

**ACTA ACADEMIAE PAEDAGOGICAE AGRIENSIS
NOVA SERIES TOM. XXV.**

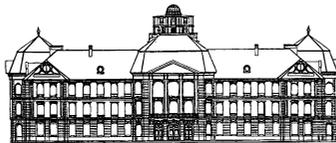
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**EGER JOURNAL
OF
AMERICAN STUDIES**

VOLUME V.

1998

EDITOR: LEHEL VADON



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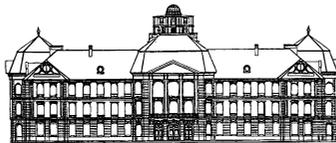
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ISSN 1219-1027

A kiadásért felelős:
az Eszterházy Károly Főiskola főigazgatója
Megjelent az EKF Líceum Kiadó gondozásában
Kiadóvezető: Rimán János
Felelős szerkesztő: Zimányi Árpád
Műszaki szerkesztő: Nagy Sándorné
Megjelent: 2002. április
Példányszám: 150

Készítette a PR-editor Kft. nyomdája, Eger
Ügyvezető igazgató: Fülöp Gábor

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The Department of American Studies at Eszterházy Károly Teachers' Training College is pleased to present Volume V of the *Eger Journal of American Studies*.

The *Eger Journal of American Studies* is the first scholarly journal published in Hungary devoted solely to the publication of articles investigating and exploring various aspects of American Culture. We intend to cover all major and minor areas of interest ranging from American literature, history, and society to language, popular culture, bibliography etc. The journal welcomes original articles, essays, and book reviews in English by scholars in Hungary and abroad.

The *Eger Journal of American Studies* is published by Károly Eszterházy Teachers' Training College.

Manuscripts should be sent to the editor of the *Eger Journal of American Studies*, Eszterházy Károly Tanárképző Főiskola, Amerikanisztikai Tanszék, Eger, Egészségház u. 4., 3300, Hungary. They should conform to the latest edition of the MLA Handbook in all matters of style and be sent together with a disk copy of the article in WP5.1 or Word for Windows.

ANDRÁS CSILLAG

JOSEPH PULITZER, MASTER JOURNALIST AND BENEFACTOR

An adventuresome youth of seventeen, Joseph Pulitzer (1847–1911) departed from Hungary, his home, in 1864 leaving the age-old hostilities and oppressions of Europe for a new life in America. He viewed the United States as the land of promise, opportunity, and, above all, freedom. Virtually penniless when he arrived, he served eight months in the Union Army. When the Civil War ended, he joined the ranks of jobless veterans. Unable to find work in New York, he headed for St. Louis, traveling the way of thousands of ex-soldiers—by hopping rides on freight trains and walking. He worked his way across the unbridged Mississippi River by firing the boiler of a ferry for several round trips. In St. Louis he labored as a mule hostler, stevedore, hack driver and waiter in a beer garden. There was a time when he lacked money for room rent and slept in a park. From this humble beginning, he started a career in journalism which was to reach towering heights of moral force and influence. His militant, crusading spirit dedicated to the public welfare was to achieve reforms, to win honors for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and its sister papers, *The World* newspapers in New York City.

Fluent in German and Hungarian but limited in English, Pulitzer got a job as a reporter on the German-language *Westliche Post* where he soon demonstrated a remarkable drive and “nose for news”. He turned in so many exclusives that the exasperated editor of another local paper, the *St. Louis Democrat* allegedly roared “I’m tired of having to read a German paper to learn the real news.” Pulitzer

acquired the bankrupt *Evening Dispatch*, merging it with the *Evening Post* in 1878. The new paper, the *Post and Dispatch*, pledged that it “will serve no party but the people ..., will oppose all frauds and shams whatever and wherever they are; and will advocate principles and ideas rather than prejudices and partisanship”—the first embryonic beginning which anticipated the platform now carried daily on the *Post-Dispatch* editorial page. (Dec. 12, 1878)

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* soon became the talk of the town. New stories exposed corruption in government, gambling, prostitution, a railroad monopoly damaging to St. Louis commerce. A headline shouted “Tax Dodgers” and subheads “Wholesale Perjury as a Fine Art”, etc. Articles were backed up by blistering editorials. Such aggressive journalism was yielding results and reforms in the life of the city. Pulitzer’s crusades used powerful ammunition—solid facts obtained through diligent investigative reporting. The exposés were based on knowledge of political corruption and ways of exposing it. The publisher’s experience as a reporter covering city hall and state capital, as a member of the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners and as a state legislator served him well. Above all, his crusades were not isolated one-time efforts, but continuing attacks that pounded away with persistence. To arouse public opinion he used what he called “the red thread of continuing force”.

Maintaining his ownership of the paper, in 1883 he moved the center of his operations to New York. Pulitzer undertook new ventures on an even grander scale. He again bought an ailing newspaper, *The New York World*. He called in his former editor from St. Louis and trained a new staff of journalist. It was from this point that his career really began to take off. In the first issue of *The World* under his ownership a manifesto was published that announced a totally new force in New York:

“... There is room in this great and growing city for a journal that is not only cheap but bright, not only bright but large, not only large but truly democratic—dedicated to the cause of the people rather than that of purse-potentates—devoted more to the news of the New than the Old World—that will expose all fraud and sham, fight all public evils and abuses—that will serve and battle for the people with earnest sincerity ...” (*The World*, May 11, 1883)

The robber-baron era was at its height. The United States was expanding and industrializing fast with millions of new immigrants pouring in. Practically nobody took the trouble or time to indulge in the luxury of social concern. New York's handsome facade concealed a sink-hole of selfishness, corruption and despair. Recognizing this, Pulitzer continued the crusade of a social reformer he had started in St. Louis. He listed a number of demands he thought the country needed to bring about social justice: "Tax luxuries, tax inheritances, tax large incomes, tax monopolies, tax the privileged corporations, a tariff for revenue (i.e. not for protection—*A. Cs.*), reform the civil service, punish corrupt officers, punish vote buying, punish employers who coerce their employees in elections." (*The World*, May 17, 1883) It may be noted that nine out of ten of these propositions became laws in due course. Pulitzer brought a quality exclusively his own in journalism, one that the country badly needed. It was the most earnest, powerful and efficient social conscience yet seen in journalism.

In 1887 *The Evening World* was launched, the evening edition of Pulitzer's paper. The combined circulation of Pulitzer's newspapers far outpaced any other New York paper. He was a political reformer and a successful business manager of his publishing company at the same time. The qualities which helped him win over the public were those which appeared every day in his newspapers: easy-flowing style; interesting, sensational stories within the limits of good taste; crusades arousing public opinion; the exposure of social problems; educating the general public to be critically demanding. He rendered a great service by educating the ignorant masses including immigrants. He taught them democracy, the importance of their votes, and maintained that America could be true to its promise. He adjusted his journalistic methods to the needs of the masses (often called "mass-appeal journalism"). His chief weapon was the editorial page. However, he was not to be content carrying out his struggle only through the press. He entered Congress as a representative for New York's ninth congressional district in 1885. For a brief period of time he served there as the first United States congressman of Hungarian origin.

At the time of the Spanish-American War over Cuba (1898) Pulitzer was also waging a fierce competitive war on the newspaper

scene against his chief rival, William Randolph Hearst. Temporarily he resorted to sensationalism in order to gain circulation. It proved to be the greatest blunder he ever made. This was the age of the infamous “yellow press”, full of fake news and jingoism, when many put the blame on Hearst and Pulitzer for the outbreak of the Spanish-American War itself. But later, he again employed a team of first-rate journalists, abandoning cheap sensationalism, and so once again, he won great admiration. He continued, as before, to use his papers to attack social injustice, political and economic corruption, the manipulations by trusts and insurance companies—still all important issues of the turn of the century.

But even before he reached old age or retirement the pace at which Pulitzer worked had taken its toll, wrecking his health. He often suffered from serious depression, which made him an eccentric figure. He was dealt another severe blow: his failing eyesight led to an almost complete blindness. Although this was a great setback in his career he still managed to maintain his high standard of progressive-liberal journalism in the running of his newspapers. Upon his retirement at the age of sixty in 1907 he sent the following message to his papers:

“ I know that my retirement will make no difference in its (i.e. the newspaper’s—A. Cs.) cardinal principles, that it will always fight for progress and reform, never tolerate injustice or corruption, always fight demagogues of all parties, never belong to any party, always oppose privileged classes and public plunderers, never lack sympathy with the poor, always remain devoted to the public welfare, never be satisfied with merely printing the news, always be drastically independent, never be afraid to attack wrong, whether by predatory plutocracy or predatory poverty”. (Quoted by Wilensky, 14.) This became the *Post-Dispatch* platform, displayed every day at the head of the editorial page even today.

Pulitzer’s publishing companies in St. Louis and New York were very lucrative businesses, making a lot of profit. At the turn of the century, Pulitzer could have rightly been held up as a classic example of the “self-made man”. From a penniless immigrant in search of fame and fortune, he went on to become, thanks to his own hard work and determination, a multimillionaire tycoon and a prominent figure in American public life. The Pulitzer Building, erected at the cost of

more than two million dollars on Park Row right across from the City Hall, was the tallest building in New York in 1890. In his private life the Old Man was eccentric and had vagaries. He was known to have entered his lavish office building with the golden dome and full of marble only three times in his life. He spent much of his time traveling around the globe or cruising in his luxury yacht surrounded by a flock of secretaries. He kept in touch with his editors by mail or cable. Sometimes there came from him a blast of telegraphic criticism—as rough as the wires would bear, sometimes there was a word of praise or suggestion for a series of articles.

*

After the Civil War philanthropic behavior became a distinguishing aspect of the American national character. An opportunity to perform a great public service came for Pulitzer in 1885. The French sculptor Bartholdi had completed the gigantic, goddess-like figure of “Liberty, Enlightening the World”, a symbolic gift of France to the United States, designed to stand on a small island near the tip of Manhattan in New York. A committee had been formed to secure funds for the construction of a proper pedestal for the huge statue. Enough money had been collected to lay a concrete base but not a cent was in sight to pay for the construction of the great pedestal designed to lift “Miss Liberty” nearly two hundred feet above sea level. The committee vainly sought aid from Congress to avoid shame. This failing, it announced its inability to proceed further and in effect threw up its hands. This was because much of the American public remained critical of the project, especially of its costs. They simply could not understand why the pedestal for the statue should cost as much as the statue itself. Many Americans outside New York considered it New York’s statue. “Let New York pay for it”, they said, while America’s newly rich millionaires were saying and contributing nothing. New York City did approve a grant of 50,000 dollars, but the expenditure was vetoed by the governor.

It was then that Pulitzer, whose reverence for liberty was as powerful as his desire to increase circulation, came to the rescue and

made an appeal to the American public through his newspapers. He published an effective editorial in *The World*:

“ It would be an irrevocable disgrace to New York City and the American Republic to have France send us this splendid gift without our having provided even so much as a landing place for it ... There is but one thing that can be done. We must raise the money ... Take this appeal to yourself personally. It is meant for every reader of *The World*. Give something, however little. Send it to us. We will receive it and see that it is properly applied. We will also publish the name of every giver, however small sum given, (*The World*, March 16, 1885)

As the fund drive began in both of Pulitzer’s papers in New York and St. Louis, the response was instant and popular. Contributions started to flow in, including, of course, Pulitzer’s own. Ultimately, the Bartholdi Pedestal Fund totaled more than one hundred thousand dollars, representing tens of thousands of donations ranging from a nickel to 250 dollars. The money was soon turned over to the builders and when a French ship brought the statue to New York the 89 feet (27 m) tall, beautifully designed granite pedestal was ready for the great figure that would become, perhaps, the most famous symbol of the United States and freedom. The statue was dedicated in October 1886, with a great naval and civic demonstration. Dignitaries from both countries were in abundant attendance. The sculptor was also present to witness the crowning of his work and the ceremony closed with a brief address by President Grover Cleveland, in which he said, “We will not forget that Liberty has made here her home; nor shall her chosen altar be neglected”. (Seitz, 155–159.)

Whether Pulitzer’s initiative to encourage his readers to make a donation in order to save the reputation of the project was an act of philanthropy on his behalf, perhaps, can be argued. No doubt, this campaign equally served his and his paper’s interests, too. Still, according to the permanent exhibit in the base of the Statute of Liberty highlighting the monument’s history, Pulitzer did have a prominent role in the erection of the pedestal and thereby in the whole process. This role only enhanced Pulitzer’s standing as one of the country’s most famous and respected newspapermen. His love of the fine arts and music was also known. His appreciation and taste were reflected

in his private collection, his relationship with artists as well as in the great benefactions made to the New York Philharmonic Society and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in his last will.

When in the fall of 1886, the renowned Hungarian painter Mihály Munkácsy arrived in New York to present his magnificent canvas “Christ Before Pilate” to the general public in the United States, Pulitzer helped to ensure a most enthusiastic reception in his honor. Not only his paper, *The World*, wrote in admiration about Munkácsy’s work but Pulitzer also did his best to praise the Hungarian artist’s merits at public gatherings and events. At one of the receptions in his honor he said, “We have met tonight to honor Mr. Mihály Munkácsy because he is a great artist and also because he is a stranger in this great republic and needs a hospitable welcome ... We welcome you sir, because true Americans, having no aristocracy, are ready to worship the aristocracy of virtue and the royalty of genius.” (Quoted by Swanberg, 125.) Subsequently Pulitzer commissioned Munkácsy to paint his wife’s portrait.

The best known portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Pulitzer were painted by the American artist John Singer Sargent. Pulitzer was also modeled by the sculptor Auguste Rodin. When his eyesight deteriorated, as with most blind people, melody became a solace. Piano music especially appealed to him; he went to concerts and listened to great players whenever possible. Now and then Paderewski would pay him a visit and there would be a carnival of piano playing in his house. His group of secretaries always included one excellent pianist, whose duties were by no means easy and whose slightest error in technique met with instant and fierce rebuke. The permanent fund of half a million dollars was established for the Philharmonic Society of New York in his will directing “that the income from such fund shall be applied and used to perfect the present orchestra, and to place it on a more independent basis, and to increase the number of concerts to be given in the city of New York, which additional concerts, I hope, will not have too severely classical programs, and to be open to the public at reduced rates, and to recognize my favorite composers: Beethoven, Wagner and Liszt.” (Quoted by Seitz, 464). Pulitzer’s bequest to the Philharmonic was the natural result of his liking for good music. He had helped it before by subscription and a substantial donation.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art received a bequest of more than 900,000 dollars, devoted to the purchase of works of art. In his will Pulitzer testified his lasting admiration for Thomas Jefferson, by setting aside 25,000 dollars “that a statue of that great statesman may at last adorn some public place in New York, the foremost democratic city of the New Republic”. (Seitz, 463.) The impressive statue now stands in one of the inner courts of Columbia University. Another sum of 50,000 dollars was left for the purpose of erecting a fountain at or near the Plaza entrance of Central Park, similar to the ones in the Place de la Concorde, Paris. The fountain now occupies the square on Fifth Avenue in front of the Plaza Hotel at 59th Street. Also, there is another important monument, which is in Paris and was a gift of Pulitzer: the imposing statue of George Washington and Lafayette as they are shaking hands with each other.

Pulitzer’s interest in education, and his desire to open opportunities for young men to advance themselves had a practical manifestation in the 1890’s when he started providing a series of scholarships to students at Teachers’ College, Columbia University, the City College of New York and various other institutions of higher education. Pulitzer also took a keen interest in the work of the black educator, Booker T. Washington and his Normal and Industrial Institute at Tuskegee, Alabama. Following 1901, he regularly and generously supported the Institute, paying for the expenses of several Negro students. As an act of charity and a token of heartfelt sympathy, he also made a donation of 25,000 dollars to the New York Association for the Blind (1909).

*

Nowadays, above all, Pulitzer’s name is remembered for the lasting legacy of the Journalism School at Columbia University and the Pulitzer Prize closely attached to that institution. In the second half of the 19th century American colleges and universities continued to be the greatest beneficiaries of gifts, notably the first made by George Peabody, whose educational foundation was established in 1867. Wealthy philanthropists poured fortunes into old institutions and founded new ones; educators introduced new courses and adopted

new teaching methods; professional schools of law, medicine, education, business, and other specialties increased in number. The university founded by Johns Hopkins in 1876 specialized in graduate education. In 1885 the railroad builder Stanford endowed a university in California, while a year later John D. Rockefeller made a gift to resuscitate the University of Chicago. In the same decade Andrew Carnegie enunciated his “gospel of wealth”, stating that the rich should act as trustees for the public benefit. Soon a series of further notable gifts for philanthropic purposes began to attract attention. Bankers, industrialists and other business people, like Andrew J. Drexel, Philip Armour, etc. inaugurated similar institutions of higher education at the turn of the century.

Joseph Pulitzer gained distinction in initiating the training of journalists at the university level. Although himself achieved lasting recognition for establishing high standard, modern journalism, he wanted to raise newspaper standards by endowing a school of journalism. He regarded journalism as a profession (which was unusual at the turn of the century) and envisioned an institution that would not only provide training in reporting and in development of writing style but would promote ethical principles, too. No school of journalism existed when he made his first proposal to Columbia University in 1891. However, the authorities at Columbia were inclined to look rather doubtful upon the proposition. Journalism still hardly qualified as a respectable profession, and *The World's* aggressive liberalism did not make it very appealing to the academics. Also, there were fears that the university's dignity might suffer. The collegiate training of newspapermen was almost as unheard of as advanced studies for salesmen or hotel managers. Pulitzer made it clear that once the gift was made, neither he nor *The World* would have any connection with the institution. Still, his plan met a lot of criticism and underwent much modification in the following years.

As a result of Pulitzer's eloquent and convincing argument for its need, the trustees of the university finally accepted the plan of a graduate school in 1903. It was supported by a donation of two million dollars from the man who masterminded it. Pulitzer, to further justify his idea, wrote the following in an article published by the *North American Review*:

“Our Republic and its press will rise or fall together. An able, disinterested, public-spirited press, with trained intelligence to know the right and courage to do it, can preserve that public virtue without which popular government is a sham and a mockery. A cynical, mercenary, demagogic press will produce in no time a people as base as itself. The power to mould the future of the Republic will be in the hands of the journalists of future generations. This is why I urge my colleagues to aid the important experiment which I have ventured to endow...” (*North American Review*, May, 1904)

This extraordinary statement of hope and faith in journalism was later further developed to the ultimate statement used as the *Post-Dispatch* platform quoted earlier.

Even after signing the agreement with the university prolonged discussions followed concerning organizational matters. The actual building of the institution was delayed—an interval which sadly dragged out until the end of Pulitzer’s life. Eventually, the graduate school in New York opened in 1912, a year after Pulitzer died. Since then, generations of able students who became remarkable reporters, editors and TV personalities have graduated from it, many of whose names are well-known in the United States.

Besides establishing the School of Journalism at Columbia, Pulitzer in his will provided funds for a series of prizes in the interest of literature and good newspaper work. This was a confirmation of the agreement he had reached with the university in 1903 directing the School of Journalism to annually award prizes for excellent achievements in the following categories:

1. For the most disinterested and meritorious public service rendered by any American newspaper.
2. For the best editorial article.
3. For the best example of a reporter’s work.
4. For the American novel which shall best present the wholesome atmosphere of American life, and the highest standard of American manners and manhood.
5. For the original American play, which shall best represent the educational value and power of the stage in raising the standard of good morals, good taste, and good manners.

6. For the best book of the year upon the history of the United States.
7. For the best American biography, teaching patriotic and unselfish service to the people illustrated by an eminent example.

At Pulitzer's request an Advisory Board of experts was to supervise the operation of the Journalism School and the prizes named after him. In time, however, the Board (now called Pulitzer Prize Board) made some alterations in the original awarding plan by adding new categories and broadening the scope of the areas where entries are eligible for a prize. Today, there are 14 different categories in journalism including cartoon and photography, 6 different categories in letters including poetry and non-fiction, and there is a separate category for distinguished musical composition. Each Pulitzer carries a 5,000 dollar prize, except for public service in journalism, which is awarded a gold medal. The prestige and influence that it brings, however, to the winner or the newspaper is incomparably more important than the face value of the prize. Since 1917, when the prizes were first given, a number of outstanding writers, for example, became first famous when they got the award. Among the recipients one can find the names of Margaret Mitchell, John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Bernard Malamud, Norman Mailer, John Updike, Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Edward Albee, Neil Simon, Carl Sandburg, John F. Kennedy, Archibald MacLeish, Aaron Copland and many others. In the category of journalism, for instance, 1973 was a most memorable year: the gold medal went to *The Washington Post* for its investigation of the Watergate affair.

All the daily and weekly newspapers (no magazines!) published in the United States are eligible for the Pulitzers. Sixty-six jurors, most of them top editors at newspapers nationwide, select and make nominations among the entries to the 18-member Pulitzer Prize Board. The Board, composed of prominent journalists, educators and scholars, chooses the winners for the awards. Sometimes the continual all-America emphasis of the prizes is criticized. The question has cropped up at board meetings now and then when a non-American

novel or play has been deemed superior to anything produced in the United States during the year. Many years ago, a Board member once asked Joseph Pulitzer Jr., grandson of the founder, then chairman of the Board, “Why are we so chauvinistic?” He answered, “That was old J. P. His main notion was to improve things *in this country* and he put it in his will.” (Quoted by Hohenberg, 349.)

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PÁL CSONTOS

IS POLITICAL CORRECTNESS POLITICALLY CORRECT? A TOUR ALONG THE ALLEYWAYS OF THE SHAMBLES CALLED POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

For a start, a word about the adequateness of the sub-title might not be amiss. Anyone who has been in the little meandering street in York, England, that is called The Shambles would associate with this term a meaning that not only refers to the original functional quality of the place but also to its similarity to a maze where one can fairly easily lose their way and become frightened by the condition of seeming “complete disorder or ruin,” to use the phrase offered by *The American Heritage Dictionary* as part of the first meaning.¹ It is in this sense that I thought ‘shambles’ might constitute a most appropriate term to denote the kind of ambiguity the issue of political correctness evokes in me. By the way, as the reader will have noticed in one of the previous sentences, for want of a more appealing choice, I use the plural third person pronoun when the gender of the general subject is not necessary to be made clear.² This might also hint at the fact that the present study is not going to be a hundred per cent politically correct. In fact, what I am going to do is simply pinpoint a

¹ See meanings 3 and 4 in *The American Heritage Dictionary: Second College Edition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, n.d.): 1126.

² This reflects a decision I have made despite the availability of several recommendable ambigenic or epicene pronoun possibilities: one... one; s/he; etc. The one that might seem most appealing to some radical parties is ‘h’orsh’it,’ “an artful contraction of ‘he or she or it,’ offered by Joel Forbes in 1975 as a gender-free pronoun” (Beard 32)—a choice I understandably did not want to risk in the present study.

few aspects of the phenomenon commonly denominated as political correctness, raise certain questions concerning them and, finally, offer an approach to what possibly could be the right track towards potential answers. Far be it from me to pretend that I know the correct solutions to all the problems and dilemmas that can crop up during this brief inquiry or can satisfactorily take care of all the relevant concerns. That is not the aim of the present study. Rather, I intend it to be merely thought provoking and I would not prefer it to move beyond the level of generating further query into the nature of the issue. Having stated this much, I will start with a quick outline of the itinerary I plan to follow, before I get immersed in the details.

In the first section, I am going to concentrate on the potential sources and original meanings of the issue of PC, starting with the inherent sexist quality of the English language, and followed by examples from George Orwell's and Paul Fussell's respective critiques of certain other aspects of English usage. A brief look at the notions of affirmative action and multiculturalism will preface an assessment of Harold K. Bush's "A Brief History of PC, With Annotated Bibliography," one of the most useful introductions into the evolution of the phenomenon.

The second section will take a look at interpretations, implications and applications of PC. From a grammatical definition, through a look at the hazards of both the serious and the humorous approaches and a sample of Hungarian application possibilities, we shall finally arrive at the controversial question of sexual correctness in section three.

I

"Every language reflects the prejudices of the society in which it evolved," state the authors of the first essay of Appendix B in Rosalie Maggio's *The Nonsexist Word Finder: A Dictionary of Gender-Free Usage*. They contend that one should not be surprised at how the vocabulary and grammar of English reflect attitudes that exclude or demean minorities and women since it evolved in a white, Anglo-Saxon, patriarchal society through most of its history (Maggio 187). Sexist language, i.e. language that "promotes and maintains attitudes that stereotype people according to gender" (165) assumes that male is the norm. Indicators of sexism in English include, for example, the

traditional exclusive usage of masculine third person personal pronoun forms [someone... he], gender-specific nouns [businessman; mailman], false generic terms [mankind; “all men are created equal”], the biased and unfair connotations attached to noun-pairs like [bachelor-spinster], etc. The term “sexism” was coined in the late sixties, and it was the first step in acknowledging the existence and extent of the phenomenon.³ Efforts to eradicate sexist manifestations and to revise a sizable proportion of language rules and customs have been around since the same time, but have been on the increase recently, which I plan to illustrate further down.⁴

In order to demonstrate what hazards there might occur in the revision of certain language rules and customs, I will go back to

³ Mind you, Hungarian, despite its gender-free personal pronouns, is also sexist to a considerable extent. (Cf. collocations of the kind “férjhez megy;” “feleségül vesz;” “az ember...;” “Uramisten;” etc.)

⁴ Let me just refer here to the *Newsweek* article “Religion: God Gets the He-ho” and a reader’s response it elicited. In the article author Kenneth L. Woodward, in a seemingly rejoicing tone, announces that “readers who find the Bible sexist, racist, elitist and insensitive to the physically challenged, [should] take heart” because OUP’s new inclusive language version of the New Testament and Psalms has “cleaned up God’s act.” In the new version, “God is no longer ‘Father’ and Jesus is no longer ‘Son.’ The hierarchical title of ‘Lord’ is excised as an archaic way to address God. Nor does God (male pronouns for the deity have been abolished) rule a ‘kingdom’; as the editors explain, the word has a ‘blatantly androcentric and patriarchal character.’ darkness has been banished in connection with evil because the editors fear it may remind some of the readers of ‘darkies.’ Even God’s metaphorical right hand has been amputated out of deference to the left-handed.”

The uneasy feeling one is left with about the further examples Woodward cites is that he might or might not be quite earnest in stating that “[t]he King James Bible never looked so good” (52).

The Reverend J. Steven Reynolds letter to the editor in the October 9, 1995 issue of the same magazine opts for the former choice and purports to put things into the right perspective when it contends that this “is another example of political correctness gone amok.” In it the reverend reasons that “[f]irst of all, Jesus was male. Being God in human form, he had to come to earth as one sex or the other, and it just so happened that was male [*sic*]—just as his mother was female. Second, the term ‘darkness’ has nothing to do with racism. The concept of light and dark are major themes in describing the spiritual realities of good versus evil. Light was used in representing good because one could see and was more prone to tripping over the effects of evil. This has nothing to do with the color of a person’s skin” (10B).

George Orwell. His dystopic prophecy about 1984 did not fully materialize, yet one can certainly recognize its relevance concerning the language aspect of the emergence of PC.

The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought—that is a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc—should be literally unthinkable, at least as far as thought is dependent on words. Its vocabulary was constructed as to give exact and often very subtle expression to every meaning that a Party member could properly wish to express, while excluding all other meanings and also the possibility of arriving at them by indirect methods. (Nineteen Eighty-Four 257)

The following quotation is also from Orwell, but it is not an apprehension of an imaginary future state of affairs any more. It is a reflection on how one actual segment of the English language can deteriorate when it is used for dubious purposes:

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemisms, question-beggings and sheer cloudy vagueness. Consider for instance some comfortable English professor defending Russian totalitarianism. He cannot say outright, 'I believe in killing off your opponents when you can get good results by doing so.' Probably, therefore, he will say something like this: 'While freely conceding that the Soviet regime exhibits certain features which the humanitarian may be inclined to deplore, we must, I think, agree that a certain curtailment of the right to political opposition is an unavoidable concomitant of transitional periods, and that the rigours which the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement.'

The inflated style is itself a kind of euphemism. A mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outlines and covering up all the details. The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. ("Politics" 173)

For some reasons, these were the words I involuntarily kept recalling when, as the initial stage of a first-hand experience, I was browsing through the entries of the *The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook*, and also later, when one of my colleagues called my attention to another related publication called *Are You PC? 101 Questions to Determine if You Are Politically Correct*. The instruction on the back cover of the latter "processed tree carcass" reminded me of the author of *Animal Farm* again. It goes, "Answer the following questions as honestly as possible. There are no right answers, but some are more correct than others."

It seems obvious that these two publications do not carry the label 'Humor' in their Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data for nothing and, because of that, they are supposed to be appreciated in like fashion. Nevertheless, I started wondering about the "early-warning" function of literature and, gradually, all sorts of related questions emerged in me, and I could only conjecture about the answers.

However, before I launch into listing these questions and queries, there are a few other issues I hope to clarify, or at least recapitulate. First of all, I will concentrate on yet another source that can illuminate to us why the development of certain patterns in (American) English usage can cause concern. The author's name is Paul Fussell. In *Bad or, the dumbing of America*, the chapter on "BAD Language," as one of 31 chapters seconding the statement that "nothing will thrive unless inflated by hyperbole and gilded with a fine coat of fraud," offers an insight into how in BAD language there must be "an impulse to deceive, to shade the unpleasant or promote the ordinary to the desirable or the wonderful, to elevate the worthless by a hearty laying-on of the pretentious" (101).

From the simple examples of "discipline" used for "field" or "subject," or "motion sickness" used for "nausea," through "vice president, merchandising" used for "salesman," Fussell demonstrates

the hazards of the inclination towards multi-syllabic pretentiousness and euphemisms.⁵

Fussell's invective is lashed out against quite a few other examples of "updated" usage that seek to impress through the sheer increase of syllables. Yet his stance is mentioned here not only because he represents a radical view about formations like "developmentally delayed" (for "retarded") or "African-American" (for "black") but also because his approach is fundamentally similar to that of Orwell's. Both of them would most probably disagree with the practices exercised and strongly recommended in the usage of English by the staunch adherents of PC.

Affirmative action, my next point, is an issue that has been around since the late sixties–early seventies, and should sound familiar to most of us. Nevertheless, just a quick recapitulation of the basic concept could possibly be of some help at this stage to illustrate why it has been a key prompt in the emergent awareness of the necessity of PC.

The original idea was first introduced in government programs that covered colleges, universities, and companies receiving public funds, and the overall goal was to make up for past inequality by giving special preference to members of minorities seeking jobs or admission to college. The programs oftentimes resulted in setting quotas of minority students and workforce to be admitted or hired, and therefore, also in protests by many Americans (minority citizens included).⁶

⁵ The fate of the word *salesman* exemplifies both the urge toward high portent and the normal American discomfort in facing unpleasant or demeaning things. Once, a *salesman* was a *salesman* as in *Death of a*, a useful person, to be sure, but socially low and inclined to make a pest of himself. Or herself, since women were admitted to the occupation, necessitating the welcome addition of a syllable as the word expanded to *salesperson*. In time, more class was felt to be needed, so in due course three syllables were expanded to five (*sales associate*) and then to six (*sales representative*). But this last, it was found, could be extended to eight syllables by designating this person a *merchandising associate*, and the former *sales manager*, a poor thing with only four syllables to his name, was verbally promoted to *vice president, merchandising*—eight syllables, and a nice bit of euphemism as well. (BAD 104)

⁶ Asian American students, unembarrassed by any traditional group advantages in American society, vehemently reject the idea that they should suffer in order to

Multiculturalism, or the movement of the “multi-culti,” identified by Robert Hughes as “the obsessive subject of (...) sterile confrontation between the two PCs—the politically and the patriotically correct,” a “buzzword with almost as many meanings as there are mouths to utter it” (83) would hardly offer any useful points of departure.⁷ A somewhat more specific definition, offered by Christopher Beard, on the other hand, will take us right to the core of PC:

***multiculturalism.** A broad, pluralistic social movement that, through the celebration of ‘difference,’ champions a more tolerant, diverse, inclusive, and realistic view of America and (in the memorable words of the New York State Social Studies Review and Development Committee) ‘the peoples who person it.’ Indeed, ‘multiculturalism’ encompasses virtually the entire spectrum of views that have come to be known, not always without irony, as ‘politically correct.’ (46)*

While I am aware of the fact that a thorough investigation into the problematics of the phenomenon denoted as multiculturalism alone should cover at least as many sources as would be substantial to make up a smaller library, for various reasons (most of all, space restriction), I cannot extend the scope of the present study to include that as well. Instead, I will concentrate on an article that, concise as it may be, appears to be one of the best introductions into my immediate subject. It is Harold K. Bush, Jr.’s “A Brief History of PC, With Annotated Bibliography,” published in *American Studies International* in April, 1995.

create space for underrepresented black and Hispanic groups who suffered no maltreatment or disadvantage at the hands of Asians. (...) Yet this may not be stated in public, partly because most universities continue to deny that they lower admissions requirements for select minorities, and partly because favored minorities would take offense at such ‘insensitivity’. (D’Souza 237)

⁷ NB.: we should not judge the severe Australian social critic on the basis of this one quote alone. In “Multi-Culti and Its Discontents,” the transcript of his second lecture collected and edited in *Culture of Complaint*, he does provide a thorough and oftentimes quite vitriolic analysis of multiculturalism in the US.

In his essay Bush contends that “political correctness has emerged as a source of strong emotional feelings and serious public debate in 1990’s America, one that does not appear to be dissipating.” His observation is based partly on the fact that, by the fall of 1994, it had been included in three “prominent cultural creations” (1/ a “Beavis and Butthead” episode called “Politically Correct,” mocking left-liberal educational reform; 2/ Don Henley’s sarcastic critique of PC social values made during the MTV broadcast of the reunion tour of the legendary rock group The Eagles; and 3/ the publication of the bestseller *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* by James Finn Garner (42). Bush believes that “PC as a phrase seems to have originated from the Left as a term of disparagement towards radicals and extremists,” and “as an indication of the Left’s sense that it must regularly criticize its own excessive political stances” (42–43).

However, in the Reagan years, PC was slowly but steadily taken over by the Right as a rhetorical tool, with the meaning that “one was ‘out of the mainstream of not only American life but also of university life’” (43). The term emerged simultaneously with a “sustained critical examination by a number of critics, both academic and popular, of American educational institutions, including higher education” (43).

The representative titles listed by the author in chronological order include *A Nation at Risk* (the 1983 doomsday govt. report on American education), Allan Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind* (the surprise bestseller of 1987), and Dinesh D’Souza’s *Illiberal Education*, at which I am going to take a closer look further down.

Thus it seems that the so-called PC-wars were restricted to the critique of ideas about education, yet Bush argues that they should be seen as “a manifestation of a much broader cultural struggle as well” (44). The desired effect of this much broader cultural struggle has been “to re-define through public negotiation the central ideas of American myth and ideology” (44). The primary battlefield still appears to be higher education in America, viewed by the public as an expensive failure given over to much of radicalism. As James Davison Hunter put it in the title of his 1991 book, these conflicts fought out

between Left and Right are actual “Culture Wars,” that can be traced ultimately and finally “to the matter of moral authority.”⁸

Struggling to define the meaning of America, the two opposing sides are very often talking past each other, each snug and comfortable in its own preconceived position (44). With the original battlefield (discussions concerning education) widened and extended to such diverse areas as entertainment, politics, news coverage, the media, and the arts, PC has become largely “an empty container of meaning” (45).

As a dangerous rhetorical weapon used by the Left and the Right alike, political correctness has acquired a status of a commonplace feature in political rhetoric. Some commentators have already tried to prove that it is already fading into the past. But PC, the author argues, is more alive than ever (45).

The selected bibliography completed by Bush in April 1994 lists 148 sources, 61% of which came out in 1992–1993. His contention is that PC is “a representative phenomenon of the American social scene,” and its supposed demise has been “vastly overexaggerated (...) by those who wish that the term would go away” (47).

II

“The cult of ethnicity has reversed the movement of American history, producing a nation of minorities—or at least of minority spokesmen—” states Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. in “The Decomposition of America,” a chapter in his *The Disuniting of America*, and adds that these representatives are “less interested in joining with the majority in common endeavor than in declaring their alienation from an oppressive, white, patriarchal, racist, sexist, classist society” (112). In his view, a “peculiarly ugly mood” appears to have settled over the arena of colleges and universities, which made it necessary for higher education administrators “to adopt regulations to restrict racist and sexist speech. More than a hundred institutions, according to the American Civil Liberties Union, had done so by February 1991” (114). Schlesinger seems to be worried that “what began as a means of

⁸ See also *Campus Wars: Multiculturalism and the Politics of Difference*, edited by John Arthur and Amy Shapiro.

controlling student incivility threatens to become, formally or informally, a means of controlling curricula and faculty too” (115). The examples he discusses raise a number of concerns, leading him to the conclusion that the PC movement, as “contemporary sanctification of the group” can create a situation in which “the old idea of coherent society” is put to stake, because “[m]ulticultural zealots reject as hegemonic the notion of a shared commitment to common ideals” (117).

Schlesinger is not the only observer who has his doubts concerning the ultimate potential outcomes of PC taken seriously. However, others seem to be a lot less alarmed by the impending “cultural tower of Babel” (Hughes 89), as the following definition might illustrate:

“politically correct. Culturally sensitive; multiculturally unexceptionable; appropriately inclusive. The term ‘politically correct,’ co-opted by the white power elite as a tool for attacking multiculturalism, is no longer ‘politically correct’” (Beard 100).

Thus, political correctness can be viewed in two, if not diametrically, yet nevertheless opposed, fashions: the serious and the humorous. What for a roughly 5–6 year long period might have appeared to the uninitiated as mere play on words, creating a multitude of adverbially premodified adjectival lexical units,⁹ has turned out to be an effective double-edged weapon defending the traditionally defenseless.¹⁰

⁹ as the “most frequently used linguistic form in the construction of culturally appropriate language” (Beard 4)

¹⁰ i.e., for example, minorities [**minority groups**. Members of the world’s majorities; emergent groups; traditionally underrepresented communities” (Beard 97).] E.g.: “**Jew**. Jewish person. ‘Some people,’ say the Fellows [sic] of the University of Missouri Journalism School’s Multicultural Management Program, ‘find the use of Jew alone offensive,’ and, therefore, it is to be avoided” (Beard 94); or women [**woman**. Wofem; womban; woman; womyn; woperson; person of gender” (Beard 107).] E.g.: “**seminar**. Ovarium; ovular (especially when women are among the attendees)” (Beard 102), etc.

PC has been applied to a range of fields, from education¹¹ through weatherforecasting to personal computers. Just to illustrate its diverse applicational possibilities, a sample of the list offered by Harold K. Bush, Jr. includes articles that relate PC to children's literature;¹² mathematics instruction; literary anthologies; graduate education in English; academic research; general cinema; western films; house construction; ecotourism;¹³ the business of selling sweaters; gift-

¹¹ Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* is considered to be by many the most widely read and discussed book dealing with the issues of PC on campus. D'souza, regarded as the chief spokesperson on PC for the political right, discusses in his book a number of conspicuous educational policies at different major American universities. Although D'Souza focuses upon important educational issues and provides an impressive amount of research, his book has been—deservedly, Bush contends—attacked “for careless analysis, hasty generalizations, and some overtly uninformed opinions” (51). For example, the author uses the term “politically correct” only once, in the section of the last chapter called “New Racism.” Even these are not his own words. He quotes Donald Kagan, dean of arts and sciences at Yale, who contends that it “is common in universities today to hear talk of politically correct opinions, or PC for short” (239). (See also John C. Chalberg's review in *Eger Journal II*)

¹² One related, although undoubtedly humorously intended, publication in the field is James Finn Garner's *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, published in New York by Macmillan Books 1994.

Modern Tales for Our Life and Times contains updated versions of 13 classical fairy tales, including *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *The Three Little Pigs*. As retold by Garner, they surprise us by unexpected twists in their plots and the new features championed by their protagonists, all this in the spirit of PC. The politically correct little pigs, for example, “set up a model socialist democracy with free education, universal health care, and affordable housing for everyone” but the readers are asked to note that the wolf in the story “was a metaphorical construct” and that “no actual wolves were harmed in the writing of the story” (12). Whether this is in all good faith, judge for yourselves... (For an analysis, see András Tarnóc's essay in *Eger Journal*, Volume II)

¹³ A look at the table of contents of The PC Committee's *Are You PC? 101 Questions to Determine if You Are Politically Correct* can prove to be fairly educational. After a brief introduction, the readers get multiple-choice questions broken down to various fields or walks of life where PC is applicable (is there anywhere it is not?) The questions sometimes read as if they were asked in earnest, sometimes they are downright funny if you do not take them for their provocative value. The answers speak for themselves.

Environmentalism QUESTION #52

How many of the following steps have you taken to conserve water?

(1) I shut off the water while brushing my teeth.

giving at Christmas; museums; and even personal computers ® “the advent of the PC of PCs” (46).¹⁴

Before offering an evaluation of the authors’ effort displayed in *The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook*, I will move back to my original query:

Whose concern really is PC? Is it the all-powerful media, or the government, maybe the administration, or all of them intertwined in a unison of common interests? Could it be the vast and allegedly all-encompassing middle class that wants to shed one of the last vestiges of diversity by attempting to conform to yet another set of idiot-proof but Procrustean precepts on the road from insecurity of all sorts to evolving into a smily, happy people?¹⁵ But why can it not be just normal healthy individuals aspiring to be more sensitive about their overall environment? Why? Good question... Maybe because ‘normal’ and ‘healthy’ by themselves are suspect in PC as examples of ableist language that can serve the purpose of “oppression of the differently abled by the temporarily able” (Beard 3). But surely, there must be an honest desire in most of us, caring human animals, to think and behave in a manner apt to improve our chances to survive in a brave, new, cruelty-free, environment-friendly, etc. world—or is there not?

I would believe that there should be. Nevertheless, we *cannot* always rest assured that we invariably make the right decision about which behavior pattern in a certain situation is correct for us to champion, or take the right choice in accepting or rejecting certain attitudes by others. If *you* feel that it is important for you to be politically correct or, in other words, if you want to abide by a code commonly shared by people whose opinion you think you should trust and accept, and if you want to be acceptable in your present niche in

(1) *I installed a low-flow shower head.*

(1) *I bathe less frequently.*

(1) *I flush the toilet less often (25).*

The bottom line is that the reader is still left in two minds about the actual intentions of the anonymous authors. However, when we look at the names in the list of adjuncts their approach becomes quite clear.

¹⁴ As far as the Hungarian applicability of PC is concerned, see, for example, István Kenesei’s article called “Kis politikai jelentéstan.”

¹⁵ For an interesting opinion on this issue, cf. John K. Wilson’s “Preface: PC and Me” in his *The Myth of Political Correctness*.

society but you notice that “the times they are a’changing,” in order to feel safe and comfy you need reliable guidelines to be able to comply with the new rules. But pray, where do you get those surefire guidelines? This is just one of the first questions you come up against when trying “to survive in the be-sensitive-or-else nineties” (*Beard* vii) but the number of additional questions it generates is legion. The foremost concern is, of course, one of language.

Language, because it expresses attitudes, it communicates beliefs and, as such, it is “not merely the mirror of our society; it is the major force in ‘constructing’ what we perceive as ‘reality’ (*Beard* ix). When you are uncertain about what is all right to say and to whom, or what is not and why, when you are in two minds concerning what opinions and concepts are acceptable and which ones you want to discard, you need an authority to take you by the hand and show you the way. One such authority—as far as self-advertising goes—appears to be *The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook*. Authors Henry Beard and Christopher Cerf contend that theirs is a comprehensive and exhaustively researched reference work and, indeed, if we look at the source notes section of their book, we do find it impressive. While we should not, for a second, forget about the “Humor” label, we all the same have got to concede freely that the “Source Notes” section impresses us not just because of the sheer number of the items included but also because of the diverse and compendious quality they display.¹⁶ The four parts of the *Handbook* cover an impressive array of items: “A Dictionary of Politically Correct Terms and Phrases” is supplemented by “A Politically Incorrect/Politically Correct

¹⁶ Ranging from other dictionaries and handbooks (like *A Dictionary of Euphemisms and Other Doubletalk*, *Dictionary of Cautionary Words and Phrases*, *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary*, *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing*, *A Woman’s Thesaurus*, *The New Words Dictionary*, *A Feminist Dictionary*, or *The Efemcipated English Handbook*) through books and articles of a relevant nature (including Nigel Rees’ *The Politically Correct Phrasebook*, Amoja Three Rivers’ publication called *Cultural Etiquette: A Guide for the Well-Intentioned*, *Racism and Sexism: An Integrated Study* by Paula S. Rothenberg, articles from newspapers and magazines like *The New York Times*, *Village Voice*, or *New York* magazine) down to handouts and pamphlets authored by college administrators (such as “Definitions” from Smith College or “How to Speak Post-Modern, Being a Glossary of Actual Post-Modern Terminology in Current Usage Made Sensible for the Un/informed and Semi(initiated)” from Princeton University).

Dictionary,” followed by “Other Suspect Words, Concepts, and ‘Heroes’ to Be Avoided and/or Discarded” to be wound up by Part IV, called “Know Your Oppressor: A Bilingual Glossary of Bureaucratically Suitable Language.” The late Mr. Orwell would probably be most outraged by this last one..

III

Due to constraints of space, for illustrational purposes, I will select only two out of the more than 750 entries, and these with an eye to another concern of mine, namely, that of the *application*, i.e. the issue of what use or abuse PC might be put to. The simple reasoning for this is that, following a desirable course of events, anyone can probably visualize a better world to come out of the benefits of political correctness. In my mind’s eyes, I can see thousands and thousands of former Donna Ellen Coopermans, who “...after a courageous yearlong battle through the New York State court system, [have] won the right to be known as Donna Ellen Cooperperson” (Beard v). A worst-case scenario, however, seems to be quite eerie and appalling. Among the more radical potential consequences of a verbatim interpretation of PC precepts, let me just mention the “Take Back the Night” marches an appalled witness of which I myself was way back in 1991 as a Soros-fellow at the New Brunswick campus of Rutgers, or the meetings of the kind advertised in a fashion that can very easily create unease in some people.¹⁷ I could probably offer you an impressive list of instances of how potentially dangerous a weapon PC might evolve into when it is used, or abused, for dubious purposes but let me restrict myself to a sample of “prisoners of PC” as cited by Kate Roiphe in an extract of her book *The Morning After: Sex, Fear and Feminism*, submitted to and published in *The Sunday Times*.

The two selected entries from the *Handbook* are ‘acquaintance rape’ and ‘date rape,’ because they very neatly second the points made by Ms. Roiphe. Acquaintance rape is a term “defined by a Swarthmore College training manual as spanning ‘a spectrum of

¹⁷ What I have in mind is a copy of a poster advertising a “NO MEANS NO WEEK” that displays the quote “ALL MEN ARE POTENTIAL RAPISTS” as its leading slogan.

incidents and behaviors ranging from crimes legally defined as rape to verbal harassment and inappropriate innuendo” (Beard 3), while date rape gets the specification of “acquaintance rape that occurs during a prearranged social engagement” (15). The latter entry expression is further clarified through the following:

Among the offenses specifically categorized as sexual assault in a landmark study on date rape conducted by Mary P. Koss of the University of Arizona is ‘intercourse as a result of intentionally getting the woman intoxicated.’ The Koss study found, perhaps not uncoincidentally, that 43 percent of the victims interviewed had not previously realized they had been raped. (15)

Katie Roiphe’s extract also starts with concerns about the Koss report and contends that “measuring rape is not as straightforward as it seems” and that “what is being called rape is not a clear-cut issue of common sense” (8). Furthermore, she adds that the “so-called ‘rape-epidemic’ on campuses is more a way of interpreting, a way of seeing, than a physical phenomenon. It is more about a change in sexual politics than a change in sexual behavior” (8). She expresses her worries about date rape pamphlets as vehicles that call into question all relationships between men and women and about feminist definitions of rape that “do not exist in a realm completely separate from the law” (9). The most shocking revelation she lists, however, is the one about what we could term “delayed recognition.” Becoming an actual prisoner (out) of political correctness looms over the horizon for anybody who translates the anecdote about the novelist Martin Amis to their respective terms. When he spoke at Princeton University in 1992, Amis “included a controversial joke: ‘As far as I’m concerned you can change your mind before, even during, but not after sex.’” Roiphe states that

the reasons this joke is funny, and the reason it’s also too serious to be funny, is that in the current atmosphere you can change your mind afterwards. Regret can signify rape. (...) Since verbal coercion and manipulation are ambiguous, it’s easy to decide afterwards that he

*manipulated you. You can realise it weeks or even years later (11).*¹⁸

The above examples might shed some light upon how, in the awareness about PC, there has recently occurred an increase of such proportion that could perhaps be illustrated by far-fetched hypothetical comparison. Let us suppose such an extreme case of hypersensitivity as a Hungarian person being sued for having offered what used to be known by the commercial slogan ‘the chimney-sweeper of the throat’ (a piece of candy called ‘Negró cukorka’) to an African(-American) student studying in Hungary—taken for an act of unintentional discrimination...

It seems to me that one of the apparently salubrious approaches to the overall issue of exaggerated concerns about political correctness could be the one championed by Paul Fussell, whose rightful heirs Beard and Cerf in all good faith might regard themselves. In the last chapter of *BAD or, the Dumbing of America* professor Fussell propagates that the only recourse is *to laugh* at BAD and warns that if we do not laugh at it, we are going to have to cry (Fussell 201). Henry Beard and Christopher Cerf have proved to be good disciples and scored in this respect. What waits to be seen is if we are still not going to have to cry later anyway.¹⁹

¹⁸ For additional insights into the debate about “sexual correctness,” see Sarah Crichton’s “Back of the Book” review-report together with Michele Ingrassia’s article, bearing the same denomination for the phenomenon in their respective titles, or Adele M. Stan’s compilation called *Debating Sexual Correctness: Pornography, Sexual Harassment, Date Rape, and the Politics of Sexual Equality*.

¹⁹ In the meantime Beard and Cerf have brought out their new *The Official Sexually Correct Dictionary and Dating Guide* (New York: Willard, 1995), observations on which will make up a separate paper planned to be delivered at HUSSE 3 in January 1997.

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LÁSZLÓ DÁNYI

INTERPRETATIONS OF SEXUALITY IN WILLIAM STYRON'S *SOPHIE'S CHOICE*

William Styron's (1925–) *Sophie's Choice* (hereafter cited as *SC*) was published in 1979. As almost all of Styron's books this novel has also become highly controversial, and its treatment of the theme of sexuality has been criticized for the following 'weaknesses':

the supposedly chaotic combination of Stingo's sex life with Sophie and Nathan's destructive love, the unjustified comparison of antisemitic Poland to a racist American South, the confused linking of Stingo's experience as a writer to Nathan's drug-induced madness, and, most importantly, the juxtaposition of all the above themes to the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps. (Durham 449)

This paper aims to analyze the relationship between meaning and sexuality and tries to explore the ramifications of the questions that are raised in connection with this topic: In what way are the different meanings of sexuality as creative power and compensation are interpreted. What is the definition of sexuality as a communicational channel in the novel? What is the rhetoric of sexuality?

In order to try and find answers to these questions, first I will analyze the situations in which the three main characters, Stingo, Sophie and Nathan are sexually entangled. Sophie is a Roman Catholic Polish girl, who is accidentally taken to the Auschwitz concentration camp and loses her father, husband, lover and two children. After her sufferings in the camp, she arrives in the U.S., where the Jewish and schizophrenic Nathan Landau saves the

emaciated Sophie, and offers her a seemingly better life, in which safety and security are the greatest values for her. Stingo is an autobiographical character, who is a promising twenty-two-year-old writer from the Protestant South, starting his career in New York. He unintentionally intrudes and witnesses Sophie and Nathan's self-destructive relationship ending in suicide. By telling the story of her life, Sophie immerses Stingo in the horrors of the concentration camps, but, unlike the two other characters, Stingo is reborn from the vortex of "monstrous mechanisms" (SC 625).

At the beginning of the novel the themes of sexuality and creative power are interwoven with each other. Stingo works for McGraw-Hill publishing house and as a young man hoping to become a great writer he longs for experiencing sexuality and lust on the one hand and for reaching the height of his creative power on the other. When tracing the most memorable events of his sex life, he remembers that up until the age of 13 he visualized sexuality "as a brutish act committed in secrecy upon dyed blondes by huge drunken unshaven ex-convicts with their shoes on" (SC 379). Then he has postadolescent fantasies about the girls around him, but he does not go beyond autoeroticism, which he does not regard as being unhealthy, and he shares the accepted opinion saying that "It was an old wives' tale... in which it was imputed to masturbation such scourges as acne, or warts, or madness" (SC 65-66). The need to leave autoeroticism and to fulfil his sexual desires parallels with the urge to achieve success in his writing career, and he nourishes ambiguous feelings in connection with both.

Ambiguity characterizes Stingo's consciousness when he tries to align his views on sexuality with the accepted moral code in the South. He is aware of the fact that he himself violates accepted norms, but he also feels the weight of his Southern background. For example, Stingo usually sticks to a modern idea compared to the old dogmas on masturbation, but later on in the novel there are other situations in which he argues by considering an old-fashioned moral code. He proposes marriage to Sophie at the end of the novel, and says that it is impossible to live down in the South and not to get married. Stingo justifies his incompleteness in the past by ignoring the same

moral code that he does adapt when projecting his own personal conduct in the future.

Individuals interpret everything as it is the most convenient for them and as it serves their purpose. Beyond regarding sexuality as satisfying lust, Stingo longs for establishing a family which he imagines as the stereotypical family based on the partners' mutual love and understanding, in which the mother, the father and all the other family members live up to their stereotypical roles imposed on them by the moral code of a Puritanical society. He ignores the contrary images of the family as a violent community where children are abused, wives and husbands divorce, beat and kill each other.

The young girls around Stingo make him remember the absence of 'real' heterosexuality in an office with "all-male clientele, mostly middle-aged or older" (*SC* 11). In the office the managers and heads are all men and the secretaries are women. The women in the office work under male management, under male conduct. This situation makes it possible for feminist critics to interpret the organization of labor in the office as a nice example of male chauvinism and misogyny. For Stingo the office job was monotonous, and he could be anything but a misogynist. The office is just the place where he is surrounded by women and his desire is aroused, as it usually happens to a man with a heterosexual flair.

Later on in the novel it is sexuality that brings Sophie, Nathan and Stingo together. In Yetta Zimmerman's house the innocent Stingo, who is a newcomer, gets to know about his neighbors, Sophie and Nathan, in an unconventional way. He "looked up at the ceiling in alarm. The lamp fixture jerked and wobbled like a puppet on a string" (*SC* 43). Stingo is accidentally exposed to Sophie and Nathan's sexuality even without first knowing or meeting them in person. This sexuality is faceless, he does not know his neighbors personally. From what he can see and hear he realizes that they are making love. The situation seems to be exotic to Stingo and it is because the words he can hear are "exotically accented" (*SC* 43). He cannot make out the words exactly, he can only hear sounds. For Stingo the accent of the words is enough to stimulate desire. The accent has a meaning to Stingo and not the word as a linguistic unit. This situation demonstrates that it is not necessary for words to have meanings and

to have distinctive forms. Maybe the sound sequence is a word upstairs in Sophie and Nathan's room, but it sounds like a murmur or a groan in Stingo's room.

Stingo's first love is Miriam Bookbinder, a Jewish girl. He remembers her while eating in a restaurant and enjoying his meal. One enjoyment evokes the image of another. "Enjoy, enjoy, Stingo, I said to myself ... I have from the very beginning responded warmly to Jews, my first love having been Miriam Bookbinder" (SC 45). Through the girl Stingo experiences empathy with Jews.

The first episode which darkens Stingo's erotic fantasies is the Maria Hunt story. He loved the girl when he was fifteen, and his father writes about her death. Maria committed suicide. She was from a tragic household. Her father was an alcoholic and her mother had high moral demands on people. Maria Hunt's story coincides with that of Peyton Loftis in Styron's first novel entitled *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951). The 'doomed' Maria Hunt's life is embedded in Stingo's story, she is the link between the two novels. After reading about Maria Stingo has a nightmarish erotic dream.

I soon fell into a heavy sleep that was more than ordinarily invaded by dreams. One of the dreams besieged me, nearly ruined me. Following several pointless little extravaganzas, a ghastly but brief nightmare, and an expertly constructed one-act play, I was overtaken by the most ferociously erotic hallucination I had ever experienced. (SC 52)

This is the first time when love and death are interwoven in the way they appear in Edgar Allen Poe's stories.

Another erotic incident awakens Stingo from his nightmarish and erotic dream. He can hear the still unknown neighbors making love upstairs. In the previous situation the noises from upstairs were stimulating but now after bearing the burden of the Hunt story Stingo's response is different. He shouts, "'Stop it!'... Fucking Jewish rabbits!" (SC 53). His anger expresses that Stingo interprets the neighbors' love-making in a different way compared to the first situation.

The first time Sophie and Stingo meet, he catches sight of her body and finds it sexually attractive. Sophie's physical appearance, after her

appearance in Stingo's mind as one of the love-makers, makes him realize how beautiful she is. Sophie's body has two functions for him. On the one hand it stands for the aim of his desire, on the other hand it makes him realize her sufferings. "As she went slowly up the stairs I took a good look at her body in its clinging silk summer dress. While it was a beautiful body,... It possessed the sickish plasticity ... of one who has suffered severe emaciation" (SC 61).

In the sequence of Stingo's sexual encounters Leslie Lapidus is the next character. Before trying to make love to her, Stingo recollects his sexual experiences. First he describes the "sexual moonscape of the 1940s" (SC 145). He describes the 40s as the era between the forefathers' puritanism and the arrival of public pornography. It was a transient period in which certain openness was accepted in sexual matters, but it was difficult to speak about it. Leslie Lapidus is a good example of the time. She could not speak about sex, and after her therapy she can, but she cannot do it. She is liberated to a certain extent, but not fully.

Stingo expects a lot from his date with Leslie. So far he has had an affair with a prostitute, but he does not count it as a 'real' sexual intercourse, because it was a failure for him. With all the tension and frustration in him which he says is due to the semi-puritanical 40s, he expects the fulfillment of his physical desire for Leslie. His desire towards Leslie is different from that for Sophie. He has a buried and poetic passion towards Sophie, and he wants to satisfy his needs with Leslie, as he wanted to with the prostitute. He assumes that his "attraction to Leslie was largely primal in nature, lacking the poetic and idealistic dimension of my buried passion for Sophie" (SC 145). He expects that Leslie would allow him to taste all the varieties of bodily experience filled with lust and she would be able to liberate his desires and further extend his artistic dimensions. A liberating force is needed when something is repressed. In this respect Stingo is not different from Leslie because he also has his repressed sexual desires and not-yet-born and latent artistic talent which also needs stimuli.

As I mentioned earlier in connection with the affair with autoeroticism and the moral code of the 40s, it is always necessary for Stingo to find justification for his sexual life. The keen striving for proving that what he does is right and accepted by even conservative

moral standards is present in the following lines. “Another thing: I had been almost beside myself with a sense of rightness of this prospect. Every devoted artist, however impecunious, I felt deserved at least this” (SC 144). When he starts making love with Leslie he tries to calm himself by doing things he thinks is typical of the forties. He does “a certain amount of smooching ... ‘bare tit’...” (SC 147). The duality of clinging to the Puritan moral code of the 40s and the liberation of sexual desires is always present in Stingo’s life.

Language and tongue are also of great importance in Stingo’s relationship with Leslie Lapidus. Language means sexuality to Stingo when he hears this name. The ‘l’ sound implies sex because it is an alveolar and lateral sound, and its formation involves tongue activity. For Stingo, who links almost everything to sex, the tongue is a sexual organ and a speech organ, but the two functions are related to each other as tongue can be used for doing sex and for speaking about sex as well. Thus he expects inexpressible pleasures from Leslie after hearing her name. It also adds something to Stingo’s excitement that oral sex was not accepted by the Puritan morals, and doing it meant breaking the rules, doing something forbidden. His expectations are even greater when he hears her speaking about sex. She does not have any inhibitions about language. She stretches out on the sandy beach and “peering into my face with all the unstrained, almond-eyed, heathen-whore-of-Babylon wantonness I had ever dreamed of, suggested in unbelievably scabrous terms the adventure that awaited me” (SC 148). Regarding sexuality, the impression Leslie has on Stingo goes a little bit beyond his expectations, because she can use her language so freely that he is even shocked. The following observation ironically expresses his astonishment, “Only the fact that I was too young for a coronary occlusion saved my heart, which stopped beating for critical seconds” (SC 148).

Stingo and Leslie are connected to language in another way as well. They both have a good command of English because they have majored in English. They can talk about Hart Crane and Walt Whitman, but all these conversations lose their importance when he sees her breasts. The conversation no longer has any meaning to Stingo. It is only meaningless background noise. It is meaningless in the sense that words do not mean as linguistic units. Their significance

is that they express a ritual. This meaning of the words is completely new to Stingo. This background conversation is just a prelude, or a foreplay, or an introduction to something desired. It is like the foreplay before the fulfillment of sexual desire. For Stingo it was a “prelude, a preliminary feeling-out of mutual sensibilities in which the substance of what one said was less important than the putative authority with which one’s words were spoken” (*SC* 151). Stingo realizes it is like a verbal game.

In this verbal game almost all the conversational fragments start with “My analyst said...” (*SC* 151). Eventually it turns out that Leslie’s repressed sexual desires are brought to the surface by uttering words that are connected to the sexual intercourse. Her analyst intended to liberate her sexuality by teaching her to pronounce these words. Although Stingo speaks about Leslie’s analytic treatment ironically, because he expected more than just kissing, the treatment was successful. She learned to use her tongue for sex in two ways; speaking about sex and doing it. Stingo’s disappointment comes from the fact that he expects words to mean what they mean. He thinks she means sexual intercourse when she mentions sexual intercourse. But for Leslie words have another function. Words can be speech acts, and words can substitute for actions. For her uttering the words ‘fantastic...fucking’ (*SC* 205) is such a great achievement and enjoyment as a sexual intercourse in its physical sense could be for Stingo.

The sexual intercourse remains a fantasy to Leslie. She can imagine other people doing it, but not her. She finds great fun in imagining historical figures making love. These images are revolts for her. It is like desecrating history or in other words to ‘fuck’ history, but only in words. These images do something to her, they satisfy her. She says, “I mean, doesn’t it just do something to you to think of one of those ravishing girls with that crinoline all in a fabulous tangle, and one of those gorgeous young officers—I mean, both of them fucking like crazy?” (*SC* 208).

She reads Lady Chatterley’s Lover, which gives her inspiration, but nothing more. The fantasies she has are not much different from Stingo’s, since they do not go beyond autoeroticism.

Stingo meets Leslie several times, and he always has high hopes, before meeting her he is always “in a state of semi-arousal” (SC 200). He recalls memories of his erections. By remembering these situations he stimulates himself up to a higher and higher level, from where it is getting more and more painful to fall down into the deeper and deeper hole of frustrations. Ironically, the pain is not only spiritual but physical as well.

I can assume I am suffering from a case of ‘severe acute glossitis,’ an inflamed condition of the tongue’s surface which is of traumatic origin but doubtless aggravated by bacteria, viruses and all sorts of toxicity resulting from five or six hours of salivary exchange unprecedented in the history of my mouth and I daresay anyone’s. (SC 211)

Finally, he concludes that her failure is due to her Oedipal complex. “Should I have suspected something a little bit amiss when a few minutes later, as we were bidding the Lapiduses and Fields farewell on the gravel driveway, I saw Mr. Lapidus kiss Leslie tenderly on the brow and murmur, ‘Be good my little princess?’” (SC 205).

Another sign of her complex is that she does not dare to touch his penis which is the organ of her joyful fantasies, but it is also the organ which could take her virginity and the Puritan morality of the 40s away. She sticks to the idea of ‘your virginity should be preserved until you get married’ so notoriously that when she is forced to touch it she “sails off the sofa as if someone has lit a fire beneath her and at that moment the evening and all my wretched fantasies and dreams turn to a pile of straw” (SC 213).

The Leslie Lapidus story can have other interpretations as well. For example a feminist reading of the text could make it possible to say that Leslie is the victim of male chauvinism. She is forced to touch Stingo’s organ, and it is more like an implication of a rape. The male organ is the symbol of all female frustrations. It is the organ a girl lacks, and in our male dominated world she would like to own it, but it is impossible. It is the penis envy motive and it is the symbol of eternal frustrations that are a part of Leslie’s unconscious.

Stingo gets disappointed with Leslie, and his frustration reaches a state when he is no longer interested in her life, and he does not want

to understand her. He does not want to understand psychoanalysis or the Christian dogmas on sexuality either. He thinks he was taken in, “if through those frigid little harpies in Virginia I had been betrayed chiefly by Jesus, I have been just as cruelly swindled at Leslie’s hands by the egregious Doktor Freud. Two smart Jews, believe me” (*SC* 216). He escapes into work, into writing. He tries to forget his sexual urge, he leaves the promise of physical satisfaction behind, and he wants to find spiritual satisfaction in arts.

The reader does not know a lot about another female character who might have played an important role in Stingo’s life. It is Stingo’s mother. The presence of the mother figure in Stingo’s life is not so relevant as the lack of it. He thinks that he contributed to his mother’s death, and that is why he has the combined feelings of remorse, self-hatred and guilt. The mother suffered from cancer and Stingo had to look after her. As he was a young boy at that time, one day he went for a ride with his friends and left the mother alone. That single day would not have any significance if the mother had not died later. The mother’s death attaches a different meaning to that day. Abandoning the mother causes his very strong sense of guilt. In the following line he remembers the funeral, “I thought of the hearth, and my deserted mother, and became sick with alarm. Jesus Christ, guilt...” (*SC* 360). He thinks he sinned against Jesus and against his mother and against the moral teaching of helping our human fellows in need.

The mother is the first determining female person in a child’s life. From a psychoanalytical point of view it is possible to say that for Stingo the loss of the mother evoked a sense of guilt which recurs whenever Stingo gets involved with female characters. The mother’s death is the starting point which evokes guilt, and since the mother stands for THE female, sexuality is associated with her. “I recaptured the fright in my mother’s eyes, wondered once again if that ordeal had not somehow hastened her dying, wondered if she ever forgave me. Fuck it, I thought. Prompted by a commotion next door, I began to think of sex” (*SC* 362).

The mother figure is supposed to be so dominant in a person’s life that she is usually idealized. It is extremely difficult to satisfy the needs of an idol, to live up to an idol. In your life, sooner or later you will do something with which you will hurt your mother, the idol.

Hurting the idol results in guilt. If you do not have the idol, you cannot hurt her. Through getting rid of her you could get rid of your guilt. But if you get rid of her, by killing her, or abandoning her, you will be a sinner. It is a vicious circle, and no way out is offered. First Stingo asks for her mother's forgiveness, but then, since he realizes that it is impossible now, he wants to get rid of the mother and forgiveness and the mother's death and everything connected to that incident. He escapes into dreams.

His dreams are filled with sexuality. He dreams about sexual scenes and about the three women who have played an important role in his life. In his dream he visualizes ironically exaggerated sex scenes, "glistening coral-pink vulvas as lofty as the portals of the Carlsbad Caverns; pubic hair like luxuriant groves of Spanish moss; ejaculating priapic engines the size of sequoias; jumbo-sized dreamy-faced wet-lipped young Pocahontases in all conceivable and meticulously detailed attitudes of suck and fuck." (SC 363) Stingo mentions Pocahontas, who is a legendary heroine and respected by most Americans. Mentioning her name in this text is the same as Leslie's fantasy about historical figures making love. It is Stingo's little rebellion against something that can be read only in one way. Stingo's reading of the Pocahontas story is different from the one offered to most Americans. Leslie does the same. She wants to see historical figures from her point of view, and not from the historiographers' point of view. She wants to read the historical texts differently.

The three women he conjures up are Sophie, Maria Hunt and Leslie. Stingo begins to analyze the relationships he had with these girls. Sophie is the Roman Catholic Polish girl, Leslie is Jewish, and Maria Hunt is the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant girl from the South. These are the general notions that can be attached to the girls, but these are the distinguishig features as well. The three girls can be compared to each other and to Stingo, and the comparison can be based on the family background or Jewishness or Catholicism, or any other criterion which is not worse and not better than the other.

Comparing the results of analysis and synthesis in Stingo's life, I will add that analysis usually ends in blind alleys. Talking about things over and over again, and analyzing them do not always lead to

a better understanding of things. Stingo, urged by his sexual desires, is impatient and after a while he gets fed up with trying to understand. At the beginning he tries to understand Leslie's frustrations, but finally he gives it up. It is the same with his mother. He tries to understand her suffering, but then he wants to escape and eschew his thoughts about her behind.

Is it all right to say that he cannot understand the significance of these situations? Perhaps he does not want to understand them because he cannot understand them. I do not think that this assumption is the explanation, however, if I accepted this explanation, I could end my essay by saying that Stingo is just a simple-minded character to whom it is too much to comprehend, analyze or synthesize. I think the explanation lies somewhere else. Perhaps there is no final truth to understand. Perhaps the problem is not with Stingo but with the aim of understanding. There is not one single thing to understand, there is not one single explanation, there is not one single and eternal truth. It takes a long time until the narrator Stingo realizes it.

Someday I will understand Auschwitz. This was a brave statement but innocently absurd. No one will ever understand Auschwitz. What I might have set down with more accuracy would have been: Someday I will write about Sophie's life and death, and thereby help demonstrate how absolute evil is never extinguished from the world. Auschwitz itself remains inexplicable (*SC* 623).

Auschwitz is only one example. Stingo tries to understand Auschwitz the way he wants to understand sexuality. Since death, horrors and almost all situations in the novel are linked to sex, it seems to be suitable to find an explanation to the failure of Stingo's sex life in the diversity of sexuality. At the beginning of the novel he is frustrated because he always has a lot of truths in his mind and he wants to achieve a monolithic single truth about sex. He tries to meet the requirements of the truth of the culture that ingrained the mystique of manhood in him. Even his own ideas related to truth in sexuality are different and vary from situation to situation, he has his truths, his ideas; he wants to meet the moral requirements of the age; he has Leslie's truth; he wants to know Sophie's truth. But at the beginning he

wants to make up one unity, or entity out of these truths and he does not accept them as they are. He does not accept the diversity of these truths. It is only at the end of the novel, after Sophie's death, that Stingo learns to read Sophie's life and his own life, and tries to accept the lack of one single truth.

At the beginning of the novel Stingo could be a typical modernist writer, who wants to understand the truth. When he asks Sophie about the truth in Auschwitz Sophie gives him the answer that she herself does not know the truth. She, who lived in the concentration camp, can remember things and recall memories and speak about the horrors, but perhaps it is not the truth, and she admits it to him.

Eventually, Stingo finds that the analysis of his sex life provides answers to his questions on why he is sexually frustrated, but a synthesis also seems to be adequate. The synthesis is linked to sexuality and death which is not physical. The quotation here starts with an exclamation expressing the painfulness of sexual frustrations. "Oh Lord, how my balls hurt as I synthesized stormy love-making not only with Leslie but with the two other enchantresses who had claimed my passion. ... a gathering distinguished not only by its diversity but for the sense that all three were dead. ... so far as each of them concerned my life.." (SC 363).

While Stingo has these dreams he is lying in bed with his father. His relationship with his father is balanced because they both respect the difference in character they have between them. Stingo makes a noise while having his wild dreams, and the father wakes up to it. He asks his son about what it was. It is very difficult for Stingo to speak about his dreams, to express what he wants to say, or perhaps it is difficult because he does not want to say anything, but he is forced to say something. Even in a relationship as close as Stingo and his father's sexuality is not an easy topic to speak about. Making words meaningless is a good way of escape for Stingo. When his father asks him about the noise he feigns drowsiness, and murmurs "something intentionally unintelligible" (SC 364).

The father lying beside Stingo frustrates Stingo. He likes his father, and he affectionately loved him when he was a child, but now the father cannot satisfy Stingo's needs. They make up an anti-heterosexual couple.

Stingo's relationship with Mary Alice, the literate and sensitive girl, is also disappointing to Stingo. In a certain respect she is just the opposite of Leslie. She is from the South and she is prudish in the use of language. Her Baptist upbringing does not allow her to use nasty words or to have a sexual intercourse with somebody, but it allows her to satisfy her partner by hand. This kind of experience seems to be exciting to Stingo first, but later on he finds it boring, because he cannot reach his aim which is the intercourse itself. His frustration is expressed in his dream after the Mary Alice affair. He goes to bed and after hours of sleeplessness he has his first homosexual dream. To him homosexuality is shameful. It is hard for him to confess that he has had a dream like that, but after waking up he thinks of societies of people, like seamen in the Marine Corps, to whom homosexuality is the accepted norm.

Sophie is the dominant character in Stingo's sex life. She is the motivating force for Stingo to start his quest, his voyage of discovery into two fields. She speaks to him about her life and reveals the horrors of history, and she is the aim of Stingo's sexual desire. Stingo has his first physically satisfying sexual relationship with her.

Sophie and Stingo have some similarities in their lives. Music is life-affirming in their lives. Music forms an integral part in their lives and stories. From the Freudian point of view they both have some unresolved Oedipal ties, because both experienced the death of their opposite sex parent and they both have some guilt about these deaths, and they want some punishment for their obstinacy. They feel guilt over not having pleased the lost parent, and they desperately need the lost parent's love and approval. Their dreams reveal frustrated erotic feelings. They are both involved in eccentric sexual affairs, however, the difference between them is that Sophie experiences most of these, whereas Stingo fantasizes about them.

Daniel Ross explores SC in a paper entitled "Sophie's Case, or What Does a Man Want?". The paper was delivered at the Feminism and Psychoanalysis Conference at Illinois State University, May 3, 1986. Ross states that the novel is more a case history than a Bildungsroman. According to him a case history describes the tension between male and female, hero and heroine, teller and tale. Ross compares the relationship between Stingo and Sophie to the famous

Freud and Dora relationship. Sophie's story gains power and importance only through the male narrator, Stingo. Stingo writes about his relationship with Sophie and Sophie's story becomes noteworthy only through his narration. Sophie confesses her life and her guilt to her psychoanalyst, who is Stingo. Stingo recollects his memories of Sophie, because he had a memorable relationship with her. And this relationship is memorable because it is sex oriented, so sexuality is among the main factors that motivates Stingo to remember Sophie.

It is true that Sophie confesses her story to Stingo, and that sexuality has a major role in Stingo's remembering Sophie, but sexuality is also a limitation for Stingo. His desire for manhood through sexual initiation limits his understanding, if there is a full understanding of Sophie's story at all. If we accept that the full understanding is impossible, we have to assume that sexuality influences Stingo's understanding of the story. Sexuality is a coherent part of his understanding of Sophie's story, of her story and not of THE understanding of THE story.

What the reader of the novel knows about Sophie's sexuality seems to be the truth but in fact it is not. What the reader knows about it is quite ambiguous, because what the reader knows is only Stingo's interpretation of Sophie's life. And even Sophie's original interpretation is ambiguous, because at the beginning of the story she tries to camouflage certain facts and creates her reality out of lies.

What are the elements of Sophie's sexuality Stingo knows about? It is important to know the elements of Sophie's sexuality and her experiences as all these are embedded in Stingo's reading of sexuality.

Stingo knows about the "digital rape" (SC 110) that happens to Sophie on the metro in New York. In the dark a finger penetrates into her vagina. That rape filled up Sophie with horror because she does not know her assailant's features and she cannot respond to this act. She wants to register something like malediction or hatred or disgust or fright inside her but she cannot. Far away from Poland, seeking reconciliation with her unstable psyche, Sophie finds that the place she escapes to is also a nightmare. She feels that this world is even more violent than the world of the concentration camps because this violence is faceless.

Sexuality in the concentration camp is not different from that in New York. Both are varied. Violence, rape, homosexuality, heterosexuality and sex for interest are parts of sexuality everywhere. In the camp Sophie flirts with Hoss in order to save her son from the gas chamber. Sexuality induces Sophie's choice between her two children. Wilhelmine, Hoss' housekeeper forces Sophie to make love with her. Wanda is also a character who finds satisfaction in making love with women.

Sophie and Nathan's love-making is the expression of the diversity of their relationship. It is gentle but most of the time it is violent and aggressive owing to Nathan's drug-taking and schizophrenia. Their sexuality involves forced oral sex, Nathan's urinating into Sophie's mouth and raping her. Besides being mentally sick and a drug addict, Nathan cannot come to grips with the situation that Sophie, who is not a Jew, suffered in the concentration camp and survived it. He loves Sophie but from time to time this love turns into despising and degrading Sophie through sexual abuse. For example he calls her Irma Griese, who was known for her cruelty in the camp. By raping Sophie he wants to take revenge on cruelty in the camp. First Stingo cannot understand their strange love-making and searching for meaning he asks Sophie why she lives with Nathan. Sophie cannot give a satisfactory answer to Stingo.

In spite of all these her relationship with Nathan is life-giving to Sophie. Nathan is everything to her. They make love and Sophie's touching Nathan's penis is like a child's asking for protection. "Whenever she began to grope for him she was reminded of the way a tiny baby's hand goes out to clutch an outstretched finger" (SC 395)

Sophie confesses to Stingo that in Warsaw she had a lover, Jozef. She did not tell Nathan about him but she does not know why (SC 432).

She has a dream about Walter Durrfeld, who has Jewish workers in his factory. In her dream he wildly makes love with her. After this dream she realises that she is attracted to him, but this attraction is ambiguous. She imagines having sex on an altar with him, and she thinks that she wants to pay back what she feels she has unfairly received.

Another explanation from the psychoanalytical point of view can be that in a male-dominated world in which Sophie lives, her sexual fantasies reveal her need to be overtaken, to submit to the power of male dominance. She chooses to enslave herself and it contributes to her tragic ending. But it also seems to be all right to say that Sophie is the victim of all men, because their desires and prejudices distort their ability to save and help her.

Stingo's relationship with Sophie brings him fulfillment. The first encounter they have ends in "Ejaculatio praecox (Psychology 4B at Duke University)" (SC 439). Later on, before Sophie meets her tragedy, they have varied and satisfying sexual intercourses in a hotel room. Stingo has not been the perfect lover to any of the previous girls. He needs Sophie to prove that he is a great lover. She is the only one who appreciates him. The sexual relationship is also satisfying to Sophie, because she is usually forced to make sex, except when she is with Stingo and sometimes with Nathan.

As it was revealed earlier in connection with Leslie Lapidus, language and sexuality are interwoven in the novel. Most students of English are shocked when they read SC because they find the language used in connection with sexuality obscene. But when they are given the task to express the same ideas that are in the novel in another way they have difficulty in finding substitutes for the nasty words. They have the same problem as all the characters have in the book, that is the difficulty of speaking about sexuality. Speaking about sexuality is not convenient because the way you speak about it tells the reader or the listener a lot about you.

What does the reader know about the characters' sexuality just by reading how they speak about it? He knows that Leslie's sexuality is repressed, Mary Alice Grimbball's is misused and abandoned, Nathan's is schizophrenic, Stingo's is unfulfilled and Sophie's is oppressed.

The language of sexuality causes a lot of trouble to translators as well. Translations always modify the effect because translations are the translators' interpretations of the writer's text. In the Russian version of the book all the four-letter words were left out. Almost all the sex scenes were left out of the film version. These facts prove that the sexual liberation has not achieved its purpose, yet.

Sophie is a character who takes liberties with sex. She does not have a good command of English, and it is a limitation in her understanding, in her vocabulary. At the same time it is a great advantage as well. Sophie uses the English words she knows more freely than other characters. It is because the emotive value of words is different to her than it is to native speakers of English. She is the innocent user of English. She says that, “Dirty words in English or Yiddish sound better than they do in Polish” (SC 233).

At another chapter Sophie confesses that she is lost in the English-speaking world, because she cannot understand everything (SC 396). Is it important to understand everything? Not necessarily. In the happiest moment of their love-making Stingo and Sophie forget about what language they speak. It is such a freedom for them that they do not have to force their thoughts and feelings into meaningful linguistic units. Stingo admits that a “kind of furious obsessed wordlessness finally — no Polish, no English, no language, only breath” (SC 604).

In Sophie’s sexuality the versatility of language is also joyful. Whenever she is with Stingo she finds pleasure in seeking different words for the sex organs and for sexual activities.

Quiescence and wordlessness recur at the very end of the novel when Sophie and Nathan lie dead in bed. Their entangled bodies rest in “total quiescence” (Brooks 110) after the last outburst of desire.

The rhetoric of sexuality in the novel shows that sexuality can have lots of meanings. For example Stingo’s efforts to meet the moral requirements of a given age and to live up to the moral standards of the 40s or 50s are vain attempts because it is impossible to define general norms or accepted behavior in sexuality. The novel does not reveal THE truth or THE meaning of sexuality. The reader has to accept the ambiguity of sexuality and meaning. The rhetoric of sexuality confirms this ambiguity and the possibility of several interpretations and the same idea is expressed in Shoshana Felman’s article when she writes that it is not “rhetoric which disguises and hides sex; sexuality is rhetoric, since it essentially consists of ambiguity: it is the coexistence of dynamically antagonistic meanings. Sexuality is the division and divisiveness of meaning; it is meaning as division, meaning as conflict” (Felman 158).

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ROBERT MURRAY DAVIS

MULTIPLE VOICES IN *THE DEATH OF BERNADETTE
LEFTHAND*

Even without Tony Hillerman's praise above the title of the Bantam edition of Ron Querry's *The Death of Bernadette Lefthand* (New York: Bantam, 1995; first published 1993), comparisons with Hillerman's mystery novels are inevitable. Both construct plots about murderers and victims; both draw upon the local color of the Four Corners area of New Mexico and Arizona; both deal with Indian¹ characters and draw upon Navajo customs and beliefs; both implicitly acknowledge that they not part of the culture they describe.

The similarities may account for Antonya Nelson's dissatisfaction with Querry's book in her *New York Times* review. She complained that the two first person narrators "cannot sustain suspense in the mystery because they do not have sufficient information to present to the reader. Much of what they report is either digressive or ancillary." When the element of witchcraft appears, however, the reader "feels the growing threat to Bernadette's life" and "The book begins to feel like a mystery...." This leads Nelson to predict that Querry will "find the perfect balance between the evocative Southwest and the equally evocative mystery genre" (Nelson 31).

Her description of the book, if not her judgment, is more or less supportable. Bernadette Lefthand has been killed—not, as her friends, family, and even the ostensible murderer think, by Anderson George, her handsome, alcoholic Navajo husband but by Emmett Take Horse, physically and spiritually deformed, who turns first to witchcraft, then

¹ I use "Indian" in preference to "Native American," following the usage of my First American colleagues.

to encouraging Anderson's drinking, and finally to physical violence out of jealousy and desire for Bernadette. He plants the evidence that leads to Anderson's arrest and, when confronted with photographic evidence of the crime he supposedly committed while drunk, his suicide.

And Nelson's logic is formally impeccable: *Bernadette Lefthand* falls in the mystery genre; it doesn't have the proper elements of the mystery genre; therefore it is not quite successful. The reasoning is not fallacious; the problem lies in the major premise. Querry has used elements of the mystery novel, but he has used far more ambitious formal means in order to create a complex picture of life in the modern Southwest.

The difference between Querry and Hillerman is obvious if one looks past the superficial similarities. Despite the exotic setting, Hillerman's books are classic examples of the mystery genre, detective novels in every sense of the word. He uses the standard limited third person point of view, with the investigator as focus of narration and major center of interest. And his books are constructed in the traditional way: disruption of social balance by a crime; search for a solution (dependent on evidence about motive, method, and opportunity); discovery of the guilty party; and restoration, however tentative and uneasy, of order in the society and in the mind of the detective, who has to understand the motive as well as the method and opportunity. Hillerman's Navajo detectives, educated in white universities, are useful not just to solve crimes but to present to the reader a world-view which they both share and analyze and a setting to whose beauty they are acutely sensitive.

Bernadette Lefthand turns the traditional mystery form inside out. It has no detective, no investigation, no discovery, except by the reader, and, most important, no restoration of order, social or psychological. The reader is given motive and opportunity, but the method (actually two quite different methods), is not finally decidable. Unlike Hillerman, Querry employs not one consciousness but five different narrative voices which deny coherence to the plot and harmony to the world created in the novel.

The narrative voices interweave with, supplement, and sometimes contradict each other, but in general terms they range from wholly

uninvolved and objective, even scientific, to very limited and subjective. The first kind of voice—quotations from anthropologists about Navajo beliefs at the beginning and end of the novel and between sections—is not usually thought of as part of the narrative at all. In most novels, these would be called epigraphs, casually noted for their relevance and then safely ignored, but Querry clearly regards them as crucial to his purpose. In *Bernadette Lefthand* the epigraphs offer a more detached and analytical perspective than the other narrative voices. In the novel as a whole, Querry neither asserts nor denies the efficacy of witchcraft, but the epigraphs give scientific and analytic evidence of the widespread credence placed in it by Navajos. They also help to establish the methods by which Emmett Take Horse believes he is operating. The last quotation suggests but does not enforce belief in the means of retribution for his crime: “a witch who escapes human retribution will eventually be struck down by lightning” (215).

In what would be considered normal narrative space, Querry creates a voice in italicized passages.² The copywriter for Bantam calls this “an unnamed stranger.” In fact, the voice is that of an impersonal narrator who employs limited omniscience to present the traditional Navajo cosmological view of the action. Most of the italicized material describes Emmett practicing witchcraft, but Querry also uses it to describe the Devil Chasing Ceremony with which Anderson’s grandfather attempts to cure him, Anderson’s brother Tom’s horror at the sight of a skinwalker which causes his fatal crash, and Bernadette’s ebbing consciousness and inert body. Most of these passages present specific behavior to reinforce and be reinforced by anthropological theory. To take a relatively minor example, in one italicized scene we learn that Emmett’s father, also a witch was struck by lightning, and in his last appearance Emmett is driving into a rare thunderstorm, exulting in his success.

On two occasions, Querry uses a scenic mode of narration, once to describe Anderson and his brother Tom driving across the desert, once to present the police investigation of Tom’s death in what seems to be a commonplace collision with a cow. These passages give a secular

² Geary Hobson has noted that Frank Waters used this device in *The Man Who Killed the Deer*.

view of the causes of Tom's death and Anderson's decline. The first helps to establish the relationship between the brothers: Tom is steady and sober, Anderson's good angel to Emmett's bad; Anderson has a tendency to drink and show off. It also foreshadows Tom's death: Anderson tells Tom to stay alert for "any of those stray livestock that might be xing each other out in the middle of this road," and Tom responds that "I expect you to keep me awake" (59). Just before the fatal crash, described in italics, Anderson is asleep. But as far as the white state trooper is concerned, in the ensuing scene in roman type, "it's just another one of your typical reservation one-vehicle accidents" (162), almost as common as deaths from alcoholism and suicide.

These objective voices are important to an understanding of what happens and why and how it does so, but the two first-person narrators dominate the novel. Their purpose is not, as Nelson thinks, to "sustain suspense in the mystery." As far as Gracie Lefthand, Bernadette's sister, and Starr Stubbs, Bernadette's white employer and friend, can tell, there is no mystery: she was murdered in a drunken rage by her husband, Anderson George, who then commits suicide. Nor can there be any suspense: Bernadette is already dead when the novel begins. Both accounts are retrospective. If Gracie and Starr were characters in a mystery novel, they would be witnesses, but Querry establishes them not as witnesses to but as survivors of a crime. In their struggle to understand what has happened, Gracie and Starr remember, speculate, and mourn. These narratives are central, not ancillary, to their tellers' function: to provide information about the character, setting, and situation from the contrasting viewpoints of a sixteen-year-old Taos-Apache girl and a sophisticated, somewhat jaded New York model transplanted after marriage to a country and western singer to Dulce, New Mexico.

Starr is so loosely connected with the plot that some readers think her character unnecessary or over-developed. Querry makes some attempt to integrate her into the story line: Gracie thinks for a time that she is somehow associated with the beginning of the troubles, and Starr does feel guilty about inviting Anderson in for a drink when he picks up Bernadette from work. But nothing comes of these suggestions, and Starr's real purpose in the novel is to represent a

white outsider's attitude towards Indian culture. Querry gives her individualizing traits (pills, drink, lovers, a crazy husband), partly in order to show that the white world is far from ideal, partly to make her seem more than a mere convenience.

But she is clearly useful. Bored and lonely in Dulce, which she finds stark and ugly, she collects Southwestern art, jewelry, and clothing. Curious about Indian life and culture, she has to gather information from reading because "Lord knows you couldn't get them to tell you anything about themselves" (31). She employs Bernadette as a maid, is drawn to her beauty of body and spirit, thinks of her as the only friend she has in Dulce, and regrets, far more than Bernadette or any of the Indians, the poverty in which she lives. Recognizing Bernadette's sadness as her husband's health and spirits decline, she offers to pay to send him to a "real doctor" because she has no faith in or understanding of Navajo healing ceremonies and regards belief in witches as mere superstition. In her last monologue, however, Starr is willing to admit that her inability to accept these ideas is "more a result of my own culture than of any unwillingness on my part to be open-minded" (183). Finally, speaking from feelings rather than superior white knowledge, she is both accurate and sympathetic: "Bernadette Lefthand is dead, and that something unspeakably evil and ugly happened to her" (183, 184). The major representative of the white world's impingement on the Indians, she is at the end far more sympathetic than the trooper who refers to Indians frozen from exposure as "popsicles" and thinks that, in contrast to "Your Mexicans and coloreds...Indians would rather kill themselves" (162) or than the white bigots from Lubbock in search of "some local Indian color" (39) who are lured into biting on a very old joke about how Indians get their names.

Starr is literally alienated from her surroundings, but Gracie Lefthand, whose account (except for the epigraphs) begins and ends the book, is so much at home that she hardly seems to judge. Perhaps not all of American literature comes, as Hemingway asserted, from *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, but Gracie certainly does. Like Huck, Gracie has little education, narrow experience, and an inherent shrewdness; like him, she does not think of herself as a victim; unlike him, she is not naive, nor does she admire or identify with the

dominant culture. And though she is aware of inter-tribal tensions and feelings of superiority, she does not share them.

Gracie is not exactly a traditional Indian. She watches game shows on a battered black-and-white television set, enjoys mass-produced junk food as much as she does a Hopi feast, and has only cursory knowledge of traditional Indian religion and none of the supposedly Indian identification with nature. She does note that “plastic bags have ruined the looks of the country” around Many Farms, but she also thinks the store from which they came “really nice” (82). White tourists endure heat and discomfort to enter Canyon de Chelly so they can “write their names everywhere and take souvenirs home with them even if they know they aren’t supposed to” (83). For her, it is merely the place where Tom’s and Anderson’s grandparents live.

She does know that she is an Indian, and she is matter-of-fact about rather than resigned to her lot. She points out that except for the local white people, “most everybody who lives around here is an Indian and real poor. One just naturally goes with the other, I guess” (46). She knows that whites, including Starr, look down on and discriminate against Indians, but, aware of the foolishness of white “Wannabees” and even less knowledgeable tourists, she does not accept the premise that they are superior. Nor does she let white attitudes spoil her pleasure at staying in a Gallup motel and eating at a Furr’s Cafeteria, the high points of her sixteen years’ experience.

Gracie is aware of and resigned to personal as well as social limits. Plainer than her accomplished sister, she accepts her subordinate role, proud of Bernadette’s beauty and her dancing and pleased with her romance with Anderson, the handsomest male in the region even though she does not entirely reject her Taos father’s stereotyping of his Navajo tribe. She accepts the responsibility of caring for her sister’s orphaned son (the idea of marriage and motherhood as natural disasters provides a subtext of her narrative) at the expense of her own education and prospects and even her home, planning at the end of the novel to move to California so that the boy will not grow up surrounded by people who know his parents’ fate.

Gracie knows the circumstances of the characters’ lives, but she does not have all the facts. She has heard that Emmett Take Horse is suspected of being a witch and believes in witches, though she doesn’t

know much about them, and that the Navajo who caused his terrible injury in a riding accident wasted away and died, and she knows that her sister befriended Emmett and then took up with Anderson. But she cannot know the depth of Emmett's obsession with Bernadette or the means he employs.

Gracie's usefulness in providing the novel with a structural thread is as important as the picture she gives of Indian life and character from the inside. However, she is only intermittently conscious of telling a story, and in her opening lines almost effaces herself:

I'm just barely sixteen years old, but sometimes I feel a whole lot older than that.

You know how sometimes a person can get to feelin' like their life's already just about over with? Or worse yet, like they ain't even here anymore?

Well, that's how I feel a lot of the time...at least ever since Bernadette died. (2)

Then, after telling how she and her father were notified of Bernadette's death, she presents fragmentary memories about her sister's beauty and prowess as a dancer and Anderson's triumph at the Taos powwow, the highest point of his beauty and power. Later—perhaps to indicate that the shock has worn off—Querry has her describe settings, customs, and characters, seemingly by association but in fact providing expository material essential for understanding what is to follow.

The middle of the novel, in which Gracie describes a trip to the Navajo and Hopi country with Bernadette and the George brothers, is more coherent. On the surface, the trip is the high point of Gracie's life, her farthest excursion into the world outside Dulce. In fact, intercut with the italicized passages introduced at this point, the trip marks the beginning of Anderson's decline, either because of Emmett's witchcraft or because of the alcohol which Emmett gives him.

After the trip and Tom's death, Gracie chronicles Anderson's decline and her sister's growing sadness and continued silence about her problems. The one moment of relief comes in Gracie's account of Bernadette's last powwow, where her beauty of body and spirit are emphasized most strongly. This sequence is clearly intended to echo

the one in which Anderson triumphs; Bernadette recalls it and vainly hopes, by making Anderson remember, to get him to stop drinking.

In the brief final episode, Gracie tells of the circumstances of Anderson's suicide and her plans to move to California before delivering her valedictory lines, an echo of the novel's opening:

I feel like my whole life is just about over with. Like it's already gone past me.

And I'm just barely sixteen. (214)

Gracie's beginning and closing speeches, enclosing as they do the two powwows featuring the doomed lovers, indicate that she not only establishes a framework but, like Charlie Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* and any number of Jamesian observers, occupies a central place within it. She is the most fully developed character, hers the major narrative voice, hers the clearest awareness of her circumstances and the means by which she must confront them.

However, Gracie's is not the only voice, nor hers the only tragedy. Tom, Anderson, Bernadette, and presumably Emmett have suffered the consequences of what the next-to-last epigraph, placed just before the catastrophe, calls the "imbalance" created "by indulging in excesses, having improper contact with dangerous powers," behavior that results in "conflict, disharmony, disorder, evil, sickness of the body and mind, ugliness, misfortune and/or disaster..." (165). Starr has suffered the loss of her friend and gained a limited awareness, but her knowledge will apparently not cause her to change her life for the better. The other narrative voices and the audience, presumably white, may contemplate but cannot alter or be directly touched by tragic events that occur not because of the white world's incursion or even Navajo witchcraft but of human flaws and passions that are more Indian in texture than in essence.³

³ I am indebted to the students in my critical reading and writing course who read and discussed the book with me and to Professors Geary Hobson, Alan Velie, and Jeanette Harris, who read an early draft of this essay.

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TAMÁS MAGYARICS

FROM THE ROLLBACK OF COMMUNISM TO BUILDING BRIDGES: THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET BLOC COUNTRIES FROM THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1956 TO THE PRAGUE SPRING IN 1968

1. The failure of the “liberation policy” (1956–1961)

One of the most obvious lessons of the events in Poland and Hungary in 1956 for the U.S. was the failure of its official policy pursued vis-à-vis the European communist countries since 1953. The policy of the “rollback of communism” and the “liberation of the captive nations” turned out to be no more than empty rhetorics during the first days of the Hungarian Revolution in October 1956. President Dwight D. Eisenhower wondered at a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) on October 26 if the Soviet Union would not “tempted to resort to extreme measures, even to start a world war” in case it lost its power over its satellites.¹ As a matter of fact, the President harbored some doubts about his Secretary of State, J. F. Dulles’s sharp anti-Communist rhetoric since 1953.² The way-out in this dilemma was offered by adopting a strictly legalistic-moralistic approach toward the events in Eastern-Europe and the Middle-East. The leading American statesmen denounced the use of force in international matters as “immoral” and called upon the Soviet Union as well as Izrael and the latter’s allies, Great Britain and France to abstain from aggression. The forum for this action was provided by the General Assembly of the UN and its resolutions; but while the U.S. made great efforts to enforce the resolutions regarding the Middle

¹ Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Waging Peace, 1956–1961*. Garden City, N.Y., 1965. 67.

² Bundy, McGeorge. *Danger and Survival*. New York, 1990. 253.

East, it did not do too much to do the same as far as Hungary was concerned. Dulles concluded with some satisfaction in mid-December, 1956 that the 60 satellite divisions “could no longer be regarded as an addition to Soviet forces—in fact they may immobilize certain Soviet forces.”³

The U.S. Congress realized the need for a shift in the policy toward Europe in general, and Eastern-Europe in particular. A Congressional delegation was dispatched to the West-European capitals in April 1957, two members of the delegation, Alwin M. Bentley and James G. Fulton visited Poland and Yugoslavia as well. The Congressmen in their report called for a more active American policy concerning the East-European nations in the fields of international relations, economic ties and even propaganda.⁴ Senator John F. Kennedy urged that the administration do its best to promote “peaceful change behind the Iron Curtain whenever this would help wean the so-called captive nations from their Kremlin masters.”⁵ This shift in tone was noticed—among others—by the Hungarian chargé, Tibor Zádor, who reported about a changing American-Polish relationship: Wladyslaw Gomulka was treated as a “Communist but a good Polish patriot”, the so-called national Communism (the Yugoslav model) was promoted by the American leaders, and even the American-Bulgarian relations improved: the two countries broke off diplomatic relations because of a spy-case in 1951, but in the summer of 1957 the American administration lifted the prohibition for American citizens visiting Bulgaria and the administration was even busy preparing an answer to two former Bulgarian notes, which suggested the restoration of the diplomatic ties between the U.S. and Bulgaria.⁶ In a broader sense, the exchange of messages between the Soviet Union and U.S. in late 1957 and early 1958 can also be seen as a sign of easing the tension between the two blocs. The Soviets, namely Premier Bulganin, suggested the freeze of nuclear testing, the demilitarization of Central-

³ See John Lewis Gaddis’s remark; In: Immermann, Richard H. ed. *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War*. Princeton, N.J., 1990. 65.

⁴ *Congressional Record*. 85th Congress, 1st Sess., Vol. 103. XIII. (H) 9324–9326. (June 26, 1957).

⁵ New Hungarian Central Archives. XIX-J-1-j, USA TÜK Box 9, 5/b 001338/6; 001338/3; and 001338/5.

⁶ *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*. 1958–1960. Vol. V. Part 1. Eastern Europe Region: Soviet Union; Cyprus. NSC 5811/1, May 24, 1958. Washington, D.C. 1993. 18–30.

Europe and a non-aggression treaty between the NATO and the Warsaw Pact, while President Eisenhower in his reply on January 12, 1958 proposed the termination of the veto right of the great powers in the Security Council, the unification of Germany after free elections, the free choice of the form of government in Eastern-Europe as stipulated at Yalta, and the termination of the arms race. The points relevant to Central-Europe were picked up by others as well: the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Adam Rapacki broached the idea of a nuclear-free Central Europe, while George F. Kennan in his Reith-lectures on the BBC elaborated on the theme of “disengagement”, that is the mutual withdrawal of troops from the region. As the Western leadership believed that either of the plans would give unilateral advantages to the Soviets in the military field, neither of them was accepted. Instead, the NSC spelt out the mainlines of the new American goals in Central-Europe in the spring of 1958. The report declared that “the Soviet control over the region ... is ...a threat to peace and to /the/ security of the U. S. and Western Europe. ... Poland’s ability to maintain the limited independence gained in October 1956 will be a key factor affecting future political development in Eastern Europe /and Yugoslavia/ ... The current ferment in Eastern-Europe offers new opportunities, though still limited, to influence the dominated regimes through greater U.S. activity, both private and official, in such fields as tourist travel, cultural exchange and economic relations, including exchanging of technical and commercial visitors.”⁷ The report warned that major East-West agreements would run the greatest risk, so the policy of “small steps” should be preferred in this situation. As for Hungary, the NSC maintained that because the country had become an important psychological factor in the world struggle, the U.S. policy pursued here should not compromise the “symbol” which Hungary had become.

The Eisenhower Administration thought that field to yield the greatest success might be that of the economic relations: on August 14, 1958 the administration announced the reduction of controls on exports to Soviet bloc countries.⁸ The initial steps were rather promising for the Americans, at least as far as Poland was concerned.

⁷ The Department of State Bulletin (DSB). Vol. XXXIX, No. 1002. September 8, 1958. 392.

⁸ Gardner. Lloyd C. A Covenant with Power. New York–Toronto, 1984. 125.

Economic relations were established between the two countries in 1957, negotiations started concerning cultural exchange programs, and Vice-President Richard M. Nixon visited Poland on August 2–5, 1959. However, the reaction of the Polish people to the visit startled Gomulka and the Communist leadership in Poland, who had pursued a conciliatory policy toward the U.S. in 1957 and 1958 mainly as an attempt to establish some counterbalance to the heavy Soviet presence in the region. The Soviets were also more restricted in these years than before because they did not want, and could not afford, to have “another Hungary”; however, from 1959 on they were able to put more pressure on the Polish leaders and Gomulka was a “good Communist” in the first place and a “good patriot” only in the second, after all. The positions became more rigid and confrontational on the other side too: the U.S. Congress passed the Captive Nations Resolution in July 1959, and the July 27, 1960 report of the NSC stated that the establishment of the economic, cultural, technical, etc. fields could not be effected without the cooperation of the other side; in short: the Eisenhower Administration accepted the then dead J.F. Dulles’s proposal that the socialist countries were only “inching their way” toward independence and it was in the interest of the Atlantic Community not to interfere with the pace of it in any way.⁹

US–East-European Economic relations in the 1950s

The economic relations between 1948 and 1956—if we can speak of any at all—were defined by the various commercial restrictions and embargoes: the political concept of a “monolith Communist bloc” resulted in a “monolithic” economic policy. First of all, the Anti-Dumping Act of 1921 was still in force and as the economic relations of the socialist countries were distorted by the political considerations, “dumping” could also be evoked against the export of goods of these countries. Another pre-World War II act, the Johnson Act of 1934 was also still in existence, which provided that the American business enterprises could extend loans and credits to the so-called non-friendly countries only for a period of six months; the East-European countries were always short of foreign exchange and therefore they were interested in medium- and long-term loans in the first place. Congress

⁹ Quoted in McKitterick, Nathaniel M. *East-West Trade*. The 20th Century Fund, 1966.18.

attached a clause to the Foreign Aid Act in March 1948: Section 117(d) excluded countries from the Marshall-aid which exported material under export embargo in the U.S. to any European countries which were not beneficiaries of the aid-program. As for the list of goods forbidden to be exported to the Communist countries, the Export Control Act of February 28, 1949 provided for a unilateral American commitment; it was later supplemented by an international list of embargoed items on November 22, 1949. The CG-COCOM list (Consultative Group Coordinating Committee) of January 1, 1950 was accepted by 15 Western countries by 1953. Furthermore, these countries put together the CHINCOM-list, i.e. the list of embargoed goods with relation to China during the Korean War, while in the U.S. another act forbade the import of woolen goods from Eastern European countries, which maintained contacts with North Korea or China or which re-exported the goods of the latter countries. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives under the chairmanship of Laurice C. Battle proposed an act about a more extensive list of embargoed goods than the COCOM-list; President Truman signed it on October 26, 1950. The Battle Act of 1951 (Mutual Defense Aid Control Act) threatened any country with an embargo which was regarded as a security risk to the U.S. The same year, the most favored nation status was revoked from all the Communist countries and all economic ties with the Soviet Union were broken.

This long list of prohibition was somehow broken only in 1954, in the wake of the death of Stalin, when Congress passed the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act (commonly known as PL 480), which made the export of agricultural surplus possible. At the same time, Prime Minister Winston Churchill suggested in the House of Commons on February 25, 1954 that substantial relaxation be effected in the field of supplying raw material and manufactured goods to the Communist countries.¹⁰ The restrictions in the East-West trade hurt the West-European countries more than the U.S.: while the former depended on the import of energy from and the export of manufactured goods to the East-European countries, the U.S. trade with this region was below 1% of the total.

¹⁰ DSB. Vol. XLII, No. 1087. April 25, 1960. 670–673.

The gradual shift in the assessment of the East-West relations made itself felt in the area of the economic relations, too. The Administration argued after 1956 that “national Communism” was kept in existence in Yugoslavia mainly because Tito opened up the country for more intensive trade relations with the West. Cautious steps were taken by the Administration in this field: for instance, the Rumanian Deputy Minister for Financial Affairs, Radu Manescu and Assistant Secretary of State Foy D. Kohler signed an agreement on March 30, 1960 to settle the outstanding financial questions between the two countries. The agreement was important for the Rumanians because under the stipulations of the Johnson Act of 1934 no country could get American loans which had outstanding financial questions with the U.S.¹¹ Later, the Hungarians, the Czechoslovaks, and the Bulgarians were also forced to enter into negotiations regarding unsettled financial issues with the U.S. because they increasingly needed the American or international loans and credits to stabilize their economies. This endeavor became one of the sources of the basic disagreement between the U.S. and the countries related to above: while the latter sought economic advantages, the U.S. had no special interest in promoting trade for its own sake. As Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Thomas G. Mann declared: “... From a purely economic standpoint, the true limitation on the magnitude of U.S. exports to Eastern Europe is the ability of these countries to earn dollars through exports to the U.S. or other hard-currency markets.”¹²

It was the Polish who had the most intense economic relations with the U.S.—besides Yugoslavia—from among the East-European states and their experience in this field frequently served as a yardstick for the other satellites. The American Ambassador to Warsaw claimed in his memoirs that the Polish Ambassador to Washington, D.C. Spasowski had a meeting in the State Department on October 20, 1956 where he told the Americans that Gomulka had to implement economic reforms and he would not decline assistance from abroad. Four days later the American representation in Warsaw approached the Polish leaders with an offer, but the Polish Foreign Minister Józef Winiewicz rejected “aid” and declared that Poland was more interested in the restoration of the most favored nation treatment. The

¹¹ DSB. Vol. XLII, No. 1093. June 6, 1960. 931.

¹² Report of the Special Study Mission to Europe on the Policy toward the Satellite Nations. Washington, D.C., 1957. 10.

international situation favored a bold Polish policy in this respect. The Soviets wanted to avoid the repetition of the events in Hungary on a larger scale—such an event would have threatened with either the dissolution of the Soviet empire in Eastern-Europe or with a third World War. At the same time, Alwin M. Bentley, a member of the Congressional delegation to Poland in April 1957 warned that “... /T/he present Polish regime is in a very precarious position and, if the current economic situation continues to deteriorate, could collapse by late fall. The only foreseeable result would then be a return to a Stalinist type government ... any weakening of Soviet economic domination of this area would be a net gain for the free world.”¹³ However, the Republican Administration had to reconcile its more pragmatic approach to its harsh anti-Communist stance. The dilemma was solved on January 5, 1957 when the Administration announced that “Poland was not a nation dominated or controlled by the foreign government or foreign organization controlling the world Communist movement”¹⁴, therefore the country qualified for the agricultural surplus shipments under Section 117 of PL 480. The decision triggered an intense debate in the U.S. Senator William K. Knowland opposed any economic agreements with any Communist country, while the head of the Congressional delegation to Europe in April 1957, Edna F. Kelly of New York stated that it was an “April Fools’ Day” joke to say that Poland was independent from the Soviet Union.¹⁵ On the other side of the aisle, influential politicians lobbied for the deal; let it suffice here to quote from Sen. John F. Kennedy’s address at the Overseas Press Club on May 6, 1957: “ ... Other satellites, we may be sure, are watching—and if we fail to help the Poles, who else will dare stand up to the Russians and look westward? ... /If we grant the aid/ ... we drive still another wedge between the Polish Government and the Kremlin... The basic laws governing our foreign economic policies ... recognize only two categories of nations in the world: nations “under the domination or control” of the USSR or the world Communist movement—and “friendly nations”. I suggest

¹³ Quoted in Adler-Karlsson, Gunnar. *Western Economic Warfare, 1947–1967*. Stockholm, 1968. 99–100.

¹⁴ Congressional Record. 85th Congress, 1st Sess. Vol. 103. No. XI. 7364–68 and 6845–47.

¹⁵ Congressional Record. 85th Congress, 1st Sess. Vol. 107. No. X. (S) 6457.

to you that there are more shades of /color/ than black and white ...¹⁶ The last sentence of the speech has special relevance: it meant a departure from the bipolar world view which characterized the first phase of the Cold War (1946–1961) and pointed toward the concept of a “multipolar world”, which was elaborated on and implemented by the Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy leadership in the early 1970s. Because of this bipolar approach and the doctrines like the “massive retaliation”, the Eisenhower Administration was forced into a passivity in the East-West relations. The Administration was not able to carry out a total face-about in the Polish-question either: the agreements signed with Poland in June and August 1957 provided a 30 million dollars loan to Poland through the Export-Import Bank and allowed Poland—with the rather liberal interpretation of PL 480—to purchase agricultural surplus in the U.S. in the value of 46.1 million dollars; both sums were considerably lower than the ones the Polish asked for. However, by 1961 Poland had received the MFN-status for the second time in the face of only weak Congressional opposition and the real question was whether this liberalization of the East-West relations would be continued and extended to the other satellite countries in Eastern Europe.

2. “Great expectations” and meager results (1961–1963)

a. The Kennan-Brzezinski Doctrine

The ideological underpinning of the policies of the Democratic administrations for the better part of the 1960s is said to be determined by Zbigniew Brzezinski by a number of contemporaries and historians. It is a fact that the historian-politician became one of the most prominent members of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department by the second half of the 1960s and later, in the Carter Administration, became the national security adviser. Brzezinski’s starting point was the criticism of the foreign policy of Jogn Foster Dulles: he believed that the “verbal hostility” took the place of real political ideas in the years of 1953–1957.¹⁷ He argued that the political shift in 1957 was only symbolic: the relatively small credit extended

¹⁶ Brzezinski, Zbigniew, “Competitive Relationship”; In: Gati, Charles, ed. *Caging the Bear: Containment and the Cold War*. Indianapolis and New York, 1974. 121.

¹⁷ Brzezinski, Zbigniew and William E. Griffith, “Peaceful Engagement in Europe”. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (July 1961). 642.

to Poland and the support of a few cultural exchange programs were still at variance with the professed goal of the U.S., namely, the destruction of Communist power in Eastern-Europe. In Brzezinski's reading, 1956 could be attributed to the "spirit of Geneva", i. e. it was the early *détente* that undermined Soviet political hegemony in Eastern Europe and the continuation of the relaxation of tensions would bring about the final collapse of Communism and not the confrontational style of the Republican administrations in the 1950s. Nevertheless, *détente* should not mean primarily the relaxation of economic relations: nowhere did economic aid bring about the political and social liberalization of a given country; for instance, opposition to the Soviet dominance started both in Yugoslavia and in Poland **before** American economic aid was extended to them—later the liberalization of the Hungarian political life was also introduced without any American financial pressure in 1962–1963. The solution should be a **dual** American policy: on one hand, the East-European regimes should be accepted as they were, on the other, the peoples living under their domination should be separated from them. In practice, it would amount to the maintenance of the formal relations and the encouragement and extension of the informal ones; in other words, the regimes should be "softened up" from within within the framework of a "peaceful coexistence".¹⁸ In particular, the West should (1) promote the appearance of "national communisms"; thus (2) enhance the chances of the East-European countries to loosen their ties with the USSR; and (3) ultimately create a neutral zone in the region ("Finlandization"). This program needed patient, long-ranging policies: evolution should be the goal instead of forceful "liberation".¹⁹

George F. Kennan became famous for his Long Telegram in 1946 and his article signed as "X" in the **Foreign Affairs** next year. In the wake of the Polish and Hungarian events in 1956 he modified his "containment" policy and broached the idea of "disengagement". Later, he became Ambassador to Belgrad but resigned in 1963 because of the trade restrictions imposed by the U.S. Congress concerning Yugoslavia. Upon returning, he proposed that instead of the bipolar world as conceived in the early years of the Cold War, a

¹⁸ *ibid.* 644–645.

¹⁹ Kennan, George F. "Polycentrism and Western Policy". *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 42, No. 2 (January 1964). 171–183.

“policentric” one emerged: there were three distinct Communist blocs, namely the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern-Europe.²⁰ Kennan urged that the issue of the East-West trade was a political question in the first place, but he objected to the Congressional approach which demanded political concessions for everyday commercial deals from the socialist countries. Furthermore, the trade restrictions backfired to a certain extent: while the U.S. had an annual turnover of 200 million dollars with Eastern-Europe due to its self-imposed restrictions, Western-Europe enjoyed a 5 billion dollar-turnover with the same region annually.²¹ From the political point of view, this rigid economic antagonism only strengthened the national self-sufficiency of the East-European countries and thus the U.S. had fewer and fewer means to influence the societies there.

b. The mainlines of the policies of the Kennedy Administration toward Eastern-Europe

As we have already seen it, John F. Kennedy supported the Polish loan in 1957; in his speeches and in his **The Strategy of Peace** (1960) he proposed that the improved trade relations with the satellites in Eastern-Europe would loosen the ties between them and the Soviet Union. However, the Kennedy Administration was paralyzed by the failure in the Bay of Pigs incident, and the Vienna Summit and the erection of the Berlin Wall even further limited its activity in the region. It was mostly symbolic gestures that indicated an intended, though rather slow departure from the earlier confrontational policies and rhetoric: in 1962 the Assistant Secretary of State, William R. Tyler explained that the East-European countries were more like “junior partners” than satellites²²; Secretary of State Dean Rusk suggested that “power is being diffused from the center” in the region, though “/T/he results of this massive and glacial movement cannot be expected soon”²³; or Assistant Secretary of State George C. McGhee declared proposed that the socialist countries should be given the

²⁰ *ibid.* 173.

²¹ Cited by Wandycz, Piotr. *The U.S. and Poland*. Cambridge, Mass., 1980. 375.

²² From Dean Rusk’s speech delivered at the University of Knoxville on May 17, 1962. Rusk, Dean. *The Winds of Freedom*. Boston, 1963. 57.

²³ The Hungarian chargé, János Radványi’s report on May 31, 1962. New Hungarian Central Archives, KÜM XIX-J-1-j, USA TÜK, Box 11, 5/b 005426/1962.

chance to join the international community of the free nations.²⁴ The Kennedy Administration thought that time had come to take the initiative after the Cuban missile crisis and two of its high-ranking advisers, Walt W. Rostow and McGeorge Bundy drafted a policy paper in which they suggested the the U.S. give up its Cold War politics, recognize the realities in world politics—which would have meant the final abandonment of the “liberation” of the East-European nations. However, the plan was leaked to a Republican representative, J. Arthur Young, who demanded an explanation from Rusk. At the same time, Sen. Barry Goldwater of Arizona started to talk about an “East-European Munich” and a counter-attack was initiated in the press, too. The Administration backed off: Assistant Secretary of State in charge of Congressional matters, Frederick G. Dutton wrote a letter to Rep. Young and assured him that the plan was just a plan and no change could be expected in the East-European policies of the Administration.²⁵ It was true that no drastic changes were effected, but after the summer of 1963 President Kennedy started a more or less new course in the East-West relations: in his major speech at the American University in June 1963 he called upon the Communist countries to start a dialogue with the West on the basis of mutual interests; then the Administration signed the Atom Test Ban Treaty in Moscow on August 5; while the President announced on October 10 that he supported the intended sale of wheat to the Soviet Union and the extension of intermediate-term loans and credits to the Communist countries.

In reality, the U.S.–East-European relations meant the bilateral American-Polish and American-Yugoslav ties in the region (excluding the Soviet Union). While Albania, Czechoslovakia, East-Germany and Hungary received altogether 545 million dollar aid from the U.S. in the form of UNRRA and other programs between July 1945 and June 1962, Poland got 1356 million and Yugoslavia 2720 million dollars in various forms.²⁶ However, the economic relations were rather

²⁴ For the exchange of letters, the Goldwater speeches, and the articles printed in the Congressional Record see New Hungarian Central Archives, KÜM XIX-J-1-j, USA TÜK Box 11, 5/b 004034/2 (1963).

²⁵ Drachkovitch, Milorad M. *U.S. Aid to Yugoslavia and Poland*. Washington, D.C., 1963. 121.

²⁶ FRUS. *UN and General International Matters*. Vol. XI. 1955–57. Washington, D.C., 1988.

insignificant on the whole. The U.S. exported into the East-European countries only in the value of 167 million dollars in 1963—some 45 million dollars out of it went to Poland under PL 480. This sum amounted to 0.7% of the total export of the U.S. (23.207 million dollars). On the other hand, the U.S. imports from these countries were even lower: the import from the East-European countries in the value of 85 million dollars meant only 0.5% of the total import into America. The Cuban missile crisis affected the trade relations in an adverse way: Congress called upon the President to terminate the most favored nation status of Poland and Yugoslavia and it even accepted an amendment which prohibited the extension of aid to Communist countries. The Administration suspended the issuance of export licences to the Communist countries during and right after the Cuban missile crisis despite the fact that after Yugoslavia (1948), Poland (1960), Rumania (1960), Bulgaria also settled its outstanding financial claims with the U.S. in 1963 and thus—on paper—became qualified for American aid. In essence, the intensification of the Cold War as a result of the various crises over Berlin, the Cuban-question, and the mounting tension in Southeast-Asia (at that time, especially in Laos) all contributed to the failure of the intended new approach to the East-West relations during the Kennedy Administration.

A special case in the U.S.-East European relations in the years 1956-1962 was provided by the “Hungarian question” in the United Nations. The representatives of the U.S. challenged the credentials of the Hungarian delegates at every possible international forum after 1956; the debate about the legitimacy of the new Hungarian regime and its acceptance by the U.S. was mostly carried on in the U.N. though. On January 10, 1957 a Committee of Five was sent out to investigate into the “Hungarian question” (Australia, Denmark, Ceylon, Tunisia, and Uruguay). After a long debate, the U.S. gained enough support to block the official Hungarian delegate’s admission and, in response, the Hungarian government ordered Edward Thompson Wailes out of the country: the diplomat arrived on November 2, 1956 and refused to present his credentials to the Kádár-government in protest against their collaboration with the Soviets. By the summer of 1957 ten different resolutions had been passed by the UN, which called upon the Soviets to refrain from using force in Hungary—to no avail. Under domestic pressure (both Congressional and popular), the U.S. Administration requested a special session of

the UN to discuss the “Hungarian question” on June 27, 1957. John Foster Dulles sent out a circular to the American representations around the world in which let them know the goals of the American delegation in the UN: (1) with the help of the report of the Committee of Five to refute the Soviets’ account of the events in Hungary; (2) to have the report accepted by the General Assembly in general, and by the Asian countries in particular, so as to undermine Soviet positions in the world; and (3) to make the secret trials held in Budapest against the revolutionaries public.²⁷ In reality, the U.S. maintained its strict opposition to the acceptance of the mandate of the Hungarian delegation, which slowly became a liability to the West in the East-West relations. The British Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd warned the Americans on November 26, 1957 that “many delegations at the UN in all geographical groups are at present very anxious to avoid anything likely to increase East-West tension ...”.²⁸ Moreover, the problem of the Hungarian prime minister, József Mindszenty, who fled to the American Embassy in November 1956 and eventually stayed there until 1971, could also trigger a “major quarrel ... /which/ might upset the present delicate balance in Poland by forcing Gomulka and the Polish Catholics to take sides ...”.²⁹ The expulsion of the Hungarians from the UN might have resulted in the expulsion of the Western diplomats from Budapest, and that was not in the interest of the U.S. or any other Western country as the Hungarian capital was one of the most important outposts of them in the satellite countries. With the death of the implacable Dulles, the “gradualists” gained the upper hand in the State Department and the attacks on the Soviets and their Hungarian stooges became more and more restrained. The incoming Kennedy Administration did not wish to risk its new policies toward the countries of Asia and Africa; finally, as a result of the talks started between the Americans and the Hungarians in October 1962, the U.S. dropped the “Hungarian question” from the agenda of the UN and the Hungarian government simultaneously proclaimed amnesty to those still in prison because of their activities in 1956. The case was worth discussing in details because it casts a light on the interplay of the

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ FRUS. UN and General Matters. Vol. II. 1958–1960. Washington, D.C., 1988. 78–80.

²⁹ Eisenhower. *op. cit.* 507.

U.S. policies and objectives in the “third world” and in Communist Eastern-Europe.

3. “Building bridges” and the impact of the Vietnam War on the U.S.–East-European relations

At the death of John F. Kennedy, his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson promised continuity both in domestic and international affairs. With reference to the Communist countries, he proposed to “build bridges”—though the metaphor did not apply exclusively to this group of the countries. The Eisenhower Administration made some weak attempts to open up “new paths” between the East and the West, but Soviet intransigence made the initiative a dead issue at the Geneva Summit in 1955.³⁰ Lyndon Johnson himself, who was the Senate majority leader at that time, suggested the introduction of an “open curtain” policy in New York in 1957; this approach was at variance with the current Republican policies but it meshed with John F. Kennedy’s ideas. As a matter of fact, it was even more radical than those because Kennedy believed that it was only Poland and Yugoslavia that should benefit from the liberalization of American policies toward the East-European satellites.

President Johnson announced his new approach at the opening of the George C. Marshall Library at the Virginia Military Institute in Virginia on May 23, 1964. He pledged himself to continue Marshall’s vision “to build bridges—bridges of trade, travel, and humanitarian assistance—across the gulf that divide us from Eastern Europe.”³¹ However, the “liberal” Johnson had to be cautious because of his Republican opponents and the conservative—mostly Southern—politicians of his party. Thus, he welcomed the opportunity that the Chamber of Commerce, after its conference held in the White House in 1963, urged the liberalization of the East-West trade: Johnson supported the establishment of further economic ties with the Communist bloc and, at the same time, effected considerable changes in the cultural exchange programs and political relations as well.

The Johnson Administration wished to gain broader support for its foreign political initiatives than its predecessor. The most prominent

³⁰ Johnson, Lyndon B. *The Vantage Point*. New York, 1971. 471.

³¹ See McKitterick. *op. cit.* 1–2.

members of the administration appeared before the various committees on Capitol Hill. Secretary of State Dean Rusk spelt out the guiding principles of the administration toward the Communist countries before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: (1) to prevent the Communists from gaining more ground and to make it as expensive and useless for them as possible; and (2) to encourage the establishment a larger degree of independence and the evolutionary processes leading to an “open” society within the Communist bloc.³² Assistant Secretary of State Averell Harriman elaborated on the latter point before the same forum: the East-European peoples should freely decide what form of government they wished to live under, they should entertain “natural relationships” with their neighbors, including the Soviet Union. This last point echoes the statement made by John Foster Dulles in Dallas on October 26, 1956; it is less known, though, that President Johnson advised his Ambassador to Warsaw, John A. Gronouski that besides working on the establishment of the Polish-American friendly relations he should not put the Polish in a situation, which might result in the deterioration of the Polish-Soviet relationship because “the primary interest of the U.S. is the good relations with the Soviet Union.”³³

However, the slow but gradual improvement of the relations between the U.S. and the East-European countries was arrested by the Vietnam War. While Secretary of State Rusk held a number of bilateral meetings with Foreign Ministers Péter (Hungarian), Gromiko (Soviet), David (Czechoslovak), Manescu (Rumanian), and Winewicz (Polish) at the UN in 1965, the escalation of the war erected unsurmountable barriers on both sides before the further improvement of the relations. The U.S. found itself in a deadlock: it wished to improve the relations with the East-European Communist countries to counterbalance the effects of the Vietnam War, but it had to move very carefully because the Soviet Union had acquired a new importance in the eyes of the American leaders: they thought that the key to solve the Southeast-Asian situation was in Moscow. Thus, they did not want to “disturb” the Soviet leadership with an increased degree of activity in Easter-Europe. At the same time, the Americans

³² The Hungarian Chargé, János Radványi’s report of his conversation with the Czechoslovak Ambassador, Drozniak. New Hungarian Central Archives, KÜM XIX-J-1-j, USA TÜK Box 13, 4-1. 103. 001303/11.

³³ Fulbright, J. William. *The Arrogance of Power*. New York, 1966. 120–121.

tried to make use of the Polish, the Hungarians, and the Rumanians in their half-secret negotiations with the North-Vietnamese. All these efforts were almost doomed from the beginning because the U.S. emphasized that it was waging a war against the **Communists** in Vietnam, and not against the Vietnamese; this attitude alienated those East-European countries which might not have deemed the Vietnam War so important from their point of view, provided it had not been against their comrades. Sen. J. William Fulbright recalls an incident that “an Eastern European diplomat told me that he regarded the Vietnam War as remote to the concerns of his own country except when he read statements in the American press celebrating the number of “communists” killed in a particular week or battle. Then, he said he was reminded that America considered itself to be at war not merely with some Vietnamese rebels but with Communists in general.”³⁴ It is true, though, that in the latter case, it would have been the American public that would have withdrawn its support from the war even at the beginning of the conflict. Of course, it was not only the Vietnam War that worked against the relaxation of the East-West tension. The ideological orthodoxy in the East-European satellites contributed to the failure to a large degree too, as the American Ambassador to Czechoslovakia Jacob D. Beam writes in his memoirs: “I soon had to realize that President Johnson’s ‘bridge-building’ program is not for Novotny...”³⁵ The Vietnam War served as good excuse for blocking the “bridgeheads” and resuming ideological confrontation on both sides: it became more and more difficult to maintain the idea of seeking rapprochement with the enemy in the U.S.—one of the “victims” of this atmosphere was the killing of the East-West Trade Relations Act in 1966—, while the “anti-imperialists” voices grew stronger on the other side and resulted in such actions as the “spontaneous” demonstration in front of the American Embassy in Budapest in February 1965.

The most ambitious economic plan of the Johnson Administration was its attempt to place the East-West trade relations on a new basis. The President appointed a committee under the chairmanship of J. Irwin Miller in October 1964. The task of the Miller-committee was to

³⁴ Beam, Jacob D. *Multiple Exposure*. New York, 1978. 152.

³⁵ For the full text of the Report see *American Foreign Policy. Current Documents*, 1965. Washington, D.C., 1968. 532–537; or *DSB*, Vol. LIV, NO. 1405. May 30, 1966. 845–855.

suggest ways to revive the East-West trade relations. Lyndon Johnson justified the operation of the committee by declaring in his message to Congress on February 10, 1965 that with a view to improve the balance of payments of the country, the volume of trade should be enhanced. The Miller-committee handed the White House its report on April 29. Its major recommendations and findings were as follows: "... 12. There is little doubt that the East European Communist countries are interested in purchasing more from the U.S. than they do now—principally machinery, equipment, complete plants, and technical data. This advanced technology could provide the U.S. with some of its most effective bargaining leverage for trade negotiations with Communist countries. ... 13. If we relaxed some of our restrictions, purchases from European Communist countries from the U.S. would probably rise in the short term. But their lack of foreign exchange would soon limit trade. In this sense, foreign exchange, rather than present U.S. export controls, is the major limitation on the potential for this trade. ... 14. The Committee has seen various estimates of our possible exports to the USSR and Eastern Europe over the next decade; none suggests that this trade could constitute a significant part of our total trade ... Whenever possible, we should use such /trade/ negotiations to gain agreements or understandings on such matters as library and information facilities, embassy quarters, the establishment of consulates, the jamming of broadcasts, the distribution of Government and other publications, and the initiation or expansion of cultural and technical exchanges ... 24. Trade with the U.S. should put pressure on Communist countries to move away from the rigid bilateralism ... it should encourage them to become more heavily engaged in the network of world trade and committed to the Western practices ... 25. U.S. aims in these negotiations must be political: we seek to encourage moves toward the external independence and internal liberalization of individual Communist countries. We are not interested in fostering animosities among European Communist nations. ... 36. Apart from the commercial risks, it is important to recognize that long-term credits could run counter to the central purpose of this trade and reduce its potential political benefits."³⁶ The Report was accepted by each of the 12-member committee, except for Nathaniel Goldfinger, the Director of Research of the AFL-CIO. The

³⁶ DSB. Vol. LIV. No. 1405. May 30. 1966. 855.

trade union organization had already clashed with the administration over the sale of corn to the Soviets in the early 1960s, and now its representative again emphatically gave voice to their political concerns regarding the proposed East-West Trade Bill. Goldfinger declared that “ ... /T/rade relations with the Soviet Union and its European satellites should be viewed as a tool of our Nation’s foreign policy. Therefore, the Report should have placed greater emphasis on the political aspect of this issue. ... Moreover, we should have no illusions about the ability of trade, in itself, to alter Communist attitudes and policies ... Recognition of these realities should result in greater emphasis on the principle of *quid pro quo* concessions than is contained in the Report. In my opinion, there should be no expansion of trade, extension of Government-guaranteed credit or MFN /most favored nation/ tariff treatment without political *quid pro quo* concessions from them. ...”³⁷ The gist of the debate was whether the so-called spillover effect was a proper strategy to deal with the Communist countries or not. The idea was that gains in one field, say, in trade, will influence other areas, for instance political life. Actually, the goal was to turn the economic, cultural, and technical exchange gains into political capital—and that is exactly why the leaders of the Communist countries were afraid of opening even toward seemingly innocent fields, like scientific exchanges or even art exhibitions.

The East-West Trade Relations Bill was killed in Congress. Consequently, President Johnson issued an Executive Order on October 7, 1966 in which he stated that it was a “national security interest” for the U.S. to provide credits to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria through the Export-Import Bank.³⁸ The Johnson Administration took every opportunity to “educate” the American people, to explain them that the unilateral embargo-policy hurt only the U.S., while the West-European countries took the opportunity to fill in the vacuum and established lucrative trade relations with the eastern half of the continent. The data suggest the victory of the conservatives on both sides: the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria exported into the U.S. in the value of

³⁷ American Foreign Policy. Current Documents, 1966. Washington, D.C., 1969. 438.

³⁸ The data are taken from the Hungarian Commercial Councillor Endre Kovács’s report on April 29, 1968. New Hungarian Central Archives, KÜM XIX-J-1-j, USA TÜK 4–5. 00316/3.

a total of 45.6 million dollars in 1966 (Czechoslovakia's share alone amounted to 27.2 million), while the figure for 1967 was only 44.7 million dollars. The American export into these countries amounted to 102.9 and 74.8 million dollars respectively. As for Poland and Yugoslavia, they exported into the U.S. in the value of 157.1 and 177.8 million dollars, and imported 226.4 and 157.4 million respectively in 1967. This downward curve took an even deeper dive with the crushing of the Prague Spring and modest increase came only with the new "multipolar" approach and "linkage" policies of the Nixon Administration.

SZABOLCS SZILÁGYI

VERBAL VERSUS NON-VERBAL ASPECTS IN *THE REZ SISTERS* AND *DRY LIPS OUGHTA MOVE TO KAPUSKASING*

Out of the three main literary genres, drama seems to be the most unique in that while it is heavily dependent on verbal language it cannot be fully realized without its equally important non-verbal elements of the script—that is, of course, if one treats dramatic works not simply as written texts but rather as play-scripts designed for theatrical performances and inherently ‘equipped with’ several non-verbal means of communication.

In the case of post-colonial writing the matter becomes even more complicated because quite frequently the mere *choice* of language(s) may become a crucial issue and gain an even finer tone.

Tomson Highway is one of Canada’s most exciting and distinctive playwrights as his plays explore the contemporary Indian in a dominant white society, and the results are both exciting and challenging. Highway is the first major native-Canadian playwright who had a great influence on Canadian theatre on a broader level and on alternative theatre in particular. In the multiculturally open Canada he had the support through the institute of Native Earth Performing Arts Centre to become a significant figure in the mainstream of Canadian literature and theatre.

Both *The Rez Sisters* (1986) and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* (1989) employ Native languages. Referring to this question in his foreword (being the same text in the published versions of both plays), he states that:

both Cree and Ojibway are used freely [...] for the reasons that these two languages, belonging to the same linguistic family, are very similar and that the fictional reserve of Wasaychigan Hill has a mixture of both Cree and Ojibway residents. (Highway 11)

While *The Rez Sisters* (which received the Best New Play Dora Mavor Moore Award) is a moving and powerful portrait of seven women making their way to the biggest bingo in the world, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* (awarded with the Best New Play Award in 1989) tells the story or rather several minor events of seven ‘Wasy’ men and the game of hockey of the mythical Wasaychigan Hill Indian.

Almost without exception all the translations of words, phrases or passages are given in the text, but the fine task of deciding how to interpret these to the audiences is up to the directors. The English language is only a second language for the characters, just as it is for Highway himself, yet they choose to express themselves in this language but the peculiarity of the use of the language is apparent.

Their English is broken English and it is a multilayered result of cultural oppression: a) English is not the mother tongue of the characters, and b) it is also due to the lack of proper education. Very often Natives happen to fall into both categories despite the fact that they do try to retain some form of their native language. In Wasaychigan Hill the use of English and all kinds of ‘civilised benefits’ (drinking beer, watching TV, playing hockey, shopping, etc.) are taken for granted. Even the title of *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* (the play, which will be in the focus in the first part of this paper) itself suggests several things: while it can reflect the influence of everyday use of English on the Natives, it can also have the connotation that this is how the people of this place are thought of, this is how they are treated, and, as a result, this is how they will *want* to behave: uneducated, low-class, blue-collar, simple, inferior, common, everyday.

The same feeling is expressed through the use of words like ‘gimme’, ‘tank you’, ‘kinda’, etc. and the consistent drop of ‘g’ at the end of gerunds or continuous forms of verbs like ‘rattlin’, ‘livin’, ‘shoppin’, etc. Although these naturally imply real-life-like dialogues, the emphasis is placed on the ‘broken-English’ the Natives speak.

The change occurs when the Natives shift 'back' into their Native languages. As soon as they reach a point which is either emotionally or spiritually too difficult to handle, they switch to their Native language—sometimes for no more than a word; which is probably due to Highway's use of 'english' as a postcolonial linguistic code (cf. Ashcroft 7–8), which is not only a somewhat distorted language of the English, but is mixed with Native words, thus characterizing a special region, special group or nation of people.

Besides the language another form of civilisation and colonisation must be mentioned: the symbols of Christian religion and the faith of most people as the majority are converted from 'paganism.' This is an issue that has to be dealt with in more detail, especially because it has significance in connection with language as well. Some of the people who converted did so as a result of disappointment in their own beliefs. At one point the two sides are brought to the surface in the following way:

Spooky: (*to Simon*) If Rosie Kakpetum is a medicine woman, Simon Starblanket, then how come she can't drive the madness from my nephew's brain, how come she can't make him talk?

Simon: Because the medical establishment and the church establishment and people like you, Spooky Lacroix, have effectively put an end to her usefulness and the usefulness of people like her everywhere, that's why Spooky Lacroix.

Spooky: Phooey!

Simon: Do you or your sister even know that your nephew hasn't come home in two days, since the incident at the hockey game, Spooky Lacroix? Do you even care? Why can't you and that thing...

(*Pointing at the bible that sits beside Spooky.*)

and all it stands for cure your nephew's madness, as you call it, Spooky Lacroix? What has this thing...

(*The bible again.*)

done to cure the madness of this community and communities like it across this country, Spooky Lacroix? Why didn't "the Lord" as you call him,

come to your sister's rescue at that bar seventeen years ago, huh, Spooky Lacriox? (90–91)

In these lines the traditional native view clashes with that of the colonised world in a somewhat usual way, but there are two interesting points that could be mentioned here: a) the much finer and sophisticated way of expressing the traditional views in Simon's case versus the much simpler way of thinking in Spooky's case which might reflect that the less smart one is the easier prey for the new ideas he might be; and b) the lack of capital letter at the beginning of the word Bible which might indicate Highway's own personal attachments—though it is only apparent in the written text, the treatment of colonizing religion is clearly treated with despise.

The person who almost entirely lacks the skills for verbal communication is one of the most controversial figures of *Dry Lips*. Dickie Bird Halked symbolizes the desperate need of a nation hoping to express itself, yet the means he/it finds follows the wrong structure, omits grammatical rules, and ends in a kind of dead-end street which is not so surprising if one traces these inadequacies back to Dickie's past.

Although everybody knows who the 17-year-old Dickie Bird's real father was and that his mother had a husband after whom he had been named, he has always been treated more or less as a bastard but it does not seem to matter as he is thought to be mentally handicapped or retarded. One of the scary messages of the play comes when his biological father accepts him as a result of a very shocking rape which he commits against Nanabush/Patsy with a crucifix.

As for mental handicap: according to native belief the special mental state allows people like Dickie Bird in *Dry Lips* and Zhaboonigan in *Rez Sisters* to have a unique kind of relationship with the spiritual world which is the obvious explanation why they can see and interact with Nanabush.

In *Dry Lips* the first Native reference is a separate and lonely sentence "Igwani eeweepoonaskeewuk. (The end of the world is at hand)" (36) which is from the Bible when Spooky tries to enlighten Dickie Bird. Although Dickie Bird cannot speak, he can write and whenever he wants to communicate, he writes words on a piece of paper—in English. Yet, when anyone tries really hard to get

something across to him, they speak in Cree or Ojibway as if the *real* means of communication could be nothing but the Native language.

Shortly after this, Simon (whether his name has any implication of the Simon of the Bible is yet another question, but if he is anything, he is a solid rock of Native culture) is approached by another man, Zachary, who is looking for an answer in the middle of a Native dance performed by Simon. One would assume, and is fooled for a while to believe, that Zachary seeks Simon's advice for spiritual reasons, and it is quite ironic to realise that it is because Simon worked with 'dough-making' machines that his help is asked for. In this scene, Simon constantly dives back into the Native language as if it was the only way to retain and maintain his spirituality, and although Zachary understands everything Simon says, his responses are always in English. He (Zachary) is so converted and materialistic at this point of the drama (and by this point of his life) that—especially from a Native observer's point of view—one can feel nothing but a strong kind of detachment from him and resentment over his actions. Nevertheless, this kind of behaviour is what will allow him the significant change that he goes through. So by the end, when he questions the existence of any kind of God, he does so out of true feelings for his people as he loses his materialistic view.

Besides the occasional Native words that come up every now and then, there are three major scenes when the use of Native language is extensive.

The least significant but quite surprising one is the hockey commentary of Big Joey in *Dry Lips*, who mixes the Native and English languages so much in his speech relating to the action on the ice that one has to stop and wonder at times whether he just mispronounces a word or two or uses a word of a different language. The reason for such a commentary might be multiple: a) as in most cases, the use of their mother tongue reflects that they are emotionally attached to what they are talking about and feel the need to hide behind their original language, or b) perhaps this is the only way they can express emotions, or c) by announcing or reporting the game, which originates in a different culture in their own language, it might become their own.

The other, and more important instance, of the use of the Native language occurs in the scene when Nanabush/Patsy is raped by Dickie Bird Halked. Shortly before Patsy (acted by Nanabush) appears, Black

Lady, his ‘mother’ (again acted by Nanabush), exchanges a few words with Dickie Bird about how he resents the crucifix, and he speaks in his Native language even though his mother tells him to say his prayers. When Patsy appears in the scene, he takes the crucifix and rapes her without a single word while this whole act is watched by his real father, Big Joey. As she disappears from the scene, Big Joey comes to comfort his (bastard) son and does so exclusively in Cree/Ojibway. Big Joey is one of the most ‘advanced’ civilised Natives in town, and his use of the Native language should get special attention. At this point he feels the need to return to it as English could not be a possibility for the confession he makes—admitting that he is the real father—and the whole scene becomes more understandable and, of course, a lot more intimate. Later, he even admits why he let the rape happen and did not intervene by saying, “I hate them! I hate them fuckin’ bitches. Because they—our own women—took the fuckin’ power away from us faster than the FBI ever did” (120). It may not necessarily be the most sound reasoning, yet, in fact, he only projects the hatred he should feel towards himself onto women: but this is again a sign of creating ideologies which is a white phenomenon rather than Native—showing how advanced he is in becoming more and more like the whites. It is also worth pointing out that this moment of confession which (unless interpreted for non-native audiences) might be forwarded in a very subtle way so the non-native audience will have but two choices: either they are sensitive enough and realise the relationship between the characters, or they fall into the typical coloniser phenomena of ignorance about native affairs.

In the penultimate scene we see Simon, who has almost lost his mind over the fact that his fiancée was raped and is ready to take revenge. We see him wandering through the woods as he is trying to express himself and talk to Nanabush but seems to be losing his voice. He comes to terms with the Native language not expressing gender:

... weetha (“him/her”—i.e., no gender) ... Christ!
What is it? Him? Her? Stupid fucking language,
fuck you, da Englesa. Me no speakum no more da
goodie Englesa, in Cree we say “weetha,” not “him”
or “her” Nanabush, come back!

(Speaks directly to Nanabush, as though he/she were there, directly in front of him; he doesn't see Nanabush/Patsy standing on the upper level.)

Aw, Boozhoo how are ya? Me goo. Me berry, berry good. I seen you! I just seen you jumping jack-ass thisa away... (110–111)

He is the one who could express himself in a very sophisticated way but who is not turning away from English totally. What we can see in the examples of the Wasy men is how they come to terms with the difficulties their human nature has caused.

Dickie Bird Halked blames Christian religion for being the cause of his having been born in a bar of a drunkard and then brought up as a bastard. Big Joey sees women to be the main source of his personal problems for not finding a woman he can trust and a woman he would choose to be his only partner—the possible loss of his potency is yet a further just explanation. Simon Starblanket finds the English language (along with other forces of colonisation) to be the major evil of his life. And although he does not deserve the treatment he gets from his fellow Natives, it is not the language that pushes his life in the direction he is heading, finally ends up accidentally shooting himself. He was the one who was trying to assimilate but still tried to hold on to the old traditions and values as well. This is what cannot work, it does not seem possible. You either give your full self to convert or you are lost. The closing scene is again the hockey game, which takes place shortly after Simon's death, and its commentary is delivered by Big Joey in the same old fashion: mixing English with Cree/Ojibway. This seems to be the only solution: yes, one can retain some of its past but it has to be melted into something much larger, much more accepted by English culture: for example, a hockey game.

In writing both his plays Highway employed both native and English languages—its reasons can be explained, but the urge to explain them might lead us astray. On the one hand, we could blame Highways's own lack of education as the main reason for the lack of sophisticated English. One can also find a subtle irony in the fact that he used both languages at different levels—English when it was a mere tool in an almost pointless conversation as the majority of the scenes involve the 'humanised' problems, and Cree or Ojibway when it was meant to express spiritual harmony, attempt for such harmony

or the presence of spiritual mystery—mainly the presence of Nanabush. The almost exaggeratedly uneducated English can be a grotesque acceptance of the role cast on Natives by the English as well as a sad reflection on Native affairs—they have not yet mastered the new culture, but seem to forget more and more about the old one.

All these might or might not be true, but what might gain an even greater significance is the lack of communication, lack of attempt to use any visible ways of communication.

The use of verbal communication seems to be in a different light if we consider that while in *The Rez Sisters* Nanabush does not say much (except in the role of the Bingo Master) it has a few dialogues in *Dry Lips*—as Gazelle, as Patsy and as Black Lady—but never as Nanabush. Realising this makes one wonder: can it be that everything that is verbalised on stage is just a petty attempt to reflect something much deeper, stronger, and spiritual which is present perhaps only in the subconscious of the Natives? Could it be that naming these either in English or Cree would drag them too much to a material level where they would have no place or force or even right to exist?

Let us take a look at the scene where Marie-Adele dies. She is taken for a dance by the Bingo Master who transforms into Nanabush, and without any explanation, or long speech leading into it she becomes aware of the change and the significance of having been able to see the bird; and she is taken into the spirit world. The whole scene is as peaceful as the Native spirituality where death is not necessarily the end of something but very much part of a cycle. It is perhaps more direct in *Dry Lips* where Simon Starblanket, after having been shot, “*rises slowly from the ground and ‘sleep walks’ right through the scene and up to the upper level, towards the full moon.*” (118)

Once the importance of speaking and not speaking has been in the focus one should not forget about other—this time non-verbal—means of the play. The two very obvious examples come from *The Rez Sisters*: the first being when the women go to the ‘band office’ at the end of Act I and there they stand “*in one straight line square in front of the audience. The ‘invisible’ chief ‘speaks’: cacophonous percussion for about seven beats, the women listening more and more incredulously. Finally the percussion comes to a dead stop. And Pelajia says, ‘No?’*” (60) Without any male character having to appear it is the responses of the women that show how little success they had. In lack of men in this case one feels that they (the men) are resonant,

hopeless, and ignorant, while in *Dry Lips*, although only Nanabush appears in different roles of women, most of the men's talk is about women who, this way, are just as much 'in the play' as if they were on stage and had lines as well.

The other and perhaps a bit more ambiguous example for the subtlety of showing less is the setting at the beginning of *The Rez Sisters*. It is the roof of Pelajia Patchnose's house which might in fact very well be indicative of the relationship of these women on the reserve to both civilization (or rather circumstances that these people were forced to live under) and the spiritual elevation towards the clarity and freedom of the sky (not surprisingly the role of Nanabush in *The Rez Sisters* is mostly that of a bird). It is exactly the lack of being rooted—or perhaps the symbolic meaning of 'going beyond what is known' lies below and loses its significance—serves as nothing more but a springboard.

Behind the English sentences, the civilised and educating sentences one can often hear a non-verbal sound: a never ending drum which can be the stomping of the feet of Nanabush reminding its people of their culture or just the blood rushing in one's ears louder at times when the sense of guilt (for non-natives) becomes harsher and the same moments more painful for native audiences. The mimicry in Highway's plays is not within the plays happening to the characters, but the simultaneity of emotions happening to the spectators of the performances. These moments are rarely caused by the verbal messages, but rather the more universal understanding of each other. The simplicity with which the playwright manages to treat the most annoying or most mournful moments of his plays prevents sentimentality.

Setting, props, choice of language, spiritual elements, use of words instead of action: the masterful handling or at times lack of all these create the curious reserve of Wasaychigan Hills. Thus when one takes a peek into the lives of its characters, it is hard to get involved but hard to stay neutral. Highway does it in a way that his plays talk to all kinds of audiences, and not always wanting to apply the mind but often hoping to reach out to the soul without falling into the trap of melodrama.

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ANDRÁS TARNÓC

VOICES FROM THE WILD ZONE:
THREE VERSIONS OF THE FEMINIST AESTHETIC
IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Feminism as a blueprint for political action is a derivative of the women's liberation movement. Whereas the foundations of the movement can be traced to the issuance of the Seneca Falls Declaration in 1848, the United States witnessed two major upsurges of feminism in the twentieth century. The passage of the 19th amendment in 1920 indicated the climax of the first phase, the struggle for universal suffrage. The second wave emerged as a result of a society-wide cultural, political, ethnic, and racial awakening in the 1960's, and as a backlash to the New Left's failure to take women's aspirations into account. The female aesthetic is the cultural arm of the second stage, or the modern feminist movement, launched by Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963).

This essay concentrating on historical development, principal aims and objectives, placement in the macrocultural context, and methods of cultural polarization will perform a comparative analysis of three variants of American feminist thought, the white female, black female, and Chicana aesthetics. However, before proceeding any further, a clarification of terms is in order. Since the feminist movement cannot be treated as a monolithic unit, the expression "feminisms" appears to be more appropriate (Országh-Virágos 254). Among the ever-increasing feminisms, cultural, psychoanalytical, linguistic, lesbian etc., the white female, the black female, and the Chicana aesthetics are representatives of an extremely crowded arena emphasizing a transformational mode of literary critical practice. Feminist literary criticism, however, is only a component of a wide range of critical problems denoted under the umbrella term of feminist criticism

focusing on such diverse issues as the possibilities of the subversion and transformation of the patriarchal system, feminist historiography, the reconstruction of the canon, and stereotypy of women in literature and in visual arts. The phenomenon can also be categorized according to national and geographical origin as the French critical trend characterized by the de Beauvoir-Derrida-Lacan-Kristeva-Irigaray-Cixous-Wittig continuum is complemented by the British and American school, including the emergence of feminist criticism in Quebec (Országh–Virágos 254–55). Furthermore, this essay serves another purpose.

One of the main complaints of non-white feminist activists is mainstream America's neglect or ignorance of their contributions to women's cause. This effort at comparative analysis shedding light at different shades of a movement popularly conceived as a white monolith, attempts to set the record straight.

The aesthetics discussed here are only a small component of the conceptual labyrinth of feminism. Feminism can be viewed as a tree whose trunk is composed of one and a half centuries of women's liberation struggle. Feminism as a political theory would be represented by the tree's main branches, the smaller branches stand for the various feminisms from which feminist (literary) criticism is spawned giving rise to the female aesthetic. (Throughout the essay the terms "feminist and female aesthetic" are used with identical meaning)

The White Female Aesthetic

Although this essay concentrates upon the American side of feminisms, the great figures of French feminism, Kristeva, Irigaray, Cixous, and Wittig deserve a passing look. French feminists, inspired by Lacanian psychoanalysis, locate the motivating force behind female creativity in the repressed sphere of the mind. Julia Kristeva argues that female writing stems from the imaginary, a pre-Oedipal stage of development during which the child mistakenly identifies himself as the Other. The derivation of female literary production from the pre-Oedipal stage is justified as in this pre-gender phase women are not constrained by patriarchal restrictions. This theory is also reminiscent of Jung's view of the source of creativity, with the pre-Oedipal phase functioning as women's "collective unconscious."

Whereas Kristeva originates female creativity and literary production from psychological repression, Luce Irigaray argues that women's language and writing stem from repressed sexuality. Following her "two lips" theory, derived from the anatomical characteristics of the female genitals, women's language is characterized by contiguity. Hélène Cixous' origination of female writing from the repressed female libido not only attempts to break from Kristeva and Irigaray's essentialism but underlines the difficulty in defining the female aesthetic:

It is impossible to define a feminine practice of writing, and this is an impossibility that will remain, for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed, coded—which doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. But it will always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallogocentric system; it does and will take place in areas other than those subordinated to philosophico-theoretical domination. It will be conceived of only by subjects who are breakers of automatisms, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate. (Cixous 340)

For Cixous writing is a means of fighting against patriarchy, and is an expression of "repressed female sexuality" (Weedon 68). As a return to the body "an uncanny stranger on display," (68) the process in itself is a revolutionary act. Cixous considers language as a concealer of an invisible enemy, male syntax and grammar (qtd in Kolodny 149). The critical means of resistance against the phallogocentric order is *jouissance*, a multitiered experience of sexual pleasure (Stanton 77). Monique Wittig's *Les Guérillères* (1969), promotes the image of the Amazon stepping beyond the sexual, political, and linguistic categories of the phallogocentric order (Jones 370).

The famous maxim that French feminists emphasize repression, their British counterparts stress oppression, and American feminists concentrate upon expression refers to the existence of an intellectual debate between French and American feminist thinking. The attempt to reconcile the theoretical French and the pragmatic American

perspectives gave rise to much of feminist literary scholarship in the U.S. in the 1980's. Similarly to Irigaray, Elaine Showalter representing the British-American line believes that female literary creation is sex defined and functions as a revolt against the view of writing as a phallic, or Oedipal process. According to the latter, the author through the writing process becomes a father to himself, suffering the "anxiety of influence," a term referring to the internal struggle a male writer must wage against his literary ancestors (Showalter 257). Perceiving writing as putting the "phallic pen on the virginal paper" reinforces that this activity belongs to the male domain (Showalter 250).

Showalter predicates her own theory on Shirley and Edwin Ardener's model positing society as a compound of dominant and muted groups. Whereas women belong to the muted, subordinated group, owing to a "lack of full containment," or perhaps overlap there exists a "wild zone." The wild zone, or independent female space is the source of women's creativity. While similarly to the French psychoanalysts' view Showalter considers the source of creative activity to be rooted in the unconscious, she concedes that the means of expression, or channels of communication are male dominated, and women are restrained to use the "master's tools." The wild zone manifests itself in three ways. Spatially it is an equivalent of an area in the dominant culture forbidden to men, experientially it indicates particularly female activities (childbirth, child rearing), and metaphysically corresponds to the imaginary (Showalter 261–262).

Rachel Blau Du Plessis argues that just as the Etruscan was a language unintelligible to the Romans, the female language appears Etruscan to the dominant socio-cultural order. Female writing is characterized by a porousness of communication, a secret language, a non-hierarchical structure, (131) and "non-linear movement" (135). In its "shapeless shapeliness"(132) it can be compared to a "verbal quilt" (136) representing the woman as a "leaf" in opposition to the "phallic tower" (133). Female writing performs a synthesis between opposing elements: love and ambition, mother and child, death and pleasure (134). Since woman is an incorporation of contradictions, she represents a strange liminality: an outsider by her sexual status and relation to the dominant group, yet an insider by social position (135) reminding one of DuBois' famous description of black consciousness:

“One ever feels his two-ness,—An American, A Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body.” (1013)

Thus the true meaning of women’s writing is located at the interstices.

Du Plessis offers the following definition of the female aesthetic:

....the production of formal, epistemological, and thematic strategies by members of the group Woman, strategies possibly born in contradiction, overdetermined by two elements of sexual difference—by women’s psychosocial experiences of gender asymmetry and by women’s historical status in an (ambiguously) nonhegemonic group. (139–140)

This definition is essentialist, and in its vagueness is reminiscent of Maulana Karenga’s view of the Black Aesthetic, and Raymund A. Paredes’ definition of Chicano literature. For Karenga, the determining factors are race and social relevance, for Paredes ethnicity and ethnic experience (74). A logical extension of Du Plessis’ s theory offers itself as the female aesthetic, a nonhegemonic marginal school of thought, can be applied to other nonhegemonic, marginal groups (149) supported by the fact that both blacks and Chicanos have had a subordinated historical status and have suffered from racial and ethnic asymmetry as well.

The term “epistemological” refers to the dominance of theory, compared to the higher degree of tangibility of the black feminist and Chicana feminist aesthetics. The emphasis on marginality makes woman the symbol of all oppressed groups expanding Zora Neale Hurston’s notion of the black woman as the “mule uh de world” (14).

Paralleling the black aesthetics’ committed and detached schools, the white female aesthetic can be divided into a radical and a more inclusive version. Carolyn Heilbrun and Catherine Stimpson point out that two types of female literary criticism exist. Following biblical analogy, demonstrated by its “righteous, angry and admonitory tone,” the radical trend adheres to the lines of the Old Testament, and the New Testament view seeks “the grace of imagination” (Showalter 243).

The white female aesthetic, like its other minority counterparts, was a response to a historical exclusion of women from American public discourse. Nina Baym asserts that the barring of women from literary theory was motivated by sexist male bias, and the prevailing contention that women were unable to produce “great works” (64). The excellent or great works were books replete with classical references, and the exclusion of women from higher education denied the former the opportunity of being familiarized with the classics. Also, just as the black male writer was forced to carry the stigma of eternal childhood, mainstream America had foisted on the white woman writer a similar image. In Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper” the author, suffering from post-partum depression, is locked into the nursery, deprived of intellectual activities, and is condescendingly treated by her doctor husband, who believes that her disease is partly caused by her “imaginative power,” and “habit of story making” (Baym 1532). Furthermore, as Leslie Fiedler argues, women writers’ incessant production of “flagrantly bad best-sellers” against which male authors, the best of “our fictionists”(Baym 69) had to struggle, and Hawthorne’s oft-quoted statement: “America is now wholly given over to a damned mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash” (qtd. in Tompkins 101), underlined the woman writer as the enemy. In this view authorship was equaled with fathering a text and if literature was considered an attempt to achieve fatherhood on the part of the author, “then every act of writing by a woman is both perverse and absurd, and of course, it is bound to fail”(Baym 78).

Thomas Jefferson’s condescending rejection of Phillis Wheatley’s poetry based on the prevailing concept of Anglo-Saxon superiority and Hume’s guidelines making the “taste of an intelligent man” an adequate basis of criticism is not only an example of racism, but of contemporary sexism as well (Baker 149). Du Plessis asserts that women’s exclusion from public discourse and education led to the development of “an aesthetics which in many respect was feminine” (147) and gave rise to a “mother tongue” (148), a form of linguistic resistance to male scholarly discourse.

As Heilbrun argues feminist criticism and by expansion the female author faced three types of reception: “has been scorned, ignored, fled from, at best reluctantly embraced” (qtd. .in Gilbert 37). J. Hillis Miller’s comments reflect the first two of these approaches:

I believe in the established canon of English and American literature and in the validity of the concept of privileged texts. I think it is more important to read Spenser, Shakespeare, or Milton than to read Borges in translation, or even, to say the truth, to read Virginia Woolf (qtd. in Gilbert 38)

Following Virginia Woolf's prescription for great art, the female aesthetic emphasizes androgyny. While Du Plessis claims the existence of a female psyche, a feminist version of negritude (143), there are crucial differences, as the former favors racial exclusivity. The concept of negritude emphasizes the existence of a Negro value system and presents black people as warm, expressive, and community-oriented human beings. The American version of this school of thought is based on the dichotomy of mind and soul, the former representing the rational Eurocentric thinking, the latter the human and intellectual warmth of the black community. Thus negritude is separatist and exclusive, the notion of the female psyche is integrationist and culturally inclusive.

The female and black aesthetics emphasize their connection to "the rhythms of the earth," their "sensuality, intuition and subjectivity" (Du Plessis 150). Several female aestheticians consider the woman's body as a colony, viewing feminism as a decolonizing movement. Christiane Rochefort asserts that women's literature represents the artistic and creative production of the colonized (Showalter 259). By putting women's culture and women's literature on the periphery, a definition for the former is needed. Showalter argues that female culture has two principal characteristics: egalitarianism and community orientedness (261). Gerda Lerner reflects on the liminality of women's culture. She rejects the notion of a subculture, as women's social functions place them in the "general culture" and when confronted by "patriarchal restraint," they convert the latter into complementarity, a greater appreciation of the woman's function (Showalter 261). Consequently, Lerner sees women as integral elements of the mainstream, or primary core, and assigns them to the secondary core simultaneously.

Virágos argues that any culturally stable society is capable of maintaining a balance between two kinds of constituent elements: a

primary core and numerous secondary cores. The primary core in this case refers to “mainstream America,” and the secondary core is informed by numerous subcultures. The division between dominant and muted groups parallels the distinction between the primary and secondary cores. However, if one considers the wild zone and the men’s section on Ardener’s imaginary circles as separate areas, the notion of centrifugality and centripetality can be applied.

In its general thrust the white female aesthetic is non-divisive. The New Testament version suggests integration. Du Plessis promotes Woolf’s notion of androgeneity and integrationism. The radical feminist approach, viewing the male as the enemy, demonstrated by Cixous and Rich among others, is divisive or particularistic. The female aesthetics is an important element of multicultural (MC) America. Its inclusive main trend is pluralistic as Virágos’s MC1, and the radical version qualifies as MC2. Furthermore, the notion of the primary core must be considered. Since American civilization is a result of a balancing act between culturally divisive, centrifugal, and uniting centripetal forces, the white, middle-class version of the female aesthetics is centripetal toward the primary core. However, if one accepts feminism as a subculture, radical feminism emphasizing gender-based oppression and calling for cultural independence, it is centrifugal to the primary core and centripetal in relation to the secondary core.

The primary core is a multi-tiered concept containing icons of American history, literature and popular culture on one level, and the notions of philosophical Americanism, mythological explanations, affective Americanism, and a volitional component on the other (Virágos 31–32).

Consequently female aestheticians’ efforts, replacing the stereotyped “feminine mystique” with professional women, expand the canon, bringing new icons into the public discourse in the process. The emphasis of gynotexts over androtexts serves this purpose as well. Philosophical Americanism, as well as a reference to one of the “sacred documents of the republic” (Virágos 32), is prevalent in the Seneca Falls Declaration’s adoption of the ideas of the Declaration of Independence. Furthermore, the Amazon, fashioned after Wittig’s *Les Guerillères*, brings the superhero, one of the integral figures of the cultural mainstream into mind. Also the promotion of the New

Woman, who would in turn invent the New Man (Davidson 61) recalls the mythological element of the core.

Similarly to its black and Chicano counterparts, the feminist aesthetics employs methods of cultural polarization. Any essentialist rhetoric is dependent upon conation and dichotomizing devices including “wedge issues,” and “versus patterns” (Virágos 21). Essentialism, based on “alleged or real in-group specificity” (Virágos 21) is manifested in Irigaray’s emphasis on the female anatomy. The notion of conativity is present in *l’écriture féminine*’s view of the writing process as a revolutionary act against patriarchy.

One of the most frequently deployed wedge issues is rape defined by Brownmiller as a “conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear” ((qtd. in Beard 135). Andrea Dworkin, viewing all male-female relations as rape, considers the latter a political crime. Sexual harassment, with the survivor deciding the nature and gravity of the crime (Beard 153) is also a frequently employed dividing tool.

By viewing rape and sexual harassment as a political crime, radical feminists promote centrifugality and cultural separatism. Having assumed the right to define, a move is made from the phallic order, making the woman, the heretofore defined one, the definer. The woman as a definer of rape becomes the interpreter of herself as a text, launching herself on an evolutionary process from a passive victimized object to a subject signifying agency.

The establishment of versus patterns is prevalent in Showalter’s notion of gynocriticism as well. In order to battle the neglect and hostile attitude toward feminist criticism, gynocriticism views and interprets literature from a female point of view, constructs paradigms based on the female experience, breaks away from male criticism, and promotes the idea of a female culture (Weedon 155).

Du Plessis, putting forth the both/and vision of the female aesthetics, favoring monism over dualism, betrays conativity as the former is believed to bring forth a non-hierarchical system (132). Consequently, the artist is a producer of a social product designed to will a better world into being. The very view of the female artist as a site for the reconciliation of the domestic and public sphere (139) is also conative, as history has proven the unfeasibility of the above. Conativity is also present in the transformational notion that the feminist aesthetic will help the overthrow of existing forms (144).

The Black Female Aesthetic

While the white middle-class version of feminism is essentialism oriented, black and Chicano feminists emphasize race, class, and ethnic origin in addition to gender. According to Barbara Smith the roots of black feminism are the home peopled by strong Amazon-like female figures. Her description of “strong, fierce women who could stop you with a look out the corners of their eyes” (xxi) brings Wittig’s Amazon to mind. The view of the home as a source of black feminism is somewhat ironic, as black males regard black feminists as people who left the race, a group without a home (xxii). Reaffirming Hurston’s description of the black woman as the “mule uh de world,”(14) Smith describes the double discrimination black women are exposed to. As the white man handed the load of the world to the black man to carry, the latter passed it on to black women. The black woman is a subject of two-fold oppression, once due to her skin color, and again due to her sex.

The blues, another source of black feminism, commemorated black women’s aspirations for freedom both in the public and in the private spheres (xxiii). The notion of black women’s independence is also present in their concept of marriage, where the institution is viewed as a “pragmatic partnership” (xxiv).

Smith argues that *The Color Purple* (1982) demonstrates that the rural South and the “lives of our mothers” housed the origins of the movement (l). Celie’s experiences display the interlocking systems of oppression, as her subordinated status was reinforced by her sex and her economic position. The rural South compelled black women to fight myths. For Celie political equality and racial liberation did not mean freedom from the incestuous advances of her stepfather, and racism, demonstrated by the mayor and his wife’s response to Sofia’s efforts to reaffirm her personal integrity, was not the primary enemy. The very act of writing Celie engages in is a revolutionary act as her writing leads to the weakening of patriarchal restraints.

Referring to mature women and “outrageous, audacious, courageous or, willful behavior” Alice Walker defines black feminism as womanism (qtd. in Smith xxiv). However, the term “womanism” is not clearly delineated. Arguing that a womanist is committed to the survival of all people regardless of gender, both Walker and Anna

Julia Cooper emphasize centripetality and posit humanism as the school's main characteristic (Karenga 43).

Besides Alice Walker the centripetal thrust of womanism is reaffirmed by Vivian Gordon and Clenora Hudson Weems. The former believes that black women are integral partners of black men in their struggle against racism, the latter views the "Africana woman" as a "companion to the Africana man" in his fight for emancipation (Karenga 296).

Anna Julia Cooper is considered one of the forerunners of the black feminist movement. Her *A Voice from the South* (1892) protested against racism, sexism, and classism and pointed at the dual nature of philosophical concepts:

There is a feminine as well as masculine side to truth, that these are related, not as inferior or superior, not as better or worse, not as weaker or stronger, but as complements—complements in one necessary and symmetric whole (Karenga 285)

Furthermore, Cooper's belief in the priority of community development over individual grievances foreshadows a rejection of the basic tenet of feminism summed up in the slogan "the personal is political." She recognized that the goals of the black feminist movement and of the global empowerment of oppressed people are universal:

...when race, color, sex, condition, are realized to be the accidents, not the substance of life..... then woman's lesson is taught and woman's cause is won—not the white woman nor the black woman nor the real woman, but the cause of every man or woman who has writhed silently under a mighty wrong. (798)

On the other hand, black feminists along with their Third World sisters reject the racism of white feminists and view black men as the primary obstacle to their cause. Smith considers feminism as a school of thought dedicated to examine the way Third World women live, treat each other, and what they believe. Black feminism, by denying

that sexual identity determines women's relationship to power, is non-essentialist.

Black feminism deconstructs several myths. The abolition of slavery after the Civil War did not mean the liberation of black women. Unlike for black men, racism is not the sole concern for black women, as the elimination of racial discrimination would not put an end to sexism and sexual oppression. An additional damaging myth, not taking into consideration that the movement aims to improve the situation of all non-hegemonic groups, contends that the scope of black feminism is narrow (Smith XXVI–XXIX).

The primary purpose of black feminist aesthetics is to struggle against the “simultaneity of oppression” (XXXII) based on interlocking modes of forcing black women into submission. Black feminism demonstrates that this “triple jeopardy” (XXXII) rests on race, class, and sexual orientation components. The movement, similarly to the black aesthetics, is a political program, rather than a means of evaluation of artistic products created by black women. As Smith asserts, black feminism emphasizes organizing and day-to-day activity over theory, and its primary concerns, home truths, include a wide range of issues from abortion through sexual harassment to welfare rights (XXXV).

Black feminists reject the sexist blueprint for blackness created by the Black Power Movement and the black aesthetes (XL). Furthermore, the movement struggles against being viewed as the Other. Black feminists, unlike their white, middle class counterpart, do not fight against the black family, and similarly to *l'écriture féminine* believe in the existence of a black female language. The latter assertion is justified by Smith's discovery of a “specifically Black female language” in the works of Zora Neale Hurston, Margaret Walker, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker (Toward a Black Feminist Criticism... 174).

The black female aesthetician combats such stereotypical descriptions of African-American womanhood as the “mammy” and the “castrating matriarch.” The former is represented by the cantankerous, yet well-meaning Mammy adored by Scarlett in *Gone With The Wind* (1939), by Idella in Ossie Davis' play “Purlie Victorious” (1961), or by Dilsey in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), the latter is suggested by Nanny, the invincible grandmother in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), by Mama

holding the family together in Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" (1959), and by Bigger Thomas' mother in Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940) or by Granny in Wright's *Black Boy* (1945). The black male view of black women is nonetheless offensive, suffice it to refer to LeRoi Jones' derogatory comments," I have slept with almost every mediocre colored woman," (qtd. in Smith 202) or Ishmael Reed's complaint over the meager sales of his books:

"Maybe if I was one of those young *female* (sic) Afro-American writers that are so hot now, I'd sell more. You know, fill my books with ghetto women , who can *do no wrong* (sic)" (qtd. in Smith....Toward A Black Feminist173). Finally, another damaging image of black womanhood, being a traitor to the Black Power Movement, or a "female Uncle Tom," is presented by Jimmy Garrett's 1968 drama, "We Own The Night."

Black and white feminism share a common historic background as both are products of the society-wide upheaval of the 1960's. While both movements base their origin on earlier events, the abolition struggle of the 1830's and the enslavement experience respectively, the second stage of American feminism paved the way for the emergence of its black counterpart. In 1973 black women dejected over the racism of their white peers broke away from the feminist movement to establish the National Black Feminist Organization. The other axis of creation was the Black Power Movement from which, alienated by the movement's sexism, many black women separated. A third foundation of black feminism is the everyday life of black women, who similarly to white women became aware of their captivity in the "feminine mystique" (Smith 272-74).

Unlike its white middle class counterpart, black feminism is not an umbrella term for essentialism-oriented social and cultural criticism. The movement's primary concern is the elimination of the "triple jeopardy," the interlocking system of race, class, and gender-based subordination. One of the movement's primary goals is to fight for the recognition of black women's humanity: "We reject pedestals, queenhood, and walking ten paces behind. To be recognized as human, levelly human, is enough" (Smith 275). Black feminism, demonstrated by its concept of rape of a black woman by a white man, introduces the notion of racial-sexual oppression. Here a wedge issue is used and the scope of rape expands from a political to a racial crime. Black feminism, singling out capitalism and patriarchy as the

causes behind women's oppression, tends to move toward the left on the political spectrum. The notion of "the personal is political" is expanded as race and class issues are included.

Black feminism occupies a centripetal position in its relation to the black aesthetic as it does not call for separation:

Although we are feminists and Lesbians, we feel solidarity with progressive Black men and do not advocate the fractionalization that white women who are separatists demand. (Smith 275)

Racial solidarity acts as a centripetal force in the black community. In its rejection of the racism of white feminism black feminism is centrifugal, a mutuality of concerns i.e., patriarchy notwithstanding. The situation of black feminists is much reminiscent of Du Plessis' view of the white female aesthetic. The followers of this school are outsiders by race and economic status, yet insiders according to their final objective: the elimination of the patriarchal imperative. The "jugular vein mentality" (XL), the anti-Semitism of some black feminist activists betrays a centrifugal attitude between secondary cores, as the oppressed becomes the oppressor (XLIV).

Black male criticism castigates black female literary production for several reasons. Works by black female authors provide a monolithic image of black men as sexists, black female writers assign gender top priority and reinforce the negative stereotypical images of black men held by the white community, fail to provide an Afrocentric approach to male-female relations, and emphasize victimization over agency (Karenga 288–289).

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) functions as the refutation of these arguments. While the male characters at first appear to be the incarnations of the savage brute: Fonso rapes Celie, Mr. treats Celie like an animal, and Harpo yearns to beat Sofia, Mr's subsequent transformation indicates a deviation from the stereotypical mold. The issue of male-female relations is viewed in a non-WASP light, as the female and male characters end up in forming a commune type living arrangement. Finally, Celie's development from sexual, cultural, and economic peonage to feminine consciousness and business ownership demonstrates the author's emphasis on agency.

In comparison to white feminism, black feminism (black womanism) is not characterized by conativity or versus patterns and does not suffer from the domino principle either as it does not distort the meaning of black or white feminism. However, Alice Walker's belief in the life-saving power of writing reveals a touch of conativity: "It is, in the end, the saving of lives that we writers are about. Whether we are 'minority' writers or 'majority.' It is simply in our power to do this" (33).

Chicana Feminism

Chicana feminism is also the product of the 1960's. Just like black women, Chicanas face triple jeopardy, as sex and class discrimination are coupled with social and economic disadvantages suffered due to ethnic origin. Marcela Lucero reaffirms the notion of triple jeopardy in her theory of a "tri-cultural person in a triple bind oppression." The Latina self is caught between the Anglo woman, Mexican-American culture and the Chicano man (Ortega and Saporta Sternbach 13).

Chicanas have also been relegated to the private sphere, and had to fight against two damaging, extremist images of Mexican-American womanhood, Malinche, *La llorona*, or the traitor woman and *Virgen of Guadalupe*, the pure, angelic female. According to Ortega and Sternbach, the term "Latina writing" refers not only to literary products of Chicana authors, but to women writers representing other groups sharing Latina concerns (11). The Latina aesthetics has one so far unuttered or emphasized criterion, attachment or ties to the working class. A working class origin is needed to function and interpret cultural contexts which include: race, economy, ethnicity, the political, social, ideological, and artistic spheres (Ortega and Saporta Sternbach 12).

Latina writing, seeking the woman's space in these cultural contexts, emphasizes a matriarchal heritage, based on a long line of female forebears. Chicana writers restructure the patriarchal family by presenting an expanded family of women, and a central, patriarchal figure is replaced by a matriarchal character (Ortega and Saporta Sternbach 12). Latina writing follows Bloom's thesis of male writing as the author struggling with the "anxiety of influence" in this case contends with the frustration of the "mother's" impact. The central role of the mother presents a female version of Bloom's theory. While

male writing is driven by the manifestation of a father and son conflict, Latina literary production commemorates the clash between the mother and the daughter (Ortega and Saporta Sternbach 12).

Latina feminism or the Chicana aesthetic fights against the partial truths of the “official hegemonic ideology,” as the mainstream discourse is characterized by omissions and gaps. The Chicana aesthetic attempts to fill the gap by deconstructing the angel and prostitute stereotypes. Consequently, Latina writing at first offers a “negative definition” of Chicana identity, establishing what Chicana women are not, than it proceeds to give an affirmative description of the Latina character and its historical and macrosocial surroundings (Ortega and Saporta Sternbach 13).

According to Catherine Belsey feminism is based on the cultural construction of the self. Feminist consciousness arises when the self is considered a speaking subject. For women in general this process is very painful as speech and language are elements of the phallogocentric socio-symbolic order. A Latina needs to be inscribed into two symbolic orders, the mainstream, or hegemonic culture, and the Spanish language mother culture. Since the Self has to continuously negotiate between two cultures—belonging to neither, rejected by the first and accepted by the second, a devalued form of discourse itself—a Latina develops a negative view of herself. Owing to this continual balancing between two cultures, or a constant liminality, one of the most defining characteristics of Latina writing is bilingualism (Ortega and Saporta Sternbach 14).

Chicana feminism’s main objectives are the fight against gender inequality and against the interlocking systems of oppression. An additional function of Latina writers is to act as a chronicler of their personal lives and of their community as well. A Latina writer also projects a New Person forged by her fight against racism and sexism (Ortega and Saporta Sternbach 16). Writing not only serves as the expression of the self, or the demonstration of achieving the status of “speaking subject,” but guarantees the Chicana author’s mental equilibrium, and protects her psychic integrity.

As Ortega and Sternbach argue, the main elements of Latina aesthetic are interlingualism, intertextuality, and a struggle for a “woman, life, and mestizaje affirming discourse” (18). The story of Malinche, reflects the Chicana/Latina experience. Driven by the mother’s intention to please Malinche’s stepfather, so the latter could

make his son (Malinche's half brother) the sole beneficiary of his estate, the young girl was sold to the Tabasco Indians as a slave. Later she was transferred to Hernan Cortez, in captivity she made use of her bilingualism eventually functioning as a guide and interpreter for Cortez. Furthermore, she became his lover, and her children are considered to be the first Chicanos (Moraga 52).

The myth mirrors the position and image of the Chicana. Malinche was betrayed and treated as an object twice, once by her mother, and once by her captors, the Tabasco Indians. She was caught between two cultures, the domestic one represented by the mother, and the macrosocial one indicated by the Tabasco males. The mother-daughter conflict of Chicana myths stems from the Malinche story as well, as both her stepfather and mother call her "la chingada" (Moraga 53). Consequently, a Chicana feminist shares the fate of Malinche in two aspects: she is rejected by her own people for allegedly adhering to white feminist theories and models, and is sexually oppressed by Chicano men.

While black feminism emphasizes the political aspects of the writer's role, Chicana feminism favors the spiritual level. According to Ana Castillo the writer functions as a relator, and must call on the Chicana woman to love herself (Binder 37). Sandra Cisneros sees the Chicana author's role as an artist and teacher (Binder 68), positing awareness and consciousness of oneself and community as the crucial elements (Binder 69). Lucha Corpi presents a different view of Malinche, as an intellectual woman and the originator of "mestizaje," the mother of the race (Binder 82). Veronica Cunningham compares writing to a romantic relationship during which the lover brings the best out of a person, extracting certain truths from the inside (Binder 92). This view is the opposite of the phallic concept of writing as the latter emphasizes invasion and by extension domination, the former points to co-operation and harmony.

According to Rebecca Gonzalez the Chicano author must contribute to the rich ethnic cultural tapestry of the U.S. (Binder 94). Angela Hoyos argues that writing, similarly to Bloom's view, is creation, as the artist produces order from chaos, and "plays god" (Binder 113). Similarly to Rudolfo Anaya, a Chicana author must promote a harmony with the cosmos, and must gain her artistic strength from spiritual values (Binder 115).

Consequently, the Chicana aesthetic assigns the following role to the author: a promoter of psychological well-being, a teacher, a catalyst toward self-actualization, and a booster of ethnic pride and consciousness. While black feminism is overtly political, mostly associated with Marxism, Chicana feminism emphasizes the psychological and spiritual well-being of the community.

According to Evangelina Vigil love is one of the most important forces that can save the Chicana community. Vigil and Hoyos emphasize spirituality based on Elihu Carranza's Chicanismo, promoting the harmony of the individual with his community, a moral duty "to make woman as he is with woman as he ought to be" (Treacy 87). Vigil, unlike the main trend of Chicana culture, is culturally nationalistic (Treacy 88) and centrifugal. She equates Mexicanness with femininity, as the latter includes nurturing and people-orientedness based on the family and the cultural legacy of matriarchy (Treacy 89).

Gloria Anzaldúa describes the Chicana condition with the Aztec term, *nepantlism* or being "torn between options" (Alarcón 99). The Chicana is a site of a cultural struggle in which the tenets of white culture debase and devalue Mexican culture, and both Chicano and Anglo culture confront native-American culture, placing the Chicana in the dilemma of the "mixed breed," demonstrated by the Malinche myth (Alarcón 98).

The historical background of Chicana feminism is similar to black and white feminism as it stems from the same era, the 1960's. Chicana feminism's main nurturing force is black feminism as the "woman, life, and mestizaje affirming discourse" is a Chicana equivalent of womanism. In its overall objectives it appears to be centripetal, and similarly to womanism emphasizes the common participation of Mexican-American women and men in the fight against gender and racial oppression. Chicana feminism with such exceptions as Evangelina Vigil's cultural nationalism exerts a centripetal force in the macro-cultural context, striving to stay away from versus patterns.

While white feminism is essentialist, black feminism is overtly political, Chicana feminism stays on the spiritual level. All three feminisms strive to promote the image of the new person, represented by Wittig's Amazon, Weems' Africana Woman and the reinterpretation of the Malinche myth. Whereas white feminism is primarily confronted with the concept of universal patriarchy, black

and Chicana feminist thought, compelled to negotiate between mainstream America and a “domestic culture,” are caught between two discourses.

Summary

According to Mukarovsky the function of aesthetics is threefold as it isolates the object, turns it into a self-referential sign, and forces the reader to utilize the totality of his or her experience in order to “contemplate the specific manner of the work’s organization” (Ickstadt 31). In the case of the female aesthetics, in addition to the aesthetic role, pragmatic functions can be discerned. Showalter’s gynocriticism separates female writers’ works from the rest of literature, views gynotexts as the autonomous texts of female experience, and through the establishment of new paradigms it relies on the readers’ experience. Lillian Robinson in her subscription to the female aesthetic also emphasizes the dominance of the aesthetic side as alternative feminist readings and efforts widen the range of the canon reinforcing the self-referentiality of female literature.

The black female aesthetic views literary production as one of the signs of black women’s independence and at the same time reinforces the self-referentiality of the “mule” as the signifier of the black female experience. In the case of Chicana literature *Malinche* acts as a signifier of the Mexican–American experience, and an attempt at cultural independence, demonstrated by Vigil, is also present. These two aesthetics emphasize the pragmatic aspects of the text and of the author, including didactic, communicative, religious, and political functions. The black and Chicano aesthetics’ struggle against the multiplicity of oppressions place both on a political level. The black female aesthetic with its effort to coopt black males into its struggle against racial injustice appears to satisfy the requirements for a communicative function. Sandra Cisneros’ view of the Chicana author as a teacher and a promoter of Chicano consciousness shows a didactic side. Angela Hoyos’ concept of writing as creating order from chaos, or “playing god,” and the movement’s emphasis on spiritual values manifested by the notion of Chicanismo elevates the Chicana aesthetic to the level of religious mysticism.

The domination of essentialism in the white female aesthetic deserves a further look. Unlike its racially or ethnically tinged

counterparts, white feminism is middle-class based. Thus, in this case female alterity can only be justified by anatomical factors as women's social position assures an insider status. White women are not caught in the grip of interlocking oppressions as sex-based disadvantages are not coupled with race or ethnicity-induced discrimination. Whereas white feminist thought according to Heilbrun had to contend with being "scorned or ignored," Black and Chicana feminists experienced a greater degree of hostility. In both cases minority males angrily rejected the former as traitors to their cause, as followers of black feminism are considered to have "left the home," and the myth of Malinche's treason signifies the Chicana experience.

Feminist theory examines the relationship between male and female discourses in four possible ways. Feminist critique aims to identify and offer means of elimination of traditional barriers toward women's social and cultural progress: sexism and the patriarchal society. Feminist extensions challenge women's cultural and historic exclusion by providing alternative knowledges and histories. Feminist deconstruction undermines the binary structures of patriarchal theory, weakening such dyads as identity-difference, mind-body, subject-object, and reality-representation. Also, feminist deconstruction achieves a reversal of the relations between these binary terms by exchanging the position of the subordinated and the dominant. Feminist explorations attempt to change the linguistic foundation of women's oppression, to develop "autonomous woman defined categories and forms of utterance" in order to fight against patriarchal constraints (Blain 362–364).

The four components of feminist thought are reflected to varying degrees in the schools discussed above. In the case of white feminism critique, deconstruction, and exploration are dominant. As feminist critique is dedicated to offer means of elimination of barriers to women's social and cultural advancement, the centrifugal views of radical feminism, and the concept of a female culture are indicative of this purpose. The movement's broadsweeping effort to fight against the division of the world into public and private spheres, and its attempt to undermine the notion of gender demonstrates a desire to deconstruct such fundamental dyads of patriarchal theory as "public-private," and "sex-gender." Du Plessis' notion of a female culture and mode of expression qualifies as feminist exploration, or an attempt to eliminate the linguistic foundation of women's subservient position.

Gerda Lerner and other female historians' efforts to provide alternative knowledges and histories are elements of feminist extensions.

In the case of Black and Chicana feminism critique is dominant. In addition to sexism and the notion of the patriarchal society, race and ethnicity-based discrimination along with economic considerations are discerned as obstacles to women's advancement. It is noteworthy that one of the reasons for the advent of black feminism is the racism of white feminists, and Afrocentric womanism emphasizes the irrelevance of white feminist theories to the black female experience.

Finally, Du Plessis' notion of the applicability of the female aesthetic to the experience of any marginal group must be qualified. Whereas she claims the non-hegemonic nature of the female aesthetic and points to women as a "historically non-hegemonic group," (149) this statement is only valid in reference to the patriarchal society as the racism of white feminists' underlines the existence of hegemonic thought within their ranks.

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BOOK REVIEWS

LÁSZLÓ DÁNYI

METHODS AND HISTORY:
A MILESTONE IN AMERICAN STUDIES IN
HUNGARY

(Vadon Lehel: *Az amerikai irodalom és irodalomtudomány bibliográfiája a magyar időszaki kiadványokban 1990-ig.*
Eger: EKTF Líceum Kiadó, 1997. 1076 pp.)

If American Studies is to be considered a unique discipline, one of the major issues has been the search for an appropriate methodology in the field. However, owing to the perpetually changing nature and to the inherent complexity of the discipline, the struggle to achieve the establishment of adequate and eternal methods for American Studies has always proven to be futile. The constituent elements delineating the parameters of the discipline itself are so malleable that, after considering new perspectives and investigating all the ramifications of the topic, even the best theoreticians of the field could not explore the issue further than raising the question of how to develop a method for American Studies*.

* See:

Henry Nash Smith. "Can American Studies Develop a Method?" *American Quarterly*, vol.9 (1957), 197–208.

Gordon Kelly. "Literature and the Historian." *American Quarterly*, vol. 26 (1974), 141–159.

Gene Wise. "'Paradigm Dramas' in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History." *American Quarterly*, vol. 31 (1979), 293–337.

Michael Cowan. "Boundary as Center: Inventing the American Studies Culture." *Prospects*, vol. 12 (1987), 1–20.

Philip Fisher. "Introduction" to *The New American Studies*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, vii–xxii.

'The terms that need to be defined here are plastic' is an understatement, since the study of American culture immanently bears in itself the multiform interpretation of the past and present of social consciousness in such a cultural region where the only constant is change, and where the only culture is multicultural and multiethnic. Furthermore, new temporal and spatial dimensions are attached to the inherent complexity of the study of American culture when it is absorbed through the filter of the common awareness of a culture which is not American. In Hungary American Studies as an academic discipline is still in the phase of establishing its principles, thus the scholar who ventures to study American culture will contribute to establishing methods for the discipline.

The aforementioned propositions vindicate the concept that ready-made methods are not provided for American Studies, so the discipline in Hungary must elaborate and develop methods for itself. In the never-ending process of devising local programs for American Studies, the greatest contribution a scholar can make is to register and record the history of American Studies, which will practice influence upon the emergence of new methods. Lehel Vadon's recent *Bibliography** fulfils this mission.

When trying to epitomize a comprehensive volume which is the result of an erudite author's indefatigable research for decades, I struggle with selecting the proper words for describing the impressive volume. Lehel Vadon, the chairperson of the first Department of American Studies in Hungary, has devoted his talent and energy to paving the way initiated by László Országh for American studies in Hungary, and his latest bibliography proves to be the peak of his achievement, and to be the greatest asset and repository for those scholars who wish to expand and develop the discipline.

On the one hand Vadon admits that his errand owes a debt to the Országh legacy, and he regards Országh's oeuvre as the greatest encouragement and motivation to continue to work in a field which

T. V. Reed. "Theory and Method in American Studies: An Annotated Bibliography." *American Studies International*, vol. 30 (October 1992) 4-34.

Paul Lauter. "'Versions of Nashville, Visions of American Studies': Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, October 27, 1994." *American Quarterly*, vol. 47 (1995), 185-203.

* Vadon Lehel. *Az amerikai irodalom és irodalomtudomány bibliográfiája a magyar időszaki kiadványokban. 1990-ig*. Eger: EKTF Líceum Kiadó, 1997. 1076 pp.

Országgh appeared to be the founding father of, and which is still in its immediate post-nascent phase in Hungary. The bibliography is considered to be a contribution to accomplishing the program that was launched and formulated in László Országgh's policy-making declamatory essay, 'Az amerikanisztika feladatai Magyarországon' ('The Tasks of American Studies in Hungary'), in 1965. The essay takes stand for the establishment of scientific research and for the scholarly development of American studies in Hungary.

On the other hand it is also a burden to follow the footsteps of the predecessor, and, at the same time, to achieve something genuine by leaving an indelible mark behind that would be noteworthy in comparison to the perpetually fresh works of the great scholar who cast a long shadow. Lehel Vadon's bibliography is so ingeniously impressive that I must proclaim my conviction here at the beginning that he succeeded in establishing a firm position and reputation in the field of American studies. László Országgh laid down the foundation stones of the discipline, and Lehel Vadon's *Bibliography* is definitely a milestone.

The volume has received high critical acclaim from Hungarian scholars of American studies. Zoltán Abádi-Nagy, a reader and a critic of the book, considers it a well-structured volume which is logical in handling concepts, and he highly appreciates the author's accuracy and precision in being faithful to the vast material. In his comments on the volume Zsolt Virágos assumes that the bibliography bears indisputable professional benefits and scholarly values, and it implies important directions for further research in order to achieve a better understanding of the literary and cultural areas in American-Hungarian relations; to analyze the sociology of Hungarian reading habits; to map the political forces that shape book-publishing; to explore the direct and indirect literary and cultural effects. All critics agree that the indispensable bibliography supplies a sore deficiency in a discipline where the gaps and white spots outweigh the known and explored terrain.

A deficiency in the sense that the bibliographies published in Hungary—in spite of being very comprehensive and synthesizing—engaged themselves to cover mainly national literature, and they have not explored foreign literature, or secondary sources and philological studies related to literature from abroad. The exhaustive *A magyar irodalomtörténet bibliográfiája* (*Bibliography of Hungarian Literary*

History) accomplishes the aim of establishing an up-to-date synthesis of Hungarian literature, but it fails to involve foreign literature in its scope of observation. Some bibliographies treating individual foreign authors and particular periods of literary history have been published, but they have always been compiled without the author's intention of supplying a complete bibliography of sources.

Up until the 1960s, owing to politico-ideological reasons and to lack of interest, American studies in Hungary accomplished modest results, and it did not carry out an extensive research in the field of registering sources of American literature in Hungary, and this failure obstructed the development of reception research and the exploration and exploitation of American-Hungarian relations. It was László Országh, who first endeavored to found a retrospective bibliography of American literature and literary studies. Under his encouragement and guidance at Lajos Kossuth University doctoral dissertations were written on the Hungarian reception of American authors and literary tendencies, and the first bibliographies were the products of serendipity, as they were derived from those dissertations. Until 1990 only ten bibliographies were published in Hungarian periodicals.

The publication of Vadon's current anthology was preceded by fifteen years of meticulous research and, as he remarks in the preface to his bibliography, assembling data from all possible sources required looking through the pages of 1619 different kinds of periodicals ranging from the publication of the first Hungarian periodicals (*Magyar Hirmondó*, 1780; *Magyar Könyv-Ház*, 1783; *Magyar Musa*, 1786) to 1990. When collecting data, he considered each Hungarian literary publication and examined periodicals that were not born purely in the field of belles-lettres or literary criticism but the ones that are of interest and of value for the literary historian. Furthermore, he focused his attention onto Hungarian publications from the territory of historical Hungary and from other countries.

Vadon conducted a bibliographic exploration into every area of American studies in Hungary: he listed all the literary works by American authors in Hungarian periodicals (primary sources), and he treats studies, essays, reviews and book reports, critical comments and articles (secondary sources). Besides registering belles-lettres and literary criticism, the bibliography encapsulates those publications of cultural history, publicism, bibliographical literature and other fields of science that are closely linked to the literary life of the United

States. In spite of the huge collected material, he did not select the data according to any criterion, or he did not wish to filter or grade the bibliography by considering critical principles.

Due to the masterly structuring and editing the author succeeded in compiling a bibliography which is user-friendly. The reader can find the literature related to a special field in one chapter, however, owing to the extreme difficulty of categorizing works bearing overlapping features, publications are mentioned under several headings. When trying to find data, the user must consider the aforementioned structuring principle and is advised to check related topics.

The bibliography can be divided into two main parts: authors' part and general part.

The authors' part follows the alphabetical order of American authors, and the chapters are the names of the authors, who are referred to after the genres they belong to. The authors' pen-names, pseudonyms, dates of birth and death are provided. The personal bibliographies consist of two parts: primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources are quoted in chronological order according to genre-division. The translators of literary works are mentioned too. The secondary sources list works related to authors and their writings in chronological order. Due to the great abundance of secondary sources, they are grouped into thematic units of essays, articles, publications, news, book reviews and reports, film criticism, TV review, radio review, and literary works about the author. The demanding author of the bibliography compiled data with such care that the titles of the secondary sources are occasionally annotated, which is an invaluable help to the users. Nothing escapes the authors attention when he quotes the titles with their date of publication, volume, issue and page number.

The general part contains such sources that treat American literature in general, and the works in this segment are not only related to individual authors and their oeuvres. If the topic of a source on a particular author addresses questions linked to American literature in general, it will be listed both in this part and the authors' part as well. To make the general part more user-friendly, Vadon groups the sources into thematic units of prose, poetry, drama, theater, literary history, literary theory, literary criticism, American-Hungarian relations, reception, comparative studies, bibliography, publishing,

press, book reviews and reports on anthologies in Hungarian, and miscellaneous.

The 'Appendix' containing the chronological listing of the 1619 periodicals that were examined designates those 395 publications the data of which were absorbed into the bibliography. The 'Index of Names' and the 'Index of Translators' alphabetize all the personal names that occur in the bibliographic title-descriptions, but they do not quote names from the publishing data, pseudonyms, pen-names, acronyms, abbreviations, monograms or initials.

When writing about a book like this, I cannot avoid the question of utility.

Besides being an invaluable philological aid to americanists, librarians, literati, historians, sociologists and students, the book will accelerate processes that will encourage those who want to carry out research in this area. By enhancing the search for new topics it should be an indispensable book for professors and students in higher education and in Ph.D. courses. Furthermore, among the public for American Studies, I must include the audience which, according to Jay Gurian, has a special significance in relation to the discipline, as this inclusion establishes the totality of the discipline. He writes, "If we have a 'method,' it is the approach to ideas and consequences in the round – a total approach something like the 'total theatre' of Bertold Brecht. From the communication point of view, American Studies wants more than most disciplines to include its audiences."*

The book opens new vistas since the author does not regard 1990 as a boundary for his research, and he is aware of the transience of such a study, so he includes some references and data from later years. Secondary sources from the 1990s are mentioned related to Kimberley M. Blaeser and Patricia Riley. The choice is not accidental as it indicates new fields of American Studies by focusing on ethnic literature.

Not only does the Bibliography perform the task of being a literary document, but by considering the Hungarian authors of secondary sources, the issues and topics that were explored by them, the politico-ideological commitment of the media, and the indoctrination of the reading public the reader may explore the intriguing questions of the

* Jay Gurian. "American Studies and the Creative Present." *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* (Spring 1969.)

alterations in canon-formation and the changes in social consciousness in Hungary.

A researchers' dilemma is that, on the one hand, they must consider data in retrospect, they must explore what has been written on their topic, and, on the other hand, they must constantly search for genuinely new methods for their work, they must always be in the state of rejuvenation. The greatest strength of the *Bibliography*, which is a record of the history of American culture in Hungary, is that it incites scholars to find answers to the eternal historical and methodological questions that will always stimulate researchers of American Studies to seek new answers: How did American Studies begin in Hungary? What was its reception in the Hungarian academy? How does it differ from previously established disciplines? What have the fields of history, literature, the social sciences, ethnic and gender studies, and popular culture contributed to American Studies? What does it mean to study American culture in a Hungarian context?

The final conclusion is that the Bibliography contributes to a better understanding of the changes that shape the character of American Studies in Hungary. It embodies key social and political issues, and indirectly examines the processes of recreating and reconstructing the discipline of American Studies, which “embraces America in a Whitmanish hug, excluding nothing and always beginning.”*

* Stanley Bailis. “The Social Sciences in American Studies: An Integrative Conception”. *American Quarterly* (August, 1974).

JUDIT ÁGNES KÁDÁR

VIRGINIA L. SAUVÉ AND MONIQUE SAUVÉ: *GATEWAY
TO CANADA*

(Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1997. 280 pp.)

The study of Canadian culture either as foreign learners or as newcomers in Canada is a different enterprise than that of other culturally and historically well-established nations. The outsider must put his/her finger on the pulse of a culture, one which is actually not one but the blend of many cultures under constant change and interconnection; which is full of uncertainties about major questions of self-definition and identity; which seems a bit uncertain about the interpretation of its past but seems proud of the colorful diversity that characterises its present culture; and one which has become one of the largest well-developed countries on earth. The study of Canadian culture can be rooted only in a perspective, which provides less the image of a unified culture based on the similarities of people, places and events but rather that introduces their colorful multiplicity as well as the possible questions and tension that mark many fields of life nowadays, just like in the past.

Virginia and Monique Sauvé attempt to present a book that gives many answers to the question of what it means to be Canadian besides challenging the readers to “explore the country from sea to sea” and “have fun” doing so. This approach creates a real *Gateway* to Canada. The presentation of the book itself is very attractive, so one might start to fear content does not fit the form so nicely—as it often turns out elsewhere. However, what we get here is not only the beautiful illustrations and high quality printing. The very first glance will recognize the careful planning behind the preparation of the layout where the most important guiding point for the authors must have

been efficiency in learning. Virginia L. Sauvé's long-term TESL and curriculum planning experience visibly marks the book from the very first page, while Monique Sauvé contributed with her knowledge and appreciation of Canadian history and immigrant life.

The structure of the book is built on twelve chapters followed by a glossary and an index section, the latter helping the quick search for words, expressions and notions mentioned in the texts. Each chapter opens with a list of "Quick Facts" offering an impression about the given chapter as well as an Introduction to that particular unit. After this part which often contains easy-to-grab clues to locate the topic, one or more sections are developed on the main idea. Then comes the chapter review where theory is put into practice. The Comprehension Checks include various tasks such as crosswords, "mix and match", "research and write" besides vocabulary expansion exercises and discussion questions. The variety and length of each unit depend on the content. The authors provide keys to the exercises at the end of the book, which enable the reader to use it effectively even without the help of an instructor. Chapters that discuss the characteristics of the different regions of Canada follow the pattern of presenting a general geographical and economic orientation with further references to major cities, national parks and other points of interest.

Following the traditional format of other introductions to a culture (such as *American Life and Institutions* by D. K. Stevenson, *Spotlight on Britain* by S. Sheerin et al., or a quite recent one on Canadian culture entitled *Canada: Pathways to the Present* by J. Saywell) one can find prefatory chapters on government, economy, arts, education and recreation along with the ones that discuss issues such as biculturalism, native voices, religion, and make references to some problematic points related to them, too.

The abridged chapter that highlights historic events, trends and periods does not make an effort to accomplish a thorough examination with any claim for completeness instead it summarizes what the writers consider as most important facts regarding the origins of Canadians, their cultural and political encounters and the rise of the nation as such. In this respect the chapter of *Gateway* on Canada's past seems to be a curtailed version of the general impressions suggested by other well-known interpretations of Canadian history, such as that of D. Morton's (*Canadian History*) or C. Brown's (*The Illustrated History of Canada*), and it is similar to the overviews

offered by J. Saywell in *Canada: Pathways to the Present* or the chapter entitled “History and People” in *Inside Guides: Canada* (ed. H. Cunningham), which apparently both give a bit deeper understanding of Canada’s past. The authors’ personal view of these matters is counterpointed by the dominance of others’ opinions in the later chapters, especially the one entitled “Challenges for Canadians”, where central contemporary issues such as unemployment, racism or the question of native land claims are diagnosed.

Professional readers might wonder about the selection of facts, personalities and details included in the text. We all have our personal preferences as do the authors; no one textbook can include the immense factual detail behind the scope of its investigations. However, let me express the doubts of an outsider (being a Hungarian teacher and researcher of Canadian culture) I might share with some Canadians, too. The authors mention that they invited others’ views to accompany their own. Nevertheless, a more pregnant solution, the use of quotes from authentic resources of opinion would have been welcome, especially in chapters like the one on Canadian identity. There are some in other chapters, but I think to introduce others’ views on national (and regional) identity and self-definition would greatly enrich the reader’s access to a better understanding of what Canadians think about themselves. Moreover, that would provide a multiple perspective without inclusive and simplifying views and there would be no need any more to put everything under the cover of first person plural statements on what a proper average Canadian citizen is expected to be proud of (especially related to the U.S.–Canadian controversies). The writers here seem to overemphasize the need to sustain the integrity of Canadian national identity *against* the Southern neighbor. It is especially unfortunate since in my view a lot of Canadians are excited about their regional and ethnic definition at least as much as about the American impact on the nation’s economy and culture. Besides, there is little indication of the diversity of opinions on certain problematic issues (for instance the U.S.–Canadian relations are viewed differently by Canadians living along and close to the 49th Parallel, who are naturally more influenced by the U.S. and less concerned about questions of Canadian national identity, than other Canadians might be). If the authors can devote only a very limited length of text on the issue of identity, probably the mention of

related questions and the indication of the great variety of possible answers would have done better.

Another troubled part seems to be the selection of “Significant Canadians” who represent the nation in different fields of life such as arts, including literature and music. It must be a difficult task to decide whom to mention, and even harder to decide whom not to, in these sections. To prefer Anne Murray to Rita MacNeil, both singers of outstanding popularity throughout Canada, yet to exclude Brian Adams, k. d. Lang or Céline Dion who all have achieved great international success and reputation recently, is probably not very fortunate. To devote a longer paragraph to the details of Roch Carrier’s well-known short story “The Hockey Sweater” in the literature section seems to reduce our chance to learn about more about other literary personalities of at least equal relevance to Carrier or Lucy Maud Montgomery, author of the *Anne of Green Gables* stories... One other field that the authors did not consider worth enough mentioning here is poetry, though it is difficult to doubt the relevance of landscape poetry for the Canadian imagination, or the popularity of poets like, Al Purdy and Leonard Cohen. Perhaps again the authors might have made mention of the regional varieties or some more classics of Canadian literature, or they might as well call the attention to the fact that they are presenting their own personal preferences of significant persons.

Other significant aspects of daily life have also relatively little mention in the book. Canadians’ contributions to peacekeeping, or their achievements in technology, especially communications might have received more attention. Neither have the authors devoted much space to the aspects of Canadian wilderness and wildlife, both defining features of the Canadian persona. However, on the whole these questions of emphasis are not serious drawbacks, do not spoil the overall efficiency and strength of the book.

Now let me explain what I personally like about this book. I consider its chief merits to be the following:

- It has an attractive presentation (cover, layout, printing, illustrations of extremely high quality) and nicely organized subject matter;
- The language used is easy to follow for both intermediate and advanced speakers of English, as well as for those getting introduced to Canadian culture here for the first time;

- It manages to introduce and summarize relevant characteristics of Canadian life highlighting features of symbolic relevance for Canada as a nation;
- It includes fairly recent issues and data such as the 1995 Quebec separation referendum and the Nunavut project;
- Despite some minor issues mentioned above, the authors achieve success in sustaining a relatively objective and widely accepted perspective;
- It can be a useful resource for both newcomers to Canada and to others studying this culture from outside;
- It is highly motivating for further readings since it invites the reader to investigate the different fields of Canadian life in detail.

What describes the resource students and teachers all want to use? It has an attractive outlook, contains rich and valuable material which is organized in an effective way—supposedly by someone who is experienced in teaching. The book Virginia L. Sauvé and Monique Sauvé have recently released seems to achieve these points successfully.

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ANDRÁS TARNÓC

THE RETURN OF THE HOLY CROWN

(Glant Tibor: *A Szent Korona amerikai kalandja 1945–1978*.

Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 1997. 180, [1] pp.)

January 6, 1978 marks a special day in Hungarian history and in the course of Hungarian-American relations as well. After an almost 33 year absence the Hungarian Crown and the attendant crown jewels were officially returned by the government of the United States. Tibor Glant's excellent work, titled *A Szent Korona amerikai kalandja 1945–1978* was inspired by the twentieth anniversary of that momentous event.

Being the principal icon of the nation, the Holy Crown is unseparable from the upheavals of Hungarian history, and its very removal from Hungary deserves a further look. As the author asserts, the possibility of taking the Crown beyond Hungary's borders was pondered after the defeat of the 1848 Revolution and War of Independence and eventually the removal was realized in 1945. Whereas, in both cases the intended destination was the United States, the historical circumstances differed. Kossuth and Szemere fleeing from Hungary were motivated by an honest appreciation and reverence toward the role and function of Hungary's national relic and dared not to break one of the stipulations of the 1715 oath of the Crown Guard, forbidding the transfer of the Crown beyond Hungary's borders. In 1945 the fascist Szálasi government viewed the Crown as a legitimizing device for its unlawful dictatorial regime. It is no coincidence that the Crown was taken abroad in the year marking the collapse of fascism and at the same time indicating the termination of one of the darkest periods in Hungarian history. Whereas Kossuth was driven by a sincere respect and loyalty to Hungary's national relic, the

leader of the Hungarian fascist government was compelled by a twisted megalomaniac desire for this national symbol of power.

Glant offers a thorough and highly entertaining overview of the milestones of the Holy Crown's adventure. The brief stations of the Holy Crown's ordeal, culminating in its departure from Hungary on December 27, 1945, the Mattsee interlude and the eventual handing over to the American forces, however do not only symbolize a surrender, but a hope in a better future. The Holy Crown taken to the United States in 1953 appeared to have served a dual purpose. For Hungary it functioned as a symbol of historic continuity and of national identity, and the U.S. considered it as a collateral, or a guarantee for a democratic future in the region. The crown's presence in America even at the height of the Cold War held the promise of normalization of the relations between the two countries.

The Holy Crown as a metonymy can either represent the Hungarian state and being a central issue to be resolved between Hungary and the United States, functioned as a barometer measuring the intensity and quality of Hungarian-American relations between 1945–1978. Glant views the adventure of the Holy Crown not as an isolated event, but as a process, or a continuum. The work in fact progresses on two levels, describing the Hungarian government's efforts at achieving the return of the national relic and discussing the accompanying political developments in America.

The Holy Crown, however, as Glant argues is not a strictly interpreted issue between Hungary and the U.S., but a cornerstone of the relationship between two world orders. Hungarian-American relations started as an object-centered continuum reified in the 1902 unveiling of the Kossuth statue in Cleveland and the presentation of Washington's statue in 1906 in Budapest. The return of the Holy Crown in 1978 appears to be the culmination of this process taking place between the two nations divided by the contemporary political climate and united by the past. The fact that the United States government held the Crown for safe keeping, offered a chance for a new beginning, provided a hope for cooperation and a stable relationship even in the darkest days of the Mindszenty trial and the Vogeler affair. In fact, the Crown buried literally in the vault of Fort Knox, and hidden figuratively in the subconscious of the American people, represented a certain international obligation or unfinished business to be attended to.

As Glant points out, the idea of returning the Holy Crown and the crown jewels emerged several times before 1945 and even the American government's position was not a unanimous one owing to the somewhat murky conditions of its acquisition qualifying it either as a war booty, or a property of a foreign nation to be held in the U.S. for temporary safe keeping. While the Hungarian government made repeated efforts to reacquire this national relic, American policy makers did not deem the political conditions in Hungary conducive to the return. The giving back of the Crown jewels was treated as a condition for the normalization of the relations between the two countries.

Glant correctly evaluates the dual role of the Crown carrying different meanings for Hungarians in America and for those who remained in the Old Country. Largely conditioned by living in Hungary between 1920–1945, the post-World War II immigrant generation embraced the Doctrine of the Holy Crown, viewing the national relic as a symbol of the Hungarian community incorporating all Hungarian people and Hungarian territories. Those remaining in Hungary after 1956 and also the Hungarian government primarily viewed the Holy Crown as a historical relic.

Modifications of the international political environment and the attendant easing of the tensions of the Cold War laid the foundations of the American effort aimed at the return of the crown jewels. The Carter administration's decision to return the Holy Crown and the attendant crown jewels to Hungary can be treated as an example of the exercise of presidential power. Richard E. Neustadt envisions three primary factors of presidential power: formal powers conferred by the Constitution, professional reputation, that is the President's standing in the eyes of the Washington establishment and finally the public perception of the chief executive's authority (164). According to Neustadt, it is the power to persuade, that is convincing the legislators or other members of the political environment, that the action to be taken by the president is beneficial for them and for the nation as well is the most influential component of the executive decision making apparatus (35).

Elaborating and implementing its plan for the return of the Holy Crown, the Carter administration had to cope with a formidable challenge concerning the components of Neustadt's model. The President's constitutional authority to decide in the issue was

questioned by Kansas Senator Bob Dole's petition seeking the transfer of the decision making power to the Senate on the contention that the actual return of the Holy Crown, should be dealt with by a treaty subject to the "advice and consent" of the upper house of Congress. Another petition by Nebraska Senator Carl T. Curtis asserted that the Holy Crown as a booty extracted from a vanquished foe was the property of the United States giving jurisdiction over its disposal to the Senate. The United States Supreme Court rejected both claims thereby affirming Carter's formal powers. Congressional opponents and proponents represented the Washington audience of the Carter decision. The opponents included Ohio representatives Louis Stokes and Mary Rose Oakar, and Senator Bob Dole from Kansas. Indeed, the Oakar letter vigorously objecting to the return decision was, signed by 40 representatives. Also, as Glant reports, the protesters included the Mayors of Boston, Honolulu, Pittsburgh and Cleveland and the governors of Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, and Missouri. Furthermore, the Carter administration had to face impassioned protests and demonstrations organized by Hungarian-American groups as well.

Carter largely by gaining the support of such outstanding figures of the Hungarian-American community as Ferenc Nagy and Béla Király, however, was able to reach his goal thereby preserving his professional reputation. While almost simultaneous negotiations facilitating the return of the Panama Canal to the Republic of Panama resulted in several concessions on the part of the administration, in this case, the presidential initiative for the returning of the crown sailed through unscathed. The success of Carter's effort was also assisted by the acquisition of the support of such key figures as Senator Joseph Biden, New York Representative Ted Weiss, than the only Hungarian-born member of Congress, and of Pope Paul VI.

According to the author, both sides viewed the decision as a success. Americans cherished the fact that Hungary became one of the most democratic countries in the Eastern Block displaying a partial commitment to democracy and promoting religious freedom and tolerance. The return of the crown jewels was presented as a device to encourage the reinforcement of Hungarian national consciousness and the expansion of the freedom of religion. Carter describing Hungary as a nation open and receptive to values Americans hold dear was able

to use Neustadt's power to persuade, promoting the decision as a benefit to the American people.

The return of the crown jewels paving the way for the acquisition of the Most Favored Nation status in trade relations was one of the greatest successes of the post-1945 Hungarian diplomacy. The diplomatic maneuverings connoted a certain degree of freedom from Soviet control and signaled an effort at achieving a quasi-autonomous status within the Eastern Block.

Glant's work painstakingly retracing the details of the removal and return of the Holy Crown is a welcome addition enriching both the scholarship on Hungarian history and the domestic achievements in American Studies. It is noteworthy that the author chose an event from the recent past on which the figurative dust has not yet settled, and whose participants are in most cases alive. This apparent lack of historical perspective, however, does not present an insurmountable obstacle for the author, as he is able to present the findings of his thorough and careful research in a remarkably objective manner. However, Tibor Glant's book is valuable for another reason. As it is often mentioned the average citizen is far removed from the workings of history, and he or she can gain an insight into the background of milestone events only after the respective period is viewed as one belonging to the distant past and its actors disappeared through the trapdoor of history. The present work, however, focusing on a relatively recent event breaks this imposed code of silence taking the reader on an unforgettable journey in the labyrinth of contemporary foreign policy decision making.

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