Scout in how to play the social game and pass as a lady, in how to appropriate what Holly Blackford terms "a double life as chameleon lady/morphodite" (288).¹² But the film does not deal with Miss Maudie's androgynous characteristics or

12 A comic pronunciation of the word "hermaphrodite," "morphodite" becomes Scout and Miss Maudie's comic designation for those who are neither male nor female, or are both. It might very well be an intertext to the passage in Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding* about the Half-Man Half-Woman, "a morphidite and a miracle of nature" (27) who both attracts and terrifies the tomboyish Frankie. McCullers, famous for her female characters who oppose drastic differentiation between the sexes as well as the imposition of rigid racial boundaries, actually noticed the resemblances between *Mockingbird* and *Member* and, as Lee's biographer observes, "The surface similarities of the two novels were not lost on McCullers, either, who commented acidly about Lee to a cousin, 'Well, honey, one thing we know is that she's been poaching on my literary preserves'" (Shields 192). One of the reasons why the major studios were not interested in *Mockingbird* was the commercial failure of the film version of McCullers's *Member*, and some reviews noted similarities between nine-year-old Scout and twelve-year-old Frankie (Shields 192).

include Scout seeking advice from her on issues of gender. Critics tend to think that the primary function of Miss Maudie's presence in the film is to indicate the widower Atticus's opening up to the possibility of a heterosexual relationship. In the film's opening sequence she joins the Finches for breakfast in their house, and for Barton Palmer "this brief moment of 'normal' life does little beyond establishing Atticus's heterosexual *bona fides* and his easy acceptance of what changes might come from sharing his life and children with a woman" (169).

Scout's other ideal person is her own father, Atticus, who is tolerant of both racial and sexual otherness. His heroism has nothing to do with guns, and he does not resort to male violence to resolve conflicts. If Scout's ideal woman, Miss Maudie, is both masculine and feminine, her ideal man, Atticus, seems equally androgynous. It is not clear if Scout's identification with him is due to his maleness, to a male power and freedom unattainable for her as a woman in the backward South, or if it is due to his androgynous nature, his being both a mother and a father, his feminine passivity, his rejection of masculine violence and a false sense of honor. He never forces on Scout the traditional stereotypes of the southern female. Indeed, he sometimes ridicules the women's attitudes and is well aware of the tragic consequences of the connection between the myths of southern femininity and white supremacy. Dean Shackelford explains Scout's attraction to Atticus: "In a world in which men seem to have the advantages and seem to be more fairminded and less intolerant than women with their petty concerns and superficial dress codes, why should she conform to the notion of Southern ladyhood?" (112). The film stresses Scout's closeness to her father throughout, and maybe this is better understood by viewers who have read the novel in which the issue of Scout's gender is so important.

In the three years spanned by the novel Scout has learnt many things, including that a lady in the best sense is the one who can be tolerant, polite and brave, and her unconventionality augurs progress in the South. Kathryn Seidel notes that neither Calpurnia, the Finches' black maid, nor Atticus "want her to be a 'lady' in Aunt Alexandra's traditional southern sense of the word but rather in a more Stoic sense, as someone whose primary concern is not clothing or costume jewelry but personal qualities" (86). Scout is to a certain extent a very young lady at the end of the film, but the complex process of her relationship with the opposing models of Aunt Alexandra and Miss Maudie is not explained and, as Bradley Shaw says, the film "leaves behind the cultural complexity of this socially-constructed role of Southern woman" (457).

White Femininity and Racial Supremacy

Atticus is well aware of the tragic consequences of the connection between the myths of southern white femininity and white supremacy, an issue dealt with at length in the second half of the film, which covers the trial and conviction of Tom Robinson, falsely accused of raping Bob Ewell's daughter Mayella. One day Atticus tells his sister Alexandra that he is "in favor of Southern womanhood as much as anybody, but not for preserving polite fiction at the expense of human life" (161), and of course the African American Tom Robinson is the innocent mockingbird unfairly convicted and later killed because of the myth of southern womanhood. We do not know the true

depth of Scout's awareness of the sinister connections between race and gender, but she surely senses something, particularly during the courtroom section of the film, in which she watches everything from behind the rails of the balcony where she sits with the town's African Americans. The rails suggest not only the bars of the prison in which Tom Robinson was put but also the metaphorical prison of the past of the South whose presence still shapes the attitudes of the inhabitants of Maycomb, and influences the characters and action of the narrative.

Atticus knows only too well that the past of racial oppression and the aristocratic pretensions of genteel white families continue to determine present attitudes, and thus the winter before the trial he tells Scout that he will probably lose Tom Robinson's case, "Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started" (82). The attitudes of whites toward blacks in Maycomb have been shaped by slavery and Reconstruction and they have not changed much. Not only the uneducated rural poor but also the most prominent citizens are shaped by the long tradition of racism. When Scout is made to attend the meeting of the ladies of the Missionary Society, which is part of Aunt Alexandra's "campaign to teach me to be a lady" (249), the author uses the girl's innocent outlook to subtly expose the dogmatism of these women with respect to gender issues and to relate it to a hypocritical Christianity that cares about "those poor Mrunas" who live "in that jungle" (251) and need Christian salvation, while ignoring the suffering blacks in their own town. These ladies continue to fight the Civil War and they are furious at the hypocrisy of Yankees with respect to the treatment of blacks. As Mrs. Merriweather says, "People up there set 'em free, but you don't see 'em settin' at the table with 'em" (254). Aunt Alexandra opposes the idea of Scout, who feels attracted by the otherness in Calpurnia, visiting the house of this black "mother" who raised her in order to know more about her life. Alexandra feels threatened with contamination from those that live a dark and different life, and she reflects the obsession of the white South with the absolute separation of whiteness and blackness, which harms both blacks and whites.

Mrs. Lafayette Dubose, described in chapter 11 of the novel, appears in only one scene in the film, sitting "on the front porch in her wheelchair" (Foote 13) accompanied by the black girl who takes care of her. Very old and sick and living her last days in a broken romantic world enveloped in clouds of morphine, she is an adequate representative of the Old South symbolized by her "old and run-down house" (Foote 13). She is as racist as the whites at the bottom of society who are known as "white trash," and she often chides Scout for not dressing and behaving like a proper young lady. This is only very partially conveyed in the film when Scout is reprimanded for poor manners when she passes Mrs. Dubose's house and says "hey" instead of "good afternoon" (Foote 14). In the novel, when Atticus makes Jem go to Mrs. Dubose and read to her, she significantly chooses Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*.¹³ Through this minor character, Lee is exposing the outmoded Old Order that used to revere the historical romances of Scott,

13 The film went through two consecutive re-edits; at the insistence of Gregory Peck, the children's scenes were cut down to give more prominence to Atticus. Pakula said later, "It just tore my heart out to lose the sequence [where Jem reads aloud to Mrs. Dubose, who is dying]" (in Shields 218). In a review of the DVD Legacy Series edition of 2005, Glenn Erickson says that Ruth White "originally had a much larger role [as Mrs. Dubose] that was cut down."

deriving from them some of those illusions of grandeur that would prove to be so self-destructive. In *Life on the Mississippi*, Mark Twain accuses Scott of “set[ing] the world in love with dreams and phantoms” and of doing “measureless harm” to the American South: “But for the Sir Walter disease, the character of the Southerner ... would be wholly modern, in place of modern and medieval mixed, and the South would be fully a generation further advanced than it is.” According to Twain, Walter Scott had such an influence on the antebellum South “that he is in great measure responsible for the war” (500-501). Ironically, a woman like Mrs. Dubose who considers blacks to be “trash” (111) is totally dependent on her black nurse Jessie. This is yet another instance of the tragic unawareness on the part of southern whites of how much they lose by rejecting blackness, and with it so many vital forces that they suppress in themselves.

In the long courtroom section that occupies most of the second half of the film, we see, through the eyes of Scout, the complex intersections of race, gender and class at work in this society. The culture of segregation resulted in a collective racial identity that narrowed the scope for class politics. Whiteness inhibited the natural expression of class divisions in the South, as the white southerner, no matter what misfortunes might befall him, would never be a “nigger.” Poor white Mayella Ewell is also a woman of dubious morals, like the two women who initially accused the Scottsboro boys: everybody knows that she is the victim of her father’s beatings and sexual abuse and that she attempts to break the taboo that forbids sex with black men and later makes Tom pay for her own sexual transgression. She takes advantage of the social code that a white woman’s word is always going to be taken before that of a black man, and that in the case of sexual assault by a black male the white woman is always going to be assumed to be chaste, no matter how strong the evidence to the contrary or how low she is in social estimation. In the 1930s the South was still dominated by the taboo of race mixing and the presumption that its white women are to be protected from violation by an “inferior race.” Most whites clung to the myth of the black beast rapist, according to which after the collapse of the “moral order” of slavery, black men reverted to their African base instincts, the most prevalent of which was their insatiable sexual appetite, especially for white women. After emancipation and Reconstruction, the white version of southern history made the white male into the new enemy. This enemy enabled white men to fulfill their role as protectors of white women. The elevation of the “pure” white woman in turn elevated white men to the noble role of protector, at the same time establishing the necessity of keeping blacks “in their place.” Thus did sexuality forge a link between gender and race: white men became protectors of “innocent” white women, threatened as they were seen to be by sexually aggressive black males. The major coincidence between Tom’s case and those of the Scottsboro Boys and Emmett Till resides precisely in the pernicious obsession with the defense of southern white womanhood supposedly threatened by the inherent depravity of black males. As Leon Litwack observes, “The Negro as beast became a fundamental part of the white South’s racial imagery” (302) during the segregation period and “White women often fed the obsession with black sexuality by depicting themselves as virtually under siege” (Litwack 304), like Mayella does in Lee’s novel, and as Carolyn Bryant, Emmett Till’s accuser, also did.

In both the novel and the film we see clearly how the low-class Ewells savor the invigorating drug of white supremacy that gives them automatic superiority thanks

to the most precious possession of a white skin. In the episode of the attempted lynching of Tom Robinson by the poor white farmers and later during the interrogation of Bob and Mayella Ewell, the film gives the impression, so frequent in popular media renditions of southern society, that the ugliest acts of racism are carried out only by the lowest members of the white social scale, which automatically exonerates the elites and leaves unexplained the genesis of the situation. The novel is much more critical of institutional racism and the hypocrisy of “respectable” whites than the film, which blames it almost exclusively on the “redneck” Ewells. Allison Graham notes how the “cracker” or “redneck” “has functioned in popular culture as a signifier of racial ambiguity, with his class-bound vulgarity consistently representative of contaminated whiteness” (13). No matter how deeply the “respectable” whites despise the alcoholism and violent racism of Bob Ewell, they make a pretense of believing his false accusation, as the survival of the system is at stake: in spite of being far down the social and moral scale, his false accusations set in motion the destructive racial solidarity that destroys Tom Robinson. The refusal to admit white inferiority or perfidy, or the irrepressible sexual urges in white women, least of all the possibility of a white woman lusting after a black man, leads to Mayella’s lies being taken as true, and makes Tom Robinson collectively, if not individually, guilty, because he is a member of the subjected race and was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Ewell is, in Graham’s words, “the redneck [that] can be counted on to perform his time-honored, generic duty: roar the hatred that his betters will only whisper, and then die at their hands in a near-mythic purgation of the race” (13). Thus most of the evils that plague the society portrayed in the film spring from the degeneracy of the redneck Ewells rather than from the repressive racial and sexual codes that govern a society most of whose betters are implicated in its despicable practices.

Atticus tells Scout the “single trick” to “get along a lot better with all kinds of folks”: “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it” (Foote 35).¹⁴ But Atticus never extends his compassion and understanding to Bob Ewell¹⁵ or his luckless daughter Mayella, as if they were irremediably beyond the reach of his compassion and tolerance. At the end, neither Atticus nor anyone else shows any concern about the future of the Ewell orphaned children. In the courtroom section, we see a class battle being fought, with the camera angle consistently placing the evil “white trash” Bob Ewell below everyone else, crouching in his chair and looking defiantly at Atticus in his confidence that playing the sex-and-race card is going to win the day for him. When he leaves the witness stand and purposely bumps into Atticus, he provokes the laughter of part of the crowd, but Atticus soon reaffirms his class superiority by asking, “Now, Mr. Ewell, ... can you read and write?” (Foote 58).

14 In the novel, Scout reports that “One time [Atticus] said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them” (305), which also appears in the voice-over that closes the film.

15 As Bradley Shaw notes, his ironic full name Robert E. Lee Ewell “reminds us that he represents the worst of post-bellum cultural decay—an angry farmless yeoman farmer whose infrequently washed white skin is his only cultural capital” (451).

Reconsidering Atticus

In recent years *Mockingbird* has become engulfed in the acrimonious racial debate, and Atticus Finch has been attacked from different sides, by literary and film critics, educators and lawyers, both black and white. Several individuals and associations have demanded to have the novel removed from school reading lists, as if curricula should shortsightedly avoid all controversial issues (see Johnson 14-17). They oppose the book because the word “nigger” is used 48 times and because the portrayal of blacks, like Tom, whose name is reminiscent of the virtuous suffering Uncle Tom, as innocent and harmless mockingbirds that “don’t do one thing but sing their hearts out for us,” is the opposite of a discourse of liberation. According to Isaac Saney, “What these lines *say* is that Black people are useful and harmless creatures—akin to decorous pets—that should not be treated brutally” (102). He sees this as reminiscent of some pious abolitionists who instead of postulating the equality of blacks argued that they should be treated with kindness, like one’s horse or dog: “By foisting this mockingbird image on African Americans, the novel does not challenge the insidious conception of superior versus inferior ‘races,’ the notion of those meant to rule versus those meant to be ruled” (Saney 102). The basic argument is that the novel does not really attack racism but only the most violent excesses of the racial social order. Another complaint is that the novel and the film convey a historically inaccurate message: that heroic whites like Atticus Finch, instead of blacks, were the leaders of the anti-racist movements of the twentieth century. Richard Yarborough states that in *Mockingbird* “black characters exist largely as tools to have white characters successfully test their ethics” and that this makes it into one of those narratives in which “the black character is the victim and he or she becomes the test upon which any struggle for moral satisfaction on the part of the white savior is waged” (in Martelle; qtd. in Palmer 231).

One of the unavoidable issues here is who in American society has the authority to speak on racial issues. One of the prerogatives African Americans claimed in the civil rights movement was that of becoming the subjects in the analysis of the racial divide and in the demands to end racial inequality. As Crespino says, “The early success of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Atticus Finch’s warm reception can be explained in part by the way Finch embodies what historians have called the ‘liberal consensus’ of mid-twentieth-century America” (11). The liberal views that Harper Lee expresses through Atticus are obviously too timid and limited for our age and render both the novel and the film defenseless against the accusation that her message was that racial change could only occur through the agency of elite southern white liberals like Atticus Finch, who in a sense becomes as much a stereotype of the white liberal hero as Bob Ewell is a stereotype of the racist redneck. In the courtroom scene the verdict is received in submissive silence by the blacks and at the end, as Atticus walks down the aisle, “the Negroes in the balcony start to rise until all are standing” and the black Reverend Sykes urges a distracted Scout, “Miss Jean Louise, stand up, your father’s *passin*” (Foote 69). This speaks volumes about the unconscious paternalism of white liberals and of their incapacity to acknowledge the power of blacks, who here rise as one body, as if they had no individuality.¹⁶ In the well-known statement of the most

16 Roger Ebert says that “The problem here, for me, is that the conviction of Tom Robinson is

radical outgrowth of the civil rights movement, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (1967), Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton ask, “How fully can white people free themselves from the tug of the group position—free themselves not so much from overt racist attitudes in themselves as from a more subtle paternalism bred into them by the society, and perhaps more important, from the conditioned reaction of black people to their whiteness?” (28; qtd. in Crespino 22).

It is true that Atticus Finch remains tied to the accommodating values of his class,¹⁷ that he never openly questions the structural racism of which he himself is part or the dominant discourse of the difference between the races, and that his treatment of blacks is paternalistic. But moral horizons of previous eras are often narrow in comparison with our own; we cannot expect that a moral position which is obvious to us in the present should have been equally obvious to those in the past, nor should we consider ourselves implicit heroes because of our moral position on issues already settled long ago. As Andrew Delbanco says, “History is lived by people ignorant of the future, and surely it is a hubris of our own to dismiss all who, living in the darkness of [previous eras], made a different calculation” (54). Atticus is not the ideal model of racial heroism for our times, but we should avoid the excesses of presentism and maintain the historical perspective that allows us to celebrate the courage and success of fictional white liberals like Atticus and real ones like Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith or Harper Lee herself, who could only speak as whites, not as black victims.¹⁸ Lee satirized the racism of her native South in a humorous magazine that she edited at the University of Alabama in 1946-47 (Johnson xi-xii), and from the age of 24 made the far more liberal New York City her adopted home. White liberalism does deserve some credit for the attack on discrimination at a time when African Americans had limited political power.

In view of Atticus Finch’s fall from grace due to his obvious inadequacies and limitations, Crespino suggests “that we reassign *To Kill a Mockingbird* from English class to history class and that rather than dismissing Atticus we deconstruct him” (28). I think it is better to keep *Mockingbird* in the literature and film classes, including the necessary creative deconstruction, and paying attention to how novels and films are affected by the particular circumstances of their composition and by their contemporary reception, as well as to how the passage of time changes our sensibilities and perceptions. While acknowledging that Atticus Finch acted heroically in the drastically segregated 1930s Alabama, the modern reader has every right to expose the limits of his heroism, and his or her reaction will obviously be different from that of readers or viewers in the early 1960s, when Atticus was still in some respects a model of bravery and a man ahead of his times. No text can surpass *Mockingbird*

not the point of the scene, which looks right past him to focus on the nobility of Atticus Finch.” Equally incredible is the scene at Tom’s house in which Bob Ewell is not attacked or even insulted by Tom’s friends and relatives.

17 Atticus explains to his son Jem, “You and Jean Louise... are not from run-of-the-mill people... you are the product of several generations’ gentle breeding... and... you should try to live up to your name” (144).

18 Ralph McGill (1898-1969) was an anti-segregationist editor and publisher of the *Atlanta Constitution* newspaper.

for providing the material for fruitful debate in our age of pluralism and skeptical dissension. Nothing is more motivating and thought-provoking than the promotion of critical readings that expose the internal contradictions of characters and books or films with such a wide cultural reach as that of Atticus and *Mockingbird*. And the many-mindedness of earnest students of fiction and film should be broad enough to perceive the potential of *Mockingbird* to instruct us about the inadequacies of white southern liberalism in the 1930s—and the early 1960s, for that matter—while at least acknowledging its merit in taking a stand during a period when many films avoided controversial racial matters. In spite of all its limitations, *Mockingbird* did contribute to making hearts and minds reconsider race in America, and it remains a socially and historically important film, released only 11 months before the assassination of President Kennedy definitely put an end to the complacency of the postwar years, that period Robert Lowell described as “the tranquilized Fifties” (2535).

Works Cited

- Best, Rebecca H. “Panopticism and the Use of ‘the Other’ in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.” *Mississippi Quarterly*, vol. 62, nos. 3-4, 2009, pp. 541-552.
- Blackford, Holly. *Mockingbird Passing: Closeted Traditions and Sexual Curiosities in Harper Lee’s Novel*. U of Tennessee P, 2011.
- Carmichael, Stokely and Charles V. Hamilton. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. Vintage, 1967.
- Chura, Patrick. “Prolepsis and Anachronism: Emmett Till and the Historicity of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.” *Southern Literary Journal*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2000, pp. 1-26.
- Crespino, Joseph. “The Strange Career of Atticus Finch.” *Southern Cultures*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2000, pp. 9-29.
- Crowther, Bosley. “*To Kill a Mockingbird*.” *New York Times*, 15 Feb. 1963, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9D06EEDF143CEF3BBC4D52DFB4668388679EDE>. Accessed 9 Sep. 2014.
- Delbanco, Andrew. *The Abolitionist Imagination*. Harvard UP, 2012.
- Ebert, Roger. Review of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Dated 11 Nov. 2001. <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/to-kill-a-mockingbird-2001>. Accessed 9 Sep. 2014.
- Erickson, Glenn. DVD Savant review: “*To Kill a Mockingbird*,” 1 Sep. 2005, <http://www.dvdtalk.com/dvdsavant/s1718kill.html>. Accessed 15 Sep. 2014.
- Flood, Alison. “*To Kill a Mockingbird* tops vote for ‘most-life-changing books’ by women.” *The Guardian*, 29 July 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jul/29/to-kill-a-mockingbird-life-changing-women-harper-lee>. Accessed 5 Sep. 2014.
- Foote, Horton. “Foreword.” In *Three Screenplays: To Kill a Mockingbird, Tender Mercies, and The Trip to Bountiful*. Grove Press, 1989, pp. xi-xvii.
- . *Three Screenplays: To Kill a Mockingbird, Tender Mercies, and The Trip to Bountiful*. Grove Press, 1989.
- Going, William T. “Store and *Mockingbird*: Two Pulitzer Novels about Alabama.” *Modern Critical Interpretations of To Kill a Mockingbird*, edited by Harold Bloom, Chelsea House, 2007, pp. 47-64.

- Graham, Allison. *Framing the South: Hollywood, Television, and Race during the Civil Rights Struggle*. The Johns Hopkins UP, 2001.
- Holcomb, Mark. "To Kill a Mockingbird." *Film Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 4, 2002, pp. 34-40.
- Johnson, Claudia Durst. *To Kill a Mockingbird: Threatening Boundaries*. Twayne, 1994.
- Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Vintage, 2005.
- Litwack, Leon F. *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*. Vintage, 1999.
- Lowell, Robert. "Memories of West Street and Lepke." *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 5th edition, vol. 2, general editor Nina Baym. Norton, 1998, pp. 2534-2536.
- McCullers, Carson. *The Member of the Wedding*. Penguin, 1979.
- Martelle, Scott. "Educators Take a Hard Look at *To Kill a Mockingbird*." *Los Angeles Times*, 21 June 2000, <http://articles.latimes.com/2000/jun/21/local/me-43202>. Accessed 16 Sep. 2012.
- Mulligan, Robert, dir. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Universal, 1962.
- Palmer, R. Barton. *Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird: The Relationship between Text and Film*. Methuen, 2008.
- Saney, Isaac. "The Case against *To Kill a Mockingbird*." *Race & Class*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2003, pp. 99-110.
- "Scout Remembers." Interview given to NBC News by Mary Badham in 1999. Universal Legacy Series DVD edition, 2005. Disc 2.
- Seidel, Kathryn Lee. "Growing Up Southern: Resisting the Code for Southerners in *To Kill a Mockingbird*." *On Harper Lee: Essays and Reflections*, edited by Alice Hall Petry, U of Tennessee P, 2007, pp. 79-92.
- Shackelford, Dean. "The Female Voice in *To Kill a Mockingbird*: Narrative Strategies in Film and Novel." *Mississippi Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 1, 1996-1997, pp. 101-113.
- Shaw, Bradley. "Baptizing Boo: Religion in the Cinematic Southern Gothic." *Mississippi Quarterly*, vol. 63, nos. 3-4, 2010, pp. 445-476.
- Shields, Charles J. *Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee*. Henry Holt, 2006.
- Smith, Lillian. "No Easy Way—Now." *The Winner Names the Age: A Collection of Writings by Lillian Smith*, edited by Michelle Cliff. Norton, 1978, pp. 76-90.
- Tolson, Melvin. "Hitler Blitzkrieg Strikes Near White House!" *Caviar and Cabbage: Selected Columns by Melvin B. Tolson from the Washington Tribune, 1937-1944*, edited by Robert M. Farnsworth, U of Missouri P, 1982, pp. 122-124.
- Twain, Mark. *Life on the Mississippi*. *Mississippi Writings* by Mark Twain, The Library of America, 1982, pp. 217-616.
- Whitfield, Stephen J. "The South in the Shadow of Nazism." *Southern Cultures*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2012, pp. 57-75.

Intertextuality in Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.03

Abstract: Intertextuality has frequently featured in postmodern literature and film. By mixing various genres, intertextuality enables a more flexible crossing of the film's boundaries and allows filmmakers to experiment with artistic form. The film's style or scenes resonate through other movies creating intertextual references. Hence, intertextuality is an approach that analyzes how one text is related to already available texts and discourses. Nonetheless, the successful perception of intertextual references requires a certain degree of comprehension ability from the film's audience. This essay examines the intertextuality of Quentin Tarantino's film *Jackie Brown*. The article has the three-fold aims: first, to analyze the movie as an adaptation of Elmore Leonard's crime novel *Rum Punch*; second, to highlight *Jackie Brown*'s tribute to the blaxploitation cinema of the 1970s; third, to focus on the film's intertextual crossings with other movies and film genres.

Keywords: Quentin Tarantino, film adaptation, intertextuality, blaxploitation genre

Introduction

The term "intertextuality" was coined in 1966 by Julia Kristeva, who defined it as "a mosaic of quotations" in her essay titled "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (85). She based the concept on Mikhail Bakhtin's notion that every utterance is related to what had previously been said (Landwehr 2). Roland Barthes introduced a similar notion in 1968, claiming that a text consists of a "multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (Landwehr 3). Kristeva's interpretation of the term implies that all texts are, to a certain degree, intertextual because they are shaped from already existent meanings. Moreover, intertextuality may be understood as the perspective of the later text to the preceding one. "So no text exists on its own. It is always connected to other texts" (Haberer 57). The early theorists resisted the term "intertextuality," replacing it with, among others, reference, pastiche, allusion; nevertheless, the concept began to gain popularity. Religious scholar Samuel D. Giere discusses the boundaries of text, stating that "In a sense, all texts are intertexts" (4-5). Literature professor Heinrich F. Plett defines "intertext" as "a text *between* other texts" which possesses "a twofold coherence: an *intratextual* one which guarantees the immanent integrity of the text, and an *intertextual* one which creates structural relations between itself and other texts" (5). By relating to previous texts, the text creates new texts; thus, the process of repetition is unavoidable. Literary theorist Mariusz Pisarski calls the intertextuality of the text "its inherent quality and the inseparable part of its 'texture'" (183).

Intertextuality has become a characteristic of postmodern literature and film. By mixing various genres, intertextuality enables a more flexible crossing of the film's boundaries and allows filmmakers to experiment with artistic form. The film's style

or scenes resonate through other movies creating intertextual references. By implying text-to-film analyses, adaptation studies also explore the notion of intertextuality. Film adaptations concern the shift of the text to film and its intertextual reference to previous films. Thus, intertextuality is an approach that analyzes how one text is related to already available texts and discourses. A film examined intertextually demonstrates a series of interpretations that create new imageries. Nonetheless, the successful perception of intertextual references requires a certain degree of comprehension ability from the film's audience.

This essay examines Quentin Tarantino's film *Jackie Brown* through the prism of intertextuality. The article has three-fold aims: first, to analyze the movie as an adaptation of Elmore Leonard's crime novel *Rum Punch*; second, to highlight *Jackie Brown*'s tribute to the blaxploitation cinema of the 1970s; third, to focus on the film's intertextual references to other movies and film genres.

Adapting Elmore Leonard's *Rum Punch* into Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*

Quentin Tarantino's semi-noir *Jackie Brown* (1997) is based on Elmore Leonard's crime novel *Rum Punch*, published in 1992. The book's title refers to a criminal intrigue that describes a deal with Colombians in the Bahamas (Leonard 138 and 264). When Tarantino retitled the novel from *Rum Punch* to *Jackie Brown*, the focus of the plot shifted from the unlawful act named "Rum Punch" to the main female protagonist, suggesting that she matters more than the crime itself. All of the films Tarantino had directed before *Jackie Brown* had been based on original scripts he had written himself, so this particular movie was his first adaptation project.

The novel's main character, Jackie Burke, is introduced in chapter 4 as an attractive 44-year-old flight attendant. Leonard describes her in the following way: "Jackie Burke's her name, fine-looking woman, has kinda blond hair" (Leonard 60). As she is returning from the Bahamas to West Palm Beach in Florida, Jackie is approached by two representatives of U.S. law enforcement: Ray Nicolet, an ATF agent (the Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms), and Faron Tyler, who represents FDLE (The Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Division of Criminal investigation). In Tarantino's movie, Jackie's surname is changed to Brown, and her role is given to an African American actress, Pam Grier. The role of the ATF agent, Ray Nicolet, is played by Michael Keaton, but the novel's character of the police officer, Faron Tyler, is renamed Mark Dargus in the film, and Michael Bowen takes the role.

The film's setting differs from the book as Jackie is not returning from the Bahamas to Florida but from Mexico to Los Angeles, California. Tarantino's life and background had a significant influence on the choice of the film's cityscape. In an interview conducted by Adrian Wootton, Tarantino explains the reasons behind changing the setting of the book from Miami to LA: "I don't really know anything about Miami. I had never been to Miami before, and Miami is very hot! You don't want to go there to shoot! One thing I have to offer is some kind of knowledge about Los Angeles. The area that we shot in, in the South Bay, I am very familiar with because I grew up in that area" (Wootton).

The main criminal protagonists are Ordell Robbie and Louis Gara. The book describes the former as “a light-skinned black guy,” and Samuel L. Jackson plays his role in the movie. The latter is depicted as “a dark-skinned white guy” (Leonard 3) and played by Robert De Niro. The minor role of the criminal Beaumont Livingston is given to Chris Tucker. Leonard provides a detailed description of Ordell when Tyler and Nicolet see him for the first time: “black male, mid to late forties, six foot maybe, about one seventy, sunglasses, patterned tan silk shirt and tan slacks. Stylish and fairly dressed up, compared to the two law enforcement officers in their Sears sport shirts and Levi’s this morning” (133).

The novel begins with a white-power demonstration attended by different organizations: skinhead Nazis, the Klan, Bikers for Racism, also known as Dixie Knights, which takes place in Palm Beach, Florida. In this way Elmore Leonard accentuates the racial background of the Florida setting. Organized white supremacist activity has existed in Florida since the founding of the original Ku Klux Klan in the 1860s, and it still poses the most significant extremist-related problem in the state. The major deviation from the book concerns the complete omission of the neo-Nazi subplot in the film. By shifting the setting from Florida to California, the director avoids the story’s connections with the historical past of the American South. Tarantino prefers to begin his movie with the two gangsters, Ordell and Louis, watching a pre-recorded TV presentation of a fictional show titled *Chicks who Love Guns*. The program features beautiful female protagonists wearing only bikinis and holding automatic weapons. Samuel L. Jackson’s character instructs Robert de Niro’s protagonist about the merits of different types of guns presented by the ladies on the video: “Then there’s the AK-47, when you absolutely, positively have to kill every m— in the room.” This scene with sexy ladies firing automatic weapons introduces the viewer to Tarantino’s world full of fetishization and sexualization of violence (Pagello 146).

The novel manifests its preoccupation with race and ethnicity through the explicit use of the colors white and black. The indications of race allusions begin with Ordell’s nickname, “Whitebread” or simply “bread.” The gangster overtly demonstrates his ethnic identification while talking to Max Cherry: “I used to be Negro, I was cullud, I was black, but now I’m African-American” (Leonard 16). Then, his conversation with Louis confirms how much race means to him: “Louis? You only think you’re a good guy. You’re just like me, only you turned out white” (Leonard 74). Colors also prove vital for the main female protagonist. Leonard created a blue-eyed Caucasian heroine named Jackie Burke, whom Tarantino deliberately turned into an African American character and renamed Brown. Jackie works as a flight attendant and smuggles cash for the gun dealer Ordell Robbie. When Jackie is caught at the airport, Ordell has her bailed out by the bail bondsman, Max Cherry (played by Robert Forster). The contacts between Jackie and Max develop into an unspoken attraction but not an affair, just a partnership in deceit.

The movie emphasizes the protagonists’ racial belonging much more strongly than the novel. The film script and visualizations accentuate blackness and frequently contrast it with whiteness. Tarantino uses colors to play with intertextual dialogue, e.g., when Jackie asks Max how he takes his coffee and Max responds, “Black’s fine,” suggesting she is attractive, rather than simply denoting coffee without milk. When the

viewer sees the African American character of Jackie for the first time, she is presented with dignity, wearing her flight attendant uniform; however, her confidence disappears when two white enforcement agents confront her at the airport. The role of race is confirmed in the scene when Ordell asks Max to arrange Jackie's bail and provides the cause of her arrest: "black woman, falsely accused." Max soon realizes that the woman he meets is not helpless but clever, and she gains his trust (Igrez 25). Interestingly, the black man sees the marginalization of the black woman while the white man elevates her status simply by realizing the virtues of her intellect. Although Jackie agrees to act as an informant against Ordell, she realizes that her life is under threat, so she double-crosses the gangster and the law enforcement agents.

The world of the protagonists is spacious and full of different characters. Robbie Ordell's relations with women have a unique context as he "puts girls up," which means he pays their bills in exchange for sex or participation in his illegal activities. It is not only a woman herself but a woman in his house that presents a trophy for him (Gallafent 35). Both the novel and the film feature three of Ordell's women (Sheronda, Simone, and Melanie) living in different parts of Florida (in the book) or California (in the film). The black character of Sheronda, played by Lisa Gay Hamilton, comes from Georgia. Tarantino promotes a negative stereotype of American Southerners by depicting her as a naïve girl with low mental capacity. Ordell says in the film: "[I] took her to Compton and told her it was Hollywood, and she believed it." (Necaise 14). Hattie Winston plays the African American character of 63-year old Simone. The third woman Ordell "puts up" is the white character of Melanie (Bridget Fonda), Ordell's "surfer gal," who lives in Palm Beach (in the book) and in a beach apartment in Southern California (in the movie). Ordell explicitly demonstrates his privileging of whiteness with his insistence on sponsoring Melanie despite the evidence of her treacherous nature. It seems that her whiteness presents a higher value for him than her young age. According to African American Studies Professor Adilifu Nama, "Melanie is like a trophy wife who elevates Ordell's status among his peers," and this arrangement emphasizes not just the relation between an older man and a younger woman, but rather the status of a black man supporting a white woman (Nama 61). The movie's play with colors is also visible in the scene at Melanie's apartment where the Caucasian character of Luis wears black clothes while Ordell's clothes are white. This deliberate use of contrasts allows the emergence of new perspectives about the social status of the protagonists.

Tarantino's selection of the movie's cast is unexpected because both Pam Grier and Robert Forster in the leading roles seemed rather unlikely to generate box office gains. Nonetheless, as retro stars, they are returning to their previous types of film roles; thus, they enable the viewer to create new intertextual interpretations. On the other hand, bigger stars, such as Bridget Fonda and Robert de Niro, are cast in minor roles. Hence, the supporting cast creates a white background for the main female character's blackness.

The significance of race is emphasized when Tarantino expands the usage of "the n-word" (Holm 118). Amy Archerd, in her article for *Variety*, quotes Samuel L. Jackson, who admits that the "n" word is used 38 times in the movie, and this excessive frequency suggests Quentin's infatuation with that term. Tarantino, when asked about this issue during a press conference on *Jackie Brown* held in 1997, replied: "It has that

much power! Should any word have that much power?... Any word that has that much power should be depowered.” (Peary 130). In fact, the film's Ordell racializes whiteness by calling his white friend Louis “my nigga” (Nama 63). Thus, in Tarantino's world, “the n-word” appears in a context somewhat derogatory for whites when an African American man uses it to address his white friend. Moreover, the white man works for the black man, so the black superior calls his white inferior “my nigga,” not vice versa. Sociology Professor Salvador Jimenez Murguía claims, “Despite the racist dialogues, it seems that the film elevates rather than degrades African Americans” (299).

Tarantino gives much empowerment to the character of Jackie and portrays her as a solid African American female who is respected and elegant. Her body is always covered, sometimes by her flight attendant's uniform. It does not mean that Jackie is unaware of her feminine traits; however, due to her intellect, she manages to outsmart the male characters, whether they are black or white. *Jackie Brown* attempts to “modernize the active women from exploitation films of the 1970s, reworking the female characters' mobilization against typical gender roles” (Platz 528). In contrast, the white character, Melanie, is a hypersexual female who constantly displays her body by wearing bikini tops and shorts. The movie shows her performing a kind of fetish by touching a glass with her bare feet. Cinema Studies Professor Jenny Platz suggests that Melanie is killed as a punishment for her lack of loyalty and because she is weak and lacks masculine features (Platz 533).

The significance of colors in the movie is not restricted to white and black. Another color reappearing in the movie is blue. Jackie wears a blue uniform while double-crossing Ordell and the law enforcement agents; Simone shows her seductive nature performing in a blue dress; Ordell wears a blue shirt when he comes to Jackie's apartment to kill her. Other characters do not avoid blue either: Melanie is wearing a blue bikini and shorts in her beach apartment when she betrays Ordell; Louis wears a blue shirt in the money exchange scene. The color blue metaphorically suggests some treacherous plan, evil intentions, generally anything far from innocence.

Legacy of Blaxploitation Films in *Jackie Brown*

Tarantino grew up in Los Angeles during the heyday of the blaxploitation genre, which denotes the film productions from the 1960s and 1970s when American popular culture began to depict African American characters in the context of urban spaces. In the interview with film producer Adrian Wootton, Tarantino explains how black culture affected him: “I kind of grew up surrounded by black culture... It is the culture that I identify with” (Wootton). The blaxploitation genre is connected with the African American civil rights movement and the Black Power philosophy, which influenced the way in which African Americans were represented by popular culture. Film critic Katherine Rife writes, “Blaxploitation is an attitude as much as it is a period in cinema history” (49). The black audience wanted the film protagonists to be African Americans, cared about their images, and criticized their degrading representations.

In response to those expectations, the blaxploitation genre focused on a more complex portrayal of African American characters; nevertheless, the devaluation of blackness continued with the representations of black gangsters and drug dealers

(Guerrero 70). The protagonists of the genre usually included gangsters, junkies consuming cocaine, corrupt white officers, pimps, and prostitutes who operated in the inner city ghetto of specific urban settings, such as Los Angeles' South Central and Watts or New York's Harlem and Brooklyn. The blaxploitation formula presented a higher tolerance for violence, sex, and inappropriate language, which partly resulted from the collapse of Hollywood's Production Code. The plot of the movies concentrated on the motif of revenge that the black characters executed against the corrupt white protagonists. The imagery of the urban ghetto was emphasized by aesthetic visuals and soul music (Guerrero 94).

The blaxploitation films offered the viewer a voyage through the cityscape and exploration of ghetto topography as exterior scenes were shot on location. The inner city became more closely connected with the concept of race when "The term 'ghetto' was redefined to refer specifically to urban, usually slum, areas inhabited by minority populations" (Massood 84). The films featured "black-inflected" speech idioms and slang language. The primary audience of the genre constituted young African American urban males. These movies articulated the main characteristic of the blaxploitation formula, according to which the central black character challenges the oppression of the whites and wins.

The legacy of two blaxploitation movies with Pam Grier can be traced in Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*. *Coffy* (1973) and the movie that was primarily supposed to be its sequel *Foxy Brown* (1974) star Pam Grier as female protagonists who carry out vigilante missions against the drug underworld to avenge the people they loved. The main character of *Coffy* is Flower Child Coffin, who takes revenge for her sister's drug addiction by killing people responsible for it. This film established Grier as the "Queen of Blaxploitation." In turn, the title character of *Foxy Brown* turns to vigilante justice to avenge her boyfriend who had been shot by a gang member. Grier's blaxploitation protagonists are outlaw characters who do not accept the legal methods of pursuing justice.

Moreover, they do not hesitate to use their sexuality to accomplish the mission of revenge. Yvonne D. Sims, in her book *Women of Blaxploitation*, notes that the roles of Pam Grier and other female blaxploitation artists "offered a significant departure from the historical representation of African American women and, through the writers, producers, and directors of the genre, brought to the screen a new image of African American femininity" (Sims 26). Although Grier's appearances in blaxploitation films were ground-breaking for her portrayals of powerful African American characters, critics claimed that those roles perpetuated controversial stereotypes of vengeful black females (Sims 69). Grier received tremendous criticism for appearing in both *Coffy* and *Foxy Brown* because they involved "sex-violence-action scenarios" (Guerrero 99).

The blaxploitation genre underwent a revival in the 1990s when filmmakers such as Quentin Tarantino, in a nostalgic way, reintroduced the convention of the genre into their new movies. The intertextuality of *Jackie Brown* derives mainly from Pam Grier herself and her past roles in blaxploitation cinema. By casting Grier in the role of Jackie Brown, Tarantino directly links his movie with the blaxploitation genre. "*Jackie Brown* was received as a nostalgic film that paid homage to a Blaxploitation icon and revived a fallen star's career" (Nama 65). The viewer sees Jackie as the development

of Jackie Burke and through the prism of the actress's previous roles in blaxploitation films. Film critic Roger Ebert calls Pam Grier "the goddess of 1970s tough-girl pictures." It was in homage to Grier's role in *Foxy Brown* that Tarantino changed the character's surname from Burke to Brown. Furthermore, a Caucasian character became an African American one in the film, and this transformation enabled Tarantino to depict racial and gender relations in American society. Murguía (298) claims that the director did not aim to change Jackie's character but casting an African American actress in this role provided a social context to explore her life experiences.

Tarantino attempts to revive the career of Pam Grier, and in numerous instances his movie refers to certain conventions of the blaxploitation genre. In his review in *The Austin Chronicle*, Marc Savlov writes, "Tarantino is having so much fun playing fast and loose with Seventies genre conventions that the film plays more like one of his beloved retro-board games than a standard QT film." The resemblance starts with the font style used for the poster advertising *Jackie Brown*, which is identical to *Foxy Brown*'s. Tarantino explains how the film's opening sequence with Pam Grier walking through the airport resonates with *Foxy Brown*: "[S]he is walking through the airport, and she just looks like the baddest creature a guy ever created.... She has just got all this power and strength—she is Foxy Brown twenty years later" (Wootton). The list of tenants in Melanie's apartments building includes the name "S. Haig," which is a direct reference to the character of Sid Haig, who accompanied a few of Pam Grier's roles in the blaxploitation films from the 1970s. Another tenant, named "J. Hill," refers to Jack Hill, who directed *Coffy* and *Foxy Brown*.

In addition, the title protagonist of the film, Pam Grier, received some recognition in Tarantino's earlier films, e.g., Mr. Pink mentions her in *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and Grier's role in *Coffy* inspires Bonnie's character in *Pulp Fiction* (1994). The scene in which Ordell orders Melanie to pick up the phone, and she does it but quickly hands it over to him, mirrors an almost identical scene in *Truck Turner* (1974), released as a double feature with *Foxy Brown*. Moreover, both *Jackie Brown* and *Truck Turner* feature bounty hunters who break the law.

Tarantino builds a self-conscious intertextual relation with other 1970s movies representing various film genres. In one scene, Melanie is watching the movie *Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry* (1974), which belongs to the canon of road films. The background music in the scene when Ordell talks to Jackie on the phone is the song "The Lions and the Cucumber" by The Vampire Sound Corporation, which was also used in erotic horror *Vampyros Lesbos* (1971).

Jackie Brown pays tribute to the 1970s and California's South Bay even by Tarantino's choice of the cityscape. In his article published in *L.A. Taco*, Jared Cowan describes the South Bay locations appearing in *Jackie Brown*. In the film's opening sequence, the viewer sees Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The movie features other locations in the district that are rarely used in Hollywood productions. Tarantino grew up in this area, and by showing its locations on the screen he establishes his personal connection with the South Bay. The production designer of the film, David Wasco, proves the director's fascination with the 1970s by explaining the choice of the film's setting, "When the film was shot in the late 90s, the South Bay was in some ways stuck in a time warp still reminiscent of the 1970s." The central plot scene of

the money exchange takes place in the shopping mall Del Amo Fashion Center in Torrance, referred to in the movie with a shortened version of the Del Amo Mall. This shopping center acquired its present name in 1971, and then it began to expand (Rivera). Another reference to the South Bay concerns the Hermosa apartment where Melanie lives, which seems to be Ordell's favorite location. The actual setting of this apartment was the Playa Del Rey building in the northern direction of Hermosa Beach.

An additional effect of reality and a fearful atmosphere is created with the selection of the Sybil Brand Institute for the jail scenes. This place operated as a female prison in Monterey Park, and *Jackie Brown* was the first movie filmed there. Since then, the jail has frequently been used for filming. Another location seen in the film is The Cockatoo Inn on Hawthorne Boulevard in California. The place gained a reputation for a celebrity clientele: politicians, actors, and members of the Mafia. Although the business started to decline in the 1970s and the place closed a year before *Jackie Brown* was filmed, Tarantino insisted that the scene of Jackie getting a drink with Max after her release from jail is filmed in the actual location of The Cockatoo Inn (Cowan). By selecting this particular place for the film footage, Tarantino reawakens the times of the hotel's glory and ensures its permanent presence on the screen.

Another intertextual reference concerns the film's soundtrack, which pays homage to blaxploitation cinema. Film scholar Lisa Coulthard analyzes the music in Tarantino's movies and concludes that stylistic details of his use of songs reflect the intertextuality of his films (2). The musical world of the movie is rarely contemporaneous with the depicted action but emphasizes nostalgia and temporal dislocation with songs that were popular in the 1970s. This retro-nostalgic attitude is further emphasized by the visual display of technology: vinyl records, jukeboxes, transistor radios. Nonetheless, film critic Mick LaSalle claims that the film's music "clashes with the modern-day setting".

The opening credits of *Jackie Brown* are set apart from the rest of the film sonically and visually as they occur within the duration of a song. During Grier's first appearance in the film, she is riding an airport moving sidewalk, and the viewer hears the 1970s song "Long Time Woman." It was composed by Lex Baxter and used in *The Big Doll House* (1971) when a character, also played by Pam Grier, was being locked in a prison cell. The film's background music explicitly accentuates her race in the prison scene when Jackie stands in a procession of nine women, of whom seven are black. Tarantino deliberately uses the postmodern trait of circularity when the viewer hears the lyrics: "ninety-nine years is a long time" from the film's introductory song "Long Time Woman." The viewers have to work out how the characters from both movies ended up in the same place. The song creates a sense of inevitability and destiny for African women who are likely to end up in jail.

The soundtrack features Roy Ayers' score from the film *Coffy*: "Aragon," "Escape," "Brawling Broads," "Exotic Dance"; and Roy Ayers and Harry Whitaker's "Vitroni's Theme-King Is Dead." Roy Ayers' songs are listed during the film's credits but not included in the commercial soundtrack, titled *Jackie Brown: Music from the Miramax Motion Picture*. Hence, the film soundtrack is complementary, not identical, to the commercial music album; the attentive listener needs to become a viewer of the film to hear all of the songs from the movie. Tarantino seems to invite the listeners to

see his film, if not for the plot, at least for the music.

The soul music of the movie soundtrack informs about the protagonists' social background (Murguía 298). It also applies to the theme song, Bobby Womack's classic soul single "Across 110th Street," taken from the movie with the same title, directed by Barry Shear in 1972. The song tells the story of Blacks who improved their life by escaping from the ghetto (Igreç 26). The movie begins with Jackie and the song "Across 110th Street" playing in the background. Tarantino creates a kind of circularity by echoing this shot at the end of the film when she drives away in Ordell's car, and the viewer hears the same song. The close-up of Jackie's face shows her lips moving to its lyrics. The song provides a sense of completeness and closure through a return to the opening sequence. This circularity creates a contrast between what was happening at the beginning and the end of the film. It offers the viewer some space for interpretation of whether the protagonist's situation has changed for the better, or, worse. Although the same song played at the beginning and end suggests the same position, the character undergoes transformation, affected by the story's events.

Another circularity occurs before the money exchange when Jackie is listening to music in the car, "Street Life" (1979) by Randy Crawford. This is the same song that was played as background music in the scenes in the shopping mall. The emotions between Jackie and Max are emphasized by the songs "La-La Means I Love You" and "Didn't I (Blow Your Mind This Time)," performed by R&B/soul band The Delfonics, who were popular in the 1970s. Both songs provide examples of diegetic¹ sound in the film. The music of The Delfonics also accompanies an emotional scene when Max is driving his car with Jackie, while the radio plays "I gave my heart and soul to you," and the ride ends with the couple's kiss. Another romantic song, "Why do I keep my mind" from Charles McCormick's "Natural High," is played when Max and Jackie meet outside the jail.

The Intertextual Crossings of *Jackie Brown* with Other Movies and Film Genres

The intertext of *Jackie Brown* concerns the variety of the film genres incorporated and the intertextual handling of the characters. The essential signature of Tarantino's movies is the scripts, including some pop culture references, which the director himself refers to with the word "Tarantinesque" (Peary 131). In turn, film critics Mick LaSalle and Benjamin Svetkey describe the dialogues of Tarantino's films with the terms "Quentinized," and "Tarantinoism." From the beginning of *Jackie Brown*, the viewer knows precisely that the movie is in the Tarantino universe. It includes typical characteristics such as witty dialogue; unexpected gunfire; or close-ups of bare female feet, known as a "foot fetish."

Jackie Brown has multiple references to previous Tarantino movies, e.g., Samuel L. Jackson's line, "This is some repugnant shit," is a direct quote of the words used by his character in *Pulp Fiction*. When Jackie changes her uniform into a white shirt and black

1 The term "diegetic" refers to any sound originating from the source within the screen environment so the movie characters can hear it, e.g., the sound of an explosion. In contrast, "non-diegetic" means that the sound comes from a source outside the story space, so the film protagonists cannot hear it (Heckmann 2020).

suit, her image also evokes the character of Mia Wallace from *Pulp Fiction*. Another common theme concerns the fictional food chain “Teriyaki Donut,” which appears in *Jackie Brown* and *Pulp Fiction*. Film and Media Studies Professor Federico Pagello (145) claims that Tarantino’s cinema philia made him develop *Jackie Brown* in such a way that the film initiates reflexivity towards the previous movies he had directed. Another reference to previous films is the use of non-plot-related conversations.

The postmodern traits frequently used by Tarantino include intertitles, chapter titles, and “map shots,” like the one tracking Jackie’s journey from Mexico to California, or close-ups of a record player, occasionally substituted by a jukebox. The intertitles inform the viewer about the exact location of particular film scenes, e.g., “Del Amo, California,” summarize the events happening in the next scene, e.g., “Money Exchange Trial,” or provide timing, e.g., “3-days later.” During the sequence of the money exchange, the intertitles inform the audience about the times of plane arrivals, which creates additional tension connected with the timeframe of Jackie’s deceit. The map used to show the route of Jackie’s flight prior to the final money exchange echoes the maps used in *Kill Bill* (2003).

Tarantino’s trademark includes “a car trunk shot,” with characters viewed from the inside of a trunk. The director used this frame-within-a-frame technique in *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Kill Bill*, and *Inglorious Basterds* (2009). The characters of Beaumont and Louis both experience death in a vehicle, which is unexpected and does not result from a car crash. Relying on the familiar space of a car gives the protagonist an illusory feeling of homeliness which Tarantino at once converts into a place of death (Gallafent 67). Ordell tempts Beaumont to get into the trunk with the means of chicken with rice and beans. The director deliberately uses the dish stereotypically associated with African Americans. Then, Ordell executes Beaumont in a scene shown to the viewer as a shot inside the car trunk. Afterward, he shows Beaumont’s body to Louis, saying, “an employee I had to let go.”

Tarantino is exceptionally playful with subtle references to other movies and film genres. Nonetheless, the viewer needs to comprehend American cinema to notice the intertextuality of *Jackie Brown*. In the conversation with Louis, Ordell uses the phrase “as serious as a heart attack,” which is the same line as the words of Robert de Niro in the psychological thriller *The Fan* (1996). A movie that impacted *Jackie Brown* was the crime neo-noir *Straight Time* (1978), featuring Dustin Hoffman as an ex-thief after his release from jail. Tarantino wanted Hoffman’s performance to influence Robert De Niro’s character of Louis Gara. Certain plot similarities are noticeable between *Jackie Brown* and *Carlito’s Way* (De Palma, 1993). Both movies are crime stories with love plots and characters trying to escape and start new lives with a large amount of money, but only one of them succeeds (Page 162). According to Film Studies Professor Edward Gallafent, Elmore Leonard inserted some archetypes of the western genre into the urban setting of *Rum Punch* (Gallafent 86). Both the literary and cinematic characters of Max Cherry evoke the image of a western lawman. The final scene of Jackie’s departure also brings to mind the ending of a western; Jackie, wearing a white suit, says goodbye to Max and drives away in Ordell’s car, leaving Max alone.

Jackie Brown does not fit into any single film category, but rather represents a cinematic pastiche, including a caper film, a subgenre of the heist film. It tells a story

from the point of view of criminals planning and executing an elaborate theft, rather than a robbery. American writer and editor Rachele Ramirez notes, "Suspense is often driven by whether or not all team members will remain loyal to one another." The crime itself is not a mystery, and the viewer follows the lawbreakers who execute the audacious crime without violence. Hence, a caper showcases the ingenuity of the thieves. Film critic Sean Axmaker elaborates on the subgenre of the caper, "Compared to the brute force of a robbery, where guns and violence are so often the primary tools, the caper calls for ingenuity, crack timing, mad skills, play acting and a little sleight of hand." *Jackie Brown* is a caper movie in which Jackie and her partner Max make a plan to steal half a million dollars from Ordell while the federal agent and the local police officer are watching them. The intrigue develops into a story with double-crosses involving the protagonists, the criminal, and law enforcement. Tarantino adds some distinctive comic touches to the story as caper films include elements of humor. Nonetheless, Ordell soon realizes who stole his money. Ebert writes in his review: "whoever is smartest will live."

The film narrative is chronological except for the crucial sequence of money exchange at the Del Amo Mall, when Tarantino uses the plot device of shifting the viewpoint and narrates the act of thievery from three different perspectives. The viewer sees the money switch-off from the perspective of Jackie, Louis and Melanie, and finally Max. In all cases, the chronology of events stays the same, only to be repeated from different angles. The non-linear story structure has been used on multiple occasions in cinematic history, including Stanley Kubrick's heist movie *The Killing* (1956). A similar technique was used in Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950) and Edward Zwick's *Courage Under Fire* (1996). In those films, the purpose of this narration was to illustrate how various characters provide subjective versions of the same story. The British writer Edwin Page believes that the purpose of showing different perspectives of Jackie's double-cross is to give the viewer a clear picture of what really happened (Page 166). In turn, the film critic James Berardinelli claims that Tarantino did not use the trick with three viewpoints for the needs of plot development but rather because he considered it unconventional. In contrary, the American avant-garde poet K. Silem Mohammad (88) suggests that the repetition of the event emphasizes the different experiences of the characters and makes the viewer realize that Jackie is actually play-acting that the money has been stolen, thus the viewer's perception changes.

Conclusion

Quentin Tarantino altered the text of Elmore Leonard's novel and created a film immersed in the tradition of the blaxploitation genre. The movie foregrounds blackness and backgrounds whiteness; thus, it overtly privileges the former. *Jackie Brown*'s constant visual interplay between blackness and whiteness aesthetically accentuates the success of the African American female protagonist. The heroine is trapped in a problematic situation, a vital plot element of the blaxploitation formula; nevertheless, she uses intellect, not violence, to execute her plan. Jackie Burke from Leonard's crime narrative develops through the prism of Pam Grier's previous roles in classic blaxploitation cinema, but Tarantino's movie gives her some 1990s sensibility. She is a dignified middle-aged woman who manages to outwit both the gangsters and the law

enforcement agents threatening her safety and financial security. Her elaborate theft gives *Jackie Brown* an element of the caper film genre.

Despite following the blaxploitation formula, *Jackie Brown* does not feature much violence. Some subplots of the movie include brutal scenes, but only four people are murdered, which is by far “Tarantino’s least bloody offering” (Podgorski). Grier and Forster play subtle characters who succeed with their intrigue due to their brilliant skills. Their roles stand in sharp contrast with those of Samuel L. Jackson and Robert de Niro, who do not hesitate to kill. The themes of good and bad blur when the protagonists of Jackie and Max commit theft and become antagonists, the film’s villains, who get away with their crime.

The film is fundamentally intertextual, and its different layers intertwine with pre-existing cultural texts. Tarantino builds a self-conscious intertextual relation with his former movies and other popular culture discourses. The features of self-referentiality and “Tarantinoism” regularly appearing in his films also apply to *Jackie Brown*. The intertextual references in the movie are subtle, and the director leaves the audience the delight of discovering pop-cultural allusions which develop into new meanings and imageries. This process may be more engaging if the viewers share Tarantino’s cinema philia.

Works Cited

- Axmaker, Sean. “Art of the steal: Here are some great heist/caper films to stream.” *The Seattle Times*, 9 April 2020. Web 8 April 2021. <https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/movies/art-of-the-steal-here-are-some-great-heist-movies-to-stream/>
- Archerd, Amy. “Lee has choice words for Tarantino.” *Variety*, 16 Dec.1997. Web 20 Dec. 2021. <https://variety.com/1997/voices/columns/lee-has-choice-words-for-tarantino-111779698/>
- Berardinelli, James. “Jackie Brown (United States, 1997).” *ReelViews*, Web 9 April 2021. <https://www.reelviews.net/reelviews/jackie-brown>
- Coulthard, Lisa. “Torture Tunes: Tarantino, Popular Music, and New Hollywood Ultraviolence.” *Music and the Moving Image*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2009, pp. 1-6
- Cowan, Jared. “How Quentin Tarantino and ‘Jackie Brown’ Made the South Bay a Star.” *L.A. Taco*, 21 Dec. 2017. Web 17 April 2021. <https://www.lataco.com/how-quentin-tarantino-and-jackie-brown-made-the-south-bay-a-star/>
- Ebert, Roger. “Reviews: Jackie Brown.” *Roger Ebert. Com*, 24 Dec. 1997. Web 20 Dec. 2021. <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/jackie-brown-1997>
- Ells, Kevin. “Elmore Leonard Jr.” *KnowLa Encyclopedia of Louisiana*. Ed. David Johnson. Louisiana Endowment for Humanities, 2011. Web 16 April 2021. <https://web.archive.org/web/20130822010928/http://www.knowla.org/entry/518/>
- Gallafent, Edward. *Quentin Tarantino*. Pearson Longman, 2004.
- Giere, Samuel D. *A New Glimpse of Day One: Intertextuality, History of Interpretation, and Genesis 1.1-5*. Walter de Gruyter, 2009.
- Guerrero, Edward. *Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film*. Temple UP, 1993.
- Haberer, Adolphe. “Intertextuality in theory and practice.” *Literatura*, vol. 49, no. .5, 2007, pp. 54-67.

- Heckmann, Chris. "What is Diegetic Sound? Diegetic Definition and Examples." *StudioBinder*, 3 July 2020. Web 13 April 2021. <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-is-diegetic-sound/>
- Heckmann, Chris. "What is Non-Diegetic Sound? Definition and Examples." *StudioBinder*, 5 July 2020. Web 13 April 2021. <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-is-non-diegetic-sound/>
- Holm, Douglas Kimball. *Quentin Tarantino*. The Pocket Essentials, 2004.
- Igrec, Ela. *Representation of Race in Quentin Tarantino's Films*. Universitas Studorium Jadertina, 2019.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Columbia UP, 1980.
- Landwehr, Margarete. "Introduction: Literature and the Visual Arts: Questions of Influence and Intertextuality." *College Literature*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2002, pp. 1-16.
- LaSalle, Mick. "Tarantino's Latest Caper / Funky 'Jackie Brown' loses velocity." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 December 1997. Updated 28 Jan. 2012. Web 8 April 2021. <https://www.sfgate.com/movies/article/FILM-REVIEW-Tarantino-s-Latest-Caper-Funky-2788200.php>
- Leonard, Elmore. *Rum Punch*. HarperCollins, 1992.
- Massood, Paula, J. *Black City Cinema: African American Urban Experiences in Film*. Temple UP, 2003.
- Mohammad, K. Silem. "I Didn't Know You Liked the Delfonis': Knowledge and Pragmatism in *Jackie Brown*." *Quentin Tarantino and Philosophy: How to Philosophize with a Pair of Pliers and a Blowtorch*, edited by Richard Greene and K. Silem Mohammad, Open Court, 2007, pp. 85-93.
- Murguía, Salvador Jimenez, editor. *The Encyclopedia of Racism in American Film*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2018.
- Nama, Adilifu. *Race on the QT: Blackness and the Films of Quentin Tarantino*. U of Texas P, 2015.
- Necaise, Justin Taylor. *The Cinematic South: A Look into the South According to Quentin Tarantino*. Honors Theses. U of Mississippi, 2018.
- Page, Edwin. *Quintessential Tarantino*. Marion Boyars, 2005.
- Pagello, Federico. *Quentin Tarantino and Film Theory: Aesthetics and Dialects in Late Postmodernity*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.
- Peary, Gerald, editor. "Quentin Tarantino: Press Conference on *Jackie Brown*." *Quentin Tarantino: Interviews*. UP of Mississippi, 2013, pp. 128-133.
- Pisarski, Mariusz. "Hypertext and Intertextuality: Affinities and Divergences." *Porównania*, vol. 8, 2011, pp. 183-194.
- Platz, Jenny. "Return to the Grindhouse: Tarantino and the Modernization of 1970s Exploitation." *Entnymema VIII*, 2012, pp. 528-542.
- Plett, Heinrich F. "Intertextualities." *Intertextuality: Research in Text Theory*, edited by Heinrich F. Plett, W. de Gruyter, 1991, pp. 3-29.
- Podgorski, Daniel. "Tarantino's Odd Film Out: The Uniqueness of Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*." *THE GEMSBOK. Articles on Literature, Games, Films, Philosophy*, 24 September 2015, Web 17 April 2021. <https://thegemsbok.com/art-reviews-and-articles/movie-reviews-thursday-theater-jackie-brown-quentin-tarantino/>

- Ramirez, Rachele. "Secrets of the Crime Genre: How to Write a Great Caper." *Story Grid*. Web 8 April 2021. <https://storygrid.com/crime-genre/>
- Rife, Katherine. *If You like Quentin Tarantino: Here are over 200 films, TV shows, and other oddities that you will love*. Limelight Editions, 2012.
- Rivera Brooks, Nancy. "The Mall Face-Lift Craze: The looks of the '60s and '70s just won't do. Multimillion-dollar remodeling jobs are bringing back customers and boosting sales, despite a recession." *Los Angeles Times*, 28 January 1991. Web 6 January 2022. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1991-01-28-fi-55-story.html>
- Savlov, Marc. "Jackie Brown." *The Austin Chronicle*, 26 December 1997. Web 9 April 2021. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/events/film/1997-12-26/jackie-brown/>
- Sims, Yvonne D. *Women of Blaxploitation: How the Black Action Film Heroine Changed American Popular Culture*. McFarland & Company, 2006.
- Svetkey, Benjamin. "Jackie Brown: Quentin Tarantino on his follow-up to Pulp Fiction." *Entertainment Weekly* 19 December 1997. Web 10 April 2021 April. <https://ew.com/article/1997/12/19/jackie-brown-quentin-tarantino-his-follow-pulp-fiction/>
- The Quentin Tarantino Archives since 1999*. Web 16 April 2021. <https://www.tarantino.info/>
- Wootton, Adrian. "Quentin Tarantino on Adapting *Rum Punch*, Moving the Story to A, Elmore Leonard's Opinion." *Quentin Tarantino: Interviews*, edited by Gerald Peary, UP of Mississippi, 2013, pp. 134-138.

Filmography

- Carlito's Way*. Dir. Brian De Palma. 1993.
- Coffy*. Dir. Jack Hill. 1973.
- Courage Under Fire*. Dir. Edward Zwick. 1996.
- Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry*. Dir. John Hough. 1974.
- Foxy Brown*. Dir. Jack Hill. 1974.
- Inglorious Basterds*. Dir. Quentin Tarantino. 2009.
- Jackie Brown*. Dir. Quentin Tarantino. 1997.
- Kill Bill*. Dir. Quentin Tarantino. 2003.
- Pulp Fiction*. Dir. Quentin Tarantino. 1994.
- Rashomon*. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Daiei Film, 1950.
- Reservoir Dogs*. Dir. Quentin Tarantino. 1992.
- Straight Time*. Dir. Ulu Grosbard. 1978.
- The Big Doll House*. Dir. Jack Hill. 1971.
- The Fan*. Dir. Tony Scott. 1996.
- The Killing*. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. 1956.
- Truck Turner*. Dir. Jonathan Kaplan. 1974.
- Vampyros Lesbos*. Dir. Jesús Franco. 1971.

“We’re missing the Latino attorney or astronaut as the hero”¹: Latinx Presence in Hollywood in the 20th and 21st Centuries

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.04

Abstract: The article examines the Latinx presence throughout the history of American cinema and analyses the reasons for the mis- and underrepresentation of Latinos/as in Hollywood productions focusing on major stereotypes and politics of American government towards this ethnic group influencing their cinematic description. The final part discusses the recent works produced by Latinos/as and telling their stories in the twenty-first century to demonstrate that Latinos/as are the integral part of American society who want to be justly represented and have the possibility to speak in their own name.

Keywords: Latinx cinema, Hollywood, Latinx representation, stereotypes, diversity, racism

The 2002 documentary *The Bronze Screen: 100 Years of the Latino Image in Hollywood*, directed by Nancy De Los Santos, Susan Racho, and Alberto Dominguez, discusses the representation of Latinos/as in American movies in the 20th century. It focuses both on the cinematic descriptions and on the participation of Latinx² artists in the movie productions. As Luis Valdez, a famous Chicano playwright, movie director and a founder of El Teatro Campesino,³ observes: “You’ve seen Latinos come and go in Hollywood” depending on the political situation in the U.S. The documentary ends with the statement that “the world is still all hungry for American dream and Hollywood has

1 Ben Lopez for Villafañe *Forbes*.

2 Latinx is an American English neologism and pan-ethnic gender-neutral label describing the U.S. population tracing their roots to Latin America and Spain. The gender-neutral (-x) suffix replaces the (-o/-a) ending of Latino and Latina typical of grammatical gender in Spanish. Its plural is Latinxs. In the U.S., the first uses of Latinx appeared more than a decade ago, but it was added to the English dictionary in 2018. However, only 23% of U.S. adults who self-identify as Hispanic or Latino have heard of the term, and just 3% say they use it to describe themselves, according to 2019 Pew Research Center. Words used for similar purposes include Latin@ and Latine (www.pewresearch.org and English Wikipedia).

3 Farmworkers’ Theatre—a folk theater group founded by Luis Miguel Valdez in Delano in 1965 to publicize the cause of the United Farm Workers (UFW) and to assist the union in organizing farmworkers. In 1967 El Teatro Campesino left the UFW, moved to California (first to Del Rey, then to Fresno, finally to San Juan Bautista) and started to perform actos about Mexican culture and history for college students, professors, union organizers, and community activists, becoming an inspirational voice of the Chicano movement. During the 1970s, Luis Valdez experimented with various dramatic forms and took his theatre to Europe and Mexico. *Zoot Suit* (1978) became the first play by a Latino to be presented on Broadway. In 2000, Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino began an extended association with the San Diego Repertory Theater to develop and create new works for a growing multicultural audience, yet in 2006 it had returned to its roots as an ensemble theater company committed to generating social change through the arts, under the direction of Kinan Valdez (Castro 221-223, and elteatrocampesino.com/our-history).

to communicate that this dream belongs to all of us,” still the voiceover bitterly adds that “it’s never our [Latinos/as] time.” Therefore, the documentary concludes that the future of Latin actresses and actors, as well as producers, in the 21st century will depend on the audience and support from the community, since “people from our community must do it [assure well-representation] for ourselves.” Jennifer Lopez expressed a similar opinion in an interview for *Latinx Now!* about her 2019 movie *Hustlers* when she says: “I think we need to tell more of our stories. We have the power to change our reality.”

Hence, in the third decade of the 21st century addressing the issue of Latinx position in Hollywood, we can ask the question—has the situation changed? Actually, not so much. In 2019 in *Forbes* magazine Veronica Villafañe published an article, “Number of Latinos in Hollywood Films Is Dismal. What Needs to Change?” in which she quotes a study from the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, which analyzed 1,200 films from 2007 to 2018. According to the study: “Latino actors barely landed 4.5% of more than 47,000 speaking roles in the 100 top-grossing U.S. movies from each of the past 12 years and only 3% were leads or co-leads. The staggeringly low numbers are just as bad behind the camera, where Latino directors constituted 4% and producers just 3%” (Villafañe). Moreover, not only the underrepresentation of Latinos/as was dramatic, the portrayal of the Latinx population continues to be stereotypical and cliché. “Among the findings across 200 films from 2017 to 2018, 24% of all of Latino speaking characters were depicted as criminals (mostly gang members or drug dealers) and 13% were shown as poor or from low-income backgrounds. When it came to jobs on screen, the majority of Latino characters were portrayed as non-college educated individuals (construction workers, farmers, service personnel) with a meager number of highly educated professionals” (Villafañe).

Edward James Olmos makes similar observations in an *L.A. Times* article by Daniel Hernandez, entitled “Hollywood’s Treatment of Latinos is an Open Wound. Healing it Requires a Reckoning.” when he says: “White Hollywood does not want to tell the real stories of Latinos. Latinos are in a worse place now than in 1964 when [I] started in the business. Just because there are several successful Latino actors does not mean that Latinos are making it in Hollywood.” Even though the number of Latinos/as involved in the movie business is constantly increasing, similarly to the number of movies or series, they are still hardly visible and appreciated in Hollywood. Moreover, Latinos/as say they encounter numerous obstacles in producing and viewing stories that reflect their experiences on the screen.

U.S. Latinos in 2025 are expected to reach 20% of the population, according to census projections, meaning 1 in 5 Americans will identify as Latino in a handful of years. By 2045, a quarter of Americans are expected to be Latino. Yet study after study shows a vast gap between the number of Latinos represented in English-language Hollywood productions and their share of the population at large. USC’s 2020 inclusion study of 1,300 popular films found that 4.9% of speaking roles in 2019 movies went to Hispanic or Latino actors. And UCLA’s 2020 ‘Hollywood Diversity Report’ found an underrepresentative 5% of the roles in scripted broadcast T.V. shows went to Latino actors in the 2018-19 season. (Hernandez)

Accordingly, Latino/a community undertook several actions. For example, Tanya Saracho founded Untitled Latinx Project, whose mission, as we can read on their webpage, is: “To increase Latinx representation in television, broadcast, cable, and streaming platforms through content created by Latinx writers,” while their vision is: “an entertainment industry where Latinx content by Latinx creatives is the standard. Where Latinx people and their stories are represented authentically and in all their complexity.” The group also released an open Letter to Hollywood to end Latino/a exclusion signed by 270 people from the movie business. In the Letter they write:

We are incensed by the continued lack of Latinx representation in our industry, especially among the Black and Indigenous members of our community. Our stories are important, and our erasure onscreen contributes to the persistent prejudice that prevents real change in this country. This prejudice is not as overt as the one that keeps immigrant children in cages and separates families at the border, or as violent as the racism that is killing our Black, Brown, and Indigenous community members at the hands of police. But when we are onscreen, we’re often relegated to stereotypes or villains.... By refusing to tell our stories AND by refusing to put us in charge of telling them—Hollywood power brokers are complicit in our exclusion. (Braxton)

As an example of racism and violence toward Latino/a population they point to is the mass killing in Walmart, El Paso, Texas, on Aug. 3, 2019, when a white man began shooting “intending to target Latino, specifically Mexican, people, according to a federal affidavit. Twenty-three people died, most of them Latino.” The shooter was “a 21-year-old believer in the white supremacist conspiracy theory the “Great Replacement” (Hernandez). One year after the shooting, Democratic Representative from Texas and the chairman of Congressional Hispanic Caucus Joaquin Castro wrote an article to *Variety* in which he says:

Today there is a dangerous nexus between the racist political rhetoric and the negative images of Latinos as criminals and invaders that Americans see on their screens. It’s clear that many Americans have a fundamental misunderstanding of who Latinos are. Prejudice has existed in the United States for generations, but the image of our community created by film and television has done little to counter bigoted views, and too often has amplified them. I bet most studio executives are progressives, yet the industry is regressive. Hollywood looks like an America of yesteryear. You can draw a clear line from the pervasive lack of positive Latino representation on-screen to the rise in hate crimes against our communities, including in El Paso. In this moment of pandemic and protest, Hollywood needs to reckon with its systemic injustice and exclusion of our communities.

Subsequently, he decided to put political pressure on Hollywood. On September 24, 2020, the House Judiciary Committee on Diversity in America: The Representation of People of Color in the Media was held. Edward James Olmos, in his testimony, said: “We’re talking about the single most important art form that humans have ever created. Nothing attacks the subconscious mind more. You sit down before a theater screen, a

dark room, with no peripheral vision. Everything goes into the subconscious, and it stays there” (Hernandez). He was also referring to El Paso shooting.

After the hearing, at the request of Rep. Castro and Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-N.Y.), chair of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office agreed in October 2020 to initiate a report on “Latino hiring in entertainment industries, representation in management and the enforcement of federal equal opportunity laws and regulations by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Department of Labor” (Hernandez) with the purpose to use regulatory and political pressure on Hollywood. Moreover, members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and various other Latino/a organizations have been meeting informally with Hollywood executives about hiring and negative portrayals of Latinos/as. “We know what happens in D.C. affects entertainment, and how we’re portrayed in entertainment is how we are treated in real life,” said Brenda Castillo, head of the National Hispanic Media Coalition. “If we’re not seen, then we don’t exist, and then we’re treated poorly. We’re treated as noncitizens, as criminals and rapists, and that’s why our children are in cages” (Hernandez).

Advocating for more Latino representation in the Hollywood Latinx community proposed numerous solutions. One of them is changing casting practices, including hiring Latino/a casting directors and auditioning and casting more Latinos /as in minor roles that can later lead to more significant opportunities – a strategy called building pipelines. Co-director of the 2012 breakout hit *Filly Brown*, Michael D. Olmos, a son of Edward James Olmos, said, “the industry [I have] pursued can often be a ‘meritocracy,’ but it is also a ‘referral industry,’ in which connections matter most of all. And making those connections can be tough.” Thus, his father founded the Youth Cinema Project, which teaches multicultural children how to make their movies. “He wants to address the so-called “pipeline” issue at the earliest stage” (Hernandez). Accordingly, Flavio Morales, an executive vice president at the distribution and production company Endemol Shine Latino, argues that if more people of color work at every movie production stage: as grips, costume designers, camera operators, editors or production assistants, the pool of future directors and film pioneers naturally grows. “Look at the Blaxploitation movement,” he said of the often-dismissed films. “We got line producers, writers, directors. We need our Blaxploitation movement, and we need our Roger Corman. How are we going to get better if we don’t practice? We just need more things on the screen. More, more, more” (Hernandez).

Consequently, in this study, I am going to first analyze the Latino/a presence in American cinematography since its beginnings throughout the twentieth century, and then discuss several works produced by Latinos/as and telling their stories in the twenty-first century to demonstrate that Latinos/as are the integral part of American society who want to be justly represented and have the possibility to speak in their own name.

Latino/a history in Hollywood in the 20th century

In the beginning of Hollywood depiction of Latinos/as in the movies mainly was based on stereotypes associated with Mexican presence and relations in the U.S. Therefore, Mexican women were represented as treacherous, evil and unfaithful wives and

Mexican men as bad guys, dumb rapists of white women who cannot speak English (*Greaser's Gauntlet* 1908; *Tony the Greaser* 1911; *Bronco Billy and the Greasers* 1914; *The Gunfighter* 1917, etc.). Interestingly, similarly as in the case of 19th-century minstrel shows, many “Mexicans” at that time were played by white men whose faces were artificially darkened. At the same time, the term “greaser” became a synonym for a violent Hispanic on the screen. The appearance of a series of pseudo-documentaries about the Mexican Revolution that started in 1910 accentuated the image of Latin violence and primitivism on the screen (*Barbarous Mexico* 1913). *Viva Villa!* from 1934 in which Revolutionary hero Pancho Villa is depicted as animalistic and childish killer started another tradition of stereotypical Mexican men representation, namely the bandito (*bandido* in Spanish), a man with a thick Mexican accent, who wears a sombrero and poncho, and who represents the outlaw stories set in Mexico or near the border.



Probably the most famous depiction of the bandito character:
Alfonso Bedoya in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948)

When Mexico and some Latin American countries decided to boycott movies that offended their people, President Woodrow Willson appealed to Hollywood producers: “Please be a little kinder to Mexicans” (*The Bronze Screen*). As a result, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America signed an agreement that promised to avoid negative depictions of Latino/as. Subsequently, the 1920s witnessed the appearance of the “Latin lover”—a spicy sex symbol—played by Antonio Moreno, Ramon Novarro and Rudolf Valentino in the case of male roles and by Lupe Vélez and Dolores Del Rio in case of females (*The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* 1921, *The Spanish Dancer* 1923, *Scaramouche* 1923; *Ben-Hur* 1925; *The Gaucho* 1927; *Ramona* 1928). These actors and actresses were incredibly popular in silent movies where their accent was not a significant problem, yet the “talkies” brought a disaster to some of

them. While “true American men” could not be endangered by foreigners’ speech, thus excluding Latino actors from major roles, the double standard benefited women. For example, Lupe Vélez made a smooth transition to sound cinema becoming one of the first successful Latina actresses in Hollywood. She was primarily cast in comedies, the series *Mexican Spitfire*, from which she got her nickname, being the most famous of the time and, as some claim, the work that paved the way for *I Love Lucy* TV show of the 1950s. Together with Dolores Del Rio they are considered Latina icons of Golden Age of Hollywood.

Since language was a problem in sound movies, yet the producers wanted the revenue from popular titles, some movies of the era had both English and Spanish versions, *Dracula* from 1931, directed by Tod Browning, being the best example. The movie made in Universal Studios in California had a Spanish version of *Drácula* with a Latino/a cast, shot at the exact location but at night during the graveyard shift to make production cheaper, which was a popular strategy at the time. English movies were shot during the day and Spanish-speaking at night.

Not only the accent and language were problematic in the first half of 20th century Hollywood, but also the depiction of borderland territory. The Warner Brothers’ *Bordertown* (1935) not only again shows a Latino man, Johnny Ramirez, a looser and gambler, who cannot control his temper and violent outbursts, but also starts a tradition of locating Latinos/as in the U.S. in the East L.A. and Boyle Heights neighborhoods, where Ramirez once defeated by the white society retreats to be with his “own savage people.” Thus, the movie sends a message that “you should not go beyond the borders of your tribe” and precisely defines where these borders are situated. Moreover, the irony is that the Ramirez character was played by a white actor, Paul Muni, who later was also cast in the 1939 film *Juárez*—a positive portrayal of Mexico and its heroic first president of indigenous origin, Benito Juárez, often praised as Abraham Lincoln of Mexico. As Greenfield and Cortés claim:

the movie treats Mexico with considerable dignity as it relates Juárez’s successful leadership of Mexico’s victory over the French, including their puppet Emperor Maximilian. However, [it] also transforms Juárez into a metaphor for U.S. political democracy and a spokesman for growing American concerns about the spread of nazism and fascism. Pursued relentlessly by French troops, Juárez lugs a huge, cumbersome portrait of Abraham Lincoln, which he hangs dutifully on the wall at each stop. With French Emperor Napoleon III serving as an unobtrusive surrogate for Adolf Hitler, Hollywood’s Juárez intones anti-Hitlerian messages, sometimes in perfect Monroe Doctrine rhetoric: ‘By what right, señores, do the great powers of Europe invade the lands of simple people...?’ (295)

Two things should be stressed here. Abraham Lincoln was never called Benito Juárez of the USA, and why did a white actor play the Mexican hero? “Lupe Velez once complained that she portrayed Chinese, Eskimos, Japanese, Indian squaws, Hindus, Swedes, Malays and Javanese, but rarely a Hispanic. Thus, false Latins often found the road to success easier than true Latins in the 1930’s” (Woll).

Latinos/as’ situation improved during the Second World War when Hollywood deprived of a European audience had to look for alternative markets, and the U.S., in

general, to secure its shores, had to maintain good relations with countries south of the border. This “Good Neighbor Policy” was characterized by two objectives: “1) to insure that nations in Latin America were joined in the Allied war effort and were not associated with the Axis or Communist sympathizers, and 2) to allow the U.S. access to Latin America as a source of raw materials and a market for goods, including films” (Falicov 245).

The shift from a historical pattern of the United States intervention in Latin American countries using military and manipulation was now replaced by a more soft power approach in which cultural productions played a significant role. For example, the “good will” tours throughout the Americas by famous actors and directors such as Orson Welles, Carmen Miranda, Rita Hayworth and Walt Disney were arranged by the Office of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA) which was the central agency to oversee international film industry relations.

Another strategy was to distance itself from the history of Hollywood films with an insensitive portrayal of Latin American characters. Subsequently, Hollywood studios were convinced to create a series of Latin-themed movies that would resonate favorably with Latin American audiences. Two organizations under the jurisdiction of the OIAA were used for that purpose—the Motion Pictures Division and the Motion Picture Society for the Americas (MPSA). This private society was financed by a congressional grant and consisted of Hollywood directors and producers who were reviewing scripts and material with inter-American content. It acted as a liaison between the State Department, War Production Board, Office of Price Administration, Hollywood Victory Committee, War Activities Committee, and other government agencies in order to facilitate the production of pictures with Latin American content, many of them in Spanish or Portuguese. As a result, “by February 1943, 30 films with Latin American themes or locales had been released, and 25 more were in production. By 1945, 84 films dealing with Latin American themes had been produced” (Falicov 249). Still, most productions were pure propaganda and functioned to maintain U.S. hegemony over the Western Hemisphere.

In the wartime era, Latinos were no longer bandits or ignorant peasants but appeared in various cinematic roles. Films also began to differentiate between South American settings, “allowing viewers to spend a *Weekend in Havana* and *That Night in Rio* (1941) or travel *Down Argentina Way* (1940).” However, according to some critics, the growing number of South American musical films which showed Hispanics singing and dancing to the latest samba rhythms replaced one stereotype with another. “Latin might no longer have been a bandit, but now he was holding a guitar and crooning the melodies of his native land. Many Latinos worried that Hollywood had gone too far in its efforts to supplant earlier stereotypes” (Woll). Still, these romantic musical comedies introduced many new Latino actors and actresses. The best example could be Cuban-American Desi Arnaz or a Spanish-origin dancer Margarita Carmen Cansino who later became known as American Love Goddess Rita Hayworth. After several successful movies in which Rita Cansino played mostly exotic foreigners - an Argentinian girl in *Under the Pampas Moon* (1935), an Egyptian girl in *Charlie Chan in Egypt* (1935), a Russian dancer in *Paddy O’Day* (1935), or South American in *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939) and *The Strawberry Blonde* (1941) - Hollywood decided to

eliminate her ethnicity and de-Latinize her (*The Bronze Screen*). For that purpose, her hair was first dyed blond and then made famously red, and her surname was changed in 1937 to Hayworth since the original was “too ethnic.” In this way, she became an “all-American glamour girl” and a wartime pin-up, “second only to Betty Grable in popularity” (McLean 8).

According to Woll, after the war, Hollywood lost its interest in the Latin extravaganza and focused more on the situation of Latinos/as in American society. An example can be *A Medal for Benny* (1945), a John Steinbeck tale about a Chicano war hero. The Chicanos were “portrayed as sensible and wise, while the Anglo community leaders were exposed as greedy and deceitful” (Woll). Consequently, several movies were made in the late 1940s and 1950s with the accurate and favorable representation of Latinos/as and their problems. Such productions worth mentioning here are John Ford’s *The Fugitive* (1947) with almost the entire Mexican crew and symbolical depiction of anti-religious *cristada* (a war against Catholic Church in the 1920s in Mexico); *Border Incident* (1949) starring Ricardo Montalbán, a movie about the Border Patrol agents, the cruelty of human trafficking across the border, and Bracero Program showing Mexican laborers as honorable hard-working people, but exploited by the mishandlings in the program; *Viva Zapata!* (1952) directed by Elia Kazan with a screenplay written by John Steinbeck in which Marlon Brando stars a revolutionary Mexican hero Emiliano Zapata.

Furthermore, mentioned above, Desi Arnaz turned his Cuban nightclub singer and annoying husband Ricky Ricardo into one of television’s most iconic characters in *I Love Lucy*, a CBS sitcom, which aired for six seasons (1951-1957) with a total of 180 half-hour episodes. The series followed the life of Lucy Ricardo (Lucille Ball), a young, middle-class housewife living in New York City, her husband Ricky and her best friends, Ethel and Fred Mertz (“A Brutally Honest History”). It was the most-watched show in the U.S. at that time, which won five Emmy Awards, and is still considered one of the most influential sitcoms in history. In 2012, it was voted the Best TV Show of All Time in a survey conducted by ABC News and *People* magazine (English Wikipedia). In 2021, Lucy’s life and marriage was depicted in *Being the Ricardos*, where Lucy is played by Nicole Kidman and Desi Arnaz by Javier Bardem.

Moreover, the 1950s is the period when Puerto Rican José Ferrer becomes the first and till nowadays the only Latino to win an Academy Award for Best Actor for his lead role in *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1951). In 1953 Mexico-born Anthony Quinn won the supporting actor Oscar for *Viva Zapata!* and in 1957 for *Lust for Life*. Quinn was nominated in 1965 as lead actor in *Zorba the Greek* and in 1958 for *Wild Is the Wind*. It takes nearly 50 years for another Latino actor to win the Oscar when Puerto Rico-born Benicio del Toro wins in 2001 for his supporting role in *Traffic* (“A Brutally Honest History”). Alejandro González Iñárritu, in 2014, was the first Latino director to win Oscar for Best Picture for *Birdman*, and Guillermo del Toro was the second in 2017 for *The Shape of Water*. Both titles also won in the category of Best Director.

The first Latina to be nominated for her supporting role in *Imitation of Life* (1959) was Susan Kohner, a daughter of Mexico-born producer Paul Kohner and early sound star Lupita Tovar known for her performance in the Spanish-language version of *Dracula* (1931). In 1962 Puerto Rican actress Rita Moreno became the first Latina to

win an Oscar for her supporting role in a musical *West Side Story*, which is considered to be one of the greatest musicals of the time, won 10 Awards altogether and in which non-Latina Natalie Wood plays the central role of Maria (“A Brutally Honest History”). In 2021 Steven Spielberg made a remake of the musical, which despite the wide acclaim (winning 3 Golden Globes) and financial success, has been criticized by some critics for not bringing anything fresh to the story as it is, for example, observed in *New Yorker* Richard Brody’s review:

With the screenwriter Tony Kushner, Spielberg has attempted to fix the dubious aspects of the 1961 film, including its cavalier depiction of Puerto Rican characters and its stereotypes of a hardscrabble New York. But, instead of reconceiving the story, they’ve shored it up with flimsy new struts of sociology and psychology, along with slight dramatic rearrangements. They’ve made ill-conceived additions and misguided revisions. In the process, they’ve managed to subtract doubly from the original.... [T]he characters have no richer inner lives, cultural substance, or range of experience than they do in the first film.

Nonetheless, it took thirty years before Mercedes Ruehl won Oscar for the supporting actress role in 1992 for *The Fisher King*, yet she is not always counted as Latina, and another seventeen years till 2009, when Penelope Cruz, who is Spanish and not officially considered Latina, won the supporting actress Oscar for *Vicky Christina Barcelona*. In 2014, Lupita Nyong’o became the first Kenyan-Mexican to win an acting Oscar for her supporting role in *12 Years a Slave*. So far, four Latinas have been nominated for Academy Award for Best Actress, but none of them has won.

Moreover, the Sixties witnessed the appearance of the new western and with it the return of stereotypes about Latinos/as, namely the greaser, who is even more violent and bloodthirsty this time. In fact, in reaction to the African-American Civil Rights Movement, Mexicans became a replacement for all the vices that used to be attributed to Blacks before. The 1960 classic, *The Magnificent Seven*, can be an example of such a movie that allowed Anglos to demonstrate their superiority over Mexicans. Here we have seven famous American gunmen who rescue a poor Mexican village by wiping out an entire forty-man gang of vicious Mexican outlaws while losing only four of them. Another illustration of the lawless Mexican border and brutal, corrupt Mexicans can be found in 1969 *The Wild Bunch*. Both movies reinforced the pattern of going to Mexico when you are an escaping criminal or somebody looking for something illicit (sex, liquor, gambling etc.) (*The Bronze Screen*).

At the same time, the Sixties recognized ethnic differences among Latino/a population—the already mentioned *West Side Story* musical (1961) portrays Puerto Ricans in New York and has extraordinary Rita Moreno in the cast. Nevertheless, the central role of Maria is played by Natalie Wood, which is another outrageous, after *Juárez* (1939) and *Viva Zapata* (1952), example of Hollywood whitewashing. As Rita Moreno says in those times, “there was no Latina in the whole world with that star power to play the role.” Furthermore, Raquel Welch adds that the message was that “for a star role you cannot be a Latina.” Actually, Welch, a Latina of Bolivian descent, earned her popularity mostly starring in international productions. However, she recollects how when she played in *One Million Years B.C.* (1966), a British film, she was asked to

dye her hair blond. When she inquired why she was told that her role was of a “good girl and only the bad girl has dark hair.” Additionally, Moreno, who won an Oscar for her performance as Anita, was not offered a decent role after that for seven years. She recalls that she was expected to play in other “gang movies” but of a lesser quality than *West Side Story*.

Generally, this type of movies became incredibly popular in the 1970s till early 1990s when we see “a hardcore of Chicano gangs in films” and the bandito character transformed into the “urban greaser,” and as Moreno says “placing the stereotypes of the [Latin] people in their [audience] minds” becoming “the self-perpetuating image” in the words of Luis Valdez (*The Bronze Screen*). On the whole, gangster movies are well-liked Hollywood productions, but the problem is that society judges gang films as they judge gangs. There is a kind of extraordinary fascination with gangs in American society, indisputably founded on the violent myth of the Wild West and gun culture. This fascination contains in itself a contradiction of both attraction to and repulsion of gang culture (the components of which are East L.A. *barrio*⁴, guns, money, low-rider⁵ cars, police chase, *cholos*⁶ and hot women, violence, and revenge), and is probably one of the most frequently perpetrated negative stereotypes in American movies. The critics underline that it is all done for money while the “kids in prison get the instructions from watching gangs on the screen” (*The Bronze Screen*). The titles that should be cited here are *Boulevard Nights* (1979), *Colors* (1988) and *Mi Vida Loca* (1993) about a girls’ gang with genuine gang members as actresses. Although the movie shows the effects of street gang violence on young women and their children, it still romanticizes and trivializes gang culture and friendships. Moreover, it confirms a negative stereotype of young Latinos/as as dangerous, drug-dealing, un-educated and incapable of thinking for themselves, and primarily welfare-dependent.

Contrary to these representations, in the late 1970s, Latinos began making their movies on an unprecedented scale to present their culture in their perspective and their own voice, so far not had heard in Hollywood. Luis Valdez said: “Hollywood doesn’t accommodate any minority group. If you are a minority group you have to push, you have to fight, to climb a mountain. You can’t feel sorry for yourself in this business, you have to be aggressive, you have to be positive and you have to compete.” Accordingly, Valdez produced and directed several successful feature films—*Zoot Suit* (1981), nominated for Golden Globe Award for “Best Motion Picture—Musical or Comedy;” and *La Bamba* (1987), the Ritchie Valens’ story, for Columbia Pictures. Gregory Nava directed *El Norte* (1983) about two Guatemalan refugees to the U.S., giving voice to Latino illegal immigrants. Cheech Marin took a comedic approach to immigration issues in his famous movie *Born in East L.A.* (1978), which is both a parody

4 A *barrio* is a neighborhood, a city district, or a ward in an urban area where Mexicans and Chicanos/as live (Castro 20).

5 The expression “low rider” is used to describe the car, the subculture, and the person who drives a vehicle that has been lowered rides very low and has been customized (Castro 142).

6 *Cholos*—in 1990s the urban youth, usually male between the ages of eleven or twelve and eighteen or nineteen who are distinguished by the clothes they wear, their speech, gestures, and a defiant street style. Although some may be gang members, some may be low-riders, or just Chicanos influenced by the cholo lifestyle (Castro 54).

about U.S. Border Patrol deportations of Latinos/as and a general social statement on immigration. He also played in a comic picture about low-rider culture in *Up in Smoke* (1978). In turn, Mexican farmworkers' experience was reflected in *!Alambrista! The Illegal* (1977) and *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988). Edward James Olmos was the first Latino to direct a Hollywood movie about gangs from the Latino perspective—*American Me* (1992)—and as he described it did it for the kids—brown, black, white—to give them “a chance to make an educated choice whether they want this life or not.” Finally, in 1995 Gregory Nava directed *Mi familia*, a multigenerational movie about a stereotypical Latino family in the U.S. but revealing all positive aspects of it and showing a stereotypical Latino male but “with a heart.” The movie also wonderfully depicts Mexican culture and the syncretism of indigenous spiritualism (*curanderismo*, white owl appearing in the significant moments of Chucho's life) with Catholicism. Two years later, Nava directed *Selena* (1997), a film about a Queen of Tejano music killed by her friend and former manager that “catapulted Jennifer Lopez into international stardom” (*The Bronze Screen*). Still, not only her since the Nineties created a number of actors and actresses that would become world-famous stars—Salma Hayek, Edward James Olmos, Rosie Perez, Andy Garcia, Benicio del Toro, John Leguizamo and Antonio Banderas—the Latin lover of the 1990s.

Nonetheless, Hollywood in the 1990s maintained the tradition of whitewashing Latino characters, the most striking examples of the time being a film adaptation of Isabel Allende's novel about a Chilean family, *The House of Spirits* (1993), with Meryl Streep as Clara del Valle Trueba, Glenn Close as Férula Trueba, Jeremy Irons as Esteban Trueba, Winona Ryder as Blanca Trueba, Vanessa Redgrave as Nívea del Valle and only one native Spanish speaker, Antonio Banderas as Pedro Tercero García and the movie *Evita* (1996), with Madonna starring Evita Peron, Argentinian actress, politician, activist, and First Lady (latimes.com). In the Oscar-winning film *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), which depicts the life of math genius and Nobel laureate, John Forbes Nash, his wife, Alicia, is from El Salvador, but the movie made no mention of her ethnicity, and the part was played by Jennifer Connelly, a non-Latina, who won an Oscar for this role. Lisa Navarrete, spokeswoman for the National Council of La Raza, a civil rights organization that puts on the annual American Latino Media Arts Awards to promote the Latino image in entertainment, comments on that factual lapse as follows: “[this] omission robbed audiences of the image of a Hispanic professional who helped her husband re-emerge from his mental illness. ‘They just changed it,’ she said of the real Mrs. Nash. ‘You'd think she's a Southern belle.’” The film's director, Ron Howard, refused to comment (Navarro).

Another continued convention has been casting Latinas in the roles of maids and household help, along with or even sometimes replacing Black women. Lupe Ontiveros' case, a widely recognized and acclaimed actress, who played a maid more than 150 times throughout her career, beginning with ABC's television series *Charlie's Angels* and most memorably in *As Good as It Gets* (1997), is the best illustration of this trend. She describes Hollywood and how it views Hispanics as follows: “It's their continued perspective of who we are. They don't know we're very much a part of this country and that we make up every part of this country.” Moreover, to play a maid, she must put on an accent her family lost a generation ago. She herself was a Texas Women's

University graduate, where she majored in psychology and social work. Yet, she recalls: “When I go in there and speak perfect English, I don’t get the part.” Jeanine Basinger, chairwoman of the film studies department at Wesleyan University, adds: “It’s not that some Hispanics are not maids. The issue is that not all Hispanic women are maids” (Navarro). Alternative striking illustration can be *Maid in Manhattan* (2002), in which Jennifer Lopez, already independent and successful in her career, plays a Latina woman who works as a maid in an expensive hotel, is a single mom (enforcing the idea that Latino men are absentee fathers/bad family men), and only finds success after she falls in love with a white man who “saves” her, which creates a distorted image for other Latinas.

Therefore, at the end of *The Bronze Screen* documentary, Latinos/as in Hollywood are saying, “We are tired of being portrayed as losers and hoodlums, as people who are not contributing to this country.” They believe transformation is possible, but the hope for it lies in their own community. “It will change because people from our community will take it upon themselves to write the films and direct the films, and produce the films and tell their own truth instead of watching somebody else do it for them.”

Latinos/as in 21st-Century Hollywood

The first of five demands included in the Latinx Letter to Hollywood declares: “*No Stories About Us Without Us*—....We need to be included in the telling of our own stories.” The third compels: “*Represent All Aspects of Our Lives and Culture*.—....We are a diaspora from more than 20 different countries. We are more than just White Latinx and Mestizxs. We are Black and Indigenous. We are LGBTQIA. We are Undocumented. We are Disabled. We have different religious backgrounds and spiritual beliefs. We are more than our trauma. We write stories of joy, origin stories, genre stories, children’s stories, and much more. We demand to be seen and heard in our entirety.” The last one pronounces: “*Hire Us for Non-Latinx Projects*—We are able to write more than identity stories. In fact, our stories are also American stories, stories of resilience, of liberation, of hope. Stories of business owners chasing the American dream, little girls that one day will be president or work for NASA, war veterans, nurses, musical artists and fashionistas. Because we are steeped in the dominant culture, we speak at least two, if not more, cultural languages, well versed in yours as much as we are in ours. Our voices and our perspective will undoubtedly enhance yours and that of all Americans” (Braxton). Representative Joaquin Castro recently expressed a similar opinion: “Latino stories are universal, and more than capable of selling tickets and winning awards if told right. Hollywood has a civic duty to tell Latino stories—and by so doing, to take a stand against hate. The only question is whether Hollywood will finally give Latinos the opportunity to tell our stories.” Subsequently, in the final part of my paper, I would like to analyze several movies made by/about the Latinx population in the last twenty years to examine if their stories are included and how universal they are. However, it needs to be emphasized that it is a subjective selection hence some issues or titles may have been omitted.

When we think about representing various aspects of Latinx life in the U.S., the topics that are often mentioned are related to their economic situation, issues

concerning migration and violence at the Border, and conflicts within the Latino/a family.

In 2002 the movie *Real Women Have Curves* directed by Patricia Cardoso and based on Josephina Lopez' play, was released. It is a story about relations between parents and children, being a working-class Mexican-American in the U.S. and a woman in a patriarchal culture. The movie's motto is that women should love who they are, their bodies, choices in life, and embrace themselves. According to the Sundance Institute, the film gives a voice to young women who are struggling to love themselves and find respect in the United States. The central protagonist—Ana Garcia (America Ferrera's first film appearance)—is a Californian Mexican-American adolescent who strives to match her dream of going to college (Columbia University) with her family's difficult economic situation. In this, she is supported by her grandfather and dad, but faces strong opposition from her mother, Carmen (Lupe Ontiveros), who believes that Ana should get married, have children and work in her sister's, Estela's, (Ingrid Oliu) East L.A. dress factory. Carmen also has very conservative views on female sexuality and body appearance, constantly warning Ana that she will never find a man if she does not lose weight. As a result, Ana rebels in a monumental scene when she undresses at work and encourages other women to do so and then they compare their "imperfect" bodies, bellies and cellulitis. This is one of the most liberating moments in the movie and articulation of body positive philosophy. Today *Real Women Have Curves* is considered the most important film of Latinx feminism, which reflects the experience of Latina women and labor exploitation of undocumented workers in America (Preciado).

A Day Without a Mexican (2004), directed by Sergio Arau, is based on the short 28-minute comedy (1998) by Yareli Arizmendi and Sergio Arau, which was so well received on different festivals, winning several important awards that the authors decided to make a full-feature movie of it. The origins of the idea and its title are in Pete Wilson's policies when he was running for re-election in California and pushing for Proposition 187⁷. Arizmendi recalls how she said to Arau then: "What California needs is a day without a Mexican!" And he adds:

A DAY WITHOUT A MEXICAN was definitely the most provocative title choice and the decision to leave in the word 'Mexican' was very deliberate. We did this for historical reasons because the word 'Mexican' has become a pejorative word in our language, and I want to change that. Any Latino on the West Coast is presumed to be a 'Mexican' and we use comedy to toy with these perceptions and stereotypes in the film. (www adaywithoutamexican.com)

7 California Proposition 187 (also known as Save Our State SOS) was a 1994 initiative to establish a state-run citizenship screening system and prohibit undocumented immigrants from using non-emergency health care, public education, and other services. It passed at a referendum on November 8, 1994, but the law was challenged in a legal suit the day after its passage and found unconstitutional by a federal district court on November 11. In 1999, Governor Gray Davis halted state appeals of this ruling. Governor Pete Wilson, a Republican, was a prominent supporter of Proposition 187, which ultimately became crucial to his re-election (en.wikipedia.org).

Though the comedy, the movie deals with a serious question of what an average Californian's life would be like on a day when a large part of California's population has disappeared. As a result, the state begins to deteriorate into economic, political and social chaos. Only then do people realize that their cooks, gardeners, policemen, nannies, farm and construction workers, waiters, teachers, etc. are of Mexican origin and are also a growing market of consumers in California. Hence, their return becomes a significant concern for the whole Californian community. In Arau's words: "How do you make the invisible visible? You take it away[.]" (www adaywithoutamexican.com).

Bordertown 2007, directed by Gregory Nava and starring Jennifer Lopez and Antonio Banderas and Mexican *El Traspatio* (*Backyard*, 2009) directed by Carlos Carrera are two meaningful pictures that deal with the issue of violence against women at the US-Mexican border, namely Ciudad Juarez' femicides, and their relation to NAFTA, *maquiladoras*⁸ and big business. Sabina Berman, a screenwriter for *El Traspatio*, describes the movie as follows: "It speaks of the wall of indifference and denial in Mexican society: There's a horrible problem, we can't solve it, let's change the subject" (Wilkinson). In fact, both these movies address femicide and attempt to analyze its reasons, but the Mexican picture provides more information about the life of the community and indigenous women, as well as shows how violence is structural and escalates in all patriarchal institutions—family, workplace, police force and justice system; how deeply it is rooted in the Mexican society. Both films have female protagonists who try to solve the mystery of the murders, yet the Hollywood production is more sensational, a thriller, rather than a work addressing social problem, and there is also a subplot of Lauren (Jennifer Lopez) having a crush on Alfonso Diaz (Antonio Banderas), which is odd taking into consideration the storyline, but entirely explicable bearing in mind Hollywood productions' audience. Nonetheless, both films vastly contribute to the discussion about violence against women, which is one of the most alarming issues at the US-Mexican border.

For me, another thought-provoking movie is *Girl in Progress* (2012), directed by Patricia Riggen, a typical coming-of-age story about mother-daughter relation, however its remarkable characteristic is that both the daughter and the mother have to grow up. A long tradition exists of Latino/a coming-of-age stories, with Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* (1991) and Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972) being the most famous Chicano/a examples. The latter has its film adaptation (2013), directed by Carl Franklin. Nevertheless, while Anaya's story is deeply rooted in Chicano/a culture full of religious influence and native spirituality, and the landscape of the American Southwest with the focus on the life of people in the countryside, *Girl in Progress* tells a more universal story and is not much centered in the Mexican culture. The mom, played by Eva Mendes, is not considerate and attentive to her daughter, which is why the kid is driven to grow up by herself, studying books and not wisely coping with the stories included in them. Her rites of passage include insulting her best friend, stealing money from her mother, manipulating another adult to buy her alcohol, and plans to lose her virginity with the school's playboy. She believes that

8 Assembly plants along the U.S.-Mexico border that appeared already in the mid-1960s, but their number increased dramatically after the implementation of The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994.

becoming an adult quickly will solve all her problems, only to learn that life is not fiction. Still, the mother also is far from behaving like a grown-up, responsible adult. She is having an affair with a married man and believes that he will leave his wife and well-to-do life for her, neglects home chores and recklessly acts at work which leads to a robbery. She is too preoccupied with herself to notice her daughter's problems. This lack of communication between the characters leads to a climax that promises a better future for them. Indeed, there are specific Latino/a markers in that story, yet the mother-daughter conflict and the adolescent problems discussed in the movie, are, for me, the evidence that "Latino stories are American stories."

In turn, *How to be a Latin Lover* (2017) is a contemporary satire of the Latin lover character so popular in Hollywood since Rudolph Valentino. However, this time the lover Maximo, played by Eugenio Derbez, is an ageing boyish playboy whose job for the last 25 years was to be a kept man by a rich old wife, Peggy. However, this flawless life ends abruptly when his wife, at her 80th birthday, replaces him with a younger man, a luxurious car dealer (Michael Cera). As, being entirely ignorant, Maximo signed a prenup, the consequences of which he realizes only now, he is left without home, money and any prospects at the same time. Hence, he shows up at the doorstep of his estranged sister, Sara (Salma Hayek), a widow with a nerdy, 10-year-old son, Hugo (Raphael Alejandro). Since Maximo as a child pledged never to work as hard as his father, in fact, his only job in life was to be a lover, which he practiced till perfection, so, instead of finding a decent job, which is Sara's suggestion, he again looks for a rich woman to keep him. He becomes interested in a wealthy grandmother (Raquel Welch) of one of Hugo's schoolmates, which leads to several funny slapsticks. Still, the movie is not only an excellent parody of one of the most recognizable stereotypes of Latino masculinity in Hollywood; it is a story about problematic family relations as well. Though not a perfect father figure, Maximo starts to occupy a significant role in Hugo's life, and the sibling dynamics between him and Sara is just magnificent. When the two argue in Spanish or discuss her romantic interest in a neighbor, both are at their comic best, and Hayek is the sexiest Latina when she dances salsa in her pyjamas. Moreover, the movie depicts the gender role reversal in a humoristic way—here women have money, and they seek for younger lovers, which is stressed by the character of Rick—Rob Lowe who has always played playboys in Hollywood and now is an elderly desperate gigolo. Finally, there is no promise of "redemption." At the end of the story, Maximo finds another rich woman to support him and even convinces her to give a job to his sister.

Conclusion

Latinos/as have been part of Hollywood since its beginning. Some of the stories they communicate are rooted in their culture, others are more universal, but all of them constitute a substantial segment of American culture, which is multicultural and global in its scope. As Moctesuma Esparza, a film producer, says: "Hollywood is the communicator of the American Dream to the world, and the world is all hungry for this American Dream, and as Hollywood communicates that this dream belongs to all of us, that we all participate equally in it that world is going to be impacted by that as well and we all gonna benefit from it" (*The Bronze Screen*). Hence, the Latinx legacy

to Hollywood is not only their contribution to the development of cinematography or the fact that they were legends and stars like Rita Hayworth, Anthony Quinn or Rita Moreno, but that they are full-fledged members of American society telling their stories and wanting them to be heard and recognized.

The best example can be the 2021 musical *In the Heights* directed by Jon M. Chu, which depicts a panorama of Latino/a characters representing the diversity of the Latinx community living in the New York *barrio* of Washington Heights. Here Cubans mix with Puerto-Ricans and Mexicans, and the central character Usnavi is from the Dominican Republic. However, they all have their version of the American Dream—*el sueño* in Spanish, or actually *suenito*, a little dream—that they wholeheartedly pursue. There are no gangs in their neighborhood, and no violence is presented, which is a romanticized vision, yet they are all hard-working, honest, dedicated to their community and values people who try to struggle with the gentrification of their home block. Some of them want to stay here, like Sony, a Dreamer whose *sueño* is to become a legal citizen, get a driving license and go to college. Some, like Vanessa, dream about getting out of the *barrio*, moving to Downtown New York and having a career (“One day I’ll walk JFK and I’m gonna fly”), or like Usnavi, who at the beginning of the story wants to sell his shop, return to the Dominican Republic and re-open his father’s beach bar. Finally, they both decide to stay and work in the *barrio*, fulfilling their *suenitos* here. Lastly, there is Kevin, the local businessman who has to sell his family business piece by piece to afford his daughter’s, Nina’s, Stanford tuition. He himself has not even finished high school but believes that his daughter is supposed to do it and fulfill his dream as the next generation. Nina, the local *estrella* (star), is beautiful and intelligent, and all the community rests their hopes on her success. She represents their dreams to change their lives and to get out. Nonetheless, after her first year at Stanford, where she meets with prejudice and stereotypes about Latinos/as, she is insecure about the rightness of her choice and wants to drop out. She reflects: “I’m the one who made it out but maybe I should stay home.” At the same time, she realizes that she would let down not only her father but the whole community, which feels predominantly “powerless,” which is wonderfully symbolized by 2003 blackout. Yet, when all the artificial lights go out and one of the vital members of the community—Abuela Claudia—dies, people arrange a vigil with candles for her and in this natural darkness they begin to see the stars. Ultimately, they grasp the meaning of Abuela’s life maxim that dignity lies in small ways and beautiful things such as velvet gloves or embroidered napkins, and that “these little details tell the world, we are not invisible.” Thus, they regain their “power” – the light is back.

Works Cited

- “A Brutally Honest History of Latinos in Hollywood.” www.latimes.com/projects/latino-gap-timeline-history-latinos-hollywood-movies-tv/#nt=0000017a-0707-d467-a77a-afbf8ed50013-showMedia-title-promoSmall-enhancement. Accessed 10 Feb. 2022.
- Braxton, Greg. “We Are Tired’: Read the Open Letter 270 Fed-up Latinx Writers Just Sent Hollywood.” *Los Angeles Times*, 15 October 2020, www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/tv/story/2020-10-15/latinx-writers-open-letter-to-hollywood-united-latinx-project. Accessed 7 Feb. 2022.

- Brody, Richard. "Review: Steven Spielberg's "West Side Story" Remake Is Worse Than the Original." *New Yorker*, 14 Dec. 2021, www.newyorker.com/culture/the-front-row/review-steven-spielbergs-west-side-story-remake-is-worse-than-the-original. Accessed 1 March 2022.
- Castro, Joaquin. "Latinos Love Hollywood, but Hollywood Hates Latinos." *Variety*, Aug 18, 2020, variety.com/2020/tv/news/joaquin-castro-hollywood-latinos-1234737915/. Accessed 7 Feb. 2022.
- Castro, Rafaela, G. *Chicano Folklore. A Guide to the Folktales, Traditions, Rituals and Religious Practices of Mexican-Americans*. Oxford UP, 2001. elteatrocampesino.com/our-history/. Accessed 17 Feb. 2022.
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1994_California_Proposition_187. Accessed 1 March 2022.
- Falicov, Tamara L. "Hollywood's Rogue Neighbor: The Argentine Film Industry during the Good Neighbor Policy, 1939-1945." *The Americas: Latin American Film History*, vol. 63, no. 2, 2006, pp. 245-260.
- Greenfield, Gerald Michael and Carlos E. Cortés. "Harmony and Conflict of Intercultural Images: The Treatment of Mexico in U. S. Feature Films and K-12 Textbooks." *Mexican Studies/ Estudios Mexicanos*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1991, pp. 283-301.
- Hernandez, Daniel. "Hollywood's Treatment of Latinos is an Open Wound. Healing it Requires a Reckoning." *Los Angeles Times*, 13 June 2021, www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2021-06-13/latino-gap-hollywood-movies-tv-representation. Accessed 28 Jan. 2022.
- Jones, Monique. *Being Latinx in Hollywood*. colorwebmag.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/BEING-LATINX-IN-HOLLYWOOD.pdf. Accessed 17 Feb. 2022.
- judiciary.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=3354. Accessed 7 Feb. 2022.
- Lopez, Jenifer. "On Lack of Latino Representation in Hollywood." *Latinx Now!* www.youtube.com/watch?v=92cXhvy0CdM. Accessed 28 Jan. 2022.
- Mc Lean, Adrienne. "I'm a Cansino': Transformation, Ethnicity, and Authenticity in the Construction of Rita Hayworth, American Love Goddess." *Journal of Film and Video*, "Latin American Cinema: Gender Perspectives," vol. 44, no. 3/4, Fall 1992 and Winter 1993, pp. 8-26.
- morningconsult.com/2020/11/30/hispanic-americans-want-hollywood-to-see-them-as-more-than-gang-members/. Accessed 7 Feb. 2022.
- Navarro, Mireya. "Trying to Get Beyond the Role of the Maid; Hispanic Actors Are Seen as Underrepresented, With the Exception of One Part." *New York Times*, 16 May 2002, www.nytimes.com/2002/05/16/movies/trying-get-beyond-role-maid-hispanic-actors-are-seen-underrepresented-with.html. Accessed 17 Feb. 2022.
- Preciado, Marty. "15 years later, *Real Women Have Curves* Remains One of the Most Important Films for Brown Girls." www.hellogiggles.com/reviews-coverage/movies/real-women-have-curves-still-important-film-brown-girls/. Accessed 7 Feb. 2022.
- The Bronze Screen: 100 Years of the Latino Image in Hollywood Cinema*. Directed by Nancy De Los Santos, Susan Racho, and Alberto Dominguez, Questar, Latino Entertainment Media Institute, 2002, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pl42ltufzas. untitledlatinxproject.com/. Accessed 7 Feb. 2022.

- Villafañe, Veronica. "Number of Latinos in Hollywood Films Is Dismal. What Needs to Change?" *Forbes*, 27 Aug. 2019, www.forbes.com/sites/veronicavillafane/2019/08/27/number-of-latinos-in-hollywood-films-is-dismal-what-needs-to-change/?sh=23f3d2cf22c5. Accessed 28 Feb. 2022.
- Wilkinson, Tracy. "Filming 'El Traspatio' was a Death-defying Act" *Los Angeles Times*, 19 Dec. 2009, www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2009-dec-19-la-et-mexico19-2009dec19-story.html. Accessed 22 Feb. 2022.
- Woll, Allen. "How Hollywood Has Portrayed Hispanics." *New York Times*, 1 March 1981, www.nytimes.com/1981/03/01/movies/how-hollywood-has-portrayed-hispanics.html. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.
- www adaywithoutamexican.com. Accessed 5 May 2006.
- www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2020/08/11/about-one-in-four-u-s-hispanics-have-heard-of-latinx-but-just-3-use-it/. Accessed 17 Feb. 2022.

VARIA

Justyna Fruzińska

Becoming Real to Oneself: Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.05

Abstract: This paper focuses on three American Romantic writers: Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne, examining the problem of ghostliness or life not fully lived present in their works. The point of departure for the present discussion is Arnold Weinstein's analysis of Hawthorne's short story "Wakefield," suggesting that the main goal of its protagonist is an attempt to become real to himself. This paper finds similar issues to the ones tackled by Hawthorne in the essays by R.W. Emerson and H.D. Thoreau, and argues that the method applied by Wakefield, which is looking at one's life from a distance, is also present in the two Transcendentalists' writings, though often as a danger rather than a wished-for solution of the problem.

Keywords: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, ghostliness, selfhood

Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Nathaniel Hawthorne are three Romantic writers who, despite their differences, may be seen as sharing a common interest in the problem of living (or not living) one's life to the fullest despite the threat of a feeling of one's unreality. All three tackle the issue in various ways, concentrating on the act of witnessing one's life and looking at one's self from a distance, offering different answers to the question whether such a distance is a positive or negative phenomenon. The first half of the nineteenth century in particular is a period in which the problem of becoming as real to oneself as possible, is a vital one: literature of this time "is a gallery teeming with larger-than-life portraits of imperial selves," whose dream is "to break free of constraint, to stop time, to own one's life" (Weinstein 25–26). Before Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, Romantic writers, when faced with doubt about the epistemological possibilities of the human being, do not accept these constraints but look for a way out: philosophies or ways of life for becoming one's own person. Getting to know the world and getting to know oneself is the grand Romantic project, which, however, always takes place in the shadow of looming doubt or skepticism.

One important American short story that touches upon the subject of what it means to become real to oneself is Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Wakefield," published in 1835 in his collection *Twice-Told Tales*. One day, the eponymous character leaves his London apartment and his wife, only to spend the next twenty years living close by and observing her and his former abode. After twenty years, Wakefield ultimately decides to go back home; what the result of his decision will be remains, however, a mystery. The story finishes at the moment of his entering the house: we do not know the

reaction of his wife and friends, or how Wakefield himself is going to feel once he tries to live normally again. But the narrator offers a skeptical comment: "Amid the seeming confusion of our mysterious world, individuals are so nicely adjusted to a system, and systems to one another, and to a whole, that, by stepping aside for a moment, a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever. Like Wakefield, he may become, as it were, the Outcast of the Universe" (147). For the narrator, it is doubtful that Wakefield is going to be smoothly absorbed into his former life, since his former life is no more: the world does not wait for the one who has left it, keeping for him an empty spot; rather, the absence gets quickly built over, and Wakefield may have nothing to return to.

Yet, the most interesting part of Hawthorne's short story from the point of view of the present paper is the question why Wakefield decides to absent himself for twenty years, and not to start a new life but merely to put his old one on hold. In the beginning of the story, Hawthorne introduces his character as the dullest person imaginable: "Had his acquaintances been asked, who was the man in London, the surest to perform nothing today which should be remembered on the morrow, they would have thought of Wakefield" ("Wakefield" 137–38); a sort of "No Man" (Weinstein 14). With his "sluggishness" and a mind that "occupied itself in long and lazy musings, that tended to no purpose, or had not vigor to attain it," he may be seen as another version of Rip Van Winkle: a man who does not fit in the practical world of adult responsibilities (and is not Wakefield's twenty-year absence an equivalent of Rip's twenty-year sleep?). But it is this dull man that decides to live his life in an extremely unusual way, and the story never makes his motivation fully clear.

While Hawthorne's piece has received surprisingly little critical attention, one scholar in particular, Arnold Weinstein, offers an interesting interpretation of the protagonist's motives. In the few critical texts on "Wakefield" preceding Weinstein, Wakefield's bizarre behavior has been seen as a manner of spying on his wife, and interpreted as an expression of scopophilia (by Deborah and Michael West), or as an "experiment in loving" (by Herbert Purluck), according to which love requires separation (17). However, as Weinstein rightly notes, it is not Wakefield's relationship with his wife that seems central to the story. Rather, it is his connection to himself that truly matters; if anything, it is he who is his own "libidinal target" (18, 20). The goal of his strange escape is not getting closer (in a paradoxical way) to his wife; it is not becoming someone else (after all, why does he stay in close proximity to his house? Why does he not do anything other than watch during these twenty years?), but finding himself (19). Wakefield takes pleasure in spying on his own absence: he becomes "both the performance and the audience" (19).

But his behavior is not only hedonistic; there is a purpose to it, and that is to become real to himself: "He is made real by dint of observing his own absence, the vacancy he has 'crafted,' which is the very shape of life, a shape he could not see as long as he lived it"—shape of his own trace (Weinstein 20). In order to know that he exists, and how he exists, Wakefield needs a distance from which he can observe the gap he has left in the world by vacating it (a gap which, if we are to believe the narrator's final words, may not even be there, at least not after twenty years). To put the story in a more contemporary context, Weinstein points to the fact that Wakefield's behavior

mirrors what Marshall McLuhan says about media and technology as extensions of the human brain (25). Perhaps an even more specific comparison would be in order: reading “Wakefield” today one may assume that had the protagonist lived in the twenty-first century, he would have certainly had a Facebook account. It is enough to think of people posting all the details about themselves on social media as if to see the figure their lives make or to get a confirmation that they truly exist, to understand the sort of psychological need motivating Wakefield.

Wakefield’s “adventure” may be seen as a response to a problem preoccupying not only Hawthorne, but also other writers of the same era. Weinstein points to the fact that Wakefield’s story is in fact more significant than it might seem at first glance: “He has traveled far, rather as Thoreau was said to have traveled a great deal in Concord” (22).¹ That Weinstein chooses to compare Wakefield to Thoreau is not insignificant: Thoreau and his friend and mentor Emerson are two nineteenth-century writers who are as concerned with the problem of experiencing one’s self as Hawthorne is. As Weinstein stresses, a central problem not only in “Wakefield” but in Hawthorne’s thinking in general is the feeling of inauthenticity, thus expressed by the writer: “A man tries to be happy in love; he cannot sincerely give his heart, and the affair seems all a dream. In domestic life, the same; in politics, a seeming patriot; but still he is sincere, and all seems like theatre” (“American Notebooks” 618). This “living in a permanent haze, a gauzy world with nothing vital in it, nothing searing, nothing that cuts through” (Weinstein 19) is a state that concerns also the two Transcendentalists, and neither wants to live in such “permanent haze.” For Emerson and Thoreau, however, the problem lies not only in one’s relation to one’s self, but also the connection between the self and the world.

Emerson speaks of a feeling similar to Hawthorne’s “dream”: of man gliding through the world “ghost-like,” as if lost in the middle of a stair, unable to discern where and what he is (“Experience” 228). This ghostly quality of human experience is due to the fact that we live unconsciously, unable to focus on the present, since “[s]o much of our time is preparation, so much is routine, and so much retrospect” (“Experience” 229).² It is a state of being unable to live fully: “on the brink of the waters of life and truth, we are miserably dying” (“The Poet” 463). Emerson’s vision of the world could be compared to the one expressed in the famous parable in Franz Kafka’s *The Trial*. The man portrayed by Kafka comes to the gates of the Law and waits for the doorkeeper to let him in so long that he finally dies, informed at the very end that the entrance he spent most of his life at was meant only for him. Similarly, in Emerson’s essays man is waiting on the doorpost of life, just a step away from his destiny, but unable to make the final decision and enter the gate.

Another, and possibly more important, component of man’s ghostliness is a sense of detachment or distance between himself and the world, his feelings, and his experience: “An innavigable sea washes with silent waves between us and the things we aim at and converse with” (“Experience” 230); or, in another passage of the same essay: “I know that the world I converse with in the city and in the farms, is not the world I

1 Thoreau makes this statement about himself in *Walden* (6).

2 In fact, this spectrality may be seen also in passages dealing with Emerson’s skepticism and his attempts at fighting against the suspicion that we may not exist (see Cavell, *Etudes* 86).

think. I observe that difference, and shall observe it” (“Experience” 251, emphasis in the original). The key term here is “difference,” pointing to the fact that no immediate access to reality is possible, no Romantic Unity with the world that Emerson hopes for throughout his writings. “Totality can only manifest itself in fragments and under aspects” (Salska 189), or its availability is constantly deferred. In such a state “[a]ll is riddle, and the key to a riddle is another riddle” (Emerson, “Illusions” 1117)—this observation is not just a sad pun, but a description of the experience of the Real forever escaping human cognition, on the one hand infinitely unfolding and promising a final epistemological satisfaction, but on the other—never in fact granting it.

If then Wakefield, in order to stop living in a haze, and as it were to become materialized to himself, must detach himself from his own life and look at it from a distance, for Emerson this very distance may be the source of the problem—even, as Stanley Cavell claims, a source of pain (*Passages* 29). It makes him unable to become one not only with the material world, but also with his experience of it: the essay “Experience” is not only about the gap between the world-in-itself, which he wants to reach, and the world as he thinks it, but also about being unable to grieve fully after the death of his son Waldo, estranged from his own emotions. The feeling of a discrepancy (between thoughts and objects, self and the world, self and self) is thus the key concept of the Emersonian experience.

This idea of a gap between the world thought and the world out there is something that Emerson inherits from Kant’s distinction between the phenomena and the noumena. However, for Emerson the fact that man does not have access to things-in-themselves is not merely a neutral characteristic of human perception, but a tragic condition, which makes us forever estranged from the world.³ He refers to it as “this evanescence and lubricity of all objects, which lets them slip through our fingers then when we clutch hardest,” and calls it “the most unhandsome part of our condition” (“Experience” 231). The material world withdraws or shrinks from us (Cavell, *Etudes* 118); it dissolves into thin air when we try to grab it with our minds, because thought and matter are not of the same substance, or do not belong to the same logical order.⁴

The feeling of separation from the world and from one’s self are for Emerson interlinked: when he speaks of self-consciousness, or the discovery that we exist, he refers to it as “the Fall of Man,” and explains its consequences for how one experiences life: “Ever afterwards, we suspect our instruments. We have learned that we do not see directly, but mediately, and that we have no means of correcting these coloured and distorting lenses which we are” (“Experience” 246). Such is his distrust of these “distorting lenses” that it leads him to a solipsistic fear that “these subject-lenses have a creative power: perhaps there are no objects”; like a Baudrillardian simulacrum they do not refer to any external reality, or in this case do not distort any external reality but

3 Cavell sees Thoreau too as having a Kantian vision of the world, when he declares: “I had been impressed by Thoreau’s sentence running ‘The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions’ as being in effect an elegant summary of the Critique of Pure Reason” (Cavell, *Etudes* 11).

4 At least, though, in this passage the world exists: “This very evanescence of the world proves its existence to me; it is what vanishes from me. I guess this is not realism exactly; but it is not solipsism either” (Cavell, *Etudes* 13, emphasis in the original).

only cover its lack. This is why there is a longing in Emerson's writings for an Edenic pre-reflective state of innocence, in which, apparently, one would know the noumena not intellectually, but through a metaphysical Unity with all being. By cultivating this dream he stays within the frame of the Romantic tradition, characterized by M. H. Abrams as fascinated by the myth of the Fall and aspiring to the return to Paradise (Abrams 217-19). This is the very opposite desire of Wakefield's: while Emerson wishes to reduce the distance between himself and the external world in order to appear less "ghostly," Hawthorne's character feels unreal precisely when he is too near to himself. The difference seems to lie in the fact that Wakefield wants to know himself intellectually, which is a kind of knowing that Emerson, being mystically-inclined, deems insufficient.

Thoreau is just as concerned with this state of permanent haze, or of a life half-lived, when he famously declares that "[t]he mass of men live lives of quiet desperation" (*Walden* 10)—a condition which Cavell sees as an equivalent of Emerson's "secret melancholy" (*Etudes* 39). In his *Journal*, Thoreau speaks of a state which is perhaps less acute, but nonetheless similarly unwanted: "I lagged or tagged after myself" (*Journal* 15), being unable to catch up with his own self. As F.O. Matthiessen puts it, Thoreau's concern is that "life wastes itself while we are preparing to live" (60)—it is yet another form of spectrality that needs to be remedied.

Thoreau's answer to the problem is to an extent similar to Wakefield's: although he does not move out to spy on his former life, he moves out nevertheless, opting out of social responsibilities in order to find a newer and keener sense of the Real: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived" (*Walden* 98). The experiment means confronting life in whatever shape it presents itself: "if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion" (*Walden* 98-99). It is a passage which strongly resembles Emerson's declaration in "Self-Reliance": "I am the devil's child, I will live them [my impulses] from the devil" ("Self-Reliance" 33). Both writers speak of an openness to accept the Truth however it will look, since even its meanest form is better than its alternative: a feeling of being not entirely alive. Trying to regain a lost intimacy with the world (Cavell, *Etudes* 34), Thoreau wishes not to "tread on the heels of [his] experience" but to become one with it at the moment of it happening (*Journal* 63). This is where his passion for physically checking things stems from: in *Walden* he speaks of measuring the depth of the pond by himself (307); in the *Journal* he expects people living on riverbanks, drawn by natural curiosity, to "follow in the trail of their waters to see the end of the matter" (*Journal* 7). Seeing, touching, and measuring the world are the readiest ways to ensure that one is no ghost but part and parcel of the external, material reality.

Another, connected remedy for the feeling of (one's or the world's) flimsiness is a passion for what is common or low, shared by both Emerson and Thoreau. The latter declares his loyalty to things which are "apparently near and small" as opposed to those "distant and sounding" (Thoreau, *Journal* 106). The former believes that "in the speech of men in the barber shop or in Bigelow and Wesson's barroom" he succeeds at "grasping... facts" (Matthiessen 35), and, according to Cavell, "[b]y embracing the

common,' by 'sitting at the feet of the low,' Emerson surely takes his stand on the side of what philosophers such as Berkeley and Hume would have called the vulgar" (*Etudes* 23-24). "The vulgar" has the undeniable value of giving one something firm to hold on to, and a basis for future philosophy. He clings to the low as to the best embodiment of factual reality. That is also why Emerson insists that "[t]hinking is the function. Living is the functionary" ("The American Scholar" 62), as "[l]ife is not intellectual or critical, but sturdy," and "[i]ntellectual tasting of life will not supersede muscular activity" ("Experience" 236). As Cavell observes, to Emerson thinking is true when done with the whole man, when it is almost physically filtered by the body (*Etudes* 142). Such an ability to act rather than think, or think with the whole man rather than with the mind only, provides a sensual barrier to the feeling of unreality. Matthiessen puts this combination of thought and action in simpler terms: "The reconciliation of the two strains, of untrammelled speculation and Yankee practicality, was what he [Emerson] wanted most in his own writing" (15).

In "Experience" Emerson's way of getting closer to the Real is through trying to properly feel grief after his son's death: "There are moods in which we court suffering, in the hope that here, at least, we shall find reality, sharp peaks and edges of truth"—a reality "for contact with which, we would even pay the costly price of sons and lovers" (230). This is why the first part of the essay is filled with despair: not only because Waldo is dead, but because his father, Emerson, is alive and well, thinking about his loss but unable to "get it nearer to [himself]." As Cavell notes, this has serious consequences for Emerson's entire philosophy, since being unable to get Waldo and his death nearer means also being unable to bring the world nearer to oneself (*Etudes* 244). Yet again, the problem is a feeling of a distance between self and the world, and the feeling of pain gives hope for bridging the disconcerting gulf.

Another strategy for getting experience "nearer" is not through suffering, but through a somewhat contradictory practice: self-annihilation, or annihilation of the ego. Here, in order to cross the gap between self and the world, the self must dissolve into the world and become one with it. This is the meaning of the famous passage from *Nature*, in which Emerson declares: "I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God" ("Nature" 10). In "The Over-Soul," he conveys a similar experience: "From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all" (151). In this passage, Emerson plays with a similar optical effect as in the "American Scholar," where he explains that a correct process of reading means that "the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion" (59). The latter passage creates an image of being blinded by revelation (Bloom, *Anxiety* 109), but also of a process during which the text on the page that disappears after the page starts glowing. It is a metaphor for the scholar getting an initial impulse from the book but later discarding its content in favor of his own ideas, during which "every trope [is] burning away [its] context" (Bloom, *Kabbalah* 63). In the quotation from "The Over-Soul" mentioned before, a parallel process during which the self casts light on objects makes it disappear like a luminous page too.

Seen from this perspective, Emerson's goal appears to be anything but similar to Wakefield's. What Wakefield needs for himself is a double role of a spectator and a

spectacle; what Emerson wants is its very opposite: for him, “the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one” (“The Over-Soul” 150). While Wakefield needs to generate a split within himself in order to confirm the reality of his existence, Emerson aims at abolishing the distinction that already exists: one between “me” and “not-me.” Emerson’s project for the self to become one with the world is not only a Transcendentalist version of the Hinduist and Buddhist view on the ultimate unity of all things. It is also a dream of proving Kant wrong, or, to be more precise, of finding a plane on which Kant’s epistemology would not apply. In “The Over-Soul” Emerson refers to time and space, seen by Kant as the necessary structuring categories imposed by the human mind on the world. For Emerson, the soul “abolishes time and space” (152): experiencing the world directly through the soul rather than reason allows one to bypass these mediating categories, and get direct access to the world as it really is. In almost all of his essays Emerson writes of experiencing the world intuitively, one might say “selflessly,” which may be seen as his attempt at getting directly to the noumena, to the unthinkable things-in-themselves, rather than phenomena, produced by the constraints of the human senses and mind.⁵

The discussion so far might suggest that Emerson’s and Thoreau’s answer to the problem of becoming real to oneself is contrary to Wakefield’s: while Hawthorne’s character needs to look at his own life from the outside in order to feel its reality, the two Transcendentalists write of getting closer to one’s life in order to bridge the gap between one’s self and the world. This, however, is not always the case. Thoreau accepts that alongside his pragmatic self, focused on a direct sensory experience of the material world, there is another part of this psyche, which he refers to as a spectator:

I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and I’m sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it; and that is no more I than it is you. (*Walden* 146)

Thoreau does not seem upset about the presence of this “detached” part of his inner self; rather, he experiences life cultivating this meditative “witness” and aware that it allows him to enter another plain of thinking about his actions. Here, distance does not work the same way as it does for Wakefield: instead of bringing Thoreau nearer to understanding his place in the world, it makes him see everyday life as play: an equivalent of the Hindu *Maya*, or illusion. Neither does this mean that realizing the

5 At the same time, it is possible to identify in Emerson the very opposite tendency, when he does not seem to care about the thing-in-itself, but only how it appears to the human mind: “Not he is great who can alter matter, but he who can alter my state of mind. They are the kings of the world who give the color of their present thought to all nature and all art” (“The American Scholar” 65). In Nature he speaks of the poet who “conforms things to thoughts” and “unfixes the land and the sea, makes them revolve around the axis of his primary thought” (“Nature” 34), which would suggest that, unlike in “Experience” or “The Over-Soul,” what matters here is projecting one’s self on the world; not aiming for the noumenon but making sure that the phenomenon agrees with one’s genius.

“spectator’s” presence he becomes less real to himself; rather, he starts to believe that the real (or permanent) “me” is to be found on a different plain of existence.

Emerson goes even a step further, when he admits that distance is not always tantamount to an “innavigable sea” between himself and the world, but that it may be necessary in order to see things better. In the “American Scholar” he explains that we see our childhood clearly, but “[n]ot so with our recent actions,” because “[t]he new deed is yet a part of life” (61). If being one with the world is in general desirable as a meditative state, he is aware that at the same time it is a place from which one cannot say anything reasonable about reality. In order to see things one cannot be living them; like Wakefield, one needs a distance from which to observe one’s life. The same idea, of the human being as unable to know the meaning of his life in the moment of its happening, is present in “Experience” and in “Self-Reliance,” where Emerson advises not to worry about consistency in one’s life, since any zigzag line made by a ship, when seen “from a sufficient distance ... straightens itself to the average tendency” (“Self-Reliance” 38). Once again, it is distance (this time not temporal but spatial) that allows one to understand fully the meaning and direction of one’s life.

Emerson’s and Thoreau’s answers to the problem of ghostliness are different than Wakefield’s, or, at least, more varied. Hawthorne’s character, being a protagonist of a work of fiction, has the luxury of trying out one simple experiment, which provides enough of a solution for his ten-page-long life. Mysterious as the story remains, it seems to be well-explained by Weinstein’s interpretation, according to which Wakefield, the quintessential No-Man, needs to step out of his own life and start spying on his absence in order to fully grasp the essence of his existence: to become real to himself. Emerson and Thoreau may be seen as plagued by a similar feeling of spectrality; however, the way they deal with it varies throughout their work, oscillating between a need to reduce the distance between self and the world and to reaffirm it. Especially Emerson’s writings contain at times contradictory ways of approaching the problem—which is as true of his attitude towards spectrality as towards almost any other subject.

On the one hand, in many of his essays (or passages thereof) the feeling of ghostliness does not apply to Emerson at all. “I am always environed by myself,” he states (“Character” 500): his self is as real as can be, which is why there is no need for him, like for Wakefield, to look at himself from a distance. Rather, it is the reality of the external world that can be put into question, as chances are that it may be a mere emanation or projection of his strong self. In such a case, distance is dangerous rather than healing, since it only adds to the overall feeling of the world’s illusoriness. If for Wakefield looking at his life from the outside allows him to get to know it better, for Emerson it traps him within his own mind, which results in a sense of unwanted detachment. On the other hand, for Emerson too distance may be necessary, albeit in a less straightforward sense. Cavell comments on the passage from “Experience” where Emerson laments the “unhandsomness” of things slipping through our fingers when we clutch at them in the following way: “the unhandsomness is rather what happens when we seek to deny the standoffishness of objects by clutching at them, which is to say, when we conceive thinking, say the application of concepts in judgements, as grasping something, say synthesizing” (*Etudes* 117). In other words, Cavell sees Emerson’s problem not in the gulf between the self and the world, but in an impulse trying to

reduce this gulf, as only then does one discover that the gap is unbridgeable. In the end, just like for Wakefield, distance is needed, be it a distance between the human being and his own self, or the self and the world.

Works Cited

- Abrams, M. H. *Natural Supernaturalism. Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*. W.W. Norton, 1971.
- Bloom, Harold. *Kabbalah and Criticism*. Continuum Publishers Co., 2005.
- . *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry*. Oxford UP, 1997.
- Cavell, Stanley. *Emerson's Transcendental Etudes*. Stanford UP, 2003.
- . *Philosophical Passages: Wittgenstein, Emerson, Austin, Derrida*. Blackwell, 1995.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Character." *Essays and Lectures*, Library of America, 1983, pp. 493–510.
- . "Experience." *Emerson's Essays*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1955, pp. 228–252.
- . "Illusions." *Essays and Lectures*, Library of America, 1983, pp. 1113–1124.
- . "Nature." *Essays and Lectures*, Library of America, 1983, pp. 5–49.
- . "Self-Reliance." *Emerson's Essays*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1955, pp. 29–56.
- . "The American Scholar." *Essays and Lectures*, Library of America, 1983, pp. 51–71.
- . "The Over-Soul." *Emerson's Essays*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1955, pp. 149–167.
- . "The Poet." *Essays and Lectures*, Library of America, 1983, pp. 445–468.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "American Notebooks." *The Portable Hawthorne*, edited by Malcolm Cowley, Penguin Books, 1977, pp. 611–635.
- . "Wakefield." *Twice-Told Tales*, James B. Millar & Co., 1884, pp. 136–147.
- Matthiessen, F. O. *American Renaissance: Art And Expression In The Age Of Emerson And Whitman*. Oxford UP, 1974.
- Salska, Agnieszka. *Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson: Poetry of the Central Consciousness: Whitman and Dickinson*. U of Pennsylvania P, 1985.
- Thoreau, Henry David. *The Journal 1837-1861*. Edited by Damion Searls, New York Review of Books, 2009.
- . *Walden*. James R. Osgood and Company, 1878.
- Weinstein, Arnold. *Nobody's Home: Speech, Self, and Place in American Fiction from Hawthorne to DeLillo*. Oxford UP, 1993.

**The Hero Who Disappointed: Images of Lajos Kossuth
and the Hungarian Revolution of 1848/49 in Livermore's
*Zoë; or the Quadroon's Triumph***

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.06

Abstract: This article studies US American perceptions of the European Revolutions of 1848/49, especially the different receptions of the Hungarian revolutionary leader Lajos Kossuth's sojourn in the US, through an analysis of a rather unknown novel *Zoë; or the Quadroon's Triumph* (1855). Benefiting from different sources, the article examines the impacts of the revolutions of Europe in the US literary, cultural, religious, and political sceneries by pointing to how even non-canonical works reflected upon these influences.

Keywords: Lajos Kossuth, Hungarian Revolution (1848/49), Young America, Transcendentalism, European Revolutions (1848/49), Age of Revolutions, Orientalism, the Wandering Jew

The waves of revolutions across Europe in 1848/49 reached the western shores of the Atlantic before too long if not in their immediate political and military forms, then as intellectual stimuli and demographical fluctuations which found their reflections in American lives. Following the revolutions, numerous Czech, German, Hungarian, and other political exiles crossed the Atlantic. Among these were many like Carl Schurz and Franz Sigel whose later contributions to the political, military, and intellectual life in the United States would make it into history books. Sometimes, it was simply the ideas and the know-how that travelled across the ocean. Hungry to reform their army after the Mexican-American War, many in the US received with enthusiasm the know-how of the Napoleonic Wars carried by European veterans who were exiled after their partaking in the revolutions. The American public consumed narratives of the revolutions so greedily that being an exile in the US became almost a "profession" (Tóth 120-63).

Not all that was brought from Europe was welcomed equally enthusiastically, at least not by everyone. The US in the mid-1850s would be home not only to the forty-eighters who arrived from Europe and settled in different states but also to the Know-Nothing Party with its anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic agendas. These politics gained significant popular and partisan support including from President Millard Fillmore, who would become the Party's presidential candidate in the 1856 elections. The foundations of the "red scare" that would come to characterize the Cold War mindset in the US would be laid during this time, resulting in a cautious reception of the intellectual incitements from Europe (Levine, "Conservatism" 469; Levine, *Spirit of 1848* 109; Reynolds 49-53).

The reception of the news, exiles, and ideas of the Revolutions of 1848/49 was as diverse as it was thought-provoking. Yet, regardless of the nature of their reactions, Americans felt inclined to respond to the events of 1848/49. This diversity of reflections

is easily traced in the American literature of the mid-nineteenth century. It was with the impact of “historic international developments, especially the European Revolution of 1848-49” that literature in the US experienced what is today referred to as the American Renaissance and literary nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century: “European revolutionary heroes, imagery, and issues quickened American literary imagination and shaped the characters, plots, and themes of American writings” (Reynolds xi–xii).

As a result, there exists extensive research on the reception of the 1848/49 European Revolutions in the US, which appears to agree in the conclusion that the immediate public interest in the revolutions vanished to a great extent within the next couple of years as the conversation switched from Europe to less distant subjects with the increasing sectionalist tension in the US following the Mexican-American War and leading to the Civil War. In this article, I demonstrate that this conclusion covers only part of the story. The rich imagery that the revolutions brought into US literature kept inspiring authors to interpret the succeeding events and phenomena in both their own country and the world. To do so, I pursue traces of the 1848/49 Revolutions, especially the Hungarian Revolution, in a non-canonical example of the literature of the era: Elizabeth Dorcas Livermore’s 1855 novel *Zoë; or the Quadroon’s Triumph*. The main postulation of my article is as follows: Employing myths, symbolism, and interpretations borrowed from several and often conflicting political, philosophical, and religious stances such as transcendentalism, Young Americanism, or Mormonism, Livermore’s novel offers a uniquely American republican view of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848/49.

As a rather unknown work by an obscure author on which there is but little literature, Livermore’s *Zoë* provides an interesting case study, since, in the novel, one can clearly pursue the influence of a diverse range of topics and themes that characterized the political, cultural, and literary atmosphere both in Europe and the US in the years following the revolutions. The European Revolutions of 1848/49 are perhaps not the leading motif of the narrative, the most persistent concern of which is building a moralistic argument for slaves’ and women’s liberation all over the world. However, in making its argument for equality of genders and races, the narrative often draws on the political and societal events of the era among which the Revolutions in Europe, predominantly the Hungarian Revolution, emerge practically as a leitmotif that rather slyly penetrates into the plot. This is no surprise, given the presence of Hungarian leader Lajos Kossuth as a political exile in the US between late 1851 and mid-1852, just about three years before Livermore published her two-volume novel. Much like Livermore, more preeminent names of mid-nineteenth-century US literature including Harriet Beecher Stowe and John Greenleaf Whittier referred to Kossuth and his fight for Hungarian independence in their works. While most of these works have been acknowledged in studies focusing on the influence of Lajos Kossuth’s sojourn in the US, unknown to many scholars, Livermore’s 1855 novel and the thought-provoking and entangled imagery of the Hungarian Revolution that it portrays remain yet to be explored.

In undertaking this task, my article draws on the various topics and themes that the novel addresses by employing images, symbolism, and references relating to the European Revolutions of 1848/49 in general, and Lajos Kossuth and the Hungarian Revolution in particular. The article first provides an overview of reactions to Kossuth’s

1851/52 visit to the US with a special emphasis on the abolitionist, transcendentalist, and Young American perceptions of the Hungarian revolutionary and his cause in order to contextualize the novel in the literary and political atmosphere within which it was produced. The second part of the article engages in a closer reading of the novel, focusing especially on the function of its Hungarian Jewish character Ben Ezra interchangeably as an alias for Kossuth and the biblical figure of the “Wandering Jew,” to understand the ways in which this figure allows the novel to tie seemingly separate issues together in a rhetoric of American republicanism.

Entangling American Rhetorics, Celebrating the Hungarian Cause

1. Livermore's Zoë

Born in 1810 as the fifth child of Catherine and Jacob Abbot, Elizabeth Dorcas Livermore married her cousin Abiel Abbot Livermore who was a unitarian minister like her father. Elizabeth D. Livermore published “poetry in Midwestern periodicals” and her own weekly literary magazine, *The Independent Highway*, in which she also published a play titled *The Fugitives*. She “enjoyed considerable popularity” during her life, yet she was “forgotten by all except the literary historians” by the 1960s (Coyle 387). Today we know little about the author compared to her more famous contemporaries. Her abolitionist and feminist novel *Zoë* was published in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1855, amidst increased tension over slavery just half a decade before the Civil War broke out. Ohio was, after New England, a cradle of transcendentalist thinking with one of the most important transcendentalist publications of the era *The Messenger* published in Louisville. Far from forming a united organization, most transcendentalists of the era nonetheless held feminist and abolitionist convictions. These ideas evidently influenced Livermore whose biography and works connect her to Unitarianism, the theological movement out of which Transcendentalist notions can be said to have been born.

Livermore's novel *Zoë* centers around the brief life of its homonymous “quadroon” protagonist who is sent by her former-slave parents to Copenhagen to study from her home island St. Croix, which was back then part of the Danish West Indies.¹ The first volume of the two-volume novel is set mostly in the Danish city where Zoë meets an international group of people who help cultivate her religious sensibilities. Following a quarrel with her teacher Ms. Ingemann, eighteen-year-old Zoë leaves Denmark with her best friend Hilda.² The first volume concludes thusly. The second volume opens with Zoë and Hilda's westward voyage in the Atlantic, during which the young women meet several people from different backgrounds. The conversations among the passengers shape the girls' opinions on slaves' and women's emancipation and Zoë's religious ideas ultimately turn into a sense of divine mission to introduce the idea of an abolitionist and feminist Christian Republic in the Americas.

1 Unlike in the British West Indies, in the Danish West Indies slavery remained legal until 1848. Livermore's novel is set in St. Croix right after the abolition of slavery on the island.

2 While both Zoë and Hilda are from St. Croix, unlike the novel's biracial protagonist, Hilda is a white girl. Later in the novel, during the westward journey of the two young women, the narrative reveals that Hilda's parents were slaveholders in St. Croix until the abolition of slavery in the West Indies in 1848.

The westward Atlantic voyage serves to distinguish Europe and the American Hemisphere from each other in terms of their racial prejudices and marks the latter as a space of racist structures. This distinction of the Americas from Europe signals the hardships that the novel's protagonist will experience once she arrives in her longed-for home St. Croix, where, surrounded by a racist society, she cannot fulfill her dreams and slowly dies. The choice of settings in the novel serves to avoid estranging the readers in the US, who may react negatively to the critical descriptions of the country as racist and cruel. Because of their imagined nationless or multinational status in the narrative and the distance they bear to the US, both the Atlantic Ocean and St. Croix help the novel to point at the wrongdoings of the slaveholding countries without necessarily putting the US under the spotlight. Nonetheless, the novel introduces many characters from the US in its plot and points to the US, specifically to its northeastern states, as the designated space from which the protagonist's imagined transcendentalist Christian republic will begin to flourish. Thus, the novel carries the US to a focal point in its narrative, although the country never becomes a setting in the novel. In this sense, it can be argued that the novel often employs various examples set by other countries to under-handedly criticize the US (Bozkurt-Pekár "Imagining the South"; Bozkurt-Pekár *Imagining Southern*).

2. Vindicating Kossuth After the "Craze"

Despite the novel's tendency to employ settings outside the country to comment on what the narrative perceives as the wrongdoings of the US, it may still surprise present-day readers that a novel which engages mostly with abolitionist and feminist arguments introduces a Hungarian revolutionary character in its plot and repeatedly refers to the European Revolutions of 1848/49.

To understand these choices, we can briefly refer to Timothy M. Roberts who, through the example of Margaret Fuller, demonstrates how reformers in the US began to connect "reform causes that [they] had considered disparate in America: the rights of women and laborers, and the cause of antislavery" by observing the 1848/49 events in Europe (*Distant* 96). Roberts' observation is significant for understanding the theme of the 1848/49 European Revolutions in Livermore's novel. Firstly, as also noted by Colleen C. O'Brien, Livermore's works connect the author to the most influential transcendentalists of her era, including William Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller (O'Brien 82-109). Among these, especially Fuller's influence on Livermore is incontrovertible, as the latter repeatedly praises Fuller's literary production in her magazine and echoes her voice and ideas in *Zoë*. Thus, it is possible that, being so clearly influenced by Fuller and other contemporary transcendentalists and reformists, Livermore followed a similar logic in connecting her arguments of slaves' emancipation and women's liberation not only to each other but also to the events of 1848/49 both in Europe and in the American Hemisphere.

This leads to the second and correlated point. Although *Zoë*'s foremost focus lies on feminist and abolitionist arguments, one nonetheless observes minute attention paid to the debates of the era, especially to those in transcendentalist and abolitionist literature. Among these, the discussion on the European Revolutions of 1848/49 emerges as an important one although just for a rather brief period. This is

true not only for the abolitionists' and transcendentalists' interest in the revolutions. The attention that the proponents of the Young America movement—which appear as a target of Livermore's novel's disapproving tenor—paid to the revolutions of 1848/49 also substantially disappeared in subsequent years. Indeed, one can well argue that by 1855 when *Zoë* was published, public interest in the European Revolutions in the US had already been fading for at least the last couple of years.

This was especially true for Lajos Kossuth's cause, to which Livermore refers the most. Having won many military and political battles including the passing of the April Laws in 1848 and declaration of independence from the Habsburg Monarchy in April 1849, Hungary was defeated in August by the Austrian Empire, which found renewed strength with Russian military support. Following this failure, Kossuth escaped first to the Ottoman Empire hoping to maintain the revolutionary fervor among other exiles and to reignite the struggle for independence. About a year later, he left for Britain³ from where he went to the US in December 1851. Gaining financial and political (and even military) support for a renewed attempt at Hungarian independence constituted the principal motivation for Kossuth's trip to Britain and the US.⁴ As in Britain, in the US, too, the Hungarian leader was often welcomed warmly and with great enthusiasm. But, by the time he left for Europe after eight months, the "craze" in the US over the heroic Magyar had died out and turned into disappointment and sometimes even disdain among different segments of the public who felt that Kossuth failed to deliver what they expected from him.

3. Abolitionist Disappointment

The years of revolutions in Europe were also the years of rising abolitionist sentiment across the Atlantic. Three decades had passed since the Haitian Revolution, which had liberated the island's slaves, by the time Britain announced emancipation of slaves in its West Indian colonies in August 1834. This was soon followed by the Danish and French in 1848. The emancipations in the Caribbean provided great motivation for many abolitionists in the US who turned their faces also towards Europe to find solidarity from revolutionaries demanding equality and freedom. Lajos Kossuth was a great inspiration for abolitionists in the US, as it was the April Laws enforced by him that abolished serfdom in Hungary in 1848. The fact that "[i]n Britain [Kossuth] offered public congratulations for the emancipation of colonial slaves in the West Indies" ascertained abolitionists in the US that the Hungarian hero would side with them and advocate for their cause (Roberts, *Distant* 152).

3 To read more on Kossuth's reception in Great Britain, see *Great Britain and Kossuth* by Dénes Jánossy and "Reception of Kossuth in England and the Magazine *Punch* in 1851" by Thomas Kabdebo.

4 Tibor Frank writes that Kossuth considered "the political support" of British people "essential in pursuing the struggle for Hungarian freedom and independence" ("Marketing Hungary" 221). Similarly, Samuel J. Wilson notes that "Kossuth's mission was to convince America to intervene in European affairs for the purpose of enforcing the policy of non-intervention." Moreover, Wilson, like Tim Roberts, Thomas Kabdebo, and Donald S. Spencer, attracts attention to the fact that the Hungarian leader sought to raise funds in both countries for a second attempt at Hungarian independence and was often offered generous donations on behalf of the Hungarian cause (Wilson 39; Roberts, "Lajos" 793; Spencer 53; Kabdebo n.p.).

However, contrary to the anticipations of abolitionists in the country, Kossuth refrained from openly condemning slavery and declared a noninterference policy toward the domestic politics in the US (Roberts, *Distant* 152-53). W. Caleb McDaniel and András Tarnóc capture the disappointment that US abolitionists, especially the Garrisonians, felt in the face of this noninterference. Studying William Lloyd Garrison's reaction to Kossuth's noninterference in detail, Tarnóc writes that following a "syllogis[ti]c" logic that considered slavery "a universal sin" and suggested that "[a]ny person representing a struggle for freedom should raise his voice against it," Garrison concluded that "Kossuth's reluctance to address the issue makes [Kossuth] an accomplice in this universal sin" (Tarnóc 64).

To comprehend Kossuth's reluctance to adopt a manifested stance against slavery in the US, first, the motives for Kossuth's sojourn in the country should be acknowledged. Tibor Frank calculates that Kossuth "gave over 600 public speeches in the United States alone" (Frank, "Give Me Shakespeare" 187). Among these were, for example, an address to the US Congress on January, 7 1852 delivered during a dinner held in his honor, a speech addressing to "the ladies of New York," and another one delivered at a reception in Cincinnati taking place on February, 13.⁵ While these speeches touched upon various topics ranging from westward territorial expansion of the US to the duty and status of women in national independence movements, almost without exception all of them served as an "unstoppable propaganda, a public relations effort to win the goodwill of the English-speaking peoples" (Frank, "Marketing Hungary" 221). As it can be gathered from the numerous speeches that he held in England and the US, Kossuth used his stays in these countries as an opportunity to appeal to the public to gain primarily diplomatic but also financial support to rejuvenate the revolution in Hungary. The Magyar hero's primary concern was gathering political support for Hungarian independence. This prevented him from meddling with the domestic affairs of the countries that he visited. His eight-month-long visit in the US coincided with the 1852 presidential election campaigns between the proslavery Democratic candidate Franklin Pierce and the abolitionist Whig candidate Winfield Scott. The elections took place after Kossuth left the country and resulted in the presidency of the former. Uncertain of the election results, Kossuth could not afford to take side with either party, the diplomatic support of a government built by either of which could help him regenerate his life's mission.⁶

On the other hand, "Kossuth's visit coincided with the aftershocks produced by the Fugitive Slave Law and the Compromise of 1850," which made slave emancipation in the country an even more urgent matter and "pushed the issue of fugitive slaves to the center of antislavery agendas." Therefore, Kossuth's reluctance to denounce slavery estranged also non-Garrisonian abolitionists. To draw attention to the "hypocrisy" of the American enthusiasm with which Kossuth was received, abolitionist writers compared Kossuth to a fugitive slave (McDaniel 4-6). Perhaps the most famous of such comparisons came in Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was serialized in *The National Era* during Kossuth's sojourn in the US and published in book form some three months before he left the country:

5 A selection of these speeches is available in Kossuth's Selected Speeches.

6 I am thankful to Prof. Tibor Frank for bringing the impact of 1852 presidential elections on Lajos Kossuth's stance towards abolitionism in the United States to my attention.

If it had been only a Hungarian youth, now bravely defending in some mountain fastness the retreat of fugitives escaping from Austria into America, this would have been sublime heroism; but as it was a youth of African descent, defending the retreat of fugitives through America into Canada, of course we are too well instructed and patriotic to see any heroism in it. . . . When despairing Hungarian fugitives make their way. . . to America, press and political cabinet ring with applause and welcome. When despairing African fugitives do the same thing,—it is—what is it? (Stowe n.p.)

Even though Stowe refrains from naming the Hungarian whose image she carries into her novel, given the context of Kossuth's vibrant presence in the country, it is not hard to associate the heroic Magyar appearing in the plot with Kossuth.

The sentiment among the preeminent transcendentalists of the era, among whom a topic of exceptional unanimity was their shared anti-slavery stance, was similar. Michael Ziser summarizes the overall transcendentalist impression about Kossuth via the examples of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, the former of which delivered an address to Kossuth in Concord. Ziser suggests Emerson's "lukewarm" address which can "be read as [a] gracious attempt to shield Kossuth from the antipathy of both the conservatives and the abolitionists" estranged Thoreau. Thoreau "ultimately expressed disdain in 'Life without Principle' for the waffling nature of Emerson's speech and the political frippery that attended Kossuth's visit" (Ziser 12).

Given abolitionists' reluctance to welcome Kossuth with open arms, it is no wonder that themes of the revolutionary and republican heritage of the US were not as positively associated with the Hungarian Revolution and Kossuth in the abolitionist literature as they were elsewhere. Garrison's lengthy 1852 letter to Kossuth is one among many examples that show negative allusions. In this letter, Garrison compares Kossuth's attempt "to throw off Austrian usurpation" to the struggle of "Washington, Jefferson and Patrick Henry" "to overthrow British oppression." Yet, all these three names, besides being revolutionary heroes, emerge in the letter with insistent emphasis on their roles as slaveholders. Kossuth's resemblance to these revolutionary heroes gives Garrison, who was by then already disappointed at the Hungarian revolutionary, the chance to compare Kossuth, at least to a certain degree, also to Southern slaveholders who much like Washington, Jefferson, and Henry appealed to the language of liberty "against despotism and in favor of the rights of man" without necessarily applying these principles universally to all people (Garrison 52-53).

In this sense, it can be argued that Livermore goes against the abolitionist and transcendentalist currents of the mid-1850s by vindicating Kossuth and his cause in her novel and dwells on an imagery that had for some time lost not only the popularity but also the sympathy that it had once received.

4. Sharing Enthusiasm, Revising Interventionism: Young America in *Zoë*

Even though the overall utopian vision of Livermore's novel is closely associated with the abolitionist and transcendentalist segments of nineteenth-century American intellectual life, the strong pro-Kossuth stance in her novel diverges from the mainstream transcendentalist and radical abolitionist reactions toward Kossuth. Instead, an unlikely alignment with mid-nineteenth-century Young American ideals arises in the way that

the novel defends Kossuth and the Hungarian Revolution. However, this alignment is not one that unconditionally accepts the entire Young American agenda. Quite contrarily, the movement is a major target of the novel's rhetoric of moral perfection. Transformation of Young American ideals under transcendentalist guidance emerges as a persistent subject in *Zoë*. Elsewhere, I provide a more detailed reading of this transformation (Bozkurt-Pekár, "Imagining the South"). Here, it suffices to describe the movement and its overall principles, outline the Young American reaction to 1848/49 European Revolutions and Kossuth's sojourn in the US, and study the way in which the symbolic Young American character is treated in Livermore's novel.

Donald Spencer offers a detailed account of the Young American fervor of Kossuth. Yet, his rather restricting definition of the Young America movement obscures the philosophical and political inconsistencies among those who identified with the movement. Positioning Young America outside of proslavery agenda of the slaveholding Southern states and labeling Western states such as Ohio with "strongly antislavery" sentiments as prone to Young American ideas, Spencer creates the impression that the movement was strictly abolitionist and Northern (123). Yet, the individuals associated with the movement provide wealthy evidence for the division of opinion regarding slavery among Young Americans. For example, William Gilmore Simms, a most preeminent name of antebellum Southern literature and a fervent proponent of the "peculiar institution," was part of the circle. Simms was a close friend of Evert A. Duyckinck, one of the most significant names of the Young America movement and an opponent of slavery. While such examples can be multiplied, Simms and Duyckinck's friendly coexistence under Young America gives enough indication for the non-determining character of the question of slavery for the movement.

Dividing the movement into two groups as Young America I and Young America II, Edward L. Widmer outlines how "an innocent youth movement" born out of a desire to "rejuvenat[e] American culture" among a generation, who was living their youth during a period when the US was demographically a very young country, transformed "into a call for more territory, unleashing tensions over slavery and exposing democracy to ridicule" through Democrat partisanship in the early- to late-mid-nineteenth century (3-14). Widmer's account of the development of Young America shows how this "bifurcated and confused" movement is often understood as merely the latter ideology that is often associated with territorial (mostly Southern) expansionism on behalf of republicanism (15). It is also this Young America ideology that Livermore criticizes in her novel.

The conjunction between the two group within the Young America was their mutual support for the European Revolutions of 1848/49 (Widmer 3-15). It should be noted that, much like the rest of American population, Young Americans did not clearly distinguish between the distinct revolutions taking place in Europe. They generally considered the revolutions as a whole, sometimes practically as a single demand for republican values. Thus, they sympathized mostly with those uprisings in Europe the demands of which they could relate to those of the American Revolution, that is, independence from a foreign monarch such as in Hungary. Young Americans felt that "republican and democratic institutions" of the US were superior to those in Europe and "recklessly spoke of imposing their will on Europe as well." It was with

such a feeling and an idealistic and ideologically-ridden understanding of diplomacy, the Young Americans received the news of the European Revolutions (Spencer 101-102). The parallel that they draw between the republican legacy of their revolutionary history and the demands of European revolutionaries led to the birth of Young America II in the late 1840s (Widmer 190). Many Young Americans believed in the necessity of an intervention to Europe by the US and promoted policies to support the revolutions. Calling for a suspension of diplomatic relations with Austria at the Senate, Secretary of State Lewis Cass suggested that the US government should “offer public congratulations... to people crowned with the success in their struggle for freedom” and “recognition of their independence” and called Kossuth “the Washington of Hungary,” as was quite fashionable during the time (Cass 1-3). Some more radical Young Americans who “shared the filibusters’ roots” of the movement even felt inclined “to arm or fight with European revolutionaries” (Roberts, *Distant* 25). Needless to say, nothing came out of this military enthusiasm.

The common support for the European Revolutions yielded to a division of opinion about more pressing issues among Young Americans with sectional tensions growing intense. 1848 was the year of the victorious end of the Mexican-American War for the US and the annexation of more than half a million square miles to US territories, stirring sectional debates over the expansion of slavery to the newly acquired territories. This chain of events, leading to the Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act, illustrates the division emerging among Young Americans whose divergence on the issue of slavery had already made them a heterogeneous crowd. Added to this were the 1849/51 schemes of Cuban annexation through illegal filibustering campaigns. Partially also inspired by the same republican idealism shared by Young Americans which led them to imagine a military intervention to Europe, the illegal efforts to annex Cuba were not supported by all. Even some fervent advocates of slavery such as Simms rejected the idea of sending filibustering troops to the island (Simms “Invasion”), which signals to widening disagreements among the Young America movement in the face of realpolitik despite mutual republican and expansionist idealism.

In Livermore’s novel, one witnesses Young America movement with all its radical connotations embodied in a fictional character named Mr. Stephenson—or with his nickname, Young America—who is depicted as a misogynist man supporting territorial expansionism and slavery. On his way to a filibustering expedition to “South America” “to dam up the Amazon” in a very Young American fashion, Stephenson becomes part in a companionship among the many Transatlantic passengers. This companionship leads to scriptural conversations on societal order, liberty, equality, and emancipation of women and slaves (Livermore, Vol. 2 141). The transcendentalist guidance of these conversations helps Stephenson overcome his imperfections and become a fervent abolitionist and feminist. Eventually, giving up on his expansionist filibustering mission, Stephenson joins Hilda, whose heart he wins. Together, they travel to the US to carry a manuscript by deceased Zoë, which, the narrative implies, carries the “signs of the times” which will lead the US to its utopian future (Livermore, Vol. 2 297). Young America thus becomes a promoter of the novel’s transcendentalist vision.

Considering the novel’s proponent position for the European Revolutions, it can therefore be argued that Livermore’s *Zoë* surprisingly aligns itself more with the

Young American standpoint towards the European Revolutions in its almost uncritical enthusiasm for Kossuth than it does with transcendentalist and radical abolitionist positions of the era, even though the novel absolutely rejects the proslavery and xenophobic elements within the Young America movement. In Stephenson's change of trajectory, one can read a similar rejection. By transforming its fictional Young America from a potential filibuster into a harbinger of the millennial future, the novel rejects not only expansionism but implicitly also the Young American interventionist agenda on the European Revolutions, which it considers as still ongoing and destined to be victorious.

An American Conversion

1. Alias to Kossuth

Although the Hungarian Revolution of 1848/49 occupies Livermore's attentiveness to the European Revolutions the most, it is with the First Schleswig War of 1848/51 (Three Years' War) that the theme first appears in her novel. During a conversation with Zoë in Denmark, Mrs. Liebenhoff expresses appreciation of a common friend for "speaking manly and courageous words for the independence of Schleswig Holstein" (Livermore, Vol. 1 174). While these short remarks may seem rather trivial, the fact that Mrs. Liebenhoff leaves a significant influence in the protagonist's almost prophetic sentiment hints at the novel's positive attitude toward the movements in Europe.⁷ It is also significant that the novel introduces the topic via the Schleswig Holstein case, which much like the Hungarian one, had independence as its most imperative demand.

Shortly after, the narrative also introduces the Hungarian Revolution to the plot via a character who at times functions as an alias to Lajos Kossuth. A lady called Miss Holberg joins the conversation between Zoë and Mrs. Liebenhoff, inquiring the latter about a possible candidate for a German teacher for the girls' school that Zoë attends. The conversation between Liebenhoff and Holberg continues for some four pages whereupon Liebenhoff gives lengthy replies to the queries of her companion about the character and the past of the Hungarian man who teaches her an "oriental tongue" (Livermore, Vol. 1 177). Through this long conversation, the reader learns that unlike Kossuth, who was a Protestant, his alias is a Hungarian Jew.

The fictional revolutionary is depicted as not only an "intimate friend and profound admirer" of the Magyar hero but also a companion of him who seeks to

⁷ It is noteworthy that the author introduces the topic through the case of Schleswig Holstein, while locating the plot in Denmark which, at the moment the novel was published, held the region in its possession following the Three Years' War. Although the novel pictures Denmark, in contrast to the US and the rest of the American Hemisphere, as a place where racial prejudices are not felt very strongly, Mrs. Liebenhoff's remarks on Schleswig Holstein's independence signal that the novel does not completely disregard Denmark's position as an imperial power in possession of several colonies, including Zoë's home island St. Croix. It should also be noted that in 1848/49, Denmark, like many other regions in Europe, was home to revolutionary movements. While the upheavals of the Danish liberals were not as bloodstained as elsewhere in Europe, the consequences of the Danish liberal revolution were multifold and included the end of the 188 years of absolute monarchy in Denmark, the establishment of the constitutional monarchy, and the abolition of slavery in Danish West Indies (Sperber).

“apprise him of the traitorous design of Görgei” (Livermore, Vol. 1 178). For a long time, it remained customary in the literature of the era to depict Artúr Görgei, to whom Kossuth had handed over the authority before fleeing to the Ottoman Empire and who later capitulated to the Russians, in a bad light if not blatantly as a traitor to the Hungarian Revolution. Almost a decade after Livermore’s novel, the British novelist Anne Manning would refer to the Hungarian general as “the green-eyed monster” who “was bitterly envious of Kossuth, although he had drawn him from obscurity, and opened him the way of fame” (245-87).⁸ The almost simultaneous introduction of Görgei and Kossuth to Livermore’s novel functions likewise to celebrate Kossuth even further. Mrs. Liebenhoff defends Kossuth’s decision to yield power to the younger general even at the sake of the revolution:

true to his Christian and republican principles, [Kossuth] refused to appropriate his own person and dignity and rule which, to his ideal, was inconsistent with strict justice to his compatriots.... [S]uch unflinching devotion to a high sentiment, though apparently it may result in disaster at the time, will bring about in the end a higher good than any could be gained by a most conscientious departure from it. (Livermore, Vol. 1 178)

These remarks also allow the novel to pronounce the Hungarian Revolution unfinished. Through Mrs. Liebenhoff’s words, the novel declares it almost a divine ordinance that the revolution will eventually bear the palm.

The rest of the conversation goes practically as a monologue by Liebenhoff, who gives a lengthy response to Holberg’s inquiry about the Hungarian teacher’s age, beginning: “O anywhere between five and five thousand!” (Livermore, Vol. 1 178). The remainder of this obscure answer depicts the Hungarian revolutionary assuming the forms of various biblical figures including Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist through several centuries, portraying the Magyar meandering in the desert in search of the promised land. She concludes:

He is the Wandering Jew *par excellence*, not the vulgar, stale idea of one... who scoffed at our Saviour on his way to the cross..., but the true, sublime... and at last purified and Christianized Israelite, who is to bring the millions of his countrymen... into the light, joy, peace, and full satisfaction of Christ’s kingdom. I doubt whether his eye is opened to the view of his glorious destiny; but I know it, and rejoice that it is so. (Livermore, Vol. 1 178)

These allusions to biblical figures in the novel’s portrayal of the Hungarian teacher—who is called, the reader later finds out, Ben Ezra—signal different qualities that the narrative attributes to its fictitious Hungarian revolutionary character. However, it is the reference to the myth of the “wandering Jew” that is persistently emphasized in almost all the following mentions of Ben Ezra. This insistent imagery in the narrative’s employment of the theme of the Hungarian Revolution through a character that both

⁸ Of course, not all early fictional and non-fictional accounts of the Hungarian Revolution depicted Görgei negatively. In *The Red, White, and Green* (1901), for instance, English author Herbert Hayens depicts Görgei in a heroic fashion.

functions as an allusion to Kossuth and is depicted through the figure of the “wandering Jew” poses a curious case, an in-depth analysis of which requires at least a brief overview of the mid-nineteenth-century meanings of the myth of the “wandering Jew,” especially in association with the European Revolutions of 1848/49, the myth’s origins, and its employment in the context of what is commonly called the “Jewish Question.”

2. The “Wandering Jew” and the Revolutions of 1848/49

The “wandering Jew” (also known as the “eternal Jew” or Ahasuerus⁹) refers to a myth concerning a Jewish man who is believed to have cursed Jesus on the way to crucifixion and, thus, been condemned to wander around the world until the second coming of Jesus. The exact origins of the “wandering Jew” are not clear.¹⁰ What is known for sure is that the mythical figure began to gain popularity in the Middle Ages in Europe, especially “in the learned and quasi-learned literature” (Anderson 201). This popularization continued for centuries not only in the oral and written accounts by people claiming to have seen the suffering man in different European lands but also in more established literature, particularly in romantic poems and novels. Most famously, the French author Eugène Sue published his *Le Juif Errant* (1844) which was translated to English the same year. Some decades later, the Unitarian minister Moncure Daniel Conway wrote a theological book in the US with the same title in English.

Nineteenth century references to the “wandering Jew” diverted from the Christian accounts of otherworldly encounters with the legendary figure. Instead, the “wandering Jew” became a symbolical stock character that allowed for various reactions to the so-called Jewish Question, best known from Bruno Bauer’s *Die Judenfrage* and Karl Marx’s response to it, *Zur Judenfrage*. Having been oppressed and discriminated against all over Europe through various laws and restrictions, Jewish populations were influenced by the flame kindled with the first French Revolution leading to hefty debates on Jewish emancipation and equal enfranchisement. Many of such deliberations nurtured anti-Semitic discourses, paving the way perhaps to the darkest events in recent history.¹¹ Although this malignant trajectory as well as the persistent impacts of methodological nationalism together still serve to blur it, the question originated and

9 “[T]he story of the Eternal Jew first gained popularity in the 17th Century when a [sic] in Leyden appeared a printed pamphlet saying that the bishop of Schleswig had met the Wandering Jew in Hamburg in 1542 and the Jew’s name was Ahasuerus.” This is also the name by which the king of Persia is referred to in the Book of Ezra, an association between the myth of the wandering Jew and the Hebrew Bible which probably inspired Livermore to call her fictional Jewish character “Ben Ezra” —i.e. son of Ezra—(Idalovich 4).

10 Probably the clearest references to the myth in the Christian scripts are the following passages in the New Testament: “If I will that he remains until I come, what is that to you?” (John 21.22f. qtd in Bricchetto); “There are those standing here who shall not taste of death until they see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom” (Matt. 16:28 qtd in Bricchetto). However, there are disagreements over the meanings of these passages and their interpretations are better left to theologians.

11 “The myth of the ‘Eternal Jew’ is best known in the 20th Century through its revival in the NSDAP propaganda film ‘Der ewige Jude.’ This film was a Nazi interpretation of the powerful age-old legend of the Eternal or Wandering Jew (Göttingen, 1995). [T]he Eternal Jew Myth was a powerful tool used by National-Socialist propaganda to justify the persecution of the Jews and prepare the masses for the forthcoming Holocaust” (Idalovich 5).

circulated “in a vast area inhabited by thousands of Jewish communities” (Baron 195), making it not only a relevant but also urgent matter for the revolutionary movements of 1848/49. Against the anti-Semitic sectarian responses, diverging positive reactions to this pressing question, too, were produced.¹² Notwithstanding the nature of the answer given, intellectuals in Europe and the US employed the figure of the “wandering Jew” to address the “Jewish Question.”¹³

Inspired by the events of 1848/49, authors on both sides of the Atlantic in the mid-nineteenth century saw a parallel among the eternal suffering of the “wandering Jew,” the search for a collective Jewish identity, longing for the promised motherland in Palestine, and the revolutionary struggles for national independence in Europe.¹⁴ Baron poetically summarizes these inspirations: “[T]he very struggle for emancipation appeared to some sensitive souls as the expression of a newly awakened tiredness of the ‘Wandering Jew’ with his perennial homelessness” (247). To demonstrate how this analogy entered German language revolutionary literature of the era, he refers to the Austrian poet Moritz Hartmann’s *Reimchronik des Pfaffen Maurizius* (1849):

Jetzt steh ich da der Güter baar
Kein Jude mehr, doch ein Magyar...
Gib eine Muskete mir in die Hand,
Auf dass ich Fühle, dass endlich ich fand
Was lange mir fehlte, ein Vaterland,
Und wenn ich’s auch fühle in blutigem Sand.

-
- 12 “The myth of the Wandering Jew underwent a metamorphosis in Western literature at the hands of some English, German, and later American Romanticists—perhaps for the first time assuming an almost sympathetic mantle.” Idalovichi ties these raising sympathies to the “changes in the physical appearance” and the “enhanced social and economic status” of the Jewry. Besides some texts by English authors and poets such as Percy Bysshe Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound* (1819) and Lord Byron’s *Cain: A Mystery* (1821), Idalovichi briefly studies Hermann Melville’s 1876 *Clarel: A Poem and a Pilgrimage in the Holy Land* as nineteenth-century texts where the figure of the “wandering Jew” appears with positive connotations (9-12).
- 13 Alexander Scheiber in his 1954 article, where he catalogues references in Hungarian texts to the figure of the “wandering Jew,” writes that it was in 1811 the “Wandering Jew as a simile first emerged in Hungarian literature in the drama ‘Monostori Veronka’ of Joseph Katona” and the 1840 political pamphlet “A zsidok emancipatioja” (“The Emancipation of the Jews”) by Joseph Eötvös also included this legend (222).
- 14 The same parallels also led to anti-Semitic allusions to the legend of the “wandering Jew.” Mischa Honeck summarizes these ideas and their transatlantic circulations through the figure of German patriarch Wilhelm Marr clearly: “The boisterous rise of a new, competitive nationalism triggered the development of more-aggressive racial ideologies, including anti-Semitism.... [A]ssociations of Jewishness with capitalist exploitation were common in popular left-wing rhetoric. Quite a few Forty Eighters, moreover, resorted to negative stereotypes such as that of the ‘wandering Jew’ to express fears of homelessness and isolation in exile. One who went yet further was Wilhelm Marr, the patriarch of modern German anti-Semitism. A radical democrat who fought for a unified German republic in 1848, Marr turned into a vicious antiblack racist and anti-Semite after spending ten years in the United States and Central America. Adapting racial ideas to traditionally religious anti-Jewish discourses upon his return to Germany, Marr set the tone for future exclusionist theories and exemplified the ways in which racial belief systems from both sides of the Atlantic could overlap and influence each other” (184).

With such associations between the legend of the “wandering Jew” and revolutions in Europe already existing in the literature of the era, it is no surprise that American authors might have seen a parallel between the “wandering Jew” and Kossuth’s status in the US as an exile. It is through this chain of associations that the Hungarian revolutionary character enters into Livermore’s abolitionist novel as an embodiment of the “wandering Jew.”

3. Converting the “Wandering Jew”

It is, of course, impossible to dismiss the anti-Semitic undertones in any texts that refers to the “wandering Jew,” even when the figure emerges with positive connotations. Livermore’s 1855 novel with its emphatically equalitarian tenor utilizes this problematic figure to contribute to its millennial vision of liberty to all people and nations under a united Christian Republic. In doing so, like Hartman’s poem, Livermore’s novel symbolically converts the “wandering Jew” into Christianity. Yet, it is not only the “wandering Jew” who is “Christianized” in *Zoë*. Through this legendary figure, the character Ben Ezra, whose image often intermingles with that of Kossuth, also becomes Christianized. However, it should be underlined that Christianity in Livermore’s novel does necessarily not appear only as a religious affiliation. Ben Ezra, for instance, is depicted as “a Hungarian, which means noble; a Jew, which means acute in reading hidden meanings; a Christian, which makes him universal, and a German which means *gemutlich*” all at the same time (Livermore, Vol. 1 252). Rather, Christianity is understood as a quality of the individual’s relationship with god and nature, as often regarded in transcendentalist writing as a philosophy that “places[s] God within the world and within each person rather than outside humankind’s experience and knowledge” (Myerson et al xxiv). Therefore, Christianity does not necessarily exclude other religious affiliations, as one national belonging doesn’t exclude another.

At the end of the first volume, upon hearing Zoë’s intention to leave Denmark, Ben Ezra reveals his love for the young woman, who does not give him any assurance that she will wait for him in St. Croix. After this incident, the novel appears to have forgotten about Ben Ezra, creating the impression that the nonverbal rejection by Zoë, who, the novel ardently implies, is destined to die, constitutes the final chapter of their love. Yet, shortly before Zoë passes, Ben Ezra is reintroduced to the plot via a letter by Mrs. Lindsey to her husband. Mr. Lindsey is a Unitarian man who, much like Mrs. Liebenhoff and Mrs. Lindsey, helps to cultivate Zoë’s transcendentalist vision of the Christian Republic. It is months after their common maritime journey, while visiting Zoë on her death bed, Mr. Lindsey reads Zoë the letter by his wife who informs her husband of her new friend. As the letter progresses, the reader discovers that this friend is Ben Ezra, whom Mrs. Lindsey also describes as the “wandering Jew”:¹⁵

15 Ben Ezra introduces himself to Mrs. Lindsey with a letter from a common friend called, Mr. Fielding. As namedrops are not uncommon in Livermore’s novel, where many names of US literature and philosophy are mentioned one after another, it is possible that this common friend is Joseph Fielding of the Latter-Day Saints movement, a nineteenth century leader of today’s Mormonism. Such an allusion would be in line with the similarities between Livermore’s transcendentalist take on the European Revolutions as some sort of second coming of Jesus and Mormon interpretation of the same events (see the following).

I remembered the story of the 'Wandering Jew'... and I then knew that this man was no other than he,... said to myself, how long will men cling to the worn-out creeds and parchments of the past, and not see that in the religion of Jesus is the cure of all life's ills...! For if he would but receive this later gift of God in its purity and extent, then would he be relieved from his imaginary curse and be at rest from his wanderings. (Livermore, Vol. 1 296-97)

Later in the letter, it is revealed that Ben Ezra, who had left Denmark following Zoë's departure, has also left the US after learning that Zoë is in St. Croix. Yet, by the time he finds Zoë, she is about to have her last breath.

Even before Zoë falls sick, the reader is acquainted with the idea that her death will be a "triumph," that is, some sort of divine union with god. This is confirmed in the final pages of the novel where young Zoë's death is described as ascension to heaven. In this triumphant journey, Zoë is not left alone. Her death brings also Ben Ezra, who appears by her bedside right before she passes, closer to divinity. Interpreting his presence next to her as a call back to earth, Zoë wishes Ben Ezra to instead "ascend... to the glorified spheres" with her "where [they] will exchange with each other the *sign of the soul*." As Zoë dies, Ben Ezra disappears and "instead of him there lay upon the floor a parchment" with a verse from the first Corinthians written on it: "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which in part shall be done away" (Livermore, Vol. 2 304). This biblical verse is often interpreted as referring either to the Second Coming of Jesus or to a perfect understanding of religion usually achieved once one reaches heaven (Barnes; Dunagan). That is, in connecting Ben Ezra's ascension alongside Zoë with either the Second Coming or the idea of developing a true relationship with god, the novel implies that Ben Ezra's *eyes have finally opened* to what Mrs. Liebenhoff calls "his glorious destiny" which, the novel repeatedly suggests, would happen once he is altogether *Christianized* (Livermore, Vol. 1 178). Ben Ezra's persistent image as the "wandering Jew" penetrates into the scene of his ascension, implicating that his wanderings, his suffering, and homelessness are over.

This scene is not unfamiliar to the reader, as a similar scene depicting Ben Ezra takes place some chapters before, once Mrs. Liebenhoff publishes a manuscript which includes an illustration of the Hungarian character as

holding cross in one hand, while a roll of parchment is lying at his feet. An intelligent-looking eagle is standing by his side, to whom he is saying, 'reverence no longer, the letter of Scripture, but imbibe its life-giving spirit, and it will point thee ever to the crucified Jesus, as the idea of human perfection, the inspirer and guide to a sublimely spiritual life and its consequent bliss.' (Livermore, Vol. 2 268-269)

4. Past and Present Revolutions

The appearance of the eagle in this scene can be interpreted in various ways: as a banal symbol of American liberty and republicanism, a Christian symbolism of strength, or, quite to the contrary, of God's punishment (Wellman). Yet, it is more likely the first, as the novel repeatedly points to the US, more specifically to Ohio, in a prophesying manner as the future birthplace of its utopian Christian Republic.

It was a common tendency in the mid-nineteenth-century US to perceive Europe of 1848/49 through the experience, memory, and legacy of its own revolutionary history. This is especially true for the Hungarian Revolution. While other movements in Europe entailed demands such as those that concerned workers' rights which were unfamiliar for the US audience, Americans found it easy to draw parallels between their revolutionary history and the Hungarian struggle for independence from a foreign monarch (Roberts, *Distant* 10). In order to address Kossuth in his visit to Philadelphia in January 1852, for example, students wrote thirty-eight essays, nineteen of which "compared Kossuth to George Washington" (Spencer 155). Michael A. Morrison quotes one such student who addresses the Magyar hero with a poem: "We honour—aye, we revere one/ In whom so brightly shine/ The virtues which made Washington/ appear almost divine" (Miss Wiley qtd. in Morrison 111). It was not only school children who evoked the image of Washington with regard to Kossuth. In his welcoming address to Kossuth at Concord, Emerson, too, declared that he spoke "the sense not only of every generous American, but the law of mind, when [he said] that it is not those who live idly in the city called after his name, but those who, all over the world, think and act like him, who can claim to explain the sentiment of Washington" (n.p.). The visual atmosphere of Kossuth's presence in the US was accompanied by similar images: "In New York hotels and saloons were adorned for Kossuth's regal processions with portraits of him and Washington, along with portraits of Lafayette, Sultan Abdulmecid, and the British Lion" (Roberts, *Distant* 154).

Livermore partakes in such republican celebrations of Kossuth by reflecting American republican values on the Hungarian hero and his cause. Although a great portion of her novel can be read as a criticism of slavery and racism directed at the US, this criticism seems to concern mostly the slaveholding Southern states. The rest of the country receives barely a miniscule of this disapproval. Especially Cincinnati is imagined as the potential birthplace of the millennial future or the salvation of all humans irrespective of race, gender, nationality, or religion, with both Ben Ezra and Zoë gesturing toward Ohio. Ohio, then, can be read—besides its significance as a hotspot for the transcendentalists of the era—as a symbol of American republican values much like the eagle that appears besides Zoë's body.

Yet, it is important to note here that the revolutionary heritage meant different things for different actors in the mid-nineteenth-century US. "It was in [the] context of declension and against [the] background of the fragmentation and sectionalization of the revolutionary heritage that Americans watched and reacted to the European revolutions of 1848" (Morrison 156). Not all who stirred images of revolutionary figures such as Washington and Lafayette in reference to Kossuth did so with the same level of enthusiasm. Some were raising criticism rather than excitement through these images, as it can be seen in Garrison's letter to Kossuth. Similarly, for some others such as the Mormon communities, American republicanism did not have celebratory tenors. Such communities looked elsewhere for references in their support and praise of the European Revolutions.

Craig Livingston suggests that it was common to tie the European Revolutions to the biblical themes of the Second Coming and salvation among Mormon communities

(while there were also some “like Apostle Willard Richards [who] regarded them as just ‘anarchy’ and ‘commotion’”). Interpreting the desire to build republican governments as a step towards “large-scale global transformation” for a millennial future, many members of the Mormon church such as William I. Appleby and Wilford Woodruff understood the revolutions of 1848/49 as “God’s work.” More interestingly, they saw a connection with the question of Jewish emancipation. “The Mormon millenarian tradition stipulated that, before the Second Advent, the world must receive the chance to hear the gospel and gather to Zion.” According to some readings, this would become possible only with the “[t]he rise of Jews to ‘highest stations in governments [which] would lead to their restoration in Palestine.” That is, the Mormons in the nineteenth century regarded a Jewish emancipation achieved through European Revolutions as a sign of the Second Coming (Livingston 86–96).

Livermore’s novel does not carry undertones of Mormonism, except for a brief instance where the Mormon leader Elder Snow is mentioned as a positive influence on Stephenson. Instead, the novel shows an explicit tendency toward Unitarianism by marking most of its favored characters as of this belief. Still, one observes a clear resemblance between what Livingstone summarizes as a Mormon reception of the European Revolutions and *Zoë’s* approach to the same issue. The figure of the “wandering Jew” in *Zoë* finding its embodiment in a revolutionary Hungarian character seems to stand as a link among the European Revolutions, the Jewish question, and a transcendentalist belief in salvation. This salvation is achieved, depending on however one may interpret the redemption of the “wandering Jew” is attained, either through a perfect universal relationship among humanity, nature, and god or with the Second Coming of Jesus.

How can we read this overlap of symbolisms and simultaneous Biblical and republican allusions in Livermore’s *Zoë* in the context of 1848/49 European Revolutions? More importantly, how shall we interpret the symbolic conversion of the novel’s “wandering Jew” into Christianity in relation to the same character’s function as an alias of Lajos Kossuth, especially given that the Hungarian revolutionary himself was already a renowned Protestant to begin with?

5. From Oriental to Occidental

Writing on traveling patterns to and from Hungary between mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, Irina C. Popova-Nowak suggests that Hungarian travelers who headed “to the West” considered themselves travelers “to the future” and those going eastward were travelers “to the past”: “Hungarian travellers were convinced that learning from the West and applying this knowledge were crucial for moving upwards within the developmental scale of Europe” (221). This Hungarian imagery of the East-West axis corresponded with the American imagery thereof within which westward territorial expansion was strongly associated with progress, while the east of the Atlantic symbolized an old and outdated world divided into a similar axis between the Orient and the Occident. Within the American imagery, Hungary was placed in an ambivalent position, especially following the demarcation of Vienna as the last point of the West by Prince Klemens von Metternich and the Ottoman rule in Hungary lasting from the mid-sixteenth to almost eighteenth centuries, with “a legacy of... movement between

medieval independence, possession and dispossession by eastern and western empires” (Roberts, “Lajos” 793). This vision persisted in the US through the cultural reproduction of images depicting the Ottoman Empire in an orientalized fashion (794-96).

Hungary’s part in the European Revolutions of 1848/49 and demand for national independence challenged this vision, “moving the country ‘westward’” in the minds of Americans (Roberts, “Lajos” 794-796). The fact that many Americans saw parallels between the revolutionary legacy of their own “Occidental” and “progressive” country and the Hungarian revolutions contributed to this westward shift. The American Quaker, abolitionist, and poet John Greenleaf Whittier’s encomium of the Magyar revolutionary leader (also quoted in Roberts, “Lajos” 793) illustrates this in-between position that Hungary and Hungarian culture occupied in mid-nineteenth-century American minds. As it was common during the time of Kossuth’s arrival to the US, Whittier’s poem calls Kossuth a “great fugitive” looking for a refuge and finding it in the US. More significantly, the poem portrays Kossuth as “combining/ The strength of Europe with the warmth and glow/ Of Asian song and prophecy, —the shining/ Of Orient splendors over Northern snow!” Yet, it is not only the contrast between the East and the West that Whittier highlights. A similar contrast appears as the poem depicts “the Old World” as the wrongdoer and “the New World” as the fortunate receiver of “the noblest guest” (Whittier 173). For some others, however, it was surer that Kossuth was an oriental leader. Roberts describes a poster hung by Boston workers welcoming Kossuth which reads “Washington and Kossuth, the Occident and the Orient” (Roberts, “Lajos” 154-55). While Kossuth’s and his comrades’ struggle for liberty made them appear as part of what was perceived by Americans as the “Western” intellectual and political heritage, they could not escape being portrayed as Oriental figures that were often romanticized, at least, in sketches that vindicated their cause.

While it is not excessively emphasized, one can still decipher the tendency to define Hungary and Hungarians as in-between the Occident and the Orient in *Zoë*. Introducing a romanticized notion of a pure and biblical East, which unites enlightened and inspired “Oriental” characters with a God-given sense of empathy with people all over the world, Livermore’s novel adopts an imagery of its alias for Kossuth as an Oriental to the degree that he is “a poet, full of fire and fancy, reading the hidden meanings of flowers, and trees, and symbols of every kind, as none but an Oriental can” (Livermore, Vol. 2 261). Yet, the reader cannot be certain of the origins of the Oriental tendencies of Ben Ezra, since beside at times functioning as an alias for the Hungarian revolutionary Kossuth, he is also embodied in the almost quintessentially Oriental figure of the “wandering Jew” meandering around Middle Eastern lands. Moreover, the “oriental tongue” that he teaches to Mrs. Liebenhoff is not Hungarian but Hebrew (Vol. 1 177). Still, his revolutionary persona emerges as a Westernized European. This is especially the case in the instances where his depiction is blended with the image of the Hungarian leader Kossuth who appears as a “sublime, yet humble Christian Statesman” and the “leading man of Europe” (Vol. 2 262). It is in this sense that the imagery of Hungary in Livermore’s novel emerges as one that combines both the East and West within.

This Western-Eastern dualism embodied in Ben Ezra seems to serve the novel in associating its utopian vision with its unique imagination of the European Revolutions.

The utopian Christian Republic imagined in the novel, which is supposed to include all nations, appears to rely as much on the success of the European Revolutions as it does on the arrival of Zoë's manuscript to the US, as the novel appeals to Kossuth to "[f]orm Germany, Poland, Hungary... into a Christian republic, each separate state an emporium for art, or science, or learning, or morals" (Vol. 1 262). Contradicting the actual nationalist demands of the revolutionary movements, the novel perceives the European Revolutions through a version of nineteenth-century US republicanism that interprets the US as a marriage of several states under a federal government rather than the spatial and political structure of nation state. Livermore's novel reflects a nineteenth-century American tendency to regard American revolutionary and republican heritage as a dominant ideological export to Europe.

This understanding can give us some clues about the function of the symbolic conversion of Ben Ezra. The conversion and fluctuating role of Ben Ezra between the "wandering Jew" and Kossuth are at its best confusing and problematic, especially considering that the Hungarian leader was born and raised Protestant. However, reconsidering the scene of ascension not from a religious perspective but from the standpoint of American republicanism, one may fathom out that it is not Christianity as a religion but its symbolical value as a Western (that is, progressive, republican, American) philosophy that Ben Ezra's *eyes have finally opened* to. Read in this sense, Ben Ezra assumes a new role in reflecting the shift of the mid-nineteenth-century American imagery of Hungary went through with its recent revolutionary movements from an Eastern, "backward," and "belonging to the past" to Western, "progressive," and heralding the "sign of the times" that the novel promotes.

Conclusion

Each wave of a big storm reaches the shore smaller than the previous: This was surely the case for the waves of the 1848/49 European Revolutions touching the Atlantic west coast. By 1855, the European waves in the US were largely replaced by those left behind by the many hurricanes of the country's own unique political atmosphere. The popular enthusiasm felt for Kossuth had already died even before the Hungarian revolutionary left the country and final verdicts by various actors on the Magyar hero had been quite vocally announced. Neither Kossuth nor other symbolical figures of the European Revolutions of 1848/49 seemed to raise much public or political interest in a country that was unknowingly yet rapidly moving toward one of the most defining incidents of its history.

In this article, I have sought to unsettle this narrative of fading relevance of the revolution in the face of sectional conflict. Scrutinizing a rather unknown novel and contextualizing it in larger cultural, social, and political framework, I have shown that the theme of European Revolutions not only remained relevant but also proved inspirational for the literature of the US in understanding the events, circumstances, and experiences of their time and location. Engaging itself in various different yet interrelated discussions simultaneously and employing a rich range of imagery, Livermore's *Zoë* provides wealthy material to study, beside the continuing influence of the 1848/49 Revolutions, divergent American reactions to these revolutions, especially to the Hungarian Revolution and Kossuth, as well as different imagery and

imaginings that these events and figures triggered in American literature. More significantly, the novel poses a distinctive example of how Americans employed and appropriated imageries, symbols, and issues raised in the European context during the mid-nineteenth century, while interpreting the European Revolution of 1848/49 in American terms and addressing pressing concerns and debates directly engaging their own country.

Works Cited

- Anderson, George K. "The Neo-Classical Chronicle of the Wandering Jew." *PMLA*, vol. 63, no. 1, 1948, pp. 199-213.
- Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:4." *Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible*, <https://www.studydrive.net/commentaries/bnb/1-corinthians-13.html>. 1870. Accessed 22 July 2021.
- Baron, Salo W. "The Impact of the Revolution of 1848 on Jewish Emancipation." *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1949, pp. 195-248.
- Bauer, Bruno. *Die Judenfrage*. Braunschweig, 1843, <http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10570949-4>. *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Digital*. Accessed 22 July 2021.
- Bozkurt-Pekár, Deniz. *Imagining Southern Spaces Hemispheric and Transatlantic Souths in Antebellum US Writing*. De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021.
- . "Imagining the South Through the Caribbean: Spatial Narratives of Liberty in the Novels of Holcombe and Livermore." *Ex-Centric Souths (Re)Imagining Southern Centers and Peripheries*, edited by Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis, Publication de la Universitat de València, 2019, pp. 35-52.
- Cass, Lewis. *Diplomatic Relations with Austria: Speech of Hon. Lewis Cass, of Michigan, in Senate of the United States, Friday, January 4, 1850, on Suspending Our Diplomatic Relations with Austria*. The Congressional Globe Office, 1850.
- Chaffin, Tom. "'Sons of Washington': Narciso Lopez, Filibustering, and U.S. Nationalism, 1848-1851." *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1995, pp. 79-108.
- Conway, Moncure Daniel. *Wandering Jew*. Chatto and Windus, 1881.
- Coyle, William. *Ohio Authors and Their Books: Biographical Data and Selective Bibliographies for Ohio Authors, Native and Resident, 1796-1950*. The World Pub. Co., 1962.
- Dunagan, Mark. "Commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:4." *Mark Dunagan Commentaries on the Bible*, <https://www.studydrive.net/commentaries/dun/1-corinthians-13.html>. 1999-2014. Accessed 22 July 2021.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Address to Kossuth." *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, with a Biographical Introduction and Notes by Edward Waldo Emerson*, vol. 11, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904, <https://www.bartleby.com/90/1119.html>. Accessed 21 July 2021.
- Frank, Tibor. "'Give Me Shakespeare.' Lajos Kossuth's English as an Instrument in International Politics." *Studies on Nationalism*, edited by Mária M. Kovács and Petr Lom, Nationalism Studies Program Central European University, 2004, pp. 177-194.
- . "Marketing Hungary: Kossuth and the Politics of Propaganda." *Lajos Kossuth*

- Sent Word...: Papers Delivered on the Occasion of the Bicentenary of Kossuth's Birth*, edited by László Péter et al., School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, 2003, pp. 221-249.
- Garrison, William Lloyd. *Letter to Louis Kossuth Concerning Freedom and Slavery in the United States: In Behalf of the American Anti-Slavery Society*. R. F. Wallcut, 1852. *Internet Archive*. Accessed 21 July 2021.
- Hartmann, Moritz. *Reimchronik Des Pfaffen Maurizius*. Tredition, 2011.
- Hayens, Herbert. *The Red, White and Green*. London: Thomas Nelson, 1901. *Internet Archive*. Accessed 21 July 2021.
- Honeck, Mischa. *We Are the Revolutionists German-Speaking Immigrants & American Abolitionists after 1848*. U of Georgia P, 2011.
- Idalovichi, Israel. "Creating National Identity through a Legend—The Case of the Wandering Jew." *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 4, no. 12, 2005, pp. 3-26.
- Jánossy, Dénes A. *Great Britain and Kossuth*. Kiadás, 1937.
- Kabdebo, Thomas. "Reception of Kossuth in England and the Magazine Punch in 1851." *Hungarian Studies*, vol. 1/2, 1985, pp. 225-234.
- Kossuth, Louis. *Select Speeches of Kossuth*. Edited by Francis W. Newman, Trübner & Co., 1853.
- Levine, Bruce. "Conservatism, Nativism, and Slavery: Thomas R. Whitney and the Origins of the Know-Nothing Party." *The Journal of American History*, vol. 88, no. 2, Sep 2001, pp. 455-488.
- . *Spirit of 1848 German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War*. U of Illinois P, 1992.
- Livermore, Elizabeth D. *Zoë, or the Quadroon's Triumph*. Vols 1 and 2. Truman and Spofford, 1855.
- Livingston, Craig. "Eyes on 'the Whole European World': Mormon Observers of the 1848 Revolutions." *Journal of Mormon History*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2005, pp. 78-112. *JSTOR*.
- Manning, Anne. *The Interrupted Wedding*. 1864. *Internet Archive*. Accessed 19 July 2021.
- Marx, Karl. *Zur Judenfrage*. 1844. *Internet Archive*, <http://archive.org/details/KarlMarxFrage>. Accessed 19 July 2021.
- McDaniel, W. Caleb. "Our Country Is the World": *American Abolitionists, Louis Kossuth, and Philanthropic Revolutions*. 2004, <http://www.owl.net/~wcm1/pdf/oah2004.pdf>. Accessed 20 July 2021.
- Morrison, Michael A. "American Reaction to European Revolutions, 1848-1852: Sectionalism, Memory, and the Revolutionary Heritage." *Civil War History*, vol. 49, no. 2, June 2003, pp. 111-123.
- Myerson, Joel, et al, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism*. Oxford UP, 2010.
- O'Brien, Colleen C. *Race, Romance, and Rebellion: Literatures of the Americas in the Nineteenth Century*, U of Virginia P, 2013.
- Oliver, John W. "Louis Kossuth's Appeal to the Middle West-1852." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 14, no. 4, 1928, pp. 481-495.

- Popova-Nowak, Irina V. "The Odyssey of National Discovery: Hungarians in Hungary and Abroad, 1750–1850." *Under Eastern Eyes: A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe*, edited by Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis, Central European University Press, 2008, pp. 195–222.
- Reynolds, Larry J. *European Revolutions and the American Literary Renaissance*. Yale UP, 1988.
- Roberts, Tim. "Lajos Kossuth and the Permeable American Orient of the Mid-Nineteenth Century." *Diplomatic History*, vol. 39, no. 5, 2015, pp. 793–818.
- . *Distant Revolutions 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism*. U of Virginia P, 2009.
- Scheiber, Alexander. "The Legend of the Wandering Jew in Hungary." *Midwest Folklore*, vol. 4, no. 4, 1954, pp. 221–235.
- Simms, William Gilmore. "The Invasion of Cuba." *Southern Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 9, 1852, pp. 2–47.
- Spencer, Donald S. *Louis Kossuth and Young America A Study of Sectionalism and Foreign Policy 1848–1852*. U of Missouri P, 1977.
- Sperber, Jonathan. *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851*. Cambridge UP, 2011.
- Stowe, Harriet. *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Or, Life Among the Lowly*. Penguin Classics, 1981.
- Sue, Eugène. *The Wandering Jew*. Chapman and Hall, 1844.
- Tarnóc, András. "A Hungarian for Hungarians and Nothing for the Mankind? William Lloyd Garrison's Response to Kossuth's Stance on Slavery." *Hungarian Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2019, pp. 61–72.
- Tóth, Heléna. *An Exiled Generation*. Cambridge UP, 2014.
- Wellman, Jack. "What Does The Eagle Represent In The Bible? A Christian Study." *Christian Crier*, 17 July 2015, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/christiancrier/2015/07/17/what-does-the-eagle-represent-in-the-bible-a-christian-study/>. Accessed 22 July 2021.
- Whittier, John Greenleaf. "Kossuth." *Complete Poetical Works*, Household, Houghton, Osgood and Company, 1879, pp. 172–173.
- Widmer, Edward L. *Young America The Flowering of Democracy in New York City*. Oxford UP, 1999.
- Wilson, Samuel J. "Kossuth and American Non-Intervention." *Hungarian Studies*, vol. 5, 1989, pp. 39–48.
- Ziser, Michael. "World Revolutions." *The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism*, edited by Joel Myerson, Sandra Harbert Petrulionis, and Laura Dassow Walls, Oxford UP, 2010, pp. 70–83.

**We Have Always Lived in the Mind:
The Freudian Topographic Model of the Mind as Depicted
in Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962)**

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.07

Abstract: The literary setting of Shirley Jackson's 1962 novel *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* is eerie, symbolic, and inextricably interconnected with the main characters of the book. The Blackwood family, haunted by its macabre past, is confined to its mansion, which is a manifestation of its dwellers' troubled minds. The Blackwoods abide in a reciprocal influence with their house, the titular castle. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the discourse on Jackson's work and to illustrate a symbolic rather than mimetic reading of the novel. The theory of psychoanalysis, and more specifically the concept of the Freudian topographic model of the mind, is used to characterize the novel's setting and its foreground characters. The paper identifies the three focal characters with Freudian archetypes of id, ego, and superego, and uses the theory to further analyze the relationships between the characters to prove they are each ruled by one of the archetypes. Then, it places the characters within the plane of the Blackwood mansion to demonstrate the house's psychological agency over its dwellers. This is achieved by comparing the mansion's floors to the Freudian levels of consciousness. Such an interpretation not only compares the Blackwood family to a single entity, a shared mind, but also includes the house as an integral part of its manifestation.

Keywords: Shirley Jackson, psychoanalysis, literary studies, Gothic novel, topographic model of the mind

The spatiality of the human mind and the location of mental processes have long been subjects of philosophical divagations and numerous theories. Although neurology has recognized separate parts of the brain and the relations between them, thus providing much information about the mechanics behind the brain functions, the source of human identity is a question of nurture rather than nature. One of the most recent attempts at the spatial categorizations of the human mind in a metaphorical sense is Freud's theory on the levels of consciousness.

Freud's research was aimed at finding causes of neurosis and due to his patients often having problems remembering traumatic experiences, he assumed that there is a part of the psyche hidden even from itself. In 1915 Freud contextualized the stratification of the mind, dividing it into three levels of consciousness. Although Freud never put forward such a comparison and its origins remain unknown, the iceberg remains the most common image depicting this Freudian theory (Green). The iceberg's top as the only level remaining in immediate contact with the outside world represents the human conscious: the location of the processing of external perceptions. The immersed part initially was theorized to represent the unconscious as the source of needs, urges, and difficult to retrieve memories. However, Freud differentiated an intermediate level of the preconscious, just below the water level, and described it as a place of "storage" for memories (which are not repressed to the unconscious), and

knowledge gained via the systems of the conscious. This topographic representation of the human consciousness located some of the mental processes and put them into the context of social interactions.

However, the stratification of consciousness does not provide a full image of the human mind as theorized by Freud. According to him, these levels constitute a matrix for yet another tripartite division of the psyche. Its first element is the ego, a psychological component and the place of the coherent organization of the mental processes. It operates mostly on the conscious and the preconscious levels and is responsible for external perceptions. It also facilitates the movement of memories from the perceptions into the repressed, which is located on the unconscious level where the second part of the psyche operates, the id. It is a biological component, ruled by impulses, basic needs, and self-preservation instincts. The id is limited in its operations in the unconscious and is regulated by the superego, the third element of the psyche and its social component. As the superego stretches from the very bottom to the top of the iceberg, it is a place of synthesis of moral imperatives learned from the society and imposed upon the id. These three elements are both static and dynamic, as not only do they stand for different elements and processes of the human mind, but they also interact and influence each other. For example, Freud says that the ego to the id is what a rider is to the horse: the ego, as it represents reason, "has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse," i.e., the passions of the id (Freud 1927). Freud stresses the reciprocity of such a relationship: "often a rider... is obliged to guide where it [the horse] wants to go; so, in the same way the ego constantly carries into action the wishes of the id as if they were its own" (Freud 1927). Freud believed that if all the elements of the psyche are in a constant tension of such regulations, the mind remains healthy. However, had the boundaries of one of the elements were violated, the psyche loses its stability. The topographical model of the mind, reflecting both tripartite divisions as theorized by Freud, establishes these boundaries, and illustrates the mutual dependence of all the elements.

The topographic model of the mind remains controversial even among psychoanalysts. Jacques Lacan, one of the most influential theorists of this strand of psychology, argued that the mind is not topographic but topologic: it is subject to constant deformations, and that the boundaries between the id, the ego, and the superego are continuously pervaded, thus the mind should not be depicted as a stratification but rather the Borromean knot which consists of three linked rings, inseparable until one of them is removed. The Freudian partition of the mind also may be perceived as questioning the unity of a person and, as Gardner notices, although Freud stresses the 'functional interdependence as much as the conflict of the parts' (Gardner) it is still arguable whether each of the elements introduces new sortal into the psychology. Yet, the topographic model remains one of the most thought-provoking psychological and philosophical concepts of the past century as Freud's theories still provide researchers with a broad basis for interpretation.

One of the fields in which psychoanalysis proves its proliferation is literary theory. Shirley Jackson's last novel, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962), offers a unique view on the agency of the topography on its dwellers and contrariwise. The world depicted in literary works has often been used as a symbolic representation of

the mental state of the characters inhabiting it, probably most famously in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), where the family mansion falls into ruin as its occupants' descent into madness and tragic death. In *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962), the reciprocal relationship between the characters and their surroundings seems to source from the Freudian theory of the topographic model of the psyche.

We Have Always Lived in the Castle (1962) tells the story of two sisters, Mary Katherine "Merricat" and Constance Blackwood who live in a family mansion with their mentally and physically disabled Uncle Julian, who lost his health six years prior in a mass murder attempt: arsenic was mixed with sugar and served for dinner in the Blackwood mansion. The three have prevailed seemingly by chance: Merricat was sent to her room before the dessert and Constance never eats sugar. Uncle Julian was poisoned but managed to stay alive. The murder was carefully planned by Merricat who was never accused of the crime. Yet, this event has left the Blackwood family in trauma: Constance has become agoraphobic and has not left the house since, Merricat is assured of her superiority, and Julian is left disabled and obsessed with authoring a book about the murder. The novel describes their repetitive daily life, to the point of the visit of Cousin Charles and the subsequent burning of the upper levels of the house. At the end of the book, Uncle Julian dies from a heart attack and the sisters confine themselves to a lonely life in the remains of a burned house. The story however is not a linear narration. Instead, it is told from the perspective of Merricat and full of distorted reality perceptions, it delves into such issues as society, family life, magic, and mental illness.

The novel's ambiguity is highlighted by Darryl Hattenhauer: "In the end, the sisters become part of the social text of the mad-women in the attic (although in this case they are so mad that they have burned up the second floor and the attic and now live on the ground floor and in the basement—in Jackson's recurrent architectural metaphor, *their higher consciousness is destroyed*"(183). He stresses the particular significance of the book's topography. In my research I would like to further expand Hattenhauer's thought of the Blackwoods' consciousness destroyed with the burning of the upper levels of the mansion quoted above. To develop this idea, I focus on the topographic model of the psyche theorized by Sigmund Freud as it seems to best correspond to the performative characteristics of the novel's figures and its literary setting. I will show that not only the Blackwood mansion but also its inhabitants reflect the Freudian model. Merricat, Uncle Julian, and Constance respectively correspond to the id, the ego, and the superego operating on the house's levels also modeled on the three planes of consciousness as theorized by Freud. This paper argues that Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962) can be analyzed by applying the comparison to the Freudian topographical model of the mind to demonstrate how the effects of the ego, the id, and the superego can be conceptualized within a single unit of a family and to analyze the agency of the setting on its inhabitants.

We Have Always Lived in the Castle is a first-person focal character narrative told from the point of view of the younger Blackwood sister, Mary Katherine. It is her wishes and needs that motivate and push the narrative. She can be identified as id-dominated as her actions are dictated by her instinctual thoughts and serve her subjective wish-fulfillment, even if they lack a particular purpose—she was the one who killed the Blackwoods and the real motivation behind the crime can only be

conjectured. Her self-centered disposition and tendency to brutality are on par with the Freudian characterization of the id.

The reader confronts the fact that Merricat was often mistreated and punished when she was a child, which, according to not only Freud, but also contemporary psychiatrists, may lead to mental trauma and memory repression (Badura-Madej and Dobrzyńska-Mesterhazy). The id operates in the unconscious, which is also the place of storing the repressed, strictly corresponding to the neuroses Freud was researching. The troubled relationship between Merricat and her family manifests in her narration by referencing the events the reader learns are not true. Mary Katherine, repressing the real memories of her family punishing her, reminisces them praising and glorifying her: “Mary Katherine, we love you.... You must never be punished.... Mary Katherine will never allow herself to do anything inviting punishment.... Bow all your heads to our adored Mary Katherine” (99-100), while Constance reports: “Merricat was always in disgrace. I used to go up the back stairs with a tray of dinner for her after my father had left the dining room. She was a wicked, disobedient child” (41). The repression of the real connected with the manifestation of the desire to be not only accepted but also worshipped, further establishes Merricat as id-dominated or even its avatar in the novel’s plane.

The compulsion to repeat traumatic events by Merricat in multiple ways resembles Freud’s case study of a child described in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). Freud says that the boy played a game of “disappearance and return” by throwing away his toys into the room’s corner and then having them retrieved. In this way, he compensated himself for his mother leaving him for short periods of time by putting himself in the active position of a “person who leaves” and not “a person left” (Freud 1920). A similar action is performed by Merricat when she destroys her mother’s favorite milk pitcher and leaves it in the kitchen “so Constance would see” (35). In this way, she shows her sister her dissatisfaction with the elder even considering leaving the house and Merricat. Freud says that a year after the start of the boy’s play his toy throwing was accompanied by an exclamation “go to the front!” alluding to his absent father who was at the war front. The play developed: not only did the boy express dissatisfaction of not being in the constant presence of his mother, but he also showed his satisfaction with the absence of his father (Freud 1920). A corresponding situation can be observed at the end of *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*: Merricat can no longer stand Charles’s presence as he is a direct threat to her union with Constance. Therefore, she takes drastic—and successful—measures of his disposal. By throwing her father’s pipe used by Charles into the bin, she also throws Charles away from the sisters’ life. Freud concludes his case study of the boy by saying that children “pass over from the passivity of the experience to the activity of the game... and in this way revenges... on a substitute” (Freud 1920). As Constance says, Merricat was very often sent to her room, almost disposed of the family life. Later in Mary Katherine’s life, she revenges herself on her family. Moreover, Merricat often treats her activities as a game, but always set up to make her win: “I played a game when I did the shopping... there were always dangers, like ‘lose one turn’... and little helps, like ‘advance three spaces’... until I reached the black rock, when I would win” (17). Thus, Merricat can be compared to the id-dominated, pleasure principle motivated child from Freud’s case study.

The superego, the social component, is embodied by Constance. She readily receives guests at the house and mimics her mother's way of doing so, confirming her role as the guardian of internalized moral standards—of course, in this case, those which are relevant to the Blackwood's social class. Yet, the Freudian convention is played with. Although Constance embodies the characterization of the superego, she is agoraphobic and is only able to leave her house as far as her own garden, drawing attention to the impairment of the social sphere of the Blackwood lives caused by the murder.

According to Freud, the superego is the location of conscience. In fact, using her position as the house's matriarch, she moralizes Merricat quite often: "Wear your boots if you wander today" (55); "Please be pleasant to Cousin Charles" (63); "It's wrong to hate them [people from the village]" (20), as if trying to make Merricat-id conform to social norms. Even after the house burns and the sisters live in ruins, she only allows them to drink from cups with handles, "like ladies" (111). Merricat is fully aware of her sister's moral teachings, but she chooses to ignore them. She does not wear boots on rainy days, is particularly unkind to Charles, and hates the villagers. The Constance-superego is not suppressing the desires of the Merricat-id completely: what is more, she sometimes actively encourages her impulsive behavior. She enables it by laughing at her morbid jokes, infantilizing (calling her "silly"), and by giving quiet compliance to Merricat's crimes. Even just after the murders, having seen whole her family poisoned, Constance remains cold-blooded as she first washes the sugar bowl to dispose of hard evidence. The Merricat-id does not feel any guilt over her crimes because Constance-superego fails to suppress the "socially unacceptable." In turn, it looks like Constance is the one who takes over the feelings of guilt, although she does not fully comprehend it: she says, "somehow it was all my fault" (108) when they return to the burned house. The controlling function of the superego as theorized by Freud is not sufficiently executed, thus resulting in the id breaching its boundaries freely.

Uncle Julian complements the trinity, playing the role of the ego of the family. The Freudian ego is a coherent organization of mental processes (Freud 1920) and a representation of a psychological component of the mind, ruled by the reality principle. Paradoxically, the only Blackwood living in the house after the murder that takes interest in objective reality is the mentally disabled Uncle Julian. His behavior shows he has not completely lost his cognition as he recognizes Charles momentarily as his nephew, remembering well that his family has declined to help Constance during the trial as if wanting to point out the audacity that Charles shows appearing in their house. In one of the last scenes before the fire—and his death—Julian confuses Charles with John, the sisters' father, and accuses him of greed, selfishness, and loss of dignity. Although he uses the name of his late brother, he aptly defines the cousin's characteristics, recognizing in him a strong patriarchal figure and a threat to the Blackwood household, highlighting the new matriarchal order of the family. Uncle Julian's reality perception is impaired; yet he accurately reads the underlying social codes around him. Although Julian is a symbol of a neurodivergent mind, he still is a man in the society, thus establishing himself as the ego of the Blackwood family.

The Freudian ego also consists of what is repressed in the unconscious by the id (Freud 1927). According to Freud, the ego brings the influence of the external world upon the id, and, in exchange, it carries into action the id's wishes as if they were its

own. Thus, the ego can overcome the repressed with the help of the id (Freud 1927), but otherwise, the ego is unconscious of what is represented in the id. If assumed that Uncle Julian represents the ego, he should be able to communicate with Merricat, representing the id, to relieve the traumatic events from the past. However, his link to the Merricat-id is broken from the moment it was created: the poisoning. Julian as the ego is unable to retrieve the repressed and remains unconscious of the id as he believes that Merricat has died in an orphanage during Constance's trial. Although they live in the same house and eat at the same table, he never recognizes her: throughout the novel, they never exchange a word and she is not allowed in his room (47) as if highlighting the lack of his patriarchal authority over her. She considers him "dead" in a way: when introducing herself in the first paragraph of the novel, she mentions living with Constance only, concluding the passage with a statement: "Everyone else in my family is dead" (14). What is more, it has been suggested that Merricat and Constance are complementary and, in fact, "two halves of the same person" (Hardin 113). This stance reassures my view of both sisters as symbolic parts of the same mind, embodiments of the Freudian theory of the elements of the psyche. I also believe that the treatment of Constance and Merricat as "two halves of one person" further belittles Uncle Julian's share in the Blackwoods' life, highlighting his role as a suppressed part of the family.

The communication between the ego and the id does not exist thus leaving the Blackwood family unable to deal with its past. The trauma and its reliving by the Blackwood family are also facilitated by the house and its stratification. The mansion's floors each have a different purpose, and each can be related to the Freudian theory of the levels of consciousness.

As mentioned before, the Freudian concepts of the id, the ego, and the superego are often depicted in relation to another tripartite division of the mind: the Freudian levels of consciousness. As the Blackwood mansion's dwellers correspond to the three elements of the psyche, the place they occupy seems to comply with the stratification of consciousness into three levels: the conscious, the preconscious, and the subconscious.

The house floors that correspond to the level of the conscious are the attic, where the deceased Blackwoods' possessions are stored, and the second floor with its bedrooms and the father's room. This plane symbolizes the times when the Blackwoods were still both, a family community, and a part of the village community. The "upstairs" is also the original place of confinement of the Merricat-id. Her parents, in an attempt to civilize her "wicked" behavior, abused Merricat by sending the child to her bedroom without food so she could humble herself and get rid of her primal, aggressive behavior. However, according to the placement of the id on the Freudian iceberg, consciousness is one of the planes unable to contain the id: since this plane has no agency over her drives, she is free to subdue the conscious and destroy it. Merricat revolts and disposes of her oppressors and, at the same time, transforms the top levels of the house. After the mass murder, the sisters constitute a new, modified version of the familial bonds and still use their bedrooms upstairs. The remaining bedrooms are abandoned completely. The father's room is also merely "neatened" once a week and not due to its usage but from the attachment to the high social standing provided in the past from the patriarchal privileges. The sororal family is not "civilized" enough to still be a part of western society: they are flawed by crime (especially dramatic because committed by a young

woman) and by the absence of the patriarch. Although Uncle Julian is theoretically the eldest remaining male Blackwood, his disabilities prevent him from becoming the head of the household. The attic and the second floor are also not accessible to him. He can never go upstairs just as he can never become fully conscious of his surroundings and memories: he is equally impaired physically and mentally. Charles Blackwood upon his arrival at the mansion occupies the father's room symbolizing his attempt to "re-civilize" the family and re-establish patriarchy over them. Merricat, perceiving his arrival as a disruption coming from the outside world, effectively blocks this influence. By setting these floors on fire, she banishes the male-dominated culture and marks the definitive separation of the sisters from the outside world, also destroying their Freudian consciousness.

An intermediate plane between the conscious and the unconscious and a place of their mutual exchange is called the preconscious. It consists of "memory-traces," making it a representation of stored knowledge and memories. The embodiment of the Freudian preconscious is the mansion's first floor. The kitchen is where the sisters spend most of their time, having most of their conversation and memory-making activities, especially cooking together. These activities are not only connected to their memories but also the knowledge they gained: as they are both women, they were conditioned to learn how to be a housewife. The mother's drawing-room is of special significance as it is a place of the re-enactment of the mother based on the memories from before the murder. The first floor can also be read as the preconscious due to its purely architectural, transitional position in-between the cellar and the upper levels of the house. The sisters live between life and death, society, and reclusion, in a way stuck in their memory of the Blackwoods being a distinguished family, barely noticing their demise.

Subconsciousness is at the bottom of the Freudian iceberg, and it is the source of human behavior. It is the place of storage of the traumatic memories repressed from the preconscious (thus they can never be made conscious), but also a source of urges, primal needs, and desires. Below the ground, in the Blackwood's cellar, preserves dating many years back are hidden: Preserving food is the basis of a Blackwood woman's life in the mansion, a part of the family tradition, one reserved exclusively for women. Not only is the cellar the furthest from the attic spatially, but also regarding its designation. The second floor is associated with the late father and his material possessions, useless to the sisters. However, especially after the fire, the basement becomes a source of food and thus preservation: not only fulfilling basic human needs but also preserving the matriarchal order. It is worth noticing that the Blackwood preserves are eaten for the first time after the fire, so upon Merricat ruining the upper levels of the home. This resonates with the fact that the sisters have lost their consciousness and rational minds (Hattenhauer 185) and have been pushed into the deeper levels of their psyche, focused on basic survival, a characteristic not only inherent to the unconscious but also the id.

Another place of realization of the subconscious and the Merricat-id's influence upon it is the ground. The younger sister often buries tokens and treasures in the soil to perform magical rituals of protection, all with Constance's knowledge about the procedure. Not only does it correspond to the placement of the id and superego over the consciousness iceberg, but also refers to Freud's idea of magic as a primal force

developed in his 1913's book *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*. Since the comparison of Aboriginal practices to a neurotic mind and the general imagery of the book are both marked by colonial perspective and racism (Frosh 143), this theory will not be given further attention in this article, and it serves only to ascertain the placement of Merricat's behavior in the Freudian idea of the unconscious. Nevertheless, the ritualistic procedure of burying protective tokens in the ground is not only spatially connected with the level of the subconscious, but it is also an expression of Merricat's id-motivated non-scientific reasoning of the world (via the medium of magic) and self-preservation mechanisms.

The relationship between the mansion and the Merricat-id does not end on its levels. Although Merricat has given anthropomorphic features to the house even before the fire, Hattenhauer notices that Merricat projects herself onto the house fully only after the arson (185). She says: "the house ended above the kitchen doorway in a nightmare of black and twisted wood" (167) reflecting on her own family name, now not only associated with wealth but also nightmarish and twisted behavior. Upon the sisters' return to the house, Merricat notices that the house "shivers" when it is safe to assume it was her who quivered from anxiety about the change in both, the appearance of the house and the lifestyle of its dwellers. Not only does the mansion's state influence Merricat's feelings, but she projects herself onto the house, presenting it in a new, post-humanistic shape, an expression of the psyche itself. This reciprocity Gothicizes the house: it becomes a manifestation of the troubled, toxic family, while at the same time becoming the plane of its imprisonment.¹ Such an extreme anthropomorphizing of a house is also one of the characteristics typical of a Female Gothic genre, but for the sake of this paper, I shall stress its role as the realization of the id taking total control over the collective Perception-Conscious system, which is in fact close to the Gothic interpretation².

A narrative place that ought to be included in this categorization is Merricat's fantasy world, the moon. Initially, it only exists in Merricat's imagination, and she can visit it. She escapes there in her mind when she wants to run from the villagers. The moon is also a promised land: oftentimes, Merricat promises Constance that they will live there with Jonas, Mary's cat, and there "they have everything" (78). Merricat also talks about the moon in the context of Julian's escaped death: "You should have let me take him to the moon" (55), signaling that the moon can also function as an afterlife and Merricat, like ancient Charon, can take other people there. It raises questions about her promise to Constance—it may be perceived as a deathly threat. However, after the fire, both sisters compare their living in the house to the Merricat's fantasy place. Taking into consideration the fact that Merricat is surprised by what her moon, eventually, looks like, conclusions can be drawn. First, the place on the moon is the creation of the Merricat-id: she has conceived it, can control who enters it, and, eventually, contributes

1 As Andrew Hock Soon Ng in *Women and Domestic Space in Contemporary Gothic Narratives: The House as Subject* notices, the house in *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* is "marked by condemnation" for both the reader and the minor characters of the novel, but for Merricat it is "a paradise that collaborates with... her" (3). Thus, the mansion is at the same time a symbol of the Blackwood murder and plays an active role in it, enabling Merricat committing it.

2 Hattenhauer quotes Chris Baldick: "The Gothic castle or house is not just an old and sinister building; it is a house of degeneration, even of decomposition, its living-space darkening and contracting into the dying-space of the mortuary and the tomb" (185).

to its physical apparition by burning the house. Secondly, the moon can only come into the existence when their “higher consciousness” in the shape of both, the upper stories of the house and the Julian-ego, is destroyed, thus further establishing the moon as an id-creation. “We are so happy,” Merricat says to Constance when they hide from the eyes of the villagers, far from civilization and close only to each other and ruled by the primal needs of the id³.

I believe that the relationships of the three focal characters of *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* are not only family relations, but also realizations of internal mental processes. The characters’ embodiment of the tripartite division of the human psyche, makes them supplementary to each other, just like the id, the ego, and the superego coexist as complementary parts of one’s mind. However, in the novel, their coexistence is not harmonious as it should be in a neurotypical, “healthy” mind—the tensions between the characters and their influences upon each other mirror the collective trauma of the Blackwood family. The family, haunted by its history of abuse and toxic patriarchy, is unable to function in the society and within the boundaries of its own unit, disintegrating from the inside. The pathology of the Blackwoods is facilitated by the Gothic house they are confined to, as it is an inextricable element of their collective identity. Recalling Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the house crumbles under the burden of familial conflict. At the same time, its structure determines the behavior of its inhabitants giving it its own causative power, what constitutes the house as a character of its own, the Freudian iceberg itself.

Works Cited

- Anderson, M. R. and Lisa Kröger, editors. *Shirley Jackson, Influences and Confluences*. Routledge, 2016.
- Badura-Madej, Wanda, and Agnieszka Dobrzyńska-Mesterhazy. “Wpływ traumy na funkcjonowanie dziecka-świadka.” *Dziecko Krzywdzone. Teoria, badania, praktyka*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2004, pp. 115-126.
- Freud, S. *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*. Routledge, 2004.
- . *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. W.W. Norton, 1961.
- . *The Ego and the Id*. 1927. Kindle edition, 2013.
- Frosh, S. “Psychoanalysis, Colonialism, Racism.” *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, vol. 33, no. 3, 2013, pp. 141–154.
- Gardner, S. “The Unconscious.” *The Cambridge Companion to Freud*, edited by Jerome Neu. Cambridge UP, 2006, pp. 136-160.
- Green, C. D. “Where Did Freud’s Iceberg Metaphor of Mind Come From?” *History of Psychology*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2019, pp. 369–372.
- Hardin, A. “Listening to what she had almost said”: Containment and Duality in Shirley Jackson’s *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*.” *Shirley Jackson: Influences and Confluences*, edited by Melanie R. Anderson and Lisa Kröger, Routledge, 2016, pp. 111-122.
- Hattenhauer, D. *Shirley Jackson’s American Gothic*. SUNY P, 2003.

3 These include food that was left by previous Blackwood women, food that is often delivered to them by local housewives, shelter and clean water (Jackson 123-24).

- Hock Soon Ng, A. *Women and Domestic Space in Contemporary Gothic Narratives. The House as Subject*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Ingram, S. "Folk Narrative in *Hangsman and We Have Always Lived in the Castle*." *Shirley Jackson: Influences and Confluences*, edited by Melanie R. Anderson and Lisa Kröger, Routledge, 2016, pp. 54-75.
- Jackson, S. *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*. Penguin Books, 2006.
- Krafft, A. "Recovering Housewife Humor in Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*." *Shirley Jackson: Influences and Confluences*, edited by Melanie R. Anderson and Lisa Kröger, Routledge, 2016, pp. 97-110.
- Rubenstein, R. "House Mothers and Haunted Daughters: Shirley Jackson and Female Gothic." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1996, pp. 309-331.

Lukasz Muniowski

How Much Do Bench Players Matter in the NBA? A Case Study of the Seattle SuperSonics/Oklahoma City Thunder¹

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.08

Abstract: The National Basketball Association offers only 150 starting spots to the best basketball players in the world—five on each of the 30 teams it consists of—and, considering such factors as personal preferences, luck and salary cap, it is possible that a bench player on one team would be not so much a starter, but one of the two-three best players on a different one. This article analyzes two basketball players, Detlef Schrempf and Jim McIlvaine, whose career narratives will be discussed have played for the Seattle SuperSonics, a franchise which eventually relocated to the state of Oklahoma and became the Oklahoma City Thunder. By narrowing the focus of this article to one franchise—as the Thunder are the extension of the Sonics—I want to highlight two issues. Firstly, I want to show individual involvement in sports history, how two players can shape the fate of a franchise. The fact that both were reserves before coming to Seattle highlights the importance of every personnel decision in running a team. Secondly, while it can be argued that such players may be found in the history of each of the other 29 NBA teams, Seattle/Oklahoma is significant because of the relocation that took place in 2008, effectively ending high-profile men’s professional basketball in Seattle. Hopefully this article adds a new perspective to the scholarship already devoted to the issue, dealing with the depiction and the repercussions of the move.

Keywords: NBA, sports, relocation, Seattle, SuperSonics

The National Basketball Association offers only 150 starting spots to the best basketball players in the world—five on each of the 30 teams it consists of—and, considering such factors as personal preferences, luck and salary cap, it is possible that a bench player on one team would be not so much a starter, but one of the two-three best players on a different one (Deshpande and Jensen 51-72). There have been however numerous talented players who simply did not get the opportunity or the support necessary to develop their games. While there are some players labeled as “busts,” who came into the league carrying great expectations, yet failed to make it in the NBA, it is safe to assume that there are no accidental players in the league. The two basketball players whose career narratives will be discussed in this article have played for the Seattle SuperSonics, a franchise which eventually relocated to the state of Oklahoma and became the Oklahoma City Thunder. By narrowing the focus of this article to one franchise—as the Thunder are the extension of the Sonics—I want to highlight two issues. Firstly, I want to show individual involvement in sports history, how two players can shape the

1 The following is a revised version of the chapter “From the Bench to a Starting Role (On a Different Team)” (pp. 45-59) from my book *The Sixth Man: A History of the NBA’s Best Off the Bench* (2022), published by permission of McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640.

fate of a franchise. The fact that both were reserves before coming to Seattle highlights the importance of every personnel decision in running a team. Secondly, while it can be argued that such players may be found in the history of each of the other 29 NBA teams, Seattle/Oklahoma is significant because of the relocation that took place in 2008, effectively ending high-profile men's professional basketball in Seattle. The reason why I focus on Seattle is because of how the relocation to Oklahoma is emblematic of the influence that individual players can have on the fate of a franchise. As of today (2022), it is also the most recent relocation that took place in the NBA and by far the most publicized. Hopefully this article adds a new perspective to the scholarship already devoted to the issue, dealing with the depiction (Morris 31-42) and the repercussions (Scott) of the move.

While it would be unreasonable to blame the downfall of men's professional basketball in Seattle solely on the team's general manager's, Wally Walker's, infatuation with center Jim McIlvaine, the 1996 free agent signing may be considered the first step to the demise of the Sonics, just as they were turning around years of playoff futility, coming off a hard-fought 1996 NBA Finals series against the 72-10 Chicago Bulls. One bench player did not lead to the relocation of a franchise, however his signing did play its part in the process. The relocation itself however would not have been that big of an issue--after all, 20 other NBA franchises relocated up until that point--if it was not for Detlef Schrempf, previously a bench player, and his influence on establishing the identity of this Seattle team. While one bench player helped to elevate the team, another contributed to its departure. This article discusses the career narratives of Schrempf and McIlvaine, and their respective influences on the Sonics. Before both can be analyzed, a brief discussion of the relocation itself is necessary, preceded by the only other documented example of NBA relocation occurring because of a singular player, Pete Maravich.

Pete Maravich's Influence on the Relocation of the New Orleans Jazz

The main impact of an individual player on a displaced franchise usually occurs after the relocation, when a team wants to either cater to its new fanbase by bringing in a player with close ties to the region or simply trades for a big name to increase the team's marketability. Such was the case with the Vancouver Grizzlies, who traded the best player in their brief, six-year history, Shareef Abdur-Rahim, in 2001 for promising rookie Pau Gasol in order to establish a new identity in Memphis. Similarly, the Brooklyn Nets, prior to their 2012 relocation from New Jersey, were trying to trade for Brooklyn-born scorer Carmelo Anthony, and when that failed, acquired All-Star point guard Deron Williams. For both teams the moves were attempts at breaking up with their rather shameful pasts, as the Grizzlies amassed one of the worst regular-season overall records in league history, while the Nets were for the larger part of their 35-year stay in New Jersey a badly-run franchise, with fans rarely filling up the arena, even when the team went to back-to-back NBA Finals in 2001 and 2002.

A prominent example of a player who saved professional basketball in one city and led to relocation in a different one is Pete Maravich, a member of the NBA Hall of Fame. Dubbed "The Great White Hope," he played for the Atlanta Hawks and the New

Orleans Jazz in the 1970s. In 1968 the St. Louis Hawks relocated to Atlanta because of diminishing fandom—even though the Hawks were a good team, in the playoffs not more than 5,000 fans attended their home games. The two new team owners, Carl Sanders and Thomas Cousins, described buying the franchise as “replaying the debt to the city and state. Atlanta and Georgia have been good to us” (Trutor 4). Initially the Hawks were popular in St. Louis, but once the novelty wore off, in what would turn out to be their last season there, 1967-68, they would sell out their arena only once, for an exhibition game against the Harlem Globetrotters, despite the team reaching the Western Conference Finals. Coming to Atlanta, where sports teams were yet to integrate, posed a problem for the Hawks, who only had two white players on their roster. The (white) press was not interested in giving the Hawks sufficient coverage, devoting more room to baseball, soccer, and professional wrestling. Race would soon influence draft and trade decisions, and while the team was playing worse, its popularity rose once Pete Maravich was picked third overall in the 1970 NBA Draft.

Maravich had two qualities which should endear him to the fans in Georgia: he attended Louisiana State University, hence was seen by Southerners as one of theirs, and, maybe more importantly, was “a white player who performed like a black player” (Aiello 76). In order to accommodate Maravich, the team traded away disgruntled black players, who did not enjoy the same respect from the management as the highly-coveted pick. While the team struggled on the court, off of it the Hawks finally gained recognition. In Maravich’s first season in Georgia attendance rose by 20 percent, revenue by 50 percent, and the team sold out 13 home games (Aiello 80). Still, four years later, Maravich was traded to the New Orleans Jazz, after arguments with his coach and teammates. The expansion Jazz, seeing the effect that Maravich had on a similar—Southern and predominantly white—fanbase in Atlanta, hoped for the same popularity and paid a hefty price for the player: two first round picks, two pick swaps, three second round picks and picks two and three in the expansion draft.² That way Maravich became the first player on the Jazz, fueling the narrative of a prodigal son coming back to his hometown (even though he was born and raised in Pennsylvania). Maravich’s arrival did little to translate to the team’s popularity, as it constantly struggled to even find an arena to play in and was forced to every year be on the road for a whole month during Mardi Gras. In 1979 the Jazz relocated to Utah, after five years without a single playoffs appearance.

That way Maravich—or rather the price that the team paid for him—remains the only player whose influence on the demise of a professional NBA franchise has been analyzed and documented. The difference between him and Jim McIlvaine is that he was a big-name player, a superstar, while the center was not a coveted prospect, but a reserve. Similarly to Maravich though he was a white player, whose presence itself caused a rift between black teammates and management. Seattle however did not have

2 Some notes on the terminology: each year the NBA holds a draft, in which teams acquire rights to the best college and international players, who declared themselves eligible for selection. The worst the team’s overall record during a given season, the higher the chances of selecting a better player with the lowest pick—the first pick is the most coveted, then the second, etc. The expansion draft is organized when a new franchise joins the league and other teams make three players available for selection.

the same complicated relationship with race as cities from the Deep South, in which NBA franchises were established. That is why the whiteness of Schrempf and McIlvaine will not be analyzed or brought up in the article. The trading for/signing of the two players was not racially motivated, as they were acquired purely for their basketball skills.

From Seattle to Oklahoma

Established in 1966, the Seattle SuperSonics (in 1969 the spelling of the name was changed to SuperSonics) were part of the city's rebranding "from a loggy old frontier town into a shiny technotopia of glass and light," which explains the futuristic name of the team (Anderson 27). Seattle paid \$1.75 million to the NBA for the privilege of housing one of the five expansion teams, rounding up the total number of NBA franchises to 14 at the time. The 1960s were a time when pursuing a Major League team, either by relocation or expansion, was "a matter of government business," as was the case in cities like San Diego, Tampa, Phoenix or Atlanta (Trutor xix). Having a big league team presumably "legitimized" a city, with sports stadiums and arenas serving as designated places of collective entertainment. 13 years after the team was established (and 11 after completing its first NBA season) Seattle celebrated its first championship. The city would have to wait until 2014, when the Seattle Seahawks football team won Super Bowl XLVIII, for its team to emerge triumphant in a professional sports league again. Following the 1978 championship, the Sonics went to the finals a year later, but lost to the Bullets, and reappeared there only in 1996.

In 1983 the organization that paid the NBA slightly less than \$2 million to be part of "basketball royalty," was sold to Barry Ackerley for \$21 million. In the 1980s the team made the Conference Finals twice, but also failed to reach the playoffs three times. In the 1990s the Sonics became one of the more promising teams, impressing fans and experts alike with their high-flying, fast-paced offense and hard defense. Led by the point guard–power forward duo of Gary Payton and Shawn Kemp, and coached by George Karl, in the 1990s the Sonics were in the top three of the Western Conference teams when it came to the regular season record five times, but made the finals only once. In the year 2001 Howard Schultz bought the Sonics for \$200 million. The founder of Starbucks was sold the team only after promising that it would stay in Seattle, and when he sold the Sonics to an ownership group of Oklahoma businessmen led by Clay Bennett and Aubrey McClendon for \$350 million in 2006, he made them promise the exact same thing. However, just two years later they moved the team to Oklahoma City, which was their intention all along, following a series of leaked e-mails.

When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005, the New Orleans Hornets' arena was only slightly damaged, but the area around it was completely flooded. League commissioner David Stern came up with the idea of temporarily moving the team to Oklahoma City, while New Orleans was healing from the wounds suffered from the natural disaster (Ritter Conn). The inhabitants of Oklahoma quickly embraced the Hornets, despite the team rebuilding, with a roster consisting of NBA journeymen like Speedy Claxton, Marc Jackson and Marcus Fizer, and promising, but still rather raw players like Chris Paul, David West or J.R. Smith. "Embraced" may actually be too small of a word to describe the enthusiasm with which Oklahomans welcomed their first

professional sports franchise, even though it was just temporary—the Hornets were 11th in attendance in 2005-06, while a season earlier, when playing in New Orleans, they were 30th out of 30 NBA teams in that regard.³ As pointed out by journalist Jordan Ritter Conn: “OKC’s arena was almost always sold out, and it became instantly notorious as one of the loudest places in the league.” Furthermore, “attendance in Oklahoma City was far higher than it had ever been in New Orleans,” (Anderson 41) which meant that the city made sense as a possible NBA location in the future, despite the small market.

Meanwhile in Seattle, the league and the owner were struggling to get government funding for a new sports arena. After Schultz bought the Sonics in 2001, they have made the playoffs only twice, and while Seattle was considered a basketball-crazed city by outsiders and Sonics players themselves, the basketball fandom there was fading. Ray Allen, who played for the Sonics during that time and was traded a season before the team moved to Oklahoma, wrote in his autobiography: “I’d always believed the Sonics would never leave Seattle, given such enthusiastic support from the fans at KeyArena. Turns out, those fans represented a relatively small sample size” (Allen 76). On the 7th of November 2006 nearly 75 percent of Seattle voters voted against using tax dollars to build a new arena for the Sonics, while on the 16th of February 2008 Oklahoma City voters agreed to a one percent sales tax that would be used to pay for the improvements to the city’s own sports arena, the Ford Center, where the Thunder were supposed to play. The different results of both votes represent different attitudes of Seattle and Oklahoma City to owning a professional basketball team at the time of the relocation.

Former Sonics’ players were clearly unhappy with the development. Team legend Gary Payton openly refused to have his jersey retired by the Thunder. On the 13th of April 2008 the team played its last game in Seattle. The fans chanted “Save our Sonics” throughout the whole event and after it was over, Payton said: “The simple fact is we want to try and save the team. It’s not gone yet. Everybody has to try and buckle down in the next couple months and see what can happen” (Associated Press B6). Following the relocation, Detlef Schrempf, another key member of the Sonics’ roster that made the 1996 NBA Finals, said about the Thunder: “There’s nothing left from the Sonics, really. There’s no tradition. It’s a totally new organization, a different city” (Dwyer). Schrempf felt that team leadership and local politicians did not do enough to keep men’s professional basketball in the state of Washington, where he has spent 10 years of his basketball career.

Detlef Schrempf

Schrempf’s basketball career spanned for 22 seasons, four in college, at University of Washington, and 18 in the NBA. Schrempf played for six seasons for the Sonics, the longest he has been on one team during his NBA career, which also included three and a half seasons in Dallas, four and a half in Indiana, and two final years in Portland. Born in West Germany, Schrempf’s primary love was soccer, but he quit after arguing with his coach and injuring his foot. At 13 he fell in love with basketball, despite such obstacles as being unable to find a basketball court or enough players to play pickup games, due to the sport’s lack of popularity in his homeland (Wolff 47). Thanks to connections he

3 All statistical data provided by Basketball Reference, if not stated otherwise.

has made while playing basketball, he was able to spend one year in Centralia High, Washington, where he made such an impression on college coaches that he stayed in the U.S. and was recruited by the University of Washington. As a freshman he saw relatively little playing time, but during his second year the number of minutes per game he would spend on the court tripled. Capable of playing all five positions, the 6'10" Schrempp earned comparisons to Magic Johnson for his ballhandling ability. The player welcomed them, saying: "if I could choose, I'd like to play more like Magic. I get satisfaction passing the ball" (Wolff 47).

Schrempp joined the Dallas Mavericks, taken with the eight pick in the 1985 draft. In the same draft, with the 17th pick, the team from Dallas took another player from West Germany, the 7'1" center Uwe Blab. The expectations were relatively high regarding Schrempp. Sam Goldaper of *The New York Times* predicted that he should make an immediate impact on the team, as "his open-court game fits in with Dallas's galaxy of shooters: Mark Aguirre, Rolando Blackman, Derek Harper and Brad Davis, all plus-.500 shooters from the field" (Goldaper 10). Instead he found himself coming off the bench behind either Aguirre or Sam Perkins, the starting forwards on the Dick Motta-coached Mavs. Schrempp was named the starter for a total of 22 games during the three and a half seasons he has spent on the Mavericks. Blab started just one game during his four seasons in Dallas.

In his third season on the Mavericks Schrempp was playing fewer minutes per game than the year before due to the rise of another sixth man, Roy Tarpley, the second-year power forward selected with the seventh pick in the 1986 NBA Draft. The Indiana Pacers' GM Donnie Walsh acquired the frustrated Schrempp in the middle of the 1988-89 season, and the German was given a bigger role on his new team. The trade was made because of Tarpley, as the Mavericks needed a big man to fill in for their potential superstar while Tarpley was in rehab, as the player developed a drug habit. Schrempp was still coming off the bench for the Pacers, but his playing time increased. Coach Dick Versace moved him from small forward to power forward and the switch better suited his game. He started his first full season with the Pacers 15 pounds heavier, yet was able to retain his speed, passing ability and shooting touch (Hersch 36). He finished the 1989-90 season with averages of 16.2 points, 7.9 rebounds and 3.2 assists, all career-highs, while starting just 18 games. He lost the voting for the Sixth Man of the Year award to Milwaukee's Ricky Pierce by a decisive margin of 69 votes (77-8).

A year later though, Schrempp won the award while posting very similar numbers as the year before. The Pacers finished the season 41-41 under coach Bob Hill and were eliminated in the first round of the playoffs. In the 1991-92 season the team showed no improvement, winning one game less and again getting eliminated in the first round. Still, Schrempp was once more the recipient of the Sixth Man of the Year award. His best game of that season came on February 11, 1992 against one of the worst teams in the league, the Orlando Magic. Schrempp scored 26 points and grabbed 23 rebounds. He scored 20 or more points in 26 games and had the third-highest point average on the team, behind esteemed shooters Reggie Miller and Chuck Person.

Despite these achievements, the Pacers traded him to the Sonics for Derrick McKey, a younger wingman, whom new head coach Larry Brown wanted for his defensive abilities. Schrempp immediately became a starter and an important part of

the Sonics' roster. In the 1994-95 season, his second on the team, Schrempf was voted to the All-NBA Third Team, and a season later his team has made the NBA Finals, where the Sonics lost to one of the best teams in NBA history, the Chicago Bulls. Moved back to the small forward position, the German took some time to adapt to playing in the frontcourt next to explosive power forward Shawn Kemp. Coach George Karl immediately after the trade predicted that the Sonics were going to win a championship in two to three seasons and if not: "we'll be very, very disappointed" (Daily News Wire Services D1). A few months after the trade, Phil Taylor of Sports Illustrated wrote that "it was the acquisition of the versatile, 6'10" Schrempf that many observers believe may put championship rings on the Sonics' fingers" (Taylor 30). In the player's first five seasons in Seattle, the Sonics won at least 57 games. His last season on the team was one of rebuilt and turmoil, not only because of the 1998 lockout, which heavily impacted the whole league, but more so due to the departure of Shawn Kemp in the summer of 1997. The move was a consequence of a different management decision, one made a year earlier.

Jim McIlvaine

In the summer following the 1996 finals the team made one key acquisition, which would shape its future for years to come. Shawn Kemp was the Sonics' best player during their finals run, yet he was making just slightly above \$3 million, due to the contract renewal he had signed in 1994. According to the collective bargaining agreement, which prohibited players from renegotiating their contracts three years after signing an extension, the contract was non-negotiable until October 1997. The situation caused a lot of grief and frustration for Kemp, who eventually demanded a trade after the turbulent 1996-97 season concluded. Interestingly, he signed the deal following an unsuccessful trade attempt which would see him change teams with another famously underpaid superstar. Kemp was so beloved in Seattle that when the team had the opportunity to trade him, Ricky Pierce (now a Sonic), and a first-round draft pick, to the Chicago Bulls for Scottie Pippen in the summer of 1994⁴, the fans were so vocal against the move that it was vetoed by the team owner, despite the trade being already agreed upon between Karl and Jerry Krause, the GM of the Bulls. The Sonics did not have a GM at the time, as Bob Whittsitt, that season's NBA Executive of the Year, was fired after the playoff loss.

In the 1997 offseason Kemp was traded to the Cleveland Cavaliers, where he immediately signed a seven-year contract for \$107 million, becoming just the fifth player in NBA history—after Juwan Howard, Alonzo Mourning, Shaquille O'Neal and Kevin Garnett—to sign a contract for \$100 million or more. He got what he asked for—albeit on a different team—when he complained to the press before the start of the 1996-97 season: "When you play for seven years and you've proved yourself to be an All-Star, then you see guys who haven't proved themselves sign for millions of dollars, you have a right to be upset" (Cour). The interview was the consequence of Kemp

4 The decision to engage in trade talks was made following a disappointing playoff performance, in which the Sonics, first in the league after the regular season, were eliminated in the first round of the playoffs by the eight-seed Denver Nuggets. It was the first time in NBA history that such a thing occurred.

sitting out three weeks of training camp and missing five exhibition games. After the Sonics lost to the Rockets in the second round of the 1997 playoffs, Kemp said that he never wanted to play for the team again (Karl 208).

Although he stated otherwise on numerous occasions, it was evident that the reason for Kemp's frustration with the Sonics was the signing of reserve center from the Washington Bullets, Jim McIlvaine, by general manager Wally Walker in 1996 free agency. The Sonics' search for a center was one of need rather than want. When Shaquille O'Neal moved to the Los Angeles Lakers in the summer of 1996, teams in the Western Conference were forced to upgrade their center positions. By then teams were not necessarily built around a big man, but it was still the norm, and tall players were in high demand. The Sonics' coach, George Karl, characterized the situation as follows: "We hired the 7'1" McIlvaine to be our Shaq-stopper,⁵ but the guy he stopped instead was his new teammate. Shawn Kemp resented Mac's seven-year \$33.6 million deal, and I didn't blame him... Shawn would be making about a million less than the unproven new guy" (Karl 206-207).

The 32nd overall pick in the 1994 NBA Draft, McIlvaine had a rather pedestrian rookie year, playing less than 10 minutes a night. He was the team's third center, behind the 7'7" Romanian Gheorghe Muresan and veteran Kevin Duckworth. Duckworth, the 1988 NBA Most Improved Player of the Year and two time All-Star was the starting center on the Portland Trail Blazers teams that have made the NBA Finals in 1990 and 1992. With his game continuing to regress—the process already began in Portland—due to a struggle with weight issues and injuries, Duckworth has spent only two seasons in Washington, before being traded to Milwaukee. After the 1995 trade, McIlvaine became the reserve center for the Bullets and his playing minutes increased. He did not show much improvement on the offensive end, finishing the season with 2.3 points per game, but it was his defensive skills that have made him such an interesting player for the Sonics. His 2.1 blocks per game average was good for ninth place in the league, the same as Shaquille O'Neal and better than Vlade Divac, Shawn Kemp or one of the best defensive centers in the NBA, Ervin Johnson. Johnson was a starter for the Sonics during the 1995-96 regular season, but was moved to the bench during the playoffs and the team decided not to extend his contract following his performances in the postseason.

Instead, the Sonics' management was impressed by a different player, whose team did not even make the playoffs, and he himself started just six games. During those six games, the last six of the season, against three of the worst—the Raptors (twice), the Timberwolves and the Celtics—and two of the best—the Magic and the Bulls—teams in the league, he was averaging 4.7 points, 6.2 rebounds and 5.2 blocks per game. In the last game of the season, against the eventual champions, McIlvaine had six points, nine blocks and 11 rebounds. The Bullets lost by 10 points, with the Bulls resting their starters (only Scottie Pippen played 30 minutes) before the playoffs. The statistics help to explain the allure of McIlvaine for a team in need of a defensive-minded center.

The contract was largely discussed even before McIlvaine played a single game for the Sonics, as he was considered overpaid, making more than such stars as Kemp,

5 Interestingly, team GM, Wally Walker, said: "We didn't get McIlvaine to be a Shaq-stopper" (Taylor, "Spotlight: Jim McIlvaine" 124).

Pippen, Karl Malone or Mitch Richmond. Phil Taylor of *Sports Illustrated* tried to be optimistic about the deal:

if McIlvaine provides the interior defense the SuperSonics need to transform them from last season's NBA finalists into this season's champions, he will seem like a bargain. His 2.08 blocked shots per game ranked 10th in the league even though he averaged only 14.9 minutes, and his projected 6.67 blocks per 48 minutes was the best such mark in the league. (Taylor, "Spotlight: Jim McIlvaine" 124)

However, he concluded that: "If Sonics had been careful, they wouldn't have gambled on signing McIlvaine in the first place. Now they hope that, come June, they will be rewarded for their risk" (Taylor, "Spotlight: Jim McIlvaine" 124). A good shot-blocker and not much more, McIlvaine, somewhat predictably, failed to develop into a good offensive player, but, more importantly, he caused the aforementioned rift between Shawn Kemp and the Sonics. Kemp's frustration was visible on and off the court, as he led the league in fouls (320 in 81 games), was late for team flights and practices. McIlvaine had 247 fouls in 82 games, but he played just 18 minutes per game, which means that per 48 minutes he averaged 9.37 fouls—second in the league behind Felton Spencer of the Golden State Warriors.

Kemp was also benched for four games late in the season and was rumored to have a drinking problem (Baker). He was traded to the Cleveland Cavaliers, who acquired him and Milwaukee Bucks veteran point guard Sherman Douglas. The team from Wisconsin got the Cavs' Terrell Brandon and Tyrone Hill. The Sonics got Vin Baker, who, as it turned out, also had a drinking problem and would soon succumb to his addiction. The move started the decline of the franchise, despite a promising beginning—Baker made the All-NBA Second Team and the Sonics won 61 games in his first season in Seattle, but were eliminated in five games by the Lakers in the Western Conference Semifinals. McIlvaine, the center that was supposed to make the difference on the defensive end in such a series, was playing just 10.4 minutes per game, despite being named the starter in four of them. He made just five blocks and grabbed nine rebounds in total.

After the season the Sonics traded McIlvaine to the Nets and signed veteran Olden Polynice, the player that the team infamously traded away Scottie Pippen for on 1991 draft night. The center said about his predecessor: "No offense, but last year when that guy was on the court, Seattle was playing four-on-five. Anything I can add will be an improvement" (Weitheim 94). McIlvaine was often injured when on the Nets, playing more than 22 games in the season only once, and retired from professional basketball in 2001. The Sonics, despite being stronger at center, failed to make the playoffs for the first time in eight seasons. Baker regressed from 19.2 points and eight rebounds to 13.8 points and 6.2 rebounds per game. The team also got rid of head coach George Karl, whose contract was not extended. With Paul Westphal on the bench, the Sonics were able to win just 25 games in the lockout-shortened 50-game season.

Up until the aforementioned move to Oklahoma City, the team went to the playoffs only three times and only once made it past the first round. In a last ditch effort, the city of Seattle sued the ownership group, who was originally supposed to honor the last two years of the Sonics' lease of KeyArena and only then consider moving the

team. When the NBA Board of Governors approved the move prior to an actual trial taking place, the 2008 relocation was inevitable. The ownership group was forced to pay \$45 million to the city which, according to Mayor Greg Nickels, “more than [covered] whatever rent the Sonics would have paid over the next two season and [allowed] the city to retire the debt on previous renovations made to KeyArena” (Lynn and Williams A6).

Conclusion

What happened to the Sonics stands in opposition to the situation on a different team that Schrempf played for, the Blazers, who around the same time as the Sonics were also dealing with their share of issues. The Blazers were the only NBA team in Oregon, the neighboring state of Washington, where the Sonics were the sole NBA team. The close proximity of both teams led to a rivalry between small market teams, which historically stands at 98-94 in favor of the Sonics. Around the same time both teams were going through periods of disappointment, but the Blazers had an owner—Paul Allen—who simply could afford to keep the franchise competitive and safe, despite the image issues which led to his team being nicknamed the “Jail Blazers.”

In Schrempf’s first season there, 1999-2000, Portland had the deepest roster in the NBA, as the bench players on that team (Jermaine O’Neal, Brian Grant, Schrempf, Bonzi Wells, Greg Anthony) would have easily been starters on other teams in the league. The Blazers had the highest salary in the league (\$73.9 million), more than double of the \$34 million salary cap. The starters (Arvydas Sabonis, Rasheed Wallace, Scottie Pippen, Steve Smith, Damon Stoudamire) themselves were earning more than full rosters of 25 teams in the league. In the 2000 playoffs the Blazers made it to the Western Conference Finals, but in the next three seasons would be eliminated in the first round of the playoffs, before missing out on the postseason completely for the next five years. In the years when they made the playoffs the Blazers were consistently placing in the league’s top ten in attendance.

In comparison, in their last season in Seattle, 2007-08, the SuperSonics were 28th in attendance, while in their first year in Oklahoma, the Thunder leaped to 11th out of 30 teams. The transition from the top-15 American media market to the 45th benefited both cities. During the team’s last years in Seattle the Sonics were operating at a loss (Bonesteel), while Oklahoma embraced its only professional, major league franchise and since its inception the Thunder have never been lower than 15th in attendance, with lower operating costs than the Sonics. More so, they made for a compelling and captivating story, as pointed out by league commissioner David Stern: “There’s a unification element... [demonstrating] how a community can rally around a team when, at first glance, it might not seem probable or even possible for a major-league sport to be supported by a smaller market” (Buck 10D).

The career narratives of Detlef Schrempf and Jim McIlvaine are forever connected to the history of the franchise. To a certain extent they are responsible for the move—as it was Schrempf’s arrival which led to the Sonics becoming so successful and popular, and it was McIlvaine’s arrival that contributed to the deconstruction of that Sonics’ roster—but more so they serve as on-court representations of the changes that made the relocation possible. After the 90s “incarnation” of the Sonics failed to win

the NBA Championship, the roster was dismantled and the franchise started gradually losing the support of the fans and the local authorities. The fact that these processes were caused by bench players, shows how important one reserve player can be for the fate of a franchise, as well as how difficult talent evaluation and roster-building in a league as competitive as the NBA really is. And while franchise relocation can be impacted by cultural, economic, and social processes, the intention of this article was to show how on-court performance fits into the discussion.

Works Cited

- Aiello, Thomas. *Dixieball: Race and Professional Basketball in the Deep South, 1947-1979*. U of Tennessee P, 2019.
- Allen, Ray. *From the Outside. My Journey Through Life and the Game I Love*. Dey St., 2018.
- Anderson, Sam. *Boom Town: The Fantastical Saga of Oklahoma City, Its Chaotic Founding... Its Purloined Basketball Team, the Dream of Becoming a World-class Metropolis*. Crown, 2018.
- Associated Press. "Seattle Fans Chant 'Save Our Sonics.'" *Sioux City Journal*. 14 Apr. 2008, p. B6.
- Baker, Chris. "Kemp is Key Player in Three-Way Trade." *Los Angeles Times*, 26 Sep. 1997, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1997-sep-26-sp-36358-story.html#:~:text=Disgruntled%20forward%20Shawn%20Kemp%2C%20who,Terrell%20Brandon%20of%20the%20Cavaliers>. Accessed 23 Jun. 2022.
- Bonesteel, Matt. "Seattle's Key Arena Lost Money When the Sonics Were There. It's Now Turning a Profit." *The Washington Post*. 7 Oct. 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/early-lead/wp/2014/10/07/seattles-keyarena-lost-money-when-the-sonics-were-there-its-now-turning-a-profit/>. Accessed 23 June 2022.
- Buck, Ray. "Grown-Up Town on Prairie Deserved Big League Team." *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Oct 30, 2008, p. 10D.
- Cour, Jim. "Shawn Kemp Upset About New NBA Millionaires." *AP News*. Oct 23, 1996. <https://apnews.com/article/c95bbcd44284b30f16b794294cc37f9f>. Accessed 23 June 2022.
- Daily News Wire Services. "The Heat is on SuperSonics Thanks to Coach George Karl." *Longview Daily News*. Nov 3, 1993, p. D1.
- Deshpande, Sameer K. and Jensen, Shane T. "Estimating an NBA player's Impact on His Team's Chances of Winning." *Journal of Quantitative Analysis in Sports*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2016, pp. 51-72.
- Dwyer, Kelly. "Detlef Schrempf on the Former Seattle SuperSonics: 'We Gave [the Team] Away. We Screwed Up.'" *Yahoo! Sports*. Jun 13, 2012. <https://sports.yahoo.com/detlef-schrempf-former-seattle-supersonics-gave-team-away-174607452--nba.html>. Accessed 23 June 2022.
- Goldaper, Sam. "N.B.A. 1985-86; Sizable Additions Promise a Higher Level of Play." *The New York Times*, Oct 21, 1985. <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/10/21/sports/nba-1985-86-sizable-additions-promise-a-higher-level-of-play.html>. Accessed 23 June 2022.

- Hersch, Hank. "Fast New Pace." *Sports Illustrated*. Jan 1, 1990. <https://vault.si.com/vault/1989/12/25/sports-illustrated-contents-page-december-25-1989-january-1-1990-volume-71-no-27>. Accessed 23 June 2022.
- Karl, George. *Furious George: My Forty Years, Surviving NBA Divas, Clueless GMs, and Poor Shot Selection*. HarperCollins, 2017.
- Lynn, Adam and Eric D. Williams. "The \$45 Million Goodbye." *The News Tribune*. Jul 3, 2008, pp. A1, A6.
- Morris, Matthew. "The 'Oklahoma City Plunder:' Turner's Social Drama and Team Relocation." *Elements*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2009, pp. 31-42.
- Ritter Conn, Jordan. "How the Hornets and Hurricane Katrina Paved the Way for the OKC Thunder." *The Ringer*. Oct 24, 2019, <https://www.theringer.com/2019/10/24/20929974/sonic-boom-episode-4-new-orleans-hornets-oklahoma-city-katrina> Accessed 23 June 2022.
- Scott, Terry Anne, editor. *Seattle Sports: Play, Identity, and Pursuit in the Emerald City*. U of Arkansas P, 2020.
- Taylor, Phil. "Spotlight: Jim McIlvaine." *Sports Illustrated*. Nov 11, 1996, <https://vault.si.com/vault/1996/11/11/spotlight-jim-mcilvaine-seattle-is-gambling-35-million-on-a-former-backup-center-to-help-it-hit-the-jackpot> Accessed 23 June 2022.
- . "Wide Awake in Seattle." *Sports Illustrated*. Dec 6, 1993, <https://vault.si.com/vault/1993/12/06/wide-awake-in-seattle-buoyed-by-new-arrivals-the-bickering-supersonics-are-among-the-early-favorites-for-the-nba-title> Accessed 23 Jun. 2022.
- Trutor, Clayton. *Loserville: How Professional Sports Remade Atlanta-and How Atlanta Remade Professional Sports*. U of Nebraska P, 2021.
- Wetheim, L. Jon. "#5 Seattle SuperSonics." *Sports Illustrated*, Feb 8, 1999, <https://vault.si.com/vault/1999/02/08/5-seattle-supersonics-is-olden-polynice-the-remedy-for-the-sonics-mediocrity-in-the-middle-just-ask-him>. Accessed 23 June 2022.
- Wolff, Alexander. "Two Bits, Four Bits, Six Bits, A Deutsche Mark!" *Sports Illustrated*. Mar 12, 1984, <https://vault.si.com/vault/1984/03/12/two-bits-four-bits-six-bits-a-deutsche-mark>. Accessed 23 June 2022.

Native American Gothic as Third Space: Stephen Graham Jones' *The Only Good Indians*

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.09

Abstract: The intention of the article is to examine Stephen Graham Jones' most recent novel *The Only Good Indians* (2020) from combined ecogothic and postcolonial perspectives. The central concept informing the analyses is that of Third Space, as formulated by Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*, and adapted by the spatial turn critic, Edward W. Soja in *Thirdspace*. Marking the onto-epistemological condition of in-betweenness, openness and ambivalent cultural identities, Third Space will be employed here to interrogate hybrid interspaces and generic dislocations in Jones' new novel. As will be argued, Jones rewrites the Gothic slasher with a view of unsettling the inherited paradigms of thought, identity and representation. The writer reclaims the conventions and tropes of the genre, such as supernatural figures and events, the return of the repressed past, delayed revenge, and excessive acts of violence, and fuses them with the Native American settings, temporalities, tropes of spirituality and modes of storytelling. Jones' novel, as we would like to propose, undermines any claims of a coherent identity and turns the Gothic mode into Third Space, characterized by an excess of ambiguous signification and revealing entangled ontological, ethnic, ecological and cross-cultural locations of horror.

Keywords: Native American Gothic, Third Space, ecogothic, postcolonial criticism, Stephen Graham Jones

Introduction: The Objectives and the Method

The Gothic has always occupied an ambivalent, subversive and interstitial position vis-à-vis dominant cultural practices. Resembling “a Frankenstein's monster, assembled out of the bits and pieces of the past,” as observed by Maggie Kilgour in *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (4), the genre has often included considerations of destabilized identities and heteroglot discourses, be it familial, individual, ethnic, sexual or political. The most recent reconceptualizations of the Gothic mode through various theoretical lenses, including those of postcolonial, New Historicist, feminist, postfeminist, ethnic, ecocritical, affective and queer studies, have demonstrated the unwaning appeal and productivity of gothic tropes for addressing the complex problems of contemporaneity and for mirroring various social and political anxieties. In the chapter on queer American Gothic, Ardel Haefele-Thomas aptly observes that “the Gothic genre, which often embraces intersecting identities... has served as a safe space to investigate deeper cultural chasms” (115). A good example could be Gayatri Spivak's influential essay “Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” (1985), which reveals the colonial imaginaries in *Jane Eyre* and *Frankenstein*, or Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's seminal *Between*

1 The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: conception, methodological design, analysis, interpretation and manuscript preparation: Paulina Ambroży 70 %; Alicja Kozłowska 30%. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire (1985), which offers insights into the relationship between the Gothic and homoeroticism. Theresa Goddu in her New Historicist rereading of the American canon argues that “the horrors of history are also articulated through gothic discourse” (Goddu 2). The Gothic “othering” and penchant for abject spaces and beings, the critic contends, makes visible “the cultural contradictions that undermine the nation’s claim to purity and equality” (Goddu 10). More recently, in the edited collection *Ecogothic* (2013), Andrew Smith and William Hughes have argued for a revisionary look on the American Gothic from an ecological perspective, showing its inherent entanglements with environmental concerns and ambivalent representations of the human as well as more-than-human matter.

The revisionist gaze has also turned towards ethnic adaptations of the mode. The idea of Native American Gothic, which is crucial for our inquiry is at least problematic, as argued by Michelle Burnham in her provocatively titled essay “Is There an Indigenous Gothic?,” since we tend to think of the Gothic as the product of a certain historical moment—the counter-narrative emerged in response to the rational philosophies of the Western Enlightenment. The founding Gothic novels, the critic notes, “seem as far away from Native American cultural and literary forms as do the conventional Gothic settings and figures those early novels inaugurate—including decaying castles, labyrinthine cities, and aristocratic villains” (Burnham 225). Indeed, if we see it in this narrow historical framework, as “invariably described as a European form that contains a European response to Europe’s own past,” the natural answer to the question “is there an Indigenous Gothic?” would have to be “no” (Burnham 225). However, literary tradition is a dynamic and open site, with new developments, trends and sensibilities ever arriving and pushing against the old ones. The Gothic, as an inherently mobile, hybrid and pliable form, has been adapted and revised by many traditions, including Non-Western ones. In Burnham’s apt words, “Native American Gothic joins a variety of nations, ethnicities, regions, and communities that have likewise adopted but also transformed the genre and its conventions—including French Gothic, Scottish Gothic, Canadian Gothic, African American Gothic, Feminist Gothic, and Southern Gothic” (226).

Exploring the tropes of spectrality in Anna Lee Walter’s *Ghost Singer*, Angela Schoch/Davidson calls for new paradigms for the study of the Indigenous Gothic:

The study of the Indigenous Gothic requires an acknowledgement of the challenges presented by hybridity and an understanding that spiritual and epistemological differences produce texts that do not conform with traditionally identified gothic structures. However, the gothic thrives in liminal spaces; the gothic text often dramatises dissension within the self through conflicts between external forces. (158)

Burnham further complicates the field by drawing our attention to the processes of cross-fertilization and rejecting the reductionist considerations of mere influence and adaptation. The critic explores the overlapping tropologies of Gothic and Native American storytelling, such as ghosts, witches, tricksters, haunted burial grounds, unforgiving nature and shapeshifting, pointing to the indigenous writers’ long-time “engagement with strategies, effects, and sensations that can be identified as Gothic”

(230). However, Native American adaptations of the mode are often employed to “write back” to the colonial representations of the American Indian, problematizing the long history of US imperialism, white violence, dehumanization and racial oppression (Burnham 227). An example of an anti-colonial Native American Gothic could be Sherman Alexie’s novel *Indian Killer* in which the writer re-inhabits and reverses the familiar Gothic conventions to represent the psychological and affective results of colonial terror. Alexie fuses the Indian sources and tropes of the supernatural with the Western Gothic conventions to probe the imperialist sources of cultural trauma. Similar strategies integrating diverse spiritualities and cultural imaginaries can be found, among others, in Eden Robinson’s *Monkey Beach*, Louise Erdrich’s *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*, and Anna Lee Walters’s *Ghost Singer*.

Such processes of cross-fertilization and transformation of Gothic and Native American sensibilities are in the center of the following inquiry. Perceived as a dynamic and highly absorptive form, the Gothic will be thus treated as an interrogatory mode rather than a fixed genre, creating interspaces and critical prisms for the exploration of the darkening cultural, social, and ecological vistas. The intention of this article is thus to tap into the current critical interrogations of the Gothic genre and, following major postcolonial critics and the philosophers of the spatial turn, to discuss its Native American variety as an instance of a liminal and ultimately transgressive “Third Space” whose function is to mediate between indigenous and Euro-American imaginaries of horror. The primary text which has inspired this interrogation is *The Only Good Indians* (2020)—the recent novel by a Blackfeet writer Stephen Graham Jones. Resisting easy categorizations, the novel’s complex form calls for a more sustained theoretical interrogation, and our hope is to contribute to the growing critical reception of Jones’ work.

Jones is the author of several novels and is very well known for his transgressive and irreverent generic mash-ups which unsettle cultural identities, expectations and boundaries and which often involve engagement with formulaic genres such as detective thriller (*Not for Nothing*), gothic novel (*Mongrels*), horror short stories (*After the People Lights Have Gone Off*), neo-noir novel (*All the Beautiful Sinners*), borderland thriller (*Seven Spanish Angels*), zombie horror (*Zombie Bake Off*), and a graphic novel with elements of film script and musical (*Demon Theory*). This transgeneric and post-ethnic dimension of his fiction is addressed in the 2016 collection *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones* edited by Billy J. Stratton, the only book-length study of the writer and a valuable introduction to his work. The essays which have paved the way for our own inquiry include also Jodi A. Byrd’s “Red Dead Conventions: American Indian Transgeneric Fictions,” which focuses on Jones’ novel *Fast Red Road*, Billy J. Stratton’s “Reservation Hero is a Hero Forever,” and Robert A. Lee’s “Native Postmodern? Remediating History in the Fiction of Stephen Graham Jones and D. N. Birschfield,” all of which interrogate Jones’ aesthetic versatility, audacious detournements of popular formulas and his eclectic literary backgrounds.

Stratton’s insightful collection contains Jones’ artistic manifesto, titled “Letter to a Just-Starting-Out Indian Writer—And Maybe to Myself,” which postulates a new Native American Renaissance. As argued by Jones, the new opening in Native American literature should derive its force from rejecting rigid ethnic labels, along with

commodified perceptions of the indigenous traditions, and overly predictable aesthetic identifications:

Go on, get out there, traffic in the genres typically denied to Indians. That we're not allowed to do fantasy or science fiction and the rest, it's both stereotyping us and it's primitivizing our writing: it's saying we can't play in the branches that come off literature with a capital L—we can't go out on the branches because our literature is still 'formative,' it's still in its infancy. (Jones, "Letter" xii)

Jones is clearly against the cultural stereotype of the "picturesque Indian"—reduced to an empty silhouette on a T-shirt, a liminal and somewhat "ancient" "elf," adorned with the ceremonial headdress and haunting the disappearing woods, until he "fade[s] into that sunset looming behind [him]" (xi-xii). Instead, he encourages young indigenous writers to pierce the illusory and constructed imperative of authenticity and "[s]neak down the road, jump the fence," "mess up" and "don't ask for forgiveness" (xiii). This urge to "mess up" pertains clearly to the creative use of genre fiction, leading Jones to the inherently messy, disjunctive and transgressive spaces of the Gothic.

"When the audience or the market or the critics refer to you as an 'American Indian writer,' this is an attempt to dismiss you, to preserve you on a shelf, to prepare you for display," Jones warns his fellow writers ("A Letter" xiii). In the provocatively titled *The Only Good Indians*, which is the text under scrutiny here, the writer works to avoid this fate, as he himself "jumps the fence" and constructs an intricate and highly disturbing ecogothic narrative, fueled by the plot paradigms and conventions of the Gothic slasher. The novel wallows in scenes of violence, excessive bloodshed, grotesque plot turns and abject and sadistic horror, leaving the reader in a permanent state of shock and growing disbelief. As we shall argue, Jones probes the subversive potential of the Gothic mode by fusing it with Native American traditions, worldviews, and discourses. Both traditions make up the active memory of the text whose unique forces lies in the recombinant, citational and adaptive strategies. The result of his experiment is a highly ambivalent and discontinuous "Third Space" which carries the ghostly "inscriptions and articulations of culture's *hybridity*" (Bhabha 38) and works to complicate and transform the meanings of cultural memory and cultural difference.

Given the formal complexity of the novel, the methodology informing the following study will be also appropriately hybrid and based on three interrelated critical paradigms: 1) the generic, related to the genre of the Gothic and its postmodern varieties; 2) the ecocritical—in particular, the ecogothic critical perspective which foregrounds nature as a contested site and sees the human efforts to control it as a dystopian project haunted by the prospects of self-destruction (Smith and Hughes 1-3); 3) and the postcolonial, useful for the analyses of intercultural spaces, ethnic othering and mimicry.

Terminology: Third Space and Thirling

"A particular problem in postcolonial communities," as noted by Margaret Noodin in *Bawaajimo* (2014), an in-depth study of Anishinaabe language and literature, "is the duality of existing always either as an untranslated identity or as an assimilated translation of oneself" (xx). Those untranslatable identities are well captured by the

postcolonial concept of Third Space, central for our interrogation of Jones' work. It has been adapted primarily from Homi K. Bhabha's influential considerations of cultural hybridity in *The Location of Culture*. However, our study is also indebted to Edward W. Soja's rethinking of the term in relation to the shifting conceptions of space. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha defines postcolonial imaginaries as a "transit space," "the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new sites of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining idea of the society itself" (1). *Third space* relates thus to an open, intercultural "space of translation" which "eludes the politics of polarity" (Bhabha 39), unsettles the inherited discourses, subjectivities as well as historical narratives and creates a dynamic site of hybridity and transcultural negotiations. Seen by Bhabha as a new heterogenous emergence that has the power of a radical cultural critique (25), "Third Space of enunciation"

makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past kept alive in the national tradition of the People. (36)

Significantly for our own adaptation of the term, Bhabha sees Third Space as "unrepresentable in itself" and yet capable of providing "discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity" (37). Within this dynamic interstitial space, "even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (37). The unrepresentability as well as the interventionist, resisting nature of Third Space, as formulated by the philosopher, resonates with the revisionist uses of the Gothic mode, as will be exemplified in our study of Jones' novel.

As mentioned above, our analyses will be informed also by the spatial turn criticism that is heavily indebted to postcolonial concepts. Following Bhabha, cultural theorist Edward W. Soja develops a similar critical category in *Thirdspace* (1996). Soja proposes an unhyphenated term "Thirdspace" and a derivative notion of "thirthing" to mark a transdisciplinary mode of interpretation and thinking, "radically combinatorial and open" in its premise (4). Thirdspace allows for a recognition of the inseparability of the spatial, historical, and the social (3), undoing the inherited frameworks and confines, to forge new critical sensibilities. "Thirthing," in Soja's scheme is an active interventionist practice which "introjects a critical spatial imagination" into restrictive binary dualisms of the historical and social imaginations (Soja 3). Soja's modification of the term emphasizes its modal aspect which further binds it with the Gothic mode.

Building on the above approaches, we will focus on three aspects of Stephen Graham Jones' revisionary "thirthing" of the Gothic mode. The first is space itself—we shall examine the ecogothic nature of the haunted landscape—here the Blackfeet reservation which features very prominently in Jones' novel and is the seed of the dramatically violent plot and the subsequent supernatural hauntings. The second element will be an arch-gothic convention of repetition and return—here exemplified

by the subversive uses of various rituals, including hunting, ritualistic cleansing, and basketball. The last element will bring into focus the ontological and cultural hybridity of the female antagonist—Elk Head Woman—whose shapeshifting abilities and uncanny apparitionings straddle the boundaries between the real and the unreal, the human and the animal, reinforcing ecogothic and native realist concerns of the narrative. Jones, as we shall evidence in the close reading of the selected passages, braids and integrates various strands of gothic and horror genres, culture and of American history, to ask questions about the limits of representation, of nature, and of identity. The strategies of “thirding” are his ways of a productive unsettling of generic and onto-epistemological boundaries. The resulting nonlinear identities, dislocations and affective ecologies produce a deep sense of discomfort, denying us any sense of closure and epistemological certainty.

“It Came From the Res”: Reservation and its Ecogothic Specters

Already in his first collection of short stories, Jones hints at the “thirdness” of his aesthetic and existential positioning, seeing his identity as “a parallel universe, an alternate dimension whose first foot falling is heard on the road I did not take” (Jones, “One Another” 363). Although, as argued by Stratton, all his stories “emerge out of and draw significance from just such a Native understanding of the world, articulating a consciousness inextricably informed by his ancestry, travels, and experiences” (Stratton, “Come for the Icing” 11), the quotation resonates with a peculiar sense of dislocation and creates an image of the universe with an unknown origin and equally ghostly futurity, “an alternate dimension” poised uncertainly between the possible and the impossible, between the beginning and the end. The haunting sound of the invisible “first foot” seems to evoke the indigenist belief in all creatures’ inseparable connection to the land as the centre of being; and yet, the phantom acousticity of the trope implies the trauma of the Blackfeet tribal past, haunted by the historical dispossession and fragmentation—the past that is forever intertwined with the present.²

The novel’s settings most certainly emerge from Jones’ attachment to the climate, the changing seasons, and the animal world of the Blackfeet reservation—the land circumscribed by colonial cartographies, portioned off, and misused for its natural resources. The Blackfeet peoples are themselves presented as survivors; e.g. Lewis, one of four male protagonists, reflects on the spectral character of the present, speaking of “the few ancestors who made it through raids and plagues, massacres and genocide, diabetes and all the wobbly-tired cars the rest of America was done with” (Jones, *Only* 45). Unsurprisingly, winter is the dominant season in Jones’ narrative, and one cannot

2 The trope can be also read as Jones’ conversation with what Renee Bergland described as “the discourses of Indian spectrality,” popular in Western representations of Native Americans especially in the nineteenth century (5). Citing Bergland in her essay “Indigenous Alterations,” A. E. Schoch/Davidson defines it as “a form of literary annihilation whereby American indigenous inhabitants were presumed already dead and gone” (144). What is especially relevant to our study, Schoch/Davidson further proposes that the ghosting of the Indigenous peoples was linked to the Western conceptions of time “its linear orientation as one way that Indigenous peoples are denied a future and banished from the present; this view of time also supports the separation of the individual from surrounding communities and the environment” (151).

but think of its symbolic ecological resonance as the darkest and death-haunted seasons and nature's crypt: "Past where the road ducks down to the right there's just snow and snow and more snow, though," one of the characters, named Denorah, observes, "and the shimmer of the lake where her dad told her one of his running buddies died, way back" (295). As implied in this quotation and further reflections of Denorah, it is not an empty container; on the contrary, it reveals a larger ecosystem, full of communications, in which humans are deeply enmeshed. Be it "[e]lk tracks in the snow," the squirrels that "chattering about" impending danger, or "the blanket of stars spread out around" the protagonists (Jones, *Only* 196, 68), the weather and landscape are not a mere backdrop but an important agent—an uncanny co-participant and ecogothic antagonist in Jones' plot. It communicates its ghostly messages in various ways, freezing up time and bodies, forcing upon the characters a recognition of their entanglements and mortality, and rendering porous the boundaries between the human and animal world.

The images of disconnectedness, frozen life, and the arrested future takes us to the darkening reality of the Blackfeet reservation—the circumscribed landscape-turned-trap—which is an important spatial figure in *The Only Good Indians*. The gothic tropologies tie in well with the progressing and intertwined loss of natural balance and identity—the wound that never heals—caused by the US land politics and the resultant territorial, cultural and spiritual fragmentation. Using the term ecogothic to conceptualize mankind's multilevel abuses against the environment, Dawn Keetley and Matthew Sivils aptly argue that "ecogothic imagination... taps into the murder and displacement of indigenous peoples" and that "injustices play out upon a natural world that is likewise victimized" (11). Jones' narrative takes up that issue, but it combines the ecogothic lens with the perspective of Native Americans.

The main plot revolves around the fate of four male protagonists—Ricky, Gabe, Lewis, and Cassidy—all members of the Blackfeet tribe, who decimated a big herd of elks, mercilessly killing a pregnant cow. The massacre took place out of the hunting season, thus violating the tribal law and triggering nature's spectacular revenge executed by an animal-human ghost of the shot mother elk. The meticulous, excessively gory and deadly hunt of Elk Head Woman for the perpetrators of the crime—the "four boogeymen" of the Duck Lake (Jones, *Only* 31), as they are now known in the tribe—constitutes the core of the dramatic plot. The hunt culminates symbolically on a Thanksgiving Day, which also resonates with the long history of dispossession for all indigenous tribes.

Significantly, Jones opens the narrative with the memories of Ricky, who has left the reservation to bury his guilt and shame caused by the hunting trip turned bad, but who is also followed by the memories of his land, the tribal past and his longing for the abandoned kinfolks. Ricky remembers the "family plot behind East Glacier," the picture book "about Heads-Smashed-In or whatever it was called—the buffalo jump, where the old time Blackfeet ran herd off the cliff" (3) and regrets his absence at the funeral of his little brother Cheeto, who "overdosed in some living room" (2). "It was just a running reminder how shit the reservation was, how boring, how nothing" (1)—this deprecating rant exposes the growing alienation of the protagonist from his homeland and cultural heritage. The disastrous hunt contributed to this feeling as the men wanted to prove themselves as "those kinds of Indians" who can "bring meat to

the whole tribe,” “to show everybody in Browning that this is the way it’s done, but then the big wet snow had come in and everything had gone pretty much straight to hell” (4). The imperative of “being those kinds of Indians,” always “on display,” has a detrimental effect on the hunters—tied to their hunting prowess, their ethnic self-worth and masculine identities are threatened by the increasing alienation from their roots, and thus must be reaffirmed through rituals of excessive violence and death.

This interplay of connection and separation is visible also in Gabe’s strong emotional attachment to various spaces on the reservation. His daughter Denorah remembers that her dad had “a story for every place on the reservation.... If not someone he used to run with in high school, then a coulee where he popped a blacktail once, a ridge where he found a little pyramid of brass shells for a buffalo gun, a place he once saw a badger humping it across the grass, an eagle divebombing it like it thought this was the biggest prairie dog ever” (Jones, *Only* 295). The nostalgically inflected “used to” marks the split between the somewhat idyllic has-been, where everything had its place, and the postlapsarian present, the time after the elk massacre, which lends a spectral aura to the characters’ guilt-ridden memories. The spectrality is enhanced by Gabe’s persistent silence about the fatal hunting trip and his friend’s death at the lake. “To talk about what actually happened might get him in Death’s crosshairs, the way he thinks,” Denorah worries further on, adding: “But still, her dad’s got to *think* of that dead friend still, doesn’t he, even if he won’t talk about him out loud?” (296).

“What actually happened” is revealed gradually, in scraps and flashes of memory as the four hunters try to forget the event, but the phantom elk mother inevitably rematerializes in various guises and forms, feeding on the perpetrators’ sense of guilt. Through shifting focalizations that take us also inside Elk Head Woman’s mind, we keep reliving and reviving the horror: “an elk mother, cornered, will slash with her hooves and tear her mouth and even offer the hope of her own hamstrings, and if none of that works, she’ll rise again years and years later, because it’s never over, it’s always just beginning again” (Jones, *Only* 159). As argued by Jennifer Schell in her insightful essay “Ecogothic Extinction Fiction,” “the specters of extinct and endangered animals serve, much like the ghosts of more traditional gothic fiction, as haunting indicators of the unredeemed vanity, avarice, and wastefulness of humanity” (178). In Jones’ narrative, the memory of the massacre lives in the wounded and abused nature: “knowledge of this day lodged in the herd, got passed down like what headlights meant, like how those blocks of salt aren’t for elk tongues in the daytime” (158). Jones endows animal nature with a transversal memory and agency that embraces the entire species threatened by extinction. The use of the proleptic temporality, repetition, and present tense is “a moment of freezing,” a temporal contraction—“an excess [of death and negative sublime] that cannot be transcended”—so characteristic of horror narratives (Botting 69). In the above passage, it creates a peculiar ecogothic chronotope which resonates also, albeit subversively, with the Native American concept of great mythic cycles—here the imbalance caused by violence against nature disrupts the spiritual harmony and unity, turning the cyclical return into a tightening loop for the transgressors, a loop of destiny from which there is no escape. The nightmarish image of the elk mother “rising and rising again,” years and years later, becomes thus a disturbing spatiotemporal symbol of the inseparable human and environmental trauma.

Ghosting the Game and the Revenant EcoOther: The Role of Ritual and Doubling

Allan Lloyd-Smith observes that the gothic “is about the return of the past, of the repressed and denied, the buried secret that subverts and corrodes the present” (16). Similarly Julian Wolfreys and Ruth Robbins propose that “the promise of the gothic was—and still is—a promise of a certain return, a cyclical revenance” (xii). One of the central Gothic tropes employed by Jones is that of doubling—itsself bound up to the tension between return and repetition. Symbolizing the split consciousness, “the shadow self” or the repressed antagonistic other, double points at once to the limits and possible proliferations of identity. Double is a figure of self-knowledge and self-doubt, questioning our belief in the clear boundaries between the subject and the object. In Native American tropology, as observed by Gerald Vizenor, return is “a metaphor of motion, survivance, and native sovereignty” (Vizenor, “Authored Animals 672). Doubling and return feature prominently in Jones’ revision of the Gothic mode, and, characteristically for the genre, they are the driving forces of the entire plot. The temporal frame for the main event is Thanksgiving—itsself an ironic date for the Blackfeet and other tribes, explicitly evoking the specters of the colonial violence and Anglo-European mythologies of settlement which covered up the indigenous people’s displacement. The structure of the narrative is also repetitive—after the fatal error, the four hunters become the hunted, one by one confronting their nemesis and shadow—the revenant ghost of Elk Head Woman that tracks them down and kills the last of them on another Thanksgiving Day, exactly ten years after the massacre. However, Jones complicates the trope as he pushes it beyond the concept of the identity split. The double for the writer is not a simple rupture of the self but a continuous interplay between separation and fusion, presence and absence, with the boundaries between the performing bodies, identities and actions constantly blurred.

The most important “return” in which doubling creates the unclear entanglements and hybridizations that can be categorized as the revisionary Third Space is the climactic basketball duel between Elk Head Woman, here disguised in the body of Lewis’ murdered friend Shaney, and Gabe’s daughter, Denorah. The match is indicative of an unresolvable tangle of life and death, of the present and the past, as the mother elk is after Gabe’s own offspring, whose life is about to be cut short as that of the animal on the day of the Thanksgiving massacre. It is preceded, however, by an important ritual of bodily and spiritual cleansing involving three male protagonists—two remaining participants of the elk massacre—Gabe and Cassidy, and a young boy named Nathan, who is a son of the tribal cop, Victor. Engaging with the indigenous ritual whose function is to reestablish the broken relations with the transcendent powers, Jones uses the liminal positioning of Gothic tropes in the ambiguous zones between the holy and the unholy, between faith and incredulity, the real and the visionary. During the episode titled “Three Little Indians,” ironically referencing racist nursery rhyme from 1864, the actions of the established ceremony become disrupted by the anarchistic powers of the uncanny, confusing and threatening the meanings of conventionalized rites and their original spiritual intents. Instead of reassurance, purification and renewal, Jones exposes a vacuum of belief, a condition of separation and division from the mythological harmony of all beings that leads to the protagonists’

tragic downfall. The structural principle of this part is also significant—it is a relentless and suspenseful countdown which in Gothic narratives implies that something is amiss with time and signals the inevitability of punishment and death.

This ancient ritual is taking place in a sweat lodge—the “holy place” for Blackfoot tribes, and, as Gabe believes, “the safest place in the Indian world” (223). In the sweat lodge scene, Jones employs the unsettling elements of grotesque and dark humor, reversing and “thirthing” the ritual of purification and spiritual restoration with a spectacular blood bath and excessive horror as Elk Head Woman tracks down and violently disposes of her killers. According to the Plains peoples’ tradition, the smoke and purifying steam of the sweat lodge relate to breath and are considered sources of vitality and life (Harrod 74). The participants of the arduous ceremony, involving fasting, smoking and dancing, sing songs to Sun, Moon and the Morning Star, gathering symbolically the transcendental powers of the sky, earth as well as all living creatures to ask them for protection, health, prosperity and happiness (Harrod 87). The ceremony is often enacted in moments of crisis, with the intention to re-establish the lost kinship with basic structures of being.

Jones engages with this powerful theme of renewal; however, given his irreverent juggling of forms and tropes, he endows it with the grotesque sense of humor—another instance of “thirthing” in his work that disrupts the readerly expectations concerning the ceremonial culture. “A sweat was never a ritual, was always an ordeal” (Jones, *Only* 232), Cassidy observes, realizing his own estrangement from the spiritual dimension of the practice. Explaining the meaning of the sweat to the young Nathan, Gabe compares the purification to a dishwasher: “We’re the dishes. It steams us up spick-and-span” (217). The swerves from the original ritual are numerous—the sleeping bags instead of hide, drumbeats from the car sound system, and beer instead of water for the post-sweat “rehydration”—all indicative of the hollowness of the underperformed transcendence. The purgation of threatening ghosts and a sense of closure and fixity that the ritual promises turn out to be illusions and become another trap. The men’s superficial and half-hearted attempts at restoring wholeness and the boundaries of control in their lives will be frustrated by the counter-ritual of abject horror, the methodical and equally grotesque carnage performed by the Elk Head Woman, trapped in her own rage:

Neither of these last two know you’re in the world at all. That day in the snow they shot you, to them it’s just another day, another hunt. That’s why it has to be like this. You could have taken them at any point over the last day, day and a half, but that’s not even close to what they deserve. They need to feel what you felt. Their whole world has to be torn from their belly, shoved into a shallow hole. (Jones, *Only* 262)

Indeed, this is what follows as the revenant ghost unleashes the full power of her revenge, turning the “safest space in the world” into a gory and grotesque nightmare. The most poignant moment in the scene is the Elk Head Woman’s blackmail forcing Gabe to shoot himself with his own gun, which implies that man’s excessive desire is the instrument of his own self-destruction.

The second ritual mentioned above—and the climactic mock-epic battle—is the duel between Gabe’s daughter, Denorah, and the elk ghost. The match is an important

“return” in which doubling creates the unclear entanglements and hybridizations. It is also a tour de force of Jones’ strategies of “thirthing,” as the game itself quickly turns into a site of multiple transgressions.

Basketball is a very significant theme in *The Only Good Indians* and it deserves a closer attention both as a popular American sport and a form of ritual. As we would like to propose, the repetition, shadowing and doubling which are integral to the game are translated by Jones into a Gothic trope of “thirthing.” Examining the significance of sports in the works of Sherman Alexie, Stephen Graham Jones and James Welch, Billy J. Stratton stresses “the complex meaning of basketball in Native American society” and its link to the communal identities and traditional paradigms of storytelling (“Reservation Hero” 44). As “ambivalent embodiments of the historic tragedies and the accumulated experiences of trauma and loss,” the basketball players become ambiguous signifiers that “resist Western conceptions of individual achievement and success in favor of Native American conceptions of community and cultural survivance” (Stratton, “Reservation Hero” 44). The basketball stars are also often treated as “savior figures” representing and carrying the burden of tribal dreams and aspirations (Stratton, “Reservation Hero” 46).

In “New Warriors, New Legends: Basketball in Three Native American Works of Fiction,” Peter Donahue similarly points to the role of basketball on Native American reservations. However, unlike Stratton, who interrogates basketball’s relation to loss, trauma and pan-Indian identity, Donahue pays special attention to the ways basketball and indigenous traditions hybridize. The author provides alternative Indian origin stories of the game and gives examples from contemporary American literature in which basketball is informed by Native American traditions and beliefs. As a result of cultural hybridization, basketball is no longer a game with firmly established roots but turns into a transcultural activity whose ethnic provenance cannot be easily categorized. Thus, the sport opens up an in-between, liminal space where different cultures collide and intertwine. Referencing the fictions by James Welch and Sherman Alexie, Donahue recognizes several features that characterize the so-called Indian basketball. He stresses its various functions within indigenous cultures which include strengthening tribal bonds, fighting racism and transmitting Native American spiritual values.

As persuasively argued by the critic, Indian basketball strengthens bonds within the reservation. An example could be Sherman Alexie’s short story collection *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993), where the characters retell the story of Silas Sirius, a Native American basketball player, who made one famous move during an insignificant game and thus became a local hero. Contrary to the “statistics-crazed Americans” (47), as the author comments, Indian basketball values quality and loyalty to the tribal group. The lack of loyalty is punished accordingly. In *The Indian Lawyer* (1990) by James Welch, a story of Sylvester Yellow Calf, shows that, as long as he plays for the reservation, he is lauded and maintains good relationships with his tribe. However, the more he seeks individual success at college, the further he distances himself from his Native American fellows. The game can thus become a tool of stigmatization and alienation.

Indian basketball is also a potential tool of resistance against racism and oppression. Donahue cites the scene of a basketball match from Alexie’s *Reservation Blues* (1995) which is a fight between two reservation Indians, Samuel Builds-the-Fire

and Lester Falls Apart, fully devoted to their indigenous heritage, and Tribal Police Officers, who are notorious for police brutality towards Native Americans despite belonging to the reservation themselves. The basketball match is the protagonists' means of revenge—away to punish not only the police officers who oppressed them but all those who abused their indigenous roots and, in fact, were perceived as traitors. The dynamic, aggressive moves here may embody not only a competition on the court but imply a literal fight whose aim is revenge and victory also outside the court. Similarly in Stephen Graham Jones' earlier novel *The Bird Is Gone: A Manifesto* (2003), the game turns into "an act of Native survivance," a struggle against "the sense of loss and hopelessness," counteracting social inequity, and the dominant narratives of the vanishing Indian as belonging to "an extensive history of losing" (Stratton, "Reservation Hero" 51).

Finally, Indian basketball is deeply spiritual. Stratton observes that rez-ball heroes often become "compelling agents of healing and restoration, pride and community, self-worth and source of legends" ("Reservation Hero" 55). Donahue discusses religious subtexts that refer both to Christianity and to Native American beliefs, with the emphasis on the latter. The game has redemptive powers, creating its own saviors and rituals. *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* features images of a ball making a sound like an Indian drum or the sweat of the players making it rain on the whole reservation. Indian players are also often represented as contemporary saviors. The example could be Junior, one of the characters from *Lone Ranger*, who says: "I mean, if basketball would have been around, I'm sure Jesus Christ would've been the best point guard in Nazareth" (Alexie, *Lone* 52). It is evident that Indian basketball bears spiritual associations and strongly ritualises the game using various religions as a point of reference.

Jones' narrative in *The Only Good Indians* certainly taps into those rich contexts and intercultural uses of the game. Basketball is mentioned several times during the course of his novel. In fact, the majority of characters either play basketball or support their family members in their sports careers. Lewis plays it both with his wife Peta and with his workmate Shaney in their free time. Gabe's daughter, Denorah, is a professional player at a college. Though basketball is a recurring theme throughout the book, the most prominent instance is the final game of twenty one between Denorah and Elk Head Woman, here disguised as Lewis' work colleague Shaney, who uses the competition to avenge her own death.

The basketball match between Denorah and Shaney straddles the ground between Indian and Gothic conventions and thus becomes an in-between and undefinable space where multiple realities intertwine. As for the indigenous elements present in the scene, both Denorah and Shaney are rooted in the reservation tradition, the former through her father Gabe, and the latter because of her supernatural shapeshifting abilities and uncertain ontological status as the hybrid animal-human being. Denorah believes that her opponent belongs to the Crows and so the game evolves into the intertribal match between the Blackfeet and the Crow, even though Shaney is an elk in disguise: "Shaney has her by six inches, she [Denorah] guesses. But tall girls are never the ball handlers, at least not in small schools—not in reservation schools" (Jones, *Only* 301). Being a professional player, Denorah represents a more schoolbook and regulated style, whereas Shaney's moves are more unruly and wild and

thus closer to the indigenous tradition of basketball. A mockery question “What do y’all play up here? Big on the fundamentals, all that boring-ass stuff” (301) not only serves as a means to undermine the opponent’s morale, but also to juxtapose professional and reservational basketball styles. Denorah at last starts to abandon her rigid moves, as shown in the following passage: “Denorah uses the toe of her right shoe to flip it up to her hands, a move Coach would be all over—hands, hands, basketball players use *hands*” (308), the duel becomes an act of liberation and return to one’s own heritage, as if the real game was where the end justifies the means.

The uncertain ontology of the supernatural hybrid embodied by Shaney links the basketball scene into the larger Native American Gothic framework of the narrative. The creature is both human and animal, and, at the same time, neither of them fully. While exhibiting great knowledge of the game and acting like a human player, she plays so wildly and fiercely that Denorah cannot but acknowledge the rival’s superhuman strength: “She flips over fast, onto her palms and toes, and then she rolls her shoulders slow, her hair all around her face, and screams for longer than her lungs should have air for” (Jones, *Only* 312). Both Shaney’s behavior and physical appearance belie her ambiguous trickster nature. Denorah at some point notices her rival’s yellowy eyes, “with hazel striations radiating out from the deep black hole of a pupil” (312). Her liminal, zombie-like and shapeshifting form is best demonstrated in the climactic moment of the match when, in the atmosphere of excessive violence, she transforms into Elk Head Woman with a “nightmare face” (314), as if a reversed centaur figure, with the human body and head of an elk. Her dubious ontological state, linking the past and the present, the animal and the human, and indigenous and Western cultures, vividly demonstrate Jones’ strategies of thirding.

As mentioned before, the return of the repressed past, often in the form of revenge, is inherent to the Gothic plot and so it is present in the basketball scene. Significantly, the duel begins in the chapter called “Thanksgiving Classic”—the ironic name given to the fatal hunting trip which took place exactly ten years before the duel. To make the link even more obvious, Shaney refers to Denorah as “a calf” (Jones, *Only* 313) and encapsulates her encounter with Denorah’s father in the following words: “We met ten years ago. He had a gun. I didn’t” (313). Adamant about winning the game, Shaney asks Denorah “So this is what’s most important to you, right?” (305). There is no doubt that the game is a duel to the death and that the victory for the elk is the *sine qua non* of a fulfilled revenge. The basketball court becomes thus a battlefield that enables the oppressed nature to take its vengeance on human species and it is where the fight gains the ecogothic hue.

The Elk-Woman in the Attic: The Trickster and More-than-Human Worlds

In *Manifest Manners*, Gerard Vizenor thus describes the role of the trickster in Native American cultures:

The trickster is reason and mediation in stories, the original translator of tribal encounters; the name is an intimation of transformation, men to women, animals to birds, and more.... Tricksters are the translation of creation; the trickster creates the tribe in stories and pronounces the moment of remembrance as the

trace of liberation. The animals laughed, birds cried, and there were worried hearts over the everlasting humor that would liberate the human mind in trickster stories. Trickster stories are the translation of liberation, and the shimmer of imagination is the liberation of the last trickster stories. (15)

The trickster “does not die; he comes back to life in new guises, new narratives” (Larry Gross, “Bimaadiziwin” 28). “Better than the real, much better than the flesh and blood” (Vizenor, *Postindian* 59), tricksters are “characters capable of understanding passion, pain, and longing while at the same time transcending human limits. They are as likely to turn into rabbits as they are to make love to the wind.... They are real enough to be present on earth and yet are able to walk with the dead” (Johnston 151). This transformational and affective power of the trickster undoubtedly informs Jones’ reinterpretation of the Gothic figure of the revenant female ghost. Elk Head Woman can indeed be read as a Gothic trickster figure capable of mediating between spiritual and physical spaces and transcending animal-human boundaries. “Better than the real,” she is a feisty and strong creature that overflows with life energies, as shown in the basketball duel, but at the same walks with and on behalf of the dead. In *Acknowledgements*, Jones gives us yet another important source of the revenant ghost:

And I’d be lying if I didn’t also cite the seventh episode of season one of *Masters of Horror*, ‘Deer Woman’ by John Landis. I really liked how that woman kicked whoever needed kicking in that story. I want that for all Indian women. I also want them all to live, too, please. Some of them are my sisters, and all of them are my cousins, my aunts. (Jones, *Only* 351)

If trickster is a figure of healing, of liberation, of myth and memory, as Vizenor defines it (*Postindian* 59), Jones’ Gothic engagement with it gains a similarly complex dimension. His words “I want them all to live” articulate the trauma of the vanishing indigenous women—often victims of violence, racism, forced prostitution, rape, and abuse. Elk Head Woman, herself born out of violence, returns to give back the stories of the victimized women, to bring their difficult pasts and forgotten voices into view, and thus make them live again, in a new guise, in a new powerful and mythical narrative.

In *Sacred Hoop*, Paula Gunn Allen demonstrates that in the tribal past Native American women were not perceived as a weaker sex, but seen as “powerful, socially, physically, and metaphysically” (48). However, the centuries of cultural dislocations and dispossessions have changed that perception and today their situation is different: “Most Indian women I know are in the same bicultural bind: we vacillate between being dependent and strong, self-reliant and powerless, strongly motivated and hopelessly insecure,” trying to deal “with two hopelessly opposed cultural definitions of women” (Gunn 49). Using the trickster human-animal ghost that reverses the relation between the active male hunter and the passive female prey, Jones taps into the earlier transformational energies. Louise Erdrich, who is named by Jones, as one of his inspirations, reflects on the transgressive female agency in her poetry arguing that it can take “the form of becoming an animal” that is “a symbolic transformation, the moment a woman allows herself to act out of her own power” (Bruchac 82).

The strong animal characteristics, the “monstrous” elements of Elk Head Woman, belong both to the indigenous cosmologies and the abjective tropologies of the Western Gothic. In his essay “Authored Animals: Creature Tropes in Native American Fiction,” Gerald Vizenor formulates a category of “the authored animals”—“the species of imagination”—which belong to reality of fiction and exist in language (668-71). They are often “tropes of human severance” (“Authored Animals” 671), showing the alienation of the human from the animal consciousness. Significantly, the authored animals in Native American fiction, as proposed by Vizenor, “are connected to the environment, not to the similes of human consciousness” and thus escape “the human horizon of existential reason” (“Authored Animals” 665). Emerging from the shared imagination of native realism and the Gothic, the uncanny Elk Head Woman partakes of that connection, but she is also endowed with the powers of transcendence which upset ontological rules and destabilize the perimeters of anthropomorphizing metaphors. Harrod notes that the belief that the Elk had power over women” was a “prominent element in Blackfeet consciousness” (121). Jones engages with that belief by turning the female body into an ecogothic transversum—Elk Head Woman’s final chase after Denorah shows their deep interconnection—where their bodies and minds become one in the Gothic chronotope of return.

To show the initial severance between the human and animal ontologies, however, Jones uses tropes of abjection, typical for the Gothic transgressive subjectivities. In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva describes the abject as an unassimilable ontology, close yet distant: “There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated” (1). Jones’ spectral trickster embodies the same unassimilable condition—articulated, to borrow from Kristeva again, “by negation and its modalities, transgression, denial, and repudiation” (6). Existing as a smell, “motion,” the “idea of something” (Jones, *Only* 227), the abject is what “disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (Kristeva 3-4). Elk Head Woman, being the abject other, the uncanny, hybrid animal-human phantom, is constructed in each episode through an interplay of the familiar and the strange, the material and the supernatural, in accordance with American Indian thought where “life has twin manifestations that are mutually interchangeable and where “all creatures are relatives (and in tribal systems relationship is central)” (Gunn Allen 246). Significant for the female revenge plot seems the gory on-site “dressing” of the young elk mother, which Lewis himself insists on performing just after the massacre. The memory of it haunts the character and, at the same time, it nourishes the return of the elk ghost:

To do it right, he hacked a thick branch from the brush, split her sternum with just the knife—she wasn’t even old enough to need the saw—then cracked the pelvis like prying a butterfly’s wings apart, jammed the branch of her ruptured guts, the last little bit of her lungs, he even crawled in like a kid with his first elk, scooping and pushing, and when he finally rolled out, dislodging the branch. (Jones, *Only* 85)

The incredible violence of the scene and the abject as well as voyeuristic emphasis on the splitting and prying apart of the elk's intimate parts is an enactment of rape against nature but, above all, it is a projection of violence and abuse directed at indigenous women. By connecting all women characters in the narrative through the figure of Elk Head Woman, Jones indicates that such gendered violence, rooted in the colonial exploitation of the land, has enduring effects across generations—the transgression results in a lost balance and reciprocity of ecological life. As the damage to the psyche and the spirit, the trauma lasts, re-inhabits bodies and minds, and destroys not only individual subjectivities but threatens the wellness of the entire tribal communities.

Significantly, in Lewis's episode the center of the haunting becomes the backyard and well-lit living room—the familiar and protective everyday spaces turned spectral by the act of violence. Being followed by apparitions of Elk Head Woman in the spaces and people around him, the increasingly paranoid protagonist ponders over the ontological uncertainty of the ghost: “Of *course* an elk can't ‘inhabit’ a person. That person would fall over onto all fours and probably instantly panic. Unless she's like that shadow he saw in the living room. Woman body, elk head, non horns” (96). Working methodically “to tear down [Lewis]'s own life” (Jones, *Only* 114–115), the elk unsettles the familiar so that every woman around the protagonist, including his own wife, Peta, and his coworker and friend, Shaney, becomes the incarnation of the zombie elk:

The dots he's trying and trying not to let connect in his head are that Peta showed up *on* the reservation, didn't she? And it was the exact summer *after* the Thanksgiving Classic, when he was all busy flipping the whole place off with both hands, denying it his sacred presence from here on out... As for the case against Peta, or for her *not* being Peta, it doesn't help that she's a vegetarian, either (Jones, *Only* 101).

Shaney, “who is pretty much superhuman,” and Peta, who “can run and run,” and Gabe's daughter, Denorah, who almost outwits and outruns Elk Head Woman in the climactic chase, are all imbued with the powers of the revenant specter. Examining the system of values in Blackfeet and Crow cultures, Harrod observes that “in some cases animal forms mediate powers to humans that are associated with their specific characteristics (speed, vision, cunning)” (87). In the final scene, in which Elk Head Woman chases Denorah until they reach the original site of the massacre, now the graveyard filled with the elk bones, the girl and the creature exhibit equal physical prowess and stamina, as if they have overcome the severance of the human and the animal. While the massacre uncannily rematerializes as an embodied re-memory in the final turn of the plot, the two female bodies and minds become one, experiencing the same feeling of cold, exhaustion, and menace but also the same mixture of affects:

Just—your anger, your hate, it was coursing through you so hot, and you got lost in it, and—.

Denorah looks up that long hill, into the winking scope and dead eye of her new dad, and then she looks to Elk Head Woman, to the calf, and she sees now that both her fathers have stood at the top of this slope behind a rifle, and the elk have *always* been down here, and it can stop... it *has* to stop, the old man telling this in the star lodge says to the children sitting all around him. It *has* to

stop, he says, brushing his stubby braids out of the way, and the Girl, she knows this, she can feel it. She can see her real dad dead in that burned-down sweat lodge, the back of his head gone, but she can also see him up the slope ten years ago, shooting into a herd of elk that weren't his to shoot at, and she hates that he's dead, she loved him, she *is* him in every way that counts. (Jones, *Only* 347, original emphasis)

The psychic and ecological wounds are overlapping in this narrative—they can heal only if the characters overcome the fragmentation of transversal ecologies, memories and time—in the chronotopic re-turn of the dead, the girl, the elk and the hunter become one gaze linked to personal and collective terrors. Soja defines Thirdspace as an “all-inclusive simultaneity” which “opens endless worlds to explore, and, at the same time, presents daunting challenges” (57). The synchronized interlocking visions and temporalities in the narrative’s climactic moment create such Thirdspace, where the painful history of loss can be replayed, embraced and rewritten. The re-memory takes on the shape of the elk mother and her calf, now protected by Denorah’s own exhausted and vulnerable body, as the girl places herself between the hunter and the animals to prevent the repetition of the bloody carnage: “what she does is slide forward on her bloody knees; placing her small body between that rifle and the elk that killed her dad” (348). The last view of the elk family is thus reshaped, replacing the bloody shooting with the image of a harmonious lifeworld: “An elk cow stands up from the snow and lowers her face to her calf, licks its face until it wobbles up, finds its feet, and that’s the last anyone ever sees of those two, walking off into the grass, mother and calf, the herd out there waiting to fold them back in, walk with them through the seasons” (349). Denorah’s ultimate decision to shield the mother and her calf with her own body against the armed rescue of her stepfather is a revisionist gesture of solidarity with the vulnerable animal, a gesture through which her father’s initial transgression against more-than-human nature can be redeemed. In this moment of identification with the irrational, “the uncanny assault on the sense of self” (Wolfreys xvi) embodied by the trickster elk, turns into a deeper understanding of the sources of the Native American fragmented subjectivity. The ending is thus a hopeful one—the animals, or their ghosts, are freed of human desire and violence, to walk together “through the seasons.” Denorah’s empathetic backward glance and sacrificial gesture, her spiritual reconciliation with her biological father, as well as her non-predatory and respectful sportsmanship in a competition against the Crow basketball team in the narrative closure counteract the Gothic story of revenge and carnage, carrying a new chronotopic promise that “[i]t’s not the end of the trail..., it never was the end of the trail / It’s the beginning” (Jones, *Only* 349).

Conclusion

“In drawing distinctions and marking difference,” Jodi A. Byrd contends, “genre demarcates what does and not does belong and what it does and does not belong to. It embraces and refuses, includes and excludes all for the sake of producing a recognizable form of attachment and then interpretation. Genre, in other words, colonizes texts” (345). Referencing such Indigenous authors as Leslie Marmon Silko, A. A. Carr, Drew

Hayden Taylor, Gerald Vizenor and Stephen Graham Jones, the critic observes further on that “the literatures that American Indian authors produce disrupt and resist the narrative strategies of colonial imaginings by transforming the modes of interpretation and revealing the structures of dominance by turning generic conventions against affiliations” (Byrd 346). As argued by Julian Wolfreys, “[t]he gothic, as a body of fiction, is always already excessive, grotesque, overflowing its own boundaries and limits” (xi). In *The Only Good Indians*, Graham Jones explores that complex deconstructive nature of the genre as he conflates the imaginative spaces of the Gothic with the topographies, chronotopes and mythologies of the Blackfeet tradition. His creative braiding and fusion of tropes works to unseal generic and aesthetic boundaries, revealing shared complexities and transgressive potential of “thirding” in Native American and Western ecogothic imaginaries. Through the spatial trope of the haunted reservation, the uncanny figure of zombie elk-cum-female trickster, and his plots and figures of doubling, ritual and return, the writer invites us to rethink the artificial boundaries between human and animal consciousness. Imbued with an indigenous ecological sensibility, the novel asks us also to acknowledge the landscape and nature as sentient biosemiotic agents, haunted and capable of haunting, and of speaking and fighting back against environmental injustice. The ecogothic spatiotemporalities, reaching back and forth into the past, and cross-cultural tropologies of horror employed in the novel address the issue of environmental trauma as an integral part of the indigenous histories of dispossession and loss. Native American Gothic offers thus a productive opening up of the spatial and sociohistorical imagination, enabling creative explorations of composite cultural legacies, porous genres and transversal identities.

Works Cited

- Bergland, Renee L. *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*. UP of New England, 2000.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- Burnham, Michelle. “Is There an Indigenous Gothic?” *A Companion to American Gothic*, edited by Charles Crow, Wiley Blackwell, 2014, pp. 223-237.
- Byrd, A. Jodi. “Read Dead Conventions: American Indian Transgeneric Fictions.” *The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous American Literature*, edited by James H. Cox, James Howard Cox, and Daniel Heath Justice, Oxford UP, 2014, pp. 344–366.
- Bruchac, Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Beacon P, 1986.
- Bruchac, Joseph, editor. “Whatever Is Really Yours: An Interview with Louise Erdrich.” *Survival This Way: Interviews with American Indian Poets*. U of Arizona P, 1987, pp. 73–86.
- Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. Routledge, 2014.
- Donahue, Peter. “New Warriors, New Legends: Basketball in Three Native American Works of Fiction.” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1997, pp. 43–60.
- Gross, Lawrence W. “Bimaadiziwin, or ‘The Good Life’ as a Unifying Concept of Anishinaabe Religion.” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, vol. 26, no.1, 2002, pp. 15–32.

- Goddu, Theresa, A. *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation*. Columbia UP, 1997.
- Allen, Gunn, Paula. "The Sacred Hoop." *Ecocriticism Reader*, edited by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, U of Georgia P, 1996, pp. 241-263.
- Haefele-Thomas, Ardel. "Queer American Gothic." *The Cambridge Companion to American Gothic*, edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, Cambridge UP, 2017, pp. 115-127.
- Haggerty, G. *Queer Gothic*. U of Illinois P, 2006.
- Harrod, Howard, L. *Renewing the World: Plains Indian Religion and Morality*. U of Arizona P, 1992.
- Hughes Andrew, and William Smith. *Ecogothic*. Manchester UP, 2016.
- Johnston, Basil. *The Manitous: The Spiritual World of the Ojibway*. HarperCollins, 1995.
- Jones, Stephen, Graham. *The Only Good Indians*. Titan Books, 2020.
- . "Letter to a Just-Starting-Out Indian Writer—And Maybe to Myself." *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones: A Critical Companion*, edited by Billy J. Stratton, U of New Mexico P, 2016, pp. xi-xvii.
- . "One Another." *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones: Critical Companion*, edited by Billy J. Stratton, U of New Mexico P, 2016, p. 363.
- Lloyd-Smith, Allan. *American Gothic Fiction*. Continuum, 2004.
- Keetley, Dawn, and Matthew Wynn Sivilis. "Introduction." *Approaches to the Ecogothic. Ecogothic in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*, edited by Dawn Keetley and Matthew Wynn Sivilis, Routledge, 2018, pp. 1-20.
- Kristeva, Julia. *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez, Columbia UP, 1982.
- Noodin, Margaret. *Bawaajimo: A Dialect of Dreams in Anishinaabe Language and Literature*. Michigan State UP, 2014.
- Schell, Jennifer. "Ecogothic Extinction Fiction: The Extermination of the Alaskan Mammoth." *The Nineteenth-Century American Ecogothic*, edited by Dawn Keetley and Matthew Wynn Sivilis, Routledge, 2018, pp. 175-190.
- Schoch/Davidson Angela. "Indigenous Alterations." *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Gothic*, edited by Clive Bloom, Palgrave MacMillan, 2020, pp. 143-162.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. Columbia UP, 1985.
- Smith, Andrew and William Hughes. *Ecogothic*. Manchester UP, 2013.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 12, 1985, pp. 243-261.
- Stratton, Billy J., editor. *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones: A Critical Companion*. U of New Mexico P, 2016.
- . "Come for the Icing, Stay for the Cake: An Introduction to the Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones." *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones: A Critical Companion*, edited by Billy J. Stratton, U of New Mexico P, 2016, pp. 1-13.
- . "A Reservation Hero Is a Hero Forever?: Basketball, Irony, and Humor in the Novels of James Welch, Sherman Alexie, and Stephen Graham Jones." *Native Games: Indigenous Peoples and Sports in the Post-Colonial World*, edited by Chris Hallinan and Barry Judd, Emerald Group Publishing, 2013, pp. 43-57.

- . “Towards a Heteroholistic Approach to Native American Literature.” *Weber: The Contemporary West*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2013, pp. 148-150.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance*. UP of New England, 1994.
- . “Authored Animals: Creature Tropes in Native American Fiction.” *Social Research*, vol. 62, no. 3, 1995, pp. 661-683.
- Vizenor, Gerald, and A. Robert Lee. *Postindian Conversations*. U of Nebraska P, 1999.
- Wolfreys, Julian. Preface: “‘I could a tale unfold’ or, the Promise of Gothic.” *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys, Palgrave MacMillan, 2000, pp. ix-xx.

REVIEW ESSAYS

Elżbieta Wilczyńska

The Power of the Gaze and of the Lens: Britta Muszeika's Look at Sarah Winnemucca, Zitkala Ša, and Charles Eastman through the Critical Race Theory Magnifying Glass

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.10

Britta Muszeika. *Approaching Whiteness: Acknowledging Native Americans as Scholars of Reversal in 19th-Century Autobiographical Writings*. Universitätsverlag Winter, 2020, 305 pages.

John Sloan's famous American painting *Sunday Afternoon in Union Square* focuses on the human gaze as its central theme. Rendered in 1912, it portrays women and men in a park gazing at each other, some openly, others more surreptitiously or coquettishly. Everyone appears to be looking at somebody else, and everyone is being simultaneously looked at. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, people, particularly artists such as painters, marveled at the changing social, political and economic fabric of America (Pohl 323), and directed their gaze at scenes that captured those changes. In a similar fashion, Britta Muszeika made a gaze the central element of her new book titled *Approaching Whiteness: Acknowledging Native Americans as Scholars of Reversal in 19th Century Autobiographical Writings*. In this book, the primary gaze under examination is that of nineteenth-century Native American non-fiction writers, and this gaze is directed, as the title suggests, at white people. Why, then, do they look at white people?

The aim of such a close-up view is to assess the approach of white people towards the indigenous population, an approach imbued by a feeling of civilizational superiority. The grounds for such an assessment is an analysis of important nineteenth-century non-fictional texts. The texts include *Life among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1882) by Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, an indigenous Paiute; *American Indian Stories* (1916) by Zitkala Ša, a Yankton Sioux; *Indian Boyhood* (1902) and *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916) by Alexander Charles Eastman, a Santee Sioux. Muszeika rereads these books, focusing her analytical gaze on the description of the white people the authors encounter and deal with, or whose attitudes they are subjected to. It should be stressed that the nineteenth-century indigenous gaze, in all texts, was at times extremely critical, or at times explanatory of the behavior of white settlers. Sometimes, it praised white men, their culture and achievements. The differences in the gazes stem from a different appraisal of the authors' attitudes towards the Native Americans and the Native Americans' approach to the white man. Irrespective of their overall attitude towards white men, all the indigenous authors discussed showed a genuine interest in

the culture of the white people and wished to juxtapose their own cultures with the culture of white men; however, many a time, they were not able to comprehend the reason why the white people as a group, and their actions, failed to reciprocate genuine interest in their cultures. The Native tribal cultures were ancient, varied and complex, frequently intriguing in their ontologies and epistemologies, but white people's views seemed to overlook these aspects, obstructed in their vision by a feeling of superiority towards the barbarian "other." In order to counteract these tendencies, the three indigenous writers tell their stories with the intention of attracting the gaze of white people. The writers' objective was therefore a 'telling' of indigenous cultures directed at white people, of explaining the attitudes of the indigenous population concerning their (mis) treatment, or sometimes challenging the basis of this (mis)treatment. The point is that they, the Native tribal cultures, did not feel inferior.

Muszeika, in turn, looks at the aforementioned texts from a specific point of view. Her gaze is dictated by the perspectives of Critical Race Theory (further CRT), Critical Whiteness Studies (further CWS), and Critical Tribal Studies (further TribalCrit). This approach allows her to take a magnifying glass and, looking closely at the texts under examination, to focus on the aspects dictated by her theoretical framework in order to propose a solution, also dictated by the theoretical framework. The long-term goal, which makes the enterprise literary, anthropological and political in nature, is to thus propose a way to rectify relations between modern Native Americans on the one hand, and American society and American institutions at federal or state levels on the other.

Britta Muszeika's book, published in 2020 by Universitätsverlag Winter in their American Studies Monograph Series, consists of four chapters and an impressive list of references. The core of the book is an analysis of the non-fiction work of the three aforementioned authors in the last and the longest chapter, at about 150 pages. This chapter is preceded by three chapters, each discussing a crucial lens Muszeika affixes to her gaze to explain her rereading of the nineteenth-century indigenous texts and at the same time framing the main goals and intentions that inspired her to write this book.

The first chapter, an introduction to the book, lays out both Muszeika's personal path, which led her to take an interest in the field, and the goal her book may help to fulfill. In the field of Native American Studies, there are many German scholars whose fascination with Native Americans has followed a similar trajectory, from the novels of James Fenimore Cooper, the literary imagery of the ever-popular Karl May, the cycle of films featuring Winnetou and Old Shatterhand inspired by May's novels, Michael Mann's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992), and even nineteen pictorial representations of Indians by Karl Bodmer and Paul Klee, to today's German Indian hobbyists. Britta Muszeika, additionally inspired by a number of her teachers, relatives and friends, is apparently in a good company (for more see Hartmunt Lutz's essays and books).

Later in the chapter, she traces the origin of the stereotype of the Indian, from the seemingly immortal barbarian, the noble and ignoble savage, to the romanticized types, as a scholar both intellectually intrigued and simultaneously disconcerted by the endurance of all the stereotypes. It is indeed disconcerting when assessing the perpetuation of such detrimental stereotypes in spite of a multitude of developments

that suggest otherwise; the countless examples of Native Americans that explode these stereotypes, whose works, presence, accomplishments and daily transcultural encounters with non-Indigenous people reveal their enormous wisdom, perseverance and openness, including a readiness to embrace changes initiated by settlers' cultures. Perhaps the underlying desire of Muszeika, like many scholars in the field of Native American studies, is to challenge the portrayal of these encounters, which, as she says, "is virtually left untouched" (3).

Her gaze has been further influenced by CRT, CWS, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (further TRC). In line with the first two lenses, Muszeika asserts that the great success and perpetuation of the stereotype of Native Americans as savages was possible due to its establishment by white colonizers who were in a position of political and cultural power, which awarded specific functions to different racial and ethnic groups and ranked them from the point of view of the nature of their contribution to the construction of the country being built throughout the nineteenth century. At the bottom of the political and social ladder were Native Americans or Black Americans, or, as some would argue, Asian or Latin Americans. Here the battle ranges as to which group was most abused. There is no consensus. Muszeika claims throughout the book that whiteness—skin color—was the true basis underlying the supremacy of white colonizers. This, in turn, extended into an ideology that rendered whiteness the racial and cultural ideal. To a great extent, this conclusion is valid and the end effect of Critical Witness Studies should be unquestionably shared. The result of this was white people's privileged position and the emergence of racism, but it should have been remarked in the book that the white people of Europe who masterminded the colonization of the world, including the western hemisphere, at that time based their feelings of supremacy on the outward achievements of their cultures and their economic power. By no means did they see all the cultures of the then white European domain as equal: in the North American colonies and the subsequently independent American Republic, the Anglo-Saxons positioned their culture at the top, while Spanish and French cultures found themselves near the bottom, just above the Blacks and the Indians, and the lowly Irish (see Hunt). Each of those European countries saw the Native cultures of America as lacking in literacy, architecture, technological developments, and complex religious systems. This was the result of the then-dominant *Zeitgeist* dictated by the thinking of the Enlightenment. In no way does this acknowledgment excuse the Europeans from the crimes they committed against the Native Americans, but it should be remembered that at that time a person's whiteness also functioned as a geographical indicator, not only as a sign of a uniformed thinking. Moreover, it must be remembered that European countries waged war against each other, and held each other in contempt. The English, for example, ruthlessly killed the Irish during the English Civil War of 1642-1651, whom they beheld as ethically and culturally inferior (Smedley 52-64).

Critical Witness Studies, launched in the 1960s, also motivated Muszeika to follow in the footsteps of Robert Berkhofer's famous book *The White Man's Indian*, in which Berkhofer recreates the formation of the white gaze and its role in the development of the enduring stereotypes of Indians. Muszeika, in contrast, focuses on the gaze of the Indigenous writers and traces their perception of the white people. The

list of people that would qualify as the subject of Muszeika's research has been growing since the 1970s as a result of a wide-ranging search carried out by Native American and non-native scholars in archives all over the United States. She intentionally excludes documents written before the 1830s, as their authorship through ghost writing or an assumed white way of thinking might have been objectionable, consequently focusing on works of non-fiction where elements of imagination do not overpower ethnographic accounts. This explains the omission of such names as William Apess or Samson Occom, an omission that Muszeika acknowledges.

Muszeika has chosen the three authors because they fulfilled two roles at the same time: they were scholars of whiteness and ethnographers of their own tribes. As regards the former role, Muszeika labeled Sarah Winnemucca, Zitkala Ša and Charles Alexander Eastman scholars of reversal. Though none of them was a scholar by today's definition, they all acquired the tools necessary to understand the people that invaded their lands, i.e. their language and the benefits of an education in the settlers' school system. Armed with that knowledge and blinded neither by resistance to nor hatred of the settlers, they genuinely attempted to understand the conduct of the white people, at some point fascinated by their culture and the reasoning behind that conduct, including the bases of the feeling of superiority and resultant racism that white people displayed. Then the highlighted authors reversed the mirror; where once Whites revealed their images of Native Americans, now Whites were asked to see their images as portrayed by indigenous writers. When publishing their literary works, also much encouraged and assisted by some white people, Sarah Winnemucca, Zitkala Ša and Charles Alexander Eastman wished to make the white people aware of their hypocrisy and unfounded prejudice, possibly to evoke more understanding, if not appreciation, for the indigenous cultures. As ethnographers, the authors desired to explain what it was the white people declined to turn their gaze upon, i.e. indigenous traditions, epistemologies and ontologies, together with the fact that they were born equal, as stipulated by Enlightenment ideals. In their books, they therefore provided an acute analysis of the political, cultural and economic situation of their tribes in order to shed more light on them. Each of the authors realized, however, and Muszeika underscores this fact, that the main culprit of that behavior was white people's feelings of cultural superiority. In this light, the application of Whiteness Studies and the attendant tenets in analyzing the chosen texts is justifiable. To do justice to the authors under examination and even to establish the superiority of their reversed position, Muszeika from the beginning foreshadows the fact that the authors held no uniform attitude towards white people: while Sarah Winnemucca wavers in her approach towards the colonizer, trying to balance the losses and gains of their presence, Zitkala Ša adamantly resists the settlers' encroachment into native education, while Eastman opts for the assimilation and acculturation of his peoples in the face of the power of white cultures and their achievements; he often mentions literacy, Christianity, and technological achievements. Of the three authors mentioned, only Sarah Winnemucca eventually stayed with her people.

The last frame is the above-mentioned Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that both highlights the purpose of Muszeika's book and establishes the premise necessary to achieve that purpose. The traditions of setting up the TRC around the

world emanated from the 1970s in South Africa and then proceeded to North America. Everywhere, the overarching objective of establishing such commissions was to return the history of mistreated indigenous populations suffering under colonizers and to provide public attention to it, thus giving voice to the victims of colonization and restoring their human dignity. The ultimate aims should be to redress the wrongs and to acknowledge the guilt of the colonizer, compensate the victim, and open up venues of accepting accountability. The TRC Muszeika makes repeated reference to is the TRC active in Canada between 2008 and 2015, which indeed provided a platform for the healing of the First Nations by giving them a voice to share their experiences, mostly associated with the boarding schools, and by extension including the whole Canadian nation, who would finally learn about the history of colonial mistreatment of the indigenous. The first and most memorable moment marking the beginning of the works of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a public apology by Stephen Harper in 2008, on behalf of the previous generations that perpetrated the harm, along with a promise to improve the relations and accord the First Nations their rightful place in the history of the Canadian nation. This public apology was hailed as a major breakthrough in the Canadian-First Nations relations, and it was followed by apologies addressed to First Nations, the Metis and the Inuit, and by an expressions of guilt by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2015 when the TRC released the complete report. 2021 marked the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to be observed in September each year. In spite of all the initiatives, voices persist that undermine the importance of TRC and the possibility of fulfillment of its long-term goals. Yet Muszeika takes this TRC as a model the United States should follow, though she asks whether this is feasible, listing the obstacles that stand in the way. She further contends that the still uninformed attitude towards the indigenous population in the United States and the many prejudices still rooted in the stereotypes fashioned almost 300 to 400 years ago stand as major hurdles to reconciliation and solving numerous problems on many levels (social, political, education, health). Many Americans, like Canadians, despite the TRC results, know little about Native Americans, their culture and history, past and present, or even whether they still exist today. Muszeika tries to explain this by outlining the curricula in all stages of education in the USA, and showing just how little attention is placed on Native Americans. This predicament, however, has been improving, especially at the university level, but ever so slowly, and the curricula still largely ignore the role Native Americans played in the history of the United States. A great example in the domain of history revision is the long-overdue true account of the Thanksgiving holiday, as found in the book by David Silverman *This Land Is Their Land: The Wampanoag Indians, Plymouth Colony, and the Troubled History of Thanksgiving* (2019). In this accounting, Silverman (372) reveals scant knowledge of the holiday, even among history teachers from all over the USA, who arrive at specially designed summer courses for new instructions on the way they should teach about this holiday and what they should include. This serves as a confirmation of Muszeika's claim to restore the forgotten or silenced history of Native Americans in the United States and justifies her call for action.

Furthermore, she asserts that it is impossible to reverse American history (22-23) and the course of events that laid its foundations: conquest, colonization, the Revolutionary War, expansion, slavery, and the abuse and exploitation of minorities

(harnessing them in the process of the actual construction of the country and the state). That being stressed on many occasions, she thinks it is possible to acknowledge the abuses involved in building the foundations of the American state and identity, which incurred so many losses for the Native Americans in terms of life, land, culture, language and tradition. She also postulates that a rightful place should be made in the national narrative for those who were erased from it. This calls for mentioning the way Native Americans helped white people to survive in colonial America (i.e., the real story of the Thanksgiving), the way they helped defeat and then stave off the British in two wars for independence and sovereignty, or that they were involved in slavery and the Civil War. To this effect, she wants to contribute by presenting in *Approaching Whiteness* some indigenous individuals that showed agency and tried to navigate between the two groups, i.e. the western settlers and the indigenous people, and thus attempted to mitigate the effects of distrust and wrongful policies undertaken by the former. Thanks to their fluency in English, Sarah Winnemucca, Zitkala Ša and Charles Alexander expressed what native people thought about white people and their consistent attitudes, in the context of “savagism” that white people displayed when dislocating, assimilating and waging war against their supposed “red” brethren.

Critical to a full understanding of Muszeika’s analysis and the power of the gazes is Chapter 3, in which she provides a detailed delineation of the theoretical framework of her scholarly endeavor, the Critical Race Theory and its offshoots, Critical Whiteness Studies and Tribal Critical Race Theory. Here she is meticulous and knowledgeable, logically describing the origin and objectives of those fields of studies, albeit addressing those already familiar with the field and supporters of the theoretical framework in mind rather than newcomers. CRT was launched as a result of a struggle during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, which foremost fought for the equal treatment of and the improvement of life conditions for black people, and then other minorities in the USA. As a result of the formation of post-colonial studies, colonialism was blamed for the inequality experienced by indigenous peoples in many countries. CRT, and by extension CWS, both postulate that white people and the colonial system are rooted in white supremacy and are thus viewed as the main culprit of the long-term subjugation of people of color and are hence responsible for the resulting legacy of inequality, past and present. While CRT has concentrated on studying the development of racism and racial stereotypes in order to sustain the rule of white people, CWS has made whiteness the object of study and reflection. CWS therefore sees white people not so much through racial categories, but rather through the set of advantages they enjoy in political, social, educational and even religious spheres of life. CRW therefore aims to make white people aware of these benefits and, by extension, aware of the history of the rejection of these benefits—land, property, enfranchisement, certain professions—to people of color, which CWS treats today as the reason for enduring inequalities.

A subgroup of CWS is Tribal Critical Race Theory, which developed in the 1970s (see Brayboy). Its main goal was to give a voice to indigenous people from divergent tribes, as they differed in their approach to white people who colonized them at different times and in different ways. A consequence of the differences in experience may have been a different gaze. Muszeika points out that what sets TribalCrit apart from CRT was treating colonialism rather than race as the source of all other problems

that have plagued Native Americans to this day. She supports claims that in the case of Native Americans we should not even be talking about post-colonialism because Native Americans are still colonized. She agrees that among the manifestations of enduring colonization we may mention the perpetuation of the stereotypes of Native Americans, the lack of acknowledgment of white people's guilt in the mistreatment of Native Americans, and the lack of acknowledgment of a vital role Native Americans played in the history of the United States. It is precisely these three manifestations that Muszeika claims to be prerequisites for reconciliation, which she purports are necessary steps in (1) the improvement of relations between Native Americans and white people and (2) a pronouncement of the onset of post-colonialism.

There have been a number of landmark events that indicate at the very least an "erosion" of colonialism. Among them is the decision to dispense with offensive Indian mascots, widespread recognition of many instances of appropriation of Indian cultural elements (in the fashion industry, in Hollywood's rendering of *Pocahontas*), most notably a sincere, yet understated, 2009 apology by President Obama for "many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States"; in this statement, there was no mention of liability or compensation. Another landmark event is the exceptional first Maine Wabanaki State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which settled the issue of the forced foster care of the disproportionately high number of Native children from tribes from the state of Maine. These small steps deserve mention if only to establish their inadequacy. They indicate the reluctance of the federal and state governments to undertake any substantial action toward the improvement of their relationship with the tribes, but also the complex nature of the problems to be resolved, which resist the white-black paradigm that CRT imposes on all cases involving encounters between white and non-white people. An ideological approach has the great advantage of simplifying any issue for the sake of clarity and possibility of a solution, but it almost always fails to acknowledge the complex nature of problems involving white and non-white people, frequently alienating the other side either by dint of the rhetoric of oppression and a demand for an expression of the guilt of their forefathers for previous policies towards the Native Americans.

As was mentioned above, CRT, CWS, TribalCrit, and the reports of TRCs constitute the new matrix in which the selected authors have been re-read by Britta Muszeika with the aim of demonstrating that they were "scholars of reversal," ethnographers, and inquisitive readers of their own and white cultures, who, in fact, applied the tenets of CRT and CWS long before the theories were developed and their tenets were defined. What the authors wrote constitutes an important source of knowledge about their tribes, incisive observations and insights about white people and their encounters with the indigenous population, and, perhaps foremost, a clear refutation of the enduring stereotypes of Native America both in the US and in Canada.

Chapter 4 is dedicated in its entirety to an analysis of the three authors. The subject of the first part of Chapter 4 is the non-narrative by Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins (1844-1894) *Life among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* published in 1883 as the first autobiographical and ethnohistorical work written by a woman. Born into a family of tribal leaders of the Paiutes, which was nomadic and not of the warrior type, she

proved to be extremely effective in managing the affairs of the tribe in the capacity of a translator, negotiator, messenger, guide, lecturer, teacher and writer. Continuing the legacy of her grandfather Truckee, who decreed a peaceful and cooperative attitude towards the white people embodied in the sentiment that has it that “their lives are as dear to them as ours to us,” she strained every sinew to protect her people from the unjust policies and to advocate for their rights, humanity and needs in the face of their multiple dispossessions, mistreatment and neglect. Though at one point she remarks that “if the white people treat us like human beings, we will behave like a people; but, if we are treated by white savages as if we are savages, we will be relentless and desperate” (Winnemucca), she is able to assess members of the white race depending on the way they behave, for example, “privileging soldiers,” “loathing reservation agents.” In short, she possessed no one-size-fits-all assessment of white people, but took them as individuals and hoped for the same from white people, as posited by the main tenet of CRT. Readers can thus be encouraged to go back to the original work of Winnemucca and compare it with the textual analysis of Muszeika to truly appreciate Sarah Winnemucca’s wit, intelligence, and vivid descriptions of a wide array of situations, including her successful attempt to meet President Hayes in order to ask him to reverse the policy of dislocation of her Paiutes. Indeed Muszeika informs us—through her insightful account of Winnemucca’s experience—about Sarah Winnemucca’s contribution to settling the relations between Native Americans and white people of different ranks, in the sensitive time of forced assimilation, forced education and forced civilization of Native American tribes. This narrative, therefore, offers a counter-narrative to the dominant mainstream myth of colonization and expansion, providing an account of the painful and unhappy experiences of people who had to disappear physically or culturally for the policy to be instituted. Sarah Winnemucca has already been acknowledged; she has schools named after her and books written about her (see Zanjani). What is more, further elevating her cultural status, she has been inducted into the Nevada Writers’ Hall of Fame and the National Women’s Hall of Fame and is a part of the National Statuary Hall Collection in the U.S. Capitol (2005). Her story and gaze have received attention and acknowledgment and are incorporated into the American identity, but still only to a modest extent.

The second part of Chapter 4 is devoted to Zitkala Ša (1876-1938), which means “Red Bird” in the Siouan language, and is the pen name of Gertrude Bonnin, nee Simmons. She adopted it for her literary, social and political career, to better reflect her Siouan heritage. All her names capture her position in-between: white and native cultures, resistance and compliance, alienation and assimilation. The core experience that plays a pivotal role in re-reading Zitkala Ša’s *American Indian Stories* is the boarding school system and its consequences for her personally and for other Native American children subjected to an assimilationist policy. In her analysis of the stories, Muszeika concentrates on three main aspects: a biography of the author, who seems to have embodied the experience of thousands of other Native American children who went through the boarding school system; a retelling of the history of the boarding school systems in the United States and Canada; and a profuse description of the TRC in Canada and the extent to which it benefited Canadian society and the extent to which it might benefit the USA if it follows in Canada’s footsteps. The frame through

which she looks at the texts involves the tenets of CRT and TribalCrit. The hoped-for end effect she sees in the long-term is a reconciliation process, as reached in Canada. It is worthy of note that the mistrust towards white people was inculcated in Zitkala Ša by her mother who, already exposed to white people who moved her tribe to a reservation, always saw them as duplicitous, or, more literarily, as a “sickly sham” (Muszeika 7).

This mistrust would be first upended by the lure of the America Dream in the autobiography of Zitkala Ša, beautifully illustrated by the metaphor of the biblical red apple. She too would fail to resist the temptation of western civilization and the fruits it promised, and attend the boarding school in the East, and, like Adam and Eve, would be forever expelled from the life she knew up to the age of 8. To stretch the metaphor further, she frequently felt like the apple: red outside and white inside, partially demonstrating the success of the assimilationist policy through the boarding school system. She expressed this powerfully in a 1916 poem of hers: “I’ve lost my long hair; my eagle plums too. / From you my own people, I’ve gone astray. / A wanderer now; with nowhere to stay” (Lewandowski 105). Indeed, she assumed a life between her own people and mainstream society, enlightening the latter about the true image of the Native Americans and the disastrous consequences of the policies they implemented towards the former. In this part, we also learn how the boarding school experience proved to be a double-edged sword for her. On the one hand, it separated her from her own people culturally and physically; on the other, it bestowed on her the education and skills she was able to use both to record her own experiences as a Native American and as a student in her three autobiographies. It also equipped her to challenge the school system she found detrimental to the cultural survival of her people and to the well-being of indigenous children. Muszeika mentions Gertrude Bonnin as an activist, who founded or co-founded important organizations such as the Indian Rights Associations (1882) and the National Council of American Indians (1926), who was also a lecturer, teacher and a musician.

In *Approaching Whiteness* the story of Bonnin’s life intertwines with the history of the boarding school system, especially in Canada. The fragments in which Muszeika parallels the experiences and observations made by Zitkala Ša in her stories, dating from the late 19th century, and the testimonies given a century later by former students of the boarding schools in Canada, as gathered in the final 2015 TRC report, are compelling. Muszeika, therefore, stresses that it is paramount to listen to the testimonies of children who went through the system, to apologize for the harm done to them and their children, and to make amends. In line with this, Muszeika suggests Zitkala Ša’s stories be treated as such testimonies, which CRT would refer to as counter-stories. The “concrete” Native American that is Gertrude Bonnin, like Sarah Winnemucca, may both inspire others and teach a great deal about the lives of Native Americans that were hidden behind the stereotype of the savage Indian. In the context of CRT, Zitkala Ša is presented as a “scholar of reversal” since, having experienced the system as a student and then as a teacher, and having written negatively about the education process in the school system, she nonetheless graduated from this system and deconstructed it as an oppressive institution for Native Americans, often comparing it to a prison, eventually suggesting the need for such a system to change. We have to remember that, in spite of the second meaning of the apple metaphor, Zitkala Ša also serves as an example of the

futility of the system: not only did the boarding school fail to kill the Indian in her, but it almost rekindled her Indianness, albeit at the cost of her alienation from her people, kindling her fierce conviction that the Native American education system and tribal cultures were neither inferior nor less civilized than the culture of the so-called “pale faces.” She condemned white people for their ‘iron routines’ and the epistemologies they applied in schools “to denationalize” (as we say today) Native Americans for not perceiving in Indians human beings born equal to white people in terms of their capabilities, ambitions, and loyalty to their own traditions and cultures.

Muszeika is consequently harsh in her criticism of the boarding school system and the white people dedicated to implementing its practices irrespective of the cost borne by Native Americans or its mixed results (*vide* the cost and economic conditions of Native Americans in reservations then and now), but it should be pointed out that both Bonnin and Muszeika acknowledge the presence of good white people who disagreed with the assimilationist ideas and policies. Many of them are mentioned in *Red Bird Red Power: The Life and Legacy of Zitkala Ša* by Tadeusz Lewandowski, in which we gaze at Gertrude Bonnin through a magnifying glass, to see the complex nature of her life and the difficult choices she made. In Muszeika’s book we gaze at her through the TRC tinted lens and her challenge to the school system, which narrows the vision of her. Though Muszeika should thus be praised for bringing Zitkala Ša again into the spotlight, Lewandowski’s book offers a fuller picture of this extraordinary Native American woman. Those interested in art may refer to the article ‘A View into Two Worlds’ by Michelle Delaney and dedicated to Gertrude Bonnin, in the spring 2022 online magazine issued through the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian. This site can appeal to and inform more people from a wider audience about Zitkala Ša.

Muszeika lastly analyzes the gaze cast at white people through CRT and CWS by Charles Alexander Eastman (1858-1939), a Santee Dakota, also referred to as Ohíye Ša, ‘the one who wins’. One of the most renowned Native Americans of his time, Ohíye Ša was a doctor, prolific writer, lecturer, and activist with a considerable influence in the instruction of white people about Native Americans, especially the Dakota Sioux. Muszeika mentions all these roles, but concentrates on him as a writer. Out of the ten books he wrote, she chooses two that best fit her purpose: *Indian Boyhood* (1902), which depicts his childhood spent with his Dakota people until the age of 15, and *From Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916), which concentrates on his transition from the Indian ways into the mainstream Euro-American life, when he became a bridge figure (Deloria 122) between the two traditions.

At the outset of the analysis Muszeika sets the stage for understanding his oeuvre and stresses three points. In spite of his painful experiences, all endured prior to his career as a writer (the Dakota War of 1862, his flight to Canada, his life on a destitute reservation, and his work as a doctor assisting victims and survivors of the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890), Eastman adopted a benevolent attitude towards white people and was determined to assume their way of life, albeit as an Indian. He urged Indians, in accordance with the teachings of his father, to accept the situation of Native Americans as it was at the turn of the centuries and to make the best of it by availing themselves to all “its supernatural gifts (knowledge about time, space, mathematics, and belief)” (Muszeika 230).

The second underlying point of his writings, dictated by his assumed position as a cultural mediator, was that these accounts should be informative. Encouraged by friends and his wife Elaine Goodale, he set out to inform white readers about the Native cultures, specifically their constructive sides and values that could be borrowed by white people. In his first book he, therefore, writes about his childhood on the prairies and in the woods, and the sense of freedom and responsibility inculcated in Indian children through their upbringing, in harmony with nature and under the guidance of elders. One of the methods of description is a comparison of the native and western ways of life in order to make the Native significantly more accessible to white readers. In that comparison, when he sets the country and town boys against the prairie or woodland boys, or compares the “luxuries” of nature with the benefits of civilization, he is not acknowledging the superiority of either way of life. “Each civilization has rules and regulations that are good for their own way of living” (Muszeika 242), he asserts at one point. So each civilization developed customs and institutions that served it best and each should be assessed on the basis of this effectiveness in serving its own people. This is almost a paraphrase of today’s multicultural approach, far ahead of the then dominant Darwinian approach. Muszeika, therefore, sees in it an embodiment of the tenets of CWS. Eastman did not see the American civilization as superior and often pointed out its shortcomings in its constant striving for progress—the accumulation of possessions and power, and in its attempt to preach Christianity to the world by dint of savage methods. It might be surprising for the modern reader that Eastman was among the few people who shared and propagated such an approach during a meeting at the Universal Races Congress in London in 1911 (Muszeika 253).

In spite of this enlightened conclusion that cultures are equal, Eastman opted for the replacement of the emblematic bow and arrow with the book, for pursuing education and finding one’s place in the mainstream world, as he did in graduating from American schools (Beloit, Knox) and colleges (Dartmouth, Boston University Medical School). In his description of the western education system, fully cognizant that he was a teacher in the infamous Pratt Institute where he met Zitkala Ša and from which he quit in disapproval of the methods employed there, we will nevertheless find few derogatory or condemning statements, as in Zitkala Ša’s stories.

The third point that Muszeika underscores in his writing is his attempt to merge the two cultures, or more specifically, to incorporate those ideals, values and practices of Native cultures that may mitigate the vices of western cultures. First, she does this extensively by presenting examples of captivity narratives, which often display the infatuation of the captured white individuals with native cultures and the decision to go “native.” These narratives might also be a further source of testimony for today’s readership, as, at the time of publishing, they never reached a wide readership. Eastman also participated in establishing youth development programs within the framework of the YMCA and the Boy Scouts of Ernest Thompson Seton and Robert Baden-Powell. Drawing from the experience of his childhood when he was supervised by his grandmother and uncle and had the Dakota ways inculcated in him, he promoted the Indian way of life in harmony with nature as the best example of youthful virtue that might be followed by white girls and boys at summer camps. Eastman was thus proposing to merge the modern and anti-modern primitive ways of the Indians and

thereby “defend native cultures against the negative stereotypes left over from the colonial period” (Deloria 123).

Eastman’s writings seem an ideal embodiment of the precepts of CWS because Eastman aka Ohiye S’a was actually a cultural hybrid, a person who was born and identified as an Indian, but who chose to be an American and live among white Americans with a white wife who showed tremendous concern for Native Americans and their predicament. His contact with white culture and his ability to use concepts and the language of that culture to create an image of white people that would be comprehensible and digestible for them were therefore enormous. In his professional life as a doctor, writer and activist, he was extremely concerned with the plight of the Indians and was involved in many causes. In all spheres of his life, he collaborated with many white people to undermine policies made by other white people. In his books, his tone can be ambivalent, ranging from sincere praise for the western civilization and its architects to outright condemnation of the savage ways it spread that civilization. In this context, the call for white people to apologize and admit a sense of guilt is extremely complicated, as observed in this discussion in the USA regarding the introduction of CRT into American schools.

Muszeika tells us that these stories (like many others) were written “with white ink on a white paper in a white world” (62) that did not want to notice them. Indeed, irrespective of the size of the readership these books enjoyed, they received less attention than they merited and failed to break the stereotype of Native Americans that was formed then and which has endured to the present day. The image of Native Americans was dominated by stories written by white writers, among them James Fenimore Cooper, Catherine Sedgwick and Margaret Fuller. These profoundly influential authors did not allow their imagination to break free from the intellectual frames of the day to place Native Americans in mainstream society and allow them to live their lives among other white and non-white Americans. These authors described encounters between different ethnic or racial groups, e.g. Native Americans and white people (generally through a love story), and these encounters often ended in the disappearance of the Indian, either by death or the incorporation of the non-indigenous partner into the Indian community, or by passing for white in mainstream society. No literary picture of a lasting relationship that would constitute a cultural paradigm for others to follow was created. No wonder the Indian “vanished” from the intellectual landscape, which was symbolically sealed by George Catlin and Edward S. Curtis and their series of paintings devoted to the “vanishing” Native Americans (Lipiński 337-393).

Many readers who might know some of the above authors would rarely, if ever, have heard of some of the authors Muszeika mentions, perhaps surprisingly once we learn about the books and the influence their authors had at the time they were written. It was clearly a matter of publishing policy when a certain middle ground had to be struck between profits (i.e., a larger readership) and the mission publishers wanted to pursue when issuing, for example, *Apess* in the 1830s, *Zitkala Ša* in the latter part of the 1890s, and *Eastman* in the early 20th century. The mere numbers can suggest the choice made by the publishers.

Muszeika closes by wrapping up her scholarly endeavor by once again referring to the possibility of achieving the goal she set within the framework of Critical Whiteness

Studies. If the goal is reconciliation between white people and Native populations, while the prerequisite necessary to fulfill the goal is the critical reconsideration of white people as a race and their role in designing the racial hierarchy that marginalized Native Americans and other racial groups, then there is a long way to go in the United States. This view is certainly shared by many if we think about reconciliation modeled on the Canadian TRC, as no steps have been taken on a federal and institutional level apart from those already mentioned above, i.e., the 2009 Obama apology or Maine TRC. Neither is reconciliation in sight if we share Muszeika's view that reconciliation should be built on mutual interest, as the interest of the general public in Native American lives, problems and literature, music, art and their historical counter-story is apparently limited. It is still doubtful whether a modern "Sloan" would include a Native American as the object of a gaze, though many Native artists place themselves in contexts from which they were erased, for example, Rosalie Favell in her remake of Charles Willson Peale's "The Artist in His Museum" of 1822 or many nineteenth-century ledger artists.

If we take into consideration the breadth and volume of scholarly research, however, such as the new museums and galleries set up in the last decade (e.g. the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian), the soaring number of Native American historians using indigenous methodologies, and the plethora of indigenous artists, writers and musicians, we simply cannot say that there is hardly any change in the perception and place of Native Americans in today's United States. The change is slow, but the number of gazes cast by Native people and at Native people has never been higher. Included in such a list is the gaze of Britta Muszeika, a white German scholar, who substantially widens the view on Native people and by Native people. *Approaching Whiteness* is a great contribution to the body of work on Native Americans. It asks pertinent questions and tackles burning issues. It is not necessary to accept all of Muszeika's claims or conclusions, propounded by the so-called *Just America* (Packer 121), but a desire to take issue with them will broaden the scope of the debate, show a greater diversity of gazes, and eventually lead to a reinterpretation of Native Americans' role in history and research.

Works Cited

- Apess, William. *On Our Own Ground. The Complete Writings of William Apess. A Pequot*. Edited and with an Introduction by Barry O'Connell, U of Massachusetts P, 1992.
- Brayboy, Bryan M. J. "Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education." *The Urban Review*, vol. 37, no. 5, 2005, pp. 425-446.
- Deloria, Philip J. *Playing Indian*. Yale UP, 1998.
- Eastman, Charles Alexander. *Indian Boyhood*. 1902. U of Nebraska P, 1991.
- . *From the Deep Woods to Civilization Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian*. 1916. Settler Literature Archive, https://commons.und.edu/settler-literature/10From_the_Deep_Woods_to_Civilization. Accessed 3 March 2022.
- Hunt, Michael H. *The American Ascendancy. How the United States Gained & Wielded Global Dominance*. U of North Carolina P, 2007.
- Lewandowski, Tadeusz. *Red Bird, Red Power. The Life and Legacy of Zitkala Ša*. U of Oklahoma P, 2016.

- Lipiński, Filip. *Ameryka. Rewizje wizualnej mitologii Stanów Zjednoczonych*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2022.
- Lutz, Hartmut. *Approaches: Essays in Native North American Studies and Series*. Wißner, 2002.
- Packer, Gorge. *Last Best Hope. America in Crisis and Renewal*. Jonathan Cape London, 2021
- Pohl, Frances K. *Framing America*. Thames and Hudson, 2002.
- Smedley, Audrey. *Race in North America. Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*. Westview P, 2012.
- Silverman, David. *This Land Is Their Land: The Wampanoag Indians, Plymouth Colony, and the Troubled History of Thanksgiving*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019.
- Winnemucca Hopkins, Sarah. *Life among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*. Edited by Mrs. Horace Mann, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1882. Accessed 20 March 2022.
- Zitkala Ša [aka Gertrude Simmons Bonnin]. 1916. *American Indian Stories*. Hayworth Publishing House, <https://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/zitkala-sa/stories/stories.html>. Accessed 20 Apr 2022.
- Zanjani, Sally. *Sarah Winnemucca*. Nebraska UP, 2004.

Katarzyna Macedulska

A Walk in the White Spaces

DOI: 10.7311/PJAS.16/2022.

James M. Hutchisson, editor. *Conversations with Paul Auster*. UP of Mississippi, 2013, 220 pages.

Paul Auster. *A Life in Words: Conversations with I.B. Siegmundfeldt*. Seven Stories P, 2017, 320 pages.

The two volumes under discussion—*Conversations with Paul Auster* edited by James M. Hutchisson (2013) and Paul Auster's *A Life in Words: Conversations with I.B. Siegmundfeldt* (2017)—take us behind the scenes of his writing process as Paul Auster lets us into the intricate entanglements of his oeuvre, which includes translations, essays, poetry, prose (fiction and non-fiction), and movies. Both the publications, which are over 200 and 300 pages, respectively, offer the reader not merely a sneak peek backstage, but rather a long and riveting walk through the territory that constitutes Auster's literary universe.

The 2013 volume is a collection of interviews that Auster gave in the years 1985-2010. It is a well prepared selection of seventeen conversations, each of them conducted by a different person, most of them of literary/artistic background as well: other writers, authors, a poet, a painter, a film operator, activists, radio personalities, scholars, and journalists; one interview includes questions from the public. James M. Hutchisson arranged the interviews in the order of their publication starting with a short 2-page 1985 conversation led by Stephen Rodefer which oscillates around Auster's initial literary activities as a translator, and he closes the volume with the talk conducted by Nick Obourn which is concerned with Auster's novel *Invisible* (2009). This chronological arrangement enables us to follow Auster's works in the order of passed time and follow the distinctive relationship between his works where one text grows out of another.

As Auster himself claims: "All my work is of a piece" (Mallia 6); in another interview he maintains this affirmation explaining that his texts are "The story of my obsessions The saga of the things that haunt me ... all my books seem to revolve around the same set of questions, the same human dilemmas" (McCaffery and Gregory 18). While he takes himself or perhaps rather his inner terrain as the ground for narrative exploration, his books respond to one another. For instance, *The Book of Memory* emerged out of *Portrait of an Invisible Man* and the two are published together as the volume *The Invention of Solitude* (1982), his first longer prose work. The family saga/bildungsroman *Moon Palace* (1989) and *The Music of Chance* (1990), a dark novel about the meaning of freedom, also form a pair: "At the end of *Moon Palace*, Fogg is driving out west in a car... I realized that I wanted to get back inside that car" (McCaffery and Gregory 38). As Auster himself explains: "In some sense, *Moon Palace* and *The Music of Chance* are opposite books, mirrors reflections of each other" (Irwin 41). It proves to be a rule rather than an exception that Auster operates

by pairs¹: the other novels where the same or similar impulses and/or events give rise to different responses include *The Book of Illusions* (2002) and *Oracle Night* (2003), *Travels in the Scriptorium* (2006) and *Man in the Dark* (2008)—also re-published in one volume in as *Day/Night: Two Novels* in 2013, as well as *Invisible* (2009) and *Sunset Park* (2010). Not surprisingly, the same is true of two of his movies: *Smoke* (1995) and *Blue in the Face* (1995): “They’re opposite sides of the same coin... and the two films seem to complement each other in mysterious ways” (Insdorf 63). Auster’s universe is one of doubles and of connection: either by purposeful design or by chance, where it is sometimes hard to determine which is which. This uncertainty propels and structures the narrative mechanics of his texts.

Hutchisson’s arrangement of the interviews has an accumulative effect where some serious and trivial details are revealed and gradually expand the context in which Auster’s works emerged. The onus is on the reader to keep in mind all these different elements both known and new available for swift recall and in constant interaction as potential constituents of Auster’s literary expressions. While obviously the interviews were not conducted with the view of being put together in one volume, the effect they jointly achieve is of a meaningful collage—it is as if they were meant to be published this way where one interview informs another and augments its significance—just like Auster’s texts do. As such, the interviewer’s voices come across as a unanimous inquisitive literary detective persona investigating the case of the text.

The entanglements between Auster’s texts in general and novels in particular go beyond his predilection for pairs; they are intensely intricate and complex and result from the work of a peculiar sensibility for connections, metaphors, and symbols that is able to arrest associations and remains in a vigilant attunement to the everyday life. From the interviews it transpires that the links between Auster’s texts are multiple and of varied kinds and they form idiosyncratic constellations. The translations were an indispensable apprenticeship in language and literary form, whereas poetry was the bedrock for his prose, which he actually gradually entered on different levels and in different ways with: first the threshold narrative poem “White Spaces” (1980), secondly with the non-fiction *The Invention of Solitude* (1982), and finally with the novel *The New York Trilogy* (1987). The movies seem, on the other hand, to grow out of his prose and poetry alike and then feed back to his prose (Auster claims to no longer write poetry, at least not for publication). His novels and autobiographical texts are all linked (across and within genres) by formal devices and thematic threads or even whole webs of connections in terms of characters’ names and features, events, places, issues explored, things, objects, artefacts. The continuity of the literary effort is also sometimes paradoxically secured by an outward breaking with or going against what he had previously written. Yet the wrestling ground remains the same, the territory does not change, it gets expanded. In fact Auster’s literary movements are quite circular, or perhaps rather cyclical. Hence, whereas the texts themselves are read word by word in linear progression, the works together form and exist in a dialogical simultaneity.² Overall, with each text the reader realizes that they enter a space that is at once new

1 There are also triptychs: *The New York Trilogy and Moon Palace*—inside one novel we have three interlocking stories and 3 versions of the (same) story simultaneously.

2 Which is outwardly thematized in *Travels in the Scriptorium* (2007).

and familiar, a mesh of a greater or smaller density of signification whereas its center is exactly where the reader currently finds him/herself. While each text can be read on its own and for its own sake, it can also be pried deeper as a part of a much greater endeavor, a life-time achievement.

Moreover, the interviews lay bare that whereas the dates of publications are known, they are not necessarily close in time to the very genesis of a given book, especially when it comes to Auster's earliest literary output. From the interview with Larry McCaffery and Sinda Gregory we learn that this was the case of *In the Country of Last Things* (1987). According to Auster, Anna Blume, the main protagonist, first came to him in the early 1970s as a voice which he could not at first sufficiently uphold to continue with the story. The voice returned when Auster was midway through the composition of his universally famous *The New York Trilogy*, so he turned his efforts into writing the first 30/40 pages of Blume's story in between the 2nd (*Ghosts*) and 3rd (*The Locked Room*) parts of the former. The story had an initial working title *Anna Blume Walks Through the 20th Century*, which definitely transmits the aura of the work and one wonders why it disappeared from the final version, why it did not stay at least as a subtitle. In this interview, Auster also reveals his wife, the author Siri Hustvedt, to be his first reader and the one who steadfastly encouraged him as he wrote this novel where the leading voice is that of a woman.

All of the interviews inevitably delve into—either right from the start or they ultimately veer towards—the writing process itself and Auster is willing to explore it for us. The book within a book structure, the meta-narrative and meta-fictional layers in his novels, the intense self-reflexivity on part of himself as the author and his characters as authors—all these that are considered elements of postmodern fiction Auster grounds and familiarizes as parts of daily reality. He considers himself primarily a storyteller, a realist, who is gripped by images (walls, falling from high places, stone, etc.) or fragments of images (e.g. David Zimmer's mustache). These are the grains in which he sees the world of a particular novel with its peculiar axis emerge: the image(s) as character, the character as image(s). And, as has already be mentioned, the voice. Each character, alongside their unique autonomy, comes with their distinct tone. The figure's speech—its rhythm, cadence, melody—orchestrates the narrative form: "If it really has to be said, it will create its own form" (Mallia 5).

Auster experiments with form are not for the sake of experimentation but are undertaken to do justice to the inner logic of his endeavors. He claims to answer to the story as it comes to him appropriated by its characters. In his fiction and non-fiction he is frequently guided by a title, if provisional, and explores the possibilities and boundaries of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person narration; he also combines the different modes within one text. He has experimented with recurrent themes, footnotes, abandoned plots, parallel plots, shorter book formats and extensively long books; he divided his books in parts, sections, added epilogues, he portioned the material from one books into more than two, he extricated characters from one text to another. He has had his books filmed (*The Music of Chance*), directed his own movies (*Lulu on the Bridge*), and described movies in his books (*The Inner Life of Martin Frost* in *The Book of Illusions*). The interviewers elicit information on Auster's literary influences and he promptly supplies the classic fairy tale, the international and national fables, the pioneering works of Kafka, Beckett,

Musil, James, the American classics of Hawthorne, Poe, Thoreau, and many others. There are some literary theorists mentioned as well (at Columbia University he was supervised by Edward Said): Blanchot, Bakhtin, Sartre, and many others, but the reader wishes for more and Auster does not like to admit here his in fact broad literary knowledge or perhaps does not want us to be sidetracked or gripped by theory too much. One thing is certain: in his acts of invention he definitely is about diversity and inclusiveness, he is more about letting things in than keeping things out (Irwin 45).

Auster stands by both the physicality of writing and his intuition as he is led on by the will of his figures, who bear (and wear) the traces of himself. His characters are the manifestation of what he dubs “the multiplicity of the singular” (McCaffery and Gregory 35): some of his features and autobiographical facts he endows them with on purpose, some of his personal memories resurface embodied in their stories as if of their own accord. Reading the interviews, the conclusion transpires that staying true to his figures is tantamount to staying true to the parts he harbors in himself, it is a way of maintaining integrity. Moreover, what emerges from the interviews is Auster’s engagement with the figures in terms of facing them with particular questions and sending them on urgent missions—philosophical, existential, literary, cultural, as well as prosaic everyday errands—while he closely follows in their tracks with language. Thus, the surface, the known, and the visible are plumbed for the dark, the hidden, the inaccessible, the scars, the traumas, the secrets—all of which are expressed as exerting their influence in mysterious ways. When he writes, Auster tends to deal with the matters at hand: his engagements, obsessions, his reactions, and emotions to both past and current events are relived and reconsidered in different configurations. He maintains he has this compulsion to write, for him it is an inner necessity, or as Hutchisson reminds us of Auster’s own words: “a matter of survival” (Hutchisson xv). His characters go through crises, we witness them falling into pits, metaphorical and literal, or we find them already there at the bottom while they are trying to hoist themselves and stand on their own two feet again (serendipity is often of help here). Sometimes their predicaments are a matter of the conundrum of forces beyond them, sometimes they are of the character’s own making. Nevertheless, the writing is not about finding the culprit or the reasons why (or at least not solely and not directly), it is not so much about the whodunnit, but a matter of working through whatever appears in front of one and remaining human in the process.

In the interview by Michel Contat, the longest conversation in the collection, placed right in the center of the book, we get closest to Paul Auster’s invention, especially in the talk about Auster’s manuscripts, which are housed at The Berg Collection in the New York Public Library. These can be perused by anyone interested and, as Contat remarks, contain useful information about Auster’s drafts, his planning, outlining, self-censorship, editing. Interesting here is that even though Auster claims to be moving in the dark and his works to be resolved only in the process of writing, here he admits to opting for an arch, a frame to the book: “everything you say in the beginning of the book is somehow reflected in the end. So if you don’t have a sense of the whole shape of it, it makes the beginning lose its meaning also.” (Contat 76).

James M. Hutchisson’s collection of interviews with Paul Auster is an awaited first publication of this kind dedicated to the writer. Virtually all of the included

interviews have acquired the status of iconic conversations and key reference points for Auster's audience. It is with gratefulness that the readers welcome them collected together between the covers of a single volume. The editor provides us with an informative introduction to the entire collection, includes also the helpful list of Auster's works to date, a chronology in terms of a timeline of achievements and biographical information on the writer, and an index. Every interview comes also with the information on where it was first published, which is important especially for scholars and researchers. What could be added in this volume would be the notes on the particular interviewers, a short biographical information on each person who conducted the interview would be appreciated. All in all, the volume *Conversations with Paul Auster* is a valuable contribution to the field of studies on the American author.

Hutchisson begins his introduction with an apt statement that "Paul Auster has granted a lot of interviews, more so perhaps than most contemporary writers" (xi). The size of the interview material collected throughout the years somewhat confirms the suspicion that for Auster interviews are more than just a fulfillment of his obligation to the publishers, as he claims them to be. In the interviews he gives there is a noticeable pleasure on his part, a veritable engagement in the conversations about his work and himself as a writer. One could even risk a conclusion that the talks are where his work is not so much discussed as continued but in a different form, i.e. in a dialogue with the immediate other person instead of a distant reader. Whereas Hutchisson's collection was a retroactive effort, the book long interview *A Life in Words: Conversations with I.B. Siegmundfeldt* (2007) began as a collaborative endeavor of the scholar and the writer with the view to being published as such.

The book opens with a "Preface" which promptly recalls that at the heart of Auster's writing is the unknown and writing is "about accommodating the unknown" (89). The author of the now 17 novels and 5 autobiographical books, he invariably claims to maintain a distance from the inner source that emits the intuitive impulses. Yet, Siegmundfeldt's promise to focus on *What, When, and Where*—instead of the usual *Why and How*—persuaded him to partake in the extended interview, first of its kind, about his work with a scholar that "took place from November 2011 to November 2013" (ix). The volume takes the entire oeuvre (in the chronological order) of the writer into consideration and is divided into two parts: "Autobiographical Writings" and "Novels." These are preceded by a preface and a prologue, and are followed by the complete list of Auster's works, a bibliography, and an index.

To the reader familiar with the previous publication, this book reads as both an insightful repetition and a continuation—a confirmation and a broadening of the already covered ground as well as a discovery of some new regions. The focus is on all aspects of the writer's craft, which helps contextualize his works in the greatest detail yet. The idea is to devote certain time and pages to the singular works by Auster. The dialogue revolves around the most crucial themes: the personal aspects, family matters and secrets, father-son relations, author-character relations, the vicissitudes of making a living as a writer, the regular stages in the development of a person—from early boyhood to advanced manhood, and others. Here prominent are also the losses in time: missing people, places, objects (that both fiction and non-fiction can in a way preserve, retrieve). Siegmundfeldt addresses also the shifts in Auster's oeuvre as it

expands: the figures of the women become more developed and complex; the structural and formal aspects of the later memoirs and novels are also of import. Focus is also on the immanent fingerprint features of his prose: the vicissitudes of solitude together with the feelings and states of enclosure as well as incessant movement, i.e. on Auster's grammar of wandering and wondering, walking and pacing, dancing and jumping. The physicality of writing is mirrored by the physicality of moving, and movement is what secures the flow of language for him.

The later works are addressed as well where we witness a recourse to the tangible physicality in Auster's oeuvre with *Winter Journal* (2012): a book about the body (where writing starts), the spaces it traverses, the senses and sensory data; it is also about Auster's mother so it complements *The Invention of Solitude* (1982) over a span of thirty years. It also ties in with "White Spaces" (1980), the breakthrough symbolic prose poem, and thus one can risk a statement that Auster's autobiographical works have come full circle. This poetic memoir, yet again, has its immediate sequel, a mirror complementary text in *Report from the Interior* (2013). This text in turn is devoted to life perceived on the inside, to the intellectual epiphanies: "inner development, thought, morality, aesthetics, politics, religion" (Auster 65); it is about being a member of society, culture, nation. Both memoirs are written in the second person singular, which continues Auster's penchant for formal expeditions. These are continued in the novels. In *Invisible*, he used more than one narrator for the first time (there are three narrative voices). In that novel also one of its parts is written in the 2nd person (aside the 1st and 3rd person narration) and thus he explores its potential this time in fiction. *Sunset Park*, on the other hand is his only novel set in the present (all others are set in the past). His narrative technique here is new inasmuch as in composing the sentences he follows the associative wanderings of the mind (albeit not in the stream-of-consciousness way as we are familiar with).

Siegmundfeldt asks Auster important questions about the author's placement between the world and the word, his standing with regard to time and place, the relationship with language, the experiences of inadequacy and failure as well as the triumphs of expression and composition. One of the leading concerns that runs through the entire book interview, and it also informs the entire oeuvre of Auster, is the question of ambiguity. The talk lays bare the multidimensionality of ambiguity in his text: the ambiguity that results from the perception of chance (coincidence vs. purpose; or: irregularity vs. pattern), the ambiguity that stems from the impossibility to know another person when one hardly is able to know oneself (Auster talks here of the self as a spectrum rather than an entity and the sometimes contradictory conclusions one arrives at about oneself and other people). Ambiguity is also encapsulated in one of Auster's early formulations: "The world is in my head. My body is in the world" (73, 227). Further, ambiguity ties in with the notions of contradiction and paradox, "two truths that are equal and opposite" (46) together with the conclusion that: "we can never arrive at any stable truth. There is no one answer. Once you think you have one, that's the moment when you begin to drown" (96). Also, ambiguity happens to be the effect we witness in *The New York Trilogy*—an apprenticeship in living with ambiguity in the form of a novel—of "the kind of writing that cancels itself out, almost with every sentence, every thought, so that, ultimately, it's confusing" (110). Auster's

ambiguity looks forward onto the horizon of the future but what it promises to him is an abundance of more questions. As he repeats this time in reference to *Sunset Park*: “Things are not going to be resolved, and he has to learn to live with it” (302).

Overall, this volume sets some records straight, especially Auster’s insistence upon the difference between his texts of fact and his texts of fiction. It also draws on and continues the early stories Auster either imparted in his works or during interviews. Some of the stories come full circle, like the one when as a young boy he wanted an autograph from Willie May but didn’t have a pencil; he left empty-handed. Now, after 52 years, by a confluence of circumstances and an engagement of some people, he is in a possession of a baseball ball signed to him by the baseballer himself. Life and fiction for Auster follow similar, if not the same, trajectories. In fact, he does not let go of the fascination of human perception of reality and invention, fact and fiction—the way we consider narratives and how we decide whether something is a real occurrence or has been created for the sake of the story, and how wrong we can sometimes be in our judgments (e.g. the episode of the dog playing the piano in *Timbuktu*, as well as the reasons for the inclusion). Overall, Auster staunchly believes, in the end it is not about the distinction as such, but about the power of the story and our readiness to suspend our disbelief and jump for/into it; to have the courage to make a leap of faith over the mounting suspicion and believe the tale, whereas how we manage in the process so much depends on how we read.

Auster opens up in the dialogue with Siegumfeldt and sheds some new light on the context in which his books have been composed. Again, we learn of some other works that have originated much earlier than it was believed: *Moon Palace* goes back to 1968, and in fact it was once one book with *City of Glass* (1985), whereas the origins of *Oracle Night* date back to 1982. Of great interest is Auster’s own approach to *Timbuktu*, as well as the reasons for the inclusion of the endearing story of Kafka’s doll in the only book of his written as a comedy—*The Brooklyn Follies*. Insightful are Siegumfeldt’s readings of and to-the-point remarks about the later novels: *Travels in the Scriptorium*, *Invisible*, and *Sunset Park* that contextualize Auster’s prose in a different perspective. He in turn, shares his reading background, which includes texts by: Merleau-Ponty, Kierkegaard, Hume, Berkeley, Kant, Descartes, Pascal, Marx, Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein, all pre-Socratics, John Milton, Cervantes, Dostoyevsky, and many others. For the first time, in this volume Auster talks about religion and Judaism quite extensively. He also reveals his penchant for numbers. Overall, Auster and Siegumfeldt together take their reader for a long talk/a long walk through the main and the less traveled roads and that is an immensely rewarding experience. The scholar’s idea and its fulfillment is a great accomplishment, a feast for Auster’s readers, and a valuable contribution to the studies on the contemporary writer, and to the research on the writing process and authorship in general.

In both the volumes of interviews here considered what we participate in is an evolution of man as writer and writer as man, the author of translations, poetry, essays, memoirs, novels, and movie scripts who never flinches from using himself to get to the core of what it means to be human, and a self-reflexive human at that. In the end, both the volumes leave us with a sense of direction and a challenge to (re) discover Auster’s universe: both the nicely zoomed in on places as well as the remaining

territory nearby and further away. In both *Conversations with Paul Auster* and in *A Life in Words: Conversations with I.B. Siegmundfeldt* some extensive plumbing is exposed as the mechanics of Auster's literary engagement emerges from the exchange of readings and viewpoints. As such, the interviews are a continuation of his writerly endeavor in the form of dialogue—a meeting of words, perspectives, and meanings, if provisional. In fact, these two volumes not only prolong and extend Auster's oeuvre but have become an already indispensable part of it themselves, a part of the greater narrative rhizome that constitutes his integral literary universe—a mesh of entangled lines and connections—that as such opens up towards other texts and the world at large.³

Works Cited

- Contat, Michel. "The Manuscript in the Book: A Conversation." *Conversations with Paul Auster*, edited by James M. Hutchisson, UP Mississippi, 2013, pp. 64-94.
- Insdorf, Annette. "The Making of *Smoke*." *Conversations with Paul Auster*, edited by James M. Hutchisson, UP of Mississippi, 2013, pp. 50-63.
- Irwin, Mark. "Memory's Escape—Inventing the Music of Chance: A Conversation with Paul Auster." *Conversations with Paul Auster*, edited by James M. Hutchisson, UP of Mississippi 2013, pp. 40-49.
- Mallia, Joseph, "Interview with Paul Auster." *Conversations with Paul Auster*, edited by James M. Hutchisson, UP of Mississippi, 2013, pp. 5-12.
- McCaffery, Larry, and Sinda Gregory. "An Interview with Paul Auster." *Conversations with Paul Auster*, edited by James M. Hutchisson, UP of Mississippi, 2013, pp. 13-39.

3 The two volumes of interviews do not cover the latest works by Auster: the novel *4321* (that is composed of 4 parallel narratives) and the biographical *Burning Boy: The Life and Work of Stephen Crane*, which were published in 2017 and 2021, respectively.

REVIEWS

John Berryman. *The Selected Letters of John Berryman*. Edited by Philip Coleman and Calista McRae, Belknap P of Harvard UP, 2020, 736 pages.

Eric Hoffman, editor. *Conversations with John Berryman*. UP of Mississippi. 2021, 175 pages.

Not that long ago, in 2014, to mark the centennial of John Berryman's death, Farrar Straus and Giroux republished his three books of poems: the groundbreaking *77 Dream Songs* (from 1964), the less well-known *Berryman's Sonnets* (1967), and his opus magnum, *The Dream Songs* (1969), complemented by *The Heart Is Strange: New Selected Poems* (edited by Daniel Swift, 2014) and a reissue of *Poets in their Youth* (2014), a memoir by Berryman's first wife, Eileen Simpson. "These books make a fierce little pile," wrote Dwight Garner in the *New York Times*: "When you aren't looking, they may scald a hole through your bedside table" (Garner 1). Signaling, perhaps, a rising interest in the work of one of America's more original and difficult twentieth-century poets, they were recently followed by *The Selected Letters of John Berryman*, edited by Philip Coleman and Calista McRae (2020), and *Conversations with John Berryman*, edited by Eric Hoffman (2021). Both constitute a needed addition to the field of Berryman studies

Hoffman's collection gathers over twenty conversation reports and interviews conducted with Berryman on various occasions between 1939 and 1971, including the transcript of the 1970 televised meeting, prefaced by William Heyen's poignant account of the day itself and the events preceding it. Published in 1974 in *Ohio Review* (two years after the poet's death by suicide), Heyen's "A Memoir and an Interview" is a harrowing portrait of a man "shortly after the beginning of another slip" (Haffenden 379): Berryman had just joined Alcoholics Anonymous and was an outpatient at St Mary's Hospital in Minneapolis. Referring to the crucial notion of irreversible loss underpinning his poetic activity, and the "epistemology of loss" from "The Ball Poem" (1948), Berryman remarks to Heyen and Mazzaro: "isn't it true that the three of us sitting here, began with a great loss, from the controlled environment of the womb?" (qtd. in Hoffman 112, cf. Warso 77-81). Discussing *Dream Song 1* in a 1971 letter to Peter Stitt, he'll note: "the first line drifted into my head and I saw that it's about The Fall.... But as I followed the Song thro', mentally, it seemed also to dramatize the birth-trauma... the terrible 'departure' is from the womb) (*Selected Letters*, n.p.). Hoffman's collection includes several other important conversations, among them "The Art of Poetry" from 1970, conducted by Stitt and published originally in *Paris Review*, and the *Harvard Advocate* interview from 1968. Both had been reprinted before, in *Berryman's Understanding: Reflections on the Poetry of John Berryman* (edited by Harry Thomas, Northeastern UP, 1988) but the book, itself surely of use to anyone interested in Berryman, has now been out of print, and Hoffman manages to partly fill the gap. It is in the *Harvard Advocate* that Berryman remarks on the possibility of an "ulterior structure" to the *Dream Songs* (ironizing

that one day, perhaps, “somebody can get to be an associate professor or an assistant professor by finding it out,” 73), discusses the importance of naming in Henry James and Stephen Crane (all while denying any special significance to the name of the Songs’ hero—the question of Henry’s name is dismissed also in the 1965 Lundegaard interview), finally, refers to the arguably shocking minstrel presences in the Songs, also in relation to his often overlooked, early short story, “The Imaginary Jew” (1945). In “The Art of Poetry” Berryman famously expresses “rage and contempt” at being labeled “confessional” (Hoffman 122) and talks about his relationship with other poets, from Robert Lowell, Delmore Schwartz, and Dylan Thomas to W. H. Auden, W. B. Yeats, Walt Whitman, and William Shakespeare, returning yet again to the question of Henry’s name and its insignificance. While any poet’s commentary on their own work needs to be approached with caution, this one’s insights into the work of others prove revealing, and it is worth remembering that Berryman was also a literary scholar and biographer. As such, *Conversations* provide useful context for the reading of his work, now available in a single book, each interview accompanied by a small introduction. Hoffman’s collection includes also a brief chronology, a list of recommended, selected secondary sources, a personal yet informative introduction to the whole, and an appendix with the editor’s own, hand-picked “selected Berryman” for the reader’s consideration.

Edited by Philip Coleman and Calista McRae, the 2020 selection of Berryman’s correspondence opens with the poet’s 1925 letter to his parents, sent from a boarding school and signed “your loving son, John Allyn.” Less than a year later, his father, John Allyn Smith, commits suicide in Tampa, Florida, “close by a smothering southern sea” (*The Dream Songs* 83). Reflection on the impact of this loss and its formative function (“You is from hunger, Mr Bones”; *The Dream Songs* 83) can be found also in Berryman’s correspondence, for instance, in the letter sent in 1955 to Saul Bellow, after Abraham Bellow’s sudden passing:

The trouble with a father’s dying very early (not to speak of his killing himself) is not so much just his loss as the disproportionate & crippling role the mother then assumes for one. The three men I chiefly think of all lost their fathers when you have. The results as I make them out seem to be: grief, remorse, loneliness, and an entirely new strength. Shakespeare was probably in the middle of *Hamlet* and I think his effort increased; also he then wrote *Othello*, within about a year. Freud was 40, and wrote to Fliess a week later: ‘By one of the obscure routes behind the official consciousness the old man’s death affected me deeply... the whole past stirs within one. I feel now as if I had been torn up by the roots’ and his self-analysis gained in intensity and it was exactly a year later that he recognized the Oedipus complex. Luther’s sec’y [secretary] wrote to his wife: ‘The news of his father’s death shook him at first, but he was himself again after two days. When the letter came, he said, “My father is dead.” He took his psalter, went to his room, and wept so that he was incapacitated for two days, but he has been all right since.’ May you be now or soon. (*Selected Letters* n.p.)

Coleman and McRae’s voluminous edition now complements *We Dream of Honour*, the 1988 selection of the poet’s letters to his mother, edited by Richard E. Kelley. Martha Berryman was a continuous presence and influence in his life—in the

1972 semi-autobiographical, Freudian and unfinished *Recovery*, he'll have Dr. Alan Sevrance remark in his journal:

Maybe my long self-pity has been based on an *error* and there has been no (hero-)villain ruling my life but ONLY an unspeakably powerful possessive adoring MOTHER, whose life at 75 is still centered wholly on *me*.... And my vanity based on *her* uncritical passionate admiration (letter ten days ago on my lectures twenty years ago!)—rendering me invulnerable ('indifferent'—a fact, too) to all criticism and impatient with anything short of total prostration before the products of my genius[.] (*Recovery* 80)

This impatience and not a small amount of vanity, ambition, irony, a sense of failure, and inner torment reverberate in over 600 letters selected for the volume. Addressed to family, friends, other poets, editors, colleagues, and former students, they are filled with tedious and touching reports—on “endless negotiation about teaching, magazine commissions, publishers & agents” (letter from 5 October 1953), contemporary literary life, and what is otherwise referred to as Henry's “plights and gripes,” all because:

Life, friends, is boring. We must not say so.
After all, the sky flashes, the great sea yearns,
we ourselves flash and yearn,
and moreover my mother told me as a boy
(repeatingly) 'Ever to confess you're bored
means you have no

Inner Resources.' I conclude now I have no
inner resources, because I am heavy bored.
Peoples bore me,
literature bores me, especially great literature[.] (*The Dream Songs* 16)

Coleman and McRae's selection closes with a 1971 letter to Edward Hoagland, whose “delicious, solemn, funny, original, pathetic, vivid, tragic, exuberant” *Notes from the Century Before* Berryman admired in a letter sent to Hoagland on January 2, 1968. The other one, dated for “Xmas 71,” is short enough to be quoted in full:

Delighted abt the coming reprints—I hope you are working on a new novel, tho' I spent a rare happy envying evening last month with your essays. It is high time, my boy, for the one 'that will beat Bellow.' He's half through one on our tragic & beloved Delmore Schwartz. I wasted eight months this year on a novel myself, 220 pp of it, and have nothing good to say for myself at all except affection to you. We had a baby, Sarah Rebecca, in June—a beauty.

John

Kate says Hi! Be merry w. Marion. (*Selected Letters*, n.p.)

On January 7, 1972, Berryman jumped off the Washington Avenue Bridge onto the west bank of the Mississippi River. His correspondence has so far been accessible through the University of Minnesota Libraries, and otherwise, mainly, quoted in his two biographies: John Haffenden's *The Life of John Berryman* (1982) and Paul

Mariani's *Dream Song: The Life of John Berryman* (1990). Coleman and McRae's selection, available now both in print and a search-friendly digital format, accompanied by useful notes, a glossary, chronology, and a short introduction, constitutes thus an indispensable resource for anyone interested in researching Berryman's life-work. Coleman's continuous efforts for the development of Berryman scholarship are nothing short of admirable.

Works Cited

- Berryman, John. *The Dream Songs*. 1969. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993.
 ———. *Recovery / Delusions etc.* Dell Publishing, 1974.
 Haffenden, John. *The Life of John Berryman*. Ark Paperbacks, 1982.
 Garner, Dwight. "A Chance to Read Between the Lines." *New York Times*, 15 Oct. 2014, Section C. 1.
 Warso, Anna. *Staging America, Staging the Self: Figurations of Loss in John Berryman's Dream Songs*. Peter Lang, 2021.

Anna Warso
 SWPS University, Warsaw

Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich. *Między Freudem a Bogiem. Życie i twórczość Anne Sexton [Bewteen Freud and God: The Life and Work of Anne Sexton]*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Katedra, 2020, 340 pages.

Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich's book on Anne Sexton is a well-researched biography, which effectively weaves together in-depth readings of the poet's work and refreshing insights into her turbulent life, marked by emotional upheavals, internal conflicts, and mental illness. Even though the title itself seems to imply a duality of work and life, the book vividly illustrates how in Sexton's case the two were inextricably embedded in each other. The author carefully analyzes how Sexton's life informed her poetic thinking and how the act of writing affected the way she experienced the world, placing special emphasis on the poet's relationship with psychoanalysis and her unorthodox approach to religion and spirituality as intimately tangled with the body.

Composed of eight chapters, the book focuses on those aspects of Sexton's life and work that have received slightly less attention from scholars, critics, and translators alike, as the author explains in the introductory note (11). While in the United States Sexton's work is widely known and discussed, in Poland it remains largely unexplored. Sexton published ten poetry collections (three of them appeared posthumously), including a Pulitzer-winning *Live or Die* (1967), and a play *Mercy Street* staged in New York City in 1969. Even though she was later overshadowed by Sylvia Plath's fame, she received much critical acclaim and was widely recognized on the American literary scene already in her lifetime. In Poland, however, only one collection, *Kochając zabójcę*, was published in 1994. As Aleksandrowicz-Pędich points out, the Polish anthology of American women poets *Dziki brzoskwinie* (2003), edited by Julia Hartwig, includes only two poems by Sexton (in Hartwig's translation), while fourteen poems by Plath. More recently, two of Sexton's poems were translated by Magdalena Szewczuk and Adam Buszek for the literary magazine

Wizje.¹ Hopefully, in the twenty-first century an interest in Sexton's work will grow, since, as Aleksandrowicz-Pędich demonstrates, her life and work are a "fascinating material that can strongly resonate with the experiences of contemporary readers" (8).

Między Freudem a Bogiem constitutes an important contribution to the studies on Sexton. It introduces Polish readers to her poetry as inseparable from her life, complicating the oft-used category of "confessional poetry" and renewing its meanings for the twenty-first century. The book is both research-based and lucidly written. It draws on academic articles and monographs, but at the same time reads like a good story, which makes it an informative and engaging source both in academia and beyond. When it comes to the factual information, it mostly relies on Diane Middlebrook's *Anne Sexton. A Biography* (1992) and Anne Sexton's *A Self-Portrait in Letters* (2004) edited by her daughter and literary executor Linda Gray Sexton and Lois Ames (2004). Since one of its major focal points is the relationship between Sexton's poetry and psychoanalysis, *Między Freudem a Bogiem* also integrates enlightening insights from Dawn Skorzewski's *An Accident of Hope. The Therapy Tapes of Anne Sexton* (2012): a monograph which sheds light on audio recordings and notes from Sexton's therapy sessions with Dr. Martin Orne, which are archived at the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard. However, unless it is not indicated in the bibliography, Aleksandrowicz-Pędich does not draw on the Anne Sexton Papers, which are part of the Harry Ransom Center and consist of a plethora of unique materials. Typically, biographies utilize such materials to offer original insights into the author's life and work and open new research paths. On the other hand, the Papers have not been digitized, which makes them difficult to access.

Aleksandrowicz-Pędich also situates the entanglements of Sexton's life and work in a larger context of American patriarchal culture from the late 1940s through the 1970s. Here, however, the analysis is sometimes slightly less nuanced. For instance, the chapter 2, "W świecie amerykańskiej kobiety" ("In the American woman's world"), opens with an observation that "[in] the past, American women, just like women all over the world, were confined to the emotional and private realms of life, while their work was mostly done at home" (51).² The author continues to observe that "the tendency of middle-class women to develop emotional disorders was not only a medical, but also a social issue" (51-52) and refers to the canonical 1892 short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. The connection between the conservative late 1940s and 1950s—when Sexton was a young woman—and the late nineteenth century is a significant one, but a more detailed contextual analysis which would establish a link between these two historical moments is missing.

As Adrienne Rich, Sexton's contemporary, noted, the 1950s in the United States was a period when "both poetry and women were being re-domesticated" (193). The prefix "re-" is crucial here. The time when women and poets like Sexton, Plath, or Rich, among others, were relentlessly trying to reconcile creative work with the roles of wife and mother, was marked by a return to conservative values, including a

1 See, Anne Sexton, "Dwa wiersze," translated by Magdalena Szewczuk and Adam Buszek, *Wizje*, no. 2/2019. <https://magazynwizje.pl/anne-sexton-dwa-wiersze/>.

2 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of excerpts from *Między Freudem a Bogiem*. *Życie i twórczość Anne Sexton* are my own.

traditional family model with a father as a breadwinner and mother as a homemaker. This model, rooted in the suburban American Dream, was weaponized as part of American capitalist ideology during the intensified Cold War tensions. Significantly, the process of re-traditionalizing was coupled with a systemic erasure of the history of revolutionary feminist thinking that emerged in the 1920s in the United States and was manifested both in the streets and in literature. Aleksandrowicz-Pędich refers to the “Roaring Twenties,” but only in passing—in the context of lavish parties that Sexton’s parents enjoyed—and does not mention this revolutionary tradition that post-war women poets were cut off from as a result of the conservative backlash in the 1950s. Such trail blazers as Djuna Barnes, Muriel Rukeyser, Margaret Sanger, Anne Spencer, Mina Loy, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, and many others refused to be “confined to the emotional and private realms of life” (51), to return to Aleksandrowicz-Pędich’s description of the climate that Sexton was born into, and engaged in writing and activism, bringing together the affective and the intellectual, the public and the intimate. Experimenting both in life and work, they also negotiated cultural taboos that Sexton and her contemporaries had to re-negotiate: taboos that included women’s body and sexuality. Discussing, even briefly, this process of re-domestication might have enriched the contexts of patriarchal backlash that Sexton was exposed to and which contributed to her positioning as “a secret beatnik hiding in the suburbs in my square house on a dull street” (*A Self-Portrait* 70-71), as she wrote in her 1959 letter to Carolyn Kizer.

Między Freudem a Bogiem also offers a refreshing take on “confessional poetry”: a poetry “school” that Sexton is associated with alongside Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, and John Berryman, among others. As opposed to deep-seated definitions which tend to reduce confessional poetry to a direct expression of the poet’s own affective states, Aleksandrowicz-Pędich’s book illustrates how Sexton’s poetry constitutes a meticulous research into “the self” understood as a multi-faceted psychological and philosophical concept. The relationship between Sexton the poet and the speaking subject in her poems was “complicated,” as Aleksandrowicz-Pędich points out, quoting the poet’s own words: “I’ll often confess to things that never happened” (*No Evil Star* 131-132). While Sexton often places emphasis on the lyric “I” and draws on her own life experience, she also refigures the embodied self in a broader and more universalist sense. Moreover, in *Między Freudem a Bogiem*, Sexton also proves a “chronicler of historical evils, who was able to comment on them in a poignant way” (88). Even though she did not explicitly engage with politics, her historical and sociocultural awareness informed many of her works. And, importantly, her research into the self and relations with others was enriched by references to mythology, psychoanalytic theory, and popular culture. For instance, as Aleksandrowicz-Pędich illustrates, the figure of the father in Sexton’s poetry is an intricate assemblage of “autobiographical elements, an influence of psychoanalytic treatment, the workings of patriarchal culture, and, most of all, the author’s creative imagination” (26). Such a rethinking of the confessional mode of poetry builds on a recently observed intensified interest in the concept of “life writing” and tallies with the current trends in the Plath scholarship,³ which also refigures the meanings of lyric confession.

3 See, for instance, *Sylvia Plath in Context*, edited by Tracy Brian, Cambridge UP, 2019.

As the title *Między Freudem a Bogiem* suggests, the biography foregrounds two recurrent themes in Sexton's imaginative life-writing: her engagement with psychoanalysis and her spiritual search. As Aleksandrowicz-Pędich explains, Sexton spent most of her life in therapy, which at the time still relied to some extent on Freudian psychoanalysis. Also, she was encouraged to start writing poetry by her psychiatrist and therapist, Dr. Martin Orne, who became a major figure in her life. Through close readings of Sexton's writing, the author demonstrates how deeply the poet's experience as a patient and her intimate knowledge of psychoanalytic theory were reflected in her poetry. Significantly, Aleksandrowicz-Pędich combines her textual analysis of poems with critical reflections on the ethics of Freudian psychoanalysis, tracing how it was evolving in post-war America's patriarchal society.

The second theme is developed in Chapter 7 titled "W poszukiwaniu Boga" ("In search of God." Here, the author establishes interesting connections between Sexton's reliance on psychoanalysis, her life-long spiritual search, and profound interest in the body through a reference to Julia Kristeva's 2009 monograph *This Incredible Need to Believe*, which claims that "[f]ar from locking themselves into the obsessional palace of pure thought, thinking, for women, cannot be shut off from carnal sensoriality: the metaphysical body/soul dichotomy is, in these women, unbearable" (114). Aleksandrowicz-Pędich situates Sexton's poetic thinking within a larger tradition of destabilizing long-standing dualities: a tradition in which many women philosophers, writers, poets, and activists also partook. The author compellingly argues that Sexton consistently brought together the incorporeal and the material and that her affirmative refiguring of female corporeality and sexuality was intimately tangled with her search for spirituality, which was a yet another manifestation of her feminist thinking. She focuses in particular on these poems where Sexton offers an experimental vision of God as dissociated from any religious dogmas: a vision which presents God as intensely embodied.

Aleksandrowicz-Pędich hailed Sexton as a "prophet for tumultuous twenty-first century: an era marked by depression, searching for emotional rest, and digging deep into internal wounds—whether through Freudian analysis of childhood trauma and life mistakes or by putting hope in God and religion-rooted explanations of the world" (11). While I am reluctant to agree with such a characterization of the twenty-first century: Freudian psychoanalysis is nowadays taken more seriously by literary theorists than practicing psychologists (as pointed out elsewhere in the book) and a lot of people actually turn away from religion, I also consider Sexton's work highly relevant today. It constitutes a meticulous research into the self in crisis, both psychological and sociocultural. It complicates the idea of lyric expression, which is a recurrent topic in contemporary debates on poetics. And, last but not least, it develops integrative, non-dualist thinking that we desperately need in times of intersecting global and personal crises. All those aspects of Sexton's work are analyzed in Aleksandrowicz-Pędich's book, making it quite a compelling read for times like these.

Works Cited

Kristeva, Julia. *This Incredible Need to Believe*. Translated by Beverly Bie Brahic, Columbia UP, 2009.

Rich, Adrienne. *What Is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics*. Norton, 1993.

Sexton, Anne. *No Evil Star: Selected Essays, Interviews, and Prose*. Edited by Steven E. Colburn, U of Michigan P, 1985.

———. *A Self-Portrait in Letters*. Ecco, 2004.

Joanna Mąkowska
University of Warsaw

Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands. La Frontera: The New Mestiza. The Critical Edition*. Edited by Ricardo F. Vivancos-Pérez and Norma Elia Cantu, Aunt lute books, 2021, 550 pages.

Gloria Anzaldúa is a central figure in the modern Border studies theory. When in 1987, she published her groundbreaking book *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, she became the most representative and most often quoted researcher of the US-Mexican border, and soon an icon of the entire border studies. As she repeatedly emphasized, the task of her life was to create a new Borderlands discourse, which would include the voices of socially and culturally excluded people—women of color, the queer or the poor from the so-called Third World. Demonstrating visionary sensitivity, Anzaldúa has long drawn attention to the problems and issues that are currently being discussed and written about in various academic disciplines. The Borderlands she depicts is an area where various systems of power, exploitation, and oppression intersect—capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and the white man’s supremacy. Her Border symbolizes cultural crossroads and the intersection of multiple identities, where Chicana *transfrontera feminista* (transitional feminist) consciousness was born. Therefore, the New Mestiza created by her, the figure of a strong and self-conscious woman, breaking all barriers and limitations through a feminist consciousness rising method, has become a model for many women worldwide. Also, her *La Frontera* is more than just a revisionist feminine vision of the Borderlands, contrasted with the one known from the canonical male depictions. Hence, it has become a constant inspiration for numerous academics.

Initially meant as a poetry collection, *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* became a milestone in various disciplines. It redefined Chicano/a, Border and women’s studies in the U.S. and significantly impacted such disciplines as cultural and literary studies, political and ethnic studies, and feminist philosophy and queer theory. Therefore, in 2021 the critical edition edited by Ricardo F. Vivancos-Pérez and Norma Elia Cantú was published to honor Anzaldúa’s legacy and make her masterpiece available to a broader audience.

The critical edition has two introductory chapters, one by each of the editors. Norma Elia Cantú, in her Preface “Doing Works that Matters. The Impact of Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*,” focuses on three aspects. In the first part—the trajectory of *Borderlands*—she describes her history of reading the book and meeting with Gloria Anzaldúa, thus using Anzaldúa’s method of *autohistoria* (life-writing). Cantú recalls how the book influenced her life as a woman of color and an academic, offering her “a voice that spoke to my own experience and that

relied on that experience to theorize about the larger world. It was a voice I knew well but had never acknowledged or truly honored or respected. My own internalized racism, instilled through the South Texas public education pedagogy of the time, had silenced that voice in me” (8). Further, she claims that “*Borderlands* has become iconic precisely because it voices what has been silenced” (8).

Since Anzaldúa’s work impacted so many people and areas of scholarship, in 2007, Norma Cantú founded The Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa (SSGA) to continue Anzaldúa’s life project. Every 18 months, in November and May, the SSGA co-sponsors and hosts El Mundo Zurdo conference to provide a space for scholars, artists, writers and activists who deal with or are inspired by Anzaldúa’s work. Subsequently, the second aspect discussed by Cantú in her Preface is the impact on disciplines (women’s, border and Chicana studies) in which *Borderlands* provides “a new lens for analysis” (10), and the last one is the presentation of the international scholarly community that investigates Anzaldúa’s work across the globe.

According to Cantú, publishing *Borderlands* was a paradigm shift that created/redefined epistemological and ontological frameworks within many disciplines. For example, Anzaldúa redefined the border as a liminal space and a socio-political and cultural construct and suggested the third space (Nepantla) to feminism which was later developed into the third space criticism and differential consciousness theory by Chela Sandoval in her famous book *Methodology of the Oppressed* (U of Minnesota P, 2000). Apart from that, Anzaldúa focused on Spanish and Mexican vernacular folk culture contributing to the continuous discussion on *mestizaje* and appropriating the term to create a hybrid culture and a “spiritual *mestizaje*.”

As far as literary studies are concerned, I believe that *Borderlands* has been an experiment of its own that defies any categorization. In its form, the book combines prose and poetry, theoretical and autobiographical essays with Native American myths and legends. The prose segment consists of 7 chapters in which Anzaldúa focuses on the history of Mexico and the Mexican-American border, migration of the borderland population, Chicano/a mythology, *mestizo* culture etc. The poetry segment consists of 6 sections containing 38 poems altogether written in English, Spanish or both languages with the use of code-switching crossing the linguistic borders. Finally, *Borderlands* provides a new method of studying history called *autohistoria*, which enriches the traditional autobiography with cultural and social background.

Lastly, Cantú describes the work process on the critical edition of *Borderlands/La frontera*. The determination and devotion of the second editor, Ricardo F. Vivancos-Pérez, played a significant role here. He studied materials included in The Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa’s Papers archive at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection in Austin at the University of Texas. And he equipped the critical edition with the four appendices of previously unpublished drafts of *Borderlands* (pictures of original manuscripts), which are meant to give access to Anzaldúa’s manuscripts to the people who may never be able to visit the archive themselves and/or encourage those who can to come and explore her work on their own. Appendix 1 is a complete draft of the table of contents, preface and acknowledgements. The second Appendix presents the prose section drafts from October 20 and 22, 1986, and the third is the first draft of the poetry collection. Finally, Appendix 4 offers selected drafts of poems in

Borderlands and other previously unpublished materials that inspired the content of the final version of the book. The appendices show the process of Anzaldúa's creative work and how thoughtful and conscious she was about every line and sentence.

Moreover, the footnotes to appendices help compare and clarify some sections of the drafts with the published text. They are the book's unquestionable asset and an invaluable resource for the people who study Anzaldúa around the world. Having access to her manuscripts, drawings, and recordings allows us to comprehend how multi-talented person she was, but at the same time humble and aware of her weaknesses and limitations, and hence diligent in her creation.

Apart from that, Ricardo F. Vivancos-Pérez, in his introductory chapter "The Process of Writing *Borderland/La Frontera* and Gloria E. Anzaldúa's Thought," examines the process of writing *Borderlands* concerning Anzaldúa's theories of writing. He mentions how "thoughts on her own writing process were... fundamental to the articulation of her philosophy and spirituality" (21). The main ideas on which she focused were: how creating empowers women of color, *mestizas*, and queer and marginalized subjects; how the process of writing highlights intersectional markers of identity such as gender, race and ethnicity, sexuality, class and geographical location etc.; and lastly how writing/creating is a "central step to spiritual transformation, knowledge, activism, and healing—a step toward a New Mestiza consciousness, as explained in the seventh chapter of *Borderlands*" (22). The writer, for her, was an intellectual, artist and spiritual leader—"the writer as *tlamatini* (wiseman in Nahuatl)... and the writer as shaman, transforming herself into somebody else" (24). On the other hand, writing is a "sensuous act and a source of intense anxiety," alchemy that transforms both the reader and the storyteller. It is no wonder that Anzaldúa meant the prose section to be a teaching tool for her philosophy. As Vivancos-Pérez recollects, "for her, the main purpose of the book was to spread, but also produce knowledge from her own vantage point as a working-class Chicana lesbian writer, educator, and activist from South Texas" (19).

Furthermore, he quotes one of the interviews with Anzaldúa in which she says: "I didn't want to do what Audre Lorde describes as using the master's tools; I did not want to ape the master. I wanted to write in a mestiza style, in my own vernacular, yet also use the knowledge and histories of the white cultures, of other ethnic cultures," later, in another interview, she says, "we need to understand each other's history.... A lot of people don't know that our experiences have been misdocumented. Our history has been fictionalized" (19). The last two sections of Vivancos-Pérez's introduction are analyses of firstly poetry collection, in which he describes the poems that Anzaldúa deleted from the final text and her process of selecting the material for the final publication, and secondly, the prose section in which similar examination is conducted. With this work, Vivancos-Pérez offers the readers a thought-provoking insight into the mind and process of conscious creation of the artist. Finally, he concludes that the research, the review of literature and footnotes that accompany the body of *Borderlands* aim to show that this pan-American masterpiece "was written by an experienced writer, activist, and educator as a part of an organic, ongoing, and a very ambitious project of creative philosophy" (37).

The critical edition ends with an annotated bibliography of Anzaldúa's publications and a comprehensive list of scholarship on *Borderlands/La Frontera*

printed from 1987 to 2020, compiled both thematically and alphabetically. The last text, the Afterword “New Doorways into Anzaldúa’s Creative Mind” by AnaLouise Keating, Anzaldúa’s literary trustee, describes the origins of The Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa’s Papers archive and its content which, as Keating claims, is enormous and a great potential for Anzaldúan scholars. The wide range of materials covers Anzaldúa’s entire life, from birth certificates to obituaries, since Gloria herself collected most of the materials related to her literary, intellectual, activist and daily life. Hence, the archive collection contains her fiction and poetry manuscripts and “highly significant authorial and editorial revisions; thousands of pages of notes; lots of correspondence with friends, publishers, scholars, fans and lovers; candle affirmations; tarot... astrology readings; favorite books filled with marginalia, drawings... audio and video recordings of writing workshops, meditations and over twenty journals” (544). The archive is still growing because Anzaldúa’s colleagues, friends and family donate more materials to the collection. Keating also describes nine stages in Anzaldúa’s writing process that have contributed to producing this immense number of artefacts. According to her, “a single essay or chapter might exist in thirty or more drafts—and Anzaldúa seems to have saved them all... which is a scholar’s dream, containing all sorts of intellectual and/or aesthetic nuggets” (545).

To conclude, the critical edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera* is intended for various international audiences and scholars working in different fields. It aims to enrich our knowledge of Anzaldúa’s writing theory and deepen our understanding of her teachings and concepts. It offers an insight into the author’s mind and life and the critical framework to the vast community of scholars who continue to study *Borderlands* in their everyday research and teaching, thus disseminating Anzaldúan studies across the globe.

Grażyna Zygadło
University of Lodz

Jarosław Hetman, editor. *David Foster Wallace*. Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2021, 154 pages.

The volume *David Foster Wallace*, edited by Jarosław Hetman, provides the first comprehensive scholarly study in Polish of Wallace’s fictional and non-fictional work. Hailed as one of the best minds of his generation and as a worthy successor to the old postmodern masters, David Foster Wallace left, despite his relatively short life that ended in suicide at the age of 46, a strong and intense mark on American literature. In his eulogy at the funeral in mid-September 2008 Don DeLillo characterized Wallace’s work as animated by the effort “to reconcile what is difficult and consequential with a level of address that’s youthful, unstudied and often funny” and thus able to articulate “the loss and anxiety, darkening mind, self-doubt” with a persistent sense of vitality and stunned vigor. In closing his speech DeLillo called Wallace “a brave writer,” whose legacy will continue to resonate in the broad context of contemporary culture: “We can imagine his [Wallace’s] fiction and essays as the scroll fragments of a distant future. We already know this work as current news—writer to reader—intimately, obsessively. He did not channel his talents to narrower patterns. He wanted to be equal

to the vast, babbling, spin-out sweep of contemporary culture” (“In Memoriam”). The last fourteen years proved DeLillo’s prediction correct: Wallace’s work has attracted the attention of both academic and non-academic audiences not only in the US but also worldwide. Wallace’s novels, short stories and essays have been translated into several languages, including Polish. Jolanta Kozak translated two collection of short stories *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* and *Oblivion*, and the collection of essays *A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again*; Mikołaj Denderski took on the challenge of trying his hand at Wallace’s unfinished experimental novel *The Pale King*. The translation of *Infinite Jest*, Wallace’s most celebrated work, a novel that catapulted him to fame and further released his talent for writing, has been scheduled for release in summer 2022. This growing interest in Wallace’s work created a need for a balanced and critical overview that the volume, published as a part of the series *Mistrzowie Literaturny Amerykańskiej*, seeks to meet.

In the editor’s introduction, Jarosław Hetman discusses the work, life, and posthumous reception of Wallace and his writings, examining questions of artistic intent, emerging narrative strategies, literary and philosophical inspirations, and more. There is also a discussion of feminist readings and the ensuing accusations of a misogynist perspective embedded in some of Wallace’s narratives. While the David Foster Wallace phenomenon has undeniably been fueled by a cycle of biographical appraisals and re-appraisals, assessments and re-assessments including all aspects of his public persona,⁴ the central focus of the volume is on Wallace the writer, whose treatment of female characters, as Hetman shows, is nuanced and capable of inducing a self-reflective stance on misogyny and the objectification of women’s bodies. A case in point is the collection *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*, which as Hetman contends, can be interpreted as specifically directed at a male audience, ironically encouraging them to make a list of sins and offences and to re-assess their habitual ways of thinking and acting. In the first two chapters of the volume Hetman traces trajectories connecting the early texts, *The Broom of the System* (1987) and *Girl With Curious Hair* (1989) with the monumental narrative of *Infinite Jest* (1996) by placing Wallace against the background of postwar American literary tradition, in particular postmodernist writing. Regarded as a worthy successor of such prominent writers as John Barth, William Gaddis, Robert Coover and Thomas Pynchon, Wallace was exceptionally self-aware of this legacy to the point of being haunted by a feeling of belatedness. In a persistent effort to chart a new direction, Wallace tried out all kinds of possible ways to move beyond postmodern self-reflexivity and the meta-fictional trap. As A.O. Scott put it, “if one way to escape from the blind alley of postmodern self-consciousness is to turn around and walk in another direction.... Wallace prefers to forge ahead in hopes of breaking through to the other side, whatever that may be” (41). Wallace succeeded in breaking through with the publication of *Infinite Jest*, praised for its exuberance and intellectual impishness, a brilliant work of “a writer of virtuosic talents who can seemingly do anything” (Kakutani). Hetman insightfully discusses this enthusiastic reception of *Infinite Jest*, arguing that its unexpected success, a true Black Swan event, is due not only to its sophisticated, nuanced conceptual framework steeped in mathematical and

4 For a critical overview of this phenomenon, see for example Moats’s essay “Year of David Foster Wallace.”

philosophical ideas (in particular that of Waclaw Sierpiński, William James, Søren Kierkegaard), but also its strong “prosocial” stance and direct, unpretentious insistence on being a decent human being. Good fiction, as Wallace observed in an interview with the literary critic Larry McCaffery, “could have as dark a worldview as it wished, but it’d find a way both to depict this dark world *and* to illuminate the possibilities of being alive and human in it” (26, emphasis in original).

The question of the writer’s capacity to capture reality’s infinite complexity by revealing its (blocked, neglected or aborted) possibilities is the central concern of Marek Paryż’s contribution that discusses Wallace’s non-fictional work *A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again*. Paryż sees this collection of essays as co-shaped by the tradition of American New Journalism that Wallace the reporter had been aware of and exposed to. By carefully constructing his journalistic persona, Wallace successfully combined postmodern sensibilities and a self-deprecating, absurd sense of humor with a sensitive ear for the polyphonies of contemporary American speech to produce a wildly funny, discerning and approachable body of texts that diagnose “a great despair and stasis in U.S. culture” (Wallace, “E Unibus Pluram” 49) and the American way of life. Wojciech Draj in his contribution to the volume turns his attention to some of the shortest (and therefore frequently undervalued or marginalized) stories in *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* to study Wallace’s original appropriation of the microfiction genre. Draj argues that Wallace, keenly aware of postmodern mannerism, explores the potentials of this genre so that he can move beyond unrelenting irony and create intimate zones of communication, in which manifestations of empathy are not merely thinkable but also desirable. In his critique of the post-industrial condition of society Wallace joins the ranks of other contemporary authors such as Dave Eggers and Mark Z. Danielewski, whose fictions acknowledge the importance of empathy and human commonality. Tymon Adamczewski likewise addresses the issues of communication and commonality by reading the collection of short stories *Oblivion* (2004) as a sort of narrative meditation on suffering, depression and other nightmares of consciousness. While it is tempting to approach this text through biographical lenses, *Oblivion*, Adamczewski maintains, is more than a contemporary jeremiad of the author who repeatedly fell victim to doubt and depression throughout his life. Shaped by Wallace’s interest in philosophy and language games, the collection probes the existential depths of our contemporary condition by drawing our attention to the complexities of inner experience as mediated by language and the plurality of meanings. In the penultimate chapter of the volume Mark Tardi, in turn, examines some rich and fascinating relationships between mathematics and literature in his reading of Wallace’s essay “Rhetoric and the Math Melodrama” (2000) and the book *Everything and More: A Compact History of Infinity* (2003). Wallace’s writing persistently reminds us that mathematics is not necessarily a logical science that excels in formal accuracy and precision but can be a source of aesthetic experience. Tardi shows how Wallace renders abstract theorem and concepts into compelling and emotionally laden elements of narrative that help readers to appreciate the beauty of prime numbers, infinity and other concepts. The volume concludes with an essay on *The Pale King* (2011), which Jarosław Hetman reads as a conceptual sequel to *Infinite Jest*. If the latter novel, whose narrative structure was inspired by the concept of Sierpiński’s fractal triangle,

injects a sense of unpredictable dynamism into its unfolding, *The Pale King* seeks to top it in its effort to imitate the dynamic structure of tornado-like vortices as it (somewhat paradoxically) delves into prosodic everydayness, complacent solipsism, and consumer capitalism. The final result is overwhelming: *The Pale King* sucks in style conventions, techniques, narrative voices and perspectives to diagnose “routine, repetition, tedium, monotony, ephemeracy, inconsequence, abstraction, disorder, boredom, angst, ennui” (501) as true and fearsome enemies of our lives. And yet as Hetman notes, the novel’s resonance is ultimately upbeat in its persistent reminder that the key to modern life is the ability “to find the other side of the rote, the picayune, the meaningless, the repetitive, the pointlessly complex. To be, in a word, unborable” (905). This imperative appears to apply also to Wallace’s *oeuvre* itself, which, as the essays collected in the volume show, remains relevant and poignant today and is far from being “borable.”

Works Cited

- DeLillo, Don. “In Memoriam on David Foster Wallace,” *Five Dials Special*, https://fivedials.com/files/fivedials_no10.pdf. Accessed 1 June 2022.
- Kakutani, Michiko. “A Country Dying of Laughter. In 1,079 Pages.” *New York Review of Books*, 13 Feb. 1996, <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/13/books/books-of-the-times-a-country-dying-of-laughter-in-1079-pages.html>. Accessed 1 June 2022.
- McCaffery, Larry. “An Expanded Interview with David Foster Wallace.” *Conversations with David Foster Wallace*, edited by Stephen J. Burn, UP of Mississippi, 2012, pp. 21-52.
- Moates, Michael. “Year of David Foster Wallace,” *Fiction Advocate*, 20 Dec. 2012, <https://www.fictionadvocate.com/2012/12/20/yearofdavidfosterwallace2012/>. Accessed 2 June 2022.
- Scott, A. O. “The Panic of Influence.” *New York Review of Books*, 10 Feb, 2000, pp. 39–43. Accessed 1 June 2022.
- Wallace, David Foster. “E Unibus Pluram: Television and US fiction.” *A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again. Essays and Arguments*. Abacus, 2002, pp. 21-82.
- . *The Pale King*. Little, Brown, 2011

Arkadiusz Misztal
University of Gdańsk

Lukasz Muniowski. *Narrating the NBA: Cultural Representations of Leading Players after the Michael Jordan Era*. Lexington Books, 2021, 207 pages.

In *Narrating the NBA*, Łukasz Muniowski looks into the lives of, as the title informs us, leading NBA players after the Jordan era. The players in question are Shaquille O’Neal, Alonzo Mourning, Vin Baker, Allen Iverson, Antoine Walker, Steve Nash, Tim Duncan, and Kobe Bryant. The title of the book itself is highly informative, as it indicates that an attempt has been made to present these eight players as more than “just athletes,” but as cultural phenomena. Moreover, the title highlights Michael Jordan

(the only name mentioned in the title) as a towering figure in the NBA, especially in the 1990s, which decade Muniowski aptly refers to as “the Michael Jordan Era.” At this point, I need to note that I am writing this review as a researcher and, more importantly, as a fan of basketball, the NBA, and some of the players⁵ whose (auto) biographies are analyzed by Muniowski. Therefore, I am biased. I am biased in the sense that *Narrating the NBA* is one of those books which I consume passionately, regardless of their academic value, which is not to say that the academic significance of Muniowski’s work is debatable.

Narrating the NBA opens with an Introduction, which provides a richly documented history of sports writing (mainly) in America. In his review of this particular genre, Muniowski focuses on sports journalism and the concepts of biography and autobiography. He also presents the modern understanding of sports as a part of Debordian society of spectacle at the crossroads of sports, business, and the media.

In the first chapter, Muniowski analyzes the mythical status of Michael Jordan. Now, Muniowski and I disagree on a number of things when it comes to Jordan. For example, I consider Jordan to be the GOAT (Greatest of All Time), to which Muniowski replies that there are other players worthy of consideration, to which my reply is, “Come on!” and I believe that renders all his arguments invalid. I also think that he puts too much emphasis on Jordan’s control over the narratives which made him reach “a truly mythical status” (Muniowski 26). For example, while I agree that Jordan and his PR team had some power over the manner in which Jordan conducted himself on and off the court, they did not have power over the publication of Sam Smith’s *The Jordan Rules*, which book, as observed by Muniowski himself:

presented Michael Jordan as he was—arrogant, cocky and competitive—which was not how he conducted himself during public appearances. Paradoxically, the book played a vital role in the popularization of Jordan and, in consequence, the sport of basketball, as the hero was made, somewhat surprisingly, more appealing thanks to his demythologization. (19)

The paradox presented above puts Jordan’s power to narrate his own story in question. Had Jordan not dazzled and won on the basketball court, there would be no mythical Jordan, just as there are no mythical: Penny Hardaway, Vince Carter, and Grant Hill, all of whom are mentioned in *Narrating the NBA*, yet none of whom has a chapter devoted to his biography.

There are opinions, however, which Muniowski and I share. One is that Jordan “may have been the most important athlete of the twentieth century” (Muniowski 20), which claim is supported by a 2022 poll conducted by HoopsHype among 52 former and current NBA players, which places Jordan on the top of the list of the most influential players in the NBA history with 73.85% of the votes (Scotto). I also agree that “no player has influenced the NBA discourse the way Jordan did and none has contributed to the importance of basketball-related storytelling as much as he” (Muniowski 20), or in the words of the comedian Bill Burr, “It’s like when Michael

5 That is a polite way of saying that I am a “Michael Jordan psycho fan”—Muniowski’s words, not mine.

Jordan came into the NBA. He was so fucking good... he wiped out everyone. No one ever goes, 'He's the next Dr. J..' 'He's the next Wilt.' No one says that. It's always, 'He's the next Mike'" (46:36–52). Not only did Jordan “erase the NBA’s past,” but his career also “established a blueprint” for a hybrid of the sporting, marketing and personal narratives (Muniowski 21) for “the next Jordans,” and I too think that none of these players managed to reach status equal to Jordan’s due to the “fact that sports stars simply are no longer able to become mythical heroes.... Instead, they are celebrities” and even though they “still are personages ‘of not only local but world historical moment’... sports stars are no more regarded as more than human” (Muniowski 21). With that observation, the Author moves on to his analysis of the narrative strategies used in the (auto)biographies of eight NBA players.

The first player analyzed by Muniowski is Shaquille O’Neal whose biographies ought to be viewed as a clear case of self-promotion and even false advertising—the blurb of the 2012 *Shaq Uncut* promises “Juicy, behind the scenes peeks” none of which can be found in the book. What can be found is yet another case of O’Neal portraying himself as black Superman—an archetypical superhuman of many talents, capable of doing more than others, which as Muniowski demonstrates is an example of a star/celebrity’s subjectivity and control over their own biography, which is characteristic to the “narcissistic culture of professional sports” (55).

The next player on the list is Shaq’s contemporary and, for a time, his main rival, Alonzo Mourning. In the analysis of Mourning’s biography *Resilience*, Muniowski, in a most fascinating manner, presents how a spiritual story can be told through a corporeal narrative. By fitting the Mourning’s tale of his battle against focal glomerulosclerosis into the context of African American Christianity, in which physical and spiritual healing is an important element of exercising faith, Muniowski demonstrates how Mourning created a spiritual text with a conscious decision to be a role model and to inspire. In the Author’s view, *Resilience* reconnects the body and the spirit in an exemplary fashion by “conveying an account of a disease in the form of autobiography” (61).

The chapter on Vin Baker also treats on a story of overcoming a disease—alcoholism. This athlete’s life story, as told in his autobiography *God and Starbucks*, is analyzed by Muniowski in terms of “The Downfall and Rebirth” (73). Baker’s biography, as retold by Muniowski, is a textbook example of an alcoholic’s tale of how his own character flaws and insecurities led him to addiction (the downfall), and how he was able to regain sobriety through faith (the rebirth), which allowed him to fill *God and Starbucks* with lessons for other athletes, and other drinkers as well. While Muniowski aptly demonstrates the “correlation between alcoholism, Christianity, and sports” (76), especially in terms of healing through a narrative cure (constant retelling of the story of addiction), it must be noted that the Author’s focus on Christianity is somewhat limited, as the members of AA (frequently mentioned by both Baker and Muniowski) refer to their “Higher Power,” which needs not to be Jehovah or Christ. However, the choice of Christianity is understandable when discussing the story of Vin Baker—an alcoholic Christian in America.

Allen Iverson (AI), who also had a fair share of alcohol abuse in his life, is analyzed in terms of “Celebrity and the Event” (89). I must admit I never understood

the phenomenon of Allen Iverson. Chapter Five of *Narrating the NBA* does little to help me understand the level of reverence AI has received, but I guess that was not the Author's goal. His goal was to present the complexity of Iverson's persona and his life story as being reflected in two Events for which Iverson is most remembered, and this Muniowski does splendidly. Perhaps the reason why I "don't get" Iverson is because, as the Author ingeniously demonstrates, he was an Event himself, a temporary occurrence, which I missed. Muniowski concludes that the player, who placed "keeping it real" above all else, was a product of harsh environment, the stereotypes of which Iverson embraced in his search for freedom. Unfortunately, all that AI's "realness" does for me is to remind me of the *Chappelle's Show* and a series of sketches entitled "When Keeping It Real Can Go Very Wrong" ("Chappelle's Show" 03:15–05:21)

My reaction to Antoine Walker's story, after reading Chapter Six, is actually quite opposite to my reaction to AI. Both players' careers had similar trajectory of the rise and fall narrative, both of them considered themselves the best players on the court, both of them enjoyed some measure of success, and neither of them lived up to the expectations, nor reached their full potential. The difference between the two, in my view, is that Walker was overconfident and Iverson was an asshole, which opinion, prior to reading *Narrating the NBA*, was that of a basketball fan; now, it is backed by scholarship and for that I have to thank Muniowski. By applying philosophical observations of Dominic D.P. Johnson and Aaron James to Walker's story, the Author in a quite endearing way, presents Walker as a victim of "positive illusions" (109), whose, frequently emphasized, generosity excludes him from being portrayed as someone who systematically allowed himself to enjoy special advantages in interpersonal relations out of an entrenched sense of entitlement that immunized him against the complaints of other people—an asshole.

Steve Nash was definitely not an asshole. How could he be? After all, he was seen (by some) as a white savior—who arrived to the "too black" league and saved its fundamental values. I use the irony here merely as an introduction to Muniowski's excellent exposition of the complexity of race relations characteristic to the NBA, sports, and American culture. In his analysis of the biographies of the "long-haired, skinny, white" superstar, the author demonstrates how, depending on the narrative, Nash can be seen as the hero or the antihero of the post-Jordan NBA. He was the NBA's establishment's hero by elimination (Bryant too selfish, Duncan too boring, and Iverson too controversial (128)), but also the predominantly black players league's antihero (white, beer drinking, and "sympathy MVP"). In Muniowski's conclusion that "Nash's legacy do not have much to do with his skin color and background, but rather with the fact that these issues are brought up whenever his basketball ability is disputed" (141), the hackneyed platitudes of "everything is a matter of perspective (and context)" becomes a fact. The additional value of this chapter is that it signals the rise of nationalistic sentiments, the full-blown effects of which are exemplified by Trump's presidency and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Interestingly, while such sentiments have been evident in the post-9/11 America, the Author reveals their Canadian face.

I have always liked the San Antonio Spurs and their leader, David Robinson (obviously not as much as the Bulls and Jordan), yet I have never cared much for Tim Duncan. Not that I did not like him as a basketball fan, I just saw him as a member

of one of my favorite teams—no one special, which is odd given Duncan’s five championship rings and three Finals MVP titles, and two regular season MVP titles. The list of his achievements is far longer, and proves that Duncan was one of the best players in the league’s history. I was unable to understand my lack of fascination with Duncan until Muniowski explained it to me in his book... Duncan was boring, and, as the Author proves, it is narrative boredom that reflects Duncan’s basketball genius.

Kobe Bryant I have been fascinated with, in that I hated his guts, mainly because Bryant, “throughout his career, at times very successfully, tried to emulate Michael Jordan” (Muniowski 161), which I found sacrilegious. Muniowski’s analysis of Kobe Bryant as the embodiment of the spectacle is most accurate, and I have already expressed that in writing, somewhat indirectly though:

If it were true that Americans did not react to the killings of unarmed black men and, in consequence, police officers, because they were watching a basketball game, which in itself was a spectacle ‘prepared by the league, the team and the player’ (Muniowski 226), that means that America is a society of spectacle as proposed by Debord; a society which chooses *panem et circenses* over social issues. (Jachec 155)

I have not much to add, except that, as in life, so in death, Bryant was the spectacle. Also, since *Narrating the NBA*, due to the time of its conception, does not cover the untimely death of Kobe Bryant in 2020 and how it resulted in hagiographication of Bryant’s persona, I would like to shamelessly direct any reader interested in Bryant’s persona to my own article, which not only confirms the observations presented in Chapter Nine of *Narrating the NBA*, but also provides a *Post Scriptum* to Muniowski’s study on Bryant.

With Kobe Bryant, *Narrating the NBA* comes full circle, in the sense that the book starts with Jordan, who may have started the sports/business/media spectacle in America, and ends with Bryant who embraced and embodied the very spectacle.

Garry Whannel, in his typology of celebrity biographies, lists the following types of the functions of such narratives: “the exposé/hatchet job, the hagiography, the ‘real’ person revealed, the chronological account, the ‘meaning’ of the subject as capturing the *Zeitgeist* or reflecting his or her time, and the subject as creative genius” (117). Muniowski, to some extent, uses Whannel’s typology and expands it by looking at the cultural representations of the players through the prism of certain universal concepts discussed in humanities—boredom, event, celebrity, body, spectacle, etc.. In doing so, Muniowski manages to demonstrate how important biographies of contemporary sports (not just basketball) stars can be to students and researchers of media studies, sports studies, and American studies in general.

Narrating the NBA offers an insightful analysis of narrative strategies used in attempts to encapsulate lives of prominent athletes and simultaneously to put these life stories in a larger, cultural context. Moreover, the book is a fascinating tale of people behind public images, which brilliantly illustrates the complexities and polysemic meanings behind the personas of those who function in the world of professional sports, corporate interests, and the story-hungry media. In *Narrating the NBA*, Muniowski displays his vast knowledge of the topic, acute analysis and insightful observations,

which I appreciate immensely. Moreover, the author, who is a basketball fan himself, throughout his book manages to “keep it real”—in the academic sense, of course. That, I salute.

Works Cited

- Bill Burr: Walk Your Way Out*. 2017. Directed by J. Karas. Netflix.
- “Chappelle’s Show.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Comedy Central, 21 July 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3U55usfJK8&feature=youtu.be. Accessed 15 May 2022.
- Jacheć, Tomasz. “Death of a Celebrity: Kobe Bryant and Post-Millennial Sensitivities.” *Polish Journal for American Studies*, vol. 15, Spring 2021, pp. 143-160.
- Scotto, Michael. “NBA Players Poll: Michael Jordan the Most Influential Ever; LeBron, Iverson, Kobe Behind.” *HoopsHype*, 23 March 2022, hoopshype.com/lists/nba-players-poll-top-influential-players-michael-jordan-lebron-james-allen-iverson-kobe-bryant. Accessed 15 May 2022.
- Whannel, Garry. *Media Sports Stars: Masculinities and Moralities*. Routledge, 2002.

Tomasz Jacheć
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

CONTRIBUTORS

Paulina Ambroży is Associate Professor and Head of American Literature Department at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. Her research centers on American avantgarde and experimental poetry. She is interested in intersections between poetry, literary philosophy, science and the visual arts. She is the author of *(Un)concealing the Hedgehog: Modernist American Poets and Contemporary Critical Theories* (AMU Press, 2012), which received the 2014 American Studies Network Book Prize for remarkable research in American studies, and which focused on Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams and Mina Loy. With Liliana Sikorska, Joanna Jarzab-Napierała and Marta Frączzak-Dąbrowska she has authored *Between the Self and the Other: Essays on the Poetry of Paul Muldoon* (AMU Press, 2018), a study which fuses four perspectives: autobiographical, geopoetic, postcolonial and intertextual. [ORCID: 0000-0001-9037-8725; apaulina@amu.edu.pl]

Deniz Bozkurt-Pekar studied Translation and Interpreting Studies at Boğaziçi and gained MA and doctorate degrees in American Studies at Leipzig University. Her dissertation was published by De Gruyter Oldenburg with the title *Imagining Southern Spaces Hemispheric and Transatlantic Souths in Antebellum US Writings* in 2022. She worked as researcher at the Collaborative Research Center 1199: Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition between 2016-2020 and at the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO) in 2021. Since January 2022, she is employed as the event and IJ4EU program manager at European Center for Media and Press Freedom (ECPMF), Leipzig. [ORCID: 0000-0002-6220-0230; ddenizbozkurt@gmail.com]

Justyna Fruzińska holds an MA in American Literature and a PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of Lodz, Poland, where she holds the position of Assistant Professor and teaches American literature, culture and history. Her publications include *Nineteenth-Century Visions of Race: British Travel Writing about America* (Routledge, 2022) and *Emerson Goes to the Movies: Individualism in Walt Disney Company's Post-1989 Animated Films* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014) as well as numerous articles on American popular culture, Transcendentalism, and Polish poetry. She is a graduate of the Institute of Jewish Studies Paideia in Stockholm as well as a member of the Association for Cultural Studies and Polish Association for American Studies. She is also a published poet and translator working in Polish, English, and Hebrew. [ORCID: 0000-0001-6368-5746; justyna.fruzinska@uni.lodz.pl]

Constante González Groba is Professor of American literature at the University of Santiago (Spain). He has written essays on Carson McCullers, Lee Smith, Lillian Smith, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Bobbie Ann Mason, Ellen Glasgow, Colson Whitehead, Ron

Rash, Ellen Feldman and others. His latest book is *On Their Own Premises: Southern Women Writers and the Homeplace* (Universitat de València, 2008). He edited *Hijas del Viejo Sur: La mujer en la literatura del Sur de los Estados Unidos* (Universitat de València, 2012) and *Unsteadily Marching On: The US South in Motion* (Universitat de València, 2013). He has led competitive research projects about women in southern fiction, southern fiction and civil rights, and southern autobiography. At present, he is doing research into intersections of race and the body in US fiction and film. [ORCID: 0000-0002-0556-8362; email: constante.gonzalez@usc.es]

Alicja Kozłowska is an MA student at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. She completed her BA degree in English at the same institution. Her previous research interests focused on reader-response theory as implemented in Translation Studies. Her MA project is concerned with revisionist approaches to the Gothic mode in contemporary American fiction. [ORCID: 0000-0001-7303-7486; alikoz6@st.amu.edu.pl]

Katarzyna Macedulska, Ph.D. (J-L-U-Giessen, Germany and AMU Poznań, Poland), is author of *Remembering Oneself, Charting the Other – Memory as Intertextuality and Self-Reflexivity in the Works of Paul Auster* (WVT, 2012), co-editor of *Storying Humanity: Narratives of Culture and Society* (with Richard Wirth and Dario Serrati, Inter-Disciplinary Press/Brill, 2015), and author, with Agnieszka Rzepa and Dagmara Drewniak, of *The Self and the World: Aspects of the Aesthetics and Politics of Contemporary North American Literary Memoir by Women* (AMU Press, 2018). Currently, her research concerns memory, trauma, and narrative in American autobiographical writing. She works at the Faculty of English at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. [ORCID: 0000-0001-6299-8468; kkania@amu.edu.pl]

Malgorzata Martynuska is an Associate Professor at the Department of English Studies, University of Rzeszow, Poland. Graduate of American Studies Center at University of Warsaw (MA) and the Institute of American Studies and Polish Diaspora at Jagiellonian University in Cracow (PhD). She completed her habilitation at SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw. Her scholarly interests focus on the American South, cultural hybridity of US Latinx, acculturation patterns, transculturation, tropicalism, ethnic representations in American popular culture, and American crime fiction. [ORCID: 0000-0002-5028-5046; email: mmartynuska@ur.edu.pl]

Łukasz Muniowski holds a Ph.D. in American Literature from the University of Warsaw and works as Assistant Professor at the University of Szczecin. He is the author of *Three-Pointer! A 40-Year NBA History* (McFarland, 2020), *Narrating the NBA: Representations of Leading Players after the Michael Jordan Era* (Lexington, 2021), *The Sixth Man: A History of the NBA's Best Off the Bench* (McFarland, 2021), and *Turnpike Team: A History of the New Jersey Nets, 1977-2012* (McFarland, 2022). [ORCID: 0000-0001-5814-366X; lukasz.muniowski@gmail.com]

Elżbieta Wilczyńska, Ph.D., is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of English in Adam Mickiewicz University, at the Department of Studies in Culture. Her major academic interests involve Native Americans, their history, culture, identity and role in contemporary America. Other academic interests include American and Canadian art as well as Australian and New Zealand cultures, with a focus on indigenous culture and art. She published numerous articles on Native Americans and Australian Art, among others in *Studia Anglica Poznaniensia*, *Scholar Publishing, Anglica, Historyka*, and *Journal of NZ and Pacific Studies*.

[ORCID: 0000-0002-6603-4540; elzbieta@amu.edu.pl]

Jacqueline Victoria Woroniec, MA, is PhD student at the Doctoral School of the University of Szczecin. With a background in minority and literary studies, she conducted her Master's research on the cinematic diegesis in selected pictures by Tim Burton. Her field of academic interest comprises queer and gender studies as well as all things morbid: horror, the Gothic, and the occult.

[ORCID: 0000-0001-8063-676X; email: jacqueline.woroniec@phd.usz.edu.pl]

Beata Zawadka is Associate Professor in the Institute of Literature and New Media at the University of Szczecin, Poland. She is a literary scholar by education, southernist by specialisation, and an ardent cinephile. At present she teaches mainly film. Her postdoctoral book entitled *Dis/Reputed Region: Transcoding the U.S. South* was published in 2018. Her next book is a coproject on the performativity of Daphne du Maurier's prose. It is going to be published in 2024. She is a member of the Performance International (PSi), IASA, EAAS (PAAS), and of the Southern Studies Forum of the EAAS. Prof. Zawadka has presented at conferences in the European Union and beyond and has also published—in Poland and abroad—on topics linked to her fields of research.

[ORCID: 0000-0002-9992-7572; email: beata.zawadka@usz.edu.pl]

Grażyna Zygadlo is an Associate Professor in the Department of American Studies and Mass Media at the University of Lodz, Poland. Her areas of expertise are in American studies, minorities and their marginalization, gender and Border studies with a particular focus on the work of Gloria Anzaldúa. She was a guest lecturer at the universities in Spain, Finland, Sweden, as well as a recipient of grants from major US universities: University of Idaho, MIT and Florida International University in Miami. She has published two monographs: *Culture Matters: Chicanas' Identity in Contemporary USA* (Peter Lang, 2007) and "*I Change Myself—I Change the World*": *Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Her Writing of Committed Development in the Socio-Cultural Context* (University of Lodz Press, 2019), as well as two edited books and over thirty articles. Since 2004, she has been a member of HispaUSA and since 2009 a member of the Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa at the University of Texas, San Antonio.

[ORCID: 0000-0002-2559-631X; email: grazyna.zygadlo@wsmip.uni.lodz.pl]

Constante Gonzáles Groba

Is It Gender or Is It Race?

To Kill a Mockingbird and Its Film Adaptation

Grażyna Zygałło

Latinx Presence in Hollywood in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Justyna Fruzińska

Becoming Real to Oneself: Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne

Deniz Bozkurt-Pekár

Images of Lajos Kossuth and the Hungarian Revolution of 1848/49

in *Livermore's Zoë; or the Quadroon's Triumph*

Paulina Ambroży and Alicja Kozłowska

Native American Gothic as Third Space:

Stephen Graham Jones' *The Only Good Indians*