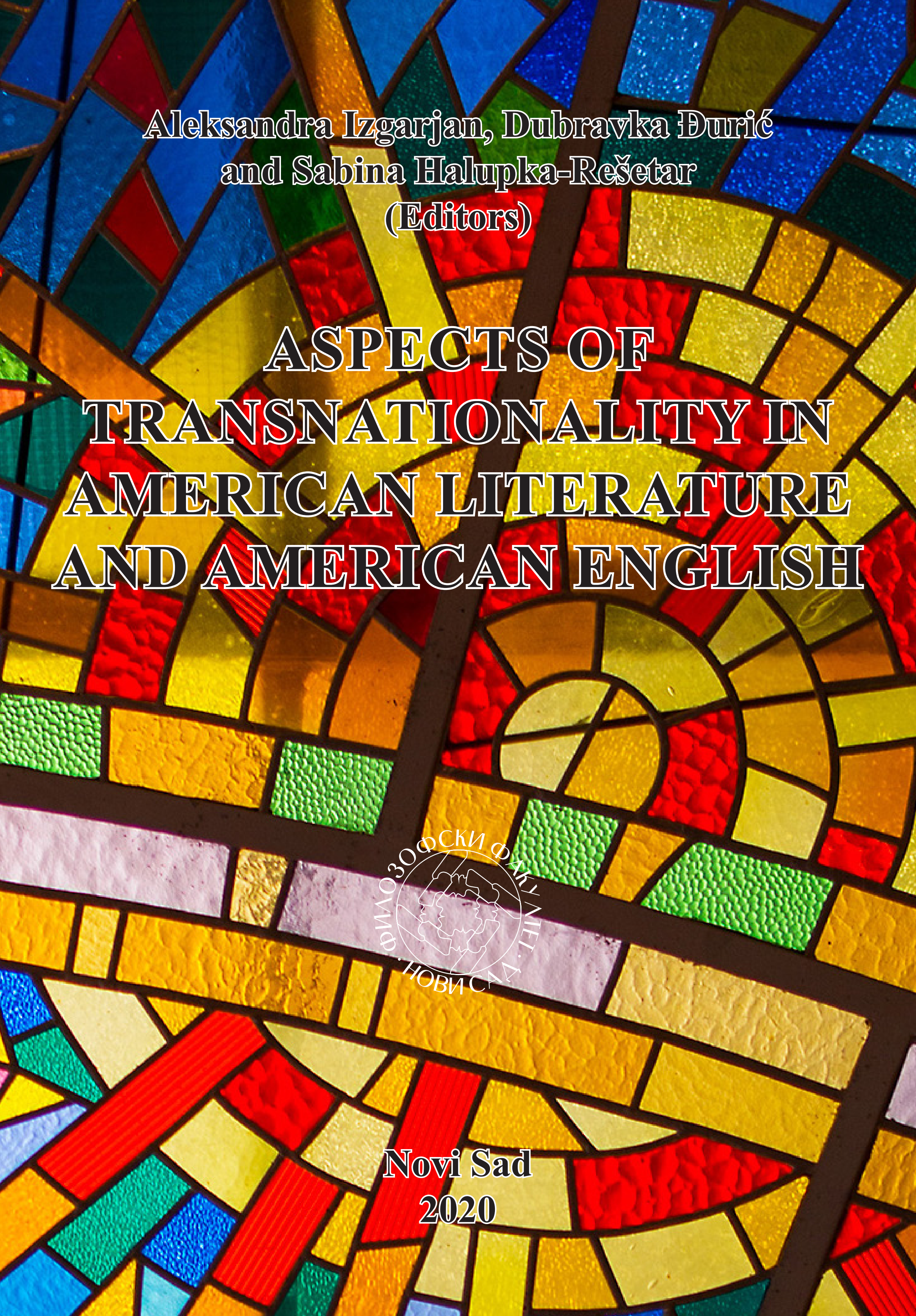

Aleksandra Izgarjan, Dubravka Đurić
and Sabina Halupka-Rešetar
(Editors)

ASPECTS OF TRANSNATIONALITY IN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

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ALEKSANDRA IZGARJAN, DUBRAVKA ĐURIĆ
AND SABINA HALUPKA-REŠETAR
EDITORS

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In Novi Sad
November 30, 2020

Dubravka Đurić
Aleksandra Izgarjan
Sabina Halupka-Rešetar

Dubravka Đurić, Aleksandra Izgarjan, Sabina Halupka-Rešetar

INTRODUCTION

Two years ago we started planning a conference which we imagined as a meeting point of colleagues from our regional Association for American Studies in South East Europe (AASSEE), scholars from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. We invited colleagues outside the region of South East Europe with whom we had collaborated and we wanted to use the conference as a platform for further cooperation and networks of exchange. However, as the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was proclaimed in March 2020, we had to cancel the conference and to invite our colleagues to contribute to this thematic issue with their articles.

When we first started discussing what the theme of the conference would be, we focused on the transnational turn in American studies since we know that many of our colleagues from AASSEE have worked in the field of transnational studies. We could not have foreseen that transnationality would become one of the key words during the political, economic and health crises that we are witnessing in many countries around the world at this moment. So, the title of the conference and of this issue gained an unintended and unimaginable meaning. The new meaning the term *transnationality* has gained since we first agreed to organize the conference is due to the global pandemic but it has made us realize how quickly terms can gain additional meanings and become redefined. Thus, the papers in this volume approach the phenomenon of transnationality from both the old and the new vantage points.

In her presidential address to the American Studies Association in 2004, Shelley Fisher Fishkin proclaimed the *transnational turn* advocating an urgent need for establishing the new *transnational paradigm* (Fishkin, 2005, p. 23-27). She points to the fact that different definitions of what American studies have been and are already existed, stressing that

> [t]oday American studies scholars increasingly recognize that the understanding requires looking beyond the nation’s borders, and understanding how the nation is seen from vantage points beyond its borders (Fishkin, 2005, p. 20).

The field of transnational American studies offers for her, let us say, a starting point for questioning the borders inside and outside the U.S., making visible that borders are not fixed, but are always porous despite all regulations intended to prevent this.

Emphasizing the influence of *global studies* in the process of transnationalization of literary studies, including American studies, Paul Jay points to the fact that globalization is not an entirely new phenomenon, but one which gained special impetus after the fall of communism with the accompanying process of transnationalization of neoliberal capitalism. The characteristics of this *neoliberal moment*[1] included the appearance of global communication by electronic media and the flow of capital due to the spread of transnational corporations (Jay, 2010, p. 2). Following Aiwa Ong, Michael Davidson points to the concept of “flexible citizenship” (Davidson, 2013, p. 24), meaning the flow of people which is dictated by labor flows. As a result of these processes, Fishkin points out that many studies already traced “multidirectional flows of people, ideas and goods and the social, political, linguistic, cultural, and economic crossroads generated in the process” (Fishkin, 2005, p. 22) outside, as well as inside the borders of the U.S. This meant that the scholars in the field of transnational American studies directed their attention to “geographical formations both beyond and below the level of the nation-state” (Shu and Pease, 2015, p. 2).

Fishkin (2005) and Jay (2010) stressed that the 1960s were important for the transformation of the American studies. This transformation was in direct relation to the anti-Vietnam war movement, civil rights movement, women’s movement, gay rights movement, and all other efforts being directed at social changes in the American society (Fishkin, 2005, p. 20; Jay, 2011, p. 17). As Jay suggests, “forces operating both within and outside of the academy” were significant in this process (Jay, 2010, p. 17). From that moment, the national paradigms of literary studies (which, dealing with similar processes in social sciences, Urlich Beck and Natan Sznaider called “methodological nationalism”) were replaced with “methodological cosmopolitanism” (2006, p. 4-5). “Methodological nationalism” means that for a long time literary studies were dominated by the Arnoldian model, which proposes that the “best” literature is able to “transcend the local, historical circumstances of its production" (Jay, 2010, p. 17). This notion was internalized, embodying what was thought to be the universal truth about certainty of reality and universal humanity. But, in truth, this universalism was abstract and functioned as a cover for Western, middle-class, white masculine conceptions of reality and its imposition on the rest of the world.

---

[1] The term *neoliberal moment* was coined using as a model the titles of the following books: J. G. A. Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Moment*, Norman Finkelstein, *Utopian Moment in Contemporary American Poetry* (Watten, 2003, p. xxvi-xxvii). By *neoliberal moment* we denote the idea of neoliberalism as a pervasive totalizing concept and practice which shapes all aspects of contemporary life.

Contextualizing the approaches in American Studies, Donald E. Pease points to the fact that during the Cold War era, in a dichotomized and divided world, the ideological dominance of the U.S. was sustained partly by its exceptionalism, i.e. the U.S. was positioned as a superpower which ruled over the world order of that time. The political hegemony of the U.S. produced an exceptionalism which was "the horizon of intelligibility" for the Cold War scholarship. But with the crash of these relatively stable macro-power relations, globalization, with its transnational imperative, became the background on which to perform American studies (Pease, 2016, p. 39-40). Although a transnational analysis of literature was already practiced at departments of comparative literature in its old version, it asked the question what is similar in literatures produced in different parts of the world (Jay, 2010, p. 22). But the old comparative literature was Europocentric. The transformations of American studies, especially from the 1980s, shifted the focus to the studies of ethnicity, feminism and minority literatures (Davis, 2013, p. 3). This approach paid attention to differences. Significant terms were introduced and branches of literary studies connected to them followed: "deconstructionism; feminist and gender studies; work on race, class, and sexual orientation, and minority, multicultural, and postcolonial literatures" (Jay, 2010, p. 17). All these approaches deal with the canon in a way that is gendered, racialized, sexualized and discussed in relation to class (Đurić, 2016, p. 33). These approaches included the *politicization of literature*, which meant that literary production had an agenda to function as an agency of emancipation. At the same time, theoretical approaches to literature, specially within the scope of cultural studies, cultural poetics, etc. developed the stance of *politics of theory*, which means that they were constructed as "discursive regimes based on difference that operates ideologically, and through institutions to both enable and restrict certain forms of agency" (Jay, 2010, p. 19). Henry Louis Gates Jr. made the interesting point about this institutional aspect of writing that the "margin (that is, its positionality) is an effect of the cultural dominant rather than an autonomous agency of subversion" (Gates Jr., 1992, p. 313). According to J. G. Marquior, the process in which "the center constructs the margin as a privileged locale" could be called, "official marginality" (qtd. in Gates Jr. 1992, p. 313). By the mid-1980s, this development and pluralization of

American studies was marked by a change in the naming of the field. American literary studies which included research of African American, Chicano/a, Asian American and Native American writers became known as Literatures of America (Jay, 2010, p. 21).

It should be noted that the transnationalization of American studies is connected to a *spatial turn* in the humanities, which added the geographical dimension to the discussion of cultural production. The attention in literary studies is now directed to space, place, landscape and mapping (Đurić, 2016, p. 37). On the other hand, Pease suggests that the notion of transnational is a contradictory and contested concept.

> Transnational American studies originated in efforts to comprehend the incompatible scenarios in which the United States – as simultaneously a territorially bound nation-state and a deterritorialized imperial state of exception – negotiated and attempted to regulate the global economic system. The transnational/diaspora complex describes the agent and outcome of the operations through which transnational citizen-subjects and diasporic subjects undertake transactions with the state of exception and with the unruly processes of the global economic order (Pease, 2015, p. 42).

Commenting on the transnational nature of American cultural production, Rocio G. Davis noted that it involves “the ways in which artifacts or manifestations of American culture have traveled and what has happened to the texts in the process” (2013, p. ii). In her opinion, “transnationalism has become one of the constitutive modes of cultural production in the twenty-first century” (2013, p. 2). Similarly, the articles in this volume consider the travelling of American culture and various approaches within the field on transnational American studies which can examine these pathways, for example the Americanization of cultures around the world. However, it also shows opposed directions in which aspects of different cultures travel to the U.S. and localize there. This makes the articles gathered here rather heterogeneous, but on the other hand, it is precisely this complexity that provides insight into the ways cultural products represent and produce a transnational turn (Davis, 2013, p. ii).

Davis points to the complex semantic field of the word *transnational*, which usually denotes three things. First, it refers to the different transcultural practices in the study of literature.

> [It] foregrounds comparative approaches between the different 'Americas,' the United States and Europe, unveiling the limits of the nation as a dominant critical parameter. Secondly, it attends to American studies done by scholars from outside the United States, engaging their perspectives and including their voices in conversations about culture. Thirdly, others approach it as a methodology arising from theoretical attention to critical paradigms such as multiculturalism, ethnicity, imperialism, postcoloniality, cosmopolitanism, or hemispheric studies (Davis, 2013, p. 2).

According to Pease, the transnationalization of American studies developed in three phases, from anti-imperialist to multiculturalist and finally to transnational approaches to literature. The first one, the anti-imperialist phase, took place between 1968 and 1979. Pease calls this approach "countercultural American studies," within which scholars were connected with transnational social movements in opposition to the U.S. as a Cold War state of exception. By this phrase he maintains that during the Cold War period, the U.S. functioned as "an exception to the rules through which it regulated the rest of the global order" (Pease, 2016, p. 39). The second phase, which Pease calls "multicultural American studies," was established during the post-Cold War period, in which the welfare state disappeared under the pressures of the transnational market. The third phase, in which transnational American studies were established as a field of research, appeared "in the wake of 9/11" (Pease, 2016, p. 51).

Analyzing the state of transnational American studies proliferating after 2004, Shelley Fisher Fishkin divided this broad textual terrain into four categories. The first category is "*broadening the frame*, integrating U.S. history and literature into broader historical and comparative frameworks and integrating multiple national histories and literatures with one another more fully" (Fishkin, 2013, p. 14). The second category encompasses works which explore "*the cross-fertilization of culture,* particularly the ways in which literature and popular culture from different locations influence and shape each other." In the third category, she places research in "previously neglected *transnational dimensions of canonical figure* not generally viewed in transnational contexts before." Finally, "[t]he fourth category involves *renewed attention to travel and migration.* It also involves renewed attention to *how texts travel* and what we learn about different cultures in the process" (Fishkin, 2013, italics in the original, p. 14-15). The author argues that this approach points to "*the limitations of an English-only approach to American* *studies*" (Fishkin, italics in the original, 2013, p. 15). We think that the texts in this volume can be placed in all of these categories.

The contributions to this volume

The texts in this volume address the concept of transnational American studies in practice at several levels. First of all, our contributors are transnational American scholars, who wrote out of different national contexts, mostly former East-European ones, except Dr Carmen Birkle, who graciously accepted to be the plenary speaker. Dr Birkle's work functions as a symbolic link between European Americanists and Americanists in South East Europe, similarly to our colleagues from Hungary, Réka M. Cristian and Ágnes Zsófia Kovács. Our contributors enter into a dialogue with theories which shape American studies within and outside the U.S. All the texts, with quite different theoretical backgrounds, demonstrate that American studies is articulated as a transnational and transdisciplinary field of literary studies. What this means is that the scholars in their texts examine different parameters of culture and cultural experiences of the writers, as well as genres and forms they use, such as autobiographies, movies, plays, and poetry. They address the fact that the authors and their works find themselves caught in the net of transcultural transactions in various ways.

Our thematic issue shows that the notion of American literature is traditionally defined as the study of prose fiction. Contextualist approaches to literature from the 1990s developed methodologies which privileged the reflexive, referential and documentary quality of literary texts. That is why while most of our contributors deal with novels, several works exhibit a tendency to privilege autobiographies and memoirs (Birkle, Kovács, Dejanović, Runtić and Drenjančević). Even those articles which deal predominantly with the themes of identity construction, travel, space or the process of Othering in transnational framework, point to autobiographical elements in the works of the authors in question (Šesnić, Ćurić, Manojlović and Žeželj Kocić). This is in line with Runtić and Drenjančević's conclusion, following Couser's study they use in their article, that the memoir, as a subgenre of autobiography, seems to be the dominant 21st century literary mode "that now rivals fiction in popularity and critical esteem and exceeds it in cultural currency" (Couser, 2012, p. 3). On the other hand, as Joseph Harrington put it, "[i]n the professional imagery, the corollary of poetry's hypostatization is the notion that fiction provides a privileged access to 'the social'" (Harrington, 2009, p. 272).

That is why "poetry studies" are generally not included in "American literature" and we have just one text dealing with American experimental poetry. Thanks to cultural studies, visual studies and transmedia studies, American studies have been broadened to embrace discussions of narratives shaped in other media than the national language, so several contributors analyze film and cartoon production (Maleska and Veseljević Jerković) or examine the function of photography in autobiography (Kovács). Two of the papers in this volume focus on the concept of transnationality in language(s) (American English and Serbian). One of them (Knežević and Halupka-Rešetar) aims to establish what causes the scarce usage of dictionaries in English for Specific Purpose university courses while the other one deals with distinctly American topics in movie titles and how these are translated into another language and culture (Panić Kavgić).

It should be stressed also that the articles in the volume belong to the transdisciplinary paradigm of literary and linguistic studies. This transdisciplinary, transcultural and transnational approach made it difficult to structure the book, or more precisely, made us more flexible in doing this. This means that there are many ways to arrange the texts in this book into a logical sequence. What we are offering is as arbitrary and provisional a structure as any other would have been. Our guiding principle was to choose a feature common to several articles and to consider it as the dominant characteristic around which we then organized a chapter. The chapters are grouped following these dominant features: (1) travelling cultures,[2] (2) identity politics, (3) intermediality/transmediality, and a separate chapter (4) is dedicated to linguistics-related topics. According to this, the volume is divided into the following chapters: "Transnationalization and traveling cultures," "Transnationality, (self)representational practices, space and identity politics," "Intermediality/transmediality and narrative production," and "Transnationality in linguistics".

The first section, "Transnationalization and travelling cultures" consists of five texts: Carmen Birkle's "'Obama Sushi' and the Ch(i)ang Way of Life: Transculturating America and the World," Réka M. Cristian's "Transnational Encounter in a Selection of Works by Tennessee Williams," Aleksandra Izgarjan's "Poetics of Translation in the Works of Contemporary Transcultural American Writers", Jelena Šesnić's "Margaret Fuller, America's First Transnational Romantic," and Slađana Stamenković's "The Transnational Memory of Violence: Terrorism and Identity in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man.*"

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[2] For this term see "James Clifford's 'Travelling cultures'" in Baldwin et al., 2005, p. 175-176.

All the texts in this chapter include the idea of travelling cultures in the sense that people (the authors and their characters) are traveling and with them travel their cultural practices. In a new environment these practices are localized in another geopolitical and geo-cultural space, and localization usually means hybridization.

Carmen Birkle defined the approach she uses in her article as practicing American studies as part of Cultural studies, emphasizing that Food Studies should be included in Transnational American studies. She traces historically the relations of the Chinese population and their social status in America, and stresses that she will deal with "the impact of Chinese food and foodways on the United States" (p. 30), pointing that the "[f]oodways are expressive of and influential in intercultural encounters" (p. 31). Birkle points out that this theme is connected with the questions of constructing national identities and transculturation thanks to geographical mobility and shows how this process is deeply connected with hybridizations. Because she deals with the memoirs of Cecilia Chiang, a Chinese American chef, entrepreneur and author, her text reflects how the author recreates the self in writing. "Chiang's autobiographical narratives are authentically hybrid in their intercultural mingling and mutual impact. They are neither Chinese nor American (in a Western-style sense) but Chinese American in a way that is more than just the combination of the two ingredients. They have culinarily transculturated the US-American nation and, by extension, the world" (p. 55).

Réka M. Cristian researches Tennessee Williams's "seven plays and a novel in order to map types of transnational encounters that take place in Williams's fictional world" (p. 59). She gives the genealogy of the notion of transnational America from 1916 to the beginning of the 21st century. The experience of different characters in Williams's work shows the range of practicing transnationalism/cosmopolitanism which is symbolically shaped in the private space or is manifested in real traveling adventures. For example, in Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* the character Tom stands outside the world of his family, and "'literally and figuratively' … by traveling finds 'an avenue of escape through his art'" (p. 64). Cristian sees her article as part of a transnational turn in American studies, showing Williams's work as basically practicing literature as a transnational endeavor. We can say that Cristian follows Fishkin's suggestion to examine previously overlooked transnational dimensions of a canonical figure which were not placed in transnational contexts before.

Aleksandra Izgarjan explores the "works of American writers who use the metaphor of translation to point to different ways hybrid identity is constructed in the contemporary, trans-national American society" (p. 74). She uses translation theory as a tool to intervene in literary theory in order to "compare translation cultural strategies with the narrative strategies used by American transcultural writers" (p. 75). She analyzes the works of Asian-American, Chicano and Native American authors to illustrate the process of hybridizations of culture, languages and cultures in the transnational setting of contemporary United States. Code switching emerges as the dominant strategy the writers use to reflect the power dynamics between American English and other languages spoken in various ethnic communities in the U.S. Izgarjan uses the notion of performative gender to demonstrate the way many transcultural writers who use code-mixing also exploit the metaphor of transvestism to question the boundaries between the dominant social categories (race, class and gender) and to point to the fluidity of these categories.

From the perspective of transnational turn in American studies, Jelena Šesnić discusses romanticism in the case of Margaret Fuller outside the frame of "an American version of the idea of world literature" (Voelz, 2017, p. 92). She also uses the idea of "romantic cosmopolitism," stressing Fuller's "literary and cultural 'European cosmopolitanism'" (p. 101). She skillfully reflects on how Fuller utilized her translation of Goethe's work to "de-provincialize America." This endeavor, which Šesnić aptly reads in the context of transnationality, helped Fuller to sustain her concept of women's emancipation and to ground the idea of Bildung, her own and other women's. Šesnić traces Fuller's work while she moves through different cultural spaces, first inside the U.S., from Boston to New York, and then to Europe (England, Scotland, France and Italy). Fuller's texts about her European tour, particularly her life in Italy and bearing witness to the political turmoil during the establishment of the Roman Republic in 1849, illustrates her transnational change of perspective, which includes both Europe and the U.S.: "The sights of Europe, or, rather, what Fuller made of them, allowed her not only to actually get to know Europe, but to refine and crystallize her long-germinating thoughts on her own society and country, of which she had previously had serious misgivings" (p. 100).

The text by Slađana Stamenković treats traveling cultures in a very specific way, focusing her discussion of DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* on transnational memory studies. In her interpretation, global terrorism is discussed as a global phenomenon. The concept of transnational memory refers to the fact that memories are always constructed in relation to the construction of transnational memory in the contemporary world in which "information flow reaches incredible speed and knows no boundaries" (p. 111). Transnational memory is understood primarily in relation to identity, specifically a national one. The collective identity of any country is constructed partly due to "transnational flow and intercultural exchange with emphasis on the political relevance and social implications" of historical events and their textual recollection (p. 111). For the understanding of the 9/11 terrorist attack around which DeLillo's novel revolves, it is important to see that juxtaposed to the Western construction of global and/or national memory is the construction which resides in the Muslim or any other non-Western community. In other words, non-Western communities construct their counter-memories. This means that "what is often overlooked from the Western perspective is that the travelling process flows in both directions" (p. 111). Having these concepts in mind, DeLillo intended "to highlight 'the similarity of terrorist motivations across the globe', as well as 'to explore personal and national traumas transnationally'" (p. 114). This is evident in his linking of the terrorist attacks in New York on 9/11 with the activities of a terrorist group in Germany in the 1960s and 1970s.

The second group of articles under the title "Transnationality, (self)representational practices, space and identity politics" consists of the following contributions: Sanja Runtić and Ivana Drenjančević's "'Witnessing Beyond Recognition': An Existentialist Reading of Francisco Cantu's *The Line Becomes A River: Dispatching from the Border*," Mirna Ćurić's "Reading Space and Identity in Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*," Sanja Manojlović's "Images of the Other in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*," Aleksandra Žeželj Kocić's "Towards Transnational Identification: Hemingway's Revision of Africa," Jovana Petrović's "Space in Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit*," Vladimir Vujošević's "Transnational Condition and Spatial Control: (De) sacralization of Space in Jhumpa Lahiri's 'This Blessed House'" and Ivana Dejanović's "The Image of Post-War Serbia in Jelena J. Dimitrijević and Helen Lea Reed's Writings." The texts in this section deal with the construction of identity in novels and memoirs of ethnic writers in the U.S., in which space functions as a productive concept for the creation of the hybridity of the protagonists. Political and cultural spaces are represented as places in which both the forces for protection of a supposed national purity and forces of hybridization operate.

In their analysis of Cantu's memoir, Sanja Runtić and Ivana Drenjančević examine the concept of the border between the U.S. and Mexico, starting with the theoretical framework of "life-writing studies." They conclude that "the autobiographical mode functions as a 'rhetorical strategy' that exposes global, transnational, and economic backdrop to contemporary citizenship and identity formation" (p. 131). Similarly, they define the memoir as an important discursive form, which can serve as a public forum for discussion of public matters regarding the personal, but also social, ideological, and political activities of its protagonists. Using Jean-Paul Sartre's, then Hannah Arendt and Emmanuel Levinas' concepts, Runtić and Drenjančević discuss the existentialist ethics of responsibility, which is particularly relevant for their article since it deals with the memoir of a former U.S. Border-Patrol agent. In their discussion, the notion of shame becomes also important, because it is now considered to be "an ontological structure that defines the core of our identity and plays a central role in relational subject formation" (p. 133). Turning to the analysis of Cantu's memoir, the authors conclude: "He emphasizes the complex interaction between the geopolitical and geo-economic shifts and alarmist discourses on both sides of the border in producing the immigrant crisis within the borderlands space" (p. 139).

In her discussion of Sandra Cisneros's novel, *The House on Mango Street*, Mirna Ćurić uses the concepts derived from spatial theories, gender and ethnic studies. She particularly relies on transnational spatial perspectives to question identity construction and social positions of Latinas in the U.S. "Focusing on particular immigrant experiences, Cisneros shows that spaces are not only physical points in time, but constitutive elements of personal and collective identification" (p. 158). Following Lefebvre and Foucault, she sees space as a social product that further reflects social relations. She also utilizes Soja's concept of thirdspace since it encompasses aspects of decentralization practices, bicultural living, identity, and processes related to the demarginalization and reaffirmation of minorities. The article centralizes two particular types of spaces – the domestic, embodied in the house and the public, epitomized in Mango Street. The space of Mango Street, a Mexican-American neighborhood or barrio, represents a social periphery and a space of margins through which Cisneros exposes Latino minorities whose position in the U.S. is subjugated. In her analysis of various spaces that the main character Esperanza inhabits, Ćurić illustrates how space, ethnicity and gender are interconnected in terms of different spatial lines that are drawn between male and female Hispanic American characters, as well as white and colored characters. Like Runtić and Drenjančević and Petrović, Ćurić shows how characters use public and private spaces (including their bodies) as the sites of both colonization and resistance.

Discussing the process of Othering in Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, Sanja Manojlović uses postcolonial theories, especially Edward Said's *Orientalism.* At the beginning, Manojlović claims that the idea of Desai's novel is to show "that the discourse on images of the Other, which was employed during the colonial period, still persists as a medium of thought and communication" (p. 186). She juxtaposes two characters in the novel: one belonging to the generation of young Indians, who is thwarted by his lower class position in India and goes to the U.S. to find his American dream and another, who, as a member of the older generation of Indians, emulates British identity. Both end up heavily disappointed in their attempts to succeed in the western societies, highlighting the severity of the post-colonial era towards former, colonized subjects and the hardship of the immigrants in the U.S., which propagates democratic values and civil rights but falls short of these ideas when it comes to the treatment of minorities.

Aleksandra Žeželj Kocić analyzes *Under Kilimanjaro*, Ernest Hemingway's posthumous work. The story *Green Hills of Africa*, which was written prior to *Under Kilimanjaro*, gives an account of Hemingway's first African safari. In *Under Kilimanjaro* he deals with his second safari, and exhibits quite different intentions. He "sheds his role as a white conqueror and begins to assimilate with his surroundings" (p. 205). The difference is in Hemingway's changing attitudes towards the question of race and gender. Žeželj Kocić claims that while in the 1930s Hemingway constructed himself as a masculinist and racist, which was reflected in the way he built his characters, in the 1950s his attitudes changed and his masculinity became softer, which can be noticed in *Under Kilimanjaro*. In this book, he showed "that Africa has the power to make the Westerner go primitive and immerse himself completely in the African experience" (p. 217). According to some scholars, Hemingway made a revision of his views on Africa in this book and it seems as if he "adopted African values onto hi Western worldview" (p. 218). Africa became the space of transformation, and as Žeželj Kocić concludes: "He had tried to redefine the rigid myth of his persona of a proto-masculine white American writer, having become almost angry with the stubbornness of his skin and his Western culture" (p. 219). In that respect, we can say that by using the transnational framework, Žeželj Kocić, like Šesnić and Cristian, managed to offer a different perspective on the canonical representation of Ernest Hemingway.

In order to show "the connection between the land and Native American individual and communal identity" (p. 221) Jelena Petrović uses studies of space and geopolitics as a frame to consider colonial circumstances of Indigenous people in the U.S. The novel *Mean Spirit* by Linda Hogan is based on the historical fact of "the 1920s, when oil was discovered under the land owned by the Osage people" (p. 222) and shows the drama of the people living there when white colonialists committed crimes to gain the territory.

Petrović connects spatial turn in literary studies with postcolonial studies in order to reveal the territory/the space as a terrain of the conflict between white colonial desire and Native populations, which resulted in discrimination, oppression and murder. Like the other articles in this chapter, Petrović's also shows how space is intrinsically linked to the construction of identity and to history. It is also important to note that, as Petrović suggests, "in close relation to geopolitics stands Edward Said's appeal for 'geographical inquiry into historical experience'" (p. 226) of colonization. This is similar to Runtić and Drenjančević's analysis of the ways Cantu in his memoir "emphasizes the complex interaction between the geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts and alarmist discourses on both sides of the border in producing the immigrant crisis within the borderlands space" (p. 139).

The examination of space in relation to the construction of ethnic identity is also at the center of Vladimir Vujošević's article on the (de)sacralization of space in Jhumpa Lahiri's "This Blessed House." Vujošević skillfully combines the theory of space with the postcolonial framework in order to show how the Catholic paraphernalia that crop up in the house inhabited by a newly married Indian American couple (Sanjeev and Twinkle) can be understood as Lahiri evoking a poltergeist scenario. In this scenario, the haunted space is used to show how the dominant society or colonial authority attempts to repress or ignore the heritage previously belonging to this space which is being colonized/possessed. The elements of the suppressed culture serve "as an eerie reminder of the permanent instability of cultural boundaries" (p. 245). Vujošević claims that "Sanjeev perceives his new house as a place of control, a manifestation of his success and authority" (p. 251) connecting this domestication of space to the colonial enterprise of spatial governance. In dealing with the religious paraphernalia and his wife's obsession with them, he has to come to terms with his desire to control both his domestic space and his wife. "It could be claimed that towards the end of the story the objects the couple discovers come to seem like the true mediums of disenchantment that make the "ideal home" (and the ideal marriage) into a real one" (p. 258).

Ivana Dejanović examines the identity of the patriotic and feminist Serbian writer Jelena J. Dimitrijević and her travelogue *The New World or A Year in America* (1934), as well as Helen Leah Reed's *Serbia: A Sketch* (1917). In her text, Dejanović constructs the heroic time of Serbian emergence on a modern world's political and cultural scene, in which a wealthy Serbian woman took part. The discourse of patriotism in Dimitrijević's work is shown while she describes her experience during her one-year stay in the U.S. in 1917. Typically for this time, Dimitrijević "emphasizes the feeling of pride for her origin and "the sacrifices her people had to make" (p. 267). Dimitrijević acted as a mediator and informant, who worked on the creation of the heroic image of Serbia, which was not well known in the Western world system of countries. Dejanović demonstrates how this image of Serbia as a martyred, but heroic little country, can be found in Helen Leah Reed's writing as well.

The third group of articles is centered around the concepts of "Intermediality/transmediality and narrative production" and consists of four texts: Ágnes Zsófia Kovács's "Becoming Visible: On the Role of Pictures in Michelle Obama's *Becoming*," Dubravka Đurić's "(Trans)nationalism and American Feminist Experimental Writing," Kalina Maleska's "Encounters of Cultures in Climate Change Narratives," and Selma Veseljević Jerković's "(Trans)nationalism of Super-Hero Films." All of these texts address intermediality and/or transmediality, which means that they usually do not center around narratives performed in the national language. They examine the relation of an autobiography performed in words and photography, or narrative performed in words (novels) and film or cartoon, or works which use words as visual material to work with.

In her article on the autobiographical narrative written by Michelle Obama, Ágnes Zsófia Kovács explores intermediality through the relation of text and images within the context of a pictural turn and visual studies. The problem of race visibility is considered as "a general, socially constructed and overtly politicized media image of a colored public figure" (p. 278). Kovács places Obama's text in the wider context of African American culture by focusing on traditional uses of pictures in African American autobiographies, as well as the themes of voice and visibility in the works by African American women. She contrasts Toni Morrison's notion of "the veil" and the phenomenon of "the American gaze." The veil refers to the tradition of suppressing too sordid descriptions of racial violence against African American from their autobiographies so as not to offend the white audience. The notion of the American gaze refers to the way the U.S. (white) public views an African American public figure and the biased stereotypes reserved for an African American woman who takes on a public role. In the case of Michelle Obama, the American gaze made itself felt as a hurting presence when she was represented by the media as unpatriotic, unfeminine, an angry black woman. Kovács concludes that Obama, in spite of the American gaze, managed to turn her early stereotypical and negative public image into something more personalized and positive, making her story into a socially constructive mode of women's transmedial empowerment.

Dubravka Đurić discusses experimental poetry as a transnational practice, which is constructed in relation to European avant-garde ranging from Italian futurism, Russian cubo-futurism to European dadaism. She examines the field of American experimental poetry and its relations to poststructuralist and feminist theories. This approach points to the transgressiveness of poetry which questions the disciplinary borders between poetry and theory, poetry and prose. It also develops visual aesthetics, which treats words with their visual and plastic qualities in making visual configurations on the printed page. Visual poetics is traced from Ezra Pound to Charles Olson. Special emphasis in the article is placed on the fact that male poets used visuality as a tool to masculinize the field of poetry. The poem and its configuration on the page in Olson's work is later used and redefined in the works of American feminist experimental poets like Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Kathleen Fraser. In the context of feminism and poststructuralism, the relation to French theory is important and is seen in the concepts of *écriture feminine* and *female aesthetics*, hybridity of the textual production, as well as the articulation of an anti-essentialist politics. In relation to international, as well as American experimental poetry, the notion of a spatialized concept of language became especially important and is connected with the visual turn in American poetry.

Kalina Maleska's article focuses on narratives on climate change, which include climate warming and climate migrations due to it. She discusses Kim Stanley Robinson's novel *Signs of Rain* and the film *The Day After Tomorrow*, directed by Roland Emmerich. These narratives, performed in quite different media, are transnational and global because they show that the problem of climate change "transgresses borders, and concerns the whole population of the world" (p. 314). Two aspects of these narratives are stressed. The first one is that they belong to the science fiction genre, which could be understood as the most important narrative mechanism for imagining the future of the contemporary world. The second one is that these narratives are performed as implicit and explicit criticisms of capitalism. Maleska uses the concept of Anthropocene and in her analysis of the novel and the film, she relies on non-fictional, mostly theoretical writings on this theme. Maleska emphasizes that although the Anthropocene "refers to the impact that humans have produced on the earth's climate, and specifically the fact that global warming is induced, at least to a certain degree, by humans, the notion of the Anthropocene involves more complex and contradictory implications. In the sense of humankind's influence on nature, it refers to the fact that climate change is inevitably linked not only to nature, as the climate is a natural phenomenon, but also to culture and to politics, as they play a great role in its alterations" (p. 317).

Selma Veseljević Jerković's analysis of the phenomenon of superheroes revolves around the concept of transmediation. She illustrates how comic books, as a formerly subcultural genre, are transmediated in the film and recently in the TV serial industry for mass global consumerism of popular culture. The article opens with the statement that the "[e]xplicit transnational nature of graphic narratives is visible at the levels of authorship, form, as well as content" (p. 330). The author focuses on popular superhero films, which are the products of globalization. Dealing with the content of these materials and analyzing the characters in them, she illustrates the construction of transcultural and transnational meanings. She shows how in narrative and visual ways, the superheroes are represented in a mixed nationalistic rhetoric with the perspective of globalization, especially after 9/11. Jerković concludes: "Surely, the film and comic book industries are first and foremost businesses, constantly seeking to increase sales; however, they also serve as reflections of societal trends and changes. In that sense, the recent incarnation of Ms. Marvel demonstrates the readiness of the American society to change and embrace transnational subjects as members of their own society" (p. 346).

The fourth chapter, entitled "Transnationality in linguistics" contains only two papers, Ljiljana Knežević and Sabina Halupka-Rešetar's article "What Causes the Scarce Use of Dictionaries in ESP Courses? A Qualitative Analysis of the Teachers' Perspective" followed by Olga Panić Kavgić's "Transnationality in Language: Translated Titles of Recent U.S. Films Depicting Distinctly American Topics", both of which discuss at length the connection between American culture and American English and Serbian culture and language.

In Ljiljana Knežević and Sabina Halupka-Rešetar's paper "What Causes the Scarce Use of Dictionaries in ESP Courses? A Qualitative Analysis of the Teachers' Perspective" the authors present a qualitative analysis of the teachers' perspective on the frequency and ways of using general and specialized dictionaries in teaching English for specific purposes at higher education institutions in Serbia. As a follow-up of an earlier quantitative study (Knežević et al., 2019), which established that dictionaries are scarcely used in ESP classes at tertiary level in Serbia, the aim of this paper is try to establish what objective and subjective reasons lie behind this and ultimately, to stress the need to raise ESP teachers' awareness of the advantages of using dictionaries in class and of the need to train their students in using dictionaries. While several objective reasons recurring in the data collected using semi-structured interviews (e.g. the learning environment, i.e. large groups and insufficient teaching hours) indeed pose a challenge for teachers to include dictionary use practice in their classes, there are also subjective reasons, and as the authors stress, “the predominant reason for not using dictionaries, as the current study shows, lies in a specificity of ESP teaching and is related to the role of the ESP teacher as a syllabus and course designer” (p. 365). The findings of this study suggest that more attention should be paid to raising the teachers’ awareness of the need to introduce dictionary skills into their ESP syllabi, especially since it has been proven that millennial EFL learners rely heavily on digital resources but do not make efficient users of these resources as they only pay attention to a small portion of the information these resources have to offer.

The volume closes with the article entitled “Transnationality in Language: Translated Titles of Recent U.S. Films Depicting Distinctly American Topics”, by Olga Panić-Kavgić. She analyzes the Serbian translations of the titles of one hundred feature-length U.S. films from the past 35 years which deal with distinctly American topics, such as predilection for gun violence, the tragedy of 9/11, defending the principles and foundations of democracy and justice, the institution of U.S. Presidency and the White House, U.S. military interventions abroad, as well as personal war and post-war experiences, civil rights, ethnic diversity and racial tensions, chasing the American dream and others. The aim of the paper is to establish which translation procedures were used in presenting American culture to foreign audiences through movie titles, seen as a paratextual introduction to films as works of art. Panić-Kavgić concludes that “the Serbian translator did succeed to a considerable extent in adequately transferring, through the translated titles, the discussed U.S. topics and values to the Serbian audience” (p. 389) by relying mostly on contextual reformulation or on direct translation. The former strategy was used in those cases where the translator deemed that abandoning the linguistic model of the source title and recreating it so that it “made more sense” in Serbian was the best strategy to apply, though this was sometimes to the detriment of the intended accuracy and precision. The latter strategy was applied when the translator judged that the Serbian audience would gain more from directly transferring the linguistic expression of the English original, though this was sometimes to the detriment of semantic clarity.

From our description of the book it is obvious that it covers a broad range of current issues in transnational American studies, as well as a broad range of theoretical and methodological approaches. The contributors to this volume explored transnational American studies from the perspective of cultural studies, food studies, postcolonial studies, translation studies, space studies, experimental poetry studies, transmedia studies, popular culture studies, visual studies, transnational linguistics, visual studies, gender and race studies, etc. These approaches are put into interaction and we hope that they will be inspirational for further research. We also hope that this volume will be the first in a line of volumes that will present regional and European American Studies in its richness and differences and as it is practiced within this geocultural area.

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TRANSNATIONALIZATION AND TRAVELLING CULTURES

Prof. Dr. Carmen Birkle
Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik
Philipps-Universität Marburg
birkle@staff.uni-marburg.de

"OBAMA SUSHI" AND THE CH(I)ANG WAY OF LIFE: TRANSCULTURATING AMERICA AND THE WORLD

Abstract: The United States is a country of immigrants, and immigrants have shaped the U.S. on all levels ever since the first permanent English-speaking settlement in Jamestown in 1607. Immigration has been essential in the formation of a multicultural and hybrid U.S.-American culture. Although its components are not always at peace with each other, a powerful nation has emerged. I propose to use food culture and food metaphors to discuss what I call transculturation, of both U.S.-American culture and, in its wake, of world cultures. My focus will be on Asian immigration to the United States and its influence on U.S. foodways, on the one hand, and on these foodways' reverse migration to Asia. Autobiographies and fiction written by Asian Americans in a broad sense will serve as bases for my analyses. Overall, I argue that this mutual influence is an ongoing cyclical process so that notions of cultural hybridity may begin to transform our understanding of cultural authenticity. This transformation is visible in Chinese American Cecilia Chiang's Mandarin restaurants in the United States and her memoirs as well as in some entrepreneurs' attempts to introduce Chinese American restaurants to China.

Key words: Food Studies, foodways, Chinese American, Cecilia Chiang, memoirs, authenticity, transculturation.

1. Introduction

The United States is a country of immigrants, and immigrants have shaped the United States on all levels ever since the first permanent English-speaking settlement was founded in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, and arguably even before. Immigration has contributed to the formation of a multicultural and hybrid American culture. Food culture and food metaphors have both contributed to and are indications of a transculturation of

U.S.-American culture and, in its wake, of world cultures. Asian, above all Chinese, immigration to the United States has had a strong influence on U.S. foodways, on the one hand, and on these foodways' reverse migration to Asia, and China in particular. This mutual influence is an ongoing cyclical process so that notions of cultural hybridity begin to transform our understanding of cultural authenticity.

Foodways have always served multiple purposes, be they social, cultural, economic, biological, or psychological, and have been seen as manifestations and expressions of identity backgrounds such as gender, ethnicity, nation, religion, class, and more. Identities are in flux, and so are foodways. If foodways and identities are inextricably connected, people who search for a usable notion of (their own) identity also aspire to an authentic self that finds its correlation in authentic food. Authenticity, thus, has been a buzzword in Cultural Studies, mostly because people desire and believe in authenticity (see Taylor, 1991; Orwell, 1989) but have been unable to actually agree on a fixed definition of the term, let alone of the objects, practices, or rituals that they label authentic. Similarly, life writing is a genre that by definition is strongly linked to identity. In any form of life writing, an identity is created, questioned, changed, and negotiated. Life writing, as the term implies, brings together life and writing, and an important element of life is food. Consequently, autobiographical narratives are used by immigrants to come to terms with the loss of a home and their arrival in a new and foreign location. Food connects both locations and serves as the intercultural mediator in a contact zone that allows – explicitly or implicitly – for the interaction of people and countries that then leads to changes in the immigrants' and the host countries' cultures. These changes initiate the process of transculturation (see Birkle, 2004).

Food is omnipresent in immigrant literature and has been dealt with by numerous scholars, often with a focus on Asian foodways in the United States (see, for example, Arnold, Tunç, and Chong). However, the example I have picked for my analysis is not an immigrant narrative that happens to include these foodways, but Cecilia Chiang's *The Mandarin Way* (as told to Allan Carr) (1974; second edition 1980) and *The Seventh Daughter: My Culinary Journey from Beijing to San Francisco* (2007), which are actual food memoirs that have two protagonists, namely Cecilia Chiang (*1920 in Wuxi, China) and the food that she produces, most visible in the food images and their recipes. Cecilia Chiang brings together her own life experiences, the restaurant she opens up, and the food she prepares as an homage to her mother who, as a traditional aristocratic Chinese wife with bound feet, perfected the art of cuisine by instructing the chefs the family employed. That is the kind of food Chiang considers authentic, and it is what she reproduces in her restaurant *The Mandarin*. *The Mandarin Way* as memoir is dedicated to the memory of her mother "who showed [her] the way all her life" (n.pag.).[1]

More recently, attempts have been made by men of both Chinese and non-Chinese descent to introduce Chinese American food and foodways to China, among them Cecilia Chiang's son Philip, who co-founded the food-chain *P.F. Chang's* in the United States and has recently (2018) started to bring his creations to the country of his origins, which he had to leave as a child. Whether we call his attempt remigration or re-orientalism will be a matter of debate, but it certainly questions the authenticity of foodways and serves as an interesting case study – together with a similar attempt by Fung Lam and Dave Rossi's *The Fortune Cookie* in Shanghai – of how and why people label something authentic and, even more importantly, of how they connect food to ethnicity/nationality and identity.

"Obama Sushi," a combination of African American and Japanese ingredients, can thus be considered the admittedly humorous symbol of processes of culinary transculturation that allow for each element to still be visible and yet enmeshed in new creations. Foodways may be discussed rationally, as we do in academic studies, and fixed in place in recipes, as cookbooks do, but foodways are more than that. They give us insight into the drama of life, the hardships of migration, the nostalgia for a past irretrievably lost, identity and self/other constructions, the longings, desires, and emotions of a human being; in short, they allow us access to what makes a human being human. Foodways, like humans, cross national borders, meet and mingle, and help us understand what happens in these intercultural encounters. Food Studies, therefore, are and have to be essential ingredients in Transnational American Studies.

2. Food Studies, Life Writing, and Authenticity

The emphasis of my discussion lies on the impact of Chinese food and foodways on the United States. This impact has become a staple of research in American Studies as part of a Cultural Studies perspective. Foodways are expressive of and influential in intercultural encounters. Ever since the arrival of the first Chinese immigrants to the United States in the late 1840s with the Chinese sojourners to the California Gold Rush and their subsequent strandedness and impossibility to return to China, Chinese men and, later, women worked for the Transcontinental Railroad, opened laundromats, and, ultimately, became restaurant owners and cooks, not because they had a specific liking for the latter business but because everyone has to eat and likes to eat food that is familiar and transports positive memories of a lost past, a past that is idealized retrospectively. It is not just the taste of food but the feeling of home that is conveyed via the smell, the kind of ingredients used for preparation, the way it is cooked, and the community it creates when and while eating.

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[1] Food and foodways are, of course, also omnipresent in other Chinese American memoirs such as M. Elaine Mar's *Paper Daughter* (1999) as well as in Chinese American fiction. One of the best examples is Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), which humorously depicts a family dinner where the one U.S.-American white man present, one of the daughters' fiancé, seems to be excluded from the rituals of the Chinese family. Another example is Frank Chin's novel *Donald Duk* (1991), which mostly takes place in the Chinese restaurant the family and relatives run (see Birkle, 2018). Obviously, writers from other ethnic groups have similarly produced fiction and memoirs with a strong focus on food.

The history of the Chinese in the United States is ultimately connected with the foodways related to this ethnic group. The first Chinese who came to the United States in the late 1840s and 1850s were all male and had no interest in being cooks. They came for the Gold Rush to Gold Mountain, as they called America, to make money and return to their country. However, circumstances, such as the failure to find gold and the early end of the Gold Rush, left them penniless and poor and in need of work. The late 1850s and 1860s saw the rise of the railroad and the attempt to connect the East and the West of the nation through the Transcontinental Railroad. This enterprise, more or less terminated in 1869, offered the Chinese men jobs and housing, however poorly paid, without hygiene, and constantly confronting them with racism and discrimination. In the aftermath of the railroad’s completion, the only niches on the job market those men could find was work at laundromats and restaurants. Those Chinese men, still without wives and children, did women’s work and sought relief from daily pressures with prostitutes and opium. All the men had arrived in the United States from Guangdong Province, a place mostly “synonymous with excellent food” (Mendelson, 2016, p. xvii), and were “Cantonese-speaking” (p. xvii). Mandarin speakers and their customs are a much more recent addition to the United States and its Chinese foodways. The impossibility to interact, mingle, and marry with white American women – the Chinese were considered to be unassimilable until 1943 – and several exclusion acts that prevented more Chinese and, above all, Chinese women to immigrate – most prominently the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act – pressured the early Chinese immigrants to turn to restaurants as places of community, nourishment, and survival, and, consequently, Chinatowns grew, gradually, in the second half of the nineteenth century. Chinese cooks and restaurant owners began to concoct food “for non-Chinese patrons, equipped with a phenomenal insight into the American palate" (Mendelson, 2016, p. xvi). This became the era known as "the chop suey era" (p. xvi). In 1898, the Supreme Court decision of *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* finally declared that "a child born to Chinese parents on U.S. soil is automatically an American citizen" (Mendelson, 2016, p. xviii) and allowed for Chinese families to grow. It is not until 1943 that U.S. legislation granted Chinese the right to become naturalized citizens and repealed all exclusion laws. At the time, China and the United States were allies against Japan. All this happened after many years of anti-Chinese violence, of the Chinese in the United States being called the "yellow peril," of being arbitrarily arrested or expelled from the country, of suffering from anti-Chinese exclusion acts renewed on a regular basis. In 1949, the United States granted refugee status to 5,000 educated Chinese after the Communist régime had assumed power in China. In 1965, a new immigration act (Immigration and Nationality Act or Hart-Celler Act) finally abolished all racial bias in U.S. immigration laws. Legally, Chinese Americans are American citizens, which, however, does not prevent them from experiencing the occasional discrimination – as, for example, during the Covid-19 pandemic.

That politics has a lot to do with food is an insight that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the foreground again. While all restaurants across the United States (and not only there) suffered and still suffer from the lockdown and the closing of businesses including restaurants during the Covid-19 pandemic, Chinese American restaurants are hit even harder. They do not just have the same problems with the pandemic as all other restaurants, but they experience a decrease in business up to 90% in some areas such as Seattle, due to "xenophobia surrounding [the] spread of the illness" (Lalley, 2020, n. pag.). The same holds true for Chinatowns in other cities such as San Francisco and New York. The general fear of the virus and its association with China, which Donald Trump loves to emphasize by calling it China or Wuhan virus, have provoked significant racism against Asian Americans in general and Chinese Americans in particular. Chinese Americans and their restaurants have often been subject to suspicion of, for example, serving dogs, cats, or rats or being unsanitary by not following hygienic standards (see Ku, 2020). As Robert Ji-Song Ku criticizes, "[t]o avoid eating out due to fears of exposure is perhaps not unreasonable during these confusing times. But to single out Chinese restaurants as the harbinger of COVID-19 is not only unreasonable but irrefutably racist" (Ku, 2020, n. pag.)

Moreover, because more and more Chinese people over the decades have moved to the United States or at least visited the country or even studied there but then have returned home, food cultures from the United States have also been exported to and imported into China. Young people in particular do not remain unaffected by the American way of life as imported food suggests worldwide. Not only has McDonald's entered China; the company has also spread its business philosophy of McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2002); the Coca Cola Company's Coca-Colonization (Wagnleitner, 1994) has been equally disseminated. Even if governments try to reduce a Western or U.S.-American influence on their own cultures, a complete erasure of this influence is impossible. Chinese students study in the United States; they experience and, mostly, enjoy campus life, including the kind of fast-food culture that busy schedules necessitate. They do miss their own cultural rituals and foodways and often stage them themselves with their friends, but they cannot evade the impact of their surroundings, in particular, if positive connotations are associated with certain moments, such as friendships or even love. The relevance of this impact will remain, maybe decrease, but certainly not evaporate upon their return to their home country.

The food people prepare and eat is ultimately connected to their identities. Therefore, studying foodways gives insight into specific historically and culturally motivated identity formations. In foodways and in their translation into life writing, identity is "recovered, imagined, and negotiated" (Birkle, 2018, p. 211). Since foodways are so intimately connected to socio-cultural, ethnic, and individual identities in the Chinese context, their representation might run the risk of "Re-Orientalism" (Lau, 2009), or what Ruth Maxey calls "Self-Orientalizing," that is, an Orientalism "propagated […] ironically enough, by Orientals, albeit by diasporic Orientals" (Lau, 2009, p. 571).

Anthropologists like Claude Lévi-Strauss and cultural critics like Roland Barthes have emphasized the strong relationship between food and national and ethnic identity. Therefore, foodways indicate the nature of connections, interminglings, and transformations of these identities as well as mechanisms of "inclusion and exclusion of different ethnic groups from an in-group" (Birkle, 2018, p. 213). Food, therefore, becomes a "*metaphor*" (Nicholson, 1991) of inner- and inter-identity processes. Immigrants, as Cecilia Chiang's example also shows, tend to create "home[s] away from home" (2007, p. 75), as the Caribbean American writer Michelle Cliff shows in her novel *No Telephone to Heaven*, and perform "rituals of cultural belonging" (Döring, Heide, and Mühleisen, 2003, p. 2). While this is mostly true for foodways in the home, opening a restaurant such as *The Mandarin* could also be considered what Frank Chin calls "food pornography," which means that restaurateurs, like Cecilia Chiang, try "to make a living by exploiting ethnic foodways so as to gain a foothold in a white dominated society" (Döring, Heide, and Mühleisen, 2003, p. 7). Foodways, as mentioned before, are in flux. Nicole Waller argues: "Food as a semiotic system, a marker of ethnic identity, symbolizes this idea of fluidity on several levels. Food incorporation and assimilation is flux, an opening of the body for foreign matter which is transformed into self. Food points to the fact that the body is a process, constantly being re-built and altered" (1995, p. 485-86). Foodways and their representations create locations – physically and imagined – with changing ingredients and, often, changing participants. Consequently, members and membership shift, and, yet, all are invited to apply for "culinary citizenship" (Mannur, 2010, p. 20).

Life writing picks up, perpetuates, and changes this culinary citizenship. It allows the writer exclusions and inclusions of people and foodways of different kinds. Based on Philippe Lejeune's "autobiographical pact," readers assume that writer, narrating I, and narrated I (see Smith and Watson, 2010, p. 207) are identical and everything told is true. This is, therefore, a pact between author, reader, and publisher because the latter puts a genre label on the product to be published and then marketed. However, this pact relies to a large extent on the writer's memories that may or may not render events accurately. What they always do is to confirm the authors' belief in their own memories (unless deliberately faked). In any case, life writing is a deliberate act with a purpose in mind, and in and through it, "we give shape to and remake ourselves" (Smith and Watson, 2010, p. 102), and, therefore, life writing is "a form of self-invention that constitutes the self" (2010, p. 209), as Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson point out with reference to Paul John Eakin's influential study *Fictions of Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self-Invention*, to be followed later by *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (1995) and *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative* (2008). Eakin's terms – "fictions," "self-invention," "making selves," "create identity" underline that autobiographies are made, created, and invented and so are the identities actually lived as well as represented in life writing. The juxtaposition of verbal language and images (photography) in life writing, and culinary memoirs in particular, is similarly hand-made and brings together two forms of representation that suggest different realities and emphases on truth because these two media appeal to readers differently. While narrative addresses first of all human cognition, images of food appeal to the emotional, visual, and olfactory senses. Rosalia Baena has, therefore, coined the term "gastro-graphy" for life writing that relies on an intimate connection between life, writing, and food. "Gastro-graphy" clearly applies to Cecilia Chiang's food memoirs.

3. Foodways, Authenticity, and Cecilia Chiang

What do Jackie Onassis, Paul Newman, Sophia Loren, Luciano Pavarotti, Janis Joplin, John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Arthur Miller, Norman Mailer, and Lillian Hellman share apart from being celebrities? They are names in Cecilia Chiang's guest book which she kept as part of her restaurant *The Mandarin*, opened in 1961 first on Polk Street and then moved to Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco in 1968 and catering to a newly awakening "Bay Area 'foodie' culture that was curious about new ethnic foodways" (Geraci, 2011, p. 54).[2] Moreover, as Lisa Weiss points out in her introduction to Cecilia Chiang's memoir and cookbook *The Seventh Daughter: My Culinary Journey from Beijing to San Francisco* (2007), "The Mandarin" also appealed to "people in the food world" in the 1970s. "[C]ulinary giants like James Beard, Julia Child, Marion Cunningham, Alice Waters, Jeremiah Tower, and Chuck Williams were revolutionizing America's culinary landscape. What they loved was the taste of her food. What they respected was its authenticity" (2007, p. 2). Some of them actually attended Chiang's "cooking school" (Geraci, 2011, p. 56). What these quotations as well as the title of the memoir show are the success the chef, restaurant owner, and first-generation Chinese immigrant Cecilia Chiang had with her food soon after her arrival in the United States, on the one hand, and the promise of authenticity her food offered, on the other hand. The success she has had since then seems to be based on both quality and authenticity. Although *The Mandarin* was closed in 2006 (after she had sold it in 1991), Chiang's fame continues to be quite prominent, also perpetuated by the memoir cookbooks she published, such as *The Mandarin Way* (1974) – exactly in the year when she opened a second Mandarin restaurant – and *The Seventh Daughter* (2007) a year after *The Mandarin* had been closed.[3] The latter book's subtitle, *My Culinary Journey from Beijing to San Francisco*, suggests family background and mobility as key factors in her own upbringing and education. As the seventh daughter of a wealthy family with ten surviving children, she was used to being fed good food by the cooks and chefs her family hired. She and her siblings were never allowed in the kitchen but taught by their mother how to recognize good food. Like her sisters, she attended the Sisters of the Sacred Heart Bridgeman Academy, an American missionary school. Born as Sun Yun (meaning "flower of the rue" [Geraci, 2011, p. 52]) but renamed Cecilia at the suggestion of a Catholic professor at Fujen University in Beijing (Geraci, 2011, p. 53), Cecilia had never cooked in her life until she moved to the United States at the age of forty (Weiss, 2007, p. 3). It was this move and the desire for "authentic" Chinese food that turned her into a cook, a student of the culinary profession, and a restaurant owner. The move is not just that of an immigrant who comes for a visit to the United States and stays, but it is a "culinary journey" on which she brought recipes, ingredients, taste buds, and entrepreneurship from China to the United States. Culinary knowledge accompanied every single act she undertook in the United States. Thus, knowledge seemed to guarantee the authenticity of the food she offered.

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[2] Not only did this move imply that she had to invest a substantial amount of money into this new and much fancier location, but she also had to fight stereotypes: "Chinese restaurants are too greasy, too dirty, and have a lot of mice and a lot of cockroaches" (Chiang qtd. in Geraci, 2011, p. 55). But she convinced the real estate agent and the Bank of America of her project.

[3] Her son Philip managed a second Mandarin restaurant in Beverly Hills while her daughter May ran one in San Francisco, which, however, was not successful (Geraci, 2011, p. 57).

Questions of authenticity in general, and that of food in particular, have been discussed over many decades with reference to cultural phenomena such as food as well as music, dance, clothing, memory culture, festivities, and many more. What authenticity truly is, however, still remains a matter of debate. Who decides who or what is authentic or not? How do we know if something is authentic? Which role does memory play in this labeling? How much of the appreciation of authenticity is nostalgia for a lost past and the desire for a revival of this past? In the sense that Salman Rushdie talks about "imaginary homelands" and depicts immigrants' desire for the homeland they had in the past as existing only in the minds of those who remember something that no longer is, authenticity seems to mutate to a phenomenon that becomes flexible and allows for the creation of a culinary utopia with nostalgic reference to the past, a phenomenon which Zygmunt Bauman (2017) has recently called "retrotopia."[4] Moreover, a shared sense of authenticity helps a community emerge that is similarly imaginary as it consists of those people that supposedly agree on the authenticity of, in my case here, food and its preparation, presentation, and different ways of eating. Therefore, this sense of authenticity via foodcultures serves exclusionary and inclusionary functions, including those in a community who are culinary natives and excluding those who do not and, thus, are culinary immigrants. Even more so, foodways can both unite and separate generations, as Lisa Weiss's compliment about Cecilia Chiang's food suggests: "[…] your mother would approve" (2007, p. 3). This implies that Cecilia's food actually is what it professes to be. However, at the same time, Cecilia Chiang prepares food in an attempt at coming close to what she remembers from her own childhood in a privileged household where her mother together with the hired cooks would determine the ways in which the ingredients were picked, the meals were prepared, and the labels were chosen. Cecilia Chiang's mother, too, based her own taste – which added a subjective note to authenticity – and decisions on her own past, knowledge, and experiences. To say that what is authentic is to be "'faithful to an original'" (Varga and Guignon, 2020, n. pag.) implies that one knows what the original is or was, which is hardly ever possible in foodways. Moreover, the notion of authenticity is often also connected to the characteristics of a human being, thus to an individual who is expected to act in a way that is true to who he or she really is. But how can we know that? Being authentic is subjective in any case. So how can we even know in a more general sense what authenticity is if it is always an individual characteristic? Authenticity, therefore, is defined as "'being true to oneself for one's own benefit'" (Varga and Guignon, 2020, n. pag.). This, then, also implies that to be authentic is a value in itself that can be checked by yourself according to reasons, motives, and guidelines. In terms of foodways and in the case of Cecilia Chiang, her guidelines are shaped by her personal memory, the tastes her mother passed on to her, and the general – probably mostly familial – acceptance of these rules. Cecilia Chiang's motives seem to have been to produce authentic food that – like a narrative – tells the truths about her own Chinese culture, or at least about a specific part of Chinese culture, namely the Mandarin part. In this sense, she enacts what Charles B. Guignon describes as a "life-defining commitment to something that gives your life an ultimate content and meaning" (Guignon, 2020, n. pag.). In existentialism, of course, authenticity is related to "the raw fact of the 'I exist" (Guignon, 2020, n. pag.), thus, the mere human existence, which is not what Chiang refers to, but the idea of a "defining commitment that gives one's life a focus and sense of direction" and "a commitment to some specific range of possibilities opened up by one's historical 'heritage'" are certainly elements of Chiang's life as well, helping her to achieve "a focused, intense, coherent life" (Guignon, 2020, n. pag.). This shows that authenticity is always subjective, and that Cecilia Chiang's life and the way she lives can certainly be considered authentic, thus, true to herself. Similarly, her foodways are thought to be authentic by herself and others.

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[4] "All the same, it is the genuine or putative aspects of the past, believed to be successfully tested and unduly abandoned or recklessly allowed to erode, that serve as main orientation / reference points in drawing the roadmap to Retrotopia" (Bauman, 2017, p. 9).

If we follow Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in their collection of essays, *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), we could argue that foodways are a tradition which people adhere to because they believe that these traditions have existed and developed over a long period of time. However, as Hobsbawm and Ranger argue, traditions have frequently been invented at a particular moment in time, often quite recently. While authenticity and tradition seem to go together well, they seem to clash if traditions are indeed invented. Something invented can no longer be authentic, as it seems. Moreover, people often do not know that a specific tradition was invented. Thus, Cecilia Chiang's mother could have made variations to the food that would still be Mandarin because she would give it this label, but it would be different from other Mandarin cooking. Eric Hobsbawm, in his introduction, argues "'[i]nvented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past" (2012, p. 1). This past, in Hobsbawm's understanding, imposes "fixed (normally formalized) practices, such as repetition" (p. 2) and, thus, contributes to the creation of tradition. In this sense, Cecilia Chiang repeats what she believes her mother and, supposedly others, did in the past.

Cecilia Chiang considers Chinese food in the United States to be inauthentic (2007, p. 12), but herself wants to offer authentic food – "the dishes I was most familiar with – the delicious food of northern China" (p. 12) – but a "Western-style service and ambience" (p. 12). She hires a couple as cooks who prepare the food "just as my mother would have liked" (p. 13). Authenticity seems to be reduced to Cecilia's mother but is shared by the cooks – and by implication other Chinese people – and thus seems to deserve the label of authenticity. Ultimately, however, Chiang's restaurant embraces hybridity; it is Western in style and Chinese in taste, thus already catering to U.S.-American expectations.

Moreover, *The Seventh Daughter* is both Cecilia Chiang's autobiography and a culinary cookbook that prints some of the recipes mentioned in her life story. Here, she reproduces Western-style life writing and instructions for authentically Chinese food in Mandarin-style. The cover of *The Seventh Daughter* shows Cecilia Chiang in the process of cooking, a process which obviously gives her pleasure since it produces a smile on her face while preparing food by hand. Here, she is dressed in Western style with a blue knitted sweater. In contrast, *The Mandarin Way*, published 33 years earlier, features a Chinese landscape with a pavilion, trees, and mountains in the background. Her earlier publication also offers a photography of Cecilia on the inside that shows her as a rather aristocratic woman, elegantly dressed with a Chinese paravent in the background. This posture emphasizes her origins – both class and ethnicity / nation – and affirms – with a modestly smiling face – that she is in control and is, for a Western viewer, authentic. A translation into Chinese, visually represented, of the dedication to her mother furthermore stresses her Chinese background. Clearly, the 2007 memoir seeks to visually emphasize Chiang's adjustment to an American way of life. Not only that; it underlines a more modern contemporary attitude whereas the much earlier publication is still deeply rooted in the culture of her origins. The development from a Chinese focus to an American one is visible in the images added to the recipes and the written memoirs. As a human being, Cecilia Chiang – just like the food she prepares – has undergone a process of transculturation that significantly characterizes the multi-ethnic American way of life.

One essential ingredient in her food memoirs are the recipes, supposedly based on her mother's knowledge and, therefore, for Chiang, authentic. Generally, recipes are meant to be instructions for successful cooking. Readers are expected to follow the guidelines step by step and expect to have reproduced, at the end, the dish described in the cookbook. Usually, they hope to have the same authentic experience the author promises when they finally eat their product. However, as the Jewish immigrant writer Mary Antin already maintained in her own immigrant autobiography, *The Promised Land* (1912), those recipes will never result in the same experience. She raves about her mother's "thick cheese cakes" (1997, p. 74) they "used to have on Saturday night" (p. 74) and warns her readers:

> I am no cook, so I cannot tell you how to make such cake. I might borrow the recipe from my mother, but I would rather you should take my word for the excellence of Polotzk cheese cakes. If you should attempt that pastry, I am certain, be you ever so clever a cook, you would be disappointed by the result; and hence you might be led to mistrust my reflections and conclusions. You have nothing in your kitchen cupboard to give the pastry its notable flavor. It takes history to make such a cake. (p. 74)

She goes on to explain what a recipe can never accomplish: it cannot reproduce childhood memories of moments of relish when the dish was eaten by the family; the crossing of the ocean from home to a new land shapes the taste of the food as much as the abstinence of many years as "one of the essential ingredients in the phantom dish" (p. 75) does. Ultimately, for Antin, it is the memory of the taste that she relishes. Her mother has forgotten how to practice Polotzk cookery in the meantime, and for Antin, this means that she is "the richer in memories for her omissions" (p. 74). Some food she eats reminds her of the past; she yearns for some but knows that, most probably, if she ever had the chance to return to her previous home, she would be disappointed in finding that what she remembers has become "extinct" (p. 75) and remains, in Salman Rushdie's sense, food of the mind. At the same time, she connects to these tastes and her memories thereof the development of her identity, giving her – at moments of recognition – "a complete vision of [her] self" (p. 76).

Mary Antin's example shows the limitations of recipes and, consequently, of the desire for the reproduction of authenticity. Cecilia Chiang honestly offers her guests "authentic" Mandarin food. She reproduces it from memory, her childhood memory that also includes the rituals of eating it in the safe environment of her family, protected by her parents and surrounded by her brothers and sisters. No recipe can recreate these memories; no chef in San Francisco is able to conjure up the same authentic taste. For Antin, authenticity exists (only) in people's minds and mostly cannot be shared, not even with people with similar migrant experiences because they all have different memories, different associations with foods and rituals, and different tastes. These are the "intangibles" that immigrants seek with the preservation of their foodways, as Donna R. Gabaccia claims in *We Are What We Eat* (2000, p. 176), but these intangibles can hardly be shared, passed on, written down. Yet, cookbooks, and among them many ethnic cookbooks, became fashionable by the 1970s and 1980s, "describing the foods and cooking techniques of cultures around the world" (Gabaccia, 2000, p. 181). Cecilia Chiang published her first book exactly at this time, *The Mandarin Way* (1974), and aimed at what Gabaccia calls "recover[ing] and celebrat[ing] the past" (2000, p. 182). She, too, does, what others did at the time. They "celebrate[d] their mothers and families […] [and] dedicated their cookbooks to their mothers and grandmothers" (2000, p. 183-84), thus, the women in the family.

This focus on one's family and, therefore, on conveying aspects of one's private life to a larger public, is what Sneja Gunew calls "affective histories" that "attempt to communicate what a culture feels like from the inside, by invoking its grammar of emotions – hence the use of food and the idea that, by way of recipes or culinary anecdotes, a reader/viewer may temporarily occupy the position of cultural insider" (2009, p. 245). As Gunew emphasizes, this "transmission of affect" (p. 247) is meant to convey actual emotions related to (one's own) moments in history, often related to hardships such as racism. Coupling her own life story of a protected childhood, then suffering due to the Japanese invasion and the subsequent communist takeover, and finally arriving in the United States, Cecilia Chiang manages to transmit her own feelings to a sympathetic audience, however, a conveyance that is, as Mary Antin revealed, something one aspires to but reaching this goal will forever be deferred. Nevertheless, the narrativization of foodways in memoirs does offer insights into an individual's, his/her ethnic group's, and the respective nation's past, history, characteristics, value system, and stance on interethnic encounters. Food, foodways, the kitchen, the home, and the restaurants become intercultural contact zones where interaction leads to transculturation.

The hybridity of life story, recipes, and images of dishes makes Chiang's enterprise successful. Both the pages of the book and the geography of the United States allow for the encounter of two very different cultures and their intermingling to then become a success story. This success hinges on the idea of authenticity of both Cecilia's life and her food. She interweaves traditional and ritual elements of her life with deliberate resistance against these traditions. For example, she talks about her mother's foot binding. Her mother was "bound both figuratively and literally to the old customs" (2007, p. 49), with her "four-inch-long bound feet" as a "constant – and very painful – reminder of her dutiful link to ancestral tradition" (p. 49), which will be broken in the next generation. "The smaller the foot, the more desirable the woman, and thus the more marriageable she would be. It was an unbelievably painful and lengthy process, and often girls died from the resulting infection" (p. 49). For Cecilia, her mother is connected with traditions, some of which she rejects, such as foot binding, some of which she embraces, such as cooking. This shows that traditions can be and are constantly changed by each individual, just as Cecilia's father forbade his daughters' foot binding: "By the 1930s, except in all but the most rural areas, the custom of foot binding became a thing of the past" (p. 50).

Cecilia's mother was a woman of traditions, rituals, and customs. "Like all upper-class Chinese women of her time, she did not actually cook" but "she had impeccable taste, a point almost everyone who had ever eaten at our table agreed upon" (2007, p. 51), and "she demanded […] punctuality" (p. 51). Disobeying was punished by the withdrawal of food. Her mother's sense of fixed and ritualized behavior had a strong impact on Cecilia, which she shows by constant references to her and the label of authenticity attributed to the food that tastes like her mother's. Even as an adult, Cecilia still seems to fear her mother's criticism, which she would always voice after each dinner invitation. Cecilia has internalized her mother's behavior and joins company with her: "Although there was a part of me that felt a little bad for the cooks who were on the receiving end of my mother's barbs, I listened intently to all of her criticisms and then usually smiled in secret agreement with her" (p. 52).

This female genealogy and the bonding across generations lead to Chiang's comparison of American and Chinese foodways. As she points out, in "American homes, most family interactions tend to take place in the kitchen" whereas her "family life took place in the dining room" (2007, p. 52). All eating at her house seems to have been a ritual, such as breakfast, which Cecilia considers "choreographed chaos" (p. 52) and which her mother orchestrated and the children had to abstain from; the adverb "always" accompanying the description of the dinner table; add to this the phrase "perfectly arranged noodles" (p. 55), and the ritualistic aspect shines through, as it also does with the arranged marriages in Cecilia's parents' generation with rituals of respect for your elders. For Cecilia Chiang, preparing the food her mother would approve of implies the continuation of a tradition and the showing of respect but it also implies an apology for not being like her and the women of previous generations. "Continuity of tradition was of utmost importance to my mother's generation […]. My mother was brought up in the same strict traditions as her own mother and all the women who preceded her for hundreds of years" (p. 91). *The Mandarin* restaurant is Cecilia's way of dealing with her mother's "large and dominant shadow over [her and her brothers' and sisters'] lives" (p. 91).

Any celebratory moment had to do with food, and every time Cecilia Chiang describes the rituals, she emphasizes that her mother "was strictly traditional when it came to the order of service," which "invariably began with" the same types and numbers of dishes, served in the same way and order every time "because tradition is, above all, reassuring" (2007, p. 113). It is in July 1937, however, that these traditions, rituals, and celebrations were severely disrupted by the Japanese invasion and occupation of Beijing (p. 117). These are not only moments of loss of property, but also of control and authority. Cecilia's mother had to realize that in spite of her desire to prepare everything well, she could not and did no longer have the means to be in control. Cecilia's later Chinese restaurant based on her mother's foodways may perhaps be considered the daughter's way of restoring the mother's authority, of maintaining the memory of rules and regulations, which implied a good and happy family life. It is the return to these years in her life that Cecilia equates with authenticity. But she herself can only attempt to get close to her mother's perfection; some of the dishes she has "never been able to duplicate" (p. 114).

Due to the Japanese invasion of China in 1931 and their gradual takeover of the country until the late 1930s, the situation of Cecilia's family gradually deteriorates (2007, p. 133). Cecilia and one of her sisters ultimately escape but have to walk most of the way to Chongqing, where they arrive in 1942. She teaches "Mandarin at the American and Russian embassies" (Geraci, 2011, p. 53) and gets married to Chiang Liang, a professor and businessman, who ultimately moves her to Shanghai (1945) and then to Tokyo (1949). She gives birth to her daughter May (1946) and her son Philip (1947 or 1948). During all the hardships she has to endure, Cecilia is convinced that "[her] future was in [her] own hands, and that if [she] worked hard enough and persevered through tough times, [she] could affect [her] own fate" (2007, p. 169). As she grows older, she understands, of course, that "there are just some things over which we simply have no control" (p. 196). Yet, her mother remains a constant reminder of how to do things such as run a household, instruct the servants, and even do the cooking oneself. As she tells her mother on the last occasion she is able to visit her, "I paid close attention to how you wanted things done, and always ask myself, 'How would my mother want me to do this?'" (p. 197). The situation worsens because of the civil war between the Chinese Nationalists and the Communists so that the Chiang family escapes to Tokyo in 1949.

Living in a Chinese diaspora for the first time makes her realize that she is homesick for Chinese food (2007, p. 203). The food markets do not offer anything she recognizes so that she gets together with other Chinese women, and they all begin to search the markets for necessary ingredients until she finally decides to open her own Chinese restaurant in Tokyo, which she calls the *The Forbidden City*. This move allows her easier access to the food she knows from her childhood. The food not only connects her to other Chinese people living in exile but also to Japanese people, with whom the restaurant is a great success. She also understands that food and foodways once people begin to grasp their meaning outside of their own country, as she does in Japan, can be indicators of adjustment to a new culture; they can mean inclusion but also exclusion. The moment she appreciates raw fish, which she would never have eaten in China, she knows that she has "adapted to [her] new life in Japan" (p. 203). In 1960, she visits one of her sisters in San Francisco, stays, has her children come, separates from her husband, and is unable to connect with her parents and the rest of her family due to Mao's "Cultural Revolution" (1966 to 1969); he terrorized the country's citizens until his death in 1976. It is not until 1975 that she can finally visit her dying father who lives in absolute poverty. Her mother had died five years earlier. She adequately entitles the last chapter 10 of *Seventh Daugther* "Saying Goodbye: Desserts."

Through foodways Cecilia Chiang's autobiography reveals how much her life is shaped by traditions and rituals that offer something to hold on to in difficult times and give structure to human life. Not only do they give people – in particular in childhood – the feeling of being cared for, but they also guarantee physical and emotional survival. They later serve as cultural and personal reminders of joyful moments with people that are dear to oneself. Once deprived of this connection to family and friends, foodways become a substitute, a synecdoche for all that is past and lost. They no longer serve survival but revival and, thus, connect past and present. They bring people together, an in-group, who can then create their imagined communities. Wherever people of the same ethno-national background gather, they find themselves reunited via foodways. Even if these foodways change over time, the desire for most is to keep them as authentic as possible. Whose authenticity it actually is varies. In Cecilia Chiang's case it is her mother's. To her, she connects individual and cultural memory. The foodways her mother taught her symbolize strength, control, and authority, which is what Cecilia frequently emphasizes in *The Seventh Daughter*. It is her mother's voice, shadow, and advice that tell her what to do. When she is in Tokyo, she opens the restaurant *The Forbidden City*; when she is in San Francisco, it is *The Mandarin*, and each time, she is very successful. And she attributes this success to her mother's teachings. Cecilia's culinary memoirs serve as eulogies dedicated to her mother, who died in 1970 in great pain due to her bound feet, and the tribute of a daughter to her mother who managed a large household with many servants in a very traditional and strict yet empathic way. It is this authenticity that she passes on to both Japanese and U.S.-American people and with the latter seems to have revolutionized Chinese food and its perception in the United States.

However, as critic Anne Mendelson points out, the word "Mandarin" has "no meaning whatever in reference to Chinese cuisine, but for more than half a century restaurateurs had known that it appealed to American notions of ancient Chinese grandeur" (2016, p. 180). Mendelson calls it an "aura" (p. 180) that probably had more to do with social status than authenticity. But Mandarin-style Chinese food sold extremely well and at high price for a number of years, in particular if one emphasized – as Chiang seems to have done – that Cantonese American food "was utterly déclassé" (Mendelson, 2016, p. 181). As is the case still today, the rise and fall of restaurants depends on marketing and journalists, such as, at the time, the *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen, who announced after the *Mandarin*'s opening that "'Here you will find real Chinese food'" (qtd. in Mendelson, 2016, p. 181). Craig Claiborne, journalist for the *New York Times*, later admitted in his autobiography that he "was mostly operating in the dark about Chinese gastronomy" (qtd. in Mendelson, 2016, p. 183). Mendelson calls Claiborne and others of his kind "inexpert experts" (p. 190), who, nevertheless, paved the way for later actual experts. This influence once more sheds light on the more than illusive notion of authenticity.

Cecilia Chiang had started her writing career with a "food-centered memoir sprinkled with recipes" (Mendelson, 2016, p. 221), with which she introduced a new genre of life writing. *The Mandarin Way* (1974) celebrated the past of a "leisured, privileged cosmos […] made possible by phalanxes of servants – or, as she acknowledged, quasi-slaves" (p. 221). It soon became clear that she had described a way of life that had not survived the wars and the Cultural Revolution in China. After her 1975 visit to Beijing, she was horrified to find her father "in a squalid Beijing hole with essentially no medical attention" (Mendelson, 2016, p. 249). Consequently, she published a revised version of *The Mandarin Way* in 1980 to make known this devastation that also affected Chinese high cuisine with all the chefs dead, in working camps, or fled abroad: "This nightmare, Chiang made clear, summed up the irrevocable ruin of Chinese culture as she had known it. Food had been one casualty" (Mendelson, 2016, p. 250). The gradual opening up of China toward the West under Deng Xiaoping and his agreement with Jimmy Carter to reintroduce diplomatic relationships allowed for a Western insight into the actual disastrous situation. Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, in 1971 (Kissinger) and 1972 (Nixon), had already shared a meal with Premier Zhou Enlai that was broadcasted worldwide on television and, thus, secured the prominence and acceptability of Chinese food in the United States. Ever since the early 1970s, the quality of Chinese food had improved again (Coe, 2009, p. 226-28). As Andrew Coe maintains, the "status of Chinese food in the American culinary scene has always been linked, albeit often loosely, to the state of international relations between the two countries" (p. 247). What people learned from restaurants and their cookbooks like Cecilia Chiang and her *The Mandarin Way* and *The Seventh Daughter* in the 1960s and beyond, they had learned from travelers and their travelogues and journals as early as 1784 when U.S.-American Captain John Green of the *Empress of China* and Samuel Shaw, an officer, tasted British and French food prepared by Chinese cooks (Coe, 2009, p. 12-16). It is not until 1819 that the first account "of Americans eating Chinese food" (Coe, 2009, p. 29) appears, written by Bryant Parrott Tilden from Salem (see Jenkins, 1944).

The Mandarin Way (1974) is Cecilia Chiang's first book publication meant to "bring back the past" (p. vii), as she says in the introduction. While translating "the word associations of one culture in[to] the language of another" (p. vii) was difficult, her memories did recall significant features. She is proud of her “reliable memory,[5] trained in the Chinese fashion” (p. vii), and conversations with Allan Carr helped her remember details she would otherwise have overlooked.[6] “The way of life I have set out to recapture no longer exists” (p. vii) so that she feels she has to tell her story as an eye witness. Her focus on food and its accompanying rituals derives from her fond childhood memories in an extended family with parents who knew much about food so that she herself possesses “more than a passing appreciation of the cooking of [her] homeland” (p. viii). This is also why, when living in Japan, she, like other Chinese, “longed for some of their own food” (p. ix) so that she finally opened her own restaurant, which she ran successfully for about ten years in the 1950s until she left for San Francisco. Whereas in later times, she and other people emphasize that she wanted to introduce authentic Mandarin cuisine to the United States, in her introduction to *The Mandarin Way* she admits: “[…] there is no such thing as ‘Mandarin’ cuisine. The cuisine of the Mandarin classes was a combination of the cuisine of the capital, augmented by the specialties of every province: the finest produce, from the limitless resources of the whole of China, prepared by chefs whose skills had been handed down from time immemorial” (p. xi). Mandarin food by definition is hybrid and, obviously, an upper-class product as well as one associated with a long tradition. The chapters of this memoir are numbered from First to Twelfth Moon, alternating with one introduction, interludes, and two postscripts. Almost all chapters have subtitles with references to food, and the postscripts give practical advice for shopping and food preparation (“Practical Shopping”; “Glossary of Regional Methods of Preparing Chinese Food”). In all chapters, she mingles events in childhood with the description of specific dishes and their recipes along with detailed instructions of how to cook the dishes. At the end, she even adds addresses of stores in New York, San Francisco, London, and Washington, D.C., where ingredients for Chinese food could be ordered. In contrast to her later culinary memoir *The Seventh Daughter*, *The*

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[5] Memory, of course, is the basis for storytelling, but storytelling is also a means to preserve memory for oneself, one’s community, and for future generations. Moreover, Chiang’s memories turn individual memory into collective and, ultimately, cultural memory. It is not just written for her own family but for a larger ethno-national community.

[6] In quantitative and qualitative interviews, interviewers are usually careful not to influence their interview partners too much in order to prevent the distortion of what the person actually remembers. The interviewers come with a prefabricated disposition of interest, knowledge, and risk of conducting the interview with a fixed outcome in mind (see Mayring, 2015; Seidman, 2019). At the same time, they ask questions that trigger memories or, potentially, also false memories. The conversation between Cecilia Chiang and Allan Carr had a book product in mind that would sell easily.

Mandarin Way does not contain any images of food, but like its follower, it joins life writing, culinary writing, and recipes and shows how much life and food have connections that go far beyond mere nourishment for physical survival. Foodways reflect fond memories of a lost past, of family, friends, relatives, of traditions, rituals, and cultural practices, of fears, love, and joy, of home, exile, and migration. Foodways are a strongly integrated part of Cecilia Chiang’s life and have turned her into an icon of Chinese (American) cooking. Since her retirement in 1991, she has been a consultant for Chinese restaurants and a fundraiser for the Chinese American International School in San Francisco, where students study the Mandarin language (Geraci 57). The James Beard Foundation Award for lifetime achievement (2013), the *Soul of a Banquet* documentary about her life (2014, director Wayne Wang), and a six-part cooking series *The Kitchen Wisdom of Cecilia Chiang* (2016, PBS) all document the success, recognition, and the impact that Cecilia Chiang has had over the years in the United States (Chen, 2019, p. 24).[7] On September 18, she will turn 100, born in 1920 in Wuxi, China, her life spanning a whole century during which food has determined her life and she has shaped foodways in the United States and, through her son, also in China.

4. Foodways, Re-Migration, and the Shanghai Experiments

While Cecilia Chiang has had no intention of bringing her food back to China, her son Philip, who is the successful co-founder of the chain *P.F. Chang’s* (which often features in *The Big Bang Theory* [2007-19]), opened an outlet in Shanghai in 2018. Together with Paul Fleming, Philip Chiang started his business in 1993 with headquarters in Arizona. By May 2018, they owned 250 outlets in the United States and 220 around the world. The one in Shanghai is located in a shopping mall along East Nanjing Road (Qi and Zhenghua, 2018, n.pag.) and mostly hosts U.S. expatriates and other foreigners who bring their Chinese friends. The food is a mixture of American and Chinese food, and their owners call the restaurant “‘an American bistro’” (Ma and Lin, 2018, n.pag.). Zhang Ji, a customer, points out that the food looks Chinese but is not (Ma and Lin, 2018, n.pag.). Her conclusion is: “‘I don’t think this is Chinese food’ […]. ‘I think it’s what Americans think Chinese food should taste like’” (Ma and Lin, 2018, n.pag.). *P.F. Chang’s* unites Chinese food with American ingredients, such as the Duck Spring Role with mozzarella. The original menu in Scottsdale, Arizona, was inspired by Cecilia Chiang, Philip's mother. As the owners in Shanghai see it, "[i]n a fun kind of way, we're bringing Chinese intellectual property back to China […]" (Ma and Lin, 2018, n. pag.).

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[7] Paul Friedman’s *Ten Restaurants that Changed America* (2016) lists Chiang’s *The Mandarin* as one of them.

Chang talks about Chinese property that has already been Americanized, that has gone through the process of "[c]ulinary Americanization" (2000, p. 222), as Donna Gabaccia labels it. It is Chinese food adapted to American expectations and taste buds and shaped by the availability of ingredients. It has thus transculturated into Chinese American food with elements from both national/ethnic foodways. Chang describes the original food as "Chinese property," but can the "concept of Chinese food" ever be property or even intellectual property? In any case, Chinese food has been appropriated by both the Chinese themselves and their American recipients. While Cecilia Chiang tried to prevent this from happening by attempting to produce "authentic" Chinese food, she, too, could not avoid adjusting to an American context. Her son, then, brings Chinese American food to China. While in the United States, many people believe in eating authentic Chinese food, the Chinese in China (or Chinese visitors to the United States) immediately declare that it is not Chinese. What are the implications in such a statement and in Chang's and others' moves to China?

Of course, such an unambiguous statement that a specific kind of food is not part of a national identity presupposes a clear understanding of a homogenous national identity. As scholars in American Studies know, the question about the Americanness of U.S.-American people is at least as old as the independent nation and has variously been answered with newness (Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur) and culinary metaphors such as the melting pot[8] (Crèvecoeur; Horace Zangwill) and the salad bowl, each giving it a new twist but each agreeing on variety as part of the definition. What then makes Chinese American food American and no longer Chinese?

Donna Gabaccia has traced the connections between food and national identity. What unites Americans, for her is how they eat (2000, p. 225). As she maintains: "As eaters, all Americans mingle the culinary traditions of many regions and cultures within ourselves. We are multi-ethnic eaters” (p. 226). She does admit that there are two characteristics of American eating habits: one is the love of “standardized mass-produced processed dishes,” and the other is the taste for a “diverse variety of multi-ethnic specialties” (p. 226). This distinction – albeit in both cases American – is also used to define what American identity is. Americans, according to Gabaccia, not only eat this “multi-ethnic mix of foods,” but they also “make this mix part of themselves” (p. 227). In other words, Americans seem to love what is familiar but are also curious about what is exotic, strange, and unknown in food culture. In that sense, they enjoy “culinary pluralism and gustatory cosmopolitanism” (p. 231). Gabaccia strongly emphasizes the entanglement of culinary cultures and national or ethnic identity. However, she also points to the troubled or non-existent extension of the love of the culinary other to the human other. “[W]hy not embrace,” as she asks, “those ties and the multi-ethnic identities they create?” (p. 231). Authentic Chinese food in the United States is, therefore, and from Gabaccia’s point of view, an impossibility. It is always already hybrid and, then, American.

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[8] As Heike Paul points out, "[t]he melting pot is a myth that rejects narratives of purity and potentially also simplistic and one-sided notions of assimilation" (2014, p. 298). However, as history has shown, not all newly arrived immigrants have been allowed to "melt," and, moreover, the process of melting suggests the loss of recognizable original features. More recently, *The Melting Pot* is also a "chain of franchised fondue restaurants," which Heike Paul reads as "a euphemistic symbol of a shared culinary feast engaged in by those who can afford to consume in rather than be consumed by a globalized world" (p. 298).

Chinese people’s reaction to Chinese American food is precisely this refusal of embracing otherness. Chinese food was introduced to the United States by Chinese people for various reasons, such as the need for self-sustainment, the desire for a home, or, simply, the economic interest in making money. Both the Chinese newcomers and the people considering themselves Americans together transformed Chinese food into Chinese American and, thus, American multi-ethnic food. In that sense, the Chinese customer who refuses to call the food that Chang or Fung Lam and Dave Rossi offer the Chinese is right because the producers – although in part of Chinese descent – are Americans and the food is American in its multi-ethnic sense.

Fung Lam and Dave Rossi were most probably the first to introduce Shanghai’s population to this form of American food in 2015. Instead of calling it American (or American Chinese) food, they use the label “‘western Chinese food’” (Hatton, 2015, n. pag.), which Cecilia Hatton defines as “a genuine style of cuisine primarily developed by generations of Chinese immigrants to the United States” (n. pag.). Fung Lam himself learned the culinary art from or in his own parents’ and grandparents’ restaurants whereas Dave Rossi had grown up eating “New World Chinese classics” (Hatton, 2015, n. pag.) every Friday night. This is the kind of food both missed when they traveled to China as tourists. Like many others, they first sought out familiar food and believed that with Chinese food they would be on the safe side since they had eaten it in the United States all their lives. Yet, this was not what they found. They realized that the lack of what they and many other exiled or tourists from the United States or other Western countries missed in China was a good business opportunity. Yet, they stumbled upon a number of obstacles in their attempt to produce "authentic" Chinese American food in Shanghai. Their personal experiences defined authenticity for them, and they worked hard to supply what was missing. Fung's father came to Shanghai to teach the chefs they had hired to make each dish exactly like those in the family's American restaurants. They had to import ingredients from the United States such as Philadelphia cream cheese, Skippy peanut butter, and others, and from Hong Kong such as soy sauce, which the first Chinese immigrants had used for their cooking. Their customers are mostly non-Chinese who long for the tastes they are used to; some are Chinese who want to try the food because they have seen it on American sitcoms like *Friends* (1994-2004) and *The Big Bang Theory* (see Hatton, 2015, n. pag.). U.S.-American TV series have become cultural mediators of aspects of American culture that are considered American in China and Chinese in America. The label obviously depends on perspective.

In *The Big Bang Theory*, viewers constantly see the five friends – Penny, Leonard Hofstadter, Sheldon Cooper, Howard Wolowitz, and Raj Koothrappali – eat Chinese take-out food in Leonard and Sheldon's apartment. The series has been a major success in China and has left its fans devastated upon its termination. This series has brought to China a certain American way of life for a younger generation, and a strong part in this life is Chinese take-out food in white cardboard containers. This is how people often want it served in *P.F. Chang's* or at Lam and Rossi's *The Fortune Cookie*. The young Chinese use the series to learn English but also to be initiated into a specific American way of life. They are curious about the Chinese food that, for the Chinese, is actually American. Chinese people are surprised by the label "Chinese" for such food. They do not, for example, recognize fortune cookies as Chinese because those do not exist in China.

Finally, we can say that so-called authentic Chinese food – which, as I have shown, hardly exists, or if it does then only on the maps of people's minds – was brought to the United States with the first immigrants from China. With the increase and gradual diversification of the Chinese immigrants, coming from different regions, language groups, and ages, the food itself became diversified and began to be integrated into a new life in a new nation. For various reasons, it was then also produced for (other) Americans who believed in its authenticity but really appreciated Americanized food catering to their taste buds. Eventually, some of it returned to China where – because of its lost markers – the food has by now become a symbol of the American way of life. This re-migration may be considered a second Americanization, the first being when Chinese food became part of American life, the second being the label American when introduced to China and, thus, slowly beginning to change Chinese food in China as well.

In both *P.F. Chang's* and *The Fortune Cookie*'s cases, the respective owners have used the phrase "to bring back to China." What they want to bring back is "intellectual property" and "American Chinese food" respectively. These ideas have various implications. "To bring back," of course, presupposes that something had been in China, had left China, and then had to be returned. The circle that is described expresses mobility as a trigger for change. Here it is the idea of a certain kind of food that travels, and it usually travels with people. "To bring back" also suggests the need for return or re-migration or, at least, some people's belief in this need. In these particular cases, Americans (two of them of Chinese descent) embrace this activity. In both cases, I argue, economic reasons are a strong motivational factor but also, according to the newspaper articles that are available, four men's (including Chang's partner) curiosity about China and the effect their kind of food – which insinuates to be of Chinese origin – might have on the people of the country that figures so largely in their enterprises. In both cases, Shanghai is their choice of location, a multicultural and cosmopolitan city whose inhabitants might be more prone to being curious about culinary experiments. Moreover, "to bring back" bears associations with Native American attempts to retrieve their own cultural objects – often in possession of museums – and to bring them back to the land they had been forcefully taken from. In their case, this act has been called repatriation. Repatriation, in general, is the act of bringing someone or something home to its or their country of origin. In all cases, it has to do with a return to a place which those who are still alive feel that it or they belong to. And belonging is a category of identity that is based on the idea of "authentic inner selves" (Fukuyama, 2018, p. 163) in spite of all the confusion "over identity" that is part of a process of modernization that is "mobile, fluid, and complex" (p. 164). Logically, the food that the restaurateurs want "to bring back" is no longer what it used to be when the idea departed for the United States. Yet, the Chinese customers, Cecilia Chiang, and even the next generation of restaurateurs insist on their food's authenticity or deny it as in the case of the Chinese customers. Authenticity, as we can once more see, is subject to very individual beliefs and belief systems.

"To bring back" has more implications. The *idea* of Chinese food – since it is not the actual food as such – leaving China, crossing the Pacific (sometimes flying), and arriving on the shores of a new country, the United States, and then returning to China, of course, is not a simple linear process and embraces a longer period of time (in the case of China and the United States most probably about 170 years). In these years, food, foodways, and ideas about them keep changing with each individual affected by this form of migration. So obviously, what people bring back is a hybrid version of original ingredients, multiple eating and preparation rituals, and a memory culture that is as varied as the number of people involved in these processes. What happens in all cases is the attempt to reconstruct an "authentic" idea of what one remembers (in Chiang's case her mother's recipes, in Lam and Rossi's case one father's way of cooking, in Chang's case his own creations mingled with Cecilia Chiang's experience). In all cases, they produce food of the mind – and I do not mean that they invent it – that has undergone – just like their Chinese origins – significant changes through processes of transculturation turning them into something new. The label of "authenticity" is helpful in addressing people's desire and nostalgia for a cherished but lost past, for an imaginary community, and simply for a moment of well-being and satisfaction if expectations are met – which they hardly are but mind and memory frequently trick people into believing in authenticity, perhaps also because they have forgotten past tastes or because other people emphasize it so much that the pressure to agree is too strong for resistance.

A final note is necessary here on the idea of "intellectual property." Can ideas about food be such a form of property? In some sense, yes, because if you, for example, create a successful recipe, most chefs do not want it to become public knowledge because they want it to be unique to their own cuisine and, of course, also profit from it financially. If someone takes this property, for example, an employee who wants to open his/her own restaurant, then it is theft and a crime. But there is a large grey zone of possible decisions. Yet, a whole nation does not own a recipe let alone multiple ideas of cooking that are rooted in people's minds and experiences. Clearly, with people's migration and their ideas of cooking in their luggage, taken and returned property is not the terminology to be used to describe such a situational constellation.

5. "Obama Sushi" and Transculturation

Having unraveled the fragility of the notion of authenticity and revealed the work of transculturating processes in foodways, it is however important to acknowledge people's desires and needs for food which they "feel" is authentic and reminds them of a past they – at least in part – long for. Food expresses and shapes identity. What Donna Gabaccia claims for the bagel, is certainly also true for Chinese food that caters to various kinds of identities: "It highlights ways that the production, exchange, marketing, and consumption of food have generated new identities – for foods and eaters alike" (2000, p. 5). At the same time, foodways reflect the desire for "the culinarily familiar" and the "culinary novelty, creativity, and variety" (p. 6). This tension has remained present all over the world until today. Food, in this sense, is the familiar and the unfamiliar at the same time. It is this combination that has been successful on the marketplace. It has allowed Cecilia Chiang to market her food as authentically Mandarin Chinese; it has made her son's business with Chinese American food in the United States successful, and it has given rise to the experiment of bringing Chinese American food to China. This investment in China is probably too recent an enterprise to say whether it will be growing. To argue again with Danna Gabaccia, "[t]o understand changing American identities [and I would add all national and ethnic identities], we must explore also the symbolic power of food to reflect cultural or social affinities in moments of change or transformation" (p. 9).

"Obama Sushi" is the product of a process of transculturation. It is, above all, an image of a sushi roll in the shape of a face with almost stereotypical African American features meant to represent then President Barack Obama. One website describes it as "Obama Sushi: You'll Come Barack for More!" (www.pinterest.com), and one can read: "'Obama Sushi' made by an exceptionally creative sushi chef pays tribute to America's 44th president in a most unusual – and dare I say, tasteful – manner" (n.pag.). On another website, we can read: "Eat Obama," an article written by Robin Mansur. Here, the master chef Ken Kawasumi is credited with being the creator of "this finely crafted American platter at the Tokyo Sushi Academy" (n.pag.). The site is more a commercial that invites viewers to eat Obama Sushi depicted as follows: "The Barack Roll certainly stands out, with its black sesame hair, fish paste teeth, and small ground shrimp for our fine president's skin" (n.pag.). It is a commercial for both food and president. The rolls are integrated into a larger dish of various sushi rolls that are arranged like a cake in a frame with two Obama rolls, smileys, and other features including an American flag (with stars and stripes) and the slogan "YES YOU CAN." While the writer must be American because he labels Obama "our" president, the sushi creator is Japanese. This Japanese American production joins the two nations in an optimistic spirit agreeing with and emphasizing Obama's own motto for his presidency: "Yes. We. Can." The text, images, and frame are celebratory and joyful, like a birthday cake, implying that with this election a new nation or at least a new phase in the U.S. nation's development has been born. The president's laughing face and the affirmative and encouraging slogan spelled out by a Japanese allow for an optimistic outlook into the future with a peaceful merging of ethnic groups in the United States, on the one hand, and a possibly more humane and tolerant foreign and world politics, on the other. Only the introductory sentence is questionable: "Yummmmy. Obama's finely shaped head sure makes one hell of a sushi roll" (n. pag.). Eating Obama's head metaphorically points to the intake of Obama's ideas and ethnicity, thus becoming one with him. While literally evoking cannibalism, symbolically (Black) America and Japan become one. Sushi, like Chinese American food, has undergone the same circles of traveling and here is crisscrossing the Pacific Ocean between the U.S.-American and Japanese nations. Like Cecilia Chiang, who brought Mandarin food to California in 1960, Noritoshi Kanai brought sushi to Los Angeles when he opened the *Kawafuku Restaurant* in Little Tokyo with his Jewish business partner, Harry Wolff (Avey, 2012, n.pag.). The Japanese and Jewish partners together brought sushi first to Japanese businessmen and then their American colleagues. The final breakthrough came with the opening of *Osho* in Hollywood, catering to celebrities (see Avey, 2012, n. pag.) in 1970.

In the above sense, "Obama Sushi" is a perfect, visible, and easily recognizable symbol of culinary transculturation that has affected any food brought to the New World, including Cecilia Chiang's, and resent out of the country. "Obama Sushi" would not exist or make sense in its trans-ethnic manifestation had not Kanai and Wolff introduced sushi to the United States. Had Chiang not brought Mandarin food to San Francisco, her son and Fleming as well as Lam and Rossi would not have been successful with Chinese American food in the United States as well as in China. Fleming himself has founded, supported, and bought restaurants in the United States with multiple ethnic backgrounds, including Chinese and Mexican; Rossi is of Italian descent. *P.F. Chang's* locations are called China bistros in the United States and American bistros in China. What Frank Jacob claims about sushi is certainly also true for Chinese food: "Sushi is a tremendously important part of global food culture" (2018, p. 151). While sushi may definitely be global, it is also local because in each nation, region, city, town, or village, it has been adapted to local preferences and possibilities. Culinary transculturation is a consequence of globalization and localization or, if you want, a manifestation of glocalism. Popular culture, such as films (*The Breakfast Club* [1984] for sushi) and TV series (such as *Friends* and *The Big Bang Theory* for Chinese [American] food) have largely contributed to successful glocalization.

More so, Cecilia Chiang's restaurants, teachings, and her culinary memoirs, or gastro-graphies, are testimonies to such mutual changes. Both her memoirs are Chinese American collaborations, *The Mandarin* (1974) as a "as-told-to" narrative (Allan Carr), *The Seventh Daughter* written together with Lisa Weiss (trained in culinary writing at the California Culinary Academy). Like the restaurants and the foodways they describe, Chiang's autobiographical narratives are authentically hybrid in their intercultural mingling and mutual impact. They are neither Chinese nor American (in a Western-style sense) but Chinese American in a way that is more than just the combination of the two ingredients. They have culinarily transculturated the U.S.-American nation and, by extension, the world.

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Réka M. Cristian
University of Szeged
cristian@lit.u-szeged.hu

TRANSNATIONAL ENCOUNTERS IN A SELECTION OF WORKS BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

Abstract: Tennessee Williams's works present attendant messages of transnational encounters along their revolutionary topics of sexuality, alienation, among many others. The essay will survey seven plays and a novel in order to map types of transnational encounters that take place in Williams's fictional world including *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1950), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *Suddenly Last Summer* (1957), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), *The Night of the Iguana* (1961), and *The Milktrain Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* (1963). The theoretical background is provided in line with issues of transnationalism as enounced by Randolph Bourne *Trans-National America* (1916) and Shelley Fisher Fishkin's thoughts on the transnational turn in American studies (2004), along with those of Thorstein Veblen's on conspicuous consumption and leisure from the *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) along John Ryders's ideas of and approaches to cosmopolitanism (2007).

Keywords: Tennessee Williams, transnational, cosmopolitan, comfort cosmopolitanism, conspicuous consumption, Randolph Bourne, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Thorstein Veblen, John Ryder

The complex world of Tennessee Williams' works includes many themes and motifs among which one of the least researched ones is the issue of transnational encounters. These types of encounters are embedded under various forms in the American writer's dramas and narratives; at the same time, these are at the core of literary influences the author himself acknowledged. Among these are, in the first line, D. H. Lawrence, Hart Crane and Anton Chekhov, followed by a genuinely transnational list of names that include "Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, Jean Cocteau, Federico Garcia Lorca, Eugene O'Neill, Harold Pinter, Luigi Pirandello, Bernard Shaw, August

Strindberg, Oscar Wilde and Thornton Wilder" (Debusscher, 1999, p. 167). As Gilbert Debusscher writes, Williams was "in life and in the best of his art a devourer, a predator who seized upon his own experience and that of his literary forerunners to feed his imagination and trigger his creativity" (1999, p. 187). The American author was keen on using characters of various ethnicities or ones that are in expatriate context in his works by employing various, international settings to his plays and narratives. These international features, though not central to the work of the artist, still add a new dimension to the understanding of Williams's works by highlighting unseen facets in many of his famous characters.

In this essay I will shed light to a number of transnational encounters which take place in seven dramas and a novel by Williams, works written from the mid-1940s through the beginning of the 1960s: *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1950), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *Suddenly Last Summer* (1957), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), *The Night of the Iguana* (1961), and *The Milktrain Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* (1963). The period of the end of the World War II and afterwards in the post-war decades were times when, in the context of a new international geopolitical climate, transnational relations radically intensified and changed. This new context had a strong impact on various levels of society in the US and across the globe, including the arts and as such, literature. During the tensed atmosphere of the Cold War, this period's political and especially technological developments led to intensified international exchanges in many fields of life that led in turn to the adoption of new strategies and practices of transnational exchanges.

Although present under many previous forms including that of the "international," "inter-national," "cross-cultural," and "multinational," the transnational term has been 'validated' in American culture since the publication of Randolph S. Bourne's 1916 article in *The Atlantic* magazine – at that time it was written in a hyphenated form, that of "trans-national." For Bourne, the idea of transnational America meant not only a kind of "transplanted Europe, but a Europe that has not been disintegrated and scattered in the transplanting as in some Dispersion" (Bourne, 1916). By critically overcoming the idea of the American "melting pot," Bourne envisaged a community of people and ideas that adhere to cosmopolitan principles within a heterogeneous community, including all peoples inhabiting the country, ranging from Natives to all immigrant newcomers. As a result, he saw the ethnic mosaic of the United States in the second decade of the twentieth-century as a "cosmopolitan federation of national colonies" (Bourne, 1916). Moreover, his friend, Waldo

Frank observed that there was more than just a federation of national colonies; the US was also plurality of Americas or simply put, “many Americas” at that time because everyone went “forth to seek America” that was created “in the seeking” (1920, p. 10) of it. Previously, the revolutionary Cuban José Martí advocated in his article published in the New York-based *La Revista Ilustrada* (1891) the pressing “need” for what he labelled “nuestra America” [our America], where he called for a bridging of all nations and races of the continent in building a common identity based on the recognition of all voices and identities present in the Americas. In this sense, Bourne’s and Frank’s ideas of American transnationalism are in close relations with Martí’s Pan-American thoughts.

The transnational term has undergone a series of definitions throughout the decades. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Everett Helmut Akam saw transnational relations over the globe as an attempt “to unify the particular with the universal or difference with community” (2002, p. 45). A couple of years later, Shelley Fisher Fishkin reframed Bourne’s and Waldo’s words in her Presidential Address to the American Studies Association (2004) by giving pertinent examples of these encounters. In this context, she claims that America “has always been a transnational crossroads of culture” which has, in turn,

> generated a host of other cultures as it has crossed borders. Reading Thoreau helped inspire Gandhi to develop his own brand of civil disobedience, which crossed the Pacific to inspire the civil rights movements; the idea of dissent through civil disobedience as a particularly American resurfaced in Asia when Tiananmen Square protesters used the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of African, African American, and Easter European musical traditions met and mixed in the United States to produce jazz, which traveled back to Europe to shape, among other things, a large swath of Czech poetry and the architecture of Le Corbusier. (Fishkin, 2005, p. 43).

Similar to Fishkin’s view on the issue, more recently Nina Morgan and Alfred Hornung emphasized in their “Introduction” to the comprehensive *The Routledge Companion to Transnational American Studies* that these transnational crossroads and encounters involve a complexity of factors by being made up of “multiple entanglements and modes of co-agency” including “persons, texts, things” (2019, p. iii) among a conglomerate of other factors, which all create a truly cross-cultural dimension. This dimension can be best mapped with Waldo's paradigm of the "seeking," which seems to be crucial in understanding transnationalism in general because it is a tool that leads to complex encounters, 'searchable' under various cultural forms, including that of literature. And, along the works of many writers from America and beyond, Tennessee Williams's works adhere to this "seeking" for whatever is thought to be America through an idiosyncratic form of the quest, all through his characters and their mode of interaction, alongside the setting and the context of their dramatic or narrative plot.

The paradigm of the transnational, however, is closely connected with the idea of cosmopolitanism. While the first traces the trajectories of various types of mobility across individuals, groups, peoples, nations, countries, regions and continents, the second complements the actions of the first by adding a special attitude of openness to universal human values and cultural differences present in these encounters. According to John Ryder, cosmopolitanism is a "guiding principle" that subscribes to those "moral obligations" that are applied to "all people regardless of their national identity or citizenship" in all interactions that go beyond "ethnic, national and cultural borders" (2007). In this context, cosmopolitanism is more than a sheer internationalism, which generally covers "international interaction and cooperation" because it is "tied to the very nature of democracy itself" having "to do with more than personal satisfaction and the richness of an individual life" (2007). As Ryder puts it, there is a certain virtue in acting in cosmopolitan manner, because people can this way "be open to a fairly broad range of experiences" (2007); however, he warns, there are some drawbacks to it, too. One most important drawback is that cosmopolitanism is "severally limited" because this is practically "an unduly elitist principle" that applies "only to a small segment of the population," who can afford travel and, as such, they can gain special insight into and understanding of other cultures. As a result of these journeys and especially of the transnational encounters, these people can develop a sense of what Ryder calls "comfort cosmopolitanism" (2007). This comfort cosmopolitanism is thus a feature of mostly middle and upper classes, who have the means to have both leisure time and the financial background for extensive travels over the world – and nowadays also in space. Their disposable income can afford the type of transnational consumption that the majority of global population simply cannot afford or sustain. This so-called non-productive consumption of time, which is at the same time a status symbol and a positional good, was labelled more than a hundred year ago as "conspicuous leisure" by the sociologist Thorstein Veblen, who also defined the term of "conspicuous consumption" in the fourth chapter of his 1899 book

The Theory of the Leisure Class by pointing out that acquiring luxury goods and services (including at that time also international travels), was a "means of reputability" and reflected "social structure" (Veblen, 2013).

One hundred years later, when international travels became gradually affordable for more and more people, Dean MacCannell defined the people of conspicuous leisure and consumption as tourists, who are even today mostly still middle class people, as the best representatives of the leisure class of his time, too. In his view, contemporary tourists are "deployed throughout the entire world in search of experience" (1999, p. 1), immersing themselves in various cultural geographies through sightseeing, which is conceived as a "modern ritual" (p. 42). MacCannell's views adhere to those of Daniel J. Boorstin, who saw the "rise of the tourist" from that of a simple traveler as a result of multiple developments starting from the middle of the nineteenth-century and culminating in the twentieth-century (Boorstin, 1964, p. 79). Additionally, Lucy R. Lippard noted that tourism in itself had become by the end of the twentieth century "something of a cult among the cognoscenti, ripe as it is with alienation, displacement, surrealist juxtapositions, shifting grounds, and other pomo [i.e. postmodern] delicacies" (Lippard in MacCannell, 1999, p. x).

In this context then, international travels involving a spectrum of cosmopolitan attitudes – including comfort cosmopolitanism and conspicuous consumption – combined with issues of tourism provide the essential core of transnational encounters. In the following, I will briefly chart these types of attitudes transnational encounters in Williams's works by mapping the complex conglomerate of international travels and contexts, the presence of ethnicities and cosmopolitan attitudes, alongside conspicuous leisure and tourist features in the above-mentioned dramas and novel.

Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* is a memory play which is set in the home of the Wingfields, a dysfunctional family of three: a histrionic mother and two grown-up children, the crippled Laura and her poet-brother, Tom. They never left the place in which they live, as opposed to their father, who was a telephone man "who fell in love with long distances." The family last heard of him in "a picture postcard from Mazatlan, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, containing a message of two words – 'Hello – Good-bye!' and no address" (*The Glass Menagerie*, p. 235). The father deserted his family and lived wandering around the world as a permanent tourist – and comfort cosmopolitan. For those who remained in the family apartment, time, as the place itself, seem frozen in a permanent present, "without change or adventure" when "adventure and change were imminent" (p. 265) right from the beginning of the play – at least for Tom, who was often going to the movies in order to travel far, as far as his imagination could take him. Laura has her own internalized microcosm of feelings and objects, furnished by a tiny glass menagerie through which she is escaping into a fantasy world of the half-read book of “Freckles,” a never opened volume entitled “The Rose-Garden Husband,” her Victrola-disc music and menagerie of glass figures. For her, the room she rarely leaves is actually the world in which she can ‘travel’ freely – and feel at home in and of its corners. Laura thus invents a kind of domestic cosmopolitan comfort in the safe space of her own room, which is more than just “a room of her own” in the sense of which Virginia Woolf wrote. The arrival of the Irish gentleman caller Jim O’Connor disturbs for a while this tranquil comfort home-cosmopolitanism of hers, but after his visit she retreats in it as soon as Jim leaves – to marry another girl. After the departure of the gentleman caller, the women in the family remain motionless seeing that Tom also leaves following his father’s footsteps. He peregrinates around “a great deal” having cities swept about him like “dead leaves, leaves that were brightly colored but torn away from the branches” (*The Glass Menagerie*, p. 313) and never stops; this status of the uprooted, transitional figure also makes him the metadramatic, objective “narrator” of the play, who turns out to be a mere sentimental tourist in his former home. As Christopher Bigsby writes, Tom “stands outside this world, literally and figuratively” and by traveling finds “an avenue of escape through his art” (2004, p. 39). Despite his lower social status of a working man, Tom Wingfield becomes through his poetic art the cosmopolitan figure with universalist morality, always open to what the world can offer him.

In *A Streetcar Named Desire* the protagonist Blanche DuBois travels to New Orleans to her sister, Stella Kowalski, who lives in the working-class, multicultural and multiethnic neighborhood of Elysian Fields. Blanche, once a wealthy Southern belle, has lost her estate and money due to her family’s misfortunes and, despite her obvious affluent roots and affluent manners, she cannot afford any more living as an upper class aristocrat she was brought up in. However, she behaves like one despite her new, incongruous setting becoming a controversial figure in regard to her cosmopolitan attitude in the eyes of her hosts. In this context, “Blanche’s life and the South alike become art objects, admirable for their style, compelling in their artifice” (Bigsby, 2004, p. 44) and thus make her to look at first glance as a genuine conspicuous consumer, when she is obviously not one. She takes much care of her looks and talks proudly of her provenience when she says that “[W]e are French by extraction. Our first American ancestors were French Huguenots”

(*A Streetcar Named Desire*, p. 150) but she is not so content with her sister's choice of a simple "Polack" (p. 127) for husband. Moreover, the play accentuates several distinct ethnic colors with the recurring music of the Polish Varsouviana that appears throughout the play in significant moments, as well as that of the sound-and-image fusion of the Southern blue jazz that protrudes in the Kowalski apartment from the quarter with that of the Chinese paper lanterns Blanche uses to cover the "naked" lightbulbs in her sister's apartment. Besides, the Mexican *tamales* street vendors, neighbor Pablo and the flower vendor, who shouts "*Flores. Flores. Flores para los muertos. Flores. Flores*" (p. 205) and "*Coronas para los muertos. Coronas…*" (p. 206), all draw attention to a transnational, Mexican American context the play is set in. Similar to Tom in *The Glass Menagerie*, Blanche wants to escape from her temporary home in New Orleans after her "rough house" with Stanley, her brother-in-law, but she can only do it like Laura Wingfield, in a fantasy journey on a cruiser "out on the ocean" (p. 220) because she is finally taken away to a mental asylum. But even on her way to this dead-end journey, the protagonist of *A Streetcar Named Desire* is conscious of her attitude. As a wealthy tourist would do on the deck of a luxury ocean liner, for her departure from the house of her sister she is wearing an elegant, Della Robbia blue-colored jacket, "the blue of the robe in the old Madonna pictures" (p. 219), a less known, special color first used by Luca Della Robbia in the 15th-century European terracotta representations of the Virgin Mother. This is the best metaphor of Blanche's misunderstood comfort cosmopolitanism, a transnational attitude that has very little in common with the multiethnic, working-class environment of Elysian Fields, making the former aristocrat an outcast doomed to isolation in~~to~~ her own dreams, similar to Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*.

The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone is a candid novelette about female sex tourism in the fifties. Karen Stone, a wealthy American woman, decides to live for a longer period of time in Rome after the death of her husband. Williams's Rome is similar to Pier Paolo Pasolini's eternal city, "where sexual exploitation dramatizes the economic warfare of capitalism" (Costantine, 1997), a place in which conspicuous consumption of overseas cosmopolitans and tourists flourished in the fifties. As Williams writes, Mrs. Stone "had selected Rome as being somehow the most comfortable place to lead that kind of existence, perhaps because so much of it seems to exist in the past" (Williams, 1957, p. 37). *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* provides a frank image of this "barbarism of victorious Americans in an indifferently vanquished Rome" (Constantine, 1997). Knowing that the Italian capital abounds in young men needing financial help, she sets an agreement with Paolo, a local gigolo, with whom she spends some time (and a lot of money) and who will finally leave her for a younger (and probably richer) woman. Mrs. Stone, a person who has travelled extensively in her life, takes her new companion to Athens but he does not understand the nature of her conspicuous consumption and luxury spending at all. Despite considerable international travels throughout her life, Mrs. Stone cannot find any solace or relief from loneliness in any of her spendings; no conspicuous leisure or consumption seems to make her happy but the urge to be continually on the move – just to pass time. When Paolo deserts her, she is not desolate for losing another 'object' she formerly acquired but looks for other ways of consumption. She drops the key of her apartment to a starving street urchin waiting for days outside her house, knowing the dangers involved in such an act. She calls this final 'international journey,' "the drift." This metaphor embodies "everything that you did without having a reason" (p. 21) and while drifting, Mrs. Stone feels everything is wandering with her. In that final, helpless waiting for closure, when drifting "was nothingness," she kept "helplessly drifting" (p. 116) as an aimless tourist in lack of a sight to be seen or visited. This idling resembles that of the modernist *flàneur* or rather *flàneuse* ['stroller' or 'lounger'], the man or woman of leisure, whose main aim was to explore the cities of the world (but primarily that of European venues), the prototype of the contemporary tourist. By becoming thus a *flàneuse* on sensual fields, Mrs. Stone paradoxically finds an extensive comfort cosmopolitanism in her final overseas spot of Rome through a self-sacrificial gesture.

Apart from the world-traveler Mrs. Stone, the main characters of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* are people prone to local anchorage and do not have cosmopolitan features as such because they are stuck in a local claustrophobic fight over their past, being locked up into a microcosm of untold things. However, the play has an interesting insertion of transnational journeys and even some type of cosmopolitan attitudes that come to the surface through its minor or, for that matter, even absent characters. As prefigured in the "Notes for the Designer," this drama has a metatheatrical insertion of transnational features by virtue of two absent characters that used to own the Mississippi plantation house which was later inherited by Big Daddy. This metatheatrical item is the description of the family's house, which was once "the home of the Delta's biggest cotton-planter," a huge Victorian mansion with "a touch of the Far East" that was owned by Jack Straw and Peter Ochello, "a pair of old bachelors" who shared one of its rooms "all their lives together" (p. 13). This is the room where Brick and his wife, Maggie, inhabit when they are visiting Brick's parents. And the shadow of former owners lingers over the story of Skipper, Brick best friend, who killed himself after he realized – through Maggie's desperate mediation – that he was in love with Brick.

Brick's father and mother, Big Daddy and Big Mamma, an affluent couple of the Mississippi Delta, used to travel together to many places around the globe. As genuine comfort cosmopolitans, they visited most of Europe, including Barcelona and then went to Africa to see Morocco and stopped for a while in Marrakech (*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, p. 60-61) with the "damn" Cook's Tour travel agency. As Big Daddy remembers, the experience was mostly commercial on their part because "Big Mama bought more stuff than you could haul in a couple of boxcars" and stressed that "[E]verywhere she wint on this whirlwind tour, she bought, bought, bought" for the sake of spending only but never used any of the souvenirs and so they have most of stuff she bought "still crated up in the cellar, under water last spring!" (p. 59). According to Bigsby (2004), at this point the play is a "caustic account of a corrupting capitalism as Big Daddy and his wife plunder Europe of cultural artifacts which mean nothing to them" (p. 54) only to bring everything into their storage in the cellar. This cellar, which functions as a metaphorical unconscious of the characters' hidden things, repressed desires and untold secrets, is the setting where Brick and Big Daddy have their sincerest talk ever; this is where Brick tells Big Daddy that his father has terminal cancer and this is also the place where Big Daddy has the courage to finally confront Brick with the death of his son's best friend, Skipper. Interestingly, this setting brings forth the truth in both men, an attitude that leads the estranged father and son under the same 'roof' of tolerance. In the Pollitt family, thus, Big Daddy and Big Mamma share traits of genuine comfort cosmopolitanism, but Brick's introvert attitude – similar to Laura Wingfield – makes him stay within the realm of the domestic one.

Similar to Big Daddy and Big Mamma in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, the wealthy Mrs. Venable and her son, Sebastian, the essential *flàneuse* and the *flàneur* of *Suddenly Last Summer*, used to travel all over the world starting with the Himalayas, where Sebastian, a young poet extensively interested in all things around the globe, "almost entered a Buddhist monastery" (Williams, 1968, p. 120), through New Orleans, New York, the Mediterranean Riviera, Paris, Venice, Cairo, Cannes, the Galapagos Islands and the "terrible Encantadas, those heaps of extinct volcanoes," where they "saw the great sea-turtles crawl out of the sea for their annual egg-laying" (p. 117). The play is set partly in a "mock jungle" (Bigsby, 2004, p. 61) that reminds one of exotic South American places. As Bigsby remarked, "[E]xotic plants frame the action" (p. 61) of the drama, which is about a number of "private fears" in connection with an unsaid part of the protagonist’s sexuality and which can only be subversively transcended if put into another geographical and cultural context. As genuine comfort cosmopolitans, they were also intending to visit India and China (p. 120), but Sebastian was keen in seeing Scandinavia, especially Copenhagen and Stockholm with his beautiful young cousin, Catharine, instead of his venerable mother, because “wherever he was […] he always had the entourage of the beautiful and the talented and the young!” (p. 121). So, he exchanged his elderly mother for a more attractive travelling companion, a girl who would attract all the young men Sebastian was so famished for. As a result, they travel to a Hispanic place called Cabeza de Lobo [wolf’s head], where Sebastian, the “archetype of Williams’s artist figures” (Murphy, 2005, p. 185), is finally devoured by hungry crowds of young urchins. Catharine escapes but Mrs. Venable is unable to accept the truth she hears from the girl’s traumatic story about Sebastian’s libertine adventures and proves to be less cosmopolitan than she seemed in the beginning. Nevertheless, as a pair of *flàneuse* and the *flàneur*, accordingly, Mrs. Venable and her son are dramatic examples of extensive comfort cosmopolitans, with Sebastian going to the extremes of it.

Sweet Bird of Youth is set in St. Cloud, Florida in the Royal Palm, a “fashionable hotel somewhere along the Gulf Coast” of the United States, resembling “~~of~~ those ‘Grand Hotels’ around Sorrento or Monte Carlo,” built in a vaguely Moorish style (*Sweet Bird of Youth*, p. 17). Despite its international-style setting, the play suggests the opposite of cosmopolitan attitudes and is a sign of what Bigsby called “the indictment of southern bigotry” and, as such, “another portrait of a terminal society trapped in its own myths” (2004, p. 62). Under a deceitful transnational façade, the hotel does not host many cosmopolitan characters, with the exception of a famous actress, Alexandra del Lago, also known on her artist nickname as The Princess Kosmonopolis. She invents this nickname to “console herself for her dwindling public significance” (Bigsby, 2004, p. 62) and to suggest not only a *cosmopolit*an figure but also one of a global movie star (emphasis mine). She wakes up in St. Cloud because her escort man, Chance Wayne, takes her with him in his native town to prove that, by her side, he has become a successful man. Nevertheless, by hiring him as hustler, the Princess resembles Mrs. Stone from *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone.* However, unlike Mrs. Stone, Kosmonopolis is just a minor character that appears at the beginning of the play. When she is blackmailed by her companion for more help, she simply disappears, leaving Chance to his fate to be castrated by his first love’s father, Boss Finley. As a result, Chance, the protagonist of the play, is sacrificed on the altar of his deserted love.

Death is also what Lawrence T. Shannon, the protagonist of *The Night of the Iguana,* wants. He is a defrocked American priest, who becomes a tour guide for the Blake Tours travel agency and takes a Baptist female college group of school teachers from Blowing Rock, Texas, to a small place called Costa Verde on "the 'caleta' or the 'morning beach' of Puerto Barrio in Mexico" (*The Night of the Iguana*, p. 228), instead of taking them to Ambos Mundos – as it says in the group leader's brochure. The setting of the play is inhabited by the small hotel owner, Maxine Faulk, and her two young Mexican helpers. A set of cubicles facing the Pacific Ocean are occupied by a German group of tourists, the Fahrenkop family – or "the Nazis," as Shannon likes to call them. Their presence is quite controversial and seems not to have any dramatic function whatsoever, but it actually validates the place as a veritable tourist spot hidden from the main sights, also connoting the time of the drama's plot, set during the Second World War, when "travel for pleasure came nearly to a halt" (Cabello, 2011). As Juanita Cabello observes, the presence of the Fahrenkopfs heightens the "traveler's sense of political unease and spiritual dislocation," making the atmosphere of the play loaded with uncertainty even in the case of adventurers, expatriates or simple tourists. Indeed, in this play, Williams

> assembled a crew of characters […] that playfully highlights a transitional moment in tourism. There are globetrotting adventurers who make their way by their talents and wits (Shannon, Hannah, and Nonno); a young Western schoolgirl on the loose in the tropics (Charlotte); a lusty, bohemian, expatriate innkeeper (Maxine) who keeps two young local men as house servants and lovers; and mass tourists (the group of fussy women travelers, teachers from a female college in Texas). (Cabello, 2011)

All these people seem to find their momentary place in Costa Verde, which is a liminal setting, a place where all kinds of people can peacefully meet even in the time of war. This setting is also a metaphor of the world's 'veranda' with views perhaps even "better than the view from Victoria peak in Hong Kong" or "the view from the roof-terrace of the Sultan's palace" (*The Night of the Iguana*, p. 237). Shannon emphasizes the cosmopolitan atmosphere of this transnational place of gathering by saying that even "[T]he cook is a Chinese imported from Shanghai by me!" (p. 237). For him "God's world, has been the range of [his] travels" (p. 297) and thus he becomes a versed traveler, who knows what to see and also what to seek when on the move. He is not the prototype of the tourist-type comfort cosmopolitan but his attitude is definitely one of a cosmopolitan person. He takes the group of women to places they could have otherwise never see and is proud of teaching others how to be or become appreciative of other cultures. This is how Shannon eschews official itineraries, making his followers less touristy and more genuine travelers – like him:

> I showed her San Juan de Letran, I showed her Tenampa and some other places not listed in the Blake Tours brochure. I showed her more than the floating gardens at Xochimilco, Maximilian's place, and the mad Empress Carlotta's little homesick chapel, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the monument to Juarez, the relics of the Aztec civilization, the sword of Cortez, the head-dress of Montezuma." (p. 295)

The other important character of this drama is Miss Hannah Jelkes, a New England woman, whom Shannon simply calls "Miss… Thin-Standing-Up-Female-Buddha" (p. 304). She is so less because of her appearance and more because of her spirituality and Oriental wisdom. Hannah has traveled the world together with her poet grandfather Jonathan Coffin, nicknamed Nonno, and has known lots of people from Nantucket to Shanghai and Singapore (p. 311, 316). As both she and Shannon seem to be in a kind of permanent exile, Hannah understands the protagonist's feelings and deeds when they exchange ideas about what Cabello calls the "loneliness of travel." Hannah is not only a person, who adapts well to various conditions, but she is also modern transient understanding the way the world works. She does more than just "highlight the intrusion of a woman traveler into a previously masculine travel arena" (Cabello, 2011), she exemplifies the ideal cosmopolitan person when talking about the way she perceives the world and the intimate behavior its inhabitants. The type of cosmopolitanism described by Ryder as a guiding moral principle applies perfectly to her, especially when she utters the humanist sentence of "nothing human disgusts me unless it's unkind, violent" (*The Night of the Iguana*, p. 318). Hannah understands Shannon's desire (or death-drive) to have "the long swim to China" (p. 299) as she understands the essence of different types of 'travels' people desire to have at some point, making her the best example of an ideal cosmopolitan character, endowed with the highest universalist morality, far from the madding crowd of conspicuous consumption and comfort cosmopolitanism.

The globetrotter, transient figure of Williams's *The Milktrain Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* is Chris Flanders, nicknamed also the "Angel of Death."

An eternal tourist looking for new people to escort, he visits the protagonist of the play, Sissy Goforth, another wealthy, elderly woman from the Williams' dramatis personae of golden aged women, who is living in a luxurious palace on a small island in the Mediterranean Sea close to the Amalfi coast. Mrs. Goforth tries to put together a volume of her memoirs before she dies but it seems that her endeavor cannot be finished in time. A widely travelled woman and a true comfort cosmopolitan, she knows the ways of the world and shows it by having a luxurious home abroad and by being dressed in extravagant clothes pertaining to other cultures than her own. In this sense, she can be considered an extensive comfort cosmopolitan figure. At the time of Chris's arrival, Sissy Goforth looks as a Kabuki dancer by wearing an expensive kimono, "a Japanese national treasure one of her former lovers bought on their "reconciliation trip to Japan" (*The Milktrain Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*, p. 165). The transnational context of her home and staff is also emphasized by the play's opening scene, when two stage assistants, minimally named One and Two, talk in this American-owned home in Italy in a Japanese Kabuki and Noh stage-type of dialogue. Mrs. Goforth is also visited by the Witch of Capri, who warns her international friend of the dangers of the Angel of Death. Distressed and frightened in the beginning, Goforth finally finds comfort in Chris' presence and his words and ultimately she dies in the arms of this young man, who travelled across the globe for years in a row as a true cosmopolitan with universalist morality, attending many elderly people on their last journey on Earth. An extensive comfort cosmopolitan, Sissy Goforth has found solace in the arms of the best companion she ever had.

Tennessee Williams's characters from the above-mentioned plays present an array of attitudes regarding their transnational encounters. While some of Williams's more popular plays from the mid-forties, fifties and the sixties do not have explicit transnational background, the international ambience is still creatively embedded in a number of multicultural layers present in the discourses of these dramas, which exhibit cross-cultural exchanges under various forms, including that of domestic cosmopolitanism in the case of Laura Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* and Brick in *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, misunderstood comfort cosmopolitanism for Blanche Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and genuine comfort cosmopolitanism for Big Daddy, Big Mamma and Princess Kosmonopolis in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Sweet Bird of Youth*. Moreover, these plays also provide characters with a pure cosmopolitan attitude endowed with universalist morality. Such is the case of Tom Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* and, on another level, of Hannah Jelkes in *The Night of the Iguana*, and Christ Flanders in *The Milktrain Doesn't*

Stop Here Anymore. Additionally, *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *The Milktrain Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* and *The Night of the Iguana* delve into obvious issues of transnational affairs making Mrs. Stone, Mrs. Venable, Sebastian, as well as Sissy Goforth, characters of extensive comfort cosmopolitanism through their *flàneuse or flàneur* attributes of American expatriates and global tourists – while Lawrence T. Shannon's character exhibits the basic values of general cosmopolitanism.

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Aleksandra Izgarjan
Faculty of Philosophy
University of Novi Sad
aleksandra.izgarjan@ff.uns.ac.rs

POETICS OF TRANSLATION IN THE WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY TRANSCULTURAL AMERICAN WRITERS

Abstract: The presentation focuses on the works of American writers who use the metaphor of translation to point to different ways hybrid identity is constructed in the contemporary, trans-national American society. Through specific narrative strategies such as code-mixing and covert translation, these writers subvert the dominance of the English language as well as Christian, western world view and allow for the existence of different modes of expression. The hybrid nature of their texts can be compared to political acts on the part of the writers in their criticism of the dominant community's treatment of minorities. They can also be viewed as a resistance to the erasure of the Other and its retrieval from the margins of society. Simon calls the effects of incorporation of the intertexts from different languages poetics of translation. She suggests it is a form of cultural pluralism where the fragmented literary object reflects the state of the contemporary society. The crucial insight that the poetics of translation offers us is that translation and literature at present have more to do with discontinuity, friction and multiplicity than with the creation of new commonalities. In my presentation, I will show how transnational American writers approach different aspects of translation as a means of allowing members of ethnic minorities to claim their voice and speak in the dominant, mainstream culture.

Key words: transnational, American writers, translation strategies, poetics of translation.

1. Introduction

Following Lefevere's idea that "a certain approach to translation studies can make a significant contribution to literary theory as a whole and how translations, or, to use a more general term, refractions, play a very important part in the evolution of literatures" (2012, p. 233), this article will compare translation cultural strategies with the narrative strategies used by American transcultural writers which can be linked to what Sherry Simon calls "poetics of translation" (2012, p. 70). And while the article does not attempt to provide any system approach to literature, I agree with Lefevere that "[t]ranslations, texts produced on the borderline between two systems, provide an ideal introduction to a systems approach to literature" (2012, p. 234). It is precisely this borderland, contact zone or third space (to use just three of the more ubiquitous terms for this phenomenon) created by interaction of cultures and power structures that is in the focus of this article. Therefore, the article understands translation primarily as a process, as an act of reading (Spivak, 2001, p. 312). In this regard, it rests upon Bhabha's notion that

> What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (1994, p. 2)

2. Poetics of translation

Admittedly, at first glance translation and transcultural literature stand against each other since their goals are opposed: transcultural literature includes at least two languages, translation substitutes one with the other (Grutman, 1998, p. 157). However, in translated texts and even more so in transcultural literature, we can find tensions between languages. Transcultural writers reflect the struggle for power between the dominant and minority cultures (embodied for example in the relationship between Spanish and Catalan, standard American English and African American vernacular or TexMex, Spanglish or Hispanic English, French and Québécois). These refractions represent the double bind of transcultural literature: simultaneous existence in dominant and minority cultures, unease and dependence upon it, limitations and guilt which this life on the border enacts. Due to these tensions, to heteroglossia, heterology and heterophony of transcultural texts (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293-4; Berman, 2012, p. 252) there is a satisfaction that arises through deciphering of the text. Transcultural literature creates for the reader a strong sense of reality which, once experienced, cannot be recreated by reading monolingual texts. That is why Simon calls such effects of incorporation of the text and intertexts from different languages poetics of translation. It brings to "realization an aesthetics of cultural pluralism in which the literary object is fragmented, in a manner analogous to the contemporary social body." (1999, p. 70) The crucial insight that the poetics of translation offers us is that translation and literature at present have "more to do with discontinuity, friction and multiplicity than [...] with the creation of new commonalities. Culture no longer offers itself as a unifying force; language, nation, culture no longer line up as bounded and congruent realities" (Simon, 1999, p. 71-72).

In the period when American studies are becoming increasingly diverse, studies of the works of American transcultural writers might point us in the direction in which American studies will develop. As Salman Rushdie notes, displacement, the state of being out of language and culture, is becoming increasingly common in today's globalized world. This diasporic experience "may enable [the writer] to speak properly and concretely on a subject of universal significance and appeal" (Rushdie, 1992).[1] Due to shifting cultural allegiances that mark their characters, transcultural writers forge unbreakable bonds between language and identity, making their texts a suitable ground for examination of socially constructed categories. By creating texts with interplay of languages, American writers create literature which can be described as postcolonial in that it interrogates the notions of dominance and subversion. Discussing the role of "place" in American literature, Martha Cutter suggests that "it may be more productive to view place not as a 'homeland' but as a site of difficult dialogue where the national can be contested and constructed by its interaction with international and transnational roots and routes." (2008, p. 6). According to Maxine Hong Kingston, "the time of the great American novel is over. If you were going to write a great American novel, then it is also the global novel. [...] It breaks across borders and boundaries. [...] The references are from all cultures; the language has the accents of every culture. Any good writing has to have elements of all of our backgrounds." (Lim, 2008. p. 166). Given the fact that transcultural literature combines different languages and engages readers from different cultural backgrounds in its textual dynamics (Dasenbrock, 1987, p. 10), the strategies that the writers of transcultural literature use can be compared to cultural translation strategies. Translation inevitably presupposes a degree of acculturation and, similarly in their work, transcultural writers negotiate two languages and cultural frameworks. In Simon's opinion, since

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[1] Following Bhabha's arguments, Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi suggest that for Rushdie, similarly to other postcolonial writers, translingual and translocational translation was crucial in his formation. They find near synonymity between transnational and translational and "the translated hybridity of the 'unhomed' immigrant" who inhibits the Third Space. (1999, p. 12)

> cultures are bounded spaces characterized by a plurality of codes and languages, it is not surprising that translation has come to figure prominently in contemporary literature. Whether used as an implicit mode of literary creation in post-colonial writing or as an explicit source of inspiration in various modes of 'border writing', translation and plurilingualism inhabit many contemporary texts. As a consequence, the place of the translator is no longer an exclusive site. It overlaps with that of the writer and, in fact, of the contemporary Western citizen. (1999, p. 58-59)

3. Cultural translation strategies

Two broadest groups of cultural translation strategies are domestication and foreignization. Domestication strategy is target culture oriented and aims at adapting the elements of source language to target language. The text which is the outcome of application of this strategy is not supposed to be different from texts created by target language native speakers. In order to achieve this end, translators replace culture specific references from the source language by those from the target language and by doing so create a sense of familiarity in the reader. Domestication strategy can be likened to what Berman calls "ethnocentric translation" which through reversal of "the relations which prevail in the original between formal and informal, ordered and disorderly, abstract and concrete" causes the work "to undergo a change of *sign*, of *status* – and seemingly without changing form and meaning" (2012, p. 242). Foreignization strategy goes in the opposite direction since it is source language oriented and seeks to preserve its signals in the target language. It opposes the concept of adaptation and instead preserves differences between the source and target language and culture. Unlike domestication strategy, foreignization creates in the reader a sense of wonder, strangeness, and sometimes even alienation. It must be clear here that the issue is not about "good" or "bad" translation, of using appropriate "semantic equivalence, but rather one of a compromise between two kinds of poetics, in which [in the case of domestication] the poetics of the receiving system plays the dominant part" (Lefevere, 2012, p. 212).

In comparison, foreignization, similarly to transcultural literature, does not accommodate source culture poetics to target, on the contrary, it strives to preserve tensions in the original and not change its signs and statuses, to borrow from Berman's explanation. While domestication with adaptation to the source culture and the erasure of the signs of competing poetics in the original (for example expunging vernaculars) prevents hybridization, foreignization makes it possible. Much more than domestication, foreignization is dedicated to preserving iconic surface and signifying process and mode of expression that allows a text to "*speak* to us" (Berman, 2012, p. 247). Translation transforms translating language (Berman, 2012, p. 253) just like transcultural literature transforms American literary canon by inserting voices previously excluded from it.

4. Translation zone in transcultural literature

Parallel existence of two cultural codes (source and target) in the texts which are the results of foreignization strategy makes them similar to transcultural literature. Both foreignization strategy and transcultural literature rest upon the notion of dialogue and engagement of multiple cultural frameworks. In this translation zone, the cultural Other is not erased, rather it remains visible even if its difference is expressed in the words of the target language (Berman, 2012, p. 241). In that regard, translation stops being a question of "simply overturning cultural influences, of reversing the tide of influences, but of creating a new idiom through the encounter of languages and traditions." (Simon, 1999, p. 63) However, while cultural translation strategies have as their ultimate goal transmission of the codes of the source into target language, the goals of transcultural literature are more complex. Narrative strategies in transcultural literature, particularly code-mixing, show that it resists hegemonic perception of culture as a closed system and favors heterogeneous culture. Opposition to hegemony is obvious in the emphasis on diversity and inclusion of the language of minority communities in the language of the dominant community. The readers are made aware of the fact that the resulting text is a product of various cultures, of the process of interaction and translation and not only of the dominant culture. In the case of American transcultural writers, through insertion of the words from their ethnic communities (Asian, Hispanic or Native American) they undermine dominance of English language and create new modes of expression. For Aparicio, such strategies defy assimilation and constitute a subversive act:

> of writing the Self using the tools of the Master and, in the process, transforming those signifiers with the cultural meanings, values, and ideologies of the subordinate sector. Subversive also in a literal sense (*sub-verso*, under the verse, under the word), the Hispanic and Caribbean subtexts that permeate Latino fiction and poetry are only present for those readers who can recognize the underlying textuality clothed in the language of the Other. (1994, p. 797)

Domestication is therefore connected to colonization, to appropriation of the discourse of the colonized by the colonizer. Brisset shows how translation can be used to support the nationalistic project of Quebec to position Quebecois as a language in its own right through translations of the masterpieces of world literature. For her, translation is a "dual act of communication" which presupposes two distinct codes (2000, p. 443). The task of translation is to change "the relation of linguistic forces, at the institutional and symbolic level, by making it possible for the vernacular language to take the place of the referential language." (Brisset, 2000, p. 345) This notion can be successfully applied to the works of many transcultural American writers who, at least to a degree, supplant English with their native, often vernacular languages. Even more so, it can also be relevant for the discussion of usage of vernacular by African American writers. In that respect, "translation becomes an act of reclaiming, of recentering of the identity, a reterritorializing operation. It does not create a new language, but it elevates a dialect to the status of a national and cultural language" (Brisset, 2000, p. 346) As can be seen from Brisset's analysis and the examples provided in this article, transcultural writers are by nature of things much more politically invested in the project of translation and cultural accommodation than translators who use foreignization. While foreignization is an approach which favors heterogeneousness, and in that way constitutes political stance, transcultural writers belong to the minority cultures whose language they are inserting in the dominant discourse which makes their task much more politically engaged. What is common for both is rejection of the idea of homogenous culture, since "the ideology of homogeneity rejects all dialogism and is, thus, a form of totalitarianism" (Brisset, 2000, p. 353)

American transcultural writers "paradoxically use English, the language of the dominant culture, to assert their difference." (Grutman, 1998, p. 158) As Spivak notes, one of the seductions of translating "is a simple miming of the responsibility to the trace of the other in the self" (2012, p. 312). In that sense, transcultural writers trace and claim their self in the language of the dominant community, just like they provide an opportunity for American society to see its multiple selves in their texts. Different narrative strategies that resemble foreignization which will be discussed here, become a political act since they interrogate the signs of the Other, proximity and distance of the dominant and suppressed codes, their potency and visibility in the text. If they are treated only as the exotic sign of the Other, followed by added translation which creates a buffer zone between the dominant and minority language, then they serve to Orientalize the text and en route the Other as well. Conversely, transcultural writers who favor co-existence of different languages and cultures, creating a zone of contact, oppose the hegemonic view of culture as a close system and opt for heterogeneity and allowing for different modes of expression. In the case of American transcultural writers, fusion of languages and manifestations of the Other are reflected in the intrusion of Chinese or Spanish words in the English text (Izgarjan, 2008, p. 14).

It can therefore be concluded that transcultural literature in many ways depends on the active reading and willingness of the readers to engage with the text, particularly cognitive holes a heteroglossal texts presents to monolingual leaders. They are invited to try to deciphers words foreign to them and consequently they, consciously or unconsciously, enter into the process of translation which brings them closer to the meaning of the text of the marginalized ethnic community and its culture. For example, the title of the first prologue of Amy Tan's novel *The Joy Luck Club* "Feathers from a Thousand *Li* Away" contains the Chinese word *li* which is unfamiliar to the readers who speak only English. However, later in the text, the readers can infer the meaning of the word on the basis of its context: "Then the woman and the swan sailed across an ocean many thousands of *li* wide, stretching their necks toward America" (Tan, 1989, p. 3) There are "common mechanisms of decoding and understanding of foreign languages and cultures in translation and transcultural literature. However, while in translation one language and content gets replaced by another, in transcultural literature they exist simultaneously." (Izgarjan, 2012, p. 142) In this example we see that the signal of the protagonist who is a double Other in a sense that she is Chinese immigrant and a woman, does not get erased. Quite the opposite, it has a vital function in the prologue as a signifier of Tan's poetics.

5. Narrative strategies resembling translation in transcultural texts

One of the noticeable strategies in transcultural literature is code-mixing and code-switching. It is important to note that code-mixing is not a reflection of transcultural author's inability to distinguish between languages.

On the contrary, they are part of a larger symbolical meaning of the work. As Hess observes, languages are switched "to fulfill artistic and literary function." (1996, p. 6) Often the writers use code-mixing as a political act to subvert preeminence of English language and resist suppression of the Other in the dominant culture. One of the best examples of multilayered use of code-switching is Kingston's novel *The Woman Warrior Memoir of the Childhood among the Ghosts*. In the first part of the novel Kingston uses the word ghost to transfer Chinese mythology into American reality in which her characters, Chinese American immigrants live. China is recreated as the lost home to which Chinese immigrants no longer have access due to the Communist revolution and the Second World War but also as a native land where they had power since they understood language and customs. The narrator's mother, Brave Orchid, is thus capable of fighting all sorts of ghosts in China, both as a medical doctor and shaman like figure. However, in America, she is only capable of telling her children stories of these epic battles since she no longer has a status either of a doctor or a shaman. In face of the American ghosts, she is completely powerless: "But America has been full of machines and ghosts – Taxi Ghosts, Bus Ghosts, Police Ghosts, Fire ghosts, Meter reader Ghosts, Three Trimming Ghosts, Five-and-Dime Ghosts" (1977, p. 111). Kingston here masterfully plays with the notion of ghost, going back to Chinese history and Chinese word *gui* (or *kuei* depending on transcription) which was used to designate foreigners. For Chinese, who perceived themselves as the Central nation, the foreigners were beings from the other world. *Gui* (or *kuei*) can be translated as a white demon. By calling Americans ghosts, Chinese immigrants are trying to maintain their status of the central nation in American society which is completely foreign to them, but it is also clear in the novel that actually it is immigrants who are ghosts to the Americans not just because of their illegal status and general invisibility, but more importantly because of their struggle to successfully integrate themselves in the society. Thus the narrator's family works in a laundry in a basement and has constantly to put up with the insulting customers. In a similar inversion of codes, Kingston foregrounds the power relations between the dominant and minority community in the scene when the white costumers imitate broken English of Chinese immigrants coming across as inarticulate. Brave Orchid tries to reverse the power play between them by using Chinese label which Kingston literally translates into English:

> "No tickee, no washee, mama-san?" a ghost would say, so embarrassing.

> "Noisy Red-Mouth Ghost," she'd write on its package, marking its clothes with its name. (1977, p. 123)

Both the white customer and Brave Orchid dehumanize each other and Kingston successfully shows how this interchange does not lead to understanding despite code-mixing. Although Brave Orchid's attempt at signifying somewhat restores her sense of self, she still remains in the realm of the ghosts since the white customer never finds out what she called him. Kingston further plays on the metaphor of ghosts when she has the narrator's parents and relatives use the Chinese word Ho Chi Kuei when they address her and her siblings who were born and brought up in the U.S. The narrator finds thirteen different meanings of this word in a dictionary. As she ponders on various translations, transcriptions and transliterations, she can only conclude that the word refers to a being from another world. For Chinese parents, their children started being Ho Chi Kuei when they started speaking English and behaving as Americans. While they are not the ghosts from Chinese legends, or the white demons, by assimilating into the American society they became unfamiliar to the Chinese immigrant community. As part of her poetics, Kingston decided to sometimes transliterate and sometimes translate Chinese word *gui* and use it in the subtitle of her novel. This crosscultural translation functions as a metaphor for Chinese-American culture and avoids narrow interpretations by including in its broad specter of meaning both insiders and outsiders in Chinese and American cultures (Sato, 1991, p. 200). Understanding of different levels of the meaning of the word *ghost*, from simple idiomatic expression to complex metaphors, demands active and engaged readers and illustrates two possible ways of their reaction to the Other (Dasenbrock, 1987. p. 14).

As is evident from the provided example, there are different ways of using code-mixing and code-switching in a transcultural text. Sometimes the readers unfamiliar with the language inserted into English text can infer meaning from the context provided by the author as is the case with Kingston's use of the word ghost and Ho Chi Kuei. Another approach is not to provide explanation or translation. Maier calls this strategy "withheld translation" (Maier, 1995, p. 32). This creates a text with cognitive holes in it which can encumber reading for monolingual readers. Untranslated words function as insider codes whose meaning is available only to bilingual readers who belong to both of the communities depicted in the text (Izgarjan, 2008, p. 21). Consequently, Spivak concludes that "the genuinely bilingual post-colonial now has a bit of advantage" (2012, p. 319).

However, while Spivak advocates silence in cases where translation is impossible, Maier, following Pratt's concept of linguistics of contact, supports co-presence and interlocking of practices even if they happen within asymmetrical relations of power with "all the potential, heterogeneous interaction it implies (1995, p. 29). Here the degree of correspondence stops mattering (Dasenbrock, 1987, p. 11; Maier, 1995, p. 30), what matters more is transcultural experience and the potential of authors to create a new language, the third language which is not only available to bilingual readers but also to those readers who are willing to make an effort to understand it. In that way, the third language includes insider codes of the dominant and minority cultures and becomes a language of the contact zone. In this interaction, the dominant language, which is not the language of exile, but language of repression and colonization, has to be recreated and repossessed in order to be turned into a "space of resistance" (Hooks, 1989, p. 296). Only then can it speak about the experience which transcends occupation and dominance.

The minority cultures gain strength in this process of conversion or convergence of languages, they reshape it according to their needs and cultural experience. This changed and adopted/adapted language becomes a cohesive force in heterogeneous communities. According to hooks, the transformed dominant language becomes a counter language and reflects spirit of rebellion which claims language as a space of resistance (Hooks, 1989, p. 296). The new language created in the process of translation and transculturation, confirms the status of transcultural literature as literature of borderlands. Bhabha contends that "[t]he borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of the past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation." (1994, p. 7)

Anzaldúa similarly evokes the Borderlands as a specific locale on Texas-Mexican border with its history of conflict and bloodshed, but also a third space enabling mixture of cultures, religions, traditions and languages. The fact that Borderlands are at the same time real and fictional makes for different reading in which Anzaldúa inscribes indigenous and gender elements. She thus revisions and replaces the dominant post-Columbian, post-Cortesian, Catholic, America mainstream history and particularly reconfigures religious and historical figures which embody patriarchal order and inserts Chicana substitutes: La Virgen de Guadalupe, Coatlicue, and Malinche. Sonia Saldívar-Hull proposes that Anzaldúa "stages her writing within the larger context of the continent and its layered histories. When Anzaldúa deploys multiple languages as part of her New mestiza methodology, she enunciates her writing as an act of self-creation within that context, a strategy she claims as an Nahuatl concept." (1999, p. 9)

As McDowell observes, “key concepts used to refer to translocal culture and identities include hybridity, diasporic identity and translation” (1999, p. 210). Anzaldúa translates herself into different national and political communities and challenges the division on public and private, male and female space crafting a language of resistance and renegotiation of different social norms. For her, “[t]he switching of codes in this book from English to Castilian Spanish to the North Mexican dialect to Tex-Mex to a sprinkling of Nahuatl to a mixture of all of these, reflects my language, a new language – the language of the Borderlands. There, at the juncture of cultures, languages cross-pollinate and are revitalized; they die and are born.” (1999, p. 20)

We can find this spirit of resistance in the ways Native American writer Louise Erdrich uses intrusion of Anishinabe words into English text in her novel *Tracks*. Erdrich opens each chapter with a year, followed by its Anishinabe title and English translation: “Winter 1912 Manitou-geezisohns Little Spirit Sun.” (1988, p. 1) The years testify to the imposition of the western time (and Christianity) upon Anishinabe tribe. The invocation of different manitous in the novel’s title is in sharp contrast to the concepts of white American colonizers. Similarly, at the very beginning of the novel, Erdrich uses literal translation for European diseases, spotted sickness for small pox and Anishinabe word Nadouissioux for Sioux (1988, p. 1). For Peterson, “[t]he turn to oral history in *Tracks* signals the need for indigenous peoples to tell their own stories and their own histories.” (2001, p. 984) At the same time, Erdrich creates a text composed of competing and conflicting representations and meanings. (Peterson, 2001, p. 984) Conflicting codes reflect juxtaposition between Christianity and shamanic religion as well as mechanical or industrial time versus ceremonial time. (Rainwater, 2000, p. 406).

In her story “Little Miracles, Kept Promises,” Cisneros uses code-mixing between English and Spanish and evokes different religions so that the hybridity of the text reflects intersection of different beliefs inherent to Hispanic American culture. It is important to note that Cisneros is careful to refer to the saints from the Catholic tradition which are connected to Hispanic communities (La Virgen de Guadalupe, Santo Niño de Atocha, San Martín de Pores, Niño Fidencio, Santísima Señora de San Juan de los Lagos and Cristo Negro de Esquipulas) as well as those connected to African tradition (Obatala, Yemaya, Ochún, Orunla, Ogun, Elegua and Shanga). Cisneros’ interrogation of power relations and religious dominance of Catholicism in Hispanic American community is best seen when the narrator Rosario in “Little Miracles, Kept Promises” first rejects La Virgen de Guadalupe as too restrictive. She feels La Virgen espouses patriarchal binary opposition of women on virgins and whores only to later understand that she is the incarnation of the Aztec/Nahuatl goddesses Tonantzin/Coatlicue/Coatlaxopeuh and as such represents a form of resistance of native people to colonization. Instead of focusing on humility and purity of the Virgin Mary, Rosario celebrates La Virgen de Guadalupe's connection to Mother Goddess whom she sees both as a creator and destroyer. She claims her as a symbol of Mexican rebellion and identity and her predecessor. At the end of the story, Cisneros foregrounds hybridity in a supreme act of code-mixing, conjuring deities from various belief systems and creating intertextuality with her precursors, primarily Gloria Anzaldua:

> When I learned your true name is Coatlaxopeuh, She Who Has Dominion over Serpents, when I recognized you as Tonantzín, and learned you name are Teteoinnan, Toci, Xochiquetzal, Tlazolteotl, Coatlicue, Chalchiuhtlicue, Coyolxauhqui, Huixtochihuatl, Chicomecoatl, Cihuacoatl, when I could see you as Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, Nuestra Señora de los remedies, Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Soccoro, Nuestra Señora de San Juan de los Lagos, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Our Lady of the Rosary, Our Lady of Sorrows, I wasn't ashamed, then, to be my mother's daughter, my grandmother's granddaughter, my ancestors' child.
>
> When I could see you in all your facets, all at once the Buddha, the Tao, the true Messiah, Yahweh, Allah, the Heart of the Sky, the Heart of the Earth, the Lord of the Near and Far, the Spirit, the Light, the Universe, I could love you, and, finally, learn to love me. (1992, p. 128).

6. Translation, transformation and transgression

As we can see, Cisneros' poetics of code-mixing includes both transgression and fusion of different perspectives. Like many other transcultural writers who use code-mixing, she employs it to question boundaries between the dominant social categories, primarily race/ethnicity and gender. In this examination, she often exploits metaphor of transvestism to point to fluidity of these categories. In the story "Remember the Alamo," through the protagonist Rudy Cantú/Tristan, who is a drag queen, she interrogates power dynamics between two cultural and historical frameworks apparent in the configuration of the Battle of the Alamo in Mexican and American communities.

> But I'm not Rudy when I perform. I mean, I'm not Rudy Cantú from Falfurrias anymore. I'm Tristán. Every Thursday night at the Travisty. Behind the Alamo, you can't miss it. One-man show, girl. Don't forget. The Travisty. Remember the Alamo.
> *Lionel Ontiveros, Darlene Limón, Alex Vigil ...*
> Because every Thursday night Tristán dances with La Calaca Flaca. Tristán takes the fag by the throat and throttles her senseless. Tristán is not afraid of La Flaquita. Thin Death. (1992, p. 64)

Cisneros mixes various discourses and codes to highlight shifting perspectives on the famous battle. Mexicans won the battle of the Alamo, however this victory led to the Battle of San Jacinto during which many American soldiers cried "Remember the Alamo" sparking support for the American army. Mexicans lost that battle not only ending the Texan revolution, but more importantly the whole war. While for Mexicans the battle of the Alamo signifies ultimate defeat in the Mexican-American war, in American imagination Alamo achieved the status of the cultural icon. As an official Texas State Shrine and the most popular tourist attraction in Texas, it has been presented in many fiction and non-fiction works which glorified American success in annexing large portions of Mexican territory. The issue of colonialization of Mexican land and its inhabitants is in Cisneros' story presented through Tristan's dance with death. The text is cut with the names that at first appear random but are actually the names of people who are, as Tristan, casualties of AIDS. Just like Mexicans appear in American mainstream version of history as the dispossessed and marginalized people, so are homosexuals on the margins of American and Mexican society. The names of the AIDS victim, similarly to the names of the Mexicans killed in the Battle of the Alamo, are not part of the official records.

Isabel Allende also uses the tropes of translation, transformation and transvestism in her novel *Eva Luna* to renegotiate not just social categories but also the notion of history. The character Melesio/Mimi (whose very name points to mixture/mingling) is a transsexual who lives "suspended in androgynous limbo" (Allende, 1988, p. 23). A woman in the male body, Melesio recreates herself as Mimi and from a poor teacher and singer in a sleazy vaudeville show becomes a leading actress in a famous soap opera. By referring to Melesio's transformation as "reincarnation" (Allende, 1988, p. 183) and by comparing him/her to a "mythological being" (Allende, 1988, p. 225), Allende undermines religious discourse and its imposition of rigid gender categories in Venezuela where the novel takes place. However, while on the surface, the novel favors androgyny and hybridity of different races, it also shows that Melesio/Mimi is allowed to succeed only if she respects the codes of Venezuelan society. She changes her body and behavior to correspond to the feminine ideal and yearns for a "macho" man who will love her as a true woman. More than Eva Luna, Melesio/Mimi knows that she has to maintain the façade and overtly comply with the norms of the patriarchal society. She does not accept the labels of transvestite and homosexual and becomes the ultimate woman who uses her beauty to obtain financial and political power. In that respect, she resembles Allende's another character from the novel *The House of Spirits*, a prostitute Tránsito Soto. She also starts from the position of the "low-Other" (Panjabi, 1992, p. 13), but manages to achieve "transition to a position of power through an appropriation of control over her own body and income, and through her use of her sexual and psychological powers." (Panjabi, 1992, p. 17) Her name, like Melesio's, points to this ability to translate and transform herself from one the dominant set of codes into the one she creates. For Panjabi, Tránsito's method of translation becomes a way of transcending social borders and moving from a periphery to the center: "Her psycho-sexual reality of being simultaneously peripheral and central to the subjectivity of men translates itself into a parallel strategy of action. Marginal to society, she simultaneously defines a central place in it for herself" (1992, p. 17) Moreover, Tránsito and Melesio/Mimi question the limits of both machismo and excessive femininity showing both to be inadequate (Panjabi, 1992, p. 92). Reading Meleseio/Mimi's story as "a cautionary tale about resistance and conformity", Levine L. Gould shows that Mimi rejects "the notion of inborn sexuality as a natural state" which points to gender as a social construct (2002, p. 59). Although she "artificially creates a female identity to match the desires of a male dominated society [...] the coexistence or fusion of female and male in Mimi's being provide one more mirror reflection of the creation of hybrid spheres that shapes Allende's novel, urging her readers to consider the dissolution of concepts of certainty as defining aspects of contemporary reality. [She] dismantles, in the process, a wide range of culturally engendered constructs." (Gould, 2002, p. 60) Melesio/Mimi and Tránsito Soto, as the signifiers of performative gender, are inscribed in Allende's reconstruction of Chilean and Venezuelan history in *The House of Spirits* and *Eva Luna* respectively. Mimi stars in Eva Luna's soap opera *Bolero* which provides an alternative to the official history of the repressive regime by subversion of convention and undoing of social hierarchies. Tránsito Soto uses her power to rescue the main female narrator from the dictatorial regime by intervening with military forces and negotiating power relations. Both Melesio/Mimi and Tránsito Soto bring about change by using the transformative potential of the margin. While Tristan is unable to translate himself into two opposite codes of behavior, Mimi and Transito gain power and inscribe themselves in the dominant structures because they successfully navigate between these codes. Given the emphasis on performative gender, historical crises and genres she uses which are traditionally marginalized and linked to women (soap opera, diary, confession), we see that Allende follows Bhabha's notion that "terms of cultural engagement [...] are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of satirical transformation." (1994, p. 2)

7. Conclusion

Simon posits that "writing across languages, writing through translation, becomes a particularly strong form of expression at a time when national cultures have themselves become diverse, inhabited by plurality" (1999, p. 72) Transcultural writers whose works are discussed here manage to capture that plurality of expression not just across language, but gender categories as well. This new politics of in-betweenness and reassessment of the creative potentials of liminal space is something that characterizes transcultural writers' usage of poetics of translation. I would contend that translation as a narrative strategy is founded precisely on the idea of reappropriation of cultural codes. Undoubtedly transcultural texts would lose their strength if they were written only in English as the dominant language. Instead, the words from minority languages and depictions of the tradition and customs of the ethnic minorities serve as signals of the Other or as Lipski calls them "cultural/ethnic markers" (1982, p. 195). In their function as translators and mediators between different worlds, transcultural writers make the readers notice various degrees of translation in the text and in turn think about the way languages function and the way people perceive them. By utilizing in their works narrative strategies which resemble strategies in translation, transcultural writers are allowing parallel existence of different languages and cultures and enriching them with new meaning.

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Jelena Šesnić
University of Zagreb
jsesnic@ffzg.hr

MARGARET FULLER, AMERICA'S FIRST TRANSNATIONAL ROMANTIC[*]

Abstract: Participating in the 1830 and the 1840s in the Transcendentalists' calls for the creation of a national American literature, Margaret Fuller imbues a nationalist literary movement with cosmopolitan and international tendencies, already subsumed in the transnational aesthetics pertaining to the Romantic movement. Further enabling a "cultural transfer" by her "Conversations," her editorial work and translations of key texts of Romantic sensibility (especially from German and Fuller's favorite author, J.W. von Goethe), Fuller ambitiously attempts to de-provincialize American culture. Other facets of her biography, especially her stay in New York as a first woman editor and columnist of the *New York Daily Tribune* (1844 – 46), and her dispatches from Europe in the midst of the 1848 Revolutions which she witnessed first-hand in Italy and Rome, place Fuller in a unique position to merge her aesthetic concerns with social and political issues and so to achieve their fruitful synthesis in an international setting to which she was fully committed. In the process she has become a truly "cosmopolitan intellectual" (Capper). Considering Fuller's contributions allows us to shift a perspective on so-called "classic American literature" and place it more consequentially in a transnational perspective, as well as to reconsider the ways nineteenth-century American culture was riddled with transnational influences and currents.

Key words: Margaret Fuller, Transcendentalism, Romanticism, transnationalism, the 1848 Revolutions

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To claim that an author espousing the Romantic aesthetic is “transnational” seems like stating the obvious since Romanticism is a notoriously international literary movement freely crossing the national and imperial boundaries at the time, and breaking down various cultural, ethnic, and literary barriers (cf. Eagleton, 1990, for the international ideological underpinnings of the movement; cf. Ferber’s (2005) collection for particular national contexts and their imbrication; Glazener, 2016, pp. 20-29, 45.52; Voelz, 2017, pp. 91-94; Walls, 2014, pp. 423-428). On the other hand, and despite its clearly mongrelized and uncontainable nature, its origins in the German aesthetic and philosophical thought, as well as the impact it had within contained national or political boundaries, often mandated that it be read in national and bounded terms. Yet my argument would like to elucidate ways that Margaret Fuller, one of the foremost Transcendentalist and Romantic writers in the American literary canon, be reappraised in terms of her incalculable contribution, alongside a handful of her contemporaries, to the internationalization of American cultural tradition and thus its literature, and to claim that she has done so by practicing what cultural theory nowadays calls a “transnational turn.” In brief at this point, Charles Capper, a Fuller biographer and critic, importantly sums up Fuller’s status as “her generation’s most famous cosmopolitan intellectual” (2007a, p. 3).[1]

The foregoing notion of transnationalism has gained momentum from the 1990s and the increasing globalization of literary studies. From a fairly robust and continuing tradition of teasing out the transatlantic relations in the American context, the focus has shifted to a wider range of locales and international places, traditions and cultures that have impinged on the development of American letters and literature. The obvious impetus from within American Studies has been coming from the “borderlands” perspective, transnationalizing America from the point of view of its Southern and Southwestern regions (interacting with the Caribbean and Central and South America) (Saldívar, 2011). From there the concept of the transnational begins to spread into and encompass other geo-cultural spheres.

Specifically, in the 1998 presidential address to the American Studies Association titled “What’s in a Name,” Janice Radway (1999) sought to open up the very borders of the nation and so to invite the reckoning of texts, authors, and traditions that were placed outside the discipline’s nation-centered purview. Using the metaphors of interdependencies, borderlands, and hybridities, Radway provocatively set a stage for a new approach to the matter of being "American," and engaging diasporic and hemispheric perspective of the Americas (1999). Understandably, so-called classic American literature, called upon to consolidate the national literary field, was initially seen to be exempt from such interventions but would soon too be subject to a transnational inquiry, as my contribution intends to show.

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[1] My approach thus differs from the contributions in *Transatlantic Conversations* (2017) where, working also with the transnational turn and feminist criticism in mind, the authors place emphasis on transatlantic dialogues in a broader Anglo-American context.

Further consolidation of this recent orientation in the discipline was marked by Shelley Fisher Fiskin's ASA presidential address in 2004, even more explicit in its premises, "Crossroads of Culture, The Transnational Turn in American Studies." The tendency was lauded as providing new insights into the intermingled cultural stakes of nation formation from the earliest beginnings of the Western civilization in the Americas and thus from the point of "cultural contact," whatever its form and shape (Fishkin, 2005). In her recent contribution, Fishkin further seeks to "unsettle" American literature, and in particular the idea of American exceptionalism, by re-situating them in the frame of debates on "nation and empire" as these played out in the United States and its contiguous regions (2017, pp. 19-20). Transnationalism thus stands for several things, including in particular the expansion of the perspective in which to situate the national (U.S. American) canon, to the calls to study the texts produced within a specific geographic scope in languages different than English, or to the inclination on the part of U.S. Americanists to acknowledge "multilingual research" and enter into "greater engagement with scholarship produced around the world" (Fishkin, 2017, p. 19). In this contribution, all three principles of transnational American Studies will be considered but obviously they will not be accorded equal weight, as befits the subject. Certainly, the way Fishkin highlights "texts that travel and the cultural work" they perform when entering the processes of "translation, adaptation, and appropriation" (2017, p. 19), puts us in mind of Margaret Fuller and her incipient understanding of literature and culture more broadly as worldly and cosmopolitan endeavors.

Paul Giles, one of the leading scholars of nineteenth-century Anglo literary globalization, rightly assumes that transnationalism portends primarily a spatial axis of movement (2003, p. 63). Despite hailing transnationalism as a boon from various quarters (cf. Radway, 1999; Fishkin, 2005), Giles warns of the transnational turn as an indicator of "ideological conflict" in American literature (2003, p. 65), thus reflective of its contextual delimitations. Unlike the co-extensive process of globalization, transnationalism should, so Giles hopes, render visible "actual border territories or other kinds of disputed domain, where cultural conflict is lived out experientially" (2003, p.

65). By employing “a transnational framework” for reading “classic American literature,” it helps “elucidate ways in which it necessarily enters into negotiation with questions of global power” (Giles, 2003, p. 72). John Carlos Rowe, retaining a critical edge to transnationalism and the related concept of globalization contends that transnationalism should be considered in the ambit of the long-term processes of modernization and nation-building, which prompts us to search for its roots much earlier than the late twentieth century (2003, p. 79).

Notwithstanding the newfound transnational impulses back in the nation’s past, Johannes Voelz rightly contends that twenty-first century idea of transnationalism should not be jammed into nineteenth-century models and applications of what the past period saw as its transnational mark, as his discussion shows. Interestingly, Voelz situates the beginning of the internationalization of U.S. American literature in conjunction with “romanticism” which enabled its advocates (Margaret Fuller and her circle) to form “an American version of the idea of world literature” (2017, p. 92). (The idea of “world literature” in itself is layered with the idea of transatlantic cultural transfer coming from Goethe, one of Fuller’s most important writers and models; cf. Durning, 1969, pp. 89-120). Explicitly, “They thus coupled the promotion of a national literary tradition with an outlook we now call transnational” (Voelz 2017, p. 92). This seeming paradox, the entanglement of the national and transnational (and very often cosmopolitan), is well illustrated in Faith Chipperfield’s account of Fuller’s life and work, where she imbues Fuller with the ambition to further “the cause of an American literature,” a goal she certainly shared with her Transcendentalist brethren, and even wider cultural circle, such as Young America (1957, p. 74; Capper, 2007b, pp. 236-237; Eckel, 2007, pp. 33-34). Simultaneously, there is seemingly no contradiction in the fact that the coming-of-age of American literature and culture is to take place through the inculcation of German ideas, writers, and texts so that tellingly Fuller’s first published book is her translation of Eckermann’s *Conversations with Goethe* (Chipperfield, 1957, p. 151).

Fuller’s romantic commitment meant the Transcendentalists’ investment in and experimenting with the idea of world literature as a way to strengthen the burgeoning literary-aesthetic field and grant it a semblance of autonomy from other spheres, as well as to empower and authorize the writers within it (Voelz, 2017, p. 94). Her critics differ in their assessment of the trajectory of Fuller’s activities; whether to see sharper divides between her early aesthetic and late social and political engagement, or, rather, to assume more seamless passage from one phase to the next, as Voelz seems inclined to do (2017, p. 95). He claims that Fuller's romantic concept of the aesthetic predisposed her for her later political engagement (2017, p. 95). While there is some credit to this contention, I find more credence for the fact that it was the revolutionary context of 1848 and 1849 in Europe that turned Fuller increasingly toward political issues and even action, and that it is useful to notice shifts in her attitude toward art, literature, society and the nation.

So, shifting the paradigm from transatlanticism to transnationalism, and from the aesthetic to the political, allows us both not to just turn Fuller's experience into a unique and isolated occurrence but also to give her credit for intuiting, embracing, and sustaining the transnational currents throughout her whole but brief career. In evaluating her contribution, therefore, we can comprehend how complexly transnational the American experiment has been from the start, and can begin to appreciate what the stakes are of its survival and sustenance at present. Granting attention to Fuller's life-long pursuits and following her intellectual and writerly development, we encounter a much more dynamic landscape of early to mid-nineteenth century America, precisely at the time of the rise of national literature. This further allows us to rightly evaluate Fuller's enormous contribution to and influence she exerted in the process. Thus, we move from the earlier accounts of American renaissance that made only very sporadically room for her to the latest tracing of "a female genealogy of transcendentalism," as suggested by the recent critical anthology's title (Argersinger and Cole, 2014) and assigning Fuller a central place in this rewriting of literary history.

The argument will further contend that one can distinguish two distinct phases of Fuller's transnationalism, loosely depending on her biography. In the first phase she would be working toward and elaborating a transnational model of Romantic (mostly Transcendental in American parlance) thought in order to introduce to the American public the extraordinary, striking but also foreign and quixotic ideas of the self and society by intensely reading and translating from original languages (German, Italian, French, and Spanish, all of which she acquired by private study; Capper, 2007b, p. xi; Durning, 1969, pp. 74-75, 131-133) key documents of Romantic sensibility. Intent on de-provincializing American literature, she supplied New England intellectual circles with European ideas and sought to spark debates that would put her ahead of most of her contemporaries due to her uncanny capacity to blend different traditions of thought and mediate them for her American audiences.

As Charles Capper puts it aptly, at this point Fuller became heir to and devotee of "*Romantic* cosmopolitanism" (Capper, 2007b, p. xi; emphasis in the original). In her Harvard and Boston circles, to which she famously gained entrance even though mostly a home-schooled and self-taught girl and woman (except for a brief stint in a boarding school for a year), the "new transatlantic talk was felt at every turn" (Capper, 2007b, p. xi), and cultivated especially by returning PhDs to Harvard from Germany. The next infusion of transatlantic currents of thought was brought in by European liberal refugees from failed revolutions to Cambridge (Capper, 2007b, p. xi).

Capper identifies four venues of "transnational American cultural reform" of which Fuller partook; namely, "New England Transcendentalism, women's rights discourse, Western settlement, and New York literary journalism" (2007a, p. 7). (Each will be taken up in the ensuing discussion except for "Western settlement," which is of no particular interest in this frame.) If Fuller ministers at the birth of an American literature, as seems to be the case in the Transcendentalist flowering (even if F.O. Matthiessen fails to recognize her contribution in his seminal study *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* from 1941 where he grants her only a few references), she does that by administering a dose of cosmopolitan fare pushing German, French, and Italian writers (Capper, 2007a, p. 7). Furthermore, this mongrelizes the tradition from which we are to derive the first American original contributions, the writings of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman (to run down the usual list). She was particularly able to push this transnational agenda (in her choice of authors) in a counter-cultural literary magazine of the Transcendentalist circle, *The Dial*, where her editorial capacity was in full evidence from 1839 to 1844 (Capper, 2007b, pp. 3-14).

Famously proclaimed by Ann Douglas as a dam to the sweeping "feminization of American culture" in early-to mid-nineteenth-century America, Fuller became international and cosmopolitan by necessity as it were, since given that at the time she didn't have American role models, she had to look for guidance elsewhere, that is, toward Europe (1998, p. 268). As Carol Strauss Sotiropoulos clarifies, in Fuller's intense pushing of Goethe to her American audiences in different venues, from her early editorship of *The Dial* to her literary columns in *The New York Tribune*, Fuller constructed her own image of the German poet to serve a particular cultural agenda – mainly to de-provincialize America (cf. Schöpp, 2007, p. 29), to sustain her concept of women's emancipation, and to ground the idea of Bildung, her own and other women's (Sotiropoulos, 2014, pp. 83-84). Not the least of it was, according to Schöpp's reading, Fuller's "[a]ppropriation" of "those Goethean ideas that she found most conducive to her own work as a writer" (2007, p. 30).

Singularly talented and multifarious, Fuller incorporated her impressive reading in and knowledge of major European literatures in another experiment that she implemented in order to shake up the New England cultural milieu, still quite suspicious about the import of foreign ideas and writers when in 1839 she launched in Boston a series of conversations with women (later on joined also by men), which, as Chipperfield contends, drifted in on "A breeze of feminism [. . .] blowing from overseas" (1957, p. 155). If we recall Fuller's earlier interest in a hybrid genre of "conversations" evinced in her first published translation from German, hovering on the border of the written and the oral, the fixed and the fluctuating, the conversation format is fully compatible with Fuller's ideas of the individual transformation through imbibing spiritual and cultural impulses from a vast array of traditions that she summoned during these sessions (cf. Durning, 1969, pp. 44-46, 48-50). Unfortunately, this oral format meant that it could not be recorded in a way that would ensure the status of Fuller as an author in an emerging literary field. Still, it solidified her status of a leading Transcendentalist, and, alongside Elizabeth Peabody, who hosted the conversations in the family house's "shabby parlor," the only other "woman member of the Transcendentalist Club" (Chipperfield, 1957, p. 157).

That her idea of German culture was an elevated construct is not difficult to ascertain by comparing historical data in the two countries, so we might presume, as Sotiropoulos contends, that Fuller's primary goal was to effect a "cultural transfer" of Romantic ideas to the United States (2014, pp. 81, 89, 95; Schöpp uses a compatible concept of *translatio* [2007, p. 31]), rather than historicizing the elements of German culture, such as the position of women in it. Sotiropoulos further delves into Fuller's investment in the German ideal; insofar as Fuller felt a "sense of displacement" in American culture, she would have yearned for an idealized "imagined German womanhood" espoused in the Romantic friendship between Bettine von Arnim and Karoline von Günderode (2014, p. 93), tying together all her major interests.

Development of her ideas, and formats in which to express them, continues with her next move, from Boston to New York in 1844 to take up a newspaper job there, spurring her onto conjoining of the aesthetic with the social and the political. Douglas's succinct assessment summarizes the stance of many a critic when she states that working for Horace Greeley's daily *The New York Tribune* and entering the nitty-gritty world of journalism enabled Fuller to find her style. Furthermore, she discovered new topics, and expanded from purely literary and cultural interests to tackle social criticism (Douglas, 1998, pp. 281-282). Jeffrey Steele convincingly explains Fuller's expansion of topics, and a decisive shift that she made in her writings, by ascribing a new-found synthesis of the social and the aesthetic to "political affect” (2014, p. 218) imbuing her outlook and seeping into her texts in *The Tribune* (2014, pp. 217-218). For Judith Mattson Bean and Joel Myerson, a lot can be explained by the cosmopolitan whiff of New York, even back then a vibrant, energetic, and ethnically mixed place (2000, p. xi). This new surrounding challenged Fuller to find ways to combine her abiding interest in the theme of national identity with a cosmopolitan outlook of her foreign literature contributions (Bean and Myerson, 2000, p. xxi). In the “Golden Age of Periodicals,” as Bean and Myerson quote it (2000, p. xxiv), American culture grew as a cross-pollination of different seeds from various cultures, and Fuller was there at the source to capture it for herself and for her readers.

This ordered narrative occludes or minimizes the challenges that Fuller had to face in the transition that she was making. (On the other hand, this occlusion is, as often is the case with Fuller, counteracted by the sheer visibility of it, since it is heralded by her surprising move from Boston to New York, and from her previous career of teacher-cum-writer-cum-conversationalist to a journalist, the first female columnist in the United States; the facts hard to overlook in any case.) These spectacular moves to the side, she strove to learn to see the new urban reality of New York, and, even more importantly, to find a new vocabulary fit for “a new style of social critique” (Steele, 2001, p. 229). The ensuing change was surely necessitated by the requirements of her new job; her assignment in *The Tribune* demanded of her to pay attention to both cultural and literary as well as “social and philanthropic problems,” thus fusing the favorite concerns of *The Tribune*’s owner and editor-in-chief Horace Greeley (Chipperfield, 1957, pp. 221-222). Greeley admires her “original, vigorous, and earnest mind” as he also notes her previous editorial and writerly contributions to the Dial in characteristic terms: “The lofty range and rare ability of that work, and its un-American richness of culture and ripeness of thought…” (Fuller, 1860, p. 152). From this it seems clear that Greeley wanted Fuller to internationalized the literary and cultural fare of the Tribune and to act as a conduit to the European thought and currents for his American readers.

In her Tribune contribution “Thanksgiving” Fuller’s admonition combines the sphere of politics and the sphere of society, as she sees the holiday as an occasion for the exercise of charity and brotherly sympathy as the key national values that should promote “social and political reform” (1869, p. 247), showing her incipient social impulse that would later be honed in the cauldron of European revolutions. When she discusses alternatively the meaning of the national holidays, such as the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, St. Valentine’s Day, and Christmas, she pointedly asks about the collective meaning of these days of remembrance, commemoration, and celebration. What kind of collective affect should they incite, across the social groups rent apart by class, race, citizenship, and gender? How should these holidays, we might imagine Fuller asking, re-constitute the nation and return it to its original values, and what kind of a society do they call forth? It is a society that she summons through her appeals to readers' sympathies, for example, for the inmates of the penitentiary at Blackwell's Island in New York, for an insane asylum inmates or the institutions for assisting "the discharged female convicts" (1869, pp. 285-286). Not the least in her own transcendentalist program of national revitalization, she contends that the nation's slogans (equality and liberty for all) be universally respected (with a hint to the status of the black people as slaves) and that in particular the rich owe to the poor "politeness," "respect for man as man," and "delicate sympathy" (1869, p. 323). If, while still in America, she repeatedly expressed hope that the country would revive its original promises (thus implying that they had been lost or despised), her stay in Europe reoriented her thoughts on America's providential role so as to provisionally pass it on to Europe, especially where revolutions are put in place.

In this transitional stage, her interests continue in an international vein as she plied her readers with various European themes, authors, texts, and translations, even as she continued the imaginary dialogue between the American and the European concerns. But, as various critics have noted, for the first time Fuller was ready to concede the importance of social issues next to cultural and literary. It is rather that in her New York stage she experimented with a perspective that would not hamper her widening scope of thought which always relied upon the European material to elucidate and reinforce the American side. Contending with a new kind of urban reality, as Susan Belasco points out, and parallel to her work on *The Tribune*, Fuller began to evince an interest in abolitionism (2003, p. 88), a reformist movement that she had shunned from previously thus reinforcing her new social priorities.

Rowe's reading of Transcendentalists within his critique of the twin effects of exceptionalism and nation-building in the early United States unduly places Fuller in the same bag with other, more ardent proponents of the idea of America's unbridled cultural and political superiority (2003, p. 81). Fuller indeed spoke from within the model of a nationalist cultural program but she pointedly infused it with the idea of a sovereign individual, never compromised an aesthetic component, and thus reserved the right to criticize precisely the postulates that gave rise to the idea of exceptionalism. She was ready to point out in her "The First of January" (January 1, 1846) article "that the pure blood shown in the time of our revolution still glows in the heart" (1869, p. 214), even as she began to seriously doubt of America's fitness for democratic leadership due to the crisis of the Mexican war, territorial expansion, and the eventual extension of slavery in the South and the West (1869, p. 214). Then again, in her contribution "New Year's Day" she blithely affirmed the country's religious, providential mission (a tenet of exceptionalism) (1869, p. 222), while observing how it was violated by "selfishness and tyranny" shown to the free black settlers in the West (1869, p. 220). She also vacillated in her attitude toward the increasing number of (Irish) immigrants at the time, showing a paternalistic attitude to them and arguing for their uplifting and education, rather than repudiation (1869, p. 222), a far cry from the nativist position.

Her "American jeremiads," admonitions to the nation for the forfeiting of its ideals and fundamental principles, continue in her other *Tribune* contributions previous to her departure for Europe, anticipating her transnational change of perspective.[2] The sights of Europe, or, rather, what Fuller made of them, allowed her not only to actually get to know Europe, but to refine and crystallize her long-germinating thoughts on her own society and country, of which she had previously had serious misgivings.

On August 1, 1846, just prior to her embarkation of an England-bound ship, Fuller published in *The New York Tribune* a short column titled "Farewell to New York," which is worth our attention since it reveals Fuller's state of mind on the cusp of another momentous change in her life situation. Praising the city as a site of "a richer and more varied exercise for thought and life" than any place else in the country, Fuller further notes "that [the city] has at least nothing petty or provincial in its methods and habits," assuming thus that her experiences in it are suffused with the same broad spirit (1895, p. 354). Fuller importantly suggests that her stay in the city as a professional woman has enabled her to "lead [her] proper life here," enhancing her independence (1895, p. 354) If the ideas of gathering experience and exercising independence have a decidedly Transcendentalist drift, the next point nicely interweaves another of her favorite subjects, transnationalism (here seen as transatlanticism): "New York is the focus, the point where American and European interests converge," thus pointing out an enduring source of her fascination with the city which had sustained her cosmopolitanism (1895, p. 354).

In the next instance, this cultural catholicity is shown to be embedded in her "two great leadings," one being "promoting national education," the other the woman question: "the part which is assigned to women in the next stage of human progress in this country" (1895, p. 355), allowing us to assess the range of Fuller's social engagement taking place in the urban environment and conditioned by it. When proceeding to state her chief objective in Europe, Fuller consciously sets herself up in the role of a mediator between the two worlds: "I hope for good results, from observations, with my own eyes, of life in the old world, and to bring home some packages of see for life in the new" (1895, p. 355), evoking in her suggestive phrasing what critics readily understand by "cultural transfer" (Satiropoulos, 2014). If, as suggested earlier, Fuller was grappling with finding a tone and vocabulary to address a new set of themes and to interest her diverse city and national audiences in them, she has found it in what Steele calls "sentimental transcendentalism," surpassing a self-sufficing individual and enmeshing her in the emotional response to others, otherwise strange, distant, or unfamiliar (Fuller, 1895, p. 355; Steele, 2014, p. 207). By responding sympathetically to her ideas and suggestions in her columns, a circle of putative friends arises that, although distant and virtual, might be amenable to seeing things differently and acting upon that insight (1895, p. 355).

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[2] For a more recent approach to the notion of "the American jeremiad" cf. Van Engen, 2020, pp. 256-270.

Lastly, in the final passage of her farewell address, Fuller assumes that America excels over Europe in terms of her potential to embody some of her lofty ideas (this important insight will also suffer change during her European sojourn [1895, p. 355]). Going over this set of important themes, closing down on an exciting segment of Fuller's life and presaging her successive inclinations, we can agree with Larry Reynolds's assessment that Fuller's increasing concern about social problems begins during her stay in New York as she could not avoid responding to social problems (1988, p. 57). By the time she reached Italy, Reynolds asserts, her transformation had happened (1988, p. 62).

Narratives of Fuller's life intend a particular teleology whereby her departure for Europe stands as a convenient dividing line between the national sphere of influence – even though fertilized by her literary and cultural "European cosmopolitanism" (Capper, 2007a, p. 21) – and the international scene of action and experience in Europe, Italy in particular, which consolidates her public persona. Capper, however, disrupts this neat chronology by suggesting how even in the first phase her cosmopolitanism was cross-pollinated with American cultural transnationalism, further energized in Europe by political fervor and upheavals that Fuller witnessed. It was precisely this early fusion, concocted by Fuller herself even though with ready-made ingredients, that turned her into "a public intellectual" (Capper, 2007a, p. 21), a position that had been already clarified by Ann Douglas a while ago and which made Fuller stand apart from any other American woman of her time. As summed up by Capper, "[New York's] cosmopolitanism had been fruitful for her" (2007b, p. 276).

The second, properly transnational part of her life begins in 1846 and her long-delayed voyage to Europe, which took her to England and Scotland, thence to France, and, finally, Italy, the last and most extraordinary and transformative stage of her journey. It is in this international ambit that her already vibrant and strong cosmopolitan sense will flourish in a congenial climate pushing her further in the direction of a transnational Romantic. These developments will therefore be at the focus of our reading in the succeeding sections.

Writing dispatches for *The Tribune*, which at the time had the circulation of 200,000 and thus offered Fuller quite a publicity (Bean and Myerson, 2000, p. xxii), Fuller gradually moves away from the mold of "a literary pilgrimage," a familiar and hackneyed form of writing using the picturesque conventions (Douglas, 1998, p. 283; Steele, 2001, p. 275), and strides toward her own engagement with the present and the future of Italy and its people. That way, Fuller puts behind and transcends the Italy that had become "constructed" by a number of other American travelers, tourists, or sojourners (Douglas, 1998, p. 283), as she goes on to discover and experience the "real" Italy. However, the rising suspicion of realism and essentialism, should lead us to realize and identify the new discursive strategies which Fuller activated to allow her to capture the reality of the moment, delve in the present, and report it to the wider world: "Fuller depicts in herself a process of cognitive and emotional transformation that maps the contours of political engagement" (Steele, 2001, p. 269). The new insights are recorded by Fuller in a May 7, 1847 letter from Rome to her dear friend and fellow transcendentalist, William Henry Channing:

> I write not to you about these countries, of the famous people I see, of magnificent shows and places. All these things are only to me an illuminated margin on the text of my inward life. . . Art is not important to me now. I like only what little I find that is transcendentally good. . . I take interest in the state of the people, their manners, the state of the race in them. I see the future dawning. . . (1860, p. 209)

The focus shifts on the ethical aspect of literature and on its social role while Fuller notes the popular stirrings and tries to articulate her expectations and projections.

However, let us delve deeper into Fuller's entire European itinerary and follow her immersion in the scenes from her journey. Her first stops are England and Scotland. It is not strange, given her previous literary and cultural dispositions, that once in London, "Margaret was enjoying transatlantic society" (Chipperfield, 1957, p. 241). Recommended and introduced by Emerson, she found the doors of English intellectual, if not always aristocratic, mansions open to her, the most notable being that of Thomas Carlyle (Chipperfield, 1957, pp. 243-245). Even though picturesque and filled with various meetings and a near-fatal trekking experience in Scotland, her observations of the British contemporary scene, as Capper observes, still adhere to her journalistic and travel writing style carried from home, while her political orientation continues as "Romantic social liberalism" (2007b, pp. 287-288, 296).

The French section of her journey is a bit more intellectually enriching since, coming to Paris, Fuller felt drawn to "socialism as a political movement," as she delved deeper than her examination in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* to exhibit the style of "spiritual humanitarian socialism," urging her to combine criticism of social ills and a call "for a radical social ethics" (Capper, 2007b, p. 311). This orientation is again illustrative of Fuller's acclimatization to her surroundings which enabled her to spout new ideas or achieve a new synthesis of various intellectual influences. She didn't stay moored in her appreciation of a single social or philosophical tradition but stood ready to re-examine them and apply them to shifting circumstances that she now witnesses in Europe (unlike those in America that she had addressed in *Woman*). Also, the encounters with literary and political luminaries in Paris, some of them Fuller's abiding influences, made for a stimulating sojourn in France (Capper, 2007b, p. 319).

All this, however, pales in comparison to Italy, the next stop on her itinerary. Fuller's stay in Italy and, more specifically, its yield are inestimable on at least two levels. The first is obviously the personal level, as stipulated by Capper, who situates this remarkable change of priorities for Fuller in the frame of her initial sojourn in Italy, from 1847-48 (she will continue to reside there until her fateful 1850 return to the United States). Capper argues that in Fuller's encounter with the real country and its people, her bookish Italophilia detached itself from an idealized past and turned into an active, enabling force allowing Fuller to really feel her new surroundings (2007b, pp. 322, 323). Reynolds concurs, seeing how her perception of the country and its people changes and becomes an experiential thing, no longer a hollow phrase (1988, p. 69). Thus, impressed by Naples and bedazzled by Rome, she plunged into the domestic scene calling for a change of priorities, from art to politics (Capper, 2007b, pp. 329, 375). That her stay in Italy, and a particular synergy that she experienced there acted upon her character and her work, is repeatedly insisted upon by Capper, calling forth Fuller as "a historical hero" and a harbinger "of a new America renovated by the infusion of European lives and ideas" (2007b, p. 376).

In her private correspondence, acting as a companion piece to her public pronouncements, Fuller fully elucidated her enthusiasm and affinity for the country (no longer a cultural cipher but a place pulsating with its own life) and its people. She felt embraced by the country and experienced a sense of spiritual belonging, as testified by her admission in a September 1847 letter to Elizabeth Hoar: "Enough to say, Italy receives me as a long-lost child, and I feel myself at home here…" (1860, p. 220). Then again, in October 1847, she wrote to Marcus Spring, with whose family she began the European tour, that she no longer felt a tourist, a stranger in the city: "Now I saw the true Rome. I came with no false expectations, and I came to live in tranquil companionship, not in the restless impertinence of sight-seeing. . ." (1860, p. 221), testifying to her rising intimacy with the place and its genius, as she occasionally noted (1860, p. 244). Moreover, she felt estranged from her compatriots, her culture and language as she immersed herself in the Roman current of life. This estrangement is perhaps a necessary condition to make herself receptive to the vibes of the local spot and to cease to feel her foreignness (1860, p. 222). As she confessed in a letter to Emerson from Rome, she had long felt the congeniality with Europe which she assumed would be "the right soil" for her growth (1860, p. 225).

The second plane of signification relates to American literary and intellectual history. Considering Fuller's incomparable contribution to the Transcendentalist circle, which she enriched by her cosmopolitanism hardly matched by any of its members, and her belated recognition as one of the luminaries of American renaissance, Fuller's European engagement, so argues Larry Reynolds, re-centers the very idea of American renaissance as a bounded phenomenon. Reynolds namely argues that we should unmoor the movement from its strictly national shoals and move it towards an international context, including his contention that it was the European revolutions of 1848 which helped grow this literary flourishing (1988, p. xii). On that view, Fuller definitely stands at the forefront of these cross-currents, as shown by her literary dispatches from Italy and Rome (1847-1850), in particular, and by her personal involvement in the revolution.

When events began to heat up in Italy and Rome, Fuller wondered about her future role in them, whether as an actor or a historian but she had no doubts that momentous events would unfold and that she was called upon to bear witness to them; her resoluteness on that plane contrasted with her frequents outbursts of depression and weariness in her letters to friends in this period (the spring of 1848). Her private troubles and cares notwithstanding (her pregnancy and recent childbirth), she felt "the deepest interest" in the events of the ongoing turmoil, both in Italy and the rest of Europe, as she confided in a letter to her mother of November 16, 1848 (1860, p. 248). Consistent with her strong sense of justice and her feeling of kindredship with her people (i.e. the Italian people, or even just Romans), whom she addresses as "brothers" in a letter to Channing (1860, p. 267), she makes clear that her private cares are fully entangled with the revolution, with the public needs: "I have played for a new stake and lost it" (1860, p. 267).

When she stayed behind in Rome during the time of the French siege of the city as "America's first war correspondent and the only American journalist then reporting from the city," she intended to "instruct[. . .] her readers back home on the proper ways of cosmopolitan patriotism in a revolutionary age" (Capper, 2007b, pp. 424, 381). Part of the lesson would probably entail one of Fuller's growing realization in the course of her Italian experience, already alluded to in her "American jeremiads," that now Europe has taken over from America the torch of liberty and freedom, on which America could once pride itself and is leading the way in a string of popular upheavals: "Europe had become Fuller's America . . . . [I]n partial reversal of her idea of the 'thinking American,' while remaining an American in ideals, she herself was also becoming something of a European in practice as well" (Capper, 2007b, p. 387).

The fascinating intellectual arc spanned by Fuller's intensely lived and masterfully relayed European experience is indicated also in her shifting the central modern metaphor of transformation (that of a revolution) from the glory of the American Revolution to the splendor of its Italian counterpart, as her lost manuscript of the Italian Revolution would show. The pages destroyed in a shipwreck would probably evince "the cosmopolitan history of emerging modern Italy that no American in the nineteenth century would write" (Capper, 2007b, p. 486), and she laid great store by the manuscript's eventual publication upon her return to the States (Chipperfield, 1957, pp. 291, 294). Her life, cut short by her and her entire family's death in the Atlantic, so close yet so far from her American shores to which she would always remain dedicated, symbolically and tragically marked her in-between position (Capper, 2007b, p. 492), for which she, as in many other things, paved the way and laid a pattern that later generations of American artists and intellectuals would emulate, not knowing perhaps that they tread in Margaret Fuller's shoes.

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Slađana Stamenković
Faculty of Philosophy
University of Novi Sad
sladjana.stamenkovic@ff.uns.ac.rs

THE TRANSNATIONAL MEMORY OF VIOLENCE: TERRORISM AND IDENTITY IN DON DELILLO'S *FALLING MAN*[*]

Abstract: Throughout his novels, Don DeLillo explores different concepts inherent to human existence, not the least important of which is the question of identity. In his novel *Falling Man*, he employs what Hornung defines as transnational memory to discuss the global phenomenon of terrorism and the trauma it causes on both collective and individual levels. Transnational memory explores the interconnection of national memory with the collective and individual memory of other countries and cultures. *Falling Man* is also an important example of how terrorist violence can be represented in literature from different perspectives. It offers valuable insights into the inner functioning of terrorism (or what the author assumes it to be) by representing the other side of the official narratives, although he never offers equal representation to both sides, assigning the advantage to the American point of view. Most importantly, terrorist violence is used as a device in this novel to allow for a detailed depiction of different social concepts, such as identity, and the ways they change under challenging and extreme conditions. In *Falling Man*, the historical trauma of 9/11 sets in motion different changes in both one's own identity and one's perception of other, foreign identities of the people in the immediate surroundings. The trauma, and the concept of terrorist violence in general, prove to be powerful triggers for questioning the very idea of identity, both on personal and national levels.

Key words: Falling Man, Don DeLillo, identity, terrorist violence, terrorism, transnational memory

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1. Introduction: The Concept of Transnational Memory

Transnational memory is a relatively novel concept, widely accepted across social sciences and humanities. It involves collective memories of historical events that transcend the national level of individual countries and states. In other words, transnational memory is a shared recollection of historical events that affect multiple nations and peoples. The concept itself is deeply paradoxical. As Sierp and Wüstenberg observe, memory (collective one, in particular) is a basis for creating national identities. They note that collective memory has so far been "central to the formation of modern nation-states" and thus "firmly situated within national boundaries" (Sierp and Wüstenberg, 2015, p. 322). Moreover, they insist on the local nature of memory, in its essence. They argue the following:

> Memory is locally grounded almost by definition. Anything we as individuals or collectivities choose to remember, to narrate to each other, to draw meaning from, is by necessity linked to the place and the time where it took place […]. And yet, there has been a lot of talk […] of 'transnational memories,' […] How can remembrance – something that derives its power of persuasion and its motivation for action from its very rootedness – be understood in transnational terms? How can we take seriously both the local and transnational processes of memory politics and explore the complex ways in which they are linked and through which they shape one another? (Sierp and Wüstenberg, 2015, p. 321)

This paragraph indicates a few interesting points. Firstly, the narrative aspect of memory is highly relevant to the postmodern discussion of the concept of memory. As a form of narration, it is defined as a story or text – regardless of whether it is written or oral. It is the nature of texts to be prone to alteration, assimilation, and subversion; such manipulation of the official texts and grand narratives has long been the focal point of postcolonial studies. Moreover, this exposes memory as a concept that includes multiple points, multiple observations, and versions of historical events. Secondly, the local character of memory indicates an important historical change in how human civilization has evolved in its relationship to the past. While collective memory still needs to be grounded in the particular point in time and space, the contemporary flow of information and interaction between different nations has contributed to memory advancing to a higher level in terms of including a much larger scope of temporal and spatial soil for the development of historical events. What is more, the news of different events travels across the globe more easily, thus impacting a much larger number of people and countries, as well. Finally, Sierp and Wüstenberg highlight the interaction of different memories, politics, and historical events that initiate, affect, and shape each other. They argue that "the national arena is no longer the only place where memory politics are made, and memory policies are formulated" (Sierp and Wüstenberg, 2015, p. 323). In such a scheme of interconnection, memory can only exist on a transnational level. Therefore, transnational memory includes a joint recollection of historical events, shared by different nations and countries. As a popular phenomenon, it perfectly fits the era of globalization, in which different cultures exist in a global village, where information flow reaches incredible speed and knows no boundaries.

In *Transnational American Memories*, Hebel and several other authors discuss transnational memory primarily in relation to identity, specifically a national one. Focusing on the American identity and culture, they argue that "constructivist notions of memory" are linked up with "political understandings of cultural memories and collective commemorations" (Hebel, 2009, p. 1). The collective identity of any country is constructed partly due to "transnational flow and intercultural exchange with emphasis on the political relevance and social implications" of historical events and their textual recollection (Hebel, 2009, p. 7). Thus, by discussing transnational memory, we can understand the nature of national identities and the universal thread upon which different collective identities (national and otherwise) are similarly woven.

It should be noted that the Western point of view is often centralized even within transnational studies. In other words, Western theoreticians often tend to neglect the fact that Eastern cultures (for example, the Muslim communities that are often perceived as exotic and foreign cultures that affect the Western culture or cultures) have their own perception of transnationality, as well. Mandaville offers a valuable insight into this shift of perspective within which "the observer becomes the observed, the curator is himself curated" (Mandaville, 2001, p. 83). He develops the idea of translocality, or the ability of the culture to travel. However, what is often overlooked from the Western perspective is that the travelling process flows in both directions. Consequently, changes in both cultural phenomena and their representations occur and Mandaville further argues that "in the context of Muslim translocality hybridity theory is particularly useful for understanding the nature of encounters and dialogue between different interpretations of Islam" (Mandaville, 2001, p.

84). The hybridity he mentions here applies to the unique identity of Islamic diaspora – a practical example of the clash and interaction between opposed cultures. Such interactions occur in translocal spaces, “sites through which a great many cultures travel” (Mandaville, 2001, p. 85). In a loose interpretation, translocal spaces in the current era is more globalized and virtual – the interaction between cultures through the media and social networks provides the next level of hybridity and the development of transnationality. Considering these claims, transnational memory can be viewed as hybrid itself, but also as ambiguous – one and the same event can be perceived and memorized in different aspects for different cultures and still have equally powerful influence on both sides.

2. Don DeLillo and Transnational Memory

As a prolific contemporary writer, Don DeLillo thoroughly explores the nature of American identity and several pillars of American culture and civilization, such as the media, entertainment industry, technology, etc. Regarded predominantly from the perspective of white protagonists (and occasionally Italian immigrant perspective), DeLillo’s America is rarely credited with transnational features. If such traits are considered, they are mostly related to the way American society manages to spread its culture and influence and create a globalized society. However, several instances of transnational memory are included in DeLillo’s works, all of which imply the impact of different historical events, persons, and issues on the creation of American identity.

One of the most transparent examples of transnational memory in DeLillo’s novels is *White Noise*. It focuses on Jack Gladney, a professor of Hitler studies in a small university town, whose life undergoes numerous turbulences and troubles, caused by events both in and out of his control. However, for the purposes of this paper, the aspect of this novel that is significant is its elements of German culture and social heritage. Jack Gladney is a professor of Hitler studies – an entire field of academic studies dedicated to Hitler’s life and actions that led to World War II. The potency of this historical event and, more specifically, its transnational memory is depicted in the way Gladney acquires different aspects of German culture in his life. His son’s name is German, his behavior and character are constructed to appear German, and one of his final epiphanies results from his conversation with a German nun. However, as much as he tries to include German culture in his life, he still does not speak German. His knowledge of German culture and history is based almost entirely on transnational memory, specifically on those parts of Germanness that affected international politics and life in general.

White Noise is not the only novel that includes examples of transnational memories which influence both characters and events in DeLillo's America. For example, in *Underworld*, the underlying threat of war and the ever-present bomb imply the historical context of the Cold War. The entire novel covers a larger timespan, but the impact of the Cold War in the novel is undeniable. It shapes the American media and its content, drives the entertainment and sports industry, and affects the society so deeply that people become seriously obsessed with violence, implicit threats of death, and destruction. Furthermore, in *Mao II*, DeLillo builds his novel around the transnational memories of Mao's China and modern-day terrorism; in *The Names*, he focuses on different cults and violent formations, shaped according to some existing, historical terroristic groups; finally, in *Libra*, he constructs the entire novel around the assassination of J.F. Kennedy by Lee Harvey Oswald, an event that is related more to the national memory of the USA, but an event that also had its impact on the global social and political scene.

Perhaps the most apparent use of transnational memory in DeLillo's novels (apart from *Libra*) is the overt mention of 9/11 in *Falling Man*. Named after the famous photograph of a man jumping out the window of a burning Twin Tower, the novel explores the consequences of the terrorist attack on New York that has shaped the contemporary history, not just of American people, but also of the entire world, arguably. The protagonist of *Falling Man* is Keith Neudecker, a lawyer who worked at one of the Twin Towers, and a person who survived the terrorist attack by evacuating from the building at the last moment. Through him, DeLillo attempts to approach the trauma of a grand historical event and excessive violence from the first-hand witness' perspective. The dominant point of view is the American one, as DeLillo attempts "dramatizing privileged American domesticity in the specter of the mourning city" (Keeble, 2014, p. 78). He also includes chapters that introduce Hammad, a fictional terrorist who participated in the 9/11 attack, thus portraying the entire event from opposing perspectives. It is notable that he avoids falling susceptible to the stereotypical representation of a terrorist, rather creating "a passionate analytical portrait of a terrorist prone to emergent individual and social frailties rather than to inherent debilitating cultural and intellectual models or value systems" (Gamal, 2012, p. 96). However, DeLillo refuses to focus on the event itself and instead depicts the impact of the event (or, rather, of its memory) on the protagonist and his family. Furthermore, the crucial position that transnational memory has in this novel is enforced by the mention of another terrorist group – this time from an earlier era and non-American soil (German guerilla terrorists fighting the fascist state). By doing this, DeLillo implies the potency of memory (transnational, in particular) and different ways in which it contributes to both the construction of national identity and modification of an existing one. In *Falling Man*, it is not only the Neudecker family and the immediate survivors of the attack that undergo a profound change in life – it is the entire society. Essentially American traits and elements of culture become shaken, twisted, and even mocked. The praised cosmopolitanism and multiculturality of New York (and thus America) become the space for doubt, fear, and even paranoia. Consequently, transnational memory is exposed as an important factor in social, political, and cultural circumstances alike, both on the collective and individual level. DeLillo seems to be especially concerned with the level of the individual, trying to "create characters that are preoccupied with re-evaluation" (Keeble, 2014, p. 84). He does so from both perspectives, notably; both the American and Muslim perspective offers insight into how an individual deals with traumatic cultural clashes and mutual hostility.

Hornung writes that it is precisely transnational memories "of manmade destruction [that] served as the material to cope with the impact of international terrorism on the American soil at the beginning of the twenty-first century" (Hornung, 2009, p. 172). In other words, the trauma of the terrorist attack could only ever be rationalized by putting it in the context of other, similarly gruesome, instances of terrorist acts. Therefore, transnational memory in *Falling Man* does not evoke only the recollection of the 9/11 attack, but also that of the grand narrative of Americanness, as well as different catastrophic and painful moments. Hornung further argues that transnational memory helps the 9/11 witnesses and survivors find "comfort and sustenance" when faced with perhaps the most difficult moment in their lives (Hornung, 2009, p. 173). From the point of view of the author, the use of transnational memory has an even more significant role in the novel. It is to ignite "his analysis of the universal existence of evil" and to highlight "the similarity of terrorist motivations across the globe", as well as "to explore personal and national traumata transnationally" (Hornung, 2009, p. 173). Thus, by interweaving "the storylines of family history, terrorist activities, and artistic falls with the reality of private and political figures involved in the catastrophe events of 9/11" (Hornung, 2009, p. 179), DeLillo attempts to find the joint pulse which stimulates trauma produced by different historical events and modern-day terrorism. Transnational memory here serves as an indicator of the human response to trauma, both on the collective and individual level. Although De-

Lillo primarily pays attention to the individual response, the consequences of the trauma on the collective level are reflected in subtly noted changes in the American identity and spirit of union of the entire nation.

3. *Falling Man*: Elements of Transnational Memory

The crucial level at which transnational memory is present in the novel is the context of the 9/11 attack. The novel does not focus on the very event in ~~great~~ depth; DeLillo offers glimpses, vivid enough to create an image of destruction and terror on a large scale. The audience meets Keith Neudecker dazed after the attack. DeLillo depicts his evacuation down the stairs of the Trade Centre, lost in the confusion of the mass of other people. Keith manages to reach the street, completely unaware of his appearance, and walks away from Ground Zero in a numb trance. Ally notes that he is "unsure of his place in time and space, in a kind of a shell-shocked stasis that lasts the duration of the story" (Ally, 2019, p. 357). From this point on, every action he takes will be affected by the attack, one way or another, when he is aware of it and especially when he is not. His instinct brings him to the door of his estranged wife Lianne and son Justin, with whom he did not live prior to the attack. Shocked and with a face full of glass, he resembles a zombie that acts mechanically, with no clear guidance of reason. Lianne describes him as resembling "gray soot head to toe […] like smoke standing there, with blood on his face and clothes" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 8). At this point, he is, a total embodiment of the traumatic event, in so far that he is fully under the influence of what happened to him. His mind is notably absent from everything he does, especially during the first weeks after the attack. Lianne also notices he "needs to stay away from things, including discussions" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 9). As the novel progresses, she describes him as someone who "has not returned to his body yet" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 59). Moreover, his mind, or at least a piece of it, will remain absent throughout the novel – a conspicuous silence and absence of character that only highlights the loss and gravity of the violent historical event. Whenever he tries to recollect the event, he uses phrases such as "I think," which might be DeLillo's way of indicating that his memory of the event is not based solely on his remembering, but perhaps also on the official narrative of the attack from the media.

Had this story been a cliché, the grand event would have had a ground-shifting change on Keith's life, and probably a mostly positive one. At first glance, the attack does appear to have that very affect. Lianne does take

Keith back, without even discussing the terms of their separation and reunion, and they begin their life as a family almost automatically. However, it is soon discovered that all positive changes took place solely on the surface. Haunted by the memory of his own experience, Keith seeks other people with similar experience; namely, a woman whose briefcase he picked up during evacuation Florence Givens, who incidentally becomes his mistress for a short and meaningless period. He often walks and revisits places of his past – streets, offices, his apartment, where he used to play poker with his friends. Somehow, the memory of the attack manages to loom large over every single of these places and Keith cannot find them as comforting and pleasant as he used to. DeLillo openly states that he "saw the place differently now" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 26). In this regard, the memory of a traumatic event becomes a shaping factor of Keith's identity. While in his apartment, the narrator states that "[m]aybe he was thinking of the man who used to live here and he checked the bottles and cartons for a clue" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 27). He undergoes a change, not necessarily a positive one, but a change of character, nevertheless. It is noted that earlier he was "a body in raw motion" and someone who "used to want to fly out of self-awareness" but he now "finds himself drifting into spells of reflection" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 66). The memory and experience of 9/11 affect everything about him and who he essentially is as a man.

However, Keith is not the only one affected by the event. Despite not being present at Ground Zero when the attack happened, Lianne suffers a great change of character under the influence of the 9/11 memory, too. We can even argue that the influence of the attack on her identity was larger than the one on Keith's. If it is not more substantial, her identity change is definitely more transparent in the novel. She becomes frightened and crazed, almost verging on paranoid, especially being a person who likes "to nourish [her] fear" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 10). She starts reading Kierkegaard almost fanatically, mostly because of her fear of everything that surrounds her. Also, she suddenly becomes weary of people, particularly foreigners and those appearing foreign. She becomes unreasonably triggered by her neighbor's music taste, solely based on association – her neighbor Elena is an immigrant and plays loud Arabic/Oriental music that includes the word "Allah-uu" from her apartment. She notices it is the music "located in Islamic tradition" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 67). In normal circumstances, one would not expect the Neudeckers to react, especially in the light of New York's multiculturality; yet, Lianne physically confronts the neighbor in whose music taste she sees a provocation, a mal-intent of some kind. Gamal cites this particular scene as an example of DeLillo's attempt to "analyze and intermesh the quiescent parameters of

Islamic radicalism and Western autoimmunity as dramatically reflected in the personal lives of the perpetrators and their victims" (Gamal, 2012, p. 96). He also focuses on the poor treatment of Muslim immigrants in the US after the attack. In *Falling Man*, DeLillo offers just a glimpse of this treatment through Lianne's hostility towards her neighbor, although hers was a definitely mild reaction in comparison to the general, national perception of the Middle Easterners in the American media, for example. However, Lianne's reaction is symptomatic of an extreme rift between cultures, so much so that even those who became a part of her culture (as American immigrants) become perceived as enemies, or at least as Others. She also becomes intensely interested in Shelley's *Revolt of Islam*, a poem whose title enters her home via a card sent from the Keats-Shelly House, coincidentally just around the time of the attack. This is, however, not the only hint at her frail state after 9/11. She also becomes almost obsessed with a performance artist who started appearing in the streets of New York, hanging from different buildings in a position that mimics the falling man from the photograph of the same name. The artist is precisely the element of collective memory that haunts not only Lianne, but the entire city. He is the one who reinforces the memory of the attack again and again and does not allow the citizens to move on and let go because its intensity was so strong that it becomes inseparable from both everyday life and culture of American society. DeLillo notes that "[h]e brought it back, of course, those stark moments in the burning towers when people fell or were forced to jump" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 33). Sadly, the art performance is also a subtle comment on the USA's entertainment industry and popular exploiting of the attack. Although an element of transnational memory with a deeply disturbing context, it becomes used as a pinpoint of popular culture, reduced to a consumerist good and materialist artifact. Such reducing of transnational memory to a popular culture symbol is a testimony to the American identity and its media, which turns everything into a spectacle or simulacrum.

Furthermore, another element of transnational memory (perhaps more openly transnational than 9/11) orbits the main events of the novel more subtly. Namely, Lianne has a mother Nina, whose comments on Lianne and Keith's relationship point to significant issues that they avoid resolving. However, Nina has a relationship of her own – with Martin Ridnour (also known as Ernst Hechinger) – that introduces another example of transnational memory. As Martin's real German name implies, he is connected to the German background, and the darkest one of all – that of the fascist regime. Hornung recognizes the connection of Martin's story to "terrorist activities in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1960s and 1970s" (Hornung, 2009, p. 179).

His story, however, is never given as a direct depiction of what happened to him in the past, he never gives a direct testimony of events, much like Keith, but DeLillo introduces his story through different filters. Namely, it is always Nina who narrates it, partly relying on what hints he gave her about his experience, and partly from what she knows from official history – in other words, from transnational memory.

> He said to me once, I've done some things. He said, This doesn't make my life more interesting than yours. It can be made to sound more interesting. But in memory, in those depths, he said, there is not much vivid color or wild excitement. It is all gray and waiting. Sitting, waiting. He said, It is all sort of neutral, you know. (DeLillo, 2011, p. 146)

Martin told her he was in a terrorist group that opposed the German fascist state, but he never gave away too many details. What she got from him were fragments; she cannot tell the story of his youth using solely his narrated memories. Instead, she uses her vague knowledge of the events to fill in the gaps in the story; she "provides the missing details by taking recourse to the transnational memory about terrorist activities in Europe" (Hornung, 2009, p. 179). Martin's character in the novel is, therefore, entirely narrated by different memories – both individual and collective, or transnational. Hornung also notices other, non-verbal artifacts that evoke transnational memories, such as "the wanted poster with nineteen names and faces of German terrorists of the early seventies" that Martin keeps in his Berlin apartment (Hornung, 2009, p. 179). In *Falling Man*, Nina remembers that these men and women were "wanted for murder, bombings, bank robberies" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 147). Hornung further notes that "she recognizes its content when her partner links the 9/11 terrorists to the European ones" (Hornung, 2009, p. 179). Indeed, it is Martin who points out to the universality of terrorist groups in the novel, though through Nina's narration. She says that he thinks "they're all part of the same classical pattern" that they have "theorists" and "their visions of world brotherhood" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 147). This mention of the German terrorists parallels the more prominent terrorist group in the novel – the one that performed the 9/11 attack. By including the German group, DeLillo demonstrates the universality of grand historical events and (although perhaps not deliberately) also points to the force of transnational memory that can shape societies in different temporal, spatial, and cultural contexts.

Finally, on a more symbolical level, the concept of memory is reinforced through Lianne's engagement with the group of Alzheimer's patients.

Ally points out to the members of this support group who struggle with memory loss. They "struggle to preserve memory by/writing down their recollections" (Ally, 2019, p. 356). The potential loss of memory might symbolize the loss of history. Different theoreticians, such as Cvek and De Marco, see the mentions of memory loss and amnesia in the novel as the disappearance of history. Ally summarizes their observations, stating that amnesia and memory loss are used in the novel as "a vehicle for its costly depoliticization of 11 September, a sort of resetting of geopolitics that removes the event from history and lifts it out of the flow of time, nullifying any meaning or motivation behind it beyond death-driven nihilism" (Ally, 2019, pp. 356-357). The silence that is present in the novel, therefore, can be seen as the potential loss of history and memory, and thus a connection to the past. It is a question, however, whether the world can have hopes of functioning without transnational or national memory, for that matter. Amnesia and memory loss are not seen as a positive element in the novel. All characters who experience it fight against it by trying to remember to preserve their memories. What is more, they rebel against not knowing or having information about the past. For example, Lianne scolds her mother for not asking Martin whether he killed someone during his days as a terrorist, as seen in the following paragraph:

> "All these years. Never forcing the issue. Look at the man he's become, the man we know. Isn't this the kind of man they would have seen as the enemy? Those men and women on the wanted poster. Kidnap the bastard. Burn his paintings."
> "Oh I think he knows this. Don't you think he knows this?"
> "But what do you know? Don't you pay a price for not knowing?"
> "It's my price. Shut up," her mother said. (DeLillo, 2011, pp. 147-148)

In Nina's refusal to stir up the old memories and the past, there is a determined escape from the pain. Ally recognizes that, in this entire novel, silence is employed because the events mentioned are "too traumatic to understand or even describe" (Ally, 2019, p. 357). However, silence does not imply that memory is entirely erased. They avoid talking about 9/11, but its memory is forever present in their lives, whether they are conscious of it or not. Transnational memory and memory of grand historical events in general are too potent to disappear altogether. They are like the pellets that remained in the victim's body after the 9/11 attack. Their impact is undeniable, but they are ambivalent; they can be both positive and negative.

4. Representing Terrorism in *Falling Man*

What separates *Falling Man* from other novels that depicted the 9/11 attack, among other things, is DeLillo's depiction of the other side, of the antagonists. Although conspicuously shorter than the part dedicated to the Neudeckers, Hammad's parts also comment on the concept of transnational memory, perhaps even more so, due to its being an international element, a non-American perspective. Despite common expectations to see the antagonist depicted as the evil incarnated, DeLillo portrays Hammad as another problematic protagonist, much like the myriad of similar characters found throughout DeLillo's novels. We see Hammad as an "apprentice", a novel follower of a group he does not fully understand, it seems. He spends time in Germany to "pursue technical educations" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 79) in a group of men from the Middle East trained by Amir, a vehement Muslim terrorist whose character is DeLillo's fictionalized version of Mohamed Atta. Similarly to his American counterparts, he too seeks to belong, even to an extremist group whose eventual goal is to die by suicide in a terrorist act. There is frequent mention of religion and "[their] time, [their] truth" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 80). From the very beginning of Hammad's chapters, it is obvious that men have some higher purpose in their lives (or a purpose they perceive as higher). At one point, the motivation behind their actions is revealed:

> There was the feeling of lost history. They were too long in isolation. This is what they talked about, being crowded out by other cultures, other futures, the all-enfolding will of capital markets and foreign policies. (DeLillo, 2011, p. 80)

It is noteworthy to mention that DeLillo depicts the terrorist preparation located in Germany, because "Europe, as home to the world's largest Muslim diaspora, is at the heart of the battle over Muslim identity" (Benjamin, 2012, p. 167). Moreover, the 9/11 attack was indeed prepared in Hamburg. Benjamin further writes about the struggle the Muslim immigrants have to cling to the defined notion of identity in an atmosphere of a modern-day melting pot that is the EU today. He writes that religion offers them the distinction, "their determining trait" (Benjamin, 2012, p. 169). DeLillo depicts Hammad as a young man whose identity becomes structured entirely around religion. By the end of the novel, his identity holds no individual trait apart from his utter confusion and inner fear – of being singled out, of being alone, of not belonging to a community. Yet, he starts the journey as a regular young man, similar to both his Western and Eastern fellows, focusing "not on macropolitical issues but women and sex" (Rowe, 2001, p. 123). Even though his perspective is considerably underrepresented, Hammad is still a significant part of the story, because he is a testimony to the universality of human spirit, which transcends transnational politics. Rowe notes that DeLillo "includes some part of the terrorists' story" in each part of his novel (Rowe, 2001, p. 123). Slight as it is, this inclusion still stands as a message that every grand event that merits transnational memory has two sides of the story, two perspectives, and that only both aspects can provide us with a valid impression of current affairs. Rowe further notes that DeLillo demonstrates the mechanism through which powerful countries, such as the US "have created their own antagonists in al-Qaeda and any other 'terror'" (Rowe, 2001, p. 124). Hammad (and even more so Elena) is marked as the Other in the world of *Falling Man* not necessarily by his choice, but due to the global functioning of both Western civilization and US government and also Islamic terrorist groups and extremist organizations. Thus, he suggests that transnational memory and transnationality often disregard the individual, and instead they focus on the nation and government, as well as on the effects of specific events that influence their economy, politics and industry.

What is also peculiar about these episodes is DeLillo's very depiction of terrorism. Terrorism representation in literature has been a rich soil for debate among theoreticians, and it has gained momentum ever since the War on Terror was declared. Fiction that depicts terrorism has become a chronicle of the contemporary era. In fiction, terrorism can be hidden, implied, or overtly violent and aggressive, depicted as a traditional antagonistic force. Yet, in *Falling Man*, DeLillo does not seem to aim at contrasting the two sides, but rather comparing them, to an extent. Characters on both sides have similar needs and wishes, they function according to similar principles and universal patterns. Their paths are, no doubt, starkly different, but their inner workings seemingly veer towards connection. In the passage above, the motivation behind the terrorist group's actions resembles the motivation of every oppressed side in history – to gain a voice, to become free of foreign meddling and control. However, as the chapters progress, and the group's training intensifies, their motivation becomes fanatic and problematic. The element of religion serves to extremize the group that tended to "become one mind" and "[s]hed everything but the men [they] are with" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 83). Hammad gradually becomes an integral part of the group, choosing to let go of everything he used to be, even memory of people he became involved with, such as Leyla, a pretty woman he was about to court. His dismissal of memory helps

DeLillo demonstrate what happens once memory is lost or disregarded. The individual loses oneself and becomes but a part of a larger structure, often one he has little real connection with.

DeLillo also avoids putting the blame openly on one side and justifying the other. Rather, he attempts to dissect the world that has led to terrorism and gruesome acts such as 9/11. At one point in the novel, there is a discussion of the Twin Towers. Their symbolism, so frequent in DeLillo's novels (for example, in both *Underworld* and *Cosmopolis*, they are used to symbolize American wealth and monetary dominance[1]), seems almost inseparable from the symbolism of their destruction, as if the two notions go hand in hand by nature. The paragraph reads as follows:

> But that's why you built the towers, isn't it? Weren't the towers built as fantasies of wealth and power that would one day become fantasies of destruction? You build a thing like that so you can see it come down. The provocation is obvious. What other reason would there be to go so high and then to double it, do it twice? It's a fantasy, so why not do it twice? You're saying, Here it is, bring it down. (DeLillo, 2011, p. 116)

Far from saying that America brought 9/11 to itself, DeLillo rather observes the futility of blaming anyone. Similar catastrophes happened in the past – transnational memory teaches us that. Whenever there is a position of power, there will be someone trying to knock it down and destroy it. Terrorism thus becomes the natural force of destruction, a symbolic evil that only changed its shape during history. It is not justified in the novel, but rather accepted for what it is. What DeLillo highlights, however, is the position of an ordinary man, even when he is a part of a fanatic group. The individual is as lost as any other person across the globe. Hammad's gradual indoctrination to the point where "[i]t was all Islam" (DeLillo, 2011, p. 172) is a testimony of what happens when transnational memory teaches us nothing. Recollections of previous acts of terrorism do not reach him, so he is doomed to repeat other's mistakes.

The relationship between individuality and collective spirit is significant for this novel, especially for its depiction of terrorism. The terrorist group here is in stark contrast to American unity as a nation. Hardack writes that even xenophobia in *Falling Man* represents "a foreign threat to American individuality" (Hardack, 2004, p. 375). The same can be said of terrorist units. It is not just war between nations or even religions; it is a war between life philosophies. American paradoxical narrative of a strong, united nation that simultaneously praises individualism is problematic. Hardack writes that the "American notion of terrorism […] is then born from an acute fear of collective identity based in a long Western literary tradition of fetishizing the individual" (Hardack, 2004, p. 374). In other words, once faced with a group that is truly united, to the point where no individual can be separated from the group, the problem with the official narrative of American togetherness, even with minorities, becomes exposed for its hypocrisy. After 9/11, Ally notes, terrorism and War on Terror become tightly related to the "dehumanization of Muslims, the inciting of racial animosities, the expelling of religious minorities, and the debarment of economic and ethnic refugees" (Ally, 2019, p. 351). This is precisely why Lianne is triggered by her immigrant neighbor and why both she and Keith notice words from foreign languages used in their environment. To some extent, they start acting as early fanatics, resembling how "certain psychotic individuals obsessively predicate their beliefs upon concepts of perfection and predestination that spring not from openness, pragmatism and inclusiveness, but from 'selective perception, selective organization and selective interpretation'" (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 49). In other words, they become more similar to those they perceive as the enemy. Terrorism, thus "overwhelms the very subjectivity of the individual at the center of the trauma" (Ally, 2019, p. 354), and what DeLillo highlights with this novel is that there is no human utterly safe from the danger workings of terrorism, one way or the other.

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[1] Another aspect of the symbolism of the Twin Towers can be found in the writings of Jean Baudrillard, most notably in *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1976). He discusses the towers as America's destruction of competition, or rather the inability of any competition to even exist in the specific system of American hyperreality.

5. Identity and Trauma: Living with Transnational Memory

As seen from the aforementioned examples, the effect of trauma on one's identity is undeniable. DeLillo's characters experience changes on both individual and collective level. Keith, Lianne, Florence and other characters all lose parts of themselves after the attack, regardless of whether they actually were present at Ground Zero during that day. Moreover, the changes seem to be permanent, which testifies of the power of transnational memory. For as long as they remember the event, they will be under its influence and their worldview will be forever affected by it. Symbolically, this is represented in the scene in which Martin and Lianne look at the painting of still life in Nina's apartment. Neither of them was the direct victim or witness of the attack, yet

Martin says that he sees the Twin Towers in the painting. The painting has nothing to do with the attack, but two of the “taller items were dark and somber, with smoky marks and smudges” (DeLillo, 2011, p. 49) evoke the image of the towers for both Martin and Lianne. This demonstrates that their psyche will forever insert the memory of this event into the world around them.

Furthermore, the production of collective identity has long been a topic that DeLillo has explored in his novels. Hardack writes about *Mao II*, for example, which “stages a battle between the notion of an individual Western identity and that of a ‘mass-produced’ foreign consciousness” (Hardack, 2004, p. 374). His argument further relies on Žižek, claiming that “Western capitalists and Muslim fundamentalists are themselves twinned, are not really opposed; […] they belong to the same fabric” (Hardack, 2004, p. 387). This argument raises the question of globalization and the creation of global identity crafted by capitalism. Several theoreticians agree that the problematics of this novel boils down to the issue of collective versus individual identity. This is why religious groups, as representatives of true mass identities occur so proficiently in the novel. What they contribute to, eventually, is the “disengagement from mainstream society, as the growth of secessionist groups with not only religious, but also survivalist, ecological and sundry other orientations, attests” (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 36). Ally notes that “the mantra of many public and political figures in the United States in the aftermath of 9/11 was for the country to try to ‘come together,’ which, in an innocuous way, often served as an imperative to close ranks around orthodoxies both well-meaning and insidious” (Ally, 2019, p. 354). As seen from the comparison between, Hammad and other characters, it is obvious that such calls for mass identities can be dangerous, to say the least. Every collective concept or formation, DeLillo seems to suggest, most often leads to manipulation and even destruction, either of an individual or an entire group or society.

What numerous critics have noted, *Falling Man* tends to move the focus from the collective perspective of a historical event to an individual one. The trauma present in this novel is manifested on a large, national, even global scale, but what DeLillo is more concerned with is the individual. Ally notes that “trauma is by its very nature private” and that “the traumatic experience does not survive its dispersion to the level of ideology” (Ally, 2019, p. 359). Translated to the notion of transnational memory, its most important part is arguably its impact on the individual, the ordinary man. Moreover, the reaction to transnational memory and trauma is almost always universal. Hornung notices that, by mentioning different religions and nations in this novel, he “appeals to the common bond of all humankind” and “suggests a mode of understanding and acceptance of differences and failure on a global scale" (Hornung, 2009, p. 182). De Cesari and Rigney further warn that "hegemonic national (or colonial) representations that acquire transnational qualities" are "very similar across the world" (De Cesari and Rigney, 2014, p. 262). As such, they should always be regarded in a broad context of the global scene.

6. Conclusion

Falling Man explores the notion of transnational memory from a private, individual perspective. Specifically, it focuses on the trauma caused by a grand historical event. The 9/11 attack is depicted in this novel as a strong force that causes changes of both individual and national identity in the USA. By contrasting Keith and Lianne with Hammad, DeLillo attempts to point out the similarities between individuals across the globe. His portrayal of the protagonists observes the impact of transnational memory and the lack thereof, once removed (such as in Hammad's case). While multiple differences are evident even at the first glance, the protagonists exhibit numerous similarities in their need to belong somewhere and to have a purpose. Keith and Lianne find (or at least learn how to perform) purpose in their family, but also in their hobbies and occupations. Hammad, on the other hand, only seemingly finds his purpose in a cult, a terrorist unit, whose only goal is destruction. What they have in common, DeLillo suggests, is their frailty mutual to all human beings concerning their susceptibility to mass identities and collective grand narratives. Such a universal quality of vulnerability and response to trauma is an important focus of this novel, urging the reader to turn inward and search for a purpose in the individual, never forgetting the grand scale and lessons taught by transnational memory.

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TRANSNATIONALITY, (SELF)REPRESENTATIONAL PRACTICES, SPACE AND IDENTITY POLITICS

Sanja Runtić
University of Osijek
sruntic@ffos.hr

Ivana Drenjančević
University of Zagreb
ivana.drenjancevic@ffzg.hr

“WITNESSING BEYOND RECOGNITION”: AN EXISTENTIALIST READING OF FRANCISCO CANTÚ’S *THE LINE BECOMES A RIVER: DISPATCHES FROM THE BORDER*

Abstract: This paper proposes an existentialist reading of *The line becomes a river: Dispatches from the border* (2018), a memoir by former U.S. Border-Patrol agent Francisco Cantú. Drawing upon Anya Topolski’s political ethics of relationality, grounded in Emmanuel Levinas’s notion of alterity and Hannah Arendt’s concept of plurality, and Luna Dolezal’s re-reading of Jean-Paul Sartre’s account of shame, it examines the triangulation of the personal, the intersubjective, and the public in Cantú’s autobiographical act. The paper argues that by articulating its protagonist’s experience from the perspective of both a law enforcer and an emotionally involved immediate observer of the hazards and horrors of undocumented immigration, Cantú’s memoir negotiates subjectivity in relational terms, exposing complex human realities of the U.S./Mexico borderlands that signify the immigrant body as a product of alarmist discourses, illegal industries, and geopolitical mapping, and hence adds new perspectives to the human tragedy produced by the global economic apartheid. The paper also maintains that by turning the private lives of immigrants from abstractions into subjects of the polarizing (trans)national debate and foregrounding both its protagonist’s and its readers’ ethical and critical response, *The line becomes a river* affirms the existentialist view that the ability to sustain personal responsibility and relationality within a network of Others by making a conscious authentic choice is the ultimate signpost of our humanity and self-determination.

Key words: Francisco Cantú, U.S./Mexico borderlands, immigrant body, memoir, relationality, existentialism, Sartre, Levinas, Arendt, shame

1. Life writing and the contemporary memoir

As numerous literary critics have observed, we live in the age of memoir (see Atlas, 1996; Couser, 2012, p. 3; Zinsser, 1998, p. 3). The memoir, traditionally considered a subgenre of autobiography,[1] seems to be the dominant twenty-first century literary mode “that now rivals fiction in popularity and critical esteem and exceeds it in cultural currency” (Couser, 2012, p. 3). Today, autobiographies are produced at a more rapid rate than ever, appealing to a readership drawn from “a much greater cross section of society than at any other time in the history of the genre” (Jensen Wallach, 2004, p. 9). As Stone remarks, “one finds personal histories everywhere one finds books: on library shelves and in the syllabi of college courses; at the checkout counters of drugstores and supermarkets; on best-seller lists, as book club selections, in reviews . . . of the *New York Times*; in the knapsacks of high school students and hitchhikers” (1982, p. xiii). The growing interest in the autobiographical genre and the production and consumption of self-representational practices since the late 1960s is indicative of the contemporary “anxiety about the self” (Olney, 1980, p. 23) and the growing inquiry into “what it means to be human” (Conway, 1998, p. 17). In accordance, many theorists of autobiography, such as Leigh Gilmore, Sidonie Smith, Julia Watson, and Elizabeth Bruss, have broadened its scope, defining it “as a cultural and rhetorical practice rather than simply a form” (Kulbaga, 2006, p. 15). In a similar manner, Bruss contends that autobiography as a genre is distinguished not by its form but rather by its function, defining the autobiographical practice as an “illocutionary act,” a purposeful process in which the author performs “the action of autobiography” (Bruss, 1976, p. 4).

One of the well-established concepts in life-writing studies is that of the “autobiographical pact,” coined by Philippe Lejeune in 1971 (see Allamand, 2018). According to Lejeune, autobiography is a “[r]etrospective prose narrative written by a real person" regarding his/her own existence that focuses on "the individual life, in particular the story of [one's] personality" (1989, p. 4). It therefore presupposes an organic unity between the author, the narrating subject, and the protagonist, which metaphorically seals the "autobiographical pact" with the reader, creating a textual "signature" that reminds us that the text is to be conceived of as an authentic narrative based on real events, people, and places and encourages us "to imagine the text as a sort of candid camera that captures life as it 'actually' is and that promises to 'document' the existence and experience of an actual subject in the historical world" (Kulbaga, 2006, p. 15; see also Lejeune, 1989, pp. 4, 5, 21). According to Jensen Wallach, autobiography is a unique genre that "purports to be both literature and history" but "resists complete incorporation into either category" while remaining partially rooted in both (Jensen Wallach, 2004, pp. 31, 76). Straddling both literature and history, memoirs "transcend the particular and the historically situated and become universally relevant" (Jensen Wallach, 2004, pp. 84-85). In that sense, autobiographers serve as "historical agents" who not only document history but also react to historical reality and attempt to create it: "Memoirists are lay historians who, much like professional historians, set out to construct lucid, defensible narratives about the past. Like their professional counterparts, memoirists tell their stories from various philosophical perspectives, which influence the stories that they tell. Memoirs should be read the same way that historiography is read" (Jensen Wallach, 2004, p. 75). One of the earliest theories of autobiography, Georges Gusdorf's 1956 essay "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography" defines the genre as

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[1] Explicating the difference between the two modes of life narrative – the autobiography proper, or the res gestae (the deeds done), and the memoir, Weintraub notes that even though in both forms external facts are “translated into conscious experience,” the latter is more public. In the memoir, “the eye of the writer is focused less on the inner experience” than on the external world of events, and the message about the person lies not in the “value of the deeds done” but “in the conscious reflection on the inner meaning of these acts for the personality” (Weintraub, 1975, p. 823).

> a primarily Western phenomenon written by men who possess a certain feeling of personal importance and a desire to recapture their pasts and to inscribe their own image onto the historical record. Gusdorf's emphasis is on the act of writing the autobiography itself; this process is, according to Gusdorf, an important part of the autobiographer's life. Reliving one's past through the vehicle of autobiography is in many senses superior to the initial life experiences, Gusdorf argues, because "autobiography is a second reading of experience, and it is truer than the first because it adds to experience itself consciousness of it." (as cited in Jensen Wallach, 2004, p. 14)

Like Gusdorf, Kulbaga maintains that the autobiographical act is not merely a "passive, transparent record of an already completed self" (Eakin, 1985, p. 226) but that it, rather, represents "an integral and often decisive phase of the drama of self-definition" (Eakin, 1985, p. 226) and a key site in understanding the processes of identity and subject formation (Kulbaga, 2006, p. 4). Kulbaga defines autobiography as "a narrative practice in which a subject takes up various truth-telling discourses" in order to represent himself/herself "in a life story that also makes arguments about identity" (Kulbaga, 2006, p. 14). This quality of the autobiographical genre is particularly salient in contemporary U.S. popular culture, where it has been closely related to politics, in particular to the projects of citizenship, nation-building, and "the national fantasy of belonging" (Gilmore as cited in Kulbaga, 2006, p. 10; see also Kulbaga, 2006, pp. 7-10). Similarly, Stone contends that "no other mode of American expression seems to have more widely or subtly reflected the diversities of American experience or the richness of American memories and imaginations" (Stone, 1982, p. 1). Shifting back and forth from the geopolitical and national to the sphere of the personal and being heavily invested in national anxieties and "truth-telling cultural practices," including activism and human rights campaigns, the autobiographical mode functions as a "rhetorical strategy" that exposes global, transnational, and economic backdrop to contemporary citizenship and identity formation (see Kulbaga, 2006, pp. 7-8, 203-204). In the same vein, Jane Danielewicz contends that the contemporary memoir trend confirms that the function of this genre is not only personal or expressive but also public, with a potential to challenge cultural master narratives, create opportunities for social and political action, and galvanize change (Danielewicz, 2018, pp. 5-6). Contemporary memoirs "exchange views and information to argue and advocate for ways of being that include the personal but extend well into social, ideological, and geopolitical arenas" (Danielewicz, 2018, p. 8); they are thus "an important contemporary discursive form" that constitutes a public "forum for discussion and conversation" and advances "exchange in the public sphere" (Danielewicz, 2018, p. 10).

2. The political ethics of relationality and responsibility

Even though since its 1930s–1950s heyday, existentialism has been vehemently criticized, labeled defunct and expired, and "dismissed as incurably modernist" (Flynn, 2006, p. 117), its abiding preoccupation with moral concerns of human existence (Flynn, 2006, p. 106), alienation, individual freedom, responsibility, intentionality, absurdity, angst, and death (Daigle, 2006, pp. 8-9) still very much resonates with contemporary realities and has been increasingly re-entering the philosophical conversation and the political domain (see Flynn, 2006, p. 117).

Though neither is commonly regarded as existentialist, recent scholarly interest in the work of Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) and Emmanuel Levinas (1905–1995) has brought the existentialist ethics of responsibility and Sartre's phenomenological ontology back to the fore (see Flynn, 2006, p. 123; Rae, 2016, p. 88). In her comparative reading of Levinas's and Arendt's oeuvres, Topolski has brought new perspectives to the contemporary discussion of situational ethics and its correlation with the concepts of alterity and relationality. She proposes a politics of relationality as "a new starting point from which to understand and appreciate the political that speaks directly to a paradoxical need to belong to a community while also knowing that our voice is unique" (Topolski, 2015, p. xv). Reflecting on the Post-Holocaust world, both Levinas and Arendt paved the way to a post-foundational politics and ethics of relationality that, according to Topolski, is still relevant to our contemporary world, which is equally plagued by economic and political crises, issues of democratic deficit, and various forms of "allergic reaction to alterity," to use Levinas's term, such as xenophobia, anti-immigrant sentiment, and racism – the predicaments both Arendt and Levinas were all too familiar with. Topolski argues that both Arendt and Levinas engaged "in a similar project of grounding the world in intersubjective discourse" – whereby meaning is created through "the relation to the other" (Levinas), or action that forms "a horizontal transcendence" through "a web-of-relations" (Arendt) (Topolski, 2015, pp. 122-123). Taking Levinas's notion of alterity and Arendt's concept of plurality as starting points, Topolski develops what she calls "a new principle for democratic politics" (Topolski, 2015, p. 180) that has the capacity to address the current "political malaise" – a growing lack of interest and disdain for politics among younger citizens in "democratic" nations (Topolski, 2015, pp. xiii-xv). The politics of relationality is a form of ethics rooted in alterity and plurality that "points towards a new empowering and life-affirming perspective on the political in light of a relational understanding of the human condition with regard to our responsibility for others and the shared world" (Topolski, 2015, p. xviii). It prioritizes "the relation to the other over the notion of a nonrelational self, or of a self in which interhuman relations are seen as secondary" (Topolski, 2015, p. 118) and "refuses the priority of either the 'I' or the 'we', thereby inhabiting the paradoxical space between both" (Topolski, 2015, p. 180). For Topolski, relationality

> seeks to (1) strengthen the political by prioritizing alterity – the cornerstone of plurality – and in so doing acts as an extra precaution against nondemocratic political alternatives; (2) creates an ethos of openness and 'equality' (without denying that power dynamics are inherent to all human interactions) necessary for a basic trust to develop between people; and (3) redefines politics such that each person – in her individuality and distinction – has something vital to contribute to the collective, making each voice significant. (Topolski, 2015, p. xv)

Drawing upon the concept of a relational subject that Levinas develops in *Otherwise than being* and Levinas's premise that subjectivity is "born in the relation of responsibility" (Topolski, 2015, p. 130) and that "without the other, neither judgement nor ethics would be possible" (Topolski, 2015, p. 124), Topolski maintains that relational subjectivity is "constituted, enacted, and performed, by means of relations to itself, to the other and to the world" (Topolski, 2015, p. 201). Responsibility is the glue that binds the political to ethics, she claims (Topolski, 2015, p. 192). Our subjectivity is "constituted in alterity" (Topolski, 2015, p. 130). Taking responsibility "for the other whose rights are being denied" (Topolski, 2015, p. 195), choosing to act instead of allowing "others to do so in my place" (Topolski, 2015, p. 191), is therefore "my source of meaning" (Topolski, 2015, p. 130) and a way of claiming my place "in the web-of-relations" (Topolski, 2015, p. 191).

According to Dolezal, the politics and ethics of relationality and responsibility are closely related to the notion of shame. Turning to the classical phenomenological interpretation of shame proposed by Jean-Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* and recent conceptions of shame offered by Dan Zahavi and Lisa Guenther (see also Zahavi, 2014, pp. 208-240; Guenther, 2011), Dolezal describes shame as an ontological structure that defines the core of our identity and plays a central role in relational subject formation (Dolezal, 2017, p. 421): "Philosophers working in the phenomenological tradition have positioned shame as central to the ontology of human existence, arguing that without shame certain capacities of consciousness and intersubjectivity would not be possible. In particular, it is argued that, without shame, we would not have the capacity for reflective self-awareness nor eventually become relational or political subjects" (Dolezal, 2017, pp. 421-422). Dolezal proposes an alternative reading of Sartre's theory of shame, arguing that by placing the body and the physical vulnerability "at the core of original shame," Sartre's account emphasizes "the human need for connection to others, or belonging" as the fundamental aspect of our existence. Sartre's conception of shame may thus be regarded as an optimistic view on social relations, she claims, since it reveals that shame not merely reflects one's "awareness of one's flaws or transgressions with reference to norms and others" but that it also reveals "a deeper layer of relationality through our bodily vulnerability" (Dolezal, 2017, pp. 423, 428). According to Dolezal, Sartre distinguishes between multiple levels of shame:

> First, he discusses shame as a moral emotion; it is an experience where the judgement of others can teach me that I have transgressed or violated some social norm or moral code. Second, shame is a mode of self-evaluation; through shame I can see and judge myself. Third, and most significantly . . ., shame is an ontological structure of subjectivity and intersubjectivity; it is because of our "original shame," for Sartre, that we have the capacity for reflective self-consciousness and are relational subjects through our embodiment. Shame initially arises when the other's 'look' reveals to me that I have transgressed some social expectation or norm; this is Sartre's characterization of shame as a moral emotion. (Dolezal, 2017, p. 428)

As an experience that pertains not merely to one's consciousness of oneself and one's transgression but also, more importantly, to one's perception and judgement by others, shame is in its essence a self-evaluative and self-reflective emotion (Draghi-Lorenz et al. 2001, p. 270) premised on "the triangulation of me, myself and the other" (Dolezal, 2017, p. 427). In that sense, rather than entail "negative self-evaluation," it is an emotion that reveals "our connection to our social world," "our relationality, our being-for-others," and "our striving for belonging," confirming Sartre's view that "our very existence depends on the other on the most foundational level" (Dolezal, 2017, pp. 428, 435).

The existentialist distinctive emphasis on the concrete and the particular instead of the general, its concern with the individual human whose essence is to be attained by means of authentic choices and free will (Daigle, 2006, pp. 10-11), and, in particular, Sartre's claim that reflective consciousness is also moral consciousness, as by freely choosing for ourselves, we "disclose values" and avoid bad faith by refusing to adopt values from another (Warnock, 1967, p. 50), fully comply with the conventions of the autobiographical genre. According to Kulbaga, the boundary between autobiography and biography – between giving an account of one's own life and writing another's life – is not just a formal or generic one but is also an ethical one (Kulbaga, 2006, p.

115). As Barbour confirms, as a reflection on one's own life, autobiographical writing is representative of the mechanics of conscience. Autobiography is not simply a record "on how the author's conscience operated in the past"; it is, rather, "an act of conscience," a configuration of principles and moral values that define [his/her] sense of self (Barbour, 1992, p. 10). "Ethical reorientation and regrounding" is thus a central component of the autobiographical act as both its incentive and its consequence (Barbour, 1992, p. 8). According to Barbour, both the exercise of conscience and the autobiographical act are intimately connected with the construction of one's identity as well as its integrity, consistency, and continuity (Barbour, 1992, p. 9):

> Conscience is a dimension of self-knowledge and of moral agency which is constantly activated by autobiography's inherent structural tension between the author as protagonist (his past self) and as narrator (his present self) . . .. Since writing an autobiography is itself a major event in a person's life and a matter for moral reflection, (1) autobiography offers an opportunity for continuing evolution of a writer's conscience. . .. The construction of a narrative is essential to the operation of conscience, as a person selects events as relevant for inclusion in one's story, characterizes oneself and other agents, locates the self in a community and culture, and construes how intentions, circumstances, and consequences of human action are linked and should be assessed. The act of imagining and fashioning a coherent narrative is a central function of conscience, both in its ordinary workings and in that unusually extended and articulate form of self-examination and expression we call autobiography. (Barbour, 1992, p. 2)

Viewed in this way, the ethical dimension of the autobiographical extends both to its subject and to its recipient since it not only nurtures its author's conscience through his/her assessment of his/her moral character but also includes a reader's assessment of "the character (ethos) of the author," which in itself is a "form of ethical criticism" (Barbour, 1992, pp. 4-5).

Cantú's autobiographical act(ivism)

Written by a former U.S. Border-Patrol agent, Francisco Cantú's recently published memoir, *The line becomes a river: Dispatches from the border* (2018), chronicles its protagonist's journey along the U.S./Mexico continental border, from Arizona to Texas, during and after his 2008-2012 Border Patrol service. Even though right from the start, Cantú's life narrative constitutes itself as an "illocutionary act" and a narrative of (moral) self-imagination, it fails to maintain two trademarks of the autobiographical genre – identity coherence and psychological healing. In the Prologue, Cantú, a civilian of Hispanic origin, recent graduate from the International relations program at the American University in Washington D.C., explains to his mother the reasons for his decision to join the Border Patrol:

> Look, I told her, I spent four years in college studying international relations and learning about the border through policy and history. . . I'm tired of studying, I'm tired of reading about the border in books. I want to be on the ground, out in the field, I want to see the realities of the border day in and day out. I know it might be ugly, I know it might be dangerous, but I don't see any better way to truly understand the place. . . I don't know if the border is a place for me to understand myself, but I know there's something here I can't look away from. Maybe it's the desert, maybe it's the closeness of life and death, maybe it's the tension between the two cultures we carry inside us. Whatever it is, I'll never understand it unless I'm close to it. This isn't necessarily a lifelong career choice. Think of it as another part of my education. Imagine what I'll learn–imagine the perspective I'll gain. . . I can still help people. I speak both languages, I know both cultures. . . My mother shook her head. You make it sound like you'll be communing with nature and having heartfelt conversations all day. The Border Patrol isn't the Park Service. It's a paramilitary police force . . . you must understand you are stepping into a system, an institution with little regard for people. . . Maybe you're right, I replied, but stepping into a system doesn't mean that the system becomes you. As I spoke, doubts flickered through my mind. I smiled at my mother. The first job I ever had was bussing dishes with migrants from Guanajuato, I reminded her. I'm not going to lose sight of that. I'm not going to become someone else. (Cantú, 2018)

Soon enough, Cantú's initial experience as a Border-Patrol agent confirms the accuracy of his mother's prediction. Following an extensive training and recruiting procedure, Cantú starts his service in the Sonoran Desert in southern Arizona, "the scene of the greatest wave of undocumented migrants" in the last two decades (Taylor, 2010). Since 1986, the United States has been involved in one of the largest public work programs in the last fifty years, building a wall along the U.S./Mexico border covering a wide area from San Diego, California to Brownsville, Texas (Hattam, 2016, p. 27). Though the U.S. Border Patrol was created in 1924, the pressure to fortify the U.S. southern border by means of a physical barrier came after Bill Clinton signed the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act on September 30, 1996, two years after the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (Hattam, 2016, p. 27; Bauer, 2020). When the closure of land borders and airspace in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks in 2001 disrupted continental trade relations, a need for "'smarter' border security policies that would allow goods to continue to flow freely" presented itself (Gravelle, 2018, p. 107). Consequently, in 2006, the Secure Fence Act was signed into law, authorizing the construction of approximately 1,100 kilometers of fencing along sections of the U.S./Mexico border from California to Texas. (Hattam, 2016, p. 27; Gravelle, 2018, p. 107). The then President George W. Bush claimed that "the fence was intended to secure the US southern border and impede the activities of human and drug traffickers" (Gravelle, 2018). The war against terror rhetoric and the "discursively produced definitions of the homeland" have subsequently reshaped the U.S./Mexico borderlands as "enemy territory," "a war zone that is under siege, 'invaded,' 'defended,' and possibly about to be 'lost,'" and have turned the immigration debates into questions of national security (Chávez, 2003, pp. 254-255). The same rhetoric was utilized in the 2016 presidential election campaign. Making repeated complaints of "porous, unsecured borders allowing criminal elements to enter the U.S. from Mexico," Donald Trump promised to build a wall along the nearly 2,000-mile-long U.S./Mexico border and to compel Mexico to pay its estimated cost of $12-22 billion (Gravelle, 2018, pp. 107-108). In early 2017, Trump moved forward on his pledge to begin with the construction of the border wall, yet failed to get approval from Congress (Bauer, 2020). In February 2019, he proclaimed "a state of emergency" as a response to the surge in illegal immigration at the U.S. southern border and subsequently vetoed the congressional resolution that sought to overturn the emergency order (Rodgers & Bailey, 2019).[2] In less than twenty years, beginning with a single fourteen-mile stretch in San Diego, which was built in 1993, by 2012, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) completed 651 miles of fencing along the U.S./Mexico border. When Donald Trump took office, the length of the fencing was 654 miles (just over 1,000 km) (Rodgers & Bailey, 2019; Kamarck & Steglein, 2019). As of this writing, the Trump administration plans to complete 450 miles of the new border wall by the end of 2020 (Alvarez, 2020). However, even though the federal government has spent $186.8 billion dollars on border enforcement resources, this has not kept unauthorized immigrants from entering the United States, nor has it forced them to leave. Since most of the initial immigration enforcement was concentrated in Texas and California, from the early 1990s, undocumented migrants began crossing to the United States through the extremely dangerous Arizona territory (Ewing, 2014, pp. 200, 205, 212). As a result, since the beginning of the 1994 "prevention through deterrence" era, the number of recorded migrant deaths has significantly increased, to 5,570 in the period from 1998 to 2012. In the same period, the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States tripled – from 3.5 million in 1990 to 11.7 million in 2012 (Ewing, 2014, pp. 205, 212).

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[2] Illegal border crossings at the U.S./Mexico border have seen a rapid increase since Donald Trump took office in 2017. In 2019, more than 800,000 people were detained on this border, twice the total for 2018 (Rodgers & Bailey, 2019).

The geopolitical history of the U.S./Mexico border is an important backdrop to Cantú's memoir. Right from the start, *The line becomes a river* seals its "autobiographical pact" by defining itself as a text invested in the rhetoric of memory situated both internally and externally – at the juncture of the past and the present, the public and the intimate. Constantly shifting back and forth between his own historical, cultural, and political research into issues of the southwestern borderlands and the close-up perception of its human realities described from "within," Cantú brings the transnational to the sphere of the personal, confirming that autobiography "is a site at which contestations of 'truth' concerning national and historical memory converge" (Kulbaga, 2006, p. 11). He draws from a long list of diverse sources including, among others, Mexican electronic and printed media and Mexican Government data, *dispatches by the New York Times* foreign correspondent Damien Cave, Julie Watson's reports for the *Associated Press*, the book *The Femicide Machine* by Mexico City journalist Sergio González, the work of the historian Timothy Snyder, Gianfranco Rosi's documentary *El Sicario, Room 164*, and the writings of the poets Cristina Rivera Garza and Antígona González. *The line becomes a river* also refers to another memoir – *Spain in the West: Kino's Historical Memoir of Pimería Alta, A Contemporary Account of the Beginnings of California, Sonora and Arizona* (1919) – a comprehensive fifteen-volume-account of the European "discovery" of the Sonora region, written from 1682–1711 by Cantú's namesake, Italian missionary Eusebio Francisco Kino. Describing his arrival in the territory "just south of the international boundary line that would come, nearly 150 years later, to separate the territory of the United States from the contiguous lands of Mexico" (Cantú, 2018), Kino noted that "[t]o the Europeans the entire region was a malpaís, a bad country" (Cantú, 2018) but that the people who made their lives there saw the desert "as a place inextricable from the terrain that surrounded it" (Cantú, 2018), an organic indivisible geographical whole, "a single unbroken expanse" (Cantú, 2018) in which "there was life to be had" (Cantú, 2018). Juxtaposing the past and the present interaction between humans and the Sonoran borderlands environment, Cantú reveals that today's immigrants' perilous journeys "along the infamous Camino del Diablo" (Cantú, 2018), a centuries-old harsh desert trail, are not unlike those endured by Anglo-American settlers during the California gold rush, many of whom died of thirst and exposure, and that to this day, the Arizona desert landscape has refused to be controlled, making man-made borders infinitely porous and untamed:

> As they cautiously made their way along the infamous Camino del Diablo, their reports noted that "during the few years that this road was much traveled," in the rush to California of the 1850s and 1860s, "over 400 persons were said to have perished of thirst . . . a record probably without a parallel in North America." . . . The report took special care in describing the point where the boundary line gave itself over to the Rio Grande, "a variable stream with turbid waters." The river carried "an immense amount of sediment," it noted, "and as a consequence it is bordered by alluvial bottoms, through which by erosion, it is continually changing its bed." It was as if the surveyors wished to acknowledge how the border, no matter how painstakingly fixed upon the land, could go on to endlessly change its course with the whims of a river. (Cantú, 2018)

Cantú dedicates a large portion of his text to the information on the wave of large-scale violence that occurred in Ciudad Juárez, the twin city to El Paso, Texas, in the 1990s and the 2000s. He emphasizes the complex interaction between the geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts and alarmist discourses on both sides of the border in producing the immigrant crisis within the borderlands space:

> The unsolved murders in many ways provided a blueprint for the structural underpinnings of the large-scale violence that would soon come to eclipse them. By 2008, little more than a year after Calderón declared war on the cartels, Ciudad Juárez had become ground zero for the conflict. As cartel violence exploded south of the border, Juárez un-

> derwent a grim transformation. It was no longer the city where women died, it was the city where everyone died. At the height of violence in 2010, according to *El Diario de Juárez*, more than three thousand murders were reported – an average of eight per day – earning Juárez the nickname Murder City and the dubious title of "murder capital of the world." During these same years, El Paso was named the safest city in the United States. . . On a Mexican news site I read about the discovery of seventy-two bodies in the state of Tamaulipas near the town of San Fernando – fifty-eight men and fourteen women found twisted atop one another, lying blindfolded with bound hands against the wall of a cinderblock barn . . . the slumped bodies that would later be identified as migrants from Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Honduras, souls forever waylaid on their passage north through the crumbling Republic of Mexico. (Cantú, 2018)

Citing from Cristina Rivera Garza's book *Dolerse* and Sara Uribe's poem "Antígona González," whose speaker searches for the body of her missing brother, Cantú notes the centrality of the body in both the perpetration and the discussion of the borderlands violence: "The 'social languages' of pain are, in fact, 'political languages' as well, 'languages in which bodies decipher their power relationships with other bodies'" (Cantú 2018). Drawing a parallel between the fate of the Juárez victims and that of the undocumented immigrants, whose bodies are caught in the crossfire between global economic forces, both legal and illegal, and commodified as products of geopolitical mapping, he emphasizes what Taylor describes as an "interaction between large-scale productions of space and the local making of place" (Taylor 2010), the fact that political and economic forces create inequalities and social struggle, which in turn generates a discursively produced space that is being enforced on the individual level. Like the plethora of nameless women whose abduction and violent murder "became the hallmark of Ciudad Juárez, an emblem of the danger and chaos unfurling along the border" (Cantú 2018), the bodies of undocumented immigrants end up "dumped into the desert like garbage" (Cantú 2018), their essential humanity negated, resignified with "indifference and abjection" (Cantú 2018), "predestined not to exist" (Cantú 2018). Similarly to Juárez female victims, who were "taken by force into safe houses where they were raped, tortured, and murdered at stag parties or orgies" (Cantú 2018), the undocumented immigrants "who survive the journey through Mexico's interior and evade capture across the U.S. border are often shepherded by their smugglers to 'drop houses' in the suburbs of southwestern cities and towns” (Cantú 2018), where they are “beaten and ordered to produce phone numbers of relatives in the U.S. who [are] then called and told to wire ransom money” (Cantú 2018).[3] Like the Juárez victims, whose families rarely turn up to identify their remains for fear of retribution, many of the immigrants’ bodies remain unclaimed. Juxtaposing the border town violence to the migrants’ torturous reality of fear and utter hopelessness that he witnesses as a member of the Border Patrol, Cantú demonstrates that the experience of violence is frequently depersonalized and rendered invisible both in the political and economic terms. Quoting from a study by the cultural sociologist Jane Zavisca on the most common metaphors used by journalists writing about migrant deaths, he reveals the prevalence of economic metaphors, “characterizing migrant deaths as a ‘cost,’ ‘calculation,’ or ‘gamble’” (Cantú, 2018). “Death is a price that is paid, a toll collected by the desert. Death is the foreseeable outcome of ‘cost-benefit analysis, with measurable, calculable risks and consequences’” (as cited in Cantú, 2018). Yet, Cantú insists that the public narratives of the U.S./Mexico borderlands also “fail to take into account all those who have died or gone missing crossing the border into the United States, people often fleeing the violence-ridden towns and cities of their birth” (Cantú, 2018).

As they start their Border Patrol service, neither himself nor his fellow recruits are able to reconcile the preconceived notion of the borderlands with its concrete experience:

> Have you ever felt 115-degree heat? Hell no, Hart answered. Well, I told him, we’ll be out in it, fetching dead bodies from the desert. Hart looked puzzled. Who the fuck walks through the desert when it’s 115? he asked. . . Migrants used to cross in the city, I told him, in places like San Diego and El Paso, until the Border Patrol shut it all down in the nineties with fences and new recruits like us. Politicians thought if they sealed the cities, people wouldn’t risk crossing in the mountains and the deserts. But they were wrong, and now we’re the ones who get to deal with it. (Cantú, 2018)

The protagonist himself realizes that his studies of international relations and border issues have also failed to prepare him for dealing with the harrowing reality of undocumented immigration: “When the call came out on the radio, I braced myself for the smell. That's the worst part, the senior agents would always say, the smell. During my first week at the station, one of them suggested I carry a small tin of Vicks VapoRub with me wherever I went. If you come upon a dead body, he said, rub that shit under your nose, or else the smell will stay with you for days" (Cantú, 2018). Recounting his first upsetting impressions of his new job, Cantú describes countless cases of people whom he found on the verge of death, abandoned by the smugglers in the middle of the desert because they "failed to keep pace with the group" (Cantú, 2018). As the narrative progresses, its focalization becomes increasingly internal, proving Conway's statement that "virtually the only prose narratives which are accorded the suspension of disbelief today are the autobiographers' attempts to narrate the history of real life" (Conway, 1998, p. 4). Cantú recounts finding a "half-naked man curled up in the fetal position on the desert floor [who] had been drinking his own urine for four days" (Cantú, 2018) and was barely able to talk by the time he was brought to the hospital. He records his own reaction to what he has seen: "The doctor said he had never seen such thoroughly decimated kidneys on a man still living. After hanging up, I sat staring at the camera feeds on the massive screen in front of me, imagining all the bodies that I knew were out there, undiscovered under trees and in dry washes, slowly returning to the earth" (Cantú, 2018). Soon enough, Cantú realizes that, in spite of the strong rhetorical emphasis of the border security program on the war against terror and organized crime, the bordering practices fail to fully address and forestall the workings of human traffickers and drug cartels. He not only shows how the bordering strategies contribute to the rise in criminal activities but also warns that they are targeting primarily ordinary people, victims of the very criminal elements the wall avows to remove, while the core of the illegal machinery remains untouched: "Did you ever arrest a narco? Sure, I said. But. . . We mostly arrested the little people . . . mostly I arrested migrants, I confessed. People looking for a better life" (Cantú, 2018). According to Labove, what discourses that "reframe the undocumented individual as criminal" fail to see is that they are victims of both the economic processes and organized crime (Labove, 2011, p. 1). On a similar note, Heyman contends that the security discourse, law enforcement, and representation of the border "serve to hide from view the remarkable system of low-wage labor exploitation in the maquiladora export factories on the Mexican side of the border. No one talks about them and mostly they are out of academic fashion. Yet their conditions are shocking, and there are millions of people affected, and they're producing consumer goods [Americans] use every day" (Wilson, 2018). According to Heyman, the concept of "global apartheid" reflects the rudimental transfer of value in capitalism. One of its traits is the dividing role of the border, both politically and ideologically as well as economically, keeping "a lower social wage formation separate from a higher one." In this sense, unauthorized migration can be regarded as "resistance to inequality" (Spencer as cited in Heyman, 2017, pp. 47-48).

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[3] Cantú provides the statistics reported by *Wall Street Journal’s* Joel Millman showing “that in Phoenix alone, authorities discovered 194 drop houses in 2007 and 169 in 2008” (Cantú, 2018).

The rift between the external and the internal reality of the border the protagonist becomes increasingly aware of is reciprocal to his personal struggle and sense of alienation. He realizes that his placement within a structure and the pledge to "the duties of the office" (Cantú, 2018) have disrupted the essence of his humanity, precluding him from making a free authentic choice, to borrow Sartre's term. *The line becomes a river* both manifests and confronts "the painful gulf between witnessing and testimony, seeing and understanding, wanting to help and knowing how to do it" (Kulbaga, 2006, p. 114). On one occasion, the protagonist discovers a young couple spending the night huddled inside a church: "The man propped himself up on one elbow and told me that they had crossed four days ago, that their guide had left them behind on the first night when they'd failed to keep pace with the group. They were lost for days, he said, with nothing to drink but the filthy water from cattle tanks" (Cantú, 2018). Even though they converse in Spanish and he sympathizes with their plight, the duty he performs prevents him from making a conscious authentic choice: "The man took a moment to look at me in the light. Listen, he said, do you think you could bring us back to Mexico, como hermano? You could drive us down to the border, he pleaded. . . Like a brother. . . I have to bring you in, I told him. It's my job. The man took a deep breath and nodded and then climbed into the back of the transport van, holding out his arms to help his pregnant wife" (Cantú, 2018). On their way to the detention center, they exchange pleasantries and introduce themselves to each other: "Mucho gusto, I said. They replied with polite smiles. Igualmente. I turned my head and then bolted the cage and shut the door" (Cantú, 2018). Yet, as he resumes his duty, in spite of his empathetic reaction, these people soon erase themselves from his memory, become invisible and depersonalized: "Later that night, as I sat in the transport van listening to the calls come out over the radio, I realized I had forgotten their names" (Cantú, 2018). On another occasion, a man to be processed for deportation asks him if there is any work for him at the station. Even though he understands the man's situation, Cantú is unable to suspend the process of his criminalization and return: "You don't understand, I said, you've just got to wait here until the bus comes. They'll take you to headquarters and then on to the border. You'll be back in Mexico very soon. I understand, he assured me, I just want to know if there is something I can do while I wait, something to help. I can take out the trash or clean out the cells. I want to show you that I'm here to work, that I'm not a bad person. I'm not here to bring in drugs, I'm not here to do anything illegal. I want to work. I looked at him. I know that, I said" (Cantú, 2018).

It is precisely the uneasiness between his institutional and his private self that opens the protagonist to moral self-reflection and transforms his narrative from a mere recording of experience towards what Jensen Wallach terms a "selfcritical act" (Jensen Wallach, 2004, p. 35):

> There are days when I feel I am becoming good at what I do. And then I wonder, what does it mean to be good at this? I wonder sometimes how I might explain certain things, the sense in what we do when they run from us, scattering into the brush, leaving behind their water jugs and their backpacks full of food and clothes, how to explain what we do when we discover their lay-up spots stocked with water and stashed rations. Of course, what you do depends on who you're with, depends on what kind of agent you are, what kind of agent you want to become, but it's true that we slash their bottles and drain their water into the dry earth, that we dump their backpacks and pile their food and clothes to be crushed and pissed on and stepped over, strewn across the desert and set ablaze. And Christ, it sounds terrible, and maybe it is, but the idea is that when they come out from their hiding places, when they regroup and return to find their stockpiles ransacked and stripped, they'll realize their situation, that they're fucked, that it's hopeless to continue, and they'll quit right then and there, they'll save themselves and struggle toward the nearest highway or dirt road to flag down some passing agent or they'll head for the nearest parched village to knock on someone's door, someone who will give them food and water and call us to take them in–that's the idea, the sense in it all. (Cantú, 2018)

According to Levinas, the internal tension – the urge to crawl out of one's skin, which one can neither escape nor be comfortable in – is the first step "towards the hither side of being" (Topolski, 2015, p. 133). As he strives to resolve his unbearable double-bind position, the protagonist engages in what Kelly Oliver terms "witnessing beyond recognition." According to Oliver, the tension between two meanings of witnessing – "seeing with one's own eyes" and "bearing witness to something beyond recognition that can't be seen" is at the core of subjectivity and ethical relations (Oliver, 2001, p. 16):

> If subjectivity is the process of witnessing sustained through response-ability, then we have a responsibility to response-ability, that is to say, we have a responsibility to promote the ability to respond. We have an obligation not only to respond but also to respond in a way that opens up rather than closes off the possibility of response by others. . . Response-ability, then, is the founding possibility of subjectivity and its most fundamental obligation. We are constituted as subjects through our interactive intersubjective address and response with others. (Oliver, 2015, pp. 485-486)
>
> Witnessing is the heart of the circulation of energy that connects us, and obligates us, to each other. The spark of subjectivity is maintained by bearing witness to what is beyond recognition, the process of witnessing itself. (Oliver, 2001, p. 20)

Embracing his responsibility "for the other's ability to respond" (Oliver, 2001, p. 19), Cantú starts taking actions that increasingly suspend his institutional role. When he finds three boys who got lost in the desert after their adult companion died in the August heat, he oversteps his official authority to give them a personal friendly advice: "Before the boys were loaded into the transport unit, I went to them and told them I was sorry for their loss. It's a hard thing, I said. I told them that if they ever decided to cross again, they must not cross in the summer. It's too hot, I said – to cross in the heat is to risk one's life. I told them never to take the pills the coyotes gave them, because they suck moisture from the body. I told them that many people died there, that in the summer people died every day, year after year, and many more were found hovering at the edge of death. The boys thanked me, I think, and were placed into the transport unit and driven away" (Cantú, 2018). Cantú's "responsibility to response-ability," albeit discrete, signalizes the emergence of his ethical authority and his authentic self. An individual manifests responsibility if he "could have done otherwise," maintains Sartre (Sartre, 2012). Making a responsible choice is thus a form of both freedom and self-determination. According to Flynn, even though the prudent person and the existentialist judge "in-situation," unlike the prudent person, who "discovers what is the right thing to do," the existentialist "decides what is the right thing to do . . . in full recognition of the fallibility of his or her judgement," but "in view of the best available evidence" and the promotion of freedom (Flynn, 2006, pp. 124-125). The ethical reorientation Cantú undergoes both as the protagonist and as the narrator of his memoir is equally discernible from his later encounter with Martin Ubalde de la Vega, an immigrant whose name he does not forget. He reveals that the man had spent six days in the desert, having wandered for over forty-eight hours without water and food in Arizona July heat before he was found by the Border Patrol:

> He came from the jungles of Guerrero, he told me, and in his village they spoke Mixtec and farmed the green earth. He was the father of seven children, he said, five girls and two boys. His eldest daughter lived in California and he had crossed the border with plans to go there, to live with her and find work. We spent the following hours watching telenovelas and occasionally he would turn to ask me about the women in America, wondering if they were like the ones on TV. . . I reassembled my uniform and returned to the passenger door to offer him my undershirt. . . Before leaving town, I asked him if he was hungry. You should eat something now, I told him, at the station there's only juice and crackers. I asked what he was hungry for. What do Americans eat? he asked. I laughed. Here we eat mostly Mexican food. He looked at me unbelievingly. But we also eat hamburgers, I said. We pulled into a McDonald's. (Cantú, 2018)

As his authentic individual response to perturbing situations at his workplace becomes more and more prominent, Cantú increasingly becomes prone to nightmares and anxiety attacks. He starts dreaming of the people "staggering through the desert, men from Michoacán, from places I've known, men lost and wandering without food or water, dying slowly as they look for some road, some village, some way out. In my dreams I seek them out, searching in vain until finally I discover their bodies lying facedown on the ground before me, dead and stinking on the desert floor, human waypoints in a vast and smoldering expanse" (Cantú, 2018). He relates his alarming nightmares to symptoms of "moral injury," pervasive "among soldiers who have returned from the battlefronts in Iraq and Afghanistan." "Long confused with PTSD, moral injury is a more subtle wound," he explains, citing from the book by *What Have We Done* by veteran war reporter David Wood. It is "characterized not by flashbacks or a startle complex" but by "sorrow, remorse, grief, shame, bitterness, and moral confusion" (as cited in Cantú, 2018) and an emotional response manifested by "dreams and doubts" (Cantú, 2018):

> "moral injury is a jagged disconnect from our understanding of who we are and what we and others ought to do and ought not to do. . . . [it is] a learned behavior, learning to accept the things you know are wrong." Wood describes how "most of us . . . have a firm and deeply personal

> understanding of life's moral rules, of justice and injustice, right and wrong. That sense, our inner compass, is built on beliefs we begin to acquire as infants. . . . But war, by its very nature, tends to suddenly and violently upend these remaining moral beliefs. Things don't go well in war, whose very purpose demands death and destruction." This upending is often a gradual process, one that is difficult to perceive. Likewise, moral injury is a wound that sets in slowly, something that occurs, as one Iraq veteran wrote, "when a person has time to reflect on a traumatic experience." When Wood writes of moral injury, he refers most often to traumas suffered in combat, by soldiers deployed in foreign war zones on the other side of the earth. But he also notes that one does not have to be in combat to suffer from moral injury. He reminds us that war is something that reaches far beyond the battlefield, something that leaches out into proximate geographies and relationships, seeping deep into the individual and societal unconscious. "To be in war," Wood states, even in this broader sense, "is to be exposed to moral injury." (Cantú, 2018)

According to Daigle, extreme situations involving angst and death can "serve ethical purposes," and it is precisely in such situations that "the true and fundamental nature of the human" is revealed (Daigle, 2006, p. 9). As the protagonist's individuality and freedom of conscience take hold, or, in existentialist terms, as he avoids bad faith "by refusing to adopt values from another" (cf. Warnock, 1967, p. 50), his recurring nightmares intensify and his exposure to trauma eventually manifests on the physical plane. He starts grinding his teeth in his sleep, and so, like his dreams, his body turns into a site of horror:

> The dentist introduced a small mirror into my mouth, cocking his head and pushing the tool at different angles against my cheeks. For several minutes he picked and prodded at my teeth, scraping my gum line with a long metallic tool. He glanced up at me. Do you know you're a grinder? he asked. I looked at him. Sorry? You grind your teeth, he said. Did you know? Oh, I said. No, I didn't know. Well, he said, it's getting kind of ugly in there. I looked around, feeling strangely panicked. I had no idea, I said. . . What you do for work? the dentist asked as he grabbed my chart from the countertop. I'm a Border Patrol agent, I told him. I see, said the dentist. Is the work stressful? The grinding, you know, it comes with stress. The question surprised me–no one had ever asked me so plainly. I

> paused to think. It's not stressful, I said, no. Hmm, the dentist said, seems stressful to me. I thought of my dreams. . . I dream in the night that I am grinding my teeth out, spitting the crumbled pieces into my palms and holding them in my cupped hands, searching for someone to show them to, someone who can see what is happening. I dream that I am clenching my jaws, unable to stop, unable to pull them apart. I clench harder and harder until an overwhelming pressure builds. Then, slowly at first, my molars begin to pop and burst. I dream that a piece of my tooth has chipped off in my mouth. As I hold the jagged shard in my hand, I feel other teeth slowly starting to flake apart. I hold my mouth closed so that I won't lose the pieces, until finally they become too many and I must spit them into my hand, where I look upon them with desperation. I dream that I am grinding my jaws from side to side, that my teeth are slowly catching and breaking as they are dragged across a decaying surface. I dream that each time I close my mouth my top teeth become snagged against my bottom teeth. I try to carefully unlock my jaws, to slowly separate them, but the teeth pull and scrape against each other, cracking and crumbling in my mouth. I dream my molars are falling to pieces, filling my mouth like clumps of hardened dirt. (Cantú ,2018)

Even though at his request, he is transferred from the field post to El Paso intelligence center, his new job is no less traumatic but only intensifies his distress. Looking at the monitoring screens in the center, he is constantly reminded of border violence, imagining "all the bodies that I knew were out there, undiscovered under trees and in dry washes, slowly returning to the earth" (Cantú, 2018): "Back in the hotel room that night, I was visited by flickering images as I slept. I dreamed of a cave littered with body parts, a landscape devoid of color and light. I saw a wolf circling in the darkness and felt its paws heavy on my chest, its breath hot on my face" (Cantú, 2018). The physical vulnerability and the body as its vehicle are central to Sartre's concept of shame, explains Dolezal (Dolezal, 2017, p. 431). Shame "brings thematic awareness to the body" (Dolezal, 2017, p. 428); seeing our body "engaged in a particular action or appearing in a particular way" (Dolezal, 2017, p. 428) can make us feel ashamed of ourselves because of the way we "appear to the Other" (Sartre, 2012). Watching his reflection in the mirror, the protagonist experiences the same state: "I awoke to Beto's snoring. I fumbled for my notebook in the dim light from my phone, then shut myself in the bathroom and sat on the toilet with the light on and the fan running, hurriedly scrawling every detail I could remember from the dream. Then, for several minutes I stared into the mirror, trying to recognize myself" (Cantú, 2018). According to Sartre, as "the recognition of the fact that I am that object which the Other is looking at and judging" (Sartre, 2012), shame is the basis of both self-reflection and the relational identity: ". . . the Other has not only revealed to me what I was; he has established me in a new type of being. . . . I need the Other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being" (Sartre, 2012). In other words, the Other "teaches me who I am" (Sartre, 2012). Dolezal explains:

> Self-conscious evaluative emotions, like shame, are asserted to be qualitatively different from more "primary" or "basic" emotions, such as sadness, joy, anger and fear. They involve the ability to compare oneself or one's behaviour with an internalized social norm and respond to the outcome of this evaluation. They further involve the capacity to pay attention to the self as though from the perspective of an external observer. . . Shame, as such, involves reflexive awareness of the self and a necessary triangulation of experience, or to use Guenther's formulation, "a relation between me, myself and the Other" (2011, p. 26). As a triangular experience, shame is perhaps more accurately to be understood as a "self-other-conscious" emotion. (Dolezal, 2017, pp. 424-425)

According to Deonna et al., shame is fundamentally related to one's internal ethical compass and is produced as a consequence of a person's inability "to honour the demands consubstantial with being attached to certain values" (Deonna, 2012, p. xii). In like manner, Cantú's failure to respond to human tragedy and vulnerability in an authentic manner leaves him deeply ashamed and ultimately drives him to the verge of a breakdown. When his uncle asks him about his job, he wants to tell him that he has "reached a point at which [he can] barely sleep, a point at which [his mind has] become so filled with violence that [he can] barely perceive beauty in the landscape around [him]" (Cantú, 2018).

Finally, he realizes that the only way to resolve his importunate position is to step out of the system. He decides to leave the Border Patrol and starts working as a civilian in a coffee shop. It is in that post-Border-Patrol stage that his memoir becomes most intensely self-reflexive and relational and turns into what Barbour terms "an act or exercise of conscience" (1992, p. 1). He meets José Martínez, an undocumented immigrant who comes to his coffee shop every day and shares his breakfast with him:

> José knew I had spent several years in the Border Patrol, but he rarely questioned me about the work, almost as if there were not much to ask. Likewise, I relinquished certain questions about his arrival and status. . . Day after day, month after month, every morning at the coffee shop was the same. José would complete his daily tasks and then come to the counter to talk and share his food. For nearly two years there wasn't a single day he didn't come, not a single day he didn't sit down and offer to break bread with me. (Cantú, 2018)

Two years later, returning from a visit to his dying mother in his home village in Mexico, José is arrested by the Border Patrol on his way back to the United States. In spite of his familiarity with the border policy process, Cantú is unable to help José reunite with his wife and two sons, who remain in the U.S. As he witnesses the Streamline court hearing, a joint trial of forty immigrants, approaching the judge five at a time, their "ankles . . . chained to one another and their wrists . . . bound at the waist" (Cantú, 2018) each of them given just a few minutes' hearing, Cantú for the first time gets an inside look at the utter hopelessness and humiliation of the immigrant experience:

> After repeating this set of questions for each defendant, the judge issued his sentence – for most, thirty days of incarceration in the state detention center an hour north of the city. . . Watching the defendants shuffle to the front of the room to stand before the bench, I realized that I had never before seen so many men and women in shackles, that I had never laid eyes on a group of people so diminished. I had apprehended and processed countless men and women for deportation, many of whom I sent without thinking to pass through this very room – but there was something dreadfully altered in their presence here between towering and cavernous walls, lorded over by foreign men in colored suits and black robes, men with little notion of the dark desert nights or the hard glare of the sun, with little sense for the sweeping expanses of stone and shale, the foot-packed earthen trails, the bodies laid bare before the elements, the bones trembling from heat, from cold, from want of water. (Cantú, 2018)

His participation in the proceedings, this time from the standpoint of an ordinary citizen, results in his retrospective ethical regrounding as he "faces sources of shame in the past" (Barbour, 1992, p. 1). He remembers filling "countless documents" during his service in the Border Patrol, "documents sorted through by clerks and attorneys and judges, documents that followed the accused as they were shuttled across the state from one holding cell to the next" (Cantú, 2018): "I realized, too, that despite my small role within the system, despite hours of training and studying at the academy, I had little inkling of what happened to those I arrested after I turned over their paperwork and went home from my shift" (Cantú, 2018). Pained by the shame of his past role in the process he now reproves, he can do nothing but helplessly observe as José, a model worker and citizen who has lived in the U.S. for more than thirty years and whose immigration lawyer has submitted dozens of support letters from his American friends, including the local pastor, who helped raise the money for his public defense, is pressed with criminal charges and deported to Mexico. He describes José's last encounter with his children during his incarceration at the detention center prior to his deportation, which occurs behind the security glass wall, yet another fence separating him from his family: "I looked back at José and watched the way he tilted his head as he gazed through the glass, the way he smiled as he listened to his son. I watched the motion of his mouth, the way he spoke and laughed. It was like watching a man on mute, I thought, a man who, despite his proximity, would not be heard even if he was crying out on the other side of the glass, even if he was screaming" (Cantú, 2018). According to Sartre, it is through "the look," the "encounter with the objectifying gaze of another subject" that reflexive self-awareness is formed (Dolezal, 2017, p. 426): "once we are captured in the look of another, we suddenly separate ourselves from the activity in which we are engaged and see the activity and ourselves as though through the eyes of the other" (Dolezal, 2017, p. 427). Deeply disturbed by the misery of José's situation and his own inability to help him, the narrator confesses to his mother:

> My friend, I finally told her, he's been deported. I felt unable to breathe. I fear for him, I said, I fear for his family. All these years, I told her, it's like I've been circling beneath a giant, my gaze fixed upon its foot resting at the ground. But now, I said, it's like I'm starting to crane my head upward, like I'm finally seeing the thing that crushes. . . It's been almost four years since I left, I told her, but when I'm in the courtroom, when I'm talking with the lawyers, when I'm at the jail, it's like something inside of me still belongs to it. . .. I don't know what to do, I confessed. I feel pain, I feel hurt, but it isn't mine. . . It's like I never quit, I finally muttered. It's like I'm still a part of this thing that crushes. . . José's situation is not unique. There are thousands of people just like

> him, thousands of cases, thousands of families. Millions, actually–the whole idea of it is suffocating. . . (Cantú, 2018)

Struck down with José's misfortune, the protagonist completely detaches himself from his past Border-Patrol self. Learning about José's attempts to cross the border illegally and how during one of them, his wife, Lupe, was blackmailed by smugglers demanding that she pay a thousand dollars to bring José from a safe house, only to discover that he had never been there in the first place, Cantú even considers breaking the law to help José cross back to the United States: "I wished I had the courage to smuggle José myself, to ferry him safely through the desert, past the sensors and watchtowers, past the agents patrolling distant trails and dirt roads, past the highway checkpoints" (Cantú, 2018). He imagines the two of them driving "together through the night, past faraway fields and prisons to the edge of the city" (Cantú, 2018) and arriving "at the barrio, at the trailer park, at the door of José's home where Lupe would lie sleeping with their three children, no longer afraid to wake" (Cantú, 2018). According to Levinas, the proximity of the ethical subject to the Other and their relational bond produce a transformative form of disturbance that nurtures both responsibility and the subject's sense of self (see Topolski, 2015, p. 132; Rae, 2016, p. 154). Cantú demonstrates this when, after yet another disturbing dream, he decides to meet with José on the Mexican side of the border and dedicates the last part of his memoir to José's firsthand account of his torturous situation:

> The day you saw me in court, the day I saw my family there, it was as if the government was destroying my family, tearing it apart right in front of me. I could feel the power they held over us. . . I shouldn't have left the U.S., it's true. I shouldn't have left my family, but I couldn't live without going to see my mother. . . for me, there was no other way. . . Now I sit in this room and I look out the window at those hills. Those hills that you see right there, that's the United States. I used to be able to just run up and over those hills. But now there is a barrier. I hate it, I hate it. It's something barbaric. The crossing now, it's much more dangerous than it ever was. It's not easy. I've tried four times in six months and still I can't get across. Each time it takes something from you. And of course, each time it takes money. . . People in my situation, people who have tried again and again to get across, they become desperate. They try to find an easier way to get across, a cheaper way. Out of desperation, I've even thought of crossing over as a mule for the cartels. . . But it's a risk, of course. If

> you are captured by la migra you are entered in the computer as a drug trafficker, and you'll never be able to become legal. The cartel will be against you too, because you lost their load. You become a victim of both systems. I don't want to carry drugs across the desert, I don't want to get myself into more problems, but sometimes it's not a choice. The same people who control the drug smuggling control the human trafficking, so in some places if you want to get across, you have to carry a load. I've even heard that sometimes they will kill you if you refuse. A man in jail told me that there are mass graves in the desert where many people are buried for this very reason. . . The judges in the United States, if they know the reality, they know they are sending people to their death. They are sending people to commit suicide. I will do anything to be on the other side. To be honest, I would rather be in prison in the U.S. and see my boys once a week through the glass than to stay here and be separated from my family. At least I would be closer to them. So you see, there is nothing that can keep me from crossing. (Cantú, 2018)

Through this final narrative maneuver – manipulating the autobiographical pact by ceding the autobiographical agency to José's confessional voice – *The line becomes a river* reinforces its appeal to an ethics grounded in relationality, responsibility, and the resignification of the migrant Other, confirming that if we reclaim "the relationship of man to man" (Cantú, 2018) and "turn the numbers back into people" (Cantú, 2018), it is possible to give true meaning to our existence and our shared world.

3. Conclusion

Francisco Cantú's memoir *The line becomes a river: Dispatches from the border* is not a simple literary exercise in the mechanics of memory, nor is it just a self-referential autobiographical project. Albeit failing to address the traditional concerns of the autobiographical genre – the realization of a coherent identity and psychological healing – but, rather, disrupting both, Cantú's autobiographical act is a manifestation of conscience instrumental in (re)defining its author's sense of self that both responds to reality and purports to create it by exploring what it means to be human in this day and age. Grounding its protagonist's identity quest in the intersubjective experience, it advances a political ethics of relationality and affirms the existentialist premise that responsibility is a key component of our humanity and, by extension, our self-determination. Employing the existentialist tropes of shame, alienation, angst, and death and juxtaposing the geopolitical, geoeconomic, and the media construction of the U.S./Mexico border to the complex human realities of its borderlands, *The line becomes a river* reveals ways in which the production of the body, memory, and trauma – invested with relations of power – generates multiple subject positions and brings the public to the terrain of the intimately personal. For this reason, in its essence, Cantú's memoir is foremost a life narrative of Others that elicits its readers' identification and empathy by lending a public voice and autobiographical agency to the objectified immigrant, brings the literary into the social and political arenas, and adds new perspectives to the narrative of human rights and the contentious transnational and national immigration debate.

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Mirna Ćurić
Ph.D. student, University of Novi Sad
mirnabijedicdc@gmail.com

RADING SPACE AND IDENTITY IN SANDRA CISNERO’S *THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET*

Abstract: This paper explores the relationship of space and identity in the novel *The House on Mango Street*, written by a prominent Chicana writer Sandra Cisneros. Based on spatial theories and ethnic studies, the paper demonstrates how specific spatial characteristics interact and translate into the main character’s identity traits. The spatial narrowness of homes and the isolation of Mango Street reflect a sense of social confinement, isolation, and subjugation of Latino people in the U.S., predominantly Latino girls and women. As a minority people, they occupy the space on the social periphery where Latino and Anglo cultures meet. The spatial contact of Latino and Anglo-American culture generates de-territorialized, diasporic, and hybrid identities which are further compromised by gender issues in the Chicana case. In this setting, the main character Esperanza strives towards identity reconstruction which strongly relies on spatial and mental repositioning.

Key words: space, identity, home, hybridity, border, gender, Cisneros

1. Introduction

Cisneros’s novel *The House on Mango Street* centralizes the spatial and existential dimensions of Latino immigrants, presenting issues concerning the evolution of immigrant identities in the U.S. The novel presents various fictional events and characters to show how different living spaces interact with the identities of its characters and influence their self-perception. Focusing on particular immigrant experiences, Cisneros shows that spaces are not only physical points in time, but constitutive elements of personal and collective identification. Given that Cisneros’s work greatly refers to transnational spatial perspectives, consideration of the space-identity relation in this paper employs several important arguments that have emerged from the 20th-century spatial turn, as well as relevant Chicana feminist theories that question spatial and social positions of Latinas in the U.S. Hence, along with theoretical argumentation related to Chicana identity given by Gloria Anzaldúa, Deborah Madsen, or Anna Marie Sandoval subject analysis extends to Henry Lefebvre's theory of space as a social product, Bachelard's introspection of home space, Edward Soja's concept of thirdspace and Michel Foucault's conceptualization of heterotopia.

The House on Mango Street belongs to the U.S. and Latino/a literary canon. This modern literary classic was written by an eminent Chicana writer Sandra Cisneros. Although published in 1984, the novel still draws significant interest within the contemporary literary circles. Cisneros's novel is especially praised within the scope of ethnic literature, since it viably conveys different perspectives of transnational life, border consciousness, and hybrid identities of Latino immigrants who have crossed the U.S.-Mexican border to settle in the U.S. The central location in the novel, Mango Street, is located in a Mexican-American quarter of Chicago, a neighborhood of Latino immigrants called barrio. Mango Street signifies a liminal space that discloses the bicultural reality and identities of Latino immigrants rooted in both the country of origin and country of residence. Hence, the street is a space marked by transnational immigrant experience reflected in continuous border-crossing practices of Cisneros's characters.

Located in the suburban part of Chicago where Latino and Anglo-American cultures meet, the poverty-stricken street also epitomizes life in the margins of society or social periphery. A peculiar spatial intersection of different cultures, in which Anglo culture assumes the dominant position, impels the development of hybrid identities in Cisneros's characters. Such an identity is found in the main character, a twelve-year-old Latino girl called Esperanza Cordero. The novel's narrative, recounted in short stories called vignettes, follows the personal growth of Esperanza in the manner of bildungsroman, representing an intimate account of her identity evolving in an American barrio, where she often finds herself underestimated and marginalized on the basis of ethnicity, class, and gender. Besides the spatial elements embodied in Mango Street, Esperanza's narrative invites readers to inspect the most intimate personal spaces of the house and home. Comprehending the concept of home in terms of space shows that the immediate environment of the characters is vital for understanding spatial identities in the barrio. In the case of Esperanza, the sense of self is symbolically embodied in the dilapidated house she inhabits. However, besides the physical house, Esperanza provides substantial insight into the space of her imaginative home, her dream house which, as a transgressional space of bicultural existence, bears considerable significance in her identity development.

2. Theoretical Approach: Spatial Theory and Latino/a Identity

Twentieth-century spatial theorists, such as Henry Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, and Edward Soja, rejected ideas where space is a mere repository of content, arguing that spaces are essential social determinants, inseparable from questions related to human existence, development, and identification. According to Lefebvre, space is more than a physical manifestation; it is a social product that further reflects social relations. In his book *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) argued that space is produced by various hegemonic practices and modeled by power relations. Thus, produced space, as he explained, "serves as a tool of *thought* and of *action*; that in addition to being a means of production, it is also a means of control and hence of domination, of power" (p. 26). Since power relations have an important role in cultural theory and ethnic studies, it seems that space, and not only history, bears considerable significance, along with other social constructs such as identity, culture, and gender.

Similar to Lefebvre, Michel Foucault (1986) argued that space is fundamental to all social life. He wrote about space as an infinite set of relations within which social life takes place, paying special attention to heterotopias – real places commonly considered as the Other space, such as prisons, brothels, asylums, or cemeteries (p. 24). According to Foucault, heterotopias are universal, as they are present in all cultures. As in the case of Lefebvre's argumentation, Foucault's distinctive places rest upon social power relations and reflect attitudes towards those who do not hold power – be it prisoners, lunatics, women, or ethnic minorities in barrios. Since heterotopias are inclusive only for people who are considered different from those who hold power, these spaces "open doors to Otherness[1] and subsequently to plurality and heterogeneity" (Sudradjat, 2012, p. 32). As Foucault (1986) argued, everyone can enter heterotopia, but that is only an illusion, as we are excluded at the very entrance (p. 26). Hence, heterotopias are only seemingly open, but fundamentally isolated places. They are inclusive only for marginalized subjects but exclude everyone else. Moreover, heterotopias are situated in the social periphery, because the center is most commonly disturbed, if not threatened by their existence. Therefore, places like asylums, prisons, or barrios are heterotopic spaces created so that the dominant center may preserve the illusion of homogeneity, privilege, and control.

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[1] In social studies, the concept of Otherness refers to broader Self-Other systems of devaluation in which the outsiders of the dominant group (the Others) are assigned an unequal or inferior social position based on their difference. The concept is often applied in ethnic studies to refer to ethnic minorities who hold less power and are generally regarded as different, unequal and inferior to the dominant culture. The Self/Other differential practice is also prominent in patriarchal systems in which women occupy the role of Other, given that patriarchy devalues women on the basis of gender differences.

Following Lefebvre and Foucault's theoretical thought, Edward Soja was also concerned with social aspects of space. In his widely recognized work *Postmodern Geographies*, Soja (1989), wrote about the contemporary *center-periphery* dialectic, along with which class dichotomy *bourgeoisie-proletariat* forms. According to Soja, the socio-spatial configuration is changeable: the country or the region in the center can become part of the periphery, just as individuals and families from one generation can move from proletariat to bourgeoisie in a subsequent generation (pp. 110-111). This dialectic is important when analyzing physical and social peripheries in ethnic literature as it commonly addresses center-periphery and class relations. However, perhaps the most important contribution is Soja's conceptualization of thirdspace - a lived space, and the sublimation of the firstspace – a physical space and the secondspace – a mental space. As argued by Soja (1996), thirdspace is a radically open space in which "everything comes together - subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and unconsciousness, everyday life and unending history" (pp. 56-57). Evidently, Soja's thirdspace goes beyond the Western binary logic based on *either/or* practices and becomes a conceptual vehicle that includes a vast diversity of social practices and behaviors. As Kulenović (2018) observed, thirdspace is "a place where different social forces meet. In such places, cultural categories of space, time, and identities come to the fore; these are places where particular spatial experiences generate new and sometimes conflicting notions of society, create new memories and create new views […] these are places where identities and social positions are being established and challenged" (p. 3-4).

As a radically open space, thirdspace includes different and opposed social and cultural practices. It is a space where the identity of *Other* and the agency of those who occupy the space of margins come to light. For this reason, Soja (1996) has linked his concept to the space of margins and identified margins as a thirdspace (p. 84). He further claimed that binary power relations can be transgressed in third spaces. Through the strategy of *thirding* – a process of moving beyond binaries, Soja argued that various mental or social differentiation practices over the *Other* may be subverted and new cultural politics created – politics that contribute to the survival of the oppressed in the space of margins (p. 100). Along with the previously mentioned center-periphery argument, Soja's thirdspace also has a vital role in minority discourse since it encompasses aspects of decentralization practices, bicultural living, identity, and processes related to the demarginalization and reaffirmation of minorities. Therefore, the concept of thirdspace is deemed relevant in analyzing spatial aspects in Cisneros's novel.

Besides reflecting socio-economic tendencies, spaces also reveal information about us. For instance, private spaces convey information about our personality, attitudes, aspirations, feelings, social status, and other elements that constitute our identities. In the book *The Poetics of Space,* French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1994) explored a peculiar relationship of space and self from the phenomenological view and argued that homes are instruments for analyzing the human soul, given that "houses are in us as much as we are in them" (p. xxxvii). However, it seems that Bachelard was more concerned with positive spatial phenomenology since he viewed the home or house space as a sheltering zone providing comfort and reflecting coherency and stability in those who occupy that space. According to Bachelard, homes are highly evocative spaces, usually linked to childhood memories of positive experiences in growing up and a sense of being protected (p. 6). However, we cannot help but wonder about those less positive home/self-images. Bachelard obviously leaves them out, although there are houses that reflect claustrophobia, loneliness, and isolation as we will later see in the analysis of home in Cisneros's novel.

Given that spaces convey information about us, we are tempted to ask "who is us" in a particular space or "who is a person/group that particular space or spaces refer to" and, hence, we pose the essential question about our identity with reference to a specific space. However, before indulging in a further discussion of space and identity, especially within the minority discourse, it is useful to make a short review of the concept of identity itself. From the sociological perspective, identity refers to the construction of sense of self in relations with others. It generally forms through socialization processes that include class, sex, gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, and language-related aspects. We usually differentiate between individual identity a set of personal qualities and attributes, and collective identity – a set of common qualities shared by groups of people. One cannot be separated from the other, since individuals are historically and spatially organized into larger groups. Many cultural theorists agree that identity is never fixed, but a fluid, changeable, and dynamic social category that can change under different spatial and social circumstances. Hence, as reasoned by renowned cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1990), identity is always "a matter of becoming, as well as being" (p. 255).

2.1. Construction of Space and Identity in Latino Minority Discourse

In discussions about identity within Latino minority discourse in the U.S., it is cultural, hybrid, and diasporic identities that capture the most attention. Cultural identity generally refers to the sense of self and belonging to a particular cultural group or groups. Within the frame of cultural identity, we can talk about racial, ethnic, social, gender, economic, and other traits that constitute a person's cultural identity. However, a person does not necessarily need to identify within one cultural frame. For example, Latino people, who share a long history of colonialization and migration, develop identities that rely on several cultural frames, i.e., Indian, European and Anglo-American. Such identities are culturally hyphenated or marked by a sense of cultural in-betweenness, which further generates cultural hybridity characterized by a constant identity negotiation in terms of the opposed cultural aspects. As Smith (2008) argued, such hybridity "encompasses partial identities, multiple roles, and pluralistic selves" (p. 5).

Cultural hybridity is also present in diasporic identities that are typical for migrant populations. i.e., Latino people who abandon one space to settle in another for different reasons: wars, labor, or politics. An essential feature of diasporic identity is that it is shaped by imperialistic arrangements where cultural outsiders are exposed to marginalization based on race, ethnicity, and social status. Due to physical, spatial, and cultural detachment from the homeland, notions of diasporic identity extend to a personal and collective sense of discontinuity, loss, disrupted sense of belonging, and nostalgia for the home. The absence of a stable place of belonging leads to diasporic identities which are often regarded as de-territorialized. As argued by Mujčinović (2004), the sense of spatial dislocation has urged many people with diasporic identities to travel, either physically or mentally, between a newly inhabited space and space of origin (p. 65). This physical or mental traveling between the new space and homeland is a reoccurring theme in Latino/a literature, which draws attention to a problematic sense of spatial and mental belonging and not belonging, inherent in diasporic Latino/a identity.

A more direct relationship between identity and space within a bicultural/multicultural context was established by the postcolonial theorist and writer Homi Bhabha. In his book *The Location of Culture,* he coins the term Third Space, which is a space of cross-cultural exchange, a fluid space of hybridity and liminality, a space of openness, cultural in-betweenness, and a space in which hybrid identities develop. As Bhabha (1994) argued, Third Space is "not based on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (p. 38). However, many Chicana feminists criticize Bhabha for neglecting the important aspects which lead to hybridity, for example, colonization or migration processes that evoke rather negative sentiments in hybrid subjects. For Anna Loomba (2005), Bhabha's concept of hybrid identity is too universal and distanced from specific localities and histories, gender, and class issues. Therefore, she broadens the concept by suggesting that hybridity is based on simultaneity and opposition, cultural syncretism and exchange, cultural, social, and gender differences that must be included when speaking of hybridity (p. 150). Like Loomba, many Chicana writers, including Cisneros, acknowledge Bhabha's celebrative tone on hybridity and biculturalism. However, they also view hybrid identity as a concept weighted by complex questions related to a subject's spatial and temporal discontinuity, sense of displacement, ambivalence, sense of loss and rejection, as well as class and gender issues.

When speaking of Latino hybrid identity, we should note that Latino people encountered hybridization very early, during the 16th-century colonization of the Aztecs when the Spaniards conquered the territory of present-day Mexico City: "Centered upon the city of Tenochtitlán, site of present-day Mexico City, it was to this prestigious city of wealth that the Spanish-sponsored Hernán Cortés beat his path . . . as a consequence of the legend of Aztlán, the Aztecs and their original homeland are held to lie at the root of Chicano/a culture" (Hepworth, 1999, p. 166). Hence, the first mestizos, cultural hybrids, or people of mixed Spanish and Indian origin emerged from the colonial period. An apparent difference between hybridization during the early colonial period of Latin America and the hybridization of Latino immigrants in the U.S. is that of *space* and *mobility*. Namely, during the colonial period, people mostly remained in their homelands, whereas 20th-century Latino immigrants moved across the continent to settle in North America. This spatial shift meant that the identities of Latino immigrants in the U.S. became diasporic. In the new land, Latino immigrants had to adapt to different spatial conditions and new lifestyles. For many, especially first-generation Latino immigrants, organizing life in a new space was demanding, all the more when taking into account that Anglo-American society was not friendly towards people of color. In the space of the U.S., Latino people were often stereotyped, marked by their cultural difference, lower class position and impoverished social status, which further propelled their sense of difference and Otherness in U.S. society. For second-generation immigrants, as we will see in the example of Esperanza, the process of adaptation and cultural assimilation drove the quest for self and the development of a hybrid identity as the only point of reference within the bicultural matrix.

In her extensive exploration of spatial and identity aspects related to Latino/a minorities in the U.S., Anzaldúa (1999) argued that people of Latino descent in the U.S. inhabit borderlands or spaces "where one or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch" (p. 19). Due to a peculiar cultural edging of the opposing Latino and Anglo-American cultures, borderlands represent a contact zone in which cultural tensions emerge, bringing to the fore problems of cultural and social positioning, marginalization, subjugation and complex identity formation in marginalized Latino people. In *Borderlands La Frontera*, Anzaldúa focuses on different spatial dimensions of borderlands: physical space encompassing the liminality of lives of generations of Latino immigrants; mental, empirical, and social space in which self-Other dichotomy persists, giving borderlands a heterotopic tone as it stands outside the mainstream Anglo society and the white hegemonic order. Throughout her work, Anzaldúa pays tribute to Latino/a hybridity, while also underlining that hybrid identities of Latino people, as well as their border consciousness, only develop under certain conditions: specific locality,[2] class, and gender aspects. Therefore, like Loomba, Anzaldúa goes beyond Bhabha's definition of hyphenated cultural existence and promotes a discussion of disputable issues, such as Indian colonialization, occupation and annexation of Indian territory or space, history of Latino immigration in the U.S., social positions, ethnic status, and gender traits that have made Latino/a hybridization specific.

From the social position of Latino immigrants in the U.S., Anzaldúa's border space represents a space of margins which reinforces the dialectic of difference and "enhances anxiety" (Hepworth, 1999, p. 171). However, borderlands are also transgressional spaces that can be turned into active sites of struggle for racial, ethnic, gender, and other rights. In a discussion on Anzaldúa's borderlands, Soja (1996) wrote that: "in a postmodern border culture, with its decentralized subjects, space is created for oppositional action, for critical exchange, for struggle and resistance" (p. 129). Accordingly, borderland is a space of cultural contact, and a space that may be altered by resistive actions and turned into a specific counter-space from which new subjectivity arises. As suggested by Allan Rick (1997), it is from these counter-spaces that new identities are created in a radical, creative, and open way (p. 26). Therefore, Anzaldúa's borderlands may be viewed as a counter-space that allows for the transformation and identity reconstruction of marginalized subjects.

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[2] Mainly the U.S. border with Mexico, but not limited to it, since New Mestiza consciousness may arise wherever Latino and Anglo cultures meet.

2.2. Chicana Spatial Identity

In an effort to establish a relationship between space, identity, and gender, in her book *Space, Place, Gender*, Doreen Massey (1994) argues that spaces are closely related to gender: "Geography matters to the construction of gender, and the fact of geographical variation in gender relations, for instance, is a significant element in the production and reproduction of both imaginative geographies and uneven development" (p. 2). As Massey indicates, a space/time dichotomy translates into gender politics in which time, as a privileged signifier, is coded masculine, whereas less privileged space is coded feminine (p. 6). However, it must be noted that only domestic spaces are coded feminine, and yet women do not own them, but rather belong to them. The vast geographic spaces, the lands conquered, owned, and ruled by men for centuries, are also coded masculine. Hence, as Massey further remarks, the cultural reading of women is strongly tied to the "local sphere," whereas men are privileged to operate within the global (p. 9). In a masculine world, contrary to men who make policies, mark territories, draw borders, construct societies, and have decisive roles in general, women are restricted to home spaces where their primary duty is to take care of family and home. This gender role management is quite restrictive towards women and their actions in both domestic and public spheres, which has further negative implications on their identities, such as insecurity, entrapment, or low self-esteem. As far as Latinas are concerned, space plays an important role in reinforcing the patriarchal discourse of female oppression and marginalization, mainly through the domestic space – Latino households, but not limited to it. Apparently, the marginalization of Latinas is not a single-sided story, as these women also suffer oppression outside the space of their home and communities. Namely, as a result of the aggressive racial atmosphere in U.S. society, Latinas' oppression encompasses both "misogynistic Chicano discourses of feminine sexuality and the oppressive racial discourses of the American mainstream" (Madsen, 2003, p. 70). Hence, Latinas in U.S. society are twice oppressed and marginalized, both inside and outside of their Latino communities.

As an alternative to multiple oppressions that Latinas face in the U.S., Anzaldúa builds a concept of New Mestiza – a woman who develops a tolerance for contradictions and learns to be "an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view." The New Mestiza learns to juggle cultures and operate in a pluralistic mode as "nothing is thrust out, the good, the bad, and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, but she also turns the ambivalence into something else" (Anzadúa, 1999, p. 101). By turning "ambivalence into something else," Mestiza creates the previously mentioned counter-space, a consciousness upon which this new Chicana identity is built – the one which is not universal or idealized since "nothing is thrust out." The New Mestiza sustains contradictions, transgresses binaries and creates a space that carries new prospects for Latina identification. Hence, through New Mestiza, Anzaldúa forges a multivoiced thirdspace that both echoes the Indian female past and simultaneously refers to her Latino and Anglo-American present.

Furthermore, the identity of New Mestiza relies on Indian mythology. The mythological aspect is carefully employed to invoke a sense of cultural continuity and heritage in diasporic Chicana identities, since myths "always function as a sign of restoration, reestablishment of origin and genesis and no space in myth can appear an obstacle" (Farago, 1997, p. 20). Namely, Anzaldúa reinterprets mythical female figures to provide contemporary Latinas with more appropriate identification models. Through revision of myth, she attempts to catalyze the conflicting elements of Latinas' lives in the cultural border space. Similarly, many other Chicana writers also resort to finding relevant subjects of identification in ancient Indian mythology. In doing so, they try to break the traditional Virgen/Malinche dichotomy and reinterpret mythical figures to support the reinvention of Latinas' identity. They reject passivity embodied in La Virgen's image and offer new perspectives through powerful mythical images, such as Malinche. The renowned figure of Malinche emerges from the 16th-century colonial myth presenting Malinche as an Indian woman enslaved by the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés. She became his translator and a mistress who gave birth to the first mestizo, thus becoming a symbolical mother figure of all mixed-breed people. Malinche was labeled a traitor of Indian people and culture due to her relationship with the Spaniards. However, as Lenchek (1997) pointed out, Malinche also "saved thousands of Indian lives by enabling Cortés to negotiate rather than slaughter" (para. 2). Accordingly, in the opinion of Chicana feminists, Malinche is a cultural mediator who did not willingly submit to the Spaniards and, thus, cannot be thought of as a cultural betrayer. On the contrary, Malinche is a powerful Indian woman who embodies agency and uses her advanced communicational skills, i.e., knowledge of languages, to seize power in society. Undoubtedly, the re-appropriated image of Malinche serves to empower Latinas and reconcile ambivalences inherent in their identities, but it is also important in terms of spatial theory. Namely, the materialization of the Malinche myth in Chicana reality serves to create a Chicana thirdspace, where, as Soja suggests, everything may come together – the abstract, concrete, real, imagined, knowable, unimaginable, structure, agency, mind, body, conscious, and the unconscious. This created thirdspace serves to validate and reconcile dualities in Chicana life, and invoke a sense of continuity in their hybrid and diasporic identities.

In her exploration of Chicana female identity, Réka Cristian (2015) uses the term inter-American to refer to identity features pertaining to the Americas (para. 2). A distinctive characteristic of inter-American identity is that it manifests within the border space or between two cultural grounds – Mexican and Northern American (para. 4). Basing her argument on Anzaldúa's concept of borderlands, Christian also argues that Chicana inter-American identity operates in a pluralistic mode and is shaped by continuous transgressional and border crossing practices: physical, mental, linguistic and cultural. Thus, like the identity of New Mestiza, Chicana inter-American identity provides for the negotiation of spatial, cultural and gender boundaries. However, a more important aspect of inter-American identity is its reference to the concept of home and the Chicana sense of belonging: "Her Mexicanness, as well as her Americannes, unveil an admixture of home and homelessness that lead her to ceaselessly remodel her subsequent Mexican and American identity into a new, inter-American one" (para. 18). Obviously, the metaphor of home is a significant marker of Chicana identity. However, Christian also notes that this metaphor of home "is in tandem with the gendered spatial imagery of borderlands" (para. 12). Therefore, the conceptualization of home is not only essential from the aspect of cultural belonging, but also in terms of gender issues.

Discussing home metaphors in Chicana discourse, Julián Olivares (1996) remarked that unlike Bachelard's point of view, the poetics of home are different in the case of Latinas. Asserting that Bachelard's point of view is male-centered, Olivares argued that men have never been confined to home spaces for the reason of gender and were never supposed to do any female work at home (p. 233). In other words, home spaces are zones of comfort for Latinos, while for Latinas, they become very restrictive and oppressive environments. Additionally, Latino homes are strongly tied to female stereotypes and male violence. Traditionally, home is a space where proper care is always ensured by a female figure – be it a caring mother, obedient wife, sister, or a daughter. According to Alma M. García (1997), Latinas are expected to be "submissive, faithful, devoted, and respectful to their husbands and to take the major responsibility for rearing the children" (p. 33). Apparently, in Latino communities where women face multiple physical and psychological oppressions, domestic space is used by patriarchal structures to manage female positions and lock women into a fixed gender identity matrix. For this reason, as Massey (1995) pointed out, women have a strong urge to leave the home space, and long for mobility to cut with rigid gender roles embedded in their identity (p. 11).

3. Juxtaposing Space and Self in *The House of Mango Street*

The title of Cisneros's widely acclaimed novel *The House on Mango Street* centralizes two particular types of spaces - the domestic embodied in the house and the public epitomized in Mango Street. The space of Mango Street, a Mexican-American neighborhood or a barrio, represents a social periphery and a space of margins through which Cisneros exposes Latino minorities whose position in the U.S. is subjugated. The novel begins with a description of Esperanza's house, which is entirely different from Bachelard's phenomenological perception of home. As mentioned earlier, Bachelard views the house or home space as an instrument for analyzing the human soul, arguing that the house is a protective and intimate zone physically manifested in its openness, spaciousness, harmonious room disposition, coziness, and comfortable ambiance. However, these physical manifestations of houses are not found in the novel, but instead are a "series of homes which are simultaneously unfixed, semi-public, and unprotected" (Martin, 2008, p. 50). In the first vignette, Esperanza's parents finally buy a house but it fails to fulfill Esperanza's anticipations:

> The house on Mango Street is ours, and we don't have to pay rent to anybody, or share the yard with the people downstairs, or be careful not to make too much noise, and there isn't a landlord banging on the ceiling with a broom. But even so, it's not the house we'd thought we'd get. (Cisneros, 1991, p. 3)

Although there are no limiting factors in the immediate environment like rent, landlord, or other tenants, Esperanza does not feel the comfort the house should be providing. As pointed out by Kaup (1997), Cisneros's "family home is anything but the warm sheltering of the world" (p. 385). Instead of accepting the new home in Mango Street, Esperanza fantasizes about a house "with a garden on a hill, like the houses her father works in" and notes that in these houses, people "sleep so close to the stars that they forget about those of us who live too much on earth" (Cisneros, 1991, p. 86). The spatial metaphors and the distance embodied in the contrasting spaces of the sky and the earth are used by Cisneros to point to discrepancies related to cultural positions of minorities in the U.S. Namely, the infinity of the sky represents uncountable possibilities for white people and the limitation of the earth points to the subordinated and limited positions of ethnic minorities like Esperanza.

Unlike the house on the hill, Esperanza lives in a small and dilapidated red house with a spatial image leaving the impression of narrowness and containment:

> It's small and red with tight steps in front and windows so small you'd think they were holding their breath. Bricks are crumbling in places, and the front door is so swollen you have to push hard to get in. There is no front yard . . . Out back is the small garage for the car we don't own yet and the small yard that looks smaller between the two buildings on either side. (Cisneros, 1991, p. 4)

As Elena de Valdés (1992) observes, the house is "a reflection, an extension, a personified world that is indistinguishable from the occupant" (p. 66). Accordingly, the small and old house does not only represent the spatial embodiment of Esperanza's social position, but her sense of self as well. The spatial narrowness of the house points to her inferior socio-cultural position and even translates into her prominent identity traits, such as sense of isolation, limitation, and personal fixity. At the outset of the novel, Esperanza confesses these feelings: "Someday I will have a best friend all my own. One I can tell my secrets to. One who will understand my jokes without my having to explain them. Until then I am a red balloon, a balloon tied to an anchor" (Cisneros, 1991, p. 9). The absence of friends and the balloon metaphor points to her sense of loneliness and entrapment, both anchored to that place and tied as the balloon.

Additionally, Esperanza's identity exhibits a strong sense of insecurity and embarrassment, stemming from her impoverished position. These feelings are also expressed towards the home space. As pointed out by Sandoval (2003), Esperanza's house "reflects her view of self, her poverty, and her shame" (p. 24). Indeed, the house reflects the narrator's fragile identity brimming with shame, vulnerability, insecurity, self-doubt, and confusion. Esperanza feels so ashamed that, on one particular occasion, she provides a distorted description of her living place to her teacher. She provides false information because the house represents "the spot of negation, shame, and denial" in the eyes of a young Esperanza (Christian, 2015, para. 10). However, she not only hates the house, but her hatred extends to the entire street (Kaup, 1997, p. 389). Seemingly, both the house and street are places without much opportunity and choice for the main character: "Here there is too much sadness and not enough sky" (Cisneros, 1991, p. 33). This is why, even as a very young girl, Esperanza longs for spatial change which she believes would bring a change in her social position and self-image. Her longing is expressed through the spatial metaphor of another house – Esperanza's ideal dream house:

> Not a flat. Not an apartment in back. Not a man's house. Not a daddy's. A house all my own. With my porch and my pillow, my purple petunias . . . Nobody to shake a stick at. Nobody's garbage to pick up after. Only a house quiet as snow, a space for myself to go, clean as a paper before the poem. (Cisneros, 1991, p. 108)

According to Cristian (2015), the imaginative house is a symbol of Esperanza's inter-American identity that rests upon reconciling painful reality and the transgression of problematic border and gender issues, given that the imaginative house "goes beyond the limits of personal liberation, over the boundaries of class and race, past the barriers between rich and poor, and well beyond the confined gender roles, Chicano patriarchy or Anglo-American culture" (para. 13). In addition to Cristians' view, Esperanza's dream house can also be viewed in terms of the Soja's previously mentioned thirdspace, where the "imaginative" attribute establishes a radical openness of the dream house, enabling negotiation and transgression of binary relations that burden Esperanza.

Besides the home space, another space in the novel, the monkey garden, is also indicative of the development of Esperanza's identity. Namely, the garden is a deserted place where the monkey used to live. Now it is a space almost forgotten by everybody in the barrio, except for children who play there. As Achilles (2017) remarked, "the children turn the garden into a heterotopic zone which remains untouched and uninfluenced by their repressive parents" (p. 224). Like heterotopias, which may simultaneously contain several different spaces, the monkey garden is a "mixture of lush garden and sewage disposal site" (p. 223). It is a heterotopic space outside the dominant social order that confronts nature and civilization: "There were sunflower . . . there were dizzy bees … sweet, sweet peach trees . . . this was a garden, a wonderful thing to look at in the spring", but after the monkey left, it "began to take over itself . . . dead cars appeared overnight like mushrooms" (Cisneros, 1991, p. 95). In the eyes of Esperanza, this space is an embodiment of freedom because it "allows for a reclusive detachment from the moral values that dominate her life which enables novel ways of both reorientation and self-organization" (Achilles, 2017, p. 223). Hence, the monkey garden, as a rare micro-location in the barrio, provides space for self-exploration of the main character just like the imaginative house.

Additionally, the monkey garden is a space that provides a sense of continuity within Esperanza's diasporic identity, since it has probably always been there: "We liked to think that the garden could hide things for a thousand years" (Cisneros, 1991, p. 96). Due to its cultural blankness, Esperanza is no longer compelled to "travel" between the Mexican and Anglo cultures – which she frequently does in the barrio, for example, when she recalls seeing the houses in Mexico. Therefore, the monkey garden serves as a neutral space and becomes a spatial embodiment of what Esperanza wants to become – an individual freed from cultural limitations. However, the idealistic image of the garden is disrupted when Sally turns her back on Esperanza and allows Tito's friends to kiss her. All of a sudden, the space of the garden becomes a location of oppression, violation, and loss of innocence (Sandoval, 2008, p. 26). Esperanza is unable to understand why seeing Sally kiss upset her so much. Unlike Sally, she feels violated and offended by such acts, but more importantly, she is surprised that these events take place in the monkey garden – a place which she believed was a safe zone. She suddenly feels a strong displacement and runs further into the remotest parts of the garden, hoping to regain some security within the untouched parts of nature. Eventually, Esperanza dismisses the idea of the monkey garden as her place of rescue: "the garden that had been such a good place to play didn't seem mine either" (Cisneros, 1991, p. 98). Although the garden was a place of escape for Esperanza at first, the practices of the barrio, i.e. Sally and the boys kissing, turned it into "a rite of passage from innocent childhood to adulthood" (Saber, 2013, p.77). Subsequently, the garden space becomes a symbolical embodiment of Esperanza's changing identity and her maturity. Nonetheless, as concluded by Achilles (2017), the garden is only a transitional space for the young Esperanza, not a solution to her problems (p. 225). Hence, like the home space, neither does the garden provide shelter nor security for Esperanza.

3.1. Esperanza's Hybridity and the Space of Mango Street

From a theoretical perspective, the space of Mango Street can be viewed in terms of Lefebvre's social production, modeled by social actions and relations towards Latino minorities, as well as Foucault's heterotopia because the street spatially encompasses those who "deviate" from the mainstream Anglo culture and thus present a threat to the homogeneity of white Anglo-centered society. However, Mango Street can also be analyzed in terms of Bhabha's Third Space and Anzaldúa's border space. The latter two perhaps provide the best framework for analyzing communal space and identity in the novel, as they engage the hybridity inherent in Mango residents. Namely, Mango Street represents what Bhabha calls Third Space. It is a space of cultural contact and liminality where culturally hyphenated identities emerge. However, Mango Street is more closely related to Anzaldúa's concept of borderlands because, besides cultural hybridity, it unfolds other problematic issues related to history, the past, social and gender issues related to Latinas.

As already mentioned, people who inhabit social peripheries or margins develop a sense of self in terms of their socio-spatial position. Barrio residents construct their collective identities in line with their minority status. According to Saber (2013), the barrio space in the novel "epitomizes more than geographical neighborhood or quarter; it is a part of their [Latino/a] very existence" (p. 74). Many female characters in the novel, such as Esperanza, Rafaela, Sally and Mamacita, display identities ridden by confusion, doubt, deterritorialization, lower self-esteem, insecurity, and a sense of isolation from mainstream society. These identity traits are collectively shared by the entire Latino community. As pointed out by Martin (2008), Cisneros portrays Mango Street as a realistic Latino neighborhood and a reflection of the collective Latino voice/identity characterized by deterritorialization, physical instability, and disappointment in the myth of America as the land of equal opportunity (p. 54).

For Esperanza Cordero, growing up in Mango Street implies evolving in a space between two cultural grounds – Anglo-American and Mexican cultures, giving rise to the development of what Bhabha calls hybrid identity. Located in a poor part of Chicago, the spatially disorganized street stands in stark contrast to the neatly arranged white Chicago neighborhoods. The street is a chaotic place that reflects the underprivileged social position of its inhabitants (Izgarjan & Čukić, 2019, p. 24). Besides being marked by cultural intersection, Mango Street is also marked by a peculiar cultural tension: "those [white people] who don't know any better come into our neighborhood scared," which leads to various Latino stereotypes: “they think we will attack them with shiny knives” (Cisneros, 1991, p. 28). Just as the street is spatially disordered, stereotyped, and characterized by cultural contacts, so too are the identities of its inhabitants. Esperanza’s dual identity is symbolically illustrated by her name, which has different meanings in English and Spanish. As she explains at the beginning of the novel, in English it means *hope*, but in Spanish, it means “too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing” (Cisneros, 1991, p. 10). Obviously, given that the cultural contact is embedded in the space Esperanza occupies, opposing cultures are confronted within her – the Anglo culture with excellent prospects and the Latino culture weighted by the harsh reality of ethnic minorities. Evidently, Mango Street represents a spatial extension of Esperanza’s identity, revealed in an episode when Alicia tells Esperanza: “Like it or not you are Mango Street, and one day you’ll come back too” (Cisneros 1991, p. 107). In this way, Cisneros affirms that Esperanza’s hybrid identity is symbolically embodied in the bicultural space she occupies. Although contradictory, both cultures represent the essence of Esperanza’s identity, for she cannot deny either. Hence, in order to reach the totality of self in bicultural space, Esperanza needs to reinvent herself and reconstruct her identity, which is why in the vignette “My Name,” she says that she would like to be baptized under a different name: “a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes, Zeze the X will do” (Cisneros, 1991, p. 11). Accordingly, Esperanza expresses her wish to end the cultural labeling and the ways she is identified through one or another culture. She aspires to take a proactive stance from a marginal position, i.e. Mango Street, as indicated by the symbolism of the name Zeze the X.[3]

Although Mango Street is not physically located in the U.S.-Mexican border, it carries a transgressive potential of Anzaldúa’s borderlands. As already mentioned, the street is a space where hybridity forms; it is a zone marked by cultural tension, hatred, anger, and exploitation. At the same time, just like the borderlands, it is also an active space of oppositional activity, struggle, and resistance. Harboring a transgressive capacity of the borderlands and the heterotopic feature of lying outside of the Anglo system, the street represents a sort of threat to Anglo-American homogeneity, which is why, just as in heterotopias, its Latino characters in the novel are kept isolated and suppressed in space. Such spatial circumstances urge the street’s occupants to transgress the harsh border reality through alternatives. The quest for the alternatives is present in Esperanza's case, as she is determined to move from Mango Street to alter her identity in the way that no culture or society would pose restraints upon her: "One day I will say goodbye to Mango. I am too strong for her to keep me here forever […] I make a story for my life, for each step my brown shoe takes" (Cisneros, 1991, pp. 109-110). Esperanza is aware that she has to leave the street to focus on all aspects of her identity and rewrite her true self. As suggested by Sandoval (2008), "by leaving Mango Street, Esperanza places herself in another physical space in order to give her story a place of importance" (p. 32). Evidently, Esperanza aims to settle in the Anglo environment to validate her bicultural existence and broaden the space for self-exploration and social repositioning.

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[3] The name calls to mind the African American civil right activist Malcolm X (1925-1965).

As already mentioned in the theoretical section, the self-repositioning is possible with changes to the socio-spatial position. Referring back to what Soja said about social spatiality where shifting the center and periphery is possible, it becomes clear that Esperanza's wish to step outside Mango Street echoes the systematic *center-periphery* shift. Thus, Esperanza aspires to break the *self-Other* relationship and destabilize the dominant logic that fixates minority people, especially minority women, into a subjugated position. In wanting to break with Mango Street, Esperanza does not aspire to forget her people, but the act itself articulates her ambition to cut the chain of subjugation and marginalization imposed on her and other Latinas. However, as a very young girl, she is unable to do so, but from this yearning of hers, the conclusion is that she finds it very difficult to embrace the space of barrio, and hopes to find an alternative in her life. This hope, symbolically embedded in her name,[4] represents a small but important sign of resistance against the extant social order and an initial step towards self-reinvention from the space of margins embodied in Mango Street.

3.2. Gendered Identity and Space Dynamics in *The House on Mango Street*

Further analysis of Cisneros's novel shows that space and gender are interconnected, meaning that their relationship greatly affects the identities of the female characters. This is not only evident in the case of Esperanza, but other female characters such as Sally, Rafaela, and Minerva. Female identity in the novel is highly influenced by the oppressive trait of the Latino patriarchal community in the barrio, where social roles are strictly split between male and female: “The boys and girls live in separate worlds. The boys in their universe and we in ours” (Cisneros, 1991, p. 8). The chasm between gender identities is clearly described in spatial terms, i.e., a separate world or universe. In Cisneros’s novel, men are the ones who hold authority, have power, and make decisions, whereas women are expected to follow behavioral patterns imposed by men. Moreover, women are often the objects of mental, physical, and sexual abuse, as exemplified in the case of Sally, Esperanza, and Minerva. Given that female identities are modeled on gender-based differences, women are everything that men are not: Latinos ought to be strong, confident, decisive, whereas Latinas are weak, insecure, and confused. Besides the differential practices, patriarchal paradigms also utilize other mechanisms to lock women into oppressive gender roles and identities. The use of space, as a strategy of male oppression, is undoubtedly one of them.

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[4] The Spanish word *esperanza* means hope.

As in the previously mentioned argument by Massey, women’s roles are generally reduced to domestic space where they are either somebody’s wife, mother, daughter, or sister. These relational qualifications suggest that a woman at home is the least version of ‘herself.’ The interplay between different patriarchal oppressions in the novel restricts women in many ways, even spatially, because they are limited to private spheres where they can only exhibit obedience and submissiveness to men. For example, the female character Rafaela “gets locked indoors because her husband is afraid Rafaela will run away” (Cisneros, 1991, p. 79). Rafaela stays home, leaning out the window, drinking coconut and papaya juice, and waiting for some “sweeter drinks, not bitter like empty room” (p. 80). The spatial metaphor of an empty room, translated into bitterness, points to Rafaela’s unhappy life and a sense of alienation, whereas her “leaning out the window” represents a spatial allusion to her discomfort at home and longing for a change. Additionally, the window trope in the novel is the “site of gaze into and out of the confinement of the female space” and a “metonymic figure in the lives of these [Latino] women” (Saber, 2013, pp. 81-82). The window, hence, represents a spatial barrier to female participation in social space. As Olivares (1996) pointed out, the window metaphor in the novel conveys the inside and outside spatial dialectic in which the “inside” represents confinement and a source of anguish and alienation for Cisneros’s characters (p. 234). Accordingly, the female position inside the space of home, or by the window, underscores that Latinas are not participants, but only spectators of social life. Women like Esperanza’s grandmother, whose position Esperanza does not want to inherit, Mamacita who never learns English and stays at home all the time, or the imprisoned Rafaela, stay by the window, symbolically accepting fixated female identities imposed by their patriarchal environment.

Contrary to Rafaela, who shows no opposition towards patriarchal practices, Esperanza's friend Sally challenges the patriarchal logic in the barrio. Interestingly, she uses her body as a space of resistance. She acts seductively, wears make-up and nylons, and generally looks older than her age. By putting on make-up and wearing women's clothes, Sally utilizes bodily space to rebel against the patriarchal paradigms directed towards appearance, behavior, and domestically shaped identities of girls. Her antagonism towards the suppressive nature of patriarchy does not go without punishment. At home, Sally is a victim of her father's violence and abuse. The violence exerted on her body, a space of resistance, can be interpreted as patriarchal suppression of female aspirations to attain more a fulfilling selfhood and identity. Referring back to what Bachelard says about the home space, we can conclude that home spaces for Latinas like Sally are not even close to his concept. Living spaces of the female characters and their selfhoods show a resemblance given that both are shaped by patriarchal actions. Just as homes lack spaciousness, coziness, and belong to men, so too the identities of the female characters lack the potential to break from oppression due to aggressive patriarchal practices and treatment of women as property. In other words, if a woman like Sally dares to resist, she is destined to suffer. Evidently, homes in the novel take on prison-like features, which is why, on one occasion, Esperanza asks: "Sally, do you sometimes wish you didn't have to go home?" (Cisneros, 1991, p. 82). This question calls to mind Massey's statement that women need to leave home to pursue their identities. In this respect, the actual question turns into curiosity for Esperanza about whether Sally also wishes to move from the oppressive home and pursue her identity elsewhere.

Besides home spaces, public spaces in the novel also reflect limitations for female activity and identity. As previously noted, Chicana women are most often denied access to the public sphere. Hence, it is not only domestic spaces where Latinas are controlled and even abused by men, public spaces also pose a threat to Latino female characters in the novel. For example, in the vignette "Red Clowns," Cisneros writes about Esperanza's painful experience at the carnival, where a group of white men physically and sexually abuse her. She questions sexual violence, racist tendencies, and double marginalization which further contribute to the already unstable and insecure identities of the female characters. As argued by Deborah Madsen (2003), "Chicanas are twice oppressed: first by the master discourse of colonialism (mobilized within Anglo-American culture) and then by the colonizing effect of patriarchy (within both Anglo and Chicano cultures)" (p. 65). The abusive behavior towards Latinas arises from any space, given that violence equally stems from Latinos, as in the example of Sally or Minerva who are abused by their male family members, or white men, as in the episode when Esperanza is raped by a white boy, who after the violent act of rape, throws a racist slur against her Hispanic femininity: "I love you Spanish girl" (Cisneros, 1991, p. 100).

While some characters like Sally wait to be rescued from their realities through marriage, other characters, like Esperanza or Marin, commit themselves to writing and receiving an education in order to transgress the barrio borders and combat negative aspects of their socio-spatial gendered reality and identity. Writing enables Esperanza to create an imaginary space, or what Saber (2013) calls "a third space of writing", providing mobility and the possibility to transgress the conflicting notions of Esperanza's identity (p. 84). The act of writing represents Esperanza's gesture of personal self-recreation. Indeed, writing has always been a sign of female agency and a mechanism used by women to find relief in oppressive patriarchal environments. Many Latina writers, such as Cisneros, also acknowledge writing as self-rediscovery process. In the case of Esperanza, "writing is empowerment" (Sandoval, 2008, p. 30) and a means of "earning her passage out of Mango Street" (Martin, 2008, p. 62). Moreover, writing empowers Esperanza to penetrate the traditional male sphere and assume a dominant position: "I have begun my own quiet war. Simple. Sure. I am the one who leaves the table like a man, without putting back the chair or picking up the plate" (Cisneros, 1991, p. 89).

3.3. Esperanza's New Self?

Towards the end of the novel, as Esperanza grows, she realizes that forging a viable Chicana identity entails negotiating all aspects of Chicana reality. She decides to leave the space of Mango Street one day to attain more personal autonomy and gain experiences outside the space of barrio. However, her assertion that she will come back resonates with the New Mestiza's destiny and the life path of going back and forth between cultures. As mentioned in the paper's theoretical section, the New Mestiza consciousness operates in a pluralistic mode, which endows Chicanas like Esperanza to reconcile ambivalences and recreate themselves. Apparently, Latinas like Esperanza need to embrace all elements of their identity because "denying the Anglo is bad as having denied the Indian" (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 194). To build a more coherent self, Esperanza feels that she needs to detach herself from the barrio in order to collect and internalize experiences from the Anglo space. Interestingly, here we see the most obvious relationship between space and identity since Esperanza clearly underscores the importance of spatial repositioning in her pursuit of identity and happiness in life. At the same time, by saying she will return to Mango Street, her intended message is that she will not deny her origins even when she leaves.

Returning to Mango Street represents a symbolical reclamation and acceptance of her Mexican origin, an essential aspect of Latina identity transformation. When she leaves, she will refuse to forget her origins and her fellow people. The image of Esperanza's coming back symbolically suggests the power, strength, and integrity she has gained throughout the novel. By the end of her story, she is able to envisage herself as a Malinche-like salvific figure of other Latinas, since she will return: "For the ones I left behind. For the ones who cannot out" (Cisneros, 1991, p.110). As symbolically implied by these words, Esperanza will return to mediate between opposing cultural worlds, as by then, she will have learned how to reconcile the conflicting parts of self and be able to show others that achieving a coherent identity in a bicultural space is still possible. Just like Malinche, she will become a cultural mediator, not a traitor of her people. Evidently, the Chicana feminist myth, embedded in Esperanza's character, functions as a sign of restoration and reestablishment of origins. Additionally, the inclusion of mythical space in Esperanza's spatial reality enhances the visibility of Esperanza's thirdspace, from which, as previously discussed, new identities and relations emerge.

Finally, though we have no information about Esperanza's physical departure from Mango Street, the last vignette "Mango says goodbye sometimes" suggests that by the end of the novel Esperanza manages to attain identity coherence in terms of important Chicano/a issues such as border space, history, culture, society, and gender. Esperanza undergoes a detachment from Mango Street through the act of writing: "I write it down and Mango says goodbye sometimes. She does not hold me with both arms. She sets me free" (Cisneros, 1991, p. 110). Ultimately, the novel's narrative ends where it begins. As noted by Cruz (2001), "the end of the Mango Street casts a 'sideward glance' at its beginning" (p. 930). The circular frame of Esperanza's narrative points out that reaching the totality in a bicultural space is an ongoing process. Namely, the ending that resonates with the beginning invokes the symbolism of a circle – the sign of completion or closure. However, as pointed out by Saber (2013), the image of the circle, a repetitive symbolism in Cisneros's novel, also depicts infinity (p. 83). This infinity calls to mind Stuart Hall's remark at the beginning of this paper mentioning that identity is always a matter of becoming. By the end of the novel, Esperanza rounds off her identity, meaning her first circle, with the lines: “they will not know I have gone to come back. For the ones I left behind. For the ones who cannot out” (Cisneros, 1991, p. 110). Esperanza’s circular path and the transition embedded in the spatial image of departure and return, takes us back to the spatial dimension of her identity as she will, as though in a circle, keep going back and forth between two spaces in search of self.

4. Conclusion

Cisneros’s novel *The House on Mango Street* delineates a significant level of interdependence between space and identity. Focusing on the twelve-year-old character of Esperanza Cordero, Cisneros shows that spaces play an important role in Chicana perceptions of self, given that spatial dynamics translate into their identity traits. Both the space of home, the most prominent physical space in the novel, and the entire topography of the border space embodied in Mango Street, reflect the main character’s most intimate feelings of displacement, isolation, and shame which evolve into her prominent identity traits - low self-esteem, insecurity, and discontinuity. On the other hand, the bicultural reality of the border space induces the development of hybrid, diasporic, and de-territorialized identities shared by all characters in the novel. Cultural hybridity generates the issue of cultural belonging, further fueling the need for identity negotiation, mainly through the transgression of borders, spatial and mental repositioning. Additionally, the patriarchal organization of both domestic and public spaces weighs down on Chicana identities and forces Cisneros’s female characters to succumb to passivity, despair, silence, and subordination. Esperanza, however, chooses to battle the imposed spatial and identity restrictions through spatial mobility. In an attempt to attain more personal, cultural, and social integrity in the U.S., the main character wishes to decouple herself from Mango Street to pursue both parts of her Latino and Anglo-American identity equally. The spatial change symbolizes Esperanza’s effort in reconstructing her identity, because once she gains experience of both spaces, she will attain greater cultural and personal coherency. Until that time comes, Esperanza endeavors to navigate her identity through the prevalent transgressional spaces depicted in the novel – those spaces being her imaginary house and her writings.

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Sanja Manojlović
University Union – Nikola Tesla
cukic.sanja@gmail.com

IMAGES OF THE OTHER IN KIRAN DESAI'S *THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS*

Abstract: The aim of the paper is to explore the images of the Other in Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. The Other here primarily refers to the people of a different cultural and ethnical background, primarily Indian immigrants in the USA and England. In this respect, the paper will particularly focus on the experiences of two characters: Biju, an illegal immigrant to the US, and the retired judge who lived and was educated in England. They are seen as the Other and are often discriminated against abroad, which creates problems in their identity formation. The themes of split identity and the sense of loss of the protagonists, which prevail in the novel, will be seen through the lens of migrations and the quest for the Self in a post-colonial period. By addressing several viewpoints, primarily that of O*rientalism* by Edward Said, this paper will explore the attitudes and representations of India by the West, as well as the effects that these attitudes and representations have on the characters of the novel.

Key words: displacement, identity, image, India, The Inheritance of Loss, Kiran Desai, the Other, post-colonialism.

"Could the fulfillment ever be felt as deeply as loss?"
Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006)

1. Introduction

In his influential and oft quoted work, *Outlandish Writing between Exile and Diaspora*, Nico Israel writes that displacement is "both a lived, historical condition for vast and increasing numbers of people over the course of the century and also a predicament of writing for the writers concerned with that plight" (2000, p. 17). Given that a large number of writers at the turn of the century were displaced, cross-cultural immigrants, scattered all around the globe, it should not be a surprise that both the production and popularity of their texts exploring immigrant experiences and ordeals reached their peak. In the preface of his aforementioned book, Israel explores the struggle of the immigrant writers to assert their identity out of place. In their struggle they employ the rhetoric of displacement (2000, p. ix). By doing this, he draws attention to the writers' life between diaspora and exile, "two fundamentally different descriptions of displacement", as he puts it (2000, p. ix). Displacement is an important theme in all migrant literature. This experience has empowered and given voice to many transnational writers, especially in the USA, where the works concerning the difficulties of forging a new American identity relate the notion of the melting pot to the readership.

The Inheritance of Loss by Kiran Desai contains a multitude of characters who live at the intersection of two or more different cultures, which is why this novel can be placed into the group of transnational literary works. The lives of the characters revolve around transnational home which helps them emotionally to find their place outside their homeland (Izgarjan & Čukić, 2019, p. 30). According to Saldivar (2016), this transnational home is located beyond the place where new subjects and spaces emerge outside the dominion of the national (p. 174). Kiran Desai is one of those writers who experienced such life which encouraged her to communicate the struggle to live between two cultures to the readers. Desai belongs to a group of cross-cultural authors who were born and spent their childhood in India. At the age of fifteen, she moved to England and then to America where she was educated. During that period, like a majority of immigrants, Desai experienced cultural conflict as she wanted to fit into English/American culture, but at the same time, she became aware of the stereotypes toward Indians in these countries. Similarly, Desai's characters, mostly of Indian descent, face cultural clashes, discrimination or racism in another country. In her novel, *The Inheritance of Loss,* for which she won The Booker Prize in 2006, Desai explores various issues regarding Indian people, living in India and abroad, who are struggling with their sense of displacement. The story is centered on several characters occupying three different locations: India, America and England. The novel problematizes both the protagonists' self-perception as well as the points of view of American and British people who see the Indian immigrants as the Other, shunning them for their origin. These perspectives, as well as the images of India and the West, are always in juxtaposition and this conflict between the two worlds is one of the main themes of the novel and Desai's oeuvre. In this respect, the paper will try to explore the representations of the Other in the novel, as a means of the author's articulation of attitudes towards national identity and cultural affiliation in the period of post-colonialism in India. Therefore, the hypothesis of the paper, and the starting point of its analysis, is that the images of the Other which used to circulate both in the imperial center and the colonies are harmful for the colonized people and their sense of identity – even in the period when colonialism is formally over. Moreover, the images of the Other are not only harmful stereotypes, but also political weapons, especially when internalized by both the colonizer and the colonized, as evidenced by Desai's characters.

2. Otherness in the context of the legacy of colonialism

Scholars have noticed a tendency of human beings to define themselves within the limits of a certain group, based on the dimensions of sameness or difference, although this division to groups is often quite arbitrary. The paradox is that otherness and alterity cannot even be imagined maximally, instead we have to turn the other "into something like the self in order to be ethical" (Spivak, 1993, p. 83). This process of exclusion or *othering* reached its full potential in the period of colonialism as a means that the colonizer used in achieving their political goals. The image of the non-Europeans as the Other to the West has not substantially changed even though colonialism officially ended a long time ago (Mbembe, 2001, p. 2). *The Inheritance of Loss* is taking place in the 1980s, and its themes are closely related to the vestiges of colonialism that resulted in many upheavals between Indian residents. This is why it is particularly important to shed some light on the period that succeeded it, and to see the novel through the lens of post-colonial theory which questions the universal pretensions of Western cultures and their philosophical and cultural premises.

Desai's novel primarily analyzes the position of the Other and the images of the world constructed from the imperial point of view, which is always politically and culturally dominant (Bužinjska & Markovski, 2009, p. 605). The Other in this paper refers to the immigrant characters in the novel of a different cultural and ethnical background, who came to the Western countries, the USA and England, in search for better life conditions. The approach that Desai employs in depicting her characters points out the dominant role of the (former) colonizer over the (former) colonized in the globalized, yet still divided world, where the Other is seen as "not fully human in relation to the western subject's identity" (Tembo and Gerber, 2019, p. 1). Although *colonialism* primarily refers to the conquest of new territories by European countries, the implications that the term colonialism has on the modern society in the USA cannot be neglected. The USA was made by the colonists who came from different European countries to American continent and occupied its territory. It also represents a link between colonialism and neo-liberalism as the leading neo-imperial world power, which is why both the USA and England in the paper are referred to in the context of the colonizer. Jackson points out that the novel can be read "as a critique of interrelated historical processes that, as the title suggests, generate a heritage of loss for each successive generation. As the novel vividly dramatizes, there is loss for those affected by imperialism, nationalism, and globalization" (2016). In her tendency to show how power is articulated in both post-colonial India and the countries of the colonizer, Desai uses the discourse of representation. By doing this she shows that the discourse on images of the Other, which was employed during colonial period, still persists as a medium of thought and communication (Tembo and Gerber, 2019, p. 5).

In his cultural criticism on *Orientalism* (1979), Said accepts the cultural thesis of a discourse as a means of forming one's perception about different cultures. The author proves that the Orient, or the East, as a field of interest for many experts who had studied the Orient since the 18th century, is their own invention rather than an objectively existing reality subject to a neutral description. The discourse on Orientalism, according to Said, serves as an instrument to the Western empires who perceive the East as the Other in order to treat it as an object of conquest. The Orient is an unfathomable, exotic, mysterious, and thus disturbing Other, which should be conquered with the help of images and representations. Orientalism is the discourse that justifies imperialist pretenses of the West to monitor and control the cultures that are supposedly not as emancipated as the Western ones (p. 31). Seemingly, Desai follows Said's theoretical footsteps in depicting the dichotomy between her Western and Eastern characters. Using irony, humor and hyperbole, Desai points out and criticizes the disproportion and asymmetry between the West and "the rest". She does this by depicting the events taking place in India, the USA and England in the context of the vestiges of the colonial state of affairs. Her Indian characters suffer from loss and confusion over their identity in their own country. Moreover, as the members of the third world countries, the immigrants from the novel do not feel welcome in the American/English society. They are experiencing difficulties on account of their ethnicity, since the white population in those countries perceives them as different and not emancipated enough, due to the internalized images and stereotypes that persist long after colonialism is over.

This feeling of being excluded is the reason why the immigrant characters stick to their own community abroad, which often contributes to an even more pervasive sense of rejection by the majority. Moreover, Desai is a keen social chronicler of her time, portraying "the post colonial situations both in India and America objectively and comprehensively (Joseph, 2012). Desai treats the issues of her characters with a touch of familiarity, not only as an eager omniscient narrator, but as a true witness of the situation in postcolonial India and the ordeals that an immigrant can undergo in a foreign society. The author's investment in the treatment of Otherness, shows her personal connection to the array of themes that she introduces in the novel, such as identity, displacement and loss.

Some authors state that the problem of the Other in the world today is as present and current as ever. Mbembe (2019) claims that neo-imperialist modern society, as a mere extension of colonialism, has a drive for an enemy which is more than just a social need. The existence of an enemy allows free exercise of otherwise forbidden desires embodied in the practice of hatred and exclusion. Furthermore, it allows so called liberal democracies to achieve their political and financial goals by demonizing certain groups and making even bigger gap between communities. We can pose some questions about the identity of the enemy or the Other: is it a nation, a religion, a civilization, a culture or an idea? (p. 29). The answer is, probably, that the enemy/the Other is anyone who is not me, who does not belong or does not fit in. This is especially the case from the point of the Western conception, where the experience of the Other, or the idea of recognition of another human being who is perceived "as foreign to us" has always posed a problem (Mbembe, 2001). The European perception tended to dehumanize the Other by reducing its existence to that of a barbaric or insufficient being. This is why the discourse from Western societies has almost always presented non-European peoples as lacking (Tembo & Gerber, 2019, p. 8). Consequently, Otherness becomes a powerful means for the dominated to claim shared ownership of a culture and break free from its domination and representations based on cultural/national identity or ethnicity.

3. Aspects of Othering in *The Inheritance of Loss*

In the light of the theories on otherness presented above, we will now turn to the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, and see how the images of the Other become recognizable in the novel. Many scholars point out (Goffman, 1968;

Focault, 1985; Hall, 1990; Bauman, 1995) that the locus of these representations is in the notion of difference. This notion in the novel is determined by national, ethnical, cultural and class affiliation of the protagonists.

In the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* the differences that are depicted make starting points for the characters to construct images about the Other. The novel has two plot lines. In one of them it deals with the socio-political issues of the people in Kalimpong, India, and in the other it depicts the painful and alienated existence of Indian diaspora in New York (Joseph, 2012). Desai creates her characters by putting them in opposition with their environment or the life circumstances, underscoring both their desperate need to fit in and the failure to do so. She depicts the suffering of the migrants to the USA and England due to discrimination, exploitation, racial/ethnical prejudice and displacement. Moreover, the novel highlights the severity of post-colonial era towards formerly colonized countries, and the hardship of the immigrants in America which has propagated its democratic values and civil rights. By doing this, "Desai portrays migration as a universal, multifaceted experience, rescuing it from the clutches of myth and fetishism" (Sawhney, 2006, p. 22). This is particularly reflected in Biju, one of the characters who goes to the USA illegally, in order to escape the lower class system in India. As a son of a poor cook in Kalimpong, Biju is looked down on by the upper-class members in his country, aware of the fact that he will never be able to bridge the class gap. He has expectations that in the Western world he will be treated differently – in a fair and respectful manner. In short, he buys into the idea of the American dream. However, Biju soon learns that immigrants in America face many problems. Besides being exposed to hard working conditions in New York restaurants, long working hours, small wages, poor accommodation and discrimination, Biju is disappointed with the notion that the legal American citizens and (il)legal immigrants have completely different status and treatment. Disproportion between the two groups of people becomes obvious in the restaurants where Biju is exploited, spending most of his days working from morning till night. Those restaurants epitomize insurmountable divide between the rich Western guests and poor immigrants working in them: "Biju at Le Colonial for the authentic colonial experience. On top, rich colonial, and down below, poor native. Columbian, Tunisian, Ecuadorian, Gambian" (Desai, 2006, p. 27). Here Desai describes the structures of the USA restaurants and the power relation within them, pronouncing "dialectical relations between spatial separations and racial and/or biopolitical taxonomies" (Masterson, 2010, p. 422). Oana Sabo points out that Desai contends that mobility is a dream unavailable to labor diasporas who are able to cross geographical borders, but not socio-economic ones. "The novel thus debunks the myth of the USA as a land of opportunity for postcolonial immigrants who undergo not only racial discrimination, but also economic exploitation within their own diasporic communities" (2012, p. 385).

Moreover, the previous quote is a typical example of Desai's employment of binary opposition by which the author depicts the difference in status between the dominant group and the ethnic minorities, which she does throughout the whole novel. Not only does Biju feel stigmatized for his class in his homeland but also for his nationality and ethnicity abroad. Biju's cultural background becomes a label that associates him to a set of unwanted characteristics that form a stereotype. When a society categorizes individuals into certain groups, the labeled person is subjected to status loss and discrimination (Goffman, 1963, p. 92), which is exactly what happens to Biju in the USA.

Biju encounters discrimination and resentment that the restaurant owners show towards his nationality and ethnicity. This treatment displays the negative image of Indians in the USA:

> 'He smells,' said the owner's wife. 'I think I'm allergic to his hair oil.' She had hoped for men from poorer parts of Europe – Bulgarians perhaps, or Czechoslovakians. At least they might have something in common with them like religion and skin color, grandfathers who ate cured sausages and looked like them, too, but they weren't coming in numbers great enough or they weren't coming desperate enough, she wasn't sure. (Desai, 2006, p. 56)

Desai here criticizes differentiation made between immigrants based on their background and ethnicity. Despite of her general portrayal of the immigrant experience as difficult, the author underscores the different treatment between those immigrants who come from the European countries and those who arrive from the countries that used to be colonies, suggesting certain bond and "solidarities within and between communities of the dispossessed" (Masterson, 2010, p.424). Moreover, the paragraph expresses the author's concern for the inhuman treatment of people in modern society. By this racist comment, Biju is put into the group of immigrants from the third world, who are regarded to have nothing in common with the Westerners and who are thus perceived as the Other. As such, he is found undesirable to work in the restaurants owned by American-born people, and is thusly stigmatized. Todorova claims that stigma that comes from one society can have a ripple effect on other societies, meaning that its responsibility for conflicts within a society or among societies cannot be neglected (1999, p. 111). This can be seen in the novel in respect of the negative image of Indians in the West, which results in animosity towards them in other parts of the world. Gradually, Biju finds out that people from many countries have negative image of Indians: "From other kitchens, he was learning what the world thought of Indians: In Tanzania, if they could, they would throw them out like they did in Uganda. In Madagascar, if they could, they would throw them out [...] In China, they hate them. In Hong Kong. In Germany. In Italy. In Japan." (Desai, 2006, p. 86-87). According to Sabo, immigrants' shared experience of poverty and marginality make them become part of a transnational and cross-ethnic labor class. However, diasporic protagonists' "nationalist investments and reliance on national stereotypes" make such transnational and cross-ethnic solidarities difficult (2012, p. 386).

Due to this unfair treatment, Biju grapples with a pervasive sense of loss and displacement in the USA. In diaspora, many immigrants cling to the past or the people from their homeland because the feeling of nostalgia often shapes immigrants' perceptions regarding their new country. However, a new country does not necessarily mean home. Biju does not see America as his home; he does not abandon his Indian identity despite the pressures and difficulties that he faces in the United States regarding his cultural, national and ethnic background. Biju has seen the underground society in America and has a more objective vantage point from which to assess the two cultures. That is why his image of the Indians who have not resisted the pressure to assimilate into American society is equally as negative as the one that Americans have of Indian immigrants. Biju loathes his compatriots who do not practice their religion in the USA. His attitude is that "one should not give up one's religion, the principles of one's parents and their parents before them. No, no matter what." (Desai, 2006, p. 149). The contact with his native culture, which he finds worthy of preserving in America, helps him reinforce his national identity in spite of the difficulties.

In the plot that runs parallel to the one featuring Biju, the judge, Jemubhai Patel, is another character who struggles with the problem of discrimination in England due to the stereotypes that the English have about Indians. However, unlike Biju who sticks to his cultural heritage abroad, the judge tends to deny it. Biju and the Judge are the two sides of the same coin – they are both victims of discrimination and unfair treatment in the Western countries, but their perception on the experience is quite different. Jemubhai's time spent in England doing university studies was marked by unhappiness, suffering and loneliness because he was shunned, mocked, and avoided by the English. Despite this and the fact that he was born and raised in India, by leaving it, the judge also leaves his Indian *Self,* symbolically rejecting his former identity of the subordinated other (Todorović, 2013, p. 163). However, in England, which he considers superior to his homeland, people do not even want to communicate with him because he is from India. That is why he becomes silent and almost invisible. On one occasion, the judge witnesses a brutal scene when a group of English men beats an Indian in the street. Although shaken by this abominable act, the judge is unable to react:

> Another Indian, a boy he didn't know, but no doubt someone just like himself [...] was being kicked and beaten behind the pub at the corner. One of the boy's attackers had unzipped his pants and was pissing on him, surrounded by a crowd of jeering red-faced men. And the future judge, walking by [...] hadn't said anything. He hadn't done anything. He hadn't called for help. He'd turned and fled, run up to his rented room and sat there. (Desai, 2004, pp. 225-226)

This scene illustrates the exercise of the imperial power and brutality over the weaker and subjugated Other, as well as the inability of the colonized to resist. Although aware of the injustice and wrongdoing encapsulated in the act of beating, the judge does not try to help the Indian boy, nor does he resist the oppressors, but flees instead. This scene of violence presents the act of xenophobia, the understanding of a different culture as a lower one.

Xenophobia is, to a certain extent, a characteristic of every society, but it is especially common in those societies which once had a power over another (Todorova, 1999, p. 154). Even the judge who negates and loathes everything that stands for India internalizes stereotypes of the Western world about lower and barbaric cultures. In order to justify Western conquests, the discourse on barbaric and lower cultures that need to be cultivated and emancipated was in wide use during colonialism. Todorov (2010) negates this usual misconception, pointing out that it is only a social construct. He states that a barbarian is not the one who believes that there is barbarism, but someone who believes that certain populations do not fully belong to humanity and that they deserve to be treated differently. In a similar tone, Said (1979) explains the fear and discrimination of the Other by pointing out that a group of people living on a piece of land is prone to set-up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings, whereby the territory beyond will become "the land of the barbarians" (p. 84). These geographic boundaries accompany the ethic, social, and cultural ones in expected ways. Therefore, stereotypes become the lenses through which the Other is experienced.

Upon his return to homeland, the judge finds himself despising even more everything regarding India and Indian tradition. In spite of all the ordeals that he undergoes in England, the judge keeps believing in English superiority, and starts seeing himself from the perspective of the colonizer (Todorović, 2013, p. 164). He becomes one of those “ridiculous Indians” (Desai, 2006, p. 105) whose Anglophilia turns into self-loathing. The judge’s anglophilia marks him as “a particular kind of postcolonial subject: a self-hating Indian, a would-be Englishman, a foreigner to everyone including himself” (Spielman, 2010, p. 76). The judge’s internalization of the colonizer’s perspective is primarily reflected in his lack of any emotional connection to his homeland and people. Instead, he regards himself a stranger, adopting habits of an Englishman and insisting on “anachronistic colonial conventions” (Jackson, 2016). As a result of this, he denies and despises Indian education refusing to send his granddaughter Sai to the local school. Moreover, he insists on preparation of English food, and he addresses his cook in English language, despite the fact that the cook does not understand it. By addressing an Indian servant in a language of the colonizer, the judge underscores his superiority and becomes *a white master* (Todorović, 2013, p. 166).

The judge’s internalization of the colonizer’s attitude is the most obvious in his relationship with his wife Nimi. In this relationship his self-loathing and the sense of inferiority is redirected toward her and transformed into violence and cruelty. He treats his wife the same way he used to be treated in England, harassing her mentally and physically. He considers Nimi ugly and unattractive because of her dark complexion, and because “an Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one” (Desai, 2006, p. 168). He abuses her sexually “to teach her the same lessons of loneliness and shame he had learned himself” (p. 170). He fails in attempts to teach her English manners, which is why he regards her stupid. However, the culmination of the judge’s hatred toward his wife happens in the episode in which he discovers that she took his powder puff which he used in order to make his face look whiter. After this event he beats her cruelly, and sends her away to her family. The judge’s application of powder is the act of mimicry (Bhabha, 1994), an attempt on the part of the colonized to imitate the colonizer in order to become closer to them. At the same time, it is a desperate attempt to expunge his Indian self completely.

With respect to the characters who internalized attitudes of the colonizer, the most similar to the judge is his granddaughter Sai. Although Sai’s character is not going to be analyzed thoroughly, it is worth mentioning. Through her character Desai shows that identity confusion is not only the characteristic of Indian people who experienced immigration, but also of those who live in post-colonial India. Sai lives with the judge and their cook in Kalimpong, in a house which represents "a remnant of colonialism, having been built by a Scotsman through the exploitation of poor Indians" (Sabo, 2010, p. 384). Although both the judge and Sai were born in India, they carry the burden of their English education. The author's ideas regarding identity confusion and the way it is passed over from generation to generation as a sense of permanent loss are filtered through the text in her description of the judge and Sai: "He worked at being English, with the passion of hatred and for what he would become, he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians, both" (Desai, 2006, p. 132). Similarly, the judge's granddaughter is going through identity confusion: "But Sai, it had turned out, was more his kin than he had thought imaginable. There was something familiar about her; she had the same accent and manners. She was a westernized Indian brought by English nuns, an estranged Indian living in India" (p. 227). Although Sai is not as radical as her grandfather when it comes to accepting Indian culture, she is equally anglicized. Just like her grandfather, Sai prefers speaking and reading in English. Her proficient use of English and weak knowledge of vernacular language makes her unable to speak to the cook, which is a clear indicator of a strict class divide between them. Sai's knowledge of English also gives her the opportunity to explore the texts of different issues of the magazines written in English, which makes her see herself through colonizer's eyes and locate herself in a world that operates by power asymmetry (Sabo, 2010, p. 383). However, Sai's response to her own westernization is quite different from that of her grandfather's in respect that she wants both Indian and English things, which is why she develops an ambivalent mindset (2010, p. 82).

Identity confusion that Sai and the judge experience, both in their own way, is rooted in their desire to avoid stereotypical categorization of Indians that they have both experienced – the judge in England, and Sai growing up in a convent. Desai uses stereotypes to express her heroes' points of view regarding the people of different national, cultural, or class identity. According to Klaus Rot (2001), anything can become subjected to stereotypes, including people, conditions, institutions or historical events. They are historically changeable, yet rather stable everyday categorizations and typologies. However, since they influence people's behavior, Rot points out that they can equally influence reality and be a helpful means of its creation (p. 260).

The most common stereotypes, however, are social stereotypes which are related to groups of people. Our notion about what people really are is a construction within certain social and historical context (McDonald, 1993, p. 232). Therefore, the evaluation of the Other inevitably takes place within the framework of one's own value system. Representations of the Other are called Hetero-stereotypes or hetero-images. As culturally influenced attitudes and images, representations are very often emotionally loaded and directly related to definition of identities (Rot, 2001, p. 267). Besides the image of the Other, each social group has an image of its own character and identity. These images are called auto-images or auto-stereotypes, which are mainly positive. However, depending on national self-consciousness and historic experience, images of the Self can also be negative. These auto-images and hetero-images may have an influence on other groups and determine their own image about themselves. They can also become *projected auto-stereotypes* manifesting our convictions on how others see us (Rot, 2001, p. 269). Identity is, therefore, determined externally as well as internally.

Apart from using stereotypes about Indians in describing the Western point of view, Desai also uses them to illustrate animosity between different groups within India who espouse negative ideas about the outsiders. By this Desai shows that not only the white colonizer is prone to creating images of the other. Stereotypes therefore become a means of translating her ideas of postcolonial mayhem in her homeland where images of other groups become a reason enough for fear and paranoia. That is the case with the prevailing opinion of the Nepali: "These Neps can't be trusted. And they don't just rob. They think absolutely nothing of murdering, as well" (Desai, 2006, p. 53); "Those Neps will be after all outsiders now, especially us Bongs" (Desai, 2006, p. 140). Another example is the opinion about Gorkha movement: "These people aren't good people. Gorkhas are mercenaries, that's what they are. Pay them and they are loyal to whatever" (Desai, 2006, p. 267). The opinion about castes is that: "It was important to draw the lines properly between classes or it harmed everyone on both sides of the great divide. Servants got all sorts of ideas" (Desai, 2006, p. 147).

In *The Inheritance of Loss* the images of the West about Indians (hetero-images) are internalized, after which they become the images of the Self (auto-images). That is the reason why higher social groups in India as well as the emigrants take over the Western image, which results in self-deprecation or even self-hatred, like it was shown in the case of the judge. In that respect, India is described in the novel as a country with a "messy map" (Desai, 2006, p. 9), where the police are "being paid off by the robbers" (p. 10), whose poor are "defecating onto the tracks, rinsing their bottoms with water from the can" (p. 30). Visa applicants come to Western embassies with "fake: birth certificates [and] vaccination records from doctors" (p. 183). Teachers fail "the children unless paid off by the parents" (p. 270). With these images of India Desai illustrates the bleak reality of a postcolony unable to get rid of the chaotic burden of its past, personified in poverty and corruption. Moreover, this tumultuous situation in India, as Desai depicts it, contributes to the overall feeling of psychological fragmentation of the characters in the novel who are trying to make sense of themselves in the post-colonial era. In order to underscore the implications that the Indian conditions have on its citizens not only home but abroad, Desai portrays confused people who tend to avoid standard misconceptions about their country by stepping back from their culture. They are primarily immigrants who are desperately trying to fit into American or English standards of behavior and follow the cultural patterns of these societies in order to be accepted by the domestic population. Very often, they lose the battle with identity confusion in the process. Deasai uses irony and humor to describe these endeavors of Indians, often resulting in grotesquely adopted American or British ways:

> They had a self-righteousness common to many Indian women of the English-speaking upper educated [...] They considered themselves uniquely positioned to lecture everyone on a variety of topics: Indians on America, Americans on India, Indians on India, Americans on America. They were poised; they were impressive; in the United States, where luckily it was still assumed that Indian women were downtrodden, they were lauded as extraordinary – which had the unfortunate result of making them even more of what they already were. (Desai, 2006, p. 58).

The radical transformations of Indians in diaspora also stem from their feeling of neglect and unfair treatment as immigrants. "The problem of identity returns as a persistent questioning of the frame, the space or representation, where the image – missing person, invisible eye, Oriental stereotype – is confronted with its difference, its Other" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 45). The Other is always on the margin, waiting to be acclaimed and accepted. In American and English societies the immigrants from the novel are shunned, despite their efforts to blend in. The Western images of immigrants as a worse Other (hetero-image) change their perception and points of view regarding their culture and homeland (auto-image). That is why they tend to break free from their past: in order to be accepted in the new society, although they are aware that the process of change is painful, leading them to alienation from their native culture.

4. Conclusion

Salman Rushdie (1992) believes that immigrants are characterized by plural and partial identity. That is exactly what makes them able to talk on behalf of the modern era, as they are forced, more than others, to accept the contradiction and arbitrariness of everyday experience, the fact that no language can completely express experience of a culture (pp. 12-15). Such is the case with minority writers who not only write about their immigrant past, but also about contemporary matters. In the process of writing they mostly rely on two cultures that they belong to and write from the perspective of both of them. Might this be one of the reasons why Desai's novel, *The Inheritance of Loss,* had such a great impact on both the readers and the critics? In Rushdie's opinion "it may be argued that the past is a country from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is a part of our common humanity. [...] The writer who is out of country and even out-of-language may experience this loss in an intensified form" (1992, p. 12). Kiran Desai is only one among many (women) writers of Indian descent such as Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharaty Mukherjee, Anita Desai, to mention but a few, who has succeeded to use the loss of a homeland as well as the fragments of her own past and experience, and make the readership of different backgrounds relate to it.

Moreover, the universality of *The Inheritance of Loss* is laid down in its criticism of the unfair treatment of the Other. The novel seems to echo with danger of classifying people strictly by means of national, cultural, class or ethnic terms, or singular affiliation to a particular identity. The novel shows that the author, just like her protagonists, is not able to establish a unique, monolithic identity, struggling to differentiate cultural heritage from stereotypes. On the one hand, it is a criticism of colonialism, the centuries of subjection by the economic and cultural power of the West. The period resulted in desperation, hatred, and fear of other national groups in India, where in the time of crisis identities became blurred or excessively highlighted (Todorova, 1999, p. 96). On the other hand, the novel criticizes racism, discrimination and xenophobia, whereby respect and the necessity to recognize the Other are inferred more than once. "For what are we all if not others for some other observers, in other situations, under other points of view, in other circumstances and other perspectives?" (Bošković, 2005, p. 112). Desai does not deny the difference between people nor does she naively tend to turn the blind eye to the authority of the discourses that shape our minds when it comes to the other. At the contrary, she keenly points out to them with the intention to invite the readers to question their premises. At the same time, she calls for a critical attitude towards what Achile Mbembe designates as politics of enmity (2010). This politics develops instincts that gradually push our societies towards demise of democratic values transforming them into the societies of enmity, as it happened at the time of colonization (p. 14).

Although Desai points out the importance of group identification and necessity that people should be free to choose how they should be labeled, she argues that the external attempts to classify individuals within a limited set of terms (cultural, national, ethnic, etc.) is dangerous and absurd, leaving little space for dialogue and overcoming differences. The novel, however, does not give any hope that these differences will soon be resolved.

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Aleksandra Žeželj Kocić
Independent Scholar, Belgrade
aleksandra.zezelj@gmail.com

TOWARDS TRANSNATIONAL IDENTIFICATION: HEMINGWAY'S REVISION OF AFRICA

Abstract This essay chooses to shed light on *Under Kilimanjaro*, Ernest Hemingway's posthumous work edited by Robert W. Lewis and Robert E. Fleming. A copy of the 843-page typescript-manuscript of what Hemingway had informally referred to as 'the African Book' was first published by Charles Scribner's Sons as *True at First Light* (1999, ed. Patrick Hemingway), before it got published as an unabridged version with a university press in 2005. Tackling the famous American writer's 1953/54 safari, *Under Kilimanjaro* expresses the so-called Other Hemingway in that it shows him to be a different persona to the one depicted in *Green Hills of Africa* (1935). Namely, in his last unfinished narrative Hemingway sheds his role as an American great white hunter/conqueror and begins to assimilate with the surroundings of Kenya, assuming, among others, the role of a naturalist and a conservationist. *Under Kilimanjaro* is a very intimate critique of the commodification of Hemingway's own image, a fictionalized piece that minimizes an irrefutable element of the showman in his public persona. Now moving through a changing East Africa, Hemingway captures his sense of alienation from his infamous trophy-hunting mindset, and focuses instead on a number of identity politics concepts, such as authenticity, hybridity, performativity, ethnicity, race, primitivism, going native, contact zone and liminal spaces. Thus, *Under Kilimanjaro* proves to be the culmination of a lifelong fascination with African culture of the author who is, in fact, very much capable of abdicating authority and transgressing boundaries.

Key words: Hemingway, Africa, transnational immersion, identity politics, hybridity, authenticity, race, transvaluation of experience.

1. Introduction: from *Green Hills of Africa* to *Under Kilimanjaro*

Ernest Hemingway's established reputation is primarily built on a world famous list of novels and short stories – *In Our Time* (1925), *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *Men Without Women* (1927), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), *Winner Take Nothing* (1933), *To Have and Have Not* (1937), *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950), *Old Man and the Sea* (1952). This catalogue oft disregards his equally important non-fictional works – *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), *Green Hills of Africa* (1935), *A Moveable Feast* (1964) – while, at the same time, is ignorant of the writer's posthumous publications.

Any writer's professional growth is delineated best when his whole oeuvre is taken into critical account, and so, if we are to fully understand Hemingway's worldview we need to scrutinize everything he ever wrote. Despite some critics' beliefs that towards the end of his life he lost his creative energy and could not draw level with his old self, we propose that Hemingway had always stayed true to his theory of writing, although he did experiment with fictional themes and techniques, so much so that he was reluctant to publish certain works in his lifetime so as to avoid compromising his secure position of not just an American Nobel prize-winning author, but also a white man, a womanizer, a soldier and an adventurer of enviable masculine prowess. For example, even a heavily edited version of *The Garden of Eden* (1986) proves to be "a published literary crime" (Solomon in Fantina, 2005, p. 13) since it mostly tackles the characters' androgynous sex-reversal experiments. Albeit this novel may be seen as a departure from Hemingway's usual themes, it remains his typical work "in his profound study of character and his primary interest in the effect that events have in the minds of individuals concerned" (Scribner Jr., 2003, p. viii).

This essay chooses to shed light on *Under Kilimanjaro*, Ernest Hemingway's posthumous work edited by Robert W. Lewis and Robert E. Fleming. A copy of the 843-page typescript-manuscript of what Hemingway had informally referred to as 'the African Book' was first published by Charles Scribner's Sons as *True at First Light* (1999, ed. Patrick Hemingway), before it got published as "an unabridged version with a university press" in 2005 (Lewis, 2006, pp. 89-90). Tackling the famous American writer's 1953/54 safari, *Under Kilimanjaro* expresses the so-called Other Hemingway in that it shows him to be a different persona to the one depicted in *Green Hills of Africa* (1935). Namely, in his last unfinished narrative Hemingway sheds his role as an American great white hunter/conqueror and begins to assimilate with the surroundings of Kenya, assuming, among others, the role of a naturalist and a conservationist.

Under Kilimanjaro is a very intimate critique of the commodification of Hemingway's own image, a fictionalized piece that minimizes an irrefutable element of the showman in his public persona. Now moving through a changing East Africa, Hemingway captures his sense of alienation from his infamous trophy-hunting mindset, and focuses instead on a number of identity politics concepts, such as authenticity, hybridity, performativity, ethnicity, race, primitivism, going native, contact zone and liminal spaces. Thus, *Under Kilimanjaro* proves to be the culmination of a lifelong fascination with African culture of the author who is, in fact, very much capable of abdicating authority and transgressing boundaries. Through multiple hunting and romance-driven plotlines, as well as his stereotype-free depiction of Africans, African landscape and semi-fictional characters (Ernie, Miss Mary, Pop, G. C.), Hemingway immerses himself in a transnational experience of *inbetweenness* and a world of floating signifiers, showing us, yet again, fiction at its best.

2. A shift in the Hemingway persona

In *'Foreword'* to *Green Hills of Africa*, Hemingway states that none of the characters or incidents in the book is imaginary, and reveals that his attempt is to write "an absolutely true book to see whether the shape of a country and the pattern of a month's action can, if truly presented, compete with a work of the imagination". Even though he unmistakably wants to restrict the book's genre to memoir, what he does is write a new form of expression which makes, in fact, *Green Hills of Africa* an amalgam of *Künstlerroman*, safari memoir, catechism, novel, guidebook and manifesto – a multidimensional prose which he once called "a landscape painting with plenty of excitement" (Kale, 2016, p. 96).

Published in the heyday of literary modernism, *Green Hills of Africa* gives an account of Hemingway's African safari (November 1933 – April 1934) he went on with Pauline Pfeiffer, his wife from 1927 to 1940. Having ejected Pauline from typically masculine domains,[1] Hemingway here hunts in company of other predominantly white men, and desperately wishes to prove himself as a worthy hunter, if already a successful writer. Depicting himself as a competitive braggart, he also does not fight shy of his jealousy when another man proves to be more skillful at hunting:

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[1] Conspicuously enough, Pauline's hunting license soon runs out and she no longer shoots from the end of Part I of the book (Hemingway, 2004, p. 30).

> He's not a damned show-off like me.
>
> Hell, he can shoot.
>
> Hell, he's got the best buff, the best waterbuck, and the best lion, now.
>
> But he's got a damned fine lion and a big leopard. Everything he has is good.
>
> There was the newly severed head of a rhino that was a rhino. He was twice the size of the one I had killed. [...] Why did he have to get one that makes mine ridiculous? It just makes ours silly.
>
> Karl and I had each tried to give the other the better chance on everything that came up. I was, truly, very fond of him and he was entirely unselfish and altogether self-sacrificing. I knew I could outshoot him and I could always outwalk him and, steadily, he got trophies that made mine dwarfs in comparison. [...] He had made my rhino look so small that I could never keep him in the same small town where we lived. He had wiped him out. I had the shot I had made on him to remember and nothing could take that away except that it was so bloody marvellous I knew I would wonder, sooner or later, if it was not really a fluke in spite of my unholy self-confidence. (Hemingway, 2004, pp. 43, 57, 58)

When Hemingway misses a shot, he admits to being "a damned bloody stubborn fool" (p. 55), but he equally does not want to kill another rhino "unless he's big", before he finally takes on "a correct perspective" of a good friend (p. 81). Knowing that he had already earned a high reputation as a writer, Hemingway craved to prove to himself and others that he could simultaneously be successful at anything he undertook. Since Karl constantly overmatches his own kills, Hemingway "succumbs to the jealousy of a trophy hunter out-trophied" (Strychacz, 2003, p. 167). If we are to follow the intricate pattern of Thomas Strychacz's still very much relevant reading of Hemingway's characters' manhood,[2] we are bound to understand that "Hemingway's self-stag-ing makes his identity indeterminate" (p. 183). Furthermore, in *Green Hills of Africa* Hemingway never hunts without the applause of one of the guides or Pop, thus participating in "a drama of manhood-fashioning acted out before an audience that crucially affects his sense of manhood by approving or scorning his efforts" (p. 171). Therefore, trophy hunting functions as a trope of manhood which should display phallic power, i.e. authority and toughness. Since trophy is a complex trope for the construction of masculine identity (p. 168), Hemingway's manhood-making is a theatrical event played out before an audience, and so it does not exist prior to the acquistion of trophies, dependable on comparative measurements and ritualistic approvals (pp. 175-176). Finally, once away from P.O.M. (Poor Old Mama), in the moments of sexually charged male bonding, Hemingway hunts for trophies in order to bring back tokens of his power, metonymically incarnated in huge phallic horns.

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[2] Strychacz maintains that manhood is not an essence, but rather an economy of actions and appraisals which belongs to a theatre of signs and their interpreting audiences, not more

By the time he went to East Africa for the first time, Hemingway had already become "the Douglas Fairbanks of American letters", i.e. a literary equivalent of an intensified celebrity (Del Gizzo, 2010, p. 7). Despite "an irrefutable element of the showman in his public persona" (p. 8), Hemingway in *Green Hills of Africa* anticipated a very intimate critique of the commodification of his own image in the manuscript pages of his posthumously published African book, where he struggled to balance his well-knownness with his work as an artist, as well as show his nostalgia for a purer, more authentic Africa remembered from his idealized past. Hence, *Under Kilimanjaro* points to many contradictions of commodity culture that privileges the cult of the author over the quality of the work, style over substance, illusion over reality, a tourist's preconceived images and pre-packaged expectations of Africa over genuine experiences of its authenticity and beauty (pp. 10-15). The issue in question is, at least, twofold. On one hand, the Hemingway of the late 50s gets increasingly alienated from his public image of the so-called "glow-in-the-dark author"[3] who, instead of his artistic integrity, becomes valued for his public personality and popularity, one imagined identity to which many contributed including himself – "a self-destructive and all-consuming persona" who is tormented by the myth of the invincibility and widespread fame, perversely becoming "foreign to his real sense of self" (pp. 21-22). On the other hand, Hemingway is aware of his complicity in exploiting not only his own image, but also that of

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than a gest. Thus, manhood is necessarily transient and it needs to be re-created. A trope is constructed out of complex events, codes of behavior and signifying glances that are themselves subject to dramatic slippage and transformation.

[3] The term refers to the luminosity of the photographs emphasizing the triumph of image over substance, as well as the concept of *celebrity* introduced in the first half of the 20th century.

Africa since he gets paid by *Look* magazine to come to Africa in the first place, and show tourists at large that Kenya is a safe place to go to despite the Mau Mau rebellion.[4] *Under Kilimanjaro* shows the Other Hemingway, the one who writes beyond his familiar public persona and its iconic status.

The Hemingway of *Under Kilimanjaro* sheds his role as a white conqueror and begins to assimilate with his surroundings. Now he is both a naturalist and a conservationist who openly professes his love for the territory and his spiritual bond with all he observes (Boese, 2006, p. 114). Unlike the trophy hunts of his past, he takes his 'protector' role very seriously (kills animals which kill livestock),[5] analyzes hunts from points of view of both the hunter and the hunted, and paints detailed images of green grasslands, swamps, woodlands, curves in the road and specific trees (p. 115). Imagining what an elephant might be feeling like sets Hemingway apart from his past uninvolved trophy hunting:

> I wondered, in the sharp coldness of the night listening to the talking of the animals, how great a trouble the huge weight of his tusks was to him and whether he was impotent and what sort of comradeship he had with his askari. (Hemingway, 2005, p. 312)

Such descriptions of the landscape and wildlife in Africa are obviously viewed with the eye of "a naturalist and consummate observer", who embraces the country with genuine respect and sensitivity. We, altogether, see "a mature man conscious of his advancing age and mortality" (Panda, 2006, p. 130):

> For several years I had exercised no command except for over myself and I was bored with it since I knew myself and my defects and my strengths too well and they permitted me little freedom and much duty. (Hemingway, 2005, p. 4)

It was, in fact, already in *Green Hills of Africa* that Hemingway linked the American Dust Bowl with the desertification of Africa, by use of metaphors of excessive consumption and self-destruction, conjuring up Timothy Morton's concept of dark ecology – the individual slow-dawning realization of his own moral responsibility for environmental damage (Tyler, 2017, p. 37). Hemingway is cognizant of his own complicity in the irreparable enviromental damage to Africa caused by the ominous advent of modernity and Western imperialism, part of which being "an ecologically unsound activity of hunting" (p. 43). As if to show that "the relentless, unending pursuit of masculinity is not just self-destructive but environmentally catastrophic", Hemingway depicts the self-consuming hyena as a trope of destructive consumption, "a metaphor of the greedy, thoughtless hunter" (pp. 44-45), an apocalyptic image of human-altered climates:

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[4] The Mau Mau rebellion was the inevitable result of European expropriation and colonization, an attempt to resist colonial domination. The *panga* killings by the Mau Mau began early in 1953 with the notorious massacre at Lari, while by early 1954 the British army was deeply engaged in anti-guerilla warfare (Martin, 2006, pp. 101-102).

[5] Hemingway was hired by the British government to serve as Honorary Game Warden, whose role was to control the animal population and revitalize the tourism industry (Strong, 2008, p. 122).

> The pinnacle of the hyenic humor, was the hyena, the classic hyena, that, hit too far back while running, would circle madly, snapping and tearing at himself until he pulled his own intestines out, and then stood there, jerking them out and eating them with a relish. [...] Fisi, the hyena, hermaphroditic, self-eating devourer of the dead, trailer of calving cows, ham-stringer, potential biter-off your face at night while you slept, sad yowler, camp-follower, stinking, foul, with jaws that crack the bones the lion leaves, belly dragging, loping away on the brown plain, looking back, mongrel dog-smart in the face. (Hemingway, 2004, pp. 26-27)

When Hemingway believes ivory is moving out of the country to the coast and Zanzibar, and when he suspects that some of the people he has grown fond of (Arap Meina, G. C.) are cognizant of it, he avoids knowing and understands his, however indirect, complicity in things illegal:

> The British are justly proud of the probity of their officials and of their police. But there had been changes in late years in the quality of both in East Africa and when we had gone down into Tanganyika after leaving the mountain for the first time the scandal of a District officer who had been arrested with quite a number of large tusks of illegal ivory under his bed had been a fresh scandal. Illegal killing of elephants was a very bad scandal both in Tanganyika and Kenya and when I had first run into the arrow-shaft factory operating within a stone's throw of the Game Ranger's tent and the lines of the Game Scouts in the Magadi country I had been very innocent and inexperienced about many things having to do with game and ivory. Now I was trying to be less ignorant and was

> certainly more experienced but I was trying to keep clear of things I had been told, officially, did not exist. (Hemingway, 2005, pp. 431-432)

The manuscript of *Under Kilimanjaro* differs radically from *Green Hills of Africa* in the voice of the narrator and the nature of his persona as well his attitudes toward Africans, big-game hunting, and many other topics. In his last work left to us, Hemingway is completely comfortable depicting his persona with self-deprecating humor (Lewis and Fleming, 2005, p. viii). Readers of *Under Kilimanjaro* will encounter a Hemingway they have seldom experienced in his previously published works. The author's sense of humor, which is not widely appreciated, comes into play, particularly joke-making at his own expense (p. xiv). Hemingway, for example, shares with us a letter from a woman in Iowa who did not like his book about Venice, now able to mock negative criticism of his works and have a good laugh about it:

> I read on, where a clipping had been inserted: "Maybe I've been slightly stuffy about Hemingway: The most over-rated writer of our time, but still a fine writer. His main faults: (1) scant sense of humor; (2) a juvenile brand of realism; (3) meager idealism, or none; (4) hairy chested bombast; (5) no common sense". (Hemingway, 2005, p. 307)

This quotation manages to perfectly capture the typical standpoint of Hemingway's readership at large that, although not well-acquainted with his works, never misses an opportunity to comment on his public persona which is, in fact, infinitely multipled since it rests on fictionalized representations of the Self.[6]

Hemingway's attitude toward hunting changed during the intervening twenty years. Once a trophy hunter, Hemingway now has no desire to kill trophy game, but rather shoots meat for the camp. Furthermore, he loses the impulse to exploit and civilize the Africans, and so he blurs the typical binary oppositions that he used to accentuate: colonizer/colonized, white/black, civilized/primitive, good/evil, beautiful/ugly, human/bestial. Let us remember Mary's words: "You get too tribal for your own good" (p. 433). His wish to become one with Africa becomes so strong that he goes to great lengths to revise himself, abdicate his white-man authority, trangress the centre/margin boundaries, and, ultimately, show that authenticity is more of a strategic performance than a given fixity.

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[6] For a more extensive exploration of the performativity of Hemingway's myth and the writer's relationship with critics, fellow writers and various readers see Žeželj Kocić 2018, pp. 105-163.

3. Animals ennobled

Hemingway's second safari has a special ethical valence especially in comparison to his 1933/34 safari. Now, he changes his attitude toward hunting and he takes greater pleasure in merely watching the wildlife than in killing. Dead animals become "less necessary as a measure or memento of his hunting experience, and ethical experience itself takes greater emphasis" (Hediger, 2008, p. 38). Whereby in *Green Hills of Africa* he consistently participates in masculine contests and battle of trophies, in *Under Kilimanjaro* he never loses a chance to express his critique of the trophy mentality. Wishing to inhabit Africa more seriously, he dismisses trophies and what they stand for and starts to show more and more sympathy toward animals and embraces a more complex view of the hunting system. For Hemingway, animal heads and carcasses were once "a sign of human prowess, international hegemonic system and mastery over nature in general" (p. 43). With his new humbled sense of self, he experiences an uneasiness about wasteful killing, "a kind of cramp of ethical feeling" (p. 41). A wide range of philosophical remarks and statements about "the problem of the white man hunting in Africa" in *Under Kilimanjaro* prove that Hemingway finds himself yearning for a new culture and faith. Moreover, he becomes "an ethical sportsman in the Roosevelt tradition of sportsmen-conservationists" (Maier, 2006, p. 121), expressing a concern for an ecological order. He starts to care more for the individual animals he pursues, and displays the ultimate paradox of hunting that you can kill the animal and still respect it.

In Hemingway's prose hunting had clearly always been likened to the serious business of writing, so nothing would be farther from the truth to say that the Hemingway of *Green Hills of Africa* is entirely different from the one of *Under Kilimanjaro*. His overbearing pose aside, he lays the foundation of his writing theory and practice early on in his life, and so it is also in *Green Hills of Africa* that he talks about the proper way to hunt:

> The way to hunt is for as long as you live against as long as there is you and colors and canvas, and to write as long as you can live and there is pencil and paper or ink or any machine to do it with, or anything you care to write about, and you feel a fool, to do it any other way. (Hemingway, 2004, pp. 8-9)

Hemingway fondly remembers Pop's advice "never to kill on the side, no ornamental killing, no killing to kill" (p. 11), and the importance of "going into that impersonal state you shoot from" (p. 51). He understands only too well that "killing is not a feeling that you share" (p. 79), which showcases us how important "killing cleanly" is for him:

> That something I cannot yet define completely but the feeling comes when you write well and truly of something and know impersonally you have written it that way and those who are paid to read it and report on it do not like the subject so they say it is all a fake, yet you know its value absolutely. (p. 100)

Hereby, Hemingway strengthens the link between hunting and writing, as he always does, taking sides with some of his favorite concepts of truth, honesty, simplicity and integrity.

It is true that Hemingway is guilty of trophy hunting on his first safari, and does not seem to get excited by shooting oryx "except for the miracle of their horns" (p. 86). However, it is even then that he finds it "very satisfying" to watch kudu cows (p. 115), or expects the majesty and the beauty of a bull kudu (p. 138). Hemingway experiences one of the rare moments of "complete happiness" when hunting (p. 38). In fact, he had always thought of how animals felt when they were shot. Thinking about a bulk elk he wonders whether he is going through a punishment for all hunters, and goes into what may seem like a combination of self-pity and arrogance:

> I did nothing that had not been done to me. I had been shot and I had been crippled and gotten away. I expected, always, to be killed by one thing or another and I, truly, did not mind that any more. (pp. 99-100)

It seems as if feeling empathy for animals did come naturally to Hemingway. In *Under Kilimanjaro* he reveals that he had always thought that he could think inside of a lioness's or lion's head (Hemingway, 2005, pp. 285, 82). He is happy for one intelligent lion who had been hunted for years that he should before he died lay "on the high, yellow rounded mound with his tail down and his great paws comfortable before him" (p. 218). At some other time, he finds the buff "awfully impressive" and "not stupid" (p. 95), the jackal "neat and handsome as a fox" (p. 140), birds beautiful (p. 225). Hemingway is filled with genuine admiration for "the two francolin dusting in a patch of dried dirt at the edge of the big fever trees" (p. 287), or the beautiful marabou storks (p. 284), becomes desperate to see a wolf in high country (p. 265), and gets humbled at watching his friend and partner that he killed:

> Nearly every other bird or beast goes downhill when it is wounded. But an eagle goes uphill and when I ran this one down and caught his legs above the killing and holding claws and, with my moccasined foot on his neck, folded his wings together and held him with his eyes full of hatred and defiance I had never seen any animal or bird look at me as the eagle looked. (p. 260)

Hemingway's admiration for Africa and its creatures never stops throughout his last book. He admires the fast and the most intelligent leopard he had ever seen (p. 295), recalls his past ways when he was given to trophy hunting:

> In those days, being new to the country, we still shot cheetah. Now, having gotten to know them, I would never kill one but then we were if not stupider at least more ignorant, and I shot a cheetah with the same ignorance and stupidity that a man will shoot a waterbuck. (p. 277)

I wonder if these words evoke a typical and stereotypical image of an insensitive Hemingway. In the course of twenty years he changes his ways and transforms into his *true* self. Now, he openly professes that in those days he did not have the respect for lions that he should (p. 182), he is sorry that he was "a showoff" (p. 155), and he swears that "the time of shooting beasts for trophies is long past with him" (p. 116). Furthermore, he finds fault with the exploitative nature of the present safaris, and takes sides with the animals:

> The way the white hunters ran safaris now they hung a series of leopard baits in trees, small buck, warthogs, and other animals, and left them to rot. [...] Now no clients would shoot anything without a telescopic sight. (p. 276)

When Mary Hemingway gets particularly happy about killing her oryx, her husband is happy for her too, but he stops to wonder about the animal killed:

> A gerenuk, though, is not as impressive in death as an oryx. An oryx, like a statesman, can look almost as good dead as he does alive if you remember to put a stitch or a piece of wire through his lips so his tongue does not hang out. (p. 443)

Hemingway remains a nuanced writer when he *writes* his beloved Africa. He notices kind, beautiful eyes of an antelope, and "a zebra stallion standing in the brown lava rocks with the mountain behind him" (p. 369). He never stops writing or visualizing stories. In hunting, as in writing, he believes you need to create the fourth and the fifth dimension, and with any luck you might succeed. Perhaps it should go without saying that, in his later years, Hemingway fully develops a belief system founded on a premise that a man is much more closely linked to animals than we are sometimes ready to accept. To an extent, Hemingway transgresses the human/animal boundary across his works so as to suggest that humans are not to be understood as a more advanced part of nature in any way or form. There is no greater proof of this than the pages of *The Old Man and the Sea* – in a full-blown continuation of Hemingway's sensitive understanding of bullfight in *Death in the Afternoon* – where Santiago insistently professes his love for the great fish, as well his aim to prove himself to him: "I wish I could show him what sort of a man I am" (Hemingway, 1999, p. 46). All that matters in Hemingway's fiction and (fictionalized) life is 'the moment of truth'.

4. Hybridity embraced

There is ample evidence that "scholars have repeatedly simplified race in Hemingway's works". Nevertheless, some have made efforts to link his racial and gender representations and focused instead on "his celebration of racial difference and his moral and aesthetic interest in the primitive" (Armengol-Carrera, 2011, p. 44). If we say that Hemingway's masculinity and racist pose hardened through the 30s, then we would need to notice his relaxed masculinity of the 50s. Since his investigation of race gets more complex, ambiguous and contradictory in time, his critics must stay attentive to his ability to forever transform himself and his writing.

Hemingway's works that directly deal with Africa evoke many concepts of postcolonial criticism, such as alterity, ambivalence, authenticity, taboo, cultural diversity, frontier, going native, hybridity, in-between space/liminality, marginality, metonymic gap, mimicry, miscegenation, savagery, subjectivity, transculturation, contact zones, Eurocentrism, interpellation, uninscribed earth, misrecognition, to name but a few.[7] Of course, postcoloniality and race are sites of contestation and debate, dubious concepts socially constructed from without, as many would have us believe. Above all else, race proves "surprisingly difficult to define" since it is neither self-evident nor self-defined (Amoko, 2006, pp. 128-129). Homi Bhabha teaches us that "all cultural statements and systems are constructed in the contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation that we begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or purity of cultures are untenable, even before we resort ro empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity" (Bhabha, 2003, p. 208). Let us delve into the ways in which a white, rich and famous, masculine, heteronormative American writer, Ernest Hemingway himself, has to do with linguistic, cultural, political and racial hybridization.

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[7] See Ashcroft et al. (2001) and Buchanan (2018) for definitions.

Hegemonic (white and heterosexual) masculinity has traditionally been defined by its opposition to blackness and the feminine (Segal in Armengol-Carrera, 2011, p. 46). Thus, the hunt is essentially a male homosocial ritual from which women are excluded and are restricted to a role of admirer/spectator, while dark-skinned men are contrasted to white men who supposedly stand for civilization and supremacy. Toni Morrison draws our attention to Hemingway's strategies which tend to promote stereotypical and derogatory images of blackness. First, *Green Hills of Africa* demonstrates "the economy of sterotype" for its portrayal of the natives is inaccurate, general, lacking in specificity, impersonal, dehumanizing and pejorative. Moreover, the natives' nakedness acts as a symbol of their cultural inferiority, primitivism and savagery, where blackness is associated with dirt and corruption. Second, "the metonymic displacement" is a linguistic strategy which positions color and other physical traits as metonyms that displace rather than signify the Africanist character, and Hemingway seems to combine it with fetishization, especially by his erotic fixation on black women. Third, the strategy of "metaphysical condensation" equates African speech with grunts and other animal sounds, as if depriving black people of the possibility of communication (pp. 48-49).

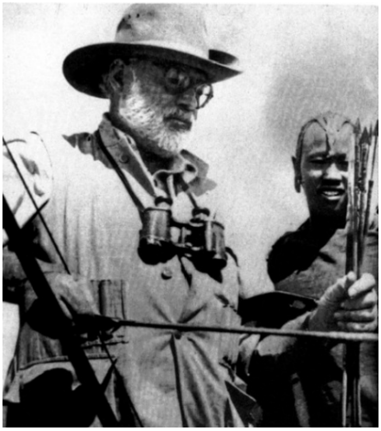
Hemingway's so-called African works partially confirm these assertions. Namely, even though he leaves the natives of *Green Hills of Africa* mostly nameless, and describes them principally as bare-legged and bare-headed, naked men carrying spears (Hemingway, 2004, pp. 98, 24), he underlines the necessity of knowing a language of the country you are in so as to go beyond just "a journalistic value" (p. 131). Surrounded with spearsmen and guides, it may seem that Hemingway solely notices natives "butchering in the dusk" (p. 80). But, what about his (dangerous?) wish to come closer to the African ways and start resembling the natives and start speaking their language:

> '*Piga kongoni m'uzuri*'.
> 'Piga' was a fine word. It sounded exactly as the command to fire should sound or the announcement of a hit. [...] There was nothing odd or unseemly in the stretching of the ears, in the tribal scars, or in a man car-

> rying a spear. The tribal marks and the tattooed places seemed natural and handsome adornments and I regretted not having any of my own. My own scars were all informal, some irregular and sprawling, others simply puffy welts. I had one on my forehead that people still commented on, asking if I had bumped my head; but Droop had handsome ones beside his cheekbones and others, symmetrical and decorative, on his chest and belly. (p. 36)

This excerpt shows the inception of Hemingway's lifelong passion for Africa, overtly constructed in his fiction and non-fiction. When in Africa on his second safari, Hemingway admires Mthuka's beautiful scars (Hemingway, 2005, p. 376), a native man's scars who is named this time round. He equally respects Keiti even if this "fine hunter" seems more Victorian than Hemingway in certain matters (pp. 357, 152). Our American writer is sad that he is "a stranger" in Africa (p. 165), and so he chooses the path of his transformation – he shaves his head (pp. 334, 407), he pierces his ears (p. 314), he goes spear hunting (p. 360), he identifies with the Wakamba:

> For a long time I had identified myself with the Wakamba and now had passed over the last important barrier so that the identification was complete. There is no other way of making this identification. Any alliance between tribes is only made valid in one way. (p. 130)



1950s – Ernest Hemingway learning about
the spears and arrows from the Masai[8]

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[8] The photograph appears on p. 72 of A. E. Hotchner's *The Good Life According to Hemingway* cited in our References. It is among other photographs which are courtesy of the author, with

"If you wished to be a good Wakamba it was necessary never to be frustrated and never to admit that you were puzzled", says Hemingway (p. 235). Having become a *mzee*, an elder as well as still having the status of a warrior, Hemingway recognizes tribal laws, even if it comes at the expense of his previous ways (p. 354), and even if he wishes he had never done certain things for fame. Feeling like a true Wakamba now, he regrets his past actions:

> I wished he had never killed goats and that I had never signed any contracts to kill and be photographed for any national circulation magazines and I bit with satisfaction on the piece of shoulder bone and waved up the car. The sharp end of the splintered bone had cut the inside of my cheek and I could taste the familiarity of my own blood now mixed with the blood of the leopard. (p. 327)

When interpreting the fact of blackness, Frantz Fanon underlines the stereotypical images of the black – the Negro is perceived as "an animal, bad, mean, ugly", "determined from without", and "locked into his body" (Fanon, 2003, pp. 324-326). The Hemingway of *Under Kilimanjaro*, surprisingly enough, subverts the paradigm and envies "Mthuka's beautiful carved face with the strange long upper lip and the arrow cut on the cheeks" (Hemingway, 2005, p. 325), "wishing again that he had a black skin like any other Kamba" (p. 320), or that he was M'Cola's son (p. 251). Furthermore, he elaborates the obvious flaws of white skin, albeit by putting words into someone else's mouth:

> "Observe the white man", the missionary had said. "He walks in the sun and the sun kills him. If he exposes his body to the sun it is burned until it blisters and *rots*. The poor fellow must stay in the shade and destroy himself with alcohol and stinghas and chutta pegs because he cannot face the *horror* of the sun rising on the next day. Observe the white man and his mwanamke, his memsahibs. The woman is covered with brown spots if she goes into the sun, brown spots like the forerunners of *leprosy*. If she continues the sun strips the skin as from a person who has passed through fire". (p. 251, emphasis added)

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additional grateful acknowledgement to The Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, and as such belongs to public domain. The photo credits were confirmed with Prof. Kirk Curnutt, Permissions and Newsletter Editor of the Hemingway Society, in private correspondence of August 10, 2020.

Hemingway does not support a popular and convenient British concept that "Africans are supposed not to suffer pain nor to be capable of love" (p. 381). In fact, his love for his African fiancée, Debba, is so passionate that he feels "suspended" between two Africas: one with her, and one with his wife, Miss Mary (p. 419):

> After a while Miss Mary came into the bed and I put the other Africa away somewhere and we made our own Africa again. It was another Africa from where I had been and at first I felt the old splitting up my chest and then I accepted it and did not think at all and felt only what I felt and Mary felt lovely in bed. (p. 410)

Debba is Hemingway's handy entrance into the Wakamba world. Nonetheless, he enjoys her company, her kisses and giggles, her black beauty, if largely fetishized. On her part, she wants his ears pierced and "wants to be his useful wife" (pp. 172-173). And this is what she becomes – a toy, but the toy one of the greatest American writers must have liked very much. Hemingway did go native in both senses of the word: he felt the threat associated with the temptation posed by inter-racial sex, but he also participated in native ceremonies, adopted and enjoyed local customs in terms of dress, food, recreation and entertainment.

Hemingway's going native can be thought as "very selective" since he had always returned to the comforts of his (white) camp (Boese, 2006, p. 117). Still, in *Under Kilimanjaro* we witness his belonging to two different cultures at once, his miscegenation and blood mixing, "his desire to reconfigure his ethnic and racial make-up". In the 50s Hemingway longed to distance himself from whiteness, Americanness and normative masculinity, to "occupy or perform the identity of the other" (Del Gizzo, 2003, p. 500). Trying to find a space of rebirth, reassessment and return to nature, he emphasizes the debilitating effects of mainstream culture and civilization, rapid industrialization and urbanization. It is in this respect and because of his fascination with "the primitive" that Hemingway becomes the other of the West, aware of his own hybridity. *Under Kilimanjaro* is "his personal attempt at identity construction" (p. 507) whereby he will raise the questions of racechange,[9] authenticity, performance, freedom, transgression, falseness and truth. His disassociation from his identity as a White Man and his transnational identification with Africans "rearticulates and revalences the expected power relations" (p. 514). Through cross-cultural interaction and cross-racial identification, Hemingway becomes a hybridized subject reminding us that the borders between Self and the Other can be transgressed, that the roles we play are, in fact, performative. Hence, Africa becomes Hemingway's space of transgression, "strategic performances of authenticity" (p. 519) and representations of the Self.

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[9] Susan Gubar's concept of 'racechange' denotes the phenomenon of white people imitating characteristic behaviors, gestures or speech patterns of people considered racially other for their purposes (Del Gizzo, 2003, p. 500).

With his growing identification with the Wakamba tribe and his experimentation with racial identity he revises the long-held beliefs of his life and works, and, finally, makes a home of Africa, as much as he did before of Spain and Paris. He understands, though, "his own limitations as a white man in a vast country with its own history", "his undeniable complicity with whites and the evils of white imperialism" (Strong, 2008, pp. 135, 137), as much as he is aware of "the rigid mythos of his own public image" (p. 143). Hemingway "succumbs to the transforming power of Africa" (Kitunda, 2006, p. 112), which causes him to redefine race, etnicity, gender and identity, and start occupying an interstitial space of liminality.

5. Immersed in Africa

"I love Africa and I feel it's another home, and anytime a man can feel that, not counting where he's born, is where he is meant to be" – Hemingway openly pronounces (Hotchner, 2008, p. 77). Albeit "the romanticization of Africa as a new frontier" (Armengol-Carrera, 2011, p. 50),[10] Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa* display his growing love for the country. The writer is completely overwhelmed by this "great looking country" (Hemingway, 2004, p. 64) and is prematurely grieved by ever having to leave it:

> This was a better sky than Italy. The hell it was. The best sky was in Italy and Spain and Northern Michigan in the fall and in the fall in the Gulf off Cuba. You could beat this sky; but not the country. All I wanted to do now was get back to Africa. We had not left it, but when I would wake in the night I would lie, listening, homesick for it already. (p. 49)

Later, on his second safari, his passion to become one with Africa gets intensified, and so Hemingway finds it "vast", "mysterious" and "very complicated"

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[10] The frontier myth is a male adventure story which presupposes that Africa is a new testing ground for American frontiersmen, a place where they could exercise their individualism, coldness, stoicism and acquisitiveness among the objectified, exploited, unmanned and feminized black people.

(Hemingway, 2005, pp. 200-201). Above all, Africa is rather unpredictable, which is what he loves most about it:

> I had not planned to shoot anything. But you could not tell. You could not tell what would happen on any day when you started out in the country there at the foot of the mountain, nor any night, I thought. (p. 442)

Hemingway and his wife Mary find themselves "all mixed up" in Africa (p. 133) and cannot disentangle themselves anymore. In memorable sentences of a true master of fiction, Hemingway believes that "the African world of unreality is defended and fortified by reality past any reality there is" (p. 147), suggesting he constructs Africa as a space of hybridity which defies definition, especially when he gets philosophical about its indefinable uniqueness:

> [...] but then almost nothing was true and especially not in Africa. In Africa a thing is true at first light and a lie by noon and you have no more respect for it than for the lovely, perfect weed-fringed lake you see across the sunbaked salt plain. You have walked across the plain in the morning and you know that no such lake is there. But now it is there absolutely true, beautiful and believable. (p. 239)
>
> Anyone to have any success in Africa must be able to invent dreams and then make them come true. (p. 282)

This is exactly what Africa is for Hemingway – a fictionalized space, an invention on which he imprints his thoughts and his whole life. It might come shocking to see that his grand pictures of the African landscape speak little of the greater political issues (the Mau Mau terrorism) of the 50s. Hemingway rather chooses to "create a different, more intimate connection that reflects an interest in being involved in Africa", a space in which to take risks and "open up the borders of the self" (Del Gizzo, 2003, p. 508).

Under Kilimanjaro demonstrates that Africa has the power to make the Westerner go primitive and immerse himself completely in the African experience. So much so, in fact, that Hemingway often launches into a tirade against the white race:

> But I did know that the white people always took the other people's lands away from them and put them on a reservation where they could go to hell and be destroyed as though they were in a concentration camp.

> Here they called the reservations the reserves and there was much-do-gooding about how the natives now called the Africans were administered. (Hemingway, 2005, p. 260)

Once "a crabby, very egotistical bastard" himself (p. 220), he gets truly engrossed within the African culture, perfectly happy, and does not worry about possibly jeopardizing his place in American literary history.

Africa was one of Hemingway's homes away from home. There is no other way to talk and write about home but with love, and, if you happen to be Hemingway, with precision:

> There were wind clouds high in the sky and it was beautiful looking across the green meadow at the mountain looking so huge and wide from here. (p. 13)

6. Conclusion: transvaluation of experience

Ernest Hemingway's posthumously published works gives his readers "an opportunity to engage in new dialogue about his multiculturalism" (Panda, 2006, p. 131). Moreover, his revision of Africa and his "transvaluation of experience" shows him to be one "slippery writer" who adopted African values onto his Western worldview (Kitunda, 2006, p. 113). His fictionalized hybridization allows for the belief that any kind of truth is ultimately elusive. Hemingway's African counternarrative, with its strong sympathy for the African animals, the people and the landscape, is an act of resistance to the dominant discourse of his previously constructed persona, in the same way that the colonized' strategies of mimicry and parody might disrupt the system that oppresses them.

Camping on the Kenya-Tanganyika border, on January 3, 1954 Hemingway writes a letter to Harvey Breit revealing how pleasant it is to do certain things in Africa which you are not going to be rebuked for:

> Have my head shaved because that is how my fiancée likes it. She likes to feel all the holes in my head and the wealts. It is sort of fun too. I never knew about it before. I thought they were a kind of disgrace. *But not here*. Harvey, African girls, Kamba and Masai anyway, are really wonderful and all that nonsense about that they can't love you is not true. It is just that they are more cheerful than girls at home. My girl is more impudent, her face is impudent in repose, but absolutely loving

> and delicate rough. I better quit writing about it because *I want to write it really* and I mustn't spoil it. (Baker, 1981, p. 827, emphasis mine)

By the time Hemingway wrote *Under Kilimanjaro* he had done everything in his power to unite with Africa, both physically and emotionally. He had tried to redefine the rigid myth of his persona of a proto-masculine white American writer, having become almost angry with the stubbornness of his skin and his Western culture. His repudiation of racial and cultural signs of representation created the Other Hemingway who "wanted to be everything" (Mandel, 2006, p. 99). The one who demands a wide-angle critical lens and the one who equally feels good to read.

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Jovana Petrović
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad
petrovic.jovana.loos@gmail.com

SPACE IN LINDA HOGAN'S *MEAN SPIRIT*

> *"It has been my lifelong work to seek an understanding of the two views of the world, one as seen by native people and the other as seen by those who are new and young on this continent."* (Hogan, *Dwellings*, 1995, p. 11)

Abstract: The focus of this paper is on the exploration of the Indian Territory as depicted by Linda Hogan in her novel *Mean Spirit*. In the novel, the space of the Indian Territory is represented as a conflicting space in which two opposing cultures, Native American and white, clash. Therefore, it can be argued that two conflicting world-views shape the space of the Indian Territory. This is evident in the fact that the white people are interested in the land so that they can exploit it whereas the Osage have a spiritual connection to the land and are intent on preserving it from the exploitation. Hogan particularly focuses on exploring injustice, crimes, racism and oppression the Osage suffer as consequences of the colonization of their land. The novel also shows the devastating effects of the unavoidable loss of land on the Native American community, which is made possible by the unjust government policies, murder and trickery. However, Hogan also sheds light on the connection between the land and the Native American individual and communal identity.

Key words: space, land, geopolitics, identity, Linda Hogan, Mean Spirit

1. Introduction

The issues of space, land and mineral rights, as well as environmental concerns represent cornerstones of the contemporary Native American literary productions. The importance of land to the indigenous people of the United States is evident at the present moment from the fact that on July 7th, 2020, a federal judge supported the claim of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and ordered the Dakota Access Pipeline to be shut down until an extensive research was conducted into its influence on the environment. DAPL, as it stands today, en-dangers the sacred burial grounds of a couple of tribal nations as well as their supplies of clean water, and represents an environmental risk. Around the same time, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that half of the state of Oklahoma is in fact Native American land. While this decision of the Supreme Court represents a validation of the Native American claim to land, it is at the same time a controversial decision, as it complicates the issues of jurisdiction over the people who live on that land. Therefore, land still remains the burning issue addressed in contemporary indigenous political and artistic life as is evident from the writing of Native American writers such as Louise Erdrich, Winona LaDuke, Thomas King, Linda Hogan and many others. These recent events also highlight the timing and the necessity of revisiting Hogan's *Mean Spirit* and its exploration of the issues of land title, mineral rights and environmental concerns.

The issues surrounding the land claims, mineral rights and exploitation of land are the focus of Linda Hogan's first novel, *Mean Spirit* (1990). The novel is set in the Indian Territory (located in the present day Oklahoma) in the 1920s when oil was discovered under the land owned by the Osage people. The novel is based on real historical events concerning the discovery of oil. This period is historically referred to as the "Osage Reign of Terror" during which numerous wealthy Osage women and men were killed or simply disappeared. The framework of the novel is the murder of Grace Blanket, a prominent Osage woman from the Hill people and one of the wealthiest Indian women, and after that, the murder of her sister Sara. Before these murders, there were 17 more suspicious deaths in the Indian Territory, and the murders continue after the Blanket sisters' deaths. As the novel indicates, all of the deaths are closely related to land ownership and rights for oil exploitation, and they are not prosecuted or tried by the court. As Callanan explains, "*Mean Spirit* engages the historical violation of the Osage people by a white culture bent on taking their wealth and resources by murder, marriage or manipulation" (Callanan, 2016, p. 252). At the same time, legislation is passed (i.e. the guardian program) so that the Native people living in the Indian Territory do not get the full amount of money for leasing their land for cattle grazing and oil exploitation. The theft of land and money, as well as the absence of justice with regards to the numerous murders, are made possible by numerous laws and government practices that limit the sovereignty of the indigenous people and make them helpless against the colonizing society. Thus, Hogan's focus is on addressing the historical injustices that have been done to the Osage[1] for the purpose of exploitation of their land. The consequences of colonization also include the imposition of white cultural practices onto the indigenous people which results in the disintegration of the community of the Osage as is portrayed in the novel.

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[1] The author will alternately use terms Osage, Native American, indigenous, Native and Indian (even though considered to be offensive to some Native authors, Linda Hogan uses the term Indian, without its negative connotation) to denote the indigenous people of the

The focus of this paper will be put on the Indian Territory as a political entity that gives political, cultural and judicious autonomy to the Osage. But, the political, cultural and judicious autonomy are at the same time restricted owing to the discriminatory laws and government policies. I would also like to cast light on the problems of racism and imposition of white culture that permeate the space of the Osage reservation and how that affects the construction of Osage identity. Ultimately, this paper casts light on how Osage identity is inherently linked to land.

2. Space, Geopolitics, Land

For the purpose of this paper, the studies of space, geopolitics and the role of land in the U.S. political and legal treatment of Native American are very important when it comes to understanding space in Hogan's *Mean Spirit*. Space has been neglected in the study of humanities owing mostly to the imperial discourse that dominated the sciences since the 16th century. In particular, literary theory and criticism up until the 1950s have been primarily concerned with time and temporality as the basic paradigm of human existence. The metaphor of time as a steadily flowing river (Tally, 2013, p. 12) was nowhere better expressed than through the science of history. Historical narratives heavily depended on linearity and the idea that history brings progress, and implies constant movement from the primitive past to progressive civilization (Tally, 2013, p. 13). However, the so-called spatial turn allowed for a shift in such a perspective of space. According to Tally, there are several factors that have contributed to the spatial turn in humanities, one of the most important ones being the Second World War and the changes it brought (2013, p. 12). In the light of violent events of WWII, specifically the Holocaust and the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the concept of time and history came to be severely criticized and reevaluated. As Bertrand Westpahl explains, "the concept of temporality … had lost much of its legitimacy" and people abandoned "the image of history as a progressive movement towards ever greater freedom and enlightenment" (qtd. in Tally,

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American continent who lived in the Indian Territory of the 1920s and who were wronged by the US government.

2013, 12). Furthermore, the Second World War put to the forefront the issues of space, place, land and mapping. The aftermath of the war showed that the space is one of the main factors in the clash between ideologies, ideas and world powers. This is specifically evident from the fact that the Second World War brought the end of the imperialist world order. In Europe, monarchies were substituted by democratic republics, whereas colonial powers such as the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Portugal were forced to liberate their colonies around the world. In this postcolonial era, people were slowly gaining political and cultural independence. In Tally's words,

> the geopolitical organization and disruptions in the postwar era called attention to the distinctively political essence of geography, as the forces of decolonization, as well as those of neocolonization, made clear that the spaces of the map were not uncontested. The very names by which we knew places such as Rhodesia or Zimbabwe, Burma or Myanmar, were revealed to be matters of immense ideological conflict, and the thoroughgoing intertwinement of history and geography. (2013, pp. 13-14)

The intertwinement of history and geography Tally speaks of is probably the most evident in the study of geopolitics as one of the most prominent political practices of the modern world. In Merriam Webster dictionary, geopolitics is defined as "a study of the influence of such factors as geography, economics, and demography on the politics and especially the foreign policy of a state" (n.d.). The term 'geopolitics' was coined by Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellen in 1899 (Dodds, 2007, p. 22). For Dodds, geopolitics "has often been taken to signify a hard-nosed or more realistic approach to international politics that lays particular emphasis on the role of territory and resources in shaping the condition of states" (Dodds, 2007, pp. 24-25). What is important to notice in both definitions is that geopolitics recognizes the role land plays in politics. Moreover, both definitions emphasize that geopolitics refers to the foreign policy of a nation. How does geopolitics relate to the issue of Native Americans who live within the United States as its "domestic, dependent nations" (Meyer, 2016, p. 173)? On the one hand, many Native American scholars, such as Vine Deloria Jr. and Thomas King, as well as numerous critics who engage into the exploration of the Native American writing, such as Arnold Krupat, point to the fact that the "post" aspect of the postcolonial era still has not affected the indigenous people of the U.S. continent: "Call it domestic imperialism or internal colonialism; in either case, a considerable number of Native people exist in conditions of politically sustained subalternity" (Krupat, 1996, p. 30). In other words, Native Americans are regarded as subjects within the U.S. legal and political system, relegated to the position of ethnic minorities. This position severely restricts and even denies their legal rights and their sovereignty. However, on the other hand, they are considered as "distinctly separate peoples outside the American polity" (Norgren qtd. in Meyer, 2016, p. 173), i.e. nations. The discrepancy between the two positions represents one of the main subjects, and a pain point, in the indigenous political and cultural life. Thomas King, Gerald Vizenor and Vine Deloria Jr. claim that Native American tribes are nations within the U.S., and they base their argument on the fact that the land which constitutes the present day United States is originally Native land. According to them, a nation is closely connected to its land, and the Native land has been stolen by the U.S. They further assert that the government can make treaties solely with its legal equals, i.e. another nation, which means that the treaties signed between Native Americans and the U.S. government represent a confirmation that Native American tribes are nations within the United States.

The Osage tribe is interesting in particular when it comes to discussing the geopolitical position of Native people in the United States in relation to the land, as the Osage tribe is one of a few Native American tribes that actually bought the reservation land in the Indian Territory after their forced relocation in the 1870s. The majority of Native tribes that were forcefully relocated from their homelands were placed on reservation lands that were considered to be the gift of the U.S. government to the Native people which further complicated the issues of tribal sovereignty, jurisdiction and justice (Rifkin, 2016, p. 203). However, the land on which the Osage established their reservation was in their legal possession, and therefore could not be treated as a gift of the U.S. to the tribe. When the Allotment Act (or the Dawes Act) was passed in 1887 for the purpose of taking even more land from the Native people, the Osage refused to have their land allotted to 160 acres per head since they were legal owners of their land, by white rules and legislations. Ultimately they were forced to, but they managed to keep all the remaining land as well as the communal mineral rights to mining. The Osage received royalties for mining which became solid ground for manipulation, violence and theft when oil was discovered on their land during "the Osage Reign of Terror". As Alix Casteel explains, "[a]ccording to Osage tradition, land was held in communal tenure and enterprise was generally of the collective nature. Through tenacious negotiating, the Osage had succeeded in retaining the mineral rights of the reservations as a tribal holding, which was to have a disastrous impact on their lives and culture" (1994, p. 55). This colonizing geopolitical chain of events and their consequences are described by Linda Hogan in *Mean Spirit*. In this respect, geopolitics proves particularly useful for the exploration of the issues of land, mineral rights and justice that permeate the space of the Indian Territory in the novel. In other words, the novel can be interpreted as Hogan's portrayal of the consequences of the allotment policy and the guardian program which were passed for the purpose of taking land and money from the indigenous people and also, for the purpose of obstructing any kind of justice for the Native people. The guardian program dictated that the amount of money the Osage were to receive from their mining and grazing leases depended on whether or not they were full-blood Natives. For example, Moses Graycloud's lease money is reduced by the government because he is a full-blood Indian and thus considered incapable of handling his money. Hogan specifically names these policies in the novel, emphasizing their devastating influence on the Osage Indian people.

When discussing *Mean Spirit*, in close relation to geopolitics stands Edward Said's appeal for "geographical inquiry into historical experience" of colonization of Native American people (qtd. in Tally, 2013, p. 9). Said's claim casts light on the fact that Native American space is inherently linked to the experience of colonization in terms of land acquisition as well as the imposition of the white society's political and cultural systems onto the indigenous people. In this respect, Brian Jarvis' definition of space proves particularly useful. Jarvis defines space as "an ongoing process … a vital product and determinant of [sociohistorical] action" (1998, pp. 6-7). He goes on to assert that space and social relations are structurally inseparable and that "there can be no geographical knowledge without historical narrative" (1998, p. 7). This means that "all spaces contain stories and must be recognized as the site of an ongoing struggle over meaning and value" (1998, p. 7). With all this in mind, I intend to analyze space in *Mean Spirit* through the prism of colonization with particular focus on the Indian Territory as a reservation, a political entity that grants certain rights to the indigenous people and yet is an ambivalent space, a locus of a continual struggle between white marginalization, discrimination and subjugation and Native American "survivance" and continuance. "Survivance" is a term coined by Native American scholar Gerald Vizenor. In his essay "Aesthetics of Survivance: Literary Theory and Practice" he defines survivance as: "an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent" (2008, p. 1). Having Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit* in mind in terms of her insistence on telling the story from the Native perspective and with the insistence on the Native worldview, culture and tradition, Vizenor's survivance seems to encompass Hogan's ideas about Native American survival and resistance.

In Hogan's *Mean Spirit*, the exploration of the history of colonization, inherently related to forceful and violent relocation of the Native people, continual land theft enabled by unjust laws and murders, is told from a Native American perspective. In that sense, it can be argued that the novel also represents "a subversive historical account of the 1920s dispossession of the Osage Indians of their oil rights" and land as it focuses on painting the picture of violence, dispossession and oppression from the point of view of the Indian people (Kroumova-Krasteva, 1999, p. 49). As Hogan herself states, the story told in the *Mean Spirit* paints the picture of "the continuing destruction of the Third World and tribal people, and the exploitation of our earth" that needs to be explored for the purpose of healing, regeneration and survival (qtd. in Blair, 1994, p. 21). Healing and regeneration are made possible by the land and nature itself through the powerful bat medicine and the return to the more organic, tribal way of living. Thus, the novel stands as a "symbolic [act] of recovery, remembrance and reinvention of a history of loss and grief" (Kroumova-Krasteva, 1999, pp. 47-48). It can also be argued that *Mean Spirit* "is an antidote to suffering and disintegration, a new story with regenerative power…" (Smith, 2000, p. 178) in its reinvention of history told from the perspective of the Osage who emphasize the importance of connection to nature and land as a form of regeneration, as will be discussed in further detail.

As is evident through the writing of almost all Native writers, space represents one of the most important elements in the construction of Native American identity and holds a special significance in the indigenous tradition. Native American sense of self, identity, community, history, and tradition stems from their connection to the space they inhabit, the geographical space that surrounds them, their land. According to Alfonso Ortiz and Richard Erdoes, "Mysterious but real powers dwell in nature – in mountains, rivers, rocks, even pebbles. White people might consider them inanimate objects, but to the Indian, they are enmeshed in the web of the universe, pulsating with life and potent with medicine" (qtd. in Allen, 1991, p. 1). In this respect, nature and landscapes are imbued with spirituality and provide sense of belonging to the world, as is evident from the fact that numerous indigenous novels describe the Native people's worship of trees, stones, caves, lakes and mountains, or different animals. Linda Hogan emphasizes the connection between people, land and nature by stating in *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World* that: "I write out of respect for the natural world, recognizing that humankind is not separate from nature" (1995, p. 12). In other words, people and land are inseparable. Therefore, the colonization and appropriation of the Native lands signify the destruction of the Native culture and belief system, so vastly explored through all Native literary productions. Alix Casteel further explains that Native American worldview presupposes that the earth and all living beings are united in one harmonious ecosystem and that Native Americans place themselves within that ecosystem (Casteel, 1994, p. 50). For example, in *Mean Spirit*, the Hill people community and the Watona Indians all unite in an attempt to save the sacred place of the powerful bat medicine, the Sorrow Cave, and the bats themselves, from the whites who want to kill them out of fear and lack of understanding. While whites believe bats carry rabies, the Indian people of the Watona and Hill communities turn to them and the sacred cave as a means of healing and a way that would enable their "survivance" as will be discussed in further detail. According to Andrew Smith, "the animals and land … are the very repositories of Osage knowledge" in Hogan's *Mean Spirit* (2000, p. 176). In this respect, it can be argued that Hogan's novel paints the picture of the intrinsic relationship between the Native people and their land, whereas, at the same time, that relationship represents the main source of power against the colonial imperatives.

3. Space in *Mean Spirit*

In this particular novel, the story about the Indian Territory revolves around the problems of land theft, untried and unprosecuted murders, injustice, racism, government trickery and manipulations and cultural imposition which are opposed by the indigenous belief system which presupposes unity with nature and all living beings as a means of survival against oppression and genocide. In that sense, the space of the Indian Territory is represented as a conflicting space in which two opposing cultures, Native American and white, clash. As Hogan writes in *Mean Spirit*, "The Indian world is on a collision course with the white world … It's more than a race war. They are waging a war with earth" (Hogan, 1990, p. 13). The "race war" and the "war with earth" Hogan mentions are enacted in the novel through manipulation and murders of Native people and merciless exploitation of land for oil and cattle grazing. These two wars the whites were waging against the indigenous community in the Indian Territory represent the colonizing endeavor driven by the materialist view of land, nature and indigenous people brought by the settlers and rooted in the Manifest Destiny. In the colonizing frame of mind, land and nature are considered to be commodities to be exploited and used for the purpose of taming the wilderness and acquiring land and wealth. Similarly, the people who already inhabited the land are considered to be savages in need of being educated and civilized by the more advanced settlers. These particular ideas are explored throughout Hogan's *Mean Spirit* which talks about the white colonization of the Osage land fueled by the discovery of oil and the possibility of acquiring wealth. As Alix Casteel claims,

> Terry P. Wilson comments in his book *The Underground Reservation: Osage Oil* that "[f]or many of the white inhabitants of Osage County, the tribe occupied the same category as the area's other natural resources: grazing land and mineral deposits" (135). Linda Hogan takes this idea and works it into the narrative structure of her novel *Mean Spirit*. In her novel, the Euroamericans view the oil-rich Osage as a form of natural resource akin to the oil itself. Sentences referring to the oil – "The dam would not go in until all the dark wealth was removed from inside the land" – might as easily refer to the dark and wealthy Indians (10). The dam to the hungry greed of the enterprising Euroamericans would not go in until all the dark and wealthy Indians were removed from their land. … The Euroamericans in Hogan's novel have a low regard for any kind of natural resource, reducing both the land and the Native Americans to exploitable commodities. (Casteel, 1994, pp. 49-50)

In this sense, both Native people and the land are used as commodities to be exploited for the purpose of obtaining wealth. While indigenous people are murdered and their money stolen through guardian program without any legal repercussions or punishments, nature is being mercilessly exploited and destroyed. By using real historical events of the 1920s as the basis for her novel, Hogan's aim also seems to be to rewrite historical injustices and to tell the story of colonization and oppression from the point of view of the indigenous people. In this sense, the novel focuses on showing the negative consequences of the Manifest Destiny and its idea of progress and civilization which results in the destruction of nature and genocide of the Indian people. In other words, "[t]he dramatized experience of the marginalized and the dispossessed in *Mean Spirit* subvert[s] and correct[s] the official discourse of progress, equality and prosperity" (Kroumova-Krasteva, 1999, p. 59).

The materialist and consumerist view of land and people shaping the space of the Indian Territory is evident through the merciless use and abuse of nature and indigenous people enabled by the state and government laws and legislations. As soon as oil is discovered under seemingly barren land, the whites came in droves seeking an opportunity to make profit from it. The greed for the land and the money that can be made from it seems palpable throughout the novel: "It doesn't matter anymore if there's oil under it; if it's land, someone wants it" (Hogan, 1990, p. 264). In *Mean Spirit*, Native people are murdered for land and title rights to it and these murders are not addressed by the judicial system. Thus, it can be argued that Hogan explores the issues of crime, injustice, government manipulations and trickery in the Indian Territory. As already mentioned before, the novel opens with the murder of Grace Blanket, one of the wealthiest Indian women in Watona, Indian Territory. Before her murder, there were 17 more suspicious deaths, and after her murder, many more are killed. However, the murders are not prosecuted or tried, even though the stories about them appear in all national newspapers. The novel suggests that the murders are not addressed by the judicial system because of the conflicting jurisdictions. As Stace Red Hawk, an Indian agent from the U.S. Bureau of Investigation (federal police institution which was a predecessor to the FBI) explains, "We can't do anything until there's a crime on Indian land. It's not our jurisdiction" (Hogan, 1990, p. 87). Therefore, in the novel, jurisdiction over crimes committed is inherently connected to the exact place where they happened – to the land. And, in the eyes of the government, represented by the U.S. Bureau of Investigation, Indian land is considered to be the federal land: "…not one of the murders took place on Indian land. We can only move on federal land. Whoever's guilty is smart as a whip. Sometimes I think they, or he, works for the government" (Hogan, 1990, p. 219). The excerpt shows the problematic relationship between the Osage and their land – while the tribe owns the land legally, they are powerless over the crimes committed there because the U.S. government lays claim on their land (since reservation land is considered to be a gift given to the tribes as already mentioned before). Their tribal sovereignty is thus completely denied which testifies to the marginalized and oppressed position of the Osage who live in the Indian Territory. The excerpt further shows that the people from the government, with intimate knowledge of such racist and oppressive laws and legislations, are involved in the murders as the trials will ultimately prove. The inability of the justice system to protect the Native people and provide them justice is best seen through the character of Benoit, Sara Blanket's husband. He was accused of murdering Sara and blowing up their home. Even though he is innocent, he is held in prison for months without any legal action being taken towards his case being tried:

> Benoit was being held without arraignment. Because of his citizenship in an Indian nation they had not yet brought him to trial. Federal court did not want to try the case, though they claimed that Indian country was federal jurisdiction. County court couldn't try Benoit even though they held the young man in county jail. And the tribal court wanted him released for lack of evidence. It was argued from place to place who had jurisdiction and who didn't. Forrest [Benoit's lawyer] believed Benoit was innocent, but Benoit would tell him nothing. (Hogan, 1990, p. 191)

As the excerpt indicates, the conflict between federal, state and tribal government stalls any legal action while Benoit is held in prison against the law. Ultimately, Benoit commits suicide because of the legal enigma over the conflicting jurisdictions which render him helpless.

In *Mean Spirit*, Hogan suggests that such a state of affairs is made possible by the geopolitically motivated allotment policy. As Stirrup explains, the goal of the allotment policy was to break apart tribal communities and structures for the purpose of easier assimilation into the white society (2010, p. 6). It can be argued that even more important goal of the allotment policy was land theft – while every indigenous individual was to receive 160 acres of land for farming and cultivation, all the remaining land was open for white settlement. Hogan mentions the Dawes Act at the very beginning of the novel in order to explain how Grace and Sara Blanket come into possession of the land richest in oil, by accident (Hogan, 1990, p. 8). The sisters chose the land which was barren, ignorant of the fact that there is oil underneath it which will cost them their lives. As a matter of fact, the novel suggests that all of the murders in Indian Territory are related to John Hale, local oil and cattle magnate, and his accomplices (sheriff Jess Gold and his helpers) who wanted to lay claim on the land and mineral rights of the murdered Indians. The physical fragmentation of the land in Indian Territory seems to obstruct justice and thus opens space for every "outlaw and crook … to hole up and be safe from the law" (Hogan, 1990, p. 52) making the Indian Territory "outlaw country through and through" (Hogan, 1990, p. 127).

The issues of injustice, oppression and marginalization of the Indian people are also in the focus of Hogan's exploration of the government's policy called the guardian program. The guardian program, racist in its essence, was designed specifically for the oil-rich Osage for the purpose of taking their mining and grazing money. This particular program dictated that the Osage people are to be declared competent or incompetent based on how they manage their newly acquired wealth, or, in other words, how they spend their money. If they are declared incompetent to deal with their money, they are assigned a legal guardian that is to take over their finances. Following the stereotype that Native people are savage and primitive beings with lesser cognitive abilities owing to their race, the white clerks in the Indian Territory assume that they cannot manage money because of how they spend it: Jim Josh buys three cars and uses them as hothouses to grow tomatoes while Grace buys a piano which she then leaves in the chicken coop for chickens to nest. Hogan notes: "They [the white clerks from Washington] had ideas about Indians, that they were unschooled, ignorant people who knew nothing about life or money" (Hogan, 1990, p. 60). The notion of indigenous inferiority, entrenched in the dominant white ideology, results in the government policy of guardian program which further marginalizes and oppresses the indigenous people by pushing them into poverty against which they cannot fight. When Moses Graycloud comes to Watona on the payment day in order to receive the money for the land he leases for cattle grazing, he is only given a percentage of money he was supposed to get because he is a full blood Indian. Moreover, Moses is assigned two legal guardians as well, and the majority of the money he is due to get from grazing leases goes to the guardians/lawyers for their fees. In the end, Moses still owes them money (Hogan, 1990, p. 241). Alix Casteel explains:

> Because the Osage do not take their wealth "seriously," they are judged primitive and child-like. In the spring of 1922, nearly all of the full-blood Indians were deemed incompetent and placed under the authority of guardians who would control the money. Mixed-bloods, although deemed competent, were ineligible to receive full payments. The logic at work here is that Indian blood confers the right to receive money, while white blood guarantees the right to control money. Therefore, the mixed-bloods receive partial payments because they are only partially Indian, but because they are partially white they automatically have a better chance of keeping whatever portion they do receive. On the other hand, the full-blood Osage cannot retain their oil money because they *are*, as "natural" resources, the oil money. (Casteel, 1994, p. 57)

In other words, the guardian program is based on the stereotype of Native American racial inferiority which signifies that indigenous people are incapable of managing their newly acquired wealth owing to their Native blood. Moreover, this policy shows that "there is no place for a rich Indian in a white man's world … The very concept of a wealthy Indian, let alone the existence of such, is offensive to white people" (Kroumova-Krasteva, 1999, p. 57). Moses is helpless against this policy during the payment day:

> The guards knew that the situation could explode at any time, but the Indians knew, from history itself, that it was a smart thing to keep silent on the affairs and regulations of Washington, to be still and as invisible as possible. They might be cheated, but they still had life, and until only recently, even that was not guaranteed under the American laws, so they remained trapped, silent and wary. (Hogan, 1990, p. 63)

The excerpt paints a clear picture of the oppressed and subjugated position Native people suffer. Native American lives are completely delineated by white society's racist and marginalizing laws in the Indian Territory: "[t]he law is on their side because it's their law" tells Moses to Belle as a way of explaining his own helplessness at the face of injustice (Hogan, 1990, p. 113). Lawlessness and injustice caused by the geopolitically motivated allotment policy are perhaps best evident in a sham trial for Hale and his associates. Hale pleads 'not guilty' while witnesses called up to testify against him end up dead in mysterious car accidents or simply disappear: "Hale sat tall, almost self-righteous; his circle of stolen money and power had built him far beyond human feeling and, it seemed, far above the law" (Hogan, 1990, p. 326). As the excerpt clearly indicates, corruption and greed run deep in the Indian Territory when it comes to obtaining any type of justice for the indigenous people. This trial is proclaimed a mistrial, but the tribe refuses to surrender so they pay 20,000 dollars to the Bureau of Investigation to conduct their own investigation. Ironically, the first murder that does take place on federal land and is the object of Bureau's investigation is the murder of Mr. Forrest, a white man who comes close to learning who is behind all of the deaths in the Indian Territory. During this particular trial, the truth comes to light:

> He [Mardy Green, one of the witnesses] told a tale of misery and of crime against the Indian people. As he talked, he began to blend in with the room, his voice, hesitating now and then, becoming one with the walls, a part of the wood, a part of the stone, a part of history. He simplified the war against the dark-skinned people: they were in the way of progress. Everyone needed the land, the oil, the beef-fattening grass, and the water, and all was fair, he told them. "We have to go on, as a race, I mean." He looked earnestly at the eyes of the others. "It's like clearing the land for your farm, or hunting the food you eat. They shoot

> deer, don't they? Well, maybe you would call that a plot," he said, "or call it murder, but here it's just survival". (Hogan, 1990, p. 327)

It can be argued that the excerpt above demonstrates the philosophy of the Manifest Destiny and colonization of the indigenous people. In the eyes of the white community, it is justifiable to kill and abuse Native people because they, as racially inferior beings, stand in the way of progress. This excerpt exemplifies also Terry P. Wilson's claim that for the white society in the Indian Territory, Native people represented natural goods to be exploited just like the oil, the grass or animals. Or, in the words of Alix Casteel: "The Osage are shot, blown up, and poisoned in the same manner, and for the same reasons, that the earth is drilled, dynamited and despoiled for oil" (Casteel, 1994, p. 50). The excerpt ultimately portrays dehumanization of the indigenous people in the eyes of the white community. Even though Hale is re-tried in the federal court, the situation does not change for the Native people: "The belated justice, if it can be called justice, does not change anything for the Indians. The murders go on" (Kroumova-Krasteva, 1999, p. 57). In the light of these events, and under a false threat that the army is coming once again to relocate the indigenous people, many Osage decide to sell their land and leave Indian Territory. Stace Red Hawk concludes that for the Native people in Indian Territory, the world is "[o]ne eye opened, one eye closed … only half of a scale of justice" (Hogan, 1990, p. 333).

Hogan indicates in the novel that this situation is made possible by the long history of colonization full of crimes against indigenous people that have not been addressed by the law or punished. The "geographical inquiry into historical experience" of colonization in *Mean Spirit* is evident in Hogan's mention of the Trail of Tears, Ghost Dance and buffalo extermination as events from history that shape the present situation in the novel. Lettie, Belle's daughter, recalls the Trail of Tears as a part of her family history when her grandmother and her tribe were forcefully relocated from their homeland into the Indian Territory (Hogan, 1990, p. 210). Historically speaking, many Native people (including the Osage, the Choctaw and the Chickasaws among others) were killed or died during the relocation into the barren land of designated as the reservation land for the relocated tribes. Hogan also mentions the Ghost Dance and the massacre of the Sioux that ensued. Lionel Tall, a Sioux man that comes to perform a healing ceremony in Watona, remembers the Ghost Dance and Native preacher Wevokah who preached that the white supremacy will come to an end. However, by taking part in the Ghost Dance, the religious ceremony conducted by Wevokah, the members of Tall's tribe were massacred, along with his family (Hogan, 1990, pp. 220-221). Finally, there is also mention of the extermination of the buffalo by the whites (Hogan, 1990, p. 117). The buffalo represented the basic food source for many of the Native tribes and was a respected animal. The Trail of Tears, the Ghost Dance and buffalo extinction represent pivotal moments in the history of indigenous-US relations which shows the murdering and destroying impulse of the colonizing society which is replicated in the present moment of the novel through the genocide of the Indian people and destruction of land and animals for profit.

The materialist view of the people and the land behind the colonizing endeavor is also represented through the destruction of land from oil extraction and cattle grazing as well as senseless killing of bats and eagles. The materialist view of land is evident throughout *Mean Spirit* – there is constant mention of maps hanging on the walls of law officials in Watona. These maps represent geological surveys and predictions where the oil deposits can be found. The mapping projects are done throughout the Indian Territory and they represent a white way of measuring and quantifying the land for the purpose of exploitation and profit, in much the similar fashion as the Dawes Act. They indicate a view of the land as a physical entity that can be divided and exploited, to the detriment of the people living on it as well as the nature. The fragmentation of the land for oil extraction parallels the fragmentation of the land from the allotment policy – both are to the detriment of the Native people. When Belle Graycloud, a matriarch and a pillar of the Native community and its traditions, sees such a map in sheriff Gold's office, she is terrified because she sees that a part of her land is mapped as a potential oil well. She understands that if the whites realize her land has oil, they will likely murder her and her family for it. In a similar fashion, white hunters come to Indian Territory to hunt eagles so that they can make trophies out of them. Belle is devastated because of their killing: "For what seemed like a long time, Belle stood rooted to the spot. Her marrow went cold. She stared at the dead, sacred eagles. They looked like a tribe of small, gone people, murdered and taken away in the back of a truck. The hunters were busy beside the truck, counting the eagles. There were three hundred and seventeen carcasses in all" (Hogan, 1990, p. 110). While the hunters see "just birds", Belle sees "a tribe of people" that is killed for no reason which testifies to two completely opposed world-views on nature (Hogan, 1990, p. 110). For Moses and Belle, killing of eagles is a massacre because "mere trophy-hunting has no value in tribal communities" (Casteel, 1994, p. 52). The killing of the eagles can ultimately be understood as a metaphor for the killing of the Native people in the novel.

What can be concluded time and time again in the novel is that in the white society, the land and the animals are viewed as commodities to be used.

The materialist view of land is imposed onto the indigenous people as a part of the colonizing efforts of the white community over the Native people. In order to keep their allotted pieces of land, the Osage are supposed to somehow "improve" the land (Hogan, 1990, pp. 211-212). As Linda Hogan suggests in the novel, the improvements required seem to be completely arbitrary. Or, in other words, they depend on whether the whites are interested in the particular piece of land or not. For example, at one point in the novel, Belle Graycloud wakes up to find her land fenced off for cattle grazing under the explanation that she did not improve her land. Throughout the novel, Hogan portrays Belle Graycloud as a woman who is in tune with the land and off the land. She grows corn, has a garden in which she grows vegetables and she takes care of her bees. Along with her husband, Michael Graycloud, she runs a successful farm. However, her land is wanted by the local magnate John Hale, the man responsible for the killing of many of the wealthy Native people. Against him, Belle and Moses are powerless since Hale is supported by law enforcement and unjust laws designated to deprive the indigenous people of their land and their rights. In the Indian Agency, an institution created for the purpose of helping Native people obtain their rights, Belle tries to get her land back but is met with scorn. When she asks the agent: "Why is it that so many crimes are backed up by your laws?", he simply replies "I don't know" (Hogan, 1990, p. 305). As the excerpt clearly indicates, Native people are helpless against the laws created for the purpose of their ultimate eradication.

John Hale represents an epitome of this materialist view of land and the insatiable desire of the white people to acquire wealth at any cost. His behavior and actions are directly responsible for the destruction of land and murders of many indigenous people. For example, Hale introduces an invasive type of grass that fattens the cattle easily and thus increases the profits for Indian people who lease the land for cattle grazing. But, while the grass is suitable for feeding the cattle, it is, at the same time, damaging for the land. The grass "had roots so strong they spirited away the minerals and water from other trees and plants, leaving tracts of land barren-looking. Moses Graycloud called it "Hale Grass." […] Some of them [the Indians] renamed the grass "Hell Grass" (Hogan, 1990, p. 54). This invasive grass can be interpreted as a symbol of white colonization of the land to the point of complete devastation as the excerpt above demonstrates.

The money-making endeavor behind oil extraction and cattle grazing leave the nature and the environment of the Indian Territory devastated:

> Up the road from Grace's sunburned roses, was an enormous crater a gas well blowout had made in the earth. It was fifty feet deep and five hundred feet across. This gouge in the earth, just a year earlier, had swallowed five workmen and ten mules. The water was gone from that land forever, the trees dead, and the grass, once long and rich, was burned black. The cars passed by this ugly sight, and not far from there, they passed another oil field where pump, fueled by diesel, worked day and night. These bruised fields were noisy and dark. The earth had turned oily black. Blue flames rose up and roared like torches of burning gas. The earth bled oil. (Hogan, 1990, pp. 53-54)

Hogan's apocalyptic passage indicates the level of destruction of nature brought about by white colonization and exploitation. Destruction of land caused by overgrazing and oil exploitation destroys the Native community as is evident in Tar Town, a town in the Indian Territory where many Native people whose land was destroyed live:

> The camp was an extension of the black and destroyed land, a scramble of structures stretched out a long distance behind the mesquite hills. The shacks and shelters had been put together in any way possible in order to provide cover from the rain, and most of them were covered with black tar paper.
>
> Seeing the once-beautiful people living there in poverty and misery, Silver became very quiet. Belle thought how many ruined great people lived in that tar-paper village, broken men and destroyed women who had once been singers and kind mothers. The scrawny brown children did not look full of future. Both Belle and Silver were silently afraid that the sickness of despair, as devastating as smallpox, might be contagious. (Hogan, 1990, pp. 274-275)

In the words of Kroumova-Krasteva, "[b]y leasing their land to the oil company [or for cattle grazing], the Indians in fact help the intruders destroy their community and ultimately their way of life" (1999, p. 53). Hogan states in the novel: "Hale had hired Indian men to help him cut, burn, and clear their own land" (Hogan, 1990, p. 54) which made "[t]he Indians … happy to learn business ways, but before long they had no choice themselves but to become meat-eaters with sharp teeth, devouring their own land and themselves in the process" (Hogan, 1990, p. 54). Senseless consumerism made possible by exploitation of land engulfs Belle's own daughter Louise who joins a dance competition with her husband Lloyd in order to win a new car. During the dance marathon, Louise and her husband seem to lose all of their humanity while their son Ben dismisses them:

> Louise reached toward him with an outstretched arm, but he [Ben] took a step back. She appeared ghoulish, as if she reached up from the underworld. She was barely breathing. Her muscles, other than the arm, were limp. His father held her hand, loosely. Ben was shocked at the way they looked, both of them white-faced, their eyes glazed and distant. They looked wasted down to nothing, and they smelled like the stale room, he was sure of it. "Ben." She smiled again, like a demon. He turned away. (Hogan, 1990, p. 253)

The excerpt paints the picture of a family falling apart under the burden of the constant race for money and material goods imposed onto the indigenous people. Blair explains that what many Native people "ignore in their rush to gain material products of white culture is their old, vital connection with the land" (Blair, 1994, p. 19). While dance marathon is considered normal in a community delineated by white standards of consumerism and money grab, the Hill community of Native people who live away from the town sees it as an act of self-loathing:

> One day Cry ran up to the bluffs and tried to describe a marathon to her people "The dancers never stop. They dance until they are dead on their feet. They eat standing up. They hold each other like one tree leaning on another."
> Oh, said the people, that's good, an offering. Is that for the corn crop? And in town, too; who would have thought it of people who didn't seem to love the land.
> "No," said the young woman. "They do it for money." She looked grave and shook her head. […] "They don't love their bodies down there," said the runner. (Hogan, 1990, pp. 254-255)

The passage above indicates two different world-views: one that presupposes unity between people and land where dancing until exhaustion is accepted when it represents a sacrifice for the land and better crops and thus the future and survival; and its complete opposite. For the Native people of Hill community which adheres to the traditional way of life, such self-sacrifice represents a self-hate instilled by white society's greed, consumerism and destruction.

While some Osage accept the tenets of the white culture, like Louise, many Osage suffer because of the destruction of the land. They come to the local diviner Michael Horse to help them ward off bad dreams and feelings of fear. However, Horse reminds them that: "earth was being drilled and dynamited open. Disturbances of earth, he told them, made for disturbances of life and sleep" (Hogan, 1990, p. 39). This excerpt indicates a close connection between Native people and the land which is being severed by colonization and exploitation. The novel opens with Michael Horse failing in his prediction that there will be a dry spell in the Indian Territory. The fact that his own prediction is wrong testifies to the broken relationship between the people and the land.

The intrinsic relationship between the Native people and their environment at the same time represents the source of "survivance" and struggle against the colonizing society. At one point in the novel, a girl dies by being infected with rabies. Mistakenly, the white people believe that she got the rabies from bats that live in the nearby Sorrow Cave. The sheriff puts a one-dollar bounty on every bat killed so a party of white men from Watona goes on a killing spree. While this "genocidal impulse implicit in the moneymaking endeavors of Euroamericans in Indian Territory reaches its fullest expression with the war on bats" (Casteel, 1994, p. 52), this incident at the same time becomes a Native community gathering and reaffirming event where people come together to protect "bat medicine, one of the strongest traditions of healing" (Hogan, 1990, p. 136). The protection of the bats in the Sorrow Cave represents resistance to oppression, marginalization and genocide. Moses, the Hill People, Jim Josh, Michael Horse, Martha and Joe Billy all join Belle and unified, they manage to ward off the whites. Thus, Hogan emphasizes that only a unified community can resist against colonization and subjugation. After the white men leave, the Indian people spend the night in the cave talking to each other and passing the time together. Thus, community is again and reaffirmed in the face of violence, oppression and killing (Hogan, 1990, pp. 281-282).

Sorrow Cave represents a sacred place in the Indian community since it is the place where powerful bat medicine resides. Many characters in the novel, Belle Graycloud, Stace Red Hawk, Michael Horse among others, at one point of the novel go to the Sorrow Cave in search of peace and reconnection with the land. In a world that "wasn't setting just right on its axis, and things had gotten all out of kilter. Every one of them needed medicine, needed protection" (Hogan, 1990, p. 169). In the Sorrow Cave, Michael Horse finds the bat medicine bundle that belonged to Sam Billy, a practitioner of bat medicine. His medicine bundle represents "the older world, wanting out" (Hogan, 1990, p. 138) to heal the spiritually wounded and damaged Indian people. Bats are sacred for Native people because of their dual nature: that of animal and that of the bird. The whites who gathered to shoot and gas the bats call Belle backwards and crazy for wanting to protect them: "But Belle pretended to hear nothing as she remained there protecting the double world of bats with their whistling songs and their lives in the cool and deep darkness, the bats who were husbands to trees, the beautiful creatures who were hated by those who lived in what they called the light" (Hogan, 1990, p. 279). Smith explains,

> [w]ell programmed with the manifest lesson that bats are unclean, the white men mistakenly believe that the creatures carry rabies. They despise the bats because of their dual nature and label them "flying rats" in the newspaper … Put simply, the white people hate the bats because they do not readily fall into the segregated categories of Western culture; they hate the bats because they are not bifurcated. Belle Graycloud knows they are not evil, and the very night before she defends the winged animals at Sorrow Cave, she triumphantly recognizes the wealth Indians have that whites do not: "Bats! They don't have bats" (1990, p. 277). (Smith, 2000, p. 182).

In other words, bats do not easily fall into the binary categories of the western world, they are mammals, but they can also fly, like birds. As such, they live in "the double world" in a similar fashion to Native people who are also forced to live in the double world, white and Native. In that sense, bats can be interpreted as a metaphor for Native people and their position between two cultures and two different world-views, as discussed above. According to Belle Graycloud, "One of the best things about bats is that they are a race of people that stand in two worlds like we do" (Hogan, 1990, p. 257). This shows an intrinsic connection between Native people and their environment, from which they learn. In the novel, the successful navigation between two worlds (like that of the bats) represents a strategy of survival for Native people:

> But bats, if not the dispensers of survivance in Mean Spirit, are the models for it. Hogan clearly cherishes their positioning in liminal space when she addresses in an interview with Scholer such an advantage for her own people: "If you live on the boundaries between cultures, you

> are both of those cultures and of neither of those cultures, and you can move with great mobility in any direction you want" (141). The nature of bats – a unification of the seemingly irreconcilable physical differences of bird and animal in one creature – suggests a power to mediate, to exist in more than one world and to move in and out of oppositional space. Such an ability is of great value. (Smith, 2000, p. 181)

Native people who are able to mediate between worlds seem to be successful in *Mean Spirit*. For example, Belle Graycloud, while being a fierce protector of the nature and animals, at the same time has deep knowledge and understanding of the workings of the white world as used them for her advantage. In a similar fashion to Nanapush from Erdrich's *Tracks*, she navigates between two worlds – when she wants to visit Benoit in prison and not raise suspicion, she dresses in traditional clothes and justifies her visit with a remark that she wants to take care of his soul: "You know we are about those things," she said and he [sheriff Jess Gold] knew she meant Indians" (Hogan, 1990, p. 82). By using the stereotype of Native spirituality, she manages to work around the system and get what she wants. Once she discovers oil on her land, she does everything to hide it because she realizes oil will get her and her family killed. Thus, she protects them even for a little while.

However, Hogan's ending poses a question whether a successful navigation between worlds so opposed can actually be achieved. At the very end of the novel, the Graycloud house is blown up and the family is forced to flee to the Hill community. On the one hand, Callanan claims that "…the Grayclouds' flight back to the traditional Osage community … suggest[s] refusal of the normative and destructive powers imposed on [the family] (Callanan, 2016, p. 252). She further states that "Hogan's ending results in a clear severing of the white and Native populations" (Callanan, 2016, p. 253). But, on the other hand, Hogan's strategy of "survivance" described through the metaphor of bats and enacted by Belle can provide a means of surviving and continuing in a discriminatory, racist and oppressive world. Erdrich's Nanapush, King's Latisha, Hogan's Belle, in a trickster-like manner, navigate between worlds and succeed.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the space of the Indian Territory is delineated by two conflicting world-views, white and Native. The exploration of space of the Indian Territory centers on the problems of injustice towards the Osage community, land exploitation and theft, brought about by geopolitically motivated laws, as well as racism and imposition of the dominant white culture onto the indigenous people enabled by colonization and its assimilation policies. Marginalization, oppression and ultimately genocide are countered by the Native belief system that presupposes the unity of nature and people, as is seen in the tribal bat medicine. Hogan ultimately disproves the idea that history is inherently linked to progress by focusing on telling the story from Native perspective that shows the negative consequences of land exploitation that result in violence against indigenous people and destruction of land and environment. She shows that Native people live in a marginalized and oppressive world which damages them and their sense of self as is evident in the family of Lloyd, Louise and their son Ben. This damage is only repaired through learning and practicing tribal medicine which provides a successful way to navigate between these worlds and thus enables Native "survivance".

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Vladimir M. Vujošević
University Donja Gorica
Vladimir.Vujosevic@udg.edu.me

TRANSNATIONAL CONDITION AND SPATIAL CONTROL: (DE)SACRALIZATION OF SPACE IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S "THIS BLESSED HOUSE"

Abstract: Interpreting Jhumpa Lahiri's "This Blessed House," a short story included in her Pulitzer Prize-winning collection *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), this paper explores the meaning and function of the gimcrack Catholic paraphernalia the story's protagonists Sanjeev and Twinkle, a newlywed Indian American couple, uncover in their newly purchased house. It could be claimed that Sanjeev's explicit rejection of these religious objects does not represent (as the usual interpretation of the story goes) his effort to preserve his home and marriage from the tenacious influence of the dominant Christian culture. On the contrary, this paper argues that his virulent opposition to the tawdry religious artifacts functions as a symptom covering a more personal marital conflict, and also, ironically, serves as an important tool of his self-styled "westernization."

Key words: transnationality, space, Jhumpa Lahiri, "This Blessed House," hybridity, postcolonialism, kitsch, poltergeist

1. Uncanny spaces

Jhumpa Lahiri's "This Blessed House" explores the first marital experiences of the young Indo-American couple, Sanjeev and Tanima (nicknamed Twinkle). Thirty-three-year-old Sanjeev is an Indian born MIT graduate working for a renowned company in Hartford, Connecticut, while his parents are still living in Calcutta. Twenty-seven-year-old Twinkle, pursuing a Ph.D. in English, is the second-generation Indian American with parents permanently settled in California. Before their marriage, Sanjeev "had never been in love" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 156), presumably relying on his parents and the broader family network to provide him with a wife suited to his caste, in line with the Hindu traditions. On the other hand, Twinkle, who had had a few American boyfriends before she met Sanjeev at an event arranged by their matchmakers, is more Americanized and thus (apparently) less dependent on traditional structures of the old country. Since it could be preliminarily claimed that Sanjeev stands for a traditional, more homogenous model of identity and that Twinkle represents more "fluid" social practices, their marriage seems to provide an interesting ground for negotiating different cultural experiences and conflicting expectations of marriage and relationship.

The story begins with the couple returning to the United States from their honeymoon in India. They move into their new home only to discover that the house is replete with tucked-away objects that belonged to the previous owners. These are mainly religious paraphernalia: images of Jesus, Mary, and the saints. Since Sanjeev and Twinkle's approach to these "holy objects" is utterly different, they will soon become a medium of their first marital crisis. For Sanjeev, these items are worthless kitsch of a foreign religion. "We're not Christian" (Lahiri, 1999, pp. 137, 146, 151, 152), Sanjeev vehemently asserts several times throughout the story. Twinkle, however, displays an unusual interest in their new home's strange heritage. Ignoring Sanjeev's apparent frustration, she gathers these objects and arrays them in prominent places. The tension provoked by these items is gaining momentum throughout the story. On one occasion, Sanjeev even revels in a strange iconoclastic fantasy of smashing the big plaster statue of the Virgin Mary they have discovered in the garden and fantasizes about using the moment of Twinkle's absence to gather all the holy objects and take them to the dump (Lahiri, 1999, p. 155).

The image of Christian sacramentals emerging unexpectedly from various parts of the house evokes a poltergeist scenario. There is indeed some parodic "gothic" quality to the apparent ability of the house to ceaselessly generate parts of the strange religious "menagerie," to almost miraculously "reanimate" the uncanny objects from its drawers, compartments, and dark corners. This peculiar capacity of the house is never completely exhausted even weeks after the couple has moved in, rendering the space of their new home uncannily larger than seemed at first, almost ungovernable, potentially "alive."

In the poltergeist cinema, the house is always haunted by some previous silenced identity. The attempts to repress or ignore its heritage leads to its reappearance as an eerie reminder of the permanent instability of cultural boundaries. Furthermore, the idea of haunted space in cinematography is strangely evocative of the politics of colonial authority (a haunted house is often built upon an old Indian cemetery or at a location of some colonial atrocity, etc.). The haunted space constantly reminds new tenants of its past through some unsettling presence that tirelessly keeps coming to the fore. The previous life is never successfully obliterated. “The emptiness of the house is illusory” (Kuortti, 2007, p. 215).

2. Image and hegemony

It should be noted that in works of the poltergeist genre, the “thing” that haunts the house is rarely a part of the dominant hegemonic culture. Hegemony does not need some sort of revenant “afterlife” to achieve its purpose. Uncanny voices that haunt the space of new tenants are almost always the ineffectual subjects of a given culture – doomed lower-class lovers haunting an aristocratic mansion (in James’ *The Turn of the Screw*), slaves (in Morrison’s *Beloved*), children (in Waters’ *The Little Stranger*), dishonored maidens (in Lewis’ *The Monk*), Native Americans (in Kubrick’s *The Shining*), etc. In various works of the genre, there is always a link between repression and “apparition.” In a subversive way, this is also echoed in Lahiri’s story.

If the story is read as an almost allegorical identity narrative concerning a Hindu immigrant couple moving into a new American home (a metaphorical representation of America itself) only to encounter there the preexisting layers of America’s historically dominant Christian heritage still exerting in various subtle ways (even in the new transnational setting) its influence on the newcomers from different religious backgrounds, then such a reading can certainly be contested when the specific nature of the “sacred objects” the couple encounters is closely examined.

The sacred “heirloom” of the house is ostesively Catholic. One of the images Twinkle discovers portrays St. Francis of Assisi, an explicitly Catholic figure. Devotion to the Virgin Mary (two of her representations are found in the house) is the unmistakable visual sign of Catholicism (at least from the American Protestant perspective), and the depiction of Christ with the crown of thorns, shedding tears is a recognizable trope of popular Catholic devotional aesthetics. However, the couple is completely uninformed concerning the specific religious context of the “sacred legacy” of their Connecticut household. At one point, Twinkle wonders if the previous tenants were “born-agains” (Lahiri, 1999, p. 137). The obvious irony is that this phrase is an explicit reference to the dominant American evangelicalism that has been traditionally hostile to Catholic devotional practices (especially to the use of religious imagery in worship).

The problem with the allegorical reading of the story is that the Catholic imagery of the house cannot unproblematically represent the dominant religious and cultural heritage of American history. It is a well-known fact that the very inception of prerevolutionary Puritan America (Connecticut itself began as a Puritan settlement) was marked by virulent anti-Catholicism. In the following decades, Catholicism will become the ultimate "foreign" religion in the popular imaginings of the first white Protestant Americans. From the mid-19th century, nativist, anti-immigrant political populism was frequently fueled by the anti-Catholic rhetoric (Irish and Italians were usually seen as the ultimate unassimilable and undesirable immigrants). Additionally, among the prejudiced religious polemicists of the period, a peculiar tendency of "orientalizing" Catholicism was manifesting itself. In the Anglo-American polemical context of the era, Catholicism was often styled as a "non-white" religion, and Pope and bishops were sometimes portrayed as Eastern despots dressed in Oriental attires (see Griffin, 2004, p. 134). Interestingly, within these charged religious polemics of the 19th century, Roman Catholics were occasionally compared to Hindus. The Protestant polemicists of the era, in their attempts to portray "Catholicism as Hindoo paganism" (Griffin, 2004, p. 171) have often insisted that "both Hindu and Catholic rituals are virtually identical" (Pennington, 2005, p. 67), equating, e.g., the devotion to the Virgin Mary with the cult of Kali (Griffin, 2004, p. 137). With this background, it seems highly problematic to interpret the Catholic artifacts from Lahiri's story as some kind of symbolic representations of the dominant American culture.

Far from being the undeniable sign of the incessant operation of cultural hegemony that openly intrudes on the life of a couple belonging to a religious minority, the Catholic artifacts Sanjeev and Twinkle keep on discovering are actually the true cultural "marginalia." They are marginal in almost every sense. As we have seen, they can hardly pass for some emblematic representation of America's dominant Christian identity that persistently looms beneath the surface of multiculturalism. These artifacts are marginal in the aesthetical sense also: some of these objects are over-the-top 3D prayer cards and Christmas snow globes, which in their ludicrousness can hardly be seen as cunning cultural "tools" of imposing dominant and exclusive values. More importantly, they are utterly peripheral, even in the ideological sense. Certainly, various minority communities are still experiencing manifold cultural pressures, even in the professedly multicultural societies. In Lahiri's diasporic narratives, however, this type of pressure is almost never a religious one. Among Sanjeev and Twinkle's American friends and peers, the vast majority of whom belong to the aspiring higher middle-class circle of trained professionals, religious concerns are never voiced, or suggested.

At one instance, Twinkle jeeringly claims that the previous tenants had perhaps left those objects behind in order to convert the future owners (Lahiri, 1999, p. 138), to which Sanjeev bitterly replies that the scheme has obviously succeeded in her case. However, even if we were to imagine Twinkle somehow succumbing to the colonization of Christianity, to the religious lure of plaster statues and salt and pepper shakers resembling the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, it would still be hard to assume that this purported conversion would make her more respectable and better adjusted to her social circle (which was the desired effect of colonial conversions). In a word, it is hard to see her unlikely conversion as a way of succumbing to the implicit influence of the dominant American culture. In a highly secularized context of the late 1990s urban transnational America, the gimcrack Catholic statuary appears as a direct cultural otherness, not as a "cover face" for the dominant social ideology.

It seems that there is nothing in the story to justify the equation of Christian religiosity with the dominant cultural expectations the couple face. One could claim that in the social circles of young, ambitious professionals within which Sanjeev and Twinkle circulate, religious conversions and some newly discovered denominational enthusiasm would hardly present a more respectable choice than simply maintaining one's own (however vague) religious and cultural identity. Perhaps, it is here that one should search for the real motivation of Sanjeev's repulsion towards the "sacred objects."

3. Allegorizing colonial history

The first six weeks of the couple's arranged marriage mark the period in which their initial romantic enchantment ends, while their differences are gradually coming to the fore. Sanjeev is especially irritated by the newly-observed patterns of his wife's behavior. Instead of doing household chores, she reads in bed during the daytime. She takes regular long-distance phone calls to her friends in California, and smokes too much, accidentally dropping the cigarette ash on the floor. He perceives her as being too lazy and disorganized to make elaborate Indian dishes. Things gradually escalate, and almost everything in Twinkle's behavior becomes a nuisance for Sanjeev, even "the way she sometimes spat a little when she spoke" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 156). Incidentally, this growing divide between the spouses is accompanied by the proliferation of the "sacred objects." As if every time Twinkle does something "wrong" in Sanjeev's eyes, a picture of a saint emerges from nowhere. For instance, during one of the mealtime tensions generated by Twinkle's lack of culinary ambition, Sanjeev suddenly perceives that the bread basket is covered with a dishtowel with "the Ten Commandments printed on in" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 157). It seems that the unpredictability of Twinkle is somehow projected onto the house. From Sanjeev's perspective, the religious objects she keeps on discovering come to represent a secret and inexhaustible "excess" that undermines his authority over the domestic space, and consequently over his marriage and life.

The concept of the couple's marital conflicts being materialized through some visible sign of disturbance is precisely in line with the poltergeist narrative the story parodies. In literature, poltergeists were usually perceived as externalized "unconscious parts [of a person], so strong or so troubled they can take on a life of their own" (Waters, 2009, p. 364). It should be noted that in many "ghost stories" (some of which were enumerated in the previous section) the originator of the poltergeist disturbance was often portrayed as a "mischievous" female character, usually mistreated by some male-dominated structure (fathers and husbands, slaveholders, clergy, aristocrats, etc.). A poltergeist allows the conflict to be expanded from the province of psychology to the domain of spatiality.

Mark Chiang (2014, p. 95) rightly cautions against reading "This Blessed House" as a simplified narrative on religious identity conflict. It can be claimed that the whole religious disturbance structuring Lahiri's story is only a symptom covering a deeper and more oblique marital conflict (in the same way chronic anxiety can sometimes take the form of hives). Thus, the religious dispute becomes a visible sign of the couple's broader differences, the singular instantiation of an unlimited list of the more pressing (though censored) marital issues.

Sanjeev's frustration boils down to the fact that Twinkle is not interested in "acting out" his fantasy of the "ideal wife." She regularly indulges in smoking and drinking (the habits commonly perceived as "unfeminine" in patriarchal social contexts). She neglects household duties and detests "chopping garlic and peeling ginger" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 156). She (unintentionally) threatens Sanjeev's masculinity (and his "traditional […] patriarchal views") by "wearing high heels because that makes him look shorter" (Harehdasht et al., 2018, p. 119). Twinkle's "betrayal" of the "traditional" fantasy of marriage enrages Sanjeev to such a degree that he obsessively starts to clean, dust, and cook (in a passive-aggressive manner), comically replicating in himself the desirable behavior of a wife. He is constantly thinking of "the snapshots his mother used to send him from Calcutta, of prospective brides who could sing and sew and season lentils without consulting a cookbook" (Lahiri, 1999, p.

160). He silently laments not choosing one of the women from the Calcutta catalog ("whom he had even ranked in order of preference" before he had met Twinkle). His regret of choosing Twinkle (and thus the more unpredictable and uncontrollable model of marriage) over the more "obedient" catalog wife now sustains the ersatz religious conflict of the story.

It can be claimed that the entire "conversion narrative" (of Sanjeev struggling to preserve their religious and cultural identity while his wife is slowly succumbing to the "hegemonic" lure of Christianity) is nothing more than a rhetorical tool Sanjeev employs in order to regain control and authority over his marriage and domestic space. By trying to provoke assimilationist guilt in Twinkle, he attempts to restore her to a more "obedient" patriarchal identity. Since Sanjeev himself (as a well-adjusted and well-paid professional) is highly familiar with the American, urban, transnational cultural ethos, he understands completely well that to admonish someone not to be ashamed of their own identity and culture (and not to succumb to the hegemonic cultural expectations) is a much more reasonable and respectable attitude than reminding a woman to behave more in accordance with traditional "gender roles". He is careful never to voice his real concerns, lest he should appear overly traditional and narrow-minded. For example, one late afternoon, after finding his wife still in bed, Sanjeev "had wanted to say to her then, You could unpack some boxes. You could sweep the attic. You could retouch the paint on the bathroom windowsill" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 153). Of course, he says none of these things. Instead, he silently takes over these household chores while simultaneously cultivating resentment towards his wife. Religious artifacts are the only uncensored issue of Sanjeev's marital disillusionment. The Catholic paraphernalia becomes the only "legitimate" object of his hatred, the "rightful" substance of his violent *Bildersturm* fantasy. All the violent, petty, frustrating, "unacceptable" feelings that are burdening his relationship with Twinkle are sublimated and projected onto these sacred images.

Instead of dealing with the real issues of his marriage, Sanjeev rhetorically reworks the entire problematic marital situation into an allegory of a broader colonial conflict. He repeatedly (and unnecessarily) reminds Twinkle that they "are not Christian," presenting her thus as a person easily susceptible to utter assimilation. However, far from holding her cultural heritage as something irrelevant, Twinkle (perhaps, no less than Sanjeev) unashamedly engages in various manifestations of her ethnic identity. She regularly eats Indian food (although she lacks the enthusiasm necessary for preparing it), she proudly wears her salwar-kameez, and, most importantly, she has willingly entered into an arranged marriage, one of the most traditional of Indian cultural institutions.

Thus, Sanjeev's reimagining of the matrimonial dispute as some micro-level instantiation of broader colonial politics (which allows him to display his actions as some sort of resistance to the attempts of colonization of his domestic space by the hegemonic Christian imagination) serves the purpose of providing him with moral legitimacy in the marital conflict which he would otherwise lack. Instead of openly voicing his regret that Twinkle lacks the "ideal housewife" skills, he plays a more respectable identity card. Ironically, Sanjeev's reimagining of this specific domestic situation as an allegory of colonial history repeating itself at the micro-level of their family home has the paradoxical result of him unwillingly assuming a mock role of the colonialist trying to domesticate and control a resisting empire. In a way, he is outplayed in a game he purports to lead.

4. The inscrutability of space

"Domestication" of space is, indeed, the focal colonial topic. Comparing Conrad and Flaubert, Edward Said asserts that both authors create characters that retreat to specific "undomesticated" spaces "surrounding themselves in structures they create" (Said, 1994, p. 163). Such a retreat to a hostile location that needs to be "pacified" by the hero's effort "takes the same form as the colonizer at the center of an empire he rules": "Axel Heyst in *Victory* and St. Antoine in *La Tentation* (...) are withdrawn into a place where, like guardians of a magic totality, they incorporate a hostile world purged of its troubling resistances to their control of it. (...) Yet unlike Robinson Crusoe on his island, these modern versions of the imperialist who attempts self-redemption are doomed ironically to suffer interruption and distraction, as what they had tried to exclude from their island worlds penetrates anyway" (Said, 1994, p. 163).

Sanjeev perceives his new house as a place of control, a manifestation of his success and authority. Everything in his life was going according to plan: he got married, he moved into a new home, he expects soon to be promoted to vice president of his company. However, the emerging Christian sacramentals grow to become the uncontrollable symptoms that are challenging his fantasy of ordered life. They are true mediums of "interruptions and distraction" thorough which the space he wants to govern constantly eschews all of his domesticating attempts. What he desperately wants to exclude from his life stubbornly returns (“penetrating anyway”), and Sanjeev, a man obsessed with control, is made helpless at the end of the story. “These interruptions are realistic reminders that no one can, in fact, withdraw from the world into a private version of reality” (Said, 1994, p. 163). There is no such thing as a completely (culturally) sterile world.

It is important to note that this very fantasy of spatial vacuity has considerably influenced crucial colonial attitudes. With the arrival of colonizers, the previous history has to be suppressed, allowing for the “repressed Other Scene” to “erupt” (Žižek, 2001, para. 2) through series of partisan obstructions to the dominant fantasy of control. In a way, the dream of colonialism always had its peas under mattresses.

For the colonial mind, the idea of “enclosed space” (what Foucault has termed “medieval space”)[1] came to represent an important source of resistance to the colonial attempts of spatial governance. Such an understanding of space (which is, interestingly, still employed in generic works of the Gothic fiction with its “haunted spaces” trope) has a certain “enchanted” and “hard-to-govern” quality (what Said has termed “the magical totality”). It is no coincidence that, in the colonial imagination, the space intended for colonization was often portrayed as labyrinthine, atmospherically and geographically capricious, substantially enclosed, and utterly impenetrable, akin to a haunted castle, or an enchanted forest. One should just recall Bradford’s account (in his history *Of Plimoth Plantation*) of Pilgrims surrounded by invisible denizens lurking in deep woods, besieging the Christian colony, and terrifying the settlers by their “hideous & great crie[s]” (Bradford, 2008, p. 102). It is not surprising that the trope of impenetrability and inscrutability of space (delivered thorough the motifs of dense fog, thick jungle, abandoned and mystifying structures) was employed in the important works of the (post)colonial imagination such as Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* or Herzog’s *Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes*.

The devotional objects in Lahiri’s story extend the space of the house, making the domestic spatiality more “unfathomable” (this is the role various “heathen religions” have played in colonial narratives), hard to be dominated and controlled. They are parodically re-playing the role of the suppressed Otherness enchanting the space. Due to this sacred agency, the domestic space becomes “inexhaustible” and untransparent. The statues that keep pouring forth from various parts of the house assume the role of the sacred *surplus* that renders the familiar domestic space uncanny and unfamiliar.

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[1] See Foucault, 1986, p. 22. It seems that the colonial idea of the essential “backwardness” of the natives was also projected onto the “subaltern” space itself, rendering it somehow morphologically intricate and substantially “premodern.”

From the colonial standpoint, this projected "medievalish," "enchanted castle" quality of "subaltern" space, infinitely enclosed within the circles of sacredness and impenetrability, had to be tamed, opened up, and transformed ("disenchanted" and "desacralized") into what Foucault has termed *lieu ouvert*. Enclosed space is the area that is still "nurtured by the hidden presence of the sacred" (Foucault, 1986, p. 23). Whereas the "medieval space" was perceived as fundamentally mystical, utterly inscrutable (Foucault, 1986, p. 22), the "open space" remains transparent and easily dominated.

The metaphor of spatial "opening" had its violent realization in concrete colonial practices of destroying shrines and sacred groves of the natives. For civilization to arrive, the labyrinth of "backwardness" and "superstition" had to be obliterated. The colonial spatial discourse thus always bears a touch of certain (hypocritical) emancipatory approach. These tactics are parodically reenacted in Sanjeev's attitudes towards the sacred "surplus" of the newly-purchased house. As will be demonstrated, his adoption of hegemonic cultural values allows him to perceive the religious artifacts as something irredeemably *primitive* that has to be purged so he could regain control over the space of the house. Ultimately, Sanjeev's desire to turn the space of the house into "lieu ouvert" stays frustrated. The location remains "enclosed" since it constantly eschews discipline and control. The domestic space subverts the project of domestication by always offering something new: new excitement for Twinkle, new frustration for Sanjeev.

Of course, this is not to suggest that Sanjeev is an actual colonizer but that, only on the phantasmatical level, the exclusivity and the violence of his fantasy (of reclaiming the space haunted by its previous identities through "desacralization") ironically replicate the ultimately colonial imagination of complete spatial authority. To reproduce in an immigrant descendant of colonial subjects the seduction, the very trill of hegemonic control (as some kind of general temptation, even at the domestic micro-level) represents a uniquely subversive underside to Lahiri's narrative.

5. Aesthetics of desacralization

It would be an erroneous oversimplification to assume that Sanjeev exclusively stands for some patriarchal, authoritative and unbending "ethnic" values while Twinkle represents the more liberal, "fluid," multicultural ideals.

It seems more appropriate to describe the couple's marital conflict, not as a collision of ("traditional") Indian and ("transnational") American values, but as a clash of two distinct models of westernization.

It is important to emphasize that Sanjeev himself has already been willingly westernized to a considerable extent. His enthusiasm for the Western "high culture" (his desire to emulate the ideal of a "cultured man" with a sophisticated taste) has a certain ludicrous quality and could even be described as an instance of petty-bourgeois attitude (Chiang, 2014, p. 95).[2] Far from being an expression of his resistance to the dominant American cultural values, Sanjeev's violent distaste for the "sacred images" is an important tool of his westernization. He perceives the proliferation of these objects as a true hindrance to his enaction of higher middle-class American cultural values he aspires to emulate.

Why is Sanjeev so repelled by the Catholic paraphernalia, while indulging, at the same time, in Bach's music (see Lahiri, 1999, p. 169), an *oeuvre* almost entirely composed for the Catholic devotional needs? The answer is obvious: While Bach's (predominantly religious) works belong to the Western canon of high culture, inexpensive plastic statues, saccharine images of crying saints, and the "Nativity scenes" in snow globes do not. Such items could be easily dismissed as "kitsch."

When Sanjeev sees one of the Catholic statues for the first time (before their incessant "outpouring" becomes a real nuisance), he overdramatically describes it as being "idiotic" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 148). This immediate reaction, hardly provoked by some preexisting religious antagonism Sanjeev harbors, is a simple expression of the instantaneous aesthetic distaste. Later in the story, he will note that the statues and images they keep on discovering "look so silly. Clearly, they lacked a sense of sacredness" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 138). Sanjeev here establishes an important link between "sacrality" and aesthetic culture. From his perspective, the Western "high culture" itself is something "sacred" (Chiang, 2014, p. 65). He believes that what makes one respectable is the possibility of access to a certain set of "undisputable" cultural values (which enable the existence of "canonized" art versus low and debased cultural products). In a way, the adherence to a certain cultural ideal (Bach and Mahler he listens to, the Tudor facade of his house, etc.) is Sanjeev's way of adapting to the desirable social strata of Western bourgeois respectability.

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[2] He puts substantial effort into this personal project of "cultural upliftment," studying various supplementary texts on how to properly understand and enjoy classical music (see Lahiri, 1999, p. 169).

The appearance of the Christian artifacts "desacralizes" his domestic space, not so much because they represent an unwanted presence of a foreign religion, but because they are vulgar and profane. At one point, when Twinkle insists that they should install the newly-discovered plaster statue of the Virgin Mary on their front lawn, Sanjeev immediately snaps: "All the neighbors will see. They'll think we're insane" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 159). Through this unchecked initial response, he is voicing his real concern: not that these artifacts are a threat to their identity, or that the neighbors will think they are Christians, but that the very presence of these objects on their lawn (with their over-the-top quality and with the sheer notion of the aesthetic excess they unmistakably convey) will portray them as being tasteless and "primitive" ("insanity" here being employed as the exaggerated expression for the ultimate "unrespectability"). Instead of the house being a testimony to his success (with a well-organized and tastefully arranged domestic space radiating the desirable image of its holder as an accomplished professional), the unattractive possibility now arises for Sanjeev. Namely, that, through the mediation of the "sacred objects," this fantasy could be thwarted, and he could be perceived as an uncultivated immigrant who naively arranges his front yard with cheap religious bric-à-brac. Sanjeev is well aware of the class aspect of one's "aesthetics." After calming down a bit, he abandons the tone of endangered middle-class respectability and retreats to the usual "conversion" and "identity" rhetoric intended for persuading Twinkle to give up on these gimcrack statues: "We are not Christian" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 159).

The housewarming party is the central event of the story. The couple's friends and peers are expected to come, providing thus the unique opportunity for Sanjeev to project a controlled and desirable image of his marriage and himself. The housewarming presents the occasion for private space to become an arena of self-representation. However, due to the lurid presence of the religious paraphernalia in his home, the party is also a dreaded moment for Sanjeev. His anxiety about what his guests would say is not generated so much by a concern that they would think Twinkle and he had renounced their religious identity and heritage. He is concerned that, due to the presence of cheap religious images in his home, he will not look sophisticated enough (see Nickl, 2011, p. 41).[3]

Anticipating with anxiety the arrival of his guests, he construes the entire domestic space through the juxtaposition of kitsch and respectability. His guests will probably be impressed by “the lovely bay windows, the shining parquet floors, the impressive winding staircase, the wooden wainscoting”. However, this desirable effect will certainly be thwarted by the simultaneous presence of the “flickering ceramic saints” (Lahiri, 1999, p. 164). It is important to note that the Catholic artifacts are never contrasted with some kind of symbolic representation of the couple’s national and religious identity,[4] but exclusively with the symbols of the aspiring higher middle-class respectability. Thus, it could be claimed that the central issue at the heart of the story is not a religious or a national one. It is primarily the notion of class that sustains Sanjeev’s violent rejection of these objects.

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[3] When one of their guests remarks, after seeing their Christian statuary: "I thought you were Indian," Sanjeev will calmly explain "that there are Christians in India" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 165), downplaying the importance of the religious issue.

For Sanjeev, the Catholic paraphernalia obviously achieves the “desacralizing” effect. However, for him to perceive these objects as mediums of spatial desacralization, some idea of objective “sacrality” must already be in place. This is an important difference between Twinkle and Sanjeev. Unlike Twinkle, Sanjeev still adheres to the notion of objective sacrality (in the sense that he still believes in a set of obvious, exclusive, hierarchical cultural values). He is a devotee of the authoritative Western high culture and is offended by the presence of kitsch in his home. He rejects the Catholic artifacts as ostensively worthless. From the perspective of the highbrow cultural sensibility, something that is mass-produced and cloying cannot possibly be “holy”. On the other hand, Twinkle’s embracement of these objects appears to be sustained by certain “postmodern” permissiveness towards “low” cultural forms. In line with the postmodernist rejection of firm hierarchical structures, these statues are, for Twinkle, simultaneously sacred and desacralized, i.e., they can be interpreted and appropriated without invoking (or adhering to) any specific religious heritage, while still retaining some vague and undifferentiated aura of spirituality. One can observe a similar attitude towards “the sacred” in processes enabled by transnational conditions, within which theological insights of Eastern religions have been “recycled” as consumerist “wisdom” in the West (see Žižek, 2001, para. 1), and Buddhist heritage has been popularized as some kind of spiritual supplement to business (the trend marked by the proliferation of books like *The Monk Who Sold his Ferrari*). Such instances of “open sacrality” have played an important role in global, transnational circumstances: the religious sign is “despatialized” (extrapolated from its religious context, “exhumed” from its spiritual heritage), and, its specificity and “difference” being obliterated, it can be used for any private purpose and interpretation. For Twinkle, the statues are just a natural part of the "world where no identities and cultures are fixed and stable: rather, they are mixed, syncretic and fluid in the current globalized and post-modern age" (Baumann, 2009, p. 351). In this way, they share the experience of hybridity with Twinkle and Sanjeev.

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[4] Paradoxically, it appears that they are at least once associated with the exclusive signs of the Indian heritage. E.g., the statue of the Virgin Mary is described as resembling an Indian bride (see Lahiri, 1999, p. 159).

6. Sacred desacralization

The story ends with Sanjeev's housewarming party turning into a charade with tipsy guests, led by Twinkle, searching their house for the still undiscovered hallowed objects. When Twinkle finally brings out a large silver bust of Christ from the attic, now irreverently adorned with one of their guests' feather hat, Sanjeev can only powerlessly attend such a carnival in his own home. In this pivotal moment, through the racket and the stampede of excited guests descending a staircase and with Twinkle accidentally scratching the expensive parquetry, it appears that what we are witnessing is the ultimate prankish sabotage of Sanjeev's fantasy of control, as if a surge of chaos is suddenly overtaking the entire space.

His authoritative vision of respectability and marriage instantly disintegrates while he, as in some ultimate act of accepting reality, powerlessly receives the statue of Jesus from Twinkle and obediently carries it into the living room. In these final moments, Sanjeev perceives that the silver exterior of the bust reflects "in miniature the walls and doors and lampshades around them" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 170) as if consuming in its reflective surface the entire space of the house. What began only as a slight disturbance, now openly dominates the domestic space. This mock procession of drunk guests, led by dazed Sanjeev carrying the sacred effigy, should not be interpreted as the evidence of some final, bizarre conversion of the couple to the hegemonic social values. On the contrary, Sanjeev's final embracement of the sacred object, profanely adorned with an outlandish feather hat, represents a ludic subversion of his own fantasy of control. The effect of the sacred statuary is ultimately dehegemonizing. The strange dialectic is at work at the story's finale: all the things Sanjeev "sacralizes" (his highly idealized understanding of marriage and domestic spatiality, the idea of respectability he entertains, his faith in the objective and strict cultural hierarchies) are disintegrated (or desacralized) by the very presence of a "sacred sign."

However, one should be careful in concluding that the final disintegration of Sanjeev's fantasy of control inevitably entails the imminent collapse of the couple's marriage. Rather, Sanjeev's early disillusionment could indeed become the precondition for more realistic marital expectations, and thus the opportunity for healing. It could be claimed that towards the end of the story the objects the couple discovers come to seem like the true mediums of disenchantment that make the "ideal home" (and the ideal marriage) into a real one (see Elie, 2004, para. 6). Thus, the "blessing" suggested in the story's title may not be (just) an ironic pun hovering over the proceedings of the story, but an actual disclosure of the final scene's restorative potentiality.

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Ivana Dejanović
Faculty of Philology
University of Belgrade
ivana.dejanov.fil@gmail.com

THE IMAGE OF POST-WAR SERBIA IN JELENA J. DIMITRIJEVIĆ AND HELEN LEAH REED'S WRITINGS[*]

Abstract: This paper aims to present the image of Serbia in the American society during and after the First World War in the works of two authors: in the travelogue *The New World or A Year in America* (1934) by the Serbian writer Jelena J. Dimitrijević and in Helen Leah Reed's *Serbia: A Sketch* (1917). In *The New World or A Year in America* Jelena J. Dimitrijević writes about her one-year stay in the United States of America in 1919, soon after the end of the First World War. The travelogue features both detailed descriptions of the lifestyle of the Serbian population in the United States of America and their strategies how to inform the Serbian and American people about the post-war circumstances in Serbia. *Serbia: A Sketch* is a historical essay by the American writer Helen Leah Reed which could be interpreted as one of the responses to the war circumstances in Serbia. Helen Leah Reed follows Serbian history "from migration from Galicia to the tragic withdrawal in 1915" providing an insight into how the American population perceived the history of the Serbian nation. Furthermore, this is significant because Jelena Dimitrijević incorporated parts of Helen Leah Reed's poem in prose in her travelogue *The New World or A Year in America*. The paper presents a two-way traverse of Serbian national culture and history, first by entering American literature as foreign, "the other" in relation to the local national version of the same history, and then returning to its own national literature as an integral part of the foreign element. The second aim of this paper is to indicate some misconceptions in Helen Leah Reed's Serbia inspired writing, scaffolded by the sketches in Jelena J. Dimitrijević's travelogue.

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Key words: *The New World or A Year in America*, Jelena J. Dimitrijević, *Serbia: A Sketch*, Helen Leah Reed, Serbian travel writings, Serbian national literature

1. Jelena Dimitrijević: Serbian Woman Travel Writer in America

Jelena Dimitrijević (1862-1945) was a Serbian writer, humanitarian, aid worker, feminist and one of the first Serbian female travel writers. Born into a wealthy family originally from Kruševac, she moved with her mother to Aleksinac after her father's death. She received a good education, including English, French and German language lessons together with her cousin Dobrosav Knez-Milojković in Aleksinac, in her uncle's house.[1]

Before her journey to the U.S., Jelena Dimitrijević travelled throughout the Balkan Peninsula, the Ottoman Empire and Europe. Her American travelogue published in 1934 was preceded by the following travelogues: *Pisma iz Niša o haremima* (*Letters on Harems from Niš*) which was published in 1897, *Pisma iz Soluna* (*Letters from Salonika*) in 1918, *Pisma iz Indije* (*Letters from India*) in 1928 and *Pisma iz Misira* (*Letters from Egypt*) in 1929. Despite the fact that her journey took place in 1919, the travelogue was published nearly 15 years later, in 1934. Dimitrijević's interest in the U.S., specifically in American women, began almost one decade before the journey described in the travelogue *Novi svet ili U Americi godinu dana* (*The New World or A Year in America*).[2] Her acquaintance with an American woman, Miss Kathrine Flagg, resulted in a short story entitled *Amerikanka* (*The American Woman*) published in the literary magazine *Srpski književni glasnik* (*Serbian Literary Gazette*) in 1912 and republished in 1918.[3]

During the First World War Jelena Dimitrijević was engaged in volunteer work where she became acquainted with both American benefactors and American volunteers.[4] Traveling throughout the East Coast of America (New York, Washington, Boston, Philadelphia), she was welcomed into their homes.

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[1] For additional information on Jelena J. Dimitrijević's biography see: http://knjizenstvo.etf.bg.ac.rs/en/authors/jelena-j-dimitrijevic.

[2] For more details on Jelena Dimitrijević's writings focused on American women see Dojčinović (2019) and Koch (2012, pp. 202-212, 279-296).

[3] During her stay in Boston, Jelena Dimitrijević visited Mrs. Flagg in her home in Brockton. This visit is described in the chapter *Na Uik Endu Kod Misis Flag* (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 402).

[4] For additional information on American humanitarian activity in Serbia see Ostojić-Fejić (1992), Lozanić-Frotingham (1970) and Petrović (2016).

The descriptions of these visits provide the readers with a closer insight into the American understanding of Serbia. Jelena Dimitrijević set off for the North American continent soon after the First World War ended. She had lost her husband to war (second lieutenant Jovan Dimitrijević died in 1915 on the battlefield). Haunted by this loss and years spent in the occupied territory when she witnessed the misfortune of her country, she boarded in Plymouth and started her one-year stay in the U.S. As a cosmopolitan, she used this time to get to know both the natives and Serbian immigrants in the States. The fields of her interest were modernization process, American women with an emphasis on women's rights to vote, as well as her compatriots, including both the wealthy ones who were engaged in humanitarian activity to help Serbia, and the common middle-class people (Milinković, 2013, p. 1263)[5].

The feeling of patriotism and love for her people and her country were never neglected and they were evident in the choice of lectures she attended in New York, Boston and Philadelphia, people she met, her speeches and reflections. Jelena Dimitrijević's patriotism manifested itself from her early youth: she was accepted at the age of nineteen as the youngest member of *Podružina ženskog društva*[6] (The Women's Society's Branch) in Niš; after moving to Belgrade, she immediately joined *Kolo srpskih sestara*[7] (The Circle of

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[5] More on this subject in Koch (2012).

[6] *Podružina ženskog društva* (The Women's Society's Branch) in Niš derived from *Žensko društvo* (Women's Society) founded in 1875 in Belgrade on the initiative of Katarina Milovuk, the first woman school principal of the Higher School for Girls in Belgrade. *Podružina ženskog društva* was a humanitarian organization dedicated to helping the poor and providing education to children, especially orphans and girls from destitute families. Branches of the Society were founded in different Serbian cities soon after the First Serbian-Turkish War (1876-1877). The aims of the Society were to provide education for young girls, which was accomplished in 1879 with the founding of *Radenička škola* (Women's Workshop). The Women's Workshop was aimed at preserving such crafts as sewing and tailoring, and also at training girls between the age of 13 and 17, accepting only girls from poor families, providing them with education and salary. *Podružina ženskog društva* used to organize *bazaars* where the products made by their proteges were sold in order to collect money which was later used to help those in need and for the school maintenance. The first women's magazine *Domaćica* (*The Housewife*) was published by the *Podružina ženskog društva.* The secondary aim of the Society was the political emancipation of Serbian women, who had close to no rights in the 19th century. One of the ways of accomplishing that was through the magazine *Domaćica* in which female writings were published, both prose and poetry and in which themes concerning women's freedom, rights and the concept of the new woman were discussed (the beginnings of it). It is important to mention that *Podružina ženskog društva* was patronized by Kneginja Natalija Obrenović.

[7] *Kolo srpskih sestara* was a humanitarian organization established in 1903 in Belgrade on the proposal by Ivan Ivanić and Branislav Nušić. The first administrators were Savka Subotić

Serbian Sisters). Through her humanitarian engagement Jelena Dimitrijević managed to merge patriotism and feminism, providing help for schools, girls and Serbian people who remained outside Serbian borders, in Macedonia and Greece at the time still under the Ottoman rule. Jelena Dimitrijević's patriotism and feminism are equally expressed in all of her travel writings. Born into an upper-class family and married to an open-minded and progressive husband, Jelena Dimitrijević enjoyed more liberties than most women in Serbian society at the beginning of the 20th century. It was both the higher education and the traditional upbringing that had shaped her into a progressive and autonomous woman with highly developed sense of patriotic love. Jelena Dimitrijević began the literary work at the end of the 19th century, when a new generation of educated female writers emerged in Serbia. These authors both promoted female characters as heroines and transformed the traditional narrative by making emancipation of both men and women the principal subject and by promoting and defending the cultural identity of female intellectuals (Tomić, 2014, p. 16). Jelena Dimitrijević represents the affirmation of the new emancipated women and their opposition to the patriarchal, stereotypical, subjugated and limited space which women occupied in Serbian society (Tomić, 2014, p. 16).[8]

During the First World War she assisted in an orphanage (Tomić, 2014, p. 120). Her national loyalty was confirmed once more through her constant interest for the well-being of her country and people even in a foreign and distant country such as the U.S. was soon after the Great War.

The first encounter with the American image of Serbia, or rather, the incognizance of Serbia, awaited Jelena Dimitrijević at the very gate into the New World. Although she travelled with written recommendations and invitation letters, a Customs clerk presumed she was a Russian Jew and furthermore, a Bolshevik (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 77). At the Rutledge Hotel, a Hotel for Women, Jelena Dimitrijević felt the need to explain her origin, for other

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and Delfa Ivanić, both close friends and collaborators of Jelena Dimitrijević. The organization provided and supported nurse's training courses, established the IV Reserve Hospital in Vračar neighborhood and created a network of aid stations along the major railway lines in the country to assist troops by providing hot drinks, food, and medical attention during the First and Second Balkan Wars and at the beginning of the First World War. In 1906 *Kolo srpskih sestara* started publishing the calendar *Vardar*. Due to her close acquaintance with Delfa Ivanić and Ljubica Luković, who were members of the editorial board, Jelena Dimitrijević was an associate of the calendar from the beginning.

[8] On her journey to North Africa and the Middle East, described in the travelogue *Pisma iz Misira* (1929) Jelena Dimitrijević was introduced to the Egyptian feminist Huda Sharawi (1879-1947). More on this topic in Dimitrijević (2016).

guests first thought that she was French, but after hearing her surname, they thought she was Jewish. Being open to social criticism, Jelena Dimitrijević did not miss to notice anti-Semitism in American society: some of the Serbian families removed the "–ić" ending from their last names so that their children in elementary school would not be taken for Jews (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 291).

2. Serbia in the period after the Great War: American and Serbian Perspective

2.1. The American Image of Serbia – "Small, but Courageous Serbia"

In Serbian literature the period of the First World War, the interwar period and the Second World War (1914-1940) is characterized as the period of flourishing of the travelogue genre (Gvozden, 2011, p. 6). The reason for this is to be found in the forced merging of the foreign and the domestic in Serbia during the First World War. The foreign element that entered Serbian culture during the war years continued existing in the post-war period, too. The modernization process, more frequent journeys abroad and especially Serbian citizens who went to study outside of Serbia and then came back, introduced the foreign element, the world outside of one's habitat (Gvozden, 2011, p. 7). The travelogue as a non-fictional genre is based on a journey, simultaneity and facts. One of the most difficult assignments for the travelogue writer is to convince the readership of the authenticity of their writing (Gvozden, 2011, p. 22). Jelena Dimitrijević leaves no room for suspicion in the 36 chapters of her writing. Dimitrijević brings all layers of an American city with the detailed descriptions, including architecture, American homes, customs, habits and manners of the common people, as well as the vivid world of the immigrants.

In late September Jelena Dimitrijević arrived from the war-destroyed Europe in New York or as she herself says: "a New World" (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 72). Her first host was major John Frothingham[9], an American lawyer who helped to raise consciousness about the hardships and sufferings of the wartime Serbia together with his wife, Jelena Lozanić-Frothingham.[10] It is in his home that Jelena Dimitrijević presents us with the image of Serbia constructed upon Serbian army's performance in the war for the first time: "He sees my people in me, small, but proud Serbia, who fought not to take someone's freedom, but to preserve its own, as they say here"[11] (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 88). The adjective that Jelena Dimitrijević uses throughout the travelogue to describe how the American people portray Serbia is "little." When reunited with her war companion Miss Philips, she notes: "We saw our little Serbia in each other, as they say when they mention our country" (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 89). In her American travel writings, Jelena Dimitrijević never fails to emphasize the heroic and devoted character of the Serbian nation. She openly criticizes and disapproves of the statements and actions of the Serbs in the U.S. which undermine this character.

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[9] John Frothingham (1879-1935) was an American lawyer, industrialist and great benefactor of Serbia during the First World War. He began helping Serbia in 1915 toghether with his sister, Elisabeth Frothingham, and dedicated the last 20 years of his life to assisting Serbian orphans. In the USA in 1915 he met Jelena Lozanić, a Serbian humanitarian who was on humanitarian mission collecting funds for the Serbian army. John Frothingham and Jelena Lozanić got married in 1921 in a Russian church in New York. The Frothingham-Lozanić family continuously helped Serbain orphans until John Frothingham's death in 1935. For additional information on John Frothingham's missions in Serbia see Ostojić-Fejić (1992),Lozanić-Frotingham (1970), Petrović (2016).

Before the First World War the community of Serbian immigrants in the U.S. had little to no impact and did not raise awareness of its homeland. After the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo in 1914 at the beginning of the First World War, the community of Serbian immigrants on the North American continent began to establish firmer connections with its homeland. Serbian intellectuals (in Serbia) and renowned Serbian immigrants in the U.S. initiated activities for drawing attention to the sufferings and losses in Serbia. Mihajlo Pupin, a Serbian scientist, Jelena Lozanić, and Mejbel (Mabel) Grujić[12], the wife of Mr. Slavko Grujić, a Serbian diplomat in the United States of America, started to inform the American establishment about the war situation in Serbia and engaged themselves in raising money through humanitarian organizations from both the U.S. and Serbia (Đikanović, 2016, p. 14). These activities also continued after the U.S. entered the First World War in 1917. The ties established during the war years increased in the after-war period. After the war ended in 1918, the newly founded Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later renamed to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia,[13] kept firm ties with its immigrants on the North American continent. The official stand of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes towards the immigrants was clear - the immigrants in the U.S. were to be considered equal to citizens of the Kingdom. Jelena Dimitrijević stresses that although in Europe and in some big European cities the interest in Serbia is flagging, the concern for Serbian suffering is still a matter of great importance in the U.S. (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 89). The reason for the unremitting interest in Serbian affairs lies in the newly founded Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the Balkan Peninsula and the expectations that the young kingdom had from the USA in the after-war period.

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[10] In the humanitarian society *Kolo Srpskih Sestara* alongside her close friend Delfa Ivanić (1881-1972), the co-founder of the society, Jelena Dimitrijević collaborated with Jelena Lozanić-Frothingham (1885-1972). Jelena Lozanić, married Frotingham, was a daughter of Sima Lozanić (1847-1935) a chemist, professor of Velika Škola, and the first dean of Belgrade University. She was engaged in humanitarian work during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), the First World War, and the years to come, Jelena Lozanić was engaged in raising funds for the shattered Serbia.

[11] All translations are provided by the author of this paper and the author is responsible for all the mistakes.

[12] Mejbel Grujić toghether with Mihajlo Pupin founded The Serbian Agricultural Relief Committee in New York in 1915 (Ostojić-Fejić, 1992, p. 202).

In her reflections on encounters with her American acquaintances, most of whom she met in Serbia during the occupation, Jelena Dimitrijević points out the fact that those men and women from the distant U.S. have joined Serbian people in their suffering and distress (Dimitrijević, 2019, pp. 126-127). According to Jelena Dimitrijević's statements, unlike the volunteers and benefactors who had travelled to Serbia and witnessed the occupied land, the general American public was not familiar with the little Balkan country. Having left her host's home, Jelena Dimitrijević moved to the Hotel Rutledge for Women, where she would spend long winter nights talking about her homeland to other guests of this all-female hotel. From her writing, it becomes evident that the common people in the U.S. had not heard of Serbia before the Serbian army played a crucial role in Europe's liberation (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 209). Jelena Dimitrijević set the emotional atmosphere in yet another all-female gathering in New York, where all the ladies were touched after her reading of the occupation inspired story *Kilogram brašna* (*A Kilogram of Flour*). "They were all listening and they were touched by the suffering we endured under the occupation... Here, on the other side of the ocean, they have heard a lot, but they have not believed it" (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 278). The unique value of Dimitrijević's writings lies in the fact that she gained the confidence of the common people and brought her readership closer to the American image of post-war Serbia. Jelena Dimitrijević was accompanied by professor Zelenka, her acquaintance of Czech origin, in Philadelphia. Professor Zelenka introduced Jelena Dimitrijević to the students of the University of Pennsylvania Summer School, where they expressed the desire to hear something about her land of origin, given the fact that they did not know much about it. National identity is mainly defined in the following way: The collective cultural identity is not manifested in the same patterns through generations, but through the feeling of continuity from generation to generation, the shared memories of events and periods from the previous times, and the shared perception of the collective destiny of the community and its culture. (Smit, 2010, p. 46). Dimitrijević's national identity is manifested in her speech in front of Philadelphian students: "My country started to speak from within me, both the hero and the martyr, my people, whose courage and love towards freedom are loved here, our heroes about whom tales are told, our mothers, all in black, our women without protectors, our children, fatherless orphans..." (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 439).

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[13] The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (the South/Yugo Slavs - Jugosloveni) was founded on December 1st, 1918 and it was formally renamed to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929.

Writing about Serbia and its people, Jelena Dimitrijević takes pride in her origin and the sacrifices her people had to make. Her image of a martyred, but heroic little country can be found in Helen Leah Reed's historical essay *Serbia: A Sketch*. During her stay in Boston, Jelena Dimitrijević spent much time with the Boston writer Helen Leah Reed (1860? - 1926). Helen Leah Reed was introduced to Jelena Dimitrijević by another Serbian woman living in Boston, Natalia Berger DeRocco. Both Helen Leah Reed and her sister Mrs. Mors were Serbian benefactors, American high society individuals engaged in providing financial help for the war-affected area, even though neither of them had visited Serbia before. We learn from Jelena Dimitrijević's travelogue that Mrs. Mors, a Boston society lady, despite the fact that she had donated thirty thousand dollars to Serbian charity, did not have a clear idea of Serbia, and that she, like many others in the USA, mistook it for Czechoslovakia (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 397). Helen Leah Reed gave her contribution to the war-affected Serbia in a literary manner, writing a historical narrative named *Serbia: A Sketch*, which was published by the Plimpton Press Norwood Mass USA and for the Benefit of the Serbian Distress Fund in Boston. Helen Leah Reed depicts Serbia as it is portrayed by the American people: "Serbia, valiant daughter of the Ages" (Reed, 1917, p. 1), always retaining the diminutive. The usage of the term "a sketch" indicates that Helen Leah Reed considered herself personally close to Serbia and the Serbian people, for the sketch offers an aspect of culture written by someone within that culture for the readers outside of it. The historical essay written by Helen Leah Reed in 1916 and published in 1917, consists of 124 pages and provides the American readership with the history of Serbia in a poetic manner. Helen Leah Reed finishes her essay with a poem in prose in which the verse of an old Serbian song is included, using the Serbian word *pesma.* The year of its publication corresponds with the year when the United States of America entered the First World War. It is not to be considered a coincidence.

2.2. The Serbian Perspective – “Poor, Dying Mother Serbia”

In the chapter entitled “Poor, Little Serbia” Jelena Dimitrijević describes a highly humiliating and hypocritical fund-raising event organized by the National Birthday Committee whose chairwoman was an American of Serbian origin, Mrs. Olivera Harryman. The banquet Jelena Dimitrijević attended accompanied by Mrs. Ema Petrović was organized for the “Poor Little Serbia.” Jelena Dimitrijević was unpleasantly surprised by the banner at the entrance which depicted what was supposed to be a young healthy person, plucked before his time. The aim of this banner was certainly to evoke empathy and compassion from the attendees, but Jelena Dimitrijević was repulsed by its manipulation: “Why do they not remove this picture, for Serbia is not dead, it has risen from the dead” (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 282). She voiced her further disappointment with the tactics the Americans of Serbian origin used to collect funds for their “poor, starving mother.” It was a widespread custom for the wealthy Serbs who lived in the U.S. to organize fund raising in order to gather benefactors for Serbian orphans. The disharmony of the well-dressed women with expensive jewelry at the luxury venue was not unnoticed by Jelena Dimitrijević: “These women who have come all this way across the Ocean and who have come to America to beg for ‘poor little Serbia’ are well-dressed, they stay at the Fifth Avenue next to American millionaires” (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 286). Moreover, she compared them with bullies who used to break their children’s hands or legs so they could send them to beg, but instead of children, these “humanitarians” did this to their mother. In her correspondence with both Serbian benefactors from the U.S. and the common people with whom she had the chance to socialize, Jelena Dimitrijević always tried hard to keep Serbia’s honor, so it is understandable that she pointed a finger at the pathetic moves made by her fellow countrymen, or rather, countrywomen. Performances which followed that evening, which Jelena Dimitrijević described as the “most upsetting day that she has spent and survived in New York,” included various speeches of the so-called “godmothers” of Serbian orphans. An American godmother had to reimburse seventy-two dollars per year for each Serbian orphan. The strategies used by humanitarian workers comprised of the heartbreaking and traumatic pictures of the Serbian people, with an emphasis on women and children, speeches full of touching phrases and attempts to persuade American wealthy gentlemen and ladies that this small amount of dollars could save and change the life of an orphan whose father had sacrificed his life for freedom. Jelena Dimitrijević concludes the story of that evening with an observation: “In this humanitarian committee the wealthy daughters begged for their miserable mother – poor, little Serbia" (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 287).

Contrary to Serbian humanitarian workers, Jelena Dimitrijević mentions the acquaintance with professor Paja Radosavljević[14] who taught at the University of New York in the next chapter entitled "Naši u Americi" ("Our People in America"). Jelena Dimitrijević attended his lectures on Serbia and the Serbian people at the University of New York and she stresses that these lectures were interesting and well-attended. She characterizes his monography in English entitled *Who Are the Slavs?* as interesting and full of useful information in contrast with the presentations which focused on poverty and disruption in Serbia, and which did not provide useful knowledge held by humanitarian workers.

3. "Our People" in America

One of the characteristics that epitomize Jelena Dimitrijević's travel writing is that in every country she visited, Dimitrijević aimed at learning about the lives of the middle class. Upon arriving in America, she noted: "I wanted to see women from the middle class" (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 126). As for the American women, the same statement applied to the Serbian people in the U.S. Being herself a member of the upper class in Serbia, her American acquaintances belonged to the upper class. During her stay in major Frothingham's house, Jelena Dimitrijević did not have a chance to find herself in the company of Serbian immigrants. After moving to another type of accommodation, Dimitrijević began her pursuit for the Serbian working class. She points out that while travelling across Serbian countries under the occupation (Macedonia and Kosovo under the Ottoman Empire) she had no trouble finding the Serbs and meeting with them; on the contrary, her Turkish hosts provided her with information and ensured her safety during the visits. That being said, it is not strange that she was surprised when her American hosts showed no interest in helping her make acquaintance with the Serbs who emigrated to America and who belonged to the working class. Furthermore, Jelena Dimitrijević dedicated one whole chapter entitled "Our People in America" to Serbian immigrants and their lives.

As mentioned before, Jelena Dimitrijević was very patriotic and, as in every country she had visited, she felt the need to be reunited with her *own blood* in the USA. In New York, Jelena Dimitirjević came across a Serbian name, Ana Petrović, and decided to pay her a visit in her store called *A Store of Art.* She met Jelica Srbinović during that visit and became a regular guest at her home. Familiarizing herself with the Serbian working class homes, Jelena Dimitrijević became a significant witness to the way of life of Serbian immigrants.

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[14] Paja Radosavljević (1879-1958) was the first Serbian doctor of psychology. He was one of the founders of experimental psychology and the department chair at the University of New York.

The changes of the place of residence cause significant personal and social changes in the lives of immigrants. Not only their lives, but also the lives of their descendants are molded by the newly-created living circumstances in which the creation, shaping and manifestation of the awareness of national and ethnic affiliation play an important role (Lukić Krstanović, Pavlović, 2016, p. 44). In the light of this statement, the writing of Jelena Dimitrijević adopts a more significant dimension. Social and economic circumstances in which Serbian immigrants lived were one of Jelena Dimitrijević's fields of interest. She intended to introduce the mechanisms of positioning and assimilating of the Serbian people who emigrated to the U.S. "Their lunches are not American lunches, but Serbian: *sarma* with bacon, turkey with cabbage, *burek* with meat, cheese and squash. And the amount of food eaten during a Serbian lunch would be enough for the whole week of American lunches. There is also liquor despite the drought in America"[15] (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 291). It is noticeable that Serbian immigrants to a certain extent preserved their customs, food, and religion as the determinants of their ethnic identity despite the fact they were isolated from their home country. The same observation is not applicable to the immigrants' descendants. Serbian children born in America – the second generation of immigrants – although they had Serbian traditional names, did not know, or knew just a bit of the Serbian language: "It is really sad that our children in America do not know our language. They can actually use it but with great difficulty, searching for words and expressions, their pronunciation being worse than foreign children's... It is heartbreaking for me when I look at these beautiful, darling children of ours who bear our lovely names – Bojana, Bora, Radmila – and see them becoming distant, alienating from us" (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 295). The root of this phenomenon was in their education, in the American educational system in which they could not learn Serbian and they lost every touch with their national language and history – everything that happened later in the lives of the immigrant children (socio-economic, cultural, and other types of integration into the environment in which they lived) repressed the earliest experiences: the language of their origin – their parents' mother tongue and those situations, especially the ritual ones, in which the language functions as a means of maintaining social relationships (Lukić Krstanović, Pavlović, 2019, p. 48). The following is also true: to the second and third generation of immigrants their parents' mother tongue is less of a means of verbal communication and more of a formula for the identification with the ideal and typical ethnic model (Lukić Krstanović, Pavlović, 2016, p. 47). Jelena Dimitrijević noticed the detachment from the mother tongue in adults (the first generations of immigrants) as they tended to import English words into their everyday discourse. This can be ascribed to the politics of Anglo-Conformity or the "Americanization," a movement towards the detachment of immigrants from their homeland culture, which reached its peak during the First World War.[16] By alienating from one's origin and implementing other nation's symbols, it is inevitable to lose parts of ethnic identity and awareness. As it is shown in Chapter "Our People in America," the first generation of Serbian immigrants tended to preserve its national identity which started to fade in the next generation.

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[15] Liquor was banned by the 18th US Amendment on January 16, 1919.

4. Helen Leah Reed's History of Serbia

In Boston, Jelena Dimitrijević met the Boston writer Helen Leah Reed (1860?-1926) through her friendship with Mrs. Natalija Beger DeRocco. The acquaintance between the two female writers, Serbian and American, led to frequent visits. During one special visit to Helen Leah Reed's sister, mentioned solely by Mrs. Mors – a Boston wealthy lady – Jelena Dimitrijević reopened the question of humanitarian help to the post-war Serbia, adding one more manifestation of Serbia, this time in the American literature. Jelena Dimitrijević mentions that Mrs. Mors, as the other Serbian benefactors in America, is not well-informed about the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, of which Serbia became part in 1918, which was not surprising because the kingdom had just been established. In addition, she stresses that Mrs. Mors tends to confuse Yugoslavia with Czechoslovakia, despite having made a big donation to the Serbian humanitarian society (Dimitrijević, 2019, pp. 397-398). Serbian misfortune and bravery were introduced to them by Serbian humanitarian Mrs. Mabel Grujić.

Accompanied by Helen Leah Reed, Jelena Dimitrijević visited Boston's sights, historical buildings, libraries, churches and clubs for women. She became acquainted with Boston's literary scene in Helen Leah Reed's company, with publications and contemporary female writers as well as their literary preferences. Touched and inspired by Serbia's destruction and sacrifices, Helen Leah Reed wrote a historical essay entitled *Serbia: A Sketch*, which was published in Boston, by the Plimpton Press Massachusetts in 1917. At the very beginning it stated: “Written and published for the benefit of the Serbian Distress Fund.” Next to this inscription, the writer expresses her thanks to Mrs. Slavko Grouitch, the wife of the Serbian Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who first got her interested in Serbia (Reed, 1917). Helen Leah Reed’s essay is based on historical books available in English: *Serbia and the Serbians* by Čedomir Mijtović, *Serbia by the Servians* by Alfred Stead, *The Slav Nations* by Tučić, *Serbia, Her People, History and Aspirations* by Petrović, *Hero-Tales and Legends of the Serbians* by Petrović, *With Serbia into Exile* by Jones Fortier and *The Serbian People* by Lazar Hrebeljanović. Observing her choice of literature, it becomes obvious that Helen Leah Reed found her inspiration in Serbian history books, chronicles, but also in Serbian myths, legends and folk tales, which had a great impact on her narration. Reed’s narrative process seized Jelena Dimitrijević’s attention. “Miss Reed starts with the following verses: ‘Serbia, valiant daughter of the Ages...’ and finishes with a poem in prose: ‘Monastir! Monastir! Serbia! Serbia! Not a year since that awful retreat, and now the long exile was nearing its end. King Peter, and the Crown Prince, the Government, the whole Nation were hurrying home! There is no death without the appointed day, chants the old *pesma.* Serbia will live!’” (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 398). Jelena Dimitrijević draws attention to the personified image of Serbia on the cover of Helen Leah Reed’s poem: it is a Serbian noble lady from the Medieval period, dressed in her authentic folklore costume (Dimitrijević, 2019, p. 398). This image presents Serbia as it was seen in Jelena Dimitrijević’s notion: courageous, valiant, proud and prosperous. The national costume indicates that the personification of Serbia has its own symbolic meaning, it is carefully selected from the most flourishing period in Serbia’s history: the reign of the Nemanjić Dynasty.[17] Quite different from how humanitarian workers used to present Serbia during their lectures and presentations, Jelena Dimitrijević's pursuit of the post-war Serbia is suffused with everything which is depicted in Helen Leah Reed's poem.

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[16] For further information on Anglo-Conformity see Gordon (1961).

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[17] The dynasty traced its descent from Stefan Nemanja, who, as *veliki župan,* or grand chieftain, of the Serb region of Raška from 1169 to 1196, began to expand his domain while remaining a vassal to the Byzantine emperor. Stefan Nemanja’s great-grandson, Stefan Dušan, the greatest of the Nemanjić kings, conquered all of Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro and drove farther south to take Epirus, Aetolia, and Thessaly (in Greece). He was crowned emperor in 1346. The Serbs consider Dušan’s reign to be their Golden Age, during which the law code called the Zakonik was promulgated, many churches and monasteries were built, and agriculture, industry and trade developed. Stefan Dušan’s son and successor, Stefan Uroš V (from 1355), was a weak ruler under whom the Serbian empire dissolved into fragments ruled by rival princes. The Serbian principalities were compelled to accept the suzerainty of the Byzantine emperor before falling to the advancing power of the Ottoman Turks after 1371. (https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nemanjic-dynasty)

Reed begins her narrating of the Serbian history from her far beginnings in the seventh century and the settling of the Slavs on the Balkan Peninsula. Here, it is important to highlight that by the term of the medieval Kingdom of Serbia we have in mind the north of the Balkan Peninsula, which consisted of Bosnia, Old Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, the Banat and Slavonia (Reed, 1917, p. 7). Helen Leah Reed's choice of events from the Serbian history included all the repression and occupations, together with the liberation battles, enclosing here the dynasty of Nemanjić, the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, Karađorđe's (Karageorge) rebellion against the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of 19th century (1804-1813), and, finally, the liberation of Serbia in the Great War. If we focus on the beginning of the poem, it is notable that Reed's perception of Serbia is in contrast with the post-war images spread across the North American continent. For Reed, Serbia is unbreakable, it cannot die, she lives immortal (Reed, 1917), it does not suffer from tuberculosis, it did not die on the battlefield as it was presented on the charity ball's banner. This is the reason why Jelena Dimitrijević incorporates the poem which Helen Leah Reed used to conclude her essay, in her writings, as the acknowledgment of Serbia's bravery and sacrifice and as a demonstration of pride and honor attributed to Serbia, and its role in the First World War.

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During her one-year stay in America (1919-1920), running away from war wounds and memories, Jelena Dimitrijević found herself surrounded by them. In the households of her American friends, in the houses of her new Serbian acquaintances, she relived the war horrors and traumas. Despite her emotional state, Jelena Dimitrijević approaches every situation with objectivity and social criticism. The aim of this paper was to depict the image of Serbia before, during and after the First World War, as well as the perception of the Serbian people living in the USA indicated in Jelena Dimitrijević's travelogue, always following the writer's observations and tools of narration. In addition to cultural and social questions, the two-way traverse of Serbia is pointed out as the theme of Helen Leah Reed's poem in prose, which was, as we have seen, included in Jelena Dimitrijević's travelogue.

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INTERMEDIALITY/TRANSMEDIALITY AND NARRATIVE PRODUCTION

Ágnes Zsófia Kovács
University of Szeged
agnes.zsofia.kovacs@gmail.com

BECOMING VISIBLE: ON THE ROLE OF PICTURES IN MICHELLE OBAMA'S *BECOMING*

Abstract: The article discusses the role of the photo illustrations in the performance of racial visibility in Michelle Obama's autobi.ography. In African American autobiographies, illustrations were traditionally used to authenticate the story of social ascent and make racialized bodies visible. The article argues that parallel to the book's main narrative of finding one's voice and becoming audible, the illustrations perform the project of changing the female African American narrator's social visibility for the American gaze from a stereotypical racially biased version to a more personalized one closely connected to issues of education and self-help. The article claims that if the story of finding one's voice in the book is read along with the narrative on visibility the pictures tell, then the racial politics of book cannot be so easily criticized as some of its early reviews would suggest.

Key words: Michelle Obama, African American autobiography, finding one's voice, performance of race, class, and gender visibility, text-image interaction, women's transmedial empowerment.

1. Introduction

Michelle Obama's autobiography is known all over the world and is associated with its cover image: Michelle Obama, the beautiful colored woman in front of a pale blue background, behind white letters. This essay looks into the problem of racial visibility as it is thematized and performed by the text and its illustrations in *Becoming*.

Visibility is a central concept of the book. As a theme, racial visibility appears in the third section, where Michelle Obama, campaigning for First Lady, encounters the problem of the American gaze. The American gaze refers to the biased view a mainly white US audience see a colored public figure, one in relation to which a colored person remains "invisible" (Obama, 2018, p. 372). Obviously, the notion of visibility here refers to a general, socially constructed and overly politicized media image of a colored public figure. As Obama writes, her own early public image was stereotypical and antagonistic: that of the angry black woman disrespectful of white expectations. Obama comments that one of the main objectives of her work at the White House was to refashion that image into a more personal and popular one in order to be able to perform meaningful work there. The article argues that the illustrations of her autobiography are actively engaged in constructing Michelle Obama's redesigned racial visibility. In this sense, the story of the self-made woman includes the story of the colored woman who has become socially visible.

Early reviews of the book commented on the lack of definite criticism of racial prejudice in the US. A. Hirsch (2018) wrote: "[m]ost of Obama's narrative on race, however, comes courtesy not of her own perspective, but that of the many commentators who weaponized her blackness against her." In other words, in the book Obama does not allow herself to be overtly critical (ibid.) of structural racial bias in the US. Another, softer way to put this is to criticize the "compulsive American optimism" (St. Félix, 2018) that permeates the text. St. Félix discusses Michelle Obama's dislike of politics and easy immersion in the "soft power" of celebrities (ibid.) instead. Both reviewers are touched by the volume, but criticize its unproblematic processing of the American Dream for African Americans because they would expect more race-related issues to surface along the way.

The above critique sounds much like the problem of the "veil" in African American autobiographies Toni Morrison explains. In autobiographies written by African Americans for a primarily white audience, too sordid details of racial discrimination had to be veiled so that the book did not sound too critical of the white race in general (Morrison, 1995, p. 90). In fiction, these details can be imagined and reconstructed (p. 93), Morrison's essay contends. Could Michelle Obama's book be read as part of the tradition Morrison describes? This article studies the role of illustrations in the construction of racial identity and visibility in *Becoming* by placing it in the wider context of African American literature (as Eric Lamore did with Barack Obama's autobiography, see Lamore, 2016, p. 3). In African American autobiographies, the story of freedom and social ascent has always been authenticated by the frontispiece (or later cover image) of the author. In Obama's book, it is not only the cover image but also sixty-two illustrations that help authenticate the story, and the question looms large how this happens. An exploration into the relation between text and images can help one understand how the story of becoming racially visible is explicated by the illustrations. Moreover, if this visibility is socially constructed, then the exploration also reveals how the illustrations target the racial bias in the ex-First Lady's earlier public image. And, last but not least, one can link the photographic narrative of becoming racially visible to the thematic commentary on visibility and finding one's voice in the book, eventually returning to the question of racial positioning.

The paper discusses the problem of racial visibility in Obama's book in three sections. First, it surveys principles of picture-text interaction, and traditional uses of pictures in African American autobiographies. Section two surveys the actual images of the text in order to link them to their commentary, and to assess the relationship between the two. Thirdly, the narrative of images is connected to the issue of visibility and finding one's voice.

2. Picture and text in African American autobiography

The intermediality of the relation between pictures and texts remains a challenging yet extensive critical terrain. Let us just glimpse at its main questions in order to be able to locate its links to the use of pictures in African American autobiography.

2.1. Iconotext

An iconotext as defined by Nehrlich is the "use of an image in a text or vice versa by way of reference or allusion in an explicit or implicit way" (Wagner, 2015, p. 318). Peter Wagner extends the meaning of iconotext from actual images in texts to "such art works in which one medium is only implied, e.g. in the reference to a painting in a fictional text" (ibid.).

The potential of iconotexts lies in the fact that the relation between text and image remains polysemic. With a deconstructive terminology one can say that an illustration is not a window but a misrepresentation or distortion (Mitchell, 1984, p. 507). Yet, these distortions tend to have reasons. W. J. T. Mitchell has pointed out that the text-image contact may appear in three major different relations, but "*semantically* speaking […] there is no *essential* difference between texts and images" (Wagner, 2015, p. 319). Rather, it is their relation, i. e., what they communicate that differs (Mitchell, 1984, p. 529). This is the so called why aspect, the ideological implications of the difference between text and image. In a similar vein, Nicholas Mirzoeff says visuality is the opposite of the right to look, because "the ability to assemble a visualization manifests the authority of the visualizer" (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 2).

Furthermore, second-wave feminist criticism complicates the notion of the authority of the visualizer and the role of the visualized further by considering the possible counter-narratives feminine bodies generate in the semiotic process of visualization. McAra and Kérchy call the potential female bodies offer for challenging traditional theorizations of the text-image relation 'women's transmedial empowerment' (Kérchy, 2017, p. 5).

In a similar vein, illustrations in Obama's *Becoming* can be seen as iconotexts that have a polysemic relation to the written text. The ideological aspect of what is allowed to be seen by the visualizer is coupled by the problem of possible counter-narratives pictures of racialized feminine bodies generate here.

2.2. Pictures in African American autobiographies

African American autobiographies were traditionally illustrated by the picture of their authors, but the method of the illustration changed with improvements of printing technology. The frontispiece with the image of the author was part of the earliest African American narratives: this was usually an etching based on a daguerretype (discovered in 1839). The image authenticates the text, like in the case of the drawing of Olaudah Equiano, the author of the first African American slave narrative from 1789.

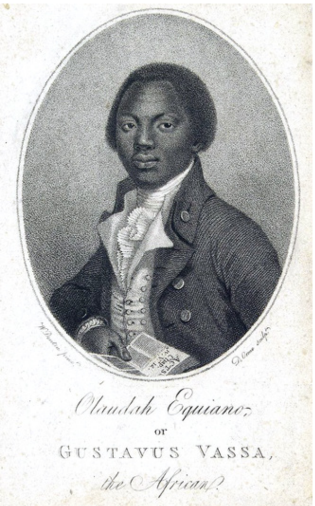


Fig. 1: The frontispiece of Olaudah Equiano's *Narrative.*

Equiano's image posed basic questions about the identity of the author. The African man is dressed in the elegant clothing of a well-to-do European gentleman of the time, so the image provoked basic questions like: is the person African or European, literate or barbarian, civilized or savage (Casmier-Paz, 2003, p. 93)? The fact that he is holding the Bible in his hand open at Acts (12:4) about a man lame from birth cured by Jesus identified him not only with the cured man but with Jesus as well (pp. 95-96).

Casmier-Paz goes on to argue that in the nineteenth-century the Bible "loses its ability to clearly identify the African as a human being. [… t]he narrative locates the humanity of slaves in a complex semiotic identification with whiteness and class privilege" (Casmier-Paz, 2003, p. 98). In their book on photography and race in nineteenth-century America, Wallace and Smith add that the photograph offered African Americans an unprecedented challenge before and after the Civil War. The photograph became "a political tool with which to claim a place in public and private spheres circumscribed by race and racialized sight lines" (Wallace and Smith, 2012, p. 5). Frederick Douglass, the author of the most famous African American autobiography from the nineteenth-century, also published his books with frontispieces. Douglass was well aware of the power of pictures beside those of words, so much so that in his essay "Pictures and Progress" he claims that "the picture making faculty" distinguishes humans from animals through catalyzing self-reflection (Douglass, 1886, p. 461). He published his autobiography in three different versions, with a different frontispiece each (*The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, American Slave,* 1845, intr., William Lloyd Garrison; *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 1855, intr., James M'Cune Smith; *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, 1881, intr., George L. Ruffin). The most widely-known image of Douglass comes from *My Bondage* (1855).

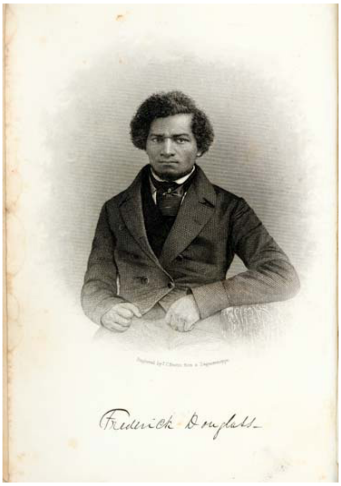
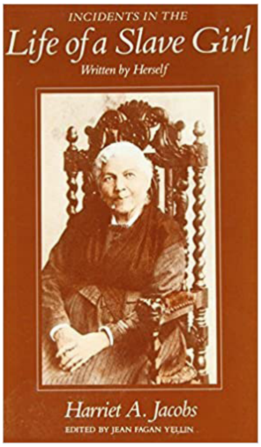


Fig. 2: The frontispiece of Douglass's *My Bondage*.

The picture shows an impeccably clad serious and defiant young mulatto man with “tragic whiteness” (Casmier-Paz, 2003, p. 99). The ambiguity of the picture lies in the expensive clothing, the facial features, and the signature that do not conform to contemporary Northern expectations about slaves as poorly dressed, markedly black, and illiterate. Douglass was playing upon the ambiguity of his own image for political ends, exposing the contradictions of slavery.

A different nineteenth-century pattern of illustration is present in Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents*. She published her autobiography about the sexual abuse she encountered as a young slavewoman. The book was published under the pen name Linda Brent, without the need of an author image to authenticate it. At the beginning of her narrative Jacobs claims she would have preferred to remain silent as she is ahamed to tell her own story even to her own children, would it not be for the thousands of colored women suffering from the same plight (Jacobs, 2001, pp. 2-3), hence the lack of pressure to authenticate the story.

The psychological reason for the lack of visual authentication was backed by a social one at the time of the first publication. In mid-nineteenth century America, middle class femininity was defined in terms of four basic values: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity, constituting the so called cult of true womanhood (Welter, 1966, p. 152). The psychological conflict for slave women defenseless from their masters physically was that they could not possibly conform to the norms of the cult (Sherman, 1990, p. 167) although they have been raised in accordance with them. Accordingly, Jacobs feels ashamed even at the time of telling her story and also a failure for not having a home of her own for her children. Ironically, the lack of authentication led to a critical mistake, as the book was considered to be fiction, a “fake” autobiography until 1987 when archival research revealed its author’s identity and it was published under Jacobs’ name (Yellin, 1987, p. 14). The book’s 1987 cover image depicts an elderly, respectable woman in a domestic setting, seated in an armchair: Jacobs at the time of writing, not Jacobs the alluring young woman and mother. The image represents the view Yellin’s generation had of Jacobs.

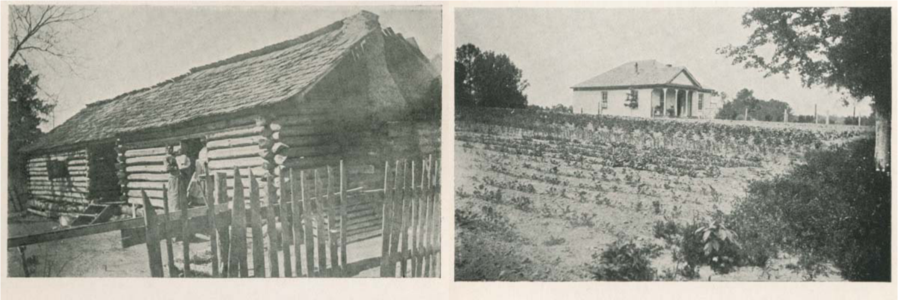


INCIDENTS IN THE
Life of a Slave Girl
Written by Herself

Harriet A. Jacobs
EDITED BY JEAN FAGAN YELLIN

Fig. 3: The frontispiece of Jacobs' *Incidents*.

In the late nineteenth century the discovery of half-tone technology in printing enabled cheap illustrations in newspapers, journals, and books as well (Trachtenberg, 1993, p. 122). By the early twentieth century, extensive illustrations became hallmarks of African American autobiographies. (Foy, 2016, p. 89). At the time of Jim Crow, the nuanced institutionalized racial discrimination in the US, these texts showed that African Americans were actually able to ascend socially, and showcased middle class African American lives (p. 90). Foy analyzes the use of pictures in William J. Edwards's 1918 *Twenty Five Years in the Black Belt*, where although one can find the usual frontispiece, it is not so much pictures of African American bodies but rather of improved African American housing that dominate the illustrations.



TYPICAL LOG CABIN IN THE BLACK BELT

HOME OF A SNOW HILL GRADUATE

Fig. 4: Illustrations from Edwards' *Twenty Five Years* (p. 60).

Foy argues that the illustrations in Edwards' text problematize the expectation of racial visibility permeating African American autobiography at the turn of the century (Foy, 2016, p. 92), and the need for middle-class invisibility is interposed on the expectation of racial visibility as a sign of social ascent, that is why facades of well-to-do middle-class homes take the place of the narrator's images.

In contrast to Edwards' book, the extensive photo illustrations in Michelle Obama's *Becoming* depict black bodies. Therefore, beside the adherence to the generic expectation for photos, it would seem that the expectation of racial visibility is not problematized. Yet the social visibility of racialized people is a central issue of the text and *Becoming* argues for the need to end the social invisibility of colored women especially. There seems to be a contradiction here, so let us have a look at exactly how racial visibility is constructed by the illustrations of the book, how the images 'illustrate' the issue of visibility.

3. Pictures and text in *Becoming*

Michelle Obama's autobiography contains 63 images altogether: apart from the cover image, 6 images each on the front endpaper and the back endpaper, and 16 pages of inserts with 50 pictures.

3.1. Cover image

The most widely known and important illustration of the book is the cover image. The portrait depicts the upper body, the face, shoulders, the arms; the title and the logo of Oprah's Book Club form part of the image.

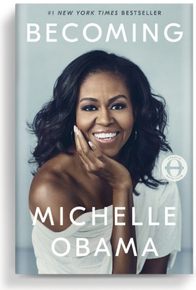


Fig. 5: The cover image of *Becoming*.

There is a marked contrast of light and dark between the background and the foreground, as the pale blue background and her white clothes highlight Michelle Obama's black hair, eyes, and rich brown skin. Also, there is a bare shoulder exposed, it makes the image playful, flirting, feminine. The make-up of the face also accentuates feminine features, the painted eyebrows, the lush eyes, the silky downpour of hair. All in all, the image depicts a playful, feminine, markedly and proudly colored woman, in a setup that is definitely not to be expected on an official portrait.

In African American autobiographies we have seen that the frontispiece always posed a question about the identity of the narrator. Equiano's image contrasted the high-end white clothes with the African features of the face, the contrast accentuated by the Bible is open in his hand at Acts (12:4). In Douglass's case the daguerreotype made one ponder because of the contrast between the expected and the seen, the *not* so African features and the elegant clothes. Jacobs's image as a respectable matron on the cover of her book on the sexual abuse of a young colored woman again presented a question, this time about the respectability of the narrator.

Michelle Obama's image highlights her femininity and there is a contrast of light and dark in it, but it presents no immediate question of racial identity to be pondered. However, the silky waves of her long hair and the bare shoulder catch the eye: they do not fit the idea of the 'angry black woman' projected by the conservative white media against the wife of the Democratic presidential candidate back in 2008.

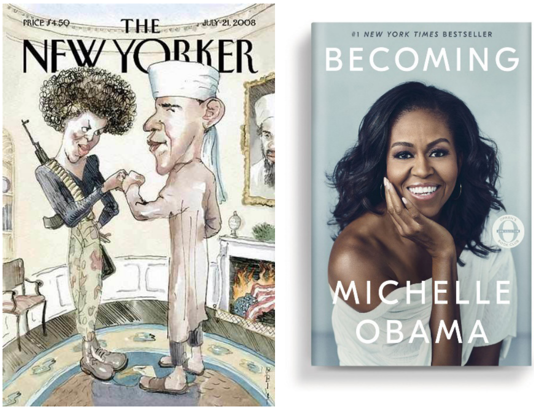


Fig. 6: *Becoming* and the *New Yorker* cover from July 28, 2008. NPR

The caricature by Barry Blitt on the cover of the *New Yorker* grasped the heart of the problem the American gaze presented, as it depicted Michelle

Obama as the feared militant colored woman of the Civil Rights movement, with big Afro hair and in guerilla gear with her husband in the White House. In contrast to that depiction, the cover image of her autobiography presents a playful, feminine, and smiling colored woman. The image on the cover of the autobiography is interposed on the earlier biased image: the real person on the earlier stereotype.

3.2. Inserts

The next most important section of the book is the insert made up of 16 unnumbered pages of colored photos, altogether 50 of them. Although they are not separated by sections, the images follow the three-part narrative of the autobiography: individual story, two of us, and the service for the community. The pictures are accompanied by commentary, each image with three or four lines of text that do not originate from the main text but seem to repeat its ideas. Thus, the relation between images and main text, and the relation between images and their commentary are the two areas that will be analyzed here.

3.2.1. Images and main text

The arrangement of the images shows a focus on the presidential years. Usually there are three images on one page, with variations (four/two). The first area represented is the Robinson family and Michelle's schools, ending with a photo of the Obamas as a couple. Then come illustrations on their life together: marriage, family, Michelle as a working mum. Then public themes follow on 11 pages: the campaign trail, the presidential oath (full page with large images), then days and projects in the White House. The last two large images of the final page of photos center on Michelle the speaker and the participant of a march.

Section theme	Pages	photos	%
Becoming Me: family, schools	3	9	18
Becoming Us: Michelle and Barack	2	7	14
Becoming More: Community	11	34	68

Table 1: Arrangement of images according to theme

So, the arrangement of the images reveals that although the frame story of the book is about finding one's voice, most of the illustrations document the days of the First Lady, and within that, photos of increased size highlight the moment of taking the oath and Michelle the activist (speaker/march).

Three main thematic sections document the Obama family's road to the White House, and each highlights special points of interest. The first section on family and schools focuses on work ethic (father at work) and social interest (white exodus, colored girls in college, staying at Euclid Avenue of the South Side). Then follow pictures of the family and the working mother. Between the two, there is a gap: there are no pictures of either Harvard law School or Sidley and Austin (Harvard does not figure in the main text, either), only Michelle's places of work after she decided to work for community building. The third section on campaigning and presidency is illustrated by 11 pages, each one with an identifiable topic:

Subsection theme in *More*	Page	photos	%
Road to candidacy	6	3	6
Campaign trail: publicity, assistants	7	3	6
Family on the trail, election day	8	3	6
Taking the oath	9	2	4
Everyday adventures of the presidential family	10	4	8
Projects, meeting famous people	11	4	8
Projects, meeting ordinary people	12	3	6
Ordinary days in the WH	13	3	6
Assistants	14	3	6
Family and normalcy in presidential life	15	4	8
Michelle's tasks: alone and in community	16	2	4

Table 2: Arrangement of images in section *More* according to theme

Moreover, there are recurring general themes unrelated to chronology as well. First and foremost, the boundary between family and work is often shown as blurred. The children often appear in public photos (speech, oath, Oval Office) where spaces of the White House are reinterpreted from their perspective. In this respect the most spectacular photo was taken in the Oval Office (insert p. 9), where the family are hanging out in everyday clothes, defamiliarizing the space well known from newsreels.

Another general feature to be noticed is how well populated the photos are. Many other people appear in the company the Obamas keep: public personages and ordinary people are both on display while the couple's public projects are catalogued. Very often there is bodily contact in the pictures, too: a hug. On pages 10-11, five pictures out of 6 are representing hugs, the commentary only mentioning it in relation to the first, but the images repeating the gesture four more times, not mentioning the hugs by words. Michelle hugs a student, a mourning mother, her own daughters, and a dog. The power of physical contact is transmitted by the images only.

Publicity and visibility also occur in the images repeatedly as themes. There are two pictures about the Obamas eating a campaign trail breakfast, once in the company of the Bidens and once in the company of another couple and media workers.

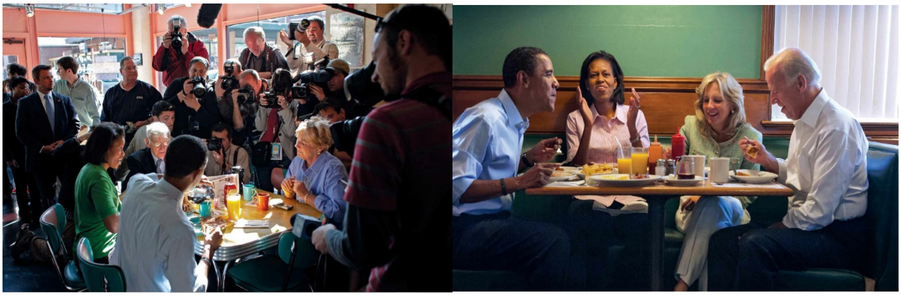


Fig. 7: The Obamas having breakfast on the campaign trail. Inserts, p. 7.

These remind readers how each word and each action of a candidate becomes public, as it is not only the campaign crew that follow him around but hosts of media workers as well. In the text, we are reminded of the media hype Barack's asking for Dijon mustard created, and these images testify to how that was possible.

The difference between the two images lies in the use of frames. The first shows the media around the eaters, while the second does not. However, as the mediatized one appears first, by the time the second is looked at, it is easy to imagine the photographers around the two couples. In other words, the image is reinterpreted in the context of the series (pp. 7-8). A similar effect is created by the image about the Obamas with their security file on page 7. Taken from a distance, the image shows how the smiling couple is surrounded by security personnel. Had the picture been shot with a different frame, it would have only represented the happy couple – the way it appears now sheds light on the margins of presidential life not normally shown.

Visibility and publicity as themes reoccur on the final page of inserts as well. The two images of the final page show Michelle Obama's preferred ways of public action: Obama on stage preparing to speak, and Obama with her family, friends, and allies at a march for the memory of the Civil Rights movement. The opposition between solitude and community is strengthened by the colors, the movement, and the layout of the photos.

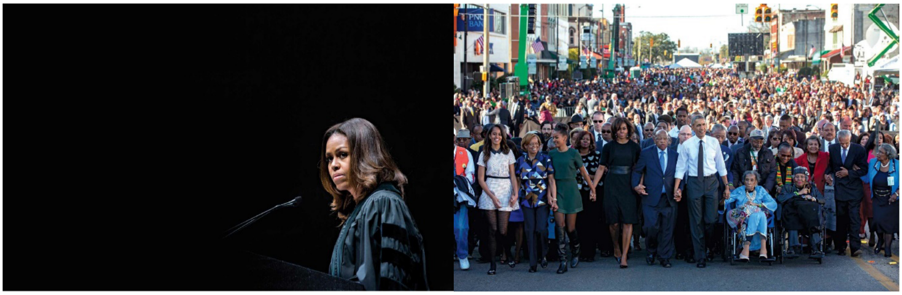


Fig. 8: Michelle Obama standing alone and leading a community. Inserts, p. 12.

In the first picture Michelle Obama is standing alone, there is no movement. She is wearing black clothes in front of a black background, her face lacks the usual smile. She looks concerned, responsible: preparing to talk or having finished it. Her figure is situated in the corner of the image, while the biggest part of the image is empty, signifying the audience somewhere near. The picture projects a somber, dark atmosphere, it represents the duty of public speaking as a responsible personal task. The companion piece of the image depicts a colorful crowd marching, Michelle and Barack Obama with senator John Lewis in the lead. The picture is balanced, the crowd moves from the background towards the emptiness in the foreground, driven by a common aim. The crowd is marching with a sense of purpose towards something, the activity itself fills the participants with joy. The march is an act of communal remembrance and self-expression of a community, it encapsulates the essence of social action. So the final two pictures accentuate the importance of finding one's voice that can lead to communal action, they show how change starts with an individual story but is made to happen by communal action.

3.2.2. Images and commentary

The commentaries of the pictures authenticate the events and add detail to the stories in the main text. When the picture shows an official occasion, then the commentary often complements a personal remark, or the other way around, a personal image often comes with a general remark. In the first section one can find two school photos with six years between them. The reader is eager to find Michelle in the pictures, but the commentary refuses to help in this as it goes on about the social transformation of the neighborhood between 1969 and 1975. Until the late sixties, her neighborhood in the South Side "was made up of a racially diverse mix of middle-class families" Obama writes (inserts, p. 2). The comment explains the "white flight" from the neighborhood that resulted in the disappearance of white faces from the class. The reader returns to mark this, and it will only be the third glance that identifies Michelle, as one of the class members, in the pictures.

The family picture about making the presidential oath combines the personal and the public in a similar way. The photo represents the act of the oath as a communal family enterprise (Inserts, p. 9): while Barack is repeating the text, Michelle is holding the Bible, the girls are concentrating very hard, keeping their fingers crossed metaphorically so that everything goes as planned. The commentary draws attention to a personal detail, the fact that Sasha had to stand on a box 'so that her face is in line with the others', for best photographic effect.

The second image of the page reveals an off-stage moment of the protagonists of the inauguration. The photo shows the presidential couple in party gear, heading off to their ten balls. Their chatting black and white duo is opposed to the group of official looking soldiers. The commentary runs on about the need for personal presence during official events. Interestingly, the commentary states that Jason Wu's beautiful dress had a lion's share in the fact that protocol could not triumph over personal feeling on the eve of the inauguration. One critic wrote that many female readers would have expected a style guide for Michelle Obama's autobiography, for them, this is the only but key place where the performative power of clothes is mentioned, although Michelle is relying on it consciously all the time (Cartner-Morley, 2018).

In the examples, the commentaries make it necessary to take a look at the image for a second time and reinterpret our first understanding of it in a novel way, making us reflect on how what it actually shows may not be so obvious.

3.3. Endpapers

The book carries 12 half-tone images on its endpapers: the inside of the cover. It would seem there are so many images to show that they overspill to the endpapers, but a second glance shows there is more to them. The images repeat the major turning points and key themes in the life of the narrator. The front endpaper shows Michelle's family and her schools, the preparation for her becoming, while the back endpaper shows president Obama's family and presidency, with Michelle the speaker in the company of a microphone on the final image. These photos construct a mini narrative of the most important people in and influences on Michelle's life that promise a new beginning with Michelle having found her voice and being ready to use it in the future.

3.4. Implied sunrise

The book has a sixty-fourth illustration that remains invisible. Alma Thomas's *Resurrection* is only mentioned in the text but fits Wagner's definition of an iconotext even so. The Obamas hung this picture in the small dining room of the White House when they redecorated the room and opened it for the public. They altered the furnishing and the color scheme of the dining room when they began to use it for receiving official guests. As part of the new appeal, Thomas's picture was acquired and became part of the White House Collection.

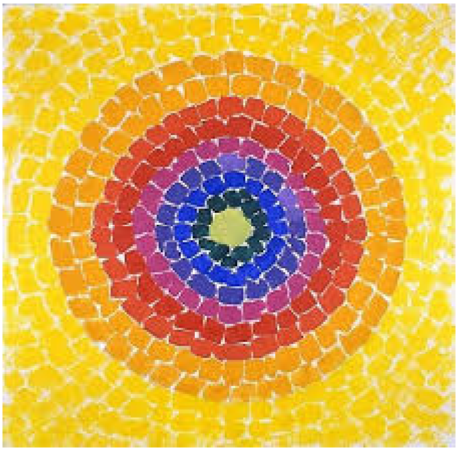


Fig. 9: Alma Thomas, *Resurrection*. 1966. Source:
The White House Historical Association.

The form of the rising sun is represented by this picture of an African American painter from the Civil Rights era, which was hung on the wall of the Obamas' dining room. Perhaps this limits the possible interpretations of the metaphor of the rising sun, in any case, it is definitely connected to the idea of change that has been formulated by many slogans of Michelle Obama's book as well: Joining Forces, Let's Move! The notion of change implies many areas as it ranges from personal change through political change to social transformation. It even has a religious aspect, as the term initially refers to spiritual rebirth. Because of all the thematic ties, Alma Thomas' work would fit the series of illustrations in the book admirably: although it depicts no humans, metaphorically and through its history it is connected to the project of 'becoming' explicated in the book. Its actual absence, inversely, draws attention to its importance: its invisible presence highlights the problem of visibility yet again.

4. Visibility and finding one's voice in *Becoming*

A central concept of the book is visibility that is present both thematically and materially. Thematically it appears in section 3 titled 'Becoming more,' in connection with the issue of political change. While telling the story of the first presidential campaign, the text criticizes the phenomenon of "the American gaze" (p. 372). The notion refers to the way the US (white) public views an African American public figure. It also refers to the biased stereotypes applied to an African American woman who takes on a public role. In the case of Michelle Obama, the American gaze made itself felt as a hurting presence when she was represented by the media as unpatriotic, unfeminine, an angry black woman (pp. 264-265, pp. 272-273) during the primaries. This is the time the slogan "When they go low, we go high" (p. 407) originates from. Michelle Obama's autobiography describes the process through which, in defiance of the American gaze, she made herself visible "differently" (pp. 267-269, p. 372) for the public; through writing she shares her strategies of turning her early stereotypical and negative public image into something more personalized and positive.

This strategically planned public visibility is embodied by the illustrations of the book that show Michelle Obama beyond stereotypes: engaging in personal projects, as part of a family, a community, or in the company of a microphone. These pictures construct a race, class, and gender identity of Michelle Obama that was not yet visible by the American gaze in 2008. Michelle invests a lot into making herself visible for the American public in a new way (p. 372) by 2018. As she comments on minority students: "they'd have to push back against the stereotypes that would get put on them, all the ways they'd be defined before they'd had a chance to define themselves. They'd need to fight the invisibility that comes with being poor, female, and of color" (p. 319). In other words, class, gender, and race issues hinder one's social visibility in combination. To counter the effect of the intersection of race, class, and gender bias, Michelle Obama created her own visibility by way of her own projects in the White House, by writing her autobiography.

The illustrations of the book play a significant role in constructing Michelle Obama's new social visibility. As far as the basic story of American success is concerned, the pictures show her humble working class beginnings, her schooling, her family, the South Side she has exchanged for a secure middle class existence (for more on this, see my paper on Obama and African American autobiography (Kovács, 2018, n.p.). Her projects as First Lady on veterans' families, healthy eating, doing sports, and gardening transform traditionally domestic interests into political ones. The class and gender emancipation of a "colored woman" results in a reassessment of the very category of the "colored woman." Beside repeating key issues of the book, the pictures also reflect on the problem of visibility self-consciously. Several images play upon the questions "What can you see?" "Who makes you see that?" (insert p. 7), and the commentaries make you reinterpret your first idea of what you actually see in the image again and again, so that after a while you need to reflect not only on the social identity of the persons seen but also on the way you read images and interpret them. An invocation to Alma Thomas's *Resurrection* implies a possible Civil Rights or spiritual motivation to the basic imperative for changing the way you look at things.

The illustrations of the book do not show but rather perform what the text tells about visibility. The text argues that "our" stories connect "us to each other," that change is possible by sharing our stories: "our stories connected us to one another, and through those connections, it was possible to harness discontent and convert it to something useful" (p. 116). The text also argues that finding your voice happens when you find your own story: when the story of your life begins to be a story of something more, when it articulates an extra narrative, which may sometimes be called a lesson. Then you can share that narrative with others and by sharing, find a link to a community (be it a reading group or a film club, but primarily *not* a political party) (Kovács, 2018, n.p.). These stories need to be made visible and known for others so that they can understand events from "our" perspective as well, not only according to "their" own existing views. The book articulates this general need of finding social meaningfulness in life and makes Michelle Obama's own socially meaningful story known to the global audience. The illustrations of the book confront the reader with images of the private person in public scenarios (election night, Oval Office) or the public figure in domestic settings (with kids, in the garden, in the private quarters of the White House). The images construct the material visibility of Michelle Obama's private story in direct defiance of actual stereotypical public misrepresentations of it. They perform the work of making the reader see Obama differently.

5. Conclusion

Illustrations provide not a "window" to but a "distortion" of our relation to 'reality,' J. Mitchell wrote (Mitchell, 1984, p. 507). The question is not about the authenticity of the image but rather about why and how the distortion takes place, who has the authority over it (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 2), whether it has some sort of disruptive potential to defy accepted strategies of representation. In the case of the illustrations in Michelle Obama's autobiography, race, class, and gender aspects interact to produce a vision that challenges previous views of the ex-First Lady, drawing copiously on private settings for performing public action.

The cover image situates the enterprise of the book in opposition to the simplifying racial stereotypes best represented by the *New Yorker* caricature. The playful and feminine image of a bare black shoulder on the cover image is therefore no longer a sumptuous objectified part of a racialized female body, but a defiant gesture against official poses and simplified opinions about colored women as such.

At the same time, the image shows a well-to-do middle class colored woman who has successfully transgressed her working class beginnings. Like in preceding African American autobiographies of the self-made African American, the cover image provides the story with authority by representing the middle class dream of American success.

The illustrations also highlight the feminine aspect of the narrative. Michelle Obama's book tells the narrative of a colored woman's individual struggle against social invisibility. By telling the story it shares the female experience and offers an example for other women to follow as well. The meaning constructed by the female voice telling its own story draws attention to the narrative and visual performative quality of female self-construction, of 'becoming.'

The visual process of self-construction has a marked feminine quality in that it focuses on the female body (clothes, motion/position) and promotes activities usually belonging to the domestic sphere (gardening, decorating, cooking, doing recreational sport) into issues of the public sphere by providing them with a public role. I find this a very socially constructive mode of women's transmedial empowerment.

In general, the images of the book appropriate the private sphere for public purposes in a very subtle and conscious way. The images of the inserts focus on the projects of the presidency, consistently blurring the boundary between private and public. They are populated by members of the Obama community who are connected by stories and also bodily contact. In this context, a hug becomes the bodily symbol of the private sharing of a public purpose. The illustrations construct a *different* Michelle Obama, made visible for the public by her own private projects in the seemingly private female sphere that becomes public through tackling basic social and political issues.

In addition, the images and their commentaries also provoke the reinterpretation of the pictures and, through that, they offer self-reflexive commentary on racial and feminine social visibility. Reading the autobiography together with the illustrations provides an understanding that positions the book as more race, class, and gender conscious and defiant than it seems at first sight. The images forefront black bodies, personal interaction, and counter-hierarchical actions in a medium of communication less regulated than the textual main part of a mandatory autobiography of an ex-First Lady of the US.

Michelle Obama at the DNC 2020. Source: New Yorker Aug. 18, 2020

There is good reason to expect more products of socially performative African American female self-construction indexed by the name 'Michelle

Obama.' In 2019 the self-help version of *Becoming* has been published, a documentary film on the book tour for Netflix came out in 2020. Also, the documentary film *American Factory* produced by the Obamas won the Oscar Award for the best documentary in 2020. In 2019, Michelle Obama signed a contract with Spotify to post regular Podcasts with Spotify starting July 2020. Last but not least, her online speech for the Democratic National Convention 2020 sounded and looked like a State of Union speech delivered by your neighbor (as Doreen St. Félix noted, St. Félix 2020, n.p.). If *Becoming* is to be read as a cue, the list is far from complete and the discussions of social issues in subtly politicized domestic settings will continue.

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Dubravka Đurić
Faculty of Media and Communications
Singidinum University, Belgrade
dubravka.djuric@fmk.edu.rs

(TRANS)NATIONALISM AND AMERICAN FEMINIST EXPERIMENTAL WRITING[1]

Abstract: In my discussion of American feminist experimental poetry, I will deal with two aspects of their practice. On the one side, I will point to its relation to the mainstream more traditionally conceptualized feminist poetry, and its relation to experimental male-dominated formation of language poetry. On the other side, I will discuss the aspects of transnationalization of the field of American feminist experimental poetry. As a central figure in feminist poetry I will discuss Adrianne Rich negative response to feminist experimental poetry. In these discussions I will point to the status of *lyrical I* in feminist poetics, language poets' poetics and feminist experimental poetics. Two feminist experimental poets will be in focus of the text: Rachel Blau DuPlessis, with her French feminist theory inspired notion of 'female aesthetic', and Kathleen Frazer, who in 1993 established important platform for feminist experimental poetry, magazine *HOW(ever)*. In the end I will focus on four aspects of transnationalization in the field of American experimental poetry. The first one is the fact that experimentalism is by definition transnational, regarding the transnational impact of international avant-garde Russian Cubo-Futurists, Italian Futurists, European Dadaist, then international neo-avant-garde: Fluxus artists and concrete poets from different parts of the world. The second one is the influence of French poststructuralist and feminist theory. The third one is related to connection of American and Canadian feminist experimental female poets, the exchange between magazine *HOW(ever)* and Canadian *Tessera*. Finally, I will point do special kind of transnationalization within the English speaking poetry communities in U.S., Canada and Great Britain.

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Key words: experimental poetry, feminism, national/transnational poetry field, poststrutcuralism

1. Feminism and feminist poetry movement

In this paper I will deal with the American experimental women's poetry, which belongs to "feminist avant-garde tradition" (Frost, 2003, p. v). During the 1980s this poetry production took controversial place between two opposing poetry practices: feminist poetry, conceptualized by more traditional approaches to poetry composition, and prevailingly radical and predominantly male language poetry. Feminist poetry came out of Women's Liberation Movement which appeared at the end of the 1960s, in literature marked as the second wave feminism. In this context poetry became an important tool in the process of consciousness raising. Feminist poetry had as its goal to tell stories of *women's life experience* with the language whose meaning was available to all, and this experience was excluded from hegemonic male-centric poetry discourse, as particular and not universal. Poetry in this way became the site for performing feminist politics. In feminist poetry, the *lyric subject*, in accordance with the imperatives inherited from Romantic tradition, speaks out from herself, out of her I. The *lyric I* was established as one of the basic categories of lyric poem which by definition is short and emotional. In mid-80s Charles Bernstein wrote that in this influential tradition, the *lyric I* is the main organizing principle of the poem (Bernstein, 1986, p. 408). Constituted in accordance to Romantic heritage in this kind of poetry, the male voice, produced as neutral and universal, speaks of his experience, his feelings and adventures. In the mainstream poetry, the *lyric I* is an important marker which secures authenticity and truthfulness of utterance. When female poets started using the *lyric I*, they intervened in male-centered universalistic discourse. "Stealing the language" became an important concept in feminist theory and criticism. The phrase is used by Alicia Suskin Ostriker in her book on women's poetry *Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America* which appeared in 1986 (Đurić, 2009, pp. 71-74). This phrase is taken from the French theory. In 1976, French critic Claudine Herrmann published the book titled *Les voleuses de langue* in which she investigated "women's displacement out of male language defining them as his negative" (Janković, 2019, p. 226). In the context of American feminist poetry, the phrase "stealing the language" suggests that because of the missing female genealogy, i.e. female precursors, and their work as an established model, the only option for female poets is to “steal the language.” By stealing the language developed in male poetry, women’s poetry can come across as a poetry of lesser value. Female genealogy could, on the other hand, give the frames and reference for writing and through it we could understand the work of a particular woman poet. It would help us to place women poets within the literary history (Mix, 2016, p. 259).

American feminist poetry should be situated into the broader context of American poetry in the 1950s and 1960s, because tendencies that appeared then not only impacted the change in poetry production, but they also determined feminist poetry. Kim Whitehead pointed to three important shaping factors of poetry production. First, during the 1950s new poetry movements and schools appeared, among which Black Mountain College, Beat poetry, San Francisco Renaissance and New York School. Since critical of established poetry they built alternative poetics opposed to the mainstream formalism. The most influential was Black Mountain poet, Charles Olson, who advocated writing poetry in an open form, which initiated a new field of innovative poetry production. On the other side, confessional poets from the 1960s constructed a persona in their poetry which enabled them to talk about their personal traumas. Their poetry was emotional, with autobiographic content, and narrative structure (Beach, 2003, p. 155). As the third factor, Whitehead pointed to the “rise of social awareness and corresponding emphasize on poetry performance” (Whitehead, 1996, p. 5).

In the context of social fights and changes which influenced poetry production, the women’s liberation movement appeared, proclaiming that personal is always already political. Within it, the *feminist poetry movement* appeared because poetry became an important tool for consciousness-raising, while sincerity in describing women’s experience was considered as revolutionary (Witehead, 1996, p. 25). This meant that in the feminist movement of the late 1960s and during the 1970s, women poets and their poetry were an integral part of the feminist movement. A poet Jan Clausen wrote that “[p]oets are some of feminism’s most influential activists, theorists, and spokeswomen, at the same time, poetry become a favorite means of self-expression, consciousness-raising and communication” (in Berke, 2016, p. 162). Poetry was a tool for expressing the protest against gender constraints and invited women to participate in feminist movement with the goal to provoke social change. Therefore, Karen Brodine argued that poetry was a tool by which feminist movement was built and enabled different tactics of resistance (p. 162). American feminist poets praised “women’s experience” and advocated politics of identity. The slogan “personal is political” required articulation of personal voice, usage of transparent language which clearly and with no ambiguities points to the reality outside language into the condition of women's life. Ostriker pointed to three themes inherited in women's poetry – women poets expressed their rage and described violence to which women are exposed, and openly protested against nonvisibility and silencing of women (Đurić, 2009, p. 73). Poets active in the feminist poetry movement created specific *feminist poetics* by which they intended to return poetry into the public sphere. This poetics was based, according to an innovative poet Kathleen Frazer, upon "common language" aesthetics (in Frost, 2003, p. 110). They wrote confessional poetry in an open form, charged with political messages (p. 110). They activated subversive potential of poetry which enabled them to act in public sphere from which poetry was banished long ago. In this context, even lyric poetry as the most personal literary practice was "enacted as a charged site of public utterance" (Kinnahan, 2004, p. 3). When it appeared in the 1960s and 1970s, the feminist poetics conceptually was connected with the idea of social progression of women. Thanks to this fact, the systematic frame was established along with the conceptual apparatus by which it was possible to connect poetry of various women practices from the past to present. In 1978, Elaine Showalter used the word *gynocriticism* to mark the need for analyzing women writers as separate and specific women's literary tradition (Dojčinović-Nešić, 1993; Đurić, 2009, p. 67).

2. Feminism and innovation/feminism vs. innovation

American language poetry, which during the 1970s became more and more influential, through its poetics, poetry and theory impacted the transformation of poetry production. A language poet Ron Silliman, introducing the notion of *new sentence*, wrote that in new poetry, a sentence became the main unit of writing, and writing got rid of emotional tone which is obligatory in lyric poetry (Silliman, 1987; Đurić, 2002, p. 93). By *new sentence* as a device, the difference between poetry and prose, poetry and theory was questioned. Kathleen Frazer wrote an essay regarding language poetry in 1982 entitled "Partial Local Coherence: Regions with Illustrations (Some notes on 'Language' writing)", noticing that her students started submitting to her poems that were not written in the manner of Robert Bly, Robert Creeley, or Adrienne Rich. Their pieces were composed from "collaged fragments or sentences or paragraphs juxtaposed in amusing and unexpected ways ... cutting back on the more obvious preoccupation with Self" (Fraser, 2000, p. 65). It was the sign that language poetry became unavoidable. According to Fraser, poetical imperatives of language poetry were another trend after interventions of the New York School, “in the spirit of Baudelaire, Dada, Kurt Schwitters and André Breton – and experimentalists like John Cage and Jackson Mac Low who had introduced techniques of arbitrary mathematical patterning to break open syntactical habit and thought frame” (Fraser, 2000, p. 65). With this statement, Fraser pointed to the fact that innovative poetry is by definition basically transnational.

Transnational poetics refers to the literary production which transgresses the constraints posed by national canon and questions it. European historical avant-garde movements mentioned by Frazer, experimented with visual aesthetic of the page, treated language as material, used collage, etc., and were crucial for American innovative poets after WWII. In their texts, language poets emphasized the importance of Dadaism, Italian Futurism and Russian Cubo-Futurism for their work. The transnational connections and exchanges were important for language poetry. The textual production of language poets referring to European avant-garde and French theory constructed the context in which experiment was practiced by female and male innovative poets. Literary theory produced by Russian Formalists was crucial for the language poets. In his book *Total Sintax* (1985), Barrett Watten discussed “Russian Formalism & the Present.” Lyn Hejinian was a co-translator of the work of the important contemporary Russian poet Arcadii Dragomoshchenko, whom she met in 1983. Her book of poetry *Oxota*[2]*: A Short Russian Novel* (1991) was based on the structure of Pushkin’s *Evgeny Onegin* (Đurić, 2002, p.132; Vickery, 2018, p. 286). Rosmarie Waldrop is German-born poet, who became significant American experimental feminist poet, writing in her second language. She emphasized the relevance of European poetic heritage for her (such as the Vienna Group), and she has been a relevant translator of contemporary French poetry. In her essay “From White Page to Natural Gaits: Notes on Some Recent French Poetry,” she mentions poets Anne-Marie Albiach, Pierre Alferi, Dominique Fourcade, etc. French poets were also interesting for American experimental poets because of their usage of space on the page for spatial configurations of the words (Waldrop, 2005, p. 124).

Narrative feminist mainstream poetry and feminist experimental poetry in the U.S. were established as two opposed, gendered fields of poetry. Feminist poets like Adrienne Rich believed that language experiments are not relevant for feminism. (Frost 2003, p. xix). Rich’s poetry and prose were crucial in the processes of defining feminist movement after the Second World War till the 1980s and especially in the 1990s, when feminism became a global, and transnational phenomenon (Heuvig and Hogue, 2016, p. 62). Rich considered writing *poetry* as a *feminist practice*, while for DuPlessis *writing* is a *feminist practice*. At first sight these formulations seem similar, but in fact they are quite opposed. In Rich's case, it means that *narrative poetry* is dealing with female lives, it uses transparent language, and it is defined as a *feminist practice*.

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[2] ‘Oxota’ in Russian means hunt and desire.

In DuPlessis' case, the term *writing* refers to Franch *écriture,* denoting experiments in language and with language. It refers to poststructuralist belief that language is not transparent but material and that as subjects we are constructed in language (Đurić, 2014, p. 286). Mixing of different styles, genres and registers of writing is understood as *feminist practice*. Rich's feminist essays have a cult status and had an important role in the process of establishing women's studies as well as gay and lesbian studies. On the other hand, Rachel Blau DuPlessis came to poetry thanks to the feminist movement and directed her activism toward scholarly engagement (Heuvig and Hogue, 2016, p. 65). American innovative poets like Fraser, DuPlessis, Beverly Dahlen, Joan Retallack, Rae Armantrount, Leslie Scalapino, and Susan Howe questioned the devices used by poets active in the feminist movement in which patriarchal forms of poetry composition remained along with its lyrical narrative hierarchies. Instead, innovative feminist poets searched for modernist innovators like Gertrude Stein and Mina Loy who at the beginning of 20th century shattered the male lyric tradition. In the process of establishing feminist genealogies, feminist experimentalists transformed poetry into feminist writing space (Berke, 2016, pp. 165-166). In opposition to the aesthetics of "common language", in 1978 DuPlessis advocated *female aesthetics*, which was based on *écriture feminine* of French feminist theoreticians and writers. In her essay "For the Etruscans" DuPlessis wrote:

> To define then. 'Female aesthetic': the production of formal, epistemological, and thematic strategies by members of the group Woman, strategies born in struggle with much of already existing culture, and overdetermined by two elements of sexual difference – by women's psychosocial experiences of gender asymmetry and by women's historical status in an (ambiguously) nonhegenomic group. (DuPlessis, 1990, p. 5).

In this essay DuPlessis used *collage*, the device inherited from historical avant-gardes. Another device she used was Charles Olson's *field composition*, which became important for experimental female poets by the end of 1970s. DuPlessis appropriated these two modernist modes or methods of thinking and used them for feminist ends (DuPlessis, 2006, p. 27). Innovative female poets were led by Olson's field composition toward establishing a specific visual aesthetics. Fraser wrote:

> Expanding onto the FULL PAGE – responding to its invitation to play with typographic relations of words and alphabets, as well as with their denotative meanings, has delivered visual-minded poets from the closed, airless containers of the well-behaved poem into a writing practice that foregrounds the investigation and pursuit of the unnamed. The dimensionality of the full page invites multiplicity, synchronicity, elasticity ... perhaps the very female subjectivity proposed by Julia Kristeva, as linking cyclic and monumental time" (Fraser, 2000, p. 175).

Olson's field composition should be situated within the transnational context of concrete and visual poetry because in the 1950s it was a significant site of experimental poetry production. Establishing relations "between 'field' of the page and 'field' of meaning in semantic as well as referential terms" (Drucker, 1994, p. 50), Olson realized a specific spatialized concept of language. He used whole page for making the visual composition out of arrangement of the words so that we could speak of a *visual turn* in American poetry. Crucial for this turn was revolution in the production of the text at the beginning of 20th century, as well as the usage of free verse which was not generated by meter and sound. Moreover, the invention of typewriter enabled poets to design pages by themselves (Frost, 2016, p. 140)

In the excerpt cited above, Fraser connected Olson's concept of open field to Julia Kristeva's notion of time. According to Kristeva, there is monumental time which is gendered and connected with male time, while cyclic time is gendered female. Visualization of the page, for poets like Pound, Windham Lewis and later for Olson, was used for masculinization of poetry, which was a reaction to what they thought to be feminization of poetry (Frost, 2016, p. 347; Đurić, 2009, pp. 132-136). On the other hand, American feminist experimental poets like Fraser and DuPlassis, explored formal innovative devices with the focus on specifically feminist possibility of a visual-oriented poetics (Frost, 2016, p. 339). For Fraser, this meant that it is possible to connect visual performance of poetry on the printed page with Kristeva's concept of time, in which new generation of feminists harmonized linear time of history and politics and cyclic time of giving birth and motherhood (Đurić, 2009, p. 110).

3. *HOW(ever)*, language poetry, feminine *écriture* and Canadian connection

For DuPlessis, the essay "For the Etruscans" established "antipatriarchal writing as a method of investigation and an instrument of change." (DuPlessis, 2006, p. 28) It expressed the main idea at the time that the writing practice is a site of social engagement and change, common to innovative American female poets, French postructuralist feminists and American language poets. DuPlessis and Fraser, along with many other American female poets, were interested in structural and syntactic innovations in contemporary poetry. From the end of 1970s DuPlessis was working on construing *female aesthetics* which would embrace textual contradictions, fragmentation and nonlinearity (DuPlessis, 1990, p. 8). In 1982 Fraser started teaching a course "Feminist Poetics" at San Francisco State University. That was the moment when French feminist theory and its concept of *écriture feminine* became influential in American academic circles. Fraser was "excited about the nonlinear feminist textually outlined by [Caroline] Burke and [Luce] Irigaray" (Vickery, 2000, p. 89). With the poets Beverly Dahlen and Frances Jaffer, she established in 1983 the first feminist magazine dedicated to avant-garde writing, titled *HOW(ever)*. The magazine was conceptualized as a platform which would help feminist experimental female poets to exit out of twofold marginal position in relation to poetry connected with second wave feminism as well as in relation to the increasing influence of innovative poetics (Frost, 2003, p. 109) in language poetry formation. Innovative women poets gathered around *HOW(ever)* worked on reconstructing experimental women's poetry tradition, the tradition of female writers excluded from male-centered canons of experimental poetry. Although from late 1970s, American feminist critics and writers/poets within the feminist project of gynocriticism rediscovered forgotten female writers, they were not interested in innovative poets. Therefore, the editors and contributors of *HOW(ever)* worked on constructing the canon of female innovative poets. At the same time, they worked on poetics of feminist experimental approaches in poetry. These three efforts were simultaneous. While establishing the canon of female innovative poets, they constructed for themselves an important, but still invisible tradition on which they could rely. Writing on their own work, they produced a new discursive field of feminist textually which they defined and in which they performed their poetic practice. The increasing importance of poetical and discursive theoretical texts in the production during the 1970s was a transnational effect of reception of French poststructuralist theory. Male and female American experimental poets were reading poststructuralist textual production and their own texts became theoretical-poetical hybrids (Drucker, 1994, p. 53).

For American experimental feminist poets, language became "the site of feminist politics", which meant articulation of an anti-essentialist politics (Frost, 2003, p. xii). *HOW(ever)* enabled construction of American feminist innovative poetry community, and the next step was connecting innovative poets with American feminist academic interpretative community which till then had not paid attention to American innovative female poets. Feminist project of French authors encouraged the editors of *HOW(ever)* to investigate "alternative traditions of female writing", which they did during the 1980s and the early 1990s. At the same time, it offered them theoretical frames and models with which to intervene and change traditional poetry forms (Vickery, 2000, pp. 51-52).

Investigating language-oriented feminist epistemology, Megan Simpson emphasized that through the tools that this epistemology obtained, feminist poets tended to "disclose and change the operations of power in discourse that have depended on limited and fixed notions of gender and other differences among people" (Simpson, 2000, p. 11). They were not interested in depth, but in surface, which meant they were dealing with the discourse which structures the reality. They intended to understand in which way the discourse, as a mechanism, shapes our belief that there are "deep meanings and essences such as 'feminine experience', 'lesbian desire' or the 'self'" (p. 11). Kinnahan positioned innovative poets connected with *HOW(ever)* "between feminist and postmodern aesthetics" (p. 184), because they investigated the role of language and representation in the construction of female subjectivity. The importance of Kathleen Fraser, according to Kinnahan, is in the fact that she, with her work within the postmodernist frame, pointed to the relation of feminism and postmodernism. Like other experimental women poets, she questioned the way the structures of self, tradition, and language are ideologically mediated. Simpson pointed to the similarity between French postructuralist feminist theoreticians and language-oriented feminist American experimental poets. Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray's writing became an important source in the articulation of feminist avant-garde poetics (Frost, 2003, p. xxii).

Cixous emphasized the importance of poetry in her efforts to establish radically new language. Her insistence that women should write with the "white milk" of their body was important, but it was also questioned because it could be interpreted that femaleness is an essentialist category. In her works, Irigaray created plural "we" calling "the female reader to a new relationship to the text and to language" (Frost, 2003, p. xxiii). *Écriture feminine* was defined in opposition to the patriarchal discourse which was marked as 'rational', 'representational', 'symbolic', 'coherent' and 'fixed'" (Simpson, 2000, p. 1). Language-oriented women poets investigated language and meaning. Language was not approached as an inert medium for conveying meaning which exists outside of language, preceding the language. Instead, language is considered as an experience in itself, as language poet Lyn Hejinian wrote (Đurić, 2009, p. 281). Therefore, the innovative poets were not dealing with representation of female experience, but with the function of language in the construction of knowledge, subjectivity and gender, the categories which in the traditional approach to writing had never been questioned (Simpson, 2000, p. 5). Establishing the parallel with male poets, Simpson concluded: "What sets American women language-oriented writers apart from their male counterparts is the urgency with which they recognize that the question of how meaning is constituted has particular significant consequences for women" (p. 5).

American feminist innovative poets and American language poets had in common the insistence upon the process and method of writing, and not upon the poem as a finished product. Feminist innovative poets were dealing with the redefinition of female subjectivity. Later Fraser explained "[p]erhaps the most pivotal factor in *HOW(ever)*'s creation was the urgency to provide alternatives to the romantic *I* of fixed unilateral authority" (Vickery, 2000, p. 90). Female poets therefore started investigating the constructed self in poetry in an experimental way. The relation of subjectivity toward borders, codes and texts of gendered self-defined by Western male-centered society had to be destabilized by oppositional cultural politics (Kinnahan, [1994] 2008, p. 185). Questioning lyric quality of poetry in the work of experimental female poets led, in Michael Golston's term, toward the *new lyric* (Kinnahan, 2004, p. 17). In this new lyric poetry, female poets took lyrical conventions, separating the *lyric I* from ideological premise of identity politics. Inspired by at the time hegemonic discourse on subjectivity, by which language poets banished the *lyric I* from poetry, avant-garde female poets searched for an alternative articulation of subjectivity, ambiguous in relation to the lyric subject. In this process, the important influence came from the poststructuralist understanding of language.

Feminist experimentalists had an ambiguous attitude to the question of the *lyric I*. Referring to Susan Stanford Friedman, Kinnahan wrote: “Under the pressure of the lived histories of nonwhite, nonmale groups, the lyrical ‘I’ emerges in critical conversations as a necessary formulation for asserting a suppressed or erased identity” (2004, p. 21). But, under the influence of post-structuralism, from one side, and by activities of language poetry formation, on the other, the *lyric I* in American poetry was dramatically questioned. Bernstein wrote “a poem exists in a matrix of social and historical relations that are more significant to the formation of an individual text than any personal quality of the life or voice of an author” (Berstein, 1986, p. 408). From the end of the 1970s, French feminist theoreticians insisted that female experience is constituted in and by language, it is not a reflection of a reality outside the language. Sexual difference was connected with discursive formations of subject (Vickery, 2000, p. 50). I have already discussed the *lyric I* which form the 1960s became important for mainstream feminist poet, while language poets, rising from the 1970s, rejected it along with all stable identities shaped in poetry. Therefore, these two poetry formations, one insisting on *expression,* the other on *experiment* were opposed. Yet, critics like Steve Evans, state that the appearance of feminist avant-garde from the 1970s on, forces us to rethink relations of feminism, avant-garde and poetry (Kinnahan, 2004, p. 5). The insistence of poets like Joan Retalleck and Rachel Blau DuPlessis that poetry as a textual practice is a social activity which is socially encoded is what they shared with language poets. In other words, this is the site in which feminist innovators overlap with intentions of language writing. But, as Ann Vickery, Linda Kinnahan and other critics pointed out, the problem is in the fact that male-centered narrative of language poetry does not pay attention to specificity of feminist approach to experimental writing (p. 8). Thanks to the influence of language poets, the term language poetry was used to denote all kinds of experimental approaches to language in poetry. The result was the marginalization of specifically feminist experimental poets.

However, poetry production that appeared in the magazine *HOW(ever)* during the 1980s and early the 1990s while the magazine was published, was a prototype for feminist experimental poetry. Although this practice was in relation to language poetry, it was different. That is why in this context it is important to investigate the relation of language poetry and feminist experimental poets towards *lyric poetry* and the *lyric I*. Consequently, Linda Kinnahan stressed that we have two parallel movements on the American experimental poetry scene. On the one side, there was the formation of language poets in which women poets were a minority. Their impact culminated during the 1990s, and the most important aspect of their writing was the "dismissal of the unmediated or essentialist self" (2004, p. xx). On the other side, feminist experimentators started treating the *lyric I* in a complex way, intervening into the concepts of language poets, which was the specificity of feminist avant-garde from the 1980s. The *lyric I* was questioned, pluralized and treated having in mind that it is always gendered. It is important to stress that feminist experimental poets constructed genealogies of lyrical practice that were different from the dominant critical discourses, whether avant-garde or feminist (p. xx). The transformed lyric subject "becomes site for contesting the masculinization of poetic and artistic theory as well as prefigurating the conflicts within feminist poetries over lyric subjectivity that arose in the 1970s and 1980s." (p. xxi).

Kinnahan pointed to the fact that the discussion on self, language and politics in American poetry appeared within the formation of language poetry and impacted other poets in English speaking countries. Here we come to the interesting aspect of transnationalization of feminist experimental community. *HOW(ever)* was the site of meeting of American and Canadian, and, to a lesser extent, of British women writers. On its pages we can find theoretical concepts of Anglo-American gynocriticism, and French feminism, pointing to two quite different kinds of feminism. Special attention was given to the connection of the concept of *écriture feminine* created within the French feminism and contemporary experimental women's poetry practice which had been excluded from the French feminist analysis. According to Ann Vickery, in *HOW(ever)*, "[f]or the first time, working projects by both Canadian writers of the feminine (écriture feminine) and Language writers could be presented in the same forum" (Vickery, 2000, p. 96). The exchange between American feminist innovative magazine *HOW(ever)* and Canadian *Tessera* (the first issue appeared in 1984) was established. Heather Milne explained: "When Canadian writers published in *HOW(ever)*, their work often underwent a shift in context in order that it might fit seamlessly within a North American frame of reference, but in so doing, its specific Canadian context was effaced" (Milne, 2018, pp. 22-23).

In Canadian feminist magazine *Tessera*, the process of translation was important as a mediation between Francophone and Anglophone Canadian women writers. Their effort was directed toward resolving the problem in communication in the late 1970s and early 1980s, making available a complex francophone experimental and theoretically sophisticated feminist writing largely unread and unknown in the English-speaking Canada (p. 18). The discussions regarding the postructuralist theory in this magazine were performed intranationally not internationally. But what was common for both magazines was the fact that they appeared out of the need to make the context for experimental women writing. While Canadian authors published in *HOW(ever)*, Americans were not published in *Tessera* because the conditions for getting the state support would not permit it.

4. Conclusion

While dealing with the American experimental women poets, I pointed to the complex and conflicting relations between the poets participating in the feminist poetry movement, language poetry formation and feminist experimental poetry. The main topic discussed was their understanding of language which is in direct relation to the treatment of the *lyric I*. Feminist poets used the *lyric I* for feminist purposes to speak about women's lives and make women conscious of their subordinated position in society. Language poets deconstructed the *lyric I* showing that it is a social construction. Feminist innovative poets on the one hand rejected the *lyric I*, but at the same time dealt with multiple *I*s which were always shown as linguistically constructed.

In my discussion, I pointed to the four aspects of transnationalization of the field of poetry in this context. Firstly, experimental poetry is by definition transnational, despite the fact that it is performed in one national language. Its codes and conventions are transnationally generated from the time of historical avant-garde to neo-avant-garde which the poets inherited. The second aspect of transnationalization is the exchange of American experimental poets with Russian and French contemporary poets. American poets used French and Russian concepts to work with in their own poetry and theory, or they translated the works of poets from abroad. The third aspect is the impact of French feminist theory and its concepts. The concept of *écriture feminine* was crucial to the practice of American experimental poets. It is obvious that this practice was shaped under the impact of transnational hegemonic theoretical and writerly traditions. The discussion on feminist experimental magazine *HOW(ever)* shows the need to examine an exchange first of all between American and Canadian feminist writers, and then to a lesser degree between them and British feminist writers. This complex exchange points to another aspect of transnationalization of American experimental poetry. This fourth aspect of transnationalization took place paradoxically on the level of specific polysystem of English speaking area with its subsystems, British, American and Canadian English. This exchange was necessary because of the marginal position of female poets in their own national cultures, and the fact that innovative female poets had been a margin inside margin. On the other hand, this effort to make feminist avant-garde visible, has been fruitful, because today theorization of this field has been present as never before.

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Kalina Maleska
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University – Skopje
kalina.maleska@flf.ukim.edu.mk

ENCOUNTERS OF CULTURES IN CLIMATE CHANGE NARRATIVES

Abstract: Narratives about global warming have started emerging more frequently during the last two decades as discussions about the negative effects of global warming increased. In this paper, I focus on two different types of narratives about global warming: the novel *Forty Signs of Rain* (2004) by Kim Stanley Robinson and the film *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004) directed by Roland Emmerich. One of the most prominent characteristics in global warming narratives is the encounter of different cultures, since "global" indeed suggests that the problem transgresses borders, and concerns the whole population of the world. Robinson's novel offers rethinking of the traditional Western solutions to global warming by introducing the culture of the Khembalis – Buddhist monks from a fictional island nation, situated, it seems, somewhere near the Sundarbans. Emmerich's film, although in some regards a conventional disaster movie, offers an interesting perspective in which immigration takes an opposite direction when compared to the present moment. Analyzing the construction of various perspectives in the two narratives reveals their position that solutions to global warming can be found only in the cooperation between different cultures.

Key words: climate change, global warming, K. S. Robinson, R. Emmerich, cultures, weather migrants, capitalism, Anthropocene

1. Introduction

Researchers who explore climate changes have reiterated that we should be alarmed about the climate changes and their expected devastating impact on life on Earth. As their consequences have become increasingly prominent in the world, the efforts to raise awareness about them have also become more prominent.

The two narratives discussed in this paper, the novel *Forty Signs of Rain* by Kim Stanley Robinson and the film *The Day after Tomorrow* directed by

Roland Emmerich – interestingly both published/broadcast in the same year, 2004 – focus on aspects of climate change that are emphasized in the scientific research on this topic carried out both before and in the years following these fictional accounts. One of the most conspicuous characteristics in global warming narratives is the encounter of different cultures, as an aspect of transnationality, since "global" indeed suggests that the problem transgresses borders, and concerns the whole population of the world. *Forty Signs of Rain* and *The Day after Tomorrow* focus on environmental issues, and warn about the dangers of the ongoing climate changes that have become one of the greatest threats the world has faced.

In this paper I point out that the narratives belonging to the climate fiction genre suggest, either explicitly or implicitly, that mitigating the consequences of this phenomenon requires not only scientific response, but also changes in the political systems of the countries that are largely responsible for global warming. Namely, what is specific and common for these narratives is that they contest the existing capitalist system by introducing perspectives of various cultures. This is true not only of the two narratives discussed here, but also of the non-fiction work based on research of climate crisis and the environment, such as Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. Climate* or Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement*, to name just two among the many examples. In this paper, I focus on encounter of cultures, and on the political issue of contesting capitalism – as both of these aspects are not only inevitably present in global warming narratives, but also closely interwoven.

It is no accident that both narratives discussed belong to the science fiction genre, to a greater or lesser degree. This is not exclusively linked to the selected narratives, but it is rather a characteristic feature of climate fiction. Taking into consideration that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of today's world, and tackling it requires visionary thinking, science fiction seems to be the adequate genre to deal with this topic. This is pointed out by Andrew Milner, as well as, from a different perspective, by Ghosh. In his essay "Eutopia, Dystopia and Climate Change", Milner writes that science fiction "is a primary mechanism – perhaps *the* primary mechanism – by which our culture imagines its possible futures, both positive and negative" (Milner, 2020, p. 77). Ghosh refers to the fact that climate change has very rarely been a topic in literature or literary reviews, and even the fiction that does deal with it "is almost by definition not the kind that is taken seriously by serious literary journals: the mere mention of the subject is often enough to relegate a novel or a short story to the genre of science fiction" (Ghosh, 2016, p. 7). Ghosh contests this idea by providing examples of novels, some of them belonging to science fiction, which discuss climate change and which, even though not numerous, have foregrounded important environmental aspects, thereby testifying to the fact that science fiction is also a genre to be taken seriously.

This paper compares the two mentioned narratives which are different in many regards, extracting several aspects they have in common, which refer specifically to their treatment of climate change: how they take into consideration scientific research and how they draw attention to the importance of dealing with this problem. In terms of the theoretical framework, the paper refers mainly to the research presented in the theoretical works of Klein and Ghosh, as the research of these authors foregrounds some of the major concerns in regard to climate change in today's world, and is helpful in identifying these concerns in the selected narratives. The views about what causes the increased level of greenhouse gasses emission, what its consequences are, and what are some possible approaches to dealing with this threat, are detailed in the following chapters.

2. The Anthropocene

The fictional narratives *Forty Signs of Rain* and *The Day After Tomorrow*, regardless of the differences in terms of their approach to characterization or plot, are both based on the contrary ideas of: care for environment versus capitalist profit, scientists versus politicians, altruism and sharing knowledge with others versus selfishness. In the case of Emmerich's film, the binary oppositions are much more emphasized and there is a rather simplified division between the positive characters who are concerned about the environmental changes and support scientific struggles to tackle them, and the characters shown in more negative light, who are mainly concerned with economic progress. These oppositions, although in more complex terms, are also found in Robinson's novel. These two narratives are not isolated cases in regard to sharing such ideas; in fact, most climate change narratives share this concern that the capitalist pursuit for profit is detrimental to the environment, which is not surprising since it corresponds to the scientific explorations and studies of the causes of global warming.

Therefore, such studies of climate change, which refer to scientific evidence, and are also concerned with the consequences of climate changes on the political and social sphere are highly relevant to any discussions of narratives that focus on this topic. Some of the prominent studies that will be discussed in terms of Robinson's novel and Emmerich's film are the non-fiction books *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. Climate* by Klein and *The Great Derangement* by Ghosh's, which brings together aspects of climate changes in relation to literature and politics, *Stolen Future, Broken Present: The Human Significance of Climate Change* by David A. Collings, *Overheated: The Human Cost of Climate Change* by Andrew T. Guzman, as well as several studies on climate change fictions.

What has specifically been emphasized in the studies of the environmental changes is the notion of the Anthropocene, "[o]ne of the most-discussed and widely received concepts in academia today, most of all in the environmental humanities" (Bartosch, 2019, p. 1). Although generally it refers to the impact that humans have produced on the earth's climate, and specifically the fact that global warming is induced, at least to a certain degree, by humans, yet the notion of the Anthropocene involves more complex and contradictory implications. In the sense of humankind's influence on nature, it refers to the fact that climate change is inevitably linked not only to nature, as the climate is a natural phenomenon, but also to culture and to politics, as they play a great role in its alterations.

Taking into consideration the human role in bringing about environmental changes, both the fiction and the non-fiction works discussed rely on the realization that it is the responsibility of humankind to mitigate the consequences, and if we do not act now to at least slow down, or hopefully prevent, global warming, soon it is going to be too late to reverse its negative outcomes. This idea has constantly been stated and reiterated. The scientific estimate in 2007, according to Collings, "appeared around the same time as Al Gore's documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and reaffirmed a widespread sense that if we did not act soon to curb the emissions of greenhouse gases, the worst effects of climate change could be dire indeed – but would transpire some decades into the future" (Collings, 2014, p. 9). Thus, the situation was threatening in the long run rather than in the near future, which soon proved as a wrong estimate, as Collings writes, since just a few years later it became clear that the melting of the ice cap would arrive much sooner. Similarly, estimates about the melting of the ice cap in the near future are given in the beginning of *The Day After Tomorrow*, which soon prove to be too optimistic, as, in fact, the danger arrives within days from the moment they were announced rather than decades or years. In the beginning of her book, Klein quotes a Report from 2014 by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which states that, according to most studies, greenhouse gas emissions lead to increases in temperatures and sea level rise, which may have large-scale consequences: "At that point, even if we do not add any additional CO2 to the atmosphere, potentially unstoppable processes are set in motion" (quot. in Klein, 2014, p. 1).

Ghosh tells of an unexpected tornado in Delhi in 1978 and of the case of the Sundarbans, the large mangrove forest of the Bengal Delta, where there are cyclical changes of the weather. In the mentioned cases, the weather phenomena were not necessarily provoked by global warming; however, the increased frequency of such unusual weather events in the last couple of decades, according to research, *is related* to the human-induced climate changes. Ghosh points out that, due to global warming, some of the changes are very rapid and can take a few weeks or months whereas in the past they took much longer. Although some of these changes are cyclical, still "in the first years of the twenty-first century, portents of accumulative and irreversible change could also be seen, in receding shorelines and a steady intrusion of salt water on lands that had previously been cultivated." (Ghosh, 2016, p. 6).

There is a real danger that the rise of the sea level may flood the Sundarbans, as well as cities all over the world built along the ocean and sea shores. Klein also emphasizes that the cities most endangered by climate changes are the coastal ones. This is visually presented in *The Day After Tomorrow* as well, where New York is hit and greatly destroyed by a tsunami on the Atlantic Ocean.

The global climate changes have in reality already brought about extreme weather in many places in the world. Klein starts her book with an account of what happened before Flight 3935 took off from Washington. The wheels of the plane had sunk into the asphalt which had become soft because of the extremely high temperatures. Similar unusual weather events are registered in Ghosh's book as well, with a special mention of the year 2015, in which many extreme weather events happened:

> a strong El Niño, perching upon 'the ramp of global warming', wrought havoc upon the planet; many millions of people found themselves at the mercy of devastating floods and droughts; freakish tornadoes and cyclones churned through places where they had never been seen before; and extraordinary temperature anomalies were recorded around the globe, including unheard-of midwinter highs over the North Pole. Within days of the year's end, 2015 was declared the hottest year since record-keeping began. It was a year in which the grim predictions of climate scientists assumed the ring of prophecy. (Ghosh, 2016, p. 139)

The events in *Forty Signs of Rain* are taking place in the early twenty-first century, containing subtle elements of a near future, in which there are occasional extreme weather events in the world due to the rapid climate changes, connected with the notion of the Anthropocene, so that nearly every day there are short-term violent weather problems such as severe droughts or typhoons in unexpected places. *The Day After Tomorrow* also underlines the fact that unusual weather will hit and affect humans and other living species – thus, in the movie, it is unexpectedly snowing in New Delhi, enormous ice chunks are raining in Tokyo, while a series of simultaneous tornadoes hit Los Angeles.

It is difficult and in many cases even impossible to say whether certain weather events, for example Hurricane Sandy was a natural storm or one induced by humans, as Mehnert points out since although "the anthropogenic causes of climate change play an important role in the debate on climate, it is no longer possible to draw a line that distinguishes between natural global (non-anthropogenic) climate and artificial climate" (Mehnert, 2016, p. 150). However, according to scientific research, some of these extreme weather phenomena can be attributed to the human-induced climate change. Thus, the 2019 documentary *Ice on Fire* provides an insightful explanation, quoting scientific experts, of why these extreme weather events are happening, making it clear how they are connected to the climate change.

Information about the climate and the possible effects of global warming, based on scientific research, and implicitly referring to the humans as a factor that contributes to the climate changes feature in Robinson's *Forty Signs of Rain*. Most chapters in the novel begin with a few passages of scientific explanation of a certain phenomenon related to the environment. Thus, in the beginning of the first chapter it is stated that the Arctic ice pack "averaged thirty feet thick" in the 1950s, and "[b]y the end of the century it was down to fifteen" (Robinson, 2004, p. 5). In the beginning of the third chapter, there is a reference to the possible desalination of the North Atlantic, which may stall the Gulf Stream and thus lead to extreme cooling, also a possibility mentioned by the protagonist Jack Hall from *The Day After Tomorrow*, whose main concern is that such a development may lead to a new ice age. Similar information concerning the effects of global warming is found in the beginning of other chapters of Robinson's novel as well. Such approach puts the fictive story into a realistic context. It also directly draws attention to existing environmental threats that can be checked against media reports and research articles.

The climate change puts life in jeopardy not only because of the extreme weather events, but also because it threatens the whole system which humans have based their lives on, and Guzman discusses such indirect impact of climate change: “Food and water will be less available and more dangerous, disease will be less well contained and more common, and illnesses will be less well treated and more prevalent.” (Guzman, 2013, p. 185) Although the novel and movie discussed here mainly focus on the impact on weather, they also suggest these less direct upcoming dangers, as the whole civilizational system threatens to crush as a result of climate change, which is especially visible through the changes in the lives of the Khembalis that mark the future path of all nations should emission of greenhouse gases continue unchecked.

3. Science vs. Politics

The characters of Charlie Quibler, Anna Quibler and Frank Vanderwal in *Forty Signs of Rain*, as well as the central character in *The Day After Tomorrow*, Jack Hall, a climatologist, and his collaborators – are all scientists actively involved in doing something to reveal the truth about the dangers of global warming that is threatening to endanger whole life on Earth. The opposition between science and politics is especially evident both in Robinson’s novel and in Emmerich’s film through the focus on scientists, and their relation to politicians. When it comes to the global warming crisis, the political is deeply interrelated with the scientific. In *Forty Signs of Rain*, both Charlie and Anna, who are spouses, are greatly concerned about the effects of climate change, and, in different ways, are engaged into tackling them: Anna through her work at the National Science Foundation (NSF), while Charlie, who is unemployed at the time of the events in the novel and takes care of their two young children, through his engagement as environmental policy advisor to Senator Phil Chase. Charlie is dedicated to convincing politicians to pass the bill for mitigating climate changes pass in Congress. Frank, working for a year in NSF, is also greatly concerned about the fact that the political structures are passive when it comes to action that is supposed to be taken in order to reduce the effects of global warming. He constantly keeps track of climate news. *The Day After Tomorrow* also follows the story of several scientists: Jack Hall, who presents at a UN conference in New Delhi his theory of an imminent ice age that may come unless action is taken to reduce emission of greenhouse gases, and his colleagues Frank and Jason, as well as Terry Rapson, an oceanographer, and his team in Scotland’s Hedland Centre.

The characters who are politicians in both narratives are presented in a somewhat more negative light, although to a different degree. In *Forty Signs* *of Rain*, Senator Phil Chase seems to understand the issue of global warming and is concerned about its effects, although not as much as his advisor Charlie had hoped he would, especially in light of the fact that Senator Chase always takes into consideration the political consequences of his actions. After a great storm in Washington, however, Senator Chase shows a greater dedication to dealing with climate change.

While Senator Chase is a character motivated by complex and sometimes conflicting motives, another character, the President's science advisor Dr. Strengloft, represents the reckless emphasis on profit as a priority over the concern for the consequences of global warming. Thinking about the position of the administration in regard to global warming, the third-person narrator in *Forty Signs of Rain* is giving the readers insight into Charlie's thoughts, when he encounters Dr. Strengloft, who seems to be against investment into resources to fight global warming on the grounds that it would be too expensive, while its effects are unknown. Opposing Strengloft's views, Charlie is thinking:

> Their line was that no one knew for sure and it would be much too expensive to do anything about [global warming] even if they were certain it was coming – everything would have to change, the power generation system, cars, a shift from hydrocarbons to helium or something, they didn't know, and they didn't own patents or already existing infrastructure for that kind of new thing, so they were going to [...] let the next generation solve their own problems in their own time. In other words, the hell with them. Easier to destroy the world than to change capitalism even one little bit. (Robinson, 2004, p. 158)

This line of thinking by Charlie makes clear his opposition to the administration's approach, which is essentially nothing – i.e. taking no action at all – an approach without any regard to consequences on future generations; in other words, according to Charlie, this is an utterly arrogant and selfish approach. Such opinions are in line with the explanations of Klein, who refers to the difficulties to deal with climate changes because the states usually see the present economic wellbeing as a priority, although the long-term effects of global warming on the economy are certain to be devastating. Referring to the Copenhagen Summit, Klein states that it has caused great despair because the governments did not agree to binding targets. Ghosh also considers that "Naomi Klein and others are right to identify the currently dominant model of capitalism as one of the principal drivers of climate change", but also adds empire and imperialism as “an aspect of global warming that is of equal importance” (Ghosh, 2016, p. 87).

Capitalism is criticized through other scenes in Robinson’s novel as well. On the walls of one of the offices which Frank visits almost every day, there are pieces of paper on which statistics and other recent information is written. “World Bank President says that four billion live on less than two dollars a day” says one of them; or “America: Five percent of world population, fifty percent of corporate ownership,” says another (p. 76). Through the conversations of Frank, Anna and other characters regarding these statistics, it is clear that there is an underlying criticism of the concern for financial gains and profits, which excludes care for the population at large and for future generations; additionally, such profits, in the long run, may actually turn out to be losses for everyone if global warming is not stopped.

Politicians defending openly capitalism and the drive for profit are likewise presented and criticized in *The Day After Tomorrow*. The character that represents such ideas in the movie is the US Vice President Raymond Becker. At the fictional UN Conference on Global Warming in New Delhi, the paleoclimatologist Jack Hall warns that the global warming can trigger a new ice age since the northern hemisphere owes its temperate climate to the North Atlantic current: “Global warming is melting the ice caps disrupting its flow. Eventually, it will shut down. When it does, there goes our warm climate” (Emmerich, 2004, 0:06:50). As a scientist, Hall presents his research and possible predictions, warning that “if we do not act soon, it is our children and grandchildren who will pay the price.” In response to the scientific explanations, the Vice President Becker protests that the economy is as fragile as the environment, and puts emphasis on the economic drawbacks from the measures to deal with climate change, mentioning that the Kyoto protocol has cost “the world’s economy hundreds of billions of dollars”. The answer of Hall that doing nothing will cost much more – is in line with the assumptions indicated in studies concerning global warming. Although by the end of the movie, the Vice President comes to realize the consequences of global warming, throughout most of the narrative he speaks for the business interests, and in that sense is opposed to the characters that represent the scientific views. The political element is also foregrounded with the protests during the Delhi Conference, the protestors calling out to the politicians to stop global warming.

It is clearly emphasized, in the non-fiction studies as well as in the fictional narratives, that in order to resolve the problem of global warming, protests and raising awareness of the problem among the world population is not sufficient. Instead, coordinated efforts from the highest political leaders of the world's nations directed towards changing the economic system are necessary to save the planet from the effects of emissions of greenhouse gases.

4. Migrations

Global warming inevitably affects lives, and in order to find better chances of survival, many of those affected migrate to other areas. Migration, therefore, is a major topic in the discussions of climate change and is largely present in the two narratives as well. The weather migrants from the fictional country of Khembalung are among the central characters in *Forty Signs of Rain*, whereas Emmerich's film, although in some regards a conventional disaster movie, offers an interesting perspective in which immigration takes an opposite direction when compared to the present moment.

How much people's lives are dependent on the climate and how much migration is induced by the changes in the environment is made clear by Ghosh in his story of his ancestors who, according to him, "were ecological refugees long before the term was invented" (Ghosh, 2016, p. 3). They lived along the Padma River, which in the 1850s changed its course and flooded their village, so those few who survived had to move to other locations.

While the course of the Padma River was not changed because of global warming, in the last few decades global warming has contributed to many other extreme environmental changes that have caused or are likely to cause in the near future, displacement of millions of people. The people living on the island of Tuvalu, which is a low-laying island on the Pacific Ocean, for example, are especially vulnerable to the rise of the sea level. Another example is given in *The Great Derangement* with the Bhola island in Bangladesh, whose partial inundation "has led to the displacement of more than half a million people" (Ghosh, 2016, p. 88). According to Ghosh, "one study suggests that rising sea levels could result in the migration of up to 50 million people in India and 75 million in Bangladesh" (p. 89). The climate changes are also a threat for the whole continent of Asia as well as the world, and the dangers come in various forms – as droughts, flooding, transformation of the arable land into desert, severe shortages of water.

Recognizing that great migratory movements are a realistic possibility of global warming, Klein also emphasizes the need to act in order to mitigate the consequences, although she is not optimistic that the governments are willing to take action to improve the situation. As she states, "rather than recognizing that we owe a debt to migrants forced to flee their lands as a result of our actions (and inactions), our governments will build ever more high-tech fortresses and adopt even more draconian anti-immigration laws" (Klein, 2014, p. 49).

Forty Signs of Rain also deals with the topic of migration due to climate changes. In fact, the Khembalis, who are among the central characters in the novel, seem to come exactly from the area where the Sundarbans are. It is Anna Quibler who notices and meets the Khembalis, and their worldviews, though so different, do not clash, but, being open-minded, Anna and the Khembalis open the way to mutual understanding and possible cooperation. The rationality and order that Anna prefers are displayed from the very beginning in the description of how she appreciates the efficiency of Starbucks, and the carefully structured architecture of the NSF building. Suddenly, this ordered, rational-looking scene is disturbed with a different kind of presence – when transnationality enters the scene – it is the Tibetans who bring "disturbance" with their behavior, clothes and music.

Approaching the office window near the entrance of NSF on her way to work, Anna notices the sign: Embassy of Khembalung. Asking where they come from, Anna learns that their country is an island nation in the Bay of Bengal, and they originally came from Tibet, as one of them tells her, but it soon becomes clear that these people are not only diplomatic representatives, but also, in a way, weather migrants. Drepung, one of the Khembalis, explains that their island is on the mouth of the Ganges River, close to the Sundarbans, which is the area that Ghosh so vividly describes in his book *The Great Derangement*. Discussing Khembalung, Drepung describes the nice town that was built with the help of Dutch advisors. Then, however, he reveals the reason that the embassy was established: due to global warming, Khembalung is in danger of being completely flooded and uninhabitable, so the lives of the people there are threatened, and they would have to become weather refugees and migrate to other parts of the world or stay and face likely death. Therefore, they have established the embassy in order to join the Dutch in their campaign to influence American policy on the matter of global warming. Being foreigners in the US, not all of them are able to communicate directly with the Americans. While Drepung speaks English, Rudra Cakrin is still taking English lessons and can't directly communicate with the Americans, but only through interpretation.

The topic of migration in *The Day After Tomorrow* is dealt with in another way, by representing an opposite direction from the one in which migrations usually occur. Instead of going from less developed to more developed countries for the purposes of economic wellbeing, and specifically in the case of the US, instead of Mexicans crossing the border into the US, the climate change threats have caused the population of the US go migrate to Mexico. The reason is that a superstorm will bring about a new ice age, covering the northern hemisphere with snow and ice, so since the time to act and prevent such a scenario has passed, the only way for people to save themselves is to go south. In the film, this is additionally presented visually through the images of news reporters reporting the events for television, showing footage of "US refugees who are fleeing south in the wake of the approaching storm" (Emmerich, 2004, 1:13:03), however they have faced closed gates and are cutting the wires to get through, which functions as a reference to the often closed US borders to Mexican immigrants. The movie also features a US refugee camp in Mexico, where Americans escaping the superstorm are accommodated.

5. Various cultures in search of global solutions

Analyzing the construction of various perspectives in the two narratives reveals their position that solutions to global warming can be found only in the cooperation between different cultures. Robinson's novel offers rethinking of the traditional Western solutions to global warming by introducing the culture of the Khembalis. Help for the population also comes from cooperation between different nations in the movie directed by Emmerich.

Such views are drawn from the fact that, being a global phenomenon, anthropogenic climate change needs to be addressed globally, through cooperation between different nations. Klein tells of how she became more aware of the issue of global warming when she met the Bolivian ambassador to the World Trade Organization, Angélica Cecilia Navarro Llanos, who discussed the idea that countries that have contributed largely to global warming should help the other countries deal with the consequences of this environmental threat: "If we are to curb emissions in the next decade, we need a massive mobilization larger than any in history. We need a Marshall Plan for the Earth." (Klein, 2014, p. 5) This shows the necessity of cooperation between nations in the world in tackling this problem. The cooperation is necessary not only because of the need for a large-scale response, but also because of the need to share perspectives of various cultures that may prove significant in dealing with the crisis. This is delineated by Klein in her recognition that listening to Navarro Llanos, she (Klein) "began to understand how climate change – if treated as a true planetary emergency akin to those rising flood waters–could become a galvanizing force for humanity, leaving us all not just safer from extreme weather, but with societies that are safer and fairer in all kinds of other ways as well." (p. 7)

Ghosh likewise emphasizes the need for global response, pointing out that the vulnerability of the people in Asia due to global warming suggests that the conditions in Asia must also be taken into consideration in the discussions on climate change. Some of the experiences from Asia may prove vital in the strategies for dealing with global warming. Ghosh offers the examples of Gandhi stating that India should not introduce industrialism after the manner of the West since it would be unsustainable, as well as the examples of Japan and Korea, which have taken a path that was "much less wasteful of resources" (Ghosh, 2016, p. 113).

Transnational communication and exchange of experiences and opinions takes place in *Forty Signs of Rain*. Discussing this novel as the first part of the *Science in the Capital* trilogy, Mehnert states that "Robinson shows that climate change cannot be considered solely from a scientific perspective because it pervades all areas of life. By portraying in detail how the characters in the trilogy deal with global warming, the series postulates that an interdisciplinary response to climate change based on negotiation and compromise is required." (Mehnert, 2016, p. 153) Thus, alongside the scientists working in Washington, the novel shows the Khembalis represent the people who are in a way the most direct victims of the global warming – because of the sea overflowing their living space, being part of the so-called League of Drowning Nations, and they attempt to find ways to help their people. The NSF scientists' interaction with the Khembalis affects both groups in reconsidering their perspectives on how to deal with climate change. The delegation of the Khembalis "unsettles the lives of the characters in Washington, causing them to question their own work routines and disciplinary work ethics." (p. 153)

Frank, Anna and Charlie use scientific approach in discussing global warming, while the approach of the Khembalis is very different. In that sense, one of the ideas of the novel can be traced to the contrast rational-emotional. Frank and Anna are described as being rational to an extreme, which is something that Frank regards as a great strength. However, in the lectures the Khembalis give at NSF, extreme rationality is described as a form of madness – and this is something that makes a strong impression of Frank despite the fact that he does not generally agree with the Khembalis' view on science. What specifically their claim – "An excess of reason is itself a form of madness" (Robinson, 2004, p. 268) implies is open to interpretation, but in the context of the developments in the novel, one possible interpretation is that extreme rationality may refer to the authorities' exclusive focus on economic growth and at the same time their lack of consideration of the impact of global warming on the world population.

As a contrast to this overrationality stand characters who genuinely worry about the possible threats of global warming on the lives of people. The problems that Khembalung faces certainly require a different kind of approach, contrasted to the concern for profit. The Khembalis, for example, according to Anna, project a certain calm, which she herself never feels, as she is always in a hurry. Their reasoning is more explicitly shown when they visit Anna and Charlie's home, when, despite pressures and problems, they have a way to show patience and to think of the climate change from various perspectives so that, even if it's not possible to completely reverse it, they might be able to help people deal with it more effectively.

Additionally, although Frank and Anna are rational, they seem to have an emotional side, which the authorities are lacking. Anna's connection to her sons (as we can see in the scene in which she was heartbroken to see her son Nick stoically determined not to cry in the kindergarten), the gentle names that she and her husband Charlie address each other with, as well as Frank's emotional experience in the elevator with the unknown woman that makes him smile and do irrational things (breaking, for example, into the office of Diane Chang, the head of the NSF) put them in the group of people that understand science and its effects on the planet, understand rationally the possible financial loss if changes are made, but at the same time also understand that being concerned solely with the economic logic would bring about destruction of human life as well as the life of other species. Therefore, working against financial gain and against global warming is the most sensible course of action.

In *The Day After Tomorrow*, the cooperation between cultures in dealing with climate change is displayed from the very beginning, when a UN summit is being held in New Delhi, at which, after Jack Hall's presentation, members of various nations get included in the conversation about global warming. The idea is mostly foregrounded at the very end of the movie, when, because of the US President's death in the storm, Vice President Becker has become a President, and gives his first address in this role from Mexican soil. Admitting that he, as many others, had been wrong in thinking that the Earth's resources could be used continually without consequences, he extends gratitude to the nations, who have sheltered the people from the northern hemisphere.

6. Conclusion

The narratives and the non-fiction works that deal with climate change have presented relevant research on this topic, placing it into the focus of public attention, thus contributing to raising the awareness of this serious threat to life on Earth. Dealing with this problem is very difficult and complex as it requires thorough changes in the capitalist system, as well as joint and coordinated action from all (or most) nations in the world.

The theoretical works of Klein, Ghosh, Collings and Guzman identify the main concerns in regard to climate changes. They suggest that climate changes are, at least in part, induced by humans, and warn of extreme weather events that may seriously jeopardize the life and well-being of millions of people around the globe. Klein and Ghosh also point out the importance of creating long-term strategies for dealing with climate change, which should include transformation of the present capitalist system, as well as the importance of international cooperation in the efforts to mitigate the negative consequences.

All of these aspects are also present in the two works that were discussed in the paper. Thus, *Forty Signs of Rain* and *The Day After Tomorrow* try, in different ways, to explain how global warming is affected by humans, basing the information on available scientific research dealing with climate change. They also emphasize the need to address this problem in the nearest future in order to curb its negative consequences. In doing so, they discuss several aspects relevant in the area of climate change: the threat of extreme weather events, the challenges of altering the present capitalist system, the problem of weather migrants, the necessity for cooperation between science and politics and between various nations in the world toward mitigating the effects of the human-induced climate change.

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Selma Jerković Veseljević
Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Tuzla
selma.veseljevic@untz.ba

(TRANS)NATIONALISM OF SUPER-HERO FILMS

Abstract: As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, movies based on super-hero comic book characters are more popular than ever, as the enormous financial success of the Marvel Cinematic Universe proves. Current cinema display, reflecting global societal anxieties, presents heroes saving the world from pandemonium with the aid of special effect technology that is capable of faithfully rendering comics visually. Explicit transnational nature of graphic narratives is visible at the levels of authorship, form, as well as content; nevertheless, this paper will focus on super-hero films as products of globalization and interrogate the pluralism of multiple national identities within the genre. In order to appeal to international audiences, the super-heroes need to rise above the "American icon" narrative and embrace transcultural and transnational meanings. Concurrently, the paper will address the inconsistent meanings of nationalism and globalism in the post-9/11 world as to understand how nationalist rhetoric is presented in popular culture.

Key words: Transnationalism, Nationalism, Super-Hero Film, Comics, DC Comics, Marvel Comics

> "The night is darkest just before the dawn. And I promise you, the dawn is coming."
> (Harvey Dent in *The Dark Knight* 2008)

1. Introduction

Super-heroes, though a crucial part of the cinematic universe since its beginnings, have established their domination in the Hollywood film production at the beginning of the 21st century with Marvel Cinematic Universe

(MCU). Not only do super-hero films provide high returns for the studios, but they also succeed at expanding the genre out of comic books and provide legitimization to the formerly subcultural genre. The first two decades of the twenty-first century have witnessed super-hero films become a global phenomenon through the appropriation of the genre in different communities that use it to reflect their values and tell their narratives.

In their Preface to *The Rise of the American Comics,* Williams and Lyons (2010) explain that North American comics need to be understood in a transnational context while underlying how the institutional transaction of texts, authors, and capital have rendered "productive tensions" in the comics (p. xiii). The same can be said to hold true for super-hero films, which, as products of globalization, attempt to interrogate the pluralism of multiple national identities within the genre. The examination of the flow of ideas and cultural products across borders, which is the most central to this reading of the genre and its positioning in the early 21st century popular culture, is itself becoming more transnational. However, this approach does not exclude the articulations of national cultures nor nationalism. Rather, it acknowledges their importance as well as that of borders and national identities.

The *nationalist super-hero* narratives are the ones in which the hero's mission is to represent and defend a particular nation and national identity (Dittmer, 2012, p. 7). Concurrently, super-heroes represent "larger than life symbols of American values" (Anderson & Cavallaro, 2002, p. 162). With protagonists possessing strengths with which the readers/viewers may identify, super-hero films may be understood as contemporary morality tales. Costumed, super-powered individuals are compelled to protect their society from imminent danger. The threats described symbolize the current social, political, and individual concerns. Consequently, the genre offers an opportunity for the audience to examine and undertake contemporary issues via emissaries capable of addressing the menace.

Rather than just seeing the genre as an instrument of domination, it can also be conceptualized as a contested domain reproducing the fundamental conflict within a society, but on a cultural level (Kellner, 1991). Cultural criticism should incorporate both social hopes and fantasies in the film, as well as the ideological ways of presentation, resolving of conflicts, and the management of potentially disruptive hopes and anxieties (Jameson, 1979). Nevertheless, as Radovic (2014) notices, Hollywood cinema, even though it incorporates a variety of modern, often political mythologies, tends towards homogenization of the audience", thereby preventing reinterpretations that stem from diversity (p. 20). Despite the diversity of the cultural contexts of the audience, typically Western values and ideologies exemplified in the representation of the United States as a God-chosen nation that has a ‘sacred’ role in the history of the world (Radovic, 2014, p. 88), predominate.

2. The Super-hero Era

Super-heroes are perceived as a distinctively American concept (Romagnoli & Palucci, 2013, p. 9); however, in recent years the global circulation of super-hero characters has become a point of interest for scholars worldwide. Characters such as Batman, Iron Man, or Ms. Marvel are becoming increasingly global, impacting not only the comic books, films, and other mediated narratives, but also the way other cultures have appropriated the characters and made them their own.

As Gray II and Kaklamanidou (2011) observe, the first decade of the twenty-first century will be remembered as the “superhero decade” because of the extraordinary financial success of fantastic chronicles that reflect the audience’s escapist desires (p. 1). Although the super-hero comics have successfully transitioned to the new media of radio and film by the middle of the twentieth century (Maslon & Kantor, 2013), the genre did not achieve permanent and constant presence in popular culture until the onset of the new millennium. More than a hundred highly successful super-hero films have been released in the period between 2001 and 2019 (Silberstein, 2019), while the most successful franchises, namely DC and Marvel, dominate the cinematic market worldwide with seventeen super-hero films scheduled to release in the next two years (Weaver & Carey, 2020).

The phenomenon had its onset in the 1930s: as new idols were required by the new generations; hence, a new brand of heroes was coined, projecting desires, wants, and repressed emotions of their target readership. The first super-hero, Superman, appearing in the pages of *Action Comics* in 1938 was so successful that the term “super-hero” was coined to describe an array of vigilantes following in the footsteps of Superman, who within two years of his existence saw a radio show, film series and a wide collection of toys emerge. In an epic battle of good against evil, the early comic books featured super-heroes and villains of equal strength, symbolizing the World War II conflicts and attempting to increase the patriotic sentiment in general public.[1] Following suit were, amongst others, Batman (without any particular superpower, but superbly wealthy and righteous), Wonder Woman (the heroine for the second wave of feminism, the embodiment of emancipation of women), as well as heroes of Marvel Universe: Spider-Man, Iron Man, Captain America and Hulk.

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[1] As necessary as (super)heroes are in time of danger, their popularity significantly decreased following the end of the war. Only after the genre was revitalised did its popularity increase.

Worth noting is the fact that the superhero genre was largely defined by liberal Jewish artists – Stan Lee, Joe Simon, Jerry Siegel and Jack Kirby, to mention a few – whose aversion to the Nazi regime and to American isolationism was especially visible in comics. Born Jacob Kurtzberg, Joe Simon, the son of an immigrant from Austria, developed the idea of a hero specifically opposed to Hitler, with the costume heavily influenced by the American flag, and a career in the armed forces. Captain America's rationale was to oppose Nazism; however, he also embodies the assimilationist tendencies prevalent amongst the Jewish immigrants of the time. The 1981 issue of X-Men offers Magneto's origin story which includes his childhood in Auschwitz and the death of his family in gas chambers (Mintz, 2001). Magneto's origin narrative is representative of the conventional comic book formula with the superhero who is transformed by the traumatic experience in early childhood (Batman and Superman as the most memorable examples), nevertheless, the insertion of Holocaust complicates the convention and makes the supervillian's character more comprehensible to the reader.

Quite possibly the most illustrious example of convergence culture (Jenkins, 2006), comics are profoundly invested in transmedia storytelling. Comic book film adaptation is a genre on its own, with super-hero film experiencing its rebirth, enkindled both by post-9/11 sentiments and advances in 3D modeling and computer-generated animation. Super-heroes, as well as super-villains, are very useful for transmedia adaptation because of their narrative docility. What the success of *Joker* (2019) demonstrates is that the character has become a logo itself, the embodiment of a specific cultural moment in addition to being an homage to its preferred spectators, the fans.

3. Spatial and Narrative Transnationalism

According to Vertovec (2009), transnationalism is a concept which predates 'the nation' and represents mobility, connections, interactions and affiliations worldwide, both in real life and virtually (p. 3). It incorporates continuous negotiations on the significance of the value and symbolic forms that include the cultures of the old and new space (Hannerz, 1996). Transnational traffic of people, capital, and cultural products can affect identities (Jackson, Crang & Dwyer, 2004, p. 2).

This approach can be applied to super-hero films as it is relevant not only for cinematic representational strategies. More importantly, the fact is that studios, in order to reimburse filming costs, entice both American and international audiences. Even for releases of traditionally American cultural icons, such as Captain America and Superman, globalised adventures of the protagonists are presented, in an attempt to reconcile American exceptionalism and transnational tendencies. Undoubtedly, Captain America is a symbol of American exceptionalism, which, as Dittmer (2005) notices, enables analysis of "the changing meaning and symbolic shape of America as the region is continually (re)constructed" (p. 625). Captain America, according to Jewett and Lawrence (2004), can be compared to the American cowboy vigilantes, who "exercise the powers otherwise reserved only for God in dealing with evil" (p. 35). Superman's narrative, on the other hand, is that of an (extra-terrestrial) immigrant who achieves the American dream in a new land of opportunity (Weiner, 2009, p. 10). The iconic *nationalist super-hero*, Captain America, is separated from the *transnationalist super-hero*, Superman, who, although fights for the American nation, does not embody, reproduce and defend the American national identity.

Reynolds (1992) connects the appearance of the super-hero with the undermining of the American economic progress by the Great Depression and at the onset of the Second World War (p. 18). However, he stresses the transnational nature of the "new kind of popular hero" of the 1930s and 1940s, "from Doc Savage to Philip Marlowe, from Hannay in Hitchcock's *39 Steps* to Green Hornet, from Rick Blaine in *Casablanca* to Captain Midnight" (Reynolds, 1992, p. 18). Hence, the genre's transnational nature is visible not only in its current success worldwide, but also "by the historical evidence of transnational cultural flows" (Dittmer, 2012, p. 16).

Multiple, often irreconcilable identities that represent reinterpretations of formerly exceptionally American identities have resulted in many ambiguities and tensions that Faist (2000) defines as "transnational syncretism", a diffusion of cultures and the appearance of new, hybrid identities (p. 201). Transnationalism is a mode of cultural reproduction (Vertovec, 2009, p. 4), which could be an appropriate starting point for the analysis of spatial and narrative transnationalism of super-hero films. Collective enjoyment in cultural events and products represents a form of transnationalism (Portez, Guarnizo & Landolt, 1999, p. 221). Popular culture is an important form; not only does the audience choose meanings, pleasures and social identities, but they also publicly express their value judgment on the genre. Super-hero figures considered transnational play a crucial role in this.

According to Fishkin (2004-05), “the United States is and has always been a transnational crossroads of culture” (p. 27). American studies focus on the figure of the immigrant in addition to paying attention on the cultural, linguistic, economic, and familial connections across nations. No longer a static and stable territory but a participant in “a global flow of people, ideas, texts and products” (Fishkin, 2004-05, p. 26), in American studies, the super-hero figure embodies the attempt to reconcile American exceptionalism and transnational commitments. Moreover, in an attempt to attract international audiences, the film studios often employ the tactics of minimizing historical, regional, or national particularities (Hutcheon, 2006).

3.1. Super-heroes across the globe

The super-hero comics, as well as its offspring the super-hero film, occupy a transitional place in a shared international culture, while simultaneously remaining connected to its place of origin and political situation. Mid-century *Batman* serial (1943), directed by Lamber Hillyer, represents Batman and Robin defending America during the Second World War from the evil Asian Dr. Tiko Daka, who has escaped the Japanese American Interment program. In Gotham slum stereotypically named Little Tokio, the malevolent mastermind recreates a foreign land in the epicenter of America. Furthermore, the second film in Nolan’s Batman trilogy, *The Dark Knight* (2008), recreates the atmosphere and iconic images of Hong Kong filmography, with Batman tracking a criminal accountant from the fictional setting of Gotham City[2] to an ordinary, yet exotic one of Hong Kong. The two cities appear very similar, exotic and extraordinary, with striking skylines and gothic slums accentuating worldwide economic relations and dependencies. Under the rule of global capitalism, the two cities function as doppelgangers, while Gotham is, for the first time in the Batman film industry, shown to have global connections; not being self-contained and isolated abstraction (Sarris, 2011, p. 2).

This very American view of the “exotic” East is portrayed just empathically in the film *Wolverine* (2013). Most of *Wolverine* was filmed in Japan where the story is primarily set. Many of the stereotypical aspects of Japanese culture are present, such as Yakuza, ninjas and samurais. The Marvel non-Japanese super-hero is placed in a recognizably and visually iconic Japanese setting. Even though the character is located in contemporary Tokyo, the narrative incorporates images from medieval history; from samurai weaponry and armor to traditional ceremonies. Both feudal tradition and modern-day Tokyo are showcased for the international audience, while Wolverine attempts to embody a new transnational hybrid identity.

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[2] It is common knowledge that Gotham City represents New York. As Duncan and Smith (2009) notice since the first days of the comic “virtually all of American comics were created by a couple hundred of people in the New York metro area” (p. ix). Regardless of the name, Star City, Gotham or Metropolis, super-hero comics, as well as films, are believed to take place in New York.

The film introduces former Japanese Imperial officer, Yashida, who, having been saved from death by Logan decades earlier, invites Wolverine to Japan in an attempt to steal his power of regeneration. The heroic quest of saving Mariko, heir to Yashida Corporation, from her father and his criminal accomplices proves to be Wolverine's heroic quest in Asia, thus fitting the narrative of the Western male-Asian female romantic trope in Hollywood cinema (Marchetti, 1993). Japanese patriarchal misogynist culture is contrasted to the superior Western democracy by stating that Mariko is obliged by her father to marry Noburo, perverse, unscrupulous, and dangerous man, against her will, while the Westerner is inclined to sacrifice his power of regenerative healing to save Mariko and demonstrate his white masculine superiority.

In the X-Man cinematic universe, Wolverine is competing against the Oriental peril, technologically advanced Asians who are contrasted to his white masculine heroism. The Silver Samurai, Yashida's attempt at immortality through combining Eastern body with Western technological advances, is a virtually indestructible gigantic cyborg whose Adamantium katana can pierce through Wolverine's Adamantium-fortified bones. However, self-sacrificing Wolverine endorses hegemonic white masculinity by overcoming the technologically superior threat and saving defenseless Japanese woman.

4. A (Trans)national Fairy-tale

The role of the super-hero, according to Reynolds (1992), is not to reinvent society, but to preserve it (p. 110). Super-heroes are the representatives of the values of the culture they epitomize. Since the release of the first MCU films, *Iron Man* and *The Incredible Hulk* in 2008, the genres of super-hero films and television series have seen an unprecedented proliferation. Eleven years later, the genre demonstrated no signs of losing its popularity in spite of the predictions of media saturation. The MCU released three films in 2019: *Captain Marvel*, *Avengers: Endgame* and *Spider-Man: Far from Home*. Each made over $5 billion internationally, with the second film becoming the highest-grossing film in history two months after its release (Bean, 2019).[3] *Avengers: Endgame* made $857.672 million in North America (the United States and Canada) and around $1.937 billion internationally, of which more than $500 million was accumulated in China (Mendelson, 2019).

Mark Millar, a comic book writer, highlights that super-hero stories are most popular when they reflect on the especially turbulent political periods, particularly those marked by civil unrest and war (in Abad-Santos, 2016). The international audience is seeking refuge from decades of life under continuous threat of financial, political, cyber, and, in 2020 especially, bioterrorist mayhem. The *myths* of the 21st century, American super-heroes often include narratives with easily identifiable protagonists and antagonists, which, even though simplistic, promote issues of individual power and responsibility for others that can help the audience address their own anxieties. Fernandez (2013) names this *superpower* “therapeutic intervention” because super-hero films provide the audience with multiple positions of identification in an attempt to overcome the trauma arising from the loss of the possibility of an improved future (p. 1).

A fairy-tale does not only represent a crucial narrative for the socialization of children; its influence in the domain of popular culture is profound for it is simultaneously disturbingly appealing and suspicious (Benson, 2008, p. 13). Fairy tale, a part of the traditional folk canon, is revised to create a new form incorporating critical and creative thinking and corresponding to demands and interests of the audience (Zipes, 1994, p. 9). Both fairy tale and super-hero narrative contribute to the fabric of social experience and cultural values, with the latter offering contemporary enactments of fairytale mythology (Reynolds, 1992). In his description of the contemporary blockbuster film, Elsaesser (2001) compares it to fairy tales, albeit more technologically advanced (p. 17). Even Stan Lee (2016), one of the most influential comic book writers, noticed the progression from fairy tales, read by children, to super-hero stories, targeting adult readership but essentially satisfying the same need for protection (p. 96). Super-hero stories provide a fantasy of safety and security during the time of the destruction of traditional institutions of order, upon the realization of the audience that they need super-heroes just as much as fictional citizens of the films they enjoy in. By allowing for ritualistic immersion in the story-telling process, the super-hero narratives have become an influential form of not only economic but also cultural currency, successfully crossing the borders between different cultures and nations, as well as between popular and high cultures.

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[3] COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on cinema, with Marvel Studios delaying the release of, for example, *Black Widow* and pausing filming of other films. The beginning of the upcoming Phase 4 of MCU will inevitably also be postponed.

In the *Avengers* series, American allies assemble to battle for security and freedom. However, as James N. Gilmore (2015) noticed, post 9/11 super-hero film narratives revolve not around saving the city but rather sacrificing it (p. 54). The images of destruction, combined with astonishing special effects and computer-generated imagery, are inviting the audience to escape into the world of fantasy for fear of instability, future terrorist attacks, and the new world war. The success of the latest super-hero cycle is directly connected to the need of the audience to believe in the fantasy of safety and security in place of the failing traditional institutions of order, in line with eschewing the existential panic that comes from a loss of identity. In the conclusion of the series, *Avengers: Endgame*, to finally beat Thanos, Iron Man is forced to sacrifice himself in one of the rare representations of the actual death of the super-hero, accentuating his masculinity, heroism, and patriotism[4].

Following the activation of the Infinity Gauntlet, the effects of the destruction following Thanos' Snap began to take place, with half of the life in the universe disintegrating. As Rocket Raccoon notices: "When Thanos snapped his fingers, Earth became ground zero for a power surge of ridiculously cosmic proportions. No one's seen anything like it" (*Avengers: Endgame*, 2019). The usage of the term "ground zero" demonstrates the profound importance brought forth by the death of the population of the universe and is used as a metaphor and reminder of 9/11, accentuating the establishment of a painful memory in the cultural tapestry of the American identity. Nevertheless, the need for a return to the "normal", invites the super-heroes, both terrestrial and extra-terrestrial, to prove themselves as not being merely mythical archetypal figures, but also to sacrifice themselves in the fight for security and salvation of the population of the universe.

Directly following the events in *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018), *Avengers: Endgame* sees the remaining heroes being sent to different periods in the past to recuperate the Infinity Stones before they come into Thanos's possession. With the stones assembled, the population that disappeared five years ago is revived; however, with his entire army, Thanos travels to the future to attack the super heroes of MCU. Assembling against alien evils, Americans lead the super-heroes to unite against universal evil. Transcending national, cultural, and cinematic ideologies, the narrative concludes with heroes, with the exception of Iron Man, who sacrificed himself to defeat Thanos, Black Widow, who fights Hawkeye for the right to sacrifice herself in order to obtain the Soul Stone, and Captain America, who decided to return to his original time, going back to their regular lives.

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[4] Whether Iron Man will return in the next phrase of MCU is yet to be seen, as in the comic books Tony Stark created Artificial Intelligence of himself, with his intelligence, consciousness and knowledge stored, in case his body ever stopped working.

In a disturbingly homogenous super-hero market, one of the most successful Marvel films, *Black Panther*[5] (2018), stands out. Mostly set in a utopian African country of Wakanda, an isolated technologically-advanced wealthy society disguised as an impoverished farm country, it stands out for its representation of non-Caucasian super-heroes as well as for its profound transnational message of uniting and sharing knowledge and technological resources on the global level. Namely, the narrative revolves around the conflict between T'Challa, the protagonist and a noble heir to the throne of the kingdom of Wakanda, and the antagonist, Killmonger, who is of transnational, American upbringing. Killmonger is motivated by the oppression of African-Americans he witnesses every day to take over the Wakandan government in order to use their resources and technology to help the oppressed around the world defend themselves.

Although brutal and violent, Killmonger's agenda is ultimately relatable for the viewers. He directly criticizes Wakanda for its lack of intervention worldwide. Even though they are in possession of resources and technology, they never assist neighboring countries.[6] Not even when millions are killed in Rwanda do they intervene. Although T'Challa rejects Killmonger's interventionist ideals with claims that providing the discriminated population with weaponry would lead to a world war, he eventually creates Wakandan outreach centres worldwide, thus revising the isolationist policy of Wakanda. Invoking Black Lives Matter,[7] T'Challa announces at the United Nations the need for uniting African diaspora and improving their technological skills and education.

5. (Trans)patriotic Avengers

The polarization on the super-heroes and the super-villains is crucial for the super-hero film genre. Nevertheless, unlike many of its predecessor and competitors, the Avengers series represents the transnational (and *trans-universal*) super-hero cast with characters of accentuated morality whose violence is justified by their status and belief in the "higher goal". The trans-universal cast of the super-heroes includes, among others, Natasha Romanoff (Black Widow[8]), a former KGB spy and the only female character among the Avengers. There are also Thor, the Asgardian god of Thunder and the only Avenger to be a god, portrayed as an arrogant warrior with no sense of responsibility, and Rocket Raccoon, genetically enhanced extra-terrestrial creature dedicated to protecting the Earth. Under Black Widow's command are Rocket Raccoon, together with Nebula, the adopted daughter of Thanos and former luphomoid assassin, and War Machine, a United States Air Force officer. The super-villains include Loki, an Asgardian prince plotting to destroy humanity, Thanos, a Titan with genocidal tendencies, and Ultron, a peace-keeping entity built by Tony Stark/ Iron Man, which determines that humans pose the greatest threat to Earth (Defalco et al., 2019).

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[5] *The Black Panther* is the 18th Marvel release and the first super-hero film directed and acted by a predominantly African-American ensemble. Although very successful at the box office, interestingly, unlike most other Marvel releases, it was not well received at the Chinese market.

[6] In Marvel Universe, the bordering countries are Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, and South Sudan.

[7] Although founded in 2013, Black Lives Matter, a social movement propagating non-violent civil disobedience in protest against racial violence and discrimination of African-Americans, gained prominence in 2020 during the global protests following the death of George Floyd.

Nicknamed the first Avenger, Captain America is a representative of the Second World War patriotic rhetoric[9]. Originally intended as pure propaganda, Captain America is the embodiment of the American identity, an obvious American super-hero who represents the idealized American nation and the need to defend the concept of the American dream (Dittmer, 2005, p. 627). In 1976 Chris Claremont creates Captain Britain for the British market in an attempt to satisfy the British audience's need for local heroes. Unlike the idealized Captain America of the 12940's, the 1970's hero is, similar to Spider-Man, flawed and tormented by insecurities (Dittmer, 2012, p. 20).

After being frozen in ice for nearly seventy years, Captain America has his authority constantly undermined by his team because of his inability to understand popular culture references and "old" age. His "vintage" super-hero's white and blue costume, a direct reference to the American flag, illustrates the traditional patriotic refuge of the mid-twentieth century, while his role of consoler is best portrayed in *Avengers: Endgame* (2019) when he hosts a support meeting for survivors of the Snap.

As the Avengers prepare to enter the Quantum Realm and recuperate the Infinity Stones, in front of a large "A" sign and dressed in a white uniform, Captain America addresses his fellow Avengers:

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[8] Black Widow, Hawkeye and Iron Man do not possess superpowers, even though Iron Man's technologically advanced armour provides him with superpowers. An analysis of the importance of *non-superheoric* super-heroes would be very useful.

[9] The cover of the first issue of Captain America comics portrays Captain America punching Hitler (March 1, 1941).

> Five years ago, we lost. All of us. We lost friends... We lost family... We lost a part of ourselves. Today, we have a chance to take it all back. You know your teams, you know your missions. Get the stones, get them back. One round trip each. No mistakes. No do-overs. Most of us are going somewhere we know. But it doesn't mean we should know what to expect. Be careful. Look out for each other. This is the fight of our lives. And we're gonna win. Whatever it takes. Good luck. (*Avengers: Endgame*, 2019)

The cultural trauma of 9/11 is beseeched in the first sentences of the speech. Apart from the senses of security and safety, the terrorist attacks affected the mental health of the general public, as well as senses of responsibility and individuality that are reflected in the speech. The American exceptionalism is reflected in the us/them-dichotomy, positioning the Avengers as victims. Such position justifies any future violent actions as exceptions directly caused by the actions of the terrorist Thanos. It is Captain America who believes his duty is to uphold traditional American ideals of justice, freedom and equality even when not fighting for America specifically. Even though he does not demonstrate national affiliation, Captain America is the embodiment of the American dream (Bainbridge, 2015, p. 756; Dittmer, 2012, p. 7).

Just as Captain America represents a relic of the past era, Thanos's rhetoric is reminiscent of eco-fascism of the 1960s and '70s when overpopulation was detected as the main threat for the future of humanity. At the time influential environmentalists lobbied against providing aid to poorer countries for fear of overwhelming the planet's resources in the future (Ehrlich, 1968). Overall portrayed as a terrorist, Thanos occupies an ambiguous position; on one side he wants to destroy half of the population in courtesy of policy of austerity designated towards the sustainable conservation of resources, on the other, he is in service of helping the other half survive and flourish, as the following dialogue with his adopted daughter, Gamora, demonstrates:

> Gamora: I was a child when you took me.
> Thanos: I saved you.
> Gamora: No, no, we were happy on my home planet.
> Thanos: Going to bed hungry, scrounging for scraps? Your planet was on the brink of collapse. I was the one who stopped that. You know what's happened since then? The children born have known nothing but full bellies and clear skies. It's a paradise.
> Gamora: Because you murdered half the planet.

> Thanos: A small price to pay for salvation.
> Gamora: You're insane.
> Thanos: Little one, it's a simple calculus. This universe has finite resources... if life is left unchecked, life will cease to exist. It needs correcting. (*Avengers: Infinity War*, 2018)

With justice as their objective, global and intergalactic super-heroes do not steer away from violence in the protection of the community, implying American colonial past and interventionist foreign policy. The exceptionalism of Avengers echoes that of the US government, especially after 9/11. As disturbing and genocidal Thanos' actions are, they never touch upon the basic premises of inequality and discrimination connected to the allocation of resources within the system. The *status quo* at the end of *Avengers: Endgame* is restored: after Thanos successfully accomplished his task of eradicating half of the population in the universe, the Avengers travelled back in time, saved the world, and restored the previous order.

The connoisseurs of Old Norse Mythology would not expect the narrative centering on Thor to echo American exceptionalism. Based on the eponymous comic, the film *Thor* (2011) presents a very skillful rewriting of the Old Norse mythology for a contemporary audience.[10] As the common unifying elements of ancient myths become less identifiable, the traditional hero stories are being replaced by modern mythology, the comic book superheroes.

For both American and Americanized audience, Thor, as well as the majority of MCU texts, represents a "powerful wish-fulfillment fantasy" of "how many Americans chose to view the world after 9/11" (McSweeney, 2018, p. 24). Thor's history is established and tied into the human world's mythology as planet Earth is presented as being one of the nine realms of Asgard, where from Thor originates. Hence, Old Norse mythology is altered to incorporate the Marvel universe. Even Asgard, being described as "beacon of hope shining out across the stars" (*Thor*, 2011), is evocative of decades of American presidential narratives, from Obama (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2010) describing America as "the engine of the global economy and a beacon of hope around the world" to George W. Bush (2001) stating in his national address immediately following 9/11 that "America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining".

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[10] As Stan Lee admitted, the creation of Thor is in direct relation to that of Hulk, "How do you make someone stronger than the strongest person? It finally came to me: Do not make him human-make him a god" (Lee, 2002). Hence, the Norse god was recast in his role of a naturalized American superhero.

On the other hand, Gaine (2015) claims that the film ought not to be described "as simply or entirely American", as he highlights that a wide range of ethnic and national identities are present both in the narrative world as well as in the movie crew in charge of production (p. 37). Nevertheless, these transnational collaborations are not evident in the narrative, for the story appears to be completely American; Thor is constructed as an American super-hero, while Asgard is depicted as an American empire. Furthermore, the first part of the narrative centers on Thor being rescued and accepted into the white, middle-class heteronormative community. Taken to a diner, the preeminent restaurant type in the northeastern United States and a landscape symbol (Manzo, 1996, p. 140), Thor is introduced not only to coffee, but also to the contemporary American identity.

Another way it becomes clear how far non-American identity has been marginalized in the MCU and across the American film industry is that of *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015). A malicious robot, Ultron, after having witnessed thousands of years of inhumanity identifies the Avengers as the source of the problem. Portrayed as a stereotypical robotic villain, Ultron's rhetoric can be associated with terrorists, often portrayed in the media as being on a quest to destroy Western democracies. The climax to *Avengers: Age of Ultron* takes place in Sokovia, a fictional country in Eastern Europe, where Ultron is attempting to destroy humanity by detaching the entire country from land and then throwing it back at Earth. Often portrayed as a "unique cultural entity" in Hollywood film production (Radovic, 2014, p. 98), Eastern Europe is imagined as a mystical land, marked by violence and conflict where Eastern European women are presented as victims of cultural violence and objectified by a Western male gaze. The security of Sokovia and American national identity as saviors and contemporary vigilantes are endangered by the perilous 'other', which in turn justifies the Avengers vengeance. The crucial scenes portray women and children in danger, awaiting rescue by mostly American super-heroes, when Nick Fury, the founder of the Avengers, arrives with a gigantic hovercraft and helps civilians load one by one. Although the ending leads the audience to the conclusion that all were saved, in the sequel *Captain America: Civil War* (2016) it is revealed that there were many casualties. Hence, the problem of the us/them binary in *Avengers: Age of Ultron* is that the patriotic savior narrative conveniently erases the fact that the leader of the Avengers, Tony Stark, created the entity that poses the threat to the American pride and patriotism and consequently perpetuates violence.

5.1. An Avenger to come

Phase Four of MCU is planned to include *Ms. Marvel*, a web television series representing the eponymous *transnationalist* super-heroine. Although not yet represented on screen, the new Ms. Marvel is the embodiment of a multiplicity of meanings, not excluding transcultural, hence, a worthy representative of the genre's future. Kamala Khan, the fourth Ms. Marvel, first appeared in 2013 in Issue #14 of Captain Marvel and has had her own title since February 2014. She is the first Pakistani-American super-hero of the Marvel Universe with her own series. The sixteen-year-old Muslim super-heroine written by Wilson as a symbol of the complexity of identities in today's America has a profound potential of becoming a powerful transcultural icon.

A New Jersey-born Muslim teenager of Pakistani origin, Kamala Khan is transformed into a super-hero in the first issue of Ms. Marvel. Following the explosion of a Terrigen bomb, she is temporarily rendered unconscious, and, when awoken, confronted by the previous Ms. Marvel, now Captain Marvel, Iron Man, and Captain America[11].The latter questions Khan's identity crisis, both as a second-generation immigrant and a teenager when he asks, "You thought that if you disobeyed your parents – your culture, your religion – your classmates would accept you. What happened instead?". The next question is more direct, „Who do you want to be?" (Wilson, 2014, p. 17). At first, the response echoes her struggles with identity, growing up, heritage, and her place in her community, for she wants to be transformed into the personification of an ideal all-American girl, the previous Ms. Marvel.

Having just received polymorph super-powers, she is able to transform herself into the original blue-eyed, blonde Ms. Marvel, to literally embody whiteness. However, Kamala's transformation into whiteness is only temporary and when the situation is dire she returns to her complicated self, contrasting the experience of a Pakistani-American teenager and the role of whiteness in American popular culture. The transformation that Kamala seems to desire is a religious and racial conversion to an unencumbered white American-ness. As any teenager, Kamala Khan is struggling with parental desires and rules, which do not always arise from their cultural and religious upbringing. However, the comics represent the complexity of Muslim-American identity and the difficulty of reconciling the plurality of identities new Ms. Marvel.

Considering Kamala's unique space as a Muslim-American super-heroine, it is very important to highlight that the comics do succeed at times at encouraging readers to embrace problematizing identity challenges that young immigrant women face and the manner in which various patriarchal cultures work together to sustain social practice oppressive towards women. Specifically, the Western beauty ideals, with Ms. Marvel's black leotard costume, fair skin and blonde hair, which, in Issue# 12 Kamala Khan, cannot wear when in Karachi, Pakistan. During a family visit, her superpowers are needed; however, she does not have a costume, the substance of being a super-hero (Dudenhoeffer, 2017, p. 4), ready, and consequently must improvise. In a modest attire consisting of a purple burkini (in respect of her religious beliefs and cultural upbringing), red pants, red scarf and a golden bracelet (representing her Pakistani heritage), with her natural skin and hair color, she, at least in Pakistan, does not alter her appearance in accordance with the Western beauty ideals.

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[11] The three super-heroes appearing in a Khan's vision are strongly echoing the Christian narrative of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Kamala Khan has even become an icon of religious tolerance and inclusion in real life. Namely, the American Freedom Defense Initiative's anti-Islamic campaign in 2015 in San Francisco saw advertisements with anti-Islamic messages on city buses in San Francisco. The said advertisements were in reaction to messages of hate repainted by an anonymous artist with pictures of Kamala Khan containing messages against racism and islamophobia (Letamendi, 2015). A symbol of racial equality and inclusion in the American society, Kamala Khan demonstrates the way how super-heroes can be used as a medium for communication in the plurality of (trans)national identities in the USA and worldwide.

6. Conclusion

The recent renaissance of the super-hero film has provided new perspectives on the academic engagement with the genre, ranging from a new focus on religion, race, gender, and nation to reflecting global societal anxieties through various ideological and hegemonic debates. Without any doubt, these products of globalization grasp the anxieties and fears of the times from 9/11 to today, while synchronously both rising above the narrative of the American icon to embrace transcultural and transnational meanings and perpetuate the American imperialist narrative. The aim of this paper was to explore the inconsistent meaning of nationalism and globalism in the post-9/11 world and to shed more light on understanding how nationalist rhetoric is presented in a super-hero film.

The example of the latest Ms. Marvel incarnation is a useful demonstration of the achievements and the problematic position of the contemporary world of comics. Attempting to introduce a transformative narrative in the comic book world, the authors penned a narrative about a female protagonist at the intersection of racial, national, and religious identities, which has even become a representative of integration and inclusion. Surely, the film and comic book industries are first and foremost businesses, constantly seeking to increase sales; however, they also serve as reflections of societal trends and changes. In that sense, the recent incarnation of Ms. Marvel demonstrates the readiness of the American society to change and embrace transnational subjects as members of their own society.

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TRANSNATIONALITY IN LINGUISTICS

Ljiljana Knežević
Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad
ljiljana.knezevic@dbe.uns.ac.rs

Sabina Halupka-Rešetar
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad
halupka.resetar@ff.uns.ac.rs

WHAT CAUSES THE SCARCE USE OF DICTIONARIES IN ESP COURSES? A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE[1]

Abstract: Drawing on contemporary literature (Milić et al., 2018; Nesi, 2014), which underlines the importance of the use of dictionaries in teaching English for specific purposes, this paper presents a qualitative analysis of the teachers' perspective on the frequency and ways of using general and specialized dictionaries in teaching English for specific purposes at higher education institutions in Serbia. A previous, quantitative study (Knežević et al., 2019) has already provided some insight into the extent to which dictionaries are used in teaching ESP at university level, the ways in which this is done, the reasons behind using dictionaries in teaching ESP and the goals to be achieved, as well as the problems teachers encounter and their attitudes toward using dictionaries. The aim of this study is to complement the findings of the quantitative study and thereby gain a better understanding of the causes that underlie the scarce use of dictionaries in ESP courses.

The research is based on data collected by means of a semi-structured interview conducted with teachers of English for specific purposes who are employed at faculties of the University of Novi Sad (N=9). The results of the

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research show that there are both objective (General learning environment) and subjective (ESP field specific) reasons behind the scarce use of dictionaries in ESP courses and while the objective reasons can hardly be affected, ESP teachers' awareness of the advantages of using dictionaries in class and of the need to train their students in using dictionaries can and should be raised.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), tertiary education, dictionaries, dictionary use.

1. Introduction

Dictionaries have always been considered a valuable resource and learning tool in foreign language (L2) education since they provide learners with various information – phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, etymological and usage information (Hamouda, 2013). However, despite the generally accepted statement that dictionaries are one of the basic learning tools because they help understand and produce messages (Nation, 2001), Milić et al. (2018, p. 265) point out that "[e]ven though dictionaries are essential reference books for learning a foreign language, recent research findings indicate that their role in language teaching is often neglected." The reasons for such a situation are various and can be sought in the general principles of the modern approach to teaching as well as in current trends, the availability of quality dictionaries and quick and easy access to information and various translation tools using modern technical devices. Contemporary foreign language teaching is based on the principles of the communicative approach to language learning, which involves learning a language through interaction and communication rather than learning it through memorization of different aspects of the language system. It focuses on actively developing competence in understanding and communicating meaning and thus in this approach, communication takes precedence over linguistic precision, global understanding is more important than individual elements of language and the use of the mother tongue is reduced to a minimum (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). This teaching approach insists on developing strategies by means of which language knowledge is constructed on the basis of perceiving the context, relying on general knowledge and logical principles, critical thinking, guessing, and anticipation. However, these principles appear to be in sharp contrast with the main principles of vocabulary use, which insist on precision in meaning and systematicity (and often the use of the mother tongue). Instead of consulting a dictionary, which is often not available to students (another reason for not using dictionaries in class), students today are mostly instructed to conclude the meaning based on context, logical reasoning and background knowledge.

Teaching a foreign language at the tertiary level is aimed at mastering the language of the profession since ESP students working within their professional field have very particular linguistic needs in their communities of practice, their discourses and types of documentation they use (Northcott & Brown, 2006). An important segment of this teaching is mastering the specific vocabulary for a given area, as well as general academic vocabulary inherent in the scientific style of expression. As pointed out in Peters and Fernández (2013), since professional decisions and judgements hang upon their command of specialized language, there is a strong incentive for learners to grapple with the challenges of bridging the gap between their L1 and L2, and develop the necessary L2 lexicon. Nation (2001) points out that 8-10% words and expressions in academic texts are general academic vocabulary, and 5% of them are narrowly professional terms. Dictionaries certainly play a very important role in acquiring the lexical resources which ESP students need to deal with the discourse of their discipline, and this extends not only to general dictionaries, but also to specialized dictionaries, which focus exclusively on terms from a specific scientific or professional domain. The question is, however, to what extent monolingual and bilingual dictionaries of this type are available, whether they are available for all scientific and professional domains, how exhaustive they are and how they represent and explain the terminology they contain. Namely, monolingual specialized dictionaries have been found to be rather encyclopedic in nature, they are primarily intended for native speakers, and are thus focused mainly on concepts, which means that the majority of dictionary entries are nouns, and pronunciation and usage examples are not supplied (Vidić, 2014). Regarding bilingual specialized dictionaries, Peters and Fernández (2013) argue that they rarely include general scientific (semitechnical) terms, or those from less formal registers of the specialized domain (Fernández et al., 2009), nor do they embrace the near-equivalents used to paraphrase terms in cohesive chains (cf. Rogers, 2007), which means that to cover all their needs, ESP students very likely have to consult multiple dictionaries, although, like EFL students generally, they are unlikely to have had training in how to use those dictionaries (Chi, 2003). This is why Nielsen (2010) suggests that specialized dictionaries should be designed as augmented reference tools which, in addition to the terms (head words), their definitions and equivalents in L2 should also contain relevant syntactic structures, cultural aspects and genre conventions accompanied by illustrative examples, and exercises, as professional texts are mostly translated by lay people, semi-experts, beginners or intermediate level language speakers. In line with the functional approach to defining dictionary entries, Nielsen (2010) argues that the definition of a word should meet the cultural, factual and linguistic needs of the users for whom the dictionary is intended, whether they are lay people, semi-experts or experts. In this way, in addition to learning new concepts, the dictionary users can also master their adequate use and translation equivalents in different contexts.

In Serbia, the fields of practical, theoretical and pedagogical lexicography have gained significant insight from the works of Prćić (2002, 2005, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2018). For the purposes of this study, the dictionaries that Prćić (2018, p. 16) terms 'pirated' are of special importance. These dictionaries are the result of commercial lexicography rather than of research and traditional academic lexicography, their authors and publishers typically have no linguistic background, the dictionaries are widely available and are of a questionable quality. Prćić (2018) claims that there are many such bilingual dictionaries (for various specialized fields, such as economics and business, civil engineering, computer science, medicine, etc.), but many of them fail to meet the needs of their users. Bearing in mind these challenges, as well as the already mentioned marginalized role of dictionaries in contemporary teaching, in an earlier paper (Knežević et al., 2019) we examined the extent to which dictionaries are used in ESP courses at Serbian universities, from the perspective of the teachers themselves, and found that dictionaries are generally used rather rarely. Relying on these results, the aim of the present study is to gain a better understanding of the causes that underlie the scarce use of dictionaries in ESP courses in Serbia.

2. The use of dictionaries in teaching English as a foreign language

Research into dictionary use is the most recent and least developed area within the field of dictionary research (Wiegand, 1998 in Töpel, 2014). The reasons for this are numerous and range from (a) the private nature of dictionary consultation (Lew, 2015), which makes it very difficult for studying both from the technical and the ethical point of view, to (b) the complexity of the issue itself, as the study of dictionary use may take into account different types of users, different types of dictionaries, identification of users' needs and activities and investigation of their dictionary use skills (Nesi, 2013) and (c) a general neglect of dictionaries in L2 teaching and learning (Augustyn, 2013). Reluctance to dictionary use may well be due to the principles of the communicative approach favouring general comprehension and guessing the meaning from the context rather than consulting a dictionary, as well as to the still prevailing teacher-centred approach (Müller, 2002). Additional reasons, as observed by Carstens (1995), can be found in poor availability of dictionaries in language classrooms and students' poor reference skills.

Addressing research on dictionary use from the perspective of dictionary users, L2 learner's behaviour has been reported to be affected by variables such as native and second or foreign language, the level of language proficiency and dictionary use skills. Similarities between the students' L1 and L2 have been found to contribute to more successful dictionary use in the L2 classroom (Ard, 1982), but the level of language proficiency is the variable that is most frequently reported to affect the use of dictionary in L2 learning: higher level learners tend to use dictionaries less but at the same time make more use of monolingual dictionaries and consult them more often while engaged in productive activities, such as writing, than their lower level peers (Battenburg, 1991).

Regarding the types of dictionaries used in L2 education, the largest number of studies so far have focused on the use of monolingual over bilingual or bilingualised dictionaries. Empirical evidence suggests that language learners generally prefer bilingual to monolingual dictionaries (Atkins & Varantola, 1997; Baxter, 1980; Lew, 2004; Nesi, 2014; Tomaszczyk, 1979) and the reason for this lies in the finding that a native language equivalent is normally far easier to understand and process than a definition in the foreign language, however skillfully worded (Lew, 2015). Research findings are inconsistent with regard to the use of monolingual dictionaries with some studies reporting that they are preferred at advanced levels of L2 learning (Battenburg, 1991; Nesi, 2013) and others (Lew, 2004) claiming that even very advanced learners are still more fond of bilingual dictionaries. Monolingual dictionaries, nevertheless, appear to be preferred by language teachers as they perceive them as higher quality resources than bilingual dictionaries (Boonmoh & Nesi, 2008).

Studies focusing on L2 learners' dictionary use skills have revealed that L2 learners usually receive little training in these skills (Bae, 2011; Béjoint, 1981; Hartmann, 1999). As a result of this, most learners fail to make efficient dictionary users (Chan, 2012; Hamouda, 2013; Nesi & Haill, 2002), but learners' dictionary consultation skills can be improved by training (Cardunner, 2003). The findings of studies focusing on problems learners face when consulting dictionaries show that the most common problems are related to inaccurate interpretation of polysemic word entries (Nesi & Meara, 1994; Nesi & Haill, 2002) and some authors report the lack of knowledge regarding the interpretation of grammatical information (Chan, 2012).

In recent years, due to the growing role of modern technologies, research attention has been directed towards the use of electronic or digital dictionaries (cf. Töpel, 2014). New research methods (also resulting from technological advances), such as eye-tracking and log files, have provided better insights into dictionary consultation processes, primarily into how users approach lexical searches and what kind of information they are mostly interested in. As far as L2 learning is concerned, a number of studies have focused on comparisons between traditional (printed) and digital dictionaries. While some of these point to better results in completing language tasks and longer vocabulary retention when digital dictionaries are employed (Dziemianko, 2010; Laufer, 2000; Leffa, 1993 in Töpel, 2014; Shizuka, 2003), there are also studies that report equal success when printed and digital dictionaries are consulted (Chen, 2010; Dziemianko 2011, 2012; Koyama & Takeuchi, 2003). What all of these studies show quite consistently, however, is the fact that consultation is far quicker when digital tools are employed. Another advantage of digital-medium dictionaries reported in many of these studies is higher satisfaction of the user, i.e. a more positive attitude towards these resources (Leffa, 1993 in Töpel, 2014). Finally, as an addition to this list of advantages we can include the easy accessibility of digital dictionaries as many of these resources are nowadays in the form of online dictionaries, and, as Lew (2015, p. 293) observes, "the new digital-native generation of language learners are increasingly unwilling to pay for their dictionaries, expecting instead to get their dictionaries online for free."

This brief review of research into dictionary use in L2 education dealt with the use of dictionaries mostly from the perspective of students, through questionnaires, tests, observations or logging. Studies conducted with language teachers are much fewer in number and indicate that there are different opinions and experiences among the teaching staff related to the use of dictionaries in teaching. Some language instructors advocate the use of dictionaries in class, however, a larger number of them state that this practice can slow down the pace of work in class, it can hinder the students and make them pay more attention to individual words and expressions than to a comprehensive understanding of the content (Hamouda, 2013; Poulet, 1999; Scholfield, 1997). Having in mind this situation, a prior, quantitative research (Knežević et al., 2019) focused on how language instructors view the use of dictionaries as a teaching tool within their ESP classes, to what extent the pedagogical role of dictionaries is realized in this segment of tertiary education, i.e. how often dictionaries are used, what types of dictionaries, for what purposes and for what activities. The results of the quantitative study, on which the qualitative research reported on in this paper draws, are presented in the next section, followed by a description of the methodology applied in this qualitative research (Section 4). The results of the research are presented and discussed in Section 5, while Section 6 concludes the paper.

3. The quantitative study preceding the current research

The aim of the quantitative study was to gain a better insight into the extent to which dictionaries are used in teaching ESP at university level, the ways in which this is done, the reasons behind using dictionaries in teaching ESP and the goals to be achieved, as well as the problems teachers encounter and their attitudes toward using dictionaries.

The research was based on data collected by means of a *Googleforms* questionnaire filled out by the teachers of English for specific purposes employed at 11 faculties of the University of Novi Sad (N=21). The average amount of work experience of our research participants at the tertiary level was 15.25 years.

The questionnaire was designed for the purposes of the research, relying on similar studies (Alhaisoni, 2008; Al Homoud, 2017; Almuzainy, 2005; Béjoint, 1981; Harvey & Yuill, 1997; Li, 1998; Nation, 2001; Tomaszczyk, 1979). It consisted of two parts: the first was intended to collect data on the respondents (gender, total number of years of service at tertiary level and position), while the second part of the questionnaire contained 5 groups of questions related to frequency of using dictionaries in teaching (10 items), frequency of using dictionaries during independent learning (6 items), the way of using dictionaries in teaching (11 items and 1 open question), the reasons for using dictionaries (9 items and one open question) and finally, attitudes towards using dictionaries (6 items). For the items in the first 3 groups of questions, a four-point Likert scale was used (*never, rarely, sometimes, always*), while in the last two groups of questions, data was collected using a dichotomous scale (*agree* or *disagree*).

The results of the research show that dictionaries are rarely used in class (values ranging from 1.71 for printed and 1.76 for general bilingual Serbian-English dictionaries to 2.71 for electronic dictionaries and 2.86 for online dictionaries). General dictionaries are slightly more frequently used in teaching if monolingual (2.48). As far as specialized dictionaries are concerned, bilingual, English-Serbian dictionaries are used the most (2.43), and to a somewhat lesser degree, monolingual (2.24), or bilingual Serbian-English dictionaries (2.19). In general, higher values are recorded for all types of digital dictionaries, thus they appear to be used most in the teaching process: online dictionaries (2.86), electronic dictionaries (2.71), as well as dictionaries in the form of mobile applications (2.43). Regarding the expectations of the teachers concerning the students' use of dictionaries during independent learning, most responses fall within the category 'rarely', with the highest value once again recorded for online dictionaries (2.84), followed by specialized bilingual dictionaries (2.71).

Regarding the teachers' attitudes towards using dictionaries, the results show that most teachers think very much alike. An absolute match in attitudes was observed in four of the six items in this part of the questionnaire. All the respondents reported to expect students to use dictionaries while preparing for the exam, they all claimed to believe that greater availability of electronic dictionaries would speed up their use, they all shared the opinion that the skill of using dictionaries contributes to independence in learning English and believed that in addition to training students how to use of dictionaries, teachers should focus on developing the students' strategies for understanding unknown words and expressions based on the context, on word building, previously acquired knowledge, etc. The sharpest disagreement among teachers is observed with respect to the statement that students should already be trained in using a dictionary at the point when they start their studies. One third of the surveyed teachers did not share this opinion. Finally, regarding the opportunities modern technology provides and the availability of information as a possible substitute for the use of dictionaries, it is interesting to note that not all teachers share the same opinion, with a small proportion (9.5%) believing that the skill of using a dictionary in the age of modern technology is not necessary. Since the number of respondents was relatively small in this study, this percentage is not negligible as it indicates that although the Internet is not always a reliable source of information, students should be referred to sources that are valid and reliable and might in the near future serve as the basis for high quality specialized dictionaries, at least when English-Serbian lexicography is concerned.

Thus, even though the majority of the respondents in the quantitative study shared extremely positive attitudes towards dictionary use in the teaching process, dictionaries were reported to be used rarely in the classroom. When teachers do resort to including them in the teaching process, it is most frequently specialized and general dictionaries that are used, which suggests the need to rely on more dictionary sources in ESP instruction. The results of the study also reveal that the teachers are, in most cases, prone to using electronic dictionaries in class, most frequently online-dictionaries.

4. Research design

Relying on the findings on insufficient use of dictionaries in ESP classes presented above, the present study further explores this issue by attempting to identify what causes such a situation. Accordingly, the research question addressed in the study is as follows:

RQ: What are the reasons for the scarce use of dictionaries in ESP classes at tertiary level of education?

In order to obtain as much detailed and relevant data on this issue as possible, a qualitative research design was applied. Data gathering was performed by means of semi-structured interviews with nine ESP teachers from the University of Novi Sad. The choice of participants was made through Purposeful Sampling (Patton, 2002). The intention of the researchers was to collect data from teachers working in various fields and therefore two of the interviewees were from the field of technical sciences, one from natural sciences, two from the field of ICTs, one from business and economics and three from humanities. The teachers' work experience in the field of ESP ranged from four to twenty-five years, they were all formally qualified for their positions, with five of them holding a PhD and the remaining four with a master's degree. They all regularly attended professional conferences and seminars and published articles in academic journals. To make the interviewees feel comfortable and at ease while answering the questions, the interviews were conducted in Serbian and after the process of transcription translated into English. The interviews took place at the institution where the participants worked and each lasted for approximately half an hour.

The verbatim transcribed data were analysed by the process of deductive category application of content analysis approach (Mayring, 2000). The analysis implied careful readings and examinations of the transcribed texts with identifying and highlighting the passages that explained the reasons for the scarce use of dictionaries. The interview data were reviewed several times by each researcher individually and afterwards the researchers worked together. This joint analysis included two stages: first, the passages highlighted by each researcher were compared and further discussed until all of the reasons were identified and enlisted; second, the identified reasons were analysed and based on their nature, they were classified into two categories that emerged while applying the principles of deductive reasoning. The two emerging categories were coded as Reasons related to ESP Field Specificity and Reasons related to General Learning Environment. A more detailed description of the established categories is given in the Results section.

5. Results and discussion

This section is divided into two parts. The first part presents the reasons for the scarce use of dictionaries that directly reflect some kind of specificity of the ESP field, such as the fact that ESP teachers are usually syllabus and course designers and in that way it is their personal opinion and a matter of choice whether dictionary use will be included in classwork or not. The second segment presents those reasons that are all related to objective circumstances under which the teaching and learning processes take place. These mainly include insufficient number of contact hours, large groups of students and the lack of dictionaries in university libraries.

5.1. ESP Field Specificity

A number of reasons identified in the teachers' interviews refer to some specific features that ESP is characterised by. At first sight, many of these reasons appear to reflect the teachers' personal opinions and views as they are often worded by expressions “I personally”, “In my opinion” etc. A more in-depth analysis of these reasons, however, reveals that these rather subjective views actually reflect a profound specificity of ESP, and that is the fact that most often ESP teachers are also syllabus and course designers. In so doing, their area of specialisation and professional background seems to influence the extent to which dictionaries are used in their classes. Namely, the interviews reveal that those ESP teachers who specialised in applied linguistics and L2 teaching methodology insist more on guessing the meaning of words based on the context and relying on background knowledge than using a dictionary. Those of our interviewees who specialised in theoretical linguistics, particularly in lexicology, opt for a more extensive use of dictionaries in ESP classes. This sharp distinction is best observed in the following two extracts, the first one from an interviewee holding a PhD in applied linguistics and the second one from a teacher with a PhD in theoretical linguistics:

> I1: I must admit that dictionaries are hardly ever used in my classes… Generally, my concept of teaching is based on guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words, both general and technical ones, by relying on the context and background knowledge, so that students can link ideas, think logically and critically, guess and predict the meaning… That is the concept of teaching that I develop. Maybe that is the main reason why dictionaries are not used in my classes.
>
> I2: We regularly use dictionaries in my classes…Students use online dictionaries on their mobile phones. Few students bring their dictionaries with them to class; I also take my dictionaries with me and let the students use them… Dictionaries are very important and their use should be considered compulsory in language classes.

Although both of the teachers are highly qualified and fully meet the requirements officially set for their positions, it is obvious that their field of specialization has a strong influence on their approach towards vocabulary development and, therefore, towards the use of dictionaries as well. Nevertheless, we can say that this observation reflects a generally accepted view in L2 pedagogy that vocabulary learning is still an on-going challenge as there has not been a method that best enhances it (Schmitt, 2008), in spite of a number of approaches that have been developed so far.

Another reason why teachers are reluctant to use dictionaries, as the interview findings suggest, lies the fact that ESP students are not language majors. This being the case, as some of the interviewees conclude, dictionaries cannot be considered a priority in their reading lists. Therefore, they deem it rather unfair to insist on the students buying and possessing them:

> I6: There are many monolingual dictionaries, but this is not enough for our students, sometimes they need a bilingual English-Serbian or Serbian-English dictionary, and those that are of a good quality are usually expensive, particularly to students who do not study philology, there are certainly other books and resources that are more important to them.

One more reason that can be viewed as a specificity of ESP and which contributes to insufficient dictionary use is the lack of specialized dictionaries in some fields. This situation has been reported in two cases:

> I1: As far as specialized dictionaries are concerned, in the area of science, such as biology or chemistry, there aren't many good quality dictionaries, as far as I know. Those that are available are more like glossaries, simply lists of specialist terms and nothing else.
>
> I6: Some of the good quality dictionaries are very difficult to find. If we take a geodesy dictionary as an example, there is an old, high-quality dictionary that was published in former Yugoslavia and it is almost impossible to find it today, except maybe on a website for selling and buying used books…

More often than other L2 learners, ESP students are expected to use specialized dictionaries, but as some of the interviewees point out, for some fields these do not exist, or if they do, the question is how reliable they are or whether they can (still) be obtained. The interview data, in this way, support previous findings that many of the available dictionaries actually do not meet the real needs of their users and that there is a dire need for institutionally organized, modern and digitally realized lexicography in Serbia, which will yield desired results in the domain of compiling research-based general and specialized open-access electronic dictionaries (Prćić, 2018).

5.2. General Learning Environment

Apart from the reasons explained in the previous section, the content analysis of the interviews also revealed some reasons for not using dictionaries which are related to the general circumstances under which ESP classes take place in Serbia. Thus, one of most frequently reported reasons in this category is the problem of insufficient teaching hours allocated to ESP courses. This is by far the most frequently mentioned reason by the interviewees, as almost half of them (four out of nine) report that they simply do not have time to include the use of dictionaries in their classes. Here are some of their comments:

> I1: For more frequent use of dictionaries in class, we should have more good-quality dictionaries available and more teaching hours. I'd say this is also one of the reasons – the lack of time… we don't have much time, it's a one-semester course, and there are so many things to be covered in such a short time.

> I8: I rarely teach my students how to use a dictionary because of the lack of time… I think they should be taught this, but I also think we

> should be given more teaching hours for our courses, this would make it possible.

A limited timeframe for conducting ESP courses has been reported in literature (e.g. Suzani et al., 2011) and this is apparently an overarching problem in the Serbian context as well. This reason, however, can be associated with the issue of time, which has been addressed in the literature on dictionary use in L2 classroom. The prevailing opinion in L2 pedagogy literature today is that the use of dictionaries is rather time-consuming and slows down the work in class and does not encourage active engagement of students in class (Ali, 2012; Scholfield, 1997). Apart from the fact that in such a restricted time of teaching, the interviewees do not give priority to dictionary use, it also appears that they take it for granted that dictionary use is a time-consuming activity. While this may be true for printed dictionaries, it certainly does not hold for electronic dictionaries, the increasing popularity of which can be credited to better readability and their ease of use, which makes the consultation process less time-consuming (Stirling, 2005; Kobayashi, 2006; Barham, 2017). In other words, it appears that the teachers themselves are not entirely aware of the fact that dictionary use in the 21st century ESP classroom should not be considered an unattainable goal and they still believe that dictionary use in class would take up too much time even though they do not use dictionaries in the teaching process.

Along with the lack of time, a general obstacle to using dictionaries is also perceived in typically very large classes of ESP students, as particularly reported by those who teach students of technical sciences:

> I5: They don't have their own dictionaries and one dictionary for a group of 150 students wouldn't mean anything… And, as I said, I think the greatest problem at our faculty is that we have large groups of students.

However, some of the interviewees actually see dictionaries as a good way of overcoming certain problems caused by large class sizes. For some teachers, individual use of dictionaries could provide better engagement of the whole class and ensure that each student is provided with the explanation of the words and phrases they are unfamiliar with, which in turn could speed up some activities, since the teacher is not expected to explain everything in that case. This situation, however, seems hardly attainable, as there are not sufficient numbers of dictionaries available to the students. The teachers report the lack of dictionaries in university libraries, making this another reason for the scarce use of dictionaries in ESP classes. A good way for resolving this, as perceived by the interviewees, is the use of online dictionaries on students' mobile phones, but this imposes an additional problem – a stable internet access. As the teachers observe, most of the university classrooms and lecture halls are not provided with a reliable internet connection and insisting on using dictionaries on their mobile phones would put some students in an unequal position, as pointed out in the following excerpt:

> I5: …I think that technical support is also one of the greatest problems…I am not sure about the quality of Internet connection at other faculties, but this is also really important if students are to use online dictionaries to search for new words.

This adds poor IT infrastructure to the list of reasons which account for the infrequent use of dictionaries in ESP courses in Serbia.

6. Conclusion

The present study is intended to provide an answer to the question why dictionaries are scarcely used in ESP classes at tertiary level in Serbia. The findings show that there are several objective reasons which concern the learning environment, such as large groups and insufficient teaching hours, and these pose a challenge for teachers to include dictionary use practice in their classes. However, the predominant reason for not using dictionaries, as the current study shows, lies in a specificity of ESP teaching and is related to the role of the ESP teacher as a syllabus and course designer. As teachers are very often responsible for their syllabus and course design, it seems that it is their personal decision whether and to what extent dictionaries will be used in their courses. This decision, as the findings show, is highly affected by the teachers' professional development. In other words, those teachers who have specialized in applied linguistics tend to follow an approach that favours the development of word guessing and predicting skills and strategies instead of relying on dictionaries when new vocabulary is acquired. On the other hand, the ESP teachers holding a PhD or MA degree in theoretical linguistics seem to pay much more attention to the development of dictionary skills and include more dictionary practice in their courses. This suggests that more attention should be paid to raising the teachers' awareness of the need to introduce dictionary skills into their ESP syllabi, especially since it has been proven that millennial EFL learners rely heavily on digital resources but do not make efficient users of these resources as they only pay attention to a small portion of the information these resources have to offer (Knežević et al., 2020). Various workshops, seminars and other forms of training should be organized with this topic and offered to ESP teachers at universities in Serbia.

A major limitation of the current research lies the fact that it is designed as a small scale study, so any generalisation regarding its findings must be taken with caution. Certainly, studies with a larger sample and more sources of information are needed in order to confirm the results obtained in this qualitative study. Nevertheless, as research on the use of dictionaries in ESP teaching is scarce (Peters & Fernández, 2013), the present paper can be considered a small contribution to this field.

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Olga Panić Kavgić
Faculty of Philosophy
University of Novi Sad
olgapk@ff.uns.ac.rs

TRANSNATIONALITY IN LANGUAGE: TRANSLATED TITLES OF RECENT U.S. FILMS DEPICTING DISTINCTLY AMERICAN TOPICS

Abstract: The paper deals with translations into Serbian of titles of one hundred feature-length US films from the past 35 years which deal with distinctly American topics, such as the following: predilection for gun violence (in, for instance, *Bowling for Columbine*), small-town suburban life (*American Beauty*), events surrounding the tragedy of 9/11 (*United 93*), defending the principles and foundations of democracy and justice (*The Post*), the institution of US Presidency and the White House (*W.*), US military interventions abroad (*Zero Dark Thirty*), personal war and post-war experiences (*Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*), civil rights, ethnic diversity and racial tensions (*If Beale Street Could Talk*), chasing the American dream (*The Pursuit of Happyness* [*sic*]), epic stories involving ordinary Americans (*Hacksaw Ridge*), etc. The titles were chosen based on both culture-specific and linguistic criteria, as well as on how they aim to achieve their informative, appellative and aesthetic functions. Namely, they all represent a challenge for the translator in terms of dealing with both culture-specific references and language issues related to their structural or lexical properties, with possible semantic ambiguities involved. By applying the methodology of qualitative analysis, the aim of the contrastive analysis in this paper is to exemplify, describe and classify the procedures applied in translations of the selected titles into Serbian, with occasional additional examples from other European languages, and to establish which approaches were used in presenting American culture to foreign audiences through movie titles representing a paratextual introduction to films as works of art. The analysis is expected to show that, albeit through different strategies, chiefly through contextual reformulation and direct translation, most of the newly created titles in Serbian succeed in achieving the right balance between retaining a distinctly American atmosphere and, if deemed appropriate and reasonable, adapting it to the needs and expectations of the receiving culture and the structural and lexical constraints and requirements of the target language.

Key words: film title, paratext, translation procedure, contextual reformulation, direct translation, transcription, copying, American culture, culture-specific reference

1. US films and their titles as a transnational phenomenon

One of the phenomena explored within the "transnational turn" in American Studies, is how the U.S. cultural production has traveled and been received outside the country. Scarcely have the American culture, society and way of life been depicted and represented more vibrantly and vividly than through films, which are widely seen as one of the most important cultural media of our time. Distinctly American topics, be they tragic such as the events surrounding the terrorist attacks of 9/11, heroic such as epic stories involving ordinary Americans in extraordinary situations, or uplifting such as chasing the American dream, reach and influence audiences in movie theaters all around the world much due to the efforts of translators who make it possible for this form of art to take on transnational dimensions – both linguistic and cultural. Therefore, as pointed out in Cronin (2009), translation has been an abiding concern of film makers dealing with questions of culture, identity, migration, conflict, representation and globalization. Being a contemporary cultural product and viewed as a transcultural phenomenon, the present-day US film owes its international success not only to its rich heritage but also to the way its paratextual and textual components are presented to ever more demanding and diverse audiences around the globe.

In light of the transnational nature of film titles as a paratextual introduction to films as works of art and bearing in mind their importance as primary cinematic paratextual material, the aim of this paper is to exemplify, describe and classify the procedures that were applied in translations of selected US film titles into Serbian, with occasional additional examples from other European languages, and to establish which approaches were used in presenting American culture to foreign audiences through movie titles. It is expected that most of the newly created titles in Serbian succeed in achieving the right balance between retaining a distinctly American atmosphere and, if deemed appropriate and reasonable, adapting it to the needs and expectations of the receiving culture and the structural and lexical constraints and requirements of the target language.

1.1. Film titles as paratext

A paratext, according to Kolstrup (1996), is a shorter text which represents an introduction into a longer and more complex text[1] (a book, story, poem, film, theatre play, painting, piece of music). Notable examples of paratext thus include, for instance, book titles, newspaper headlines, or film titles and taglines. The viewer, reader or listener is first acquainted with the paratext and if it grabs their attention and arouses their interest, they proceed to the text itself. When it comes to films, the paratext is textual, while the text is auditive or, in the case of subtitled films, it is audio-visual.

A film title is a form of paratext which serves as an intermediary between the film itself and the audience and, as such, it is a crucially important aspect in the reception and marketing of films. Based on Jakobson's (1960) division into six communicative functions of language, film titles as paratextual linguistic expressions have four conspicuous functions, most of which are shared with those attributed to film taglines (Panić Kavgić, 2014; Panić Kavgić and Kavgić, 2018):

1) **identificational** or **referential** – audiences refer to a film by mentioning its title, rather than by any of its other paratextual features, regardless of how memorable or eye-catching they may be;
2) **informational** – the title provides basic information about the central idea, theme, plot, characters and/or socio-cultural background of the film;
3) **poetic** or **aesthetic** – the title represents the result of creative application of linguistic and extralinguistic devices, and it should be both linguistically and visually appealing, especially as the most conspicuous paratextual content in movies posters (Haidegger 2015); and
4) **appellative**, stemming from functions 2) and 3) – the title is directed at the audience as the decoder of the message; its informational and aesthetic qualities aim at influencing and attracting the audience.

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[1] In the (para)textual paradigm, according to Kolstrup (1996), the term ʻtext', in its widest sense, refers to the main body of a work of art or literature, and is not restricted to the written medium only. In other words, a text may be a book, a film, a theater play, a piece of music, a painting, etc. and it is distinct from its "auxiliary" materials such as headlines, titles, illustrations, notes, etc., which all represent examples of paratextual content. Paratexts in narrative cinema were most extensively discussed by Mahlknecht (2011).

1.2. Translating film titles

When translating a film title, and in line with the communicative translation method, as it was labelled by Nida (1964), i.e. the pragmatic or contextual method, as proposed by Prćić (2011), the translator tries to achieve a balance between closeness to the original title in the source language on the one hand, and naturalness of expression in the target language, on the other. Closeness in film title translation is primarily attained by means of direct translation (with structural modifications, e.g. *Dances with Wolves* translated as *Ples sa vukovima*, or without them, e.g. *Short Cuts*, as *Kratki rezovi*), transcribing (e.g. *Wyatt Earp* as *Vajat Erp*) and, in its extreme form, copying (*Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*), whereas naturalness most often comes as a result of contextual reformulation – a translation procedure based on recreating the title in the target language in accordance with the linguistic and extralinguistic (situational and/or cultural) context (e.g. *The Whole Nine Yards* translated as *Ubica mekog srca* [*A Soft-Hearted Killer*]). Between the two extremes, as it is pointed out in Panić Kavgić (2010, p. 85), the translator at all times has to bear in mind the following factors:

a) the film's plot – the title cannot be translated adequately if the translator has not watched *the whole* film closely and is not familiar with *all details* of the story;
b) the target group – the translator has to be aware of the age group, the gender distribution and the educational level of the potential target audience, as well as of a number of social, cultural and geo-political factors in the country where the translated film is to be shown;
c) the commercial aspect – the film is supposed to do well at the box office, and an aptly translated title is an asset in promoting it and attracting audiences to movie theaters.

Among the listed procedures, it is the complexity and creativity of *contextual reformulation* that deserves most attention. Conceptually, from the viewpoint of transferring film titles from one language to another, it is most similar to Xiuquan's (2007) contextual adaptation; at the micro-level of translating individual lexemes and phrases, it is similar to Prćić's (2011) functional approximation; while, more generally, at the macro-level level of text translation, it could be viewed as the counterpart of transcreation as seen by, among others, Katan (2014), Zanotti (2014) and Filmer (2014). With its emphasis on achieving functional equivalence, it is in line with Vermeer's (1996) Skopos Theory, which places emphasis on the function and purpose of the text in translation.

The procedure was first labelled ‘contextual reformulation’ in Panić Kavgić (2010) and was further elaborated in Panić Kavgić (2011), where it was subdivided into associative, complementary and intralinguistic reformulation, all of which may be partial or full. Based on partial recreation of the original title, associative reformulation aims to retain at least an associative link to the original, as in the Serbian translation of *Murder at 1600*, which is *Ubistvo u Beloj kući* [*Murder in the White House*]. However, when it comes to full contextual reformulation, there is no apparent connection whatsoever between the titles in the source and target language, as is the case with *How to Make an American Quilt* translated as *Poslušaj svoje srce* [*Listen to Your Heart*]. The three specified types of contextual reformulation will be defined and illustrated as follows:

a) *Associative contextual reformulation* represents the renaming of the film in translation in order to arouse positive feelings and associations in the target audience based on their previous favorable experience of watching another, usually unrelated film, albeit of a similar genre, which achieved great success in the target culture. This is why *May Life in Ruins* was translated into Serbian as *Moja velika grčka avantura* [*My Big Greek Adventure*] – to remind the viewers of another blockbuster comedy starring the same lead actress – *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, even though the plots of the two films are not related in any way.

b) *Complementary contextual reformulation*, realized by what Steinsaltz (2000) terms ‘explanatory tags’, refers to attaching an additional, explanatory component to the copied original title. A good example of this strategy is how the Brazilian translator dealt in Portuguese with *LBJ* – the title of a 2016 US film about President Lyndon B. Johnson: it became *LBJ: A Esperança de uma Nação* [*LBJ: The Hope of a Nation*].

c) *Intralingual contextual reformulation* represents a relatively recent phenomenon, mostly in German- and French-speaking regions, which is based on renaming the original title by replacing it with a simpler and more memorable expression in English, rather than using the language of the target culture. This is done in order to simplify the lexical and structural features of the source title, whilst, at the same time, retaining at least some of the flair and atmosphere of the original English-speaking setting. Hence, the US thriller *Phone Booth*, for instance, has become *Phone Game* “in French”.

However, contextual reformulation should definitely be avoided if it reveals too much of the plot, i.e. more than the authors originally intended (e.g. *Thelma & Louise* translated in Mexico and Venezuela into Spanish as *Un final inesperado* [*An Unexpected Ending*]), if it banalizes or oversimplifies the original title (e.g. *Petróleo sangriento* [*Bloody Petrol*] for *There Will Be Blood*), or if it represents a mere brief retelling of the plot (e.g. *Eine Frau kämpft um ihr Kind* [*A Woman Fights for Her Child*] in German, instead of the shorter and less elaborative original title *The Other Woman*).

In addition to contextual reformulation, there is one other procedure that stands out in translating film titles, but owing to its frequency of application rather than its complexity or creativity. As discussed in Panić Kavgić (2010), *direct translation* is the word-for-word transfer from one language to another of the title's literal and sometimes also transferred (metaphorical or metonymic) meaning and form, regardless of whether it is a simple monolexemic expression (e.g. *Witness* translated into Serbian as *Svedok*), or a longer and syntactically more complex title (e.g. *Mark Felt: The Man Who Brought Down the White House* as *Mark Felt: Čovek koji je srušio Belu kuću*). In the process, minor structural changes may occur, primarily as a result of different morphosyntactic rules in the target language (e.g. *Patriot*$_{\text{(noun)}}$ *Games* = *Patriotske*$_{\text{(adjective)}}$ *igre*). This category would also include: a) *undertranslated titles* that saw a certain degree of simplification, in the sense that one part of the original title was translated directly, while the other was simply omitted or "cut off", as is the case with *Gorillas in the Mist: The Story of Dian Fossey*, translated into Serbian as *Gorile u magli* [*Gorillas in the Mist*], and b) *overtranslated titles* which were enriched by adding a single explanatory element, which makes this procedure similar to, yet less complex than, complementary contextual reformulation (e.g. *The 15:17 to Paris*, translated as *15.17 – Voz za Pariz* [*15:17 – Train to Paris*]).

Finally, it is expected that a certain, albeit smaller, number of titles analyzed in Section 2 – almost exclusively those that represent proper names denoting real or fictitious persons or entities – would be transferred to Serbian by means of *transcription*. The adaptation of originally English names to the phonological and orthographic system of the Serbian language is the procedure employed in, among others, the following examples of US film titles: personal name – *Nixon* (*Nikson* in Serbian), geographical – *Roswell* (*Rozvel*) and institutional name – *Apollo 13* (*Apolo 13*).

2. Translating titles of films with distinctly American topics

Direct translation and contextual reformulation, with their subtypes, are expected to be the two most prevalent translation procedures when it comes to transferring titles of recent US films depicting distinctly American topics such as the following: small-town suburban life and values; defending the principles and foundations of democracy and justice; the institution of US presidency and the White House; the US police force; civil rights, ethnic diversity and racial tensions; American involvement in conflicts around the world; personal war and post-war stories of ordinary Americans; events surrounding the tragedy of 9/11; predilection for gun violence and proliferation of guns in American society, especially among the young; epic stories from recent American past; chasing the American dream; the bright and dark side of Hollywood and LA and the American entertainment industry. Similarly, Gersten (2006, pp. 10-11) also names and exemplifies the following topics as suitable for representing and discussing American values through film: the role of women in citizen environmental activism; jury system, citizen participation in rule of law; racial tolerance; overcoming the odds, persistence through hardship; investigative journalism rooting out government corruption.

Bearing in mind the importance of their intermediary role in transferring not only titles and dialogues from one language to another, but also, at a more symbolic level, topics and culture-specific values depicted through the medium of film from one culture to another, translators must never forget that they are always translating for the viewer and should thus stick to principles that favor the target audience and their needs. In what is called the *framework of audience-based approach* (Lu, 2009, p. 171), the translator must strive to stay, as much as possible, within the boundaries of the audience's expected linguistic and extralinguistic expectations and worldview, or, if those boundaries need to be transcended, to do it skillfully and tactfully, so that viewers would benefit from their encounter with another language and culture and broaden their horizons. An adequately translated title is the first step in such an endeavor – a step which may play an important role in the audience's perception of a foreign cinematography, culture and the values it promotes, in this case exemplified by American themes presented through movies to the Serbian viewer.

More often than not, titles of films dealing with the listed topics can be regarded as a challenge for the translator in terms of coping with ambiguities related to culture-specific references that represent critical points in translation (e.g. *The War of the Roses*), as well as language issues in terms of their structural or lexical properties, with possible semantic ambiguities involved (e.g. *Hope Springs*). This was already proven to be true in Panić Kavgić (2015), when a similar analysis was carried out in the opposite direction – namely, the object of the study were translations into English of titles of Serbian films shown at international festivals and to foreign audiences in the period starting with the breakup of Yugoslavia, up to 2015, with special emphasis on translating creative titles based on puns and other forms of word play, as well as those containing culture-specific words and expressions.

2.1. Research corpus

The corpus for the research consists of one hundred titles of feature-length American films dealing with the above-mentioned US-related topics, from the period between 1985 and 2019, and their translations into Serbian, selected for the purposes of this research from a wider list of over five thousand items.[2] The bilingual pairs of titles included in the analysis were chosen based on both extralinguistic, i.e. culture-specific and linguistic criteria, as well as on how they aim to achieve their informative, appellative and aesthetic functions. The main culture-specific criterion for the inclusion of a particular title was that the film should have as its predominant theme one of the listed US-specific subject matters. The basic linguistic criteria were that the title was not fully semantically transparent[3] and/or that it contained some form of linguistic creativity – an inventive language mechanism which represents, preferably, a surmountable challenge or, unpreferably, a formidable obstacle for the translator.

The concept of linguistic creativity in the English language has most extensively been studied and described by Crystal. In this author's opinion, the more creative the context, the greater the probability of encountering linguistic experiments (Crystal, 1995, p. 134). More precisely, "linguistic creativity includes all intelligent and witty uses of language, at various levels of analysis (primarily, morphological, semantic, phonological, orthographic and graphemic), which serve the purpose of devising appealing and associatively charged expressions" (Panić Kavgić, 2016, p. 385).

In the following subsections, the titles from the selected corpus will be categorized and discussed according to the procedure which was applied in their translation from English into Serbian. If the author believes that a better or alternative solution could have been found, it will be proposed and discussed within each of the categories.

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[2] A huge corpus of approximately five thousand film titles in English and their translations into Serbian was compiled by the author over a period of ten years (between 2010 and 2019) and was used in some of her previous papers on translating film titles (Panić Kavgić, 2010, 2011, 2013a, 2013b, 2014). The corpus has by now grown to include official titles of films from English-speaking countries released and distributed in Serbia, in movie theaters, on VHS, DVD and television, between 1980 and 2019.

[3] Semantically transparent and "simple" titles such as *Thirteen Days* will not be included in the analysis, regardless of the fact that the film's plot is distinctly American and that it describes a crucially important episode from the Presidency of John F. Kennedy – the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

2.2. Direct translation

The selected corpus includes fifteen titles of films dealing with one or more of the listed distinctly American topics that were translated without any structural modifications:

- *Bang Bang You're Dead = Beng beng mrtav si*
- *After Parkland = Posle Parklenda*
- *American History X = Američka istorija iks*
- *American Gun = Američki pištolj*
- *Runaway Jury = Odbegli porotnik*
- *World Trade Center = Svetski trgovinski centar*
- *Thank You for Your Service = Hvala vam na službi*
- *I Am Not Your Negro = Ja nisam tvoj crnja*
- *Once Upon a Time… in Hollywood = Bilo jednom u… Holivudu*
- *American Beauty = Američka lepota*
- *The Straight Story = Strejtova priča*
- *The Pursuit of Happyness* [sic] = *U potrazi za srećom*
- *Born on the Fourth of July = Rođen 4. jula*
- *Green Book = Zelena knjiga*
- *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood = Lep dan u komšiluku*

In the author's opinion, the translations of the first nine titles could not have been improved or made more "accessible" to the Serbian target audience by structural modifications or the application of other translation procedures. In other words, they clearly and unambiguously reflect what the creators of the original title wanted (or did not want) to reveal about the film's content.

The last six titles, however, deserve special attention. Each of them contains a translation issue that represents a challenge beyond the translator's pure linguistic knowledge. The title *American Beauty*, introducing a groundbreaking deconstruction of small-time American life and values, gives rise to as many as three possible interpretations[4]: 1) an ironic reference to the lives of its characters which are far from beautiful; 2) the young protagonist who is a beautiful but insecure 16-year-old girl, and 3) a kind of rose grown on American soil, with its red petals being the film's visual leitmotif. Instead of opting for a simple direct rendering of the title into Serbian, in line with interpretation 1), an alternative ambiguous solution could have been *Amerika (ni)je cveće* [*America is (not) flowers*] or, even more generally, *Život (ni)je cveće* [*Life is (not) flowers*], which would point to the de-idealization of small-town life on a transnational scale, while at the same time retaining the intended reference to the symbolic red rose petals. Similarly, *The Straight Story*, David Lynch's poetic account of an old man's last long road trip, based on the real story of Alvin Straight's search for reconciliation with his brother, may also have been translated as *Iskrena priča* [*An Honest Story*], or even *Istinita priča* [*A True Story*, in line with *Une histoire vraie*, *Una storia vera* and *Eine wahre Geschichte* – the translations into French, Italian and German, respectively], as the protagonists name and the nature of his mission – *Straight* and *straight* – would justify both solutions, including the Serbian translator's choice *Strejtova priča* [*Straight's Story*]. Finally, the title of the story of a struggling Afro-American salesman and single parent is intentionally misspelt because the word *happyness* [sic] appears the same way on the outer wall of his son's daycare center. Similarly to Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious* [sic] *Basterds*, there is not much the translator could do to reflect such deliberate spelling "mistakes" in the translation, especially since Serbian orthography is morpho-phonological and does not provide fertile ground for such seemingly unmotivated errors.

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[4] References to the plots of the films whose titles are discussed in this paper are based on contents found on *IMDb* (*Internet Movie Database*), the largest and most popular online film database, available at www.imdb.com.

On the other hand, the titles *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Green Book* and *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* bear distinctly American cultural and historical references that are perhaps not visible enough from their direct translations into Serbian. July 4 is not just any date, it is Independence Day, the most important national holiday in the USA, and it is by no means unimportant that Ron Kovic, the film's hero and a real-life Vietnam-war veteran and peace activist, was born on that particular day. The *Green Book*, i.e. *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, in the 1960's, was a travel guide through America's racial segregation and one of the most potent symbols of appalling injustices towards the Afro-American population. Finally, Fred Rogers, also known as Mister Rogers, America's "most beloved neighbor", was the showrunner and creator of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, a long-running children's television series, with the lyrics of the opening song to the program being "It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood...". In light of these culture-specific facts, the three titles cannot be said to have been translated incorrectly, but they could also have been made more informative by changing the date in the first title to the name of the holiday – *Rođen na Dan nezavisnosti* [*Born on Independence Day*], by adding an explanatory element about racial injustice in the second – *Zelena knjiga nejednakosti* [*Green Book of Inequality*], and, in the third title, amplifying the intensity of *lep* [*nice*] and replacing it by *divan* [*beautiful*], which would be more in line with Mister Rogers' uplifting persona and the slogan of his TV show.

As pointed out in Section 1.2., direct translation also includes instances of structural simplification, when a part of the original title is translated directly, while another is simply left out. The omitted element, if considered by the translator to be unnecessary, less important and/or potentially distracting for the Serbian viewer, may be initial, i.e. premodifying, as in *Snajperista* [*Sniper* instead of *American Sniper*], or both pre- and post-modifying, such as *Pobednica* [*Winner* instead of *The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio*]. An interesting case, however, is that of the title of Spike Lee's recent critically acclaimed racial satire *BlacKkKlansman*, whose three Ks unambiguously refer to the notorious Ku Klux Klan. The "simple" translation *Crni klanovac* could, however, have retained the original eye-catching effect had it been *Crni KKKlanovac* – the solution chosen by the Croatian translator.

Finally, on the borderline between direct translation and contextual reformulation, there are two titles in the selected corpus that were enriched by adding a short explanatory component, which proved to be the right choice by the translator, since they turned out to be more transparent, especially the first title – *The 15:17 to Paris*. As it is not customary in Serbian, unlike in English, to refer to trains only by their time of departure, the enriched title *15:17 – Voz za Pariz* [*15:17 – Train to Paris*] is the preferable option, although *Voz za Pariz u 15.17* would be an even better and more correct solution. On the other hand, *First Man* does not automatically trigger the intended association to the *First Man on the Moon*, which is how the title was translated into Serbian – *Prvi čovek na Mesecu*.

2.3. Contextual reformulation

Out of forty-three examples of contextual reformulation found in the selected corpus, several topic-based subcategories will be exemplified and discussed that testify to the explanatory and, often, creative potential of this translation procedure.

1) The first group comprises titles that include direct or indirect mention of, or allusion to, concepts or persons related to the US political, judicial

or military system. The following were aptly translated by means of full or partial contextual reformulation so as to reveal to the Serbian viewer what lies beneath certain personal or institutional proper names or jargon expressions, since it was, in most cases, practically impossible to directly transfer the idiomatized or culturally loaded title:

- *Patriots Day = Bostonski heroji* [*Boston Heroes*], about the heroes and victims of the events surrounding the 2013 Boston Marathon terrorist attack and its aftermath – the bombing was carried out on **Patriots' Day**[5], an annual event commemorating the first battles of the American Revolutionary War;
- *Air Force One = Predsednički avion* [*Presidential Plane*], about the hijacking of the US Presidential airplane, better known as **Air Force One**, with the President and his family on board;
- *Zero Dark Thirty = 0:30 – Tajna operacija* [*0:30 – Secret Operation*], about the decade-long hunt for and assassination of the al-Qaeda terrorist leader Osama bin Laden, which secretly took place in the early hours of May 2, 2011 – the expression **zero dark thirty** is often used in military jargon to refer to any time after darkness has fallen, most typically to the time around **12:30** a.m., when the attack was allegedly carried out;
- *Vice = Čovek iz senke* [*Man from the Shadow*], about the sinister rising influence of former US **Vice**-President Dick Cheney on President Bush and US politics in general;
- *White House Down = Napad na Belu kuću* [*Attack on the White House*], about an attack on the US Presidential residence by a group of paramilitary invaders; emphasis on the seriousness of the situation is achieved by employing the postmodifying element **down**, in military-speak usually referring to a destroyed aircraft or base taken over by enemy forces;
- *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk = Bili Lin – heroj* [*Billy Lynn – a Hero*], about the US victory tour of 19-year-old "hero" Billy Lyn and his fellow soldiers after a harrowing Iraq battle – obeying military protocol, they are supposed to show up at a stadium in the **halftime** of a football game and be greeted by a crowd of ordinary US citizens whose perceptions of the realities of war are in harsh contrast to what the soldiers actually experienced on the battlefield;

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[5] Words relevant to the title or pertaining to its potentially creative use of language are given in bold typeface.

- *The Post = Doušnik* [*Informant*], about the cover-up of the US government's deceptions about the futility of the Vietnam War, revealed by *The Washington* ***Post*** in the early 1970's;
- *Wag the Dog = Ratom protiv istine* [*With War against the Truth*], about a fabricated war in Albania manufactured by a spin-doctor and a Hollywood producer in order to cover up a presidential sex scandal before the upcoming election – the title employs an apt wordplay on the collocation "a dog wags its tail", which has become an inverted idiomatized expression pointing to something of secondary importance improperly taking on the role of something of primary importance and echoed by the film's opening line: "Why does a dog wag its tail? Because a dog is smarter than its tail. If the tail were smarter, the tail would **wag the dog**". The opposition between what is actually happening and what seems to be happening is well mirrored in the title's Polish translation – *Fakty i akty* (*Facts and Acts*);
- *Weapons of Mass Distraction = Medijski rad* [*Media War*], about two US media moguls whose greed and ambition in waging a war against each other's empires destroy their employees, families and themselves – their methods and deadly results resemble those inflicted by **weapons of mass destruction** that US presidents had accused former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein of secretly storing and using; hence the wordplay on weapons of mass **distraction**, in the context of media power struggle;
- *W. = Buš* [*Bush*], about the life and Presidency of George W. Bush, who is, often mockingly, referred to only as **W.** – the only letter in his name which publicly differentiates his name from that of his late father, former US President George Bush.
- *LBJ = Lindon B. Džonson* [*Lyndon B. Johnson*], about the unexpected Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson (often referred to in the United States as **LBJ**) after the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy, and the subsequent political upheaval it caused;
- *Roman J. Israel, Esq. = Advokat* [*Lawyer*], about a driven, idealistic defense attorney who finds himself in a tumultuous series of events in the Los Angeles criminal court system; in the US, unlike in Serbia, the abbreviation **esq.** is a title often appended to the surname of a lawyer of either sex and, since the film is about the protagonist's professional and moral fight against injustice, it is exactly his profession of a lawyer that should be the film's banner abroad.

2) The second group of examples encompasses epic stories from the past one hundred years of US history which are here represented by one film

depicting events from each of the following decades: the 1920's (*Seabiscuit* – the Great Depression), 1940's (*Hacksaw Ridge* – World War II), 1970's (*We Are Marshall* – the Southern Airways Flight 932 airplane crash) and 2000's (*United 93* – the 9/11 terrorist attack), respectively. Since all four titles include proper names which would not arouse the intended associations on the part of foreign viewers, the translators opted for certain contextually determined adaptations in their Serbian counterparts. Namely, *Seabiscuit*, the name of an undersized Depression-era racehorse which became the struggling nation's favorite and lifted its spirits, became *Trka života* [*Race of a Lifetime*], to point to the importance of holding onto a dream to get oneself through the bad times. *Hacksaw Ridge*, named after a location during the Battle of Okinawa, tells the true story of a conscientious objector who, without firing a single bullet, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his outstanding bravery in saving his fellow soldiers' lives at the very ridge – hence the fitting Serbian translation *Greben spasa* [*Salvation Ridge*]. Heroism of a completely different kind is seen when the students and the only surviving member of the Marshall University's football team who had all tragically lost their lives in a plane crash found the strength to move on and try to play the 1971 season, proving that Marshall was still a team. This is appropriately reflected in the corresponding Serbian title *Mi smo tim* [*We Are a Team*]. Another fatal airplane crash, albeit amidst completely different circumstances, is depicted in *United 93*, whose passengers heroically sacrificed their lives in an attempt to down their hijacked plane before it would hit another target in a series of terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The title in Serbian was changed to *Let 93* [*Flight 93*], to draw attention to an important event that took place aboard an airplane rather than insist on the exact and complete flight number involving the abbreviation for *United Airlines*, a company that does not operate in this part of the world.

3) The third subcategory includes titles of films whose primary or one of the main topics is racial segregation and injustice, or the white man's small-mindedness – *Hidden Figures*, *If Beale Street Could Talk* and *Suburbicon*. The first tells the true story of a team of female Afro-American mathematicians who served a vital role in NASA during the early years of the US space program. The title *Hidden Figures* represents an excellent example of creative language use and double wordplay based on polysemy: namely, *figures* denote numerical symbols, i.e. *hidden* numbers that are yet to be revealed and calculated by important individuals – *figures* who are discriminated Afro-American women, mathematical geniuses who live and work *hidden* in the dark corners of NASA, while their white colleagues cannot solve the

crucial equations without their help. The translator aptly rendered the title into Serbian as *Skriveni faktori* [*Hidden Factors*]– an expression which perfectly retains both elements of wordplay in Serbian, which is exceptionally rare in such condensed forms of language. *If Beale Street Could Talk*, the story of a wrongly accused young Afro-American man and his pregnant sweetheart, is a film whose title is a reference to the 1916 blues song "Beale Street Blues", named after Beale Street in Downtown Memphis, Tennessee. The translator rightly decided to avoid the allusion to this song which, in all probability, the Serbian audience is unfamiliar with, and rename the title *Šapat ulice* [*The Street's Whisper*], which fittingly reflects the film's atmosphere. Last but not least, *Suburbicon* is the imaginary name of a 1950's all-white suburban community – a peaceful and idyllic utopia until an African American family moves in, causing the dark side of its racist inhabitants to surface and cause large-scale destruction. The play on the word 'suburbs' is left untranslated into Serbian, with the translator opting for a simpler yet suitable solution: *Predgrađe* [*Suburbs*], with all its inherent associations to small-town life and mentality.

4) Two titles translated into Serbian by means of contextual reformulation, *Mulholland Dr.* and *Laurel Canyon*, bear associations to Hollywood, LA and the specific lifestyle in the famous star-studded valley. Both belong to the category of geographical names: Mulholland Drive is a scenic road with some of the most exclusive and expensive homes in the world, housing mainly Hollywood celebrities, while the neighboring location of upscale Laurel Canyon is the scene of unrestrained and decadent lifestyles of the film's protagonists. Therefore, it is only fitting that the Serbian translations of the two titles are *Bulevar zvezda* [*Boulevard of Stars*] and *Ulica razvrata* [*Sin Street*] – phrases that cleverly avoid the mere mention of geographical locations that the Serbian viewer may be unfamiliar with (especially in the case of Laurel Canyon), yet catch the essence of the two films' pervading tone and mood.

5) The last subcategory is represented by one film only – *Bowling for Columbine*, Michael Moore's Oscar-winning documentary which explores the roots of predilection for gun-violence in contemporary American society, especially in schools, in the wake of the Columbine High School massacre. The title, which has to do with events preceding the tragic gun attack by two teenagers, could not have been translated directly – therefore, in most other languages, the original title was either copied (in, for instance, France, Spain and Germany) or changed completely, which was the case in Serbian and Hungarian, among other languages. As opposed to the more general violence-related Serbian title *Žeđ za nasiljem* [*Thirst for Violence*], the Hungar-

ian translator, rather creatively, attempted to show the omnipresence of guns in everyday American life, by re-naming the film *Kóla, puska, sültkrumpli* [*Cola, Gun, Fries*], sadly but accurately placing them between the two symbols of present-day American way of life depicted through fast food as one of the most conspicuous US contributions to globalization.

2.4. Transcription and copying

In the absence of ideas for more viable solutions such as the above-mentioned expressions created through contextual reformulation, the following titles, consisting mostly of proper names denoting real or fictitious persons or entities, were rendered into Serbian through transcription – phonological and orthographic adaptation to the system of the Serbian language:

- *J. Edgar = Dž. Edgar*
- *Richard Jewell = Ričard Džuel*
- *Megan Leavey = Megan Livi*
- *Wall Street = Vol Strit*
- *Memphis Belle = Memfis Bel*
- *Hamburger Hill = Hamburger Hil*
- *Pleasantville = Plezentvil*
- *Hollywoodland = Holivudlend*
- *Fahrenheit 9/11 = Farenhajt 9/11*

Assuming that the average Serbian viewer knows about J. Edgar Hoover, the long-serving director of the FBI, and about Wall Street as the heart of the US business world, it remains unclear why the translator did not opt for additional explanatory elements in the Serbian translations of the titles a) *Richard Jewell*, b) *Megan Leavy*, c) *Memphis Belle* and d) *Hamburger Hill*, referring to: a) a falsely accused American security guard at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics who saved many lives from an exploding bomb, b) a young Marine corporal deployed in Iraq, known for her unique discipline and bond with her military combat dog, c) a famous US B-17 bomber in World War II, so nicknamed for the girlfriend of its stern and stoic captain, and d) a brutal battle for Hill 937 in the Vietnam War, dubbed “Hamburger Hill” because assaulting troops were practically turned into shredded hamburger meat.

On the other hand, *Pleasantville* and *Hollywoodland* were rightly left in their transcribed form only, as they represent newly coined proper names denoting an imaginary town in a 1950's TV series, and Hollywood with both its glamour and its dark side surrounding the suspicious death of one of its leading stars in the late 1950's. Finally, the title *Fahrenheit 9/11* was transcribed rather than contextually reformulated, as it was supposed to trigger the same associations both in the US and across the globe to the classic 1966 film and to Ray Bradbury's 1951 novel *Fahrenheit 451*, about an oppressive dystopian future in a lonely isolated society, where books were outlawed to prevent any free and independent thinking. The connection with the tragic events of 9/11 is evident in the title, it is subsequently aptly elaborated in the documentary itself and the translated title therefore requires no further disclosure.

At the very end of the discussion, it is worth mentioning that two titles, *JFK* and *K-9*, were neither translated nor transcribed – they were simply copied from English into Serbian, for rather obvious reasons. The title *JFK*, the initials of *John Fitzgerald Kennedy*, the 35th president of the United States, assassinated in Dallas in 1963, is perhaps the best-known acronym in history for any president anywhere in the world and, as such, requires no further explanation. On the other hand, *K-9*, a phonetic and graphical wordplay on *canine*, used for police dogs trained for service, also represents a well-known international label and a globally fitting title for a comedy about a San Diego cop and his dog. Interestingly enough, its sequel titled *K-911*, linguistically and visually even more creative, was rendered into Serbian by means of contextual reformulation as *Policijski pas*.

3. Concluding remarks

As was initially expected, the procedures that were most often used in the translation of the selected titles of films depicting distinctly US topics were either direct translation (with or without structural modifications) or, even more frequently, contextual reformulation (partial or full). The choice between the two primary translation procedures depended on the translator's judgement of whether the Serbian audience would gain more from directly transferring the linguistic expression of the English original, sometimes to the detriment of semantic clarity, or from abandoning the linguistic model of the source title and recreating it so that it "made more sense" in Serbian, sometimes to the detriment of the intended accuracy and precision.

In line with the above conclusions and the audience-based approach stands Kussmaul's (1997) general observation that

> “the function of a translation is dependent on the knowledge, expectations, values and norms of the target readers, who are again influenced by the situation they are in and by their culture. These factors determine whether the function of the source text or passages in the source text can be preserved or have to be modified or even changed”. (Kussmaul, 1997, p. 149)

Based on the analyzed examples, it is the author’s conviction that the Serbian translator did succeed to a considerable extent in adequately transferring, through the translated titles, the discussed US topics and values to the Serbian audience.

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IMDb – Internet Movie Database. www.imdb.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Carmen Birkle is a Full professor of North American Literary and Cultural Studies at Philipps-Universität Marburg. She was president, vice president, and executive director of the German Association for American Studies. Currently, she is the association's international delegate and treasurer of the European Association for American Studies. She is Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at Philipps-Universität (2017-23). She is the author of two monographs – *Women's Stories of the Looking Glass* (1996) and *Migration–Miscegenation–Transculturation* (2004) – and of numerous articles and (co-)editor of 15 volumes of essays and special issues of journals. She is General (Co-) Editor of the journal *Amerikastudien / American Studies* (open-access). She is currently at work on a monograph situated at the intersection of American literature, culture, and medicine in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Mirna Ćurić holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in English language and literature. She is currently enrolled in doctoral studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. Her academic interest ranges from classic American literature to the U.S. minority authors, predominantly African American women writers and Chicana authors. She lives in Trebinje, where she works as a PR expert associate in the Office of the Mayor. Besides her primary interests in literature, she is also enthusiastic about communication sciences and contemporary arts.

Réka M. Cristian is Associate professor of American Studies, Chair of the American Studies Department, Institute of English and American Studies, University of Szeged, and Co-Chair and founding member of the Inter-American Research Center at the same university. She is the author of *Cultural Vistas and Sites of Identity: Literature, Film and American Studies* (2011), co-author with Zoltán Dragon of *Encounters of the Filmic Kind: Guidebook to Film Theories* (2008) and editor of various volumes on American Studies. She is founding editor and editor-in-chief of *AMERICANA E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary*, as well as its e-book division, *AMERICANA eBooks*. Her research areas include modern American literature, with special regard to American drama, American modernism, theories of American Studies, film theory and the American film, and cross-cultural exchanges of the Americas in American literature and film.

Ivana Dejanović is a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. She obtained her BA at the Department of Oriental Studies, Department of Turkish Language, Literature and Culture. In 2017, she defended her master thesis *Elementary Education in the Ottoman Empire*. She was awarded the Scholarship for Young Talents - *Dositeja* for the academic year 2015/16, and the Faculty of Philology honored her for her outstanding academic achievement. She is a scholarship holder of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. Areas of her interest include Serbian-Turkish literary liaisons, female literature and feminine and feminist periodicals of the Ottoman Empire.

Ivana Drenjančević is Assistant professor at the Sub-department of Contemporary Croatian Literature, Department of Croatian Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia. She received her PhD from the University of Zagreb in 2012. Her main research interest and most of her publications are in the field of Croatian modernist poetry.

Dubravka Đurić is Full professor at the Faculty of Media and Communication, Singidunum University. She graduated in General Literature and Theory of Literaty at Faculty of Pihlology in Belgrade, received her PhD degree at the Department of English Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. Since 2015 she has acted as president of Serbian Association for Anglo-American Studies. She teaches courses on popular culture and fashion, and experimental literature. Her studies focus on feminist theories, the field of transnationalization and American experimental poetry, especially language poetry. She has authored several books, among which *Jezik, poezija, postmodernizam: Jezička poezija u kontekstu moderne i postmoderne američke poezije* [*Language, Poetry, Postmodernism: Language Poetry in the Context of Modern and Postmodern American Poetry*] (2002)*, Poezija teorija rod: Moderne i postmoderne američke pesnikinje* [*Poetry Theory Gender: Modern and Postmodern American Women Poets*] (2009) and *Globalizacijske izvedbe: Književnost, mediji, teatar*, [*Performances of Globalization: Literature, Media, Theater*] (2016). With Biljana B. Obradović she coedited *Cat painters: An Anthology of Contemporary Serbian Poetry* (2016). She has translated books of poetry by Charles Bernstein, Jerome Rothenberg, Bob Perelman and Rosmarie Waldrop, and edited a selection of essays by Marjorie Perloff. She writes poetry and is an active poetry performer.

Sabina Halupka-Rešetar is Full professor in English Linguistics at the Department of English Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, Serbia. She teaches both theoretical and applied linguistics courses to BA, MA and PhD students. Her main areas of interest lie in syntax, pragmatics, ELT and sociolinguistics. She has authored two books (*Sentential focus in English and Serbian,* 2011 and *Exploring communicative competence in English as a foreign language: a student's resource book,* 2019), (co-)edited six volumes of research papers and has published the results of her research in both national and international journals (*Journal of Pragmatics, Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, Poznań Studies in Contemporary Linguistics, Language Problems and Language Planning*).

Aleksandra Izgarjan is Full professor at the Department of English Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. She teaches courses in American literature, culture and history on BA, MA and PhD level. She has authored two books *Neprekinuta crna priča* [*Uninterrupted black story*] (2002), *Maksin Hong Kingston and Ejmi Ten: ratnica i šamanka* [*Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan: Woman Warrior and Shaman*] (2008) and co-authored one with dr Diana Prodanović-Stankić *Approaches to Metaphor: Cognitive, Translation and Literary Studies Perspective* (2015). She edited and translated an anthology of contemporary American women writers *Savremene američke književnice* (2009). In 20013, she was a contributor to the encyclopedia *Multicultural America*. She has published more than fifty articles in the field of literature and gender studies in national and international journals (*Clio-A Journal of Literature History and the Philosophy of History*; *Futures; Gender Studies*; *Književna smotra: Časopis za svjetsku književnost*; *Zbornik Matice srpske za književnost i jezik*; *Glasnik Etnografskog instituta Srpske akademije za nauku i umestnost*). As a Fulbright scholar, she was a guest lecturer at New York University and Howard University, USA. She is the president of the Association for American Studies in South East Europe, vice-president of Serbian Association for Anglo-American Studies and member of the Managing Board of the European Association for American Studies.

Ágnes Zsófia Kovács is Associate professor at the Department of American Studies, University of Szeged, Hungary. Her research interests include late 19th-century proto-modern fiction, conversions of literary modernism and postmodernism, popular fiction genres, contemporary multicultural American fiction, theories of narrative, and methodologies of American Studies. Her current research into travel writing involves re-mapping travel texts by Edith Wharton. She has published two books, *The Function of the Imagination in the Writings of Henry James* (Mellen, 2006) and *Literature in Context* (Jate Press, 2010), and she has co-edited *Space, Gender and the Gaze*(Cambridge Scholars, 2017). She served as guest editor for *AMERICANA E-Journal* in 2008 and 2016, with the issues ‘Multiculturalism in American Literature and Art’ and ‘Henry James Appropriated’; and edited Jon Roberts’ *A Life Less Damnable* for *Americana E-books* in 2013. In 2017, she was a Beinecke Library Visiting Research Fellow at Yale University with her project on Edith Wharton’s travel writing.

Kalina Maleska is a Macedonian writer and literary theorist. She is a professor of Utopian and Dystopian Narratives, English literature and American literature at “Blaže Koneski” Faculty of Philology, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University – Skopje. Her works include collections of short stories, novels, plays, a children’s novel/story collection. Her stories have been translated into several languages and published in various magazines and anthologies. Her pieces of literary theory and criticism have been published in Macedonian and international journals. Maleska also translates literary works from English into Macedonian and vice versa; including translations of Laurence Stern’s *Tristram Shandy*, Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, *Selected Stories* by Ambrose Bierce, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum.

Sanja Manojlović lectures Business English Language at the Faculty of Business and Law, University Union-Nikola Tesla, in Belgrade. Her fields of interest include language education, culture and literary studies. She has attended a number of international conferences and published several papers. She is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad.

Olga Panić Kavgić is an Associate professor at the Department of English Studies, at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, Serbia. She holds a doctorate in English Language and Linguistics, in the field of verbal politeness, obtained at the University of Novi Sad in 2014. Her main research interests include pragmatics, contact and contrastive linguistics, translation studies and grammar. She has so far published over forty papers in Serbian and international journals, conference proceedings and thematic issues, as well as two books*: How Well We Understand New Anglicisms* (2006) and *Politeness in Disagreeing and Agreeing in English and Serbian* (2019), and has presented her work at regional and international conferences in Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Romania and Austria. In 2012 she was awarded the Best Young Researcher Award at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad.

Ljiljana Knežević is an Associate professor at the Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia, where she teaches EAP courses to students of biology, ecology, chemistry, mathematics and computer science. Her areas of interest include EAP/ESP methodology, course design, transfer of learning, oral presentation and other academic skills development. She has authored two books (*English for Specific Academic Purposes: Biology, Ecology, Chemistry*, 2009 and *Development of Oral Presentation Skills in University Teaching of English*, 2019) and published the results of her research in both national and international journals including *ESP Today*, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *Sage Open* and others.

Jovana Petrović is a PhD candidate in English Language and Literature, literature module, at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. She completed her undergraduate studies in 2016 at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad and holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree in English Language and Literature. She is interested in the 20th century American literature, ethnic studies, postcolonial theory and theory of space. She is currently doing research in the field of indigenous literature of Canada and the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

Sanja Runtić is Professor of English Literature and Head of the BA Programme in English at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Osijek, Croatia. Her teaching and research interests are in the areas of American, Canadian, Indigenous, postcolonial, and women's studies. She was a visiting scholar at the University of Arizona (Fulbright, 2003–2004) and University of Central Oklahoma (Erasmus+, 2017). Her books include Suvremena *književnost američkih starosjedilaca* [*Contemporary Native American Literature*] (with M. Knežević, 2013), *Vrijeme buđenja: (De)konstrukcija ženskog subjektiviteta u američkoj fikcionalnoj prozi na prijelazu iz 19. u 20. stoljeće* [*The Awakening: The (De)Construction of the Female Self in Turn-of-the-Twentieth-Century American Fiction*] (2019), and *MALA MJERA V: Politika i poetika ženskog pisma – komparativne perspective* [*SIZE ZERO V: The Politics and Poetics of Women's Writing – Comparative Perspectives*] (co-edited with A. Nikčević-Batrićević, 2019).

Slađana Stamenković is a PhD candidate and a Teaching Assistant at the Department of English Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, the University of Novi Sad. She also works as an English teacher at the Center for Languages, at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. She has earned her Bachelor and Master's Degree in English Studies also at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. Her PhD thesis focuses on contemporary American literature, media and identity studies. Her field of research also includes modern and postmodern anglophone literature, popular culture and contemporary Serbian literature. She is a member of Serbian Association for Anglo-American Studies.

Jelena Šesnić, a Full professor in the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, teaches courses in U.S. American literature and culture. A recipient of several grants (Fulbright, European Association for American Studies, J.F. Kennedy Institute), she has authored two books and edited and co-edited two collections of essays. She is a co-founder and currently the president of the Croatian Association for American Studies, a co-organizer of the annual Zagreb American Studies Workshops, and vice-president of the Association for American Studies in South-Eastern Europe. Her current research deals with the anglophone Croatian diaspora in a global context, while she is also involved in the University of Zagreb project Transatlantic Literature and Bio-Crises in the Long 19th Century.

Selma Jerković Veseljević received her college education at University of Tuzla, where she studied English language and literature at the Faculty of Philosophy. She successfully completed her BA dissertation on the topic of *Aspects of the American Dream in Theodore Dreiser's novel American Tragedy* in 2005. In 2012, Veseljević Jerković defended her doctoral thesis entitled *(Post)feminism and the phenomenon of chick-lit in Anglo-American literature*, which investigates the interplay between consumer culture, (post) feminism and popular literature in the new millennium. Veseljević Jerković is an Associate Professor at the Department of English Language and Literature of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at University of Tuzla and currently Head of the English Language and Literature Department. She teaches Literary Theories, English and American literature and Cinematography at the undergraduate and graduate studies. Her research interests are in continuing cultural importance of dystopian themes in literature and popular culture, and the work of twenty-first century American and English literature. Dr Veseljević Jerković's more recent research focuses on the comics and graphic novels, as well as adaptation studies.

Vladimir Vujošević was born in Podgorica (Montenegro) in 1986. He received his diploma degree from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade in 2012. He gained his Ph.D. in American literature in 2018 at the Faculty of Philology of the same university with a thesis on Gothic motifs in Flannery O'Connor's prose. In 2018 he joined the Faculty of Philology of the University of Donja Gorica (UDG) in Podgorica, where he currently works as a teaching assistant for the courses English Literature, American Literature, and American Culture. His current fields of interest include the works of Flannery O'Connor and William Faulkner and the medieval themes in contemporary Anglophone literature.

Aleksandra Žeželj Kocić is an independent scholar who holds a PhD from the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia. Her primary interest is modern Anglo-American prose and drama. She has authored papers on diverse Serbian and Anglo-American writers published in journals and collections of essays, as well as the monographs *Normative Masculinity and Its Subversions in Tennessee Williams' World and Style* (2016), *Hemingvej i rod: pisac u mreži teorije* [*Hemingway and Gender: A Writer in the Net of Theory*] (2018), and *Pesnik i jedan čitalac: ogledi o poeziji i prozi Dragana Lakićevića* [*A Poet and a Reader: Essays on the Poetry and Fiction of Dragan Lakićević*] (2020). She is a member of the Hemingway Society (USA) and is currently in the process of becoming a Research Associate with the Institute for Literature and Arts.

REVIEWS OF *ASPECTS OF TRANSNATIONALITY IN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND AMERICAN ENGLISH*

Grouped into four thematic clusters, the collection of essays *Aspects of Transnationality of American Literature and American English*, edited by Aleksandra Izgarjan, Dubravka Đurić and Sabina Halupka-Rešetar, consists of eighteen articles written by authors from a number of institutional venues in a number of countries. I will briefly review the collection from the perspective of American Studies. The title that the editors chose does not immediately indicate this context, but the informative and theoretically elaborated introduction provided by the editors reveals that this is the field in which they envision their project. If the rehearsal of the transnational argument in American scholarship that the editors provide in the introduction was not enough to show how the aim of the collection is to contribute to American studies, than the editors' contention that the collected articles belong to the "transdisciplinary paradigms of literary and linguistic studies" points to the cross-inter-trans-disciplinary nature of American studies. These studies have always worked against disciplinary constrains, pioneering methodologies not wholly in accord with established practices and addressing experiences which are frequently unattended to by designated fields of expertise. I will offer a few generalizations about the four thematic clusters of the collection in this light and comment on the transnational turn and its pertinence.

In the section "Transnationalization and travelling cultures" we are given readings of American authors from a transnational perspective which "deprovincialize" a number of American literary figures and show how the "consolidation of the national canon" is much more complex than is usually assumed by scholars who work exclusively within the nation state framework. The title of the next section "Transnationality, (self)representational practices, space and identity politics" speaks for itself. Contributors to this section provide readings which problematize the imbrication of representation, space and identity. It was only to be expected that, transnationality being, among other things, a geographical notion, the spatial turn finds its way into the argument. The third group of texts relates narrative production to intermediality and transmediality and focuses upon different ways that images figure in a text. This section brings a discussion of American feminist experimental poetry. This is a welcome decision because poetry is too often passed over in American studies. In addition the article aptly illustrates how experimental poetry evinces both an image bias and how it always transcends national boundaries. The two articles dealing with "transnationality in linguistics" stem out of a particular, local engagement with American matters. This is also welcome because American studies, even as practiced outside the English-speaking world, as a rule downplay issues of linguistics.

This recapitulation cannot do justice to the breadth of scope that the articles cover. In like manner, when I note that the readings engage matter such as food, TV series, pictures, photographs, global warming, super-hero films, to mention a few, I am merely enumerating the archive relied upon to delineate things American both in the past and in the contemporary moment. The fact that transnationality has been chosen as the paradigm for understanding the present moment in the USA and its dealings with the global moment is propitious in at least two ways.

Firstly, the notion of transnationality, as is stressed a number of times in the collection, is not only one of the latest trends in American studies so that the collection updates our knowledge of the field. I would add that questions of the nation and how it relates to the world are perhaps the most intriguing issues to have been spawned by Trump's America. The discussions provided by the collection help us delineate the background on which to understand his success and chart the field imaginary which his policies sought to displace. From its inception American studies have always engaged contemporary issues and this collection is a noteworthy addition to this kind of timely engagement Secondly, the choice of the theme is particularly relevant in a region where questions of nationality have played and continue to play an enormous role. Lessons gleaned from the American experience can in that sense have a local application. This does not mean that the American example can be applied without reservations but it does mean that at least those who do American studies can initiate a questioning stance around issues which all too frequently are disastrously simplified.

Let me end with a personal note. As a participant both in establishing ties between the regional organizations of American studies and in applying, as a regional organization, for membership in the European Association of American Studies I congratulate everybody involved in producing this collection. I do so because this collection proves once more that people engaged in American studies in the region have something worthwhile to offer to their colleagues in Europe and elsewhere. Competent scholars, all of them have written texts of interest, texts which prove their competence and comprehensive knowledge of the field. This collection makes a significant contribution to the literature produced by European American studies scholars. I hope that its success proves another link between neighboring scholarly endeavors that must learn at least one message from the American experience.

Stipe Grgas, Full Professor
English Department
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Zagreb

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Appearing in 2020, in the midst of global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, *Aspects of Transnationality in American Literature and American English* (edited by Dubravka Đurić, Aleksandra Izgarjan, and Sabina Halupka-Rešetar) is an urgent and timely thematic issue written and edited by European and South-East European scholars of transnational American studies. Previously envisioned as a conference-based volume focusing on manifold aspects of the transnational turn in American literature and society, the issue has been additionally marked by the editors' and contributors' prompt insights into newly acquired meanings and levels of transnationality.

The volume consists of a theoretically well-informed and thoughtfully composed introduction followed by four extensive sections comprising eighteen high-quality articles that address various aspects and approaches in the field of transnational studies. Drawing on Shelley Fisher Fishkin's and Paul Jay's seminal concepts of transnationality, the editors introduce broad theoretical frameworks that accommodates diverse perspectives on transnational cultures, their heritage and transactions. Along with summarizing the existing and complementary definitions of transnationality as an all-encompassing concept of global communications across porous national borders, the introductory part of the volume offers a brief historical overview of how theoretical debates on human rights, cosmopolitanism and neoliberalism have transformed the already large and ideologically diverse field of American studies, challenging traditions of American Literature and Literatures of America. The editors here emphasize the importance of a spatial turn in the humanities for mapping transnational exchanges of the 21st century. The term *transnational* is additionally and thoroughly explained as a multilayered word referring to transcultural practices, transnational scholars and methodologies crossing national borders and disciplinary paradigms. The introduction outlines three distinctive phases of transnationalization of American studies and four research categories that are applicable to most recent discussions on transnationalism. The categories involving comparative, “cross-fertilizing”, revisionary, and migratory practices, are rightly seen as suitable for contextualizing the articles that follow.

Reviewing and juxtaposing the four sections that are systematically organized around key concepts in transnational studies, it can be said that the thematic issue is a skilfully edited collection of articles introduced and written by established transnational scholars whose contributions broaden insights into heterogeneous transnational theories and their applications. Aware of transdisciplinary potentials of contemporary literary and linguistic studies, the editors successfully identify common features in differently theorized articles, grouping the sections around the notions of travelling, identity, transmediality, and transnationality in language.

The first section, focused on transnationalization and travelling cultures, offers significant readings of cultural texts and novels based on food studies, studies of cosmopolitanism, translation theory, studies of race, class and gender as fluid and hybrid categories, and transnational memory studies. Discussing transcultural geographical mobility, transnational revisions of canonical literary figures, cultural hybridization in U.S. transnational settings, American and European transnational exchanges in the past, and constructions of collective identities in relation to terrorism, the five articles cover some major preoccupations of transnational studies.

While the first section deals with influential works of such diverse writers as Cecilia Chiang, Tennessee Williams, Margaret Fuller, and Don DeLillo, the second part of the volume, primarily concerned with transnational space and identity politics, offers theorized and contextual readings of autobiography and fiction by Sandra Cisneros, Kiran Desai, Linda Hogan, and Jhumpa Lahiri, whose novels belong to U.S. American ethnic literatures. The section is also strong on revising the role of canonical modernists such as Earnest Hemingway and exploring American experiences in the writing of the Serbian author Jelena J. Dimitrijević. Transnational concepts of borderland space, thridspace, and public / private spaces, along with ethnic, postcolonial, and feminist theories, serve to contextualize life-writing, immigrant writing, and writing of the Other. These seven important articles offer further delineations of transnationality through divergent representations of self and the other.

The third section of the volume is centered around intermedial and transmedial narratives seen through the prism of visual, poststructuralist, feminist, ecological, and film theories. Although the four articles focus on different genres and media, including autobiographical narrative in text and images, experimental poetry, fiction, film, and graphic narrative, their common features and arguments highlight transnational nature of modern and contemporary cultural texts. Discussing related issues of race visibility, visual poetics, climate change, and global consumerism, the articles offer fresh insights into the life of Michelle Obama and the notion of "American gaze", the relevance of feminist experimental poets, the representations of climate migrations in Robinson's novel and Emmerich's movie, as well as the phenomenon of superheroes in TV serial industry. The section reflects transnational turns in photography, film, and literature, and is visibly concerned with women's transmedial empowerment.

The volume closes with a section that unites two articles concentrated on transnationality in language. In line with the previous sections, the final section focuses on transnational elements in films with distinctly American topics, but from a linguistic perspective informed by translation theory. While the first article explores the scarce use of dictionaries in ESP courses, the second one analyses titles of numerous feature-length U.S. films, investigating the procedures and authenticity achieved in translating segments of American culture to foreign audiences.

Reading the manuscript entitled *Aspects of Transnationality in American Literature and American English* (edited by Dubravka Đurić, Aleksandra Izgarjan, and Sabina Halupka-Rešetar), one becomes impressed by the range of topics and approaches included in this excellent volume. The editors and contributors, well-informed and knowledgeable about globally important and ever-increasing transnational theories and practices, succeeded in creating a thematic issue worth serious attention. It is probably the first truly transnational volume written by scholars of regional and European American Studies, and its publication and dissemination in these turbulent and newly transnational times should be a top priority.

Tatjana Bijelić, Full Professor
Faculty of Philology
University of Banja Luka

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Transnacionalnost kao neizostavni, i poželjni, trend modernog sveta prožima sve aspekte života i društva i pojednica. Ona doprinosi sticanju novih iskustava, uvida i saznanja, unapređuje kvalitet života, ali nosi sa sobom i brojne izazove. Ovaj fenomen utiče na ekonomske, političke, društvene, obrazovne i druge tokove života, a može se odraziti i na promenu društvenog i

individualnog identiteta. Ovaj višedimenzionani pojam predmet je proučavanja brojnih naučnih disciplina, a radovi u ovom zborniku sagledavaju ga iz ugla njegovog uticaja na američku književnost i jezik. Sjedinjene Američke Države, kao izrazito višekulturna, višenacionalna, višeetnička i višejezička sredina, doživele su hibridizaciju sadržaja i forme književnih dela. S druge strane, američki varijetet engleskog jezika davno je i daleko prevazišao granice te države, te je postao univerzalno, tj. transnacionalno, sredstvo sporazumevanja. Ovaj zbornik, tako, predstavlja izuzetno važan doprinos razumevanju i proučavanju pojma transnacionalizacije američke književnosti i jezika jer se pojam sagledava, tumači i predstavlja iz perspektive grupe naučnika koji nisu američkog porekla, ali izučavaju oblast američkih studija.

Zbornik radova "Aspects of Transnationality of American Literature and American English" čini ukupno 18 radova koji su podeljeni u četiri celine od kojih svaka sagledava pojam transnacionalnosti iz određenog ugla. Tako, prva grupa od ukupno pet radova obrađuje koncept 'putujuće kulture'. Naime, ovi radovi prikazuju kako pojedinac tokom putovanja širi uticaj sopstvene kulture na pojedince lokalne kulture s kojima dolazi u kontakt, te doprinosi hibridizaciji lokalnog etosa. Osim pomenute centralne ideje koja prožima radove u ovoj grupi, u njima se pokreće i obrađuje tema promene identiteta kao posledica međusobnog prožimanja različitih kultura. Druga grupa od sedam radova bavi se temom formiranja identiteta pojedinca različitih etničkih pripadnosti u SAD-u, naglašavajući uticaj mesta/prostora na izgradnju identiteta. Likovi predstavljeni u radovima iz ove grupe ili žive u određenim oblastima SAD-a koje zbog svojih specifičnosti snažno utiču na formiranje njihovog identiteta ili su se doselili/vratili u SAD noseći sa sobom deo sveta iz kojeg su došli, koji, u dodiru sa novim prostorom, utiče na formiranje njihovog novog identiteta. Četiri rada iz treće grupe prikazuju identitet kroz druge vrste umetničkog izraza, ne nužno književnog. Naime, u ovim radovima obrađuje se pojam identiteta iskazan putem fotografije, igranog ili crtanog filma i eksperimentalne poezije. Poslednja, četvrta, grupa od dva rada obrađuje centralnu temu ovog zbornika sa lingvističkog aspekta. Prvi rad se bavi pitanjem slabe upotrebe rečnika kao izuzetno pouzdanog izvora informacija o leksikonu jednog jezika u učenju jezika za posebne potrebe, dok drugi rad istražuje tehnike koje se koriste u prevođenju naziva američkih filmova na srpski jezik u cilju približavanja američke kulture drugoj kulturi.

Kako i same urednice Zbornika to ističu u Uvodu, centralna tema i njeni brojni uticaji sagledani su iz najrazličitijih domena, te, s obzirom na raznorodnost i pristupa i tema, Zbornik predstavlja izuzetan doprinos oblasti američkih studija i izučavanju fenomena transnacionalnosti iz ugla književnosti i lingvistike. Takođe, ne samo da prikazani radovi obrađuju temu transnacionalnosti iz nekog ugla, već je i tumačenje prikazanih dela samo po sebi transnacionalno s obzirom na različite nacionalne pripadnosti autora radova, što svakako doprinosi kvalitetu promišljanja i dubini sagledavanja obrađenih tema. Svi radovi uklopljeni su u kompaktnu celinu i odlično se nadopunjuju, pružajući bogatstvo uvida u različite uticaje transnacionalnosti na različite sfere života i moguće oblike umetničkog i jezičkog iskaza tih uticaja.

Iz svih navedenih razloga toplo preporučujem *Zbornik radova "Aspects of transnationality of American literature and American English"* za štampu u najdubljem uverenju da će njegov ukupan značaj, kao i značaj svakog pojedinačnog rada, biti prepoznat i vrednovan od strane onih koji se i sami bave pitanjima transnacionalosti i njenim snažnim uticajem na različite aspekte života i društva i pojednica.

Tatjana Glušac, Associate professor,
Faculty of Law and Business Studies *Dr Lazar Vrkatić*,
Union University, Novi Sad

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