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ÍNDICE / *TABLE OF CONTENTS*

ENSAYOS / *ESSAYS*

MINE ÖZYURT KILIÇ - Where History Meets Ethics: Pat Barker's *Liza's England* 9

LEWIS CACCIA, JR. - The Status of Women Among the Guardian Class: Feminism in Relation to Plato's *Republic* 19

FERNANDO J. RODRÍGUEZ - The Outcast, the Expatriate and the Outlaw: Thoreau, Pound and Thompson's America 31

LAHOUEL BADRA - History, Memory and Identity in Nelson Mandela's Autobiography: *Long Walk To Freedom* (1918-1962) 49

ALISON VAN NYHUIS - Caribbean Literature, North American Migration, and the American Dream 59

IOANA COSMA - By Way of Detour: The Experience of the Interval in Peter Handke's *Slow Homecoming* 73

Irina Strout - 'Who Are The Mimic Men?' Or the Crisis of Identity in V.S. Naipaul's Fiction 85

POESÍA / POETRY

HUGO RÍOS-CORDERO - Réquiem Erótico II; Eros y Tánatos; Praga de noche; Ciclo de Pordenone; A la muerte ... 97

Ensayos / *Essays*

WHERE HISTORY MEETS ETHICS: PAT BARKER'S *LIZA'S ENGLAND*

Mine Özyurt Kılıç

In her interview with Mark Rawlinson, Pat Barker asserts the worth of fiction and contends that "It is the only form that makes you think deeply and feel strongly, not as alternative modes of reaction, but as part of a single, unified reaction" (168). Much has been said about the way Barker's work, especially her *Regeneration* trilogy, produces that unified reaction. For many Barker critics, the rich critical and emotional potential of her novels is one of the strongest features of her writing. For instance, in his introductory chapter of the monologue on Barker's fiction, "Why Should We Read Pat Barker's Fiction?" Mark Rawlinson argues that her fiction "causes us to stand back and ponder moral and intellectual dilemmas at the same time as we are drawn into identifying with her characters (14). Another important Barker scholar John Brannigan makes a similar comment and maintains that Barker's fiction has an "ethical commitment to fictionalising the story of victims, victims of war, poverty, oppression, while never allowing her character to be defined or objectified solely as victims" (4-5). In her article on Barker's *Double Vision*, Barbara Corte underlines the novel's moral depth by pointing to its potential to "call for a compassionate response whenever the pain of others is regarded" (193). Exploring the ethics and aesthetic features of Barker's *Life Class*, Fiona Tolan also suggests that art is, if not essential, a "potential good in the face of relatively poorer alternatives" (391). With the retrospections of its titular heroine, *Liza's England* (formerly published as *The Century's Daughter*) has become a focus of attention for critics who explore issues like representations of history, memory and working class women in contemporary British fiction. Critical work on *Liza's England* notes the emphasis on the thematic concerns of the novel such as silence, trauma and poverty but most of these works study them as common thematic features of Barker's fiction. This paper aims to investigate the ways *Liza's England* fosters an ethical stance by exploring the link between the

narrative strategies and their thematic implications. Thus, I will argue that Barker offers an ethical trajectory in *Liza's England* both through its plot and narrative strategies.

Providing evidence for Barker's scholarly interest in history, *Liza's England*, set in 1984-85, centres on the story of Liza, an octogenarian, who has lived since 1922 in the house she is now forced to evacuate. The row house which survived the bombings in World War II is scheduled to be torn down and replaced by the Clagg Lane housing project. To go beyond an interest in history, the novel engages Stephen, a 29-year-old gay social worker, who is sent to persuade Liza to move to an old people's home. Through a meeting of these marginalised characters, and their evolving friendship, the text presents a story of bridging the gap between different generations and making an attempt to establish connections. The regular visits Stephen pays to Liza unfold their stories and help the reader to explore different lives spent in different times.

In the beginning, Liza is a mere subject to the new housing policies of the Thatcher government and as her old house, a bastion of memories, faces demolition, she sees Stephen as a "bloody do-gooding cow from the social" (1). Accordingly, the text starts *in medias res* taking us straight into a conversation between Liza and Stephen presented as antagonistic forces. But as soon as Liza starts telling about herself, Stephen sees her as a human being. And as Stephen shows a growing interest in her story, Liza becomes less hostile:

> Telling the story of her birth had animated her: her cheeks had flushed to the same hectic colour as her shawl; and suddenly, in Stephen's eyes, she ceased to be a case, a social problem, a stubborn, possibly senile old lady, and became instead what she had called herself: the century's daughter. (6)

This shift in perspective that results from communication sets the tone and suggests the ethical stance that the text offers. As John Brannigan contends, "community, or sense of solidarity" that emerges from the relations between her characters is almost a "signature" in Barker's writing (10). In *Liza's England*, this signature is made evident through the call to understanding and sympathy Liza and Stephen make as antagonistic forces.

Interestingly, in its employment of a social worker as an agent of communication, Barker's novel lends itself to a discussion of ethics of care. While endorsing social bonding and connectedness through various scenes of reconciliation, the text explores social work as a theme and raises questions about rendering "care" a profession. For Brian, one of the unemployed youth in the club Stephen visits, social work is meaningless. He is sceptical about the help social work offers

and bitterly says that he "get[s] pissed off with people helping the unemployed and getting paid for it" (14). Walter, Stephen's father who worked in a factory for years, also sees social work as worthless. Stephen tries to explain how hard his job can be since it involves making decisions about people's lives and gives an example:

> There was a little boy, a baby, about six weeks old, and his Mam spilt boiling fat all over him. By accident. *She said*. And I had to decide whether he should go back to her. You don't sleep after a decision like that. And whatever you might like to think Dad, that is *work*. I don't care if I never get a spot of bloody grease on me hands, [...] I *work*. (40-41)

The text justifies Stephen's view that "[Social work]'s bloody hard work sometimes" both through his encounters with the young people at the club and through the help he offers to Liza.

Although she explores it more centrally in *Double Vision*, inspired by Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), Barker raises a moral question regarding the problems of others. *Liza's England* asks if refusing to be a mere spectator of tragedies and working to help others is not valuable enough to be regarded as a profession. By employing Stephen as a sympathetic character, the text proposes that at a time when people try harder to survive in a more alienating and divided society, going beyond ourselves and being responsible to others can make life more endurable. It is important to note here that Barker does not naively claim that social problems like unemployment and poverty can be solved simply by philanthropy. A clear evidence for this is her intelligent character Brian, who challenges Stephen and implies that what can deter the unemployed youth from crime and violence is not various kinds of social engagement but jobs. When Stephen asks if its workshops or discos they want to happen at the club, Brian sceptically suggests an objection asking: "Money?" (13).

The strength of the ethical suggestions *Liza's England* makes mostly lies in its portrayal of care as a reciprocal process. The novel does this by a convincing picture of the interaction between Liza and Stephen. Although they are presented as opposing forces, the similar traits they are endowed with help underscore the reciprocal quality of care. The main similarity between Liza and Stephen is that both are lonely individuals who are pushed to the margin of society. The third-person narrator introduces Liza as "the sole remaining inhabitant of a street scheduled for demolition" (1). She is "isolated, helpless, and threatened with eviction" (1). Liza's literal and metaphorical insularity, namely her marginal position in society, is verified by the comment Stephen makes as a social worker; ironically, such people living amid dereliction and decline are outside the reach of even the social services the state provides. Upon his first visit to Liza's house,

Stephen says: "I did not know places like this existed" (11). Like Liza, Stephen confronts the risk of being *invisible* due to his marginal status. He is firstly marginalised due to his sexual choice: for his parents, Stephen is a failure with no family of his own. His job also renders him an isolated figure in a money-oriented society which sees social work as worthless. Besides, for the people he serves, Stephen's presence is a constant reminder of their predicament, thus they tend to avoid him. Therefore, both Liza and Stephen suffer from alienation at various levels. It is this similar isolated condition that brings these initially opposing forces together. Thus, it can be argued that the text suggests the meeting of the two marginalised figures as a model of solidarity which provides a remedy for the emotional coldness that surrounds both Liza and Stephen. In that sense, the scene in which Stephen builds a fire for Liza is symbolic of the warm domestic space they both yearn for. He first goes out into the yard to get some coal for Liza and tries to heat the room; as he manages to revive the "almost-dead fire," he both feels rejuvenated and becomes literally *visible* to the reader:

> Then he began to fan the fire with the cardboard top of a Weetabix packet he'd found propped up by the hearth and, as the flames took hold, *his shadow began to grow on the wall* behind him and his face re-emerged into the light.
>
> It was a blunt-nosed, high-cheek-boned face, the face of a man who is nearing thirty and therefore no longer thinks of himself as young. A tired, self-disciplined, lonely face [...]. (my emphasis, 8)

As he helps Liza, Stephen finds the opportunity to receive the recognition denied to him in his family. It can be suggested that this fire, which is initially the concrete help Stephen offers for Liza, becomes a metaphor for the regenerative dimension of care. In his famous *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, Gaston Bachelard draws an analogy between fire and love, and quoting Rilke suggests that "To be loved means to be consumed in the flame; to love is to shine with an inexhaustible light (106). The fire that Stephen builds on his first visit for Liza works its miracles and generates reciprocity, which defines the revitalising quality of care. As he is busy with the fire, Liza keeps telling about herself and feels reanimated: "Her face kindled and glowed in the light of the fire. She was not so much recalling the past as reliving it" (9). The ethical stance that the novel cultivates relies on this crucial moment of healing interaction between the two parties.

Barker portrays the interaction between Liza and Stephen by using juxtaposition as her main narrative device. Throughout the text, Liza's retrospective, objectivising and generalising viewpoint that gives us a generous account of the time past, is put next to Stephen's

future-oriented perspective. This technical strategy of juxtaposing two different perspectives not only enables Barker to explore a wide span of time in her text, it also functions as an element that bridges the gap between consciousnesses shaped by different contexts, namely different centuries. Moreover, the temporal distance in Liza's perspective that encourages a critical stance is punctuated by Stephen's present voice. In other words, the narrative technique reduces the temporal distance and adds to the text an intensifying effect, which supports the theme of communication.

Some ethical concerns of the text are presented directly through the thematic network as well. As Sharon Monteith also maintains, "failure to communicate effectively is a significant theme for Barker" (37). To expand on the vital need for communication, *Liza's England* offers scenes of failure in love and suggests that it is mainly the failure to communicate that causes this failure of love. For instance, as a child, Liza means to her mother a mere helping hand in housework. She constantly feels "weak, useless, small and ignored" (22). Whenever she is sick and throws up, her mother typically replies with an insult: "You stupid little bugger!" (27). This lack of motherly affection in Liza's life soon leaves its place to an equal lack of love and communication with a husband whose answer to Liza's pleas for help is: "You can go Liza. Anytime you want" (91). Liza's barren family life is paraleled to the complete indifference Stephen gets in his relation with his parents. Every time he visits his family, Stephen feels "strange" and "awkward" (35). Feeling "like an intruder," he senses that the only thing they are really interested in is his job (99). Stephen is mature enough to see that his parents cannot communicate their feelings effectively and he sourly notes that his mother's offer of a sandwich is a masked word of endearment: "Food was communication!," he says (36).

Forging the theme of connection to others, the novel employs imagery as another device. As many critics agree, images of failure to communicate and blocked speech are central to *Liza's England*. For instance, the lack of communication in Stephen's life is externalised by the image of broken telephone boxes and interrupted phone calls. Stephen is annoyed when he cannot find a working telephone, which presents the theme of failed communication as a social problem. He says: "It is a disgrace; there is never one that works" (100). In order to highlight the impossibility of communication, the text also mentions that the only means of communication between Stephen and his partner, Gordon, is the very expensive long-distance calls (63). To the same effect, Stephen's mother is described as a character almost "afraid of the phone" (98). Accordingly, the first thing they give up to cut down expenses is their landline.

Among the images that intensify the novel's theme of failure to communicate is silence. Vivid descriptions of domestic interiors in the novel are often dominated by an uneasy silence, by "interminable, unspoken conversations"; Stephen's father demands "absolute silence at mealtimes," which makes him feel unloved (144). The narrator describes such moments of uneasy silence in mechanical terms and compares Stephen and Walter to "a pair of electric plugs that wouldn't fit into each other" (40). His frustration is so overwhelming that when his father falls ill and physically fails to speak, Stephen feels relieved; he thinks that he is no longer "embarrassed of finding nothing to say" (102). The text describes a similar failure to speak at a different narrative level too. This time, it is Liza's husband Frank who is delineated as an unloving father to Tom. Like Walter to Stephen, Frank is indifferent to Tom and he has "no idea how to approach a child" (93). The third person narrator suggests that the reason for Tom's literal silence is this emotional distance: "Tom sat up, crawled and walked early, but talked late" (93).

Barker employs silence not only as a sign of failure to communicate but also as an indicator of weakness; Stephen's description of the silence in the lifts in his apartment building places the communication problem in a social perspective:

> And yet in the lifts. . . Again silence. You knew too much about people to talk, and too little. Did that quiet little man in number thirty-three really beat his wife's head against the wall? That's what it sounded like. You met him in the lift and said nothing. (64)

As such, this uneasy silence also points to the limits of the help and care Stephen can offer. As a social worker whose job is to offer professional help, he becomes a mere spectator to the pain of others, which renders lack of communication as a social ill.

I argue that silence as a negative force is an important motif in the text that supports the novel's ethical stance and encourages social bonding as a form of solidarity. Monteith contends that in Barker's work "characters are revealed through what they say—and to whom they are speaking—but also through what is left unsaid—or what they avoid saying. (10). Following this premise, one can suggest that description of the silence at a meeting of spiritualists from Liza's perspective reveals the theme of connectedness:

> At first it was the usual silence of people in a crowded room: coughs, breathing, tummy rumbles, a belch politely smothered, the rasp of wool as women crossed and uncrossed their legs. [...] Then, without warning, the silence deepened, became something that was not merely the absence of speech, but a positive force. Positive, or perhaps negative, she couldn't tell. At any rate a source of power, binding them together, drawing them in, [...]. (60)

This positive feeling about the unifying effect of the silence felt together pervades *Liza's England*. Throughout the novel, the narrative voice remains stable but the narrative perspective that expands on the theme of silence varies between different characters. This alternation produces a text that sounds like a musical composition, a variation upon the same theme. As different characters go through a similar problem in different contexts, repetition as a narrative method becomes a way of endorsing an inclusive logic of interconnectedness. And through a textual exercise of moving between different standpoints, the reader gains a certain degree of flexibility in observing different minds at work. This flexibility encourages the reader to interact with the text and cease to be a mere spectator. What Pat Barker says on the topic of creating a fictional voice in her work gives us clues about her interest in promoting a more encompassing view in her novels:

> If you listen very carefully to people, you often find a particular group of people that come together as individuals, speaking in a kind of recognizably individual way. As the group gets going and imposes its rules on all of the people in it, those individuals actually tend to sound more and more alike, [...].What you get then is a kind of communal voice. I find that I get very interested in the communal voice as well as in the individual voices of the characters, and also try to listen for that and bring that across. (41)

Interestingly, in *Liza's England*[1] reconciliation is achieved through the mingling of voices and characters that belong to different times and spaces. The novel offers an image of interconnectedness as Liza remembers the time when she gave birth to Eileen just at the moment of helping Eileen at labour:

> As the hours passed, Liza felt herself merge into the girl on the bed. She had laboured to give birth like this, in this room, this bed. She became afraid of the *vanishing boundaries* and turned to the fire, only to feel it strip the flesh from her face and reveal her mother's bones. Eileen was not Eileen, Liza was not Liza, but both were links in a chain of women stretching back through the centuries, into the wombs of women whose names they didn't know. (my emphasis, 211)

It is obvious that the communal voice Barker "tr[ies] to listen for and bring across" is present in *Liza's England* also as a visual image of "vanishing boundaries." This transgression results from a heightened awareness and erases the borders that impose otherness. Stephen

[1] Both of the titles Barker found for her novel, *The Century's Daughter* and *Liza's England*, mark this communal aspect of the text in the sense that they both present Liza as part of a wider context, whether it be temporal or spatial. Thus, in both cases, the novel promises to speak not just for Liza but also for those who are in contact with her, which hints at the novel's potential to suggest notions of inclusion and connectedness.

experiences a similar experience of transgression in his dream with a theme of dissolution of the boundaries: In the shadow of trees among a mixture of music, mud, feet and light, Stephen sees a "cowled figure" he couldn't tell whether it was a man or a woman. In his dream, he feels that one day, all will "crumble" and "dissolve away." This similar image of vanishing boundaries seems to be evoked by the effective communication he establishes with Liza. As he opens himself to the rewarding friendship of an octogenarian. Stephen ceases to perceive himself as a failed son: "In the labyrinth of his dream, his father and Liza were one" (272). In return for the care he offers, Stephen receives a big change in his consciousness, which is mirrored in his liberating dream. The text suggests, once again, the mutual aspect of loving care: In his dream, he holds out his hands and receives the "box" his father offers and gets reconciled with him.

In his "Repetition as the Raising of the Dead," J. Hillis Miller suggests that "repetition in narrative is the representation of a transcendent spiritual realm of reconciliation and preservation, a realm of the perpetual resurrection of the dead" (202). In *Liza's England*, the need for reconciliation and mutual understanding is highlighted not only through the mingling of voices and events, but also through a repeated auditory image of the "rattle on the grate." At first, it is employed as a call to Mrs Dobbin for help when Liza is in labour with Eileen (208). Later, it is Eileen who rattles on the grate asking for help, as she is in labour with Kath. Mrs Dobbin humorously marks the likeness by saying, "You always start when I'm baking" (209). Then comes old age: on Tuesdays, Mrs Dobbin and Liza go out for drinks: at 7 o'clock Mrs Dobbin "does rattle on the grate." Finally, the boys in the gang break into Liza's house, and her mind plays a trick upon her: she thinks what she hears is "a rattling in the grate." Twenty years after her neighbour's death, she thinks that "Mrs Dobbin must be calling her" (260). So it is the same image that marks the scenes of birth and death in the personal history of Liza. With this auditory image of breaking the silence and calling for help, Barker enables us to see not only the personal details dissolving in the bigger picture but also the ever-present need to connect. In other words, repetition of events suggested by the repeated image of "rattle on the grate" erases the personal boundaries and reconciles all the little stories to the whole. In this plane of reality, there is nothing more important than the common good of all people involved.

In Barker's *Liza's England*, the aesthetic and the ethical melt into one another; aesthetics supports ethics and fosters moral meaning. Weaving bonds of humanity and representing experience of sympathy, the text encourages an ethical reflection on the nature of relating

to others. Through an investigation of her characters' ability to transgress silence and communicate, the novel underlines the fact that to turn this mechanical repetition of events called life into a unique experience, communication is essential. By leaving her reader with an image of Stephen speaking to Liza's parrot Nelson, her old friend, Barker seems to refuse an ending and makes another attempt to invite her reader into a critical engagement with the text; mimicking the notion of reciprocity inherent in care, the text heightens what Wayne Booth calls "the level of reciprocity between author and reader" (180). Stephen, the new owner of Nelson upon Liza's death, quotes from John Skelton's satirical poem "Speke Parrot" (1521), "Parrot is a fair bird for a ladie," which presents the parrot as a symbol of immortality of the soul (282). While immortalising Liza and her memories, Nelson's presence in the finale of the novel suggests that as parrots simply repeat sounds they have been taught, it is our responsibility to choose the words we want to hear. This final image with which Barker leaves the readers not only supports the emphasis on the notion of responsibility in the novel but also accentuates her view about the function of fiction: in an interview, Barker states that her work "comes very close to therapy in that there is a preoccupation with darkness and trauma" (Garland 199). Apparently, like Barker's other novels exploring the darkness and trauma, *Liza's England* points to the need for the effort literature should make to create a better future.

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THE STATUS OF WOMEN AMONG THE GUARDIAN CLASS: FEMINISM IN RELATION TO PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*

Lewis Caccia, Jr.

> Do we think that the wives of our guardian watchdogs should guard what the males guard, hunt with them, and do everything else in common with them? Or should we keep the women at home, as incapable of doing this, since they must bear and rear the puppies, while the males work and have the entire care of the flock? (451d)

Having established his argument that the guardians were to own everything in common, Socrates is challenged by Adeimantus, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, and Glaucon to account for how communal ownership would affect the concept of family in the ideal state. Socrates is also being challenged by the four interlocutors to explicate the status of women and children among the guardian class. Socrates begins the discussion toward this account and explication with the two questions quoted at the beginning of this essay. By raising these two questions, Socrates implicitly calls attention to the larger question of equality between the sexes. While this larger question emerges more overtly in Book V, the question takes root in previous books of Plato's *Republic*. The larger question of gender equity also remains conspicuously central in the subsequent chapters. Whether or not Plato is making a case for the equality of women has been a subject of debate among scholars, as have been the motivations behind his representations of gender. Sarah Pomeroy reports that Francis Cornford "titles the section from 445B-457B 'The Equality of Women'" (33), a title Pomeroy views as misleading. In a direct response to Pomeroy's article, W.W. Fortenbaugh claims Pomeroy is "more than a bit unfair to Plato" (1). H.P. Rickman likewise proclaims that Plato "proposed the equal education and equal opportunities for women" and refers to Plato's considerations as "emancipation" (30). Julie Annas is comparatively more dour in her assessment: "I shall maintain what may surprise some: that it is quite wrong to think of Plato as 'the first feminist.' His arguments are unacceptable to

a feminist, and the proposals made in Republic V are irrelevant to contemporary debate" (307). A look at some of the central passages from the *Republic* will reveal some of the issues that have fueled scholarly debate.

The challenge raised by Adeimantus, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, and Glaucon at the beginning of Book V is a direct response to Socrates's explicit but undeveloped call for communal ownership in Book IV:

> These orders we give [the guardians], Adeimantus, are neither as numerous nor as important as one might think. Indeed, they are all insignificant, provided, as the saying goes, that they guard the one great thing, though I'd rather call it sufficient than great.
>
> What's that?
>
> Their education and upbringing, for if by being well educated they become reasonable men, they will easily see these things for themselves, as well as all the other things we are omitting, for example, that marriage, the having of wives, and the procreation of children must be governed as far as possible by the old proverb: Friends possess everything in common. (423d-424a)

This passage, wedged between a discussion of the definitional parameters of the proper "city" and subsequent discussions of artistic control and the division of the tripartite soul, functions as more than a passing remark, and it is the centrality of this passage that motivates the recollection of Socrates's interlocutors at the beginning of Book V. However, while this passage assigns priority to his rules of order and pushes toward dogmatism in the form of a concise proverb, Plato here neglects to flesh out the potential implications and consequences of his communal ownership.

Perhaps it is Plato's awareness of this neglect that compels him to clarify his rule as "sufficient" rather than "great," an awareness that is evident when Socrates later claims he "saw the swarm and passed the topic by in order to save us a lot of trouble" (450b). The qualification and rationale employed by Plato, however, do not discourage scholars from calling attention to and taking issue with what is *not* said in the passage. Arlene Saxonhouse notes that Plato's reference to the female gender does not allow for "their participation in the affairs of the city, much less equal participation" (198). Similarly, Helen Pringle does not view the passage as an allusion toward proposed equity between citizens but merely as a "safeguard against the generation of private goods or possessions" (145). Pringle further suggests that the passage may be more of an allusion to proposed inequity, that the proverb constructs a hierarchical power structure that regulates "the proper uses of women's bodies" (145). While the passage

from Book IV may read ambiguous, particularly when read without reference to the more lengthy discussion of gender in Book V, other passages during the first four books more directly offer depreciative representations of the female gender.

The first discussion of gender in the *Republic* begins with a question: "How are you as far as sex goes, Sophocles? Can you still make love with a woman?" (329bc). The poet's answer initiates the construction of a tone that may help inform the interpretation of the more-ambiguous passages that appear later in the *Republic*. Specifically, Sophocles answers, "I am very glad to have escaped from all that, like a slave who has escaped from a savage and tyrannical master" (329c). While readers must allow for the possibility of different word choices in alternative translations, the word "that" suggests a disdain for the most mature form of relationship between the genders. The terms "slave," "savage," and "tyrannical master" do not reflect a value of mutual consent. In Book II, when Glaucon argues that it is more beneficial to oneself to be unjust, Socrates refutes Glaucon in part by drawing upon negative associations with the female gender. Portraying Glaucon's "luxurious city" as "a city with a fever" (372e), Socrates suggests the unhealthy city caters to the weakness of ascribed female taste by providing "devices… needed for the adornment of women" (373b). Socrates further suggests the unhealthy city welcomes "wet nurses" and "nannies" (373c), two supposedly nonessential roles typically associated with women. The women represented in Socrates's unhealthy city are, as explained by Saxonhouse, "in opposition to the process of abstraction from body that characterizes the founding of the just city" (197). Thus far, Plato has constructed an unequal identity between the genders.

In Book III, the inferiority of women is depicted in terms of activity. Relegating concern for personal tragedy to the level of insignificance, Socrates suggests that the "cowardly" act of "lamentations" should be left to women (387e-388a). The representation of women as inferior is even more overt when Socrates reduces women to the status of children and slaves as unable to control their desires and moderate their reactions to pleasures and pains (431bc). Again, Socrates and his interlocutors are not very complimentary in their description of female behavior. The critical views expressed by the characters may preclude sympathetic readings of Plato's Book V, the book typically of primary interest to feminist scholars.

In Book V, ambiguity pervades the discussion immediately following the challenge of Socrates by his interlocutors to explicate the status of women (451d). In the passage immediately following the challenge, Socrates suggests "that the females are weaker and the

males stronger" but in turn suggests that women and men "must also be taught the same things" (451e). How do we account for this differentiation between ascribed skill and prescribed responsibility? Annas suggests that the quality of weakness may be represented as a quality of inconsequence and thus reasons women "are otherwise the same, and so should be given the same upbringing and tasks as men" (308). Plato himself appears aware of his contrast and may be deliberately constructing the sequence to make the discussion of the status of women palpable to the context of its time, cued by Socrates's acknowledgement of the impending discussion as a "swarm of arguments" (450a) and that the proposed equitable education of women "would incite ridicule if [it] were carried out in practice" (452a).

Socrates's discussion of nude activity may help substantiate Annas's claim while at the same time illustrating Plato's maneuvering around the mores of his time. Certainly, it is not flattering for naked women, particularly the "young women," to be compared with "wrinkled old men" (452ab). Still, Socrates later removes the issue of nudity from importance when he suggests that men who laugh at naked women are cognitively immature, "plucking the unripe fruit" (457ab). Then again, the misogyny hinted by Socrates in his comparison of women with wrinkled old men, a misogyny also perceived by Pomeroy (34), may be facilitated more by the decision of modern translators than by Plato's original composition. In a direct response to Pomeroy, Fortenbaugh argues, "the Greek text does not compare *all* unclothed women to wrinkled old men. Only a prejudiced reading of 452b 1-2 will construe *hosper* in such a way that it does more than relate old men and old women" (2). Hence, the difficulty of pursuing 2000-year-old positions manifests itself in our attempts to apply those positions to contemporary discussions.

Between the aforementioned discussions of female nudity in Book V is another seeming contradiction. On one hand, Plato appears to pose a case for equality: "there is no way of life concerned with the management of the city that belongs to a woman because she's a woman or to a man because he's a man" (455d). On the other hand, he has Socrates insist that "in every way of life … women are weaker than men" (455e). The contrast continues even more concisely in the next passage: "Therefore, men and women are by nature the same with respect to guarding the city, except to the extent that one is weaker and the other stronger" (456a). The contradictory statements may again reflect an intent to relegate the quality of weakness to the level of insignificance, or as Burns suggests, Socrates "is trying to establish that there is nothing about women *qua* women which espe-

cially qualifies or disqualifies them for particular jobs in the city" (136). Perhaps Socrates is rendering more concrete his representation of degree of weakness as inconsequential when he analogizes that the consequences of the difference between "bald and long-haired men" are just as insignificant (454c). As Susan Moller Okin explains in response to Socrates's literal and metaphorical representations of difference, "there are many ways in which human beings can differ, and we do not regard all of them as relevant in assigning different functions to different persons" (357).

The inconsequential nature of some differences also appears to be drawn from a concession of superior traits attributable to the female gender. Indeed, it should be noted that, immediately before Socrates's comments that political leadership lends itself neither to man or woman in general, he concedes that women are superior at weaving and cooking (455cd). Taken another way, the passages are not rendering differences inconsequential but rather reinforcing a hierarchical societal structure privileging men. Annas takes this interpretive position through both a classical and modernist lens:

> Anyone acquainted with the modern literature will realize at once that someone objecting to the idea that men and women should share all roles is not very worried about whether there are some jobs that only women are suited for. The reason for this is obvious enough: jobs that women usually do are badly paid and lack status, and men are generally not interested in doing them. (309)

In reference to the guardian class, the debate regarding the equality of women continues. As some men are naturally equipped to serve as guardians while others are not, some women are naturally equipped to serve as guardians while others are not; within this context, it would seem some women are therefore more qualified to serve as guardians than some men (456a). Nevertheless, Socrates is prompt with a subsequent qualifier, that women are generally weaker while the men are stronger (456a). This recurring meme allows Plato to fulfill a dual purpose. According to Fortenbaugh, Socrates has established the "spirited" and "philosophical" qualities possessed by women and therefore provides justification for their equal access to the education "demanded of guardians" (3). At the same time, the qualification allows the justification to be discreetly negotiated with the culture of Plato's readership.

Some readers may interpret the call for "common dwellings and meals" (458cd) as a clear move toward a culture of equality. It should be observed, however, that a definite hierarchy prefaces this call as lawgivers "will select women" for guardianship "and hand them over to the men" (458c). Fortenbaugh, in her read, does not perceive this

hierarchy. Believing the activity of "handing over" is more of a referent to the chronology of men having been selected first, Fortenbaugh goes as far as to say, "Certainly, it should not be interpreted as suggesting 'the fate of Briseis, Chryseis, and all captive women'" (2). Perhaps this declaration reflects an interpretation that accounts for the lack of the obvious but falls short of allowing for subtlety.

Chryseis and Briseis in ***The Anger of Achilles.***
Painting by Jacques-Louis David (1819).

Passage 460 in Book V is one of the most controversial passages in the *Republic* and is a lightning rod of contention among feminist scholars. Saxonhouse believes the passage begins a pattern whereby females become, at times, simply "forgotten" (195). She substantiates this claim by pointing to the omission of women when it is suggested that the rulers will "keep the number of males as stable as they can" (460a); that younger people will not physically strike older people for "fear that the others would come to the aid of the victim, some as his sons, some as his brothers, and some as his fathers (465ab); and that the children's "fathers won't be ignorant … about which campaigns are dangerous and which are not (467c). A focus on these passages suggests an "ideal state" that privileges men. This tone of privilege is reinforced when women are propositioned as "rewards" for "young men who are good in war" (460ab). Conversely, Okin responds to the posing of women as prizes by proclaiming, "The annihilation of

traditional sex roles among the guardians is total" (358), pointing to Socrates's suggestion that newborn children will be taken over "by the officials appointed for the purpose, who may be either men or women or both" (460b). Fortenbaugh likewise points to 460b in suggesting that Plato is representing women as "co-rulers" who "participate in the control of intercourse" (2). Perhaps relying on the popular modern connotations of the word "nurse," Annas responds more critically to 460b. Specifically, Annas suggests women are being kept in "a traditionally 'feminine' role" (311) when Plato comments "they'll take the children of good parents to the nurse in charge" (460b). Saxonhouse similarly takes issue with the idea of "making it very easy for the wives of the guardians to have children" (460d), arguing that the "minimizing of the female's reproductive role is what makes women in Socrates's city not only weaker but ultimately also inferior to men" (199). The range of these disputed interpretations underscores the difficulty of determining not only Plato's intent but also the intent of any text that survives the lifetime in which it is written.

The latter stages of Book V only further contribute to the difficulty of discerning Plato's exact position on the equality of women. Saxonhouse, Pringle, and Annas are unified in pointing to the following question asked by Socrates as one that is definitely non-feminist if not misogynistic:

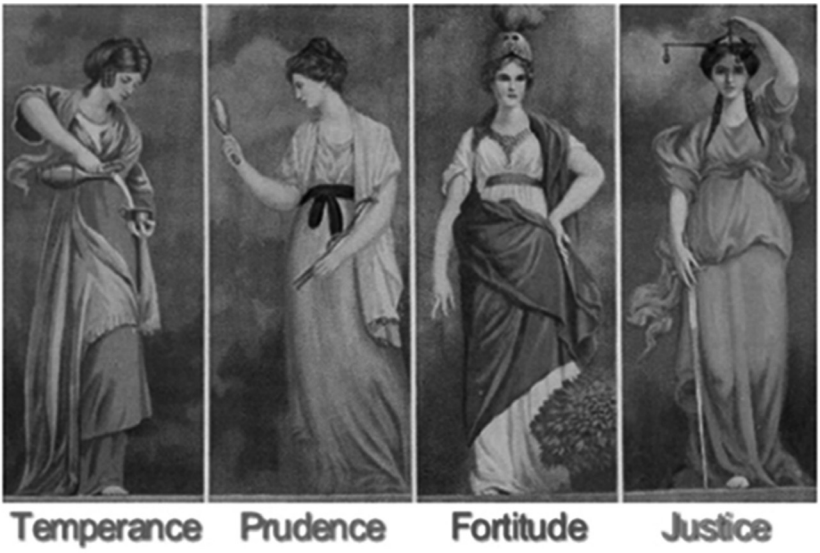
> Don't you think it's slavish and money-loving to strip a corpse? Isn't it small-minded and womanish to regard the body as your enemy, when the enemy himself has flitted away, leaving behind only the instrument with which he fought? (469d)

The consensual objection to this question notwithstanding, ambiguity once again manifests itself in a subsequent passage when Glaucon allows that the guardians would be "quite unbeatable" if women "joined the campaigns" typically made up of "brothers, fathers, and sons" (471cd). One way to look at the contrast between the two passages would be to infer that Plato is implying that women are equal in skill but not in humanity, which is not a flattering implication. Still, what if we allow for Socrates's declaration, "I shall say what I have to say, even if the wave is a wave of laughter that will simply drown me in ridicule and contempt" (473c)? If we make this allowance and interpret more charitably, then we might ascribe Plato as qualifying radical proposals, proposals that include a measure of gender equity, for the society of his time.

Following the inquiry that motivates Book V, Books VI and VII appear to move toward a more discernibly positive representation of women. In Book VI, philosophy, the basis for rule in Plato's ideal city, is analogized as a woman:

> When these men, for whom philosophy is most appropriate, fall away from her, they leave her desolate and unwed, and they themselves lead lives that are inappropriate and untrue. Then others, who are unworthy of her, come to her as to an orphan deprived of the protection of kinsmen and disgrace her. These are the ones who are responsible for the reproaches that you say are cast upon philosophy by those who revile her, namely, that some of those who consort with her are useless, while the majority deserve to suffer many bad things. (495c)

Philosophy in this passage is represented as a truth, a truth that reflects poorly on those by whom it is not accepted. As philosophy in the *Republic* is founded upon the virtues of temperance, prudence, fortitude, and ultimately, justice, those who revile philosophy revile the virtues.



Four Cardinal Virtues. Photo courtesy of the Phoenixmasonry Masonic Museum and Library at <http://www.phoenixmasonry.org/>.

By feminizing philosophy, Plato in effect portrays the female gender as the embodiment of these virtues. The embodiment continues in a subsequent passage: "What about when men who are unworthy of education approach philosophy and consort with her unworthily?" (496a). This question could imply that the male gender is being employed to represent all that is bad in society. Granted, an alternative reading of these two passages may instead conclude that women are being represented as passive recipients incapable of resisting interpersonal pressure. This interpretation, however, would assume through the analogy employed that philosophy itself is passive and malleable to the most numerous or most influential societal forces.

The positive representation of women is again evident at the end of Book VII in the following exchange between Glaucon and Socrates:

> Like a sculptor, Socrates, you've produced ruling men that are completely fine.
>
> And ruling women too, Glaucon, for you mustn't think that what I've said applies any more to men than it does to women who are born with the appropriate natures. (540c)

Socrates's response is a potentially powerful and far-reaching assertion. As articulated by Okin, "It is most likely that women guardians, if allowed to compete for the highest rank of all, would have been excluded from any other office" (364). Of course, the discussion of gender in the *Republic* does not conclude with book VII.

In Book VIII, Plato again reverts to depreciative representation of women in his discussion of how a man becomes timocratic:

> When he listens, first, to his mother complaining that her husband isn't one of the rulers and that she's at a disadvantage among the other women as a result. Then she sees that he's not very concerned about money and the he doesn't fight back when he's insulted, whether in private or in public in the courts, but is indifferent to everything of that sort. She also sees him concentrating his mind on his own thoughts, neither honoring nor dishonoring her overmuch. Angered by all this, she tells her son that his father is unmanly, too easy-going, and all the other things that women repeat over and over again in such cases. (549c-e)

Considering Plato's parallel of the individual and the city, this passage in effect represents women as the instigators of regressive forms of government or, indirectly, as distractions from the virtues that constitute the ideal individual and the ideal city. The reversion of this passage is not mere aberration as women are again invoked for their presumed weakness, this time a weakness for "embroidery" that is "multicolored" (557c). In Book IX, Plato again treats the woman reductively, going as far as to say the tyrant "lives like a woman, mostly confined to his own house" (579b). To be reductive is to present subject matter in a simplified form, a form that in some cases is crude. Even for fifth-century Athens, the representation of all women as literally imprisoned reads as somewhat an exaggeration; consider the independence and influence some of the *hetaerae* were able to attain as a benefit of their more sophisticated education. The notion of home as confinement is further problematic considering that dwellings of any age often function as symbiotic systems where women are appreciated for their insight and not just their role in raising children and maintaining the hearth. In Book X, as Plato concludes his argument of why it is better to be just than unjust, we see yet one more

denigration of women, of their qualities as contrary to the virtues of the ideal individual and state. Specifically, grieving is depicted as "unworthy" and "shameful" (605de), this "womanish" activity being construed as another violation of temperance, prudence, fortitude, and ultimately, justice.

Historians recognize fifth-century Athens, or the Age of Pericles, as a period of economic and cultural growth. The Greek Assembly is considered a precursor to the democracy of contemporary Western civilizations. To negate poverty as an impediment to civic participation, classical governance initiated social programs such as land grants, public building programs, and assistance for orphans and invalids. The classical notion of equal participation gave rise to the *kleroterion*, whereby identity tokens were randomly drawn to select legislative representatives and court juries. There was, however, an important limitation to this principle of equality – only men were eligible to participate. Most, though not all, women focused on their responsibilities at home, tending to their children and servants. This is not to say there weren't exceptions such as Aspasia of Miletus, who belonged to the Socratic circle. Still, men far more often enjoyed the privileges afforded by access to education and power.

In this context, an examination of Plato's *Republic* demands careful reading guided by judicious parsing of the literature. If the *Republic* is to be examined in terms of layer, readers might posit that Socrates must rely on contemporary gender inequity in his use of metaphor and argumentation in order to make himself intelligible to his interlocutors. Yet he envisions a time of maximal gender equity, where his metaphoric and argumentative reliance on the classical contemporary sentiment is quite of use, since in the Kallipolis, men and women regard each other as equals. When contemplating the *Republic* holistically, we are left with the question of whether Plato is posing a state that allows gender equity, if not maximal, then at least to a greater degree beyond what existed at the time. There are multiple passages that appear to support gender equity, and there are multiple passages that appear to support gender inequity. There are even multiple passages that appear conducive to both points of view, contingent upon the predilection and interpretation of the specific reader.

In a final contemplation of Plato's Socratic dialogue, I call attention to Plato's two most extreme representations. The most flattering representation analogizes the female with philosophy, his ideal basis for government. The most unflattering depiction of femininity poses women as instigators for tyranny, his most despised form of government. Perhaps the paradox of these extreme representations

is incidental. Perhaps the femininity of philosophy is merely an artifact of Plato following the linguistic conventions of his time. Perhaps each gender could be described only generally, with allowances for male and female individuals on both ends of a continuum of quality and ability. Keeping in mind that the *Republic* is not a treatise on gender but on civic governance, a civic governance dependent on harmony within and between crafts, perhaps Plato felt nothing particular against women but had no vested interest in their empowerment either. Maybe Plato all along was depicting women as needed for a moment, consistency being no object, to advance and complete his proposal for the ideal city.

The Ideal City. Painting by Piero della Francesca (c.1470).

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THE OUTCAST, THE EXPATRIATE AND THE OUTLAW: THOREAU, POUND AND THOMPSON'S AMERICA

Fernando J. Rodríguez

Throughout their works, authors like Henry David Thoreau, Ezra Pound and Hunter S. Thompson define "America" as they perceive it during their individual literary periods and through their own literary perspectives. However, Tim Cresswell's theories defining "place," described in *Place: A Short Introduction* particularly the concepts of "Location," "Locale" and "Sense of Place" are a useful lens to show that, while virtually every American artist identifies "America" through the perspectives presented in their works, these three authors assume an identity (or role) where they exist outside the conventional and contemporary constructs of American society by putting into practice the views that these authors present in their writings. Therefore, their lifestyles and texts afford insight to the nature of the conflicts between the writer's self-imposed outsider perspectives, be it "Outcast," "Expatriate" or "Outlaw," and the construct of "America" which the authors initially separated themselves from. Taking Lewis Hyde's definition of "trickster" also into consideration, this article explores the ways in which how Henry David Thoreau, Ezra Pound and Hunter S. Thompson as American further define the outsider perspectives present as a result of each author's interactions with conventional American society. In order to define further the Trickster in American literature, this study will simultaneously observe how these Tricksters react to America, and conversely, how America reacts to these Tricksters, based on the concepts of America as a "place" in terms of Location, Locale and Sense of Place, and how the definition of these concepts of America defines the nature of each author's works and lifestyle.

In *Trickster Makes the World*, Lewis Hyde proposes that "trickster" is a boundary-crosser, where every group has its borders, its clearly defined structures, and components. The trickster is always there, defying the "internal boundaries" by which groups articulate their social life:

> we constantly distinguish—right and wrong, sacred and profane, clean and dirty, male and female, young and old, living and dead—and in every case trickster will cross the line and confuse the distinction…. Where someone's sense of honorable behavior has left him unable to act, trickster will appear to suggest an amoral action, something right/wrong that will get life going again. (7)

The connection between Hyde's definition of "trickster" and the individual personalities of these three particular authors should not go unnoticed. By analyzing the self-imposed "Trickster" roles that Thoreau, Pound and Thompson create for themselves, we can further classify the idea of the American Tricksters in literature with the models of "Outcast," "Expatriate," and "Outlaw." Furthermore, by interpreting each author's literary works and individual lifestyle, we see how, through their distinctive voices, the Outcast, the Expatriate and the Outlaw define "America" as an ideal, a structure, a construct and a concrete geographical location; in short, each author creates an "America" that represents a culture, an "America" that represents the actual "American" continent and how these authors conduct themselves, in both lifestyle and literature, according to their definition of "America," which in turn defines the Trickster that they adapt.

As Cresswell notes, "place is not just a thing in the world but a way of understanding the world… a way of seeing" (11), and I argue that Thoreau, Pound and Thompson, by simultaneously defining themselves and the construct of "America," in their writings they ultimately oppose, achieve a perspective outside conventional middle class values and beliefs that defines "America" into concepts other than the universal definition based on the geographic landscape of America, such as the authors' views of contemporary "American" society, the author's definitions of "American" culture, and ultimately, "America" as a system that all three authors, in their respective Trickster roles, seek to undermine and challenge. In these three cases, because of the collision between the author and the system which they ultimately oppose, close reading and analysis of the authors' respective works, in comparison with the praxis of those works, reenforce the roles that Henry David Thoreau, Ezra Pound and Hunter S. Thompson, as Outcast, Expatriate and Outlaw, respectively assume during their corresponding historical periods.

Part I: The Outcast

To say that Henry David Thoreau is one of the most important writers to emerge in America is a fair assessment of the influence he has had on not just America, but throughout all of Western and Eastern culture. However, his influence on figures like Mohandas Gandhi,

Martin Luther King Jr. and Leo Tolstoy, as Lewis Hyde postulates in "Henry Thoreau, John Brown and the Problematic of Prophetic Action," seems to have given contemporary audiences the notion that "Thoreau...was an advocate of nonviolent resistance." Nevertheless, as Hyde also points out, "'Civil Disobedience' contains hints of Thoreau's more aggressive side, one that would become patently evident a few years [after its original publication date]" (129). While Hyde's assessment of Thoreau's character does acknowledge Thoreau's aggressive side, Hyde seems to underestimate the aggressive nature inherent in Thoreau's earlier writings. Furthermore, when viewed in contrast with the Trickster in traditional Western culture, Thoreau's aggressiveness can be more specifically highlighted across his writings in order to demonstrate how the author separates himself from specific constructs of "America" and redefines the American system as a direct result of a confrontation between the system and its Outcast.

Thoreau was arrested in 1849 due to non-payment of taxes for the amount of nine shillings which he denied owing, having argued that there was no reason he should pay the tax (as he had lived in Walden Pond and his contact with society, while admittedly accessible, was minimal). Given the significant shift in how Thoreau writes about "nature" (i.e. the "American" landscape) as opposed to constructs like "government," "taxes," and "currency" (as can be seen throughout the entirety of *Walden),* these attitudes could be considered as precursors to the dominating ideas Thoreau would later develop in "Civil Disobedience." It could also be argued that the conflict that lands Thoreau in jail brings about a vindication and re-enforcement of the beliefs and views practiced in *Walden.* Keeping the definition of Trickster in mind, "Civil Disobedience" then becomes the "right/wrong" choice that Thoreau presents, simultaneously aggressive and passive, created as a direct attack against the system from which he had originally exiled himself from. Furthermore, it can be discerned that "Civil Disobedience" acts as a medium between the praxis of Thoreau's actions and the conflicts that this praxis creates with the contemporary social constructs and structures it was designed against. In short, while "Civil Disobedience" is Thoreau's reaction as a Trickster to his arrest, it should be noted that the fact that the arrest happened in the first place is what prompts him to respond, as the arrest itself comes as a direct challenge to the lifestyle Thoreau had presented and maintained in *Walden*.

In accordance with Hyde's definition of "Prophetic Action," where Hyde elaborates about the prophet—"not that he engages in any literal predicting of the future....Rather, the prophet speaks of things that will be true in the future because they are true in all time"

(130)—we see then that Thoreau's "prophecies" or "knowledge" are derived from experiences in Walden Pond, and that the "prophetic action" presented in *Walden* is how to escape from the constructs of contemporary society and survive in "Nature," which is what the author had effectively done while writing this work. To this extent, as Alan Fox describes in "Guarding What is Essential: Critiques of Material Culture in Thoreau and Yang Zhu," *Walden* becomes an "experiment designed to determine what is essential in life... to distinguish between what people want and what they need," in order to argue that Thoreau's "analysis includes a critique of the excesses of material culture, concluding... the most important concerns for human beings" (362). Both Fox and Hyde seem to agree that Thoreau is ultimately criticizing "American culture" and material standards and commodities throughout his works. Consequently, it can be also discerned that Thoreau acts as a Trickster through both *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience" by not only establishing an independent system outside the established constructs of his contemporary society in *Walden*, but also by presenting this "amoral action" to society as praxis instead of theory. Thoreau, it could be discerned, ensures that the distinction between his system and the "American" system is not only clear, but made evident throughout his works which can be argued to be the praxis of his "prophetic vision." Consequently, Thoreau's Trickster role of Outcast, when considering the idea of his prophetic vision, seems to imply the image of Thoreau living alone in the woods co-existing with nature instead of society, and pointing out the natural flaws in the systems that society employs in order to undermine society and return to nature.

However, when Cresswell's ideas on "place" as "a meaningful location" are applied to how Thoreau places himself within the constructs of "America," we see that, while defining the author's ideas of "America" in terms of Location, Locale and Sense of Place, Thoreau's self-imposed role as Outcast becomes more evident, especially when one considers how both *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience" present positive and negative definitions for "America" as landscape, culture, society and system through his Outcast point of view.

If the Trickster is a being that interacts with the system in order to question, undermine, or directly challenge it, then it could be proposed that the Outcast, in turn, would be a specific type of Trickster that exists within a culture, watching the system operate, and opposing the system while maintaining a safe distance from the structures that, as a Trickster, the Outcast seeks to challenge.

Taking into consideration Thoreau's role in his contemporary period, it is important to demonstrate how he emplaces himself

through his role as Outcast. By John A. Agnew's definition, in *Place and Politics*, discussed by Cresswell, "Location" refers to position in the actual geographic landscape. In Thoreau's case, his Location would be Concord, Massachusetts, where he spent the majority of his life. "Locale," on the other hand, refers to the conditions of one's surroundings. In Thoreau's case, while his Location is still Concord, Massachusetts, his Locale is not amidst the city itself. Instead, Thoreau's Locale could be accurately described as Walden Pond rather than Concord, as he lives in the former, free from constructs such as currency and government, whereas the latter is run by these structures. The third of Agnew's categories, "Sense of Place," establishes the distinction between Location and Locale. If one considers that Thoreau's Sense of Place (that is to say, where he forms a "meaningful connection" to a specific area, thereby defining it as a "place" as opposed to "space") is in nature, not in society. By acknowledging that the beauty and freedom found in nature (themes that dominate most of *Walden)* ultimately define how Thoreau creates a "place" for himself in Walden Pond from which he views society, it can be argued that where *Walden* seeks to define Thoreau's Sense of Place, "Civil Disobedience" seeks to defend it.

In opposition to Hyde's assumption in stating that "Civil Disobedience" only "hints" at Thoreau's aggressive side, we see how this speech highlights the simultaneously aggressive and passive tone that distinguishes Thoreau's writing. The incendiary opening lines "I heartily accept the motto: That government is best which governs least" offers a distinguishable air of rebellion, not uncommon in Thoreau's writings up to this point in his career. Thoreau begins the essay by allowing the idea that government should not be so authoritative as it had been up to that point was to come from an outside source, in order effectively to deliver the statement "I believe—'That government is best which governs not at all'; and when men are prepared for it, that is the kind of government which they will have" ("Civil Disobedience" 1). The juxtaposition of these ideas at the beginning of the essay serves to show not only the aggressive, if not altogether hostile critique that Thoreau plans to deliver in "Civil Disobedience," but also, in Trickster fashion, the presentation of an alternative to the established system which, though realistically improbable, serves to put into question the necessity of the original system. Thoreau admits that society was not ready for a government that "governs not at all," but proposes that this type of government will be available someday, thereby implying that there is essentially no need for the government to possess the amount of power that it wielded, other than the fact that society had allowed it to become so powerful. By

this logic, the Outcast is a Trickster who has seen how this system works, and therefore, cannot function within the confines of normal society because of this. By this logic, "Civil Disobedience" serves as an example of Thoreau defending his Sense of Place, that is to say, his livelihood in Walden Pond, against the oppressive impositions of "American" governments and economic systems (Thoreau's crime being Non-Payment of Taxes), which, as can be discerned from the literary content and praxis behind both *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience," are the main factors which prompted Thoreau's self-exile into the woods of Walden Pond.

Part II: The Expatriate

While many Modernist American poets left the United States for Europe after the First World War, Ezra Pound seems not only to accept his role as Expatriate, but appears to revel in it through most of his literary career. Having decided to leave for Europe as the result of "the lack of culture" in America, and declaring that there "was no one else [he] wished to study under, except Yeats" (Tytell 42) early into his academic career, it is of no surprise that for the majority (if not the entirety) of his life, Ezra Pound was surrounded by scandal and controversy every time he returned to the United States after officially leaving in 1908 for London, and exponentially so after he was charged with High Treason against the United States, for crimes committed during the Second World War in 1943, and subsequently arrested in 1945.

It should be noted that while extremely controversial in both context and lifestyle, Ezra Pound's position as one of the icons of the American Modernist Movement remains unchallenged. Furthermore, his relationships to other poets and writers of the era, including T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, W.B. Yeats, Ernest Hemingway and Gertrude Stein, is noteworthy not only in the sense that Pound shared personal friendships with these contemporary writers, but that he also edited and aided them both poetically and critically throughout their literary careers. Consequently, Pound's attitudes, particularly his anti-Semitism, Fascism, and overall brashness in character, could be argued to cause the majority, if not all, of Pound's conflicts, as David Barnes suggests in his article "Fascist Aesthetics: Ezra Pound's Cultural Negotiations in 1930s Italy." Barnes asserts that "Pound's avant-garde aesthetics and neo-platonic philosophy colored the way he engaged with the cultural projects of the regime, making his Fascism a mixture of spirituality, modernism and totalitarianism" (21), while elaborating the role and ideals Pound displayed during

the Second World War. However, it should be noted that many of the qualities and examples that Barnes focuses on in order to establish how much of a Fascist Ezra Pound was throughout the 1930s can actually be considered as by-products of Pound's adopting the role of Expatriate earlier in his career. If the Trickster is supposed to challenge, change, or undermine a structure or construct, then it can be seen that, by his own volition as Expatriate, Pound becomes not just someone who simply resides in a culture outside of his own, but, as can be seen in selections from his writings and notable events of conflict between Pound and the United States, someone who completely accepts foreign influences while contemptuously rejecting the culture he originally came from. The attitudes and beliefs that make Pound leave America in the first place not only evolve from an original state of mocking contempt into direct military actions against the United States, but can also be interpreted as the underlying reasons for Pound's constant geographical movement across Europe, his penchant for joining prominent writers and artists to form poetic trends (only to leave them shortly afterwards in order to form other artistic movements), and the breadth of influences Pound utilizes in his poetry as well. In short, Ezra Pound, as a Trickster, can be argued to create the conflicts throughout the majority of his life as result of the direct challenges he posed to established norms. Consequently, if Pound is considered as Expatriate as well as a Trickster, then it can be discerned that Pound's challenges are generally directed against previously established values and traditions from which Pound emancipates himself throughout his lifetime.

As Trickster, Pound seems almost nihilistic in his approaches to certain topics, particularly poetry and literature. Critical works like "A Retrospect," and the poem "A Pact," seem to emphasize attitudes which not only break from traditional norms by blatantly insulting or disregarding them altogether, but also seek to create a new "amoral action" that is based on the original structure, but serves only to challenge its existence contemptuously.

The poem "A Pact," written in first person, is notable because it showcases the poet's attitude towards "American" poetry, particularly his "Make It New" mentality, which can be understood as the "amoral action" proposed. By addressing the poet Walt Whitman in the first stanzas "I make a pact with you, Walt Whitman-/ I have detested you long enough" (1-2) in order to show how the speaker esteems the (at that time) long-dead Whitman, and how, despite his personal feelings, he is willing to put them aside, if only momentarily, Pound asserts his own position with the line "I have come to you as a grown child" (3), meaning that he comes to Whitman as an equal as poet,

and follows with the lines "Who has had a pig-headed father;/ I am old enough now to make friends" (4-5) in order not only to reiterate his loathing of Whitman, but also to show how he (Pound) is able to overcome his distaste of the dead transcendentalist in order to "Let there be commerce between us" (9). The commerce Pound refers to is poetry, where he admits that Whitman "broke the new wood," (6) as a reference to free-verse poetry, which Whitman revolutionized during his career. The following line "Now is a time for carving" implies that, though Whitman developed free-verse, Pound believed that its true potential was still untapped. Hence the following stanza: "We have one sapling and one root-" (8), which serves to show Pound's belief that both poets have something to offer which has the potential to grow, which is why Pound has put his personal feelings aside in order to make this pact, take free-verse and "Make it New." However, it should not be ignored that, aside from the obvious insults to Whitman, though Pound proposes this pact to Walt Whitman, the only one who truly benefits from this "amoral action" is, in Trickster fashion, Ezra Pound.

Like Henry David Thoreau, Ezra Pound separates himself from the constructs and structures that he finds in "America." However, Pound's separation differs from Thoreau's in the sense that, while the latter rejects "American" culture while remaining on the American continent, Pound's prejudices against "America" prompt him to leave the American continent for Europe as soon as he finds himself able to. Furthermore, Pound's actions and attitudes vary greatly from Thoreau's own actions within the same classification of Trickster.

Where Henry David Thoreau could be compared to the Anansi Trickster myth, in the sense that after succeeding in their respective challenges through the use of Trickster "amoral actions," both the Outcast and the spider god Anansi, are generally regarded in a positive light, and are considered archetypically "good" or "moral" characters, with great contributions to society to their credit. Anansi gains stories from the Sky God Nyame after using trickery to capture the python, the leopard, the hornets and the dwarf, while Thoreau's writing of both *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience" as reactions to the structures and regulations imposed upon him by "American" culture, and their subsequent reception and influence can be argued to serve the same purpose of a means to an end that challenges the previously established system through "amoral actions." Consequently, if Thoreau is esteemed in the same fashion as Anansi, Pound, conversely, is regarded akin to the trickster Loki of the Norse traditions (particularly the Loki depicted in Snorri Sturluson's translation of the *Prose Edda*). Both Loki and Ezra Pound, aside from their main offences (Loki's

multiple murders and crimes, along with Pound's treason against the United States), share attitudes especially notable because of their directly insulting and challenging authority figures (like Loki's insulting of Bragi and Pound's demoralizing messages against the Allied Forces) throughout the entire conflict until the moment of their capture. Though both Loki and Pound do end up punished for their crimes, coincidentally, both are somehow spared the full extent of punishment (Loki's wife, Sigyn, holds a bowl over his eyes to keep the venom dripping from a giant snake's fangs from spilling into his eyes, while Pound was declared unfit to stand trial due to reason of insanity, spared the death penalty, and institutionalized in St. Elizabeth's hospital shortly thereafter). Ultimately, like all Tricksters, they undermine the system before their death (Pound lived the last years of his life in Italy, after being released in 1958 from St. Elizabeth's hospital with a full pardon, and Loki, according to the myth, will be liberated during Ragnarok, where he will slay the god Heimdallr). Taking the comparison of how Thoreau and Pound are esteemed in American society the way that Anansi and Loki work within their own respective cultures, the role of the Expatriate, how it reacts to its original culture and how its culture, in turn, reacts to the Expatriate, because of the contrast to how Sturlurson's *Prose Edda* depicts Loki in the "Lokasenna," (or "Binding of Loki") drastically clarifies the position the Expatriate holds in "American" society.

The tendency to challenge previously established norms and beliefs across literary communities seems to drive Pound in his role as Expatriate, pushing him to step outside the normal boundaries of poetry and literature and into politics in the 1930s, when he officially joined the Fascist Party. While there is no denying that Pound was highly active during the Second World War as a member of Mussolini's Fascist Party, it can also be considered his ultimate act of expatriatism, where not only is he rejecting his parent culture, but openly embracing another culture whose fundamental values, actions and allegiances have made an enemy of Pound's home country. This act is what separates Ezra Pound from most Modernist Expatriate Poets, since no other poet acted so zealously against the United States during the war as Pound did while broadcasting demoralizing messages against allied troops until his capture in 1945. However, even in captivity, Pound would continue to challenge the system and generate controversy and scandal thanks to the praxis between his writings and lifestyle.

After a controversial move to St. Elizabeth's hospital, because of having been charged for treason, Pound's career would continue to cause controversy and strife in most literary and academic circles.

As Lem Coley narrates in his article "'A conspiracy of friendliness': T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Allen Tate, and the Bollingen Controversy," "[i]n 1948, the fellows of American letters of the Library of Congress announced the creation of a new prize for poetry: one thousand dollars for the best book published by an American citizen during the previous year" (809). The prize, named after the foundation that had funded the money, was awarded in 1949 to Ezra Pound for his *Pisan Cantos.* Coley explains that:

> the first Bollingen Award owed its existence to Allen Tate[,] [who] had established the Fellows in American Letters at the Library of Congress-the jury for the award-and nominated the members. He created the prize, raised the money, and spent 1949 as the floor manager of what would be a grand controversy. (812)

It caused controversy because, as Coley bluntly points out, "Tate and Pound disliked each other" (812). Even after his capture, Pound was still considered controversial, particularly due to his anti-Semitic views and having been previously tried for treason, which was the argument Tate held against the awarding of the prize. While there are notable rumors and speculations as to how Pound was awarded the prize in the first place, there are theorists that speculate that the entire Bollingen affair, from its conception to its conclusion, was actually a ruse devised by T.S. Eliot, and carried out along with several other members of the award committee in order to create a precedent for the case to liberate Pound from his institutionalization in St. Elizabeth's hospital. Though he was allowed to keep the prize money, Pound would remain in St. Elizabeth's hospital until 1958. When he was released he spent the remainder of his life in Italy, living notably in isolation, depression and making few, if any, public appearances until his death in 1972.

When considering the definition of "Location," Pound, as the Expatriate, was, as can be expected, highly nomadic, moving from the United States to London in 1908, and staying until 1920 when he moved to Paris until 1924, where he then settled in Italy until 1945. However, it should be noted that in 1945, Pound was brought back against his will to the United States, in order to face charges of High Treason for crimes committed during the Second World War. Therefore, it is necessary to sub-divide Ezra Pound's Location into two categories of geographical Location: Voluntary and Involuntary. In Voluntary Locations, Pound traversed most of Europe before he was brought to the United States, which can be easily identified as Pound's Involuntary Location. Therefore, if the idea of Location has to be divided into both Voluntary and Involuntary Locations, it can be understood that the idea of Locale will also have to be sub-divided,

as the distinction between Voluntary and Involuntary Locales implies that Pound's interactions during his childhood vacations and adult life in London, Paris and Italy would be much less limited than his upbringing in Haley Idaho, his education at Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania (which included a highly notorious and scandalous period as a teacher at the latter until his release from contract in 1920), and his incarceration and admittance into St. Elizabeth's Hospital in 1945, the only periods where Pound found himself staying in the geographical landscape of America for prolonged periods of time. Therefore, it can be discerned that the main difference between Pound's interactions inside his Involuntary and Voluntary Locales is that during his stay in Voluntary Locales, he seems to thrive in creating new poetic movements and adopting new cultures to integrate into his own works, while still maintaining the Trickster role of Expatriate that targets the cultures from which he separated himself, challenging institutions and structures formed in these cultures (notably parodying American and English poets Walt Whitman and Lord Alfred Tennyson in this manner). However, while in the Involuntary Locale, Pound can be seen as volatile, if not outright rebellious during his confinement, challenging every element of the confining structure in efforts to undermine, overthrow or gain control of the system.

Consequently, Pound's Sense of Place as Expatriate is also difficult to pinpoint. Given his propensity for moving across Europe and accepting a myriad of influences in his writing, his attitudes and actions during the Second World War and his subsequent incarceration and institutionalization and release in 1958, when he settled in Italy it seemed to diminish any sense of belonging within a culture that Pound, as Expatriate, might have felt. However, it should be noted that during his time as a free citizen before his institutionalization, Pound was most commonly known for associating within the higher circles of multicultural academic and artistic communities, and therefore, it can be concluded that within this social group Pound finds some semblance of community, if not belonging. Despite still maintaining a prominent (though highly tarnished) status after his release, Pound was notably depressed since 1959, outliving W.B. Yeats, William Carlos Williams (whom he had known since their time together in Hamilton College), and T.S. Eliot (whom he had personally mentored) who had died in 1965. Seldom seen as publicly active as before his imprisonment, the Expatriate died in his sleep in 1972 two days after his 87th birthday.

Part III: The Outlaw

In the same manner that Henry David Thoreau and Ezra Pound can be considered American Tricksters because of the praxis of the attitudes they display in their writings and lifestyles, challenging "America" as Outcast and Expatriate respectively, Dr. Hunter S. Thompson, in like manner embodies the role of the Outlaw not only in American literature, but also, in "American" politics and throughout the majority, if not the entirety of his literary career. In "American Highways: Recurring Images and Themes of the Road Genre," Brian Ireland proposes that:

> the 'road' genre is a microcosm of America itself. The journeys undertaken in these stories frequently are associated with the search for the elusive 'American Dream,' and the obstacles (or roadblocks) hindering the search for the Dream—racism, class division, government or police oppression, gender discrimination, and cultural differences, for example—are obstacles that America as a whole has yet to overcome. (99)

With this in mind, it can be argued that as a journalist, Thompson seeks to expose the truth as his way of combating Ireland's "roadblocks." Furthermore, as Trickster, Thompson undermines, mocks, argues and tests the practicality of the systems that create these "roadblocks" which he opposes in his writings, akin to Thoreau and Pound, but as Outlaw, proposes an "amoral" action which is usually found outside of the defined structure of law, rather than outside of the culture (like Thoreau) or the continent (like Pound) of America.

Arguably Hunter S. Thompson's greatest literary contribution is the creation of "Gonzo" journalism. It should be noted that it began with the publication of the article "The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved" in 1970 and the subsequent publication of the 1972 novel *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. However, it is of equal importance to note that prior to these two texts, Thompson had been a vivid activist during the decade of the sixties, having won particular fame for his work *Hell's Angels: The Strange and Terrible Saga of the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs,* an account of the two years in which he rode with the titular motorcycle gang. In 1970, prior to writing "The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved," Thompson ran for sheriff of Denver County, as a move not only to motivate his contemporary counterculture voters (or as Thompson called them, the "freak" vote), but also to question the nature of many of the constructs and structures that surround the ideas of law, government and order. Furthermore, after writing *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* under the alias "Raoul Duke," Thompson was tasked to cover the Nixon campaign of 1972, which is hailed by many scholars as Thompson's prime in writing due to the

outlandish nature of his reports (some of which actually doomed the careers of various political candidates). All of these events seek to demonstrate how Thompson, as a journalist, throughout the interactions, ideas, beliefs and struggles depicted with and about "America" in his writings, can be observed becoming the Outlaw in American Literature as he explores American culture as a Trickster through the praxis of the ideals he upholds throughout his writings.

In order to fully appreciate how Hunter S. Thompson operates as both Trickster and Outlaw, we must first discern how Thompson works within the confines of "American" culture. Contrary to both Thoreau and Pound, Thompson remains within both "American" society and the "American" continent by his own volition. Furthermore, his role as Trickster within "American" society, particularly from 1965 through 1974, is characterized by Thompson's relentless attacks on those he considered to be his enemies, yet attacking in such a way that, though he writes in an extremely biographical tone, as Thompson points out in an interview presented in *Gonzo: The Life and Works of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson* it "shouldn't be taken seriously in the first place" (*Gonzo*). Keeping the doctor's advice in mind, Thompson, particularly in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas,* often presents transcriptions of voice recordings (also presented in the documentary). These transcribed recordings lend credibility to the narrative presented in this writing style, though it should be specified that, despite the veracity of some of the parts presented in Thompson's works, the author's own advice on taking things seriously should still be kept in consideration. The recordings from *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas,* for example, consist of Thompson (identified as Raoul Duke) and his accomplice Dr. Gonzo, ("[his] Samoan attorney" in reality Oscar Zeta Acosta, a Chicano activist and attorney who was highly influential in the Ruben Salazar hearings), interviewing Las Vegas locals, asking them "Where can we find the American Dream? Is it in Las Vegas?" (*Fear and Loathing* 76). Interestingly enough, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, as explained by Thompson in the preface to later editions of the novel, was intended to be an experiment in "Gonzo" journalism. Ideally, as Thompson explains, he planned to write without editing or proof-reading until he achieved a final product. Nevertheless, after three revisions of a 200-page manuscript that was originally intended to be just "a 5,000 word article on the Mint 500 Motorcycle Race" (Thompson 3), Thompson admits that the experiment resulted in failure, though, ironically, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* came to be considered by many to be Thompson's greatest literary success.

Taking these facts into consideration, and considering that throughout the entire narrative of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* the

author finds himself continuously running from debt, evading hotel bills and capture by a combination of what can only be described as sheer luck, grim determinism and wit, along with a scathingly tenacious attitude and a suitcase full of drugs. Consequently, it could be discerned that, as Outlaw, Thompson is constantly on the run, simultaneously living within "American" society and culture, but placing himself through his actions and writings in a position where his personal existence in "American" society is in constant conflict with the system's structures, and "roadblocks" that he opposes. Rather than escape society like the Outcast or escape the continent like the Expatriate, the Outlaw lives within the system while simultaneously functioning outside of conventional norms, constantly at odds when the system and the Trickster come into contact with one another. Thompson's writing is constantly paranoid, the idea that at some moment the author might get caught is constantly present in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and it can easily be argued that the acts Thompson narrates across the novel, both inside and outside the established parameters of law are either too wild to ignore as fiction, or too real to prove otherwise. Therefore, Thompson, as a Trickster and narrator, creates for himself a role outside of contemporary social constructs that defined his literary period. This, in turn, created a writing style that was simultaneously fictional and biographical: a hybrid confessional narrative/dream vision that takes the idea of "The American Dream" as what it could have been, and what it ultimately became, and pushed it to its farthest applicable logical point. Additionally, when the ideas of Location, Locale and Sense of Place are then applied to the Outlaw model, the relationship that Thompson holds with America comes into clearer perspective across his writings.

Due to the volatile nature of his lifestyle, Thompson's Location is often erratically nomadic across narratives. Though he remains within the "American" continent, often, as is the case in *The Great Shark Hunt: Gonzo Papers Vol. 1,* he might go through as many as four US States before the narrative settles down to finish. In terms of Locale, on the other hand, Thompson is often, as is also the case in "The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved" and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas,* determined in terms of Locale for the majority of his actions, as the company he finds himself in dictates how he acts. In the case of "The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved," for example, the contrast between how Thompson treats the unnamed man at the bar in the beginning of the article (convincing him that "Helter Skelter"—the race war between the whites and blacks that Charles Manson prophesied—was going to manifest itself at the

Kentucky Derby) and how he later befriends Ralph Steadman (despite first giving Steadman his first taste of mescaline and later macing him before throwing Steadman out of a moving car outside of the Kentucky Derby, towards the end of the article) serves to highlight the relationship that Thompson, as Outlaw, holds with "American" culture, where he is more than willing simultaneously to torment the obnoxiously ignorant while protecting those he considers his acquaintances (to a unspecified extent). This kind of behavior can also be seen in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* when Raoul Duke registers at the Tropicana hotel, befriending the hotel clerk while simultaneously undermining the people waiting to checked-in to the hotel, the majority of them narcotic enforcement officers from different states, attending the same conference as Thompson. These two examples serve to highlight that Thompson's Sense of Place, as Outlaw, is the "American" landscape among "American" society, working within the "American" counter-culture, constantly undermining the systems with which he comes into contact. Through the use of the narratives within his writings, as Outcast, Thompson identifies a morality based not on the constructs of legal and illegal, but, as his campaign for office of Sheriff in Denver County attempted to demonstrate, on the ideas of a communal greater good based on the ideologies of free-love, expression, and empowerment developed in the sixties.

If Thoreau can be considered similar in esteem to the trickster Anansi, and Pound can also be compared to Loki, then it could also be argued that Thompson, as Outlaw, is held in the same regard as the trickster Coyote found in many Native American stories. Throughout most of the tales that involve Coyote, much like the majority of the articles present in *The Great Shark Hun*t, the protagonists question a tenement of society and, through their own interaction of the system in question, seek to improve the structure and the system, despite the system's reluctance. It can be seen then, that both Coyote and Thompson as Outlaw exist within the system to challenge the applicability, practicality and merit of the systems and structures imposed on them by contemporary American society, proposing an alternative based, not on the structure in question, but created from the Trickster's own interpretation of the previous system, without the flaws that it finds from the original system.

Part IV: Conclusion

Throughout their works and lifestyle, it can be noted that Henry David Thoreau, Ezra Pound and Hunter S. Thompson, through praxis of self-imposed outside perspectives, define and subsequently chal-

lenge the American structures, constructs and systems they oppose, presenting an "amoral action" that serves as an alternative that, though not always achievable (or in some cases, practical), serves to question the validity of the system it seeks to dispute. Consequently, it can also be observed that by applying Tim Cresswell's ideas of "place" in terms of "Location," "Locale" and "Sense of Place," in regards to how each author individually views the concept of "America," Thoreau, Pound and Thompson can be more clearly identified as Tricksters in American culture, and subsequently, American Literature. We see that, given the praxis of the ideals that these three authors, as Outcast, Expatriate and Outlaw display across their literary works and lifestyles, and also taking into consideration not only how these authors interact with (and ultimately change) American society, but also how these interactions bear a strikingly coincidental resemblance to Trickster lore found across different cultures. It can be concluded that Thoreau, Pound and Thompson as Tricksters in American culture openly challenge and eventually impact their respective societies through their writings and the praxis of the attitudes that inspired these writings in the first place.

Though easily classifiable as American Tricksters, Henry David Thoreau, Ezra Pound and Hunter S. Thompson deserve individual recognition for the way each author develops his own voice when addressing America, be it as its Outcast, its Expatriate, or its Outlaw. Consequently, it can be observed throughout their works that each author confronts the structures and systems that contest their lifestyles. In "Civil Disobedience," originally titled "Resistance to Civil Government," it can be observed how the fact that Thoreau's imprisonment directly challenges his lifestyle as Outcast sparks the opinions and statements which constitute the driving forces behind the 1848 speech. Conversely, Pound's poem "A Pact," as well as his involvement in the Second World War display not just his opinions and attitudes towards "American" culture (the reason that fueled Pound's desire to move to Europe), but also detail the abrasive extent to which the poet challenges "American" traditions, the United States government, "American" politics and ultimately "American" society. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and "The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved," however, display the author directly challenging the systems that drive him to become an Outlaw, and how, ideally, "American" society and "American" culture would be better without them.

It can be discerned from the "amoral actions" that each author presents, namely, the praxis of the views and ideas presented in their works (which has been observed throughout each author's literary

career and individual lifestyle) and the self-imposed roles of Tricksters in their respective American societies that Henry David Thoreau, Ezra Pound and Hunter S. Thompson embody their titles of Outcast, Expatriate and Outlaw. These three authors should be considered, both in literary and historical perspectives, as not only American authors, but as the quintessential American Outcast, Expatriate and Outlaw in American studies.

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HISTORY, MEMORY AND IDENTITY IN NELSON MANDELA'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY: *LONG WALK TO FREEDOM* (1918-1962

Lahouel Badra

In his autobiography which he had started to write in 1974 when jailed in Robben Island, Nelson Mandela accounts for the root causes of his commitment to free his people who were smarting under the cruel system of apartheid. In the narrative he unfolds, history, memory, and identity are constantly intertwined. Before analysing their relationship in his writing, it seems worth recalling the great variety of definitions some critics have provided of these concepts, including the term of "autobiography."

As a literary work, the autobiography has been at the heart of debates between scholars mainly because of its ill-defined contours. Scholar Candace Lang raises the issue when she remarks: "if the writer is always, in the broadest sense, implicated in the work, any writing may be judged to be autobiographical, depending on how one reads it" (qtd.in Anderson 1). To avoid confusion with other types of writing, Philippe Lejeune supplied a more precise definition. For him, an autobiography is a "retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his own existence, focusing on his individual life, in particular on the development of his personality" (qtd. in Anderson 2). In other words, to differentiate the autobiography from other genres like biography and fiction, the author of an autobiography must be at the same time the narrator who relates the story of his own life, especially the experiences that fashioned his personality.

Other analysts highlighted other salient features of the autobiography to distinguish it from other forms of writing. Lejeune contends that it must be "truth-telling" to distinguish it from fiction whereas Candace Lang emphasizes its critical aspect (Anderson 5). Laura Marcus argues that its author should say "something of historical importance" (qtd. in Anderson 8). In her view, an autobiography occupies the apex of a typology including the memoir, journal or diary

(Anderson 8).

Among these categories of "life-writing," memoirs have been at the centre of controversial analyses, too. Georg Misch believes that unlike autobiographies, where the authors are fully involved in the story they recount, memoirs "tend to avoid psychological depth and concentrate instead on external events of which their writers are merely observers" (Anderson 113).

To reconstruct the story of his personal trajectory and the events that shaped it, the author of an autobiography relies on memory without which human beings would be reduced to the present only. For Andrew Lass, memory is a concept which is often used broadly as a "catchall term for a wide variety of phenomena" (qtd. in Cubitt 5). Confusion may arise from the close connection between memory and history. For the philosopher George Santayana, "history is nothing but assisted and recorded memory" (qtd. in Cubitt 31) whereas Peter Burke considers "history as social memory" and Patrick Hutton sees "history as an art of memory" (qtd. in Cubitt 31).

On the other hand, other scholars insist on the necessity of distinguishing the two concepts. David Lowenthal asserts that: "History differs from memory not only in how knowledge of the past is acquired and validated but also in how it is transmitted, preserved and altered" (qtd. in Cubitt 31). For Michael Bentley as well, the two terms are largely antagonistic because they operate differently: "History is precisely non-memory, a systematic discipline which seeks to rely on mechanisms and controls quite different from those which memory triggers" (qtd. in Cubitt 31). According to the philosopher R.G. Collingwood, historical knowledge draws its strength from evidence while memory derives knowledge from "the personal consciousness of the rememberer who alone could experience its authority" (Cubitt 33). He therefore implicitly lays stress on the subjectivity and unreliability of memory, by contrast with history which he regards as more objective and scientific.

Memories are revived as a result of a conscious, deliberate attempt at remembering or they come to mind unexpectedly "in response to some accidental stimulus." (Cubitt 76). They are not captured as they occurred in the past but undergo a process of "reconstruction" or adaptation to the present needs. Frederic Bartlett, one of the leading scholars of the "reconstructionist" approach, advocates that: "Remembering is not the re-excitation of innumerable fixed, lifeless, and fragmentary traces. It is an imaginative reconstruction or construction" (qtd. in Cubitt 79). In the eyes of Wilhem Dilthey, memory plays a central role in autobiographical writing "not

by indiscriminately preserving the traces of past experience, but by ordering them selectively and interpretatively in ways which articulate an unfolding sense of life's direction" (Cubitt 34).

The way memory and history apprehend time have also divided critics. Some have seen a rupture between past and present in history whereas memory implies a continuum between them: "For history, distance between present and past has to be bridged; for memory, the two are always connected" (Gardner 89). Other scholars consider memory and chronological order, which is essential in history, as antithetical. Thus, according to Mona Ozouf, memory is "largely indifferent to a linear unrolling, the calendar is not its religion" (qtd. in Gardner 104).

Other critics view history as the province of a ruling elite which excludes and oppresses the marginalized and memory as the latter's voices (Cubitt 36). However, for the historian Gerder Lerner, the two terms tend to overlap. She considers history as a tool to air the grievances of subalterns—"women especially but also…slaves, proletarians and colonized peoples"—(Cubitt 57) and not just as a heuristic device designed to record the conditions and experiences of the ruling elites only (57).

The issue whether memory is individual or collective has also been raised. Some think that individual memory as such is a pure fiction as it is always impregnated by social life. Michael Schudson asserts that "in an important sense, there is no such thing as individual memory at all" and he adds that "it is distributed across social institutions and cultural artifacts" (qtd. in Cubitt 11). From Patrick Hutton's viewpoint, too, the personal act of remembering is, in fact, influenced by the events that impact on a community's memory: "We do not retrieve images of the past as they were originally perceived but rather as they fit into our present conceptions, which are shaped by the social forces that act upon us" (qtd. in Gardner 103). For David Kaplan, too, individuals are part and parcel of a community, and as a result, their memories are pervaded by "otherness." As he puts it: "otherness is not external to selfhood but internal to and constitutive of it" (qtd. in Gardner 110) and he further specifies: "We are always connected in a continuity of generations, linking us to the past and the future. So long as our identities are constituted by stories, our lives are intertwined with the stories of others; I am a part of the story of my parents, my sister, my friends, my enemies" (qtd. in Gardner 110). For the sociologist Gary Alan Fine, the process of remembering is nurtured by "ideoculture" defined as "a corpus of group-specific folklore (stories, myths, anecdotes, etc.) that groups develop through the interactions of their members, and that those members refer to in

organizing their collective activities" (Cubitt 137).

For some scholars, memories are always attached to places which act as powerful bulwarks against oblivion. As Paul Ricoeur points out:

> 'Things' remembered are intrinsically associated with places...It is not by chance that we say of what has occurred that it took place. It is indeed at this primordial level that the phenomenon of 'memory place' is constituted... offering... a support for failing memory, a struggle in the war against forgetting... (qtd. in Gardner 111).

C.E. Reagan puts forward the same idea when he writes: "Every memory refers to a particular point in space (e.g. the house I used to live in) and collective memory is always attached to a traditional or sacred place" (qtd. in Gardner 111-112).

The relationship between memory and identity has also been the field of deep investigations. Commenting on the conception of memory, Allan Megill, an authority in social science, explains that "crucially, the Holbwachsian model held that memory is determined by an identity (collective or individual) *that is already established*… fundamentally identity *preceeds* memory" (qtd. in Gardner 102). Although there is a common agreement on the role of both memory and history in the preservation of identity, some dissident voices have stressed that they operate at different levels. For instance, Richard Hofstadter has argued that "memory is the thread of personal identity, history of public identity" (Cubitt 41). Now let's see how these concepts function in Mandela's work.

History, Memory, and Identity in Mandela's Autobiography

In his *Long Walk to Freedom,* Mandela tries to explain his personal itinerary as a freedom fighter against the racist system of apartheid based on an absurd skin colour classification. A lawyer by profession, he voiced the grievances of subalterns and thus became an iconic figure not only in the history of his country but in the world at large. Like all non-Whites, he smarted under the oppression of the white regime and therefore "self" and "others" can hardly be distinguished. He starts his autobiography by his childhood recollections not so much out of respect for chronology but because some events which occurred during that particular period constituted a very important landmark in his later struggle against apartheid. From the opening pages of his book, the intimate relationship between individual and collective memory is present in the narrative of his father's and by extension all the traditional rulers' degradation by the white government. Once an influential Thembu chief and king maker, his father was

reduced to a mere figurehead overnight. Mandela cannot help being overwhelmed by a deep feeling of injustice: "Although the role of chief was a venerable and esteemed one, it had… become debased by the control of an unsympathetic white government" (4).

The whites' interference sparked off the rebellion of his father because he saw the colonizer as an intruder, or to use Albert Memmi's terminology as a usurper: "My father's response," Mandela writes, "bespoke his belief that the magistrate had no legitimate power over him. When it came to tribal matters, he was guided not by the laws of the king of England, but by Thembu custom" (9). Mandela was deeply grieved by his father's loss of status as a result of his insubordination to the white man: "I was unaware of these events at the time, but I was not unaffected. My father, who was a wealthy noble man by the standards of his time, lost both his fortune and his title" (9).

The tight link between "self" and "others" can also be perceived in the evocation of the Whites' disruption of the larger black community to which Mandela belonged. Indeed, they imposed not only their power but also their own religious beliefs, education and lifestyle, and the few Blacks who had access to them turned their back to their African heritage and thus lost their identity. Although Mandela is himself one of the few converts, he nevertheless blames the missionaries' ethnocentrism and his countrymen's internalization of the Whites' proclaimed cultural superiority and implicitly their acceptance of the colonial situation: "They confirmed the missionaries' axiom that to be Christian was to be civilized and to be civilized was to be Christian" (17).

Indeed, nineteenth century Evangelists were instrumental in the occupation of alien territories in the name of their cultural superiority. To mention one example, the Reverend William Shaw suggested in 1820 that the settlers in the Cape Colony were to "be placed like Ebenezer in occupied territory to keep the Philistine 'Caffres' out of the land of God's favoured people" (Stuart 66). To add insult to injury, the "heathens" whose lands had been grabbed by the newcomers were expected to be grateful for this act of Christian "Charity and Benevolence" (68).

In western rhetoric, Africans were caricatured as immature children who needed colonization, a thesis which was later developed by colonial apologists like the French philosopher and ethnologist Octave Mannoni (1899-1989) but strongly challenged by Frantz Fanon (85) and other anti-colonialists. For John Philip, the Superintendent of the London Missionary Society, the autochthonous populations presented "all the weaknesses and prejudices of children associated

with the vices of Manhood" (Stuart 79). The victims of many forms of confiscation became criminals that the Gospel would redeem by "laying the axe" to the root of "pagan customs and criminal indulgences" (72). The early missionaries, or at least some of them, distorted the Christian message of love, brotherhood, and tolerance of mankind's cultural differences and the African converts were not long to discover disappointedly the gulf between the Christian ideals and the grim reality of racial segregation, even in the Church, which triggered massive desertions (Campbell 224).

Racism was at the core of the Dutch Reformed Church in which Dr. Malan served as a minister before leading the Nationalist Party (NP). The principle of *baaskap* or white supremacy underpinned the policy of apartheid applied by the NP. To quote Mandela, they believed that "Afrikaners were God's chosen people and that Blacks were a subservient species" (159) and thus inevitably created what Amin Maalouf called "*des identities meurtrières*."

In his autobiography, Mandela wards off the colonizer's attempt to legitimize his rule by retrieving and idealizing his traditional culture. For example, he brings to the fore what he perceives as the embryonic democratic institutions of pre-colonial Africa. He observes that

> The regent was surrounded by his amaphakathi, a group of councillors of high rank who functioned as the regent's parliament and judiciary. They were wise men who retained the knowledge of tribal history and custom in their heads and whose opinions carried great weight. (29)

In African societies, griots played a significant role in the preservation of collective memory. The tales transmitted orally during his childhood about military heroes like Moshoeshoe,[1] king of the Basotho, Dingane,[2] king of the Zulus, and others, strengthened his African identity and his commitment to change the prevailing situation. Indeed, as time went by, the Black South Africans had new reasons to stand up against the brutal regime of Apartheid. In several passages, Mandela revisited their conditions to denounce his race's marginalization and frustrations: the miners were subject to an inhumane exploitation by the white-owned companies (145); full-fledged teachers

[1] Moshoeshoe (1786-1870), also spelled Mshweshwe, or Moshesh, whose real name was Lepoqo was regarded as the founder of the Sotho nation, called Basutoland by the British. A shrewd diplomat, he managed to rally not only his people but also the British in 1843, but this alliance was short-lived because they took over most of his lands. The war he waged against the British ended by the latter's defeat. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, UK, 2001, CD-ROM Edition.

[2] Dingane also spelled Dingaan, the Zulu king of Natal since 1828 was beaten by the Boers at the Battle of Blood River (16 Dec. 1838). *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, UK, 2001, CD-ROM Edition.

were "expected to scrape before a white man" with less qualifications (49-50); the law firms employees "were given the crumbs from the table and had no option but to accept them" (100); the inhabitants of the townships were daily at grips with filth, the lack of amenities, blatant poverty, and the criminal activities of gangsters or *totsis* (108) and when they rebelled, they were shot dead or jailed as it occurred in Sharpeville (344-345); men and women were constantly harassed by the threat of pass laws and made history by staging demonstrations against them. Mandela clearly perceived himself as a descendant of a great lineage who would, in his turn, carry the torch of anti-colonial struggle. Cubitt is thus right to argue that "events and personalities do not establish themselves in social memory as isolated containers of symbolic meaning: much of their significance comes from the ways in which they get connected to other events" (214).

Through Chief Joy's stories, Mandela learned how the whites with their superior weaponry had deprived them of their land, reducing them to poverty and subservience: "Chief Joy's war stories and his indictment of the British made me feel angry and cheated, as though I had already been robbed of my birthright," he complains (33). He also realized that the whites manipulated history to justify their domination: "I did not yet know that the real history of our country was not to be found in standard British textbooks, which claimed South Africa began with the founding of Jan Van Riebeek at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652" (34).[3] Chief Meligqili's sad remarks made him further understand that his people had become social, economic and political pariahs under white rule: "…We Xhosas, and all black South Africans, are a conquered people. We are slaves in our own country. We are tenants in our own soil. We have no strength, no power, no control over our own destiny in the land of our birth" (42). Mandela cannot conceal the mounting resentment he harboured against white oppression: "His words," he adds, "soon began to work on me. He had sown a seed, and though I let that seed dormant for a long season, it eventually began to grow" (43). His decision to stand against it was reinforced by the griot Krune Mqhayi's open call for rebellion against occupation and oppression:

> What I am talking you about is the brutal clash between what is indigenous and good and what is foreign and bad. We cannot allow these foreigners who do not care for our culture to take over our nation. I predict that, one day, the forces of African society will achieve a

[3] Jan van Riebeek's arrival in South Africa in 1652 marked a turning point in South Africa's history. A member of the Dutch East India Company, Jan Van Riebeeck (1619-1677) landed at the Cape of Good Hope on April 6, 1552, but his presence set off the Hottentots' opposition and war against him (1650-60). *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, UK, 2001, CD-ROM Edition.

> momentous victory over the interloper. For too long, we have succumbed to the false gods of the white man. But we shall emerge and cast off these foreign notions (59).

In his autobiography, Mandela refers to symbolic sites which the French historian Pierre Nora calls *lieux de mémoire* (memory loci), especially the ones he saw as catalysts or weapons which would spur his quest for a free and just society. While operating underground, he crossed Natal which reminded him of Cetywayo, the great Zulu king who had defeated British troops at Isandhlawana in 1879. The sight of Majuba Hills called back to his memory the Afrikaners' fight for freedom against British colonialism, a freedom they nonetheless refused to grant to the Blacks, Mandela sadly noted (254-255). His visit to Alexandria Museum again brought back memories of the Egyptians' great cultural past which destroyed definitively in his mind the Whites' stereotypes about his race's backwardness and stirred his pride to be an African:

> It is important for African nationalists to be armed with evidence to refute the fictitious claims of Whites that Africans are without a civilized past that compares with the West. In a single morning, I discovered that Egyptians were creating great works of art and architecture when whites were still living in caves (432-433).

Commemorations such as the National Day of Protest (26 June 1950) were also designed to enable the future generations to remember the most outstanding features of their history (168).

Traditions and the common experience of racial discrimination further conveyed this sense of collective identity. After dancing the *indlamu*, a traditional Zulu war dance with other detainees, he asserted that they "felt the hand of the great past that made us what we were and the power of the great cause that linked us all together" (288). In the same vein, the traditional *kaross* he was wearing when he appeared before the Court on October 15th, 1962 may be interpreted not only as the symbol of his people's cultural legacy but also as an assertion of their right to respect and dignity in a society which disdained them. As he explained:

> I had chosen traditional dress to emphasize the symbolism that I was a black African walking into a white man's court. I was literally carrying on my back the history, culture and heritage of my people. That day I felt myself to be the embodiment of African nationalism… (469).

Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* is the story of a man's personal experience of apartheid with its inherent racism, exclusion, and alienation. It is at the same time the story of the non-Whites who smarted under the same Afrikaner overlords and who resolved to recover the basic rights of dignity and freedom that they were denied although

as several intellectuals like Emmanuel Levinas pointed out "the self is only possible through the recognition of the other" (qtd. in Kapuscinski 5). Because of their common history, the South Africans' individual and collective memories were even more closely intertwined, whatever their racial identity.

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CARIBBEAN LITERATURE, NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Alison Van Nyhuis

Authors from most regions of the Caribbean have narrated migration to the United States and Canada in terms of North America's history of political and economic imperialism in the Caribbean and the rhetorical trope of the American dream. But the literary criticism that has shaped the field of Caribbean literary studies has not provided a framework for the centrality of North America and American dream rhetoric in Caribbean literature. Since its establishment in the 1970s, Anglophone Caribbean literary studies has considered the male writers of the 1950s who migrated to England the founding fathers of the tradition (Gikandi 26; Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* 38-39; Ramchand 4). Their writing on migration and exile, such as George Lamming's *The Emigrants* and Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*, has served as the model of Caribbean migration and exile.

But England was not the sole destination nor the British Empire the only colonial force that Caribbean authors confronted in the twentieth century. Some authors of migration narratives to the United States and Canada have received substantial literary critical attention, including the Haitian-born Edwidge Danticat in the United States and the Barbadian-born Austin Clarke in Canada. Many more female and male Caribbean authors have migrated to the United States and Canada throughout the twentieth century. Caribbean writers' employment of American dream rhetoric in narratives of North American migration challenges the foundational framework for understanding Caribbean literature: it shifts the focus from Caribbean literature's traditionally male, British colonial context to a more explicitly female, North American imperial context.

Even the foundational authors of West Indian literature use American dream rhetoric in their writing on the United States and Canada. C.L. Chua discusses the ways in which the Nobel Prize winning Indo-Trinidadian author and historian V.S. Naipaul writes on Indo-

Caribbean American and Canadian migration, exile, and rootlessness in terms of the American dream, especially in the short story "One Out of Many," novel *The Enigma of Arrival*, and nonfiction travel narrative, *A Turn in the South* (51-54). In an introduction to *In the Castle of My Skin*, the Barbadian-born author and literary critic Lamming also describes his and other Caribbeans' perspective of America in terms of an American dream of economic success.

American material success stories shape Lamming's portrayal of Caribbean economic migration in the novel:

> It is interesting for me to reflect on the role which America was to play in shaping the essential features of the novel. If England dominated our minds as the original idea of ultimate human achievement, the United States existed for us as a dream, a kingdom of material possibilities accessible to all. I had never visited the United States before writing *In the Castle of My Skin*; but America often touched our lives with gifts that seemed spectacular at the time, and reminded us that this dream of unique luxury beyond our shores was true. The image of America has not changed. Almost everyone had some distant relation there who had done well. I had never heard of anyone being a failure in the United States. And Christmas was evidence of this when postal orders arrived with money and gifts of exotic clothes. (xl-xlil)

Lamming represents his belief in an American "dream of unique luxury" as commonplace and widespread in the twentieth century, from the postcolonial eighties when he writes this introduction to the novel's colonial setting in the thirties and forties, when the American historian James Truslow Adams coins and popularizes the American dream in *The Epic of America* (Carpenter 5; Hulme 4).

In the novel *In the Caste of My Skin*, a young Afro-Barbadian male migrates to the United States in pursuit of economic success, primarily because people "'say things are good there'" (Lamming 168). After migrating, however, Trumper learned that "things" were significantly better in the United States for whites than blacks (Lamming 295). Lamming returns to the role of racial discrimination in the Afro-Caribbean experience of American exile in *The Pleasures of Exile*, where he emphasizes the ways in which racism had awoken him from his own dream of America as "a place where everything was possible, a kingdom next door to the sky" (188). Indeed, migrants from the Anglophone, Hispanophone, and Francophone Caribbean often emphasize the ways in which racism frustrates Caribbean migrants' pursuit of economic success, freedom, and equality in North America.

Foundational and emerging Caribbean-born authors of American migration narratives write Caribbean migrants into the most popular American dream narratives of the successful self-made man, generally writing in terms of and against populist American dream rhetoric.

In the Guyanese-born Cyril Dabydeen's short story "Drive Me until I Sweat," an Afro-Barbadian migrant temporarily leaves his wife in Barbados in order to rise "from rags to riches" and make "the holy million" as a taxi driver in New York City (130). The "rags to riches" rhetoric alludes to Horatio Alger's late-nineteenth-century popular literature, which narrates the rise to wealth of those "commonly assumed to be" and "depicted as, white males" (Pulera 201), who achieve material success with hard work, intelligence, and virtuous living (Hearn 68). In Dabydeen's story, however, the taxi driver's wife questions the morality of her husband's economic pursuits in the United States. She calls New York City "the same Big Bad Apple of the world, the very one that Eve gave to Adam" (138). Dabydeen's dual representation of the United States as a material promised land and moral wasteland reappears in other narratives of Caribbean American migration.

A closer examination of Caribbean American migration narratives reveals that Caribbean authors' appropriation, alteration, and subversion of American dream rhetoric correlates with the emerging and changing conceptualization of the American dream, from its socially critical roots in Adams' *The Epic of America* and dismantling following the assassination of the African-American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. Adams and King are two of the most important rhetoricians of the American dream. In *The Epic of America*, the European American, Yale-educated philosopher, and Pulitzer Prize winning historian Adams reconsiders centuries of American history in terms of Americans' theorization and realization of the American dream.

Adams identifies the American dream as the defining factor of American history: "If America has stood for anything unique in the history of the world, it has been for the American dream, the belief in the common man and the insistence upon having, as far as possible, equal opportunity in every way with the rich one" (123). The earliest authors of voluntary Caribbean American migration literature, such as the British Guyanese-born Eric Walrond and the Jamaican-born Claude McKay, published literature on the West Indians' pursuit of economic advancement in the United States and the American-controlled Panama Canal Zone. In his earliest poetry and later work, including autobiographies and novels, McKay narrates his estrangement from aristocratic English cultural traditions and his increasing engagement with American industry in terms of migrants' pursuit of economic success in the United States and the United States' political and economic imperialism in the Caribbean, two key elements of Adams' American dream narrative.

In *The Epic of America*, Adams uses the utopist rhetorical elements of the jeremiad, which generally includes a promise, declension, and prophesy (Schlueter xiii), to rewrite American history in terms of the American dream: he represents an equitable social order as the promise of the American dream, criticizes American citizens and immigrants for jeopardizing this equitable social order through rampant anti-intellectualism, self-reliance, and materialism, and prophesies on the ways in which Americans should return to the fundamental American principle of an equitable social order (379-380). Adams represents education, a "communal spirit," and economic equitability as the best means to restore American citizens and immigrants' unsurpassed access "to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable" (374). In conclusion, Adams represents the Library of Congress as the institutional emblem of the American dream, and the laissez-faire capitalist logic, which the United States Steel Company's Andrew Carnegie explicitly endorsed as "the concentration of business . . . in the hands of the few" corporate magnates (Carnegie qtd. in Wallman 109), as "perhaps, as inimical as anything could be to the American dream" (383).

Adams' conceptualization of the American dream in *The Epic of America* starkly contrasts popular, critically acclaimed, and proletarian depression era authors' representation of the American dream. In popular escapist literature, such as westerns and self-help books, authors generally limit American citizens and migrants' achievement of the American dream to white men's independent achievement of economic success (Hearn 20-21, 25, 29; Wallman 19; Hart 257-263 qtd. in Hearn 77; Cullen 64; Pulera 201). Critically acclaimed depression era literature, such as John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, emphasizes workers' failed economic dreams. "The recurring tragedy," according to Charles R. Hearn, is "the physical, as well as the spiritual suffering, the destitution and despair, of those who taught to dream of wonders, but find themselves trapped in a struggle merely to survive" (106).

In 1930s American and Caribbean proletarian literature, poets also focus on the unethical, unjust, and extremely violent consequences of rampant individualism, materialism, and the growing gulf separating the nation's rich factory owners and shareholders and the nation's poor, hungry, homeless, and sick in rural fields and mines and urban factories and streets. In "Let America be America Again," the African-American Langston Hughes uses American dream rhetoric in order to revive "the dream that's almost dead today," the idealized American dream of freedom and equality for everyone "[w]ho made America" (qtd. in Nelson 516). In literary and autobiographical

writing, McKay and other Afro-Caribbean American migrants employ the American dream's originally socially critical function in order to emphasize African-American citizens and Afro-Caribbean migrants' discriminatory exclusion from the American dream of equality, freedom, and socioeconomic advancement.

Adams' reliance on the concept of equality of opportunity for each American initially seems more progressive than the racist theories circulating in early twentieth-century scientific communities on Caucasians' inherent physical, intellectual, moral, and cultural supremacy and sexist opinions circulating in early twentieth-century popular American culture on men's inherent physical and intellectual supremacy (O'Kane 1). In practice, however, Adams narrates Americans' past theorization and realization of the American dream in the racially and sexually exclusive terms of well-educated European American men's expression of the American dream and working class white men's pursuit of the American dream, perhaps explaining why Adams basically has fallen out of American popular culture and only has appeared intermittently in literary criticism as the historian who coined the American dream phrase.

In addition, Adams interprets the perceived occupation or exhaustion of the American Frontier as the impetus for a disturbing development in American history: America's extension of manifest destiny politics to neighboring nations, including Puerto Rico, which the United States acquired from Spain in 1899; Cuba, which the United States military occupied for at the turn of the century from 1899 until 1902 and 1906 until 1909; and Panama (Sheller 205). On Franklin Delano Roosevelt's negotiation of the Panama Canal, Adams states, "the rawness of such imperialistic methods beat almost anything Europe had been guilty of" (Adams 329-330). Indeed, Adams compares American political and economic imperialism in the Caribbean to European political and economic imperialism in the world.

United States service people enter the Caribbean at least twenty times from 1898 until 1920, and the United States political involvement in the Caribbean increases after World War I (Bolland 5, 125, 442-43). The United States military occupies the Dominican Republic for almost one decade, from 1916 until 1924, and Haiti for almost two decades, from 1915 until 1934, establishing military bases throughout the British West Indies in 1941 (Sheller 205-206). As the influential Martinique-born literary critic Edouard Glissant insightfully notes, "The United States of America is determined to show its military strength in the [Caribbean] region to head off 'destabalization'" (118), that is, the proliferation of socialist and communist leaders and regimes.

Throughout the twentieth century, Caribbean authors address the United States's political, economic, and cultural imperialism in the Anglophone, Franchophone, and Hispanophone Caribbean, often focusing on the American-controlled Panama Canal Zone, socialist Cuba, and Haiti, the first Caribbean nation to achieve independence from European colonial rule. In *Home to Harlem*, McKay's best-selling novel on Caribbean American migration (Cooper ix), McKay strategically employs a Haitian exile in order to critique the United States government's political imperialism in Haiti at the turn of the twentieth century (Lowney 413).

In the mid-twentieth century, American and Caribbean novelists significantly alter the stock plot of the hardworking or personable man of depression era success stories, focusing on educated workers' advancement in an increasingly corporatized professional climate (Long 64). In *The American Dream and the Popular Novel*, Elizabeth Long notes that from the mid-forties to the mid-fifties popular American novelists generally focus on intellectually gifted men who achieve the American dream of upward mobility through formal education and traditionally masculine income-earning professions, such as law and medicine; women generally suffer if they ventured into the income-earning public sphere through a conventionally masculine profession, and only periodically succeed if they professionalized conventionally feminine minor vices as actresses, authors, and courtesans (63, 72, 76-77).

But in Clarke's critically acclaimed Toronto trilogy and other narratives of Caribbean American migration published since the mid-twentieth century, such as Paule Marshall's novel of Afro-Barbadian American migration, *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, the men generally suffer if they venture into the income-earning public sphere through conventionally European American masculine professions. They only periodically succeed if they assimilate to European American culture. In the Toronto trilogy, for example, the Afro-Barbadian economic migrant, Boysie, migrates to Canada under the sponsorship of his wife, who migrates independently under the auspices of the West Indian Domestic Scheme (Kaup). Boysie eventually emulates his boss, Mr. Macintosh, at Macintosh and Company, Stock Brokers, in order to go "up in the world"; he sells his janitorial services to Mr. Macintosh as part of his own cleaning corporation (*Storm of Fortune* 257, 286). But by the end of the trilogy, Boysie leaves his wife and the majority of his assets in Canada to drive to the United States to pursue more "[f]reedom" (*The Bigger Light* 236). Contemporary critically-acclaimed and emerging authors of Caribbean American migration narratives emphasize the ways in which sexist immigration policies and racist

labor policies privilege Caribbean women over men, resulting in Caribbean women's economic support of their family and Caribbean men's psychological trauma.

Contemporary Caribbean authors also interpret the experience of arrival in Canada and the United States in terms of the civil rights and black power movements, a critical turning point in people's belief in the American dream. In public addresses and sermons in the 1950s and 1960s, King restores the originally socially critical function of American dream rhetoric. In a 1961 commencement address, which has since been printed as "The American Dream," King states,

> For in a real sense, America is essentially a dream, a dream as yet unfulfilled. It is a dream of a land where men of all races, of all nationalities and of all creeds can live together as brothers. The substance of the dream is expressed in these sublime words, words lifted to cosmic proportions: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This is the dream. (qtd. in Washington 208)

King defines the American dream in terms of the Founding Fathers' writing on all men's "unalienable rights" in the Constitution and Declaration of Independence (Schleuter xiii), which has been referred to as the "source-code" or "charter of the American Dream" (Cullen 36, 59).

In subsequent addresses, such as "Where Do We Go from Here?," King emphasizes the importance of actualizing the American dream: "This is no time for romantic illusions and empty philosophical debates about freedom. This is a time for action. What is needed is a strategy for change, a tactical program that will bring the Negro into the mainstream of American life as quickly as possible" (249). King mentions the ways in which his American dream had turned into a "nightmare" (257), including the bombings, beatings, killings and arrests accompanying civil rights victories, in order to inspire people to "continue our triumph and march to the realization of the American dream" (229). Clarke also writes civil rights events into the Toronto trilogy in order to encourage Afro-Caribbean economic migrants living in Canada to join forces with African-Americans in the United States. Contemporary authors of Caribbean American migration narratives often trace migrants' expanding field of identifications in Canada and the United States, especially from originally nationalist Caribbean identifications to more transnationalist Pan-African identifications.

The Toronto trilogy's first novel, *The Meeting Point*, which was published in 1967, includes television coverage of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s march on Washington, D.C. in the opening chapter on black Barbadian economic migrants' experience of arrival in Canada

during the 1950s and 1960s (Clarke 13). The novel's last part, "The Triangle is Smashed," includes a civil rights march in Toronto. The domestic protagonist, Bernice, and her half-sister, Estelle, see people, including their friend Henry (Clarke 288), marching on College Street with "placards saying: CANADA IS NOT ALABAMA and END RACE PREJUDICE NOW and BLACK EQUALS WHITE and NEGROES ARE PEOPLE" (Clarke 283). By the novel's conclusion, participation in the civil rights movement emerges as a necessary and ideal yet tragically overlooked meeting point.

Since King's assassination in 1968, American and Caribbean authors generally treat the American dream as a fraudulent and harmful myth or as a passé cliché, focusing on the social forces threatening Americans' realization and estrangement from the idealized American dream of everyone's equal access to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (Cullen 191; Madden xvi). Shortly after African American men and women earned key legal rights through the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, King's assassination symbolically brought "down the curtain on the American dream" (Harris qtd. in Cullen 129), to quote a passage from the African-American novelist James Baldwin's 1963 novel, *The Fire Next Time*.

The metaphors of an American dream of economic prosperity, freedom, and equality give way to metaphors of an American nightmare of poverty as well as race- and gender-based discrimination. Long identifies 1969 as the year when best-selling American novelists stop narrating the successful economic rise of white men in a moral, ordered universe (120). Kathryn Hulme interprets authors' rhetorical shift from an American dream to an American nightmare as a sign of the "the estranging aspects of immigration, on the slippage between America's promise—equality, justices, prosperity—and the culture they enter" (10), and she notes that "[s]ince the early 1960s, we have had the Generation of the Lost Dream" (8). In addition, Hulme importantly interprets the rhetorical shift as a symptom of Americans' loss of innocence "as not doing harm" when pursuing the American dream (41-42).

The increase in Caribbean migration to North America after World War II, when voluntary outbound migration to North American and European metropoles first exceeded migration within the Caribbean (Puri 2), paired with the increase in American and Caribbean authors fictionalization of voluntary Caribbean migration conceivably contributes to Canadians' and Americans' awareness of the harm resulting from the American dream myth. In the 1985 novel *Continental Drift*, which the American-born novelist Russell Banks published after briefly living in Jamaica, Banks emphasizes the ways in which

working-class white Americans' illegal pursuit of economic success in the United States actually jeopardizes illegal Haitian American migrants' survival.

In the Trinidadian-born Neil Bissoondath's collection of short stories on Caribbean Canadian migration, *On the Eve of Uncertain Tomorrows*, a middle-aged Caribbean Canadian man expresses his abandonment of the American dream of economic success:

> Is a good fifteen years I in Canada now, and I's livin' proof that not every immigrant is a multicultural success story. Maybe is a question of too much dreamin' and not enough doin'; maybe is a question of dreamin' the wrong dreams or doin' the wrong things. But before I arrive here, nobody—especially nobody in the Canadian High Commission back home—really tell me much 'bout this country I was goin' to. It was all dream and gossip, what people say. They say, in Canada is: You want a job? Here's a job. You want money? Here's money. But I find out quick-quick that to get a job, you have to have the trainin'; to get money, you have to have money. And even then, it damn hard to hold on to the little you does manage to save. (150-151)

An Indo-Caribbean woman similarly expresses why she lost her faith in the American dream after immigrating to Canada in the Trinidad-Canadian Shani Mootoo's collection of short stories, *Out on Main Street*: "I used to think, if only I lived in North America! But here I am, in this place where these things are supposed to happen, in the midst of so much possibility, and for some reason my dreams seem even further away, just out of reach. It's just not quite as simple as being here" (20). In the Puerto Rican-born Esmeralda Santiago's first novel, *América's Dream*, the Puerto Rican-born protagonist, América Gonzalez, does not even desire to pursue economic success in the United States due to the United States' political imperialism in Puerto Rico, especially the navy's bombing practice on the Puerto Rican island municipality of Vieques. The United States government has maintained a military presence in the Caribbean in the latter half of the twentieth century, invading the Dominican Republic in 1965 to 1966 and Grenada in 1983 (Sheller 206).

In contemporary narratives of Caribbean migration, male and female authors more thoroughly ground the protagonists' economic migration in the history of North American political and economic relations with the Caribbean, especially on the islands of Hispaniola and Cuba. In Edwidge Danticat's 1994 novel on Haitian American migration, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, the Haitian migrants debate the United States' economic and industrial involvement in early-twentieth-century Haiti, both criticizing Americans' treatment of Haitian cane cutters in the 1920s and applauding Americans' construction of Haitian roads. Danticat more fully addresses American economic imperialism on the

island of Hispaniola in her 1998 interregional Caribbean migration novel, *The Farming of Bones*, on the mass exodus of Haitians from the Dominican Republic during the Dominican General Rafael Trujillo's massacre of Haitians in the thirties (Krohn-Hansen 53).

During the Cuba Missile Crisis in the sixties, the United States government establishes a navy blockade near Cuba and a trade embargo against Cuba. In *Dreaming in Cuban* and *The Agüero Sisters*, the second generation Cuban American Cristina García explores Cubans and Cuban American immigrants' diverging perspectives on the capitalist United States and socialist Cuba, alternating between rural Cuba and urban New York and Miami, the first and second most popular destinations for West Indians in the United States (Foner 83). Caribbbean-born authors from most regions of the Caribbean importantly have written within and against the rhetorical trope of the American dream to critically engage the Caribbean's fraught relationship with North American political and economic imperialism.

Indeed, Canadian and American investors and tourists have played a significant role in the expansion of the Caribbean tourism industry (Cabezas 95; Jiménez 29; Sheller 33). The Dominican-born Alan Cambeira's Azúcar trilogy on Dominican Canadian migration critically examines the Dominican Republic's trade and political relations with Canada and the United States, focusing on the Dominican nation's shift from an export sugar economy to a service tourist economy. The trilogy exposes the connections among Canada and the United States' material prosperity and cheap Caribbean labor. The trilogy's second novel, *Azúcar's Sweet Hope. . .: Her Story Continues*, both challenges North American tourists' dream of the Caribbean as an island paradise and also encourages Dominican exiles to return home and restructure Dominican society through breaking the nation's ties to global capital, especially to Canadian and American corporations and governments. In effect, the novel rejects the American dream and its capitalist apparatus as serious threats to Caribbean workers and nations. A significant number of Caribbean authors represent uneven transnational relations in a starkly negative light.

Even a brief sketch of the flows of migrants, military forces, and trade across Caribbean-American borders clarifies why Caribbean-born writers mention North America in textual documents ranging from autobiographies to novels and poetry. Therefore, Sean X. Goudie recently posits "the value of a Caribbean American regionalist perspective in regionalist study of the Americas, one neither supplementary to nor corrective of U.S. regionalism but a complementary, mutually revealing site of critical inquiry that resituates regionalism in the context of hemispheric American studies" (318). Indeed, authors

of Caribbean American migration narratives critically engage with North American political and economic imperialism in the Caribbean in similar imperial terms as foundational Caribbean authors engage with the Caribbean's fraught relationship with Europe.

In conclusion, Caribbean authors migrate voluntarily to North America throughout the twentieth century, and their literature reflects the emergence and evolution of the rhetorical trope of the American dream. North America and the American dream play a crucial role in Caribbean literature, especially in narratives of migration to the United States and Canada. But major literary critical studies of Caribbean literature fail to account for the ways in which Caribbean-born authors of migration narratives write within and against North America and the rhetorical trope of the American dream, because they primarily focus on the relationship between the Caribbean and European metropoles. More research should examine the ways in which Caribbean authors adopt, revise, and subvert the rhetorical trope of the American dream in poetry, fiction, and autobiographies.

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BY WAY OF *DETOUR*: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INTERVAL IN PETER HANDKE'S *SLOW HOMECOMING*[1]

Ioana Cosma

Detour, *dé - tourner*, *détournement*. "To take a detour" evokes the pleasure of traveling into the unknown but also the fear of running astray, of losing yourself in an unchartered territory. Detours come in many shapes. They are the ever-winding paths, the roads "less traveled by," the serpentine *lines*[2] that turn around and out of themselves, means of deferring indeterminately the arrival at a destination. While for a painter like Paul Klee the curved line was a "walk for the walk's sake," an innocent, embryonic arabesque, the determinations and strategies of the detour do not always bring to mind gratuitous or purely hedonistic associations. We have learnt from Odysseus's story that the experience of the detour came as a result of transgression. But Odysseus' is an imposed and not a *chosen* detour.

The experiences of Sorger, the hero of Peter Handke's *The Long Way Around* (1979) are detours made by the character's, so to speak, choice.[3] Taking a detour is a strategy of survival. The detour enables Sorger to restore a harmonious relationship with the landscape and to discover a middle ground between him and objects, which is the first step towards the geographical and historical inscription of his

[1] I will discuss two texts from this tetralogy: *The Long Way Around* and *The Lesson of Mont Sainte-Victoire.*

[2] I am referring here to Paul Klee's lines in his *Pedagogic Sketchbook* (1925): the first line in the book is already winding, it is the sign of a walk.

[3] For this typology, we have another archetype, which precedes the *Odyssey*: it is Hercules' task as he first sets away from home: he is presented with two possible roads, one winding, perilous and full of hardships, the other smooth, straight and filled with pleasures. Hercules chooses the first one. He has thus passed the test, made the good choice—on the second road, Athena tells him, he would have been lost...by choosing the first one, he has made the first step towards accomplishing his heroic destiny.

identity, *after* the linguistic and subjective experience of separation and distance.

This last aspect relates to another one of the definitions of detours, or of the act of *détourner*: to deter, or to present with an obstacle. Taking a detour on your way back home is a *de-re-turn*, a way of remembering by slowing down the pace and by re-visiting the sites of your previous tours. It is an act of revision, a corrective task that Sorger sets for himself on his way back to Germany from the far American North. The revisionist agenda brings us to another significance of detours as *détournement*—stealing, embezzling, or appropriating someone else's possessions. Whether performed in quotation or not, these *détournements* are ways of revisiting the past and bringing it into the present. In Handke's case, visiting the site of Paul Cézanne's first landscape paintings bespeaks an ethos of recuperation and nostalgia but it also represents a way of forging a new aesthetic in the encounter with the impressionist painter. The 1979 *The Lesson of Mont Sainte- Victoire* is an autobiographical essay in which the author lays the foundations of his new poetic art which he extracts from Cézanne's teachings.

In the two texts that I discuss, taking a detour is, in many respects, also an experience of the interval. Of the many definitions of this concept, I will briefly review a few that are relevant for my discussion of Handke's texts.

Both in *The Long Way Around* and in *The Lesson of Mount St. Victoire*, intervals appear as the middle ground of meaningfulness which links the perceiving subject to the perceived object in an act of reciprocal re-signification. With Cézanne's art and its constant search for and reworking of motifs, intervals stand for the encroachment of disparate objects, prompting a new mode of perception on the part of the beholder and also the restoration of a previously unnoticed feature of the object. This is what Paul Virilio called an interval, a negative or transparent form in his 1984 *L'horizon négatif*. In his own search for interval figures, Virilio also actualizes Cézanne as a point of reference— "I preferred Cézanne whose pictorial approach abandons nothing of the formal problematic" (*Negative Horizon* 36). As with Cézanne, for Virilio the exercise of creating transparent forms is mainly a question of training vision:

> While we perceive circles, spheres, cubes, or corners perfectly, our perception of intervals, of the interstices between things, between people, is far less acute. These configurations, cut out by bodies, stamped out by forms, escape us […] in every case, these passing figures barely leave any traces in our vision of the world, their fleeting character, tied to the instantaneity of a relation, never seems particularly important. These figures have a far too immediate obsolescence

> for our analytical consciousness, for our scrutinizing minds, we have more or less despised this movement that displaces the lines (29-30).

"Displacing the lines" is one of Cézanne's signature devices—he takes away the geometrical configuration of objects and landscape by doing away with contour— the object "appears" only through the painter's treatment of color. Lisa Robertson has also defined color as a site of passage, a liminal space: "an indiscrete threshold where our bodies exchange information with the environment" (143). While intervals are localizable but for a brief instant, their proper place is the non-place, the *a-topos*, the *terra incognita*. The desire to uncover these intervals both in Handke and Cézanne's search for form enacts what Giuliana Bruno called "the topophilia of the lacunae": "those seductive voids that, if one knows the topophilia of the lacunae, are not there to be conquered but are textures exposed, where the markings of time take place" (5).

From an auctorial perspective, intervals are also those empty or transitional periods of the search for a new poetic art which is usually achieved through the retrieval of past models and their transformation into a personal aesthetic. As McLuhan sees it, intervals are periods of intense creative effervescence which bring together the figure and the ground: "All cultural situations are composed of an area of attention (figure) and a very much larger area of inattention (ground). The two are in a continual state of abrasive interplay, with an outline or boundary or interval between them that serves to define both simultaneously" (5). The encounter between two different artists belonging to two diverse artistic periods gives way to a creative ferment which leads to the redefinition of both. Handke's recuperation of Cézanne's dominant aesthetic categories is a necessary stage in the reconstruction of his own language. For Handke, the achievement of a private artistic language can take place, it seems, only *by way of detour*, through the laborious, roundabout walk in the interval. This aspect of the artist's experience of the interval was noted in 1923 by Gertrude Stein:

> Geographically, geographical. Geographically to place, geographically in case in case of it.
>
> Looking up under fairly see fairly looking up under as to movement. The movement described…
>
> An interval.
>
> If it needs if it needs if it needs do not move, do not move, do not touch, do not touch…That is what she is looking for. Less. Less threads fairly nearly and geography and water. Descriptive emotion…[…]
>
> I touched it.
>
> As through…
>
> Geography includes inhabitants and vessels (quoted in Bruno 208).

The Long Way Around: Recovering Language and the Self in the Interval

We start the meandering journey home with Handke's *The Long Way Around*. The point of departure is Alaska; the point of destination is Germany. In-between, a vast expanse of whiteness and still life, inertia, delayed departures, the Arizona desert and the suburbia desert, the pantomimic space of the "great city" (New York), encounters with alter-egos, visiting the corpse of the recently deceased ski instructor friend in an ambiguous location (still in America but in a very German-style sky resort), flights in-between these places, and the final flight…Going quickly through Sorger's slow homecoming,[4] one loses from sight important details, significant stages in his slow metamorphosis—his relation with people, the cultural critique implied in the juxtaposition of different nations in different sites, the whole *topos* of exile, characters, stories, embedded narratives: Sorger's Eskimo lover, Sorger's "happy family" neighbors in the North-American suburbia and his feeling of domestic peacefulness as he dines in their home, etc.

The Long Way Around is a psychogeographic text "by the book," in the sense that the focal point is at all times the character's relation with the landscape, his rejections and embraces of it, the fleshing of the scenery and the emplacement of the flesh. It can also be considered an "atlas of emotions" insofar as Sorger's evolution in the landscape is "to visit the ebb and flow of a personal and yet social psychogeography" (Bruno 2). Significantly (but perhaps too obviously), Sorger is a geologist. At the moment the narration begins he is in Alaska, allegedly to conduct research, but mainly taking long walks in the wintry and still incomprehensible landscape, in search of images. He is away from home, in a state of impermanence and separation from the world and history. His first descriptions of the landscape betray the analytical attempt to classify the real world and to separate the subject from the object:

> Capable of tranquil harmony, a serene strength that could transfer itself to others, yet too easily wounded by the power of facts, he knew desolation, wanted responsibility, and was imbued with the search for new forms, the desire to differentiate and describe them, and not only out of doors ("in the field"), where this often tormenting but sometimes gratifying and at its best triumphant activity was his profession (3).

At the moment when he was writing this text, Peter Handke was

[4] The text is extremely dense and I will not be able to give it justice here—nor am I attempting to. I will focus mainly on the relation between Sorger and landscape, his gradual discovery of the interval, which prompts the detour as a strategy of countering death and recovering language and identity.

undergoing a crisis of meaning similar to the one expressed in the paragraph quoted above. Christoph Parry notes that the first part of Handke's work (until the late seventies) is characterized by a self-reflexive expression of the incapacity of language fully to render reality, history and self; however, the works following this date display a completely different style, devoid of ambiguity and indeterminacy, a style which underscores the author's concern for liberating himself from the discourse of finitude (1-9).[5]

The capacity to harness and control nature, to keep it at a safe distance, pacifies and gratifies Sorger for a while. However, this apparent stability is slowly undermined by the character's passion for landscape and his search for images: "After his initial irritation with a nature too quick to promise itself and even quicker to withdraw, Sorger was obliged, on pain of losing himself, to immerse himself in it" (7). What follows is a gradual discovery of the interval, a journey which begins in Alaska with the finding of what Virilio called the "antiforms" and continues in the character's historical and geographical emplacement on his "de-re-turn" home. Before reaching this stage, Sorger's metamorphosis begins with a radical shift in the perception of his body in the landscape: "What he perceived then was not the unthinkable distance between himself and another point but himself as a distant one (guilty of being away)" (25). Sorger is as strange to the landscape as the landscape is to him. By becoming objectified by the landscape, by learning to see himself in perspective, Sorger takes the first step in that interval "where the markings of time take place" to which Giuliana Bruno was alluding. Sorger's long separation from home, which is suggested by the many places that he revisits on his way back, reveals itself as a long detour whose point of destination will have to coincide with the point of departure: "During the day […] his work made him one with himself and the landscape, but at night, asleep in his iron cot, Sorger remained alive to his remoteness from Europe and his 'forebears'" (25). This newly found perception of himself in relation with the landscape has a direct impact on Sorger's sense of identity—his self is a-topic, it is indefinite because not *rooted* in the world: "[…] without self-awareness, a space in which he was neither a doer nor an idler, neither an actor nor a witness" (31). The first description of an interval reminds us of the sudden perception

[5] In *The Lesson of Mount St. Victoire*, a text immediately following *The Long Way Around*, Handke expresses this same idea: "Poets lie, says one of the first philosophers. And indeed, it has long been held that reality means hard times and disastrous happenings; and that the arts are faithful to reality when their central and guiding content is evil or man's more or less ridiculous despair over evil. But how is it that I can no longer bear to hear, see, or read such thoughts? […] Mortality will always be my guiding principle, but never again, I hope, my central theme" (147).

of the "transparent form," as Paul Virilio called it:

> It was the middle ground of a quite commonplace segment of the landscape, chosen by Sorger because of an earthquake fault in the foreground and a fragmentary shelf of loess far behind it. Through no intention of his, this center, which disclosed no particular surface form, not so much as a small swampy depression, and which only a sense of having to fill up his page led him to sketch, gradually took on a decided individuality. It was a smooth bit of meadow, almost entirely bare of trees or underbrush, with a few huts and a straight path in the foreground demarcated on the far side by the sparse virgin forest […]. Between these two zones, which were clearly set off from the landscape as a whole, lay the formless middle ground. Though on a plane with them, it gave the impression first of a meadow that had formed in the course of weeks and finally of a human valley in a possible eternal peace (33-34).

It would be difficult to find a more explicit description of the interval than the one in this passage. The interval as the "abrasive interface" between figure and ground, as the transparent form which links and presents in a new light the objects it conjoins, appears in this instance as a way of recapturing the meaningfulness of landscape by becoming aware of the "middle ground," the thin skin—"intervals are inhabitants and vessels," as Gertrude Stein saw it—between the disparate objects which the eye "cuts" in the fabric of the external environment. It is in the automatism of this cutting operation that the transparent forms which proliferate in the sphere of images are overlooked. As in Virilio's case, we already have in this passage from *The Long Way Around* an allusion to Cézanne's formal problematic. The particularity of Handke's understanding of the interval consists in his permanent connection of the perception of antiforms with the notion of harmony—"all the images which had played without violence on a middle ground without birth or death;" […] "consciousness was the feeling of this form and the feeling of this form was gentleness" (42). To Franco Rella, the feeling of the form as gentleness pertains to the area of atopic thinking—Sorger is still de-situated; at this point he is only learning how to emplace himself in the world. The quest for harmony does not translate into a desire for "synthesis" or *coincidentia oppositorum*, but rather a figure of the *complexio oppositorum*: "love is *complexio*—contact with, and union with the different" (Rella 10). This is the lesson that Sorger is given in his contemplation of the interval and he will use this teaching to find his way back home. The detour he takes is a way of reconciling his history of distance (from the world, history, his people) with his retrieval of proximity.

In the beginning of this article, I stated that for Sorger the detour is a strategy of survival. Sorger is aware that his quest for harmony is historically guilty, having led, in many instances, precisely to violence

and death. But, in order to be able to emplace himself in the world, he will have to accept this (German) ground, to bring it to light. The interval has taught him that figures and grounds have to go together in order to become meaningful: "Today I thought of salvation, but it wasn't God that came to mind, it was culture. I have no culture; I shall continue to have no culture as long as I am incapable of crying out; as long as I whimper my complaint instead of shouting it out loud" (95). A memory which prompts another memory, the detour is the only way of return. In the last journey which takes him home—the "first real journey" (136)—the narrator makes the statement that only in this way can Sorger find what "his own style is" (136). Intertextually, this refers to the following stage in Handke's detours, to the *Mount of Sainte-Victoire*, a *détournement* that the author will make in his own voice this time.

Walking in Cézanne's Footsteps. The *Détournement* of Style

The Lesson of Mont Sainte-Victoire (1980) is an essay in the genre of aesthetic (auto-) biography. In this text, Peter Handke *proposes* an artistic manifesto from which emerge the author's aesthetic dominants in the dialogue with Paul Cézanne's art. If, for Gottfried Boehm, Paul Cézanne is an artistic figure around whom a whole "cultural history of the twentieth century can be written" (quoted in Parry 56), for Peter Handke, the painter becomes a teacher and guide toward a new esthetic of the object (and, with it, landscape, color and reality). In order to achieve this, Handke will have to first take a geographical detour, to re-visit the very sites which had inspired the painter:

> For a long while I myself had only toyed with the thought of seeing the mountain in the flesh. Wasn't it an *idée fixe* to suppose that because a painter had once loved it there must be something intrinsically remarkable about it? It was only on the day when a spark leapt from thought to imagination that I made up my mind […]: yes, I would go see Mont Sainte-Victoire! Thus my journey was not so much a quest for Cézanne's motifs […] as a response to my own feeling: that mountain attracted me as nothing in my life had ever attracted me (158).

Handke's act of appropriating Cézanne's aesthetic for his own art is directed at incorporating both the reference and the representation. Strategically (and narratively), this takes the form of, on the one hand, actually visiting Mont Sainte-Victoire and discerning in the landscape the "transparent forms" and, on the other hand, visiting a gallery of Cézanne's paintings. The double detour—geographical and artistic—reproduces the author's attempt to take possession of that move in perception by which the painter had been able to see "parallel landscapes" within the landscape and then to transform

them into objects of representation. It is the same search for intervals that Sorger was preoccupied by in *The Long Way Around.*

Every time Handke describes a painting by Cézanne, he also alludes to his own art. The first painting which the author references is *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*:

> At first Cézanne painted horror pictures, such as his *Temptation of St. Anthony*. But in the course of time his sole problem became the *réalisation* of pure earthly innocence: an apple, a rock, a human face. His reality became the form he achieved, the form that does not lament transience or the vicissitudes of history, but transmits an existence in peace. Art is concerned with nothing else. But what gives life its feeling becomes a problem in the transmission (147).

In the painting, the gloomy colors of the background give way to the apparitional presence of the magical in the foreground. In this conflation of the imaginary, the actual objects of the landscape fade away, in an undifferentiated opacity of greens and blacks. This relates to one of Handke's reflections a few pages later: "No, magical images—and that went for the cypresses—were not the right thing for me. Within them lies a not at all peaceable nothingness, to which I never want to return. Only outside, in the daylight colors, am I" (150).

Thus, it will be more in Cézanne's landscape paintings that Handke will find the impetus for his own art. Parry explains the parallel between Cézanne's landscape painting and Handke's writing in the following way:

> The paradox of Handke's writing from this period onwards is that he too is trying to achieve something that cannot easily be paraphrased. The things he describes can be described in other ways, but they would no longer be the same because the experience connected with their description would be different one. Painting provides the obvious model for the kind of writing where the story is reduced to the minimum (51).

One landscape in particular arrests Handke's attention and around it he lays the foundations for a number of aesthetic categories which will become relevant for his own writing. It is the 1904 *Rochers près des grottes au-dessus du Château Noir*, which is one of the best expressions of Cézanne's way of envisioning the report between artist, language and reality:

> Danger, dance, solidarity, warmth—these were the components of my feeling of "nearness" as I stood looking at the painting. Suddenly magnified, the pines and rocks were deeply within me—just as a flushing bird momentarily flies through one's body with giant wings; but instead of passing as such as phantasms of horror do, they remained.
>
> […]

> Once, when Cézanne was asked to explain what he meant by a *motif,* he slowly joined the outspread fingers of his two hands together, folded, and interlocked them. Reading about this, I remembered that in looking at this picture I had seen the pines and rocks as intertwined letters, their meaning as clear as it was indefinable. In one of Cézanne's letters I read that he did not paint "from nature"—that his pictures were "constructions and harmonies parallel in nature" (177-178).

This nearness does not refer so much to the actual arrangement of depicted objects within the frame, but rather to a proximity which is created between the beholder and the object perceived and between the objects themselves. The effect is produced by the disappearance of the contour—the demarcations, which separate the objects only to unite them, are made solely by the brush, through the mediation of color. The interval as limit has to unite by the same move with which it separates. The particularity of Cézanne's motifs consists in the creation of a unitary image of significance in the juxtaposition and, as it were, encroachment of disparate objects. This *bringing together* operates as a writing by which the pictorial is given significance. Handke is able to trace and identify his own aesthetic in the encounter with Cézanne:

> "Thing-image-script" in one: that is the miracle—and yet it does not communicate my feeling of nearness. Here I must also mention the house plant which, looking through a window, I saw against the landscape as a Chinese character. Cézanne's rocks and trees were more than such characters; more than pure forms without earthly traces—in addition, they were woven into incantations by the painter's dramatic brushstroke. At first, my only thought was: so near. […] They were *things,* they were *images*, they were *script*; they were brushstrokes—and all these were in harmony (178).

Handke's "thing-image-script" is a recurrent device in his writings; it defines the nature of the relation between perceiver, the object perceived and the history which contains them. The "thing-image-script" translates the author's attempt to reenact the meaningfulness of the relations between man and the perceived world by re-creating and re-contextualizing the object in such a way—in harmony, in the here and now—that the perceiver will be able to grasp it. It is not a question of defamiliarizing the objects but rather rendering them meaningful in their own context. To state, like Rella, that for Handke landscape is "an event, not a given" (157) would be too little to say. For Handke, the given itself—of landscape, of Cézanne's art—is an event. His artistic, geographic and historic detour to Mont Sainte-Victoire is a celebration of this event and his at times emphatic and declamatory discourse reveals the author's enthusiasm in the détournement of the "given."

But the "given" is there only insofar there is a beholder to grasp it: "In a few hundred years the whole world would be flattened. But

the little that remains is very dear to the heart and eye". And thirty years later, he said: "Things are in a bad way. We shall have to hurry if we want to see anything. Everything is vanishing" (179). A bit later, Handke will give his answer to Cézanne's question, formulating it as a profession of artistic faith, a "proposal" he is passing on to us from the impressionist painter:

> Are Cézanne's works, then, messages? As I see it, they are proposals. […] What do they propose to me? Their secret lies in producing the effect of proposals. […]
>
> That is how I see Cézanne's *réalisations* (except that I stand before them, instead of kneeling): a transformation and sheltering of things endangered—not in a religious ceremony, but in the form of faith that was the painter's secret (181).

The detour as a propitiatory and restorative act: taking the long road back to prevent the images from vanishing. In a moment in which his own language is drying out, Handke places himself in the interval in order to recapture proximity and the referential substance of writing. His thing-image-script is the outcome of the need to recuperate the parallel transparent forms from landscape as well as preserve the distances of discourse and history from his previous writings. What he is attempting to do is to create an image capable of discourse and history (the script part). This is easily achieved in *The Lesson of Mont Sainte-Victoire* through the dialogue and juxtaposition between two authors and artistic periods which are as strikingly similar as they are dissimilar.

Conclusion

Taken together, the strategies of the detour and the changes of perception effected by the interval articulate a number of possible interpretations. I would say that for one, they allow Handke to distance himself from a whole range of more and more leveling contemporary discourses. This also signifies the fact that the author assumes a liminal position in the contemporary context. By way of detour, Handke comes to surpass the crisis of meaning and style which he was experiencing as a consequence of the discourse of finitude proper for his and our time as well as to avoid the mindless repetition of the labyrinth of significance of his admired precursors. In their basic description, both the detour and the interval are figures of transition; perhaps they signal of period of transition.

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'WHO ARE THE MIMIC MEN?' OR THE CRISIS OF IDENTITY IN V.S. NAIPAUL'S FICTION

Irina Strout

"… that we live in a place
That is not our own and, much more, not ourselves
And hard it is in spite of blazoned days.
We are the mimics."

Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction[1]

In 1962 in the novel *The Middle Passage* (commenting on Trinidad) V.S. Naipaul wrote that "Living in a borrowed culture, the West Indian, more than most, needs writers to tell him who he is and where he stands"[2] (68). His personal background (Indian ancestry, Trinidadian childhood, education and writing career in England) positions him close to "the heart of borrowed culture than at the brink of any new identity formations" (Mustafa 4). Naipaul often refers to the idea of 'borrowed' culture and mimicry as European, Asian and African cultures permeated the Caribbean world and his native Trinidad. Colonial mimicry becomes the desire "for a reformed, recognizable "Other" as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 86). Colonial subjects desire to appear as real and authentic by means of mimicry yet they repeat the existing, rather than produce the creative and new. Homi Bhabha argues that writing as a mode of representation mocks its power to be real and representational, "the desire to emerge as authentic through mimicry—through a process of writing and repetition—is the final irony of partial representation" (88). Originality gets lost in the process of imitation and what is left, according to Bhabha, is "the trace, the impure, the artificial, the second-hand"[3] (Beya 1).

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[1] Stevens, Wallace. *The Collected Poems*. New York: A. Knopf, 1954.

[2] Naipaul, V.S. "Trinidad" ,in *The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies –British, French and Dutch – in the West Indies and South America* (New York: Vintage, 1981): 68.

[3] See Beya, Abdennebi Ben. "Mimicry, Ambivalence and Hybridity". *Postcolonial Studies Reader* at Emory. 1998. <www.emory.edu/English/Bahri/1webpage.html>.

Naipaul's own identity as a writer ceased to be defined just as "a regional writer": "I've been breaking away from that tag all my life … It's all the things I reject. It's not *me*"[4] (108). Naipaul's closeness to the English tradition is not a sign of betrayal of his culture and background but rather a self-discovery and self-invention. Being rootless and displaced, Naipaul was offered a new insight into himself through writing, as he was taking imaginary leaves and returns in his journey: "To become a writer, … I had thought it necessary to leave. Actually to write, it was necessary to go back. It was the beginning of self-knowledge"[5] (47). The characters of his novels often attempt to "discover themselves" by writing, struggling to find a self-definition and a belonging in the chaotic world of social and political changes. The goal of this essay is to examine the theme of mimicry and its forms of individual identities in V.S. Naipaul's novels *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) and *The Mimic Men* (1967). One of the aims is to explore whether mimicry is a casual choice, necessity or a means of survival for the characters; does mimicry imply a simulation of self-discovery and therefore self-annihilation? Can the characters create or just imitate, living in the illusion of 'reality'?

V.S. Naipaul's sensibility as a colonial is revealed in the theme of identity and its various transformations. His protagonists often accommodate themselves in the hostile environments or societies to "which their authentic identity is perpetually opposed" (Anderson 510). They do not necessarily find their true self, but rather adopt a role they perform in society. Erving Goffman[6] differentiates the performed and the real identity: a person who appears in front of others "knowingly and unwittingly projects a definition of the situation, of which a conception of himself is an important part" (213). Therefore, the individual will play the role he is assigned to rather than be his authentic self. Often the reason for the role-playing is the lack of choices or even the basic survival skill.

The character of *The Mystic Masseur*, Ganesh, is a chameleon who does not play imposter for the sake of survival but for the financial security and profit. From the school days, he is not comfortable with his identity as he prefers being called Ganesh rather than by his Indian name: "He was so ashamed of his Indian name that for a while he spread a story that he was really called Gareth" (Naipaul 13). Ganesh tries to pursue a teaching career in the school system where

[4] See Michener, Charles. "The Dark Visions of V.S. Naipaul." *Newsweek* 98 (November 16, 1981): 108.

[5] Naipaul, V.S. *Finding the Center: Two Narratives*. (New York: A. Knopf, 1984): 34.

[6] Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London, Garden City, NY, 1969.

the motto is: "what is the purpose of the school? Form not inform" (Naipaul 16). School prepares young Trinidadians to be imitators, to form a resemblance with the authentic. Ganesh changed from being a school teacher to a 'successful' politician, rejecting his identity of Hindu and allying with the other tricksters (his name appears on the list as an honor member of British Empire). Irony permeates that his success can only happen in a third-world island: "Although its politicians have taken to calling it a country, Trinidad is a small island" (Naipaul Preface 4). He becomes almost a 'hero' for the displaced postcolonial Trinidad as the novel traces his career evolution from his autobiography *The Years of Guilt*, his masseur-healer role, his publishing business and political campaign, and finally to his status as G.R. Muir, Esq. In his acting for identity, Ganesh "has become the supreme mimic man" (Mann 470).

From the beginning of the novel, Ganesh, according to his biographer-narrator appears as an absolute fake: "Later he was to be famous and honored throughout the South Caribbean; he was to be a hero of the people and after that, a British representative at Lake Success. But when I first met him he was still a struggling masseur …" (Naipaul 5). His transformation from a masseur to a hero is comic and absurd as the society itself that makes him a hero. The narrator implies people's preference of trickery and fraud to authenticity: "in those days people went by preference to the unqualified masseur or the quack dentist" (Naipaul 5). Ganesh thanks the power of providence for his success yet the narrator reveals the 'real' scheming: "I had always … considered it as settled. … It all seemed preordained" (Naipaul 33). His marriage to Leela and later a writing career are not a coincidence or a blessing but a preplanned scheme. The mix of standard English and dialect intensifies the irony of real and false in the dialogue between Ganesh and Leela: " 'As you say, man.' 'Good. Let me see now. Ah, yes Leela, have you lighted the fire?' 'No, just gimme a chance. Is 'lighted' or 'lit', girl?' 'Look, ease me up, man. The smoke going in my eye.' 'You ain't paying attention, girl. You mean the smoke *is* going in your eye'" (Naipaul 57). By imitating the speech and actions of the English, Ganesh along with other characters "journey[s] down an illusory 'road to whiteness'" (Naipaul 66). He is what Bhabba calls the "effect of flawed colonial mimesis" as being Anglicized does not mean being English (87).

Becoming a healer (another scheme he undertakes) he places an advertisement in the newspaper: "WHO IS THIS GANESH?" (Naipaul 92). When his first client, a boy with the dark cloud appears, Ganesh treats him with smoke and mirrors—another fake of reality (96-105). Ironically, he gains popularity of other healers who "were nearly all

fakes … Every *obeah*-man was quick enough to call himself a mystic, but the people of Trinidad knew that Ganesh was the only true mystic in the island" (Naipaul 107). As he claims his success to God and fate, "Providence indeed seemed to have guided Ganesh. Just as it told him when to take up mysticism, so it told him when to give it up" (Naipaul 159).

When Ganesh takes up writing and publishes a few books on religion, he complains that "people want a book that *look* big. Once it look big they think it good" (Naipaul 83). "In exposing the public's illiteracy, he [Ganesh] unwittingly reveals his own hypocrisy and the pretentiousness of his status as scholar" (Mann 471). The narrator continues exposing the phony nature of Ganesh's political success: "He fought the cleanest election campaign in Trinidad history. He had no platform" (Naipaul 154); or the time Ganesh is cheated by Ramlogan in the taxi venture as "the business Man of God," in reality he "didn't have the business mind. In fact, he despised it" (Naipaul 117). In time Ganesh's fame as a "mock-hero" grows when he becomes the "most popular man in Trinidad" and "a terror in the Legislative Council" (Naipaul 164-165). Yet his popularity is the result of bribes and favors he does for others, just as his start of a protest with a walkout (165).

The novel criticizes not only Ganesh's imitation of identity but a society of Trinidad, which is not ready for social and economic changes, it turns to "trickery and to imitation of Europe and America" (Mann 471). Ganesh's life and a wide range of careers is a metaphor for what the narrator calls "the history of our times" (11) where fraud and phony identity are an essential part of countries like Trinidad. Similarly to the Hindu elephant God, Ganesa,[7] known for his gluttony, Naipaul's protagonist is 'hungry' for both fame and financial stability, he defrauds others in various schemes to gain profit and 'popularity' for himself. As Ganesh's wealth grows, his wife Leela mimicks the Western ladies of leisure in her dress, jewelry, need for a holiday (108) and even charitable work: "Every day Leela became more refined. She came back with expensive saris and much heavy jewelry. But the most important change was in her English. She used a private accent which softened all harsh vowel sounds; her grammar owed nothing to anybody …" (Naipaul 119).

The settings and landscape often intensified the disintegration of identities of Trinidadians and their need for imitation: Beharry keeps his books in a rundown shop, with "dingy distemper flaking off the walls" (Naipaul 6); Ramlogan attempts to modernize his shop

[7] For names and their meaning, see Danielou, Alain. *Hindu Polytheism*. Bollingen Series 73 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961): 291-97.

and win Ganesh as a future son-in-law by modern gifts "The most spectacular of these was the introduction of a new glass case. It was given pride of place in the middle of the counter; it was so bright and clean it looked out of place" (Naipaul 25). These items "dramatize the confusion of origins and loyalties, customs and aspirations, which is the setting of Ganesh's success" (White 65). Ganesh himself owns fifteen hundred books, half of which he never read, he wears Hindu clothes to practice his mysticism, preferring European clothes on his days off, his house is decorated with Hindu sculptures outside, yet he has a refrigerator full of Coca-Cola.

Ganesh, according to Mann, is the most challenging character, who combines "East and West, spiritual and secular, orthodox and modern, conservative and revolutionary to his advantage" (474). For instance, during his wedding, he refuses food till he gets a substantial dowry from Leela's father; or later he uses his spirituality for the business ventures and becomes the member of the Legislative council. By the end of the novel, he transforms from Ganesh to G.R. Muir, Esq., therefore rejecting his identity and Hindu ancestry that helped him succeed in the mystic business. Ganesh is what life and others make him to be: "We never are what we want to be, … but what we must be" (Naipaul 55). He performs the roles of a masseur, a mystic, a writer and a politician and "falls easily into mimicry and fraud, which he accepts as the human condition" (Mann 474). Yet despite his frauds, his life (with a few positive exceptions; for instance, when he exposes the government scandals, helps the poor) offers a fantasy of success for the islanders. Mann argues that the narrator himself relies on Ganesh's writing as a source of information "to reconstruct imaginatively scenes and dialogues involving a host of characters he has hardly set eyes upon or never met" (476). The narrator is fascinated by Ganesh and his fakery which leads to writing his biography. The writer (along with his character and the narrator) becomes the illusionist, in mimicking the reality he begins "with very vague ideas … and the act of writing, or devising a story or form, is such an artificial thing: you have to woo life into this artificial thing—which doesn't even exist"[8] (Naipaul 721).

The Mimic Men continues to explore the subject of mimicry as the protagonist assumes his identities in "the society that goes from colonialism to formal independence" (Cudjoe 92). It is a story of a forty year old postcolonial politician, Ralph Singh, living in exile in London suburbs and writing memoirs to "clarify and order his life and to repair his abiding sense of loss and inauthenticity" (McSweeney 162). He

[8] See Henry, Jim Douglas. "Unfurnished Entrails - the Novelist V.S. Naipaul in Conversations with Jim Douglas Henry," *The Listener* 25 (November 25, 1971): 721.

attempts to grasp the past and present, the life of London and the colonial world of Isabella, examining why his journey to self-discovery ends in "the greater shipwreck that had come to me already" (Naipaul 214). The novel opens with the protagonist looking out the window on the life of London streets. The window is a "symbolic proscenium through which Singh enters the theatrical space of his past" (Lindroth 519). His writing by the window is not only a sign of his being an artist but it becomes a "miniature stage" for his performance. Singh's intentions to write a book change with his life, and the writing itself becomes his "existence, mimicry of a life, mimicry of a writer's life" (King 74). Resembling Ganesh, Ralph Singh plays roles of a student, a lover, a politician and a writer. James Lindoth suggests that above all stands the figure of Singh's father, Gurudeva, whose creation of "a meta-theater defines and refines the figure of Ralph as secular performer" (519).

Similar to a number of characters from the earlier novel, Ralph Singh is in the search for belonging, being a "castaway" in between two worlds. His only "real hope for finding the security … would appear to lie in his Hindu background" (Thieme 514), which he attempts to reject. In school he changes his name from Ranjit Kripalsingh to a new 'stage' one—Ralph Singh. Later he gains political success due to his Hindu background, being a son of a rebel (similarly to Ganesh from *The Mystic Masseur*). His new name is very significant to him as he can impress teachers and friends, it also masks both his "secret name and private self" that helps him to avoid torment and ridicule of his fellow students. Ralph experiences fear by losing his racial and cultural identity which leads him to "attitudes of superiority, … a dandyism, and the cultivation of disdain for that which is flawed and imperfect" (King 72). He feels "contaminated" by his Hindu past, yearning for the ideal Aryan past, which is just a part of his idealism. However, his "Hindu self proves inescapable" (Thieme 516) and his origins remain with him throughout his political career: as people begin to listen to him and regard him as a leader, his "dream of Aryan chieftaincy" is 'almost achieved' (Thieme 516). When the people call for his protection, he refuses to lead them, "distancing the actual world" (King 70) as "'something in the book'" (Naipaul 241 qtd. in King 70).

Ralph Singh decides to follow a Sartrean concept that "it was up to me to choose my character" (Naipaul 20 qtd. in King 69) as his life becomes a play-acting. In each special context (whether it is school or his hotel) Singh puts on a dramatic performance in front of his audience: "'There was competition to serve'; says Singh to the group of political players who from round himself and Browne, 'and

among these helpers there was, as we knew, murder in the wings'" (Naipaul 233). A typical politician, he manipulates rhetoric knowing when to joke and when to "abolish[ed] the past" (Naipaul 236). He uses theatrical techniques "to figure himself as the star performer in political events on Isabella" (Lindroth 520): "So we brought drama of a sort to the island. I will claim this as one of our achievements. Drama, however much we fear it, sharpens our perception of the world, gives us some sense of ourselves, makes us actors, gives point and sometimes glory to each day. It alters a drab landscape" (Naipaul 256). His recollection of bloodshed is very general and blurred without any details of the assaults and the injured. Singh pictures himself as a heroic prisoner of the war, just as he saw on the picture of a man, who was "blindfolded, on his knees, far from home … this central figure had seemed to me … heroic and very private" (Naipaul 288). He admits later in his memoirs his playing a role of a politician is not his vocation and ends as a fiasco: "I believe I have also established, … his unsuitability for the role into which he was drawn, and his inevitable failure. From playacting to disorder: it is the pattern" (Naipaul 220). Singh refers to the political collapse on Isabella he and Browne attempt to prevent: "We had created drama. I had already seen Browne, as black folk-leader … But by returning, by putting myself at the passive center of events, by being the dandy, the picturesque Asiatic, I gave direction of a sort to the struggle" (Naipaul 286). He constructs a different role, that of a dandy, who is responsible for the events leading to the strife on Isabella: "the persona of the dandy allows for the protection of the secret self" (Lindroth 521).

Ralph Singh adjusts to the new self in his personal relationship with Sandra, whom he marries and later Lady Stella, with whom he has a brief encounter. In his relationship with Sandra, he becomes a heroic movie star, with the mysterious life and past. As their marriage is over, he continues to dramatize the break-up: "For me it was a moment of another type of drama: the aeroplane the cinematic symbol: Bogart in *Casablanca*, macintoshed, alone on the tarmac, the Dakota taking off into the night" (Naipaul 219). In a different scene where he walks around the empty house, he still performs a role, touching Sandra's things in a theatrical gesture: "I knew that the gesture, however self-regarding and theatrical, of handling Sandra's abandoned shoes and dresses, yet held something of truth: as that other gesture, in London of the magical light, on the day of my first snow, of holding the creased photograph of an unknown girl …" (Naipaul 220). Singh tries to assert his identity in the past and "through a deft rhetorical maneuver confirms the validity of his present performance as writer" (Lindroth 522).

In the beginning of the relationship with Ralph, Sandra herself plays various roles, modeling her speech and behavior after someone from "one of Bernard Shaw's plays" (Naipaul 50-51). She draws Ralph into her staged act, as he later admits that "no one had a greater capacity for occasions" (Naipaul 53). Quite unexpected is her demand for the marriage proposal, that years afterwards Ralph explains as being fallen under an actress's spell: "I suppose that if the idea had been put to me as a plea rather than as an order, if there had been the slightest suggestion that it issued from uncertainty rather than firmness and lucidity, I might have reacted otherwise" (Naipaul 55-56). Her sexuality, which she exposes to her audience, is alluring and tempting; however, it is frightening to Ralph who takes an 'escape' from his new wife after the ceremony: "… I thought of myself. I stood away from the pensive figure and considered him and his recent, terrible adventure" (Naipaul 59). If Sandra fulfills a role of a seductive actress, making Ralph play a hero, Lady Stella, quite opposite, reduces him to the level of childish innocence from *The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book,* that he "read, as I had been directed, as a child … And soon I was saddened, but pleasurably, not only by the loss … but by that limpid, direct vision of the world, neither of which had been mine, neither vision, of delight nor world, of order" (Naipaul 275). Lady Stella also 'plays' Ralph according to her game plan and when it fails, the role of the lover is dismissed: "No relationship, especially a play-relationship like ours, recovers from such a failure" (Naipaul 277).

Ralph's father sets an example for his son influencing him as an imitator. At one time of his life, Gurudeva also begins to play the role from *The Missionary Martyr of Isabella* which Ralph discovers in his father's books: "All of him was hidden except for his white turban, which the sun caught and turned to dazzle; and she thought then she saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth" (Naipaul 106). His father is very effective in his choice of costume to create drama in front of the audience. Later in life he continues to assert his identity under various masks. Shamed by his father's insecurity and distress (he leaves his family for the political fame), Ralph tries to be a part of his mother's family, which becomes rich by bottling Coca-Cola. As a result, his father takes out his anger on the shop where the drink is sold: "He broke ninety-six bottles in all, four full cases, breaking one bottle after another, methodically, as though he had been paid to do it; he didn't just lift a Coca-Cola case and smash it on the floor" (Naipaul 125). The destruction of Coca-Cola makes him a 'celebrity,' a 'hero' similarly to Ganesh in the eyes of the people: "He, who before

had kept himself to himself, now had no hesitation in asking a street idler to help him mend a bicycle puncture or dig the garden. It was astonishing how readily he got the help he asked for" (Naipaul 126). This new role gives him power over others now he seems to control. It includes his own family which he decides to take for a Sunday drive: he is living a new role he is completely submerged in. The family experience ends in a disaster due to Gurudeva's recklessness as the car rolls down and stops "slightly on its side" (Naipaul 147).

The next transformation Gurudeva undergoes is his role as a guerilla leader as he leaves his job in an education department to organize a strike of dock workers who follow him into the woods. As "the riots and burnings" take place on Isabella, Gurudeva offers people "disorder and drama" (Naipaul154). Ralph becomes a part of his father's drama, acquiring a role of "the son of the leader suddenly found" (Naipaul 157). Soon the drama wears itself out on Isabella as workers end their strike and move to town. Ralph's father has to find another role to play, another mask of self-failure. It happens before the Christmas horse racing when he steals the horse and performs a sacrifice (Naipaul 167). A fire of "sugar, pitchpine, butter and coconut" shocks the audience: "Primitive, bestial, degraded: those were some of the words used. … I shared their horror" (Naipaul 167, 169). The horse sacrifice in his father's mind represents the victory "to celebrate the expulsion of the Greeks from *Aryavarta*, the Aryan land" (Naipaul 169).

Ralph, in the acts of self-dramatization, puts on various identities: he has been a "dandy and a poseur" in his college days, a politician who fails people's needs, a "householder who has failed to put down roots in any of the numerous houses he occupies" (Thieme 517). In reality, Ralph Singh's life has never been 'real'; he has always imitated various roles as "the world I was born in was never real" (Naipaul 271). He is one of the "mimic men" of the New World "who pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing … for life" (Naipaul 175). Ralph Singh wishes to "have cleared the decks, and … prepared myself for fresh action" (Naipaul 300), positioning himself as a "free man," however, he is a "self-deceived … fraud" (Thieme 517). He lacks "identity and authenticity, [that] leads to his posturing, dandyism and flights into exile" (King 78). The writing of memoirs is nothing more than artificial sense of reality and experience as his journey to the self-discovery leaves him annihilated and dispossessed.

In his novels, Naipaul explores the power of colonial mimicry that destroys people's past and defrauds them of their identities. "To mimic, one needs a mirror, … our pantomime is conducted before a projection of ourselves which in its smallest gesture is based on

metropolitan references" (Walcott 6). Every act, gesture and word become uncreative and lack authenticity as people are reduced to the level of colonial parrots. Mimicry offers these characters a chance to grasp at their aspirations, yet the feeling of achievement is false. Jacques Lacan[9] states that mimicry is "like camouflage, not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against the mottled background, of becoming mottled …" (85). As chameleons, the characters attempt to adapt to the external, often hostile environment, creating a new idea of self. Animals use mimicry as a camouflage, a defense and a lure. Do men in a postcolonial world need mimicry to survive and preserve themselves? A number of characters, such as Ganesh, Ralph Singh and many others have entered the 'mirror,' "where there can only be simulations of self-discovery" (Walcott 7). The mimic men of the New World have no other choices but self-annihilation, migration and exile.

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Poesía / *Poetry*

POEMAS DE HUGO RÍOS-CORDERO

Réquiem Erótico II

Parte del punto de vista,
(contrapunto del aria, profunda)
es la cantata.
Canta Callas!
Se van tejiendo
una serie interminable
de recuerdos
dislocados
(ha llovido)
pero aquella mañana
sigue tatuada en la memoria.
Siénteme recuerdo!
Remembranzas interrumpidas
que terminan en un suspiro,
Una nota al calce,
Un adiós entumecido.

Eros y Tánatos

Díscola y casta:
Reverbera el eco
de un verano
Intransigente.
A orillas del faro
me senté y pensé
en los pequeños
torbellinos de lana
que me aguardarían
a diez años del origen.
Sin embargo, la muerte.

Praga de noche

Cerca del puente que une
la ciudad vieja
Con la malá strana
bajo el abrazo herido
de los santos de piedra
Se abre un espacio
De marionetas.
Mas allá, el cementerio judío,
el río, con sus puentes
como hebras de un botín mítico
y en el horizonte,
la silueta del castillo,
donde, me debo perder.

Ciclo de Pordenone

Un tren más tarde
la ciudad se revela,
desvelada y muda.

A la muerte

Es precisamente en este tiempo,
Cuando el frío dibuja en el aire,
Tiempo de volver a casa.
¿Pero dónde está?
Estas son las señales,
Estas son las canciones,
Estos son los momentos,
donde la distancia muere
Y te siento cerca.

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