

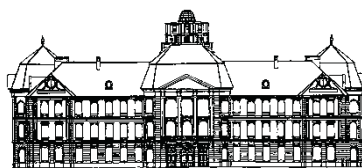
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## CONTENTS

Contributors .....	5
A note from the editor.....	7

### ESSAYS

#### **Péter Ádám**

Excerpts from the new Hungarian version of Alexis de Tocqueville's <i>Democracy in America</i> .....	9
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#### **Shaimaa Alobaidi**

Love and Pride: From Alienation to Self-identification in Sherman Alexie's "Assimilation" .....	19
--	----

#### **Muzaffer Zafer Ayar**

Cultural Identity Travels across Borders: A Study of Cross-Cultural Interaction in Everyday Use by Alice Walker .....	29
--	----

#### **Péter Csató**

Faith and Interpretation: Religious Belief as an Epistemic and Hermeneutic Concept in Neo-Pragmatist Philosophy and Literary Theory .....	41
--	----

#### **Péter Gaál-Szabó**

Ecomemory for the Future: Religious Environmentalism and Black Environmental Liberation Theology (BELT) .....	61
--	----

#### **Syrine Jerbi**

The American Interventions in the MENA Region Before 9/11 .....	79
---	----

#### **Rita Nándori**

Inuit Nunangat and Cultural Identity: Borders That Unify and Define .....	93
---	----

#### **Maksim Pelmegov**

Gold Rush in the Cold: Russian Far East Expeditions in Russian-American Travel Writing, 1898–1900 .....	107
--	-----

**Zoltán Peterecz**

Roosevelt on Roosevelt: Nicholas Roosevelt's Views on  
Franklin Delano Roosevelt and His New Deal..... 125

**Kitti Somogyi**

The Discourse of the Western Myth and the American Pastoral in  
*All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy..... 141

**Barna Szamosi**

Science and Technology Studies Engagements with the Influence of  
Eugenics on Medicine ..... 153

**András Tarnóc**

The Slave Ship as the Chronotope of the Black Atlantic: Interaction between  
Space and Time as Reflected in the Antebellum Slave Narrative ..... 169

**Zsolt K. Virágos**

Reflections on the Ideological Dimensions of Myth in American Culture..... 181

**Tamás Vraukó**

From Assimilation Narrative to Transcultural Texts – The Case of  
Hispanic-American Drama..... 205

**BOOK REVIEWS****András Tarnóc**

“Judit Kádár: Ethnic Positioning in Southwestern  
Mixed Heritage Writing. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022” ..... 217

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## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The 17<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Eger Journal of American Studies* offers an intriguing selection of the latest research results related to this ever- expanding discipline. This volume contains fourteen essays and one book review. We begin with an excerpt from the latest Hungarian translation of Alexis de Tocqueville's milestone work, *Democracy in America* with the translator, Péter Ádám's introduction. Shaimaa Alobaidi explores the question of identity formation in the Native American community by analyzing Sherman Alexie's short story, titled "Assimilation." M. Zafer Ayar probes the manifestations of cross-cultural communication in Alice Walker's short story, "Everyday Use." Péter Csató explores the possibilities of reconciling the inherent opposition between faith and reason from an epistemological and literary point of view. Péter Gaál Szabó provides a scholarly look at the connection between religion, environmentalism, and self-liberation through investigating the phenomenon of Black Environmental Liberation Theology. Syrine Jerbi forwards a critical evaluation of US political aspirations in the Middle East and North Africa and Rita Nándori continues to explore the creation of identity in the Inuit world facing the challenges of modernization. Maksim Pelmegov takes a comparative look at Russian and American travelogues commemorating prospecting expeditions in the Far East while Zoltán Peterecz examines the political and personal image of Franklin Delano Roosevelt created by the distant relative, Nicholas Roosevelt. Kitty Somogyi examines a modern version of the pastoral along with the changing myth of the West in light of Cormack McCarthy's novel, and Barna Szamosi discusses the practical and theoretical aspects of the impact of eugenics on medical practice. András Tarnóc sheds light at the the temporal and spatial aspects of the slave ship trope and Zsolt Virágos expounds upon the connection between myth and ideology in American social consciousness. Tamás Vraukó examines the manifestations of assimilation in selected examples of Hispanic drama while the last entry is András Tarnóc's brief review of Judith Kádár's latest work on Southwestern mixed blood culture and literature.

We are pleased to welcome the full spectrum of the American Studies community ranging from doctoral students to senior established researchers. Demonstrated by the present publication, we reiterate our commitment to provide a professional forum for discussing the continuously evolving manifestations of American civilization.





## Excerpts from the new Hungarian version of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

Péter Ádám

### Translator's introduction:

It was exactly thirty years ago, when the Európa Kiadó published the complete Hungarian version of this major milestone of French political philosophy. Tocqueville's masterpiece is highly appreciated in the United States by liberals and conservatives alike. Nevertheless, the aforementioned Hungarian translation had several shortcomings including the awkward style and the difficult intelligibility. The abovementioned setbacks were primarily due to the previous translators' relative unfamiliarity with the classic French language. Furthermore, since the seven-member translator team could not fully interpret Tocqueville's thought process, the text included misunderstandings, ambiguity, and confusing statements. What is more, said version could not render "Tocqueville's voice," that is, the elegant and crystal clear style of the author, while it was not able to represent the respective literary dimension either.

As the translator of the new version, I aim to present a work without literary pretensions and archaic stylization while using a current vernacular. In addition to clarity and accessibility, I strove to provide a taste of the scholarly style of the French treatise prose of the 18th century.

Tocqueville's friend and travel companion Gustave de Beaumont and the widow of the author five years after the writer's death in 1859 prepared three books of the multivolume work for publication. I believe the last lines of Beaumont's lengthy preface provide a timeless justification for the relevance of *Democracy in America*: "Tocqueville's work offers an indispensable intellectual arsenal for a long time to come. In this treasure trove the champions of liberty will find weapons for their struggle, politicians can make use of its wisdom, while the weak will gain energy and the average thinker will be enriched with food for thought."

Péter Ádám

## A BÍRÓI HATALOM AZ EGYESÜLT ÁLLAMOKBAN. MILYEN BEFOLYÁSSAL VAN A BÍRÓI HATALOM A POLITIKA VILÁGÁRA<sup>1</sup>

Úgy gondolom, nem árt [ebben a könyvben] külön fejezetet szentelni a bírói hatalomnak. Ennek ugyanis olyan nagy a politikai súlya, hogy az az érzésem, csökken-  
teném a jelentőségét, ha csak mellékesen ejtenék szót róla.

Államszövetségek létrejöttek máshol is, nemcsak Amerikában; láttunk máshol is köztársaságokat, nemcsak az Újvilág partján; a képviseleti rendszert is már több európai államban elfogadták; de egyben biztos vagyok: mindmáig egyetlen olyan nemzet sincs a világon, amelyben úgy alakították volna ki a bírói hatalmat, mint ahogy Amerikában.

Az Egyesült Államokban külföldi csak lehető legnehezebben tudja megérteni az igazságszolgáltatás szervezetét. Gyakorlatilag nincs is olyan politikai esemény, amelynek kapcsán a bírói hatalom szóba ne kerülne; amiből a külföldi arra következtet, hogy az Egyesült Államokban a bíróságot az egyik legnagyobb politikai hatalom. És amikor ezek után alaposabban szemügyre veszi a bíróságok illetékességét, első pillantásra nem lát mást, csak jogosítványokat meg szokásokat. A bíró mindig úgy fogja fel a dolgot, hogy csak alkalmyszerűen avatkozik a közügyekbe; csakhogy ilyenre úgyszólván minden nap kínálkozik alkalom.

Amikor a párizsi parlament<sup>2</sup> élt intelmi jogával, és megtagadta egy rendelet beiktatását; amikor maga elé idézett egy hatalmával visszaélő főtisztviselőt, olyankor leplezetlenül látni lehetett a bírói hatalom politikai tevékenységét. Csakhogy az Egyesült Államokban semmi ilyet nem látni.

Az amerikaiak a bírói hatalom minden olyan tulajdonságát megőrizték, amiről azt fel lehet ismerni. Bíróság csak jogvita esetén járhat el valamilyen ügyben. Bíró csak peres eljárás esetén foglalkozhat egy üggyel. Mindebből az következik, hogy

1 Az itt bemutatott szemelvényt az első könyv hatodik fejezetéből emeltem ki; a fejezet eredeti címe: *Du pouvoir judiciaire aux États-Unis et de son action sur la société politique*. L. Tocqueville, II., Édition publiée sous la direction d'André Jardin, Paris, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1992, 109-117. o. Ugyanez a szemelvény az 1993-as Európa Kiadó által közreadott könyvben (Alexis de Tocqueville, *Az amerikai demokrácia*, Európa Könyvkiadó, 1993, fordította Frémer Jusztna, Kiss Zsuzsa, Martonyi Éva, Miklós Livia, Nagy Géza, Schulteis Gyula, Szabolcs Katalin) a 149-158. oldalon található. A szöveg értelmezéséhez két angolnyelvű kiadást is használtam: Gerald E. Bevan (Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Penguin Books, 2003), valamint Arthur Goldhammer fordítását (*Democracy in America*, The Library of America, 2004.).

2 A Régi Rend egyik legfontosabb intézménye, széleskörű jogosítványokkal felruházott és legfelső bírósággént is működő királyi törvényszék. (A ford.)

a bírói hatalom csakis akkor foglalkozhat egy törvénnyel, ha az a törvény jogvita tárgya. Addig a törvény nem is kerül a bírói hatalom látókörébe. Amikor a bíró valamilyen per kapcsán megvizsgál egy – a perrel kapcsolatos – törvényt, bár kiszélesíteni kiszélesíti jogosítványainak körét, kilépni nem lép ki belőle, már csak azért sem, mert a törvény felülvizsgálata nélkül a perben nem tudna ítéletet hozni. De amikor – a per keretén belül – megítél egy törvényt, elhagyja a bírói hatalom illetékességi körét, hogy belépjen a törvényhozó hatalom illetékességi körébe.

A bírói hatalom második jellemzője nem egyéb, mint hogy a bírónak mindig egyedi esetben, nem pedig általános jogelvek kapcsán kell ítéletet mondania. Ha a bíró magánjogi perben azzal a meggyőződéssel semmisít meg egy általános jogelvet, hogy – mivel annak egyik következménye sem használható az eljárásban – az adott esetben érvénytelen, még nem lép ki illetékességi köréből; de ha a bíró közvetlenül intéz támadást egy általános jogelv ellen, és azt úgy semmisíti meg, hogy közben semmiféle egyedi esetről nincs szó, akkor kilép abból a körből, amelybe minden nép egyetértőleg bezárja: ilyenkor, meglehet, fontosabb lesz, és talán még hasznosabb is, mint egy igazságszolgáltatásban dolgozó főtisztviselő, de ettől fogva már nem a bírói hatalom képviselője.

A bírói hatalom harmadik jellemzője: csak akkor léphet működésbe, ha hozzá fordulnak, vagyis – ahogyan a jog nyelvén mondják – ha megkeresik. Ezzel a jellemzővel, igaz, nem találkozunk olyan gyakran, mint a másik kettővel. Mégis, véleményem szerint a kivételek ellenére is alapvető tulajdonsággal van dolgunk. A bírói hatalom már természeténél fogva is passzív; csakis akkor mozdul meg, ha működésbe hozzák. Tudomására hoznak egy bűncselekményt, és megbünteti a tettest; hozzáfordulnak, hogy szüntessen meg egy igazságtalanságot, és orvosolja a jogsérelmet; ha kikéri véleményét egy perirattal kapcsolatban, akkor értelmezi a periratot; de hivatalból nem indít eljárást bűnözők ellen, nem tárja fel az igazságtalanságot, és nem vizsgálja a tényeket. A bírói hatalom végeredményében erőszakot követne el passzív jellege ellen, ha maga lépne fel kezdeményezőként, és ha feladatának tekintené a törvények rendszeres felülvizsgálatát.

Az amerikaiak megtartották a bírói hatalom három megkülönböztető karakterét. Az amerikai bíró csak jogvita esetén tud ítéletet hozni. Csakis egyedi esettel foglalkozik; és csak akkor kezd intézkedni, amikor megkeresik.

Az amerikai bíró tehát ugyanolyan, mint a többi nemzet bírója. De emellett nagyon erős politikai hatalommal is fel van ruházva.

Hogy ez miképpen lehetséges? Utóvégre ugyanabban a körben mozog, ugyanazokkal a jogi eszközökkel él, mint más nemzetek bírói; hogy akkor mégis miért van felruházva olyan hatalommal, amivel azok nem rendelkeznek?

Ennek oka egyetlen tényben rejlik: az amerikaiak elismerték a bírónak azt a jogát, hogy az ítéleteket az *Alkotmányra*, nem pedig a törvényekre alapozzák. Más

szavakkal: lehetővé tették, hogy a bírák ne alkalmazzák azokat a törvényeket, amelyeket alkotmányellenesnek tartanak.

Tudomásom szerint előfordult, hogy más országok törvényszékei is igényt tartottak ilyen jogra; csak hogy ilyen joggal sohasem ruházták fel őket. Amerikában viszont ezt a jogot minden hatalom elismeri; Amerikában nincs egyetlen párt, mi több, nincs egyetlen ember sem, aki ezt a jogot kétségbe vonná.

Ennek magyarázata az amerikai alkotmányok lényegében keresendő.

Franciaországban az Alkotmány megváltoztathatatlan vagy legalábbis annak kellene lennie. Egyetlen hatalomnak nincs joga -- legalábbis az általánosan elfogadott elmélet szerint -- bármit is módosítani benne.

Angliában elismerik a Parlament jogát az Alkotmány módosítására. Angliában tehát az Alkotmány folytonosan változhat, ami gyakorlatilag annyit jelent, hogy Alkotmány nincs is. A Parlament egyszerre törvényhozó és alkotmányozó testület.

Amerikában viszont a politikai elméletek egyszerűbbek és racionálisabbak.

Az amerikai alkotmány korántsem megváltoztathatatlan, szemben a franciával; csak hogy az amerikai nem lehet a szokásos úton-módon megváltoztatni, miként az angolt. Az amerikai alkotmány valójában a népakarat kifejeződése, és mint ilyen, egyszerre vonatkozik a törvényhozókra meg a honpolgárokra; megváltoztatni is csak a népakarat változtathatja meg, mégpedig kizárólag meghatározott procedura szerint és csakis meghatározott esetekben.

Amerikában tehát az Alkotmány változhat; de amíg érvényben van, ez minden hatalom forrása. Az Alkotmány ereje minden más hatalomnál előbbrevaló.

Könnyen belátható, hogy ezek a különbségek mennyiben befolyásolják az igazságszolgáltatás helyzetét és jogait az általam említett három országban.

Ha Franciaországban a törvényszékek megengedhetnék maguknak, hogy – a törvények alkotmányellenességére hivatkozva – eltérjenek a jogszabályok előírásaitól, az annyit jelentene, hogy az alkotmányozó hatalmat is sajátjuknak tekintik, annál is inkább, mivel ebben az esetben csakis nekik volna joguk értelmezni az alkotmányt, amelynek szövegén senki sem változtathat. Ezzel pedig a nemzet helyébe lépnének, vagyis uralkodó szerepre tennének szert a társadalom felett, már amennyiben ezt a szerepet a bírói hatalom belső gyengesége egyáltalán lehetővé teszi.

Tisztában vagyok vele: azzal, hogy megfosztjuk a bírakat a jogtól, hogy felülbíráhadják a törvények alkotmányosságát, ha közvetett módon is, a törvényhozást ruházzuk fel az Alkotmány megváltoztatásának jogával, mivel ebben az esetben semmi se korlátozza a törvényhozás hatalmát. Akárhogyan is, okosabb a nemzeti Alkotmány megváltoztatásának jogát olyan emberekre bízni, akik a népet képviselik a törvényhozásban, semmint azokra, akik csak önmagukat képviselik.

De még ennél is ésszerűtlenebb volna az angol bírakat olyan joggal felruházni, hogy bátran ellenállhatnak a törvényhozás akaratának, hiszen a Parlament egy-

formán forrása a törvényeknek meg az Alkotmánynak, következésképp nem lehet olyan törvényt alkotmányellenesnek nyilvánítani, amely a három hatalmi ág döntésének eredménye.

Amerikára azonban az iménti két megfontolás közül egyik sem alkalmazható.

Az amerikai Alkotmány ugyanis egyformán érvényes a törvényhozásra meg az egyszerű honpolgárra. Amiből az következik, hogy a törvények sorában ez a legfontosabb, és hogy törvénnyel az alkotmányt nem lehet módosítani. Ebből a szempontból érthető, hogy a törvényszékek inkább az Alkotmányhoz igazodnak, semmint a törvényekhez. Mindez a bírói hatalom lényegéből is következik: végeredményében a bíró megkérdőjelezhetetlen joga, hogy azt válassza a törvényes rendelkezések közül, amelyik legszigorúbban kötelezi.

Az Alkotmány Franciaországban is első a törvények sorában, és a bírácoknak nálunk is jogukban áll rá alapozni az ítéletet; csak hogy ha élnének ezzel a joggal, megsértenének egy másik – az övékéénél is szentebb – jogot; e jog pedig azé a társadalomé, amelynek nevében eljárnak. Itt a szokásos megfontolás kénytelen meghajolni az államreazon előtt.

Amerikának viszont – ott ugyanis a nemzet az Alkotmány megváltoztatásával mindig engedelmességre kényszerítheti a bírácokat -- ilyen veszélytől nem kell tartania. Ami annyit jelent, hogy ezen a ponton a politikai érvelés azonos a logikai érveléssel, ilyenformán a nép is meg a bíró is egyformán megtarthatja előjogait.

Így amikor olyan törvényre hivatkoznak az amerikai törvényszék előtt, amit a bíró alkotmányellenesnek tart, akkor az utóbbinak jogában áll megtagadni a törvény alkalmazását. Jóllehet az amerikai bíró csak ezzel az egy sajátos hatalommal rendelkezik, már ennek birtokában is nagy a politikai befolyása.

Annál is inkább, mivel alig van törvény, amit bíró előbb vagy utóbb ne vizsgálna felül, hiszen úgyszólván nincs is olyan törvény, amely ne sértene valamilyen magánérdeket, amelyre a peres felek alkalomadtán ne hivatkoznának.

Márpedig attól a pillanattól fogva, hogy perben a bíró egy bizonyos törvényt nem hajlandó alkalmazni, a törvény morális erejének java részét elveszíti. És akiket emiatt érdeksérelem ér, azok ettől fogva nem kötelezhetők arra, hogy alá vessék magukat e törvény előírásainak: a törvény pedig a perek megsaporodtával érvényét veszti. Ekkor két megoldás lehetséges: a nép vagy megváltoztatja az Alkotmányt, vagy a törvényhozás a törvényt hatályon kívül helyezi.

Mindebből az következik, hogy az amerikaiak igen nagy politikai hatalommal ruházták fel a törvényszékeket; azzal viszont, hogy az igazságszolgáltatás csakis jogi eszközökkel kezdheti ki a törvényeket, nagyban csökkentették a fenti jogosítvánnyal együtt-járó veszélyeket.

Ha ugyanis a bíró elméletileg és általánosan vonhatta volna kétségbe a törvényt; ha lehetősége lett volna arra, hogy kezdeményezze félként elmarasztalja a törvény-

hozót, akkor nyilvánosan a politika színterére lépett volna; akkor -- egy párt híveként vagy ellenfeleként szítva fel az országot megosztó politikai indulatokat – mindenkit harcba hívott volna. A bíró azonban bonyolult jogvitában és a törvény egyedi esetre való alkalmazása kapcsán vizsgál meg egy törvényt, ezzel pedig a törvény megkérdőjelezésének tényét mintegy elrejtí a közvélemény elől. Annál is inkább, mivel ítéletében csak magánérdek kapcsán hoz döntést; az pedig pusztán véletlen, hogy a döntéssel a törvény is sérelmet szenved.

Egyébként az ekként bírált törvény még törvény marad: erkölcsi ereje, igaz, csökken, hatálya azonban nincs felfüggesztve. De amikor a joggyakorlat újabb és újabb csapást mér rá, végül csak érvényét veszti.

Ráadásul nem nehéz megérteni: az, hogy magánérdekkel kapcsolatosan hagyják figyelmen kívül a törvényt, illetve az, hogy a törvény alkotmányosságának vizsgálatát összekötik annak a félnek a perével, aki ellen eljárás indult, egyben annak is biztosítéka, hogy bíró csak jó okkal indít támadást a törvényhozás ellen. Ez utóbbi ebben a rendszerben már nincs kitéve a pártok napi agressziójának. Azzal pedig, hogy a bírák felhívják a figyelmet a törvényalkotás hibáira, valós szükségletet elégítenek ki: ráadásul valóságos és bíróilag értékelhető tény a kiindulópont, már csak azért is, mivel a per is erre a tényre van alapozva.

Nagy a gyanúm: az amerikai törvényszékeknek ez az eljárása feltehetően a lehető legkedvezőbb mind a közrendre, mind a szabadságra nézve.

Ha az amerikai bíró csak frontálisan intézhetne támadást a törvényhozók ellen, előfordulhat, hogy ehhez hiányzik a kellő bátorsága; mint ahogyan az is előfordulhat, hogy pártos elfogultságában úgyszólván minden nap ilyesmire ragadtatja magát. Így viszont könnyen megtörténhet, hogy akkor támadják a törvényt, amikor a törvényt alkotó hatalom gyöngye, és akkor vetik alá magukat zokszó nélkül a törvénynek, amikor a törvényt alkotó hatalom erős; ami annyit jelent, hogy akkor támadják a törvényt, amikor okosabb volna tiszteletben tartani, és akkor tartják tiszteletben, amikor a hatalom minden nehézség nélkül épp annak nevében nyomja el a honpolgárokat.

Vagyis az amerikai bíró mintegy akarata ellenére sodródik a politika területére. Csakis azért bírálja felül a törvényt, mert egy perben ítéletet kell hoznia, és nem teheti meg, hogy a perben ne hozzon ítéletet. A politikai kérdés tehát, amit meg kell oldania, szorosan kapcsolódik a peres felek érdekéhez, és ha a politikai kérdésben nem akarna dönteni, akkor a perben sem tudna ítéletet hozni. Vagyis csak akkor viselkedik honpolgárhoz méltó módon, ha eleget tesz a bírói hivatással együtt-járó szigorú kötelességének. Mindenesetre, a törvényhozás felett gyakorolt bírói ellenőrzés nem terjedhet ki megkülönböztetés nélkül minden törvényre, már csak azért sem, mivel olyan törvények is vannak, amelyek sohasem adnak rá okot, hogy valamilyen per kapcsán megkérdőjelezzék őket. Vagy ha mégis, akkor is előfordulhat, hogy senki sem akarja az ügyet bíróság elé vinni.

Bár ennek hátrányával az amerikaiak is tisztában voltak, nem tudták kellőképpen orvosolni a dolgot, főleg azért nem, mert úgy gondolták, igen veszedelmes dolog a bíróságokat még ennél is nagyobb jogosítványokkal felruházni.

Az amerikai törvényszékeknek tehát – bizonyos szűk határok között – jogukban áll nyilatkozni egy törvény alkotmányellenességét illetően, ez a jog pedig a legbiztonságosabb védőfal, amit valaha is emeltek egy politikai testület zsarnokságával szemben.

## AZ AMERIKAI BÍRÁK TÖBBI HATÁSKÖRE

Nem is tudom, kell-e egyáltalán mondanom, annyira magától értetődik: az olyan szabad nép körében, mint amilyen az amerikai, minden egyes honpolgárnak jogában áll köztisztviselő ellen köztörvényes bíróságon vádat emelni, és minden egyes bírónak jogában áll köztisztviselőt elmarasztalni.

Nem kell ehhez a bíróságokat semmiféle különleges kiváltságokkal felruházni, megbüntethetik enélkül is a végrehajtó hatalom képviselőit, ha azok lábbal tiporják a törvényt. Ha ezt a bíróságoknak megtiltanák, természetes joguktól fosztanak meg őket.

Az Egyesült Államokban egyáltalán nem volt olyan benyomásom, hogy gyengítően hatott volna a kormányzás fogaskerékrendszerének működésére az a tény, hogy köztisztviselőnek adandó alkalommal bíróság előtt kell számot adnia cselekedeteiért.

Épp ellenkezőleg, úgy láttam, hogy az amerikaiak ezzel csak növelték a végrehajtó hatalmat megillető tiszteletet, annál is inkább, mivel így az utóbbi még nagyobb gondot fordít arra, hogy ne adjon semmi okot a kritikára.

Nemkülönben azt is megfigyeltem, hogy az Egyesült Államokban ritkaságszámba mennek a közélet tisztaságával kapcsolatos perek; hogy miért, azt könnyű megmagyarázni. Egy per, bármilyen perről van szó, mindig nehéz vállalkozás, és költséges is. Közszerelőt nem nehéz befektíteni a sajtóban, ahhoz azonban komoly indokok kellenek, hogy bíróságon eljárást indítsanak valaki ellen. Köztisztviselő ellen pedig csak megalapozott indokkal lehet bíróságon panaszt emelni; márpedig köztisztviselő nemigen ad okot ilyen panaszra, mert tudja, bármikor eljárást indíthatnak ellene.

Mindennek vajmi kevés a köze az amerikaiak által elfogadott köztársasági államformához, hiszen ugyanezt Angliában szinte minden nap megtapasztalja az ember.

E két nép úgy gondolta, az még korántsem elegendő szabadságának biztosításához, hogy mindenkinek jogában áll a végrehajtó hatalom legfontosabb embereit bíróság elé állítani. Úgy látták, a szabadság sokkal jobban biztosítható minden egyes honpolgár számára elérhető kisebb perekkel, mint bonyolult bírósági eljárással, amelyhez a honpolgárok soha nem folyamodnak, vagy ha mégis, mindig későn.



A középkorban egyáltalán nem volt könnyű őrizetbe venni a gonosztevőket, és amikor a bírának mégis sikerült néhányat kézre keríteni, nemritkán iszonyatos kínvallatásnak vetették alá a szerencsétleneket; de így se sikerült csökkenteni a bűnözők számát. Azóta kiderült, a biztonságos és emberséges igazságszolgáltatás sokkal hatékonyabb.

Az amerikaiak meg az angolok szerint a hivatali visszaélés meg az önkényeskedés ugyanolyan bűncselekmény, mint a lopás: amiért is meg kell könnyíteni az ilyen esetek felderítését, és enyhíteni kell a kiszabott büntetéseket.

A francia köztársaság VIII. évében elfogadott alkotmány<sup>3</sup> 75. cikkelye így hangzik: „A kormányzat által kinevezett főtisztviselők ellen, a miniszterek kivételével, hivataluk gyakorlása közben elkövetett bűncselekményekért csak az Államtanács<sup>4</sup> egyetértő határozata után lehet eljárást indítani; ebben az esetben az eljárást köz-törvényes bíróság előtt kell lefolytatni.”<sup>5</sup>

A VIII. év Alkotmányát ugyan hatályon kívül helyezték<sup>6</sup>, de mind a mai napig ezt a cikkelyt szegezik szembe a honpolgárok nagyon is érthető követeléseivel<sup>7</sup>.

Amerikaiaknak meg angoloknak nemegyszer próbáltam elmagyarázni, mi is valójában a 75. cikkely jelentése, vajmi kevés sikerrel.

Annyit ők is felfogtak, hogy az Államtanács valójában igen fontos jogi intézmény a királyság szívében; és hogy van abban valami önkényes, hogy minden előzetes eljárás nélkül rögtön ez elé a bíróság elé utalnak minden panaszt.

De amikor megpróbálom velük megértetni, hogy az Államtanács nem bírói „tanács”, legalábbis a szó szokványos jelentésében nem, hanem közigazgatási testület, amelynek tagjai közvetlenül a királynak vannak alárendelve; amikor elmagyarázom nekik, hogy a királynak – miután élve uralkodói hatalmával utasította egyik (prefektusnak nevezett) szolgáját valamilyen hivatali visszaélés elkövetésére – arra is van lehetősége, hogy élve uralkodói hatalmával arra utasítsa másik (ezúttal Államtanácsnak nevezett) szolgáját, hogy az illető megbüntetésé nélkül boronálják el az ügyet; végül amikor elmondom, hogy az uralkodói parancsra sérelmet szenvedő honpolgár kénytelen magától az uralkodótól engedélyt kérni arra, hogy

3 Arról az 1799. december 13-án elfogadott rövidéletű alkotmányról van szó, amely az Első Köztársaságon belül megalapozta a Konzulátust. (A ford.)

4 *Conseil d'État*; Napóleon Bonaparte által a fentebb említett alkotmány keretében alapított – mindmáig létező – közintézmény, amely egyszerre tanácsadó testület és közigazgatási perekben a másodfok utáni legfelső jogi fórum. (A ford.)

5 V. ö. *Les Constitutions de la France depuis 1789*, Paris, GF Flammarion, 1995, 160. o. (A ford.)

6 1802-ben. (A ford.)

7 Mivel 1814-ben a XVIII. Lajos által a nemzetnek „adományozott” alkotmány átvett minden olyan korábbi törvényt, amely nem állt vele ellentétben, egyszerű törvényként a 75. cikkely is érvényben maradt. (A ford.)



ügyében jogi elégtételt kaphasson, amerikai és angol barátaim -- képtelenek lévén ilyen felháborító abszurditást elhinni – azzal vádoltak, hogy vagy hiányosak az ismereteim, vagy nem mondok igazat.

A régi monarchiában<sup>8</sup> sűrűn előfordult, hogy parlamenti rendeletre<sup>9</sup> őrizetbe vettek egy bűncselekmény elkövetésével gyanúsított köztisztviselőt. De amikor – néha – az uralkodó úgy határozott, megszüntették ellene az eljárást. Ilyenkor a despotizmus a maga pőreségében mutatkozott meg, a bírói testületek által tanúsított engedelmesség pedig nem volt más, mint a nyers erőnek való behódolás.

Bizony, jó messzire hátráltunk vissza attól a ponttól, ameddig atyáink eljutottak; mi ugyanis igazságszolgáltatásnak nevezzük az önkényt, és a törvény nevében hajtjuk végre azt, amire atyáinkat csak a nyers erő kényszeríthette.

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8 Vagyis a francia forradalom előtt. (*A ford.*)

9 Lásd, 2. jegyzet. (*A ford.*)



## **Love and Pride: From Alienation to Self-identification in Sherman Alexie's "Assimilation"**

Shaimaa Alobaidi

American Indians became minorities when overseas immigrants seized their lands in search of freedom or wealth. Fighting colonial ideologies in which the Indigenous had to suffer oppression and extinction never stopped. Racism, land loss, and the diminution of the ethnic self are some of the recurrent themes articulating their effort for survivance and are still the main points raised by (post)colonial contemporary American Indian authors.<sup>1</sup> The American Indian standpoint in their existential crises due to the complexities of placing reason/individual needs over traditions and/or fighting illusionary stereotyped identifications can be regarded as unique in the United States. They have their tribal and ethnic identifications in addition to other colonial labels. In contemporary American Indian literature, characters are drifted towards finding their own identifications by personal experiences. Self-inquiry of obligations and duties are the main concerns of mobile individuals who feel they were ambushed by mainstream colonialism showing them what they must be. This paper explores American Indian responses to alienation and skepticism deriving from losing touch with the tribal ontological premise and the desire for a healthy transformation to an unprecedented formation of self-identification.

The research examines Mary Lynn's character in Sherman Alexie's short story "Assimilation," and her struggle induced by alienation from her husband's affection to a transparent self-identification allowing her to have a stable multiracial marital life unaffected by matters related to ethnicity, racism, or class in a hybrid community. The inability to enjoy sex with her husband inspires Mary Lynn to experience sharing bed with an American Indian. The few hours she spends in the cheap dirty hotel with the strange Indigenous man makes her think anew about what she has to be. Infidelity introduces anxiety and the fear of losing Jeremiah, the husband, whom she loves. Mary Lynn, at a moment of weakness or surrender to old ideas, believes that her sexual problem is linked to her association with her different ethnicity than her husband. Yet the experience restores her confidence in her life, which she chose on free will to circumvent reservation life.

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1 Survivance can be defined as a strategy adopted by American Indians to assert their existence, which "creates a sense of native presence over absence, nihilism, and victimry" (Vizenor 1).

In *The Location of Culture*, postcolonial theorist, Homi Bhabha recognizes cultural engagements as performative productions or enunciation. For him, “the representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in the moment of historical transformation” (2). Consequently, cultures should be examined within this “third-space” which “constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read a new” (Bhabha, *Location* 37). It is in my view, the “split-space” (Bhabha, *Location* 38) where American Indians and mainstream Americans live together in an institutionalized environment. The state of complete stability and a rich communication in this area is absent, encouraging American Indians to set off and impose the required balance in their third-space discourse. The factors that help in the acquisition of this comprehensive stability deepen the concept of fluid identity.

In *Ethnocriticism*, Arnold Krupat acclaimed William Bevis’s idea of homing in in American Indian novels:

The typical pattern of Native American fiction is . . . “homing in” rather than —the pattern typical of Euro-American fiction—moving out, breaking away, searching, seeking, transcending, and so forth. Indians, that is to say, travel a good deal, but they don’t “go places.” The sense of rootedness seems extraordinarily persistent in Native American peoples today, so there’s really no place to go, no matter where one travels for one purpose or another. (78)

Often, upon encountering life outside the home reservation, moments of estrangement/alienation arise and push the affected person to take steps that enhance his/her self-confidence to promote who they are within the variables available at the given time. These steps are often linked to going *home* where there is no estrangement. In the reservation setting, the victim of alienation seeks self-identification and categorizes the responsibilities s/he holds basically as a representative of an American Indian tribe. The authentication of self-identification is a personal decision. The investigators themselves can say that their realization of their *self* is active. The sought identification might be social: the role of the self in society; cultural: the individual’s tribal obligations and history; and/or emotional: feelings toward someone/something. It is a progress towards the knowledge of the futility of polarizing the forced colonial culture, or, polarizing

a person's inherited culture, which tolerates an intercultural dialogue with the colonizer. It is a state of stability that includes a specific and promising goal of survivance for the individual to work on or for. "Homing in" is not necessarily an actual physical trip home, it is a return of multiple other forms: memorial or virtual reunions with the tribe are but some options.

Detecting alienation is not intended to exclude interactions between cultures or accuse them of any adrift experience ending by self-denial. Rather, it gives rise to the cultural re-inscriptions of the American Indian ethnic identity within a space that the character herself feels to be *home* at. "Homing" (Bevis 585) or acting "incentric" (Bevis 582) for Bevis means to be located where the majority of the ethnic group lives. It embodies the action that Mary Lynn takes when she steps out of her "in-between" multicultural identity, that is marriage, and attempts to find her real self in the extramarital relationship; an act simply described elsewhere in Alexie's works as "an Indian thing" (Alexie, *The Business of Fancydancing*). The phrase can be heard in any community, as small as a family, or as great as a nation. It is an expression intended to categorize something only the members of the community can and do inherently understand, but they cannot, or as an in-grouping strategy, do not care to explain it to others. It parallels Bevis' "homing in" notion.

Bhabha offers yet another vision of *home*. In "The World and the Home," he argues that through "displacement the border between home and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting" (Bhabha 141). In this respect, by adopting the human awareness of responsibilities and duty, Mary Lynn may show preference for her marital home over her tribal home. Jeremiah and the children are an intersectional extension for the abstract idea of *home*. Bevis, on the other hand, argues that American Indian identity "is not a matter of finding 'one's self,' but of finding a 'self' that is transpersonal and includes a society, a past, and a place" (585), the three of which he sees only within the American Indian context. I partially agree with Bevis's idea; society and the place of identification of the self can be *anywhere*, while the pre-contact past, mostly reflected in storytelling, can be related to the tribal history.

"Contact zone" is used by Mary Louise Pratt to "refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (34). Pratt explains the types of arts that are produced by the subordinated people from the intermingling of civilizations and identifies them as heterogenous, transcultural, autoethnographical, revisionist accounts. With an emphasis on hybridity, mimicry, and uncanniness, *The Location of Culture* states that: "It is precisely such a vicissitude of the idea of culture in its

colonial enunciation, culture articulated at the point of its erasure, that makes a non-sense of the disciplinary meanings of culture itself" (Bhabha 132). Cultural diversity and differences through human interaction and accumulation may make it look new to the previous generation.

For Pratt ethnocultural complexities are produced by a long history of oppression of minorities. Thereby, the "contact-zone" impact on a (post)colonial American Indian discourse unveils an "autoethnographical" text. It is "a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with reorientations others have made of them" (Pratt 35). The critical part of Mary Lynn's infidelity is her description of the affair with an American Indian as "indigenous sex" (Alexie, "Assimilation" 250); her words assert that sex with an American Indian will never be like sex with a Euro-American; even the possible baby will be "more Indian" (251). The affair after a lost interest in sex with the husband can be seen as "an Indian thing," as Mary Lynn selects her hotel partner carefully; however, her statement of experiencing "indigenous sex" is important as an "autoethnographical" act.

If survivance, for Gerald Vizenor, is a way through which American Indians declare their presence, self-identification has the same role. Both are clearly present in narratives of resistance. "The character of survivance creates a sense of native presence over absence, nihility, and victimry" (Vizenor 1). Similarly, self-identification is a personal investigation, an epistemological process to revive the feeling of the American Indian ethnic existence as a people in the United States. Though sex and infidelity can hardly be seen as a communal act, the protagonist's affair is declared by Mary Lynn to be "a political act! Rebellion, resistance, revolution!" (Alexie, "Assimilation" 247). The narrative of the story demonstrates how "dangerous" to the community Mary Lynn could be in her behavior while chasing survivance.

Drawing on Kenneth Lincoln's classification of American Indian renaissances as those aiming at "tracing the connective threads between the cultural past and its expression in the present" (2), Alexie offers an outstanding model of such past versus present representation. His characters go through a reformation of their cultural and ethnic identities, and their conclusions are the very essence and practice of survivance. In "Assimilation," Alexie introduces the character of an American Indian woman who stands for many alike overwhelmed by the aftermath of colonialism; she leads her life according to what she considers appropriate in a (post)colonial era. Like others, she acts as a member of an ethnic group in their "third space" of cultural encounter: "in the car, or rather with one foot still in the car and one foot placed on the pavement outside of the car, Mary Lynn wept. . . . She loved [Jeremiah], sometimes because he was white and often despite his whiteness" (Alexie, "Assimilation" 258). While feeling satisfied with personal decisions to leave the reservation and marry a Euro-American, alienation symptoms start to

show and pull Mary Lynn to the third space negotiations where she seeks new self-identification.

Geoff Hamilton remarks “how Native people might command respect as they are integrated, on their own terms, into the Euro-American *nomos*” (44). He continues to assert the importance of retrospection in Indigenous narratives as an opportunity to connect “past and present not only to fostering an understanding of the ongoing ramification of historical injustices but to establishing the conditions of a communal identity” (54). The narrator in “Assimilation” offers retrospections of Mary Lynn’s previous life on the reservation and then her life with Jeremiah to justify her divergence toward some, maybe falsely, perceived American Indian insurrection. Before turning ten, Mary Lynn “attended the funerals of seventeen good women—the best of the Coeur d’Alenes—and had read about the deaths of eighteen more good women since she’d left the rez. But what about the Coeur d’Alene men—those liars, cheats, and thieves—who’d survived, even thrived? Mary Lynn wanted nothing to do with them, then or now” (Alexie, “Assimilation” 248). However, leaving the reservation and then having to look for peculiar means to be able to reach a self-identification stage she is comfortable with may not equal “death”. Aiming at survivance, she dated and married an American with whom she

discussed race as a concept, as a foreign country they occasionally visited, or as an enemy that existed outside their house, as a destructive force they could fight against as a couple, as a family. *But* race was also a constant presence, a houseguest and permanent tenant who crept around all the rooms in their shared lives, opening drawers, stealing utensils and small articles of clothing, changing the temperature. (255; emphasis added)

Thus, in her sex act, Mary Lynn looks for her Native American roots, not exclusively the tribal ones. She thinks that she might have missed something to learn about the ethnic self as an American Indian and wants to make it up now. Since Coeur d’Alene men are not representatives of all American Indians, Mary Lynn picks a Lummi and decides to practice “affirmative action” in a “carnal” (247) way. The future decision, although it favors the Euro-American husband, will help Mary Lynn to overcome her suffering with alienation and make her impose her *own* kind of integration on assimilation rhetoric.

Alienation is to feel detached from something you believed you belonged to; self-identification is the quest for perceiving something you have as an articulation in your interaction with others. Feeling far off and alienated, Mary Lynn decides to cheat on her husband “because he was white” (Alexie, “Assimilation” 246); she does so with an Indian “only because he was Indian” (245). It is an ethnic binary

conflict. Remarkably, the rhetorical question whether Mary Lynn is an adulteress or not stimulates the reader to sustain the judgment. “[Her adultery] felt staged, forced, as if she were an actress in a three-in-the-morning cable-television movie. But she was acting, wasn’t she? She was not an adulteress, was she?” (Alexie, “Assimilation” 247). The experience in the cheap hotel room is justified when the “sample” man is characterized as a reaffirmation of tribal features. Mary Lynn wants to figure out whether feeling sensual or dissatisfied has anything to do with her own ethnicity. Within this line of narration, Alexie discusses an important struggle of American Indians living on their turtle island that had been reshaped, divided, named, controlled, and turned into an internal colony by settlers claiming to be the chosen to own the land as their “manifest destiny” declares. It is the struggle for self-identification following the theory of “homing in” and motivated by the feeling of alienation.

Mary Lynn is a representation of American Indians living with difficulties to balance their multicultural life and achieve a domestic and social harmony with their non-indigenous spouses. The dialogue in Mary Lynn’s home, which can be characterized as a “third space,” though located in the dominant sphere, lost its sentimental value and the couple get alienated even in bed. The family has four children, two of them look Euro-Americans and two look American Indians. “When Mary Lynn’s parents called from the reservation, they always asked after the boys, always invited the boys out for the weekend, the holidays, and the summer, and always sent the boys more elaborate gifts than they sent the two girls” (Alexie, “Assimilation” 253). In this sense, the ethnical argument derived from the children’s countenance is more important for the mother who senses the difference in various contexts as a threat. In her attempt to find out a reason for her unexpected moods towards her husband, Mary Lynn fears hearing racist blames; she “wished that she could be called Coeur d’Alene as a description, rather than as an excuse, reason, prescription, placebo, prediction, or diminutive. She only wanted to be understood as eccentric and complicated!” (Alexie, “Assimilation” 246). She lives in the middle of a multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial *family*, and family is supposed to mean *unity*. Thus, she wants to justify her ethnic pride as merely eccentric or complicated, though it does not sound like that to anyone.

“Assimilation” is a story of struggles: race-love, race-duty, race-race, and finally race-cosmopolitanism as its plot presents. Mary Lynn’s relationship with Jeremiah aims at survivance while considering the Jews’ ways to survive the Nazi camps. Sex is her “contact zone” with the world of opportunities and dreams counter to reservation reality. The feeling of nostalgia that the protagonist might have experienced after leaving the reservation does not seem as important as being a wife of a handsome chemical engineer. Being alienated from home is better than



being dead in a home cemetery. Nevertheless, she ends up being in bed with an anonymous American Indian, not to act against her ideal marriage, but to figure out the missing joy in her pre-contact-zone life.

Similarly, the husband, Jeremiah, prefers to be with an intelligent American Indian woman rather than waiting for “a white woman from a mythical high school, . . . a prom queen named *If Only* or a homecoming princess named *My Life Could Have Been Different*” (Alexie, “Assimilation” 251). He wanted to cheat on his *Native* wife but his inability to do so is explained to be family love. “He didn’t admit love for his spouse, partner, wife. No, he confessed his love for marriage, for the blessed union, for the legal document, for the shared mortgage payments, and for their four children” (251). The third space seems to function better for the dominant culture even in the familial context. Jeremiah does not believe that marrying an American Indian will make him American Indian, neither does his wife want to feel American by being his wife. “Long ago, they’d both decided to respond to any questions of why, how, what, who, or when by simply stating: Love is Love” (Alexie, “Assimilation” 255). Mary Lynn argues about ethnic matters as she herself wants to be ethnocentric. Geronimo is the name she calls her husband to refute his claim of being a Euro-American.

Consequently, in a pride-driven effort seeking self-identification, Mary Lynn expresses her wish to have another baby whose features will identify the family; it is a thought of indigenizing her family as giving birth to more American *Indian*-like children. Meanwhile, the grandparents try to maintain their cultural integrity by their preference for the American Indian looking offsprings. Subconsciously, Mary Lynn likes her sons more, too, and feels alienated from the life of her two daughters. The narrator describes the girls’ lives with references to their father’s attitude rather than their mom’s.

Alexie fictionalizes how an integrated mixed-race family might look and tries to anticipate their way out of the fixed self-identification dilemma. The bridge accident serves to offer the resolution of the conflict. A traffic jam is caused by a woman’s suicide attempt because of separation. Jeremiah leaves his wife to investigate the death decision while Mary Lynn thinks of confessing her infidelity with one foot in the car and another outside it. Each one of the couple grasps an answer for his/her alienation dilemma while the critical question of self-validity remains active between different ethnicities. The husband does not want to lose his wife as he decides to stay with her. As an American Indian, the wife is the concrete application of a third space formation of an identity. She does not want to lose him either. Now, the location for the “homing in” theory is her house with Jeremiah.

What indicates Alexie’s possible intentions is the motif of the opening line of the story: “Regarding love, marriage, and sex, both Shakespeare and Sitting Bull knew

the only truth: treaties get broken" (Alexie, "Assimilation" 245). Mary Lynn learns something that was ambiguous to Sitting Bull: Some white men can be trusted. This final observation gives a contemporary definition of sovereignty. Furthermore, Jeremiah has an important point to raise against the colonizer racism. For him, Mary Lynn is "constant" and Shakespeare overrated gravity. Mary Lynn is as decent as any other Anglo-American woman. Social and cultural alienation are not supposed to jeopardize love and family. The latter should be valued over the other to achieve survivance. The struggle, even for the husband, is not personal; it is a collective struggle over a total ethnic destruction within the blending of traditions/bloods. Tribal/collective and self/individual issues overlap, and a new kind of self-awareness comes out of colonization; it is a trans-self into a new world. "The individual Native self is, finally, no individual at all, but rather a compound, fluid entity whose proper rule is interwoven with that of other presences in a natural (divine) order" (Hamilton 7). In this mode, the story embodies the covert significance of its title. American Indians should preserve their traditional culture and extend it into new, recreative visions of Indigenous rules for integration. Assimilation as a process of oppression is not quite an option for the American Indians as Mary Lynn embodies in her revolutionary acts.

As Jelena Šesnić indicated in *From Shadow to Presence*, and as the final scene of the story represents, "the most successful exercise of hybrid identity firmly situated in the spatial temporal grid of the contact zone, border space, frontier, is the one which successfully engages both the provisionality and givenness of this condition" (139). "Assimilation" from its title to enclosure offers a placement for the "third space of enunciation" (Bhabha, *Location* 38) as a narrative to articulate the invisible boundaries to secure against total assimilation, though none of the colonizer or colonized can have the pride to be identified as an "organic ethnic communit[y]" (Bhabha, *Location* 5). Anthropological features do not control the personal desire to be more hooked on a specific ethnic group, like Native Americans, than being somewhere in the "in-betweenness" of cultures. People create new homes and cultures to which they adjust themselves to fit in. Mary Lynn's quest for self-identification to abolish her feeling of alienation is a way in which she re-personalizes the American Indian identity in a (post)colonial era. Her children, however, might have other ways of self-identification, and other ways of defining love or ethnic pride. Mary Lynn's daughter identifies herself as an American Indian "mostly because nobody asked" (Alexie, "Assimilation" 253). Unluckily or maybe luckily, she is a manifestation that the third space enunciation of a (post)colonial culture is working to breed an American cosmopolitan culture.

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<sup>i</sup> Bevis's work was published in the late 1970s, since then new trends have emerged, for example urban settings gained more ground in Native American literature.

<sup>ii</sup> Arnold in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is a good example.

<sup>iii</sup> Narrative is a representation of all American Indian writing genres used in Hamilton's book.

<sup>iv</sup> Gravity is one of the words invented by William Shakespeare and its semantic meanings differ from today's use. Based on the Shakespeare's Words website, some of its meanings which fit into the context here are: respectability, authority, dignified position, wisdom, and sage advice.

# **Cultural Identity Travels across Borders: A Study of Cross-Cultural Interaction in *Everyday Use* by Alice Walker**

Muzaffer Zafer Ayar

## **Introduction**

All through the colonial period, western and eastern countries underwent myriad changes due to social, political, cultural, and religious interactions that caused the formation of hybrid and ambivalent cultural identities as well as mimic individuals based on the relations between the colonizer and the colonized countries. Those changes did not materialize overnight but spread over a long period due to the gradual expansion of occidental ideology. The colonial period along with all its components goes beyond its initial naïve intention of bringing civilization to the Third World countries with the arrival of the colonizer in those countries with their military forces, missionaries, writers, cultural values, and religious assets. The colonizers brought white settlers to those countries as they were basically inseparable parts of the colonial ideology. As Ania Loomba highlights in *Colonialism and Postcolonialism* (2005) that it is almost impossible to put them in the same category as the colonized people of the Third World countries for they brought their superiority in all senses to these lands (Loomba, 2005). Non-western countries have always been taken into consideration as superstitious, backward, and uncivilized by the so-called civilized western powers. Despite the differences in a racial, cultural, and religious sense in a colonized country they never had the experience of being exploited, being subjected to genocide and cultural corruption that was prevalent in almost all colonies of the world.

The colonial and postcolonial periods respectively witnessed the creation of new cultures and identities in overseas countries as a result of colonialist activities. Military interventions, civil unrest, social and economic instability along with religious and cultural re-formation of indigenous people led to the mobility of not only indigenous people and their culture but this mobility created a sort of hybrid and ambivalent cultures and mimic characters as well. It is this ideological mobilization that resulted in the unprecedented destruction of the Third World countries. Colonialism refers to the establishment of colonial power and existence on colonized lands to exploit all kinds of resources and to rule the subjugated people by using power (Boehmer, 2005). The use of force by European colonizers in colonized countries caused internal

conflicts paving the way to instability, mobility of indigenous people due to the internal social and political turmoil – displacement in a sense - and destruction of nations and consciousness of nationhood. In tandem with this interaction between western and eastern cultures, it seems inextricable that most indigenous citizens have been under the influence of this cultural transformation and corruption. In most Third World countries, the process of western acculturation has been gradual due to local resistance; however, the swift phase of this cultural corruption on behalf of the migrant indigenous citizens in western countries has been remarkable. In this context, Alice Walker first explores and then reveals two different generations of black cultures: Walker initially reveals the traditional black culture in the rural environment where Mama and Maggie lead a conventional life. On the other hand, Dee, the elder daughter, is presented as the representative of the emergent mimic and hybrid character and appears as the opponent of the conventional Third World culture and cultural identity.

Walker's creation of culturally binary characters will be the core discussion of this study. The focal point will be on the mimic, hybrid, and ambivalent attitudes and lifestyles that each character exhibits through the plot structure. In the first part of the article, the location of culture will be clarified to ensure the connection between cultural identity and its components: *mimicry*, *hybridity*, and *ambivalence*. Then the following subchapter will highlight the connection and collaboration between these terms and their representations in the characters' attitudes. To clarify the issue of cultural identity, this study will contribute to postcolonial studies in the sense that it will focus on the mimic, hybrid, and ambivalent representations rather than to focus on mere cultural assets. Thus, cultural identity will be reshaped by the presentation of different cultural representations.

## **The Location of Cultural Identity**

One of the prominent literary figures of the postcolonial period is Edward Said with his masterpiece *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) in which Said was able to account for the motivation behind the colonial activity and imperial dissemination of colonizer countries. "Imperialism's culture was not invisible, nor did it conceal its worldly affiliations and interests. One of imperialism's achievements was to bring the world closer together, and although in the process the separation between Europeans and natives was an insidious and fundamentally unjust one" (Said, 1993, p. xxii). That is, imperialism was a transparent process in terms of its expansion in the intercontinental arena, however; this transparency gains ambiguity when it focuses on the fundamental rights of indigenous people of the colonized countries.

That is why Said is critical of the conditions natives were exposed to during the colonial expansion of the Empire. Bhabha contributes to the heterogeneity of the postcolonial period by coining brand new terms that are essentially based on Said's concept of 'the other' and 'orientalism' (Bressler, 2007). Bhabha's masterpiece is a unique contribution to the cultural probe of the worries of the colonized nations. Bhabha has always been of the idea that third-world nations and citizens have a heterogeneous identity- a mixture of their own and the imposed cultural norms of the imperial power- that is the motivation behind his coinage of terms such as mimicry, hybridity, unhomeliness, double consciousness, and ambivalence.

As for culture and cultural identity, both were the dominant social concerns of postcolonial writers and critics. Both terms –culture and cultural identity- have been the essence of postcolonial studies owing to cross-cultural relationships and interactions between the natives and immigrants from third-world countries. Thus, culture and cultural identity have become the core issue of the postcolonial way of writing related to such terms as hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence. Identity alone can be associated with different cultural assets but in its essential aspect identity is not “an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a production, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (Woodward 51). As is pointed out in the quotation that identity is always due to change in the culture it is shaped and reshaped by the norms of a new culture. It has always been the case for the immigrants, indentured workers, and slaves to be subjected to cultural imposition within their new settlements. The probable consequence of the change of cultural identity can be taken into consideration as a positive reaction of new settlers to secure themselves in their new countries. During the colonial and postcolonial periods 'identity' has become a worldwide societal concern both for the Third World nations and citizens and for the Empire. The British Empire endeavored to impose its cultural norms while the Third World nations tried to protect and keep their cultural values. Those periods launch a new atmosphere in terms of cultural identity and thus the periods resulted in cultural transformation and thus can be considered a period of acculturation. Especially the postcolonial period gave rise to a sordid situation on behalf of the Third World citizens that they were somewhere between the culture of 'self' and the culture of 'other'. This situation also paved the way for an understanding of reshaping, reinvestigating, and restructuring their cultural values. Afterward, they commenced questioning the cultural values imposed by dominant white culture and started a quest for their cultural norms. The reestablishment of indigenous culture witnessed a period in which cultural identity was the basic fact that should have been rediscovered.

The period of WWII up until today has been projecting a multifaceted presence in textual analysis that establishes relationships between literary texts, cultural values, and history (Bressler, 2007). Postcolonial writers and critics believe that literature is supposed to deal with social and political developments within the society that occur as a result of social instabilities like slavery, displacement, and cultural degeneration owing to colonial activities. Culture is not a fixed matter of fact and “to see culture as the practices and processes of making shared meanings does not mean that cultural studies believe that cultures are harmonious, organic wholes” (Yaghoubi 23). That is, cultures are subjected to changes and new meanings that are the focus of cultural studies that they are due to change based on the “*relations between the culture and power*” (23). The correlation between power and culture has become much more transparent among the citizens of third-world countries both at home and in all countries they were forced to displace or migrate.

The former definition of cultural identity by Hall clarifies that each identity shelters one true self within itself accompanied by an enforced identity that is much more superficial when compared to the culture experienced by people with a “shared history and ancestry” (Hall, 1996). It is colonial and imperial initiatives that imposed these superficial and imposed selves over indigenous people either in their own countries or in the countries they were forced to live. According to Hall’s second account of cultural identity, there are substantial variations between the original culture and the imposed culture. While the former is a natural process to be able to adapt to, the latter –as it is imposed process- remains unnatural and is taken into consideration as challenging to accept. So, the following part will deal with the issue of cultural identity in harmony with Bhabha’s specific terms related to cultural identity.

### **Mimicry, Hybridity, and Ambivalence in *Everyday Use***

In *The Location of Culture* (1994) Bhabha examines power relations in terms of culture, authority, race and gender relations, colonial transformation, and postcolonial reformation of cultural identity. Acting as an umbrella term, culture and cultural identity associated with mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity are to be studied in connection with *Everyday Use* by Alice Walker. In her presentation of the events and relationships between characters, Walker embodies *Everyday Use* as a story of an African American family living in the rural part of the American South and tells the story of the family’s struggles for their cultural identity and one of the family members’ quests for her new identity. *Everyday Use* is one of Walker’s prominent short stories that deals with the rights of black minorities in American



society. This microcosmic presentation of the issue of culture and cultural identity is exposed to the readers through characters experiencing *mimic*, *hybrid*, and *ambivalent* representations.

One of three main themes to be tackled concerning *Everyday Use* is *mimicry*, a term coined by Homi Bhabha out of his effort to touch upon cultural issues during the post-colonial period. Mimicry in its essence is the product of colonial domination and an expected outcome of this domination based on the power and cultural imposition of the colonizer. "In its comic turn from the high ideal of the colonial imagination to its low mimetic literary effects, mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (85). It is very influential in the power relations between the colonizer and the colonized. The term also underlines the heterogeneous origins of cultural diversity that have been peculiar to mixed societies of the postcolonial era "to signify a reading of identities which foregrounds the work of difference in identity resistant to the imposition of fixed, unitary identification which is, in turn, a hierarchical location of the colonial or subaltern subject" (Wolfreys et al 51).

As is the case in *Everyday Use*, Alice Walker attempted to account for the situation of this mixed ancestry through a small black family leading a humble life in the South. In the exposition part of the story, Walker depicts a picture of an ordinary African American family waiting for the elder daughter's homecoming from the city where she is getting an university education. Walker's creation of two binary characters in the story pervades the whole story from beginning to end. Dee is the elder daughter, an educated and sociable woman when compared to the uneducated younger sister Maggie who is timid and is leading a solitary life with her mother in the countryside. While Dee represents the mimic character along with her mimic attitudes, Maggie is bound to her ancestral values derived from her ethnic roots. Dee appears to be a mimic woman who seems to be ashamed of her ancestral roots and thrives to get rid of them by copying the lifestyle of the colonizer's way of life:

"Well", I say. "Dee."

"No, mama," she says. "Not Dee, Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo"

"What happened to Dee?" I wanted to know.

"She is dead," Wangero said. "I couldn't bear it any longer, being named after the people who oppress me" (Arp & Johnson 170).

The way Dee presents herself both through her attitudes and ideas reveals her turn towards the imposed culture as a result of her new environment at the college and forces herself to put a distance between herself and her roots. "*The copying of the*

*colonizing culture, behavior, manners, and values by the colonized contains both mockery and a certain 'menace', 'so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace'* (Ashcroft 125). Mimicry is to be considered a menace to the original cultural identity as is the case for Dee in the story. Dee's mimic attitudes are derived from the motivation of concealing or masking her original identity and a way of adapting herself to her new cultural environment. Mimicry is not so different for Hakim-a-barber as he turns towards the new culture by rejecting his cultural values. "You must belong to those beef-cattle peoples down the road," said Mrs. Johnson. They said 'Asalamalakim' ... Hakim-a-barber said, "I accept some of their doctrines, but farming and raising cattle is not my style" (Arp & Johnson 170). It is his wish to keep a distance from his cultural values and turn his direction to tenets of colonizing culture. Both Dee and Hakim-a-barber disregard their cultural heritage to some extent in their willingness to be accepted by the dominant others in their new circle.

Walker's intentional depiction of two different poles within the same society enables us to make a thorough observation of diversion in cultural identity by using different masks. So to say, this ambivalence lies in the hesitation of being in-between the two clashing cultures they exist in. "She turns, showing white heels through her sandals, and goes back to the car. Out she peeks next with a Polaroid. She stoops down quickly and lines up picture after picture of me sitting there in front of the house with Maggie cowering behind me" (170). Her attitude shows her mimic characteristics and her effort to adapt to the practices of the American way of life. Mama finds it weird as she and Maggie lead a conventional lifestyle in the countryside. In Dee's situation, all memories related to the past and her family are not more than mere memories regardless of any conventional value.

*Hybridity* is a postcolonial term coined by Bhabha most recently and highlights the intercultural exchange of the values of the colonizing and the colonized cultures, thus emerging a hybrid cultural identity.

The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and references an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code (Bhabha 37).

In his *Third Space*, Bhabha rejects the stability of cultural identity, contrarily it fluctuates to form a new hybrid cultural identity and gives rise to the re-formation of multicultural subjects.

Alice Walker herself has been exposed to this Third Space personally whose exotic cultural background mixed with that of western culture and has appropriated the resulting hybrid culture and mirrored this acculturation process in *Everyday Use*. Dee is obsessed with her hybrid lifestyle in-between her original culture and imposed culture since the culture of the colonizer is presented as an elevated lifestyle.

Along with her mimic attitudes and her distance from her roots, Dee appears to be a hybrid individual having been stuck between her secure premise within this new culture and her authentic cultural identity. She is presented as a mimic character with her fashionable clothes that are fancied up sunglasses and “showing white heels through her sandals” (Arp & Johnson 170). Walker, throughout the novel, depicts Dee as a hybrid character as she is on the brink of rejecting her cultural assets and integrating herself into her new environment. Her desire not to be a part of her authentic life is demonstrated through the story when “she stoops down quickly and lines up picture after picture of me sitting there in front of the house with Maggie cowering behind me. She never takes a shot without making sure the house is included” (170).

Dee displays the very characteristics of the hybrid subject in her hesitation to abandon her authentic cultural values while she does not translate herself into the new culture wholly. “It’s as if before entering that scene Dee wants to make sure that she has a picture of herself not being in the picture. She wants to frame that world, define its borders, and give it a wholeness which then allows her to handle it without being a part of it” (Whitsitt 448). Her distance from her authentic cultural identity is drawn by herself and she manages this socio-cultural process masterfully by excluding herself from her authentic cultural frame. Such attitudes appear and reappear in the story with Dee’s conflicts in her desire to possess authentic materials like the quilt and churn dasher but not of the intention to use them in their everyday function. “Mama,” Wangero said sweetly as a bird. “Can I have these old quilts?” .... “Well,” I said stumped. “What would you do with them?” asked Mrs. Johnson. “Hang them.” She said. As if that was the only thing you could do with quilts” (Arp & Johnson 173).

It is Dee’s preference to take the old quilts not because of their cultural and authentic values but for her artistic pleasure which appeals only to her desire to prove her distance from her cultural roots. On the contrary, Mrs. Johnson maintains her connection to her cultural representation and favors Maggie’s possession of the authentic materials and she believes that Maggie has a strong interest in her cultural values and identity. What is related to the essence of hybridity in the character of Dee is clarified with Mama’s utterance when their house was set on fire. “I saw her standing off under the sweet gum tree she used to dig gum out of; a look of concentration on her face as she watched the last dingy grey board of the house fall in toward the red brick chimney. Why don’t you do a dance around the ashes? ... She hated the house that much” (168).

Dee’s cultural transformation starts in her teenage years when she feels a sort of alienation from her traditions. As if she wants to erase the traces of her previous life she watches the burning of the house with pleasure. This enables her to turn back on

her cultural history and the traditional story of her ancestral past. Thus, she adapts to the values of the new culture through her development of a hybrid identity.

*Ambivalence* is a fluctuating term between wanting something and claiming the opposite at the same time (Ashcroft et al. 2000). This ambivalent desire of wanting and rejecting appears within the case of exposure to two different cultures on behalf of the colonized since neither do they reject the imposed culture nor disregard their cultural values and cultural identity. John Mcleod explains ambivalence and in-betweenness as this: "Location of Culture addresses those who live 'border lives' on the margins of different nations, in-between contrary homelands...Borders are important thresholds, full of contradiction and ambivalence. They both separate and join different places" (217). The beyond is neither a new horizon nor a leaving behind of the past, it is what gives a considerable explanation of ambivalence –being on a threshold of stepping up into a new identity without denying the history, cultural inheritance, and identity for the sake of materialistic charms of a new cultural identity.

Ambivalence, in this sense, is to stay somewhere secure where one subject stands in hesitation to accept and reject a new and old set of values in terms of cultural and materialistic values, and thus act in a particular way accordingly. In *Everyday Use*, Dee is the most striking character who experiences the ambivalence of cultural identity, while not rejecting her past totally, but integrating into a new culture. She is depicted as a character enjoying the blessings of different cultures:

You just don't understand," Dee said, as Maggie and I came out to the car. "Why don't I understand?" I wanted to know. "Your heritage," she said. And turned to Maggie, kissed her, and said, "You ought to try to make something of yourself, too, Maggie. It's a new day for us. But from the way, you and Mama still live you'd never know it (174).

Upon Mrs. Johnson's rejection of Dee's wish to possess the quilts, Dee's reaction reflects the feeling of ambivalence in her appreciation of the materialistic value of quilts and her turning towards the new culture once more at the end of the story by accusing her family not to understand the value of "cultural heritage". Mrs. Johnson, on the other hand, appears to have an ambivalent attitude despite her strict consideration and strong ties with her past and cultural values. In most of the story, Mama is in favor of her familial history by reacting to Dee's attitudes and her negligence of the past; however, she appears to have a dream of appearing on a TV show with her daughter Dee. Mama stands against cultural impositions of colonial ideology but favors a sort of TV culture –a fundamental component of neo-colonial cultural imposition. Her ambivalent attitude is reflected in the story via her utterance that "Sometimes I dream a dream in which Dee and I are suddenly brought together on a TV program of this sort. Out of dark and soft-seated limousine, I am ushered into a bright room filled with many people" (167).

Although Mrs. Johnson leads a solitary and humble lifestyle with her daughter Maggie in the countryside and is portrayed to be a character appreciating her cultural past and heritage, she daydreams of appearing on a famous TV program. Her ambivalence becomes evident in the cultural sense in her contradictory attitude of advocating her cultural heritage and her desire to be a part of TV culture that is an effective means of imposing the western way of life. Mama appears to be the straight character in her manners towards the new culture and her loyalty to her root cultural assets.

Though she is presented with strong feelings and dependence on her root culture, she does not totally reject the cultural and individual transformation Dee goes through at university. "A dress down to the ground, in this hot weather. A dress so loud it hurts my eyes. ... Earrings gold, too, hanging down to her shoulders. The dress is loose and flows, and as she walks closer, I like it" (169). Mama's reaction, when compared to Maggie's, is moderate as she appears to accept her daughter's cultural transformation which indicates her ambivalent attitude between the two cultures. The story appears to be the reconciliation of the idea that culture as a dynamic process travels across the borders, yet it is susceptible to any change and transformation.

Toward the conclusion, Walker in *Everyday Use* literally catches the attention through her unique talent to create a macrocosmic cultural decadence in a microcosmic setting. With a very limited number of characters, *Everyday Use* gives a tremendous feeling of the issue of acculturation in western countries. Still, Walker makes it clear for the sake of her cultural inheritance that culture is susceptible to changes of any sort as long as it travels across the borders. As is the case for Dee, she appears to be confused about her cultural legacy. Though she does not reject her maternal ancestry, she struggles to develop and create a new identity. While Dee considers much about her future, Mama and Maggie protect their ancestral values. It will not be wrong to associate mimicry and hybridity with the character of Dee as she appears to be such a figure in the rural setting. Ambivalence, though, is associated with almost all other characters in the sense of their respect for their cultural legacy.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, colonial and postcolonial periods individually are successive eras and the latter is a period of reaction to the imposition of the colonizer's enforcement of cultural identity and this social reality has become an undeniable component of postcolonial literary writing. As a dynamic process, culture and its

component -cultural identity- have gone through an unprecedented active stage, and traveled across borders owing to the social, political, economic, and cultural interests of colonialist and imperialist movements. Throughout colonial rule and imperial expansion, many of the components of culture traveled across borders and resulted in the creation of hybrid, mimic, and ambivalent cultural identities and characters. In her attempt to deal with cultural issues, Alice Walker depicted a micro prototype of this cross-cultural or intercultural interaction in her *Everyday Use*. It is observable especially in the character of Dee that she tries to escape her past and cultural roots as well as her colonial heritage. Thus, contrary to her mum and sister Maggie, Dee adapts herself to a new American way of life either rejecting or ignoring her natural heritage. However, Mama and Maggie manage to survive and keep their cultural heritage and they do not surrender to the practices of the adopted culture. Although Dee is the most volatile character with regard to preserving root cultural values, Mama and Maggie are on the side of maintaining their own traditions and cultural assets.

Alice Walker's attempt to highlight these binary situations in the name of Dee as the assimilated individual and Mama as the protector of authentic cultural norms is clearly observable throughout the story. While mimicry and hybridity are well represented in the name of Dee, ambivalence is the core stance on behalf of Mama and Maggie. When the options for indigenous black minorities are very limited in the countries they migrated to, they often tend to create new options and spaces with the motivation of having more. That is to say, Third World citizens are inclined to turn their back on their cultural heritage to ensure a secure zone by mimicking and exhibiting a hybrid lifestyle. When the root culture is suspended in time and space, the gap between cultural and individual identities is filled by the practices of the target culture through *mimicry*, *hybridity*, and *ambivalence*. Still, culture travels across the borders even if it is open to any kind of change due to various factors available.

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# Faith and Interpretation: Religious Belief as an Epistemic and Hermeneutic Concept in Neo- -Pragmatist Philosophy and Literary Theory

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## Introduction: divination and interpretation

In his essay titled “Deep Interpretation,” Arthur C. Danto evokes an ancient Greek practice of divination called *dia kledon*, “exercised upon the casual utterances of men” (53), which took place in the following way: a “message-seeker pressed a coin into the hand of a certain statue of Hermes, whispered his query in the idol’s ear, blocked his own ears—and the answer would be contained in the first human words he heard upon unblocking them”(53). Quite understandably, however, these coded words would require deciphering, “supposing, as altogether likely, the words did not transparently reveal the message . . . And an interpreter as middleman would be called upon to map interpretandum onto interpretands” (53-54). The “middleman,” thus, poses as an envoy to Hermes insofar as his task is to mediate between immortal gods and ordinary mortal humans, which provides an apt analogy of the metaphysical moment inherent to all acts of interpretation: the contingent appearance must be stripped away so that the divine essence can be revealed. The practice of the *kledon*, however, also points up an inescapable *pragmatic* element in the interpretive process, since the divine emanation must be mapped onto the most mundane human endeavors, such as solving financial difficulties, smoothing out feud in the family, or tackling illicit love affairs. In fact, the interpretive process never transcends the profane space of the marketplace, a site for transactions in more senses than one, where the accidentally overheard scraps of conversation are converted into eloquent wisdoms in exchange for a few coins. In their own right, neither the bystander (the one whose contingent words are being interpreted), nor the interpreter has any claim to divine authority, yet the proverbial Greek citizen seeking advice must maintain a firm belief that all of these contingencies graduate to the level of metaphysical emanation sanctified by some divine intent. This is how the opposing forces of metaphysics and pragmatism converge under the banner of faith in the marketplace of ancient Athens.

Danto’s account of the *kledon* is a suitable starting point for the inquiries of the present study inasmuch as it offers a succinct narrative of the interrelatedness of the three key notions on which my discussion focuses: faith, pragmatism, and

interpretation. In my usage of “faith,” I will draw upon religious belief as a model, but the notion will be used in a broader sense to denote unconditional belief implicit in such epistemologically conceived terms as “premise,” “axiom,” or “unexamined interpretive assumption.” These terms suggest that even in a rational inquiry there are certain basic factors, some first principles which are regarded as unquestioned points of reference, about which there is undivided consensus in a given community. Taken in this broader sense, we can move beyond the commonplace understanding of faith as the opposing term to reason, knowledge, and epistemology.

My purpose in what follows is to explore the epistemological and interpretive functions of faith in a specifically pragmatist context in three steps: first, I will offer a brief overview of various philosophical attempts to accommodate faith (mostly meant in a religious sense) within the realm of epistemology; second, I will focus on classical pragmatist (William James) and neo-pragmatist (Richard Rorty, Stanley Fish) strategies aimed at dissolving the dichotomy between faith and reason and argue that the apparently emancipatory gesture can only be executed at the expense of depriving faith of its metaphysical properties; third, I will discuss the function of faith as a necessary component of interpretive processes through Stanley Fish’s theories of literary interpretation. In the closing section, I will return to a brief analysis of Danto’s account of the *kledon* to provide a framework for drawing some general conclusions.

### **The epistemology of faith: from realism to neo-pragmatism**

It is a commonly accepted view that the major difference between faith and reason lies in the fact that while the latter is supposed to serve as the foundation of knowledge, the former needs no preliminary founding principle: the sheer fact of holding a certain faith is sufficient to constitute the foundation of that faith. Hence, faith does not seem to belong in the realm of epistemology, for even though one may want to possess a theory of one’s knowledge, it is less likely that one would want to formulate a theory of one’s faith. The very distinction between faith and knowledge, however, is itself an epistemological gesture, which inevitably subsumes faith under the rule of reason. Kevin Hart remarks that before the Age of Reason, the ontological and epistemological functions of God were not treated as separate, as God was the “*fons et origo* of all that is, and . . . the guarantor of determinate meaning” (29). A sharp differentiation between faith and knowledge is the legacy of Enlightenment philosophy, a prominent representative of which was Immanuel Kant, who held the view that certain postulates that are “necessary to the meaning of moral experience, lay not within but outside knowledge”

(Thayer 17). Hence the Kantian solution: “I have therefore found it necessary to deny *knowledge* in order to make room for *faith*” (quoted in Thayer 17; emphasis in original). This Kantian “denial,” however, does not undermine the privileged status of knowledge, for the gesture of “making room” results in depriving faith (or God) of its sovereign right to guarantee determinate meaning, dividing the cognitive space into stable objects of knowledge and articles of unconditional faith. This epistemological predicament is allegorized by the biblical story of the Fall, which caused a split between sign and meaning precisely because of the knowledge Adam and Eve acquired through their transgression. Thus, when Hart contends that it is “only after the Fall that a theology is needed” (6), we need only substitute “Enlightenment” for “Fall” to turn the allegory into a historically valid statement. The Enlightenment’s celebration of reason as the foundation of all knowledge forced theology into a defensive position, which therefore turned into a discourse whose *raison d’être* was to validate faith in accordance with the tenets of “realist” epistemology. For this reason, the discourse on faith has never really been able to break free from the realm of epistemology, and its discursive practices remained derivative of those of traditional (objectivist, realist, positivist) epistemology.

The essence of realist epistemology (or epistemological realism) is most concisely captured by G. E. Moore, who explained the relationship between truth and beliefs as follows: “To say that [a] belief is true is to say that there is in the Universe *a* fact to which it corresponds, and to say that it is false is to say that there is *not* in the Universe any fact to which it corresponds” (277). Moore made this statement in his 1910-11 Morley lectures, and at that time this realist account of truth was vying for prominence with the coherence theory of knowledge put forward by staunch idealists like F. H. Bradley and Harold Joachim, and William James’s pragmatic account of truth as an “expedient in our way of thinking” (Michaels “Saving” 775-76). The counter-arguments against realism were later extended to include questions about discourses (literature, philosophy, or religion) in which the truth of statements cannot be verified in terms of correspondence to reality. As a response to such counter-arguments, I. A. Richards, in his 1930 essay, “Belief,” came up with an apparently useful differentiation between “verifiable belief” and “imaginative assent,” defining the latter as not being “subject to the laws of thought” (qtd. In Michaels 777) unlike verifiable beliefs. However, as Walter Benn Michaels points out, the distinction “turns out to be a version of the more familiar [Platonic] distinction between true knowledge and mere belief” (778). Thus, from the point of view of epistemological realism, beliefs are anomalous factors which, at best, do not further, and, at worst, might hinder our objective perception of the world.

On closer inspection, however, the postulation of an objectively existing world that can always prove our beliefs right or wrong is analogous to the postulation

of an almighty and omniscient deity. Both “the real world” and God function as unassailable authorities when knowledge-claims are to be validated, and neither the epistemological realist nor the religious believer would acknowledge that “reality” and God are both constructions, albeit of different sorts and in different ways. The most significant difference from an epistemological perspective is that the authority (God) that could adjudicate between conflicting beliefs is always absent, thus the believer has to transcend the dichotomies true/false or right/wrong when his or her belief in God has to be justified. In other words, one’s belief in God’s existence is not a matter of being right or wrong about some objective state of affairs.

In his seminal essay, “The Will to Believe” (1896), William James shows an acute awareness of this property of religious beliefs, and so he does his best to detach faith from traditional considerations of epistemology: “We feel, too,” he contends “as if the appeal of religion to us were made to our active good-will [i.e. not reason], as if evidence might be forever withheld from us unless we met the hypothesis half-way” (476). On the other hand, the one who approaches faith through reason and logic, risks never experiencing it: “one who should shut himself up in snarling logicality and try to make the gods extort his recognition willy-nilly, or not get it at all, might cut himself off forever from his only opportunity to make the gods’ acquaintance” (476). James’s claims already harbor the germs of the more general pragmatist argument that the “religious hypothesis” is not a matter of metaphysical involvement with a power higher than ourselves, but that of a choice of cognitive disposition (even a negative one), and what motivates this choice is the typical pragmatist notion of usefulness. This culminates in a statement James would make eleven years after “The Will to Believe:”

On pragmatic principles, if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, [it] is true. Now whatever its residual difficulties may be, experience shows that it certainly does work, and that the problem is to build it out and determine it so that it will combine satisfactorily with all the other working truths. (*Pragmatism* 618).

The active verbs “build out” and “determine” suggest human agency as opposed to either the metaphysical or the positivist understanding of faith, where the former takes faith to be a given (or a gift), while the latter wishes to force it into dichotomies of verifiability (true/false, real/imaginary/right/wrong, etc.).

Richard Rorty approves James’s attempt to free religious faith from positivist restrictions, but he also criticizes his predecessor for still holding on to the distinction between the “cognitive” and the “non-cognitive” (or between belief and desire). He laments that “James accepts exactly what he should reject: the idea

that the mind is divided neatly down the middle into intellect and passion, and the idea that possible topics of discussion are divided neatly into the cognitive and the noncognitive ones" ("Religious Faith" 155). Rorty insists that "the only point of having beliefs in the first place is to gratify desires" (153), whereby he hopes to blur the "useless" distinction between cognitive and non-cognitive content. Furthermore, he favors the "pragmatist doctrine that beliefs have content only by virtue of inferential relations to other beliefs" (159), from which one can argue for the intersubjective nature of beliefs, counteracting the objectivist claims of realist epistemology. Beliefs can be seen as forming a web of inferential relations through a continuous process of justification by invoking other beliefs that are momentarily not called upon to be justified. The process is evidently language-bound, but Rorty warns against the "unpragmatic" mistake of looking upon language as a medium of representation for beliefs. Rorty thinks this was the mistake positivists made, which left them perplexed when faced with the representational value of religious belief. He expressly dismisses the positivist notion that "the sentences used to express religious belief are typically not hooked up to the rest of language in the right inferential way, and hence can express only pseudobeliefs" (151), but he concedes that formulating a thoroughly pragmatist view of the issue is not entirely unproblematic either. If the intersubjective justification of beliefs takes place in the form of communal practices, "what becomes of intersubjectivity," Rorty asks, "once we admit that there is no communal practice of justification—no shared language game—which gives religious statements their content?" (159). Rorty sees the solution of dealing with unjustifiable beliefs (like those in incarnation or resurrection) in treating those beliefs as translated into utterances relatable to various "patterns of behavior, even when we cannot . . . fix . . . the place of such utterances in a network of inferential relations" (160).

This solution, however, does not account for the conceivable problem of invoking unjustifiable religious beliefs in justifying secular ones. The problem is that labeling certain beliefs as "unjustifiable" is a covert reiteration of the positivist notion of "pseudo-belief," for this view implicitly denies explanatory (inferential, logical) value to religious beliefs, and, thereby, retains the cognitive-noncognitive (belief/desire, reason/faith) dichotomy that it seeks to discard. Placing religious beliefs outside the web of inferential relations would be to deny the fact that religious people do appeal to articles of faith for instance in interpretive debates about the meaning of biblical passages, by means of which they wish to put forth some ultimate argument that decides the debate in their favor. Nevertheless, even religious believers engaged in such debates must rely on epistemological notions like "validity," "truth," "rightness" or "wrongness" when defending their positions. These notions, however, can only be invoked in a dispute if the disputants are in

agreement about the rules of the language game in which they are deployed, and these rules seem to be dictated by epistemology, not religion.<sup>1</sup> Thus, when faith is to be defended against rational counter-arguments, the holder of the faith cannot but phrase his or her defense in *rational* epistemological terms, which leads to the paradoxical situation that the religious believer has to rely on the vocabulary of his or her opponent to undermine the validity of that same vocabulary. The validating processes of faith and reason, therefore, seem inextricably intertwined on more levels than one.

Further levels of this inextricability can be explored through the relevant writings of Stanley Fish. Similarly to Rorty, Fish also rejects the opposition traditional epistemology sets up between faith and reason (or knowledge), but he places more emphasis on the hermeneutic aspects of both, arguing that both involve interpretive arguments. Fish outright claims that “[t]here is no opposition . . . between knowledge by faith and knowledge by reason” (“Why” 245), for both faith in a deity and reason presuppose certain “first principles” which enable one’s participation in a given discourse, and determine the route (and, to some extent, the outcome) of the given argument. As a consequence, whatever discourse (religious or secular, foundationalist or anti-foundationalist) one represents, the first principles one acts upon cannot be submitted to a rational validation of their correctness as it is presupposed by epistemological realism. One of Fish’s most powerful claims is that one’s “consciousness must be grounded in an originary act of faith—a stipulation of basic value—from which determinations of right and wrong, relevant and irrelevant, real and unreal will then follow” (“Why” 247). According to Fish, it is unthinkable to posit “rational criteria that are themselves hostage to no belief in particular” (247). Thus, rational inquiry is no less enabled by a set of unquestioned tenets than religious faith.

It would be a mistake, however, to gloss over the differences between the two modes of thinking. In fact, Fish himself can be seen as doing just that when he differentiates between knowing by evidence and knowing by faith, and concludes that “on the level of epistemology both are the same” (245). He also adds, however, that his argument does not aim to “debunk rationality in favor of faith but to say that rationality and faith go together in an indissoluble package: you can’t

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1 This is, in fact, what the notion of epistemology has been understood to signify. See Rorty’s succinct formulation: “The dominating notion of epistemology is that to be rational . . . we need to be able to find agreement with other human beings. To construct an epistemology is to find the maximum amount of common ground with others. The assumption that an epistemology can be constructed is the assumption that such common ground exists” (*Philosophy* 316). Rorty’s anti-foundationalism consists mainly in his disbelief in “‘knowledge’ as something about which there ought to be a ‘theory’ and which has ‘foundations’” (*Philosophy* 7).



have one without the other” (“Why” 255). In fact, the package is so indissoluble that the criteria according to which one notion could be granted priority over the other are never obvious to discern. The problem is not unlike that of the Greek citizen in Danto’s example, for the *kledon* acquires divine authorization through human interpretation, which has to proceed along communally accepted norms of reasoning so as to be accepted as a convincing godly message. At the same time, the very notion of “godly message” is a presupposition (a first principle) enabled by the citizen’s faith. It is, however, not at all obvious whether faith precedes and paves the way for an acceptable interpretation, or it is a function of rational interpretive reasoning.

Surprisingly enough, this latter claim is not alien to religious believers, to which Fish’s exchange with Richard Neuhaus, an ordained Catholic priest, adequately testifies. In the above-quoted essay (“Why Can’t We All Just Get Along”), Fish argues that the conflict between faith and rationality is, in fact, a conflict between two rationalities which can never be solved on a common ground, for, obviously, what counts as evidence for one of the disputants will not count as evidence for the other, and vice versa (255). He also claims that “to ask a religious person to rephrase his claims in more mainstream terms [i.e., acceptable in a secular community] is to ask that person to cut himself off from the very source of his conviction and to become in effect the opposite of what he is, to become secular” (254). Fish thinks religious people often do this, and claims that it is an erroneous strategy on their part, for they abandon their own vocabulary and play the language game of their secular opponents, which is diametrically opposed to their interests as religious believers. In his view, “a person of religious conviction should not want to enter the marketplace of ideas but to shut it down, at least insofar as it presumes to determine matters that he believes have been determined by God and faith” (250).

Fish might be correct in a general sense, but a more detailed examination of his reasoning could reveal some contradictions. First, he states that there is no difference between knowledge by faith and knowledge by reason, for they both involve certain articles of faith or first principles, so faith and reason remain indissolubly intertwined. Then, he goes on to claim that rational reasoning and reasoning by faith will never stand on a common ground, thus it is a highly futile attempt, on both parts, to engage each other in conversation, for it can result only in the unfortunate dissolution of faith in the discourse of rationality. Therefore, Fish is simultaneously right and wrong when he concludes that the best possible outcome for the religious person would be to silence the dissenters, to shut down the marketplace of ideas. He is right insofar as shutting down the marketplace of ideas may mean the triumph of religious conviction, but he is wrong inasmuch as it is through this very marketplace that religious conviction can be given a hearing. In other words, there is no other choice

for the religious believer but to *argue* with whatever communal means available, even if those means are antithetical to his or her convictions.

This compulsion to argue, surprisingly, leads Neuhaus to defend rational reasoning, and to deny that rationality and faith cannot stand on a common ground. He invokes Augustine's *The Usefulness of Believing* to support his argument, saying:

Augustine makes the case that belief is necessary for understanding. He explains in great detail to his unbelieving interlocutor the reasonable case for believing. It is clear that Augustine and his interlocutor share a common "a priori" in what they mean by reason and reasons. The argument is that belief is necessary to understanding—in everyday life, in science, in friendship, and in matters religious—and why belief is necessary is itself rationally explicable. (29)

He then goes on to quote Augustine as saying: "No one believes anything unless he first thought it believable. Everything which is believed should be believed after thought has preceded. Not everyone who thinks believes, since many think in order not to believe; but everybody who believes thinks" (29). Neuhaus also finds it important to emphasize that Augustine was firmly opposed to the "fideistic" view of faith as arbitrary which is "not supported by and cannot appeal to an a priori about what is reasonable" (29). But why is it so important for Neuhaus to prove faith to be based on rational premises, and defensible through rational argument?

The motivation behind his endeavor might be to demonstrate that religion can and should participate in the prevailing language game of liberal societies, the rules of which rest on rationalist premises. In his desperate attempt to prove his point, Neuhaus engages in a rather tautological argument, claiming that if Christians and liberals "have systems of reasoning that have nothing in common, we could not call them both 'systems of reasoning.' To call them systems of reasoning is to assert that they have in common the fact that they both belong to the genus called 'systems of reasoning'—which of course they do" (28). The contention can be paraphrased in the following circular statement: "Systems of reasoning are what they are *because* we call them by that name." This circularity appropriately describes the whole problem at hand: what enables faith is a common rationality which, in turn, has to be suppressed when one has to testify to one's belief in "phenomena" that are unverifiable through rational inquiry and inexplicable by rational argument (resurrection, virgin birth, etc.). As Fish puts it: for the religious believer "the absence of a rational explanation is just the point, one that, far from challenging the faith, confirms it" ("Faith" 268). This confirmation, however, can occur only at the expense of abandoning the rational principles without which,



according to Augustine and Neuhaus, faith would not be possible. Consequently, they have to disconfirm reason so as to confirm faith and vice versa so that faith and reason are constantly and simultaneously enabling and disabling each other and this circular movement comes to define them both.

Needless to say, however, that the “perception” (much rather fabrication) of this paradoxical circularity is also, and to a great extent, a function of first principles, and on the believer’s part the paradox can be undone, or, rather, pre-empted by the simple interpretive move to claim rationality to be god-given (just like everything else in the world). Thus, the tables are turned immediately: it is not the discourse of faith that gets annexed by rationality, but vice versa, rationality—as a divine auxiliary—comes to the rescue of faith, if it needs to be defended in a debate. Neuhaus eventually makes this very point as an ultimate argument against Fish, but the argumentative pattern he has maneuvered himself into allows him no non-circular exit out of his line of reasoning:

However partial our knowledge, and however stumbling our ability to communicate, we finally do all participate in one discourse, the one Logos of the mind of God. This gives the Christian confidence that he can enter into a conversation with the non-Christian . . . Therefore, when Christians in conversation with non-Christians “rephrase” what they want to say, they are not necessarily surrendering to the opposition. The reason and language of the non-Christian, when rightly exercised, is ordered to the same truth. The Christian therefore tries in various ways to enter into the reason and language of non-Christians in order to help reorder them to truth. (30)

Neuhaus’s argument at this point has run its full course and this last passage leaves us with two important points to be noted. First, he makes the case for the existence of a (God-given) common ground on which believers and non-believers can co-exist. Yet, he phrases his argument in such a way that it becomes a perfect exemplification of Fish’s claim to the effect that the reasoning of the believer and the non-believer can never be brought to converge. What Neuhaus, in effect, comes to formulate is the *par excellence* foundationalist assertion that—however circuitously and mildly he tries to put it—truth is (like it or not) on his side. And, in fact, there is nothing else he could say; this is the only conclusion his faith allows him to come to, otherwise it would not deserve the designation *faith*. The point finally has to be driven home so that even the slightest semblance of relativization is avoided. Fish sees this very clearly when he contends: “Religious discourse . . . cannot be unconcerned with the substantive worth and veracity of its assertions, which are in fact *presupposed*, and presupposed too is the urgency of proclaiming

those assertions—the good news—to a world asked to receive them as the whole and necessary truth” (“Why” 252). And indeed, the believer cannot *not* assert the truth: for him or her it is not a matter of claiming supremacy in an epistemological debate, but, rather, that of a moral imperative.

The second point to be noted has to do with Neuhaus’s claim that we all participate in the divine discourse of the Logos, which enables Christians and non-Christians to comprehend each other, implies that rationality can be seen as part of the divine Logos, whose etymological root meaning can also be understood as *ratio* in the sense of “reasoning.” This entails the argument that rationality—as, indeed, *all* discourses—has always already belonged in the realm of religion. Augustine quite clearly points this out when he maintains that “the validity of logical sequences is not a thing devised by men, but is observed and noted by them . . .; for it exists eternally in the reason of things, and has its origin with God” (*Christian Doctrine* 734). It follows, then, that reason and logic are divine attributes rather than human inventions, so rational reasoning can be understood as God’s language. Thus, what Fish regards as “rephrasing,” is, for Neuhaus, just a rhetorical turn deployed in a language he and his fellow-Christians never ceased to possess.

Moreover, their ultimate goal is to eventually bring all human beings to use this language in the proper way, to be “reordered” to truth. In the absence of divine epiphanies, “reordering” can be achieved by means of rhetorical tactics, which should pose no problem for the believer, since the terms in which one casts one’s argument are merely the medium through which the one immutable truth of God is conveyed. Thus, the aim of this persuasion is not to convince the disbeliever through the persuasive force of a logical argument, but to see through the representation to truth.

Nonetheless, there is a disconcerting between the “original” truth to be represented and the medium of representation, which is the language of rational argument. The Aristotelian model of rational argument (whether deployed by religious believers or staunch rationalists) starts from certain first premises, follows a deductive route, and ends in a syllogistic conclusion which is presented as a necessary outcome of the argument. For the religious believer who attempts to reorder his or her disbelieving peer to faith, this necessary outcome is the ineluctable truth of God’s existence, which has to be presented as a “logical” consequence of his or her argument; the process appears to be linear, whereas it is, again, circular. As Neuhaus’s example also testifies, the logical route is followed only up to the point where the syllogism is to be presented as an ineluctable entailment, yet what really happens is a quick jump back to square one, to the very premise we started from, namely that God’s will governs all, or as Neuhaus puts it, we all participate in the divine Logos. The conclusion to his line of reasoning (which, Neuhaus insists, has been “rational”) has, in fact, never

been in doubt, thus the need for strict logical reasoning has been rendered moot. If one's belief in the divine origin of *anything* has been secured, we no longer need logical argument as there is no longer any doubt that needs dispelling. But if only those who are convinced can see anything as of divine origin, what is the point in convincing the ones who are already convinced? In an ideal scenario for the religious, the sequential steps of a logical argument would be replaced by the instantaneous perception of the full presence of divinity. This perception, however, would be far from being the result of a step-by-step logical argument at the end of which one gets through to divine truth, but, conversely, the argument can be convincing only to those who do not question this truth in the first place. It seems that faith persists with or without any argument being deployed.

This conclusion also entails that there is no argument that could ever seriously challenge one's faith from *outside*, which Fish quite eloquently explicates in his reply to Neuhaus ("Faith" 268). The more important implication is that faith functions as a key to reading signs in such a way that those signs will contribute to the affirmation of the articles of one's faith—in short, one's faith functions as an interpretive program. This insight is central to Fish's theory of interpretation, in which he repeatedly draws upon theological analogies in explicating his position. One of these instances can be seen when he cites Augustine as saying: "to the healthy and pure internal eye He [God] is everywhere." This Augustinian claim adequately illustrates Fish's point: "He is everywhere not as the result of an interpretive act self-consciously performed on data otherwise available, but as the result of an interpretive act performed at so deep a level that it is indistinguishable from consciousness itself" ("Normal" 272). In the section that follows, I will discuss the consequences and mechanism of this interpretive program through focusing on Fish's theory of reading and interpretation.

### **Faith as an interpretive program in Stanley Fish's literary theory**

The pivotal notion of Fish's theory of interpretation is that of the "interpretive community," which he introduces in an essay titled "Interpreting the *Variorum*." He argues that

[i]nterpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading . . . but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words, these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than . . . the other way round. (171)

The argument is typically phrased in Fish's constructivist terms, and he repeatedly comes to make this same point in various forms in his later work. What is more important for us in this context, is that preceding the passage in which the term "interpretive community" appears, Fish invokes Augustine's "rule of faith" from his *On Christian Doctrine* as a paradigmatic interpretive program, one that—he claims—can still serve to illuminate the mechanisms of exegetical practices. Fish paraphrases the rule of faith as follows: "everything in the Scriptures, and indeed in the world when properly read, points to (bears the meaning of) God's love for us and our answering responsibility to love our fellow creatures for His sake" ("Interpreting" 170). Then, Fish goes on to quote in fragments the famous Augustinian interpretive tenet that secures the success of any reading:<sup>2</sup>

[W]e must also pay heed to that which tells us not to take a literal form of speech as if it were figurative. In the first place, then, we must show the way to find out whether a phrase is literal or figurative. And the way is certainly as follows: Whatever there is in the word of God that cannot, when taken literally, be referred either to purity of life or soundness of doctrine, you may set down as figurative . . . Accordingly, in regard to figurative expressions, a rule such as the following will be observed, to carefully turn over in our minds and meditate upon what we read till an interpretation be found that tends to establish the reign of love. (744, 746-47)<sup>3</sup>

This method is unfailing: there should be no obscure or recalcitrant passage in the Scriptures which thus could not be made proper sense of—all it requires for its appropriate functioning is immitigable faith on the interpreter's part. Fish claims this interpretive rule to be operative in contemporary readings as well, so much so, that he adds: "Whatever one may think of this interpretive program, its success and ease of execution are attested to by centuries of Christian exegesis. It is my contention that any interpretive program, any set of interpretive strategies, can have a similar success although few have been as spectacularly successful as this one" (170).

2 Although the translation available to me is different from the one Fish cites, I use it nevertheless so that the passage can be quoted in full.

3 Fish paraphrases it as follows (I italicize the words he quotes from Augustine): "if only you should come upon something which does not at first seem to bear this [godly] meaning, that does not '*literally pertain to virtuous behavior or to the truth of faith*,' you should take it '*to be figurative*' and proceed to scrutinize it '*until an interpretation contributing to the reign of charity is found*'" ("Interpreting" 170).

The claim is somewhat preposterous insofar as it flies in the face of theories which operate under the assumption that interpretation is a matter of careful reasoning rather than blind faith. Interpretive acts, like those performed in literary criticism, are traditionally seen as committed to the epistemological program of providing as accurate a representation of what is “truly” in the text as is humanly possible. Such a program is obviously inconceivable without positing axiomatic elements in a text to which the critic can appeal in validating his or her interpretive claims. E.D. Hirsch famously insists on authorial intention as such an axiomatic element, arguing that “it [authorial intention] is the only practical norm for a cognitive discipline of interpretation” (7). Monroe Beardsley, though abandoning authorial meaning as an aesthetically rewarding criterion for interpretation, still insists that interpretations “must be *in principle* capable of being shown to be true or false” (37; emphasis in original). Richard Shusterman observes that “the elusive notion of authorial intention paradoxically offers the security of objective truth and convergence in literary interpretation . . . , while at the same time providing the security that this objective truth or meaning cannot be conclusively demonstrated once and for all, thereby ensuring the continued demand for interpretation” (84-85).

Shusterman’s contention is reminiscent of the silence of the gods, which necessitates and perpetuates interpretation when the divine intention calls for interpretation. Conclusive validation in interpretation is always a problem, but this fact does not necessarily discredit the critic’s work. The critic, after all, can pose in a role not unlike that of the “middleman” in Danto’s example of the *kledon*. Robert M. Adams describes the critic’s role in strikingly similar terms, saying that the critic is a “persuader, an intermediary between the object and the eye which divides its focus between the object and his critique. In one direction, he has to convince his reader that by seeing the object as his critique presents it, he will be seeing accurately, seeing what is ‘really there’” (203). Thus, in most cases, the reader of the given critical interpretation has to suspend his or her potential disbelief and have faith in the critic’s ability to perceive patterns in the text that ordinary readers fail to see.

Once we adopt an anti-foundationalist view, however, this neat epistemological pattern is seen as illusory, for what the reader perceives as “evidence” is predicated upon his or her previous beliefs, and so the patterns emerging will be determined not by an independent object (the text), but by the individual belief system of the readers. As Adams puts it: one cannot see evidence “unless one presumes they exist; if one presumes they exist, one tends to see only the evidence,” that is, “unless one has a hypothesis, one sees nothing but blur and confusion; if one has a hypothesis, one tends to become an advocate of it, at the expense of one’s role as a judge” (205). Fish makes the case even more poignantly: “it [the evidence] is always a function of what it is to be evidence for, and it is never independently available

. . . , [t]hat is, the interpretation determines what will count as evidence for it, and the evidence is able to be picked out only because the interpretation has *already* been assumed" ("Normal" 272; emphasis in original). It seems, therefore, that the critic has to pose as appealing to the reader's rational faculties, but, in fact, it is his or her faith that must be captured.

Fish readily embraces this view and puts it to work in his "strong constructivist" approach to readers and texts. He holds that if the success of an interpretation greatly depends on the reader's pre-structured faith, the reader is no longer just a passive recipient of the critic's wisdom. This is what undermines the endeavors of what he calls "formalist-positivist analyses" ("Interpreting" 152), which seek to find confirmation of their interpretive assumptions by appealing to the text itself for evidence. For Fish, there is no such thing as "the text itself" independent of the interpretive moves which the reader sets out to perform on it. The formalist-positivist analysis presupposes a spatial model of reading, while Fish's model is temporal: the reading, Fish holds, does not serve to explicate already in-place, determinate meanings, but rather the reading is what *constitutes* the text. To ward off the frequently mounted charge of relativism, Fish stipulates that each interpretive community places constraints on interpretability, and no individual reading can ever break totally free from these constraints. The reader's response is never individually formulated but, instead, is a function of a set of assumptions prevailing in a given interpretive community:

Thus while it is true to say that we create poetry . . . , we create it through interpretive strategies that are finally not our own but have their source in a publicly available system of intelligibility. Insofar as the system (in this case a literary system) constrains us, it also fashions us, furnishing us with categories of understanding, with which we in turn fashion the entities to which we can point. ("How" 332)

Questioning the constraining system is, of course, possible, but the act of questioning will be no less a function of other assumptions unavailable for critical evaluation. As Fish puts it:

[D]oubting is not something one does outside of the assumptions that enable one's consciousness; rather, doubting, like any other mental activity, is something that one does *within* a set of assumptions that cannot at the same time be the object of doubt. . . . The project of radical doubt can never outrun the necessity of being situated; in order to doubt *everything*, including the ground one stands on, one must stand somewhere else,

and that somewhere else will then be the ground on which one stands. ("Demonstration" 360; emphasis in original)

This argument might be superficially appealing even to foundationalists, for Fish can be understood as outright stating that there is no situation in which one does not stand on some kind of a ground, that is, there is not a moment in one's life when one does not hold a certain faith. Accordingly, Fish also dismisses relativism as "a position one can entertain, [but] it is not a position one can occupy. No one can *be* a relativist," he says, "because no one can achieve the distance from his own beliefs and assumptions which would result in their being no more authoritative *for him* than the beliefs and assumptions held by others" ("Is There" 319; emphasis in original). This is straightforward reasoning, and it offers a comprehensive meta-theoretical explication on how interpretative processes operate.

Nonetheless, Fish's theory raises a number of complex theoretical questions. On the one hand, Fish does not claim to have created a meta-theory capable of accurately representing interpretation *as such*, so in principle his is just one of the competing theories in the marketplace of ideas. On the other hand, Fish's generalizing claims make his position look very much like a meta-theory which, in principle, is suitable for describing all other theories. Fish therefore cannot avoid the semblance that he is aspiring to attain a privileged epistemological position whose existence he denies.

By postulating the authority of interpretive communities as a general rule, Fish has a carte-blanc theory on his hands, one that can be applied to any critical/theoretical approach without having to formulate specific arguments about (or against) those approaches. It suffices to "merely" point out that a particular reading has been determined by interpretive assumptions and constraints prevailing in the given interpretive community, rather than by what is to be "found" in the text. Thus, when A.S.P. Woodhouse or Douglas Bush assume that their reading of Milton's twentieth sonnet (Fish's example) is correct by virtue of being faithful to the intrinsic meaning of the text, the anti-foundationalist meta-theorist need only point out that their notion of intrinsic meaning is but an illusion nurtured by their unexamined interpretive assumptions. However, the formalist could easily turn the tables on the anti-foundationalist and rightfully counter that Fish's position is no less enabled by a set of interpretive assumptions, thus being no more authoritative (even by its own standards) than their formalist stance, which is grounded in "objective evidence" taken from the text—and the debate would proceed in this circular, self-perpetuating fashion ever after. And if we take Fish's theoretical tenets to be applicable to his own theoretical position, will there remain anything else than *faith* that he can rely on when trying to defend his position?



Fish is certainly not unaware of the fact that he has argued himself into a corner: “I am assuming, it is the article of my faith,” he contends “that a reader will always execute some set of interpretive strategies and therefore perform some succession of interpretive acts” (“Interpreting” 169). Fish’s preoccupation with the role of faith in his theoretical disposition is further evidenced in an interview in which recalls that when he was a young teacher of writing and composition, his exam in every course consisted in asking “the students to relate two sentences to each other and to the materials of the course” (Olson 293). The first sentence was a quotation from J. Robert Oppenheimer: “Style is the deference that action pays to uncertainty.” Fish “took that to mean that in a world without certain foundations for action, you avoid the Scylla of prideful self-assertion, on the one hand, and the Charybdis of paralysis, on the other hand, by stepping out provisionally with a sense of limitation, with a sense of style” (Olson 98). The other quotation was taken from Hebrews Eleven, the epistle of “faith in action”: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” which Fish interpreted for his students as the “classically theological version of Oppenheimer’s statement,” adding that “I think there is *nothing* in my work that couldn’t be generated from those two assertions and their interactions” (Olson 293; emphasis in original).

The quotation from Hebrews is a succinct but nonetheless efficacious account of the paradoxical nature of faith, which could very well be the reason why Fish has found it so appealing. That which can only be “hoped for” does not (yet) have substance, and that which is unperceivable cannot be evidenced. The sentence is not merely a maxim that warns non-believers not to confuse faith with knowledge, and look for substance and evidence where there is none to be found. Instead, it can be read as saying that faith constitutes its own substance and evidence without the need for ascertainment based on external factors, much like we have seen in the arguments of St. Augustine and Richard Neuhaus. The quotation by Oppenheimer, however, signifies the distinctly anti-foundationalist component of Fish’s thinking. It can be interpreted in the context of Fish’s work as saying that even though in the absence of absolute foundations no utterance can be made with immitigable certainty, “style”—the way in which we fashion our conduct both linguistically and ethically—will determine the truth or rightness of our actions, not some transcendental truth emanating from some kind of metaphysical reality or from a deity. As Fish reflects in an essay, his intention using these quotation was for his students

to see that while the moral life cannot be anchored in a perspicuous and uncontroversial rule, golden or otherwise, we must nevertheless respond to its pressures; and indeed it is only *because* the moral life rests on a base



of nothing more than its own interpretations that it can have a content . . .  
The uncertainty of which Oppenheimer and Saint Paul speak is not a defect  
of our situation but the very ground and possibility of meaningful action.  
("Milton" 272)

Thus, we can conclude that while faith of some kind in an anti-foundationalist context is not denied the right to be the foundation of moral action, scientific inquiry, or interpretive practices, it is itself a function of "style"—a rhetorical construct, an interpretation, a social or cultural practice, a pattern of behavior, a course of actions, etc.—rather than a self-constitutive foundation of absolute truth

### **Conclusion: revisiting the *kledon***

Similar to Fish in St. Augustine's exegetic guidelines, Danto sees in the *kledon* an early iteration of a general interpretive principle insofar as "the form of interpretation they exemplify play a considerable role in modern hermeneutic theory" in such a way that "when in saying *a* a speaker says *b* . . ., but where the ordinary structures for understanding *a* would not disclose to the hearer that *b* is also being said: nor is the speaker at all aware that he is saying *b*, meaning as he does only to be saying *a*" (54). But what sort of authority can guarantee that the transposition of *a* into *b* has been executed correctly? In other words, on what epistemic grounds can one present a valid argument for the "*b*-ness" of *a*?

In the absence of faith, there is no reassuring answer to these questions. Instead of a guarantee of certainty, one finds a scheme of intricate interdependences: without interpretation, the message of the gods, after all, is just contingent small talk, while interpretation without divine authorization is mere phantasm. Epistemologically speaking, there is a lot at stake, for the mortal human being has to find some way of ascertaining that he or she deciphers the right meaning from the message. As long as the gods remain silent, however, the divine word will stand in need of interpretation. It is precisely the absence of divine emanation that necessitates interpretation in the first place. Thus, sacred word and profane interpretation have to gain validation from one another in such a way that an endless back-and-forth transaction of power gets underway: the act of interpretation confers authority on the message by acknowledging its divine origin, which, in its turn, gets projected back on the interpretation. Each argumentative turn the interpretation henceforth takes will appeal for validation to the divine authority it itself has posited—and it can go on *ad infinitum*. Divine utterance and human understanding are caught up

in a constant and inevitable process of mutual empowering and validation, which amounts to a circular movement where all (divine as well as human) criteria of validity are shifting continuously.

Although this reasoning and the whole of my argument above can hardly explain all aspects of faith, my attempts have been directed at highlighting a certain epistemological ambivalence inherent to the notion. On the one hand, faith begs several epistemologically related questions about its foundation, validity, structure, etc. On the other hand, faith is often defined as a mental state which resists rational explication. The question of how to locate validating authority typically emerges in an epistemologically-charged or theoretical context, whereas the holder of a given faith would never think of posing it, for his or her faith is predicated upon the assumption that such questions should not arise in the first place. Sheer unconditional faith suffices to dispel any incidental doubt: where the secular epistemologist sees a representational anomaly, a paradox to be solved, circumvented or merely to be pointed out, the believer sees an exchange between mortal humans and the deity, which requires no more epistemological grounding or validation for the religious believer than what is already implicated by his or her faith.

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# **Ecomemory for the Future: Religious Environmentalism and Black Environmental Liberation Theology (BELT)<sup>1</sup>**

Péter Gaál-Szabó

Black Environmental Liberation Theology (BELT) is viewed as an extension of black liberation theology, which after the 1960s served to carry on civil rights goals in the field of theology. Much criticized for the narrow focus it took by neglecting, for example, gender in the theological discourse or for the narrow understanding of the black self, black liberation theology has evolved to open to eco-theology and to employ a more multilayered view of African American culture. As Dianne Glave establishes, “Layers of eco-theology inform how African-Americans view and treat the Earth, natural goods (‘resources’), and people: eco-theology; Creation care from the Book of Genesis; dominion of the Earth and her goods—an African eco-theology paralleling Creation care; and an African-American eco-theology, one of whose strands is Black Environmental Liberation Theology (BELT)” (2017, 86). Glave’s definition of BELT reveals the historically close relation of African Americans to nature, which concomitantly indicates its embeddedness in African American cultural memory.

The present paper seeks to explore the main tenets of BELT in Glave’s works as it connects to black environmentalist memory precipitating black religious environmentalism and as it reveals the interconnection between black ecomemory and specific liberation ethics presenting a “model of Christian self-empowerment for environmental justice” (Glave 2006, 189).

## **Black Religious Environmentalism**

As a strand of African-American eco-theology, BELT can be seen as a formalized expression of black religious environmentalism, but, more specifically, and beyond the attempt to be constituted as theology, it brings to the foreground the ethical and social engagement of African American religious environmentalism “for the

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purpose of mobilization for environmental activism,” which, as Elonda Clay claims, has too often been overlooked (2011, 161).

Indeed, religious environmentalism in general offers a spiritual agenda to establish “an ecologically grounded and harmoniously balanced spirituality” (King 2006, 81) and as a “countermovement [] in spirituality [it] describe[s] approaches that offer alternate solutions to existing social and religious power structures” (Bekker 2012, 76). Corné J. Bekker’s definition points to the duality invested in religious environmentalism: its spiritual orientation seeks to reveal deeper transcendental truths and, at the same time, to position itself as critique both through difference and distancing and through its constitution as social justice. As Roger S. Gottlieb also maintains, “one hallmark of religious environmentalism is a deep commitment to acknowledging the value of all life. [. . .] Another crucial aspect of religious environmentalism is the development of an environmental justice perspective” (2006, 125).

Black religious environmentalism inherently incorporates the social justice segment as “imposed inheritance.” As Clay reminds us,

environmental racism and the struggle for ecological justice are imposed inheritances. They are the result of centuries of patterned exploitation of land, natural resources, and human labor as well as the result of Christian complicity with slavery and racism, ecological imperialism, and government-sanctioned expropriation of lands inhabited by cultural and racial/ethnic “Others.” (2011, 162)

Robert D. Bullard and others have aptly demonstrated that the intersection of race, class, and the environment has determined the fate of African Americans since the first day black slaves arrived in the Americas. On the one hand, they have proved that there is “the fundamental connectedness of place and race in American culture” (Gerhardt 2002, 521)—as slavery meant being uprooted from a space and inserted into another with the result of “an alienation of a landless race from the land” (Stoll 2006, 160) and as African Americans were pushed to spaces that demarcated racial boundaries; on the other hand, it is evident that, despite alienation, an inherent attachment to the environment has been maintained through “transported landscapes” (Clay 2011, 155) and through an African cosmological understanding (Gundaker 1994, 195).

For the primary concern for racial and social issues, African Americans may seem to have been little concerned about ecological issues (Walker 2004, 249). The apparent distancing from mainstream environmentalism is due to the alienating effects of slavery and segregation, which made them feel that “This land

was not their land” (Stoll 2006, 160). Theodore Walker, Jr. also points to the fact that African Americans have found it difficult to identify with the goals of environmentalists for the “racial and racist aspects of modern white eco-logical/animal rights thinking” (2004, 249). In general, however, as Shamara Shantu Riley discusses ecofeminism, it is for the lack of focus on “the historical links between classism, white supremacy, and environmental degradation” (2004, 373) that African Americans have distanced themselves from the environmentalist movement. As Karen Baker-Fletcher expresses painfully,

There are very deep historical reasons for such suspicion and mistrust; however, when we are reluctant to listen and are silent on these issues, we reinforce our own oppression. We reinforce the assumption that we are dispensable, nothing, because it appears that we do not care. When we are silent, only we know that we do care, that we are tired of losing family members to cancer. We silently care, but the dance of dispensability continues. (2004, 388)

Black religious environmentalism suggests, however, that environmentalism is deep-seated in African American culture for two reasons. With a (religious) worldview—including the traditional African moral obligation “to contribute to the well-being of future life” (Walker 2004, 251)—and an understanding and knowledge of the environment transported from Africa, alienation could be turned into habitation, which induced an ethical view of the environment expressed through African American religiosity. In discussing the relevance of the black church in the environmental justice movement, Mark Stoll also points toward the defining interrelation of religion, an ethically defined self-respect, and the environment: “[African American] communal sense of social ethics and morality have given them a way of conceptualizing, identifying, and attacking toxic threats to their communities” (2006, 163).

The “communal-cooperative activity” (Arp and Boeckelman 1997, 258) characterizing African American religiosity and, formally, the black church proves “that religion is a factor in explaining Black environmental activism” (Arp and Boeckelman 1997, 263). The religiosity-induced environmental thinking has triggered an activism embedded primarily in the black church. So while it is true that, more directly, the African American environmental justice movement has its roots in civil rights activism (Melosi 2006, 123), just as in the case of the civil rights movement itself, it is the black church and religiosity that have served as the background for black environmentalism. As Stoll also contends, “By nurturing both civic culture and an oppositional mentality, black mainstream churches

empowered believers by encouraging their self-worth and promoted and facilitated political and economic activism within the system” (2006, 155).

BELT both represents and taps into black religious environmentalism by connecting to and continuing a centuries-old legacy. It enhances black morality as social morality (see Stoll 2006, 158) by making environmental issues a civil rights issue. For this reason, following Bekker’s afore-mentioned definition, which places religious environmentalism outside the mainstream environmental discourses, BELT as “subaltern environmentalism” (Clay 2011, 163) is not primarily ecocentric, but anthropocentrist (Melosi 2006, 123).

### **Black Environmental Liberation Theology (BELT)**

Glave first termed BELT in a 2004 article in *Griot* entitled “Black Environmental Liberation Theology: The Historical and Theological Roots of Environmental Justice Activism by the African American Church.” Later versions form chapters (“Environmental Justice: Free to Breathe” in *Rooted in the Earth* [2010a] and “Black Environmental Liberation Theology” [2006] further anthologized in Hopkins and Thomas [2010] maintain the main foci of the original paper but the encompassing volumes reveal her ecowomanist philosophy more profoundly and the 21<sup>st</sup> century understanding of the environmental context. The chapters on environmental racism present a brief history of the African American environmentalist movement from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, occasionally building on identical passages, thus centering the same thought throughout: the African American activist mind precipitates or, rather, surfaces by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the Black Environmental Liberation Theology (BELT). BELT is identified as an offshoot of black liberation theology and as such it seeks to be established in relation to it by following a dual strategy. On the one hand, Glave argues for an African American environmental justice tradition, tracing it back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when protests had an indirect environmentalist underpinning. Early civil rights activism may not have had specific environmental issues on its agenda but the struggle against racism involved issues of housing, work conditions, or unequal protection. On the other, however, embedding BELT in black liberation theology and connecting it to a spirituality reverberating with ecological ancestors reveal a memory of environmentalism in the African American community that connects to black religious environmentalism pointing back to the times prior to the civil rights activism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It would be false to tie African American environmentalism—and actually BELT—to a specific date. As she points out in other chapters, what is understood in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century as ethical farming was a characteristic trait of African



agricultural practices (Glave 2003, 401), many of which were remembered and put into use in America by African slaves and their descendants. As Kimberley Ruffin argues, ecological ancestors are the ones “who experience [ ] positive readings of human biodiversity; whose physical, botanical, and hunting skills provide invaluable support; and who seek [ ] out commonality with nonhuman nature and other marginalized peoples” (2010, 85). It must be noted, though, that for liberation theologians the social and cultural context is emphasized in interpreting any phenomenon, and in that way not problematizing the ethics in detail based on the context of the day may occasionally sound like reading present-day ideas into different times and geographies—a retroactive strategy to “serve the constructive function of positive group identity and create meaning and reality based on a connection to place” (2010, 114-5) in the present.

Thinkers such as Robert D. Bullard maintain that there is “a clear link between civil rights and environmental justice” (1994, 5), thereby claiming that civil rights activism has inherently entailed environmental justice issues. In this way, African American struggle for civil rights was closely tied to environmental justice thinking from the very beginning. The connection proves obvious: as Bullard and Beverly Wright maintain, “all communities are not created equal, and thus some get more than their fair share of the benefits or residential amenities while others receive more than their fair share of the costs or disamenities. Race, class, geography, and political power mitigate the distribution of benefits and costs” (2009, 3). What connects civil rights issues with environmental struggles in the first place is that minorities and disadvantaged groups are often “shunted into the places that are more geographically vulnerable” (2009, 11). In all this, the environment as place and its memory are interwoven with social, political, and racial discourses.

From the point of view of Glave’s religious engagement with environmental justice, African American activism was significantly embedded in religious discourses up to the Civil Rights movement and has remained so in many aspects. As for the environmental justice movement, Glave specifically identifies Martin Luther King, Jr.’s role in the strike of the sanitation workers in Memphis in 1968 as the pivotal point of African American environmental activism (2004, 64)—also to validate the launch of BELT. Exposure to waste and contamination turned sanitation workers into an endangered group, who suffered from infections and various diseases beyond the fact that “an unhealthy work environment as a subtext” (Glave 2010a, 131) also indicated the limited work opportunities for African Americans.

Glave establishes more direct roots of BELT with the National Black Church Environmental and Economic Justice Summit in 1993, which sought “to combat unequal protection and to work toward environmental justice” (Bullard 1994b, xviii). There were several protests regarding environmental issues in the 1980s (see

Bullard 1994a, 5-6) which led to the all-important First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991, serving as the background for the 1993 summit. The summit of 1991 was born out of the need for “a multi-racial movement” (Chavis qtd. in Grossman 1994, 273) initially with the intention to continue the radical, insurgent nature of grassroots organizations (Huss, Stretesky, and Lynch 2012, 796). It adopted the “Principles of Environmental Justice.” As the preamble vows:

WE THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence on the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to insure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these principles. (“Principles of Environmental Justice” 1991)

The 1993 summit intended to integrate environmental justice based on the “Principles” into its action and devise an action plan accordingly: “We, African-American Church leaders, historically committed to justice issues, affirm the unitary nature of life and commit ourselves to the ministry of converging justice and environmental issues that are critical matters of life and death for our Church and for our community” (qtd. in Pinn 2002, 86-87). The action plan follows closely from the “Principles” and foresees initiatives, participation, challenge, networking, education, and local help to be implemented by black churches.

The expanded 15-point agenda of BELT as an initiative is heavily indebted to the “Principles” of the 1991 summit and the striving of the 1993 summit. Glave situates the action plan in a multicultural and multiethnic environment, in which work with other people including whites is possible—a tenet James H. Cone is skeptical about. Thus, she advocates intra- and intercommunal networking and coalition formation based on an autonomous African American self meaning that appropriation of tools, activism, and strategies should be realized based on situational needs and in support of the African American self. Traditional and innovative, at the same time, BELT is meant to maintain its grassroots and holistic character.

By emphasizing theology and history, Glave establishes a link to a tradition of African American activism and connects to black liberation theology. On the one hand, Glave intends to anchor BELT *vis-à-vis* theology in that she theologically justifies it through the “language of theology” (Glave 2006, 190), i.e., black environmental thought is based on Biblical passages that support an environmentalist and anti-racist language. Passages that foster equality, equity, and the uplift of the oppressed serve to establish a theological and ideological background that can help target issues harming the environment and foreground the connection of race and environmental issues in one discourse. The application of a distinct language “along with the theological and historical framework of BELT” (2006, 197) strengthens a distinctive approach and particularizes the community.

On the other hand, she also seeks to position BELT in close relation to black liberation theology. The black theology evolving after the Civil Rights movement is seen as an extension of the movement into the realm of theology but also as an attempt to overcome the crisis caused by the decapitation of the movement through King’s violent death. Cone’s early works establish a formal systematic black theology, which centers on the black interpretation of the Bible as it follows from the socio-political context in America. As a theology of the poor and oppressed, it intends to offer a theological way to reclaim the biblical message to cater to the needs of African Americans and to fight oppression through theological means. Cone addresses the environmental injustice in a late essay “Whose Earth Is It Anyway?” (2000), connecting race and environmental issues and in that opening black theology toward the environmental justice movement. Glave, acknowledging the connection to Conesian thought embeds BELT in the tradition of liberation theology; however, quite refreshingly, she avoids the trap Cone falls into by insisting on ontological blackness and in that “oppression is required for the self-disclosure of the oppressed” (Anderson 1995, 87) and practically refusing collaboration with whites. While Glave adopts Cone’s liberation ethics and methodology in the main by vowing to fight environmental racism from a standpoint reminiscent of Cone’s resistance, she does not limit her activism to intra-group networking only but foresees collaboration across ethnic and racial boundaries. As she establishes, “African Americans in the church are called to operate and serve in a multicultural world that includes whites. In addition, African Americans are not isolated and are part of a community that includes whites—some of whom are racist—that wield great economic, social, and political power” (2006, 197). She envisions a coalition with mainstream organizations to “co-opt organizational, strategic planning, and management tools” (2006, 197) and to push them to “develop a more holistic and equitable understanding of environmentalism pertinent to the African American community” (2006, 198).

Criticism of mainstream, white environmentalists comes to the foreground when addressing the specific issues of African American environmental action. She repeats the skepticism of the 1993 summit (2006, 196); namely, that mainstream environmentalists' concern revolves around global issues and ignores particular African American problems. This thought is reiterated in her agenda when she insists on "focus[ing] narrowly on critical environmental problems" (2006, 197).

Negligence of black environmental challenges by mainstream environmentalists and environmental racism lead her to place primary focus on the African American community, where she advocates "selfless Christian service for environmental justice in the African American community" (2006, 198). While she supports "mixing traditional and modern activism" (2006, 198), her approach reiterates traditional community building through the religio-cultural awareness-raising characteristic of the Black Church. Further than that, focusing on the community enables acting out locally "legacy of resistance, combining grassroots activism, spirituality, and organization" (Glave 2010a, 138).

### **Rooted in the Earth: BELT, Ethics, and Ecomemory**

Besides BELT signaling an attempt to formalize a theological discourse and to launch an agenda within the African American community to struggle for environmental justice, it reveals strikingly the effort to redefine the struggle for civil rights in a field that has been close to African Americans. Glave's tactics to embed her environmental theology in a history of resistance and a memory of deep-seated environmentalism while relating it to black theology to validate it ethically represent, on the one hand, the formidability of the developing vista, but, importantly, on the other, a memory of the environment as a site of oppression and resistance. What connects the two tenets is the African American agency that is maintained by the theologian through specific liberation ethics that resists environmental racism and liberates African Americans from ecological injustices. Glave's stand echoes Katie Cannon's:

Liberation ethics is debunking, unmasking, and disentangling the ideologies, theologies, and systems of value operative in a particular society [. . .] [b]y analyzing the established power relationships that determine cultural, political, and economic presuppositions and by evaluating the legitimating myths that sanction the enforcement of such values [. . .] [i]n order that we may become responsible decision-makers who envision structural and systemic alternatives that embrace the well-being of us all. (1995, 138)

For Glave, the critique of environmental engagement is not simply that of unjust practices but that of the whole system in which the injustice appears. As Enrique Dussel also contends, “Liberation ethics arises as a theory preceded by and demanded by a praxis opposed to the system as a totality” (1988, 237). Glave’s ethics representing and promoting agency seeks to unmask systematic environmental injustice that poses a threat “deliberately or passively” (Glave 2006, 190), whereby she identifies BELT as a part of the liberating framework imminent in African American culture and connected to the African American environmental heritage. Based on her introduction to BELT, her liberation ethics is grounded in African American resistance traditions, black theological ethics, and more recently, the ethics of the environmental summits of 1991 and 1993.

The fictional vignettes in Glave’s later work, *Rooted in the Earth: Reclaiming the African American Environmental Heritage* (2010), exemplify how the liberation ethics in BELT precipitates in her memory work. Intended “to give the historical perspective of the book some ‘flesh’” (Glave 2010b), they provide a mnemonic account of the multilayeredness of the African American experience of nature as they unfold her BELT ethics by offering a context for her thinking in which she embraces her ecowomanist ideals. In the vignettes, she sets up a genealogy of African American ancestry through the way the ancestors of an African American family relate to the land. Their ancestor Minkah “once free in Africa, ‘seasoned’ in Jamaica, and [then] enslaved in Alabama” (2010a, 43) represents both the link to an African heritage and, through his journey to the Americas, the traumatic memory of the Transatlantic slave trade. As the name means “justice,” it suggests the embodiment of untarnished and obliging liberation struggle as well as authentic African heritage—that in the intersection of spiritual and environmental embeddedness. In the shadows of the forest (57), the prophet-figure Minkah, Joseph in the new world, dreams of being a priest in Africa, and “in the forest’s gloom,” he resists oppression by running away and by “beckon[ing] his people to the arbor to worship” (59). The vignettes contain relevant topics blended into African American cultural memory from the Middle Passage to the, for Glave, hope-filled, triumphalist Obama era. Minkah’s ideals precipitate thus in later generations through toil on the land, racial oppression, cultivation of “sacred wooded sanctuary” (73), and gardens. Importantly, one female descendant is narrated to become conscious of her re-connection to her cultural identity through the connection to the land and its ethical imperative during her studies at a black college: “She remembers her ancestor Yooku, an African priest who gathered herbs from the land, and her grandparents Albert and Marie, who worked the fields in Louisiana. It seems to Anabel that her family’s connection with the land has come full circle as she learns about ways to teach about nature” (105). Beyond

the reference to Anabel's studies at school, learning to teach offers interference with broader understandings of the African American approach to nature, i.e., through identity and memory, as Minkah's prophetic heritage to teach and lead gains full reincarnation in Michelle Obama "[taking] up the mantle" (114). The liberation ethics Glave professes connects spirituality and liberation in/through the environment. A later vignette further establishes that Glave connecting civil rights to the pollution of a petrochemical company (127) shows that in her ethics, liberating the environment is in fact liberating the African American self.

In Tim Gorringe's assessment, liberation ethics has three pillars: praxis, social analysis, and "appeal to scripture" (2001, 131). Glave's introduction to BELT advocates the application of biblical language and appeals to biblical passages that justify "serving the poor and the dispossessed [in] a biblical model for alleviating the condition of oppressed African Americans" (Glave 2004, 62), as well as sets ideals of church leaders (including the Nation of Islam convert, later Sunni Muslim Malcolm X in the 2004 version of her text), whose personality and lifework express the prophetic tradition. Much in Cannon's footsteps, her 15-point agenda for action seeks to set a praxis of debunking through grassroots activism, and her list of events illuminating the recent history of African American environmental protest mirrors her social analysis of "environmental racism by Euro-Americans [with] biblical, historical, and contemporary origins" (2004, 63).

Through the memory traces of the vignettes, Glave implements her BELT in praxis as she builds on the womanist methodology of recollecting in Toni Morrison's (1995) and Alice Walker's (1983) footsteps. In doing so, she insists on an Africanist religiosity as well as ecospirituality, which, at the same time are presented in a fragmented way as they are sutured into the text at the beginning of each chapter. Giving flesh to the text, therefore, also indicates the nature of ecowomanist memory work: the recollection of memory traces refers back to the fragmentation of memory itself while analysis beckons memory as it can sustain memory and provide a cohesive framework for the memory narrative.

As a religious thinker, she embeds her environmental thinking in black liberation theology but, more broadly, in an African American environmental tradition, which she employs poignantly to address burning issues in the African American community—a move not untypical of religious activism. As Bekker insists,

Religious leaders lead by *reaffirming* the central truths of existing traditions, they aim to *radicalize* these truths from within the community through a process of exemplary behavior, they *ritualize* the truths into codes of laws and sacred rituals, and they open new ways for followers to respond to the original call to lead in systems of *responsiveness*. (2012, 78)



Just as her BELT program embalms and incites a programmatic behavior, which, besides serving an ecological cause, also revitalizes the African American community, her ethics of the community in *Rooted in the Earth* evokes a “liberative dimension of poverty” (Gorringe 2001, 135) that ascribes a “messianic role” to the poor (131), thereby attaching unique authenticity to them based on “justice, grassroots activism, spirituality, and organization” (Glave 2006, 199). Initiating BELT as a “spearhead for reform” (199), she appears to attempt the same in her book, i.e., to redeem the “fragmenting and transforming” black church tradition (Stoll 2006, 163), and that of the community by clearly working toward the same goal: in her analyses as well as in the vignettes, she reaffirms black religious environmentalism, conscientizes it through the recollection of memories, and ritualizes it through the rebirth of the tradition in the White House garden. Endowing the Obamas with a spearhead role in environmentalism, Glave ritualizes their activity by replenishing the cultural activity of gardening in the heart of America:

The good work continues. In 2009 the First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, took up the mantle of those dedicated teachers and cultivated a vegetable garden on the grounds of the White House. She used the garden to feed her own family but also invited schoolchildren to the garden to learn about sustainability. [. . .] From the first shovel of soil to the first harvest of ripe vegetables by a group of Washington, D.C. fifth graders, the White House garden project has served as an educational tool for children of different ethnicities, including African Americans, who pick the vegetables from the vine and cook the produce themselves. (2010a, 114-40)

Schoolchildren represent the future of the nation and the whole nation at that; however, the inclusive maneuver indicates the intention to counteract environmental injustice by symbolically addressing and including the poor and disadvantaged groups as well, which based on BELT means people of color in the first place. In this way, Michelle Obama’s activity is ritual, signifying prophetic, but also priestly and kingly functions in Minkah’s footsteps.

What makes BELT an example of genuine African American memory work is the way Glave entices responsiveness through her book. She establishes the relation between the environment and African Americans by employing and verifying situation ethics (Gorringe 2001, 132), which “aims at a contextual appropriateness—not the ‘good’ or the ‘right’ but the *fitting*” (Fletcher 1966, 27-28). One might argue that it is a permissive use of ethics as Joseph F. Fletcher’s “principled relativism” (31) may give way to a non-dogmatic, utilitarian or pragmatic

understanding of the situation, as it “calls upon us to keep law in a subservient place, so that only love and reason really count when the chips are down” (31). Glave, even when emphasizing African American appropriation of the environment, looks to understand the situational realization of God’s revelation—an approach that follows from her integration into African American traditions. The move is well demonstrated by Glave’s description of the appropriation of Christianity to enable African Americans

to embrace a God of contradictions—a God that whites cast as the oppressor and that, at the same time, granted a spiritual or metaphorical, and literal freedom to blacks. a nuanced black God with whom they had an intimate relationship, a God who was with them in their struggle against racism and segregation. Some African Americans throughout history have seen themselves in God’s own image and have perceived God as someone they could turn to in the struggle against oppression. (Glave 2010a, 50-51)

Her situation ethics links to Cone’s conceptualization of Tillich’s and Barth’s notion of the context, which she builds on God’s liberating work of the poor and the oppressed. In a likewise fashion, reinterpreting Christianity involved “an environmental-spiritual fusion” (2010a, 56) that Glave continues to emphasize in the vignettes and her own experience as when she remembers after a snowstorm: “I experienced God in the theophany the storm presented: for me, it was the appearance of God through Nature” (2017, 88).

Situation ethics is oppositional, nevertheless. In *Rooted in the Earth*, she exploits the memory of African ethical farming in contrast to white use of the land: “Much of this knowledge began in Africa, where some Africans practiced environmentally friendly conservation that was synonymous with subsistence farming. Such practices were continued in America by the enslaved and ultimately exploited by slaveholders” (2010a, 82). In Glave’s thinking, ethical farming is overshadowed by white conceptualizations of nature and, under the pressure of the white world, in which African Americans were “forced to comply with the government’s demand to do the unthinkable” (2010a, 55)—the reason why they could not maintain the “ethical struggle over stewardship of God-given natural resources” (2010a, 55).

Glave’s retrospective interpretation of African American environmental ethics suffers, nevertheless, from inconsistency through her narration of slaves’ dealing with farm animals as a means of resistance: “Livestock and working animals were abused, another way to rebel against slaveholders. African Americans did not care about rationing the animals’ feed, letting livestock run wild, and ignoring the work animals’ safety. And why shouldn’t they when Africans Americans were



treated like chattel?” (2010a, 64). The easy dismissal of “the brutal and careless treatment” of livestock (Genovese 1989, 110) that Eugene D. Genovese describes as common (1989, 110) debunks any homogeneous environmental ideal of the African American community, even if the abuse of livestock was motivated by resistance or hunger (1989, 111). Glave’s rhetorical question answers itself based on her arguments in other parts of the book: the lack of solidarity for chattel counteracts the spiritual bonding with the environment she insists on and reveals the multilayered connection of African Americans to the environment. She also reflects on it in a later writing of hers when she acknowledges that “Africans and African-Americans are not exempt from responsibility for exploiting the natural goods (resources) of the planet” (Glave 2017, 86).

This, however, does not lessen the power of her argument. BELT does establish/verify a tradition of rootedness in earth and community, for which she establishes and promotes a model of maintenance forcefully. Beyond expressing her commitment to both the community and the environment, Glave’s final admonition and exhortation identify the book as a memory work:

This book began in Africa with the enslaved crossing the Atlantic into the Americas. It continued in time from enslavement to freedom to the African diaspora and ends with children in the garden of the nation’s first African American president and First Lady. We can reclaim our environmental heritage, but no one needs to step into a void. Locally, nationally, and internationally, blacks can follow the inspirational examples of our forefathers and -mothers’ unique relationship with the land, the civil rights generation’s strategies for change, and contemporaries such as the Obamas’ sense of environmental stewardship. We have templates for environmental change and reengagement. We can—no, we must—answer the call. (2010a, 141)

On a positive note, she warns, exhorts, but also reminds of and thus builds on African American memory closely connected to an environmental spirituality. Starting her narrative with Minkah and then twisting it into an ecowomanist narrative by recognizing Michelle Obama as the one fulfilling Minkah’s dream of leading, nurturing, and remembering, Glave brings the African American cultural memory around to effect closure in a triumphalist way. For the “Christian integrative relational womanist” (Baker-Fletcher 2006: 71) theologian, the gardening activity represents the long tradition of ecological activity leading way beyond an activity of sustenance and ecological sustainability to cultivating memory by integrating coming generations in it and thus passing it on to them.

## Conclusion

Glave's black environmental liberation theology offers a model for ecological agenda based mainly on civil rights activism and black liberation theology. Beyond, however, the practical framework for ecological action that she offers, BELT can be seen as the precipitation of her memory work that revitalizes black religious environmentalism both as grassroots activism and environmental spirituality. Her BELT is thus as much embedded in the ecological turn in the civil rights movement as in the spiritual tradition of ecological ancestors. Her major work *Rooted in the Earth* undergirds BELT as ecomemory: giving "flesh" to her book through the deployment of the vignettes as fragments of one cohesive mnemonic narrative as the beginning of each chapter represents ecowomanist memory work of recollecting as well as shows the application of ecomemory in facilitating ecological activism through analysis and writing. As much blending into tradition is essential in her BELT agenda, so it is relevant in her ecomemory detectable in her book. The African American tradition of liberation ethics interweaves resistance traditions and black religious ethics brought together in an environmental(ist) framework. It is through this framework that she manages to reconstruct ecomemory to both replenish her community and instigate ecological action.

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## **The American Interventions in the MENA Region Before 9/11**

Syrine Jerbi

Arabs in America do not constitute a monolithic group; the details about their ethnic and racial background are the keys to a clear understanding of the Arab American identity. This research explores the complicated interplay between interventionist US foreign policy and Arab immigration from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Although bilateral relations between the US and the countries of the MENA region have always been characterized by a power imbalance that has also permeated the religious, economic, and political contexts, this has not dissuaded Arab immigrants from targeting the US in pursuit of economic stability. This paper first addresses American interventions in the MENA region in the pre-9/11 era. Then, it investigates the motivations behind Arabs' decision to move from their countries to the US. Finally, through the application of Henri Tajfel's social identity theory, it analyzes the attitudes developed by Arab Americans within American society.

Despite its short history of discovery, settlement, growth, and development, the United States of America could spread its Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard forces in countries from which it accepts immigrants to construct its population and national identity. The American army invasion was spread beyond the Asian and European continents. It set its forces even in the MENA region. The emergence of the United States as a world power is what shaped the US national identity and oriented its nature from civic to ethnic. The focus on ethnicity and the individuals' background did not affect immigration. Reversely, immigration from the MENA region is continuing to the US.

The US interest in the MENA region was divided into two parts: first North Africa, then the Middle East. The US' first foreign policy in the MENA region goes back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with the Barbary war. It was a two-series war led by the US and its allies, Sweden and the kingdom of Sicily, against the North African countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya nowadays. The war aimed to reach an agreement on a maritime dispute. At that time Morocco was the only independent empire while the rest of the North African countries were still under the Ottoman empire's control. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, pirates had an effective presence in the Mediterranean



Sea<sup>2</sup>. With the absence of a solid diplomatic maritime relationship between the Mediterranean countries and sending countries of ships, there was a continuous war. A lot of pirates plied the sea and captured many ships. The nations of North Africa began to negotiate treaties with the countries that were sending the ships as a means of regulating maritime relations. These treaties of the day entailed large bribes. The ones who refused to give bribes or gifts were left to be captured by the pirates. The European governments believed that the pirates were sponsored by the Barbary powers<sup>3</sup>. The diplomatic relationships implied by treaties between the countries were custom-based. There was no actual written law that would regulate trading routes and maritime commercial deals. The first written Convention on the Law of the Sea was signed by 119 nations on Dec. 10, 1982<sup>4</sup>. It was the first UN agreement regarding territorial waters, sea lanes, and ocean resources. It is interesting to realize that since early history, the empires whose territory opened on the sea could create boundaries to foreign ships and organize customary ways which may have been considered as their territorial sea rules.

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Barbary pirates were not a serious threat. Morocco was more interested in forging genuine diplomatic and commercial ties with Europe, whereas Algiers, the most powerful nation in North Africa, was preoccupied with its unreliable political situation. The first US maritime communication between the US and the Barbarians was regulated by Britain as the American colonies were still under British control. So, the British and the US colonies were using the same vessels and used to have the same regulations passed in relation to the Mediterranean Sea. After the independence of the thirteen colonies, Britain warned the Barbarians that the US is not anymore under its rule, which would have made the American vessels a target to the Barbarians in case both sides do not reach a compromise and cooperate for a treaty<sup>5</sup>. As the protection alliance with France was rejected by the French government, the US started witnessing the capture of its vessels. In the mid-1780s, the first American vessel was seized by the Algiers

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2 Woodward, G. Thomas. "The Costs of State-Sponsored Terrorism: The Example of the Barbary Pirates." *National Tax Journal*, vol. 57, no. 3, 2004, pp. 599–611. Retrieved 30 April 2021, *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/41790233](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41790233)

3 Ibid.

4 "UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA." *International Legal Materials*, vol. 21, no. 6, 1982, pp. 1261–1354. Retrieved 30 April 2021, *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/20692526](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20692526)

5 Woodward, G. Thomas. "The Costs of State-Sponsored Terrorism: The Example of the Barbary Pirates." *National Tax Journal*, vol. 57, no. 3, 2004, pp. 599–611. Retrieved April 30 2021, *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/41790233](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41790233).



pirates. Some of the vessels were in the possession of Tripolitans before reaching Algiers, which made both sides negotiate for their own.

During his presidential term, Thomas Jefferson deployed the American naval force in the Mediterranean Sea to bring back the American honor of power as well as to protect neutral commerce against the Great powers Britain and France<sup>6</sup>. According to James R. Sofka Jefferson had three main foreign policy plans: to secure the national trading routes, to protect the natural rights of commerce, and to build a naval force to protect its interest among the Great Powers<sup>7</sup>. As a response to the captured ships, the American Congress constructed big frigates and sent them to the Mediterranean Sea to fight the pirates after which the pirates were suppressed and no longer threatened American and European vessels.

Section two article 1, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea states that:

1. The sovereignty of a coastal State extends, beyond its land territory and internal waters and, in the case of an archipelagic State, its archipelagic waters, to an adjacent belt of sea, described as the territorial sea.
2. This sovereignty extends to the air space over the territorial sea as well as to its bed and subsoil.
3. The sovereignty over the territorial sea is exercised subject to this Convention and other rules of international law.<sup>8</sup>

This Mediterranean war was the first intervention of the US in the sovereignty of the MENA region. Despite the non-existence of the Maritime Law back in the time, the coastal Mediterranean countries created their maritime territorial boundaries. The war, however, also served American economic and political interests. The US government had the chance to restore its pride as well as guaranteed control over the Mediterranean maritime territories.

After the maritime intervention in North Africa that caused political and economic unrest, the US government was more interested in the Middle East. This interest marked a power imbalance that had also permeated the religious, economic,

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6 Sofka, James, R. "The Jeffersonian Idea of National Security: Commerce, the Atlantic Balance of Power, and the Barbary War, 1786–1805." *Diplomatic History*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1997, pp. 519–544. Retrieved 14 May 2021, *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/24913335](http://www.jstor.org/stable/24913335)

7 Ibid.

8 "UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA." *International Legal Materials*, vol. 21, no. 6, 1982, pp. 1261–1354. Retrieved 30 April 2021, *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/20692526](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20692526)

and political contexts. The first US-Middle Eastern sovereign interference was in Palestine, which created a huge religious conflict between Muslims and Jews.

Although the xenophobic feeling towards Muslims increased in the US, it does not reflect its beginning in the 9/11 era. The hatred towards Muslims was far from non-existent before 2001. Arab and Muslim hatred started during the war in Palestine. The war had two main phases; the first phase was in 1929 when there were a massacre and series of violent demonstrations in Palestine between Muslims and Jews. These conflicts were caused by the 1929 Riot Act<sup>9</sup>. The act stated that Jews can enter the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem which is protected by Muslims and gave them the ability to change the time of Muslim prayers according to the Jews' prayers<sup>10</sup>. The second phase was more provocative to Palestinians as it involved other countries' decisions to control the fate of their country. After the British mandatory left the Palestinian empire, the United Nations voted to divide the Palestinian territory into Jewish and Arab Sovereign states<sup>11</sup>, on the condition that Jerusalem would stay an UN-controlled international zone. The vote was accepted by the Jewish and their ally the American leadership; however, it was opposed by the Palestinian and Arabic leaders. Despite the revolt of Arab states and the huge supportive protests by its citizens, the partition plan was adopted by the UN. Indeed, it was provocative for Arabs and Palestinians how the US, Israel, and other countries who signed the petition named the capital of Palestine *Jerusalem*, whose real name is *Quds*. One of the earliest extra-biblical Hebrew writings of the word Jerusalem is dated to the sixth or seventh century B.C. Its original form is *Yerushalem* or *Yerushalayim* in the Bible's Book of Joshua.

It was also critical how the US government supported Israel with military aid so that Israel maintains a military balance with its neighboring countries as well as gaining control over Palestine<sup>12</sup>. Such an alliance resulted in the division of Palestine and the deconstruction of the country's sovereignty. The Oxford Public

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9 "Jewish Refugees of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict". Middle East Web, Retrieved 4 May 2021, <http://www.mideastweb.org/refugees4.htm> The Riot Act of 1929 stated that Jews can enter the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem which is protected by Muslims.

10 Shaw Commission (1930), *Cmd. 3530, Report of the Commission on the disturbances of August 1929*, UK National Archives, For further information see the Commission's Wikipedia article at *Shaw Commission*

11 Jewish people were forced to leave their homes on the Jewish land, Europe, and the US. They were deprived of their houses to reside in Palestine, the newly designed home for them. Though, due to the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, the UN Assembly adopted a resolution on 29 November 1947 recommending the adoption of the Partition Plan for Palestine. The plan divides both communities, each to become a sovereign nation. <http://www.mideastweb.org/refugees4.htm>

12 The US always supported the Israeli government with military aid as much as it serves its interests. [https://ips-dc.org/why\\_the\\_us\\_supports\\_israel/](https://ips-dc.org/why_the_us_supports_israel/)

International Law<sup>13</sup> defines sovereignty as a forbidden element to be interfered with by any other external government. It states that:

International internal sovereignty refers to the international rights and duties of a State that pertain to its ultimate authority and competence over all people and all things within its territory, and in particular to the correlated principles of territorial and personal jurisdiction and integrity, and of non-intervention.

The interference of the UN assembly, as foreign governmental entities, to divide Palestine into two parts did not ensure any good relationship between the Muslim Palestinians and the Jewish newcomers in Jerusalem. Apart from some scholars who believe that the US support of Israel is an excuse for the US to start spreading its control in the Middle East, the war itself promoted Arab and Muslim hatred, which created an identity crisis specifically within the Muslim Arab American community.

The second American interference in the Middle East demonstrated by America's role in Egypt, namely in the case of the Suez Canal, was more of the economic than religious nature. The Suez Canal Company reflected the granted demand for European economic expansion overseas, especially in Egypt. Unlike the eighteenth century, Europe in the nineteenth century, and especially after World War Two, redefined and rebuilt its economy. European countries became a host for migrants to fill the labor shortage and focused on overseas territories to expand their economy. According to Daniel R. Headrick, the transportation revolution helped the globalization of the European economy<sup>14</sup>.

Transportation eased and shortened the distance to transport products as well as people, which made the latter change their minds about the world economy and its difficult routes. Indeed, the countries or regions that were left out of the economic development had the chance to contribute to the international economy. Consequently, the Suez Canal was an important trading route for Europe. In the late 1700s, the founder of Modern Egypt, Mehmet Ali was the first to use the European advanced technology of transport to serve its interest<sup>15</sup>. After his death,

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13 "Sovereignty". Oxford Public International Law, Retrieved 4 May 2021, <https://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690e1472#:text=International%20internal%20sovereignty%20refers%20to,and%20integrit%2C%20and%20of%20non%2D>

14 Headrick, Daniel R. *The Invisible Weapon: Telecommunications and International Politics, 1851-1945*. Oxford, U.K., 1991.

15 Sharma, Jagdish, P. "Egyptian Nationalism, and the Suez Canal episode: A Summary." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 57, 1996, pp. 913-915., Retrieved 1 June 2021, [www.jstor.org/stable/44133427](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44133427)

Mehmet was succeeded by his incompetent son Ismail Pasha<sup>16</sup>. During his reign, Ismail drove Egypt to bankruptcy and western military dominance. By the 1800s, the Suez Canal Company “was under the financial control of France and Great Britain, the owners of 56 and 44 percent of the shares, respectively, and holders of the majority of seats on the Board of Directors. In the period from 1883 to 1914, the Suez Company did not have any reason to deal with the Egyptians<sup>17</sup>” (Caroline Piquet, p. 113). After World War Two, the Egyptian government demanded full independence from western countries. The Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser aimed to nationalize the Suez Canal. Nasser’s decision threatened the British and French stock holdings in the Company after which they sought help from the UN. Based on the conclusions of the First London Conference and the Menzies mission’s ideas and suggestions, the United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld developed a plan, which any settlement in the Suez Canal must follow. These ideas were:

1. There should be free and open transit through the Canal without discrimination, overt or covert—this covers both political and technical aspects;
2. The sovereignty of Egypt should be respected;
3. The operations of the Canal should be insulated from the politics of any country;
4. The manner of fixing tolls and charges should be decided by agreement between Egypt and the users;
5. A fair proportion of the dues should be allotted to development;
6. In case of disputes, unresolved affairs between the Suez Canal Company and the Egyptian Government should be settled by arbitration with suitable terms of reference and suitable provisions for the payments of sums found to be due.<sup>18</sup>

In defiance of the UN resolution, Israel joined forces with Britain and France to put an end to hostilities in Egypt. Indeed, there were threats from the Soviet Union against any of these powers if they fail to withdraw from the Suez Canal. So far, the United States of America did not interfere to support Britain, France,

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16 Ibid.

17 Piquet, Caroline. “The Suez Company’s Concession in Egypt, 1854—1956: Modern Infrastructure and Local Economic Development.” *Enterprise & Society*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2004, pp. 107–127. Retrieved May 4 2021, *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/23700381](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23700381)

18 McDermott, Rose. *Risk-Taking in International Politics*. The University of Michigan Press. 1998. P 139-140 <https://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/0472108670.pdf>

and Israel to remain in the Suez Canal, which eased the tensions between the US and these countries. The two main reasons for President Eisenhower's refusal to help may have been considered as a positive interference in Egyptian political decision-making. First of all, the US government did not like the fact it was not informed by Britain, France, and Israel of their attacks against Egypt. Indeed, after the Soviet Union claimed to support Egypt, Eisenhower was more concerned if the alliance between both would result in a third world war. The Russian-Egyptian alliance raised the fear of President Eisenhower as follows in the notes from the policy meeting:

The President said our people should be alert. If the Soviets attack the French and British directly, we would be in war, and we would be justified in taking military action even if Congress were not in session. . . The President asked if our forces in the Mediterranean are equipped with atomic anti-submarine weapons.<sup>19</sup> (Ibid.142)

The decision of Eisenhower was a risk-avoiding plan to declare another world war, but it also risked the American government's alliance with Israel and the Great Powers of France and Britain. It was challenging to the international situation as the Suez Canal would be an excuse to start a war that will concern all the countries. The Suez crisis demonstrated the necessity of developing preventative measures for conflicts in order to avoid them. This economic conflict was the first American intervention that resulted in peacemaking in the Middle East, however, the United States always takes its national interest into consideration. The peacemaking convention proved that the United States is the leading and dominant power in the Middle East.

Contrary to the peacekeeping in Egypt, US deployments in other Middle Eastern countries have not resulted in any coalition agreements, as is the case with the assault on Syria. The first elected president following French independence, Quwatly, Prime Minister Azm, and the previous Syrian cabinet all resigned as a result of a military coup d'état carried out in 1949 on the orders of Colonel Husni Zaim, the chief of staff of the Syrian army<sup>20</sup>. According to Douglas Little, professor of history at Clark University, the coup d'état was "one of the first

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.142.

<sup>20</sup> "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Volume VI, Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President" Office of the Historian, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1949v06/d1132>

covert actions that the CIA pulled off”<sup>21</sup>. In the beginning, the intervention of the US was measured in reshaping the fledgling Syrian army and providing it with weapons. President Quwatli was interested in the idea of his army being chosen and trained by the great powers to instill patriotism, morality, and loyalty into the Syrian mindset. However, in late 1947, the US voted for the U.N. resolution calling for the separation of Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Syria was against this petition especially since many Syrian refugees went to the Syrian territories asking for asylum.

After the effort put into the Syrian army, the US government realized that the Syrian government may use it against Israel thus Washington ended up canceling the idea of providing training. As a response to the decline of American training, President Quwatli blocked the passage of the Trans-Arabian Pipe Line (TAPLINE) from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean through Syrian land and opened the path for a future alliance and cooperation with the Russian government. What is noticeable is that the failure of President Quwatli to protect Palestine creates a civil uprising and disobedience by the Syrian citizens. He also tried to dismiss Zaim by accusing him of cooperating with the CIA to lose the Palestinian war. Despite the denial of Zaim, there were classified records later on that proved Zaim’s meeting with the CIA operative Stephen Meade to discuss the Coup d’état plan<sup>22</sup> to serve the American interest in Syria. The US intervention proved that the American government has the power not only to interfere in the maritime areas, but it is also able to undermine the sovereignty of a country and to control the political system depending on its interests.

These four main interventions marked the power of the US in the MENA region and gave even more consideration to American actions. However, it has not dissuaded Arab immigrants from targeting the US in pursuit of economic stability. One must understand that the US was not the primary destination for MENA region inhabitants, especially in the aftermath of World War Two. At the time, millions of its citizens were killed or seriously wounded and Europe was in a period of recovery and economic rebuilding. This period of transmission and the continuous growth of Europe attracted many waves of immigrants from the MENA region to western Europe. France was the first destination for Algerians and Tunisians, Spain was the first destination for Moroccans, and Spain was the first destination for Libyans. These North African examples also may foreshadow the fewer difficulties to travel to western Europe. Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco,

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21 Waxman, Olivia B. “*The U.S. Intervened in Syria in 1949. Here’s What Happened*”, Time. Retrieved 13 April 2017, <https://time.com/4735438/america-syria-war-coup-history/>

22 Ibid.

and Libya were successively colonized by France, Italy, and Spain. Colonialism made these North African countries familiar with the customs of the colonizers and their language which would have later eased the way to integrate into the colonizers' societies. Tunisia and Algeria kept the French colonizer's language as a second language used in schools and administrative offices. Indeed, these western countries were closer to North Africa than to the US, which eased the migration between both continents. Accordingly, MENA region migration to the US was far less compared to Europe.

MENA region migration to the US was existent since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It started with the American ships bringing slaves, especially from Morocco. The first-generation immigrants from the Middle East to the US started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the immigrants were from the Greater Syria province of the Ottoman Empire. They were also male Christians who escaped religious persecution in the Ottoman Empire and who were looking for economic opportunities. Some of them became peddlers while others invested in small businesses. By the 1920s, there were an estimated 250,000 Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians in the United States. A lot of these migrants, later on, went back to their countries bringing with them high amounts of money and showing off their success to their families back in their homes.

With the European rejection of excessive migration from the MENA region and the shift of the global economy to Asia, a lot of Arabs in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were motivated to go to the Asian continent as well as the US. Accordingly, Arabs did not focus on the wrongdoing of the US government in their countries. Instead, some of them were focusing on improving their lifestyle more than thinking about their countries' political matters. Some others thought of the US as the best destination as it is a dominant world power. In the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, there was a huge number of Palestinians, who emigrated to the US. They were ethnically proud and politically aware which helped them, later on, to build the Arab heritage and the sparkling Arab American identity.

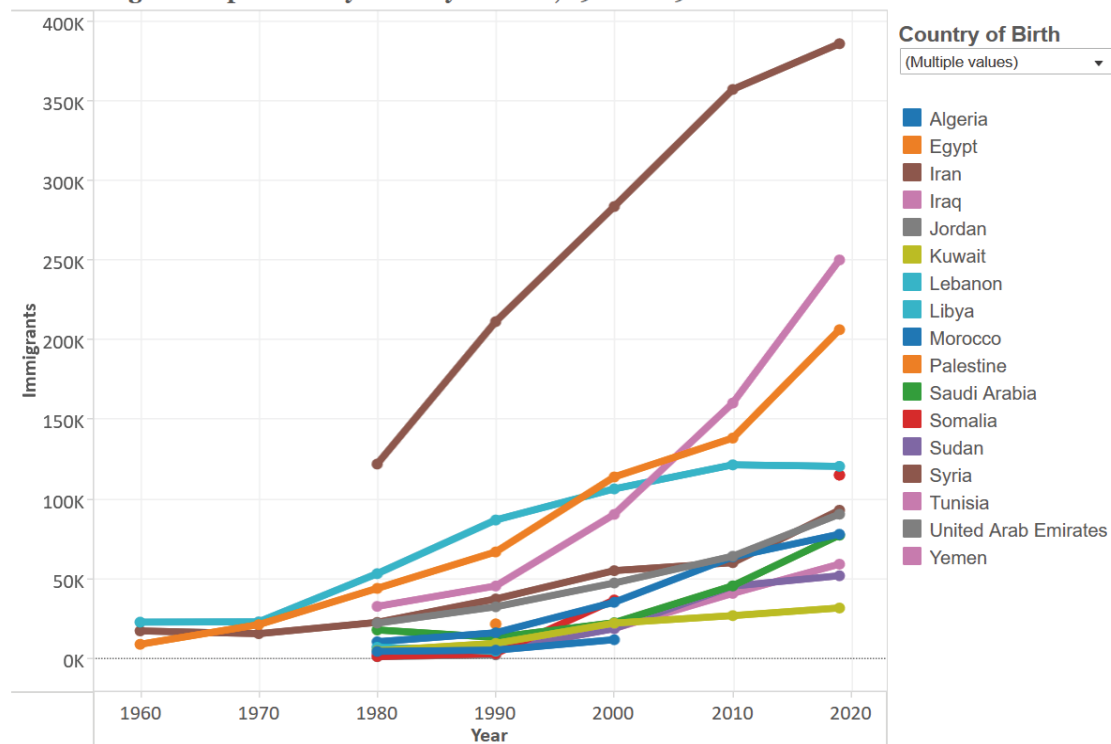
Depending on the Homeland Security census<sup>23</sup> the MENA region immigration to the US was increasing. The only decreasing immigration to the US was coming from Iran: in 1986 Iran sent over 16,505 immigrants, which decreased to 11,084 by 1996. However, depending on the Migration Policy Institute, this decrease witnessed later a huge increase such it is shown in the figure:

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23 "Yearbook of Immigration Statistics 1996 to 1999", Homeland Security, Official website of the Department of Homeland Security. 1 Mars. 2021. [https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/1996\\_1999](https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/1996_1999)



**U.S. Immigrant Population by Country of Birth, 1960-2019**



Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Data Hub  
<http://migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub>

The chart also suggested that some countries have a shortcut to immigration to the US such is the case of Somalia. Although the UN accepted Bush's proposal, and on December 9, 1992, a force of about 25,000 US troops were sent to Somalia, Somali immigrants still immigrated to the US until 2000.

What is noticeable is that ethnic and political consciousness was institutionalized in the late 1990s with the creation of different Arab American organizations, universities, associations, and the Anti-Discrimination Committee. The institutions tried their best to support Arab American rights and to promote a positive image of the Arab culture in American society especially after linking terrorism with Arabs and Muslims.

To reach peace of mind and to believe in their Americanness, Arabs encountered several stereotypes and faced racial discrimination, which made them feel alienated in American society. Notably, in early American history, Arabs were categorized as whites. Being classified as *Arabs*, made Arab Americans



feel alienated and this instilled a feeling of inferiority. The latter suggests one's self-categorization below the suggested mainstream, which points to the social identity approach. In the early 1970s, the British social psychologist Henri Tajfel and his colleagues developed the self-categorization model within the social theory discipline to give a clearer understanding of identity crises. The theory explains how an individual can define himself within society. It suggests the correlation between three psychological processes: social categorization, social comparison, and social identification.

The first refers to how people are conscious about themselves and others within particular categories. These categories are interchangeable and take into consideration the idea of *grouping* rather than the idea of *unique individuals*. As it is the example of Arab Americans: they do not define themselves as individuals living in the American society and ruled under the same supreme law, rather they define their selves by pointing to their ethnicity or *Arabism*. The second refers to the process by which people determine the relative value or social standing of a particular group and its members. For instance, Arab Americans may be seen as having higher social standing than other minorities. Compared with white Americans, Arab Americans can be seen as having lower social standing. The third refers to the fact that people generally own a sense of who they are and how they relate to others, which are also implicated in the way they view other individuals and groups around them. For example, Arab Americans feel inferior because of the stereotypes created upon them, while also their feeling of inferiority comes through believing that other minorities are in a higher social position than them.

All in all, there is always the "us" and the "other": the first asks a question about their background to define their identity and gather within a group to validate their group membership. While the second contributes also to defining the first by giving it a legitimate validation of being different. Accordingly, the Arab American identity was defined through the Arab Americans' knowledge of validating their membership and belonging to their social groups as well as it was defined by the other minorities. Unfortunately, Arab Americans were associated with terrorism after 9/11 which affected their identity. It was difficult at the beginning for Arab Americans to value their culture and background within American society. They accepted the stereotypes and did not act upon them. It is also interesting to notice that even though there were Arab American identity crises, Arab Americans remained in the US to continue pursuing their economic stability. It is only after 9/11 that Arab Americans started to spread more awareness to American society about their culture and racial/ethnic political backgrounds.

Consequently, the American interventions in the MENA region merely served the American interests to gain more power. Yet, it did not stop Arab American immigration to the United States of America. Indeed, it is true that Arab Americans faced difficulties to integrate into American society, however, they need to focus on their Americanness to fight any kind of discrimination and to preserve American liberal values.

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## **Inuit *Nunangat* and Cultural Identity: Borders That Unify and Define**

Rita Nándori

Inuit culture has substantially changed since it came into contact with the South, yet it is demonstrably one of the most traditional within Canada's quilt of cultures.<sup>1</sup> The remoteness of the Far North contributes to the retainment of traditional lifestyles and the lessening of acculturative processes even with widespread access to Western culture via the Internet as far as the northernmost hamlet in the Canadian Arctic. The Inuit attachment to land allows for little travel outside one's community and homeland, thus outside influences are far lesser than in the case of those Indigenous communities that live closer to urban areas further to the South of Canada. It appears that the geography of Inuit *Nunangat* limits Southern impact, which is apparent in many of the customs, such as hunting and sharing "country food," along with cultural manifestations of identity inherent to the millennium-old culture that are still practiced despite territory-wide access to modern lifestyle.<sup>2</sup> The isolated existence of Inuit within Canada's cultural landscape helps ethnocultural practices remain relatively intact. However, Inuit living in Arctic communities today have no personal experience "living out on the land," which is one of the most basic cultural definitions of *Inummarik* (Irwin 7).<sup>3</sup> Post-World War II Inuit settlement into Arctic hamlets was so successful, that the comparatively easy life provided by the security of a close-knit community left only a dwindling number of Inuit who preferred living out of bounds and practically none who were able to maintain life independently without government aid.

The preservation of cultural identity within the multicultural ethos of Canada presents an apparent challenge for some Indigenous communities. Originally, multiculturalism was considered as a framework that assures the cultural retainment of Canadians from various backgrounds, expressing that "[n]ational unity [...] must be founded [...] in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and

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1 "South" or "Southern" refers to Canadian citizens or culture south of the 66<sup>th</sup> parallel.

2 Inuit *Nunangat* means Inuit Homeland in Inuktitut.

3 "Real Inuk" in Inuktitut; a term to denote the traditionally accepted characteristic features of an Inuk.

assumptions” (P. E. Trudeau qtd. in the House of Commons). The context of this statement in 1971 was that of the divided Anglo- and Francophone nation, however, in the current epoch, this approach is understood to be extended to all ethnocultural groups within Canada. The balance between Canadianness and ethnocultural identity fuels a psychologically healthy populace that aims to retain a unique culture within the nation of Canada. Recent surveys, such as those conducted by the independent Angus Reid Institute, rank multiculturalism as essential in terms of things that epitomise Canadian national identity (qtd. in Angus Reid), which illustrates that multiculturalism in the 2020s is still embraced by the majority of Canadians regardless of their background. Multiculturalism, a policy uniting the Indigenous, settler, and immigrant populations, remains an integral part of Canadian public policy, but it has certainly been tested over the years as to how successfully accommodate groups with Indigenous cultural Identity. Canada’s multicultural approach rests on the equal importance of several different cultures within the one unifying nation of Canada, while acknowledging a shared Canadian identity.

How cultural identity is built and promoted may differ from individual to individual and the cultural origin of the group a person belongs to. Identity structure analysis [ISA]—a method designed by Peter Weinreich to study immigrant communities—is an applicable tool to further examine Indigenous cultural identity within a multicultural setting. ISA distinguishes between primordial perspectives showing ethnic continuity through the practice of traditions, and situational perspectives amplifying cultural revival through the process of acculturation (Weinreich et al. 115).<sup>4</sup> The analysis of acculturation—a process that indicates changes that happen due to direct and sustained contact between groups of culturally dissimilar people resulting in habitual changes to that of the incoming minority—is a method that can be adapted to study the level of Indigenous cultural retainment in modern-day Canada. Since the Euro-Western settler population has exerted a substantial cultural influence on the Inuit, ISA may be of use in evaluating the factors contributing to the rapid change of Inuit life and the manner in which tradition is discarded. Heritage-cultural practices, values, and identifications that are uniquely Inuit and those from the received culture jointly shape identity (Schwartz et al. 237). These processes have both beneficial and detrimental psychosocial outcomes on Inuit culture. As ISA-based research demonstrates, ethnic identity is not necessarily fixed but can be redefined

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4 Enculturation is the acquisition of the norms of a culture to be part of society, while potentially retaining diverging customs as well e.g., in one’s private life. Acculturation is a more transformative, holistic process.

and reconstructed (Weinreich et al. 21), thus, the characteristics and experience of Inuit identity may vary based on the individual.

Not only individuals, but different generational cohorts may assign diverging values to cultural identity. Succeeding generations from identical cultures renegotiate as to what should or should not be culturally significant (Bourdieu 1977). What one generation fights for and values may be viewed by subsequent generations as inessential. Changing cultural norms and preferences is reflected in the identity scaffold produced by a generation. The identity of an individual may change throughout the personal evolution of becoming an adult and differs based on social situations. In a cultural environment such as that of Canada's, in many situations the individual may choose which traditional cultural element of their ethno-cultural background they retain and which they drop (Berry, "Aboriginal Cultural Identity" 7), which process is in fact more aligned with enculturation. Throughout the process of enculturation, people learn the values and dynamics of a dominant culture in which they reside and internalize some of them. The nature of a situation, whether it is public or private, may also determine if an Indigenous or enculturated identity is applied. Individuals continue to enculturate elements of the various cultural manifestations available to them as opposed to wholesale acculturation strategies (Weinreich "Enculturation" 136).

Habitus—one of Bourdieu's most influential concepts—refers to the ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions, such as taste, food preferences, and artistic notions—that are acquired having been raised in a certain culture (78). An ample example is Sandra Pikujak Katsak's case from Igloodik, who while collaborating with Nancy Wachowich, confided in her explaining that:

I always tell elders that they are lucky that they grew up that way, in *kamiks* and skins and stuff like that. They always say negative things about stuff back then. They talk about having lice in their hair, or they say that it was too cold, or that they didn't have enough wood. They are always saying negative things about the way things were. I've always wanted to tell them that I wish that I were given the chance to live that way. (Katsak qtd. in Wachowich 224)

Bourdieu's theory of generational difference aptly explains why the Inuit value traditional ways such as Sandra but opt for progress when rallying for the protection of Inuit lands. The different manners in which tradition and modern life are appreciated are apparent in Sandra's deviation from how Elders think. In Sandra's life, her Indigenous culture is retained while elements of a new, Western culture are acquired. Primordial perspectives are present in her everyday life in the

form of pursuing traditional customs, such as sewing *amautiq* or using a *kamutiq* for transporting goods but her passion for ice hockey or video games is a marker of a situational perspective.<sup>5</sup>

Shifts in ethnocultural identity as in the case of the women interviewed in *Saqiyuq*, are the result of enculturation, and can be measured by John W. Berry's Fourfold Model, a less expansive form of the process. Berry's framework shows that on the part of the ethnocultural group, the fallout of direct contact with culturally dissimilar people leads to separation, marginalization, acculturation, or integration. Through cross-cultural contact, as the model suggests, one or both cultures changes regarding social expectations around language, communication, food, leisure, and most aspects of lifestyle (Berry 698). The traditions and customs of the Inuit have been extensively changed by the majority Southern lifestyle through cultural influence. Due to technology, the Inuit have never been quite as connected to the rest of Canada and the world as they are today. The shift in customs and practices is indicative of the changing times as the Inuit march from a hunter-gatherer culture to a modern society.

Similarly to enculturation, acculturation is thought to happen along multidimensional models (Ryder et al.), therefore, it is apt to assume that the changes in identity may vary depending on the amount of influence an individual or group may receive from mainstream society. Levels of enculturation may differ depending on the frequency of non-majority native language use and on whether traditional Inuit customs are observed, as well as on whether the generation in question has parents who had previously been immersed in Southern culture through schooling. Enculturation does not necessarily mean loss of ethnocultural identity, as individuals are thought to be able to maintain multiple cultural identities. Much like an onion, identity is layered, therefore, it is possible to retain traditions through the maintenance of ethnocultural roots and simultaneously adopting a new layer of identity to gain membership in the larger society, thus creating a new, amalgamated identity. Such duality is detected in Poul Røvsing Olsen's study of enculturation in the music of the Greenlandic Inuit. While their music shows Western influences, such as the choice of brass musical instruments and Western melodies, it also retains traditional components to it. In examining Inuit music, Olsen observes that "the Eskimo attitude has been either one or the other [. . .] two or more different styles are living side by side without influencing each other in any conceivable manner. This duality may exist as an active social phenomenon [. . .]" (37). Olsen postulates that duality might be a social phenomenon specific to Inuit.

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5 *Amautiq* is a hooded parka worn by Inuit women; *kamutiq* is a long wooden sled



Additionally, enculturative impact may have psychological effects on Inuit population. The proliferation of Western, sedentary lifestyle and reliance on processed foods diminishes the need for physical activity leading to loss of fitness (Rode et. al 217). Sea lifts and stores make Southern goods available, but lack of awareness about the negative effects of low-quality, sugar-rich processed foods causes health concerns, such as those regarding weight management and dental hygiene. In the meantime, the ownership of snowmobiles has increased by almost an order of magnitude in just ten years in the seventies, while the introduction of salaried work made hunting and fishing a pastime activity for many. Such changes result in a less physically fit young generation (Rode at al. 228). Moreover, enculturation may generate psychological problems in youth who are more susceptible to anxiety stemming from having to juggle their identity in two distinct worlds. Enculturation-induced anxiety appears to be one of the leading causes of substance abuse, self-harming, and suicide in Northern communities. Excessive alcohol consumption, drug abuse, and engaging in violent or criminal behaviour are unfortunate coping mechanisms for diminished self-esteem and negative self-image (Seltzer 173).

Inuit represent three generations: the Elders, who were born during the time of the policy of dispersal, an era of rare Southern presence; the first settlement adults, the first generation born in arctic hamlets in the 1950s and 60s; and the young generation, whose parents do not have personal experience about “living out on the land.” It is natural, that there is tension between generations, especially if members of the young generation are unsatisfied with the results of the decisions made by their Elders. First-hand knowledge provides information based on experience about life before and after the formation of settlements, hence the discrepancy between Sandra’s nostalgia for an imaginary epoch when Inuit were lords of the tundra and the view of the Elders’ who “always say negative things about stuff back then” (Wachowich 224). This difference in habitus implies that other elements in cultural identity may vary as well. The habitus of any generation survives through the protection of their memory by the forthcoming generation. The generational cohort of nomadic times is not alive anymore, and authentic information about what *Inummariit* was before the time of settlements is scarce. The creation of a substantial historical record is amiss, for Inuit culture was purely oral until the mid-twentieth century. Therefore, the folk stories, myths, and song-poems collected by Knud Rasmussen in the 1920s is of tantamount importance to deciphering the *Inummariit* as it once was understood.

Only if the young generation has a cultural memory about the nomadic past that entailed living on the land are they able to conceptualize *Inummariit*, if by this term we mean an Inuk gifted with traditional land-based skills and customs as in the

times before settlement. In Mary Elizabeth Piercey-Lewis's research of Inuit music she identifies drum dancing and the accompanying *pisiit* as representative features of Inuit identity (178). *Pisiit* represent not only *Inummariit* values but—as a key feature of its nature—are transmitted orally. However, while the elders' generation was raised in an oral tradition, children and their parents have adopted a written culture (178). Lacking the social context, for school age children, the language and meaning of traditional poems is abstruse. The divide between the generations is manifested—as suggested by Bourdieu—in the way they are cognizant of the world around them:

Young people do not understand the texts of traditional songs as their elders do, nor do they understand the places that these songs talk about in the same manner. What has resulted is an understanding, which values the “old ways” of “real Inuit” but, due to completely different life experiences, conceptualizes them differently from the older generation. (Piercey-Lewis 195)

The Elder generation went through a time of change from migration to settlement as children, then becoming the first parents to have no guidance as to how to raise a family in a settlement. In contrast, the young adults of the 2020s are growing up in a literate and digital age in which many of them are not taught land skills.

The generationally different conceptualizations of identity reveal that through the motions of history, technological advancement, and the input of each generation, Inuit identity is understood slightly differently by each generation. While Bourdieu suggests that both the cultural capital and habitus of each generation are altered (77-78) due to modernization, there is a collective identity all members of a group regardless of which generation they belong to, can identify with. In the case of Inuit, although the young generation regards *Inummariit* qualities differently than the Elders' generation as observable in their appreciation and inclusion of popular Southern culture in their lives, they all identify with certain characteristics, such as good hunting skills as the basis of being a true *Inuk*. Bourdieu observes that through intergenerational relationships youth can learn traditions (32) if they are open to it. Such acquisition and inclusion of traditional identity in a modern setting is apparent in Inuit singer Riit's music, consisting of Western-style popular songs containing traditional Inuit *katajjaq*.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, tradition lives on, albeit in a changed way, creating a new tradition for the upcoming generation.

As acculturation—and enculturation, a less invasive form of culture transfer—refer to changes that take place as a result of contact with culturally dissimilar people,

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6 Inuit non-verbal throat singing usually performed by two women facing each other.

groups, and their social influences, language is often severely impacted (Berry 698). Language is one of the most important cultural characteristics of a given cultural group and it is a core medium through which identity is manifested. Thus, the language in which news, information, and literature is published and consumed is significant to one's identity construction. A substantial amount of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry by Inuit authors has been released in English, but the number of Inuktitut language publications is dwindling. The scarcity of Inuktitut (or English) language publications may be an indicator of enculturation or simply stems from the oral, hunter-gatherer recent Inuit past.

Since the diminished use of native language is a significant marker of enculturation levels, the continued use of Inuktitut in the North is of elementary significance. Based on interviews conducted in the Northern Qikiqtaaluk hamlet of Igloodik and in the Nunavik community of Quaqtaq by Louis-Jacques Dorais, present-day Inuit view their language as an essential part of their identity (302).<sup>7</sup> Participants in the survey expressed that English (or French) skills are primarily regarded as a tool for getting a job (Dorais 295). The use of Inuktitut—which is crucial to Inuit identity—is fostered at family occasions, cultural functions, and social gatherings. However, in order to have equality of opportunity in higher education and the job market, the Inuit attend the same K-12 system offered elsewhere in Canada resulting in a lack of substantial focus on Inuit perspectives, including language proficiency.

The latest census shows that Inuktitut is spoken by a little above fifty percent of those under fourteen years of age as their first language. According to the data, nearly fifty percent of Nunavut—the most populous Inuit territory—use mostly English at home. Compared to the results of a similar survey conducted in 1991, only twenty-nine percent used English, and seventy-six percent of Nunavut families spoke native fluency Inuktitut (Martin, “Inuit Language Loss”). The protection and promotion of Inuktitut in school, work, and official settings may halt the rapid language loss of the past fifty years. In 2021, a new 42-million-dollar deal was signed by the government of Canada to support Inuktitut language use through a variety of initiatives (“Working Together”), this by no means is the only large-scale government fund dedicated to save the endangered Inuktitut languages.

However, fluency is not regarded by all as an integral part of Inuit identity. Natan Obed, the current president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, argues: “[t]he fact that [he doesn't] have fluency in Inuktitut is only one small part of who [he] really [is]” (qtd. in Madwar). Supporting Obed's views, Jesse Mike argues that questioning

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7 Northern Qikiqtaaluk is identical with the northern parts of the formerly Baffin Region. Inuvik is the name of the Inuit lands in Northern Québec.

Inuit identity based on language skills is inappropriate (qtd. in Madwar).<sup>8</sup> Since nearly half the Inuit teenage population in the North does not have native Inuktitut fluency, thinking about language as one of the most relevant markers of ethnic identity is worth re-evaluating. Obed observes that:

There's so many young Inuit now that are not completely fluent in Inuktitut, that have grown up with one parent who's not Inuk and one parent who has grown up outside of it. I think sometimes that's lost in the debate. That if you don't have Inuktitut, that somehow you can't be an advocate for it or that you are not ever going to be a good one. (Natan Obed qtd. in "I'm an Inuk")

While I concur that Inuit identity cannot be questioned solely based on one's language skills, native language fluency is undeniably a crucial factor in identity construction.

Borders reinforce the notion of "us," they function to frame the identity of those inside, they are metaphors for spaces where divergent discourses intersect. They are dividing lines fortified by gates and complete with road signs written sometimes in a foreign language emblazoned with coat of arms signifying the culture inside. Border crossing is a political, economic, and a cultural act. When such crossing is executed within Canada, borders are more accurately understood as cultural boundaries. Although regional boundaries are soft borders that are socially created, how they are established and internalized is crucial to the identity management of those inside. Borders also supposed to indicate where certain peoples traditionally reside, in spite of often the case being that an area may be home to various such groups.

Inuit identity construction has received a beneficial boost, because of successful land claims starting in the 1990s. The most prominent Inuit-owned land is Nunavut, the largest Inuit territory established in 1999, followed by the recognition of the Inuit *Nunangat*—in other words homeland—encompassing a substantial amount of the lands and waters of the Canadian Arctic. Inuit land claims are nation-forming acts that reinforce the notion of belonging through such symbolic acts as the extensive use of coat of arms in public and particularly official spaces. Additionally, the toponymic revolution starting with the naming of the new Inuit territory of Nunavut created a platform for enhancing the feeling of ownership.

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8 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami [United Inuit of Canada], previously Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, founded by Tagak Curley in 1971, and presently headed by Natan Obed, is a nonprofit organization representing all Inuit in Canada.

Such place names as *Qikiqtaaluk*, replacing Baffin Island are significant aids in strengthening Inuit identity (Légaré 110). However, such unifying acts neglect the fact that regional borders tend to be arbitrary. Instead of precisely separating cultural groups, borders denote economic agreements, therefore creating complex situations for those within. An example of this is the physical location of traditional Dene hunting grounds that overlap those areas also used by the Inuit creating a peculiar situation where ancestral Dene lands are located within the Inuit territory of Nunavut (Légaré 106).<sup>9</sup> Such complicated ownership claims to one territory make egalitarian divisions challenging, as they have an exacerbating effect on experiencing and preserving cultural identity.

The reason why several groups claim a territory lies in the history of the Indigenous populations in the pre-contact era. Prior to regular Southern contact beginning in the early twentieth century, there were various migrating Inuit and First Nations groups in the Canadian Arctic, whose size varied between 30 to 100 individuals (Damas 17). Since Indigenous hunting parties consisting of close-knit groups of families were following game on a seasonal pattern, specific claims to land signified by borders were not established, rather an understanding based on tradition was forged allowing different groups to hunt the same land. Contact with the Hudson's Bay Company and European interest in Arctic fox pelt changed subsistence living into a mixed economy. In the 1950s and 1960s the earlier "Policy of Dispersal" approach was discarded to extend the welfare state to the Arctic, as the Canadian government intervened in the nomadic way of Inuit life. The permanent settlements established in the North heralded the end of the era of migrating groups for all Indigenous peoples inhabiting the Arctic.<sup>10</sup> Although the Inuit have great attachment to the land, in fact good land skills are of primary importance in the characterization of a real Inuk an *Inummariit*, intimate knowledge of the land does not shield the Inuit from enculturation in an age when those feats of Western culture that cannot be transported to the North by sea or air lifts, arrive over the Internet. Arctic Inuit live in houses, drive snowmobiles, quads, boats, own a TV, cell phone, and use the Internet just like any other Canadian.

Inuit who leave the homeland experience higher levels of enculturation. According to the statistical survey conducted by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

9 *Dene* is a First Nations tribe with hunting grounds within the Inuit territory of Nunavut.

10 Examples where relocations were contentious are that of the *Ihalmiut*, a group of Inuit who lived in the *Keewatin* Region (now *Kivalliq*) and experienced large-scale starvation due to the dwindling number of caribou. *Ihalmiut* were relocated a number of times. Ernest Burch details the event in his "Caribou Eskimo Origins: An Old Problem Reconsidered." In the eyes of the 92 individuals, who were relocated to the High Arctic hamlets of Grise Fiord and Resolute, the process was understood as temporary, and when it turned out to be permanent, the Inuit protested in disappointment.

in 2018, about seventeen-thousand of the sixty-five thousand Inuit in Canada live outside the homeland. For those who leave the North and choose to live in the South, Western cultural influence becomes more pronounced, and keeping traditional customs will be challenging. Away from the homeland, the Inuit may struggle with a lack of access to Inuit customs. Not being able to speak Inuktitut also has an alienating effect. Nevertheless, some Inuit artists and professionals remarkably flourish in the South (Patrick 101), which is possible if a concerted effort is made to safeguard Inuit cultural identity. Urban Inuit are a significant part of contemporary Inuit identity, especially so in the case of mixed-heritage people, some of whom like Natan Obed, the president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, are highly successful professionals. As Southern Inuit author Norma Dunning states, Indigenous artists “walk inside two worlds,” but regardless where they are, they are Inuk.

In the case of Inuit, a people with marked cultural specificity, spatiality has strong influence on constructing cultural identity. Being away from the North has a culturally deterritorializing effect on identity, suggesting that territoriality is linked to Inuit identity (Patrick 105). Reterritorializing the homeland is fundamental to Inuit identity and is palpable in frequent references to *Nunangat*. There is an apparent opposition between multiculturalism, a political approach that encourages immersion in different but equally highly regarded cultures within Canada, de facto erasing cultural boundaries, and the appreciation of Indigeneity with the affirmation of the special place First Peoples occupy in the cultural history of the country. Furthermore, immersion in many cultures smudges cultural boundaries meanwhile the Inuit struggle to retain their own distinct culture. Biculturalism seems a more manageable solution to the dichotomous problem of concurrent Indigenous identity preservation and the creation of a mainstream all-Canadian identity.

The current stance is that boundaries worldwide are in the process of disappearing. The theory of boundary removal—the idea that boundaries are constantly changing as globalization erases them—is based on the observation of economic realities (Newman et al. 198-200). In this political climate, the formation of sovereign ethnocultural territories within Canada indicates an internal dissatisfaction with the multicultural ethos that cannot speak for the expressed wishes of all living in Canada. Inuit *Nunangat* serves as a prime example of a soft border and cultural boundary within a nation, fortifying the Inuit identity with its mere existence, nevertheless, boundaries have already been eliminated for the approximately sixteen thousand Inuit who live off land in Southern metropolitan centres. By meeting other ethnic groups that travel, work, or live in the North, Inuit socio-spatial identity—the feeling of belonging to a region—is affected, as a result habits and customs change and as a consequence so does cultural identity. Southern



lifestyle—through the Internet and other commodities—reaches the North, therefore transforming the culture of even those Inuit who never leave the land. Inuit cultural identity at present is the sum of its parts; the rapid change due to outside influences culminates into the formation of an amalgamated identity.

To conclude, there is an administrative-spatial duality inherent to Inuit identity by being not only Inuit, but Canadian as well (Dorais 302). It is pivotal to address issues relating to language, education, and sociopolitical questions to counterbalance the cultural loss of the past few decades, which is epitomized by the diminished levels of Inuktitut language proficiency within Inuit *Nunangat*. This is especially so in the case of the about fourteen thousand Inuit living in the South. Access to federally and provincially funded services in urban centres, such as Native Friendship Centres and the Inuit-specific community service, the Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) Community Centre, is necessary to fostering well-being for urban Inuit. Also, the erosion of Inuit ethnic identity could be lessened through the continued use of Inuktitut not only in private but in professional settings.

The remoteness of the Inuit homeland limits Southern influence, serving as a buffer for acculturative processes. People remaining in the *Nunangat* primarily develop their identity based on the cultural history of the homeland and have wider access to fostering Inuktitut and participating in traditional activities. Both Berry's and Weinreich's models as well as Bourdieu's theory show that cultural identity can be fluid, and as such, it is possible for Inuit cultural identity to survive as well as expand. Inuit have been masters of successful adaptation to harsh environmental conditions; therefore, it is certain that they can thrive in Canada today. To this end, keeping Inuit intellectual and material culture alive is vital to promoting Inuit identity, albeit this is not to say that it is desired or possible to keep a culture sealed off from the outside. Inuit customs that span over hundreds of years may be amended by Southern comforts, which is what Inuit call *ajunamat*, a result of cultural influence that cannot be avoided. Such changes relating to modernization—and in this case enculturation—have implications to Inuit identity, which can be preserved by the Inuit philosophy of *sappulik*, never giving up even in face of grave danger.

Since the latter half of the twentieth century, the articulation of Indigenous identity has been greatly shaped by local, national, and even global efforts, such as those of socio-political movements supportive of Indigenous causes, especially those relating to cultural retention and energy management. As Indigeneity has come into focus, the protection of Indigenous lands, languages, rights, and cultures has received institutional support from both the government and non-governmental organizations. In this advantageous setting, it is hoped that the Inuit will continue to receive the necessary tools to retain their cultural identity by safeguarding their

immediate culture and feel at home in the larger cultural context of Canada, as most adequately expressed in the phrase coined by Jose Kusugak, the late president of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated: “First Canadians, Canadians First.”<sup>11</sup>

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11 First Canadians, Canadians First: The National Strategy on Inuit Education is a program by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami devised in 2011. Their vision is “to graduate bilingual Inuit children with the skills and knowledge to contribute with pride and confidence to the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (itk.org). It is a phrase coined by Jose Kusugak, renowned teacher, storyteller, and politician, who was also in charge of land claims at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated within Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.



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# Gold Rush in the Cold: Russian Far East Expeditions in Russian-American Travel Writing, 1898–1900

Maksim Pelmegov

## Introduction

At the beginning of the twentieth century both the Russian Empire and the United States experienced considerable social and economic changes, and travel writing of this period on both sides played an important role in cultural interaction and shaping mutual images among readers back home. Russian and English scholars agree that the images formed back then continue to influence mutual perceptions even today (Allen 1988, 74; Zhuravleva 2012, 405–406). However, among many layers of Russian-American travel writing before the First World War the topic of travels to Alaska and the Russian Far East has received little consideration, even though at that point in time both modernizing empires began paying significant attention to the development of their most distant territories, making these regions appealing destinations for explorers, settlers, and travelers.

For the Russian Empire both Siberia and the Far East had primarily strategic and long-term economic value, especially in the wake of political developments in China and rapid industrial development of Japan. At the end of the nineteenth century the Russian government's intentions to develop the region were marked by building the Trans-Siberian railway and encouraging peasant migration to the region (Forsyth 1992, 14–15, 29). Russian statistics show that while in 1885–1892 over 258 thousand settlers moved to Siberia and the Far East combined, throughout the next ten years, 1893–1903, this number quadrupled to 1.2 million (RA 1906, 2–3, 22–23). Other than developing agriculture and trade, another key reason for travelling so far was seeking gold, and such expeditions were often financed by private individuals. The first prospecting expeditions and companies were established in and deployed to the Far East in the late 1860s, and the gold mining industry rapidly became a significant part of regional economy. It accounted for up to a third of the gold mined in pre-revolutionary Russia (Alekseev 1982, 253). These developments in Russia as well as the rapid increase of population and launching of federal infrastructure and agricultural programs in the District of Alaska following the Klondike and Nome Gold Rushes showed how looking for precious metals and other resources contributed to travel, settlement, and economic progress in distant unpopulated regions (Nikitin 2005, 759–761).

At the same time, intensive gold mining and its consequences disturbed the life of the native population, which came into contact with the incoming Russians and Americans. The positive impact of new commodities, technologies, and modern methods in agriculture and craft was partly undone by diseases, disruption of the local environment, and the forced relocation of native populations (Forsyth 1992, 217–218; Haycox 2020, 221–223).

Besides economic, scientific interest also contributed to the exploration of these territories, with multiple expeditions studying flora, fauna as well as indigenous peoples. Examples include the 1895–1898 expedition to the coast of the Okhotsk Sea and the Kamchatka Peninsula led by Russian engineer and geologist Karol Bohdanowicz, Sergei Kichenski and Nikolay Slyunin as well as the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897–1902), financed by director of the American Museum of Natural History Morris K. Jesup. The latter was carried out in collaboration of Russian (Waldemar Bogoras and Waldemar Jochelson) and American (Franz Boas) anthropologists, and investigated the culture, folklore, and relationships between indigenous peoples on both sides of the Bering Strait (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988, 103). In a way, expeditions, whether scientific or gold-seeking, and their results, including travelogues, were among the major sources of information about the region and indigenous lifestyle. And the fact that they were published in considerable numbers indicates interest in the topic among readers and publishers.

## **Authors and Expeditions**

Out of a total corpus of at least 10 travelogues, this study focuses on two, one from each country. One of them was written, in Russian, by Ivan Akifiev (1872–1905), a member of the joint Russian-American expedition to the shores of the Chukchi Peninsula in the summer of 1900. Born in Nizhny Novgorod, Akifiev graduated from the medical faculty of Moscow University and acquired doctoral practice while supervising builders of the Samara-Zlatoust Railroad. He travelled extensively, visiting Switzerland, Italy, and in 1898 Korea as part of the Russian expedition aimed at studying possibilities of gaining concessions as well as identifying sea and land routes of Korea for military purposes. Later Akifiev was a frontline doctor during the Russo-Japanese War. Overall, his activities made him involved with Russian Far Eastern economic and political prospects, and the expedition to the Chukchi Peninsula, in which he also played the role of the doctor, seems to confirm this fact. The other travelogue depicts the explorations of Washington B. Vanderlip (1863–1949), an American engineer from Elkhart, Indiana, who had previously worked in Australia, Burma, and Korea. Between 1898 and 1900 he conducted

several expeditions across the Chukchi Peninsula and into the Kamchatka region. Expeditions undertaken by both authors were inspired by the Klondike Gold Rush, following up on the assumption that considerable gold could be found on the Russian side of the Bering Strait, too.

At this point, some initial remarks are in order. Firstly, neither author knew the other language: Vanderlip did not speak Russian, and Akifiev had no English. Nor did they speak any of the native ones, which, in turn, seriously limited their experience. Also, both texts went through some revision: Akifiev's travelogue was subjected to Russian censorship, while Vanderlip's travel account was put into a book form by Homer B. Hulbert, American journalist in Korea. This might have had an impact on the travelogues' structure and, in part, their authenticity.

Both travelogues follow a chronological order, but they differ in narration and structure. Akifiev's notes are written in the form of a diary and are presented in retrospect. He begins with leaving St. Petersburg westward to New York through Washington and Chicago to San Francisco, from where the expedition, led again by Karol Bohdanowicz and including Russian, American, English, and Chinese prospectors, left the city in June 1900. They sailed towards the Chukchi Peninsula on the *Samoa*, a steamer operated by an American crew. The expedition was organized by Colonel Vladimir Vonliarliarskii, who in January 1900 petitioned the Russian Ministry of Agriculture and State Domains for the authorization to concentrate all mining development of the peninsula in his hands, and promptly received a 5-year concession in April. The expedition was financed from London by Friedrich Becker, who shortly before the expedition created the company named East Siberian Syndicate. The expedition travelled to the northeast of the peninsula, visiting Unalaska (Aleutian Islands), Providence Bay, Cape Chaplin, the Senyavin Strait, Saint Lawrence Bay, circled the peninsula through the Bering Strait up to Kolyuchin Bay, and visited Nome, Alaska, twice. The crew of the *Samoa* was complemented by 12 Russian workers and 8 Cossacks and marines from the Russian warship *Yakut*. On the way back Akifiev briefly visited Petropavlovsk (present-day Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky), Sakhalin, and Vladivostok before going to Japan.

Vanderlip's travelogue is divided into chapters, the content of which is ranging from describing people and events along the way to specifically examining local nature, native customs, and traditions. He starts from Vladivostok through Sakhalin to the city of Ghijiga (known as the ghost town Ghijiginsk today, formed in 1752) located at the Ghijigin Bay of the Okhotsk Sea. It was from here that he organized most of his expeditions in 1898–1899, reaching inland into the Chukchi and Kamchatka Peninsulas and the areas around the Kolyma Mountains, which he wrongly identified as the Stanovoi mountain range. In the summer of 1900 he

also visited the coast of the Chukchi Peninsula on the steamer *Progress*, incidentally crossing paths with the *Samoa* along the way. While he briefly mentioned being hired by “a Russian firm” to do the exploration, he was apparently employed by the company of Russian merchant and industrialist Julius Briner. Briner was stationed in Vladivostok, and his company was involved with German and British investors also looking for resources on Sakhalin and in Northeast Siberia.

Both travelers failed to realize their respective goal in full: Vanderlip did not find anything of value, while Bohdanowicz’s expedition was cancelled after conflicts erupted between Russian and American crew members. The breaking point came when American crew members persuaded the captain of the *Samoa* to go back to Nome in the beginning of August. In the city the Russians were held on board, by force, for several days, followed by legal proceedings, before they were allowed to leave for home after being acquitted by a local court in early September.

### **Travel Conditions and Landscapes**

Both travelogues pay serious attention to the means and conditions of travel. Akifiev states that the decision on his and his Russian companions’ part to travel westward was based on the lack of infrastructure development in the Russian Far East: they saved almost a month of travel by going from St. Petersburg to San Francisco westward rather than eastward through Vladivostok (1904, 1). Thus, the company took a series of trains to London, then the steamer *Campania* of the Cunard Steamship Company to New York, and continued to San Francisco by train. While he does not describe travel conditions on the way to California extensively, he makes critical remarks on almost all occasions. On the way to London, while conceding that German-made cars are superior to Russian ones, he calls the food mediocre and expensive; for him, the *Campania* looks like a “giant house” afloat, the interior is wonderful, but the cabins are small, and the price of the first class is too expensive. And while he enjoyed the comfort of the Pullman cars on his way to San Francisco, Akifiev mocks the quality of the American railroads (1904 5, 8, 18). On seeing the *Samoa* for the first time, he again voices disillusionment:

The disenchantment was complete. I did not believe it when Stern said to us: “And here is our steamer!”. It seemed so small and unimpressive to us. His length is only 150 feet, passenger cabins are only on aft and deck, making a rather strange appearance. ... It looks as if the middle of the steamer is broken down. The dirt everywhere is terrible. (Akifiev 1904, 19; all translations are mine)

Vanderlip, on the other hand, barely described how he got to Ghijiga on a steamer, but he paid much attention to listing all the necessary items and commodities he was bringing with him, ranging from guns and tobacco for trade to needles and pipe-bowls (Vanderlip 1903, 14–18). His travelogue depicts the local ways of travel in the area of his exploration, including horses, deer, and sled dogs. He writes in detail about the process of riding a deer and operating a *narta* (sledge) with sled dogs, praising deer and particularly dogs for their suitability for travelling in harsh travel conditions as well as for their natural instincts, including dogs' ability to "foresee" the upcoming blizzard. Once the dogs saved Vanderlip and his companions from starvation by bringing eggs of seagulls. He also adds stories of adventure and excitement, for instance, when his sled dogs started chasing deer instinctively, leading to his sledge abruptly capsizing:

I have coursed antelope in Texas, and in Arizona have picked wild turkeys from the ground while on horseback, but for good exhilarating sport give me fourteen wild sledge-dogs, the open tundra, and a bunch of deer ahead. (Vanderlip 1903, 187–188)

The nature of the scarcely populated territories is also depicted in both travelogues. Akifiev omits his impressions about American landscapes, writing only about what he sees after the *Samoa* leaves San Francisco. He bids goodbye to California, "the land of gold, light, and warmth" and addresses "the Severe North" as a guest coming to an undiscovered place (Akifiev 1904, 28). When the *Samoa* reaches Providence Bay, the crew first catches sight of the Chukchi Peninsula. In his words:

The closer we were approaching the coast, the clearer were the black arrays of colossal bare mountains, covered with white patches of snow. These somber, stern mountains, fog, grey sea covered with floating ice, penetrating dampness and cold gives one a unique, overwhelming impression. It seems like we entered in a new, dreamlike world. (Akifiev 1904, 44)

But this "overwhelming impression" quickly gave way to the notion of "harsh and unwelcoming" nature when the expedition landed on the coast of the peninsula for the first time – when the birdcalls and sounds of cracking ice were the only things which "made this dead nature alive" (Akifiev 1904, 49). The image of "dead nature" dominates throughout Akifiev's travelogue, except for the odd clear days in late summer, when bright weather finally gives the feeling of nature "awakened after its ten-month sleep and cheerfully smiling" at the sun, which "has woken her up with hot kisses" (Akifiev 1904, 100). His preference clearly lies with the landscape of



Petropavlovsk when returning to Russia after the end of the expedition: it is shown to be clearly superior in contrast to dead and cold Chukchi Peninsula.

Vanderlip, in contrast, writes little about his impressions when seeing landscapes, but extensively describes local fauna, most often in connection with hunting prospects. When going up the Ghijiga river to reach Ghijiga for the first time he describes it extensively: how the coast is filled with dead salmon swept ashore as well as seagulls hunting them, noting the variety of berries and birds, concluding:

An hour's stroll is enough to use up all the gun-shells one can conveniently carry, and to bag more game than one can bring home. The hunter has only to sit down in a "goose lane" or behind a blind of some sort and shoot birds right and left. ... The natives, as a rule, are too poor to own shot-guns, and so do not profit largely by this generous supply of feathered game. (Vanderlip 1903, 63)

Episodes of hunting, whether for food, profit, or fun as well as consuming natural products, such as seal fat or deer meat, often occur in his travelogue, giving the notion of the land as a source of survival as well as prosperity for potential hunters. Besides, his travelogue contains many situations when the author prospected and lived in the wilderness or when his life was in danger, such as an encounter with a bear or being caught in a winter blizzard in an open space for several days (Vanderlip 1903, 97–98, 169–170). At times, the author got involved in more dangerous undertakings. On one of his expeditions, Vanderlip and his companions had to go down a river. Instead of going along the riverside, the author decided to make a raft and go down-stream, stating his reasoning:

The rush and swirl of the angry waters, the narrow escape from the ragged crest of a reef that came almost, but not quite, to the surface, and was invisible thirty feet away, the rush past steep cliffs and flowery banks, all formed such a delightful contrast to the weary plodding through the forest that we were willing to welcome almost any dangers for the sake of the exhilaration of this mad dash down the stream. (Vanderlip 1903, 291–292)

These scenes of interactions with the wilderness show that at times the author wanted to present himself as a brave and skilled polar explorer and impress his readers.



## Images of Natives and Their Life

Another major topic of both travelogues is the life and living conditions of indigenous peoples, primarily Chukchi, Koryak, Even, and Evenki (the latter two were known together as Tungus before the 1930s). Although they led a self-sustaining nomadic or sedentary life based on hunting, fishing, whaling, and reindeer herding, they had unique beliefs as well as accommodation and clothing adapted to severe climate. Still, information about them to the Western readership was produced primarily by explorers coming from outside of the region (Leane 2019, 361).

While the overall population of the Primorskaya Oblast (which back then included both the Kamchatka and Chukchi Peninsulas as well as the Russian Pacific coast all the way to Vladivostok) according to the 1897 census was around 223 thousand people, indigenous peoples made up the majority in the northeast of the area (Anadyr and Ghijiga districts), including 11,751 Chukchi, around 7,300 Koryaks and around 8,850 Tungus (approximately 740 Evens, also known as Lamuts, and 8,110 Evenks) – out of an overall number of around 65,000 Tungus living in Siberia and the Far East combined (DSIRGO 1912, 1–12, 710–712, 864–868).

While the Russian government considered all the territories of the Far East its own, weakness of Russian administration in the faraway regions and lack of infrastructure led to increased American trade presence in the area, especially in present-day Primorsky Krai and the regions close to Alaska, notably the Chukchi Peninsula (Garusova 2001, 56). In these areas Americans were increasingly engaging in both legal and illegal hunting, fishing, and whaling in Russian waters. They also actively traded with the native population, giving their manufactured goods, guns, clothes, and other commodities in exchange for meat and pelts. This barter trade was also ambiguous, often helping the locals to survive and obtain necessary items, but at the same time traders were gaining significant profits and securing overwhelming presence that concerned the Russian government and business elite, both fearing the “Americanization” of the natives by adopting the English language and American culture. Another major problem was illegal alcohol selling to the natives, which clearly had an ill influence on their physical and mental health (Garusova 2001, 44–48). Thus, the natives mentioned above came under both Russian and American influence. This was true especially for Chukchi, who, remaining the only indigenous people not bound by *yasak* (fur tribute collected from indigenous peoples of Siberia) to the Russian authorities, traded and picked goods from both Russians and Americans, acting as a “middle ground” between the two, while not being completely dependent on either (Znamenski 1999, 24–26).

The Bohdanowicz expedition visited native villages only along the coast of the Chukchi Peninsula. Therefore, Akifiev writes only about the Chukchi, although he possibly saw Eskimo and Yupik peoples, who then also lived in the area. His first encounter with the Chukchi was on the coast of Providence Bay, with some natives boarding the *Samoa*. Having already seen a Chukchi burial ground where, he claims, the dead bodies were kept in the open, he describes the clothes and accommodation of these people. Their clothes are sturdy but not hygienic, their faces reveal major diseases, and their *yarangas* (Chukchi tents) are anything but clean. He does not write about Chukchi culture or beliefs at all. His conclusion is derogatory:

To eat seal meat, fat, dead whales thrown out of the sea, to sleep in stinking hides in the dirt of the smoking tent. What kind of life is this? But they still live, joke, and laugh. What can austerity lead to! (Akifiev 1904, 58)

Later, visiting the village of Ungazik (Indian Point), Akifiev claims that those Chukchi who are often visited by Americans are looking better, some even live in log cabins made by American merchants. Still, while acknowledging the beneficial American influence, he tends to view the region and indigenous peoples from a political point of view, arguing multiple times that the Russian government and businessmen, unlike Americans, completely forgot about the region and its needs. In case of finding gold his expedition could incite further Russian migration to the region, giving Chukchi an example of “a more cultured way of life”. He then speaks decisively for the need of the government to step in:

It is strange that the Russians don't visit the Chukchi Peninsula, even for commerce, even though Americans see coming here for barter trade and profit from it. Our government would do well to consider sending navy ships here at least to oppose the exploitative trade of foreigners. (Akifiev 1904, 102–103)

At the same time, he is satisfied with the remaining Russian and Orthodox influence among natives on the Aleutian Islands and he regrets the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867 (Akifiev mistakenly dates it to 1866), complaining that Alaska's newly found resources, including gold, proved that it was worth way more than its original price (1904, 90). Overall, Akifiev does not seem interested in the indigenous population, preferring to see the region as a battleground of influence between two modernizing empires and expressing imperialistic views in terms of establishing control over the land and population for their own good (Said 1994, 78).

Vanderlip, in contrast to Akifiev, experienced interactions and living side by side with multiple peoples – Chukchi, Koryak, and Tungus – as well as in villages of mixed Russian and native populations. He had various kinds of interactions with the natives, from trading to eating and even sleeping in their tents. He often used what Carl Thompson calls the “principle of attachment”, referring American readership either to American understanding of races, the Wild West or the Orient (2011, 68). For instance, he describes seeing the Koryak for the first time as follows:

These people were pure Koraks, a little under the medium size, in which they resemble the Japanese. I was led into the largest of the tents, and a wooden bowl containing boiled reindeer meat was placed before me. To the delight of my host, I went to my pack and produced some tea. I also displayed some sugar and black bread, which firmly established me in their good graces (Vanderlip 1903, 95).

Another example is when he refers to the Chukchi as “Apaches of Siberia” for resisting Russian advance for decades. Vanderlip also contrasts his experience with the Chukchi to the hardships of Harry de Windt (1856–1933), a prominent British traveler, who had previously traveled in the region and published his impressions in *Through the Gold-Fields of Alaska to Bering Straits* (1898), a travelogue, which Vanderlip had read before preparing for his own journeys. De Windt wanted to reach Paris from New York by land in 1896, but he and his companion had to stay at the Chukchi village of Oumwaidjik (Cape Chaplin) for 1,5 months until an American steamer spotted and rescued them. He describes living among what he calls “the filthiest people in creation” while suffering from their drunkenness and deception, cold, vermin, and later skin eruption and mental stress (De Windt 1898, 201, 268–270). Contrary to De Windt, Vanderlip defines these natives as “the finest race of savages that it has ever been my lot to meet” (Vanderlip 1903, 229).

He describes Koryaks most thoroughly, including their hunting skills, beliefs, marriage, and family life as well as their shamanistic beliefs. On the one hand, he seemed to have marked interest towards native life and underlined their talent in building and making unique tents, clothes or pole weapons as well as highlighting their positive traits such as kindness, hospitality, and, in case of Tungus, religious faith. The latter is demonstrated by describing the event when all the members of the converted Tungus family crossed themselves before an Orthodox icon in a tent as “a scene that would have put to shame not a few of the homes in America” (Vanderlip 1903, 108). But, at the same time, he also describes some of them being dirty, their tents cramped, and overall tends to present his interactions with the natives within the dichotomy of savage and civilization. When being caught in

a blizzard, Vanderlip tried to tell his native companions about elections, railways, and electricity, but he was deemed crazy. In another interaction, when a Tungus native cleaned a cup from his own stock with moss and gave it to him, inviting Vanderlip to drink tea in his tent, he writes:

Strange is the effect of environment; a year previous, no inducement could have made me use those cups after seeing them cleansed in that fashion. Was I, after all, a savage, and civilization but a thin veneer? I found myself at times looking at life from the standpoint of these people. I was thinking, dreaming, and talking in my sleep in my polyglot language. At times I would talk to myself in English, just to enjoy the sound of it. ... Action was my only salvation. Had I been compelled to stay in one place I should have feared for my reason. (Vanderlip 1903, 197)

Like Akifiev, Vanderlip was also prone to generalizations in his descriptions of native life. When briefly mentioning the Russian ban on selling alcohol to the natives, he notes how natives are keen on spirits and how they could sell even their own wives and daughters for another drink (1903, 10). Apart from that, he describes his native companions as if they were destined to be loyal to him throughout his journey, depicting the “noble savage” archetype:

This Tunguse, Fronyo, was game to the backbone. When it came time to start out once more on our crazy craft, he crossed himself devoutly, and followed me without a murmur. He said that if God willed that he should die on that raft he would die, that was all. If he did not follow me wherever I went he felt that he would lose caste with his people and be shamed forever. (Vanderlip 1903, 278)

What both Akifiev and Vanderlip agreed on is the process of trade with the natives, the fact that they do not recognize money and mostly do a barter exchange of pelts or animals for the articles they need at the moment, and that traders can make a huge profit over it. Vanderlip dedicates several pages describing the price of fur in dollars, Russian government policies regarding fur tribute and how sables, being the most expensive type of pelt, are hunted by the locals. His description adds to Vanderlip’s understanding of the valuable flora of the region and could also be appealing to American hunters and traders who wished to do business with the native population.

## Russian-American “Othering”

The final major topic in our analysis of the two travelogues is the representation of the Russians and Americans as the “other”. Akifiev’s thoughts were most likely influenced by the arrest that the Russian party of the expedition experienced at Nome. The arrest was based, according to his travelogue, on the alleged fear of the Americans that the Russians, being the majority among the prospectors and later having armed Cossacks on deck, might leave them on the Chukchi Peninsula or even capture the *Samoa* by force, throwing anyone resisting overboard. He openly condemns American actions, mocking how Russians were limited in their freedom while being arrested on a steamer in the “land of freedom”. Ten days later the Russians were allowed to leave for Russian waters on the *Samoa* escorted by an American warship to wait there for the arrival of the *Yakut* to pick them up.

Before getting to San Francisco, he briefly covered his trip throughout the United States, describing New York as a very noisy city with dirty streets and unwelcoming skyscrapers, compared to Washington, which he defined, due to its vegetation, wide streets, and lack of overcrowding, as one of the best cities that he had ever visited. Yet, at the same time, when comparing American culture with Russian and European, through the lens of which he at times looks at America, he clearly negates (according to David Spurr) the “high” culture for Americans (1993, 92). Akifiev visited Washington’s National Mall and museums, including the Smithsonian Institute, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and the National Museum of Natural History, concluding that while their buildings are exquisite, they lack exhibits of real cultural or scientific value, compared to European museums. He also visited New York and Washington’s crowded vaudeilles, describing their repertoire and mocking the American public’s cultural preferences from the position of superiority:

In almost all vaudeilles someone is thrown out of the window... Both big and small are thrown, and this causes frightening laughter on the part of spectators who applaud and scream like crazy. But they like it even more when a girl or a boy around 7 years old enters the scene and starts to dance the can-can while signing something of definite improper content. The audience became completely delighted when seeing the dancing mulatto family. The husband does the can-can immodestly with his wife, and their kids imitate them. “Wonderful” parenting! (Akifiev 1904, 16–17)

His American prospecting counterparts, while some of them looked likable at first, throughout the expedition turned out to be lazier than Russian workers, bringing drinks and guns with them to the shore, hunting and feasting before

doing actual prospecting (Akifiev 1904, 113). Another way that they are vilified is by showing their eagerness for quick profit and when doing unequal trade with the natives or selling them alcohol (even though Akifiev was trading with them as well). Only the maintenance crew of the *Samoa*, consisting of Americans, was praised by him for their honest and responsible work throughout the expedition, mentioning how during the last day before final good-byes in Plover Bay Americans and Russians in amicable spirit got drunk together, with Russians getting in a fight with one another (Akifiev 1904, 142).

He gives a less one-sided image of the country by writing about his conversations with the Russian immigrant family in San Francisco and with Vasili, one of the Russian workers on the *Samoa* who also worked for some time in the city before getting hired for the expedition. While the first, having established a well-to-do life, concludes that, in case of knowing the language, having the desire to work hard as well as proper connections, one could settle down successfully, Vasili gives a derogatory conclusion, stating that in America “people don’t believe in anything and pray to the devil” (Akifiev 1904, 41). Lack of true religion among Americans and in their missionary activity abroad, which is substituted by charity or agitation, is also among the things Akifiev mentions.

Akifiev got to visit Nome, and while praising the way Americans could quickly build a town and all the necessary infrastructure (the “American way”), the city itself is crowded with money-makers and criminals. When leaving Nome for the Russian waters after the arrest, he gives his final sentence on his experience in America:

Here we are back in Russia, even though there is nothing similar there to the European part of Russia. It is desolate around, but this dead silence, these bare mountains are still somehow dearer than the noises of Nome, noises of the mobs of vagabonds, crooks, con men, and quick profit seekers. (Akifiev 1904, 134–135)

Overall, he seems to have had negative prejudices about the country, which he not only confirmed, but reinforced, based on the sense of superiority of Russian/European over American.

Vanderlip, in contrast to Akifiev, dedicates less written space to the Russian people and their life. On the way to Ghijiga he hired a Russian companion Alexander Yankovski, writing about how he disregarded calling him in a Russian way by name and patronymic (synonymous to middle) name:

As this name was quite too complicated for everyday use, I had my choice of paring it down to “Alek,” “Mike,” or “Yank,” and while my loyalty to

Uncle Sam would naturally prompt me to use the last of these I forbore and Alek he became. He did not take kindly to it at first, for it is *de rigueur* to address a Russian by both his first and second names, the latter being his father's name with *vitch* attached. This was out of the question, however, and he succumbed to the inevitable. (Vanderlip 1903, 13)

However, while noting his bravery when "Alek" accompanied him on his first expeditions inland, Vanderlip completely stopped mentioning him later in the travelogue.

Among the few things he wrote about was his visit to Korsakovsk Post (present-day Korsakov) on Sakhalin as well as his Christmas celebrations in Ghijiga. Russians are depicted as being religious, hospitable, and creative, having rich food and good-quality houses. He described his feeling of being "embarrassed by their excessive generosity" when the Russian population of Ghijiga, after having realised that Vanderlip is celebrating Christmas (earlier than among Orthodox Christians), decided to join and organize special festivities (Vanderlip 1903, 179). Yet from time to time, he still distinguished between himself and the Russians in a rather derogatory way, especially when commenting on Russian bathing habits and excessive drinking. He seems to refer Russians to the Orient when eating in their company, "othering" through the lens of Europe (just like Akifiev did) when noticing how all the food gets served at once and nothing gets passed around the table except vodka. Concluding on the rich dinner that he had in the company of a high official in Korsakovsk Post on Sakhalin, he adds:

My use of the fork was not the only thing that distinguished me while in the country of the White Czar. Wherever I went, the Russians were highly amused at my use of the tooth-brush, which they consider a peculiarly feminine utensil. (Vanderlip 1903, 33–34)

To sum up, Vanderlip also looks at Russian life in a mixed way, and for both travelers it seemed hard to understand the other culture, which is hardly surprising given their lack of language skills to communicate.

There is a subject of Russian life that both travellers write about – the Russian exile camps on Sakhalin, which they both visited. They both describe the types of prisons, condition of prison barracks, interactions with prisoners or city dwellers who used to be criminals. And both authors condemn what they saw openly, and while Vanderlip writes of the exile system as "terrestrial Valhalla ... a sort of ante-mortem purgatory", Akifiev, after leaving the island, states in disgust:



Away, away as quickly as possible from this horrible island, where thousands of people are physically and morally decaying alive. (Akifiev 1904, 141)

## Conclusion

While there were multiple expeditions to the region on behalf of both countries, the travelogues analyzed in this paper were of particular interest among the corpus since other materials included either official reports or strictly scientific publications, whereas Akifiev and Vanderlip were not subjected to reporting to authorities or to scientific community requirements. Thus, they were able to express their views regarding a variety of subjects for the general audience at home, exerting considerable influence on the Russian-American perceptions of one another. Although both expeditions failed to realize their respective goals, these two travelogues tend to demonstrate the mutual interest that existed both in Russia and in the United States concerning the possibilities of development and the future of the Russian Far East at the turn of the twentieth century. By publishing these books, both authors earned considerable fame and respect and established themselves as experienced polar travellers. It seems that, overall, both authors wrote the narratives of their travels as representatives of their own cultures addressed to their home audience sharing the same culture and vision of the world. While Vanderlip was somewhat more interested in Russia and in the life of natives on its territory, Akifiev did not really change his initial – rather condescending – preconceptions towards America and Americans as well as natives living in his own country. And since travelogues can indirectly show the views of the public, it is possible that while Americans were open to increasing their presence in the Russian Far East, the Russians were becoming more aware and even more suspicious of their actions. On the larger scale, travels to the least explored territories of both modernizing countries formed a cultural interaction point between them at the turn of the twentieth century and brought additional nuances and more complexity to the process of the development of the images about one another.

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## **Roosevelt on Roosevelt: Nicholas Roosevelt's Views on Franklin Delano Roosevelt and His New Deal<sup>1</sup>**

Zoltán Peterecz

Franklin Delano Roosevelt has been the subject of hundreds of books and probably thousand of journal articles in the past eighty years. This is obvious since, aside from earlier government posts and his governorship in New York, he was the longest serving U.S. president and he was in the White House under unprecedented circumstances: he had to face economic depression and worldwide conflagration. During the New Deal and World War II years he reformed the federal government to a considerable degree and left a legacy palpable even today. His long shadow cast over predecessors is understandable in light of the overwhelming consensus that he managed both crises well and left his indelible mark on both the domestic political landscape and on the foreign policy practice of the United States. American historians regularly give him high grades when assessing the presidents so far.<sup>2</sup> Since he died in office in April 1945, he had no time to write memoirs, he had no diaries, so the public is left with his public papers and messages and the plethora of private letters he wrote to and received from others.

In light of the aforementioned facts, it is worth taking a closer look at a so far unstudied, mainly epistolary, relationship between two Roosevelts. Although Franklin D. Roosevelt is one of the most scrutinized presidents and, next to Theodore Roosevelt, the most famous and studied Roosevelt, Nicholas Roosevelt was also a well-known person in the first half of the twentieth century albeit a lightweight compared to the two presidents of the same family name.

Nicholas Roosevelt was born among favorable circumstances on June 12, 1893, in New York City. His father, James West Roosevelt (1858–1896), was first cousin and close friend of Theodore Roosevelt, was a well-known doctor, hospital director, and member of many medical societies. He married Laura Henrietta d'Oremieulx (1858–1945) in 1884. She was a descendant of Oliver Wolcott, Sr.,

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2 As an average result of such major surveys, Franklin Roosevelt has the distinguished 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> overall place. See, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical\\_rankings\\_of\\_presidents\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States#Scholar\\_survey\\_summary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_rankings_of_presidents_of_the_United_States#Scholar_survey_summary), accessed April 25, 2022.

(1726–1797) one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, while his son, Oliver Wolcott, Jr., (1760–1833) held the post of secretary of state under George Washington and John Adams, between 1795 and 1800. N. Roosevelt's maternal grandmother was Laura Wolcott Gibbs, whose father was Colonel George Gibbs of Rhode Island, and mother Laura Wolcott, daughter of Oliver Wolcott, Jr. The couple had five children, two of whom died while in childhood. The youngest child was Nicholas Roosevelt, who, at the age of three, found himself without a father who prematurely died of pneumonia. From then on he basically was brought up under the watch of Theodore Roosevelt, which experience left an indelible mark on his life and worldview. Nicholas inherited a liberal-conservative worldview and a lifelong commitment to the Republican Party.

Nicholas Roosevelt had a momentous and varied career. He served as an attaché at the American Embassy in Paris for two years during World War I, and as secretary to the American mission to Spain in 1916–1917. At the time of the armistice he served in the rank of captain, and joined the Coolidge Mission as such in the last days of 1918. After the Peace Conference, he worked as a foreign correspondent and editorial writer for the *New York Times* (1921–1923), then for the *New York Herald Tribune* as an editorial writer (1923–1942); in 1944 he went back to the *New York Times* as assistant editor. In 1930, President Herbert Hoover appointed Roosevelt to serve as Vice-Governor to the Philippines, but he was released from the post after a few months due to nation-wide protests by Filipinos, who were upset about Roosevelt's depiction of their country and people in one of his earlier books.<sup>3</sup> Shortly after he left his post in the Philippines he was named minister to Hungary. This appointment meant the pinnacle of his career, and he stayed in Budapest two and a half years (1930–1933) during the worst years of the Great Depression, and he only resigned because his distant relative, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a Democrat, had won the presidency. After the diplomatic stint in Europe, Nicholas Roosevelt returned to journalism as an editorial writer for the *New York Herald Tribune*. Roosevelt was a prolific author outside the newspaper world, and wrote twelve books altogether including his autobiography, *A Front Row Seat*, which was published in 1953. He served in the Office of War Information during World War II, where he was responsible for propaganda activities. After the war he soon resigned from journalism and resided at Big Sur, California, with his wife, Tirzah Maris Gates (1906–1961), but the couple had no children. In his later life he devoted much time and

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3 Nicholas Roosevelt, *The Philippines, A Treasure and a Problem*, New York: J. H. Sears & Company, Inc., 1926.

energy to cooking and conservationism on which topics he published books. Nicholas Roosevelt died in 1982.<sup>4</sup>

Nicholas Roosevelt all his life felt that he was important, or wished himself to be seen in such a role. A smart and educated man, he was utterly self-confident in his judgment, seldom thought that his opinions were not the right ones, and his many written texts carried the voice of omniscience. This type of egotism often broke through his personal letters and diaries as well. His relationship with Franklin Roosevelt can be said to be friendly, what can be expected between distant relatives, though admittedly Nicholas Roosevelt's "contacts with F.D.R. had never been close."<sup>5</sup> To be sure, both of them enjoyed being in the limelight—but Franklin got a much bigger share of it.

Being a life-long Republican, Nicholas Roosevelt often criticized FDR's New Deal and its related big government policies, but the relationship and the recognition of FDR was far more complex. Not only were they relatives, however distant, but N. Roosevelt resigned his ministerial post in Hungary, which FDR accepted, and for a short time FDR was Nicholas Roosevelt's boss, quite detached, while the latter served in the Office of War Information in the middle of World War II. There are two major ways to look at how N. Roosevelt looked at and evaluated FDR's work and personality. One is the various printed texts that he devoted to Franklin Roosevelt's presidential years, especially what regarded the New Deal. The other is the private sphere—diary entries and personal letters where he expressed opinion concerning the work of the 32<sup>nd</sup> president. As it will be presented, there was ample criticism, mainly for the domestic policy of FDR, while in the foreign policy domain, N. Roosevelt found more to applaud.

The first known letters are from the time when Franklin Roosevelt was the Democratic governor of New York State. He assumed office on January 1, 1929, which seemed for the ambitious politician as a suitable springboard to a possible presidency sometime later.<sup>6</sup> The two met in the summer of 1928, and Nicholas Roosevelt was quite enthusiastic about Franklin. "What a fine fellow he is, so intelligent and cultivated, and with so much character."<sup>7</sup> Therefore, FDR's famous

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4 For the bibliographical data, see, Nicholas Roosevelt, *A Front Row Seat*, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953, 3–28; "Nicholas Roosevelt is Dead; Writer and Diplomat Was 88," *New York Times*, February 17, 1982.

5 Nicholas Roosevelt, *A Front Row Seat*, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953, 222.

6 On FDR's governorship, see, Jean Edward Smith, *FDR*, New York. Random House, 2007, 223–246. Perhaps somewhat unfortunately but understandably, FDR's tenure at Albany has never become the focus of historians.

7 N. Roosevelt to Laura Henrietta d'Oremieulx, August 31, 1928, Box 12, Roosevelt, Franklin D., Nicholas Roosevelt Papers, Special Collections Research Center at Syracuse University Libraries, USA.

personal magic must have worked on the younger Roosevelt. But there was more. Despite the fact that Nicholas Roosevelt was a proud Republican, he actually voted for FDR in the race for the governorship. He believed that “You have the greatest opportunity of any Democrat in years to do something for your party – which doesn’t interest me – and for your country – which does interest me. If you will speak out vigorously and fairly, without truckling to the peanut politicians, you will go far.”<sup>8</sup> The central point of comparison for Nicholas Roosevelt was Theodore Roosevelt, of course. No matter how much he idolized that cousin in his younger years, however, by now he had understood that more tact was needed in order to win political offices than the famous Teddy had displayed. That is why he warned FDR in the abovementioned style. FDR appreciated Nicholas Roosevelt’s letter and the tone of it, and in response he expressed his hope “that you will keep on writing me in just the same way whenever you want to.”<sup>9</sup> This was an invitation that a man with an oversized ego could not refuse, and time and again he did write to FDR on various issues. Sometimes it was family history, but more often than not it pertained to American domestic and foreign policy. They also changed ideas on conservation policy, another lifelong passion of Nicholas Roosevelt that he inherited to a large degree from TR.

In 1930, for instance, the letters touched upon the ongoing London Naval Conference and the question of a possible future presidency for FDR. While regarding the Conference FDR was more optimistic than dissatisfied, as for a future bid for the presidency, he was not yet committed. Nicholas Roosevelt warned him not to let himself be talked into running in 1932 and advised that he talk to him, Nicholas Roosevelt, first and decide only then.<sup>10</sup> It is a rather strange proposition and one wonders what NR thought as to what advice he could give to FDR on whether the latter should or should not run two years hence. In any way, as a seasoned politician would do, FDR avoided answering the question straight. Instead, he complained that 1932 had “become a positive nightmare to me and the whole family,” and he wanted to focus on his current job.<sup>11</sup> It is true that Democrats in general and FDR in particular thought only in 1936 would he have a chance. However, already at this time—the first months of the recession-soon-to-become-depression—it was clear that there indeed was a chance of taking the White House back from the Republicans. But it was a preposterous notion that

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8 N. Roosevelt to F. D. Roosevelt, January 15, 1929, Box 11, Roosevelt, Franklin D., Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.

9 FDR to N. Roosevelt, January 28, 1929, Ibid.

10 N. Roosevelt to FDR, April 30, 1930, Box 11, Folder, Roosevelt, Nicholas, 1913–1920, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY, USA.

11 FDR to N. Roosevelt, May 19, 1930, Ibid.



Nicholas Roosevelt ought to explain the dangers of running for the highest office, and, even more absurd, dissuade FDR from it.

In the fall of 1930 Nicholas Roosevelt was appointed to be minister to Hungary. This goes to show that he was a somewhat important figure in Republican circles. He would have been Vice-Governor General to the Philippines—with the help of Henry L. Stimson, former Governor General there and the new Secretary of State under Herbert Hoover—but the plan fell through when there was protests against N. Roosevelt in the Philippines. He had written a book a few years earlier on the archipelago, *The Philippines. A Treasure and A Problem*, 1926. The book's sentiment was condescending toward the Filipino people, and argued that the American system was not the best for these people since they were not ready for such a governmental system for various reasons, especially because they are not familiar with democracy. The book proved to be an affront to many Filipinos, and in the wake of his appointment to the vice-governorship, such a fervent wave of protests unfolded that Hoover decided against sending him. But he was soon appointed to represent the United States in Hungary. During these years the letters between the two Roosevelts came to a virtual halt.

The only time they exchanged letters was in early 1932—when the shadows of the presidential campaign were looming ever larger. Although FDR played down his possible nomination by the Democratic Party and showed disinterestedness in getting it, and, what is more, described the presidency as “the most difficult and thoroughly annoying job in the world,” his ambition was clearly to become president.<sup>12</sup> Concrete proof that family ties, however different, played a positive role between the two Roosevelts, despite their party affiliation, is that FDR asked Nicholas Roosevelt to take some part in the campaign “if, by some lucky or unlucky chance, I should be the Democratic nominee.”<sup>13</sup>

Of course, Franklin Roosevelt not only secured his party's nomination but went on to win the presidency against an embattled Hoover in a landslide victory on November 8, 1932. N. Roosevelt obviously congratulated the president-elect the very next day (because he was stationed in Budapest, he could not do this on the day of the election). The letter he sent was correct from all angles: “I am proud of you for the sake of the family, and that because of this as well as because of my personal feelings toward you I wish you the best of good luck and success in the trying years that are ahead of you.” Then he added that he felt this way “despite the fact that I am a Republican and a Hoover man,” he would “doubtless continue to

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12 F. D. Roosevelt to N. Roosevelt, January 25, 1932, Box 69, Folder, Roosevelt, Nicholas, 1913–1920, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

13 Ibid.

differ with you in many things as I have done in the past.”<sup>14</sup> He also emphasized that he would not seek political favors for anyone or be a vehicle for any such demands. As was the tradition, Nicholas Roosevelt turned in his resignation to the new president who accepted it. This was only natural, since they represented opposing political parties, and there was a long line of people waiting to be paid for their political and financial contributions in the campaign.

When Nicholas Roosevelt had returned to the US, he paid a visit to the White House. This was not self-evident, since Hungary was not an important post for the United States. This went to show the mutual appreciation to each other and perhaps also the will to feel importance on part of Nicholas Roosevelt. In any case he visited, and in typical FDR fashion, he was to come with bathing suit and have a swim at the presidential pool. This was clearly not standard procedure for a returning minister to report on his experiences, but after all, these two men had had a positive relationship. N. Roosevelt chronicled the meeting in a draft that found its way into his memoirs twenty years later. It is not recorded what the two were talking about, but probably it was more small talk than substantial political conversation, though FDR wrote to N. Roosevelt’s mother that Nicholas “did a splendid piece of work in Budapest and I am proud of him.”<sup>15</sup> It is the impression that Franklin had on Nicholas Roosevelt that is worth repeating here: “Vigorous, charming, plausible, he was full of the fun of life... I watched his handsome head over the surface of the pool and listened to his genial comments... Here was buoyancy of spirit, magnetism, and restlessness like T.R.’s. But where T.R.’s knowledge as deep and his comments trenchant this altogether charming swimmer seemed to touch only the surface.”<sup>16</sup> This strengthens the image that has been so often tied to FDR: youthful, booming with energy, almost nonchalant, all this despite, or on account of, his being forced to live out his life in a wheelchair.

With Franklin Roosevelt assuming the executive office in March 1933, and launching the first phase of his New Deal to tackle the economic depression, Nicholas Roosevelt was applauding. He was “enormously pleased with the way he has taken hold of things and that I think he has got off to a splendid start.”<sup>17</sup> Simply, after the dispassionate and languid response on Hoover’s part, now it was “a relief to see

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14 N. Roosevelt to F. D. Roosevelt, November 9, 1932, Box 11, Roosevelt, Franklin D., Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.

15 F. D. Roosevelt to Laura Henrietta d’Oremieulx, June 25, 1933, Box 11, Roosevelt, Franklin D., Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.

16 Nicholas Roosevelt, *A Front Row Seat*, 221.

17 N. Roosevelt to Louis Howe, March 22, 1933. Howe passed the letter on to FDR on April 22, 1933, Folder, Roosevelt, Nicholas, Franklin D. Roosevelt’s, Papers as President, Official Files, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

somebody at the helm again who is not afraid to be a leader.”<sup>18</sup> To his own mother he put it this way: “One feels that he has what poor Hoover lacked, and what the country so much needs—leadership. It looks as if he would do much to restore our confidence again.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the historical analysis confirms that vigorous action was needed in order to provide some help for the structure of the American economy and even more importantly, for the American people in dire straits.

Basically, at least during the first year of FDR’s first term, Nicholas Roosevelt can be said to have been a zealous supporter of the president’s policies. For example, he wrote a personal letter on October 3, 1933, in which he congratulated the president on his address to the American Legion in Chicago.<sup>20</sup> But even in the late spring of 1935, he warmly congratulated the president on a historic veto message.<sup>21</sup> The veto referred to the Patman “Greenback” Bonus Bill, which was the movement for cash payment of the World War adjusted service certificates, which were not due before 1945. FDR vetoed it on May 22, 1935, before the Joint Session of Congress. It was the first time a president had delivered a veto message in person to Congress, and it was also broadcast on radio—that is how N. Roosevelt was able to follow it. Although in both chambers there was a majority to override the presidential veto, in the Senate it did not reach the required two-thirds margin. The veto message was seen as a signal of a resurgent FDR, who had again, after some lackluster efforts in the past six months, found his energy as president.<sup>22</sup> Five days after the veto decision, the Supreme Court in the *Schechter* case invalidated the National Industry Recovery Act (NIRA), the backbone of the New Deal. In Arthur Schlesinger’s judgment, with these two events, “Franklin Roosevelt returned to the game of leadership.”<sup>23</sup>

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18 Ibid.

19 N. Roosevelt to Mrs. J. West Roosevelt, March 10, 1933, Folder: Roosevelt, Mrs. J. West (mother) 1930–1933, Box 12, Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.

20 Folder: Roosevelt, Nicholas, Franklin D. Roosevelt’s, Papers as President, Official Files, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. In fact, N. Roosevelt visited FDR on October 29, and December 12, 1934, on both occasions for a fifteen-minute talk—the regular allocated time for visitors. (<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/daybyday/daylog/october-29th-1934/> and <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/daybyday/daylog/december-12th-1934/>, accessed April 26, 2022.

21 N. Roosevelt to FDR, May 22, 1935, Folder, Roosevelt, Nicholas, Papers as President, President’s Personal Files, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

22 See, Turner Catledge, “War Veterans and Bonus Politics,” *Current History* (1916–1940), Vol. 42, no. 4 (July 1935), 360; Kenneth S. Davis, *FDR: The New Deal Years, 1933–1937. A History*, New York: Random House, 1979, 513–514; for the text of the veto message, see, Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 4, New York: Random House, 1938, 182–193.

23 Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Politics of Upheaval*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960, 290. Indeed, six weeks later Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act, the Wagner Act, which passed Supreme Court scrutiny.

In sharp contrast to the First Hundred Days in 1933, with the later phases of the New Deal, however, Nicholas Roosevelt started to sour on his distant cousin and his policies.<sup>24</sup> He never shied away from declaring that there was a difference of worldview between the two of them. This was wholly expected. Nicholas Roosevelt was a lifelong Republican, brought up in the TR household where he inhaled the basics of a reform-minded conservative take on politics. Also, while Nicholas Roosevelt belonged to the Oyster Bay branch of the family on Long Island, FDR was the heir to the Hyde Park branch. This latter point, however, did not create necessary friction between these two Roosevelts; but FDR's policies did. The *New York Herald Tribune*, for which NR worked, continually attacked the New Deal as a socialist undertaking and the mocking of American traditions.

The allocated space does not allow to make a detailed analysis of Nicholas Roosevelt's articles concerning FDR and his New Deal, but a few examples will suffice to show the antagonism between what the president represented—both as a politician and his policies—and what Nicholas Roosevelt thought would be more beneficial for the United States.

The first serious salvo was fired in the fall of 1934 on the columns of the *New York Herald Tribune*. This daily was mainly a conservative, Republican-leaning paper.<sup>25</sup> In early September NR wanted to believe that Americans were losing their belief in the president because they had realized that FDR did not “know his own mind and that he prefers to listen to inferior and inexperienced advisers rather than to sound and seasoned men.”<sup>26</sup> This was more wishful thinking on the part of N. Roosevelt than stable analysis but he was as usual convinced of his own correctness. A month later he returned to the New Deal, and somewhat reluctantly admitted that the policy so far had worked. He said it was a novelty, it was not partisan, it contained promise and hope, and because of “the great personal charm and engaging optimism of Franklin D. Roosevelt the program was virtually irresistible.”<sup>27</sup> Frustrating perhaps as it may have been personally for Nicholas Roosevelt, he confessed that the president was “of the most astute politicians in our history.”<sup>28</sup> Another three weeks later an additional article of criticism appeared. This time N. Roosevelt took issues with the many broken promises of the Democratic president,

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24 For his retrospective and mainly not too positive characterization of FDR and the New Deal, see, Nicholas Roosevelt, *A Front Row Seat*, 222–234.

25 On the newspaper's history, see, Richard Kluger, *The Paper: the Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986. On the period when N. Roosevelt worked there, see, *Ibid.*, 239–406.

26 Nicholas Roosevelt, “The Real Roosevelt,” *New York Herald Tribune*, September 2, 1934.

27 Nicholas Roosevelt, “Our Tangled Politics,” *New York Herald Tribune*, October 7, 1934.

28 *Ibid.*

and that the propaganda machinery was churning out statements that were not factual. "Like leader, like followers," he concluded.<sup>29</sup>

In a speech he gave at the University of Virginia in 1935, he one more time found a platform to criticize the New Deal. In the discussion titled "The Constitution and the New Deal," Nicholas Roosevelt struck a grave and pessimistic tone. Although he admitted that the overall situation had improved since Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the presidency, he saw danger in the highly centralized fashion of the New Deal. His main condemnation was that the economy showed signs of centralized planning similar to socialist undertaking in the Soviet Union thereby stifling free competition and killing off a building block of the American system. "A planned economy," he argued, "implies changing the American system of government. It means substituting an economic dictatorship for a political democracy. I, for one, regard this as a threat to the very foundations of our civilization."<sup>30</sup>

After a longer hiatus he returned even more vehemently to attacking the New Deal. Maybe it had to do something with the fact that it was an election year, but he went as far as calling FDR's policies under the New Deal a "miscellaneous assortment of half-baked, semi-socialistic, semi-Fascist theories which are lumped together."<sup>31</sup> He regularly condemned the New Deal as planned economy, therefore, it was comparable to the Soviet Union's method, which meant for him it was dictatorial. In other words it was a socialist undertaking and by definition un-American. Yet in another piece he argued that the New Deal had killed off many of the basic American traits, people had become too dependent on government, and the Republicans must turn things around.<sup>32</sup> As the election of 1936 was looming ever larger, so intensified the attacks. Nicholas Roosevelt portrayed an apocalyptic future if FDR was re-elected as president. He warned his readers that the "American system is in danger. Do we wish to preserve it, or shall we accept the New Deal substitute which is perilously much like the autocracies in Europe?"<sup>33</sup> All the way until the November elections, he expounded his case against the president. In the heat of the campaign he contributed a series of articles titled "The Roosevelt Record." Every day he wrote an indictment of government policy and the president's character as leader. He accused him of misleading and outright

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29 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Truth and the New Deal," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 28, 1934.

30 Nicholas Roosevelt, *Two Amazing Years*, Washington, D.C.: American Liberty League, 1935, 14.

31 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Attempt Noted to Lift New Deal From Shoulder of the President," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 26, 1936.

32 Nicholas Roosevelt, "'Cleaning Up' After New Deal Held Chief Republican Problem," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 7, 1936.

33 Nicholas Roosevelt, "America Held Facing a Choice Of Federal or Central Power," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 28, 1936.

lying to the American people, preferring the spoils system to the merit system, breaking a score of campaign promises from budget deficit to unemployment figures, making steps toward so strong a centralization of executive power that it was bordering on dictatorship, and keeping people on dole instead and thereby killing individualism.<sup>34</sup>

Nicholas Roosevelt's criticism of FDR's New Deal perhaps reached its apogee with an article he wrote for *The American Mercury*, a widely recognized intellectual monthly magazine. *The American Mercury* was founded by Henry L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan in 1924, and could boast of "essentially a skeptical, anti-Puritan, urban, and sophisticated editorial viewpoint."<sup>35</sup> The historian of the first decade of the magazine stated that it was "truly formidable" and "perhaps no other magazine of comparable circulation has so strongly caught the national imagination."<sup>36</sup> Frederick Lewis Allen of *Harper's* in his best-selling book about the 1920s said of Mencken's project that "its contents were explosive... it poured critical acid upon sentimentality and evasion and academic pomposity in books and in life; it lambasted Babbitts, Rotarians, Methodists, and reformers, ridiculed both the religion of Coolidge Prosperity and what Mencken called the 'bilge of idealism,' and looked upon the American scene in general with raucous and profane laughter."<sup>37</sup> Another historian of journalism called the magazine "the voice of the skepticism and iconoclasm," an outlet that proved to be "an opinionated and caustic commentator" of the twenties and beyond.<sup>38</sup> It had a modest circulation of almost 80,000 before the Great Depression. In October 1936, when a new management decided to cut the price in half, from 50 to 25 cents, the sagging circulation climbed back to the pre-depression years.<sup>39</sup> The years of frustration with what he saw as a blatant rape of the American system in the shape of the New Deal had been bubbling up in N. Roosevelt since at least 1934. Now, the magazine proved to be the perfect place for him to vent this frustration and he did not hold back.

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34 These articles appeared between October 13 and 26, 1936, *New York Herald Tribune*.

35 M. K. Singleton, *H. L. Mencken and the American Mercury Adventure*, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1962, 242.

36 *Ibid.*, 246.

37 Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday. An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties*, [1931] New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957, 231.

38 Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*, Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1956, 377.

39 On the history of the magazine and its circulation, see, Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*, 377–381; Singleton, *H. L. Mencken and the American Mercury Adventure*; Hefner, Brooks E. and Edward Timke (eds.), *Circulating American Magazines*, James Madison University, <http://sites.jmu.edu/circulating/>, accessed April 28, 2022.



Actually, two articles of Nicholas Roosevelt's dealing with the president appeared that year in *The American Mercury*. In the June issue, when he wrote on account of the upcoming Republican National Convention where the party's nomination would take place, he criticized mainly FDR. N. Roosevelt described the president as someone who promised everything and to everybody in order to ensure his popularity although he knew very well that he would not deliver on those promises: "His system is simple—to give supporters and enemies alike the impression that he agrees with them 100 per cent," he wrote.<sup>40</sup> In his view, FDR was "without doubt the glibbest promiser we have ever had," and he believed there was a great demand "for a man of courage and honesty, who will say what he thinks, do what he says, and never hesitate to take a course which threatens unpopularity when to do so is obviously necessary for the nation's welfare."<sup>41</sup> Probably this was the article that Walter Lippmann commented on in a letter to Nicholas Roosevelt. Although the letter was dated May 22, 1936, and the article came out in the June issue, there was no other article by Nicholas Roosevelt in *The American Mercury* earlier that year. In all likelihood the issue came out a few days earlier or the letter was misdated by a month. In any event, Lippmann agreed with what he had read. He had also become disappointed in FDR and, as he wrote to Nicholas Roosevelt, "I am afraid I am going to have to resign my job of defending Franklin from his fifth cousin. I can stand no more of him."<sup>42</sup>

In the November issue of *The American Mercury* Nicholas Roosevelt further attacked FDR, which was no surprise if one takes into consideration that it was the month of the presidential election. This article is worth quoting in more detail since it was a more scathing criticism on both the president running for reelection and his New Deal program. Already in the beginning he set the tone: "This chameleon-like quality has made it possible for Franklin Delano Roosevelt to pose as a great Liberal at the same time that he is fostering reactionary activities. Because he does not think things through, he is unaware that the New Deal is basically paternalistic. No doubt he sincerely believes he is a plumed Progressive.

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40 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Wanted: An Honest President," *The American Mercury*, Vol. 38, no. 150 (June 1936), 196.

41 Ibid., 197, 200.

42 Walter Lippmann to Nicholas Roosevelt, May 22, 1936, Folder 1832: Roosevelt, Nicholas (Mr. & Mrs.) (1931–1944), Box 99, Series III, Correspondence, Selected Correspondence, 1931–1974, Walter Lippmann Papers, MS 326 HM 257, Yale Archives. In fact, Lippmann had chosen to change parties and voted for the Republican nominee, Alf Landon, not because he had great hope in him, but because this was his protest vote against FDR. Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1980, 317–319.

Yet he is, in fact, the conscious leader of world reaction in America today.”<sup>43</sup> The president had extraordinary “sensitiveness to currents of popular thought,” but his mind was “mercurial rather than profound,” and this was coupled with “supreme self-confidence” in a leader who enjoyed “power for its own sake.”<sup>44</sup> The major point of attack on the New Deal was that the executive had taken over powers that traditionally did not belong to it and in the process corrupted American democracy: “He has made a rubber stamp of Congress and has established government by decree. All these things tend towards paternalism—and away from the American system.”<sup>45</sup> Nicholas Roosevelt thought of himself as a traditional Republican progressive—in the Theodore Roosevelt mold. Accordingly, he abhorred what the first four years of the New Deal brought about. He could not stomach the highly centralized government that curbed or took away many states’ rights and, as he judged it, robbed millions of Americans of their rugged individualist streak. After all, he was a Hoover man. A benevolent and paternalistic government with an affable president who deluded people was outright dangerous in his view. In the final analysis, “Mr. Roosevelt has all the ‘front’ of the perfect Liberal. This makes him all the more useful to those reactionaries who, in the name of a New Deal and a More Abundant Life, are following in America the course that has destroyed democratic Liberalism in Europe. Mr. Roosevelt has identified himself with the reactionaries. This is why true progressives now oppose him.”<sup>46</sup>

Obviously, the voters had the final say in how they valued the president’s work and the results of the New Deal in the past four years. The 1936 presidential elections was an unprecedented victory for Franklin Roosevelt and his policies: he garnered more than 60% of the popular vote, while in the Electoral College he had 523 votes as opposed to Republican Alf Landon’s 8. Such a landslide victory proved that the people at large were satisfied with the efforts of the federal government working for them, and Nicholas Roosevelt represented only a small elite who on various grounds—mainly intellectual and ideological—opposed the president’s policies.

Naturally, FDR’s “court-packing” plan the next year alienated Nicholas Roosevelt further from the president’s policies. After his landslide victory Franklin Roosevelt announced his plan to increase the number of judges sitting on the Supreme Court to 15 with compulsory retirement at 70 years of age. The move

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43 Nicholas Roosevelt, “Franklin Delano Roosevelt,” *The American Mercury*, Vol. 39, no. 155 (November 1936), 329.

44 *Ibid.*, 329, 330.

45 *Ibid.*, 330.

46 *Ibid.*, 331.



was unmistakably an effort to ensure that the composition of the highest court would be changed until it became more liberal, and the practice of the past two years would be curbed during which the Supreme Court had struck down many major New Deal pieces of legislation. There was a widespread outcry against what many interpreted as changing the Constitution in order to suit the executive's wishes. Nicholas Roosevelt joined this chorus. Already in January, when the first hint came from the White House that there was a plan afoot to overhaul the Supreme Court, N. Roosevelt charged right away that such a scheme was against the Constitution and the political traditions of the country.<sup>47</sup> He one more time attacked FDR's character in cooking up this plan to alter the Supreme Court. He wrote that "indirection, lack of candor, readiness to ignore promises, and a lighthearted unwillingness to consider the far-reaching effects of his proposals are characteristics of Mr. Roosevelt's mental processes."<sup>48</sup> Reforms were one thing, and, in the Theodore Roosevelt fashion, Nicholas Roosevelt believed in them. Actually, in many a piece he scourged the Republican Party to be more up to date and find certain renewal if it wanted to fight FDR and the Democratic Party in a successful way. But reforms and changing the Constitution by decree were two very different things for Nicholas Roosevelt. No wonder he interpreted this latest move on part of the reelected president as harmful and warned his readers that "democracy is in grave danger in this country."<sup>49</sup> In the end, while in July the Senate struck down the "court-packing" bill, the Supreme Court started to judge the various New Deal bills in a more liberal way, and Roosevelt did not need to resort to extraordinary measures, but he still clearly suffered a political setback. But victory was his in the long run: during his long presidency the composition of the federal Supreme Court became overwhelmingly liberal, which proved to be a major ingredient in establishing the welfare state in the United States.<sup>50</sup>

It must also quickly be mentioned that when it came to foreign policy, Nicholas Roosevelt held his distant cousin in a much higher esteem. Not everything was according to his taste though in this field either. He criticized FDR's Russian policy,

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47 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Roosevelt 'Hint' to Court Held Misconception of Its Function," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 17, 1937.

48 Nicholas Roosevelt, "'Smartness' of Court Plan Held Typical of Roosevelt Character," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 14, 1937.

49 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Roosevelt May Be No Dictator, But What of His Successors?" *New York Herald Tribune*, February 21, 1937.

50 In more detail about the "court-packing" plan, see, Leonard Baker, *Back to Back. The Duel between FDR and the Supreme Court*, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1967; William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Supreme Court Reborn. The Constitutional Revolution in the Age of Roosevelt*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 82–162.

for example, especially the recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933.<sup>51</sup> But when it came to preparedness, he was in accordance with the president. Nicholas Roosevelt himself preached the logic of stronger naval force needed to deter any future threat, which was similar to what, albeit cautiously, Franklin Roosevelt did in the second half of the 1930s.<sup>52</sup> In the wake of FDR's South American trip, then, Nicholas Roosevelt wrote in a different spirit than earlier that year. The presidential trip lasted between November 17 and December 15, 1937, and it was to pick up and strengthen the "good neighbor policy" with Latin American countries, which he declared in his inauguration address in March 1933. Also, the conference in Buenos Aires was meant to build a quasi coalition for future exigencies in light of the worsening situation in Europe and to establish the bases of a hemispheric defense mechanism. Parallel to the conference in Argentina, the Anti-Comintern Pact was signed between Germany and Japan, which added further impetus to the idea of collective security in the Americas.<sup>53</sup> Nicholas Roosevelt, for his part, praised this step on FDR's part. He found a lot to commend in the president's realism in trying to be prepared for any situation and building up the navy.<sup>54</sup> Sometime earlier he found it important to write a personal letter to the president as well. In this he pointed out that "Even those of us who have been so much out of sympathy with the New Deal methods cannot but recognize that your Latin American policy has been, in the main, excellent."<sup>55</sup> To be fair, then, Nicholas Roosevelt paid dues if he felt they were merited.

And in the end World War II did break out, so the United States and the president had to react to the dangerous international situation. Nicholas Roosevelt one more time held FDR responsible if the latter did not do what he expected of him. But at the outbreak of hostilities he had praise again. He appreciated FDR's fireside chat of September 3, 1939, in which the president declared US neutrality but stressed that individual conscience demanded taking sides, however cautiously. He therefore established America's role in the first phase of the war.<sup>56</sup> But afterwards, in a score of articles up until Pearl Harbor, Nicholas Roosevelt mostly criticized

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51 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Unrecognizing Russia," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 7, 1935.

52 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Show of Naval Might Is Held Essential to Guard Commerce," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 16, 1936.

53 On FDR's Good Neighbor policy and his trip to South America, see, Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt. A Rendezvous with History*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990, 209–220.

54 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Roosevelt Navy Policy Enables U.S. to Dictate Its Own Neutrality," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 5, 1936.

55 N. Roosevelt to FDR, December 6, 1936, Folder, Roosevelt, Nicholas, in Franklin D. Roosevelt's, *Papers as President, President's Personal Files*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

56 Nicholas Roosevelt, "The President's Appeal," *New York Herald Tribune*, September 5, 1939.

the president. He attacked the president's personal diplomacy, which prevented everybody else from knowing the whole picture, and which practice he did not find democratic.<sup>57</sup> But this became worse, since FDR seemed to zigzag and showed "his inability to follow a simple course consistently." Nicholas Roosevelt considered this "one of his greatest failures in domestic as in foreign affairs."<sup>58</sup> When, however, the question of building up the Navy and modernizing the Army came to the foreground, Nicholas Roosevelt once more found himself praising FDR.<sup>59</sup> Still, the general tone of his articles remained critical, mainly on account of the preparedness program, which he judged chaotic.<sup>60</sup>

With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the United States became a belligerent power in World War II. From then on the nation was one in the herculean effort to devote all its energy to defeat the enemy. One aspect of how to fight the war in a country that had been traditionally isolationist was the careful use of propaganda. In order to coordinate this effort, by executive order in June 1942, Roosevelt called into being a large-scale propaganda effort for the remainder of the war. The Office of War Information was the mainly civilian propaganda arm of the US government during the next three years.<sup>61</sup> The OWI was a motley crew of thousands of people: there were journalists, printers, advertisers, playwrights, film makers, actors, radio broadcasters, managers, and academics—most of them liberal in outlook. Nicholas Roosevelt chose to work for this organization out of patriotic duty. In fact, soon after the United States had become a party to the war, he offered his services to the president, who appreciated the initiative.<sup>62</sup> Nicholas Roosevelt was appointed to a post of deputy director of the News Bureau concerning military information in December 1942.

In his memoirs, Nicholas Roosevelt, a few years after the death of FDR, still judged the New Deal in a negative light. He did not question the necessity of quick and bold steps on part of the president; but his main contention was that the "New Deal

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57 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Personal Diplomacy," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 31, 1940.

58 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Bungled Diplomacy," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 3, 1940.

59 Nicholas Roosevelt, "War Marches Near," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 14, 1940.

60 Nicholas Roosevelt, "Our Galloping President," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 20, 1940.

61 Some of the most important books and articles concerning the OWI during World War II are Lester G. Hawkins and George S. Pettee, "OWI: Organization and Problems," *Public Opinion Quarterly* vol. 7 no. 1 (Spring 1943): 15–33; Sydney Weinberg, "What to Tell America: The Writer's Quarrel in the OWI," *Journal of American History* vol. 55 no. 1 (June 1968): 73–89; Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942–1945*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978; Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996.

62 F. D. Roosevelt to N. Roosevelt, January 12, 1942, Box 11, Roosevelt, Franklin D., Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.

technique was basically changing the American political system by greatly enhancing the power of the executive branch.”<sup>63</sup> He called his distant cousin “the greatest political snake charmer in American history,” who was “the ablest politician who ever occupied the White House.”<sup>64</sup> According to Nicholas Roosevelt, FDR’s genius “lay in mastery of the art of politics and in ability to hold the love of people.”<sup>65</sup> He wrote his memoirs as the New Deal order started to come to its peak in the early 1950s, and the welfare state was made palpable reality for tens of millions of Americans and a steady middle class came into being. But Nicholas Roosevelt stubbornly refused to admit its advantages. He looked back longingly to a less centralized version of American government, and almost a hundred years later the majority of Republican voters were singing the same tune as Nicholas Roosevelt did when he was attacking Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal.

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63 Nicholas Roosevelt, *A Front Row Seat*, 224.

64 Nicholas Roosevelt, *A Front Row Seat*, 227.

65 Nicholas Roosevelt, *A Front Row Seat*, 231.

# The Discourse of the Western Myth and the American Pastoral in *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy

Kitti Somogyi

## Introduction

Writing about nature combines the literary elements of the pastoral tradition with the creation and preservation of the western myth, which are integral components of American fiction. Cormac McCarthy aims to redefine the conceptual framework of the western genre—according to the paradigm shift established by New Western historians in the 1980s and concepts of Postwestern theory—by questioning the ideologies (the frontier, Manifest destiny, self-reliance, the American dream, etc.) that upheld false consciousness about the relations of Romanticized nature and the heroism of the cowboy image. The American pastoral—a domesticated and practical, yet transcendental form of nature writing, where the protagonist encounters the hardships of the natural environment and finds divine revelations there—is criticized and demythicized as the false ideas about the imaginary southwestern landscape are deconstructed and replaced by the wildness of the terrain.

The borderland between the USA and Mexico is not a culturally, socially, politically, and naturally homogenous territory but a “middle landscape” (qtd. in Garrard 49)—as Leo Marx, the author of *The Machine in the Garden*, calls it—at the merger of civilization and wilderness that allows an ecological approach. In *All the Pretty Horses* (1993), the identity of the characters is shaped by the inappropriate and outdated nineteenth-century masculine cowboy model in the industrialized post-Second World War setting, and the collision of the postwestern approaches toward the environment (anthropocentric and ecocentric) creates serious moral dilemmas. The heritage of the late westward movement is the postfrontier that takes place on and over the borderland and affects social, economic, legal institutions, infrastructure, and cultural customs in the area. Various structures of Americanness are dismantled as McCarthy deconstructs western symbolism, the pastoral idyll, and the journey across the liminal space of the borderland, moreover, the perception of and the rhetoric about the environment are reshaped.

*Pretty Horses* depicts an idyllic image of the American Southwest, with cowboys and horses living peacefully in the natural environment as imagined in the nineteenth century, based on the literary pastoral tradition:

They ate lunch under the trees at the edge of a small cienaga. The horses stood in the marshy grass and sucked quietly at the water. . . . and they spread the cloth on the ground and selected from among the quesadillas and tacos and bizcochos like picnickers, leaning back on their elbows in the shade with their boots crossed before them, chewing idly and observing the horses. (58)

However, this illusory harmony on the USA-Mexico borderland is not a way of life but a pleasant pastime moment in the middle of the twentieth century. At the dawn of industrialization, consumerism and the capitalist endeavor, the longing for nature and the make-believe about the heroic past are merely a form of escapism from the economic changes and the smothering urban environment. The cowboy idyll implies culinary joy and consumption of Mexican meals that assumes a mutual, blended culture on formerly indigenous land.

Cormac McCarthy pays attention to details about the natural environment and the surroundings to set the context to formerly untold socio-cultural issues on the borderland and connects environmental phenomena to mental categories of anthropomorphic perception and cognition. McCarthy's new western writing style includes cautionary environmental signs and atmospheric phenomena (colors, shapes, light-dark tones, the storm, weather, etc.) which correspond to happenings, human interactions, and emotions and express various states of mind and entails the sensual perception of the natural environment. The author often uses Spanish expressions in his narrative to emphasize the ethnic, cultural, cognitive, and linguistic diversity of the territory. The rhetoric of *Pretty Horses* touches upon the concerns of the new western writing style and the use of pastoral elements in the narrative, gendered perspectives in western fiction, and the aesthetics of death and violence.

### **The Rewriting of the Western Myth and the American Pastoral**

The southern American landscape comprises naturally occurring phenomena that are typical of the territory and man-made constructs for historical reasons. The natural environment reaches over the border and it is richly detailed with native plants and various provincial environmental forms: the creek is clear and green, moss is braided over the gravel bars, there are scrub mesquite and nopal on the open country, yucca in white bloom (36) and cedar on the hills, the ground is cobbled by traprock "as it had always been, would forever be" (23). There is snow on the northern ridges (23) and the river is red with mud (24). The

animals (desert foxes, coyotes, and horses) appearing on the prairie, the desert, and the mountains are indigenous in the place.

The two boys' journey toward the South is the ride of hope for the desired cowboy life, promising "ten thousand worlds for the choosing" (31). Despite the high expectations to find flourishing ranches in Mexico, they are compared to "young thieves in a glowing orchard" (31), who aim to live in coexistence with nature but indeed, they want to live from it, deceiving the aims of the pastoral and serving the actual goals of the western ideal in another land. The high plains and hills leading to Mexico are the postfrontier, the mirror-image, and the counter-site of the imagined and ideologically constructed west of the nineteenth-century US. The journey, across the open grassland and the salty Pecos River in Texas, is described along with windmills, wild daisies, and some cattle. Getting closer to the southern border, the wire fence from pole to pole is "like a bad suture across the grey grasslands" (39). The conflicts throughout American history have left the land wounded and people separated themselves with fences to draw the line of their territory and to defend their properties. This suture-like fence-line draws a distinct line between the two countries and cultures and defends who are within, and excludes who are outside of the barrier. Despite man-built obstacles, nature lays there continuously on the two sides of the border. In the far south, there are mountains of Mexico, the blue sierras (46)—covered with nopal cactus and creosote (50)—looking like the ghosts of mountains (43) creating a mysteriously sublime atmosphere. The natural environment comprises the clay-colored water of the Rio Grande River, the desert with dry scrublands (47) and cottonwood (58), and some swallows flying in the sky. These natural entities reach across the border without the boundaries that political and social issues constructed and cause as much hardship for travelers as crossing the state lines.

Cormac McCarthy asks the philosophical question "Where ... paradise is at?" (61) in free indirect speech, through the voice of the narrator and his characters, to challenge the frontier concept about American land as a promised Eden where white settlers aimed to fulfill their dreams conforming to the ideology of Manifest Destiny. The author answers this theoretical query from an environmental-centered approach, overwriting the malfunctioning ideologically based anthropocentric notions. Besides, some further queries arise: what paradise is, who defines it, and whether American land was a paradise as the expansionist settlers imagined? In McCarthy's interpretation, "You cant tell what's in a country ... till you're down there in it" (61) because it requires empirical and cognitive knowledge about the place, its inhabitants, their culture, and their integrity in the environment. The search for a paradise across the southern US border is due to the restless American character that is constantly seeking adventure. At the turning point of rapid



industrialization and agrarian recession such an enterprise is, however, unreachable within the existing borders, so the cowboys must explore the other side of the southwestern landscape, reaching into the heart of Mexico.

McCarthy writes, “a man leaves much when he leaves his own country” (229) relating to the culture, identity, language, customs, and historical heritage a homeland renders to its citizens. The Mexican ranch workers in La Purísima consider that people are born on a certain land for a reason (229). The character of the land, the environment with its weather and seasons form the social and cultural setting of people and shape the “inner fortunes of men” (229). This means that the determination by luck and destiny affects any individual who belongs to a certain community on a specific land and it is part of their culture. It is also believed that a collective fate is inherited from generation to generation. On this basis, the westward expansion that gained “new” land to Americans held the opportunity for the formation of a “newer” kind of American culture. As the environmental circumstances have been transformed by the spread of civilization (e.g.: intensive farming and ranching, oil extraction and urban pollution), the character of the land changed—offering a different culture with different fortunes. The altered prospects did not fit the expectation of those who preferred the earlier, idealized form of connection between land and culture. Thereby the mid-twentieth century cowboy-to-be teenagers, John Grady and Rawlins are disappointed from the myth of the American pastoral.

The diversity and variation of the environment (including the landscape, weather, colors, seasons, celestial bodies, etc.) are closely related to the happenings in the novel and they reflect moods and feelings connected to those events. The prison building in Saltillo is as gray and still as the rainy day in the outside darkening, signaling that the “site of siege” (212) is a place where tragic and sorrowful enmity was generated among the inhabitants. The black pools of rain reflecting the red lamps of the town in the evening darkness (213) appear like blood, indicating John Grady’s guilt and reminding the reader of the bloody stabbing and the inevitable death in the community of young criminals and unfair conventions. Grady’s perception of the environment and his attitude toward the land change as he returns to the hacienda in La Purísima. The atmosphere is perceived through different senses and the synaesthesia of the moon as a “single silver music note burning in the constant and lavish dark” (222) expresses the lonesome but pleasing vision and feeling of the young adventurer. The smells of earth, grain, and horses in the evening air (222) evoke the pastoral sensation and pleasant memories of the place.

The storm is usually indicative that something bad is about to happen. The darkness of the day comes with a heavy storm that is symbolic of the desert land for some upcoming evil occurrence. The downpour is detailed as the sky darkened

and the terrain turned neuter gray; then it towered above, bringing cool wind and a flash of distant lightning was glowing mutely (68). Then the first thin crack of thunder brought spits of rain that finally burst into rain like some “phantom migration” flowing like a river or a train (71), enhancing the thunder. Blevins’ horse, standing restless and scared in the downpour like “the ghost of a horse” (72) is another sinister sign for the boys on a journey toward the south. Later on at sundown “a troubled light” and the “laminar bands of color to the west [are] bleeding out under the hammered clouds [and casting a] violetcolored hooding of the earth” (140). While the earlier storm was a strong warning sign for the boys that they had stepped on dangerous land, this is a visually violent caution if any unaccepted action is done.

Not only elements of the natural environment but the interior of John Grady’s grandfather’s house preserves older times and indicates the passing of linear time through the ticking of the mantel clock (3), while the prairie outside represents a different, cyclical measurement of time with the changing of seasons bringing the dark and cold autumn and the waking hopes of spring. The changing of seasons is described as “advanced in season” and the “long red sunset” (155) that shows the end of the summer is near. As the seasons change, so does the color and pattern of the countryside. Beyond temporal measurement, natural forces, especially the wind, seem to be stronger than the preacher’s words that get “lost in the wind” (5) at the old man’s funeral. This is a metaphor for Turner’s observation that “the western portion of the South ... showed tendencies to fall away from the faith of the fathers into internal improvement, legislation and nationalism” (Turner 28) in the expansion’s course and development. Religious faith becomes useless and unheard of by people in the Southwest because the natural environment has its transcendental atmosphere that creates a specific spirit for the surroundings according to the laws of nature and because of the profit and wealth that the land holds.

### **The Cultural Significance of the Horse Metaphor and Bilingual Codes in New Western Writing**

Several agricultural expressions are conveyed in Spanish when the narrative is about the Mexican ranch or the horse trade (*hacendado*, *caporal*, *gerente*, *caballero*, *vaquero*, etc.) because of the specific vocabulary connected to the land and the interactions carried out there by the members of the Spanish-Mexican cultural community. Most conversations on the postfrontier also take place in Spanish, and it makes the narrative valid and authentic. John Grady was raised by some Mexican servants, Luisa, her mother, *Abuela*, and Arturo, in the old man’s house.

Being fostered by Hispanic people who have served the family since the previous century, John Grady became a bilingual speaker of English and Spanish—that he applies throughout his journeys —, and his identity is built upon multiethnic, multicultural, and multiclass standards.

When Grady breaks horses on the hacienda, he uses Spanish because the animals have been raised and will be kept in Spanish commands. Grady's thoughts about horses suggest a one-sided relationship; he wants to be a part of the animal's mind but refuses to be manipulated by the character of the horse. Although he rides the horse "as if he'd been born to it" (23) and cares a lot about the animals while breaking them, he refuses to be one—"I ain't a horse" (108) stressing that he is a self-reliant individual who cannot be controlled. Anyway, his thoughts constantly occupied with himself being a cowboy, dealing with horses, which are associated with the mounted cattleman in the southwestern cultural framework, have the greatest impact on his identity. Perpetual contemplation about the horses and the assumed open country (120) makes him believe he has found a new frontier across the southern US border. As a result, he determines himself as the "breaker of horses" who occupies the psychological realm of the strong and symbolic animals by keeping them in menace and under control. The repetitive, almost Biblical phrases recited in Spanish elevate Grady into a superior position, regulating and sustaining the stallion's reproductive and self-preserving instincts.

Soy comandante de las yeguas, he would say, yo y yo solo. Sin la caridad de estas manos no tengas nada. Ni comida ni agua ni hijos. Soy yo que traigo las yeguas de las montañas, las yeguas jóvenes, las yeguas salvajes y ardientes. (131)

Transl. I am the commander of the mares, he would say, I and I alone. Without charity from my hands, you have nothing. Neither food nor water nor children. I am the one who brings the mares of the mountains, the young mares, the savage ones, and the mares that burn with passion. (Stevens 2)

Although John Grady's words and deeds deny he is not identical to equine species, his recurring dream of horses is an allegory of the American pastoral. In his vision, Grady sees a high plain with grass and wildflowers where he is running together with the horses. The desired aesthetic view brings an unreachable state of being free as a wild horse, but the mind can be set free during sleep. The vivid motion picture of the rich chestnut colors shining in the golden sun (163-164) and the playful and unrestrained movement of Grady among the animals create a resonance that becomes the music of the union of human, animal, nature, and

the whole environment. The union and resonance of various environmental creations and natural creatures compose a world that “cannot be spoken but only praised” (164). This pastoral idyll arouses the query: has this perfect harmony and peace ever been real or is this frail balance and peace of mind merely a “dreamscape” in the human unconscious? McCarthy answers that the idyllic environmental perception is just the projection of the mind.

### **Gender Perspectives in New Western Fiction**

Through the lens of gender, the submission of horses takes on an additional dimension, concerning whether they were born mares or stallions. Similarly to the Mexican society, animals are separated into males and females. The feminine character of mares is used for reproduction that brings more benefits to their owners. Although the body of the female horse is used as a money mint, it is not much appreciated. However, the stallion which “bred mares almost daily for three weeks and sometimes twice daily” (130) receives great recognition among vaqueros for its masculinity and productivity, which brings new colts and big fortune to the hacendado. The stallion is reckoned as a highly beneficial animal and its dynamism is described as a machine set in motion by the rider’s Machiavellian whispering:

inside the vaulting of the ribs between his knees the darkly meated heart pumped of who’s will and the blood pulsed and the bowels shifted in their massive blue convolutions of who’s will and the stout thighbones and knee and cannon and the tendons like flaxen hawsers that drew and flexed and drew and flexed at their articulations and of who’s will all sheathed and muffled in the flesh and the hooves that stove wells in the morning groundmist and the head turning side to side and the great slaving keyboard of his teeth and the hot globes of his eyes where the world burned. (131)

The organic mechanism and various objects with anthropocentric features suggest the material perspective of the animal.

Not only the dominance over horses is expressed verbally in the narrative, but the characters vocalize masculine hegemony over women in the southwest. Rawlins has a steady opinion about females and he talks about Grady’s current unreachable love interest with disrespect: “I wouldnt let her get the best of me ... She aint worth it. None of em are” (10). On another occasion, Rawlins compares a good-looking horse to a good-looking woman, pointing out his masculine attitude toward women: “They’re always more trouble than what they’re worth. What

a man needs is just one that will get the job done” (91). Such a scornful attitude toward female human beings is also part of the traditional western rhetoric, as the West was the “playground” of the male adventurer who intended to tame the wilderness with all of its creatures—including women. Despite John Grady’s negative experiences about women and his best friend’s scornful opinion about girls, external opinions do not influence his perception of people and his cowboy enterprise is a softened version of the hard-line macho spirit. Further on, Alejandra is compared to her black Arabian horse in appearance, having a fine-boned face, long black hair resembling the horsetail, and broad shoulders, emphasizing her controllable nature and inferior social role in the male-based ranch community. She looks strong, behaves with dignity, and rides the horse erect “more than well” (111), just like a horseman. Alejandra is close to the horses in the soul, being wild and free, therefore she emerges as John Grady’s interest to be seduced and “tamed.”

The author pays attention to female oppression in the patriarchal social and political system in Mexico and illustrates it through the character of Senora Alfonsa, whose life had been ruined by male judgment and pride. Politics excluded female members from elections and society served as a machine for the “suppression of women” (232) leaving no opportunity of choice for them. Along with the political and social empowerment of men, social polarization and economic decline, and the inability to improve the conditions of lower social classes were attributed to the leading figures. The failure of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) is viewed as the “rehearsal” for the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in Europe because of the Spaniard’s “yearning for freedom, but only [their] own” and the “great love of truth and honor ... but not its substance” (232). Although the Spanish live on two different lands and even on different continents, their social and cultural values, and their conceptual frame for political order and social structure are the same—including the exclusion of women from public issues.

### **The Aesthetics of Death and Violence on the American Borderland**

Violence, blood, and the beauty of animate nature make up a strange aesthetics of the world in *Pretty Horses*. Deer are noble creatures among animals with their magnificent external features and their killing has various meanings. John Grady shoots the smallest doe for a meal, but looking into the animal’s eyes (warm, wet, and without fear) launches a series of associations and harrowing emotions. The doe’s look suggests that she had been aware of her fate: she was born to be prey. The little body lying in blood refers not only to the sacrifice of the animal but reminds him of the Blevins kid who had been hunted down by the charro and the captain

with no legal conviction. The small victim also reminds Grady of Alejandra's sacrifice through bribery and forbiddance from the boy. Therefore, the doe is the symbol of majesty, but it also signifies death, victimization, sadness, and destiny. Furthermore, loneliness and alienation are connected to the hidden secret in the world's beauty (286); the world's pain is in diverging equity with the world's beauty, and the two are inseparable from each other and they are evenly changing. However, knowing beauty cannot be without sorrow, which creates an aesthetic duality of the bloodshed and truth represented through "the vision of a single flower" (286).

Hunting for food is the essential activity of wayfarers in the wilderness and Rawlins is good at it, while John Grady is rather a cowboy who speaks the language of horses. The portrayal of the shot spike horn buck "lay dead in its blood on the ground. ... shot through the base of the skull and its eyes ... glazing" (91-92) depicts the loss of life for the sustenance of another one, the hierarchy of the nutrition chain. The procession of meal from deer meat is also well-detailed and Rawlins refers to the vaqueros from whom he learned how to cut a thin piece of meat to see its "heart" (93) looking through the blood-red flesh. Along with the personification of the animal flesh, McCarthy gives nopal fruit an anthropomorphic character to emphasize the equal status of environmental elements. The fruit also feeds people with its "spines" and its blood-red (90) liquid inside, showing a human character and the act of violence on nature. Nevertheless, this "alien world" (97) with all the ordinary bloodshed and cruelty toward the non-human environment, is attractive and welcoming for the young self-appointed cowboys. The sources of admiration of the country are the pure joy of the landscape and the activities it holds for human purposes.

The death of animals and their bodies bear with symbolic meaning. The slaughtering of a sheep at Grady's returning to the Mexican ranch stands for losing Grady's innocent qualities and not only concerning his coming of age, but attributed to his violation of God's commandment regarding homicide. The buzzards feeding on a dead colt "in the tainted grass eyeless and naked" (227) also bear figurative implications concerning Grady; the lifeless body of the infant horse is the end of the new life on the ranch that Grady supported with his work by breaking the stallions and with the insemination of mares. It may also stand for the ineffective cowboy enterprise on the Mexican frontier, which the boys thought would be an equine paradise grounded in American rural ideals.

The landscape is pictured as a composite of dark tones and the colors of violence and sinister happenings. The hawk, a bird of prey, is illustrated as a paper bird, and its shadow signals the real conflict and unnecessary bloodshed on the territory. Redness of the sky like "blood falling through water" (289) bears with Biblical significance, indicating the sacrifice of Christ, who was baptized and cleansed from

all sins in water. The blood-red sunset and the “bull rolling in the dust ... in sacrificial torment” (306) is also an allusion to either the practice of hunting for the inbred bison in North America or the Spanish tradition of bullfight—both generating violence using the natural character of the animal. The cordilleras darkening, the desert gold still shining, inking over the bajada (289) suggest that darkness is coming, and the darkening landscape is an allegory to the end of an era of the pastoral, the closeness to nature is ultimately over with the emergence of machines and artificial objects on the land. As the last American horseman, John Grady, is vanishing from the landscape riding into the darkness, the cowboy ideal remains a ghost of the western world, endlessly crossing the borderland.

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# Science and Technology Studies Engagements with the Influence of Eugenics on Medicine

Barna Szamosi

In this paper, the field of science and technology studies (STS) is used to discuss the eugenic influence on medicine. The first line of inquiry explores the way social values are inextricably connected with technological development. It addresses issues related to the influence that social values, and in particular eugenic values, had and still have in medical processes. The second line of inquiry concerns the role that technological tools have played in the realization of political-medical goals. Regarding this problem, the most important is to look at processes that help us to understand how medical technology has been used to shape the public health standards of the population. The aim is to provide an understanding whether there is any possible discrepancy between the aim of an egalitarian medical discourse with its goal of health optimization and the actual outcome of public health policies and the medical practitioners' activities. An STS informed research can be helpful in pointing out in what ways eugenic values can come back into medical practice.

## Articulating the field of science and technology studies

Science and technology studies as a field emerged in the late 1980s after the publication of the work of Bruno Latour *Science in Action* (1987). The term itself refers to the intention of philosophers of science to bridge the gap between the traditional view about the subjects of science and technology. In the conventional approach, it was thought that science deals with facts while technology deals with artifacts. The aim of researchers was to develop a new framework that is inclusive regarding the interrelatedness of the way facts and artifacts are produced. According to László Ropolyi (2013), who is a philosopher of science, Latour can be viewed as an empirical philosopher whose methodology and theoretical approach enables him to create hybrid entities through the interpretation of the interactions of scientific research, with various actors in such a research, and the social environment that surrounds any scientific activity. In addition to these, it accommodates both human and non-human actors, economic and political categories as well. With this approach the classic realist view, that scientific research is the way to discover

*how things universally are* is displaced. Scientific knowledge is socially constructed through the dynamic networks of human and non-human elements and as such the knowledge produced is never value-neutral.

To paraphrase Sergio Sismondo (2008, 14), who is a historian and philosopher of science, a standard review of science and technology studies can plausibly start with a reflection on the classic and widely cited work of Thomas S. Kuhn originally published in 1962 entitled *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. In his work, Kuhn reveals three qualitatively important characteristics of scientific knowledge production: (1) epistemological communities are the basic elements, (2) the scientific knowledge that they produce is perspectival, and (3) scientific knowledge production is a dynamic, active process where participants performatively engage in constructing scientific information. Kuhn's work was a capstone essay for sociologists of scientific knowledge whose aim was to draw on his insights and expose the myth of value neutrality in scientific knowledge structures. In the Anglo-Saxon academic world the field of science studies started to emerge centralized around the question: whether sociological or philosophical approaches are best suited to study scientific knowledge production. These early science critiques, developed into the field of sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK) already successfully destabilizing the belief in conventionally understood objective science (Woolgar 2004, 345). David Bloor (1976) and Barry Barnes (1974) in developing their theory, called the strong program, in the field of SSK used Kuhn's work as their starting point (cited in Sismondo 2008, 14). They began from the problem of naturalization of scientific knowledge to work out possible alternative explanations for its production. Their method was interested in going beyond the asymmetrical explanations of scientifically true and false knowledge. They have shown that cultural values enter into scientific knowledge production. Both traditional history and philosophy of science work with the assumption that only rational scientific knowledge is true which entails that a methodologically rigorous value-neutral scientific project will produce true universally applicable knowledge. This epistemological position implies that researchers pursuing scientific truth will also avoid the production of false scientific knowledge.

Early feminist science studies criticism focused on the place of women in science, sexism in scientific knowledge construction, and other gendered perspectives that shape the production of scientific knowledge. Initial historical works were soon followed by critical contributions to the field of sociology of scientific knowledge where scholars like Nancy Hartsock (1985), Sandra Harding (1986), Donna Haraway (1988), and Helen Longino (1990) were interested in working out theoretical frameworks that make possible the reconceptualization of traditional scientific ideas such as objectivity, value neutrality, and universality. Despite their

explicit commitment to social constructionist frameworks that prioritize the discursive signifying practices of the epistemological communities, their aim was to retain some form of connection with materiality. Despite this commitment to avoid the exclusion of materiality, the initial ideas that can be traced back to the mid-1980s urge scholars to rethink human relationship to materiality; the material turn, in other words, the onto-epistemological spin in feminist science and technology studies occurred only in the first years of the twenty-first century.

Feminist scholars were working in the field of SSK from the late 1970s and by introducing gender into the field, they extended the scope of research. By explaining the role of gender in science, they made it necessary to reflect on the gendered positions of the researchers that contributed to the incorporation of gender based perspectives in traditional scientific knowledge production (Hekman 2008, 89). The concepts which are developed by feminist scholars in connection to SSK critique – and still used in some form in science studies – are strong objectivity, standpoint theory, and situated knowledges. Standpoint theory was developed by Dorothy Smith (1987), Donna Haraway (1988), Patricia Hill Collins (1991), and Sandra Harding (1993) as a response to the scientific relativism inherent in the strong program of the SSK. In their works, standpoint is a politically constructed position, only those agents have access to the political standpoint who participated constitutively in its formulation. In this sense, standpoints are necessarily interest-based positions. They are formulated from specific places in a social context, researchers experience and view the world from these particular positions. Developing this strand of theorizing further, Sandra Harding, who is a feminist philosopher of science, proposed the concept of strong objectivity in order to retain the values associated with objective scientific conduct, but also to avoid scientific relativism, that would emerge from the locatedness of standpoint theories. Harding argued for the explicit integration of values and social positions into scientific research projects in order to maximize scientific objectivity. In relation to this argument, Donna Haraway (1988), who is a biologist by training, also proposed a related concept, situated knowledges, in order to describe the embodied, socially embedded, value-laden, and perspectival character of scientific knowledge production. Haraway proposed, similarly to Harding, that to do socially relevant, sensitive, and empowering science, scientists must not only avoid abstracting their work from the everyday experiences of people but must produce applicable/useful non-universal, that is, local knowledges directly to them. Despite the extensive work of feminist science criticism which was largely written in the style of social constructivism, scholars could not convincingly move beyond the discursive, or linguistic turn that dominated science and technology studies after the 1970s in order to deconstruct the nature/culture divide, which was problematized in feminist scholarship from the 1950s.

The intention to include the material environment in the theorizing of scientific knowledge production appeared in the work of Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar in the late 1970s. In their essay, *Laboratory Life* (1979), they used anthropological methods to explore the construction of scientific facts in the context of the lab. They designed their project in the hope of developing further the principle of reflexivity of the strong program and they worked out the methodologies here that later other science and technology scholars applied in their research (Kutrovcz 2013). A significant change in the field of science and technology studies research occurred after the publication of Latour's *Science in Action* (1987). In his work, Latour argues, that studying scientific research, the traditional subject-object dichotomy that is present in history and philosophy of science, and in the natural sciences, poses a crucial problem. According to him, the problem with the standard constructivist position is that it views things as independent material units, which are not constitutive elements in scientific knowledge production. Latour challenges this position by arguing that science studies scholars must see the networks of human and non-human actors as equally constitutive elements in scientific conduct, scholars must imagine things as imbued with values that in turn play a role in the construction of scientific knowledge (Latour 1987; Ropolyi 2013). Parallel to the inclusion of things, Latour articulates the so-called actor-network-theory (ANT) which is capable of addressing and analyzing the role of human and non-human actors in the networks of knowledge production. Actor-network theory is later developed further by Latour himself (1993, 1999) and by many other scholars, among these are John Law (1994), Annemarie Mol (2002), and Karen Barad (2007).

The original aim of Latour and Woolgar was to succeed in addressing scientific knowledge production in a novel way that SSK was incapable performing. Despite the close connection of the ANT to sociology of knowledge leading theorists of SSK heavily criticized their approach (Collins and Yearly 1992; Bloor 1999). Latour defending the achievements of ANT, claims "[i]f ANT can be credited with something, it is to have developed a science studies that entirely bypasses the question of 'social construction' and the 'realist/relativist debate'" (Latour 1999a, 22). In his words, "the collective scientific reality is a circulation of transformations," which as he writes material, social, and narrative at once. With ANT science studies scholars are provided with a theoretical-methodological perspective to think through the interrelations of technology, science, and society. The term technoscience, refers to the inextricable nature of technoscientific knowledge from the social sphere. Since the early 1990s the technoscientific approach has dominated the research field of science and technology studies, which is visible from the terminology used by scholars referring to the intermingled nature of

their research: biomedicine, biotechnology, technopolitics, molecular biopolitics are such instances to name a few.

Woolgar emphasizes among the most significant contributions of STS that it deconstructed the boundary between the scientific and the social and between the social and the technological (Woolgar 2004, 345). Then he argues that this contribution implies a crucial point: in contemporary STS discussions, the hardest possible case to address is politics. “STS told us that technology is politics by other means. [...] If politics is a latest hardest possible case, it means that an STS perspective on technology must be central to any analysis of political life” (Woolgar 2004, 346). Woolgar’s standpoint positions biotechnologies as biopolitics, and argues that as such provides a crucial field for STS critical interventions. Drawing on these theoretical insights this paper will show how social values have shaped biomedical research and practice, and it points towards the idea, that biomedicine is still affected by the historical heritage of eugenics.

### **The molecular governance of biomedicine**

In his groundbreaking work *Birth of the Clinic* (1976 [1963]), Michel Foucault’s intention was to explore the discourses which shaped the ways in which the data of medical scientific phenomena were obtained. In other words, Foucault’s aim was to problematize, to think through how they came about, and point out how they were constructed and subsequently became naturalized. Hence, he was analyzing the material-discursive conditions that lead to the production of the normal, deviant, morbid, and sick. This is what he terms ‘effective history’ (Foucault, 1986; see Dean, 1994; cited in Philo, 2000) of the conditions of existence. In order to understand the process of medical knowledge production, Foucault distinguished between three shifts, primary, secondary and tertiary spatialization of disease that contributed to the articulation of what he termed anatomo-clinical gaze. In the first shift, called primary spatialization, Foucault described the practice of collecting, classifying, grouping, and hierarchizing diseases, during this mapping process, medical professionals of the eighteenth century placed diseases according to their appearance on the surface of the body. The secondary spatialization was explored by him through contrasting the writings of the first phase with the writings of the nineteenth century medical professionals. As a result of the comparative work, he concluded that the second phase was concerned with placing diseases within the body, as a result of the shift in medical thinking, the focus of interest changed from imagining diseases as abstract categories, to exploring the processes how these medical problems were taking shape. From this time onwards, the



medical professionals' work was to subject the patients' body to the technologically available most rigorous medical scrutiny, not only to look at the body, but to look into the body. The aim was to confront the embodied nature of disease by directly addressing the problems through getting as close as possible to the cause of suffering. This anatomo-clinical gaze wanted to grasp the dynamic changes that occurred in the body, the time-space configurations of the disease. And the third shift, called tertiary spatialization, is the process of diseases being divided, isolated, classified, distributed to hospitals. In this phase Foucault describes a whole set of medical practices and institutionalization processes, how hospitals become closed, privileged regions within a society, where people with medical problems were institutionalized thereby physically dividing the population into healthy and diseased cohorts. In this sense, Foucault's work can be read as successful investigations of material-discursive productions of diseases in different sites of the medical profession with exposing a prominent shift in the way how medical objects have been produced (for more see Philo 2000, 2012). During the twentieth century molecular biotechnology has brought about another transformation in medical thought.

Molecular biology started to take shape as an independent research field in the 1930s and its stabilization lasted until the 1980s. This was the time when technological advancements made it possible to combine methods from the fields of physics, chemistry and biology (Zallen 1992; Rheinberger 2009). Doris T. Zallen in her article, shows the historical period when works towards the molecularization of biology started, and Lily E. Kay explores, how it became an established discipline within the biological sciences only later, in the 1950s and 60s (Kay 1993). The central strand of molecular biological research was concerned with genetics and the application of that knowledge in medicine and contributed to the establishment of the field of medical genetics. Biotechnological advances that took place in and after the 1930s transformed the previously existing medical vision about life, health, and disease.

Another but equally important side of transforming medical thinking, that is emphasized by Michel Foucault, is related to social changes which are not always in immediate connection with medical practice. Nikolas Rose who is a sociologist of biotechnology, places emphasis in his interpretation of Foucault's essay, on the simultaneous entangled social processes concerning the circumstances, which allowed the emergence of the anatomo-clinical gaze, that still occupies a central place in the medical thinking about the human body. These processes "include changes in the laws and practices of assistance, shifts in the organization of medical profession and medical pedagogy, new forms of record-keeping in hospitals allowing the production of new types of statistics of morbidity and mortality,

pathological anatomy of those, who died in hospitals and so forth” (Rose 2007, 10). Beyond mapping the ways how diseases were grasped by medical practitioners, Foucault traced back the roots of modern medical governmentality – the politics of medicine – to the transformations that occurred at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The problem that the literature emphasizes in critiquing Foucault’s concept of biopolitics is that it focuses on bodies and populations. In contrast to the Foucauldian notion, contemporary biopolitics became molecular, in the sense that through technological developments the focus of governance is placed into the sphere of molecular biology. With the available biomedical technology the body is no longer seen as a whole entity. Thomas Lemke (2011, 94) brings two examples to strengthen this position: Michael Dillon and Julian Reid (2001) place emphasis on the immense possibilities of the recombination of the biological as a result of molecularization and digitalization of the biological material. This ‘recombinant biopolitics’ extends beyond the molar level. Michael J. Fowler and Deborah Heath (1993) claim that the most important distinction between contemporary biopolitics and the Foucauldian notion is that the individual is located in the gene pool. In this molecular biopolitical perspective the body is theorized as the sum of its molecular parts, and importantly in this biotechnological frame, instead of placing the individual body into a population, molecularized biopolitics locates the individual in the governmentally relevant gene pool: its molecular elements are relevant for technomedical reasons to elevate the health standards of the population.

The theoretical position that contemporary biopolitics manages the population by focusing on the molecular level phenomena is a significant analytical perspective that helps establishing a critical position towards the molecularization of social categories. Molecular level health management prioritizes on individual health problems and thus personalized genetic medicine would provide medical solutions to individual issues. This position is compatible with the theory that genetic variations (genetic markers) are shared across social groups, that is not only within one social group, but at the same time this position is critical of using genetic traits in a manner that would genetically homogenize the members of a community.

### **Transformation of eugenic thought: purification v. optimization**

One of the more important fields of investigation that concerns biomedical thought pertains to its eugenic heritage. Eugenics is a term that was created by the English anthropologist Francis Galton (1883) in the second half of the nineteenth century;

the discourse of eugenics rests on the Darwinian theory of evolution. Eugenicists wanted to oppose natural selection, and wanted to control the reproduction of the 'degenerate' members of the population. In the case of eugenics, the control meant primarily negative medical and political interventions such as sterilizations and segregation. According to this ideology the goal was to improve the quality of the population by not letting the unworthy reproduce. Advocates of eugenics wanted to introduce state control over the improvement of the population and their aim was to control reproduction without the consent of the individuals.

The critical analysis of the eugenic movements in the United States and in Western-Europe started to take place much earlier than the analyses of these movements within the Eastern part of Europe. For example, Daniel J. Kevles, who is an American historian, provided rich analyses on the history of eugenics and gave insights into the eugenic policies of the United States that lasted well beyond the Second World War (Kevles 1986; 1992; 1999; 1980). Critical studies on Nazi Germany (Weindling 1989b; 1989a; Weikart 2004; Weiss 1987; 2010) shed light on the process of how racial science became a biopolitical driving force that resulted in a rationalization of biological racism supported and controlled by Nazi human geneticists. Daniel Kevles (cited by Asch & Geller 1996, 321) notes that research in genetics before the 1950s "was often motivated by the desire to find negative information about already-stigmatized ethnic, racial, and class groups." In other words, as Maria Bucur (2002) argues in relation to the Romanian interwar context, genetics offered a way to justify and institutionalize eugenic prejudices against particular minorities. Thus, eugenics was an important driving force in shaping the public health goals of the first half of the twentieth century.

It is debated in the literature whether eugenics is still a relevant discourse shaping medical decision making since the 1950s. Scholars, Nikolas Rose for example, argues that the contemporary medical practice is radically different from the eugenic discourses of the past. He claims that 'optimization' is the key concern in this medical paradigm (Rose 2007, 18–20). He suggests that the contemporary focus on susceptibility is an extension of two modes of thought: (1) predisposition and (2) risk. Both have a long history dating back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Predisposition was understood as an inherited flaw that would manifest itself in illness or pathology. In the nineteenth century all predispositions (social pathology and danger) were understood as degeneracy. It encompassed problems like: urban existence affecting the life quality of the working class and other city dwellers, for others it was about how migrants contribute negatively to the nation's health standards, or how pathologies (such as tuberculosis, venereal diseases, mental illnesses) affect the quality of the offspring. Others said that the issue is rather about how these 'degenerates' are kept alive by the welfare state, so that

they can pass down to their offspring their deteriorated genetic structure, thus contributing to a downward spiral of general health standards. The concerns of the biotechnological discourse over susceptibility are thus connected to these older beliefs. But according to Rose there is an important transformation in this new perspective in contrast to the earlier concerns. This accompanied by the results of epidemiological studies that explore various sectors of the population (divided by age, gender, race, class, weight, diet, family history etc.) suggest risk scales to assess an individual's susceptibility to develop a certain disease. This means, that the present discourse looks at individuals as pre-symptomatically ill. And the direction of biotechnological work is in that of the optimization of the life chances of the individual. This makes it radically different from eugenic discourses. Other social critics such as Allen Buchanan (Buchanan et al. 2000; Buchanan 2011), Dan W. Brock (1994), or John Harris (1998, 2007) similarly to Rose, see much more the positive contribution of genetic research to our societies and they think it should not be conflated with the eugenics of the past.

In contrast to this position, there are critical works that suggest eugenic policies were transformed without sufficient reflexivity, and they are integrated into contemporary biotechnological research and medical thinking. Jürgen Habermas (2003) provides a very complex ethical frame concerning the questions related to genetic enhancement and liberal eugenics. He claims that genetic research and its applications are justified through biopolitical goals. Such goals are the improved health of the individual or prolonged lifespan and these goals tend to change radically since the aim of genetic engineering is not the clinical treatment of health problems but the genetic construction of the healthy individual. The central claim of Habermas is that the biotechnological intervention decided by a third party, necessarily takes away the autonomy of the self. To set out his argument, he draws a parallel between our *lifeworld* and the Aristotelian meaning of the concept. He claims that we are still living in the same Aristotelian world. In its basic constitution it is the same and we still think about our life similarly. In our everyday practices, we intuitively distinguish between the organic and inorganic forms of nature. Aristotle makes a division between the technical and ethical attitudes of the individual. The technical attitude means that the person while producing different kinds of products intervenes into nature. On the other hand, the actor, who engages in a communicative action, performs in order to reach a mutual understanding with the other person in a given social context. The basic point that Habermas makes is that these performative communicative practices show respect to the dynamics that humans find in the natural world. Radical modification of the human genetic makeup blurs the line between the natural and the social in a way that in consequence of the biotechnological intervention, the

intuitively distinguished line between the organic and inorganic or between *the grown* and *the made* will vanish (Habermas 2003, 44–47). Genetic engineering is in contrast with the value of the autonomously conducted life. In contrast to socialization, designer children are determined by their parents and by a third person, who intervenes into their genetic structure. For Habermas this act would blur the line between the natural and the cultural sphere and would take away the autonomy of the self.

Contributing to this critical discourse, Michael J. Sandel (2007) similarly argues that not only negative eugenics are eugenics, not only the attempts to create a better race is eugenics, but the contemporary marketized genetics can be equated with eugenics because of its market strategy to sell designer babies according to the demands of the customers. Intervention into the genetic structure of humans and creating babies, which are desired by the customers, is just as eugenically motivated as the racial betterment of the population through the tools of eugenic policies. Sandel gives contemporary examples to justify his claim: it is common to reject the charges of eugenics by claiming that a medical intervention is the choice of the client. When the rhetoric is based on the free will argument it implies that it is not possible to talk about eugenics since coercion does not apply in such a democratic context. Sandel gives a clear example to counter this claim: the Indonesian government pays for voluntary sterilization for those women whose education and income is low, and supposed to give birth to biologically inferior children. This example clearly shows the eugenically motivated biopolitical policy, based on class, and an ill-formulated argument that tries to justify voluntary sterilization in cases where women are vulnerable because of their social position. But according to him, it is also important to call attention to eugenic practices in other cases as well, when people want to have a designer baby that meets the norms of their social group, or even exceeds them. This is similarly eugenically motivated because in these cases babies are deliberately designed and produced according to the values of the community.

In addition to these examples, the actual, already existing and used techniques are also important for critical scholars. Troy Duster (2003) suggests that genetic screening as a method is akin to the dramatic technique of placing a gun on the wall, as Chekhov points it out: if one places it on the wall in the first scene, it means that it must be used by the third scene. In other words, the mapping of our genetic structure and connecting this to genetic counseling is like creating a tool for a certain purpose and the tool itself implies that it will be used against certain populations. Duster agrees with the liberal argument that when we can use the knowledge provided by our genetic counselors (like how to change our habits, eating, sport etc.) it can be very valuable. If this knowledge creates more possibility and the individual is capable of

utilizing these opportunities that is good in itself. However, he pays attention in his analysis to variables such as class position, environmental issues, and racial identity as well. He suggests that an important task for social scientists is to identify how certain diseases become racial, how risk groups change according to the social factors that are constitutive of medical targets. It is imperative to explore and make it explicit how genetic issues are framed as class, race, or gender problems. Not only genetic screens are significant in this discourse for Duster, but the hidden arguments within health policies and medical encounters. Since he claims that there is a conflict of interest regarding the use of the knowledge provided, geneticists for example must justify their work towards the state economically and medically as well. Consequently, it puts pressure on them to provide results for the state. One of the most obvious ways they can show results is by claiming that they have managed to screen and prevent the birth of those with serious health defects. The question is how the individual is manipulated in a decision making situation and whether they (the couple or the woman) would have the right to have their child with that health condition. Duster gives examples from the context of the United States. It was proposed by the Chicago Bar Association in the state of Illinois to change marriage laws: every couple who would like to get married must obtain a certificate that informs them about their genetic condition (Duster 2003, 127, cited from Kevles 1985). This is a clear example of hidden eugenic arguments at work. The rationale of the suggestion is that couples who know about their shared genetic problem and it is likely that they would pass it down to their offspring must choose a reproductive option that ensures the birth of a healthy child. Duster argues it is economically and medically justified that these different institutions (genetic research, genetic counseling etc.) support the public interest. Thus, he says “the elimination or prevention of the ‘defective fetus’ is the most likely consequence and ultimate meaning of a genetic screen” (Duster 2003, 130). In his view, liberal democratic states will not embrace eugenics directly, but inevitable he says that the real question is how target groups of genetic screens are identified, what the constitutive social factors are that play a role in circumscribing the targets. And thus, what is an acceptable public policy in cases when the condition is not life threatening, and how to ensure diverse understanding of what it means to be well-born.

## **Conclusion**

Research results stemming from the field of science and technology studies show us that social values are integrated into scientific work and into the produced scientific knowledge. Therefore, the values present in scientific knowledge drive their application

in everyday life. A historically sensitive biopolitical critique is useful regarding the transformation of medical thought because with the help of this critical framework, it is possible to trace the way social values, technologies, biological research, and medical practices intertwine through seemingly distant historical and political contexts. Although, the molecular shift in medicine has opened up the possibility to individually tailor medical treatments and optimize our health as its proponents claim, critics warn, if we are not sufficiently reflexive to historical processes, eugenic thinking can become naturalized even in democratic states, and eventually will harm our understanding of health, and health related practices.

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# **The Slave Ship as the Chronotope of the Black Atlantic: Interaction between Space and Time as Reflected in the Antebellum Slave Narrative**

András Tarnóc

## **I**

The international slave trade is considered the largest migratory wave in human history. Between 1450 and 1750 approximately 15 million people were forcibly removed from Africa. The slave ship, a vessel physically standing for and at the same time symbolizing the infamous Middle Passage is more than just a plain watercraft as it reifies the slave trade and according to Paul Gilroy functions as a chronotope (4). The international slave trade, a liminal activity impacting three continents, Africa, America, and Europe primarily originated from the Atlantic littoral. The slave ship naturally applies to first generation slaves arriving in the New World before the United States and Britain prohibited commerce of humans in 1808 and 1807 respectively.

The slave ship as a tangible manifestation of the slave trade, either the British or American version, had plied the waters within the context of the triangular trade. The first scheme includes the exchange of guns, or manufactured goods produced in Britain for slaves at the West Coast of Africa, followed by the infamous Middle Passage to the Caribbean, and the selling of slaves for primarily sugar at the Caribbean market and the eventual return of that commodity to Britain. The American version of the triangular trade had three endpoints: New England, with rum production, the slave coast, and the Caribbean. Accordingly, rum was shipped to West Africa to be exchanged for slaves, who were taken across the Atlantic to slave markets in the West Indies, where after completing the heinous “transaction” sugar or molasses was purchased, which was transported to New England again for the making of rum.

While the early phase of the Atlantic slave trade was controlled by six countries, England, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland and Denmark, eventually due to the Portuguese and English dominance most slaves were taken to North America and Brazil. Between 1750 and 1850 the slave trade was centered around three staples: cotton at the American South, sugar in the Caribbean, and coffee in Brazil. In the view of David Eltis the slave trade was made possible by the development of European navigation, the demand for the respective products, the warm oceanic

currents of the southern and western streams, and the active participation and profiteering of the indigenous population, known as agency of the Africans. (Eltis 22-23)

My essay aims to disclose the potential interpretations and various meanings of the slave ship while exploring the motive of the chronotope. In my work along with that of Gilroy I utilize the theories of Alexandra Ganser, Tamara Danicic, Michel Foucault and Ulrich Neisser. I consider the slave ship as a literary and cultural trope while probing the temporal and spatial perspective of its human cargo. My research relies on the narratives produced by Briton Hammon, James Albert Gronniosaw, Ottobah Cuguano, Olaudah Equiano, and Venture Smith. At first I provide a closer look at the chronotope as a literary motive then I investigate the time and space-related attitudes of the respective protagonists.

## II

The idea of the chronotope, a binary conceptual structure standing for the correlation of space and time in a literary work originates from Mikhail Bakhtin considering it the “intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships” within a given text. (84). In the same vein, Tamara Danicic asserts that a specific text contains a system or matrix of chronotopes as well (312).

The chronotope is primarily applicable to travel and mobility. Frances Bartkowski posits that travel pushes the subject into “affirmative groundlessness” despite the traveler’s effort to interpret or decipher a new culture by visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory means. “Texts of travel, immigration, and confinement are intended to make most bold the contrast in possible positions of subjects and writers who look, hear, speak, touch, taste, and smell their way by, through, and into an already existing community to be deciphered” (xxvi). In the same vein, Steven H. Clark argues “the travelling subject, wavering between two worlds, is [...] poised to split and unravel” (39)

The slave narrative and the accounts of white settlers forcibly taken by Indians are the two major examples of captivity literature. While in case of the latter the forced journey takes place on land, the African enslavement experience includes compelled travel both on the continent and at sea. The events leading up to and taking place during the Middle Passage amount to a tragic series of displacement episodes reflecting the very notion of “affirmative groundlessness.” The international slave trade certainly resulted in the displacement or uprooting of millions of Africans. First generation slaves experiencing the Middle Passage suffered the first displacement in their homeland as they were sold or enticed into

slavery, then again upon their arrival into the New World as they were forced into the bottom rungs of the given social structure.

The slave narratives produced primarily before the prohibition of the slave trade went into effect in 1807 in Britain and in 1808 in the United States provide a glance into the temporal and spatial perspectives of enslaved persons via the chronotope. Frances Foster and Kim Green's view of the slave narrative replaces the traditional interpretation of the given reports as a linear or direct progress from slavery to freedom. Having reconsidered the paradigm, Foster and Green forward the concept of a circular movement between two endpoints: ports of call and pulpits of consultation (45). Ports of call implying the actual harbors the slave is forced to pass through refer to the physical aspects of mobility, especially the movement between the slave coast and the arrival in the Caribbean. Pulpits entail the heuristic or didactic considerations of such texts. Naturally, it is the port motive, which is primarily applicable to my inquiry.

The port and pulpit model offers a promising tool to deal with autobiographical literature. If we consider ports figurative gateways then the physical details of the actual travel come to mind. The protagonist as an actual traveler passes through a landscape he or she is part of and describes. The view of the landscape is a consequence of travel in space, or in Michel de Certeau's words, "linking acts and footsteps" (162). The port and pulpit aspect is also present in the general evaluation of the travel trope entailing mobility and perception, and individual development respectively. The simultaneity of the motif is further expressed in Jerome Bruner's observation concerning the function of the travel narrative as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality (5-6).

Following suit, John Sekora interprets the slavery experience as a circular movement between the core and the periphery (504). The core in case of the potentially enslaved individual is the given African society from where he or she is forcibly removed and tossed into the periphery as the infamous holding centers or slave castles, among them Elmira, established in 1482 were located on the coast, or the peripheral edge of Africa. At the same time, this motive also expresses social displacement, both at the destination and arrival points.

Chronotopes have two main types, the pastoral pattern and the one reflecting displacement. In case of the first space dominates over time. The pastoral pattern is found in traditional travelogues commemorating a journey undertaken at the traveler's will, or initiative and usually refers to an idyllic immersion in the beauty of the landscape. In the chronotope expressing displacement the temporal or time-oriented perspective prevails over spatiality (Ganser et al 2). Likewise, according to Ulrich Neisser during travel the hero forms or attempts to form a cognitive map. Cognitive mapping, or constructing "an orienting schema, an active information-



seeking structure” is comprised of three steps: becoming acquainted with the new physical surroundings, finding and exposing routes, and identifying landmarks until everything becomes familiar (110-111).

The slave narrative contains the non-pastoral or displacement version of the chronotope in which time prevails over space. Comparing the position of the slave to the Indian captive, one obvious difference is that the latter moves or forced to move on land, and several texts contain reports or descriptions of the landscape encountered. The slave or the human cargo of the slave ship is naturally deprived of such opportunity. Consequently, s/he is unable to develop a cognitive map, which would assist him or her structuring the travel experience by the help of physical and metaphysical landmarks.

The analysis of a chronotope calls for the exploration of both the spatial and temporal aspects. For the purpose of evaluating the given individuals’ perception of time Stephen Hawking’s arrow of time model can be helpful. The tripartite scheme includes the thermodynamic arrow pointing toward entropy, the psychological arrow referring to the subjective perception of time, and the cosmological one highlighting the expanding universe (Eiley).

I believe the first two arrows are relevant to the chronotope represented by the slave ship. The entropic aspect of the Middle Passage is suggested by the limited space, or virtual imprisonment at the bottom of the vessel along with the lack of communication and isolation. At the same time this experience, just like the entropy phenomenon, is apocalyptic in itself. While according to Virágos, the apocalyptic pattern is based on myth and points to a felicitous future, or “delayed gratification,” its aspect suggesting divine election and the acceptance of the given ordeal can be applicable to future interpretations of the slavery experience (121). Accordingly, Alexander Crummel viewed slavery as an ordeal imposed by God to justify the historically exceptional status of the black race (416).

Linda Warley’s postcolonial theory considering the acquisition of control over space and time suggests the temporal structuring of the slavery or confinement experience. As she asserts “Only by investigating both time and space can we fully articulate what it means to be *situated* human beings” (3). Thus the chronotope is a tool of subject construction, a way to achieve agency, even if in a limited form. The perception of time is the exact guarantee of personal integrity, and a way to preserve physical integrity in case of the suffered trauma. A well-known example is Mary Rowlandson dividing the story of her captivity into Removes. It is worth noting that the accuracy or extent of the perception of time differs at land or sea. Naturally, any ground trip can provide points of reference for orienting the protagonist while the same does not apply to crossing the endless ocean.

Why does time dominate over space in the chronotope implying uprootedness or displacement? Just like in the captivity narrative, the victim of both the Indian attack and the ambush of the enslaver is thrown into a Heideggerian nothingness in which he or she has to gain control over time. Control over time means ownership of the given traumatic experience and the ability of coping. Perceiving the passage of time implies the division of the endless temporal continuum into units, thus a way of control, by extension agency. In case of the pastoral chronotope the protagonist can fully immerse himself or herself in the scenery and imagine that time has stopped. Ironically, the captive white settler or enslaved African attempts to emphasize the passage of time, that is the passing of his or her trauma as well.

Space or the perception of the distance covered during travel is the other component of the chronotope. The spatiality of the slave ship experience can be interpreted by Foucault's concept implying that place created at the intersection of space and time always reflects power relations. It is beyond doubt that the slave or human cargo jammed in the bottom of the slave ship with severely limited mobility is in an inferior position in fact forced into an early version of a non-place. Marc Augé defines non-place as a location excluded from the traditional interpretation of space, that is, the mainstream space. The non-place "which cannot be defined as relational, historical, or concerned with identity" (78) also expresses separation from roots. The spatial structure of the slave ship includes the non-place in a dual sense. The slave being moved against his will between two continents is excluded from his own original world, that is Africa, and s/he is also torn from his or her cultural and social roots. Furthermore, s/he is forced into the non-place of the slave ship as well. The slave's confinement in the holding area of the ship secluded from the public and open sphere of the given vessel represents the physical and metaphysical inferiority of the slave on-board and in the world alike. Nancy Munn's negative space theory implying spatial prohibition and boundary making is also applicable. Munn considers negative spaces characterized by "deletions or of delimitations constraining one's presence at particular locales" (448). Accordingly, the slave, being physically constrained, is forbidden, or prevented from entering or accessing other parts of the ship.

Exploring the chronotope from the point of view of the cargo, or the enslaved individual, it can be concluded that during the Middle Passage, viewed as the chronotope of displacement, time dominates over space. The slaves are prevented from experiencing or only display a limited ability to perceive the passage of time. The endless ocean does not provide points of reference to evaluate the length of the journey. The slaves treated as human cargo are separated from the crew and are forced into a physically and metaphysically inferior position. A further question can be raised namely whether the space covered by the vessel and its cargo can be proportional to time?

The ocean represents infinity and stability at the same time as the slave ship is just one chronotope of the matrices of such conceptual structures recognized by Tamara Danicic. While the ship is a chronotope, so is the ocean with infinity regarding space and time. The formula “time spent = space covered,” therefore, applies only if space is conceived in a linear sense of moving ahead. (12) The slave ship deconstructs this formula, as no linear advancement can be recognized reinforcing Sekora’s notion of circular movement, or the progression between ports of call. The interaction of space and time determines the chronotope, which has such complementary aspects as one’s relation to geographic and geopolitical position, nature, social class, race, and gender. The chronotope operates on two levels. Accordingly, a given text can express historicity or describe the connection between space and time. In case of the chronotope implying displacement time is in a dominant position, while in case of an idyllic pastoral chronotope space is superior to time.

Just like in the Indian captivity narrative or in case of the slave ship the distance covered indicates the passage of time. The internal time passage experienced by the protagonist takes over or gains priority as compared to real historical time. In fact space dominates over time, but mostly in an apocalyptic manner, as for the slave this time is “out of joint” (Shakespeare). The slaveship functions as a chronotope both on the individual and macro level as it can be considered a living micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion (Gilroy 4). While nautical novels, among them *Moby Dick* (1851), present a microcosm of the contemporary social background of the respective crew, on the slave ship such a description is only applicable to a limited extent at best. The primary reason for this is the fact that there is virtually no communication between the slaves and the crew and the origin of the slaves, although they represent a wide variety of African peoples, is not known for the slave traders, who treat the former as a homogeneous entity. On the individual level the slave is compelled to travel, while on the macro level the slave ship connects several cultures, continents, and perspectives.

Time dominates or prevails over space as the slave cannot perceive the distance. On land or in the prison, s/he can perceive or feel the passage of time, but at sea s/he becomes unsure or uncertain. The exact definition of time is replaced by a time-related dead reckoning. The increasing distance from their home or home shore makes them less sure of themselves. The trauma of the abduction and the brutality experienced during the Middle Passage is alleviated by the fleeting of the internal subjective time. Thus, the chronotope shows how the slave copes with the specific trauma. As Hudson Martin argues, the slave ship became a space of displacement of unparalleled space, time, epoch and civilization (38).

Toni Morrison building on Pierre Nora’s *lieux de memoire* concept argues that in African-American culture bodies of water serve as *lieux de memoire*, or sites

of memory. "All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was." (99). Nora identifies places of memory as physical, and metaphysical repositories of remembrance with material, functional, and symbolic dimensions (19). Therefore, the Atlantic Ocean, the site of the black community's originary trauma serves as a *lieux de memoire*. The actual bones of the victims demanded by the slave trade represent the material aspect, the water and its capability to remember symbolizes the organic perspective of black history, while the actual crossing stands for the archetypal black cultural experience (Wardi 6).

A *lieux de memoire* can be conveyed verbally, kinetically, and visually (Fabre and O'Meally 8). The verbal aspect is the actual description of the given action or concept, the kinetic dimension represents motion at sea, while the visual side commemorates the landscape. Thus the very concept in fact underlines the idea of the chronotope as well. Following Morrison's line of thought, if the slave ship is considered a *lieux de memoire*, the aforementioned texts revealed that due to the coerced nature of the respective travel the recollections of the participants of the Middle Passage are restricted to the verbal and kinetic level. It is noteworthy, that the given protagonists do not engage in describing the surrounding landscape, not even while reciting their misadventures on land.

Paul Gilroy surpassing the traditional interpretation of the chronotope attributes a linkage function to the concept. In his view the slave ship represents the movement, or transfer of people, goods, and ideas, (4) or put in other words: people as goods. The vessel itself plying the Atlantic Ocean is already in a liminal position sailing between continents, cultures, and worlds. Besides the human and physical cargo the slave ship transports ideas. The slavers driven by the notion of Anglo-Saxon or western superiority arrive at the slave-coast, and take aboard African individuals as potential carriers of their home culture.

Although the application of Ganser et al's road movie model implying the coexistence of individuals in a shared location and maintaining identical perception of space and time (8) might appear tenuous at best, the slave narratives primarily report on, or provide such information from the victims' point of view. These texts also contain indirect references to the spatial or temporal perspectives of the crew. Furthermore, in case of the slave ship the separation of the crew from the cargo precludes such a shared perception and alludes to the racial component of the chronotope expressed by the black cargo and mostly white crew.

While Ganser et al focus on the road movie or the trope of the road, their observations can bear relevance in the case of the slave ship as the actual vessel as well. The chronotope set on the road implies the encounter of characters who would otherwise never meet sharing the same space and time. The slave ship certainly implies a place where space and time intersects, and in a way functions

as a meeting place for people who would otherwise not come to know each other. The road narrative also presupposes identical perception of space and time by the respective characters, which in case of the slave ship does not apply.

The narratives of Briton Hammon, James Albert Gronniosaw, Ottobah Cuguano, Olaudah Equiano, and Venture Smith provide valuable information regarding the applicability of the chronotope. These texts were written before the prohibition of the slave trade in Britain and the U.S in 1807 and 1808 respectively. Equiano later worked on a slave ship thus he offers an important glimpse into the temporal perspective or the perception of the passage of time on the part of the crew.

Briton Hammon's Narrative titled "*A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings, and Surprising Deliverance of Briton Hammon, a Negro Man* (1760) begins in 1747. He describes how he received permission from his master to join a logging expedition at the Caribbean. Thus, he leaves for the journey not as a slave, but as a member of the crew. He makes little note of the details of the trip: "We sailed from *Plymouth* in a short Time, and after a pleasant Passage of about 30 Days, arrived at *Jamaica*" (20). The ship is not involved in the slave trade as it is on a commercial or business venture. The use of the first person plural expresses belonging or identification with the crew.

In "*A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars...*" (1772) Gronniosaw also provides details of his enslavement. Born originally into a royal family in Bournou, that is inland Africa, he is lured away from home by an unscrupulous trader with the promise of showing him "houses with wings to them walk upon the water" (35). The narrative includes reports or accounts of his trip to the coast of Africa with clear indication of Gronniosaw's ability to maintain a temporal perspective and accurately perceive the passage of time. The protagonist is fully aware of space and time as he comments: "We travelled 'till about four o'clock every day, and then began to make preparations for the night" (36), or "I was now more than a thousand miles from home, without a friend or means to procure one" (37). Furthermore, it is probably due to his privileged background that he is treated relatively well during the transatlantic crossing. His reports confined to being seasick implies that he spent most of the journey on-deck.

The Narrative of Cuguano, "*Thoughts and Sentiments...*" (1787), however, is clearly written from the point of view of the victim. The protagonist is uprooted and separated from his home culture both literally and figuratively. It is noteworthy that exact definitions of time are not given: "we continued several days in sight of our native land" (149) implying a removal, a gradual distancing from familiar sites, and the entering of the Heideggerian nothingness surrounding the enslavement experience. The statement: "I could find no good person to give any information of my situation" (149) is a clear indication of separation and isolation. It is worth mentioning that his description of the travel bearing a similarity to that

of Gronniosaw also contains more stable and definite references to the passing of time and the distance covered on land, "We went with them again about half a day's journey" (148) and "I was kept about six days at this man's house" (148).

In "Narrative of the Life and Adventures..." (1798) Venture Smith on the other hand describes his crossing as a commercial transaction: "after all the business was ended at the coast of Africa, the ship sailed from thence to Barbadoes" (375). His report of the Middle Passage reflects a distancing from the suffering of his fellow travelers. "After an ordinary passage, except great mortality by the small pox, which broke out on board, we arrived at the island of Barbadoes: but when we reached it, there were found, out of the two hundred and sixty that sailed from Africa, not more than two hundred alive" (375).

Olaudah Equiano, eventually becoming an entrepreneur participating in transatlantic slave commerce describes himself on a continuum ranging from a status of cargo to a crew member on a slave ship. The beginning of his enslavement experience recorded in "The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano" (1794) connotes anxiety, fear, and alienation as the slave ship ominously "riding at anchor" (202) hides an entry into a "world of bad spirits." (203) In a noteworthy manner and at the same time indicating an attempt to appreciate or assess distance, in other words, spatiality, Equiano evaluates his and the ship's position as to the African coast by looking through the quadrant of a sailor (205).

Interestingly, while most of the Narratives exclusively refer to the experiences of the given slave preserving or presenting the events from the point of view of the enslaved person, Olaudah Equiano reports from the other side of the issue, as he was working on slave ships as well. Having enjoyed a somewhat privileged status, he is manumitted and "can try his luck as a commerce merchant" (229). Since now he is relatively free he judges distance and time better as manifested in his report on "being very ill for eleven days" (237). Moreover, he displays a gradual distancing from his original culture and countrymen referring to slaves on a ship where he serves as "some of the poor oppressed natives of Africa" (237) or as "live cargo" (240). By this time, however, Equiano is clearly aware of his geographic position and the respective destination: "We arrived at Georgia, and, having landed with part of our cargo, proceeded to Charlestown with the remainder" (237).

### III

As it was mentioned before, the motive of the chronotope is applicable to the slave ship as an object, a manifestation or tool of the slave trade, and is valid and operational from the point of view of the slave as well. It is noteworthy, that



the passage of time or the judgment of the distance covered is only applicable to overland travel, or when the given slave reports on other journeys than the Middle Passage. Since the slave ship is part and parcel of the international slave trade it is also a scene or site of intercultural communication, or of its failure.

The chronotope as a literary tool assists in a more profound understanding of the slavery experience. The very definition, implying the perception of space and time to varying extent alludes to an activity or feature that can only be performed or possessed by humans. Consequently, the application of the chronotope concept refutes the view of slaves as objects while it inscribes such displaced individuals into history. It was suggested that the chronotope operates on the macro and micro level. The slave ship as the representative of the slave trade symbolizes or stands for victimization, objectification, and displacement in the larger community context while it connects several cultures and functions as a tool or means of cultural exchange frustrated by failed intercultural communication. On the micro level, however, the concept reinforces the ability of enslaved persons to maintain a temporal and spatial perspective and offers a strategy for coping with the trauma brought on by the forcible removal from one's home and culture.

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# Reflections on the Ideological Dimensions of Myth in American Culture

Zsolt K. Virágos

## [1] Preliminary observations

Any group with a shared interest can generate clusters of functional ideology. There can be no doubt about the fact that, owing perhaps to the clarity, brevity, and apparent simplicity of the received version, the above statement has often been accepted as a prime contender for the role of defining ideology as a system of ideas, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory. In such situations of real-life control particular inhibiting factors are likely to be created by what we can most often identify as (future-oriented?) conceptual synonyms such as *belief, ideal, principle, doctrine, creed, credo* (if this last lexical item happens to mean *conviction, opinion, view, or worldview*). Again, one of the most challenging tasks in the study of the forms of social consciousness is isolating those large terrains and institutions of the collective human mind of those who are engaged in controlling or seeking to control a government or its principles, aims, and policies: *ethics, law, science, the arts, politics, philosophy*. In addition to this motley array of ideological-political signifiers there seem to exist two more cumulative, solid ideologically tinged constructs that appear to pervade human thinking in the largest possible senses: **M2** and **public myth**. The rest of my essay will pertain to these two, with particular emphasis on **myth**.

The study of myth has been long bedeviled by conceptual uncertainties, of which the most striking manifestation has been the misleading assumption that myth *per se* is a monolithic substance. The corollaries of this fallacy are that (1) all myths have the same kind of origin and function; and that (2) it is possible to penetrate the essence of myth via a single, all-embracing theory. Nothing could be further from the truth. The package of myth and its satellites has ended up as an intellectual property widely dispersed in a thoroughly multidisciplinary terrain. Which is one of several obvious reasons why it is essential to have to make it clear at the outset of the present discourse that the theoretical underpinnings of this discussion are fundamentally different from those of the conventional, that is, universalist—therefore reductive—understandings of myth.

The findings of the present study are predicated upon the prerequisites that (a) there exist fundamentally different and discrete incarnations of myth, and

that (b) these can be penetrated only through more than one special definition and theory. Thus I am talking of different orders—M-coded variants—of myth: (Myth1 [=M1], Myth2 [=M2], and Myth3 [=M3], with each of these requiring different explanations and applications. And definitions. M1 has been made to stand for ancient myth (most often a sacred narrative), while M3 has been chosen to identify products of mythopoeic urges triggered by the apparently ever-present, thus self-perpetuating, ontological questionings and epistemological gaps. I will not be concerned with M1 and M3 in this discussion, which will be devoted to some essential questions and dilemmas pertaining to M2.

M2 will be used in the present context as a self-justifying intellectual construct that is capable of neutralizing epistemological contradictions, thus claim truth. For a certain length of time anyway. Thus M2 is also capable of performing a pragmatic trick of authentication: if rightly packaged and adequately promulgated, through its devices of legitimation it can persuade believers to accept the untruth of a given M2-type myth as “true” (or, “useful”; perhaps “expedient”). M2 is predicated upon a we-ness versus they-ness dichotomy, thus it can never be “disinterested” or “innocent.” Neither does it tend to be “historically blind.” Which means that of the three M-coded variants mentioned above M2 tends to be the most supremely *ideological*; while M1 is anchored in *expressive*, M3 in *creative* concerns and potentials. This study will show how the ideological dimension penetrates and gets inscribed in all M2-type forms of ideation and patterning of thought, and it will also clarify the apparent contradiction that ideology can be operative in patterns which are not by definition ideology *per se*. M2—like many other artifacts of culture—is an ideological product, while it is also different from ideology. In addition, the concept of ideology will be variously defined here but it will be basically understood throughout as a form of power to support the social and existential possibilities of the in-group and to weaken these same possibilities in and of the out-group.

## **[2] Why a contestive space of signification?**

In American culture, where a multitude of priorities existed but not all of them have prevailed, we are witnessing the existence of an increasingly contestive space of signification. In this space, a whole spate of oppositional frameworks have been generated between the vocal dominant and the marginalized—muted, victimized, deterritorialized, colonized, dispossessed, decentered, silenced—groups: primarily the underclass, African Americans, Chicanos, other groups within the colored multiculture, and women. The marginalized tended (or have tended) to be routinely

deprived of access to the resources of articulating and communicating their cultural priorities: their specific icons and images for the purposes of supporting their own life chances.

The very process of the institutional or semi-institutional *selection* of images for a wide public audience via the school system, the mass media, and the popular theater (e.g., the blackface minstrel shows) is strongly reflective of underlying interests and commitments, thus the selective process is and has always been—along with its concomitant: the *repudiation* and *subversion* of alternative frames of reference—intrinsically ideological. Thus, virtually all the items in image banks and other “representative” cultural/historical lists are, in accordance with Jameson’s understanding of the concept, *ideologemes*, the ultimate building blocks and raw material of cultural products and ideologically attuned mythic constructs (*Political* 54).

### [3] M2, public myth and ideology

This still leaves us with the task of sorting out the problem of the relationship between myth and ideology, allowing at the outset that [1] ideology is by definition inscribed in M2-type configurations, and [2] often the two—M2 and ideology—can be, or rather can be seen as, one and the same thing. I might add at this point that while a purely ideological legitimizing/justifying construct tends to be directly linked to relations of power within society (to class, a power elite, hegemony), social/cultural myths, although ideologically attuned and often tied to classbound beliefs, cover a broader variety of social, frequently in-group, uses and have a similarly wide distribution in terms of orders of magnitude. In other words, not every M2 configuration is a public myth.

Some authorities, for example Richard Slotkin, regard the latter—public myth—as the equivalent of ideology. “McNeill’s ‘public myth,’” Slotkin observes, “is roughly equivalent to ‘ideology’ as I have been using the term. It refers to a core of common beliefs, maintained by a broad social consensus, embodied in ‘general statements [based more on faith than on fact] about the world and its parts, and in particular about nations and other human in-groups, that are believed to be true and then acted on whenever circumstances suggest or require a common response’” (*Gunfighter* 626).

Incidentally, it is instructive to see how in Slotkin’s trilogy, which is devoted to an in-depth study of the myth of the frontier, his view of myth, ideology, and the relationship between these changed in a matter of two decades. In *Regeneration through Violence* (1973) the issue of ideology is virtually avoided and the index

does not even list *ideology*. In *The Fatal Environment* (1985) over fifty pages are devoted to discussions of ideology, and a separate entry in the index specifies *myth and ideology*. In *Gunfighter Nation* (1992), *ideology* and (public) *myth* are regarded as synonyms; although the index does list *ideology*, it immediately refers the reader to myth (ideology. *see* myth).

#### **[4] The disparagement of the notion of ideology in the American social consciousness**

Before addressing the problem of identifying somewhat more usable distinctions, a brief look at the special American attitude toward the very notion of ideology will be necessary. For the purposes of illustration, I have chosen a widely circulated and relatively recent text. In 1997, former presidential candidate Senator Robert Dole wrote an article for a political news magazine about the “Good War,” i.e., World War Two, in which he himself fought. As even a brief quotation will illustrate, his statements are symptomatic for a variety of reasons:

Although I did not fully understand it, I was fighting for another cause as well—to establish a new place for America in the world. On remote, foreign battlefields, our nation renewed its confidence and found its mission. It was a mission unique in human history and uniquely American in its idealism: to influence without conquest and to hold democratic ideals in sacred trust while many people waited in captivity. [...] We stayed true to that mission long after the war ended. As Winston Churchill stated, America stood at the “summit of the world.” And yet we helped our enemies rebuild and we defended them against ideology’s lingering threat until this very decade. Today the freedom America championed is the standard of civilization. At the close of history’s most brutal century, America’s values have triumphed—not through force but through example. (4)

The irony is obvious: Senator Dole is glorifying a central American ideology, America’s “Higher Calling,” and particular incarnations of the republic’s redemptive task: Elect Nationhood, Chosenness, Mission, Redeemer Nation, etc., and expressing at the same time revulsion from the notion of ideology. In Dole’s reasoning—which again is reflective of a wide consensus as documented in the popular magazines and in the spontaneous consciousness of most Americans today—ideology is supposed to be something “foreign,” connoting at its best “European,” at its worst “Marxian,” “socialist,” “revolutionary,” or “totalitarian.”

Indeed, Dole's anti-ideology stance is indirectly rooted in the predominantly pejorative sense in which the concept was uniformly used in Euro-American thinking throughout the 19th-century<sup>1</sup> and is at the same time directly linked to the long-held claim that American life somehow escaped, transcended ideology.<sup>2</sup> The drift of the logic of this claim would prompt at least two unlikely deductions. One, in the context of the nation's divinely imposed errands, whenever the American model offered itself as an alternative to the benighted nations of the world, it apparently supplanted "ideological" with something that was untainted with ideology. Two, a long chain of various historical and cultural manifestations of the American experience such as the colonial rebellion; federalism versus states' rights; creeds of national destiny and identity; doctrines of racism; the pro- and antislavery debate; Jim Crowism; the Social Darwinian, "capitalistic" and the biblical defenses of slavery; the various—Theodore Roosevelt's, Wilson's—brands of progressivism; the Muckraking Movement; the clash over "creationism" versus "evolutionism" in the Scopes trial; the patriotic creed; the various brands of civil religion; nationalism; social welfare; HUAC; the rearranged priorities of the 1960; civil rights; ethnically tinged aesthetics; the Moral Majority; right-wing conservatism; cultural feminism; multiculturalism; indeed the totality of the American political culture floated in

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- 1 Actually the pejorative implications of *ideology*—illusion, deception, unreality, false consciousness, a distorted representation of reality—were most effectively promoted by Marx and Engels. In *The German Ideology*, for instance, they argue that the concept is synonymous with an upside-down version of reality; in his *Letter to Mehring* Engels used the expression "false consciousness" for it, which later reverberated in the Frankfurt School; a kindred understanding of the term is formulated in *Feuerbach* and *Letter to Schmidt*. It should be added that they also prompted a value-neutral understanding of ideology, as described, for instance, in *Contribution to the Critique of Political Philosophy* by Marx, where he identifies various forms of social consciousness ("... the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological—forms...") as expressions of economic conditions of production. All in all, the views of Marx and Engels pertaining to ideology provided points of entry to two value-neutral definitions and one "misrepresenting/distorting-mirror" definition of the concept. The bare essentials of the two neutral usages are these: ideology is [1] the combination of all forms of social consciousness (such as philosophy, law, ethics, religion, art, etc.) and [2] the political ideas ascribed to a social or economic class (e.g. bourgeois ideology or, by extension, feminist ideology, Chicano ideology, etc.). The third, "false consciousness" alternative definition conceives of ideology as a form of misrepresentation that distorts social reality and seeks symbolically to resolve social contradictions that elude real solutions. The poststructural understanding of ideology has drawn upon elements from all three definitions.
  - 2 One more reason for the anti-ideology stance may be located in the conservative view, which claims that "conservatism is the one political doctrine which eschews ideology, being based on empirical observation and concern with actual historical conditions rather than abstract principles and definitions. This view implies that there can be no such thing as a conservative ideology. In this usage ideology is virtually identified with theory *per se*" (S. Davies 134).



a very special realm, in which these manifestations remained uncontaminated by an “ideological bias.” This is clearly an unlikely dream, as well as the triumph of the self-deluding tactics of contemporary ideology. Indeed, we are dealing here with a culture that has often shunned the very word itself but which is in fact, like all others, structured by deep, powerful and increasingly more conflicting ideological currents. We have to agree with Régis Durand’s summative and categorical statement: “[m]en live in ideology, produce it, manipulate it and are manipulated by it” (9). Or, as R. A. Nelson observes in his study of propaganda—one of the most frequent incarnations of M2—, “[e]ach one of us has been indoctrinated since childhood, and daily we continue to be bombarded with intrusive messages attempting to inform, manipulate, motivate, redirect, and even placate us” (1011).

Even apparently “non-ideological” beliefs such as the diffuse concept of the American Dream, or the soothing and reassuring myth of American classlessness are ideological concretizations, both being outgrowths of an open-class ideology, one of the oldest and most persistent American beliefs. The idea that any person can rise to any position in society by hard work, gumption and ability, regardless of his or her family origin or present condition or status has not only been always irresistible—despite statistical evidence—but also an effective strategy of containment. Or, even a casual look at the current multicultural scene will convincingly show that it would be difficult to find a cultural terrain in the world today more ideologically saturated than that.

The curious historical fate of the concept of ideology for the past somewhat more than two hundred years (the word appeared in the English language in 1796) from Antoine Destutt de Tracy (who first used the term; *idéologie* meaning, in his interpretation, “the philosophy of mind” or “the science of ideas”) through Marx, Engels, Gramsci, Mannheim, Lenin, the Frankfurt School to more recent interpretations of the concept by Marcuse, Barthes, Daniel Bell,<sup>3</sup> Althusser, Nüth,

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3 Daniel Bell, together with other social scientists—most notably Raymond Aron and Edward Shils—largely contributed to the post-World War Two disparagement of ideology in the United States. Bell’s collection of essays (on social theory, labor, society, and intellectual life), published in 1960 as *The End of Ideology*, although it did not champion liberal or technocratic triumphalism, served as a lightning rod for young radicals, who identified it—and the phrase the title perpetuated—with the quiescent mood of the 1950s and the liberal proposition that American society had “matured” to the point where only technical adjustments, not substantial social change, were required to meet common goals. The negative assessment of ideology, argued Christopher Lasch in 1995, “had the effect of proscribing not only politically self-serving statements but all claims not subject to scientific verification. [...] The critique of ideology had the effect, in other words, of banning from political discussion and serious study a whole range of allusive, symbolic, metaphorical, and emotionally charged strategies of communication. The twentieth-century attack on ideology echoed the Enlightenment’s attack on religion, compromising the analysis of political thought (by reducing

Eagleton, Jameson, Zizek, etc. will not be rehearsed here. Why, however, the value-neutral concept of ideology in the American political culture is a relatively late phenomenon (as, for example, in “feminist ideology,” Chicano or Black ideology, supporting the thesis that any group with a common interest can have an ideology) requires brief comment.

### [5] Ideologies “classic” and “pragmatic”

For the purposes of elucidating this issue I will propose a distinction between the “classic” and “pragmatic” manifestations of ideology, and—even if it looks paradoxical—between *ideology* and *ideological*. My understanding of the classic alternative involves the prerequisites that ideology as a form of conceptual patterning, beyond the basic requirement of the legitimization of society’s power-structure through a variety of strategies, should possess [1] a high degree of explicitness of formulation, and it [2] should have the characteristics of assertive authoritativeness, [3] explicit promulgation, and the quality of [4] insistence upon action.

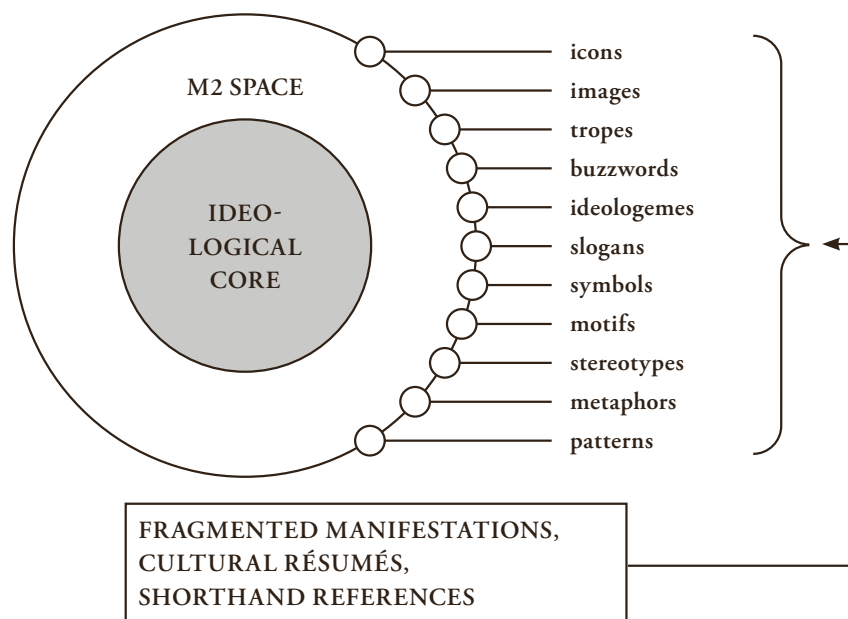


Figure 1

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it to lies, distortions, and rationalizations) in the same way that analysis of religious thought is compromised by reducing it to superstition” (*The Revolt of the Elites* 189).

In other words, these explicit, authoritative, widely disseminated, and often *coercive* forms must be wedded, in their vital phase of operation, to an elaborate infrastructure servicing them: authoritative texts supporting and maintained by a distinct social group or, more typically, a centralized state authority, a network of institutions (each complete with its own structure, equipment and personnel) designed to realize the norms, doctrines and preferences that are considered by a social group or society politically desirable or mandatory. Obvious avatars of the “classic” alternative are the powerful institutionalized medieval ideology of the divine right of monarchs; the dominant ideas underlying the theocratic social arrangement of New England Puritanism before the end of the 17th century; the explicit inner justification and defense of totalitarian political-economic systems, as in the Italian and German brands of fascism between the two world wars, or Marxism as it was made to operate in the Soviet Union and in a dozen or so other countries in Asia and East-Central Europe; Muslim ideation in those countries—current examples are Iran, Pakistan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan—where religious laws are virtually identical with civil laws. Thus the “classic” variant is also a visibly *coercive* alternative, which involves rigid regulation of all major aspects of political, economic, and social life, strict control of the means of production, (state) monopoly of the means of communication (which has a decisive role in the dissemination or suppression of the culture’s viable ideologemes), glorification of the state or power elite, and severe curtailment of the latitude in which the individual can operate.

M-CODE	CULTURAL FOCUS	CONCEPTUAL FOCUS	FUNCTIONAL CENTER	OTHER DOMINANT KEYWORDS
	expressive	authority “memory” “residue the Inquires”	contextual device, super-added potentials	paradigm prefiguration archetype intertextuality mythical correlation analogy
	ideological	epistemology iconicity conation	sense-making, justification, legitimation, projection	epistemological gap we-ness—they-ness status quo time-index fragmentation operational validity group cohesion pragmatism
	creative	mythiccity, mythopoeia, metamorphic transition	radical typology, novel recreation	ontological gap the poetic superwriting vision

Figure 2

Even a casual retrospective glance will make it clear that under American circumstances, ever since the birth of the republic, the “classic” alternative has not applied in mainstream American thought, or rather, in the actual objectifications of the political culture, which can be traced back to a number of reasons. First of all, the classic liberal recipe for maintaining the ideological ecology of the American republic was to rely on a free market of ideas. By allowing dissenting views to have a voice, liberal pluralists from the 17th century onwards believed that a kind of natural selection among versions of mythicized preference models would prevail—with some help from the dominant WASPM power structure. All in all, Americans find stances across a wide spectrum of values and perspectives. Although it is possible to discern relatively distinct cultural tendencies and competing moral visions, J. D. Hunter, in his analysis of present-day “culture wars,” certainly has a point in claiming that “there are no modern manifestos declaring a coherent system of programs and goals. What actually exists in public discussion are, very often, nothing more than jumbled accumulations of pronouncements, accusations, appeals, and partisan analyses” (107). Hunter’s point is certainly borne out by the wide spectrum of diverse ideological positions in today’s multicultural scene: radical separatism, academic radicalism, pseudo-radicalism, Eurocentrism, liberal pluralism, moral relativism, cosmopolitanism, conservatism, etc. Second, apart from the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, which describe and guarantee the four core values (liberty, equality, democracy, individualism), there is no centrally maintained and authoritatively promulgated code text outlining the ideological premises of the American nation. Indeed, even the words of the sacred documents are subject to diverse interpretation,<sup>4</sup> which means, among other things, that even the core values, which in theory could serve as unifying agents, can be construed to point in opposite directions and be made to encourage diversity and pluralism rather than orthodox adherence. Thus, for instance, the American concept of *liberty* is most often understood as referring to guarantees of individual protection against governmental restriction or intrusion, and *equality* as reinforcing identical political rights for the benefit of the individual citizen. It is, however, equally legitimate to construe both as an encouragement to equal rights to *variety*, the freedom of the individual to construct his or her life as they see fit, and that the target of the avowed American “associative impulse” could be virtually anything and anybody.

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4 “There are, it is usually said, two Constitutions, not one: the written document and the unwritten usages. Actually the more meaningful second Constitution is to be found not in the usages but in the outlines of economic power and interests, of religious convictions, of ethnic loyalties, of rural and urban thinking, of attitudes toward war and peace, with all of which the President must reckon as exactly as he reckons with the written Constitution” (Lerner 373).

A series of other factors have contributed to making American national ideology—which to most people exists as a blend of a kind of vague civil religion and affective, pious patriotism—apparently “soft,” “loose,” and resilient: the constitutional separation of church and state, federalism (in contrast to a centralized system of government; with the political subdivisions possessing a significant degree of political autonomy), the general desirability of limited government, checks and balances, etc., with the concomitant that there has been virtually no significant political agenda in the republic that has gone unchallenged.

There are two more extraconstitutional factors which I think have contributed to blunting the sharp edges and muting the overly ideological flavor of the political culture in the United States. One is the pragmatic bent inherent in most American political decisions. In the middle of the 20th century, Henry Steele Commager still saw no reason to doubt that pragmatism was a central theme in American life, flowing naturally out of the American experience and becoming, in the twentieth century, “almost the official philosophy of America” (97). This quality spills over into what could be best described as the means-ends construction of cultural reality. As diagnosed by P. Meadows, in American culture there has been “a structure of action which is no less notable for its ingenuity of means,” “its tentativeness of purpose,” and the “legitimacy of substitution and alteration.” “Form is not sacred,” he argues, “but process is.” This pragmatic resilience is operative in “the continuing assault on the limitations of action in favor of its facilitation: in other words, an American voluntarism of ends and means, usually in the name of efficiency...” (43).<sup>5</sup>

The second added factor is the simple fact that in the United States governmental power remains dispersed among the national, state, and local levels. The economy, for instance, permits companies to expand, compete, contract, and expire largely on their own, and this, to a large extent, is analogous with the nation’s cultural life, made up of the sum total of expressive, ideological, and creative activities. The apparent dispersal of ideology across space is also a consequence of the nation’s regional, demographic, and ethnic diversity: the various manifestations of the national ethos tend to be regionalized, localized and tribalized.

When we cast about for obvious examples, the American civil religion and the patriotic creed will immediately come to mind: the former Confederacy, for instance, has produced a Southern civil religion complete with its own Southern historical pantheon, hagiography, and patriotic pressure groups. As Charles Reagan Wilson has observed, “[m]inisters and religious groups created a civil religion that tied regional patriotism and religion together so that the remembered Confederate

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5 I looked at the formal and functional interpenetration of M2 with the philosophy of pragmatism in my “Some Observations on Myth and ‘Practical’ Pragmatism in American Culture.”

cause took on spiritual significance” (“History” 589). Historically, the Southern consciousness in ante-bellum times also had to face the virtually insurmountable task of legitimating its own distinctive class structure and selectively applied democracy—actually *Herrenvolk* democracy: master race democracy with political citizenship limited to white males—and much energy went into the ideological—and for public consumption inevitably mythicized (M2-ed)—defense of the paradoxical and symbiotic linkage between liberty and slavery. And to illustrate how ideological priorities, in this case those of the Confederate Cause, were spontaneously—and coercively—promulgated and maintained, suffice it to cite the words of the intensely patriotic Mrs. Merriwether in Mitchell’s *Gone With the Wind*, the novel which became part of national and regional folk culture: “Any man who does not think our Cause is just and holy should be hanged!” (231). Mitchell’s own comment is even more revealing:

These women, so swift to kindness, so tender to the sorrowing, so untiring in times of stress, could be as implacable as furies to any renegade who broke one small law of their unwritten code. This code was simple. Reverence for the Confederacy, honor to the veterans; loyalty to old forms, pride in poverty, open hands to friends and undying hatred to Yankees. (832)

Further examples could be provided, for instance, in the various incarnations of the Puritan work ethic, which became elevated to the status of ideology and, as such, widely promoted. It is an added irony of recent American development that this enduring tenet has been recently appropriated and practiced most spectacularly by the “model minorities,” i.e., Asian immigrants, more specifically the Japanese, the Chinese, and the Koreans.

Thus, just like the primary and secondary levels of the American public school system, the actual terrain of ideological inculcation is the local: the family, the classroom, the church, and a large number of patriotic organizations, that is, primarily *state* and *regional* agencies, or simply *grassroots* organizations.<sup>6</sup> There is plenty of volunteerism, charity, and philanthropy in American society, which, together with the recent flurry of public opinion polls, may also reinforce the belief that governing institutions may occasionally reflect rather than direct popular attitudes. Historically, various reform forces, for example the Populist movement and the Muckrakers, used the media to bring about middle-class awareness and helped spur change. The operation of the various interest/pressure groups is also

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<sup>6</sup> Recent issues of *Statistical Abstract* count on the average 330,000 churches and 40,000 foundations currently operating in the United States.

acted out most effectively on the local and state levels, and rarely can the source of coercion, subtle or otherwise, be located in federally enforced initiatives.<sup>7</sup>

To offer a simple illustration of the point, I will invite the late John Updike to testify. The American writer, Updike argued over three decades ago that he “is the citizen of a wealthy, literate country where ‘the freedom of speech, or of the press,’ as the Constitution puts it, has been a vigorously defended right for over two centuries of national existence ... [N]o American writer, to my knowledge, has ever gone to jail for anything he has written” (19). The other side of the coin, it seems, is what may happen in local public schools and libraries, which have banned a large number of American classics from the shelves. Even a very brief sample is impressive: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, R. Wright’s *Black Boy*, *The Bell Jar*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *The Fixer*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, Miller’s *The Death of a Salesman*, P. L. Travers’ *Mary Poppins*, *The American Heritage Dictionary*, etc.

Moreover, under American circumstances, behind-the-scenes leadership—wielding influence from the closet—is not an unfamiliar phenomenon. “The hidden persuaders” (as Vance Packard called them with reference to commercial persuasion) in the political culture, however, are often difficult to spot, although they are present in the media, in the mass cultural text, or in the complex strategies of rhetorical persuasion in which the cultural consumer is offered substantial incentives for ideological adherence.<sup>8</sup> Again, it is worth considering at this point the ramifications of Lasch’s critical statements pertaining to the decline of public debate, the “lost art of argument” in public communicative transactions:

Increasingly information is generated by those who wish to promote something or someone—a product, a cause, a political candidate or officeholder—without arguing their case on its merits or explicitly

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7 This understanding of how the relevant institutions are involved, as infrastructure, in generating and maintaining ideology shows some overlap with Althusser’s idea of “an ideological apparatus” (168), and his distinction between the two “levels” or “instances” of the superstructure: **RSA** (*Repressive State Apparatus*) and **ISAs** (*Ideological State Apparatuses*). However, Althusser’s model was not made with the American political culture in mind, where power permeates down through several filters, and the ideological significance of RSA (the federal government, the administration, the armed services, the police, the FBI, the courts, the prisons, etc.) may be offset by that of the second level: churches, schools, the family, political parties, trade unions, the media, other cultural institutions (Althusser 127–186).

8 Which segment of American society dictates likes and dislikes is obvious: corporate America. “No one challenges the rich and their corporations, [...]” Gore Vidal once observed and he also added, “[w]e’re a second-world nation as far as 80 percent of our people go. Twenty percent do wonderfully well, working for the one percent that owns most of the wealth” (171).



advertising it as self-interested material either. Much of the press, in its eagerness to inform the public, has become a conduit for the equivalent of junk mail. (174)

This perverted obsession with information became especially conspicuous during the never-ending bombardment of the American public with details of the American president's private life in the so-called Clinton scandal: much of the information nobody wanted and most of it ended up as unread waste.

#### **[6] Is there an American ideology?**

It would appear, on the face of it, tempting to accept Kaplan's conclusion that "there is no such thing as an American ideology." It is true," the argument goes, "that some small subgroups in the United States may have a comprehensive pattern of cognitive and moral beliefs that constitute an ideology. [...] But the beliefs of even the extreme conservatives in the Republican party or leftists in the Democratic party come closer to being creeds or even belief systems than to being ideologies" (217). A slightly different approach to emphasizing the American freedom from the constraints of ideology is reflected in Richard Hofstadter's widely circulated aphorism: "It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies but to be one" (qtd. in Wightman 326), another instance of fetishization for the purposes of avoiding definition by the misplacing of emphasis.

The fact remains, however, that on the federal level, ideology in America lacks the unequivocally dogmatic certainty of the "classic" variant, and owing to the structural incorporation of the multiple filters described above, the system appears to be tentative rather than dogmatic, thus, in a comparative sense, resilient, loose, and pragmatic. This, however, does not mean that the American social consciousness or—to borrow from F. Jameson—the "political unconscious" is less ideological than comparable forms of collective conceptual patterning in any other culture or nation.

The apparently pragmatic/resilient version of ideology may even evoke the concept of value neutrality in some. It should not be forgotten, however, that neutrality often is an ideological cover which can provide crucial service for the legitimation of the established political order. And, finally, because every cultural act and product is to some extent *ideological*, social myths are closely related to the process of the subject-object dialectic and that of cognition. As such, the study of M2 configurations should, in the final analysis, also be concerned both with object-cognition and the laws of motion that govern human thinking. Owing to the fact

that the ideological dimension penetrates and is inscribed in all forms of ideation and patterning of thought—and not only outlooks, creeds, social programs, belief systems, myth structures but each distinct domain of the social consciousness—ideology is operative in patterns which are not by definition ideology. Which is an added reason why the modification of the concept of ideology by adjectival means is justified.

### [7] “Ideology” versus “ideological”

That is, the noun-adjective duality translates into our *ideology/M2* parallel in the following manner: myth—like many other artifacts of culture—is an ideological product, while it is different from ideology *per se*. This generates an ostensible paradox because most often it is the M2 incarnation of the ideology that is perceived and analyzed *as* ideology. This slippage is most often a not even detectable omission for the simple reason that the social content of pure ideology—which is usually not even accessible in communicated form—and its mythicized version—that is, as a given ideology appears in the guise or through the filter of M2—is most often hardly noticeable. Indeed, this metonymic shift is a pardonable inadequacy for two reasons. One, it is often difficult, even risky—because deliberately hidden—to identify the naked core version; two, in terms of content and social function, the lines of force of ideology and of the mythicized version are bound to point in the same direction. Thus, in a pragmatic sense, they are one and the same thing. However, as we shall see, they are still not identical.

Moreover, it is worth considering the fact that sometimes, depending on the social circumstance of its uses, one and the same text, narrative, or method will or will not function as ideology. The thrust of the British Antony Easthope’s example will serve here to argue the point:

Joseph Campbell, writing as an anthropologist, claims that a wide range of myth and story presents the hero on the basis of a common narrative structure: this is science, or at least counts as science if accepted by others as true. But if Campbell’s views (“follow your bliss”) are taken up—as they were during the 1980s in the United States—and used to provide a rationale for Reaganite consumerist avarice and entrepreneurial selfishness, then the same set of arguments become ideology. That is, they operate as forms of power to support some social possibilities and weaken others. (131)

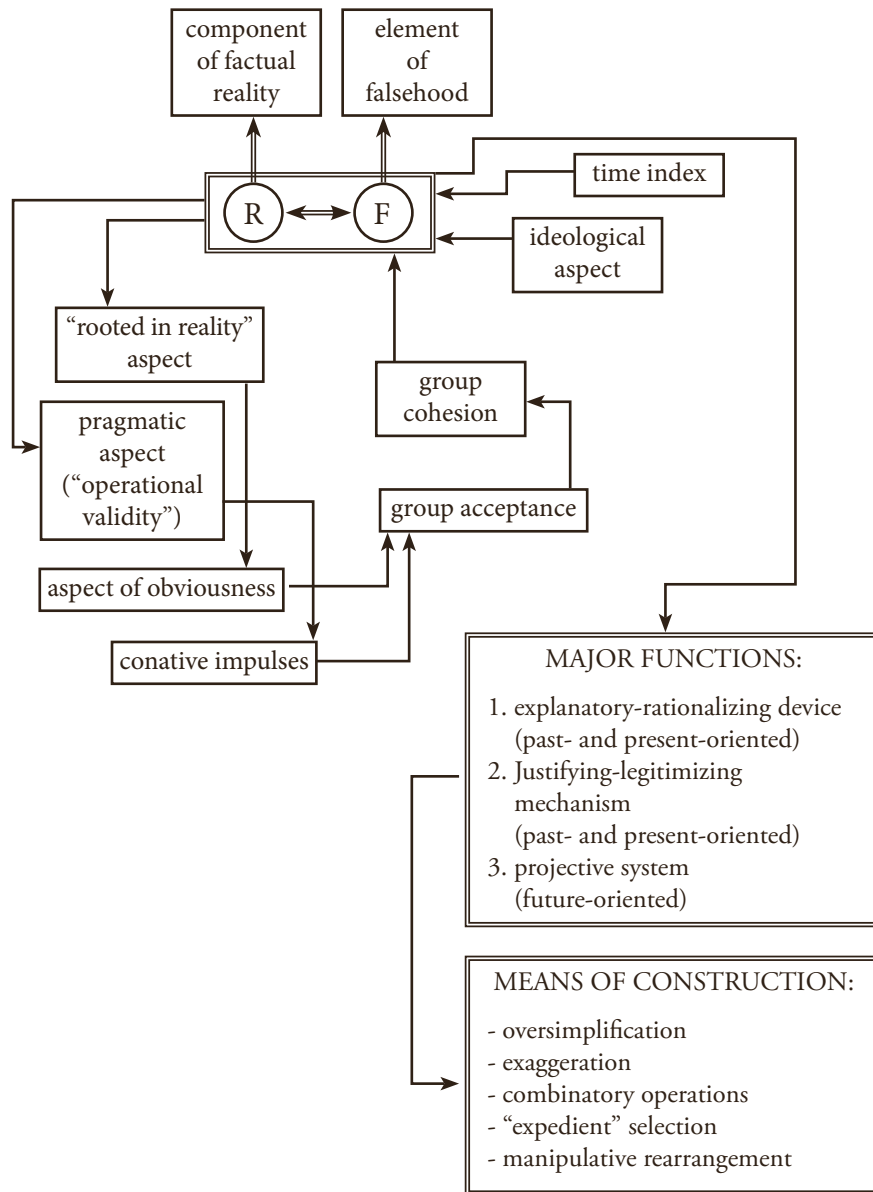


Figure 3

Besides, at a lower and more practical level of cultural analysis, *myth* may be used to describe a defunct or rival ideology, hereby labeled negatively as “untruth” or “bad knowledge.” In this kind of sorting out, much depends on (a) who is doing the labeling; (b) which definition of ideology we are talking about. This

is almost always the case when ideology is used with pejorative connotations to refer to the thought of others.

It is primarily when we come to sorting out the functional aspects of ideology that it becomes almost impossible to distinguish M2-type configurations from ideology. In a broad sense, both constructs are focused on justification, rationalization, and legitimization of a given status quo, group attitudes, goals, or general life situation, and both can reflect, defend, support—or weaken—particular social, moral, religious, and economic institutional interests and commitments. Moreover, both can be seen as mystifying, distorting, or concealing the relations of power within society, as well as criticizing and repudiating alternative frames of reference or existing social orders.<sup>9</sup> In these particular functions, ideology and M2 can show significant overlaps, indeed the two words, for reasons mentioned above, are often used interchangeably.

Yet there *are* identifiable differences: while ideology tends to offer theoretical, primarily philosophical and apparently logical, often blunt, justifications, M2 is most often devoid of conceptual abstractions, or rather, its abstraction often tends to be symbolic. This latter feature of social myths does not necessarily clash with M2's aestheticizing-concretizing function, formulated by Tindall in the following statement: “[t]hey [social myths in general] tend to develop abstract ideas in more or less concrete and dramatic terms” (“Mythology” 2).

## **[8] Ideology into M2, M2 into iconic signifier: packaging/signifying transactions**

Structurally, therefore, in elaborate public myths by ideology I mean the inner conceptual, philosophical core of M2-type myth. As the pattern of ideation moves away from the abstract center, the core content is subsequently “served” (“cloaked,” “dressed up,” “translated,” “packaged”) in the M2 space, that is, the ideological

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9 Karl Mannheim's disjunction between present-oriented *ideologies* (the classbound beliefs of those who had an interest in maintaining the status quo) and future-oriented *utopias* (representing the interests of those for whom the status quo is insufficient) is legitimate in describing rival ideologies belonging to social classes caught up in an oppositional framework. But neither can a monolithic (non-oppositional) elaborate ideological system, no matter how present-oriented, do without projecting an image of “where we are going.” Most ideological systems target the status quo, thus they tend to possess a marked present-oriented drift. However, the status quo cannot be conceived of without contemplating its own origins either, thus the past-oriented dimension is also an attendant quality. In terms of this triple orientation, we are bound to find yet another proof for the fact that ideology and (thematically kindred) M2 constructs are close cousins.

formulation acquires a concrete, dramatic, aestheticized, intellectually accessible format, ready for dissemination to a wide public audience. In social space, the M2 version, as has been highlighted earlier, tends to become further fragmented, iconicized, sloganized, pictorialized, visualized, etc. to serve as cultural shortcuts: reminders of the message are coded in the M2 configuration. Thus, in a sense, M2 is tied to ideology in a special functional relationship: M2 serv(ic)es ideology by *packaging* it for the purposes of making it suitable to fulfill a variety of social needs: to serve as rhetoric of persuasion, to function as a tool of concealment, but, above all, to justify. For whatever reason.

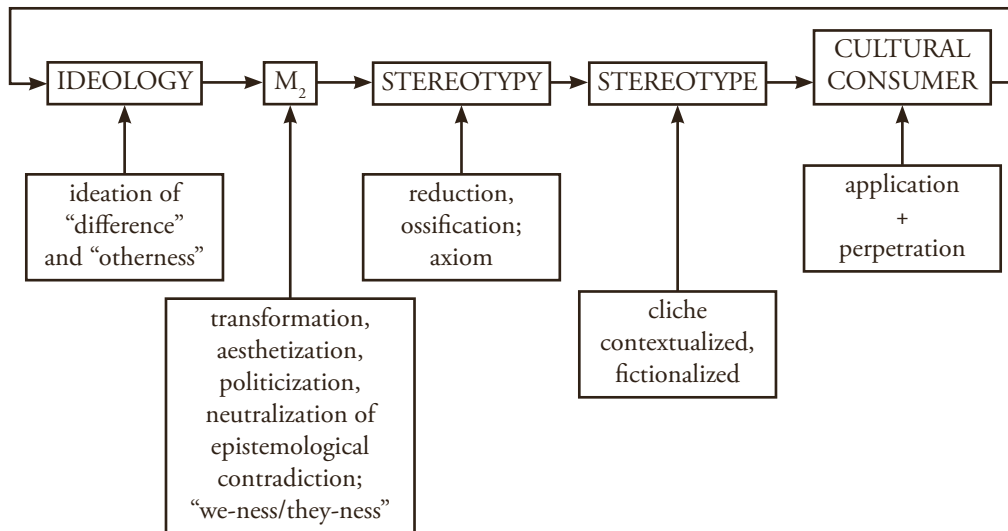


Figure 4

Let's see in two selected and familiar examples how this three-stage process actually operates. My first example will be Manifest Destiny. The designation itself shows that we are dealing with a packaged version: the concept is identified as perceived in the second, M2 (indeed, M2-ed) stage: it is in this mythicized guise that the ideology received wide circulation. But what was the "real" ideology behind Manifest Destiny? The answer is very simple: territorial ambitions. The acquisition of new territories to fulfill the nationalistic imperative of expanding the orbit of the nation's activity across the continent and building an American empire to the Pacific. Visions of a vast "Empire of Democracy from sea to shining sea" had been active at least since the Louisiana Purchase, indeed even earlier than that. This ideology was bound up with a number of support preference models: geographical predestination, world leadership, the cult of élan, what Josiah Strong later came to call "the outpopulating power of the Anglo-Saxon race," the Puritan

sense of mission, etc. Even so, however, the ideology was overly selfish, pragmatic, voluntaristic—and blatantly aggressive. Not even the crusading spirit or the notion of the white man's burden could sufficiently mitigate it to be safely used for wide public consumption.

The harsh edges of the ideology, therefore, had to be blunted. Which means that the ideological content had to be “packaged,” “serviced” as it were. This crucial transaction took place in the M2 space. In the process, the core content underwent miraculous transformations. In the alchemy of mythicization, the naked ideology (naked in more senses than one) was “dressed up,” packaged, made to assume a new identity as a high-prestige public myth. The reincarnation of the ideology as mythicized/packaged ideology under the alias of Manifest Destiny actually meant adding substantial cosmetic touches in the “dressing up” sequence: the mythicizing process [1] upgraded the national(istic) ambition to the level of religious discourse; [2] by transcendentalizing territorial ambitions, it shifted these strivings to the realm of sacred duty (not a particular national objective but a cosmic errand), to that of a “higher calling,” thus injecting into the M2-ed frame of reference the notion of external imposition; [3] most importantly, owing to the above transactions it concealed the real (nationalistic, acquisitive) motives; and [4] hereby it shifted the locus of responsibility outside the frame of reference in which it actually resided. The nature of the procedures operative in the third stage could be best summed up by pointing to the many sloganlike clichés and literary images celebrating epic westering, the heroic quality of the relentless and providentially approved march, the triumphalist view of a superior civilization, or simply by referring to John Gast's famous painting (to be found in the Library of Congress) depicting Columbia's civilization-generating, westward march. The title of the painting is, not uncharacteristically, American Manifest Destiny. This will also make it clear why one way of understanding ideology is through looking at the repertoire of images, themes, and ideas disseminated for broad public consumption by and for a dominant culture. In this understanding, ideology is a *system of representations*.

The tripartite sequence from ideology via M2 through iconic manifestations also marks a chronological progression of operations, clearly detectable in our second example, the frontier myth. Thus, the unprecedented popularity of Turner's thesis appears to demonstrate that a core ideology, which the Turner concept dramatized and aestheticized, had been in place before the frontier thesis itself was born and widely circulated. This ideology was anchored in nationalistic expectations to find a nativistic explanation of national history, of a unique American character and creed that would shed the uncomfortable burden of the unappealing notion of European precedents: the “germ theory,” “the inheritance of institutions,” and

the emphasis on “the continuity of history” (Hacker 63). “Our national genius is Anglo-Saxon,” proclaimed J. Strong somewhat less than a decade before Turner’s exceptionalist argument first surfaced in American historiography, “but not English, its distinctive type is the result of a finer nervous organization, which is certainly being developed in this country” (217). In brief, the ideology was ready to enter the M2 space, where the right man at the right time was capable of bringing the scattered resources into focus and, having produced an improved version cloaked as a romanticized narrative, offered the final product as a “key to American development” by making the core ideology palatable and ready for appropriation to the cultural consumer.<sup>10</sup> In the third stage, a profusion of iconic satellites were generated, from “fountain of youth” to Marlboro man. The understanding of the three-tier mechanism described offers a practicable methodological point of entry into how the gloss of ideological “innocence” can be identified and penetrated in M2-type public myths or, for that matter, in any other cultural product, including literature, into which M2 configurations are incorporated.

Thus, in the final analysis, reversing Northrop Frye’s notion that “an ideology is applied mythology” (*Words* 23), I see M2, on the one hand, as applied ideology—the particular concretization of particular core ideological content—, and, on the other hand, as a corollary of what has been outlined above, M2—as public myth—is interpreted ideology. Again, while I agree with the basic logic of Barthes’ understanding of how *parole interpellative* addresses the subject to naturalize—for him—the cultural environment, and I also accept the “hailing” process described by Althusser—ideology “makes obvious” the ways in which people live their lives in society—I do not think it is always through direct interpellation that ideology addresses itself to the subject. Most often, I believe, an ideology in its naked purity is not suited to “interpellating” the cultural consumer; hence the rationale for the transactions transpiring in the M2 space.

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10 The linguistic and textual markers of Turner’s frontier “narrative” serve as unmistakable and symptomatic indicators of the conative transactions he is involved in, manifested primarily in the affective, “edifying,” and romanticized flavor of the argumentative framework in a text that is supposed to be “objective” historiography.



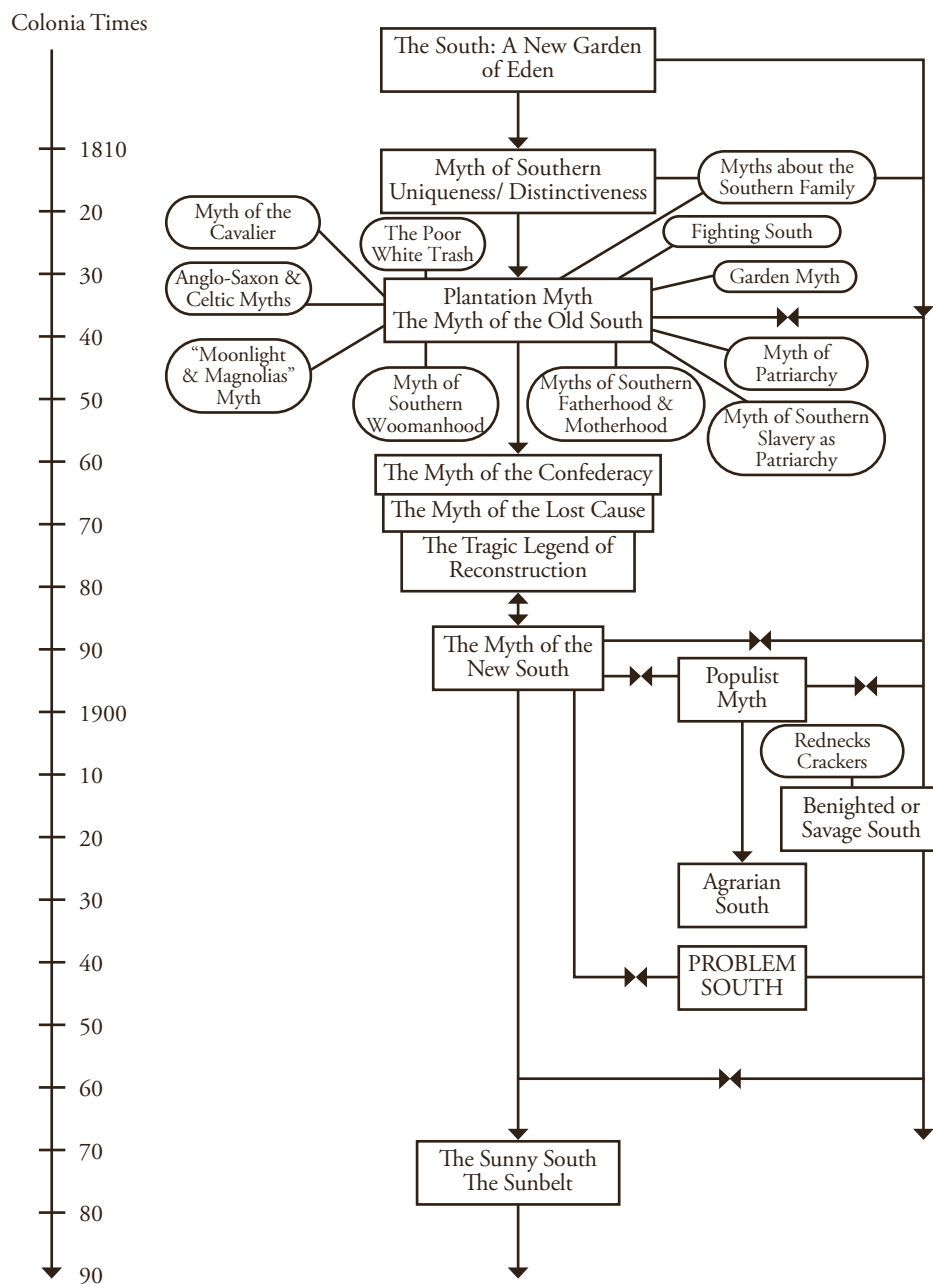


Figure 5

It should be added, however, that it is virtually impossible to offer a general description of the level of articulacy at which the social consciousness stores the content of the ideological core. In some cases ideology is formulated, verbalized,

and promulgated *as* ideology. In other cases it can be programmatically hidden, and the concealed entity can only be reconstructed via penetrating the M2-ed incarnation: a rewarding exercise for the student of M2. In still other cases, as, for instance, in most manifestations of racially prejudiced stereotypy, the social consciousness may accommodate the triggering ideological deep structure—thus the conatively generated idea of otherness and difference among human beings and populations—in forms of abstracted hierarchy, difference, otherness, superiority versus inferiority abstractions, us-them (in-group versus out-group) patterns, etc., which, in the logic of our previous argument, acquire their external, packaged, public form in the M2 space. That is when ideology is ready to “interpellate” the cultural consumer, that is, through the filter of M2. It would be a large measure of self-delusion to believe that this is an “innocent” and “disinterested” game. And one last note: does it still make sense today—in the post-postmodern age—to isolate a particular kind of consciousness as “false”? It seems that the puny force of theory does not have much of a chance against the overwhelming bulk and tide of everydayness. Which is a dilemma that has to be addressed, separately, in its own right.

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## From Assimilation Narrative to Transcultural Texts – The Case of Hispanic-American Drama

Tamás Vraukó

In literary theory and literary history the works of (ethnic) minority authors—and similarly, the works of authors dealing with minorities—are often referred to as “assimilation narrative.” This term tends to suggest that minority authors of works produced in the language of the majority of the people living in the country concerned seek a place in society through assimilation. Assimilation, however, means melting up in the majority nation by adopting all the values, customs and way of life characteristic of the majority, and abandoning, leaving behind, giving up the original traditional values, ethics, lifestyle, religion etc. of the minority. Assimilation means disappearing without a trace, continuing life as a new person, with new values, language, a whole set of new cultural assets. Milton M. Gordon provides various definitions of assimilation. A relatively early one is the following:

An early and influential definition of “assimilation” by the two sociologists Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess reads as follows: Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to understand and believe that one ethnic group accepts the other’s memories and sentiments, let alone historical heritage of the other one. If an individual or an entire ethnic group suppresses its own sentiments and historic heritage for the sake of survival it is not identical with accepting those of the dominant group.

Another author Gordon quotes in order to support his argumentation is Henry Pratt Fairchild:

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1 Milton M. Gordon. *Assimilation in American Life. The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*. New York: Oxford UP, 1964. p. 73., quoting Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1921, p. 735.

social assimilation does not require the complete identification of all the units, but such modifications as eliminate the characteristics of foreign origin, and enable them all to fit smoothly into the typical structure and functioning of the new cultural unit. . . . [and later] In essence, assimilation is the substitution of one nationality pattern for another. Ordinarily, the modifications must be made by the weaker or numerically inferior group<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, Fairchild's definition is partly close to a definition of integration, rather than assimilation. It claims that the individuals and groups do not necessarily give up all the "units" of their existence, although in the second half of the quotation, somewhat contradictorily, refutes what he has said two lines above, when assumes that " assimilation is the substitution of one nationality pattern for another." Gordon also points out some of the contradictions in this and other definitions, and continues to find other ones. Such is an interpretation by John Cuber:

Assimilation is] the adoption by a person or group of the culture of another social group to such a complete extent that the person or group no longer has any characteristics identifying him with his former culture and no longer has any particular loyalties to his former culture. Or, the process leading to this adoption.<sup>3</sup>

Gordon browses through a number of definitions and approaches that suggest that assimilation is in fact a mutual process, as also referred to by Park and Burgess above. Although it is natural that the cultural exchange is to some extent mutual, the process is basically one-way; the less powerful, numerically weaker group is melted up in the larger, dominant social, ethnic and/or cultural entity.

Similarly to what Gordon did a few decades before him, Martin N. Marger also examines a range of possible definitions of assimilation, emphasising that it is not a static situation but a slower or faster process:

Most simply, assimilation means increasing similarity or likeness. As Yinger defines it, assimilation is "a process of boundary reduction that

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2 Gordon p. 73., quoting Henry Pratt Fairchild (ed.), *Dictionary of Sociology*, New York, Philosophical Library, 1944, pp. 276-7.

3 Gordon, p. 66., quoting John F. Cuber, *Sociology: A Synopsis of Principles*, New York, Appleton -Century- Crofts, 3rd ed., 1955, p. 609.



can occur when members of two or more societies or of smaller cultural groups meet” (1981:249). Similarly, Harold Abramson defines it as “the processes that lead to greater homogeneity in society” (1980:150). Each of these definitions stresses that assimilation is best seen as a path or trajectory on which ethnic groups may move. It is a process, not a fixed condition or state of relations.

The end point of this homogenizing process is, for an ethnic group, the disappearance of any cultural or racial distinction setting it off from other groups (Alba and Nee, 1999). Or, for the society as a whole, it is “the biological, cultural, social, and psychological fusion of distinct groups to create a new ethnically undifferentiated society” (Barth and Noel, 1972:336). Following this idea to its logical end point, with complete assimilation there are no longer distinct ethnic groups. Rather, there is a homogeneous society in which ethnicity is not a basis of social differentiation and plays no role in the distribution of wealth, power, and prestige.<sup>4</sup>

It is necessary to discuss the issue in detail, as the terms *assimilation* and *integration* are still often used interchangeably, although the situation has improved a lot recently, last but not least due to the large-scale international migration and the high number of articles that deal with the problems of *integrating* crowds of people of different ethnic background into European societies.

It is to be noted, however, that most ethnic minority authors do not long for assimilation. The complete assimilation, that is, the disappearance of all ethnic groups, minorities on the altar of an entirely homogeneous society is convenient for majority politicians, and that is exactly what (most) minority authors fight against. There are minority authors who embrace complete and irrevocable assimilation, but they are the minority.

When the social, political and cultural movement of the Hispanics, the Chicano Movement emerged, the intention of the playwrights—and other authors, prose writers and poets—became immediately evident. Luis Valdez’s *campesino theatre* soon turned out to be the mouthpiece of the movement on the stage. Spanish-language theatre has long traditions on the American continent. Historical sources

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4 Martin N. Marger. *Race and Ethnic Relations. American and global Perspectives*. Boston: Cengage Learning. 2017. p. 81., quoting: Yinger, J. Milton. “Toward a Theory of Assimilation and Dissimilation.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1981. 4:249–64., p. 249, Noel, Donald L. “A Theory of the Origin of Ethnic Stratification.” *Social Problems*. 1968. 16:157–72., p. Richard Alba. “Immigration and the American Realities of Assimilation and Multiculturalism.” *Sociological Forum*. 1999., Abramson, Harold. “Assimilation and Pluralism.” Pp. 150–60 in Stephen Thernstrom (ed.), *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1980. p. 150.

mention that when Don Juan de Oñate's expedition arrived at the Rio Grande in 1598, the second thing they did—after drinking a lot from the water of the river, thus escaping death from thirst—was staging a play that was written by a cavalry officer. The play has been lost in the centuries past, but the fact indicates how important, and at the same time natural, theatre was for the *conquistadores*. The play of Oñate's expedition has been lost, but the tradition has not. Huerta talks about the *carpas* as forerunners of the Campesino theatre that emerged in the 1960s. The

*Carpas* were popular vaudeville-like performances that flourished on both sides of the border in the 1920s and 1930s. Mexicans, who found themselves living in an alien nation on land that used to belong to Mexico, were now considered 'traitors' back home and 'outsiders' in the United States. Many *carpa* sketches deal with this sense of dislocation, making fun of the 'Gringos' as well as of those Mexicans who attempted to 'fit in' by denying their culture and language. (...) [T]hese early examples of political theatre in the barrios were performed primarily, but not solely, in Spanish, thus presaging the bilingual expressions of Chicano theatre.<sup>5</sup>

The sense of dislocation in a land that formerly belonged to another country is all too familiar for people living in many parts of Europe as well, especially for those in Central and Eastern Europe. The way Huerta rejects assimilation—that is, "fitting in" at the expense of abandoning one's culture and language—is just as natural as the Hispanics mock and scorn the people who are ready to do that.

It is the tradition of the *carpas* that Valdez built his *campesino theatre* upon. The plays, although written primarily for the seasonal farmworkers in California and other areas in the Southwest, were also meant for the mainstream American readers. Valdez chose his topics from the darkest dimensions of urban life: crime, riots, unfair punishment and racial prejudice. The very choice of his subjects convincingly indicate that Valdez seeks an opportunity to deal with things that are taken from the Hispanic community, and that are not very well known to mainstream American audiences. Valdez also chose topics that were despised by the (Anglo-) American public, or were at least found suspicious. Valdez intended to show that there is no reason to look at these topics in a hostile way or with suspicion. Bruce-Novoa describes how Valdez joined forces with Chávez as follows:

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5 Jorge Huerta, "When Sleeping Giants Awaken: Chicano Theatre in the 1960s." *Theatre Survey*, May 2002: 43.1. Arts & Humanities Database, pp. 23-36. p. 24.

Shortly after Chávez had established the United Farm Workers Union, Luis Valdez came to him at his headquarters in Delano, California, and offered to organize dramatic presentations for the strikers. The performances would be designed to both entertain and instruct. Valdez had personal, professional, and ideological credentials to support his offer. A Chicano native of Delano, Valdez had worked as a laborer in the very fields Chávez aimed to organize. But he also had a long association with drama, beginning in high school, activities which won him a university scholarship and an eventual degree in drama from San Jose State.<sup>6</sup>

One of the most famous plays by Valdez is *Zoot Suit*. The "zoot suit" was a characteristic outfit, almost like a uniform, worn by *pachucos*, that is, young Hispanic men. It consisted of highly colorful, usually one or two sizes bigger than necessary trousers and jackets, with some exaggerated features, e. g. a too long watch chain. As the zoot suit was different from mainstream clothing, it was looked upon with suspicion and hostility on the side of the Anglo-Saxons. The suspicion and hostility escalated into the open violence called the "Zoot Suit Riots" during World War II, when the paranoia in connection with the "enemy within" led to attacks on Hispanic youths (and everyone else, who was regarded as different from the majority society). One of the main objectives of Valdez—in accordance with the intentions of the movement of Chávez—was to dispel the prejudice and hostility. The play, *Zoot Suit*, begins with a brief English introduction. Enters El Pachuco, addresses the audience in Spanish, and then we read/hear this:

(EL PACHUCO *breaks character and addresses the audience in perfect English.*)

Ladies and gentlemen  
the play you are about to see  
is a construct of fact and fantasy.  
The Pachuco Style was an act in Life  
and his language a new creation.  
His will to be was an awesome force  
eluding all documentation ...<sup>7</sup>

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6 Juan Bruce-Novoa. Chicano Theater: Editing the Origin Myth. In: *Hispanic-American Writers*. New edition. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism. 2009. pp. 3-17.

7 Luis Valdez. *Zoot suit*. In *Zoot Suit and Other Plays* by Luis Valdez. Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 1992. epub. pp. 43-166. p. 47.

Not only is the English pronunciation of the character supposed to be impeccable, but the style of the first English monologue of the character is educated and sophisticated. The purpose is winning the attention of the audience, including the Anglo-Saxon viewers. Later on, El Pachuco corrects the press when they speak to him in English:

THE LINEUP: Police Arrest Mexican Youths. Black Widow Girls in Boy Gangs.

PRESS: The City of the Angeles ...

PACHUCO: (*Sharply.*) El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles de

Porciúncula, pendejo.

PRESS: Los Angeles Daily News Headline...<sup>8</sup>

The sharp voice in which El Pachuco corrects the journalist is a sign of the awakening conscience and possessiveness: Los Angeles is *our* city, at least as much as it is the Anglos'.

The disdainful and vulgar word attached to the end of the sentence—*pendejo*—is not very common in Valdez's work. In most cases, *pendejo* simply means a stupid person, and may even be used affectionately, but this is not the case here.

Chicago-born playwright Carlos Morton, while also dealing with issues of contemporary Hispanic-American society, reaches back to the beginnings of Spanish history in the New World in his play written about Hernán Cortés's interpreter and mistress, *La Malinche*. The play was written in 1983, but was not published until the end of the century. Aikaterini Delikoustantinou sums up Carlos Morton's life and inspirations briefly in the introduction to an interview as follows:

Prolific throughout his career as playwright, which spans well over four decades, Carlos Morton draws material for his theatre work from his many travels across continents. His family's immigrant background and his experience of living throughout the United States and Latin America inspired early on a deep appreciation of different cultures that shines through his plays.<sup>9</sup>

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8 Luis Valdez, p. 53.

9 Aikaterini Delikoustantinou. "An Interview with Carlos Morton." [www.critical-stages.org/20/american-theatre-now-an-interview-with-carlos-morton/](http://www.critical-stages.org/20/american-theatre-now-an-interview-with-carlos-morton/)

Following the footsteps of Valdez, Morton launches *La Malinche* in alternated English and Spanish; the introductory instructions are in English, but the first character appearing on the stage, an Aztec goddess, sings in Spanish. The language of the Aztecs is Nahuatl, but the goddess uses Spanish, not only because Morton does not speak the Nahuatl, but it also indicates that she belongs to Mexico, and the Spanish is older on the American continent than English. The lament of the goddess, opening the play in Spanish, is repeated in English at its end, thus enclosing the play in a frame, and creating a synthesis of the two cultures.

In *La Malinche*, Morton treats the birth of Mexico as a new culture and new nation. While the author spins and weaves the lines of the story, and creates a dynamic action with moving a handful of characters only, the first instances of cultural exchange take place, and the first cases of code switching occur. That code switching occurs between Nahuatl and Spanish, since the original name of the female protagonist is Malintzin, and that was distorted into Malinche, more easily pronounced by the Spaniards:

CORTÉS

Your name?

Malinche

Malintzin.

CORTÉS (*mispronouncing it*)

Ma-lin-che? They say you speak many languages.<sup>10</sup>

Code switching and learning from each other between the Aztecs and Spaniards continue all through the play. Morton's aim is to show that what the Anglos often scorn, the dual cultural heritage of the Hispanic-Americans, is in fact a resource. The Hispanic-American theatre has gone a long way in a short time: from the *carpas* of the early 20th century through dramas inspired by events of direct political-legal oppression to the liberated plays that deal with the daily life and problems of Latinos. Finally, the assimilationist strategies were forced to retreat. Jimmy A. Noriega summarizes the—then—triumphant advent of the second decade of the 21st century for Latino theatre as follows:

The (...) decade (...) began with a series of milestones that signaled a major turning point for Latina/o theatre. In April 2010 Luis Valdez's classic *Zoot Suit* opened at the Compañía Nacional de Teatro in Mexico City, and the

10 Carlos Morton. "La Malinche". *Dreaming on a Sunday in the Alameda and other Plays*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004. pp. 3-56. p. 8.

Association of Theatre Journalists honored it as the Best Mexican Musical of the year, making it the first time a non-Mexican play was given the award. John Leguizamo performed his one-man show *Ghetto Klown* at the Lyceum Theatre on Broadway from March to July 2011; it received Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle awards and was eventually filmed for television. In 2012 Quiara Alegría Hudes became the first Latina to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for her play *Water by the Spoonful*, which went on to become one of the most produced plays of the 2013–14 season.<sup>11</sup>

It is noteworthy that the author uses both genders, recognizing the increasing importance of female playwrights in the world of Hispanic American theatre. That Valdez's play only needed a short period, a mere few decades, to be labelled as *classic* indicates that Hispanic drama—and literature in general—has undergone a really spectacular progress.

A contemporary playwright from California, Octavio Solis, takes code switching to new heights in his plays. The reason for that is not that he intends to make it difficult for an Anglo audience to read and understand his dramas, but because he primarily writes to an audience in California, a lot of members of which are able to speak or at least understand both languages. Even the titles of his plays are sometimes English (*The Man of the Flesh*), sometimes Spanish (*La Posada Mágica*), and sometimes the two languages are mixed within one title (*The 7 Visions of Encarnación*). Still, the titles are easily understandable for an Anglo audience as well, as the Spanish terms are familiar from an infinite number of inns and motels, advertising their services in Spanish or in two languages, the word *mágica* is the Spanish for magic. Similarly, *encarnación* does not sound strange either, as it is derived from the same Latin word as the English *incarnation* is. The communities in which the plays of Solis take place, are from the American Southwest, where the two cultures mingle and mutually influence and enrich each other.

Sylvie sings the slow Mexican ballad as everyone listens.

SYLVIE *Si yo me voy*

*Me extrañarás*

*Te dejare sin gusto y paz*

*Tus gran deseos*

*Se secarán*

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11 Jimmy A. Noriega. "Don't Teach These Plays!": Latina/o Theatre and the Termination of the Tucson Unified School District's Mexican American Studies Program." In: *Theatre Topics*. Baltimore. Vol.27, Issue 1, (Mar 2017): 37-48. p. 37.

*Si mis cariños  
De aqui se van.  
(...)*

AL This white chick singing along with real heart, singin' a Spanish song I heard a long time ago. *Cancion de mi madre*.<sup>12</sup>

Here Solis italicizes the Spanish words in his text, at other places he does not:

DUANE

Al, you owe me. We are camaradas, and as camaradas we do for each other, we make sacrifices.

AL

Yo no te debo ni madre, cabrón!"<sup>13</sup>

The rude answer, that translates roughly into "I owe neither you nor your mother, you bastard," is entirely in Spanish, but the words *debo* and *madre* might be familiar to Anglo readers/viewers as well: debt and mother.

Female playwrights, who claim their well-deserved place in the literary canon, tend to deal with maternal and household chores, as the audiences—both Hispanic and Anglo—expect to see them. What is common with the works of male playwrights is the frequent code switching:

DOÑA JUANITA

It's a little bit different, Doña Mercedes; babies get the colic.

DOÑA MERCEDES:

¡Ah, es la misma cosa!

[DOÑA JUANITA *suddenly turns, thinking she sees something off in the distance.* DOÑA

MERCEDES, *noticing, gets a bit excited.*]

DOÑA MERCEDES

¿Qué es, Doña Juanita? ¿Pasa algo por allá?

No, parecia, pero no. [*Disappointed.*] Nothing ever happens around here.

12 Octavio Solis. "El Paso Blue". *Plays by Octavio Solis*. New York: Broadway Play Publishing Inc., 2006. pp. 89—139. p. 109.

13 Solis, p. 93.



DOÑA MERCEDES:

[*To Stage Left.*] ¡Uuuuh, ¡seria un milagro que algo pasara por aqui!

DOÑA JUANITA

¡Ay, don't be like that! We have peace and quiet here.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly to what we find in the plays of Solis and Mena, code-switching in the works of several contemporary Hispanic authors reaches a point where it becomes incomprehensible for audiences who are not equally at home in both languages. Simple and relatively rare code-switching in earlier works was a message to mainstream readers, creating a *couleur locale*, giving the mainstream audiences a taste of the original culture, enriching their knowledge about that culture, or merely entertaining them. Colloquial phrases, names of dishes and clothes well serve that purpose. In that sense, these texts are *transcultural*, as they relay messages to another culture. Transcultural text is a relatively new term; as Magdalena Roguska-Németh defines it, "Transculturalism has been one of the defining phenomena of recent years in many areas of the humanities and social sciences. It has been widely discussed within such disciplines as, among others, cultural studies, anthropology or ethnology."<sup>15</sup> Roguska-Németh's conclusions have been drawn from Hungarian literature, but they are equally applicable to Hispanic-American authors as well.

It is easy to see that a lot of the differences are mostly typological, as code-switching may be interpreted as a transcultural text, and the term transcultural literature has only emerged recently. The recognition that code-switching, intercultural, transcultural literature—whatever word is preferred at any given time—is important. It is also indicated by the fact that today special curricula are made to offer the high school students a selection of the best Hispanic-American literary works across the United States. The works are chosen according to their widely accepted quality, regardless of the amount of Spanish terms in them. Simple code-switching and virtually bi-lingual texts are equally able to deliver a message to a new, open and receptive audience.

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14 Alicia Mena. "Las Nuevas Tamaras." *Puro Teatro*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999. pp. 149-176. pp. 149-150.

15 Magdalena Roguska-Németh. "Transculturalism in Literature as Reflected in the Works of Translingual Writers from the Hungarian Cultural Context." In: *World Literature Studies* vol. 14, issue 3, 2022 (35-47)

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**“Judit Kádár: Ethnic Positioning in Southwestern  
Mixed Heritage Writing. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022”**

András Tarnóc

Judit Kádár’s interdisciplinary approach combines psychology, literary criticism, cultural studies and an extended focus on visual arts and poetry in exploring current mixed-blood writing, or in the author’s words, “mixed heritage US literature with a regional accent.” The author delves into the cultural and literary history of the southwest and presents a panorama of contemporary multiracial literary production. Kádár at first provides a theoretical foundation for her inquiry, and recognizing the inapplicability of Western colonial, or hegemonic approaches she extends the post-colonial paradigm “with different cosmologies” (3). She is influenced among others by Susan Ilcan’s notion of the transitory aspects of ethnicity dominated by location, displacement, and re-location. Consequently, Kádár maintains “mobile sensitivity and nomadic awareness” (20) in exploring her main theme.

In Foucault’s view the West includes subjugated knowledges buried below, which are to be discovered, unearthed, and included into our perception of culture. The writings of mixed-blood authors or the perpetuation of mixed-blood experience is such a knowledge. Kádár’s book performs this unearthing function and similarly to Alice Walker undertakes a search not necessarily of “our mother’s garden,” but that of a distant relative. In other words the author not only digs the figurative grounds for heretofore buried literary treasure, but illustrates how the lessons gained from the respective texts can help anyone in dealing with various challenges of life.

By its very nature mixed blood or multiracial literature is liminal representing individuals caught between two cultures, the dominant Anglo and the subjugated indigenous one or as Paula Gunn Allen asserts such a multiracial identity includes “the blood of both the victim and the victimizer” (148). Consequently, in case of such threshold position the traditional racial or ethnic binary is not applicable. Kádár, relying among others on Appadurai and Ilcan strives to surpass the binary perspective and makes a leap beyond the post-colonial and even the post-modern paradigm. One of the requirements for such paradigm shift is thorough familiarity with the very perspective and approach the writer aims to exceed. In this vein, the author’s inquiry rests on a solid theoretical foundation implying an impressive level of knowledge regarding the given conceptual models. She

provides a clarification of the mixed-blood concept, the central term of her inquiry, and positions it among such terms as hybridity, creolization, or borderland.

Kádár realizes that similarly to the protagonists of the works she explores, she has to find a Thirdspace which according to Edward Soja represents the hybrid movement of the subject, not merely negating a given social space, but building upon the specific socio-spatial paradigm. Therefore, she develops a research angle not caught between, but profiting from the achievements of both the indigenous and Euro-centric inquiry.

The author has compiled a critical mass of primary sources in which representing four different decades such works as James Welch's *The Death of Jim Loney* (1979), Louise Owens' *Bone Game* (1994), Linda Hogan's *The Woman Who Watches Over the World* (2001), and Joy Harjo's *Crazy Brave* (2012) receive special emphasis. The main goal of the comprehensive inquiry is to reveal the wellsprings behind the formation of a multicultural identity. Kádár considers a wide variety of genres including memoirs, frontier writings, even Canadian novels, and examples of post-colonial life writing, while demonstrating a thorough familiarity with Native American and in a larger sense American or Western literature.

The primary focus is on the responses provided by the protagonists to the challenges of mixed-blood existence, which range from abjection (ambiguity, disorder) via secession (Third Space) to prospection (racelessness, racial indeterminacy). The inquiry is enriched by the inclusion of intercultural psychology methods facilitating the exploration of the pitfalls of identity construction, in addition to deploying Maslow's hierarchy of needs model. Kádár discusses a wide variety of psychological and emotional quandaries the divided subject can face and the relevant means of self-healing. She reveals different types of mixed-blood identity including the Border, the Protean, the Traditional and the Transcendent. The author demonstrates how mixed-blood writers invoke the concept of the trickster, a motif generally deployed in literary works produced by members of marginalized groups.

The focus of the research also includes such concepts as spatiality, lifewriting, the minority female experience of the triple bind of oppression, questioning and re-establishing identity.

The investigation identifies additional features of mixed-blood writing including the maze, water, or the eponymous concept of the blood. Furthermore, the author offers her own criticism of specific critical approaches as she calls Linda Hogan to task for an imbalanced treatment of her own heritage along with using oversimplified images reminding one of the colonial perspective. The comprehensive analysis maps routes for further research as well. One of its conclusions recognizing the purported capability of mixed-blood stories to change reality in my view potentially draws a parallel with the conative aspects of African American slave narratives.

In sum, the author certainly deserves praise for her significant scholarly effort, which enriches the discipline of American Studies by identifying an area of Native American literature, which until now perhaps has not received critical attention equal to that of the larger indigenous literary canon along with expanding the existing research arsenal and professional terminology. Last but not least, the writer should also be commended for maintaining scholarly objectivity in discussing a highly politicized and rather controversial aspect of American culture.