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WATCHUNG REVIEW

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MIGRATION AND IDENTITY

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Dedication



Photo courtesy of the American Federation of Teachers New Jersey

Dave McClure was a champion of his students. After, and while, teaching for decades in the public-school system, Dave began to teach Developmental and Freshman English classes at Union County College. He also began teaching in the Freshman Seminar program that began in the early 2000's. Dave's classes always filled due to his reputation as a dedicated teacher who was devoted to his students. As an adjunct professor he was not obligated to meet with his students outside of class time. However, McClure held office hours in the adjunct faculty office before, between, and after his classes. He would go over class work with the students until he was satisfied they knew the lesson. No student who came to Dave was denied the help and attention that they needed to succeed.

Dave was a champion for the rights of adjunct faculty at the College. He became involved in the adjunct faculty union at the College, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), shortly after its inception in 2004, and eventually became 1st vice president and then co-president of the local union with Bill Lipkin. Along with other union leaders Bill and Dave spent countless hours dealing with the inequities and disrespect shown to adjunct faculty. They went to many conferences and workshops to keep up with pedagogical changes and the growing issues in Higher Education.

Dave was a teacher, an advocate, a colleague, a listener, a creator, a tutor, a friend, and a role model for his students and his colleagues. He was honored posthumously by AFTNJ for his dedication as a union leader and innovator, and will always be remembered for his dedication to his work. He is sorely missed and is often referred to when things get tough and solutions are sought.



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IMMIGRANT EVERYDAY LIFE

THE ORDINARY, THE ETHNIC, AND THE ARTISTIC IN AKHIL SHARMA'S *FAMILY LIFE*

I can say it enough but can I say it more than
enough that the daily life is a daily life if at any
moment of the daily life that daily life is all there
is of life.

(Gertrude Stein, *Narration*)

It took Akhil Sharma almost thirteen years to write a plotless story that captures the way an Indian immigrant practices everyday life in America. *Family Life* (2014) simply articulates Gertrude Stein's summation that "daily life is all there is of life" (10). During these years, Sharma "was concerned about the plotlessness problem" ("A Novel Like a rocket"): how to transform the boring and the mundane into a pleasurable experience of reading. *Family Life* is based on Sharma's own tragic family story. It charts the life of an immigrant Indian family and unfolds as a bildungsroman, tracing the moral and psychological growth of the eight-year old Ajay Mishra, the narrator. Two years after the family joins their father in America, the elder son, Birju, has an accident in the swimming pool. He hits his head on the bottom of the pool; he remains unconscious three minutes under water which irreversibly damaged his brain. The accident causes the collapse of the family: while the mother cultivates a compulsive delusion to cure her invalid son, the father starts sinking into alcoholism. Ajay has to elbow his way alone in a hostile environment and to negotiate his daily life as an immigrant child.

Sharma's anxieties to alienate the reader with the pettiness of his everyday life have evaporated face to the immediate success of *Family Life*. Not only did it make the New York Times top Ten of 2014, the novel also won the 2015 Folio Prize. It was widely reviewed and praised for its economic and especially unsentimental style. Fellow Indian writer Kiran Desai describes Sharma as the "most unsentimental writer [who] leaves the reader, finally and surprisingly, moved." Within the same vein, Pakistani writer Mohsin Hamid believes that "Akhil Sharma's unsentimentality has the effect of making his writing uncommonly touching." The recent publication of the novel, however, may explain the lack of academic assessment of this text. Toral Gajarawala's short essay "A Minor Complaint", nevertheless, stands as a good beginning of the serious assessment that the novel deserves. Gajarawala highlights the domestic microcosm of the narrative and its depiction of small things. While she hails Sharma's sophisticated style and his "craft" in "turning prose into origami," she criticizes his claustrophobic-like narrative which "leaves out many things."

This essay picks up where Gajarawala left off: an investigation of everyday life in Sharma's novel. It proposes to study the intersection between three pivotal issues in the narrative: immigration, everyday life, and artistic production. I argue that the domestic and the cultural are textually weaved within an artistic gesture that answers Henri Lefebvre's appeal: "Let everyday life become a work of art" (*Everyday Life* 204). Sharma's *Family Life* provides a pertinent example of immigration and narration, accommodating both immigration genre and generic immigration. The text also displays a terrain of negotiations wherein the boundaries of the ordinary are pressed towards the artistic.

Immigration Genre/Generic Immigration

Genre, I'm arguing, is first of all an instrument of reading, not a formula for writing. As such, genre is what enables the reader to locate himself or herself before the text and thereby to have access to the possible meanings of the text.

(Janet Warner Gunn, *Autobiography: Towards a Poetics of Experience*)

Akhil Sharma is adamant about distinguishing between an immigrant novelist and an immigrant novel. While he accepts, albeit with a caveat, a generic classification of his novel, he feels repulsion for an ethnic categorization of writers. "I mind the label," he states in an interview, "because there is the sense of ghettoization in the term. I don't want to be called an immigrant novelist" (Interview by John Wray). In the same interview, he accepts "the book being called an immigrant novel;" and yet, he shows resistance in other interviews to generic taxonomy. Mohsin Hamid's question "Do you expect the book to be called an immigrant novel?" is answered in a rather defensive way: "the problem is that after they use a label, they begin to think only in terms of the label instead of the totality of the experience a novel provides" (Interview by Mohsin Hamid).

The critical conversation around the textual rendition of the immigration experience oscillates between sheer classification and strong resistance to generic nomenclature. Seyhan Azad, for instance, uses the label "immigrant writing" and refuses all types of categorization. She bases her argument on the diversity of this kind of writing, as the "act of abstraction and theorizing presupposes the loss of distinction and difference" (180). On the other far side of this critical dialogue, stands, for instance, Rosemary Marangoly George, who believes that "the contemporary literary writing in which the politics and experience of location (or rather 'dislocation') are the central narratives should be called the 'Immigration Genre'" (171). She explains her argument for a "distinct genre" with the fact that the category of writing known as 'postcolonial literature' has been critically overburdened (171).

Despite Sharma's reluctance to have his novel categorized or ruled by a law of genre, *Family Life* does accommodate smoothly the immigrant genre. The immigrant novel follows a pattern or a narrative trajectory recurrent in this genre. William Q. Boelhower's "macro proposition" of the immigrant novel provides a clear map of this type of writing:

An immigrant protagonist(s)
representing an ethnic world view,
comes to America with great expectations,
and through a series of trials is led to reconsider them
in terms of his final status. (5)

Family Life falls within the parameters of this model based on three moments: "expectation," "contact," and "resolution" (5). The father's immigration to America is instigated by his great expectations of a better life. The beginning of the narrative records the father's dream of a "glamorous" life as "he believed that if he were somewhere else, especially somewhere where he earned in dollars and so was rich, he would be a different person" (13). Even though the mother does not show real interest in emigrating, being a high school teacher of economics, she ends up sharing her husband's expectations. "What's here?" She asks her mother. "Thieves? That Indira woman will eat us" (23). Ajay, eight years then, starts creating his own story of America while cultivating a growing feeling of superiority: "I learned that everybody in America has their own speedboat" (21), he tells his friends.

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Once in America, the family has to adjust to a new culture. While life seems easier in terms of facilities, they can hardly claim themselves to be rich. The very small house they live in and the mother's need to work show that America is not an El Dorado-like place. They need to toil hard to have a decent life. Ajay finds many difficulties and his attempts at making friends are meted with rejection and scorn. The narrative ends with a fully assimilated young man, who manages to come to terms with his hyphenated identity. This brief outline of the novel shows that part of the narrative aligns to Boelhower's model of the immigrant novel genre. The label 'immigrant', however, functions on another level of generic lineage. The text crosses the frontiers of autobiography to poach the territory of the novel.

Generic displacement in *Family Life* is in accordance with dislocation as a thematic paradigm of the immigrant novel. Sharma finds in the hybrid genre of semi-autobiography a comfortable terrain to fictionalize his life. In her study of the relationship between autobiographical writing and other genres, Sally Cline provides two motives behind semi-autobiographical novels. First, "to protect the privacy of friends, family, colleagues"; and second, "to achieve emotional distance from the subject" (75). Sharma's option for a fictional account of his own life combines these two motives. In his essay "A Novel Like a Rocket" (2014), he announces the autobiographical strain in his narrative: "The novel is called '*Family Life*', and it is based on my own experience." The essay, which focuses on techniques of narration, does not dwell much on the reasons behind migrating from one genre to another. Many details, however, are disclosed in his numerous interviews. To the same recurrent question: 'why fiction and not a memoir?', he usually explains the personal and technical drives behind this generic mixture. "I think I can be braver and more honest when I can say that what I'm writing is a novel," he confesses in an interview. "If I had written a memoir, I would have felt as if my parents and everybody who makes up a part of the novel was standing around my desk as I was writing" (Foyles). His need to create a distance between himself and what he is writing about has also a narratological reason:

For me, a memoir is non-fiction and non-fiction has to be absolutely true. I can't have composite characters. I can't attribute dialogue to someone based simply in my memory and not based on notes taken at the time that the words were spoken. I also need to tell the things that are important but which don't make sense in terms of the narrative, things that would destroy symmetry or narrative pace. (Interview by Mohsin Hamid)

While acknowledging the biographical basis of his narrative, Sharma stops at one single generic type: the novel. Nowhere in his interviews does he use any other genre to describe his amalgamation of fiction and autobiography. Similar to the label 'immigrant novel', such classifications as "autonarration"¹ (Arnaud Schmitt), "autobiografiction"² (Stephen Reynolds), or "autofiction"³ (Serge Doubrovsky) are likely to narrow down scopes of reading.

Sharma's indisposition to generic cataloging is substituted by his willingness to indulge in a thematic description of his narrative. "A more accurate description" of the novel, he claims, "would probably be that it is a coming-of-age novel or an illness novel" (Interview by Wray). Discarding a generic straightjacket provides interesting and multiple avenues of reading. I propose in the following section to read Sharma's rendering of the everyday life of an immigrant family, for the book can also be accurately described as an everyday life novel.

Negotiating the Ordinary: Performing Everyday Life

To the ordinary man.
To a common hero, an ubiquitous character,
walking in countless thousands on the streets.
(Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*)

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Theorizing everyday life and the daily mundane elements that generally do not call attention started long time ago. With Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), the term 'everyday life' entered the realm of scientific investigation. Freud brought everyday actions, like forgetting a person's name or common slips of the tongue, into the field of psychoanalysis. This paved the way for what Clifford Geertz calls the urgency to "descend into details" (*The Interpretation of Cultures* 53). The minutiae of everyday life have become a major concern in sociological and anthropological studies. Henri Lefebvre links everyday life "to all activities" and relations: "friendship, comradeship, love, the need to communicate, play etc." (*Critique* 97). Lefebvre's preoccupation with an encompassing mode of everydayness informed subsequent studies. In "Everyday Speech" (1987), Maurice Blanchot, who acknowledges Lefebvre as a precursor in reflecting on everyday life, provides a similar definition: "the everyday is what we are first of all, and most often: at work, at leisure, awake, asleep, in the street, in private existence. The everyday, then, is ourselves, ordinarily" (12). This focus on the habitual, the mundane, and the ordinary is also foregrounded in Rita Felski's definition: "the everyday...epitomises both the comfort and boredom of the ordinary" (16). Sharma's *Family Life* is anchored in the tedious condition of everyday life. His narrative exemplifies the practice of ordinariness as well as the theatrical impulse in people's daily lives.

Even though the practice of everyday life is gauged in the street, especially in the work of Michel de Certeau (*The Practice of Everyday Life*), Sharma focuses on domestic activities mainly set at home. "Real life was occurring back in our apartment with Birju studying" (43), assures Ajay. It is probably more the parents' perception of real life than that of their children for it is at home that Ajay and his brother are trained to assimilate. Both are forced to "watch the news every evening" (40) as their father believes it to be the best way to become familiar with the new culture. Within a similar domestic move, the mother takes her sons "for walks in grocery stores so that [they] could see things [they] had never seen before" (41). The parents, however, seem to believe that real integration can concretize only through education. The small space of the kitchen, where Birju studies very hard, becomes a transcultural site securing the passage to social and economic success.

Narrating the daily anxieties over the education of Birju provides important information about the Indian community in America in the 1970s. Composed mainly of educated people, this first wave of immigrants perceived education not only as a way to infiltrate American culture, but also as a means to preserve cultural ties with their origins. Ajay's parents' concern with assimilation is enmeshed with their preoccupation in maintaining their high caste as Brahmins. Indeed, Birju's success to get accepted into the Bronx High School of Science secures for the family the prestigious role of a model for the hitherto small Indian community. They start to be invited to people's houses, where the mother "would sit quietly in peoples' living rooms and look on proudly as Birju talked" (46). Real life happens in closed spaces; it takes shape in kitchens and living rooms where immigrants cling to their Indianness while grappling with an alien culture.

Family Life is energized by the double concern of negotiation and retrieval that marks immigration novels. "One of the motivations for writing this book," claims Sharma, resides in his belief that his "community is worth preserving" (Interview by Jyothi Natarayan). Religion and its attendant rituals, as well as festivities, are important elements in everyday Indian life and are smoothly inserted into the narrative. The young Ajay's feeling of dislocation is accentuated on Diwali, a major festival in Hinduism celebrating the victory of light over darkness. As he cannot celebrate Diwali, feelings of foreignness and pain mingle in the heart of the child who feels wrenched from the joys of Indian life: "it was odd to go to school, odd and painful to stand outside the brown brick building waiting for its doors to open" (35). At that moment, Ajay records, "only life in India matters" (35); the glamorous life in America loses all importance. This scene of nostalgia, common to immigration

narratives, acquires its poignancy from its depiction of a disoriented child groping for collapsing cultural landmarks.

The temple is one of these landmarks that Ajay needs to process and recuperate. His juxtaposition of the temples in India and the temple in Queens shows his attempt at preserving the memory of the original while coming to terms with the simulacrum. The act of recreating an Indian temple on American soil yields a distorted copy, lacking authenticity: "Here, along the smell of incense, there was only a faint odor of mildew. Because the temple smelled so simple, it seemed fake" (37). It is the same situation with Mr. Narayan, the pundit in Metuchen, where the family moves because "it was one of the few towns in New Jersey that had a temple" (75). Ajay's contempt for the pundit stems from the fact that he "was not a real one" (77); Mr. Narayan is an engineer who volunteers at the temple. The imaginary homeland, "India of the mind" (Rushdie 10), keeps feeding the fabricated India on a foreign land. This is how the Indian community, including the Mishras, preserve their Indianness. It is in this "fake" temple that the family performs the ritual of 'real' life such as opening the envelope containing the results of Birju's exam (45). Getting the blessing of Indian Idols to start an American life shows once more this negotiation between two cultures performed at the level of everyday practices.

Birju's tragic accident in the swimming pool places religion at the center of the *Family Life*. "The most important thing," Ajay reports, "was to appeal to God" (57). As the home is transformed into a temple-like space, prayer becomes an everyday activity performed each morning. Before the accident, the family used to go to the temple on Fridays, as the mother believes this visit a propitious ritual to "begin the weekend with a clean mind" (37). For the mother, however, religion veers more towards obsession than spiritual relief. Clinging to the hope of seeing Birju recover, she starts confusing religion with superstition and even charlatanism. Several miracle workers are allowed to enter the house in an attempt to cure Birju. When Ajay asks her if she believes that Birju can get better, she answers: "God can do anything" (122). Her belief in miracles, not much different from the belief in magic, is an aspect of everyday life which is "defined by contradictions: illusions and truth, power and helplessness, the intersection of the sector man controls and the sector he does not control" (Lefebvre, *Critique* 21).

It is within these dynamics of everyday life that Ajay invents his own God. The God he invokes "everyday, hour after hour, praying till [his] throat became raw and even [his] gums hurt" behaves like "the president, distant, busy, not interested in small things" (55). Consequently, Ajay constructs his God of everyday life, the ordinary, and the small. Ajay's God, reverberating with Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), is reminiscent of Marjani Satrapi's God in *Persepolis* (2003). Marji's God, who resembles Karl Marx, and Ajay's God, who looks like Clark Kent, are everyday Gods attentive to two children's petty anxieties. At the beginning, Ajay imagined a Krishna-like God, but he "felt foolish to discuss brain damage with someone who was blue and was holding a flute and had a peacock feather in his head" (59). Americanizing his god is Ajay's way of bringing a comforting religion into a life that starts losing its comfortable ordinariness.

While the narrative is steeped in everyday life, it also carries the burden of recouping one's ordinariness. The *Family Life*, now exclusively revolving around Birju's illness, has completely lost its grasp on a commonplace style of life. Instead of being invited to peoples' houses to show a model of Indian success, they are now invited or visited as a model of "love of family, sacrificing for others" (81). In Ajay's mind, real life is transferred from the kitchen, where Birju used to study, to his brother's room, where the whole family is "suffering so intensely" (79). Interjections like "your story is like a fairy tale" (79), however flattering they might seem, transform their life into "something unreal" (79). Similar to his dislike for the fake temple, or his contempt for the unreal pundit, Ajay

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finds this aura of unreality cloaking his family quite disturbing; it divests his life from the authenticity of the ordinary. The family, treated like they “were holy”, finds itself involved in extraordinary practices. The mother is daily asked to bless Indian children, while other people “would go into Birju’s room and touch his pale, swollen, inward-turned feet, as if the sacrifices being made for him had turned him into an idol” (140). Flooded by a daily crowd of curious Indians, Ajay’s house is no longer an ordinary home.

Ajay’s feeling of a collapsing ordinary life is best illustrated in an episode showing him grappling with the simple ordinariness of childhood:

I kept going to look at Birju, but I couldn’t get used to seeing him in an ordinary room in an ordinary house. Every time, I was startled....

At some point in the late afternoon, I decided to go outside and throw a ball. This seemed like something any ordinary boy might do....

I threw the ball over and over, sometimes with my left hand. When I did this, the ball went up at a slant.

Throwing the ball, I didn’t feel any better. I kept seeing Birju lying on his bed, his head tilted up, the white curtain on the window beside him rising and falling.

My tee shirt grew damp and stuck to my skin. Before long I want to go back inside, but to go inside felt like giving up. I stayed on the lawn and threw the ball. (119-120)

Quoted at length, this episode exemplifies Sharma’s recurrent use of the term “ordinary.” His confession that he “didn’t know how to have an ordinary life” (Interview by Gary Wood) is recreated in the entire novel via a compulsive repetition of the word. In the first paragraph of the excerpt, the twice-repeated “ordinary” engages space as a defining agent of ordinariness. The presence of the inert brain-damaged brother divests the whole house from its domestic normalcy. The house is more like a hospital or a temple than a common home. The use of “ordinary” in the subsequent paragraph displays the term as a practice of everyday life. Throwing a ball is so petty and mundane that it hardly deserves mentioning in another type of narratives. Yet, this ordinary act embodies what Ajay yearns to perform.

Because the ordinary is always accompanied with a feeling of guilt, it becomes “a type of anorexia,” Sharma explains, “you’re choosing not to consume things. You’re choosing not to consume happiness” (Interview by Wood). Ajay feels guilty, for instance, when he prays to get a good mark on the math test instead of praying for his brother. His mother’s often-repeated story about her prayer when her sister got sick, “God, let me fail as long as you make Kusum better” (58), stands as a deterrent to the ordinary. To be an ordinary child means to betray the ill Birju, who is unable to be ordinary. Sharma’s subtle way of expressing this feeling of guilt is carried through juxtaposing the movement of the ball and the rising and falling of curtains in the room of the inert brother. Later in the narrative, he describes “guilt and sadness” like “wearing clothes still damp from the wash” (134). The importance of this excerpt resides in the fact that it is the only time we see Ajay playing. His predilection with such an ordinary activity is displayed in the detailed description of the act of throwing and recuperating the ball. More significantly, the excerpt marks a moment of dissent. In resisting the impulse of going back inside, Ajay claims his right to ordinariness.

To be an ordinary child is further complicated at school. It is in this public space that issues of everyday life and immigration interlace. While ordinariness is negotiated on a domestic level at home, it is contested on an ethnic one at school. The school epitomizes what Mary Louise Pratt calls a “contact zone” or “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (4). Ajay’s estrangement “among so many whites” who “all looked alike” (34) is exacerbated

by racial violence and xenophobia. "I was often bullied," Ajay reports, "sometimes a little boy would come up to me and tell me that I smelled bad" (35). Even though bullying stops after his father complains to the school, Ajay's loneliness and alienation persist.

In order to break out of his isolation and find a friend, Ajay starts playing a new role at school: the role of the child matured by the illness of his brother. Lefebvre's claim that "everyday life resembles theatre" (*Critique* 136) is fully developed by Erving Goffman's theorization of everyday life as performance. His distinction between "front stage", where behavior and language are controlled, and "back stage", where these two elements are relaxed and less informal (78), offers an interesting venue to study Ajay's performance of everyday life in a public space. Initially, Ajay keeps his brother's illness to back stage. Being a domestic matter, it should be kept away from the public sphere of the school. As he yearns for attention and sympathy, he decides to bring his brother's story to front stage. This performance first takes place in the classroom where Ajay whispers in one breath the whole story of his brain-damaged brother. "I said all this in a rush," states Ajay, "feeling scared, feeling almost like I was watching myself from the outside" (100). Being aware that he is playing a role that "must be acted out until the end" (Lefebvre, *Critique* 130), Ajay is now obliged to fully (front) stage himself as well as his brother.

Because he is unable to *play* with a friend, his *play* substitutes an everyday activity. Every day, Ajay brings Jeff new details about his brother's illness. He opts for shocking details such as shaving Birju's crotch so that his urinary catheter does not get caught in his pubic hair (108), or the acids in his brother's shit which cut the skin if not cleaned immediately (109). As he brings these backstage details to the fore, Ajay feels "powerful" (109). And yet, the 'dirty' image of his invalid brother needs to be cleansed. That is why he concocts "an ideal brother" (103). Like his invented Superman God, Birju becomes a super hero, "a great basketball player" (103) or "a karate expert" (104). While acting is one characteristic regulating relationships in everyday life, Ajay's inability to perceive the line separating the front stage from the back stage testifies to a child's apprenticeship of everydayness.

Called "a freak" (19) and beaten, his attempts at making friends is meted with utter rejection and scorn. Staging the self functions as a means of integration, a solution to loneliness and ethnic alienation. On a narratological level, it functions as a metafictional move, a way to gauge the readers' ability to accept a narrative of the mundane. Ajay sees his fear of misunderstanding and indifference come true. Indeed, "what happened to Birju did not matter for most of the world" (99). Sharma also grapples with narrating illness and unhappiness while running the risk of warding off his readers.

Storifying Everyday Life

It might, however, be more exact to say that
readers were suddenly made aware of everyday
life through the medium of literature
or the written word.
(Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life*)

After twelve and a half years of writing and re-writing, the seven thousand pages written over this period were cut down to the two hundred and eighteen pages of the finalized *Family Life*. This long process, full of frustrations and pain, testify to the fact that writing about small things is a huge endeavor. Sharma had to grapple over those years with three "technical challenges" he describes in his essay "A Novel Like a Rocket." First, how to handle a story narrated from a child's point of view without ending up with "a flattened narrative" that feels like "you are on the surface of the events."

Second, how to narrate “the physical horror of illness” without raising the readers’ resentment at an “unwanted education.” Third, and most importantly for him, how to transform the “plotlessness” of “real life” into an appealing story that reads fast while combining pain and humor.

Opting for a bildungsroman genre, a novel of education and growth, allowed the writer to use the perspective of a child without flattening both language and narration. This strategy is announced at the opening of the novel through a domestic scene showing father and son joking, while the mother is complaining about the narrator’s frequent absences. The family tableau stops there and the whole narrative unfolds as scraps of remembrances and flashbacks narrating different episodes of the *Family Life*. Sharma makes it a point to sign a pact of narration with his readers. Because they know from the beginning that the narrating voice is a grown up, adult person, their reading proceeds in a smooth way without interrogating the reliability of the narrator or his sophisticated reflections.

The second challenge is probably the hardest for the *reader*. Dwelling on the horrible side of illness is not an easy venture for the writer; however, it is not a pleasant experience for the reader, either. The most shocking details, as stated above, are those Ajay tells his American classmate to attract his attention. It is significant that these are reported details, taken outside the closed space of the house. The focus is more on the children’s reaction to illness rather than a deliberate dwelling on the repulsive aspects of ailment. The carelessness and cruel rejection of children functions as an alert to adult readers, who also have to confront their own reaction to a similar situation. The repugnant account of everyday grappling with malady is attenuated by humor. “If you sing a sad song sadly,” claims Sharma, “it becomes dolorous. It’s hard for an audience” (Interview by Natarajan). The scene describing the difficult task of bathing Birju, for instance, is rendered in a rather comic way. Lifting the heavy body of his invalid son, the father addresses Birju jokingly: “Why are you so heavy? are you getting at night and eating? You are, aren’t you? admit it. I see crumbs on your chin” (117). While the father’s words trigger Ajay’s laughter, they are meant to win the readers’ sympathetic smile. The father’s joke transforms the repulsive description of Birju “urinating, a thick, strong-smelling, yellow stream” (117) into an ordinary detail accepted both by the family and the reader.

Sharma’s hardest task as a writer is to seize the tediousness of everyday life and transcribe it into an exhilarating text. “Everyday life becomes less and less interesting; yet the author manages to create an interest in this intolerable tediousness simply by telling, by writing, by literature” (Lefebvre, *Everyday Life* 11). Narrating dreariness, however, is not as simple as Lefebvre claims. Sharma was haunted by the anxiety that “the experience of reading books that replicate” the plotlessness of everyday life “can be irritating” (“A Novel”). This is why he stopped writing only when he believed that his book had achieved one major quality he wanted in fiction: “it was reading very, very fast” (Interview by Carroll). To achieve this quick pace, Sharma opts for an episodic strategy of narration. The narrative does not follow a traditional plot based on causation, climax, and denouement. It is divided into short, often disconnected, episodes imitating the fragmentariness of everyday life. The layout of the text is regulated by blank spaces separating one episode from another or announcing the beginning of a new chapter. While these blanks stand for deleted events or jumped over days, they endow the book with a strong visual quality: “it is as if the scenes are painted on paper and you can see the white beneath” explains Sharma (“A Novel”).

While Sharma’s essays and interviews provide “paratextual scraps” of really “prime interest” (Genette 346), the metafictional impulse of the narrative also elucidates the process of storifying everyday life. In his essay “A Novel Like a Rocket”, Sharma records that he found the answers to his narratological anxieties in different literary works “that shared the same DNA” as his book. From Proust, he learns the art of ending a narrative; and from Chekov, he learns how to focus on the visual and avoid the sticky and lingering details related to sound and smell. In *Family Life*, however,

the narrator speaks only about Hemingway as a major source of inspiration. He first encounters Hemingway through his biography, a significant material showing that a writer's life matters. He reads the biography "mostly at the kitchen table" (151), a symbolic space related earlier in the narrative to "real life." This domestic space represents a terrain of negotiating the private (auto/biography) and the artistic (the act of writing): "as I read", Ajay announces, "I began wanting to be a writer" (151). Writing discloses an act anchored in the private as well as the daily. Indeed, the first lesson he learns from reading critical studies on Hemingway is to foreground the ordinary. Hemingway, he reads, acquired his fame from focusing on the exotic: "if he were to write about ordinary things in an ordinary way, he would be boring" (153). The young Ajay reverses the situation as he realizes that he "should push all the exotic things to the side as if they didn't matter" (158) and focus on the mundane and the ordinary.

As he progresses in his apprenticeship of the craft of writing, Ajay starts to pay attention to objects. His focus on small things strikingly reverberates with Lefebvre's vision of writing everyday life: "If I want to write today - that is write fiction - I will start from an ordinary object, a mug, an orange, a fly of which I shall attempt a detailed description; never departing from the perceptible - presented in the concrete" (*Everyday Life* 7). In a similar move, Ajay starts to see "things as material for writing": "I began to feel as if I were walking through my life collecting things that could be used later: the sound of a ping-Pong ball was like a woman walking in high heels, the shower running was like television static" (160). Ajay's interest in objects has a metafictional quality as Sharma literally translates this urge for small things by inserting a picture of a flashlight at the end of page 209.

Sharma explains that the novel has two endings, the first one is "the scene with the flashlight" (Interview by Carroll). Ajay learns the technique of ending stories from Hemingway: "all I need to do was to attach something to the end of the story that was both unexpected and natural" (159). Sharma concretely attaches something: a picture. The flashlight, which belongs to the mother, is used to see their way in darkness after leaving their Indian friends' house. Mother and son are invited for dinner to celebrate Ajay's success on entering Princeton University. The mother, who has resented the Sethis' denigrating behavior upon hearing about her husband's alcoholism, leaves the dinner angrily. Ajay relates the flashlight to his memory of India and the frequent blackouts there. At that time, Birju "would walk ahead of us", reminisces Ajay, "He would guide us" (109). Gajarwala reads the picture of the flashlight "as a sign of continuity, of sorts, across the great divide, between India and America. Despite all America's privileges, the Mishras must still walk home in the dark" ("A Minor Complaint"). The metonymic quality of the flashlight as an Indian cultural artifact should be linked to the earlier episode of Diwali. Accordingly, my reading of this object stands on the opposite side of Gajarwala's. Diwali, from Sanskrit *dipavali*, "means 'row of lights'. The lamps stand for inner light and knowledge" (Murray 14). Ajay, now holding the flashlight, creates his own Diwali on American soil. The inner light he acquires from the act of writing is seconded by his admission at Princeton University. What is relevant to my argument in this essay, however, is that small, ordinary, and concrete objects acquire the power to energize the narrative. The cultural resonance of the flashlight relocates the narrative in its immigrant context.

The section announcing the birth of a writer is significantly the longest section in the novel (150-60). The narrative here veers towards a *kunstlerroman*, literally 'artist-novel.' Sharma provides a portrait of an *immigrant* artist as a young man. Writing against the exotic allows him to narrate his own community. "I hadn't known how to write about Indians," Ajay declares. "How would I translate the various family relations, the difference between an uncle who is a father's brother and an uncle who is a mother's brother?" (158). Shuttling between two cultures, Ajay needs to find a

terrain of entente for his artistic production. Dwelling on too many details of the Indian culture would alienate the American reader; while stripping his stories from everything Indian would alienate him from his own community. He finds a solution in his own definition of exoticism: “this is how one used exoticism - by not bothering to explain” (158). In other words, while the immigrant writer is not supposed to be a cultural informant, the American reader has to make an effort to reach for other communities.

In an interview by Rosie Huf, Sharma significantly states: “I don’t know if I have to be responsible for representing my community or representing the world. I have to be responsible for representing my talent.” *Family Life* offers an artistic rendition of an immigrant family wrestling with a domestic tragedy without falling in the trap of exoticism. Sharma manages to strike a balance between his Indianness and Americanness. This metafictional section of the narrative significantly ends with Ajay channeling ethnic alienation and racial violence into a work of art: “When a boy tried to start a fight by saying, ‘you’re vegetarian - does that mean you don’t eat pussy?’ I thought this would be something I could use in a story” (160). The novel celebrates artistic production as a mediator between cultures.

Conclusion

If Sharma resists classification as a writer, his narrative transgresses all taxonomic borders. The overlapping boundaries between autobiography and fiction offer a textual space accommodating different generic lineages. Sharma’s use of the novel as a generic receptacle for his autobiography may find explanation in the nature of this genre. From Latin *novus* (new), the novel acquires its essence from its perpetual change as it “sparks the renovation of all other genres, it inflects them with its spirit of process and inconclusiveness” (Bakhtin 7). Sharma’s description of his novel highlights its innovative side: “My sense is that this is something new: a rigorous modernist novel of the childhood self that deals specifically with the Indian immigrant experience” (Interview by Hamid). He locates the modernist impulse of his text mainly in its ending: “you end the novel and you suddenly think, now the real problem has occurred, has started” (Interview by Natarajan). Faithful to a Proustian ending, *Family Life* closes on a new beginning: “That was when I knew I had a problem” (218).

While he builds on the narratives of European and American modern writers, Sharma strives for a creative emulation. And yet, when compared to other immigration novels, like those of Jhumpa Lahiri or Khaled Hosseini, *Family Life* veers more towards innovation than imitation. Not only is it free from a mystifying exoticism, it also provides a new account of immigration. The recurrent celebration of America as a savior, a surrogate motherland where all dreams come true is absent in the novel. Sharma provides an immigrant counter-narrative of the American dream.

Notes

- 1 “Autonarration refers to a referential form of literature: “The autonarrative project is very realistic at the core: it proposes to talk about the self with a little confabulation” (26, Translation mine). (Arnaud Schmitt, “La perspective de l’autonarration.” *Poétique*, NO. 149, 2007).
- 2 “The phrase autobiographical fiction is mainly reserved to fiction with a good deal of the writer’s own life in it; or those lapses from fact which occur in most autobiographies. Hence the need for coining a rather dreadful portmanteau-word like *autobiografiction* in order to connote shortly a minor literary form which stands between those two extremes” (28). (Stephen Reynolds, “Autobiografiction.” *The Speaker*, New series NO. 366, 1906. 28-30).
- 3 The term “autofiction” is first coined by Serge Doubrovsky to describe his novel *Fils* (1977).

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Emily Bright

FRANCIS

Accra, Ghana

My housemate Francis got his visa,
flew to join his wife in New York
on the Fourth of July.

The week before he was to leave
(before document in-hand
so we did not say good-bye),

we spent the evenings
talking of America. Francis
who bought fish and kenkey

nearly every night, who said
“You’re welcome,” when I got home,
pointing at his plate.

My first week, he showed me
phone cards and where I could buy
clean water in sealed half-liter sacks.

He rode the tro-tro all the way
to work with me that first day.
So little time to give back

what I knew. Credit
systems. Health insurance.
Bronx, be kind to him.

I brought mangoes, he brought fish.
I described job interviews, and
fireworks, and maple syrup.

He said, “Do you remember
where to find the pharmacy?”
He said the world connected,

but I knew back in America we’d live
in different states, how, busy there,
our teaching done, the phone calls

would subside. Friday he got his visa.
He showed me how to make
jolof, a great soup-pot-full.

MIGRATING BORDERS

A wall sat in the middle of Berlin separating the East and West sections of the city. One could see it, touch it, and die crossing it. Compared to most borders, it was an anomaly, a bit reminiscent of medieval cities, but misplaced because it did not surround a community but cut through it. The wall marked the end of a war and the beginning of a *détente* that transformed the lives of people on either side. Its very visibility reminded us that ideologies differentiated a population united by the same language. On the Western side, citizens noticeably prospered, and on the Eastern side, they clearly struggled. The solidity of the wall translated into tangible differences in jobs, food, and housing. All these changes came about not because people migrated. Rather, the border that marked the boundaries of their lives did.

This essay traverses the borders of fiction and philosophy, region and nationality, race and ethnicity. I cross the boundaries of academic disciplines to explore some of the ways charted borders indicate the un-chartable ones in contexts that stem from history but touch on culture and sociology. The result is somewhat kaleidoscopic. I aim to dislocate binary paradigms of center and margin, of transgression and crossings. Of course, geography determines some boundaries, and treaties legislate others. Alterations in these visible and tangible markers, however, frequently reveal those more significant, unseen ones within individuals and communities. I contend that the un-chartable ones deserve attention because they highlight conflict. Unlike the refugees we see in camps, in boats, on dusty roads, the individuals who remain in their homes when maps are re-drawn do not figure in the migration statistics of human geography. Yet, these people also deserve attention because their situations provide another perspective on conceptions of communal identity. Their actuality also broadens self-designations such as *metiza*, which Gloria Anzaldúa notably uses to flag her competing identifications and subjectivities (79-80). Suggestive rather than exhaustive, the following examples touch on some of the historical ways borders change and the costs that result.

War usually displaces people. To survive, some leave their homeland. They cross a border and perhaps find safety but also find a new set of challenges. Most leave things that identified them, and with which they identified. Many leave family members. Refugees undergo transformation. Relocation frequently breeds dislocation. What happens to individuals, however, when only the boundaries move, and the people remain in the homes they occupied before the maps changed? Once a region passes among political hands, institutions, such as government and commerce, demand adjustments. Yet official actions may not immediately translate into private ones. In *Cosmopolitanism*, the contemporary philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, treats the conquest of one nation by another in terms of ownership and displaced contexts for cultural artifacts. In one example, he quotes from Baden-Powell who boxed up museum quality objects from the African Kumasi to be shipped to England and so lost to the people whose ancestors created them (116). Here, the border likely remains the same, superseded by a new government. Regions in proximity to each other, however, offer a different set of challenges because the border moves as the region changes hands.

Consider, for instance, the situation of migrating borders in the European area of Alsace-Lorraine. After the Treaty of Frankfurt (1871), it was Germany, returned to France with the Treaty of Versailles

(1919), Germany again after 1940, France in 1945. Interestingly, it is also one of the borders where the Germanic branch of language meets the Romance branch in the Indo-European family tree. The people in this area likely forge a dialect and probably comprehend each official language. The community shares a culture despite the re-mapping, partially due to the frequent re-mapping that has occurred there. They are not strangers to each other, but some become strangers to a different government. However horrendous the dislocation of objects from their contexts, the ownership of artifacts may matter less to these people than the language required for employment and for schooling. They continue to own their communal medium of communication. Unlike the refugee experience, the things that identify these people and with which they identify remain the same. To put it in concrete terms, even if artifacts leave the region, their household cooking utensils do not.

The complexity and ironies spawned by borders has inspired fiction as well as philosophy. An insightful post-modern example is Miéville's murder mystery, *The City & the City* (2010), which probes the significance of borders. The novel plays with the idea of seeing and 'unseeing.' The depressed city of Beszel intersects with the thriving city of Ul Quoma in two different countries. Unlike Berlin, no wall intersects them. The populations speak different languages. 'Unseeing' enforces the border. For Beszel natives to see the Ul Quoma foreigners sharing the same sidewalk constitutes a 'breach.' Spotting a woman walking away from the crime scene, for example, the lead Beszel detective realizes "with a start... that she was not on GunterStrász at all, and that [he] should not have seen her" (12). "Crosshatches" mark the intersections between the cities and warrant crucial alertness when negotiating them. The building in one city may abut a building in the other, so that one of them necessitates 'unseeing.' To go from one city to the other requires permission and passport, even if the trip is next door. To phone across the street necessitates an international code, if in the other city. Violation of the border is a criminal act resulting in deportation for a foreigner and disappearance for a native. Government officials in the department of Breach surveils the citizens of Beszel and enforces the strictures of borders: "The powers of Breach are almost limitless. Frightening. What does limit Breach is solely that those powers are highly circumstantially specific" (68). In other words, the limitless power of Breach only extends to that of the breach, but a breach consists of simply seeing the forbidden. In effect, a patrolled, intangible border separates the people of Beszel and of Ul Quoma, a peoples thought to stem from one tribe.

Even this brief description of Miéville's thought-provoking murder mystery highlights two aspects of borders. First, each citizen internalizes it. The boundary between places parallels one within the individual subject to national laws, which may or may not permit travel to another country. Individuals need either self-regulate or risk criminality. The boundary entails acute awareness in order to regulate unawareness especially as the population circumnavigates 'crosshatches.'

The second aspect of borders revolves around the displacement of truth. The detective in this novel, after all, must solve a crime. His truth rests in the determination of the culprit. Given a murder in one country, the victim's body in another, and the limitations placed on seeing, the boundary disrupts and nearly eliminates the very possibility of solving the crime. However imaginative and diligent the characters are, the novel reveals the way empirical evidence can fall through the cracks known as the border. For when we say, "We see," we mean we understand. It does not involve the physiology of our eyes but of consciousness. To 'unsee' is to miss the point, to fragment understanding as if a post-modern requirement for moving about in the world. Whereas the border in Miéville's novel defeats understanding between the two cities, it paradoxically posits the acknowledgement of 'unseeing' as a necessary first step in the process of understanding. In other words, we need be aware of what we do not see, what we do not understand, in order to bridge the boundary between an 'us' and a 'them.'

Some borders, of course, are more visible than others. The ancient Romans likely would have welcomed a Berlin wall to clarify 'us' and 'them.' It would have relieved the vigilance of 'un-seeing'

for those in Beszél. Until they reached Scotland, however, the Romans had another solution to borders: they just moved them outward. However suspect in his claims, Livy (59 BCE-17 CE) describes a ritual for accomplishing expansion in the settling of Rome. In summary, a legate runs up to the boundary of Rome's Latin neighbors and declares his state's intentions. He addresses all the immortals, declares who sent him, and asks Jupiter to let him know if this idea is a bad one: "If I demand unduly and against religion that these men and these things be surrendered to me, then let me never enjoy my native land" (Livy, 1:32.6-7). As he crosses the boundary, he repeats the message, with appropriate variations, to the first man he meets, when he enters the city gates, and in the market. At this point, I always wonder how many legates were necessary? Why not just capture him? Then again, maybe no one understood this crazy person running around, speaking gibberish. Perhaps, as Miéville's novel imagines, the legate was unseen. If Rome's demands go unmet within thirty-three days, the legate dutifully calls once again on all the immortals as witness and notifies them of his return to Rome for consultations. Notice that those who see this ritual are the virtually unseen, but acknowledged, immortals. The second part of the declaration begins when the legate reports to the pre-republican, Roman king. The king, in turn, consults the elders. If all agree to war for their reparations, a verbal ritual occurs whereby each member affirms his agreement with the others as witness. Then a priest carries a "cornet-wood spear, iron-pointed or hardened in the fire" to the boundary of the other nation (1:32.13). "In the presence of not less than three grown men," he declares war, names those in agreement, and "hurls his spear into their territory" (1:32.14).

Livy fails to explain how the legates knew that their first spear landed across the boundary. He refers to gated and walled cities, but as the original settlers reached east across Italy, most of the population were farmers who marked their adjoining lands with a rock, a terminus (e.g. Ovid, II. 641-42). Indeed, unlike East and West Berlin after the wall, many territories around the world look the same from each side. The desert, for example, looks the same from Mexico and from Arizona. How would one know what to 'unsee'? The line is clear on a map; any internalization stays somewhat abstract until a fence interferes, a sign indicates difference. In contrast to look-alike-landscapes, the geography of rivers, oceans, and mountains sometimes make their own borders and thereby restrict seeing; dialects evolve, and can even birth a language incomprehensible to the inhabitants' ancestors. Yet my own state of Colorado escaped a geographical divide; the Rockies cut through it. A cartographer's pencil, as opposed to a pioneer's wagon, determined its boundaries. Interestingly a Coloradan once told me that her family was Mexican. I asked how long they had been in Colorado. She replied that she and her family had lived here for generations: "the border moved; we didn't." She self-identified as neither American nor Coloradan under which laws she lived. She obeyed these laws and benefitted from public education and modern conveniences the United States offered. In effect, she was making a political statement, a statement of pride, a critique of the displacement of Native Americans who preceded the Mexicans. For this woman, ethnicity circumscribed historical fact. As with the characters in *The City and the City*, she internalized boundaries but only some, so as to deny others.

I encountered a similar situation where ethnicity mattered to individuals near the Dolomites in Northeastern Italy. I chatted with an Italian colleague whose grandfather lived there during World War II. My colleague told me that her family sided with the Germans. Her grandfather's brother was a commandant. They accepted Mussolini's rules--not a partisan among them. They welcomed the Germans. They were not alone. Many families in the region felt and acted the same way. After all, they were Austrian-German. They had lived in the same area for generations. The borders moved; they did not.

In effect, World War II ushered in a civil war in Italy's northeast. The Brenner Pass provided a major route for the Nazis. It was a fast track between Munich and Rome for soldiers, for supplies, for prisoners. Dependent on ethnic affiliation and filiation, dependent on winners and losers, the war boiled just

Nancy Ciccone • Migrating Borders

under the social surface, generations after it ended, invisible to non-natives. The regions' background likely contributed to the inhabitant's sense of identity. The Veneto province joined the Italian kingdom as late as 1866. It had bounced around. After the Seven Weeks War and a Prussian victory, the Treaty of Vienna (1866) forced the Austrians to cede the region to a neutral France, which in turn gifted it to Italy. This event followed the Roman Republic declaration of 1849, which theoretically united Italy and which was the same year the Venetian Republic succumbed to Austria. Confused? Imagine living there.

One morning, you look out the kitchen window you have looked out for the past twenty years, and the hill behind the house is no longer Austrian; today, it is Italian. The hill did not move. The river may have a new name but only in official documents. The street addresses cadge the same numbers, but in another country. Natives may walk the same streets and shop at the same grocer, but the people who ate 'wurst' for dinner, now order 'salsiccia'. To paraphrase from Appiah, their conversation makes them used to each other (85), despite the changeability of maps. Then a war arrives and they distinguish an 'us' from a 'them'. Before the formation of the European Union, the Austrian in Veneto Province needed a passport to visit relatives in Austria. As the British might ask, who are they when they are at home? Some think that one driving force for Garibaldi's military prowess resulted from the 1858 treaty between Napoléon and Cavour. At that meeting, Nice located north of the Alps was ceded to France. Nice was Garibaldi's birthplace. So Italy's hero was born in France, only it was Italy then. A hurled spear could no longer cross the Alps. However habitual the tolerance of pluralism, it failed in Sarajevo because a group of Serbs held on to who they are when they are at home. They threw their spear across a border of ethnicity. If "'Being home' refers to the place where one lives within familiar, safe protected boundaries," what tectonic plates shifted for the Serbs?¹ They literally occupied the same place. We need to know the self-designated borders of 'home' to circumvent the kind of ethnic atrocities that Sarajevo has come to represent (Siege of Sarajevo, 1992-1996).

For the Coloradan native and for my Italian colleague, boundaries displaced nationalities leaving cultural identities, even if somewhat mythic, as intact as it did for those in Miéville's fictional Beszel. Unlike cosmopolitans, the inhabitants stay where they have always lived but the province figuratively migrates to another government. When the United States disunited in civil war, the newly drawn border generally separated the north from the south. The difference it made on one individual life—that of Prince Rivers—defies imagination. He first appears in history as an enslaved coach driver and ends his life in the same profession, but as a freeman. In between those markers, Prince Rivers gained emancipation by escaping from his owner (1861); joined the Union army (1863) and served as a sergeant under Thomas Higginson² at Port Royal, South Carolina, where Rivers was previously enslaved; escaped bounty put on his head by his previous owner; settled in Hamburg, South Carolina, where he rose to magistrate (1868) and then mayor (1871); endured newspaper revilement for his successes; and finally survived a white supremacist massacre at Hamburg (1876), only to face dismissal from his position and a frequently postponed lawsuit (1877).³ The man whom Higginson thought could be "'King of South Carolina'" "had been politically guillotined long before his [legal] case was finally dismissed in 1885" (qtd. in Budiansky 52; 253).

The end of the civil war in 1865 eliminated the border between North and South, but the repercussions of emancipation issued in the corruption known as reconstruction. Prince Rivers did not move from the South Carolina that initially enslaved him, but public events and racial prejudice repeatedly remapped his emotional geography. The land remained the same, but marauders destroyed his things: the tangibles that identified the freed Rivers. As visible as the Berlin wall, skin color distinguished an 'us' from a 'them.' One could see it, touch it, and die crossing the boundary. The 'white' side pretended to speak a language different from the other; Prince Rivers's writing proves otherwise, but the boundaries were set. He must have forgotten to internalize the border others observed; he must have thought the post-war

elimination of the border indicated actuality. A group of Southerners replaced Roman legates in declaring their intention to claim what some thought they owned. Guns replaced the spear and established a racial boundary that muddied the ability to identify the culprits. Only skin color was seen, only the surface, so the person was unseen.⁴

Borders enable forms of identity and identification, and at the same time, obfuscate them. Crossing them generates meaning but also limits it. By mining historical examples in juxtaposition with Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism* and Miéville's *The City & the City*, we cross the generic boundaries of philosophy and of fiction. However different the discourses, they articulate a similar concern with literal and figurative borders. The Besz citizens looking at those in Ul Quoma risk life, although the cities occupy the same geographical area. Laws keep one set of citizens from the other. In contrast to Miéville's fictional treatment of borders, Appiah begins *Cosmopolitanism* with an image of a "shattered mirror" indicative of the perceptions of the world-traveling, "educated upper classes in late Victorian England"; "each shard of [the mirror] reflects one part of a complex truth from its own particular angle" (8). His image injects the significance of 'class.' Wealth, perhaps more so than education, enables the lucky few to cross national borders. But the "Victorian" travelers fail to see the native cultures they visit; they merely taste different aspects in their travels. They return home essentially unchanged. Whereas Miéville's novel attends to the ridiculousness and momentousness of enforcing borders, Appiah notes their variations in the exchange of perceptions. This brief glance at ethnic, racial, political, geographic borders shatters even Appiah's "shard." The plethora of figurative and literal borders highlights the tremendous consequences entailed by them, but more importantly, it alludes to the continuing need to excavate them, to see what is unseen and move closer to understanding the humanity that binds us.

Notes

- 1 Martin and Mahonty continue this quotation to define "'not being home' as "a matter of realizing that home was an illusion of coherence and safety based on the exclusion of specific histories of oppression and resistance, the repression of difference even within oneself (196).
- 2 Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823-1911) may be better known to some as Emily Dickinson's correspondent rather than the commander of the first Union regiment of freed African American soldiers.
- 3 This timeline is gleaned from Budiansky's *Bloody Shirt*. For contextual information, see Kevin Dougherty, *The Port Royal Experiment* (Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 2014) and Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).
- 4 In 2015, a lone shooter targeted the Emanuel African Methodist Church, near Charleston, South Carolina. Among the people murdered was a senator, symbolic of the political inheritance in the same area Prince Rivers had carved out.

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Sandra M. Cox

REVOLUTION & RELOCATION IN GRAPHIC MEMOIR

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES & TESTIMONIAL PURPOSES IN
CUBA: MY REVOLUTION AND *VIETNAMERICA*

Recent developments in mediated coverage of refugees seeking asylum point to an ever-expanding anxiety about the diasporic spaces that result from conflict-driven immigration. At the same time as traditional news media—in print and on-screen—frames refugees fleeing the developing Global South (often as a result of either the American War on Terror or of postcolonial discord and Western interventionism), a body of autobiographical comics by and about migrants who relocated during a period of violent revolution has grown. Looking more closely at these autobiographical comics provides a means to more fully understand how patterns of migration are reflected in the self-representation of identity. By conducting close readings of the intertextual conversations in two such comics, I hope to consider the varied socio-political pressures that prompt relocation and to offer an analysis of the lived experiences of asylum-seekers in the U.S. after American military occupations during the Cold War. While this context is radically different from the current crisis in Western Europe and in the United States after recent executive orders, the ways in which each graphic narrative considers how civil unrest and systemic violence prompt transnational migration and transcultural identification in ways that remain relevant to contemporary considerations of migrants and identities. My hope is that in examining how these narratives present records of asylum-seeking will better illuminate some of those contemporary issues that plague attempts to resettle migrants fleeing conflict zones.

Both *Cuba: My Revolution* and *VietnamERICA* are part of a burgeoning genre of autography, or graphic memoir, which has particular didactic functions. The books actively participate in civic discourse about an ever-growing set of diasporic communities—migrants moving from the Global South to the Global North to flee armed conflicts in which the United States has intervened. G.B. Tran's *VietnamERICA* tracks one family's migration from Vietnam to the U.S. during and after the Vietnam War, and Iverna Lockpez and Dean Haspiel's *Cuba: My Revolution* follows a young woman from the July 26th Revolution in Cuba to her eventual migration to Florida after persecution by the Castro regime. Tran's book is based upon the author's life, as well as extensive interviews with his family members about their experiences during the War, which he both writes and illustrates. *Cuba: My Revolution*, on the other hand, is a sort of graphic *roman à clef*, based on Lockpez's real-life experiences, which have been fictionalized and illustrated by Dean Haspiel, a frequent penciler and writer for DC Comics.

Both books also represent a shift in mediated expression—from the textual genre of *testimonio*, endemic to Latin America and most often associated with the Central American Dirty Wars to the visual medium of comics. Understanding the ways that this shift reflects and reveals narratives about transculturation and migration is significant and useful because the two markets in publishing that have continued to grow since Marshall McLuhan famously declared that “print is dead” are illustrated texts and texts for adolescent and young adult audiences. For contemporary literary studies to demonstrate its relevance in a post-culture wars society, scholars may need to apply the analytical tools developed for understanding the textual pragmatics of identity politics to these burgeoning genres. In the present moment, when debates about migration and asylum are at their most heated and relevant, it is particularly appropriate to investigate the content of these two graphic narratives with the intention of allowing their

creators to bear witness to the experience of migration under the duress created by revolution and foreign occupation.

The two comics were originally published by American presses, in English, and are rhetorically oriented on an audience of American readers, which suggests that the stories encourage a particular set of responses from that specific audience. *Cuba: My Revolution* and *Vietnamerica* are autographic works of *testimonio*, which is a genre of non-fiction narrative that bears witness to cultural trauma for radical political ends. The comics serve those ends in three ways as the visual texts work to implicitly persuade readers to: 1) re-examine mainstream historical and commercial narratives about the Cold War, 2) reflect upon the political, economic and human costs of American intervention in foreign governments, and 3) participate more actively in civil discourse concerning the fates of migrant populations fleeing armed conflict. In doing so, Tran, Lockpez, and Haspiel present inherently politicized narratives about the ethics of American military intervention in foreign revolutions. These narratives operate didactically to prompt readers to shift their understandings of the ways that war and revolution prompt relocation and transculturation.

In spite of this politicization, both texts remain profoundly ambivalent about revolution and conflicted about the opportunities offered by relocation. Contradictions abound in the ideological fabric of both texts. Tran's grandfather was a ranking official in the revolutionary army, who is remembered as a war hero in Vietnam. Tran's father, was imprisoned by the Viet Minh and is therefore understandably critical of the communist regime. Tran's father isn't an American apologist, in spite of his vehement rejection of Ho Chi Minh's reforms; he is equally critical of what Tran's dialogue calls the "myopic contemporary Western filter" that he believes clouds his youngest son's perspective on Vietnamese history (95). Similarly, Lockpez and Haspiel's protagonist, Sonya, has no stable position on the political and economic spectrum that runs from totalitarian facism to complete *laissez faire* governance by the market. Sonya initially sympathizes with the Marxist revolution, in spite of her upper middle class upbringing, but is later victimized by the Castro's secret police and is forced to flee to the U.S. Because both texts use multiple narrative perspectives to view the consequences of American imperialism and the troubles of the *coupes d'etats* that contextualize that intervention, the nuances of revolution and relocation are reproduced for the audience. This nuance produces a complex nexus of narrative levels, and attendant didactic purposes.

Of Genre and Medium: Defining *Testimonio* and Narratological Readings of Autography

In order to produce a unified theoretical foundation for interpreting these narrative levels and didactic purposes, two distinct bodies of scholarship—*testimonio* and narratology—are crucial to the theoretical intervention this article posits. The first of these is drawn from Hispanophone literary studies and considers how personal narrative functions as an act of witnessing. The word *testimonio* is often used to describe first-person accounts of atrocities committed against marginalized populations in crisis. Scholar John Beverley's definition—"a literary simulacrum of an oral narrative. . .with a political purpose" (70-71)—suggests that the more immediate the experience of the writer, the more potent the testimonial literature is likely to be. The most famous example of writing in this genre, and the one Beverley draws upon most frequently in his work is *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, a narrative by the Nobel Prize winner that documents the atrocities visited upon indigenous Guatemalans that led to the narrator/protagonist's immigration. While it cannot be argued that Tran, Haspiel and Lockpez's work exactly approximate Menchú's form, the connections between that *testimonio* and the autographic narratives do not stretch Beverley's definitions overmuch.

Beverley offers a definition of *testimonio*, as "a nonfictional, popular-democratic form of epic narrative" (33), which manifests as "a novel or novella-length narrative in book. . .told in the first

person by a narrator who is also the real protagonist or witness of the events he or she recounts, and whose unit of narration is usually a ‘life’ or a significant life experience” (31). Tran’s *Vietnamerica* is organized through polyphonic stories—either the protagonist/ author/ illustrator GB’s own experiences or the oral narratives relayed to him by his living relatives. Although Haspiel and Lockpez manufacture the character of Sonya, the preface by Lockpez argues that the her own experiences primarily inform that characterization and that those events she did not personally witness were produced from shared memories that other survivors of Castro’s purges shared with her, producing exactly the sort of composite character that is central to *testimonio*—a narrator who is both an ‘I’ and a ‘we’. In collaborating with Haspiel to tell the story of the Cuban Revolution, Lockpez presents a cultural story rather than a personal one. In doing so, she chooses to speak in a kind of pluralistic narrative voice that documents the shared trauma of the revolution from the perspective of multiple Cuban nationals living under the regime.

That relationship between Lockpez, as pluralized narrative center, and Haspiel, as a kind of collaborating adaptor who sets her narrative into comics form, is not without complications that related to *testimonio* as a genre. Beverley also argues that much of any *testimonio*’s protagonist’s story is filtered through the voice of an interlocutor, who will set the narrative into a context accessible to the dual audience. Beverley’s own work examines the ways in which Elizabeth Burgos-Dubray, the translator of the seminal piece of *testimonio I, Rigoberta Menchú*, worked to reshape the oral narrative that Menchú shared into a form that would be legible to the international readership Menchú hoped to persuade when she approached Burgos-Dubray about compiling the book (first in Spanish and then later in more than a dozen languages before becoming an international bestseller). Similarly, Haspiel’s expertise on the poetics of comics and Tran’s Americanized perspective on his family history serve as lenses through which non-immigrant readers might be better able to understand the ways in which immigration both broadens and distills national and ethnic identity.

Additionally, Beverley notes that beyond simply identifying *testimonio* as a generic category, critics should attend to “precisely how *testimonio* puts into question the existing institution of literature as an ideological apparatus of alienation and domination at the same time that it constitutes itself as a new form of literature” (43). Beverley’s contention that *testimonio* is always necessarily located at the margin of literature—indeed, he calls it “a new postfictional form of literature” (43)—makes an analysis of how comics might bear witness to cultural experiences of oppression especially relevant to considerations of how textuality is permuted in the case of autoethnographic narratives, as the medium of comics and the genre of autobiography are both often marginalized in literary criticism.

In examining how Beverley’s work might apply to fiction, Kimberley Nance has worked to categorize potential purposes for didactic literatures of witness. Nance argues that three functions shape the rhetoric of *testimonio*: first, forensic narratives work to inform readers who may be unfamiliar or misinformed about the narrated events. For instance, what most American readers know about the war in Vietnam comes from literary texts—like Bobbie Ann Mason’s *In Country* or Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*—or commercial films—like Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* or Stone’s *Platoon*. These texts and films almost always take on the narrative position of the American soldier deployed abroad, and often exclude of the experiences of the civilians of the occupied nation. By revising that perspective through centering the story on family members who were allied with Ho Chi Minh’s revolution, or the US-backed army of North Vietnam, or the unallied civilian populations caught between those two forces, Tran works to multiply the contexts in which the conflict and the attendant refugee crisis might be understood. Likewise, Haspiel and Lockpez’s decision to depict Sonya as both a sympathizer with the Marxist revolution and a critic of the fascism of the Castro regime unsettles the dichotomy between Capitalist savior and Socialist oppressor that so many narratives about Cuba (like Ernest Hemingway’s *To Have and Have Not* or Reinaldo Arenas’ *Before Night Falls*, for instance) seem to build.

Second, epideictic narratives both build community and call for readers to make judgments about the institutional and political factors that traumatize that community. For instance, Che Guevara's autobiographical *Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War* works to situate Latin Americans, regardless of country of origin, language or race, in a pan-national ethnic community. After producing that sense of community, Guevara works to persuade readers to lay blame for economic exploitation at the feet of a colonialist Euro-American military industrial complex. While *Vietnamerica* and *Cuba: My Revolution* do not operate pan-nationally to construct the sort of culturally-derived community that Guevara produces, both autographies make use of diasporic communities as third terms in the exclusionary construction of natives/immigrants that belies so much mediation of transnational migration. Because both GB and Sonya, as protagonists, feel equally estranged from their nation of origin and their new homes in the US, the ways in which community is built and maintained are always already at odds with the autographic call for epideictic analysis.

Third, Nance suggests that deliberative narratives work to make readers reflect upon how they might unwittingly be complicit in the traumatization of the cultural group the writer speaks for, and, occasionally, to ask readers to undertake some action to assist that group, or mitigate the damage done to them. Again, a good example of this function is Menchú's autobiography, in which readers in the Global North are called to intervene on behalf of indigenous Andeans persecuted by the ladino-controlled government of Guatemala.

In addition to applying these evaluations of didactic purpose drawn from theories of testimonial fiction, a body of scholarship drawn from classic narrative theory has grown up around non-fiction comics. These narratological approaches to the mechanics of representation used in autobiographical graphic narratives illuminate formal features that lend credence to close readings of those testimonial functions. Comics theorist Hillary Chute has called the sort of personal narrative through the machinery of comics "autography", and feminist literary critic Robyn Warhol has argued that autographic works might be better understood through Gérard Genette's notions of diegesis. According to Warhol, every graphic memoir contains at least three diegetic levels—what she calls "story worlds"—that are produced by the perspectives on narrated events that audience are offered as they read the text and view the illustrations.

These three diegetic levels are perhaps better observed than explained, as Fig. 1 and 2 demonstrate. The first of these levels is what narratologists have long called the intradiegetic—wherein the writer is a kind of "character" in dialogue with the other people involved in the events of the narrative. The second level, the extradiegetic, is the voice of the writer in retrospective first person, writing from the present as a narrator of those past events. Luckily, in comics (if not in textual memoir), it is relatively easy to separate the intradiegetic from the extradiegetic, as the form makes use of dialogue balloons for the former and narration that is either unattributed to a speaking character or presented outside the frame of each panel for the latter.

In spite of this ease of identification, some slippage between the doubled image of the narrator as both actor in past events and organizer of present recollections often occurs. The forensic functions of both pieces of autography are often communicated by these two levels. The intradiegetic dialogue situates the reader in the time and place in which the cultural trauma occurs, and the extradiegetic narration provides analysis that works to push back against misconceptions or to contextualize the testimony provided by the intradiegetic level of narrative. In this way, Tran and Lockpez are able to integrate the voice of the witness/protagonist and the interlocutor who frames the story that witness/protagonist shares. This is one way the medium of comics provides for a clearly formal framing of the didactic purposes of *testimonio*.

In addition to these two levels drawn directly from Genette, Warhol's important contribution to understandings of narrative levels within autobiography is what she's called the interdiegetic, which is a narrative level produced by the pictorial dimension of autobiography and any words or phrases that cannot be attributed to a single narrating voice. Sometimes pictures function intradiegetically—to illustrate the characters in dialogue—or extradiegetically—to depict the narrator in the literary present or to illustrate the events in the recalled past. However, occasionally an image corresponds to neither level, and serves to illustrate a space either between or outside those two perspectives. In these narrative spaces, those two other functions of testimonial literature are made particularly apparent to viewers. In Fig. 3, for instance, Vietnam is depicted as a kind of sinkhole, with displaced citizens being sucked down. This visual metaphor has an epideictic function, wherein the sunken subjects are portrayed as a community in crisis and viewers are implicitly asked to consider how these displaced populations should respond to the traumatic events by which they are trapped.

The ways that content overlaps in *Cuba: My Revolution* and *Vietnamerica* point to shared forensic functions and diegetic levels of autobiographic narratives about transnational migration. Both autobiographies push back against some notions that their American audiences might have about the communist revolutions in Cuba and Vietnam. Rather than focusing on the costs of American intervention for Americans, the cost of these revolutions for the indigenous populations of the two nations is rendered in similar scenes of detention and torture. As can be seen in Fig. 4 and 5, both texts use the intradiegetic dialogue between detainee and interrogator to illustrate the subhuman conditions that both Sonya and Tri Huu were forced to endure when they came under suspicion by the party. Where the didactic functions of the novel diverge is in how they work epideictically. As Fig. 6 shows, Haspiel and Lockpez use a tri-color format and askew paneling to emphasize Sonya's pain and degradation when her captors administer electroshocks during interrogation. Contrasting red and grey tones persuade readers to identify and sympathize with Sonya's helplessness and to visually represent the physical pain and emotional confusion she experiences. The heightened contrast of the greyscale produces a kind of neutral background against which the red works to call attention to the visual representations of pain the torture produces in the protagonist. The use of red also evokes the connotative associations of anger that Haspiel's art hopes the viewer will feel at this depiction of gross misuse of governmental authority. The characterization even becomes less detailed, so that rather than representing a specific person, drawings of Sonya are universalized, demonstrating how the character stands in for other young Cubans who are similarly brutalized.

Tran, on the other hand, focuses on the way the time elapses during Tri Huu's detention, as is evident in Fig. 7. The use of the *mise en abyme* effect in the lower left of this panel shows the repetition of this sequence of events as part of the external characterization in the extradiegetic pictorials. In the next few panels, However, Tran juxtaposes that with illustrations of the character's memories, using intradiegesis to situate the earth-toned images of Tri's isolation and starvation below the more brightly colored happier times in his life. Like a film montage, those memories proceed from the immediate past into the future, showing that Tri imagines his pregnant wife raising his children without him. The bars of his cell melt into the panel divisions—called "gutters" by comics artists—so that the form of comics become part of the extended time of the narrative. In manipulating time using visual redeployments of space, Tran makes a tacit comment about how lifespans and family trajectories are disrupted by regime change and American interventionism. While Haspiel and Lockpez portray pain as the major consequence of detention and torture, Tran works to show readers that the suspension in limbo—between a fascist state that oppresses its own population and sympathies with the state that seeks to 'liberate' that population without clear plans for regime change or population resettlement—is every bit as effecting as the sorts of electrocution and mortification of the body that readers may expect in narratives about torture. The clear connections between Tri Huu's detention and the millions of refugees living in detention centers

and refugee camps are not obviously framed in the intradiegesis of Vietnamerica, but the interdiegetic combination of words, pictures and compositional layout helps to portray that endless waiting as a kind of torture that dehumanizes just as completely as violent attacks.

Of Rhetoric and Audience: Intertextuality and Persuasive Objectives in Autography

In order to build on Warhol's notion of additional narrative levels in autography, I assert that there is a fourth diegetic level—the protodiegetic. This protodiegetic level works to fuse forensic functions with deliberative ones by implicitly asking readers to consider how the information provided by the forensic testimony might refer to the mainstream narratives and recognizable formal features. By using familiar visual cues in the interdiegetic level, the illustrators help readers to reframe their reflections about American ideological complicity in armed conflicts, which in turn causes readers to carefully consider their shared responsibility for the consequences portrayed by the epideictic sequences at the extradiegetic and intradiegetic levels. This works by directly referencing, often through illustrations rather than textual narratives, the contextual preconceptions that the audience brings to the text. The protodiegetic level is intertextual and often formalized, which limits the amount of intradiegetic text used for deliberative functions. When looking for the protodiegetic level, readers must interpret the style of the form, rather than the content it conveys, in order to see how these autographic works of *testimonio* function deliberately.

In *Cuba: My Revolution*, that context comes from an assumption that the reader will be familiar with mainstream superhero comics, which often feature anthropomorphized characters as larger than life heroes and villains. In the section of the text that follows the weeks of torture Sonya endures, Haspiel's drawing literalize a metaphor from Lockpez's diaries. Sonya is increasingly dehumanized and begins to think of herself as a caged panther, as is presented in Fig. 8. The pictorial levels of the narrative don't choose to focus on the animalistic behaviors that Sonya literally displays—smearing her hirsute body with her own feces to deter the attention of guards—but instead depict a transformation from woman to jungle cat, reminiscent of Batman's nemesis, Catwoman, or of Stan Lee's hypersexualized shero Tigra, as can be seen in Fig. 9. The protodiegetic construction of this character calls for readers to consider how superhero comics—themselves a product of American Cold War propaganda—might desensitize American audiences to this sort of suffering, and to potentially reject those narratives about American exceptionalism that the mainstream uses of the medium contain.

Rather than referencing mainstream comics, Tran takes on a differentiated visual history. The section breaks in *Vietnamerica* approximate propaganda posters from the CPV after the August revolution, an example of which is presented in Fig. 10. By reworking the aesthetics of these posters as formal markers of breaks in the narrative, Tran works to insert the disarticulated hand—first as savior, lifting his family above the conflict, and later as defender of the army of Vietnam, crushing the bombs dropped by Japan, France and the U.S.—into a particular narrative about specific asylum-seekers (see Fig. 11 and 12).

In this way, Tran's family is saved from the CPV's troops, but the CPV's intervention saves Vietnam from colonialist oppression, thereby complicating a seemingly simple narrative. Additionally, much of the interdiegetic content in *Vietnamerica* comes from hyperbolic renditions of photojournalism from the revolution, which further builds verisimilitude into the narrative (as can be noted in Fig. 13 and 14). By referencing real-events, Tran builds some sense of veracity into his narrative. Using illustration to exaggerate the chaos of those moments, he works to frame asylum seekers as a population under duress, simply seeking safety, rather than as traitors and turncoats or abject illiterates begging for handouts from international aid organizations. This humanizing impulse is intrinsically linked to the deliberative functions of the autography as well.

The sections of the graphic memoir depicting Tran's own ambivalence about and alienation from his extended family and Vietnam are represented by protodiegetic references to mundane objects from idyllic American family life. In this depiction of a game of Scrabble (in Fig. 15) the word "home" is jumbled in unused tiles at the side of the game board, which shows Tran's audience that the very concept has become irrelevant for second generation Vietnamese Americans. There is literally no place to lay the word on the board, because it is filled in with the faces of lost loved ones and memories of racial microaggressions. Readers are asked to consider how their assumptions about Vietnamese families might be challenged by these pictorial representations of transculturation and elided ethnic identity, which are long-term costs that extend well beyond periods of torture and civil unrest.

Of Politics and Mass Production: Imagining Identity and Interrogating Consumerism in Autography

Both pieces of autography call for readers to consider how the mainstream representations of American roles in the wars in Cuba and Vietnam worked to manufacture broad consent, by which military might was used to produce culturally specific shared traumas for Cuban and Vietnamese people. In calling attention to this American complicity in foreign atrocities, Tran, Lockpez and Haspiel call for an ideological shift in collective reasoning about how and when to become involved in regime change, as well as to remind readers of the costs—both personal and political—of these interventions. Given that broad political invective in each work, critics might well ask how any intervention in the intertextual conversation the two works stage might function, according to the ethics of reading. Indeed, Paolo Quattrone has taken up the question of the ethics of assigning the designation of *testimonio* to those productions that cannot be subjected to checks of veracity; "[t]he issue at this point becomes ethical and political for it relates to the need to speak for those who can no longer do it," like the members of Tran's family who do not survive the conflict in Viet Nam or the unnamed victims of the Castro regime's various purges in post-revolutionary Cuba. This issue is, of course complicated by the need for "reflection on the possibility and consequences of speaking" or drawing, about politically suppressed atrocities. Quattrone goes on to argue that "where the absence of the unspeakable rather than the presence of the fact is the only possible object of investigation, there is a need to rethink the relations between the case [being presented in the *testimonio*] and the author and the theory" (148).

By situating investigations of didactic discursive strategies alongside narrative techniques, an implicit theory of reading may emerge that marks both *Vietnamerica* and *Cuba: My Revolution* as transgeneric and transmedial constructions which owe their particular consideration of the fluidity of culture and identity in a diasporic space to the popular aesthetics they take from comics as a consumerist tradition. Jaqueline Loss, in considering how cinematic adaptations of textual *testimonio* may shape the questions of veracity that Quattrone raises, notes that Frederic Jameson's arguments about the relationship between *testimonio* and *cinéma vérité* suggest that the two genres share "a set of aesthetic positions against stars and against traditional narratives and fixed scenes" (qtd. in Loss 330). Because the works by Tran, Haspiel and Lockpez also adapt a visual mechanism that makes apparent the intervention of the form—in this case comics, rather than film—in producing the verisimilitude of the narrative, that relationship seems appropriate. However, this argument about how the abandonment of a singularly textual narrative strategy might become grounds for questioning the validity of a translated or adapted visual narrative cannot be easily dismissed; Loss poses the primary question: "Whose cultural memory is privileged if [viewers] accept the rescue paradigm, and what aspects of consumerism lead us to buy into the narrative of rescue and demise that coincides with the market's whims?" (331). Does the use of the poetics of comics undermine the politics of *testimonio*? How might the fact that Lockpez and Haspiel's narrative visually replicates the narratives of superhero saviors, and, indeed, of American exceptionalism, complicate the testimonial rendering of a Cuban-American identity? Indeed, might those same narratives

strains overwhelm the purposes to which Tran revises his father's narrative through the perspective that his father has called "myopic" and "Western"? While these questions are prescient, it might be argued that the tropes of popular culture in these two autographic works are actually connected to the rhetorical work they undertake.

Comics are, of course, often viewed more as a commoditized mass culture than as exemplars of high culture (as literature or film may be considered by some), but perhaps that very extension of the popular into the political is grounds for reconsidering the testimonial purpose of these sorts of texts. In his defense of *testimonio* as an extra-literary genre, Beverley has noted that

the commodification of cultural production through the operation of the market and the technologies of commercial mass culture can be a means of democratization and redistribution of cultural use-values, allowing not only new modes of cultural consumption by also increased access to means of cultural production by subaltern subjects. (159)

The very fact that these stories are proliferated through a mass cultural medium—comics—rather than sold as capital-L "Literature" may point to the truth of Beverley's argument. George Yudice seems to concur with Beverley's point here and to extend that endeavor by noting that authorizing the polemically situated narratives of the sorts of speaking subjects Beverley finds in *testimonio*: "Testimonial writing, as the word indicates, promotes expression of personal experience. That personal experience, of course, is the collective struggle against oppression from oligarchy, military, and transnational capital" (26). In their elevation of the personal to the political, Tran, Haspiel and Lockpez undertake a kind of democratization of narratives about systemic oppression that work to broaden and deepen the ways in which migration and national identity might be written, visualized and communicated across varied and complex forms. For this reason, attending to the political didacticism of each work of autography is, perhaps, among the best ways to locate both theory and practice of transnationalism in the increasingly mediated environments of a broad global culture.

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Fig. 1. An example of intradiegetic narration from Tran's *Vietnamera*.

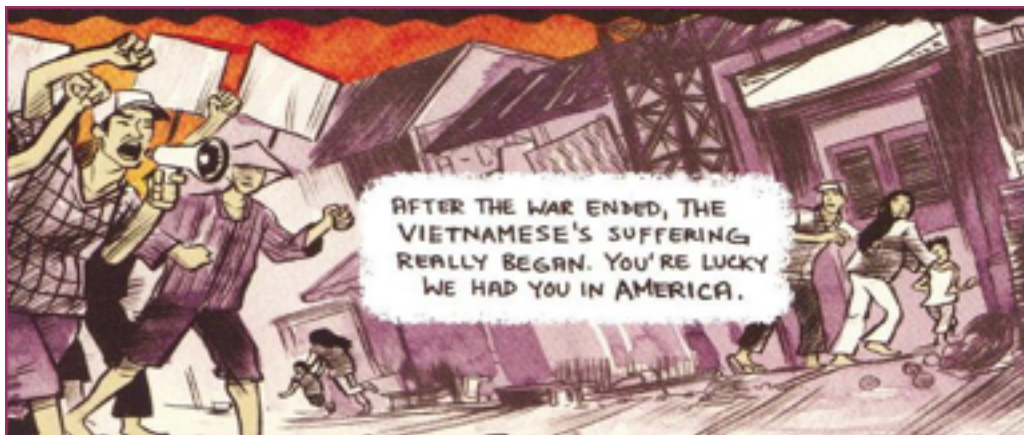


Fig. 2. An example of extradiegetic narration from Tran's *Vietnamera*.



Fig. 3. An example of intradiegetic narration from Tran's *Vietnamera*.

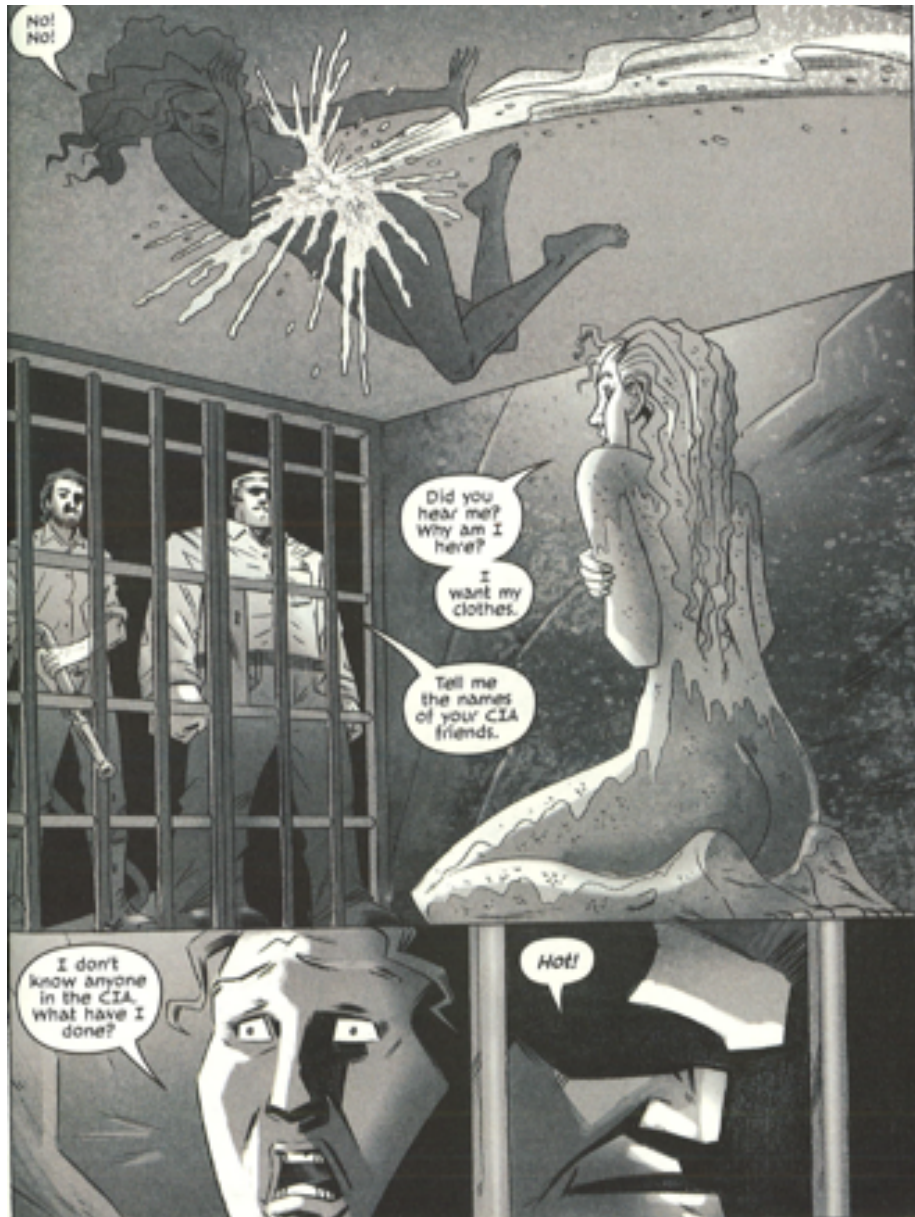


Fig. 4. Detention scene in from Lockpez and Haspiel's *Cuba: My Revolution*.



Fig. 5. Detention scene in from Tran's *Vietnamera*.



Fig. 6. Torture scene in tri-color format from Lockpez and Haspiel's *Cuba: My Revolution*.



Fig. 7. Torture scene with *mise-en-abyme* effect in from Tran's *Vietnamerica*.



Fig. 8. Panther panels from Lockpez and Haspiel's *Cuba: My Revolution*.



Fig. 9. Cover of Stan Lee's *Tigra*.



Fig. 10. "Fight to Win" poster produced by South Vietnam during the revolution.



Fig. 11. Interstitial break from Tran's *Vietnamica*.



Fig. 12. Interstitial break from Tran's *Vietnamerica*.



Fig. 13. AP Photo of the evacuation of Saigon.



Fig. 14. Tran's drawing of the evacuation of Saigon.



Figure 15. Scrabble game board from Tran's *Vietnamerica*

Carol Erwin

SHADOWS AND PRINTS

This naming of things is so crucial to possession – a spiritual padlock with the key thrown irretrievably away – that it is a murder, an erasing, and it is not surprising that when people have felt themselves prey to it (conquest), among their first acts of liberation is to change their names.
Jamaica Kincaid, *My Garden* (Book)

Even though they were both displaced from home, H. D., an expatriate poet in the early 1900s, and Jamaica Kincaid, a contemporary diasporic writer from Antigua, appear to have little in common. Yet both wrestle with their identity and memories of home and the dominant ideologies attached to that space by focusing on writing as a personal act of discovery as opposed to a political statement. Born Elaine Potter Richardson in Antigua in 1949, Kincaid grew up in a home with an abusive mother. Most of her works contain elements of her memories of that relationship. Beginning with *A Small Place*, Kincaid also began to address the nature of her homeland as colonized, conjoining previous depictions of dominating mother with mother country. Described by J. Brooks Bouson as a “memory-haunted woman who continually remembers and tries to make sense of her Caribbean upbringing on the island of Antigua” (1), Kincaid states her principal reason for writing as a means of self-discovery: “writing is like going to a psychiatrist. I just discover things about myself” (Perry 498). Born Hilda Doolittle, H. D. also used memory and writing as means of therapy and self-discovery. In fact, she spent a period of time in psychotherapy with Dr. Sigmund Freud and records part of these sessions in one of her more autobiographical works, *Tribute to Freud*. While H. D.’s poetry, especially her later work, more often employs symbols and stories from Greek mythology, she chooses these archetypes of quest because they represent “models of search,” and Susan Friedman proposes that her quest is strongly influenced by her experiences as an analysand with Freud (*Psyche Reborn* 4).

This paper examines the techniques H. D. and Kincaid employ in creating symbols to rename and liberate feminine and diasporic identity. Both writers use flowers and gardens as symbols and spaces that are an amalgam of real and fictitious objects and experiences based on their loss of home. As Kincaid emphasizes, the act of naming is critical to possession. Therefore, in creating these hybrid symbols and transplanting them in a liminal space, each writer is able to rename objectified symbols—rose, garden, African, mother, love, sexuality, etc.—thus liberating themselves from oppressive ideology. Because the hybrid symbol is emotive and contradictory, however, the act of renaming and remaining in a liminal space is unstable. This instability—of holding together neither one nor the other, but both—highlights the ambivalence and slipperiness of language. As a result, H. D. and Kincaid are able to disrupt dominant narratives, creating a gap to write another chain of signification. In order to maintain a position within the contradictory space, the symbol projects or prints its own shadow in the liminal space. It is the shadow – a referential “you” that is both the writer and not the writer – that effectively speaks back to those forces that oppress or wound the writer.

In order to speak back to oppressive forces, Kincaid and H. D. create landscape and flowers in an attempt to return to the past, both the immediate, personal past and a past in the larger, historical

context. While H. D. transforms misogynist myths by using the various symbols of goddesses or religious female icons, such as Helen and Mary, these acts of transformation are founded upon her loss of home. She reveals that her use of Greek mythology is, at least in some ways, a literary representation of her own childhood. In a letter written to Norman Holmes Pearson on December 12, 1937, H. D. discusses her poem, "Leda," saying:

It is nostalgia for a lost land. I call it Hellas. I might, psychologically just as well, have listed the Casco Bay islands off the coast of Maine but I called my islands, Rhodes, Samos and Cos. They are symbols. And symbolically the first island of memory was dredged away or lost, like a miniature Atlantis. It was a thickly wooded island in the Leigh river [in Pennsylvania]. (Hollenberg 9)

Her comments throughout this letter expound upon her reasons for creating Greek symbols that contain the essence of childhood memories. She equates the "lost world of the classics" with "the world of childhood," declaring her early works are fragments of inner conflict and "poems of escapism...of actual memory, repressed memory, desire to escape, desire to create (music), intellectual curiosity, a wish to make real to myself what is most real" (Hollenberg 10). Her early works specifically fuse childhood memories with hybrid flowers. In exploring the power of place for H. D., Annette Debo illustrates how memories of the American landscape surface in the sea-flowers in her first work, *Sea Garden*. For example, the sea poppy is a wildflower that grows on gravelly beaches in southern New England. The sea lily is actually an invertebrate marine animal with a body that resembles a land lily, the sea violet is violet coastal flower that grows in sandy soil on the beaches of Maine, and the seashore itself is based upon Casco Bay (9-10).

Kincaid also mixes memories and symbols as a way of revisiting a home no longer available. Even her name is a symbol. While she explicitly invented Jamaica Kincaid to protect and disguise her from her mother, she also attaches personal meaning to the name, saying "It was a kind of invention: I wouldn't go home to visit that part of the world, so I decided to recreate it. 'Jamaica' was symbolic of that place" (Cudjoe 220). As Bouson identifies, the chronological order of Kincaid's texts coincides with the progressive story of self-discovery; and as her literary acts of remembering the past reach a state of maturation, she juxtaposes her domestic world of gardening in Vermont with her Antiguan past, creating both a sense of immediacy and remembrance. While she had written articles on gardening previously, *My Garden (Book)*, written in 1999, directly expresses her connection among writing, gardening, hybridity, and conquest. In pondering why her garden in Vermont is shaped peculiarly, Kincaid concludes that "this must be why: the garden for me is so bound up with words about the garden, with words themselves" (7). As she deliberates over this relationship, she discovers the reason behind her odd shaped garden:

it dawned on me that the garden I was making (and am still making and will always be making) resembled a map of the Caribbean and the sea that surrounds it...I only marveled at the way the garden is for me an exercise in memory, a way of remembering my own immediate past, a way of getting to a past that is my own (the Caribbean Sea) and the past as it is indirectly related to me (the conquest of Mexico and its surroundings). (7-8)

Thus, Kincaid's rumination on her own garden correlates with H. D.'s elucidation of nostalgia for her "miniature Atlantis." In short, each writer uses liminal landscapes as a means self-discovery and empowerment.

The chapter, "To Name is to Possess," in *My Garden (Book)* illustrates the significance of creating hybrid symbols in liminal spaces. In this chapter, Kincaid explores the relationship between gardening and conquest, tracing the origins of the renamed dahlia, once called cocoxochitl before it was removed from Mexico, "hybridized," and transplanted in European soil. The dislocated, hybrid plant is renamed by the Swedish botanist Andreas Dahl. Kincaid's garden, therefore, becomes a reflection of the "(re)

naming and the very presence of flowers as symbols of possession and dislocation" (Bernard 114). The original flower is removed from its homeland, cross-bred and transplanted in foreign soil, and then, given a new name to denote the conqueror's possession over it. As she contemplates this flower's historical past, Kincaid considers the significance of naming and possession in a wider historical context: "This naming of things is so crucial to possession – a spiritual padlock with the key thrown irretrievably away – that it is a murder, an erasing, and it is not surprising that when people have felt themselves prey to it (conquest), among their first acts of liberation is to change their names" (*My Garden (Book)* 120). This passage indicates an inseparable relationship between the act of naming and the ability to possess what one has named. Kincaid considers this act of possession a "display of entitlement" that is "symptomatic of the erasure and revision that informs the grand scheme of imperialism" and specifically proposes that Carl Linnaeus's system of classification functions "as a means of placing order over chaos in an attempt to make sense of new and strange lands" (Bernard 114). Kincaid associates this act of naming and erasure through dislocation with murder. However, as Derek Walcott has so skillfully stated, the classic Kincaidian sentence "heads toward its own contradiction" (Garis). The first part of the sentence recognizes the power of conquest, stating that those renamed are imprisoned with the key irretrievably lost and thus murdered, but death isn't necessarily the end, especially with the context of Kincaid's garden in Vermont. According to Soto-Crespo, gardens, in connection with post-colonial theories of hybridity and as motifs and tropes of imperialism, are also places of resistance because of its association with mourning and death. Because it is liminal, death becomes a space that cannot be possessed or controlled by the conqueror. Therefore, the conquered—even though they are erased without a key to unlock their prison doors—can still gain freedom through the act of renaming after death.

H. D.'s sea-flowers also illustrate the power of renaming. H. D.'s poems do not directly address the power of the dominator to name the flower, but it does hint at such an influence through landscape. Cassandra Laity identifies the images in *Sea Garden* as displaced flowers in sparse wind-tortured seascapes in contrast to the sheltered, over sweetened gardens (112-15). By placing her sea-flowers in an unstable space that noticeably contradicts the patriarchal association of garden with femininity, H. D. is able to create a new name for a feminine symbol – the rose. Her first poem, "Sea Rose," obviously "interrogates literary representations of women through distorting conventional symbols of femininity and romance... cultural clichés and the treatment of women as delicate flowers are under attack" (Dowson 136). In other words, the iconoclastic ideals of the rose contradict the images, representations, and names in this new landscape. The title of the poem positions the traditional romantic symbol on a seascape instead of a cultivated garden. Its new location is quite significant. Eileen Gregory states "Sea/salt is the arcane alchemical substance linked to the mysterious bitterness and wisdom essential to spiritual life" (140). On the edge of the sea, the salt will transmute the rose into something new, a sea-rose that has different properties than the traditional one. This rose becomes a hybrid, both in location and in function. As with the history of flowers, when it is hybridized, it must be given a new name.

In this "first act of liberation," H. D. quickly renames her new hybrid in the very first line, "Rose, harsh rose." She acknowledges its roots by first calling it by its traditional name, and then renames it as a hybrid in this alchemical seascape, giving it new signification that includes its past; while it is a "harsh rose," it is still a rose. The alchemy here is a blending of femininity with a supposed opposite, harshness. This rose is "marred and with stint of petals, / meager flower, thin, / sparse of leaf" and "Stunted, with small leaf" (lines 2-4, 9). In these imagistic lines, the sparse use of words accentuates the alterations to the domesticated flower; it is marred, meager, sparse, and stunted. Yet, because of its position near the sea, with its alchemical function, this harshness is "more precious" than the domestic rose. However, the overall poem is not meant to just create a new word, but also to serve as a rational re-definition through challenging the power of language itself.

Carol Erwin • Shadows and Prints

Because it is imagistic, “Sea Rose” is “visual, not logical; and its image or metaphor is neither mere ornament nor analogy. It is instead an emotion or idea incarnate, subject and object fused in the image” (Friedman, *Psyche Reborn* 56). Because of this emotive quality in her poems, Friedman argues that H. D. is able to transform “the misogyny of patriarchal tradition” (230). She proposes that, in “Callypso Speaks,” H. D. “taps the vein of hidden anger [Adrienne] Rich believes essential to the birth of woman out of the ashes of patriarchal culture” (242). However, because of her use of Greek symbols, here the symbols being Odysseus and Callypso, the female realizes that anger in and of itself is a dead end. Friedman identifies this poem as a pivotal point between “Helen” and the *Trilogy*, her work that allows for transformation, “the dialectic that put new wine in old bottles...a process of purification” (244) in which she recovers and rectifies tradition. While Friedman focuses primarily on the later works, she acknowledges that H. D.’s “‘revolutionary’ re-vision of tradition did not spring into being full-grown with the publication of the *Trilogy*. Instead, it was planted firmly in her imagist poetry” (232). H. D.’s sea-flowers, then, contain that “ur” matter of emotion, of anger that can lead to purification and transformation.

H. D.’s exploration of emotions in her sea-flowers correlates with her recognition of the problems with language itself. Using *Tribute to Angels*, Heather Rosario Sievert demonstrates H. D.’s belief in the insufficiency of existing language. In poem XIII, the poet finds she is unable to use words that would express the color of the jewel. Hermes exhorts her to invent the name, but the poet declares that she does not want to name it, but instead experience it. Sievert conjoins this concept of naming the unnamable with the sea-flower poems in *Sea Garden*. She proposes that even in these earlier works, H. D. is attempting to communicate the “interiority of the object rather than name it” (51). This idea of an unnamable interiority is significant, for it demonstrates the possibility of naming the sea-rose in ways beyond language. In this context, H. D. not only renames her hybrid rose linguistically, but also fuses oppositional forces that transform it into the emotion or idea of a sea rose. In an alchemical seascape, then, the renaming of this symbol is not simply a new definition, a new word to add to our vocabulary; it is a hybrid between the dominator’s language and a raw emotion that disrupts signification by contradiction.

Kincaid’s works also contain a strong sense of raw emotion—of anger—in connection to her self-discovery and transformation. In the interview with Perry, Kincaid explains her belief in expressing anger, specifically identifying it as a “badge of honor” (497). Linda Lang-Peralta addresses the writer’s expression and negotiation of this emotion through her gardening, stating that for Kincaid, “writing, even if it is in the colonizer’s language, is her only means of expressing anger” (43). Lang-Peralta’s conclusion identifies an intriguing feature of transformation through emotive energy within the act of naming, of using language to express that anger. While much of her writing before *My Garden (Book)* explicitly casts Kincaid or her main characters in the role of oppressed/conquered, her reflections on her Vermont garden mark a shift “to the other side of the binary” to the side of the colonizer/conquered (41). In a moment of contemplation, Kincaid confesses, “I have joined the conquering class: who else could afford this garden...My feet are (so to speak) in two worlds” (123). Yet, Lang-Peralta’s proposal is cast within the context of Bhabha’s theory on ambivalence, on contradictory feelings on repulsion and attraction in the relationship between colonizer and colonized. Perhaps Kincaid’s reflection on her double stance does not indicate an irreversible shift to the other side of a binary but instead delineates her embrace of language’s slipperiness and its subsequent instability. Lang-Peralta also explores how meaning is elusive and ambivalent. I propose that Kincaid’s garden illustrates her negotiation of contradictory spaces in order to *remain* in the locus of those opposing forces. In short, Kincaid not only disrupts dominant ideology through contradiction driven by a hybrid of raw emotion and language, she also seeks to remain within that contradictory, ambivalent space.

Remaining in the contradictory, ambivalent space requires the writer embrace homelessness. Perhaps H. D. and Kincaid are able to rename symbols because they are displaced. Critics such as Simmons and Lang-Peralta examine how Kincaid holds contradictions or tensions in a state of suspension through her status as a diasporic writer. Gerise Herndon specifically refers to it as “a state of liminality” exploring how Kincaid is “homeless, in between, neither here nor there” (1). In her work that explores both her mother and her mother country, *The Autobiography of My Mother*, Kincaid states that Xuela, the first-person narrator, can be a metaphor for the African diaspora. In reference to this work, she remarked that “At the moment African people came into this world, Africa died for them...The birth of one is the death of the other” (Lee). Xuela’s account of her own birth and separation from mother illustrates Kincaid’s aptitude for holding contradictions in a state of suspension: In her reflection on her mother’s death, Xuela says,

My mother died at the moment I was born, and for my whole life there was nothing standing between myself and eternity...I only came to know this in the middle of my life, just at the time when I was no longer young and realized that I had less of some thing I used to have in abundance and more of some of the things that I had scarcely had at all. And this realization of loss and gain made me look backward and forward. (Kincaid 3)

Xuela’s narration throughout the book is consistent with this beginning reflection. She is caught in a liminal state, a place of contradiction where she can look one way and see one path and look the other way and see the opposite path. She examines many aspects of her life through this lens of contradiction. For example, she believes that love and hate wear the same face and love brings defeat (22, 29). She proposes that history is not the past, but it is the past and it is the present (139). In regard to her husband, she says, “You were not the great love of my life and so I understand you completely” (227). As with H. D.’s sea-flower poems, Xuela’s contradictions disrupt dominant narratives, thus enabling her to challenge normative thinking. For example, when we love another, we assume it comes from a place of seeing who that person really is, completely understanding him or her. Love is supposed to bring victory, not defeat. Yet, Xuela is not speaking these disruptive, contradictory statements completely from the side of the “other.” She is caught in this liminal space of neither one nor the other, of neither here nor there. She understands that these contradictions “wear the same face” because of her unique existence within an affective liminal space.

In “Sea Rose,” H. D. creates another type of liminality: ocean and land; real flowers and landscapes, and an imaginary, pastoral fourth dimension (as defined by Friedman). Her use of liminality reveals the importance of voice in remaining in an ambivalent space in order to liberate one’s self through the act of renaming. In comparing *Sea Garden* with the Euripidean choruses that H. D. translated, Gregory proposes that the voice in most of these poems “is hermaphroditic, collective, and atemporal. The poem is, in a sense, a liminal state without ordinary determination of gender, person, or tense” (139). This androgynous nature of the poems, in juxtaposition with its hybridity and its liminality, is significant in H. D.’s ability to transform symbols. In all of the sea-flower poems, the regenerated symbol of femininity is not the speaker; it is not “I.” H. D. as a female poet has not necessarily directly transformed herself through writing. Instead, she has projected her ideal, re-envisioned image of femininity onto a separate object, a sea-flower that she addresses as “you.” This technique of transplanting symbols in a liminal space and then harkening that regenerated symbols as “you” allows H. D. to avoid a dialectic trap implicit in language and ideology. If she had simply created a “harsh rose” in a sheltered, nauseatingly sweet-smelling garden, she would be confined in patriarchal ideology; she could only be the “Other” to masculine identity.

According to Gregory, the first three poems, “Sea Rose,” “The Helmsman,” and “The Shrine,” function as “initiatory poems that move us immediately and deeply into the mysteries of the sea garden”

(140). If we associate the “mysteries of the sea” with its liminal space, these three poems are a progression of entering a contradictory space in order to project the symbol, the referential “you,” to complete the process of renaming: the first act of liberation. Many of the first poems in the book embody emotive, aggressive, violent action pivotal in gaining the right to name one’s self. In “Sea Lily,” the violence against the flower increases from the initial harsh figure of “Sea-Rose.” H. D. does not even begin with a slight recognition of the commonly desired part of the flower, but brutally apostrophizes the flower by accentuating its stalk that is marred, beaten, and wounded by the sea: It is a “Reed, / slashed and torn” that is “shattered / in the wind” (lines 1-2, 6-7). Its “scales are dashed” and “the sand cuts your petal” (lines 10, 12). As Gregory posits, the beauty of this flower lies not in its innocent, sheltered existence, but in the presence of torture and annihilation (141). Once again, the sea salt fuses femininity with non-traditional images to create an image that opposes gentle, domesticated femininity, and H.D. triumphs in its brutal existence: “Yet, though the whole wind / slash at your bark, you are lifted up, aye – though it hiss / to cover you with froth” (lines 16-20). It is important to note, however, that although valued and somehow victorious, the sea-flower does not possess, control, or disperse the emotive energy disrupting dominant ideology; it is only the recipient of such violence.

H. D.’s earlier sea-flowers correlate with Kincaid’s early writings, *At the Bottom of the River*, *Annie John*, and *Lucy*. These works focus primarily on “the powerful ‘Jamaica Kincaid’ [identifying] with “her discarded, yet remembered self, the powerless and vulnerable and deeply shamed ‘Elaine Potter Richardson’” (Bouson 10). In these autobiographical-fictional narratives, the daughters emulate ambivalence toward mothers due, in large part, to the power and abuse inflicted upon them by the maternal figure. In her 1996 novel, *The Autobiography of My Mother*, Kincaid both continues and departs from her previous autobiographical mode of self-discovery. On one level, Kincaid continues the mode of expressive anger toward mother by writing a vendetta against a “bad” mother. Yet, as Alison Donnell has observed, its form as an autobiography of Kincaid’s mother, and not herself, creates questions and paradoxes. How can Kincaid write an *autobiography* of her mother? Donnell demonstrates both the confusion of the speaker and the “slippage between mothers and daughters, mothers and mothers” (127). This altered autobiographical-fictional narrative tells a story of a mother, written in first person narrative by the literary persona Kincaid as daughter, which also includes family obeh stories passed down by Annie Drew, Kincaid’s real mother. For example, the story of the jablesse that took the form of a monkey and threw stones is a story that Annie actually told (Bouson 115). *The Autobiography of My Mother*, in many ways, most explicitly illustrates the locus of contradiction in Kincaid’s most influential, dominating force: mother. Even Kincaid’s interviews on the book reveal the contradiction. In an interview with Thomas Brady in 2002, she affirms that his book is about her: “I am really always writing about myself. Especially when I write something as explicitly not about myself as *The Autobiography of My Mother*, which was not really about my mother but about a woman who could be my mother and so therefore could be me.” This text, then, marks a shift in representation of the speaker that lead to Kincaid’s later writings on gardening and her understanding of conquest, language, and liberation. The shift involves a combination of first person narrative—“I”—and a referential “you”—the domineering mother or motherland.

In conjoining “I” and “you,” Xuela represents the combination of opposing forces, of mother and daughter, of subject and object, of conqueror and conquered. This hybrid narrator compares how a mother would watch a child grow to a flower, to a “new flower in bud” that begins to slowly loosen and unfurl. Xuela deems the mother in this action as the beholder, the observer who is connected to the beheld and observed by an invisible current, “which is in many ways a definition of love” (56). Yet, because this hybrid narrator exists in a constant space of contradiction, a liminal space due to the death of mother/motherland, she becomes her own possessor of that unseen power. She says, “No one

observed and beheld me, I observed and beheld myself; the invisible current went out and it came back to me. I came to love myself in defiance, out of despair, because there was nothing else" (Kincaid 56-57). Xuela occupies her own space that is neither subject nor object, but both, resulting in the right to possess the key to the padlock of the oppressor. In other words, because of her disruption and continued existence in contradictory space, Xuela displays the unusual ability to avoid possession by the conqueror. In connecting this with flowers and gardens, the lack of possession means the conqueror cannot name and own her.

While Xuela embodies and embraces numerous contradictory stances, the right to possess and name one's self revolves around ideas of love and sexuality, thus hinting at patriarchal ideas of gender. Xuela refuses standard practices and ideas of love, and in doing so, refuses the possession that derives from it. She says, "I did not want to belong to anyone...since the one person I would have consented to own me had never lived to do so, I did not want to belong to anyone; I did not want anyone to belong to me" (Kincaid 104). Her act of self-possession is in direct connection to sexual acts. Her favorite form of sexuality is not heterosexuality or homosexuality. It is self-sexuality: masturbation. The "space between her legs" belongs to no one, but herself. One might argue against her power of self-sexuality since Xuela very actively engages in sexual acts with many males and even marries the English doctor. But even in these relationships, she refuses to play the role properly assigned, such as mother. Xuela refuses to possess a child, having a life that belongs to her, even if it means aborting that life, which also highlights contradiction since the very title of the book implies that Xuela gave birth to children. At the end of her life, Xuela reflects on her refusal to participate in patriarchy, saying "I refused to belong to a race, I refused to accept a nation" (226). The result, the refusal to participate, is a state of emptiness. She says, "I can hear the sound of much emptiness now...It holds no fear, only growing curiosity. I only wish to know it so that I may one day tell myself the story of my existence within it" (226). Xuela believes embracing the emptiness will allow her to tell her own story to herself within that liminal space. Kincaid's book is the representation of that story, of an imaginative space of contradiction where the hybrid is neither subject nor object due to her refusal to participate in dominant ideology. Xuela, while not the direct representation of Kincaid's own act of liberation, is a symbol that marks the catalyst for her own regeneration. Creating this hybrid obviously began Kincaid's own process of liberation from mother, for after this book, Kincaid moves away from stories about mothers and daughters and onto her role as gardener in *My Garden (Book)*. Yet, to understand why this hybridity was necessary for Kincaid's self-empowerment, we must once again return to H. D.

Most of H. D.'s poems in *Sea Garden* address the referential "you." We have already explored how many of the first poems apostrophize the flowers as "you," recording images of the violence and annihilation forced upon the flower in a liminal space, much like the abuse inflicted upon the daughters in Kincaid's earlier stories. Like *The Autobiography of My Mother*, the poem, "Sheltered Garden," marks a convergence in the use of "I" and "you" and thus a shift in possession. However, instead of love and sexuality, H.D. continues with the imagery of aggression and violence. The speaker begins by saying "I have had enough / I gasp for breath" (lines 1-2), but in the next stanza addresses her opposite, the "you" who "retraces your steps." The speaker questions the actions of the other, the "you" who protects the fruit by smothering it in straw and picking it before it is ripe thus avoiding possible frost. The speaker deems these actions by "you" a "beauty without strength" that "chokes life" (lines 41-42). For the majority of the poem, "you" is the active, violent force, choking and smothering the life of the fruit in its sheltered garden. Yet, because this poem allows space for the "I" to speak to the "you," we also see a shift in the possession of violence. In the last part of the poem, "I" speaks of her wish for the wind to dispense violence against those domesticated images of femininity. "I" desires the wind to break, scatter, snap, fling, and hurl those symbols until those images and ideas are blotted out, allowing a new

beauty to be discovered in “some terrible / wind-tortured place” (lines 56-57). The role of wind in this poem is quite significant. This wind, much like Xuela, cannot be possessed by any kind of ideology. It is invisible, yet we can feel its force, and it is this untouchable, invisible force that breaks the ideology of the domesticated flower that is so smothering and destructive.

While this new kind of emotive beauty has been portrayed in earlier sea-flower poems, “Sheltered Garden” marks a shift in the symbol’s ability to act or speak against forces of annihilation. The three sea-flowers that follow “Sheltered Garden” are not just recipients of violence; they act on the environment. In “Sea Poppies” the flower is no longer passive. In the third stanza, the speaker describes how its stalk has

caught root
among wet pebbles
and drift flung by the sea
and grated shells
and split conch-shells (lines 8-12).

The stalk acts on its environment among other objects of brokenness in this “wind-tortured,” liminal space. “Sea Violet” also emulates action and power and opposed to passivity. In this first stanza, H. D. contrasts the domesticated white violet to the sea-violet. Although the sea-violet is fragile, it fronts the wind among torn shells and it catches light.

The last poem, “Sea Iris,” however, is most significant in combining many of the emotive features in the early flowers. This symbol is able to most fully project its image—to tell its own story like Xuela—within that liminal space. Like the initiatory poem, “Sea Rose,” H. D. returns to listing names: “Weed, moss-weed, / root tangled in sand, / sea-iris, brittle flower” (lines 1-3). This long list of undesirable qualities correlates with emotive images from the other sea-flower poems. Its root is tangled in the sand much like the sea-poppy’s root is caught on the pebbles. Its brittleness is comparable to the sea-violet’s fragility. It only has a broken petal, correlating with the sparse and stunted leaves of the sea-rose. As a result of this mixture of images and activity, the sea-iris is able to “print a shadow” (line 6). It is also able to emulate opposing senses and forces. It is both “scented and stinging” and “sweet and salt” (lines 9, 12). After this imagistic description, H. D. inserts a dash, signifying a moment of reflection. In that space of silence, the contradictory smells transform. The poet addresses it saying “you are wind/ in our nostrils” (lines 12-13). The flower transforms into wind, into a force that cannot be possessed due to intangibility in rational ways; its tangibility only exists in experience: in the fragrance of a hybrid—of “scented and stinging” smells in a liminal space.

When Kincaid created Xuela as an emotive, autobiographical, hybrid character, she created her own shadow that functioned much like the wind in H. D.’s sea-flower poems. Both writers embrace and possess the very locus of contradiction through its experiential force. As wind, it cannot be possessed by others, but instead exists within those contradictions, within that experiential fragrance of sweetness and saltiness, of mothers and daughters, of conquerors and conquered. “Sheltered Garden” and *The Autobiography of My Mother* function as the turning point in a process of renaming a symbol by replanting it as a hybrid in a liminal space. Whether it is a domesticated flower conjoined with harsh, bitter forces or an abusive mother intertwined through the first-person narration of the diasporic daughter as a literary persona, the joining of the “I” and “you” in an imagined space allows the writer to speak back to dominating ideology. To avoid the trap of conqueror and conquered, the writer plants a hybrid in a liminal space. This hybrid projects a shadow: Xuela tells her own story within her own empty, childless existence and the sea-iris prints its shadow on the sand.

In comparing H. D.’s sea-flowers to Jamaica Kincaid’s literary works, we see first the need to create a hybrid, an image that has its roots in a liminal space. However, this hybrid itself cannot truly conjoin

oppositional forces. Instead, it must create its own image. Perhaps this printing of the shadow is the poetry and art created by marginalized, displaced voices. In creating poetry and art in this liminal space, the emotive experience is able to transform into wind, a force that cannot be possessed but instead releases the fragrance of opposition, allowing each writer to find new life in the wind.

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Jenni G Halpin

PUBLICITY OF PRIVATE PERFORMANCES

And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your room. And shutting your door, pray to your Father in secret; and your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly.
– Matthew 6:5-6, MKJV

Elizabeth Cary, too, read her way towards Catholicism.
– Frances E. Dolan, “Reading, Work, and Catholic Women’s Biographies” 332

During the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, Elizabeth Cary conducted her life within an unstable social space which had formed around those English Catholics who did not convert (or reconvert) to obedience to the Church of England. Although there was, throughout the period, a “strong presence of both a residual and continuing Catholic culture,” the narratives presented until fairly recently by historians and by the biography of Elizabeth Cary (written by one of her daughters) have emphasized a fragility in the lived circumstances of English Catholicism (Corthell, et al. 2). *The Lady Falkland, Her Life*, inscribes the life of one woman traversing the edges of this space and suggests the vexed relation there among text, speech, and the performance of (re)conversion. Cary’s passages from Anglicanism toward, away from, and into Catholicism occurred within a social framework geared to a practice of Catholicism only within relative secrecy.¹ This framework limited her possibilities for performative (and especially for effectively performative) speech and also caused her material resources to rise and to dwindle according to how those around her viewed her Catholicism. The result of her limitation was a life conforming to the bounds imposed upon her but, within those bounds, not only continuing in her Catholicism but also pursuing further divergence from Anglicanism and promoting her children’s subsequent conversions to Catholicism. Four of Cary’s daughters not only became Catholic, but also entered a convent at Cambray; one of these daughters authored the biography (Weller and Ferguson 48). *Her Life* reveals the various attempts to curtail Cary’s practices as backfired strategies that lent additional force to Cary’s career of reading, writing, and translating.² In Cary’s attempts to negotiate her loyalties to her church, king, husband, and children, she initially intended to remain in the position I will call hypo-recusance. Recognizing this desire, one can read Cary not only as a rebellious but also as a hyper-loyal subject. That is, hypo-recusance maps Catholic practice back onto the English political subject such that the hypo-recusancy expresses loyalty both to sincerity of worship and to a monarch whose authority over the state should not be muddled by attempted extensions of that authority to other (religious) areas.

Margaret W. Ferguson identifies three groups of English “with regard to how their religion was perceived and judged by others: there were those who accepted the authority of the Church of England, those who merely pretended to accept it, and those who refused to conform and hence became *recusants*” (*Dido’s*

267). Catholics, obviously would fall into two of these groups, but 'recusant' "does not simply denote those Catholics and dissenting Protestants who refused to attend their parish church"; it is, as Frances E. Dolan observes, a label applicable specifically to "those whose absence was observed and prosecuted, and who, in the face of accusation or conviction, refused to conform" (Ferguson, *Dido's* 267; Dolan, *Whores* 19). Thus, Catholics could inhabit yet another, undesigned, position: neither pretending to accept the authority of the Church of England nor being recusants prosecuted for failure to maintain such pretense. This position would not have been stable, because such a stance remains conditional upon somebody (everybody) failing to make the accusation that would force such an undesigned Catholic into explicit recusancy. It would be impossible to designate a hypo-recusant, as such a labeling would thrust the accused into an explicit recusance. It is not only a hidden practice (as secret Catholicism) but also a practice from a position which is itself hidden.³ Hypo-recusants, then, lived under danger of a possible accusation which would force them into either formal recusancy from or hypocritical outward conformation to Protestant worship.

Cary had planned to remain a hypo-recusant for some time, out of respect for her husband's interests. However, Lady Denbigh publicly exposed Cary's recusance (an exposure Cary's daughter calls an "accident") and Lord Falkland "was...angry with her for making such haste to publish...her being [a Catholic], which it was not her intention to have done (though she always joyed much to make profession of it), had not that that accident spoken of before done it for her" (Cary 210-11). The irony of this accusation is that we read it in a biography not published during Cary's lifetime. Her biographer-daughter moves simultaneously to suggest Cary's good will toward her husband and to imply that a sound Catholic would find it impossible to prevent publicity. The interruption, that Cary "always joyed much to make profession of" her Catholicism, is necessary to the refractory image her daughter paints of her: a woman who loved to profess her faith, who would have chosen not to profess her faith, and who professed her faith as a concession to its having been made public by another.⁴

In Cary's play, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, "marriage is the battlefield" and Cary, like her heroine, "must come to terms with domestic and political tyranny" (Beilin 55; Fischer 227). Unlike many recusant women living with Protestant husbands, Cary enjoyed greater freedom and risked greater suspicion by being out from under her husband's direct supervision. Because he remained in Ireland while Cary lived in England, his knowledge of her activities came through reports (false and true) made by various servants and *soi disant* friends.⁵ Ferguson notes that the religious differences between Cary and her husband created "an opportunity for mutual distrust between husband and wife. In domestic spaces as in the imperial nation at large, then, the distinction between friend and enemy, loyalist and traitor, could be extremely labile" (*Dido's* 267). The sides and, also, the terms shifted in the battle between Cary and her husband. As their daughter relates, Cary's husband, "his displeasure against his wife being much greater out of his taking himself to be much prejudiced by her turning and that she has by it disabled herself to advance his affairs...than for her only being a Catholic," disapproved more of his own (potential) financial and political losses than of her disloyalty to the Church of England (Cary 210). He expressed his disapproval in "letters to the king disclaiming his wife" and also failed to provide her regularly with the £500 allowance adjudged her by the Privy Council (Fischer 227). Thus his efforts were to promote his own financial and political well-being rather than to prohibit her religious exercises, which intention suggests at least one reason for Cary to have sought hypo-recusancy despite her "jo[y]... to make profession of" her Catholicism (Cary 210, 211).

Cary's relations with her king were similar to those with her husband. Charles I, having confined Cary to her home for her faith for so long that he forgot about her, finally released her from her confinement simply because he was reminded to do so (Cary 205, 208). Cary may have submitted herself to the authority of the king, but this submission is one which called upon the queen (Henrietta Maria) to

receive her children so that they would (for a while) neither starve nor be taken from her (206-07). The *Life* portrays Cary as an endlessly patient woman who gives the outward appearance of submission while singlemindedly pursuing her children's conversions.⁶ Charles I may have forgotten about Cary *because* Cary was so patient—that is, because she did not raise sufficient fuss to remind him of her—and Cary's long confinement made it necessary for somebody to help in providing for her children. It is easy to suspect Cary had an ulterior motive for her patience (to insinuate her daughter Anne into Henrietta Maria's court, thus promoting both Cary's connection to the queen and Anne's conversion under Henrietta Maria's influence [206]).

To read hypo-recusance as hyper-loyalty is to find loyalty not only in unwillingness to commit hypocritical acts of worship within the Church of England but also in resistance to renaming sincere worship as a history of treachery against the state. Loyalty to an older tradition, loyalty to a monarch as something other than a priest (perhaps as a secular authority not needing to be shored up by spiritual authority), and loyalty to one's own decision regarding faith, along with an unwillingness to proclaim disloyalty to the misled monarch, family member(s), or countrymen (and –women), potentially describe a hyper-loyal logic of hypo-recusance.⁷ Here Cary's situation mirrors but exceeds that of her heroine, Mariam. That is, Mariam negotiates her own articulation of loyalty primarily on political and domestic levels, whereas the religious dimension driving Cary's recusance and loyalty "adds a persistent undertone of moral difference as well" (Fischer 232). Mariam's loyalty is easier to recognize than Cary's, but it was pursued against a simpler field than Cary's as well. The more complicated alliances undertaken by a wife, mother, English subject, and Catholic may be mirrored and even may have been worked out in Mariam, but Mariam's resolution could only be a limited representation of Cary's loyalties.

Recusing herself from the Church of England was part of Cary's formation as a Catholic.⁸ As such, although this experience was open to interpretation as treachery (as indeed it was interpreted), as *experience* it should be considered "not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced" (Scott 26). That is, Cary's experience of recusance should not be taken as evidence for treachery so much as it should be taken as a thing itself in need of explanatory evidence. The catechism is not "Is Cary a traitor? Yes, because she is recusant." Instead it is "Is Cary recusant? Yes, because of what she read." Joan W. Scott's model of the relationship between experience and explanation serves well to describe Cary's conversion process: she began by reading, "read her way towards Catholicism," and maintained her faith on the practice of reading (Dolan, "Reading" 332). Her experience as a Catholic grew out of her reading and then her reading supported and explained her continuing experience. As Scott argues, "experience is at once always already an interpretation *and* is in need of interpretation;" Cary's experience of Catholicism led her to read (and write) her way into a deeper understanding of what she had already read her way into (Scott 37). This need for interpretation is a point of insertion into a narrative of Catholic practice for a counter-narrative of treachery. Whereas the Catholic interprets her practice as religious fidelity, the counter-interpretation asserts that Catholics are not following Catholicism so much as opposing the Church of England and its head, the king. Cary's *Life*, however, particularly by contrasting Cary with various less scrupulous persons, works to redeem Cary's Catholicism from the charges laid against it:

Treating the emergence of a new identity as a discursive event...is to refuse a separation between 'experience' and language and to insist instead on the productive quality of discourse....Subjects are constituted discursively, experience is a linguistic event.... Experience is a subject's history. Language is the site of history's enactment. Historical explanation cannot, therefore, separate the two. (Scott 34)

In this light, Cary's daughter has produced the mother who led her into Catholicism, and both Cary's own texts (*The Tragedy of Mariam* and others) and Cary's daughter's text engage in a discourse which underscores Cary's loyalty to her daughters and the manner in which that loyalty led to the formation of Cary and of most of her children as Catholics.

Not only hypo-recusants but also writers—given the broad range of intertextual possibility inherent in the parallels between Cary's fiction and her life— “were well aware that they could look, to some of their countrymen and countrywomen, like potential traitors in league with foreigners” (Ferguson, *Dido's* 269).⁹ Ferguson observes of Elizabeth Cary's Mariam that “[s]he is clearly innocent of plotting to poison Herod....But Mariam has certainly wished for Herod's death, so she is not innocent from a moral perspective” (*Dido's* 270). Dramatically and ironically, Mariam's wishes become performative, although she does not so intend them.¹⁰ Mariam's wishes are ‘infelicitously’ performative, for she does not intend to speak them in a context in which they have effect. From the beginning, Mariam “recant[s]” her performative speech, saying,

When Herod liv'd, that now is done to death,
Oft have I wish'd that I from him were free:
Oft have I wish'd that he might lose his breath,
Oft have I wish'd his carcass dead to see. (l.i.5, 15-19)

This recollection of now unhappily performative wishes only precedes Herod's reappearance, which gives this speech, too, the appearance of a performance of the recantation she asserts.¹¹ Although Mariam does not enter into a contract by expressing her wish, nor intend to undertake the means necessary to the execution of such a contract, insofar as her words have the *appearance* of performativity and, also, the force of performativity, they still fail as performatives because of the mismatch between Mariam's stated words, her intention, and the result(s) following from them. Similarly, the potential treachery inherent in hypo-recusance and the actual illegality of separation from the Church of England nonetheless fail to *perform* disloyalty. In Cary's case, one can discover, in her initial pursuit of *hypo*-recusance, a ‘recantation’ of any disloyal intent; out of loyalty to her husband, Cary would have foregone publishing her conversion had it been left in her control.

A tension between statement and intention reflects a tension inherent in wives' inability to sign legal documents (Ferguson, “Renaissance” 147-48). As J. L. Austin observes, written performative utterances indicate their agent by an appended signature (60). When this signature is missing, or when intention itself is obscured, performatives cannot be happy because they would lack an agent to enact the performance (Austin 60). The inability to sign would translate as an inability to perform. Although a performative utterance may be made in an inexplicit way, if it is not so made, “it will regularly be possible to take it in a non-performative way” (Austin 62). The distance thus placed between Cary and the power to enact performance allows Cary's biographer to argue that her kidnapping of her sons is not performative, or, rather, not Cary's performance alone. By making not only Patrick and Henry but also others of her children complicit, the biographer indicates that Cary has just a plan rather than a formal intention. However, when Cary is tried for the kidnapping, the trial is based on the presumption that the responsibility becomes hers alone, and Cary then resorts to equivocation.¹² This equivocation is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for her removal of her sons to Paris and, in its necessity is a bears a peculiar relationship to performative speech. That is, Cary's equivocation, an action of non-speech, is nonetheless performative, at least insofar as it meets the partial qualification that it “be (or...be included as part of) the performance of an action” (Austin 60). In this marginal space between treachery and obedience, the *Life* rescinds Cary's power to act to remove her sons while her trial grants her the power to speak in such a way as not to speak and thereby to *not-speak* (to equivocate) with the power to enable her sons' removal from England.

As a spinner of words both in equivocation and in dramatization, Cary was 'deviant' not only in religious observation but also in politics. Language, according to Hobbes, has the power to lead people astray and also to inspire sedition.¹³ When Elizabeth Cary convinces her children to live with her, she does so on the promise "not to speak of religion to them till they should desire it; which they thought themselves sure they would never do" (Cary 223). They had come to live with her out of a belief in her fidelity which would include the belief that she would refrain from proselytizing (222). Both sides have an unspoken complement attached to 'till they should choose it.'¹⁴ The children's is 'which they thought themselves sure they would never do'; Cary's, however, based upon her belief that having them live with her will make them more likely to become Catholics, is "trusting wholly to God" (223). In this dual equivocation, Cary appears to succeed through capitalizing on a greater awareness of the ways in which her children equivocated than they had of her equivocal intention. "Equivocation in many of its forms," writes Ferguson, "achieves its unsettling effects through positing competing systems of value at work in one place" (*Dido's* 275). This understanding explicitly poses refractory points of view as reflections of one another: the two sides (Cary and her children) both have stubbornness and have other similarities: familial ties and the eventual conversion of all to Catholicism, to name two of the most significant. In support of her own equivocatory practice, Cary employs a further equivocation—to her confessor—and though he sees through her disguised request for permission partially to break the fasts, she further tangles her relationship to language "not thinking herself bound to take his word" despite seeking out his judgment on the more general case (223).¹⁵ Thus, even meat represents "competing systems of value" not only in Cary's home, but also at the homes of friends whom she visits with her children. At least one of her children, while still a Protestant, paid more attention to the Catholic fasts than did the absent-minded Cary. This daughter did so with "no other end in it than to laugh when she [the daughter] had [reminded Cary of the fast], to see how suddenly she [Cary] had stopped [being about to put meat in her own mouth]" (224). While Cary loves the law (of the fast in this example), she also regularly forgets it; her daughter remembers the law only to mock both it and Cary. By mocking Cary in her Catholicism, Cary's daughter serves to make Catholicism more regularly a part of Cary's conversation with the children than it should have otherwise been (given Cary's promise not to speak of her religion until the children asked).

Cary's daughter further excuses her parents' evasions of the normal rules of speech when she describes Lord Falkland's deathbed conversion to Catholicism. Speaking French to avoid being overheard on his deathbed, he sought an informal means of conversion when he learned that there was no priest available to make his conversion 'legal.' Cary's daughter (through her description of Cary's assistance in this conversion) defends Cary's equivocatory response to her husband's desire to convert. When a part of the public act (legalization by a priest) became impossible, Cary resorted to equivocation and,

kneeling by his bed, told him the best she could how to dispose himself interiorly, not having exterior means; but she durst not propose to him the professing himself to have a desire to be a Catholic, before the standers-by, not thinking it to be necessary, and fearing he might be too loving a careful father, and not have the courage to do that, for fear of prejudicing his children towards [in the view of] their friends. (220)¹⁶

Just as equivocation considers the public presentation's truth-value irrelevant so long as the interior (thought or prayed) statement is true, so Cary decided not to court the possibility of her husband reconsidering his decision to become a Catholic and did not ask him to enact his conversion by anything which could cause him to change his mind. The surgeons, on the other hand, "desired him to profess he died a Protestant" (221). Worried about appearances and apparently unable even to think that he actually could have converted, the surgeons seek to circumvent one public reporting (that he died a papist) by eliciting another (contrary) report.¹⁷

Because the fundamental basis for differentiating between a Catholic and a Protestant exists at the level of beliefs observable only via the mediation of individual actions (including actions of speech) which may or may not accurately reflect them (as, for example, in the church papists who, visibly attending the Church of England, were not publicly Catholics), hypo-recusants were particularly vulnerable to accusations of popery.¹⁸ The social significance of accusation (rather than actual conviction) is similar to the Jesuitical equivocator's reliance upon the truth of the entire statement (not that of only the vocalized portion). The larger system of what one believes and what is believed of one is more important than whether or how one believes, just as the larger system of spoken word and silent emendations is more important to the equivocator than the apparent lie presented in speech alone. Further, if the burden of truth is upon the recipient of an equivocated statement, is an accusation of papacy (and therefore treason) an admission of treacherous designs?¹⁹ That is, does an accuser, by accusing, admit treachery against the one accused? Certainly, the accusation, the act by which hypo-recusance comes to judicial notice and becomes recusancy, is open to being read as a personal if not a political treachery. Further, even after Cary was openly recusant she was repeatedly betrayed by such servants as bore ill witness against her to her husband. She was not beyond betrayal even when she was no longer able to quietly remain hypo-recusant.

In another mode of betrayal, Catholic wives of Protestants found themselves out from under the authority of their husbands. Priests officiating at household services exercised authority over these women within the house—authority which contests that of the husband—but also, because many such priests were “sheltered from the law” by the same women, were too much in their debt to contain their hostesses (Dolan, *Whores* 51). When women sheltered priests, they countered the performance of priestly authority by exercising the authority of a host.²⁰ That is, although they accepted the authority of the priest by taking him in, because genuine performance entails that “it must remain in principle open for anyone to reject any procedure” the act of ‘sheltering priests from the law’ was simultaneously an inscription of the authority of the priest (as one who is to be served) and an erasure of that same authority (as one who becomes subject to the household and who cannot safely depart) (Austin 29).

The relation between an authority other than the Monarch or a husband and an English woman would be suspect, if for no other reason that that such a relationship undermined the preexisting relationship between the subject and her monarch or the wife and her husband. This authority (the priest) becomes even more suspect when, as in Cary's life, he is manipulated by a Catholic woman for her own ends. As Dolan writes, “whether the Roman Catholic church liked it or not, many English Catholic women were not clearly under either a husband's or a priest's spiritual guidance” (*Whores* 51). Cary not only treats priests' judgments as firm only insofar as they agree with her own intentions (her decision to prepare meat for her children on fast days and her judgment that her husband need make no public declaration of his deathbed conversion are but two examples), but also treats the priests themselves as pawns in her pursuit of the conversion of her children (as, for example, when she sets them to debate Mr. Chillingworth for her children's edification).

This suspicion of the interactions between priestly authority and the authority of a wife who is also a protector is so great that “critics often depict Cary's conversion in terms of loss—of money and male support” (Dolan, *Whores* 149). But this ‘loss’ presumes the “socially constructed notions of masculinity; [by which] authorship was redefined...to produce a culturally powerful notion of ‘men in print’” (Ferguson, “Renaissance” 145). Rather than assent to the masculine authority, Cary, “born through or in conjunction with reading,” reinscribes herself as a Catholic first rather than a wife first (Dolan, “Reading” 350). As a reader, as a writer, and as the written subject of *The Lady Falkland, Her Life*, Cary obtains money and female support which take on a textual value greater than that posed by the challenge of the voices of men and the retraction of male-controlled resources. While Cary's biographer shows that Cary

“grew into much doubt of [Protestantism...initially from] reading a Protestant book,” the biographer also shows that reading “the Fathers, especially St Augustine...of the religion of the Church of Rome” developed in Cary a faith in Catholicism (190). Amid the disorganization of her house, to prove that this confusedness was forgetfulness and not want of good intentions, a paper or two <several papers> which were found of hers in <these times> this time did show, wherein she did make a disposition of the day for herself, designing to all her duties a due part, and expressly appointing to herself what prayers to say...and she always much esteemed and loved order <when she remembered there was such a thing>. (215-16)

Here, and elsewhere in the biography, writing gives Cary the power to observe her Catholic obligation (of prayer in this case) and, also, shows her efforts to make herself appropriately observant (in that she takes steps to remember her prayers and not only her household duties).

The *Life* portrays Cary as a performer as much as it portrays her as a retreatant. Despite her pursuit of solitude via reading, we read the *Life* in pursuit of Elizabeth Cary: a mother, a wife, a Catholic, and the author of *The Tragedy of Mariam*. Her connection to a larger Catholic community provided her with considerable resources to accomplish the goal at the core of *Her Life*: the conversion of her children to Catholicism. Her ‘private devotion’ and ‘self-definition’ become ‘a form of service’ not only to her daughter (who effectively credits her mother with the conversions of herself and her siblings) but also to her readers, and, ultimately, to herself.²¹ When she reads, she executes performatives only with herself: she signals her own authority to engage in these verbal contracts and affirms her right to compel her own obedience to herself: she offers herself service by seeking to define herself. And as the subject of a biography, Cary’s reading becomes a public event. Even as Cary reads herself into the world and into connection with a larger Catholic community as she prepares herself for theological discourse (in conversation, in translation, and in *The Tragedy of Mariam*), her daughter ‘reads’ her into a scatterbrained, faithful Catholic mother and into a seemingly tenuous social space within which she has nonetheless endured (by virtue of its and her preservation in text) within which we meet her.

Notes

- 1 Karen L. Nelson, among others, signals the importance of situating Cary amid “an increasingly visible Catholic population in England” (149). Following the *Life*, although I recognize the dangers of a monolithic representation of English and Irish culture in Cary’s day, I foreground the dangers and estrangements, real or perceived, of English Catholic life of the mid-to-late-seventeenth century.
- 2 As an attempt at hagiography, the *Life* is not markedly successful. As Catherine Sanok has observed, in hagiographic texts such as the *Lives of Women Saints of our Contrie of England* “the female saint is presented as the exemplary basis for ethical and devotional behavior” (266). Cary’s biographer is too committed to representing an inconsistent figure, writing a rather questionable example at times. As Deana Rankin describes, the author of the *Life* “seeks to entwine hagiography with biography,” leading me to treat the *Life* as if it were a realistic biography despite its frequent hagiographic tendencies (Rankin 205).
- 3 With this label, I hope, further, to evoke elements of hypocrisy’s etymology: “a. Gr. ὑπόκρισις; the acting of a part on the stage, feigning, pretense, f. ὑπόκρινεσθαι to answer, to play a part, pretend, f. ὑπό HYPO- + κρινεῖν to decide, determine, judge” (OED). Where Catholicism is unacceptable, either the Catholic or the Catholic’s audience engages in an hypocrisy about the hypo-recusant: to pretend to Anglicanism or to pretend not to see recusance.
- 4 The *Life* not only represents Cary as a refractory figure but also presents its own imagined and reflected figure of the author’s mother.
- 5 Consider, too, that the Lord Falkland’s agent, who “in his letters to her lord [...] had always spoke of her with much respect and honour, and had never made those complaints which others falsely had (increasing by it her lord’s anger),” nonetheless “immediately stops her allowance” upon news that she had reconciled herself to the Catholic church (207, 206).

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- 6 This is, of course, one of the more obviously hagiographic moves of Cary's biographer-daughter.
- 7 Frances Dolan observes that after Henry VII declared himself the head of the church "English subjects owed religious and political allegiance to their sovereign rather than dividing their allegiance, as they once had done, between sovereign and pope" (*Whores* 18). 'Stubborn loyalty' might be more accurate a description: Cary frequently appears to have dug in her heels and simply out-waited everybody, most notably Charles I.
- 8 As Joseph Puterbaugh writes, "[a]s early as the 1560s, recusancy became crucial in identity formation for Catholic subjects in their resistance to the Church of England, and attendance at Protestant church services was [...] an explicit rejection of Catholic selfhood" (423).
- 9 The similarities between Cary's *Life* and her play are suggestive. I do not intend to use the *Life* as a key to *The Tragedy of Mariam* but rather to use the play to expose the cruces in the *Life*. As Elaine Beilin writes, "in the case of the first English play known to be by a woman, playwright and play seem to have an unusually close relationship" (45).
- 10 J.L. Austin describes performative utterances as those "in which to say something is to do something; or in which by saying or in saying something we are doing something" (12).
- 11 Austin evaluates performatives as either happy (felicitous) or unhappy (infelicitous) rather than as true or false. For example, when contractual performatives are happy, "statements typically of the form that I ought or ought not subsequently to do some particular thing are true" (53).
- 12 "If Cary had revealed their [her sons Patrick and Henry] location, she would have been off the hook; yet she would also have lost her chance to get them out of the country. By persisting in equivocation, she outlasted the Council's interest and, with the help of a priest, got the boys to Paris" (Dolan, *Whores* 146).
- 13 "The association of equivocation with deviancy is dramatized in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, in a passage that Steven Mullaney adduces as an ideological precursor to Johnson's famous attack on Shakespeare. Hobbes likens 'metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words' to 'ignes fatui' among which the mental traveler wanders dangerously, with his (or her) 'end' being 'contention, and sedition'" (Ferguson, *Dido's* 274).
- 14 A key component of equivocation is the inclusion of unspoken modifiers which change or even reverse the force of the spoken words.
- 15 Cary asked her confessor, generically, whether a Catholic might prepare meat on fast days for Protestant members of the household, if doing so could tend to encourage their conversion. The confessor answers yes to the general case, but he also forbids her applying this answer to her particular case because he believes her children are not likely to convert.
- 16 Equivocation "also posits the political subject's ability to split a 'private' act of discourse, made either in the mind or [...] in writing, from a 'public' act usually conceived as a speech act directed to a disapproving audience with the power to punish the body as well as the mind" (Ferguson, *Dido's* 276).
- 17 It is interesting to note that Protestantism, shored up by the authority of the crown, could be presumed to lapse without a verbal sign, whereas the practice of equivocation (making nugatory, or potentially nugatory, such verbal signs) is ascribed to the Jesuits.
- 18 I find it ironic that Protestant worship, with fewer sacraments and tending—throughout history—away from hierocracy, has less need of priests than has Catholicism and therefore that the mediation of priests between God and humanity, in Catholicism, invites betrayal more readily than would secret Protestant practices.
- 19 Could such burden be analogous to the accusation that obscenity is in the eye of the beholder? Ferguson finds in Robert Pearson's *Treatise tending to Mitigation* insistence "that it is not the producer of an utterance but rather the recipient, whether reader or auditor, who is ultimately responsible for making it conform to a 'truth' defined as inhering in the logical domain of common sense" (*Dido's* 281).
- 20 Hospitality as a religious obligation suggests interesting nuances to the relationship between a woman who served as host ("a man who lodges and entertains another in his house: the correlative of guest" [host2, OED]) and the communion wafer—another host—consecrated by the authority vested in the priest.
- 21 But "when the biography discusses her reading it is not as a form of service but as a means of self-definition and a form of private devotion. Reading in the *Life* is a solitary, consoling, and wholly absorbing occupation; Cary reads for her own purposes, for herself (Dolan, "Reading" 354).

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Heidi M. Hanrahan

“ONE MUST COME ‘WEST’”

CAROLINE KIRKLAND’S HETEROTOPIC VISION

In one of the most humorous episodes from Caroline Kirkland’s 1839 work *A New Home, Who’ll Follow?*, Mrs. Clavers, the narrator, relates the story of a neighbor whose own child is unable to nurse and wishes to “borrow” Mrs. Doubleday’s beloved baby. This section is memorable not only for its humor (punctuated by Mrs. Doubleday’s aghast response and her husband’s amused poetical waxing) but also for Clavers’s insightful reflective comment: “I could not help but think that one must come ‘west’ in order to learn a little of everything” (72). What at first might seem like a bemused throwaway comment is, in fact, representative of Kirkland’s idea of the West in her book. For the author, the frontier of Michigan is a space that, while distant and separate from “civilization,” offers invaluable lessons about and views of that society as reflected through those members who have set themselves apart in this dynamic “new home.”

A New Home, Who’ll Follow? creates in both content and form a Foucauldian heterotopia. Both Montacute and the text Kirkland creates to describe it are sites in which differences and contradictions are not erased, but come to the forefront and coexist. For Kirkland, the frontier is a place that is both inside and outside of society, with people from the East and the West; where class and gender boundaries are complicated; and where, despite these differences, a community takes shape. As a woman writer of the frontier whose identity is in flux, Kirkland is, in fact, in the best position to recreate and represent this complex site. Additionally, the form of Kirkland’s text mirrors this heterotopian vision, as she mixes and blurs genres and literary forms, including advice writing, fiction, nonfiction, romance, sentimentalism, realism, regional sketch, and satire. The result is a new, hybrid, and, yet, cohesive whole that provides a more complete and polyphonic depiction of Montacute, the West, its citizens, and, significantly, the systems and constructions that underpin the “East” they have left behind. Moreover, in creating this new kind of frontier textual space—decades before the post-bellum Regionalist writers do something similar—*A New Home* provides an early model of how a book can challenge ideas about what a woman writer and a literary text can and should do.

In order to understand how Kirkland’s role as a woman frontier writer enables her to portray a heterotopian vision of Montacute, and stylistically and structurally create a heterotopian text, we must first examine Michel Foucault’s formulation of the concept of heterotopia. In “Of Other Spaces” (1986), Foucault writes of Western society’s tendency to see both geographical and conceptual spaces as diametrically opposed to and separated from each other: “These are oppositions we regard as simple givens: for example between private space and public space, between family space and social space, between cultural space and useful space, between the space of leisure and the space of work” (23). In reality, these are constructed separations and the space we live in is always “heterogeneous” (23). Nevertheless, there are sites where the artificialities of such delineations are more apparent—sites which also “suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect” (24). Foucault identifies these spaces, which “are linked with all the others” and yet “contradict all the other sites,” as heterotopias. He explains that they “are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia” in regular spaces “are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (24). Significantly, Foucault adds that the heterotopia is “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place

several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible” (25). Finally, he argues, “Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable” (25). In short, a heterotopia functions as a unique space of contradiction and change: both open and closed, it has the potential to mirror the larger society, while also subverting it by revealing hidden inconsistencies and artificial constructions and bringing together diverse populations and ideas which would not ordinarily mix.

Clearly, Kirkland’s Montacute is a physical heterotopia, existing as a dynamic frontier space. Additionally, readers can begin to see how her unique and hybrid book itself mirrors and creates a textual heterotopia. Although other critics have written about Kirkland’s innovative form and content, most do not engage in a full-scale examination of the work, concentrating instead on isolated incidents and techniques. Heterotopian ideas allow for a more complete explanation and treatment of the text’s multilayered polyphony, enabling us to talk about how Kirkland’s message and her medium work together, and providing a useful framework for discussing what she has created in *A New Home*.

The Frontier as Heterotopia

Critics have debated what Kirkland is saying about the frontier community that she so intricately depicts. Janet Floyd argues, “*A New Home* does not...embrace the democratic, communitarian forms that it is argued to celebrate” (129). Instead, she claims it “appears to be a narrative relatively unconcerned with the participation, much less the incorporation, of the narrator in the community she describes beyond the exigencies of practicality” (133). In sharp opposition, Sandra A. Zagarell feels that Kirkland’s literary topic is inherently social. “Community formation,” she writes, “is the real drama of western life” and is the primary topic of *A New Home* (xxvii-iii). Zagarell maintains that Montacute is “a site where culture must be created from...heterogeneous and often conflicting groups,” and, as the book traces “their slow and usually testy mutual accommodation...something new is born” (xxix). Kirkland, she posits, has given readers a “pluralistic, polyphonic culture that honors the original viewpoints and practices of each constituent group and may well represent the future of America itself” (xxx). Yet, neither critic’s view of Montacute and Kirkland’s opinions toward it completely addresses the complexities of her attitudes and endeavors. Instead, it is more useful to consider the concept of the heterotopia, and see Kirkland’s community as a dynamic, hybridized, polyphonic site of possible subversion and change, but also an imperfect space in which the middle-class, educated, and refined narrator is never fully an insider nor outsider, but where, ultimately, white, middle-class values begin to dominate.

Throughout *A New Home*, Kirkland portrays Montacute as a heterotopian space in which diverse groups come into contact outside of “civilization,” shedding light on the larger society through their interaction. Kirkland emphasizes the settlement’s heterogeneous population, remarking that the Western country is a place “where every element enters into the composition of that anomalous mass called society” (76). Additionally, she argues that rustic life in the West opens one’s eyes towards life back East, describing her new existence as “this simplification of life, this bringing down the transactions of daily intercourse to the original principles of society” (184). The frontier, then, reveals the intricacies and constructed performances of everyday life, culture, and class by stripping such artifices away.

It is important to note that the frontier as Kirkland creates it is not simply a reflection of society, but a more complicated refiguring of it. While Scott Peeples argues that Kirkland depicts Western life “as a synecdoche for the whole of American experience” and a “microcosm of the United States” (307, 314), the actual relationship is more complex. Indeed, the frontier provides a sort of inverted mirror image, which calls attention to the original through inversions, absences and rejections. Living on the margins of society and united by what Zagarell calls an “ethics of interdependence” (xxxix), frontier settlers are forced to interact with each other, and, in doing so, reveal the contradictions and constructions upon

which life back East is built. Simply put, because these people must depend on each other in order to survive, distinctions based on class or even public and private come to the forefront, only to be deemed superfluous by both Kirkland and the community. For example, Kirkland shows us how the West most clearly unmasks wealth and class differences hidden or ignored back East. She writes that while class distinctions are present with the same frequency in the West as in the East, the differences stand out more on the frontier:

The denizens of the crowded alleys and swarming lofts of our great cities see, it is true, the lofty mansions, the splendid equipages of the wealthy—but they are seldom or never brought into contact or collision with the owners of these glittering advantages...But in the ruder stages of society, where no one has yet begun to expend anything for show, the difference lies chiefly in the ordinary requisites of comfort; and this comes home at once ‘to men’s business and bosoms.’ (186)

Thus, the new society is not without class distinction. Indeed, rather than being eliminated, such differences stand out to all and become possible sites for subversion, critique, or, on the other hand, reaffirmation. The importance here lies not so much with how the new society deals with these issues, but instead, that they take the time to consider and examine them at all.

In addition to revealing and commenting on class distinction, life on the frontier also strips away distinctions between public and private. Indeed, traditional boundaries between what belongs to one person versus another are virtually eliminated, as the episode on borrowing indicates. Kirkland explains, “Wo [sic] to him that brings with him anything like the appearance of abundance, whether of money or mere household convenience. To have them, and not be willing to share them in some sort with the whole community, is an unpardonable crime” (67). Any attempts to impose clear delineations over “yours” versus “mine” are met with suspicion and resentment. She explains, “Whoever exhibits any desire for privacy is set down as ‘praoud,’ or something worse...and of all the places in the world in which to live on the shady side of public opinion, an American backwoods settlement is the very worst” (139). For better or worse, then, the heterogeneous community exerts a real and powerful force over the lives of the frontier settlers, making public those spaces and matters usually seen as private.

Kirkland emphasizes how individual settlers respond to these unconventional ideas about wealth, class, and public and private chiefly through her narrator. Mary Clavers’ recounting of her experience explains her introduction to and gradual acceptance of life in the heterotopian frontier. From early on in the text, Clavers realizes the extraordinariness of her situation, as she finds herself dependent on others (including those of lower classes) for food, shelter, and survival. Furthermore, she is increasingly aware that those attributes which set her above and apart from others back East (education, manners, and material possessions) are actually weaknesses on the frontier (Gebhard 164). Indeed, Clavers explains that dependence on others quickly strips away most of the status that wealth and education might bring: “They [new settlers] soon find that there are places where the ‘almighty dollar’ is almost powerless; or rather, that powerful as it is, it meets with its conqueror in the jealous pride of those whose services must be had in order to live at all” (52). For Kirkland and her narrator, then, the frontier is a unique space in which class and wealth, traditional demarcations in society, are exposed and, at least initially, challenged and rejected in favor of survival and interdependence.

Kirkland and Clavers’ somewhat less-than-enthusiastic embracing of the backwoods’ conceptions of class and wealth keeps readers from idealizing the frontier space. “It would be vain,” the narrator tells us, “to pretend that this state of society can ever be agreeable to those who have been accustomed to the more rational arrangements of the older world” (52). Indeed, some of the book’s best comedy comes from those moments in which egalitarianism is, in Zagarell’s words, “excessive” (xxxix). Clavers asserts, “Granting the correctness of the opinion which may be read in their countenances that they are ‘as

good as you are,’ I must insist, that a greasy cook-maid, or a redolent stable-boy, can never be, to my thinking, an agreeable table companion—putting pride, that most terrific bug-bear of the woods, out of the question” (52). While in the abstract sense, she remains devoted to the spirit of frontier cooperation, she cannot fully abandon all sense of life and propriety from back home in the East. Thus, the text refuses to be pinned down, and as Brigette Georgi-Findlay writes, it emerges “ambiguously positioned between cultural affirmation and cultural critique” (37). The heterotopia is not, therefore, a space where distinctions are completely erased and an ideal society takes its place. Rather, its uniqueness lies in its ability to bring such distinctions to the surface and make them matters of public (and disputed) knowledge.

Nevertheless, despite their occasional clinging to middle-class prejudices, Clavers and her family also remain committed to Montacute’s success and hope to serve as models for those less refined members of this new society. She writes, “Neatness, propriety, and that delicate forbearance of the least encroachment upon the rights and enjoyments of others, which is the true elegance of manner, have only to be seen and understood to be admired and imitated” (53). Thus, Kirkland and her narrator endorse not a blatant or forceful “conversion” of those less refined, but rather see simple exposure to cultivated ways as the key to improving life on the frontier. Kirkland gives readers examples of this gentle method’s effectiveness in several places. For example, Clavers relates her neighbors’ gradual acceptance of carpets, which they initially saw as “introducing luxury” but now are embraced as essentials for “saving trouble”—that is, they are practical (145). Furthermore, she tells us with mock-seriousness, “Mrs. Micah Balwhidder only wanted a silver teapot, because, as all the world knows, tea tastes better out of silver; and Mrs. Primrose loved her crimson paduasoy, merely because her husband had happened to say it became her” (145). What we see is a sort of tongue-in-cheek compromise between the old and the new, between West and East, framed here in the sometimes convenient connection between practicality and luxury. Slowly but surely, then, Clavers exerts a real influence on her rustic neighbors, and one that she might not have effected if not for the close interaction that life in the heterotopia fosters.

Exposure and influence, though, clearly go both ways, as the narrator is also changed by those around her. Indeed, after only fourteen days away from the city, she explains, “My ideas of comfort were by this time narrowed down to a well-swept room with a bed in one corner and a cooking apparatus in another” (44). Looking at all of her possessions and reflecting on her neighbors’ disdainful reactions to them, she adds, “I began to cast a disrespectful glance upon them myself, and forthwith ordered them upstairs, wondering in my own mind how I could have thought a loghouse would afford such superfluities” (43). By the time she attends a wedding with Mrs. Rivers, Clavers has begun to see herself as a “Mentor” to new settlers and “quite an old resident, and of right entitled to speak for the natives” (66). Mrs. Rivers, newly arrived from the East, does not enjoy the unfashionable backwoods affair, while Clavers is “delighted” by the outing and tries to convince her companion to “look on the rational side of things” (66). Here, then, Clavers identifies herself with the older settlers, and is infinitely more accepting of their ways than her new friend.

Key to understanding Clavers’ gradual acceptance of and introduction to life on the frontier is her gendered position. Like all women living in heterotopian spaces, Clavers faces a shifting subjectivity as she finds her identity in flux. As Susan L. Roberson explains, women on the frontier experienced a simultaneous loss of and widening of the self: “extending spatial, territorial boundaries, going from ‘the states’ to the territories, the pioneer woman was opening up social and psychological spaces, new knowledge, powers, and discourses” (214-15). Similarly, Dawn E. Keetley writes of Kirkland’s liminality, calling her a “subject in transition...on the borders of selfhood” (18). She adds, “Literally between places, [pioneer women] were figuratively between the ‘locations’ and ‘locators’ of identity” (18). The frontier woman, literally and metaphorically in transition, acquires the power to examine, subvert, or reaffirm the patterns of life she has left behind back East.

Through their removal from the old world and exposure to new worlds, frontier women such as Kirkland and Clavers find themselves questioning what they previously and unquestioningly held to be true. Indeed, Keetley unconsciously echoes heterotopian ideas about dissonant and diverse ideas coming together in the heterotopia, revealing certain gender and social constructions to be artificial rather than natural, when she adds, “traversing the borders of diverse and contradictory ideas of selfhood, the subject is produced in conflicting ways; thus it discloses those identities which otherwise seem ‘timeless’ or ‘obvious’ to be constructed, provisional, and contingent” (18). Similarly, Joyce W. Warren argues that Kirkland’s experience living away from Eastern expectations for middle-class women “enabled her to recognize that her society’s definitions of gender were neither natural nor essential” (9). As a location with “a new home” in the process of creation, not only does the frontier expose ideas about wealth and class, but also about women’s roles in society, including their place in the domestic, familial sphere. Thus, in the midst of discomfort and uncertain identity, new spaces are opened for women to exercise freedom and agency.

Indeed, Kirkland seizes upon the concurrent suffering and freedom the frontier can offer, portraying such experiences as common bonds that all pioneer women share. She writes, “Women are the chief grumblers in Michigan, and they have some apology. Many of them have made sacrifices for which they were not at all prepared, and which detract largely from their everyday stores of comfort” (146-47). These mutual grievances unite the women of Montacute, giving them a starting point for community formation. Additionally, as Clavers realizes, women may also make the most of their unique situation and see the frontier as a place for individual expression and exercise of agency. After dutifully noting the disadvantages of frontier living, she nevertheless asserts, “it would scarce be fair to pass without notice the compensating power of a feeling...which rejoices in that freedom from the restraints of pride and ceremony which is found only in a new country” (148). Clavers attributes this “natural and universal” “love of unbounded and unceremonious liberty” as much to her distance from civilization and its pressures as she does to nature’s influence.

Freed (at least somewhat) from Eastern pressures to conform to pre-established roles, pioneer women can explore other frontiers in ways their sisters back home never or rarely could. As Floyd explains, “the figure of the emigrant woman could speak as much to debates about women, work, and the domestic as to issues about emigration and the West” (7). Thus, the women in Kirkland’s text are often non-conventional. Some are strong family leaders, always willing to speak their minds. Perhaps the most interesting and unconventional character of all is Mrs. Clavers herself: a mother, wife, gossip, worker, mentor, and self-proclaimed authority on frontier life. Consider for a moment the seemingly taboo topics she discusses in her text, including drunkenness, spousal abuse, and a botched abortion. The frontier is a place that provides Clavers with the opening to discuss such traditionally unfeminine topics.

For Kirkland and her narrator, the frontier heterotopia is a success, especially for women, bringing together different people from different classes in the creation of a new society. By the book’s closing Clavers observes, “But I am now a denizen of the wild woods—in my view, ‘no mean city’ to own as one’s home; and I feel no ambition to aid in the formation of a Montacute aristocracy” (186). Here, interestingly, the narrator even expresses an endorsement of Montacute’s curious ideas about class and wealth with an apparent disavowal of the East’s class system. Although she always keeps one foothold in her life back East (most significantly through her rhetorical audience in the book—an imagined community of Eastern readers) and although she will contradict her assertion elsewhere in the text, she is also a self-proclaimed insider and member of this new society. Our final image of Clavers is of a well-adjusted and happy woman thriving along with the little town, and enjoying the quirky and unique life on the frontier, a life which gives her, as a woman, freedoms she might never have realized had she not come to Michigan.

A New Home’s Heterotopian Form

Because Kirkland is a woman writer on the heterotopian frontier, surrounded by various and distinct groups of people, with her own identity in flux and in a simultaneously liminal and powerful position, her text—her depiction of this new place and new people—almost has to be something just as unique and new. Traditional forms and genres alone—the novel, travel sketches, biography, sentimentalism, romanticism, realism—work for neither the author nor her subject. Turning our attention to *A New Home* and Kirkland as the creator of this heterotopian text, we begin to see how form masterfully mirrors content, creating a multi-voiced and multi-genred work that gives readers a more complete sense of life on the frontier than any one genre or convention could deliver on its own.

A New Home’s unique form has baffled critics. As a result, until the last thirty years or so, Kirkland had fallen into relative obscurity, occasionally mentioned in discussions of frontier realism or travel writing. Henry Nash Smith’s assessment of Kirkland typifies these kinds of evaluations. In his classic text, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950), he writes, “Her books were widely read, and deserved to be, for they have the merits of clear observation and lively reporting. They are also a valuable repository of upper-class Eastern attitudes toward the West” (225). Smith identifies any value that Kirkland’s texts might have as coming from their journalistic/historical offerings, and certainly not from their literary merit. Additionally, Smith does not know what to make of Kirkland’s use of form in *A New Home*, as he finally decides that “the contradictions between her high-flown theory [about the nobility of rustic settlers] and her instinctive revulsion from the crudity of backwoods Michigan are reflected in her vain struggle to find a satisfactory literary form” (226). On the surface, he argues, she has created a travel diary, “but she cannot be permanently content with so simple a literary form and tries valiantly to devise something more complicated” (226). She mixes genres and makes the unfortunate decision to try to “endow with plot” simple sketches best left untouched. Ultimately, he concludes, “despite the variety of these experiments in fiction, it cannot be said that Mrs. Kirkland succeeded in finding an adequate form for her Western materials...There is no progress toward overcoming the lack of coherence between materials and form that constitute her literary problem” (227). For Smith, then, Kirkland’s work is a failure.

It is important to examine Smith’s comments at length because what he and so many others have dismissed as failures—Kirkland’s attempt to find a form to fit her subject—invites careful reassessment and consideration within the construct of the heterotopia. Indeed, Smith (and many critics before and after him) works under the flawed assumption, often applied to women writers, that the material controls the writer—that Kirkland is not in command of her own text and is simply unable to create a traditional book. Additionally, these critics assume that Kirkland tries or even wants to play by the rules of traditional fiction. Consequently, they fail to ask about *A New Home’s* internal ambitions and assess the text in those terms. Once we begin to look at *A New Home* on its own terms, disregarding our preconceived notions of what a long text should do, what we might initially view as the author’s inability to provide a reasonable structure and cohesion emerges instead as Kirkland’s deliberate decision to play with genre and form. We begin to see an author creating a multi-voiced, hybridized text truly representative of her own position as a writer of the heterotopian frontier. The resultant text, which refuses to meet our criteria for standard definitions, is instead radical and “Western,” and thereby skillfully mirrors its content.

Indeed, Kirkland’s text is *itself* a kind of place, site, and location. Recent critics have argued such claims for women’s writing, including Roberson, who posits, “writing itself is a location, a site for the construction of further spaces of power and knowledge” (“Narratives” 7). Speaking of women’s frontier writing in general, she adds, “the text about location becomes itself a location, a space in which the author discovers and maps herself” (“With” 225). Similarly, Gebhard applies these ideas specifically to Kirkland arguing, “Writing itself provided her a ‘new home,’ a means to work through ‘uncomfortable

thoughts and feelings” in the safer realms of literary representation” (174). Thus, if we see *A New Home* as a location, specifically as a heterotopian space both inside and outside the conventions of literature, in which diversity and contradiction are brought together to both reflect and challenge these conventions, Kirkland’s choices in structuring her book move from failures to deliberate choices and innovative creations.

A New Home, with its multiple genres and conventions, thus, emerges as a hybridized text, as do other frontier texts written by women. Floyd writes of how pioneer women writers represent and manipulate the conventions of domesticity and traditional female forms, explaining, “They embrace the tropes of nineteenth century writing...but in placing them in unfamiliar contexts, they...destabilize their meaning” (7). Nathaniel Lewis applies this destabilization to Kirkland specifically, claiming that she “did not break established forms of writing so much as quietly defamiliarize them. The result is an author who positions herself among a number of different discursive models, and a text that resists easy codification” (63). Kirkland accomplishes this defamiliarization and destabilization of genre and convention by sliding between realism and romanticism, between fact and fiction, from satire to advice writing and pastoral. She places her text both inside and outside mainstream literature, free yet marginalized in a heterotopian space.

Kirkland’s craftiness and manipulation of genres reveals itself in the opening pages of *A New Home*, where she identifies her text as both realism and romance, fact and fiction. She writes, “I claim for these straggling and cloudy crayon-sketches of life and manners in the remoter parts of Michigan the merit of general truth of outline” (1). Although she originally calls her book a “veritable history” and an “unimpeachable transcript of reality,” she soon adds, “I must honestly confess that there be glosses, colourings, and lights, if not shadows, for which the author is alone accountable” (1). Right away, then, readers should be on notice that *A New Home* is no ordinary realist text or simple travel writing, and it is important to note that the author is consciously aware of this difference. To be sure, Kirkland assures us, there are facts and realism to be found in her text, but one must negotiate between them and her own touches of romance and fiction. The author therefore creates the need for a careful reader who must pay close attention to the text as a whole, finding truth in the spaces between and within conflicts and tensions.

Readers must exercise this careful negotiation in Kirkland’s invocation of romanticism and sentimentalism, which she sometimes reaffirms and other times rebukes. For example, Clavers tells the story of Henry Beckworth and his thrice-married wife as a blatantly romantic tale, explaining, “I shall here recount what he [Beckworth] told me; and, as I cannot recollect his words, I must give this romance of rustic life in my own, taking a new chapter for it” (89). Thus she creates an almost stand-alone romance, set off from the rest of her work and comprising several chapters, complete with an appropriate epigraph from Byron (89). The amazing story of Beckworth’s eventual marriage to his beloved seems almost unbelievable, like most romances, yet Clavers assures us of its verity, writing, “Let no one imagine that this tale of man’s constancy must be the mere dream of my fancy. I acknowledge nothing but the prettiness” (98). What Kirkland has done here then, is, as Lewis explains, “play fiction against fact” and “authenticity against romance,” subverting the established hierarchy and “nearly eradicating the system” (68). In the heterotopian space where she can bring seemingly discordant forms together, she challenges easy identification and privileging of one genre over another, showing that in this case, romance, realism, fiction, and fact are all necessary to tell the Beckworths’ story.

Interestingly, immediately after relating her hybridized romance, Kirkland introduces Eloise Fiddler and, along with her, a seeming critique of sentimentalism. Through her reproduction of Fiddler’s poetry, Kirkland creates a space for this type of melodramatic composition. She includes, for instance, Fiddler’s “Ballad,” which opens memorably: “With anguish in his haughty eye, the Moor Almanzor came; / He

prick’d his fiery courser on among the scatter’d dead, / Till he came at last to what he sought, a sever’d human head” (103). Kirkland’s tone is warmly satirical, as she invites readers to share a gentle laugh with her over the poet’s whims and fancies, adding that “young ladies like stories of love and murder, and Miss Fiddler’s tastes were particularly young lady-like” (103). The text does not let Fiddler remain in her deluded sentimental world for long, though, and her subsequent marriage to the rather ordinary Mr. Daker “fairly vanquishe[s] [her] romance” (106). Here, too, the text’s form mirrors its content, as Clavers’s practical, rather ordinary ending replaces the fanciful flights of Fiddler’s poems: “And at this present writing, I do not believe Eloise, with all her whims, would exchange her very nice Edkins for the proudest Dacre of the British Peerage” (107).

Kirkland also invokes both romanticism and realism in order to question them in her telling of Cora and Everard Hastings’ tale. Clavers’s description of the pair, particularly Cora, recalls Eloise Fiddler. Cora is “deeply tinged with romance” and lives “entirely in an ideal world” (156). Just as she did with Henry Beckworth’s story, here Kirkland devotes several chapters to the young couple and their misfortunes after running off to get married. She quickly points out, “The world’s harshness soon cures romance” (166). Thus, romanticism and idealism are checked by the realism of life in the harsh world. Nowhere is this rebuking clearer than at the moment when Cora’s young baby lies near death and the mother’s suffering serves as atonement for her past foolishness: “The wretched mother cast one look at [the baby’s] altered countenance, and with a wild cry sunk senseless on the floor. Her punishment was fulfilled” (167).

Nevertheless, Kirkland does not end the story here, with a dead child and broken, rebuked parents. Instead, the next chapter offers a decidedly sentimental ending, reuniting Cora with her forgiving parents and a recovered, healthy child: “Her mother, her own dear mother, laid [the baby] on her bosom without a word, but she saw that it breathed in a soft sleep, and tears relieved her bursting heart... And Cora was a new creature, a rational being, a mother, a matron, full of sorrow for the past and of sage plans for the future” (169). The tale, then, and its form, takes an unusual path—from romance to realism to sentimental resolution, each form playing an integral role in telling the couple’s story, and again challenging ideologies that view them as hierarchical, separate, and in opposition. Significantly, the Hastings’ story ends firmly in the heterotopian space, both geographically (the family has, after all, moved to Michigan) and formally (169).

As it winds its way through its heterotopic space, *A New Home* finds room for realism, romance, sentimentalism, fiction, nonfiction, and even the occasional recipe for baking bread (Kirkland 33-34). Because of this hybridity, it is quite unlike any work before it and many after it. Kirkland is, of course, aware of this difference and, following the tradition of so many women writers before her, repeatedly “apologizes” for her unconventional subjects and form. At her book’s conclusion, she pronounces it a failure, writing:

I have departed from all rule and precedent in these wandering sketches of mine...I think I have discovered that the bent of my genius is altogether towards digression. Association leads me like a Will-o’-the-wisp. I can no more resist following a new train of thought, than a coquette the encouraging of a new lover...This attempt to write one long coherent letter about Montacute, has at least been useful in convincing me that History is not my forte. I give up the account in despair. (177)

Earlier she attributes her unusual style to her gender, writing, “I know this rambling gossiping style, this going back to take up dropped stitches, is not the orthodox way of telling one’s story; and if I thought I could do any better, I would certainly go back and begin again...but I feel conscious that the truly feminine sin of talking ‘about it and about it’...would cleave to me still” (82). Smith, it appears, takes Kirkland at her word here and dismisses her text as a self-acknowledged failure. Careful readers may

detect, however, some false modesty in these apologies. What Kirkland labels as “feminine sin” and failure are, in fact, what enable her to create this remarkable, polyphonous, multi-genred work. In this way, she takes what literary critics (both contemporary and modern) so often see as a symptom of poor women’s writing and turns it into an asset, as she leads readers on a twisty path through both her text and Montacute itself.

In the end, we can see *A New Home, Who’ll Follow?* as a consciously created textual heterotopia, one that exists both inside and outside of conventional literature, bringing together various genres and forms to more completely and accurately tell the story of life on the frontier of Michigan. In a final gesture towards heterotopian possibilities for reinvention, resistance, and subversion, Kirkland’s book even avoids a conventional ending. As she closes her narrative, Mary Clavers asks, “And now, why do I linger?...I—conscious that I have said forth my little say, yet scarce knowing in what style best to take my parting reverence, have prolonged this closing chapter—a ‘conclusion wherein nothing is concluded’” (189). Kirkland’s heterotopic text, ultimately both closed and open, finished and unfinished, continues to serve as both a reflection of and challenge to our ideas about literary genres and forms.

“To Learn a Little of Everything”: Conclusions

Certainly, the society Kirkland depicts in *A New Home, Who’ll Follow?* is less than ideal. As numerous critics have pointed out, she and her narrator never really move beyond their position as white women, ignoring questions of race and virtually gliding over the very real, albeit vanishing, presence of Native Americans (Keetley 18; Merish 94). Additionally, by the book’s close, a dominant ideology—that of the middle class—comes slowly but surely to the forefront and, as Kirkland proudly points out, Montacute is on its way to becoming civilized. What we see here, is that the frontier heterotopia exists for only a brief period of time, as old constructions of class, race, gender, and wealth eventually begin to rebuild themselves. The frontier exists in all its newness, openness, and possibility for the most fleeting of moments. Kirkland’s textual heterotopia, though, is interestingly timeless, complete yet incomplete, finished yet perpetually unfinished, eternally existing as a site for readers to visit and revisit, challenging them to question their assumptions about texts and genres.

Readers familiar with criticism of nineteenth-century American women’s writing can see how an examination of Kirkland’s heterotopic vision opens door to a discussion of other authors and movements. We may, for instance, read *A New Home* with an eye towards American women writers’ long utopian tradition. In imagining a new community with revised and alternative ideas about gender and class, Kirkland’s text aligns itself with later works, including Elizabeth Stuart Phelps’s *Beyond the Gates* (1883) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland* (1915). Writing of various types of female utopias, Carol Farley Kessler includes those seen as “pioneering expedition[s] to a frontier” as well as “an author’s view of one’s own society” (xxi). We see, then, how Kirkland’s vision both fits and complicates these ideas, as the space she creates and describes is both old and new, inside of society and outside of it.

Additionally, *A New Home*, which asks readers to examine the text and the author’s ambitions on their own terms (outside of masculine conceptions of form, genre, and aesthetics), provides a valuable model for consideration of other regionalist works and writers. Most clear, perhaps, are the parallels between critical assessments of *A New Home* and Sarah Orne Jewett’s works, specifically *Deephaven* (1877) and *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896), two books that present unique challenges to readers because of their innovative forms and non-conventional subject matter. Marjorie Pryse envisions Jewett as a “border-crosser” whose “resistance to traditional categories produces a salutary crisis for critics” (57, 32). As we have seen, Kirkland is also just such a border-crosser, only much earlier, challenging our ideas about form and indeed what it means to be literary. Karen L. Kilcup and Thomas L. Edwards, writing specifically of Jewett, advance an argument just as applicable to Kirkland: “What is at stake is the

power to name and configure the 'literary' itself, to determine whose stories ('literary' as well as 'critical') will continue to possess cultural authority" (16). Our readings of Kirkland, Jewett and other regionalist writers, including Mary Austin and Rose Terry Cooke, must be open to reconceptualizations of what a text can and should do. In short, we must be willing to investigate the possibilities the heterotopian text offers, realizing its potential to change the way we read and talk about literature.

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Cheryl R. Hopson

THE SHIFTING SELVES AND REALITIES OF REBECCA (NEE LEVENTHAL) WALKER

In the twenty-plus years since Rebecca Walker published her influential essay “Becoming the Third Wave” (1992) in *Ms.* magazine she has done well to establish herself as an important though at times contesting voice within contemporary U.S. feminism. In “Becoming the Third Wave,” Walker invoked as effectual a previous generations’ feminism; in her introduction to the anthology *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism* (1995), she challenged the perceived limitations of that feminism, and in her first memoir *Black, White, and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self* (2001), she gave expression to deeply personal aspects of what is for her matrilineal family politics.

This article is a critical close-reading of Third Wave feminist writer and cultural critic Rebecca Walker’s early, career-establishing works, specifically her groundbreaking essay “Becoming the Third Wave,” her introduction to the anthology *To Be Real*, and her memoir *Black, White, and Jewish*. I argue that these writings highlight a, by now, well-known breach in her relationship with her famous African-American mother, Alice Walker. This psycho-emotional, physical, and ideological breach is influenced as much by differences of materiality, e.g. race/ethnicity, class, socio-historic location, between Walker and her iconic mother, as it is by differences of womanist (i.e., Alice Walker) and Third Wave feminist (i.e., Rebecca Walker) ideology. A continuation of my argument is that in the construction and articulation of her Third Wave feminist perspective, Walker, similar to her mother, centralizes the Black/Black-identified mother/daughter relationship as it is embodied by herself and her mother. Walker suggests in her writing the momentous influence of this troubled womanist/feminist familial relationship on the construction of her feminist politics, as well as on her overall sense of womanism/feminism as they are forwarded by Alice Walker, and Alice Walker’s generation of feminist.

I read Walker’s early writings through the lens of a Black feminist/Third Wave feminist theoretical perspective that understands the significance, as well as the shaping and delimiting influence of the mother/daughter relationship for Black and Black-identified feminists. My reading, then challenges the feminist theoretical perspective of Third Wave feminist scholar Astrid Henry’s, and, in particular, Henry’s assertion in her book *Not My Mothers’ Sister* (2004) that the mother/daughter relational model is an inadequate lens for understanding US feminist generations. As Henry sees it, such a model reduces generational feminist discourses, perhaps, in particular, Third Wave feminist discourse, to reactionary family politics. I argue that this critical framework, that of the Black (and Black-identified) feminist mother/daughter relationship is part and parcel to the Black feminist theoretical espoused by Walker, and certainly by her famous mother, and as such is the proper lens by which to access Walker’s politics, and to contextualize her ideas about feminism.

It bears mentioning then that Henry, in the concluding chapter to *Not My Mothers’ Sister*, enlists Alice and Rebecca Walker’s mother/daughter relationship and uses it to her own purposes. Henry argues that while Alice Walker was a “token” Black feminist for white second-wavers, by contrast, and in naming herself the Third Wave as she did in “Becoming the ‘Third Wave,’” Walker centralizes women of color/Black women within Third Wave feminism. Second to this, by way of her book’s title, Henry signifies Alice Walker’s 1979 essay “One Child of One’s Own,” an essay in which Alice Walker famously writes her relationship with her daughter as a friendship-based, dialogic, and mutually supportive *sisterly*

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relationship. As Henry sees it, Alice Walker's idea is problematic because mothers and daughters, whether actual or figurative, do not beget sisters and to suggest otherwise is to supplant the role of the daughter.

While I agree with Henry's argument that there are very real material and psycho-emotional differences that exist between mothers and daughters that must be acknowledged in feminist analyses and constructions of the generational feminist mother/daughter relationship, I disagree with her reductive reading and placement of Alice Walker.

My reading of Walker's early writings then acknowledges the very real differences that exist between Walker and her mother, the influence of Walker's personal relationship with her iconic mother on the making and shaping of her Third Wave feminist politics and praxis, and understands that a critical consideration of Walker's early writings yields great insight into the making and shaping of her Third Wave feminist politics. It also suggests a direct link between Walker's politics and her mother's own.

A Family Activism

In 1967, Walker's African-American mother and Irish-Jewish father defied national law, cultural custom, and family expectations to marry. That same year, the interracial, interfaith couple, following the exhortations of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., relocated from New York City to Jackson, Mississippi to work in the Civil Rights movement. On her parents and their unlawful marriage, Walker writes in *Black, White, and Jewish*, "when my parents break all the rules and marry against laws that say they can't, they say an individual should not be bound to the wishes of their family, race, state, or country. They say that love is the tie that binds, and not blood" (23). Walker takes two fundamental lessons from her parents' early idealism and self-asserting acts in the face of powerful resisting forces. The first is that it is her responsibility and prerogative to affirm and to assert all of who she is, and the second, that an individual's desire to live as s/he deems appropriate and right supersedes the expectations of family, law, and culture.

Walker was eight years old in 1976, the year her parents divorced. After the divorce, her mother relocated from New York to San Francisco, and her father remained on the east coast. Walker's parents devised a plan whereby she would alternate every two years between their respective homes. The different racial, ethnic, class, social, cultural, and familial locations in which Walker found herself after her parents' divorce demanded that she adopt different and often contradictory identities based on the expectations and desires of others, including her parents. In the predominantly white cultural and familial landscape of her father's home and community, Walker felt "too Black," and was considered intimidating and controlling by her Jewish and white female peers, was referred to as a "nigger" by friends of a white boyfriend, and was rendered suspect in her father's all-white community of Larchmont, New York. In the predominantly Black cultural and familial landscape of her mother's home and community, Walker felt "too white," was hounded by "real Black girls," beaten up, and charged with "acting white."

As early as nine or ten years old and while visiting the home of her Slavic great-grandmother, Walker was continuously confronted by the woman's "angry silence" and felt, as a result, shut out and unrecognized as family (*BWJ* 36). At the age of eleven or twelve, and while visiting her mother's family in Georgia, a favorite uncle commented on the "cracker" in Walker's laugh, marking her as racially/ethnically different from her maternal side, and making her explicitly aware of the ways in which she did not fit in with her African-American relatives.

Even within the insular space of her parent's respective homes, Walker admits to feeling isolated, unseen, and expected to shape-shift into her parents' ideas of who she was, or into the person they needed her to be. For her mother she became, "bright Rebecca, cheery Rebecca, helpful and independent to fault" (*BWJ* 231). In her father's home, she was primarily cared for and mothered by her stepmother Judy,

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a Jewish woman she describes as a “Sephardic-looking” (*BWJ* 199). Walker admits to being frustrated by her stepmother’s inability to see her racial/ethnic difference as her stepchild, and by her father’s physical and psychological remoteness, as well as by her father’s lack of awareness with respect to her racial/ethnic difference. Walker’s most pressing desire growing up, one she suggests goes unfulfilled, was to be recognized as family by her actual family. In a 2000 interview with *Publishers Weekly*, Walker stated that neither of her parents “actively addressed the issue” of her experience as a mixed-race girl, as to do so would have meant facing “the limitations of the culture that denounced their love and, finally, the limitations of themselves” (Fleming).

In Walker’s remembering, Alice Walker and Melvyn Leventhal were oblivious to her needs and to the specific challenges that she faced as a biracial and bicoastal girl growing up in the 1970s and 1980s. Scholar Ralina Joseph is critical of Walker’s self-portrayal in *Black, White, and Jewish*. In a review essay published in *The Black Scholar*, Joseph argues that Walker writes herself as “the innocent experiment/victim” of her parent’s interracial union, and continues that “even the beneficial aspects of [Walker’s] childhood ‘shifting self’ are forever steeped in the United States legacy of slavery,” such that with the memoir “Walker illustrates the impossibility for a contemporary ‘mulatta’ to move beyond historically anti-black images.” Joseph adds that “even when [Walker] paints herself as the hopeful Movement Child, she ends up becoming ‘the tragic mulatta caught between both worlds like the proverbial deer in the headlights,’” (14). This is a critical and personal blind spot on Walker’s part, suggests Joseph, which is indicative of a limited consciousness, and perhaps even of Walker’s sense of entitlement as a girl and woman of privilege.

Joseph continues that Walker writes herself as tragic in *Black, White, and Jewish*, and as being forever constrained by familial as well as cultural divides that predate but also forever mark her. However, Walker’s self-construction and self-conception is not unlike those of other biracial individuals, and, in particular, those of Black and white, mixed-race ancestry. Sociologist Kerry Ann Rockquemore argues that “a major challenge faced by mixed-race people involves the struggle to define themselves racially within a society that conceptualizes race in a rigidly dichotomous manner and that attaches differential values to each of these dichotomies.” Rockquemore continues that “as a result, many mixed-race people routinely encounter social invalidation from others related to their chosen racial self-identification,” and this is especially so for “Black-White mixed-race people, whose relationships are defined against the historical backdrop of slavery, the legacy of the one-drop rule, and the politics of skin color stratification.” Still, Joseph’s reading of Walker’s memoir is not so much a misreading but it is rather incomplete. In *Black, White, and Jewish* Walker showcases the strengths, limitations, and challenges of growing up biracial and bicoastal during the 1970s and 1980s, and with two parents who were sometimes physically and psychologically remote. If Walker’s memoir reads as tragic then perhaps it is because there was something about Walker’s experience of growing up that was in fact tragic.

“Becoming the ‘Third Wave’”

Walker’s first publication, “Becoming the Third Wave,” was in part a response to the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas televised Senate hearings that took place in October 1991, and to Clarence Thomas’s subsequent confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court. Hill, a Black female law professor, accused Thomas, a Black Supreme Court nominee, of repeated sexual harassment when he was her boss and the director of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission during the 1980s. Thomas denied the charges. Even more incendiary for Walker was the fact that the conservative Thomas replaced retired U.S. Justice Thurgood Marshall. Marshall argued the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* school desegregation case and was a civil rights pioneer. Walker writes in “Becoming the ‘Third Wave’” that “To me the hearings were not about determining whether or not Clarence Thomas did in fact harass Anita Hill. They were

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about checking and redefining the extent of women's credibility and power" (41). At the end of the hearings, Thomas was confirmed by a 52-48 Senate vote. For Walker, the end-result of the hearings, overseen by an all-white male Senate Judiciary Committee, and Thomas' confirmation, was a sanctioning of male power and authority, and a silencing and repudiation of Hill.

A major thematic concern of "Becoming the Third Wave" is women's silencing by men and, in particular, by male power and authority. Walker regards such silencing power as a privilege men have that is sanctioned by patriarchy. She situates her perspective within a U.S. feminist trajectory that includes the writing and activist efforts of her mother, but she also makes a distinction. Walker writes, "I am ready to decide, as my mother decided before me, to devote much of my energy to the history, health, and healing of women. *Each of my choices will have to hold to my feminist standard of justice*" (40, emphasis added). As Walker saw it, the hearings and the outcome served as an admonishment to Hill and women generally "to keep their experiences to themselves" (39). Walker continues in the essay that Hill's silencing is indicative of "protected male privilege" that serves to minimize and thwart women's ideas and influence. It is important to note that in "Becoming the 'Third Wave'" Hill functions as synecdoche for women generally, and Black women specifically.

To emphasize her ideas about protected male privilege, Walker provides two personal anecdotes involving Black males. The first involves a discussion on the hearings she has with a Black male intimate whom she perhaps sardonically refers to as a progressive. Walker writes that when she asks her friend for his opinion on "the whole mess" he responds that he is "primarily [concerned] with Thomas's propensity to demolish civil rights and opportunities for people of color" ("Becoming" 39). Walker is disturbed by her friend's response as for her it elides the issue of women's rights and autonomy. She writes that she launches into a tirade, demanding of her friend, "[w]hen will progressive black men prioritize my rights and well-being? When will they stop talking so damn much about 'the race' as if it revolved exclusively around them?" Her friend responds that she wears her emotions on her sleeve, to which Walker responds, in a scream, "I need to know, are you with me or are you going to help them try to destroy me?" (39-40). There is clearly an "us vs. them," in Walker's retelling of this conversation, a side that sanctions male privilege and a side that champions gender equality. It seems the Black male progressive is on the wrong side of right.

The second account provided by Walker in "Becoming the Third Wave" involves a heated discussion between Walker and a Black male stranger she meets on the train. Walker writes that while on a train in New York City, she sits reading Faulkner and directly across from her sits a beautiful brown girl and mother. The mother and daughter are dressed alike in green outfits, and the girl wears her hair in "tightly plaited braids." The bright-eyed girl chatters happily as she looks out the window of the train (40). This rather serene scene is interrupted by two Black men who board the train and sit with a thud behind Walker. The men begin to talk about women in a vulgar manner and within earshot of the little girl. One says, "Man, I fucked that bitch all night and then I never called her again" (40). Walker writes that she buries her head in her book but soon realizes that the little girl, fallen silent, is listening to the men: "Looking at her small back I can see that she is listening." The men, seemingly unaware of or unconcerned about the presence of the girl continue with their refrain of "bitches" "girlies," and discarded "hoes," and the cavalier quality of their boasts within earshot of the now-silent girl unnerves Walker. Walker writes that the girl's mother moves in closer as if to protect her daughter, and Walker herself thinks about how she can transform the situation. She is of the opinion that the silence of the people in the car, including her own, makes them all complicit in the damage being done to the little Black girl.

The men are soon joined by a third Black male, seemingly known to both, and the situation escalates. When this man confides that he is en-route to Philadelphia to visit his wife and child, Walker writes that

she is momentarily “suckered into thinking that he is different” (“Becoming” 40). But soon the man joins the others in their boasts, with “Man, there’s a ton of females in Philly, just waitin’ for you to give ‘em some.” Fired up, Walker turns to face this man who has seated himself beside her. She writes, “I...allow the fire in my eyes to burn into him. He takes up two seats and has hands with huge swollen knuckles” (40). Walker imagines the man slamming “the gold rings on his fingers” into her face, and her violent imagining sets the stage for what is to come. Unfazed but drawn in by her fire, the man asks Walker: “What’s your name, sweetheart?” as his friends lean in. Walker lets loose an explosion of words: “I ain’t your sweetheart, I ain’t your bitch, I ain’t your baby. How dare you have the nerve to sit up here and talk about women that way, and then try to speak to me” (40). The mother of the little girl “chimes in to the beat with claps of sisterhood,” and the men are “momentarily stunned” (40). But once the shock of Walker’s torrent wears off, the man responds with, “Aw, bitch, don’t play that woman shit over here ‘cause that’s bullshit” (40). Walker and the man begin a heated exchange until “instinct kicks in,” as she writes, and Walker removes herself to a different car (40). It is perhaps the very real possibility of the gold rings on the man’s fingers slamming into her face that gets Walker up and out of the path of the man’s wrath. Her wrath, however, will not die down.

In days to come, Walker pushes herself “to figure out what it means to be a part of the Third Wave of feminism” (“Becoming” 40).¹ She writes that she comes to the realization that Third Wave feminism means an indebtedness to herself, to the “little sister on the train [and] to all of the daughters yet to be born”; an indebtedness to translate her anger into action and an agenda (40). It means for her to connect to her own feelings of powerlessness and to forgo a desire, rooted in anger, for gender separatism and militancy. It also means a necessary self-transformation, and in community. As Walker writes, “I realize that I must undergo a transformation if I am truly committed to women’s empowerment. My involvement must reach beyond my voice in discussion, beyond voting, beyond reading feminist theory. My anger and awareness must translate into tangible action” (40). Thomas’ confirmation and Hill’s ostensible silencing coupled with Walker’s very own intimate and immediate experiences of sexism as a Black-identified woman and at the hands of Black men compel her to formulate an agenda for Third Wave feminism. She begins by writing and publishing “Becoming the ‘Third Wave,’” which is in effect a plea to women of her generation to translate whatever certain anger they have at the status quo into action – that is into a sisterhood that is Third Wave feminism.

In her now-famous closing to “Becoming the Third Wave” Walker writes, “I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave.” Walker’s statement registers as a powerful, potent disavowal of post-feminism, and a declaration and embrace of a third wave of U.S. feminism.² As I read Walker’s essay, in claiming and by naming a presumably new wave of U.S. feminism, Walker advances a feminist political perspective that is activist-driven, transracial, youth-directed, and informed but now wholly shaped by the feminist politics and activism of a previous generation (e.g. her mother’s feminist generation).

To Be Real

If with “Becoming the Third Wave” Walker helps to usher in a generationally-inflected new wave of U.S. feminism, it is with her 1995 edited anthology *To Be Real*, and, in particular, her introduction to the anthology entitled “Being Real,” that Walker attempts a further articulation and delineation of this new, Third Wave. Walker writes in the book’s introduction that *To Be Real* “upset[s] the boat a little” by attempting to reconcile the imbibed ideas and practices of a previous feminist generation with the “ideas and desires,” as well as lived realities of her own generation who have a distinctly different vantage point on the world (*TBR* xxxiv).

In “Being Real,” Walker writes that her desire for *To Be Real* was that it contains within “what was most relevant” in the lives of young women and men, including her own. She wanted the book to be

a work that pulled her along a captivating and intriguing journey into third-wave feminism, a book she would want to read. As such, Walker felt *To Be Real* needed to be a work not of feminist social critique but rather one that recorded the “transformative journey” of young women and men who “push [for] new definitions and understandings of female empowerment and social change” (xxxvii). This, even as they attempt to situate themselves and their ideas within a legacy of feminism that “challenges the status quo, finds common ground while honoring difference, and develops the self-esteem and confidence it takes to live and theorize one’s own life” (*TBR* xxxv). These were women and men who came into adulthood in the 1990s after a decade of intense feminist backlash, political conservatism, and identity politics that they experienced as restrictive and extremist. They were women and men for whom feminism was a course of study in college, a living, breathing blueprint in their homes, and an ideology they experienced as being both contested and constructed by the media and popular culture.

“Feminist Ghetto”

Walker begins her introduction to *To Be Real* with a confession. She confesses that prior to beginning work on the anthology and following the publication of “Becoming the Third Wave,” she felt as though she were living in a “feminist ghetto,” which for her was a self-created and policed space of circumscription. She admits to self-censoring and to practicing deception, and she admits to compartmentalizing aspects of her identity that she felt others might find unacceptable or un-feminist. She writes that every decision she made, person she spent time with, or word she spoke “had to measure up to an image I had in my mind of what was morally and politically right according to my vision of female empowerment.” She continues that “Everything had a gendered explanation, and what didn’t fit into my concept of feminist was ‘bad, patriarchal, problematic’” (*TBR* xxix, emphasis added). This experience of living in what was in effect a self-created feminist ghetto was the opposite of what Walker had envisioned for herself in “Becoming the Third Wave.” In fact, it stood in direct contrast to her declaration, “I will not be silenced.” Walker could not anticipate that the silencing would be self-imposed and a result of her own misconstruing of feminism as a fixed set of beliefs.

Walker believed then that to have curiosities about pornography, a capitalist bent, and love for non-feminist leaning people was for her to exhibit contradictory and un-feminist behavior. And, so, to avoid being thought un-feminist, and in particular as the daughter and goddaughter of feminist icons,³ and as a woman who boldly stated “I am the Third Wave,” Walker writes in “Being Real” that she hid from family and from public view aspects of her identity that she felt were contradictory, antirevolutionary, and unfeminist. After all, just a few years earlier she had vowed to do as her mother did and to dedicate much of her “energy to the history, health, and healing of women” (“Becoming” 40). The contradictions of Walker’s life disrupted her ideas about what made one a “good feminist” and interfered with her “sense of how to make feminist revolution” (*TBR* xxx). Walker provides in “Being Real” that it is only when she communicates her thoughts and fears to her peers that she that comes to the understand that embracing the contradictions that come with living and theorizing feminism is what it means for her to make feminist revolution. The suggestion of “Being Real” is that this very realization allows Walker to liberate herself from her feminist ghetto.⁴

Walker makes a second confession in “Being Real.” It is that a significant part of her desire to be a “good” feminist, which for her means tapping into her artistic strength as a woman, belonging to and participating in a community of like-minded and supportive women, and holding “no dislike” or jealousy towards other women, was a very real desire to be “accepted, claimed, and loved by a feminist community” that included her mother (*TBR* xxx). Walker writes of her fear then that not measuring up to the imbibed beliefs and practices of her feminist family would mean losing the love, support, and acceptance of her mother, specifically. She writes of fearing that the moment she shared her newly

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explored world and subsequent revelations about herself as a young feminist with her mother would be the moment of her outright rejection. And, so, for a while, as she writes, she believed that in order to maintain ties with her family she needed to “pass” as a “good feminist” and a “good daughter,” by mirroring the feminist beliefs and practices of her feminist family.

It is significant that *To Be Real* was compiled and published during a time when Walker was attempting to assert herself both as an adult daughter and as a feminist writer and activist, both of which entailed for her a necessary individuation from the person and politics of her world famous mother. Walker has written that the years leading up to the publication of *To Be Real* were years she spent fretting about but taking “tentative steps out of [her] mother’s orbit” (“The Two of Us” 173). Walker’s Third Wave feminist identity then is linked up with her identity as the only child and daughter of a prominent Black feminist artist. *To Be Real* was published the year Walker turned twenty-five. That same year, in an *Essence* magazine article titled “The Two of Us,” co-authored with her mother, and commemorating Walker’s twenty-fifth birthday, Walker writes again of her fears, but also of her determination to “come full out” to her mother as the woman she is and was (“The Two of Us” 173, 254). And, again, she makes a confession: that she masqueraded as a good daughter and a good feminist who is a feminist daughter with unimpeachable values that mirrored and affirmed her mother’s own. Walker says that part of the reason for the masquerade was her desire to win favor with her mother, but also to guard against the possibility of maternal abandonment. Walker connects her fear of being abandoned by her mother to a moment when she was eight years old and asked by her mother to take dictation on her funeral arrangements. She writes that while her mother relayed the specifics on how she wanted her funeral to be handled, Walker, at eight years old, dutifully took notes and, like any good daughter, silenced her girlhood fears about losing her mother.

Walker continues in “The Two of Us” that to avoid being abandoned, she arrived at the idea that she would be “too perfect to leave.” She continues that she instinctively made herself “into what I perceived to be ‘a good daughter’, often silencing or ignoring my own needs” (“The Two of Us” 254). By the time Walker conceptualizes *To Be Real*, however, she has come to understand that part of her desire in conceiving of and editing the book was to break free of the need to perform the linked roles of “good daughter” and “good feminist,” and to come out from behind the suffocating masks “good” feminist/daughter.

Black, White, and Jewish

Walker’s introduction to the anthology *To Be Real* provided a general comment on her relationship to U.S. feminism, and in the context of her relationship to her mother and her mother’s politics, even as it detailed her frustrations with and desires for U.S. feminism. With her memoir, *Black, White, and Jewish*, Walker went deeper, and delved into the material and psycho-emotional dimensions of being her mother’s and her father’s daughter. She also and significantly wrote about her experience of growing up biracial, that is Black and Jewish, during the 1970s and 80s, and showcased the shaping and delimiting influence of family, culture, and society on her self-conception and personal politics. The suggestion of the memoir is that Walker removes the mask she donned for so many years, to reveal a second-generation feminist woman of color in flux.

Through remembering and writing her shifting identity from “Movement Child” to “Tragic Mulatta” to Third Wave feminist,⁵ Walker shines a bright light on her conflicted relationship both with U.S. feminism, and she does so in the context of her relationship with her mother. A leading question of *Black, White, and Jewish* is “[w]hat do we become when we put down the scripts written by history and memory, when each person before us can be seen free of the cultural and personal narrative we’ve inherited or devised? When we, ourselves, can taste that freedom?” (30).⁶ The suggestion of the memoir is that when

it is only when identities are consciously, deliberately made free of the burden of expectations that come with race, ethnicity, family, and politics, that there is the possibility of discovering, developing, and showcasing a self and a politics that are informed, though not wholly defined, by the surrounding culture. As the daughter of two prominent people who expended much time and energy working to put words and laws behind concepts such as equality, justice, and freedom, Walker admits to a powerful and informing family legacy.

At the close of *Black, White, and Jewish* Walker writes, “I stand with those who stand with me.” She adds, “I’m tired of claiming for claiming’s sake, hiding behind masks of culture, creed, religion.” In these final culminating statements Walker dispels any belief that her allegiance is automatic and by virtue of blood (321-22).⁷ In a review of Walker’s memoir for the *Village Voice*, dream hampton writes that “there is no resolution, no declaration of a single, solid self: She [Walker] simply grows big enough to fit her disparate family history and her considerable experiences into her slight, yellow (light-skinned) frame” (20). hampton is fairly correct that there is no declaration of a single, solid self by the close of Walker’s memoir. There is, however, a *self*, albeit in flux, that is Black and Jewish, that is womanist and feminist, and that is and is not aligned with her famous African American mother. In her closing statement, then, Walker effectively breaks away from her mother, which is also to say her “Blackness,” and instead seems to embrace a racial fluidity in which she and her father, an Irish Jewish man, can coexist as loving and mutually affirming relations. This embrace of the father should not be read as a negation of the mother (and the womanism/feminism of the mother) but rather as Walker’s suggestion of the shaping and delimiting influence of racial/ethnic, class, generational, and ideological on the Black feminist familial mother/daughter, daughter/mother relationship. It is a relationship, suggests Walker with her memoir, with strengths and challenges, yes, but also with limitations.

At the age of seventeen, Walker changed her name from Rebecca Grant Leventhal to Rebecca Leventhal Walker, in effect subordinating her whiteness/Jewishness and foregrounding her Blackness. In *Black, White, and Jewish*, she gives several reasons for doing so, the primary of which being a desire to establish a “tangible, irrefutable link” between herself and her mother. While this may very well be the case, it is no doubt that Walker, then a budding writer and burgeoning feminist, must have known that a shift from “Leventhal” to “Walker” would all but guarantee her place within U.S. feminist discourses, as well as within American and African American literary canons. And this, even if the maternal abandonment she once feared would one day become a reality.

Notes

- 1 The “wave” model as a metaphor for understanding U.S. feminism persists despite sustained criticism. In an essay titled “Response from a ‘Second Waver’ to Kimberly Springer’s ‘Third Wave Black Feminism?’” Beverly Guy-Sheftall provides an overview of U.S. feminist waves or, as she prefers, phases, that I find instructive. Guy-Sheftall writes that the “first phase” consist “primarily the nineteenth-century woman suffrage movement, which had been spawned by the abolitionist movement.” Guy Sheftall continues that “the second phase being the modern women’s movement, which began in the mid- 1960s and was catalyzed primarily by the Civil Rights movement; and the third wave, referring to a younger generation of women in the 1990s who were certainly influenced by their feminist foremothers but would define feminism differently and in some ways reject what they perceived to be the doctrinaire aspects of an ideology, mainstream feminism, that they both respect and find limiting” (1091).
- 2 A general consensus among feminist scholars and activists is that the term “postfeminist” contains within it both positive and negative configurations of/on feminism—this is inherent in the “post.” Scholar Astrid Henry writes that the term “postfeminist” is often used “to mark historical periods when feminism and women’s movement are in decline or abeyance...[and to] indicate a rejection of feminism.” This rejection of feminism, Henry continues, “serves as proof of the failure of feminism” (Henry 19). But, Henry continues, postfeminist can also be used to suggest that feminism has proven successful and is therefore no longer

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- necessary. Scholar Sarah Gamble adds that postfeminism “is critical of any definition of woman as victims who are unable to control their own lives,” and adds that “postfeminist debate tends to crystallize around issues of victimization, autonomy and responsibility” (Gamble 43).
- 3 Rebecca Walker is the goddaughter of Gloria Steinem.
 - 4 It is possible to glimpse early signs of Walker’s self-imposed “feminist ghetto” in “Becoming the Third Wave.” In the essay, Walker suggests that women should refuse to vote for, nurture, “break bread,” or have sex with men who do not “prioritize our freedom to control our bodies” (1992, 40). She pushes either/or dynamic on her Black male friend when she demands of him “are you with me or are you going to help them try to destroy me?” (39). The essay also possesses a tone which sometimes perilously borders on the self-righteous, as when Walker declares “I am not one of those people who sat transfixed before the television, watching the Senate hearings. I had classes to go to, papers to write” (39). These elements of “Becoming the Third Wave” could be read as early indicators of the kind of political/personal rigidity that would foster the psycho-social ghettoization Walker experiences and creates with her feminist ghetto.
 - 5 For a sustained analysis of Walker’s use of the dual tropes of the “tragic mulatta” and the “Movement Child,” see scholar Ralina Joseph’s essay “Performing the Twenty-First Century Tragic Mulatto” in *The Black Scholar*, vol. 39, pp. 3-4, 2009.
 - 6 In her introduction to *To Be Real*, Rebecca Walker writes of her wish to “hear the experiences of people attempting to live their lives envisioning or experiencing identities beyond those inscribed on them by the surrounding culture” (Walker xxxvii). She argued throughout the anthology’s introduction that in order for young feminists to embrace and to be all of who they are it is a necessity that they jettison imposed and or adopted norms—i.e. a perceived status quo with contemporary feminism—that deny their multifaceted and sometimes conflicting selves.
 - 7 In her second memoir, 2007’s *Baby Love*, Walker modifies her statement on family writing that biology, especially in relation to one’s own child, trumps any and all other relationships.

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Katarzyna Nowak-McNeice

THE CALIFORNIAN EXOPOLIS

HECTOR TOBAR'S AND TIM Z. HERNANDEZ'S LITERARY INTERVENTIONS

Introduction: California as the Paradise That Never Was

In the present essay, I focus on the literary portrayals of California's underrepresented communities and the places their members inhabit and move through. These places are often zones of disruption of the historical and cultural discourses that traditionally portray California as a paradise and a migrant's dream, even if increasingly so the dream proves compromised, if not corrupted. I offer a reading of Hector Tobar's *The Barbarian Nurseries* (2011), and Tim Z. Hernandez's *Mañana Means Heaven* (2013), two novels which in varying ways show spaces of resistance to the globalizing impulses. Tobar's novel focuses on a migrant's experience of a city's labyrinth, providing an alternative reading of the cityscape; while Hernandez's novel portrays the valley where constant vacillation across the border and between cultures is a crucial part of the field workers' experience. Both novels complicate the possible triumphant reading of the land- and cityscape as an all-inclusive actualization of the multicultural dream, as they portray local cultures as being simultaneously shaped and occluded by the larger national and transnational forces. I see these novels as interventions in the discussion about the state's past and its identity, as they give voice to the cultural and social agents who are traditionally silenced in the narratives of the state's – and the nation's – history.

The narratives presented in Tobar's and Hernandez's novels can be read as signs of the processes that Edward W. Soja analyzes as the development of the "Exopolis." It is a twofold process, simultaneously describing the emergence of "Outer Cities" and "Edge Cities" as well as other formations falling under the category of "the rather oxymoronic urbanization of suburbia"; and at the same time indicating a drastic restructuring of the Inner City happening under the influence of an outflow of the local populace and an inflow of the migrants from the "Third World" countries. Thus, Soja concludes, "The social and spatial organization of the postmetropolis seems as a result to be turning inside-out and outside-in at the same time, creating havoc with our traditional ways of defining what is urban, suburban, exurban, nor urban, etc." (7). The two-way, or rather, multiple-way traffic changes not only the face of the urban landscape, but also our understanding of what "urban" might mean. Tobar's and Hernandez's novels both point in the direction of the renewed understanding of these spaces as they document the movement – and immobility – of the representatives of the communities whose emergence disrupts the easy binaries of the urban and the suburban. In my essay, I point to the subversive quality of the Exopolis that both analyzed novels expose, in a reference to what Soja specifies as the "provocative double meaning" of the term "exopolis": "exo-referring both to the city growing 'outside' the traditional urban nucleus, and to the city 'without', the city that no longer conveys the traditional qualities of cityness" (8). It is precisely this challenging potential that *The Barbarian Nurseries* and *Mañana Means Heaven* display that I wish to explore in my essay.

Both novels unavoidably hint at the traditional representation of California as paradise or the Garden of Eden, both also revisit the traditional narrative, in which California is first deemed to be the fulfillment of the promise of westward expansion and the ideals of freedom and unencumbered growth, only to be subsequently pronounced the ultimate disappointment of the corrupted ideal.

The moment when California enters written history takes us back a long way: the name is first mentioned well before those parts of the world become known to the Europeans, in an early 16th century Spanish romance *The Deeds of Esplandián*, and the land itself, imagined as an island inhabited by valiant women warriors, is said to be rich in precious metal and full of wonders. Some elements of the myth proved extremely durable, but, as Joan Didion puts it, “a good deal of California does not, on its own preferred terms, add up” (19) – the Californian landscapes include not only the garden, but the desert; not just the beaches and the sea, but the mountains and snows; they remain a contradiction in and of themselves.

The myth of California as the Garden of Eden functions within the parameters of what we may see as a nostalgic landscape: the term indirectly refers to John Brinckerhoff Jackson’s distinction between the “official” and the “vernacular” landscape. When discussing the latter type of landscape, Jackson tells us that “The commonplace aspects of the contemporary landscape, the streets and houses and fields and places of work, could teach us a great deal not only about American history and American society but also ourselves and how we relate to the world. It is a matter of learning how to see” (43). Thus, Jackson places didactic importance upon the landscape, at the same time reminding the viewers that what they look at is in a way a reflection of their character. The landscape they see is, in fact, themselves in relation to the world. Yet, the knowledge gained from the observation of the American landscape is by no means an easy task. It requires taking a step back and inquiring into our own involvement in the world. Thus, I would like to propose a reintroduction of the idea of California as the Garden of Eden, since it signals an importance placed on the landscape which emerges out of the interaction between various groups of humans, but also with the land itself (and the non-human animals inhabiting it). “Learning to see” California as an Edenic landscape had the potential of an inclusive, heterogeneous vision for the state.

Michael J. McDowell adds to Jackson’s landscapes “another more romantic official landscape,” gaining in popularity, which he describes as “a nostalgic landscape of national forests still filled with trees, undammed wild and scenic rivers, unplowed national grassland, and ungrazed and undrilled federal wildlife refuges, all of it nearly peopleless, as the majority of Americans have liked to think the land was before the Euro-American settlement” (382). McDowell’s nostalgic landscape can be seen as a much needed act of resistance to the binarism suggested by the distinction between the official versus the vernacular. In the Californian context, this nostalgic landscape takes on a local variation: even if not of forests, but a semi-arid desert, it is the landscape before highways and the omnipresent cement. As David Wyatt claims, “California has always been a place no sooner had than lost,” and he adds, “every family has its paved garden” (15). The suggestion that the Californian garden has been lost to paved roads is possibly a nostalgic expression of the fear that California has never been the paradise it was supposed to be; it is only the loss that is real.

The Ethnic Garden and the Logic of Exclusion

The nostalgic garden is the central image in Tobar’s *The Barbarian Nurseries*, where the conflict over one family’s piece of paradise and its loss motivate the narrative’s progression, which mirrors the central character’s movement through a variety of landscapes. These landscapes are organized along the axis of the garden and the desert, and the distinction between the two is reflected in a series of differentiating features, such as: the use of language, either Spanish or English; understanding art or disregard for it; and individualism or a collective spirit. These binarisms, however, are broken up by the ideas of movement and liminality, embodied by the character who is an agent of artistic dissent.

The Barbarian Nurseries focuses on a family whose hyphenated last name suggests a mixed ethnic background, Maureen and Scott Thompson-Torres, and their Mexican maid, an illegal immigrant, Araceli. Undergoing financial difficulties, the family let the gardener go, which triggers the rapid deterioration

of their landscaped surroundings and is an apt reflection of the disruption in the family dynamics. Maureen's decision to remove the tropical garden and install a desert landscape is extremely costly: in a subsequent squabble over financial matters, the couple decides to take some time off, neither bothering to inform the maid. Left to her resources and with food supplies running low, Araceli decides to take the two boys left in her care to their grandfather. Their trip from a gated Orange County hilltop community to the heart of Los Angeles, when seen from the perspective of one of the boys, a precocious, highly imaginative 11-year old Brandon, is presented in terms of a fabulous journey to the heart of darkness; and when represented in Araceli's adult terms, it seems like the Grand Tour for an artist that the maid is. When the parents eventually return, they realize the boys and the maid are gone, and because of a lack of communication and misconstrued motifs, Araceli becomes a kidnapper on the run, hunted by the police, the social services, and the media alike. The parents are not willing to admit their guilt in abandoning their family, but eventually they come clean, which leads to Araceli's release. The unfolding of the events gives Tobar an excuse to comment on the social mechanisms at play and to expose deep chasms in the bilingual, bi-ethnic Californian households, with the garden serving as a befitting metaphor for the many identities of California.

This multiplicity is reflected in the naming: the Thompson-Torres call it "la petite rain forest" (11); this mixture of French and English signals their upper-class status and distances them from the Spanish-speaking people who actually take care of the garden's maintenance. When they have to let the gardener Pepe go, Scott muses, "It seemed to him it would take a village of Mexicans to keep that thing alive, a platoon of men in straw hats, wading with bare feet into the faux stream that ran through the middle of it" (15). In fact, only one person was maintaining the place, so Scott's musings are a fantasy of the superhuman strength and abilities that distinguish his gardener from himself. The conclusion shows the contrast starkly: "Pepe. . . was a village unto himself, apparently. Scott wasn't a village" (15). A hint at the American individualism, this comment also serves to draw the line between the upper middle class employers and their Mexican working class employees, with the duality extending to the sense of communality versus individualism, regulated legal status versus unprotected illegal standing, down to the language they employ.

Araceli, the maid, is the character straddling these oppositions, as she is a former art student in Mexico City, forced by economic circumstances to seek a job as a nanny on the other side of the border. In her memories, we are presented with yet another opposition influencing the characters' sense of identity: she is a city dweller, navigating the crowded streets between art galleries and cafes, transplanted to the land of suburbs stretching to the horizon. The difference between these spaces is captured by Soja, who uses the term "postmetropolis" in order to "accentuate the differences between contemporary urban regions and those that consolidated in the middle decades of the twentieth century" (1). Araceli then is an agent moving not only between various modes of spatial organization and their social and cultural consequences, but it seems she also moves between temporal planes, equally influencing the identifications of the agents.

Needless to say, among the important facets of identification is the language, and the Californian characters in Tobar's novel are well aware of the different status of the two languages; as Araceli says, "it was obvious to her that the two languages did not carry equal weight" (250). The grasp of a language proves important when Araceli is asked by her employer, Maureen, about her opinion on the reconstituted garden: "She really didn't possess the words in English to communicate what the tropical garden and this new desert garden made her feel. How did you say in English that something was too still, that you preferred plants that you could feel breathing around you?" (106). The two languages parallel the approach to the two versions of the landscape, which in turn translates into differing ranks in the hierarchy of social standing and power of the Californian characters. The preference for the desert

garden might suggest ossified structures and stiff divisions in the strata of society; but a more optimistic reading might also hint at a turn to native plants and species as an attempt at a rehabilitation of a previous arrogant, exploitative treatment of the land.

The character of Araceli displays a very different approach to the landscape. Her liminal position between the worlds of English and Spanish, between high art and middle-class mediocrity, and between city dwelling and the suburbs is represented in her response to the places Marc Augé calls non-places of supermodernity, the places of transit, rushed through, places of solitude. Araceli, a post-modern heir to flaneurs of the past, understands such spaces and appreciates them for what they are. Seen from a train, the railway tract seems oddly appealing: "There was a spare beauty to all this decay, it was the empty and harsh landscape of an unsettling dream; these were spaces you were not meant to see.... Her aesthetic lived in barren places like this, and she missed them. *Here the wind, rain, and sun are free to shape and cook the steel and cement into sculptures that celebrate forgetfulness*" (164). The dream-like quality of California is mentioned here, but it is not the golden dream promoted by Hollywood; far from it. It is by no means a manicured lawn of the suburban variety, or a characterless city park. The landscape is recognized as a dynamic art form in itself. The celebration of forgetfulness, not of history or identity, is the central function of art here, which possibly signals an attempt to resist any curbing of artistic freedom and pinning down of a homogeneous identity.

Araceli, the free agent, finds herself in non-places as she is forced by circumstance to flee the danger of deportation and prison. When she disregards the "No Trespassing" sign, she ventures into a place that resists definition:

She was entering a kind of urban wilderness, a nursery of odd flora sprouting up through the mustard grass. A cypress tree, its canopy shaped like a large wing. Sickly rosebushes without buds. Strawberry plants clinging to a patch of loam. Bamboo grasses and a stunted palm with thin leaves that sprouted, fountainlike, from its trunk, and the wide, tall bouquet of a nopal cactus. She had stumbled into the back closet of California gardens, the place where seedlings of plants discarded and abandoned came to scratch their roots into the dry native soil. If she hadn't been on the run, she might have stopped to admire this freakish landscape. (259)

It takes an artist's eye to transform the place into an object of contemplation; but the wild place on the borders between city and wilderness is represented as the originator of the carefully maintained middle-class yards and their nursery. The plants that survive in this marginal space later thrive in suburban gardens thanks to the work of those who remain as unacknowledged and as invisible as the liminal nursery. Araceli's preference for the wild versus the cultivated is a sign of her cultural identification. In her vision of California there is a place for wildness and for art; it is an inclusive, multilingual, heterogeneous space of contact and interaction.

Such a perception must be contrasted with that of her employers'. Their California is the place of the past that they are desperately trying to recreate: "California was a paradise of open land and sea breezes, the sliver of Eden between the desert and the sea" (304); it is a paradoxical place, at the same time elusive, yet with clearly demarcated borders. One character, a mouthpiece for xenophobic views, describes California of the past in terms of a "playground," which suggests a controlled space with utilitarian function. The nostalgia for that place corresponds to a falsified vision of history that feeds the fearful xenophobia of the present. It is only with a realization of the need for a non-exclusive identification of California that the falsified vision may be dispelled.

The ending of the novel presents such a recognition in the form of a self-imposed expulsion from paradise. Realizing her guilt, Maureen decides they will move to a smaller house: "They would leave their Eden, and that would be a fair punishment" (389). The expulsion means that the paradise must be

redefined, its borders expanded, and the sense of entitlement – re-visited. Yet for a white middle-class character such as Maureen the suburbs delimit her movements; in contrast, Araceli, the illegal Mexican worker and an artist, is the agent of dissent who leaves the suburbs and through her movement illustrates the possibility of the challenging potential of the Californian Exopolis.

The City and the Return to the Ethnic Paradise

Liminality and mobility are the twenty-first century possibilities for a non-white character; a Mexican artist figure, even though it remains a provocative proposal in today's prose, half a century ago remained an oxymoron, with the distinction between a white artist and a Mexican laborer very much in place. The second text I discuss here, Tim Z. Hernandez's 2013 novel *Mañana Means Heaven*, destabilizes this distinction and celebrates ethnic diversity, not allowing for identity appropriation by a white, mobile narrator.

In *Mañana Means Heaven*, paradise is also part of the stock images to conceptualize California, but a much more prominent referent is Jack Kerouac's 1957 classic *On the Road*. One episode concerns Terry, a Mexican woman with whom Kerouac's narrator has an intimate relationship; and it is this figure and the events centered around her that provide an impulse for Hernandez's novel. In a mixture of fact and fiction, Hernandez recounts the story of romance with the young writer, Jack, from the perspective of the woman, Bea. California provides a vivid backdrop against which the events unfold, while also accounting for the characters' motivation and explaining their perspective.

The moments in history when the two novels were conceived represent two important points of reference in the history of California, as they exposed the social rift and unrest, violently erupting in the streets of the multiethnic metropolis. In the words of Edward Soja, "Between the Watts riots of 1965 and what are now called the Rodney King or Justice Riots of 1992, the urban region of Los Angeles experienced one of the most dramatic transformations of any comparable region of the world" (1). Thus, even though Kerouac and Hernandez both set their narratives in 1930s California, Kerouac's text represents a very different Los Angeles and California than the one seen from the vantage point of a twenty-first century text, with a different understanding of the city's dynamics which Soja calls "the socio-spatial dialectic" (2). The awareness of this difference is evidenced by Hernandez's narrator's words, "Strains of resentment were still crusted in the cracks of the sidewalks, from Watts all the way up to Santa Monica Boulevard, and there wasn't enough rain in the entire Pacific Coast to wash it off of L.A. that easy. The blackouts too seemed like only yesterday. The whirring propellers of low-spying zeppelins, yesterday. The Zoot Suit beatings, yesterday" (37). For Kerouac's narrator, Sal Paradise, California is devoid of the socio-political dimension in favor of the mythical; it is "the ragged promised land, the fantastic end of America" (50), and it is there that he hears the Spanish word that he chooses not to translate: "It was always *mañana*. For the next week that was all I heard – *mañana*, a lovely word and one that probably means heaven" (56). Sal uses a strategy here that various critics analyze under different names: Marianna Torgovnick describes it as "primitivism" and Graham Huggan deems "exoticising"; both mean a fascination with the Other to the point of appropriation and commodification, with no respect for the insiders' perspective on the cultural issue that is being seized.

Hernandez's novel, written in the twenty first century, cannot afford Sal's naivety. With an awareness of the past century's conflicts and delicate and complex identity politics behind them, Hernandez's text responds to the pronounced sentimentality of Kerouac's narrator. In a remark about a singer who is passing for a Mexican, Bea (Kerouac's "Mexican girl" Terry) says: "'You actually buy all that *Mañana*, *mañana* junk? I mean, she ain't even Mexican, and...oh, it just makes me sick" (122). The comment not only demystifies the romantic approach of *On the Road*; it also makes it clear that claiming Mexicanness and exoticizing it must not be taken lightly. Sal Paradise presents himself as one of the workers in

the Valley when he says, “They thought I was a Mexican, of course; and in a way I am” (98), but such identification is conditioned upon his mobility and freedom to assume other cultural positions, whereas for his “Mexican girl” mobility and freedom of movement cannot be taken for granted. Their differing interpretations of the land they pass through or inhabit depend on their positioning as free or bound agents. When Augé reminds us that: “Travel...constructs a fictional relationship between gaze and landscape” (69), we have to take his pronouncement to see Bea as unable to assume the relationship with the landscape equal to Sal’s, as she is conditioned by socio-economic factors beyond her control. Sal, however, is well aware of his relationship to the landscape: in a characteristically anti-intellectual gesture he reveals his awareness when he says, “I had a book with me I stole...but I preferred reading the American landscape as we went along” (207).

In *Mañana Means Heaven* we are presented with a rather clear-cut division between the two zones, the valley with punishing working conditions, and the city, an ambiguous and exciting space of artistic freedom, further divided by the availability of the city spaces to the agents of varying economic status. Bea, the primary focalizer in the story, presents the valley in terms of hard labor that it means for the menial workers; to her, “Returning to the great San Joaquin meant a backache” (23). When the couple decides to take the job picking grapes, she displays the practical knowledge that derives from years of experience. Bea assures Jack that “the body, no matter how many days or months or years, never gets used to fieldwork” (129). The damning effects of the hard work are most recognizable on the children who work in the fields: “Every last one of them wore a defeated mask” (142). Even though at one time Bea admits that living in the camp amounts to a simpler, healthier existence, reminiscent of camping as a form of leisure, it is Jack who holds romantic illusions about such a life. He expresses such views saying, “I know plenty of city folks who’d kill for a little bit of quiet like this. A little room to stretch your legs. Buy your own chunk of land, set things on fire when you want” (120). His fantasy of freedom and empty land evokes the Frontier Thesis and the ideals of Manifest Destiny, which only exposes Jack’s position as an outsider and a passer-by, unaffected by the landscape to which no communal value is attached.

For Bea, the fantasy of freedom and unobstructed movement results in a sense of frustration: she feels “trapped in the campo” which prompts her to say, “This must be what purgatory is like” (183). Bea’s and Jack’s differing responses to the landscape in the valley parallel their economic position which conditions their mobility.

Just as the valley with its camps of workers picking up fruit represents unchangeability and stagnation, the city lures with its dynamism:

The soundscape was punctuated with raw music: the scream of an engine, the sizzle of hot grease from an open window, a fed-up neighbor threatening to call cops on the hoodlums who lurked in the alleyways. Across the street, a band was loading up a car with chrome and brass musical instruments, their shirttails untucked and hats cocked, faces ragged after an all-nighter. Cars hummed past, and the noon hour buzzed with working stiffs tending to the incessant nag of life. (37)

The characters see themselves as momentarily released from the constraints of the mundane; the city invigorates them with its chaotic energy. It is the landscape that creates music out of chaos and that feeds their creative energies. The city unites the lovers and allows them to see themselves similarly freed by it. They create an enclave in the bustling chaos, with the two of them against the rest of the world:

Off and on, maybe once an hour, or every other hour, they peeked out of the window, only to remind themselves that the world outside, the stiff and utterly square world, didn’t apply to them. Not its rules or contradictions, not its streetlights or crosswalks, not its arbitrary neighborhoods quartered off by highways and byways, bridges and barrios. Deep into the afternoon, at the pearl hour, buzzing with invincibility, Bea stuck her head out the window and spread her arms as if embracing the sky. She blurted out, ‘Goddamn you L.A.!', A voice greeted her back, ‘Shut up!’ (53)

Just as for Bea, the valley is a landscape that she understands and is able to represent, the city, described as the “stiff and square world”, is represented from Jack’s perspective. When Bea makes the gesture trying to embrace the city, even as she simultaneously denounces it, the city rejects and silences her. Bea’s approach to the cityscape is dictated by her economic position. She contrasts the city where “there was a heap of money waiting to be made” with the valley, “that miserable campo, that sad den of discarded prayers” (72), yet in the end she must go back there. The novel presents a sense of reconciliation at the end, when Bea realizes her limited freedom which nevertheless rests on the liberty of choice: “It had nothing to do with leaving, and everything to do with returning” (214).

In contrast, *On the Road* does not offer a similar resolution. Sal reminisces about his Mexican lover with a sense of regret:

At lilac evening I walked with every muscle aching...feeling that the best the white world had offered was not enough ecstasy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough light...I wished I were a Denver Mexican,...anything but what I was so drearily, a ‘white man’ disilluminated. All my life I’d had white ambitions; that was why I’d abandoned a good woman like Terry in the San Joaquin Valley. (105)

Sal’s musings, however, are played out against the backdrop of a cityscape in which he moves about freely, even as he mourns the lack of euphoric excess in his life. He presents his regret in racial and ethnic terms, and however naive to the point of recklessness his identifications are, they are nevertheless shaped by the landscapes he inhabits. Rachel Ligairi discusses the question of race in *On the Road* and, as she points to the wide range of critical assessment of Kerouac’s racial dynamics, from perceiving it as simple naivety to dismissing it as a sign of colonial domination, she concludes that Kerouac’s treatment of the issue is “a choice that suggests a larger Beat refusal to see racial Others as fellow questers rather than stepping stones toward the authentic” (153). Sal Paradise situates himself on the margin of social life, but he does it precisely because he can afford to do so, as a white man endowed with mobility. For Terry / Bea, as well as for her co-workers, mobility as an option may not present itself for many years to come. It is only for the character placed in a twenty-first-century context, such as Araceli, that mobility – moving through the landscape and reading it – becomes a real choice.

Conclusion

The idea presented at the beginning, the reading of the landscape as “a matter of learning how to see”, now becomes a political responsibility, and both *The Barbarian Nurseries* and *Mañana Means Heaven* undertake this responsibility with a reference to the traditional, idealized representation of California as an edenic space. The former novel presents the garden as a liminal space which disrupts an easy distinction between an urban and a suburban space, while simultaneously questioning the notion of the garden itself. In the latter novel, the garden is a purgatory rather than paradise, yet it plays an important function: that of epitomizing the experience of an undocumented laborer limited in her mobility.

Set in different historical moments, the two novels display very different approaches to the landscape, yet both represent necessary interventions into a renewed comprehension of Californian spaces. In the words of Soja, “Understanding the postmetropolis requires a creative recombination of micro and macro perspectives, views from above and from below, a new critical synthesis that rejects the rigidities of either/or choices for the radical openness of the both/and also” (4). *The Barbarian Nurseries* and *Mañana Means Heaven* represent precisely this radicality of options.

In the two novels, Californian landscapes are represented in a series of binaries, broken up and complicated by a free agent of dissent: in *The Barbarian Nurseries*, the division between the city and the suburb is challenged by the artist able to transform the refuse of the city into an object of contemplation,

at the same time showing the points of convergence between the seemingly irreconcilable, discordant zones and their interrelatedness. In *Mañana Means Heaven*, the distinction between the valley and the city is subverted through the intertextual play that suggests a different network of meanings attributed to places, resulting from the complex identifications of the dwellers, passers-by, and interpreters of these spaces. Finally, the two novels present California's non-places reinvented, whose meanings, context-dependent and reliant on other vectors of cultural interpretation, are celebrated in their ambiguous and chaotic complexity.

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Monica Reyes

THE (UN)HERO IN THE AMERICAN WEST

REEXAMINING THE MALE/FEMALE BINARY OF NINETEENTH CENTURY TRAVEL DIARIES

“Saturday, April 16th [1853] Camped last night three miles east of Chariton Point in the prairie. Made our beds down in the tent in the wet and mud. Bed clothes nearly spoiled. Cold and cloudy this morning, and every body out of humour. Seneca [son] is half sick. Plutarch [son] has broke his saddle girth. Husband is scolding and hurrying all hands (and the cook) and Almira [daughter] says she wished she was home, and I say ditto. ‘Home, Sweet Home.’”
- Amelia Stewart Knight, *Oregon Pioneer*, 1853

“The mountains, whose stern features had lowered upon us with so gloomy and awful a frown, now seemed lighted up with a serene, benignant smile, and the green waving undulations of the plain were gladdened with the rich sunshine. Wet, ill, and wearied as I was, my spirit grew lighter at the view, and I drew from it an augury of good for my future prospects.” (158)
- Francis Parkman Jr., *The Oregon Trail*

It is estimated that nearly half a million people ventured toward the American Pacific Coast within the period known as Great Westward Migration, which officially began in 1843. The typical traveler was destined to settle and farm, usually in California or Oregon, on land that was promised as free or inexpensive and incredibly fertile. Travelling the two-thousand-mile journey in large groups, most of the pioneers had sacrificed small luxuries to save money, parted with extended family and close communities, and sold most of their possessions to establish a new life in places they had, in all likelihood, never even visited. In other words, the journey, which could take as much as a year to complete, was costly in many ways. It was not unusual for these pioneers to record their experiences in a unique hybrid of autobiographical writing known as travel diaries, and these accounts have allowed historians as well as writing and literary scholars the ability to study the westering experience of men and women of the nineteenth century. Less than one percent of the scores of sojourners who travelled West in America during the 1800s are represented in self-writing that exists today, either through published pieces, archival material or within family collections (Faragher 11; Schlissel 11). The writing done on the frontier—complete with all its challenges and dangers—soon became synonymous with the American travelling experience. Its unique focus on spaces associated with uncharted territories, wilderness and the unknown delineated it from travel writing about European travel experiences, like the Grand Tour, common to wealthy young adults during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Unlike Grand Tour narratives,¹ in which well-to-do young ladies and men viewed fine art, roamed classical ruins, and met with wealthy Europeans for pleasure and education, the frontier experience focused on romantic adventure and heroic identity in an effort to survive and thrive within nature. So, in an exciting way, the travel literature coming out of the American frontier offered fresh settings, plotlines and protagonists which nineteenth century readers thoroughly devoured.

Also, travelling the American West were explorers, traders, politicians and tourists. Even if for a summer tour of the frontier, these privileged travelers wrote about their journeys and experiences, and

often their writing showcases patterns of an effort to replicate the pioneer and settler experience. I posit that the individuals who could afford to travel West for pleasure (tourists)² sought to authenticate, in their own lives, an experience they had only read about in travel diaries and dramatic adventure novels, as the impressions, perceived experiences, expectations, hopes and fears of life on the trail of the frontier were, without question, influenced by the constructs set forth in previous travel narratives. Through their travel diaries, these tourists of the frontier obviously aimed to (re)create a Romantic identity and landscape, a luxury settlers could not afford.

In the sections that follow, I offer first a theoretical framework that informs my thinking on identity constructs within travel literature of the American frontier. Next, I briefly examine Francis Parkman's *The Oregon Trail* (a memoir of the author's 1846 trek across the American West) as a representative, yet brief, example of how travel-diarists of the American frontier are able to rhetorically construct a heroic identity within their diaries. I then turn to Susan Shelby Magoffin's *Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico* (the author's edited 1846 travel diary while journeying the title's namesake route) to closely examine how female writing of the frontier is able to breach the discourse considered stereotypically "male". Ultimately, I use Magoffin's narrative as evidence that quintessential American Western literary romances are mostly developed by writers, regardless of gender, who selectively purposed to travel as tourists and not settlers, as the purpose of travel often birthed the literary identity of the diarist.

Writing Identities

The act of keeping a diary shows the author's belief that their experience is worth telling. Diary researcher Margo Culley describes how diaries "always [begin] with a sense of self-worth, a conviction that one's individual experience is somehow *remarkable*," (8) an idea prevalent during America's westward expansion, which significantly overlapped with the literary period of American Romanticism. Faragher describes how the unique experience of emigrating great distances across unsettled terrain prompted many men and women to write about it, even if diarists simply jotted down their daily tasks while in transit (4, 12). Moreover, keeping a written account during a travel experience seems natural, as journaling symbolizes a course of progress. For many, the start of the journey begins on page one, and the journal becomes intensely metaphoric. Bernard Rosenthal, in his introduction to Francis Parkman Jr.'s *The Oregon Trail*, comments that frontier travelers saw how "civilization would be renewed; here was the region where the faults of the Old World might be put aside and where a better civilization might emerge" (viii). For example, Magoffin, a newly-wed trader traveling the Sante Fe Trail in 1846, begins her diary with these thoughts: "My journal tells a story tonight different from what is has ever done before. The curtain raises now with a new scene. This book of travels is Act 2nd, litterally and truly. From the city of New York to the Plain of Mexico, is a stride that I myself can scarcely realize" (1). The newness of travel, journaling, and scenery combined to create a true frontier setting for nineteenth century readers and writers in which to play.

Attempting to (re)create a type of "hero's journey" western experience prompted many individuals to realize themselves as the protagonist of their own story in their travel diaries, and they did so by engaging in what Culley labels "double consciousness," or even "constructing the self" (10). Culley determines that even in the most seemingly transparent writings, "all diarists are involved in a process, even if largely unconscious, of selecting details to create a persona" or an identity (12). In other words, the awareness of audience (real or imagined) has a profound influence over how diarists portray themselves in their writing, so understandably, diarists endlessly re-read and edited their own work. Critics like Fussell excuse how diarists construct their own "self" because if diarists do not "visit [their] narrative with the spirit and techniques of fiction, no one will want to hear it"; and certainly, many diarists understood this idea well (16). Moreover, Saunders understands that "demand" drove the fictionalization of travel

literature: “Driven to lie through prejudice-- religious, political, or racial--, quest for commercial gain, or to improve personal reputation, travel writers found a winning formula by stretching, moulding, or disguising the facts” (2).

It is misleading, however, to generalize all American travel narratives as exaggerated or creatively manufactured exploits—the truth is, American female travel accounts of the nineteenth century were largely ignored until the 1970s as they are often characterized as dry, predictable accounts of daily chores. The hundreds of American nineteenth century female accounts that have been discovered record the routines of women who were settlers and not tourists, who had little choice but to follow their husbands and children across the U.S. Their writing usually portrays survival without idealization, perhaps because most women were too busy feeding their families to depict themselves as idealistic representations of the heroic trailblazer. In her book, *Women’s Diaries of the Westward Journey*, Lillian Schlissel provides ample representative excerpts from womens’ (settlers’) accounts on the Overland Trail. Female accounts typically resemble Catherine Haun’s detailed entry about available groceries during her trek to California in 1849: “We also had the advantage of camping near farm-houses and the generous supply of bread, butter, eggs and poultry greatly facilitated the cooking. Eggs were 2 1/2 cents a dozen—at our journey’s end we paid \$1 a piece, that is when we had the dollar” (170). In addition, Amelia Stewart Knight’s 1853 travel account en route to Oregon from Iowa is a perpetual cooking and washing log with lamentations about the hardships of her seven children along the way. Knight’s first encounter with native people is noteworthy in that it is told without fear or romanticized danger; instead, her encounter with Indians is a side note alongside a description of her chores for that day (203). It is important to emphasize that the frontier settler diary was first and foremost kept for utilitarian reasons, and most diaries would actually be sent back home for pleasure reading and/or news, or the diary would be used as a helpful guide for those families who would take the trek next. In fact, keeping a diary was part of the private duties of women, “a feminist practice” (Huff 6), that many men considered necessary for the family as a whole, similar to washing or cooking (Jameson 150).

In contrast, male frontier writing is largely associated with “the story of the male innocent who escapes from civilization into the wilderness to become a man, free from the constraints of tradition and authority” (Georgi-Findlay 6), easily identified in works like James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*, Mark Twain’s satire *Roughing It*, or *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*. In other words, the male in American frontier literature makes a conscious (and perceivably heroic) choice to venture out, decidedly not to settle, but to experience, much like a modern tourist, and this is the story that nineteenth century readers demanded. American frontier readers and writers craved more than the scientific discoveries of uncharted land commonly found in seventeenth century, Enlightenment accounts; they desired the hero’s journey meta-narrative that involved an inward and personal story alongside the outer journey. For example, Twain’s *Roughing It* comically exhibits the great desire for the adventure that arises from travel found in male accounts. In his description of his brother’s appointment as Secretary of Nevada Territory, Twain’s writing is overwhelmed with envy of the westering travel experience: “I coveted his distinction and his financial splendor, but particularly and especially the long, strange journey he was going to make, and the curious new world he was going to explore. He was going to travel! I never had been away from home, and that word ‘travel’ had a seductive charm for me” (49). In his humorous way, Twain is able to accurately describe the idealism of adventure travel in nineteenth century America: “[My brother] would be hundreds and hundreds of miles away on the great plains and deserts, and among the mountains of the Far West, and would see buffaloes and Indians, and prairie dogs, and antelopes, and have all kinds of adventures, and may be get hanged or scalped, and have ever such a fine time, and write home and tell us all about it, and be a hero” (49). Twain also recalls his awe at covered wagon travel: “Even at this day it thrills me through and through to think of the life, the gladness and

wild sense of freedom that used to make the blood dance in my veins on those fine overland mornings" (75). Twain's satirical optimism about the trail differs greatly from that of women who had no choice but to follow their husbands' and fathers' Westward dreams, and his work illustrates the romanticizing of a selective venture, a heroic vacation from the mundane responsibility of domestic life often lived by women.

There is an obvious male/ female binary that travel writing scholars use to read these archival texts (Faragher; Jameson; Riley; Scharff; Schlissel); consequently, female frontier literature is mostly seen through the classification of "settler," and male accounts are mostly perceived through the persona of "tourist." However, I argue that such conflation of gender and travel identity is not always helpful in viewing the rhetoric and persona(s) of the American frontier story, as women and men travelled for varying purposes and rhetorically constructed various identities within their travel journeys, able to overlap gender norms.

For modern readers, the various identities that nineteenth century travel writers construct often oppose their desired intention; in other words, even if an author sets out to prove their heroic character through their travel experience, the end result may read contrived and problematic. For example, in her landmark piece, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt understands how travel writers place themselves at the center of their saga and become a type of "unhero," who only seek experience and not any deeper understanding or appreciation of the culture or native people they encounter; these protagonists simply actualize their experience as an "epic series of trials, challenges, and encounters with the unpredictable" (73). Similarly, Helmer and Mazzeo, in "Unraveling the Traveling Self," describe the *flâneur*,³ an individual who is like Pratt's "unhero" in many ways, but most importantly is "bourgeois, one who has the money, leisure, and class distinction to move freely within and across borders" (10). Like the "unhero," the *flâneur* has a "desire for pleasure and experience" (Helmer and Mazzeo 10), but also possesses the monetary wealth to seek out-- through travel-- cultural wealth and heroic identity. Two American frontier travel-narratives, Parkman's *The Oregon Trail*, and Magoffin's *Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico*, suggest that wealth, power and choice helped shape writing identities perhaps as significantly as gender.

The Rhetoric of the (Fe)Male "Unhero" of the American Frontier

In March of 1846, Francis Parkman Jr., a wealthy, single, "gentleman" and Harvard graduate, decided to leave home and explore the American West. His goal was to write and publish a firsthand account of his fascinations-- native people and the untouched land of the U.S. The budding historian first travelled toward the Platte River and continued its path to Fort Laramie. Next he headed south where he spent time with affable Oglala Indians, whom Parkman discusses in depth. He continued south, first towards Bent's Fort in Colorado, followed by the Santa Fe Trail, returning home to New England by September that same year. He first published about his adventures in an 1847 issue of *Knickerbocker Magazine*; and he eventually published four more revisions over the course of forty-five years. Each edition became increasingly more separated from personal opinion and instead became more of a collection of historical observations of the West. In some ways, his work can be considered a flawed ethnography, as even Parkman expresses his desire to become an "insider" with Native Americans for his purposes of study (15). *The Oregon Trail* was wildly successful (Rosenthal vii, xxiii), and multiple revisions allowed Parkman to clearly depict the romantic imagery of the Western frontier.

Despite its commercial success, Parkman's work is often criticized, in hindsight, as void of deep analytical insight, an observation that makes sense considering his touristic pursuit of quintessential frontier experiences (Rosenthal ix), marking him, in twenty-first century retrospect, a true "unhero". Parkman opens his 1849 account with his admission that his purpose for travel is adventure and

experience, but most of all to spend time with the vanishing Indian—in other words, he is a sightseer (Parkman 14, 150). He also romanticizes the danger of his pursuit of the Indian: “to those who are unacquainted with Indians, it may seem strange that our chief apprehensions arose from the supposed proximity of the people we intended to visit” (167). And accurately, Rosenthal concludes that “Parkman in *The Oregon Trail* seems like a man far more concerned with watching a passing panorama than with trying to understand its meaning” (x). He, unlike the thousands in transit during the 1800s, was solely on this adventure for amusement. Rosenthal understands how Parkman “seeks experience rather than understanding” (x), and because Parkman’s purpose for travel is essentially entertainment, it is easy to identify the frontier as his “playground” (Rosenthal xv).

Parkman’s romanticized frontier experience is centered primarily on spending time with native people, and his stereotypical perspective of natives is what marks him as a true “unhero.” While a discussion about Parkman’s questionable ethnography, racist commentary and appropriation of natives and foreigners merits its own discussion, it is my intention here to only use his xenophobia as a brief example of one of the many ways Parkman may be classified as “unhero.” For example, Parkman begins his journey by describing the excitement and archetypal picture of transit: “Parties of emigrants, with their tents and wagons, would be encamped on open spots near the bank, on their way to the common rendezvous at Independence... the scene was characteristic, for here were represented at one view the most remarkable features of this wild and enterprising region” (8). Additionally, he also observes in detail the “dark slavish-looking Spaniards gazing stupidly out from beneath their broad hats,” “a group of French hunters...with their long hair and buckskin dresses,” and “a group of Indians, belonging to a Mexican tribe” (8-9). Parkman’s description of the varied cultures teeming together with the common goal to relocate for adventure or economic opportunity certainly helps establish the thrilling picture of American Western movement. Like other travel narratives of this time, however, the varied individuals along Parkman’s path are sometimes valued only as novelties: “the Kansas Indians, who, adorned with all their finery, were proceeding homeward at a round pace; and whatever they might have seemed on board the boat, they made a very striking and picturesque feature in the forest landscape” (9). For Parkman, the Indians are part of the Western landscape, essential only in their romantic associations with wilderness and adventure. For example, his perception of the Ogallala village solidifies readers’ expectations of what an Indian village should look like:

Here were the heavy-laden pack-horses, some wretched old woman leading them, and two or three children clinging to their backs. Here were mules or ponies covered from head to tail with gaudy trappings and mounted by some gay young squaw, grinning bashfulness and pleasure as the Meneska looked at her. Boys with miniature bows and arrows were wandering over the plains, little naked children were running along on foot, and numberless dogs were scampering among the feet of the horses. The young braves, gaudy with paint and feathers, were riding in groups among the crows, and often galloping, two or three at once along the line, to try the speed of their horses... With the rough prairie and the broken hills for its back-ground, the restless scene was striking and picturesque beyond description. Days and weeks made me familiar with it, but never impaired its effect upon my fancy. (181)

Parkman’s commentary on Indian culture shows how deeply he misunderstands Native Americans as objects of a romantic Western panorama, but his account effectively reminds readers of the culture out of which Parkman wrote. Additionally, in the spirit of the *flâneur*, Parkman puts emphasis on the “intense visual quality” of the landscape of the West (Helmer and Mazzeo 11), and offers no groundbreaking and egalitarian perspectives about native people, or even hints at a change in attitude that his tour should have provided for him. While many modern readers chastise Parkman for his openly violent and

hateful thoughts toward native people, his account is a sincere example of what many Americans were thinking in the 1800s. As Helmer and Mazzeo explain, “the *flâneur*’s acquisitive stance toward the world defines a type of travel writing in which people and things are appropriated for their exotic nature” (10), and Parkman’s travel account, and especially his exploitation of native people allows him to construct his heroic identity. Thompson describes how authors use people, places, foods, etc. in an effort to legitimize the self that they are attempting to create: “to this way of thinking, much travel writing entails the traveller achieving a symbolic or psychological mastery over the...places they describe” (119). In the end, Parkman’s wealth affords him a western adventure, complete with “insider” experiences with natives which allows him to construct his identity on the American frontier.

Similar to Parkman, Susan Shelby Magoffin’s *Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico*, showcases the diarist as the “unhero” and the *flâneur*, yet her account is, of course, female. Her diary has been edited and memorialized for its connection to the Mexican-American War, an ideal space in which to set her Romantic account. Magoffin’s female perspective regarding the Santa Fe Trail is rare; the only edition of Magoffin’s journal that is published claims that she was in all probability the “first white woman ever to go over the rude trail of the Santa Fe traders” (Lamar ix). To mainstream readers, there is little of interest in Magoffin’s diary outside her involvement with the Mexican-American War. Describing the months Magoffin spent traveling through Mexico (June 1846–September 1847) as “historically valuable” is understatement. Magoffin’s journal begins the second week of June-1846, approximately three weeks after the U.S. declared war on Mexico, and five weeks before the Mexican congress responded with its own declaration on July 7.

Magoffin is much different from the typical woman in transit to California or Oregon in nineteenth century America. For one, Susan’s wealth marks her dissimilarity from other traveling pioneer women. According to Schlissel, the typical American family may have sacrificially saved for months to fund their westward journey (23). Conversely, Magoffin’s expedition was comfortable to say the least. Howard R. Lamar notes in the journal’s foreword: “In addition to a small tent house, a private carriage, books, and notions, her indulgent husband provided her with a maid, a driver, and at least two servant boys” (xvii). Magoffin, of course, does not have the heavy responsibilities of the typical pioneer, as in cooking and washing. In this way Magoffin is similar to Catherine Haun, a wealthy newlywed, who in 1849 also travelled without the daily hardships that formed life in transit, and her diary records her idealism that exemplifies an American tourist: “Full of the energy and enthusiasm of youth, the prospects of so hazardous an undertaking had no terror for us, indeed, as we had been married but a few months, it appealed to us as a romantic wedding tour” (166). Magoffin’s wealth afforded her the most distinguishing privilege of her journey -- a choice between staying home in Missouri and traveling with her husband, as this adventure was not a permanent move (Magoffin 64).

In light of her temporal excursion, it is no wonder that Magoffin begins by describing her journey as “wonderful” (1), “sweet,” “complete” (6), “fun” (29) and “romantic” (18); she looks upon traveling in a wagon “as one of the ‘varieties of life’ and as that is always ‘spice’ of course it must be enjoyed” (23). Additionally, she keeps a friendly distance, like Parkman, from the very frontier she seeks to experience: “It is the life of wandering princess, mine. When I do not wish to get out myself to pick flowers the Mexican servants riding on mules busy themselves picking them for me” (11-12). If Susan’s journey is unique, her optimism and carefree attitude is even rarer, but it one that reflects the selectivity of her travels.

While Parkman appropriates native people to help craft his heroic identity, Magoffin aims to construct her heroic identity by proving her journey is as rough as a pioneer experience. In other words, she refers to the hardships of her own journey in an effort to make it more authentic. The initial part of Magoffin’s journey compares nicely with Twain’s tone in *Roughing It*, for example, because it is when Magoffin

most clearly communicates her romantic notions about frontier life and interprets her experience as “roughing it”: “and I can say what few women in civilized life ever could, that the first house of his own to which my husband took me after our marriage was a tent” (Magoffin 6); and later: “After dinner I layed down with mi alma [Samuel Magoffin] on a buffalo skin with the carriage seats for pillows and took what few ladies have done a siesta in the sun” (12); additionally, a few rainy days of a mud-filled tent motivate Magoffin to compare herself to an Oregon pioneer (23). Moreover, her description of her entry into Santa Fe argues her trailblazing identity: “I have entered [Santa Fe] in a year that will always be remembered by my countrymen; and under the ‘Star-spangled banner’ too, the first American lady, who has come under such auspices, and some of our company seem disposed to make me the first under any circumstances that ever crossed the plains” (102-03). Despite her upbeat tone, it is important to note that Magoffin did in fact face very real calamities during her travels: countless times Magoffin writes about rumors of impending attack from Mexican troops and the likelihood that she and her husband will be murdered; she braces herself for death on more than one occasion and loses two children during her journey; she comforts her husband as rumors of his brother’s being brutally murdered by Mexicans swirl around them; she hears the alarming and true reports of the overwhelming number of Mexican troops that threaten her own countrymen; her team is usually in close proximity to U.S. troops, multiplying its danger; she contracts malaria and yellow fever and cares for the sick; she is involved in two wagon accidents and a prairie fire; and the Magoffins’ goods are nearly stolen by Mexicans. If usually Overland travelers had intensely trying circumstances to face in their treks, their circumstances could not compare with the horrors of national war on the Santa Fe Trail. What is peculiar is Magoffin’s romantic tone in her telling of such events. In fact, Magoffin’s focus on romantic experience is evident when she writes about her most dangerous days on the trail with a tone of enthusiasm:

This is truly exciting times! I doubt if my honored Grandmother ever saw or heard of more to excite, in the War she was in [War of 1812], than I have here. The Indians are all around us; coming into the soldiers’ camp and driving off their stock, and killing the men in attendance on them. The [Mexican army] are advancing on us as we hear today and have even had a battle with our troops only about eighty miles from us. (180)

By referencing her hardships with a tone of zeal, Magoffin is essentially establishing an ethos of heroism in order to authenticate her Western experience.

Similarly, Magoffin validates her frontier journey by alluding to Josiah Gregg’s experience on the Santa Fe Trail in his *Commerce of the Prairies*. Repeatedly, she mentions her life on the trail as they relate and solidify Gregg’s perceptions (Magoffin 35, 49, 50, 72-73, 197, 228). Besides alluding to literature, Magoffin also hints at her desire to produce her own romantic account of the frontier. General Kearney encourages her to visit California, and Magoffin writes how “there will be a little romance in that—and I think we might on the strength of it bring forth a novel, with Capt. Johnson, who they tell me is a good writer to handle the pen” (139). Magoffin understands that Captain Johnson’s male perspective is necessary to make her own journey appealing to her American audience. Perhaps Magoffin is rightly aware that her femaleness limited her writing to the arena of Romanticism during the nineteenth-century; and perhaps to Magoffin, she needed a male perspective in her writing because “women were not necessarily associated with truth or realism in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries” (Saunders 1).

Magoffin’s fascination with the romantic and dangerous frontier adventure is quite rare for a female account, but it is common for an individual who has purposefully chosen the journey for the experience, as many males did. Additionally, Magoffin seems to, at times, exploit how “travel writing often reveals the lives of women at times of peculiar difficulty, danger, excitement, or achievement” (Mulligan 184). Much like Parkman, Magoffin’s pride in her frontier venture demonstrates her playing and esteeming the

role of pioneer adventurer, no doubt to prove her own heroism and pioneering. This attitude is cultivated through her experience as a tourist, a woman who elected this journey for the sole purpose of idealistic adventure.

Within my analysis, I am powerfully aware that gender did play a vital role in how frontier travelers were allowed to construct their narratives and identities while on their journeys. I understand why scholars such as Wallace Stegner describe the American frontier narrative as opposed juxtapositions: a story of “male freedom and aspiration versus female domesticity, wilderness versus civilization, violence and danger versus the safe and tamed” (qtd. in Georgi-Findlay 6).⁴ To put it simply, women in nineteenth century America were with few choices in life, and “[t]hey went West because there was no way for them not to go once the decision was made” by the men in their lives (Schlissel). My argument that those who selectively travelled were afforded the opportunity to construct heroic identities takes into account how choice was influenced by power, and power was synonymous with gender in the 1800s. Yet, I ultimately argue that wealth often leveled the playing field, across gender lines, providing opportunities for women that otherwise would have eluded them.

Power, wealth and choice are substantial issues to consider when reading the works of tourists like Magoffin and Parkman, as these concepts afforded travel writers the time, energy and audience necessary to construct a heroic identity that no doubt served to counter the touristic motivations which originally prompted their journeys West.

Notes

- 1 Chloe Chard's *Pleasure and Guilt On the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* provides a wealth of information regarding the rhetoric of the Grand Tour experience, especially as it is viewed as a feminizing experience during the nineteenth century.
- 2 Carl Thompson provides a thorough background on the major debate within travel writing studies concerning terminology of the traveler in his work *Travel Writing*. See especially Chapter 2, "Defining the Genre". In my discussion of American frontier literature, I understand “settlers” as those leaving the Eastern United States and settling West, seeking to relocate for an extended period of time; Conversely, “tourists” are those selectively traveling, not for purposes of relocating, but “driven partly by a Romantic desire to ‘get off the beaten track’” (Thompson 54) in a pursuit to escape the monotony of daily life and experience noteworthy and exotic adventures.
- 3 The *flâneur*, as an archetype, was inspired by Charles Baudelaire in "The Painter of Modern Life". Translated as a traveler who is also an "idler," "stroller" or "lounger," the original concept developed by Baudelaire focused on the observer in the modern city, who hoped, through his wanderings and silent observations to achieve a meaningful transcendent experience within a busy urban space. I see the relationship between Pratt's "unhero" and Baudelaire's *flâneur* in that wealth affords the traveling individual an "unhero" experience. Also, both the "unhero" and the *flâneur*, seek out self-fulfillment as a spectator within a rich landscape.
- 4 In my article, "'Within the little circle of my vision!': Domesticity as the Catalyst for Acculturation in Susan Shelby Magoffin's *Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico*," published in *Coldnoon: Travel Poetics*, I discuss at length the impact gender had on the American frontier travel diary, especially how domesticity allowed females to form meaningful, respectful relationships with those outside their race and ethnic groups.

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Arundhati Sanyal

TAGORE AND YEATS

DISCOURSES IN GENDER AND NATIONALISMS

The trajectory of independence movements takes predictable paths in emergent post-colonial nations such as Ireland and India. Rabindranath Tagore as a major literary figure and political ethicist for the Indian liberation movement explores, questions, and problematizes conventions of nationalism in his novel, *Home and the World* (1916). In Ireland, the intellectual underpinnings of the nationalist movement devolve into a similar conversation between diverse voices that find expression in W. B. Yeats' poem, "Easter, 1916." The poem is a resounding response to the Irish uprising of the same year that was brutally quelled. The reader is given a glimpse of the many Irish nationalists of various political hues: Constance Markievicz; Patrick Pearse; Thomas MacDonagh; John Macbride. Noticeable is the shared ambivalence towards violent responses to British colonial occupation common to both poets. This response in both finds expression in personal and gendered characterizations in the works of both writers. So, there is both fascination and distrust in Yeats' relationship with Maud Gonne, the love of his life but also a fiery nationalist whose zeal repelled him. This is comparable to Tagore's treatment of a triangulation in his novels' characters.

An allegorical representation of the freedom movement, Tagore's novel creates a love story between the characters Bimala, Nikhilesh, and Sandip, who each represent the citizen, the principle of non-violence, and the spirit of armed resistance respectively. The dynamics of Tagore's discussion reconceives gender in national politics in light of "accommodated" feminism in his novel. The discussion inevitably is framed in the broader examination of how each writer conceives of history and ethics in charting future progression of ideas and cultures based on the mediation and dialogism between the individual and society. To that end, I examine comparable contemporary historians who are spiritual collaborators of Tagore and Yeats, and are themselves influential in their times' politics in accounting for both the presence and distrust of violent resistance. The metonymy of the individual story line in literature representing national political forces is common to both writers in the two works discussed here. In effect, this is a global conversation between the Tagore and Yeats that traverses thresholds of colonial experience, national aspirations, and a nascent internationalism that both are passionate about in their writings.

Tagore's novel is presented as a series of free indirect speeches that provide readers with an interiority vis a vis the three principal characters: Bimala, Nikhilesh, and then Sandip. The narrative structure allows for the novelist to present three sides to the same action, namely, the stepping out of the young wife Bimala from the limits of her home to the world beyond on the insistence of her enlightened husband Nikhilesh, which may be metonymically de-coded as the path of a nascent national consciousness that steps into the world stage to know, understand, and choose its precise identity, the key trope being that of "choice". Within the narrative the immediate occasion for such a coming out is the arrival of Sandip, the fiery Swadeshi or freedom fighter who wishes to organize and raise money for the cause within the estate and village where Nikhilesh is landlord/zamindar. There is foreshadowing within the narrative of Bimala where we see her anticipating and encountering Sandip from within her veiled world prior to their actual meeting. The reader is prepared for what seems like an over-whelming fascination with the dramatic, passionate, and by default (for Tagore) flawed presence of the nationalist (Swadeshi)

spirit which instigates in Bimala the desire to not be just a participant, but a valued inspiration, the “queen bee” of the movement itself. Nikhilesh’s idealism has required him to anticipate this tension that he realizes Bimala has to experience, confront, and then pull back to return to her husband and his stable, syncretic version of a rational, historically-sanctioned, and assimilative nationalism that within the projected action of the novel devolves into an acceptance of her familial role within her home. His project of creating an experiential decision-making mechanism for Bimala is set up for failure as he himself has to confront the obvious agency of affinity that Bimala exhibits for Sandip and which the latter feeds off of for his political needs. Sandip’s perspective is not surprisingly the least attractive and most problematic as Tagore depicts the extreme nationalistic strain he recognizes as the bane of contemporary politics that in its opposition to western imperialism mimics its worst intransigence and hegemonic agenda. It is not surprising, then, that nation building and sexual politics become partners in this metonymic narrative structure.

As Tagore explores the psychology of freedom movements or Swadeshi in terms of their gender-based political manifestations, research underscores that there is personal experience and familial consensus for such conceptions. Arundhati Banerjee points out comparisons between his elder brother Surendranath Tagore and Nikhilesh, the protagonist in the novel as both understand the need to bring education, modernity, and choice to their respective wives’ post-exposure to western education. The article details a letter written by Surendranath Tagore to his wife that is comparable to the novel:

Do you not feel that our [Indian] women marry too early and at an age when they do not even comprehend the implication of marriage and that they cannot marry of their own free will...Prosperity and good fortune is divorced from those societies where women have no authority; where social norms, husband’s orders and other people’s dictums regulate and govern the lives of the women... We will not enter the conjugal relationship until you are mature, educated and have developed yourself in all respects. (qtd. in Deb 25)

This is similar to the novel when Nikhilesh suggests that Bimala may step out into the world beyond the home and experience its complete essence through interaction with public life and the opinions and company of his friends like Sandip before stepping back to their secluded world, this time consciously choosing to be with him (Banerjee 208). I want to move beyond this to show how awareness of the world beyond, awareness of other choices and opinions is seen as essential by Tagore in developing a truly modern and vital conjugal relationship between husband and wife.

Nikhilesh’s position is clearly the favored centrist one that Tagore himself prefers. His understanding of nationalism is assimilative, carefully weighed between western technology and indigenous culture, privileging the preparation of a stable self that eschews the temptation of crass domination and sense of superiority that seeks to name and subjugate the “other” in a futile mimicry of imperialism. But it is also connected to his giving up of masculine and proprietary rights on his wife Bimala who is allowed by this centrist position to step into the freedom of the world beyond her home to make her own choice of the path to national identity. Nikhilesh appears to experience emasculation and articulates it:

What is the use of straining to keep up my pride? What harm if I confess that I have something lacking in me? Possibly it is that unreasoning forcefulness which women love to find in men. But is strength a mere display of muscularity? Must strength have no scruples in treading the weak underfoot?

I longed to find Bimala blossoming fully in all her truth and power. But the thing I forgot to calculate was, that one must give up all claims based on conventional rights, if one would find a person freely revealed in truth. (41)

The action of the novel explores the responsibility that Nikhilesh bears as landlord of the village. It is a microcosmic portrayal of the cosmopolitan fabric of India itself as a Hindu hierarchy rules over

a predominantly working class Muslim population. The predominantly Hindu Swadeshi movement with its destructive propensity to violently negate the sensibilities of the Muslim population by banning slaughter of cows along with British goods that are now intrinsically determinants of the Indian economy hurt the body politic of the microcosmic state and Nikhilesh has the unenviable task of opposing such mindless violence that adversely affects his people. In a famous line between Sandip and Nikhilesh, the unmistakable communal nature of the ultra-nationalist movement that is Swadeshi is laid bare as Nikhilesh affirms: "It is a historical reality that the Mussulman is as much Indian as the Hindu." His tutor verbalizes Tagore's own skepticism with the history of nationalist politics: "I tell you Nikhil, man's history has to be built by the united effort of all the races in the world, and therefore this selling of conscience for political reasons – this making a fetish of one's country, won't do" (Tagore 166). Sandip fetishizes the nation and by default Bimala as the queen bee and the "robber queen" in her final role as the thief of her husband's revenue coffers that have been kept in their bedroom for dissemination amongst the people. This is her final act of betrayal of both Nikhilesh and the nation to whose service Sandip has ostensibly drawn her. This act has brought with it a clear understanding of the narcissism of the Swadeshi movement for Bimala. Her eventual reconciliation with her husband follows her clarity about his intentions and understanding of nationalism, and her penitence. The emasculation of Nikhilesh is self-realized and searing in its self-scrutiny. Here is Nikhilesh responding to Bimala's lapse as a wife and citizen:

I did not realize all this while that it must have been this unconscious tyranny of mine which made us gradually drift apart. Bimala's life, not finding its true level by reason of my pressure from above, has had to find an outlet by undermining its bank at the bottom. She has had to steal this 6000 rupees because she could not be open with me, because she felt that, in certain things, I despotically differed from her. (198)

He belittles his decision to "impose" the world outside on Bimala treating her as his possession in the process. He blames the failure of his experiment on his own lack of restraint in the face of a temptation to be a despot: "It is our unyielding obstinacy, which drives even the simplest to tortuous ways. In trying to manufacture a helpmate, we spoil a wife" (Tagore 198). This acknowledgement of an accommodated and fallacious freedom without genuine agency for Bimala is one way for Tagore to critique his favored position. In solipsistic manner, then the narrator's syncretic stance on nationalism results in his own exclusion from the triangulation Tagore conceives between nationalism, citizen-state, and jingoism.

Within Yeats' understanding of Irish nationalism we see a dualism where he seems to draw back from a direct, physical understanding of and participation in what is at times a violent political movement leading up to the Easter uprising of 1916. However, he seems to be drawn towards and espouses a strong cultural nationalism that is co-opted along with the political struggle at this time. In doing so he feels emasculated in comparable ways to Tagore's Nikhilesh when Maud Gonne the love of his life recognizes the distinction between his political and cultural participation by urging him to stay with the latter as the former is not for him. Like Bimala in her attraction to the Swadeshi and Sandip's activism, Maud Gonne is drawn to the active participants of the Irish political scene and much to the heartbreak of the poet refuses to forge romantic, sexual relations with him personally. So, there is clearly a parallel between the sexual and gendered formulations and the political activism or brand of national or ultra-national politics that becomes a contentious subject for each of the writers in their respective nations.

Yeats' "Easter 1916" confronts its own historicity by framing in modernist terms a historical day within its human, nondescript, monotonous, and urban description of the passing on of a band of Irish patriots. The narrator testifies to the unalterable truth that he has known them in all of their distinctive yet bland entities as they emerge in that first stanza only to blend into the urban city scape. The cyclical

path of historical events seem to overlap a recurring everyday life that the narrator has shared with those who have been martyred in the Easter uprising. The easy back and forth between everyday life and the historical moment in Yeats' poem is comparable to the back and forth in the dual lives of Tagore's characters between the humdrum reality of home and the world of momentous change outside. The indigenous lives of people in Ireland shape up almost miraculously through time and the progression of the verse into their martyrdom of the most supreme kind and so "a terrible beauty is born." The paradox of the Romantic absolutes of Truth and Beauty that hold true for the early 19th century are re-formulated in stark terms as contradictions that alone can enact the violence and the sacrifice that kill lives and give birth to nationhood simultaneously. Yet, there is no attempt to idealize the historical personalities. So, all these historical figures are given realistic profile descriptions in the second stanza. No one is unscathed by life's vicissitudes and everyday mediocrities even as they rise up to the supreme sacrifice. The description augments the perfection of the sacrifice, even as the transformation is absolute and unequivocal. The aftermath of their sacrifice is shown through the dynamic interaction of nature captured in a variety of movement and the center of it remaining still and unmoved as a stone. Indeed, here the center has held even as the everyday living nature has resumed its dynamism. Grief or national achievement, both get measured alike in terms of the activity of nature at the heart of which is the stone of grief and despair. Certainly, there is more transformation to come because in the final movement of the poem where the extent of this sacrifice pushes the limits of human endurance, through the finality of death, the deepening relation between country and martyr is established metaphorically as a mother naming her child. The final assertion of nationhood is in the honor roll of the lives lost. The shared ambivalence of such nationhood is indicated in the paradox of the refrain that announces the inordinate price paid for this second coming: "A terrible beauty is born."

Both Yeats and Tagore perceive history in cyclical rather than linear, teleological terms as is common to the western tradition. Historians and philosophers such as Frank E Manuel (*Shapes of Philosophical History*, 1965); Mircea Eliade (*The Myth of the Eternal Return*, 1965); Romilla Thapar (*Time as a Metaphor of History: Early India*, 1996) define a variety of cycloid and sinusoidal historical trajectory. The one that comes closest to the Yeatsian and Tagorean conception brings together an alternation of opposing impulses (such as romantic and classical; indigenous and foreign; homogeneous and multi-cultural, caste defined versus reform susceptible, for example) that become realities in the political and cultural psyche of a community and begin to define it. This is a movement away from the prescriptive "progressive" or linear understanding of history that assigns cause and blame to events, communities, groups, and religions for the rise or fall of a nation and hence bring in the pre-conception of superiority or otherwise that both writers see as a pre-condition for an imperialist agenda. The feature of cyclical history liberates both these thinkers/writers to think beyond time-bound issues. Thus, it does not follow that whatever is deemed "modern" is privileged as more valuable than that which is in the past. All ages within a given tradition are analogous in value and meaning irrespective of chronology. According to Yeats (writing in 1893), history is the endless alternation of a "falling...into division" when unity of mind "began to break into fragments," and a "resurrection into unity" or into "Unity of Being" that was "perfectly proportioned" (*A Vision; "Nationality and Literature"* both qtd. in Williams 80, 91). Tagore reflects something similar in his essay "Sadhana" (1913) where he argues that perfection results when the "finite and infinite are not in conflict" but are "in harmony", when "a union of two opposed elements" is created because in the mind of the Creator, "male and female principles are both present – how otherwise could creation arise from uniformity?" (qtd. in Williams 79). While the history and nature of imperialism in Ireland and India are quite different in many ways, the need to acknowledge complexities and polarities in nationalist ideas seem essential to both Yeats and Tagore. The inception of violence in nationalism is for each poet actually the refusal to see the ground realities of opposing impulses operating within community and

state. This resonates in and complicates gender relations as well. Hence, both Yeats and Tagore are repelled by the crass violence of un-thinking nationalism that collapse discussions of state identity to the complete denial of rational universalism.

Another interesting conundrum for the choices Nikhilesh and, by extension, Tagore accept in this dualism is that of a larger question: can those who are under imperial rule possess the option to eschew narrow nationalism for a generous, universalism? Are they not by default enjoined to find their national identities by fighting for them before any other options may present themselves? Related to this question is the discussion of what constitutes a historical awareness of nationhood as contrasted with a pre-historical notion of community or "Samaj". To frame this conundrum, I look to Subaltern theorists such as Ranajit Guha who formulate the notion that a distinctly independent concept of history or "Itihaas" underlies the prose narratology of South-east Asian literature. In the 19th century, Hegel's categorical statement that those societies that did not have a state in the modern sense, or those that hadn't imagined that they could become nation-states, made Indians under British colonial rule people without history. In other words, India had literature, but no history in such a formulation. In Hegel's vision then the notion of history is a gift from the colonizing European psyche to the emerging Indian intellectual sifting historical fact from the rich mythic narratives of its epic and puranic heritage. The not so surprising irony is the co-opting of European belittling of the "mythic" and "poetic" dimensions of Indian historical narratology. The general trend is to reject these registers as "unhistorical" and commit to staid, solid, analytical prose histories. Guha contends through an etymological analysis of the Sanskrit word for history "*Itihaas*" that it embraces two opposing paradigms of representing the past. On the one hand, there is the legacy of the European understanding of history as documented fact. On the other there is the pull of the mythic, emotive, culturally resonant tropes of a literary history. Guha emphasizes the importance of both and presents Tagore as an ideal purveyor of both these strains of history. Tagore's narrative captures individual truth in the story in all its complexity and wonder: "It is only by confronting historiography with creativity, [Rabindranath] suggests that we can hope to grasp what historicity is about" (Guha 87).

The understanding of an ethical self in relationship with and creation of a community or "Samaj" is an inevitable outcome of the cyclical and recursive historicity of Tagore and Yeats. In "Home and the World", the fluidity between the world within of Bimala's existence (Andarmahal) and the world or nation beyond her given role of wife to that of inspirer and nation builder enacts this possibility. Each character in their own way projects their self onto their understanding of nation-hood and any place that is in-between becomes plausible in much the same way it is possible for Tagore to be both cosmopolitan (of the world), a citizen of a colonized nation (stateless), and yet able to see self "*Atmasakti*" beyond the ultra-nation to the self-created Samaj or community (Saha 18). Rebecca Walkowitz reiterates this when she points out "The self-styled cosmopolitanism of *The Home and the World* ultimately depends on the uneasy encounter between one invested place and another, between public and private, between a conventional England and an invented motherland...[It] is precisely that – the home, the world, the situation – which the narrative seeks to explore, in its plots of rising nationalism, modernization, and ethnic conflict" (227). That trajectory takes Nikhilesh and Bimala to their respective conclusion: death and widowhood, and an escapist's route for Sandip.

W. B. Yeats and Rabindranath Tagore discover a common affinity towards an assimilative nationalism that forecasts internationalism as the norm. Their work reflects in creative and exploratory ways a cultural understanding and recreation of contemporary nationalist history that situates understanding of contemporary events in light of an assimilative and cyclical history rather than a linear one. There is a layered approach to gender interwoven in such creative re-enactments of history. Emerging from autobiographical experiences, relation between genders is presented as metonymic enactments of

characters' power relations within political landscapes of nationalism, aggressive and confrontational on the one hand, and assimilative and reconciliatory, on the other. The occasional poem in Yeats' rendering becomes a reminder of the larger dialogue about the futility of the tragic violent sacrifice of the Easter Uprising even as it lauds its patriotic sacrifice and heroic re-centering of Irish national pride. The poets knew themselves as aligned on the same end of the historical conversation as Yeats' editing, translating, and introducing Tagore's works to his western peers, remains an example of invaluable trans-national collaboration.

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