WATCHUNG REVIEW

OTHER VOICES
REDEFINING THE HUMANITIES

Volume 4 • July 2021

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Drawn From and Against Islamophobia

Transformative Visual Rhetoric about National Identity in Three Post-9/11 Nonfiction Comics

> You may shoot me with your words,
> You may cut me with your eyes,
> You may kill me with your hatefulness
> But still, like air, I'll rise.
> — Maya Angelou

Representative Ilhan Omar posted these four lines from Maya Angelou to her Twitter account in July of 2019, the day after attendees at a rally for President Donald J. Trump chanted "send her back" as a response to his critique of her publicly stated positions about increasingly draconian immigration enforcement policies. The tweet, and the incident it responds to, make for an object lesson in the ways that the boundaries between rhetoric, poetics, and politics have become increasingly permeable in contemporary narratives about nationality, ethnicity, and cultural belonging in the United States. Representative Omar, a Somali-American woman and a practicing Muslim, makes use of the work of a former American poet laureate as a means of yoking identity politics in the present to recent literary history. The eloquence of her quotation of Angelou sits in stark contrast to the vitriol and implicit Islamophobia of the crowd's sentiments about her, and by extension her legal naturalization as a citizen of the United States. Implicit in the chanted utterance is not just a critique of Representative Omar's national origins, but also the deeply ingrained postulation of Muslim as Other, which has become increasingly normative in the United States. What this microcosmic dialogue between Omar and Trump illustrates is that the ways in which narratives about religious and ethnic difference in the present moment are fraught, intertextual, and decidedly polarizing in the decades since the beginning of the War on Terror. For students of narrative historiography, this observation is anything but news.

In the late nineteenth century, historiographer Frederick Jackson Turner noted that "Each age writes the history of the past with reference to the conditions uppermost in its own time. When history is written down, the mode of that writing is always shaped by the present conditions into which the historian writes it" (qtd in Meinig 312). Certainly, many narrative histories of the United States in the early twentieth century have been written since 9/11, and those narratives might be used to trace how Islamophobia became the ground upon which the figure of the American nation after 9/11 can be drawn. The Twitter feeds of congressional representatives and the current president are but two of those narrative media. I use this particular incident to introduce this article as a means of pointing out that public discourse about Muslim identity is often veiled by concerns about border security or Muslim infiltration of U.S. politics. This discourse is also to be found in news media, narrative television and cinema, popular fiction, and the visual arts. An analysis of nearly any mediated representation of 9/11 and the War on Terror may find that the Islamophobic sentiments that become so pronounced after September 11, 2001, shape and reflect the tone and timbre of the ideological problems that American national identity faces in this present moment.

What makes nonfiction comics about those events and sentiments useful, as grounds for analyzing the formation of American national identity, is that the narrative mechanisms by which non-fiction comics operate allows for a multimodal analysis of the textual and pictorial maneuvers made by popular historiographers. This work has been done productively by scholars such as Lucas Wilde, who in a recent issue of *ImageText* included in his broadly focused parsing of the ways in which pictorial media literally illustrates how narrative media reenacts historical events to persuade viewers to assign particular significance to the story of the 9/11 attacks. Wilde argues compellingly that "[o]ne of the recurring discourses surrounding 9/11 was [. . .] a profound irritation between fact and fiction on the one hand, and between representation and the represented on the other" through historical reenactment as a specific "transmedial documentary practice that often goes unnoticed" (1-2). Wilde sees the pictorially mimetic work of the drawn images of the towers of the World Trade Center, in particular, as one means of establishing geographical verisimilitude to produce a sense of accuracy or authenticity. I'll argue that those claims about the setting of the attack can be fruitfully

extrapolated from in order to examine the visual characterization of Muslims, Arabs, and people from the Middle East as the cartoonists depict them. The historiographic content of those visual characterizations is a means by which the mutual exclusivity of American patriotism and Muslim identity are perpetuated and maintained in the American imagination. Wilde, of course, is not the only scholar to make such a contention. Bob Britten's analysis of visual and verbal rhetoric of *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation* (2006), the comic adaptation of the Warren Commission report on 9/11, drawn and written in 2006 by Ernie Colón and Sid Jacobson, notes that the comic is "intriguing first for what it tells us about the worldview of the authors and the 9/11 commissioners" even if "the text and image language systems that work in concert in a comic text rely on different rules, conventions and assumptions" (368). Britten reminds readers that the form of each visual narrative shapes how readers respond to the content of the historiographic narrative.

Kent Worcester, who undertook a specific examination in depictions of New York in comics about 9/11 in a 2011 article for *Radical History Review* also argued that the ideological underpinnings of cartoonists shaped their rhetoric: "Liberal creators used the moment to call for dialogue, while conservative ones shook their symbolic fists. Some radical illustrators used the occasion to flag larger discussions about foreign policy, the national interest and the rhetoric of consensus" (152). One mode of praxis in this article that draws from these parts of the existing conversation is the focus here on the ways that particular visual and textual tropes are used in one comic from each of those ideological perspectives. By including comics, like Colón and Jacobson's, that center a conservative perspective next to one that is liberal and another that is radical works to broaden the focus from setting and theme to the use of visual characterization in the service of imaging the implicit understandings of "national interest" in each historiographic comic. Following the examination of Colón and Jacobson's adaptation of *The 9/11 Report*, will be a close look at transtextual and didactic features of Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004) and Toufic El Rassi's *Arab in America* (2007).

Because the three comics selected here portray characters who are "Muslim terrorists," Arabs, and people of Middle Eastern heritage in order to make use of visual rhetoric to contain their nationalizing narratives, attending to the formal features that shape visual characterizations in the comics is particularly illuminating for three reasons. First, as comics theorists Hillary Chute and Marianne DeKoven note,

> [T]he graphic narrative differs from [prose]…because its spatializing of narrative is part of a hybrid project…[T]his hybridity [is] a challenge to the structure of binary classification that opposes a set of terms, privileging one . . . . The medium of comics is cross-discursive because it is composed of verbal and visual narratives that do not simply blend together, creating a unified whole, but rather remain distinct. (767)

Because of that hybridity, comics works as a formal system that disrupts binary thinking, and the ideological questioning of mutually exclusive classes—like citizen and alien, or patriot and terrorist—has productive potential for highlighting how historiography reveals and constructs national identity. Furthermore, the multiplicity of discourses within and between these three graphic narratives on the subject makes non-fiction comics useful in terms of delineating the variety of didactic purposes at play in cross-discursive historiographies. These tacit moments of persuasion, embedded into popular media like comics, are the means by which nations are narrated into being. If the project of resisting Islamophobic visual and textual rhetoric is to be undertaken, then moving beyond the problematic dialectic of American/Muslim is essential to the ability of American historiographic depictions and the interpretation thereof to reveal, confront, and reduce implicit bias against Muslims in the United States. Finally, the accessibility of comics, as a medium that works to invite readerly interrogation of implicit ideology through both visual and textual registers of narrative, is perhaps an indicator of the potential of the medium to participate in extratextual movements for social justice.

These three points may help to translate the theoretical interventions of the formal features of historiographic comics proposed by Chute and DeKoven into praxis through an analysis of the narrative strategies used in non-fiction comics about 9/11. To that end, examining the rhetoric and formal choices in Jacobson's and Ernie Colón's *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation*, Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, and El Rassi's *Arab in America* may allow for a better understanding about how historiographic comics produce, reflect, or disrupt the imaginative construction of Islam in American culture since the War on Terror. While *The 9/11 Report* builds a sense of neutrality into its textual components, the visual presentations of people of Middle Eastern heritage work to reify the ideology of Islamophobia by collapsing complex identities into an amalgamated Other against which American identity can be produced and maintained. *In the Shadow of No Towers* does more reflective work, showing how the transgeneric features of comics as a medium work to reveal the conflicts in American identity as resistant to or complicit in Islamophobic discourses within both images and text. *Arab in America* works overtly to disrupt the ideology of Islamophobia by unpacking a

complex identity through text and countering or critiquing the reductive imagery often used in visual media to denigrate Muslims and Arabs. Read together, these comics demonstrate the wide range of aesthetic and political choices that graphic storytelling can accommodate, which allows readers to examine three distinct choices about the visual rhetoric and cultural politics surrounding American Islamophobia.

American Sentiments about Islam and Terrorism After 9/11

The conditions uppermost in the cartoonists' times are not difficult to discern. Under the Trump administration, systemic Islamophobia has come to be among the defining qualities of the United States as a nation, and this narrative is reproduced across media. In *Arab in America*, El Rassi draws himself telling his readers that "racism against Arabs is one of the few prejudices that is not only tolerated but sometimes actively encouraged" (29). This sentiment can be confirmed through the analysis of many kinds of narrative—from stump speeches to editorial cartoons—wherein patriotism is situated against the specter of "Muslim terrorism," which has become the principal villain in nationalizing narratives through which American community is imagined after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. In fact, the rhetoric surrounding immigrant detention and the travel ban on majority Muslim countries serve as excellent examples of this, even nearly twenty-years after 9/11. I do not make this claim lightly, and I do not seek to minimize the many counter-narratives that push back against the inscription of Islamophobia as a national value. In fact, I see parts of Spiegelman's and El Rassi's work as two of those counter-narratives. In spite of that important mediated work, however, predictions and observations pointing toward increasing institutional Islamophobia—particularly the uptick of hate crimes against people of Middle-Eastern heritage, and the possibility of a national registry under the Trump administration with the support of the conservative majority of congress at the time of this composition—are becoming more proliferate in American public discourse and therefore ever more central to national identity (Aydin 260; Aziz 833; Ciftci 295-8; Goldstein 560). There has been a great deal of discourse, in popular cultural studies and media studies, that works to debunk that false dichotomy, but it persists because the way a nation is imagined is perhaps more important, in terms of identity politics that can be read through comics, than the actual threats to national boundaries. For this reason, Benedict Anderson's definition of nation as an imagined community rather than a geographical space or a political body is particularly useful for analyzing the visual rhetoric of graphic narratives about 9/11. Anderson argues that nations are *imagined* rather than experienced directly; identity lives "in the minds" of citizens as an "image of communion. . . .to be distinguished, not by falsity or genuineness, but by the style in which [that community is] imagined" (6). Whether or not the average American citizen harbors a fear or hatred for Arabic or Muslim people, the nationalizing force of xenophobic mediated representations of Islam and the Middle East at large, which is visible in all three comics, may give form to a set of representational visual and linguistic styles. The style through which the American community is imagined in opposition to "Muslim Terrorism," which is itself a fiction produced by the process of reimagining American national identity, shapes the received meanings of mediated imagery and acculturating narratives work to produce an image of communion that Anderson describes. Fear of Islam thus becomes connected to how American citizens understand their "deeply horizontal comradeship" as "patriotic" xenophobia. The conduit for imagining communion and comradeship in this way is always narrative, which Anderson calls "the cultural root of nationalism" (5-7). The binary pairing that marks Muslims as always outside the boundaries of American national identity is one example of how nationalism persists in the ways Americans imagine a single historical incident like 9/11.

In her 2007 article on Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, Chute makes note of how "the traumatic temporality Spiegelman experienced after 9/11, in which a normative, ongoing sense of time stopped or shattered" (230) serves to introduce the ways in which seriality in peritextual framing controls both narrative time and readers' perceptions of trauma—both personal for Spiegelman, and national for his American readers. Chute claims that temporality, trauma, and national identity are interwoven through the narrative conventions of comics. Her argument may be useful to understanding narrative time in El Rassi's, and Jacobson's and Colón's comics as well. Like Spiegelman, El Rassi collapses the personal and the cultural in crafting an autographic narrative, and Jacobson and Colón render the timeline of events in the planning, execution, and investigation of the attacks as the plotting device for their visual organization of the commission's data. Chute's interpretation of Spiegelman's choices to make use of "rows of sequential windows" that visually "recuperates the trauma of 9/11—re-building the shattered pieces through comics" in a model for "how history can become livable, and even productive" seems to presuppose the claims made by Britten and Wilde about the didactic nature of nonfiction comics that deal in narratives of nation and self.

One means of imagining the limits of both the self and one's nation, then, is to clearly mark those outside that community, and to reinforce those limits through storytelling. Historical evidence seems to reveal that American national identity is often formed in opposition to the image of a threatening foreign enemy—from Revolutionary imaginings of the British foot soldier as imperial oppressor to the Cold War's reframing of "Red Spread" as an act of Soviet world domination. "Islamic fundamentalists" and "Muslim Terrorists" are perhaps the most prominent of recent iterations of this imagined enemy. However, this cultural phenomenon is different from the red-coated Englishman and the jack-booted Russian. The "Jihadi" (as a monolithic construction of Muslims in the American popular imagination, a collectively held caricature of Middle Eastern people) is less produced by opposition between states and more by the reification of racism and religious intolerance that draws citizens into a shared conflict. As can be seen in the examples of that discourse from the three comics that follow, the barriers constructed to the American nation are imagined as a fundamental distinction in ideology of cultural essentialism in the service of nation building.

National Identity and Graphic Adaptation: Jacobson and Colón's *The 9/11 Report*

Jacobson and Colón's *The 9/11 Report* adapts the 9/11 commission report made to the outgoing Bush administration into a graphic narrative. The text borrows its visual aesthetics from superhero comics. Both Jacobson and Colón previously worked at mass market companies like Marvel, DC, and Harvey and are therefore well-versed in those visual vocabularies. Character design within the genre must be simple enough to print quickly and cheaply and be recognizably formulaic and archetypal. In the graphic adaptation, the iconography of mainstream comics serves two goals. The first goal is for Jacobson and Colón to "tell the story of 9/11 in a way that the American people could read and understand" (ix), as Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, who served on the commission, indicate in their foreword to the comic. In that respect, the simplicity and ubiquity of the style is serviceable. "Good guys" are immediately identifiable through their costuming, posture, shading, and physical features, as are "bad guys." The rendering of Jihadis as universally swarthy-skinned, typically squinty-eyed, and often be-turbaned is one apt example of Colón's illustrative choices. The features he selects highlight the threat of Islamic fundamentalism as aligned with the norms of racialized phenotype and modes of traditional dress in the Arabic world (even those aforementioned turbans, which are cultural, rather than religious head coverings). If Colon's illustrations eschewed phenotype and culturally specific garb, with only the assault rifles slung across some of the Jihadis' backs to mark them as "enemies," then the implication may be that the will to enact violence, rather than the ethnicity of the fighters, was the salient feature. Because of the use of those cultural markers, collapsed into a single visual image repeated across characters in the comic, the Islamophobic symbolism in the visual narrative is perhaps less plausibly deniable. The implicit rhetoric in representing Jihadis, Muslims, Arabs, and other people indigenous to Afghanistan as of-a-piece is especially evident when contrasted with the varied images of grief-stricken New York firefighters that appears in the title block of the book's cover and throughout the first chapter. Even though the regalia of the firefighter is ubiquitous, a wide array of postures, facial features, skin tones, and body postures are used. While Jihadis are practically interchangeable, first-responders are specific and differentiated. Neither set of characters plays a significant enough role in the narrative to be named individually, but as they are presented to viewers the Otherness of Jihadis, Muslims, and Arabs, as a composite group, is codified into the character designs. To be fair, Colón does opt for a more neutral depiction of headshots of the attackers, which were published or broadcast by almost all news media following the attack, on the fourth page of the book. In that illustration, the hijackers are individuated; however, Jacobson's textual narration on the facing page identifies these men not as terrorists, Jihadis or even Muslim radicals but as "Arab nationals," a descriptor that reduces people from the region into the same category regardless of pronounced ethnic and religious differences and dissimilar national origins. That rhetorical gesture collapses some categorical identities neatly through the hybrid register of the form of comics in ways that text might not be able to accomplish so neatly.

In a single pair of facing pages, the cartoonists implicitly assert the synonymic connotations of "terrorist," "hijacker" and "Jihadi" with "Muslim" and "Muslim" with "Arab," when those terms are denotatively distinct from one another, as the original textual report from the Warren commission explains in section 2.2. The absence of ethnically or nationally specific descriptors is not only inaccurate, it is also an important adaptive choice to attend to in Jacobson and Colón's work. Each of the nineteen hijackers was affiliated with al-Qaeda, which is definitely a terrorist organization with political aims that espouses a religious charge. However, the percentage of Muslims affiliated with al-Qaeda at the time of the attacks in September of 2001 is, by most researchers' accounts, an infinitesimally small minority of those people living in the Middle East and practicing Islam (Aydin 250). The majority of the hijackers, fifteen of the nineteen, were citizens of Saudi Arabia, and two others were from the United Arab Emirates; it is perhaps notable that neither Saudi

citizens nor Emiratis were subject to the travel restrictions imposed by the first executive order issued by President Trump. The remaining pair of hijackers, who were born in the travel-restricted countries of Lebanon and Egypt, could not accurately be described as ethnically Arabic, although they were Muslims (Beydoun 601). By reducing the complex intersections of national origins, religious beliefs, cultural values and motivations to act against the United States, *The 9/11 Report* sets readers up to understand the Islamic World as a kind of oppositional force working against the imagined community of the United States. This fact is particularly problematic when one considers that the U.S. maintains normal diplomatic and foreign relations with the government of Saudi Arabia. As noted in a comprehensive analysis of the intent and effect of Executive Order 13769, more colloquially called the Muslim Ban, published in *The Michigan Journal of Race and Law*,

> Although the stereotypes that direct the Muslim Ban imagine Muslims as a monolith, the global and U.S. population reveals that it is anything but. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, outpacing every other faith group in the U.S. in terms of membership. Muslim Americans are more commonly Black than they are Arab, and at 25%, they comprise the biggest plurality of the Muslim American population. Moreover, despite being caricatured as an immigrant-dominated faith group, the Muslim American community is overwhelmingly composed of American citizens. In addition, 45% of Muslim American households earn an annual income that is below, at, or dangerously close to the legal poverty line, demystifying the trope that Muslims are an overwhelmingly affluent and upwardly mobile demographic. Therefore, when the Muslim Ban was enacted, it had disparate effects on different segments of the Muslim population, and furthermore, compounded the threat to and injury on subsets of the faith group that are racially and socioeconomically marginalized. (Ayoub and Beydoun 233-4)

In short, the collapsing of categorical differences between terrorists, Muslims, and Arabs allows refugees from Sudan, Yemen, and Syria to be denied asylum by the State Department, in spite of the fact that the correlation between national origin and acts of terror is imagined rather than factual, and in such correlation would point to the countries that are notably absent from the list of nations whose citizens are barred from migrating to or visiting the United States. Additionally, the hardships built into the Islamophobic policies are likeliest to impact citizens who are low-income and from historically marginalized racial groups. This would seem to be evidence that the narrative and rhetorical representations of collapsed categories is based in Islamophobic sentiments rather than hard data that pertains to national security. This does not, of course, prove any one-to-one causation between the sort of visual rhetoric that the comic traffics in and this specific use of executive authority, but perhaps this close reading of *The 9/11 Report* does demonstrate the ways in which public consent for the War on Terror is manufactured in American media.

In Britten's and Wilde's examination of the adapted comic, the analysis of how truth is produced and communicated through illustration is productively explored. It might be generally agreed that the confluence of Colón's drawings and Jacobson's narration contributes directly to the reification of a monolithic image of Muslims as always already outside the boundaries of the American nation. This extension of those earlier articles' analyses is to point out that by visually and textually marking those boundaries, the cartoonists produce for their readers the rhetorical fulcrum upon which Islamophobia is fostered through the act of imagining nationhood after collective trauma. Every Muslim depicted in the text, even informants passing on intelligence to American forces, is drawn and described as decidedly villainous in the ways described above. In contrast, Americans, particularly those in uniform, are typically characterized as victims or heroes. This plays out in the depictions of Jihadis throughout the book, wherein civilians and terrorists are impossible to discern from one another, which comes, in the report from which the comic is adapted, to be used as a justification for sweeping action and policy change that while begun with the Patriot Act, continues to constrain the rights of Muslim people living in the U.S. in the present. This is one reason that the best-seller status of Norton's publication of the textual report as a mass market paperback was seen as an important cultural moment. In an interview with *Booksellers This Week*, an industry newsletter, Norton's President Drake McFeely acknowledged that he was "absolutely surprised" that, after two print-runs totaling 800,000 copies, it nearly sold out within a week of release for sale (Grogan). The rapid proliferation of the data in the report had both a clear link to the shifting zeitgeist of the early twenty-first century and became an impetus to capitalize on the sentiments the text espouses. Because the Warren Commission's report is often used to justify infringements upon civil rights in the service of national security (Beydoun 595), the adaptation of the report is culpable for intensifying the Islamophobic rhetoric that pervades that debate decades later. In an interview with the Neal Conan broadcast on National Public Radio in 2006, Jacobson suggested that one goal of making the adaptation was to further proliferate the report and render its contents easier to understand, but that the adaptors also hoped to spur legislative action based on the report's findings:

> as big a seller as the book was, it was very difficult to follow and to understand. And I'm sure that most people who did read it—I mean, this was written as a Congressional report—and I'm not sure how many Congressmen [sic] fully understood because they haven't done much about it. And I think we felt it was important that this be translated for the adult, for the child, for anyone to understand.

That assumption—that the onslaught of legislative attempts to bolster national security as the solution to the threat of "Muslim Terrorists" that political scientists, juris doctorates and cultural historians have documented (Aydin 250; Aziz 779; Beydoun 600; Ciftci 295-8; Goldstein 558)—is "not much," as Jacobson claimed, is one of the reasons that critiquing a more accessible and reductive version of the report is particularly important.

According to its preface, the second goal of *The 9/11 Report* is to support the recommendations of the original report for improving national security. As they adapt the report of the Warren Commission, the cartoonists employ the visual aesthetics of the superhero comic, which are fused in with expository prose that is often abbreviated from the nearly 600-page commission's report. One reason for the oversimplification of character types may be that Colón's and Jacobson's adaptation comes in at a scant 130 pages. Much of the descriptive content of the original report is radically condensed into extradiegesis, wherein the narrative is told through a third-person voice rather than shown through direct illustration or communicated through quoted dialogue. The reliance on extradiegetic narration makes for an exceptionally text-laden comic, which is unusual in the medium, where running narration is typically scant and intradiegetic, and readers are typically shown the narrative more directly in a visually driven mode of storytelling (McCloud 138-50). Most text in comics is largely intradiegetic, composed of dialogue between characters, typically contained in speech balloons. Most of the text in *The 9/11 Report* is externalized third-person narration, which works to dissent against what the commission and the adapting writer see as a lack of governmental vigilance. The book makes a tacit argument for a greater policing of national borders and for more restrictions on Muslims, Arabs, and other Middle Easterners entering the U.S. There is an effect of authority implicit in the formal choices that Jacobson and Colón make. By framing the information through a narrator rather than showing the information with less text or through more direct quotation, say of the commissioners themselves, *The 9/11 Report* tacitly grants the analytical points said commissioners make without the untidy and complex analyses of the data the commission perused. This closes off any potential for epideictic readings of the text that might situate readers as adjudicators who are led to draw conclusions based upon findings, and that epideixis is perhaps one of the virtues of Norton's textual publication of the report. Not all comics work to do this sort of reductive work that removes nuance, nor to suggest that the medium is unsuited for nuanced considerations of national identity; to do so would be to overlook the transformative potential of other uses of transtextuality and visual characterization in graphic historiography.

Diegetic Narrative and Transtextual Graphic History: Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*

Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* is one example of the ways that tensions between textual and pictorial narratives can actually function as a means to invite careful consideration of the arguments for and against the War on Terror and the Islamophobic sentiments that undergird rationales for increased securitization. Perhaps because the cartoonist makes no clear statement of intent in interviews, the didactic purposes of *In the Shadow of No Towers* are harder to pin down. Spiegelman is perhaps most famous for his autobiographical comic *Maus* (1991), which documents his discussions with his father, an immigrant and Holocaust survivor in ways that interweave familial and global history. The combination of a personal memoir and an ethnography in *Maus* extends into Spiegelman's examination of the complexities of being a New Yorker in the moments of and months after the attacks on the World Trade Center. In this book, Spiegelman begins by setting the American government alongside Al Qaeda, rather than in opposition to the threat of "Muslim terrorism," as the cartoonist is just as critical of the Bush Administration as he is of the hijackers. For instance, in one panel on the second page of the comic, Spiegelman draws the sitting American President, grinning sadistically and armed with a flag and a handgun, in mid face-off with a sinister caricature of Osama bin Laden, who is gleefully brandishing a scimitar. The sword functions here as the turban did in *The 9/11 Report*, as another specific reference to American Orientalism that has no religious significance in Islam. The face-off occurs over the body of a sleeping cartoonist with a mouse's head. The textbox set into the panel reads "equally terrorized by Al-Qaeda and his own government, our hero looks over some ancient comics pages instead of working. He dozes off and relives his ringside seat to that day's disaster, yet again, trying to figure out what he actually saw" (2). Equating the two dangers to American democracy posed by terrorist networks and governmental overreach seems especially powerful as a conceit, particularly as this image introduces the intertextual dimensions of the book, which make use of stylistic innovations of early 20th century comics as a means of considering how the medium has shaped reading practices and

images of national identity. Those visual allusions ask readers to question the very directive nature of an intradiegetic medium that operates through visual synecdoche, which relies upon the very epideictic critical response to comics that *The 9/11 Report* seems to eschew.

In spite of those intertextual features, at its heart, Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* is a survivor's memoir very much in the same milieu as *Maus*. There are some renderings that have undeniable and palpable pathos: Spiegelman's horror as he watches Manhattan burn through his studio window; his terror and impotence when he is initially unable to find his daughter, whose school was very close to Ground Zero; his fury at the cartoonish Islamophobic discourse that marks news coverage. However, rather than rendering the narrative bias as a limitation on the comic's ability to craft an effective analysis of the impact of the events depicted, the very personal nature of the work emphasizes the subjective quality of storytelling through comics, so the memoir further serves an epideictic purpose. This representational strategy asks readers to assign blame and give praise, rather than to accept those assignments as made by a narrating voice. As Chute points out, Spiegelman's "trauma takes the form of innovative representation and expression in serialized comics" that somehow render the experience of that trauma and its ability to alter worldview and identity as "both ephemeral and destructible" (242). The impermanence of the formal interventions in graphic storytelling in *In the Shadow of No Towers* may be part of the means by which the threats to Americanness, as an imagined communion with other New Yorkers or other cartoonists or other Americans, work to cement senses of nation in opposition to both the perpetrators of the attack on 9/11 and the untenable executive response to that attack.

Additionally, Spiegelman's intertextual narrative is polystylistic, borrowing from newspaper strips like Frank King's *Gasoline Alley,* began in 1918 and still in syndication, and Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (1905-1927). *In the Shadow of No Towers* is also oddly self-referential. Spiegelman is an intradiegetic character and the extradiegetic narrator. He challenges his viewers to follow the many inter- and paratextual references to American comics and print media. Form is content for Spiegelman. *In the Shadow of No Towers* is by turns rife with sincere, deeply-felt anguish and is all-too-glib and smugly self-satisfied in its framing of the attacks. On the fourth page of the book, Spiegelman includes a series of askew panels, like snapshots lying on a newsprint photo of the flaming towers. Those snapshots tell the story of a terrified Spiegelman looking for his daughter, Nadja. Above those snapshots is a panel that depicts the two towers of the World Trade Center as bizarre riffs on Rudolph Dirk's *Katzenjammer Kids*. Each "Tower Twin" wears a kind of headpiece designed to look like a besieged building. Spiegelman draws a paparazzo taking their photo as they burst into flames, just before Uncle Screwloose, sporting a long white beard and a starred and striped Uncle Sam costume, appears on the next page to douse them with crude oil, poison them with hornet spray, and leave their corpses behind to pursue an "Iraknid"—a creature with a roach's body and the face of Saddam Hussein (5-6). The juxtaposition of his actual experiences looking for Nadja and this madcap indictment of the media and federal government's response to the attacks allows Spiegelman to craft a tension in two narrative tracks, one of which seems to satirize the nationalist dichotomy that Jacobson and Colón tacitly endorse in *The 9/11 Report*. Spiegelman's readers are called to negotiate between those perspectives—one shown via intradiegesis in the maniacal intertextual evocations of earlier comics and the other told via extradiegesis in the voice of a traumatized parent, artist, and citizen. In the latter portion of the narration, readers are asked to examine the assumptions that imagine opposition between American identity and terrorism, and, in so doing, Spiegelman takes care to disrupt the collapsing of identities. The juxtaposition of caricatures of prominent people—bin Laden, Bush, and Hussein—and imagined figures of national identity—Uncle Screwloose and the Tower Twins—encourages a differentiation between the collective and the individual. The intertextual narrative in *In the Shadow of No Towers* works to expose the stylistic means by which Anderson's "image of communion" is discursively manufactured through media and popular culture.

Because the narrating voice in the former narrative is often first-person, rather than exclusively third-person (as is the case in *The 9/11 Report*), the tension between diegetic registers seems to produce an individuated narrative rather than a nationalized one. In those sincere and personal moments in the text, Spiegelman is less interested in imagining nation or building community and perhaps more invested in compelling sympathy or identification. There are moments, however, when the cartoonist chooses to narrate his own story in an extradiegetic third person voice.

For instance, on the seventh page of *In the Shadow of No Towers*, six small panels cross the top of the double-page spread. The first two panels depict a trio of red, pointillist images of one upper story corner of one of the World Trade Center Towers, and superimposed over those images in blue-lettering is this third person narration describing Spiegelman's state of mind: "He's starting to get nostalgic about his near-death experience back in September'01. Nothin' like the end of the world to help bring folks together" (7). In the next two panels, the blue-lettered narration continues, but the pictorial register inserts Spiegelman into the intradiegesis, first through presenting the cartoonist as a

character in the comic and second, by crafting the running narration as internal dialogue portrayed in thought bubbles. The pointillist perspective on the tower pulls out, revealing that the image is the stripes on an abstracted American flag, which covers the background of the middle panel; in the foreground at the lower left of that panel, Spiegelman's face looms, his glasses obscured by tight red spirals. The narration continues, "But why did those provincial American flags have to sprout out of the embers of Ground Zero?" The fourth panel's blue narration asks "Why not . . . a globe?" as the panicked character of the cartoonist flees from the flag background into an orange space, which is labeled with the text of Homeland Security's Orange Alert Advisory. In the penultimate panel, the character's running turns to leaping and the background shows red, signifying the elevation of the Orange Alert to a Red Alert, warning of increasing likelihood of terrorist attacks. In the last panel, the cartoonist hides his head beneath a flag in the interior of his home and the decidedly intradiegetic thought balloon floating over his backside reads "I *should* feel safer under here, but -*damn it*- I can't see a thing!" and the Homeland Security Advisory label reads "Red, white and blue alert! Virtual certitude of terrorist attack." The shifting from an external narrating voice to an internal monologue, especially presented alongside the iconographic shifts from phantom building to draped flags, works to tacitly question the assumption of the mutual exclusivity of terrorism and patriotism. In the last of the six panels, the character is most clearly unprotected and obviously presented as an externalization of the cartoonist's fear, not just of terrorist violence, but also of the fervor of anti-Islamic sentiments that have justified the curtailing of personal freedoms and access to unbiased information. The use of the "red, white and blue alert," in particular, seems to show the ways in which the mediated narrative about American identity has become sutured to Islamophobia through the emergent narrative about the opposition between American and Muslim identities.

The metatexuality that dissolves the boundaries between narrating voice and cartoonist-as-character in *In the Shadow of No Towers* is perhaps specific to visual storytelling, as it would be difficult to craft a textual narrative that so seamlessly intertwines those shifting points of readerly identification. The authoritative tone of the third-person narrator is implicitly questioned by the ridiculous image of the cowering character that also speaks from the same subject position, as both extra- and intradiegetic voices are Spiegelman's. These moments seem to invite readers to consider the ways that international coalition-building is deferred in favor of imagining communities through the use of exclusionary rhetoric. By presenting that set of claims through epideictic means in both the visual and textual narratives in the same comic, Spiegelman situates his readers as necessary participants in that decision calculus about national values and the fallibility of the assumed choice between security and liberty, and, in doing so, calls out the reductive nature of the mediated narratives he critiques in his intertextual content in this piece of graphic historiography.

Deliberative Narrative and Atemporal Autography: El Rassi's *Arab in America*

Like Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers,* El Rassi's *Arab in America* is a memoir. Just as Spiegelman begins with a consideration of individual experiences as a New Yorker on 9/11, El Rassi draws upon the experiences of a Lebanese immigrant living in the United States after 9/11. In crafting a personal story that enfolds a cultural one, the cartoonist uses an autoethnographic mode of first-person narration to problematize the easy dichotomy of victimized citizen and victimizing "Muslim Terrorist" that is so central to Spiegelman's and Colón and Jacobson's comics. One thing that differentiates El Rassi's work from Spiegelman's and Colón and Jacobson's is that *Arab in America* demonstrates the potential of sequential art to abjure, rather than endorse or question, exclusionary conceptualizations of national identity in favor of inclusive, transnational ones.

Unlike the commercially recognizable tropes of *The 9/11 Report* or the pastiche of meta-textually appropriated aesthetics in *In the Shadow of No Towers*, the images and lettering in *Arab in America* are decidedly handmade, and sometimes the inconsistent scaling of scenery, the skewing of perspective, and the disregard for realistic proportions in characters work to make the comic feel like an authentic and earnest rendering of the cartoonist/narrator's life rather than a stylistically perfected and overpolished production of the didactic purpose that the comic might otherwise present to readers. This indie aesthetic, coupled with El Rassi's choice to collapse his intra- and extra-diegetic voices by using both the first and second person, produces an intimacy between reader and writer. Rather than trying to fit his experiences into a larger cultural narrative that considers what 9/11 means for "mainstream" (read: white, middle-class) Americans, El Rassi, who holds graduate degrees in both Art and History, draws *Arab in America* to invite identification as part of a call to action, challenging readers to reconsider dominant perceptions of Islam in the American imagination in the service of a deliberative narrative.

In his monograph *Serial Selves*, comics scholar Frederik Køhlert noted that one of the intriguing choices that El Rassi as a cartoonist creating an autographic memoir is to portray himself in a manner similar to how Arabs, Muslims

and Terrorists are penciled by Colón and Speigelman. Because Køhlert's subject is autobiographical comics, the separation of the narrating voice in the extradiegesis and the character's functions in the intradiegesis has emerged as a typical strategy to show the growth in character, which is usually manifest is physical changes as visual markers of the passage of time. For instance, in the sequence on DHS Security alerts in *In the Shadow of No Towers*, viewers can see the shift from running narration to spoken dialogue to thought bubble mirrored in the increasingly erratic and haggard appearance of the figure Spiegelman draws to represent himself. Køhlert notes that "Where the other artists discussed in [*Serial Selves*] often insist on portraying themselves as unruly and multiple, in strategies that allow them to challenge or elude hegemonic notions of identity and insist on being seen by the reader on their own terms, El Rassi's self-portrait instead opts for identification with a stereotype that has often been used to marginalize or exclude him" (158). *Arab in America* documents the microaggressions El Rassi faced as a boy in middle school and rather than drawing himself as an awkward pre-teen character in that scene, El Rassi remains the adult man, of medium build with a stubbly beard and a sad expression. While Køhlert argues that "El Rassi's repetitive insistence upon portraying himself as a distinctly Arab stereotype illustrates both how he is seen by others (and perhaps has come to see himself) and how easily individual specificity is turned into general stereotype in comics art" (157), the choice to reiterate those visual stereotypes may be one means of destabilizing the visual narrative for readers.

If Spiegelman writes and draws out of confusion and consternation by widening the gap between Americans and Muslims (and wedging a mistrust of government and media into it), then El Rassi works to bridge that gap by demanding that his readers identify with a character rendered only through those visual tropes that have been used to frame Arabic and Muslim identities in a nationalizing narrative. The didactic purpose of the autographic comic oscillates between trying to understand the fear and hatred that he is victimized by and asking readers to reconsider their own complicity in that fear and hatred. Like Colón and Jacobson, he draws a grid of portraits of the 9/11 attackers, but he puts his own face in their midst. The text that accompanies this act of self-representation is spoken directly to the reader, like extradiegetic narration, but enclosed in a speech balloon-like dialogue. That text reads: "Could the average American distinguish me from a Muslim terrorist? I saw the photos of the hijackers and the fact is . . . they looked like me, and the images appeared everywhere" (19). The relationship of image and text in this moment in *Arab in America* directly contests notions of racial difference and membership in the shared comradeship of nation. Here, El Rassi seems to respond almost directly to the representational choices of other mediated images—perhaps even including those crafted by Jacobson and Colón—by calling for a more nuanced interpretation of the distinctions between Muslims, Arabs, Jihadis, and terrorists.

El Rassi follows up this rhetorical question with a meta-textual history lesson that discusses the distinction between ethnic, national and religious identities. He draws himself before a written on blackboard and pull-down map as he explains how the phrase, "The Muslim World" should actually refer to the entire globe, as there are very few geographical spaces in which Islam has never been practiced, even noting that the largest concentration of self-identified Muslims is to be found in Southeast Asia rather than North Africa (28). In this lesson, the cartoonist accomplishes the accessibility that Jacobson reports to aim for without the sort of broad characterization that Colón's drawings often rely upon. El Rassi even discloses some personal struggles with faith and ongoing discomfort with transculturation as he frames his familial relationships in *Arab in America*, so that the subtext of the graphic memoir works to ask questions about how second-generation immigrants relate to their parents' countries and cultures of origin while the main text works to provide clear definitions of the distinctions between geographic, cultural, and religious markers of personal identity. The formal unity of those two narratives, arrayed in tension with one another, works to build complexity into relatively simple renderings, which, in turn, disrupts the image of communion as anchored in race, religion, or national origin.

El Rassi follows up this formal unity with additional narratives about experiences with truly terrorizing acts of violence he faces as an Arab living in the U.S. after 9/11, including being accosted and chased down the street by drunken racists, as well as a series of microaggressions, like being at the same party as a white man dressed as a Jihadi for Halloween. In these graphic anecdotes, El Rassi clearly displays his own unease with his identity as an Arab-American. In doing so, he shuts down any debate about the veracity or bias of his narrative by presenting himself as an individual narrating subject writing and drawing forthrightly about his first-person experiences. In this way, the same epidiectic potential noted in Spiegelman's personal stories in *In the Shadow of No Towers* is wrought in *Arab in America*. Once again, readers are invited to assign blame and praise to the characters with whom El Rassi interacts as a character in the graphic memoir. By withholding overt judgment—the character even asks himself, in a thought balloon over his head at the Halloween party, "Does this costume really hurt anyone? Why am I so angry and ashamed?" (41)— the cartoonist calls on readers to work through the ways that personal safety might mirror the issues of national security, and how notions of liberty can be both individually relevant and politically significant.

In a portent of things to come, at the close of the book, El Rassi makes a trip to Lebanon to visit his extended family. For the plane ride to Beirut, he dons a "Viva Mexico" t-shirt, explaining that he hopes to both avoid attracting undue attention from the TSA and his fellow passengers. For the trip back, after reflecting on the ways he may have internalized the Islamophobic sentiments of his adopted country, he elects to not only forego the ethnic legerdemain, but also to engage with the customs agent who stops him. In the "Outro," El Rassi crafts a set of paired panels that occupy the same temporal space in the narrative, one labeled "What I wanted to say" and the other labeled "What I actually said." In that set of panels, El Rassi identifies some strategies that in-group and out-group readers might deploy to respond to these situations. For readers who are Arab or Muslim, and are all too aware of what it is like to travel under similar conditions, El Rassi's narrative works to build community through the representation of shared experiences and the vocalization of often inexpressible frustrations. It facilitates collective discourse that responds to institutional oppression by speaking about the structural difficulties of speaking out in this particular context. The outro also works to demonstrate to non-Arab and non-Muslim readers how the imagined threat of the Jihadi divides rather than solidifies any American communion or comradeship. First, El Rassi's parallel panels contextualize the degree to which civil discourse becomes a mandate for people with visible markers of Middle Eastern identity who are traveling internationally. This reveals the often private struggles of that population to readers who may be unaware because of their own privilege, which, in turn, may provide a mechanism for building coalitions through shared experiences and operates as a kind of implicit call-to-action to disrupt those microaggressions when possible. This sort of subtext adds to the diegetic multiplicity found in Spiegelman's comics and contradicts the polarizing narrative of Jacobson and Colón's adaptation, so that the formal features of *Arab in America* are able to actively disrupt the mediated imagination of opposition between "Muslim Terrorist" and American.

Viewed together, each of these three narratives works to call attention to the ways in which discourse about September 11th and the need to secure borders to American geographic spaces and imagined communities reflects the nuances of national identity. If readers and cultural critics are to respond to the Islamophobic policies and the heightened tensions that mitigate the successful inclusion of Muslims into the shared comradeship that is American national identity, we could do worse than to look to the comics written by El Rassi, Spiegelman, Jacobson and Colón as primers for gauging the impact of our public discourse and historical narratives upon the success of that endeavor. Of course, cartoonists cannot be solely responsible for drawing Islamophobia out of representations of American identity, and a pair of autographic texts is perhaps the smallest of bulwarks against the shifting social mores of contemporary American media. It is to be hoped, however, that by paying additional critical attention to ways the Islamophobia is discursively resisted in historiographic comics, that the issues foremost in our time may become less oppressive and divisive and that our imagined community can become more varied and inclusive.

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Farrah Goff

"Prof, You Be Illin'"

Mental Illness Inside the College Classroom

After conversations in a teaching practicum course related to responding to Margaret Price's *Mad at School*, I noted that there was a consuming desire for a conversation revolving around how to be a *Professor* and a disabled body. For this paper, I explore an important part of disability conversations, not merely related to academia, but to societal ideologies related to ability, access, and accommodations (as it seems many of the classroom discussions often do) and their treatment of both visible and invisible illnesses. This paper seeks to exclusively explore the experience of mental disability and mental illness in professors. Inadvertently, an important aspect that becomes all too apparent as one engages in this conversation is greater discussions regarding the systematic stigmatization of mentally ill persons. Ultimately, the paper suggests that while there is no perfect way to address the issues of mental illness in the classroom, specifically when the instructor is the person who has a mental illness, overall work towards de-stigmatization and open classroom plans can be implemented to create better systems to intervene in times of emotional crises. Additionally, the implementations of these systems can allow for the ultimate goals of a positive and more supportive instructor and student experience to be met, while also assisting in the students receiving the education they are requesting.

One avenue of exploration related to tracing the relationship of mental illness in professors is to first account for what makes up a large demographic of this population. More specifically, if this paper works to make an intervention related to the presence of mental illness in instructors, and subsequently offer a way to best bring helpful discussions related to the de-stigmatization of mental illness (while simultaneously striving to overthrow negative or unhelpful systems currently in place that are influenced by these current stigmas and societal beliefs), it must take into account who this intervention is geared towards. While ultimately working with the discussions that are significant to all persons, it would be negligent to overlook the composition of the instructional population of most universities on a basic level. In order to explore the relationship between mental illness and academia, one must also consider the large prevalence of graduate students as professors. One 2007 study reported that 16.2% of classes were taught by graduate students and adjunct faculty (Spalter-Roth 7). In accounting for such a high percentage of graduate students teaching undergraduate classes, it is helpful to consider the mental health of said population.

It seems that more and more studies are cropping up addressing the "mental health crisis in graduate schools" (Evans). I focus on the mental health experiences of graduate students specifically as these are the people who are most often expected to live in this dual role. A 2018 study worked to establish that of the graduate students they surveyed, 39% reported moderate to severe depression and levels of anxiety (Evans). It is necessary to point out that this study only accounted for depression and anxiety. This does not account for graduate students and graduate labor that may be suffering from a variety of other mental illness. If over 35% of the graduate student body is suffering from depression or anxiety and over 15% of the faculty is comprised of said graduate students, the conclusion that can be made is that there is a large portion of the teaching staff at colleges all throughout the country who are affected with varying mental illnesses. So, how do we support those professors while simultaneously offering students the best educational opportunities possible?

Margaret Price attempts to tackle many of the difficult elements that come with incorporating mental illness (or perhaps a better, more nuanced term, "mental divergence") into the classroom in *Mad at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability and Academic Life*. While the discussion of mentally divergent instructors and individuals is startlingly absent, many of Price's discussions are applicable to this paper's exploration of de-stigmatization of neuro-divergence. Early on, Price emphasizes how psychiatric discourse effects pedagogical practices in the sense that it creates a "system through which human minds may be reliably measured as 'crazy' or 'normal'" (33). Price takes issue with this, and I do as well. The desire to categorize people, and thereby people's *brains,* in a neat orderly system where everyone fits into one of two boxes (crazy or normal) is normal, but it is neither sustainable nor helpful. Instead of working within these constructs and categorizations to which we are inclined and simultaneously encouraged by institutional agendas, such as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, one simple way to move away from or beyond these

biases and tendencies is to change the *language* that is used in these discussions. Had Price, going forward, moved away from verbiage of "ill", "mad", or "crazy" and instead incorporated "divergent" or "atypical" into her analysis, she would have made a step towards pushing back on these constructs. Instead, Price maintains her reference choices and continues to state refer to her subjects as "mental disabled" or the "mad subject" (Price 44, 56).

Price does bring up the treatment of instructors at one early moment in her piece. She breaks down the current means of dealing with mentally divergent individuals in the classroom; "where 'crazy' students are quickly referred out of the classroom to the school counseling center, and where 'unstable' or 'difficult' teachers are triaged out by means of the tenure and promotion system" (33). However, there are many issues with Price's statement. First, Price unintentionally creates a situation of mutual exclusivity that is not always the case. She offers that one is either the "crazy student" or the "difficult teacher", but what if one is in the position of both student and instructor? As I have asserted earlier, it is clearly not an intuitive assumption that a person with mental illness would occupy solely one of these roles, and in fact quite possible and likely that a person could exist as both student and teacher.

Second, Price assumes that mental divergence presents itself in identifiable and disruptive ways. The assumption that mental divergence in a teacher would necessarily take the form as instability or difficulty and the societally proscribed treatment would be to remove said individual through the form of other jobs is neither exclusively true nor always possible. While yes, this is one possible embodiment of mental divergence in an instructor within the classroom (I'm sure most people can relate to that one professor who just should not have been teaching any longer) and yes, tenure and removal of teaching responsibilities is one possible course of action and treatment to remedy the situation, this is an over generalization rife with stereotypes. Stereotyping that all difficult or unstable instructors are that way due to mental divergence is falling into these earlier preconceived beliefs regarding "crazy" and "normal". Some instructors are simply poor instructors due to no other reason than their personality or lack of training. Conversely, instructors with mental divergence are not always difficult or unstable, and in fact it is entirely possible to have mental divergence and be quite accomplished at one's job. Instead, I offer the depressed and anxious graduate student, fulfilling the necessary responsibilities to both their academic course load and their teaching obligations. While said individual may be meeting expectations, there are ways as both a student and an instructor their experiences could be normalized and made easier.

One possible way to support both graduate students and instructors is through the counseling center. Most colleges now offer some sort of free mental health counseling to their students. An easy way to help graduate students would be for all instructors of graduate courses to simply have the counseling center's website on their syllabus (as most instructors of first year writing at Queens College are encouraged to do for their own students). Simply, raising awareness of the availability of this resource could be helpful. While, accessibility and availability are very important, most colleges that have large populations of both graduate and undergraduate students have one counseling center for the entire student body. If there was a specific portion of a counseling center that was dedicated solely to graduate students, it is possible that graduate students would make more use out of the services that are offered there. Currently, it may feel embarrassing or unprofessional for a graduate student who is also a college instructor to go to the same counseling center and risk the possibility of running into their students waiting on similar services. Alternatively, a way to bypass the initial intake process or waiting room could increase likelihood of using these services. Allowing graduate students to set up appointments via email could be helpful in streamlining the process and cutting down on the possible risk of running into a student when the graduate student and instructor themselves is seeking help. Some colleges already do offer this option; however, it would be helpful if it was more wildly available at universities in the United States. While a larger goal is that seeking help for mental health issues should not be a problem or cause for concern, in so far as people should not feel embarrassed about reaching out for assistance, as it stands, the risk of a student knowing their instructor's mental divergence may prevent the instructor from taking advantage of these services.

Another possible way to support graduate students and instructors would be through the use of graduate specific support groups. "Groups help students increase their self-awareness" and groups help encourage feelings of togetherness and fight narratives that would lead to feelings of being "alone" (Harpine 66). Not only is there value in not feeling alone when facing difficult problems, but an instructor specific support group would be valuable as part of the "learning to teach" process. Queens College is unique in the sense that it offers a teaching practicum. As I have personally seen, throughout the course of the semester the practicum has functioned not only as a means to teach the teachers, but also as a place where issues throughout the semester are addressed. If more colleges were to offer an instructor specific support group, it could operate as a place where instructors (both new and old) who were experiencing issues both in and out of the classroom could come together and discuss how to continue teaching to the best of their abilities.

Additionally, this would serve as outside support and assistance with problems instructors may not be equipped to face. These support groups would not have to be limited to people who are mentally divergent, but they would exist as spaces of additional support for instructors who are.

In a more focused discussion regarding the practice of teaching writing, Price offers a quote from Berlin's New Rhetorical approach: "in teaching writing… we are teaching a way of experiencing the world, a way of ordering and making sense of it" (38). Price takes issue with this quote in the sense that she argues that the theory relies heavily on the assumption that one has the ability to order and make sense of his or her world. She writes, "He misses the fact that those with mental disabilities are always already defined as non-human, by dint of their failure to *make sense*. In other words, [Berlin] has not considered the possibility that some subjects lack rhetoricity" (39). However, what Price overlooks is the possible attraction to not only learning how to make some sense and order one's world, especially if one does not already possess the ability to do so. She also fails to recognize the freedom that writing presents as a way to exist outside of this imposed societal order. In fact, Price does not even consider the idea that perhaps someone with mental divergence already possesses the ability to order one's world but utilizes writing as a means to be free from this expected order or as a means of basic expression. If writing instructors look at their role instead of as a means to achieve sameness and order, but rather as a way to teach communication, an idea that should be at the core of writing instruction, than the significance of the course becomes two-fold. For one, the neuro-divergent student who may desire but does not already possess this means of communication gains the opportunity to achieve this written form of communication. Secondly, the mentally divergent instructor can utilize the class as a way to further encourage these divergences rather than stifle them.

Instructors of first-year writing, a mandatory course found in almost all American universities, and frequently taught by graduate students, could employ assignments that focus on this inherent need to communicate and be understood through writing. One possible method to achieve this emphasis could be through the use of free writing activities that would be designed to allow students to explore any topic or emotion of their choosing, while putting into effect the most recently taught skill or approach to formal writing. A hypothetical assignment could be: "Describe how you experienced waking up this morning, but be sure to use proper transitional phrases to articulate your meaning and engage with the paragraph structural outline we discussed in class last week." Although this may seem to be not entirely topic based, it would allow for practice with the emphasized and taught forms while also moving away from the rigidity of certain paper and essay topical expectations and alternatively emphasizing a communication of personal and individual experiences. Testing first-year writing courses as a space in which communication, through writing of course, functions as a way to discuss individual experiences, including but not limited to those of mental divergence, is another way to work against societal stigmas of mental illness and improve the experiences of non-neurotypical students. The fact that first-year writing is often taken during the first year of the undergraduate experience is simply an additional bonus and incentive to incorporating such practices.

Moving beyond the practice of writing, Price discusses another important aspect of communication, listening, when she asks, "if a student (or teacher) lacks rhetoricity, what happens to this vaunted process of listening? Is it possible to listen to the mad subject" (Price 42). Price mentions the strategy of listening in a discussion of her own previous point that the "mad subject" lacks the ability to speak or be understood. Again, Price is founding her discussions on these incorrect assumptions that a person who is neuro-divergent lacks the ability to communicate in a way that they can be understood. While it is possible that there may be a difficulty in communication or understanding, there are ways to encourage students (both neuro-typical and neuro-divergent) to understand someone or something, which at first, may not be easy to understand. One way is through the process of peer review. While Price argues that peer review is useless to the individual who cannot be understood, what she is actually doing is diminishing the ability of peers *to understand*. More specifically, if one is not being understood, peer review can be a lower stakes opportunity for a fellow student to assist in helping their classmate gain understanding. Concurrently, promoting the ability to communicate effectively in individuals who are struggling to be understood is also important, if not necessary work. Using Intro to Writing courses as a space to teach people to both be understood and to understand is not only beneficial, but also possible with small changes and steps.

It has been said, "everyone is a little crazy, some people are just better at hiding it" (Hodkin). Instead of ascribing people who are different with the label as crazy and forcing them to mold to societal preconceptions about what is right and wrong, society should move away from words like "crazy," "mentally ill," or "mad" and work towards de-stigmatizing mental divergence. Rather than forcing one to "hide it" work needs to be done both inside and outside of the classroom that demonstrates mental divergence not as a negative, but rather as an extremely typical part of the human experience. Through working to understand both the presence and experience of mental divergence inside the

classroom in both students and their instructors, the goal is to employ techniques both at the university level and at the classroom level that work to achieve several goals. The first and foremost goal is to work to fight the stigmas surrounding mental illness. Secondly, the aim is to provide better support for individuals in all levels of the university structure who experience mental divergence. Finally, the hope is to open up the classroom so that the different experiences of mentally divergent persons is not just pushed to fit within accepted guidelines and structures, and instead encouraged as a means for more valuable learning.

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Notes

1 Similar authors who address this issue of mental illness in graduate students include Chris Woolston and Colleen Flaherty.

2 If I were to explore this further, a more interesting and perhaps more valuable study that could be conducted would take a survey of all instructional staff at universities who report experiencing some type of mental divergence. Additionally, the survey would ask for reports of the position of the instructor (although the survey could remain anonymous), so that more accurate data could pinpoint how many instructors suffer from any type of mental divergence, and if there are any correlations between rates of mental illnesses and the teaching responsibilities of the individual.

3 In an extended version of this paper, I would consider the other key factors that are contributing to mental illness rates in Graduate Students, such as poverty level wages, demanding teaching and course loads, and more.

4 A slight digression here, but worthy of note; Price also considers the teacher here and founds an argument around the idea that a teacher who is "mad" lacks the ability to speak or listen (or both). Earlier discussion in this paper has demonstrated that an individual who is neuro-divergent can still make a good teacher, thus disproving the assumption that they lack the ability to be understood. Similarly, the neuro-divergent instructor may actually be the one who possesses better communication abilities (both listening and speaking) because they have previously had to learn to accomplish both more effectively.

5 On one level, striving to understand that which is not easily understood is already the practice through the assignment of higher-level academic texts.

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Arleen Ionescu

A WAY FORWARD
THE HUMANITIES AND THE UNIVERSITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY[1]

As a former European (now based in Asia) academic laboring under the most inauspicious pedagogical and intellectual conditions for many years, I have kept my strong belief that the Humanities do matter in the twenty-first century world. Recalling Jacques Derrida's thinking on the New Humanities as well as Bernard Stiegler's theoretical views on the educational system in the age of technology, the first part of this article is meant to contextualize why academia has changed so profoundly in relation to broad cultural, social, and economic currents. This part is conceived as a short history of the university, counterpointed by my own narrative as an academic who endeavors to analyze what happened, without lamenting over the crisis in the Humanities, since this would mean inability "to break free of a nineteenth-century vision of education that sees the humanities in narrow terms as an escape from the world of business and science" (Jay 30).

As Stiegler asserted in *States of Shock: Stupidity and Knowledge in the Twenty-First Century*, irrespective of the historical period, the university has a unique vocation: forming "a type of attention:" *logos*, or "reason" in the Enlightenment period (7). The model of the first ideal university was defined by Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant and implemented by Wilhelm von Humboldt in the eponymous Berlin university (1810) before being imported to Johns Hopkins University (1876). Its purpose was to serve the needs of emerging nation states in contrast with the medieval model that served the church. The Humboldtian model had two primary functions: to educate the future state bureaucrats and to conduct research with the purpose of producing new knowledge. Following Kant's idea, its architecture privileged the Humanities, especially the Faculty of Philosophy. However, it is essential to note that Kant did not have only theoretical interests, but he also insisted on "practical interests that have concrete implications for daily life in the real world" (Taylor 49).

The first revolution that changed the world was in the industrialized nineteenth century; the second in the first half of the twentieth century, when electricity, petroleum and the automobile made the world progress; followed in the 1990s by the "third industrial Revolution", when cyberspace, micro-computing and robotics appeared (Rikfin, *The Third Industrial Revolution* 9-73). Coincidentally, I became an academic by the time universities entered this era of telecommunication, where technology is driven by market-oriented forces, becoming a "sector of knowledge" prioritizing an "elite of entrepreneurs, scientists, technicians, computer programmers, professional educators, and consultants" (Rifkin, *The End of Work* xvii). According to Derrida's "The Future of the Profession or the University Without Conditions," mutations in the Humanities were a consequence of "techno-science, with the worldwide-izing virtualization and delocalization of tele-work" (47). Derrida was writing at a time when the technological era was not yet in full bloom, before LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other networks, including academic ones, were invented. This is why he was not skeptical about the modern university's freedom "to question and to assert, or even, going still further" and "the right to say publicly all that is required by research, knowledge, and thought concerning the *truth*" (24). For Derrida, the "university without condition" had to promote "an unlimited commitment to the truth" (24); it had the "right to say everything" (26), a condition that still linked the Humanities to the Enlightenment.

In the twenty-first century, *logos* became *technologos* and could no longer function "outside of the industrial system, in a society where the economy occupies a position that demands incessant critique" (Stiegler 206), imposing itself on our lives brutally and changing "the very conditions of education and research, as well as the relations between educational institutions and universities on the one hand, and what lies outside them on the other hand" (7). Universities faced what Stiegler called "a *technological shock strategy*" (7), a "global war", "a kind of *dis-integration* of knowledge itself" or "anti-knowledge" (168), because, unlike the capitalist industry, the university did not take advantage of the positivity of the *pharmakon*. Today, nobody can deny that research is under the pressure of industrial criteria, and "subjected to the shortest-term efficiency possible" (which is sadly inefficiency in the long run), and education is oriented more towards "the criteria of so-called employability, which has nothing whatsoever to do with professionalization" (Stiegler 169). Thus, Derrida's very notion of "the university without condition" became an impossible ideal, since "*there is no university without condition* – academic freedom is *always* a *conditional* freedom"

(Stiegler 170), and these conditions are always extra-academic. Even the opinions of Peter Mandler, Professor of Modern Cultural History at the University of Cambridge, who in 2015 pointed out that the belief in the crisis of the Humanities had become "orthodoxy", seem dated now, when for instance, major enrollment in English or in History have been halved in the US since the Great Recession of 2008 and many Humanities sections in European universities were closed down. Such conditions made us, academics, feel that we are under an assault, just to paraphrase the title of Michael Bailey and Des Freedman's edited book *The Assault on Universities: A Manifesto for Resistance*; we often felt that we were forced to become "microentrepreneurs of the self," as Gary Hall put it in his *The Uberfication of the University* (30). In 2020, starting from their book, Bailey and Freedman launched a petition in UK, *The New Assault on Universities: A Manifesto for Resistance in Covid Times* which announces, among other bad news that taking advantage of the pandemic, employers institutionalize "a form of 'shock higher education' where online delivery becomes standard, where surveillance becomes routine, where precarity becomes acceptable, where the right to a pension becomes obsolete and where funding becomes ever more tied to employability."

My own history as an academic started only two years before Derrida's plea for the "university without condition" was published in French, when I became a member of a Humanities department in a Romanian university in 1998. At that time Romania was still outside the European Union, but they eventually joined in 2007.

A contextual parenthesis on how the Romanian educational system developed after the country got rid of communism in December 1989 is needed before presenting a usual day in my former office. In the 1990s, Romania was still striving to learn what democracy meant, and, hence, it also had a lesson to learn in matters of education and research. Since December 1989, Romania has had as many as 23 ministers of education (plus 3 *interim* ministers), and the denominations and structures of the ministries have changed constantly. Only two ministers really reformed education and research: Mircea Miclea (29 Dec. 2004 – 9 Nov. 2005) and Daniel Funeriu (23 Dec. 2009 – 9 Feb. 2012). Funeriu's name is linked to the first national law of education, Law no. 1/ 2011 (also known as "Funeriu law"), that had a proper scientific basis and was aligned to other European Union states' education laws (Pantazi). In 2011, Funeriu also conducted the first and, to date, only proper evaluation of universities despite huge opposition coming from many universities interested in maintaining their status quo. Universities were classified as follows: 12 universities of advanced research and education; 30 universities of research (or artistic creation) and education; and 48 education-centered universities. In 2011, it looked like Romanian education and research were for the first time going in the right direction. However, the government where Funeriu was the Minister of Education had to resign in September 2012 after a vote of no-confidence. On the very hour the new government was installed, the first changes that appeared in its official publication were to Funeriu's Law. Romania has been, and unfortunately still is, the country where many politicians boasting academic titles have been exposed as plagiarists (see the infamous case of the former PM, Victor Ponta, in Schiermeier; Maci's book, an excellent analysis of Romania's academic system; Şercan's book that details many cases of Romanian politicians' academic imposture; Tismăneanu's considerations on why Ponta refused to admit his fraud in Ionescu, "Apologia de mediocritate" 83; and Ionescu, "Umanioarele în epoca tehnologiei"). In September 2012, Romania lost not only the best Minister of Education it has ever had but also the best education law; the law was gradually changed in order to accommodate politicians' desires.

At the time when the Romanian educational system seemed to be travelling down the right path, in April 2012, I became the Vice-Dean of Research of the Faculty of Letters and Sciences. I had high hopes that Romanian universities would soon manage to obtain better positions in world rankings.[2] In 2016, I became Dean of the faculty and in 2018, I decided to leave my native country once I painfully felt that I no longer belonged in the university I had been working at for twenty years. It had become a rather business-like, interest-driven workplace or even some sort of factory where one's productivity was on an assembly line. I joined the same kind of school, the School of Foreign Languages, as a regular tenured professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

The ongoing trend for a few years in my country of birth has been to judge curriculum and research quality pragmatically. Since we faced escalating financial problems, caused by the very poor national budget for education, everything had to be "costed" and "priced". If there were not enough students enrolled in a program, we had to apply crude economic criteria when vetting programs because one section might have been potentially disruptive to the efficient running of the whole factory. Such crude economics did not assess the intellectual and pedagogical merits of our degrees and courses, but simply set those off against overheads and running costs: staff on payroll, electricity, gas and water bills, and room and equipment maintenance, with accreditation costs. On a state-to-state basis within the United States and the European Union, the rampant corporatization of universities can often be on a par with chronic underfunding and the increasing disengagement of governments from public spending in education, and the first casualties in line of sight are the Humanities as opposed to the STEM subjects. Yet, as Thomas Docherty showed, to

have a future, education "is not a business, certainly not a commercial activity, nor is it even remotely 'like' one, nor should it be reduced to being the condition of a transactional medium responding to private avarice" (*For the University* 164).

Romania followed the international trend of investing money almost entirely in "transformational sciences and technologies" (Dupuy and Roure, my translation). These tendencies gradually turned the members of my former university board of directors, *Consiliul de Administrație* [The Administrative Council] into corporate executives and stubborn academic administrators who almost lost sight of the university's dual core mission. In 2017, in order to survive, the board members at my former university started to exhaustively analyze our programs' cost efficiency: how much money the Ministry of Education allocates per student capita, how much money comes from research projects, how much money is spent on staff's salaries, utility bills and accreditation and how much the university earns in the end. I unsuccessfully attempted to make my colleagues aware that in our official positions, surrounded exclusively by figures and charts, we lost touch with our students. Additionally, we, who were to inform students on how to resist oversimplification, practiced it on a daily basis in our documents written in the best *langue de bois*, borrowed from the discourses of managerialism, based on a culture of auditing. We had gradually become "service providers", our students "customers" or "clients", who, when enrolling in a program, signed a contract each academic year during the whole duration of study. We strove to support "quality enhancement", and many potential employers worked as external assessors who constantly checked on our internally robust "quality culture", implemented by academics whose main goal was to develop effective institutional assessment strategies; we needed to implement a rolling program of "annual reviews" of our offerings to examine their "sustainability".

At my former school, I saw first-hand what Docherty describes generally: how quality insurance approaches drive us slowly towards mediocrity, since "teaching is not a commodity transaction or transparent dealing in information" but "a collaborative activity that leads to the expansion of imagination and discoveries on all sides" ("The Unseen Academy" 40-41). Every document we generated was marketized: at the beginning of the academic year, we produced lengthy handbooks, manuals, circulars, with objectives, targets, risks, and at its end, we measured whether our targets had been met. In what fast became a kind of academic panopticon, we evaluated ourselves and our colleagues' courses, students provided course feedback; more often than not, we paid lip service to relying on such evaluations because we needed to be attentive to students' "satisfaction rate", which is now being recorded in yearly updated national student surveys in some countries. Last, but not least, we shared "best practice" in the implementation of internal quality systems. In many European countries, for more than twenty years, the university agenda and curriculum have been dictated by stakeholders, the political powers-that-be, the main economic players and the employers in the market economy. We therefore needed to facilitate stakeholders' participation in our decisions, to hold annual meetings with them, and to change our Curriculum Plan so as to match the range of entrepreneurial skills they want our students to acquire, of the kind that squares uneasily with, or transfers uneasily from, more humanistic pursuits.

In order to keep up student recruitment, our website had to demonstrate our "excellence" on all fronts, a label first bandied about in the 1990s' neoliberal spirit – and savagely criticized by Bill Readings' famous *The University in Ruins* then – and enjoying a renewed lease on life in spite of Readings' earlier deconstructive effort. Despite being overwhelmed all over Europe by so much (occasionally self-proclaimed) excellence – which once prompted Docherty's ironic remark that, since in the United Kingdom some twenty-five universities regularly claimed to be among the top ten, one may legitimately wonder whether they had a department of mathematics or even logic ("The Unseen Academy" 38) – I sometimes wondered if effective learning, teaching, and research still actually exist, and can still flourish, beyond all these (self-)assessment protocols.

After the Bologna declaration was signed by the ministers of education from twenty-nine European countries in 1999, a professor from a Bologna university had to fill in grids (on aims, methods, objectives, and outcomes) and monitoring forms, he/she had to not only complete the marking but to also complete the supporting paperwork after the marking, without having to deliver proper teaching and to make sure that students could formulate a position and think critically. This should be the challenge of teaching, as Mark Taylor rightly has observed: "not merely to convey information but also to encourage students to ask questions they never imagined asking", which means that they start to think critically and are capable of learning "how to formulate a position and develop thoughtful arguments to defend it" (48).

Today, many European academics live in a research culture in which, prior to sending an article for evaluation, they often look at the rating of a periodical or check which databases index the journal, since these are likely to inflect the impact factor of their work. This happens, unless, under pressure of their national research assessments, academics in the Humanities are sacrificing a book and prefer to write individual articles in journals ranked as A, since the latter

matter more than one whole monograph (Williams and Galleron; Bonaccorsi). Moreover, if someone's "cutting-edge" research is on an unpopular or niche topic hardly represented in a major indexed journal, the resulting article is likely to be sunk without a trace in compliance with the laws of the academic market and regardless of its intrinsic value. Under such circumstances, we may wonder whether and how we "do research" – a term too often used and misused to refer to any form of publication.

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The next part of this article will be the narration of "a usual day in the office" at my former university, with an emphasis on how extra-academic factors may influence the decisions of a university board. Although referring to the past, this part is narrated in the eternal Present of the corporate university where I worked for twenty years.

At 10 am, I attend the de-rigueur, usually open-ended meeting of the Administrative Council in which for the third time running those in attendance (with a few notable exceptions) bicker about closing down underperforming, inefficient programs, most of which are in my faculty.[3] I, the representative of liberal arts, do not seem to be able to dispel the growing skepticism of colleagues in engineering and economics about the worth of "my Humanities inefficient programs." I have often heard questions like: "What do you, the humanists, produce?" with the already-known implied answer "You are basically incapable of productive innovation." "What advantages can we have from your pondering over past historical events or literature?" I have also witnessed one of my leader's "objective" assessments of humanists: "In your classes you do nothing. You just waffle about '-isms.'" It is clear to me that some of my colleagues think that we indulge in obscure critical inquiry which they see as neither constructive nor practical but effectively solipsistic. I regard myself as a scholar who neither believes in nor supports the idea that the Humanities matter in our multicultural and global society only for acquiring a literary, cultural or theoretical knowledge for its own sake, and I always attempt to articulate the practical value of an education in the Humanities obtained by our students.

I am one of only two members of the Administrative Council who obstinately put forward arguments against regarding our university as a *de facto* business corporation. Today, as in other previous meetings, I am trying to explain that we cannot simply measure everything in utilitarian terms, and we should not close down BA and MA programs only because we are missing a few students in order for the programs to be cost-effective. I can see my colleagues' patent general distrust. It resembles the distrust of the early twentieth-century American capitalists that Frank Donoghue analyzes concluding that they "were motivated by an ethically based anti-intellectualism that transcended interest in the financial bottom line"; their distrust simply meant that "if universities were to be preserved at all, they must operate on a different set of principles from those governing the liberal arts" (3). I do not share Donoghue's defense of the capitalists. However, I can hear my colleagues invoking "ethical reasons."

The dean of a technical faculty came up with a magic formula to reduce costs. Another presents an Excel table with formulas that I, with my own limitations, just cannot comprehend. What my humanist mind figures out on the spot is that the mathematization of our efficiency might cost some of my colleagues their jobs in the Humanities in the future. We close the meeting without reaching any sort of conclusion, let alone consensus. I am kindly asked to make more calculations about the cost efficiency of the programs. We will resume our discussion next Monday because the prospects are gloomy: last week a new government ordinance cut all our costs by 10% for the next academic year even though inflation is rampant in a supposedly buoyant economy.

I return to my office in low spirits at almost 5 pm. We had two 10-minute breaks in seven hours. "Critique" is the word that comes to mind. "Critique", not calculations, certainly not symbols and formulas that show how ill-adapted to the new world I am. "Critique", Jay wrote, is "at the very heart of the humanist enterprise. It involves the kind of abstract, systematic thinking we associate with Kant's theory of the aesthetic, Hegel's dialectic, Marx's analysis of the class structure or the operations of ideology, Nietzsche's idea of the death of God, or Freud's work on the unconscious, or his great work, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (27). However, my critique, or, in other words, my evaluation of my colleagues' evaluation of my faculty, would not impress financially efficient minds. Sigh.

The clerk from the Registry hands my secretary official papers we received from the Ministry of Education. I look for the essential words "Deadline: next week."

"Have you eaten?"

Sigh.

My secretary knows the answer, so she brings me a slice of a delicious chocolate cake she made at home. Feeling empathy is just what I need to become more optimistic, so I open the new evaluation grids on how well we perform in research as a faculty. The Ministry of Education distributes an allocation (the budget) to our university taking into account the numbers of students we have enrolled. However, we can obtain supplementary funds of 20% if we

produce good research. The evaluation grids refer to research only. Teaching does not matter, since it cannot be quantified. That matters only internally. I try not to think that a teacher in the Humanities is at a disadvantage here as well. For example, a teacher who is in charge of a course on Writing can have over one hundred papers to assess during a semester. However, assessments do not take into account the many hours spent on students' drafts and revisions requiring extensive and individual feedback. And when it comes to assessing the course, students will often say that the course on Writing was "hard."

I return to my grids where only figures are important. Nobody reads our research items. Our performative efficiency is assessed with a single aim in mind: quantifying quality, a tendency that became obvious through the Bologna system and Global Rankings and Quality Assurance that exponentially increased their relevance in determining the value of Higher Education Institutions in EU and worldwide. The grids contain figures in an Excel table. Our names do not appear in that table, but rather, as in the famous 1960s American series *The Prisoner*, we have become numbers. The data we need to collect is: each member of staff needs to make a table with the Thomson Reuters (now Clarivate) articles they have written with their impact factor. There are around 1,800 AHCI journals, and more than 8,500 SCI. Unlike SCI and SSCI, AHCI do not record impact factors. Thus, in our table we have no option but to return a value of 0 for impact factor, no matter how prestigious the journal we published in is. According to these criteria, an excellent humanist already matters less than an average engineer who co-wrote an article with six to seven colleagues with an impact factor larger than '0'. Neither books nor book chapters count, even though humanists have repeatedly explained how valuable monographs are for literature, history, theology, and philosophy.

We also need to provide our assessors with a print screen of our Hirsch index – an author-level metric, based on a set of a scholar's most cited papers and the number of citations that they have received in other publications – that attempts to measure both the productivity and citation impact of the publications of said scholar. While any average professor in engineering can easily notch up over 20 for their *h*-index owing to the way citation operates in their fields, a professor of comparable status in the Humanities scores 5-6 on average. According to an ironically bitter pamphlet written by a reputed Romanian professor of English literature, Umberto Eco's Hirsch index was a mere 2 (at that time Eco was still alive; his books were not taken into account for the calculation of the index) and the eminent linguist Geoffrey Leech had 1 (Papahagi).

I have often criticized reducing facts *ad absurdum* by using figures only. Nevertheless, only a mere look at an article on scientometrics shows that only 32 of the 100 most heavily cited authors in the humanities were born in the twentieth century (Nederhof, Luwel, and Moed). Evidence is hard to find, as not many people write about these discrepancies that remain a taboo subject even in scientometrics journals. The most recent data I found was for 2004 when every week about 17,000 new articles and 300,000 new citations were added to the SCI database, 2800 articles and 50,000 citations to SSCI, but only 2200 articles and about 15,000 citations to AHCI (Leydesdorff; facts are confirmed also by Archambault and Gagné; Dassa, Kosmopoulos and Pumain; and in the more recent article of Leydesdorff and Salah, 39 that explains "the slower pace of 'progress' in the humanities.")

For the evaluation I need to work on the following week, we also have to fill in a file with items to prove that we fulfill the criteria for our positions: excellence in research and international visibility. For international visibility, we need to append the list of citations and indicate which libraries worldwide include our works in their collections. In reality, therefore, only a few of these criteria say something relevant about the humanists' value, a basic point which I have repeatedly been attempting to evidence in numerous meetings of the National Council for Research, at the National Council for the Financing of Higher Education and through various petitions addressed to the Ministry of Research, all to no avail. The last one I initiated with four Romanian humanist colleagues in order to convince the minister of research to also appoint representatives of our disciplines in the Research Committee from which he excluded all humanists in 2017; it gathered 1578 signatures, received wonderful comments from great humanists in the country and abroad, yet no answer whatsoever from the minister (*Petiție în sprijinul științelor umaniste din România*).

The next document on my table that requires my attention and an urgent reply hails from another official institution, which kindly asks me to fill in a 20-page questionnaire... with several questions repeated *ad nauseam*: how many classes of computer science are taught to students in letters, how many computer skills they develop, how many classes of entrepreneurship are taught, how many entrepreneurial skills do students receive.

At the end of this usual day in the office, after spending another eight hours doing nothing but administration with no intellectual result whatsoever (and certainly no research done, yet said research needs to be as "excellent" as possible for the national assessment exercise), I might feel tempted to ask whether the Humanities are indeed in a crisis. Yet I dismiss such thoughts.

I do believe that humanists ultimately do themselves a disservice in lamenting about being regarded as "second-class" citizens in their contribution to society. I believe that to maintain the idea that the Humanities are in a crisis is a mistake.

It is 7 pm. I can finally have some time for myself to read my own evaluations for the MA course on Critical Theory I teach. The synthesis made by the university managers (containing the grades I received from 1 to 5) landed on my desk to be signed hours ago. The evaluation form also includes students' opinions on the course bibliography: "Rate from 1 to 5 how recent the bibliography for the course was." I have provided my students with a Reader and very recent articles/ book chapters, some of which I discussed with my students (with the authors' permission) even before publication, thus practically, bringing them a bibliography from the future. Yet it seems I have managed to garner some "2-s". I "need to be more careful when compiling a bibliography in the future", the section of conclusions says. I can consider myself "lucky" that I did not score "2-s" for my pedagogical methods, otherwise I would have had to be retrained in pedagogy by the Department of Educational Sciences, as some feedback to the students' evaluation requires. Knowing that some of my MA students for whose program I have fought for hours today were unsatisfied with the most updated bibliography I have ever produced, maybe it is time to go home. Or to leave the country.

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In the concluding movement of this article, I will endeavor to come up with a response to this kind of state of affairs that is both hopeful and constructive, engaging once more with some of the ideas of the theorists whose works I used in the first part: Derrida's thinking of the role of the Humanities in the twenty-first century, Stiegler's seven-point "program", based on a contemporary adaptation of the Platonic model, and Jay's conclusions in *The Humanities "Crisis" and the Future of Literary Studies*.

According to Derrida, the New Humanities have to go on focusing on treating "the history of man, the idea, the figure, and the notion of 'what is proper to man'" ("The Future of the Profession" 50-51). The history of literature should keep the same desiderata as in the past, since the literary canons remain "traditional and indisputable objects of the classical Humanities", as strong as "the history of the concept of literature" and that of the institution of literature, "which allows one to *say everything* in *every way*" (Derrida, "This Strange Institution Called Literature" 36).

I began this essay with Stiegler's views on "the global war" affecting the university that has not chosen to develop the positive side of the *pharmakon*. Even after the philosopher's premature death in August 2020, Stiegler's pharmacological critique will remain the necessary prelude to a cure that would harness the benefits of technology while eradicating its negative effects. Stiegler's seven-point "program", based on a contemporary adaptation of the Platonic model, provides a general blueprint for the "university with conditions" of the future that will no longer work like a corporation but will "put organological" (by "organology" he designated a way of thinking the co-individuation of human organs, technical organs and social organizations) and "pharmacological questions at the heart of its work" and make "tertiary retention not only an object of study, but an object of *practice*;" with these two objectives in mind, the university should become "a *new integrated system of primary, secondary and tertiary education*" and academics' goals should be the transformation of "public space, public time and the public thing", while they should remain aware of "the new publication system generated by digitalization" (171). The two projects initiated by Stiegler, the political and cultural group *Ars Industrialis* (2005) and his own philosophy school (*pharmakon.fr*, 2010) in Épineuil-le-Fleuriel, with courses running for high school students and a doctoral program, started from his "insistence on the need to create new forms of spirit in the contemporary digital age under new media conditions" (Milesi 136).

Some of Jay's conclusions in *The Humanities "Crisis" and the Future of Literary Studies* are worth pursuing as well: on the one hand, the critique against humanists who do a disservice to the Humanities; on the other hand, the emphasis on the practical values of the humanities.

Jay is right to oppose Lisa Ruddick who asserts that professionalization was the "near enemy" of the Humanities, and that critical theory as well as methodology made humanists step into nihilism. He is also right to disagree with Geoffrey Galt Harpham, the promoter of an education for the postgraduates that should open them to the experience of literature instead of involving them in research (101). To Jay's list, historian Nigel A. Raab can be added, for his non-constructive criticism of theory in historical studies that he characterizes as "an Ikea instructional booklet that demonstrates step-by-step how to build a bunk bed (or to interpret a given set of historical data)" (11). Such attitudes are also disapproved with in Stefan Herbrechter's "~~Review~~" (intentional deletion) of Daniel J. Cohen and Tom Scheinfeldt's edited book *Hacking the Academy*. Herbrechter thinks that "the best service one might do to the humanities is to save them from themselves" (203).

Reiterating Jay's conclusion that the Humanities "*do* teach practical, transferable skills" (30) is important to make students enrolling in the Humanities aware that they can contribute to the understanding of crucial contemporary issues such as migration, economic or pandemic crises (and we are experiencing such a crisis now). The assumption that young people opting for a career in the Humanities have no "practical" utility in a society that decided that STEM subjects are more robust and future-proof disciplines has been proven wrong numerous times. Jay's truth is validated by at least two facts: the extension being able to learn is critical thinking, as the world changes and business are obliged to follow suit, a fact validated during the current crisis; Humanities graduates are employed by corporate leaders because they possess communication skills and critical thinking so much needed in our contemporary world. From many examples, I will use Marissa Mayer's report (2011) that revealed Google's interest in hiring about 6,000 people, from whom probably 4,000–5,000 were with a Humanities or liberal arts background (Jay 12; Reisz) and Lesa Sawahata's interview (2018) with Susanne Folkerts, a Project Manager from Starbucks, who admits that the value added to her company by employing International Studies and Humanities students consists in "research data, market specific insights, and lots of great energy." These facts are proven by Koendjbiharie's case study on the learning practice of student consultancy and Madsbjerg's *Sensemaking: The Power of the Humanities in the Age of the Algorithm*, that insists on a return to training business leaders in the SSH, since the rise of algorithmic intelligence comes with the business leaders' inability to produce contextual analyses and their lack of "analytical empathy" (116). An example of successful graduates of a technical field who felt the need to enroll in a Humanities program can be also revealing: Damon Horowitz, director of Engineering at Google, returned to Stanford to pursue a PhD in philosophy, explaining that he believed there was "no surer path to leaping dramatically forward in your career than to earn a PhD in the humanities" (qtd. in Jay 14).

Moreover, as Maximilian Gindorf claims, "the humanities are an essential part of modern society because they emerge in the process of modernization as a response to the rise of the natural sciences" (2). Unlike scientists, humanists are not focused primarily on "quantification, measurement, calculation, and formulas" but rather on "affect, interpretation, ethical and moral thinking, dramatic representation, and the kinds of emotional and intellectual experiences they shape", producing "an intersection…between the emotions and the intellect" (Jay 14). Being interested not only in meaning as scientists but also in its nature and its production, humanists are more capable of "operating as global citizens in a transnational marketplace" and of facing "the challenges of the twenty-first-century workplace" (Jay 28, 13).

Recently some universities gradually realized that investing only in the STEM disciplines is a mistake. Some UK Schools of Humanities have published disclaimers on their sites that contradict Humanities graduates' unemployability (see School of Humanities, Dundee University; School of Humanities, University of Southampton).

A striking example of opening towards the Humanities in our age is Tsinghua University, the most prestigious Chinese university in QS 2021, ranking 15 (see QS World University Rankings, 2021), part of the C9 group (Chinese Ivy League), traditionally a stronghold for the sciences, which strengthened considerably its Humanities programs recently. Tsinghua follows a different education principle from other universities, "that brings out graduates with a superior mastery of Chinese and foreign culture and history." (Tsinghua School of Humanities website) In 2014, Xinya College, a residential liberal arts college, modelled after universities in the United States and Europe, was established at Tsinghua as a pilot project to reform undergraduate education (Xinya College website). Tsinghua's expenditures in 2016 were 13.7-billion-yuan, making it the top-spending university in China (Wenyu).

The remedies proposed here, and the strong belief into the practical values of the Humanities and the critique of anti-humanist positions (often, sadly, coming from humanists themselves), I hope, must become the profession of any humanist facing the changes of our contemporary society. They will help the institution called university remain the school of thought that made us, the humanists, reflect skeptically about received truths which are far from reality.

Notes

2 In 2021, there were only two universities from Romania in QS (Quacquarelli Symonds), Babes-Bolyai University and University of Bucharest, 801-1000 – see QS World University Rankings, 2021; and the same Babes-Bolyai University, 701-800 in ARWU – see Academic Ranking of World Universities 2020. In QS 2022, both universities had even lower scores.

3 'Faculty' here refers not to academic staff who teach courses as in a US context, but to academic schools/departments from a European perspective. Some European universities use the term 'faculty' instead of the Anglo-American term 'School'; thus, the School of Arts and Science would be the Faculty of Arts and Science.

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Gloria McMillan

"THE NEW CRITICISM?" *AGAIN?*

This essay shows parallels between the DBAE (Discipline-based Art Education) method of art education to the literary analysis method of The New Criticism or the related critical discourse of Formalism. We have the experience of "The New Criticism" method as articulated by John Crowe Ransom in his 1941 text of that name, as our guide from the familiar textual analysis into uncharted realms of visual art education. Art history and literary history researchers detect elements in and about visual and verbal texts. What comes to mind when somebody becomes an "art detective?" Usually the activity involves a skilled estimator trying to prove the worth of an artwork as a commodity, the end product (or some would argue by-product) of a lifelong way of viewing reality and transforming it into visual values. But here a new art detective is doing something a bit different. In this essay, I will look at some important and neglected aspects of world of art itself, how art works, and how art is taught.

Discipline-based Art Education and Its Discontents

Sandra Münster's recent research in learning styles at Oxford University tells us that most of us are rather more open to taking in new knowledge visually than via any other sense ("Visual Side"). I will show by a graphic how the new regime of DBAE ("Discipline-based Art Education") disseminated by the John Paul Getty Foundation is shaping the way K-12 art teachers are trained. Now keep in mind that the public schools have fewer and fewer funds for full-time Art Specialists. I am one. I am certified to teach K-12 art by the State of Arizona. My training occurred just as DBAE was taking hold at the University of Arizona due to a large (for art) grant from The Getty Foundation to Dr. Grant[1]. Dr. Grant and others teach our K-12 art teachers the methods that they will use to teach art in our schools.

What do art theorists mean by their "discipline?" Here is a critique of the DBAE approach to art history from a student writer in *UK Essays*:

Art history is studying the artistic accomplishments based on culture and history. Students educated through DBAE instruction begin with observing exemplars. The choices of exemplars have received the most criticisms because of the lack of representation in different societies, gender, and minorities. The section of curriculum devoted to art history has roots with Perennialism qualities. From a Perennialist perspective the exemplars are mainly chosen from Western European artists; predominately individuals who are white and male. The program meritoriously excluded other genres and narrowed student's ability to think critically by telling them the exemplars were the only necessary or worthy pieces of work to study. ("Discipline-based")

"Perennialist" means that nothing changes and that art standards are "eternal," an illogical statement on the face of it. Van Gogh's paintings were deemed of poor quality by a majority of the public and professional audiences in his lifetime. If art standards were, in fact, "perennial," then van Gogh's paintings would still be viewed as lacking artistic value. The unnamed student writer at the British Art Curriculum site continues that

Unfortunately, the designers of the DBAE rely heavily on the "great works" specifically within Western European art history, in essence taking the status quo route of it was good for previous generations, so it must be good for the next generation. The Perennialist teacher is supposed to focus on personal development, but it appears that the art history framers of the DBAE approach are interested in developing one point of view, one level of emotion, and providing one genre of "great work. ("Discipline-based")

The DBAE "Selection Effect"

The "exemplars" in the online DBAE Guidebook seem stilted and prone to stereotypical views, as is shown by one of the few representations of African American life: African American painter Henry O. Tanner's *The Banjo Lesson*. For "exemplars" without images, please refer to the hypertext links in Works Cited. Tanner is an established or "canonical" painter, who lived from June 21, 1859 – May 25, 1937. He was prominent and one of the first African American painters to reach international acclaim, but hardly cutting edge for today's students. The next painting used as an exemplar in the DBAE Sampler online is of a black-face minstrel. This minstrel is placed in comparison to Tanner's *The Banjo*

Lesson, presumably to start a conversation about authenticity in representing African Americans, as well as analysis of formal values. I might add that "The Banjo Lesson" is an odd choice, selected perhaps because it is "picturesque," or "historically rustic" unlike paintings that might relate more directly to students' lives as minorities in *an urban setting*, by beginning with some of the Harlem Renaissance painters instead.

Reading *The Banjo Lesson* in its historical context, we have somebody perhaps during the time of slavery teaching a small child, maybe a relative, how to play a banjo. The year *The Banjo Lesson* was created, 1893, saw classical composer Antonin Dvořak (Symphony #9, *From the New World*) in New York at the National Conservatory of Music, working with the African- American composer and arranger Henry Thacker Burliegh to introduce to the classical music world some examples of "plantation melodies" or, as we call them now, Spirituals. Statistics from the University of Missouri's Law School show that 1893 also marked one of the peak years for lynching in the post-Reconstruction south ("Famous"). In its day, *The Banjo Lesson* might have been a progressive image. But the outside chance that any of this will come up in a class in which 90% of the time is devoted to those New Critical principles of visual elements of a painting is remote at best. Tanner's painting may be viewed as a testament to the family or powers of creativity under slave conditions, but the image holds the ambiguous position of setting limits and looking only at the past as its perennialist rhetorical argument.

One painting that might serve to contrast with *The Banjo Lesson*, which hearkens to the past and which feeds off the Perennialist theme, is *Aspiration* by the Harlem Renaissance painter Aaron Douglas, who lived from 1899 to 1979. The few representations of African Americans in the online DBAE Guide's pages show masks and tribal gear, a past-facing "Banjo Lesson" and *National Geographic*-like photo of a "Yoruba Nigerian woman in her tribal dress." But *Aspiration* specifically denies power to the Perennialist dogma and aims African Americans into a future of better lives, lives that make use of all that African Americans have to offer. Not merely one talent is shown but a rainbow of abilities and a star sending out warmly radiant light, as figures rise up from chained arms at the base of the painting, holding tools of professions. Since these images are part of a sample and teachers may select their own "masterpieces" by "great" artists, I might take the position that no harm is done here and that teachers may choose as I just did. Any culture needs to look both to the past and to the future.

To clarify, I am making no judgment on the formal values in these two paintings, but an analysis of the two paintings' rhetorical arguments. I am not attempting to prove one painting is stylistically "better" than the other. They are apples and oranges in terms of style. *The Banjo Lesson* makes its case for values and tradition that can easily be fit into the Perennialist position that life is an unchanging continuum. A person or group was held in one demoralizing position in the past, but this need not be challenged, according to the rhetorical argument of this painting. *Aspiration* makes a different sort of rhetorical case: the past may always be with us, but we have also a future and we are capable of so much more. The painting *Aspiration* is something that students from various backgrounds can connect with in their everyday lives, as Vincent Lanier advises as a benefit for the use of "topical" art in "The Teaching of Art as Social Revolution."

The rhetorical statement any painting makes may be shown overtly as in *Aspiration* above. The rhetorical meaning of *The Banjo Lesson* is inferred. Teachers may choose one or another of an artist's works that give a more easily digestible view of the world. This kind of invisible or "behind the scenes" selecting out of uncomfortable content may give an unwarranted impression that all "great" art has nothing to do with social issues, as will be seen below in the selection of a Picasso painting or a Kollwitz graphic. These visual texts, paintings and graphics, selected by the DBAE Sampler show a tendency to avoid issues of society. Even when an artist is featured known to be very concerned with social issues, instead the DBAE Sampler writers show works of these artists that are more easily rendered only in formal visual values, rather than as a rhetorical narrative combined with formal visual values.

When controversial artists are shown in the "Discipline-based Art Education Curriculum," these painters' least engaging and blandest works are chosen. The German artist Käthe Kollwitz's selection is not her stark works from devasted post-World War I Berlin, protesting the futility and horror of war (after her son was blown apart in a trench), paintings of starving mothers shielding babies and asking for bread, but an anonymous woman with her eyes shut. Instead of this widely recognized and reproduced image by Kollwitz, the online writer of the DBAE chose an intriguing but vague earlier work called "The Waiting" ("Das Warten") from 1914. Looking at the link to this lithograph in the Works Cited, we can see that there is no narrative in "The Waiting" except whatever can be gleaned from a generic mood. Reader Response Theory, and our reading repertoire tells us that readers and viewers usually appreciate paintings via prior experience and world views. Obviously the uncomfortable nature of much of Kollwitz's graphics caused the DBAE Sampler writers to choose rhetorically unchallenging visual texts (McCormick 22).

The still-controversial painter Pablo Picasso is represented in the online "Discipline-based Art Education Curriculum," by his early and lesser-known blue period painting from 1903, *The Tragedy*, rather than his world-famous and viscerally emotive 1937 *Guernica*. *Guernica* uses the schematized imagery of the lamp-holding man thrusting his head out a window, the screaming woman and dead baby, bodies lying on the ground, and the bellowing bull. By contrast *The Tragedy* shows three figures apparently in mourning over something, standing motionless. *The Tragedy* is so "universal" in its simple theme and ambiguities that Picasso's early work *The Tragedy* shows itself as another perennialist artwork selected in the DBAE Sampler. That is, any tragedy equals any other with something for everybody (and therefore, very little for anybody). *Guernica* speaks in a heightened rhetorical register of a singular event that rocked the twentieth century, the first aerial carpet bombing of civilians in a city. By now, *Guernica*, too, has a broader resonance with inhumanity after the title's event. The difference is in professional risk-taking. When Picasso painted this *Guernica*, the painting of civilians being bombed by one side in a war, his artwork offended some of its contemporary audience. *The Tragedy* is safe and offends no one then or now. Arguments about audience that focus on children in grade school through high school needing to be "protected" by such skewed choices of art show little awareness of what students see outside the classroom in media. My understanding of the DBAE principles and their overvaluing of form over narrative is that *The Tragedy* will suit anybody and will be easier to reduce to shapes, tones, and colors on a surface via the DBAE system than will *Guernica*, where the narrative story of Picasso's painting *demands* attention. Students might ask what is going on in the shockingly anguished figures in *Guernica*. They will not ask much about *The Tragedy*. *The Tragedy*'s title says it all. A DBAE instructor might note, in keeping with such a simplified approach to art that "Picasso was sad when he painted *The Tragedy* in his Blue Period, students."

A calm "appreciation" of art in suitably "decorous surroundings" is precisely what Vincent Lanier was speaking of in his essay cited in the next section Rock and Feather: DBAE on Form and Content. DBAE's goal is to nudge the student toward becoming a spectator "self" who is capable of separating life from art and appreciating "art" as only—exclusively—formal values in 2- or 3-dimensions, largely devoid of narrative content except what may be lengthy narratives about form.

Rock and Feather: DBAE on Form and Content

The unequal weight given to formal values and issues of content or narrative by these categories outlined in the Getty Foundation's DBAE program is a matter of concern. Using a scale as my image of this methodological inequality, I would represent the weight difference this way as seen in Figure 1:

Figure 1. Discipline-based Art Education's emphasis of form over content.

While we were told in art education seminars that a painting or other artwork's narrative ("story") would be part of the analysis of that artifact, we spent up to 90% of time on formal values alone. Too much narrative will "break out of our disciplinary boundaries into illustrating an external-to-artwork point" was one of my art education professor's explanations. We were not forbidden outright from considering "content" in our Art Education certification classes, but the weight in art analysis is all on the plastic or formal values. The higher the "MQ" (Masterpiece Quotient) the less

attention to "content issues." The epitome is abstract expressionism, which by design has no narrative and only formal values.

What is the cost-benefit ratio of Abstract Expressionism's refusal of content? Who benefits most? I could be flippant and say multinational corporations benefit the most from the prevalence of Abstract Expressionism because this form of art is perhaps most often found in their global offices. Abstract Expressionism challenges nothing in the external world. Abstract paintings remain fully encased in their world of line, shape, hue, tone, perspective, vanishing point, color saturated field, and negative space. Ironically the largest of these *negative spaces* is the ability to comment upon society in abstract paintings. That is, such a painting may take up an entire wall yet have nothing to say about any doings in the corporate board room it occupies, the city, the country, the planet, the cosmos. Just one example of this "wall treatment" is Wrapped Studios' *Convene*, a wall-sized painting of mostly red strokes that bleeds along walls on ceilings and down halls ("Wrapped"). Exclusively used formal values do say something. These formal values infer endorsement of those who own these art works, the way they have engineered the social relationships and strata of the society. By restricting art to a catalogue of formal values, nothing need be different outside in society, and the voice of the artist is largely stilled.

Though he may not be remembered as broadly as other art theorists, Lanier's influence on movements like Visual Culture has been noted by researchers such as Sarah Moore at the University of Arizona ("Interview"). Jan Jagodzinski says of Lanier that he was "one of the first generation of post-WW II art educators, who had an influence on the field of art education that remains with us to this day" (338). Lanier condemns art education that gives undue weight solely to formalism because of how this emphasis harms the creativity of poor children in his essay "Art as Social Revolution" (*Phi Delta Kappan* journal Feb. 1969), saying that

> What art must do and can do is to help the poor—particularly the children of the poor confront and explore their own problems. This cannot be done by conceiving of art as the central behavior of society or or of the individual. It is not. This cannot be done by seduction into the dream world of Pied Piperism. The hunger of the belly or the spirit is very real. (314)

Lanier goes on to address the cognitive creative "Process" movement then sweeping across pedagogy in the art and writing educational quarter. He continues that we must understand and catalogue the "process of creating and appreciating" art in all students, but this slow research on the teaching of the young to better assess their visual surroundings is not helpful unless this pedagogy intersects the students' *own lives* and lives of the people surrounding them. Lanier challenges the educators' claim that the poor are a sensorially-deficient population group, arguing instead that "What will we then do for the disadvantaged? First of all, stop thinking of them as disadvantaged and accept as valid the arts and art experiences they enjoy and approach critically" ("Teaching").

The main problem of the teaching of art may well be economic self-segregation. The cadre of teaching professionals do not share the surroundings of their students, so tend to operate in pedagogical methods that penalize the young students for not being themselves—clones of the teachers—and of the social classes above the teachers. Lanier continues

> Secondly, we must understand by continual exposure, the lifestyles, the cultural patterns, of the poor, so that these will neither surprise nor shock us when we meet these patterns as teachers in the classroom. Third, we must find the means—in this case the art class by which the children of the poor can solve their own life problems and develop alternatives to alienation, frustration, and irrational violence.

Psychoanalyst Viktor Frankl's study of World War II Nazi concentration camp prisoners *The Search for Meaning* revealed that human beings need meaning as much as food and water. Lanier pleads for a similar understanding for students because "the dispossessed of our society want dignity even more than good jobs and suburban homes."

Both Frankl and Lanier knew that people in desperate circumstances have a powerful need to make sense of life. This need may mean little to those in comfortable circumstances where art is one of the leisure activities that shows we have "culture," Vincent Lanier was one of the first art education researchers to challenge art as a field totally boxed in by formal values alone.

Narrative Art and the DBAE Scale of Balance

The Getty Foundation's DBAE pedagogy of "masterpieces" and "great works" exemplars operates upon assumptions and goals that run counter to what Lanier is proposing in his essay. In the DBAE, the job is all that of the children from less-affluent environments to change themselves in order to please. No movement at all is required on the part of those in power in society. Their standards must be the one and universal standard for all. In terms of rhetorical style, the DBAE Guide disguises its points in terms of "helping" students to "grow" and "see" new vistas. But these vistas are those already known to those in charge. DBAE is a closed system and a system with movement only in one direction,

with little outreach from the teachers into the here and now of everyday life of students in lower socio-economic urban or rural environments.

The teachers using DBAE seldom "learn" anything from their students; instead they use the old empty pitcher model of education because they depend upon "great" art and masterpieces so heavily. In "How Can Art Educators Promote A Choice-Based-Program While Supporting And Maintaining Standards-Based Instruction And Assessment," Jessica Frisco explains her experiences with DBAE

> While this traditional approach is historically referred to as Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), my experience at my undergraduate institution was constructivist in nature. It felt like a strange mixture. The philosophy of constructivism, which emphasizes learning through experimentation and reflection and the traditionally prescribed nature of the DBAE pedagogy did not feel like they melded together naturally, especially in the world of teaching students how to be innovative thinkers. (9)

A major reason for the emphasis upon formal values and art history is that they are more amenable to standardized grading and create respectability for art education and its practitioners. The value of art amid all the academic subjects was and is a topic of debate. Teachers pour knowledge into the empty heads of their pupils. The pitcher model and the perennialist frame of time are two major weak areas in extremely formal, value-weighted methods such DBAE, according to many critics, including Vincent Lanier.

Figure 2. George Lucas Museum of Narrative Art under construction in Los Angeles, CA. This museum will address the form, content balance, and meaning outside "formal values," although those are fully covered.

However, there is a counterpoint on the horizon, The George Lucas (director of *Star Wars*) Museum of Narrative Art is under construction in Los Angeles, as seen in Figure 2. This Museum will directly challenge the rigid formalism of the DBAE, including the hierarchical value placed upon art that can only be judged by formal values *rather than telling a story*. Narratives may take many forms, including social critique or discussing a visual text's formal values. The Getty Foundation's DBAE program's status-conscious system has kept socially-aware art at a disadvantage. DBAE-trained teachers use methods that discourage any voice in the artist, so how can the student artists know that there may be more to art than what teacher says?

Science fiction readers are sensitive to the pressure of imposed hierarchical framing of art into an ideology because they model alternate ways of thinking, alternate futures, and aspects of technological change. These readers in my experience have often told of feeling unchallenged where art history and models from the past are held in absolute esteem based upon shaky standards of unchanging "excellence" in the arts. Art has been used as "crowd control," in fact (Arnold). Matthew Arnold felt that the working-class flooding Manchester and London needed something to keep them in line and, if religion would not do the job, then culture could. Culture could dazzle and replace the awe of religion with an awe of power via art. He called this winning the "masses" (a non-existent designation but useful to those in power) via "sweetness and light."

> Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater! - the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we all come to a

perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so 'neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. (Arnold, "Sweetness")

As if in a prophetic trance, Arnold saw the future genre of science fiction and fantasy into to which the uncouth "masses" might flee from the regimentation of DBAE, saying

It must be real thought and real beauty; real sweetness and real light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses. ("Sweetness")

The grandfather of DBAE and the original formulator of "Perennialism" to keep people in line, Arnold concludes that

It [Culture] seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely, -nourished, and not bound by them.

This is the social idea; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time. ("Sweetness")

To give Arnold a bit of slack, he wrote without the benefit of seeing how his ideas would be enacted. He actually meant well in a time when textile factory workers in Manchester, England, were thought of as little more than cattle or slaves. Now the Getty Foundation is again raising the banner of this "great men of culture" idea and making some headway, although the number of students fleeing the "great art" ideology into various pop and media genres must be worrying to the DBAE adherents. This is not either-or, but *both* as a desirable goal, both what has been called fine art and also what is called narrative art.

Van Gogh Becomes a Narrative Artist

You'll probably find the interior the ugliest, an empty bedroom with a wooden bed and two chairs – and yet I've painted it twice on a large scale. I wanted to arrive at an effect of simplicity as described in Felix Holt. In telling you this you'll perhaps understand the painting quickly, but it's likely that it will remain ridiculous for others, not forewarned. To make simplicity with bright colours isn't easy though, and I find that it can be useful to show that one can be simple with something other than grey, white, black and brown. That is the *raison d'être* for that study. (Van Gogh, "Letter 21 to Willemien van Gogh, Oct. 1889")

Figure 3. Van Gogh's *The Bedroom* [De Slaapkamer]. The Art Institute of Chicago.

The "formalism only" forerunners of the DBAE method of seeing paintings accounts for why Vincent van Gogh's period of living among the miners in Le Borinage was so undervalued until a few shows quite recently, the latest at London's Tate Gallery. That Tate show that ran from the March 27 to Aug. 11, 2019, dealt with van Gogh's activism in his paintings done in London, how Charles Dickens's and the rebellious George Eliot's novels, such as *Felix Holt the Radica,* inspired some of his art, including The Art Institute of Chicago's *Bedroom in the Yellow House at Arles,* see Figure 3. Because of training the overall importance of formal values, curators and critics alike ignored the artist's *own statements* to his mother and sister in a letter that Bedroom was painted to recreate the surrounding of the proponent of voting rights and "Chartism," Felix Holt the Radical, the protagonist of George Eliot's novel of the same name.

This letter was cited in Kathryn Hughes' April 2, 2019 review of the van Gogh 2019 exhibit at the Tate Gallery. Some people were thunderstruck by the sudden re-classification from "fine" art to narrative art of Van Gogh's famed *Bedroom*. How can such—we'll give this a kindly explanation—"omissions" occur? Why did the curators "not notice" what van Gogh was plainly saying? The most obvious theory I can posit here is because acknowledging what van Gogh said about *Bedroom in the Yellow House at Arles* did not suit the framework of formalism. Admitting that *Bedroom* is a narrative painting and not pure "Fine" Art lowers the painting in the system. This meaning of *Bedroom* opens the door to social critique being prominent in van Gogh's thinking in ways that have not been discussed in biographies because this is new research on recently translated letters and, especially, exhibit catalogues. His Borinage paintings of miners are seldom on tour. Another theory as to how this meaning was never acknowledged in one of van Gogh's most famous paintings may have to do with demographics and who becomes a curator in the first place.

The DBAE operates from a closed system that what is known is "all" there is to know. There is little room for divergence and surprise. Below is a summative statement from the British Art Curriculum essay site on what students "take away" from the Getty Foundation's Discipline-based Art Education (DBAE), which in the 1990s was crossing the United States due to Getty Foundation grants:

> The teacher deposits the notion that "exemplary x" IS a piece of great work and the student accepts and memorizes it and later regurgitates it back to the teacher. There is a complete lack of variety [in] opinions given toward the exemplars. Freire (2003) believes [that in the 'empty pitcher' or 'banking system'] the students have to work at storing the deposits delivered to them not to develop an awareness which may result in transforming the opinion. Certainly, the teacher engages students in a dialogue, but the conversation revolves around what the teacher believes is important and offers no other alternatives. ("Discipline-based" UK Essays)

Pierre Bourdieu and "The Hardening of the Categories" in the Arts

Sociological research done in France by Pierre Bourdieu some decades ago suggests that we not only harden the arteries leading to our hearts by eating fatty foods and not exercising, but we also harden our hearts by forming categories in our minds. One of the most persistent myths I encounter is that "the arts" are the personal property of the economically comfortable in society. When they attend an art event, this shows their "taste" in the arts, a problematic assumption, leading to entitlement of the consumer over the producer of art.

Bourdieu created an exhaustive catalogue of the taste of the mid-twentieth century French public in his lengthy text *Distinction*. Industrialists and major employers tended to like Bach's *Art of the Fugue,* Jackson Pollock in art, while manual workers liked Petula Clark and nice landscapes. Note that this record of "taste in society" emphasizes the viewer, listener, reader as a consumer, but more importantly (and *invisibly*) grants diminished importance to the player, visual art maker, and creator of drama and film.

If we analyze our role as consumers of the arts according to Aristotle's tripart model speech, speaker, audience, we see in Figure 4 how exaggerated is the importance of the audience.

AUDIENCE	
musician/artist/writer	music/art/literary text

Figure 4. Aristotle's Model applied by Pierre Bourdieu to a study of "taste" or "cultural capital" in society.

Something that goes largely unmentioned in the continuous drone on cultural media broadcasts that bathe the listeners in praise for their "taste" in supporting "the arts" is that this ballooning of attention to the reception of culture diminishes attention to and freedom of the artists themselves.

<div style="border:1px solid black; text-align:center;">

~~BANNED!~~

</div>

Figure 5. Self-censorship is as effective as public censorship .

Taste is the gatekeeper. Taste is self-censorship in the creative process. Just because "taste" happens in ways more subtle than outright censorship does not mean that this process is not equally deadening to "the arts," which many people claim to love. In addition, the process of making the arts a commissioned commodity for the public who support the arts financially leaves little space for *experiment and failure*, two essential ingredients for any science or art not simply set in amber and "rotten with perfection." Cultural and rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke, in his *Language as Symbolic Action*, refers to Aristotle's notion of entelechy, which states that we seek to reach the perfection of our kind. We are rotten with perfection (18).

So in his little way, the French cultural theorist Bourdieu, while studying "taste" also added some heavy fat in the diet of intellectuals and hardened their categorical arteries. Bourdieu's effect on the intellectual class around the world might be likened to the effect of a chocolate mousse on a person who needs to eat a low sugar and fat diet. Before we will meet a person, we can judge by income (largely) what "level of culture" or Bourdieu's term "cultural capital" that a person can be said to possess. Bourdieu may have unwittingly hardened the categories he was "only" trying to measure. That shimmering object called "art" about which we hover in order to study may relate to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. This physical science Uncertainty Principle says that we cannot measure or act upon something without in some way altering that target of our investigative attention.

Pierre Bourdieu may well have caused a ripple of rich chocolate mousse to flow down the whole stream of intellectual discourse with his well-meant categorizing of who is who and what is what about culture, class, and the arts. In terms of the most basic statistical principle of research validity, we can also ask whether Bourdieu really studied "taste" or *something else*. Sometimes educational theorists think they are studying learning disabilities when it turns out they have been tracking a different quality, say, linguistic competence of English-as-second-language learners.

One of my professors in the certification classes for teaching Visual Art in grades K- through-12 in the State of Arizona told me that he hoped one of the main things we would leave his class with was a proper respect for the inertial drag on art of "hardening of the categories." While seeming to challenge and interrogate a number of aspects of social behavior, I have always kept those words in my mind. Hardening of the categories makes us unable to see the walls we have built in our minds.

Argument Via Analogy

People operate on the basis of analogies to prevent novel connections from forming among their synapses. The historical analogy is a great favorite of those who are afraid a new idea may take up neurobiological space in their minds. It goes like this, as voiced by an anxious "supporter of the arts" I know who argues that "unless a critic can surpass the artist under discussion," then nothing but uncritical adulation is needed.

Toulouse Lautrec in the enlightening and visually lovely 1950 biographical film *Moulin Rouge* makes the point about hardened categories quite well. Wealthy Toulouse was treating some friends to cognac outside a Parisian café. One of Lautrec's drunken artist friends breaks into ecstatic admiration of the Mona Lisa, sighing, "Ah, the *Mona Lisa*! She 'smiles with her soul!'" To which Lautrec answers pungently, "I don't care if she 'smiles with' her navel! The only reason you admire the painting is that little brass plate that says 'da Vinci' underneath."

Who is the defender of the arts actually defending? Musicians such as Mozart? Painters such as Da Vinci? Playwrights such as Shakespeare? Hardly! The answer is none of the three but rather the self-image of the culturally-anxious speaker. Bourdieu would agree that this person is merely taking out a mental wallet and waving a bunch of high denomination "cultural capital" bills under our noses. Who counts? I count. My "taste" justifies all my decision-making well beyond the arts and my place, my rank.

Flaws From Analogies to the Past

People like to use historical analogy to predict the future, because cheaper than going to a palm reader, I suppose. However, life's rearview mirror, the historical analogy, only shows similarities and *ignores differences*. No current rhetorical situation is identical to the past. Analogies are one of the easiest baubles to dangle in front of audiences. They shine and shimmer with the promise of solving a perplexing current problem. Our fear-filled cultural aficionado

proposes that "In the past Neanderthal people did A—and what happened to them? Don't do A. I have spoken. End of thinking now ensues on this topic I have solved." This example may be a bit straw—a straw person logical fallacy—but fear and closed systems go together. The gaudier the patter, the murkier the logic, to paraphrase Sam Spade the fictional detective.

In a recent meeting with some Arizona art museum officials, we tossed around some of these ideas like hot potatoes on a ping pong table. There are those things we would do if we could in cultural institutions, but there are many constraints in working in a large arts institution in society. In the current political climate, there is little hope for any public funding. This museum is not unique in having such problems of dealing with "hardening of the categories." The way our system is set up, I would probably be doing much the same in a position of institutional authority. But standing outside this structure a bit, I can offer some insights that museum officials may not see.

For instance, the people who are both economically comfortable and who may not like government contributing to the arts (preferring to give out charity that puts their name in lights), may also miss the cutting off the poor from art by having hefty entrance fees for museums. For much of my life in Chicago, Chicago's cultural and scientific museums were free of charge. What is the difference if they charge now? In a recent phone call, my mother commented that we rarely could have attended the Chicago Art Institute, Museum of Science and Industry, Field Museum, and other institutions if they had the entry fees that they have now. We went almost every week or two. Many of my classmates in my public school in an industrial suburb had never even been to Chicago's Loop and looked blankly when I mentioned the Loop and its cultural institutions. The Loop is just a 40-minute bus ride away from this suburb. What could I have learned in a quick visit every two or three years (or never?) to the Art Institute or the Field Museum? Free wandering through a museum can be liberating, allowing the student to think of connections from one visual text to another without being drilled.

Formulations of "taste" that limit opportunities for some may happen invisibly while society-at-large may not know or care why economic barriers matter. Taking away what used to be *public spaces* might be not optimal for the growth of culture. Bourdieu's "taste" is largely based upon income and who likes what because of who they are or can afford to buy. *Artists think differently than art collectors.* I have personally heard artists agonize over questions such as this: "Should I try to anticipate what my art will "taste" like to you before I paint? I try to locate my market in advance."

Such internal censoring is a major source of creative block for those teaching and those studying the arts. But artists like to do what they like to do because they are exploring all kinds of tangential neural connections, as explored in *Wired to Create* by Scott Barry Kaufman. Kaufman pioneered research on "mind wandering" in the artistic process (33). Waiting for a green light to compose music, paint, write or create in other ways is very slow. Often what the cultural leadership find valuable *later in history* is (how could it be otherwise) invisible to those with the most "taste" in any period and rhetorical situation. Hopefully, this essay has begun to show why.

There is much more involved in art than formal values and "taste," but limiting the spotlight to formal values and "taste" shows how the influence of Bourdieu's theories of "taste" and "distinction" may be a factor in hardening of categories. DBAE, with its "great masterpieces" emphasis, stifles creativity in ways previously mentioned. In addition, the rigid insistence upon artistic formal standards and the accompanying devaluing of student *life experience* do not conform well to neurobiological findings on how human beings think and create. In future, Perhaps an arts radio or television show can explore the effect on culture of "taste" and of "hardened categories" with respect to how they influence both those teaching and those being taught.

Notes
1 This is a pseudonym.

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Patrick Joseph Caoile

THE LIMINAL NATURE OF DIASPORA

FAMILY, HOME, AND IDENTITY IN MIA ALVAR'S "THE KONTRABIDA"

Part of the challenge of the humanities today is in reconciling the Anglo-American tradition with "other voices" that have yet to be heard. Stories of diaspora particularly capture the tensions and conflicts between Western hegemony and marginalized, minority voices. A critical exploration of contemporary diasporic literature, as is the work of this paper, can pave the way for those voices, especially in academic spaces where they have been largely excluded. In *In the Country*, Filipino American writer Mia Alvar presents a collection of stories about Filipinos scattered throughout the world, those abroad and those returning to the Philippines. Her short story "The Kontrabida" follows Steve, a Filipino American pharmacist who returns to his homeland to smuggle painkillers for his bedridden father, despite the abuse and suffering he has inflicted on his seemingly innocent mother. After his father's death, Steve suspects his mother to have played a role in his accidental overdose. Regardless, Steve quickly disregards his suspicions, vowing to bring his mother back to the United States. The borders are blurred, much like the identities and moralities of the story's characters. Alvar's story addresses the clash of generations and cultures, and in between these conflicts—in the liminal spaces between the Philippines and the United States, Steve's mother and father, and even Alvar's text and our reality—the potential for identity formation and expression emerges. As such, the turn towards diasporic literature is a direct answer to the call for other voices in the humanities. Diasporic identity, like literature, is open to interpretation and conceived by imagination.

Definitions of Diaspora and the Role of Imagi(nation): A Review of Literature

Though definitions of diaspora have changed in the latter half of the twentieth century and continue to be contested among scholars in the field of diaspora studies, common definitions remain true to the word's origins. As the editors of *Theorizing Diaspora* note, the Greek term *diasperien* translates to "to sow or scatter seeds," therefore diaspora "can perhaps be seen as a naming of the other which has historically referred to displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration, or exile" (1). In "Diasporas and the Nation-State," Robin Cohen explains how the term has been traditionally associated with the Jewish diaspora and their historic plight of "afflictions, isolation, and insecurity of living in a foreign place…cut off from their roots and their sense of identity" (508). Since the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian Exile in the late sixth century, the Jewish people were forced out of "the land 'promised' by God" and "were depicted as pathological half-persons destined never to realize themselves or to attain completeness, tranquility or happiness so long as they were in exile" (Cohen, "Diasporas and the Nation-State" 508-09). The term was later associated with the analogous cases of groups who "experienced traumatic interludes in their histories which led to their dispersion or further dispersion"—Africans under slavery, the Irish after the famine, Armenians after the genocide under Ottoman Turks, and Palestinians after the formation of Israel (Cohen, "Diasporas and the Nation-State" 512-513). Today, as William Safran explains in "Diasporas in Modern Societies," diaspora has taken on more "metaphoric designations for several categories of people—expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities *tout court*" (83). Safran goes on to articulate a diaspora's idealized concept of homeland, much like the return to Jerusalem for which the Jewish people have longed: "they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return" (83). While this may be true for some who represent the traditional definition of diaspora—those who have been forced out of their places of origin—this return to the mythic homeland is either less or not at all a priority for those seeking permanent settlement outside their birthplaces. Regardless, while the term has widened to include separate and various groups, diaspora remains a term that indicates the outward movement of peoples from their homeland.

The reconsideration of diaspora with "metaphoric designations" coincides with the rise of globalization in the modern age. In addition to definitions concerning the historical displacement of peoples, scholars today often draw on Benedict Anderson's concept of *imagined communities*. As Anderson himself notes, the concepts of "nationality… nation-ness, as well as nationalism [are] capable of being transplanted" (4). In *Imagined Communities: Reflections*

on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Anderson argues that one's ties to a nation, and the concept of nation itself, is pathological and imaginary: "[Nation] is an imagined political community" (6). In contrast to the kinship of tribes and smaller communities where one creates direct associations through face-to-face, in-person, and immediate acknowledgement of other members of the group, in a nation one *imagines* these associations—however loose—with other members. Applying Anderson's nation-as-imagined-community to diasporas, Stuart Hall writes, "At all events, the question of diaspora is posed here primarily because of the light that it throws on the complexities not simply of building, but of imagining…nationhood and identity in an era of intensifying globalization" (208). In *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Arjun Appadurai emphasizes the "*work of the imagination* as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity" (3). He argues modernity as a compounding of both the rise of mass electronic media and the rise of mass migrations. At this intersection, "[D]iasporas bring the force of the imagination, as both memory and desire, into the lives of many ordinary people…. For migrants, both the politics of adaptation to new environments and the stimulus to move or return are deeply affected by a mass-mediated imaginary that frequently transcends national space" (Appadurai 6).

This paper is concerned with the implications of these definitions on one's identity, as *diaspora* often indicates a liminality between a homeland and a host land. Because this sense of belonging to one's nation, homeland and/or host land, is imaginary—unstable, mutable, and susceptible to constant reimagining—so too is identity formed and reformed through imaginary constructs and associations. As Hall continues in "Thinking the Diaspora: Home-Thoughts from Abroad," "[A] closed conception of 'tribe,' diaspora, and homeland…is, of course, a myth—with all the real power that our governing myths carry to shape our imaginaries, influence our actions, give meaning to our lives, and make sense of our history" (209). Appadurai, too, recognizes the 'real power' of myth:

> [As] anthropologists have learned to regard collective representations as social facts—that is, to see them as transcending individual volition, as weighted with the force of social morality, and as objective social realities… [w]hat I wish to suggest is that there has been a shift in recent decades, building on technological changes over the past century or so, in which the imagination has become a collective, social fact. This development, in turn, is the basis of the plurality of imagined worlds. (5)

By extension, the imagination then becomes a tool one uses to construct facts about oneself, both as an individual and as part of a collective. The ambiguities and conflicts inherent in identity are only further complicated by movement, displacement, and dislocation. "This hybridity," as Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur introduce in *Theorizing Diaspora*, "opens diasporic subjectivity to a liminal, dialogic space where identity is negotiated" (5).

Family, Home, and Identity in "The Kontrabida"

The protagonist of "The Kontrabida" finds himself in this liminal space of identity; however, unlike the traditional concept of diaspora where one longs to return and belong to the homeland, Steve is disillusioned in his own homeland rather than in his host land. It has been ten years since he left Manila and his parents for New York. Now a *balikbayan*, a returning Filipino, Steve feels like a foreigner. As a motif, temperature reveals Steve's discomfort with being back home. "I was no longer used to the Manila heat," he admits (Alvar 11); "I craved the cold rush" of the air conditioner (17). When his relatives interrogate him about life in America, he refuses to admit how he "loved the snow, was built for the American cold, and felt, upon entering [his] first job in a thermostat-controlled pharmacy, that [he'd] come home" (12). Furthermore, when he offers to help his mother operate their family-owned store, he fails to understand the customers. He tries to serve Sarsi cola to a teenage girl, who responds with "*plastik*" before taking it (10). However, instead of pouring cola into a plastic bag with a straw—a traditional way to drink sodas in the streets of the Philippines—he depends on his mother to translate what she means. "How had I forgotten?" Steve asks himself, "I'd drunk sodas from plastic sleeves up until the age of twenty-five. And yet the liquid bag I handed over made me think not of my childhood but of some dark, alien version of the waste pouches and IV fluids I'd see at the hospital" (10). While Steve is only starting to become self-aware of this "alien version" of himself, others around him clearly recognize it. When Steve is out with his mother buying flowers for his father's wake, a seller tries to bargain with him. Steve refuses all the seller's offers, "simply [because he] wanted every peddler in the city to know he didn't stand a chance against [him]…. They can read *balikbayan* written on [his] forehead" (21). Like any tourist city, Manila has its own con artists heckling Americans. When he cannot hide his American-ness, Steve lies. Instead of admitting that he spends most of his free time alone at the gym or cleaning his apartment, Steve convinces his relatives that he eats Filipino dishes like *lumpia* (eggrolls) with other Filipino nurses, and that he even "tag[s] along to Sunday Mass" (12). Faith and food are hallmarks of Filipino culture, both of which Steve rejects in his life in New York. The Philippines is not the "true, ideal home" of diaspora that Safran articulates (83). For Steve, there is no mythic homeland, no desire of returning.

Hall asserts, "In the diasporic situation, identities become multiple" (207). Borrowing W.E.B. Du Bois's term, Hall describes a "double consciousness" that results from diasporic identity (212). Here, Steve is torn between being Filipino and being American. He wholeheartedly embraces the United States, yet he does not entirely reject the Philippines since he is so willing to return. Though he has lost taste for Filipino food and fallen out of Catholicism, what ultimately ties him back to his homeland is his family, most importantly, his mother. "As is common to most transnational communities," Hall continues, "the extended family—as network and site of memory—is the critical conduit between the two locations" (207). When his mother picks him up from the airport, Steve "only half-embraced her, afraid she might break if [he] held too tight" (Alvar 3). His mother is the "half" that he "embraces," the part of his Filipino-ness he is careful not to forget nor destroy. Notably, Stuart calls one's ties to the homeland a kind of "umbilical cord" which symbolizes "a cultural identity…primordially in touch with an unchanging essential core" (209). Though this essential core is imaginary, as previously articulated, Steve still clings to his mother. The 'umbilical cord' between mother and son is reinscribed as Steve's connection to the Philippines. This metonymic relationship between parent and homeland is further emphasized in the Sandovals' family dynamics, particularly in how gender informs their relationships.

The conflict between Steve's parents is a continuation of the family drama from his childhood. Esteban, Steve's father, is an abusive, controlling husband, taking steps to limit his wife's socio-economic freedoms. "Years ago my father had forbidden her to drive," Steve narrates, "my mother had been a nurse before he banned her from working outside the house altogether" (Alvar 3). Even when he "slid[es]…down a spiral of unrelated jobs" (3), either through petty theft or a result of his alcoholic tendencies, Steve's father is reluctant to let his wife work, let alone leave the house. He deliberately confines his wife to domesticity, not as an overprotective husband; rather, he knows that letting his wife work would threaten his own sense of power as breadwinner and provider—whether or not he is, in fact, providing. Even when he finds out about the cancer in his liver, Steve's father retains his hubris: "I saw my father shrug or grunt each time the doctor addressed him, as proud and stubbornly tongue-tied as he always became around people with titles and offices" (6). He calls himself an "import-export businessman" whenever Steve asks about his work, but the phrase is vague and, contrary to the doctors of "titles and offices," points toward a lack of job stability, responsibility, and position (3). As much as he desperately wants to be the patriarch of the family, his hubris and alcoholism ultimately prevent him from becoming the ideal figurehead of masculinity.

Instead of seeking power in the socio-economic, public realm, Steve's father turns to his own physical prowess. In his narration, Steve often emphasizes his father's physical descriptions, "the short boxer's physique, a bullish muscularity" (4). Paired with his alcoholism, Steve's father uses his body to his advantage, abusing his wife both physically and sexually. Before Steve "learned much about sex," he—still a child—walks in on his father "Naked, but hidden from the waist down by [his] mother" who is most likely performing fellatio. When his father sees him, Steve runs out to the yard knowing his father would "punish her for every second of [his] presence there" (11-12). Afterwards, as a sign of "contrition that followed nights of drinking," his father would bring home flowers for his wife, "the swooping, romantic gestures that came after he'd blackened an eye or broken a bone" (20). If he cannot earn his dominance by way of title or office, he willfully claims it through brute force. He may not earn the same notoriety and prestige, but his strength and control over his wife becomes widespread in family discussions: "*Esteban has got some heavy hands*, the family always said. *Loretta is a saint*" (7). Steve presents his father as the definitive villain of the story—the *kontrabida*. His lust for power, alcohol, and violence exposes him not as a successful patriarch, but a corrupt tyrant. Even when his father is dead and buried, Steve finds no redeeming qualities in him. Later revelations about his mother, however, complicate Steve's notions of hero and villain.

While his father is characterized through his hubris and physicality, Steve's mother is characterized through her servitude and frailty. In contrast to his father's muscular physique, Steve's mother is "more frail; more tired; softer-spoken" (3). As a child, Steve remembers his mother as "the kind of woman who waited on even the people she'd paid to serve us, back when we could afford them: the laundress, the gardener, the *yaya* who watched me before I started school" (14). Even though she employs them, Steve's mother still expresses an obligation to serve them. Her kindness and hospitality is perhaps an extension of her inherent trait of willingness to help people, evident in her previous occupation as a nurse. In addition, this reveals her loneliness and desire for social interaction and companionship. Confined indoors by her abusive husband, Steve's mother seeks community among the hired help of the household. While she submits herself to her husband's dominance, she also avails herself as an example of Christian humility. "*Loretta is a saint*," the family refers to her, acknowledging her portrayal of a suffering servant (7). As she welcomes Steve upon returning home, Steve's mother makes it clear: "You don't know my strength!" (3). Whereas his father finds strength in his explicit acts of oppression and aggression, his mother finds strength implicitly through not only weathering abuse, but also in her servitude and humility. Opposing the villain of Steve's father is the hero—the *bida*—

in his mother. The conclusion of Alvar's story, however, reveals that it is unwise to underestimate her strength and that she might not be the hero Steve assumes.

When Steve returns to the Philippines as an adult, smuggling opioid patches for his bedridden father, one would expect an inversion of the power dynamics between his father and mother. In the years since Steve left for New York, his parents have built a *sari-sari* extension from their home; as Steve narrates: "*Sari-sari* meant 'assorted' or 'sundry', and so they smelled: like a heady mix of bubble gum and vinegar, salt and soap, floor wax and cologne" (7). It is in this store that Steve's mother claims domain, ever since his father was diagnosed with cancer. The *sari-sari* used to be their backyard, where Steve would retreat from his parents' quarrels. Now, the space has become his mother's refuge. Unlike Steve's father, a self-proclaimed businessman with no work or profit to show for it, Steve's mother successfully keeps the *sari-sari* in business:

> [She] had no trouble hearing her customers. No sooner had a face appeared at the wicket than she was reaching for the shoe polish or cooking oil. Her right hand could pop open a bottle cap while her left tore a foil packet from the shampoo reel. To the voice of a young boy, so small I couldn't see him through the wicket, she sold three sheets, for ten centavos apiece, of the grainy, wide-ruled paper on which I'd learned to spell in grade school. It was a way of shopping I had completely forgotten: egg by egg, cigarette by cigarette, people spending what they earned in a day to buy what they would use in the next. (10-11)

Her ability to be personable, to know the wants and needs of the people in her community, is an advantage. Not only is she able to express her prowess as a businesswoman in the success of the store, but she also experiences the social interaction she so desperately yearned for when her husband was well. For all her husband's efforts to confine and restrict her, Steve's mother becomes what his father had failed to do.

While this may seem to be a complete subversion of his mother's status from when he was a child, Steve notices that this is not the case. Indeed, the *sari-sari* is an opportunity for his mother to take on financial responsibility and to interact with others, but the store is still an *extension* of the house. She does not even need to step outside to go between the house and the store; she has not fully escaped her forced domesticity and her husband. While his father's debilitated health may seem to elevate his mother's status in the power dynamic, it proves only to strengthen the status quo: "Even bedridden and in pain, my father had managed to preserve their old arrangement: when he called, she was there to wait on him" (5). His mother once again dons the role of a nurse, not as a public servant, but a servant to her husband. Steve's father remains the oppressive patriarch of the Sandoval household. Much like the cancer in his liver, the only way to get rid of this oppression is to either cut it out or destroy it. Both Steve and his mother know this, and it is this morbid truth that propels the family drama into more complicated implications.

As a story about a father's death and a son's longing to be with his mother, "The Kontrabida" lends itself to a psychoanalytic reading. The fact that Steve finds himself in the middle of this conflict of power between his mother and father evokes Freud's Oedipus complex, as Freud describes, "Being in love with the one parent and hating the other are among the essential constituents of the stock of psychical impulses" (278). The mere presence of a scene in which Steve, still a child, walks in on his mother performing fellatio on his father encourages such a reading. Throughout "The Kontrabida," Steve mentions his desire to kill his father and save his mother, especially after witnessing his father abuse her. "For all the years I'd spent wishing him dead," Steve narrates, "it was my mother's role in the family drama…to suffer" (Alvar 7). When Steve would retreat into the yard as a child, he would climb a tree and "sling a branch onto [his] shoulder, aiming sniper-style at [his] father…Another time [he] stabbed a fallen twig into the grass and twisted it, imagining his [father's] blood" (26). His father has always been the *kontrabida*, the villain; in turn, Steve desires to play the *bida*, the hero, who saves his mother from his torture and tyranny. The text leans into the oedipal, so much so that it foreshadows the very ending:

> [The] family had switched…to a Tagalog movie…observing the rules of every melodrama I'd grown up watching: a *bida,* or hero, fought a *kontrabida,* or villain, for the love of a beautiful woman. The oldest films would even cast a pale, fair-haired American as the *bida* and a dusky, slick-mustachioed Spaniard as the *kontrabida.* Between them, the woman spent her time batting her eyelashes or being swept off her feet; peeking out from behind lace fans; fainting or weeping; clutching a handkerchief to her heart or dangling it from the window as a signal; being abducted at night, or rescued from a tower, or carried away on a horse….When, at last, the *bida* won the woman, we cheered and whistled, again not out of joy so much as a malicious sort of triumph. The script had succumbed, in the end, to our demands. (16-17)

The morning of his father's death, the doctor states that he had died "peacefully…in his sleep" (18); yet, when Steve checks the deficiency in the Succorol supply, he questions whether or not his mother had a hand in his death. "How many would it take to finish off a dying man?" he questions, "I must have known a drug so powerful could end his life.

So what? Didn't I want him gone, hadn't I always? My mother was better off" (24). Contrary to the figure of Christian servitude and humility, his mother indeed has the capacity for evil and violence, to be just like the villain in his father. Yet, knowing this, Steve is quick to disregard this morbid truth; instead, he confesses: "I would take her with me to New York. I would never leave her again" (25). Steve, at the conclusion of the story, fulfills this "divine will" and "the fate of all of us" as Freud writes of the Oedipus complex (279-80). "Character and destiny," Steve concludes, "I believe in all of that, I guess" (Alvar 26).

While this oedipal, familial conflict takes place in the microcosm of the story, on a more macrocosmic level, "The Kontrabida" presents a conflict between homeland conceptions. Myth, such as that of Oedipus, is integral to diaspora and diasporic identity making. As Appadurai observes, diasporas—as products of mass migration and shaped by mass media—bring new "mythographies different from the disciplines of myth and ritual of the classic sort" (6). For example, Steve's understanding of the Tagalog movie demonstrates how "images, scripts, models, and narratives that come through mass mediation [contribute to the] imaginary that frequently transcends national space" (Appadurai 6). Not only is the global conflict explicit in the American hero's and Spanish villain's rivalry over the damsel-in-distress, the Philippines personified, but Steve also views the film as a reflection of his own familial conflict. If the film represents the Philippines' history under centuries of colonialism and imperialism—a myth in itself that reproduces Western dominance—this new myth conflates the Oedipus myth with the mythical homeland and redefines what the Philippines means for Steve. As Robin Cohen writes,

> Often, there is a complex interplay between the feminine and masculine versions of homeland. In the feminine rendition, the motherland is seen as a warm, cornucopian breast from which the people collectively suck their nourishment…. In other interpretations, the nurturing white milk of the motherland is replaced by the blood of soldiers gallantly defending their fatherland. Their blood nourishes the soil, the soil defines their ethnogenesis. ("Solid, Ductile, and Liquid" 5)

Steve's father is representative of this militaristic, violent, and grotesque notion of the fatherland. Steve emphasizes his brute physicality, embodying the physical land of the Philippines. It is fitting that the father is buried, returning to the land that claims him. On the other hand, Steve's mother—initially—represents the warmness and nourishment of the motherland. Yet, she proves to be just as capable of taking "blood" as providing "milk."

Since the nation is imaginary, it can also be said that the nation is mythical. Stuart Hall writes, "The narrative structure of myths is cyclical. But within history, their meaning is often transformed" (210). The history of the Philippines is characterized by these conflicting notions of fatherland and motherland—of resistance, like Steve's father who repudiates others' titles, offices, and authorities; or of submission, like Steve's mother, always ready to serve and embody humility. Under past colonial-imperial rule from Spain, Japan, and the United States, the Philippines has barely practiced nationhood in the past century. And yet, Steve finds his nation, his homeland, and his Filipino-ness in his mother Loretta, whom he chooses to bring with him to the United States. She withstands her husband's abuse in order to protect her son. Yet, when she has the opportunity, she is willing to sacrifice her morality to join him in America. She is not a clear-cut hero nor a villain; in fact, the word *kontrabida* itself loses meaning entirely without its root *bida*—hero and villain simultaneously. Steve, the protagonist, would not exist without his Filipino roots, nor would he exist without both his mother and father, despite his efforts to cut them off. All these conflicts—historical, moral, familial, mythical—do not necessarily need resolution. It is through ongoing myths and stories that people continually define themselves. Such is the nature of diaspora, a liminal state of vacillating borders and constant redefinition of identity through the use of imagination.

Conclusion

"The Kontrabida" presents a conception of homeland that is neither fatherland nor motherland; its story does not propose a conquering of the father and seduction of the mother in a simple Freudian sense, nor does it tell a straightforward story of hero defeating villain. Instead, the story depicts how one's identity is formed and reformed by nation and family. Homeland, much like its diaspora, must also be a malleable conception. Cohen writes, "diasporas can be constituted by acts of the imagination...transnational bonds no longer have to be cemented by migration or by exclusive territorial claims" ("Diasporas and the Nation-State" 516). For those who do not have the opportunity to return to their homeland, or if circumstances exclude the possibility entirely, the imagination—and in turn, fiction—is an opportunity not only to reaffirm identity, but to redefine it in terms of the various aspects that constitute it. In this way, as Cohen continues, diasporas can transcend "the victim tradition" ("Diasporas and the Nation-State" 513) inherent in traditional definitions of diaspora; rather than be defined by the plight of displacement, diasporas can find agency in their movement. Diasporic writers especially play a crucial role in defining diaspora in the age of globalization:

"An identification with a diaspora serves to bridge the gap between the local and the global, even if the outcome is a cultural artefact rather than a political project" (Cohen, "Diasporas and the Nation-State" 516). Fiction, and more broadly, literature, "are resources for experiments with self-making in all sorts of societies, for all sorts of persons"—this, as Arjun Appadurai articulates, is *the work of imagination* (3). Questions of who we are and where we come from are not answered with simple, one-word responses; they are questions answered in multifaceted, imagined stories. Such is the advantage of telling diverse literatures, especially from writers like Mia Alvar who find themselves in states of liminality. If the role of the humanities is to interrogate the human condition in all its aspects, then a reorientation towards this diversity can not only pave the way for more voices through inclusivity but can also better achieve the humanities' holistic aims.

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Dr. Christina Tourino

REVIEW

REESE, SAM V. S., *BLUE NOTES: JAZZ, LITERATURE, AND LONELINESS*, LOUISIANA STATE UP, 2019.

In *Blue Notes: Jazz, Literature, and Loneliness*, Sam Reese looks at writers who recruit jazz in order to talk about loneliness. His thesis, that these writings, collectively, help us reimagine loneliness as something positive, is welcome news at a historical moment when we seem lonelier than ever. Current social science commentators have worried that loneliness—and the poor mental and physical health that go with it—has gone viral, a state of affairs only intensified by COVID 19. Reese sets out to show us how jazz and writing, as solo artistic forms, can help us reimagine loneliness as an affirmation of the singular held in tension with a system of others. As Reese puts is, loneliness, "however painful and isolating, can also create beauty, empathy, and understanding" (3). In pursuing this line, Reese sorts the cultural meanings at work in the nexus of music and literature in an original way. Further, he evidences his argument through careful and imaginative close readings of an impressively wide range of texts, readings buttressed by the complex historical tangle of race and jazz in America.

Reese begins his work with a study of loneliness. With reference to psychology and sociology, he establishes the fact that while loneliness afflicts humans nearly universally, it varies according to the stories we tell ourselves about what it means. Loneliness is also deeply social: our experience of loneliness can only be understood in relationship to the attachments we are missing. Jazz, Reese claims, matters for authors who explore loneliness, in part, because of the common belief that jazz is mostly sad music, and that jazz musicians are isolated. The importance of the solo in jazz underscores this. The soloist steps away from the group, seems even to reject it, to assert his or her voice alone. At the same time, Reese contends, jazz links with loneliness beyond stereotype and myth. Jazz originates in black alienation from the white mainstream dating back to slavery and its legacy of racial oppression. The sense of exclusion in jazz comes in part from the cultural and economic marginalization of these musicians. The jazz solo perfectly connotes this estrangement, and the emergence of bebop in 1940 exaggerates this effect. Here, black musicians reject the commercially successful big band and swing with a "counterdiscourse" that resists appropriation by white bandleaders and jazz critics.

If loneliness is relational, then writing about loneliness means writing about the relationship of the individual to the group. In order to describe how writers of jazz literature do this (and only after spotlighting what I might call the ur jazz text, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, about which much more momentarily), Reese very smartly recruits composer and saxophonist Ornette Coleman, and his theory of jazz improvisation he called "harmolodics." Coleman is well-known for writing and playing in a style called "free jazz," which eschews conventional harmony, rhythm, and form. Musicians bend pitches to the point of imprecision. With more pulse than meter, and no piano comping, solos are organized around melody instead of chord changes. Free jazz offers more room for individual expression within the context of the group than other jazz forms. "Harmolodics" as a principle of improvisation opens the music to multiple, particular voices in conversation without driving toward closure or harmony. If this feels linguistic, it certainly could be: As Reese notes, Coleman emphasized the linguistic connection in an interview with Derrida. Reese describes Coleman's hope that harmolodics as a concept could "communicate abstract musical ideas through concrete linguistic ones" (128). According to Reese, Coleman's "harmolodics" perfectly describes jazz writing about loneliness. In a series of beautifully-observed close readings, Reese shows us why.

In his first chapter, Reese reads the giants of the "jazz story"—Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Eudora Welty, and Julio Cortázar—and demonstrates how each revises the convention of the lonely jazz musician and considers the ways in which their singular brilliance actually occurs through connection to a larger community. In the final action of the Hughes and Baldwin stories, an improvised performance transforms the fundamentally painful experience of being alone into one of communion and harmony. Welty and Cortázar, instead, complain about white audiences and critics who misunderstand and exploit Black geniuses (Fats Waller, Charlie Parker) and invite the reader to reject this racist view and empathize with the individual musicians.

Sometimes, though, the "jazz story" stages a failed effort to connect. In one of my favorite beats of the book, Reese concludes his first chapter with a fresh and compelling reading of Geoff Dyer's *But Beautiful*. Dyer's accessible and

popular book blends fact and fiction in narrating eight jazz musicians in a series of what Reese understands as "jazz story" fragments (54) whose form Dyer explicitly likens to the performance of a jazz improvisation. Some criticized Dyer for following the commodifiable "jazz-as-destruction-and-redemption" convention (56). But Reese argues that Dyer's book instead dramatizes the problematic nature of the convention itself. For example, Dyer writes of one of his musicians that he "was being thrown out of his own life for not sounding enough like himself" (7). Indeed, Dyer thinks the musicians' popular appeal works against them. Reese asks: In a discourse as well-established as jazz, whose audiences have a clear idea of what to expect, how can the individual, the idiosyncratic, be registered? Writers, musicians, can only express something personal within a conversation of established standards. Reese convincingly shows that Dyer's book does not rehearse social expectations, then, but instead critiques the ways in which social expectations fail to capture the music of the individual: Summarizing Dyer, Reese writes, "we all lose something of ourselves in the patterns of life, and in doing so, lose our connection to others" (63). In his defense of Dyer, Reese showcases his talent for carefully evidenced, evocative readings of even popular literature, as well as his respect for its insights.

In reading jazz writing by women in Chapter 2, Reese finds that, given the gendered restrictions of jazz, for women, jazz is more a source of loneliness than its solution. Further, the limitations of commodified romantic tropes of jazz, so harmful to male musicians' individual expression, hurt women even more. Reese reads Zadie Smith's "Crazy They Call Me" (about Billy Holiday), Toni Morrison's *Jazz*, Gayle Jones's *Corregidora*, and Candace Allen's *Valaida* (about Valaida Snow). In all these pieces, in spite of the clear constraints jazz imposes on women, Reese argues that it also, as a form of social resistance, gives female characters a way to imagine value in their individuality and the possibility of their independence.

In Chapter 3, Reese argues that jazz, since it comes out of a politics of positive difference, perfectly figures the sense of simultaneous isolation and collectivity of marginalized groups. Reese features four "out-narratives" here: Michael Ondaatje's *Coming Through Slaughter* (about Buddy Bolden), Phil Kawana's *Dead Jazz Guys*, Gerald Vizenor's *Hiroshima Bugi*, and Haruki Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*. These writers consider jazz characters who are black, Maori, Anishinaabe, half-caste, and even "part of no group" (120), and they include a parade of hoodlums, orphans, lepers, and homeless. Jazz, according to Reese, doesn't just reverse hierarchies in these narratives; it upsets the logic of domination entirely, and helps those in similar outsider predicaments find one another and move from subordination to "resistance, and cultural autonomy" (118).

In Chapter 4, Reese turns the tables and studies musicians who have written autobiographies. Writing allows musicians to say something about loneliness that their music alone cannot. Further, in writing, musicians can subvert the jazz industry's narrative about them. In an effort they overtly frame in the jazz aesthetic terms of improvisation and performance, both Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus narrate selves that are multiple, plastic, and provisional. This complicates an easy communion with the reader. Mingus, for example, sees in jazz its limitations, its ego, its failure to connect. In one passage, he admires the total unity of a string quartet, something he knows jazz cannot do.

In braiding jazz, literature, and loneliness, Reese pursues the sort of synthetic project that is after my own heart. *Blue Notes*' reach allows Reese to give our understanding of loneliness nuance, depth, and amplitude. However, with this ambition come some limitations. One bugaboo is a certain equivocation around the relationship between novelistic and jazz forms. Reese respects this difficulty: "I am wary of simply reading loose analogies between literary structures and musical ones" (136; he also states this on 117). Instead, he claims to explore only what the writers themselves say about the relationship of their writing to music. Still, this is a fine line, and there are moments where Reese cheats it. Five times Reese draws the kind of analogy between literature and music that he promises to avoid. For example, Reese claims that the short story naturally invites jazz writing because both are "rebellious" in their way (the jazzer is "rebellious" and the short story is a "minor form" in comparison with the novel (32, 37)). Similarly, when Cortázar's character Johnny criticizes his biographer because "there are things missing," Reese compares this line to a solo in jazz (52). Reese also argues that Morrison's text, because it demands an active reader who can piece fragments together, mirrors jazz in its form (74-5). Again, of *Coming Through Slaughter*, Reese says "[it] draws on jazz as . . . a counter narrative structure that helps circumvent the expectations of conveniently linear narrative fiction" (102). Most obviously, Reese banks on Coleman's theory of "harmolodics," which expressly tries to codify music in linguistic terms. It is hard to stay mad at Reese for these indiscretions, though, because finding these sorts of equivalent terms is notoriously fun, and because Reese has the chops to make it worth our while.

A related and probably more serious concern is the way Reese selects his texts. Reese chooses texts that present images of jazz in fiction with a common thread of loneliness. While this has what I take to be the advantage of nicely

avoiding categories like nation, race, class, gender, and even restrictions of genre, at times, however, this wide scope puts Reese's project in jeopardy of wobbling off its jazz-in-literature axis. Reese is everywhere: He looks at texts about particular musicians; he looks at texts about fictional musicians; and he looks at texts that are not about any particular musician at all. He reads short stories, novels, and autobiographies. He reads the high-brow and the best-seller, the experimental and the conventional, the "minor" forms and the canonical, the resolved and the fragmented. Some texts are more about blues than jazz, or they are about bebop, or they are about early jazz, (in fact, given Reese's latitude, I was surprised not to see James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* among his offerings). Sometimes I think I see beads of sweat break out as Reese muscles the material into orbit. Still, most of the time, when I feel him spinning out to distant stars, he provides a really convincing detail, and I can see why his temptation to include this or that text is just too strong to resist.

Finally, while Reese's readings are generally sensitive and keen, I would like to complicate his explication of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. This reading deserves careful attention because it is Reese's first, it comes in his introduction, and like Coleman's "harmolodics," it sets the stage for the rest of Reese's study. Reese argues that the Invisible Man's solitude, as Ellison narrates it, is a positive, protective thing, associated as it is with Louis Armstrong. This solitude breaks down in only one scene, the focus of Reese's attention: when the Invisible Man, who is black, tries to seduce Sybil, a white woman, in order to collect information. Sybil proves to be not only a worthless political informant, but she also scoops the Invisible Man with her own demands: she asks him to comply with what is clearly a racist rape fantasy. Luckily for him, she passes out. When she comes to, he lies that he did, in fact, rape her, to her delight and gratitude. Reese reads this as a moment where mutual recognition, in the form of conspiracy in the same narrative, shows the Invisible Man the possibility of shared experience.

This provocative reading supports Reese's larger claims about the positive valences of loneliness in jazz writing. However, I want to contest this reading by dwelling for a moment on the sexism in the scene, which goes largely unremarked. The Invisible Man, in trying to understand why Sybil would beg him to rape her, does acknowledge that white women are taught to worship power, and to think that black men entertain. But he still also thinks "maybe a great number [of white women] secretly want it" (520). Sybil herself says "Men have repressed us too much," but the only liberation she seeks is through sexual self-expression. If the narrator is a racist projection of Sybil's, Sybil is also a sexist projection of the narrator, but without the sympathetic analysis.

Perhaps, though, this is on Ellison as much or more than it is on his eponymous character. As Ellison writes her, Sybil "needs" to be raped (518). Sybil is a hateful, sexist cartoon, stranded in this scene, without any reference to or objections about the forces that have produced her. She is merely damning evidence of the triviality of the "Woman Question." Ellison repeats this lapse in two other earlier scenes that narrate sexually accommodating women; the nameless, bored white seductress who supposedly takes erotic advantage of the narrator, and the young, black Matty Lou Trueblood, who, as her father tells it, willingly, and with desire, cooperates in her own incestuous rape.

All this leaves me less optimistic than Reese about the possibility that Sybil and the narrator make a connection in their solitude. They both seem isolated beyond saving by projections of white patriarchy. Reese conscientiously unpacks the limitations that patriarchy imposes on women in his second chapter, including a thoughtful treatment of gendered violence. He also unflaggingly excavates many characters and writers who are so buried by stereotype and prejudice that we struggle to see them in their particularity. If Reese were to lavish this kind of attention on Sybil as well, he might conclude that what we see in this jazz narrative is more solitude than togetherness.

My grousing aside, Reese ably and admirably introduces a substantive discussion of loneliness into scholarship about jazz and literature with his book. In doing so, he moves our thinking at the junction of jazz and fiction into richer territory. What is more, he consoles us at a moment when we may be lonelier than ever: "Writers," Reese concludes, "draw on jazz to reimagine loneliness as an experience that can be shared with others" (171).

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Kristina Fennelly

REVIEW

GRAYSON, MARA LEE. *TEACHING RACIAL LITERACY: REFLECTIVE PRACTICES FOR CRITICAL WRITING*, ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD, 2018, 149PP, ISBN: 1475836619.

Taking as her starting point a First-Year Composition course at a public community college in New York City, Mara Lee Grayson's *Teaching Racial Literacy* (2018) charts her embrace of narrative song lyrics to teach the fundamentals of literary analysis, while also tapping into her students' interests in race, ethnicity, and class issues. Her subsequent teaching centers around this question: "Could this curriculum help improve not only student engagement in the classroom but also their understanding of social (in)justice? If so, what other curricula could engage young people in such critical discussions?" (xiii). Situated within the recent and salient context of the Black Lives Matter movement, police violence and racial profiling, and a polarized political climate, Grayson effectively establishes a significant need and demand for racial literacy (xiii). Defined as "a collection of skills and behaviors that allow individuals to 'probe the existence of racism and examine the effects of race and institutionalized systems on their experiences and representation in US society,'" racial literacy functions as a "framework" to actively "read individual situations for the ways in which they represent, reinforce, or resist systemic injustice" (xv). With this social, political, and cultural context, Grayson effectively guides readers over the course of nine chapters through understanding what racial literacy means, how it can be used in the classroom, and how it can promote civic engagement.

The subjects of racial tension, inequity, and social media converge in meaningful ways to illustrate the significance and potential of a racial literacy framework. At the time of composing this review, we see headlines speaking to racial tensions and persistent inequities: "Tim Scott Speech Triggers Radical Reaction from Liberal Media Mob" from *Fox News*; "Debate Erupts at N.J. Law School After White Student Quotes Racial Slur" from *The New York Times*; "Examining the Police Shootings of Black Americans and How Leadership Plays a Role" from *PBS News Hour*. These stories and others illustrate the urgency and timeliness of Grayson's text. Her research equips and empowers instructors on how to "introduce to students to the tools of racial literacy with the goals of increasing student engagement, developing awareness of structural inequity and discursive modes with which to respond to social injustice, and improving student writing" (xv). Grayson is keenly aware that attention to such content should not take priority over the development of writing skills but should work to inform those skills as noted here: "In addition to making space to interrogate race and racism, a racial literacy curriculum can introduce students to foundational concepts of literacy and rhetoric, such as authorial positionality, language choice, representation, critical media literacy, textual analysis, and audience" (xv). By grounding the book in a three-year ethnographic teacher research project, Grayson successfully and thoroughly achieves the aims outlined in her book, making a lasting and invaluable contribution not only to the field of rhetoric and composition, but also to the broader fields associated with the humanities.

Chapter 1: "Racial Literacy and the College Composition Classroom" begins with a refrain we often hear in the year 2021: "'I'm sick of talking about race!'" (1). Grayson engages directly with this lament by noting the pedagogical value of voice in our classrooms: "The truth is that race talk is difficult….Attempting to facilitate conversations around race and racism without a plan or framework can be met with awkwardness, negativity, or even silence" (5). Her claim gestures to the importance of voice as a heuristic teaching method. Within feminist pedagogy, voice has been an important heuristic as a means of consciousness raising and identifying oneself as separate and distinct from patriarchy (Fulkerson 666). As Catherine Lamb further explains in "Beyond Argument in Feminist Composition," "Current discussion of feminist approaches to teaching composition emphasizes the writer's ability to find her own voice through open-ended, exploratory, often autobiographical, writing in which she assumes a sympathetic audience" (11). Expressive voice additionally concerns itself with cultivating the "'writer's presence,'" with voice functioning as a kind of ethos (Fulkerson 668). Developing a voice is also seen as deeply connected to discovering oneself via writing (Fulkerson 668). Within a cultural studies framework, expressive voice seeks to reclaim or recoup marginalized voices of minority groups previously eclipsed by a hegemonic voice (hooks 16). Thus, the development of, identification with, and reclamation of voice has occupied a culturally necessary and theoretically sound means of supporting goals within personal writing and process pedagogy. Grayson's well-crafted and nuanced racial literacy framework guides instructors and students alike in harnessing voice as an agent of rhetorical and practical change.

In line with expressivist and feminist pedagogies, a racial literacy framework seeks to center individual identity in students' writing while also taking into account the nuances and complexities of intersectional identity: "Identity development in the racial literacy classroom maintains this emphasis on positive racial identity but is intersectional, taking into account factors that, along with race, contribute to one's sense of identity as an individual and a social being" (Grayson 7). Grayson's work is additionally helpful in speaking to issues of white identity: "A critical analysis of the cultural value of Whiteness and the resulting privileges is an integral component of the racial literacy curriculum" (9). Thus, Grayson effectively reminds her readers to be cognizant of the intellectual and material work for which white students and instructors must assume responsibility, instead of looking to their black peers "for their own educational benefit" (9). With these historical and theoretical underpinnings in mind, Grayson concludes her opening chapter by highlighting four keys to communication in the racial literacy classroom: "students must learn interpersonal skills of sharing, inquiring, listening, acknowledging, and responding respectfully" (9). Grayson's remaining chapters outline ways that effectively speak to how instructors can foster such skills and how students can benefit and learn from developing them.

Chapters 2 through 5 outline tangible ways to incorporate these racial literacy skills in the classroom. Topics include developing curricula, selecting texts, using text-based approaches via narrative song lyrics, and feeling and experiencing emotions within a racial literacy framework. Of paramount importance in this part of Grayson's book is recognizing the significant power of social media. At the start of the crucial chapter 3, Grayson urges us to consider "song lyrics, films, television episodes, YouTube videos, tweets, and other digital and social media" as nontraditional texts that invite real rhetorical participation and deliberation (33). As Grayson explains: "Social media today represents a primary site of social engagement and political resistance" (43). Indeed, one might imagine the prescience Grayson possessed at the time of writing this book, which now serves a readership that has witnessed and continues to witness the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as ongoing activist efforts by the Black Lives Matter movement. Grayson cites YouTube as an example of how instructors and students can hone their skills in racial literacy: "Social media venues already function as an outlet for individual citizens to share their views; on YouTube, for example, some users distribute directly or indirectly racist videos under the guise of free speech. Without the provision of formal concepts or language with which to discuss these videos, viewers may overlook the ways in which such videos not only reinforce stereotypes but also propagate the message that such views are acceptable in online forums" (43). In this vein, Grayson's racial literacy framework intersects well with previous work by composition scholars such as Brian Jackson and Jon Wallin, who expertly focus on digital deliberation in their article "Rediscovering the 'Back-and-Forthness' of Rhetoric in the Age of YouTube." Certainly, as Grayson's research shows, the kinds of conversations students are enacting in these public domains of the World Wide Web reflect intertextuality, argument, and deliberation. As Grayson notes: "Scholars have suggested that, in the racial literacy classroom, reading such comments [on social media sites] could 'facilitate discussion about how oppression can be reproduced even when resisting racism'" (43). In an age where adversarial argument remains a problematic, yet dominant, approach, instructors and students would be served well to follow Grayson's lead and interrogate social media forums as sites of deliberation and argument.

Chapter 4: "Narrative Song Lyrics" invites us to consider how music ranging from Bruce Springsteen to hip-hop affords educators and students the opportunity to critically consider audience, word choice, syntax, dialect, and authorial choice. Reflection and inquiry are crucial components to Grayson's assignments when analyzing narrative song lyric (NSL) texts, which "resemble short stories and utilize traditional techniques like plot, character, setting, and conflict" (50). Thus, narrative song lyric texts in the racial literacy classroom invite students to "read texts through rhetorical and critical lenses. In other words, they should look at the author, implied audience, and contextual factors surrounding the production and reception of the text, as well as who is (or who is not) represented in the text—and how those individuals and groups are represented" (Grayson 50). In this way, Grayson's NSL text assignments focus on an oft-overlooked rhetorical act: listening. Grayson speaks to this point when she explains how "Social justice educators have suggested that, because 'listening to music is an emotional and educational experience that potentially shapes an individual's values, actions, and worldview,' songs of all genres can be used…to expose students to different cultures and encourage cross-cultural communication and understanding" (47-8).

Chapters 6 through 9 showcase strategies to apply the skills learned in the racial literacy classroom to our local communities and broader interactions with the world, inviting instructors to tailor their instruction around current events that connect to the material conditions of their students' lives. Asking students to interrogate "how we know what we know" translates to racial literacy as a form of civic engagement by which students use language as part of real-world activism rather than mere perfunctory prose. Just as Grayson explores the primacy of voice, identity,

and listening in her previous chapters, she also focuses on the rhetorical power of silence in Chapter 6: "Personal Writing and Positionality" and in Chapter 7: "Controversial Conversations: What We (Don't) Say." Both chapters encourage students and instructors to resist essentialist understandings of racial identities while interrogating myths and assumptions surrounding popular criticisms of and within academia: political correctness, trigger warnings, free speech, critical race theory, and safe spaces (82-4, 106-07). These chapters' exploration of marginalized voices, white fragility, and even "the N-word" demand not only that silent students learn how, when, and why to speak up, but also that instructors know how to identify, decode, and dismantle racist discourse. Grayson also serves her readers well by devoting Chapter 9 to ways in which secondary English education can benefit from a racial literacy framework, most importantly with administrative and parental support. Above all, Grayson concludes her seminal work by reminding instructors that "racial literacy is a journey rather than an end point" (125). Here, Grayson's recommended assignments range from building a classroom cultural literacy dictionary to problem-solving-based group projects that invite students to craft proposal arguments and conduct research in the vein of Ken Macrorie's I-Search paper.

Throughout her book, Grayson features specific assignments, instructional strategies, and students' experiences to show the purpose and value of a racial literacy framework in the composition classroom. One of the most memorable can be found in Chapter 8: "Racial Literacy as Civic Engagement," in which she shares the experience of Brice, a writing instructor for juniors and seniors in a racially diverse private university: "In Brice's class, interviewing individuals in different lines of work not only helped students learn more about their intended fields of work or study, but it also helped to humanize each profession…. Moreover, because students used their own language to share those individuals' stories, they had to consider questions of representation" (125). Now more than ever, those questions of representation must be asked and answered as we grapple with national and local issues of identity and responsibility. We must answer what Grayson describes as a "calling" (135), one in which we must reconcile within ourselves how "Racism is in fact a defining characteristic of the institutions that uphold our way of life in the United States" (136). While Grayson makes no claim that racial literacy is the only way to "learn what it means to be citizens," she definitively shows how racial literacy is a way for students to "learn more about their classmates…and to learn more about themselves" (136).

By citing the 1972 resolution on "Students' Right to Their Own Language" as issued by the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Grayson reminds instructors of academia's historical attempts at equity in composition instruction—equity which sought to eradicate such violence that nevertheless persists as a material reality for our students and faculty alike today. Increased attention and focus on social justice urge us now in ways that this resolution urged educators nearly 50 years ago: to adopt a racial literacy framework as a means of developing curricula and introducing students "both to the social functions of race and the ways in which language can serve to maintain or reshape racial ideologies" (Grayson 5).

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Marguerite Mayhall

REVIEW

Because *The Insider's Guide to Working with Universities* was published in the fall of 2019, its picture of higher education is/was fairly up-to-date. The COVID-19 pandemic happened right after its publication, however, and it is hard to read the book now except as, perhaps, a historic document. The pandemic and its economic, cultural, and social repercussions and reactions to anti-racist protest movements, as well as even larger political events, are already changing major aspects of higher education. I found myself wondering which parts of the colleges and universities I know will still look the same as described here, and which will be changed, perhaps forever.

As the title demonstrates, the book was conceived as a primer for the various constituencies listed therein. Although the authors state that their book is targeted at other audiences beyond prospective members of boards of trustees, all of them are assumed to come from the business world, whether as board members, candidates for administrative roles, donors, teachers, legislators, or industries tied to education like online education groups and various consulting groups. They therefore take as their organizing principle the distinction between "business" and non-profit higher education as a way to describe the academic enterprise to outsiders looking to interact with it in some fashion, and the book's length is closer to approximating an executive summary. Chapters are short and concise, sometimes too short (in my opinion as a faculty insider), because the purpose of informing the reader (who presumably only wants to know "the facts") about the basics of colleges and universities is the primary purpose, as the authors state in the Introduction, ". . . we decided to write a book that explains to these important individuals how colleges and universities work so they can make these institutions better" (5). The brevity means that on many occasions needed nuance is lacking, and the ostensible neutrality of providing just "the facts" is at times belied by little telling asides. For example, the tone throughout assumes these various groups of people come to work with colleges and universities with the best of intentions (as well as with gaps in their knowledge about the special enterprise that is the academy), and omits mention of the more controversial or politically motivated goals of some of these groups; it also takes a light-hearted but critical attitude toward faculty that comes off as condescending at times, perhaps as a play toward common stereotypes of faculty as pretentious and out of touch with non-academic concerns. Lastly, the authors omit (as they admit) discussion of a very large sector of the public higher ed market – community colleges and unranked regional comprehensive universities, schools that educate the majority of students in higher ed in the United States and which intersect with each other in significant ways. Some of the colleges and universities described here as short case studies include large state schools like University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, the United States Air Force Academy, and private schools such as Carnegie Mellon University, Gonzaga University, and Pomona College.

The book's introduction lays out some of the common misconceptions businesspeople may have of higher education, depending on their relationship(s) to it, ending with the statement that academic institutions *need* business leaders (serving as board members or other leaders) to help them solve problems. That is the driver of the book – to explain higher education to businesspeople *because* colleges and universities need their help, and it may explain some of the omissions as well as the somewhat defensive tone employed in parts of the book. The best sentence in the entire introduction, in my opinion, is the authors' advice to businesspeople to think of academic institutions "as if they were in a different industry in a different country" (8), because it is *not* defensive, but, rather, a real attempt to describe, in impartial terms, how far apart the business and university worlds really are.

The first chapter does just that, in laying out first, the differences between businesses and universities, and then, their similarities. University insiders will find no surprises here – the authors mention universities' pursuit of reputation, uninterest in profit, less definitive chains of command, relative lack of a sense of urgency, faculty placement of affiliation in disciplines rather than institutions, faculty work processes and how that work is judged, as well as attitudes toward growth, as major differences. Similarities are fewer: they both need to make operational decisions, are on the hunt for talent, address a multitude of different "stakeholders," engage in competition on a variety of levels, and face challenges in limited resources and ways to achieve their priorities. Interestingly, professional service firms like law firms appear most similar to universities, according to the authors, for a variety of reasons, such as professional standards and the

notion of colleagueship. I'm not that old, but I remember when professors were included alongside doctors and lawyers as members of the professional class as a matter of course. To have to state it in a book aimed at people looking to work with and in universities demonstrates how much has changed in the public's perception of universities in the last fifty years.

Chapter 3 describes the types of units, both academic and administrative, found in colleges and universities, and the place of curricula and new teaching practices such as the flipped classroom, service learning, makerspaces, and online learning. Chapter 4 describes outside influencers on higher ed like federal and state regulations and accrediting bodies, while chapter 5 focuses on faculty members and their education, the tenure process and its relation to academic freedom, adjunct and contingent faculty, and their dual loyalties to discipline and institution.

Chapter 6 deals with how universities are organized and how influence is wielded within them, with sample organizational charts and descriptions of administrative roles from the president to the provost, down through the dean and department head. As an example of the snarky asides at faculty expense I mentioned above, the authors describe the "faculty-centric" university as faculty members' "unabashed" belief that faculty do the most important work in a university with some incredulity. They end the chapter with an example of how they addressed implementing a mandated Title IX training with medical faculty and then humanities faculty. The former, "accustomed to rules (such as HIPAA) and a more hierarchical approach. . ." were easier to deal with than the latter, who were described as having "a lot of time on their hands and they write really well" (109). Faculty in all disciplines have administrative laws like FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) they must follow, so this is a gratuitous swipe at humanities faculty.

Chapter 7 discusses academic research – what it is, what drives faculty members to do it, how it is funded, and how it is published, evaluated, and, in some cases, commercialized, which is a nice segue to the next chapter on college and university funding, focused on its sources and where the funding goes. The book ends with the authors' recommendations for collaborations between business and higher ed.

The few reviewers of this book on Amazon (it's new!) commend it for its comprehensive scope and neutral tone. It is certainly comprehensive in scope if not in detail, and the tone would not strike a non-academic as biased; admittedly, my own prickliness about the authors' exasperation at faculty attitudes comes from my own position as faculty. I wonder, though, if the lack of context will make it more difficult for the various audiences this book addresses to understand the major catastrophes facing higher education now and in the near future as a consequence of the pandemic: the bypassing of faculty governance in universities' layoffs, program eliminations, and mandates for face to face teaching, and the influence of state and local politics on these administrative decisions; the surveillance and data tracking of students made even more possible by the almost complete transition to online/remote learning; the loss of revenue to residential campuses with this transition and the possible movement toward community colleges and comprehensive universities as students look to pay less for their educations; the narrowing of access to higher ed for lower income students as a result of the move to online/remote learning; the influence of the Black Lives Matter movement on university and college curricula and faculty hires (when it becomes possible again); and, perhaps, most importantly, the acceleration of the winnowing process colleges and universities have been undergoing since 2008. According to Scott Galloway, professor at NYU's Stern School of Business, the pandemic and universities' response to it will result in many, many more schools shutting down at much higher rates than previously seen ("USS University"). Some pundits have prophesied the melding of higher ed with Facebook or Google and the consolidation of marketable disciplines over all else as a result of this process (Kroger). Historic, indeed. This book just may describe a vanished world.

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Dr. Barbara Mossberg

Review

What does it say about us that a book entitled *Homesickness* gathers us round? Or is our resonance to this book in the subtitle, *longing*? Is the complicated feeling about "home," the intersection of *longing* and *belonging*, whether our own place, or earth itself, an inextricable part of our human psyche no matter where or how or when we live? Now that we are asking, is existential loneliness particular to humans? Does the act of longing characterize human identity? And how does climate change impact our sense of home? Such are the questions and thoughts invoked by Ryan Hediger's philosophical tour de force, *Homesickness: Of Trauma and the Longing for Place in a Changing Environment*. It is as a professor that Ryan Hediger constructs this engaging performative work that blends creative nonfiction, literary criticism, and cultural scholarship in a synthesis of trans-eco-theory. If there is such a thing as posthumanities, as the book has us consider, Hediger's title alone captures what might be called the Ground Zero of humanities, its Big Bang: the quality of complicated consciousness in a term like "longing." Home is a place we long for. We do not belong where we are. In such paradox we can wonder if it has always been thus: is Hediger's meditation on the trauma of being itself a finger on the pulse of humanity from our beginnings? Is it a magic mirror of today's Anthropocene awareness? Or does he define "posthumanities" based on a connection of our acute consciousness of suffering in these fraught days of earthly unrest in war, pandemic, migration, and climate change with age-old human concerns? That there can be so many "perhaps" and buts" in a description of Hediger's framework suggests this professorial work as an extended, lively, seminar designed to raise questions and keep them aloft. The book's Introduction assembles questions that must be asked in response to present circumstances and explores ways to answer them, from cultural history to contemporary thought in emergent fields.

Hediger considers such philosophical questions in the realm of "eco" scholarship. His book posits that we are profoundly destabilized today because of climate change. The works and theories he summons in his book provide a way to reconcile his thesis, as he has us reflect that we have always contended with a changing environment: perhaps we never have felt "at home." He reasons that our feelings about home in this day and age are so complicated they make us feel *ill*. Perhaps we never *can* feel at home, and are not meant to. Perhaps our human common ground *is* alienation. Professor Hediger fuses human dislocation and alienation, the Biblical notion of being "strangers in a strange land," with "changing environment," and thus connects an age-old human fear of change itself, and our own complicity in these changes in our technological and environmental developments. And yet, finally, Hediger suggests hope in a common longing to connect with our place on this earth, to recognize this planet—ever changing—as *ours*.

This insightful and innovative book, organized by chapters based on literary works that provide evidence of humanity beset with environmental change, provides creative scholarly leadership in methodology for the Anthropocene. Engaging the reader professorially in the traditional format of criticism through the lens of literary texts, he uses a poet's rhetorical fervor and neophilosopher's bold wordsmithing to illuminate our current cultural landscape in terms of transdisciplinary analysis. The result of his synthesis of cultural theory, literary criticism, and philosophy is as emergent as the new fields of eco philosophy and cutting-edge international philosophy. His rhetorical command and nuanced treatment of multiple parallel theoretical and radical critical movements will inspire the next wave of transdisciplinary eco graduate studies across and through disciplines. In one sense, his reading of texts recalls old-school scholarship reshaping American Studies as a field in the late 1950s, the creating of new common ground weaving history, sociology, literature, landscape architecture, psychology, political science, economics, and popular culture theories and texts to tell a story about how surface culture contains the psychology and identity of a people. In another sense, he forges new ground as a literary scholar, bringing new ideas from ecological, economic, philosophical, feminist, and critical race theories to traditional close textual readings of literature of trauma and violence, and in the process, extracts from these works a wisdom he integrates into "post" understandings and awareness.

Structurally, Hediger's work takes the central theme of homesickness—a literal idea of illness that reverberates with headlines of immigration and migration, exile and homelessness, and articulates it as a synonym of today's climate change crisis. Certainly, from the beginning of recorded history, whether in stone or scratched into clay or

etched on leaves or bark, the human plot has seemed to be the crisis of exile and—an important word for Hediger—*dislocation*. We are ever strangers in a strange land. One can reflect on literary stories, beginning with *Gilgamesh*, whose protagonist leaves home to wander earth in tragic tears (having caused an ecological trauma, clear-cutting the cedar forests), continuing through Homer (again the ecological trauma of how we use and misuse the land and its inhabitants), the Bible, Dante, Cervantes, Voltaire, Hugo, Dickens, George Eliot, Chekov, Joyce, Synge, Proust, and the whole of American literature. This trauma of homesickness is explored in Hediger's study through the lens of selected literary works in linked essays dedicated to their treatment of the theme of the trauma caused by life in a changing environment.

Hediger's essays probe and survey the age-old wisdom of modern writers observing human nature; in the process, he reveals the extent to which concern for earth, and trauma at earth changes, both natural and human-caused, is on the minds of people we may associate with a café or bull-ring like Ernest Hemingway, or street or porch of Billie Letts, big store like Natalie Portman's Wal-Mart, backyards of John Updike, fields of Thoreau, or killing fields of Tim O'Brien. Just as he traverses human nature expressed in contemporary literature and culture, Hediger reflects on persistent headlines of the homelessness and dislocation of migration and immigration on domestic and global scales. In this context, as a book both of eco criticism and eco literary criticism, Hediger sees war as "a distinctly agrilogistical or anthropocenic homesickness."

Thus, the essays identify and interpret contemporary cultural critical, creative, and current events' movements. Following the introduction of his thesis and the vocabulary of eco suffering on which his meditation is grounded, Hediger begins with a chapter about a central theme in his own scholarship, Annie Proulx's work in terms of "suffering in our animal skins" and "uncanny embodiment" in one's mortal human fate. In this chapter, Hediger develops his analytical framework combining cultural and literary theory and philosophy. The essay's epigraph is by Novalis, quoted in Jacques Derrida's "The Animal That Therefore I Am," and with this reference, Hediger lays a postmodern theoretical foundation to the field of cultural and American Studies and their diagnosis and analysis of contemporary social problems of homelessness and in this case, "rootlessness." Social studies of contemporary life are defined by Hediger as a feeling of "dislocation from one's culture, identity, and geography, and the desire to better belong, to be more at home in the world." Intertwined in his analysis are works, for example, of sociology (Peter K. Kilborn's *Next Stop, Reloville: Life Inside America's New Rootless Professional Class*), iconic American Studies (Leo Marx), psychology (Clay Routledge's *Nostalgia: A Psychological Resource*), environmental humanities (Ursula K. Heise's *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* and what she argues is "eco-cosmopolitanism"), ecology (Timothy Morton's *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence*), poetry (Goethe), and philosophy (Kant).

Hediger is bringing to light the desire to be home, feel at home, not just go home, as a driving human impulse that also identifies a primal alienation with where one is. Hediger discusses this estrangement in postcolonialist criticism, citing Cary Wolfe's understanding of "Posthumanism." Such an interdisciplinary frame which Hediger calls "the method of homesickness" and his "posthumanist reading" ground Hediger's first chapter focus on Annie Proulx's literature, and later chapters on Marilyn Robinson, Peter Hedges, Ernest Hemingway, Tim O'Brien, and Bobbie Ann Mason. Each chapter's thematic focus expands the authors and topics Hediger considers. Thus, writers, philosophers, historians, and scholars are interwoven with critical reading that illuminates Hediger's home in literary studies.

Focusing on the "dynamics of identity and home in a place" in post-World War II writers, Hediger's examination of Annie Proulx's works conjures "suffering in our animal skins." Her chronicle of what she calls a half-skinned steer is explored as an "icon of homesickness." Hediger is an enthusiastic literary critic, finding Proulx's story "The Half-Skinned Steer," for example, to be "stunning." Hediger takes us through the story with a polished and generous literary joyousness in her use of language; he is an appreciative and keen-eyed reader at home in close-textual reading. Such textual exegesis allows him to bring the reader to his consideration of the work in terms of eco criticism, for which "wilderness and wildness" are problematic ideas in which to understand a work. He makes a complicated but important argument that the tradition of writing about wilderness and wildness can be aligned "with ideas of hyperobjects, with uncanny matter, with radical rethinking of human selfhood."

In this examination of Proulx's work, Hediger connects civil rights crises in the U.S. with the idea he is developing that home is "stranger than we commonly recognize." This idea is applied to Ernest Hemingway in an original way, looking at his experience in Africa and return to the U.S. as a way of "killing" his "homesickness for Africa." Hediger sets out to explore a contemporary critical thinking of Hemingway as a representative of white privilege, especially privileged travel that can be both dangerous and destructive. He asks his readers to consider the question of the extent to which Hemingway is usefully seen as an "American writer," as opposed to a "postnational" or even "eco-

cosmopolitan." Hemingway's first major trauma noted in this study is his injury in Italy working for the Red Cross. In Hediger's words, Hemingway offers a "proto-ecological perspective on human life." The worlds of traditional literary criticism and ecological studies are brought together in an original re-interpretation of Hemingway that brings him up to date and makes the case for his relevance in contemporary scholarship and teaching in today's changing curricular and pedagogical climate. Indeed, Hediger proceeds in his analysis of literature to see Toni Morrison in this larger pattern.

Popular culture, including shopping and football, becomes part of this overall analysis as Hediger explores eco-cosmopolitanism as a way of a global and historical analysis of creative cultural and civic responses to changing environments. Fittingly, Hediger's conclusion brings in Henry David Thoreau's vision of living "deliberately" as describing the driving forces of the Anthropocene, including the dynamics of change and mobility of all kinds. Having described American surface culture, such as "Wall-Mart in South Park," in which he conceives a "critique with irony and entertainment," as "international restructurings," in the context of Billie Letts' *Where the Heart Is*, Hediger invokes Thoreau for his own argument of dark ecology's advice for how we can more productively live our lives today, rethinking how we inhabit space and time. Citing scholars of the Anthropocene, Hediger defines trauma to society in terms of racism, imperialism, colonialism, eugenics, ecological damage, and war, challenging ideas about change and "progress." In a book that is at once as compellingly contemporary as headline news, and a meditation on age-old human existence, Hediger asks us to slow down and consider our next steps, or steps at all, taking our time to figure out how to recognize and inhabit our world. Its existence—and our own—are at stake.

While the narrative flows gracefully in its arc of purpose in sequential case studies, the rigorous scholarship underlying the concept of homesickness as a critical human feature is evidenced in the book's substantive thirty-six pages of Notes, comprehensive Index, and Acknowledgements. This scholarly apparatus makes the literal framework of the book a fascinating state-of-the-art of the fields of study that are being integrated here: psychology in the concept of homesickness, mental injury and health, and resilience and trauma, eco-literature in the theme of "longing for place," and environmental studies, specifically, climate change. Critics across the disciplines are cited for their contributions to the topic as Hediger pulls together these fields into especially human and emotional terms (what is more emotional than longing?). This point of the book's explicit emotional appeal is worth emphasizing because the book is framed by a philosophical critical history of alienated thought, beginning with the epigraph from Jacques Derrida. The choice of Derrida to introduce Hediger's meditation indicates the philosophical context for literary and eco studies. Derrida is a cosmopolitan French philosopher famous in the late 1960s for developing a form of semiotic analysis known as deconstruction, developed in the context of phenomenology.

Concepts of mobility, for example in the migration of peoples and creatures, are interrogated in terms of their possible collateral damage. Is progress progress? Recent sophisticated graduate and scholarly studies inform Hediger's discussion of his authorial purpose: postcolonialism, posthumanism, poststructuralism, and other kinds of "post" tropes, are incorporated into contemporary ecological and environmental studies, including deep and "dark" ecology, and "cosmopolitanism," to underscore what Hediger defines as the overarching issue: the fear of what it is in our age now that may make what we know of earth itself as "post."

The Index of *Homesickness* shows the range of intellectual resources that inform Hediger's meditation, from contemporary and modern writers across genres, from Bobbie Ann Mason, John Updike, Marilyn Robinson, Bill McKibben, Tim O'Brien, Billie Letts, Toni Morrison, and Ta-Nehisi Coates, to icons of ecological literary focus such as Emerson, Thoreau, Leo Marx, Gary Snyder, Timothy Morton, and contemporary eco-literary critics such as Louise Westling, William Rasch, Robert Marzec, Christine Marran, and others, in the context of such figures as novelist Charlotte Bronte and essay pioneer Michel de Montaigne. In his integration of scholarship on ecology, literature, cultural studies, and philosophy, Professor Hediger draws upon his own work on human-animal cultural studies. He brings readers of literary criticism to theories of "the unhomely," and homelessness. He defines his stance: "Despite contemporary highbrow derision of homesickness, this book demonstrates that the feeling remains powerful and is visible everywhere in culture." Hediger sees himself as "exploring this abjected terrain," advocating for a "critical cosmopolitanism." Identifying the "dislocating traumas of colonialism, war, and anthropocentric global warming" as the factors that show the centrality of homesickness to the human psyche, Hediger cites Donna Haraway to expand and ground this alienation on scales from the microbial soil and body bacteria and city rats, elements of "ordinary truths" that make our lives seem strange.

Hediger is broadly an interpretive writer of our world. His topic of homelessness is as old as the hills, and current as a *New York Times* headline or a Lasse Hallstrom film. His evident facility with literary theory and language of complex, urgent, and profound contemporary responses to global environmental crises, enabling him to demonstrate how environmental crises demand new thought from scholars, and new understanding from modern texts, will weight

this book as a valuable reference and model for how multiple cultural studies fields are synthesized and put into context of the Anthropocene. As a useful interpretive framework, *Homesickness* enables readers to apply this idea of complicated connection to a changing earth to examples in their own fields. In this reviewer's own practice, numerous examples come to mind. In Emily Dickinson's "A little madness in the spring," Dickinson contrasts a king's and "Clown's" experience of "this whole Experiment in Green:" not the legal "owner" of the land, but the Clown, an artist figure, who ponders earth "as if it were his own." Eco writer Scott Sanders reflects on such thinking in *Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World*. If the world itself is restless and changing, how are we to belong? Reading Hediger's *Homesickness* is to put oneself not only in a meditative state of profound questions but to engage with and recall the broad swath of writers of fiction, philosophers, and theorists he invokes who ponder them, as well: how do we belong to each other and this earth? Is it even in our human nature to feel at home with where we are? How can we feel at home in a place that is characterized by accelerating and possibly dangerous changes? And finally, what is at stake for our survival and earth itself in our struggle to feel at home? Although not brought into the book's discussion, figures such as Wendell Berry, Barry Lopez, Linda Hogan, Rebecca Solnit, Daniel Quinn, Terry Tempest Williams, Scott Sanders, and other icons of contemporary eco literature and critique of policies that erode both the land and our connections to it, can be understood in the context of Hediger's work, urgently arguing the stakes of eco-consciousness.

Readers of *Homesickness* are left not only with a mirror held up to themselves revealing our human experience with earth, but with a sense of hope: if we long for something we feel we have forfeited, by not treating earth and each other with appropriate reverence, perhaps this very longing and tragic estrangement is a sign of hope. Just in writing the book, Hediger shows we have not given up longing to belong. We can try to act now in a way that will connect us powerfully and vitally to earth, an "eco-cosmopolitan perspective" advocated by Gary Snyder in "The Practice of the Wild"—as Hediger sees it, the best practice for being home wherever one is, whatever home is, in the elephant in this book's room—the suffering and teaching heart. For all its complicated and dazzling theoretical-technics, this is profoundly a heart-felt book.

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Arundhati Sanyal

REVIEW

SEN VENGADASALAM, SARBANI. *NEW POSTCOLONIAL DIALECTICS: AN INTERCULTURAL COMPARISON OF INDIAN AND NIGERIAN ENGLISH PLAYS,* CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS, 2019.

Sarbani Sen Vengadasalam re-visits post-colonial historical approach to the phenomenon of colonial occupation and its impact on the creation and re-creation of literature by the educated generations of the colonized in reaction and interaction to the colonial decimation and denigration of the indigenous population and cultural legacy. In her book, *New Postcolonial Dialectics*, Vengadasalam presents a study of the literature of Nigeria and India as instances of an involved, protracted, and complex interaction between the colonizer's intentioned policies of systematic control and manipulation of the occupied country and its educated youth which, paradoxically, experiences closest interaction with western education and culture. Chapter 1 lays out in close detail the clearly-thought-out intentionality of the colonial move which is single-minded in its objective to maximize the profit principle by absolute control over the material resources of the country being colonized as well as creating simultaneously an ever-present market for the finished product that the industrialized colonizing power sends its finished products to. In Chapters 2 and 3, she focuses on the work of Wole Soyinka (*The Lion and the Jewel*) and Rabindranath Tagore (*Red Oleanders)* respectively to analyze and present as examples and outcomes of such interaction. Chapters 4 and 5 take the discussion to the Indian playwright Badal Sircar's dramaturgy as reflected in *Procession* and Wole Soyinka's work *The Road* to bring the discussion to more contemporary times.

The work is meant for students of global multi-cultural studies with specific interests in post-colonial experiences and parallel encounters in literature and drama. Each of the chapters from 2 to 5 has been laid out schematically with a description and definition of "Interculturalism"; the "Philosophy and Dramaturgy" of the specific author being dealt with; and finally, an "Intercultural Analysis" of the specific work from the author. This schema allows the reader an easy access to the parallels between the three authors/personalities and their over-arching commonalities in negotiating between their indigenous colonized tradition and the internationalism that each reveal various syncretic moves within each work.

Using the examples of Tagore, Soyinka, and Badal Sircar, Vengadasalam presents a nuanced examination of responses to colonial cultural intrusions that result in seminal works of literature that become part of the national canon in India and Nigeria respectively. The colonial cultural "interaction" is driven by the political and economic desire to gain absolute control over the subjugated country. The author is most effective in detailing the decision-making that goes into subjugating, discounting, supplanting the host nations' culture, literature, norms. Western education and religion is presented as the better and only option for the upcoming generation. The emergent population that is exposed to the colonizer's culture shows a range and variety of responses from abject imitation to internalization of colonizers' principles, to the rebelling against it, and eventually to syncretic assimilation of western and native traditions. These representative authors also reveal a way out from the excessive dichotomized universe imposed by the colonizers' policies. The resulting works become texts that negotiate and reflect the multi-phonal possibilities of responding to the colonizer's heritage, appreciating anew the native culture, creation of a syncretic work that re-visits the ancient with new approaches made possible by western exposure.

In engaging with Tagore's work in Chapter 3, Vengadasalam analyzes his magnum opus, *Raktakarabi or Red Oleanders* in terms of an allegory where each aspect of the freedom movement of India, and its intricate involvement with the colonizer, its native sympathisers, and its strident anti-colonialists of varying ilk are represented by the characters of the play. This analysis of Tagore's play reveals his intentions as beyond strident nationalism. Tagore, according to Vengadasalam, concludes beyond predictable adversarial relationships between the colonizer and colonized, and the varying shades of allegiances in between to a place of reconciliation that is supported by India's ancient cultural heritage of naturalism and universality.

In Chapter 3, in the corresponding analysis of Nigerian experience with colonization, she brings us a nuanced analysis of Negritude, its emergence, its particular role in combating the aftermath of colonial appropriation, and its distinct limitations that are understood by Soyinka who creates a kind of "neo-negritude". This draws deeply from the

emotionalism of Yoruban traditions without neglecting his western understanding of rhetoric, but rather synthesizes and brings this ancient culture to the fore of his artistic creation. In the words of Vengadasalam,

> Like Tagore his [Soyinka] holistic approach empowered him to look at the past, present, and future in one stream. Though Soyinka saw the relevance of the Yoruban world in spite of his colonial 'inheritance and at a time when the African mind was encumbered by Western culture,' he felt it incumbent upon him to not merely 'articulate African   concepts, but to also make them intelligible to those whose world view has been conditioned by the west. (112-13, quoting Wilfred Feuser in "Wole Soyinka: The Problem of Authenticity")

The analysis of Tagore and Soyinka's theatrical rhetoric develops through negotiations between colonizer and colonized and is shown as comparable through close textual analysis as well as over-arching broad sweeps of analysis of political, social, and cultural interaction at multiple levels. That lends credence to the overall project as laid out in the introductory chapter by Vengadasalam.

In Chapter 4, the author discusses a dramatist and theater personality of post-independent India, Badal Sircar, whose early career and education reveal how the post-colonial intellectual learns from an eclectic experience that cuts across international borders and cultures. Vengadasalam traces the early influences of Sircar's exposure to indigenous Indian theater, Nigerian, East European, American theatrical repertoires and workshops as the basis out of which is born a theater that cuts across binaries of urban/rural, national/international, colonial/post-colonial, and critiques the neo-colonial imperialist forces working within the socio-economic fabric of the emergent nation coming to terms with its political and economic independence and birth pangs. In critiquing Sircar's play *Procession*, Vengadasalam shows how different traditions of world theater forms merge in the play in order to create a genre that functions beyond the proscenium stage into the "liberated" stage or "Muktamancha". Here, the hierarchies that separate the audience from the actors on stage are deleted to create an experience where the audience is participatory. The play's principal character represents the everyman figure who experiences the cynicism, corruption, anonymizing effect of a materialistic, industrial society that rises out of the colonial rule into a freedom compromised by confusion, chaos, and disruption. The post-colonial intellectual has his work cut out after the emergence of ostensibly "free" nations. He has to assemble his literary influences through language and art to critique the dehumanization of the individual in a neo-colonial environment.

In Chapter 5, Vengadasalam shows a similar, parallel experience within the Nigerian post-colonial society, where a neo-colonial, conservative, Nigerian ruling class seem to take up exactly where the European powers had left off. The resultant turmoil and civil strife in the country makes it imperative for the Nigerian intellectual and man of letters, such as Wole Soyinka to marshal his syncretic learnings from a variety of traditions, native Nigerian, tribal, western European, even Asian. In the words of Vengadasalam, "While Soyinka had used Nigerian metaphors, idioms, and proverbs in past works, he now began to include, integrate, and utilize the entire spectrum of the West African linguistic world. The language and dialects he used in his plays ranged from Yoruba to the Queen's English, and from pidgin to bookish English, with any number of shades in between" (179). This chapter goes on to interpret Soyinka's 1965 play *The Road* as an example of the imaginative amalgam of ritual, practical reality of Yoruban contemporary life, satire, and symbol of the violence and civil strife in the country as *Procession* does for the Indian context.

The style adopted in the entire work is based on a comparative analysis of the respective set of plays by the three dramatists chosen from two continents. The research is key in establishing the veracity of a rather large set of claims made in the work, namely, that the post-colonial intellectual from erstwhile colonies re-creates an imaginative space based on his syncretic education and understanding of nationalism, internationalism, native language and traditions, as well as multi-phonal linguistics as demonstrated in his art. The style is inherent in the clarity her organization brings to the analysis. Consistency within the analysis in all of the respective authors and their works allows the reader to perceive the commonalities of experience as they follow the condition of the nation's post-colonial experience; the unique educational, cultural, political biography of the individual author; the interpretive analysis of the individual work by each author that shows this background context yielding innovations in style, form, and content of each work.

Such confluent analysis of two colonial experiences in Asia and Africa as expressed in the dramatic works of Tagore, Sircar, and Soyinka is an effective exercise as it puts to the test the post-colonial lens that historicizes and re-examines the cross currents of intentions, readings, counter-readings, and such-like between colonizer nations and those cultures which were affected at the colonized end. The close analysis of plays by stalwarts of Indian theater such as Badal Sircar, Tagore, and Nigeria's Wole Soyinka further eke out the ideas mentioned in the introductory chapters of the book as the collusion of political and cultural conquest that colonizing nations adopt towards their total dominance. The unique contribution of this work is to show a clear connection between post-colonial national crises, the unique preparation

of the writer who wields his pen for multi-pronged purposes, and clear connections to the genre innovations of form, content, rhetoric that are undertaken usually to defy the binaries that seem to separate the socio-cultural fabric of the nascent nation. The post-colonial intellectual emerges as a primary agent of reconstruction in the post-colonial reality.

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Julie O'Connell

REVIEW
REESE, SAM V. H. *BLUE NOTES: JAZZ, LITERATURE, AND LONELINESS*, LOUISIANA STATE UP, 2019.

One of jazz music's central paradoxes is how it is both an individual expression of improvisation and a traditional and historically rooted call and response between group members. Another inherent duality is the notion that jazz is joyous and uplifting (think of the great Louis Armstrong, the Swing music of Count Basie, or the compositions of Duke Ellington) and also lonely (as in the mournful strains Billie Holliday, the mysticism of John Coltrane, or the deep and abstracted chord dives that made Charlie Parker a genius). All of it is jazz: musicians alone and together creating an effusive spell of joy and pain that is distinctly American.

While Sam V.H. Reese's *Blue Notes: Jazz, Literature, & Loneliness* navigates these dichotomies (the individual and the group; joy and sorrow), his critical tour de force does much more. By examining literal and structural appropriations of jazz in works of fiction and autobiography, Reese considers a multitude: short stories, novels, the autobiographies of Ellington and Charles Mingus, and works by contemporary writers like Toni Morrison and Zadie Smith, all in an effort to understand how the reciprocal conversation that is jazz is revealed in the literary psyche to communicate a connected theme of loneliness. An expert in mid-20th century countercultural literary forms, Reese takes on complexities within complexities. For instance, it is not just jazz music and literature that are complicated, but loneliness itself. He writes, "Loneliness…is not singular; it can be used to describe a range of states of isolation and solitude" (12). To that point, the author closely analyzes literary works to see how jazz reveals itself in them and how the presence of jazz expresses jazz's unique and multi-varied manifestation of loneliness. On the surface, jazz is a participatory form of storytelling by the group, but when the soloist steps out to improvise, she or he is at once an individual who can be lonely and also part of a collective expression of loneliness made manifest by the music and, by extension, the literary works that use the images and structures of jazz. Reese writes, "Jazz has the ability to recreate experiences for the audience, as they listen, through an act of improvisation that mirrors the affective turn of the spoken narrative" (20). Thus, the music and the literary works are interlaced as if they are infinity mirrors reflecting upon each other and on the audiences who encounter them.

Palpably, Reese's project is highly ambitious, perhaps in large part because understanding jazz is such a complex (and at the same time, simple and readily available) process: alas, more contradictions. For instance, we know that jazz changed and that it changes from its ancestries in the "recognizable New Orleans style…that was largely improvised, polyphonic music rooted in the tonality of the blues" (Reese 17). The mellifluent panorama Reese plays for us takes us from Congo Square and brass band parades, to big band swing, to the bebop melodies of Miles Davis, to the counterculture expressions of Charles Mingus and Ornette Coleman, to bossa nova and fusion from other countries, to now. Even this discussion is a huge oversimplification, all of which is to say that talking about jazz is complex and comparing it to literature even more so. Through it all, Reese claims that expressions of jazz in literature become increasingly lonelier as we move out of what F. Scott Fitzgerald coined the Jazz Age (the 1920s and 30s) and into more abstract expressionist variations of the form, when jazz increasingly lost its popularity and became more subculture than mainstream. Just as young people were making a move toward rock and roll, jazz was moving in on itself and isolating in complex and unconventional spaces, after which it moved overseas and continued to morph into long stretches of escape and retrospection.

Reese organizes his chapters by looking at important literary motifs: the jazz short story, the way masculinity and femininity are depicted, the lonely jazz performer, and the inward glance of the jazz musician on him or herself. In pursuing this framework, Reese's readers encounter familiar works of literature by Fitzgerald, Morrison, and Zora Neale Hurston, and less familiar ones (such as Eudora Welty's "Powerhouse"). We discover writers who used jazz to "capture the effect of improvisation through storytelling" (45) and others who help us experience the isolation and sadness of the blues. Reese cites jazz literature scholar A. Yemisi Jimoh's distinction between the two: they are "differentiated by the number of voices. Blues focuses on a single voice: jazz is polyphonic" (qtd. in Reese 85). For example, in James Baldwin's exemplary jazz short story "Sonny's Blues," we meet Sonny, whom we learn faces the struggles of Charlie

Parker, Miles Davis, and Billie Holliday rolled into one, and this leads us to consider how the individual, the soloist, the one who is different and lonely, emerges from the crowd in the face of heroin addiction and poverty. Isolated and trapped inside of himself, Sonny's pain serves as a fountain from which he draws when he plays music with others in the story. It is also a place we can draw from to relieve our own discomfort. Simply stated, Sonny gets out of his isolation when he plays with other musicians. Baldwin writes, "The dry, low, black man said something awful of the drums, Creole answered, and the drums talked back. Then the horn insisted, and Creole answered, commenting now and then" (862). Likewise, Reese explains that in *The Invisible Man*, we are told that Ralph Ellison's unnamed narrator spans historical expressions of the loneliness of jazz in that he likes the "poetry" (23) of Louis Armstrong but also listens to and synthesizes music much as a bebop improviser does. Interestingly, Reese notes Ellison's disdain for bebop by pointing out the fundamental difference between Ellison's narrator and the bebop musician: the invisible man does not know he is invisible, while the bepop artist self-consciously and solipsistically does.

In a chapter entitled "Lonely Women," Reese unpacks the overwhelmingly masculine aesthetic model of jazz and the expression of female agency and loneliness in the face of institutionalized patriarchal and racial oppression, and he does this, in part, by looking at female authors, female characters within jazz literature, and female jazz musicians. Not only does Reese raise issues with regards to the gendered constraints of the musical form, but he also describes the limits of the romanticized white experience of jazz as it is revealed in Zora Neale Hurston's "How it Feels to be Colored Me." He spends time examining Toni Morrison's *Jazz* and not only discusses how Morrison's reader is invited to listen in and engage with the narrative much in the same way that the jazz audience member communally listens but also describes the problem this creates for Morrison and his use of her for his larger discussion: "by emphasizing community, it neglects the loneliness and isolation that is at the heart of *Jazz*" (76).

Generally speaking, Reese does not describe loneliness as an isolating experience as much as an expansion on the part of the listener who experiences jazz (and jazz literature, for that matter) alone. We see this 'opening out' (my words) in the autobiographies of Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington, the latter of whom composed melodies right up until his death. When autobiography is interpreted in terms of loneliness, it becomes easier to confront one's own loneliness in the same way that reading helps the reader encounter solitude. "We read to know that we are not alone," often attributed to C.S. Lewis, but actually said by the character of C.S. Lewis in the William Nicholson made-for-TV film *Shadowlands*. One can reflect on the loneliness Duke Ellington felt as he traveled the American landscape speaking the "language…[that] expresses more than just sound" (Reese 141), chasing after work, and then internalizing the collective nature of this loneliness, as jazz lost its popularity over the course of the 20th century and more and more musicians were forced to find audiences across the country and abroad. We feel the loneliness of Louis Armstrong singing "Hello, Dolly" and other songs the public wanted to hear, putting on a happy face (and some say a minstrel show) in the process. We find loneliness in Reese's discussion of the fragments and unfinished pieces of Michael Ondaatje's *Coming Through Slaughter*, itself a "poetic meditation on pioneering jazz trumpeter Buddy Bolden" (101), his novel breaking conventions in the same manner that Bolden's Avant Garde music did.

The interesting turn that Reese makes toward the end of his book is to consider how musicians like Ellington used literary forms (such as a fairy tale) in their retelling of the narrative of what jazz meant to them. He even goes as far as to connect narrative, loneliness, jazz autobiography, and auto-fiction, the latter of which serves to blur the lines between autobiography and fiction. In a sense, these personal histories perform much in the same way that jazz musicians do: creating and recreating the identities of the musicians themselves. Reese charts a similar course with Mingus by explaining the parallels between his autobiography and hyperbolic fantasy.

Reese concludes his book by reflecting on how "jazz works not simply as cultural resource, but as a literary technique for writers to at once expand and complicate narratives of loneliness" (162), and it was at this point that I began to appreciate how his book is, in fact, his own jazz composition. His narrative moves away from literature that appropriates jazz to jazz musicians who appropriate literary devices and genres to communicate their messages. So many notes and ideas here; such a range of melody inspiring this reader to riff and recreate something well beyond a traditional scholarly review.

Overall, this is a great book for modernists, short story and fiction aficionados, jazz fans (especially those who can delineate the music in all of its many subgenres), and those interested in the gendered, racialized, and psychological embeddings in jazz and in the literature that depicts it. Like jazz, loneliness itself is contradictory: it is collective (everyone feels it) and unique (each in her own way). To that end, Reese's book helps all of us think about how jazz and literature symbiotically reveal loneliness, and the depth of meaning continues to expand "like gold to airy thinness beat" (Donne line 24).

Notes

1 In the spirit and freedom of jazz, I hope you will condone this (sentence) 'fragment.'

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Ben Fine

THERE MIGHT BE WEASELS IN THE CHICKEN HOUSE

1. COUSIN MORRIS'S STEADY HAND

"Benjie, I'm seventy-five years old. Want to see how steady my hand still is?" Morris asked me.

"Sure" I answered and he opened the jacket of his fancy blue suit and drew a revolver from a shoulder holster. Then to demonstrate his steady hand he pointed the pistol and held it. I looked at the gun and told him how amazingly steady I thought his hand was but what I was really amazed at was that he was carrying a gun under his jacket like the tough guys in the movies.

I was eight-years old and Morris was Morris Eisenstein, my grandfather's first cousin, and the oldest of the Lebeaux and Eisenstein clan. At least once a month, usually on a Sunday afternoon, Morris came from his chicken farm in Vineland, New Jersey, to have dinner in Brighton. Morris and his wife Henrietta drove up in a big black Cadillac, the top-of-the-line model, and parked in front of our small bungalow. As they got out of their car, they were greeted like visiting royalty. As a young boy, I found Morris to be the most impressive man I'd ever seen. He was tall by LeBeaux standards, about five-ten or so, broad shouldered and muscular. He had long wavy silver gray hair that had once been jet black and he dressed like a movie star. Even as a youngster, I thought it odd that a chicken farmer drove a big Cadillac and always wore a fancy suit. In school, we were reading the Dick and Jane books and in them Farmer Brown always wore overalls. Morris though, came in a classy blue suit, always with a red rose in his lapel, nicer than anything my grandfather ever wore. His wife Henrietta had a fancy fur stole and glistening jewelry. They definitely fit with the Cadillac but not with the chicken farm. I asked my mother "Why does Cousin Morris dress like a millionaire?"

She shrugged and answered, "He and Henrietta just like to dress well."

"But he's a farmer, isn't he?" I pressed her.

"Farmers can dress well, can't they? Besides he used to be a businessman in New York City" and with that she dismissed me.

However, I also wondered why Cousin Morris, a chicken farmer, carried a gun under his suit jacket. My mother wouldn't answer that, so when Cousin Morris left, after showing me his steady hand, I had to ask my grandfather. "Papa George, how come Cousin Morris carries a gun?"

My grandfather, always cagey, knew how much an eight-year old needed to know and answered. "You know there might be weasels in the chicken house. You never know when he has to shoot something."

That was good enough for me at the time. As I got older, and Morris kept visiting I wondered more and more about the weasels he was shooting.

2. YOU HELP ME AND I'LL HELP YOU

"Hey Moe, how are you?"

Morris put down the heavy box he was carrying and looked at the three men standing by the rear door of Davidoff's Dresses. "Hello, Mr. Buchalter" he answered and nodded at the man standing in the middle of the three. He was dressed in a starched short sleeve, white shirt and was wearing a tie. The man was slender and had the look of a bookkeeper or an accountant except for the outsized muscular arms that looked better fitted to a construction worker. He was flanked by the two others and Morris recognized one of them as Jake Shapiro. Everyone called Jake, Gurrah, since he growled when he spoke.

"Mr. Buchalter? Come on Morris," the man said, "we've been friends for years. Please, to you, it's still Lepke."

Morris wiped sweat off his forehead and shook his head, "You're a big shot now with the union Lep. You're in white shirt and I'm still here schlepping boxes."

"I have a proposition to get you out of all this." Lepke said and then walked closer and spoke so that only Morris could hear. "I know you have a bit of money out on the street. I want you to do that for me. You'll be your own shy, but I help you out and you help me out." Lepke extended his hand, actually a big paw, towards Morris.

Morris tilted his head and shook the hand. It was 1923 and Morris "Moe" Eisenstein became a player in the loan shark world of New York. He was protected by Lepke Buchalter, one of the top mobsters in the city.

There were fifteen children in the LeBeaux and Eisenstein families and Morris was the oldest of all. In Bucharest the two families had lived together and my grandfather, ten years his junior, idolized Morris. Morris was bigger than all the Lebeaux men of his generation except for George's younger brother Lee, who was the odd-sized family giant; Morris was muscular and broad shouldered like all the boys, with a thick head of wavy black hair. He came to the U.S. in 1902, sometime ahead of my grandfather, and rather than going through Boston and settling down in New England like the first wave of LeBeaux's, he took the more traditional route through Ellis Island. Living on the Lower East Side with few real skills, he first worked as a laborer in the garment industry, which at that time was mostly composed of sweatshops in the southern part of Manhattan. He was tough and ambitious as well as business savvy and started earning a decent side living as a loan shark. Then, allied with his friend from the garment trades, Louis Buchalter, known by his Yiddish nickname Lepke, he purchased a dry-cleaning shop in Brooklyn and moved to East New York, a neighborhood in the eastern part of Brooklyn.

By the mid-twenties he had expanded both the shark business and the dry cleaning. He now owned a string of dry cleaner shops, throughout Brooklyn, and was one of top "shy's" around. Shylock, shy, or shark, were the common street expressions for a loan shark.

3. BROWNSVILLE COWBOYS

Morris walked out of his dry-cleaning shop on Pitkin Avenue and immediately heard the annoying voice.

"Hey, Eisenstein I have a message for you."

It was Shoe Schwartz, a scrawny, acne-scarred runner for the Abe Rellis mob. Shoe was one of the hundreds of secondary characters and hangers on that were attached to organized crime in the nineteen thirties. They did little jobs for little money.

Shoe continued "Abe don't like it, you layin' out so much cash in dis neighborhood. He wants a cut, fashaysht?"

"Hey Shoe," Morris answered. "Why don't you get a job up to your intelligence – like cleaning toilets with your tongue."

"Ha, Ha, Eisenstein, you think you're funny. What do I tell Abe?"

"You tell Abe, I'm just a businessman. I have no fight with him or the Ambergs or the Shapiros. I work with Lepke and I put cash wherever I want. If he doesn't like it he can talk to Lepke. I'm sure Abe doesn't want a fight with Lep or Lucky or Meyer."

Brownsville and East New York of the twenties and thirties were akin to the old Wild West, with many gangs jockeying for racketeering positions. Abe Rellis headed a gang out of Rose's Midnight Café in Brownsville that became the nucleus of Murder Incorporated. They fought for the top spot in the underworld of Eastern Brooklyn with the Ambergs and the Shapiros in almost constant gangland warfare, involving shootings and kidnappings. Morris, although a tough shark, was more businessman than thug. He maintained his independence and perhaps his life, through his friendship with Lepke, a mob boss that the other Brownsville cowboys were afraid to anger.

Moe Eisenstein with the dry cleaners and loan sharking made a ton of money in the twenties and moved to a mansion in Far Rockaway, a quiet Long Island suburb. My grandfather and his brother-in-law Misha Seltzer had both done well in the booming economic environment of the twenties and both owned nice small homes in Brooklyn. However, neither house compared to Morris's manse which had two stories and a large stone staircase in the front leading to a double door entryway. In the late twenties, every other Sunday, the LeBeaux's from Brighton and the Seltzers from Prospect Park, would drive, in Misha's car, out to Far Rockaway to have dinner with Cousin Morris and his family. The Far Rockaway house had a large circular driveway and after driving up to the front door, one of Morris's "associates" would take your car. If the associate didn't know you, he might pat you down.

4. I'D RATHER BE POOR BUT HONEST

During the twenties, my grandfather Papa George had moved from milk truck driver to shop steward and dues collector for the milk driver's union, a precursor to the teamsters' union. With a bigger salary from the union, he managed to save enough to open a small breakfast and lunch counter-type restaurant on Thirty-Fourth Street in Manhattan, across from Macy's. For several years he was riding high, but then, like for most of the country, the bottom fell out. He lost the restaurant and there was no work to go back to. Reduced to fishing in nearby Sheepshead Bay for dinners, and picking up whatever odd jobs he could find, he was desperate.

"Ray," he told my grandmother. "I have to go to Morris."

My grandma loved Morris personally but was wary of getting involved with anything illegal. "Georgie, you know how I feel about that. What about Misha? He's still afloat."

Misha Seltzer was married to George's younger sister Mary. He was a big Russian with a big smile who in his older years morphed into Maurice Chevalier's long lost twin brother. Misha's business, selling sundries drugstore to drugstore, was surviving the Depression. "I can't ask Misha for more, Ray. He's given too much already. Besides us he paid the taxes for Lee and Alex and the farm in Massachusetts. I have to ask Morris."

"Do what you have to do." Ray finally told him reluctantly.

George arranged to meet Morris at his main dry-cleaning shop on Pitkin Avenue. Although it was only fifteen miles from Brighton Beach to Brownsville, without a car it required a subway ride and then two buses and took over an hour. George was hot and exhausted when he finally got to Pitkin Avenue. He fought his way through the crowds of shoppers looking at the sidewalk clothing displays and at the pushcarts and made it to Morris's store. He stepped inside. Morris hugged him and led him to the back office. Morris, always what my grandfather called a "spiffy dresser" took off his sport jacket and hung it on a coat rack. He then removed a shoulder holster with a revolver and hung these next to the jacket. George looked knowingly at the pistol. Having t was part of Morris's work.

"Morris did I ever show you the pearl handled revolver I used to carry on union collections?"

"No, but I know all about it," Morris answered. "I've heard the story of you saving Misha – hiding behind the curtain." Morris and George then shared a short laugh. "So, Georgie what can I do for you that you had to come all the way out here without a car?" Morris asked.

George at first avoided looking directly at his cousin and looked down at his own feet but then looked up at Morris and answered: "I'm desperate. You know I haven't had steady work in three years. I already lost my three rental properties and Misha had to pay my taxes last year. He doesn't have it to help me this year and if I don't pay, I'm going to lose my own house."

Morris shook his head and held out his hand to start to talk. "Why didn't you come to me sooner. You know I wouldn't let you lose your house."

"I couldn't come before. This is tough for me, Morris – I'm a proud man. It was hard enough asking Misha. Misha by the way also paid the taxes for Alex and Lee out on the farm."

Morris sat down at his desk. He pulled out a small iron box. "I told you, Georgie. I won't let you lose your house. How much do you need?"

"Five hundred dollars."

Morris opened the box and took out a large wad of cash. He then counted out five hundred dollars in mostly twenties and handed it to George.

George again looked down at the floor as he put the money in his wallet. Five years earlier, George thought, five hundred dollars was easy money; now, he had to scrounge for it just to save his home. Morris again shook his head. George looked crestfallen so Morris said to his cousin. "Look, Georgie, don't feel bad – it's not your fault. I'm happy I can help." He thought for a moment and then said, "Georgie, why don't you come to work for me? You'll do the same thing you did for the Driver's Union, collect money."

"I don't know, Morris, I'll have to talk to Ray. You know how she feels about anything that might get me in trouble."

"Talk to her then, the offer is real. Georgie, we're family. Even if you don't work for me, I'll still help you out. Just ask me."

It was an appealing offer for someone who hadn't worked in some time. My grandmother Ray was adamant though about George not working for Morris. "Georgie, I love Morris, but I'd rather be poor but honest."

My grandfather never worked for his adored older cousin but somehow managed to survive the depression as an honest man. He eventually found work as a technician for Primo Drugs in the late thirties.

5. VINELAND, NEW JERSEY?

"A chicken farm, Morris? What the hell do you know about chicken farming?" My grandfather asked. Morris had shown up unexpectedly in Brighton Beach on a Saturday afternoon in 1941. George invited him inside for coffee, but Morris said that they had to talk privately so they went to the backyard of the bungalow and sat underneath the grape arbor.

"That's why there's hired help," Morris answered. "I sold all the cleaning shops and I'm moving there. This *fekokteh* (screwed-up) thing with Dewey is out of control and this is a good time for me to change addresses. That *momser* (bastard) Dewey is an anti-Semite. See how he's going after Lepke. I tell you Georgie its killing all of us."

"But Vineland, New Jersey? Where the hell is that? I never even heard of it." George asked him.

"It's south Jersey maybe only a hundred miles from here. I bought a big farm and it would surprise you but there's a lot of *lantzmen* (Jews) down there. The fresh air is good and I've been in the city too long." Morris shrugged his shoulders in a sign of exhaustion.

George shook his head, not believing what he was hearing. "Morris, you've been in the city your whole life, even in Bucharest. You don't know anything about farming."

"That's why I'm here Georgie. I want you to come also – you know farming. I'll pay you well, you know that."

Georgie thought for a moment but then shook his head. "Morris, I'd love to help you, but I can't leave here. Ray would never move. We have Jeff and Sonny and Ray's cousins and friends. She just wouldn't go. Besides I'm starting a business with Misha." George diplomatically left out any of his wife's reservations about Morris's less than legal activities.

"What kind of business?"

"I'm making witch hazel and hair tonic in the back garage. Misha is going to sell it to his druggists."

"You need a still for witch hazel. You have a still here, Georgie?" Morris asked.

"I set one up, right in the back garage." He pointed to his left just beyond the end of the last grape vine.

Morris flicked his head and winked. "If you had that still fifteen-years ago, we could have cleaned up during Prohibition. Oh well. I'd wish you'd reconsider about my farm, but either way I'm off to Vineland. Don't forget we're still family George." He got up and hugged his cousin and then left.

Loan sharks handle economic downturns very well; people still gamble and people still need to borrow money. For Morris, no matter how his dry-cleaning shops were doing, throughout the depression he was making money and living well. Then, Tom Dewey entered the picture with his stated goal of cleaning up New York City. Dewey, starting in the mid thirties as a federal prosecutor and then as the New York district attorney, was a staunch establishment Protestant, who in his words, was protecting New York from the crime wave perpetrated by the Italians and Jews. Most of the major mob leaders were indicted and convicted. Lucky Luciano went to prison on a trumped-up prostitution charge. Abe Rellis turned state's evidence against Lepke and the rest of Murder Incorporated and Lepke became the last major mob leader to go to the electric chair. Rellis never got to testify. Under police protection in the Half Moon Hotel in Coney Island, he managed to "commit suicide" by jumping out of the window. Dewey used his notoriety as a gangbuster to become governor of New York and then have two failed presidential campaigns.

Whether Morris was indicted or not was never clear or at least never spoken about within my family. However, in the midst of the Dewey rampage, Morris suddenly left the dry-cleaning business to become a chicken farmer in Vineland, New Jersey where he stayed the rest of his life.

6. POOR BUT HONEST REDUX

I learned about Morris's true profession when I was 12, about a year or so after Castro revealed himself as a Communist and the press began berating those who had supported the anti-Batista revolution. The revelations about Morris came in a sort of round about fashion.

Political discussions were commonplace at our small kitchen dinner table, but always from a left-leaning perspective. My mother's maternal grandfather had been a fiery Socialist in Russia and then a major unionist once in New York. He worked with the beginnings of the Clothing Workers Unions, and he influenced both his daughter and my mother who became an active young Socialist in the thirties. My Papa George was a union man through and through. In our kitchen, on a summer night in 1960, a radio program blared against the leftist fools who had supported Castro. My mother, anger and annoyance in her voice, spoke out.

"We're getting what we deserve with Castro. We supported all those tin pot fascists like Batista and Franco and Trujillo. Castro is our payback" my mother asserted. To her, her opinions were correct, and there was no other position that could possibly be correct.

"You're right about the Fascists, Sonny," Papa George countered to my mother, "but in Cuba, Batista was only a puppet. Lansky ran Cuba. He had the girls and the gambling. He owned the hotels and he had Batista in his pocket. Everybody knew that."

Then, my grandma chimed in and threw Cousin Morris right out into the open.

"They ran Lansky out of Cuba. Like I told you so many times Georgie, it's better to be poor but honest. Look at Lepke. He went to the electric chair, and they sent Luciano back to Italy and now Lansky is out of Cuba. Look at poor Morris stuck all these years down in Vineland."

During these discussions, mostly I just listened. However, Morris's name made me enter the fray and ask: "Cousin Morris? He's just a farmer. Right?"

My grandfather, maybe not thinking, or maybe thinking that now I was old enough to understand, answered: "Well way back when, before he was a farmer, he was a loan shark. He was a partner of Lepke."

Once the truth was out, and there was nothing to hide, bit by bit, I heard all the Morris stories: the string of dry cleaners, the loan sharking, the meeting and partnership with Lepke, the fights with Rellis and the big house on Long Island. Did this knowledge shock me or make me think less of Cousin Morris? Not really. It was somewhat exciting having a family member connected with organized crime and by age 12 I knew quite a bit about wise guys. Brighton Beach in the fifties was at a crossroads of American Jewish gangster history. It was far away from the ghetto poverty of the Lower East Side and Williamsburg, where the fine line between street criminality, gambling, gangs and extortion, wasn't that distinct from just ordinary daily living, but Brighton wasn't the suburbs either. It was far closer in character to the Brownsville of the thirties, where Murder Incorporated held sway, than to Great Neck, Long Island, or to Scarsdale, New York. There were bookies, sharks and wise guys around, and these characters and their businesses were just a part of life. A group of gamblers and bookies hung out each morning in front of the Forty Thieves, a candy store on Brighton Beach Avenue underneath the elevated trains. In the evenings this group went together to the Club Twenty Eight, a night club on Ocean Parkway, where my grandfather was the bartender. There was another bookie who conducted his business at the Fifth Street Pool Parlor, an unsavory looking pool hall on the corner of Brighton Fifth Street and Brighton Beach Avenue. A separate collection of Italian and Irish wise guys congregated at the Coney Island Social Club on Neptune Avenue, around the corner from our bungalow. On a larger frame, I knew the names Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel and especially Lepke Buchalter, not as movie characters, but as men that my grandfather, in his union work, ran into and rubbed shoulders with. Actually, my mother and father had dinner with Meyer Lansky in Cuba in 1950, but that's part of an entirely different story. So, despite all the new knowledge, Cousin Morris was as impressive to me as ever.

7. COINS, LEGACY AND MORRIS'S GUN

During the years that Morris lived in Vineland, he and my grandfather remained close. At least once a month, Morris and Henrietta drove from New Jersey to have dinner at our house in Brighton Beach. They came in his big Cadillac – he in his fancy suit, his red rose, and his gun, and Henrietta in her fur and jewels.

Cousin Morris discovered that I was a coin collector and we bonded over this. Each Sunday that he came, he handed me two or three Indian Head pennies. This became our little connection. After one Sunday dinner he said to me, "Benjie, I have a bunch of complete sets of coins. I have a nice complete collection of Liberty Silver dollars – you can have them – I'll bring them sometime."

I was ecstatic both for the promise of getting a complete set of silver dollars and for the fact that it came from impressive Cousin Morris.

Cousin Morris died when I was fifteen, in his eighties of natural causes, and I lost out on his silver dollar collection. When he passed away, Henrietta said to my mother, "Sonny, Morris had a nice coin collection that he wanted Benjie to have. They're too heavy for me, but when Benjie starts to drive have him come down to Vineland and pick them up."

Unfortunately, Henrietta passed away soon afterwards and before I could drive. My mother mentioned the coin collection to their son Bernie, who said, no way, the coin collection was too valuable. So, Bernie kept the coins and my legacy from Cousin Morris was just the stories. However, now I realize why Cousin Morris carried a gun.

Gary Beck

Motifs

Fractured America

We elected a President,
a minority,
who persuaded coal miners
jobs would come back.
They were desperate,
believed a liar
who seemed convincing.

Others fell for his lies
and still believe him
despite broken promises.
His corrupt cohorts
elected and appointed,
too ignorant to know
the science of climate change,
economics
and do not care
the gifts to the rich
are thefts from the poor
and undermine democracy.

Our once promising country
once known to the world
as the land of opportunity,
now beset on all sides
by an army of enemies
foreign and domestic,
assaulting our security.

Our leaders
elected and appointed
let hatred fester at home,
dissension provoke danger abroad.

The servants of power
are generously rewarded
for betraying the people
while the lords of profit
feast on our abundance
while the rest of us fear
for the future of our children.

Eric Scholz

Piss

When the temperature stays below freezing, Piss is better off getting herself arrested than spending the night outdoors. She knows she shouldn't steal. Stealing sets a bad example for the baby. She wonders where she left the baby. She hopes she'll get the nice cop, the one who used to load her bags into the trunk of his car, careful not to damage the books or jewelry she collects for the baby. *So gentle*, Piss would say, as the cop helped her into the backseat and reached around her body to buckle her in. *Such a gentleman*. Nights when the shelter was full, he drove her to the hospital and used her name at check-in. The nurses would wash her hair and cut her nails. Sometimes, a nurse helped Piss look for the baby and sat with her, folding shiny applesauce lids into bows and rings.

Piss stops in front of Good-Fortune Liquors and looks inside. Her breath fogs the window. The store looks empty; the shop owner must be in the bathroom. Enough time to steal a beer before getting caught stealing a beer.

Wind blows through a hole near the armpit of Piss's coat. She makes for the door, but it catches the corner of her walker. She almost goes down on her back, like one of those last tortoises she's seen on the animal channel, too big-bodied to flip itself right. A tote bag with one stapled-on handle falls to the ground, sprouting a meadow of flowery scrubs across the sidewalk. She squats to pick them up. Her bad foot throbs.

She tries again for the door.

The air is warm inside the store. Piss checks down the first aisle, then the second, and pulls a big blue can from the fridge and stashes it in her bag. She pulls a second and cracks it open. "Yoo-hoo!"

The bathroom door creaks open and then slams. "No no no. You do not come in here." The shopkeeper charges toward Piss, his finger raised like a sword. He waves it in her face. "I told you, do not come in here."

Piss bats the finger from her face, spilling beer on the floor.

"You cannot have that unless you have money," the shopkeeper says.

"I have money," Piss says. "I have lots of money, but it's for the baby, for college, and you can't have it."

"Do not start with that," the shop owner says, adjusting his agal. "If you have no money then get out."

"I'll die out there," Piss says.

"Then go to the shelter."

"I can't go there," Piss says. "It's full'a crazies." She hobbles toward the bathroom. "They steal your shoes."

The shopkeeper looks down at the plastic contraptions velcroed to Piss's feet. His glasses slide down his nose. "Nobody will want those ugly things."

Piss pushes her walker into the shopkeeper's knees and drinks from the can.

The shopkeeper grabs at the can, but Piss swats away his hand, spilling beer on the floor. "Have you seen my baby?"

"You have no baby."

Piss charges toward the bathroom, splashing beer with each hobble. "Are you hiding her in there?"

The shopkeeper stands between Piss and the door. "Get out," he says. "You are not a customer. You are not welcome in this store."

The wind howls.

"Call the cops," she says. "Have me arrested."

"If you stop stealing my liquor, maybe they'll let you in the shelter."

Piss ploughs past the shop owner, knocking bottles from the shelf.

"Go bother somebody else," the shopkeeper says, snatching the open can from Piss's hand.

Piss stumbles. Her bad foot falls in a puddle of beer, and her legs fly out from under her. The shop owner reaches to catch her, but the back of her head slams on the floor.

• • • • •

Eric Scholz • Piss

Piss wakes up in a hospital bed. A tube clipped to her nose blows cold oxygen. She pushes the nurse-call button. Nothing. She pushes the button again and shouts until a nurse appears in the doorway. The nurse's sleeves are pushed up under her scrubs, exposing the uncolored koi tattoos on her forearms. She ducks her head out of the room. "The dump-off's awake."

The tattooed nurse shoves a wheelchair to the side of Piss's bed. "Get in," she says. "You're fine, but the doctor wants you washed up."

"My head hurts," Piss says.

The nurse unclips the oxygen tube. "There's no concussion, and we gave you pain killers. Do you remember we gave you painkillers?"

Piss smiles. "Who are you?"

The nurse mumbles, "Jesus."

"Good to meet you, Nurse Christ."

Piss rolls out of the bed and onto the wheelchair. "What about the diabetes?"

"You already had your insulin. Do you remember fighting the orderlies?"

Piss is quiet.

The nurse looks at her cell phone, bumping Piss against the walls as she wheels her through the hallway. They pass through a coffee lounge where sad, busy people sit by themselves on loveseats.

"I'm thirsty," Piss says.

"You're fine," the nurse says. She looks up from her phone and at the back of Piss's head. "You can have something later."

"What about the baby?" Piss says.

The nurse either doesn't hear or chooses to ignore the question.

They reach the showers. The nurse looks for shampoo behind a stacked row of bar soaps.

"Have you seen my baby?"

The nurse groans. "This again?"

Her phone buzzes.

"So popular," Piss says.

The nurse sighs. "My friend's trying to bring her shithead boyfriend on our girls' trip."

"Just shoot the shit," Piss says.

The nurse looks.

Piss points her finger like a gun. "I mean get to know him."

The nurse's phone vibrates. "Hello?"

A man passes by the door to the hallway. "Sir," Piss hisses. "Sir."

The nurse pats down a stack of towels and shakes her head. "Of course, he cheated on you. He's a shithead."

Piss stands, toddles into the hallway. "Yap, yap, yap."

Without the walker, she lands hard on her toes, radiating pain through her shins. Stepping with her heels eases the pain from the toe-stubs.

The hallway is quiet. The nurse-station at the end of the hall is abandoned. Piss crosses the hall and finds an old woman sleeping upright with an IV drip in her arm.

"Ma'am," Piss says. "Excuse me, Ma'am."

The woman opens an eye and closes it.

Piss steps forward. "Excuse me."

She spreads her legs wide like she's about to underhand a bowling ball and ducks her head below her knees to look under the bed. Her hair stays greased to her face and the sides of her neck.

The old woman opens her eyes.

Piss straightens. "Have you seen my baby?"

The woman's mouth hangs open. Her eyes close.

Piss turns around and peeks her head back into the hallway. A nurse has taken her post at the nurse station, but she's typing at a computer. Piss limps through the hall away from the nurse station and ducks into a room with a cracked-open door. The room is filled with hot machines. Piss hears the nurse swearing on the other side of the door. "Where the fuck did you go?"

Piss watches through the cracked door as the nurse walks the wrong way down the hallway.

With the nurse gone, Piss can finally find her baby. She shuffles across the hall and enters a room with a sleeping old man. Like the woman in the other room, he is upright. Like the woman, he has an IV drip. Piss looks under his bed and limps toward the back of his room, past a curtain that has been hung to turn a single room into a double. On the other side of the curtain is another bed, with another upright man, this one awake. "Sir," Piss says. "Sir. Have you seen my baby?"

The man sits up straighter in his bed. "I don't know anything about your baby." He hangs his feet over the edge of the bed. "Do you need help finding your room?"

"I'm looking for my baby," Piss says. "The bastards, the dirty motherfuckers, are hiding her."

The man puts his hand on Piss's shoulder.

Piss charges forward into the man. Both fall to the floor. The bed slams into one of the poles holding up the curtain. The curtain lands on the bed with the sleeping man.

A nurse appears at the door, followed by a security guard who stands outside the door yelling into his walkie talkie. The tattooed nurse reappears, holding a little bottle of shampoo. She pushes the guard aside and frees the old man from under the curtain. She wheels his bed out of the room.

Piss's hands find a bedpan and throw it across the room. "They're hiding my baby," she says, her voice a shriek.

The bedpan clatters on the floor.

More security guards appear and push the tattooed nurse aside.

None of the guards will make the first move. Piss is a biter.

The tattooed nurse pushes back through the security guards. She kneels on the floor with Piss. "It's okay," she says. "Let's get up and get you washed."

"Not without the baby," Piss says.

The nurse stands.

An older doctor in a white coat enters the room. "If you don't get up, we'll have to call the police," he says.

"Call them," Piss says. "Call them, and I'll have you all arrested for kidnapping." Saliva drips from her chin. She grabs the nurse around the knees and pulls her to the floor.

Three security guards rush in and pin Piss's arms and legs to the floor, but Piss sinks her teeth into the nurse's arm on the way down, reddening the koi tattoos.

The nurse shouts.

The guards twist Piss's arms behind her back and drag her through the halls and out the back door. "Nurse Christ!" she screams.

The guards restrain Piss until she stops struggling.

"Get outta here," they say. "You're not in the system."

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The afternoon air is not as cold as the night before. Piss walks through the park and notices a group of twenty-somethings smoking outside the Orville Café. The one in the baseball cap will usually give her loose cigarettes. In front of the group, Piss leans into her walker and drops her bags. Baseball Cap turns toward her.

"Piss," he says. "How the fuck have you been?"

"I'm gonna wash my hair," she says.

After Piss was expelled from the hospital, the tattooed nurse found her wandering around the parking lot and returned the walker and bags. Piss apologized to the nurse for biting, and the nurse offered her the little bottle of shampoo.

The girls in the group laugh. Another guy takes a pack of cigarettes from his jacket pocket and holds one out in Piss's direction. "Glad to hear it, Piss. Wanna bum a stoge?"

Piss takes the cigarette and holds it to her lips with both hands. One of the girls hands her a white lighter. Piss's hands shake as she thumbs at the flint wheel. She drops the lighter and picks it back up.

"Careful, Piss," a different girl says. "White lighters are bad luck."

Piss screams like a person doing an impression of a screaming person and drops the lighter a second time. She stomps at the lighter and falls. She catches her walker and hangs by the armpits.

Laughter erupts from the smokers, and the group heads inside. Piss teeters back to her feet and follows them in.

Inside, the café is warm but drafty with a front door that has never quite closed right. A small fishbowl sits atop the milk bar a few feet from the drafty door. The smokers have settled into a cluster of frumpy sofas at the back of the café. One of the guys is showing two of the girls how to roll a cigarette. Two baristas are standing behind the bar. One

curly-haired, the other in tight jeans.

"Excuse me," Piss says. "Has anyone seen my baby?"

Curly-Hair runs to the bathroom and locks himself inside. Once Piss gets in there, she's impossible to get out.

Tight Jeans swings her legs over the counter. "Ma'am, are you okay?"

The smokers laugh.

A customer gets up from his table and leaves.

Piss points at her foot. "My diabetes."

"Why don't you sit down? Is there someone I can call for you?"

Piss's eyes wander across the room. "I'm looking for my baby. Have you seen my baby?"

The first cigarette guy says, "Don't bother. She's fucking bonkers."

"Well, what are we supposed to do?" the barista asks.

"I don't know. People usually just call the cops."

"But what do *they* do with her?"

Piss grabs a customer by the sleeve.

"Excuse me, sir. Have you seen my baby?"

The customer brushes the hand away and leaves the shop.

Piss grabs at another customer.

Tight Jeans asks Piss, "What's your baby's name?"

Piss lets go of the customer. "Julie," she answers.

"Julie? That's such a pretty name."

"Julie is so pretty," Piss says. "Such a pretty baby."

"You know, this little girl needs a name," Tight Jeans says, gesturing to the goldfish on the milk bar.

"Can we call her Julie?" Piss says.

"I think Julie would be a beautiful name for her."

Piss knocks over a bottle of honey as she presses her face against the top of the fishbowl. "She's so pretty," Piss says. Tight Jeans agrees.

"Julie's hungry," Piss says rummaging through her bag. She finds the broken cigarette under an empty blue can.

Tight Jeans watches as Piss holds the cigarette over the fishbowl and shakes.

Bits of tobacco fall and float at the top of the water.

The fish flicks its tail and takes a piece of tobacco into its mouth. The fish stills for a moment and the tobacco flake shoots out of its mouth. The fish flicks its tail and takes the tobacco flake into its mouth, stills, and spits it back out, flicks its tail and takes the tobacco flake into its mouth, stills, and spits it back out, flicks its tail and takes the tobacco flake into its mouth, stills, spits, and flicks.