JAST

JOURNAL OF AMERICAN STUDIES OF TURKEY

NUMBER 57
SPRING 2022

Journal of American Studies of Turkey

A semiannual publication of the American Studies Association of Turkey, Journal of American Studies of Turkey is an international journal. It operates with a blind peer referee system. It publishes transdisciplinary work in English by scholars of any nationality on American literature, history, art, music, film, popular culture, institutions, politics, economics, geography, and related subjects. Contributors need not be members of the American Studies Association of Turkey.

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Journal of American Studies of Turkey (JAST) yaygın süreli bir yayın olup, 6 ayda bir İngilizce olarak yayımlanmaktadır.

Yayın sahibi : Türkiye Amerikan Etüdleri Derneği adına Bergüzar Meldan TANRISAL

Sorumlu Yazı İşleri Müdürü : Defne ERSİN TUTAN

Journal of American Studies of Turkey is indexed in the MLA International Bibliography, TÜBİTAK/ULAKBİM TR Dizin, and the Classificazione ANVUR delle riviste scientifiche (Italy). It also appears in the Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory and the MLA Directory of Periodicals.

Publisher:
On behalf of the American Studies Association.
President, Meldan Tanrısal
Editor in Chief:
Defne Ersin Tutan
Address of ASAT:
Cinnah Caddesi No:20, Oda 48,
Kavaklıdere, Ankara, Turkey
Printed by
Başkent Klişe ve Matbaacılık Bayındır Sokak 30/E
Kızılay- Ankara Tel: 0312 431 54 90
Date: May 2022

Yayın Sahibi:
Türkiye Amerikan Etüdleri Derneği Adına,
Meldan Tanrısal
Sorumlu Yazı İşleri Müdürü:
Defne Ersin Tutan
Yayın İdare Adresi:
Cinnah Caddesi, No: 20, Oda 48,
Kavaklıdere, Ankara
Basıldığı Yer ve Matbaa:
Başkent Klişe ve Matbaacılık Bayındır Sokak 30/E
Kızılay- Ankara Tel: 0312 431 54 90
Basım Tarihi: Mayıs 2022

ISSN 1300-6606

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In Memory of Associate Professor Saadet Bozkurt (1944–2022)

Dr. Bozkurt started her academic career as a Teaching Assistant at Hacettepe University, Department of English Language and Literature in 1966. There, in 1973, she wrote her PhD dissertation, "Freedom and Identity in Henry Miller." Again at Hacettepe University, she was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1976, and later in 1981, with her dissertation "Love and Hate in James Baldwin's Fiction: A World of Painful Ambivalence," she was promoted to Associate Professor at the same institution.

During her time at Hacettepe University between 1966 and 1987, she founded and chaired the Department of American Culture and Literature where she taught undergraduate and graduate courses, such as 20th Century American Novel, Survey of Black American Literature, 19th century American Novel and American Short Story. At Hacettepe, Dr. Bozkurt was also the Founding Chair of the Department of Translation and Interpretation.

Later in 1987, Dr. Saadet Bozkurt decided to continue her career at Bilkent University where she once again founded and chaired a department, the Department of American Culture and Literature.

She was invited to Başkent University in 1995 to establish the Department of American Culture and Literature and worked there as Founding Chair until she chose to retire in 1999.

During her fruitful career just shy of 30 years, Dr. Bozkurt not only was the Founding Chair of four departments where she designed and set up core curricula but also taught courses on American literature and culture, performed the duties of thesis and dissertation advisor and student academic advisor. In addition, Dr. Bozkurt served in administrative positions including Assistant Dean at Başkent University; furthermore, she was the Faculty Representative at the University Senate at Başkent University and served on committees, advisory boards and executive boards at the higher education institutions where she worked.

Among being a member of other professional organizations, Dr. Bozkurt was a founding member and later president of the American Studies Association of Turkey between 1992 and 1994.

Dr. Saadet Bozkurt received grants and awards for her academic work from the John F. Kennedy Institute, NATO, the British Council, among others.

She organized, chaired and attended national and international conferences where she often presented papers as well. Her publications in academic journals mainly focused on the African American novel. Her Associate Professorship dissertation on Baldwin marked only the beginning of her extensive publications on this renowned writer. Her research interests also included Black American women writers and Native American culture. In addition, she co-translated with her dear husband Professor Bülent R. Bozkurt *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Ankara: Dost, 1985; İstanbul: Remzi, 1994).

I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Bozkurt first in the 1971-1972 Academic Year at Hacettepe University, Department of English Language and Literature in my freshman year when, at the time, she was lecturing on Survey of American Literature and American History. She used to give pop-quizzes to keep us on the subject. Once, when she told me that I was the first student to get a 100 on her quizzes, this made me want to study even harder for her exams. It was this warm and kind encouragement that went a long way in my days as an undergraduate student and in the many more years to come.

Our paths later crossed again when I joined the Department of English Language and Literature at Hacettepe. Until last year, for no less than 35 years, I had the cactus plants she had planted herself and gifted me when I first settled in my office. In those days I learned so much from her about carrying out departmental chores. I also remember

enjoying her perceptive humor not only at the office but also during our private chats. With a few other like-minded professors and colleagues, we enjoyed many wonderful times during the American Studies conferences. After she left Hacettepe for Bilkent, I was overjoyed and proud to be asked to move to her office where her warmth lingered.

When I succeeded Dr. Bozkurt as Chair of the Department of Translation and Interpretation at Hacettepe in 1987, I had to work really hard to sustain the system she had so perfectly set up in order to run the department flawlessly.

At the time the American Studies Association of Turkey was founded in 1988, with Professor Necla Aytür its President, Dr. Bozkurt made significant contributions to the Association's projects as the Vice President, and later as its President. During this time, as the other vice president, I once again further benefited from her knowledge and expertise - which she always so generously shared - in the administrative field and in organizing academic events.

When I was teaching part-time at Bilkent University, I was lucky to share an office with Dr. Bozkurt. I would look forward to the breaks when we would exchange notes, and I could once again learn from her extensive experience in varied areas of the academic arena.

Despite her heavy workload, Dr. Bozkurt always made time for herself and her hobbies; she enjoyed gardening, and she always dressed well, keeping up with the fashion. Whenever her younger colleagues neglected dressing nicely and came to work in too casual attire, she was quick to make a warm remark, reminding them of the rules of the office space. There was always something to learn from her…

I am grateful for having known Associate Professor Saadet Bozkurt who was a wonderful teacher, a mentor, and a diligent and energetic administrator. I have no doubt she left a lasting mark on the professional and personal lives of many.

You will be fondly remembered and will always be missed, Hocam.

Prof. Dr. A. Deniz BOZER

***JAST*, 2022; 57: 5-26**
Submitted: 21.12.2021
Accepted: 07.05.2022
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Postmodern Film and Fiction Intermediating: Texture, Spectacle, Theatricality, and Violence in Robert Coover's Texts

Lovorka Gruić Grmuša

"…a vast moving darkness and brilliant flickering pictures, new and strange"[1] (*PB* 542)

Abstract

This study recognizes reciprocal interplay of cinematography and literature, which constitute one another in a dynamic process of remediation, while highlighting intermedial reflexivity from screen to paper and how its "cinematic," multifaceted dimensions of imagery, art, movement, technology, and industry interact with paper-based writings of Robert Coover. Embracing the techniques and forms of screen technologies, as well as exposing their ideological constructions and stereotypes, Coover's texts reveal filmlike texture, spectacle, theatricality, and violence, disclosing the disintegration of the confines in-between media, as well as relative non-distinction of the frontier between the real and the mediated, where virtuality imposes as a cultural force and dominates actuality. The study is informed by Paul Virilio's, Jean Baudrillard's, and Gilles Deleuze's accounts on how media and image-manipulation imprison the viewers through means of identification, and how cinematography contributes to the genesis of a new notion of reality.

Keywords: Cinematography, Robert Coover, Reality-Virtuality, Intermediation, Spectacle

Postmodern Film ve Kurmacada Medyalararasılık: Robert Coover'ın Metinlerinde Doku, Temsil, Teatrallik ve Şiddet

Öz

Bu çalışma, Coover'ın yazılı eserlerinde, ekrandan kağıda medyalararası özdüşünümselliğin ve bunun sonucunda ortaya çıkan imgelem, sanat, devinim, teknoloji ve endüstrinin çok boyutlu, sinematik yansımalarının altını çizerken; sinematografi ve edebiyatın karşılıklı etkileşimine iki türün birbirini geliştirmesini mümkün kılan dinamik bir süreç olarak bakar. Coover, eserlerinde, ekran teknolojilerinin yöntem ve biçimlerinin yanı sıra ideolojik yapı ve klişelerine de dikkat çeker. Sanal olanın kültürel etkisinin hissedildiği ve gerçeklik üstünde hakimiyet kurduğu bu eserler, film türünü andıran doku, temsil, teatrikallik ve şiddet öğeleri ile medyalararası ayrımların ve gerçek ile sanal olan arasındaki sınırların ortadan kalkışına işaret eder. Çalışma Paul Virilio, Jean Baudrillard ve Gilles Deleuze'ün medya ve imgelerin manipüle edilerek izleyicileri kimliksel özdeşleşim üzerinden esir alışı üzerine düşüncelerinden ve sinematografinin yeni bir gerçeklik anlayışının ortaya çıkışına sağladığı katkıdan yola çıkar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sinematografi, Robert Coover, Gerçeklik-Sanallık, Medyalararasılık, Temsil

Introduction

As Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin have illustrated, modern mass media do not simply discard earlier media forms for a new set of aesthetic and cultural precepts, instead, they borrow from them, as well as refashioning them, confirming that all media interpenetrate mutually, constituting one another in an on-going dynamic process of animation and remediation (14-15). One of the most striking effects of these correspondences and transformations within and in-between media is the erosion of their boundaries and the fading of the confines between what we consider reality and what we think of as virtual or mediated.

This article inspects Robert Coover's texts in terms of intermediation between cinematic screen and paper page, where cinematography intrudes into the real world and literature, generating its own imprint and the reality-virtuality tension. It tries to respond to two sets of questions. First, how does remediation and specifically interactions of screen technologies work in postmodern fiction, in the texts of Robert Coover? In what way do cinematography and its exuberant amplitude of imagery, technology and industry interact with the verbal dexterity of Coover's prose? Second, what is the significance and the outcome of these mediations and the specific imprint of cinema on culture and individual mindset? How do intrusions of the multifaceted visual or more precisely "cinematic" inform Coover's paper-based writings and erode the boundary between the actual and the virtual, the real and the mediated? Could one say that such a text performs in a "cinematic" manner?

In this analysis, "cinematic" is understood as a multifaceted property of the visual and the verbal, unfolding as a fluid, moving, and progressive mediation that always materializes as a unique concept, is always within the specific con/text, and is not a given category. Since observation, sight, and generally the postmodern world does not belong to absolute Newtonian space, and the frontier between reality and virtuality is blurred, the concept of "space-time" is used in this paper to describe a variety of worlds, zones, and realms that these mutual mediations and animations create. There is an underlying assumption that a relative event-space is process-dependent and does not treat space and time as isolated but as interlaced entities (just as the real and the virtual intermingle so do space and time) in a four-dimensional space-time.

Colonization, Consumption, and the Social Control of Screen Technologies: The Fading Boundary between the Fictive and the Real

It must be noted that representations of cinematography (and television) in postmodern texts introduce a second ontological level of radically different kinds in the world of fiction, multiplying or splitting the primary ontological plane. Immersed in mediation, postmodern literature uses cinematic techniques, evoking camera

movement, a variety of shots, cuts, and montage to mobilize print-space, thus animating both form and content. Brian McHale speaks of the screen as an ontological pluralizer that mirrors the "ontological pluralization" of literature itself, the multiplicity of space-times that all appear real (*Constructing Postmodernism* 134). Borrowing from new technologies of representation and imaging, but also repurposing and refashioning cinematography and television, Coover demonstrates the repercussions of intermediation as a cultural force and foregrounds literature's performativity, its ability to accommodate the "cinematic" and transform and animate fiction. His observation is that screen technologies exercise extreme power because they are omnipresent and the message they transmit is never intact but instead—"the medium is the message" (McLuhan 7). He also elaborates on how the screen gives power to the military-industrial-entertainment complex, the forces behind the screen that are pulling the strings, and even to lonesome individuals who can "appropriate some of the authority of social surveillance through imitation of it" (Winokur).

In his literary works, Coover displays the American national experience as largely fashioned according to media representations, forcing their standards of cultural values and ideologies onto citizens. Screen technologies disseminate popular stereotypes so that ideological constructions of reality transform artificiality into reality, creating a space-time of illusion, where consumer values and rapidly changing trends shape human consciousness. As McLuhan has noted, media technologies could condition the behavior of a whole nation (30).

The overpowering media (including newspapers) administer news as commodities to be quickly consumed and disregarded. In Coover's *The Public Burning* (1977) and "The Babysitter" (1969), the commodities make space for ever interesting new information on the hour. The speed with which a piece of information circulates, revamps, and gets overshadowed by another chunk of news, hinders the characters (and the public in general) from digesting the information, lacking synthesis of the news items. Even though contemporary mass media make economic and cultural realities much more transparent, it is a false transparency for they are not more intelligible: "the real structures of production and social relations remain illegible" (Baudrillard, *Selected Writings* 21). Historical consciousness and continuity are concealed by the military-industrial-entertainment complex and non-stop 24-hour news, which produce "only disorienting, alienating

effects, rendering it in turn ever more susceptible to manipulation" (Johnston, "Machinic Vision" 32), and by a human tendency to "trade our responsibility for a comfortable masochism or diverting spectacle" (Moore 138). Coover's collection of stories, *A Night at the Movies* (1987), represents our society as principally "a consumer society that, with its gargantuan appetites, is in danger of consuming its own cultural bases of existence," for individual tastes and beliefs disintegrate in the face of a mass-produced, homogenized culture (Zamora 53).

The hegemony of media also serves as a framework of social control, implementing its own ideologically tainted reality, which is depicted in Coover's *The Public Burning*, *A Night at the Movies*, and "The Babysitter," while postmodern authors keep asking how we can know what is real without becoming trapped in the false conceptions of the real. A few carnivalesque, surreal, and slapstick scenes in *The Public Burning* stage false conceptions of reality associated with media's ascendancy, including the one where a moviegoer, after seeing a 3-D horror movie, forgets to take his cardboard glasses off and staggers onto the street, vividly disoriented, and joins frenzied crowds who rush to the festivities tied to the Rosenbergs' execution. The dreamlike farce and the character's inability to escape the reality of the horror movie reflects the control that media have over the American public and their fear because, "ever since the new hydrogen-bomb tests at Eniwetok: yes, the final spectacle, the one and only atomic holocaust" (*PB* 286), Americans have been in a "panic" (*PB* 287), "expressing the madness of the country's psychological state" (Walsh 335). The electrocution of the Rosenbergs, Molly Hite argues, "was a stunning overreaction to a purported crime—passing the 'secret' of the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union—for which there was little direct evidence," illustrating "the elliptical and sometimes transparently fabricated nature of the prosecution's case" (85), while the media frenzy relied on the fear of communism and called upon the historical imperatives of the nation, coaching American folk consciousness.

Weinstein notes how "[b]uilding on the 3-D sequence from *The Public Burning,"* Coover's writing continues to engage in "the most popular art of our time—film, […] to show that the fabulous technical possibilities of film (dissolve, panning, cutting, montage) have […] their verbal counterparts" (260). The texture of Coover's narrative features gestural eloquence, which delivers his characters' sight gags, dance, vaudeville, and other uncharted vistas verbally, so

that it feels, Weinstein opines, as if the readers "were being helped, through Coover's language vision, to special lenses, to a picture of higher definition, to a more articulated and refined awareness of what our eyes process" (261). In an interview, Coover states that he "wanted to learn the language of film […]. Not the aesthetics of it, but the technical language used in making films, […] to look at the world through a lens" (qtd. in Bass 298). Indeed, Coover's bizarre, at times nauseating, and yet captivating scenes, particularly the ones saturated with cinematic taxonomy and *seeing*—the techniques, forms, and contents of cinematography—keep readers engaged, even to a point where "[t]he reader is nudged into the role of […] a voyeur" (Pughe 175). Numerous erotic close-ups in *Gerald's Party* (1985) fall under that category for they often include a cameraman, a director, or a photographer who orchestrates the characters and "occasionally joined in" (*GP* 78). The guests watch old videotapes "'[f]ull of sex and violence'" (*GP* 241), which besides the bedazzlement of the spectacle, reflects and even duplicates the character's restrained condition, their objectification and receptiveness to the colonization by the virtual.

The abundance of cinematic compositions, techniques, taxonomy, and images, straightforward and ambiguous in *A Night at the Movies*, "The Babysitter," *The Public Burning*, *Gerald's Party*, and *The Adventures of Lucky Pierre: Directors' Cut* (2002), reveals two aspects of screen technologies. First, these texts show how the projections of the virtual are encouraging the characters to act in a predisposed manner, which hinders their "sensory-motor" range (Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 121). Coover's protagonists are overcome by ideological and political causes disseminated through the screen. The consumers of entertainment are figuratively trapped by means of identification, so that virtuality both procreates and even monopolizes reality (Virilio, *The Vision Machine* 63). Second, these "brilliant flickering pictures, new and strange" (*PB* 542), mirror our complex, accelerated, fluid, indeterminate, and process-dependent reality, theorized by physicists such as Einstein, Planck, Bohr, and Heisenberg. They generate a postmodern space-time that unravels as nonlinear, fragmented, accidental, consumption-oriented, and disposable, delineating "the pluralistic and anarchistic ontological landscape of advanced industrial cultures" (McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* 38).

Thus, modern mass media amplify the ontological indeterminacy of objects in the world and augment vagueness. The

representational scheme and vague language inform the ontological structure that the given object shows itself to have in particular circumstances (Hyde 150), whereas screen technologies intensify the object's transience and ambiguity while offering the apparent factuality of virtual images (through the perceptual act). Virilio explains that cinematic representation raises "the problem of the paradoxically real nature of 'virtual' imagery" because our nervous systems record ocular perception, which means that our "retinal retention" is also "mental retention of images," concluding that, "virtuality [is] dominating actuality and turning the very concept of reality on its head;" hence the relative con/fusion of the factual and the virtual (*The Vision Machine* 61; 63).

Similarly, first Henri Bergson, and then Gilles Deleuze and Jean Baudrillard, ascribed ontological connotations to the virtual and acknowledged that the distinction between the real and the mediated is no longer feasible for the real appears always already mediated. As Bergson clarified, "the form of a possible" seems pre-existent to the real, although it cannot be represented before it becomes real, and the real is never fully realized for it accommodates the virtual (23; 118). For Bergson, life operates within the virtual-actual circuit. Deleuze embraces the dynamical systems theory, renouncing the idea of the possible as an empty form and opts for the virtual, which "is not opposed to the real; it possesses a full reality by itself. The process it undergoes is that of actualization" (*Difference and Repetition* 211). In his view, systems self-organize, tending toward the virtual or the actual. Baudrillard, who is even more radical, argues that in a world where images, symbols and signs of simulation dominate, simulacra have replaced all reality, and we inhabit the perceived reality or hyperreality, where the subject "becomes a pure screen, a pure absorption and re-absorption surface of the influent networks" (*America* 27).

Accordingly, Coover's texts challenge his characters (and readers) with ontological and epistemological questions, as he infuses them with experimentation and indeterminacy, utilizing cinema as an agency which conveys the discoveries and metaphors tied to the human condition. His texts display "images [that] define a new kind of reality in a world which seems to have entirely lost all substance, anchoring, or reference points, except in relation to other images or what are also conceived as images" (Johnston, "Post-Cinematic" 96). The truth is, Coover points out, informed by modern physics, that our world is in

constant flux, gravid with mutability, discontinuity, and fragmentation, which makes it difficult to distinguish the fictive from the real, also because "representation is short-circuited by the realization that there is no reality independent of mediation" (Hayles, "Saving" 779). Thus, the film-saturated space-time that looms at the juncture of cinema and fiction within Coover's texts projects the realm where the real and the virtual, although distinct, are indiscernible (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 68-69).

Filmlike Texture, Spectacle, Theatricality, and Violence:

How Virtuality Dominates Actuality

Following Baudrillard's and Virilio's views of information technology and media as enablers of a space-time of illusion and virtuality in which subjects absorb and become saturated with the proliferation of consumer values, commodities, and media ideologies, this section focuses on how pluralized rhythms of contemporary society project on screens and reflect in Coover's paper-based writings and onto the screens of consciousness (human reality), yielding in Baudrillard's words the "sign value" revolution (*Selected Writings* 57-60) or in Virilio's terminology,—displaying the "accelerated virtualization" of the globalized world (*The Information Bomb* 16). The screen has become an interface which features an emergent postmodern condition of the overexposed world, where an individual is overpowered by the play of signs, images, information, and spectacles, losing agency and control over the object, becoming a media-saturated spectator who suffers the deprivation of the real.

The military-industrial-entertainment complex promptly uses the coercive qualities of the screen, drawing on amusement, desire, consumerism, and ideology. Michel Foucault's panoptical subject—the spectator—is metaphorically imprisoned for s/he identifies with filmic modes of behavior and thought, (un)consciously internalizing the instructions from the screen (195-228). Because Western culture thrives on consumerism, competition, corporate culture, and self-reliance, it is not surprising that Hollywood exploits these topics and emphasizes action sequences, spectacle, and violence, using special effects to increase marketability and consumerism, while postmodern fiction utilizes and digests these topics from a critical point of view.

With these developments, cinema has indeed fortified as an advocate of architectonic dissolution (Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* 64-66), transferring not just the materiality of three-dimensional space into the immateriality of two-dimensional wall-screen (Virilio, *The Lost Dimension* 73), but instigating dematerialization and disappearance of the notion of narrative unity and its organizing principles. Stanley Solomon points to postmodern cinema as a prime example of the disintegration of classic narrative in the Aristotelian sense, referring to films such as *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977):

> The narrative elements in such films are chronologically arranged incidents that, given the premises, could happen but have no tragic or comic necessity for happening—the causes stemming not from story but from an available mixed bag of general emotions, special effects, and faith in production values. (65)

The very same remark makes sense in context of the narrative of Coover's short stories and his novels *Gerald's Party, Ghost Town* (1998), and *The Adventures of Lucky Pierre,* for the narrative has lost its determining role and can no longer be seen as the central organizing process. The arbitrary nature of textual arrangements in these texts resembles a series of collages with an abrupt transition from one image to another (mimicking film cuts), or occasional gradual transitions from one sequence to another (characterized by film dissolves), as the texts "keep […] metamorphing and rearranging" themselves, so that the first and the last page are only "accidentally" there (Vanderhaeghe 166).

Numerous episodes that occur in Coover's short fiction "The Elevator" (1969) underline this principle, featuring the play of possibilities that could happen during an elevator ride with a specter of impossible events, appearing as incidents of the same scene that splits repeatedly into multiple bifurcations. Adopting screening techniques, Coover modifies the form of the text so that the sections in the story do not follow each other in any apparent causal or temporal order, emerging as splices of individual juxtaposed or sequential shots of the same subject taken from different angles (jump cuts). Each scene focuses on the main character, Martin, who rides the elevator to his office, where he is either bullied by his co-workers or he seduces a girl he likes. On one occasion while the elevator falls, a mix of highly improbable and even impossible scenarios unfolds, such as his meeting

with Death and his reverie of being glorified for the size of his genitals, where "several fantasy lines are continued without being concluded" (Evenson 85). The reader can attempt to sort some of the scenes chronologically, but most of them are mutually exclusive permutations of the same elevator ride. Some events remain logically incongruous, pressing vertical impetus (also in sync with the movement of the elevator ride) via startling juxtaposition and rapid cutting, as opposed to the conventional horizontal narrative progression. All variations are allowed to exist as possibilities, and not one is insisted upon as the primary or actual one as opposed to the rest that are fictitious.

All Coover's stories and most of his novels remediate film, photography, or video, showing how screen-based media influence the structure and meaning of literature and how the boundary between media, as well as the one between the fictive and the real, fades away. The method of presentation in Coover's texts is clearly informed by the "cinematic:" "The process is similar to watching film rushes of the same scene shot several times from different angles, the action moving slowly forward in spurts and sputters because of so many retakes" (McCaffrey 73). The variations of the same scene in "The Elevator," "The Babysitter," and *Ghost Town* alter as if following camera movement, while the contrasting shots add emotional effect, and rapidly changing angles and scenes generate unease. Thus, Coover's fiction is refashioned and invigorated through a variety of cinematographic techniques such as cross-cutting, lighting, montage, and jump cuts to produce a startling effect.

Many contemporary films have a thin veneer of narrative that unifies action and provides continuity for the audience. Solomon points out how "plot is being replaced by texture," meaning incidents, events, or conversations, including tone and spectacle that resemble traditional narrative (76). Although Coover's *Gerald's Party* has a plot line that orbits around a murder, the novel could be "perceived as a texture of numerous (in)consistent conversations […], with violent events and dead bodies piling up as the evening wears off, parodying detective fiction and mimicking spectacle movies" (Gruic Grmusa and Brillenburg Wurth 192). As Scott Lash declares: "There has been a shift from a realist to a postmodernist cinema, in which spectacle comes heavily to dominate narrative" (325), and the same is truth in postmodern fiction. Many films from the late 1980s and the 1990s such as *The Punisher* (Goldblatt 1989), *Double Impact* (Lettich 1991), and *Fight Club* (Fincher 1999) seem to

build a narrative to fit between their scenes of special effects and violence presented as fetishes and staged as sadomasochistic spectacles. Because postmodern literature draws on and merges with cinematography, spectacle and violence proliferate in contemporary fiction as well. In fact, screen technologies have mobilized print space and made it texture-like as no other media before.

In the previously mentioned 3-D episode in *The Public Burning*, the moviegoer views the hydrogen-bomb tests and the Rosenbergs' execution as "spectacle[s]" (286). Weinstein surmises that the whole book exposes a "frenetic new code of ENTERTAINMENT as the central idiom and script of American life" (241), where Coover criticizes contemporary mass society for being entertainment oriented. Both war and violence draw on spectacle-like methods and technology, where visual representations capture the viewers/consumers (in this case characters and readers) into cinematic, false reality. *Gerald's Party*, *Spanking the Maid* (1982), and "The Babysitter" feature a succession of violent set pieces, often accompanied by perverse, exhibitionist brutality cloaked as a fetish, adding to fragmentation, and resulting in the blurring of the boundary between fiction and reality. Paraphrasing Baudrillard, David Morley remarks how postmodern flirting with the truth breeds a "society of the spectacle, where the real has been replaced by its image, and the image supplanted by the 'simulacrum' which is of course, itself hyperreal" (60).

Coover's novel *The Adventures of Lucky Pierre: Director's Cut* reveals how linearity is substituted by progression of movement, by endless looping and repetition (at times annoying), using film as his favorite trope, with scenes of spectacle-like sadomasochistic orgies, torture, and bacchanal. It is constructed as a pornographic film, mocking the belletristic tradition while featuring the main character Pierre, a porn star, buffoon, and everyman, filmed by his nine muses/directors, entirely defined by designated film roles, his personality rotating from a naughty little boy to an enamored husband and a compliant slave, whatever the avatar of film's trajectory. Pierre's identity is definable only by his "naked sexual organ, always in public view in film and 'reality' (the difference between the two evaporating)" (Hoffmann 638) for there is no scene in Pierre's life that is not, implicitly, a movie.

The subtitle *Directors' Cut* announces the novel's cinematic assembly. The text consists of nine reels instead of chapters where

textual dynamics and articulation shape the literary work around a musical theme "C to C and F again" (*LP* 1). As Vanderhaeghe observes, the novel's "very language is somehow set in motion," playing variations of the melodic composition, with "each reel striking a new cord as it opens and closes," climbing the C major scale (164). The first reel opens with "Cantus," denoting a melody in polyphonic style or "the topmost part in a polyphonic work," and ends with "discant" which implies "note-against-note writing," or the "newly composed voice in a polyphonic complex" (Randel 144-145; 244). The reels continue with subsequent repetition of the same chord so that chapter/reel 2 starts with "Documentary" and ends with "End," and the next one begins with "Exits" and finishes with "FADEOUT," and the like. The emphasis is on polyphony, on multiple voices that comprise the whole for each individual artist directs her own scheme, playing a dominatrix, a gentle wife, a vulgar cartoonist, and the like (yet, all their names begin with C, presenting repetition and variations of the same theme), puppeteers that direct and determine Pierre's life (in life and in film), where sexual intercourse is presented as a polyphonic texture in a "DEVOUT EFFORT TO ATTAIN TRANSCENDENCY; TO UNIFY THE WORLD'S MAD SCATTER" (*LP* 137).

Coover challenges his main protagonist with the absence of free will for Pierre obeys the directors' mappings and is imprisoned within the assigned coordinates, unable to control what goes on, playing his part under surveillance. At the same time, he is the victim of his own sexual impulses, always monitored by the camera. Cinema here serves as a perfect engine which transfers the actualities and analogies tied to the human condition. The camera both reflects and replicates Pierre's subordination and vulnerability. Pierre is "caught up in a complex blurring of ontological layers that makes it difficult to locate what's real and what isn't, and—as in all good postmodern tales—this is, of course, partly the point and partly the subject of a critique that's carried within the novel itself" (Burn 7). In a similar manner, the consumers of entertainment are not immune to political and ideological issues disseminated through the screen; cinematography is also an agency of control where spectators are metaphorically imprisoned through mechanisms of identification.

Another filmic, tele-visual or theatrical property that Coover employs in his texts is fictional audience, often a laughing one, such as in "Charlie in the House of Rue" (1987), "Panel Game" (1969), "The

Hat Act" (1969), "A Pedestrian Accident" (1969), *The Public Burning, The Adventures of Lucky Pierre,* and *Gerald's Party*. These fictional audiences prompt the reader to be more aware of the observation as an act of *seeing*, and as Thomas Pughe suggested, associate with voyeurism, especially in *Gerald's Party* (175) where protagonists engage in peeking and lurking and record images of others and themselves during intimate interactions. The scenes are swarmed with cameras, photographs, and videotapes, inviting readers to tag along and scrutinize. Through their investigative gaze, the characters also uncover their desire to take up the authority of social surveillance. These power struggles to control and direct other individuals can be spotted throughout the novel. An example is the reporter who "directing the camera crew, shifting the lights, calling the angles—pulled the others into a circle around Ros" (*GP* 169), the dead actress. Another illustration of the exploitative urge, the wish to manipulate and entice the masses to follow, is Beni's pretense of being stabbed, with "half-chewed blood capsule between his teeth," which results in Gerald's fear for his friend's life and climaxes in the guests'—spectators' crescendo of "laughter and a loud burst of applause," while being monitored by "the lens of the video camera" (255). These scenes reflect contemporary society at large, mirroring coercive forces that employ new technologies as a tool of social surveillance, investigating and instructing human behavior, hidden behind entertainment and spectacle.

Coover uses prescribed models from cinematography, theater, and television, such as games and comedy that are thoroughly permeated in pop culture so that the readers can easily identify with them, immersed in the enterprise that is unfolding on paper, yet reminiscent of scenic projections. One of the stories that draw on a well-known character from cinematography is "Charlie in the House of Rue," premised on Chaplin's vaudeville and pratfalls beyond compare where the texture of gestural eloquence is particularly pronounced as Charlie engages in his buffoon routines. The language abounds in cinematic metaphors. For example, during Charlie's comic interaction with the maid, her behind is "winking at him from behind the fluttering white apron like the negative of a sputtering lightbulb" ("CR" 105). The audience fosters the readers to laugh along with the crowd. As Weber notes, with reference to Plato, laughter breaks "the barriers of property," undermines "the division of public and private space," contagiously spreading in "the iterative movement of corporeal self-abandonment" (39; 224). This underlines the ability of the fictive to

usurp the real. Images and representations that the viewers/readers perceive laughing, transform virtuality into reality for laughter disrupts the stasis of the body, the fictive mobilizes the space of the actual.

"The Hat Act" is linked to popular entertainment and consumerism, and it focuses on the position of allegedly invulnerable spectators, who in their illusory isolation and safety observe the magician's act, driven by the desire to see without being seen. But as already noted, visual media imply that voyeuristic audience is under (in)visible surveillance; Foucault's panopticon deploys information to create the desired spectators, "to constitute us as compliant workers and consumers" (Winokur). Indeed, the spectators passively assimilate information, consuming the act and at the same time become consumed by the hyperreal, which shapes their thoughts and behavior. The only way to withstand the media's infiltration is to deflect one's urges.

Situated in a small town theater, rather than on the screen, "The Hat Act" unravels in front of an auditorium, revealing a tremendously critical audience, evocative of our space-time of consumerism (even inhumanity), our need for entertainment, and ever new prestigious goods. It presents a highly improbable plot that conflicts with the readers' expectations where the magician is decapitated in the process of his act, while the audience gets frantic, cheering and applauding: "Magician's eyes pop like bubbles from their sockets. *Laughter and applause*" ("HA" 249). As Weber notes, the spectacle "seeks simultaneously to assuage and exacerbate anxieties of all sorts by providing images on which they can be projected, ostensibly comprehended, and, above all, *removed"* (334). The viewers, with their "self-dissimulation and self-delusion," are encouraged to enjoy, *"forget the past,"* have their distress relieved, and project their fears onto an image of the other, triumphing in the other's liquidation (8; 335). The same principle is present in *The Public Burning,* where the crowds cheer for the executions, reminiscent of carnivalesque theater and, "like one of those trick images in a 3-D movie" (641), together with "the political and journalistic hullabaloo" (Weinstein 254), reveal "the American penchant for rose-tinted glasses" (Gallo 43) for all the public wants is to enjoy, release the fear, and experience catharsis.

Each successive trick in "The Hat Act" brings an increase in violence, while the "magic" is further performed by the lovely assistant and volunteers from the audience, implying optional participation and

crossing of the "reality—fiction" borders. A similar transgression occurs in *Gerald's Party* when "Zack Quagg, the playwright-director, […] once in a performance […] stepped down into the audience and slapped" Gerald's wife "with a dead fish" (141), or when in a Dionysian drama about Lot's wife the audience was invited and then "join[ed] in […] to lick the salt" off of the actress's body (35). "The Hat Act" proceeds as the magician is surprisingly recovered from the "lovely assistant's shorts" (251) and then she gets dismembered while her body parts and clothes incite cheering from the crowd, depending on their erotic value. Here Coover pushes his critique of postmodern space-time to extreme where audiences and readers encourage barbaric acts. The consumers of entertainment command satisfaction of their urges or they boo and even destroy the fiction-maker as the magician is mutilated by two large men displeased with his act. The performance becomes a downright spectacle, which serves as a mere gambit for pornography and violence, widely spread resources of cinema and television transmissions. Above all, the story speaks of Coover's concern with human values, exposing human bodies as consumption commodities, where individual identity is shifting off the center of ontological gravity, following subsequent virtualization and actualization principles (as is dramatized in *The Adventures of Lucky Pierre* as well).

Coover's "The Phantom of the Movie Place" (1987) involves just a lonely projectionist who alters from an active spectator to an involuntary, marionette actor in an old-fashioned movie theater. The recluse watches the same repertoire repeatedly. His space-time is completely excluded from the outside, "real" world where even the audience is absent. To make his viewing more interesting, he creates "his own split-screen effects, montages, superimpositions" (22), revolutionizing a projection technique that enables him to watch assorted films simultaneously. He "collages the films together, allowing the different genres to collide" (Evenson 180), so that,

> a galloping cowboy gets in the way of some slapstick comedians and, as the films separate out, arrives at the shootout with custard on his face; or the dying heroine, emerging from montage with a circus feature, finds herself swinging by her stricken limbs from a trapeze, the arms of her weeping lover in the other frame now hugging an elephant's leg. ("PMP" 23)

This opens a whole new space-time for him, his world expands, and even though this generates a "liberating" potential, he senses "there's something corrupt, maybe even dangerous, about this collapsing of boundaries" (23).

On one occasion, while collapsing the confines between a "Broadway girlie show" (25) and a Western, the chorus-line artist vanishes and does not reappear again. From then on, it seems that the projectionist's invention, the multi-layered film space, has been released from the bondage of the screen, and it percolated his own space, the movie palace. The liberated movie characters, aristocrats, mummies, wonder dogs, gold diggers, and cartoon pigs, mingle with the projectionist who is soon unable to distinguish himself from them, terrified by "a cold metallic hand in his pants" (34), which he later recognizes as his own. "What's frightening," one of the filmic characters explains is "discovering that what you think you see only because *you* want to see it […] *sees you"* (33), reminding the readers that the coercive forces of the screen collect information about the projectionist and use it to gradually take over so that the virtual world hijacks the actual. When the projectionist hears a guillotine blade fall, he protests: "I don't belong here!" but is dragged to the foot of the guillotine with the rest of the characters (36). The beheading might imply the ending of the haunting creatures for: "It's all in your mind […] so we're cutting it off" (36), and the literal death of the projectionist in the movie.

Coover's "The Phantom of the Movie Place" is the text that reveals the most extreme erosion of the barrier between film and (textual character's) physical reality. While trying "to bridge" the "distance between the eye and its object" (17), the projectionist created a perfect setting for the virtual to usurp the actual, allowing the object to gain the privileged position as the subject gets stripped of its superior access to truth, in Baudrillard's sense (*Simulacra and Simulation*). The story demonstrates how an imaginary or fictive space-time imposes itself on the protagonist and projects the characteristics of actual space-time where the projectionist oscillates between the physical reality and the cinematic, as "milieus slide by like dream cloths" ("PMP" 35), and he is barely able to distinguish "these abominable parvenus of iconic transactions" (36).

In her most recently published book, *Postprint* (2021), Kate Hayles notes regarding American university presses which

are developing online publishing venues (such as the University of Minnesota's Manifold platform, yet another multimedia friendly zone), that they allow "curation, remixing, and recombination" as potent scholarly activities for they even offer the readers to contribute with "comments, links, and annotations" (127; 123). In a similar manner, Coover's (and the projectionist's) self-organized creatures and "parvenus of iconic transactions" ("PMP" 36) are a never-ending recombinant or mashup of the projectionist's world and that of multiple filmic ecologies, offering what Mark Amerika calls "the remix," which may well be the defining cultural form of our age (2011).

Conclusion

Cinematography was the first medium to display virtual realities in motion, interfering with literature and the actual world, and producing highly original domains that alter existing notions of space, time, reality, embodiment, and identity. Following modernists such as John Dos Passos and James Joyce who adopted cinematographic techniques (including flashback, montage, and rapid cutting) to convey simultaneous cinematic consciousness, Coover's fiction employs motion picture technology, its art and industry, mimicking film critically and modifying it with yet another twist, reinforced by experimental literary techniques, such as intermittent story-pieces. Cinematic techniques have invigorated and animated Coover's writing, allowing for the projection of simultaneity (within the bounds of linear constraints) of storylines, recollections, conversations, impressions, and incidents. Shaped by the intermediation of the screen and the page, his texts—such as "The Babysitter," "The Elevator," and *Ghost Town*—exemplify multi-branched narratives that describe mutually exclusive versions of the same scenes with contradictory details. Coover's stories in turn help mold electronic literature for they "are often identified as precursors to electronic hypertexts" (Hayles, "Intermediation" 111), which substantiates the idea that all media permeate and influence one another.

The multiple and mutually exclusive ontological pluralities exposed in Coover's texts systematically prevent privileged instants of epiphany and are a defining feature of postmodern fiction. Coover's texts deploy, praise, and criticize these transformations and mutual

mediations of film and literature, drawing attention to the crisis of representation that can be traced to the ascendancy of cinematography, but also to the new richness of the animated page. With cinema as a dominant cultural metaphor, complexities are revealed fusing the actual and the virtual that illuminate ontological instability among real, cinematic, hallucinated, and oneiric.

Cradled in the idea that all media modify one another in a series of feedback loops, sustaining transition to otherness in which something is always retained, this paper stresses the ability of screen technologies to instigate literature's performativity, its capacity to adopt, change, and animate. It also acknowledges visual media's omnipresence, which facilitates shared, mediated consciousness, forcing its standards of cultural values onto the public, disseminating popular stereotypes and entertainment while eroding the boundary between the fictive and the real. The analysis of filmic imagery, techniques, and forms within the chosen texts demonstrates how cinematography mobilizes Coover's literature and adds to the disintegration of a classic narrative style, emphasizing the rapid sequence of scenes and spectacle that operate mostly through violence, as the characters face identity crisis and fragmentation. These highly mediated texts focus on structures/textures of incidents, events, and conversations that substitute for plots and/or overpower the readers with the proliferation and non-conclusiveness of plots, and feature laughing and even violent audiences that play along, cheer, and separate the barrier between public and private space, juxtaposing reality and fiction.

The concept of movement operates as a trajectory of innovation and as a possible channel for meaning-making processes as utilized cinematic concepts and compositions generate, "a vast moving darkness and brilliant flickering pictures, new and strange" (*PB* 542), in tune with our process-dependent, dynamic space-time, where randomness is the prevalent ontology. Merging cinema, fiction, and life, acknowledges the fading of the boundary between the real and the fictive.

Notes

[1] Coover's novels *The Public Burning, Gerald's Party,* and *The Adventures of Lucky Pierre: Directors' Cut* are respectively abbreviated as *PB*, *GP,* and *LP* when citing from these texts. His stories "The Hat Act," "The Elevator," "A Pedestrian Accident,"

"Panel Game," and "The Babysitter" are collected in the volume *Pricksongs and Descants*. Coover's "The Phantom of the Movie Place" and "Charlie in the House of Rue" are collected in his collection of stories *A Night at the Movies.* Subsequent references to "The Hat Act" are marked as "HA", those referring to "Charlie in the House of Rue" are marked as "CR", while "The Phantom of the Movie Place" is abbreviated to "PMP".

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***JAST*, 2022; 57: 27-51**
Submitted: 14.01.2022
Accepted: 05.03.2022
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Science Fiction Literature as Thought Experiment: An Ethical Analysis of Michael Crichton's *Prey*

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Abstract

Science fiction literature, a product of unlimited imagination, often contains several philosophical issues related to ethics within its narratives. Science fiction works, which sometimes function as a thought experiment, provide examples of how humanity may react in various situations with a controlled scenario. Michael Crichton's novel *Prey* (2002) is one of such works. Crichton's novel, which warns the reader about the probable dangers of irresponsible use of technology with a striking scenario, essentially functions as a thought experiment. This article aims to reveal the relationship and similarity between philosophical thought experiments and science fiction literature. In this context, *Prey* will be analyzed in terms of ethical theories, and how ethics becomes the subject of science fiction literature will be elaborated.

Keywords: Thought Experiment, Science Fiction Literature, Ethics, Ethical Analysis

Bir Düşünce Deneyi Olarak Bilim Kurgu Edebiyatı: Michael Crichton'ın *Prey* Romanının Etik Analizi

Öz

Sınırsız bir hayal gücü ürünü olan bilim kurgu edebiyatı, anlatıları ile çoğu zaman içinde etik ile ilintili birtakım felsefi sorunlar

barındırır. Kimi zaman bir düşünce deneyi olarak da işlev gören bilim kurgu eserleri, kontrollü bir senaryo ile insanlığın çeşitli durumlarda nasıl tepkiler verebileceğine dair örnekler sunar. Michael Crichton'ın *Prey* (2002) adlı romanı da böylesi eserlerden biridir. Teknolojinin sorumsuzca kullanılmasının doğurabileceği tehlikeler hakkında okuyucuyu çarpıcı bir senaryo ile uyaran Crichton'ın romanı, esasen bir düşünce deneyi olarak işlev görmektedir. Eldeki çalışma, felsefi düşünce deneyleri ile bilimkurgu edebiyatı arasındaki ilişki ve benzerliğin ortaya çıkarılmasını amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, *Prey* romanı etik kuramları temelinde analiz edilerek etiğin nasıl bilimkurgu edebiyatının konusu hâline geldiği incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Düşünce Deneyi, Bilim Kurgu Edebiyatı, Etik, Etik Analizi

> "*They didn't understand what they were doing."*
> *I'm afraid that will be on the tombstone of*
> *the human race.*
>
> -Michael Crichton, *Prey*

Introduction

As the readers and researchers of SF are already familiar, this genre has always been "a literature of ideas" and in fact, "it is the *only* literature of relevant ideas" as Isaac Asimov suggests (307). In this sense, SF literature embodies a philosophical dimension that asks epistemological and ontological questions by depicting an imaginative world. As the title of this article suggests, there seems to be a unique dimension to the SF literature, which is more of an analogy that claims a striking similarity between science fiction and ethical thought experiments. According to this, SF serves as a valuable source for us to imagine the ethical responses we may make, right and wrong actions we may perform in the event of an encounter with the unknown, whether this unknown may be aliens, AIs, robots, cyborgs and organic/inorganic/hybrid existences, or any other technology. It helps us to imagine ourselves in such scenarios, serves as extended thought experiments, and provides us ethical guidance. After all, "SF

may not be the only moral literature left but the best of it is that," says Timothy Dolan in "Science Fiction as Moral Allegory" (2020) (112). In this context, this article firstly explores how such an analogy can be constructed and aims to examine Michael Crichton's novel *Prey* (2002) as an example. In such an examination, it is seen that the powerful narration Crichton presents implores ethics of technology, governments, institutions and individuals by constructing a gray goo[1] scenario of nanotechnology, thus also functioning as a thought experiment for an ethical analysis. Such an examination (a) would point out how significant the relationship between literature and philosophy is, in this particular case it is science fiction literature and ethics, and (b) demonstrate that literary ethical analysis can be a valuable method to conduct a more systematic examination by making direct references to the theories of moral philosophy.

An Analogy of Science Fiction Literature and Thought Experiments

To begin with, a thought experiment can be defined as a hypothetical situation in which the possible consequences of a principle or a theory to be tested through thinking and imagination. First established by Hans Christian Ørsted in 1812 as *Gedankenexperiment*, the English version of the term we use today appeared in Ernst Mach's translated paper "On Thought Experiments" (1897). The purposes of this kind of experiment vary; it may be used for entertainment, education, exploration, theory selection and implementation and so on. However, thought experiments hold a very significant place in the field of philosophy, particularly in ethics. By taking Philippa Foot's famous "Trolley Problem" as her example, Frances Myrna Kamm explains the use of these in ethics as such:

> "Trolley problems" are not supposed to describe actual ethical problems or to be solved with a "right" choice. Rather, they are thought-experiments where choice is artificially constrained to a small finite number of distinct one-off options and where the agent has perfect knowledge. These problems are used as a theoretical tool to investigate ethical intuitions and theories—especially the difference between actively doing vs. allowing something to happen, intended vs. tolerated consequences, and consequentialist vs. other normative approaches. (qtd. in Müller)

As understood from the quotation, such experiments help us to inquire into the possibilities of actions and their outcomes, not for the aim of finding a right action but for examination of ethical theories within variant scenarios. Therefore, the power of a thought experiment lies in its imaginative nature, in the "what if" questions it presents. When the aforementioned analogy is considered, it is observed that the relationship between thought experiments and literature becomes very functional for providing an understanding of moral discussions.

Thought experiments are conducted in controlled environments, they are designed for testing specific phenomena or principles. They have a narrative structure and they often need to be interpreted. It is in these aspects that they share a similarity with fiction; while reading works of fiction, like thought experiments, the reader is required to participate cognitively in the imaginative hypothetical scenarios. In her "Fiction as Thought Experiment" (2014), Catherine Z. Elgin suggests that thought experiments are imaginative exercises, which put forward the question of what would happen if certain conditions were to occur. They are conducted with a suspension of disbelief that the conditions may not exist in reality, or may be inconsistent with reality or even cannot be obtained (231). This similarity is an important starting point for considering fictions as thought experiments. As she states:

> If an austere thought experiment can afford epistemic access to a range of properties, and can do so in a context that is not tightly beholden to a particular theory, there seems to be no reason to deny that a more extensive thought experiment can do the same. This opens the way to construing works of literary action as extended, elaborate thought experiments. They afford epistemic access to aspects of the world that are normally inaccessible—in particular, to the normative, psychological and metaphysical aspects that philosophical thought experiments concern. (232)

When the role of fiction in understanding these aspects of human thought is deliberated, as explained by Elgin above, it would not be completely wrong to say that whatever the thought experiments are to philosophy and ethics, science fiction holds a similar role for literature and ethics. Why science fiction holds a separate role is also of significance because compared to other genres, SF is "the" genre that allows the imagination to create hypothetical what if scenarios in the infinite numbers of

ways. Hence, philosophy, ethics in particular, and science fiction share many common themes and discussions that inquire into hypothetical imaginative scenarios and how humanity would or should act in the face of the unknown. "Intriguingly, if you read science fiction writers like Stanislaw Lem, Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clark [sic], and Robert Sawyer, you are already aware that some of the best science fiction tales are in fact long versions of philosophical thought experiments" (2) says Susan Schneider in "Thought Experiments: Science Fiction as a Window into Philosophical Puzzles" (2016). She presents the shared themes between philosophy and science fiction literature, and emphasizes the convergence point of science fiction and science fact: "some of the most lavish science fiction thought experiments are no longer merely fictions – we see glimpses of them on the technological horizon" (5).

As the technology advances, the themes of science fiction literature also change, keeping up with the pace of our world. Timothy Dolan explains that "a key point regarding the moral dimensions of science fiction is that it often rises to the level of classic literature because it exposes the contradictions of prevailing norms in its investigation of the moral ambiguities that arise from the socio-technological nexus" (111). Within this nexus, there arise many themes, which can be examined to understand the ethical dimension of SF literature and as stated by Harald A. Wiltsche, "If written in a scientifically responsible manner, science fiction has thus the potential to increase our understanding of what it means for us, as human beings, to live in the kind of world our increasingly arcane scientific theories purport to describe" (18). A similar argument is also made by Russell Blackford in *Science Fiction and The Moral Imagination: Visions, Minds, Ethics* (2017). Standing as one of the most important sources in the study of ethical/moral dimension of SF, Blackford's propositions gain more importance. He states:

> When its tropes are used more seriously, however, it often explores the social and psychological effects—and hence the moral significance—of scientific and technological innovations. With its greatly extended narrative possibilities, science fiction can illuminate the social impact of change, propose blueprints for a better future, or implicitly criticize any naive optimism about where the human species is headed. . . . Recurring themes in science fiction include the design

> and functioning of future societies, terraforming and cosmic engineering, reshaping ourselves with technology, and questions about our treatment of non-human persons (perhaps extraterrestrial aliens or advanced artificial intellects). Science fiction writers have employed the genre's tropes to engage with a wide variety of moral questions. ("Introduction" 14)

In this respect, SF has proven itself a vast area for ethical discussions, not just for the technological but also for the individual, social, institutional, political and many other levels.

Ethics of Science Fiction: *Prey*

This overall discussion brings us to the practical use of the aforementioned analogy: the ethical analysis of *Prey*. Beginning with the emergence of the genre, American science fiction literature has involved moral themes, and presented the ethical dilemmas of the period it was written in. "Though fictional narratives engage with ethical questions, they seldom comment directly on ethical systems such as Kantian deontology and utilitarianism. There are, however, some stories that go close, inviting us to judge the character of individuals or societies that seem to embody philosophical stances" (Blackford, "Engaging" 75). This statement is also valid for SF literature, as it does not directly address ethical theories, yet, the implications of these can be found within works of science fiction. We can include *Prey* among such works, which examines the ethical implications of nanotechnology as well as artificial intelligence, agent-based computing, emergence and complexity and host-parasite coevolution. As stated by Michael Crichton in the novel's introduction, titled "Artificial Evolution in the Twenty-first Century,": "it is always possible that we will not establish controls. Or that someone will manage to create artificial, self-reproducing organisms far sooner than anyone expected. If so, it is difficult to anticipate what the consequences might be. That is the subject of the present novel" (xv).

In attempt to attract attention to this subject, as it can be seen above, Crichton begins the ethical discussion right at the beginning of the novel. In the introduction, Crichton further proposes that every living organism changes at every instant in response to other living organisms, which means that all human actions have uncertain,

unpredictable effects. He criticizes how humanity interacts with nature in an "obstinate egotism" and calls for caution, which according to him we failed to possess in the past (x-xi). He states, "sometime in the twenty-first century, our self-deluded recklessness will collide with our growing technological power. One area where this will occur is in the meeting point of nanotechnology, biotechnology, and computer technology" (xi). As a writer who uses recent technological developments in his books, Crichton again warns us about the potential dangers of nanotechnology, and proposes that we should make international regulations on the use of such nanorobots. Written in 2002, in the article titled "Could Tiny Machines Rule the World?" Crichton proposes as follows:

> We know these machines are coming. We know we will have to control them when they do. It is not too early to plan how we will treat them, what we will allow in the way of research and what we will forbid. Historically, human beings have a poor record of addressing the hazards of new technologies as they arrive. We generally pass laws after the accidents occur. But in the case of self-reproducing machines, we simply can't wait.

What the author proposes here is a very relevant issue for the field of ethics, as he essentially makes two suggestions: firstly, we should discuss the ethical use of such technology and secondly we should create ethical machines. Even though we may not control such machines all the time, we should take preemptive measures. "All the potential uses and risks, and all the unknowns surrounding nanotechnology, seem to call for reflection and potentially for regulation, even at this early stage - both to avert disaster and to avoid uninformed panic" ("The Dust" 142). In this context, the book, in the broadest sense, functions as a thought experiment as well as a warning for humanity to act responsibly and carefully while dealing with nanotechnology, and to create ethical machines/codes so that the machines would inherently have ethical norms of not harming others. This gray goo scenario makes the claim that the nanotechnological particles can get intelligent, evolve very fast and destroy humankind. Therefore, the responsibility lies in the work of the scientists along with the corporations that fund and allow such inventions to come out in the first place.

In this context, Crichton clearly disapproves the pragmatist

outlook of the companies in the book as Jack, the protagonist, makes a criticism of this issue at the end of the novel:

> I didn't understand how they could have embarked on this plan without recognizing the consequences. Like everything else I'd seen at Xymos[2], it was jerry-built, half-baked, concocted in a hurry to solve present problems and never a thought to the future. That might be typical corporate thinking when you were under the gun, but with technologies like these it was dangerous as hell. (502-503)

Through Jack's words, Crichton warns corporations to adopt a more consequentialist, utilitarian ethical understanding in their use of technologies, which is also echoed by an idea repeated throughout the novel: "things never turn out the way you think they will" (2). The unpredictable nature of artificial intelligence and technology in general may produce undesired consequences and the ethical use/creation of such technologies should always come first. However, as the author presents this thought experiment, what happens when such an ethical outlook is not adopted can be observed. As Jack states: "I was feeling angry about what had happened in the desert. A chain of bad decisions, errors and fuckups extending over weeks and months. It seemed as if everyone at Xymos was doing short-term solutions, patch-and-fix, quick and dirty. No one was paying attention to the long-term consequences" (261-62).

The human factor in this disaster is also taken into consideration and why Julia, Ricky and Xymos company released the swarm to the environment as well as supporting its development, even though it was gaining autonomy, is also explained within the perspective of those involved by providing their personal justifications. While the company does not want to lose the funding and seeks profit, Ricky's motives are explained by Mae to Jack: "'I think Ricky sees Xymos as his last big chance to score. He's been here five years. If this doesn't work out, he'll be too senior to start over at a new company. He's got a wife and baby; he can't gamble another five years, waiting to see if the next company clicks. So he's really trying to make this happen, really driving himself'" (254). While Ricky seems to be influenced by the stress of his financial situation and career path, he performs actions that harm others, and this is presented as ethically wrong. Even though he does not directly mean harm, the actual consequences of

his actions are different, and therefore he is criticized by Jack. This criticism makes the reader consider if it is ethical or not to perform actions that in the end harm others but provide a personal gain. The same idea is reinforced when Julia explains her motives:

> You see, the thing is, I just wanted to save the company, Jack. That's all. The camera failed and we couldn't fix it, we lost our contract, and the company was falling apart. I've never lost a company before. I never had one shot out from underneath me, and I didn't want Xymos to be the first. I was invested, I had a stake, and I guess I had my pride. I wanted to save it. I know I didn't use good judgment. I was desperate. It's nobody else's fault. They all wanted to stop it. I pushed them to go on. It was... it was my crusade. (417)

While she seems to accept that she made bad decisions, she tries to justify her actions, yet again; the reader is invited to question if this justification is an acceptable one. Jack's inner thoughts are presented to the reader for ethical guidance for that matter: "I hated that she would start this when I was exhausted, when I had just gone through an ordeal that nearly got me killed and that was, ultimately, all her doing. I hated that she dismissed her involvement as 'bad judgment' when it was considerably worse than that" (417).

This ethical problem of personal gain in business and in personal life is not only limited to Xymos company, the story of how Jack is fired is also presented as another example. At MediaTronics company, Jack was running a program division that aims to create distributed parallel processing or agent-based programs modelled after biological processes inside a computer. After one of his codes is stolen from the company, Jack also becomes responsible for the security and increases the surveillance of the workers. This is how he initially learns that his boss, Don Gross, is having an affair with a woman working for the same company, and he has given her a company car. From Jack's reaction, it is assured that, he is a virtuous character who tries to do the right thing in all aspects of his life. The classical virtue theories in ethics consider virtue essential to well-being, and a golden mean should be found in actions. As suggested by Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics*, people have two types of virtues, theoretical virtues and virtues of character (1103a). In this division, while theoretical virtues point out to the virtues controlled by reason such as judgement and wisdom,

virtues of character point out to virtues controlled by desires such as courage, temperance, justice and generosity. It is seen that Jack possesses both types of virtues; he acts with his reason rather than his desires and demonstrates virtues of character on many occasions. As a first example of his virtuous character, Jack tries to do the right action and gives Gross a choice: "I went to him and said that based on emails relating to Jean in accounting, it appeared that someone unknown was having an affair with her, and that she might be getting perks she wasn't entitled to. I said I didn't know who the person was, but if they kept using email, I'd soon find out" (11). This instance also reflects the contemporary understanding of virtue which mainly focuses on motives and intentions as suggested by Elizabeth Anscombe in "Modern Moral Philosophy" (1958) (9). Jack follows his reason and intends well in his actions and this invites the reader to trust the moral rightness of the actions he will perform in the future.

Rosalind Hursthouse also suggests that the right action is what a virtuous agent would do because such an agent would have action guiding and action assessment senses helping him/her to find a fine tune, the Aristotelian golden mean (16). In this sense, Jack's action represents a right course of action, yet his motives come from a duty-based, Kantian perspective. He believes that he has duties against other people and particularly he should not harm them. Therefore, he intervenes and feels a moral responsibility to correct Gross' actions. While he does not directly condemn and reveal the moral wrongness of Gross' actions, he chooses to warn him indirectly. However, the abuse of power and sources of the company, as well as the affair and betrayal, are only the beginning of the unethical actions of Gross. Later, Jack discovers that Gross is actually selling company software to foreign distributers and taking fees in return; as it turns out this is indeed how Jack's code was "stolen" (12). The ethical dilemma Jack finds himself in once more becomes whether to inform authorities about this situation or not. As a virtuous character, Jack again feels a responsibility to correct this situation, his feelings in the matter are clear: "This was clearly illegal, and I couldn't overlook it" (12). The emphasis on the illegality of this action shows that today most ethical conducts are also regulated with laws, and laws regard a utilitarian understanding of ethics, which tries to maximize the benefit of all parties influenced by the actions. As a violation of this utilitarian principle, the actions of Gross are considered ethically wrong by Jack and therefore should be reported.

However, when Jack consults his lawyer, Gary, about the right course of action in such a situation, the advice he gives is interesting:

> "As your attorney, my advice is that if you are aware of any illegal activity you have a duty to report it. But as your friend, my advice is to keep your mouth shut and get out of there fast."
>
> "Seems kind of cowardly. I think I have to notify the investors." Gary sighed. He put his hand on my shoulder. "Jack," he said, "the investors can look out for themselves." (12)

The author here presents four ethical invitations to consider. The first one is the corruption of state and justice. In such a clear action against the law, a lawyer can give such an advice, knowing that the corrupted system would turn against Jack when he tries to do the right thing. The second issue here is that the investors are also corrupt, and seek personal gain, violating the trust between them and others. The author here invites the reader to think about how these unethical actions are against the utilitarian or even duty-based notions of ethics and the corporations; state and system of justice are corrupted; they do not function as they should and they violate the terms of social and legal contracts. The third invitation is the type of ethical duty Jack faces. In "The History of Utilitarianism," the author explains two basic types of duties that form the demandingness problem of utilitarianism: required and supererogatory ethical conducts. According to the notion of required ethical conduct, people have an ethical duty to perform some actions whereas supererogatory ethical conduct points out the actions that are beyond their duties and they cannot be blamed for not performing them (Driver). In this context, Jack's lawyer considers this as a supererogatory conduct as this duty which, according to him, is beyond Jack's duties; he would not be blamed if he chooses not to interfere and the right thing for Jack to do would be seeking out his own interest. This reveals the last invitation, which is Jack's response to Gary. His reaction to his lawyer's advice emphasizes his virtuous character and demonstrates that he considers this as a required ethical conduct on his behalf. He considers quitting from his job as a cowardly action and therefore informs one of the board members about this offense. However, Jack's lawyer proves right and the board member is in this conspiracy as well. Jack is immediately fired "for gross negligence and misconduct" (12) and he becomes a "marked

man" labeled as "Troublemaker. Not cooperative. Belligerent. Hot-headed. Not a team player . . . involved in some kind of shady dealings" (13). The ethical invitation offered by the author is reinforced by this damaging of Jack's reputation, and the critique of the society, which punishes the effort of right ethical action, presents itself.

Apart from these ethical issues on the individual, social, institutional and technological levels, there lies the most important matter of ethics that needs to be discussed yet again in the technological level. Crichton's gray goo brings out the ethical discussion of artificial intelligence as objects and subjects. The artificial intelligence of the nanoparticles in the novel is enough for them to create emergent, complex behaviours and consequently an artificial life. The main ethical issue is based on their use as objects. The initial aim of producing such a technology was actually a military one; it was designed as a defense project (170). However, presented as a medical imaging technology, the nanoparticles were mere objects of surveillance and real-time imaging. A fail in their design resulted in malfunctioning in high winds, and when the scientist could not find a solution to the problem, they released the nanoparticles to the environment, letting them solve the problem instead. With this aim, they rewrote their code by adding a genetic algorithm and provided them with solar power and memory. When the swarms were released, their biological part enabled them to evolve, reproduce, and learn how to self-optimize.

Henceforth, their use as objects causes several ethical problems. The first ethical problem presented within the context is the irresponsible action in using and designing new technologies, as it would not benefit humanity but the corporation. The author here invites readers to consider two layers of ethical discussion; the first one, as discussed above, is finding the right thing to do is while producing such technologies, and how the dangerous aspects of those can be eliminated, who is responsible when an accident occurs, and what the limit of intelligence that can be given to these creations is. The second ethical issue is the problem of autonomy. When these swarms of nanoparticles learn self-optimization, they gain a sense of autonomy, which necessitates the inquiry whether they can still be treated as objects or would their moral status change into ethical objects. Crichton addresses to this firstly by asking the essential question of whether programs with artificial intelligence (AI) can ever be self-aware; and the common idea is that they cannot. However, he continues to discuss further:

> But there's a more fundamental version of the question, a philosophical question about whether any machine can understand its own workings. Some people say that's impossible, too. The machine can't know itself for the same reason you can't bite your own teeth. And it certainly seems to be impossible: the human brain is the most complicated structure in the known universe, but brains still know very little about themselves. . . . But lately these philosophical questions have taken on new importance because there has been rapid progress in reproducing certain brain functions. Not the entire brain, just certain functions. (107-108)

What he states here, that the brain does not have much information about itself, is a very thought-provoking idea. Such a suggestion connotes that machines, even though they are not self-aware, can be intelligent beings if they have just enough functions, such as human brains. Crichton continues his discussion: "What was important about the programs was that the machines literally learned. They got better at their jobs with experience. Which is more than some human beings can claim" (108). If intelligence is a criterion of assessing human qualities, then how could a person evaluate artificial intelligence, which at times may be smarter than humans? The key answer to the question lies in the concept of autonomy and control. The differentiation between weak AI and strong AI here reveals itself, and this newly gained autonomy of the swarms and their ability of biological reproduction and evolving raise their chances of demonstrating features of strong AI. Crichton states:

> The eighties were a good time for English professors who believed that computers would never match human intelligence. But distributed networks of agents offered an entirely new approach. And the programming philosophy was new, too. . . . The program defined the behavior of individual agents at the lowest structural level. But the behavior of the system as a whole was not defined. Instead, the behavior of the system emerged, the result of hundreds of small interactions occurring at a lower level. (93)

As it can be seen, the author explains how the concept of artificial intelligence was perceived as an unlikely endeavor once. Today, however, the programs can show emergent behaviours as a result of

interaction, therefore making this once unlikely endeavor a possibility. This possibility necessitates a change in the ethical principles about AI as subject, as well. As the systems are not programmed, they could come up with surprising behaviours.

The nanoparticles in the novel demonstrate such surprising behaviours that demand a consideration upon their moral status. They exhibit intelligent behaviours, but surprisingly, the predator code they include causes them firstly to hunt small animals, and then human beings. On the verge of singularity[3], the swarms begin gaining a sense of consciousness. To explain how physical existence and consciousness of humans occur, Crichton makes a comparison between the swarms and the human beings, claiming that a human being is actually a swarm first in physical terms, then in terms of consciousness. Crichton explains this similarity: "If you could enlarge the human body, blow it up to a vast size, you would see that it was literally nothing but a swirling mass of cells and atoms, clustered together into smaller swirls of cells and atoms. . . . The control of our behavior is not located in our brains. It's all over our bodies" (362-63). Hence, this physical resemblance is also responsible for how similar the minds of a swarm presented in the novel and a human being work. Human beings also have a "swarm intelligence" in which there is not one single control unit but the brain takes signals from all organs. For that reason, human brains process many things that escape our immediate attention, consequently building up the subconscious. Crichton continues and gives an example of avoidance. According to this, the advantage of human beings is their unawareness of the obstacles they need to deal with until they lose a necessary organ or a sense. Therefore, according to Crichton, human beings' sense of consciousness or control is a mere illusion, and therefore such a self-consciousness and self-control can be gained by machines as well, as long as they have the necessary set of skills to create this illusion. What brings the swarms of *Prey* to the brink of singularity, as Jack states in the novel, is the mentioned self-consciousness and self-control: "and for all we knew, this damned swarm had some sort of rudimentary sense of itself as an entity. Or, if it didn't, it might very soon start to" (364).

Jack comes to this conclusion as he observes that the swarms learn by interaction, they have memory (a rather limited one), they are capable to hide, nest, adapt to new situations, reproduce, and hunt. At last, they begin imitating physical features of their preys, which

is an emergent behavior. This one, as presented as the "wild type" by Julia in the novel (467), tries to create a simulation of humanity. The most critical point occurs when the other one, the "benign type," evolves and merges with humans, thereby initiating a host-parasite coevolution and creating a human host for itself. To reach their aim of hunting all living things, due to the predator behavior in their code, they begin manipulating infected humans; they violate the cognitive functions of the host by dehumanizing them and thus create a new form of existence: a hybrid human-nanorobot. They also enhance the physical features of the host bodies: the hosts become more attractive and muscled. Nevertheless, while the physical aspects of the hosts are developing, their mental and psychological states deteriorate; they become more stressed than usual, less tolerant, angry and edgy. When these changes occur, their ethical status as objects also changes, and the orthogonality thesis[4] manifests itself, which poses an existential risk from a superintelligence that threatens humanity.

Within this respect, the author once more invites the reader to dwell upon the moral status of the AI, and the moment this status is determined, the actions of the protagonist and the ethical sanctions of these actions can be understood better. In the novel, when Jack first gains the knowledge of the runaway swarm, he directly considers it as an object and underestimates its intelligence. His initial impression of the swarm was that it could be easily killed. With this conversation however, he understands the features of this swarm more evidently:

> My head throbbed. I was seeing all the implications, now, and they weren't good.
>
> "So," I said, "what you're telling me is this swarm reproduces, is self-sustaining, learns from experience, has collective intelligence, and can innovate to solve problems."
>
> "Yes."
>
> "Which means for all practical purposes, it's alive."
>
> "Yes." David nodded. "At least, it behaves as if it is alive. Functionally it's alive, Jack." (245)

As understood from the quotation, this swarm, in technical terms, is alive as it has many capabilities and evolves in every hour. However,

Jack's idea about killing the swarm does not change after discovering its abilities, he says: "We've got to kill these things cold stone dead. We have to wipe them off the face of the planet. And we have to do it right now" (253). At the end of the novel, swarms are stopped by Jack and Mea as they pose a threat both to themselves and to humanity. The utilitarian principles necessitate such elimination of the threat, as these machines are no longer beneficial but harmful to all humankind. These machines cannot be accepted as fully ethical agents because they do not meet the necessary benchmarks. As stated by Martha Nussbaum and H. Peter Kahn, et al., there are several criteria for determining the worth of life and human qualities, and these swarms seem to meet some of these but not all. For instance, according to Nussbaum's criteria of worth of life (76-78), the swarms are alive, they have bodily health, they manage to create and keep bodily integrity, they have senses, imagination and thought (to some degree), however, they do not have emotions, practical reason, affiliations, their relation to other species is built upon dominating/hunting them, they do not know how to enjoy their life and they cannot control their environment. According to the criteria Kahn, et al. present to assess the qualities of a robot (366-381), it is seen that the swarms have autonomy, they can imitate others but these are the only things that they can do. Among other qualities that they do not have, the most significant ones are the notions of intrinsic moral value and moral accountability. In this context, as the novel suggests, they are not fully ethical agents, they do not possess a worth of life, and therefore killing them to protect humanity is not considered ethically wrong.

Another important ethical dilemma can be observed when it comes to harming others. As mentioned above, the swarms do not have moral accountability, and their killings of the team members in the desert are not questioned in the novel on the presumption that it is ethically wrong. However, killing other people is considered immoral in all major strands of ethical philosophy, and the fact that Jack kills his wife Julia and his friend Ricky at the end of the novel is another issue of ethics to be discussed. Jack explains his relationship to Ricky early in the novel, describing him as "cheerful and appealing" so that everyone would forgive his mistakes at work. He says: "At least, I always did [forgave], when he worked for me. I had become quite fond of him, and thought of him almost as a younger brother" (38). At this point, Crichton's thought experiment dwells upon the conditions

of having the urge to kill another person could be justified and given the circumstances provided in the novel, if Jack could be forgiven for such ethically questionable action. At this point, four important ethical theories should be mentioned. The first one is the aforementioned autonomy and worth of life concepts; Julia no longer possesses the necessary autonomy and other traits of being human as she is infected by the nanoparticles. Losing her set of cognitive skills, she functions as a host body controlled by this technology and therefore, as suggested in the book, can no longer have moral responsibility. After their confrontation, Jack realizes that the creature before him is no longer his wife: "In a way it made everything easier. Because I understood I wasn't dealing with Julia anymore. I didn't have to worry about what might happen to her. I just had to worry about Mae—assuming she was still alive—and me" (472). After this realization, Jack does not consider Julia as a fully ethical agent anymore; she clearly poses a threat to Jack, Mea, her children, and all humanity. Therefore, in a utilitarian manner, the killing of Julia, and Ricky for that matter, is justified within the ethical understanding of the novel. This situation is also an example for utilitarianism, as Jack, in an altruistic manner, makes a great sacrifice by killing his wife and friend; his motive to do the right action forces him to make such a selfless deed.

The second ethical theory, which applies to this dilemma, is the euthanasia theories. While some philosophers support voluntary euthanasia on the grounds of self-determination and helping others in distress, others support only involuntary euthanasia in rare cases[5]. In this context, Julia's case can be categorized as involuntary euthanasia because she does not hold a moral status anymore, her worth of life is questionable; she is in no position to make rational decisions, as she does not have self-awareness. The swarm infects Julia and Ricky to the degree that they form a symbiotic relationship and the humanity aspect of this relationship, both physically and mentally, is almost vanished. Jack witnesses how further the swarm takes over Julia in two instances. The first instance happens in the MRI room of the laboratory in the desert when he uses the MRI machine to clear the swarms away from her:

> And then in a sudden rush Julia literally disintegrated before my eyes. The skin of her swollen face and body blew away from her in streams of particles, like sand blown off a sand dune. . . . And when it was finished, what was left behind—

> what I still held in my arms—was a pale and cadaverous form. Julia's eyes were sunk deep in her cheeks. Her mouth was thin and cracked, her skin translucent. Her hair was colorless, brittle. Her collarbones protruded from her bony neck. She looked like she was dying of cancer. (469-70)

After this first encounter with the real Julia within the swarm, Jack's first impulse is to save her by making her drink a vial that would destroy the nanoparticles in her body. However, Julia claims that it is too late for such a rescue and very soon, when the machine loses its power, the nanoparticles assemble back to recreate the infected Julia. The second incident happens at the end of the novel, which indeed convinces Jack that his wife is beyond rescue.

> Julia came swirling up through the air toward me, spiraling like a corkscrew—and grabbed the ladder right alongside me. Except she wasn't Julia, she was the swarm, and for a moment the swarm was disorganized enough that I could see right through her in places; I could see the swirling particles that composed her. I looked down and saw the real Julia, deathly pale, standing and looking up at me, her face a skull. (477)

When Peter Singer's defense on the involuntary euthanasia stated in *Practical Ethics* (1979) is considered, the validity of Jack's decision is reinforced, as Singer suggests that killing someone without his or her consent could only be regarded as euthanasia on the grounds that the motive of such a killing is to prevent the unimaginable suffering of this person (158). Jack's decision of killing Julia and Ricky, therefore, is more than mere murder. As discussed before, these people are not fully ethical subjects anymore and the real people, who are hardly alive beneath the swarms, are in suffering. Hence, their death can be regarded within this perspective.

The third theory, which constitutes the concepts of rights mentioned by Philippa Foot in her "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect" (1967), applies to this situation as well. Negative rights, i.e. right to live, to be free, freedom of speech, religion, freedom from violence and slavery and rights of property, suggest the rights that a person cannot be prevented from or interfered with. Positive rights include the things that people are free to do, such as helping someone in distress. Non-interference is the right to not performing an

action, such as seeing two people fight and not to be involved (27). In this regard, negative rights of Julia no longer have validity because she loses her moral autonomy, and therefore these rights can be violated by Jack's positive rights to minimize the damage. Killing Julia (and Ricky for that matter) aims for this damage minimization by choosing the lesser evil. As exemplified by Foot's "Trolley Problem[6]," this action becomes acceptable and justified within the context of this novel.

The final theory that applies to this situation is Foot's doctrine of double effect. In the above-mentioned article, she explains this doctrine, and in basic terms, she suggests that people might perform morally good actions, even though this action may produce morally wrong side effects (20). Foot also distinguishes the moral difference between doing and allowing and she includes the doctrine of double effect to consider morally difficult cases: "The words 'double effect' refer to the two effects that an action may produce: the one aimed at, and the one foreseen but in no way desired. By 'the doctrine of the double effect' I mean the thesis that it is sometimes permissible to bring about by oblique intention what one may not directly intend" (20). In this sense, Jack's intention of killing is directed at the dangerous swarms, and killing Ricky and Julia is an undesired side effect. As Jack's intention is not directly murdering the human form of these people, the doctrine applies and Jack's action is once more justified.

So far, the moral rightness or wrongness of harming others and if such actions could be justified or not have been discussed, which leave one final comparison to be mentioned. Jack, who can take the life of infected people on the grounds discussed so far, cannot turn a blind eye to the death of an alive person earlier in the novel. After an attack by the swarms, and the swarms killing two of the team members, the others realize that Charley is still alive when they view the attack area from the monitors. Jack insists that someone should go outside and rescue him. However, the swarms could still be outside and this would be a great risk. The initial response of Ricky, who is infected by the swarms, is to leave Charley to die, as going outside is too dangerous. Because he lacks an empathy for the human life, he is calm and brutal; claiming that Charley would be dead by the time any of them reaches him (323). However, Jack does not accept such justification and goes outside once more even though he just survived the swarms' attack, and saves Charley. However, he later realizes how Ricky actually manipulated him to save Charley, with an agenda that Jack could be

killed or infected by swarms. In comparison to Jack's action of saving a live human being, the swarms on the other hand can murder people in cold blood, which again emphasizes the difference between humans and machines:

> Julia walked up to Charley, and kissed him full and long on the lips. Charley struggled, tried to wrench away. Vince grabbed a fistful of Charley's hair and tried to hold his head steady. Julia continued to kiss him. Then she stepped away, and as she did I saw a river of black between her mouth and Charley's. It was only there for a moment, and then it faded. . . . Julia wiped her lips, and smiled. (439-40)

As the swarms realize Charley as a threat to themselves, they kill him immediately. The two scenes can be examined in terms of moral status of actively allowing vs. actively doing a morally wrong action (Foot, "The Problem of Abortion" 20). In the first instance, Ricky intends actively allowing Charley to die and manipulates Jack for the same end as well, which makes the action ethically wrong. In the same manner, their killing of Charley in the second scene is also considered ethically wrong in the novel, creating a contrast between conscience of humans and machines. However, from Jack's perspective, allowing Charley to die is against his conscience, as he would be actively allowing a person to die, and therefore he rejects performing such an action. The author here invites the reader to understand the moral status and difference of actively doing harm and allowing harm by picturing the same character, Charley, in different situations. In this sense, the novel examines what it means to be a human and the line where the qualities of human life is drawn and expects readers to question what the right thing to do would be in Jack's position. The answer the author provides also helps readers to imagine themselves in such a position and shapes their moral understanding in terms of the ethical sanctions of technological inventions and their possible dangers, thus validating the initial argument of this study once more.

Conclusion

Overall, it has been argued that science fiction can function in the same manner as thought experiments and may help us navigate thorough ethical issues or dilemmas. Moreover, as exemplified in above,

a coordinated examination of such literature by using literary ethical analysis reveals this function in an elaborated manner so that one may pinpoint intended ethical invitations of the authors and possible ethical influences their works leave on the readers. Obviously, such use of ethical analysis can be used in any literary genre as it has been practiced for many years; however, its effectiveness for understanding moral issues becomes more apparent when implemented in science fiction literature due to the genre's inherent and vast imaginative nature. "In literary experience we are given the gift of identification without the pathology of delusion" (79) says Marshall Gregory and in this sense science fiction becomes a genre that has limitless space of imagination, consequently allowing the exploration of ethical issues that may not be discussed in anywhere else. Just so, Michael Crichton's *Prey* focuses on the possibility of robots' development through a claim of humanity as well as the consequent emerging necessity of early preemptive measures concerning nanotechnology or any other technological development that may be harmful for humanity if developed too far. In the novel, Jack asks a very congruous question about why they all kept working even though they knew the swarm was dangerous: "If they were all concerned, why didn't they do something about it? But of course that's human nature. Nobody does anything until it's too late. We put the stoplight at the intersection *after* the kid is killed" (64). He criticizes the inability of human beings to do the right action until an accident occurs, and here the autonomy of the swarms is more than just an accident, it threatens all humanity. Within this context, Crichton presents a powerful thought experiment, and wants readers to think about what it means to be human and what they would do if they faced such a threat. The discussion of the ethical issues creates many responses on the side of the readers, and shapes their moral and ethical understanding regarding this type of technology. In the case of *Prey*, after reading the novel, they may perhaps insist on putting that stoplight *before* the kid is killed.

Notes

[1] The hypothetical scenario of molecular nanotechnology in which self-replicating machines eat up the entities in their environment and increase their own population is called "gray goo" (or "ecophagy"). The term "gray goo" was first coined by the engineer K. Eric Drexler in 1986, and it stands as a useful term for the ethics of technology, as it is a thought experiment of worst-case scenarios of low-probability but influential outcomes of current technologies.

[2] The name of the corporation in which the protagonists work.

[3] Singularity describes the hypothetical situation of the "intelligence explosion" and the development of AI reaching to the level of human intelligence, creating their own AI systems and consequently becoming uncontrollable by humanity. Such superintelligent machines then can create other superintelligent machines easily, which makes it hard to predict the future after singularity.

[4] In "Ethical Issues in Advanced Artificial Intelligence" (2003), Nick Bostrom argues that, the superintelligent machines may be the last invention of humanity and their emergence can be sudden. Such superintelligence will lead to other advanced technologies, and eventually more advanced superintelligence, copying artificial minds will be possible, they will potentially be autonomous agents, yet they will not have humanlike motives and psyches. They may even become biology-based superorganisms and function like a global brain. However, AI machines would eventually regard their own utility, which may bring unintended or undesired consequences to human beings such as extinction. It could kill other agents or persuade them to change their behaviors, and block any attempt of interference. Such a hypothetical scenario would create an existential risk from superintelligence. Theoretically, superintelligence itself or a global disaster caused by superintelligence may cause human extinction. Poorly designed initial goals or building it to serve a selected group of humans may be the reason of its malfunctioning. According to this "orthogonality thesis," Bostrom claims that intelligent machines can be programmed into single goal and no ethical or moral rule can stop them from performing their goal.

[5] See Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (1979); Philippa Foot, "Euthanasia" (1977); James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia" (1975)

[6] According to this thought experiment, a runaway trolley is headed towards five people who would be killed by the trolley and it can be steered to another track where there is only one person. Usually, according to Foot, negative rights outweigh positive rights and one person's negative rights cannot be violated to meet the positive rights of others. However, in this scenario, the choice is between negative rights of one person against negative rights of many, therefore the trolley can be stared to kill the one person and minimize the damage (27).

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***JAST*, 2022; 57: 53-70**
Submitted: 19.10.2021
Accepted: 01.03.2022
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From Kerouac back to Thoreau: The Pull towards Nature, a Revolt against Culture?

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Abstract

Many of Jack Kerouac's road novels stage a retreat into the wild that typifies an irrepressible urge towards natural phenomena, an urge which closely resonates with the works of Henry David Thoreau a century earlier. In Kerouac's *Big Sur* (1962) and in Thoreau's *Walden* (1854), nature is envisaged as a safe haven from the sociohistorical forces of oppression that shape modern existence, but also – more romantically – as a gateway to spiritual insights that affords the possibility for transcendence. Highlighting a series of analogies on the narrative, aesthetic and ontological planes between the two novels, the article goes on to show that this tropism towards nature simultaneously involves a process of disengagement from the cultural predicament of modern America; for Thoreau this meant the industrial revolution, for Kerouac the post-war quagmire. Reinterpreted as a romantic form of the revolt, this paper argues that this disengagement promotes a deliberate alienation from the social world that blurs the line between the quest for transcendence and the solipsistic condition.

Keywords: Beat Literature, American Transcendentalism, American Romanticism, Disengagement, Alienation

Kerouac'dan Thoreau'ya: Doğaya Karşı Çekim Kültüre Bir İsyan mı?

Öz

Jack Kerouac'ın pek çok yol romanı, bir asır önce yazılmış Henry David Thoreau'nun eserlerini andıran doğa olaylarına karşı bastırılamayan dürtünün tipik bir örneği olan yabani doğada inzivaya çekilmeyi betimler. Kerouac'ın *Big Sur* (1962) ve Thoreau'nun *Walden* (1854) adlı eserlerinde doğa, modern varoluşu şekillendiren toplumsal ve tarihsel baskı güçlerine karşı sığınacak bir liman ve aynı zamanda -daha romantik bir biçimde- ruhani aşkınlığı olası kılan içgörülere açılan bir kapı olarak tasavvur edilmiştir. Bu makale, iki roman arasında anlatı, estetik ve ontolojik düzlemde bir seri analojinin altını çizerken doğaya karşı bu yönelimin aynı zamanda, Thoreau için endüstri devrimi, Kerouac için savaş sonrası çıkmazı olan, modern Amerika'nın kültürel açmazından uzaklaşan bir süreci de içerdiğini gösterir. Başkaldırının romantik bir biçimi olarak yeniden yorumlanan bu uzaklaşmanın ruhani aşkınlık ve tekbencilik arayışı arasındaki çizgiyi bulandırarak sosyal dünyadan kasıtlı bir yabancılaşmayı teşvik ettiği savunulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Beat Kuşağı Edebiyatı, Amerikan Transandantalizmi, Amerikan Romantizmi, Uzaklaşma, Yabacılaşma

The connection between Kerouac and Thoreau has rarely been made; yet, despite obvious differences of period, of movement and of style, both writers share a preoccupation with nature and its transcendental powers on the self – a preoccupation, largely Romantic, which also signifies on a number of levels, philosophical, aesthetic and ontological. Simultaneously, both authors tend to position their respective narrators in defiance of the sociohistorical environment in which they are immersed, and whose encroachments are viewed, often, as an impediment to the quest for transcendence. In the 1962 novel *Big Sur*, Kerouac relocates his narrator Jack Duluoz to a Californian beach by Bixby Canyon, a place devised as a secluded haven surrounded by luxuriant nature. For Duluoz, the point of this retreat is to take him away from the ceaseless hassle of the last few years: "It's the first trip I've

taken away from home (my mother's house) since the publication of 'Road' the book that made me famous and in fact so much so I've been driven mad for three years" (2). Duluoz's intention, in his own words, is to "be alone and undisturbed for six weeks just chopping wood, drawing water, writing, sleeping, hiking, etc., etc" (1). This eagerness to return to the wild – devised in the novel as a version of the American pastoral – and to lead a simple life, albeit copiously idealized, typifies a departure from the world of commercial transactions and domesticity for the pristine world of a more primitive America, a change of scenery envisaged as a means to palliate the disarray of urban life and liberate him from the sense of meaninglessness and growing confusion that besieges him. The narrator's relocation to Big Sur signals a desire to rediscover a primeval space – both outside and within, a space through which he may reconnect with the forces of the transcendent and access an experience that is fully regenerative. Apprehended in the greater context of Kerouac's works, the move to Bixby Canyon not only restores the scenario of the quest, but it also reactivates its ontological function. Injecting vitality into the toxic immobility of the narrative, it carries the promise of an impending encounter with an immaculate nature in search of the transcendental impulse that would defeat the raging anguish that creeps into the text.

While this type of immersion in nature is characteristic of the novels of the *Duluoz Legend* – the name given by Kerouac to his oeuvre, covering a dozen of individual works that cohere into a greater corpus – it is also unmistakably reminiscent of the writings of nineteenth-century American Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau, whose influence on Kerouac has been too rarely investigated. Thoreau's *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854) is an experiment in self-reliance which is motivated by a desire to withdraw from society and interact with nature – defined as outer as well as inner phenomena – in the most direct way possible. To that end, its narrator vows to spend two years in the wilderness of New England with minimum social interaction. It opens, "[w]hen I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months" (5). Depicting a genuine retreat into the wild, *Walden* features a narrative arc which is not dissimilar to that of *Big Sur*. In *Walden*, the aspiration for a radical form of self-

sufficiency is precisely what enables the possibility to transact with nature in its purest form: the narrator seeks, in his own words, "[t]o anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself!" (17).

Crucially for Thoreau – and more generally for the American Transcendentalists – nature has a capital function. Transcendentalism posited the existence of a universal principle of creation, divine in essence, that is incarnate in nature, and which transcends the sensible world. This axiom suggests that the divine is not devised as a singular and external entity; rather, it is conceived as a pantheist form of godliness that directly penetrates the here and now; a divine essence envisaged as universal and imbedded, primarily, in natural phenomena. Thus grasped through its romantic and allegorical dimension, this appeal for nature typifies a drive towards natural phenomena that carries the hope for a restored harmony with the transcendental powers within and around the self, and along with it the prospect for regeneration. Rooted in a form of self-reliance, Kerouac's literary project may be perceived through this Romantic legacy: typically, in his road novels, Kerouac immerses his narrator into nature, creating an opportunity to interact with its essence which is envisaged as mystical – an interaction that vouches for the recovery of the transcendental through prolonged contact with nature.

Thoreau, Kerouac: The Pull of Nature

In order to get closer to nature, both writers position their respective narrators in a cabin whose function is conspicuously similar. Located off the beaten track, both Duluoz's and Thoreau's cabins operate as bona fide sanctuaries from which to reflect upon, and write about, their confrontation with the elements, allowing the vision to infuse into the self and resurface in written form. As Thoreau declares in *Walden*, "When I first took my abode in the woods, ... my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defense against the rain ... This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains" (78). The lyricism of this passage relies heavily on a brand of the pastoral which is highly allegorical. As David Bowers points out, the

American Transcendentalists "interpreted material nature mystically as a 'veil' or symbol of the divine; [they] maintained that every individual can penetrate the veil to discover divine truth for himself without the aid of traditional authority or even logic" (11). In this sense, Thoreau's cabin in *Walden*, by inviting nature to flow into its profane space, concomitantly allows for the circulation of the godhead. Similarly, for Duluoz in his Big Sur cabin: "Marvelous opening moment in fact of the first afternoon I'm left alone in the cabin and I make my first meal, wash my first dishes, nap, and wake up to hear the rapturous ring of silence or Heaven even within and throughout the gurgle of the creek" (15). As modest as it may be, the cabin becomes a tool for capturing the ethereality of the spiritual essence of nature; a receptacle for divinity which becomes part of the quest for the transcendental, fully integrated into the Romantic fabric of the text.

In addition, while Thoreau's cabin faces Walden Pond, that of Duluoz faces the Pacific Ocean – stretches of water that signify not only the ubiquity of natural elements, but also the availability of their transcendental essence. For Thoreau, the surface of the pond acts as a giant, cosmic eye: "A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature" (168). Not only does it trap the essence of the transcendent into its depths, but it also sends its reflection back up to the surface and to the viewer. In *Big Sur* however, Kerouac subverts Thoreau's image of the placid lake and turns it into a monster ocean which is too unruly and threatening to send back a reflection at all: "And I'd get scared of the rising tide with its 15 foot waves yet sit there hoping in faith that Hawaii warnt sending no tidal wave I might miss" (26). It would not be inaccurate to recognize in these giant waves a symbol for the anguish that submerges the narrator from the onset of the novel. Above all, this turmoil shatters the continuum that Thoreau seeks to cultivate by Walden Pond between self, nature and the transcendent through the device of reflection; a reminder that, as Duluoz aims to retrieve the faculty of the visionary, he must first reconcile with the demiurgic forces of nature.

Despite crucial differences in the imagery, both works share a certain kinship in their aesthetics. Thoreau's writing exemplifies a trajectory from the local to the universal and from the common to the sacred which is not unlike that of Kerouac's, and which is implemented, often, at the level of the sentence unit itself. For both writers, this

impetus in the writing is derived from a tendency to romanticize nature: it foregrounds a movement from the particulars of natural phenomena to the apprehension of its universal oneness, a movement rooted in the very physicality of the elements that extends towards the metaphysical and the spiritual. This movement also implies that natural phenomena themselves must be transcended on the site of the self; or, as Thoreau puts it in *Walden*, "[n]ature is hard to be overcome, but she must be overcome" (198). The body plays a major role in this operation: it is viewed as a sensorial interface whose function is to filter the essence of nature which permeates the sensible world and to transfer it to the deeper self. For Thoreau, "[a]ll sensuality is one, though it takes many forms; all purity is one. It is the same whether a man eat, or drink, or cohabit, or sleep sensually. They are but one appetite" (198). Emanating from the corporeality of nature which it seeks to sublimate into a singular, universal essence, this process of idealization also works as a unifying principle. As David Robinson pinpoints in *Thoreau's Worldly Transcendentalism*, "[t]he empirical accumulation of facts could be justified only as one stage of a process that ultimately aimed at an explanation of the inclusive whole of nature" (118). Inherently transcendental, this process interrelates the self with the godhead and the mundane with the holy – transactions operated through incessant and concomitant upwards and downwards movements in the writing structure in terms that are spiritual, and which provide a mystical basis for the naturalistic poetics of both writers.

Used extensively by both Thoreau in *Walden* and by Kerouac in his road novels, this aesthetic feature reveals the contiguity of their ontological foundations. For Thoreau, the perception and synthesizing of natural phenomena via the body and its senses has the capacity to induce a type of consciousness that reveals the ubiquity and wholeness of the universal mind – a consciousness that may be interpreted, in fact, as visionary. Under such conditions, nature is equated with the godhead: conceived as the physical expression of the metaphysical principle of creation, universal and atemporal. Ultimately, as James McIntosh remarks, "nature with all its incoherency is one for Thoreau, one subject and one source for his being" (18). More than a way of living, Thoreau's naturalism foregrounds a way of *being* which strives for the transcendent.

Similarly, for Duluoz in *Big Sur*, and more generally in Kerouac's novels of the *Legend*, the respective narrators have the

power to achieve a higher form of being; a being, ultimate and ecstatic, that materializes through the ability to find a passageway towards the transcendental through prolonged contact with nature and its spiritual essence. Crucially, it is through the mystical concordance between nature and the self that the subject may comprehend, and eventually *embody*, the transcendental essence of nature – an achievement that vouches for the circulation of the flux of the universal mind within the individual, and which realizes the transcendental potential of his or her own being; an ontological proposition synonymous with an existential form of authenticity in Kerouac's writing.

A Revolt against Culture?

Notwithstanding, while Duluoz's relocation to Bixby Canyon offers him a chance to transcend his doomed condition and reconnect with self, nature and spirit, the motive behind his retreat remains largely ambivalent. The pressing call to the wild is also sparked by a recognition of the vital necessity to run away from his drunken stupor and cultivate isolation in order to retrieve his sanity: "I was surrounded and outnumbered and had to get away to solitude again or die – So Lorenzo Monsanto wrote and said 'Come to my cabin'" (2). In this sense, Duluoz's relocation is also a flight from his urban existence; an escape that allows him to shun all forms of social communication and avoid "endless telegrams, phonecalls, requests, mail, visitors, snoopers" (2). The type of simplicity that Duluoz cherishes here sets itself in opposition to both technological progress and social interaction. In romantic fashion, Kerouac refers to the archetype of the hermit to signify Duluoz's yearning to withdraw from modern civilization and dwell in wilderness, a yearning that foregrounds the search for a transcendental connection with the universal through seclusion and material detachment – a possible version of Thoreau's natural life, whose grace has been sacrificed to the modern age. Crucially, Duluoz's monastic allegiance to solitude and isolation in *Big Sur* can be conceived as a strategy for *disengagement*: one that articulates the clear will to escape social conditioning and reclaim one's own authority over that of society, a recurrent fixation that Kerouac shared with other Beat writers, but also with the main representatives of the American pastoral tradition. Accordingly, as John Tytell contends in *Naked Angels*, "[t]he Beats . . . had to find new ways to remind their culture of the dignity of

self-reliance and to provide an Emersonian awareness of the tyranny of institutions. Execrating the worldly, dreading the implications of control, they chose to consecrate the whims of the individual" (259). While most Beat writers did not so much execrate the worldly than seek to subvert its profanity, this rebellious impulse against the institutions and the conventions of daily reality – viewed as mediocre, vitiated and self-repressing – has its roots, partly, in the American Transcendentalist tradition, as Tytell indicates. It is reflected by Emerson through essays such as "History" or "Self-Reliance" (1841), for instance, but also through the works of Thoreau, from "Resistance to Civil Government" (1849) to *Walden* (1854) and to "Life without Principle" (1863).

Throughout *Walden*, the natural life that Thoreau champions features a distinct pastoral dimension that runs counter to the developments of the industrial revolution and to the processes of mechanization and of rationalization that it entailed. In the opening chapter, "Economy", Thoreau suggests that the latest historical transformations shaking America copiously infringe upon the integrity and the liberty of the self. A life in compliance with the civilizational project of modernity, whose race towards technological progress propagates a reckless materialistic ethos in every corner of the country, is similar to the "fool's life" for Thoreau:

> The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. (9)

Behind the injunction to follow his example, Thoreau intends to show how such "lives of quiet desperation", conceived as fundamentally self-alienating, are shaped by ways of being that are viewed as meaningless and soulless, inasmuch as they are severed from nature. This predicament, symptomatic of the conditions of social reality in North America in the midst of the nineteenth century, epitomizes a form of existential inauthenticity, both in a transcendental and in an ontological environment: one in which the individual cannot perceive the mystical essence of nature because he or she has no possibility of venturing into it in the first place, and therefore fails to fulfil the

innermost and higher self. For Thoreau in *Walden*, "this points to an important distinction between the civilized man and the savage; and, no doubt, they have designs on us for our benefit, in making the life of a civilized people an *institution*, in which the life of the individual is to a great extent absorbed, in order to preserve and perfect that of the race" (30). The foundational dichotomy that Thoreau establishes between modern and pre-industrial man is the difference between two types of being: one which is institutionalized and moderated – and therefore controlled – and another envisaged more romantically as self-reliant and radically free. The mode of being that Thoreau vindicates, beyond the stark opposition between the "civilized" and the untamed and between the urban and the pastoral, is more intuitive and instinctive rather than rational and reflexive, more organic and sensual rather than mechanical, fundamentally idiosyncratic and self-affirmative rather than standardized and self-objectifying. It is an ontological mode that channels a wholesome involvement with nature in the plurality of its forms and manifestations, and through which nature itself has the capacity to induce an experience in the individual which is genuinely transformative. As Thoreau marvels, "[t]he indescribable innocence and beneficence of Nature, – of sun and wind and rain, of summer and winter, – such health, such cheer, they afford forever! . . . Shall I not have intelligence with the earth?" (126). While Thoreau's objections to the parameters of nineteenth-century modernity are, in origin, ontological, they are also politically charged: Thoreau's *being-towards-nature* is, also, a being *against* the cultural rationale of the historical moment in which he is immersed.

A century later, the cultural predicament of nineteenth-century industrial America that Thoreau vituperated transmuted into its post-war variant; more constricted, more commodified and more objectifying than ever, and against which Kerouac rails. In *Big Sur*, the tyranny of the sociohistorical environment is frequently illustrated through a series of scenes from daily American life in the early 1960s which have been satirized. In the following passage, Kerouac targets the stereotypical figure of the tourist – an avatar of post-war economic prosperity in North America:

> Every time the old man's trousers start to get creased a little in the front he's made to take down a fresh pair of slacks from the back rack and go on, like that, bleakly, tho he might have secretly wished just a good oldtime fishing trip alone or

> with his buddies for this year's vacation – But the PTA has prevailed over every one of his desires by now, 1960s, it's no time for him to yearn for Big Two Hearted River and the old sloppy pants and string of fish in the tent, or the woodfire with Bourbon at night – it's time for motels, roadside driveins, bringing napkins to the gang in the car, having the car washed before the return trip – And if he thinks he wants to explore any of the silent secret roads of America it's no go. (38-39)

Kerouac's recourse to a satirical tone enables him to comment ironically upon the cultural climate of his times and denounce the mechanisms of mass consumption, of cultural uniformity and of social mimicry which, for him, characterized the post-war moment.

Concomitantly, this is what also fuels his desire for evasion – an articulation that tallies with an American expression of the pastoral tradition of the nineteenth century. By deserting the historical field of an America whose normative discourse tends to subdue the innermost self and prevail upon the most intimate desires of the individual, Kerouac channels the political implications of novelists such as James Fenimore Cooper with *The Pioneers* (1823) for instance, or Mark Twain with *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), whose characters – portrayed as highly self-reliant – may be viewed as alter egos of Thoreau's and of Kerouac's narrators. Through the retreat into the wild that they advocate, they press for a radical form of disengagement from sociohistorical reality through which they may create a space – in terms both physical and metaphysical – for the self to thrive. Nevertheless, for Thoreau and *a fortiori* for Kerouac, this disengagement is carried out for the sake of a more private sense of transcendental communion with the elements. As Kerouac writes, "[s]o easy in the woods to daydream and pray to the local spirits and say 'Allow me to stay here, I only want peace' and those foggy peaks answer back mutely Yes" (18). Carved out in immaculate nature, this space is envisioned as ideal, pure and virtuous, and as remote as possible from the social and material contingencies of everyday life:

> [N]o more dissipation, it's time for me to quietly watch the world and even enjoy it, first in the woods like these, then just calmly walk and talk among people of the world, no booze, no drugs, no binges, no bouts with beatniks and drunks and junkies and everybody, . . . be a loner, travel, talk to waiters

> only, . . . it's time to think and watch and keep concentrated on the fact that after all this whole surface of the world as we know it now will be covered with the silt of a billion years in time… Yay, for this, more aloneness. (18-19)

The further Duluoz steps away from the conditions of post-war modernity and into a primitive landscape, the closer he gets to recovering a sense of self-abandonment through which he may perceive the *intuition* of the preeminence of natural phenomena over all things; suggesting a correspondence, made by Thoreau a century earlier, between a strategy for disengagement, radical and wide-ranging, and the possibility for mystical insight. As Thoreau declares, "[m]y purpose in going to Walden Pond was not to live cheaply or to live dearly but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles" (19). Ironically framed in a language that taps into economics, this declaration entails that the menace of self-alienation for Thoreau resides, first and foremost, in the series of mediations that the cultural predicament of an increasingly materialist and productivist America articulates in day-to-day reality. As he sharply puts it in "Life without Principle", "we are warped and narrowed by an exclusive devotion to trade and commerce and manufactures and agriculture and the like, which are but means, and not the end" (325). Ultimately for Thoreau, it is the manifold encroachments of an ever more industrialized nation that dismantle the continuum between self, nature and spirit and hinder access to an experience of the transcendental.

Crucially, Thoreau's rebellion against such mediations takes the form of a double movement which is contradictory in its form, yet convergent in its ontological claims: it epitomizes both an engagement towards natural life – a *being-towards-nature* construed as the optimal ontological modality for authenticity in Existentialist theory – *and* an insurrection against the intrusion of a cultural predicament whose interferences cripple the realization of the transcendental self in the here-and-now. Through this revolt, it is the historical principle of alienation that Thoreau seeks to bypass in order to cultivate the spiritual resources of the self. Such a form of the revolt connives against the infringements of an increasingly industrialized America, seen as overly rationalized and outrageously materialist, in order to provide the individual with the sheer *opportunity* to dwell closer to nature, devised as ahistorical and universal. For Thoreau in *Walden*, "[m]ost of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but

positive hinderances to the elevation of mankind" (15). In so doing, the revolt encapsulates the brutal confrontation of the individual in search of transcendental being against the disruptive interposition of the cultural predicament of his or her concomitant historical and social reality – a revolt framed in ontological terms by the European Existentialists a century later. For Albert Camus, "man thus catches sight of a burning and frigid, transparent and limited universe in which nothing is possible, but everything is given, and beyond which all is collapse and nothingness. He can then decide to accept such a universe and draw from it his strength, his refusal to hope, and the unyielding evidence of a life without consolation" (32). While Camus's revolt seeks to rebel against the limitations contingent to sociohistorical reality, it also makes use of these limitations, which it seeks to subvert to create the conditions for authentic being. For this purpose, the Camusian revolt needs the constraints of history to materialize.

In Thoreau however, a more radical stance crystallizes against the temporal world – viewed as profane – and more particularly against the productivist ethos and social conditions of mid-nineteenth-century modernity. As he writes in *Walden*,

> [a] saner man would have found himself often enough "in formal opposition" to what are deemed "the most sacred laws of society", through obedience to yet other sacred laws . . . it is not for a man to put himself in such an attitude to society, but to maintain himself in whatever attitude he find himself through obedience to the laws of his being. (287)

The brand of individualism that Thoreau champions militates for the abrogation, pure and simple, of the historical and civilizational forces that deny access to the transcendence of being. For him, "[m]ost men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the facticious cares and superfluous coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them" (8). Unaware of nature and its transcendental powers – presumably the "finer fruits" of existence for Thoreau – the individual remains ignorant of this phenomenon, which in turn precludes the achievement of a higher form of being. In this sense, Thoreau's revolt foregrounds the contradiction of a disengagement from historical reality which paradoxically allows the individual to discover and perceive the essence of the world.

In a similar manner, the Beats also strove vehemently against the dominant cultural predicament in which they were immersed, which they viewed as viscerally oppressive and self-negating, in order to protect the nucleus of their individual freedom – a freedom intimately linked to the possibility of transcendence. In Kerouac's *Big Sur*, the capacity to retrieve the visionary is conditioned to the pressing necessity to reclaim a space which is in principle preserved from the most alienating aspects of the latest historical developments of the post-war moment; envisioned as an enclave in which the self may intuitively move as close as possible to nature and attend to its phenomena in order to sample its essence, envisioned as regenerative and salutary. This strategy of disengagement may be conceived in the vicinity of a Western regionalism that taps into the main tenets of the pastoral tradition, where rebellion is established as a central theme: a revolt framed in terms that are deeply romantic but also implicitly political. This revolt enables both authors to effectively consume the American myth of self-reliance via their own alternative system of values: values of radical autonomy, of self-sufficiency and of anticonformism in Kerouac – "[t]he infancy of the simplicity of just being happy in the woods, conforming to nobody's idea about what to do, what should be done" (25) – which all channel Thoreau's notion of *extra-vagance*. As he writes in the conclusion to *Walden*, "I fear chiefly lest my expression may not be *extra-vagant* enough, may not wander far enough beyond the narrow limits of my daily experience, so as to be adequate to the truth of which I have been convinced. *Extra vagance!* It depends on how you are yarded" (289). Solidly anchored in the American Transcendentalist tradition, this dedication to the singularity of individual character, whose eccentricity is the measure by which being aims to bridge the distance from the truth of the deepest self, largely resonates with the concept of authenticity coined by the Existentialists: a concept that champions the most complete fulfilment of the innermost and ownmost self, right here and right now, in defiance of sociohistorical contingencies. As Sartre proclaims in "Existentialism & Humanism", "man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only insofar as he realizes himself, he is therefore nothing else but the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is" (47).

In the Beat literary output, this impulse is invigorated by a sense of disappointment, repeatedly reaffirmed, with the national ideals of liberty and of the pursuit of happiness, reconfigured in the Beat

imaginary as a quest for transcendence. What the Beats, but also the Transcendentalists before them, identified as the moral failure of these ideals, stems in great measure from the regulations and restrictions forced upon the individual by the modern predicament. Seen as thoroughly alienating, it is thought to mediate experience in the world and with nature, taming the intuitive energies of the self and hampering action – be it individual or collective; constrictions encouraging a status quo that thwarts the very promises that America vowed to deliver in the first place – an articulation of the ontological with the political that defines the terms of their existential struggle.

In this context, Duluoz's relocation to the shores of Big Sur may be envisaged as an attempt to eschew the matrix of post-war modernity – an insurrection against the temporal through which access to a more spiritual experience of transcendental oneness with the elements may be reestablished. This existential revolt is fundamentally romantic in its expression: it proclaims the imperious need to rescue the truth of the self by pitting the individual against both history and society, in a fashion largely reminiscent of that of Thoreau a century earlier. For Thoreau, the possibility of reaching authentic being presupposes securing the purest, most unmitigated path to nature, so that the individual may *attempt* to interact with its spiritual essence with minimum hindrance. As per *Walden*'s rallying cry, "I delight to come to my bearings, – not walk in procession with pomp and parade, in a conspicuous place, but to walk even with the Builder of the universe, if I may" (293). This contention foregrounds the moral dimension of his revolt: since the affairs of the world impact the transcendental self, the political becomes moral – a correspondence that can be traced all the way back to the American Puritan tradition. In this context, self-worship is elevated as a moral injunction. As Thoreau advocates at the end of *Walden*, "explore your own higher latitudes, ... be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice" (286). It is this emphasis on the singularity of individual character and on the unlimited resources of the self which Kerouac obstinately carries into *Big Sur*. While the prevalence of the self over the social and the historical adds to the confessional nature of the writing, it also implies that the self is conceived as an absolute center of reality, encouraging the emergence of a solipsistic condition that plays a crucial role in his self-alienation.

Such a type of individualism, which borders on self-centeredness, risks becoming counterproductive for the self by compromising its integrity, but also jeopardizes the collective, because the radical freedom that it champions is transacted at the expense of social responsibility. This brand of individualism constitutes a tendency in American literature that spans across a wide range of traditions, from Romanticism to naturalism and modernism; forming the substratum of a literary lineage signalled by writers such as Jack London and Henry Miller – a writer often referred to as the godfather of the Beat movement. In his work *Existentialism and Alienation in American Literature*, Sidney Finkelstein argues that

> [t]he form that Miller's "revolt" took, as one of the "disillusioned" after the First World War, was much like that of the self-named "beat generation" after the Second World War. It was as much a way of life as a way of writing, a defiant, vituperative resignation from society with the writing serving as an autobiographical manifesto for his behaviour. (203)

Through his exploration of a range of literary works and traditions in the US that channel a distinctly Existentialist sensibility – whether it is derivative from European influences or consubstantial to American cultural history – Finkelstein connects the existential with the literary by interrelating a *being*-in-revolt with a specific *writing* of the revolt. In doing so, Finkelstein draws attention to the sweeping divorce from society that such a revolt entails, an estrangement that contaminates the field of the representational. Grasped in its American dimension, this revolt promotes a deliberate alienation from the social sphere, a disengagement that constitutes the foundational event in Kerouac's *Big Sur*. This revolt is as seditious as it is incendiary; it departs from its European formulation in its neutralization of the ethical through a zealous contempt for social responsibility. For Sartre, "one ought always to ask oneself what would happen if everyone did as one is doing; nor can one escape from that disturbing thought except by a kind of self-deception" (33). While this lack of ethical responsibility characterizes the shift from an Existentialist form of authenticity to a more American ethos, it also suggests that ontological solace can only be self-directed. "What is Miller's 'triumph'?" Finkelstein asks. "He reiterates that he has renounced the bondage to a demanding world, and has found freedom" (205). Nonetheless, this freedom is the nihilistic freedom of the anarchist, because it has no social relevance: it is the

by-product of a revolt which, in its obsession with immaculate forms of liberty and of autonomy, precipitates a form of being that subdues all practical possibilities for social action, and which risks engulfing the self in return.

Failing the realization of an alternative political project that is socially viable, this revolt is fueled by a reckless individualism that verges on solipsism; a brand of individualism which is fiercely obstinate and as intransigent as it is idealistic, which is meant to provide the individual with the opportunity to achieve a higher form of being: suggesting that ontological solace can only be self-directed. The autarchical individualism that fuels this revolt is as flamboyant as it is contemptuous; nonetheless, it creates the conditions for an extreme form of alienation that nullifies the possibility of social change and in turn hinders access to transcendence in the circumstances of the real. In this sense, the revolt that Kerouac's narrator operates through his disengagement is by moral, not ethical: primarily motivated by the desire to transact privately with the mystical essence of nature, Duluoz's commitment to a radical type of self-reliance does not signify on the social plane. Motivated solely by the pressing demands of the ideal self, Duluoz's quixotic relocation translates as a private retreat into the self – a retreat dangerously demobilizing and alienating by its own will, as illustrated through the series of crises that plague the second part of the novel. Duluoz becomes increasingly disoriented and paranoid:

> "Can it be that Ron and all these other guys, Dave and Mclear or somebody, the other guys earlier are all a big bunch of witches out to make me go mad?" I seriously consider this – . . . now at the point of adulthood disaster of the soul, through excessive drinking, all this was easily converted into a fantasy that everybody in the world was witching me to madness. (100)

Such phobic bouts evidence a shift in the narrator's vision, which becomes strictly incarnate and self-legislating, harnessed to the whims of an hysterical self – a deflection characteristic of the condition of the solipsist, in which the individual is inclined to dismiss the factuality of the world by subverting its empirical status. As Duluoz finally reckons, "I realize everybody is just living their lives quietly but it's only me that's insane . . . I'm beginning to read plots into every simple line"

(134). This realization suggests that Duluoz's experience at Big Sur is fragmentary at heart – an outcome of the highest degree of self-alienation that his strategy for disengagement fostered. Ultimately, he is tempted to self-destroy: "Oh hell, I'm sick of life – If I had any guts I'd drown myself in that tiresome water but that wouldnt be getting it over at all, I can just see the big transformations and plans jellying down there to curse us up in some other wretched suffering from eternities of it" (161). At this point, Duluoz has come full circle to his original limit-situation as recognized in the first chapters, "one fast move or I'm gone" (4). Taking the form of a flight from socio-historical reality that epitomizes a private retreat into the self, Duluoz's response fosters an inwardness which, in turn, breeds a solipsistic agony.

Thus for Kerouac, the obstinate commitment to natural phenomena – envisioned as a gateway to transcendence – and the insurrection against the temporal conditions of the here-and-now may be viewed as two sides of the same coin. This revolt of a twofold nature, which has roots in the American pastoral tradition, is conceived in the lineage of a Romantic brand of naturalism that simultaneously militates for a deliberate estrangement from sociohistorical reality. While such a type of revolt carries the promise of renewed transcendence, it is also tragically counterproductive: by draining the forces of creation and vitality, it creates, paradoxically, the conditions for self-alienation. This is the road that Kerouac takes in *Big Sur* – operating a retreat from the world that fails to rescue him from self-destruction.

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***JAST*, 2022; 57: 71-92**
Submitted: 21.02.2022
Accepted: 27.03.2022
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Still Struggling for Equality:

Women Activism in the Trump Era

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Abstract

The beginning of Donald Trump's presidency started with largest single day protest on January 21, 2017 in Washington DC and several other cities. Trump's sexist comments and his stance in reproductive rights had already caused concern. Dreading that their hard-earned rights would be revoked, several women groups organized an annually repeated Women's March. These marches used similar, yet creative new strategies of the 1970s Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) rallies. Protestors wore handcrafted pink pussyhats to present a unified front, composed new songs with critical lyrics, rehearsed online, sang the lyrics together with other well-known protest songs, and carried creative banners that referred to debated policies. In time, the themes and scope of these marches grew to encompass larger domestic and international issues. A Women's Agenda called for federal policies on ending violence against women, reproductive rights, racial justice, immigrant rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, disability rights, labor rights, civil rights and liberties, and environmental justice. Thus, during the Trump era women were reminded of their struggles in the 1970s from which they drew inspiration and motivation while forming innovative strategies to organize and create lasting influences on decision-making processes.

Keywords: Donald Trump, Phyllis Schlafly, Women's March, *Mrs. America*, 1970s

Eşitlik için Mücadeleye Devam:
Donald Trump Döneminde Kadın Hareketleri

Öz

20 Ocak 2017 tarihinde, Başkan Donald Trump göreve başladıktan hemen sonra, Washington DC ve diğer iller gün boyunca süren geniş kapsamlı gösterilere sahne oldu. Trump'ın kullandığı cinsiyetçi dil ve kadın sağlığı konusundaki görüşleri zaten endişeyle izleniyordu. Çeşitli zorluklarla kazanılmış olan kadın hakları alanında geriye dönülebileceği endişesiyle, çeşitli kadın grupları her yıl tekrarlanan Kadın Yürüyüşleri düzenlendi. Bu protestolar sırasında 1970'lerde Eşit Haklar Yasası lehine yapılan gösterilere benzeyen ama daha yaratıcı olan stratejiler kullanıldı. Göstericiler birlikteliklerini vurgulamak için el işi pembe "kedi" şapkaları giydiler, eleştirel bakış açısıyla şarkılar bestelediler, şarkı sözlerini çevrimiçi öğrenerek bilinen diğer protesto şarkılarıyla birlikte söylediler ve güncel kaygılarına gönderme yapan yaratıcı pankartlar taşıdılar. İlerleyen yıllarda bu gösteriler diğer ulusal ve uluslararası sorunları kapsayarak genişletildi. Kadına karşı şiddet, kadın sağlığı, ırksal adalet, göçmenlerin durumu, LBGTQIA+, engelli ve işçi hakları, vatandaşlık hakları ve çevreyi koruma konusunda gereken yasaları içeren bir Kadın Ajandası hazırlandı. Böylece, Trump döneminde kadın grupları, 1970'lerdeki mücadelelerinin izinde ve güdümünde, karar verme ve yasal düzenlemelerin oluşturulması süreçlerinde etkili olmak için yaratıcı stratejiler kullandılar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Donald Trump, Phyllis Schlafly, Kadın Yürüyüşleri, *Mrs. America*, 1970'ler

We are here and around the world for a deep democracy that says we will not be quiet. We will not be controlled. We will work for a world in which all countries are connected. God may be in the details but the goddess is in connections. We are at one with each other. We are looking at each other, not up. ...

When we elect a possible president, we too often go home. We've elected an impossible president. We're never going home. We're staying together and we're taking over.

Gloria Steinem

Women's March on Washington

January 21, 2017

About a month before Donald Trump won the presidential election of 2016, conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly, who had successfully campaigned in defeating the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the 1970s, died on September 5, 2016. Although she never held an official position in the Republican governments, Schlafly had always been an influential supporter of conservative causes. Donald Trump—the presidential candidate she endorsed—attended Schlafly's funeral, addressing her as "a truly great American patriot" and paying homage to her by saying that the "movement has lost its hero. Believe me, Phyllis was there for me when it was not at all fashionable. Trust me" (Morin). Trump's supporting attitude and his expression "her legacy will live on" (Morin) must have reminded her earlier conservative stance to many for whom women causes mattered, suggesting that despite the fact that half a century had passed, debate over basic human rights remained an unfinished business. Phyllis Schlafly's last book entitled *The Conservative Case for Trump* was published the day after her death. Emma Green writes, "Phyllis Schlafly might be dead, but her America is alive and well . . . Trump is proof that Schlafly's political style and conservative values still resonate with a large portion of the American electorate" (Westenfeld). Schlafly's book, which outlines Trump's proposed policies on a number of issues, is also a reminder of the continuing backlash to the feminist movement.

Schlafly's campaigning against the ratification of the ERA is still remembered. Largely due to the backlash organized by her, in 1979

the 35 states out of the necessary 38 states fell short for the ratification of the Amendment designed to guarantee equal legal rights for every citizen, regardless of gender. Her name is often associated with negative connotations in the recent history of the feminist movement. During her campaigns, Schlafly started most of her speeches by thanking her husband for allowing her to attend that particular meeting and explained her reasoning behind these statements as, "I like to say that because it irritates the women's libbers more than anything" (Kozlowska). She presented a content image of a suburban housewife as if to mock what Betty Friedan called "the feminine mystique." She played the role of being unaware of the strategies of domestic patriarchal dominance. Betty Friedan had responded to Schlafly's daring antifeminist remarks, stating that she should have "burned at the stake" for thwarting the amendment under the pretext that women's role as a mother and wife would be harmed. In fact, feminists in the 1970s viewed Schlafly as hypocritical, since she enjoyed the privileges of a wealthy family and moved freely in political circles, which gave her further freedom to be an active agent in the public arena while emphasizing the virtues of traditional gender roles and ardently preaching to be domestic in her circles (Kozlowska). Schlafly's active public campaigning through newsletters, meetings, and gatherings, as well as her insistence on pursuing a law degree later in life actually prove that she was performing domesticity rather than living such a life.

Women from all social stratifications undoubtedly recalled the discussions and debates during the ERA protests with Schlafly's death. Additionally, Trump's election victory, a few weeks later, must have rekindled the rise of dissenting voices and grassroots activism together with a number of novel media responses. The legacy of the Civil Rights Movements and the ERA campaigns could be observed clearly in the Women's Marches during the Trump's era. Trump's presidency from January 20, 2017 to January 20, 2021 was marked with these Women's Marches coupled with several other forms of online activism, which were as striking and as enthusiastic as the ones in the 1970s. A number of noteworthy events and benchmarks in terms of the women's movement happened while Trump was in office and women's dissenting voices became noticeable, due to the possibility of losing hard-earned rights or dreading the probability of stepping backwards on women related health issues. Phyllis Schlafly's death was not indicative of the end of an era; just the opposite—as Trump had already voiced—it was the

beginning of a similar ideology, which, once again, required creative activism in the light of what was already lived and learned.

Trump's policies on women's issues became clear during the presidential campaigns and his daring and conservative rhetoric enraged several women groups. In the third and final presidential debate, when Hillary Clinton stated, "I will defend Planned Parenthood. I will defend Roe v. Wade, and I will defend women's rights to make their own health care decisions" (Clinton), he stated that he was in favor of leaving abortion or reproductive medicine support decisions to individual states. Such a decision would endanger abortion rights and would make it difficult for women to reach affordable care in certain states. He also called Hillary Clinton "such a nasty woman" in the same debate when she stated that she would raise taxes to deal with debts rather than cutting benefits for the needy (Berenson). This derogatory expression was later picked and used by women protestors as a chosen remark and depicting catchphrase. Actually, taking a vulgar remark and subverting it into an empowering tool has always been a part of women's protests. In the late 1960s and 1970s, feminist groups embraced the offensive uses of the words "witch" and "bitch" and inverted their meaning by expanding the signified concepts. They even created positive and inspiring liberation manifestoes, such as the WITCH Manifesto or the BITCH Manifesto with these spitefully designated words (Roszak and Roszak 259, 275). Similarly, rather than its surface vindictive connotation, in its later (re)appropriated usage, "Nasty Woman" became a loaded word to designate empowerment and motivation during the Women's Marches.

On several occasions during the debates, Hillary Clinton referred to Trump's backward thinking, especially on women's issues, by statements like "When Donald Trump says, 'Let's make America great again,' that is code for 'let's take America backward… Back to the days when abortion was illegal, women had far fewer options, and life for too many women and girls was limited" (Alter). Hillary Clinton was the first official woman presidential candidate and despite gaining the popular vote, she lost the electoral votes, much to the dismay of her women supporters. Clinton's loss meant more than just losing an election since the electoral votes also displayed the dissemination of popular conservative ideology. Obviously, this "failure" was going to be interpreted as more than just a shift in the political mood of the voters in the eyes of the feminist voters. Samhita Mukhopadhyay

expresses her disappointment with the loss of the election as follows: "The 2016 election wasn't just a loss for Clinton, it was a loss for feminism. Not only did the first female candidate from either major party lose, she lost to an open misogynist—someone who called a former Latina beauty queen fat and was caught on the record bragging about grabbing women by the pussy" (8).

Yet, Trump's negative rhetoric motivated women to start rallying for their rights right after he took the office. Women realized that if they were going to voice their grievances, it was necessary to take action immediately and mobilize large public gatherings to include most disenfranchised and alienated groups. Digital technologies and especially the social media proved to be a fertile ground to initiate and achieve the scale and the kind of action needed. Trump's conservative stance led to one of the largest single day protests at the beginning of his presidency on January 21, 2017. Women might have been concerned with his sexist language and anxious that their rights would be revoked, but they were also united and determined to face the challenge. The goal of the march was to advocate legislations and policies not only on women's rights but also on immigration, disability, environment, LGBTQIA+, and other issues of concern. The demand for rights were expanded to include unprivileged groups and neglected issues. The protesters believed that the new administration would fall short in addressing social justice and human rights, and they wanted to have their voices heard on the very first day of Trump's office.

The main protest was in Washington DC with an attendance of 500,000 but "sister protests" occurred in other states bringing the estimated total of 4,500,000 people in the United States and up to 5,000,000 worldwide. For example, in New York City close to 400,000 people marched in the rally starting in front of Trump Tower. The Washington DC rally was streamed live on YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Washington DC organizers created the march and maintained an official page, but the march was made possible by the support of several local groups and other organizations such as Planned Parenthood. Groups and individuals from diverse backgrounds came together with the aim of securing their rights and sending a clear message. The ability to organize protests simultaneously in several places needed prearrangements, organization skills, and enthusiasm achieved not only through skills of organizers but also the willingness of the participants. Political figures attended the march, such as

civil rights activist Jesse Jackson in Washington DC, Senator Bernie Sanders in Vermont, Senator Elizabeth Warren in Boston, as well as celebrities including Cher, Christina Aguilera, Alex Baldwin, Scarlett Johansson, Madonna, Frances McDormand, Katy Perry, Tim Robins, Julia Roberts, Emma Watson in Washington DC, Drew Barrymore, Whoopi Goldberg, Robert De Niro, Rihanna, Naomi Watts in New York City, Jamie Lee Curtis, Miley Cyrus, Jane Fonda, Helen Hunt, Angelica Huston, Julia Louis-Dreyfus in Los Angeles (Hartocollis and Alcindor). The attendance of the number of well-known celebrities alone suggested the scope of concern over Trump's dividing rhetoric and rising conservative ideology.

Trump's general attitude and defiance provoked the participants further and caused the protests to be remembered as anti-Trump protests although the main organizers clearly stated this march did not target Trump personally. Cassady Fendlay, spokesperson for the march, said, "We are not targeting Trump specifically. It is much more about being proactive about women's rights" (Redden). Gloria Steinem who served as one of the honorary co-chairs of the march, referred to Trump's defiance in the following manner: "Constitution does not begin with 'I the president.' It begins with 'We the People'... Do not try to divide us. If you force Muslims to register, we will all register as Muslims." She also called for a united front, asking women to bond and know each other, during the rally: "We are linked. We are not ranked. And this is a day that will change us forever because we are together, each of us individually and collectively will never be the same again... Make sure you introduce yourselves to each other and decide what we're going to do tomorrow, and tomorrow and tomorrow," and added: "We're never turning back!" (Steinem). Steinem also referred to the protests of the 1970s, saying that the deaths of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Robert F. Kennedy paved the way for the Vietnam War and the election of Nixon, but the present situation was not as hopeless, since opposing political figures such as Michel Obama, Hillary Clinton, and Bernie Sanders were still alive and supporting the cause. Steinem's speech in the 2017 Women's March underlines the necessity to remember and learn from mistakes of the past.

A certain fashion statement also marked this first Women's March in Trump's era. The women protestors wore handcrafted pink hats with corners resembling cat ears, called pussyhats, to show their solidarity. Of course, handmade hats do not take the place of direct action

but "it can be a powerful gesture" since such acts are symbolic gestures which "allow the body itself to become the site of protest and symbol of solidarity, to be visible and counted when others perhaps would prefer you not to be" (Judah). In his book, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Dick Hebdige focuses on the meaning of style in Britain in the 1950s and recognizes that style could be used in a powerful manner in defying dominant ideology. Hebdige examines subcultures such as the Teddy Boys, Skinheads, and Punks from historical, economic and social aspects, and examines how styles were used for resisting dominant discourses. In its initial stages the mainstream society views these styles as radical, which in turn empowers the subculture in question, up until the main culture starts to reappropriate and recuperate the contradictory style as commodities to negotiate and contain a possible threat to the status quo. Hebdige also acknowledges the need and the right of the marginalized groups "to embellish, decorate, parody and wherever possible to recognize and rise above a subordinate position which was never of their choosing" (139). Thus, pussyhats could be viewed as an influential tool in presenting the stance and anger of women toward prospective policy changes. This kind of activism has been utilized before in protest gatherings such as dressing up like witches in the 1970s to make statements related to women's issues. Since the 1990s online activists have been using the Internet for similar purposes. The women shared patterns online for sewing, knitting, or crocheting pussyhats as a form of "culture jamming." Culture Jamming can be described as "a genre which critiques popular/mainstream culture, particularly corporate capitalism, commercialism, and consumerism. Here, media artists and activists appropriate and "repurpose" elements from popular culture to make new works with an ironic or subversive point—put another way, culture jamming 'mines' mainstream culture to critique it" (Lievrouw 22).

Jayna Zweiman and Krista Suh designed and co-founded Pussyhat Project in November 2016. In 2017, Suh planned to attend the Women's March in Washington DC and needed a cap to keep her head warm in the cold. Zweiman would not be able to attend due to the fact that she was recovering from an illness but she wanted to be there in spirit. Together they conceived the idea of offering a chance to those who could not attend the march physically. Handmade pussyhats would demonstrate their support and would be a visual statement of solidarity (Pussyhat Project). Thus, both women created the patterns

for sewing, knitting, or crocheting a cap with cat ears in response to Trump's vulgar remarks in 2005. Trump had been recorded saying, "I just start kissing [beautiful women]. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait," and continued, "And when you're a star they let you do it;" according to him, "You can do anything. … Grab them by the pussy. You can do anything" (Arrowood). These repugnant comments of expressing his entitlement to women's bodies obviously enraged many and became the motive behind the creation of the now iconized pussyhats during the women's marches. Although it lasted for a short while, countless moving pink pussy heads offered visually striking images in the media and became the symbol of women's discontent toward Trump's biased remarks. Through this simple fashion statement, the meaning of Trump's words associated with sexism was weakened, and the misogynic understanding of the term was subverted to encompass empowerment.

Trump's offensive words against women's private body parts and transforming that image to pink sewn or knitted cat ears, echoes other cat images related to the history of suffrage. As Corey Wren points out, cats and dogs have been conceived as gendered animals in a stereotypical manner. Since cats represent the domestic sphere, "anti-suffrage postcards often used them to reference female activists. The intent was to portray suffragettes as silly, infantile, incompetent and ill-suited to political engagement" (Wren). In cartoons, often a distraught father was left behind to fend for household duties while the wife was busy campaigning for voting rights. An unhappy cat was often used to portray this chaotic domestic sphere that supposedly needed the attention of an absent female figure. Thus, cat images had already been used in women's equality struggles since the nineteenth century. Starting with the 2017 Women's March, Trump's inappropriate message was appropriated through pussyhats with the pun intended.

Banners carried by protesters during the marches were also inspired by Trump's comments or were related to his possible policy changes. Shepard Fairy, the graphic artist known for his Hope poster for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, designed a new series of posters titled "We the People" which consisted of drawn portraits of Muslims, Latinas, African Americans, and Natives to be used at inauguration demonstrations and the following Women's March. Titled by the initial words of the United States Constitution, and the creative use of the flag colors—red, white, and blue—these posters

intended to support and address those who felt left out and powerless during Trump's presidency. To facilitate easy access to these images, full-page newspaper ads were provided through online Kickstarter funds and free downloads were offered (Gelt). Fairy posters are now recognized among the iconic banners of these protest marches. Other banners by the protesters featured satirical and ironical remarks and exhibited signs of witty and dark humor while projecting women's concerns over the future of Trump's policies. For example, as stated before, "Nasty Women" banners were carried as a way of adopting his denigrating words and transforming the expression into an authoritative label. Some others were warning signs for his possible policies such as, "Keep Your Laws Out of My Drawers," "Build the Wall around Trump," "Make America Kind Again," and "Our Bodies, Our Minds, Our Power." Most banners were related to solidarity and protesting rights such as, "No More Silence," "We Stand Together Against Hate," "Resist Fear," "Malice Toward None," "The Future Is Still Female," "Dissent Is Patriotic," "They Tried to Burry Us, They Didn't Know We Were Seeds," and "We Will Fight to Protect Reproductive Rights Our Mother's Won (Support Protective Parenthood)." This last banner is a direct reminder and allusion to the 1970s demonstrations, and there were more which echoed the protests that took place almost fifty years ago, such as, "I Will Not Go Quietly Back to the 1950s," "I Don't Believe I Still Have to Protest This Shit," "Still Fighting for Equality. Can You Believe It?" or "I'm tired of Holding This Sign Since the 1970s." In a way, such statements were proof that the women were frustrated to repeat what they had gone through in the 1960s and the 1970s they were conjure the legacy of their predecessors whenever necessary. Some protestors even dressed as suffragettes to refer to a more distant yet significant past in the women's movement (Tavernor).

Another similarity to the marches of the 1970s was the role of music in strengthening the arguments and bringing the protestors together. During the 1960s Civil Rights demonstrations and the 1970s Vietnam War protests, music was used to give messages, encourage camaraderie, and lift up collective mood in gatherings. As the language of emotions, voiced the grievances of the era and offered solidarity and solace. Resistance the songs of Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and Phil Ochs, lyrics of the Civil Rights Era, such as "We Shall Overcome" and "We Shall Not Be Moved," have been included in most solidarity gatherings since then. This tradition was also repeated

in the Women's Marches. In San Francisco, activist musician Joan Baez sang "We Shall Not Be Moved," in Spanish, to include those who were marginalized by Trump's statements (Baez). Several other songs of the Civil Rights movement were also sung during the marches including "We Shall Overcome," which testified to the timelessness of protest songs in displaying dissenting voices. Meanwhile, some preexisting songs were modified to represent the current situation; for example, Rocky Mountain Mike reworded "Mr. Tamburine Man"—Bob Dylan's 1965 song—to "Mr. Tangerine Man." Speaking from the viewpoint of a racist narrator who supports Trump, the narrator exclaims, "Hey Mr. Tangerine Man, build a wall for me / I'm not that bright and don't know that you are going to / Hey Mr. Tangerine Man, keep Muslims away from me / With my jingoistic worldview, I'll come following you" (Rocky Mountain Mike). Many other reworded songs and parodies from different music genres would be adopted over the period of Trump's presidency.

Yet, a new song by a Los Angeles based Asian American singer Connie, Lim, aka MILCK, went viral on social media. "I Can't Keep Quiet" became one of the unofficial anthems of the initial Women's March. It was rehearsed online, garnering more than 14 million Facebook hits, and it was communally voiced several times on the day of the march. It also started the #ICanttKeepQuiet movement on social media platforms. In the 2018 Women's March, MILCK sang the song alongside Yoko Ono. The song was actually written a year before the marches but it was never released (Balingit). The lyrics reveal the trauma the narrator suffered when she was told by the society to keep quiet and "put on your face / know your place / shut up and smile / don't spread your legs." The narrator decides that this is not ethical, and she needs to publicly acknowledge her pain because many women endure violence silently, thus, she exclaims, "I can't keep quiet, no oh oh oh oh oh oh / A one woman riot, oh oh oh oh oh oh oh / I can't keep quiet / For anyone / Anymore." The song ends with a chanting of "Let it out / Let it out / Let it out now / There'll be someone who understands" (MILCK). On a larger scale, Trump's rhetoric on women was also targeted since his prospective policies were promising to silence women. Plus, his personal remarks about women had already proven to be degrading. Fiona Apple's song, "Tiny Hands" was also released a few days before the Women's March and was considered another unofficial anthem. In this very short yet effective chanting, the songwriter refers to Trump's

earlier remarks of grabbing women's body parts and says, "We don't want your hands / anywhere near our underpants" (Apple). This chant was repeatedly used during the following marches. The song was recorded and released through the social media channels and in these recordings Trump's offensive comments are overheard from his own voice in the background.

Despite the creative use of social media, the organizers were aware that that the protests would not lead to the change of policies unless the messages were followed through. In March 2017, the organizers posted a resolution entitled "10 Actions for the first 100 Days." By voicing a new issue every ten days, the organizers wanted to remind their demands to the administration from the very beginning. Their first action was to send postcards to the senators about their various concerns (Shamus). The actions were posted on the Women's March official Twitter and web accounts. Trump also used his Twitter account extensively to talk back to the demonstrators. Partially because it attracted more crowds than his inauguration speech two days before, on January 22, 2017, his Twitter response to the first Women's March was: "Watched protests yesterday but was under the impression that we just had an election! Why didn't these people vote? Celebs hurt cause badly." Yet, he posted a following statement in which he recognized the need for protests, and wrote, "Peaceful protests are a hallmark of our democracy. Even if I don't always agree, I recognize the rights of people to express their views" (Staff, "The Associated Press"). Thus social media was used in following the arguments, suggesting solutions, answering back and repeating social concerns for interested parties.

In 2018, celebrities started revealing the sexual abuse and harassment cases they endured through social media accounts and well-known names—such as film producer, Harvey Weinstein—came under scrutiny. These disclosing and exposing remarks and criticisms expanded the scope of the #MeToo Movement. As the founder of the movement, Tarana Burke originally proposed "MeToo" in 2006 to develop self-worth in young women who had been sexually harassed. By exposing the perpetrator, the sufferer would turn into an influencer rather than a victim. She spoke about the power and the therapeutic effect of acknowledging misconduct and said "#MeToo is essentially about survivors supporting survivors. And it's really about community healing and community action … legitimate things like policies and

laws that change that support survivors" (Synder and Lopez). Although the movement started earlier, 2018 became the year of criticism and backlash as well-known celebrities started to talk about their experiences and what happened to them through media platforms. As an expected backlash, President Trump declared that the #MeToo Movement was dangerous because it conflicted with the "innocent before proven guilty" principle (Olson and Daniel).

The Women's Marches continued as an annual event in 2018, 2019, and 2020 the with expanded themes and participation from countries around the world. The Women's March on January 21, 2018 was held right after the shutdown of the government offices on immigration and the day after Trump attempted to block funds for Planned Parenthood. Meanwhile, Democrats and several Republicans declined to support a border wall and rejected to approve the deportation policies proposed by the Trump administration (Short). On January 19, 2019, the third Women's March was held with declining numbers due to a controversy over four of the organizers attending an earlier event hosted by Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam, and supposedly not condemning his anti-Semitic remarks (Youn). A Women's Agenda on drafting federal policies was created and posted. Policies included ending violence against women, reproductive rights, racial justice, immigrant rights, LGBTQIA+'s rights, disability rights, workers' rights, civil rights and liberties, and environmental justice. The included universal health care, Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, and ending war (Women's March Agenda 2019). By including the ERA as one of the policy priorities, once again the women were trying to revive and hopefully remedy the unfinished business of the 1970s.

The fourth Women's March was held in January 18, 2020 in a similar manner to earlier marches with three themes: reproductive rights, immigration, and climate change. Although the turnout was the lowest compared to earlier marches, a noteworthy performance included the protesters chanting the Chilean feminist anthem, *A Rapist in Your Path* (*The Rapist Is You*) and performing the Las Tesis dance moves, which aimed at denouncing violence against women and promoting solidarity among all women around the world (Las Tesis). Las Tesis is a collective performance with a simple choreography involving synchronous moves and the lyrics are chanted in a captivating tune. Since the video of the initial performance went viral in Chile in November 2019, the lyrics

were translated and tweaked to include local matters in other countries. These forms of resistance are called "art activism" where the meaning oscillates between the politics and the poetics of the performance. The matter of interest is in the forefront but the art or performance is employed for transforming the situation and/or finding remedies. In other words, the balance between the "political intervention" and the aesthetic quality of such acts needs to move the discussion forward towards the desired aim. (Serafini 293). Paula Serafini explains Las Tesis in the following manner:

> Art activism thus becomes an aesthetic–political practice through which we can build specific ways of relating to each other and acting collectively towards achieving social and political transformations. Because of the understanding of art and activism it puts forward, and the forms of agency and action it facilitates, Un violador en tu camino can be read as a case of prefigurative art activism. (293)

Las Tesis continued to develop and shift as different countries adopted it. The Women's March also understood that such "performance actions can open up spaces of communication, of transnational movement building, of empowerment, of resistance, of solidarity, of organizing and of creative embodied expression" (Sarafini 294). In the United States, the performance was in Spanish and English simultaneously, to embrace a larger participation and to raise awareness on domestic and state violence as well as ongoing immigration issues.

A second Women's March was held in the same year on October 17, due to the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg a few months before the presidential election. The organization held a vigil to honor Ginsburg and voiced their concern over the appointment of conservative judge, Amy Coney Barrett. Barrett's appointment was confirmed a week before the election and meant that Supreme Court would have a conservative advantage. Women organizations were concerned that Roe vs. Wade would be overturned and feminist and life-affirming agendas brought to the Supreme Court would be annulled. Ruth Ginsberg's dying wish was not to have her seat filled until the new president was elected, as she reportedly told her granddaughter (Lozano). Due to the pandemic, lower turnouts were expected and the coalition of organizers asked people to observe social distancing, wear masks, and prefer local events instead of travelling (Heyward and

Ellis).

2020 was a noteworthy year because it was also the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which guaranteed all American women the right to vote. Women had kept organizing, writing, rallying, lobbying, and protesting against sanctions to a reach this milestone for more than a century before the Amendment was drafted and ratified. Thus, the centennial deserved to be acknowledged and celebrated, despite the pandemic. Women groups formed the 2020 Women's Vote Centennial Initiative online as well as creating a Facebook account, which provided information on women's suffrage movements and ways to get involved in planning events and building conversation groups in local communities.

The last year of Trump's presidency witnessed another media event; the premiering of the TV drama series *Mrs. America* in April 2020. Since Trump's rhetoric or policies did not show signs of improvement on behalf of the disenfranchised groups, the subject matter of the series proved to be timely in terms of remembering the dissenting voices from the recent past. The nine episodes dramatized the incidents surrounding the conservative backlash to the ERA led by Schlafly, and reiterated the era of active campaigning and details of women's struggle to gain equal rights in the 1970s. The series, produced by Canadian Dahvi Waller, demonstrated the lives of women activists Gloria Steinem (Rose Byrne), Betty Friedan (Tracy Ullman), Shirley Chisholm (Uzo Aduba), Jill Ruckelshaus (Elizabeth Banks), Brenda Feignen-Fasteau (Ari Graynor), and Bella Abzug (Margo Martindale), as well as their response to Phyllis Schlafly (Cate Blanchett) (IMDB). Less than a year before Trump's presidency ended, conjuring Schlafly's name and stance was ironically emblematic. Trump's election had started with the news of her death and now, during the last year of his presidency, he and his supporters were reminded of campaigns led by Phyllis Schlafly against the ERA through a television series.

In the partly fictionalized series, Schlafly is portrayed as a successful campaigner, but her endeavors do not pay off at the end and she does not receive the favorable position she had hoped for in the Reagan administration except for a simple telephone call of appreciation. The series does not vilify her but portrays her as a woman who wants to prove herself in a patriarchal society. In one striking scene, she is placed among men in an elevator, on her way to attend a political

meeting. Her prim and proper turquois suit, her neck scarf, and string of pearls stand in a stark contrast to the men-in-dark-suit surrounding her. Her indistinct smile shows contentment and confidence in the presence of these politically powerful men. Yet, although she was asked to join the meeting, the men in the room reduce her to taking notes as if she is just fit for a secretarial job, instead of listening to her in the decision making process. While presenting the misogyny of the men, the scene also shows Schlafly's unrealistic expectations of being treated as an equal in the public offices where conservative ideology is the norm of the era. This section also foreshadows the ending of the series where Schlafly enters her kitchen after the disappointing appreciation call for her contributions to the conservative cause, puts on her apron and starts to peel apples in preparation of baking an apple pie; symbolic of being trapped in the domesticity she had fervently defended to gain a favorable office position in the government. In the scene, Schlafly has been forced to return to the housewife role she preached, ironically demonstrated through her apron and cooking. In the patriarchal world of politics, Schlafly's devotion to conservative causes eventually fails to bring her the acknowledgment she desires. According to the series, Schlafly's opposition to the ERA stems from her self-indulgence, her wish to manipulate, and her aim to gain personal social status, not because of her real convictions. Her seeming acceptance and pride in her domestic role and her ambition in presenting the ERA as harmful to the existing rights of women is indefensible in the eyes of those who struggled hard to ratify the amendment.

The plot of *Mrs. America* tried to keep true to the main historical facts although for purposes of storytelling, some characters and dialogues were fictionalized. Schlafly's motives are presented without glorifying her position as a mother of six children with her eldest son as a closeted gay man. She tries hard to cover personal and social shortcomings with an upright posture, a calm but determined voice, and a pleasant expression during her campaigns. Phyllis Schlafly's son, Andrew Schlafly denounced the series by saying that the plot was nothing more than left wing propaganda. Gloria Steinem, on the other hand, also refused to give credit to Phyllis Schlafly's role in defeating the ERA, stating that corporate lobbying was at fault in slowing the ratification (IMDB). The series while dramatizing the recent past is noteworthy in drawing an unstated connection between the positions of Schlafly and Trump. Like Schlafly's portrayal in the series (and real

life), Trump's position and likeminded policies to exert authority before and during his presidency and his eventual loss of power is viewed as deserved conclusions for undermining liberal women causes and activism. Adrienne Westenfeld also believes that *Mrs. America* tries to

> … draw parallels between Trump and Schlafly, both of whom share an affinity for "alternative facts" when reporting crowd sizes and describing the outcomes of proposed legislation. Like Trump, Schlafly stoked conservative resentment through anti-establishment politics, arguing that the party was increasingly puppeted by "secret kingmakers." (Westenfeld)

Although the television series does not try to condemn the conservative viewpoint, the episodes eventually present a moral stance on the side of the ERA causes and feminist activism and attempts to boost the confidence of those who were feeling defeated by Trump's policies. Trump would eventually lose the elections and his executive power at the end of 2020. Yet, his presidency would end with a provocative attack right after the possible election results were announced. Trump supporters would storm and attack the Capitol, temporarily halting the tallying of the votes that declared Joe Biden the next president. The retreat to violence and the siege of the Capitol was unexpected and showed the degree of divide in opinion in the United States. This incident also demonstrated how statements from public leaders could initiate possible harmful consequences. Trump's conviction that the election was stolen moved his supporters to breach the police lines and storm the Capitol Building without questioning Trump's personal motives. The rioters' visceral anger was directed towards Democrats and several offices were ransacked much to the disbelief of many citizens who followed the incident through media channels.

The United States experienced the expression of divided ideologies in the Trump era, leading the citizens to contemplate on the fragility of democratic principles. Dissenting as well as supporting rallies on women's issues, immigration, race, and later pandemic-related matters were in abundance. The focus of this article was on women's marches and other noteworthy markers in the feminist cause, organized as a reaction to Trump's rhetoric and policies. This period witnessed multiple benchmarks; the first official woman candidate for Presidency, the largest protests since the 1970s, the #MeToo movement, the death of prominent opponents and advocates of women's movement,

extensive social media coverage on women's issues, as well as a record number of women being elected to the Congress in 2020 elections—which is the highest percentage in the United States history—and finally the election of the first woman vice president, Kamala Harris. Thus, all these and the Women Marches during the Trump era were effective in mobilizing women and opening up debates on the recent past. The revival banners and the use of music in the of women's protest movements recall the non-violent nature and manner of earlier Civil Rights rallies, Vietnam War protests, and ERA campaigns yet, the use of social media and digital communication tools in spreading the news and organizing activities have redefined the borders of grassroots activism in the present.

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***JAST*, 2022; 57: 93-109**
Submitted: 03.02.2022
Accepted: 05.03.2022
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The Spatiality of Violence in Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*

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Abstract

The present study, emphasizing the significance of interdisciplinary approach in interrogating the phenomenon of violence as comprehensively as possible, explores the concept further through the insights from recent spatial studies and spatially oriented literature studies. Although space was traditionally defined either as a distance between entities or as an empty, natural, and passive container which functions as a backstage for human action, more recent theorizations, with especially the spatial turn in the social sciences and humanities since the late 1960s, have approached the term from more critical, analytical perspectives. Space has been conceptualized as an active, dynamic agent participating in social, political and cultural processes. To investigate the active role space, intersecting with a set of cultural, economic and political processes, plays in shaping individual and social experiences, it is significant to go beyond the traditional understanding of space as a physical entity but to include the imagined and lived aspects of spatial production as well. Violence, as an equally contested social phenomenon defying easy theorizations, is a pertinent term to be considered in relation to space with its physical, imagined and lived dimensions, and the present study seeks to explore the relations between these two terms as represented in Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*. The play offers significant insights into the subtle workings of violence in everyday spaces, and calls for a comprehensive, intersectional approach in the enquiry of the term rather than focusing on a straightforward perpetrator and victim binary.

Keywords: violence, spatial turn, Thirdspace, spatiality of violence, Susan Glaspell, *Trifles*

Susan Glaspell'in *Trifles* Eserinde Şiddetin Mekânsallığı

Öz

Bu çalışmada, şiddet olgusunun etraflı bir şekilde ele alınmasında disipliner arası çalışmanın önemi vurgulanarak, kavramın tanımlanmasında ve irdelenmesinde son dönem mekân çalışmalarının ve mekân odaklı edebiyat çalışmalarının sağlayabileceği potansiyel katkılar üzerinde durulmaktadır. Genel kanının aksine, mekân yalnızca toplumsal olayların vuku bulduğu bir arka plan yahut pasif, nötr bir düzlem değildir. Aksine, mekân çeşitli vesilelerle üretilerek, toplumsal, siyasi, kültürel süreçlere aktif bir şekilde katılım sağlayıp, bu süreçlerin gelişiminde, yönlendirilmesinde önemli roller üstlenmektedir. Kavramın bireysel ve toplumsal hayatın şekillendirilmesindeki aktif rolünün idrakinde, mekânın fiziksel boyutun ötesine gidilerek, ideolojik ve yaşanan mekân boyutlarını anlamak önem arz etmektedir. Mekân üzerine geliştirilen son dönem kuramlara bakıldığında, mekânın biteviye üretilmekte olduğu, mekânsal bir bakış açısının toplumsal, ekonomik, kültürel, vb. gibi birçok sürece dair önemli ipuçları sunmakta olduğu ortaya koyulmaktadır. Bu noktada, mekânsal farkındalık diyebileceğimiz bakış açısı şiddet kavramının daha etraflı bir şekilde incelenmesine yönelik değerli, derinlikli perspektifler sunmaktadır. Makale; Susan Glaspell'in *Trifles* (1916) isimli tiyatro eserinde şiddet ve mekân kavramlarının arasındaki ilişkiyi disiplinler arası bir yaklaşımla ele almaktadır. Sonuç olarak, *Trifles* şiddetin gündelik alanlardaki incelikli işleyişine dair önemli içgörüler sunuyor ve terimin araştırılmasında doğrudan fail ve mağdur ikilisine odaklanmak yerine daha kapsamlı, kesişimsel bir yaklaşımın gerekliliğini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şiddet, mekânsal dönüş, üçüncü mekan, şiddetin mekânsallığı, Susan Glaspell, *Trifles*

Violence is a contested term which defies easy definitions, a fact which necessitates thinking about the concept as comprehensive as possible with the participation of multiple disciplines and perspectives. The term seems to be self-evident to many, and what is meant by it is usually taken for granted without ever bothering us to define in which sense we use it, which is part of the problem with the concept of

violence. It is traditionally and commonly considered in physical terms and climactic moments of crisis. Since especially the second half of the twentieth century however, there have been various ways to theorize the concept of violence in the social sciences and humanities. Despite differences in their names and foci, such diverse critical perspectives have contributed to understand the contested nature and complex workings of violence and called for further exploration of the term as an always on-going process. Thinking more comprehensively about the term with its multifarious social, cultural, structural and also spatial manifestations is urgent, which requires the participation of various perspectives going beyond the boundaries of any discipline. The present study brings the perspectives of spatial studies and literary studies into the further examination of violence as a socio-spatial phenomenon, and thereby seeks to contribute how the study of physical, symbolic and lived spaces as well as their representations in literature can contribute to the theorizations about the concept. Analyzing the American playwright Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* (1916) from a spatially oriented literary approach, I will first delineate the spatiality of violence, and then examine the ways in which the play represents narrative spaces imbued with visible and subtle forms of violence as active participants in understanding the reasons behind a murder taking place in a rural, midwestern farmhouse.

Space, like violence, is an equally contested term. As highlighted by many scholars, such as Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja and Doreen Massey, space is not a passive, objective and container-like background for human action. On the contrary, it is a shaping force participating actively in the production of socio-cultural phenomena. Since the spatial turn of the late 1960s in particular, human geographers and scholars of spatial studies have pointed toward the neglected status of space as a critical category and initiated a broader understanding of the term across various disciplines. Henri Lefebvre's work, in this regard, has called for a radical re-consideration with regard to the significance of space in human life. More precisely, the traditional view of space as empty, natural, objective "thing" has been contested, and the term has instead been conceptualized as a dynamic agent participating in a myriad of social processes and shaping how they are experienced by individuals and groups, a fact explained by Edward Soja as follows: "We must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power

and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology" (*Postmodern* 6). Yet, this critical awareness of "apparently innocent spatiality" may often remain lacking in the interrogation of social processes such as injustice, various forms of discrimination and education. For instance, paying attention to the spatial aspects of injustice will not only shed light on how everyday spaces are filled with and produced by injustices but also point toward the roles of physical and symbolic spaces in the continuation of injustices. More precisely, the spatial awareness that the spatial turn in social sciences and humanities call for has the potential of understanding and demonstrating the spatiality of injustice as well as the injustices caused by and experienced on a spatial level. With this renewed interest in the inherent spatiality of human life, a broad spectrum of space-related terms such as mapping and cartography, deterritorialization have been employed as analytical tools in various disciplines including but not limited to sociology, history and philosophy. Likewise, a solid number of scholars from literary studies have turned to space as an interpretive framework and questioned the prioritization of time and traditional tendency to overlook space as a simple, negligible backdrop for action in literary texts. More recently, a few spatially oriented literary approaches, including literary cartography, literary geography and geocriticism have explored the multifaceted relations between space, place and literary texts.

Once its physical, ideological and lived dimensions are considered together, space and all sorts of processes and factors that both contribute to its formation are important. Violence is undoubtedly one of them. More precisely, violence is a complex phenomenon which actively affects the individuals' and social groups' socio-spatial experiences and molded by these very experiences. For example, the production and arrangement of public and private spaces put some individuals and groups at a disadvantage; the location of health centers, libraries, sports fields and bus stops cause injustices on a spatial level; the socio-spatial compartmentalization of social groups according to income, cultural or ethnic specificities in an urban setting, and thereby minimizing contact and interaction between individuals belonging to different economic classes and educational levels with each other are issues closely related to both space and violence, and there is a bilateral cause-effect relationship between them. Recently, there have been a good number of studies that explore the spatial aspects of

violence especially in the field of human geography, but there is indeed more work to be done with the participation of scholars from other disciplines, such as literary studies, in this emerging field.[1]

Correspondingly, the present study, highlighting the spatiality of violence and vice versa, engages with both concepts as explored in Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*. Literature offers valuable insights into the ways these two phenomena relate each other and manifest themselves in individuals' lives, and thereby contributes to the further exploration of the spatiality of violence and "violent" real and imagined spaces as they are represented and contested *in* and *through* literary works. Any literary text can be considered a critical space itself which both represents the broader socio-cultural phenomena and functions as a commentary on the existing, conventional paradigms and contributes to different, alternative ways of thinking about violence from a spatial perspective. As my spatially oriented analysis of *Trifles* seeks to demonstrate, literary works, functioning as cognitive maps, chart the complexity, relationality and intersectionality of socio-spatial experiences in understanding, defining and coping with violence as comprehensively as possible.

Trifles is a one-act play published in 1916. It is an example of psychological and analytical drama, focusing on the mysterious murder of a midwestern farmer and narrating how a set of five characters search for clues around the abandoned farmhouse in the absence of his wife who is under custody as a suspect. The plot events are based on true story that occurred in Iowa in the year 1899. Susan Glaspell (1882-1948), working as a newspaper reporter at *Des Moines News* back then, covered the murder trial of John Hossack who, as understood later, was killed by his wife Margaret Hossack in their farmhouse. Being deeply immersed in the event for months from its beginning till the final decision sentencing Margaret Hossack to life in prison, Glaspell decided to turn this actual murder trial to a play years later in 1916 when she, along with her husband and some friends, founded the amateur theater company named the Provincetown Players in Massachusetts. The writer of fourteen plays, nine novels and fifty short stories and the receiver of Pulitzer Prize for her Alison's House, Glaspell is a central, albeit a controversial, figure in American drama known especially for her powerful female protagonists, overt feminist attitudes towards patriarchal institutions, and plots that represent the everyday problems experienced by women especially in rural, traditional settings.

Likewise, *Trifles,* set in midwestern rural town at the turn of the twentieth century, narrates the investigation of John Wright's being strangled to death while sleeping in his house. The play begins in the cold, untidy kitchen of the Wright's midwestern farmhouse, and the Sheriff Henry Peters, the County Attorney George Henderson, Lewis Hale who is the Wrights' neighbor are the first to enter. Mrs. Peters, the Sheriff's wife, and Mrs. Hale join the three men and stand close to the door in a timid, hesitant and disturbed manner. Upon the Attorney's questioning, Mr. Hale explains how he comes across Minnie rocking on a chair in the kitchen without knowing what to do when he comes by to ask John Wright about sharing a telephone line with him only to find about his murder. Minnie tells him that she, too, has found him strangled to death on their bed. After Mr. Hale's claims, the men look for clues around the house, but the kitchen is dismissed because it is a "woman's space" with unimportant, trivial things. However, those "trifles" in the kitchen turn out to reveal the most important clues about the murder. Occupying a liminal space and role in the entire setting, Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Hale pay attention to the kitchen and find proofs of frustration and an abusive, dysfunctional marriage through things such as a piece of quilt with improper stitching and her rocking chair. On several occasions, the men come by the kitchen, and they make stereotypical comments on the women's detective work. An empty, broken birdcage in a cupboard and a canary with a broken neck and wrapped in a piece of textile preserved within Minnie's sewing box are what help the two women conclude that she might have killed John Wright because of her anger at her husband's strangling the bird and her victimization within this claustrophobic space. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Lewis are at first not sure whether their findings should be disclosed to men or should remain as secrets between the two at the expense of covering up these potential incriminating evidences. However, focusing on the socio-spatial processes behind the violent action rather than the crisis moment and the thought that the men would stereotype them once again help Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Lewis decide to protect her by hiding the evidences. The play's ending does not reveal whether Minnie is found guilty or released, but the conversation between the two women in the bleak, domestic space of the Wrights creates a sense of sympathy with her and other women who are enclosed within the patriarchal system and thus can maintain little, if not any, continuum with the rest of society.

As this brief plot summary may already suggest, the themes of violence and subtle relationship between victim and perpetrator are of pivotal significance, and the play provides the reader with complex, comprehensive perspectives in the enquiry of these issues. Especially, the different attitudes of male and female characters toward the violent murder of John Wright is a catalytic event that interrogates the reader by urging us to think more deeply about the contested, complex nature of violence. While the men such as the Attorney and the Sheriff tend to focus on the climactic act of murder and direct all of their action to solve the mystery by finding the perpetrator, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Wright look more at its background and imagine the reasons that have possibly driven Minnie to commit it. Thus, the play is more about the processual and intersectional nature of violence and potential ways of empowerment of the silenced than the victimization of women only. More precisely, it highlights the various processes and relations that circumscribe Minnie's subjectivity within the domestic space opened and regulated by John Wright. That Minnie is remembered by Mrs. Hale as an outstanding, lively girl with full of life before her abusive marriage with John Wright who is described as a "good" yet "hard" man with whom one would not want to "pass the time of day" (Glaspell 1162), her subsequent isolation within the farmhouse without any social contact even to her next-door neighbor are revealing how violence should not be conceptualized solely in terms of physical brutality and why penalizing the perpetrator will not secure its eradication in the society. As the quotation below suggests, the women adopt a more complex, comprehensive perspective in interpreting and dealing with violence:

> MRS. PETERS: But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.
>
> MRS. HALE: It would, wouldn't it? [*Dropping her sewing.*] But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when *she* was here. I—[*Looking around the room.*]—wish I had.
>
> MRS. PETERS: But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale—your house and your children.
>
> MRS. HALE: I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's why I ought to have come.

> I—I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I dunno what it is, but it's a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—[*Shakes her head.*]

MRS. PETERS: Well, you mustn't reproach yourself, Mrs. Hale. Somehow we just don't see how it is with other folks until—something comes up. (Glaspell 1162)

Mrs. Hale's regret regarding not visiting Minnie before the crisis moment has taken place is indeed significant because it puts the spell not just on Minnie or John Wright but includes herself, therefore the community as well, which, in turn, reveals that the play is not primarily interested in finding and punishing the perpetrator. To put it differently, Minnie's isolation and her subsequent victimization are the consequences of the society's turning its back on her, and this fact is not given to justify the violent act committed in the house but to acknowledge why violence and crime do not exist separately from a whole set of social, cultural and spatial processes and interrelations. This point is significant, for it reconsiders the category of victimization and rejects the representation of women as being pathetic victims. In fact, the female characters' peripheralization in the kitchen in both physical and metaphorical senses of the word empowers them, for this very experience of being stereotyped by men as being frivolous and interested in trifles, helps them adopt a different, more nuanced perspective in looking at the objects and physical spaces around themselves. In spatial terms, the Wrights' house becomes a liminal zone for the female characters or a "Thirdspace" in Soja's taxonomy, albeit a contradictory and contested one, *in* and *through* which they can disturb the patriarchal order and build empathy with Minnie. More precisely, in his *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre, arguing that space is a social and historical product which operates on different levels, introduces three critical concepts that are dialectically related: perceived space (spatial practice), conceived space (representations of space), and lived space (spaces of representation). Similarly, Edward Soja, drawing heavily on Lefebvre's conceptual triad, identifies three categories in his spatial analysis: Firstspace (real), Secondspace (imagined), and Thirdspace ("real-and-imagined"). The house, in this regard, can be seen a socially produced space not only in terms of concrete materiality and spatial practices (Firstspace) and symbolic, ideological constructions (Secondspace) but also with regard to lived,

"real-and-imagined" spaces (Thirdspace) through which the physically and discursively produced spaces are experienced and negotiated by the protagonist. Below, I will examine the role of spatial configurations in Glaspell's call for understanding violence as being closely related to the socio-spatiality of human life.

In *Susan Glaspell in Context,* J. Ellen Gainor suggests that "[o]ne key achievement of [Glaspell's] drama is her ability to make the stage environment come alive as another player in performance" (7), a claim which is especially relevant for *Trifles* on a textual level. The play makes close, causal relationship between the characters, their spaces as well as their spatial practices. It starts with the characters' entrance to Minnie's cold, untidy kitchen. In physical terms, the exposition clearly states that the men, who are introduced by their profession in direct contrast to the women whose first names are not mentioned even, are the first to enter, and they immediately get closer to the stove situated in the kitchen's center. With a more timid and hesitant manner, the women, who are "stand[ing] close together near the door" (Glaspell 1156), are described as occupying a peripheral position. When the County Attorney trivializes Minnie's kitchen as a "mess" and thus her "[n]ot much of a housekeeper" (Glaspell 1158), one of the central conflicts in the play manifests itself, and the kitchen space, occupying a central role, mobilizes action in the plot.[2] For instance, the Attorney's criticism of Minnie's kitchen and thereby her "housekeeping" identity along with his stereotyping claims about women are challenged by Mrs. Hale: "Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be" (Glaspell 1158). Thus, space, from the beginning, asserts itself to be constitutive of the play's themes, and the following spatial analysis informed by Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja's trialectic understanding of the concept, namely physical, symbolic and lived perspectives, will analyze how violence and space construct each other mutually.

To begin with physical space and spatial practices, *Trifles* suggests that the Wrights' house is located in a remote, rural farm in the Midwest. Highlighting the significance of the physical setting, the play literally begins with space: "*The kitchen in the now abandoned farmhouse of John Wright, a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the bread-box, a dish-towel on the table— other signs of incompleted work*" (Glaspell 1155-56). This initial description of the kitchen

already contests the traditional notion of home as an enclosed sphere of privacy and peaceful solace for its inhabitants. It is no longer a safe haven but something to be "turn[ed] against her [Minnie]" (Glaspell 1160), highlighting the house's ultimate status as the male figure's property just like the wife. The male characters' ruthless entrance into the kitchen and their describing the place only in negative ways, such as "Dirty towels!", "Here's a nice mess," "Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?" (Glaspell 1158) reveal how domestic spaces are perceived and practiced by the patriarchy even in the absence of John Wright. To the women, coming into the kitchen, "snooping around and criticizing" (Glaspell 1159) is an act of trespassing, especially in Minnie's absence. Furthermore, within the farmhouse, there is an identifiable contrast between the male and female characters' movements. While the men move inside and outside the house freely throughout the text, the women, conjuring up Minnie's physical entrapment in it, are physically fixated in the kitchen. Ironically, the County Attorney and the Sheriff look for evidence outside the kitchen which, from their male gaze, is the least important place in the Wrights' house. Instead, they move constantly and look for evidence elsewhere in the farmhouse. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Wright, on the other hand, do not treat space as a simple, fixated background but approach the kitchen as speaking to them in its own way. For instance, the rocking-chair, which is usually expected to be used in a porch or outdoor space, marks a strong, disruptive presence. Mr. Hale reports that that he finds Minnie rocking back and forth on it when he finds about the murder, suggesting that Minnie's spatial confinement within the farmhouse is epitomized by her circumcised movement on the rocker. Its simple act of moving back and forth gives one an illusional sense of movement, a fact which can also be seen in Minnie's "queer" (Glaspell 1157) state of mind when Mr. Hale comes into the kitchen. She escapes this state of not knowing what to do by shifting to another chair. Similarly, Mrs. Hale, intimidated by this confining aspect of the rocker, avoids sitting down on it with a similar concern. Glaspell provides Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale, and thereby the reader, with other objects symbolizing the offstage protagonist's spatial enclosure. For instance, the cage with a broken door and the dead canary wrapped in silk highlight Minnie's dramatic change once she gets entrapped in the domestic space which is largely defined, configured and regulated by the dominant discourse, which I prefer to analyze through Lefebvre's concept of imagined space or Soja's notion of Secondspace. Below, I will explain how the

house is constructed discursively in a way that facilitates Minnie's, and other women's as well, socio-spatial entrapment, which, in turn, causes certain forms of violence to get naturalized.

A spatial analysis of *Trifles* should also include the ways in which physical spaces and spatial practices are imagined, regulated and represented discursively. More precisely, these imagined spaces affect how individuals develop strategies to project and implement their dominant, hegemonic spatial orders on domestic spaces that are considered as safe havens opened by men for women. The men such as the County Attorney, the Sheriff and the offstage character Mr. Wright approach the house as a property or a container-like structure that can be enclosed and ordered in certain ways. For John Wright, his house is separated from the outside to the extent that putting in a telephone line is not necessary, as Mr. Hale comments. The change in Minnie's identity from a lively girl singing in choir to a solitary figure in John Wright's farmhouse is a result of imagining the domestic sphere as a new, disparate spatial structure operating with its own rules supervised by the male figure. Moreover, her isolation is aggravated by the fact that theirs is a childless marriage, and thus their family life, from the patriarchal imaginary, is a "dysfunctional" one. The dominant discursive construction of house prescribes Minnie to renounce her pre-marital identity and keep it in order as prescribed by the society, a situation which applies to the women such as Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale as well. Mrs. Peters, having to perform "a great deal of work" within her own compartmentalized domestic space, fails to realize how abusive Minnie's life could actually become after marrying John Wright, an error in judgment that she compensates by hiding the dead canary as an evidence which may well be considered as a motive for Minnie's killing her husband. The female characters' epiphanic moment reveals that the dominant spatial claim representing domestic space as the domain of security for women is not necessarily true.

Furthermore, the dominant discourse that compartmentalizes spaces as public and private by applying strategies of enclosure for women is at work within the domestic space as well. The kitchen, which is traditionally regarded as the woman's space, seems to be the only locale available for Minnie. There, she is expected to perform duties of housekeeping, a role given yet still seen trivial by men such as Mr. Henderson. The patriarchal gaze which situates women and their separate space in a trivial, complementary position, I argue, is a

form of conceived space which is constructed and performed mostly through "a system of verbal (and therefore intellectually worked out) signs" (Lefebvre 39). For Lefebvre, this imagined, cognitive space "is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production)" (38-9), and it can be seen at work in the male characters' attitude toward Minnie's kitchen and the proper spatial practices she is expected to perform "within" it. This dominant conception of the house and the kitchen in particular is a relational space of the socio-spatiality that circumscribes Minnie's, and other women's as well, right to participate in the social production of her lived space. However, space, as Doreen Massey suggests, is "never finished; never closed" (9). Despite the strategies and representations to secure power and control, the physical spaces and spatial practices shaped by the dominant discourse can be disturbed by the alternative practices and perspectives. Below, I will refer especially to the changing attitudes of Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Lewis toward the concept of violence and the role of kitchen with its allegedly "trivial" things in transforming these characters' opinions.

Analyzing the interrelations between violence and spatiality should also include the lived spaces of individuals in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the processes in which individuals problematize the dominant claims and practices. While the patriarchy and establishment as represented by the men of authority, such as the County Attorney and the Sheriff, approach the Wrights' domestic spaces as secure, fixed, enclosed, and well-ordered entity, the women call these into question and disrupt the alleged order "in" it. To begin with Minnie, the play explicitly states how she is limited spatially in the house which is the true reason for her isolation. Her pre-marital subjectivity is to be erased once she becomes Mrs. Wright in "farmhouse of John Wright." Alluding to her "out of place" status in the house, Minnie does not appear at all throughout the narrative. In her monograph *Self and Space in the Theater of Susan Glaspell*, Noelia Hernando-Real, drawing on Una Chaudhuri's concept of "geopathology," examines Glaspell's domestic spaces, including the ones in *Trifles,* as the "protagonist's fundamental problem" (18).[3] She further suggests that Glaspell's major characters suffer from the "*victimage of location*" (Hernando-Real 18, italics in original) and this spatial experience leads them to "what Chaudhuri calls *heroism of departure*": "a character gains full independence and fulfills the creation of their own identity by disentangling themselves from the

oppressive place they were fixed to" (Hernando-Real 18, italics in original). Minnie's killing her husband, in this regard, can be understood as a form of "departure". Moreover, a more processual understanding of her lived space can also reveal that Minnie has already negotiated, or attempted to do so at least, her subjectivity before the climactic moment of murder. Despite the physical and symbolic forms of spatial limitation she faces, Minnie participates in the construction of the kitchen through the seemingly simple acts petting a canary or quilting on her rocking chair which, in turn, provide her with the possibility of voicing her subjectivity. Keeping a canary functions as a reminder about her pre-marital identity which has been oppressed by the socio-spatial workings of patriarchy, a fact which, as implied in the text, disturbs John Wright. Similarly, quilting itself becomes a text or an alternative account in which she expresses her *self* along with her anger and discontent with the very structure she feels entrapped. While John Wright is able to silence the canary by breaking its neck, the quilt escapes his attention, and it, along with other "kitchen things," provide the female characters with an alternative account into the background of what has happened in the farmhouse.

That Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Lewis approach the kitchen and the things inside it from a different perspective demonstrate that spaces cannot be controlled entirely. Although the kitchen is presented as the very location of Minnie's victimization, it also becomes a site of possibility and alternative epistemology for the female characters. In and through the kitchen, they not only gain a different account of what has happened there but also develop another way to behave, an act which enables them to connect Minnie and to contest the dominant patriarchal discourse. As mentioned earlier, the two female characters gradually change their opinion in regard of doing the right thing in Minnie's kitchen. While Mrs. Lewis warns Mrs. Hale about the fact "the law is the law" (Glaspell 1160), she later agrees to hide some potentially incriminating evidences from the men. Similarly, Mrs. Hale gets transformed in the kitchen by reflecting on Minnie's isolation. What she realizes about Minnie's socio-spatial victimization is that both she as a neighbor and her own neighboring house are relational to Minnie's experiences and to the Wrights' farmhouse. It is the recognition of this relationality between spaces that leads Mrs. Hale to adopt a more complex attitude toward the "nature" of crime and violence and to acknowledge her own and the society's responsibility

in the mostly overlooked part of Minnie's act. To put it differently, the kitchen, as much as it appears to be a disabling space for Minnie, becomes an enabling space for the female characters, in that it helps them realize how similarly their lived spaces are affected by the workings of patriarchy and empathize with her by (self-)reflecting on how it feels like to be entrapped within this abusive structure:

> MRS. HALE: [*Her own feeling not interrupted*.] If there's been years and years of nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still, after the bird was still.
>
> MRS. PETERS: [*Something within her speaking*.] I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then—
>
> MRS. HALE: [*Moving*.] How soon do you suppose they'll be through, looking for the evidence?
>
> MRS. PETERS: I know what stillness is. [*Pulling herself back*.] The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale.
>
> MRS. HALE: [*Not as if answering that*.] I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. [*A look around the room*.] Oh, I *wish* I'd come over here once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?
>
> MRS. PETERS: [*Looking upstairs*.] We mustn't—take on.
>
> MRS. HALE: I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs. Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing. (Glaspell 1163-64)

Mrs. Peter, who is described as being "married to the law" (Glaspell 1164) by the County Attorney, agrees to hide the potential evidence, and thereby a continuum with Minnie is established, which, in turn, marks a disruptive spatial practice and alternative episteme within the allegedly enclosed, ordered domestic space. With this rather unexpected move, the kitchen proves itself to be a contested space, for it divorces from the traditional notion of home which is physically

and discursively constructed "as a place of familial pleasures, a place of leisure and rest—for men a sylvan and tranquil respite from the rigours of the city or the workplace and for women a supposedly safe haven" (McDowell and Sharp 263). To put it differently, as Mrs. Hale suggests, the men "are trying to get her [Minnie's] own house to turn against her" (Glaspell 1160) initially, but it, with the transforming power of the kitchen and the female continuum succeeded in it, works the way around.

In conclusion, *Trifles,* as a critical, conflictual space itself, interrogates the reader by offering a more complex, subtle understanding how violence is not simply about a moment of insanity but a product of stretched-out, intersecting socio-spatial relations. The play charts the intricacies of violence as societal phenomenon and demonstrates that physical and symbolic spaces participate actively in the processes it is experienced on individual and social levels. Correspondingly, spaces are not simple backgrounds for human action, but they are wild cards shaping individuals' experiences while being shaped by them at the same time. The present study, responding to Edward Soja's call "to think differently about the meanings and significance of space and those related concepts that compose and comprise the inherent spatiality of human life" (*Thirdspace* 1), has sought to bring spatial perspectives in the inquiry of violence-related phenomena, and vice versa as explored in Glaspell's *Trifles*.

Notes

[1] For instance, in 2016, the journal *Political Geography* published a special issue entitled "Violence and Space: An Introduction to the Geographies of Violence" which brought together various articles exploring the dynamics of relationality between these two terms. Likewise, there is a good number of other monographs investigating the spatiality of violence in specific contexts. See, for instance, Monica Duffy Toft's *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory.*

[2] Similarly, a few other scholars have also pointed toward the dynamic role kitchen space plays in Glaspell's writing. See, for instance, Alberola's "Homes and Kitchens: Rethinking on the Works of Susan Glaspell, Tennessee Williams and Lynn Nottage," Alkalay-Gut's

"'A Jury of Her Peers': The Importance of *Trifles*," and Hernando-Real's *Self and Space in the Theater of Susan Glaspell*. A trialectic analysis of the play from the perspectives of physical, symbolic and lived spaces as I propose to accomplish in this study, however, has not been done yet, to the best of my knowledge.

[3] Hernando-Real suggests further: "Two principles integrate the dramatic discourse of geopathology. The first one is *victimage of location*, a principle that describes place as the protagonists' fundamental problem. This spatial problem leads the characters to acknowledge their need for the second principle, which Chaudhuri calls *heroism of departure*. According to this principle, a character gains full independence and fulfills the creation of their own identity by disentangling themselves from the oppressive place they were fixed to." (18, italics in original)

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***JAST*, 2022; 57: 111-133**
Submitted: 24.12.2021
Accepted: 11.04.2022
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Master–Slave Dialectic and Morality in Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*

Cenk Tan

Abstract

The Man in the High Castle (1962) is one of Philip K. Dick's most acclaimed and striking novels. The narrative is set in an alternate reality where the Axis powers have won the Second World War and occupied the United States, dividing the country into three regions: the Nazi ruled greater Reich, the Pacific Japanese States and the neutral zone. As a result of this partition, Americans have become foreign in their own country. This article examines the master-slave dialectic and master-slave morality in Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*. The master-slave dialectic is a theory proposed by Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel outlines a mutual relationship where he assigns specific roles to two parties that engage in a struggle for desire to achieve self-consciousness. In direct connection with the master-slave dialectic is Nietzsche's master-slave morality which was developed upon Hegel's original conception. The thinker describes a binary opposition where particular values have been ascribed to master and slave/servant morality to establish a sustainable and reciprocal relationship. This study aims to analyze Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* from a philosophical perspective, attempting to expose the master-slave dialectic and morality in the work of fiction and thus revealing the author's covert messages implied in the subtext of the novel, while at the same time comparing and contrasting these with the television adaptation.

Keywords: Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, Master-Slave Dialectic, GWF. Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche

Philip K. Dick'in *Yüksek Şatodaki Adam* Romanında Efendi-Köle Diyalektiği ve Ahlâkı

Öz

Yüksek Şatodaki Adam (1962) Philip K. Dick'in en çok bilinen ve en çarpıcı romanlarından biridir. Hikâye, Mihver Güçlerinin ikinci dünya savaşını kazandıkları ve ABD'yi işgal ederek, Nazilerin hüküm sürdükleri Büyük Reich, Pasifik Japon devletleri ve tarafsız bölge olmak üzere ülkeyi üç farklı bölgeye ayıran alternatif bir gerçeklikte geçmektedir. Bu bölünmenin sonucunda Amerikalılar kendi ülkelerinde yabancı konumuna düşmüşlerdir. Bu makale, Philip K. Dick'in *Yüksek Şatodaki Adam* romanında efendi-köle diyalektiği ile efendi-köle ahlâkını incelemektedir. Efendi-köle diyalektiği Hegel tarafından *Ruhun Fenomenolojisi* adlı eserinde ortaya atılan bir teoridir. Hegel, özbilince ulaşma arzusu için mücadele eden bu iki tarafa belirli roller atadığı karşılıklı bir ilişkinin ana hatlarını çizer. Efendi-köle diyalektiği ile doğrudan bağlantılı olan Friedrich Nietzsche'nin efendi-köle ahlâkı Hegel'in özgün kavramı üzerine kurulmuştur. Düşünür, sürdürülebilir ve karşılıklı bir ilişki kurmak için efendi ve köle ahlâkına belirli değerlerin atfedildiği ikili bir karşıtlığı tanımlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Dick'in *Yüksek Şatodaki Adam* adlı eserini felsefi bir bakış açısıyla incelemeyi, eserdeki efendi-köle diyalektiğini ve ahlâkını ortaya koymayı ve böylece televizyon uyarlaması ile özgün eseri karşılaştırarak, romanın alt metninde yazarın ima ettiği örtülü mesajları açığa çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Philip K. Dick, *Yüksek Şatodaki Adam*, Efendi-Köle Diyalektiği, GWF. Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche

Introduction

Philip Kindred Dick (1928-1982) is one of the most celebrated science fiction authors of all time. He published 44 novels and more than 120 short stories in his lifetime (Wittkower 342) and won worldwide recognition by his novels entitled *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968) and *Ubik* (1969). Dick's oeuvre became extremely popular in Europe, specifically in France during the 1980s (Burton 21). Due to this growing popularity, Dick's works have been the subject of critical analysis which in the majority of cases, is connected to one or more

psychological, social, or ontological dimensions of the postmodernist experience (Burton 21).

Another renowned Philip K. Dick novel that attracted fame around the globe is *The Man in the High Castle* (shortly *MHC*) (1962) which is considered one of the exemplary representations of alternate history. Dick's prominent experiment in *MHC*, in which the outcome of World War II is inverted and the Axis powers are declared victorious, demonstrates the author's interest in history as a changeable record of events that may be adjusted in the narrative (Kucukalic 21). As a narrative of alternate history, *MHC*, is a complex work of fiction that focuses on a variety of themes and issues. This attempts purports to critique Philip K. Dick's *MHC* from a philosophical point of view, specifically, from the perspective of Hegel's master-slave dialectic and Nietzsche's master-slave morality. The study aims to analyze representations of master-slave dialectic and morality in Dick's *MHC* in order to unveil the author's covert criticism towards America and American people in particular. Thus, the study analyzes the novel, while also comparing and contrasting the original work with the TV series released after 53 years in 2015. The article comes up with notable differences from various perspectives between Dick's authentic work of fiction and the television adaptation.

Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic

GWF. Hegel (1770-1831) is commonly regarded as one of the founders of German idealism and western continental philosophy. From dialectics and existentialism to progress and logic, Hegel exerted a profound impact on western philosophy. An essential component of Hegel's philosophy is the master-slave dialectic which he also refers to as the *master-servant dialectic*.

Hegel sets forth two different entities, the first being the master which is self-sufficient and the second being the servant/slave which is non-self-sufficient (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* 113). The master is described as a substance that exists for itself, yet also in relation to others, mainly the servants (113). Thus, the master's recognition comes to exist via another consciousness, that of the slave. On the other hand, the slave is another substance that lacks purity and shows dependence on the master. For the slave, the master represents essence

and the ultimate goal is to achieve self-consciousness which Hegel deems synonymous with desire (107). To this end, in order for desire to be achieved, the independence of objects is necessary (Şekerci 150). Thus, desire cannot take place if the object shows dependency and when desire is achieved, it leads to satisfaction (150). However, satisfaction through desire is what both parties want to obtain and thereby engage in a struggle to do so. Therefore, both the master and the slave engage in a deep struggle for desire to achieve self-consciousness (151).

Alexandre Kojève posits that human history is the "history of the interaction between mastery and slavery: the historical 'dialectic' is the 'dialectic' of Master and Slave." But this interaction must "finally end in the 'dialectical overcoming' of both of them," mastery and slavery (9). Through this statement, Kojève formulates the fundamental problematic classification of European colonization and postcolonial studies. In the upcoming periods, Hegel's interpretation of colonial activities through the master-slave dialectic met stark resistance and opposition. The reason of this lies in Hegel's assertion that all countries must consequently suffer the strict discipline of subordination to a master in order to become free, to have the capacity for self-control (Habib 27). Hegel even goes further to claim that slavery and tyranny are 'relatively justified' as they stand for a necessary stage in the advancement of countries (27).

Additionally, the dialectic condition emerges where consciousness evolves into the transformation from consciousness to self-consciousness (Habib 21). According to Hegel, achieving self-consciousness represents a mutual process where humans are dependent on one another (21). The first stage on the path to achieve self-consciousness is desire where consciousness is addressed to an exterior item to fulfill desire (Habib 22). Next, the second stage includes the contradiction which will result in sheer competition and struggle for survival (25). M.A.R. Habib contends that this struggle leads to "a one-sided denial accompanied by inequity." While one side favors life, preserves his solitary self-consciousness, but relinquishes his claim to recognition, the other maintains his self-assertion and is acknowledged as superior by the former (26). The slave, being an "unfree consciousness", can only bestow upon the master a void and formal recognition (26). It is this recognition that approves and affirms the master's identity. Additionally, both sides do not attempt to exterminate one another, but maintain an inequitable and interdependent

connection which is a struggle for recognition and a war of wills (Cole 580). Therefore, rather than annihilating one another, sustaining the unequal relationship is the major characteristic of the master-slave dialectic. Furthermore, Hegel outlined three classes: the "absolute and free," the "honest" class, "and a class of unfree or natural ethical life," which are lords (the military, landed class), the bourgeoisie, and the peasantry (*Systems of Ethical Life* 152). Hence, the possibility of conflict between the first and the third class was apparent.

Hegel's master-slave dialectic was inspired by the feudal condition of agrarian Germany during his lifetime and he argued that the battle between possession and ownership of land eventually determined the personal connections of control in Herrschaft (Cole 578). Thus, feudality had a profound influence on Hegel's master-slave dialectic. Hegel discusses how slave-masters and feudal lords justify their dominance over others by comparing *Sklaverei* and *Herrschaft*:

> The alleged justification of slavery [Sklaverei] (by reference to all its proximate beginnings through physical force, capture in war, saving and preservation of life, upkeep, education, philanthropy, the slave's own acquiescence, and so forth), as well as the justification of a slave-ownership [Herrschaft] as simple lordship [Herrenschaft] in general, all historical views of the justice of slavery [Recht der Sklaverei] and lordship [Herrenschaft], depend on regarding man as a natural entity pure and simple, as an existent not in conformity with its concept (an existent to which arbitrariness is appropriation). (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* 48)

Hegel centered his dialectic system on the notion of the slave. Whether the epoch is feudal or not, every time period has its own masters and slaves. Within a general context, it is apparent that Hegel conveyed the master-slave dialectic in an allegorical manner, highlighting its timeless nature. As a consequence, the master-slave dialectic is formulated as a notion that exists since the early periods of history and will continue to exist in different forms in the future.

In the context of the master-slave dialectic, the slave can only be regarded as an object for the master and himself and can never retain the status of a subject since to become a normative subject, one must first conceive of oneself as a subject, so that one may master the bravery to stake one's life for that notion (Brandom 339). Thus, the slave's

realities are not established by the slave's longing but by the master's (340). Therefore, the master acts as the determining force behind the slave. The master-slave relationship is an authentic normative subjugation and obedience system (340). While the master shares an independent position towards the slave, the slave exerts recognitive dominion over the master but nevertheless due to its hegemonic power, the master does not acknowledge the recognitive dominion of the slave (340). To this end, the master is purely independent whereas the slave not only affirms the hegemony of the master but also leads an existence dependent on the master. On the other hand, though the master exerts power over the slave, it also needs the slave to affirm its self-consciousness (Farivar, et al. 18).

In addition to Hegel's formulation of the master-slave dialectic, many other thinkers and scholars have reinterpreted this notion. Jean-Paul Sartre accepted that humans seek for acknowledgment, but since he saw the ego as fundamentally solitary, he rejected the notion of reciprocal recognition (Deleuze, et al. 182). Another influential philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir considered the conflict between master and slave as a political and social one, involving issues such as gender (182). Others such as Kojève, Hyppolite, and Lacan followed the French tradition whereas Lukács, Habermas and Gadamer continued the German tradition of Hegelians (182). However, Deleuze, himself argues that the Hegelian dialectic in general must be regarded as an inherent component of his exposition and critique of capitalism and modernity.

In short, the master-slave relationship is intrinsically dialectic as the master is less free than he/she believes because his/her entire mastery is predicated on service, and the slave is more free than he/she thinks because he/she finds freedom in labor based on the fear of death (Houlgate 102). All in all, Hegel's master-slave dialectic had a profound impact on many influential thinkers such as Marx, Nietzsche, Adorno, Kojève and Deleuze. The following section will explore Nietzsche's master-slave morality which largely relies upon the foundation established by Hegel's theory of master-slave dialectic.

Nietzsche's Master-Slave Morality

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) was one of the most influential German thinkers of the 19th century. His controversial

notions of the übermensch, nihilism, amor fati and eternal recurrence have exercised a profound impact on western thought and society. Most of Nietzsche's theories still remain widely discussed today. One of these is the master-slave morality which he puts forward in his acclaimed work, *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Nietzsche first describes master morality and contends that when dominant individuals define what is "good," exalted, proud states of soul are viewed as unique and as defining rank order (*Beyond Good and Evil* 154). Hence, the philosopher ascribes values such as nobility and goodness to those who possess the master morality. Thereby, Nietzsche establishes a binary opposition with the nobles, or the ones that determine values and others that act upon the determined values. The philosopher describes the qualities of master morality as: "The capacity and duty to experience extended gratitude and vengefulness – both only among your own kind –, subtlety in retaliation, refinement in concepts of friendship, a certain need to have enemies" (155).

On the other hand, slave morality is expressed as the morality of the oppressed, exploited, unfree and toiling masses that Nietzsche associates with: "qualities that serve to alleviate existence for suffering people are pulled out and flooded with light: pity, the obliging, helpful hand, the warm heart, patience, industriousness, humility, and friendliness receive full honors" (155-156). Thus, the philosopher identifies and emphasizes multiple motives for the justification of the poor masses that suffer and lead an unhappy existence. The longing for freedom, the instinct for happiness, and nuances in the experience of freedom are invariably signs of slave morals and morality, just as artistry and zeal in regard and devotion are invariably symptoms of an aristocratic manner of thinking and valuing (*Beyond Good and Evil* 156). To that end, Nietzsche not only affirmed the reciprocal relationship between the masters and the slaves, but also set forth the opposing two types of morality which the masters and slaves abide by.

As mentioned in the earlier section, Hegel's master-slave dialectic coincides in many aspects with Nietzsche's master-slave morality. Firstly, both hold negativity central to their philosophy (Greene 125). In other words, both thinkers focus on the reciprocal relationship between two opposing positions that ultimately lead to the definition of one's self-consciousness as one's self-consciousness is eventually decided in respect to the other (Greene 126). Hegel marks

the unhappy consciousness central to his phenomenology whereas Nietzsche argues that the Christian morality results with a negative conscience (126-127). Secondly, both thinkers rely on the struggle between the two states of humans; the strong and the weak, the giver and the taker, the active and the passive, the ones who decide and the ones who carry out the decision (127). Murray Greene maintains that:

> In the active master nature the old savage rapacity remains turned against the outsider, and thus continues to have a natural outlet. In the slave nature, however, the old instincts turn "inward" and become a "cauldron of unsatisfied hatred." The impotent vengefulness of the slave nature eventually yields the "good-evil" values of *ressentiment:* meekness, pity, self-abnegation - the foul-smelling products of the underground "workshop of ideals." As a *ressentiment* this slave morality is not only a turning of weakness against strength, not only a turning against "other" (the master), but also a turning against self, a diminution of life-force. (127-128)

With the diminution of life-force, Nietzsche means the very fact that slaves are not capable of reflecting their energies to the outer sphere, but rather lose this vast potential due to directing it inwards. This calls for an impediment of instinctual energies that fail to be reflected to the outer world (Greene 128). Nietzsche refers to this phenomenon as "the internalization of bad conscience" and names this process the ""debtor-creditor" relationship of "exchange" (128). As a consequence, those adhering to slave morality find themselves in constant debt and guilt before God. This, in turn causes the "'maximization' of God and the 'minimization' of self which could be interpreted as the deprivation of one's life force" (129). In addition, Nietzsche identifies ressentiment as a major characteristic of slave morality that is an instrument for the weak, for those who are scared to act and who suppress their desire for vengeance, preferring constraint over action (Lindstedt 87). Nietzsche constantly associates revenge with ressentiment and identifies it as one of the key motivators of the slave uprising (Meredith 251).

Moreover, slave values present a purely derivative picture of the excellent person by rejecting a good-making trait embodied by nobles and considering the value's inverse to be good (Snelson 4). The noble value judgments 'good' and 'bad' have this distinct self-affirmative structure because they are based on the noble's sense of

superiority, his 'pathos of distance.' The melancholy of distance is the second distinguishing trait of nobility and noble values. According to Nietzsche, this "lasting and dominant collective and basic sensation of a higher governing nature in connection to a lower nature, to a 'below' - that is the root of the antagonism 'good' and 'evil'" (*Genealogy of Morality* 12). Hence, the nobles not only structure the system according to their values, but also set the basis for the implementation of a hierarchical order.

In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche also disputes that slave morality is a retroversion or pulling people down from a higher position (Lindstedt 83). Unlike the aristocrats, who are formed and motivated by instinct and external discharges of action, slaves internalized their rage (84). It is this internalization which provides the sustainability of the master-slave relationship. About the retroversion of humans, Nietzsche purports:

> Supposing that . . . the meaning of all culture is the reduction of the beast of prey "man" to a tame and civilized animal, a domestic animal, then one would undoubtedly have to regard all those instincts . . . through whose aid the noble races and their ideals were finally confounded and overthrown as the actual instruments of culture . . . Rather is the reverse not merely probable – no! today it is palpable! These bearers of the oppressive instincts . . ., the descendants of every kind of European and non-European slavery . . . they represent the regression of mankind! (*Genealogy of Morality* 42-43)

Thus, those who oppose the norms of the noble/masters finally result in becoming a "maggot man," "hopelessly mediocre and insipid" (43). Nietzsche perceives mediocrity and insipidity as the consequences of the slave morality. He argues that culture can only be produced by people of a higher status who rise above the mediocre masses (Lindstedt 86).

All in all, the morality of good and evil is not equivalent with 'slave morality' (Snelson 26). The former is a vast category whereas the latter mainly constitutes and glorifies values such as passivity, gentleness and empathy. These values of passivity are generated in contradiction to what master morality deems good and valuable. Nietzsche further points out that the battle between master and slave

morality is a historical reality, thereby accusing the Judeo-Christian cult for the proliferation and justification of this system (Snelson 9).

Finally, the question that needs to be answered is whether Hegel's master-slave conception is different from Nietzsche's. Both thinkers view the master-slave issue as a central matter in reaching independent liberty, yet they consider servitude and their revolt quite disparately (Williams 33). In Hegel's point of view, the slave's revolt embodies a possibility for freedom whereas for Nietzsche, a cultural and historical disaster has generated "the herd morality" (33). Therefore, Nietzsche searched an alternative formulated as "the return of the master, i.e., the recovery the heroic noble and tragic tradition" (33). Thus, despite their common ground, Nietzsche has added a new and critical interpretation to the original conception put forward by Hegel.

Master-Slave Dialectic and Morality in *The Man in the High Castle*

Philip K. Dick's *MHC* (1962) is a novel of alternate history that recounts a story where the United States has been occupied by the Axis powers which have defeated the Allies during the World War II. As a result of this outcome, the US. has been divided into three main sections: The Pacific States of America which represents the West coast invaded by the Japanese Empire, The Greater Germanic Reich, where the Nazis invaded the East coast and the Rocky Mountain States (neutral zone) which act as a buffer zone between the two forces. Dick's alternate history classic provides a realistic glimpse of how it might have turned out if the allies had lost the World War II.

MHC focuses on many issues but mainly centers on the master-slave dialectic proposed by Hegel. In Dick's narrative, Americans have assumed the role of slaves whereas the occupiers have embraced and are enacting the position of masters. Thus, Hegel's master-slave dialectic manifests itself in various forms throughout *MHC*. This mutual relationship is visible from the very beginning until the end of the novel via many different representations. Americans have succumbed to their invading masters and become slaves/servants in their own land. American culture is reduced to minimum, trapped between being non-existent and obsolete. In the Pacific States, Japanese culture has

prevailed over American culture and has taken on a dominant stance, determining the norms and values of the society. American culture, identity and history have been modified and categorized into the pre-war and post-war era.

The novel opens with the brief introduction of Robert Childan, an American citizen who lives in San Francisco in the Japanese ruled Pacific States. Childan owns American Artistic Handcrafts Inc., a business where he sells authentic American items, mostly to wealthy, high-ranking Japanese citizens. Through Childan's business, it can be inferred that American products, symbols and "Americanness" in general have all been confined to a very specific, narrow domain which is identified as the domain of the slave. Because they reflect pre-war American culture, all American items are restricted to local stores such as Childan's small business which is directed towards the few elite:

> 'Your earrings,' he murmured. 'Purchased here, perhaps?' 'No,' she said. 'At home.' Childan nodded. No contemporary American art; only the past could be represented here, in a store such as his. […] It was a chance to meet a young Japanese couple socially, on a basis of acceptance of him as a man rather than him as a yank or, at best, a tradesman who sold art objects. Yes, these new young people, of the rising generation, who did not remember the days before the war or even the war itself — they were the hope of the world. Place difference did not have the significance for them. (Dick 11-12)

Childan has assigned himself the role of preserving and selling American antiquities to the masters, namely the Japanese who are the rulers of the new country that once used to be America. Living off of the goods that represent what was once America is the ultimate objective of Childan who does not show any emotional attachment to the artifacts he displays and sells. On the contrary, making profit is Childan's one and only goal.

In *MHC*, the master-slave dialectic reveals itself through the relationship between the Japanese masters and American slaves/servants. Thus, as stated earlier by Hegel, the Japanese self-consciousness is strengthened and affirmed by the existence of the American slaves. Thanks to the presence of the American population

in the Pacific States, the Japanese rulers, including soldiers, officials and common civilian folk, are able to define themselves as the hegemonic power which ultimately leads to the consolidation of their self-consciousness and self-satisfaction. In Hegel's words, self-consciousness and desire are synonymous and this is demonstrated by the Japanese domination of the Pacific States.

Philip K. Dick displays two types of fascism, Japanese and German but rather than favoring one over the other; the author denounces all forms of totalitarianism, including economic, political, military totalitarianism and rejects fascism at the same time (Warrick 174). Patricia Warrick contends that Dick places Taoism in opposition to Fascism, via the character of Nobusuke Tagomi (174). At the center of Taoist philosophy is "Yin and Yang" which could be interpreted as the harmony created from the good and evil forces (Warrick 177). The novel refers to this philosophy with the following words:

> What would it be like, he wondered, to really know the Tao? The Tao is that which first lets the light, then the dark. Occasions the interplay of the two primal forces so that there is always renewal. It is that which keeps it all from wearing down. The universe will never be extinguished because just when the darkness seems to have smothered all, to be truly transcendent, the new seeds of light are reborn in the very depths. That is the Way. When the seed falls, it falls into the earth, into the soil. And beneath, out of sight, it comes to life. (Dick 106)

In contrast to Hegel's dialectic, Taoist philosophy does not include any conflict or struggle between opposing values. Therefore, Taoism is more complementary rather than conflicting (Warrick 178). Turning back to Hegel's master-slave dialectic, it should be maintained that as a representative of Taoism, Tagomi is a radical character that defies and attempts to break the master-slave dialectic. Though he does not cause a radical change in the outcome of events, he draws the portrait of an alternative mentality through his insightful and emphatic personality. Despite being a member of the master fraction, Tagomi's behavior and mentality often contradicts with his colleagues and fellow Japanese officials. He condemns the Nazis for their evil purposes: "There is evil! It's actual, like cement. I can't believe it. I can't stand it. Evil is not a view ... it's an ingredient in us. In the world. Poured over us, filtering

into our bodies, minds, hearts, into the pavement itself" (Dick 97). Thus, Tagomi is a non-conformist who often disagrees with his fellow countrymen and ideological partners.

In *MHC*, the American people represent a dependent and unfree consciousness which only deliver formal recognition to their masters. Americans are there simply to reaffirm and consolidate the master's position, not to revolt or overthrow the system constructed by the fascist oppressors. However, it needs to be emphasized that Dick presents his characters in the most realistic and complex way possible. Characters are round and exhibit complicated features, even contradictions. Childan has racist tendencies, Joe praises Nazi deeds and the expectation that a fellow American will stand up against the tyrannical order is deconstructed by the author as it is not an American that defies the master-slave dialectic but a Japanese, namely Mr. Tagomi (DiTommaso 95).

It is worth noting that in *MHC*, there exists plural master-slave dialectics. Japanese-American and German-American are the most conspicuous master-slave representations. In both of these relationships, Americans carry out the role of the slaves/servants. They are passive, weak, dependent and are in a constant state of anxiety. However, there is also a third dialectic besides these two which is manifested through the Japanese-German dialectic relationship. In contrast to the previous ones, it is not possible to determine and label one or the other as master and/or slave as the struggle for power and hegemony between these two forces takes place in a perpetual state. Furthermore, due to Dick's science fictional tendencies, the novel presents alternate realities within another alternate reality. The novel incorporates three different realities: "the realities of the reader, the novel, and that of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*" (Everett and Halpern 49). Each of these three timelines represents different master-slave dialectics where the roles have been reversed. On the other hand, because of its predominant representation, the novel's alternate reality, where the Axis powers remain in charge, forms the principal reality and the prevalent master-slave dialectic relationship.

As a result, Hegel's master-slave dialectic is constructed by the author mainly through the subordination of the American people by the fascist oppressors. Americans have acknowledged their roles as slaves and have yielded to their masters without much struggle. In this

alternate reality, American culture has been reduced to a minimum, confined to antique stores and labeled as a thing of the past that needs to be done away with.

In addition to the master-slave dialectic, Dick's *MHC* incorporates strong tendencies of Nietzsche's master-slave morality as well. In this novel of alternate reality, Americans have been enslaved and obliged to adopt the slave morality. From the early pages of the novel, American presence is insignificant and quite trivial:

> You, sir, are of American ancestry. Although you have gone to the trouble of darkening your skin color. He scrutinized Mr. Ramsey. 'A tan achieved by a sun lamp,' Mr. Ramsey murmured. 'For merely acquiring vitamin D.' But his expression of humiliation gave him away. 'I assure you that I retain authentic roots with — ' Mr. Ramsey stumbled over the words. 'I have not cut off all ties with — native ethnic patterns.' (Dick 24)

This dialogue between Mr. Tagomi and Mr. Ramsey reveals how disregarded and unwanted American identity has become. Mr. Ramsey has darkened his skin color in order not to be associated with American identity though he admits he still possesses Native American identity. Some white Americans (particularly those in government) darken their complexion and hair to appear Asian, and even adopt Asian religious beliefs (Evans 369). This shows the level of American obedience and the extent of conformity. There is also a lot of subliminal hostility, such as ethnic jokes and "urban legends" about Japanese males committing atrocities against white women (Evans 369). However, due to the mutual master-slave relationship, the master is influenced by the slave as well. Japanese characters in America have acquired parts of American culture, such as American folk phrases ("chickenshit"; "the real McCoy") and names. Older Japanese characters, such as Nobusuke Tagomi, use their Japanese names, whereas younger ones, such as Paul and Betty Kasoura, adopt American names (369).

California is occupied by the Japanese and Americans do not defend against the occupation. Americans' feelings toward the Japanese are a mix of awe and animosity, as is typical of a conquered people (Evans 368). As stated by Nietzsche, master morality exhibits certain characteristics such as goodness and nobility. The Japanese

bureaucratic elite that control and reign over California demonstrate signs of sophistication and nobility. This type of nobility and refined grace is personified with the Minister of Trade, Nobusuke Tagomi who is described as: "A heavyset middle-aged Japanese man, well-dressed in a British overcoat, pointed Oxfords, bowler, stood -a little ahead of the others, with a younger Japanese beside him. On his coat lapel he wore the badge of the ranking Pacific Trade Mission of the Imperial Government" (Dick 47). Tagomi is the foremost person that embodies the "master characteristics" as affirmed by Nietzsche.

On the other hand, in *MHC*, there exist two representations of master morality, the Japanese and the Nazis. As the embodiment of slave morality, Americans present their sympathy for one side over the other. While some acknowledge Japanese as the ultimate model of master morality, others display preference for the Nazis. Childan, an American who has racist tendencies belongs to the ones that acknowledge the Nazis as their supreme masters:

> So it all came back to what he had told his fellow store owners; what the Nazis have which we lack is — nobility. Admire them for their love of work or their efficiency. . . but it's the dream that stirs one. Space flights first to the moon, then to Mars; if that isn't the oldest yearning of mankind, our finest hope for glory. Now, the Japanese on the other hand. I know them pretty well; I do business with them, after all, day in and day out. They are — let's face it — Orientals. Yellow people. We whites have to bow to them because they hold the power. But we watch Germany; we see what can be done where whites have conquered, and it's quite different. (Dick 30)

In these lines, Childan not only confesses his racist conviction but also openly admits his acceptance of the slave morality. Childan bows to them not because of his respect but due to the power relations. Childan's racist thoughts lead him to admire the Nazis as a role-model and embrace them as the ultimate master morality.

Nietzsche identifies the longing for freedom, the instinct for happiness, and nuances in the experience of freedom as the major components of the slave morality. In *MHC*, Americans long for freedom but they do not engage into any form of action or uprising against their

masters. The instinct for happiness motivates them to lead a happy life as designed and imposed by their masters and the experience of freedom is that limited nuance of freedom granted to them by their masters.

Moreover, slave morality in *MHC* is reflected via two American characters: Robert Childan, the white Anglo-Saxon protestant and Frank Frink, the Jewish-American. Though both have internalized the role of the (American) slave, their profiles and tendencies are disparate. While occupied America is horrible both for Childan and Frink, it is in reality much worse for Frink who, because of his Jewish identity, risks being deported to the Nazis by the Japanese authorities (Rossi 477). On the other hand, Childan's profile and behavior are contradictory and highly ironical firstly due to his racist attitude but more specifically because his racist mentality leads him to adopt an excessive responsive condition towards the abusive and manipulative methods used by the Japanese on the Americans (Rossi 477). At a particular point, Childan comes to this realization:

> Christ! We're barbarians compared to them, Childan realized. Paul did not say — did not tell me — that our art was worthless; he got me to say it for him. And, as a final irony, he regretted my utterance. He's broken me. Humiliated me and my race. And I'm helpless. There's no avenging this; we are defeated and our defeats are like this, so tenuous, so delicate, that we're hardly able to perceive them. What more proof could be presented, as to the Japanese fitness to rule? (Dick 177)

The realization that the white race he deemed superior is barbaric compared to the ones he regards inferior comes as a major blow to Childan whose belief and value system collapses after this moment. Thus, comparing and contrasting both master moralities, Childan ends up on the "right track" by favoring and reaffirming the Japanese as the true, rightful master morality.

In contrast to Childan, Frink's experience with the master morality is different from the very beginning. Frink is terrified of the Nazis whereas he shares a constructive opinion towards the Japanese as he appreciates their value system and liberal racial policies (Rossi 478): "It horrified him, this thought: the ancient gigantic cannibal near-

man flourishing now, ruling the world once more. We spent a million years escaping him, Frink thought, and now he's back. And not merely as the adversary . . . but as the master" (Dick 17-18). Hence, Childan and Frink are both Americans who demonstrate a dissimilar version of the slave morality but these are not the only people that represent slave morality in *MHC* as blacks and Jews are other social groups which face discrimination within the oppressive system. In this respect, blacks and Jews are disadvantaged as they represent and symbolize the slaves amongst other slaves.

Finally, the reference to parallel worlds within an alternative reality is what makes *MHC* not only a science fiction classic, but also an intriguing novel that embodies multiple realities within an alternative reality. Tagomi possesses a special gift of visiting alternate reality through meditation and this alternate reality is the reality where the Allies have won the war and the Axis powers have been defeated. This technique is used by Dick who, instead of openly mentioning the future, brings the residents of that world into contact with our own time sequence, which is slightly different and through this actions affirms his opposition against totalitarian oppression (Wittkower 279).

As a result, *MHC* strongly manifests concrete examples concerning the master-slave dialectic and morality. Nietzsche's internalization of bad conscience is another aspect that is observable through the conduct of the American characters. Childan, Frink, Joe and Juliana constantly find themselves in a state of guilt towards their masters. Due to this guilt, they cannot direct their energy outwards, but have to keep it inside of them. Their being guilty puts them in a position of debt, where they owe the masters for their peaceful existence in the society. Because of their lack of life force, these characters are unable to stand up and revolt against the masters as they have internalized and appropriated the slave morality.

Master-Slave Dialectic and Morality in *The Man in the High Castle* (TV Series)

Philip K. Dick's *MHC* was adapted to television in 2015 by Amazon Prime Video. The series, which lasts four seasons, was received with enthusiasm around the world. Compared with the novel, the series has more differences than similarities. Firstly, the novel

mostly takes place in the Japanized Pacific States whereas the series follows a more balanced setting that goes back and forth between the Pacific States (San Francisco) and the Nazi occupied Greater Reich (New York). The biggest difference about the series is the fact that it introduces new, fictional characters to the original manuscript written by Philip K. Dick. In the Pacific States, the plot follows the storyline of Juliana Crain, a character present in the novel while on the other hand, in New York it follows the quest of former American soldier and newly promoted Nazi commander, (Obergruppenführer) John Smith who is a fictional character, non-existent in the novel. In addition to the authentic characters of Tagomi, Childan, Frink and Joe Blake, other fictional characters such as Helen Smith, Takeshi Kido, Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler have also been added to the script. Of all the fictional characters introduced into the series, those who receive the most screen time are John Smith and the Japanese head of secret police, (Kempeitai) chief inspector Takeshi Kido.

The master-slave dialectic and morality are much more prevalent and visible in the series. This is mainly due to the evil characters who are often involved in action sequences. As head of the Nazi authority in North America, John Smith ruthlessly oppresses and murders anyone who opposes Nazi rule in the occupied territory. On the other hand, Takeshi Kido is the Japanese chief inspector of secret police who commits atrocities against the enemies of the empire. Both Smith and Kido are equivalent characters that overtly demonstrate the master dialectic and morality. They engage in constant struggle with the slaves/servants and affirm their self-consciousness through the satisfaction they achieve as a result of this struggle. In addition, characters like Juliana, Frink and Childan manifest the slave morality as it is the case in the original novel.

The series has implemented substantial changes in the plot as well. The reason of this is to generate action sequences so as to create more suspense which results in higher ratings. The most significant example of these changes is the retaliation by the American resistance movement that operates in the Pacific States and the Greater Reich. The resistance becomes a major nuisance for the occupying powers as their authorities spend a serious amount of time and energy to fight and eliminate them. This shows that in the series, Americans do not succumb to the slave morality and engage into action to battle the invaders in order to regain their liberty. The American resistance

violates occupiers' laws by plotting against the regime, but it never attacks civilians or destroys property (Krajewski and Heter 103). In this context, the American resistance movement's objective is proportionate and its ultimate aim is the eradication of the invading forces in America (115). In addition to the resistance, the Japanese authorities also get to deal with the Black Communist Rebellion (BCR) who retaliates violently against the Kempeitai. In the end, the ultimate winner is John Smith, a former American soldier who converts into a Nazi to enjoy the pleasures of conformity and to become the number one authority figure to rule the American division of the Greater Reich.

Moreover, the most striking difference between Dick's original novel and the television adaptation is the creation of the so-called resistance movements. The American resistance movement and the black communist rebellion are integrated into the original plotline by the producers to add a populist and patriotic touch to the series. Through this addition, the series openly manifests to the people that Americans are willing and ready to fight for their freedom, no matter how bad and hopeless the conditions are. This was not only the message that the public opinion wanted to receive but also took for granted without questioning. Dick's original work, on the other hand, does not hint at any kind of resistance. In fact, the word "resistance" does not even appear throughout the novel. Therefore, the author's criticism towards the American people lies in total contradiction with the adaptation. Philip K. Dick deeply criticized America and American people for giving in to fascism too easily and selling American values out of pragmatism and opportunism. Given that 53 years have passed since the novel's first release, it is also Dick's way of reflecting the 1960s American spirit which was characterized by ongoing social struggle and democratic upheaval. Thus, the producers' choice to put the American resistance in spotlight seems to comply with the nationalist/populist sentiment that led to the Trump era. Hence, for the sake of gaining more spectators and higher ratings, the producers went along with the patriotic sentiment by drastically modifying Dick's original storyline.

The series ends in season four with John Smith and his family killed by the resistance and the Japanese withdrawing from the Pacific States. Compared to the novel, the series exhibits overt references to the master-slave dialectic and morality. These can be observed in multiple episodes. In season 2, episode 10, Himmler's dialogue with the commander Heusmann is striking:

> Heinrich Himmler: If we kill their emperor, it would prolong the conflict.
>
> Heusmann: So we spare him? After he murders our Fuehrer?
>
> Himmler: The Japanese must see their deity surrender and acknowledge the superiority of our Master Race. (Scott and Spotnitz)

Hence, having affirmed superiority over the American servants, the Nazis now seek to establish superiority over the Japanese, whom they wish to enslave as well. To that end, the Nazis are after the consolidation of their master morality around the world and aim to impose slave morality on all those who do not acknowledge their mastership.

Conclusion

Philip K. Dick's *MHC* is a complex narrative that combines many themes and issues but above all that of the master-slave dialectic and morality. This article has determined that through the master-slave dialectic and morality, Philip K. Dick critiques America not only for succumbing to fascist rule but also for not standing up against oppression to reclaim liberty. It can be inferred from the novel that American characters assume and openly acknowledge the position of slaves/servants. Their rationalization and normalization of the slave morality leads to the continuation and consolidation of the master-slave dialectic. In the subtext of the novel, the author criticizes American citizens for not giving a decent struggle for liberty and for taking the fascist rule for granted too easily. The colonization of America by fascist rule and gradual disappearance of American culture are evidence of the slave morality that is inflicted upon them by those who claim the role of the master.

Comparing and contrasting the novel with the series, it has been observed that the series displays a harsher type of master-slave dialectic and morality. Fictional characters like John Smith and Takeshi Kido help to enforce the master-slave dialectic and morality through various conflicts and violent clashes. On the other hand, the biggest difference between the novel and the series lies in the fact that the series incorporate a forceful Resistance movement which the novel

totally lacks. Therefore, it can be asserted that the series expose the master-slave dialectic in a more visible manner while on the other hand showing resistance to it as well. The novel, in contrast, illustrates a status quo despite the oppression of the fascist forces and highlights American passivity and submissiveness to its readers. All in all, the master-slave dialectic and morality expose American passivity and reluctance to fight back for liberty, a fundamental American value.

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***JAST*, 2022; 57: 135-158**
Submitted: 31.12.2021
Accepted: 12.02.2022
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Trauma and Event in Anzia Yezierska's *Hungry Hearts*

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Abstract

Anzia Yezierska's *Hungry Hearts* (1920) is a collection of short stories set in New York City's Lower East Side district and portrays Jewish working class women as they experience the problems of urban poverty and immigration as trauma. This article analyzes *Hungry Hearts* as a short story cycle in light of trauma theories and argues that Yezierska's protagonists suffer from what Maria Root calls "insidious trauma". Therefore, it holds that the dialectic of fragmentation and cohesion in the short story cycle form conflates with the insidious trauma of Yezierska's protagonists. From this perspective, the article claims that the narrative logic of Yezierska's work illustrates the inevitable continuity of insidious trauma because the stories follow a sequence of gradually aging protagonists. However, Yezierska also offers an alternative by creating two evental moments of intergenerational interaction in her last two stories. Drawing from Alain Badiou's concept of the "event" and Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory, this article argues that such moments function as departures from the initial narrative logic and let the characters reformulate their futures.

Keywords: Anzia Yezierska, Short Story Cycle, American Short Story, Trauma, Event

Öz

Anzia Yezierska'nın *Hungry Hearts* [*Aç Yürekler*] (1920) adlı yapıtı, New York'un Aşağı Doğu Yakası bölgesinde geçen ve kent

yoksulluğu ve göç gibi sorunları travma olarak yaşayan işçi sınıfı Yahudi kadınları anlatan bir kısa öykü derlemesidir. Bu makale, *Hungry Hearts*'ı bir kısa öykü döngüsü olarak ve travma teorileri bağlamında ele almaktadır. Makale, Yezierska'nın kahramanlarının, Maria Root'un "sinsi travma" olarak adlandırdığı travmayı yaşadıklarını öne sürmektedir. Bu nedenle, kısa öykü döngüsüne özgü parça-bütün diyalektiğinin, Yezierska'nın kahramanlarının sinsi travmasıyla biçimsel olarak örtüştüğünü iddia etmektedir. Buradan hareketle makalede Yezierska'nın yapıtındaki anlatı mantığının sinsi travmanın kaçınılmaz sürekliliğini gösterdiği saptanmıştır, çünkü öykülerin kahramanları sırasıyla hep bir öncekinden daha yaşlı karakterlerdir. Ancak Yezierska, kuşaklararası etkileşimden kaynaklanan iki olay anı yaratarak son iki öyküsünde bu duruma bir alternatif de sunmaktadır. Alain Badiou'nun "olay" kavramından ve Dominick LaCapra'nın travma teorisinden yola çıkan bu makale, belirtilen olay anlarının yapıtın başlangıcındaki anlatı mantığından ayrıldığını ve karakterlerin geleceklerini yeniden oluşturmalarına izin verdiğini öne sürmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Anzia Yezierska, Kısa Öykü Döngüsü, Amerikan Kısa Öyküsü, Travma, Olay

Introduction

In the early 1920s, when Anzia Yezierska started to use New York City's Lower East Side district as the primary setting in her literary works in order to depict and criticize the dismal conditions of immigrant life, she found herself amidst the emergence of a new critical discourse which advocated the inseparability of formal arrangement from the content. Although the movement was not called the New Criticism then, its aesthetic agenda that sought a systematic literary study by dismissing any possible relevance of the literary text to its historical context or to its author's biographical information had already germinated in T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) and "Hamlet and His Problems" (1919). Three years after the publication of her first collection of short stories titled *Hungry Hearts* (1920), Yezierska responded to the contemporary critical discourse by expressing her struggle with literary form as she voiced the perpetual desperation of the Jewish immigrant community in the Lower East Side district. In her essay "Mostly about Myself", she describes her writing

process as a state of bewilderment due to starvation, the recurring metaphor in *Hungry Hearts*. While she believes that writers with a "clear, calm security of their vision" can organize their stories in a logical order and sequential pattern, she admits her weakness claiming, "the end and the middle and the beginning of my story whirl before me in a mad blur" ("Mostly About Myself" 2). Relating her process of writing to trying to suppress hunger by begging for food, she notes "my hands run out to seize a word from the end, a phrase from the middle, or a sentence from the beginning" in order to "gather these fragments, words, phrases, sentences, and [...] paste them together with my own blood" (3). Her contemporaries who reviewed *Hungry Hearts* also acknowledged the problem of form in her writing, concluding that "it would be a pity if she turned to a more polished formula" and the stories speak to "all that is best in the human heart" or "when she restrains herself, she is artistic" (qtd. in Schoen 33-34). All of these reviews identify and positively and/or negatively value the lack of form in Yezierska's *Hungry Hearts*.

Coinciding with the cultural turn in the humanities, the revived scholarly interest in Yezierska's fiction in the 1970s has mainly concentrated on the liminal position of immigrant women caught between the patriarchal family structure and American class system. While some scholars have approached Yezierska's works as social commentaries, or "unconventional ethnographic texts" as Lori Jirousek calls them (29), many have also discussed her explorations in language, genre and form. For example, Delia Caparoso Konzett associates Yezierska's "making both English and Yiddish susceptible to foreign elements" (597) with the concept of double-consciousness, by which the author undermines cultural assimilation. Thomas Ferraro argues that Yezierska aimed to "update the project of realism" (532) and Nihad M. Farooq argues that Yezierska "manipulates the dual literary conventions of the Victorian sensation novel [...] and the elements of the American sensational novel of the same tradition" (84), using familiar forms to represent and voice the other. In other words, recent scholarship on Yezierska has approached her literary treatment of immigration as a resistant and subversive hybrid form. Although most of the studies have focused on the author's novels, *Hungry Hearts* has been of special interest, since this first collection of stories includes formal, thematic and stylistic choices that foreshadow Yezierska's later works. However, *Hungry Hearts* has been frequently criticized

alongside Yezierska's novels (Batker 2000, Mikkelsen 2010, Farooq 2014). In addition, the individual stories have been studied for their themes of immigration and/or cultural assimilation (Campos Ferraras 2019), or for their representation of modern Jewish-American life (Wallach 2022).

This article reads *Hungry Hearts* as a formally and thematically organized collection of short stories despite the author's own words and her contemporaries' reviews. More precisely, I argue that the stories in *Hungry Hearts* are organized into a distinct sequential order in the short story cycle form[1]. Contrary to the independent stories in a collection, the stories in a short story cycle are defined as "both self-sufficient and interrelated" (Mann 15). The interrelation in Yezierska's stories in *Hungry Hearts* is rooted in their common setting of the Jewish neighborhood in New York's Lower East Side, yet more significantly, all the stories have female immigrant protagonists who suffer from the social and economic problems of urban poverty. Rachel Lister argues that Yezierska's protagonists in *Hungry Hearts* represent a common consciousness among the Jewish female immigrants rather than individual characters and writes that "it is difficult to distinguish one protagonist from another when reading the text as a whole" (23). She contends that disillusioned by their American dream, they repeatedly and commonly retreat to their communities without a "tenuous hope" (23). In this sense, similar experiences are lived and relived in the same community, represented by the recurrence of characterization and setting, and particularly the hunger metaphor. In her introduction to *Hungry Hearts*, Blanche Gelfant also notices this repetitive treatment of disillusionment and relates it to the immigrants' stigmatization in terms of class and religion, concluding that Yezierska "felt impelled to tell the story of these women–of her self–again and again, the same story of a transformation never complete or satisfactory, of an Americanization never free of self-betrayal, of a hunger never satisfied" (xxx). Other scholars have also mentioned and discussed the interrelation of the stories in *Hungry Hearts*. For example, Cara Erdheim Kilgallen detects the immigrants' desire to receive higher education as a recurring theme (164). Focusing on the collective experience of urban space in a number of literary works including *Hungry Hearts*, Katrin Korkalainen explains the interrelation with the recurring "image of the Lower East Side as a *landscape* of Otherness and contrasts" (58).

Encapsulating her formal treatment of immigration and urban

poverty, Yezierska's "mad blur" due to the metaphorical hunger and her endeavor to "gather the fragments" respectively correspond to Dominick LaCapra's notions of "acting out" and "working-through" the symptoms of trauma. LaCapra defines "acting out" as a process "in which one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes – scenes in which the past returns and the future is blocked or fatalistically caught up in a melancholic feedback loop" (21). In the process of working-through, however, LaCapra states that "one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one (or one's people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future" (22). Yezierska's critics have already drawn attention to the effects of trauma in her writing. Ellen Golub, for example, maintains that Yezierska is among the Jewish-American writers who were members and observers of an "uprooted and traumatized generation" (55). In addition, Lori Merish takes Yezierska's fiction as a testimony to "psychological injuries and operations of class" (209), but emphasizes its affective dimensions rather than trauma's formal and thematic aspects. However, I argue that in *Hungry Hearts*, the dialectic of fragmentation and cohesion as the main affordance of the short story cycle collides with LaCapra's "interacting processes" (144) of "acting out" and "working-through" trauma. Furthermore, trauma narrative techniques such as fragmentation, flashbacks, digressions, recurrences and multiplicity of voices (Whitehead 81-88) predominate Yezierska's sequential depiction of female immigrant lives. Cathy Caruth also maintains the subject cannot make sense of the traumatic event at the time of its occurrence, but perceives it "only belatedly, in its repeated *possession*" (4) of oneself. Similarly, Gabriele Schwab asserts that "[t]raumatic memories entrap us in the prison house of repetition compulsion" (2). For Alan Gibbs, such an approach in trauma theory underscores the problem of representability, which resurfaces through "radically fragmented and experimental forms" (14). The formal devices of trauma writing such as fragmentation and repetition are integral to the short story cycle's episodic form. Gerald Lynch, for example, argues that "short story cycles are especially well suited [...] to conveying a character's fragmentary experiences" when they depict "the immigrant's divisions of loyalty and consciousness, identity issues, losses, novelty, and the episodic nature of those experiences" (223). In other words, the short story cycle provides a form through which the unrepresentability of

trauma can be translated into sequential order. In this respect, although Yezierska's stories in *Hungry Hearts* individually lack closure and are loosely connected on the most part, their sequential ordering and especially the prospects for the future in the last two stories imply a pattern that moves from acting-out to working-through.

However, Yezierska's female characters in *Hungry Hearts* do not suffer from a specific traumatizing incident; they rather exhibit what clinical psychologist Maria Root calls "insidious trauma" (240). With reference to Root, Laura Brown explains insidious trauma as the traumatic effects "that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit" (107). In other words, insidious trauma does not necessitate a traumatic shock, but as Stef Craps and Gert Buelens argue, it indicates "the chronic psychic suffering produced by the structural violence of racial, gender, sexual, class, and other inequities" (3). In the case of *Hungry Hearts*, although the female protagonists have no familial relationship, they inherit a common narrative of poverty and inequality from their hometowns in Eastern Europe, which remains uninterrupted after their immigration to the United States. In this sense, the possibility of working-through becomes problematic in *Hungry Hearts*, because the process demands a confrontational retrospection into the moment of trauma so that one can depart from it and reorganize one's future accordingly. That insidious trauma does not overwhelm the individual momentarily and but incessantly impacts one's life and is transmitted to younger generations raises the question as to how Yezierska can possibly organize *Hungry Hearts* for a direction towards working-through without its definitive marker.

Yezierska depicts the continuity of insidious trauma by organizing the stories in the order of sequentially aging female protagonists. Following this order, the stories suggest increasing helplessness, since the trauma remains intact, it gives no sign of resolution as the women get older, and is thus inevitably transferred to the next generation, leaving the female characters named Shenah Pessah, Hanneh Hayyeh and Hanneh Breineh with no choice but to act out the symptoms of their insidious traumas[2]. In addition, Yezierska devises a way to prevent the transmission of insidious trauma by creating two evental moments of intergenerational interaction which bring together female characters of different age groups in the last two stories of *Hungry Hearts*. Drawing from Alain Badiou's concept of

"event" and Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory, I argue that although these moments are transformative rather than traumatizing, they have formal similarities with trauma, and that they afford breaks from the narrative logic so that characters can reformulate their futures and thus work through their traumas.

The Prisonhouse of Transgenerational Oppression

Yezierska's first story, "Wings", in *Hungry Hearts*, starts with Shenah Pessah looking up through the window to "the dawn of spring" that is only available to her by "a timid ray of sunlight" entering "the gray, cheerless, janitor's basement" she is located in, and wishes for an end to her loneliness (5). External to the basement yet penetrating through it, connecting the outside to the inside, the single ray of sunlight signifies the potential of transforming Shenah's desires into the tangibility of light and warmth as she "hungrily" reaches out towards it (5). Shenah's response to light echoes the process of working-through the symptoms of insidious trauma, since she expects a new juncture which would mark a break from the present conditions that are strictly determined by the past. Having lost her impoverished family in Poland and then entered the protection of her poor and conservative uncle, she values Americanization as a new identity formation that would satisfy her longing for a larger community. However, her lack of education and her being the uncle's and the tenement's only caretaker hamper her desire. Regarding such characteristics in Shenah, JoAnn Pavletich rightfully calls her "the paradigmatic Yezierskan heroine" (86), but "Wings" can also be considered "paradigmatic" because it constitutes a pattern of compulsive returns to the past and constant failures in unreachable goals. In LaCapra's terms, Yezierska's treatment of sunlight proves that Shenah's past and future are not reconcilable. Signifying the succession of seasons, the springtime sunlight promises Shenah her summer; however, the simultaneously implied natural temporality anticipates her fall as well. Yezierska thus constructs Shenah's insidious trauma as a reality that is naturally insecure and that constantly invalidates her will to overcome it.

When John Barnes, the middle-class sociologist researching the education of immigrant Russian Jews in New York asks to rent a room, Shenah finds an opportunity to reach out to the world outside. For

Shenah, Barnes is initially the embodiment of the promising sunlight, but counterintuitively reminds her of her insidious trauma. Maria Root remarks that the external stressors of insidious trauma cause the activation of "survival behaviors" (241), such as "egocentrism, quickness to anger, social and emotional withdrawal, rumination, or shutting down" (248). Barnes likewise triggers in Shenah certain behavioral patterns of trauma by leaving her in a double-bind which forces her into rearranging her present position. In the line of LaCapra's emphasis that working-through is "an articulatory practice" (21), Shenah's attempt to overcome this dilemma can be traced in her first dialogue with Barnes. Explaining to him the reason for her immigration, Shenah says "What did I have out there in Savel that I should be afraid to lose? The cows that I used to milk had it better than me" (*Hungry Hearts* 8). With the impact of Barnes as a stressor, Shenah positions herself in the past tense rather than verbally capitalizing on the present and future prospects of living in the United States. Furthermore, she makes herself the only subject of her narrative and thus denies the collective dimension of perpetual transgenerational oppression. In other words, Shenah resolves the double-bind by reconnecting with the past as Barnes expects of her and simultaneously distinguishing herself from her community.

For an intimate relation with Barnes, Shenah not only returns to the past, but also constructs an imagined version of it. As Pavletich aptly underlines, Shenah firstly pawns her late mother's feather bed for fashionable clothes with the mother's approval (89), imagining that "she'd cut herself in pieces, she'd tear the sun" (*Hungry Hearts* 14) to help Shenah impress Barnes by her looks. She then uses the money to buy an outfit after a pleasantly imagined memory of her hometown since "the magic of those cherries on her hat brought back to her the green fields and orchards of her native Russia" (16). That Shenah devises a pragmatically imagined past might contradict her narrative to Barnes and provide an opening for the future, but without a confrontation, this version of the past is far from offering her a resolution. Furthermore, similar to Yezierska's expression of her own troubles in gathering the elements of her fiction, Shenah's imagined past compromises the cohesive impression she intends to achieve, because the change on her appearance is noticeable. When Barnes meets Shenah with her new outfit on, he exclaims, "Haven't you blossomed out since last night!" (19), because he immediately spots both her emotional investment and

her inability to combine a dress in the middle class American look she aspires to.

While Barnes's pity towards Shenah is maintained, his affection is not, and the second story, "Hunger" shows how she takes command of her life no sooner than being abandoned by Barnes. Furthermore, after a series of verbal attacks, the uncle finally reminds her of her past: "What were you out there in Savel? The dirt under people's feet. You're already forgetting how you came off from the ship – a bundle of rags full of holes" (27). The uncle's description of her clothing counteracts the combination of her "first American dress" (19) and hence unmasks the denial mechanism through which she forges an imaginary self. Hearing her story from her second external stressor, Shenah is also confronted with the fact that the uncle's narrative of her oppressed past is itself a means of exploitation, and she leaves her home and finds work in a sweatshop, where she again tries to symbolically stitch the past with the present. When her new co-worker Sam Arkin asks the same question as Barnes, Shenah slightly changes her narrative: "How I suffered in Savel. I have never had enough to eat. [...] But I still love it. [...] My heart always hurts me for what is no more" (37). This version of the same narrative ends as the effects of trauma gradually usurp her agency, illustrated by the dramatic shift from the subject "I" to "my heart". Finally, Shenah declines Arkin's marriage proposal because of her continuing love for Barnes, telling him "All that my mother and father and my mother's mother and father ever wanted to be is in him [...] it's the hunger of all my people back of me, from all ages, for light, for the life higher!" (41). Positioning herself firstly as the object of the conditions she cannot change, and then retrogressively connecting herself with the insidious trauma of the older generations, Shenah resorts to the past rather than seeking an opening for the future.

The third story "The Lost 'Beautifulness'" entertains the idea that aesthetic beauty might act as a way of working-through trauma. The story starts with Hanneh Hayyeh's joyful exultation as she observes the kitchen she recently painted, and quickly moves on to the photograph of her son in uniform. The son's being a soldier suggests that Hanneh Hayyeh is older than Shenah and can as well be at the age of Shenah's late mother. The story therefore connects Hanneh and Shenah not only as women who live in the same neighborhood, but also in a quasi-familial succession. Similarly, the ray of light that is mentioned in the first two stories enters the domestic space of the kitchen in "The

Lost 'Beautifulness'" with cleanliness and whiteness. In this sense, the light that was once promising but finally unattainable for Shenah is not only transmitted to the newly painted kitchen but also, from Hanneh's description, "lights up the whole tenement house for blocks around" (49). Unlike Shenah's individual ray of light, the kitchen's light has the potential to resolve the next generation's inherited insidious trauma and further transform the entire neighborhood. The light associated with the whitewashed kitchen walls, suggesting the Americanization of immigrant populations, is presented as the sole path toward working-through trauma.

Although Hanneh's domestic work of painting the kitchen is a symbolic act in resolving generations-old trauma, the story reveals that Hanneh takes her inspiration from her work experience at Mrs. Preston's house. Living in "the old Stuyvesant Square mansion" (43) and described as displaying "cultured elegance" (49), Mrs. Preston shapes Hanneh's aesthetic norms. Hanneh internalizes and reproduces Mrs. Preston's radiant "beauty and goodness" (49) to such an extent that she is described by Mrs. Preston as "an artist laundress" (49). However, Hanneh cannot earn her landlord's respect with the newly painted kitchen. The landlord demands a rent increase, thinking that she has enough money to spend on home improvement and that in its present condition the tenement deserves more rent. Consequently, art that Hanneh considers a way out of trauma is rendered inefficient, and especially when the notice of the second rate increase arrives, Hanneh becomes so desperate that Mrs. Preston sees in her "the ravages of worry and hunger" (55) rather than artistic beauty. To ameliorate Hanneh's suffering, Mrs. Preston's solution is charitable help; however, Hanneh is now disillusioned with the prospects of art and declines charity for justice. Applying to the court yet receiving a decision that confirms the landlord's demand, Hanneh finally returns home "hair disheveled, clothes awry, the nails of her fingers dug in her scalp, stared with the glazed, impotent stare of a madwoman" (59) and destroys her kitchen "with savage fury" (60). Yezierska clearly shows that oppression is structural. For this reason, Hanneh's working-through with the aesthetic standards of the upper-middle class in order to transform the next generation and her neighborhood ultimately fails. Consequently, her final acting-out not only does damage her home from which she is immediately evicted, but also leaves her returning son homeless. Rebeca Campos Ferraras finds in story's ending an "ironic display"

in that whereas lower-class immigrants enroll to the American army to safeguard the American social and economic ideal, the others are deprived of reaching it (22). The age-based logic of characterization in *Hungry Hearts* adds a further layer of irony. Accordingly, the United States deprives the young returning soldier of his access to the American home his mother could at least imagine, and leaving the immigrant youth with a future determined strictly by the past.

Contrary to the previous stories, "The Fat of the Land" questions the possibility that immigrant women, too, might rise up the social ladder. The story starts as Hanneh Breineh reaches out and knocks on her neighbor Mrs. Pelz's window with her "bare hands" (110), like Shenah's move toward the sunlight. Hanneh also shares the same name with Hanneh Hayyeh in "The Lost 'Beautifulness'". Hanneh Breineh is therefore introduced as the character-signifier of continuity and, with the "hungry gleam in her eyes" (111), the embodiment of the recurring hunger metaphor. However, unlike Shenah and Hanneh Hayyeh, she and Mrs. Pelz suffer from their worsened economic conditions since they settled in the United States. "The world is a wheel always turning," (111) says Mrs. Pelz and complains about her reversal of fortune rather than a predetermined and unchangeable present. In contrast to Mrs. Pelz's neutralization and normalization of their dismal conditions by her reference to the natural succession of time, Hanneh Breineh wishes for immediate solutions as a means of acting-out. When she spiritedly voices her desire for death and destruction, saying "a thunder should strike" the landlord's agent and "I take time to draw a breath, and beg only for death" (113), Mrs. Pelz reminds her that only the next generation can change the course of her misfortune, arguing in favor of maintaining patience and hope for gradual improvement. She advises her to give birth to more babies and patiently wait until they reach the age of work, despite the fact that part of Hanneh's problems lies in her economic incapacity to raise her children. Similar to the naturalization of insidious trauma in "Wings" by the transience of springtime sunlight, female reproduction is presented in this story as a natural mechanism that not only does evade and mask the present effects of structural oppression by entrusting the new generation with the task of tackling it, but also reproduces them by transmitting insidious trauma. Since Hanneh adheres to Mrs. Pelz's explanation and advice, it is clear that both women rely upon the younger generation for a change in their current conditions.

When Hanneh's children reach adulthood and become wealthy years later, all established hierarchies in the Lower East Side are reversed for her as well, letting two of her children become factory owners. In other words, the matrilinear continuity of insidious trauma that is initiated with Shenah seems to end when Hanneh's children start to reproduce the poor working conditions of the immigrants and improve their own social status. Besides, at her new home, Hanneh is described in her "white-tiled kitchen" and with her "silk dress" (121) on, suggesting that she revisits Hanneh Hayyeh's and Shenah's failed processes of working-through trauma. However, Hanneh's continuing complaints about her loneliness in her new neighborhood mark her lack of resolution. This problem is determined by the logic of age-based characterization in *Hungry Hearts*. Although her exact age is not mentioned, Hanneh Breineh considers herself old, asking "[w]hat worth is an old mother to American children" (127). Besides, for her adult children who regret that "the ghetto of the Middle Ages and the children of the twentieth century have to live under one roof" (128), she is not only old, but she also belongs to an antiquated period. In other words, Yezierska positions Hanneh Breineh as the last step in the gradually increasing helplessness of her female protagonists. Hanneh decides to resolve the problem by not attending the new apartment building's restaurant where she is expected to act in polite manners. She rather visits her old neighborhood to buy fish and garlic to cook in her kitchenette as a means of symbolically working-through trauma by combining the ingredients and preparing a meal. However, when she returns home and but not let in with her basket, her daughter Fanny, accompanied by the wealthy Mrs. van Suyden, her prospective mother-in-law, embraces the building's regulations rather than defending her mother. Fanny then voices her "shame of mother" (128) because of Hanneh's lower-class background and dates the problems in their mother-daughter relationship back to her formative years, remembering Hanneh with her "everlasting cursing and yelling" (132) and as the "tragedy of [her] life" (131). Yezierska shows that Fanny has already internalized the exchange mechanism that allows the younger generation's reversal of fortune, and thus replaced her mother with Mrs. Van Suyden. In this way, Yezierska eventually puts the mother and daughter into a gray area where the oppressed/oppressor binary collapses and both women are trapped in an unresolvable continuity of insidious trauma. In a moment of acting-out, Hanneh goes back to her old neighborhood, but understands that she can neither "endure

the sordid ugliness of her past" (135) nor reunite with her children. The oldest female protagonist's process of working-through insidious trauma therefore remains unresolved.

Reaching Out and Working-Through

Shenah's, Hanneh Hayyeh's and Hanneh Breineh's attempts to resolve their insidious traumas finally lead them to retreat to a position in which they acknowledge their pasts but cannot actively implement any plausible change. Left in the repetition-compulsion of trauma, the mentioned characters formulate their subjectivities through an internalized sense of helplessness. However, Yezierska also provides alternatives to such a subjectivity in the last two stories of *Hungry Hearts*, and creates two different moments as radical breaks that potentially lead to the process of working-through. In particular, the young Sophie Sapinsky's meeting with the not-yet-elderly Hanneh Breineh in "My Own People", and the young unnamed protagonist's conversation with the schoolteacher in "How I Found America" function as "events". Explaining his theory of the subject, Alain Badiou writes, "whatever convokes someone to the composition of a subject is something extra, something that happens in situations as something that they and the usual way of behaving in them cannot account for" (*Ethics* 41). For Badiou, therefore, what is foundational for subjectivity is the transgression of the already present form of existence. In Badiou's theory, this transgression is caused by the intervention of a spatio-temporal object which he terms an "event", and which produces a rupture that "compels us to decide a *new* way of being" (41). Badiou's examples include a wide range of defining moments, from the insurrection of 10 August 1792 during the French Revolution to "a personal amorous passion" (41). However, Badiou thinks of the event as a paradoxical concept, because the event "vanishes as soon as it appears" (67), forming a void that resists being properly articulated in the symbolic order, similar to Jacques Lacan's conception of the Real as the primordial and unrepresentable experience. Badiou describes the event as an "interval" (*Being and Event* 206) and "excrescence" (209), meaning that the void remains unnamable because it cannot be named with the set of terms already invalidated by the event, and a new vocabulary to include "the new way of being" has still not developed. As a result, Badiou concludes that "the event is only possible if special

procedures conserve the evental nature of its consequences" (221), and therefore, a strict adherence to the event emerges as a necessity, which Badiou terms "fidelity". Therefore, Badiou writes, "to be faithful to the event is to move within the situation that this event has supplemented, by thinking [...] the situation 'according to' the event" (*Ethics* 41). For Badiou, fidelity is the second step in what he calls a "truth-process" (67), because it is fidelity that "gathers together and produces" (68) the "truth" of the event. Consequently, the subject is not subjected to an already existing ideology, not interpellated, but is subjectivized in one's engagement with the event (*Being and Event* 393). The two events in the last two stories of *Hungry Hearts* similarly function as ruptures that let the characters reconsider and reformulate their past traumas on condition that they remain loyal to the transformation made possible by their unexpected interactions.

The two ruptures in trauma's compulsive pattern in *Hungry Hearts* imply formal similarities between event and trauma. Both event and trauma connote decisive momentary experiences that occur as a break from the existing order. Event is a participatory and transformative process that demands the faithful subject's reconsideration of the past, present and future. Vincenzo Di Nicola argues that such a subject embraces radical changes and a subsequent ambiguity, whereas "the reactive subject [...] experiences rupture as trauma", and thus feels threatened by the impact of change (75)[3]. Di Nicola's argument offers a radical break with trauma psychiatry, which, for him, addresses "only trauma and the closing down of possibilities" (117). Discussing the viability of Badiou's event in trauma theory, Gregory Bistoen et al. also recognize the formal similarities between the concepts, and while they cautiously distinguish between the "positive valence of [event] and the detrimental nature of trauma", they agree that trauma that is experienced by specific groups, as in sexual or domestic violence, might offer a relatively positive change on the subject, so long as it is transformed into collective acts, such as forming or joining social organizations for political and social change (848).

In this essay, my reading of Yezierska's last two stories in *Hungry Hearts* integrates LaCapra's "working-through" and Badiou's "fidelity" to the "event". In this sense, by retrospectively evaluating one's trauma, and resolutely working on its signification process, the subject might resolve the impasse that is caused by trauma's forceful repetition-compulsion. In addition, working-through is not

necessarily limited to the event's social aspect but might integrate the social and psychological dynamics. In other words, the intra-psychic retrospection functions as a starting point for the traumatized subject's reconnection to society. Although he does not resort to Badiou's theory, Greg Forter has discussed and applied the consecutive processes of retrospection and reconnection in his reading of William Faulkner's *Absalom*, *Absalom!*. Tentatively departing from the Caruthian theory, which capitalizes on traumatic shock, Forter turns his attention to how Faulkner's novel depicts perpetual trauma as a site where "historical systems of domination *enter into* the subject at the very moment of its formation" (97). In this sense, his argument illustrates the mechanism of insidious trauma. Forter shows that Sutpen's traumatization does not stem from his exposure to a specific traumatic shock. Drawing from Sigmund Freud's earlier writings, rather than his later works that have informed Caruthian theory, Forter reminds that traumatic experiences are repressed at the moment of exposure, and but they remain in the subject's unconscious until an external stressor reactivates them (101). In other words, the initial exposure remains dormant, while its belated realization causes the traumatic experience. In the case of *Absalom, Absalom!*, for example, Forter demonstrates that an unexpected occurrence leads Sutpen into retrospectively realizing his insidious trauma. However, this occurrence does not materialize into an event for Sutpen, but rather traumatizes him[4]. In *Hungry Hearts,* a similar pattern applies to Shenah's dialogues with Barnes and her uncle, whose humiliations trigger Shenah's behavioral patterns of trauma. Shenah subsequently acknowledges her trauma as a limitation of her possibilities, instead of working-through it, which is illustrated by her fixation on upward social mobility via marriage with a middle-class intellectual like Barnes. For the more hopeless Hanneh Hayyeh and Hanneh Breineh, the realization of previous exposure to insidious trauma results in instances of acting-out, which are even more detrimental to their present condition, illustrated by the former's spoiling the walls and losing her tenement, and the latter's leaving for her old tenement but having to return home to her disapproving children. However, in the last two stories of *Hungry Hearts*, characters approach their insidious traumas not as closing down of their potentials and opportunities, but as a call for transformative acts.

The sequential continuity of trauma due to oppression is at once maintained and then broken in "My Own People", the first of the last

two stories. In the story, the young Sophie Sapinsky leaves "the peace of home, the security of a regular job" (*Hungry Hearts* 139) and with an aspiration to become a writer, moves to the tenement where Hanneh Breineh used to live when she was younger and poorer. Similar to the elderly Hanneh and her adult children, the traumatizing experience of oppression for Sophie and her family is left in the past, but Sophie still has a "wild, blind hunger to release the dumbness that choked her" and to start "the uprooting of her past" (139). Sophie, then, acts contrary to Hanneh's adult children and seeks to overcome the traumatic past by revisiting it. In this sense, Yezierska interrupts the sequential ordering of *Hungry Hearts* to change the predetermined end of "The Fat of the Land". Sophie's release of traumatizing oppression is associated with her act of writing, yet similar to Yezierska herself, she is initially troubled by her impulsive vehemence. Holding the pencil "with tense fingers" and checking her notebook with her "hundred beginnings, essays, abstractions, outbursts of chaotic moods" (139), she struggles to find a coherent voice and language. Being the formal aspect of trauma narratives, the fragmentation and incoherence in her writing mirror the traumatic past of transgenerational oppression, but the process of working-through also requires the coherent narrativization of this troubled past. In this respect, Sophie's troubled writing comes from her willed return to the past and her deliberate search for a new voice echoing that of the older generation.

Because Yezierska's protagonists act out and work through the traumatic effects of oppression, their traumas lack the representation of a shocking effect that is integral to Caruthian trauma theory. However, in *Hungry Hearts*, Yezierska substitutes the absent traumatic shock in the temporal order of the individual stories with an interruption to the story cycle's age-based sequential ordering of transgenerational trauma, and creates an evental rupture. In this sense, Yezierska uses the symbolic effect of traumatic shock as a narrative conjecture to give a new meaning to the past, present and future. Priscilla Wald argues that Yezierska's female characters belatedly make sense of "the creative nature of their desire" (63). Similarly, Hanneh's authentic expressions of her traumatic oppression from her time in Poland and in her present life in the Lower East Side lead Sophie to imagine "her own life in Hanneh Breineh's life" (143-44). The hunger that determines the female protagonists in *Hungry Hearts* emerges in this story as Sophie's hunger to write, and she finally discovers the voices of her "own people"

(151) in the tenements. Consequently, Yezierska enables a productive interaction between the two women, although they have a non-familial relationship. In her essay on Yezierska's treatment of women's labor, Susan Edmunds argues that the author's works in the 1920s need to be read in the context of the Bolshevik Revolution and writes that these novels "rework the Cinderella plot central to the working girls' labor culture along the lines that resonate strongly with the revolutionary ideals of Kollontai" (406). At this point, Alexandra Kollontai's name is significant for her advocacy of "collective housekeeping" (Kollontai 255) such as day nurseries, infirmaries or free lunch provided at school, which would relieve women of domestic labor and consequently revolutionize the family institution and establish social equality (259-60). From this perspective, a solidarity that does not naturally develop between Hanneh and her own daughter emerges in the non-familial relation between two women. Therefore, unlike Fanny, Sophie can finally murmur "At last it writes itself in me" (*Hungry Hearts* 151), giving voice to the collective suffering through herself while also distinguishing the other's voice from hers. As a result, for Sophie, insidious trauma is experienced as an "event", which leads her to rewrite the past in her own words.

After the dramatic shift from the elderly Hanneh's desperation despite her higher economic status to the young Sophie's newly found hope for the future through Hanneh, the final story titled "How I Found America" presents a new chronological and episodic structure that reorders the previously broken continuity and depicts the decisive phases in its unnamed female immigrant character's life. The story does not have a named female protagonist but configures its first-person narrator as a single voice for representing the experiences of all the female protagonists in *Hungry Hearts*. Its first episode depicts a period when the unnamed protagonist still lives in Czarist Russia with her impoverished and oppressed family, who finally immigrate to the United States. The second episode features the troubles of immigration and housing. This part of the story constitutes the major themes of *Hungry Hearts* recurring until "My Own People". For example, the protagonist describes her sensory experience at the sweatshop as "the merciless grind of the pounding machines" and "a whirlpool of noise" (161), which consequently limits her physical and emotional capacity to work through her insidious trauma. Specifically, she finds the effects of her continuing oppression in her "stifled heart", in "the

dark chaos of [her] brain" and "the wound of [her] wasted life" (161). As a counterpoint to her bodily exhaustion, she compulsively returns to the past. Yezierska configures the character on the further edge of bare survival to the extent that she is hit by a car when imagining "the starved villagers of Sukovoly" and hearing "a thousand voices within [...] and about" (166) her in an incorporeal and dreamy state. Similar to Sophie's retrospective meeting with Hanneh, this accident acts as a shocking effect for her steps into her process of working-through, because she is immediately approached by a friend, who suggests she go to night schools for further education.

Like "My Own People", Yezierska halts the continuity of insidious trauma in "How I Found America", by using intergenerational dialogue to extend the definition of being an immigrant and an American. While Sophie's aim was to find a voice from within her own community, the protagonist searches for a sense of belonging to the United States. Yezierska makes this possible by having the young protagonist interact with characters older than her. In doing so, Yezierska does not categorically mark intergenerational relationship as a solution. Conversely, the protagonist can connect to only one older character among the depicted three. At the end of the second episode, the protagonist tells Mrs. Olney about her wish to be enrolled in the Immigrant School, but quickly changes her mind upon hearing that the school only provides training for practical skills. When she can finally find time to attend the night school at the beginning of the third episode, she considers the English course syllabus irrelevant and vocally criticizes her instructor. Lastly, she approaches another instructor, Miss Latham. In a lengthy conversation with her, she feels empowered upon realizing that her comments and wishes are valued, and that the instructor was an immigrant through first generation. Miss Latham supports her views with reference to Waldo Frank, who writes "We go forth all to seek America. And in seeking we create her. In the quality of our search shall be the nature of the America that we create" (179-80). These words prove to the unnamed protagonist that her struggles were not in vain and that she was right in not having "stopped at the husk–a good job–a good living–but pressed on, through the barriers of materialism" (180) like Hanneh Breineh's children.

The protagonist's interaction with Miss Latham is evental, because it lets her reconsider her disadvantaged situation as a counterintuitive advantage, and reformulate the meanings of immigrancy

and imagination. Since Miss Latham's inclusion to the story widens the experience of immigration and promises ways for structural change, the protagonist perceives the instructor not as a threat or stressor, but as a social ally. Miss Latham's reference to Waldo Frank for supporting her argument is also significant. As a popular contemporary figure in the American literary scene, Frank is known to embrace the plurality of voices in the United States, particularly through his support for Jean Toomer and his interest in Hispanic cultures. The quotation selected by Miss Latham also calls for the protagonist's active work. In this sense, the evental interaction in the story is meant to activate the protagonist's process of working-through. As a result, the fantasies of good life that mark the downfall of Shenah Passeh, Hanneh Hayyeh and Hanneh Breineh are invalidated by the protagonist's determination to embrace the future potentials arising from her eventual interaction.

Conclusion

Anzia Yezierska's *Hungry Hearts* depicts the inevitability of transgenerational transmission of insidious trauma through the sequential order of gradually aging protagonists. In her stories, when individual protagonists do not work through their desperation caused by their traumatic pasts, the collective immigrant self is compelled into acting-out and investing on the younger generation for resolution. However, by reversing this seemingly inevitable pattern through the interaction of the young and old, Yezierska proposes a way for working-through insidious trauma. In this sense, the last two protagonists depart from the hegemonic and assimilative perspectives of the male and/or middle-class external stressors of their precursors, and approach female elders for guidance. Since they perceive such potentially distressing interactions as radical changes from the established norms held by society and internalized by themselves, they embrace the event as a prospect through which they can redefine themselves and their position in society.

It is true that *Hungry Hearts* does not feature what happens when Sophie Sapinsky in "My Own People" completes her book and publishes it, or after the unnamed protagonist in "How I Found America" renews her faith in becoming a valued member of a multicultural American society. Yezierska's short story cycle thus

ends without maintaining a definitive closure. However, with this ending, Yezierska shows that closure is conditional, and entrusts the two protagonists with their loyalty to the process of working-through. Besides, as Sophie takes up writing and the unnamed protagonist narrates her own story and declares that she will actively create the America she has been seeking, they reclaim their subjectivities on their own terms and their connection with the past is no longer determined by trauma's repetition-compulsion. As a result, with the intervention of Badiouian events in "My Own People" and "How I Found America", Anzia Yezierska writes all her female characters' experiences and then symbolically resolves their sufferings through the instances of non-familial female solidarity within different ethnic and age groups.

Notes

[1] I draw this argument from *The Composite Novel* (1995), co-written by Maggie Dunn and Ann Morris, but as the title of their study implies, the authors consider *Hungry Hearts* a composite novel, which they define as "a literary work composed of shorter texts that – though individually complete and autonomous – are interrelated in a coherent whole according to one or more organizing principles" (xiii). Dunn and Morris specifically use the term "composite novel" to emphasize the genre's "kinship to the novel" (4) and hence "the integrity of the whole" (5). In his book on contemporary American short story cycles, James Nagel does not mention *Hungry Hearts* as a precursor to the genre's recent examples but asserts that in the American literature of the 1980s and 1990s, the short story cycle "became the genre of choice for emerging writers from a variety of ethnic and economic backgrounds" (17).

[2] Between Hanneh Hayyeh's and Hanneh Breineh's stories there are four other stories with different autodiegetic narrators. I will not examine these stories since they do not have protagonists older than Hanneh Breineh and therefore do not undermine the logic of Yezierska's short story cycle.

[3] Although this quotation is from *Psychiatry in Crisis* (2021), co-written by Di Nicola and Stoyanov, I only mention Di Nicola's name, because the related chapter was written by him.

[4] For this argument, Forter uses the passage in which Sutpen is sent to the plantation house to deliver a message as a teenager and is refused entrance by the black house-slave, telling him to use the back door. For Forter, this incident momentarily paralyzes Sutpen, who until then has no distressing awareness of his life in poverty and the class and race dynamics in the plantation. Sutpen, then gains access to his dormant insidious trauma, which is only "retrodetermined as trauma" (Forter 113). However, such a retrospection is not positively transformative for Sutpen, since he comes to see his family's position from the plantation-owner's perspective, and thus complies with the existing order and hierarchy in the South. Forter then concludes that Sutpen's subsequent motivation to climb up the social ladder is due to his oedipal rivalry with the plantation-owner, and with this, Faulkner illustrates how the American South has reproduced slavery.

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Journal of American Studies of Turkey
Number 57 (Spring 2022)

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