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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

[Inter]sections has been undergoing a make-over which is still in progress. Basically, it's transitioning towards a peer-reviewed form with **only two core sections (graduate and undergraduate)**, with longer and fewer papers which may allow for more fully developed arguments, and a larger number special issues. Out of the older sections we shall of course be keeping the **reviews** (we still love the idea of having many shotgun reviews, but are mostly inviting longer ones), as well as the very popular **American Studies in Romania/Abroad** section. We are also open to adding **interviews** and other forms of organizing what you write, but prefer to keep articles out of the much-too-confining genre-specific rubrics we operated with for the first part of this journal's existence.

Also, our publication is becoming a **trimestrial affair**, in an attempt to boost the quality of our work and central nervous system. To this end, we have been very happy to welcome several new members to our **(graduate student) peer-reviewing team**, and work out a new peer-reviewing system which is hopefully going to be tough but rewarding. A new set of (potentially evolving) publication guidelines is now available on the (again, quite new)

American Studies website:
<http://www.americanstudies.ro/?article=54>

Our new e-mail address is
intersections@americanstudies.ro.

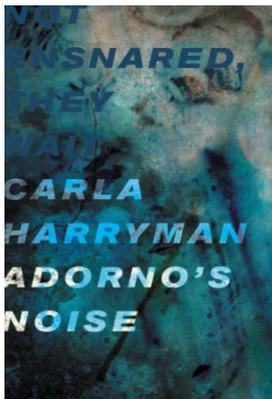
Please use it for all submissions, questions or comments. Make no mistake, we loved the old format and are still expecting many contributions from the initial *[Inter]sections* team, but thought the quality of the articles was often unfortunately unequal, and the previous strictures of organization, exhausting and not that inviting for prospective contributors.

As for this issue, it kicks off most wonderfully with an interview with American poet Carla Harryman, who was kind enough to talk to us about her many exciting projects, and wait for us to emerge from our various workaholic stupors to produce this belated December issue. All in all, let me end by saying that although the spirit of Judith Butler hovers most pleasantly over our October-December *[Inter]sections*, this one is not (yet) a gender and sexuality special issue (when we do that we'll advertise it high and low well in advance). It may not make for as nimble a read as our previous issues, but we believe the papers published here say a lot of exciting things about the new and old members of our team and some of our favorite bones of contention.

[INTER]SECTIONS INTERVIEWS

CARLA HARRYMAN

Carla Harryman is an American prose writer, playwright, poet, and essayist often associated with the Language School of Poetry. In 1979, she co-founded the San Francisco Poets Theater, which staged experimental plays. Her volumes *Percentage* (1979), *Under the Bridge* (1980), *Property* (1982), *The Middle* (1983), *Vice* (1986), *Animal Instincts* (1989), *In the Mode Of* (1991), *Memory Play* (1994), *The Words* (1994), *There Never Was a Rose without a Thorn* (1995), *Gardener of Stars* (2001), *Baby* (2005), *Open Box: Improvisations* (2007), *Adorno's Noise* (2008) are collections of individually titled short works, parable-like narratives, dramas, poetic essays. Her writings are known for the genre-disrupting poetry, performance and prose – intertwining theory and fiction, abstractions and androgyny, rational and nonrational, satire and dialogue, monologue and third-person narrative. Her latest book, *Adorno's Noise* (published by Essay Press, 2008) is a collection of experimental, conceptual essays on globalization, sexuality, the place of art and artist, the power of the state. Phrases from Theodor Adorno's philosophical text *Minima Moralia* serve as starting points for investigations across issues such as poetry, politics, art, memory, self, and...Adorno.



An interview with Carla Harryman by Costinela Drăgan

[INTER]SECTIONS: Could you please tell us a little about you as a writer – what are your main concerns, what is your poetic philosophy? Who would you say has influenced you the most?

HARRYMAN: “Play” as a construction engages me in many senses: including playfulness as an attitude toward writing and performing; game playing and the construction of language games; the genre of the theatrical play; play as a combined technical and critical tool used to negotiate social negativity and aesthetic complexity; play as it refers to motion with an emphasis on surface—as in the play of light on water—or an unsteady irregular motion of language; play as performance, with a stress on structured improvisation; play as an innovative mode of meaning making, which I sometimes relate to the connection between the literal and make-believe in children’s play; play as an activity that is shared and that draws from pre-existing materials.

What are the social logics of genre that compel me to query, sometimes radically, its conventions? What is the connection between innovative and abstract uses of narrative and non-narrative and social meaning? How do diverse artistic media and disciplines impact each other across categories? How might the innovative modes of thinking in visual art, music, and performance contribute to opening up the sometimes overly constrained and commercial, sometimes stodgy, and simplistic representational spaces of contemporary literature? I wish I had a poetic philosophy that I could paraphrase simply, but I must leave these questions open. Additionally, the connection between language as an intensely abstract symbolic medium and as a palpable, plastic kind of material that can be moved displaced, erased, altered, reconfigured, undone suggests a site of writing, where composition, or construction, begins.

I find myself writing in multiple contexts, and I suppose the simultaneity this implicates is a point of departure. How does one make what may be quite distant spatially but very present in reality and politically, like the war in Iraq, felt and known in a work? Two recent works, a text for performance “Mirror Play” and the improvised poem “Open Box” apply themselves to contrastive systems, the open kinetic space of listening, and the oppressive event of war, a war displaced from where I think, write, and live. The non-narrative stress on the aural aspects of language is in part a response to the destruction and death of war as well as a reaction to the distance of the war: living within the circumstance of war without partaking of the destruction and physical threat.

Complementing certain features of play, themes of childhood and gender frequently motivate the writing. For instance the constraint and background for the composition of *Vice*, a mixed-genre work, is that of parenting and, specifically, everyday life and the activity of thinking as shaped by the time of the child as it intersects with the rationalized time of society. The baby has no stake in the parent needing to go to work or to get rest. This can be stressful or conflicting for the adult, but it can also be liberating. The baby can offer the adult a critical perspective on everyday life. *Vice* was composed at irregular intervals in the cracks of time and is structured in fragments composed in the interval; thus, it becomes a work of time that critically views seamless or continuous modes of narration from the perspective of the gendered subject, here the mother. *Baby*, a more recent book, constructs what I have called a “maverick” figure of a “baby” that plays with and is played by language, disclosing in the process repressed knowledge, the child’s curiosity and observational powers, and the often denied intelligence and sophistication of children.

As for influences, in a formative period, I felt myself somewhat outside of poetic discourses, because in the early 1970s what I encountered was aggravatingly male-centered even as I was quite engaged by American modernists such as William Carlos Williams and Gertrude Stein and certain emerging threads of American

postmodernism that preceded the emergence of “Language Writing” in the 1970s. Much of this history has been rethought and the cannon revision that began in the 1970s and 1980s has complicated the course of influence profoundly.

Influences change, but I would stress that in addition to literature, I am compelled by visual and conceptual art and music. I sometimes like to situate influence in the less-formed place of childhood: seeing exhibitions of the American Impressionist Mary Cassatt as well as a small exhibition of 1950’s abstract art with my mother when I was a child living in a small community (that later became a suburb of Los Angeles) along with reading Moby Dick or hearing my mother recite William Blake left strong impressions. In college I was equally influenced by poetry and prose, realism, modernism, and postmodernist art and literature, art theory and performance. Likewise, I read a lot of work in translation—from Rabelais to Kafka, or Colette to Cortazar to offer playful pairings. The Civil Rights movement as well as African American art and culture has had an impact on my aesthetic practice. The “contemporary” American literature of my teenage years consisted significantly of African American works, from Martin Luther King’s speeches, to Malcolm X’s writings, to Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*. I combine political writing with literary writing here to indicate a kind of circulation of cultural and political materials at a particular moment that may suggest a thread that extends to the essays of *Adorno’s Noise*. In later years, “structured improvisation” and discussions about improvisation, minimalism, and jazz have also contributed to how I think about composition, performance, and authorship. This is amplified in some of the more recent performance works, in which the performance of predominately non-narrative polyvocal works that stress choral, or choral and instrumental, and bilingual communication are based in listening, structured improvisation, and intercultural collaboration.

[INTER]SECTIONS: I know you are the author of fourteen books of poetry and cross-genre writing that include plays, experimental essays, prose. I suspect some readers have difficulties placing your work within a tradition,

fiction or poetry or prose poetry. What do you consider your work to be?

HARRYMAN: To think of genre as something one can use but need not adhere to allows the writer to stress the plasticity of language as a medium, one that can construct new forms and “play with” the conventions of meaning making. A political dimension of this transgression includes a critique of gender and sexuality. As for where I would place my writing, I see it as literature that intersects with innovative practices in poetry, prose, the novel, performance, conceptual art, and theater. I suppose that anxieties or issues related to placing my work have something to do with the legitimacy of traditional categories but also commodity—where to niche and sell the work? Why not counter such restrictions with writing that is hard to place and enliven the awareness of such matters?

[INTER]SECTIONS: Let’s discuss *Adorno’s Noise* specifically. Could you please tell us about the process of researching for this book, and could you please – somehow – justify the title of your last book?

HARRYMAN: I would like to say something about the composition of the book. I had reread *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life* in 2006 on a flight from Detroit to Berlin. What struck me beyond the aesthetics of the essays—something that poets often comment on—was the intensity of Adorno’s negativity and his aphoristic essays’ ferocious, even if also melancholic, intermingling of personal affect with agonistic post-war cultural critique. I identified with Adorno’s using the essay to discover his own thoughts at a moment of uncharted historical complexity, and still do. My first impulse, as it often is, was to write to the side or against-the-grain of this identification. Making a game of it while still in the air, I randomly selected phrases from *Minima Moralia*, attempting to find phrases that lightened or neutralized the heavy tone of Adorno’s language. Could I find phrases that did not *sound* like Adorno? After I compiled the list of phrases, I saw that

I was attempting the impossible: the list read like a poem by Theodore Adorno. Soon after I arrived in Berlin, I started writing “essays” using the phrases as titles, or partial titles. I wanted the essays to contrast stylistically, to make noise when set against each other. One aspect of this noise is related to history, an obvious concern of Adorno’s, and the other is related to a contradictory sense of immediacy, a suspended present of writing. I also made a decision not to look back at *Minima Moralia* or to directly encounter or think about Adorno’s works until most of the book was written, and I adhered to this stricture, returning to Adorno as a source only after most of the work had been written.

As for the process of researching, this would depend on which work you are referring to. Some pieces, such as “cell of meaning which resembles them” and “dazed rabbit,” are composed as free compositions without research, while others involve literary, art critical, and historical reading, while still others involve public records, radio news, and blogs. I suppose that certain conceptual procedures could be related to research. What is the relationship of the structure or presentational style of a document to its argument or proposition? This was a question I asked in “let no one represent you,” which ironically observes a think-tank document’s skeletal features--the captions, brevity of paragraphs, signatories. I also sometimes draw from poetic impulse and personal memory, which always has a fictional aspect to it, and combine this with objective, factual research.

It is interesting to think that one has titled a book in such a way that it requires justification. One could read it in several ways: 1) The “noise” Adorno makes in the head of the writer that results in this particular concatenation of essays. 2) Adorno was a brilliant writer on music, but he misunderstood the American Jazz tradition, which has had a profound transnational impact on the arts across mediums and genres; thus, the improvisational aspects of

the writing as well as references to Sun Ra in “regard for the object rather than communication is suspect” creates critical “noise,” answering back to Adorno. 3) “Making noise” has a public and political dimension that here entails reading with and against Adorno, yet in great appreciation for his aphoristic essays and his critique of commodity culture. 5) Adorno has given quite particular attention to the genre of the essay, which he thought of as humanizing and existing at an appropriate scale that engages and includes the writing subject in a conversation with other’s writings and thoughts. My approach both embraces this view of the essay form and transgresses the genre. A dissonance occurs when writings appear as poetry, conceptual prose, or performance while they are featured in a collection of essays. 6) In “The Essay as Form,” Adorno states that the essay “does not permit its domain to be prescribed as it reflects a childlike freedom that catches fire, without scruple, on what others have already done.” What others have already done is an immediately apparent consideration in the collection; yet, the works sustain a skeptical or ironic position in respect to authorship, knowledge, and authority.

[INTER]SECTIONS: How do you consider *Adorno’s Noise* in the context of your previous works, and what sets it apart from the other things you have written?

HARRYMAN: As Kit Robinson has noted in a recent review, *Adorno’s Noise* is a visceral response to the Bush years. Each of my books is quite different one from the other, and the historical present has something to do with this. Themes such as sexuality, death, normality, repression, power, desire, and art recur and intermingle to different degrees in many of my writings. In this collection the themes play out against the historical present alongside what has surfaced in the course of writing the book as a revived interest in Post-World War II culture and society. The essays related to Anaïs Nin, post-war Japan, and post-war American patriotism located in an autobiographical childhood are overt

examples of this interest. I am of the generation of writers identified with the Vietnam War, and the politics and culture of the 1960’s and early 1970’s; but I was born in the aftermath of the Korean and second world wars and have become increasingly aware of the reach of this period into the present. Traveling to Germany, performing there, and spending time in Berlin has influenced the book as well.

And finally, the collection very much signals the impact working with and listening to contemporary noise, electronics, and improvised music has had on my conceptual approach to writing. I like to keep things lively: to quote noise musician Jessica Rylan, “there is enough unpredictability that you really have to focus on it.”

[INTER]SECTIONS: Where do you see yourself going creatively in the future? What is your next project?

HARRYMAN: I am finishing quite a few projects at the moment. A recording of *Open Box* with composer and musician Jon Raskin has just been completed, and we will soon begin to work on a second piece of spoken text and sound: the two works together will be published in a CD. This August, poet Lyn Hejinian and I are completing our manuscript of “The Wide Road,” a collaborative picaresque novel—a journey through eros, political, and natural landscapes—in prose and poetry. I am also collaborating with Konrad Steiner, a San Francisco filmmaker, on a “Neo-Benshi” script. Neo-Benshi draws from the Japanese and Korean custom of having a live interpreter of film instead of subtitles. Neo-Benshi, a form that recently originated in San Francisco, rewrites rather than interprets the text of films. In performance the new text is conveyed live. Konrad and I are experimenting with re-scripting six-minute segments of scenes featuring the actress Jeanne Moreau.

A major project is finishing a collection of Poets Theater plays and performance writings, which I hope to have done by December. The other

major project is the completion of *The Grand Piano*, which has been an ongoing ten-volume experiment in collective autobiography by ten writers identified with Language Poetry in San Francisco. Each writer composes one essay per volume, and each volume represents a collectively composed memoir loosely focused on the San Francisco Bay Area between 1975-1980. Volume eight is at the press now, and with luck volumes nine and ten will be out by the end of the year. As you may have observed, I enjoy collaborating; working with this group of writers, each of whom I have known for more than thirty years, has been an extraordinary experience.

[INTER]SECTIONS: Let me end with two rather broad questions: what is your opinion of current poetry in the United States, and what is the place and role of poetry in American life today?

HARRYMAN: There is so much going on in poetry in the United States that it is impossible to keep track of it all. For better or worse creative writing programs in universities flourish. The internet has helped the circulation of poetry and has enlivened the critical discourse of poetry to some extent. Yet, poetry does not circulate sufficiently in public culture and it is not appreciated or taught much in elementary or high school: sometimes it seems that people are brought up, nationally, to fear language. Perhaps Obama signals a shift for the better in this regard. It is unfortunate that there is so little public funding of literary arts venues in the United States, and that a culture of anti-intellectualism tends to overly influence the public reception of the arts in general. I have seen the public support of poetry erode over the years. In general there is not enough support of literary journals and magazines. Poetry and literary arts need more public forums for the performance, critique, and exchange of ideas.

GRADUATE SECTION

The Violent Woman: Nomadic Identities in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*

by Elena-Adriana Dancu

The community in the unnamed City bestows this name on Violet Trace of *Jazz* (1992) after her failed attempt to knife the corpse of her husband's seventeen-year old lover, Dorcas. In this novel, it is not the white patriarchal community that imposes a controlling image¹ on Violet, but the blacks, and, to an extent, it is Violet herself who assumes this split self, and in the end, appropriates it to fully develop the "me" Sethe seems to doubt in *Beloved*. This paper will attempt to identify two-fold instances of nomadism—in the construction of identity and in the movement from a blues to a jazz understanding of the world. The theory of nomadic identities is based on perpetual relocation and on a constant shifting of perspectives. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari explain the significance of territory (or space) to the nomad, migrant and sedentary in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. To the nomad, the earth is no longer land to be enclosed, delimited and owned, as in the case of the other two, but simply ground (*sol*) or support; nomads follow no paths and own no land. They are deterritorialized par excellence—they are free because they do not go through the process of reterritorialization once they have moved away, as the migrant does, nor do they establish their territory upon something else, like the sedentary (381). Deterritorialization is the process by which

¹ Patricia Hill Collins discusses this in her book *Black Feminist Thought*, suggesting that black women in WASP culture are depicted mainly with the help of controlling images such as the mammy, the matriarch, the whore—the historical jezebel and the modern "hoochie". This, she argues, helps justify their oppression (69)—after all, it would seem less "wrong" to discriminate against fallen women. Ideology justifies racial, patriarchal and class oppression, and, consequently, deconstructing these controlling images is at the core of black feminist thought and Third World feminism.

nomads are able to move freely: they are not bound to a certain space, simply because they carry "home" with them. As Gertrude Stein puts it, "It's great to have roots, as long as you can take them with you." (cited in Braidotti 1). In other words, the nomad lives in the in-between and does not perceive this intermezzo as a painful experience. Nomadism means perpetual travelling, and this is why I consider nomadic identities to be intrinsically beneficial.² I believe that the distinction between the migrant, who is bound to a certain space, and the nomad, who is free of the painful experience of unhomeliness makes sense when applied to black female characters in Morrison's novels, because they are all bound to something, be it a traumatic past, a lost love, or a lost life, and they are also trying to escape one way or another. However, in *Jazz* performativity lies at the core of acquiring a nomadic identity—nomadism implies perpetual relocation, and thus the female (and male) subject has to reconsider his/her performance continuously. Joe, the male protagonist of the novel, acquires a nomadic identity as well, and I will briefly discuss his journey and compare it to the development of the female characters.

My arguments will also draw on the connection made by Judith Butler between performance and masquerade, because the subject changes not only positions, but also masks. Secondly, the essence of jazz music is improvisation: no two renderings of a jazz song are identical, even when performed by the same musician. Performers typically vary the tune and the melody, responding to the reactions of the audience and to their own particular states of mind. As Missy Dehn Kubitschek observes, jazz music is all about change, originality, unpredictability, but within a recognizable structure (142). While she interprets jazz as a metaphor for social change, I am going to take it a step further and argue that jazz music is nomad music, because it involves the perpetual revision

² Nomadism may be related to rootlessness, but in my interpretation it is mainly positive, for nomads are spared the pain of *Unheimlichkeit*, or unhomeliness: they are not bound to a certain place and their home travels with them.

of one's position in the world, in the same way Deleuze and Guattari's nomad performs territorial shifts.

Masks, Masquerade, and Performativity

Judith Butler introduces her understanding of the mask and masquerade in "Lacan, Riviere and the Strategies of Masquerade" in *Gender Trouble* (1990). Lacan identifies the lack or the loss as a source of power, because the feminine position of "not having" is essential to signify the Phallus by *being* the Other: the masculine subject requires this Other to confirm and be the Phallus in an extended sense (60). How does a woman appear to be the Phallus, or the lack that embodies and affirms it? Butler argues that women inevitably put on a show, by masquerading the "appearing as being the Phallus." Starting from a reading of Lacan, she reduces all forms of being to a form of appearing, or the appearance of being with the consequence that all gender ontology is reducible to the play of appearances (63). To her, masquerade is a performative production of a sexual ontology, and thus she asks the question whether masquerade is the means by which femininity is *first* established—an exclusionary practice of identity formation.

Butler also tackles the construction of gender as related to the notions of performance of performativity. Nevertheless, these two concepts have often been misunderstood and disputed. Butler herself admits that she was able to clarify what she meant in later works, such as *Bodies That Matter* (1993). To her, gender categories are not ontological, but rather "effects of a specific formulation of power" (95). The construction of gender is achieved through the constant reiteration and performance of particular discourses. Nevertheless, "performativity is neither free play nor theatrical self-presentation; nor can it simply be equated with performance. Constraint is not necessarily that which sets a limit to performativity [...] rather that which impels and sustains performativity." (95). Butler elaborates on the crucial difference between performance and performativity in an interview:³

³ As quoted by Sara Salih in "On Judith Butler and Performativity" in *Judith Butler*.

performance presupposes a preexisting subject, whereas performativity contests the very notion of the subject. Performativity is a repeated, compulsive citation of the norm, and *not* a voluntaristic, self-conscious acting, but practices that serve to enact and reinforce sets of regulatory norms. Thus, Butler's performativity, as opposed to Austin's, is not the act by which a subject brings into being what he or she names, but the reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates (2).

Since Butler argues for gender as constructed and constituted by language—discourse does gender, not the other way around, the gendered body has become inseparable from the acts that constitute it. Therefore, in more recent theory,⁴ identity has come to be regarded as a perpetual construct and not a rigid given. In *Judith Butler*, Sara Salih briefly discusses Butler's views on race as a cultural construct. Is racial identity something that is "assumed," or imposed through cultural construction, rather than something one simply "is"? Apparently, Butler believes that racializing norms institute racial difference as a condition to being a subject. In *Bodies That Matter* she argues that sexual difference does not precede race or class in the constitution of subject (130), but race, like gender, sex and sexuality, is constructed rather than natural, assumed in response to the call of discourse and the law. However, Salih argues, Butler is unspecific as to how exactly this "call to race" takes place. Bridget Byrne, for instance, attempts to give an answer by claiming that "race is in the eye of the beholder" (16). Racialized discourses are dependent on the construction of visible differences and perceptions that make racial differences seem inevitable and prediscursive, and thus the various meanings of race have been created historically through both discourse and practice (18).

Violence Revealed

How does all this theory apply to Violet in *Jazz*? I believe her nomadic identity is based on performativity in the sense that she repeatedly reenacts several of the discourses through which

⁴ See "Identity, Identification and the Subject" in Jonathan Culler's *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*.

her history and the black feminine community are constituted: the discourse of her mother Rose Dear, who sinks into a silencing depression after she is abandoned by her husband (his work for civil rights had made it dangerous for him to stay with his family); the discourse of internalized racism that her grandmother True Belle, albeit unwittingly, instills in the minds of Violet and her siblings by telling them stories of Golden Gray, the perfect blond baby. Later on, Violet admits that stories of Golden Gray destroyed her childhood and her relationship with Joe: “tore up my girlhood as surely as if we’d been the best of lovers? [...] holding on to him [Joe] but wishing he was the golden boy I never saw either [...] I was a substitute and so was he” (97). What is more, critics such as Peter Brooker deem the stories of Golden Gray’s perfect curls to be the reason why Violet chose to become a hairdresser in the first place (208). In order to retrieve her genuine self, Violet has to renounce all memories of Golden Gray; she has to sever all bonds to the past.

To some extent, she also reproduces the discourse of Wild, Joe’s presumed mother, who lacked any kind of maternal instincts, just like Violet does until she approaches middle age and begins to sleep with a doll. Wild is a force of nature, completely unsocialized and lacking proper speech skills, just like Violet, who acts and talks “funny”: she sits down in the middle of the street, attempts to half-consciously kidnap a baby, or can no longer produce coherent speech: “Violet had stumbled into a crack or two. Felt the anything-at-all begin in her mouth [...] ‘Got a mind to double it with an aught and two or three others just in case who is that pretty girl standing next to you?’” (23-24). She is a force of nature in the sense that, although she is described as abnormally skinny, she finds the physical strength to wrestle the usher boys at Dorcas’ funeral and manages to stab the corpse, although superficially.

Time and again, “in a burst of urban schizophrenia” (Brooker 204), Violet shifts positions in a performative fashion and develops a nomadic identity—her self accommodates countless different discourses and histories. As the narrator observes, “the City makes people think they can do what they want and get away with it” (8). She is fully aware of the fact that she projects another self who acts out her subversive impulses: “*that* Violet remembered what she did not [...] *that* Violet, unsatisfied, fought with the

hard-handed usher boys and was time enough for them, almost” (90-91). Violet is a nomad because she is perpetually shifting positions not only between past and present, like Sethe, but also between masks of the same self: “NO! *that* Violet is not somebody walking round town, up and down the streets wearing my skin and using my eyes shit no *that* Violet is me!” (95-96). Also, the narrator briefly mentions how Rose Dear “was free of time that no longer flowed, but stood stock still when they tipped her from the kitchen chair. So she dropped herself down the well and missed all the fun” (102). *Beloved* and *Sethe* are time nomads as well, since they are free of the traditional passage of time, but whereas in *Beloved* nomadism saves Sethe and helps her make sense of her history, it seems that in *Jazz* being free of time does not have the same effect on Rose Dear, who commits suicide.

Alice Manfred, the uptight “dignified lady” (7), repeatedly submits to the norms of repressed feminine sexuality which had been imposed on her by white society on the one hand and by patriarchy on the other. She fears the energy of the City and the sexual power of jazz music: “it made you do unwise disorderly things. Just hearing it was like violating the law.” (58). In spite of the fact that she had spent her life hiding from her violent impulses, Alice is reminded of her own murderous thoughts by Violet: “every day and every night for seven months she, Alice Manfred, was starving for blood. Not his. [...] Her craving settled on the red liquid coursing through the other woman’s veins” (86). Violent, Violet’s aggressive self, reminds Alice of pieces of her past she had thought she had buried with her husband in Illinois, and it is in Alice’s home that Violet finds a safe harbor: “I had to sit down somewhere. I thought I could do it here” (82). Only in Violent’s presence can Alice give up the masquerade: “Not like she did with other people. With Violent she was impolite. Sudden. Frugal. No apology or courtesy seemed required or necessary between them. But something else was—clarity, perhaps.” (83). Thus, both Alice and Violet achieve clarity in each other’s company: the clarity to consider the masks they have been changing and become aware of their nomadic identity. I believe this self-awareness ultimately brings peace to both of them. With Alice’s help, Violet acquires sufficient objectivity to laugh at her previous attempts to knife Dorcas, whereas Alice learns to amuse herself at her efforts to keep up the prim and proper façade.

Just as True Belle did in her childhood, Alice reminds Violet of the most important quality of laughter—it can turn the world “the right side up” (113). More importantly, Alice Manfred helps Violet find an alternative self-definition, another mask, as it were, but this is the mask that is here to stay: “Nobody’s asking you to take it. I’m sayin make it, make it!” (123). Alice may be advising Violet to take the stance of the nomad: the one who transforms his or her world by continually shifting locations, as opposed to the migrant or the sedentary, who accepts a rigid definition of territory to define his or her identity.

Violet will ultimately teach Felice the same thing—to performatively recreate the world: “What’s the world if you can’t make it up the way you want it? [...] Don’t you want it to be something more than it is?” (208). Skeptical, Felice argues that she cannot change the world—she takes the position of the migrant who cannot accept the fact that he or she can internalize the notion of “home” and become free of territorial constraints. For nomads like Violet and Alice Manfred, the only way to relinquish bounds and boundaries is to use the world merely as ground or support to develop a sense of self: “If you don’t, it will change you and it’ll be your fault cause you let it. I let it. And messed up my life.” (208). As Kubitschek points out, Violet “highlights the continuing process of making self” (154). Although she had, at one point, lost “the lady” (211), she was able to retrieve her identity by locating it and relinquishing previous masks/positions to adopt a new one: “ ‘Killed her. Then I killed the me that killed her.’ ‘Who’s left?’ ‘Me’ ” (209). Thus, unlike Sethe, with the help of Alice and Felice’s company, Violet is able to articulate the makings of identity to herself and admit she has recovered a confident “me”. Felice too becomes a nomad because she renounces all ties to the past: she no longer wants the opal ring her mother had stolen for her from Tiffany’s—as a matter of fact, she gives up understanding the ring as a proof of her mother’s love and chooses to internalize it: “it’s what she did, not the ring, that I really love” (215). In the end, Felice is depicted very much like Violet, confident and triumphant: “Whether raised fists freeze in her company or open for a handshake, she’s nobody’s alibi or hammer or toy” (222). Alice becomes a nomad because not only she moves away from the familiar surroundings of the City, but she also renounces her repressed and repressive self. Moreover, she rediscovers and

accepts her sexuality back in Springfield: “[looking for] the cheerful company maybe of someone who can provide the necessary things for the night” (222). Violet, Alice, and Felice’s selves are under continuous scrutiny and experience constant redefinition in a performative and nomadic manner. Felice, however, represents the generation that reconciles the violence of the past with the promise of the future. She is the only character who has a genuine jazz essence and this may be because she has learned to not only express her feelings of anger and betrayal at Dorcas and her parents but also to move on.

Nomadic Music

As I have already stated in the introduction to this paper, I consider jazz to be the music of the nomads. Jazz is based on continuing interaction between audience and performers, on a perpetual shifting of tune, melody and points of view. Jazz is improvisation, just as Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of nomadic life is based on the intermezzo (380)—it has taken a consistency and direction of its own. Just as jazz musicians follow no paths, but take cues from the audience and the orchestra playing behind them, nomads travel from one point to another only as a consequence of factual necessity. Points are merely “relays along a trajectory” (380). Jazz music is not definitively enclosed within rigid walls, and musical notes are for jazz what the ground is for nomads: support or *sol* for free movement, for the variability and polyvocality of directions that are at the same time essential features of rhizomic spaces (382).

Some critics⁵ have claimed that jazz music is not present in the novel as much as one might expect it to be (200). Although it seems to seep through the City and the characters, no black actors, singers, jazz musicians or jazz bands, jazz revues or all-black clubs are ever mentioned. Peter Brooker argues that “this *Jazz* does not mean *that jazz*” (201), in other words, the novel is

⁵ See “Black and White Notes: Toni Morrison’s *Jazz*” in Peter Brooker’s *New York Fictions: Modernity, Postmodernism, The New Modern*.

not necessarily about the Jazz Age, the budding Harlem Renaissance of New Negro art and thinking. Morrison focuses not on standard history, but rather on a cultural history of losses and lacks, and how these lapses have come to exist.

The formal structure of the novel is similar to nomadic spaces and jazz music. There are many sections, without any chapter titles or numbers, so as to underline their distinctiveness. All sections are separated through blank spaces, perhaps to hint at the fact that they are basically disconnected, just as nomadic space is “open, indefinite and noncommunicating” (380). Kubitschek believes that, in order to grow and develop their identities, the characters must change “from static, destructive blues roles to dynamic jazz roles” (153). I would argue that blues music represents the sedentary identity as theorized by Deleuze and Guattari, whereas jazz is in every sense nomadic. Blues is highly repetitive, and as Furman observes, it puts forth only a limited number of roles for the performers, whereas the improvisational and creative nature of jazz requires a constant redefinition of any role (153). Initially, Violet takes up the role of the betrayed woman and attempts a pitiful revenge by taking up a lover to spite Joe, and attack Dorcas’ corpse to hurt him as well, but as her friendship with Alice deepens, she understands that she is the agent of her life. She is the one responsible for shifting masks or positions in order to better suit her ever-changing identity. *That* Violet learns to avoid doing “something bluesy” in the future (114), such as her attempt to stab her husband’s dead lover.

Similarly, as Joe follows Dorcas to the party where he eventually shoots her, he passes by a man playing blues his guitar, perhaps a hint, Kubitschek notes, at the fact that he is trapped in a frozen blues role (155). Blues is closely associated with rural music (Brooker 202), and it is frozen because it simply renders feeling, it does not re-create it perpetually, like jazz does. Jazz also heals, and there are two crucial moments at the end of the novel that stand witness to its restoring power. Felice brings music and happiness back into the Traces’ household, as Joe remarks: “Felice. They named you right. Remember that.”(215). Jazz helps Joe and Violet heal their new parrot—when they discover it is suffering from loneliness they take it out on the roof so that it can hear the music of the City: “So

if neither food nor company nor its own shelter was important to it, Violet decided, and Joe agreed, nothing was left to love or need but music.” (224). When Felice comes to visit, Joe and Violet suddenly hear music playing and dance and thus they begin to rekindle their intimacy. Their behavior surprises the unnamed female narrator, who expects them to repeat the Joe-Dorcas-Violet triangle, but this does not happen, because, as Felice herself states, she is nothing like Dorcas (209). Finally, through her considerateness, she also helps them “ease the pain” (215).

The jazz, however, does not completely obliterate the blues. There will always be a trace of Violent in Violet, but this self will coexist with her other multiple aspects, so as to underline the fact that identity is never a finished process. Peter Brooker points out how “a blues rootedness finds the answering freedom of jazz improvisation in the newly composed lives of the city people” (205). Jazz breaks families, such as the Traces and Dorcas and Alice Manfred, and at the same time it brings them back together: Joe and Violet rediscover each other, whereas Alice comes to terms with losing her niece and finds a friend in Violet. Jazz (re)defines selves, as demonstrated above: Violet, Alice and Felice emerge as triumphant nomads; Joe too is a nomad, since he himself is aware he changes his identity nine times throughout the novel. He also observes one of the most important feature of nomadic identities: the nomadic path follows trails or routes without parceling out space. What is more, Joe also cherishes tracks: “In this world the best thing, the only thing, is to find the trail and stick to it.” (130), but these tracks are an end by themselves—what matters the most is the fact that they “speak” to him about his identity, and not where they lead: “But if the trail speaks, no matter what’s in the way, you can find yourself in a crowded room aiming a bullet at her heart, never mind it’s the heart you can’t live without.” (130). Joe’s feeling of being abandoned by both Dorcas and his presumed mother Wild disappears when Felice conveys Dorcas’ last words: “There’s only one apple ... Tell Joe.” (213). The reader is left to wonder on the possible meanings of her last words. On the one hand, Dorcas hints at an earlier conversation with Joe about the risks they were taking: “no point in picking the apple if you don’t want to see how it taste” (40), on the other, the repetition of the apple metaphor may hint at Joe’s inner musings:

Just for you. Anything just for you. To bite down hard, chew up the core and have the taste of red apple skin to carry around for the rest of my life. [...] I will say again, I would strut out the Garden, strut! as long as you held on to my hand, girl. Dorcas, girl [...] I chose you. Nobody gave you to me. Nobody said that's the one for you. I picked you out. [...] I didn't fall in love, I rose in it. I saw you and made up my mind. My mind. (134)

His section has a certain jazz-quality to it, and at the same time a strong oral influence. Most importantly, here it is revealed that, apparently, Dorcas helped him define his sense of self by offering him the possibility to choose. His previous seven transformations had always been triggered by others, and not himself: Violet chooses him as a husband, the Rhode family choose to adopt him, his presumed mother Wild chooses to keep wondering whether he is her son or not. He possibly associates their love with the forbidden fruit, but I believe that, although he is not yet aware of it, Joe may be hinting at how nomadic selves are not tied down to one single event in the past, present or future, or to one fixed space, and, moreover, to one single person, be it Dorcas or Wild.

It is Felice who makes him realize that Dorcas had acknowledged their love in her last conscious moments, and thus Joe is able to confirm that his identity rests on the love, and not the lover. Likewise, Felice cherishes not the opal ring her mother had stolen for her, but the gesture. Joe finds his peace because his image of Dorcas merges with his faint memories of Wild: "darkness taking the shape of a shoulder with a thin line of blood. Slowly, slowly, it forms itself into a bird with a blade of red on the wing." (225)—death and violence are transformed through the power of music into a sign of hope. Violet too merges her memories of her mother with those of her father: "the sunlit rim of a well and down there somebody is gathering gifts (lead pencils, Bull Durham, Jap Rose Soap) to distribute to them all" (225). Thus, the *topos* of suicide and abandonment is redeemed through love.

Dorcas is confronted and shot by Joe, makes her last confession to Felice, and in the end dies with jazz music playing in the background. In the final section of the novel Felice reveals her friend to be "ugly" and "hard"—"she used people" (205-206). She leaves Joe because he allowed her to be whoever she desired to be, and enjoyed depending on her second lover Acton to indicate to her who she should be. However, I believe jazz music ultimately redeems her as well. In the beginning of the novel she is depicted in contrast to the uptight Alice—she is loose, without any restraints or repressions. Although she commits passive suicide by refusing to be taken to the hospital, Dorcas may be doing it not to involve the authorities and protect Joe. The fact that her last words are addressed to Joe is further proof of the paradoxically destructive and regenerative power of jazz music.

Ralph Ellison hints at another contradictory aspect of jazz music in *Shadow and Act* (1964). His definition of jazz highlights two interconnected facets, the relationship of the individual to collectivity and tradition: "each artist challenges all the rest; each solo flight, or improvisation, represents (like the successive canvasses of a painter) a definition of his identity; as an individual, as a member of the collectivity and as a link in the chain of tradition" (234). Jazz performance is based on improvisations on previous musical tunes, and this is reflected on the level of the narrative as well.

In the world of *Jazz*, orphans are condemned to death: Violet and her siblings are rescued by True Belle, Joe is saved by Hunters Hunter and raised by the Rhodes; Alice Manfred rescues Dorcas from the St. Louis riots. Connection to the community is essential for survival—the bird Joe and Violet adopt heals only when it can listen to the other music-makers of the city. Tradition is another crucial part of the connection the characters feel to their community: Joe, Violet, and even Alice have to rediscover their pasts and as they reminisce, they recover the lost bond to their own personal histories and moreover to the community. Joe narrates his own past after he begins his relationship with Dorcas. Likewise, Violet is reminded of her childhood with True Belle during her conversations with Alice. Alice connects with the East St. Louis riots that killed Dorcas' parents while she is watching the silent protest march in New York.

The novel's ending is proof of Toni Morrison's desire to engage the reader and to make he or she participate in the fictional thread she spins. The last section of the novel is based on her expressed wish to "make the story oral, meandering, effortless, spoken—to have the reader feel the narrator without identifying that narrator ... and to have the reader work with the author in the construction of the book—is what's important" (qtd. in Brooker 206). However, I believe that the plea of the narrator to "make me, remake me. You are free to do it and I am free to let you because look, look. Look where your hands are. Now. " (229) is not only a call to participate in the makings of the book, but a further instance of nomadism. The fictional universe narrated by the unnamed woman is, like its characters, essentially nomadic—it reenacts the discourses which constitute it and performatively acquires numerous identities as spurred by the reader's imagination. After all, it is the performance of reading *and* listening that gives meaning to *Jazz*. Performance and performativity are at the core of nomadic identities in the novel, for the Black feminine characters continually revise and shift their positions in the world, depending on their connection to the community, or lack of it.

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Art for Life's Sake: Lolita's Posthumous Legacy and Lesson

by Laura Savu

Emphatically, no killers are we. Poets never kill.
(Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*)

This essay revisits, albeit briefly—and belatedly, in view of this journal's previous issue—Nabokov's once-censored but still celebrated novel so as to account for its enduring appeal and cultural relevance. Towards the end of *Lolita*, Humbert Humbert assumes that, in its published form, his memoir will be read “in the first years of 2000 A.D. (1935 plus eighty or ninety, live long, my love)” (299) when, as he tells on the last page, “Lolita is no longer alive” (309). His assumption, which proves at once wrong and correct, inscribes an ambiguity that informs much of the text, with its constant slippage between life and death, absence and presence, crime and redemption, poetry and parody. If, according to the novel's fictional “Foreword,” Dolores Haze dies giving birth to a stillborn baby on Christmas Day, 1952, the *Lolita* that entranced and haunted H.H. has since its publication in 1955, entered the collective imagination, as demonstrated, among other things, by the sheer number of hits it is bound to yield on Google, where it comes second only to the Bible. Admittedly, not all of the 60 million “Lolita” hits refer directly to Nabokov's novel, while some are so wide of the mark that they justify a study such as that undertaken by Graham Vickers in *Chasing Lolita: How Popular Culture Corrupted Nabokov's Little Girl All Over Again* (2008). All this does not make the task of disentangling the text's myriad strands and ramifications (moral, aesthetic, legal, and cultural, largely speaking) any less daunting.

Intimations of *Lolita* can be traced back to several sources, ranging from the Greek myth about the abduction of Persephone by Hades—a myth that clearly prefigures the clash between Eros and Thanatos later embodied in the so-called “Death and the Maiden” Renaissance iconography—continuing with Edgar Allan Poe's “Annabel Lee,” Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, the “Sirens” chapter in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, or even Thomas Mann's novella *Death in Venice*, and finishing with Nabokov's

story “The Enchanter,” posthumously published in 1986. While distinct echoes of *Lolita* reverberate in Pia Pera's *Lo's Diary* (1999) and Azar Nafisi's memoir in books, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003), they can also be detected in a film such as *American Beauty*, whose protagonist's name, Lester Burnham, is an anagram of “Humbert learns.” Having been tempted by, but resisted a virgin *Lolita*, Kevin Spacey's character—who, like Humbert, does not survive his narration—comments on the things that his death taught him, the most important of which is probably the fact that in a materialistic, consumer-driven society, innocence is too rare, i.e. too beautiful a thing to be destroyed.

But what, if anything, does a monster like Humbert—the self-claimed “guardian” of his stepdaughter—learn, or might be supposed to learn? And do readers—so likely to be seduced by Art and its Muse through Humbert's self-consciously manipulative narration—share this insight? Finally, doesn't the very assumption of a “lesson,” whatever this may be, go against Nabokov's aestheticist claim that *Lolita* is a (post)modernist exercise in style—“the purest of all, the most abstract”—and not a cautionary tale confronting us with tricky moral questions? According to John Ray Jr., there is a “general lesson” lurking in the novel: “the wayward child, the egotistic mother, the panting maniac—these are not only vivid characters in a unique story; they warn us of dangerous trends; they point out potent evils (5-6). Building on this statement and on the interpretations gleaned from other critics, I would venture that the very “aesthetic bliss” posited by Nabokov as the novel's sole purpose allows for, indeed invites, reactions so intense on the part of readers—what Barthes dubs *jouissance*—that a thematic reading, one placed in its proper cultural context, can only enhance the text's richness *precisely* by rendering it more concrete, that is, more attuned to our lives in the age of lost innocence.

For instance, with respect to the twin themes of rape and pedophilia, *Lolita* has engendered, on the one hand, “the most embarrassed, looking-sideways-for-the-exit, highfalutin, and obscurantist talk of any book ever written—any” (Kincaid), or, on the other, the most forthright, but by no means self-righteous kind of judgment, such as that boldly expressed by Trilling: “we have been seduced into conniving in the violation, because we have permitted our

fantasies to accept what we know to be revolting.” In other words, we are simultaneously attracted and repelled by the perversity of Humbert’s filthy thoughts and deeds—in the replaying of which he often invites us to participate—and this complicity, in Kincaid’s opinion, points to a “dark central current” in American culture that “eroticizes children relentlessly, wishing it had done no such thing, and eagerly looking for others to blame it on.” As he explains, “We [i.e. the American public] have, for the past 200 or so years, progressively eroticized, put at the very heart of our constructions of the desirable, the young body, the innocent, the unspoiled. Rather than facing this head-on, we have manufactured a variety of scapegoats: day-care center operators, Roman Catholic priests, kiddie-porn rings, Internet predators.” Along the same lines, Colette Bancroft reads the novel as reflecting a youth-obsessed American culture that puts a high premium on beauty and desirability: “The first tremors of that youthquake didn’t escape Nabokov’s notice. Although he claimed to disdain literary symbols, it’s hard not to see Paris-born, scholarly Humbert as the old world and Lolita — born in the Midwest and raised on movie magazines, pop music and junk food — as the new.”

Nabokov, of course, subverts this contrast, even as he sets it up, for Humbert’s highbrow literary tastes notwithstanding, his character is exposed as the lowest imaginable, while the real name of his obsession, Dolores Haze, evokes pain, longing, and volatility, suggesting how vulnerable she is to the corruption he embodies. Moreover, their meandering trip across the U.S. can be interpreted as “Nabokov’s paean to the undeniable (if sometimes vulgar) energy of his beloved adopted home” (Bancroft). At the same time, however, Nabokov draws a disturbing parallel between the rape of Lolita—the violent possession of her body—and the rape of the land implicit in the conquest of the New World: Humbert cannot help thinking that “our long journey had only defiled with only a sinuous trail of slime the lovely, trustful, dreamy, enormous country that by then, in retrospect, was no more to us than a collection of dog-eared maps, ruined tour books, old tires, and her sobs in the night—every night, every night—the moment I feigned sleep” (175-76). Language itself—the power of the word—figures as yet another means through which a violence of sorts is inflicted not only upon

Lolita—recall Humbert’s “methods of persuasion” (149), such as threatening to send Lo to reformatory school—but also upon readers, alternatively apostrophized as “frigid” or “sensitive” ladies and gentlemen of the jury, whom Humbert begs to see Lolita as he sees her: a nymphet that holds him in thrall and is therefore responsible for her fate.

The Old world/New world distinction is further complicated when we consider Nabokov’s approach to another theme, namely love, which Lionel Trilling, in another bluntly stated opinion, sees as *the* novel’s theme: “Lolita is about love. Perhaps I shall be better understood if I put the statement in this form: Lolita is not about sex, but about love.” Yet, as the critic himself recognized, the line between love and sex is often blurred in Humbert’s mind, and implicitly, in ours, for we are invited to fuse our desires with his.⁶ Echoing Leslie A. Fiedler’s famous argument from *Love and Death in the American Novel*, Trilling defined this “rapturous, consuming love” as characteristic of the European tradition and conspicuously “absent from American fiction, contemporary or classic” (Kincaid). A Russian immigrant, Nabokov had read his Dostoevsky, and had been deeply influenced by him, particularly when it came to acknowledging the life-generating and all-encompassing nature of desire: “Desire is a manifestation of life itself—of all of life, and it encompasses everything from reason down to scratching oneself” (Dostoevsky qtd. in Goodheart 1). For Nabokov, too, “desire and decision” are “the two things that create a live world” (71). In seducing and abducting Lo, turning her into the object of his own will and desire,

⁶ As Maurice Courtier has shown, both the confusion of love and lust, on the one hand, and the fusion of the narrator and the reader’s desires, on the other are the result of rhetorical “strategies—poetic games, suspense, enunciative breaks, erotic descriptions—which intensely eroticize the text and arouse the reader.” “Never, since the Renaissance,” he argues, “had sex been evoked so poetically as well as so erotically as in *Lolita* (and later in *Ada*).” In support of this view, the critic dwells on “poerotic scenes,” such as the early love scene between Humbert and Annabel, which are so carefully staged by the narrator that “the reader finds it increasingly difficult to dissociate his aesthetic from his erotic pleasure.”

Humbert deprives her of both: “What I had madly possessed was not she, but my own creation, another fanciful Lolita—perhaps more real than Lolita,” having “no will, no life of her own” (62).⁷ The unsettling implication here is that the transforming power of imagination necessarily involves some degree of manipulation and control, an insight further reinforced by the aim of Humbert’s “great endeavor: to fix once and for all the perilous magic of nymphets” (134).

But once his sexual desire is gratified and his “ideal” becomes real, Humbert admits to being filled with a horror he will be never able to shake off: what torments him, however, is not the thought of having defiled Lolita—“Did I deprive her of her flower?”—which would have only intensified his pleasure, but rather that he was *not* her first lover (135). By turns tender and temperamental, childish and cynical, compliant and defiant, homely and mysterious, Lolita remains essentially “other” to Humbert, “an immortal demon disguised as a female child” (139). Not surprisingly, then, the satisfaction derived from the actual love-making pales in comparison with the ecstasy felt in the earlier, famous “apple” scene (Chapter 13), when he came close to, without, however, possessing Lolita: “Whether or not the realization of a lifelong dream had surpassed all expectation, it had in a sense overshot its mark and plunged into a nightmare” (140).

In other words, the very gap between Humbert’s desire and its object (the Lolita of his imagination) nourishes and sustains desire, whose satisfaction would be extinction. Because of this—or perhaps in spite of it, since Humbert’s desire for *his creation* is inexhaustible—it is death that looms large in the second volume, which culminates with Humbert’s murder of his doppelganger, Clare Quilty. The events leading up to this—losing Lolita, seeking her in vain, finding her, and then hunting down her “abductor”—prompt him to reassess his case and admit that “nothing could make my Lolita forget the foul lust I had inflicted upon her” (283). Up until this point, “Humbert the Hound” has cast himself as the “Wounded Spider,” or the “enchanted hunter,” a victim, that is, of a demonic

⁷ Hence also the juxtaposition of “alive” and “unraped” in the following statement: “The next instant I heard her—alive, unraped—clatter downstairs” (66).

force beyond his control, in a pathetic effort to convince us, his potential judges and jurors, of Lolita’s “perilous magic.” Generally, in fact, no sooner does he hint at his guilt, than he immediately projects it onto others, whether “the devil” whose plaything he imagines himself to be (56), the culture in which Lo was born and raised—“modern co-education, juvenile mores, the campfire racket and so forth” (133)—, the laws that forbid “lewd and lascivious cohabitation” (150), and, finally, Quilty.⁸

In “Executing Sentence,” Sarah Elizabeth Sweeney situates *Lolita* in the context of literary-legal analysis of sentences that are *not* carried out and that raise “disturbing questions about intention, interpretation, agency, and responsibility”—the final set of themes I highlight below, as they deepen our insight into and remind us of the necessity of distinguishing between Humbert’s words and deeds. Humbert, and not Quilty, as the former claims at one point, stages the murder scene—and by extension, his entire narration—as a mock-trial, complete with “indictment, plea, examination of evidence, summation, verdict, and sentence” that read “not only as verbal utterances but also as highly self-conscious soliloquies in an imaginary courtroom.” By forcing Quilty to read “his own sentence” and then by executing this sentence himself, Humbert indirectly confesses his guilt, without, however, ridding himself of the burden that will continue to weigh heavily on his heart (305).

The incendiary words Humbert puts down while awaiting trial bear clear, almost tangible traces of his vile deeds: the manuscript is described to have “bits of marrow sticking to it, and blood, and beautiful bright-green flies.” As Sweeney points out, the text’s “ambiguous corporeality” evokes dead Quilty as well as the living, dead, and immortal Lolita. The real trial never takes place, for Humbert dies upon finishing the manuscript, which remains the only thing upon which readers can base their judgments and render their verdict in Humbert’s case: guilty or innocent, “not to mention

⁸ In addition to mocking these legal terms, he dismisses the Mann Act, which prohibits interstate transportation of minors for immoral purposes, as “lending itself to a dreadful pun” (150).

hopelessly regenerate, sufficiently repentant, or somehow redeemed by either his love for Dolores or his literary achievement” (Sweeney). Humbert predicts that both he and Lolita will continue to live within the pages of his memoir, and beyond that, “in the minds of later generations,” as he imagines their shared secrecy and guilt being transmuted into a shared immortality: “I am thinking of aurochs and angels, the secret of durable pigments, prophetic sonnets, the refuge of art. And this is the only immortality you and I may share, my Lolita” (309).

A death sentence is nevertheless imposed on Humbert—by “God, or fate, or Nabokov, or the necessities of the plot”—and thus “poetic justice” is achieved (Sweeney). Humbert has tried hard, perhaps too hard, to make us believe in the reality he has created, to love *his* Lolita, and to make us remember her, by insisting, for instance, that, “The gentle and dreamy regions” through which he “crept” were the patrimonies of poets—*not* crime’s prowling ground” (131). But such twisted rationalizations, no matter how poetically, or “poerotically” (Coutourier) delivered, only expose him for what he truly is—a rapist, kidnapper, and a murderer. Or perhaps herein lies the main “lesson” that survives him, namely, that poets, too, can kill. In any case, neither the spirit of a human being nor the “laws of humanity” (306) should be broken under the cover, or worse, in the name of Art, for then the artist’s dream would turn into a nightmare. Lost in a madman’s dream, Lolita lives on in our poetic memory.

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The Strange Palimpsestic Body of *The Hours*

by Ioana Pelehatăi

An oft-touted view asserts that adaptations are but a mercantile, superficial means of ‘dumbing down’ canonical texts, ostensibly laudable yet ultimately risible attempts at making literary ‘classics’ more palatable for the viewing masses. While film studies have long since garnered their cultural credentials, and have consequently escaped the blight of moralizing rhetoric, not the same applies to the study of adaptations. They remain largely relegated to notions of fidelity and originality. Adaptations are generally regarded as second-hand texts, whose claims to artistic value are, for fear of ridicule, few and far-between. Possibly the most effective way to refute these claims is to steer argumentation clear of difference-eliding fallacies such as ‘A good adaptation successfully recreates the overall feel of the original’, and move towards an intertextual approach of this cross-media phenomenon. To this end, this paper embarks upon the case study of a text, which has been upheld as a successful transcoding instance: Stephen Daldry’s 2003 *The Hours*, the filmic adaptation of Michael Cunningham’s novel of the same name. What makes *The Hours* a relevant example is its intricate intertextual fabric: the film performs the transcoding of a novel based upon another classic novel, recontextualized, updated in points of ideology, its author fictionalized. This paper aims to demonstrate that the film and, implicitly, the novel of *The Hours* are successful adaptations precisely because their intertextual workings are so rich, so readily available and so apparent for the reader and the viewer. They are adaptations *par excellence* because they simultaneously pay homage to and challenge their respective hypotexts, allowing the spectator to revel in the pleasure created by the tension between the familiar and the new.

The first part of this paper engages in a theoretical analysis of the often-misrecognized mechanisms of adaptation. Several such misconceptions are explored, in an attempt to redefine adaptation as a particular instance of intertextuality. According to this view, adaptation

comes across as the sum total of intertextual processes and authorial intention. From this, the paper moves on to identifying the novel of *The Hours* as a particular type of adaptation, namely a tri-level appropriation, whereas the film of the same name is a trans-media adaptation. The difference between the modalities which produce the two texts is that Cunningham’s novel engages in an embedded and politicized dialogue with its Woolfian precursor, as well as with the historical figure of Woolf herself. Conversely, the film employs a remarkable range of very specific mechanisms through which it renders material a delicate textual weave of internal dialogue, echoes and parallelisms. Ideologically, however, this transcoding does not entail too great a departure from the source text, thus providing the spectator with the conservative pleasure of recognition, as well as with the unexpected delight of film-specific elements.

The theoretical framework employed here is founded on Julie Sanders’ assertion that “adaptation studies are ... not about making polarized value judgments, but about analyzing process, ideology and methodology” (Sanders 20). Much like film semiotics, adaptation studies vacillate between an open structuralist and a poststructuralist approach. While the usefulness of the latter is apparent in revealing the fallaciousness of the fidelity and originality criteria, understanding precisely how a given adapted text is intertextual requires an open structuralist methodology. Linda Hutcheon and Julie Sanders deploy their efforts to theorize and functionally define adaptation within the former critical framework. According to Hutcheon, “an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing” (Hutcheon, 8). Texts feed off other texts and beget new texts in numberless ways, making adaptation a heterogeneous phenomenon, at the core of which lie the two generically human penchants for pleasure and passion. Passion is to be equated here with authorial intentionality—even when the adapter is waxing politically, the ideological commitment fueling any textual ‘re-vision’ should be heartfelt. As for the task of the adaptation reader/spectator, Gérard Genette expresses it best, in surprisingly affectionate terms: “One who really loves texts must wish from time to time to love (at least) two together” (399). From this love comes the reader’s pleasure in experiencing texts intertextually, which resides in the “tension

between the familiar and the new, and the recognition both of similarity and difference ... The pleasure exits, and persists, then, in the act of reading in, around, and on (and on)" (Sanders 14).

Adaptation cannot be regarded strictly as a process or as a product, for each such text is simultaneously both. As a creative process, adaptation (re-)interprets and then (re-)creates "another's story" (Hutcheon 18). Here, Hutcheon outlines the distinction between the "aggressive appropriator outed by a political opponent" and the "patient salvager" (Hutcheon 8), which parallels Julie Sanders's delineation between adaptation and appropriation. Where Hutcheon's 'patient salvager' seeks to pay homage to the adapted text and openly announces the filiation, the appropriator defined by Sanders builds a "less explicit, more embedded" (Sanders 2) intertextual relationship, shaped by political or ethical commitment to transcoding. The adaptation product is a formal entity with a life of its own, "an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works" (Hutcheon 7). Essentially, at this level, the adapted text performs dynamically, shifting across media, genres, cultural frames, or ontological dimensions (fiction to reality). This transcoding is extensive, involving more than mere allusions and occasional citations; it is particular, relying profusely on a limited number of recognizable antecedent texts; and transactional, entailing "both gains and losses" (Stam, *Film and Theory: An Introduction* 62) in the exchange between hypo- and hypertext.

In understanding what is gained and what is lost in the process of adaptation and appropriation, one must first understand what is at stake, and look at the primary source-text. The textual connections of the novel of *The Hours* extend into literary tradition, biography, and the ideological narratives of authorship and readership. Through his appropriation of an iconic Modernist figure, one of her mainstay texts, and the implications that the reading of such a text might have had in post-World War II America, Cunningham manages to construct an intertextual model of identity, which is not linear, but associative and fluid. He seems to assert that living, much like reading intertextually, is about a type of pleasure which "exits, and persists, then, in the act of reading in, around, and on (and on)" (Sanders 14).

Michael Cunningham's novel, which served as source text for the 2003 film of the same name, is, in its turn, both hypo- and hypertext. It is a dialogic text, engaged in a tripartite act of communication across time, media and ideology. And that is no small feat for a 'second-hand' text, since it attests to the power of Cunningham's novel in "prolonging the pleasure of the original presentation, and repeating the production of a memory" (Ellis qtd in Sanders 24). Beyond this pleasure, *The Hours* also deals with what Leo Braudy has called "unfinished cultural business" (qtd in Hutcheon 116), both with Virginia Woolf's novel, as well as with the historical figure of Woolf herself thus highlighting the "continuing historical relevance (economic, cultural, psychological)" of its intertexts (*ibid.*). Through precise modalities, Cunningham's novel performs a triple appropriation, in the sense that each of its narrative strands ('Mrs. Woolf', 'Mrs. Dalloway', and 'Mrs. Brown') re-claims a previous text. Readers, reviewers, and common readers (in the Woolfian sense of the phrase) have discussed the sexual identities of Cunningham's Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Woolf and Mrs. Dalloway to great length. Likewise, literary critics have engaged in long-winded debates about what kind of literary text *The Hours* is. Seymour Chatman lists some of the labels employed by reviewers in describing it—"emulation,' 'replay,' 'echo,' or 'parallel'" (269)—yet eventually deems it a 'second-degree' narrative in the Genettian sense, and specifies that it involves a "serious transformation" that "imitates another text on sustained and explicit grounds" (270). Meanwhile, Suzanne Henke makes use of a 'lowering the story'-type argument, as she wonders whether a postmodern reappraisal of a modernist novel does not "inadvertently mock and minimize the serious resonance produced in the modernist prose model" (Henke 18). Conservative Woolfian Roberta Rubenstein states that the practice of 'reanimating' a historic literary figure and her text merely offers audiences a melodramatic version of "Virginia Woolf lite" (qtd in Henke 16). More of the same dismissiveness is displayed by Jonathan Dee, who compares the "coincidences that pile up" in Cunningham's text to a "particularly highbrow episode of *The Twilight Zone*" (76). These critical stances infer that the relationship between Cunningham's novel and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is a strictly linear one. Henke and Dee are quick to write off *The Hours* for the fallacious reason that "source texts

are always better at being themselves” (Leitch 10), while Rubenstein displays a flawed understanding of the ontological shift from reality to fiction.

None of the reviewers above takes into account the authorial intentionality behind this appropriation. As Cunningham states, what he “wanted to do was more akin to music, to jazz, ... to both honor it and try to make other art out of an existing work of art” (Cunningham with James Schiff qtd in Henke 13). This paper chooses to credit Michael Cunningham’s aesthetic vision, not by taking it at face value or by discarding the differences between what is encoded by the author and what is decoded by the reader. However, by retracing the jazz-like modalities through which the author renders his concept a reality, it attempts to engage in dialogue with the text, the intentions behind it, and the critical response to it. If one must apply a label to *The Hours*, then this novel would best be described as more than mere homage, allusion and citation—it is an appropriation, which “affects a more decisive journey from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain” (Sanders 26). In Genettian terms, the novel architextually announces itself as a reinterpretation of a source text, as *The Hours* was Virginia Woolf’s work-in-progress title for *Mrs. Dalloway (A Writer’s Diary*, qtd in Lee). Although it does not affect a generic shift or a transcoding across media (or transfocalization) the novel does involve a shift in ontology and a move of the Woolfian narrative to different diegeses, which automatically imply a difference in ideological frameworks. Cunningham’s *The Hours*, like any sustained appropriation, reworks source material of different types (literary, biographical and meta-literary), ideologically updating and thematically refocusing it. It adds notions of gender and sexuality, heterosexuality and queerness into the mix, in a manner largely indebted to the tradition of queer theory that has emerged since Woolf’s instatement as an early feminist by such “scholars like Jane Marcus, Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar” (Rosenberg 1112).

Mrs. Woolf, Cunningham’s version of Virginia Woolf, brings into question the relevance of authorial intention. In her defense of intentionality, Linda Hutcheon states that a creative artist’s personal and political intentions behind engaging in the adaptive process are “of

both interest and importance to our understanding of why and how an adaptation comes into being” (Hutcheon 95). By revisiting Virginia Woolf and making her his own, Cunningham seems to posit that the same holds for any artist—in Freudian terms, the reader/spectator derives voyeuristic pleasure from seeing the artist at work. Cunningham, who professes a long-lasting and deep-seated involvement with Woolf’s biography, appears to have read it as what Ross Chambers calls the testimony of someone “dying as an author” (Chambers, qtd in Hutcheon 110). Obviously, there is much more to the historical figure of Woolf than suicide, ‘madness’, the frustration it must have caused her, and her hotly debated repressed lesbian preference, and Cunningham is likely aware of this facts. However, in order to render her a character, he has filtered out and then reassembled the elements that spoke to him at a personal level. And that is what caused the controversy.

The corpus of biographical writings on Virginia Woolf seems to be perpetually regenerating, because, no matter the age and dominant ideology, she always “seems to us, now, both a contemporary and an historical figure” (Lee 758). It is uncanny to note how Hermione Lee, one of the most esteemed contemporary Woolfian scholars, acknowledges the importance of always re-inventing Woolf, and then compare this with her response to Stephen Daldry’s 2003 film, *The Hours* and the novel upon which it is based. Housel cites the biographer’s “squeamish reluctance to see a real person made over into a fictional character, with made-up thoughts and speeches” (Housel 9). The ‘Mrs. Woolf’ sections in *The Hours* deploy what Hutcheon calls “the ontological shift” (Hutcheon 17)—a term specifically devised to describe adaptations of historical events or figures. According to Hutcheon, adaptations can not be simply labeled as ‘historically accurate’ or ‘historically inaccurate’, since “historical adaptations are as complex as historiography itself.” (18)

Even when one deals with such a richly documented biography as Woolf’s, the writing of biographical fiction will always involve a process of amplification, one of the main *modi operandi* of hypertextuality, in the Genettian sense. Actually, as John Mullan argues, the more amplification (and the less historical ‘fact’) a writer invests in

the fictional rendition of a 'real' person, the better—"The more it stacks up its evidence ... the more it confesses to a secondary status—something perhaps more entertaining than the truth, but something less than the truth too" (Mullan 83). Generically, amplification is the process which elaborates out of the potential within the hypotext a whole narrative; specifically, in the case of Cunningham's rendition of Woolf, it is the modality through which he constructs the modernist author not as a "(civil, moral) person", but as a Barthesian 'body'. As Seymour Chatman puts it, Woolf's presence in *The Hours* "seem designed less to reconstruct the actual genesis of Mrs. Dalloway than to draw situational parallels with Cunningham's protagonists" (274). Unlike Hermione Lee, Chatman is able to delineate between the aims of fiction, and those of historiography, thus eschewing one of the perils of biographic knowingness—its impingement upon the understanding and enjoyment of fiction.

Laura Brown's story in *The Hours* is the story of the female decoding experience, of how one comes to articulate one's subjectivity in response to reading. At the end of her story, the reader of *The Hours* learns that after completing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Mrs. Brown took the morally questionable decision to abandon her family, whom, in an ironic twist, she has out-lived. However, Cunningham's novel explains, she was living in a culturally repressive era, where her role and designation in society was very clearly cut, and which, she felt, left no other choice for those who were unable to conform. This section of his Cunningham's novel explores how Laura's experience with reading *Mrs. Dalloway* simultaneously reflects upon and influences the means through which she makes sense of her own identity.

Michael Cunningham recalls that reading *Mrs. Dalloway* for the first time brought on the revelation that books "can be living, active, ongoing parts of our consciousness" (Cohen 283) and claims that, in *The Hours*, he meant to illustrate the "huge, cathartic, deeply emotional experiences" (*ibid.*) that one can have with books. Consequently, his rendition of Laura Brown reads as the recuperation of one of the many sufferers of the unnamed and unnamable 'housewife's disease' (as per symptoms described by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique*). Mrs. Brown attempts to "keep herself by gaining entry into a parallel world" (Cunningham 37). If Mrs. Woolf's

identity throughout *The Hours* is revealed within a performative framework, Laura Brown's sense of self is articulated as spectator. Throughout the novel Laura acknowledges both the oppositional and the preferred reading of the Woolf's novel, regarding Clarissa Dalloway as "an aristocrat, pale and charming" (Cunningham 187), yet also as a somewhat false. She confirms Linda Williams's assertion that mothering under patriarchy renders women capable of occupying multiple positions when immersed in a decoding experience. Laura Brown thinks of herself as a fluid entity, one describable through many labels, none of which, taken separately would do her identity justice. She is a mother, a social misfit, a woman who kissed another woman, "herself and not herself" (*ibid.*). Late at night, after Dan calls her to bed, she is jolted by her sense of standing on the sidelines of her own life: "she has imagined some sort of ghost self, a second version of her, standing immediately behind, watching" (214). While her engagement with the reading experience is an intense one, a catalyst of action, her actual existence feels as if someone else were performing it.

In writing about reading *Mrs. Dalloway*, Cunningham echoes the poststructuralist belief that the reader is essentially a writer as well, and that "in many ways, any creative act is essentially the same act" (Cunningham with Farnsworth 2). In Mrs. Brown's story, one creative act triggers another—the story of one creator empowers another, much less likely one. There is a sense here of the continuous whirl of creation, in which all identities are linked, irrespective of social background or other such identitarian modifiers. Laura Brown is a housewife living in the repressive 1940s, yet her reading of Woolf's Modernist text leads her to believe that "she has a touch of brilliance herself, just a hint of it" (Cunningham 42). Her fascination with Virginia Woolf, with women "of such brilliance" (*ibid.*) is indicative of how unlikely such a woman seems in Laura Brown's world. The act of relocating to a fictional diegesis, or, as she eventually does, to a wholly new mode of existence, is the only solution apparent for a woman who senses that living out one's identity could prove pleasurable, if it were not for the unreasonable standards of society at large. As the pressure of unreasonable demands increases, relocation becomes the sole possible catalyst for the empathy which Laura so craves from those around her: "*We thought her sorrows were ordinary sorrows; we had no idea*" (205).

Like Mrs. Woolf, Mrs. Brown can only attain a sense of peace when considering disappearing, or, by extension, when she is immersed within the world of *Mrs. Dalloway*. At all other times, she perceives her identity as coaxed into pre-formatted standards, which bear absolutely no purchase on her interests, abilities and preferences, try as she might to think and act otherwise.

Clarissa Vaughn is, essentially (and simplistically) put, Clarissa Dalloway transposed into a different context, and therefore a different ideological and identitarian frame. The 'Mrs. Dalloway' narrative in *The Hours* reads like a metatextual critique of Woolf's homonymous novel, part homage, part takeover. In Kristevan terms, it is a text written in the poetic language of intertextuality, "an *intersection of textual surfaces* ... a dialogue among several writings" (qtd in Allen, 38, original emphasis). Cunningham deploys numerous references to Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* in the process of constructing his very own 'Mrs. Dalloway', thereby asserting that Clarissa Vaughn's identity is palimpsestic, as well as socially constructed.

The first echo of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is the extent to which the first part of 'Mrs. Dalloway' in *The Hours* parallels Clarissa Dalloway's morning walk through London to buy flowers. Both women are in love with their cities, which they perceive as somehow unalterable, and thoroughly overwhelming. They are equally concerned with mortality, yet reluctant to acknowledge this concern. Memories are central to the existence of both characters, as they oscillate between living and re-living, between the sensuous enjoyment of the present and the nostalgic desire to recapture the past. There is also a very interesting parallel to be drawn between the brushes with authority experienced by the two women—Clarissa Vaughn passes by a movie set, while a car with an unidentifiable occupant passes by Clarissa Dalloway. In Clarissa Vaughn's diegesis authority is feminine, cultural and contemporary (an actress, either Meryl Streep or Vanessa Redgrave), whereas in Clarissa Dalloway's it is masculine, political, and a-historical (the Prime Minister, the Prince of Wales). Both encounters, however, inspire the deployment of religious imagery. This reference invites comparisons between the sense of displaced divinity professed by Modernism and

postmodernism, and reflects the ideological differences between the two historic frames.

Inasmuch as Richard Brown is the man around whom Clarissa Vaughn's life seems to be revolving, he is, at least in part, the direct equivalent of Peter Walsh. The two men seem to share a cynicism which amends the two Clarissas' love of natural beauty. Neither one thinks well of the women's pleasure in throwing parties, and neither is concerned with notions of conventional success and recognition. The standard against which Clarissa Vaughn constantly measures her identity, then, is this cynical man, an outsider of society, who is about to end his existence out of a sense of failure. Like Clarissa Dalloway, she is occasionally angry with him, and yet cannot bring herself to break away from their shared past. Unlike her, she is also nursing this man, a poet, through his final days—and in this sense, she is as much of an appropriation of Rezia Warren Smith as she is one of Clarissa Dalloway. Since Cunningham employs the figure of Richard Brown as the 'visionary', this makes Richard's character incongruous with Peter Walsh's gregariousness. In order not to deprive his heroine of the revelation that her former love interest has found a new lease on his love life, Cunningham summons Louis, the other member of the *ménage-à-trois* in which Brown and Vaughn were involved in their youth. Clarissa's reaction to Louis's confession of newfound love contradicts the critics' assertion that Clarissa Dalloway is the most sexually liberated of the three protagonists of *The Hours*. She appears just as bound as Clarissa Dalloway before her, longing to retrieve an intensity of feeling that committed partnership has taken away from her. At the end of the day she is, indeed, the only one of the Cunningham's three women who is allowed freedom—but not just because her social context allows her to engage in a lifestyle that accurately reflects her sexual preference. Her liberation stems from the fact that, after Richard's suicide, she can finally define her identity in accordance to her own needs, and not to those of a person for whom she is caring.

Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* is largely a critique against the damaging effects of the First World War. Its impact upon human identity is explored through the description of shell-shocked veteran Septimus Warren Smith's illness and self-inflicted demise. In *The Hours*, AIDS is largely the

equivalent for the war. Just like the war, it causes displacement of identity, madness, suicide, and raises questions of heroism and patients' rights. "It's the event after which nothing's ever the same again" (Canning, 104). Unlike war veterans, however, the AIDS casualties are hardly ever regarded as heroic, and their rights are often sidelined, because of the prevalent discriminatory belief that their disease is shameful and self-inflicted. Suzanne Henke, for instance, believes that, by refusing Clarissa's party, Richard Brown makes it challenging "for either the reader or the film spectator to feel the kind of compassionate identification that his tragic suicide should warrant" (Henke 17). She cannot comprehend how a fatally ill individual might not want to publicly expose their illness, when there is glory to be revealed in. The answer comes from paralleling Richard's experiences with those of Septimus Warren Smith. Both are 'lunatics' and poets, whose illness and subsequent suicide greatly impact the articulation of the identities of the women who care for them.

Yet another intertextually displaced element in Cunningham's 'Mrs. Dalloway' is the figure of Sally Seton, the object of Clarissa Dalloway's teenage summertime affections. Interestingly, Sally Seton is not equated with her namesake, Sally Lester, Clarissa Vaughn's stable partner. Vaughn echoes her literary predecessor's memories of sheer excitement and joy at being under the same roof with Sally Seton by thinking of the summer she spent with Richard in Wellfleet at eighteen. What, then, of Sally Lester? In an ambiguous gender identity shift, Cunningham equates her with stately MP Richard Dalloway, who is completely oblivious to his wife's needs, be they sexual or otherwise. However, where Clarissa Dalloway feels misrecognition, Clarissa Vaughn acknowledges the performative quality of identity, which warrants peace of mind, but is also stifling. By deploying this parallel, Cunningham seems to be stating that human identity transcends sexual preference, and that it is conditioned by how the individual makes meaning of her own self, rather than by the manner in which she is labeled according to societal norms, in virtue of her sexual identity. In thus transposing the social agenda of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Cunningham makes normativity of any kind the primary focus of his critique.

The final parallel explored here is that between the triangulated relationship involving Clarissa Dalloway, her daughter Elizabeth, and her newfound mentor, Miss Kilman, and their equivalents in Cunningham's novel (Clarissa Vaughn, Julia, and Mary Krull). The relationship of equivalence is immediately apparent, and indicative of further transposition—from Woolf's Modernist interest in the relationship between the individual and organized religion, to Cunningham's anti-essentialist queer agenda, that condemns the perceived tyranny of theory over the actual practice of homosexual identity. Cunningham has his Clarissa equating the effects of upholding radical notions of lesbian identity with the effects of war on class struggle. Both cause the same kind of radical, enraged, monologic activism against a social order deemed incorrect and oppressive. Like Woolf, Cunningham articulates his positions as politically centrist and pre-eminently humanist, asserting that radicalism of any kind only breeds intolerance. Through this cultural critique, Cunningham is not assuming a retrograde view against political activism, but simply voicing the argument according to which "some of the previous certainties contained within Marxist, socialist and liberal feminism" are no longer apt for deriving "a political agenda that is useful and appropriate" in the context of ever-altering gender norms (McLaughlin 77).

Moving on to the actual transcoding of the novel into the 2003 film, one must investigate what changed from one textual instance to the other, what was added and what was taken out. The following is an overview of several cinematic codes involved in the process of transcoding, in an attempt to move beyond such didactic discourses on adaptation as those of fidelity and originality. The multitrack medium of film implies summoning of a host of signifying codes unavailable to literature. In Genettian terms, when creating a hypertext, the adapter of any given novel must choose what to transmutate, amplify and excise from the source material.

When it comes to adaptations, it seems that the intradiegetic narrator is often considered a possible solution to the quandary caused by the vast majority of contemporary fiction, whose hallmark is internal action. In the case of *The Hours*, "a literary novel based on another literary novel" (Cohen 289), this issue was further complicated by its multiple narrative strands, its

apparently ‘uncinematic’ stories, heavily relying on internal action and less so on external one, and the fact that it is essentially a book about a book. However, the filmmakers eschewed the presence of an intradiegetic narrator, a technique that audiences tend to perceive as ‘uncinematic’ and opted for the “intrinsic narrator”—the ensemble of cinematic codes which articulates the first-level narrative of the film, controlled by an impersonal, invisible narrating instance (Stam, *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics* 99-100). The issue of multiple narrative strands was resolved through a process that Gérard Genette has called variable internal focalization—each story is told from the limited perspective of the protagonist, yet there are frequent jumps in focalization, which help build up the richly associative quality of the film. The re-focusing required by adaptation also entailed an extensive process of translation from prose into performance text, conducted according to the very specific rules of cinematic plot structure. A film like *The Hours*, with its far from formulaic jumps across narrative diegeses, still follows the classic three-act plot structure. A reverse engineering of the film’s narrative structure, according to the plot formula proposed by Christopher Vogler in *The Hero’s Journey*, reveals that, in order to comply with plot structure, the tonality of certain scenes was amplified, while others were simply ‘invented’ by screenwriter David Hare. Amplifications in tonality abound in the film, leading one to the conclusion that, indeed, Daldry’s *The Hours* is overt in several instances where Cunningham’s novel is understated, owing to the structural constraints of performance texts.

The script accounts for a large part of the spectators’ understanding of the film’s *récit*, yet ignoring the multi-track aspect of film narratives would be an unpardonable oversight. Some cinematic codes are responsible with creating difference—that is, with making each storyline stand as an autonomous narrative with its particular identity. Meanwhile others produce repetition—they reiterate cinematic elements, which bind the three stories into a single entity. Directorial vision, editing and soundtrack pertain to the former category, while cinematography, design and cast concern the latter. Taken together, all these codes corroborate towards a textual system, whose goal is to engage and conduct the spectator towards a preferred reading of the source text.

In terms of directorial vision, Phillip French identifies an auteurist strand connecting Stephen Daldry’s previous effort, *Billy Elliot*, with *The Hours*: both depict “people in three generations attempting to break free from social suffocation”. Of the two films, however, *The Hours* has been described as the more daring one, “a real departure from most movie-making, which can handle only one universe at a time” (Peter Bradshaw). David Hare was one of the first filmmakers involved who identified the “very cinematic idea” (qtd in Cohen 285) underpinning Cunningham’s novel, by pinpointing the fact that three apparently unconnected stories, which nonetheless constantly echo and parallel one another, could prove to be a great source of cinematic pleasure. His approach brings up the same type of pleasure discussed by Raymond Bellour in “Segmenting/Analyzing”. Bellour discerned in the classical film a “complex system of repetitions and regulated differences” (Stam, *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics* 56), achieved through the deployment of rhyming effects, i.e. “devices that ‘carry’ narrative difference through an ordered network of resemblances, contrasts and unfolding symmetries and asymmetries” (*ibid.*, 56-7). *The Hours* is replete with this type of effect, partly due to the tri-partite nature of its narrative, but also thanks to the edition and musical score, which weave, bind and help the three plotlines play off of each other.

Philip Boyle’s editing has been praised as “virtuoso stuff” (Phillip French), mainly for employing two atypical editing techniques: the juxtaposition of long scenes with much shorter ones, and scene-to-scene transitions through recurring visual elements. Screenwriter David Hare explains them as deliberate attempts to emulate Woolf’s prose, once removed through its rendition in Cunningham’s novel. Each story begins with the husband/lover of each woman leading the camera to the woman. In each story there is a character who loses a shoe, as well as a character who breaks an egg against a mixing bowl. Through this, it makes “connections that the audience instinctively feels are moving the story forward, even though they don’t yet quite know how” (qtd in Cohen 288-9). Similarly, the film’s aural dimension contributes to its overall cohesiveness. It is difficult to ascribe Phillip Glass’s soundtrack to any of Michael Chion’s categories of film music. It is neither resolutely empathetic, nor didactic contrapuntal. Glass

builds up his trademark sound: endlessly layered violins, static melodies, glacial rhythms, tonal suspensions for the piano, slowly cascading scales of notes, and, most notably, arpeggiated melodies, which contribute to an overall dark, brooding tone.

While editing and score ensure the film's aesthetic unity, cinematography, production and acting carefully individualize each storyline. Phillip French and Bert Cardullo note cinematographer Seamus McGarvey's efforts to achieve "the differentiation of the three settings" (French), by presenting Mrs. Woolf in "subtly shaded or shadowed" lighting, Mrs. Brown in "sepia sunlight" and Mrs. Dalloway in a "mildly misty" environment (Cardullo 672). Similarly, production design renders the interiors of the Woolfs' home as "dark, cluttered, tasteful but oppressive" (French). Meanwhile, Laura Brown moves in a mass-produced setting, where "the furnishings reflect a conditioned taste and the overall look is of a happy family from a Saturday Evening Post advertisement" (*ibid.*). Clarissa Vaughn's New York is a place of "supposedly liberated people with good taste who dress in the 'smart casual' style, but snow is on the ground, winter is in the air and all is not well" (*ibid.*).

Naturally, the actors also do their share of adapting, by individualizing the characters, fleshing them out of written words and transfixing them in the memory of the spectator. Their roles as adapters are peculiar since, in a certain sense, all film actors always adapt the text of the screenplay, as well as the director's intensions, into the creation of their characters. Beyond that, though, most actors approach film adaptations as they would any other project—they rarely refer back to the film's source text. However, in the case of *The Hours*, all three main actors professed to having built some sort of relationship with the source text. According to the Internet Movie Database, in developing her character, Nicole Kidman decided to read Woolf's personal letters, rather than her novels, as she found that the former enabled her to access the writer's persona in a more direct manner. The same source states that Meryl Streep decided not to re-read Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, as she assumed that, much like the actor herself, the character would have read it in college, failed to understand it properly, and forgotten about it. Julianne Moore's affinity for Cunningham's book, though, actually influenced the rendition of her character's

attempted suicide. Hare had written a gun into the scene, feeling that the bottles of pills in the book were "too subtle and internal for the film" (Cohen 289), which, in spite of Cunningham's vehement opposition, was director Stephen Daldry's preferred version. Moore, who felt that her character would not use a gun to kill herself, weighed in on the issue. Says Cunningham, only partly in jest, "when you're losing an argument try to get a movie star on your side" (*ibid.*).

Many reviews have intuitively deemed the film *The Hours* a 'faithful' adaptation. Since the fidelity criterion has been demystified as fallacious, a less didactic way of arguing for this is by noting that not much excision was employed in transposing Cunningham's novel into film. The removals performed appear to have been motivated by aesthetic and pragmatic reasons—inadequacy with the film's overall structure, or time constraints. One such instance of elimination concerns the summer spent by Clarissa Vaughn, Richard Brown and Louis Waters in Wellfleet. Daldry, Hare and Rudin chose only to retain the characters' verbal references to that period of bliss in their lives, because, as David Hare states on the DVD of *The Hours*, "embodying those memories in corny pictures of people running along seashores" would have reduced the intensity of Ed Harris's (Richard), Meryl Streep's (Clarissa) and Jeff Daniels's (Louis) shared scenes. A second excision refers to the incomplete rendition of Virginia Woolf's biography. Although the novel has come in for its fair share of blame on this account, the film seems to have generated a wider and more impassioned response because of the larger audience it attracted. Woolf's grand-niece, Virginia Nicholson, for instance, has criticized Daldry's decision in casting Nicole Kidman to play Mrs. Woolf, as "a generation of cinemagoers will see Virginia Woolf as a neurotic, gloomy, suicide-obsessed femme fatale" (*The Independent*, 7 July 2004). As previously stated, the fallacy here resides in the fact that Mrs. Woolf is but a version of the writer—a clearly incomplete version, but one which, after the 2002 release of the film, propelled Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* to the top position of the US paperback chart. "No academic, however jealous, could disdain a medium that drives the modern reader back to Virginia Woolf" (Hare with Teeman).

One problematic instance of excision from the film of *The Hours* is that of the overt, arguably

sentimental, queer agenda of Cunningham's novel. David Hare's self-professed reasons for taking out Mary Krull contradict his other statements about the concern with presenting a fluid view of sexuality in his script. Hare states that his reasons tie in with thematic coherence. He did not see how the argument made by Cunningham through Mary Krull, "about whether sexual politics is or isn't radical politics" (Cohen 286) could help support the theme that all lives are interconnected. The presence of Mary Krull in Clarissa Vaughn's life could be equated with that of Mrs. Woolf's maid Nelly, or Mrs. Brown's neighbor, Mrs. Hatch. All three characters represent a normative standard (of domesticity, maternal authority, and, in the case of Mary Krull, cultural validity), against which the three protagonists compare themselves and come out feeling inadequate. Mary Krull's presence contextualizes Clarissa Vaughn's existence and adds nuance to her stance as an 'out' lesbian, since it infers that being 'out' does not automatically imply liberation from authoritarian discourses.

Adaptations are strange palimpsestic entities, whose existence is still impinged upon by moralistic discourses, irrespective of the prevalent trends in cultural criticism, which seek to impose the intertextual model. The same trends, however, take a largely negative stance against redeeming authorial intent. Meanwhile, actual consumer habits indicate that, when approaching a text, be it an adaptation or not, the reader/spectator is oftentimes involuntarily assaulted by its paratext. Adaptations in particular are most often marketed via their overt filial relation to their source text. The intertextual thread of influence produced in *The Hours* via Virginia Woolf contextualizes the other two narratives to great effect. Laura Brown and Clarissa Vaughn, whose identities are defined in relation with Woolf, her text, and each other, benefit from the cultural acumen of a literary heroine, and that of what has arguably become her best-known novel. The selves of the three heroines are caught up in a rich intertextual, inter-ideological and inter-temporal interplay, which was exquisitely translated into film. The film of *The Hours* is visually and aurally rich, and, due to its innovative narrative structure, somewhat transcends the boundaries of mainstream Hollywood cinematography. Through eschewing facile cinematic techniques and through great attention paid to the manner in which the three

stories communicate, it manages to render cinematically a story that is at once homogenous and heterogeneous. These two attributes represent the main sources of intertextual pleasure, which *The Hours* stands to provide to its viewer. The homogeneity produced by its recurrent visual elements and thematic cohesiveness yields the pleasure of repetition, while the heterogeneity that stems from its multifaceted takes on sensitive topics such as depression, suicidal ideation, motherhood and queerness brings about pleasure in variation.

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The Anti-Slavery Movement of 19th Century America and the Fight for Women's Rights

by Ilinca Diaconu

This essay focuses on the relationship between the anti-slavery movement of nineteenth century America and the fight for women's rights of the same period, which was retroactively termed "first-wave feminism" in the 1970's. Specifically, this paper argues that the political exclusion of women from the abolitionist movement because of their gender as well as the idea that assuring freedom for one group of individuals entails the same for the whole society provided the impetus for the affirmation of women's rights, of which the right to vote is the most significant example. What this essay ultimately suggests is that, through their employment of methods of protest typical of the patriarchal order, proponents of women's rights subverted this order from within, thus exposing its constructedness.

Before exploring the theme of this paper, i.e. the relationship between the abolitionist movement and the struggle for women's rights that characterized nineteenth century America, there are a few observations that have to be made. First of all, as Sara Evans argues in her work *Born for Liberty. A History of Women in America*, this period saw the "separate and parallel development of a woman suffrage movement that demanded equal citizenship rights and responsibilities for women, and a movement that defined political action for women as an extension of domesticity." (94) More exactly, while anti-suffragists like Catharine Beecher traced a link between the home and national unity, considering the role of women as "nurturers" and "submissive wives" to be the foundation on which "the democratic social order" stood (96), feminists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were against *de jure* inequalities between men and women, advocating full citizenship, which included the right to vote, and, in general, women's increased participation in political life. (95) In other words, the supporters of domesticity implicitly emphasized the middle class ideal based on the

separation of the private sphere, assigned to women, from the public sphere, viewed as men's domain, whereas suffragists worked against this strict division between private and public life which placed women at a political disadvantage. The second observation which needs to be made is that, no matter what ideology they promoted, the absence of voting rights did not entail women's lack of presence in "the political community." (Kerber and de Hart 216): proponents of domesticity "set out to change the behavior of virtually every group [i.e. Native Americans, the poor working class etc.] outside the white middle class to fit this domestic mold" (Evans 95), their efforts taking concrete form in charitable institutions, which aimed at extending the private sphere so as to include social involvement rather than doing away with this demarcation between the domestic domain and the public one; suffragists sent petitions to legislatures insisting on property rights for married women (94), they supported the temperance movement, stressing the relationship between excessive alcohol consumption and domestic violence (Kerber and de Hart 231), and they endorsed the abolitionist cause (Evans 101). The third and final observation that is worth mentioning is the fact that, despite their ideological differences, white women from both the North and the South of the country strove for involvement in public life, a fact which is best exemplified by their founding of aid societies and volunteering as "doctors and nurses to their respective armies" during the Civil War. (Evans 114)

Notwithstanding the complexities inherent in all these observations, this paper will focus on the origins of the woman suffrage movement, to the extent that they relate to the abolitionist cause. Thus, this analysis excludes any description of southern women's activities, as, in Sara Evans's words, "southern domestic ideology continued to be framed by the needs and anxieties of the planter class and permeated with racist assumptions"; explaining the weak political activism of women in this region, she later adds,

(...) the association between abolitionism and women's rights in the north horrified southern ideologues, and the repression of political dissent on the slavery issue deprived southern

women of the catalyst that had sparked women's rights activism in the north. (108)

It is this presence "of political dissent on the slavery issue" that, as suggested by the previous quotation, informed the appearance of the women's rights movement in the North. More exactly, radical abolitionism provided the context for the affirmation of women's rights in two different ways, the first of which being related to the discrimination to which abolitionist women were subjected within the anti-slavery movement itself. As Ellen DuBois explains, in 1837, Sarah and Angelina Grimké started to speak to a New England audience against slavery, a fact which attracted the hostility of clergymen, alarmed by the idea of a woman lecturing to a public; with the exception of some male abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass, many men within the anti-slavery movement refrained from defending these women. Successful in preserving their right to lecture, the Grimké sisters later began to speak and write about the "woman question", prompting a debate surrounding the question of women's equality with men "in all aspects of the abolitionist movement." Lois W. Banner traces the same problem in the division that occurred in 1839 within the American Anti-Slavery Society (founded in 1833) "over allowing women to participate in its affairs"; as she argues, "New York members, fearing that any association with feminism would undermine abolitionism, wanted women's societies kept separate from the organizations of men," later reinforcing male control of the movement by pushing abolitionism further into the realm of politics with their founding of the Liberty Party. However, in Boston and Philadelphia, supporters of William Lloyd Garrison who was in control of the American Anti-Slavery Society, believed that both sexes should participate in the organization's activities and, as a result, sent both men and women delegates to the London Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840 (217). It was on this occasion that delegate Elizabeth Cady Stanton found the reason to shift her political focus off the slavery issue and onto women's rights: faced with a conservative male audience, the women present at the convention, "were not permitted to speak on their own behalf nor to sit on the convention floor", being forced to listen to the proceedings behind "a curtained gallery at one end of the hall", while none of the

male abolitionists, with the exception of Stanton's husband, spoke against this discrimination. In response, Elizabeth Cady Stanton decided with another abolitionist present at the meeting in London, Lucretia Mott, "that they hold a woman's right convention" upon returning to the United States (218).

This decision took concrete form on the 19th and 20th of July 1848, when "more than two hundred women and forty men from the surrounding towns and countryside" gathered in the Wesleyan Chapel at Seneca Falls (Evans 94-95). The manifesto entitled the "Declaration of Sentiments" that marked the significance of the convention was authored by Stanton, who modeled it on the Declaration of Independence, thus expressing "the conviction that the Revolution had made implicit promises to women which had not been kept" (Kerber and de Hart 529). This link between the two declarations is also testament to the "seventy-year-long tradition of female activity" which united the leaders and attendants of the Seneca Falls Convention with "their revolutionary foremothers." Most importantly, presenting the Declaration of Sentiments as a reflection of the Declaration of Independence was a direct reference to the notion of "full citizenship – including the right of suffrage" (Evans 95). As Sara Evans explains, "[women] claimed republicanism for [themselves] not as mothers responsible for rearing good little citizens but as autonomous individuals deserving of that right," demanding a direct relationship between themselves and the state and not one mediated "by husband or children" (95). Thus, as far as the similarities between the two declarations are concerned, the one expressed at the Seneca Falls Convention follows the structure and diction of the Declaration of Independence, while reproducing some of the latter's phrasing; in this respect, the opening lines of the second paragraph of the Declaration of Sentiments offer the best example: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal." Moreover, like the Declaration of Independence, the one authored by Elizabeth Cady Stanton provides a list of grievances, which, however, are no longer directed against King George III but against men in general. This list includes objections to woman's inability "to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise," her obligation to "submit to laws, in the formation of which [they] had no voice," her lack of representation in the legislature, her not being

permitted to enter professions such as medicine or law, her inability to keep her children in case of divorce, etc. (Kerber and de Hart 529).

The principles stated in the Declaration of Sentiments would inform subsequent meetings like the ones in Rochester, New York; Akron, Ohio; and Worcester, Massachusetts; and in general, the whole feminist activity throughout the nineteenth century (Kerber and de Hart 528). Between the Seneca Falls Convention and the ratification of the nineteenth amendment on the 18th of August, 1920, more than seventy years would pass, a time span during which feminists Julia Ward Howe and Lucy Stone would found the American Woman Suffrage Association, which included both men and women and which advocated black suffrage and the fifteenth amendment; and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony would create “the National Woman Suffrage Association, which included only women, opposed the 15th Amendment because for the first time citizens were explicitly defined as male, and worked for a national Constitutional Amendment for woman suffrage.” In 1890, these two rival organizations would unite under the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt and form the National American Woman Suffrage Association, supporting “movements for health reform, prison reform, and child labor law reform.” With the help of suffrage marches and parades as well as of a million signatures gathered across the United States in 1913 and 1915, the Congress finally passed the 19th Amendment, sending it to the states for ratification (Johnson Lewis).

Another way in which the abolitionist movement provided the impetus for the women’s rights movement was through its underlying principle of extending rights to what had previously been a disenfranchised group, African-American males. Specifically, feminists realized that the extension of citizenship and, more specifically, of voting rights, should apply to all groups, that “freedom and liberty for some groups essentially means freedom and liberty for all groups” (“A Woman’s Right to Vote” 14). In this respect, women’s involvement in the abolitionist movement provided women not only with the organizational tools but also with the political discourse that would help further their cause. On a more individual basis, this inextricable connection between the anti-slavery and the women’s rights movements is perhaps best

exemplified by the involvement of notable black abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, “Stanton’s strongest supporter at Seneca Falls” or Sojourner Truth who insisted that “womanhood should include black women” and, thus, who took “the issue of women’s rights across the boundaries of race, class, and the bondage of slavery” (Evans 104).

On a more symbolic level, although oriented towards gaining political rights for women, i.e. towards raising awareness for a cause that defied the patriarchal order of those times, the suffragist movement owes its success to a series of methods (conventions, petitions, declarations, parades) stemming from the existing order itself. In other words, instead of attempting to completely separate themselves from the system that initially prevented them from voicing their political opinions, to reject politics altogether, women sought to work within this system in order to gain their rights. This adoption of methods of protest typical of the patriarchal order is not translatable into a submission to it, at the expense of women’s ability to effectively determine the course of historical events. Rather, this strategy should be viewed as a parodic subversion from within of an oppressive system (parodic as it copies its methods), which, in turn exposes its constructedness, its claim of being natural and normative, and destabilizes it (Butler 137). For instance, the mimicry implicit in the Declaration of Sentiments, which, as stated before, was inspired, to a great extent, by the Declaration of Independence, does not cause the former document to become a passive copy of the latter; it is not an appropriation of a masculine perspective by a feminine voice. On the contrary, the Declaration of Sentiments displays the use of a masculine language (in terms of structure, diction, phrasing) with the aim of (ironically) attacking the masculine order. The success of the suffragist movement, therefore, attests not only to women’s resilience in the face of adversity (their exclusion from the abolitionist movement and, in general, their lack of participation in the political process) and to their conviction in the notion that assuring freedom for one group of individuals entails the same for the whole society, but also to the idea that in order to defeat or, at least, weaken an oppressive system, one should work from within it and expose its constructedness.

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Hebben Is Up: Reasons for Leaving the South during the Great Black Migration

by Mihaela Mircia

Since Norf is up,

An' Souf is down,

An' Hebben is up,

I'm upward boun'

Lucy Ariel Williams Holloway, *Northboun'* (1925)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority of the African American population didn't have control over their movement and relocation. Having been brought by force to the new country as slaves during the Atlantic slave trade, and afterwards going through the experience of being traded from master to master through domestic slave trade, the liberated African Americans had, for the first time, the power to choose a course for their own expectations after the end of the Civil War. A large number of them chose to leave the oppressing South, the place where all the historical drama of slavery had taken place, and migrate towards the North, in order to begin a new life, as free people. This mass movement from the South to the North is referred to as the Great Black Migration or as the Great Migration.

The Migration was a very important process in the history of the United States of America, a process that led to the re-configuration and transformation of the American society as a whole and of the American urban space in particular, as the act of migration very much defines what we call today the United States of America. The timeframe considered for discussion will be 1910s to the beginning of the 1940s, a period marked by dramatic changes: heavy urbanization, World War I and the Great Depression.

In a 1921 article called "Causes of the Recent Negro Migration", Henderson H. Donald asserts that "the fundamental and immediate cause of this Negro exodus is economic, the

basic and predominant cause of most of the movements of modern times" (409). Henderson also groups the forces behind the movement under two categories, namely "attractive and repellent" (410) or "beckoning and driving causes, the former arising from conditions in the North and the latter from conditions in the South" (410).

I will argue that had the social climate not been so overtly racist the scale of the migration would have obviously been more reduced and I will follow Booker T Washington's reasoning, who in May 1903 was quoted in *The New York Times* as saying that "for every lynching or attempt at lynching that takes place in the country a score of colored people leave the country for the city". The socio-political reasons for leaving the South were just as important, if not more important, than immediate economic gain.

In this essay I will attempt to illustrate the reasons that led African Americans out of the rural (and urban) South and caused them to start migrating into the urban North. The decision to leave the South should be regarded as the natural outcome of a cumulus of factors rather than a process influenced by one reason alone. The main causes that pushed a significant part of the African American population out of the South are generally considered to be: racism and its implications (segregation, Jim Crow laws and discrimination, political disenfranchisement, lynching and racial violence, the lack of any hope for upward mobility) and bad economic conditions (a depressed Southern economy due to environmental forces such as the boll weevil and floods of 1916 and an unfair sharecropping system).

A series of questions arises. Who were these men and women who committed themselves to leaving their place of birth, and sometimes their families, in order to try their luck in another part of the country? How come so many of them had made the decision to leave at about the same time? Were they planning on coming back?

Who Left the South during the Migration?

Many of the accounts of this exodus tend to consider people as mere objects of external forces without paying attention to the migrants

themselves or to the deep causes for which they chose a sometimes traumatic uprooting.

Sociologist Carole Marks, in "Black Workers and the Great Migration North", argues that there was in fact population relocation happening before the start of what is generally considered the Great Black Migration. Due to the fact that the history of African Americans had been highly influenced by their connection to land, after the abolition of slavery free black migrants sought advancement and opportunity through forms of work related to the land. However small the volume, this existing trend of movement after the emancipation included three streams. As Marks classifies them "one stream advanced upon the towns in search of industrial employment. Another stream migrated west to Texas and Oklahoma where regular seasonal wages were higher. A final stream migrated to the newly opened iron and coal mines in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee"(149). It had enough strength to raise the number of black urban population in the South up to 22 per cent by 1910, meaning that nearly two million African Americans lived in cities six years before the start of the Great Migration (Marks, 150). Nevertheless, by the early twentieth century, after they encountered racial conflicts in these areas, black migrants began to consider alternatives not related to land, such as urban destinations.

Carter G. Woodson, as early as 1918, supported the theory that not all black migrants were unskilled workers or sharecroppers, by mentioning that "only a few intelligent Negroes, had reached the position of being contented in the South (23)," in a state of "recognized inferiority" especially during the 1880s and 1890s when "there were many evidences that economic as well as political conditions would become worse"(22). The white Southerners considered the educated and progressive blacks to be a 'bad influence' for others of the same race, because "they have studied history, law and economics and well understand what it is to get the rights guaranteed them by the constitution. The more they know the more discontented they become" (23). They were the potential leaders of a people facing abuse at the hand of a white caste and therefore posed a serious threat to the white desire to keep African American as in a state of subservience and "the more outspoken they become, moreover, the more necessary is it for them to leave, for they thereby destroy their

chances to earn a livelihood" (23). Reported in the 1917 issue of *The Crisis* is a black business man from North Carolina, who believes that: "There is a silent influence operating in the hearts of the growing class of intelligent Negroes that the insurmountable barriers of caste unnecessarily fetter the opportunities to which every living soul is entitled, namely, a fair chance to earn an honest living and educate his children and be protected by the laws" (quoted in Donald 65).

Some of those who moved were politicians "who, after the restoration of Bourbon rule in the South, found themselves thrown out of office and often humiliated and impoverished" (Woodson, 21). Woodson also writes about physicians, lawyers and preachers, who have been compelled to migrate North, but found that once reached there had to make great compromise taking up menial jobs "serving as waiters, porters, butlers and chauffeurs" (25) because of "the proscription by race prejudice and trades unions".

Others were part of "the intelligent laboring class" (Woodson 23), moving to cities from the Northwest, such as New York, Detroit, Philadelphia and Chicago, to which they were attracted by "the liberal attitude of some whites, which, although not that of social equality, gives the Negroes a liberty in northern centers which leads them to think that they are citizens of the country" (Woodson 23). "The wave of economic distress and social unrest has pushed past the conservative advice of the Negro preacher, teacher and professional man, and the colored laborers and artisans have determined to find a way for themselves" says W.E.B DuBois in a 1917 issue of *The Crisis* (quoted in Donald 65).

There are three main arguments that can be used as evidence that black migrants were neither unskilled nor illiterate, as some of the white Northerners would dispute in order to justify the acts of racism, hatred and exploitation of the black newcomers. First, many found out about opportunities through reading publications that advertised job openings in the North and some African Americans wrote themselves to newspapers such as *The Chicago Defender* inquiring about future prospects. Secondly, labor agents were selective about their place of recruitment and mostly preferred the Southern cities and towns to the rural areas, because the

better work force they were able to gather, the better their pay from the employer in the North. Thirdly, not many sharecroppers had the necessary funds to pay for the trip North therefore “urban, non-agricultural workers were more likely to hear about and be able to capitalize on migration inducements (...) and as early as 1920 a majority of migrants were not drawn directly from farms” (Marks, *Black Workers* 157). In fact “more than two-thirds of the black migrants who moved out of the South were employed as semi-skilled and skilled blue-collar and farm workers and less than one-third were employed as highly skilled white-collar and skilled blue-collar workers” (Nanjundappa 58). In what follows, I will attempt to provide a more in-depth analysis of this theory.

The movement North was, in most cases, carefully planned; the migrants were not leaving in a haphazard manner, but following previous information from minutiae correspondence with relatives already in the cities and with the black press advocating the move. This constitutes evidence that most of the ones leaving were literate individuals. An African American migrant from Selma, Alabama writes to *Chicago Defender* (whose circulation was almost exclusively targeted to the urban centers) in 1917: “I can write short stories all of which portray negro characters but no burlesque (...) would like to know if you could use one or two of my short stories in serial form in your great paper they are very interesting and would furnish good reading matter”. A young black man from Tennessee explained for the *New York Times* in 1914 that he was a student who wanted to finish his school work but he had no possibility to do this in the South as “Negroes were not safe anywhere in the South” and law meant nothing in the South “for a man if his face is dark.” The young man wrote that he was “trying to save enough money to come to that lovely state of yours, where men are protected by the law and where [he expected] to finish [his] training” (quoted in Palmer 55).

Another argument would be that the trip was paid for by recruiting labor agents only for a short period of time, in the beginning of the migratory flow. Shortly after, Southern authorities began charging them exorbitant fees, in an attempt to stop the leave of the work force. So the practice of paying train passes was abandoned “in favor of one where transportation costs were advanced and later deducted from wages.

Neither system, however, proved to be effective” (Marks, *Black Workers* 156). From then on, the migrants were left with only one option if they wanted to work in a Northern city: to pay for the trip themselves. For this to be possible “they sold everything that was not nailed down and families would pool resources and send one member North hoping that high salaries would allow in time the rest to be brought up” (Marks, *Black Workers* 156). However, this alternative could not be pursued by many of the sharecroppers, who in turn found themselves in need to first relocate to Southern cities and earn the money needed to pay for the car fare so “those who had spent some time in Southern cities would be more likely to have the fare” (Marks, *Black Workers* 157). It was only during and following World War II, that the cost of long-distance transportation declined (White, Crowder, Tolnay, Adelman 218) due to the development of the railroad system and to the availability of other means of transportation, thus enabling more black migrants to relocate in order to find employment in wartime industry. In the later period of the migration, the loss of valuable work force was even more significant, in both the blue collar and the white collar categories. In the 1940s and 1950s “one-fourth of the white-collar workers among the South to non-South black migrants were managers, officials, proprietors, and sales workers” (Nanjundappa 56). In terms of blue collar workers who left North “no less than 40 percent were operatives and the rest (in order of percent) non-farm laborers, service workers, and craftsmen and foremen. (Nanjundappa 57). All the arguments mentioned above constitute evidence that “a much more selective segment of the black population left the South than previously has been assumed. In concordance to what was mentioned before, Alabama-based *Age-Herald* newspaper remarked: “It is not the riff-raff of the race, the worthless Negroes, who are leaving in such large numbers. There are, to be sure, many poor Negroes among them who have little more than the clothes on their backs, but others have property and good positions which they are sacrificing in order to get away at first opportunity” (quoted in Donald 66).

Because some of the migrants chose to travel as families, it is interesting to pose the question ‘in what way did race and gender intersect in this heterogeneous movement?’. The case of black women workers differs from that of the white women because historically black women have been expected to contribute to the

work force ever since the slavery period and their employment has not only been accepted (unlike the case of white women) but also required and much needed for the financial sustenance of the family in the period after the Civil War. According to the tied-migration thesis, “the husband’s economic opportunity is typically awarded priority over the wife’s, and, as a result, the household generally moves to a destination where the husband’s economic utility will be maximized” (White, Crowder, Tolnay, Adelman 219). This has also been the case for black women, especially as it appears that “the economic imperatives of husbands may have determined destination locations among black married participants throughout the Great Migration (234). However, black unmarried women who participated in the migration, tended to chose destination that provided a greater deal of economic opportunities. Nevertheless, in the later stages of the migration, as the networks of social support (most of which were led by women) strengthened “the expansion of employment opportunities for women reached beyond the urban locale, and an increasing number of married women were migrating” (219) to suit their own economic needs.

What were the Factors Influencing the Great Migration?

Black South Carolina intellectual W.T. Andrews, spoke in 1917 in front of a mixed audience about the reasons why blacks chose to leave the South. His speech was “unusually frank in pointing out the sources of racial pressures in the South” (Lamon 366) and the clear and unobstructed tone of his message give the words historical significance, even if at the moment of the speech the South was witnessing only the early migratory stages. Says Andrews: “in my view the chief causes of Negro unrest and disturbance of mind are as follows: The destruction of his political privileges and curtailment of his civil rights; no protection of life, liberty and property under the law; insufficient wages to the laboring classes with which to buy the necessities of life; Jim Crow car, residential and labor segregation laws; no educational facilities worthy of the name for the education of Negro children in most of the Southern states” (quoted in Lamon 367). One should notice that, although he uses words such as “unrest” and

“disturbance of mind” to characterize the determination of the migrants in their choice to move, the justification he mentions is first and foremost social. One can assume that the purpose of the aforementioned words is not ill-intended but they are used due to Andrews’ desire to make his speech ‘heard’ and taken into account by the white members of his mixed audience. Nevertheless, his words do not lose their power to name the truth about the black motivation to escape a system of white supremacy ruled by anti-black discrimination on every level of society.

There is, indeed, a cause-effect relationship between the state of the economy at a certain point in time and the level of discrimination and increase in racist hate exercised by the white caste at that particular moment. The concurring circumstances that led to a fall of the Southern economy include the spread of the boll weevil infestation roughly from the 1890s until the 1920s, destructive floods such as the ones caused by the Mississippi River in 1916, 1917 and 1927, the mechanization of cotton picking beginning with the second half of the 1920s and the fail of the sharecropping system.

1. The Sharecropping System

After the abolition of slavery, starting with the early years of the Reconstruction, many plantation owners found themselves without workforce for the land. Former slaves found themselves free, but without any land to work, and many of them were yet unskilled in any other profession so “by 1867 a majority of planters and laborers were ready to explore alternative crop-making arrangements” (Reid 110).. The denial of land ownership and the impossibility of many blacks to buy land left them with few solutions, neither of which proved to be in their own benefit. They could become tenants, which meant having to pay a fixed rent either in crop or with money as “the custom was for the tenant to furnish the stock, plant, cultivate and gather the crop, and to receive in return one-half of everything, except the cotton seed, which was by far the most important part of the crop, and of which he received nothing” (Donald 418). Another option was sharecropping in which the land owner provided seeds, draft animals, food and clothing

for the family of the cropper, receiving in exchange two-thirds of the crop, while the family that worked the land was only entitled to one third.

The position of sharecroppers was never secure because the land owners still thought of the workers as inferior human beings that needed 'the white master' to control them, years after the slavery had become illegal, because "Southern planters as a class had not much sympathy for the blacks who had once been their property and the tendency to cheat them continued" (Woodson). The whites transformed the sharecropping system from one which would benefit all those involved into one that would give them the opportunity to benefit from very cheap, if not free, labor. The black sharecroppers were not entitled to benefit from the fruits of their work and in some cases due to the deal being extremely unfair, the sharecropping family had to borrow money from merchants or planters in order to make a living, but the debt had to be paid back "at exorbitant rates of interest" (Donald 418).

The typical sharecropping system was nothing else than another type of slavery and the situation of the common contract laborers was not different. Their pay was very little and "those working for wages earned about \$.75 per day [while] a majority received no wages at all, working instead for payments in kind" (Marks, Black Workers 151).

During this period of white-on-black abuse, the white dominating landowners tried in numerous ways to find methods that would at least imitate slavery. Sharecropping was, of course, one of these ways, but the ones working the land were, theoretically, free to leave at any time. A system of peonage, of Mexican inspiration, would constitute the solution to the 'problem' of how to keep the African American workers tied to the land. Peonage consisted in involuntary servitude in which poor blacks were bound to work on account of a debt they had to pay to the land owner. They would usually get in large debt because the prices were high and the charged interest was abnormally big, so a vicious circle would be formed in the sense that the more in debt the blacks would get, the more work they had to put in on the land of the white farm owners. The free black man had to be brought into submission again, the white former master thought, and the use of force and violence was

one of the ways to do so. Says Henderson H. Donald in his 1921 study: "on the farms and plantations, especially in the lower part of the South, the beating or flogging of laborers was such a common occurrence that these places came to be considered veritable peon camps" (419). Many of the victims did not dare to protest such an abuse because they knew that the system, especially in the Deep South, granted them no rights in a Court of law. On the contrary, because justice was to be decided by a handful of the white caste, laws were given that attempted to take back the civil rights and liberties gained by the African Americans after abolition of slavery were called Black Codes. For example, a Mississippi Code stated that "such corporal punishment as a father would administer to a child might be inflicted upon apprentices by their masters" and the same Code stated that "when negroes could not pay the fines and costs after legal proceedings, they were to be hired at public outcry by the sheriff to the lowest bidder" (Mississippi Apprentice Law, Sections 2 and 5, 1865).

2. Jim Crow Laws

The Black Codes enforced by many of the Southern states after the abolition of slavery by Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court starting with 1911. Nevertheless, whites used as an excuse the fear that the large number of African Americans might take over the power in the South and created laws that would continue to enforce discrimination and segregation. This desire to coerce is theorized in socio-psychology as 'the conflict perspective of social control' in which "the dominant group will more vigorously invoke measures of social control over a subordinate group when it feels threatened. The relative size of the minority group is often used as an indicator of the degree of threat to the majority group" (Tolnay and Beck, Racial Violence 109). These laws that promoted social injustice based on race were called Jim Crow laws and were enacted at state-level, making the white/colored distinction very clear. For example, a law in Georgia stated that "all persons licensed to conduct a restaurant, shall serve either white people exclusively or colored people exclusively and shall not sell to the two races within the same room", while a law in North

Carolina stated that "books shall not be interchangeable between the white and colored schools, but shall continue to be used by the race first using them". The debasement of African Americans through a myriad of such provisions extended into all levels of society, from schools to public institutions and privately owned businesses.

Furthermore, Jim Crow laws referred not only to 'color line' discrimination in the public life, but also to civil rights and liberties being taken away for the purpose of keeping the African American decision making factors at a low level. Limiting the right to vote stipulated in the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was used as a method to keep blacks at the outskirts of society, no matter how hard they might try to rise above their condition. Many Southern states adopted this practice in order to prevent the election of black leaders or of leaders who could militate for the rights of the African American community. An intricate set of measures was established in order to reduce or even suppress suffrage registration for African Americans, such as poll taxes (starting with the 1870s), literacy tests, the grandfather clause and white primaries (meaning that only white people were allowed to vote in the Democratic primary election). "Such provisions did not violate the Fifteenth Amendment because they applied to all voters regardless of race. In reality, however, the provisions were more strictly enforced on blacks, especially in those areas dominated by lower-class whites" (Davis, *Creating Jim Crow*). Disfranchisement, which started in the 1870s and was almost complete in the South by 1914 but "even the handful of remaining Negro voters was considered a challenge to the South Carolina General Assembly which, in January, 1914, favored a repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution" (Palmer 55).

Another strong reason that determined African Americans to migrate in mass at the beginning of the 20th century was institutionalized discrimination. When the Southern economy was hit by recession competition in the work market became another instrument to discriminate against African Americans and "beginning at the turn of the century, laws were established which prohibited blacks from numerous occupations, from holding any skilled positions on the railroads and from a variety of service jobs where, it was argued, they should be replaced by whites who

were out of work" (Marks, *Black Workers* 154). Race solidarity from the part of the whites was taken to the extreme to the point in which "if a new garment or shoe factory came to a southern town, only whites were employed. 'Give jobs to white men and women,' and 'Blood is thicker than water' were the cries" (Simpkins quoted in Marks, *Black Workers* 154). Black workers faced unemployment from jobs that they had previously mastered, even if the white workers replacing them were not professionally qualified for the job.

The case of education for the African Americans was similarly dealt with. The 1890s formalization of segregation in schools caused a considerable amount of damage to the schools for black children, because educating the blacks was considered a threat to the white dominating caste. Once an education was acquired by an African American, the white superiority/black inferiority dichotomy could no longer be used as a 'valid' explanation for discrimination and abuse. Denying education was done through allocating fewer resources to schools that tutored blacks, which translated into lower wages for the teachers and a decreased quality in the learning process. The money given by the states for the education of white children represented six times the amount reserved for the black children (Donald 416). The whites also dictated the politics of segregated schools in a way that would not allow African Americans to become competitors of the white workers by reducing the number of school days per year and "many times, where schools did exist, the school year lasted only six weeks in some instances and two or three months in others" (Palmer 54).

3. Lynching

Racial violence should be taken into consideration as one of the major factors that contributed to the decision of African Americans to leave the Southern states. There is in fact a cause/effect relationship between racial oppression and black migration, and this effect might have contributed more to the decision to relocate than the luring Northern economy. In the article "Racial Violence and Black Migration in the American South, 1910 to 1930", Stewart E. Tolnay and E. M. Beck bring sociological statistical evidence to support the hypothesis that the white-on-black violence factor has been one

of the major underlying causes that triggered the Great Migration. Their study argues that African American out-migration was heaviest from places in the South where the degree of lynching was high and also that counties that witnessed more migration experienced fewer lynching cases. Mob violence was used as a force to push blacks out of the South and the lynching of blacks “became relatively common in southern states after the Civil War. Between 1882 and 1910, 1,893 blacks died at the hands of white mobs, with Mississippi and Georgia accounting for one-third of the victims” (Tolnay and Beck, *Racial Violence* 104).

Carter G. Woodson describes scenes in which African Americans “have been publicly burned in the daytime to attract crowds that usually enjoy such feats as the tourney of the Middle Ages” and Henderson H. Donald writes about a 1916 incident in which “the mob, after murdering the criminal and terribly beating and terrorizing many others not implicated in the crime, proceeded across the county and killed the mother and another relative of the accused” (415). Beck and Tolnay, in another article called “The Killing Fields of the Deep South” consider lynching was “a response by white southerners to perceived *threats* from the black population” and classify these threats as *political threats* (due to the large black population), *economic threats* between white and black laborers and “maintenance of the *caste boundary* that assured whites superior social status, despite the often minuscule difference between the economic well-being of blacks and whites” (526).

Lynching was also used as means of diluting class distinction between whites, in the sense that both the poor working class and the elite found justification in racial hostility and mob violence. In a period of economic recession, poor whites viewed blacks as competitors “for a shrunken economic ‘pie’ as well as a challenge to their superior social station that was ‘guaranteed’ by the caste system” (Beck and Tolnay, *The Killing Fields* 527). There was a contradiction between the benefits that the poor whites felt entitled to have as members of a superior race and the hard conditions faced by workers during the boll weevil fall of the agriculture. On the other hand, the white elite in the South instigated to violence out of the desire to show blacks that they were still at the hands of white masters, even if they were, theoretically, free individuals.

This combination of oppressions at the meeting point between race, class and caste led African Americans in the South to seek refuge in the Northern cities, with the hope that a better, more humane environment was to be found in the urban centers not influenced by a system rooted in violence and terror.

The reaction of the South to the extensive out-migration of African Americans was characterized by duality and sometimes even ambiguity. At first, they welcomed the shift of ‘the Negro problem’ towards the North. Editors of Southern newspapers wrote that “the journey North was but one step towards ridding America of the ‘vicious, indolent and criminal blacks’” (Palmer 57). White-owned paper, which were accustomed to use the African Americans as scapegoats for everything that was wrong in the South rejoiced in reporting the movement “The *Nashville Banner* expressed the opinion that the migration might serve ‘to relieve the South of the entire burden and all of the brunt of the race problem’ [while] others described it more succinctly as ‘the countervailing effect of getting rid of the Negro majority’” (Marks, *Farewell* 14).

However not all shared this attitude and even from the beginning of the migration there were voices decrying the loss of black labor force. These voices were of those benefiting the most of this force, namely the white elite. Because this dominating class had political power, it undertook to check and even stop the migratory flow. This was done by putting heavier taxes on agents recruiting labor or advocating legislation which provisioned that leaving the South was illegal. The use of force was common and whites “arrested suspected employers and, to prevent the departure of the Negroes, imprisoned on false charges those who appear at stations to leave for the North” (Woodson). For example, the state of South Carolina “enacted a law making the solicitation of labor to leave that state a misdemeanor. In 1917, *World's Work* reported that this law was ‘being vigorously enforced against the migrating Negro and in favor of southern agriculture’” (Palmer 58).

When coercive methods did not have the expected effect, the Southern whites resorted to appealing to emotions in order to convince African Americans that the North was a bad place to be leaving for. Newspapers which only mentioned blacks as criminals and ‘the pest of

the South' before the migration, started telling stories about "deluded southern Negroes starving and freezing in the North, and editorials were written telling Negroes that the South was their 'best and only friend' (Palmer 59). But this type of stories could not go against the first-hand experience that African Americans went through. The stopping of the migration could only occur if whites took measures against the discrimination and segregation of blacks and if they started treating them as equals. However, this was not something the South was willing to do.

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AMERICAN STUDIES IN ROMANIA

with Silvia Filip

Alexandru Ioan Cuza is one of the top universities in Romania and – you have guessed – it has a very good American Studies Department. One of their MA students, Mihaela Palimariu, presents this program and the atmosphere in Iași in the following interview.

[INTER]SECTIONS: Nobody escapes this part: please tell us a few words about your background.

PALIMARIU: I am quite an exotic element in the American Studies MA program as I graduated from the Geography and Geology Faculty with a minor in English. So my first thoughts related to the US would immediately go to spectacular canyons, overwhelmingly large rivers, breathtaking national parks or giant sequoias (rather than to Dickinson, Poe or Fitzgerald!). However, last year I decided that I wanted to become an English teacher and simultaneously continue my post-graduate studies. I immediately thought of enrolling in this program, not even considering the more logical option of studying Didactics in another one. I was basically more attracted to the idea of studying the “fun stuff” like popular culture, the American mass-media or the film industry. Besides, I have always had a fascination for American culture that was probably unconsciously rooted inside me during my childhood years via the media (mostly cartoons and music).

[INTER]SECTIONS: What does Alexandru Ioan Cuza University offer Americanists?

PALIMARIU: A lot, actually. Everything from highly qualified teachers (who have studied at prestigious universities in the United States) to study centers (a Foreign Language Center, a

Center for American and British Studies and a Canadian Studies Center), multi-media phonetic rooms and international video conferences.

[INTER]SECTIONS: What does the admission consist of and when should one apply for the MA program?

PALIMARIU: Although in previous years we also had to pass an interview, admission nowadays is based solely on file application. Basically, it all comes down to how high your undergraduate and degree exam grades are (they each account for half of the final application score). What I find helpful is the fact that there are two application periods, one in July and one in September (but only if there are free places left). However, those who want to secure one of the ten places funded by the government should apply during the first period as they tend to fill up quickly.

[INTER]SECTIONS: Please tell us all about the subject matter, exams and getting your diploma.

PALIMARIU: Our MA program has an interdisciplinary approach to American culture, offering courses that range from the more traditional American Poetics, Linguistics and Critical Theory to the more avant-garde American mass-media, Ethnic Studies or Canadian Studies. Each semester we have to take about five exams (amounting to 30 ECTS) that can either be essay submissions and/or sit-ins. Of course, seminar attendance and class participation are often taken into consideration for the final grade. After the completion of such four successful semesters and after the defense of our dissertation we will be the proud possessors of a master’s diploma.

[INTER]SECTIONS: Are there any international students and/or teachers?

PALIMARIU: Unfortunately, we have no international students for the time being but we will be delighted to accommodate any, if the

opportunity arises. However, what we do have are many international teachers: Fulbright fellows, guest lecturers and visiting professors. For example, this past semester we had an American full time teacher (Harvard graduate Kim Gittleson), who introduced us to the methodology of American Studies as a discipline. Moreover, we were also involved in a pioneering experiment in a joint course with Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Video conferences, blog discussions and online assignments culminated with Professor Walter Epp's visit and his one-week intensive course in Canadian Studies, during which we also organized a Symposium celebrating 90 years of Romanian-Canadian diplomatic relations.

[INTER]SECTIONS: Are there opportunities for international exchange?

PALIMARIU: Yes, and not few. Alongside the now traditional Erasmus exchange programs (with prestigious universities in Konstanz, Copenhagen, Middlesex, Rovira I Virgili, Barcelona, Freiburg and Lisbon to name but a few), our university offers paid 3-month Erasmus internships working with Romanian Cultural Centers in London, Bruxelles, and Freiburg. Besides, opportunities for fellowships and study grants can spring up any moment: this semester, those interested could apply for a 5-month study trip in Norway.

[INTER]SECTIONS: What are you planning to do after getting your MA degree?

PALIMARIU: Probably enrolling in a PhD program here at UAIC. I am already working as an English teacher at a high school in Iași (which I absolutely love!), so I would like to continue doing just that.

[INTER]SECTIONS: How friendly is the city of Iași?

PALIMARIU: I would say very (student-)friendly. Students represent more than one fifth of the city's population, so there is always something to do. The cultural life is quite dynamic with exhibitions, film festivals and concerts taking place all year-round.

Iași still preserves some of its former charm and innocence. A walk in Copou Park or the scent of the lime trees in June, all account for that unique "thing" that makes Iași special. Compared to other university centers in the country, Iași is still one of the most affordable places to study in, if we consider accommodation and transportation possibilities.

[INTER]SECTIONS: Please point out an important aspect that each student who wants to apply for this program should know.

PALIMARIU: If I only get to pick one, I have to say that without being very passionate about what you study, you can never succeed. The Monday to Thursday, 4 to 8 timetable is not easy to follow without complete dedication. To quote a famous American saying, "love of the game" is, as far as I am concerned, the main prerequisite for successfully completing this program.

As [Inter]sections is a trimestrial student publication, you are kindly invited to send contributions to our editors. Also, should you wish to respond to any of the articles published in this and any other future issues, send your comments to: intersections@americanstudies.ro.

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