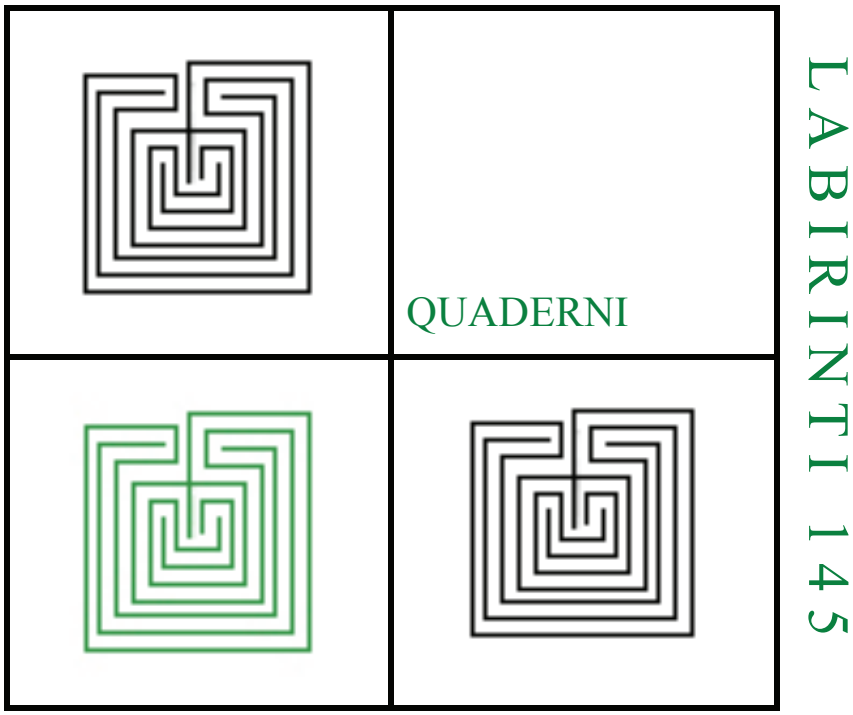
DEMOCRACY AND DIFFERENCE: THE US IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

PAPERS FROM THE 21ST AISNA CONFERENCE

Edited by Giovanna Covi and Lisa Marchi



Università degli Studi di Trento
Dipartimento di Studi Letterari, Linguistici e Filologici

Labirinti

145

Università degli Studi di Trento

Dipartimento di Filosofia, Storia e Beni culturali
Dipartimento di Studi Letterari, Linguistici e Filologici
Via Tommaso Gar 14 - 38122 TRENTO
Tel. 0461-281729 Fax 0461 281751
ISBN 978-88-8443-448-7
http://www.lett.unitn.it/editoria/
e-mail: editoria@lett.unitn.it

DEMOCRACY AND DIFFERENCE: THE US IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

PAPERS FROM THE 21ST AISNA CONFERENCE

Edited by Giovanna Covi and Lisa Marchi

Dipartimento di Studi Letterari, Linguistici e Filologici

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all the participants to the 21st international AISNA conference for providing extensive and stimulating discussion, and the authors whose contributions are included in this collection for revising and elaborating their presentations for publication. We are deeply grateful to the US Embassy in Rome for generously offering support to the US guest speakers, who provided an invaluable contribution to the success of the conference. For its encouragement, funding, administrative support, and facilities, we thank the University of Trento, in particular the Departments of Literary, Linguistic, and Philological Studies, of Philosophy, History, and Cultural Heritage, and of Legal Sciences, and the School of International Studies. Kind support for hospitality was also provided by the Autonomous Province of Trento, the Region Trentino-Alto Adige, the Foundation Bruno Kessler, the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises (Euricse), the Cassa Rurale di Aldeno e Cadine, and the Comune di Trento. We also express our appreciation to the reviewers and the editorial board for the invaluable work they contributed to the blind peer-review process adopted for the selection of contributions to this volume. Finally, we thank the University of Trento Press for providing technical support for producing this volume in its series I LABIRINTI.

Giovanna Covi and Lisa Marchi


Sol
elaborazione grafica: PAOLO CRISTE'
FOTO: ELENA MUNERATI

INTRODUCTION

DIFFERENCING DEMOCRACY, DEMOCRATIZING DIFFERENCES

This volume is concerned with the ways in which democracy and difference can be employed as useful theoretical tools for investigating the evolution of American Studies and understanding the changes and crises investing our present-day globalized societies. The collection brings together contributions by scholars who have engaged the transnational and interdisciplinary reflection proposed by the 21st International Biennial AISNA Conference *Democracy and Difference: The US in Multidisciplinary and Comparative Perspectives,* held in October 2011 at the University of Trento. The conference promoted a cultural conversation on the challenging conjugation of two key-concepts—*democracy* and *difference*—and involved Italian, US, European, Arab, and Asian scholars, writers, and musicians, along with students and the larger public; the conversation was carried on in English and Spanish to underline the fact that US multiculturalism is also multilingual. Participants explored the concepts in relation to US cultural history as well as to the present globalized world, by raising questions about power, recognition, redistribution, and postcoloniality, as well as about ethnicity and race, gender and sexuality, and ecology.

Attention was devoted to the global tendency towards democratization, combined with the rise of identity politics, increasingly paralleled on the one hand by renewed reflections upon the foundations of democracy itself, and on the other by complex representations of identity grounded on the articulation of difference. The wider questions framing this discussion included: How are conceptions of democracy and difference changing under the influence of these forces and in the midst of multiple global crises such as wars and starvation, climate change, and financial instability? What can American Studies and its affiliated areas of inquiry do to provide methods and questions that facilitate consideration of crucial issues and engage contemporary change across disciplines, boundaries, languages, and cultures?

The contributions to this collection elaborate these crucial concerns and address a wide range of topics: democracy and dissent, civil and social rights, cultural domination, humor and satire, pleasure, power/powerlessness, inclusion/exclusion, mis/representation, the Caribbean, Latin America, identity politics, digital technologies, visuality, photography, graphic narrative, sitcoms, jazz, travel and migration, the Mediterranean, ecology, and eco-criticism. They do so from different locations outside the USA—namely from Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa—and from a range of constituencies within multicultural US society. They also do so by engaging the Humanities (specifically, literature, linguistics, history, music, the visual arts) and the Social Sciences (namely, law, political science, sociology), and by embracing theoretical perspectives drawn from Ethnic, African American, Gender and Sexuality, Cultural, Postcolonial, Visual, and New Technology Studies.

By integrating a variety of approaches, themes, and locations, this volume offers a platform for critical engagement with American Studies—with the US, as well as with "America" and the Americas, Europe and the Americas, the North and the South, and the trans-Atlantic and the intra-Pacific—and brings to the fore the interdisciplinary, intercultural, and transnational nature of this rich and complex field of study. Stressing local and global dimensions on the one hand and interior and international perspectives on the other, the volume examines democracy and difference in various social, cultural, and institutional contexts, as well as takes into account expressions and interpretations of possible connections among multicultural societies. Each contribution to this collection promotes in its own distinctive way redefinitions of American Studies and globalization that not only cast new light on the way we practice American Studies and on the radical transformations that this field is undergoing, but most importantly reconsider democracies in various multicultural contexts from intercultural and transnational points of view, thus enhancing our understanding about present-day globalized societies and the interrelated changes we are witnessing. The primary aim of this collection is therefore to combine multidisciplinary and comparative approaches to map the distinct yet interconnected geographies of the present and to engage democracies enriched by difference and differences nourished by democracy—i.e., to provoke a fruitful conjugation of the differencing of democracy with the democratization of differences.

The contributions interact and dialogue among each other both within and across the boundaries of workshop sessions in which they were presented, and point the way towards new conversations. We invite readers to consult the conference program available on this webpage and situate each contribution that appears here in alphabetical order by Author's name, within the workshop panel that hosted and nourished its original articulation. To further appreciate the tone set by the forum of discussion offered by *Democracy and Difference: The US in Multidisciplinary and Comparative Perspectives*, we also encourage readers to focus their attention on this webpage to the abstracts of the key-note lectures by David Leiwei Li (University of Oregon), Nouri Gana (University of California at Los Angeles), Alessandro Portelli (Università di Roma La Sapienza), Marina Camboni (Università di Macerata), Emilia Perassi (Università Statale di Milano), Leela Gandhi (University of Chicago), R. Radhakrishnan (University of California at Irvine), François Weil (École des hautes études en sciences socials), Ugo Mattei (Università di Torino), Franco Stelzer (writer and teacher), Maurizio Dini Ciacci (Conservatorio di Venezia), Isabella Turso (pianist), Stefania Neonato (pianist), Kim Nalley (University of California at Berkeley and vocalist), Tammy Hall (pianist), Robert Reid-Pharr (City University of New York), Sergio Fabbrini (Libera Università degli Studi Sociali). Together with the essays collected in this volume, the abstracts address and re-imagine the overall theme of the conference moving both within and beyond the boundaries set by the concepts *democracy* and *difference*, which initiated this conversation.

We trust that readers within and outside American Studies will be able to savor these most fruitful exchanges, which regard pregnant concerns about the present and are articulated with full consciousness of the complex history that links four continents.

GIOVANNA COVI AND LISA MARCHI

ADA AGRESSI

"WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH BECKY?": THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN ROLANDO HINOJOSA'S *BECKY AND HER FRIENDS*

The novel *Becky and Her Friends* (1990) by Rolando Hinojosa, is part of a sequence of volumes entitled *Klail City Death Trips*. Covering a span of time production that goes from the year 1973, when the first novel *Estampas del valle y otras obras* was published receiving the third *Quinto Sol* annual prize, to the year 2006, when the latest novel *We Happy Few* was published, already fifteen volumes make up the anatomy of imaginary Belken County of South Texas. In these thirty years or so, the author managed to produce a chain of individual books which exist like historical evidence for the reconstruction—with every new text and with every new information the texts unfold—of a particular human enclave. This collectivity characterizes, and is in turn characterized by a place which corresponds to today's Rio Grande Texas Valley, both the author's birthplace and the place where his family's history began: "For me and [my people]," Hinojosa claims, "history began in 1749 when the first colonists began moving into the southern and northern banks of the Rio Grande" ("Sense of Place" 19). As he goes on explaining, "that river was not yet a jurisdictional barrier and was not to be until almost one hundred years later; but by then, the border had its own history, its own culture, and its own sense of place: it was Nuevo Santander, named for old Santander in the Spanish Peninsula" ("Sense of Place" 19).

From Spanish Nuevo Santander to Mexican American Rio Grande Valley, to Belken County, of which Hinojosa proclaims himself to be "the sole owner and proprietor" ("Sense of Place" 16), this localized space undergoes the changes of jurisdiction, it loses old proprietors and gains new ones. Split into pieces, it is renamed and replaced inside new orders, celebrated and despised, and through the process, it acquires organic unity (Allen and Schlereth 2). It is a unity that derives from a synthesis of the place and the people that live it, and who start developing a feeling of belonging to the territory on account of their long experience of it. In this way, the space and its people mutually condition and contaminate each other, and from this rich relationship ensues meaning, that is, a sense of place. Actualized in the people, the sense of place eventually survives the place itself, whose borders, labels, and dimension, are always bound to the changes of history; it remains inscribed in the cultural thread of the community's members, emanating in their understanding of the world and concurring into making sense out of new experiences.

The analogies between the fictitious histories that Hinojosa encyclopedically constructs and his life and experience, then, do not follow from a desire to reproduce reality into fiction and to give a close-as-possible image of the Mexican American character. They ensue, instead, from an ability to capture and reproduce the sense of place, the immortal and always self-regenerating meaning that a cultural community

creates out of the region it inhabits. According to the author, this sense of place is not easy to forge in an urban area where survival requires that one gives up his/her own particular culture, tradition, and language, in order to be able to conform to the public economy of relations. Given the weak restriction that exists between the private and the public in a rural environment, Hinojosa decides to set there his philosophy of a sense of place. As he explains:

> In the rural area where I was raised one develops a sense of place without even knowing it. One belongs to a culture, but one also forges part of that culture. One contributes to the culture. You invent jokes and names. Whatever you do, you are forming part of that particular culture and then all of a sudden you realize that you've been living that, and you are forming part of it, and then you are stepping aside because there is someone else coming after you as far as a new generation is concerned. (Avalos Torres 49)

Hinojosa's decision to write about his fellow community members is dictated by his commitment as a writer to "write about what [he] know[s]" ("Sense of Place" 24). Implied in this statement is that what he knows—about the history, the people, and the culture of both the valley and the country—is strictly related to *how* he knows it, a knowledge that issues not by learning it, but by "living it, forming part of it, and thus, contributing to it" ("Sense of Place" 19).

All the elements that, according to the author, make up one's sense of a place—the rural aspect, the longevity of the community, as well as the length of its duration in one specific geographical area—are thoroughly represented in the series, each novel becoming a new element adding to, and thus complicating, the community's expansion and self-regeneration.

In this context, the novel *Becky and Her Friends* contributes to the overall project, by adding a new "face" to the whole, a new unweaving narrative line that will influence, by modifying or just complementing it, the knowledge of the world of the Valley so far disclosed to the reader.

Through a series of interviews held with community members of Klail City in Belken County, Texas, the novel portrays 26 different testimonies of Mrs. Rebecca Escobar's life, a woman who suddenly shocks the community with her decision to abandon her husband and two children. So far a marginal presence in the gallery of characters, herself a witness or just an "extra" lost in the scene, Becky becomes the center of attention and the primary subject of discussion for the neighborhood. The absence of authorial discourse, which characterizes Hinojosa's stylistic technique, opens to the free flowing of voices that pertain to the community, with each singular member speaking his truth. What we acknowledge as the author's intention to symbolically bring history's marginalized voices to the center of discourse and to let them speak for themselves is strictly entwined to a search for truth which pervades the novel and is clearly articulated since the first opening lines. The novel proposes to search for the "truth [that] comes spilling out" among the "foolishness which is said, sputtered out, and, at times, hissed out" (*Becky* 9), and although it does not go so far as to give answers, it starts, at least, to raise questions. These are the very first questions the novel tackels:

> What are we to do with Becky? What should we think of such a woman? … And what of her mother, doña Elvira Navarrete, wife of Catarino Caldwell, Capt. U.S.A., Cav. Ret.? Yes, what will doña Elvira say? with her dreams of a long, lasting alliance with the Escobar-Leguizamón-Leyva families? And what will the world say? The world that matters: Belken County, Klail City, the Valley. This world where people talk, and talk, and talk. (9)

From the first chapter on, each community member, as requested by an unknown "listener", will provide information regarding his or her own relation to the woman, thus embarking the reader on an open-ended journey through the intricacies of several intertwined and extended families' genealogical trees. Becky as a character gets lost among the many anecdotes and stories told by the different speakers who tell sometimes oppsite truths and divergent stories. The focus of attention is not *what* is said but rather *how* it is said. In the thread of the vernacular language, the sense of place that is carried by each character surfaces in order to lay its truth bare. Embedded in the discourse lay the cultural biases that are characteristic of a specific place and history, and that make up the human cipher of each character. Hinojosa describes this "idiosyncratic vision" as one where "you'll be able to read the personal and the public voices as well as the voices of those hundreds of characters who populate the works" ("Sense of Place" 16). It follows that the different characters—"the fair and the mean, the fools and knaves, the heroes and cowards, those who are selfish, and those who are full of self-abnegation" (16)—must negotiate their most evident features with less predictable ones, gaining access to a dimension which eventually connects them to reality. In this sense, Hinojosa manages to create characters that are not simply typical of a particular region of the world, but who retain instead the cultural diversity of that region, thus reaching beyond the regional borders.

In the end, while each chapter seems to be committed to find out the truth about what happened with Becky and why she decides to bring disorder inside the community, the real truth we concretely approach, in the end, concerns the community, and each member of it, and by extension, humanity as a whole. Hence, the real protagonist is rather the process of inquiry represented by both the initial questions and by the interview-like narrative structure. Especially interesting are those statements of truth articulated by the Valley people, and that are disseminated in the novel. Very often, in *Becky and her Friends* the interviewed person will stop his soliloquy in order to address the listener and the reader, with the following expressions: "Now, if you don't take my word for it, I won't go on … The truth" (14); "I know I talk a lot, but it's always on the side of truth, and one can't talk too much then. You got to let truth air itself out, in the sun. The hotter the better, just like cotton in midsummer" (61); "So when I say something, make it into a statement, it's because I know, or whoever told me knows, what he's talking about" (61); "That's a freezing fact" (99); or "[he] speaks and says many truths" (129). By privileging the narration and the particular perspective over the event, Hinojosa points at the function of linguistic utterances as conveyors of the truth that can be grasped on the level of an epistemic inquiry on identity. As he explains, "the works, then, become studies of those perceptions and values and decisions reached by [the people who populate the stories] because of those perceptions and values which in turn were fashioned and forged by the place and its history" (21). The *what* and *how* of Becky's look at "the world out and the world in" (Hinojosa "Sense of Place" 21) lie in that decision from which the novel seems to originate: "A Texas Mexican who, apparently, from one day to the next, decides (that power-laden verb) that her husband is no longer going to live with her and with those two children of theirs" (*Becky* 9). Her decision to abandon her husband because that means being under the control of an androcentric system of values and an utterly moralistic religious vision of the world is further explained in the various "valleyites," in the how of the what will the world say which opened the novel. The truth of Hinojosa's sense of place suggests an understanding of objectivity as a theory-dependent ideal of knowledge, that

is grounded on the multiple stratification of signs that concur into forming meaning out of experience.

Theory-mediated experience, its causal relation to the social and natural world as well as the ideological mystification it does entail, become the very sites where knowledge can be derived. Ideal knowledge is discerned not so much in opposition to error but in combination action with it, in the same way, error, as a notion, can have its meaning displaced and is opposed to a theory-dependent objective knowledge understood as certainty. In a more general context, displacement of meaning—so intertwined with the ongoing process of globalization, the expansion of borders in the relations between cultures, and to practices of displacement like borderland, migration, exile, and travel—becomes key to an understanding of diversity and difference, while it engages in a comparative process of inquiry toward knowledge that can be valid across social and cultural contexts.

The complex thread of vernacular knowledge arises from the very uncertain quality of the articulations. In Hinojosa's project, heterogeneity and heteroglossia—the Valley's characters inhabit multiple linguistic spaces as a mixture of the Spanish and English traditions—become sites where the displacement of meaning allows a more accurate approach to inquiry, one that aims at redefining the borders separating objectivity and error in the definition of identity. This decentralization causes the reader to reconsider narrative strategies as attempts to unveil the complexities of their reality. As scholars like Francisco Lomelí, Teresa Márquez and María Herrera-Sobek point out, "the message exists somewhere between *how* something is told and *what* is told" (296); that is, as Satya Mohanty's explains, in "the different social ways in which knowledges are produced and the difference that different kinds of articulation […] make" (12).

"… what a strange accident the truth is" (*Becky* 160), Hinojosa answers, quoting George Santayana, in the note ending the novel. In a world where people talk, and talk, truth surrenders to the eye that discerns it, waiting there just by accident among "the foolishness which is said" (*Becky* 9).

Works Cited

Allen Barbara and Thomas J. Schlereth, eds. *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990. Print.

Avalos Torres, Hector. *Conversations with Contemporary Chicana and Chicano writers*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007. Print.

Hinojosa, Rolando. *Becky and Her Friends*. Houston, Texas: Arte Público Press, 1990. Print.

---. "The Sense of Place." *The Rolando Hinojosa Reader: Essays Historical and Critical*. Ed. José David Saldívar. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1985. Print.

Lomelí, Francisco A., Teresa Márquez, and María Herrera-Sobek. "Trends and Themes in Chicana/oWritings in Postmodern Times." *Chicano Renaissance. Contemporary Cultural Trends*. Eds. David R. Maciel, Isidro D. Ortiz, and María Herrera-Sobek. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000. Print.

Mohanty, Satya P. *Literary Theory and the Claims of History: Postmodernism, Objectivity, Multicultural Politics*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997. Print.

PIRJO AHOKAS

CHINESE AMERICAN MASCULINITIES AND ASIAN AMERICAN HUMOR: JEN'S "BIRTHMATES" AND LOUIE'S "PANGS OF LOVE"

Many studies of American ethnic minority humor deal with comic ethnic and racial stereotypes created by the white American majority without making a distinction between ethnic minority groups as comic victims of the dominant society and as producers of their own humor. My aim is to examine the critical humorous response of two contemporary American authors of Chinese descent to racist stereotypes created by the white majority. I will concentrate on Gish Jen's highly acclaimed short story "Birthmates" (1995) and David Wong Louie's story "Pangs of Love" (1991), which can be placed in the context of color-blind neoliberal multiculturalism. In addition to challenging the dominant society by resisting racialization, the two stories engage in a dialogue with the Chinese American literary tradition. I argue that much of the humor in Jen's and Louie's stories can profitably be studied in intertextual relationship to the work of Maxine Hong Kingston, the most well-known Asian American writer today. While Kingston is committed to the idea of the inherent connectedness between people beyond their cultural and racial difference (Soltysik 32), Jen's and Louie's stories employ humorous narrative strategies in order to challenge the feasibility of this ideal.

Kingston questions the common view that Asian Americans lack humor. She claimed in 1991 that, "being able to laugh and to be funny" are "really important human characteristics" (Fishkin 788) that should not be denied to anyone. Jen and Louie are among Kingston's Chinese American followers to the literary stage; they share her regret and defend Asian Americans' right to be humorous (see Hirose 199-200; Cheng 20). While Julie Giese contends that Kingston's critics have by and large "neglected the comic aspects of her writing" (112), she is able to demonstrate that "the comic trajectory" can be traced through Kingston's three first works (passim). The same neglect concerns the existing scholarship on Jen's and Louie's fiction to date. Their humor appears to have a strong satirical component, and I will study how they employ it as a tool of constructive social criticism.

The intersection of race and gender has been at the center of Asian American studies ever since the emergence of the field. By concentrating on racism and Asian American masculinity, male Asian American nationalists tried to subvert racist caricatures by their militant politics of re-masculinization. Kingston's work has been influenced by the Civil Rights movement, feminism and the counterculture of her youth. Her *China Men* departed from the strategy of male Asian American nationalists by dealing with the repressed racist and sexist treatment of generations of marginalized immigrant laborers of Chinese descent in United States. According to different versions of the psychological relief theory, most famously associated with Sigmund Freud, humor functions as a relief valve for negative emotions such as pain and anxiety. Through

humor, Kingston managed to empower the oppressed laborers by recognizing their hard work and heroism in the era of Asian exclusion. Similarly, Jen's and Louie's stories deal with the anxieties of their contemporary male Chinese American protagonists, who still grapple with issues of Asian American masculinity. Unlike Kingston, Jen and Louie make their protagonists the butts of their humor, which brings out the strong satirical component of their humor in their depictions of seemingly assimilated middle-class American men. My intention is to scrutinize the representations of Chinese American masculinity in "Birthmates" and "Pangs of Love" in light of the model minority construct and contemporary color-blind multiculturalism.

Several scholars argue that the complex history of racialization still underlies the contemporary contradictions of Asian American citizenship. David Leiwei Li and David L. Eng perceive the model minority construct as crucial to contemporary Asian American subject formation. Drawing on psychoanalytic theory, Eng argues that the enforced emasculation of male Chinese immigrant laborers still continues in the era of American citizenship as an unconscious trauma, which he calls "male hysteria" (203). According to him, the assimilation of the model minority not only involves a type of emotional segregation from whiteness but also disconnection from the traumatic past (196). Jen and Louie look at the susceptibility of their male protagonists to mainstream notions of promised abstract equality through humor, but the satirical thrust of their stories is also aimed at the inequalities in an officially color-blind multicultural society.

Jen's main character is a computer salesman called Art Woo, who in the narrative present of the story is attending a conference in an unnamed city. The narrator of Louie's story lives in New York and works for a midsize corporation. Both protagonists can loosely be associated with a fairly new stereotype of Asian American men, the "rice boy" construct. This stereotype refers to a select group of US-born male professionals who conform to heterosexual normativity and whose "cultural belongingness is first and foremost imagined in terms of consumption practices" (Parikh 859).

Eng regards the failure of sexual relationships as a symptom of racialized male hysteria in the Asian American context (94-95). In "Birthmates," the protagonist's inner thoughts about the current events are interspersed with his haunting memories from his failed marriage. As Jen's narrative progresses, the reader becomes increasingly aware of the narrator's subtle satirical humor as the blind spots of the protagonist's self-image slowly emerge. The beginning of the story presents Art, the protagonist, as being loyal to his company: to save their money he cancels his reservation in the conference hotel and books a room in an "amazingly cheap" hotel. Studies of human capacity for a sense of humor suggest that it leads to a perception of incongruity. Furthermore, James F. English argues that because humor is social practice, comic incongruity has a profoundly social character. The cheap hotel looks "regular enough" to Art, but the gently mocking narrator ridicules his middle-class expectations when he realizes that he has unwittingly checked into a welfare hotel where most of the inhabitants are black.

Harmful Orientalist stereotypes constructed Asian American men as effeminate and therefore physically weak. In *China Men*, Kingston playfully resignifies the mistreated nineteenth-century Chinese railroad builders "as perfect young gods reclining against rocks, wise expressions on their handsome noble-nosed faces" (Kingston 141). In *The Woman Warrior*, all non-Chinese people are called ghosts, but the girl-narrator assumes that the White and Black ghosts differ from one another because she can learn survival strategies from the daring black girls. Jen's narrator also plays with the Orientalist stereotype. When Art crosses the lobby of his hotel, he thinks of his workouts but

resents that his pectorals cannot be seen through his clothing. Unlike Kingston's streetwise narrator, who is aware of her limitations, Jen's protagonist overestimates his masculine prowess. In "Birthmates," a group of children yell racist slurs whilst attacking Art and eventually knock him unconscious. Jen's satirical humor underscores the incongruity between the small attackers and their helpless adult target.

The black activism of the 1950s-1970s strongly objected to racial stereotyping and served as a model for the Asian American movement. Jen's protagonist is lucky to be rescued by Cindy, a former black nurse. Ever since slavery, black women have served as the objectified Other in American society. The narrator ridicules Art when he unwittingly provides Cindy with motherly qualities that are suggestive of the contended black mammy stereotype, created by the privileged whites in the era of slavery. There are many references to drugs in Kingston's works.[1] In American popular culture, drugs are often associated with black inner-city, working-class neighborhoods. The narrator pays humorous homage to Kingston in her depiction of Art's reaction, when he sees a bag full of white powder on Cindy's table: "His eyes widened. He sank back, trying to figure out what to do" (28). Undoubtedly, he fears that Cindy is a drug addict. Amusingly, it turns out that her treat of hot milk with honey has been prepared from milk powder.

In addition to the role of heterosexism and racism in black women's oppression, black feminists have criticized the myths of black hypersexuality (see Collins 272-74, 79-80, 129). The narrator hints at Art's identification with whiteness, when he upon leaving Cindy's room reads in the tone of her words "something like intimacy… like an invitation of sorts" (30). The satirical tone is obvious when Art is depicted sexualizing Cindy's body, and imagining "having some hot times" with her (31). Art's and Cindy's comically contrasting views of her clearly show how mistaken Art is about her empowerment as a black woman. Simultaneously, he is deeply bothered by her teasing words: "This ain't no place for a nice boy like you" (30). Having his masculinity belittled offends Art, but Cindy adds insult to injury by comparing African Americans and Asian Americans: "You folk rise up while we set and watch" (30). It seems as if Cindy were ironically referring to the model minority myth. According to Asian American scholars, the Asian American model minority works as a buffer between American blacks and whites (see Nguyen 146). Art identifies with the hyper-assimilated model minority, yet, by pointing out the discrepancy between his predominantly white, racist work place and the world symbolized by the welfare hotel, the ironic narrator ruthlessly reveals his insecure in-between position in the racial hierarchy of his home country.

The humorous narrator of Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* may have a quiet voice but she is bold in standing up against the blatant racism of her "business-suited" employers. In contrast, Art's relation to his racist white boss is one of subservience. The ambivalence of Art's desire for whiteness is embodied in his relationship with Billy Shore, his counterpart in a different firm. Billy is a middle-class "all-American man," who speaks what Art dubs "Mainstreamese," a language in which things are not called "by their plain names" (23). The superiority theories of humor are regarded as oldest and most widespread theories of laughter. They involve individuals being scornful of

[1] Agnieszka Soltysik's article manuscript entitled "Maxine Hong Kingston as Counterculture Writer" is the most thorough study of this aspect of Kingston's writing to date. Kingston has talked about her role as a tripmaster in connection with naming her first novel *Tripmaster Monkey*. See, for instance, Seshachari (17-18).

other people, and, thus, they capture the essence of Billy's jokes. When Art is introduced to Billy, the latter says: "*Art Woo, how's that for a nice Polack name*" (24). Undoubtedly, Billy's words are triggered by his sense of ethnic superiority, but in this context, they turn into joke about a bad joke. In unexpectedly learning that Billy has moved to a better job in Silicon Valley, Art suddenly identifies more with him. Yet the text pokes merciless fun at Jen's protagonist. When a headhunter approaches Art at the conference, he begins to toy with the idea that he could just as easily have enjoyed Billy's good fortune. Art's display of self-aggrandizing turns him into an object of derision: all he has in mind when he returns to the welfare hotel are his materialistic dreams of upward mobility in the west. He does not even stop to thank Cindy for her help.

Significantly, Eng goes as far as to contend that "male hysteria exists everywhere in *Pangs of Love* " (194).[2] White women often symbolize the dominant white society in American ethnic minority literatures. Significantly, Eng claims that the Chinese American men in Louie's stories are hysterically impotent in their relationship with white women, which "compromises the notion of Asian American assimilation through the specific access of promised integration and miscegenation" (195). While Eng's analysis concentrates on the gay brother in the title story, I will look at the humorously depicted protagonist.

Unlike Jen's story, the narration of "Pangs of Love" contains carnivalesque elements interspersed with the protagonist's wry self-mockery and biting sarcasms. A chemist by profession, he recounts to his readers that after having been rejected by his girlfriend he was brought to New York by his siblings to be their widowed mother's new apartment mate in Chinatown. Like the narrator of *The Woman Warrior,* Louie's protagonist wants to separate himself from the Chinese culture represented by his immigrant mother. In Kingston's humorous novel *Tripmaster Monkey*, the protagonist marries the "unambiguously white" Taña, which Li interprets as "manifesting an authorial desire both for racial reconciliation and for the multicultural consolidation of her imagined nation" (86-87). Exaggeration is commonly used in satire, and by providing the protagonist with two white girlfriends, Louie's short story appears to be engaging in an intertextual exchange with Kingston's novel. Indeed, it seems to be humorously questioning the narrator's obstinate need for interracial romance.

The daughter-protagonist of *The Woman Warrior* objects to the Chinese tradition which does not value daughters as highly as sons, because they will belong to their future husband's family. Louie pokes fun at the same tradition. The mother figure in his story wishes all her three sons to marry Chinese women, explaining her preference: "You pick… If you don't like her, you try another" (87). Comically, Amanda (nicknamed Mandy), is all that she could desire, if he is "going to marry a non-Chinese" (80). Louie's story hints at a psychic cause for an insistent sexual failure of the protagonist's and Mandy's relationship. Mikhail Bakhtin's well-known ideas concerning carnival stress its capacity to subversively suspend all barriers, norms and prohibitions. Fittingly, everything turns upside down in a carnivalesque spirit, when the protagonist mistakenly mixes some of a synthetic fragrance produced in his laboratory into a pizza he is baking. Indeed, the magic musk makes Mandy behave as if she were high on grass and ultimately has an aphrodisiacal effect on her. Yet Louie's narrative

[2] Although Li does not analyze the story under discussion, he concludes his treatment of Louie's collection by writing: "In the abstraction of American citizenship, Asian Americans seem destined to remain 'model minority' abjects" (173).

comically questions the value of such heightened experiences, when Amanda abandons the protagonist. The crowning irony is that she does it for a Japanese man.

The satirical component is even stronger in the depiction of Deborah, the protagonist's second girlfriend. Her description lacks all ethnic markers which is suggestive of her WASP credentials. Ironically, both the son and the mother call attention to her unattractive looks. Unlike Mandy, Deborah neither knows anything about Chinese culture nor has any interest in it. Moreover, the supercilious protagonist condescendingly summarizes their relationship: "She's the rebound among rebounds; only somehow she's stuck" (84). In addition to the whiteness of the haughty Deborah, her only saving grace in the protagonist's eyes seems to be her interest in sex: "But a savage in bed she is" (84). Yet, the target of the satirical narration is the protagonist. It is obvious that the psychic condition of racialized male hysteria haunts him, as the text encourages the reader to conjecture that his obsession with Deborah is linked to his rejection of Chineseness and his desire for whiteness.

The story culminates in a trip to the youngest brother's house in Long Island, where he lives with his white gay friends. Not only is the house white, but it is also furnished and decorated throughout in white, which mocks the brother's integration into the normative world of his white middle-class gay friends. A brief but meaningful episode in which Mrs. Pang drips soy sauce on her off-white easy chair seems to sum up why the atmosphere is so tense during the visit (see Eng 201). The end of "Pangs of Love" involves the hosts and the guests coming together around big wedges of apple pie, which connect metonymically with America. Instead of forming an ideal color-blind, multicultural community in miniature, they still appear ill at ease with one another. The situation thwarts the promises of integration, and consequently Louie resorts to satirical humor. Introducing a utopian element seems to be the only way of instantaneously harmonizing the discordant group. The drug-enhanced daydreams in Kingston's work find their counterpart in a carnivalesque scene, in which the narrator pulls gold-foiled packets of tablets from his pocket and passes them to the unsuspecting people at the table. Making fun of the awkward situation, he mischievously muses on the effect of the pills: "They won't know what has happened. . . But soon the old bitterness in our mouths will be forgotten, and from this moment on, our words will come out sweet" (98).[3]

In Jen's story, Art's ex-wife Lisa, who is said to be "full of Asian consciousness" (24), is the opposite of the white world. Jen's narrator appears to use the allegorical possibilities of the couple's lost child as a means of satirical humor. Conventionally, children connote the future. Political awareness as embodied in Lisa is contrasted to Art's imprisonment in the model minority construct. The ending is tragicomic at Art's expense, as it signifies the impossibility of a common future for Asian Americans like Art and Lisa.

As I have argued, Jen's and Louie's stories undermine the rhetoric of color-blind neoliberal multiculturalism according to which race and ethnicity have become matters of choice. In my readings, each protagonist is oblivious of history and demonstrates clear symptoms of what has been called male hysteria. It is linked to the ostensibly positive white-dominated model minority stereotype that divides Asian Americans from the privileged whites and under-privileged blacks. Each author uses satirical humor as

[3] The depiction of the scene is suggestive of a party scene to which Soltysik refers in her unpublished article. In *Tripmaster Monkey*, Wittman encounters a group of stoned people "swimming in hallucinogen, ripped but appearing as ordinary as pie" (19).

an important literary strategy to undermine the protagonists' distorted thinking. I have read the two stories in intertextual relationship to Maxine Hong Kingston's works. On the surface, one gets the impression that Kingston's ideas about community, solidarity, human universalism and the interconnection of people are called into question and criticized as being hugely premature. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that all three authors are committed to changing the world and use literature to further the cause of social justice.

Works Cited

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Cheng, Scarlet. "Gish Jen Talks with Scarlet Cheng." *Belles Lettres* 7.2 (Winter 1991-92): 20-21. Print.

Eng, David L. *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001. Print.

English, James F. *Comic Transactions: Literature, Humor, and the Politics of Community in Twentieth-Century Britain*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. Print.

Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. "Interview with Maxine Hong Kingston." *American Literary History* 3.4 (Winter 1991): 782-791. Print.

Giese, Julie. "Comic Disruption in the Work of Maxine Hong Kingston." *Performing Gender and Comedy: Theories, Texts and Contexts*. Ed. Shannon Hengen. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Gordon and Beach, 1998. 11-128. Print.

Hirose, Stacey Yukari. "David Wong Louie: Interview by Stacey Yukari Hirose." *Words Matter: Conversations with Asian American Writers.* Ed. King-Kok Cheung. Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 2000. Print.

Jen, Gish. *Who's Irish? Stories*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1999. Print.

Kingston, Maxine Hong. *China Men*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989. Print.

Li, David Leiwei. *Imagining the Nation: Asian American Literature and Cultural Consent*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. Print.

Louie, David Wong. *Pangs of Love.* London: Picador, 1994. Print.

Parikh, Crystal. "'The Most Dangerous Masquerade': Queering Asian-American Masculinity." *MFSModern Fiction Studies* 48. 4 (2002): 858-898. Print.

Seshachari, Neila C. "Reinventing Peace: Conversations with Tripmaster Maxine Hong Kingston." *Weber Studies* 12 (Winter 1995): 7-26. Print.

Soltysik, Agnieszka. "Maxine Hong Kingston as Counterculture Writer." Article manuscript 2011.

ELENA BALDASSARRI

"EVERYTHING'S CONNECTED TO EVERYTHING ELSE": THE DOCUMERICA PHOTOGRAPHIC CAMPAIGN AND THE COSTS OF PROGRESS IN THE 1970S US

Does the "perfect picture" exist? Can a single photograph convey the beauties, mysteries, changes and tragedies of our environment? The *Blue Marble* image of the Earth taken from Apollo 17 in December 1972—an iconic photograph that we have all seen hundreds of times and probably one of the most widely reproduced in history (Reinert)—, seemed to do just that.. The shot was considered the visual symbol of the growing environmental movement, as expressed in the slogan "This is the only Earth we have!" The smallness of our world became one of the main issues in the 1970s. The general concerns about the character of advanced industrial society and its impact on the environment gave birth to a new form of social criticism in all the industrialized countries and especially in the United States. The US government responded with the introduction of legislation to protect the quality of water and air, and President Richard Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) on January 1, 1970. The Nixon Administration was faced at the time with the growing unpopularity of the Vietnam War and domestic economic recession (Lewis). Brooks Flippen shows that the President's interest in the environment derived from his desire to "win the environmental vote.". From the beginning of his administration, he had to cope with increasingly complex and varied environmental problems, such as the Santa Barbara oil spill of January 1969, when shocking TV images of birds covered in oil and dead seals floating on the slick caused outrage among Americans and made environmental protection a burning issue (Flippen 25). The Santa Barbara disaster showed that the US was incapable of coping with large-scale oil spills. The already strong local opposition was soon to become national and pumping operations were regarded as a symbol of pollution.

The first Earth Day was held on the crest of this wave in April 1970. Described by the historian Adam Rome as the "least understood famous event in modern American history" (*Op-Ed*), it was born out a proposal by US Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin to create a nationwide protest against the degradation of the environment. Following the lead of the anti-war movement, he called for a massive series of teach-ins on college campuses to heighten public awareness of the many deadly threats facing millions of Americans in thousands of communities all over the country (*Gaylord Nelson*). Less than three months after the first Earth Day, in July 1970, the US Government reassembled departments of other federal agencies to create the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Despite President Nixon's reluctance and

cynicism,[1] the EPA radically changed the way America interacts with its environment and became the pillar of government environmental policy. It was in November 1971 that the newly-created EPA announced a monumental photo-documentary project called Documerica and designed to show the natural and social costs of the environmental crisis. As William D. Ruckelshaus, the first director of the EPA, said on announcing the project, "We are working toward a new environmental ethic in this decade which will bring profound change in how we live and in how we provide for future generations. It is important that we document that change so future generations will understand our successes and our failures" (qtd. in Brooks 3).

Directed and conceived by Gifford Hampshire, a former photography editor at *National Geographic* and an experienced federal bureaucrat, the project's aim was to record changes in the American environment. Though initially planned to run for ten years, its operating budget suffered annual reductions and it was officially terminated in 1977 for various reasons. The end product of the initiative is a collection of more than 20,000 photographs now housed at the National Archives.

Documerica pursued three primary objectives. The first was to create a "visual baseline" of environmental conditions during the 1970s (Bustard 29) so as to help future generations understand and learn from America's environmental past, not least in order to assess the environmental impact of their own actions. The second, influenced by the First Law of Ecology put forward by Barry Commoner in *The Closing Circle*, namely that "everything is connected to everything else," was that Documerica sought to highlight the connections between the environment and people, and to provide insight into the complexity of the multifaceted environmental issues (Hampshire 1). This expanded definition of the environment went beyond landscapes and wildlife to include how people interact with the environment: how they control it and are controlled by it. The third was to become a point of reference and a support for documentary photography of everyday American life. Hampshire realized its potential for capturing history above and beyond environmental questions and hoped that the government would support other forms of documentary photography in other social sectors (Light 170).

Hampshire encouraged his photographers, who submitted their own project ideas and were hired on a freelance basis, to understand the environment in a broad sense and insisted on their freedom: "We believe you have the intellectual ability to comprehend the 'First Law of Ecology' and yet to sort out and focus on the significant connections as well as on the things" (Hampshire 1). Commoner's maxim is broad, yet also ambiguous,. Hampshire also tended to shift responsibility onto the photographers and he often blamed them when a cohesive trajectory failed to emerge: "You are not on an assignment that has to be neatly wrapped up in a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end with a publication deadline. You're certainly not on an assignment to produce pictures with a 'story line'. Any bias is your own"[2] (Hampshire 5).

---

[1] William D. Ruckelshaus said: "He created EPA ... because of public outrage about what was happening to the environment. Not because Nixon *shared* that concern, but *because he didn't have any choice* … Nixon thought the environmental movement was part of the same political strain as the anti-war movement; both reflected weaknesses in the American character. He tied the threads together. During the 1960s, when the Vietnam War protests were so powerful and so dominated his thinking, he observed that some of the same people involved in the environmental movement were also associated with the anti-war movement. So he tended to lump all of them together."

[2] After Documerica ended, Hampshire admitted, "A lot of the photographers, I found out later on, felt they were too much on their own. They didn't have any feedback, they said. They'd call me on the phone

The most effective 22,000 images were cataloged and made available to publications nationwide, after which they began to appear in textbooks, newspapers, magazines and documentaries. The most important destination, however, was "Our Only World," an exhibition of 113 Documerica photographs organized by the Smithsonian Institution that toured the country and attracted record numbers of visitors.

Documerica images can be divided into three main groups, showing environmental problems, people, and nature: photographic documentation establishing a 1972 baseline of environmental problems and what was accomplished by the EPA in the way of solutions; pictures of people "doing their environmental thing" in ways that have significant connection with change; positive images documenting appreciation and preservation of the environment (Hampshire 5). Examination of the photographs and what they depict reveals at least three important models: photojournalism, photographic campaigns sponsored by the government, and the tradition nature imagery, nature views and the sublime.

The first essential key aspect is the deep connection with the long tradition of photojournalism from Jacob Riis to Robert Capa, a great source of inspiration for Documerica. As Hampshire wrote to his photographers, "We've asked you to work on DOCUMERICA because we know you understand and believe in documentary photography. It speaks of truth, honesty, and objectivity. Yet, we also know you bring your own talent to bear on these abstractions in the presence of a reality—sometimes highly charged with emotion. All we ask is that you do not contrive or distort—that the image be a document as well as the best visual statement you can make it" (Hampshire 5). After the peak in the 1970's, however, picture magazines like *Life* and *Look* were going bankrupt as a result of inability to compete with color television and in the coverage of fast-breaking news. For this reason, despite forming part of a distinguished tradition, the photographic project appeared outdated.

The second key aspects of Project Documerica is that it was sponsored by the federal government. This encouraged the photographers to pursue a vast range of subjects and places, and gave the project a comprehensive and national point of view. In particular, Documerica was modeled on the famed Historical Section of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) in the 1930s. Hampshire acknowledged on several occasions that he was inspired by the FSA, one of the pillars of documentary photography due to the iconic images of Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans. His main ambition was to create a visual encyclopedia of American life in the 1970s, as the FSA had done in the 1930s (Shubinski; Peralta). This strong connection between Documerica and FSA is essential to any understanding of how and—perhaps more importantly—why Project Documerica came into being.

The third key aspect is related to the traditional focus on the "sublime" aspect of the natural environment. Artists and photographers had depicted the American wilderness since the beginning of westward expansion, capturing the natural beauty that industrialization and exploitation were threatening during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Photographers like Herbert Gleason, Ansel Adams and Timothy O'Sullivan as well as environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and the World Wildlife Fund had worked to present the magnificence and splendor of the American natural environment before Project Documerica was born. Hampshire was deeply aware of this

---

and I would talk to them, but I wasn't about to get into telling them how to do their assignment, what to shoot. As a consequence, we had a lot of stuff, all over the yard—some very good, some not so good" (Light 169).

connection: "DOCUMERICA is not to be a dismal record of America's environmental problems and what EPA and others do to solve them. DOCUMERICA must also record what is still good and beautiful in our environment, what delights the eye and satisfies the soul. After all, a powerful force in the environmental movement is dedicated to preservation and conservation of the natural environment" (Hampshire 5). In this context, the 70 photographers worked on over 100 assignments divided into regional areas. Even if "much of the subject matter is dull visual material" (Hampshire 1), it is possible to make a list of general themes, following the guidelines that Hampshire gave to the photographers. One of the key themes was air pollution. The Clean Air Amendments of 1970 required the EPA to set national air quality standards and 1972 was scheduled to be the year of air pollution control. The photographers were therefore called upon to document the plans developed by states and cities to control sources of emission, both mobile and stationary (vehicles and industrial plants). Another was water pollution control and the massive investment of funds to construct treatment plants for municipal wastewater.Next, there was the problem of oil spills and the deliberate or accidental dumping of hazardous materials into American rivers and the oceans. While there was no federal law to govern solid waste management, the EPA financed a research program for recycling and the possibility of closing some 5,000 dumps was raised. Another major point of interest regarded nuclear power plants and their impact and effects, including thermal pollution. Last but not least, there were the invisible problems like pesticide and noise, which are very hard to document. A great deal of attention was focused on pesticide after the publication of Rachael Carson's celebrated book *Silent Spring*, and there was public anxiety about the unknown future consequences of the long-term widespread use of chemical products. Noise is invisible but its impact on the human psyche is very real. People react to noise—and this is what the photographer has to document—but generally ignore it as a problem because they regard it as something temporary and do not realize its contribution to emotional stress.

Documerica was not only a "collection of construction pictures," however. People also played a leading role because of the involvement of men and women and their concern about environmental changes. For this reason, Hampshire stressed that the project "looks for some great photographic documentation of what the people of the nation do, or are, or think, or feel, or whatever it is that's connected to everything else" (4-5).

Let us now examine the image created by the photographers and their vision of America, if it exists. The first impression we have is that although the archive offers a particular view of the dynamic, post-industrial landscape of the 1970s, this landscape could no longer fully contain or communicate a national whole. Documerica reveals increasingly fragmented and different environments—natural, social, and cultural—that are highly specific because they react in different ways to political and economic pressures.

Another important reflection prompted by the images and the cloud of gloom hovering over them regards the deep feeling of nostalgia they evoke, often verging of a simplistic idea of a harmonious rural past. In particular, this is a reminder and celebration of American values as preserved by small towns, cohesive and stable units full of community spirit.

These observations go hand in hand with a general growing sense of futility and helplessness with respect to the post-industrial landscape despite government intervention, and this underscores the point that there was nothing revolutionary about

federal environmentalism under Nixon. Preservation and moderate environmentalism, the twin foundations of Documerica, remained conservatively rooted in the idea of returning to the past and salvaging what was left of older architecture, older values, and older standards of pure air and water.

In conclusion, though surrounded by great expectations, Documerica failed to achieve its objectives. The reasons are various. First, the EPA in general and the project in particular were afflicted by economic troubles and cuts in government expenditure. Second, the changes at the top of the EPA destabilized the possible long-term achievements. Third, unlike the FSA campaign, the project made no great impact on public opinion, probably because the images were not circulated to any real extent in the media. Fourth and most importantly, there were various problems with the photographers, who lacked help and support, were left to their own devices, and enjoyed no copyright or royalties on their works. The biggest contradiction to emerge was, however, the fact that Documerica failed to inspire solutions and future prospects for the environmental crisis and rather limited itself to show the irreparable damage done by America to its own environment.

Works Cited

"A list of DOCUMERICA photographers from records in the National Archives". *Documerica Records.* January 1972. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ej.msu.edu/documerica/History/Photographers.pdf>.

"Documerica Assignment List." *Documerica Records.* January 1972. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ej.msu.edu/documerica/History/assign.pdf>.

DOCUMERICA Project by the Environmental Protection Agency. U.S. National Archives. Web. 30 Jan. 2012.
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/collections/72157620729903309/>.

DOCUMERICA Photographs from the dawn of the EPA. Knight Center for Environmental Journalism and The Global Workshop, LLC. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ej.msu.edu/documerica/Home/home.htm>.

Brooks, Laura. *Can Images of the Past Change Our Future? The Role of Project Documerica in the Environmental Movement*. Diss. University of Chicago 2007. Print.

Bustard, Bruce. *Picturing the Century: one hundred years of photography from the National Archives*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration and the University of Washington Press, 1999. Print.

Flippen, J. Brooks. *Nixon and the Environment*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000. Print.

Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day. The Making of the Modern Environmental Movement. Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, 2011. Web. 30 Jan. 2012.

Hampshire, Gifford D. "Guidelines for Photographers." *Documerica Records.* January 1972. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ej.msu.edu/documerica/History/guidelines.pdf>.

Lewis, Jack. "The Birth of EPA." *EPA Journal.* November 1985. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. <http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/history/topics/epa/15c.html>

Light, Ken. *Witness in Our Time: working lives of documentary photographers*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000. Print.

Peralta, Nancy Allen. *A Comparison of Two Government Sponsored Documentary Photography Projects: FSA 1935-1942 and Documerica 1970-1974*. Master's thesis, California State University 1981. Print.

Reinert, Al. "The Blue Marble Shot: Our First Complete Photograph of Earth." *The Atlantic*. 12 Apr 2011. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/04/the-blue-marble-shot-our-first-complete-photograph-of-earth/237167/>

Rome, Adam. "Give Earth a Chance: The Environmental Movement and the Sixties." *The journal of American history* 90.2 (2003): 525-554. Web. 30 Jan. 2012.

---. "Op-Ed: The DIY Genius of the Original Earth Day." *Wired*, 22 April, 2010 . Web. 30 Jan. 2012.

Ruckelshaus, William D. Interview by Michael Gorn. *Oral History Interview*. EPA, January 1993. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. <http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/history/publications/print/ruck.html>

Shubinski, Barbara Lynn. *From FSA to EPA: Project Documerica, the Dustbowl Legacy, and the Quest to Photograph 1970s America.* Diss. University of Iowa 2009. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. <http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/434>.

Simmons, C. Jerry. "Documerica. Snapshots of Crisis and Cure in the 1970s." *Prologue* 41.1 (Spring 2009). Web. 30 Jan. 2012.

VINCENZO BAVARO

CRUISING THE GAY BATHHOUSE

In this paper I will focus on the "gay baths," and I will look exclusively at the bathhouse scene in New York City. After introducing part of their modern history, I will analyze specifically a decade that can be considered as the golden age of New York City gay baths: the 1970s, approximately framed by the Gay Liberation movements and the Stonewall Riot, on the one hand, and the AIDS epidemic on the other. In the Seventies a new configuration of gay life and gay identity had its effects on a general restructuring of gay baths and of the activities they hosted. These transformations highlight some interesting conflicts between the dream of a radical experiment in sexual "socialism" and a simultaneous reification of desire and of the body, in what seems to be the ultimate and undisguised triumph of commodity capitalism and gay entrepreneurship.

To contextualize the history of gay baths in New York City means, to a significant degree, to shed some light on the history of the city and on gay history in the country tout court. In 1852, the first public baths in America were established in New York. By the 1890s more baths were built in the densely populated tenements districts, especially in downtown Manhattan and in the Lower East Side (Chauncey 208). These baths' primary goal was to increase health conditions and cleanliness in an era in which private bathrooms were an upper class rarity. However, as Chauncey documents in his colossal work *Gay New York*, from their very inception, the baths were appropriated as a gay space—mostly in times of the day and days of the week when straight men were less numerous.

The Everard Turkish Baths, one of the most popular baths (later known as Ever-Hard!), was converted from a church in 1888. For a one dollar admission fee, the Everard offered to its customers a pool, a steam room, and several small cubicles designed for a comfortable rest. In its early years it was known for its upper and middle-class clientele.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, and markedly after World War One, some baths were beginning to host a stable community of gay men. Although the sexual activity taking place in the early bathhouses of the Roaring Twenties was relatively discreet, there are several historical accounts of police raids and newspaper articles denouncing the "perversity" of these places. In 1903, NYPD conducted the first recorded raid on a gay bathhouse, the *Ariston Hotel Baths*. Twenty-six men were arrested and twelve brought to trial on sodomy charges; sentences ranged from four to twenty years in prison. In 1919, the society for the Suppression of the Vice organized a raid at the Everard in which the manager and nine customers were arrested. The following year, during another raid at the Everard, fifteen men were arrested. Criminal

reports show that all the arrested men were white, and most were in their thirties (Chauncey 216).

By the 1940s, an increasing number of new tenements included private bathtubs, and the hygienic purpose of public baths for the general population was being gradually eroded. As a result, many municipal bathhouses —that is to say non ritual, non religious—were shut down (Chauncey 217). However, those bathhouses that tolerated homosexual patrons continued to thrive after World War Two, despite the increasing antigay activity of the police and a generally growing homophobic panic in the country in conjunction with the McCarthy era.

The very presence of gay patrons transformed the bathhouse in the years after the Second World War. The slow transformation of bathhouses into "safety zones" (Bérubé 188) for homosexuals needs to be understood in the context of the fierce criminalization and stigmatization of homosexual acts. In the State of New York, bars were not allowed to serve alcohol to gay patrons from 1960 to 1966, and gay sexual intercourse was illegal and punishable by law until 1980. Until that day, gay New Yorkers had no right to sexual privacy: in other words, their private sexual life was considered a public business, and regulated (and censored) as such.Police repression generally included harassment of "fairies" and "perverts," entrapment techniques, and systematical deployment of physical violence and brutality through constant raids and attacks on bars, meeting places, and cruising grounds.

The social and political repression of gay people and the efforts to prevent homosexuals from gathering in public constitute a necessary background for understanding the development of the baths as a gay institution "vital to the survival of the community," as Bérubé writes (206). Gay baths, in fact, were certainly safer than parks, parking lots, and bars, and were not raided as often (Chauncey 219). Furthermore, the administration of the bathhouses successfully managed to exclude straight people or "suspects" (undercover agents) and the admission process minimized the risk of admitting unwanted patrons, thanks to brass-caged cashier's desk, authentications, membership cards, and a series of thresholds to be opened mechanically by the staff.

Being a protected environment populated exclusively by gay men, the bathhouse was the first institution in the United States to give gay Americans a "sense of pride in themselves and their sexuality" (Bérubé 188). However, and especially in the decades preceding the Sixties, the Baths also functioned as a very spacious and crowded closet, ideal for men who could not be seen in a café or a bar, and for married men (Chauncey 225).

The New Baths of the Seventies

By the end of the 1960s the baths underwent a significant transformation, as detailed in Bérubé's article "The History of Gay Bathhouses"—originally submitted as a brief to the California Supreme Court in 1984, a time when all the State bathhouses were threatened to be shut down. Gay baths were no longer clandestine, and advertising of the many new bathhouses in the city covered the pages of the local magazines and newspapers, and the walls of the West Village.

A plethora of diversified new baths crowded the Manhattan gay scene, the Wall Street Sauna was a popular spot for businessmen during weekdays, Man's Country on 15th street was a students' favorite ($8 admission, $1 on Tuesdays), while S/M

enthusiasts favored the Barracks. The baths were now equipped with bars and common lounge rooms, televisions and videos, they hosted movie nights (showing gay cult classics), they were a center for the distribution of gay press and cultural events, offering testing for venereal diseases, and in the early Eighties, some of them were active in the voter registration effort (Bérubé 203).

As a consequence of the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s, radical sexual experimentation entered the sweat room (which was not very conservative to begin with) and orgy rooms were installed in the major bathhouses (Bérubé 200). In "Gay Manifesto," articulating the attempt to rethink the desire for monogamous sex after "gay liberation," Carl Wittman writes:

> Things we want to get away from are: 1) exclusiveness, propertied attitudes toward each other, a mutual pact against the rest of the world; 2) promise about the future, which we have no right to make […]; 3) inflexible roles, roles which do not reflect us at the moment but are inherited through mimicry and inability to define equalitarian relationships. (Wittman, 334)

Another significant innovation of the baths in the Seventies is the development of "fantasy environments." Together with orgy rooms, the baths saw a transformation of the space and architectural structure aimed at evoking, and appropriating, topoi of gay urban life and gay oppression: most of these fantasy environments had to do with the history of clandestine cruising and illicit public sex. "Glory Holes" were the remainder of the public toilet rooms, winding narrow corridors and more explicitly the "mazes" evoked cruising grounds in public parks and bushes and trees in the vicinity of gay beaches. Some baths also installed few rows of theater balconies, or even indoor trailer trucks. And finally, a few baths (famously St Marks) recreated prisons and jails, traditional destination for those who pursued homosexual sex. Many bathhouses also provided stages and platforms for performances and shows. The Continental Baths was opened by Steve Ostrow in 1968 in the basement of the Astonia Hotel in the Upper West Side (on Broadway, between 73rd and 74th street). It was a gay bath until 1975, and became the straight Plato's Retreat later. Continental, as most other baths, was open 24 hours, it could host 1,000 men, was equipped with a disco dance floor, a cabaret lounge, and a swimming pool. It revolutionized the gay baths scene in New York, with its new and clean facilities, and first class entertainment (Bette Midler was renowned for her performances there).

Another significant change in the bathhouse scene in New York was brought by the Club Bath Chain: the first openly gay-owned bath chain (originally founded in Cleveland, OH, by the activist Jack Campbell and two partners). The issue of gay-ownership is crucial in the cultural context of the time, since the early Seventies, most gay bars and baths were owned by straight people. The ideas of being autonomous from straight society, and the notion of self-government had a high currency at the time, as it is clear from the following quote from "A Gay Manifesto":

> [Our ghetto] is certainly freer than the rest of Amerika. That's why we are here. But it isn't ours. Capitalists make money off us, cops patrol us, government tolerates us as long as we shut up, and daily we work for and pay taxes, to those who oppress us.
>
> To be a free territory we must govern ourselves, set up our own institutions, defend ourselves, and use our own energies to improve our lives. (Wittman 339)

Wittman's dream of independence aligns "capitalists" with straights and oppressors. However, in the context of the Club, and of much of the gay life of the following

decades, we assist to the rise of gay entrepreneurs, who will eventually dominate and influence gay identity and culture in terms of market viability.

Most of the New York City baths were shut down in 1985 as a measure against the spread of AIDS. However, in thinking about the rationale behind this groundbreaking decision, we must notice that other attempts to shut down the city bathhouses had been made well before the AIDS epidemic, notably in 1975, and 1978.

Sexual Utopia, or Capitalistic Nightmare?

"There will be an orgy beginning in room 340 in exactly four minutes. I repeat, there will be an or…"
The Ritz, 1976

The line quoted above, shouted through a bullhorn from the 3rd floor gallery of a bathhouse in the movie *The Ritz*, is enlightening insofar as it conveys both "souls" of the gay bathhouse: the Dionysian impulse and the mechanic factory-like dimension. Cultural theorist Dianne Chisholm, in her *Queer Constellations*, acknowledges this dichotomy inherent in the identity of the bathhouse, whereby "the goals of commodity capitalism appear confused with a dream of sexual socialism" (64).

In this concluding section, I would like to briefly explore both of these ideas, the Dionysian ritual and the compulsive factory. As we have seen before, in this "gay institution" gay men could find a community, a shelter from a hostile world, a place in which they could pursue intimacy, express their homosexual desire, and cherish and glorify their gay bodies: sex was pivotal to the building of the community. Gay historiographies of the bathhouse have generally praised this gay institution as a "radical and vital experiment in urban living" (Chisholm 64). However, especially in the most influential examples of Chauncey and Bérubé, they tend to favor a myth of a "lost utopia." The bathhouse historian, argues Chisholm, is "distracted to the extent he overlooks the precariousness of the production of gay social space in the commodity space of capitalism." He succumbs, in short, to the "bathhouse mystique" (76), overlooking the fact that this was a commercial institution to begin with.

Another scholar, Ira Tattelman, focuses on the incessant cruising that the baths' ritual demands, which in turn activates a circuit of display: "[t]he bathhouse invites a continuous flow of traffic repeatedly passing each room, sometimes finding a door open and inviting, sometimes closed to view" (81). In this visual regime, everyone is required to be on display, to offer oneself as a spectacle. Cruising the corridors, looking at the men on display in their cubicles is, after all, closely akin to walking through the aisles of a supermarket looking for the right product to purchase. However, in this case, the boundary between the man who looks and the man who is looked at are blurred.

Despite the porous line between one's own body and the surrounding environment, there seems to be an unwritten set or rules of conduct, a distinct *courteousness* in the interaction among men, aimed at maintaining the atmosphere of mutuality, equality, pleasure and relaxation that makes the bathhouse a unique site of gay life, devoid of unwanted violence and power imbalances. A gentle touch of refusal or a simple glance have the power of discouraging the other immediately, without any further insistence. Furthermore, as Chauncey argues, the baths were not exclusively for fleeting encounters, but they were often a "setting for developing social relationship" (223).

A major complication for the understanding of the bathhouse as an institution primarily motivated by economic consideration and the commodification of the body is that it traditionally discourages prostitution, primarily because sex is abundant and free, and because the ritual that the bathhouse endorses (or demands) is constitutively built on reciprocity and abundance. In other words, I argue, the trade in physical pleasure that takes place in the baths is often characterized by collective generosity rather than being a transaction between two different agents, a giver and a receiver: it is a shared practice. In the orgy room, for example, the individual identity is less significant than the bodily pleasure a subject can induce in or obtain from the others: in a typical orgiastic setting, pleasure is reciprocated almost automatically and loses its agency and intentionality. The option of losing control and "ownership" of one's own body is always already there: body parts may be borrowed and lent, and the pursuit of one's own sexual pleasure guarantees the functioning of the sexual community itself. Wallet and identification cards are left outside in the lockers. Baths are also the locus of a forced democratization, of a certain class leveling. Patrons are in fact stripped of their clothes, one of the most immediate signifiers of class status—"class peels off with clothing" (73), as Rita Mae Brown wrote in 1975. The bathhouses are in a very concrete sense isolated from the outside world, and they try to appear timeless. At the same time, however, they are the site of "the collapse between public and private sphere" (Chisholm 69), where, in a dramatic setting that produces the customers as participants to a pagan ritual, public sex becomes intimacy and anonymity becomes collective empowerment.

To conclude, the extreme success and popularity of the gay baths in the 1970s was due, especially in their golden age, to an unprecedented intersection of their community building power with their commercial viability. Never more strongly than during the Seventies, were gay baths the paradoxical combination of public arena and private sanctuary, alienation and empowerment, radical social experimentalism and corporate capitalism.

Works Cited

"The Evolution of the Bath." *Life*. Aug 9 1948. 79-82. Print.

Altman, Dennis, *Homosexual. Oppression and Liberation*. New York: New York University Press, 1971. Print.

Bérubé, Allan. "The History of Gay Bathhouses." *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism*. Eds. Dangerous Bedfellows. Boston: South End Press, 1996. 187-220. Print.

Brown, Rita Mae. "Queen for a Day: a Stranger in Paradise." *Lavender Culture*. Eds. Jay, Karla, and Allen Young. New York: Jove, 1978. 69-76. Print.

Callen, Michael. "Mike Goes to the Baths." Eds. David Shneer and Caryn Aviv. *American Queer, Now and Then.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishes, 2006. Print.

Chauncey, George. "The Social World of the Baths." *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of a Gay Male World. 1890-1940*. Basic Books, 1994. 207-225. Print.

Chisholm, Dianne. "Love at Last Sight, or the Dialectic of Seeing in the Wake of the Gay Bathhouse." *Queer Constellations*: *Subcultural Space in the Wake of the City*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005. 63-99. Print.

Reid, John. "How 'Gay' is New York?" *New York Magazine* 24 Sep. 1973: 72-79.

Rumaker, Michael. "A Day and A Night at the Baths." Ed. David Bergman. *Gay American Autobiography. Writings from Whitman to Sedaris*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009. Print.

Tattelman, Ira. "Speaking to the Gay Bathhouse: Communicating in Sexually Charged Spaces." Ed. William Leap. *Public Sex/ Gay Space*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. Print.

Weinberg, Martin S., and Colin J. Williams. "Gay Baths and the Social Organization of Impersonal Sex." Ed. Martin P. Levine. *Gay Men: the Sociology of Male Homosexuality*. New York: Harper &Row, 1979. 164-181. Print.

Wittman, Carl. "A Gay Manifesto." Eds. Karla Jay and Allen Young. *Out of the Closets. Voices of Gay Liberation*: New York: New York University Press, 1992. 330-342. Print.

NICOLANGELO BECCE

"AN ACCIDENT AT SEA IS BETTER THAN AN ACT OF TERRORISM": DEFERRING DEMOCRACY IN *NCIS*

This essay analyzes two episodes of the ongoing CBS series *NCIS*, interpreting the narrated events in light of the "state of exception"[1] put into effect by the US government after 9/11, and exploring the connections between the reiterative character of this police procedural drama series and the way in which the war against terrorism in the years before and after the Twin Towers attack is represented in the episodes under examination. More specifically, the analysis will focus on the leading figure of the series and head of the NCIS team, Leroy Jethro Gibbs, and on his characterization as a typical American hero involved in a never-ending fight against Evil. I will try to demonstrate how his heroic character contributes to underline the limits, both in terms of ethical plausibility and of practical application, of the "state of exception" derived from the War on Terror proclaimed by the Bush administration. As I will try to show, a close analysis of the events in which Gibbs is involved in these episodes reveals, on one hand, a call for a more effective implementation of the state of exception as the only really effective weapon to oppose the enemies of the United States, and on the other hand, a radical doubt that the advantage obtained through exemption from the limitations imposed by the law can really ensure the defense of democracy and the pursuit of happiness.

NCIS (Naval Criminal Investigative Service) is one of the most successful police procedural TV series of the last decade. Broadcast by CBS since 2003 and currently in the ninth season, it features a fictional team of special agents in charge of investigating crimes related to US Navy and Marine Corps. Special Agent Leroy Jethro Gibbs heads the NCIS team: a former marine scout sniper, Gibbs is a charismatic and paternalistic leader with a mysterious past. The other members of the team are Tony DiNozzo, a cinema fan always quoting movies and comparing them with the NCIS cases under investigation, unfailingly unserious and unceasingly flirting with any woman he encounters; Tim McGee, a computer geek and, in his free time, a writer of mystery stories; Ziva David, a former Israeli Mossad officer, who is a very skilled spy and killer fluent in at least nine languages, but is always struggling to understand and correctly use complicated American idioms and slang; forensic scientist Abby Sciuto, an eccentric geek with a passion for Goth style and a daughter-father relationship with Gibbs; and Dr. Ducky Mallard, a Scottish medical examiner with a weird habit of speaking with dead bodies in the morgue, who habitually tells everybody prolix stories about his past.

---

[1] Drawing from German jurist Carl Schmitt, Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, develops the theorization of the "state of exception"—essentially, it is the ability of the sovereign to suspend the juridical order and transcend it for the sake of the public good.

The *NCIS* series is structured as a typical police procedural drama, with self-conclusive episodes in which all the team characters appear regularly, and marked by an extensive use of humor. The NCIS team members show a very strong commitment to their job and are very close to each other and to their leader, acting quite as a family. Their job is literally their life (during investigations they work 24/7 and often sleep in their office), and little room is left, in the series, for their private life: like the real-life NCIS agency, whose motto on the homepage is "Prevent Terrorism, Protect Secrets, and Reduce Crime," the fictional *NCIS* represents a bulwark against both international terrorism and internal enemies, and its agents are responsible for the defense of the United States and its democracy at all costs, even at the cost of their own happiness. This is clearly shown in the two final episodes of the third season, in which, for the first time in the series, several significant events of Gibbs's mysterious past are disclosed.

These two episodes, titled "Hiatus: Part 1" and "Hiatus: Part 2," were broadcast by CBS on May 9 and May 16, 2006. Both episodes were written by Donald Bellisario, the creator of the series (and of other famous TV series such as *Magnum P.I.*, *Quantum Leap* and *JAG*, of which *NCIS* is a spin-off) and were watched in the United States by 15.17 and 16.49 million spectators respectively, thus reaching on those occasions (as on many others during the last decade) the top positions in the US tv show rating charts for Tuesday primetime nights (see Webpage of thefutoncritic).

The title "Hiatus" clearly refers to the main event in the episode: during an operation on board a ship in the attempt to intercept and arrest a dangerous terrorist closely connected to Osama Bin Laden, Gibbs is the victim of an explosion and goes into a coma. While in the hospital, Gibbs dreams about his active duty in Kuwait during the First Gulf War, during which he also went into a coma. The doctor who is treating him (and who recognizes Gibbs because, by a lucky coincidence, he had already treated him during his 1991 coma in Kuwait) advances the opinion that, having no real medical reason for still being in a coma, Gibbs simply doesn't want to wake up.

During his second coma, Gibbs dreams about the time when he was a marine and had a happy life with his wife, Shannon, and his daughter, Kelly, until while in Kuwait for Operation Desert Storm, he receives the news that his wife and daughter have been killed. Gibbs reacts to this tragic news by shouting a desperate "Noooo!" and running carelessly in what looks like a mine field, surrounded by explosions.

Thanks to Mike Franks, the former NCIS Director now retired and living in Mexico, Gibbs eventually discovers (through an illegal peep into the NCIS file related to the murder) that the killer was Pedro Hernandez, a Mexican drug dealer who had been seen by Gibbs's wife while he was killing a marine. Gibbs goes to Mexico, and, basically replicating what Hernandez had done to his family, he dons his marine sniper suit and shoots him from a long distance while Hernandez is in his car. Then Gibbs utters a long scream and just at that moment, while screaming in front of his doctor, he wakes up from his coma.

With Gibbs in a coma, all the NCIS team members were deeply worried about his condition, disoriented because of the lack of their leader, and unable to make any progress in the investigation. Unfortunately, when Gibbs wakes up, he suffers from memory loss, and, with his memory stuck in 1991, he cannot help his team fight the terrorists in order to avert another potential 9/11. As Gibbs's doctor thinks that his amnesia has a psychological origin, the medical examiner and the NCIS director talk about Pedro Hernandez, who, having fled to Mexico in 1991, was never officially caught by NCIS. The medical examiner reveals his opinion that Hernandez's cold case can be closed, as he is sure that Gibbs "would have pursued the killer of his wife and

daughter to hell and back."

While trying to regain his memory by watching TV news, Gibbs notes that very little seems to have changed in the last fifteen years: the Americans are, after all, still in Iraq. To help him with his memory loss, the former NCIS Director, Mike Franks, is asked to visit Gibbs. This visit enables Gibbs to recall that Franks left the NCIS and went to live in Mexico after the bombing of the Khobar Towers in 1996, because, although he had foreseen the attack in time, the US government had not heeded Franks' warnings, thus preventing him from stopping the terrorists. Then Gibbs learns about the 9/11 attacks, and he is so shocked that at first he throws up his lunch, and then blames his ex-boss Franks for leaving the NCIS rather than remaining in charge to fight the terrorists and defend the nation. Shortly after this event, Gibbs finally recovers his memory, and goes back to the NCIS office, clearly ready to take back his place and to prevent the bombing of the Cape Fear ship. However, rather than allowing the ship to reach the Mediterranean Sea at the risk of involving other ships in the explosion of the several tons of ammunition it carries, the government decides to let the ship explode in the Atlantic Ocean, sacrificing the life of nineteen civilians; the explosion will be covered as a sea accident, and no civilian will be able to film the terrorist attack and spread the news to the media and the population. Gibbs curses his superiors in emphatic disagreement; then, deeply distressed, he decides to definitively leave the NCIS team and retire to Mexico, joining his former boss Mike Franks.

As a police procedural drama, *NCIS* features many recurring elements: the portrayal of characters, their role in the NCIS team, and their relationship to one another. Indeed, most episodes are based on these repetitions, with the investigations providing a mere background for the characters' typical actions and gestures, which come to be expected and fetishized by the audience: DiNozzo's movie quotes, Gibbs's hitting the back of his subordinates's heads, McGee's nicknames, Ducky's non-sense stories, etc. On the other hand, as already mentioned, the importance of the characters' private life and of the running plot, that is, the continuous narrative thread that runs through individual self-conclusive episodes, is usually limited.

For this reason, the two episodes analyzed here are highly significant, because they represent at the same time the beginning of a running plot and a window on the private life of the main character. More specifically, the uniqueness of these episodes resides in their ability to reactivate the reiterative quality of the series with reference not just to characters but also to the history of the United States, a historical background in which, for example, terrorist attacks represent a recurrent threat, and yet one very difficult to preempt; where there is not one Gulf War, but a succession of Gulf Wars all displaying striking similarities; where other terrorist events have prefigured 9/11 or repeated its devastating effects. In these episodes, the tension between the typical repetitiveness of the police procedurals and the unfolding of the running plot thus takes on new significance: in the Chinese boxes logics governing representations of both the past and the present, repetition reverberates on different temporalities and at various levels, from the time frame of the individual episodes to the time frame ushered in by memory/dream, from the historical past to the political present, underlining the idea of the repetitive character of American history.

Consequently, the events narrated in these two episodes (not accidentally, a Season Finale personally written by the creator of the series), while on the one hand transcending the limits of repetitiveness and serialization by virtue of their uniqueness, are at the same time immediately re-inscribed within a paradigm of historical (rather than individual) repetitiveness, insofar as the recent history of the United States is here

rendered as a repetitive narrative, reminiscent of exactly the reiterative quality of police procedural dramas.

Significantly, the story recalled by Gibbs in his coma has no repercussions on the present or future of the NCIS agency and team, but offers another self-conclusive story in which the agent lives the tragedy of the murder of his family and, in the medical examiner's words, chases the killer to hell to take revenge. Meanwhile, the present investigation, in which he is wounded, is crucial to the safety of the United States, being directly connected to Bin Laden (whose name is another fetishized element, constantly repeated in the series as a kind of mantra). Gibbs's commitment is so deep that, again, he declares himself ready to chase the terrorist "to hell if it leads to Bin Laden," using the same hyperbolic language the medical examiner had applied to Gibbs's personal revenge.

Thus, the boundaries between personal revenge and fight against terrorism are blurred. As these two episodes make explicit, Gibbs has sacrificed his private life dimension to serve his country (after all, he hadn't been able to defend his family because, in 1991, he was engaged in defending his country in Kuwait). He devotes himself to the defense of his country with the same unswerving commitment with which he took revenge for the murder of his beloved family. Gibbs is the umpteenth, reassuring reincarnation of the American hero, defending the nation, seen as an enlarged family, and in perennial fight against its enemies, be they Mexican drug dealers or Al Qaeda terrorists. The parallel often evoked in these two episodes between Gibbs and John Wayne further reinforces this cultural implication: one of Gibbs's proverbial rules is "never say I'm sorry, it's a sign of weakness," and as DiNozzo explains during the episode, this is a quote from the Duke in *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949), and Gibbs is actually very similar to a John Wayne character.

Nonetheless, the setting in which this new American hero acts seems changed: there is a recognizable difference between Gibbs's present and a past in which he could avenge the murder of his family with impunity and Franks could perpetrate an abuse of power with the best intentions. This past metaphorically evokes the good old days in which John Wayne defended the frontier against the Indians "by any means necessary," as well as that imaginary Mexico to which Franks retires and to which Gibbs, at the end of these episodes, also resolves to retire, thus replicating Natty Bumppo's retreat to the frontier as a final estrangement from civilization and the law.

What the law means, in this case, is a set of restricting rules against the state of exception. According to these two *NCIS* episodes, set in 2006, over the previous fifteen years the US were the target of a long series of international terrorist threats, including the Khobar Towers attack, 9/11, and the fictional bombing of the Cape Fear ship. Both in the Khobar Towers attack and in the Cape Fear bombing, Franks and Gibbs are aware of the danger, but their warnings are dismissed by the American government, unwilling to take immediate action because of political reasons. Such governmental delay and essential inaction frustrates all the efforts and sacrifices made by Gibbs and the NCIS team to fight terrorism in a race against time to anticipate their moves. In other words, in order to oppose the enemies of the nation these episodes seem to endorse the need for a "state of exception," as theorized by Giorgio Agamben and explicitly invoked by the US government with the PATRIOT Act.

Consequently, the sense of continuity promoted by the references to the myth of the American hero—who, from *NCIS*'s Gibbs to Wayne in *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, effectively summarizes much of US history—operates as an attempt to reabsorb the trauma related to 9/11 and to reconsider it as an episode, however tragic and painful, in

the unceasing fight of the United States and its heroes, the symbols of Good against Evil, itself serialized. In the references to hell made by and about Gibbs, it is easy to recognize the notion of the enemy as absolute evil, looking back to the origins of American exceptionalism, with the enemy as a personification of Satan. Given the number of terrorist attacks (both real and fictional) successfully prevented or not, and the continuous threats from Bin Laden and international terrorism, what these two *NCIS* episodes seem to suggest is that the United States of 2006 are not really in the "state of exception" promoted by the PATRIOT Act. Indeed, the episodes seem to reassert and reinforce the desirability of this "state of exception," which is also retroactively extended to a rereading of the past history both of the protagonists/heroes of *NCIS* and of the United States. What this historical continuity is meant to show is that the "state of exception" needs to be indefinitely prolonged in the future as a crucial instrument for national heroes to successfully prevent the threats from the present and future enemies of the nation.

The idea of a rereading of the past is also implicit in Gibbs's coma and in the events he evokes: the coexistence and strong interrelationship between his investigations as round trips to hell (be they real, oneiric, or fictional ones), and the idea of placing on the same level of veracity the real world, the fictional one, and, in a Chinese boxes game, the world as described in the TV news broadcast within the fiction, all achieve the effect of universalizing the idea of the fight against the enemies of the nation, rendering it as a timeless and unavoidable condition.

Gibbs thus takes on the canonical role of the hero who exists outside of the temporal dimension of the ordinary man, forced by his heroic status to live a kind of non-life as an instrumental, sacrificial figure working for the good of the community and never for personal interest. In this sense, it is not accidental that his story is narrated through the filter of the coma or as a para-oneiric experience. What these two episodes of *NCIS* conceal is the fact that, in a realistic context, a dream is never just a memory of the real, but always its manipulation/idealization: although Gibbs's long pseudo-dream finds confirmation in the real world, actually it is always the result of a mental elaboration, and in this sense it doesn't simply represent a portion of his life, but the desire of a life he never lived, or the life he would have wished to live. His coma/dream attempts to achieve a synthesis, an oxymoronic one for a real American hero, between two conflicting desires: the desire of devoting one's life to serving one's country and the desire of living a life with one's family and a private dimension—the kind of individual "pursuit of happiness" that is sanctioned and sanctified for ordinary men under the rule of law but is inaccessible to heroes, whose proper dimension is beyond the ordinary and beyond the law. The whole comatose phase, the "hiatus" lived by Gibbs, can be considered an attempt to suspend this conflict and experience a pure *jouissance*, or the paradoxical satisfaction, described by Jacques Lacan, that derives from the transgression of the pleasure principle as a limit to enjoyment, and that ultimately results in a painful experience because it is too intense to bear. In this sense it is no accident that his doctor feels that Gibbs refuses to wake up. His painful scream after Hernandez's murder would thus represent both his orgasmic cry, the final fulfillment made possible by the state of exception—an omnipotence that can be completely achieved only in a dream—and the cry of pain related to the return to reality and therefore to the infinite deferral of enjoyment forced on him by the real world and by his status as a hero in defense of his country (see Lacan, Žižek).

Works Cited

Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. Trans. Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. Print.

Carroll, Hamilton. "Jack Bauer e la sua 'Extraordinary Rendition': l'etica della tortura e il melodramma del neoliberalismo." *ACOMA Rivista Internazionale di Studi Nordamericani. I Soprano e gli altri. I serial televisivi americani in Italia*: Sex and the City, I Simpson, CSI, Six Feet Under, Lost, 24, Will & Grace, L-Word, I Soprano, ER 36 (Summer 2008): 25-39. Print.

Eco, Umberto. *Apocalittici e integrati. Comunicazioni di massa e teorie della cultura di massa*. Milano: Bompiani, 2008. Print.

Izzo, Donatella. "'Crime Scene Do Not Cross': i limiti della giustizia in *CSI*." *ACOMA Rivista Internazionale di Studi Nordamericani. I Soprano e gli altri. I serial televisivi americani in Italia*: *Sex and the City, I Simpson, CSI, Six Feet Under, Lost, 24, Will & Grace, L-Word, I Soprano*, ER 36 (Summer 2008): 40-51. Print.

Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007. Print.

NCIS homepage. Web. 23 Jan. 2011. http://www.ncis.navy.mil/AboutNCIS/Pages/default.aspx

The Futon Critic homepage. Web. 23 Jan. 2011. <http://www.thefutoncritic.com/news/2006/05/23/cbs-places-first-in-the-last-full-week-of-the-season-extending-its-winning-streak-to-10/20060523cbs03/>

Žižek, Slavoj. *For They Know Not What They Do. Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. New York: Verso, 1991. Print.

---. *Looking Awry*. Boston (MA): MIT Press, 1991. Print.

---. *The Parallax View*. Boston (MA): MIT Press, 2006. Print.

GIOVANNI BERNARDINI

WESTERNIZATION VS. AMERICANIZATION AFTER WORLD WAR II: STILL A DEBATE ISSUE? AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHY DISPUTE OVER SHAPES AND TIMES OF US INFLUENCE OVER POSTWAR GERMANY

This contribution aims at giving an overview of the complex and stimulating debate which has taken place since the 1990s among German historians. The debate focuses on the ability to conceptualize and periodize the manifest presence of the United States in Germany after World War II. The subject itself is nothing new: historians and journalists on both shores of the Atlantic have discussed "Americanization" of Europe at least since the early XX century, considering it either as a wishful or dreadful thinking, either confirming or denying its merits. Nevertheless, the interest on this topic was reignited by recent events, such as the end of the Cold War, the spreading of the concept *globalization* during the 1990s, and the widespread feeling that a new phase of transition with global range was taking place in politics, culture, economics, and social behavior. Later, further inspiration came from the abrupt end of post-Cold-War "triumphalism" after 9/11, from the perception that "anti-modern" and "anti-Western" forces were at work around the globe, and especially from the Transatlantic rift that occurred around military intervention in Iraq: in this case and for the first time, the German government, Washington's most loyal partner in the past, expressed publicly against the US resolution to wage war. Even more striking, this opposition paid electoral dividends to the German government, thus proving that a vast majority of German voters shared the opinion of its government against the Bush Administration.

At the academic level, the debate was reopened by a new approach proposed by a group of historians gravitating around Anselm Döring-Manteuffel at Tübingen University. Adopting the research track of "intercultural transfer" from the 1990s cultural debate on globalization, Döring-Manteuffel proposed "Westernization," instead of Americanization, as a new paradigm for interpreting the pattern of Transatlantic relations after the World War II. First of all, such analysis considered this particular phase against the background of US-European relations in the longer term. Focusing on the role of ideology and on the agencies charged with its transmission, Döring-Manteuffel and his group emphasized the long-term emergence of a Transatlantic community of values which has bound Western Europe and the US at a deeper level than the occasional transfer-adoption of certain lifestyle or production techniques. The interpretative paradigm of Westernization attributes an overriding importance to the Cold War of ideologies, which is interpreted essentially as the last battle for the Enlightenment heritage, opposition between liberal democracy and communism.

In his seminal work, Döring-Manteuffel does not deny that the starting point of this process for the postwar era was US military intervention and continued presence in Europe after 1945: without the Nazi unconditional surrendering, the looming Cold War,

the division of Europe, and the Marshall Plan, German historians simply would not have the opportunity to debate freely about the forms of Transatlantic exchange and interaction. Furthermore, both the US government and non-governmental agencies actively sought to foster such community of values since the late 1940s, in order to supply an ideological foundation to the emerging Western security and economic community. However, the values of the so-called "consensus liberalism" (which the US had experimented during the New Deal) were never transferred to Europe in a pure form, but rather merged with European ideas and traditions. While Americanization often implies US hegemonic imposition of values and practices, Westernization takes into consideration the interplay of American and non-American heritages in shaping this Transatlantic community of values by means of cultural transfer. The acculturation of "consensus liberalism," as the ideological basis of this community, took different forms in different national settings; nevertheless, it was adopted in principle almost everywhere in Western Europe. Democracy was not confined to the political practices, but became a social principle, as society increasingly perceived itself as the element influencing and altering the state and its institutions, rather than the opposite. Democracy gradually undermined powerful social polarities deriving from traditional class consciousness, which looked on working and middle class interests as irreconcilable. Other features of this Transatlantic community of values were parliamentary democracy, a representative system of government and social pluralism; in the economic sphere, equal opportunities for individuals, and free market; in the cultural sphere, individualism and the postulate of freedom in art and research. Also religion and science progressively found their place into this self-perception of society, thereby creating a nexus from which traditions and a sense of intellectual community were able to develop across national borders. Thus, the post-1945 evolution was the last step of a process of reciprocal acculturation, which had been bringing ideas and practices back and forth across the Atlantic, and which was epitomized by two centuries of migrations.

Furthermore, as a powerful symbol of redemption, the Westernization approach underlines the contribution given by political, economic, cultural, trade union elites in exile in the US and (in part) in the UK. After the end of World War II, the results of such process made the return journey to Europe in the guise of American-mediated Westerness. Germany plays a relevant part in this context in a twofold sense: first, many of its exiled were active in the cultural and political debate in the US on the postwar, carrying with them their experience of German authoritarianism and Nazi brutality. Even more important, Westernization carries considerable explanatory power in terms of "the German divergence from the West." Döring-Manteuffel argues that this Transatlantic community of values was shaped at least partially against the negative examples offered by the German authoritarianism and warmongerism which reached their peak during the Nazi era. Only after the end of World War II and the collapse of Hitler's regime, German pretenses of exceptionalism came to an end, and the new national leadership fully acknowledged its active participation in the Transatlantic community.

Even the authors of the Westernization paradigm concede that the process occurred between 1945 and 1960 should be called Americanization, meaning a phase of massive, indeed dominant, transmission of American intellectual impulses to Europe. Although two levels overlapped partially in that period, historians cannot underestimate the active role played by local leaderships, as in the case of European integration. After World

War II, Western European countries drew palpably nearer to each other due to the promotion of American influences. Nevertheless the protagonists of this process were themselves Europeans, sharing with the Americans a common interest in shoring up the West against the twin threats of Soviet influence and communist insurgence.

In concrete terms, the research project on Westernization of West Germany has focused on the protagonists of the process of "Transatlantic-community-making": Michael Hochgeschwender has analyzed the case of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an informal organization based in Berlin and grouping the elites of political parties, trade unions and intellectuals from the United States and Western Europe. This group was an excellent Transatlantic laboratory, and a legitimizing forum for politicians with Western credentials: leaders such as Willy Brandt were allowed to participate even if they opposed the politics of the Adenauer government, but accepted the values of liberal democracy. Although it is difficult to gauge the influence that the forum exerted on actual policy, it certainly set the stage for the debate on the so-called End of Ideologies theory, elaborated by US and European sociologists. The theory had a strong influence on the SPD Bad Godesberg program and on the reform movement inside the German trade unions. On this latter subject, Julia Angster delves into the Westernization of the German labor movement by employing a biographical approach and the insights of sociological network analysis. Angster concludes that the influence of intercultural transfer was especially long-lasting in this case, since the "acculturation" of the labor movement in exile had a crucial impact on the programmatic reforms of the West German Trade Unions. Other authors have rather approached those social contexts where German national traditions were strongly articulated – for example in Protestantism, in the conservative press, and among constitutional jurists. Here the process of Westernization seems to have been much slower and mediated than the mere support for the Adenauer government.

The Westernization approach has raised some enthusiastic reactions for its focus on cultural and ideological aspects, in a field of research were economic/diplomatic paradigms have been dominant. Some historians, like Holger Nehring, seized this opportunity to raise the case against the Americanization approach, which, he states, hides the implicit assumption of an aggressively acting American imperial power. The Gramscian interpretation of American hegemony in postwar Transatlantic relations has often considered culture as a mere instrument of power, without acknowledging its independent status as a foundation stone of the Atlantic community. Furthermore, the Westernization model casts a new light on aspects underestimated by previous historiography, such as the democratization process and the cross-pollination of political cultures.

On the other hand, criticisms come from historians who have spent their time and energy in fine-tuning the paradigm of Americanization through their analysis of particular aspects of postwar Transatlantic relations. However, the new pattern of analysis has exerted a positive influence even on such traditional Americanization scholars, as they were forced to admit some of the shortcomings affecting their approach. As an example, Mary Nolan concedes that Americanization still needs to be specified more sharply: the very concept has been used most frequently and unproblematically to discuss different areas of culture, mass consumption, lifestyle transformations, etc.

However, criticisms of the Westernization approach could be reduced here to two main areas. First, proponents of Westernization have been accused by Volker Berghahn

to have represented Americanization as a crude model which ostensibly argues for the forced imposition in Germany of American institutions and values, or the slavish emulation of the US. On the contrary, Americanization as a scientific concept entails a process of interaction and negotiation: no serious analyst could imply American influence as a steamroller crushing every resistance and local peculiarity, or as the mere acceptance of a foreign heritage by local political/cultural elite. A high degree of negotiation was needed in every moment, in order to blend with local traditions and to seek the voluntary acceptance by most of the population.

Nevertheless, Berghahn charges the proponents of the Westernization paradigm of underestimating the structure of the global economic and political order. Power relations are necessary to understand the comprehensive pressure and determination that emanated from America after 1945: at that time, unlike after WWI, the United States became the major player within the international system, a leading power in a new geopolitical and ideological conflict, and used their weight – even if sometimes in a hidden way—to impose American models on Europe. The progression of Americanization is strictly related to the hegemonic pressure emanating from a collective determination by the US as a player making use of its power within the international system. This pressure could, and did, take a variety of forms: political, economic, cultural. It could be quite direct, though it was rarely physical; or it could be indirect, subtle, and covert. As the German case illustrates, the goal of US governmental and private agencies was not to replicate their country; rather they aimed at making a new Germany structurally, institutionally and ideologically compatible with the "Pax Americana" they sought to establish. Their final aim was the integration of the "German economic dynamism" into a homogeneous international economic system for the prosperity and stability of the Atlantic region, especially in the framework of the new East-West confrontation. The peculiar reason for the success of the American influence in Germany after 1945 was the little resistance that the latter opposed, in contrast with the more checkered history of the same process during the first half of the century. Therefore, the model of Westernization seems to lack concreteness. Individuals, institutions and nations became westernized through negotiation and interaction with country-specific models, institutions and governments, not with a fictive West. The ruling classes, as well as economic and cultural actors, were deliberately interventionist and consciously manipulative. They reflected power relations, that changed over the course of the postwar decades; nevertheless they were clear at the end of the conflict. It would be a nonsense to affirm that the German leadership made a "free choice" for Westernization while dealing with the material and moral annihilation of their country, the continued military occupation, the prospect of Soviet hegemony.

On the economic field, Americanization was conceptualized (mainly by Berghahn himself) as the process by which ideas, practices, and patterns of behavior were first developed in the US and then widely spread on the other side of the Atlantic. In fact, US novelties in the fields of production and marketing have aroused the interest of several Europeans since the early XX century. These "Americanizers" introduced the new techniques into public discussion in their country, raising the question of transferability and applicability. Those who were convinced that what they saw was transferable, began to import these ideas and practices. However, the model they sought to emulate was not America as a whole. As an example, the German manufacturers had begun to experiment with American-inspired rationalized production since the 1920s, but with reservations. In fact, they tried to gain the economic benefits of modern technology

without any of the leveling effects experienced in America, such as mass consumption and higher wages. In short, the authoritarian German capitalism never accepted the Fordist assumption that the masses would only tolerate the accumulation of great wealth in the hands of a few, if they could derive a corresponding advantage from it.

Only after World War II, confronted with the need to adapt to an American-dominated, competitively organized, multilateral world economy, German industry completed the transition to mass production and embraced the idea of mass consumption. The introduction of Fordism aroused consumerist desires and dreams for a better life, by pushing towards an America-oriented model of mass consumption: every resistance or attempt to mediate this social side-effect was vane.

The second order of criticisms deals with the elite-centered approach of the Westernization paradigm. If the values of consensus liberalism were adopted by German officials and cultural agents, we still need to conceptualize the relationship between these elites and the population at large. Some scholars like Kaspar Maase have even questioned the usefulness of the Westernization analytical paradigm for understanding high and popular culture, on which the American impact seems to follow rather different patterns. With its emphasis on a Transatlantic community of political values, the Tübingen group seems to ignore the fact that American high culture, such as avant-garde art, music or literature, encountered considerable resistance in Europe. Consequently, US authorities and big philanthropic foundations embarked on recurrent, organized efforts of promotion and persuasion (as in the case of the diffusion of US Pop Art in Europe), which amounted to a coolly calculated Cold War strategy and value investment. On the other hand, this strategy did not need to include American popular culture, and especially not the featured popular films and music which were flowing into European societies soon after 1945 to satisfy an ever-growing demand especially among the younger generation. In fact, the recent proliferation of researches on Cold War popular culture have abandoned older analytic definitions. Today culture is being defined comprehensively to include sciences, religious practices, and all levels of education, in addition to high and popular culture as such. This is a preliminary indicator of how far more democratic American notions of culture have replaced elitist conceptions prevalent in Europe. Hollywood and the American music industry did not need to push their creations and products particularly hard: rather, they met a varying degree of apprehension and hostility by the local elites, even the most involved in binding transatlantic ties. However, in a society proclaiming the principle of free choice in both the political and the economic marketplace, the inflow of such cultural artifacts could be hardly hindered, especially since they were comparatively inexpensive and within the range of the budgets of the German working or lower middle classes—neither mediation nor bargain was required. Thus researchers in this field, especially those adopting the perspective of cultural anthropology, simply take Americanization for granted, while Westernization seems to have no citizenship. Their emphasis is more on the process of appropriation and transformation of American forms, practices, goods and institutions by ordinary historical actors such as the citizens of Europe after World War II. Therefore, Americanization is less a grand explanatory theory than a useful aid to indicate areas of inquiry and suggest provisional understandings.

It would be unfair to draw a conclusion from a debate which is still ongoing. However, this tentative literature overview suggests that the true meaning of such virtual forum of discussion is not the endless Sisyphean search for an all-encompassing

analytical paradigm for the American influence on postwar Germany. On the contrary, the debate among scholars from different methodological approaches offers precious and unlimited opportunities to fine-tune research tools, and to opening new stimulating fields of scientific investigation.

Works Cited

Angster, Julia. *Konsenskapitalismus und Sozialdemokratie. Die Westernisierung von SPD und DGB*. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003. Print.

---. "The Westernization of the Political Though of the West German Labor Movement." *German Ideologies since 1945. Studies in the Political Thought and Culture of the Bonn Republic*. Ed. Jan-Werner Müller. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003. Print.

Berghahn, Volker. *Industriegesellschaft und Kulturtransfer: Die deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen im 20. Jahrundert*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010. Print.

---. "The Debate on 'Americanization' among Economic and Cultural Historians." *Cold War History* 10.1 (2010): 107-130. Print.

---. "Conceptualizing the American Impact on Germany: West German Society and the Problem of Americanization." Paper presented at the conference *The American Impact on Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective,* German Historical Institute in Washington, March 25-27, 1999 (available online at the GHI website).

Döring-Manteuffel, Anselm. *Wie westlich sind die Deuschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrundert*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999. Print.

---. "Transatlantic Exchange and Interaction—The Concept of Westernization." Paper presented at the conference *The American Impact on Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective*, German Historical Institute in Washington, March 25-27, 1999 (available online at the GHI website).

Hochgeschwender, Michael. *Freiheit in der Offensive? Der Kongress für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen*. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999. Print.

---. "Il Fronte Culturale della Guerra Fredda. Il Congresso per la Libertà della Cultura come esperimento di forma di lotta transnazionale." *Ricerche di Storia Politica* 6.1 (2003): 35-60. Print.

Junker, Detlef, ed. *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945-1990*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Print.

Maase, Kaspar. "'Americanization,' 'Americanness' and 'Americanisms': Time for a Change in Perspective?" Paper presented at the conference *The American Impact on Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective*, German Historical Institute in Washington, March 25-27, 1999 (available online at the GHI website).

Nehring, Hölger. "'Westernization': A New Paradigm for Interpreting West European History in a Cold War Context." *Cold War History* 4.2 (2004): 175-191. Print.

Nolan, Mary. "Anti-Americanism and Americanization in Germany." *Politics & Society* 33.1 (2005): 88-122. Print.

---. "Americanization or Westernization?" Paper presented at the conference *The American Impact on Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective*, German Historical Institute in Washington, March 25-27, 1999 (available online at the GHI website).

Sauer, Thomas. *Westorientierung im deutschen Protestantismus? Vorstellung und Tätigkeit des Kronberger Kreises*. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999. Print.

Stephan, Alexander. *Americanization and Anti-Americanism. The German Encounter with American Culture after 1945*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005. Print.

SILVIA BETTI

EL *SPANGLISH*: ¿UN PUENTE ENTRE EL MUNDO HISPANO Y EL MUNDO ESTADOUNIDENSE?

Nohma Ben Ayad (2007) subraya que "El Mediterráneo se puede ver como fuente del mestizaje cultural y se extiende, a través del Atlántico, hacia los países de América Latina [y de los Estados Unidos de América, *N.de la A.*] en donde encontramos de nuevo la impronta de la cultura hispana". El mestizaje y la hibridación representan expresiones de madurez cultural, porque las personas se adaptan a nuevas situaciones de la vida e individuos diferentes pueden convivir y compartir competencias culturales múltiples, pasando de unos espacios culturales a otros (Betti en prensa/a). Asimismo, cambiar de códigos, hablar medio en español y medio en inglés, como ocurre en muchas ciudades de los Estados Unidos, no es tan absurdo si se piensa en la mezcla de las culturas, las migraciones y todas las circunstancias que han hecho que estos dos idiomas puedan encontrarse.

En el presente estudio queremos hacer algunas reflexiones sobre la comunicación entre hispanos y anglosajones, - poblaciones de idiomas diferentes que *con-viven* en los Estados Unidos, y sobre el llamado *Spanglish*, estrategia expresiva que representaría la identidad mestiza de muchos latinos en los Estados Unidos.

Hibridación, mestizaje, mezcla, fronteras, Spanglish: todos éstos son términos que aluden a mundos de referencias culturales dobles, de culturas entrelazadas que gestan algo nuevo (Betti 2009). Y, en efecto, las comunidades latinas en los Estados Unidos viven en espacios fronterizos: entre dos mundos, dos culturas, dos lenguas. Este contacto entre la lengua inglesa y la lengua española genera lo que *popularmente* se define como *Spanglish*. El *Spanglish* nace en los bordes de una frontera, "una frágil frontera de cristal", una "cicatriz", como forma comunicacional y como "manera de ser", y lo que se genera en estos bordes resulta para muchos estudiosos una amenaza. La misma amenaza que se observa, según Manzanas Calvo (2006), en el Mediterráneo entre España y África:

> The strait and Atlantic journeys have become two versions of Spain's Río Grande, the last and most dangerous obstacle between the third and first worlds. There are more parallels as well: The crossing of the U.S.-Mexican border finds a direct counterpart in the night assaults on the recently reinforced double fence separating Ceuta and Melilla, two autonomous Spanish cities in North Africa, from Morocco.

Velasco (2007) pone de relieve que la frontera entre España y Marruecos es mucho más desigual que la existente entre Estados Unidos y México, "pese a las dimensiones míticas que habitualmente se le atribuyen a ésta". España y Marruecos representa una frontera de fronteras, prolífica proveedora de metáforas, escribe Ferrer Gallardo (2008), edificada en la base "de una fascinante amalgama de conflictos y alianzas: cristianismo e islam; Europa y África; territorio UE y territorio no-UE; norte opulento y sur

empobrecido; antiguo colonizador y antiguo colonizado. En el paisaje fronterizo hispanomarroquí, se entrelaza un amplio abanico de categorías geográficas, históricas, políticas, sociales, culturales y económicas (131)".

Estados Unidos y México es, en cambio, una frontera grande. Son aproximadamente tres mil kilómetros, "en su mayoría marcados por el cauce de un río, que, al norte es conocido como Río Grande, y al sur como Río Bravo. Ahí empiezan las desavenencias y los desencuentros. En el río, que es una gran metáfora" (Bastidas Colinas, 2010). La metáfora de una relación mudable. Una relación continua e incesante:

> Una frontera que representa muy bien una relación abrumadora. De récord y números inmensos en todo. En el cruce diario de personas y vehículos, en el intercambio, en el consumo, en la migración legal e ilegal, en el paso de drogas, de armas y de contrabando. Una frontera en la que todo es tema y todo es problema: los derechos humanos, las relaciones laborales, el comercio, el medio ambiente, la economía, el desarrollo urbano y la delincuencia. (Bastidas Colinas, 2010)

Fronteras que han creado los *espaldas mojadas*, los *balseros,* y los *pateristas*, denominaciones con las que se indican los migrantes clandestinos que intentan buscar el "American/European Dream" atravesando zonas geográficas precisas: el Río Grande, frontera entre México y Estados Unidos, el estrecho de la Florida, entre Cuba y Estados Unidos y el mar Mediterráneo que separa Europa y África. Desierto, río y fronteras marítimas: el sueño americano y europeo separado también por el mar. Mignolo (2007),[1] a propósito de la historia de estos espacios fronterizos, observa que el habitar y el pensar en la frontera es "consubstancial con la formación y fundación histórica del mundo moderno/colonial y de la economía capitalista (2)." Cuando nacen los circuitos comerciales del Atlántico y la economía capitalista, se vuelve la mirada hacia el oeste del Mediterráneo y hacia el Atlántico; primero Castilla, luego Portugal y Holanda. Es en aquel momento que "[...] se van creando las condiciones para la emergencia del habitar las fronteras, esto es, la exterioridad, y para la emergencia del pensar o la epistemología fronteriza… (Mignolo, 2007: 3)."

El punto de vista lingüístico

El *Spanglish*, producto del mestizaje y de la migración, y a su vez frontera entre dos lenguas y dos culturas, representa una estrategia expresiva que da la posibilidad de comunicarse pasando simultáneamente de un código a otro, del inglés al español o viceversa, o de mezclar estas dos lenguas en los discursos dialógicos espontáneos, de forma consciente o inconsciente, o incluso inventar nuevos términos, y tiene por eso una función comunicativa, pero también simbólica, ya que sirve para reafirmar la diferencia y la identidad. Stavans (2010), por su parte, observa que el *Spanglish* está "en la cicatriz donde el sur y el norte hemisféricos se encuentran o se separan". Ese fenómeno, afirma este autor, demuestra que existe un nuevo tipo de mestizaje que, en su esencia, no es diferente al que se llevó a cabo en la América española y portuguesa durante la Colonia. Éste fue un mestizaje racial en el que los españoles y los indígenas se fusionaron para crear ese mestizo prototipo que el filósofo mexicano José Vasconcelos llamó, en los años veinte, la *raza de bronce*, y específicamente, 'la raza cósmica'. "El mestizaje que representa el *spanglish* es de orden cultural: a través del inglés y el castellano se mancomunan las civilizaciones hispánica y sajona (Stavans, 2010)." Sin embargo, el

[1] En Iñigo Clavo/ Sánchez-Mateos Paniagua (2007).

Spanglish es no solamente una modalidad de expresión, sino que se trata de la manera de vivir, marcada de hibridación, de identidad que, en los Estados Unidos, *representaría* a aquellos latinos que viven entre estas dos realidades (Betti, 2008). A los hispanos poder comunicarse en inglés y en español les permite tener contacto con dos culturas y dos mundos diferentes.

Mignolo (2006: XVII) afirma que:

> el pensamiento descolonizador necesita de historias otras [...] necesita de categorías otras de pensamiento [...], necesita de otras lenguas... y también de lenguas otras como el *creole* haitiano o el *spanglish* de los latinos y latinas en Estados Unidos. Habitar esas lenguas es habitar subjetividades no enteramente humanas (desde la perspectiva estándar de la humanidad, que es la que detenta el poder político, económico y discursivo)... El pensamiento descolonial tiene por meta descolonizar el saber y el ser y construir otros mundos posibles que no son las posibilidades que ofrece el imperio y sus disidentes internos... se necesitan pues categorías de pensamiento otras y también instituciones otras, como la universidad (en realidad pluri – versidad).

Zaccaria (2008) señala, por ejemplo, que la resistencia chicana al colonialismo lingüístico obtiene su fuerza del conocimiento de que la tierra en la que viven fue suya, antes de la conquista española y el expansionismo estadounidense hacia el suroeste (61). En efecto, como subraya Martín-Rodríguez (2004): "Aztlán y Al-Andalus proporcionan en el imaginario colectivo de las dos poblaciones inmigrantes correspondientes un referente histórico y mítico que sirve como legitimización de la experiencia diaspórica [...]." Los que emigran de México a Estados Unidos y de Marruecos a España, prosigue este estudioso, son un caso diferente del de los pakistaníes inmigrantes en Londres o del de los argelinos en París, casos en los que los súbditos imperiales de antaño emigran de las ex-colonias a la ex-metrópolis. La diferencia sustancial, en el caso México/Estados Unidos y Magreb/España, se centra en el hecho de que estos grupos emigrantes "pueden recordar y reclamar una presencia anterior, hegemónica, en las tierras de destino" (Martín-Rodríguez, 2004). Vemos en esto naturalmente las relaciones entre países desarrollados y países en vías de desarrollo (las relaciones norte-sur), la llamada globalización económica y "la idea de la migración como un retorno a un espacio geográfico y cultural que no es del todo ajeno" (Martín-Rodríguez, 2004).

¿Puede considerarse entonces El *Spanglish* como un puente entre el mundo hispano y el mundo estadounidense? Ana Celia Zentella (1995: 63) observa que

> entre los latinos de clase trabajadora, particularmente aquellos nacidos en los Estados Unidos, es más probable que se refuten las ideologías de pureza lingüística y se rechace la exigencia de que la lengua española sea un requisito para su identidad latina. Ellos adoptan el cambio de código y el préstamo de palabras del *spanglish* como una exhibición gráfica de su pertenencia a ambos mundos; usan esas herramientas lingüísticas para forjar una identidad no blanca, una identidad positiva de panlatino [...].

El *Spanglish*, esa manera de ser, ese cambio de códigos, llega a ser así un medio expresivo bien definido y legítimo en determinados contextos, que crea una identidad nueva, bilingüe, bicultural y bisensible. Hay latinos que aprecian este código comunicacional porque *representaría* su forma de ser y de vivir en los Estados Unidos, su recorrido íntimo y personal, su geografía interior, y es un modo de cruzar sus propias fronteras (Betti en prensa/b). Rodrigo Alsina (1999), por su parte, puntualiza que es por estos contactos interculturales que, a veces, se construye una lengua de contacto como el *Spanglish.* Ed Morales considera el *Spanglish* como concepto global que alude, por un lado, a unas formas de lengua y por el otro también a una manera de ser, a una identidad que abraza el componente anglosajón y el hispánico en cualquiera de sus

variantes (Torres, 2006). Y en efecto, Dionisio Cañas (1997) observa que "en lo esencial, los latinos son ciudadanos estadounidenses en cuyos hogares se habla, o se ha hablado, en un pasado cercano o remoto, un idioma de origen latino: el español." Sin olvidar "los importantísimos elementos africanos e indígenas que posee esta cultura en los Estados Unidos."

El hispano y el anglosajón son mundos diferentes en sensibilidad, cultura y lengua. Sin embargo, la complejidad de la condición plural de estos hispanos cuando se manifiesta en los Estados Unidos puede crear algo fascinante, una realidad híbrida, interesante y atractiva. Esa condición plural, esas identidades compuestas admiten que existen otras vías para llegar a ser americano, y esto podría significar, quizás, que la asimilación al *mainstream* no es fundamental (Guibernau, 2008; Betti, 2008; Betti, 2009). Estos *hispanounidenses* pueden hacer más plurales a los Estados Unidos, ya que representan identidades compuestas, síntesis y mestizaje inefable entre lo hispano y lo anglosajón. Con su sensibilidad, sus valores, sus estilos de vida, su religiosidad, su arte, su cosmovisión, su dimensión civilizatoria propia, y con su lengua representan *un gran potencial,* no sólo cultural, sino *político* a largo plazo (Calvo-Buezas, 2006). En contra de lo que escribe polémicamente Huntington, o sea que el "*American Dream*" sólo es posible soñarlo en inglés, los hispanos pueden demostrar, como afirma Calvo-Buezas (2006), que el *sueño americano* es posible soñarlo también en lengua española y en la cultura hispana (Betti en prensa/b).

Una posible conclusión…

Concluyendo, hacemos nuestras las palabras de García Canclini (2003) que subraya:

> En las actuales condiciones de globalización, encuentro cada vez mayores razones para emplear los conceptos de mestizaje e hibridación. Pero la intensificación de la interculturalidad migratoria, económica y mediática muestra, [...] que no hay sólo "*la fusión, la cohesión, la ósmosis, sino la confrontación y el diálogo*". Y que en nuestro tiempo de interculturalidad [...], el pensamiento y las prácticas mestizas son recursos para reconocer lo distinto y trabajar democráticamente las tensiones de las diferencias. La hibridación, como proceso de intersección y transacciones, es lo que hace posible que la multiculturalidad evite lo que tiene de segregación y pueda convertirse en interculturalidad. Las políticas de hibridación pueden servir para trabajar democráticamente con las diferencias, para que la historia no se reduzca a guerras entre culturas, como imagina Samuel Huntington. Podemos elegir vivir en estado de guerra o en estado de hibridación. [...] Un mundo en creciente movimiento de hibridación requiere ser pensado no como un conjunto de unidades compactas, homogéneas y radicalmente distintas sino como intersecciones, transiciones y transacciones.

Y así, muchos hispanos que llegan hoy en día a los Estados Unidos entrando en contacto con otra realidad forjan una identidad pluriforme, entrecultural, una identidad hecha de intersección, híbrida, mestiza (Torres, 2007; Betti, 2009). Asimismo, el *Spanglish* es una estrategia expresiva abierta al cambio, reflejo y representación de la identidad mestiza. Considerado expresión polimorfa, pseudolengua, lengua fronteriza… el *Spanglish* es el producto híbrido de la migración. Pero de una migración en cierto sentido particular, ya que no se puede olvidar, como observa Cebrián (1999), que los hispanos norteamericanos tienen unas raíces históricas, culturales y lingüísticas que van mucho más allá de la peligrosa aventura de los inmigrantes, los *espaldas mojadas*, el exilio anticastrista o la reciente inmigración desde Puerto Rico.

Devolver a esta comunidad hispana el orgullo de serlo, no en tanto que refugiados o fugitivos, sino en tanto que fundadores, también ellos, de la nación americana, sería una forma de contribuir a poner en valor su condición latina, que no es algo ajeno, marginal o prestado al ser de Norteamérica, sino que está presente desde los albores de su fundación como estado moderno. (Cebrián, 1999)

Obras citadas

Bastidas Colinas, Sabino. "Romper la frontera de cristal." *El País.com*. 23/02/2010. Web. 10 dic. 2011.

Ben Ayad, Nohma. "El diálogo intercultural del Mediterráneo al Atlántico." *Encuentro de Jóvenes Investigadores en torno al Mediterráneo*. 3 y 4 de mayo. Tarragona. 2007. Web. 13 en. 2012.

Betti, Silvia. *El Spanglish ¿Medio eficaz de comunicación?* Bologna: Pitagora editrice, 2008. Print.

---. "*Spanglish* en los Estados Unidos: Apuntes sobre lengua, cultura e identidad." *Confluenze,* '*Lingua e identità*'. *Rivista di Studi Iberoamericani del Dip. di Lingue e Letterature Straniere Moderne* dell'Alma Mater Studiorum di Bologna. 1.2 (noviembre 2009):101-121. Web. 31 mar. 2010.

---. "Reflexiones sobre el contacto lingüístico: el *spanglish* y el caso de la revista estadounidense *Latina*." *XVII CONGRESO DE LA AIH* (*Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*) (19-24/07/2010) Roma: Università La Sapienza. En prensa/a.

---. (en prensa/b). "*Spanglish*: ¿pseudolengua o identidad?" *Estudios de Lingüística Aplicada* (*ELA*) 52.

Calvo Buezas, Tomás, ed. *El gigante dormido. El poder hispano en los Estados Unidos*. Madrid: Editorial Catarata. 2006. Print.

Cañas, Dionisio. "Los latinos en USA: una nación virtual." *Revista Número 14* (1997). Web 21 mar. 2006.

Cebrián, Juan L. "La sociedad digital y el diálogo transatlántico." *Foro sobre Memoria, Comunicación y Futuro, Proyecto Trans-Atlántico de Brown University*. 1999. Web 21 mar. 2008.

Ferrer Gallardo, Xavier. "Acrobacias fronterizas en Ceuta y Melilla. Explorando la gestión de los perímetros terrestres de la Unión Europea en el continente africano." *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 51 (2008): 129-149. Print.

García Canclini, Néstor. "Noticias recientes sobre la hibridación." *Trans 7* (2003). Web 21 mar. 2010.

Guibernau, Montserrat. "¿Qué significa 'ser americano'?" *La Vanguardia* 8 de marzo 2008. Print.

Iñigo Clavo, María y Rafael Sánchez-Mateos Paniagua. "Entrevista a Walter Mignolo." *Bilboquet.es*. Nov. 2007. Web. 19 dic. 2011.

Manzanas Calvo, Ana María. "Contested Passages: Migrants and Borders in the Río Grande and the Mediterranean Sea." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 105.4 (2006 Fall): 809-823. Print.

Martín Rodríguez, Manuel M. "Aztlán y Al-Andalus: la idea del retorno en dos literaturas inmigrantes". Alicante: *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*, Portal de cultura chicana. 2004. Web. 13 en. 2012.

Mignolo, Walter. "Prólogo." *Modernidad y pensamiento descolonizador. Memoria Seminario Internacional*. Compilador Yapu, Mario. Fundación PIEB, IFEA. Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos. La Paz. Bolivia. XVI – XVII: (2006). Print.

Rodrigo Alsina, Miguel. *Comunicación intercultural*. Barcelona: Anthropos. 1999. Print.

Stavans, Ilan. "Codex Espanglesis." *Serie Spanglish. Parte 2*. Ed. Aurelia Fierros. *HispanicLA*. 19/4/2010. Web. 19 dic. 2011.

Torres, Antonio. "Fronteras lingüísticas y literarias. La expresión de los latinos en los Estados Unidos." *La frontera entre límits i ponts*. Eds. Montserrat Ventura i Oller, Ariadna Lluís i Vidal-Folch, y Gabriela Dalla Corte. Barcelona: Casa Amèrica Catalunya, 2006. 85-93. Web. 21 mar. 2011.

---. "Miradas sobre la identidad latina en los Estados Unidos." *Revista Pecios*. 5/12/2007. Web. 9 mar. 2008.

Velasco, Juan Carlos. "Fronteras e inmigración: la sima entre España y África." *Migraciones. Reflexiones cívicas*. *Madrimasd.org*. 10/05/2007. Web. 21 nov. 2011.

Zaccaria, Paola. "Translating Borders, Performing Trans-nationalism." *Human Architecture Journal of the Sociology of Self-knowledge*. vol. IV (Special Issue. Summer 2006): 57-70. Web. 21 nov. 2011.

Zentella, Ana Celia. "La hispanofobia del movimiento 'Inglés oficial' en los Estados Unidos por la oficialización del inglés." *Alteridades* 5.10 (1995): 55-65. Web. 21 nov. 2011.

NATASHA BONNELAME

WHAT DOES AMERICA MEAN TO US? WHAT DO WE MEAN TO IT? LOCATING THE OTHER AMERICA IN JOAN ANIM-ADDO'S *IMOINDA OR SHE WHO WILL LOSE HER NAME*

In 1989, Martinican theorist, Édouard Glissant in his collection of essays, *Caribbean Discourse* writes:

> What does this America mean to us? What do we mean to it? Before its dense and multiple presence, we seem to fade into insignificance […] In one way or another, the Caribbean is the outgrowth of America. The part that breaks free of the continent and yet is linked to the whole […] the Caribbean sea is not an American lake. It is the estuary of the Americas. (Glissant 117)

The America that Glissant focuses on and the America that I am interested in looking at in the context of this paper, is what sociologists such as Charles Wagely and Rex Nettleford have termed as "Plantation America." According to Wagley, Plantation America extends spatially from halfway up the coast of Brazil, into Guyana, across the Caribbean coast taking in the north of South America, the coast of Central America, the Caribbean itself and the southern half of the USA. Wagley writes that "sugar production by the plantation system within African slave labour became a fundamental formative feature of the Plantation-America cultural sphere" (Wagley 35).

In the mid twentieth century. as Caribbean nations established their independence and began the search for political and cultural autonomy, a number of Caribbean intellectuals started to explore in earnest this question of what it meant to be a part of the Americas. They were not the first; the possible answers to this question had started to take shape a century earlier in the Hispanophone regions of the Americas. As early as 1815, Simon Bolivar had contemplated the future of the American continent in what has now become known as his "Jamaica Letter." In this correspondence addressed to his friend the Englishman Henry Cullen, he contemplates the future of the continent and touches upon what will become a central focus in the discourse of identity in the Caribbean and the wider Americas: the recognition that the communities of the Caribbean and the Americas cannot simply reform their ancient fragmented past to create a postcolonial political and cultural future.

In 1891 the Cuban poet, essayist, political philosopher and revolutionary José Martí, expands on Bolivar's musings and develops his own vision of what this Americas might be and importantly what it could be, in his seminal essay "Nuestra America" (Martí 2002). Martí considers the need for both political and educational progress in order for the population of Cuba, the Caribbean, and the wider Americas to understand their past as he writes:

> The young men of America are rolling up their sleeves and plunging their hands into the dough, and making it rise with the leavening of their sweat. They understand that there is too much imitation, and

that salvation lies in creating. *Create* is this generation's password. Make wine from plantains; it may be sour, but it is our wine! (Martí 294)

Martí calls forth a pan-American discourse that uses the tools unique to the Americas to create this dialogue. Plantain wine might be alien and sour to the outsider, but it is an essential part of the diets of many communities within the geographical and cultural sphere known as Plantation America. In using plantain, the writer of the Americas no longer indiscriminately imitates Western thought but rather expresses his or her own culture. What I am specifically interested in is Martí's claim that salvation lies in creating. This idea of creating moves beyond simply constructing an alternative vision, and the literary critic Iris Zavala, interprets this as Marti's impulse toward "opening the future…and not toward unearthing mythical pasts or origins" (48). I want to use this idea of opening the future and breaking free from mythical pasts and origins as a means of analysing Joan Anim-Addo's libretto *Imoinda or She Who Will Lose Her Name,* (Anim-Addo 2003). and my focus is a gendered one. I am particularly interested in the position of the African Caribbean woman who writes/creates as a means of salvation. In assuming this position, I ask, what questions does the Caribbean woman writer raise in terms of what it means to locate one's history within the Americas, and the problematic transatlantic relationships that this encompasses?

Anim-Addo's libretto *Imoinda* first published as a bilingual translation in 2003 (English and Italian), is a rewriting of Aphra Behn's 1688 novella *Oroonoko.* In Anim-Addo's revision of Behn's novella, what Betty A. Wilson refers to as the interrogation of the canonical "mistress texts" (Wilson 19), we find significant changes, as Anim-Addo attempts to locate and give voice to the experiences of the Caribbean woman, by firmly, and visibly, placing her within the creation of the Americas as we know it today. To provide a brief summary for those who might not be familiar with Behn's text, Oroonoko is set in Suriname, in South America and details the tragic story of the noble African prince Oroonoko, who falls in love with Imoinda, the daughter of his aristocratic foster-father. Thwarted in their desire to be together by Oroonoko's grandfather, the two young lovers are independently taken into slavery and transported to a plantation in Suriname. The novella ends with Oroonoko's refusal to be enslaved expressed by killing Imoinda and their unborn child, and himself being dismembered at the hands of the colonialists.

The first significant adaption by Anim-Addo concerns the change in narrative form; from Behn's novella, Anim-Addo fashions a libretto, and this change is highly significant. Firstly it allows Anim-Addo to incorporate a multiplicity of voices in the form of the chorus, and secondly it bridges the oral with the written narrative. The operatic chorus, who play a central role within Anim-Addo's opera, are the sounds of the drums and the women wailing in Old Guinea, they are the collectors and the keepers of the slave's histories. During the crossing of the middle passage on the Nightmare Canoe, they sing:

Chorus: I am number eighty three.
Best to forget. Raped again yesterday.
Mouth stuffed with rope.
Tossed and dashed and tossed again,
Some new terror strikes the nightmare canoe. (Anim-Addo 62)

Once in the Americas, the Chorus become the slave songs of the plantation community, and importantly, they safeguard the ancestral history of Old Guinea, which they pass down to Imoinda and her new born child as they sing:

Chorus: River Gambia:
Listen!
River Niger:
Listen!
River Congo:
Listen!
The waters of five rivers:
Listen! (Anim-Addo 95)

For Giovanna Covi, the Chorus represents the "whole collectivity of African slaves" (Covi 85) speaking through [Imoinda's] voice:

> Imoinda no longer remains silent, she cannot be left alone to speak: in her opera, Imoinda speaks because it is the Choir – not the metaphysical but a material presence formed by all the women characters in the play – and thus [it is] the entire community of women aboard the Nightmare Canoe that empower her to speak. (Covi 86)

As the quotation illustrates, Covi's reading of *Imoinda,* positions the Chorus at the epicentre of this re-imagining of Caribbean history. In presenting us with the Chorus, Anim-Addo creates a space which at once speaks of the individual, and the multiple voices of the African presence within the Americas. In creolising the operatic form, Anim-Addo constructs what Édouard Glissant calls an "oral exposé" (4); an explanation to the lived (Caribbean/American) experience. Drawing on Glissant's idea of the "oral expose" I argue that what Anim-Addo creates in *Imoinda*, is a counter discourse to the slave and anti-slave narratives we have become familiar with, as a means of providing an explanation for the lived experience of the African female self within the Caribbean. If Behn's novella is an antislavery text, Maria Lima then, in her reading of Anim-Addo's libretto, asks us to see *Imoinda* as a 'neo-slave narrative'. *Imoinda*, Lima argues, "is a contemporary re-invention of the past and a re-positioning of the previously non-positioned gendered figure" (Lima, 2009).

Anim-Addo's libretto unsettles earlier forms of opera; in particular opera's presented on the English stage during the seventeenth and eighteenth century London: "The story of Behn's "Royal Slave" occupied the English stage for almost a century, in dramatic redactions by Thomas Southerne in 1696 and John Hawkesworth in 1759" (Brown 42). Thirty years before the publication of Behn's *Oroonoko*, Sir William Davenant, the English poet and playwright, wrote two operas entitled "The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru" in 1658, and "The History of Sir Francis Drake" in 1659. Crucially Davenant's operas were written and produced at a critical point in England's colonial history and have been interpreted as propaganda for Oliver Cromwell's West Indian initiatives. In "The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru" the opera "concludes by prophesising the fall of the Spanish in the New World empire… the Peruvians paradoxically invite the English to sit and rule as our guests" (Frohock 328). Similarly in the "The History of Sir Francis Drake," Drake the raider becomes an honourable conqueror who liberates the Native Americans and Maroons from their Spanish oppressors (Frohock 329). In choosing the operatic form, Anim-Addo subverts these two earlier operas from the English tradition, which looked to the Americas for inspiration. In addition to the "cruel Spaniards" of Davenant's operatic landscape, Anim-Addo presents us with the British involvement in

the transatlantic slave trade. As with a number of travel writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Davenant did not travel to the Americas but instead imagined the affairs of the colonies. With Anim-Addo's re-imagining of the Caribbean colony, we are presented not with natives offering to sacrifice their sovereignty, but rather with African female slaves, negotiating and fighting for their survival within the Americas.

In Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, Imoinda carries Oroonoko's unborn child, and at the end of the novella, he kills them, believing death to be a more just and heroic fate, than life as a slave on the plantation. Significantly, Anim-Addo chooses life; her Imoinda does not die, and whilst she is pregnant, it is not Prince Oko's baby that she carries. Her child is the result of her rape whilst in the plantation house. Initially Imoinda tries to induce a miscarriage, but this does not work, and at the end of the libretto, Imoinda has given birth to a mixed race baby girl. Covi contrasts Prince Oko's pursuit of the heroic ideal to Imoinda's position, and writes: "Imoinda never seeks individual immortality; rather in the end she gives immortality to her race" (Covi 87). As with Behn's novella, the noble savage dies in Anim-Addo's opera. Yet, the heroic ideal cannot survive in Anim-Addo's landscape and instead it is the struggle of the collective that Anim-Addo looks to, as a means of explaining and exploring Caribbean modernity within the Americas. The creation of a neo-slave slave text enables Anim-Addo to re-inscribe the black woman into a creolised Caribbean discourse (Anim-Addo 78).

Caribbean women's resistance to slavery in many instances took place within the domestic and matriarchal setting. Official records show that a number of cooks and domestic slaves across the Caribbean region, the majority of which were women, were responsible for poisoning their owners during slavery (Moitt 155). The domestic sphere provided a strategic position from which to exert control over one's survival. Imoinda's position within the master's house and her decision to give birth to her child speaks to this domestic and matriarchal form of resistance. Significantly Anim-Addo's libretto highlights the position of the gendered collective within these acts of resistance. Just as Imoinda cannot speak without the collective force and will of the Chorus, she cannot give birth to her child without the strength and collective energy of the women around her. For Anim-Addo the 'birthing' of the creole nation is not simply a place for revolutionaries and valorised male warriors, but rather it is the collective resistance of Caribbean women that subverts and enables the development of the creolised Caribbean societies.

Imoinda's imposed journey to the Caribbean, and her subsequent silencing is the first in a long line of absent conversations. We know that she exists, because we have seen her in Brooks' 1788 print plan for the slave ships. She travels to England and becomes part of the abolition movement, in twentieth century Paris she explores her negritude, and in 1930s London she is the Caribbean Voices. Caribbean women have long been involved in the resistance and the creation of a creolised Caribbean identity, and in giving Imoinda a voice, Anim-Addo attempts to displace the dominant systems of knowledge, so as to unearth the hidden histories of the black female experience. The migratory narratives of Caribbean women, presented not only in Imoinda but in a number of texts, highlight the cultural transactions that she has been engaged in, and continues to engage with. The Caribbean woman is not static and nor is she silent. She is present within our national records, she hangs on the walls of our museums, and she is part of our political landscape. In creating an alternative view point, one which starts with the re-imagining of the collective experience onboard the Nightmare Canoe, Anim-Addo challenges us firstly, to recognise the collective experience of the black female

presence in the Americas and, secondly, to start these absent conversations in transnational critical discourse.

Works Cited

Anim-Addo, Joan. *Imoinda: or She Who Will Lose Her Name/Imoina, o Colei Che Perdera il Nome.* Ed. Giovanna Covi. *Voci Femiminili Caraibiche e Interculturalità.* Trento: Dipartmento di Scienze Filologiche e Storiche, 2003. Print.

---.. "Imoinda Birthing the Creole Nation." *In Revisiting and Reinterpreting Aphra Behn:* Proceedings of the Aphra Behn Europe Seminar ESSE conference. Entrevaux, France: Bilingua GA Editions, 2002. Print.

Beckles, Hilary McD. "Capitalism, Slavery and Caribbean Modernity." *Callaloo* 20.4 (Autumn, 1997): 777-789. Print.

Brown, Laura and Felicity Nussbaum, eds. *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English literature*. New York; London : Methuen, 1987. Print.

Covi, Giovanna. "*Oroonoko's* Genderization and Creolization: Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda." In Revisiting and Reinterpreting Aphra Behn:* Proceedings of the Aphra Behn Europe Seminar ESSE conference. Entrevaux, France: Bilingua GA Editions, 2002. 83 -92. Print.

Frohock, Richard. "Sir William Davenant's American Operas." *The Modern Language Review* 96.2 (Apr. 2001): 323-333. Print.

Glissant, Edouard. *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. Trans. Michael J. Dash. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989. Print.

Hall, Stuart, et al eds. *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996. Print.

Lima, Maria. Video conference presentation from New York at 'Words from Other World Workshop', AHRC Student Led Initiative, Beyond Text, November 2009, Goldsmiths, University of London.

Martí, José. *Selected Writings.* Ed. and Trans. Esther Allen London. New York: Penguin Books, 2002. Print.

Moitt, Bernard. "Women, Work and Resistance in the French Caribbean during Slavery, 1700-1840." *Engendering History, Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*. Eds. Verene Shepherd et al. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers; London: James Currey Publishers, 1995. 155-175. Print.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other.* Trans. Richard Howard. New York HarperPerennial, 1992. Print.

Wagley, Charles. "Plantation America: A Culture Sphere." *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium.* Ed. Vera Rubin. Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University College of the West Indies in association with the research and training program for the study of man in the tropics. Columbia University, New York, 1957. 3-13. Print.

Wilson, Betty. "Francophone Caribbean Women Writers and/in History." *Swinging Her Breasts at History*. Ed. Moira Inghilleri. London: Mango Publishing, 2004. Print.

LEONARDO BUONOMO

FAMILY HIERARCHY IN THE AMERICAN SITCOM: THE CASE OF *BEWITCHED*

A staple of American television since its very beginnings, sitcoms have traditionally focused on the portrayal of the family. Over the years they have provided American audiences with re-creations of domestic lives variously realistic and idealized, affectionate and satirical, and they have supplied deeply influential models of interpersonal and social relations. With their roots in such popular, egalitarian forms of entertainment as vaudeville, radio, and comic strips (the immensely successful *Blondie*, in particular), sitcoms have used humor to explore the inner workings of the household which, they would suggest, is American society writ small.

This paper will focus on the sitcom *Bewitched* – loosely based on the films *I Married a Witch* (1942) and *Bell, Book and Candle* (1958) – which ran on the ABC network from 1964 to 1972. In its first season it was second only to *Bonanza* in the ratings and was watched by 31 percent of the US television audience. It remained a top-ten show for another two seasons (Pilato 2). Almost forty years after its last episode was broadcast in prime time, *Bewitched* continues to be enormously popular in syndication and on the web. When it hit America's small screens in the mid-nineteen sixties, *Bewitched* was part of an intriguing new wave of sitcoms which seemed to suggest possible alternatives to the traditional, white picket-fence, suburban family world portrayed in such fifties shows as *Father Knows Best*, *Leave it to Beaver*, and *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet.* Together with the coeval *The Addams Family* and *The Munsters*, *Bewitched* portrayed family life and domesticity with a twist (featuring, respectively, characters with a macabre life-style, a monstrous appearance, or magic powers), and it called into question the very notion of normality. Like its carbon-copy *I Dream of Jeannie*, or the futuristic *My Favorite Martian*, *Bewitched* injected a heavy (and heady) dose of fantasy into the depiction of contemporary American life, striking a chord with viewers who had had enough of the conformist, bland life-style celebrated during the Eisenhower era and who were ready for the wonders of the space age[1] and the distortions of psychedelic culture.

As is well known, *Bewitched* revolves around a young woman named Samantha (played by Elizabeth Montgomery) who, on her wedding night, reveals to her husband Darrin Stephens (played by Dick York) that she is a witch, but assures him that she will happily give up her powers, having decided to lead a normal life as a suburban homemaker. But even though Samantha frequently and warmly reaffirms her commitment to domesticity, her conduct suggests otherwise. Each of the 254 episodes that make up the entire run of *Bewitched* shows her invariably breaking her pledge not to use magic. Given this glaring contradiction at its core, it is small wonder that over the years *Bewitched* should have lent itself to widely different readings, ranging from

[1] On the "intricate bond between television and space-age imagery" see Spigel (206).

condemnations of its heroine as "the most extreme example of willing servility" (Douglas 97) to praise for providing a "proto-feminist commentary on female power" (Mittell 229). As Walter Metz has rightly pointed out, part of the seeming schizophrenia of *Bewitched*'s politics of gender (but the same could be said of the show's treatment of class and race) simply derives from its very nature as a long-running episodic series which involved a multitude of writers (male and female) with different points of view and which spanned a period of American history (from the assassination of President Kennedy[2] to the Nixon years) marked by social and cultural upheaval (13-14).

What, in my view, the creators of *Bewitched* did consistently throughout the eight-year run of the show was to use humor to tackle growing male anxieties about the evolving position of women in American society. Illustrated by the animated opening credits of the series, the theme of male unease in the face of female power (or talent) literally ushers in every single episode, from the series' pilot onwards. After skywriting the series' title while flying on her broom (possibly a reminiscence of a famous scene in the film version of *The Wizard of Oz*), Samantha twitches her nose and is magically transported into a kitchen. Her outfit and her attitude could not be more reassuring for her husband Darrin who joins her moments later: gone is her witch's uniform (cape, pointed hat, etc); in their place she now wears a nondescript dress, complete with regulation white apron. She is standing next to a cooking stove holding a frying pan and Darrin gives her a sort of stamp of approval in the form of a kiss on the cheek. But obviously she cannot resist showing off her powers. So she suddenly turns into a cat and for a moment the focus of attention shifts to the troubled expression on Darrin's face. Is he perhaps thinking of the balance of power in a marriage between a mortal and a witch? Whatever the nature of his worries, Darrin is not only bewitched but also, as the song has it, "bothered and bewildered." And, as the next scene reminds us, his authority (and indeed his well-being) must face the additional, and much scarier threat, of an even more formidable female presence in the form of Endora, the mother-in-law to end all mothers-in-law (played by Agnes Moorehead). Represented in the credits by an ominous cloud of black smoke issuing from the frying pan and, significantly, obliterating the young couple, Endora makes it her mission to undermine Darrin's status as head of the household and remind her daughter of the vast superiority of her exoteric culture of origin over the hum-drum world she has married into. A recurring gag in the series is Endora's apparent inability to remember her son-in-law's name which, as a result, is changed into Durwood, Darwood, Dagwood, Donald, Derek, Dumb-Dumb, and even Dumbo. But this is by no means the worst way in which she endangers his sense of identity, for she repeatedly casts magic spells to punish him for what she regards as offensive behavior towards herself or her daughter, or simply for the pleasure of making him the butt of a joke. Thus she changes his appearance, turning him into a number of animals (including a chimp, a mule, and a pony), and a werewolf, or altering his facial features; or she affects the way in which he relates with others, as when she makes him always tell the truth which, since he works in advertising, has disastrous consequences. Most intriguingly, on two occasions she literally cuts him down to size, first by turning him into an eight-year old boy (in "Junior Executive," #46, 18/11/65) and later causing him to shrink to the point that he can hide under a coffee cup (in "Samantha's Wedding Present" #141, 26/9/68). The symbolic implications of this diminishment of the family's nominal patriarch could not be more transparent.

[2] Filming on the pilot for *Bewitched* began on November 22, 1963, the same day John Fitzgerald Kennedy was killed in Dallas, Texas (Metz 14).

What prompts, in no small measure, a reading of *Bewitched* as a fantastic or allegorical representation of male crisis at a time of growing female combativeness (interestingly, a year before *Bewitched* made its debut Betty Friedan published her seminal *The Feminine Mystique*) is the casting of Dick York as Darrin (in the first five seasons of the show, after which he had to leave the series because of chronic back injury). York's performance as the all-American suburban husband (and later) father could not have been more different from the square-jawed, rational and wise types portrayed in such fifties and early sixties shows such as *Leave it to Beaver*, *Father Knows Best* or *The Donna Reed Show*. Almost constantly agitated, flabbergasted, and scared, York's Darrin gave the impression of being a man on the verge of a nervous breakdown. One could read on his face the stress of living with a woman who, however loving, was capable, when provoked, of zapping him out of the bedroom and onto the living room's sofa and who could, potentially, do to him all the terrible things that her mother did. Nor did York veer significantly from this conception of Darrin when his character was seen in what was then considered the quintessentially male environment: the workplace. There Darrin was dominated by his boss Larry Tate, who periodically threatened to fire him, and he almost invariably adopted a cringingly servile attitude towards his often unreasonable clients. By contrast, Dick Sargent, who replaced York in the last three seasons, seemed mostly irritated and sarcastic, as if his Darrin had finally hardened after years of being cast in the victim's role.

There are also other ways in which the character of Darrin is more or less explicitly belittled. For example his profession, which is what makes him the provider of his family and a share-holder in the American dream of success, is relentlessly ridiculed in *Bewitched*. Not only is Darrin's boss (as played by David White) a caricature of the greedy, unscrupulous capitalist, but most of his clients are unimaginative, stubborn, childish, and sometimes bigoted. And the preposterous and often deliberately deceitful character of advertising techniques is repeatedly emphasized (which is all the more remarkable for a sitcom whose existence on the air depended on commercial sponsors). Moreover, Darrin's system of values, the bourgeois life-style he embodies and which he has offered Samantha in place of her unconventional background, is mercilessly criticized by his mother-in-law and other members of Samantha's family. Tellingly, already in the second episode ("Be It Ever So Mortgaged," #2, 24/9/64), Endora disparages one of the cornerstones of middle-class consumer culture: home ownership. Clearly unimpressed with the indistinct suburban house Samantha and Darrin intend to buy, Endora launches into a sort of hymn to the world of witches and warlocks who, unlike mortals, are blessedly free from the constraints of property: "We are quicksilver, a fleeting shadow, a distant sound. Our home has no boundaries beyond which we cannot pass. We live in music, in a flash of color. We live on the wind and in a sparkle of a star." And throughout the series, Samantha's relatives come across as representatives of an alternative, colorful, unconventional approach to living which at times seems to align them with the counter-culture of the sixties and early seventies. This is particularly true of Samantha's jokester Uncle Arthur who, as played by Paul Lynde, suggests a totally relaxed gay man; and also, of the family's flamboyant witch doctor, interestingly named Dr. Bombay. But perhaps the most interesting case is that of Samantha's identical cousin Serena, played by Elizabeth Montgomery in a black wig. Clearly intended as Samantha's free-spirited doppelgänger, Serena is single, non-monogamous, and always on the lookout for new experiences. Contemptuous of the domestic life her cousin has chosen, she favors a style of dress and a mode of speech

that mark her as a member of the hippie movement and the rock & roll sexual and cultural revolution. So convincingly did Elizabeth Montgomery play Serena that a part of the audience was taken in by the in-joke devised by the show's creators: in the closing credits of the episodes in which she appeared, Serena was in fact listed as played by an actress named Pandora Spocks. As Gerald Jones has noted, that tantalizing name was:

> an odd clue to the underlying dynamic of *Bewitched*… The Pandora's box of the American mainstream was female power. Serena was the Samantha that might have been, the sexy sprite who loved every moment of her own life but brought terror and trouble to poor schmucks like Darrin. (And was Pandora Spocks a cousin to Benjamin Spock? Would her box be opened by the coming generation, the adolescents raised on the psychology of personal fulfillment?) (179)

I would argue that in her own sweet, blond way, Samantha too, occasionally, brings "terrors and trouble" to her poor schmuck of a husband. And nowhere is this more evident than in a rather extraordinary episode of the fourth season which carries the Hitchcockian title "I Confess" (#135, 4/4/68). Written by Richard Baer, it centers on a magically induced dream through which Samantha successfully convinces Darrin that it would not be a good idea to reveal to the world that she is a witch (as is also their little daughter Tabitha). In the first part of the dream Darrin watches in dismay as Larry Tate, after witnessing a demonstration of Samantha's powers, moves swiftly and effortlessly from disbelief to rhapsodic exhilaration at the idea of how, with her help, he could dominate the world. In the second part Darrin is confronted with the reaction of his neighbors Abner and Gladys Kravitz. Even though, on this occasion, Mrs. Kravitz is finally provided with the evidence of what she has suspected all along about Samantha, her initial feelings of triumph and vindication are soon replaced by fear. Indeed, much to Darrin's surprise, the Kravitzes – for whom what does or does not occur in the house across the street has been a constant source of contention (Abner never believing a word of what his wife tells him about Samantha) – are for once united in seeing Samantha as capable of doing them great harm. In the third part, taking place a few weeks later, Samantha's identity has become public. A flustered Darrin returns home after a round of unsuccessful job interviews to find the Kravitzes selling tickets, peanuts, and popcorn to a crowd assembled in front of his house. In a nice satirical twist, the former advertising man has become the victim of his neighbors' enterprising commercial spirit (which has evidently proved stronger than fear): he, together with his family, is now the product being sold to a public whose hunger for novelties in the consumer culture of late-sixties America is seemingly insatiable.[3] The scene takes a decidedly darker turn shortly afterwards when Brigadier-General Stanton and Agent "W" of the country's "top secret organization HHH" (read CIA), pay a visit to Samantha and Darrin. After warning them that their safety is in grave danger because of mounting public hostility against them (as Stanton puts it, witch-burning "is being revived"), the two visitors make it very clear that they are primarily interested in Samantha's well-being because her powers could be a formidable asset to the country's security. What is particularly noteworthy about this sequence is that, once again, Darrin's status as the nominal head of the household is diminished and this time without his mother-in-law's intervention. Faced with two stern-faced representatives of the US government (the ultimate expression of patriarchal power) and their request that Samantha do her duty as "an

[3] This episode is strongly reminiscent of an early scene in *I Married a Witch*, set in Puritan New England, in which a vendor sells "hot maize" to a crowd which has gathered to watch a witch's burning.

American witch," a visibly frightened Darrin cravenly withdraws his previous objections to her use of witchcraft. Dick York's uncommon gift for physical comedy and, in particular, for facial expressiveness, makes us see (and laugh at) a man who, for all his eagerness to ingratiate himself with a superior authority, cannot conceal his troubled awareness of the terrifying import of what is being said to him. So when General Stanton informs him that it is the government's intention to move his family to an undisclosed, remote, maximum-security location so that they can interrogate Samantha "thoroughly" and keep him and his daughter under "armed guard," Darrin correctly describes his family's future status as "military prisoners" and their new home as characterized by a "nice, concentration-camp atmosphere." Moments later, his worst fears are realized when Samantha, following Stanton and Agent "W"'s recommendations, magically transports her family to a militarily guarded, restricted area where the three Stephens (whose civilian clothes have been replaced with army fatigues) are to live from then on (shades of the Guantanamo Bay detention camp for twenty-first century viewers). When a jeep arrives to collect Samantha and her daughter for their daily interrogation (Tabitha, being a witch, is subjected to the same treatment as her mother), a distraught Darrin is left behind a chain-link fence, helplessly screaming "Let me out!" until he wakes up from his dream. Needless to say, as a result of the cautionary tale he has just lived through, Darrin changes his mind about disclosing Samantha's identity as a witch.

As pictured by Samantha (who is, for all intents and purposes, the "author" of Darrin's nightmarish visions), the response of the US government to the "otherness" of the Stephens (primarily, of course, Samantha's and Tabitha's, but also Darrin's by association) would consist in exiling them and keeping them under surveillance. As Walter Metz has argued, "this episode offers a caustic critique of the national security state. In a culture in which being a good American is so rigidly defended, the episode goes to great lengths to expose such behavior as devastatingly destructive" (123). Contradicting *Bewitched*'s reputation as a particularly light-weight, fluffy sitcom, "I Confess" perfectly exemplifies the power of laughter to undermine authority and encourage a critical, dissenting view of the status quo. It is hardly a coincidence that it first aired in 1968, the year most commonly associated with the counter-culture movement and its call to re-assess the state of American democracy.

Works Cited

Bell, Book and Candle. Dir. Richard Quine. Columbia Pictures, 1958.

Bewitched. Dir. William Asher et al. ABC. 17 Nov. 1964-25 Mar. 1972. DVD. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005-2009.

Douglas, William. *Television Families: Is Something Wrong in Suburbia?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003. Print.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Norton & Co., 1963. Print.

I Married a Witch. Dir. René Clair. United Artists, 1942.

Jones, Gerard. *Honey, I'm Home! Sitcoms: Selling the American Dream*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. Print.

Metz, Walter. *Bewitched*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007. Print.

Mittell, Jason. *Television and American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Print.

Pilato, Herbie J. *Bewitched Forever: The Immortal Companion to Television's Most Magical Supernatural Situation Comedy*. Irving, TX: The Summit Publishing Group, 2001. Print.

Spigel, Lynn. "From Domestic Space to Outer Space: The 1960s Fantastic Family Sit-Com." *Close Encounters: Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction*. Ed. Constance Penley et al. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press, 1991. 205-235. Print.

The Wizard of Oz. Dir. Victor Fleming. MGM, 1939.

ALICE CASARINI

"YOU HAVE A SARCASM SIGN?" FANSUBBING AND THE EGALITARIAN DECRYPTION OF AMERICAN COMEDY

Laughter is often defined as a universal language, capable of transcending linguistic and cultural barriers through processes that are inherent to all human beings, regardless of their geographical and socio-cultural position. As illustrated by Robert Provine, "laughter is a mechanism everyone has [and] is part of universal human vocabulary. There are thousands of languages, hundreds of thousands of dialects, but everyone speaks laughter in pretty much the same way" (Provine, qtd. in Davis). The translinguistic similarity in laughter vocalization does not imply that every member of every culture laughs for the same reasons, yet "all humans are capable of producing laughter, and cross-cultural studies to date reveal the existence of several transcultural common denominators" (Ruch, qtd. in Chiaro 207). Jocularity is also contagious: as the popular saying immortalized by Ella Wheeler Wilcox goes, "Laugh, and the world laughs with you." The idea that hilarity can be generated by an infectious, pandemic response to universal stimuli such as visual jokes informs most of the audiovisual products in the slapstick comedy tradition: the classic "banana peel" gag and its equivalents trigger an innocent and culture-general form of *Schadenfreude* that makes all viewers feel good through an implicit comparison between their lives and the staged misfortunes of other people.

From Laurel and Hardy to Charlie Chaplin and from Tom and Jerry to Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner, straightforward sight gags have always played a fundamental role in American and British comedy. Slapstick tropes continue to flourish in numerous contemporary productions (the *Mr. Bean* saga, the *Jackass* show and movies, or situation comedies like *Malcolm in the Middle*, to name but a few); nonetheless, since the advent of sound film the comedy genre has been playing on at least two different levels, combining or replacing unequivocal physical gags with Verbally Expressed Humor (VEH, Chiaro 198), which introduced a far higher degree of complexity. VEH is not necessarily the only type of humor employed in contemporary audiovisual products, but its very presence reduces the democratic, universal reception of hilarity to a non-transparent humor, exclusive to those who are well-versed in the source language and culture. An immediate demand for audiovisual translation (AVT) thus originated from the very inception of talking movies, given the popularity and the profit potential of the newly upgraded cinematic medium on the international market.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the history of the various types of AVT around the world, yet for the purposes of this analysis it is crucial to identify the dissemination of digital technologies and access to the Internet as the most evident watershed moment in the evolution of AVT in the so-called *dubbing countries*. Advances in technology and changes in dubbing policies have obviously affected the

translation and adaptation process over the decades, yet before the Internet era dubbing companies could rely on the fact that very few of their end-users had access to their source material. The escalated availability of original-language products through DVDs and especially through the Internet has not only affected traditional modes of television consumption in terms of time, space, and rituals; it has also given rise to a far higher awareness of the hiatus between source texts and target texts, both in terms of broadcasting delay and of semantic and cultural alteration. In light of the more complex, multilayered structure of contemporary American television, teeming with intratextual, intertextual and even trans-media references which call for a closer and less casual appraisal, an increasing number of viewers in dubbing countries have begun to look for alternative solutions for an undeferred and more complete experience of their chosen shows.

This paper will focus on the Italian television audience and explore the phenomenon of *fansubbing*, a form of volunteer translation that provides non-Anglophone viewers with free amateur subtitles to keep up with American broadcasts, thus reinstating a democratic access to the genres that require linguistic and cultural decryption (albeit often resorting to piracy for the retrieval of the video files with which fansubs are associated).[1] The function of fansubs is similar to that of the sarcasm sign portrayed in a hilarious scene from the situation comedy *The Big Bang Theory*:[2] one of the protagonists, Sheldon, has a hyper-logical brain that works wonders in science but also makes him unable to understand metaphors and irony, so that his roommate Leonard literally has to hold up a sign that reads "sarcasm" to walk him through the countless non-literal expressions of human language.[3] Somewhat similarly, fansubs provide a visual aid to the comprehension of American shows which viewers with a limited command of English would not be able to understand fully. My analysis will therefore explore the implications of this phenomenon, focusing on the democratization of the access to unfiltered foreign television, no longer exclusive to a language-savvier elite, and on the impact of this new mode of television consumption on professional audiovisual translation.

In Italy dubbing has always been perceived as inherent to the acquisition of foreign programs and has rarely been challenged as the quintessential audiovisual translation practice. Dubbing was introduced by the fascist regime in 1931, after an initial decision to fully eradicate dialogues from imported movies (Ranzato 75), and was employed for both censorship and propaganda. Modifying the original dialogue track allowed the xenophobic, autarchic government to both contain the threat represented by the newly available *talkies* (which reached Italy in 1929) and to promote an artificial unified language aimed at coalescing the multifaceted realities within the Italian nation, whose political unity had yet to be completed with linguistic and cultural homogeneity. Albeit often unfaithful to both the original foreign texts and the sociolinguistic varieties comprised within the peninsular borders, the new language created for the movies and through the movies succeeded in providing a bonding agent for Italy's fragmented population: "since no common linguistic models were available, the language used to

[1] Disclaimer: this analysis has only been carried out for scientific purposes and is not meant to encourage copyright infringement.

[2] Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady; CBS, 2007-present.

[3] Episode 1x02, "The Big Bran Hypothesis". The following dialogue testifies to the need for a sarcasm pointer:
Leonard: "For God's sake, Sheldon, do I have to hold up a sarcasm sign every time I open my mouth?"
Sheldon: "You have a sarcasm sign?"

translate American movies started to become a paradigm for spoken Italian" (Ranzato 77, my translation). Silver-screen Italian was designed to comply with Mussolini's pursuit of government-controlled mass consensus, yet it also provided the necessary foundation for popular aggregation. While a superimposed language can hardly be defined as a democratic tool, Italian citizens in the 1930s and 1940s did find a common ground in the artificial-sounding language later defined as *dubbese*, a pedagogic version of the "proper" Florentine language characterized by a strong theatrical and literary heritage that we have now come to perceive as familiar through decades of television watching.

Sergio Raffaelli observes that the Italian dubbing language has preserved its original linguistic physiognomy for decades (qtd. in Ranzato 81), thus training film and television viewers to perceive it as the standard language for all audiovisual products, whether imported or not. Yet this unchallenged acceptance was bound to collapse under the technological revolution that took place around the turn of the millennium. For over half a century the majority of Italian viewers had only had access to dubbed versions of foreign programs; being unaware of any discrepancy with the original texts, they usually perceived the dubbed renditions as the *actual* products. Yet with the advent of the DVD and above all with the diffusion of broadband Internet, original audiovisual texts could suddenly be accessed from anywhere in the world through legitimate, network-owned platforms and especially through not-so-legitimate file sharing clients such as eMule or uTorrent and websites such as FileServe or RapidShare.[4] In spite of the issue of copyright infringement, tools for the immediate and costless circulation of audiovisual texts have become so popular that they now rival regular TV broadcasts.

Digital dissemination has generated a new, more democratic form of television consumption. Viewers can now choose to watch their chosen programs whenever they prefer, shaping their own schedules and "specializing" in their favorite areas. Producers have then started to offer higher-quality, more specific programs to cater to these "small[er], but dedicated and demographically desirable, niche audiences" (McCabe and Akass 249) and embraced the practices of *transmedia storytelling*, creating fictional universes that propagate to other media such as comics, videogames, and the web. In turn, television viewers have evolved from *couch potatoes* to *prosumers* (producers/consumers), active re-mediators of the audiovisual texts that they now appropriate and expand through Internet-based, user-friendly technologies. More and more viewers engage in collaborative re-mediation through *fan fiction* or *fan art* and in practices of *social watching* that involve discussing plot developments on dedicated forums or checking in to each new episode on websites such as Miso or GetGlue, which reward active users with badges or stickers that can then be shared on social networks.

This *viewership 2.0* shows an unprecedented degree of agency and participation that requires a strong command of English, since debates and re-mediation activities are triggered right after the US airings and become almost obsolete by the time Italian networks broadcast the dubbed version. Keeping up with US schedules is now a necessity for many Italian viewers, and local companies such as CuboVision are already trying to tap into this new market. The Internet eliminated the spatial, temporal, and financial barriers that prevented foreign viewers from accessing American shows, but the bypassing of the dubbing phase generated linguistic barriers that once again

[4] Leading websites MegaVideo and MegaUpload were shut down by the FBI, the RIAA, and the MPAA on January 19th, 2012, together with fourteen related domains. Nonetheless, streaming and downloading practices seem to be still carried out in the same proportion.

undermined the idea of a virtually egalitarian worldwide audience. Language knowledge thus became a powerful asset and, as often occurs in the age of Wikinomics, those who possessed it soon started to share it with those who did not. Fansubs are one of the most peculiar products of participatory culture, in that their creators do not just volunteer translations in their spare time, but operate in organized teams with extremely tight deadlines (as low as 12 hours for the leading shows), involving frequent late-night work without any compensation.

As soon as a new episode is aired in the US, a *raw provider* retrieves a copy of the video and of the original closed captioning subtitles, which translators use "as templates, […] as an attempt to compensate for the lack of access to official post-production scripts or dialogue list" (Bold). Depending on the length and complexity of the episode, each dialogue list is divided among two to six different translators, whose work is then proofread and homogenized by an editor. A syncer or timer synchronizes the timecodes of each subtitle with the original audio; when needed, a typesetter takes care of graphical aspects such as fonts for songs or off-screen dialogues. Fansubs are then released as lightweight .srt or .sub files that can be downloaded for free and opened with video players such as VLC. Italy's main fansubbing community, ItaSA,[5] currently boasts over 220.000 members and about 200 translators; leading shows like *The Big Bang Theory, Fringe,* or *Mad Men* often get from 15,000 to 20,000 hits per episode, which represent a small percentage of the national audience, but still constitute a significant evolution in a dubbing country, especially considering the fragmentation of television consumption in the Internet era (ItaSA currently offers subtitles for 421 different shows).

From a technical perspective, Italian fansubs tend to favor content over form, aiming at delivering accurate and comprehensive information and at maintaining the original flavor of each show and the references to American culture, sometimes at the expense of readability standards and of the correspondence with natural speech. Conversely, dubbing often focuses more on lip-synching and on recreating natural dialogues than on their actual content, frequently generating mistranslations, omissions, inconsistencies or unnecessary generalizations. Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez (2006) explain how fansubbers tend to apply foreignizing translation strategies as an alternative to excessively domesticating dubbing practices:

> [fansubbers] know that they are addressing a rather special audience made up of people very interested in the world of [American television shows] and, by extension, in [American] culture. This is one of the main reasons why translators tend to stay close to the original text and to preserve some of the cultural idiosyncrasies of the original in the target text.

For instance, the dubbed version of *The Big Bang Theory* contains numerous unneeded substitutions that flatten most of the references to geek culture and to the characters' usage of scientific jargon in their approach to daily life, which constitute the core of the show's specific identity. In the following example from the pilot episode, Leonard and Sheldon reconsider their plan to donate to a high-IQ sperm bank in order to earn money for a faster broadband connection; much of the comic effect of the scene originates from Sheldon's approach to the whole experience through his typical scientific idiolect, which is completely lost in the dubbed version, whereas it is carefully

[5] www.italiansubs.net

maintained in the fansubs, together with the reference to the American fast food chain Fuddruckers.

Speaker	*Original version*	*Italian dubbing*	*Back translation*	*ItaSA fansubs*	*Back translation*
Sheldon	Leonard, I don't think I can do this.	Leonard, io non posso farlo.	Leonard, I can't do this.	Leonard, non credo di poter fare questa cosa.	Leonard, I don't think I can do this thing.
Leonard	What, are you kidding? You're a **semi-pro.**	Scherzi? Sei un **semi-donatore,** ormai.	Are you kidding? You're a **semi-donor** by now.	Cosa, mi prendi in giro? Sei un semi-professionista.	What, are you kidding? You're a **semi-pro.**
Sheldon	No, we are committing genetic fraud. There's no guarantee that our sperm's going to generate **high-IQ** offspring, think about that. I have a sister **with the same basic DNA mix that hosts at Fuddruckers.**	No, questa è frode genetica vera e propria. Che garanzia c'è che dal nostro seme venga generata prole **superintelligente**. Mia sorella **disse le prime parole a sei anni e fece la stessa classe cinque volte.**	No, this a veritable genetic fraud. What guarantee is there that our sperm is going to generate **superintelligent** offspring? **My sister said her first words when she was six and repeated the same class five times.**	No. Stiamo commettendo una frode genetica. Non c'e' alcuna garanzia che il nostro sperma genererà una prole ad **alto quoziente intellettivo.** Pensaci un attimo. Ho una sorella **con il mio stesso corredo genetico di base che fa la cameriera da Fuddrucker.**	No, we are committing genetic fraud. There's no guarantee that our sperm's going to generate **high-IQ** offspring. Think about that for a moment. I have a sister **with the same basic DNA mix that hosts at Fuddruckers.**
Leonard	Well, what do you wanna do?	Allora? Cosa vuoi fare?	Well, what do you wanna do?	Beh, cosa vuoi fare?	Well, what do you wanna do?
Sheldon	I want to leave. What's the **protocol** for leaving?	**Tutto tranne quello. Come ci si ritira?**	Anything but that. How do we **step back**?	Voglio andarmene. Qual e' il **protocollo** per andarsene?	I want to leave. What's the **protocol** for leaving?
Leonard	I don't know, **I've never reneged on a proffer of sperm before.**	Non lo so, è la prima volta **che il mio seme non finisce sul copriletto.**	I don't know, **It's the first time my sperm doesn't end up on the bedspread.**	Non lo so... Non ho mai **ritrattato una donazione di sperma** prima d'ora.	I don't know, **I've never reneged on a proffer of sperm before.**

The case of *The Big Bang Theory* is particularly relevant for this analysis because the show's Italian fans protested so much against the dubbing of the first eight episodes that they convinced the translation studio Post in Europe to change the entire dubbing team. The official translation has indeed improved since then, but many viewers still prefer to resort to fansubs, both to avoid missing any jokes or references and to keep up with the US programming: for instance, as of January 29th, 2012, the fansubs for the twenty-four episodes of season 4 (which have already been broadcast in their dubbed version) have all been downloaded between 13,813 and 16,026 times.

Due to both their faster retrieval and higher content accuracy, amateur subtitles generate serious competition for professional AVT. The horizontal distribution of user-generated translations that bypass cultural and linguistic gatekeepers altogether has prompted Italian networks and translation studios to consider hybrid solutions that merge the best features of dubbing and fansubbing, improving both the quality and the rate at which new episodes are made available to the Italian audience through official channels. Fox Italy now offers a subtitled version of several hit shows within 48 hours

of their US premiere and a professionally dubbed version only a week later, while the subtitling company Sub-Ti hired two particularly skilled fansubbers through their "Fans and Subs" contest (April 2011). The success of both initiatives signals a higher openness towards the convergence of professional AVT skills and fan expertise, as well as an improvement in the audience's perception of subtitling. Fansubbing can thus be considered as twice egalitarian,[6] both in itself, in that it allows everyone to participate in the new television watching practices regardless of their language skills, and as instrumental to the panoptic diffusion of professional subtitling, previously perceived as either a linguistic whim or a tool that was only necessary for hearing-impaired viewers. The true revolution of this new approach lies in its potential to lead to a future in which more and more viewers will benefit from a tool that allows them to understand original dialogues, ideally decoding VEH in a larger amount of occurrences and restoring the universal voice of laughter. This scenario might also have fruitful socio-political implications, as Alan Alda famously explained: "when people are laughing, they're generally not killing each other." While literally sharing a laugh, viewers from all over the world will also be able to develop a deeper appreciation and knowledge of foreign cultures and languages, which is an essential step towards communication and cooperation across borders and towards global democracy.

Works Cited

Bold, Bianca. "The Power Of Fan Communities: An Overview Of Fansubbing In Brazil." *Tradução em Revista* 2011/2. Web. 29 January 2012. <http://www.maxwell.lambda.ele.puc-rio.br/trad_em_revista.php?strSecao=OUTPUT&fas=178&NrSecao=44>.

Chiaro, Delia. "Verbally Expressed Humour on Screen: Translation, Reception and Perception." Eds. Jorge Dìaz-Cintas, Pilar Orero and Aline Ramael. *JoSTrans (The Journal of Specialized Translation)* 6: I (2006). Web. 29 January 2012. <http://www.jostrans.org/issue06/art_chiaro.pdf>.

Davis, Jeanie Lerche. "Why Do We Laugh?" *WebMD* (2002). Web. 29 January 2012. <http://men.webmd.com/features/why-do-we-laugh>.

Di Giovanni, Elena, and Federico Spoletti. "In Search of a Common Ground: Professional Visibility for Amateur Subtitlers." Conference presentation slides. *4th International Conference Media for All – Audiovisual Translation: Taking Stock*; Imperial College London, Jun. 28–Jul. 1, 2011. Unpublished.

Díaz Cintas, Jorge, and Pablo Muñoz Sánchez. "Fansubs: Audiovisual Translation in an Amateur Environment." *The Journal of Specialized Translation*, 6: I (2006). Web. 29 January 2012.
<http://www.jostrans.org/issue06/art_diaz_munoz.php>.

McCabe, Jane, and Kim Akass, eds. *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*. London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007. Print.

[6] A third democratic feature consists in the opportunity to bypass censorship and language "sanitization" (Bold), given that fansubbing teams do not operate through official channels. This phenomenon has not been explored in this paper as it has a lower political impact in Western countries, yet it becomes a crucial matter in China, where fansubbers manage to tackle "hot issues, regardless of any political taboo" (Ying).

Ranzato, Irene. *La traduzione audiovisiva. Analisi degli elementi culturospecifici*. Rome: Bulzoni, 2011. Print.

Wheeler Wilcox, Ella. "Solitude." *Poems of Passion*. Chicago: W.B. Conkey, 1883. Web. 29 January 2012. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16776/16776-h/16776-h.htm>.

Ying, Zhang. "Hive Translation: China's Fansubs and Crowdsourcing Translators." Conference presentation slides. *4th International Conference Media for All – Audiovisual Translation: Taking Stock*; Imperial College London, Jun. 28–Jul. 1, 2011. Unpublished.

PAOLA CASTELLUCCI

EMILY DICKINSON'S SELF-PUBLISHING

Let's start with a statement: we are now living in the Post-print Age.[1] This must be taken *literally*: in the last fifty years, online databases and hypertextual communication have indeed determined the new "paradigm" of the Net. The theoretical dimension of the discipline of Information Science and the interactions with the Humanities have consequently become more and more evident. In particular, it must be highlighted that precisely ten years ago the document generally known as *The Budapest Declaration* announced the beginning of the Open Access Movement, a radical way of conceiving the very idea of "publishing" and of what the relationship between author and reader should be.[2] It must be clearly said that *The Budapest Declaration* is not Michel Foucault's "What is an author?" in a reduced form. Instead, the Document is the consequence of a long tradition started by Foucault himself, and relates to the idea of renegotiating the political role of the author (Landow, 2006). Moreover, it is at least as of the time of Marshall McLuhan that the supremacy of textuality has been considered debatable and, conversely, the reputation of what we now call "multimedia" has been widely acknowledged.[3]

What is happening now, is that what has been perceived for a long time as a theoretical assumption, is becoming an effective way of communication: not mediated by the print but by the Internet. The effect is that the text has become a hypertext; the media has become a multimedia, infinitely multiplying the directions that the communication could take in time and space. Instead of the one-way direction between author and reader, we now see "unprecedented possibilities" of dissemination, as it is stated in the first paragraph of *The Budapest Declaration*. "Dissemination" is precisely the word used in the *Budapest Declaration,* instead of publishing. It must be noticed that it is repeated as much as five times in just a few pages, and is clearly a quotation

---

[1] The implied reference is clearly to the seminal book by Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change. Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*. After more than thirty years, the key-words used by Eisenstein should be upgraded, and we should then speak of e-print or post-print as an agent of change in a Post-Modern, globalized and hyperlinked, world.

[2] *Budapest Open Access Initiative* (*BOAI*) is available on the web site *Open Society Foundation* of the financier and philanthropist George Soros who sponsored the event (see: http://www.soros.org/openaccess). Scholars, information scientists and librarians, philosophers and biologists, signed the document on February 14th, 2002. The Document has only recently been translated into Italian; comments before and after the translation underline the highly refined vocabulary used that demonstrates the acute sense of awareness of this important political statement. See my "Dichiarazione di Budapest per l'accesso aperto. Testo e commento."

[3] In particular, see one of the many "nanodocuments" in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* whose title-incipit is: "The invention of typography confirmed and extended the new visual stress of applied knowledge, providing the first uniformly repeatable commodity, the first assembly line, and the first mass-production" (124-126). For the definition of *nanodocument* see Castellucci, 2011.

from Derrida. So the Open Access Movement shows clearly what its cultural tradition is: Postmodernism.

The Budapest Declaration concentrates on scholarly communication, both scientific and humanistic, and "dissemination" stands for immediate, global, "peer to peer" conversation on the Net. Authors directly "submit" their works to institutional repositories and electronic journals (and this way of publishing is also called *self-archiving*). It is "without payment" and "peer-reviewed," and must guarantee "unrestricted access" to *all.* As a result, the Open Access scholarly communication is economically sustainable and produces a much higher Impact Factor (around 330% in terms of the number of citations). It has therefore generally been acknowledged that Open Access has *enhanced* the activity of reading and has not caused the "the death of the book"– as had been inappropriately predicted.[4]

The *Budapest Declaration* uses a poetical tone to describe the Open Access "philosophy." This is fairly unusual in a supposedly technical context. But the point is that this is not a technical topic at all. Instead it is a big cultural issue (Castellucci, 2009). In this case we do not want to focus on the many implicit references to the political and literary American tradition in the *Budapest Declaration*. But we can at least say that the real extensor is Peter Suber, professor of Philosophy at Earlham College and a renowned scholar of the Enlightenment, son of a Democrat Senator of Illinois State. Peter Suber has productively combined Philosophy and Law, Enlightenment and the Internet, and in this way, the *Declaration* has reached everybody—scholars and common citizens.

This is the new covenant between author and reader.[5]

The Open Access Movement has rapidly included not only scholars but also artists. What is really momentous is that musicians, moviemakers, writers, are now experimenting free distribution of their works on the Net (respectively, the so called self-casting and self-publishing). Please notice that the stress is on "self," meaning: an alternative way of publishing, overriding the mediation of publishers and booksellers.[6] Therefore, the author has become the propelling centre in a "radiant textuality," as Jerome McGann would say (2001).

The "radiant textuality" of Emily Dickinson could be chosen as a good example. "This is my letter to the World," she says (Miller, "Letters to the World"). And she could have actually done it in the post-print age: by using the Internet! Self-publishing could have been a powerful alternative in order to bypass Higginson's judgment, and in this way Dickinson would have reached her reader directly.

Printed posthumously, heavily modified by editors, frequently misunderstood by readers and critics, Dickinson's textual corpus has now a new opportunity of rebirth. One of the most used words in the Open Access vocabulary is "advocacy." Everyone who is involved in the Movement is committed to propagate online free distribution. So, we shall now sustain the advocacy of an *electronic* Dickinson.[7]

---

[4] See Nunberg, 1996; Darnton, 2009. Darnton follows the history of the book up to the ambivalent project of Google Book Search.

[5] See Suber, 2004. The only work by Suber that is easily available in Italy is "Creare un bene comune attraverso il libero accesso."

[6] See e.g. self-publishing web sites, both in the US and in Italy: www.lulu.com; www.ilmiolibro.it.

[7] See: http://www.emilydickinson.org. The Italian web site dedicated to Dickinson www.emilydickinson.it is connected to the site of self-publishing www.ilmiolibro.it.

1) First of all, we should sustain a *philological* advocacy: the need for an electronic edition of all Dickinson's *documents*, that is, not only the poems and letters but also the herbarium and even her book of recipes so as to manage the entire corpus as a whole.[8]

For many years Thomas H. Johnson's chronologically enumerated edition of 1775 poems has been considered the official one. However, this should be completely reconsidered, due to the publication in 1993 by William Shurr of a further 500 poems *extracted* from letters and notes. That means that the very act of distinguishing "poems" from "letters" is not evident at all.

The electronic version of *everything* that Emily Dickinson has written should instead give the possibility of *renegotiating* her poetry, without drawing a line between supposed major or minor production. Therefore, the electronic edition should represent the first philologically correct edition.

2) The other important aspect is the fact that all Dickinson's poetry was printed posthumously. This demands a *critical* advocacy.

Up to now the question has been asked in a dualistic way:

-was she forced not to publish? (The fact that her poetry books were published after her death should then be seen as one of her "mysteries", but also as the effect of her condition as a woman of the 19th century kept "in the attic" in a physical and psychological captivity) (Gilbert).

-Or did she choose not to publish? (As an apparent reaction to the rules imposed by a society and a publishing market under the jurisdiction of men?)[9]

We could now add a *third* interpretation. Maybe she chose an *alternative* way of publishing: neither the loneliness of manuscripts, or the crowded streets of the publishing market. Instead, she radiantly disseminated her poems by way of letters. Or, again, she "presented" them in a theatrical way, as in the well known first meeting with Higginson (Emily coming down the stairs, dressed in white, offering a lily and a note containing a poem, as in a modern theatrical performance).

Everything *but* the print, for her poems!

Dickinson's poetry in a way *poetically* demands self-publishing.

The electronic version of *everything* that Dickinson has ever written (poems, letters, and even the herbarium) should be appreciated as *a whole*: a hypertext, a multimedia space, a performing art object. And even as an *ideographic* poetry, that could be badly "normalized" by the print, and that, instead, came to the reader *visually*, sometimes accompanied by a flower, a fruit, a cake made by herself.[10]

Therefore it is now time to reconsider the "publishing affair" that has made Emily Dickinson exceptional and marginal in comparison with the printing culture of the 19th century. Information and Communication Technologies give us a point of view that (in retrospect) enables us to see the mighty self of Dickinson as prophetic more than anomalous. Dickinson's "letter to the world", escapes the patronizing control of editors, publishers and critics, and jumps directly from the manuscript to the Net.

---

[8] *Emily Dickinson's Herbarium. A Facsimile Edition* was promptly translated into Italian (Roma: Elliott Edizioni, 2007).

[9] Both Wendy Martin and Cynthia Griffin Wolff present Dickinson's condition as a "pre-print" author as a resistant, feminist, position against a male publishing market. We should at least remember the biographies by Barbara Lanati (1998) and Marisa Bulgheroni (2001) among the Italian contributions. They both take into consideration Emily's choice not to publish as a reaction to unacceptable conditions of distortion that would be imposed on her poetry.

[10] Jerome McGann acknowledges the "radiant" textuality of Dickinson, and how she cared about how her work appeared on the page. See McGann, 1996.

Her way of communicating anticipates what the *Budapest Declaration* has promoted as the *alternative* way for the Post-print Age:

An old tradition and a new technology have converged to make possible an unprecedented public good. The old tradition is the willingness of scientists and scholars to publish the fruits of their research in scholarly journals without payment, for the sake of inquiry and knowledge. The new technology is the internet. The public good they make possible is the world-wide electronic distribution of the peer-reviewed journal literature and completely free and unrestricted access to it by all scientists, scholars, teachers, students, and other curious minds. Removing access barriers to this literature will accelerate research, enrich education, share the learning of the rich with the poor and the poor with the rich, make this literature as useful as it can be, and lay the foundation for uniting humanity in a common intellectual conversation and quest for knowledge.

Dickinson's poetry appears surprisingly updated in its choice of *dissemination* through self-publishing. She is beginning to be seen as model for contemporary poets, artists and performers, far beyond the textual dimension (Emerson, 2008).

NOW we can listen to Emily Dickinson "singing the body electric".[11]

Works Cited

Bloom, Harold, ed. *Emily Dickinson*. New York: Chelsea House P., 1985. Print.

Budapest Open Access Initiative (*BOAI*). http://www.soros.org/openaccess

Bulgheroni, Marisa. *Nei sobborghi di un segreto. Vita di Emily Dickinson*. Milano: Mondadori, 2001. Print.

Castellucci, Paola. *Dall'ipertesto al Web: storia culturale dell'informatica*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2009. Print.

---. "Dichiarazione di Budapest per l'accesso aperto. Testo e commento." *Nuovi Annali della Scuola speciale per archivisti e bibliotecari* XXIV(2010): 131-58. Print.

---. "Dalla gabbia tipografica allo spazio dello scrivere. Il *corpus elettrico* di Emily Dickinson." *TestoeSenso*. 12 (2011). Web. http://testoesenso.it/article/view/52/56

---. "Tempo e massa: nuova energia nella comunicazione scientifica." *Bollettino AIB* 51.3 (2011): 237-43. Print.

Darnton, Robert. *The Case for Books. Past, Present and Future*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2009. Print.

Ferri, Paolo, ed. *La conoscenza come bene comune. Dalla teoria alla pratica*. Milano: Mondadori, 2009. Print.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change. Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979. Print.

Emerson, Lori."My Digital Dickinson." *The Emily Dickinson Journal* 17.2 (2008): 55-76.

[11] There are two implicit references–or links–here: the first is of course to the other contemporary innovator, both in poetry and in the print market, Walt Whitman; and the other is to the "inventor" of Hypertext, Ted Nelson who wrote the very last sentence of his book (1974) on the back cover as a final message: "You can and must understand computers NOW." See also *The New Media Reader* (302), and, for further considerations, my "Dalla gabbia tipografica allo spazio dello scrivere. Il *corpus elettrico* di Emily Dickinson."

Emily Dickinson's Herbarium. A Facsimile Edition. Introduction by Richard B. Sewall; Foreword by Leslie A. Morris; Preface by Judith Farr Richard; Appendix by Ray Angelo. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006. Print.

www.emilydickinson.it

http://www.emilydickinson.org

Gilbert, Sarah M. "The Wayward Nun beneath the Hill. Emily Dickinson and the Mysteries of Womanhood." *Emily Dickinson: A Collection of Critical Essays.* Ed. Judith Farr. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1996. 20-39. Print.

Landow, George P. *Hypertext 3.0. Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. Print.

Lanati, Barbara. *Vita di Emily Dickinson. L'alfabeto dell'estasi*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1998. Print.

Martin, Wendy. "Emily Dickinson". *Columbia Literary History of the United States*. Ed. Emory Elliott. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988. 609-26. Print.

McGann, Jerome. "Emily Dickinson's Visible Language." *Emily Dickinson: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Judith Farr. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1996. 248-59. Print.

---. *Radiant Textuality: Literature after the World Wide Web*. New York: Palgrave. 2001. McLuhan, Marshall. Print.

www.ilmiolibro.it.

Miller, Cristanne. *Emily Dickinson: A Poet's Grammar*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995. Print.

---. "Letters to the World". *Emily Dickinson: A Poet's Grammar*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995. 1-19. Print.

Morris, Timothy. *Becoming Canonical in American Poetry*.Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995. Print.

Nelson, Theodor H. *Computer Lib/Dream Machines*. Self-published: 1974. Print.

---. *Geeks Bearing Gifts. How the computer World got this way*. Self-published, distributed by Lulu.com, 2009.

---. *Literary Machines*. Self-published, distributed by Mindful Press, 1981.

Nunberg, Geoffrey, ed. *The Future of the Book*. Afterword by Umberto Eco. Turnhout: Brepols, 1996. Print.

Pharr, Judith, ed. *Emily Dickinson: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1996. Print.

Reynolds, David S. *Beneath the American Renaissance. The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988. Print.

Shurr, William H., Anna Dunlap and Emily Grey Shurr, eds. *New Poems of Emily Dickinson*.

Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993. Print.

Suber, Peter. "Creating an Intellectual Commons through Open Access." Conference Paper (2004) http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/archive/00001246/.

---. "Creare un bene comune attraverso il libero accesso." *La conoscenza come bene comune. Dalla teoria alla pratica*. Ed. Charlotte Hess and Elinor Ostrom. Ed. Italiana Paolo Ferri. Milano: Mondadori, 2009: 177-219. Print.

Wardrip-Fruin, Noah and Nick Montfort, eds. *The New Media Reader*. Introductions by Janet H. Murray and Lev Manovich. Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 2003. Print.

Wolff, Cynthia Griffin. “Emily Dickinson”. *The Columbia History of American Poetry*. Ed. Jay Parini. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993. 121-47. Print.

ALESSANDRO CLERICUZIO

LAUGHING THE COLD WAR AWAY WITH AUNTIE MAME

Patrick Dennis' novel *Auntie Mame* was published in 1955 and, after reaching the top of best-seller lists, it fell into oblivion. It sold over two million copies, and then lived many other lives: it was turned into a Broadway play a year later, a film in 1958, a Broadway musical in 1966, and a musical film in 1974. The novel, a globally recognized specimen of American comedy, was translated into Italian in 1956 and soon went out of print. In 2009 it was published again in a new translation by Matteo Codignola, and reached huge sales. This Auntie Mame resurgence was not an isolated case: the Spanish public gained access to the novel in a 2006 version, *Mi tia y yo*, the French publisher Flammarion put out Alain Defossé's translation, *Tante Mame* in 2010, whereas the German translation by Thomas Stegers, *Tante Mame*, was published by Goldmann Verlag in 2004. Mame's "long overdue […] proper renaissance" (Rudnick xvi) was mainly propelled by the publication of the novelist's biography, Eric Myers' 2001 *Uncle Mame. The Life of Patrick Dennis*, which clearly suggests the identification of the author with the character.

Auntie Mame is a Bildungsroman, with its first part consisting of an initiation process. It is young Patrick's initiation to difference. The little boy has lost his parents and, following his father's will, is going to be reared by his aunt Mame, whom he's never met. The first chapters contain some of the funniest and most telling episodes in Patrick's Bildung. At the age of ten, he has hardly exchanged a word with his stern businessman of a father, and is cared for by an Irish nanny, down-to-earth Nora Muldoon, whose old-world wisdom is ill at ease with Mame's razzamatazz.

As a matter of fact, after the first shock, the character of Nora seems almost immediately to conform to the new environment, and the narrator focuses on the boy's gradual coming of age. The story is told from Patrick's point of view, a technique that allows puns and irony juxtaposing the boy's innocence with Mame's adult world. To assure the reader that this world is not only adult but also very extravagant, there comes the role of Norah as a stooge. The couple's first sight of the "city of sin"—Manhattan—in which they land, presents them with a proper catalog of differences: racial, sexual, gender stereotypes are exposed and soon dismantled. Later on, Patrick will learn that class differences, too, are very dangerous to rely on, because the most, say, democratic event of American history in the first half of the 20th century, the Big Crash of 1929, levels all classes and his flamboyant aunt is forced to abandon her flapper Fitzgerald parties to find herself in the same class as any other of Macy's sales assistants.

Patrick and Norah's first encounter with the other is in the sign of ethnic difference. When the lift doors open to reveal the exterior of Mame's apartment, we soon find out that the tenant appreciates the Chinoiserie trends of the late 1920s. All is lacquered

scarlet or pitch black, with Asian gods on teakwood stands. From her pre-Homi Bhabha perspective, Norah sees expressions of Eastern culture as one single threat under the rubric of Chinese. After all, moving from Boston to Chicago, years before, she had feared being slain by the Indians. Little Patrick, instead, though as terrified as his nanny, knows things for what they are.

"The door swung open and [Norah] let out a faint little scream. 'God love us, a Chinese!' A tiny Japanese houseman, hardly bigger than I was, stood smirking in the doorway" (*Auntie Mame* 12). Led inside by Ito, the houseman, the two find themselves surrounded by Japanese furniture and paintings. Again, Patrick knows better and admits to the gap caused by the hegemonic representation of the other.

"Our knowledge of Oriental fleshpots had been strictly limited to what we'd seen in the movies—hideous tortures, innocent victims drugged and sold into a life worse than death along the Yangtze, bloody tong wars—but Hollywood had made pretty clear what happened when East and West met" (*Auntie Mame* 13-4). Mame is a single woman who constantly reinvents herself, and she pretty well knows what happens when East meets West: her charm is augmented. She is transnational before the word: the first glimpse Patrick has of her before their meeting is a picture where she is dressed up as a Spaniard, then she appears as a "regular Japanese doll" and later on suggests they only speak French in the house. Again in Patrick's words, "Once inside Auntie Mame's cavernous living room … we were relieved to see that it was just full of a lot of people who looked like regular men and women. Well, perhaps not *quite* like regular men and women, but there were no wicked Orientals except my Auntie Mame, who had given up being Spanish and started being Japanese" (*Auntie Mame* 16-7).

So, while Norah is still scared that "the Chinee" might sell them into slavery, Patrick is introduced to the artificiality of another frontier, that of the strictly binarized pre-1968 gender roles. "A sinister looking couple," he says, "strode across the foyer. The man looked like a woman, and the woman, except for her tweed skirt, was almost a perfect Ramon Novarro" (*Auntie Mame* 14).

Unaccustomed to raising children, Mame sees young Patrick, at first, as a little replica of herself. To make him feel at home, she suggests he uses the powder room or works at the loom that she's been given by a descendant of Pocahontas. These female activities show that Mame is unaffected by what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls the "effeminophopia" that makes of the sissy boy "the haunting abject" of both straight and queer thought (157). All this sexual innuendo was of universal comic appeal but, at the same time, it was a delicate testimony to the presence of diverse subjectivities in Mame's world and in the audience or readers.

After meeting queer characters, ten-year old Patrick's encounter with the other takes place in the form of language. Some words he misunderstands, others he simply doesn't grasp. Mame sees an opportunity in Patrick's innocence and starts a gimmick, in which the boy writes down all the words he doesn't understand, in order to have them later explained by his aunt. Patrick complies and presents Mame with words such as nymphomaniac, free love and lesbian in the novel. In the film, hearing the word "heterosexual," Mame rips the paper away from her nephew's hands and the game is over.

"My advancement that summer of 1929," Patrick goes on, "if not exactly what *Every Parent's Magazine* would recommend, was remarkable. By the end of July I knew how to mix what Mr. Woolcott called a 'Lucullan little Martini' and I had learned not to be frightened by Auntie Mame's most astonishing friends." The boy practices his new

words, for example, while Ito does his Japanese flower arrangements or prepares "delicate Eastern cuisine" (*Auntie Mame* 28). And here comes a crucial point in Patrick Dennis' treatment of the other, not really on the author's part, but in the development of the story through genres. In the novel Ito is, though often present, definitely in the background. He is little more than a "mechanical doll" (*Auntie Mame* 13), who speaks with an accent and giggles and smirks all the time. This is all the characterization he's given by Patrick Dennis. Morton DaCosta directed the stage version on Broadway for two years in a row. There is no recording of the staged play, but DaCosta was again chosen to direct the film. He confirmed four actors from the original show, namely the ones playing young Patrick, Auntie Mame (Rosalind Russell), her secretary Agnes Gooch and Ito. The film is so theatrical that it is a very useful document for understanding the direction and the acting that took place on stage. Indeed, it "freely lifts dialogue and situations and is nearly identical in structure to the play" (Jordan 82). Ito Shimoda played the Japanese housekeeper in both versions, performing the role as the stereotypical Oriental lacking virility. Nothing is said about his sexuality in the stage directions of the play, and we are brought to believe that DaCosta was responsible for his feminization. This has been seen as offensive by present time Asian American actors; Shimoda's Ito was always "giggling into his hands like a geisha" so much so that "there is a stigma associated with the role of Ito" (Muraoka 138).

Critical readings of Mame's character have in fact two currents, or I might say two examples, considering the scantiness of literature on the subject: the feminist one and the queer one. The first was offered by Jane Hendler, who maintains that "Mame's threat to patriarchal authority may have been contained by what might be considered merely odd or whimsical behavior" (155-156). Reading this in the context of 1950s medical literature, where non-conventional women were seen as mentally ill, she suggests that the comedy (the word "madcap" containing–in more than one sense, I should add–Mame's deviance) neutralized the danger that such an eccentric woman could have posited to the family- and marriage-centered society of that era. Hendler calls our attention to the fact that "[p]resent day conservatives point to the postwar years as a time when men were "men" and women were "women," but they ignore that by 1958 nearly 500,000 pounds of tranquilizers were being mass-marketed mostly to women–clearly an indication that female discontent with rigid sex roles was treated (by a male-dominated medical community) as a psychological dysfunction rather than a social problem" (2).

On the other side, queer studies sees Mame's love of masquerade and constant self-invention as a hint of her transgender identity. Camille Paglia writes that Mame "has so many feminine personae that, mysteriously, she ends up ceasing to seem female at all. My Hermes/Mercury principle: a multitude of personae suspends gender" (220). The two schools of thought can also coincide at some points: both as a queer icon (Bronski 122) and as a feminist phenomenon, Mame has something of the drag queen (Hendler 173-84). *Auntie Mame* could in fact be the handbook of *camp*, with all its masquerades, diva worship, self-irony and sexual innuendo. Camp, as explained by Fabio Cleto, "exists only insofar as there is a doxastic space in which to surreptitiously improvise the theatricalisation, the *mise en scène*, of a 'dressing-up party space'—and by describing it as *a party*, we activate indeed its complex system of inclusion/exclusion, its grouping into *a camp* (in the very metaphor of both its vagrant movement, political alliance, and martial display, that the queer origins of the term itself promotes)" (33). Mame is made vagrant by the Depression, which forces her to move downward in the social ladder

looking for jobs she constantly loses, but she also has a vagrant dimension in the dressing-up party she makes of her life. On top of all this, the political alliance and the martial display are all but missing in her funny but serious fight for democracy.

Mame's attack at hegemonic normativity at the height of the Cold War didn't spare any of the aspects that were causing the right wing authorities the hysteria of maccarthysm. Patrick's trustee, who fears the Bolsheviks and the Democrats in the same way, is the first example of this breed, but later Mame will also encounter another specimen of nationalistic narrow-mindedness, Patrick's perspective in-laws, the Upsons. In response to their antisemitism, she buys a property adjacent to theirs in order to turn it into a home for Jewish war orphans. A child of its times, the 1966 musical play has Mame turn the building into a shelter for single mothers.

The worst that she can expect, though, is that her beloved nephew's education to democracy and difference might fail. And this is what she witnesses when Pat falls in love with Gloria Upson, the girl with "a kind of ersatz composure" and "mail-order chic" (Lawrence and Lee, *Auntie Mame* 89). As a little kid, he had showed pride in his aunt's extravagant behavior, which is one more hint that the character was speaking to queer audiences of the era, who were doing away with shame and looking for pride. But at a certain point the situation is reversed and Patrick has grown up to be, in his aunt's words, "one of the most beastly, bourgeois, babbity little snobs on the Eastern seabord." Instead of pride for her, he now feels shame for her and her gay friends: "just for five minutes tonight will you try to act like a normal human being? [...] Gloria's from good stock and she just doesn't have to know about all your airy-fairy friends from Fire Island" (*Auntie Mame* 85). Reading the 1966 Broadway musical *Mame*, Clum compares this scene to one in *La Cage aux Folles*. "The situation in *La Cage* is the same as that in *Mame*: a son becomes ashamed of his non-biological mother and has to learn that her world is better than the uptight straight world he wants to marry into" (184). Her 'airy-fairy friends' are the family she will present in comic battle array (camp's 'martial display') against the Upsons at the end of the play to discourage Gloria from marrying her nephew and vice versa. Again, camp's 'political alliance' (Cleto 33) is evident: Mame's alternative family is her response to the Upsons' conservatism. Mame's mobility through gender stereotypes is mirrored in her economical instability and her multicultural openness, just as the conservatives' narrow-mindedness covers all three categories.

Her war against patriarchal institutions links her to Lysistrata's sex war declared to stop the Peloponnesian war. It is not a case that little Patrick picks, among the words he does not understand, the title of the Aristophanes play. Though writing a self-evident example of mass literature, Dennis looks up at the classics. The initial predicament in which Pat finds himself, when Babcock wants a conservative school for him and Mame an experimental one, is the same as in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, where young Pheidippides is forced to enroll in The Thinkpot, a school he despises, and there he will be exposed to the opposite influences of Right and Wrong. The first offers to prepare the young man for a life of discipline and rigour, the latter prospects the teaching of a life of ease and leisure. It is quite easy to find Right and Wrong personified by Babcock and Mame in the novel, on stage and on film.

Aristophanes' Right and Wrong translate into Lawrence and Lee's "riff" and "raff." In her typical defiant way, Mame tries to resist Babcock's controlling influence: when he states that he intends to "keep the riffraff out of this lad's life," she confronts him with the relativity of moral standards, asking a question she does not ask in the novel:

"exactly who decides which is riff and which is raff?" (31). A few years later, Mame's riff and raff were going to be personified in Tim O'Brien's 1973 *The Rocky Horror Show*, in which Riffraff in his name, and other characters in behavior and appearance, denounced the inaccuracy of all binarisms. Right and wrong, male and female, gay and straight were all confused in yet another Mame-like continuous party, with guests high on drugs instead of alcohol.

The circulation of Aristophanes in post-war America was wide enough to reach both the high-brow and the low-brow layers of cultural production. Academics were familiar with *The Origins of Attic Comedy*, Francis Cornford's pathbreaking study of the Greek author, first published in 1914 and reissued in 1934. The book was so influential that in the 1970s it was still used as a basis for one of the first academic studies of modern comedy, Leland Poague's *The Cinema of Frank Capra: An Approach to Film Comedy*. Theatregoers and pratictioners, on the other hand, had heard of the very controversial 1946 staging of *Lysistrata* in New York with an all-black cast. In 1955, the same year as *Mame*'s publication, America witnessed the most improbable and unsuccessful adaptation of the play as a movie musical set in the 19th century American Wild West, director George Marshall's *The Second Greatest Sex*.

Allow me one last approach to *Mame* in terms of democracy. Considering this form of government as that which gives power to masses, I believe Patrick Dennis had in mind his own kind of literary democracy when he wrote the novel. Responding to the enormous power of television, he did what has been theorized by James Baughman in his *The Republic of Mass Culture*. Novelists of the late 40s and 50s adjusted their writing to the fast pace, low-brow, mass-oriented style and contents of television shows. Dennis' awareness of working within the framework of mass-culture is stated at the beginning of every chapter, where the narrator's voice introduces Mame's story-line after a discussion of similar stories he has read in the *Reader's Digest*. And though he was writing at the time when his national literature was undergoing the first real process of canonization thanks to Matthiessen's critical work, Dennis somehow democratized fiction with his ironic approach. Belle Poitrine, heroine of a later novel, *Little Me* (originally published in 1961), wants to be a movie star, and when she's given the script of *The Scarlet Letter*, unaware of what she's handling, changes the story and turns Hester into an all-American girl wearing a big A on her cheerleader uniform. By 1965 Dennis' technique was following the spirit of the times and *Mame*'s camp definitely verged on trash when writing *Little Me*. Still, Belle Poitrine has her own idea of a democracy of sex: during her burlesque shows, she presents several "Patriot Tableaux", the last of which sees her almost naked, and is titled "Safe for Democracy" (*Little Me* 31). And when, after being raised in a brothel in the States, she goes on to conquer British aristocracy, it is again her peculiar sense of (erotic) democracy that prevails. "My detractors have often accused me," she writes, "of being 'unselective' in my friends. If this is at all true, it is because I am genuinely democratic and feel that I and the lowliest stagehand or 'grip' are all God's children created free and equal" (*Little Me* 57). Patrick Dennis' idea of democracy and his penchant for the flair of difference goes even further when he publishes a raving history of a woman who believes herself to be America's first lady, namely *First Lady. My Thirty Days Upstairs in the White House* (1964). But by then, his own star was very quickly setting and he was going to disappear from public sight until the new millennium would be ready for his characters' anticonformism.

Works Cited

Bronski, Michael. *Culture Clash. The Making of Gay Sensibility*. Boston: South End, 1984. Print.

Cleto, Fabio. "Introduction: Queering the Camp." *Camp. Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*. Ed. Fabio Cleto. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999. 1-42. Print.

Clum, Johm M. *Something for the Boys. Musical Theater and Gay Culture*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Print.

Dennis, Patrick. *Auntie Mame.* Cutchogue (NY): Buccaneer Books, 1955. Print.

Dennis, Patrick. *Little Me*. New York: Broadway Books, 2002. Print.

Hendler, Jane. *Best-Sellers and Their Film Adaptations in Postwar America. From Here to Eternity, Sayonara, Giant, Auntie Mame, Peyton Place*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001. Print.

Jordan, Richard T. *But Darling, I'm Your Auntie Mame! The Amazing History of the World's Favorite Madcap Aunt.* New York: Kensington Books, 2004. Print.

Lawrence, Jerome and Robert E. Lee. *Auntie Mame.* New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1999. Print.

Muraoka, Alan. "Opening a New Window: What's an Asian-American Actor to Do When the Role He Wants Is Saddled with a Dubious Past?" *American Theatre* 23 (2006): 138-40. Print.

Paglia, Camille. *Sexual Personae. Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, New York: Vintage, 1991. Print.

Rudnick, Paul. "Introduction." *Auntie Mame.* By Patrick Dennis. New York: Broadway Books, 2001. xi-xvii. Print.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. "How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay." *Social Text* 29 (1991): 18-27. Rpt. *Tendencies.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. 154-164. Print.

ERMINIO CORTI

LA HUMANIZACIÓN DEL OTRO ABSOLUTO: UNA LECTURA DE *EL ENTENADO* DE JUAN JOSÉ SAER

En febrero de 1516 una flota europea al mando de Juan Díaz de Solís recaló por primera vez en el Río del Plata (López de Gómara Vol. I, Cap. LXXXIX; Díaz de Guzmán Libro I, Cap. I). Llegada a lo que fue bautizado "mar dulce", la flota empezó a remontar el río Uruguay. Al notar la presencia de indígenas, Solís decidió tomar posesión de aquellas tierras en nombre de la Corona española. Entre los diez marineros que lo acompañaron estaba Francisco del Puerto, un huérfano gaditano, que se había unido a la expedición como grumete. Una vez en tierra, los europeos fueron aniquilados por los indígenas, que devoraron sus cadáveres (Herrera y Tordesillas Década II, Libro I, Cap. VII). Los marineros a bordo no se percataron que el grumete se había salvado y la expedición regresó a España.

Del Puerto vivió diez años entre los indios hasta que, en 1527, fue hallado por Sebastián Caboto. El joven, que había aprendido las lenguas indígenas, le reveló que, remontando un afluente del río Paraná, se hallaba un reino rico en plata y oro. La noticia azuzó la codicia de Caboto, que envió enseguida una tropa río arriba mas, a un cierto punto del viaje, aconteció un episodio trágico. Unos veinte marineros que habían bajado a tierra fueron asesinados por los indios. En su memorial Caboto declaró que la emboscada fue el resultado de una traición por parte del intérprete (Toribio Medina CCCXXXVI). El destino de del Puerto nunca ha sido aclarado ni por los historiadores de la época ni por los estudiosos modernos. Sobre él, durante siglos, cayó el silencio. No obstante, la figura de este involuntario precursor de la colonización del Río del Plata ha despertado en el siglo Veinte el interés de algunos escritores argentinos.

El primero en tratar en clave ficcional su aventura fue Roberto Payró, con la novela *El mar dulce*, de 1927. En la obra, Francisco tiene un papel marginal. Sin embargo, al final encarna el símbolo de la futura colonización de la Argentina. El segundo texto es un cuento de María De Miguel titulado "El grumete". Se trata de una suerte de monólogo interior en que el protagonista expresa su repulsión por el comportamiento de los europeos, cegados por el espejismo de riquezas fabulosas. La codicia de los conquistadores empuja a del Puerto, con un acto que prefigura el nacimiento de la América mestiza, a seguir viviendo entre los indios.

Esta conclusión la retoma Gonzalo Enrique Marí en la novela *El grumete* (2003). En la primera parte se ocupa de la infancia del protagonista en la ciudad de Moguer, y evoca, a través de la madre, de origen árabe, algunos aspectos que preludian la conquista del Nuevo Mundo. A la muerte de ésta, el joven Francisco se alista en la expedición de Solís. Un año después se encuentra prisionero de una tribu antropófaga del Río de la Plata. Reconquistada azarosamente la libertad, es acogido por una pacífica tribu de guaraníes, a la que se integra, empezando una relación sentimental con la hija

de un cacique. Su convivencia idílica se ve interrumpida por la expedición de Caboto, que siembra la muerte entre la comunidad de los nativos y dispersa a los supervivientes. Salvándose de la matanza, el protagonista se presenta al comandante de los españoles para atraerlo en una emboscada. El choque con los indios es violento y obliga a Caboto y a sus hombres a huir. La novela termina con la unión del héroe con su amada, que ha dado a la luz un hijo "con el inconfundible rostro de Francisco, enaltecido por el color bronce de su piel" (Marí 247). En la obra de Marí, los nudos 'problemáticos' del cautiverio de del Puerto se concentran en un final paradigmático pues el protagonista decide vivir con los indios que lo han 'adoptado'. *El grumete* llama en causa la relación con el "otro" y el conflicto de identidades, mas de modo bastante simplista.

Distinto, en cambio, es el discurso por hacer sobre *El entenado* (1983) de Juan José Saer. La novela del argentino presenta, estructural y estilísticamente, elementos muy diferentes de los textos mencionados arriba. Ante todo, en *El entenado* el cautiverio del protagonista se concluye con su regreso a la patria. La novela asume así la forma de un memorial que el mismo del Puerto, ya anciano, escribe para recapitular los diez años vividos con los colastiné.

La temática central es, como el mismo Saer afirma (Schwartz 8), la relación del protagonista con una cultura y una humanidad radicalmente "otra," perturbadora e indescifrable para el europeo. Una parábola existencial estructura el memorial en cinco fases vinculadas, cada una, a un evento que marca la progresiva humanización del narrador. Son cinco "renacimientos" simbólicos y que, al mismo tiempo, presentan aspectos concretos. Del Puerto declara haber crecido en el ambiente sórdido de un puerto, sin conocer a sus padres. Es una orfandad cargada de connotaciones figuradas, en relación a la identidad cultural y a la relación con el "otro." Deseoso de cambiar su destino, Francisco se alista en una expedición que va al Nuevo Mundo y manifiesta la necesidad de una regeneración: "lo importante era alejarme del lugar en donde estaba, hacia un punto cualquiera, hecho de intensidad y delicia, del horizonte circular" (Saer 12).

Para del Puerto el contacto con la alteridad absoluta de la naturaleza salvaje americana y de la cultura de sus habitantes inicia de modo traumático y violento. Al desembarcar el joven Francisco asiste a la matanza de todos sus compañeros por un grupo de colastiné. El desconcierto del superviviente es total. Las palabras de su memorial aluden a la experiencia de una criatura que por primera vez se da cuenta de estar en el mundo. Después de que los cazadores lo circundan, repitiendo la enigmática expresión *def-ghi,* su extrañamiento asume una dimensión física, "la impresión de flotar, de estar en otra parte" (Saer 27). Los primeros días del cautiverio transcurren en una atmósfera surreal y terrorífica. El pasmo y la soledad de Francisco están asociados al trauma de un nacimiento (Saer 35). En esa condición de total fragilidad emotiva, presencia un ritual orgiástico de los indios que empieza con el descuartizamiento de sus compañeros. Siguen, en un *crescendo* paroxístico, un festín antropófago, una borrachera incontrolable y un frenesí erótico que trasciende cualquier tabú. Al vivir esta experiencia despeluznante, en el joven Francisco prevalece un desconcierto aturdido y la incapacidad de darle un sentido a lo que ve.

Cuando el "viaje sin fondo" del festín se agota, en el caserío se reanuda la vida cotidiana. Al entenado, la transformación que los indios sufren, le parece radical y la asocia al emerger de una esencia humana del tenebroso abismo de la bestialidad. Después del trauma de su "segundo nacimiento," Francisco inicia la larga convivencia con los colastiné, que asumen hacia él una actitud de enigmática deferencia. Sin

embargo, en la "urbanidad exagerada" que ellos manifiestan, el protagonista percibe una barrera invisible erguida por el "otro." La que podía ser su nueva familia no quiere acogerlo como miembro efectivo, relegándolo a una condición de liminalidad (Thomassen 5-27).

Francisco trata de comprender por qué sus secuestradores lo dejan vivo y lo retienen, más como huésped que como prisionero. Los indios le hacen intuir que su presencia presupone una función, que a él le resulta misteriosa. Esta incertidumbre depende de las limitaciones de las barreras culturales que lo separan de sus anfitriones. En primer lugar el lenguaje, caracterizado por una ambigüedad esencial cuya epítome es la plurivocidad semántica de la expresión *def-ghi*, usada por los colastiné cada vez que tratan de interactuar con Francisco. El entenado intuirá el sentido de la expresión un año más tarde, cuando la tribu repetirá el ritual de la orgía antropofágica. También en esta ocasión los cazadores vuelven con un rehén, al que dan el mismo trato respetuoso. El homólogo del entenado es un indio de una tribu cercana que parece conocer su papel y que, después de algunos meses, regresa a su pueblo. Francisco en cambio no tiene una tribu a la que volver; por eso los colastiné son obligados a retenerlo con ellos, haciendo de él "el eterno extranjero" (Saer 45).

Tras diez años de convivencia, lo inesperado ocurre. Una tarde, la tribu se agolpa alrededor de la choza del huésped, que es llevado a la ribera del río y ceremoniosamente colocado en una canoa. La embarcación es empujada en la corriente mientras que se levanta el grito "def-ghi." A la mañana siguiente, a Francisco lo despiertan dos soldados de la expedición de Caboto. Este encuentro y el regreso a España marcan el principio de la tercera etapa de la existencia del protagonista. Desnudo e incapaz de hablar, es conducido al campamento, dónde un oficial le pide informaciones sobre los nativos. El joven, aturdido y espantado, da a señas las noticias que el militar le solicita. La trágica consecuencia de su ingenuidad será decenas de cadáveres de indios arrastrados por el río. Al regreso de la matanza, Caboto zarpa hacia España llevando a Francisco. Inicialmente lo confinan en la bodega junto a un sacerdote, que lo percibe como un ser corrompido por el contacto con los salvajes. El entenado es el incómodo testigo de una cultura bárbara y, al mismo tiempo, representa una entidad híbrida. En cuanto tal, es conducido de nuevo a la patria "como se puede traer una brasa en la palma de la mano" (Saer 97).

Al llegar a España, Francisco es confiado al padre Quesada, hombre culto, vivaz y de espíritu tolerante. Bajo su guía, el entenado inicia un proceso de aculturación y crecimiento interior que asumirá un valor fundamental en su existencia. En efecto, adquiere instrumentos cognoscitivos que le permitirán descifrar su experiencia entre los colastiné y la cultura de "el otro." La muerte repentina de su protector cierra la tercera etapa de la historia de Francisco, que se encuentra solo y sin perspectiva futura. Por años vagabundea, viviendo de expedientes, hasta que por azar encuentra una compañía de actores itinerantes, a la cual se integra. El entenado le cuenta al anciano capo cómico la historia de su cautiverio y éste, seguro del éxito, le propone escribir una comedia sobre su experiencia. Francisco acepta, pero la necesidad de armar una representación que encuentre el favor del público condiciona fatalmente el trabajo. El resultado es una comedia triunfal hecha de "falsedades vulgares y actos sin contenido," de la que "toda verdad estaba excluida" (Saer 109, 108). El protagonista es consciente de que con el modo como ha escrito, ha traicionado su 'misión' de testigo. En las palabras con las que describe la reacción del público, Francisco deja intuir que la comedia tiene éxito porque proporciona una imagen del Nuevo Mundo y de sus habitantes moldeada sobre el

imaginario colectivo europeo. Una representación exótica de lo fabuloso, dónde el "otro" puede aparecer sólo como anormal o como una parodia del ser humano, que, en la visión eurocéntrica, coincide con el blanco civilizado. Después de algunos años de representar la comedia, Francisco siente la necesidad de acabar con "tanta falsedad" y de romper con la compañía. El azar le ofrece esta ocasión cuando un amante celoso asesina a una de las actrices. La muerte de la mujer deja huérfanos a sus tres hijos y el protagonista decide separarse de sus compañeros de viaje y de adoptar a los niños. Empieza así la última etapa de su existencia.

Con su nueva familia se establece en una ciudad del sur de España. Es ya un hombre maduro con una estabilidad afectiva que nunca había conocido. Sin embargo, Francisco se ve acosado por el recuerdo de los colastiné. Alcanzada la vejez, decide escribir el memorial de su existencia, que constituye la novela. Las últimas cincuenta páginas de *El entenado* son un meticuloso análisis de todo lo vivido durante su cautiverio. Es un doble impulso el que empuja al protagonista a fijar sus reflexiones y a volver con la memoria al Nuevo Mundo. Por un lado, la necesidad de comprender todo lo que antes no podía porque le faltaba la educación. Por el otro, la voluntad de realizar la misión testimonial inscrita en el apelativo *def-ghi* que la tribu le asignó, y de la que ahora es plenamente consciente. Para el viejo Francisco dejar memoria de su experiencia es un deber moral "en nombre de los que ya, definitivamente, se perdieron" (Saer 114).

La narración gravita alrededor de dos aspectos de la cultura colastiné: el canibalismo ritual y el papel del *def-ghi*. Las reflexiones del anciano sobre el canibalismo se fundan en la observación de algunas actitudes exteriores que la tribu manifestaba: un frenesí para cumplir cada actividad cotidiana, y el paradójico sentido de asco y codicia por la carne humana demostrado en ocasión de los festines. El narrador interpreta esas actitudes como una forma de angustia latente debida la relación de los colastiné con el "otro" y con el universo externo a su cosmos. Lo que se encontraba afuera de la dimensión humanizada del caserío, a los indios les aparecía como una "masa blanda," un "horizonte incierto y sin forma" (Saer 119) donde todo faltaba de la calidad básica que percibían en ellos mismos: la realidad. Francisco supone que la obsesión y el malestar en que vivían los colastiné se debían al temor de perder su condición de "hombres verdaderos". En otras palabras, temían el no-ser. Para contrastar dicha amenaza, estaban obligados a 'actualizar' el cosmos cerrado en el que vivían con sus acciones y su laboriosa meticulosidad, actuando como una suerte de *axis mundi* viviente: "para ellos, a ese mundo que parecía tan sólido, había que actualizarlo a cada momento para que no se desvaneciese como un hilo de humo en el atardecer" (Saer 121).

Tampoco esto parecía suficiente. Para sentirse "hombres verdaderos," los indios necesitaban hallar una confirmación en la realidad física de su mundo. Pero a su vez, este mundo, para ser plenamente verdadero y "habitable," tenía necesidad de un "suplemento" de realidad. Francisco plantea la hipótesis de que los colastiné recurrían a la antropofagia para resolver esta paradoja existencial. Según las conjeturas del narrador, el canibalismo ritual de los indios no era una respuesta al deseo de asimilar simbólicamente al otro. La orgía de los colastiné era más bien la herencia de su estado primordial de "hombres no verdaderos" del que habían logrado salir, aunque de modo precario. Francisco supone que en origen, el canibalismo se practicaba entre los colastiné, y que la memoria ancestral del comerse entre ellos causaba el malestar que se manifestaba durante el festín. Habiendo alcanzado un nivel cultural más elevado, su antropofagia intra-clánica se había transformado en una antropofagia que tenía como

víctima al "otro," para demostrarse a sí mismos y a las otras tribus su propia diversidad, su ser "hombres verdaderos."

Francisco observa también que "lo exterior era su principal problema. No lograban, como hubiesen querido, verse desde afuera" (Saer 120). En otras palabras, los indios percibían su condición plenamente humana como frágil e inestable y sentían la necesidad de recibir una constante confirmación de su *status*. No logrando sin embargo "verse desde afuera" para tener de ellos mismos una visión objetiva, necesitaban de alguien que no perteneciera al clan. Por eso, en las incursiones fuera de su territorio con que se procuraban carne humana, los colastiné perdonaban a una de las víctimas destinada al festín, el *def-ghi*. Este emblema viviente del caos informe, les proporcionaba la mirada externa de la que necesitaban. Pero el *def-ghi* cumplía también otra función. Una vez regresado a su tribu, tenía que testimoniar la existencia de una comunidad de indios culturalmente superiores.

Sin embargo, el *def-ghi* de piel blanca llegado un día junto a otros hombres barbudos, y blancos como él, representó para los colastiné una anomalía. El grumete de Solís no tenía una tribu a la que regresar y su cautiverio se transformó en una larga permanencia en una dimensión liminal. En último análisis, la experiencia de Francisco entre los colastiné no constituye un proceso de transculturación o de mestizaje cultural. El rechazo por parte de los nativos a asimilar al *def-ghi* niega en efecto, a ambos sujetos, la posibilidad de activar una modalidad de transición de una cultura a otra, lo que el etnoantropólogo cubano Fernando Ortiz define *transculturación* (143-51). La frontera trazada por los indios resulta infranqueable respecto a la interacción cultural y el protagonista encuentra otro terreno para instaurar un contacto profundo con ellos. Es el plano de la condición existencial en sus aspectos más problemáticos: la precariedad del ser, la soledad del individuo, la ineluctable presencia de la muerte.

En las últimas páginas del memorial, el entenado revive episodios de su vida entre los colastiné que le permiten reconocer en el "otro" su propia esencia humana. El primero de ellos es la muerte de un joven indio. Francisco, que tuvo con el indio una "relación un poco más directa y natural que con el resto de la tribu" (Saer 142), asiste impotente a su lenta agonía: "Inclinado sobre él, bajo el sol de la mañana, lo miraba morir. Este recuerdo es único, porque la muerte de cada hombre es única y fue ese hombre y ningún otro el que se moría" (Saer 146).

El segundo evento, que cierra la novela, es un eclipse total de luna al que Francisco asiste con los indios. En las reflexiones del narrador la "negrura absoluta" que envuelve el caserío se asocia al caos informe del mundo externo que angustia a los colastiné. En esa circunstancia, también Francisco percibe el estado de ánimo de los indios, que reconduce al sentido de precariedad, de soledad y de turbación propio de la condición humana: "Como a mí mismo, estoy seguro de que esa oscuridad les estaba entrando tan hondo que ya no les quedaba, tampoco adentro, ninguna huella del lucecita que, de tanto en tanto, provisoria y menuda, veían brillar" (Saer 155). En toda la novela el narrador tiende a representar su relación con el "otro" en términos de "yo" y "ellos" y, pocas, referidas al "nosotros." Nunca el uso del nosotros adquiere el sentido de comunión que se manifiesta en las últimas páginas del memorial. La metafórica "lucecita" que Francisco entrevé relucir en los indios es el mismo resplandor que siente vivo en su fuero interno: la conciencia del ser. Al comprender plenamente su función de *def-ghi*, el protagonista con su memorial puede cumplir con la misión que los colastiné le asignaron, dejando un testimonio de la presencia en los "salvajes," en el "otro"

absoluto, de esa "lucecita" que, como las velas del cuarto en que cada noche se ha encerrado para escribir, ha iluminado y guiado su pluma.

Obras Citadas

Eliade, Mircea. *Il sacro e il profano*. Torino: Boringhieri, 1984. Print.

Gómara, Francisco López de. *Historia general de las Indias*. Madrid: Calpe, 1922. Print.

Guzmán, Ruy Díaz de. *Anales del Descubrimiento, Población y Conquista del Río de la Plata*. Asunción: Ricardo Rolón, 1980. Print.

Herrera y Tordesillas, Antonio de. *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las Islas y Tierrafirme del Mar Océano que llaman Indias Occidentales*. Madrid: Juan Flamenco, 1601-1615. Print.

Marí, Gonzalo Enrique. *El grumete Francisco del Puerto.* Buenos Aires: De los Cuatro Vientos, 2003. Print.

Miguel, María Esther De. *En el campo las espinas*. Buenos Aires: Pleamar, 1980. Print.

Ortiz, Fernando. *Contrappunto cubano del tabacco e dello zucchero*. Troina: Città Aperta, 2007. Print.

Pairó, Roberto Jorge. *El mar dulce*. Buenos Aires: Gleizer, 1927. Print.

Saer, Juan José. *El entenado*. México: Folios, 1983. Print.

Schwartz, Jorge. "Sobre literatura/Juan José Saer." *Cuadernos de Recienvenido* 14 (2000): 5-27. Print.

Thomassen, Bjørn. "The Uses and Meanings of Liminality." *International Political Anthropology* 2.1 (2009): 5-27. Print.

Toribio Medina, José. *Juan Díaz de Solís. Estudio histórico*. Santiago de Chile: Impreso en casa del Autor, 1897. Print.

GABRIELE D'OTTAVIO

DEBATING AMERICANIZATION AND WESTERNIZATION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN GERMANY AFTER WWII

Introduction

This paper is part of an ongoing research project on the history of political science in Germany and Italy since 1945, which I am conducting at the Institute for German and Italian Historical Studies, Bruno Kessler Foundation in Trento. For reasons of space, this paper focuses only on the German case, which of the two case studies considered is also the most revealing with reference to the debate on Americanization and Westernization. In particular, the main aim of this paper is to assess how and to what extent the establishment of a new political science in West Germany after 1945 should be considered as a "product of importation" from the US, as many scholars have for a long time emphasized (Ritter, 1959; Arndt, 1978).

On the basis of the existing literature on this topic, the paper discusses the question of cultural transfer, and in particular of the American impact on German political science after WWII, by considering three aspects: 1) the relationship between the new political science which emerged after 1945 and the homegrown traditions of political studies; 2) the process of legitimization and institutionalization of the discipline; 3) the relations between the establishment of a new political science and the challenge of constructing a lasting democratic political system.

The relations between the homegrown traditions of 'political sciences' and the new 'political science'

Even before 1945, in Germany there were solid traditions of political studies whose origins can be traced back to the late 19th century, or even earlier according to the works of Hans Maier and Wilhelm Bleek (Maier 1962, Bleek 2001). However, these traditions were not considered as a separate field of study, politics, but rather as a topic within other disciplines (history, law, and economics). Thus the plural phrase *political sciences* was preferred to the singular form *political science*. In Germany, political science as the autonomous social science which was conceived and practiced in the United States at least since the 1880s (Farr and Seidelman, 1993), was regarded skeptically as a discipline totally alien to the more juridical, philosophical and anti-empirical oriented homegrown traditions of political studies. Nevertheless, there were also some important exceptions. For example, many scholars who worked in Berlin at the *Hochschule für Politik* (Missiroli 1988) or in Heidelberg at the *Institut für Sozial-und Staatswissenschaft* (Blomert et al., 1997), such as Hermann Heller or Karl Mannheim,

already during the Weimar Republic had expressed the need to institute an independent science of politics and to promote a more scientific approach to politics. However, most of the attempts to shape a homegrown political science with its own theoretical foundation, and to achieve disciplinary legitimacy as well as an initial institutionalization, remained fruitless until the end of World War II. This was also because under the Nazi regime many scholars were forced to leave the country for political or racial reasons.

In this regard, the German political scientist Alfons Söllner has shown that many of the German scholars who were forced to emigrate not only managed to build ordinary careers as political or social scientists in American universities, but, once they had returned to Germany after the end of WWII, they also managed to offer their help to the American authorities during the occupation period, thus contributing significantly to the emergence of a German political science as a distinct academic discipline (Söllner, 1996). Let us mention some of the most important *Remigranten* who played an important role in shaping the new political science in Germany: Arnold Bergstraesser, Ernst Fraenkel, Carl-Joachim Friedrich, Friedrich Hermens, Karl Loewenstein, Franz Naumann and Eric Voegelin.

Against this background, it would be reductive, if not even misleading, to explain the cultural transfer from the US to Europe in the field of political science in terms of a one-way process, or to picture it as resulting from a simple imitation. Although it is correct to assume that the American impact was determinant for the development and institutionalization of political science in Germany as a distinct academic discipline, it seems that the cultural transfer from the US to Germany (and more generally to Western Europe) after WWII was filtered and mediated, if not even altered, by the contribution and interference of other actors. The evaluation of the relations between the homegrown traditions of political sciences and the new political science becomes even more complex if we consider that, "although American political science is in many respects a distinctly American science of politics, its evolution has taken place within the discourse of European concepts" (Gunnel, 2006: 3). This was obviously the case during the nineteenth century, when the German concept of *state* was dominating the discourse of the field. But this was probably true also for the early part of the twentieth century, when the German *Remigranten* offer a particularly suitable example for rethinking the established definition of German political science as an importation from America. The case of the famous scholar Carl J. Friedrich is a particularly interesting example. He studied under Alfred Weber at the University of Heidelberg, where he graduated in 1925 and received his Ph.D. in 1930. Already in 1926, he was appointed as a lecturer in Government at Harvard University, and when Hitler came to power in 1933 he decided to remain in the United States and become a naturalized citizen. He was then appointed Professor in Government at Harvard University in 1936, and, after WWII, he also served as president of the American Political Science Association in 1962, and of the International Political Science Association from 1967-1970 (Lietzmann, 2006). Friedrich's experience is certainly unique, but he was not the only German émigré who, on the one hand, had became acquainted with the practice of American political science, and, on the other, had brought from Germany a different academic tradition, thus contributing to a more critical self-understanding of American political theory.

The difficult path from legitimization to institutionalization

The context of 1933 rapidly changed. The foundation of a modern political science in Western Germany after 1945 was a rather speedy process, which resulted from American political support and, above all, American money coming from philanthropic organizations such as the Rockefeller foundation or the Ford foundation (Rausch, 2010). It is not by chance that the very first chairs in political science (*Politische Wissenschaft*) were established in Hessen, one of the three lands within the American Occupation zone. The German political science association (*Deutsche Vereinigung für die Wissenschaft von der Politik,* since 1959 *DV für politische Wissenschaft*) was created in 1951; the leading journals were a revamped *Zeitschrift für Politik* (1908) and, since 1960, the *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*. From January 1957 to January 1962, the number of chairs in political science more than doubled, increasing from thirteen to twenty-seven (Beyme 1986; Mohr 1988).

However, it was not until the end of the 1960s that the disciplinary legitimacy and full institutionalization of political science were achieved. According to the report commissioned by the German research association at the beginning of the 1960s, political science was taught at 12 out of 18 universities after one decade, but only at a half of these it was recognized as an independent discipline (Lepsius, 1961). In most cases, the discipline was represented by a few individual professorships and considered as a rather secondary subject, within faculties of philosophy, sociology, and economics, and curricula in sociology, economics, and history. Thus the question which arises is: why did the legitimization and institutionalization process of political science take so long in Germany, despite the American influence? Simply put, because there was still considerable resistance within the German academic system (Kastendiek, 1987). As Michael Stein (1995) points out, in Germany, political science had to fight its way among a "constellation of disciplines" that included in particular law, history, and philosophy, which is also the case in other European countries.

Furthermore, it seems that even the promoters of an autonomous strong and ambitious political science didn't have, at least in the education field, a shared and clear idea of what the objects of research and the methods of the new discipline should be. There were different ideas even on how to name the discipline: *Politische Wissenschaft* (Political science); *Wissenschaftliche Politik* (Scientific politics); *Wissenschaft von der Politik* (Science of Politics), *Politologie* (Politology). Arnold Bergstraesser and Ernst Fraenkel, two of the most prominent exponents of German political science after 1945, conceived political science, respectively, as a "synoptic science" (*synoptische Wissenschaft*) and as "integrated science" (*integrierte Wissenschaft*), taking into account the co-existence, integration and interaction of different approaches as the real distinctive feature of a science of politics (Bergstraesser, 1961; Fraenkel, 1960). What it lacked above all was the internal differentiation and the delimitation from the other disciplines, and this in turn was again connected with the lack of empirical research. This was also one of the main points of criticism made later by the second generation of West German political scientists (Kastendiek, 1975).

The challenge of democracy

According to Alfons Söllner, "West German political science in its formative phase can simply not be understood if considered as primarily an academic, or even a purely scientific, event" (Söllner, 2002: 45). As a matter of fact, we cannot explain the rebirth of political science in Germany, and this is true also for Italy, without considering the peculiar historical context in which it took place. More precisely, we have to take into account the common political challenge those two countries had to face: the challenge of democracy and the democratization of their political systems after the totalitarian experiences and the defeat in WWII. Since the very beginning, the rebirth of political science in Germany was conceived as an instrument for consensus building within the re-education program undertaken by the Allied forces after World War II. This emerges clearly from the debate that animated a series of conferences, convened by a prominent initiatory group of professors and politicians, which took place between 1949 and 1952 in Waldleiningen (1949), Königstein (1950), and Frankfurt (1952) (Mohr, 1988).

Beyond the struggle for the existence and nonexistence of a German political science as an autonomous discipline, there was general consensus about the fact that the social sciences and in particular the political sciences had to serve as a normative-pedagogical "science of the present" in a country such as West Germany, which was seeking to construct a lasting democratic, anti-totalitarian political culture (Bauernkämper, 2005).

Precisely, this consideration leads me to point out a fundamental difference between the political science practiced in the US and the one which was implemented in Germany. After 1945, in the US political science was considered as a "science of democracy," without the need of great political interference, since democracy could be considered a set of more or less consolidated and shared values. In Germany, however, the new political science was considered and practiced not only as a "science of democracy," but also as a "science for democracy"—as a science which was strongly shaped by the political need to build a democracy that had yet to take root. As a result, many German political scientists were induced to interpret the scope and the function of their discipline in normative and pedagogical terms, to the detriment of empirical work. This particular way of looking at the discipline, as a tool for the building of consensus and for the promotion of a democratic, civic culture prevented German political science, at least in the first two decades, from developing into an empirical science, which is how it was mainly conceived in the United States after the so-called behavioral revolution. In particular, while West German political science continued to be primarily qualitative, reliant on philosophical, historical, institutional approaches, American political science was gradually being transformed by the new experimental methods of quantitative analysis. It was only at the beginning of the 1970s that West German political science started to be deeply influenced by the American behavioral revolution and, in particular, by David Easton's systems theory and by the theories of modernization, control, participation, and democratization (Narr, 1971; Narr and Naschold, 1971).

This first point is important in order to understand the way the supposed Americanization or Westernization of Germany took place in the field of political science. Somewhat paradoxically, the political influence exercised by the US in shaping German political science towards a western democratic-oriented political science

prevented it, at least in the formative phase, from becoming more similar to American political science, which was much more empirical and much less normative than in the past. In other words, political Westernization prevented intellectual Americanization. When the "behavioral revolution" eventually took place also in West Germany, domestic factors, such as the political, cultural and generational changes of the early 1970s, played an important role too in shaping the Americanization of German political science. Somewhat paradoxically again, this empirical turn took place when the image of both the West and of the American superpower were undergoing their first serious crisis after WWII.

A second point concerns the circulation of the American model of democracy. Here again, the contribution of the two aforementioned *Remigranten* Bergrstraesser and Fraenkel is particularly interesting. Both considered US democracy as a model for the West German political system. In fact, they sponsored two different concepts of American democracy, each based upon a particular selection of those characteristics which better matched with their individual *Weltanschaungen*, a liberal-conservative in Bergstraesser's case, and social-democratic in Fraenkel's. Simply put, Westernization and Americanization turned out to be a subjective rather than objective political-cultural process.

Conclusions

It is difficult to downplay the American impact on the history of political science in Germany after World War II, above all if we consider both the impressive political and financial support given in the 1950s and 1960s. However, rather than talking of importation or "influences," it is perhaps more accurate to speak of interactions. As a matter of fact, the cultural transfer from the US to Europe cannot fully be understood if considered as one-way. The example of the *Remigranten* leads us to point out, firstly, that the American political science was, at least in part, deeply informed by European ideas, and, secondly, that the American impact on the German political science was mediated, often in different ways, by actors who had close ties with the United States, as well as with the European countries of their own origins. Furthermore, what emerges from the analysis of the socio-political developments of German political science after 1945 is that the establishment of a new discipline didn't simply displace older traditions overnight. It is true that there was a conscious adoption of the American model of political science, but at the same time there was also a conscious rejection of it. As a matter of fact, the struggles of German political science for its very existence against well-established disciplines and social skepticism were longlasting.

A last point concerns the distinction we need to make between Americanization and Westernization as a cultural and intellectual process and Americanization and Westernization as a political goal. Even though it is difficult to separate the two dimensions, it is worth noting that the outcomes of political Westernization and of intellectual Americanization, respectively, turned out to be in some aspects different, if not even contradictory. On the one hand, the promotion of a democratically oriented approach through the social sciences encouraged the establishment of the first chairs of political science; on the other, it prevented German political science from fully assimilating more advanced scientific approaches, methods and trends.

In conclusion, the history of German political science after 1945 seems to confirm Jan-Werner Müller's statement, that concepts like Westernization and Americanization are now generally accepted, "as they still seem the best approximation of a phenomenon that involved the narrowing of an ideological gap between Germany on the one side and Western Europe as well as well as North America on the other … What matters is not so much the words, but whether as concepts these words are properly defined—and defended through appropriate qualification and contextualization" (Müller, 2002: 6).

Works Cited

Arndt, Hans-Joachim. *Die Besiegten von 1945. Versuch einer Politologie für Deutsche samt Würdigung der Politikwissenschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1978. Print.

Bauernkämper, Arnd. "Demokratie als Verheissung oder Gefahr? Deutsche Politikwissenschaftler und amerikanische Modelle 1945 bis zur Mitte der sechsiger Jahre." Eds. A. Bauernkämper, K.H. Jarausch, M. Payk. *Demokratiewunder. Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands 1945-1970*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005. 253-280. Print.

Bergstraesser, Arnold. *Politik in Wissenschaft und Bildung*. Freiburg i.B.: Rombach, 1961. Print.

Bleek, Wilhelm. *Geschichte der Politikwissenschaft in Deutschland*. München: Beck, 2001. Print.

Blomert, Reinhard et al., eds. *Das institut für Sozial- und Staatswissenschaften zwischen 1918 und 1958*. Marburg: Metropolis, 1997. Print.

Farr, James, Seidelman, ed. *Political Science in the United States*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993. Print.

Fraenkel, Ernst. *Das amerikanische Regierungsystem*. Köln-Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1960. Print.

Gunnel, John G. "The European geneses of American political science." *European Political Science* 5.2 (2006): 137-149. Print.

Kastendiek, Hans. "Political Development and Political Science in West Germany." *International Political Science Review* 8.1 (1987): 25-40. Print.

---. "Desintegration einer Integrationswissenschaft. Konstituierung und Wandel der westdeutschen Politologie." Eds. B. Blank et al. *Kritik der Politischen Wissenschaft. Analysen von Politik und Ökonomie inder bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1975. Print.

Lepsius, Maria Rainer. *Denkschrift über die Lage Soziologie und Politikwissenschaft. Im Auftrage der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft.* Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1961. Print.

Lietzmann, Hans. "Carl Joachim Friedrich. Ein amerikanischer Politikwissenschaftler aus Heidelberg." Eds. R. Blomert et al. *Das institut für Sozial- und Staatswissenschaften zwischen 1918 und 1958*. Marburg: Metropolis-Verlag, 1997. 329-347. Print.

Maier, Hans. "Die Lehre der Politik in den deutschen Universitäten vornehmlich zum 16. bis 18 Jahrhundert." Ed. D. Oberndörfer. *Wissenschaftliche Politik. Eine Einführung in Grund fragen ihrer Tradition und Theorie*. Freiburg: Rombach, 1962. 59-116. Print.

Missiroli, Antonio. *Die Deutsche Hochschule für Politik*. Sankt Augustin: Comdok, 1988. Print.

Mohr, Arno. *Politikwissenschaft als Alternative: Stationen einer wissenschaftlichen Disziplin auf dem Wege zu ihrer Selbständigkeit in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945-1965*. Bochum: Studienverl. Brockmeyer, 1988. Print.

Müller, Jan W. "Introduction: Putting German Political Thought in Context." Ed. J.W. Müller. *German ideologies since 1945*. New York: Palgrave, 2002. Print.

Narr, Wolf-Dieter. *Theoriebegriffe und Systemtheorie. Einführung in die moderne politische Theorie*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971. Print.

Narr, Wolf-Dieter and Frieder Naschold. *Theorie der Demokratie*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971. Print.

Rausch, Helke. "'Allemagne, année zero?' Dénazifier et démocratiser (1945-1955)." Ed. L. Tournès. *L'Argent de l'influence. Les foundations américaines et leur réseaux européens*. Paris: Autrement, 2010. 125-142. Print.

Ritter, Gerhard. *Wissenschaftliche Historie, Zeitgeschichte und "Politische Wissenschaft."* Heidelberg: Winter, 1959. Print.

Söllner, Alfons. *Deutsche Politikwissenschaftler in der Emigration: Akkulturation und Wirkungsgeschichte*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996. Print.

---. "Normative Westernization?. The Impact of Remigres on the Foundation of Political Thought in Post-War Germany." Ed. J.W. Müller. *German ideologies since 1945*. New York: Palgrave, 2002. 41-60. Print.

Stein, Michael B. "Major Factors in the Emergence of Political Science as a Discipline in Western Democracies: a Comparative analysis of the United States, Britain, France, and Germany." Eds. D. Easton et al. *Regime and Discipline: Democracy and the Development of Political Science*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995. 165-195. Print.

Von Beyme, Klaus, ed. *Politikwissenschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Entwicklungsprobleme einer Disziplin* (PVS-Sonderheft). Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag,1986. Print.

VALERIO MASSIMO DE ANGELIS

DEFERRING THE DREAM: LANGSTON HUGHES'S CRITIQUE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Throughout his career, Langston Hughes developed a consistent critique of the strategies used by dominant white culture in order to exclude African Americans (but also workers, women, and other ethnic "minorities") from enjoying the American Dream of Democracy for All. Among his best known protest poems are "Good Morning Revolution" and "Goodbye Christ" (1932), that led him to be denounced for anti-Americanism, and "Let America Be America Again" (1935)—in Arnold Rampersad's words, "some of the most radical poems ever published by an American, as well as some of the most poignant lamentations of the chasm that often exists between American social ideals and American social reality" (Rampersad, 1994: 4). Still in 1951, when his political positions were already much more moderate, in order to denounce the obstacles African Americans had to face when trying to actually realize the right to hope in a better future (the "pursuit of happiness") stated in the founding document of American democracy, the Declaration of Independence, Hughes created the fortunate figure of the "dream deferred."[1] Toward the end of his life, in December 1964, in the unpublished manuscript "Draft Ideas," he wrote: "Politics in any country of the world is dangerous. For the poet, politics in the world had better be disguised as poetry" (qtd. in Rampersad, 2002: 385). That politics was dangerous, Hughes was even too well personally aware: he had only to remember the occasions when he had been subjected to the investigations of the FBI and the McCarthy's subcommittee on subversive activities. Nonetheless, in this note he does not state that politics must be erased when writing poetry: he says quite the opposite, that the only way for the poet to deal with politics is precisely to *inscribe* it in his or her poetry, but in a *disguised* form. This strategy of *disguising* the poet has to make use of in order to say things that might be too dangerous if openly declared cannot but recall the rhetoric of *signifying* which Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (see Gates 1988) identifies as an important modality of expression in African American literature. A variant of this strategy was used by the poet in 1953, during his interrogation by the Senate's Sub-Committee on Investigation, at the presence of Senator McCarthy himself. Hughes did not in any unequivocal way attack Communism, deftly "avoiding the leads of the questioners when they challenged his deeper sense of intellectual and ethical decorum"; during the interrogation his "dignity had been largely passive, perhaps supine," and his rhetorical triumph was somehow "at the expense of a victory of the spirit" (Rampersad, 2002: 219), but Hughes did not hesitate in reasserting "the right to oppose in speech or writing those who would make of democracy, or religion, a reactionary, evil, and harmful mask for anti-Negro,

[1] The reference is of course to the famous 1951 collection of poems, *Montage of a Dream Deferred*.

and anti-American activities" (qtd. in Rampersad, 2002: 215), thus equating anti-Americanism not with Communism but with racism.

The procedure of saying (or dodging to say) one thing while covertly implying another may be found operating also in Hughes's most overt endorsement of a radically revolutionary ideology, the reportages he sent from the USSR in 1932-33, while involved in the project of shooting a film about race relation in the USA that eventually never saw the light. In these writings, Hughes compares the social and cultural landscape of the Soviet Union, which he sees as a country spectacularly projected towards a utopian future of freedom and equality, to the harsh and depressing situation of his motherland after the 1929 Great Crisis. Here the real target of Hughes's writing is the deconstruction of the American ideology of inequality as inherently un-American, while paradoxically the progresses of the Soviet Union show how the "original" American Dream of Democracy may be actually realized. This also means that Hughes, far from being the radical Communist he pretended to be in those years, was rather a typical example of the dissenting artist whose final aim is not to dismantle the American Dream but to reinforce it by denouncing its present betrayal (a political and intellectual typology Sacvan Bercovitch sees at work, in American culture, since its Puritan origins). On the other hand, it is precisely by adopting the stance of so many representatives of white culture that this African American Jeremiah may also be able to turn the rhetoric of the Jeremiad upside down by way of the oblique strategies of Black "signifying"—by showing with his personal experience and example that accepting the values of the dominant ideology does not bring a final integration into the society and culture that ideology represents and defends, but a further exclusion, or at least a "deferring" of the entrance into the American Dream of Democracy.

In one of the (supposedly) clearest examples of Hughes's acceptance of the values of American democracy, the poem "America" (1925), the poetic self envisions a nation where both the "Little dark baby" (l. 1) and the "Little Jew Baby" (l. 2), may finally become "brothers" (l. 28), "one" (l. 29), "America" (l. 30). This dream of a future America where Blacks and Jews can look at the sky "Seeking the stars" (l. 20) is balanced by a retrospective glance to the past history of African Americans, in order to demonstrate how that dream is deeply rooted in the origins of American democracy. In ll. 35-37, the poetic self blends his identity with those of the most representative African American historical figures engaged in the fight for freedom: "I am Crispus Attucks at the Boston Tea Party; / Jimmy Jones in the ranks of the last black troops marching for democracy. / I am Sojourner Truth preaching and praying for the goodness of this wide, wide land." Attucks (who did not actually participate in the Boston Tea Party, because he was killed in the Boston Massacre of March 5, 1770) and the generically named Jimmy Jones, standing for all the Black soldiers who served on the European front during the First World War,[2] here are not battling for *their own* freedom but for that of the American colonies or of the Western democratic world, and even the famous

[2] As a matter of fact, African American "flocked into the American army during the war and served with enthusiasm and hope… This loyalty and hope was rewarded by a hardening of the lines of discrimination, by increased humiliation, and by the bloody Red Summer of 1919, which saw major race riots in city after city" (Levine, 1993: 91). Anyway, at the beginning of the Second World War, and when he had already given up his most radical position, Hughes saw no great differences, as he states in "Democracy, Negroes, and Writers" (1941), where he denounces "the trend toward suppression and censorship" of "Negro newspapers": "Negroes, like all other Americans, are being asked at the moment to prepare to defend democracy. But Negroes would very much like to have a little more democracy to defend" (Hughes, 2002: 211).

abolitionist Sojourner Truth is here portrayed as doing what she can for the welfare of the whole country, and not only of her community. In Hughes's mythologization of the history of the USA (and world) democracy, the African American is an active component *inside* the dream from the very beginning, and if the recognition of his or her presence has been so far deferred, the primary task of the Black poet is to make it visible once again. The spatial image of democracy Hughes builds is one of concentric spheres, where the sphere of the African-American movement for democracy (abolitionism) is at the centre of the sphere of American democracy, and American democracy is entrenched at the core of the sphere of (the fight in defense or diffusion of) world democracy; that is to say, the African American plight is the very heart (and test) not only of what the American Dream pretends to be, but of what Western civilization as a whole ought to be.

If the poems "Good Morning Revolution" and "Goodbye Christ," written during Hughes's stay in the USSR, manifestly display the intention to promote the Socialist cause, and in so doing tune down almost to silence the vindication of the rights of African Americans, the articles he wrote in the same period insistently stress how the Soviet Union managed to accomplish what in the USA could be only dreamed of—total equality of Blacks and Whites. We should of course exercise the utmost caution in interpreting what Hughes wrote about the USSR, but also consider that he never recanted his description of Russian life and customs[3]—as he instead did regarding his most blatantly iconoclastic poems. In the first of his reportages, "Moscow and Me" (published in 1933), Hughes lists the differences between the USSR and the USA, emphasizing how the most American of political credos, democracy, is much more widely spread in the Soviet Union than in the land of the free. The main difference between the two systems is that in Russia social differences seem to have been abolished—as regards not only class, religion, and gender, but above all race: one of the things that make "Moscow different from Chicago or Cleveland, or New York, is that in cities at home Negroes—like me—must stay away from a great many places—hotels, clubs, parks, theatres, factories, offices, and union halls—because they are not white. And in Moscow, all the doors are open to us just the same, of course, and I find myself forgetting that the Russians are white folks" (Hughes, 2002: 60). Even the representation of African American culture in literature fares much better in the USSR than in the USA:

> The big American bourgeois publications are very careful about what they publish by or about colored people… Our American publications shy away from the Negro problem and the work of Negro writers.
>
> In Moscow, on the other hand, the editors welcome frank stories of American Negro life… Large audiences come to hear colored writers lecture on their work, and dinners and testimonials are given in their honor. There is no segregated Harlem of literature in Moscow. (Hughes, 2002: 61)

Just a few years before, in the most famous of his essays, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1926), Hughes had deplored that not only "white editors," but also "the Nordicized Negro intelligentsia" did not favor at all "honest American Negro literature" (Hughes 2002, 34). In the USSR, instead, he could enjoy a "critical and financial success" that did not come "from godmotherly patronage but from radical work" (Rampersad 1986: 268). Also in the field of film production the relationships between blacks and whites in Russia was something that greatly marvelled Hughes. In

[3] Arnold Rampersad underlines Hughes's "unflagging love of the Soviet Union—whatever his opinion of its government as opposed to its people" (Rampersad, 2002: 95).

his second autobiography, *I Wonder as I Wander* (1956), he remembers his surprise when he saw that *white* teachers of the Turkmen film-workers' institute were instructing *black* people "about the making of films from the ground up—the building of sets, the preparation of scenarios, acting, camera work—and I could not help but think how impregnable Hollywood had been to Negroes"; when he told this to his colleague writer and Communist activist (soon to repudiate his leftist faith and to become a convinced reactionary) Arthur Koestler, the latter did not seem much impressed: "But I was trying to make him understand why I observed the changes in Soviet Asia with Negro eyes. To Koestler, Turkmenistan was simply a primitive land moving into twentieth-century civilization. To me it was a colored land moving into orbits hitherto reserved for whites" (Hughes, 2003: 135).

In another article published in 1933, "Negroes in Moscow: In a Land Where There Is No Jim Crow," Hughes emphasizes once again how race differences melt away in Russia, accomplishing what the myth of the America Melting Pot promised but did not make true:

> colored people mix so thoroughly in the life of the big capital that you cannot find them merely by seeking out their color. Like the Indians and the Uzbeks and Chinese, the Negro workers are so well absorbed by Soviet life that most of them seldom remember that they are Negroes in the old oppressive sense that black people are always forced to be conscious of in America or the British colonies. In Moscow there are no color bars. (Hughes, 2002: 67)

If the problem of the 20th century was the color line, according to what W.E.B. Dubois wrote in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), its absence in the USSR was for Hughes the evidence that the problem was not unsolvable, even in the USA.

The comparison between America and Russia becomes the organizing structural principle in the long essay "A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia," published in 1934. On the train that is leading him south towards Tashkent, he cannot but think that "in the thirty years of my life I had never gotten on a train without being conscious of my colour" (Hughes, 2002: 72), and talking with a man he meets who is "almost as brown as I am" he learns that

> there were many cities in Central Asia where dark men and women were in control of the government– many, many such cities. And I thought about Mississippi where more than half of the population is Negro, but one never hears of a Negro mayor, or any coloured person in the government. In fact, in that state Negroes cannot even vote. And you will never meet them riding in the sleeping car. (Hughes, 2002: 73)

Looking at the vast Turkmen cotton fields, he notes how vast is the "difference between Turkmenistan and Alabama," because there is "a world between" (Hughes, 2002: 76) the "share-crop system, this mass robbery of the Southern Negro workers in the American cotton fields" (Hughes, 2002: 77), and "the cotton lands of Soviet Central Asia," where "the landlords [are] done with forever" (Hughes, 2002: 78). In this as in all the other comparisons Hughes draws between the USA and the USSR, we see a configuration of opposing time-spaces which is built on the inversion of what we might call the time-values we usually attach to each space. The American space should be at the very head of human progress, the point of the arrow of time signalling to all other civilizations what direction to take: but what we read here is the indictment of an outrageously backwards America, whose social customs and economic institutions look as still rooted in the enclosed (secluded, segregated) time-space of the plantation

system, the most primitive form of primitive accumulation. What should be the most backwards of all time-spaces, the remotest regions of Central Asia, is instead presented as a vanguard that America (and especially African America) should imitate in order to reassert the impulse towards the future of its founding ideals. In an address to the first American Writers' Congress, in 1935, "To Negro Writers," Hughes rehearses those ideals, and their declination for the sake of the rights of African Americans, resorting to a typical rhetorical device, the list of absences in American cultural life, that writers such as Hector St. John de Crévecoeur, Nathaniel Hawthorne or Henry James already used in order to stress what (fortunately or unfortunately, but in the latter case there is often a strong ironical slant) America lacks: "We want a new and better America, where there won't be any poor, where there won't be any more Jim Crow, where there won't be any lynchings, where there won't be any munition makers, where we won't need philanthropy, nor charity, nor the New Deal, nor Home Relief" (Hughes, 2002: 133). Now, these are precisely the things he just witnessed as being absent in the Soviet Union: in 1941, when he was already trying to reconfigure his public persona as that "of the dedicated American citizen committed to the ideals of democracy" (De Sanctis, 2002: 14), in an article written in order to defend himself from the charge of anti-Americanism he comes to the point of stating that "Goodbye, Christ" does not "represent my personal viewpoint" (Hughes, 2002: 209), but first he takes care to justify himself by saying that at the time his polemical attitude was enflamed by the fact that he had had the opportunity to see a country where "white and black, Asiatic and Europeans, Jew and Gentile stood alike as citizens on an equal footing protected from racial inequalities by law. There were no pogroms, no lynchings, no Jim Crow cars as there had once been in Tzarist Asia, nor were the newspapers or movies permitted to ridicule or malign any people because of race" (Hughes, 2002: 208). In following a long and honored line of writers enumerating the absences of America, Hughes dislocates these absences elsewhere, in the USSR, and these "signify" a sort of redoubling absence, an absence of absences, because what should be absent in America is not absent at all—it is clear and present.

To imitate the USSR, then, was not to betray the American Dream, it had to be the attempt to make it finally true. In 1939, in the speech made at the Third American Writers' Congress, titled "Democracy and Me," he had concluded a similar list of what he did not want to see in America with the peremptory exclamation: "We want America to be really America for everybody. Let us make it so!" (Hughes, 2002: 206). The prophetic stance here and elsewhere Hughes takes, and the recurrent use of the trope of the Jeremiad in the comparisons between the USA and the USSR, might of course concur to identify him as one of the many dissenters contributing to the consensus, controlled and enclosed within the elastic walls of the American Dream of Democracy. But the systematic highlighting of the differences between what has been accomplished elsewhere (and this of course undermines the basic notion of dominant ideology, that of American exceptionalism) and the deferral of those goals at home might also recall to everyone that the American Dream, if deferred for too long, could finally dry up or even explode, once and for all.

Works Cited

De Sanctis, Christopher C. "Introduction." Hughes 2002. 1-20. Print.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Print.

Hughes, Langston. *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. Eds. Arnold Rampersad and David Roessel. New York: Vintage, 1994. Print.

---. *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes. Vol. 9: Essays on Art, Race, Politics, and World Affairs*. Ed. Christopher C. De Santis. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002. Print.

---. *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes. Vol. 14: I Wonder as I Wander*. Ed. Joseph McLaren. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003. Print.

Levine, Lawrence W. "The Concept of the New Negro and the Realities of Black Culture." *The unpredictable past: Explorations in American cultural history.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. 86-106. Print.

Rampersad, Arnold. *The Life of Langston Hughes. Vol. 1: 1902-1941. I, Too, Sing America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986. Print.

---. 1994. "Introduction," in Hughes 1994. 3-7. Print.

---. *The life of Langston Hughes. Vol. 2: 1941-1967. I Dream a World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.

MARINA DE CHIARA

LETTERS FROM DISTANT SHORES: ANA CASTILLO

In her theoretical and literary production, the Chicana theorist and poet Ana Castillo brings together questions of gender oppression with the colonial dimension which has informed Chicano cultural history. Her feminist border perspective, which Castillo has defined *Xicanisma*, especially insists on issues of *mestiza* women's resistance to the machismo that pervades all aspects of Mexican and Chicano culture.

The Mixquiahuala Letters, Castillo's well-known 1986 epistolary novel, directly links the discourse on women's oppression to the colonial past, through the *Letters* that Teresa writes to Alicia, apparently recalling the journey that the two *mestizas* took ten years before, when in their twenties, these two women headed to Mexico leaving behind the liberal atmosphere of their birthplace, the United States. They planned the journey after attending a summer school in Mexico City, where they studied Mexican language and culture.

The Mexican village of Mixquiahuala, after which the novel is titled, is "a Pre-Conquest village of obscurity, neglectful of progress, electricity notwithstanding" (*Letters* 25), where the two young students spend a weekend planned by the summer school. Mixquiahuala becomes a sort of soul's place, which can metaphorically describe the deep, or rather abysmal, journey, taken by Alicia and Teresa; indeed, as Teresa writes, the Mixquiahuala experience "took us back at least to the time of colonial repression of peons and women who hid behind shutters to catch a glimpse of the street with its brusque men" (26).

Teresa's Indian physical traits make her different in appearance from her *gringa* friends: "I, with dark hair and Asian eyes, must've appeared like the daughter of a migrant worker or a laborer in the North (which of course, I was)" (27); her story, together with her social destiny, is somewhat irremediably inscribed in her own skin: "I was nothing so close to godliness as fair-skinned or wealthy or even a simple gringa with a birthright ticket to upward mobility in the land paved with gold" (27). Now the two women are both in their thirties, but the narrating voice is only Teresa's, who addresses her close friend (both her "travelling" companion and a "life" companion), with a sort of interior monologue—sketches from the past which appear so promising.

Each letter describes a special emotional situation, a particular mood dense with the liberal atmosphere widespread among American men and women during the mid Seventies. This liberal feeling is destined to clash against the hard core of the Mexican land, still oppressive and violent toward women. Yet, the liberal atmosphere, too, eventually reveals the unexpected and hidden forms of women's oppression still harboured in American everyday life. Once back in Chicago after her Mexican journey, Teresa eventually breaks up her marriage as she is "no longer prepared to face a mundane life of need and resentment, accept monogamous commitments and honor

patriarchal traditions" (28-29). One could read each letter separately, as a single act, a brief moral tale, on which Teresa projects her mature and detached vision, which is essentially a rich and insightful inquiry on female psychology and on the subjection of woman to man, in all its varied hues.

Women's subjection to men is perhaps the strongest theme in these letters, as evident in the epigraph chosen by Ana Castillo for her book, a bitter quote from Anaïs Nin, the French-American writer who dared to publish, between the Thirties and Sixties, erotic novels in addition to her personal diaries: "I stopped loving my father a long time ago. What remained was the slavery to a pattern."

Yet, Castillo's explicit acknowledgment to the Argentinean writer Julio Cortázar's masterpiece *Rayuela*, makes it a model both for her rhetorical choices and for her suggestions to the reader: "Dear Reader: It is the author's duty to alert the reader that this is not a book to be read in the usual sequence. All letters are numbered to aid in following any one of the author's proposed options" (9). There are three proposed options: *for the conformist*; *for the cynic*; and *for the Quixotic*. This indicates that one can skip letters at will, which will therefore disappear, or one can reorder their sequence. As to myself, I have chosen *the Quixotic*, which implies that I read *Letter One* at the very end of my path, after *Letter Thirty-Seven*, and skip *Letters Thirty-Eight*, *Thirty-Nine* and *Forty*.

The novelist perhaps requires from her reader a truly personal engagement, a sort of complicity throughout the whole narrative, a certain awareness and commitment, most likely to remind us that every text is above all an actual event, a thoroughly inter-textual occurrence, which necessarily implies the reader's reception, in its unique and unpredictable modality.

Two young women travelling from one Mexican village to the other, from Yucatán to Mexico City, to "find themselves," as proclaimed by the ruling motto of the young American generation in the Seventies, Alicia and Teresa genuinely believe they are part and parcel of those values which unmistakably represent America: freedom, emancipation, pioneering spirit, and equal rights for men and women. In the course of their journey, they realize, to their great disappointment, that, while two travelling women can certainly wander about, they definitely cannot do so in the mode of the many travellers who are most congenial to narratives of the American spirit—the mythical narrative of the journey on the road, celebrated by Jack Kerouac at the end of the Fifties, which became and a sort of existential myth for generations of young Americans. Alicia and Teresa soon find out that their wandering on the road, with the required faded jeans, bandanas to hide their hair, and loose bags on shoulders, stigmatizes them as easy prey to the rapacity of the Mexican male.

On Mexican territory—a mythical point of arrival for many American travellers and writers on the road—two women travelling alone can only be looking for trouble; here, two women travelling alone are definitely "trash," "whores" with no dignity. With no settled home, like the Biblical devil, here two young women are surely considered the devil himself, since all women, as Teresa's uncle will insist in *Letter One*, are possessed by the devil (20).

From lyrical evocations of marvellous landscapes, the special fragrances and colours of Mexican villages and the Ocean, to the evocation of moments when the two women seriously risk their life, as eligible prey to male violence, the letters unveil the limit of the on the road myth as an intrinsically male myth, a myth which is impossible for women, though emancipated and grown up in a liberal state, to inhabit:

we had abruptly appeared in Mexico as two snags in its pattern … How revolting we were, susceptible to ridicule, abuse, disrespect. We would have hoped for respect as human beings, but the only respect granted a woman is that which a gentleman bestows upon the lady. Clearly, we were no ladies. What was our greatest transgression? We travelled alone. (65)

While in Yucatán, the two young women feel they are always under the scrutiny of predators' eyes, as men mock them and women watch them with disrespect and disdain. At an outdoor cafe, two engineers who happen to be in the area for work ask them if they are South American or *gringas*. When one of them comes up to Teresa with this comment: "I think you are a 'liberal woman'" (79), Teresa comments: "In that country, the term 'liberated woman' meant something other than what we had strived for back in the United States. In this case it simply meant a woman who would sleep non-discriminately with any man who came along" (79). "Liberal: trash, whore, bitch" (79), Teresa jots down immediately, as if explaining to herself the new meaning of the word in Mexico.

The *Letters* that Teresa writes to her friend apparently repeat the rhetorical gesture which lies at the origins of the modern epistolary novel, which, as theorist Sidonie Smith explains, given its autobiographical intent, aims at uncovering the feelings and events through which character passes, charting "a progressive narrative of individual destiny" (19).[1] The self can thus emerge, and move toward full maturity and self-fulfilment, as if completing a specifically Western frame, without interruptions nor obscure blanks, but rather with a complete picture instead of a sequence of sketches with no relation nor consequentiality among them. Yet, in many respects the epistolary genre here is a false path to follow, a false clue. There is no self to re-compose and present in proper form, for we stand rather before resonant images, which evoke something deeply rooted in the Mediterranean-Catholic culture: that is, subjection of women to men.

Furthermore, these letters provoke an investigation concerning a very specific trauma common among adolescent women. Indeed, these are letters of sorrow for the death of something truly precious: women's friendship and solidarity among women, which is somehow gets lost with little particular reason after marriage, leaving behind nostalgia for an aspect of the past which will not return. It is precisely this sense of loss, this poetic lament for the lost friendship, that gives Castillo's *Letters* its delicately elegiac shade. In *Letter Seven*, Teresa recalls:

My mother had only been close to female companions during her adolescence. My older sisters never maintained close relationships with women after marriage. When a woman entered the threshold of intimacy with a man, she left the companions of her sex without looking back. (35)

Yet, Teresa, though deeply aware of her inner emancipatory drive, ends up going back to her husband. Alicia too, as Teresa recalls in *Letter Thirty*, has strived and struggled to trust only solidarity and ties with women, actively taking part in feminist discussion groups which were spreading through the Seventies (111). Still Alicia never manages to escape from the man-master dependence, because she is intimately and desperately in need of a man's love: "You craved a family, to share life with a steady

[1] Sidonie Smith's excellent inquiry on autobiography and the issues connected to the narrative I does not deal with Ana Castillo's text; still, it offers precious clues to interpreting women's feminist writing.

man, and children to sit around the table together, hold fast to each other during winters, and to go out to play in better days, always as one unit" (112).

This absolute need for love also necessarily brings humiliation, so intrinsic to some man-woman relations, as Teresa notes, at the beginning of *Letter Thirty-Two*:

> Love? In the classic sense, it describes in one syllable all the humiliation that one is born to and pressed upon to surrender to a man … A woman takes care of the man she has made her life with, cleans, cooks, washes his underwear, does as if he were her only child, as if he had come from her womb. In exchange, he may pay her bills, he may not. He may give her acceptance into society by replacing her father's name with his, or he may choose to not. He may make her feel like a woman, or rather, how she has been told a woman feels with a man –or he may not… There isn't a woman who doesn't understand this death trap. (117-118)

The conclusion of this existential journey leaves hanging a bitter question that Teresa asks Alicia, in *Letter One*, which—given my choice of the *Quixotic* option—I read at the very end: "Alicia, I don't know why so many of our ideals were stamped out like cigarette butts when we believed in them so furiously. Perhaps we were not furious enough" (22).

Ana Castillo's epistolary novel, alluding to the literary genre that best permits the proper construction of the subject in narrative terms, here scatters into a fragile cobweb, a texture which does not allow to reconstruct a person, in its singularity and individuality, but rather rewrites the history of woman's subjection to the patriarchal narrative, as the quote from Anaïs Nin reminds us.

In this discovery of the frame of woman's subjection to man, another unacknowledged unconscious emerges at the same time: the repressed colonial past. This Mexican journey is a metaphor for the necessary self-discovery process that Ana Castillo defines *conscientización*—borrowing the term from the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (*Massacre* 9-10).

In the chapter "The ancient roots of Machismo," from her 1994 *Massacre of the Dreamers. Essays on Xicanisma*, Castillo insists on the crucial importance of *conscientización* for *mestizas*, mixed blood women (like Teresa and Alicia, for instance): the identity issues shared by people of mixed blood emerge as particularly complex, especially when confronted with the sexist politics that shape the lives of women. The *conscientización* process, just like Teresa and Alicia's journey to Mexico, sheds light upon the intimate relation between *machismo*, meaning the cultural subjection of woman to man, and the colonial past, inscribed on the very skin of the two young women, both *mestizas*: if Teresa's physical traits, her skin colour and her eyes, show her kinship with the native *indios*, who lived in those Mexican territories before the arrival of the Spanish *conquistadores*, Alicia too reveals in her traits those mixed origins which result from colonial history: Alicia's grandmother, on her father's side, was from Andalucia and part gypsy. Teresa remembers: "You told me that gypsies are an oppressed dark people … Your parents had never wanted anything to do with that mongrel race, the lost tribe, and fought in America for American ideals and the American way of life" (*Letters* 31). With some disappointment Teresa concludes that she would have liked to ask Alicia's parents "what those ideals had been" (32).

This explicit reference to the Spanish heritage is fundamental to explain how the roots of that *machismo* one finds at all levels of life, investing "our gender roles within our social networks, the nuclear family, extended family, and the community at large" (*Massacre* 69) in Chicano, Mexican, Latin culture, are indeed the result of that ancient

encounter with the Arab culture, which arrived in Mexico through the Spanish Catholic heritage:

> This is due to our historical ties with Spain. Until shortly before Spain's explorations and exploitation of the Americas Spain had been conquered and ruled by the North African followers of Muhammad for nearly eight hundred years. It is impossible to dismiss the tremendous influence Arabs had on Spanish culture after a period of domination that lasted over three times the duration of the United States's existence as a nation… When acknowledging our kinship with the Arab world, we find uncanny similarities in both our peoples'social behavior and attitudes toward women that may be traced back thousands of years to the African continent. (63)

Castillo puts forward here the anthropologist Germaine Tillion's 1984 study, *The Republic of Cousins: Women's Oppression in Mediterranean Society*, which traces part of the cultural and religious traditions in the Mediterranean and Latin areas back to that geo-cultural region known as the Maghreb:

> The ancient culture of the Maghreb originated in North Africa, spread throughout the Mediterranean, and as a consequence of the conquest of the Americas via the Spaniards, to the Southwest United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean… The Maghreb people include all those whose language and culture are Berber-Arab. They reside in five states on that continent including Morocco, which is where we have a direct connection with the Moorish Conquest of Spain. (*Massacre* 71-72)

Castillo provides more details on the forms of machismo derived from North Africa (not necessarily Muslim), as a consequence of the Spanish Catholic heritage:

> jealousy; vendettas; privilege of first born male; brother's (male cousin's) defence of sister's honour; the patrimonial ties to incest; male sexual obsession as a result of female seclusion; the objectification of the female as enigma and aggrandizement of the male's prowess and virility; brotherhood society; the origins of a certain type of 'racism'. (72)

This complicated journey is, in many ways, unacceptable and intentionally forgotten, or rather erased by those living in the Americas, due, as Castillo explains, to the little knowledge of Mexican as well as Spanish cultural history, not to mention significant reluctance to accept any possible kinship with North Africa (70).

Because of this intriguing awareness of the interconnectedness of cultures distant in time and space, this awareness of the trans-national osmosis among Mediterranean shores, North African (Maghreb) and American shores, Castillo defines Tillion's work "a provisional structure from which we may try to see across the centuries and continents how humanity has evolved and connected through migration and time" (71).

Indeed, it is for this very reason that Teresa and Alicia's journey in *The Mixquiahuala Letters* can be envisaged as an inward journey, a psychic and visceral descent into one's own unconscious. A *psycho/analysis* that sheds light upon something removed, something which has been repressed, that is the colonial past.

I would venture to call this colonial past *rimosso mediterraneo*, that is Mediterranean unconscious, to acknowledge and pay homage to the many efforts that scholars like Martin Bernal, Iain Chambers, Ranjana Khanna,[2] just to name a few, have been making

[2] I am especially referring to Martin Bernal's 1987 *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, Iain Chambers' 2007 *Mediterranean Crossings. The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity*, and Ranjana Khanna's 2003 *Dark Continents. Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*.

in these last decades to relocate identitarian politics, taking into account the effects of transatlantic migration and European colonialism. Their inquiries might seriously contribute to put an end to those modern, and racially informed, geographies of Euro-American power, which have so far delineated the physical and mental borders and boundaries of nations and peoples all over the world, ignoring the distant, unceasing and surprising connections among cultures and histories.

Works Cited

Bernal, Martin. *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. New York: Rutgers University Press, 1987. Print.

Castillo, Ana. *Massacre of the Dreamers. Essays on Chicanisma*. New York: Penguin/Plume, 1994. Print.

Chambers, Iain. *Mediterranean Crossings. The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. Print.

Khanna, Ranjana. *Dark Continents. Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003. Print.

---. *The Mixquiahuala Letters*. 1986. New York: Anchor Books, 1992. Print.

Smith, Sidonie. *Subjectivity, Identity, and The Body. Women's Autobiographical Practices in the Twentieth Century*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1993. Print.

ALESSANDRA DE MARCO

WASTING LABOUR AND MATERIALITY: THE FINANCIALIZATION OF THE US ECONOMY IN DON DELILLO'S FICTION

This paper analyses Don DeLillo's representation of the commodity economy, labour, materiality, and urban landscapes as they are turned into waste resulting from the financialization of the economy—the US response to the crisis of overaccumulation and overproduction which beset the capitalist West in the late 1960s and early 1970s. From the late 1970s onward, the US economy underwent a shift from a pre-eminently productive regime towards "a pattern of accumulation in which profits accrue primarily through financial channels rather than through trade and commodity production. 'Financial' here refers to activities relating to the provision (or transfer) of liquid capital in expectation of future interest, dividends, or capital gains" (Krippner 174). As a result, a New Wall Street system based on deregulated markets, lender-trader models, a shadow banking system, credit derivatives, and assets-prices bubbles, flourished (Gowan 7-8); it effectively became "the expression of the new economic policy governed by the interests of oligopoly finance capital," operating transnationally yet located primarily in the USA (and partly in Europe and Japan) (Amin 52). David Harvey highlights a strong nexus between financialization and the neoliberal turn to argue that financialization constituted the cutting edge of Neoliberalism, insofar as the predominance of finance capital facilitated the realization of an ideological and "political project to re-establish the conditions of [US] capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites" (*Neoliberalism* 19). Indeed, financial powers were used to curb the working class through deindustrialization and relocation (Davis 137-38), and to redistribute wealth towards the upper tier of the population resulting in enormous social dislocation for the majority of people (Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing* 192). More significantly, predatory financial operations and the creation of fictitious wealth were at the heart of practices of "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, *Neoliberalism* 93), which helped the US to reassert their global hegemonic position undermined by both the economic crisis and their military defeat in Vietnam (Arrighi 162).[1]

The disinvestment in production proper of a predominantly financial regime can be summarised as the obliteration of the commodity form C from Marx's formula of

[1] Drawing on Fernand Braudel, Arrighi theorises that the financial phase which the US embraced in the late 1970s signals the terminal phase of a systemic cycle of accumulation (MCM^1) and the emergence of China as the new hegemonic leader in world economy. See also Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*. Another important study on the dynamics and impact of financialization is Robert Brenner, *The Boom and the Bubble*. In the wake of the financial crisis, numerous works have focussed on financialization. One of the earliest texts (which also accounted for the role of finance capital in affirming US neoliberal imperialism) was John Bellamy Foster and Fred Magdoff, *The Great Financial Crisis. Causes and Consequences*, esp. chapter 3 through 5.

capital, so that instead of M-C-M^1 we have M-M^1. This obliteration renders invisible "the social content of economic relations" (Aglietta 9) embodied, albeit in hiding, within C, and rests on a "structured forgetting" of labour (Shapiro 33); it opens a gap over and around which the economic agents perpetuating the circuits of finance capital must consequently organise their social relations outside the referential network of production and consumption which constitutes the productive, or "real," economy (Godden 853). To the extent that finance capital flows unfettered by the constraints of the commodity form, and avoids "uncomfortable collisions with matter" (Henwood 235), so transience, volatility and unfixity gradually inform the meanings and values—experiences, actions, motifs, "the structure of feeling" (Williams 122)—of that social group whose workings occur within the medium of finance capital, whose class agents immerse within the "fetish of liquidity" (Keynes), and consequently must endure "the experiential effects of [their medium's] fetishism" (Godden 855).

DeLillo's fiction is both symptomatic and critical of the financial era which has imploded under the weight of speculative capital's fictitiousness in late 2008. It expresses an increasingly pervasive financial structure of feeling arising from "the socialization of finance" through both the massification of stock market investment and "the financialization of household economies" (Marazzi 16, 58). Over four decades, DeLillo's oeuvre has effectively provided a nuanced and insightful depiction of the various stages of financialization, and also of American hegemony pursued through finance. A detached cultural observer, DeLillo has critically investigated America's intoxication with the seeming endless power of finance and the lure of electronic money, describing how the seemingly dematerialising power of speculative capital modifies the construction of a new social materiality and of human experience. Nonetheless, his work has constantly highlighted the distortions and limitations of an economic regime, and its culture, which relies almost exclusively on fictitious forms of capital, and has attempted to render visible forms, albeit feeble, of resistance to the system. His latest novels, however, signal the exhaustion of the financial cultural mode and the growing emergence of an oppositional stance to the overriding logic of finance. They foresee the crisis and collapse of the financial regime which results when the system's fictitiousness is exposed, and advocate the need for different, more humane socio-economic practices.

The effects of financialization on both the structural functioning of the economy and at the level of class psychology, as depicted by DeLillo, can be traced back to the loss of C and understood as structurally similar to those produced by melancholia, defined as a "loss of a more ideal kind, [a loss withdrawn from consciousness in that] one cannot see clearly what it is that has been lost…and what he has lost in him" (Freud 254, 255). Abraham and Torok argue that melancholia arises when a traumatic loss cannot be acknowledged and originates a process of "incorporation,", i.e. a refusal to mourn and the psychic encryption of the lost object within the subject's consciousness (99, 130). Such refusal produces a split within the subject's consciousness so that a part of it acknowledges that there is a lost object buried inside, the other part disavows that such a loss has occurred. The split consciousness rests on a precarious balance, where the buried object may resurface as a haunting presence (130). Abraham and Torok's theories can help understand the disavowal, and the split, informing the financial medium and affecting the agents operating within it: on the one hand "the circuits of financing remain in the last analysis dependent on the needs of productive capitalists" (DeBrunhoff 98); on the other, finance capital denies such

interdependence: given "the monetary endogeneity of its speculative means (credit financed by further credit)" (Godden 859) C is lost to the realm of finance and this loss produces a reaction akin to a refusal to mourn.[2]

Through the obliteration of C, finance capital *wastes* and, paraphrasing Nick Shay in *Underworld* (1997*),* empties and voids by apparently making materiality vanish.[3] Within a predominantly financial regime, a productive economy, embodied materiality and ultimately humanity itself are rendered obsolescent, redundant and finally apt for refuse, for instance the Fresh Kill Landfill on Staten Island (*Underworld* 184). To waste manager Brian Glassic, the landfill is a novel, much bigger, version of the Great Pyramid of Giza, whose mass and bulk offer a counterpart to the World Trade Center: both the landfill and the WTC soar towards the sky in poetic balance. Yet, if one switches vantage-point and looks at the landfill from the WTC, the site becomes an appropriate architectural manifestation of the crypt where *not* the refuse made by the productive economy *but the productive economy itself made refuse* by finance is buried and hidden from view. The towers are the symbol of an economy of the immaterial and liquidity; they epitomize finance capital insofar as they incarnate a disembodying architectural logic which pares away all living actuality, disconnected as they are from any human referent or activity (Darton 118, 119). Their "abstract, tyrannic grandeur"(*Players* 24) reflects the abstractive logic foregrounding the world of speculative capital which finds in the capacity of money to self-reproduce its means of survival. Yet, just as the "tanker trucks spraying perfumed water" (*Underworld* 184) on and around the landfill strive to hide the foul stench of rotting commodities and human effluence and neutralize the fear that "what we excrete comes back to consume us"(791), the same image metaphorically reminds us of how the buried productive economy made refuse threatens to return and haunt the financial medium.

Financial waste in DeLillo's fiction takes the form of wasted bodies as a metaphor for wasted materiality and wasted labour, and of the cityscape in ruin; bodies and bodily materiality are subject to a process of dematerialization entirely in keeping with the dematerialization of the economy produced by speculative capital. Furthermore, several characters express their desire to become disembodied, as Eric Packer, the epitome of US finance capital who can only conceive of the world as an extension of the immaterial world of electronic money, makes clear in *Cosmopolis* (2003), bodies constitute an "offence to the truth of the future" (65) constructed upon finance capital, and hinder the definitive affirmation of the "zero-oneness of the world" (24). Packer imagines a de-corporealized world totally liberated from human interaction, where capital can endlessly reproduce itself, without the hindrance of the "rotting flesh" *(Players* 107). He seeks to evaporate his own body even as he uses it as a form of capital, by theorizing that bodies will be "thrown into the gutter to retch and die" (90) and people will be "absorbed into streams of information…for the accumulation of profits and vigorous reinvestment"(104, 207), to compounds his belief that all that is embodied is "hard to credit" (*Cosmopolis* 174).

---

[2]As opposed to melancholia, mourning, its acceptance and work, offer the interpretative paradigm for reading late DeLillo's fiction. The shift from melancholia to mourning informing novels such as *The Body Artist*, *Falling Man* and *Point Omega*, as I have recently argued, is expressive of the growing, albeit belated, awareness of the deleterious effects of financialization which have marked the last decade. See my "Late DeLillo, Finance Capital and Mourning from *The Body Artist* to *Point Omega*."

[3] "Waste is an interesting word that you can trace back…to the Latin, finding such derivatives as empty, void, vanish and devastate"(120).

The cityscape in ruin constitutes another form of financial waste, from the spatial and material transformations that affect the urban landscape as a result of the restructuring of capital activities. Deindustrialization and the reorganization of space accommodate the needs of a new class of rentiers, realtors and speculators. The destruction of prior geographical, social and economic values grounded in the local occurs primarily through "accumulation by dispossession" and "spatial fixes," a process whereby capital "seeks to create a geographical landscape to facilitate its activities at one point in time, only to have to destroy it and build a wholly different landscape at a later point in time" (Harvey, *The New Imperialism* 101). As immaterial capital moves unrelentingly in search of new fixes, it leaves behind a trail of destruction and of human and material debris. New York in DeLillo clearly marks an enclosed Financial District, where financial actors and institutions manage their global operations, from an outside space, an urban landfill littered with the human and industrial detritus of the city's (and by extension of the nation's) multi-layered history of productive and commercial development. This space is either sold for real-estate speculation, or lays abandoned to the lees of society. The proliferation of abandoned districts turns part of the city into an urban desert, which functions as a geographical correlative of the burial site for the lost body of C. This desert, made up of "millions of acres of rubble" *(Great Jones Street* 262) resulting from real estate, eradicates local (affective) values and becomes an Underworld of the dead who threaten to return to haunt and "consume" the living.

Indeed, the wasted, devastated, violated body of the city becomes home to human waste, "a transient population of thunderers and hags…often too wasted to beg" (*Great Jones Street* 107). The sight of these "traceless men and women" (263) becomes a staple within DeLillo's imaginary: outcasts are "living rags," "nameless arrays" (*Players* 27) of a humanity without social status—they are socially dead. Although the melancholic incorporation prevents some characters from acknowledging that these wasted bodies are "texts in the denunciation of capitalism" (*Players* 28), their madness and squalor *do* denounce many wasted lives who have been thrown "into the spirals of poverty, drug abuse and crime (Harvey, *Neoliberalism* 48) by means of labour causalization, unemployment, factory closures or relocation, and spatial fixes. As ghostly presences, however, the outcasts periodically return to haunt the Financial District, offering an instantiation of the haunting powers of waste.

As human, industrial and spatial waste proliferates within DeLillo's city, so "SHIT," "VOMIT" and "GARBAGE" accumulate around the outcasts and the rundown buildings (*Great Jones Street* 260). The consistent presence of waste can be glossed as a DeLillian version of Norman O. Brown's "excremental vision" (611), symbolizing the body of labour as that which *has been* repressed or, better, displaced or virtualised via the flow credit, and turned into waste. Yet, the excremental in DeLillo possesses "transgressive, defiant properties" (Boxall 70) and, effectively, many characters display an irresistible, almost erotic attraction to that which has been discarded. Waste, therefore, emerges as an oppositional force, and produces a poetics of the excremental, and the ruins, as an alternative to the overriding logic and structure of feeling of finance capital. Indeed, the "residual" social formation, while belonging to the past, nonetheless continues to operate effectively within the present; it often constitutes an alternative or oppositional force in relation to the dominant economic structure and its culture (Williams 122). Thus, the return of the repressed waste product in DeLillo manifests the resilience of materiality, bodily matter, and a productive economy which refuse to be wished away. In addition, as the financial crisis has shown, the structural problems

afflicting the productive sector (and never solved by financialization) have returned to haunt the economy through a severe and persistent downturn (Brenner np).

Indeed, in DeLillo the material manifests its resistance to obliteration in many forms. In *Cosmopolis*, this emerges through the irreducible presence of bodies, bodily pain and death (Packer's), or of rats (86). Rats are a powerful metaphor for Kinsky's vision of people thrown in the gutter and displaced by an economy of the immaterial. However, since rats thrive in that same gutter, they also become a symbol of resistance. In *Players,* resistance against bodily dematerialization is represented by the sign-holding man protesting in front of Federal Hall (4), and the terrorists wishing to blast Wall Street. Both epitomize the petrified concreteness of the collective body of labour forced to evaporate by a politics of disinvestment in production to reallocate surplus capital onto the more profitable financial markets and through M&As. Also, in *Cosmopolis* a run-down neighbourhood, such as Hell's Kitchen, and the modest shop of an Italian-American barber (159) offer a spatial and temporal alternative to the delocalised space and lack of temporality proper of electronic markets. The barber shop, where Packer briefly rests, represents an American version of the ruins in the poem by Zybgniew Herbert that DeLillo evokes, and the barber's attachment to the place, its small talk, shared meals and shared houses offers a sense of history and community uncolonised by the abstractive logic of speculative capital. The city in ruin must be preserved as a space of tenuous hope, an alternative to finance.

However, it is art, which provides the most significant form of resistance to the logic of speculative capital. Art in DeLillo embodies the precious, or that which becomes a substitute for gold and a means to store value once both gold and labour are lost in a financial economy. Art preserves the notion of value once embodied in labour thus keeping labour alive. Therefore, the Watt Towers (*Underworld* 276) symbolise the persistence of human labour (Sabato Rodia's work of steel and mortar) and waste as a source of both beauty and value. Also, as *The Body Artist* (2001) testifies, the body itself is a form of art that provides an aesthetic space through which DeLillo can metaphorically envisage the recuperation of the body of C and of the productive economy vis-à-vis finance capital.

In conclusion, the reduction of labour, of materiality and of the productive economy to waste produced by the opening of the gap between M and M^1 alters the spatial articulation of human activities, leaving behind a trail of social and material destruction. Yet, the persistence of materiality refused and of human leftovers testifies resistance to the dominant logic of speculative capital, and to processes of "accumulation by dispossession" which have been undertaken to preserve American hegemony on a global scale. DeLillo's novels offer a mental and physical space where material and urban waste maintain their beauty and value, and where the re-appropriation of the body and embodied forms of materiality is possible and necessary to define new political, economic, and cultural paradigms alternative to the failing logic of US finance capital.

Works Cited

Abraham, Nicholas, Maria Torok. *The Shell and the Kernel Vol.1*. Ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand. Chicago: The Chicago UP, 1994. Print.

Aglietta, Michel. *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: The U.S. Experience*. New Edition. Trans. David Fernbach. London: Verso, 2001. Print.

Amin, Samir. "'Market Economy' or Oligopoly-Finance Capitalism?" *Monthly Review* 59.11 (2008): 51-61. Web. 5 Sep 2012.

Arrighi, Giovanni. *The Long Twentieth Century. Money Power and the Origins of Our Times.* London: Verso, 2002. Print.

---. *Adam Smith in Beijing. Lineages Of The Twenty-First Century*. London: Verso, 2007. Print.

Boxall, Peter. *Don DeLillo*. *The Possibility of Fiction*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Brenner, Robert, *The Boom and the Bubble. The US in the World Economy.* London: Verso, 2003. Print.

---. "What is Good for Goldman Sachs is Good for America: The Origins of the Current Crisis," Center for Social Theory and Comparative History, UCLA, 18th April 2009. Web. 6 Jan 2012. http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/issr/cstch/papers/BrennerCrisisTodayOctober2009.pdf

Brown, Norman O. "The Excremental Vision." *The Writings of Jonathan Swift. Authoritative Texts, Backgrounds, Criticism*. Eds. Robert A. Greenberg and William B. Piper. New York: Norton, 1973. 611-630. Print.

Darton, Eric. *Divided We Stand. A Biography of the World Trade Center.* New York: Basic Book, 1999. Print.

Davis, Mike. *Prisoners of the American Dream*. London: Verso, 1986. Print.

DeBrunhoff, Suzanne. *Marx on Money.* Trans. Maurice J. Goldbloom. New York: Urizen Books, 1976. Print.

DeLillo, Don. *Cosmopolis*. London: Picador, 2003. Print.

---. *The Body Artist*. New York: Scribner Paperback, 2001. Print.

---. *Underworld*. London: Picador, 1997. Print.

---. *Players*. 1977. London: Vintage, 1991.Print.

---. *Great Jones Street*. 1973. London: Picador, 1998.Print.

De Marco, Alessandra. "Late DeLillo, Finance Capital and Mourning from *The Body Artist* to *Point Omega.*" *49th Parallel. An Interdisciplinary Journal of North American Studies (online)*, 28 (Spring 2012). Web. 5 Sep 2012.

Foster, John Bellamy and Fred Magdoff, *The Great Financial Crisis. Causes and Consequences*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2009. Print.

Freud, Sigmund "Mourning and Melancholia." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIV*. Ed. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1964. 243-258.Print.

Godden, Richard. **"**Fictions of Fictitious Capital: American Psycho and the Poetics of Deregulation." *Textual Practice* 25.5: 853-866. Web. 6 Jan 2012.

Gowan, Peter. "Crisis in the Heartland. Consequences of the new Wall Street System." *New Left Review* 55 (Jan-Feb 2009): 5-29. Web. 5 Sep 2012.

Harvey, David. *The New Imperialism.* New York: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.

---. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.

Henwood, Doug. *Wall Street. How it Works and for Whom*. London and New York: Verso, 1997. Print.

Krippner, Greta. "The Financialization of the American Economy." *Socio-Economic Review* (2005): 173-208. Web. 6 Jan 2012.

Marazzi, Christian. *Capital and Language*. Trans. Gregory Conti. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008. Print.

Shapiro, Stephen. "Transvaal, Transylvania: Dracula's World-System and Gothic Periodicity." *Gothic Studies* 10.1 (May 2008): 29-47. Web. 6 Jan 2012.

Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977. Print.

CHRISTINA DOKOU

DIM-OCRACY/IN-DIFFERENCE: A PORTRAIT OF THE YANKEE INTELLECTUAL AS A MIRAGE

"Where do we find the naiveté that democracy needs?"–Leela Gandi

The greatest trick of the devil, a saying goes, is that he has convinced people he doesn't exist. This is wonderful advice for intellectuals, too, if they happen to live in a democracy that prides itself on being fundamentally anti-intellectual. There is hardly a study extant that does not confirm the American nation's pervasive anti-intellectualism, defined by T. J. Jackson Lears as "the pseudopopulist celebration of corporate-sponsored entertainment as an expression of popular taste, the determination to characterize *any* judgment of intellectual or aesthetic quality as 'elitist'" (qtd. in Conn 66). Richard Hofstadter's 1963 *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* grounds this phenomenon in a. the austere, unmediated Protestant ethic of the early Americans, b. "The Decline of the Gentleman" (145) in political democracy, which deemed aristocratic European ethics corrupt and "intellectual and cultural pursuits" "unworldly, unmasculine, and impractical" (33-34), c. the hands-on culture of skilled bourgeois tradesmen and craftsmen, which considered scholars redundant, and d. a conception of education as egalitarian and practical rather than theoretical.

A large number of books followed Hofstadter's study—some discredited, like Alan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*; some deemed "jeremiads" (Bokovoy 303), like Russell Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals*, or Eric Lott's 2006 *The Disappearing Liberal Intellectual*; yet the amount of discourse generated still attests to the thorniness of the issue for American culture. As David Farber puts it, "Not surprisingly, a long, relatively inclusive American conversation on the subject indicates that democratic publics and purveyors of elite knowledge are not and, virtually by definition, should not be easily mated" (794).

Besides being diachronic, anti-intellectualism also spreads across cultural sectors, unifying many of them: Ruth Elson's study traces it as "thoroughly embedded in the schoolbooks that have been read by generations of pupils since the beginning of the Republic" (qtd. in Moynihan 256), and Kevin Shortsleeve reads it in the "totalitarian" conservatism of Disney (5, 8-12), while Richard Dorson sees it propagated by American folklore icons like Davy Crockett (208). Heath Atchley observes that "traditional anti-intellectualism reaches new heights in our current, hypermediated milieu: we now have more venues than ever to disseminate undisciplined, uncreative thought" (251); finally, Nobel laureate Robert Laughlin in *The Crime of Reason* sees electronic venues of knowledge and information as choked by both trivia overabundance and a systematic restriction of patented knowledge. In politics and education, many critics have noted the correlation between Republican, neoconservative politics and anti-intellectualism: in higher education, the phenomenon varies from downright Right-wing censoring to the

mercantilization of education under corporate management to "the anti-intellectualism of intellectuals" belonging to the radical Left (Wickberg 15, Westbrook 187).

Nevertheless, as becomes clear from Hofstadter and others, anti-intellectualism is tied organically to the conception of American democracy as "for the People by the People." The domain of the intellectual being *logos*, reasoned discourse, relates to the observation of Patricia Roberts-Miller that "a basic principle of democracy is that the ability of the general public to make appropriate decisions depends to a large degree on the quality of public discourse," while at the same time in the States "restrictions regarding 'reasonable' behavior have often acted…to exclude already marginalized groups," such as the intellectuals, from such discourses (459). In their capacity to cogitate things through, then, intellectuals are an indispensible instrument of democracy *to the extent, however, their discourse affects public opinion*—a view echoed by Steve Fuller: "The transition from academic to intellectual is fully accomplished when one exchanges the verbal signs of expert authority (a.k.a. jargon) for working mainly within the target audience's universe of discourse" (150). This means that the publicly-speaking Yankee intellectual must, impossibly, invoke an authoritative expertise while simultaneously not appearing as such to an authority-hostile audience!

This is certainly not an easy dilemma. Besides the aforementioned jeremiads, the American intelligentsia have alternatively chosen expatriation—as in the case of the "Lost Generation"—or an embittered withdrawal from the public domain: the intellectual finds him/herself unable to resist "the tyranny of the majority, not the kind that actively persecutes minorities but the kind that break the inner will to resist because there is no qualified source of nonconforming principles and no sense of superior right" (Bloom 247). Some have succumbed to what Paul Theroux calls "the Hemingway personality" (311): faced with an "unmanly" and not "real" job, the intellectual must overcompensate by proving himself a he-man first through feats like Hemingway's shadow-boxing, gun-toting, and hard drinking. The hypocrisy of the intellectual who must publicly denounce themselves fosters an American idea of democracy not as respect to difference—an expression of American multiculturalism—but as hostility to difference, especially the non-concrete and elusive difference in intellect. Thus the silence of the intellectual lambs does not simply deprive democracy of its heuristic tool, but strikes at the core of what a democracy is all about, instituting instead a mass "*dim*-ocracy": a "parlement" of fools, but also a dimming of pluralism that would include the intellectual minority; which gives us, as Michael Winkelman puts it, "the new United States of Stupidity" (180).

How can scholars then maintain their distinction—in both senses—and still speak to the people? It appears that, in such cases, the resourceful intellectual finds that s/he, like Odysseus before the Cyclops, would benefit by becoming "Nobody." In particular, from the very beginning of American letters, there is a tendency for intellectuals addressing the public to assume a rhetorical posture of humorous self-directed satire which, as shall be argued here, not only pre-empts public anti-intellectual animus, but in fact renders the performing intellectual invisible to the public and thus, like the devil, even more influential. Focusing on 17th-19th century texts shows that such strategies were embedded early on into the bedrock of American cultural identity and have since informed the nation's intellectual production almost as if naturally. Consider, for example, the convention of opening a speech with a personalized joke; or the famous 1897 "How to Tell a Story" by Mark Twain, claiming that "the humorous story is American" simply because American humor focuses on the "high and delicate art" (7)

of the performance of the story by a speaker who must make him/herself an organic part of the joke, appearing playful, naïve, foolish or not aware that he/she is being funny. The success of Twain's practicing just that art speaks volumes on how this recipe was received by the American public.

Back to the origins, however: to Anne Bradstreet, the first author and first lady of American letters. Facing the 2nd edition of her book of verses in 1666, Mistress Bradstreet writes the poem "The Author to Her Book" where she chides the book like an unruly child, and herself as an unfit mother (2-3). What is interesting here is that Bradstreet expresses distance and contrary feelings towards this offspring, unlike what she shows to her progeny in other poems, while even the sole positive word "affection" (l.11) is left dangling without a qualifying personal pronoun. Instead, she paints a humorous portrait of a wayward, deformed and illegitimate "rambling brat" (l.8), thus casting herself as the "poor" (l.22) woman of loose morals, "feeble brain" (l.1), and shoddy housewifery, the exact opposite of what she intimates about herself elsewhere. Aware of public scrutiny, Bradstreet appears not as a Puritan official's highly educated daughter and wife, the writer of lofty poetry of ideas, but disguised as a lowly, piteous character. That kind of humility sounds about what is to be expected from a novice writer, but Bradstreet must have been aware of the success of the first edition of her book in London in 1650, and her prologue could well have been a letter of thanks to her public, or some thoughts on the novelty of her endeavor. The choice of tone must be seen, therefore, as dictated by the Protestant spirit of the early Bay colony, which would have forbidden her to bask in her success while the rest of the "elect" were striving for survival. By humorously abasing herself, then, Bradstreet offers her American public a twofold boon: first, she casts her imaginary hard lot with them, while at the same time the humorous contradiction of fact and fiction offers them the respite that poetry is supposed to provide from that hard lot, and which she *knows* she is providing by her successful book. In fact, her very particular awareness of the book's faults suggests that she herself knows, and could produce, much better verse, or perhaps that what appears as worthwhile to her public is far beneath her own standards. Thus she serves her role both as intellectual succor to her community and as a democratic voice *inter pares*.

An even more masterful act of intellectual *trompe d'oeil* is, also, found in Benjamin Franklin's essay, "The Way to Wealth." As Christina Lupton tells us:

> Franklin's best-selling piece, known since 1780 as *The Way to Wealth*, was written in 1757 as the preface to the twenty-sixth and final edition of the almanac. … the previous editions of the almanac had all included an address by Poor Richard to his ''Courteous Reader"…. Yet this final preface expanded the realm of the address to new proportions. (472)

The success of the preface, which even outsold *The Autobiography* (Lupton 472) and the popularity of Franklin's alter ego suggest that Franklin's genius had discovered that the path of greatest influence is the path of least prominence. For Jennifer Jordan Baker, "Franklin effaces the particularities of his own personality in order to achieve a 'republican impartiality'—refuting his own personal authority and embodying, through writing, the legitimacy of a public statesman" (274); yet here he appears rather as the Fool, who can blithely oppose a King. In this text, Franklin as Poor Richard goes to the market and chances upon a venerable elder, Father Abraham, who, when petitioned by the public for financial advice, quotes abundantly from *Poor Richard's Almanac* on the value of frugality and modesty. Flattered by the citations, Richard is nevertheless the only person persuaded by the speaker, as: "The people heard it, and approved of the

doctrine, and immediately practiced the contrary, just as it had been a common sermon; for the venue opened, and they began to buy extravagantly, notwithstanding his cautions and their own fear of taxes" (Franklin 498). The punch line of the plot casts Richard as naïve, or a fool to miss a good bargain, even more so that his vanity and pride are inflated throughout the sermon by hearing himself quoted next to the Bible. The author simultaneously upholds himself as a sagacious intellectual, and confounds himself through a sermon that castigates faults he succumbs to. His setting himself apart from the lot by being more aware and frugal than they thus becomes a dubious gesture, an alienation from "the people" which Franklin, in the beginning of his preface, praises as "the best judges of my merit; for they buy my works" (493). In fact, for Lupton, Richard is the worst of the audience, for he ingests the sermon uncritically (477), and by not buying condemns the very market that has made his books successful and lucrative (479). What is more, beyond the mask he has worn in public as "Poor," average and naïve (Lupton 494), here Franklin—a national celebrity, a self-made man of profound and inexhaustible scholarly, scientific and business genius—adds another mask on top, that of the prophetic Father Abraham, so that at the same time he alienates himself as an intellectual from this public "harangue," he also places himself closer to a transcendental voice of God that speaks to the sinners at the hedonistic marketplace. As Paul Giles notes, this irony might be intentional, due to "an important shift from the 1770s onwards in Franklin's intellectual focus, whereby he becomes less an exponent of mercantile liberalism and more a satirical traducer of established power" (24). Thus, the more Franklin strives for American democracy, the more he turns to intellectual treatments of his oratory, coupling public amusement with the capacity of the text to hide his intentions in satire or irony: "The success of Franklin's satires thus lies in the way they are not simply didactic polemics but, rather, tricky and ingenious performances which mimic the formal apparatus of the hegemonic state while emptying out its coercive substance" (Giles 32).

This comment brings us to Washington Irving, the best-loved storyteller in 19th century America, and the preface to his 1824 *Tales of a Traveler*, which signals his awareness of his role as a public functionary of cultured democratic discourses: "I have often hid my moral from sight, and disguised it as much as possible by sweets and spices, so that while the simple reader is listening with open mouth to a ghost or a love story, he may have a bolus of sound morality popped down his throat, and be never the wiser for the fraud" (384).

It is not surprising that such tales were written under the pseudonym of Geoffrey Gent Crayon, and embedded in a frame narrative involving the supposed narrator simply re-telling, in the fashion of Franklin (or Cervantes), the tales collected by a Diedrich Knickerbocker, thus allowing for a triple disavowal of Irving's authorship while stressing the qualities of researcher and scholar-author by proxy. But the true performative play, even though Irving elsewhere has often written satirically about authors and scholarly circles, comes with the portrait of Ichabod Crane in Irving's most famous story, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1819). The lanky, awkward, effeminate, vain, cowardly, gluttonous schoolmaster, suitor of the lovely heiress Katrina Van Tassel, is said to have many things in common with Irving: his bachelorhood and vain suits (Traister 117), his rootlessness, his scholarship, his impressionable fancy (Traister 112), his later political appointment, and his voracious desire "to tread…in the footsteps of antiquity" through tales of the ghostly past, as Irving confesses in his semi-humorous "Author's Account of Himself" (744). Why, then, does he show so little sympathy to his

alter ego and creation?: "when Brom Bones in his ghastly masquerade frightened Ichabod out of town and smashed a pumpkin on his credulous head, he was passing the symbolic judgment of the American male community on the old-time schoolmaster" (Hofstadter 315-16). Is this the philistinism and hypocrisy of the discomfited intellectual, or a rhetorical device in Irving's address to an audience/readership of peers, given that, in ridiculing the dangerous "elitism" of bachelors with Bachelor's degrees, the ridiculer has to include him/herself, lest s/he also suggest superiority? In a tale about the credulity of ghost-story believers, the audience fails to see the true ghost—the intellectual/author: as Ichabod's disappearance from Sleepy Hollow becomes eventually part of the ghost stories he delighted in and believed, the image of the disagreeable intellectual fop is exorcised by the gross joke at his expense, and the influence of the point-of-view that is predominantly Ichabod's, the sheer delight in a good ghost tale, sticks with the villagers—who as Ichabod's pupils refused to learn anything he tried to teach them via formal education and the birch-rod—and Irving's audience alike, as is apparent from the story's success (Irving 968). This is perhaps also why in Irving's other famous story, "Rip Van Winkle," the anti-Franklinean layabout of the story falls into the world of ghosts and in the end becomes like one, to be reborn as the village storyteller: the intellectual must first embrace his being a "Nobody" in the manly world to be allowed his ghostly influences on the public mind at the *agora* of the village tavern, under the picture of Washington's head.

What ties, then, these three authors together is their use of self-directed humor as a disappearing cloak, or rather a literary version of René Magritte's famous pipe painting with a "this is not an intellectual" caption. While apparently effacing and ridiculing the Yankee scholar in their works, Bradstreet, Franklin and Irving—and many others—actually bring back this image as a mirage that, in amusing audiences, ensures his/her influence on them. Now, whether the trimming of the text to the expectations of a *dim-ocracy* of "simple" readers actually perpetuates such a public that only understands amusement, is a different story.

Works Cited

Atchley, Heath J. "The Death of Emerson: Writing, Loss, and Divine Presence." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 20.4 (2006): 251-65. Print.

Baker, Jennifer Jordan. "Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* and the Credibility of Personality." *Early American Literature* 35.3 (2000): 274-375. Print.

Bloom, Alan. *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. Foreword by Saul Bellow. London and NY: Penguin, 1987. Print.

Bradstreet, Anne. (1666) "The Author to Her Book." *Great Poems by American Women: An Anthology*. Ed. Susan L. Rattiner. NY: Dover, 1998. 2-3. Print.

Bokovoy, Matthew F. "Strange Species: The Boomer University Intellectual." *Reviews in American History* 35.2 (June 2007): 297-306. Print.

Conn, Steven. "Who You Callin' an Intellectual?" *Reviews in American History* 33.1 (March 2005): 64-70. Print.

Dorson, Richard. *American Folklore*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977 (1959). Print.

Elson, Ruth Miller. *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1964. Print.

Farber, David. "Intellectuals and Democracy: Academics in Paradise/Emerson's Vocation." *American Literary History* 12.4 (Winter 2000): 794-801. Print.

Franklin, Benjamin. "The Way to Wealth." *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 5th ed. Ed. Nina Baym et al. Vol. 1 of 2. New York: Norton, 1998. 493-98. Print.

Fuller, Steve. "The Public Intellectual as Agent of Justice: In Search of a Regime." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 39.2 (2006): 147-56. Print.

Gandhi, Leela. Plenary Lecture delivered at AISNA 2011 conference "Democracy and Difference," Oct. 28, 2011, 10:00-11:00, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Trento, University of Trento, Italy.

Giles, Paul. "Antipodean American Literature: Franklin, Twain, and the Sphere of Subalternity." *American Literary History* 20.1-2 (Spring/Summer 2008): 22-50. Print.

Hofstadter, Richard. *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963. Print.

Irving, Washington, and Geoffrey Gent Crayon. *Bracebridge Hall; Tales of a Traveller; The Alhambra*. New York: The Library of America—Viking Press, 1991. Print.

---. "The Author's Account of Himself." *History, Tales & Sketches*. New York: The Library of America—Penguin, 1983. 743-45. Print.

---. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 5th ed. Ed. Nina Baym et al. Vol. 1 of 2. New York: Norton, 1998. 948-69. Print.

Jacoby, Russel. *The Last Intellectuals: Politics and Culture in the Age of Academe*. New York: Basic Books, 1987. Print.

Laughlin. Robert B. *The Crime of Reason*. New York: Basic Books, 2008. Print.

Lott, Erik. *The Disappearing Liberal Intellectual*. New York: Basic Books, 2006. Print.

Lupton, Christina. "Two Texts Told Twice: Poor Richard, Pastor Yorick, and the Case of the Word's Return." *Early American Literature* 40.3 (2005): 471-98. Print.

Moynihan, Ruth Barnes. "Children's Literature as Historical Evidence." *Children's Literature* 5 (1976): 253-60. Print.

Roberts-Miller, Patricia. "Democracy, Demagoguery, and Critical Rhetoric." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8.3 (Fall 2005): 459-76. Print.

Shortsleeve, Kevin. "The Wonderful World of the Depression: Disney, Despotism, and the 1930s. Or, Why Disney Scares Us." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 28.1 (January 2004): 1-30. Print.

Theroux, Paul. "Being a Man." *Sunrise with Seamonsters.* NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1985. 309-12. Print.

Traister, Bryce. "The Wandering Batchelor: Irving, Masculinity, and Authorship." *American Literature* 74.1 (March 2002): 111-37. Print.

Twain, Mark (Samuel Clemens). *How to Tell a Story and Other Essays*. New York: Seven Treasures Publications, 2010. Print.

Westbrook, Robert B. "In Retrospect: Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism, and the Vocation of Intellectuals." *Reviews in American History* 23.1 (1995): 176-91. Print.

Wickberg, Daniel. "Is Intellectual History a Neglected Field of Study?" *Historically Speaking* 10.4 (September 2009): 14-17. Print.

Winkelman, Michael A. "Myths and Realities for Today's College Professors; or, Et in Arcadia Ego." *Pedagogy* 5.2 (Spring 2005): 175-97. Print.

DANIELA FARGIONE

WORDS AND/AS WASTE IN PAUL AUSTER'S *IN THE COUNTRY OF LAST THINGS*

Auster's Fantastic and Realistic Journeys

The widespread interpretation of *In the Country of Last Things,* as a journey in a post-apocalyptic New York, hinges on the fact that, in Auster's trilogy, Stillman Jr. has already identified the city as "the most forlorn of places, the most abject... The whole city is a junk heap" (Rheindorf 94), while in an interview the writer clearly affirms that Anna Blume's journey does not take place in New York but in "an imaginary city" (17, my translation). It is, in fact, a "literary... autobiographical, photographed New York, since photography does not steal your soul, but reveals it" (de Cortanze 13, 16-17, my translation). Indeed, the fantastic property of the story that the protagonist writes in a letter and that we get to know through the reading of an anonymous recipient, allows us to align it with one of Le Guin's "nocturnal journeys" (*Book of Fantasy* 10) written "in the language of the night" (*The Language* 11), i.e. a language capable of "translating" the truth therein inscribed. It can hardly be ignored that in the late 1980s that truth was represented by fears of nuclear wars, epidemics of lethal diseases, or environmental catastrophes, which seemed to encourage a real "aesthetic of disaster" (Broderick, 2009). Nevertheless, according to Susan Sontag, the dominant sense of an ending in those texts, that Mike Broderick calls "terminal" (2009), hangs only as a *potential* condition tainted with evangelical overtones, since they eventually offer a salvational promise (Sontag, 1974). This is the case of Auster's novel as well, where the sense of looming danger in a confined multifarious space is first revealed and eventually neutralized by artistic creativity.

Despite Auster's predilection for futurist settings, he has repeatedly declared that he considers himself "a realist" (*Art of Hunger*, 287; McCaffery 3) and that *In the Country of Last Things* is "very much a book about our own moment, our own era" (Mallia 27), thus removing the illusion that this is the projection of a future simulacrum.[1] The novel, in fact, offers multifold versions of present-day and futurist urban living, while its intertextual and metafictional qualities legitimate a reading of it as the writer's parable of the art of writing, or better, of the *art of writing in hunger*, as it is the empty stomach here that makes the whole difference: *In the Country of Last Things* is in fact both an analysis of Auster's early failures and an exploration into the value of personal and national bodies' excreta.

[1] In his interview with Joseph Mallia, Auster strongly rejects the classification of the novel as "apocalyptic science fiction" and states that his "private, working subtitle for the book" was "Anna Blume Walks Through the 20th Century" (Mallia 27).

Paul Auster's Parable of the Art of Writing (in Hunger)

In the Country of Last Things was published in 1987, soon after the successful response to his *New York Trilogy,* and was often indicated as a continuation of Auster's first book's issues. We now know that all his work "is of a piece" (Mallia 25). Its gestation, nevertheless, started much earlier, when Auster was a student at Columbia University. In *Hand to Mouth*, the writer recalls those striving years and describes his total immersion in literary studies that he continued in Paris while "living in a delirium of books" (37) and getting almost "intoxicated" by them (Contat 168): "I *drank* them in staggering numbers, *consumed* entire countries and continents of books, could never even begin *to get enough* of them... I read books as if... my very *survival* were at stake" (*Hand to Mouth* 37, my emphasis).

Obviously, the vocabulary used to sketch his intellectual experience prior to fiction writing pertains to the domain of eating. Auster's injection of words and notions reminds of the binge eating of the bulimic, whose behavior, as analyzed by Sohnya Sayres and compared to a sublime experience, is connected to a "limitless loss," which also represents the point of departure for the will to "rapacious glory," eventually to personal empowerment in a consumer culture. Auster's negation of his own body to the world, his initial invisibility and seclusion within his study room, while devouring and translating other people's books, highlights the narcissistic aspects of insatiability on the one side and indigestion on the other, two conditions that paralyze the "postmodern imagination in some sort of congestion," and block the writer in a compulsion to cite and repeat, a compulsion to death (Dainotto par. 22).

In an interview, Auster states that his cognitive craving made him "feel that in order to write a novel you had to know everything in advance" and that his fear and his load of previous readings prevented him "to produce anything" (Contat 168). Not only was too much information a hindrance, but also words were inadequate to express the excessive world that he had "swallowed" and that he was not able to digest, absorb, and re-eject (*The Invention* 32). This dynamics of ingestion, blockage, and final release is rendered through the metaphor of defecation, the paradoxical discharge of the fear of subjective death posited by postmodernism and defined by Ihab Hassan as "radical irony" (77). The disaccumulation of historical and literary overloads within a cultural entropic system eventually opens the way to "a more positive mode of confrontation between subject and power" (Dainotto par. 10) by resisting the hegemony of codified myths and crystallized narrative practices through the formulation of new stories. As a result, the decentered metroscape that Auster offers in his endless novel*,* a metaphor for writing itself, becomes an enormous landfill, whose configuration inevitably leads to a discourse on its constituent material, where garbage may be seen as the excess of the world's gluttony, the tomb of a civilization that builds itself on the sedimentation of its own fragments. At the same time, however, it also operates as the womb for the coming-into-life of a new subject, who "has survived the menaces of death and has *'uplifted'* him/herself... in an act of ultimate *poiein*" (Dainotto par. 39, my emphasis).[2]

After "scraping along" for almost ten years after college graduation, Auster's recovery was represented by the publication of *The Invention of Solitude*, his first

[2] G. de Cortanze states that the beginning of Auster's first attempts at the novel dates back to 1965, although the writer affirms that it was started in 1970 (Contat), an improbable date however, since the preliminary form of the novel was published in the fall of 1969 in the *Columbia Review Magazine* with the title "Letter from the City."

literary and economic success and a matrix to all his later works, constantly populated by subjects—whose epitomes are artists and scavengers—that, while resisting the common mechanism of re-cycling (by which the rejected material is brought back into and re-absorbed by the market), ally themselves with waste and promote a sustainable economy. In other words, the destructive practice of disposal of both real and fictional debris is substituted by a more ethical dynamics of re-usage of the discarded material, which eventually fosters a sartorial or mending technique.[3] In the end, both the novelist and his characters acquire a new status when they move from the position of collectors of waste (intertextual iterations and citational graftings as the leftovers of other formalized disciplines or of other classical texts) to re-assemblers of *transvalued* material (works or even genres once deemed worthless and later reconfigured according to the specificity of the cultural contingency in which they are re-evaluated). In *In the Country of Last Things,* words and/as waste undergo the same process of transvaluation, thus justifying the writer's comment on the book: "I find it the most hopeful book I've ever written. Anna Blume survives, at least to the extent that her words survive. ... I think of Anna Blume as a true heroine" (McCaffery 19).

The Fall of Anna in Wasteland

Let's descend now into Anna's "invisible world" (18), the infernal city where she experiences the atrocities described in her letter. A strong sense of verticality pervades the whole novel and we have the feeling that her perspective is not very dissimilar from the one adopted by Quinn in *City of Glass*, where he leaves his apartment and literally moves to the dustbin where he learns to survive on garbage. Anna, like Quinn, writes from the bottom of the dustbin.

The gist of the book is expressed in the very first paragraph: "These are the last things, she wrote. One by one they disappear and never come back... It is all happening too fast now, and I cannot keep up" (1). Anna writes being pressed by a specific urgency: to beat time. Everything, in the nameless disintegrating city, is swallowed by a wave of destruction: "Life as we know it has ended" (20), and the world seems to have "turned into a huge dissolving crystal" (91), whose vitreous, glassy grains concur to play a constant game of disorienting reflections, so that her Wasteland can be perceived as the mirrored image of the upper Wonderland. The gloomy and englobing city that she describes—"a place where only blind people lived" (18)—is surrounded by a tall wall that prevents people from escaping, thus underscoring the repressive and frightening atmosphere of a site that immediately evokes incarceration and surveillance and that reminds of the stifling room in which Auster used to write in total isolation. What makes it worse is its slippery and impermanent quality; this is a place constantly re-/de-formed, perpetually self-consuming, and exclusively regulated by the laws of chance.[4]

Anna writes scrambling memories of both her recent and earlier past, despite the fact that everything is pervaded by doubt now. However, if certainty equals death, "doubt is a great blessing" (39): in doubt she can still hope that her missing brother, William, is

[3] This philosophy is best illustrated by Victoria at the Woburn House, a sort of refuge that provides temporary help for the city's dispossessed. Anna is brought here after being rescued from the street, where she literally lands in an attempt to avoid being cannibalized.

[4] Chance is an ambiguous concept that we intuitively "associate with a downward movement." Coming from the Latin "*cadere,"* it has the implication of "that which we fall into" (Shiloh 488).

still alive, "because this country is enormous" and the existence of a somewhere else might still be possible. Significantly, it is from the height of a roof that she glimpses a world beyond the city, "a revelation" that makes her "almost happy" (78). Yet, uncertainties multiply in that extreme and rarefied environment and even if Anna suggests "to believe only in what your eyes tell you" (19), she also warns us that "with so much to absorb at every step" even your sight may become sketchy, except for when you look at two specific objects: "a pencil and a crust of bread" (19), thus identifying and juxtaposing two different hungers. From the very beginning, then, the writer conveys his faithfulness in the illusionary power of words: despite the extreme spatial and ontological instabilities in which people are immersed, Anna and her readers eventually find out that language and writing are "mythical dimensions of life" (Brown 3), potentially capable to alleviate urban predicaments and obliterate erasure.

If time is the first pressing immediacy, hunger is the motor that triggers her quest: "If not for my hunger," she writes, "I wouldn't be able to go on" (2). And yet, hunger (both real and metaphorical) is a yearning that needs to remain unfulfilled (Rubin 60-70) and be converted into "the prime source of all value" (62). However, the impossibility to satisfy it paradoxically guarantees her survival, since it becomes the motor for her search for food, as much as it is the motor for the writer's search for words. In any case, both the writer and his character need to find themselves "face to face with death" because "to give up starving," Auster claims, "would not mean victory, it would simply mean that the game was over" (*Art of Hunger* 13). When Anna Blume realizes that the disappearance of words results in the disappearance of the objects they indicate, she feels compelled to give them a second life by writing them in her notebook. Also for Anna then (as much as for her writer) words stand between her and a terrifying silence, because—to say it with Hassan—she depends for her existence on the very act of narration (*The Literature of Silence* 161) being herself both a narrating and a narrated character (Varvogli 81).

Indeed, hunger is an extreme example of personal want, but postmodern literature contributes to distinguish and categorize different types of needs and invites us to reconsider the value of what we discard. Hence, while reflecting on the process of selection and rejection of the material included in his fiction, Auster also exposes the hegemonic structures that control that very process by showing how "waste" is a constructed category rather than a natural one and that what we deem "inappropriate" might actually be re-used at a different time with different functions and values. In Auster's Wasteland, people die of starvation and those who survive are forced to scavenge in filthy streets spilling over with trash and detritus. Thinness is the most evident physical sign of scarcity, but Anna often recalls her comfortable previous life and inevitably reminds us that in the specular city laying outside of the dustbin relative poverty and malnutrition are not marked by slenderness but, paradoxically, by obesity and excess of trash. The abundance of waste in the underworld corresponds to the waste of abundance in the upperworld.

In this moment of "national emergency" (175), when even to bury corpses is a crime, dead bodies, shit, and garbage become crucial resources and "shit is a serious business" (30). The city's garbage system is possibly the best example to understand how the vertical, hierarchical order is rigorously maintained. Street collectors are at the bottom of the pyramid, followed by inspectors, Resurrection Agents, and garbage brokers, who are in charge to take all refuse (corpses and excrement included) to power plants—wisely called "Transformation Centers"—built on the edge of the city, a site traditionally inhabited by outcasts. However, as David Harvey argues, since postmodern

globalized urban centers are influenced by a capital that cuts across borders and class boundaries, people's value is now at risk in *any* urban section, so that the spatial design of marginalization has now been erased: both human and material waste cohabit everywhere. But also danger lurks everywhere: armed guards build barricades out of urban debris in order to get monetary or sexual tolls, "beatings are commonplace" (6). Evidently, Anna's various attempts to grasp the governing social and power relations are doomed to be vain. Fear contributes to break off reciprocity, solidarity is substituted by cannibalism, while the nine zones into which the city is fractioned correspond to Harvey's "zones" (*Spaces of Hope*), i.e. suburbs actively produced through the differentiating powers of capital accumulation and market structures. That capitalist industry and commodification is tantamount to a process of homogenization is only mere presumption.

In the Country of Last Things finally explores the interconnections of obsolete objects and legacy that again emphasize verticality by pinpointing how material, historical, and literary heritage is bequeathed through generations. Since objects also function as carriers of memory, they hold power against the backdrop of consumer capitalism, while operating at the point of intersection between institutionalized and private memory (Pye 3). In this perspective, artists hold a special place, as they are the keepers of the world's archive. Auster always differentiates creative subjectivity, while indicating his conviction that art will outlast the ruins of civilization. Of course, this notion is as old as the ancient Egyptians: "Minimal traces of ink on a brittle papyrus provided more lasting monuments than tombs and pyramids," states Assman in a survey of the text as a medium of cultural memory (3), where we read that some contemporary writers in their roles of postmodern "scribals" are concentrating on trash in their search for authentic traces of the past ever since "litter" has become a substitute for "letter" (11). The allusion to Egypt here is not inappropriate: Auster, who supports the idea that writing is exempted from the destruction of time, declares that the garbage system described in the novel is based on the present-day garbage system in Cairo, where abject immigrants collect trash and resell it for recycling (McCaffery and Gregory 1992: 19; Brown 147). So, if the quotidian artifact becomes the materialization of a historical moment (63), waste eventually enhances a discourse on the building upon the ruins of our heritage through renovation, eventually acquiring some sort of sacredness. The best example in the book is offered by Ferdinand, the true artist and perhaps the best character to demonstrate how "utter despair can exist side by side with the most dazzling invention" (29). His extraordinary talent in building miniature ships that he puts in smaller and smaller bottles (47) and that he ardently refuses to sell despite his hunger might be considered within the perspective of an "excremental ethics." Instead of resurrecting trash for capitalist sale, reinforcing production of future waste material, he treasures it and displays how society's excreta may be a source for artistic creation. With him, the dirt of an entire culture transforms itself into compost. Similarly, Anna's diary, filled with words that get smaller and smaller in order to save space on the page, concludes with a vow that is at the same time an agreement and an expression of hope: I promise to write again.

Works Cited

Assmann, Aleida. "Texts, Traces, Trash: The Changing Media of Cultural Memory." *Representations* 56, Special Issue: The New Erudition, (Autumn 1996): 123-134. Print.

Auster, Paul. *In the Country of Last Things.* London: Faber and Faber, 2005. Print.

---. *Hand to Mouth: A Chronicle of Early Failure*. New York: Picador, 2003. Print.

---. *The Art of Hunger: Essays, Prefaces, Interviews.* New York: Penguin, 1997. Print.

---. *The Invention of Solitude.* New York: Penguin, 1988. Print.

Broderick, Mick. "Surviving Armageddon: Beyond the Imagination of Disaster." *Science Fiction Studies* 61. 20 (Nov. 1933). Web. 20 Sep. 2011. <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/61/broderick61art.htm>.

Brown, Mark. *Paul Auster*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007. Print.

Contat, Michel and Alyson Waters. "The Manuscript in the Book: A Conversation." Y*ale French Studies* 89 (1996): 160-187. Print.

Dainotto, Roberto Maria. "Excremental Sublime: The Postmodern Literature of Blockage and Release." *Postmodern Culture* 3. 3 (May 1993). Web. 23 Sep. 2011. <http://serials.infomotions.com/pmc/pmc-v3n3-dainotto-excremental.txt>

De Cortanze, Gérard. *Paul Auster's New York*. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2004. Print.

Harvey, David. *Spaces of Hope*. Berkeley: University of California P, 2000. Print.

Hassan, Ihab. *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982. Print.

---. *The Literature of Silence.* New York: Knopf, 1968. Print.

Le Guin, Ursula. *The Book of Fantasy*. New York: Viking, 1988. Print.

---. *The Language of the Night.* New York: Berkley-Putnam, 1979. Print.

Mallia, Joseph. "Paul Auster." BOMB 23 (Spring 1988): 24-27. Print.

McCaffery, L. and S. Gregory. "An Interview with Paul Auster." *Contemporary Literature* (Spring 1992): 1-23. Print.

Rheindorf, Markus. "Processes of Embodiment and Spacialization in the Writings of Paul Auster." *Reconstruction*, *A Culture Studies Ejournal* 2.3 (2002). Web. 23 Sep. 2011. <http://www.reconstruction.ws/023/rheindorf.htm>.

Rubin, Derek. "'The Hunger Must Be Preserved at All Cost': A Reading of The Invention of Solitude." Ed. D. Barone. *Beyond the Red Book. Essays on Paul Auster*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1995, 60-70. Print.

Pye, Gillian, ed. *Trash Culture. Objects and Obsolescence in Cultural Perspective*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2010. Print.

Sayres, Sohnya. "Glory Mongering: Food and the Agon of Excess." *Social Text* 16 (Winter, 1986-87): 81-96. Print.

Shanks, M., D. Platt, and W. L. Rathje. "The Perfume of Garbage: Modernity and the Archaeological." *Modernism/Modernity* 11. 1 (2004): 61-83. Print.

Shiloh, Ilana. "A Place Both Imaginary and Realistic: Paul Auster's 'The Music of Chance.'" *Contemporary Literature* 43. 3 (Autumn 2002): 488-517. Print.

Sontag, Susan. "The Imagination of Disaster." Ed. Ralph J. Amelio. *Hal in the Classroom: Science Fiction Film*. Dayton, OH: Pflaum, 1974. Print.

Varvogli, Aliki. *The World That is the Book: Paul Auster's Fiction*. Liverpool UP, 2001. Print.

CLAUDIA FIMIANI

"THE PARTY'S OVER": JAZZ AND DISILLUSIONMENT IN FRANCIS SCOTT FITZGERALD'S AMERICA AND THE HARUKI MURAKAMI'S WESTERNIZED JAPAN

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the symbolic meaning of jazz in Francis Scott Fitzgerald and Haruki Murakami's writings. By tracing a sort of brief soundtrack with some of the several, more or less explicit, references to jazz in their works, I will try to underline the importance of music as a key symbol in the narrative structure.

Francis Scott Fitzgerald coined the expression "Jazz Age" to portray the glitzy and contradictory era of frenzy and folly that emerged in America after World War I. In the essay "Echoes of the Jazz Age," he describes a whole generation, lost in a spiral of hedonism and recklessness, an artificial representation of reality, a mere "theater of being" (Curnutt 31). Ruth Prigozy points out that "for F. Scott Fitzgerald, popular music … was symbol, symptom, and sum of an era; it was past, present, and future playing endless, elusive refrains" (Prigozy 53).

In 1922, the pastor Dr. A. W. Beaven called jazz "a combination of nervousness, lawlessness, primitive and savage animalism and lasciviousness" (qtd. in Koenig 169). Besides defining effectively what jazz music conveys, all these words put together provide, broadly speaking, a definition of the mood pervading a generation whose ideals were disillusioned. This definition is topical to describe both Fitzgerald's and Murakami's "lost generations," because "Jazz, in all of its various forms, marked the passage of the new uncertain values that were replacing what many people revered as the old, stable ones" (Henson 38). This is what lies beneath the gilded surface of the booming society depicted by Fitzgerald and Murakami. Actually, though sixty years apart, the 1920s in the United States and the 1980s in Japan are both times of extravagance and wastefulness. The Roaring Twenties and the bouncy economy of Japan in the 1980's created extremely frantic city lifestyles, and while Murakami is not as integrated in the social life as Fitzgerald was, he has been deeply affected by the aftermath of those profound and lasting changes. The protagonists of Fitzgerald's and Murakami's works try to survive, no matter what they have to handle in the chaotic world around them (Miyawaki 271), and music is often a balsam to treat emotional illness. Both for Scott Fitzgerald and Murakami, music is a source of inspiration, a device to construct the narration, to enhance the characters' emotions and to create a peculiar atmosphere. From the "yellow cocktail music" played at Gatsby's parties (Fitzgerald, 1925: 34) to the refrains in Murakami's *South of the Border, West of the Sun*, jazz puts into words what sometimes remains untold. Besides, it often provides a deep insight in the characters' minds and feelings.

One of the most cited references to jazz is a scene in Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. In Chapter III, at Gatsby's party, the tycoon asks the orchestra to play "Vladimir Tostoff's *Jazz History of the World,*" a piece which "attracted so much

attention at Carnegie Hall last May" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 41). The title is quite meaningful and symbolic, but the music remains in the background: the narrator can't catch the sound because his attention is caught by the vision of Gatsby's contemplative figure isolated in contrast with a tipsy, euphoric crowd. But there are some more musical references I want to analyze: one is "The Sheik of Araby," written by Harry B. Smith, Francis Wheeler and Ted Snyder in 1921, following the popularity of the Rudolph Valentino film *The Sheik*. It has become a jazz standard, and boasts many covers: Duke Ellington recorded a version in 1932; The Beatles covered the song in 1962 for their famous Decca Records audition, and Nelson Riddle has conducted a version of the song for the soundtrack recording of *The Great Gatsby* movie directed by Jack Clayton in 1974, starring Robert Redford and Mia Farrow. The song carries a strong symbolic meaning in *The Great Gatsby*. In chapter 4, after leaving the Plaza Hotel, Jordan and Nick are driving through Central Park in a carriage

and the clear voices of girls, already gathered like crickets on the grass, rise through the hot twilight:

> "I'm the Sheik of Araby,
> Your love belongs to me.
> At night when you're are asleep,
> Into your tent I'll creep——" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 62)

The Sheik is undoubtedly Gatsby, and the song's nostalgic melody seems to foreshadow his intentions towards Daisy. With this tune in the background, Jordan tells Nick everything about Gatsby and Daisy's relationship and reveals Gatsby's plan to meet Daisy.

In chapter 5, during the long awaited encounter, Fitzgerald mentions "Ain't We Got Fun?" written by Richard A. Whiting in 1921, and *"*The Love Nest*,"* written by Louis A. Hirsch and Otto Harbach in 1920. The opening lyrics of "Ain't We Got Fun?"—"In the morning / In the evening / Ain't we got fun?" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 76)—imply a carelessness and a directness which are strongly in contrast with the lovers' controlled and awkward reunion.

These songs have an ambiguous meaning; they symbolize the 1920s class obsession with wealth and lasciviousness, as well as Gatsby's misinterpreted reality. The magic illusion in which he embraces Daisy after many years epitomizes the ephemeral dream he tries to grasp. The soft lighting of the room cast a shadow on Gatsby's tragic illusion: "Better than a palace with a gilded dome / is a love nest / you can call home" (Hirsch and Harbach).

At Gatsby's party in chapter 6, Daisy is ravished by the tune of "Three O'Clock in the Morning," "a neat, sad little waltz of that year" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 87), a popular song of 1921 with lyrics by Dorothy Terriss and music by Julian Robledo: "What was it up there in the song that seemed to be calling her back inside? What would happen now in the dim incalculable hours?" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 87). Gatbsy keeps thinking of Daisy as the sweet girl who loved him many years before, blinding himself to the reality that she would never desert her own "twilight universe" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 120).

In chapter 8, the background music in the account of Daisy's youth is the "hopeless comment of *Beale Street Blues*" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 120) played by the wailing saxophones. The song, composed in 1916 by William Christopher Handy, refers to Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee, well-known for being the center of music life and entertainment in the early 20th century. The tune became popular in 1919 thanks to the

Gilda Gray's performance in the musical comedy *Gaieties of 1919* by Jacob Shubert. In the 1958 movie *Saint Louis Blues*, starring Nat King Cole as Handy, the song is beautifully performed by Ella Fitzgerald. The song seems to describe young Daisy's "artificial world" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 120), a flimsy *beau monde* "redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery and orchestras which set the rhythm of the year, summing up the sadness and suggestiveness of life in new tunes" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 120).

In chapter 9, Meyer Wolsheim "tunelessly" whistles "The Rosary" from the back room: this sentimental ballad was composed by Ethelbert Nevin in 1898 with a text by R.C. Rogers; in *The Great Gatsby*, the song sounds symbolically like a grotesque requiem for Gatsby's tragic death.

Music in Fitzgerald's works is not merely an artistic element but, rather, a metaphor for the 1920s and its related social concerns in general. Kristin Henson writes:

> Popular, jazz-influenced music plays a special role in Fitzgerald's fiction as the consummate sign of modernity … Fitzgerald's representation of popular music can be described as a portrayal of jazz anxiety arising from the cultural that the music and, symbolically, modernism itself represents … His musical allusions also anxiously suggest that beneath the surface of the music frivolous gaiety lurks the presence of violence and chaos, which threatens to erupt at any moment. (Henson 37)

This statement allows to draw a parallel with Haruki Murakami's use of jazz as a sign of the Japanese post-modernism which has its roots in America's modern society; post-war Japan is actually a capitalistic society in which the consumption of goods is taken to extremes.

Haruki Murakami, born in Kyōto in 1949, has achieved worldwide success thanks to "the elegance of his lively writing, the depth of his psychological insights, and the entertaining voice of his narrators" (Mussari 7). One of the main characteristics of his prose is the constant reference to American culture which, according to his own claims, is a way "to rebel against my father (he was a teacher of Japanese literature) and against other Japanese orthodoxies" (Gregory *et al.*). Music is one of the most influential elements in Murakami's writing. Long before becoming a successful writer he used to run a jazz club with his wife in Tōkyō. His passion for American music, mainly jazz, is constantly present throughout his novels and short stories, in which the protagonists often lead their lives in western fashion. In a brief essay appeared in *The New York Times* in July 2007, Haruki Murakami wrote: "Practically everything I know about writing … I learned from music … My style is as deeply influenced by Charlie Parker's repeated freewheeling riffs … as by F. Scott Fitzgerald's elegantly flowing prose" (Murakami 2007).

The use of jazz music, a symbol of American popular culture, can be seen in Murakami's fiction as a device to convey all the anxiety coming from the cultural clash between East and West, as well as a symbolic image of the syncopated rhythm that characterizes the development of contemporary society. As an example of this use of jazz in Murakami's works, I have chosen the novel *South of the Border, West of the Sun*, first published in 1992, "the ultimate novel of yuppie mid-life crisis" (Rubin 195): it tells the story of Hajime, starting from his childhood in a small town in Japan. There he meets a girl, Shimamoto, who is, like Hajime himself, an only child. They spend most of their time together talking about their interests and listening to records on Shimamoto's record player. Then they join different high schools and grow apart. They meet again at the age of 36, Hajime now the father of two children and owner of two successful jazz bars in Aoyama, a luxury neighborhood in Tokyo. Shimamoto is shifty

and never gives Hajime any detail about her own life, so he constantly asks himself "what if." Therefore this Gatsby-like protagonist is forced to choose between the apparent concreteness of the present and the attempt to grasp the ephemeral magic of the past. Among many references to music from classic to pop, several jazz songs and artists are mentioned: Duke Ellington's "Star-Crossed Lovers" is a sort of main theme played at Hajime's jazz bar; the title is quite symbolic in reference to Hajime and Shimamoto's relationship. When the two meet again after many years, Shimamoto tries to understand what that song means to Hajime.

> "When they say 'star-crossed,' what do they mean?" [she said]
> "You know—lovers born under an unlucky star. Unlucky lovers. Here it's referring to Romeo and Juliet. Ellington and Strayhorn wrote it for a performance at the Ontario Shakespeare Festival. In the original recording, Johnny Hodges' alto sax was Juliet, and Paul Gonsalves played the Romeo part on tenor sax."
> "Lovers born under an unlucky star," she said. "Sounds like it was written for the two of us." (Murakami, 2000: 169)

The title is a reference to the two characters' story and the unavoidability of destiny, and reminds of the story that lies behind the Japanese *Tanabata*[1] legend. When Hajime realizes that there's no chance to repeat the past, the strong evocative meaning of "Star-Crossed Lovers" vanishes as if all the dreams, hopes and expectations of the young Hajime had gone forever with Shimamoto:

> The song just didn't do to me what it used to. Why, I can't say. The special something I'd found ages ago in that melody was no longer there … I had no intention of lingering over the corpse of a beautiful song. (Murakami, 2000: 206)

"Robin's Nest," a romantic jazz tune composed in the 1940s by Charles Thompson, is the name of Hajime's first jazz club; the robin is traditionally a symbol of "regeneration and rebirth" (Todeschi, 1995: 196) and this is Hajime's purpose when he opens the jazz club. The bar itself can be seen as a nest, a symbol for Hajime's safe shell, a dreamlike microcosm in which he can always find a shelter to face his own disillusionment and regrets. And that's also the place in which he can meet Shimamoto again and let himself be carried away by his imagination, just like Gatsby does while listening to "The Love Nest."

"South of the Border," which by mistake[2] Murakami ascribes to Nat King Cole, was written by Michael Carr and Jimmy Kennedy in 1939 for the namesake movie; apparently, there is no version of the song recorded by Nat King Cole. The protagonists of the novel listen to "South of the Border" repeatedly. They don't know the meaning of

---

[1] *Tanabata* 七夕, meaning 'evening of the seventh', is a Japanese star festival which celebrates the meeting of the deities *Orihime* 織姫 (Vega) and *Hikoboshi* 彦星 (Altair), also known as "Weaver and Cowherd". According to the legend, the lovers married in secret against the will of Orihime's father, who then separated them creating the Milky Way. The unfortunate lovers are allowed to meet only once a year on the seventh day of the seventh month (Brown 2006).

[2] In his *Portrait in Jazz* (ポートレイト・イン・ジャズ, *Pōtoreito in jazu*, 1997), Murakami writes: "Someone pointed out to me that Nat Cole had never sung (at least recorded) the song. I couldn't believe him and looked into Cole's discography. To my surprise he never ever sang it. He made several albums of Latin songs, but it is not included in them. Then it follows that I wrote a book based on a recording that never existed. But (I'm not trying to defend myself) I feel it was not so bad after all, for you 'breathe air in the world which does not exist anywhere' when you read novels" (qtd. in Truffi 2002).

the lyrics yet they sound like a spell on their young hearts. They listen to it when they reunite. And when Shimamoto suddenly disappears, Hajime realizes he won't see her again, "except in memory. She was here, and now she's gone. There is no middle ground. *Probably* is a word you may find south of the border. But never, ever west of the sun" (Murakami, 2000: 196).

The last song I want to dwell on is Nat King Cole's "Pretend," to which Hajime and Shimamoto listen again and again repeating the refrain "Pretend you're happy when you're blue, it isn't very hard to do" (Murakami, 2000: 12). This is what Hajime does in his real life. In my opinion, in this novel jazz is used to construct a sort of symbolic fortress in which the protagonist can repeat the past by lingering on his memories. Hajime is suspended in a parallel reality: he leads an easy and honest life with his family and children but, even if he knows that he truly is a part of it, this life seems to be unreal:

> I was living someone else's life, not my own. How much of this person I called myself was really me? And how much was not? […] The scenery outside—how much of it was real? The more I thought about it, the less I seemed to understand. (Murakami, 2000: 72)

Actually, Hajime does not listen to jazz outside the bar. His distorted perception of reality is strictly connected to the world in which jazz is the melancholy soundtrack of a life spent beating on "against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 144).

Works Cited

Brown, Ju, and John Brown. *China, Japan, Korea Culture and Customs*. North Charleston (SC): Booksurge, 2006. Print.

Curnutt, Kirk. *The Cambridge Introduction to Francis Scott Fitzgerald*. Cambridge: CUP, 2007. Print.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. Oxford: OUP, 1998. Print.

--- "Echoes of the Jazz Age." *The Crack Up*. Ed. Edmund Wilson. New York: New Directions, 1993. Print.

Gregory, Sinda, Toshifumi Miyawaki, Larry McCaffery. "It Don't Mean a Thing, If It Ain't Got That Swing: an Interview with Haruki Murakami." *The Free Library*, 22 June 2002. Web. 24 Jan. 2012.

Henson, Kristin K. *Beyond the Sound Barrier: the Jazz Controversy in Twentieth-Century American Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Hirsch, Louis A. and Otto Harbach. "The Love Nest" (from *Mary*, 1920). *Sheet Music Back in Print*. Web. 24 Jan. 2012.

Koenig, Karl. *Jazz in Print, (1856-1929): an Anthology of Selected Early Readings in Jazz History*. New York: Pendragon Press, 2002. 169. Print.

Miyawaki, Toshifumi. "'A Writer for Myself': F.Scott Fitzgerald and Haruki Murakami." *F. Scott Fitzgerald in the Twenty-First Century*. Eds. Jackson R. Bryer, Ruth Prigozy, Milton R. Stern. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003: 267-278. Print.

Murakami, Haruki. *South of the Border, West of the Sun* (国境の南,太陽の西, *Kokkyō no minami, taiyō no nishi*, 1992). Trans. Peter Gabriel. New York: Vintage, 2000. Print.

--- "Jazz Messenger." *The New York Times* 8 Jul 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2012.
Mussari, Mark. *Haruki Murakami*. Malaysia: Marshall Cavendish, 2010. Print.
Prigozy, Ruth. "Poor Butterfly: Francis Scott Fitzgerald and Popular Music." *Prospects* 2: 41-67. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977. Jstor. Web. 24 Jan. 2012.
Rubin, Jay. *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*. London: Vintage, 2002. Print.
Todeschi, Kevin J. *Dream Images and Symbols*. Virginia Beach (VA): A.R.E. Press, 2005. Print.
Truffi, Alberto. "Haruki Murakami." *Musica e memoria*. Web. 24 Jan 2012.

SIMONE FRANCESCATO

"THE FUTILITY OF TIME IN BETWEEN": AMERICANS ABROAD IN DAVE EGGERS'S *YOU SHALL KNOW OUR VELOCITY (!)*

This paper discusses the obsession for velocity featured in Dave Eggers's first novel *You Shall Know Our Velocity* (2001), arguing that the Interruption which introduces a second narrator in a later edition of the text (2003) is used to both dismantle and accelerate to the extreme the time of the narration. Eggers's novel recounts the adventures of Will and Hand, two young Americans on a hectic seven-day tour of the globe made to forget the tragic loss of a dear friend, and to get rid of an unexpected monetary gain towards which they feel great ambivalence. As some critics observe, at a formal level this novel would not consist of a single book, but (at least)[1] of two divergent books published within less than two years. The first edition, features Will as main narrator, while a successive edition (*You Shall Know Our Velocity! [previously retitled as Sacrament]*) has 49 new pages added to it which re-tell the whole story from Hand's point of view. Critics argue that Eggers used this double publication to question the reliability of the internal narrator, creating a tension between two different texts, so as to radically break the boundaries between the textual and the paratextual. To put it simply, *You Shall Know Our Velocity (!)*, as a whole, would be a work necessarily implying and including the author's manipulation of the publishing process. Sarah Brouillette, for instance, argues that *Velocity* somehow extends what Eggers did in his previous publication, the memoir *A Heartbreaking Work of A Staggering Genius* (2000), where he repeatedly crossed fiction and non-fiction, authorial and narratorial planes, textual and paratextual, in an attempt to defy the commodification of the book form in the print industry (10). Focusing on the comparison between the various editions of *Velocity*, Suzanne Samples similarly argues that the Hand Insertion in the 2003 edition was primarily a way for Eggers to "enter the novel" and react against its detractors (2, 17).

While it is reasonable to suspect that Eggers made textual changes to respond to unsympathetic critics like Michiko Kakutani (who from the columns of *The New York Times* proclaimed Eggers's new book as "less inventive, less affecting and less intense" than its predecessor), it is also true that Eggers, unlike what he did in his memoir, never included himself as a "vocal author," narratologically speaking, in any of the book's versions. The second edition of *Velocity* seems to feature instead a return to form, as Will's text and Hand's Interruption simply contrast two different kinds of internal narrators. This fact cannot certainly be disregarded. I thus advance a reading of this work, which eschews Eggers-the author as an overt presence and does not avail itself of the idea of a "practice of paratextuality" (Brouillette 1) elsewhere postulated for the

[1] There are at least 6 different versions of the text (Samples 1). My reading focuses on the 2002 edition published by McSweeney's (Penguin 2004) and the 2003 edition, published by Vintage.

2003 edition of the novel. Although there are good reasons to see the Interruption as a sort of metanarrative meditation in the guise of an interlude, the form in which it is presented demands an interpretation which is first of all textual rather than paratextual. My argument reads as follows: 1) Hand's Interruption can and has to be read as constitutive to the plot and not as a paratextual intervention by the author; 2) the 2003 edition provides a more radical fictionalization of the theme of velocity, already explored in the first edition of the book, resorting to the Interruption as a means to a *accelerate brutally* the reader's experience of the text.

Let me first introduce the theme of velocity in the first edition. According to Aliki Varvogli, Eggers's work "borrows from the genres of the road novel and the Bildungsroman in order to create a twenty-first century version of the Grand Tour" (85). Unlike the Grand Tour, which enacted a lengthy process of education and self-centering in the traveler, the kind of adventurous and highly unplanned travel to exotic places depicted by Eggers is characterized by urgency, short duration, and conveys a sense of displacement, which does not derive by the experience of difference but by the experience of sameness (87): the American travelers of the 21st century, embodied by Will and Hand, are in fact unable to find a dimension that is sufficiently "other." Everywhere they go, they find a world colonized by American culture: pop music, alienating resorts, and distorted English.

Like in other works by Eggers,[2] in *Velocity* the representation of adventure tourism resists mere escapism and rather stands out as a means to dig into the depths of American society and its obsession for consumption. As sociologists Bell and Lyall observe, "adventure tourism and extreme sports ... are [Anglo-American] commercial response to globalization" (37), as they shift consumerist behaviors to supposedly natural and uncorrupted paradises, where the anxiety-inducing encounter with Otherness is reduced to a self-reassuring experience. Will and Hand's intention to get rid of unwanted money in the novel somehow exemplifies Slavoj Žižek's notion of *cultural capitalism* (2), which sees charitable acts as both masking and redeeming the "colonial" exploitation of the foreign Other.[3] The very act of giving in the novel is always uncomfortably experienced as a reversal of roles, which sees the giver as an exploiter rather than as a do-gooder. When Will gives money to a man in Senegal, for instance, he feels like he is "taking his money, not giving him [his]" (V 97).[4] Charity often takes the form of an "invasion" (V 135) which hinders any real contact with people (Brouillette 26).

Will and Hand's clumsiness and ambivalence in their attempt to relate themselves to Otherness already show in their preparation for their journey. Not only do they avoid planning, but they also leave with an unlikely minimal luggage. As tourism theorist Dean MacCannell argues, "it is an ideal of some tourists to leave with a zero degree of outfitting and planning and no reservation …. The aim is to create conditions of spontaneity and to achieve a greater self-understanding and understanding of the places they visit" (67). For the theorist, however, this casualness would be mostly founded on a paranoid attitude, implying the elimination of any manifest cultural friction between the

[2] See the collection *How we Are Hungry* (Penguin, 2005).

[3] As Varvogli observes (85), the money that allows Will and Hand to travel and that they mean to give awayrandomly, derives from their complicity with the capitalist machine (Will in fact earns the sum by lending hisface to a commercial).

[4] Quotes from the 2002 edition are preceded by V. Quotes from the 2003 edition are preceded by V2.

tourist and the traveled place, as if the latter were nothing but an extension of one's "home."

The paranoia towards Otherness in the novel mingles with the paranoia towards the free roam of disturbing memories originated from the death of Will and Hand's friend, Jack. Will imagines his memory shaped as an archive (V 30-3), where little humanoids—the "librarians" as he calls them (V 151, 263, who swarm in his head after the accident at Oconomowoc)—store his memories and then pick them up randomly regardless of his decisions. Paranoia also surfaces in Will's uneasiness about the fictional dialogues through which he is used to picture imaginary interaction to himself. He would like these dialogues to stop and his thoughts to be only a flat progression towards unequivocal clarity—something that he interestingly likens to the circularity of the planet, which unproblematically conforms to the map of the traveler:

> I wanted them to end. I wanted the voices silenced and I wanted less of my head generally. I wanted agreement now, I wanted synthesis and the plain truth—without the formalities of debate. … I wanted only truth, as simple as you could serve it, straight down the middle, not the product of dialectic but *sui generis* … there was only one side only, one side always: Just as this earth is round, the truth is round, not two-sided but round ... (V 27)

The aversion towards the dialogic nature of imagination in the novel is related to a more general resistance to history and fiction, perceived as unbearably relativistic and perishable, and to the subsequent promotion of individual enterprise in the here and now to the status of indisputable and everlasting truth. Will and Hand try to overcome relativity (an therefore death and loss) by accelerating and compressing space and time to the point of irrelevancy. What they aim at is to recover a pre-lapsarian "innocent" dimension, where history is eluded or banished and possibilities are unlimited. In order to challenge and defeat time's power over them, they engage in performing (and surviving) crazy and dangerous stunt actions.

Their friend Jack was the one who "would never speed" (V 143), and speed was what in the end killed him in a terrible accident. What Will and Hand try to do is to go back symbolically to the moment of this accident to modify its final outcome (as Will reveals in a lengthy and moving dialogue/monologue with his dead friend, V 298-305). Will is the one who suffers most of Jack's loss and, therefore, also the one involved in the craziest stunts. As he himself remarks, the acceleration provided by the stunts allows him to suppress the voices and memories inside his head: "the only times [the voices] are not with me are those times when speed overwhelms, when action of moments supersedes and crowds out. When my movements stop they come. When my eyes are fixed they come" (V 146).

As we may infer in a passage of the book, Will and Hand's adventure somehow recalls the story of the Pre-Columbian Chilean tribe of "the Jumping People" (as in the anecdote narrated to Hand by their new friend Raymond in Senegal), who kept moving obsessively, running and jumping with their mouths open in order to "swallow" as much as possible air and to become able to fly by assimilating it (V 321-7). This fascinating legend about an ancient tribe who became known as the "fastest people of the Earth" *ennobles* the duo's attempt to defy time by increasing the velocity of their journey to the point of achieving an ethereal identity unaffected by determinist constraints.

If historical identity is always marked by the sorrows which inhabit the incontrollable fictions of memory, "non-historical" identity must be achieved in a

voluntary, highly performative way, where the successful confrontation with loss and death and its documentary evidence become one and the same in the present time (see Brouillette 12). The protagonists' idiotic stunts, which obviously recall popular TV programs such as MTV *Jackass,* surface in the novel as rituals through which Will and Hand achieve a solid and unbreakable identity in a world helplessly perceived as alienated and alienating. By approximating the zero degree of symbolization through a violent physical clash, however, these stunts merely represent a regressive tendency which excludes language as a mediating device for the dialogic interaction with the outer world. All this is exemplified by the major stunt in the novel, which recalls one Will and Hand did with Jack when they were young boys, and sees Hand driving and taking a picture of Will jumping from their rented auto onto a donkey-cart on a street in Morocco. The stunt obviously fails and results quite unintelligible to the poor Moroccan cart driver (as one can also easily infer from his baffled expression in the picture which accompanies the episode in the text, V 229), who, after seeing Will falling to the ground, stops for awhile, takes the money Hand gives him, and resumes his way.

The idea of the redeeming value of speed is not limited to the first edition of *Velocity,* but also constitutes a *leitmotif* of Hand's Interruption, which—in my reading—offers itself as a textual device designed to bring an extreme form of acceleration into the rest of the novel. Let us examine the characteristics of this Interruption.[5] Hand speaks in first person and directly addresses the readers. He tells that he is writing from New Zealand two years after the events narrated in the rest of the book and after Will's death. In Hand's words, his Interruption would "mimic" (V2 254) the structure of the first version: he is indeed going to spend a week retelling the events that took place and were narrated in seven days by Will. Hand claims that his corrections will provide a truer version of his own character (which he believes has been "cartooned" by Will to the point of resulting "half-insane and half-insufferable and always puerile," V2 269) and shed light on Will's "romantic lies," as he likes to call them. Hand truly reveals that Jack never existed (he was only a creation made up by Will to rework his troubled relationship with his mother) and that the trip was absolutely unrelated to any death or recent cash influx (V2 272).

Of all the characteristics Will assigned to the invented figure of Jack, Hand curiously mentions that of *driving slowly*, continuously checking the speedometer (V2 268) insisting that Will merely projected onto the fictional Jack a tendency of his own. Hand explicitly blames Will for choosing the novel form to report the events, and argues that a book like *Velocity* should have come out as a non-fiction work, since this genre (more adherent to facts) would have a stronger impact on the reader. Hand has in mind a particular kind of realistic travelogue where the traveler/observer is not "passive," or "decadent" (as Will was), but is pretty active in shaping the world around him (V2 282). His interruption argues for the creation of a new literary genre which bears the curious name of "Performance Literature" (V2 281). Doing away with all the rumination Will made about traveling to overcome grief or remedy social inequality, Hand comes close to a very Emersonian and sweeping explanation of the duo's trip: "it happened and it was good. It was good because it happened." Moreover, whereas Will's representation of their weird charitable enterprise discloses ambivalence and failure, Hand's depicts it as some sort of secular "sacrament" (hence the title of the 2003 edition)—which he describes, quite confusingly, both as a sign of inward grace and as an Eucharistic act

[5] In one of the book's editions (2002) these pages are even distinguished by red margins, standing out *visually* as a strong act of defiance of Will's narration.

preceded by a minimal exchange of words. Hand wants the power of the book to be increased by his revision, and hopes that it will inspire people to go around the earth and come back home as better human beings. He would like people to perform actions which really affect them, scolding the depressing results of the passive observation carried out by Will (V2 297). Hand's optimism and negation of any trace of guilt, however, contrasts with the lurking appearance of the corpse of a pig on the beach nearby his house. The Interruption significantly concludes with Hand hastily and dryly stating: "The pig on the beach symbolizes nothing" (V2 298).

My argument is that the Interruption reprises the obsession for velocity and the defeat of time which shapes Will's narration, not only *thematically,* by devaluing fiction in favor of non-fiction (as the latter conveys an un-mediated and faster experience of facts), but also *formally,* by accelerating the plot of the book towards—and even *over*—its conclusion. Interestingly, Hand's Interruption does not appear as a preface or an afterword, but as an interlude strategically placed only a few pages after Will's acrobatic stunt with the moving donkey-cart. There is an important analogy between these two parts of the text. In fact, the interlude (which gives voice to Hand-the second internal narrator, rather than to Eggers-the author) constitutes an accelerating device, which does not expand the text horizontally, but cuts it vertically, proposing a sudden and faster conclusion of the narrative experience for the reader. This effect is achieved by recurring to a second narrator, who anticipates and reflects on events that have yet to be related by the main narrator, and on events which will affect the main narrator himself after the publication of the book.

In other words, the Interruption offers itself as some sort of *narrative stunt*, an extreme temporal leap aimed at erasing the temporal progression of plot, thus representing the textual equivalent of the thrilling acrobatic actions narrated by Will in the rest of the novel. In this perspective, it also stands out as the perfect exemplification of the idea of a "Performance literature" enthusiastically advocated by Hand.[6]

Works Cited

Brouillette, Sarah. "Paratextuality and Economic Disavowal in Dave Eggers' *You Shall Know Our Velocity.*" *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* 3.2 (2003). Web. 18 Jan. 2012.

Samples, Suzanne R. *Interrupting the Puppet Master: (Un)reliability and Metatextuality in Dave Eggers "You Shall Know Our Velocity."* M.A. Thesis. Huntington WV: Marshall University, 2007. Print.

Varvogli, Aliki. "Underwhelmed to the Maximum." *Atlantic Studies* 3.1 (2006). 83-95. Print.

Bell, Claudia, and John Lyall. "The Accelerated Sublime."*Tourism: Between Place & Performance*. Ed. Simon Coleman and Mike Crang. Oxford: Berghahn, 2002. 21-37. Print.

Eggers, Dave. *You Shall Know Our Velocity.* New York and London: Penguin Books, 2004. Print.

---. *You Shall Know Our Velocity!* New York: Vintage, 2003. Print.

[6] Hand's attempt to erase the difference between fiction and reality is also evident in the abundance of extra textual material he supplies in the Interruption. Unlike in Will's part, the pictures he provides in his text, in fact,ndo not refer to anything mentioned in the narration and are left to speak for themselves.

Kakutani, Michiko. “Travelers in a Giving Mood, But Agonizing on the Way.” *The New York Times*, 8 October 2002. Web.

MacCannell, Dean. *The Ethics of Sightseeing*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. Print.

Žižek, Slavoj. “RSA Animate - First as Tragedy, Then as Farce 24th November 2009 [speech transcript].” *RSA: 21st century Enlightenment.* Web. 18 Jan. 2012.

SABRINA FUSARI

"THE PEARLY GATES HAVE OPENED AND SHUT": ALITALIA'S PRIVATIZATION IN THE US AMERICAN PRESS

This paper utilizes electronic language corpora to analyze the representation of the same news event (the financial crisis and privatization of the Italian flag carrier, Alitalia) in the Italian, British, and American press during the six months (August 2008-January 2009) that led to the privatization of Alitalia and its acquisition by CAI, a consortium of entrepreneurs coming from different fields of the Italian business community. The purpose of this study is to show how small specialized corpora can be built and used to investigate the language of the news, with particular focus on the comparison between the way in which the Italian, British and American quality press described one of the key events in recent Italian affairs. Firstly, some methodological notes are provided; secondly, the structure of the corpora is described; thirdly, the main findings of this study are illustrated and discussed; finally, conclusions are offered about the main characteristics of the American corpus in comparison with its British and Italian counterparts.

As shown, among others, by Lindquist (1-23), corpora can be used in a variety of ways, depending on the research questions that need to be answered. This study relies on a methodology, described by Partington (96) as Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies, or CADS, firmly rooted in the belief that

> a purely qualitative approach based on the "manual" analysis of just a few texts will necessarily lead to results that can only refer to those texts, and impede the possibility to generalize on the basis of the conclusions that have been reached. Purely statistical data obtained from quantitative analysis also have serious limits without a key of interpretation. (Haarman 141-142, my translation)

In other words, CADS may be considered to fall within the increasingly popular discourse analytical methodologies that see the affirmation of combined qualitative and quantitative approaches. The distinctive feature of the CADS methodology is that it does not make any real distinction between mathematical and statistical analysis and interpretive observations based on close readings of large amounts of discourse; in CADS, these two methodological paradigms are considered as intrinsically complementary and mutually supporting,[1] in what was described as a continuous "merging, and shunting between, quantitative and qualitative approaches" (Marchi 161).

The Alitalia corpora contain all the articles that were published on Alitalia's privatization by *Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, *The Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times* between the time when

[1] A detailed description of the steps involved in a CADS investigation is provided in Partington 101-102.

Alitalia's bankruptcy was declared official (August 2008), and the moment when the newly privatized Alitalia started its operations (January 2009). The newspapers were selected based on *Audit Bureau of Circulations* data which identified them as some of the most widely circulated quality dailies at the national and international level. The newspapers were also selected based on the possibility to access their archives on-line through the academic database *Lexis Nexis*. For the British and American corpora, it was also necessary to select newspapers that had dealt with this issue extensively: for example, a potentially very interesting object of study, *The Wall Street Journal*, was discarded because the WSJ data available from *Lexis Nexis* on Alitalia's crisis in the selected time span amounted to only 31 short articles, for a total of just 1,450 words. This was not considered enough to compare meaningfully with data coming from the two US newspapers which were finally selected due to the much wider space that they had devoted to Alitalia's crisis and privatization.

The layout of the Alitalia corpora is shown in table 1.

Table 1 Corpus data by newspaper

	Words	**Articles**	**Average article length (number of words)**
Italian			
Repubblica	181,097	333	543.8
Corriere della Sera	141,178	236	598.2
British English			
Financial Times	17,288	38	454.9
Guardian	9,544	17	561.4
Times	9,554	14	682.4
American English			
Washington Post	20,732	60	345.5
New York Times	9,931	20	496.6

One of the first steps that are required for a CADS analysis is the retrieval of a keyword list. Table 2, 3 and 4 show the keyword lists obtained from each of the corpora.[2]

Table 2 Keyword list Italian corpus (first 30 hits)

Rank	**Frequency**	**Keyword**
1	3246	Alitalia
2	1706	CAI
3	1131	Compagnia
4	863	Air
5	670	France
6	678	Piloti
7	640	Malpensa

[2] Methods for keyword extraction are explained in detail in Paquot and Bestgen.

8	648	Sindacati
9	573	Voli
10	612	Volo
11	522	Colaninno
12	491	Lufthansa
13	485	Fantozzi
14	520	Lavoratori
15	369	Fiumicino
16	474	CGIL
17	366	Commissario
18	856	Governo
19	356	Trattativa
20	617	Piano
21	654	Nuova
22	563	Accord
23	289	Bandiera
24	378	Offerta
25	248	Cordata
26	245	Aerea
27	229	Sabelli
28	245	Assistenti
29	223	ANPAC
30	263	Letta

Table 3: Keyword list British corpus (first 30 hits)

Rank	**Frequency**	**Keyword**
1	595	Alitalia
2	276	Italian
3	252	Airline
4	194	Air
5	180	Unions
6	172	Berlusconi
7	169	Consortium
8	133	France
9	112	Carrier
10	110	Rome
11	109	Italy
12	105	KLM
13	99	Lufthansa
14	98	CAI
15	108	Offer
16	97	Union
17	88	Investors
18	87	Rescue
19	75	Fantozzi
20	75	Pilots

21	78	Bankruptcy
22	68	Milan
23	67	Flights
24	62	Colaninno
25	62	Silvio
26	95	Plan
27	100	Deal
28	62	Stake
29	61	Takeover
30	314	Said

Table 4 Keyword list American corpus (first 30 hits)

Ran	Frequency	Keyword
1	676	Alitalia
2	286	Airline
3	268	Italian
4	207	Air
5	183	Investors
6	170	Unions
7	139	Carrier
8	137	CAI
9	141	France
10	111	Italy
11	139	Deal
12	108	KLM
13	155	Plan
14	101	Rescue
15	97	Assets
16	96	Berlusconi
17	82	Fantozzi
18	80	Lufthansa
19	116	Group
20	78	Flights
21	71	Pilots
22	65	Euros
23	64	Rome
24	63	Administrator
25	148	New
26	82	Offer
27	54	Euro
28	53	Bankrupt
29	99	Billion
30	51	Bankruptcy

It may seem surprising to find the word “union” both in the singular and in the plural form in the British keyword list. The reason is that the Alitalia corpora are unannotated: