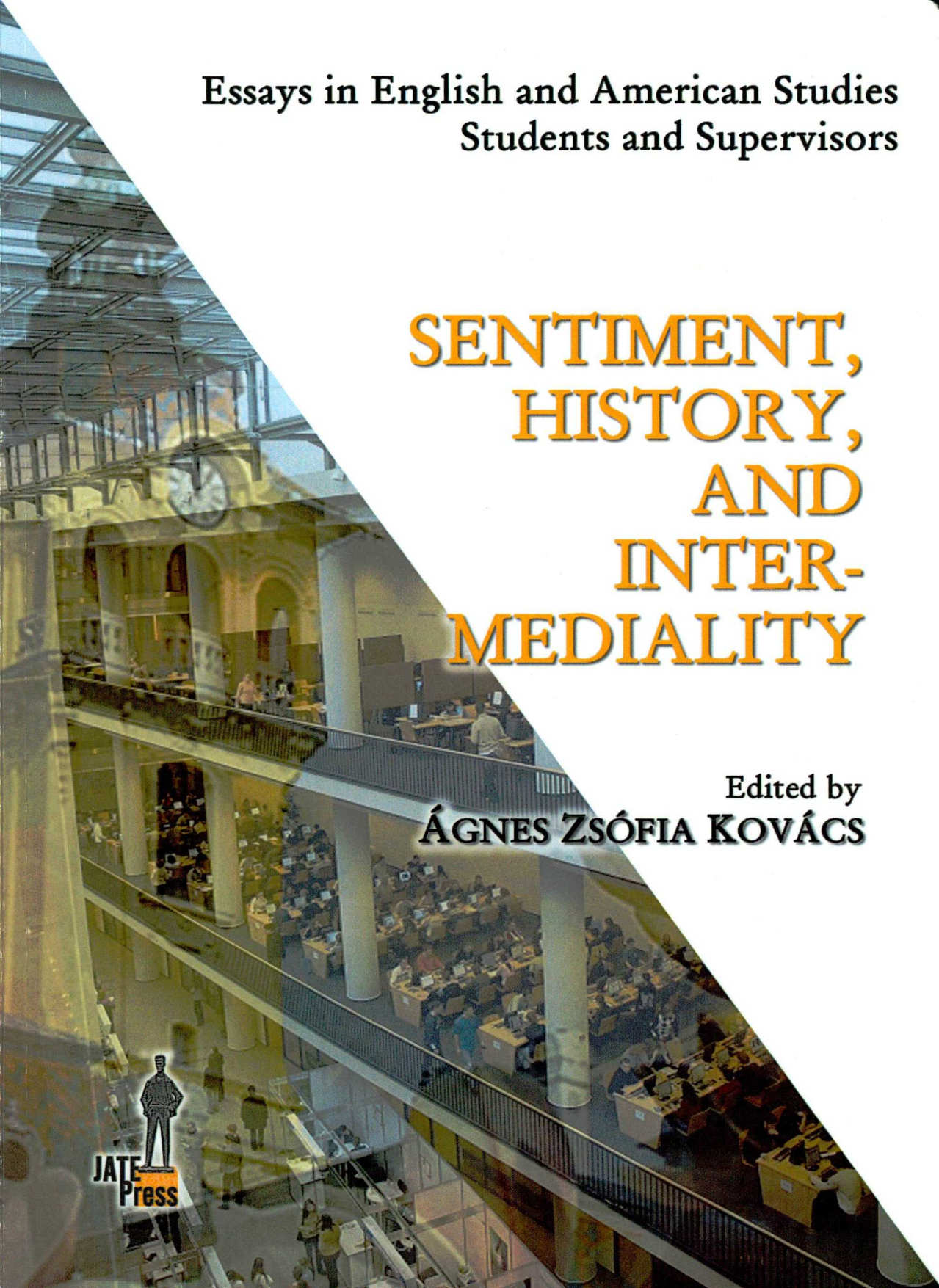
Essays in English and American Studies
Students and Supervisors

# SENTIMENT, HISTORY, AND INTER-MEDIALITY



Edited by
ÁGNES ZSÓFIA KOVÁCS

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ESSAYS IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN STUDIES

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# SENTIMENT, HISTORY, AND INTER-MEDIALITY

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ÁGNES ZSÓFIA KOVÁCS


Szeged 2021

Institute of English & American Studies (IEAS)
of the University of Szeged

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# INTRODUCTION

This volume began as a publication of the Nurturing Excellence (TDK) workshop at the Institute of English and American Studies of the University of Szeged. Along the way, the pool of contributors was extended to include not only students but their supervisors as well. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic situation, some involved were not in the position to send their material so their essays had to be replaced or simply left out. Even so, there are significant points of conversion among the pieces that represent basic research priorities of graduate students and faculty members. The title of the volume indicates some of these convergences: sentiment, history, and intermediality as directions of critical interest. The essays of the volume also showcase, but obviously do not fully represent, the variety of research going on at our Institute.

Nurturing Excellence or O/TDK is a national competition organized for students active in Hungarian higher education. The competition takes place on two levels, the local and the national within the time frame of two years. First, any active student of a department can register for the local readings with an essay in the Fall semester. The essay has to be about the size of a BA paper, and it is presented in two ways, in writing and orally. To begin with, two copies are handed in, and two readers assess the written work, each giving a maximum of 30 points divided into 5 aspects (project, argumentation, use of materials and novelty, format, language).

The readers also attach a detailed commentary of the academic merits of the paper to their assessments. Then, the competitor is asked to present a 15 minute version of the essay orally for a committee of three faculty members who specialize in the area but have not been involved in the assessment before. The committee can give max. 30 points for the presentation (based on its structure, logic, use of time, response to criticism).

Eventually, the sum of the points will determine the place the paper gets in the local competition. The committee also sets the limit for the national round when it determines the number of points necessary for an enrollment in the competition on the national level. For example, it may declare that out of the attainable 90, a minimum of 65 is needed for the national competition, but this limit may change from year to year. This local round is called the TDK. Next year or in the Spring of the same academic year, an improved version of the same paper is registered and is assessed in the very same way it has been processed at the home institution. The difference from the TDK, however, is significant: for one, the other competitors come from all over Hungary, i. e. there are many of them and their papers are all of good quality, second, the readers also come from all over the universities in Hungary, so the new assessments may be profoundly different from the ones the paper received at the home institution. The points attained will determine the position of the paper in the national competition of students. This round is called the OTDK. Only the best papers make to it this level.

In this volume, papers by Tamara Tamás, Olga Pinjung, and Bálint Szántó reached the OTDK stage of the student competition. The other papers were written by graduate students and faculty members who have kindly contributed their work to the project. So the organization of the sections does not follow the areas of the OTDK but maps out a roughly chronological trajectory of the essay topics. This trajectory is intersected by the student – supervisor axis, so the essays come in clusters: usually, the student comes first and a related supervisor sec-

ond, when this arrangement is possible. In addition, there is one case with two supervisors, and another without one.

Olga Pinjung's paper examines the identity changes of Kansas border guerrillas between 1850–1865. Irregular warfare emerged during Bleeding Kansas and lasted beyond the end of the American Civil War. The research introduces the identity changes of irregular bands of the North, i.e. Jayhawkers and guerrillas of the South, i.e. Bushwhackers by analyzing contemporary letters written by and/or about the most notorious figures of irregular warfare. The focus is on the Kansas-Missouri border area, as it was the center of guerrilla warfare due to the unique situation of the state of Missouri in the Civil War. Pinjung's approach to identity is to examine how the guerrillas saw themselves, how they were seen by the opposing side and how they were perceived by citizens. Her intention is to introduce the changes in identity and perception based on the primary sources.

Zoltán Vajda investigates the role of sentimental philosophy in Thomas Jefferson's correspondence with Maria Cosway. Jefferson's intellectual debt to Scottish moral philosophy has been well-documented; so has his preoccupation with the moral sense in humans as well as the significance of sympathy and affection for others in his theory of human relations. Nonetheless, research has treated his concepts related to them as homogeneous with no awareness of the differences in the usage of terms such as sympathy in view of the conditions under which they are generated. This essay argues for the relevance of such an approach to Jefferson's understanding of compassion, informed by Fonna Forman-Barzilai's observations about sympathetic spaces at work in Adam Smith's moral sense philosophy. Vajda explores the interaction of sympathetic spaces in Jefferson's seminal letter to Maria Cosway of 1786, where he employs them to generate a sense of continuity in friendship in the face of the disruption of the physical space of sympathy, his strategy involving reliance on cultural proximity as well as self-love.

Hogar Abdullah considers the way Toni Morrison's 2008 novel, *A Mercy*, reverses traditional meanings of freedom and enslavement in the seventeenth-century. Morrison presents a thought-provoking perspective of freedom in her use of a specific trope: a chiasmus of freedom and enslavement formed in the narrative of the enslaved Florens, the main African American female character of the novel. The paper highlights Morrison's problematization of the concept of freedom by investigating the implications of her allusion to the tale "The Ass in the Lion's Skin" in the novel. Inspired by the transformational implications of the chiasmus 'the ass in the lion's skin and the lion in the ass's skin' in paving the way for the enslaved characters to achieve a relevant freedom, the paper claims that the tale is used to illustrate her idea that freedom lies within individuals and is related to their psychological understanding and awareness of their status and position. With a focus on the ways the main characters of the novel perceive their status in terms of freedom at the time of the seventeenth century colonies, the paper also highlights Morrison's imaginative project of rewriting the North American history.

Irén Annus's paper discusses ideological implications of cartoons by Thomas Nast. Nast, father of the editorial cartoon in the US, has long been the target of harsh criticism for his representation of the Irish in the second half of the nineteenth century. One key concern among his critics regards a sense of unrelenting anti-Catholicism that prevails in his images. This study revisits a selection of Nast's works and, relying on Borer and Murphree's frame analysis (2008), investigates the ways in which these images portray Roman Catholicism and the Irish. It argues that to achieve a more elaborate understanding of these pieces, the images must be interpreted at the intersection of then current cultural representational practices in cartoon art, socio-political, economic and cultural realities in the US in general and in New York City in particular, and the convictions and values that Nast himself maintained. The paper finds that a contextualized frame analysis uncovers the reasons behind Nast's degrading visual criticism of both Irish

Catholics and the Roman Catholic Church in some of his images, but it also demonstrates that Nast expressed no objection to or criticism of the Catholic faith itself and was able to express compassion for the Irish whenever he believed it was truly deserved.

The aim of Réka Szarvas's paper is to compare the evolution of the female-written detective woman to the waves of the feminist movement. Detective fiction is considered to be a tableau of the social issues considered important in the period they are written in, and this is true to the female detective, too. Through looking at the suffragette, the women's liberation and the post-feminist movement, Szarvas intends to explore how the most important versions of the female detective (at the birth of the character, the spinster sleuth, the feminist hard-boiled and the heroines of domestic noir) act as a reaction to the social issues connected to women.

Ágnes Zsófia Kovács's paper analyzes Edith Wharton's relation to John Ruskin's art history in her *Italian Backgrounds*. The paper posits that Wharton's visual and architectural perspective comes from contemporary trends in art criticism and travel writing. Wharton is defying an earlier tradition of travel writing that came with an interest in picturesque scenes, curious sights, ruins and landscapes. Instead she prioritized the observation of architecture and architectural arrangements. In criticism this difference is called the contrast between the belletristic tradition of the picturesque and John Ruskin's model of precise observation. The question in the case of Wharton is how her travel accounts represent the change from picturesque critical model to that of precise observation, and what the exact reason for the change in her case is. The paper shows that Wharton was interested in the observation of visual culture and architectural space in order to give evidence of the historical continuity encoded in them. Her observations and comparisons measure up the extent of the cultural continuity pictures and buildings carry. For Wharton, Italy and France represent ideal locations where centuries of cultural legacy and connection can be perceived just by the observation of pictures, buildings, even of cultivated landscape.

Shreya Bera's paper studies the representation of 20th century Indian American community through the conflicted nature of 'homes' in Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Desirable Daughters* (2002). Even though postcolonial writers and diasporic writers are not the same, most hyphenated writers explore the problems originating in the colonial past: the process of rebuilding nation and identity, and how people of different origins create postcolonial selves in response to their lives in a foreign land. Bharati Mukherjee reinvests the idea of the postcolonial self by explaining the traumatic process of creating a home in the USA. Extending the interdisciplinary spectre of the sublime and Sigmund Freud's the uncanny (1919), the essay claims that *Desirable Daughters* showcases the rise of the postcolonial diasporic woman through the representation of shifting ideas of home against the theoretical backdrop of the sublime and the uncanny. By referring to the works of Bonnie Mann, Catherine Bronstein, Homi Bhabha and Vijay Mishra and use the aesthetics of the liberatory sublime and the uncanny as groundwork to explain the rise of diasporic woman as postcolonial woman and her shifting idea of home.

Réka M. Cristian surveys the fortunes of film criticism within American studies. American film theory and criticism are essential areas of American studies in general and of American film studies in particular. Their important milestones can be regarded as authentic paradigm dramas—as defined by Gene Wise—that open up multiple spaces of cultural encounters. These spaces include film history, various film offices and councils, censoring institutions, books, journals, documentaries, and also experimental filmmaking, alongside museums, various databases, archives, and registries and, last but not least, the academia.

Bálint Szántó's paper explores the use of transmedia worldbuilding techniques in the *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977) franchise. The aim of this paper is to investigate the way the narrative is changed by the expansion of an already existing story world, in this case, the *Star Wars* universe, to other media platforms. This type of interactive storytelling has been increasingly prevalent

in popular culture, and *Star Wars* is generally considered to be one of its pioneers. Firstly, the different academic approaches to the study of the transmedia phenomenon are discussed, with particular emphasis on Henry Jenkins's research (2006a, 2006b, 2006c), whose works on transmedia narratives and fandom studies are used extensively throughout the paper. After that, two important aspects of the *Star Wars* universe are analyzed in their relation to transmedia storytelling: its characters and its political system. For examining the effects of transmedia storytelling on characters, the iconic villain, Darth Vader is analyzed. His story was elaborated in many different comic books, novels, and other media products beyond the film, making him an excellent subject for this kind of analysis. Afterwards, the different political systems of the *Star Wars* universe are examined, and how different transmedia sources changed the fans' perception on them. By the end of the paper, it is concluded that transmedia storytelling played a great part in shaping the *Star Wars* saga into a modern cultural phenomenon, as it made its world more complex, interactive, and realistic.

Zoltán Dragon's paper explicates the role of photography in Frida Kahlo's art and in Julie Taymor's film *Frida.* Taymor's *Frida* is a spectacular collage of not merely the images we contribute to the name Frida Kahlo but of the image making technologies that make up that authorial name. Hence the diegetic construction of biography, painting and film all contribute to the cinematic reconfiguration of the work and life of the artist – yet it does so by silencing one particular frame that is intimately connected to both the work and the life of Frida Kahlo: photography. According to recent research, photography played a crucial role in the private and the artistic life of Kahlo, not only as a means of documenting her life (the well-known familial and friendly heritage from her father and also from one of her lovers), but as part of her artistic technique and a unique and meticulous technical expertise, as well. Dragon's paper tackles the extimate position of photography through the visual kaleidoscope of Taymor's re-imaging of technologies of the image connected to Frida Kahlo to draw a new frame for the multiple framings Frida's manifold narrative presents.

Zsófia Anna Tóth examines how authentic the aural representation of early 19th century England is in the 1995 film adaptation of Jane Austen's *Persuasion.* Her paper claims that this film version, even if not being a general and popular favourite, is actually a rather realistic and authentic representation of this time period in England and of Austen's own novel, too. The filmmakers had a very realistic, down-to-earth approach to the treatment of the story concerning visual as well as aural rendering. Authentic visual and aural rendering has become the vogue nowadays, but in 1995 the filmmakers were ahead of their time and the general public did not accept their interpretation because it was far from the "rose-colored sheen of nostalgia" (Collins 85) that viewers were accustomed to. In contrast to contemporary viewers' expectations of nostalgia films, the sensory experience of this film makes viewers actually feel being part of early 19th century England exactly because they hear the creaking of the floor, the crackling of the fire, the clanking of the cutlery etc., and not only some beautiful music/soundtrack under/next to the studio-perfected dialogues of the actors.

In her paper on ESL as a complex system, Tamara Tamás reports about her research on language learning anxiety. Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has been a widely researched area for decades. Although numerous factors have been identified, researchers have examined this notion by employing quantitative methodologies, with the selection of one or two variables which they thought responsible for FLA. Furthermore, the employed research designs could not explain contradicting results appropriately. Tamás examined the narratives of ten language learners of English from a complexity theory (CT) perspective: she was curious about how the characteristics of complex systems manifested in the data. The findings showed that FLA could be seen as a complex system because it was dynamic, complex, non-linear, open, and adaptive and it

showed inter- and intraindividual variability based on the participants' narratives. The results also supported that a qualitative design and a CT perspective may provide an additional understanding of the individual nature of FLA.

The University of Szeged was founded a hundred years ago. The institution started its first semester in October 1921 as the legal successor of the University of Cluj, which was relocated with its professors, students, and resources to Szeged after the Treaty of Trianon. The publication is dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the event.

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*Olga Pinjung*

# Identity Changes in Guerrilla Warfare on the Kansas-Missouri Border Between 1850–1865

**Keywords**

American Civil War, irregular warfare, guerrilla warfare, Bleeding Kansas, Jayhawkers, Bushwhackers

## Introduction

The role and effects of irregular warfare during the American Civil War had been ignored for decades as it did not have a significant, decisive effect on the outcome of the war itself. Historians started to recognize its role and analyze guerrilla operations in the second part of the twentieth century, therefore there are several aspects to be thoroughly explored and discussed, the issue of identity is one of them. Apart from investigating historical and military tactics, it is crucial to analyze irregular warfare of the American Civil War with respect to identity. By examining the role of identity in the lives of the guerrillas, we may obtain a more comprehensive understanding of their operations and impact.

Identity can be approached and examined from various aspects, as the field of identity studies is a complex and fascinating area of social sciences. I approach the question of identity in its most basic manner, that is, how the guerrillas of each side saw themselves, how they were seen by their opponents and the civilians, what characteristics they considered essential and what values they identified with. In the explanation of Richard Jenkins, "identity is the capacity to know who's who," identification is "rarely neutral" especially when we are talking about it in the context of the American Civil War (Jenkins 2014, 6). I have chosen this approach to identity because the seemingly simple and unproblematic questions of 'who are we?, who are they?, who are we to each other?' were the most complicated to answer on the Kansas-Missouri border at the time.

My research method is to analyze contemporary letters written by and of the most notorious figures of irregular warfare in order to determine and summarize the changes and specificities of identity. My purpose is to find and introduce the changes of identity solely based on the content of the letters and not from a recent point of view, hence trying to maintain an objective perspective. Examining identity of Civil War guerrillas is immensely important because it can shed a new light on irregular warfare and help us understand the thought process of these outlaws as well as discover new ways to approach guerrilla warfare.

Contemporary letters that constitute the foundation of my paper were accessed online on the webpage of the Kansas City Public Library, there are hundreds of letters, records and diary entries available for the public. *Noted Guerrillas or Warfare on the Border* written by John Newman Edwards provided a retrospective view and perception of the deeds of irregulars 10–15 years after the war as well as an insight into the methods Edwards used to justify the actions of the guerrillas.

In the second half of the twentieth century, as historians began to realize the role of guerrilla warfare in the Civil War, studies have been written about its military tactics, for instance *American Civil War Guerrilla Tactics* written by Sean McLachlan and Gerry Embleton or Michael Fellman's *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War*. Both books examine the military significance and operation of guerrilla troops. They are used as secondary

sources to provide details of the events mentioned in the letters. The most recently published books on the topic are *Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War* written by T.J. Stiles, an award-winning biographer and *A Savage Conflict, the Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* by Daniel E. Sutherland who is a distinguished professor of history. Both of these works proved to be invaluable in understaning the overall impact of the guerrillas.

## 1. The Civil War Context

### 1.1. Kansas v. Missouri: The beginning of a period of conflicts

Conflicts on the Kansas-Missouri border had begun years before the Civil War broke out. Missouri applied for statehood in 1817. At the time, there were 22 states in the Union half of them free and half of them slaveholder states. In 1820 Maine applied for statehood which resulted in the admission of both Missouri and Maine, Maine as a free state and Missouri as a slave state with the condition of the Missouri Compromise. The Missouri Compromise prohibited slavery North of latitude 36°30 .

The balance of states established by the Missouri Compromise was disrupted in the 1850s when the Kansas Territory applied for statehood and admission to the Union. As an attempted solution, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 was introduced, which provided the people living in the area with the opportunity to decide and vote whether they preferred to be admitted as a slave or a free state. Unfortunately, it resulted in the beginning of a series of conflicts in the Kansas area. Several pro-slavery men moved to the territory from the neighboring Western counties of Missouri as well as abolitionists from the North to establish voting rights and participate in the election. The outcome of the election of 1855 determined Kansas to be a slave state, but the result was not respected, two state governments were established with two different constitutions in the state that led to constant fights between pro-slavery and anti-slavery supporters (Dyer 1994, 9).

The first recorded event occurred November 21, 1855, when pro-slavery Franklin Coleman shot his neighbor Charles Dow to death. The incident led to the war of Wakarusa which further strengthened the polarization within the state and along the border. Pro-slavery men looted Lawrence, Kansas which was retaliated by abolitionist John Brown and his men who murdered several settlers. These were not isolated incidents, more than 200 people died from November 1855 through December 1856 along the state border line between Kansas and Missouri, hence the phrase: Bleeding Kansas (Kerrihard 1999).

Kansas was admitted to the Union as a free state in 1861. Consequently, citizens of the two neighboring states despised one another. After her admission, Kansas remained relatively united, whereas the state of Missouri was more divided than ever, especially in its Western counties (Stiles 2002). At the beginning of the Civil War Missouri wished to remain neutral and avoid taking sides which was virtually impossible, as Kansas Jayhawkers — who were the abolitionist irregular band of Kansas — and Union troops stormed into the state. The former wished to retaliate for Bleeding Kansas, while the latter realized the importance of the navigation of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers for strategic reasons. Soldiers of the Union took control over the railroads and rivers. Meanwhile, Unionist Senator of Kansas, James Lane pledged to destroy everything disloyal to the Union in the state of Missouri. His first step was to burn the town of Osceola to the ground. These events led to an ever-growing discomfort within the state, more and more citizens began to support Confederate General Price and Bushwhackers — who were the guerrilla bands of Missouri — in the area hoping for some protection against the occupying forces, marking the beginning of irregular warfare (McLachlan and Embleton 2009, 9).

### 1.2. The unique situation of Missouri and irregular warfare

As a result of Bleeding Kansas, the Union considered Missourians to be disloyal, pro-slavery rebels, who would do anything to maintain the institution of slavery. In spite the fact that agriculture — which demanded slave labor — was the main source of income, the majority of Missourians remained loyal to the Union and supported its maintenance (Brownlee 1986, 10).

The peculiar situation of the state of Missouri during this period is undeniable. Missourians had to fight a civil war within the Civil War. Citizens had to take up arms to defend themselves from the raiding and looting of Kansas Jayhawkers, hence they banded together and formed a gang called Bushwhackers. At the same time, they had to fight Union soldiers who were hunting them. Unfortunately, these inner conflicts of the state imposed long-lasting consequences on the citizens as well. During the examination of identity changes in guerrilla warfare it is essential to take a look at its effect on the identity of the people who lived in the area and suffered the consequences.

Francis Lieber, German-born American philosopher, used the term guerrilla to define an individual who had been involved in irregular warfare in the South, although, it was not a uniquely Southern phenomenon. What does irregular or guerrilla warfare mean exactly? Lieber, who was a Unionist, anti-slavery public figure, established the laws of war i.e. Lieber Code, where he attempted to define what irregular warfare was and distinguish certain types of soldiers involved in it. According to Lieber, "a guerrilla party means an irregular band of armed men, carrying on an irregular war, not being able, according to their character as a guerrilla party, to carry on what the law terms as regular war" (Lieber 1862, 7). He listed the following features of guerrilla bands: they were self-constituted or called together by a charismatic leader, they were not connected to the army, they could be disbanded if necessary and called together again, they were not to be considered soldiers, therefore were not entitled to the privileges of war if taken prisoner (Lieber 1862, 8). Irregular warfare attracted young, adventurous men who were fascinated by fighting "under the black flag," without consideration to the consequences (Edwards 1877, 21).

Let me examine and explain the differences of guerrilla warfare on the Southern and Northern sides. As he was a Unionist, the definition of guerrillas by Francis Lieber only applied to the Southern irregular groups of soldiers, who were called Bushwhackers by Union troops and citizens. They got their name because they were hiding in the bush they whacked with their feet as they roamed the territory (Dyer 1994, 15). Lieber used several terms to distinguish the types of irregular soldiers, but the following ones are relevant to my research: Guerilla and Partisan, both strictly referring to the Confederate side. However, I would like to use his definition for Partisans to describe the Jayhawkers, the Unionist guerrillas. In his own words, Partisans were "soldiers armed and wearing the uniform of their army but belonging to a corps which acts detached from the main body," as these groups of men were in fact, part of the Union army when the Civil War had begun, however, they operated independently, without the permission of their commanders (Schindler and Toman 1988, 8). The terms I am going to use through my research are Bushwhackers for Southern guerrillas and Jayhawkers for the irregulars operating in the name of the North. I have chosen these terminologies because they indicate the features of these groups properly and in a somewhat neutral manner.

## 2. Bleeding Kansas

According to Lieber's categorization of irregular warfare, anti-slavery men of the North who operated during Bleeding Kansas could not be called guerrillas because they did not meet his criteria of a guerrilla. To begin with, Jayhawker troops were connected to the regular army,

while Bushwhackers were not. Nevertheless, these regiments acted of their own accord, blindly trusting their comrades. Furthermore, their leaders were highly respected individuals, politicians, militarymen. Their founders and most respected members were James H. Lane, politician, Captain James Montgomery and Charles Jennison (Sutherland 2009, 11). The primary objective of the Jayhawkers was to facilitate the abolition of slavery everywhere by any means necessary and to take revenge on any pro-slavery men who settled down in the area. Jayhawking became common practice on the border from the beginning of Bleeding Kansas. Lane's reaction to the murder of Dow by pro-slavery group was that the city where the incident had happened needed "to be demolished without delay" (Lane 1855).

The object of the hatred of Jayhawkers was not solely focused on Missourians, there were several incidents committed and recorded in the Kansas Territory as well. Here where citizens were threatened, robbed of their property, chased away from their homes and forced to find shelter across the border, into Western counties of Missouri. Montgomery and his men "always had enough men for emergency" meaning they were always enough to be able to drive people away and rob them of what they owned (Citizens of Bates Co. 1858). Jayhawkers were described as being engaged in "robbing and burning their houses and killing all who were obnoxious to or resisted them." Citizens were not able to defend themselves and their property (Donalson, 1856). It is worth mentioning that none of the records and letters of these incidents include whether the harassed citizens owned slavers or not, even though it would be a significant detail if they tried to justify their deeds by identifying themselves as anti-slavery men.

As early as August 20, 1856, General William Pitt Richardson mentioned his concerns in a letter to the governor of Kansas, Wilson Shannon. He stated he had feared Lane's military force would disturb the peace of the area and the state should provide protection for its citizens and their properties (Richardson 1856). As the letter proves, even Unionists had issues with Lane in the Kansas area, opposing his methods years before the Civil War.

As far as identity is concerned, the anti-slavery nature of their operation would be the only seemingly justifiable explanation of inflicting violence on their fellow citizens. One of the concerned men from Kansas wrote the following about the abuse of peaceful settlers in the area: Jayhawkers made "no difference what may their political sentiments or whatever may be the natural inclination of their feelings or sympathies as regards to proslavery of anti-slavery," settlers were abused, robbed and threatened to be killed unless they joined the Unionists and declared any men pro-slavery who refused to join them (Montgomery 1856). These conflicts along the border of Kansas and Missouri were so severe because they were fought between neighbors, acquaintances, people who were well acquainted with one another. As Edwards Fitch wrote to his parents, his neighbor joined the "border ruffians," and he expected "nothing less than his house will be burned if nothing worse befalls him" (Fitch 1856) because they had a difference in opinion. These lines prove how personal these conflicts were, resulting in the depopulation of counties of Kansas along the border; as a consequence of pro-slavery raiding parties occupying the area and driving away "nearly all the best men" as we can see from the letter written by "The few that are left" in the area (The few that are left 1856).

Citizens of Vernon county, Missouri petitioned the governor to take measures against the "lawless" men of Montgomery (Citizens of Vernon Co. 1859), Missourians were sick and tired of raids into their counties; they petitioned the governor to ask for interference with their affairs as:

> we are imminently in danger of another invasion, from armed bands of banditis from Kansas territory. Our township which is but thinly settled, suffered continually for the last three years, from these marauding parties; (ten or eleven thousand dollars worth of property having been carried off in one night) (Vernon County Citizens 1860).

These atrocities led to the emergence of Bushwhackers at the beginning of the Civil War, civilians had no choice but to stand up for themselves and defend their property. The abuse Missourians had to endure by Jayhawkers resulted in the fact that citizens living in the area began to support and aid the Bushwhackers and provide them with food and shelter because these guerrillas were the only group that did not disturb them, unlike Jayhawkers and later, when the war began, Union troops that occupied the area (Dyer 1994, 33).

The identity of Jayhawkers during bleeding Kansas was determined by politics, to make sure Kansas became a free state using any means necessary. They were furious with Missourians who settled down in the Kansas Territory for the sole purpose of voting thus they took the opportunity to rob and abuse them which only became more severe during the Civil War. Bleeding Kansas had already divided the state by the time the Civil War broke out. The fact that neither the Union army nor the Kansas Jayhawkers made a distinction between pro-slavery and anti-slavery Missourians is beyond dispute. For them, an encounter with a Missourian meant an encounter with the enemy, which further divided the state and altered the views and support of the civilians. Being harassed, robbed by Jayhawkers who were supposed to stand up for their fellow Unionist men often led to the fact that citizens began to sympathize with the South. In many cases, Confederate supporters helped the guerrillas, provided them with food and shelter, a gesture that cost them greatly. Union soldiers and Jayhawkers attacked, abused and often murdered those they suspected of aiding the Bushwhackers (McLachlan and Embleton 2009, 50). The efforts of the state of Missouri to remain neutral in the Civil War were shattered when Union troops entered at the beginning of the war. Jayhawkers and Union activities in the area forced the civilians slowly but steadily toward the Confederacy.

Negative connotations of Jayhawkers appeared early on, as we have seen from the letters, they were called "border ruffians" by fellow Kansans and "banditti," "marauding parties" by Missourians. These pejorative expressions imply the negative attitude of citizens towards Jayhawkers. They were seen as "lawless" men whose only purpose is to plunder and destroy. During Bleeding Kansas, Bushwhackers were seen as saviors who would stand up to the enemy in order to protect the citizens of the state.

## 3. The year 1862

1862 was the year of the American Civil War when guerrilla warfare turned into its bloodiest, most cruel form. General order no. 19 required every able-bodied man in the state of Missouri to join the militia "for the purpose of exterminating the guerrillas that infest our state" which thoroughly undermined the state's desire to remain neutral; people were forced to take sides. The majority joined the Union army but a significant minority joined the guerrillas (McLachlan and Embleton 2009, 12). As one of the residents of Clay County, Missouri stated "were the rebels a foreign foe or stranger people, then subduing them might be called victories. But this is a family quarrel, brother against brother, & we bite &devour one another" (Stiles 2003, 81).

James Lane and Charles Jennison hand-selected anti-slavery men to establish the Kansas Red Legs. They were named after the long red piece of cloth they wore on their shins for identification, they were a part of the 7th Kansas Cavalry (O'Bryan). Most of them were "thieves, a fact admitted by the highest U.S. army officers on the border in 1861 and 1862" (Brownlee 1986, 43). Kansas governor Charles Robinson, who was a supporter of the Union, had had enough of their illegal raids, tried to disband the Red Legs, who, in turn attempted to assassinate him. They spent the winter and spring of 1862 burning homes, emancipating slaves in Missouri. In March, 1862, General Orders no. 2 was issued which proclaimed that guerrillas were not to be considered soldiers. The "no quarter" policy means that no mercy should be shown towards the

guerrillas upon capture, they should be killed. This principle was adapted by the Bushwhackers as well. "No quarter" policy determined the nature of irregular warfare for the remaining of the Civil War (McLachlan and Embleton 2009, 12).

Jayhawkers, similarly to Union troops, supposed every Missourian was pro-slavery and aided the Bushwhackers, therefore they attacked and murdered many, despite the fact that Missourians were loyal to the Union (O'Bryan). Southerners expressed their opposition to Jayhawkers and when the Confederate army arrived in Missouri, Kansas saw it as an excuse for attacking people they had feuds with for years: they started raiding and stealing their property including slaves (Sutherland 2009, 30). In his letter to A.W. Doniphan, James H. Moss mentions the events in two Western counties of Missouri, Platte and Clay where Kansas Reg Legs i.e. Jayhawkers appeared: "armed soldiers and negroes were traveling through both counties every day and every night stealing horses, money, clothes and everything of value that could be moved," while the Union army encouraged them. Jennison's regiment consisted of "worthless, lawless, thieving and ungovernable men" who posed a great danger to Missouri. Members of disbanded Union regiments joined Jennison's Jayhawkers (Moss, 1863). They were determined to emancipate the slaves of Missouri, a noble sentiment, nevertheless their means to achieve their purpose was anything but noble. Their illegal raids were condemned by Kansas governor Charles Robinson and Missouri governor Hamilton R. Gamble, who wrote letters to president Lincoln to express their concerns regarding the Jayhawkers who were planning to "raise a force composed in part at least of negroes and enter Missouri to carry out their own ideas of supporting the Union." Gamble mentioned if it were to happen, he had no choice but to defend themselves against the Kansans who seemed to think that the patience of Missourians was "inexhaustible but they are mistaken, it is completely exhausted" (Gamble 1862).

Union loyalist John C. Gage wrote in a letter to "Dear Friend" that although the citizens were afraid of the deeds of Southern guerrillas, i.e. Bushwhackers, their primary concern was "Jim Lane's negro brigade under Jennison" who threatened to "hang 50 men within 3 hours" upon arrival but he added they were ready to defend themselves if necessary. According to his description, Jennison's soldiers were equipped with the best arms and clothes available, hence, loyal men could not get the means to defend themselves from Bushwhackers (Gage 1862). The fact that local Unionists felt more threatened by Jennison's Jayhawkers than by Southern Bushwhackers proves how Jennison had no respect for loyal citizens, in his eyes, Missourians equaled pro-slavery men.

One of the leaders of the Bushwhackers was William Clarke Quantrill, who was from Ohio and moved to the Kansas Territory in the 1850s. He most likely began to sympathize with the Confederate cause when he witnessed the operations of the abolitionists, as he wrote to his mother in a letter:

> you have undoubtedly heard of the wrongs committed in this territory by the Southern people, or proslavery party, but when one once knows the facts they can easily see that it has been the opposite party that have been the main movers in the troubles & by far the most lawless of people in the country (Quantrill 1860).

In the same letter, he questioned his purpose in life, saying "I often think that there must have been something else for me to do, that I was spared," when he reflected on his gold-mining adventures and hardships he had survived (Quantrill 1860). Based on this letter we can assume Quantrill was aspiring for more, looking for his way to manage and find a purpose in life that is bigger than himself. In such a psychological state, an impressionable young man is easily drawn into such a situation as irregular warfare, especially when he is joined by men such as William T. 'Bloody Bill' Anderson whose father and sister were killed by Union troops. Hence,

he was driven by vengeance, he wanted to protect the people from Jayhawkers and the Union army. He stated "my command can give them (the people) more protection than all the Federals in the state" (Fellman 1990, 139).

If we compare the identity of the Jayhawkers during the Kansas-Missouri border wars to their identity in 1862, we may notice some significant changes. First and foremost, their abolitionist sentiment strengthened and they began the emancipation of slaves in Missouri by stealing them and often destroying the property of the slaveowners by burning their homes. Jayhawkers saw themselves as saviors of slaves, they intended to abolish the institution altogether and this was the idea they used to justify their atrocities against Missourians. Another important factor is that they used these emancipated slaves to intimidate Missourians by admitting them to their regiments.

However, the identity of the Bushwhackers had not been driven by pro-slavery sentiments, as one would expect. Most of them were young men who saw themselves as revolutionaries who would help rid the state of Missouri of invaders and avenge the wrongdoings they and their families had experienced (Fellman 1990, 140). There are very few letters and diary entries written by them and interestingly enough, neither the letters written by Bushwhackers nor those written about them mention slaveholding and whether the protection of the institution of slavery was primary for them. They either did not identify with it or did not consider it important enough. Their identity and therefore their behavior was solely defined by protecting their property, standing up for their abused or murdered family members and vengeance which they could not do without the help of the citizens who aided them because they could identify with their cause more than that of the Union or Jayhawkers (Dyer 1994, 33).

## 4. Lawrence and Centralia

By the end of 1862, clashes between Southern guerrillas and Union bands became bloodier and deadlier. Union soldiers imprisoned the female family members of Bushwhackers in Kansas City to force them to surrender and move to the South. In 1863 the prison collapsed and killed 5 women including the sister of William 'Bloody Bill' Anderson, who had been infuriated with the Union. This occasion led to the Lawrence massacre, in my opinion, the deadliest event of the guerrilla warfare.

The city of Lawrence was known for being the headquarters for Jayhawkers, at the time, and Lane was there hiding from Quantrill. In the morning of August 21, 1863, Quantrill and his guerrillas (among them Bloody Bill Anderson) entered the city and raided it (McLachlan and Embleton 2009, 14–15). A citizen and witness of the events, whose husband was murdered described the details in a letter to her parents. In her recollection, the guerrillas entered the town quietly and started shooting when they got to the center. They were shooting in every direction, killing men, shouting. A guerrilla with a companion entered her house "it haunts me day & night, a coarse, brutal, blood thirsty face – inflamed with hellish passions & strong drink for he was evidently intoxicated." They shot the husband, emptying the rounds of two revolvers, let the woman and children go and burnt the house down. It is important to note here, that a few days after this incident, the wife realized they had a Union flag on the roof of the house in the front which might have contributed to the death of her husband (Fitch 1863). This description of guerrilla violence is acknowledged by John Newman Edwards as well, who tried to justify the heinous acts of the outlaws by emphasizing how much they had lost to Jayhawkers and their rage got out of control to an extent "that feature of savage atrocity slew the wounded, slaughtered the prisoners and sometimes mutilated the dead" (Edwards 1877, 196).

The Lawrence massacre was a turning point in guerilla warfare for several reasons. The fact that it was a personal issue for their leader William 'Bloody Bill' Anderson made the guerrillas especially brutal and merciless. Several sources support the fact that Anderson was never the same after the death of his sister, often mumbling her name (McLachlan and Embleton 2009, 28). The importance of Bushwhackers had increased, as they could successfully organize and execute such an operation as the attack on Lawrence without detection or suspicion. Both Jayhawkers and the Union were shocked by the events at Lawrence. Lane got out of the massacre unharmed, while almost 150 male residents were killed and many wounded. Nevertheless, such a retaliatory measure could have been expected after the attack of free-staters on Osceola, Missouri in 1861, the center of anti-slavery sentiment and the home of James Lane should have been more prepared for an attack. As some sources indicate, Quantrill and his men had help on the inside in Lawrence who provided them with map of the city and information on the location of pro-slavery men (Williams 1968). It would not be surprising if we consider that these residents in nearby counties must have been acquainted with one another and often had stronger connections. Allen T. Ward described it in a letter to her sister

> when men who have lived neighbors, on the same section of land, and heretofore always been friendly, but when the war broke out they took different sides, they became enemies, and have watched an opportunity to shoot each other down as dogs—this is the case all through this upper Missouri, and partly so in Kansas, & frequently the case that brothers take different sides in the war (Ward 1861).

As a result of the Lawrence massacre, general order no. 11 was issued ordering the citizens of Western counties of Missouri to evacuate their homes and the area within 15 days in an attempt to suppress guerrilla violence and force residents South, into Confederate territory (McLachlan and Embleton 2009, 15).

Following the Lawrence massacre, Anderson departed from Quantrill with the fiercest fighters. He and his guerrillas began to attack and rob stagecoaches and trains. One of these instances was the Centralia massacre, September 27, 1864 where Anderson and his men stopped a train and executed unarmed Union soldiers. They were chased into Centralia by the Union army where they took on soldiers and murdered them "one by one, they cut seventeen scalps loose, then carefully tied them to their saddles and bridles. At least one guerrilla carved the nose off a victim," others mutilated the bodies in multiple horrifying ways (Stiles 2003, 126).

This period was represented by a shift in identity for the Bushwhackers. They had begun the war with the intention to protect the citizens from Jayhawkers and Union intruders, but by the time the Lawrence massacre commenced, their conduct was defined by brutality and "what most shocked Americans was that, as at Lawrence, their victims were fellow white men- and at Centralia, they were fellow white Missourians" (Stiles 2003, 127). They were not interested in the proslavery values of the Confederacy nor were they invested in its victory, they were driven by rage toward their purpose of annihilating anyone they suspected of being a Unionist but not because of their ideology, only for the purpose of revenge. The most notorious guerrillas refused to surrender, therefore they were killed in battle, Anderson in October 26, 1864, Quantrill in June 6, 1865 (McLachlan and Embleton 2009, 28).

## 5. Edwards – creation of identity

After General Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Jayhawkers were able to return to their civilian lives, most guerrillas surrendered, while many Bushwhackers refused to accept the end of the war. They became notorious outlaws, who robbed banks, stagecoaches, continued raiding Un-

ionists under the leadership of Jesse Woodson James (McLachlan and Embleton 2009, 62). He was the legendary figure John Newman Edwards needed after the war had ended to keep the Confederate values alive and help create an identity for the guerrillas that citizens could sympathize with. Edwards was a friend of Brigandier General Joseph O. Shelby and joined him when the war had begun (Stiles 2003, 129). After the war, Edwards returned to journalism and writing, he wrote a book titled *Noted Guerrillas or Warfare of the Border* in 1877 which I analyzed to provide a retrospective view on guerrilla identity.

In his opinion, Jayhawkers were cowardly soldiers who used brutality and violence to protect the Union. They were nothing but robbers who used the war as an excuse to harass and rob citizens (Edwards 1877, 24–25). He describes Jayhawkers as "prophets of demagogism" who sought legitimacy by being violent, cowardly, as they "would not stand in the last ditch" (Edwards 1877, 37). According to John Newman Edwards, Bushwhackers were patriots who lived a timid life on a farm until they were forced by Jayhawkers to defend themselves and their families. Edwards was a prominent supporter of the Confederate cause, therefore his views and descriptions of guerrillas were biased, yet he provided us with a peek into the lives and creation of the legend of Robin Hood-like bandits who had been living a calm and peaceful life until Unionists came and destroyed their properties, burned their farms to the ground and, in some cases, harassed and murdered their family members (Edwards 1877, 24). Edwards had a significant impact on influencing how civilians saw these outlaws, often exaggerating and dramatizing stories in order to gain some support for them.

Despite these factors, I dedicated a chapter to Edwards because he was the first person who realized the importance of identity and used his talent as a writer to create one. Edwards and his book titled *Noted Guerrillas or Warfare on the Border* is important for my research because he approached the human side of the guerrillas, trying to justify their deeds by providing their reasons for them, however biased his remarks are, the main aspects and events are historically accurate, his role in creating Southern identity is undeniable.

Young men who refused to join the army because they preferred to stay at home to protect their homes and families from the raids of Jayhawkers found guerrilla warfare the appropriate way to confront their enemies. They were free to go wherever they needed, not bound by the order of their commanders. The freedom of guerrilla warfare led to the remorseless and cruel nature of the conflicts and attracted impressionable young men, who were not ready to be committed to the Confederate army as soldiers but were fascinated by the lack of regular warfare and ready to avenge the wrongdoings they had suffered chose to join the guerrillas. As the number of vengeful young men grew, the border wars became more violent (Edwards 1877, 25). These men firmly believed they fought to protect their freedom from Unionist invaders and murdering ill-principled men in the name of American sentiment (Fellman 1990, 132). Due to the nature of their warfare very few letters and diary entries exist, and the ones that can be found "assert the legitimacy and nobility of their cause" (Fellman 1990, 136). In his description, guerrillas were the brave defenders of the helpless residents of the state who would risk everything in order to succeed in their mission, they were vigilant, heroic, devoted but remorseless. These young men embodied the perfect guerrillas, who would never surrender or quit even when they suffered, therefore they were the perfect examples for citizens.

His primary purpose was to create an image of the guerrillas Missourians could identify with regardless of which sides they supported. "Every man stood upon his own convictions, and he stood immovable. He laid his life and all his possessions upon the altar of his devotion. Such a man may be ruined, despoiled, slain, but he will not be false to his sense of right and justice" (Edwards 1877, 207). What guerrillas and civilians failed to put into words, he succeeded due to his experience and talent. He managed to create an identity for the people, both guerrillas and citizens.

## 6. Conclusion: Beyond the war

Identity is an essential part of examining the conduct of certain groups, especially during the American Civil War. The way they saw themselves, the way they saw their enemy and the way they were perceived by the citizens of the area were significant factors that determined the behavior of the guerrillas and the nature of irregular warfare. It is difficult to determine what Missourians identified with, because they were a slaveholding state of the Union, who wished to remain neutral and tried to avoid taking sides in the Civil War.

Bleeding Kansas was the first event to cause the emergence of irregular warfare on the Kansas-Missouri border. Jayhawkers were motivated by a strong anti-slavery sentiment because their leaders were involved in politics. They used it to justify their plunder and raids on the citizens of Missouri. They were seen as robbers who entered the state in order to steal their property- including slaves- while harassing and injuring the civilians regardless of where their loyalties laid. As the events of the Civil War unfolded, Jayhawkers began to identify more with the anti-slavery sentiment, they saw themselves as the liberators of slaves, they saw themselves as heroes of the Union. On the contrary, residents both in Missouri and Kansas thought Jayhawkers were common thieves, criminals whose aim was to destroy everything that stood in their way. Their efforts were reassured by the consequences of the war.

Bushwhackers appeared as a counter-measure with the sole purpose of protecting their property, fellow citizens and take revenge for damages caused by Jayhawkers. At the same time, Bushwhackers, their families and friends were forced to endure a growing number of incidents committed by Jayhawkers, which resulted in the increase in brutality and violence. "No quarter" policy was introduced by both sides; it meant they would not show mercy upon capturing the enemy. Slaveholding did not appear in the letters written by or about the Bushwhackers. Either they did not consider it important or they did not identify with it. Based on the letters, I assume the latter was true: they were driven by revenge, motivated by suffering. They saw themselves as freedom fighters, who were the victim of the circumstances. Their deeds brought negative effects to the lives of the residents who, at the beginning considered them heroes who stood up for them. As irregular warfare became more brutal, so did the regulations imposed by the Union on the citizens which resulted in them ceasing to support the Bushwhackers. The shift in their perception was further affected by the growing violence of the guerrillas, especially after the Lawrence and Centralia massacres where brutality materialized in the form of scalping and the mutilation of the victims.

John Newman Edwards was the first person who tried to make sense of and explain the operations of the guerrillas with respect to identity. He considered it his duty to create a positive and hopeful image of the Bushwhackers. He was a supporter of the Confederacy, hence his motivation was to bring Missourians closer to what he regarded Southern identity. In his book entitled *Noted Guerrillas* he did not mention slaveholding as a factor or virtue. Instead, his focused on the emphasis of the human side of the guerrillas: how brave, enduring, bold they were. He concentrated on creating a heroic, revolutionary identity, highlighting the values of valor, honor and dignity. He forgave the Bushwhackers for the heinous actions they committed such as scalping because, in his opinion, they were forced into brutality by enduring atrocities committed by Jayhawkers.

The identity of a person can be influenced by a conflict and it can change quickly and drastically. The American Civil War was a clash and war between brothers, neighbors, family members and friends. The perception and identity of the guerrillas shifted quite quickly and was altered by the events of the war.

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*Zoltán Vajda*

# Friendship Never Ends: Spaces of Sympathy in Thomas Jefferson's Dialogue of the Head and the Heart

**Keywords**

Thomas Jefferson, Maria Cosway, moral sense, friendship, spaces of sympathy

While serving as US minister to France in 1786 Thomas Jefferson got acquainted with English miniature painter Richard Cosway and his wife Maria, a talented artist and an embodiment of contemporary white middle class female ideal. Their relationship developed into a friendship generating a brief correspondence with the latter, the most relevant piece of which proved to be Jefferson's letter that he wrote her on October the 12th 1786. It went down in Jefferson scholarship as a major statement of his ideas concerning sentimental feelings connected with friendship, sympathy, and affection (Jefferson to Maria Cosway, October 12, 1786, in Jefferson 1977, 400–12).

The letter was written in the format of a dialogue between the head and the heart of the intradiegetic narrator lamenting over the departure of the causeways with whom he has spent a whole day visiting the sites of Paris and its environs. Interestingly enough, a great deal of the conversation revolves around the power of sympathy and affection as well as conditions under which they affect interpersonal relationships—and all that within the context of the exposition of the major principles of Jefferson's moral philosophy. My aim here will be to explore the dynamics of the interaction among various spaces of sympathy as identified by Fonna Forman-Barzilai on the basis of Adam Smith's theory of sympathy. Her take on sympathy allows one to see it as a multidimensional concept. The sharing someone else's feelings can be generated by various factors, each playing a possible role under various conditions. My particular interest here is in finding out which of these gains significance or even dominance in particular circumstances in the discussion of sympathy and friendship by the head and the heart.

The letter offers a plethora of ideas revealing Jefferson's understanding of sentimental relations including the factors generating them. In addition, they also contain soundings about Jefferson's ideal of the sentiment of white female person and through that cultural differences between the United States and Europe.

Jefferson's sentimental takings have been studied in their relation to his moral philosophy, at the center of which their moral sense is located, a capacity that unites the individual's ability to follow ethical norms as well as to feel for others. Influenced by Scottish moral philosophy as well as sentimental works of contemporary literature such as Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759), he held that independent of reason the moral sense developed in every individual with its center located in the heart. It guaranteed that the individual could exist in human society as a social animal as it were. Also the site of benevolence and sympathy for others, it served to establish social ties among members belonging to the same society (Jefferson to Thomas Law, June 13, 1814, in Jefferson 1977, 540–44; Yarbrough 2009, 27– 28). Such bonds proved essential not simply as factors defining relations among individuals but also as ones among members of political communities. This is why he raised sentimental ties to the level of national ones when arguing for independence from Britain in 1776 (Coviello 2002; Coviello 2005; Wills 1979) and later in his construction of the federal union as a political

community (Onuf 2000b). He also took pains to define other ethnic groups such as Native Americans and blacks as ones falling outside of such communities of affection with problematic sentimental ties characterizing them (Onuf 2000a; Onuf 1998; Vajda 2009; Vajda 2012a; Vajda 2012b; Vajda 2017).

An outstanding statement of his principle of the moral sense, his letter of 1786 to Maria Louisa Catherine Cecilia Hadfield Cosway, also reveals the complexity of sympathy in the context of friendship. It records their experience shared in the summer of the same year when Jefferson met the Cosway couple in Paris. Maria Cosway, who was not only a painter but also a composer of songs, love songs among them, enchanted the widowed Jefferson. He was eager to follow-up on their first encounter, visiting sights of Paris and environs, most of the time accompanied by Maria. Their shared joy obviously left a mark on Jefferson, who was happy to continue the relationship through correspondence after the Parisian encounter. The Cosways set on their trip back to London in October leaving a grief-stricken Jefferson behind (Burstein 1995, 74–75).

What is the nature of sympathy then that one can identity in Jefferson's letter? The dialogue between the Head and the Heart revolves around the complexities of friendship developing in ways that can be grasped through the concept of sympathetic space. Sympathetic space is a concept that Forman-Barzilai introduces on the basis of her reading Adam Smith's moral philosophy, as developed in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759).

## 1. The concept of sympathetic space in Adam Smith's moral philosophy

According to Smith, sympathy between humans evolves as a result of the interaction of three dimensions of sympathetic space signifying proximity between self and other. They are the "physical," "affective," and "historical-cultural" spaces of sympathy. The first of these describes the power of sympathy depending on physical distance, strongest when being closest to the observed. The second expresses the sympathy felt for the other through the concept of "connectedness," while the third indicates historical familiarity as the basis of sympathy. The power of sympathy depends upon the combination and sum total of these variables and hence it can differ from one case to another (Forman-Barzilai 2010, 141).

As for the physical dimension, for Smith, it is important because of the primacy of sight in generating sentiments in the observer. His concept of the "impartial spectator" involves the notion of imagining how the observed one feels on the basis of perception, thus trying to copy the original feeling (142). This is why physical distance has the effect of impairing sympathy by hindering sight (143). Despite distance, however, literary representation, if powerful enough, could generate sympathy in the spectator by eliminating distance by means of the imagination as it were (144).

The affective dimension of sympathy develops with time, based on habit between individuals connected emotionally (153). Smith discussed this form of sympathy as an impediment to unbiased judgement (156). Hence a balance is desirable between the requirement of physical proximity for right judgement and affective sympathy, being not too much connected distorting judgement (159).

Historical-cultural sympathy operates among persons belonging to the same historical-cultural context and thus influences them in their moral judgments. It is grounded in their own cultural "experiences" (161). This sort of sympathy has such an immense power for Smith that he finds it overwhelming and unsurmountable: our cultural biases prevent us from being distanced from ourselves and judging culturally distant persons in an unbiased manner, "without assimilating them to ourselves" (161). This version of sympathy also concerns the way in which the rules

by which one culture operates differ from those of another as well as the perspective through which it perceives moral behavior appropriate in another culture (162). The power of historical-cultural sympathy is generated by the fact that the individual strives to meet the moral expectations of one particular culture and becomes the transmitter of these rules for others to follow (164, 174). It is also that the historical-cultural space places limit on our imagination as an impartial spectator and thus compels us to make moral judgements within the confines of our own cultural biases (165, 175). This is the price that one pays for not moving beyond the boundaries of the familiar in order to avoid making wrong, culturally uninformed judgements, existing beyond one's own experience. That is why, in Forman-Barzilai's words, "we are biased in historical space toward the proximate, just as we are biased in both physical and affective space," according to Smith at least (165). All this makes her call him "a localist" (185), "primarily concerned with maintaining 'domestic morals'" (192).

These seem to be the main pillars of a world imagined by Smith that also appeared in Jefferson's conception of sympathy in his Head and Heart dialogue. Yet, in most of the letter these pillars do not function as preconditions of moral judgement but rather provide an analytical framework that facilitates the exploration of the mechanism of sympathy and affection working within sentimental friendly relationships. The interaction of the three spaces of sympathy in Jefferson's rendering of his relationship to the Cosways, and especially to Maria Cosway, offers the opportunity to explore not only his understanding of the various types of sympathy but also their hierarchy and the conditions under which they expressed their power.

In the conversation between the Head and the Heart, the former functions to articulate the unpleasant consequences of relationships with others. Pertaining to the concrete situation, it reminds the Heart of its previous warning about the dire ending of the new relationship with the Cosways: "You will be pleased to remember that our friend Trumbull used to be telling us of the merits and talents of these good people, I never ceased whispering to you that we had no occasion for new acquaintance; that the greater their merit and talents, the more dangerous their friendship to our tranquillity (sic), because the regret at parting would be greater" (401).

These sentiments are reflections on the relationship between the Cosways and Jefferson as it developed through their visiting sights of Paris and its environs together. They had the opportunity to enjoy and marvel at architecture, dinners, gardens, and the landscape along the river Seine (401–3). The Head's argument revolves around the problem of the "separation," that is, the end of conviviality for the company and the pain to be suffered by the Heart upon that (403).[1]

## 2. Sympathy from the perspective of the Head

Here then we have an exploration of the nature of sympathetic dynamism by the Head. Proximity begets mutual attraction and is the result of the overlapping of all three places of sympathy as I introduced them above: the physical encounter of the couple with Jefferson facilitates the generation of the affective connectedness and largely on the basis of the historical-cultural dimension, that is, then, common interest in the cultural scenes of a foreign environment. At the same time, the affective dimension is also reinforced by Jefferson's praise for Maria Cosway and probably a source of personal attraction. Through the words of the Head we learn "that the

[1] Jefferson's emphasis on the priority of persons in evoking sympathetic vibes was in stark contrast with later travel writers such as Edith Wharton, who dedicated such power to place and sights (Kovács 2017, 542).

persons indeed were of the greatest merit, possessing good sense, good humour (sic), honest hearts, honest manners, and eminence in a lovely art: that the lady had moreover qualities and accomplishments, belonging to her sex, which might form a chapter apart from her: such as music, modesty, beauty, and that softness of disposition which is the ornament of her sex and charm of ours" (403).

Separation would mean the shattering of the unity of the spaces of sympathy, too. This, however, seems to explain the great amount of pain that is associated with the parting to the ways for friends. The dissipation of the physical space of sympathy is the main cause of that. The other two are bound to remain though as is suggested by the Heart, who is arguing for the reunion of the Cosways and Jefferson in the latter's native Virginia (404). In doing so, it is appealing to the attractions of his native land offering several sources of pleasure for the Cosways, especially Maria, who is supposed to welcome such an opportunity to practice her skills as a landscape painter. And America would in fact offer exceptional conditions to do so: "Where could they find such objects as in America for the exercise of the enchanting arts?" the Heart asks. "especially the lady, who paints landscape so inimitably. She wants only subjects worthy of immortality to render her pencil immortal" (404). Besides the fact that the Heart is employed by Jefferson here to cajole the letter's addressees into a potentially entertaining trip to the United States in a frolicsome manner, the rhetorical strategy is also noteworthy for its matching with the affective attributes of the relationship as defined earlier by the Heart. What the latter is arguing for here is the image of the United States as an affective, sentimental place from the perspective of the interlocutor.

We have seen before how for Smith, the generation of sympathy required capturing the sentiments of the perceive other so that one can respond to them, in a way that will resonate with the latter. What the Heart/Jefferson is doing here follows a similar mechanism: the construction of the Untied States/Virginia as a place of desire for the Cosways and especially for Maria Cosway involves an intricate strategy of the imagination in a double sense. In the first place, the Heart presupposes a state of mind and sentiment for the landscape painter, who should feel a strong desire for a reunion. In the second place, all this could happen in a land where she could also fulfill her artistic aspirations.

Such an act would result in the happy reconstruction of the unison of the three spaces of sympathy once enjoyed by the Cosways in Paris. The physical space of Virginia would function as a platform for the fulfillment of the affective connection as well as the historical-cultural sympathy that, according to the imagination of the Heart, existed among them. This is why Jefferson/the Heart is quick to provide a list of the sights worth visiting in his homeland during this proposed sentimental journey—quite like in the fashion of a modern tour guide. This is why the heart identifies specific sights as potential subjects worthy of the attention of Maria Cosway as a painter: "The Falling of Spring, the Cascade of Niagara, the Passage of the Potowmac through the Blue mountains, the Natural bridge" (404). And assuming a desire for fame in his addressee, Jefferson is even appealing to the pride and vanity of the landscape painter—and not without a tinge of self-interest: "It is worth a voyage across the Atlantic to see these objects; much more to paint, and make them, and thereby ourselves known to all ages" (404).

Jefferson's rendering his native land as an ideal for a sentimental reunion as well as his positing Maria Cosway as an ideal woman as pointed above, has overtones derived from his more general views of differences between Europe and America as well as European and American women. As historian Brian Steele and others have argued, in several ways, Jefferson's nationalism depended on a strict separation of gender roles that he found confused in Europe while ideal in the United States. (Steele 2008; Steele 2012, Vajda 2008) Jefferson, for instance, found Parisian women exhibiting traits more typical of men, such as getting involved in political affairs, even

if informally, and in general, appearing in the world of public such as streets and saloons unashamedly. In his eyes, they seemed more like "Amazons," existing outside the domestic sphere appropriate for their sex thereby providing a subversive overtone for French public life. As he wrote to Anne Willing Bingham, they were "hunting pleasure in the streets, in routs and assemblies" (May 11, 1798, in Jefferson 1984, 923). Their "influence ... in the government" resulted in the decline of their country, as he concluded to George Washington on the eve of the French revolution (Jefferson to Washington, December 4, 1788, in Jefferson 1984, 932, 933). Women of the French countryside did not fare much better in Jefferson's estimation because of their exposure to toilsome work in the fields. By contrast, American women were happy with their lot in the domestic sphere, ready "to soothe and calm the minds of their husbands returning ruffled from political debate," as he wrote to Bingham (Jefferson to Bingham, 922) enjoying the "tender and tranquil amusements of domestic life" (923).

## 3. Sympathy and the Heart: Jefferson and the ideal American woman

Obviously, Jefferson's attraction to Maria Cosway was fueled by her fulfillment of the female ideal that he associated with American women. Hence the Heart develops its argument in praise of their friendship by referring to her cultural appeal and thus the historical-cultural space of sympathy. It was, in fact, this dimension of the cultural proximity that fuels the offer that the Heart makes when wishing for reunion in a physical space appropriate in every aspect.

The world of the Heart, however, is totally different from that of the Head, which lacks in sympathy and affection felt for others. The latter argues for the isolation of the self from others in order to avoid pain and gain pleasure. Sympathy for others' suffering results in suffering for the self, hence friendship is also to be avoided, it claims (Jefferson to Cosway, October 12, 1786, in Jefferson 1977, 406–407). The world of the Head is therefore free from those spaces of sympathy that the Heart can operate within.

The Heart's response to this argument in part consists in the attempt to explain the significance of the affective dimension in the construction of the physical space that it identifies. Thus, it elevates interpersonal relationships to the status of the precondition for morality. This is why the Heart addresses the Head: "... in denying to you the feelings of sympathy, of benevolence, of gratitude, of justice, of love, of friendship. He [i.e. nature] has excluded you from their control ..." (409). In other words, it is only through the relationship with someone else that morality can operate. There is an important consequence of the interpersonal aspect of morality for the sentimental interaction between Jefferson and the Cosways. Represented through the perspective of the Heart, the consequence is that the physical space of sympathy develops among them as a result of the affective and historical-cultural sympathies generated. The sights that they visited gained their sentimental power through "the presence of our charming companions. They were pleasing because they seemed pleased. Alone, the scene would have been dull and insipid: the participation of it with her gave it relish" (408).

This, then, is somewhat in contradiction with the earlier description of the magnificent sights of America. Introduced by the Heart, the sights were shown to have intrinsic value inviting sentimental visitors. Here, in contrast, the Heart downgrades the French scenes visited together with the Cosways: the affective and historical-cultural spaces connecting them gained real significance because of the relationship rather than the scenes of the encounters.

Finally, toward the end of its argumentation, the Heart provides examples that are meant to show how the moral sense is a domain exclusive to the Heart. The domain of the moral sense includes benevolence, charity, and goodwill while reason is to be treated as a domain? different from that. Benevolence, charity, and goodwill are not connected to the problem of the spaces

of sympathy and friendship but rather to positive attitude to strangers and patriotism. In this sense, they do not support the immediate aim of the Heart in a rhetorical way, that is, sharing the value of friendship in terms of pleasure despite pain, including the possibility of reunion is a sentimental environment. Their significance in fact is more appropriate to explore in a strictly moral context, where it is not affection that is at stake but rather sympathy and self-interest.

## 4. Conclusion

Jefferson's letter to Maria Cosway offers an insight into his construction of sentimental relationships, more specifically, friendship in the domain of his moral philosophy. The argument professed by the Heart clearly shows the prominent role of variations on proximity that generates sympathy among people of similar cultural background through fulfilling cultural ideals. It serves as a condition to affective connections, triggered by the physical dimension of the relationship. The latter also gains significance in the sense that the proposed reunion in the United States is to build on the supposedly mutual attraction based on common cultural interests. Through the dynamics of these spheres of sympathy Jefferson also makes sure to attest to his preference for certain cultural dispositions that he has been known for. Interestingly enough, these also function to strengthen the line of demarcation between the United States and Europe, the former representing a place of sentimental ideals. This feature of Jefferson's strategy also sheds light on his nationalism, the ramifications of which are worth addressing in a different study.

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# Free Slaves and Enslaved Free: Toni Morrison's Chiastic Fable of Freedom in *A Mercy*

**Keywords**

African American fiction, literary tropes (chiasmus), fictive rewriting of history, shifting meaning of freedom, slavery, Toni Morrison

## Introduction

Published in 2008, *A Mercy* can be regarded a prequel to Toni Morrison's other books in the sense that it is a part of her wider project of re-writing history of African Americans in an imaginative way. Set in 1682, in what is yet to be called America, Morrison takes the reader further back in time than in any of her other novels. The New World in the late 17th century is the time when the institution of slavery is beginning to appear in North America. It is also a place and time when notions of modern American standards of individuality and self-sufficiency begin to emerge. Slavery, indentured labor, servitude represent different degrees of enslavement and freedom. Moreover, neither of these categories is tied to race as yet. The novel surveys the shifting meanings of slavery, indentured labor, servitude, and freedom in relation to race. Morrison's reason behind going back to this era in particular, according to her 2008 NPR interview, is that she "wanted to separate race from slavery" and "to see what was it like or what it might have been like to be a slave but not at without being raced because I couldn't believe that was the natural state of people who were a born and of people who came here, that it had to be constructed, planted, institutionalized and legalized" (Morrison 2008).

Morrison's project of returning to the history of race relations in *A Mercy* has held the attention of academics and scholars since its publication in 2008. As Kovács writes, Morrison "has been rewriting the history of African Americans imaginatively in her novels" as an attempt to "create counter-histories" to "the official history of African Americans" which "has been written from the perspective of whites so far" (Kovács 2019, 43). Valerie Babb considers the novel to be written as a response to the US "origins narrative" and that Morrison's main objective is to allude to "prenational documents that demarcated lines of race, gender, and class in the cause of privileging an ideology whiteness" (Babb 2011, 148). Laurie Vickroy highlights the ways "acquisition and religious rationalizations aid the proliferation of slavery and the homogenization of American culture" in Morrison's novel (Vickroy 2019, 66). Quan elaborates on Morrison's reliance on "the architecture, the inscription, and the body" as three possible media to showcase and remember atrocities of slavery as an institution (Quan 2019, 555). This paper is also an attempt to shed light on Morrison's imaginative project of rewriting history in *A Mercy*. It focuses on the ways in which the main characters of the novel perceive their status in terms of 'freedom' in seventeenth century colonial North America.

The characters share different attitudes towards what freedom is to them as the meanings of freedom and enslavement are overturned in the novel's rhetoric. Florens and Lina, a teenage black slave and a servant native woman respectively, believe that freedom comes from inside. It is related to their perspective of life and the way they see themselves in relations to others. In contrast, Jacob Vaarks, a white farmer and trader, and his wife, Rebecca, attach the meanings

of freedom to their material possessions. Another attitude to freedom is that of a free African American blacksmith in the novel, especially in relation to Willard and Skully, two indentured white male servants. Despite being free, the black man is reluctant to display his superiority towards the servants related to the racial differences between them.

The paper sheds light on the dynamic relation of freedom and enslavement in the novel through a specific trope Morrison deploys towards the end of the novel, a chiasmus of freedom. The trope is used by Florens recalling one of her mother's tale "The Ass in the Lion's Skin" which relates how the ass in the lion's skin cannot defeat the lion in the ass's skin. Florens takes the tale to tell the story of the enslaved (ass) who are free inside (lion). The ABBA structure of the formulation (ass, lion, lion, ass) highlights the possibility of turning over the slave-free relation. Although the mother tells the tale to warn Florens: pretending to be free does not grant one freedom and what one sees is usually different from the reality of things, Morrison's use of this chiasmic structure in the novel poses the question of what notions of freedom the specific characters embody. The trope showcases that freedom comes from inside first and that the power of language can help the enslaved characters feel free from within and have a more reconciling attitude towards themselves. In turn, this same logic results in the vulnerability of the free characters. The paper surveys the representations of the fluid relation between freedom and slavery in Morrison's novel: it investigates the various experiences of freedom performed by different characters that follow the logic of the chiasmus. The first section elaborates on Morrison's chiasmus and its relation to and problematization of the concept of freedom. The second section investigates the female characters of the novel from the perspective of how they define freedom for themselves from the inside or the outside, while the third one examines the character of the free black blacksmith in comparison to other, free or indentured, white male characters of the novel.

## 1. Morrison's Chiastic Rhetoric of Freedom and Enslavement

Morrison relies on the trope of chiasmus in her imaginative exploration of notions of freedom available at the dawn of slavery in North America in the seventeenth-century. Doing that, she relies both on a potent device used for collapsing oppositions and a figure that has been widely deployed in African American fiction.

One of the many stories narrated by the mother of the colored slave girl Florens is that of "The Ass in the Lion's Skin." The story conveys the mother's understanding of what it means to feel free from within, despite being enslaved. Morrison figuratively alludes to Aesop's *Fables* to present this concept of freedom and enslavement in *A Mercy*. Aesop's *Fables* best known as a collection of morality tales and written by a former Greek slave circa 6th century B.C., are myths and allegories portraying mainly animals in human-like situations known as animism and Aesop being a slave recorded tales of diverse oral traditions which indicates that the tale could be of an African origin (Aesop 2011).

In an attempt to attach sense to her mother's decision of abandoning her, Florens contemplates her mother's story of the "The Ass in the Lion's Skin": "You say you see slaves freer than free men. One is a lion in the skin of an ass. The other is an ass in the skin of a lion" (Morrison 2008, 160). In this expression, the slave is a lion hidden beneath the skin of a donkey, while the other, the free person, is a donkey hiding beneath the skin of a lion, while the expression has an ABBA structure. Chris Baldick defines chiasmus as a figure of speech with an ABBA structure "by which the order of the terms in the first of two parallel clauses is reversed in the second. This may involve a repetition of the same words" (Baldick 2001, 38). Morrison's allusion to the donkey and the lion through the tale is a chiasmus because of the repetition of the two

words "ass" and "lion" and the reversal of the roles of the free and the slave. The slave is freed, and the free is enslaved by means of the rhetorical trope.

The most famous example of the use of a chiasmus in an African American slave narrative is Fredrick Douglass's formulation in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845). In his pursuit of freedom, Douglass fights back his abusive white overseer and having won the fight, eventually informs his readers: "You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man." (Douglass 1986, 107) The ABBA structure of the trope focuses attention on the overarching theme of the narrative: the story of individual freedom. Though Douglass's focus is both on his manhood and his self-esteem, the trope also implies Douglass's intellectual power. His eloquent and articulate use of language equals his strong and masculine physique and will to freedom both intellectual and physical. In other words, he preserves and manufactures his masculinity in his powerful chiasmus which impresses the reader as much as his physical power and determination.

It is also important to point out that Morrison relies on the chiastic animal imagery of a *folk tale* in the novel. Henry Louis Gates adapts the basic features of African animal tales into a theory of African American meaning making in his seminal book, *The Signifying Monkey*. According to Gates, recurring animal characters of the African oral folk tradition represent ways of communication available for African American slaves in slave narratives. In these animal tales, the roles of the free and the enslaved are reversed in the form of verbal communication between animals, such as a monkey, a lion, an elephant and other animals in Gates's book (Gates Jr. 1998, 56). Through a language of "signifyin(g)" which is a form of African-American communication and socializing, the monkey overpowers the lion in its sharp use of the language of mimicry and mockery and due to the lion's inability to differentiate between the "poles" of "signification" and "meaning" in the monkey's tricks (Gates Jr. 1998, 55). Similarly, the slave is empowered, and the free is overpowered in Douglass's narrative through action and speech.

Morrison's method of relying on a chiasmic structure in a folk tale in *A Mercy* is similar to Gates's adaptation of African animal tales for the more general use of theorizing. The allusion to the oral fable in *A Mercy* can be read in two general ways. Firstly, it can be comprehended as part of Morrison's constant references to traditional African folktales and myths in her writing (Kovács 2016, 43). Lars Eckstein argues that Morrison adopts such techniques in her writing in order to create her "unique sound" (the combination of oral and written narrative traditions). For instance, the main theme of *Song of Solomon*, her 1977 novel, is "rooted in folk orality: namely, the legend of the flying Africans" (Ecksein 2006, 180).

Secondly, this folk story serves to remind the weak that being sensible can provide a means by which they can succeed against the powerful, the enslaved can resist oppression. The cerebral dimension of the story is one that inspires the person towards more practical ways of perceiving their status in society. Freedom can be psychological not only physical and geographical, as Kovács shows, and "the psychological movement from seeing one's self as free psychologically is presented together with a religious idea of freedom or conversion, and political ideas of freedom as well" (Kovács 2018). By this token, the transforming nature of Morrison's chiastic fable allows the characters to perceive themselves as being free on a psychological level, it is a belief that comes from within characters and it intersects with their gender and race.

## 2. Free-Inside Women of color and Slave-Inside White Women

Morrison's chiasmus can be utilized as an approach to analyze the characters of the novel from the perspective of their changing relations to freedom. The plethora of female characters represent a flux of relations.

Rebecca, the mistress of the farm Florens is sold to, seems to be more fragile than Lina, the Native American servant woman working as Rebecca's main servant. Rebecca even becomes dependent on Lina as the story progresses. At the outset, Rebecca gains her power from her status as the wife of a plantation owner, Jacob Vaarks, and a mother. However, when her three children die, followed by the death of her husband, her friendliness towards Lina turns to hostility as her last attempt to conceal her fragility.

> Confined to bed now, her question was redirected. "And me? How do I look? What lies in my eyes now? Skull and crossbones? Rage? Surrender?" All at once she wanted it—the mirror Jacob had given her which she had silently rewrapped and tucked in her press. It took a while to convince her, but when Lina finally understood and fixed it between her palms, Rebekka winced. "Sorry," she murmured. "I'm so sorry." Her eyebrows were a memory, the pale rose of her cheeks collected now into buds of flame red. She traveled her face slowly, gently apologizing. "Eyes, dear eyes, forgive me. Nose, poor mouth. Poor, sweet mouth, I'm sorry. Believe me, skin, I do apologize. Please. Forgive me." (Morrison 2008, 94)

Observing herself in the mirror, Rebecca's skin reminds her of the traumatic experiences of her life. No matter how well she can display her power (of the lion), her body remembers the painful memories of her past and reminds her of her frailty as being displaced in a world that she is familiar with the least. In Rebecca's case, enslavement is related to her shame towards her body. It is a chronic pain that extends from her failure to be a mother back to her early repressed life in England.

Lina, on the contrary, acts freer than her mistress, Rebecca, in most of the story. She experiences freedom in the sense that she is spontaneous and remains uncivilized by the white villagers, she lives her life in close proximity to nature. Despite Rebecca's constant attempts to overpower and discriminate against Lina, she cannot reach Lina's reconciliation about her status and the borderline between mistress and slave is obfuscated.

The concept of reversing the roles of the free and slave can be applied to Florens, the protagonist of the novel, too. Florens achieves a relative reconciliation with her status as an enslaved black woman by relying on the possibility of chiasmic role reversal. Florens, the main narrator, is seen in the novel to be haunted by her mother's act of giving up on her. However, what Florens takes to be an act of giving up is ironically an act of mercy. By selling her to Jacob Vaark, a Dutch trader and farmer, her mother aims at saving her from being sexually assaulted by D'Ortega, their slaver in Maryland. Naomi Morgenstern suggests that this scene resonates with the mother-daughter separation scenes in Morrison's *Beloved.* Both Florens and Beloved share the same feeling of being abandoned by their mothers (2014, 16). Florens shifts between narrating two stages of her life almost in parallel: her life as a teenager being in a relationship with an African American blacksmith at the present is marred by her life as a child being rejected by her biological mother. The 16-year-old Florens continuously reflects on this primal scene that has been haunting her since she was eight. To compensate for the lack of maternal bond in her life, Florens recalls some of her mother's advice provided in terms of stories in which she follows as a base in the conduct of her relationships with other characters in the novel. One of these tales is the story of "The Lion in the Ass's Skin" thorough which she can identify herself as a lion.

The subversive nature of the fable allows the enslaved, as it is the case with Florens, a tool of escape from the idea of being racially inferior and, thus, a way of reconciling with herself. In *Posthuman Blackness and the Black Female Imagination*, Kristen Lillvis condemns the "institution of slavery" as the main reason behind the mother-daughter separation, resulting in Florens's inability to gain "a relational identity." Florens grows up with a shaken identity as a consequence of "the ongoing presence of racial oppression and other discourses" (2017, 33). For this reason, Morri-

son provides a counter discourse, the fable, to provide Florens with a means to combat racial oppression and sustain a more solid sense of herself.

Later on, Florens adds to the same idea by asserting her freedom in the novel, "I am become wilderness but I am also Florens. In full. Unforgiven. Unforgiving. No ruth, my love. None. Hear me? Slave. Free. I last." (Morrison 2008, 161). This statement indicates that Florens defines her identity in terms of the natural world, "not the social conventions of the Early American society" as Maxine L. Montgomery suggests (2011, 634). In addition to this, Florens tries to achieve freedom by writing her story on the walls of Vaark's house and leaving no chance for anyone to read her "letters" clearly. This implies that she survives despite all; despite the addressee's inability to follow her story. She exists, and it no longer matters whether she is a slave or a free woman as the meanings of the two are different in her discourse.

M. Hansen reads Florens's final statements as her "coming into her own sovereignty," which she gains "in and with the writings on the walls" (2018, 223). She almost overcomes her traumatic incidents of the past and reconciles with her identity as a slave. Quan argues that "etched into the White colonialist's memorial, Florens's inscription functions as the culture memory for African American female slaves and as such undermines the completeness and validity of the White grand narrative that Jacob's mansion symbolizes" (2019, 456). Florens's story shakes the walls of Jacob's mansion that stand as a metaphor for institutions of racism. Florens feels self-fulfilled but still bears the marks of her traumatic past. "I last" is her last attempt to run for her life and survive. It is her last chance to make herself heard and prove her resilience (at least at the moment of uttering the words). Despite providing her with a means of survival, the power of her language does not salvage the wreckages of her past: her separation from her mother and her rejection by the blacksmith continue to puzzle her.

## 3. Race and gender intersecting freedom: A Free White Man, a Free Black Man, and Indentured White Men in *A Mercy*

The male characters of the novel perform their freedoms in various forms and to varying degrees. It turns out that the legally free white men may turn out to be victims of material thinking, while an (imagined) free black man can perform his freedom, and, at the same time, indentured white men can only dream about it.

The white Protestant trader, Jacob represents the ass in the skin of the lion. He is the owner of Florens and Sorrow, but is "enslaved" in ways similar to his wife: he blindly believes in his capacity of leading a life entirely on his own. Jacob represents early slaveowners in antebellum America. He builds a mansion based on his firm belief that it will stand as a marker of his name and status as a White member of the emerging American gentry. "What a man leaves behind is what a man is," he tells his wife (Morrison 2008, 89).

According to Laurie, "Jacob's embrace of the European ideology of manhood to enhance his life and the need for recognition (represented, as in *Absalom, Absalom!*, as a huge house he builds on money earned from slavery) allows him to deny and distance himself from collusion with slavery" (Laurie 2019, 97). However, this mansion witnesses his fall and death and becomes a place of slavery. Jacob does not approve of slavery and detests the ways the salves are maltreated by slave owners such as D'Ortega. However, when he sees the disparity between what such enslavers own and what he owns, he starts to take part in the institution of slavery, too. Valerie Babb argues that he "represents the possibility of an alternative white maleness that does not take advantage of arbitrarily constructed race and gender privilege," but "his coveting of material prestige is further conveyed through his desire for a house". That is to say, his "potential" is subverted as he cannot resist the "seduction of material wealth" (Babb 2011, 154). He starts

trading rum, which is a part of slavery economy, and build his mansion from this newly gained wealth. A house that does not represent a safe refuge for him and his family as it fails to balance neither his children's death at a young age, nor by his own. Rather, the house stands as a symbol of Vaark's rank and legacy, built up on what he gains from his contaminated trade.

The two indentured white servants, Willard and Skully, further scorn their status while encountering the free blacksmith. They cannot accept the idea of a black man being free and paid for his services. The blacksmith is well-accustomed to the mindset of people from different races and social status. To avoid any clashes with the two servants, he mocks them by calling them "Mr." "Willard never knew whether he was being made fun of or complimented. But when the smith said, "Mr. Bond. Good morning," it tickled him." (Morrison 2008, 150) This illustrates that the blacksmith knows precisely how to deal with the discriminating mentality of Whites and feed their ego in a sarcastic way. This is a point related both to Gates's depiction of the "monkey's" wise and scornful use of language against the lion, and to Morrison's reversal roles of free persons and slaves in her stimulating chiasmus.

The blacksmith is a freeman who manipulates Florens sexually, and later rejects her based on her having a slave mentality. Raised and appreciated as a free worker, he is unable to see the pains of being born and raised as a slave. He sees himself having the upper hand in his relationship with Florens. This superiority comes from both his free status and his gender. However, he feels less self-assured when the other two white servants are around. For instance, the blacksmith's masculinity is subject to violation or oppression as it is an intersection of gender and race. By this token, the blacksmith's masculinity is not entirely secured despite his free status compared to Willard and Skully, as his identity is an intersection of his race and gender. The two white workers are indentured by a seven-year contract and are even referred to as homosexuals, but their Whiteness places them above the free blacksmith. The blacksmith, thus, needs to avoid displaying his privilege of freedom, at least in the way he addresses the two men.

## 4. Conclusion

The position of freedom and enslavement are reversed in Morrison's *A Mercy* for the characters by the powerful language of the text. The brief story of "The Ass in the Lion's Skin" in the novel requires elaboration in order to explicate the potential language has in creating a sense of internal freedom. The allusion to the tale serves as an efficient tool that supports the enslaved characters to feel free from within and have a more accepting attitude towards themselves. The transforming potential of the tale works for several of characters. Florens, for instance, is transformed throughout the novel from a traumatized teenage slave to a survivor who seems to reach pertinent freedom by reconciling with her true self and understanding her position.

The inscription of Florens's story on the walls of Vaark's house suggests a healing potential in that it provides an alternative reading of history of race in America. The shiny and concrete colonial mansion is inscribed by the unheard stories of Florens's. In this respect, Morrison invites the reader to look behind the salient landmarks of colonial history and pay a closer attention to the histories of those who were marginalized and even left out in the process at the time the institution of slavery emerged in North America. The power of Morrison's language and tropes exceeds the mere reversal of roles between slavery and freedom in *A Mercy*, as it opens up a reflective view of race relations, slavery, and eventually of available acts of freedom, in colonial North America.

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*Jrén Annus*

# Shapes of Faith: Catholicism in the Art of Thomas Nast

**Keywords**

Thomas Nast, political cartoon, stereotype, Catholics, Irish

## Introduction

Thomas Nast (1840–1902) was a pioneer editorial cartoonist in the US, whose images were published in *Harper's Weekly*, a leading political magazine published in New York City. Nast has been widely celebrated for his political commentaries, in particular for inventing the Elephant and the Donkey as the respective symbols for the Republican and Democratic parties as well as the image of Santa Claus and the figure of Uncle Sam. His rather degrading depictions of the Irish, however, account for his vanishing popularity in recent decades. This study explores a collection of his portrayals of the Irish and their Catholicism in particular. As images are not only witnesses to the hidden social and cultural characteristics of the period in which they were created, but also cultural products shaped in significant ways by the very same circumstances, it is imperative to survey the historical period in which the production took place as well as to consider specifics of the pertinent practices of cultural production of the age (Hall, 1997; Annus 2008, 114). Once the historical and cultural contexts are established, the images are approached through frame analysis, developed by Borer and Murphree (2008) for their investigation of the religious aspects of cartoons in particular, which would allow for a systematic study of Nast's images as well. The study hopes to conclude with a more nuanced reading of Nast's depiction of the Irish and their Catholicism, moving towards a more balanced understanding of a rather sophisticated, multi-layered artistic production.

## 1. Nast and his age

Nast was born in Germany to a liberal Catholic family that immigrated to the US in 1846. Once in New York City, he attended a parochial (Catholic) school but found its method of "rod and ruler" punishment too strict (Keller, nd.), so he completed his education in a public school. His liberal parents also resented the powerful Romanism present in the American Catholic Church, so they also shifted away from their Catholic faith within a few years' time. Nast worked as a correspondent for a couple of years before he received his position at *Harper's* in 1862 (Halloran 2012). At the time, it was the most popular national magazine with a circulation of 300,000 and a readership of about half a million. Owned and managed by Fletcher Harper, the paper was considered a powerful political medium in support of republicanism (Keller, nd.) during its peak in the 1860s and 1870s, which was a position that Nast also embraced passionately.

The Republican Party at the time advocated Northern values and aspirations, and thus led the struggle for the abolition of slavery during the Civil War (1861–65). Its political rival, the Democratic Party, represented Southern political and economic interests and attempted to establish its influence in the North by gaining power on the local level with the support of incoming immigrants, whom they assisted in obtaining citizenship in return for votes. They had a large base: by 1860, the foreign-born population in the US exceeded four million (Jacobson 1998, 43),

the majority of whom were Irish and German by ethnicity, and Catholic by faith – like Nast himself. But while most of the German immigrants continued their journey to Western rural areas, many of the Irish remained in big Eastern ports, soon becoming associated in mainstream America with poverty, the corruption of the Democratic Party and Romanism.

Ray A. Billington in his classic *The Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (1938) demonstrated that Catholicism had been a matter of concern as early as the colonial period. While Lord Baltimore received a charter to establish the Province of Maryland in 1632, which provided a safe haven for Catholics persecuted in Protestant Britain, anti-Catholic sentiments were imported to the shores of the New World by Protestant immigrants who also arrived from the British Isles. Haden (2013, 30) observed that the points of contention between the two groups were theological in nature and lasted well into the nineteenth century. However, with the arrival of the first Irish immigrants, "anti-Catholic invective incorporated a number of sensationalized accounts of Catholic immorality, treachery, and conspiracy" (Haden 2013, 31), planting fear and discontent in the hearts of Protestant Americans. Nativists in particular displayed increasing concern over growing Catholic influence "in the 1830s and 1840s in the political arena, as well as in public education" (Haden 2013, 32), which was a principal institution to ensure a homogeneous future American peoplehood. These concerns culminated in Philadelphia in the Bible Riot of 1844, followed by a series of violent outbursts in the coming decades on both sides in other cities along the East Coast. And, although Jensen argued that by the mid-1860s "politicians realized that bishops and priests largely avoided even informal electoral endorsements of any kind, [and] they were far less active than pietistic Protestants" (2002, 410), previous sentiments persevered, only to receive a fresh impetus in 1870 by the dogma of papal infallibility, declared during the First Vatican Council.

The prevalence of intense anti-Catholicism mirrored a strict religious hierarchy in the US, which also resonated with other social hierarchies. For one, the systemic conflation of religion and race took on legal dimensions during the official construction of the republic. In 1790 the first Congress debated the Naturalization Act which intended to define US citizenship. Jacobson found that once it was determined that any alien who was a free white person could be naturalized after two years of residence in the US, members started to contemplate "whether Jews and Catholics should be eligible" (1998, 22), as if Catholicism were a marker of a racialized Other. It must be noted, however, that only people of good moral standing could be naturalized, so the debate may also have implied a reproachful Protestant view of a rival faith. In addition, by the nineteenth century, as Kolchin pointed out, "race became the way America organized labor and the explanation it used to justify it as natural" (2002, 159). This frame of mind reflected the logic of early Western colonization, in which the dichotomy of civilized and uncivilized, Christian and barbarian, white and colored reinforced imperial efforts to conquer and rule, using essentialist categories and hierarchies that veiled their socially constructed nature. Christianity provided the theological justification for these efforts through some of its teachings, such as the curse of Ham (Genesis 9:20), in which the integration of biological features and innate moral character was explicated and sanctified. Scientific racism advocated these sentiments under the infallible auspices of the life sciences, thus establishing yet another basis for incontestable hierarchical relationships between groups of people in the nineteenth-century US.

In addition, during the 1860s, the Roman Catholic Church expressed its "open sympathy for the Confederate cause" (McAfee 1998, 29), thus creating a natural alliance between the Church and the Democratic Party, with its "hostility to abolition, and Negrophobia" (Keller, nd.). As faith and political affiliation intersected in the case of the Irish, Protestant America was far too ready to conflate the two, particularly in the Eastern cities, where the perceived anti-modernism and fanatism associated with Catholics was complemented by the Democratic

party's inclination to engage in corruption and deceit. Moreover, Irish immigrants were also seen as "the leading source of the growing urban criminal class" (McAfee 1998, 2), characterized by urban poverty, alcohol abuse, and domestic and public violence, among other social ills. The cartoons created in the second half of the century reflect these chains of association and systemic power relations, thus creating a rich and versatile, but in its iconic forms, quite straightforward visual economy.

## 2. The cartoon as an art form

The cartoon as a modern art form, specifically a single-panel iconic drawing that blends visual and verbal subtexts to convey moral criticism in the service of social improvement, appeared in the early 1840s and was first used in Britain's *Punch* magazine (Harvey 2009, 25–6). Cartoons operated with a rather simple symbolism and the portrayal of individuals or groups with exaggerated physical characteristics (Justice 2005, 172) that made them easily identifiable for readers. The same overblown images were used consistently, so they soon found their way into the visual repertoire that was widely employed in the genre. One of the social functions of cartoons was "to sort out the individuals into knowable groups" (Appel 1971, 374). As group identities and differences were primarily recognized through external markers, which often "were linked to internal character" (Pearl 2009, 181), these portrayals of specific groups usually reflected the negative stereotypical projections upheld by the majority society. The popularity of cartoon art by the mid-nineteenth century positioned it among the more effective cultural practices that deployed the "strategy of splitting" (Hall 1997, 258), mobilized to construct and uphold social divisions and to mark symbolic boundaries between what was perceived as acceptable and normal in American society and what fell outside of that realm – a representational practice that continues to prevail (Kovács 2020, 134–135). In fact, these visual representations became culturally so engrained that often "the basic features of the earlier [...] stereotypes changed very little while the content of the image shifted" (Appel 1971, 372).

The long-term potency of the cartoons lay in their "special power to sway public opinion" (Beau 2001, 217) through their ability to communicate to a broad range of people, regardless of their ethnic background, level of education and language spoken. And here Nast reigned supreme: he had "mastered the whole bag of tricks of the successful illustrator: exaggeration, caricature, slogans, captions, headlines, juxtapositions of disparate images, comical allusions to the history of art, and so on" (Hills 2006, 105). His mastery is attested in a legendary story, according to which William M. Tweed, head of the unprincipled Democratic Party in New York City, "reportedly complained about damning depictions of him in Nast's cartoons, saying 'I don't care what the papers write about me. My constituents can't read. But, damn it, they can see pictures'" (Pearl 2009, 180). How right he was is exemplified by the fact that years later, when Tweed was imprisoned and then escaped, he was recognized in the street on the basis of Nast's cartoons and thus was arrested again.

The stereotypical figure of the Irish evolved fast. "The pioneer genre which pictured the Irish with faces of subhuman 'Celtic gorillas' was probably George Cruikshank's illustrations for William H. Maxwell's *History of the Irish Rebellion* in 1798, published in London in 1845. [...] The ape-like, prognathous features became the hallmarks of the stereotyped Irishman" (Appel 1971, 373). Beau noted that this "image was constructed on the newly published Darwinian theory of evolution, which postulated that humankind had evolved from the apes. Some [...] evolved less than others, showing the lesser stage of evolution, or 'grades of intelligence', in the remaining degree of apelike features in their physiognomy" (2001, 251). This form of representation found its way across the Atlantic Ocean (Appel 1971, 373; Beau 2001, 251), and, as "ethnic

and religious caricatures were often inseparable" (Dewey 2007, 166), the Irish ended up being associated with Catholicism (Halloran 2012, 205): physiologically marked barbarians, at times dressed in clerical clothing. And the employment of humor in cartoons, as Forker (2012, 62) reminded us, only promoted the association of various ethnic and racial groups with negative stereotypes – and with each other, as was the case with the Irish and Afro-Americans in the US. Moreover, the conflation of the Catholics and the Irish with the Democratic Party closed a circle of disparaging associations that met the approval of an East Coast urban audience.

The use of the stereotypical ape-like portrayal of the Irish was not Nast's invention, but a broadly employed cultural representational practice within cartoon art that Nast accepted as the visual norm and tradition to follow. Thomas (2004) in his analysis of the cartoons of Nast's contemporary, Joseph Keppler, founder of the infamous American weekly humor magazine, *Puck*, noted that Keppler made use of the exact same dehumanized figure to portray Irish characters in his images as well (see also Nissan 2008, 148). Moreover, further examples discussed by Forker (2012) demonstrate that the same visual practice was in place in papers published along the West Coast as well. In addition, Keppler's images depicting the Catholic Church also displayed similarities to Tammany Hall, New York's Democratic "corrupt political machine, with the pope tantamount to a boss" (Thomas 2004, 214). This reflected the "popular assessment" also shared by Nast that "church and political machine loomed conspicuously and [...] a loyal Irish-Catholic presence in each organization was an irresistible invitation to interlace and disparage both" (Thomas 2004, 214). Religious ethnocentrism, thus, was not exclusive to Nast.

The degrading ape-like image, however, was encountered in another nineteenth-century cultural context within the US. McMahon (2014) studied the editorial cartoons in American Irish magazines, such as *Irish World*, in the 1870s. He observed that these pictures also "employed the simian ape and orang-outans imagery to signify Protestant Americans, implying that immigrants who were Northern Irish Protestant Orange Order in alliance with American-grown nativists present a threat to the freedom and democracy of the American republic" (McMahon 2014, 38). The logic of othering he identified as the explanation for this representation seems to be similar to that of Nast and mainstream America. The oppositional gaze of Catholic Irish Americans recognized in their cartoons that "ape-men were the antithesis of the cool-headed, intelligent democracy that Irish Catholics stood for ... Orangemen and their nativist allies were transnational traitors of freedom importing savagery and anti-democracy into the American republic" (McMahon 2014, 39). The ape-faced figures originally invented to signify Irish Catholics, thus, were also employed by them to portray their perceived Protestant enemies in the US, based on the same argumentation: their lack of moral character and the values that American democracy entails.

## 3. Catholicism in the images of Nast

Nast's pen frequently made use of a familiar face with a small, flat nose, bushy eyebrows framing small, dark, untrustworthy eyes, stubble on their cheeks and an oversized, projecting lower jaw. These figures were oftentimes portrayed in the company of a representative of the Catholic Church, typically a priest or a bishop, engaged in some action of particular importance for the community. In their study of Jack Chick's anti-Catholic comic books, Borer and Murphree (2008, 103) proposed a frame model, which also guides the current analysis. They surveyed the visual rendering of anti-Catholic sentiments on the basis of three frames: (1) the associative frame, referring to depictions in which Catholicism is represented as the cause of certain social problems; (2) the subversive frame, which portrays the Catholic Church as a villain in the political arena; and (3) the hidden agenda frame, which attacks Catholicism as a faith that has departed

from original Christian teachings and values. They contended that, although these areas often overlap and reinforce each other, they can be distinguished on the basis of the lead theme or focus of the images.

### 3.1. The Associative Frame

The associative frame assists in locating "Catholicism as a social problem ... by associating it with other, more commonly defined social problems" (Borer and Murphree 2008, 104). To be more specific, this frame is able to maneuver between two perspectives: one, by which Catholicism is presented as a social problem, and two, by which it is portrayed as the direct or implied cause of other social concerns, such as immorality, corruption and violence – and the Church is portrayed as unable to provide guidelines and teachings that may prevent these human shortcomings or assist in overcoming them.

A series of social problems were associated with the influx of the Irish immigrants in particular in the mid-century, from alcoholism and violence to poverty and illiteracy. Still, as McAfee contended, "[i]n Republican eyes, the essence of the Irish problem was their Roman Catholic superstition and their ignorance, both brought with them from across the sea ... The Republican solution was to Americanize these degraded recent arrivals in the public school" (1998, 2). As Fessenden commented, this desire was "particularly true of Catholic immigrants, whose arrival magnified existing tensions between races, classes, and regions" (2005, 788), while advocates of public schooling, such as Horace Mann, "promoted national education as the antidote to the religious and cultural foreignness of this new population" (2005, 789). The Catholic Church challenged these native efforts with an initiative in New York in 1870, backed by the Democratic Party (Justice 2005, 176): they fought to obtain public funding for the parochial schools, which they would then operate as public schools. Nast immediately pulled out his most powerful tool and responded to this Catholic cause with biting criticism (Halloran 2012, 32–33), informed by his republican values as well as his own unpleasant childhood experiences with parochial education.

Nast's *Foreshadowing of coming events in our public schools* (1870) is among his first works to reflect on the escalating dispute over public education in New York City. It incorporated many of his fears about the surge of Catholic Church power in matters of public education: education transformed into indoctrination that focuses on the bigoted dogmas of the Church, such as the infallibility of the Pope, which children are expected to repeat mindlessly. In the meanwhile, copies of the *Bible*, the sole source of authority for the Christian faith, are being swept into the corner, giving way to the Catholic interpretations of the *Bible* being instructed. Church authority appears through the clerics teaching in the image, the teacher's desk being transformed into an altar and a pulpit, while the children are kneeling in a pew at the front, as if in church, socialized to adore and obey. Moreover, peculiar rituals, such as dipping fingers into holy water upon entering the church, also appear among the warning signs for the future direction in which Catholic guidance may lead public education.

One year later, a most provocative cartoon was borne of his indignation to the public-school debate published under the title *The American River Ganges* (1871). It portrays a Roman Catholic conspiracy creeping onto the body of the nation to undermine education in American public schools (McAfee 1998, 48; Dewey 2007, 1). This contains the most disturbing representation of the Catholic Church as a sea of bishops sent from the Vatican are crawling out of the water as crocodiles, face down, their open miters drawn as crocodile heads with an open mouth exposing their shark teeth, their robes resembling crocodile skin, their hands like crocodile feet finding a foothold on the sandy ground. They are approaching a group of children on the beach who were attempting to find shelter there from a mob that had raided their school. But now they are faced

with the crocodiles, ready to attack and consume them. Their teacher, with the *Holy Bible* sticking out of the inside pocket of his coat, gestures to protect them, but probably to no avail. Further away, their school building with the American flag atop is in ruins, unable to withstand the siege of the Irish, who are now dragging people away, preparing to hang some of them. These images demonstrate Nast's anti-clerical attitudes as well as his distrust of the Catholic Church and his fear of the potential damage Catholic dominance may bring about in the future.

### 3.2. The Subversive Frame

This frame captures religious differences in political terms. Borer and Murphree found that in cartoons within this interpretative frame "Catholicism is often constructed in opposition to American political ideals and participation in the American political system" (2008, 105). They also noted that in terms of politics, Protestant America considered the Catholic presence as "insubordinate and dangerous to the authority of the US government and/or its ideals" (Borer and Murphree 2008, 103) and thus a threat to democracy and the freedom of conscience.

One emblematic drawing by Nast called *Religious liberty is guaranteed* (1870) applies the same crocodile imagery he used for Catholic bishops in his *The American River Ganges* a year later. The body of the nation is now symbolized by the dome of the Capitol, which is beset by two reptiles, each representing a faith whose forceful advances on American soil Nast interpreted as a threat to American freedom of religion: the Mormon turtle and the Catholic crocodile. His view met the general public perception: as Grow also observed, "Protestant authors and politicians often attacked Catholics and Mormons using surprisingly similar arguments ... denouncing both Catholics and Mormons as dangerous to treasured American values such as republicanism and Victorian morality" (Grow 2004, 141). Nast in particular objected to the aggressive expansion of these religious communities, their oppressive control over their members, their scandalous demand of blind obedience to religious leadership, and their practices which he saw as subversive to the laws and values of the country they called their home. While the Catholic Church had a long, stormy history of privilege and control in political affairs as well through which they managed political encounters, the Latter-day Saints engaged in a war in 1857–58 to gain full independence from the US and hoped to establish their own theocratic state that would uphold Mormon practices, such as plural marriage/polygamy, which was prohibited by law in the US.

Another cartoon entitled *Church and state* (1870) illustrates a Catholic aspiration for political hegemony in the US. It highlights that while monarchs and political leaders in Europe back full-fledged separation of state and church, with the Pope collapsing on hearing the news, Columbia stands defeated in the US, chained by the "fraudulent votes" of simian-faced Irish Americans causing public unrest in the background, already conspiring to gain further influence in public education as their next move. In the meanwhile, the full-figured Pope with some of his bishops and priests on the left, survey the scene with approval and satisfaction, while Columbia is looking helplessly at an Irish woman sitting in the middle, stitching together two pieces of cloth labeled state and church. This piece was interpreted as proof that the Catholic Church wants to dominate the American political arena as well, showing no respect for or desire to uphold the founding principle of the separation of state and church. Seen as a violation of the First Amendment, Nast considered such incidents as innate proof of the subversive political impetus of the Catholic Church aimed at dominating the US (Fessenden 2005, 804).

### 3.3. The Hidden Agenda Frame

The hidden agenda refers to unveiling discrepancies in Catholic practices and faith. Borer and Murphree claimed that Catholics "alter their faith whenever it becomes politically useful" (2008,

107), emphasizing the tendency of the Church to tailor its dogmas and beliefs if required to expand its hegemonic power in the world. In this regard, the United States occupied a special position as by the mid-nineteenth century, the Catholic Church had become the latest Christian denomination, and it wished to ensure its stronghold over the population. The dogma of papal infallibility was immediately rejected by Protestant Americans, and Nast pulled out his pen to start a crusade against this freshly dogmatized belief.

His *Papal infallibility* (1870) captures his views with sophistication: Pope Pius IX (1846–1878) is sitting on a thick branch that he is sawing off. Since he now believes himself to be infallible, he is cutting the branch off without a care in the world. The viewer can see that once the branch is broken off, he will fall, sliding back into the Dark Ages, while the tree trunk signifying the nineteenth century will continue to stand firmly, and the part of the branch that remains attached to the tree, representing liberal Catholics, will produce new, fresh shoots, surviving well into the next century. This convoluted portrayal confirms that the artist did not resent Catholicism as a whole, only believers in ultramontanism, such as the Jesuits, and the practices to which it gave birth, often associated with political Romanism, power-hungry, deceitful and corrupt leadership driven not by true Christian teachings and values, but individual pride and gain.

Papal infallibility was the only theme that triggered Nast's imagination with regard to this frame, addressed in a few cartoons as a side comment. Studies of Nast usually address his anti-Catholicism in general terms, but a frame analysis helps to explore his art in a more unequivocal manner. In an article on Nast, his boss, Harper, commented that "[t]he Catholic Church, as an ecclesiastical organization, has never been the object of his satire; it is only such members of that communion as seek to pervert its machinery to political purposes whom he castigates" (1871). Justice also found that Nast only objected to political Romanism, noting that *The American River Ganges* is "not anti-Catholic per se, but political and anti-clerical" (2005, 176). In a similar vein, Pearl pointed out Republican "fears that Irish-Americans' allegiances to Rome rendered every Catholic voter subject to the governing power of religion" (Pearl 2009, 177), a concern Nast also shared. But he seems never to have attacked the faith itself.

## 4. Conclusion

Beau reminded us that "[c]artoonists do not work in isolation from the culture that surrounds them. Rather, they work within that culture, they live and practice that culture's ideology, drawing literally and figuratively on prejudices that already work in their audiences" (2001, 217). Nast, the German Catholic immigrant who had left his faith and embraced republican values once in the US, was primarily driven by his personal political convictions. At the same time, he also positioned himself through his art as a true Northerner and, through his images, participated in the culture war of his age, contributing to the ultimate success of the Republican nationalist project. However, when he found fault at the Republican Party, he willingly criticized its ways and supported the Democratic Party instead. Values mattered to him, not mindless political allegiances.

His most well-known images indeed reflect powerful criticism of the Catholic Church, its practices, clergy and leadership, as well as its political maneuvering and thirst for power. At the same time, Nast managed to break away from his own stereotypes and portrayed Irish Catholics with compassion when he felt that they were being respectful of the rules and values of their chosen homeland, such as in *The martyrdom of St. Crispin* (1870) and *Uncle Sam's Thanksgiving dinner* (1869). His depictions, therefore, do not display an entirely homogeneous view of Catholicism and the Irish in terms of content – even if the forms of representation may have remained the same.

Nast employed various forms of corporeality – from a crocodile to the ape-like racialized human body – as iconic representations of Catholicism in many of his cartoons. These were used to express his discontent with particular actions and representatives of Catholicism, but he never turned to matters of the soul, tenets of the faith or essential values with which he still might have identified. It seems that the general unfavorable view of his art and legacy today among Irish Americans (Kelly 2011) is based on a rather limited collection of his works founded on a perspective shaped by current cultural expectations, "retrospectively constructed through a communal recall process, a mental journey, in the course of which various fragments of [... the] past are assembled" (Annus 2011, 54). Frame analysis placed within historical and cultural contexts has helped lend nuance to this broad and somewhat simplified perception.

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*Réka Szarvas*

# Comparing the Evolution of the Detecting Woman to the Waves of Feminism

**Keywords**

waves of feminism, female detective, spinster sleuth, female hard-boiled, domestic noir

## Introduction

Crime fiction, despite being categorized mostly as popular fiction, provides ample material for analysis and theories. The novels in the genre provide exciting materials in terms or narratology, looking at the ways of how storytelling works. Todorov sees detective fiction as two stories existing within one: the story or the crime and the story of detection (Todorov 1984, 160). Hühn brings this idea even further when he states that the criminal writes a story, and his aim is to deter the detective from reading it (Hühn 1987, 454). Hutcheon sees detective fiction as a genre that is always already metafictional, where the detective is a surrogate character for the reader (Hutcheon 1980, 31–32). Detective fiction, especially the classical ones (such as Poe's or Doyle's short stories) are also seen as the representation of the hermeneutics of thinking, a celebration of rationality, analytic problem solving (Kovács 1999, 15). Theories about the restoration of order, and its allegoric manifestations –or in some cases, their lack thereof–are also prominent talking points when theorizing the genre (Gregoriou 2007, 160). Although detective and crime fiction are fertile ground for all these theories, it is also a tableau of social issues, and it is heavily influenced by them –even from the beginning of the genre. The evolution of it shows how crime, its prevention, and punishment, developed, how the police formed, which social issues were most prevalent at the time (like the Great Depression's connection to the hard-boiled mode or Christie's pre-war nostalgia), and it continues to do so in its contemporary iterations too.

This can be observed too when it comes to women in crime fiction: both woman writers and female detectives show a parallel to debates about women, more specifically, the feminist movement. "Mystery fiction has become the infrastructure for middle-class social and ideological issues", states Bette Shoenfeld about the so-called feminist detection popular from the 1970s, however this statement is not only true to that specific era of crime narratives (Shoenfeld 2008, 842). Besides solving crimes, women detectives – and in some cases the crimes they investigate – tend to be a reaction to the specific wave[1] of the feminist movement(s) they are written in. Although the history of detective and crime fiction officially starts with the great forefathers like

[1] Using the wave metaphor of feminism is debated in the literature, because as Nicholson points out, it does suggest a unified feminism, which is of course not the case – during the specific waves different branches of feminism were coexisting, starting with the dominating liberal feminism in the first wave, which kept on going through the second one too, where radical and social feminism(s) became also apparent. Moreover, the feminist movement of women of color can also be considered as its own branch, having its own stages throughout history too. However, the different historical periods show similar tendencies that are helpful when it comes to comparing it to the trends in female written detective fiction.

Edgar Allen Poe, who established the genre, and his British counterpart Arthur Conan Doyle, who made it popular, the genre had its woman authors ever since its beginnings. Originating from gothic and sensation novels, female authors – although not canonized as detective fiction, and therefore, less known – were helping to establish and popularize the genre, oftentimes employing female detectives in doing so – both in British and American fiction. The female-written counterparts evolved throughout its course in relation to trends in crime fiction, but also were influenced by and were a reaction to the feminist movement(s).

In this paper I will touch upon the main stages of the history of female-written crime fiction in correlation with how the genre was evolving, to see what contemporary iterations are inspired by, and compare the most typical female-written crime novels to the trends and streams of the feminist movement.

## 1. Beginnings and the Golden Age

As Lucy Sussex points out, the detecting woman or a female detective is a transgressive, liminal character, who just by existing or working can disturb the social order, and because of that, she embodies the anxieties of the different historical periods' changing gender ideas and roles (Sussex 2010, 4). From Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) and the gothic women of crime, through the first wave of feminism working for the women's suffrage (and at the same time female detectives doing what they were not allowed, like joining the police); through the second wave's fight for equality and the reappropriated tough women detectives; and finally, arriving at the contemporary third wave feminism, and the many aspects women detectives challenge and rewrite order and tradition—the female detective does more than solving crimes.

The birth of detective fiction as a genre is associated with Edgar Allen Poe's short stories and his detective character, August Dupin. Crime fiction, however, did not start with Poe: it has a longer history and tradition. Crime and punishment are topics that have been of interest for writers since the beginning of recorded literature; however, the early stories were concentrating on the content and not on the now-indispensable process of detection. *Oedipus* has many elements of the detective fiction genre that contemporary readers expect: a crime, a dead body, a culprit, detection, and punishment. Sussex argues that the element of mystery only became a part of crime fiction from the Gothic; Religious texts often deal with stories about crime as a cautionary tale. Apart from the "conny catcher" pamphlets of the Elizabethan court, which are considered forerunners of crime fiction, the evolution of the genre has religious connections too: the 18th century Newgate Calendar was published by the chaplain of the Newgate prison. The calendar consisted of cautionary tales, where the detective is not needed yet, as God always punishes the criminal – even if sometimes the punishment required human intervention. The emphasis was on the punishment, as a "moral warning" for the readers. The calendar tales are related to the contemporary "true crime" narratives, rather than detective or crime fiction, because they are more biographical, and they lack the murder – detection – motive triad that are necessary elements of the genre.

But before the evolving crime fiction genre could give space to the detective fiction, organized police and the figure of the detective needed to be born. With the Enlightenment, the importance of the church turned towards secularity, and with that came rationality. Instead of leaving the investigation to the church and the punishment to God, detecting crime became the responsibility of the public, of community detection: people started observing each other from Christian conscience. At the same time, at the turn of the 18th century, with the emergence of the public law and forensic sciences, the concept of organized police was about to born. The birth of the police is an important step in detective fiction, because we can pinpoint that mo-

ment also as the birth of the detective, and thus can discuss the detective as a construct from that point on (Sussex 2010, 6–12; Knight 2004, 3–10).

The Gothic novel was also a fertile ground to crime fiction. Many writers, among them prominent women, wrote novels that can be considered as predecessors of detective fiction. It is no wonder the predecessors of the female detective can be found in the Gothic novels, since great thinkers, like Mary Wollstonecraft, begin the work that later became the feminist movement of that time. Her famous book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, first published in 1792, argued for equal education for girls and boys, but also rejected the idea of sexual dimorphism, the idea that associates men with reason and women with emotion. The book puts the emphasis on rationality for women as opposed to sentimentality, which is an important step toward a detecting woman (Tong and Botts 2018, 18–20).

The first wave of feminism was following on the path of Wollstonecraft, arguing for rationality and reason when it comes to women. Although in the United States it was tied to the abolitionist movement, generally speaking the first wave of feminism was blind to the issues of race and class, making it a white liberal feminist movement, and its most famous and most successful achievement was the suffrage for women. The first wave brought the questions of law reforms in the forefront, namely about marriage, divorce, property and child custody. It also challenged the presumption that women instinctually chose marriage and motherhood over a career or an occupation and suggested that for the liberation of women they need to become partners in a marriage, and that can only achieve by having an income on their own (Tong and Botts 2018, 20–24). No wonder that the first female detectives thematize the idea of choosing detection instead of marriage and a family.

The first dedicated female detectives were written by male authors, like Mrs. Paschal by W. S. Hayward, and Mrs. Gladden by Andrew Forrester, and were more like honorary men, according to Joan Warthling Roberts. They were submissive characters who did not disturb the status quo, or the social order, by their detection, and when their job ended, they returned to their domestic roles. Their detective roles were only made possible as being men's proxy, for example, being an assistant. The first woman who is considered to be breaking this trope is Catherine Louisa Pirkins' character Loveday Brooke. The English author published her stories in serialized format, and as novels such as *The Experiences of Loveday Brooke, Lady Detective* (1894), and her character, although a detective on her own rights, suffered the consequences of her action: she became considered a lower-class person than she already was, and her rebellious act pushed her to the margins of society (Roberts 1995, 4–6).

The American author Anna Katharine Green's Amelia Butterworth was the character who finally broke the tradition of her predecessors and who also became the prototype of the spinster sleuth. Published in 1897, *That Affair Next Door* depicts the woman detective as coming from a good financial background, which granted Butterworth the freedom of doing what she wanted – detecting. However, her abilities were only recognized after male colleagues praised her, making her still dependent on men (Roberts 1995, 6–8).

The most famous spinster detective to date is Agatha Christie's Miss Marple, who is arguably the most famous female detective to this day, created during the so-called Golden Age of detective fiction. Most of Christie's novels were written in an interwar and 'interwave' period: starting in 1930, Christie published about the spinster sleuth till the writer's death. The character, seemingly a stereotypical old lady, was able to use other people's impression on her to her own advantage and were able to expose crimes because of her unassuming nature, all the while revealing social concerns and comments on women's issues. The other notable female detective of the Golden Age was Harriet Vane, who appeared in four Dorothy Sayers novels, of which the most famous is *Gaudy Night* (1935). Harriet was written as a young and independent woman,

a writer of detective fiction, who struggled to balance her private and professional life – a fact which got thematized in the novels which made her an important predecessor of the feminist detective. Sayers also avoided the use of "female intuition" in her novels and making Vane rely on logic and deduction. This also comes from the subgenre most associated with the Golden Age: the clue-puzzle type of detective fiction provides the reader with the same pieces of information as the detective, so the reader can solve the case while reading the novel (Gavin 2010, 263; Reddy 2003, 193).

## 2. The Feminist Detective and Hard-Boiled Women

The 1960s were an important decade both in the feminist movement and in crime fiction history. Reddy argues that Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1964) and the publication of the first Carolyn Gold Heilburn novel, written under the pen name Amanda Cross (*In the Last Analysis*, 1964) started a new era in both: in Kate Fansler's character we can recognize the first real feminist detective, and Friedan's book is a commonly considered starting point in the second wave of the feminist movement.

The second wave, starting in the 1960s and ending around the 1990s, as replaced by the third wave, was the era of the women's liberation movement, and focused on identity politics, but was still predominantly liberal and white and middle class – although the Civil Rights Movement helped other social groups coming forward, too. Between the first and the second wave there is a 40-year period, counting from the 19th Amendment in the United States of America, which provided the suffrage of women; however, this division is misleading. It suggests that there was no active feminism between the two; however, this is far from the truth. In fact, one of the most influential feminist philosophical texts, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), was published in this intermediate period. The second wave – although it was not as homogeneous as the naming would suggests – sought out what was already stated in the first wave: that women need economic and sexual freedom, as well as civil rights, to be on equal ground with men (Tong and Botts 2018, 25–27). In this period many different women's rights group were working alongside each other, and with the help of the Civil Rights Movement women of color also gained a bigger platform, forming their own groups, which in their philosophical-theoretical work became the forerunner of intersectionalism that will be the central idea of the third wave (Tong and Botts 2018, 85).

Amanda Cross' novels represent the start of a new era of the female detective. Carolyn Gold Heilburn was an academic herself who theorized detective fiction and wrote about feminist criticism. It is no wonder that her character, an English professor who solves crimes, reforms the genre and the concept of the female detective too. In Heilburn's novels, the crimes do not just exist in a vacuum; they also suggest something about society too. As Reddy states, the novels "move away from the traditional mystery's progression from disorder to order and instead incorporates challenges to the very idea of social order in her plots, demonstrating some of the ways in which the status quo depends on women's continuing oppression" (Reddy 2003, 195). However, Knight does not agree with Reddy on this: he argues that although Cross provides "discursive space" in crime fiction for feminism, her character, Fansler, is just as much an honorary man as the early female detectives, since she is always helped by her male lovers, and is never an independent detective. Moreover, the cases undervalue sexism and being a victim of oppression (Knight 2004, 165–166).

Another famous example of this era is the British author P. D. James, whose *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* (1977) indicates in its title already that it questions and challenges the idea of the man-ruled world of detective fiction. Cordelia Grey, James' detecting woman, is not a formulaic

character like her predecessors, and – which foreshadows the character-central contemporary crime fiction novels – her character is just as important as the plot of the novel. The novel thematizes the roles of women, love, male-female relationships, the destructive possibility of love, and, most importantly, female independence. Sue Ellen Campbell argues that Grey avoids romance, because she fears losing her independence and her detective skills (Campbell 1995, 14)[2]. Both Cross and James can be considered the forerunners of the phenomenon that now we are calling feminist detection.

"Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival" says Adrienne Rich in her essay, and her statement defines the most striking phenomenon that evolved parallel to the second wave of the feminist movements: the appropriation and rewriting of the hard-boiled private eye character and its genre by (feminist) woman writers (Rich, 1972, 18). However, to be able to compare the feminist revision, I would like to summarize the main characteristics of the hard-boiled detective fiction first. The genre was a predominantly American answer to the so-called Golden Age, which provided the subgenre whodunit and/or the clue-puzzle, which is popular to this day. Taking place in the time period between the two world wars, the hard-boiled detective fiction adapted the western cowboy stories to an urban setting. Contrary to the cerebral predecessors solving crimes from an armchair, the hard-boiled detective inserts himself into the action of fighting against petty crimes, bootlegging, and gambling. He is a lone figure who isolates himself, "a loner, an alienated individual who exists outside or beyond the socio-economic order of family, friends, work, and home", a heavy drinker and smoker, very private and secretive (Scaggs 2005, 59–60). As the genre's most prominent authors Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler's novels demonstrate, opposed to the nostalgia-evoking whodunits, hard-boiled detective fiction breaks away from clear-cut categories of morality, highlights the corruption of the police, and shows a disillusionment in social values (Knight 2004, 112–3).

Hard-boiled detective fiction treats female characters – like the femme fatale – often in a rather misogynistic manner; moreover, as Knight explains it, detective fiction as a genre is inherently masculine:

> The violence of language and action of the private eyes, the insistent individualism they share with the clue-puzzle detectives, the extensive male chauvinist traditions of description, attitude and behaviour, as well as the complacent acceptance of a patriarchal social order, all seem contrary to the tenets of late twentieth-century feminism (Knight 2004, 163).

This is the reason why it is exciting that in the '70s and '80s a generation of American female authors appropriated the genre, and created feminist hard-boiled, private eye, or police detective women. These stories, like the aforementioned male counterpart of the genre, do not focus on individual crimes in itself, but they instead highlight the systematic nature of it. They can only achieve small victories; the usual "making order from chaos" narrative structure of detective fiction is disregarded. This is because crimes are not random; they are part of a bigger system of oppression – often the consequence of patriarchy.

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[2] Interestingly, James' next Grey-novel, *The Skull Beneath the Skin* – demonstrating how much crime fiction is a tableau of cultural and political change – is almost in opposition with the first novel, showcasing a Thatcherian propaganda of returning to the Victorian ideals of womanhood (Nixon 1995, 41).

Marcia Muller's Sharon McCone, Sara Paretsky's V. I. Warshawski and Sue Grafton's Kinsey Milhone were the main characters of the author's series of novels, respectively, however the serialized nature of the narrative is not the only thing that makes them similar. Reddy argues, that similarly to the original hard-boiled detective, these women were solitary characters too, being professional detectives, but the twist that these female writers brought to the character is the solid connections of friendships, a network of connections instead of having a family on their own – as it is often expected of women. Moreover, these women find that relationships with men have the possibility to disrupt their "hard-won autonomy and independence". Their investigations, let it be about murder, corruption or other cases, often led to the realization that crime can be the result of systematic oppression. Violence, either corporeal or on the level of language use is a key point in the hard-boiled mode. The feminist revision does not shy away from it, however it does in a critical way. These female characters find violence as something they are not fond of, but they use it when the situation calls for it, and they do not hesitate to fight back, both literally, against perpetrators, and metaphorically, against patriarchal control (Reddy 2003 197–9).

## 3. Chick and Domestic Noir – a Reaction to Postfeminism

After 2010 a new trend seemed to be crystallizing among the female-written crime fiction novels. Although its nomenclature is still not fixed, changing from chick noir to domestic noir, critics seem to agree on its major characteristics. Based on crime thrillers[3], these novels are centered on a young urban woman protagonist with a job either in publishing or in arts, exploring anxieties connected to the cultural scripts of being a woman. The genre seeks answers to questions on the anxieties of femininity, marriage, domesticity, violence, trauma, and how contemporary (female) crime writers deal with these questions in literature and consequently in filmic adaptations.

Domestic noir seems to be an updated version of the "chick noir" that was the leading denomination of the phenomenon in the past. Similarly to chick lit, themes like body image, careers, sex life, mother-daughter and romantic relationships (especially marriage), and motherhood are depicted, analyzed and questioned in these novels in relation with the "loss of female agency, power and autonomy" (Kennedy 2007, 26). Marriages are often depicted as traps, (gilded) cages with disturbing things beneath the surface. Julia Crouch, who named the genre, explains it as the following:

> Domestic noir puts the female experience at the centre. The main themes are family, motherhood, children, marriage, love, sex and betrayal. Setting is important: the home a character inhabits, and the way they inhabit it, can tell us as much about them as what they say or do. At the centre of these stories is a subversion of the idea of home as sanctuary. Home can also be a cage, a place of torment, of psychological tyranny, of violence. (Crouch in Joyce and Sutton, 2018, vii)

The genre's preoccupation with family life, marriage, motherhood and the home make the female-written detective fiction a reaction to postfeminism, which was a trend in feminism parallel to the third wave. The third wave, starting with the emergence of the voices of women of

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[3] The crime thriller emerged as a parallel genre to the hard-boiled detective ficion in the 1920s, although its modern version is rooted in the Gothic novels. This genre is considered sensational, it illustrates death and violence vividly, it is often concerned with a "secret or hidden knowledge", and it is more interested in the crime and its consequences that in the investigation process (Scaggs 2005, 105–106).

color from the 80s and becoming its own distinctive period from the 90s, has intersectionalism as its most important, central tenet, regarding diversity and change as its driving force. Intersectional approaches state that it is not enough to look at someone's gender to understand their position, other factors, such as their race, class, sexuality, age, etc. are just as important, and create a matrix, where their social position can be assessed better (Tong and Botts 2018, 193). This period seen a rise in black and lesbian detectives, not coincidentally. However, parallel to this, another movement can be observed.

Postfeminism however, according to Samantha Lindop, has the basic tenet that there is no more need for feminism as it already accomplished gender equality. The postfeminist movement can be dated to the 1990's, and it is keen to "restabilize gendered power structures" (Lindop 2015, 11). The postfeminist figure, although welcoming everything the feminist movement achieved (career, independence, etc) still finds getting married and having a family as the most important goal in her life. The media representation connected to this idea shown women in high positions in their professional live, successful and beautiful, but still their main narratives centered on them being single, wanting to have a husband and a family. Postfeminism emphasizes the importance of the nuclear family, and under its era more and more women portrayed in films and series retired from the public sphere, from their career, to embrace a purposeful life in a domestic setting (Lindop 2015, 79).

Domestic noir's turn to the family and the home as a possible place for crime challenges these ideas. The genre is a synthesis of the most prominent trends in detective fiction written by women that came before it: it combines the tight, stifling spatiality of the whodunit with the corporeal, tough-women-centered action of the feminist hard-boiled novels. The detection happens in a closed space, either in a small community or a family, similarly to the whodunit, but while there the social setting and the possible criticism coming with it was a tool for the process of detection and for the demonstration of the sleuth's brilliance, with the domestic noir the social criticism becomes the goal, the successful detection process reveals the shortcomings of the community.

Tana French's *Broken Harbour* (2012) uses the 2008 economic crisis as a backdrop and culprit for the crimes within the family depicted, while Gillian Flynn's *Sharp Objects* (2006) is set in a small town where the rigid gender roles create a fertile ground for psychological trauma and crime. Women are compelled to investigate, and while they are mostly amateurs, they are more closely connected to the women in the feminist hard-boiled novels as they are often finding themselves in situations where they have to physically fight. They are flawed, and often criminal too, but their relation to the femme fatale is critical, it emphasizes the systemic nature of abuse of oppression that women have to endure or fight against in the novels. The genre thus offers a critique of social values through a sense of isolation, a suffocatingly small social and physical spaces.

## 4. Conclusion

The paper gave an overview, a simplified genealogy, of crime fiction by female authors and with a female detective by comparing the major directions and waves of the feminist movement to the most prominent literary trends in women's detective fiction. Detective fiction is often seen as an impression of the time period it is written in; the female-written version provides an interesting reaction to the Anglo-American feminist movement through the character of the female detective. Corresponding to the concerns of the early stages of feminism, the first female detectives fought for the right to have a career and to be considered a detective on their own with more or less success. Choosing and occupation, the next step was the spinster detective who arrived at the peak of its popularity between the first and the second wave of feminism.

The second wave and the Civil Rights Movement brought the idea of revision, where the female hard-boiled detectives were born, as a reaction to the rough and tough-talking antiheroes of the hard-boiled genre, to highlight the systematic nature of the struggles of women. The third part of the paper looked at the domestic noir, a contemporary version of the female-written detective fiction, which seems to rely on its predecessors to be in opposition with the postfeminist movement, that emerged parallel to the third wave of feminism. Although this paper only looked at fiction written by white authors, exploring similar ideas through lesbian and black female authors would provide an interesting topic for the future.

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# Edith Wharton's Argument with Ruskin

**Keywords**

Edith Wharton, visual culture, John Ruskin, reading architecture, the Italian Baroque, art history

Everybody knows Edith Wharton the novelist of manners, but fewer have heard of her as the author of travel books.[1] Yet, Wharton published five volumes of travel in her life: two on Italy, two about France and one on Marocco, and was better known as a travel author than as a novelist at the beginning of her career in the life of letters. In these travel accounts Wharton focuses her reports on elements of visual culture, she describes architecture, professes a general interest in spatial arrangements typical of the given community.

Wharton's visual and architectural perspective comes from contemporary trends in art criticism and travel writing. Wharton is defying an earlier tradition of travel writing that came with an interest in picturesque scenes, curious sights, ruins and landscapes (Annus 2006, 17). Instead she prioritized the observation of architecture and architectural arrangements. In criticism this difference is called the contrast between the belletristic tradition of the picturesque and John Ruskin's model of precise observation (Wright 1997, ix).

The question in the case of Wharton is how her travel accounts represent the change from picturesque critical model to that of precise observation, and what the exact reason for the change in her case is. The paper shows that Wharton was interested in the observation of visual culture and architectural space in order to give evidence of the historical continuity encoded in them. Her observations and comparisons measure up the extent of the cultural continuity pictures and buildings carry. For Wharton, Italy and France represent ideal locations where centuries of cultural legacy and connection can be perceived just by the observation of pictures, buildings, even of cultivated landscape. Wharton is definitely frustrated by earlier celebrations of picturesque effect because, she thinks, they miss this point. Later on, World War one will be the biggest threat to the idea of cultural continuity encoded in visual art and human spatial arrangements, a problem Wharton will tackle in her wartime travel account about France (Schriber 1999, 145; Ammentorp 2004, 38; Kovács 2017, 543).

Wharton's travelogue I introduce here is her second collection of essays on Italy, *Italian Backgrounds* 1905. The first and perhaps better known volume is *Italian Villas* 1904, which surveys spatial arrangements of Italian Renaissance and Baroque garden architecture. In *Backgrounds,* Wharton constructs a general model of seeing continuity in art, which is most useful for charting out Wharton's relation to earlier traditions of writing about art and travel. I argue that in *Backgrounds* Wharton makes a case against Ruskin's accounts of Italian art because his method of precise observation remains blind to the place of the Italian Baroque, as many have stated (Lee

[1] In her lifetime, she published *Italian Villas and their Gardens* 1904 and *Italian Backgrounds* (1905), *A Motor-Flight through France* (1908) and *Fighting France: From Dunkirk to* (1915), and *In Morocco* (1920). One journal titled *The Cruise of the Vanadis* was published posthumously about a cruise on the Mediterranean (1992 and 2004).

2008, 94, Lasansky 2016, 160; Peel 2012, 287; Montgomery 2016, 112; Blazek 2016, 64). Yet I also wish to add that this is important for Wharton for the loss in the story of Italian historical continuity, and that Wharton, perhaps ambiguously, actually applies Ruskin's method of observation to epochs other than Ruskin's favourites. The article shows this through focusing first on Ruskin and Wharton, then on Wharton's representations of the Italian Baroque, and finally on her commitment to the notion of continuity.

## 1. Sentiment and science in Ruskin and Wharton

John Ruskin was a formative painter, critic of art and architecture, social thinker of the Victorian era whose ideas dominated thinking about art and art history in the latter part of the nineteenth-century. Ruskin uses the analytical skills of the natural scientist in his readings of painting, in his *Modern Poetry,* and architecture, in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice* (Ruskin 1846, 1849, 1851–3). In both areas he tries to go beyond the surface of the picturesque. His accounts of architecture from the 1850s–80s describe layers of stone, eventually telling the life story of a building (Ruskin 1849, ch 6). Gothic and Byzanthine bulidings, and even the work of the early Renaissance present the most organic examples of such architectural stories (Ruskin, 1851–3, vol. 2). Although Ruskin relies on several disciplines in his observations, as Stephen Kite in *Building Ruskin's Italy* puts it, he never identifies with any of them, he remains an amateur (Kite 2012, 2).

Ruskin's descriptions focus on not only the visual and tactile description of a building but also the emotional effect and the moral or religious values the work carries. Robert Hewison in his *Ruskin: the argument of the eye* claims that in Ruskin's visual imagination each fact finds its place in three orders of truth: truth of fact, truth of thought, and finally the truth of symbol (Hewison 1975, ch 8). Kite puts this more directly when he says that Ruskin provides visual, imaginative and moral/religious readings to the "facts" he describes (Kite 2012, 9).

How is Wharton related to Ruskin's writings on Italy and on watching architecture? In her autobiography, 1934, Wharton situates *Backgrounds* as part of a discussion in the 1870s on whether travel writing and art criticism belonged to the domain of the cultured amateur or the educated expert. Here she makes no reference to John Ruskin. Instead, here Wharton situates herself as the exponent of the scientific method in travel writing as opposed to writers of subjective impression, who eventually learned to combine sentiments and technique (Wharton 1990, 898). However, in her autobiographical fragment "Life and I" she refers to Ruskin with admiration: "His wonderful cloudy pages gave me back the image of the beautiful Europe I had lost, & woke in me the habit of precise visual observation" (Wharton 1990, 1084).

The only monograph on Wharton's travel writing so far by Sarah Wright adds the name of Ruskin to Wharton's amateur/expert opposition. Wright emphasizes Wharton's resistance to American travel authors of the picturesque like Irving and Hawthorne and highlights Ruskin as the influence that triggered Wharton's criticism of her American precursors (Wright 1997, 37). Wrights writes that Ruskin helped Wharton to move toward a more scientific register of travel writing expected by US journals in the 1880s (ibid.).

Robert Burden in his *Travel, Modernism and Modernity* stresses the different examples Ruskin and later Pater presented for Wharton. Burden identifies Ruskin's theory as an insistence on the moral function of art. In contrast, he identifies Pater as an insistence on art for art's sake (Burden 2015, 213). In Wharton's travel writing, Burden writes, the two different influences create an ambiguity: her need for balance and harmony is in contrast with her enjoyment of the emotional and ornamental Baroque (Burden 2015, 211). Burden claims that Wharton develops modernist themes and styles of presentation both in her fiction and her travel writing, and her

developing penchant for Pater and the Baroque in her travelogues is a sign of this change (Burden 2015, 213).

Emily Orlando's *Edith Wharton and Visual Art* shows the important influence of the Pre-Raphaelite movement on Wharton's fiction. Orlando shows how Wharton criticizes the image of the Pre-Raphaelite beautiful passive woman, the object of the male gaze, more and more as part of her increasing emphasis on heroines who are able to construct and manipulate the visual impressions their own bodies create (Orlando 2007, 26). Orlando writes that Wharton sided with Ruskin's ideas in her *The Decorations of Houses* (1899) already (Orlando 2007, 175).

*Italian Backgrounds* itself refers to Ruskin several times in a critical way. In the essay on Parma Wharton notes that as a devotee of the fourteenth century, Ruskin has led several generations of travelers to pass 'any expression of structural art more recent than the pointed style' (109–10),[2] who would find little in Parma for their taste. Also, Milan lacks 'the pseudo Gothicism, [...] which Ruskin taught a submissive generation of critics to regard as the typical expression of the Italian spirit' (155), a perpendicular ideal (156). Wharton's essays criticize Ruskin's ideal of art and image of Italy because it cannot see Italian art after the Renaissance.

## 2. Foreground and background

Wharton's criticism of Ruskin's limited way of seeing Italian art is put forward in the final essay of the book through two technical terms from painting: foreground and background. Wharton is interested in how human sight and attention are manipulated in pictures and then capitalizes on this theme to expand it as a metaphor of creating knowledge about art.

Firstly, she defines the key terms foreground and background. In early Renaissance devotional paintings, there are two quite unrelated parts. The foreground shows a conventional devotional theme, characters in typical attitude and symbolic dress. The background is secular, it shows what the artist sees, depicts scenes from contemporary life (173–4). For Wharton, the background of religious paintings direct the observation, present a chosen view of a realistically painted landscape, and add a personal note from the painter. For her, the secular background forms the real picture with impressions from the painter's life.

Wharton expands the duality of foreground/background to one's knowledge about Italy and Italian towns. What is in the foreground of our knowledge about Italy? Wharton claims that the foregrounded knowledge of Italy derives from guide books and is the knowledge of the mechanical sight-seer. It is a conventionalized view of Italy stiffened into symbols, it forms a facade (177). The background is known by the dreamer and by the serious student of Italy, who "in the open air of observation can disengage from tradition" (177–8). Wharton claims that the idea of Italy as the country of ancient ruins and the Renaissance belongs to knowledge about Italy in the foreground, while in the background there is much more to observe (afterwards) that is related to the life in the background – hence the title of the book.

Interestingly, in practice a focus on backgrounds means observing Baroque art and architecture as part of the notion of Italian culture, not only antique, Medieval and Renaissance culture, as Wharton shows. For instance, in the case of Rome, antique ruins are normally foregrounded at the expense of Baroque Rome. Hasty travelers flock to the town to tour the Forum and the ancient sites, disregarding the fact that most of the buildings in Rome at the time (1905) were actually built by architects of the Baroque and decorated accordingly (184). The happy few who stay for more than three days see a middle distance, while the idlers who spend more time also

[2] Subsequent references to *Italian Backgrounds* (Wharton 1905) follow as page numbers in brackets.

see the background, in fact the whole boundless horizon of Rome (179). In an implied criticism of Ruskin, she writes: "Is it not a curious mental attitude which compels the devotee of medieval art to walk blindfolded from the Palazzo Venezia to Santa Sabina on the Aventine, or from the Ara Coeli to Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, because the great monuments lying between these points of his pilgrimage belong to what some one has taught him to regard as a 'debased period of art'?" (182). So Wharton prioritizes the Baroque in Rome in the face of Ruskin's rejection of the period he called the "Barbarous Gothic" (Ruskin 1851–3, vol. 3).

Wharton goes on to exemplify the Italian Baroque through several spectacular examples relying on the schema of foreground and background. One further example for this is Venice, the staple Ruskinian site, where a young Wharton and her father had strolled with Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* in hand (Wharton 1990, 851). In Venice, the foreground is Byzantine-Gothic and early Renaissance, while the background conforms to Baroque and Rococo taste. The Baroque background is expressed in the interior decoration of old palaces and is usually relegated to the background of attention (189). As Wharton puts it: "the spirit of the eighteenth century expressed itself in rather in her expanding social life and the decorative arts which attend on such drawing-room revivals" (192). Wharton gives a historical reason for this: as Venice was "less under the influence of the Church than any other Italian state, she was able to resist the architectural livery with which the great Jesuit subjugation clad the rest of Italy" (192). In this metaphor for Venice, Byzantine-Gothic architectural style is identified with uniformed clothes and understood as a surface, distinct from the 'internal' design, invisible substance. That is the background, which is out of sight. In Venice this interior or background is Baroque because the life of the Baroque went on inside the buildings: in the saloons and galleries, decorated with paintings by Tiepolo and Canaletto. These decorations are usually considered to lack value: they are ornamental, illusory, emotional. Yet, after surveying some palace ceilings and walls decorated by Tiepolo, Wharton concludes that the paintings "recall the glory of another great tradition," because in the light of Venetian painting, Tiepolo's work can be seen as a direct "descendant of Titian and Veronese" (ibid.), as the lines, the types, the majesty of his scenes, if not his colors, link him to the *cinque cento*. Wharton's view links the supposedly valueless Baroque to the valuable Renaissance.

Wharton includes not only the discussion architecture and painting but also that of literature into her new image of the Italian Baroque. Again and again she refers positively to typical characters of the commedia dell' arte who enact the social comedy of types with the rough humor. Her first essay of the collection describes the descent into Italy from Switzerland from North to South à la Goethe, but also like a comedy with typical characters who are the travelers. In the essay on Parma she explains the Baroque sentiment that is communicated in line and color in Corregio's technically elaborate paintings. The Baroque seems to embody the lack sincerity: it forecloses mannerisms, masquerade, a laughing art, a life of intrique without conviction (113), a lack of sincerity that "modern taste has most consistently exacted" (112) Wharton comments. Yet, she herself goes on imagining and describing how a Baroque play had been acted out in the Farnese theatre. Similarly, she populates the Baroque salons of Venetian palaces with imagined characters from the comedies of Goldoni, and the *commedia* is praised as the art of satirizing social appearances. Finally, Wharton ends her last essay with a scene in the Museo Correr in Venice where the mannequins stand for the types of the Baroque world, and embody the world of appearances: fine clothes, gay colors, and graceful attitudes (213) a world that was arrested by Napoleon's actions and all but disappeared since.

Wharton's argument with Ruskin highlights the importance of "seeing" which is an idea similar to Ruskin's. Ruskin himself stresses the importance of seeing the real thing instead of an artificial idea, be it a leaf or a building. He criticizes picturesque artificial images of landscape

and architecture and instead he practices a precise observation of art. Wharton's insistence on seeing not only the foreground but also the background of pictures, notions, and cultural phenomena seems similar to Ruskin in this sense, but Wharton's scope is different: instead of Ruskin's prioritization of certain styles, Wharton emphasizes connections in art.

## 3. Seeing continuity

Wharton criticizes Ruskin's Gothicism on two counts: one, it is not comparative enough and two, it is blind to the historicity of art.

Firstly, Wharton claims that prioritizing a period of Italian art is against the comparative impulse of nineteenth-century century art criticism (182). "The perception of differences in style" she writes, "is a recently developed faculty" (104) of the first half of the nineteenth-century century but it also came with indifference toward all but a brief period of that art" (ibid.). Yet the comparative impulse is the 19th century's most important contribution to the function of criticism, she adds. Perceiving modifications (183) in art will grant interest to all modes of art, not only to the ones considered valuable: only when the art critic begins to survey the modifications of art as objectively as he would study the alternations of the seasons, will he begin to understand and to sympathize with the different modes in which man had sought to formulate his "gropings for beauty" (184). Artistic modes, she claims, evolve from each other and should not be attributed value in themselves.

Secondly, this kind of comparative criticism will be able to account for continuity in art. Continuity is not problematic in times of peaceful transition, for instance as Christianity replaces Roman gods in the Iberian peninsula (78), the new god of the towns lives beside the old gods who reside in natural habitats. The essay on hermits analyzes the coexistence of the two worlds as it is indicated by the appearance of old gods in Italian landscapes (79, 81). However, moments of social and artistic transformation become especially interesting in regard to continuity: how do "modes of gropings for beauty" change at the time of crisis. At the marble church of Tirano in chapter 1, she analyzes the transition of styles, the coexistence of different traditions. The interior, she writes, "escaped the unifying hand of the improver and presents three centuries of conflicting decorative treatment, ranging from the marble chapel of the Madonna ... to the barocco carvings of the organ" (24). For Wharton, understanding changes in art requires that one understands the new conditions of art that generate new forms (185). The Baroque is of interest in this respect as well: Bernini was the genius of the Baroque time of transformation, he was the artist of the bravura period but integrated elements of Renaissance art and "the germs of Bernini and Tiepolo must be sought in the Sistine ceiling" (182) she contends.[3]

Wharton argues that the survey of modifications in art leads to a specific model of cultural continuity focused on ongoing historical connections in art. Compared to this model, Ruskin's focus on the Gothic seems rather limited in scope. Wharton even provides her own example to the blindness of Ruskinian bias. A group of terracotta figures representing the Passion in San Vivaldo were considered to be Baroque pieces, so nobody paid them much attention. When Wharton visited San Vivaldo, she saw that the pieces showed patterns and arrangement of an earlier, sixteenth-century century fashion. She had photos taken of the groups which she sent

[3] For an alternative idea suggesting the disruptive effect of historical/cultural continuity on race relations in the United States as suggested by Thomas Jefferson within the context of sentimental philosophy see Vajda 2009, 283 and Vajda 2017, 131.

to the director of the Royal Museums of Florence at the time who duly identified them as fifteenth-century pieces indeed. In her essay she comments:

> the mere fact that a piece of sculpture was said to have been executed in the seventeenth century would, until very recently, have sufficed to prevent it receiving expert attention. [...] concealing them from modern investigation as effectually as though they had been situated in the centre of an unexplored continent [...] in the heart of the most carefully-explored artistic hunting ground of Europe (104–5).

So ironically, in the case of the terracottas of San Vivaldo, the bias against the Baroque resulted in complete blindness to actual details.

## 4. Conclusion

Wharton's method of seeing and studying art in *Italian Backgrounds* shows many traces of Ruskin's legacy. They both attribute importance to seeing, to observing architecture, although Wharton argues for an expanded scope of historical interest than Ruskin to study all manners of art, in a non-evaluative manner. The paper showed that reason for the difference between Ruskin and Wharton lies in Wharton's interest in continuity and historical change as represented in pictures, building, interior decorations. Wharton's lucid comments on Baroque comedy and appearances that function as introduction and conclusion of the collection even suggest that a concealed satire of Ruskin's method is being performed.

Returning to the secondary sources on Wharton's place in the discourses of travel writing of the period, it is important to point out that Wharton was unduly reticent about Ruskin's influence in her autobiography, that Wright's account on her relation to Ruskin seems more relevant, while Burden's psychoanalytically phrased reading for ambiguity of scholarly Ruskinian/aesthetic Baroque oriented voice in Wharton being the law of the father vs. desire mixed in her sounds somewhat general. A less general explanation for the duality would be to acknowledge Wharton's interest in continuity and crisis in art due to the changes in the conditions of production.

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# Understanding the Postcolonial Woman: Home, the Sublime, and the Uncanny in Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters*

**Keywords**

Indo-American literature, Home, Postcolonialism, the sublime, the uncanny

## Introduction

> "Today I feel that I shall win through. I have come to the gateway of the simple; I am now content to see things as they are. I have gained freedom myself; I shall allow freedom to others. In my work will be my salvation."
> — Rabindranath Tagore, *The Home and the World*

In *Home and the World* (1922), Tagore wishes for a postcolonial Indian society free from colonized oppression. Even though it is impossible to appropriate Rabindranath Tagore within a singular discipline or the discourse of Postcolonialism, he can be seen as a postcolonial thinker who wished to look beyond colonial rubble. His works present vivid accounts of the colonial past in India, the British reign, the mass inculcation of cultural norms, the manipulation of ancestral glory and the elongated Indian struggle for freedom. Similarly, Postcolonial writers such as Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul and Bharati Mukherjee focused on the idea of breaking the "walls of religions and caste" in their novels, favoured global secularism and prioritized freedom of self over that of the nation. Their novels also resonate with the need for cultural assimilation rather than appropriation and both the merits and demerits of cosmopolitanism (Donald 2008, 91), and thus, through the writings, these writers proposed a world of unity in diversity. Bharati Mukherjee, on the other hand, does not only showcase the popular trends and indulgence of Western civilization, but also reflects on the flimsy bridge of modernity that connects Eastern and Western lifestyles. Opposed to Tagore and many other postcolonial writers, Mukherjee focuses on the traumatic process of assimilation rather than on the idea of assimilation itself.

Homi Bhabha, in his *The Location of Culture* (1994) observes the existence of postcolonial literature through the category of the unhomely. Bhabha observes the collapse between the public and private spheres as the genesis for the unhomely in postcolonial literature and how mundane events get politicized. From daily events being racialized or sexualized or to even the age-old process of en-gendering the society, the perplexity of unhomeliness and alienation becomes a trait for diasporic communities (Bhabha 1994, 17). 'Home' generates an undeniable problem in the discourse of the Indian diaspora and the encounter with the idea of 'home' is not merely an intellectual quest for the diasporic Indians to resolve their existential and individuality issues (Karmakar 2015, 80). The nostalgia of the ancestral roots of the writers connect with the idea of home and hence their literary practices showcase the ambiguity over home. To trace the sense of belonging and capture the continuum of the past and present experiences in the figure of the home, its necessary to recognise that home has two spaces in Indian diaspora — one that pins

down with traditions and the other that liberates. Bhabha states that, between two nations, these two spaces create an 'interstitial space' (Bhabha 1994, 3) which consistently gives rise to narratives that erases the defining boundaries of the nation. Inferring from Bhabha, this grey zone between homes becomes a home. This article traces the construction, exhilaration and unfamiliarity of that home through the theories of the sublime and the uncanny.

In *Desirable Daughters* (2002) Bharati Mukherjee treats the issues of home, cultural adaptation, and conflicts of socio-political origin as necessary constituents of self-transition that Indian diasporic women go through while adjusting to American expectations. She reconceptualizes these issues as she explains in her interview with Dave Weich in 2004:

> It's that moment in diaspora: – discard your past if you can, or suppress it, and reinvent yourself as often as you need to (and some of those reinventions are hopelessly excessive) until you find a new autobiography. (Mukherjee 2004)

The new autobiography that is formed by discarding one's familiar relationship with one's roots deals with cross-cultural conflicts, hyphenated existence, and an overall anguished feeling concerning the resettlement process in America. Bharati Mukherjee's women express different ways of becoming American and assimilating to the American dream that helps them to come to terms with their selves and recognize their position in the world — not the one they were taught to follow but the one they created for themselves. The vision of the West among Indian women has always been quite controversial. On one hand, their desire to experience different cultural norms runs quite strong, but on the other hand, their fear of being ostracized from Indian origins is entrenched into their consciousness. The unfamiliarity of the hostland (in this case the USA) and the familiar yet repressed upbringing of the homeland refocuses on the uncanny presence surrounding Indian American diasporic culture.

The story of Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* (2002) revolves around the stories of the homes of three sisters. Tara, Parvati, and Padma were born and brought up in Calcutta during the tumultuous conditions of post-independence Bengal and who are rediscovering whatever was left of the Bengali traditions. The novel starts with a mythical recalling of the story of tree brides who were married to trees as children to restore their honour in society (Mukherjee 2002, 4). The reference to the "tree bride" at the beginning of the novel hints at the relationship between Tara and the tree bride from mythologies, Taralata—both daughters, and in the root search of their identities and being desirable. Among the three sisters, Tara and Padma are part of the Indian American community whereas Parvati lives with her husband in Mumbai, India. The novel peaks when Tara is confronted by Padma's supposed illegitimate son Christopher and she takes on the moral duty to find out the truth of her sister's past as well as to confront her own. The conflict between the two sisters regarding the extent of possible Americanisation gives a new perspective on the tensions between expatriates and immigrants and their journey through nostalgia and their guilt over abandoning their homeland as explored in the novel.

Bharati Mukherjee articulates that the dilemma of traditions is "the price that the immigrant willingly pays, and that the exile avoids, is the trauma of self transformation" (Mukherjee 2004, 274). The inconsistencies that contributed to this dilemma were generation gap amid immigrants, different orientation towards "roots" and changing political situation India. Amid these issues, the diaspora still tries to create a place to anchor the self (Karmakar 2015, 85). Tara's attempt of creating different homes in various American cities was an attempt to recreate the home in Calcutta, as a beacon of light and familiar warmth as she reflects:

> The city I knew was (and remains) the magnet hope for the world's third-largest population, the target of all their ambition. To be a native-born Calcuttan was (and is) to be a Londoner, a Parisian, a New Yorker, at the zenith. (Mukherjee 2002, 22)

To her, California or San Francisco were no different than Calcutta and she did not want to create a new home devoid of her ancestral attachments but to create a space with old and new memories. The diasporic Indian home in USA represents both reinvention and repression; homeliness and unhomeliness; peace and trauma at the same time. On the one hand, this ambiguous idea of home is formulated through notions of reason, terror, and awe as primary faculties, it contributes to elevation or as Bonnie Mann suggests it contributes to the liberatory sublime (Mann 2006, 153). On the other hand, this ambiguous idea of the home reflects on the hostility of the home due to traditional repression.

I suggest that the ambiguous idea of the home in Mukherjee's novel can be analysed through the employment of the notions of the liberatory sublime and of Sigmund Freud's theory of the uncanny. By focusing on how the concept of home is both homey and hostile, it is possible to shed a new light on the relationship between Tara's postcolonial self and her idea of home.

## 1. The Postcolonial Woman and her American Home

> "for we women are not only the deities of the household fire, but the flame of the soul itself."
> — Rabindranath Tagore, *The Home and the World*

In *Home and the World*, Tagore depicts that revolution starts from home and the women of Indian households know the meaning of revolution and struggle for freedom since they have been fighting for it for decades. They are the tools of liberation and they uphold postcolonial desire—that is, the will to rebuild and reform. The term 'postcolonial' is engaging yet unformed, so much so that its usage has become multifarious and volatile—always containing the risk of misinterpretation. On the one hand it engages with the end of colonial reality. On the other hand, it seems to provoke diasporic discussions signalling the social and political concerns of the late twentieth century such as alienation, and eventual loss of identity in the cultural limbo.

David Spurr advances a concise understanding of 'postcolonial' as a critical term as he explains:

> 'Postcolonial' is a word that engenders even more debate than 'colonial,' partly because of the ambiguous relationship between these two and I shall refer to postcolonial in two ways: as a historical situation marked by the dismantling of traditional institutions of colonial power, and as a search for alternatives to the discourses of the colonial era ... The second is both an intellectual project and a transcultural condition that includes, along with new possibilities, certain crises of identity and representation (Spurr 1993, 6).

According to Spurr, the word "postcolonial" is twofold; on one hand, it marks a historical trajectory, on the other, it suggests transcultural revolutions. In the historical discussion of postcolonialism, cultural practices of the diaspora expand the umbrella term from colonial reparations to transcultural issues. The diaspora has re-examined the cultural and national possibilities and embraced transnationality in both the public and private spheres. The diasporic communities liberate themselves, legitimize their traditions worldwide, invest in their aspirations, and try out the luck of the living to attain a formidable place amid the global dominance of Western culture. When Tagore reflects on women and their strength and willpower to survive amid challenging conditions, he reconfigures the image of the Hindu woman as a being set between the

perils of postcolonialism. Bharati Mukherjee in her novels tried to delve deep in the perils of Tara and her sisters and their journey from docile Hindu women to renovated postcolonial women.

In Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* (2002), Tara and her sisters are expected to use the privilege of their convent education, pseudo-liberal family standards, and their tolerance to create good homes in America — by speaking English, wearing American clothes but leading an Indian way of life. They create a world within their reality they are neither Indians nor Americans; where it becomes "increasingly difficult to attach human identity and meaning to a coherent culture or language" (Nicholls 1999, 10), and this difficulty transforms the Indian American woman into a postcolonial woman, in the incoherent cultural confusion. Rather than becoming an existential problem, this perplexing cultural space, according to Brett Nicholls, "opens up questions concerning cultural authenticity and political legitimacy" (Nicholls 1999, 12). In the third world, postcolonial women, such as Tara and Padma, grow out of their repressed upbringing and curve a new path for their identity.

The idea of the home is related to traditions and 20th-century urbanism, where Indian women of Bengali descent are trained to balance commitment towards traditions — commitment either to the homeland, or the hostland (Karmakar 2015, 81). When Tara recalls home, she remembers both British Calcutta and Bengali Calcutta's reminiscences — a convent-educated girl still believing in Hinduism. In her recollection, her home in Calcutta provides no peace to her soul but creates confusion regarding her identity. Her intimacy with her sisters, who were named after Hindu gods, the story of her namesake, Taralata, "the Tree Bride" (Mukherjee 2002, 4), the religious rituals, the patriarchal tension, and the fear of not following the pre-decided path — all of these contribute to the diasporic conflict of the self in relation the home and the world. The early 90s San Francisco constitutes a late 50s fragment of Calcutta in America, and the Indian American immigrant Tara could only recall a "Dirtier...Crueller...Poorer" (Mukherjee 2002, 23) yet ambitious Calcutta — a true counterpart to San Francisco.

Tara considers her home in America to be a relatively "simpler affair" than her socio-politically and sexually repressed home in 1950s Calcutta. She is part of the crowd in San Francisco where she is "ethnically ambiguous" like many others, on friendly terms, yet still distant with the neighbours, living with her "balding, red-bearded, former-biker, former bad-boy, Hungarian Buddhist contractor/yoga instructor" boyfriend Andy (Mukherjee 2002, 25). She has created a home in Upper Haight, San Francisco, with the nostalgia of the home in Calcutta — almost expecting the "chattering of monkeys, corn and peanuts and Buddhist prayer wheels" only to find "cottages in an Etruscan landscape" dominating the street with Victorian terrain and the smell of gingerbread (Mukherjee 2002, 24- 25).

Mukherjee reflects on her two different homes Tara had access to in her life — on the one hand, a 19-year-old Tara married off to a wealthy entrepreneur Bishwapriya Chatterjee who is creating a home with him in Atherton, California; and on the other hand, a 36-year old Tara who is a divorced kindergarten teacher creating a home with her son, Rabi, and her partner, Andy. The contrast between these two homes hints at Tara's ability to transit from a loveless, arranged marriage to a relationship where "love is having fun with someone...over a longer haul" (Mukherjee 2002, 27). Mukherjee observes Tara's transformation from being a submissive Bengali woman to becoming a postcolonial woman who did not limit her potentials to a provider but freed herself for endless possibilities. Even though she suffers from the inner conflict from the divorce and the modern woman enigma where self comes first and not family (Mishra 2007, 42) that supposedly made her fail in her duties as a traditional Indian wife and perhaps mother, the fact she chooses to face these conflicts in order to seize her own happiness through her own action it was her first act of rebellion.

## 2. The Postcolonial woman and the liberatory Sublime

To show the developments in the sublime's aesthetics, Longinus and Edmund Burke have to be acknowledged. The term of sublime comes from Latin *peri hypsous* (Shaw 2005, 9) meaning elevation; to elevate listeners through speech, enchant the listeners to a different dimension. On the other hand, according to Burke, the sublime manifests its power to elevate through sensory realization. The sublime emotion depends on the relationship between three mental states: pain, indifference, and pleasure. A simple introduction or deduction of pain cannot create sublime emotion. However, it can push the person to a state of indifference that may signify an apathetic mind, and there is no chance of self-elevation. Cessation of pleasure, on the other hand, does not signify the presence of pain either. He uses the terms' joy' and 'delight' in signifying the manifestation of pleasure beyond the state of indifference. The simplistic 'joy' that may occur, irrespective of indifference, is equated with the aesthetic concept of beauty and 'delight,' which is thus the "strongest emotion that the mind" can evoke. It is not caused by to the removal of pain but by the subject's relief in not being directly under pain or being involved with danger as Burke puts it, "When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we everyday experience" (Burke 1990, 36). Moving away from the general idea of the sublime's aesthetics and its development up until now, we can focus on the feminine sublime and push its boundaries to the extremes in postcolonial literature. The journey of Tara and her sisters on the path of self- elevation and self-reflection over a global citizen's true identity marks the sublime journey of their femininity.

Even though Tara and Padma live in America, they have separate lives miles apart from each other. Though Tara is living an unconventional life, she still acts judgmental when she finds out that her elder sister Padma had a child out of wedlock from a Christian guy named Ron Dey. She feels that the American society's ambiguous lifestyle has destroyed the traditional boundaries in Padma, and that is against the "Hindu Virgin Protection," as Mukherjee puts it. Bharati Mukherjee plays on Tara's insecurities regarding her heritage, weak ties to Hinduism, and her disillusioned existence as a Brahmin (the high priest caste of Hinduism). Tara having a "white" boyfriend and Padma having a son out of wedlock elevate them in breaking away from the Bengali society's repressed culture. The relationship between feminine and sublime is an answer to the sublime's masculine traditions' aesthetical experiences. The feminine sublime explores fear, power, and freedom regarding oneself and others' relations. From Longinus' to Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant, the sublime has been an explicit domination model. Within the romantic aesthetics traditions, the sublime was conceptualized as a struggle of the self and an attempt at appropriating whatever would exceed and demoralize it (Freeman 1995, 2). Currently, it is possible to observe the sublime as a process of:

> elevation of the self over an object or experience that threatens it...rather than an allegory of the construction of the patriarchal (not necessarily male) subject, a self that maintain[ed] its borders by subordinating difference and by appropriating rather than identifying with that which present[ed] itself as other (Freeman 1995, 4).

Bonnie Mann alludes to this notion of the sublime being a process of the feminine journey, appropriation, and reformation that "entails the elevation of reason over an order of experience that cannot be represented" (Mann 2006, 2). According to Mann, the sublime's misogynist history took feminists by surprise for them to realize its aesthetical value and affirm its position as a kind of counter-sublime in women's lives or their creative vigour. The involvements of vulnerability are to "re-assert individual sovereignty, to shore up the boundaries of the subject" to

"dominate," "appropriate," "colonize," "consume," or "domesticate" the alterity one encounters to "demonstrate mastery over the experience that had seemed overwhelming" (Freeman 1995, 8). Freeman's idea of the feminine sublime rejects submission to masculine ideas acknowledging struggle, crisis, and reformation. The female subject, according to Freeman, "enters into a relationship with an otherness — social, aesthetic, political, ethical, erotic — that is excessive" (Freeman 1995, 5) and unpleasant that reduces Tara's ability to categorize and reason that leads to subsequent liberation of the self-concerning other.

For the investigation of the relationship between femineity and the sublime and the search for the independent female voice within Indian American literature, there is a need to enter the realm of the immigrant experience. Bharati Mukherjee explores Tara's femininity, her multicultural upbringing, and her longing for Indian traditions through her novels. I would like to address this theme through the concept of the liberatory sublime that stresses the idea of a woman and her femininity in a "position of resistance concerning the patriarchal order, whether it is perpetuated and sustained by biological women or by men" (Mann 2006, 132). That refers to both the inner conflicts and the universalization of the problem that concerns diaspora women and their self-elevation process worldwide. In this case, Tara's appropriation of the social and cultural demands of the host country (while keeping the traditions of the homeland in mind) and her language and literary practices will be targeted as feminist practices within transnational communities. Her alert experiences, reflections, and imitations "reoccur from the subconscious mind, memory, desire, menace or apprehensions" (Singh 2017, 51).

The uncomfortable and orthodox peripheries of Indian society, such as the Indian marriages, are extremely patriarchal. Indian families are generally strict regarding the classist and casteist divisions of society. According to Tara, These Indian families, no matter wherever in the world, cling onto the old moral values that create a culturally, socially and sexually repressed condition for marriage as she reflects:

> For Hindus, the world is constructed of calamities. The stories are wonderous, lurid, and beautiful, full of shape-changing, gender-bending, grand-scale slaughter, polymorphous sexuality. Miss a ritual, and a snake will invade your wedding (Mukherjee 2002, 148).

Even though this space is ever-changing, the majority of Indian women are part of the unhomely reality, stuck within the religious shackles that they cannot relate to, restricting their physical, emotional, and psychological movement in a society that is made by and for men. Hinduism's masculinist interpretation also contributes primarily to women's subjugation. Bharati Mukherjee explores paternalistic dominance with through characters, including life skills such as a positive self-image and emotional intimacy with their father. However, most of Mukherjee's protagonists share a distant, almost negative emotional relationship with their fathers and how the fathers shape their daughters lives and their prospective marriages. Manisha Roy in *Bengali Woman* comments on the tolerance, control, and absenteeism of emotionally damaged characters with the twisted father-daughter relationship in a Bengali family:

> The daughter must also obey the father and father figures who give her instruction in schoolwork, in music, and in introducing her to the world of literature, music, imagination, and introspection. In this case, she is permitted to ask for indulgence through their affection, and she demands overt demonstration of their affection ... the cultural ideal in this case is supported by the religious ideal based on the Hindu myth of Durga who, as a little girl Uma was loved and adored by her father, the king, and his subjects. Every girl in her father's home should be treated as Uma, soon to leave for her husband's home (Roy 1975, 157).

Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* is basically a story of transformation from damaged and twisted fragmentation to a more coherent sense of the self. The question of the sublime in feminism is an enquiry of a multifaceted aesthetics of knowing that our lives and experiences are spread between intellectual and political practices, especially due to cross-cultural differences, transnational disparities or sexualities. Hence, it can be observed that the theory of the sublime can explain the construction of a more coherent self and the elevation of consciousness. Simone de Beauvoir's earth-shattering sentence, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (Beauvoir 1952, 301), is a contextual remark regarding the construction of female identity and Catherine Mackinnon declutters the idea of the premade woman and focuses on the unmaking of that premade self. This journey towards a more coherent self is a necessity that poured in women's lives no matter the country, no matter the language (Mann 2006, 151). For the sublime to take upon this idea of unravelling the "consciousness-raising" propagated by Catherine Mackinnon and established as a feminist method (MacKinnon 1989, 106–25), the very idea of 'raised' complies with the process of elevation or raised above from the current state concerning the sublime. Nevertheless, the question that always introduced at this point is raised above what? Raised to what degree? And why? The sublime's masculine traditions 'raised' the men and raped the women, and the history of women testifies to that. Indeed, if women are made, they can be unmade, and the liberatory sublime alludes to that process. It is the daily struggles of women, their mundane tribunals, and constant challenges in and out of their domestic sphere that unknots their consciousness, reasoning and elevates them to a state of their exceeding the one relegated to them.

The liberatory sublime offers a safe space for the struggles to be recognized differently and a space where characters can find a balance between their inner conflicts in relation the outer world struggles. In this case, Tara, even though culturally conflicted about Padma's illegitimate child, still remains supportive of her sister and defends her when confronted by the rest of the family. In the diasporic context, the sublime experience is oriented towards feminism because it breaks open space for feminist practice across all kinds of difficulties. "Women's Liberation" as Mann observes, makes the "sealed worlds break open, over and over again, the space between re-asserts itself, and feminism, if it is to be a viable movement at all, will (re)orient itself, again and again, in place after place and time after time" (Mann 2006,138). The liberatory sublime becomes a journey celebrating the idea of raising above the razed, victimized position and emerge as triumphant.

## 3. The Postcolonial Woman and the Uncanny

Indian women posing a real danger to the phallocentric Indian society and upbringing is not a new concern in postcolonial literature. The rise of postcolonial women is a way of resistance against being marginalized, oppressed, and victimized under religious oppression. The en-gendering of Indian women has been an interdisciplinary discourse about gender politics, gendered expectations, and subjugation of women as an unspoken national policy. The 21st-century Indian woman is treated both as a colonized citizen and as a victim by western notions of modernity (Ray 2000, 12). If the postcolonial self suggests the rebellion of the colonized existence to reclaim one's worth and identity, then Indian women have realized their potential as postcolonial women.

To Mukherjee's Tara and Padma, being Western is not being modern, and to follow traditions is not uncivilized or pitiful. The conflict between tradition and modernity is an essential part of Bengali households. A home created by Tara's father with equal respect and freedom, however, it is also a place where he demanded unquestioned respect. As Tara observes: "The qualities we associated with our father and with God were not quite divergent from the respect we accorded the president of the country, the premier of the state" (Mukherjee 2002, 29). This

home created a resting lodge where Tara and her sisters could access wealth, convent education, enjoy years of innocent childhood until thrown into marriage "after reaching the age of marital consent" (Mukherjee 2002, 29). Mukherjee, through Tara, focuses explicitly on this 1950s wealthy, Brahmin home in Calcutta that does not contribute to the sense of belonging, and where Tara and her sisters become more and more alienated within their supposed familiar zone and are eventually compelled to leave the country by marrying strangers. Even though the 19-year-old Tara breaks free from her father and his rules, Tara submits to Bishwapriya's rules — she is freed from being an obedient daughter only to submit as an obedient wife. She becomes confused and more estranged from herself.

*Das Unheimlich*, or the Uncanny, a 1919 essay by Sigmund Freud, concerns itself with and unfamiliarity and alienation as the familiar appearance during the unfamiliar situation or occurrence, or the reverse. Freud's essay is a straightforward response to the psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch's study "Über die Psychologie des Unheimlichen" (Bronstein 2020, 7) (translated as "On the Psychology of the Uncanny"). For Freud, as for Jentsch, the uncanny is a mild form of anxiety, directed from a specific phenomenon in real life and to certain motives in art, especially in fantastic literature. Julie Hakim Azzam observes different definition of the uncanny in relation home in *The Alien Within Postcolonial Gothic and the Politics of Home*:

> repetition, doubling, coincidence, or an eerie feeling of déjà vu. The unheimlich is bound up with homelessness because, at its core, it is triggered by the revelation that at the heart of what we call home is not comfortable domesticity, but an estranging, foreign place. The word *Heimlich* means something homely, familiar, and at ease, so we may assume that the term unheimlich signifies the opposite—the unhomely, foreign, hidden, and concealed (Azza 2007, 10).

Even though Freud's theory of the uncanny invokes gothic notions, it is discussed in interdisciplinary fields ranging from Marxist, historicist, psychoanalytic, political, to (post)colonial discourse. *Das Unheimlich* can be drawn in to explain the cultural trauma of Indian American diasporic life and alienation as to focus on the self-being concealed or stuck within a seemingly familiar but unknowable zone. In the postcolonial woman's context, the uncanny may be read as to represent darkness, tyranny, cultural tension, and alienation.

Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* (2002) which can be read as postcolonial fiction is, in many respects, represents a mixed version of Calcutta, Atherton and San Francisco. Tara's hypocritical and conservative mind contributes to the feeling of unhomely hostility one sister can express for another, trying to conceal Padma's secret child's identity as if it was something unholy or unthinkable. The idea of shame and a woman's chastity is so deep-rooted in Tara that its poisons her relationship with her sister Padma, who is a more liberated woman. Even though Tara lives with her non-Indian boyfriend and is divorced, she tries to hide her guilt or disappointment as a traditional Bengali woman through her sister's setback. Tara breaks her tradition in many ways but remains entangled to her native values. As Charu Sharma observes, the immigrants experience:

> pain and agony of, displacement, and relocation, the split between the native homeland and the adopted nation, the bicultural pull between the donor and recipient cultures, and the emotional fragmentation between two identities, two mindsets. If the experience of migrancy and exile is painful and emancipating then its challenges lie in hybridization, acculturation, and assimilation despite fragmentation. (Sharma 2008, 127)

Tara processes this alienation when she subconsciously fears the existence of Padma's illegitimate son Christopher and nullifies his existence in the family of Bhattacharjee sisters, as her son, Rabi, points out in disgust: "who's going to give Chris benefit of the doubt? He is the wrong

religion... and the wrong caste for the great Bhattacharjee family" (Mukherjee 2002, 90). The unhomeliness of Indian traditions, the instilled restrictions of Calcutta life, and the patriarchal boundaries all contribute to the lack of freedom and question Tara and Padma's life choices, relationships, and decisions to love and how to love. The collapse of the private space unto the public creates an impossible ring of gendered expectations and subjugation for Indian women inside and outside India. Indian American women carry the paradoxical idea of an ideal, and they slowly emerge into unsettling and unhomely figures themselves.

*Das Unheimlich* grounds itself in the home and its unhomeliness, which Freud's metaphorical discourse illuminates as a metaphor for psychological interiority and the return of the child into the adult's world as Tara says," I had a long childhood until thrown into marriage" (Mukherjee 2002, 21). Tara's constant preoccupation with the ancestral home in Mishtigunj and her inability to relate with the home she built in the States shows her desire to return to the childhood protection she received from her family. She imposes her desire to have a life without care where everything was provided, and she would not have to explain or deal with the adulting experiences in America in a quite racist way as she says "Nafisa's mother and I don't speak the same dialect. We don't even speak the same language. I am tired of explaining India to Americans. I am sick of feeling an alien" (Mukherjee 2002, 87). In her way, Tara was looking for the communal and religious differences she was brought up around in 1947 post-partition Bengal. Tara, though they received convent education and comes from an elite background, could not look past the seeming differences between Hindu and Muslims as Tara observes the religious difference:

> The communities speak the same language—Muslims, if truth be known, more tenaciously than Hindus. Nevertheless, for the faith's outer signs—the beards and skullcaps of the Muslims, the different dietary restrictions, the caste observances, the vermillion powder on the hair-parting of married Hindu women—there is little, fundamentally, to distinguish them. The communities suffer, as Freud put it, the narcissism of small difference. (Mukherjee 2002,148)

Tara's visit to Mishtigunj, her ancestral place, puts her Indian American identity in contrast to the spiritual satisfaction and mental peace she experiences in India. She realizes the materialistic passion of America to be wasteful and futile. She invests herself in this ritual of difference to thrive as a Hindu woman rather than accepting an ambiguous identity in America. She becomes the immigrant who wishes to deny her heritage to be more accessible, yet she enjoys the elitist brahmin life and becomes a mockery of the two cultural identities. Mukherjee's mention of Freud's narcissism while explaining the fake disparity between Hindus and Muslims in post-independence, postcolonial Calcutta signifies the classism and casteism of Bengali society and how wealthy families, due to their ancestral pride and sense of being virtuous, contribute to this division. In her way, Tara enjoys the centuries of division. She relishes the attention of being elite, being high class, and being a brahmin or when the children in her village spotted and shouted at her "America-memsaheb, America-memsaheb" (Mukherjee 2002, 17), meaning, the American woman.

In *Desirable Daughters* (2002), the "unheimlich" or unhomely may become a way for a text to approach the topics of home and history; illegitimacy and interracial relations; gender, the body, and trauma which connects to the colonial history and the postcolonial self that is built upon the rubbles of the colonial remnants. The root of the word "unheimlich" is home (Heim), which frames the argument about the uncanny within homes and the families and their inner dwelling, their relationship with each other in private space and relationship with the neighbouring surrounding as part of the public space — all acts as the constituents of the familiar territory called home (Bronstein 2020, 15). Freud initially defines the "*heimlich*" as something "belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, marked by a pleasant domesticity, intimate,

[and] homely" (Bronstein 2020, 10). Nevertheless, Freud's articulation of the relationship between homely and unhomely manipulates the meaning between the "heimlich" and "unheimlich", in which the "heimlich" (Donald 2008, 93) implies both safe and disturbing; familiar and foreign as Julie Hakkim Azzam puts it:

> Freud contends, house and home are constituted by the repression of the past and the threatening other; the image of the comforting sphere of home is just a screen for the uncanniness that lurks within it. (Azzam 2007, 22)

Home as a place for past repression and horrifying nostalgia also signifies the dread and gradual fear. Tara and her sisters lived under patriarchal control and religious manipulation. They related home with hostility and threatening to their individual growth, reflected in Tara's relationship with her son. Given the ever-current threat of the uncanny, the idea of home seems like an illusion and more like fearful, which is stable, coherent and everlasting. The uncanny makes an ideal vehicle for an arrangement marked by cultural ambiguity that acts as a constant reminder for both Mukherjee and her not-so-desirable daughters that they do not belong to the American society without the proper untethering with the Indian cultural upbringing and Hindu heritage. Postcolonial women and their loss of relatability with either of the homes fosters fear in their heart and intensifies the trauma regarding migration (Gallop 1982, 55). Furthermore, existence at home starts to resemble the uncanniness of Indian American diasporic life.

## 4. Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to put forth the dilemma that diasporic Indians go through in pursuit of their 'home.' In directive to explain on the subject, I have referred to the writings of diasporic Indian writer, Bharati Mukherjee, in particular her novel *Desirable Daughters* (2002). Diasporic Indian literature persists to grow consistently and often relies on life narratives. However, despite the numerous narratives of diasporic life, it is difficult to ascribe a definite connotation to the idea of home. The meaning of home in Mukherjee's works relates to the change in Tara's own experience from an expatriate to an immigrant and it also changed her idea of home that she associated with her parents and her sisters in Mishtigunj, India. This shifting of experience signifies her displacement from India to America. During this phase of immigration, she suffered racial assaults due to her skin colour. She acknowledges her shift from India to America as a "movement away from the aloofness of expatriation to the exuberance of immigration" (Mukherjee 1992, 2–3). Tara's search for home beyond the homeland is reflected by Mukherjee's other female protagonists in her novels who cannot emerge victorious over their sense of detachment from the age-old cultural upbringing like many other expatriates. Tara also chose to be an American citizen even though she remained an Indian, a Bengali, a Calcuttan in heart. Tara, like Mukherjee, remained alienated even in the abundance of western privileges. The unhomeliness and self-elevation resulting from displacement and migration open up new possibilities of great liberty for a transcultural subject. An analysis of *Desirable Daughters* (2002) through the aesthetics of the liberal sublime and Sigmund Freud's *The Uncanny* explains Tara's journey Mukherjee focuses on in the novel. Tara, through her transformation from a docile daughter to an obedient wife and a rebel mother and sister realises her postcolonial self and rejects the nationalist, physical entity of home. Through constant reinventions of her past and present, through the rejection of hostile memories of home in Mishtigunj, Tara breaks the mould and creates the future prospect of the home in herself— a safe haven for postcolonial freedom.

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# Paradigm Dramas in American Film Studies: A Brief Overview

**Keywords**

Hollywood, film studies, paradigm dramas, PCA, MoMa

The innovative form of film art has been intertwined with many other fields, especially that of the humanities, resulting in a domain of study that has slowly developed into what is today known as academic film studies. This essay aims to give a brief overview of the most important milestones in the line of American film studies that provided a special interpretative context for films in the US and beyond. In the following, I will briefly explore the cultural and institutional developments that have used and popularized knowledge about films in general and American films in particular, a schematic map that might be useful especially for students researching various facets involving film studies.

## 1. Paradigm Dramas and Film Studies

Gene Wise delineated a series of "paradigm dramas" when he described the development of American studies as discipline in his seminal "Paradigm Dramas in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement" published in 1979 in the *American Quarterly*, and which he also defined as "actual patterns of thinking in action" (175). These paradigm dramas are also defined as "representative acts" of culture endowed with special, "*trans*-actional quality" (169, emphasis mine) that offer "enormous potential for work" in the field of American studies in general and are especially "useful in bridging" gaps between the disciplines they employ (169).

Wise used the creative thespian metaphor of the paradigm drama to map a series of distinctive acts in the disciplinary matrix of the American studies; these included various landmark publications (articles, books, reviews, journals, videos, documentaries and so on) but also courses, conferences, programs, grants, academic events, and other important cultural processes that shaped the discipline from its beginnings. Film, in this context, was indirectly referred to because—as the author emphasized—the practitioners of the popular culture field "have broken away to form a separate movement" (189) from the larger discipline of American studies. From this perspective, the (re)placement of relevant paradigm dramas related to the world of movies among Wise's classical paradigm dramas seems not only logical but also a legitimate step when one wants to have an overview of the development of film studies in the US (Cristian 2014).

Film history, film theory, and criticism are as significant representative acts as all those works and events that shaped other disciplinary paths in the field of American studies. Movies have been a crucial component of the American life and culture that inspired innumerable writers, critics, journalists, and theorists alike. Moreover, films, as American art, have offered special values also to the world of art in general and film studies in particular not only in the US but on the global level as well, in addition to the practical, utilitarian values of this cultural capital which made America the leading exporter of films in the twentieth-century. As Jesse Lasky put it, the US has had a "peculiar industry" which he saw as "an industrial art or rather an art industry," (qtd. in Polan 111) that combined an elevated aestheticism with the qualities of a mass art making America cinema thus a "valuable mass art" (Polan 110).

## 2. Councils and Offices

From the cornucopia of works about film and American culture I have chosen below a brief selection of representative acts or paradigm acts in American film studies, which can be taken as genuine milestones in the delineation of the field of film studies in America.

In 1915, when American studies was merely a discipline in the making and film was far from being accepted as a full art form in any society, the poet and performance artist Vachel Lindsay prophesized in his pioneering work, *The Art of Moving Pictures*, the vast potential of cinema in shaping American culture and by this, also the democracy in the United States. Lindsay anticipated the medium's effect on the global level when he said that "[t]he state that realizes this [potential] may lead the soul of America, day after to-morrow" and described film as a universal instrument of visual culture with tremendous impact and foresaw this form of art as a "new weapon of men" (2004), an idea later echoed in the intriguing work of the independent film producer and writer Frances Stonor Saunders entitled *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (2001). Here Saunders acknowledged—besides the influence of other art works from the US—the essential role and power of movies, with special regard that of the Hollywood cinema, as a major cultural and ideological 'weapon,' especially important during various battle fronts of the World War II and afterwards, during the Cold War as well (Cristian 2014).

During the WWII, one of the central programs of the US Office of War Information relied precisely on "film's effectiveness in explaining the world events and the patriotic contribution that individuals could make" thus making film as a channel through which "government information could reach local audiences" (Acland 155) both at home and abroad. After the war ended, the Film Council of America was founded on January 17, 1946 with the mission of increasing "the information and work toward the general welfare of all people by fostering, improving, and promoting the production, the distribution, and the effective use of audiovisual materials" (156). This office worked with the National Motion Picture Council (NMPC), which was founded in 1936 and had its roots in the Federal Motion Picture Council and the Better Films National Council in the 1920s (160). The Film Council, among many other activities, organized festivals, held audiovisual workshops and events combined with screenings, lectures, and held discussions on various global and local topics to (165). As Charles Acland writes, all these film councils "comprised a formidable system of film distribution, information, and analytical procedures," which would indirectly also lead to the process of the so-called "inventing film studies" because their work materialized in a series of "significant enterprises coordinating, cataloguing, and evaluating the place of film in the public life as a modernizing instrument" (173) for the American public in special.

In the history of this modernizing instrument, another important paradigm or milestone was the establishment of the Production Code also known as the Hays Code, named after William Harrison Hays, who lead the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association of America (MPPDA) in 1930. This institution consisted of an executive branch of censors that outlined a set of restrictive guidelines that ruled over the production of Hollywood movies, with the aim to ban indecent, immoral films (Cristian 2008, 74). A couple of years later, the Hays Code was transformed into the Production Code Administration (PCA), chaired by Joseph Breen (the chief censor of this office, named after him the Breen Office), with the Hollywood studios' agreement to obey the new, stricter criteria of filmmaking. The office had its "Purity Seal," which was obligatory for all films prior their release in movie theaters making thus the Breen Office one that had its final say on all Hollywood productions. After a series of challenges, the PCA was finally abandoned by 1968 when it was replaced by a system of voluntary film ratings advocated by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPPA) president, Jack Valenti; in the seventies film ratings have ultimately become what is today known as the Motion Picture Association Rating System.

## 3. Journals, Experimental Films, and American Studies

Besides film councils and censoring offices, the American film periodicals that started burgeoning after WWII were also paradigm landmarks in the history of film studies in the US. Among the most important ones were *Film in Review* (from 1950 to the present), *Cinemages* (1955–1959), and *Film Culture* (1955 to the present); these journals had an essential role in the transformation of American film scholarship by offering "vivid and invaluable primary documents" especially about the 1950s, which were a "formative period in the evolution of film study in the US," leading to the formation of a distinctly American film culture later on (Guest 235). Supplementing these journals that proved to have longer life, there were also more ephemeral publications on film, cinema, and stardom such as *Film Music* (1953–1957), *Church Films* (n.d.), *16 mm Reporter* (n.d.), *Movies Star Parade* (1940–58), *Silver Screen* (1930–1954), and *Journal of the Society of Cinematologists* (1961 to the present), among many others. Moreover, these journals and magazines centered not only on Hollywood classical narrative cinema but were keen to bring into the focus alternative ways of filmmaking, especially American experimental cinema.

Experimental filmmaking was the term used for American underground filmmaking in the 1950s and 1960s; this changed in the 1960s and 1970s with the so-called "avant-garde" production type of films. The terms "underground," "experimental," and "avant-garde" cover the openness, permeability and eclecticism (Zryd 183) of approaches to filmmaking that led the way to the formation of alternative representational ways in visual narratives, which became the counterpoints of classical Hollywood cinema. As Michael Zryd observed, alternative cinema in general covered an array of films including those of the "European art cinema, Third Cinema, and other emerging national cinemas, documentaries" but also "the multiple forms of independent North American film" (184), which had direct impact on their audience and indirectly influenced the critical world of film study journals and scholarship by generating a "massive" literature through "newsletters, magazines, journals, small-press books and pamphlets, museum and gallery catalogues, and most recently electronic mailing lists and Web sites, documenting screenings, reviewing film, and providing forums for aesthetic, political and cultural" (207) debates on films and beyond.

In 1960, the avant-garde filmmaker and film theorist Maya Deren emphasized the important role of American mainstream but also experimental films in "Cinematography: The Creative Use of Reality". She claimed that cinema should "explore the new realms and dimensions accessible to it and so enrich our culture artistically as science has done in its own province" (70). Her interdisciplinary urge foresaw a novel approach regarding the connection between American films and its creator(s): the 1962 Americanization of auteur theory. This theory, formulated by film critic Andrew Sarris on the premises of the French *la politiques des auteurs* prompted the rise of academic film studies — hosted for a long time, as Robert Stam noted, mostly in literature departments (92) — and as such, can be considered another significant paradigm drama in the history of film studies in the US (Cristian 2014).

Although omnipresent in everyday life — and America's greatest export product after WWII — movies were paradoxically visible to a lesser extent in the larger field of theoretical American studies until the late 1970s and early 1980s. A distinguished exception and one that can definitely be included among paradigm dramas with cinematic relevance is the "Film and American Studies" 1979 Special Issue of the *American Quarterly* (Vol. 31/5), which, strange it may seem, appeared in the same year, right after the publication of Wise's study (vol. 31, no. 3). Nonetheless, during the late 1980s and 1990s, there was a proliferation of new cultural hierarchies in the United States and the popular culture scholar George Lipsitz was one of its advocates. In his influential study entitled "Listening to Learn and Learning to Listen: Popular

Culture, Cultural Theory and American Studies" (1990), he suggested that "a theoretically informed" American studies should begin by listening to all forms "found within the concrete contests of everyday life" (328), movies included. Later, Lipsitz labeled this emerging area the "other American studies" and pointed out that the novelty of this realm consisted in the employment of "organic grassroots theorizing about culture and power that has [since] informed cultural practice, social movement and academic work" (2002). Similarly to Lipsitz's organic grassroots theorizing, John Belton's cultural overview entitled *American Cinema/American Culture* (1994) emphasized that it was the movies—throughout various processes of production, distribution, exhibition, and reception—that responded critically and in a complex way to social, economic, and political issues of certain decades. He concentrated on film as a genuine collective experience, concluding that, particularly in this regard, movies were the primary cultural 'nests' of a homogenous, middle-class American culture (Cristian 2014).

In 1980, Vivian C. Sobchack published in the *American Quarterly* an intriguing study entitled "Beyond Visual Aids: American Film as American culture" where she highlighted the prominent role of the cinema in American culture. For her, the medium "doesn't just illustrate but has been and is American art, history, politics, culture, and institution from 1895 to the present," adding that "without the inclusion of film, American Studies is not studying America" (300) at all. Similarly to various popular culture artifacts, American cinema was either missing from or only superficially present in the theoretical field of American studies after the eighties.

Twenty-six years later, in 2006, two noteworthy articles warned once again about a significant lack of interest in the implication of movies within the Americanist discipline. The first one was Jonathan Auerbach's "American Studies and Film: Blindness and Insight," which also came out in the *American Quarterly* and where Auerbach observed that "[n]o systematic analysis of film" was yet performed "by academics," (31) noting that the attitude of the discipline of American studies towards film remained virtually unchanged. He was appalled by the "puzzling lack of engagement with movies" (31) despite a self-evident pairing of film and the wider Americanist field. To exemplify his statement, Auerbach pointed out that while in the period between 1953 and 1973 there was only one article on film in the major academic Americanist forum, "[b]y the late 1970s and early 1980s, film had already shown up on the American studies radar, belatedly a full generation after the emergence of the American studies itself in the United States" (31–32).

The other crucial study on the relationship between film and American studies was Lauren Rabinovitz's "More than Meets the Eye: Movies in American Studies," published in the *American Studies* journal in 2006. Rabinovitz was intrigued by the stagnant liminal presence of film and remarked that "original scholarship on cinema remains at the margins of American studies" with "only five essays that incorporate cinema as cultural artifact between 1996–2006 in the discipline's main publication, the *American Quarterly*" (78). As a possible solution, she advocated the use of "social history of cinema that contextualizes films within cultural knowledge" (79) by pinpointing the need to see behind the textual implications of movies and the network of "processes and experiences" (83) enveloping the films themselves, a creative strategy that could bring together the above-mentioned fields.

## 4. Books, Documentaries, Museums, Registry, Boards, and the Academia

As I mentioned before, the filmic paradigm dramas of American culture comprise a quite heterogeneous compilation of publications and theories, films and documentaries, institutions and events. In terms of earlier publications, besides Vachel Lindsay's aforementioned *The Art of the Moving Picture*, Gilbert Seldes's work on the early history of the American cinema entitled *The Movies Come from America* (1937) is also of pioneering importance for the history of film studies in the US.

A crucial moment in the joined realm of film studies and American culture is marked by Andrew Sarris's influential work on *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929–1968* (1968). Sarris canonized American directors and ranked a number of movies performing, as Robert Stam noted, an "invaluable rescue operation for a number of neglected films and genres" that facilitated the entry of moving images into higher education by promoting the legitimization of cinema studies as a valid academic field (92). Additionally, Robert Sklar's *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (1975) is another milestone publication on the relationship between film and American culture. This book was, according to William Grimes, one of the "first histories to place Hollywood films in a social and political context, finding them a key to understanding how modern American values and beliefs have been shaped" (2011) by the mainstream cinema.

Of a complex significance in subtly conjoining American studies, gender, and cinema is Parker Tyler's prolific oeuvre on American mainstream and underground, alternative American films including *Screening the Sexes: Homosexuality in the Movies* (1972), one of the first studies on queer identities in American films. Along this line of thought, Vito Russo's *The Celluloid Closet* (published in 1981) outlined the first history of LGBT Hollywood that was adapted in 1996 into a documentary movie with the same title which was directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman. This adaptation, alongside Gerald Peary's comprehensive documentary of a hundred years of American film criticism entitled *For the Love of Movies: The History of American Film Criticism* (2009) are major paradigm dramas focusing on filmmaking, film criticism, gender, and cultural studies. Furthermore, Peter Decherney's *Hollywood and the Cultural Elite: How the Movies Became American* (2005) is another paradigm act which discusses the ways in which several cultural institutions, "museums, universities, and even government agencies embraced film and the film industry to maintain their hold on American art, education, and the idea of American identity itself" (2). Decherney's work emphasizes cinema's important affiliation with these institutions through which Hollywood "successfully wove" itself "into the fabric of American culture" (4). And this fabric of US culture was varied enough to accommodate also even unusual venues such as museums (Cristian 2014).

In this regard, one of the prominent institutions incorporating filmic works was the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. The museum's film collection, founded as the Film Library in 1935 with the primary aim to "illustrate the historic and artistic development of motion pictures and to establish the medium as a major art form," holds today over 22,000 films. Started as a Film Library with the aim of raising the then "conventionally low cultural status" of the movies, MoMa's collection of films "provided an opportunity to reassert an idealized divide between popular movies and sacred art, main street amusement halls and venerated sites of cultural contemplation" (Wasson 121). However, MoMa's decision to include movies in its collection of contemporary art had additional directions that helped rethink the place of the movies in culture. In Haidee Wasson's formulation, by setting up a Film Library, MoMa reconfigured the presentation of cinema as "an assemblage of objects that endured through time," making films into a set of works of art that can and should also be seen "requiring a form of distribution and exhibition of films outside commercial movie theaters" (122), in venues where these works, set in a specific context and "informed by research materials" are actually seen in a "pertinent sociological, historical, political and aesthetic dialogue" (123) that multiplies their meaning.

In addition to the archiving and monumentalization of films, the Film Library has also had an array of other types of resources for film scholars, including "film stills, scripts, magazines, journals, pamphlets, books, and the personal papers of filmmakers and stars" (Wasson 128), all constituting primary material that provides the basis for serious film scholarship. According to

Jonathan Auerbach, the establishment of the film archive at MoMA marked "a crucial moment in the history of film studies in the US" that also legitimized "cinema as an art form worthy of close attention" (34). Film archives thus were the first to arrive in these institutions but there are also many other types of museums that feature collections of the cinematic apparatus, of film-related artifacts, and memorabilia; such is the Hollywood Museum in Los Angeles, which offers its visitors an overview on American film and television history together with a streamlined history of Hollywood film. There is also an intriguing museum opening in 2021 in the same city: The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, which is 'backed' by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and which will be, according to its webpage, "the world's premier institution dedicated to the art and science of movies." Additionally, the Museum of the Moving Image of New York is a groundbreaking museum which, according to their webpage mission statement, "advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media" by public screenings, discussions, exhibitions and educational programs, as well as other various interpretive arrangements alongside "collecting and preserving moving-image related artifacts" and online projects. Indeed, today, many American museums feature the inclusion of films on various levels of their exhibits making the study of film and cinema a truly institutionalized form.

Another prominent institution hosting movies is the National Film Registry (NFR) or the United States National Film Preservation Board (NFPB), established in 1988 as part of the Library of Congress's Audio-Visual Conservation that includes a continuously expanding list of films "of enduring importance to American culture," and other visual works that are "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant." The National Film Registry selects twenty-five films (only ten years after their original release) each year „showcasing the range and diversity of American film heritage to increase awareness for its preservation" and has also an impressive index of film essays.

Apart from a various microcosms of theaters, books, councils, offices, events, and museums, film entered the world of the academy as a "worthy object of study because of its determining role in modern life" (Anderson 59–60). Among the first institutions of higher education, Harvard University welcomed film into its academic context in 1927, especially those that adapted American literary works, with which they served as a "mark of the country's achievement of a valid, vital indigenous art" (Polan 108). The first large-scale survey courses on film, however, were held in 1926 by the historian Terry Ramsaye, who lectures the series entitled "The Motion Picture" at the New School for Social Research in New York (Polan 108), followed by the University of Southern California's academic film courses three years later, where they had

> schools offering a combination of film production and film studies courses such as, in the 1940s, New York University, City College of New York, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the New School for Social Research Dramatic Workshop, and subsequently in the 1950s by Indiana, Boston, Stanford, Columbia, Ohio State, and Northwestern (Zryd 185).

Interestingly, decades after the first courses on film, this art was still striving to find its proper place in the academia. Peter C. Rollins's 1974 article on "Film and American Studies" published in *American Quarterly* was among the first focus studies regarding the connection between the two fields delineated in the title, with particular emphasis on the realm of teaching. He remarked that while in higher education courses there was an "obvious student interest in film," the elitist approach of that period in American universities mostly ignored the cinematic art in the mainstream line of their courses, since for most professors at that time film was nothing more than "a mere diversion and at best a journalistic tool" (245).

This stance has profoundly changed since then, and the presence of film studies in the university curriculums has proliferated, especially after 1990s, when the accessibility of the internet for large masses provided more avenues of knowledge—and screening. Moreover, after 2000, film studies have been caught in the new world of the global multimedia, which is continuously opening various channels and perspectives for further knowledge envisaging films and cinema, including that of the multiple online film databases and internet film criticism, among many others. But this is material for another research.

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*Bálint Szántó*

# Transmedia Worldbuilding in *Star Wars*

**Keywords**

transmedia, storytelling, participatory, narrative, character

## Introduction

The study of transmedia worldbuilding and storytelling is a fairly new, yet highly relevant field of research, regarding the current trends of media convergence. With the emergence and overwhelming popularity of transmedia movie franchises such as *Star Wars*, the *Marvel Cinematic Universe*, or *Harry Potter*, it is exceptionally important to research and understand this phenomenon. There are many debates among academics over the proper description of transmedia storytelling. According to Henry Jenkins, it is the process of telling a story that "unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (Jenkins 2006c, 95–96). These media platforms can be anything from film to television series, from comic books to novels. In order to be able to tell good stories in a fantasy story world, the creators first need to build the world with its own rules, characters, and settings. The rising popularity of transmedia storytelling gave endless possibilities to film directors, authors, and other creators to create expansive fantasy universes.

*Star Wars* has been one of the flagship franchises of transmedia storytelling for decades for many reasons. Since the release of *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977), it has received sequels, prequels, spin-off films, along with a great number of tie-in novels, comic books, and other media products that expanded the universe of the films. In these media products, audiences were introduced to new characters, alien species, cultures, and planets. Although the success of the first film itself was enough to elevate it into myth status for millions of people around the world, transmedia franchising also played a great part in achieving this rank. Very few fictional universes have gone to the extent of *Star Wars* in world building. If you randomly pick a seemingly irrelevant background character in any scene of the film, there is a high chance that the character has an elaborate backstory. This level of detail had almost been unheard of before *Star Wars* (barring a couple of other fantasy universes such as *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings*), but these days many successful franchises are actively trying to follow suit.

Besides officially licensed products created by professionals, fans have also made thousands of pieces of fan fiction, fan films, and other amateur works over the years in order to add their own little pieces to this universe. Few media franchises have ever mobilized as many fan authors as *Star Wars* has. Thanks to this, *Star Wars* has grown out of the shackles and frames of traditional storytelling a very long time ago, and has turned into something that many people view as a modern mythos[1].

Before continuing, I would like to clear up some terminological issues. When I say 'original trilogy', I refer to *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (Kershner 1980), and *Return of the*

[1] The mythopoeic aspects of transmedia film franchises will not be elaborated further in this text. However, I discuss it in my paper about the *Marvel Cinematic Universe*: Szántó, Bálint. 2019.

*Jedi* (Marquand 1983). By 'prequel trilogy', I mean *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (Lucas 1999), *Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones* (Lucas 2002), *and Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* (Lucas 2005). 'Sequel trilogy', refers to *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (Abrams 2015), *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* (Johnson 2017), and *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* (Abrams 2015).

There are debates over the title of the 1977 film among fans, because while it was renamed to *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope* when it was re-released in 1981, many official sources still simply call it *Star Wars*. In the following, I will simply use the title *Star Wars* too to refer to it. *Expanded Universe* refers to all the official licensed narrative material beyond the theatrical films. It consists of hundreds of novels, comic books, short stories, video games, spin-off films and television series. This *Expanded Universe* will be the corpus I will pick stories from when analyzing the relationship between transmedia storytelling and *Star Wars*.

The main objective of my paper is to analyze the way the creators of *Star Wars* have used transmedia techniques to build and enhance its story world, to evaluate their success, to investigate the role of transmedia worldbuilding in the process of *Star Wars* becoming a massive cultural phenomenon, and to find out whether the overall narrative benefitted from transmedia storytelling or not. By the end of the paper, I hope to find many examples where transmedia storytelling greatly enhanced the already existing story world of the *Star Wars* films to support my argument.

The paper is divided into two sections, I will analyze one aspect of the *Star Wars* universe in each of those sections. Firstly, I will look at the way the creators used transmedia techniques to further build up characters who were already established in the theatrical films. For this, I picked the most iconic character of all, Darth Vader, whose personal story is spread across many different platforms of media. I will analyze the new layers and depths added to his story. Secondly, I will look at the political system of the Galaxy, and how the material in the *Expanded Universe* supplements our already existing knowledge of it. With this, I would like to support my argument further and show that the transmedia sources played a great part in shaping the story world into a complete whole. With these two sections, I hope to analyze some reasons underlying the success of transmedia worldbuilding in the *Star Wars* franchise.

## 1. Academic Approaches to Transmedia Storytelling

The study of transmedia storytelling is a relatively young field of research with many debates over even the most basic terms. One of the most important, most cited works in transmedia studies is *Searching for the Origami Unicorn: The Matrix and Transmedia Storytelling* (2006) by Henry Jenkins. Jenkins's work was also the basis of my research and my most important academic source whilst examining the utilization of transmedia techniques in *Star Wars*. In this book chapter, Jenkins analyzes the transmedia strategy of *The Matrix* (Wachowsky, Wachowsky 1999) while laying down some of the most important definitions and paradigms for transmedia studies. Jenkins calls *The Matrix* franchise the entertainment for the age of media convergence, saying that it is "a narrative so large that it cannot be contained within a single medium" (Jenkins 2006c, 95). He also calls the franchise the entertainment for the age of collective intelligence. 'Collective intelligence' is a term coined by Pierre Lévy, referring to the digitization of information in a modern society where knowledge is no longer expropriated by specialists, but by the whole society, and is freely accessible to anyone in that collective (Lévy 2001).

According to Lévy, there have been three anthropological spaces over the course of history: *the earth*, where humans lived in complete harmony with nature; the *territorial* space that came into existence with the advancement of agriculture, architecture and writing; and the *commodity* space that came into existence with the development of the world market (Lévy 2001, 256–257). Lévy argues that these spaces did not eliminate each other, but every time a new space takes shape,

it outpaces the previous ones. He predicts that with the age of digitization, we are on the brink of creating a fourth space, the *knowledge* space. Interestingly, Lévy also attributed the fall of authoritarian systems to their lack of knowledge space, and his argument is quite convincing. He says that due to the extreme censorship in totalitarian systems such as the Soviet Union, society could not develop a collective intelligence, therefore they could not keep up the pace with the technological development of the western world. Thanks to the internet, we have all the tools to distribute massive amounts of information in a very short period of time. Lévy calls this infrastructure of interconnected data the collective intelligence of living communities (Lévy 2001, 257).

Jenkins compares transmedia worldbuilding and fan culture to this phenomenon, because while no one possesses the knowledge of the entire story world of *The Matrix*, any fan can access any information about the world of the franchise, and the fans' knowledge added together form the collective intelligence of the fandom (Jenkins 2006c). In another paper, Jenkins calls online fan communities "some of the most fully realized versions of Lévy's cosmopedia" (Jenkins 2006a, 103). The theories of knowledge space and collective consciousness can also be applied to the *Star Wars* franchise, where most of the information about all details of the story world are contained on official or fan sites and wiki pages such as http://www.starwars.wikia.com. These websites can be considered as representations or manifestations of the collective intelligence of the fandom. Every time the fictional world of *Star Wars* is expanded by a new novel or comic book, more and more pieces of information are added to the collective consciousness of the fan community.

Jenkins also discusses the creation of modern cult artifacts (Jenkins 2006c, 98). He argues that the first *Matrix* film (Wachowsky, Wachowsky 1999) became successful partly because of its endless number of cultural references. According to him, the mixture of popular culture elements and mythological elements can elevate a film into a cult artifact status. This, again, can be applied to *Star Wars*. All films in the *Star Wars* saga contain spectacular special effects, exciting action scenes, and at the same time, many references to religions such as Buddhism and Christianity. As a matter of fact, Derek R. Sweet argues that Star Wars is a revision of the American western mythos, and transmedia entries such as *Star Wars: Rebels* (2014) have played a huge part in this process (Sweet 2017, 241). On the other hand, John C. Lyden sees *Star Wars* as "taking all the issues that religion represents and trying to distill them down into a more modern and easily accessible construct" (Lyden 2016, 6). Jenkins highlights some cultural references in *The Matrix*, and explains that the search for these references alone makes consuming media related to the *Matrix* franchise a participatory experience for fans (Jenkins 2006c, 98).

Jenkins explains two other very important terms in his writing: 'synergistic storytelling' (Jenkins 2006c, 101) and 'collaborative authorship' (Jenkins 2006c, 108). According to him, it is important for authors of different franchise entries within the same story world to work closely to each other, so the stories in all these media entries add up into one satisfying narrative. This also works well in the context of *Star Wars*, especially since the formation of the Lucasfilm Story Group in 2013. The Lucasfilm Story Group is a division of Lucasfilm Ltd. that is responsible for creating a consistent narrative, and making sure that all officially licensed products fit well into the narrative and there are no contradictions between the stories. They work closely with the authors on the stories, and no official canonical *Star Wars* story can be released without their consent.

After explaining synergistic storytelling and collaborative authorship, Jenkins goes on to talk about the art of world-making. He talks about how the fictional world is not only bigger than the film, but it is also bigger than the whole franchise because of fan contributions. He ex-

plains the market opportunities lying in transmedia storytelling and how each more interesting element of the story world can yield its own product line (Jenkins 2006c, 115).

The final term Jenkins explains in this chapter is 'additive comprehension'. This is another important term in transmedia studies that refers to the way new pieces of information change the way we think about characters or stories that appeared in previous media entries (Jenkins 2006c, 123). This term was particularly useful for analyzing why many fans were dissatisfied with the portrayal of Darth Vader in the prequel films and how they changed their comprehension about the character.

Kalin Kalinov's "*Transmedia Narratives: Definitions and Social Transformations in the Consumption of Media Content in the Globalized World*" (Kalinov 2017) is built on Jenkins's argument. It is much more straightforward than Jenkins's one, its language takes a more serious tone, and instead of analyzing certain examples, it gives a general overview. Kalinov starts the article with a general historical overview of narration itself, and an attempt at describing what narration really is. He makes a very important observation: "narration is not a unidirectional process and as such it has always depended heavily on the audience and its reaction" (Kalinov 2017, 61). A similar notion is also present in Jenkins's work who often heavily builds on it, and considers fans "the most active segment of the media audience, one that refuses to simply accept what they are given, but rather insists on the right to become full participants" (Jenkins 2006b, 131).

Kalinov also tries to define what a transmedia narrative is (Kalinov 2017). He criticizes the description by Jenkins because of its limitations. Kalinov argues that a modern transmedia narrative has no ideal form, and the franchise entries do not necessarily have to be self-contained. He quotes a different definition, also by Jenkins as a better definition of what transmedia storytelling is:

> Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story. (Jenkins 2007)

Kalinov concludes the article with the observation that the transmedia narrative is "slowly becoming the norm for reaching audiences around the globe" (Kalinov 2017, 66), and expresses his desire for academics to reach an agreement about the exact definition which would facilitate research in the future.

Utilizing Jenkins in a more practical way, Geraghty analyzes three characters of the *Star Wars* universe to investigate the connection between franchising and transmedia storytelling (Geraghty 2017). For his research, he uses three important characters from three very different eras of the franchise: the Sith Lord from *The Phantom Menace* (Lucas 1999): Darth Maul; the mysterious bounty hunter from *The Empire Strikes Back* (Kershner 1980): Boba Fett; and Grand Admiral Thrawn, the imperial mastermind, who has appeared in numerous novels and comic books, but has yet to make an appearance in a feature film. He argues that these characters "have been used as transmedia signposts, directing audiences to other media texts that surround the original movies" (Geraghty 2017, 117). Geraghty draws the conclusion that there are certain characters that are more likely to attract fans to transmedia products. This is beneficial to both fans and the media company on several levels. Fans keep getting more and more content beyond the film, the story world becomes greater and more fun to explore, while the company gets more profit and more opportunities to tell stories that fans are more likely to consume.

Regarding fan authorship and fan participation, Jenkins differentiates two different types of attitude a media company can display in response: prohibitionist and collaborationist (Jenkins 2006b, 134). He attributes the prohibitionist stance to mostly older media companies

who "have increasingly adopted a scorched-earth policy toward their consumers, seeking to regulate and criminalize many forms of fan participation that once fell below their radar" (Jenkins 2006b, 134). On the other hand, his description for the collaborationist stance is the following: "new media are experimenting with new approaches that see fans as important collaborators in the production of content" (Jenkins 2006b, 134). Jenkins mentions that the *Star Wars* franchise has been on both sides over time.

The *Star Wars* franchise is definitely leaning towards the collaborationist stance these days. Lucasfilm has been supportive of fan creations with tools such as the application on the official Star Wars website, that lets you create your own "opening crawl", making your fan film look like an official part of the *Star Wars* saga.

Jenkins compares digital fan films to the punk DIY (do-it-yourself) culture (Jenkins 2006b). He argues that similarly to how grassroots experimentation in the punk subculture led to the creation of new sounds, techniques used by fan authors are getting more and more exposure in the mainstream. He mentions the utilization of video game engines as animation tools as an example.

Scholars have observed that fan culture has a lot in common with folk tradition too. Jenkins argues that "popular culture is what happens as mass culture gets pulled back into folk culture" (Jenkins 2006b, 136). Similarly to folk culture, a modern transmedia mythos is also shaped by the fan contributors who create fan films and write fan fiction. I think it is important to note that many artists who are currently working on the world of *Star Wars* were also merely fan authors at some point. Directors such as Dave Filoni and JJ Abrams, or *Star Wars* novel authors such as John Jackson Miller have all added their own childhood fascination with *Star Wars* to their work.

Another important similarity between fan culture and folk culture is implied by Tóth in his overview of the history of mass media franchising in Hollywood films (Z. J. Tóth 2015). He claims that the franchise products bought by fans are much more than just simple commodities: they become part of the person's identity. He attributes the creation of geek culture to this phenomenon. This is very similar to folk and mythological traditions, because folk tales and mythical characters are usually deeply integrated in a nation's identity. Jenkins even compares transmedia character building to the way the story of Jesus was told in the Middle Ages (Jenkins 2006c). He argues that "unless you were literate, Jesus was not rooted in a book but was something you encountered at multiple levels in your culture" (Jenkins 2006c, 119).

In the following sections, I intend to analyze the world of *Star Wars,* using of Jenkins's definitions. I am focusing on two elements of the *Star Wars* transmedia universe: transmedia character building and the narrative of the galactic political system that include synergistic storytelling and additive comprehension.

## 2. Transmedia Character Building in *Star Wars*

One of the most appealing aspects of the *Star Wars* franchise is its enormous catalogue of unique characters. From goofy aliens like Jar Jar Binks to tragic heroes like Luke Skywalker, we can find all types of different characters in this vast universe. Well-written characters are among the most important ingredients of any fictional world. Therefore, by analyzing the development of a character through different platforms of media, we can evaluate the success of transmedia storytelling and worldbuilding. In this section of my paper, I would like to analyze the most iconic character of the *Star Wars* universe, Darth Vader, known as Anakin Skywalker before turning to the Dark Side, from a transmedia perspective. Vader has appeared on many different platforms of media, so his personal story is an excellent subject to my research. By analyzing

some of his appearances in the films, animated series, and comic books, I would like to show how transmedia storytelling can build the narrative of a character further.

Ever since his first menacing appearance in *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977), Darth Vader has been the most well-known, most iconic character of the franchise. But how much did moviegoers in 1977 really know about him after watching the film?

> A young Jedi named Darth Vader, who was a pupil of mine until he turned to evil, helped the Empire hunt down and destroy the Jedi Knights. He betrayed and murdered your father. Now the Jedi are all but extinct. Vader was seduced by the dark side of the Force. (Lucas 1977)

Besides this ambiguous explanation by Obi-Wan Kenobi to Luke Skywalker, viewers did not really know much about the enigmatic person behind the dark costume. Partly due to the modest possibilities provided by the special effects of the 1970s, audiences did not even really get to see his deadly fighting skills. Yet, there was something about his appearance, his charisma, accompanied by James Earl Jones' legendary baritone voice, that made even the bravest rebel soldiers shiver in fear. Fan speculation about the character's origins arose, which also greatly contributed his popularity. Then, three years later, came the shocking revelation during an iconic scene in *The Empire Strikes Back* (Kershner 1980), when Vader revealed that he was, in fact, Luke Skywalker's father, Anakin Skywalker. This revelation shocked audiences all around the world, making them radically re-evaluate both the Darth Vader seen in *Star Wars* (1977) and Obi-Wan Kenobi. Then, another three years later, in *Return of the Jedi* (Marquand 1983), fans saw a conflicted Vader overcoming his commitment to the Dark Side and betraying his master to save his son and fulfill the prophecy of the Chosen One who would restore the balance to The Force. Before dying, he revealed his damaged, burned face to Luke.

Although many questions were answered in the third installment of the original trilogy, even more arose. How and why did Anakin Skywalker turn to the dark side and become Darth Vader? How did he get his injuries that forced him into his armor? Who was Luke's mother and how did she die? These questions remained unanswered for decades. With the sudden increase in popularity of the *Expanded Universe* in the early 90s, starting with Timothy Zahn's best-selling novel, *Heir to the Empire* (Zahn 1991), the Galaxy started growing rapidly with new stories, characters, planets, cultures, and aliens, but Lucas did not allow the authors to explore the era before the original trilogy. The relevance of the franchise started to vane in the late 1980s, but the new novels and comic books of the early 1990s helped re-spark and maintain it.

After long years of waiting, *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (Lucas 1999) was released. The prequel film, which got mixed reviews from fans and critics alike, introduced the child Anakin to the audience. From this film, spectators learned the story of his childhood as the prodigal slave who was taken by the Jedi to the Jedi Temple after helping them with his exceptional pod-racing skills. The film was followed by *Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones* (Lucas 2002) and *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* (Lucas 2005). These films also got mixed reviews at release, critics and fans particularly disliked Hayden Christensen's portrayal of the young Anakin Skywalker:

> We watched with stifled yawns as Anakin grew from a snot-nosed kid (Jake Lloyd) to a whiny teen lover boy and wanna-be Jedi (Christensen). We justified the thudding lifelessness (a pox on those Jedi councils) by praising Lucas' digital artistry and nurturing the hope that *Revenge of the Sith* would spin our heads around with the dark magic of Darth Vader. (Travers 2005)

Although one can disagree with some of the criticism regarding the prequel films, it is still true that fans did not really get to see Anakin as the legendary Jedi they expected to see before the release of the films. Many fans were disappointed with the "whiny" nature of the character and

the often-embarrassing dialogue, especially during the love scenes with Senator Amidala, portrayed by Natalie Portman. After all these years, fans were still starving to see the young Darth Vader in his full potential. As we can see here, expanding the story of an already established character can not only build, but also damage the reputation of that character. After finishing *Revenge of the Sith*, Lucas had no intention of creating any more full-length films for the Star Wars saga. This is where transmedia storytelling became an even more important tool.

Three years after *Revenge of the Sith* reached cinemas, *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* (Filoni 2008a), an animated full-length film was released. The story of the film is set between the events of *The Attack of the Clones* and *Revenge of the Sith*, and features Anakin Skywalker, Ahsoka Tano, and Obi-Wan Kenobi as the main characters. The film's purpose was to introduce fans to a new animated series of the same name, set in the *Star Wars* universe, *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* (Filoni 2008b). Although the film received even worse reviews than the prequel trilogy, it was followed by a critically acclaimed animated series that lasted for six seasons. In the film, we finally see Anakin in full force: he easily destroys any obstacle in his way, and he even gets an apprentice (Jedi Padawan), Ahsoka Tano. In the beginning, she is just an annoyance to Anakin, but she plays a very important part later in the story.

Jenkins claims that in a fictional transmedia universe, leaving gaps in a film for other media products to fill might confuse spectators (Jenkins 2006c, 103). In Star Wars, the opposite happens, the creators use the animated television series to fill in plot holes that were unintentionally left in the feature films. One of the best examples is centered on the character of Anakin. Many critics found Anakin's turn to the Dark Side in *Revenge of the Sith* too fast and unrealistic. In the final episode of the fifth season of *The Clone Wars* (Filoni 2008b), *The Wrong Jedi*, Ahsoka leaves the Jedi Order after getting falsely accused of bombing the Jedi Temple. It is a popular theory among fans that this event led to Anakin losing his faith in the Jedi Order, setting a ground for him becoming Darth Vader in *Revenge of the Sith*. The term 'additive comprehension', coined by Neil Young (Jenkins 2006c, 123), can be easily applied here. Jenkins explains that after receiving information from one platform of media, it changes the way we view another one we previously consumed in the same transmedia world. If fans watch *Revenge of the Sith* after watching *The Wrong Jedi* and interpreting it the way I discussed above, it greatly reinforces the experience and makes Anakin's betrayal much more believable.

As I mentioned earlier, we never really see Vader in full force in the original trilogy. He is more of an icon, the symbol of the all-conquering power of the Galactic Empire. However, in the final scene of the spin-off film, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (Edwards 2016), fans were treated with a minute-long scene of Vader massacring rebel soldiers. This scene showed Vader's ruthlessness finally on the big screen and retroactively made his appearances in *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi* even more dramatic.

Another interesting aspect of Vader's character is his relationship with his Sith master, Emperor Palpatine. In the films, it may seem that Vader remains completely loyal until the final dramatic battle in *Return of the Jedi*, but in the first issue of the comic book series *Darth Vader* (Gillen 2015), we see that there is already a general mistrust between the two Sith Lords. Palpatine punishes Vader for a failed mission, while Vader sends bounty hunters to find him Luke Skywalker without the Emperor knowing. As we can see here, they had been testing each other and plotting against each other way before Vader's betrayal at the end of *Return of the Jedi*. In this comic book, we can see that Vader is not only a strong and feared warrior, he is also cunning, and not afraid to plot against even his own master. This rather interesting relationship between Vader and his master is further elaborated in the 2015 book, *Lords of the Sith* (Kemp 2015). In this book, Vader and Palpatine crash on the hostile planet of Ryloth. They become completely interdependent on each other while being hunted by Twi'lek rebels. During a fight with a herd of

Lyleks, hostile insectoid creatures living in the forests of Ryloth, Vader plays around with the idea of betraying his master and leaving him to die. However, thanks to the advanced mind reading abilities of the latter, Vader's plan is foiled, although all Palpatine reacts is a brief remark of approval. Here we can easily observe the concept called 'synergistic storytelling' (Jenkins 2006c 101). The two authors built on the character attributes appearing in each other's work, and wrote their stories in a way that the narrative flows unimpeded without any contradictions. With this tool, they managed to paint an authentic picture of the relationship between Vader and Palpatine.

The aim of this section was to analyze how transmedia storytelling can change and enhance an already established character in a given story world. As I have presented, in the case of Darth Vader, there were both positive and negative results. The young Anakin appearing in the prequel trilogy was not well-received by the fans who felt the mythos and character of Vader was ruined, or at least damaged by those films. However, as I pointed out, some of his appearances on other platforms of media gave depth to the character, made his decisions in the films more understandable, and allowed fans to see the character in situations where the full potential of both Anakin Skywalker and Darth Vader was used. To conclude, I believe that utilizing the character in different forms of media was effective for further building and expanding his narrative.

## 3. Politics in the Galaxy from a Transmedia Perspective

After analyzing a single character from the Star Wars universe, it is time to move on to a greater scale. Politics has always been a very important part of *Star Wars*, and the transmedia texts beyond the film further developed the political system of the *Star Wars* universe. In the films, we can see three major political eras of the Galaxy: the age of the Republic in the prequel trilogy, the age of the Galactic Empire in the original trilogy, and the age of the war between the First Order and the Resistance in the sequel trilogy. Although in the films we get glimpses of the way the galactic political systems of these three eras worked, we had not really got to see behind the scenes until the release of certain transmedia entries. In this section, I would like to discuss how transmedia sources expanded our knowledge about the different political systems of the Galaxy. My aim with this section is to support my claim that transmedia sources can greatly improve the narrative, and to evaluate how successful the creators of the different transmedia entries were at creating complex fictional political systems. I would also like to show how transmedia storytelling gives an opportunity for authors to elaborate details they are unable to do in the theatrical films due to time constraints.

In the episodes of the prequel trilogy, we get to see the Galactic Republic in its final years. In his analysis of the political system of the Republic, Tóth uses the principle of the separation of powers (C. Tóth 2016). He compares the Republic to federalist alliances such as the European Union. From the three branches of power, the Galactic Senate is the primary legislative body of the Republic. Over the course of the three prequel films, we see many plenary sittings in the great Galactic Senate Chamber. There, we can see representatives of each member planet of the Republic, such as the Wookies from Kashyyyk, or the Gungans from Naboo. The main duty of the Galactic Senate is to create laws and mediate agreements and disputes between its member planets. The executive powers are held by the Supreme Chancellor who is directly elected by the Galactic Senate. In the films, we see the main steps of Chancellor Palpatine turning the democratic Republic into the authoritarian Empire. This transition might still seem a little too fast and unbelievable to some spectators, mainly because of how hard it is to force such a grandiose narrative into a two-hour time interval. However, thanks to transmedia storytelling, the creators were able to show smaller steps of this process, making the narrative of the films more realistic retroactively.

As I have just presented, while the legislative and executive branches of the Galactic Republic are well-represented in the prequel trilogy, Tóth mentions that we never see the judiciary branch of the Republic (C. Tóth 2016, 27). Although he is right in the sense that the films of the saga never show it, it can be argued that we can see some of it in certain transmedia sources. In a previously mentioned episode of *The Clone Wars* (Filoni 2008b), *The Wrong Jedi*, Ahsoka Tano is accused of bombing the Jedi Temple. During her trial, the judge is Supreme Chancellor Palpatine. Knowing this fact makes our perception of the Republic drastically different, because it makes the Republic seem less democratic. The executive and juridical branches of power cannot be held in the hands of a single person in a well-functioning democracy. Another good example of how *The Clone Wars* changes our comprehension of the political system of the Republic is in the sixth season, where we learn that the Chancellor planted microchips into the brains of the clone soldiers, making them unable to resist certain orders from him. Thanks to the high number of smaller implications like these in *The Clone Wars*, the transition of the Republic from democracy to dictatorship, as seen in *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith*, becomes much more believable, elevating the value of the film. This case of additive comprehension (Jenkins 2006c, 123) reinforces my claim that the use of transmedia techniques is beneficial for the overall narrative.

The Galactic Empire depicted in the original trilogy is much more one-dimensional than the Republic of the prequel trilogy: a cruel, militaristic dictatorship, where all power is concentrated in the hands of Emperor Palpatine. The three films of the original trilogy are mostly based on the conflict between the rebels and the Empire, presenting it as the mythical clash between good and evil. Meanwhile, the image painted by the *Expanded Universe* of this conflict is much more nuanced. The spin-off film, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (Edwards 2016) met widespread acclaim at release, partly because of its portrayal of "grey" characters. The film shows that just like how imperials can have good intentions behind some of their acts, rebels can perform morally questionable actions too. In *Rogue One*, we gain some insight into how the imperial infrastructure works, and we learn that the people working for the Empire, who are depicted in the original trilogy as the epitome of evil, are simple humans, just like the rebels, in a desperate situation. Thanks to this, the Galaxy becomes much more three-dimensional, and the intentions behind the acts of certain characters become much clearer. Without the transmedia sources that let us have a thorough look at its way of operating, the Galactic Empire seen in the original films would be much less realistic. Even in the animated *Star Wars* series, as Derek R. Sweet argues, the black-and-white ethos of "cowboy diplomacy" is challenged, raising an important discourse about war and peace (Sweet 2017, 242).

Another franchise entry that provides a view of how the machinery behind the Galactic Empire works is the novel *Thrawn* (Zahn 2017). The book follows the early story of the popular character, Grand Admiral Thrawn, as he climbs up the ranks of the imperial military ladder. Thrawn is a Chiss, a humanoid creature with red eyes, blue skin, and extraordinarily high intelligence from the Unknown Regions of the Galaxy. At the beginning of the story, imperial troops find Thrawn on an unidentified planet. Although we learn that the Emperor and the Galactic Empire are xenophobic, the officers who find Thrawn are instantly amazed by the strategic genius of the alien creature and take him to the Imperial Academy. As the story progresses, Thrawn goes higher and higher up on the echelon of the imperial military, providing us with a lot of information about how things go among the ranks of the Emperor's army. His story shows us that while the Empire is indeed xenophobic, they reward hard work and talent, and in spite of the constant disdain Thrawn faces for his origin, he manages to achieve the rank of Grand Admiral. As we observe his journey, we get a thorough, detailed view of the imperial military infrastructure. This also radically changes the way we view the Empire in the original *Star Wars* films, and makes it much more complex. In his analysis of transmedia character build-

ing in *Star Wars*, Geraghty cites the popularity of Thrawn's character as a prime example of the importance of "peripheral" characters to transmedia storytelling (Geraghty 2017, 125).

When the first episode of the sequel trilogy, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (Abrams 2015) was released, many fans were disappointed by the fact that the film did not show much about the political state of the Galaxy. The film is set thirty years after the victory of the Rebel Alliance in *Return of the Jedi* (Marquand 1983), but instead of the idyllic peace the celebration at the end of *Return of the Jedi* implies, we jump right into another civil war, this time between the Resistance and the First Order. In this film, audiences do not learn much about what happened during the thirty-year time period between the two films, and on the top of it, the New Republic is almost completely eradicated in the middle of the film, making it impossible for fans to learn anything about it. This lack of information sparked fan speculation on websites such as Reddit, making the film what Henry Jenkins calls a 'cultural activator' (Jenkins 2006c, 95). Fans went through the stories contained in the novels and comics that were released during the *Journey to Star Wars: The Force Awakens* multimedia project, searching for clues that might facilitate their speculation and theory crafting. This phenomenon perfectly aligns with Jenkins's description of cultural activators: "The most committed consumers track down data spread across multiple media, scanning each and every text for insights into the world" (Jenkins 2006c, 95).

About five months after the initial theatrical release of *The Force Awakens*, the novel *Bloodline* (Gray 2016) was released. *Bloodline* is set six years before the events of *The Force Awakens*, and puts Princess Leia into focus as she tries to hold the declining New Republic together. As we learn in the book, the Senate of the New Republic is split into two factions: the populists, who want the member planets of the Republic to maintain autonomy; and the centrists, who want the galactic government to keep a tight hand on the Galaxy. The majority of the narrative is set on the planet that is destroyed in *The Force Awakens*, Hosnian Prime. Interestingly, the girl in the movie who is only shown for mere seconds before the destruction of the planet, gets a complete backstory in *Bloodline* as Korr Sella, the envoy of Princess Leia.

During the debates between the populists and the centrists, the conflict that would later elevate into the war between the Resistance and the First Order gets more and more apparent. At the very end of the story, Leia announces the foundation of the Resistance.

Although there are still many blind spots to this day, Bloodline makes the era between *Return of the Jedi* and *The Force Awakens* much clearer for fans. The book, which is considered by many readers to be one of strongest pieces of *Star Wars* tie-in literature ever written, was welcomed by fans who were astonished by the high amount of information revealed about the state of the Galaxy.

The aim of this section was to analyze and evaluate how the content released in the *Expanded Universe* enhances the fans' collective knowledge about the political system of the *Star Wars* Galaxy. As we can see, it is a successful project so far, the franchise entries I mentioned were successful at filling the gaps left by the films while staying entertaining. They also eliminated a lot of plot holes and made the political system of the Galaxy much more realistic. Similarly to the previous section, the examples in this section have also shown that transmedia entries can greatly improve the narrative of the films retroactively.

## 4. Conclusion

To sum up my paper, I have analyzed the transmedia additions to the *Star Wars* franchise from the perspective of how characters and the political sphere are represented in order to measure up the success of transmedia worldbuilding and storytelling. My aim with both sections was to present how much transmedia storytelling has done to further elaborate characters and political systems that are present in the films.

Firstly, I investigated the way transmedia worldbuilding enhances the characters that had already been established in the films. The character of Darth Vader was a great subject to my research for several reasons. He appeared in many different franchise entries, so I had a lot of material to choose examples from. He also went under way more character development than any other character in the franchise. Although some of his appearances beyond the original trilogy are divisive among fans, in the end I can still draw the conclusion that expanding his story with transmedia techniques was overall beneficial. It allowed audiences to see aspects of the character that were not revealed in the films, and it made his decisions in the films much more believable.

Secondly, I inspected the way transmedia sources supplemented our knowledge of the political system of the *Star Wars* Galaxy. This section had two purposes. On one hand, I presented how transmedia storytelling made the politics of the Galaxy more realistic. On the other hand, I showed the way transmedia sources filled plot holes, elevating the value of the films.

The examples I observed in both sections attest that transmedia storytelling made the *Star Wars* universe into grandiose, well-detailed story world with its own rules, history, and complex characters, which gives a solid ground for hundreds of new stories to come in the future. I came to the conclusion that the transition of the world of *Star Wars* to other media platforms was overall beneficial for the narrative. The new franchise entries gave opportunity to less-important characters of the films to become more detailed, and they fixed plot holes and deficiencies the films struggled with. They also maintained the relevance of the *Star Wars* franchise in times when it did not have any theatrical releases, and they also facilitated its transition to the digital age as cultural activators. The popularity of other similar transmedia film franchises, such as the *Marvel Cinematic Universe* or *The Matrix* has proven that mass audiences are able and willing to actively interact with or even become producers of other sources beyond the films.

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*Zoltán Dragon*

# Photographic Extimacy in the Collage of Images Technologies in Julie Taymor's *Frida*

**Keywords**

Frida Kahlo, film, photography, extimacy

Quite early on in Julie Taymor's 2002 film, *Frida*, the young protagonist (played by Salma Hayek) is seen helping her father, Guillermo Kahlo (Roger Rees) in the dark room to finish the day's development. She casually dries her father's hands, puts away chemicals and chats with her father. All the equipment, the processes, the intimate atmosphere of the dark room lab seems absolutely familiar to her, she's quite obviously at home in this setting, a knowledgeable assistant to the photographer. A bit later, we see her dress like a man for a family sitting, posing in front of her father's large format camera, creating – or recreating – the familiar Frida image that is purely photographic this time. The sequence that presents her trip to the USA with her husband, Diego Rivera (Alfred Molina), is shown in a peculiar way in the film: like a break from the traditional narrative representation, Taymor opts for an avantgarde-inspired photo montage that sums up the trip and the experience as entirely different from the scenes at home.

These are the most significant scenes or techniques where photography interferes with the filmic design of Taymor's adaptation: either on the level of representation, or on the level of the narrative structure. The rest of the film understates the presence of photography with two notable exceptions: Lupe Marín's (Valeria Golino) small exhibit that Frida cannot help but admire, and her trip to Paris, which is rendered in a typically analog photographic manner visually (significantly parting with the rest of the filmic color grading). While photography in the narrative of *Frida* is linked with the father, Guillermo Kahlo, in the light of some recent findings in terms of the Frida Kahlo archive, I would like to argue for the overall photographic influence that is strangely missing from Taylor's movie, but seems to insist as the foreclosed logic of representation on many levels.

First, I am going to focus the background of Frida Kahlo's photographic involvement to argue that photography plays a pivotal part in her later experiments with painting, especially when it comes to the iconic self-portraits. Second, I will relate the way the painterly is preceded and influenced, so to speak, "framed" by the photographic, and find entry points in the filmic representation that explain the strange and seemingly unmotivated appearances of the photographic, and how that transforms the iconic framework of the movie. The return of the strangely repressed mode of representation will explain not only how and why photography is a latent in-between technique that helps the transitions from paintings to filmic scenes, but also how the photographic comes before the paintings and thus prefigures the filmic through the stroke of the brush already. If the paintings, and the scenes emanating from within the creation of those paintings are rendered intimate in the movie, I argue that photography is the foreclosed and uncanny framing device.

## 1. Photographic involvement

Before I turn back to the movie and how it utilizes the multimedial channels in its pictorial representation, I would like to explore how photography comes to play a significant role in Frida Kahlo's life and art. What even those who only watched the movie (and had not heard about Frida Kahlo or her family) know is that Guillermo Kahlo, originally Carl Wilhelm Kahlo, born in the German empire in 1871, was an architectural photographer. He was persuaded by his wife (whose father, Antonio Calderón, was a photographer of Indian descent) to take photography seriously. Guillermo's father-in-law gave him his first full equipment (a large format, wet plate camera with the necessary extras for developing the images), and "the first thing that they did was to go off on a trip around the Republic. They produced a collection of photographs of indigenous and Colonial architecture" (Herrera 2018) that brought Guillermo a commission "by the Mexican government to record the nation's architectural heritage" (ibid). So, in the first decade of the 20th century, "using fine German-made cameras and more than nine hundred glass plates that he prepared himself" (ibid.) he did just that.

As for his style, Guillermo Kahlo was the perfect epitome of an architectural photographer: he "was a fastidious technician with a stubbornly objective approach to what he saw," without any tricky effects or romanticism. As Herrera notes, "[h]e tried to give as much information about the architectural structure he recorded as he possibly could, carefully selecting his vantage point and using light and shade to delineate form" (ibid). Architectural photography was – and still is – a meticulous process, with many fields of knowledge involved, such as art, geometry and physics to produce a two-dimensional documentary image that evokes the three-dimensionality of the object with all lines and shapes perfectly preserved (see an example for the analysis of such a meticulous endeavor in Edith Wharton's reconstruction of the Rheims Cathedral with photographic precision in Kovács 2017, 559). We know from Guillermo Kahlo's glass plates and developed images that he meticulously composed the imagery to erase human subjectivity from the scopic regime as much as possible – both on the side of the subject and on that of the object depicted.

With this kind of photography, there is no subjectivity allowed to show forth, thus it can be argued that this tradition is one of the strongest advocates of what Johanna Zylinska would call "non-human photography" – a tendency that runs opposite the style developed by Frida her own art, as I later demonstrate. According to Zylinska, this type of photography may be seen as "decoupled from human agency and human vision" (Zylinska 2017, 2) as the mechanical or technological aspect of image making becomes more and more inductive in how we take photos of our surroundings. This somewhat techno-deterministic view – or at least a historical stance echoing the early views on the photographic process – resonates with the fastidiousness of Guillermo's methodology of representation: something that is going to be foreclosed in how his daughter utilizes photography as a technological supplement for her self-portraits.

The reason why I think it's important to see Guillermo Kahlo's methodology and style is that his daughter, Frida, studied this type of image-making before she turned to painting – she worked as a dark room assistant to her father, and he "taught her to use a camera and to develop, retouch, and color photographs" (Herrera 2018), so it shouldn't come as a surprise that photography would play a significant role in Frida's life in many aspects. As Herrera notes in Frida Kahlo's biography, "the young Frida did not have much patience for the exacting work, something of her father's fastidiousness, his concern for minute surface detail, would later appear in her own paintings" (Herrera 2018) – a claim that sounds fascinatingly romantic, but in fact does not make justice to the utterly personal touch of Frida's paintings, or her iconic image as an artist.

There is, however, a significant turning point in the life of the Kahlo family – and in that of Mexico, for that matter, that results in the making of the iconic Frida image. Guillermo Kahlo was photographing the Mexican revolution from 1910, and could not help but place himself into a reporter position, thereby assuming a subjective role in the making of images. Looking at her father's developed war images, Frida was later shocked by the terrors appearing on the plates and paper, so much so that it changed how she perceived herself as a subject being photographed. She notes that "I knew that the battlefield of suffering was reflected in my eyes. Ever since then, I started looking straight into the lens, without winking, without smiling, determined to prove I would be a good warrior until the end" (Herrera 2018).

The significance of this claim cannot be understated, as this is a conscious decision that creates the famous, well-known, now-iconic Frida-look that she retains in most of her self-portraits. In other words, it is through photography, photographic representation, objectifying her subject-as-an-artist that she composes the look that would consequently define her painting – and her self-image as an artist. Moreover, we also know today that this iconic definition of the self brings about a less discussed workflow for Frida: she started using photographs as models for her own – and sometimes others' – portraits, whereby the photographic image precedes the painterly, creating an intriguing problem for representation – of Frida Kahlo's art, and of the film by Julie Taymor that creates a moving image re-interpretation of all this.

Before I tackle the issue in detail, let me also note that in 2004, some six thousand photographs were found in the Frida Kahlo's Mexico City home ("Photographing Frida Kahlo"), among which we find not only portraits of herself and the circle of friends throughout her life, but also photographic experiments, documentations of paintings, inspirations for paintings, and studies that directly serve as bases for later paintings among other things like pieces of everyday clothing and objects that Diego Rivera locked up and allowed to be opened only twenty years after his death. The massive amount of photographs in this newly found collection testifies to Frida Kahlo's continued interest in photography: a form of art and a technique that paralleled her work as a painter.

To make Frida more photographically oriented preceding the Taymor-visualization, there are two more notable uses of photography in her life and art that is completely missing from the film, but are pivotal in understanding my insistence on photography being relevant in the present frame of interpretation. The first is the documented study of photography in Nicholas Haz's workshop, where she learned to work with film materials (as she used to be trained in the wet-plate tradition). Haz is an important figure in the history of photography, as the Hungarian-born American photographer inspires and helps Ansel Adams to work on his famous Zone-system. But he was also important in another aspect in Frida's life. When he emigrated to the USA, he was first employed by Nickolas Muray (born in Szeged, Hungary) with whom he shared a stylistic admiration for pictorialism – or the painterly style of early photography that tried to compete with the established art of painting for recognition. It is following her studies with Haz that Frida meets Muray and while developing an intimate relationship with him, they start to work and experiment together with the then overlooked potentials of color photography.

The reason why I emphasize these photographic roots (all somehow originating from Hungary and introducing the stylistic and formulaic features of German and Central-European photography of the time) is that I think it is quite evident that Guillermo Kahlo's, Nicholas Haz's and finally, Nickolas Muray's influence would subsequently become notable in Frida's painting, especially her iconic self-representations. Guillermo's war images transform Frida as a model; Haz introduces pictorial film photography, i.e. the imitation of the painterly in photography and a strong sense of composition; Muray changes the way Frida uses color palettes, and self-representation in general, as it is through modelling for him that her pose acquires the stature that becomes another hallmark of her self-portraits. A lack of reference to Muray's influ-

ence also highlights the image of the independent female artist (like in James biographies the image of James the gay author has been highlighted recently, see Kovács 2007).

It is in this light that I find it somewhat interesting decision that Julie Taymor's film downplays the significance of photographic image-making, as akin to filmic representation as probably no other technology and form.

## 2. The Photographic: transitions from painting to film

Taymor uses Frida's paintings as hinge points in the narrative: they not only signify turning points in the artist's life, but consecutive scenes evolve out of the still images – most of them self-portraits painted in different periods of Frida's life. As Réka M. Cristian argues:

> Taymor imports into the cinematic narrative Frida's art works representing the painter as seen by Kahlo herself. [...] These 'edited' images turn into facsimiles of Kahlo's painted canvases while the protagonist becomes ... a negotiated cinematic character and the model for an alternative cinematic practice of the woman's self-representation. (Cristian 2014, 82–83)

What I wish to add here is that this negotiated character and the alternative cinematic practice based on Kahlo's self-representation is based on photographic practice and representation. Yet, apart from a couple of instances, photography is not present in the film.

In one of the scenes in the last third of the movie, Frida sits in front of her canvas, and we see a mirror installed a bit further away that serves as the source of the self-portrait image. In reality, however, we know that Frida often used photographic self-portraits as models of herself for the paintings. In fact, she also used photographs for other works as well: for instance, she used her parents' wedding photo as a basis for her famous *My Grandparents, My Parents and I*, and she recreated older paintings of hers for smaller versions through a photographic documentation of those original paintings.

This process culminates in what one could term as a multiple photographic amalgam with different levels of exposition and framing. On the conceptual level, the facial expression, more specifically the defiant gaze that has become her trademark feature, refers back to the emotional affect evoked by her father's war photography. It can also be seen as a visual recomposition of the childhood memories that were more connected – in some way or another – to the medium of photography, rather than to that of painting. On the formulaic level, the self-image stands in for the mirrored painter as an object-at-a-distance that proposes a multiplication of spatial frames (as also visually reframing the situation through the multiplication of screens and scenes).

On an affective level, the colorful paintings that are utilized as trampolines for filmic sequences in Taymor's movie are results of Frida's collaboration on color photography projects with Muray. Here I wish to suggest that the color grading of the movie in several parts takes its model from these experiments with color photography by way of transmitting hue, saturation and vibrance through Frida Kahlo's paintings. One of the most famous, iconic images that testify to this transfer, "Frida Kahlo on White Bench" (1939), is in fact done with the so-called Carbro technique (or carbon-bromid transfer, a process Muray experimented with before Kodak released its first color slide film emulations) and most of the colors of the film from this period evoke the result of this technique. Interesting to note, however, that the film mistakes the photo to be taken in Paris by an artist from Breton's circle, starting what might seem as a short love affair with Frida. In fact, the photograph was taken by Muray in New York, and just to add another correction to Taymor's reinterpretation of the origin of that iconic image: the image comes from the last phase of Kahlo and Muray's relationship, rather than being an initiation of the affair between them.

The technique evoked by this kind of self-portraiture is "perspectivality," which Ana Peraica explains is "setting oneself at a distance," which is simultaneously the "subjectification of space" and the "objectification of the self" (Peraica 2017, 16). It is on the border of this division (that can easily be seen as a problematization of the private and the public or the inside and the outside) that the self-image becomes a representation that is somehow in-between the self and the image becoming rather uncanny. Perspectivality, in this respect, is at the very core of Frida Kahlo's art, coming through the multiplicity of "expositions" of her photographic involvement.

In Taymor's *Frida*, the perspectivality of photographic representation is foreclosed both on the narrative and on the structural level. However, the intimacy of the self-images the narrative hinges on haunt the story of the film, and create an uncanny return of the intimate moment of the clash of subjectification and objectification in the making of the image. The intimacy of this moment turns into extimacy precisely because the very act of the birth of the image is erased from the narrative, or – rather – introduced as a "screen memory" (from the Freudian term playfully arriving in Taymor's vision of the multiplication of screens) (Freud, 237) that covers the photographic practice. The intimate moments of creation, an autographic occupation in Nelson Goodman's term, are foregrounded without the allographic precedents which are then rendered as extimate to the filmic representation.

Extimacy is a term coined by Jacques Lacan to appropriate the Freudian term *Unheimlich* as related to the dichotomy of inside and outside, subject and other, the Real and the Symbolic. As Mladen Dolar explains,

> It points neither to the interior nor to the exterior, but is located there where the most intimate interiority coincides with the exterior and becomes threatening, provoking horror and anxiety. The extimate is simultaneously the intimate kernel and the foreign body; in a word, it is *unheimlich*. (Dolar 1991, 6)

The extimate can also be linked to another Lacanian term, the *objet a*: that which the subject always already misses but curiously is the very "thing" that in turn defines it (Dragon 2015). These can be, for instance the voice or the gaze – in other words, objects once somehow connected to the subject and then later in the psychosexual development got foreclosed for some reason. However, as Joan Copjec argues, this foreclosure is not a clear denial: it is the incorporation of the very act of foreclosure, which takes the foreclosed object right into the core of subjectivity (Copjec 1995, 128). This is how the *objet a* becomes extimate: this is precisely how the photography returns from the silenced and repressed void of the visual and narrative organization of Taymor's film to frame the movie as a snapshot of Frida Kahlo, the artist. Photography foreclosed is even more powerful in the visual organization of the flow of events than present: the intimacy in front of the paternal camera during childhood and adolescence comes back in defiance through the re-use of such images and further self-portraits in the re-composition of Frida, the artist, through a mise-en-abyme of cameras – Guillermo's, Murray's, her own, and finally, Taymor's. The intimate space of the subjects is thus folded into itself through various

Taymor's film thus operates through the latent framing of the narrative through photography and the photographic act. While the movie uses particular self-images as the bases for narrative development, in other words, uses paintings to compose the filmic sequences (both in terms of biographical and stylistic references), it does not include the gesture of composing most of those iconic paintings through photography. Yet, because of the latent presence of the features we can identify in Frida Kahlo's involvement in photography (both as model and as practitioner), photography returns as the film's repressed, foreclosed kernel, rendering the intimate self-imaging processes at the core of the movie as a peculiar, extimate practice.

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# *Persuasion* on Screen: an Authentic Aural Evocation of Jane Austen's Early 19th Century England?

**Keywords**

Jane Austen, *Persuasion, Persuasion* (1995), film adaptation, aural, sound

This paper discusses the 1995 film adaptation of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1817/18). *Persuasion* was Austen's last completed novel and, according to Nicola Humble, her most 19th century work, and it is closest to Victorian values and way of thinking (ix). Amanda Collins also emphasizes the nineteenth century aspects of the novel by stating that "the novel *Persuasion* was written nearly fifteen years after the turn of the nineteenth century, near the height of the Romantic movement, which took as one of its goals [...] the depiction of the *real* lives of common people" (2001, 83). Collins also adds that while the use of Chopin's music in this film adaptation has been criticised for being anachronistic, the creators probably wanted to "ground the film in some sort of historical place, in this case the nineteenth century" (2001, 84). *Persuasion* (1995), in its time strived to provide authenticity and (re)present Austen's world as it was in its most realist ways that the creators could conceive (which critics mostly acknowledged and praised), yet, it failed miserably at the box office since audiences were still not ready for realist Austenian film adaptations (this 'realist trend' became acceptable for general audiences only after *Pride and Prejudice* (2005)), hence *Persuasion* (1995) was way ahead of its time, yet, could not compete with the spectacular and star-studded adaptations of the era such as *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) (written by and starring Emma Thompson etc.) or *Emma* (1996) (starring Gwyneth Paltrow etc.) – as only two examples.

Amanda Collins argues that the film was criticized for not being "adapted enough," meaning being refined and removed from reality as much as possible, being too real. She writes that the general reaction considered it to be not an "accurate portrayal" because audiences preferred the "hyperreal" and their postmodern nostalgic imaginations of what history is/was as opposed to Austen's original text and time. It was due to, as Collins also points out, "the public privileging of the romantic over the realistic" (81–83). In Collins' opinion, what "doomed *Persuasion* [...] was Nick Dear's failure to rewrite the past in the way that Emma Thompson did [...] and [he] did not" shroud his version of *Persuasion* "in the rose-colored sheen of nostalgia. Dear's adaptation of *Persuasion* [...] is unstinting in its depiction of both the beautiful and the bleak aspects of life in the nineteenth century. This realism, however, was not met with approbation [...]" and was called too naturalist (2001, 85). Paulette Richards even adds that modern viewers expect the filmmakers to satisfy their "'imperial nostalgia' fantasies even while purporting to offer a 'high culture' aesthetic experience" (2003, 112). About *Persuasion* (1995) Richards declares that the film pays "scrupulous attention to historical accuracy" (2003, 115) and "faithfulness" (2003, 117), additionally, this film is socially more aware than any other Austen adaptation (2003, 117) while being "a well-crafted, entertaining copy" of Austen's original (2003, 126). Tara Ghoshal Wallace similarly opines that "Michell's *Persuasion* deploys highly intelligent if intelligible filmic language" by presenting class relations and social problems more effectively (for us, modern viewers) than Austen's novel (2003, 129) while achieving "both a gratifying degree of fidelity and its very own authenticity as text" (2003, 141). Rebecca Dickson, even though being critical about

the representation of women's history in the film, claims that "Dear's screenplay is considerably more subtle than Emma Thompson's version of *Sense and Sensibility*" (2001, 50). According to Carol M. Dole, *Persuasion* (1995) is the only adaptation up to the end of the 20th century that openly discusses class issues while also exposing "the raw edges of everyday life in Regency England" (2001, 60). Dole also opines that the 1995 version of *Persuasion* failed with audiences because they expected "from costume dramas a prettification that *Persuasion* lacks" (2001, 62).

However, to support how much critics usually acknowledged this film adaptation, I would like to quote some parts from Kathi L. Groenendyk's article on the film where she cites supportive opinions extensively: "*Persuasion* gained acclaim as being unique and innovative. Bill Gallo of *Denver Westward* argues, "[a] major Jane Austen revival seems to be underway these days, but it's difficult to imagine any greater honor to her spirit than this timely and inventive version of *Persuasion*" (53)" (2000, 9). Gallo highlighted that within the Jane Austen revival of the 1990s, this film stands out as being imaginative and "true to" Austen by not beautifying the story. "*Chicago Tribune*'s Michael Wilmington asserts that "[u]sually, Austen is done in a brittle, lacquered style – all plush decor and arch elocution – [...] By contrast, this version is gritty, dramatic, emotional and bristling with social satire and psychological undercurrents" (HI)." (Ibid) Wilmington points out that this film does not use the typical high elocution that was in vogue in such film adaptations because the actors speak in a more natural way and the setting also lacks the plush and artificial décor style while real emotions are expressed in very tense situations.

> [...] Beth Pinsker of the *Dallas Morning News* observes: [...] Michell avoids the traps of modernizing or glamorizing the setting, which gives it a very un-Merchant-Ivory feel. When the characters go outside to tramp through the forest, they get dirty, sweaty and out of breath.... There is likewise no glorious sunshine illuminating lush green fields. Mr. Michell's sky is a bone-chilling gray, and there's an atmosphere of mist and rain. (Ibid)

Pinsker names precisely the 'Merchant-Ivory School of Adaptation' as a standard, which this film does not adapt itself to. The Merchant-Ivory-type of adaptations really set the standard for the beautiful film versions that were not primarily about realism. Here, however, we can observe how dirty the coats become after a walk in the field while these walks take place in the misty, chilly, cloudy weather that is more typical in England and not the sunny and warm weather that is often used in the adaptations that are not so frequent occurrences concerning the English weather. Additionally, probably it takes longer to shoot those films because the crew has to wait for the nice weather a lot, here, however, they could probably shoot any time because they just depicted the English weather as it is. "*The New York Times*' Caryn James claims that Michell and [...] Dear's "*Persuasion* is profoundly truthful [...]" (C 18). [...] the natural appearance of the film contributes to *Persuasion*'s rhetoric. [...]" (C1 8)." (2000, 10) James asserts that this film is truthful and natural in its depiction of Austen's original concerning the visual as well as aural aspects.

In this paper, I present how much *Persuasion* (1995) was a great attempt at realizing in both visual and aural ways the realities of early 19th century England (e.g.: with greasy hair, bad teeth, dirty clothes, as well as the screeching of seagulls, the splashing of water against the oars of the boat, the murmur of the ocean etc.). Concerning voices and sounds, this film is especially realistic since (apart from the sounds mentioned above) the sense of felt life is evoked to the point of the clanking of the cutlery on the plates while eating and talking (and the actors really eat while they talk), to the clapping of hoofs of the approaching horses when waiting for news and the silence is almost deafening or the crackling of the fire that can be so shooting when somebody is cold and tired after a walk, the creaking of the floor under the footsteps of people even in a ballroom making the viewer/listener feel the dance and the movement of the dancers etc. Thus,

I would like to argue how authentic the aural representation of Austen's England was in this film despite its 'quixotic destiny' at its time of production.

David Monaghan discussed the importance of sound in films. He also pointed out how "very little critical attention has been paid to the aural dimensions of film" (2009, 10) and claimed that it "includes not only diegetic and nondiegetic music and noise, but also non-conceptual aspects of spoken narrative commentary and dialogue such as volume, tone, and pitch" – all of which have a fundamental role within the storytelling (2009, 8). In *Persuasion* (1995), all of these aural aspects give us a sense of real life and enhance how we understand the characters' feelings. In this film, the creators made very effective use of these specific sounds, noises and aural signs thus making the storytelling real since we hear the actors' breathing or their steps while walking/running or the clanking and rattling of carriages and carts while travelling in/on them (this is combined with a shaking vision as if we were sitting in/on these carriages/carts too) or the baaing of sheep in the meadows or the chirping of the birds in the trees etc. John Wiltshire, relying on Southam and Lewes, emphasizes that Austen herself was a "dramatic" novelist while being rather "unvisual" (2009, 17). She greatly relied on what the characters say as well as how they say it in addition to what they do and how they behave and re/act in interaction or what they express, rather than showing them in action or describing them and their surroundings in detail (ibid).

Silence, as non-sound or an apparent negation of the aural aspects, also plays an important role in this film in line with the original novel. Wiltshire also mentions how wonderfully silence is realized in this film adaptation, which has a "rigorous deployment of the aural sense" (2009, 30). Anne is a listener primarily and she is silent or rather silenced most of the time or, at least, unattended to (ibid). Anne's silence is central in the original story as well as the film since Anne is treated by her family and surroundings as somebody insignificant and of secondary value, who comes always after everybody else, and she is there to serve others and cater to the others' needs. Yet, it is rather contradictory that she has the strongest identity matched with a reliable and powerful agency that eventually come to the surface in the story. People rely on her and she actually can and does help. Paulette Richards and Tara Ghoshal Wallace both state that Anne is generally silenced in this film adaptation (2003, 120 and 2003, 134). There are a lot of silences in this film, and silences actually are statements in themselves likewise. Anne is usually silenced but she is also often silent out of her own choice, she also consciously does that, because she places others before, above and ahead of herself, which is quite much felt and understood but when she speaks it always matters, her utterances do not contain anything superfluous as it is often the case with all the others she listens to – this is Austen's tactic to show how failed or ridiculous these other characters often are. Wiltshire also adds that Anne is a "listener, confidante, silent observer," whose "presence as actor is minimized" (2009, 31) together with her vocal expressions while she often also overhears the others' talk just by being around or nearby even if what is said is not intended to be heard by her – yet this way she gains important pieces of information. Ariane Hudelet also emphasizes the importance of silence, which is a "form of expression" and not simply "an absence of words [... or] communication" while "physical language" can complement, counterpoint or substitute spoken words (2009, 62). These silent or much rather non-verbal, non-vocal modes of communication are also important tools of conveying information, and exactly because of the silence, they gain more importance in the interpretation of events and characters – in this film likewise similarly to the novel.

As it has already been stated, the film is enriched by various and numerous external noises and sounds that are generally viewed as disturbing in a highly-controlled film, here, however, filmmakers do not strive for studio quality but they want to provide us with actual life. This is also very expressive in *Persuasion* (1995), so sometimes what is uttered matters less than the sur-

rounding noises of the utterance. These noises can really modify what is said not simply by counterpointing it as an example but by the interruption or interference that they cause within the conversation or the dialogue thus contributing to the communication in very effective ways. As Hudelet also states: "[t]his use of noises as punctuation of dialogue or movement is also frequent in *Persuasion*: the sound of a cup put down a little brutally manifests Anne's emotion when Wentworth's name is mentioned for the first time" (2009, 74). This scene is especially telling because Anne never burdens anybody with her emotions, yet here, everybody stops talking and looks at her when she makes such a noise with the clanking of the cup (because her hand starts to shake) and how forcefully she almost smashes it down the table. Additionally, "[w]ords can remain trivial, but the look and the tone can make the addressee receptive to the implicit message, and therefore materialize an unspoken understanding" (Hudelet 2009, 65). These unspoken or non-verbal aural dimensions speak volumes in the film.

This is especially the case in the scene when Wentworth is talking about Fanny/Phoebe Harville and Captain Benwick's relationship. Here, he is actually talking about his enduring love for Anne, and how against all odds, he still wants her – all of which Anne understands from his averted looks, his hesitation, slight gasping, quick changes of the volume and pitch of his voice, and a little rasping that comes into his voice etc. So, here the unspoken understanding and the implicit message are more important than what happened to Fanny/Phoebe and Benwick – which both Anne and Wentworth as well as we, the audience, understand based on body language that involves a lot of involuntary sounds and noises. Hudelet also suggests that this "secondary language" of simple signs such as gesture, tone and other nonverbal aural markers while being "largely inconspicuous" are still constantly present while influencing, sometimes changing or even substituting meaning in the original texts as well as in the adaptations (2009, 59). Thus the "phonic quality of language seems to overcome its semantic value" and the "feeling" of what is said overwrites the actual meaning of the words (Hudelet 2009, 59).

When a film is made, the actors and actresses inevitably give corporeality to the Austenian characters and start to produce sounds and noises. *Persuasion* (1995) is very realistic from this point of view, too, because the soundtrack is not done in a sense that the voices would be perfected, equalized and all background noise would be cancelled. When the characters are walking on the seashore the wind blows and we hear their talk through the wind, there are also the seagulls that interrupt the flow of the discussion as well as the murmur and splashing of the ocean. Or when there is a dinner party and Wentworth is talking about his experiences and adventures at sea, other people are talking and laughing continually or even butting in or asking questions or reacting with little screams or puffing noises etc. In the meantime, they are also eating and drinking thus making us hear chewing and gulping sounds as well as the clanking of the cutlery etc. It is as if we were there, really part of the dinner party, it is realistic and not so remote and idealized as the other adaptations are usually where the sounds and noises are heavily controlled and the actors are not actually eating and drinking at the table.

Another important addition is that very elevated and emotional music is rarely added to this film. The soundtrack is also very minimal and when the fillmakers want to achieve an emotional moment, they do not add to the scenes some intense music produced by a symphonic orchestra in a studio but they often leave simply the sounds and voices of the actors with specific intonation or a raspy voice or unequal breathing and there is no background music. A wonderful example for this is the scene I have already mentioned when Wentworth and Anne meet before the concert and they are talking to each other while we almost witness an open revelation of sentiments marking a crucial step in the development of their relationship both of them realizing without actually admitting their love that they still feel for each other, yet, all this is communicated through broken words and sentences, a raspy voice, heavy breathing, deep silences

and intonation – not through the exact words themselves, and little happens visually, too. There is no great and intense background music in studio quality with a whole orchestra to express their emotional intensity, the two actors manage to express this feeling with the use of or the withholding of their voices and bodily sounds.

What is more, the floors are creaking almost every time when people are walking or couples are dancing etc. be it a concert hall or a family home, and in communal places, other people are talking too, and we can hear that as well, not only those on whom we focus. The crackling of the fire or the beating of the rain against the window pane are also so wonderfully used because they seem to be so insignificant and monotonous noises but they are part of life and when you are tired and wet and cold it can be so imperial juts to sit next to a fire and listen to it – it is also reproduced in the film. Or when Anne is waiting for the news whether Louisa gets better or not and whether Wentworth marries her or not, Anne is just waiting in silence sometimes listening to the rain, then, the hoofs of a horse are heard and the news arrive that Louisa got better. Until the moment of the approaching of the horse and Charles' shouting the silence is almost deafening while being only mixed with the dull beating of the rain which are, by the way, very expressive of how Anne probably feels at that moment. These sounds all make the whole film much more realistic and it really feels like as if we were there participating in the events, experiencing early 19th century England – you can almost also smell the drying clothes next to the fire or the salty water on the sea shore or the wet grass after the rain etc. The strong aural evocation of possibly real life sounds of this era makes the viewer's other senses experience it too as you almost start to taste, smell and touch the life on screen and not simply see it.

Hudelet also points out how talking itself and the conversations are also delivered in a way that makes them real for the viewer/listener as opposed to other film adaptations:

> The reverence for her dialogues appears mainly through the perfect intelligibility of most dialogues and through the rather uniform kind of accent that one finds in most films.4 But Roger Michell, the director of *Persuasion*, resents this forced uniformity; he declared in the *Daily Telegraph*, "I was repulsed by the idea of people in Jane Austen speaking in the same voice. It seemed absolutely absurd so I've tried to get as many varieties as possible" (Davies 12). Accompanying this attempt at variety is also a desire to transform these words into lively, spoken English, which at times requires an abandonment of the absolute intelligibility that is generally the rule. In *Persuasion*, dialogue is used, spoken, and staged in order to create certain effects, sometimes before preserving the precise message. Language is then treated as a sound as well as a code. (Hudelet 2005, 178)

One of the best examples for this is the scene I mentioned above when Wentworth almost confesses his love to Anne before the concert, he speaks in a way that makes it alive since it is uneven, sometimes inaudible and unintelligible, the pitch and the volume of his voice changes quickly because of the emotions, hence, we hardly hear what he says but it does not matter because what matters is conveyed through his manner of speech and the other sounds that he produces, not the exact words. These various sounds express more than a simple 'I still love you, Anne, no matter what; please, marry me' would, these aural markers express everything that he feels at the moment and have felt in the last 8 years.

Additionally, it is rather fascinating vocally and aurally when Anne and Wentworth eventually find each other and have an agreement. They do not say anything anymore because everything has been said in Wentworth's letter, that is conveyed in a way that Anne is shown reading it while his voiceover is narrating it aloud to us. Then their unity is expressed by Anne's voice joining that of Wentworth, and even further we switch back to his voice only while Anne can hardly breathe because of her emotional turmoil. She becomes very agitated and leaves, outside she meets Wentworth, they only look into each other's eyes and she gives him her hand, they kiss (which would not have happened in Regency England but it is a late 20th century adaptation

and they still tried to appeal a little to viewer expectations). It is so expressive and captivating that one of the most intense and important moments in their lives can be carried out only in the street and not in the intimacy of a room because the anonymous, impersonal, indifferent and populated street full of voices and noises turns out to be a much better and convenient space for it, where, in fact, they are not disturbed.

It is especially effective to 'hear' their silence amid the noises of the outside world. In this adaptation, there is a carnival going on in the street and the carnival troop and the masses pass them by with an evidently loud noise, yet, they look as if they did not even hear it. The silence between them almost shouts and is in contrast with the outside noises entirely. Their absolute as well as intense understanding and unity is highlighted by their total silence that almost encapsulates them into a closed sphere, their (now united) inner world, while the 'outside' turmoil cannot reach them because now they are absolutely calm and happy. In the novel, they talk throughout the streets agreeing upon everything but in this adaptation, they just walk away in silence ignoring the cavalcade of the carnival going on in the streets of Bath.

The Austen adaptations usually have an idealized, charmed and dream-like quality with beautiful background music going on almost all the time so that 'we know' (we are trained to know according to the indoctrination of the cultural literacy of our times) what we should feel at the moment, the voices almost speak with studio quality all the time and there is never a 'disturbing or uncontrolled' extra sound or noise whatsoever, however, *Persuasion* (1995) is not like that, it is full of real life voices and noises, and this film really makes a difference (in every way). As Hudelet also opines:

> [t]he films of Austen's novels have benefited from considerable budgets, and from recent quality sound techniques such as dolby. [...] One can distinguish two approaches, one which tries to suppress the traces of materiality [...] in order to construct an abstract, idealized, and disembodied world, and one which emphasizes them in order to include the characters in a concrete, specific sensorial world. [...] The vividness of the characters, the intense physical presence that many viewers felt in front of these films [...] was [...] also the result of this specific treatment of sound: they made us hear these stories as vividly as they made us see them. [...] In *Persuasion*, characters sometimes speak with their mouths full during meals, and we can hear them chew or swallow; Sir Walter Elliot often clears his throat before speaking. [...], the characters are presented as material bodies which live, move, exhale, ingest. (Hudelet 2005, 180–181)

This film is not disembodied and aerial like what Austen adaptations often are greatly because the sounds and the noises really fill up the bodies and make us sense them as whole and real. This adaptation is really material and you feel as if you could touch life on screen exactly because you hear it as life usually sounds and not in a sterile, abstract way as in distant fairy tales, consequently the story's as well as the characters' existence is vivid as a result.

In conclusion, *Persuasion* (1995) manages to achieve a realist approach to the depiction of Austen's early 19th century novel and we get to feel as if we were part of the life in Regency England and the characters were alive. The 1995 adaptation of *Persuasion* is almost an experimental film from the point of view of sound because no real life sounds and noises are excluded and nothing is silenced that sounds real, but among the Austen adaptations stands out with this attempt till the moment when, in *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), the pig starts to snort while Mrs. Bennet looks at it as if she is about to bite it, anticipating a delicious ham. Since that time, real sounds and noises are more and more allowed into the Austen adaptations and the representation of early 19th century England, but still not to the level of *Persuasion* (1995) which was and still is ahead of its time and the Austen adaptations considering realism.

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# Foreign Language Anxiety as a Complex System

**Keywords**

FLA, CT, language learners, foreign language development, qualitative research

## Introduction

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has been a widely studied area in applied linguistics for decades with many researchers attempting to identify factors which may contribute to experiencing FLA. Furthermore, they have also sought possible techniques with which the adverse impacts of this kind of anxiety could be mitigated.

The dominant methodology to study notions in SLA was adopted from the natural sciences, where the object of study was examined by identifying the parts of a particular construct and analysing these parts in isolation. After an analysis of the separate constituents, the behaviour of the whole construct could be explained. This kind of methodology required a shared measurement system, so that researchers could compare their results and make generalisations. With regard to FLA, Horwitz (1983) provided this tool, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which allowed researchers to obtain comparable results and make generalisations.

Based on this scale, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) identified three interrelated manifestations of FLA: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Furthermore, they defined FLA as a set of specific anxiety reactions which are unique to the language learning context, where context not only means foreign language classrooms, but any context where a particular foreign language is used.

Many researchers have adopted this questionnaire and identified numerous possible anxiety-provoking factors, such as erroneous beliefs (Horwitz, 1988, Bell, 2005), reading anxiety (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999), writing anxiety (Cheng, 2002), age, previous experiences with learning a foreign language, or whether the participants spent a longer period in a country of the target language (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999), and how reading and speaking anxiety vary in different contexts (Kim, 2009). The findings of these articles support the contention that FLA is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon and if teachers and learners wish to mitigate its negative impacts, they need to find solutions which are applicable in that specific class, with particular individuals.

As more and more factors have been identified, researchers categorised the manifold factors which can play a role in the emergence of FLA. One categorisation was made by Zhang and Zhong (2012) who formed four groups: learner-induced, classroom-related, skill-specific, and society-imposed anxiety.

Although researchers recognised the context dependency and complexity of FLA, with the dominant research methodology, they could not capture variability from context to context or change over time. Cognitivist SLA views language learning as a primarily mental and individual process in which social and contextual factors play only a small role. In contrast, social approaches emphasise the importance of context and the influence of social processes.

They advocate multiplicity and variability on all levels, where individuals are examined in their particular social contexts. They view L2 users as competent speakers who are able to achieve their communicative goals even if they use less target-like structures (Pavlenko, 2002). Furthermore, these approaches consider language learning a never-ending process, thus L2 users always have opportunities to add something new to their repertoires to be able to communicate more effectively. However, individuals'cognitive and linguistic resources are still taken into consideration during analysis (Ortega, 2011).

A particular social approach, complexity theory (CT), was introduced by Larsen-Freeman (1997), who argued that language can be seen as a complex dynamic system because it is dynamic, complex, nonlinear, chaotic, unpredictable, sensitive to initial conditions, open, self-organising, feedback sensitive, and adaptive (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p. 142). The various elements of a complex dynamic system interact with each other over time on different levels; therefore there is no element which remains stable. Furthermore, the exact time and impact of a change cannot be predicted.

The utility of CT was illustrated by a reanalysis of previous research on the field of SLA (Ellis and Larsen-Freeman, 2006) and in a volume by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), in which the researchers discussed the theoretical background and they also offered possible research methods to examine notions in SLA from a CT perspective.

Other researchers supported Larsen-Freeman's contention and they discussed the advantages of CT by focusing on inter- and intraindividual variation (de Bot, Lowie, and Verspoor, 2007 and de Bot, 2008) and willingness to communicate (WTC) (MacIntyre and Legatto 2011). However, some difficulties may arise regarding its differences from traditional SLA research, such as the use of qualitative or mixed methods analysis or the employment of longitudinal research designs (Dörnyei 2009).

Despite the possible shortcomings, qualitative and mixed methods can provide researchers rich data and they can map the complexities of language learning more effectively (Spielmann and Radnofsky, 2001). Furthermore, a mixed methods research design allows asking more complex questions and investigating complex processes in applied linguistics (Ivankova and Greer, 2015). Narrative inquiry may serve as the qualitative component of a mixed methods research design. The use of this method can provide a richer analysis of phenomena in language teaching and learning and it can deal with the complexities of personal and social experiences which shape how individuals think and act during language learning (Webster and Mertova, 2007). It may also promote the examination of phenomena from the perspective of language learners, for example in the case of FLA, regarding different proficiency levels in various settings (von Wörde, 2003, Tóth, 2011, and Tóth, 2019).

In my paper, I will adopt the complexity theory (CT) perspective to examine the various relationships between elements which may affect the participants' level of anxiety and how the impact of these elements can change over time. I have chosen this perspective because it can offer a better understanding of FLA by providing a possible explanation of individual variation and why context is inseparable from other elements during analysis. . The paper examines FLA from a CT perspective. I will analyse ten oral interviews, during which the participants talk about their language learning experiences and beliefs, focusing on the following characteristics of complex systems: heterogeneity, dynamism, non-linearity, openness, and the role of context. The present paper is the qualitative part of a mixed methods study with the same title.

## 1. Methodology

### 1.1. Participants

The ten participants of the study were chosen because of their willingness to talk about their experiences of learning English. Language proficiency was not required; the only criterion was that the volunteers needed to have been learning English for at least four years in a classroom setting. Two of them were males and eight of them were females, between the ages of 21 and 26, who had been learning English for four to eighteen years at the time of the study. Four had known me before the study which could have influenced their behaviour during their interviews.

### 1.2. Procedure

The recorded interviews were semi-structured. I chose this type of interview to make change and individual variation more visible, seeing that the participants had different language learning backgrounds. During the interviews, I also shared some of my own experiences in connection with language learning to build trust and make the situation more comfortable for them. This design also allowed me to ask further questions and gave the participants the opportunity to explain certain experiences and events more elaborately. The interviews were conducted in Hungarian; the interviewees were thus able to share their experiences and thoughts without the limitations of their English. Furthermore, some participants noted that they wanted to talk about these topics in their mother tongue because they were too personal.

The interviews lasted between 27 to 47 minutes and were recorded in different places. With six participants I conducted the interviews in the university library, while one participant asked me to go to her apartment because she needed quite. Three interviews were conducted online because face-to-face communication was not possible. I informed them that their recordings would be transcribed and used in my thesis. Names of people and places, such as language schools, were deleted from the transcriptions to maintain anonymity. The interviews were transcribed for further analysis with VOICE mark-up conventions 2.1 (2007). Due to the fact that in Hungarian the letter 'ő' can stand both for a filled pause and for the third-person singular pronoun, I indicated the latter with blue to distinguish its two functions in the transcriptions.

There were previously written questions for the interviews but they served as guidelines rather than questions which must be asked. The order of the questions varied from participant to participant. The following main topics were discussed during the interviews:

*Language learning background*
How long have you been learning English?
Did you go to a programme in secondary school where you learnt some of your subjects in English?
How many English teachers did you have during your primary and secondary school education?
*Experiences during learning English in a classroom setting*
What was an EFL lesson like in primary/secondary school?
How did you and your classmates handle mistakes during an EFL lesson?
How did you feel during the first months of your university studies?
*The English language*
Is the English language easier to learn compared to other foreign languages?
If somebody would like to achieve a confident B2 level, how much time would they need to reach this goal?

*Language learning*
Do you consider yourself a good language learner?
Are Hungarians good language learners?
What is the most important element for you during language learning: grammar, vocabulary, fluent speech, or something else?

## 2. Results and discussion

During the interviews, I paid particular attention to talk about these topics in order to highlight the features of complex systems, analysing both the content and the form of the interviews. By form, I examined words or expressions which could also emphasise the changing nature of FLA. The following elements of CT were examined: dynamism, complexity, non-linearity, openness, adaptability, and inter-and intraindividual variability. Furthermore, attitudes to the English language and language learning in general were also investigated. Although I discuss these elements in isolation, the examples can go to other categories as well, taking into consideration the interconnectedness of elements. I apply this design because it enables me to illustrate the properties of a complex system more explicitly.

### 2.1. Dynamism

Change over time was visible in all the interviews, and it had various manifestations, from different erroneous beliefs to anxiety itself. Dynamism does not entail gradual change in one direction; there are shifts which can happen in both directions. A given phenomenon, for example, the level of anxiety is not stable from context to context and seemingly same situations may induce different levels of anxiety. The participants' narratives demonstrated this dynamism: the same tasks did not induce the same levels of anxiety, there were fluctuations in their FLA during their years of learning English, and the anxiety-provoking situations also changed over time.

Anna's attitude to her research topic changed over time. When I asked her about how she handled the situation of needing to work with materials in English, she described her feelings in the following way:

> I got frightened a little bit, I was scared that I wouldn't understand or misunderstand things and this will lead my research down the wrong path, that I won't interpret something as I should, but fortunately, after spending more time with it and digging into the topic, I saw that it was not an impossible task and I was also able to improve myself, so for my part I considered it as pushing the envelope. (p. 78)

Improvement and reaching her limits were recurring themes in her narrative. For example, she opted for a course where the other people were English majors to improve her skills, despite the fact that she had not considered herself competent at the beginning.

Laura provided details that illustrated the changing nature of FLA. In her case 'being the best' was a prominent element. She said that she felt anxiety on an exaggerated level if she perceived anyone being better in English than herself:

> And she spoke English very well and with really good vocabulary, she had great opinions, and from the moment she started talking, I closed up and somehow I couldn't express my thoughts. So if there was someone before me who was way better, I somehow withdrew and I didn't want to look like an idiot or I don't know. (p. 168)

However, when she did practice-teaching, she did not experience anxiety. She also had to speak, but this time she was the teacher, which changed everything:

> I wasn't anxious at all. Here comes the case that I can be the best and I handle and know the language the best in a given group, so there is no anxiety. So I really, really enjoyed the practice-teaching. (p.171)

Her level of anxiety depended on which other participants she had to interact with. This might show that although there are certain situations which are more anxiety provoking for learners – speaking in a foreign language in Laura's case –, but in these situations there are other factors which may strengthen or mitigate the negative feelings.

Vera's attitude to speaking in front of others changed during her secondary school years but she did not know what induced her higher level of anxiety. This may indicate that there are cases where it is impossible to highlight a factor which could be said to induce anxiety because change resulted from the fluctuation of many elements in the system.

Viki's description of her stay in England provided a further example that the level of anxiety is not constant even if we are seemingly in the same situation. In her case, talking to native speakers was an anxiety provoking situation, but she managed to overcome it and she was able to talk to them more easily later. This change can highlight that it is possible to control anxiety and if we have positive experiences in a demanding situation, we can concentrate on what we want to achieve in using the language.

> Then I really panicked about that by the way, we hadn't learnt some of the tenses and how I would talk to the host family that way, but later I was much forced to because I was together with people who were even shyer than me and then I was usually the one who talked instead of them and then this gave me confidence. (p. 209)

Change over time could also be detected in participants' language use. The most common structures to express change *were at the beginning, and/ but later, at the end, in the end, after some time.* For example, 'At the beginning, we were very embarrassed ... and later, at the end there was more talking.' (Áron p.102) 'I think at the very beginning I was afraid ... but after a few weeks or months ... in the end I had neutral feelings' (Csenge p.112)

When Tibi talked about his teachers in primary and secondary school asked them to learn a certain number of words by the next lesson, he did not understand this at first, but later he realised it should have been beneficial to him if he had learnt vocabulary from lesson to lesson.

> Let's say, learn 220 words for tomorrow and often I didn't understand it, it didn't make sense, but later I realised what it was for, why we had to do it, but doing it like that it wasn't for me. (p. 186)

Áron had a private tutor who constantly corrected his mistakes during the lessons. He admitted that for a while it was very irritating but it was worth it because he can speak correctly. This may also indicate the variability of effective methods; what is considered bad for the development of students generally may be a successful strategy for certain students.

### 2.2. Complexity (Heterogeneity)

Complex systems consist of many elements which interact with each other and these interactions lead to unpredictable processes. It is not predictable which elements will influence the behaviour of the system; only previous states can be analysed or the state in which the system is presently. This manifoldness was also present in the participants' narratives. However, the same

factors influenced their feelings and experiences differently, depending on which factor was dominant in a particular situation.

Relationship with teachers has proved to be a significant source of anxiety, and this was highlighted by some participants as well. For example, Kriszti talked about her negative feelings towards the English lessons and the language itself while she was taught by a certain teacher, but her attitude changed when a new teacher came.

Laura noted how important the attitude of teachers to their courses and to their students is.

> My teacher in primary school constantly told me that my pronunciation was not nice, she wanted to force a British accent on me at all costs, which sounded very lame from my mouth ... and after I went to the private teacher, I always mentioned to her that I was afraid because my pronunciation wouldn't be good for the entrance exam, how did I want to get in there? And she said that everything was fine. (p.202)

The relationship with classmates was also discussed during the interviews. Some participants reported positive feelings and experiences but others noted that they had a rather bad relationship with their classmates.

Laura mentioned her classmates as one of the possible anxiety-provoking factors during her secondary school years. However, this seemed to be a bidirectional relationship.

> And I did not get on well with my classmates, so I didn't show an interest in talking to them, it was complex but I think this judgement or this negative feedback was maybe that but not on the part of the teacher but rather on the part of my classmates I knew that they would make fun of me but there's nothing at stake really I know this now but during that time there could have been such things maybe. (p. 173)

In the case of Csilla, positive opinions from peers also induced anxiety. When she was the only secondary school student in the football training, her peers and the coach thought that she was the best in the group – because she had been learning English for years, she was capable of telling the new international student what to do in a training. But this was rather an expectation for Csilla; she was not as good as her peers thought, and the situation of having to speak only in English caused her a high anxiety level.

Tibi was afraid to go to English classes after a time, because the behaviour of his classmates only made his anxiety worse.

> My classmates also played a role, it formed a negative situation that when I said or tried to get something out, they immediately said: say something at last, let's move on, it's not okay like this, and these experiences hurt, when we had these kinds of situations, and after a time I was beginning to be afraid of saying anything or expressing myself at all because I knew that sooner or later it would be my turn. (p. 187)

What they found difficult in learning English also varied. Some interviewees' answers reflect the findings of previous research: speaking activities contributed to a higher level of FLA for the majority of participants. However, this anxiety was expressed in different ways. Furthermore, they noted some possible factors which had not been widely investigated, such as experiencing FLA during listening tasks.

Csilla said that the limits of her skills in English evoked higher levels of anxiety because:

> I can't express everything I would like, but it's a little bit frustrating already that I have something in mind that I would really love to tell the other but crap, oh sorry, so I'm not able to say those things in that language, because I don't know the words and I have to simplify them a lot, and I feel that my thoughts become lost and all the things I would like to express. (p. 127)

Anna noted the listening task as the most anxiety-provoking factor.

> What didn't go well and still causes me great difficulties is the listening. So, it's killing me. So my hearing is very selective anyway or it's just bad, I have no idea, but I can't hear the words the way I should when recordings are played and this caused me quite a lot problems and the listening tasks have always gone weakly. (p. 82)

Áron talked about his difficulties in learning vocabulary and grammatical rules. He was good at speaking and managed to form correct sentences, but he did not know the rules explicitly.

Kriszti remembered being very anxious when she could not prepare in advance and she had to say something spontaneously.

Dóra's case was unique among the participants because she did not note any particularly bad experiences. However, she used the phrase 'thank God' because she did not have problems learning languages. For example, when she talked about her time in England, she reported that she really enjoyed staying there.

> Thank God I had a very good command of English, so, but it was interesting because I was in a big city and I lived with a foreign family, but they spoke English beautifully so I was absolutely able to understand them and I could express myself well in most cases. (p.141 )

She also talked about her teacher in a very positive way.

> Thank God I had a very good teacher, he was with us from primary to secondary school and I really loved the subject at that time, thank God I was also good at it, hm, I don't remember anything which caused me difficulty. (p. 142)

One explanation for this gratitude may be that her classmates and later the majority of those people she had contact with did not have such a good command of languages, so she may have felt that she should be thankful for having no difficulty in learning languages.

### 2.3. Non-linearity

Change over time results in changing relationship between the elements of a system. One element does not always have the same impact on other elements and an element which only had a small impact on the system at a particular time can be dominant in other periods.

Csenge did not particularly like her English lessons, so she went to a private teacher to improve. Before her language exam, she watched one of the Harry Potter films in English, which had such a great impact on her that she later started reading the novels in English to develop her skills. She considered this event as a turning point because after watching the film in English, she became interested in learning the language and felt more motivated.

Áron realised during his university studies that a different learning style could make him a better learner of vocabulary. At the university he had to learn different courses in English and not the English language itself, which changed his attitude to learning.

Kriszti reported that after she obtained her advanced language certificate, she felt more confident in speaking.

> I got my advanced level certificate before our high school graduation, so I wasn't nervous about the exams at all because I knew that the advanced exam probably wouldn't be so hard as the language exam, so I felt really brave there. (p. 155)

### 2.4. Openness and adaptability

Stimuli can come from outside the system: teachers, other students, learning material, and expectations from others; all come from outside and can induce anxiety. The system adapts to these stimuli, and relationships between the elements change. Change in one element can result in change in the whole system. After watching one of the Harry Potter films, Csenge started being interested in learning English, then she read more novels in English as well because she became motivated to understand and use the language and she was also able to pass an advanced English exam. She will continue to invest in learning because she would like to improve, and she would like to travel to Australia for a longer period.

Kriszti's attitude to English changed after they were assigned a new teacher in primary school. She started enjoying her classes because the new teacher created a good atmosphere. As a result, she became interested in the language itself and decided to go to an English programme, and then she went to the English Studies BA programme.

Áron struggled with learning vocabulary and materials which needed to be memorised. At university, he encountered new learning styles which helped him to learn facts and rules. Furthermore, his courses provided him enough reading and writing, so that he could apply the new vocabulary and learn it more easily.

### 2.5. Context

In complexity theory context is inseparable from other elements of the system. All possible sources which were identified as anxiety-provoking represent a different context; speaking in front of others, talking to a native speaker, fear of misunderstanding and grammatical mistakes when someone needs to use a foreign language. Participants' narratives also revealed various contexts in which anxiety intensified and manifested in negative thoughts or even bodily reactions.

Laura was among those participants who mentioned speaking as the most anxiety provoking situation.

> I have never liked talking, I was rather an introvert because of my surroundings and it didn't matter if I was able to answer or if I really wanted to I didn't ever answer. So I didn't really like communicative things, I didn't like them. (p. 168)

However, during her English oral exam in her first year, she had good experiences despite the fact that she was afraid of talking in other contexts. The Academic English exam at the end of English majors' first phase of learning (after one year or one-and-a-half years, depending on the programme) is considered a serious and difficult exam by many students because those who cannot pass it will not be able to opt for a great number of courses in the following semesters.

She also noted the differences in goals someone wants to achieve which are also determined by context.

> From the perspective of students, the question is what goals they set, if they would like to have a job where they need to communicate fluently, the grammar, the speaking, listening, letter writing have to be in place. But if the goal is to have a penfriend or I don't know, where they can get to know foreign people and they chat or I don't know, the measure is lower, I think. (p. 178)

The importance of context in the participants' narratives was in line with Cheng's (2002) observations that findings should be applicable in a particular context, in the case of the participants with whom the researcher worked because FLA can manifest differently in different instructional settings. Although I only interviewed ten participants, it was clear that their language learning experiences and feelings could not be separated from their teachers, their classmates, and the different programmes they had studied in.

### 2.6. Inter- and intraindividual variability

Variability among the participants and the changing attitudes and beliefs of an interviewee were also detectable in the narratives. When I asked them whether English is an easier language to learn compared to other foreign languages, all of them answered that English is a relatively easy language, but they mentioned different factors why English can be easy and their reasons for saying that also changed. They had learnt other languages as well, so they could compare learning English and learning other foreign languages.

As a most important reason for thinking that English was easy to learn was grammar. Grammar was noted by a number of participants which can be a result of the grammar-based instruction they received in primary and secondary school.

> I think English is easier because there are not so many opportunities to make mistakes, there is no, its inflection is not so as brutal as in other languages, let's say Russian, so I think it is easier in this respect. (Csenge, p.117)

Another reason why English may be easier to learn was the fact that English is everywhere, we can watch films in English and read whole books, and there are a lot of materials on the Internet as well. These opportunities can encourage students to learn English because they are relatively easy to access and learners should exploit these sources which were not available for previous generations.

Viki thought that the availability of English materials cannot be ignored because she could not find so many materials in Russian.

> And obviously there are many rules in English as well but because of that [few inflection rules] it has way fewer than in other languages ... but I think in general we can say that another thing why I think it is easier to learn English because you have far more opportunities to practise it, there are more impulses which reach you. (p. 222)

Dóra talked about the importance of being motivated and persistent as well as language aptitude.

> I think English is the foundation of languages so I think there are only more difficult languages than English, so I think learning it can be relatively easy if someone does it intensively, with the help of a teacher, and if she is persistent, it can take two years to learn it especially if she has a language aptitude. (p. 149)

The reasons why they considered Hungarians not very effective language learners also differed. Beyond their opinions, they gave advice to their past selves and those learners who have difficulties in learning languages. Csenge noted the lack of confidence and language aptitude as possible debilitating factors:

> I think, well, somebody may not have confidence, let's say because they don't have language aptitude either and it is so easy for those who have these, I also got these kinds of comments but I think that is not a well-founded opinion because you have to study anyway ..., so the words just won't come into your head. (p. 121)

Áron considered 'encountering the language' a crucial factor but as the availability of English materials has become more widespread, students may be more willing to use the Internet or other services to improve their skills. Furthermore, we do not speak enough in casual situations.

> I think the problem is that we don't encounter the language. In Finland many people can speak English on a basic level because they don't translate the programmes, they just make subtitles ... And another reason is that if we are asked to speak or do anything in a foreign language it is within exam situations. There is always something at stake. You pass or you fail, they don't ask you to try to make yourself understood. And when a real life situation comes, and you need to make yourself understood, you start to panic. Because that's what you have been taught during exams. (p. 110)

The interview data supported the contention that FLA can be seen as a complex system. It was dynamic because possible anxiety-provoking situations changed over time. The data also showed that anxiety can change in the other direction as well: Anna was afraid at the beginning of her doctoral programme when she found out the articles in her field of interest were in English. As she continued reading and managed to understand the articles and other materials, her level of anxiety was reduced.

The participants reported various possible sources of anxiety which were in line with findings of previous studies: classroom speaking activities, teachers, classmates, talking to foreigners, native speakers, and perfectionism were all noted. However, narratives also revealed different reasons why the interviewees felt higher levels of anxiety in these situations.

Non-linearity was also detected. Csenge reported a neutral relationship to English but after watching a film in the language, she became more motivated and invested in learning. Kriszti started to be interested in English after her class was assigned a new teacher in primary school and at the time of the study, she was doing her BA thesis in the English Studies programme.

FLA showed openness and adaptability: teachers, classmates, the settings in which the participants had been in connection with learning English had an impact on their level of anxiety. Furthermore, change in one element induced other changes in the system: Laura did not like speaking in secondary school because she did not have a good relationship with her classmates and because there were some people she considered better than herself. During practice teaching, she could be in control and she could be the best of a group which also had a positive impact on speaking in other settings as well.

Context also proved to be a significant factor both in terms of the level of anxiety and individual variability. Tibi felt anxious when he had to talk in front of his classmates and this anxiety affected his attitude to language learning over the years. However, after talking to foreigners who encouraged him to talk without worrying about his pronunciation or grammatical mistakes, he became more open to learning English.

The findings supported the multidimensional nature of FLA which Kim (2009) discussed in connection with college students who enrolled in speaking and reading classes. The narratives also showed that FLA can change from context to context, and it does not necessarily remain on the same level in the same contexts due to the impact of other factors which also influence its level. Change can be a very slow process as my findings indicated; the participants talked in terms of years when they reflected on changes in their level of anxiety, motivation, or attitude to language learning.

## 3. Conclusion

My aim was to examine if FLA can be seen as a complex system. I interviewed ten university students who had been learning English for at least four years. Language proficiency was not measured because the properties of complex systems can manifest on all levels, independent of language proficiency or language learning background.

The analysis of the qualitative data showed that in the case of my participants FLA could be seen as a complex system. It changed over time and its level was not the same in every context (dynamic). The participants reported various factors which could contribute to their anxiety and the quality of it also varied (complex). Some events had such a great impact on the participants that their whole attitude changed to learning English (non-linear, adaptive). The importance of context was also significant in the narratives.

The results could give a possible understanding of the contradictory findings of previous research: levels of anxiety can change over time and from context to context. Language learners may orient to particular paths, but their manifestations of FLA are not the same and are not universal due to the different relationships of factors.

Despite the fact that interviews should not be perceived as accurate or objective reflections of reality, they can provide researchers rich data about how learners themselves view anxiety or other areas of language development. Even if the learners' views are already interpretations of various events, their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour depend on these interpretations and they form these notions based on their own experiences, irrespective of what happened to them from a more objective standpoint.

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