READING ACROSS THE DIVIDE: ETHNICITY, THE IMMIGRANT HERITAGE, AND THE AMERICAN LITERARY CANON

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation surveys widespread misrepresentations of minority characters in canonical writing, the gains by which multicultural literary criticism corrects such distortions, and the untoward nationalistic tendency of some pluralist theory. It proposes dialogic readings of "classic" and ethnic-American literature so as to engage otherness by interrogating familiarity.* Toward that end, the study posits voluntary uprooting and relocation as a rubric for examining textual overlap and thematic intersections across a broad representation of ethnicities, from American Puritans to recent immigrants to the United States. Beyond uncovering genre conventions that characterize immigrant literature irrespective of writers' native origins or dates of relocation, this study extends the paradigm for dialogic readings from a basis in the immigrant experience to an inspection of broader, often conflicting, though sometimes complementary, worldviews. The work concludes that juxtaposed readings of seemingly unrelated "mainstream" and "minority" texts

are a boon to producing an expanded yet comprehensible definition of "American-ness."

The primary texts considered include the following: John Winthrop's "A Modell of Christian Charity," Le Ly Hayslip's When Heaven and Earth Changed Places, Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, Anzia Yezierska's Bread Givers, Abraham Cahan's Yekl, Louis Chu's Eat a Bowl of Tea, Sandra Cisneros's The House on Mango Street, Rudolfo Anaya's Bless Me, Ultima, and Herman Melville's Moby-Dick.

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*Arnold Krupat, Ethnocriticism: Ethnography, History, Literature (Berkeley: U of Calfornia P, 1992) 4.

For my parents, Edward and Mary Frances,
who taught me the virtue of hard work

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CHAPTER ONE
Reading Multiculturalism: Bridges or Barricades?

Institutionalized multiculturalism, as is manifest in publishing trends, curricular reform, and even hiring practices, is a topic of keen interest and overt contention among citizens of so ethnically diverse a country as the United States. Many participants in the debate over national identity hail cultural pluralism as a redress for the forced concession of an old world heritage to a new American-devised culture. These proponents of multiculturalism often interpret historic methods of Americanization, such as "English only" language policies, as relics of a well-intentioned but misguided past or, worse, as weapons of cultural annihilation.[1] Objecting to past practices of coerced Anglo-conformity, they believe that the freedom to become reacquainted with an ethnic heritage or to maintain an uninterrupted link to that ancestry will be the welcome outcome of multiculturalism. On the opposite side are those that fear cultural pluralism as the "unraveling of America," the destruction of a common national identity.[2] But the current ethnicity debate is often facile in pitting pluralism against assimilation, for the two are not fixed entities. In fact, to posit the concepts as poles of the identity debate is reductive and misleading. As a standard metaphor of assimilation,

"melting pot" covers a range of often conflicting attitudes, just as "cultural pluralism" includes many different points of view.

Although melting pot ideology is routinely criticized as forced indoctrination into the mainstream culture, the history of that metaphor does not evince a strictly hegemonic purpose. Over two hundred years ago, J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur posed his now famous question, "What is an American?" and then set about answering it. His response featured a richly composite personage rather than a monolithic model. No individual, he explained, at least in the excerpt that follows, was exempt from the far-reaching change that transformed the people in America into Americans:

> [T]he American, this new man....is neither an European nor the descendant of an European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country....He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced....Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men.[3]

Ralph Waldo Emerson is similarly non-restrictive in outlining the American character, which he lovingly describes as formed of smelted metals which create more precious amalgams: "by the melting & intermixture of silver & gold & other metals, a new compound more precious than any, called the Corinthian Brass, was formed so in this Continent,--asylum of all nations, the energy of Irish, Germans, Swedes, Poles & Cossacks, & all the European

tribes,--of the Africans, & of the Polynesians, will construct a new race...which will be as vigourous as the new Europe which came out of the smelting pot of the Dark Ages."[4]

Likewise, Israel Zangwill, the Jewish immigrant and dramatist whose play The Melting Pot (1905) propelled that phrase into common use, described Americanization as a mutual adaptation from which none is exempt. David Quixano, the play's protagonist--a Jewish immigrant, composer, and symphonist--overcomes ethnic hatred and old world offenses to marry the gentile he loves, a woman whose father took part in the Russian pogrom in which his parents were killed. David's marriage acts out the harmonious combination of diverse elements that is his music, which itself symbolizes the happy result born of the confluence of peoples. Invoking nationalities as far-flung as those Emerson lists above, he rejoices that "the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God."[5] Certainly some Jews and other immigrants criticized Zangwill's melting pot as the renunciation of one's religious or cultural heritage. But many other Americans--intellectuals, reformers, and working class immigrants alike--shared the playwright's emphasis on mutual ethnic fusion. Those such as Jane Addams of Chicago's Hull House Settlement urged reciprocity between aliens and natives, believing that borrowing from and committing to the immigrant's old world values would enrich all of America.

Werner Sollors locates this aspect of holistic merging well within the context of American religious rhetoric. He reveals that Puritan ministers often pointed to Christ as the model of merged opposites--the divine incarnate and the reconciler of Jew and Gentile--as they deemed universal regeneration to be the route to salvation. Preaching in 1654, John Cotton used the image of melting to describe the way in which saints were thoroughly remade for God's purpose: softened and melted, the redeemed could transcend boundaries to make their way to Christ. Moreover, St. Paul's letter to the Galatians, a trenchant argument for Christian unity within diversity and a passage frequently cited in the Puritan liturgy, prefigures the call for ethnic fusion: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."[6]

John Dewey adapted the Christian regenerationist rhetoric to a call for social cohesion among Americans. Championing complete ethnic merging, he maintained that old stock Anglo-Americans enjoyed no advantage over the foreign-born regarding the formation of a national aspect. He insisted that "no matter how loudly any one proclaims his Americanism if he assumes that any one racial strain, any one component culture, no matter how early settled it was in our territory, or how effective it has proven in its own land, is to furnish a pattern to which all other strains and cultures are to conform, he is a traitor to an American nationalism."[7] Because America was undergoing constant change and evolution, no one, in Dewey's view, could remain exempt

from the nationalizing process. Americanization, in his esteem, was continuous, all-inclusive assimilation into the dynamic, democratic republic.

Certainly, such seers as Crevecoeur, Emerson, Zangwill, and Dewey did not sanction the preservation of an old world identity; but neither did they call for its forfeiture. Instead, they claimed to embrace the effect that a wealth of global cultural influences equally exerted on the new American character. Yet not all assimilationists endorsed the cultural merger that would yield Crevecoeur's new man. Many subscribers to the melting pot spurned the image of wholesale blending or fusion to focus instead on the metaphor's purgative capacities. Barely more sympathetic than the race theorists who lobbied to restrict the immigration of "beaten men of backward nations" and thus to guard the American gene pool, adherents of the melting pot as cleansing crucible welcomed the newcomer as long as he completely shed his foreign aspect. Inner-city reformer Jacob Riis was one such outspoken proponent of Anglo-conformity, despite his own status as an immigrant or perhaps because of it, since his Danish origins linked him to Anglo-Saxons. In How the Other Half Lives (1890) Riis inveighs against the squalor of New York tenements and chastises native-born Americans for not providing an environment conducive to the immigrant's necessary transformation. Only decent housing, fair wages, and moral models, he urged, would uplift the downtrodden foreigners and neutralize their unwholesome influence on the rest of society. To him and other like-minded reformers usually of similar

Anglo-Saxon heritage, "Americanization" was a "one-way process in which the immigrant did all the adjusting."[8]

The rhetoric of these descent-conscious Americans who stressed the melting pot as a crucible that would purge non-WASP characteristics evinces its own link to American Christianity. Unlike universal regenerationists, who maintained that every Christian had to be utterly remade in order to be saved, "genetic salvationists" exempted themselves from that stricture. Early New England Puritans had believed that their American-born children faced damnation if they did not undergo a conversion experience. But they fashioned a compromise based on ancestry with which to win their childrens' redemption. Via heredity, the half-way covenant conferred salvation upon the second-generation Puritans: "As scions of the American Israel, they had received grace 'through the loyns of godly Parents.'"[9]

Descendants of English settlers and the fully assimilated progeny of other early Nordic immigrants invoked a similar privilege of hereditary American nationalism. For them, Americanization was not Dewey's thoroughgoing, continuous process of learning to live in a dynamic, democratic republic; it was, simply, their birthright. Born in the U.S. of a lineage dating back to colonial or revolutionary times, or at least to the first half of the nineteenth century, they believed themselves naturally "Americanized" by virtue of their bloodline. Many of these nativists descended from "old" immigrants of northern and western Europe whose transition into American life well before 1860 had been facilitated by their WASP appearance, Protestant

faith, English language proficiency, or skill in the trades.[10] In contrast, "new" immigrants--mainly unskilled non-English-speaking Roman Catholics and Jews--fled the poverty or pogroms of Southern and Eastern Europe in massive waves after 1880. These newcomers were conspicuously different from most Americans and thus were considered exotic and inferior.

Yet non-WASP immigrants who would eagerly submit to an identity make-over were often deemed too alien. Mary Antin, so strong a proponent of Americanization that she began her autobiographical account of immigrating from Russia to the U.S. with a jubilant testimony of her rebirth--"I was born, I have lived, and I have been made over...I am just as much out of the way as if I were dead, for I am absolutely other than the person whose story I have to tell"[11]--was rejected by many as incorrigibly foreign. Antin's contemporary, Harvard English professor Barrett Wendell, summed up the exclusionist outlook that limited status as an American to a birthright. Neither Antin nor her children, he mused in 1917, five years after the publication of her autobiography The Promised Land, could consider themselves American. Not until the third generation, born of parents born in the U.S., could her progeny rightfully consider themselves American.[12] Resigned to the influx of newcomers but resenting their presence nonetheless, such begrudging assimilationists looked to the melting pot to burn off the foreign aspect of the immigrant and to enkindle in him American ideals.

The melting pot has been alternately featured as a vessel which fuses all elements into a unique new whole and a cauldron that purges difference in

order to recast individuals from a master mold. In recent decades, the hegemonic aspect of the metaphor has prevailed, thus imbuing assimilation with the character of coerced homogeneity rather than mutual influence. Cultural pluralism promises to replace this perceived Anglo-conformity with tolerance, its mission being to explore and celebrate the varied wealth of ethnicity which makes America a "nation of nations." Salad bowl, stew pot, mosaic, quilt, or rainbow--the new pluralist metaphors preserve the integrity of the separate components that comprise the whole.

But just as assimilationists varied in the thrust of their views, pluralists fall along an ideological range as well. At its extreme, cultural pluralism is warped into the virulent Afrocentrism of Leonard Jeffries (Europeans hail from materialistic, cave-dwelling "ice people," whereas Africans descend from the intellectually superior, humanitarian "sun people"); or Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakahn who calls for a separate African state in America.

Many pluralists, however, eschew such segregation, asserting that an informed awareness of other cultures represented in the U.S. and a healthy respect for difference will naturally underscore shared values and mend our fraying society. Harvard educator Charles Willie defines the goal of multiculturalism as "bringing together individuals and groups with different histories and customs so they may mutually enhance each other....diversity is essential to...creativity and problem-solving...and survival."[13] Willie's reasoning rebuts the charge that to embrace diversity is to encourage divisiveness. Rather than arrange ethnic characteristics into polar opposition,

he contends, pluralism can place them on a continuum and uncover the connection between difference and sameness, diversity and unity.[14] Likewise, African-American scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. describes the range of American culture as interactive and dynamic rather than as the fixed property of any particular group. He cites one motive in his work to "recover" the "lost" fiction of minority writers as the desire to make little known writing to accessible to the general public. For cultural pluralism, Gates explains, must fill in gaps rather than cordon off territory.[15]

Yet others detect a campaign for just such separatism and territorialization under cover of the pluralist objective of tolerance. With the deletion of a few letters, observes Werner Sollors, "pluralism" becomes "purism," and he discerns a connection between the two terms that is more than a morphophonemic coincidence.[16] Perhaps he is cynical and straining to be clever, but Sollors contends that "pluralism" can be "purism" in multi form--distinct ethnic strains that coexist but do not mingle.

Sollors uncovers a tendency toward nationalistic separatism in the original manifesto of cultural pluralism. Horace Kallen, German-Jewish immigrant and Harvard philosophy student, first coined the phrase in Culture and Democracy in the United States (1924) to protest America's racist assimilation process that stripped the immigrant of his identity. His ideal America was a looser confederation, a commonwealth that respected individual differences and deplored hierarchical homogeneity. As a means of encouraging democracy rather than destroying it through enforced cultural

cohesion, Kallen outlined distinct nationalities that, although cooperating through common institutions and the English language, would each retain for its "emotional and involuntary life its own peculiar dialect or speech, its own individual and inevitable aesthetic and intellectual forms." Kallen remained committed to a politically and economically unified American commonwealth but saw the purpose of that governing unit as guarding the "distinctive individuality of each *natio* that composes it" and preserving the "homogeneity of heritage, mentality and interest" of those who comprise it.[17]

In varying degrees, the separatism implied in Kallen's early pluralist paradigm characterizes some contemporary multicultural scholarship, for border-tending is often regarded as the way to observe ethnic tradition. The Before Columbus Foundation, for example, which provides a forum for American authors of non-European roots historically ignored by the academy, ultimately seems most interested in designating labels and making inventories of ethnic group membership. At first glance, the foundation's field of vision seems broad enough to take in both the forest and the trees, because it acknowledges a multi-faceted but over-arching national culture: "The ingredients of America's 'melting pot' are not only distinct, but integral to the unique constitution of American culture--the whole comprises the parts. There are no outsiders."[18] In this drive for inclusiveness, Before Columbus denounces the "paranoid monoculturalists" who cling to the exclusive, traditional canon; they instead "claim and affirm equal validity for one's heritage." Toward that end of parity and open membership, the foundation

dispenses with such hierarchical categories of authorship as "dominant culture," "minority," or "alternative." Justifiably refusing to diminish the contributions of non-European writers to mere 'tributaries,' Ishmael Reed proclaims American literature to be "more than a mainstream. [It] is an ocean."[19]

Yet in norming thus for equality of merit and impact (the foundation cites N. Scott Momaday's long view of history which dates American literature back a thousand years, the "Puritan invasion" just one of other subsequent events in that history), Reed fashions a sea without confluence. Abandoning categories that convey oppression or dominance, he simply reassigns people to smaller, more rigid groups. The foundation had feared admitting boardmembers who "classif[ied] themselves simply as 'white'"[20] yet is comfortable with the Latvian-, Italian-, and Irish-Americans it works with. Likewise, the editors are proud of their magnanimity in including "white male Anglo-Saxon New York-based authors" in their literary competition.[21] Presumably, if everyone belongs to a subgroup, no one is an outsider, or, more accurately, all are outsiders equally, for there is no longer an inside.

Professor Paula Rothenberg places similar stock in the value of assigning individuals to groups, as she defends her controversial textbook Racism and Sexism: An Integrated Study (1988) and the general education requirement, "Writing About Difference," for which her anthology was intended. She denounces the "white, European...middle-class...male" canon not only for what she interprets as its arrogant claim to transcendence and

timelessness, but for the bad arithmetic on which it purportedly stands. She contends that society errs in using "white male values and culture as the standard by which everyone and everything else is to be measured and found wanting" since "they" are actually outnumbered by the "true majority of people in this society, 'women and minorities.'"[22] But in arguing for an appreciation of difference that is long overdue, she commits the same transgression she denounces. For while she explains that rich and varied cultures are rendered invisible when the male, WASP model is allowed preeminence, she in turn cancels out variety among white men. Her concession of merit to "white males' scholarship and perspectives" since the "contributions of that group are valid and valuable: there is much to be learned from them"[23] flattens out difference into sameness. One white male speaks for all white men in her atomized society of groups; consensus forms along lines of gender and ethnicity.

Tallying group memberships, broadcasting "enrollments" large enough to undermine the white "monolithic" patriarchy, and asserting written works as a partyline of sorts, merely substitute one bogus homogeneity for another. But to dispute such a numbers game is not to discredit the movement to recognize the cultural heterogeneity of the U.S. Recent advances in critical theory and literary historiography, in fact, have made badly needed gains in laying bare the rich diversity within American culture.

Nearly fifty years ago, Robert Spiller's Literary History of the United States (1948) legitimated "minority" writing through such labels as

"regionalism" and "local color." But those terms, of course, relegated the non-white, non-European, and, often, female, writer to the fringes of American literary study. Such writers were included in Spiller's volume but remained peripheral to the "main current," that coherent, unified American tradition which the fifty-five male contributors and their largely male subjects reified. In reaction to and as a correction of that monolithic view of American letters, the Columbia Literary History of the United States (1988) is consciously self-referential, acknowledging the impossibility of objective universalism in a postmodern world: "There is today no unifying vision of a national identity like that shared by many scholars at the closings of the two world wars....[The Columbia Literary History of the United States] acknowledges diversity, complexity, and contradiction...and it forgoes closure as well as consensus."[24] A post-structuralist undertaking, this volume works against a "philosophical foundation [that is] realist and positivist...[against] the appearance of one continuous narrative."[25] Its scope of literature in America is comprehensive, from the two thousand-year-old Indian glyphs in Barrier Canyon, Utah, to the present-day experimental writing influenced by John Cage's avant-garde music; the offerings of its seventy-four contributors, sixteen of whom are women, are admittedly--because inevitably--idiosyncratic and read as discrete essays rather than as parts of a larger, coherent volume.

In Reconstructing American Literary History (1986) Sacvan Bercovitch also positions his revisionist argument against the positivism of that 1948 volume, and he anticipates the advent of his recent Cambridge History of

American Literature (1995). Whereas Spiller's achievement was to "consolidate a powerful literary-historical movement," the new generation of scholars, Bercovitch contends, must "reconstruct American literary history by making a virtue of dissensus."[26] The contributors to this recent, multi-volume study examine (or at least admit being subject to) the problems of historiography; they reject the proposition that the story of American letters can be told with any single authority, because no commentator is free of cultural determinants or political ideology nor can determine the impact of his or her language. Bercovitch's essaysists, and new historicists in general, avoid consensus concerning aesthetics or idealogy, committing instead to a dialogic flexibility which opens up, rather than sums up, literary interpretation.

As the academy rethinks the conception of "America" and "American literature" (possibly, in the spirit of dissensus, to forego any re-definition, since Bercovitch denounces the concern over the "Americanness of American literature" as yesterday's business, a "parochial theme of the past"[27]), the once silenced minority voices are being heard. Over the last few decades and under the auspices of the Modern Language Association have come such studies as Minority Language and Literature (1977), Afro-American Literature (1977), Three American Literatures [Chicano, Native American, and Asian American] (1982), Studies in American Indian Literature (1983), and Ethnic Perspectives in American Literature (1990). Founded in 1973, the Society for the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature in the United States sponsors sessions for ethnic literature at conferences affiliated with the MLA, and publishes quarterly its

journal of ethnic literary criticism, MELUS. The recent literary histories, beyond proclaiming the theoretical need to resist closure, practice expansiveness: The Columbia Literary History of the United States (1988), The Columbia History of the American Novel (1991), and The Cambridge History of American Literature (1995) include essays on diversity and ethnicity in general, and specific sections on Native American, Mexican-American, Asian-American, African-American, and even Canadian- and Caribbean-American literature.

In "Toward a New Literary History of the United States," Wayne Charles Miller called for the "writing of individual histories of all the various ethnic literature."[28] The project has been well launched. The two-volume Ethnic Literatures Since 1776: The Many Voices of America (1978) covers twenty-five distinct ethnic groups including such lesser studied American ethnicities as Slovenian, Ukrainian, and Estonian. Numerous ethnic groups follow the lead of Black, Native American, or Jewish scholars who produce book-length studies of the literature of their own people. It may not be surprising that in terms of full-scale, single-group studies, Irish and Italian literary scholarship follows closely behind Jewish studies, since, together with German-Americans, immigration rates for these groups were among the highest for all white ethnics. Most recently, Hispanic scholarship is prominent for that same reason. But it speaks to the power of the times that there are currently four separate book-length studies of the cultural tradition of Armenian-American literature, two on Puerto Rican literature in the United

States, and one on Hungarian-American writers,[29] when the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups lists Puerto Ricans as comprising 0.8% of the American population, Hungarian-Americans 1.1%, and groups Armenian-Americans with peoples figuring less than 0.3% individually into the category of "all others."[30]

Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin's imperative for a speaker to appropriate language and populate it with his own accent and intention rather than let his story exist "in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions"[31] sums up the urgency of specialized ethnic literary criticism. Jules Chametzky similarly urges autonomous authorship to counter the imperializing power of the word, for those who control language also control cultural memory by absorbing the experience of the other and interpreting it with seeming legitimacy and objectivity.

> One's own vision and voice are shaped by the special history and normative patterns of rhetoric and thought of a region and a landscape; by the race, gender, and ethnic group one is born into; and with varying degrees of intensity, depending on the vagaries of history and social circumstance, one's ultimate fate. When, as is often the case in our culture, matters of such magnitude are relegated to positions of so-called marginality, or to mere accident or inconsequentiality in the larger quest for literary "excellence," "centrality," or "universality," there is clearly a serious distortion at work, a serious effort at appropriation and control.[32]

In the wake of the tumultuous 1960's, when the slogan "question authority" was so ubiquitous as to appear on bumper stickers, the social, intellectual, and political climate is right for the ethnic writer and literary scholar to correct the cultural hegemony of which Chametzky speaks. Jane Tompkins' Sensational Designs (1985), though focusing on the cultural transformation which women's sentimental fiction achieved among its wide readership from 1790 to 1860, actually explains the goal of ethnic criticism from the turn of the twentieth century onward: "The struggle now being waged in the professoriate over which writers deserve canonical status is not just a struggle over the relative merits of literary geniuses; it is a struggle among contending factions for the right to be represented in the picture America draws of itself."[33] Institutionalized multiculturalism grants the right of self-representation to ethnic Americans, those who either were not featured on the national canvas or were objectified and exoticized there by others. To appreciate how immigrants and their offspring depict themselves in the literature which society now countenances and even welcomes, it is instructive to survey the portrayals of ethnic Americans in that "picture of America" which is not of their own artistry.

The ethnic poor in American reform tracts bear a strong resemblance to the pitiable inhabitants of eighteenth-century London slums, those whom Tobias Smollet, Henry Fielding, and Daniel Defoe characterize as victims of the harsh class system. Through such books as Democracy and Social Ethics (1902), Jane Addams urged mercy and understanding for the worthy but

woebegone tenants of her Chicago settlement house. Journalist voyeurs such as Hutchins Hapgood took to the Jewish ghetto and Little Hungary to render the raw vitality of immigrant life into romanticized tales of sturdy, sensual foreigners in his collections, The Spirit of the Ghetto (1902) and Types from City Streets (1910).[34]

Away from the city and out on the prairie, the immigrant was often characterized as tragic and romantic or conniving and social climbing. The Bohemian immigrants of Willa Cather's My Antonia (1918), at least as the narrator Jim Burden sees them, cover a range of stereotypes. Mr. Shimerda, Antonia's father, is too sensitive and fragile for the harsh life on the plains. His delicate hands were meant for fingering fine tapestries or playing the violin back home in Bohemia, not for pulling a living out of the hard Nebraska earth. Shimerda's suicide is made more tragic by the fact that a countryman, Peter Krajiek, cheats him and other fellow immigrants for his own gain. Burden romanticizes Antonia as an selfless, indefatigable earthmother. Yet she is also a broodmare, certainly resilient, but scarred nonetheless by hard work and seventeen pregnancies. Toothless and grizzled, she is "mama" not only to her horde of children but to her puckish husband, who dances without her at the street fairs she once loved.

Literary slummers of a darker frame of mind used the immigrant as a vehicle for their gloomy naturalist message. Stephen Crane and Nelson Algren present a damning depravity in urban ghettoes--New York's Irish Bowery for Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1893), Chicago's Poletown for Algren's Never

Come Morning (1942) and The Man with the Golden Arm (1949). Both locales are ethnic enclaves to which neither writer belonged. The moral and physical squalor of the ghetto--poverty, domestic violence, deranged mothers, absent fathers, alcoholism, sexual license, spiritual bankruptcy--inexorably doom the pawn-like characters. Yet even when characters were removed from teeming urban tenements, ethnicity often continued to determine--and deform--their character. In Frank Norris's McTeague (1899), set on the California mining frontier, conspicuously ethnic characters play out stereotypes of human degeneracy: the title character is an ignorant, brutish dentist of Irish descent, Trina Sieppe is his greedy Swiss wife who hoards her lottery winnings, and Zerkow is an odious Polish Jew who covets Trina's money.

Though Upton Sinclair is sympathetic to his Lithuanian immigrants who labor in Chicago's filthy stockyards in The Jungle (1905), his pity merely underscores the Rudkus family's pathetic vulnerability. A seven-week sojourn in "Packingtown" provided Sinclair with the details for this proletariat novel, yet he creates nothing more than cardboard cut-outs which he bends to his socialist design. Oddly lacking both religious grounding and community orientation, common mainstays of immigrant life,[35] the Rudkis family dissolves under the pressures of brutal subsistence. Jurgis, the sole survivor, finds sustenance and purpose only in the socialist party.

Perhaps the most insidious use to which foreigners are put is the unrelieved, dismal background they form in many novels of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social realism and modernism. The plots of many

such books, A Hazard of New Fortunes (1890), The House of Mirth (1905), and Manhattan Transfer (1925), to name only a few, play out against a backdrop of nameless, faceless aliens. To present immigrants thus in an unindividuated mass is a political act which denies their rightful status as human beings, differentiated entities. In Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel (1985), Philip Fisher explains the perceptual changes that occur within a society when cultural categories are collapsed or redesigned. He reveals that in Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852), for example, Harriet Beecher Stowe taught her large audience a new way of perceiving slaves. By endowing Tom with a big heart, heavy conscience, and strong faith, she turned "a thing into a man," crystalizing abolitionist action against an institution that had been in place for over two hundred years. James Fenimore Cooper affected a perceptual change in the opposite direction. Collapsing such categories of identity as Apache or Creek, Christian or farmer into the simple "Indian," Cooper erased the individual humanity of Native Americans and facilitated their removal.[36]

Immigration around the turn of the century was also a "hard fact" of American society. The exotic foreigner from Southern and Eastern Europe--non-Anglo Saxon, non-Protestant, and even non-Christian--threatened America's largely homogeneous social character. Although restrictive quotas were enacted to stanch the flow of unwanted foreigners, the birthrate of native-born Americans dropped around 1830, at the same time that widespread European immigration began, and dropped more significantly

throughout the 1880's with the arrival of Southern and Eastern European immigrants[37]: race suicide, suggested Madison Grant in The Passing of the Great Race (1916), was preferable to life among "this human flotsam...the broken, and the mentally crippled...drawn from the lowest stratum of the Mediterranean basin, the Balkans and...Polish ghettos."[38] Yet nativism itself challenged America's self-perception as a bastion of democracy, a haven for the oppressed. Fictional portrayals of ethnic Americans as an unindividuated lump of subhumanity, therefore, salved the nation's guilty conscience. The hapless immigrants of early twentieth-century fiction predate the more recent and fashionable status of "Other"; they are merely the social debris around which protagonists gingerly step and at which they need not closely look.

Basil and Isabel March of William Dean Howells's A Hazard of New Fortunes easily relegate the immigrant to a sub-human status. This couple from prime English stock with a lineage dating back many generations in America confront a "quality of foreignness,"[39] when they leave their old New England home to rent an apartment in New York. They are keenly aware of "an east and west line beyond which they could not go if they wished to keep their self respect" (58), yet they delight in the "squalidly gay" tenement life which they observe from the safety of a coupe or a seat on the Elevated:

> Roadway and sidewalks and doorsteps swarmed with children; women's heads seemed to show at every window....Ash barrels lined the sidewalks and garbage heaps filled the gutters....a peddler of cheap fruit urged his cart through the street and

> mixed his cry with the joyous screams and shouts of the children and the scolding and gossiping voices of the women....a drunkard zigzagged down the sidewalk (57).

The Marches are stoical about the poverty they view but do not experience: it is a natural fact of life, "transmitting itself from generation to generation and establishing conditions of permanency to which human life adjusts itself as it does to those of some incurable disease, like leprosy." They thus absolve themselves of all human and civic responsibility, for the only way they see for the poor to persevere is "to keep up an unbroken intimacy with the wolf; then they can manage him somehow." Moreover, Basil hopes to capitalize on these "children of discomfort" by capturing this "picturesque raggedness of southern Europe" (48) in journalistic sketches.

Lily Bart in Edith Wharton's The House of Mirth also views the immigrants and wage-earners from a distance and "liv[es] comfortably with the abstract conception of poverty...never conceiv[ing] of these victims of fate otherwise than in the mass."[40] The barrier between Lily and the underclass gives way as she plummets from high society to land on a "degrad[ed] New York street in the last stages of decline from fashion to commerce" (297). But rather than live among the "discouraged victims of overwork and anaemic parentage,...superfluous fragments to be swept prematurely into that social refuse heap" (325), she commits suicide.

Dos Passos, of illegitimate birth and Portuguese descent but raised on the wealth of his genteel maternal grandparents,[41] also presents foreigners as

a loathsome, undifferentiated mass. Ellen Thatcher in Manhattan Transfer shrinks from contact with an immigrant, catching "the unwashed smell of his body, the smell of immigrants, of Ellis Island, of crowded tenements....uneasily she could feel the huddling smell, spreading in dark slow crouching masses like corruption oozing from broken sewers, like a mob."[42] New York belongs to the smart set who have claimed the city since "about the time the Ark landed." They are disgusted by newcomers, "the scum of Europe, the offscourings of Polish ghettos...dirty kikes and shanty Irish" (80).

For the most part, mainstream fiction erased an immigrant's individual personage by casting him as part of a general malign and malodorous presence. And even when an ethnic character is drawn as a distinct individual in these novels, he is almost always an undesirable. Manhattan Transfer's Laplander Matty, "a little yellow man who had a face like a toad, large mouth [and] protruding eyes," is a barroom brawler who sports lewd tattoos (73, 74). Congo Jake, the French African in that novel, is a bootlegger and pimp, well-intentioned but dissipated by drink and sex. Producer Harry Goldweiser is a Jewish lecher, poised to prey on Ellen, who feels "caught like a fly in his sticky trickling sentences" which he forms "roundly with thick lips, continually measuring her face with his brown eyes...his words press against her body, nudge in the hollows where her dress clings" (160, 159). The abortionist is Dr. Abrahms, a Jew with a "face like a rat and...short dollhands the color of the flesh of a mushroom" (209).

In A Hazard of New Fortunes Howells presents immigrants mainly *en masse*, or, more accurately, in dehumanized pieces so that his protagonist might find "continual entertainment" in the "interesting shape of shabby adversity...of foreign birth." In the "hive of swarming populations," March catalogues the "small eyes, the high cheeks, the broad noses, the puff lips, the bare, cue-filleted skulls of Russians, Poles, Czechs, Chinese; the furtive glitter of Italians; the blond dullness of Germans; the cold quiet of Scandinavians" (158-159). Yet Howells sets one immigrant apart from the jumble of foreign riffraff. In fact, the book's most principled character is the German socialist Lindau. But having entered the U.S. before the Civil War and proved his patriotism by losing an arm as a Union soldier, Lindau is an "old" immigrant, distinguishable from the ranks of the "new." Wharton likewise sets off one ethnic character in The House of Mirth, Sim Rosedale, and he is an unctuous, Jewish parvenu.

Such portraits, ranging from shallow and idealized to cruel and depraved, typify the ethnic subject in mainstream writing before multicultural consciousness was heightened in the mid-twentieth century. Marginalized Americans, of course, have always undertaken to tell their own stories, although in the case of immigrants not usually until the second or third generation, since the newcomer often lacked the luxury of spare time and literacy. But because ethnic writing originated from a perspective outside the mainstream, the establishment generally ignored or panned the material, deeming it quaint at best, but, more likely, inscrutable or merely pointless.

Many of the themes and conventions prevalent in immigrant writing often seemed to violate the high Euro-American tradition and thus prompted a text's banishment from public attention. The trap awaiting ethnic literature was much like that which snared women's writing: a reader unfamiliar with the codes at work in fiction of the female experience generally dismissed the work as inferior. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's call in Madwoman in the Attic (1979) for male and female readers alike to learn to "penetrate the otherwise unfamiliar universes of symbolic action that comprise women's writings"[43] can rightfully be extended to the field of ethnic literature.

"Decentralized" literature presupposes a poly-centric canon; pluralist theory thus sets about uncovering and explaining the conventions that characterize ethnic writing as a culture-specific corpus, a body of writing that is coherent and distinctive. In other words, the multiculturalist critic sets about identifying how writing is significantly Irish- or Italian-American. It is wrong to assume, of course, that any ethnic experience is monolithic, since no immigrant group yields to easy generalization: class, gender, education level, religious affiliation, political orientation, date of emigration, and site of relocation are just a few of the many variables that shape unique experiences between and within groups.

Yet ethnic markers abound. Some styles and themes, though present in the multifarious strains of ethnic writing as well as in Anglo-American texts, resonate loudest among certain groups: Eugene Mohr contends that anger is the trait which distinguishes Puerto Rican literature in the U.S. from the

writing of other American immigrant groups. Like all who elected to enter the mainland U.S., Puerto Ricans sought betterment. But, contends Mohr, where the fiction of many immigrant groups reflects hope and, often, ensuing gratitude, Puerto Rican literature flashes frustration. Because many members of this Hispanic minority group are Black, their assimilation has been dually constricted. And the relative ease of return visits to the island has reinforced the doubly marginal status: *Nuyorican* back home but *spic* in New York.[44]

Examining the conventions of Scandinavian-American writing, Dorothy Skardal maintains that while fear of the unknown occurs naturally in immigrant sagas of the Old World exodus and entrance into the New, it is much more prevalent in the fiction of this group. She explains that, when possible, most immigrants sought out occupations and geographical topography similar to that which they had known in the old country, since this modicum of familiarity was a source of comfort and security. The majority of Scandinavians, however, settled in the northern plains states, where they found terrain which bore no resemblance to the mountains and seas they had known at home and from which they were unaccustomed to drawing their sustenance.[45]

Lorne Shirinian proposes that, as with Jewish writing, Armenian-American literature is shaped by the weight of a tragic history, the genocide of 1915 and resulting diaspora. Frequently an ostensible subject in the novels of Peter Sourian, Peter Najarian, and William Saroyan, this collective symbol of genocide is at work even when the Armenian massacre at the hands of the

Turks is not an actual topic: the recurring and profound sadness of many characters stems from the irrecoverable loss of homeland and past; the frequent emphasis on communication through letter writing and storytelling is a trope for preserving and transmitting cultural memory.[46]

In The Exiles of Erin (1987), Charles Fanning identifies the Irish-American element in style, genre, and theme. Overt didacticism characterizes the famine generation of writing. Tantamount to propaganda, the literature of the mid-nineteenth century aimed to preserve transplanted ways and values. Idealized characters and formulaic, sentimental plots, suggested in such titles as The Cross and the Shamrock; Or How to Defend the Faith (1853), preached trust in Irish culture, especially the Roman Catholic Church.[47] Black and grotesque humor, a legacy of Jonathan Swift's "Modest Proposal," also characterizes Irish-American fiction. The comedic sense as well as the New Journalistic reportorial style, learned through this group's remarkable success in the newspaper industry, come together in the lovable, loquacious character, Mr. Martin Dooley, the fictional bartender created by Finely Peter Dunne.[48]

It is ironic but understandable that while ethnic authors usually sought to correct their stereotyped depictions in mainstream writing, they often reinforced those same negative images in their own work. For just as the African American was initially allowed on the stage only in blackface to mime white America's version of himself, many ethnic writers proved capable of their own stereotyping, possibly to pander to public expectations and thus to guarantee a readership. In Lin Yu Tang's Chinatown Family (1948), the Fongs

are the model minority, hardworking and making no demands on the white society, happy to accept the United States on its own terms--a stereotype that still seems to persist about Chinese immigrants. At the same time, Monfoon Leong's more realistic Number One Son (1975) was consistently rejected for publication because it would not appeal to the mainstream.[49] Better known is Mario Puzo's The Godfather (1969). This sensational story of the mafia underworld found the readership which eluded The Fortunate Pilgrim (1964), Puzo's earlier novel about a typical immigrant family struggling to survive with dignity and eventually escaping the straitened conditions of New York's Little Italy. Likewise, the hardhitting cop, corrupt ward boss, and bitter spinster in Irish-American literature, characters which became popular with the reading public. Yet the basis for many cruel self-portraits such as these found in Irish-American literary realism is also the germ of truth often present in stereotypes. Such commonplaces as lonely, spiritually impoverished priests or fathers driven to drink and mothers to early graves by the large families which the Church demanded demonstrate Irish Catholicism's heavy toll of sin, guilt, and longing for uncertain redemption.[50]

Although some literary styles, themes, and motifs are indigenous to certain ethnic groups, there is also much obvious overlap, not only between groups but also within canonical writing. Multicultural scholarship, however, documents and analyzes such commonality much less frequently than it does ethnic distinctiveness. Given the distorted record of American letters in which the fiction of marginalized Americans was deliberately ignored or casually

overlooked, the demarcation of ethnic territory against renewed literary imperialism is understandable. Toward that end of marking distinct boundaries of ethnic writing, the essayists in Robert DiPietro and Edward Ifkovic's collection, Ethnic Perspectives in American Literature (1983), attempt to define the ethnic-American genre, yet they reach no consensus. Some locate the decisive ethnic element in a novel's setting; others find it in the descent of the writer or even in the predominant nationality of the book's readership. Rose Basile Green, for instance, contends that the "Italian-ness" of Italian-American fiction resides in the literature's values when they are consistent with those unique to the group.[51]

But such qualifiers actually confound rather than clarify the ethnic genre. If setting and subject matter are a novel's ethnic qualifications, the sensational unmasking of the presumed Latino novelist Danny Santiago as the WASP Daniel James was pointless; his books are set in the barrio and are thus, according to a definition that relies on place, "authentically" ethnic. If descent places a writer in the ethnic genre, Jack Kerouac, Vladimir Nabokov, or Eugene O'Neill would be known as French-Canadian-, Russian-, or Irish-American writers respectively, even though they do not ostensibly address matters of their immigrant ancestry.[52] Additionally, Mario Puzo's The Godfather (1969) would qualify as genuinely ethnic by virtue of being written by a second-generation Italian-American and set in New York's Little Italy. Yet in accord with Rose Basile Green's position that ethnicity is born in a novel's group-specific values, the "Italian-ness" of The Godfather would be

"proven" in its characters' ruthlessness and murderous vengeance, the very misconceptions which many Italian Americans vehemently protested when Francis Ford Coppola turned the book into a movie. Furthermore, the complicated point of Puzo's ethnicity would be rendered moot under Dorothy Skardal's logic, for she maintains that a novel's huge readership which crosses demographic lines cancels out its ethnicity; mainstream popularity, she claims, invalidates a writer's sub-group membership.[53]

The essentialism of a subgroup identity on which such critics as Skardal or Basile Green seem to base ethnicity (e.g. uniquely Italian values that no others share) is a watershed among ethnic writers and often an ideological quagmire. Helen Barolini's cultural heritage is clearly her creative focus, as evidenced by her work: Umbertina (1979), a four-generation novel of a family's difficult but dignified past in Italy and their near dissolution in their adopted American homeland and The Dream Book: An Anthology of Writings by Italian American Women (1985) are just two of her works that explore her Italian ancestry. Barolini, however, resents and resists being pigeonholed as an Italian-American writer. Though she maintains that Italian-American women writers share a particular bond, since they have made their voices heard despite the silence dually enforced by the patriarchal Roman Catholic Church and the male-dominated household, she insists that their writing is unquestionably unhyphenated American literature. She looks ahead to a time when ethnicity can be celebrated but also transcended.[54]

William Kennedy takes an opposite stand on the meaning of his ethnicity. He insists that his Irishness shapes his vision as a novelist and his identity as a person:

> I can't be anything other than Irish American. I know...many Irish Americans believe they are merely American. They've lost touch with anything that smacks of Irishness as we used to know it....But if they set out to discover themselves, to wonder about why they are what they are, then they'll run into a psychological inheritance that's even more than psychological. That may also be genetic, or biopsycho-genetic....there's just something in us that survives and that's the result of being Irish, whether from North or South, whether Catholic or Protestant, some element of life, of consciousness, that is different from being Hispanic, or Oriental, or WASP. These traits endure. I'm just exploring what's survived in my time and place.[55]

Despite their differing outlooks, both Kennedy and Barolini are among those writers who heed Jules Chametzky's call to articulate an ethnic experience that is authentically and legitimately their own and which responds to a legacy of misrepresentation and objectification in mainstream prose.[56] The differing degrees to which they identify with their ethnic heritage and regard it as their defining attribute does not undermine their respective positions. But Kennedy's rather awkward coinage, "biopsycho-genetic," reflects the difficulty of understanding the cause of "difference." Moreover, his phrase

suggests a dubious tendency toward biological determinism to explain ethnicity.

Social science makes compelling attempts at explaining the cause of cultural distinctiveness. Sociologist Michael Novak, for example, finds that ancestral memory feeds ethnicity. He claims that his "unmeltable ethnics," descendants of immigrants of Southern and Eastern Europe, defy assimilation. They are bound to "a set of instincts, feelings, intimacies, expectations, patterns of emotion and behavior; a sense of reality; a set of stories for individuals--and for the people as a whole--to live out."[57] Novak maintains in "Pluralism: A Humanistic Perspective," his contribution to the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups (1980), that ethnic identity persists through time, though altered, of course, by diverse social changes. He admits the danger of stereotyping, for example, the Germans as orderly or the Danes as melancholy, but insists that values, expectations, and codes of conduct are internalized from a long line of human tradition and passed on unconsciously from one generation to the next.[58]

Although in The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics Novak tends toward genetic determinism as he features ancestral identity as an indelible imprint, his conception of an innate yet dynamic identity is sound. Cultural values reinforced over generations, he explains, distinguish, influence, and even shape an ethnic group's experience. Searching beyond the very real and pervasive hindrance of bigotry, social historian Leonard Dinnerstein looks to this legacy of distinctive ethnic values to explain further the quantifiable differences and

varying levels of achievement among American immigrants. He attributes the notably sluggish climb of Polish Americans up the socio-economic ladder to their strong attachment to the Catholic church and parochial schools, their devout passivity, and their general distrust of education as a threat to family cohesion. He also finds that the machismo which deemed it better to forgo challenge rather than risk failure slowed the progress of many Mexican-Americans and caused them to languish in the working class. Dinnerstein points out in contrast that the persistent ideal of a life devoted to study, as seen in the historically high degree of community respect for the Talmudic scholar, accounts for the remarkable figures of Jewish school enrollment, high scholastic achievement, and accomplishments in business and the professions.[59] Francis Fukuyama similarly postulates that nothing so crude as a genetic intelligence differential between Americans of Chinese and African descent determines their markedly different success rates in U.S. enterprise. He contends, rather, that strong Chinese paternalism, with its attendant family network and sense of solidarity, promotes economic success, whereas, in addition to the barrier of racism, the looser links between fathers and children in many African-American families hinders entrepreneurial ventures.[60]

The causal relationship among ancestral heritage, ethnic characteristics, and immigrant outcomes explains a good deal of cultural difference, and it points to continuity within dynamic social identities. Yet even as distinct ethnic personalities in American society are traceable to pre-migration ancestry, the old world roots of such distinctions often remain buried. In addressing the

question of origins, Novak takes a circular route through the primordial and side-steps frank clarification: "From earliest times, distinctive social groups found themselves living under the shaping influence of a common culture. In a sense, what made such social groups distinctive were the prior shaping influences of diverse cultures."[61]

But the notion of a permanent and inevitable ethnic identity, extending back through time immemorial and upon which the pluralist argument frequently rests, does not easily square with the contention that nationalism itself is an invention of the modern world. Notwithstanding the enduring legacy of African or Native American tribalism, a sense of national belonging has also proved to be consciously crafted, an identity intentionally defined contrastively against what will be perceived (it is hoped) as a common enemy: Romantics in Germany, for example, delimited a culture of things German to forge a unified stronghold against a Napoleonic invasion and encroaching French rationalism; republicans in England promoted a collectivist sense of sovereign British peoplehood to wrest rights away from the Tudor and Stuart monarchies.[62] Identities can also be imposed from without, of course, as in Edward Said's thesis that "Orientalism" is a Western construct exported to the East to justify imperialism, a fiction of the "Arab mind" as a homogeneous but unruly and mysterious territory to be tamed and governed through intellectual and political colonization.[63]

But neither an appreciation for the historic fluidity of nationalism nor an awareness of the role of choice in determining human behavior need invalidate

the authenticity of ethnic distinctiveness. For shared language, cultural practices, and religion, for example, certainly served to unite the English as effectively as to separate them from the French. Yet difference, when regarded as an unbridgeable barrier between age-old, iron clad identities, is often used an excuse for hostility or isolationism.* In response, many cultural critics across the ideological spectrum see danger looming in the politics of difference. Shelby Steele, for instance, maintains that "race-holding" demands the forfeiture of personal identity and in its place asserts a presence thoroughly dependent on group association.[64] Although Steele and Henry Louis Gates are often ideological combatants, the latter likewise cautions that the position achieved by defining oneself contrastively against the dominant other ultimately reinforces marginality and perpetuates a victim status.[65]

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*In "Modern Hate: How Ancient Animosities Get Invented," Susanne and Lloyd Rudolph provide a compelling example of how those who control language (or the media, in the late twentieth century) certify history and misappropriate the weight of the past through that rendering. Questioning the assumption that pressure points around the globe are erupting under age-old stress, the Rudolphs recount the often peaceable coexistence of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims under Tito (a manner of living which is but a dim memory today, given the war which rages in the former Yugoslavia), and the frequent neighborliness of the Hindu and Muslim communities under Nehru. In pre-nationalistic India, they explain, Hinduism was a loose web of multiple doctrines, none with transhistoric authority--a free affiliation which usually allowed easy relations with Muslim co-nationals. But when the conservative Bharatiya Janata Party standardized this longtime ecumenism through televised histories of Hindu deities, they fomented an attack, under the guise of a religious crusade, on the upwardly mobile Muslims. Hindu nationalists, rallying around their newly codified religion, were incited to raze the sixteenth-century Babri Mosque, which was built, reportedly, on the birthsite of the Hindu deity Rama, the idol of the BJP televised megaseries. See The New Republic 22 Mar. 1993: 24-28.

It is possible to aver that the recognition and free expression of American ethnic diversity is long overdue but at the same time to be leery of some pluralist scholarship that tends toward social fragmentation by "belittl[ing] unum and glorify[ing] pluribus."[66] The cultural variety that distinguishes Americans from one another is a wealth that warrants affirmation. Yet such richly distinctive cultural inheritances do not cancel out a shared Americanness; in fact the capacity to prize and retain such distinctiveness proves an over-arching national character.

In "The Value of the Canon," Irving Howe contends that the broad humanist foundation of the Western world enables America to acknowledge and value its multi-ethnicity, since the bedrock of that liberal tradition, despite its many violations, is autonomy of the self, freedom of opinion, and the rights of oppressed groups.[67] Although the canon Howe proposes is neither fixed nor unalterable and includes non-Western literature, he makes no apologies for its centeredness in "Great Books," because the classical tradition itself has always encouraged dialogue, challenge, and change.[68] Many of the disparaged dead white males, Howe contends, have been harsh critics of the status quo: Emerson urged that America break with the "courtly muse of Europe," Dickens rendered scathing rebukes of the British bourgeoisie, Melville pointed up the corrupting effects of capitalism. Howe further contends that it is reductive to construe the writing of white, European males as forming a monolithic vision of the world: Plato and Aristotle, Hobbes and Locke,

Nietzsche and Freud, Jefferson and Dewey, of course, yield widely varying, often clashing, views.[69]

Furthermore, because history proves that the literary canon has undergone continual updating and expansion, the heated contest over canon reform is in some ways a moot issue. The development of "English" into its present-day discipline of literary study reflects bold but steady transitions from classical Greek and Latin to the literature of England and the eventual incorporation of American writers. As the study of British and American letters became an academic subject in its own right rather than a "handmaiden" to such emphases as elocution or composition, codified reading lists for college examinations increasingly included vernacular writing and titles that were contemporary of the times.[70] Canon revision has always been inevitable. But perhaps most illustrative of the unifying ethos Howe discerns is the fact that many who charge the West with hegemony do so in the Western tradition of protest, essentially invoking Western values. The classical humanist tradition is difficult to root out, isolate, or even objectify, since, as Howe attests, "all of us who live in America are, to some extent, Western: it gets to us in our deepest and also our most trivial habits of thought and speech, in our sense of right and wrong, in our idealism and our cynicism."[71]

The pervasiveness of Western values (or the insidiousness, depending on one's response to the canon question) undercuts the pluralist argument that ethnicity is always distinct, inborn, and virtually unchangeable and that the high profiles which ethnic groups increasingly achieve are instinctive and

inevitable expressions of those discrete identities. Instead, it seems axiomatic that the raging debate over multiculturalism points again to the elasticity of the Western heritage, that it is one more interchange in the democratic, humanist tradition which, grounded in free expression, accommodates dissent. If so, the "unmeltable" ethnics and other nationalists who claim a natural resistance to powerful cultural norming influences so as to assert their essential identity are merely shadow boxing. In fact, the phenomenon of ethnic revivalism actually testifies to the power of inter-group borrowing–an influence not unrelated to assimilation. Much of the interest among third-generation Americans to reclaim their ancestral roots arose from the Black Power example, which, as an offshoot of the Civil Rights movement for equal enfranchisement for Blacks, sprang from American democratic ideals.[72] Moreover, Horace Kallen's "pure pluralism" which sought to preserve the diverse and distinct cultural homogeneity within the separate *natios* represented in the United States was actually born of the cultural merging it seemed to repudiate: Kallen started at Harvard as a renegade from his Judaism, but, under the influence of his Anglo-American professor Barrett Wendell, became a Zionist; his work resonated with the "many-ness-in-oneness" motif borrowed from another of his professors, the Irish-American William James; furthermore, although he admitted repulsion over fellow student Alain Locke's race, he strove to protect him from racism.[73] Katharine Newman in Ethnic American Short Stories (1975) provides other ironic examples of cultural borrowing used to preserve cultural uniqueness, such as

cassette tape recordings exchanged among tribes at Pan-Indian meetings so that participants can later replay and study the orations of one another, or the horse-drawn buggies of Pennsylvania Dutch--a trademark of their resistance to modernizing influences--made more durable by rubber wheels.[74]

Deconstructing multiculturalism, Stanley Fish declares it an ultimately untenable ideology. A multicultural society, he believes, is more accurately a society of uniculturalists attempting to live side by side. At one end of the scale he posits "boutique multiculturalists," who, well-intentioned but shallow, mouth acceptance and enjoy the trappings of otherness, such as ethnic cuisine or artwork, but, when put to the test, are unable to tolerate the value system of another which conflicts with their own deeply held beliefs. At the opposite end he locates "really strong multiculturalists," who, if they tolerate fundamental difference in the other, violate their own cultural tenets. Ultimately, Fish maintains that to embrace basic cultural difference is to exchange one value system for another and thus to become a reconstructed uniculturalist. Only through "ad hocery," he maintains, can difference be addressed and peace be negotiated on an "as-necessary" basis.[75**]

Such reasoning, clever though it is, overlooks the fact that very little in America's hybrid culture is actually pure or homogeneous. Ethnic enclaves are not static configurations; they are adaptable communities with permeable,

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**Fish is equally pessimistic about the success of interdisciplinary borrowing within the academy. He maintains that "when something is brought into a practice, it is brought in in terms the practice recognizes; the practice cannot 'say' the Other but can only say itself." See "Being Interdisciplinary Is So Very Hard to Do," Profession 89 (MLA) 19.

expandable borders. The transformation of the Calabrese, Venezians, and Abruzzese into Italian Americans is just one example of the fluid community-building pattern in U.S. history. Although in Italy identity was primarily associated with the village in which one lived, Americans simply lumped together immigrants from this peninsula and regarded them as Italian. This new perception produced a new ethnicity: at first, immigrants accentuated their provincialism to retain the distinction of their village; however, threatened by the presence of those who were even less familiar than those from the far reaches of their homeland, they joined with their co-nationals. Yet this newly constructed Italian-American cultural boundary was also permeated, of course, as intermingling in public schools and the marketplace led to inter-marriage, the biggest blurrer of ethnic identities.[76]

To insist on a shared American identity is not to deny real difference. Truth resounds in Horace Kallen's claim that "men change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent: they cannot change their grandfathers."[77] Difference as dictated by national descent is a fact of American history; coping with that difference is a factor of ethnic literature. Whether a foreigner tenderly nurtures a transplanted heritage so as to keep family history alive or attempts to sever old world roots in favor of a completely fresh start in the U.S., his immutable past always remains an issue.

But while the facts of ethnic descent are incontrovertible, the degree to which an American identifies with that old world heritage is a matter of

choice. Oscar Handlin proclaims in The Uprooted that "we are all immigrants." His statement, of course, stretches the truth, since African Americans did not emigrate of their own volition and Indians were indigenous to the continent long before Europeans came ashore. Yet Sollors explains that all citizens of the poly-ethnic United States decide the extent to which they define themselves by descent. A third-generation American with Polish paternal grandparents and German maternal grandparents, for example, might name both of these nationalities to describe her ethnicity. But she might also select one over the other or reject them both to describe herself simply as American. Even Blacks, though visually identified as such by others, determine their own degree of identification with Africa: to be a Black American or an African American is a matter of individual choice. Jews in the U.S. enjoy a similar freedom to preserve or relinquish their ancestral identity. The curfew, ghetto, and pogrom told the Jew born in pre-World War II Russia, for example, that he was always a Russian Jew and never just a Russian. Likewise, a German-born Jewish convert to Christianity could never be anything other than a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even in late nineteenth-century France, where, prior to the Dreyfus Affair, Jews found general acceptance, it was usually under condition that they give up their customs and religion--their Jewishness, in short. By contrast, a hybrid Jewish-American identity is of little note in the U.S. Furthermore, though anti-Semitism still exists, many Americans of Jewish descent perceive of themselves, and in turn are perceived, simply as American.

Anthropologist Fredrik Barth contends that ethnicity emerges as much as--if not more than--it survives. Flouting ethnic essentialism, he argues that because cultural homogenization is a powerful socializing force, Americans counteract it with new ways to establish difference. The ethnic identity, then, is not only passed on from generation to generation but also constructed or consented to. In Barth's appraisal, it is the ethnic "boundary which defines the group" rather than "the cultural stuff that it encloses."[78]

Boundaries make life interesting for many reasons, not least of which is that they are traversable and as such provide access to new worlds. Cultural pluralism, rather than throwing up new barricades of biological insiderism or ethnic essentialism,"" can provide the map for exploring new territories--particularly now that postmodern criticism has expanded the traditional canon. Yet, ultimately, the literary traveller in America's multicultural society will not discover alien lands as much as tour remote areas of his own terrain. For as strong as Robert Rhodes's case is, for example, that F. Scott Fitzgerald is primarily an Irish writer (and it is strong, considering the sense of the outsider that plagued the author and his many Irish-American characters, as well as other ethnic characters, such as James Gatz),[79] Werner Sollors makes a better

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""Hissaye Yamamoto organized a boycott of Come See the Paradise, a film about American internment camps during WW II which she felt could not adequately tell the story because it was not produced by Japanese Americans; when the African-American film maker Bill Duke made The Cemetery Club, a movie about a community of Jewish widows, he was criticized more vehemently for crossing racial lines than gender lines, as was Jewish-American director Steven Spielberg when he made the film version of Alice Walker's novel, The Color Purple.

case for cross-group membership. To assert an overriding ethnic inheritance from Finley Peter Dunne to Fitzgerald ignores the modernist ethos at work in Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Stein. Yet it is a superficial reading that misses the modernists' complex sense of ethnicity: Jean Toomer as African-American, Stein as Jewish, Hemingway as an alienated WASP, for example.[80] American literature in all its cultural variety attests to a fertile cross-pollination rather than a particular, idiosyncratic ethnic-American mind.

As Edward Said attests, the point of examining difference is to achieve wider understanding. "Worldliness," which he maintains restores literatures to their rightful global setting, is accomplished not by the "appreciation of some tiny, defensively constituted corner of the world, but of the large many-windowed house of human culture as a whole."[81] The best approach to take toward multicultural literature in the U.S. then is an integrative one. America stands to learn much by exploring its dynamic syncretism--the wide historical conditions and cultural features which all Americans share.[82]

Notes

1. Consider, for instance, the Carlisle Indian School, which, in the late nineteenth-century, sought to destroy tribal culture by forcibly breaking Native Americans of their traditions. Removing the young from the reservations and educating them in the ways of the dominant white culture, school officials intended the graduates to spread the white culture when they returned to their tribe members. See Leonard Dinnerstein, Roger Nichols, and David Reimers, Natives and Strangers: Blacks, Indians, and Immigrants in America, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 1990) 205. Similarly, the Ford Motor Company English School, teaching courses in the English language and U.S. civics to foreign-born workers in the early twentieth century, mandated the immigrant's total break with the old world. The school's graduation spectacle staged a ship docking at a huge cauldron labeled "Ford English School Melting Pot" while, the Ford Times records, a deckhand drove a group of "hunkies," all shabbily dressed, into the kettle. As the newly transformed, neatly apparelled citizens filed out of the melting pot, they proudly identified themselves not as Polish or Polish-American, but simply as American, for "they [were] taught in the Ford school that the hyphen is a minus sign." See Werner Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture (New York: Oxford UP, 1986) 91.

2. Consider Arthur Schlesinger's extended essay on cultural pluralism, The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multi-cultural Society (New York: Norton, 1992), especially "E Pluribus Unum?" 119-138.

3. J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer (1782; New York: Dutton, 1957) 69-70. But Crevecoeur's amalgam, of course, consists only of Europeans; Africans are not included. Also, he ranks those of the American admixture according to their virtues, and he places the Irish at the bottom.

4. Ralph Waldo Emerson, The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Ralph H. Orth and Alfred Ferguson (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1971) 299-300, vol. 9.

5. Sollors quotes Act IV of Israel Zangwill's Melting Pot. See Beyond Ethnicity 92.

6. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 84, 85.

7. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 88.

8. David Fine, The City, The Immigrant and American Fiction, 1880-1920 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow P, 1977) 36, 8.

9. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 86.

10. Dinnerstein 184.

11. Mary Antin, The Promised Land (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1912) xii.

12. Sollors 89.

13. Charles Willie, "Multiculturalism Bashing," Change Jan/Feb, 1992: 71.

14. Johnella Butler and Betty Schmitz, "Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies," Change Jan/Feb 1992: 40.

15. Henry Louis Gates, Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars (New York: Oxford UP, 1992) v–xvii.

16. Werner Sollors, "A Critique of Pure Pluralism," Reconstructing American Literary History, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986) 264-272.

17. Sollors, "Pure Pluralism" 269.

18. Ishmael Reed, "The Ocean of American Literature," The Before Columbus Foundation Fiction Anthology, eds. Ishmael Reed, Kathryn Trueblood, and Shawn Wong (New York: Norton, 1992) xi, xii.

19. Ishmael Reed xxvii.

20. Reed xxi.

21. Reed xiii.

22. Paula Rothenberg, "Critics of Attempts to Democratize the Curriculum are Waging a Campaign to Misrepresent the Work of Responsible Professors," Debating P.C.: The Controversy over Political Correctness on College Campuses, ed. Paul Berman (New York: Dell, 1992) 266.

23. Rothenberg 267.

24. Emory Elliott, gen. ed., Columbia Literary History of the United States (New York: Columbia UP, 1988) xi-xiii.

25. Elliott xvi-xxi.

26. Bercovitch, Reconstructing American Literary History vii.

27. Bercovitch Reconstructing American Literary History ix.

28. Wayne C. Miller, "Toward a New Literary History of the United States," MELUS 11. 1 (1984): 5-26.

29. For full volume studies of Armenian-American literature see Nona Balakian, The Armenian-American Writer: A New Accent in American Fiction (New York: Armenian General Benevolent Union, 1958); Margaret Bedrosian The Other Modernists: Tradition and Individual Talent in Armenian-American Literature, diss., U of California, 1981 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1986) 8211705; or Lorne Shirinian's two books, Armenian-North American Literature: A Critical Introduction: Genocide, Diaspora and Symbols (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen P, 1990) and The Republic of Armenia and the Rethinking of the North-American Diaspora in Literature (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen P, 1992). For book-length studies of the Puerto Rican literature on the mainland see Asela Rodriguez de Laguna, ed., Images and Identities: The Puerto Rican in Two World Contexts (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1987) or Eugene V. Mohr, The Nuyorican Experience: Literature of the Puerto Rican Minority in New York (Westport: Greenwood, 1982). For information on the Hungarian experience in American literature consult Leslie Konnnyu, A History of American Hungarian Literature: Presentation of American Authors of the Last Hundred Years and Selections from Their Writings (St. Louis: Cooperative of American Hungarian Writers, 1962).

30. Stephan Thernstrom, Ann Orlov, and Oscar Handlin, eds. Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1980) 965, "Survey Research, Table 2."

31. This line from Mikhail Bakhtin's "Discourse in the Novel" is ubiquitous in multicultural criticism. See Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed. "Race," Writing, and Difference (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985) 1; Arnold Krupat Ethnocriticism (Berkeley: U of California P, 1992) 19; or Jules Chametzky's paraphrasing in Our Decentralized Literature: Cultural Mediations in Selected Jewish and Southern Writers (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1986) 4. M.H. Abrams provides a useful gloss on Bakhtin under "Dialogic Criticism" in A Glossary of Literary Terms 6th ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993) 230-232.

32. Chametzky 4.

33. Jane Tompkins, Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860 (New York: Oxford UP, 1985) 201.

34. I have relied on David Fine's excellent survey of early journalism about urban immigrants. See The City, The Immigrant and American Fiction, especially 16-37.

35. Dinnerstein 163-165.

36. Philip Fisher, Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel (New York: Oxford UP, 1987).

37. Fine cites Francis A. Walker, "Immigration and Degradation," Forum, 11 (1891): 634-644 for data on population decline. See Fine 6.

38. Fine quotes Madison Grant, The Passing of the Great Race, 3rd ed. (New York: Deforest Grant, 1944) 86-92. See Fine 7, 8.

39. William Dean Howells, A Hazard of New Fortunes (1890; New York: New American Library, 1965) 48. All other references to the novel in this chapter will be cited parenthetically in the text.

40. Edith Wharton, The House of Mirth (1905; New York: NAL Penguin, 1980) 159. All other references to the novel in this chapter will be cited parenthetically in the text.

41. Townsend Ludington, John Dos Passos: A Twentieth-Century Odyssey (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1980).

42. John Dos Passos, Manhattan Transfer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1925) 307. All other references to the novel in this chapter will be cited parenthetically in the text.

43. Annette Kolodny quotes Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's groundbreaking work in "Dancing through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism," Feminist Studies 6. 1 (1980): 6.

44. Eugene Mohr, The Nuyorican Experience: Literature of the Puerto Rican Minority (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1982) xii-xiv.

45. Dorothy Burton Skardal, "Scandinavian-American Literature," Ethnic Perspectives in American Literature, eds, Robert Di Pietro and Edward Ifkovic (MLA: 1983) 232-265.

46. Lorne Shirinian, Armenian-North American Literature: A Critical Introduction (Lewiston, NY: Mellen P, 1990).

47. Charles Fanning, ed. The Exiles of Erin: Nineteenth-Century Irish-American Fiction (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1987) 94.

48. Daniel Casey and Robert Rhodes, eds. Modern Irish-American Fiction: A Reader (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989) 16-19. See also Charles Fanning's "Finley Peter Dunne and Irish-American Literary Realism," in Irish-American Fiction: Essays in Criticism eds., Casey and Rhodes (New York: AMS, 1979) 13-28.

49. Elaine Kim, Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and their Social Context (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1982) 313.

50. Margaret Conners, "Historical and Fictional Stereotypes of the Irish," Irish-American Fiction 1-12.

51. DiPietro and Ifkovic, Ethnic Perspectives in American Literature 11-13.

52. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 242.

53. According to Dorothy Skardal, the overwhelming popularity of Carl Sandburg, a second-generation Swedish-American who frequently romanticized his own and other ethnic groups in his poetry, disqualifies him as an ethnic writer. For Skardal, he is simply an assimilated American regionalist poet. See The Divided Heart: Scandinavian Immigrant Experience through Literary Sources (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1974) 47-48.

54. Helen Barolini, The Dream Book: An Anthology of Writings by Italian American Women (New York: Schocken Books, 1985) 55-56.

55. Charles Fanning, The Irish Voice in America: Irish-American Fiction from the 1760's to the 1980's (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1990) 312.

56. Chametzky 4.

57. Michael Novak, The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics (New York: Macmillan, 1972) 47-48.

58. Novak, "Pluralism: A Humanistic Perspective," The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups 773.

59. Dinnerstein 184-186.

60. Francis Fukuyama, "Making It," rev. of Tribes: How Race, Religion and Identity Determine Success in the New Global Economy by Joel Kotkin, The New Republic 19 Apr. 1993: 41-43.

61. Novak, "Pluralism: A Humanistic Perspective" The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups 773.

62. Two recent discussions on the modern creations of national membership are Linda Colley's Britons: Forging the Nation 1701-1837 (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993) and Liah Greenfield's Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993).

63. Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

64. Shelby Steele, The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) 29, 132.

65. Gates, Loose Canons 185-188.

66. Schlesinger 16-17.

67. Irving Howe, "The Value of the Canon" Debating PC 160.

68. Bercovitch would disagree with this assessment of healthy, wide-ranging dispute and debate among American thinkers; instead, he identifies an undue tendency toward consensus-building in American rhetoric. See The American Jeremiad (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1978).

69. Howe 161.

70. Arthur Applebee, Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English: A History (Urbana, Il: NCTE, 1974) 11, 31-32, 37.

71. Howe 160, 169.

72. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 10.

73. Sollors, "Pure Pluralism" 264-272.

74. Katharine Newman, Ethnic American Short Stories (New York: Washington Square P, 1975) 18.

75. Stanley Fish, "E Pluribus Plurum?" Michigan State University Lecture Series, 23 Apr. 1993.

76. Dinnerstein 135, 136.

77. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 231.

78. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 27, 257.

79. Robert E. Rhodes, "F. Scott Fitzgerald: 'All My Fathers,'" Irish-American Fiction 29-52.

80. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 14, 15, 253.

81. Edward Said, "The Politics of Knowledge," Debating PC 185.

82. Werner Sollors, The Invention of Ethnicity (New York: Oxford, 1989) xiv.

CHAPTER TWO
The Immigrant Heritage and the Legacy of Ambivalent Renewal

The often uneasy relationship between canonical writing and ethnic or multicultural literature in America rests on an assumed mutual exclusivity. The ideological culture wars which are fought on college campuses nationwide pit Anglo-centrism against American diversity. Positions are nuanced but in broad outline, the noble, time-honored tradition, rooted in the Puritans and blossoming in the American Renaissance, is threatened by second-rate, topical fiction which would replace "reverence" with "relevance," since its merits are sociological rather than aesthetic. On the flip side, proponents of pluralism at last corral the hegemonic Anglo-Saxon male to free myriad subgroup writers from the margins; new critical apparatuses uncover varieties of aesthetics which old, standard ways of reading have kept hidden. The divide which seems to separate ethnic from classic American literature, and of which both sides are caretakers, obscures the overlapping cultural constants inherent in much of the literature produced in the U.S.

Both sides in the debate advance compelling evidence. Literary historiography from The Cambridge History of American Literature (1921) and The Literary History of the United States (1948, 1972) up to Emory Elliott's iconoclastic Columbia Literary History of the United States (1988) attests to the

myopia of the traditional. Despite such post-modern challenges as Elliott's or Sacvan Bercovitch's recent Cambridge Literary History of America (1995)[1], the conceptual categories of the Puritan tradition, the frontier spirit, romanticism, and realism remain largely in effect, and they convey the notion of a unified, unbroken lineage of the Anglo-European tradition in America.[2] Women and people of color who have written from outside this elite line are relegated to the ignoble categories of sentimentalism or local color, worthy of some note as literary curiosities but not regarded as bona fide American writers. For instance, though Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Joel Chandler Harris are regularly included in anthologies of American literature, they continue to be lumped together as quaint regionalists.[3] Though F.O. Matthiessen was widely praised for revolutionizing the study of American culture by replacing the stuffy Victorians Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and Lowell with the more "robust" writers, Emerson, Melville, and Whitman, he nonetheless remained firmly committed to a WASP northeastern paradigm.[4] Furthermore, a spate of critical works over the last decade which promised to examine Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman as regional writers rather than as national icons in part reifies their domination: Michael Colacurcio's extended study of the American Renaissance scholarship industry shows that despite some shakeups in Matthiessen's roll of stars--Poe might be added or attention to Thoreau reduced or "major" writers paired with "minor" ones to show common influence, social constraints, or concerns--Matthiessen's

construct remains, finally, the touchstone by which other writing is tacitly judged, regardless of most alleged agendum to the contrary.[5]

The revisionist's disdain for consensus is understandable, therefore, since standards were set, accords reached, and the canon formed while the ethnic writer was a *persona non grata* in American letters. Where the lone male characters of such canonical giants as James Fenimore Cooper, Herman Melville, and Mark Twain have been taken as spokesmen for America, the paradigm for any national experience has been obviously restrictive. Before the rather recent advent of anti-foundationalism, the major works of American literary criticism struck a tone of unyielding authority and finality, suggesting that the books were written, the thinking done, and the whole lot chronicled and catalogued for perusal but not for reappraisal. R.W.B. Lewis's presentation of the American as Adam, creating and self-created and thus unmarked by the past, includes, for all intents and purposes, the hero's dates of birth and death, and thus suggests that Adamic vitality is no more.

Lewis's period of study runs from 1820 to 1860 and covers major writers of the American Renaissance and such historians and theologians as William Prescott, George Bancroft, and Theodore Parker. Though he manages a half-hearted attempt at continuity and inclusiveness for the Adamic tradition by naming Daisy Miller, Isabel Archer, Jay Gatsby, Holden Caulfield, and even Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man as heirs of this legacy of buoyant assurance, his dolorous tone undercuts that optimism. His text becomes a lament for lost potential, a dirge for purity forever sullied by the realities of twentieth-century

life in America. He regrets that Adam, known for "an air of adventurousness, a sense of promise and possibility," is in retreat; the mythic hero is "no longer very evident in our national expression....recently has the dialogue tended to die away...has the old conviction of the new historical beginning seemed to vanish altogether, and with it the enlivening sense of possibility, of intellectual and artistic elbow-room, of new creations and fresh initiatives. Our culture will at the very least be a great deal drearier without it."[6]

Lewis's own narrow definition of Adam precipitated that hero's extinction. It is indeed a rare creature who fits the heroic mold of

> an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources.[7]

And while Lewis crosses gender and racial lines to extend Adam's lineage to some women and blacks, the expansive gesture is ultimately empty. The notion that figures of canonical fiction are able to "stand alone" is questionable in itself, but certainly few minority figures in American literature are thus freed from family, race, or history, as Lewis requires of a resplendent Hopeful. The past, in the form of ties to the native land, remains a powerful force in the lives of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century immigrants. Many ache over the loss of cultural traditions left behind; others who aspire to be free of the past are nonetheless constrained by it as the society they wish to join perceives

not a new American but a misplaced foreigner, a relic of the old world. Furthermore, the anguished detachments of Ellison's protagonist--his invisibility, his namelessness--are the traits that, for Lewis, release him from the mundane and set him aloft in the otherworldly. Even Lewis's Adamic exceptions to the Party of Hope, those belonging instead to the Parties of Memory and Irony, will not accommodate America's ethnic literary characters. Lewis's somber nostalgics are too freighted with the legacy of corruption and inherited sin to include these immigrants who, perhaps naively, believed in the possibility of a fresh start. Those of the ironic mentality sought to blend future possibility with past tradition and thus bear a resemblance to America's newcomers, who by and large shared this objective; however, the singularity and grand stature by which the ironics held themselves above life's fray--Lewis places the aloof, Jamesian aristocrat in this camp--distinguish them from America's immigrant. Instead, the ethnic is Lewis's wrong kind of outsider, a mangier sort who does not originate in America: he is "the dispossessed, the superfluous, the alienated, the exiled"[8] who throws the "real" Adam into glorious relief.

Despite the literary disenfranchisement of those who do not fit the narrow Adamic mold, much twentieth-century ethnic writing nonetheless bears the imprint of the Anglo-European belletristic tradition. Such influence is not surprising, of course, since as products of the American school system, which taught an Anglo-centric curriculum, writers read widely beyond the literature of their own ethnic or gender groups and modeled their work on what they

read. "Group" itself is a problematic configuring device since individuals belong concurrently to various communities, as dictated not only by gender and ethnicity, but by class, religion, education level, and geographical location, as well as by choice in voluntary affiliations. Furthermore, these marginalized writers knew where the power in publishing resided and often sought approval from and admission into the literary establishment.[9] Testaments of influence by the high tradition abound: Zora Neale Hurston read widely in Shakespeare, while Toni Morrison cites the inspiration of Virginia Woolf in her work. Ralph Ellison proclaims his enormous debt to Marx, Freud, Eliot, and Hemingway, among others, much as James T. Farrell credits his extensive reading of French and Russian authors with shaping his career. Paule Marshall attributes her skill as a novelist to her thorough grounding in nineteenth-century British novels, and quite obvious is the Negro spiritual's reliance on the King James Bible.[10]

Yet even as these minority writers profess the influence of the dominant culture, they also employ a vernacular beyond the literary tradition. A feature common to ethnic writing is a marginalized character's sense of "two-ness," the outsider's divided identity under which he or she negotiates the dominant culture and that of the subgroup. This ubiquitous duality which W.E.B. DuBuois articulates in The Souls of the Black Folk (1903) is again manifest, for example, in the literal and metaphoric bilingualism of Henry Roth's Call It Sleep (1934) as young David Schearl crosses between the Yiddish voice of his home and the language of the larger world.[11] It is at play as well in Paule

Marshall's Brown Girl, Brownstones (1959) as Selina Boyce is caught between the assimilationist drive of her Barbadian immigrant kinspeople and her longing to recoup the values they left behind on their island home. It is likewise the case with Abraham Cahan's Yekl (1896), where the title character, a would-be Yankee from the Russian ghetto in Povodye, transforms himself into "Jake" but whose Americanization is hindered by his wife's old world Judaism. Bi-culturalism, of course, is not always a successful mode of traversing two worlds; the frequent result is alienation from both the family and society.

Because this ethnic fiction often violated accepted aesthetic principles of critical evaluation and developed themes unfamiliar to the mainstream, it was routinely ignored or panned by the literary establishment. Thus, Carol Gilligan's contention that women speak "in a different voice" from men, one that only seems inferior or inscrutable because it resonates from experiences outside of dominant, male awareness, applies to pluralist writing as well. Many scholars of ethnic literature point to this feminist model of difference and likewise call for new ways of reading the extra-mainstream novel so that its meaning can be understood and its significance appreciated.[12]

Arguing for a broadened paradigm that will open up non-mainstream literature, revisionists contend that since readers are often conditioned to identify rugged individualism--the much celebrated detachment of the self from society--as the hallmark of great American literature, they cannot appreciate or even comprehend multi-ethnic writing, which is typically

grounded in the communal. Therefore, Paul Lauter, co-editor of the Heath Anthology of American Literature (1990), which refigures standard chronologies and thematic groupings to present the diversity of writing in America, urges an awareness of social emphases in literature, in addition to individual ones. His intention in making minority writing accessible to a wider readership is "not to deny the significance of defining an isolated, heroic self against the forces of nature--a theme...peculiarly persistent in the Romantic fictions of American white males that have constituted the received canon." Rather it is to note that "equally substantial and interesting are the social issues...the sacrifices of community to self, difficulties of sustaining community."[13]

Revisionists such as Lauter charge that the long-standing definition of the American literary hero, crafted by Matthiessen, R.W.B. Lewis, and other elevators of the WASP tradition and based on a small, homogeneous sampling of writers, effectively excludes these characters who, instead of setting out unencumbered to develop their self-potential, grapple with the trappings of family and ethnicity.[14] Without question, perspectives and experiences that are beyond the norm of a more or less homogenous mainstream culture have too long been ignored. The WASP school has long discounted the contribution of minority writers and presumed to speak for them through their alleged world-transcending literature. Significant differences do exist, and the academy justifiably reworks the criteria that have privileged one model of

expression over another, so that the full range of literature in America can be made accessible.

But many scholars of ethnic writing, apart from developing a broader paradigm for reading that will make America's diverse literature accessible, cling to the legacy of disenfranchisement as their credentials for membership in their own exclusive club. Instead of uncovering the syncretisms that exist within dominant and subgroup writing, or of underscoring the similarities along with the differences that exist between Anglo-centric and ethnic-pluralist literature in America, multicultural literary theory too often proceeds as a mission to stake out and guard an impenetrable ethnic domain. Mindful of a past where minority writing was routinely dismissed and the ethnic American given no control over his or her (mis)representation in mainstream fiction, pluralists often attempt to mark territory that is uniquely theirs, to claim literary ground that cannot be invaded or reabsorbed by the dominant culture. Henry Louis Gates laments a pervasive "do unto others what they did unto you" mentality at work in this separatism[15] where ethnic essentalists proclaim a nearly hermetic paradigm of "otherness," which they maintain is rightfully and necessarily incomprehensible, or at least unfamiliar, to the Anglo reader.

Toward that segregationist end, some pluralists administer litmus tests to writers to screen for "valid" ethnicity. For example, second-generation Swedish-American Carl Sandburg often examined in his poetry the lives of immigrants who settled in the midwest. Dorothy Skardal, a scholar of Scandinavian-American literature, however, would revoke his status as an

ethnic writer on the basis of his wide mainstream appeal: because he is "completely assimilated," Skardal argues, he "by no stretch of definition can...be considered anything but wholly American."[16] Other pluralists comb texts for shibboleths that "prove" ethnicity, or they impute a foreign meaning to a commonplace expression. Werner Sollors cautions against this tendency to exaggerate difference and erect a seemingly impenetrable boundary between peoples, thereby exoticizing ethnicity in literature. He scoffs at an ethnicist who glosses Mario Puzo's line in The Godfather, "She called herself Kay Adams," as a literal translation of an Italian idiom for the English "her name was...," and thus as a purported password to be spotted only by biological insiders.[17] Many revisionists cut an unduly wide swathe between themselves and the dominant tradition. The modish, out-with-the-old battle cry, such as that "the reading of Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, and their successors amounts to little more than a usable past for a white, northeastern, male"[18] resounds regularly. While it is wrong to read these canonical writers as having the last word on the American experience (or the first one, of course), it is just as wrong to assume that they no longer have anything to say, or that they only speak to a specialized group which forms along class, ethnic, gender, or geographical lines.

But division and categorization, unfortunately, are often standard practice when ethnicity scholarship is primarily committed to outlining and preserving difference. As the pluralist campaign routinely contrasts the communitarian thrust within seemingly discrete and homogeneous subgroups

against the individualism of the Anglo-centric mainstream, they rely on a specious dichotomy.[19] In the past, juxtaposing the ethnic character, portrayed as virtually indistinguishable from his subgroup, against a classic protagonist who exhibited personal autonomy heightened fear of foreigners for their supposed socialist leanings, but it now indicts the WASP for selfishness. Both uses unjustly polarize the central issue of the individual's role in society.

While "difference" as the basis for ethnic literary scholarship establishes distinct identities and neat boundaries, it proves overly restrictive and ultimately untenable. Such is Carolyn Heilbrun's concern over the dangers inherent to the "difference" school of feminism, which she believes surrenders too much of the human identity in its attempt to define one that is uniquely feminine. Heilbrun laments that the powerful old guard of American Renaissance scholars put forth a male paradigm of experience and called it human, for they effectively nullified other modes of existence. But it is that misappropriation--the male lock on what is human--which she hopes to rectify. What has been drawn from the human experience and labelled male, she insists, must be reclaimed rather than continually surrendered: "If women identify all adventure as 'male' and not for them..., if women forfeit the culture men have dubbed 'male' when it is in fact human, they will have deprived themselves of too much."[20]

Heilbrun's argument speaks volumes for the diversity debate. It is just as wrongheaded to label as male those broad human attributes that are not gender-specific (or to label as requisitely human those narrower, distinctively

male traits) as it is for the WASP paradigm to claim and the ethnicity school to yield such basic human behaviors and experiences as individualism and self-expression or, conversely, for pluralists to claim a monopoly on concern for community. "Difference" feminists who advocate a uniquely female culture are wrong to deprive themselves of male discourse, for, maintains Heilbrun, that very discourse is "not all 'male'....much of it is human discourse that society has denied to women."[21] Likewise, when marginalized groups assert far-reaching, essential differences that separate the ethnic from the WASP, they actually acquiesce in the hegemony of the dominant group. "Ignor-ance" works both ways: where the elite literary establishment would not see beyond its own sphere, ethnicists cite a reverse foreignness in American literature and deem many of its values and themes as beyond their scope of recognition and relevance. Ethnic literature shares a broader overlap with the themes of canonical literature than perhaps either side, adherents to the traditional canon and advocates of diversity, has wanted to admit.

When pluralists charge classic American literature with obsessive self-interest and communal indifference, it is usually to highlight their own collectivist values, which seem less crass and more noble. But to invoke this trite and over-simplified division is to interpret narrowly much of American literature, and thus to obscure very real parallels between the two types. (It is a stretch to refer to them as different genres, as is often done.) Ellen McCracken's claims in "Community-Oriented Introspection and the Demystification of Patriarchal Violence" are representative of this lamentably

frequent reliance on faulty absolutes. McCracken describes Sandra Cisneros as a revolutionary, since Esperanza, the hero of House on Mango Street (1984), challenges the oppressive patriarchal social organization which traditional texts presumably would not see. She further praises Cisneros's daring originality for centering Esperanza's consciousness in the broad socio-political reality of the Chicano community rather than in customary narrow individualistic introspection.[22] But while Cisneros's work is praiseworthy, it is not nearly as ground-breaking as McCracken presumes, since American protagonists have regularly exhibited social concern and patriarchal defiance: for instance, Sinclair Lewis's Carol Kennicott defies the classist, misogynist caste system entrenched in the middle-American Midwest of Main Street (1920), and William Faulkner's Quentin Compson challenges his strong father as well as the unseemly patriarchal social structure of the South in Absalom, Absalom! (1936). These writers--Cisneros, Lewis, Faulkner, and a host of others representing America's full range of diversity--continue a pattern of social reform and revolt against the patriarchy, which Thomas Paine began over two hundred years ago, when, in Common Sense (1776), he rallied the colonial "children" to defy their British "parents" in the American Revolution.[23]

Paul Lauter, too, though he undertakes the important duty of creating an aesthetic that promotes a fuller understanding of all American literature, finally offers reductive readings of the canon. To prove his dubious point that communal concern is the sole property of multi-ethnic writing, he posits ego-centrism as the rule for the WASP. In "The Literature of America: A

Comparative Discipline," Lauter indicts his sampling of white males--Melville, Twain, and Crane, among others--for solipsism. He contends that the canonical writer spoke only to a small, specialized segment of the population about abstract and idealized private battles, and thus missed the crucial matter of life with which everyone else struggled.

> ...individual confrontations with whales or wars were never central, for the issue was neither metaphysics nor nature but the social constructions called "prejudice," and the problem was not soluble by or for individuals...but only through a process of SOCIAL change[24] [his emphasis].

Ethnic criticism often makes this facile distinction between old-stock American interest in the personal and subgroup concern for the community: in the introduction to her collection of writings by Italian-American women, for instance, Helen Barolini uses Thoreau's Walden (1854) as a ready point of contrast to her group of authors. In her simplified reading, Thoreau is an anti-social recluse, his non-humanist outlook utterly opposite of the Italian mind which prizes human interchange.[25] But it is a superficial reading of Melville that would interpret Moby-Dick as a mere "confrontation with whales," describe The Red Badge of Courage simply as a war story, or fail to see the purpose of Thoreau's sojourn to Walden Pond as an extended reflection on the individual's responsibility to the community. Social awareness has always been central to American literature; the strong desire to withdraw to the forest or the open seas, in fact, attests to the weightiness of social concern. Solitude

is the state in which many protagonists re-evaluate--and often recommit to--their communal involvement. The appropriation of social responsibility by ethnicists and their assignation of ego-centrism to mainstream writers is a flawed equation. The tension between self-reliance and social interest drives American literature, canonical and marginal alike. And within the diverse range of American writing, rarely is the individual or the community a clear-cut victor. In the best literature, any resolution holds the two competing forces in balance.

Lauter's narrow interpretation of canonical literature misses its concern for society. Though Moby-Dick's monomaniacal Ahab would break his bond to humanity so as to "reach outside...by thrusting through the wall" toward the godhead, Melville also stresses the communal ties that the captain rejects. As a unit the Pequod crew rely on the varied and complementary roles of the diverse members to bring in and harvest a whale. In "The Monkey-Rope" chapter, Queequeg and Ishmael are physically linked and mortally dependent on each other as they begin the dangerous cutting-in upon a whale, and in "A Squeeze of the Hand," Ishmael is mesmerized by the crew's routine of manipulating the fragrant spermacetti and overcome with goodwill for his fellow shipmates. These are just two of that novel's affirmations of human interconnectedness. Both chapters reveal that human bonding limits the individual will and blurs a distinct identity, but they stress as well that such a link is crucial to human survival and psychological well-being. Melville, in fact, illustrates the horrors of solitariness in "The Castaway," where Pip falls

overboard as his crewmates pursue a whale: "out from the centre of the sea, poor Pip turned his...head to the sun, another lonely castaway....The awful lonesomeness is intolerable. The intense concentration of self in the middle of such a heartless immensity, my God! Who can tell it?"[26] Pip is rescued but forever mad since facing his solitary vulnerability and insignificance in the sea. And though Ishmael is the lone survivor at the novel's end, his life is spared only through the indirect intervention of another; he stays afloat long enough for the Rachel to locate him by clinging to the coffin of his trusted friend Queequeg.

Lauter's paradigm similarly ranks Stephen Crane among the self-absorbed, white, male individualists, yet Crane is a fervent advocate of social change. Certainly his naturalistic world is bleak: nature is coldly indifferent to humanity, which itself lacks the awareness necessary to improve the mortal condition. Such mean circumstances produce sad endings: Maggie's lonely suicide in the East River; the misunderstood Swede's expulsion from the Palace Hotel and his subsequent, senseless murder; the crew members' mighty struggle to beach their boat, only to lose the good oiler along the way; a regiment turned by war into an unfeeling (and, to make matters even worse, largely ineffective) fighting machine.[27] But throughout all of these stories chronicling the breakdown of human communion, Crane is outraged rather than resigned. Human survival, he urges, is in collective effort: just as easily as the five patrons collaborated in the Swede's murder, they could have joined forces to accept him; when Henry Flemming feels disenfranchised from

humanity because he has fled from battle, the power of shared identity and human sympathy, at work in Jim Conklin's own admission of fear, allows Henry to re-enter the ranks of mankind.

Hawthorne too is an easy target for proponents of wholesale change, those who would shift the focus from the traditional canon to previously ignored writers. His animosity toward his female literary rivals, that "damn'd mob of scribbling women," whose books outsold his own, is frequently interpreted as his support for an elitist, male agenda that would privilege "individual self-realization, intellectual control, and a take-charge attitude toward experience" over domestic issues and social concern, which were then more popular.[28] But the theme of integrating the self within society runs throughout Hawthorne's work. Surely Hawthorne's fiction features egotists who pursue "super" human knowledge that would divide them from the community, but such a quest is ultimately damning and deforming. Chillingworth and Rappaccini, for instance, go the route of Ethan Brand, who, cruelly using a mortal being to test the limits of the human constitution, commits the "sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man, and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own needs." Brand, like the other egregious hubrists, breaks "the magnetic chain of humanity" and destroys his own soul.[29] Yet even Hawthorne's sympathetic characters are likewise punished for breaking their societal bonds: Hawthorne celebrates Hester's sensuous vitality which is not dulled by austere Calvinism, but he nonetheless returns her to the settlement at the novella's end, where she

makes reparation to the community she has defied through her sexual liaison with Dimmesdale. Richard Millington's Practicing Romance: Form and Cultural Engagement in Hawthorne's Fiction (1992) further dispels the image of Hawthorne as a mere romance writer detached from social reality. According to Millington, Hawthorne recognized fiction's "crucial cultural role" through which he critiqued society's growing fragmentation and mercantilism, urging instead a "vision of human connection."[30]

Revisionists similarly mine Emerson's essays for evidence to condemn the traditional canon as the handbook of self-interest. In some readings, Emerson's legacy is the root of ethnic discord: David Marr charges that by teaching America to value the status of the apolitical, private citizen over all else, Emerson has "truncated [our] capacity to recognize the excluded Other as human."[31] Joyce Warren, by lifting short lines out of longer passages, also presents Emerson as a solipsistic egotist who shuns the social and political world. By decontextualizing such quotes as "Trust thyself....Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your mind," or positing such reductive glosses as that the "American Scholar Address" exalts a "picture of a nation of individuals, each acting for himself and governed only by the dictates of his own nature," she indeed reveals a self-absorbed anti-communitarian.[32] Yet Warren's narrow focus cannot take in Emerson's expansiveness. The selfhood Emerson encouraged went far beyond the petty individual to be centered in the collective unconscious. And, as Lawrence Buell observes, the very nature of Emerson's frequently used medium--the lecture, a modified sermon to be

delivered to an audience--attests to the outward direction of his vision rather than to a sterile or vain inwardness, as is often charged.[33] Though much of Emerson's writing describes the proper role for the scholar as one of contemplative passivity, Merton Sealts in Emerson on the Scholar (1992) chronicles Emerson's transition from private citizen to activist committed to social reform. Sealts presents Emerson as a figure increasingly involved in the social and political world, one eventually moved from thought to action, particularly in protesting slavery and Indian removal.[34]

Mark Twain's plan for Huck to "light out for the territory," an escape patterned on Rip Van Winkle's twenty-year sabbatical, has similarly come to symbolize the rejection of society and quest for autonomy that the received canon presumably expounds.[35] Yet The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885) is not Twain's advocacy for escape through flight; it is his plea for reform. Huck's solitary flight, after all, is only proposed on the last page of the novel, the focus of which has been Huck's grappling with the weighty social problem of how and whether to break the law by transporting Jim to freedom. Much like the ethnic character who is caught between two worlds, Huck is torn by his conscience and the dictates of society. The bulk of Huck Finn is not an idyll of carefree bucolic adventure but rather a biting indictment of corrupt society as Huck and Jim encounter it along the river. Likewise, Satan's revelation at the end of The Mysterious Stranger that "nothing exists. All is a dream. God--man--the world...have no existence. Nothing exists save empty space--and you," is not a statement of abject existentialism but a call to

action and an appeal for productivity, for he urges Theodor Fischer to "dream other dreams, and better." Thus, when Huck decides to "go to Hell" rather than to turn Jim in, or when Jim allows himself to be recaptured instead of abandoning the wounded Tom, Twain illustrates that individual acts of compassion can improve the condition of the "damned human race."

Criticism which (inaccurately) reduces literature to negative qualities--e.g. canonical fiction is not concerned with society and ethnic writing does not glorify the individual over the group--artificially preserves and even widens the gulf between what only seem to be America's unrelated literatures. The will to alter one's destiny, the hope, albeit often unfulfilled, that the U.S. is the land where this desire might be acted upon, and the conflicted conscience as community concerns war with self-interest when one is impelled toward this change recur in literature as disparate as, for example, Benjamin Franklin's The Autobiography (1774) and Gish Jen's Typical American (1991), both of which feature the rub between self-invention and social constraints. But besides isolating ethnic from mainstream writing, this polarizing methodology also obscures commonality within pluralist fiction, implying that ethnic writers create art in a vacuum. Certainly the varieties of ethnic literature are rooted in distinct cultural traditions: Amy Tan's account of four daughters' growing up under the strong influence of their Chinese immigrant mothers in The Joy Luck Club (1988) differs significantly from Anzia Yezierska's story of Sara Smolensky who in Bread Givers (1925) rejects her father's orthodox Judaism to develop both personally and professionally in society at large. Both, however,

describe the plight of the second generation as they alternately disappoint and gratify their parents on their own quests for American identity. Subgroups in the U.S. share many similar experiences by the fact of their minority status. Diverse tales of migration (from foreign lands to the U.S. or from the rural south to the industrial north) to flee hardship (whether cultural or religious persecution or economic or political oppression) generally feature, in varying degrees, accounts of alienation and loss, assimilation or cultural resistance, and the cumulative toll or reward visited upon the individual or family who undergoes this transplantation.

To assert meaningful parallels between canonical and ethnic texts is not to revalorize the classical model on the false premise that it is transcendent after all in its capacity to accommodate marginalized literature. On the contrary, to identify significant overlap between classic American texts and those of the diverse cultures transplanted to the U.S. in many respects de-exceptionalizes--or even de-Americanizes--the classical model of literature in the U.S. The theme of willed change, the conscious decision to break with the past and begin again, as expressed in Sollors' thesis of consent championing over the dictates of descent, is indigenous to Americans in a land of refuge and opportunity. Yet this "American" theme increasingly is a characteristic of literatures throughout the destabilized, post-cold war world, as other countries become "nations of nations" with their own influx of immigrants and asylum-seekers.

Multicultural theory at its best counters the exceptionalism that can distort American literary history on both fronts: the traditionalist position that the classical canon transcends barriers to represent the full range of existence in the U.S. and the pluralist claim that primordial differences inexorably divide ethnic literature from the mainstream and necessitate separate consideration. The revisionist Heath Anthology of American Literature, for instance, neither privileges the white, male, elite northeastern point of view nor sequesters minorities under a celebration of essentialist difference; by refiguring the standard "crippling habits of chronology,"[36] it wrests the traditional and marginal away from their exclusionary rationales to present a diverse but integrated chronicle of American literature. Once neutralized, the supercharged terms and categories that have presented American literary production as an undertaking primarily of the WASP writer lose their ability to vaunt and pigeon-hole: individualism is no longer the *primum mobile* of American literature, and ethnic writing becomes more than an expression of subgroup identities.

To break the entrenched modes of perception that automatically reinforce conventional thought and foster blind spots, Annette Kolodny advocates a "defamiliarization of the familiar"—a moratorium on the study of standard texts and criticism in favor of an immersion in non-canonical texts and recent theory. Thus, broken of conditioned responses and old habits of mind, a reader can appreciate the non-traditional and re-approach the formerly familiar with a fresh receptivity. The result can be new decipherings:

"interconnections will appear that had not before been visible. Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'representative man' may be identifiable in the recurrent self-inventions of Frederick Douglas, while Emerson's hoped-for American Scholar may be discovered in the intellectual independence of Margaret Fuller."[37]

This balanced perspective allows the critic of American literature to fuse, in a sense, the dual vantage points of Jonathan Swift's traveller, Lemuel Gulliver. For while Gulliver examined the Brobdingnagians up close and the Lilliputians from a distance, he saw neither group accurately. A divided focal point in fact chronically distorts the Americanist's vision. Emphasis on what sets ethnic writing apart from mainstream fiction gives necessary credence to this body of literature, just as an eye trained on distinctively "American" aspects of art once helped separate this tradition from the English; but attention to commonality is important as well, since the most accurate vision perceives at once the fine detail and the broad stroke.

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese enunciates the soundness of this dual and yet unified perspective in "Between Individualism and Fragmentation: American Culture and the New Literary Studies of Race and Gender." She is committed to a common American culture, but not one that mandates conformity; she endorses heterogeneity but not to the point of social atomization. She thus chastises extremists on both sides of the culture war: those who would ignore "otherness" and those who sequester themselves behind "difference." The integrity of American culture, she maintains, is comprised of--not fragmented by--its diverse parts.

> ...to be an American means something more than to belong to a specific group of Americans. To be an American is forthrightly to acknowledge a collective identity that simultaneously transcends and encompasses our disparate identities and communities. Unless we acknowledge our diversity, we allow the silences of the received tradition to become our own. Unless we sustain the ideal of a common culture, we reduce all culture to personal experience and sacrifice the very concept of being an American.[38]

Cultural theorists who possess this "integrity of memory"[39] view commonality and difference as part and parcel of an American identity; their broad-ranging and yet penetrating vision takes in both the general and the particular in American literature. This expansive mode of seeing makes apparent paradoxes comprehensible, such as that consensus can reside in discord. Warner Berthoff, as a case in point, invokes such present-day malignities as "continuity" and "cultural universal," but the theme he identifies as constant throughout American literary history is, in fact, discontinuity. He identifies as central to the American character the impulse to disrupt the flow of time in order to begin anew, a theme whose far-reaching applicability can encompass American diversity.

But Berthoff's emphasis on the American's radical disrespect for cultural continuousness, rooted in the country's originating covenants which describe the conditions of voluntary rupture and renewal--John Winthrop's 1630 Arbella

sermon, the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, to name a few--seems to reiterate R.W.B. Lewis's narrow thesis of the American Adam, that self-created being who steps out of the past into a fresh new existence. In "Literature in the American Situation," in fact, Berthoff draws heavily on the same nineteenth-century figures that Lewis examined. But while Lewis fixes his attention on the product of such renewal, Berthoff focuses on the process: the "exemption from history...[the] escape from either continuity or consequence in the cycles of elected experience."[40]

Berthoff's emphasis on reinvention as an act of will, a conscious choice to begin anew, puts the humble immigrant of much ethnic fiction into the company of the nineteenth-century American Adam, for central to the immigration story is the choice to forsake an old existence for a new life which promises control over one's destiny through personal liberty and release from rigid class structures. Even the more tangible aspects of ethnicity--broken English, foreign customs, the practice of a non-Protestant faith, such remnants of the old world which separated the immigrant from R.W.B. Lewis's fresh, new, representative American--would join the two figures under Berthoff's schema. For while Lewis perceives Adam as "happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritance of family and race,"[41] he is not as free of the past as Lewis presumes; history is the force that impels him toward a new beginning. Even in Leslie Fiedler's appraisal of the canonical protagonist, where Adam is an orphan shorn of family ties or a Faustian figure who flees from home and thus from the inferior position of child or

subordinate,[42] the past nonetheless exerts itself in the figure of the parent, that absent presence whose earlier, unseen action sets the story in motion.

Fiedler's catalogue of literary runaways, orphans, and victims of abusive parents establishes fatherlessness and strained family relations as fixtures of American literature. Early fiction features unsponsored offspring in Susanna Rowson's Charlotte's Daughter, or The Three Orphans (1793), where Lucy Temple, a bastard girl, would marry her biological brother, and Arthur Mervyn (1799), where Charles Brockden Brown's title character is alienated by his father's marriage to a lusty young servant girl and leaves home, ill-prepared for the city to which he escapes. James Fenimore Cooper's celibate woodsman rejects his baptismal name, and thus his parentage, to be known alternately as Hawkeye, Deerslayer, Pathfinder, and Leatherstocking. Later, in Hawthorne's fiction, suffering at the hands of a parent is routine: Giacomo Rappaccini uses his daughter as the subject in his deadly experiments; Hester's father commits her to a loveless marriage with Chillingworth, himself a demented father figure; generations of Pyncheons suffer a curse first provoked by a villainous family founder in The House of the Seven Gables (1851); the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale never acknowledges Pearl as his daughter; and Miriam Schaeffer of The Marble Faun (1860) hopes to evade not only the reach of papal authority but the memory of her own father, with whom she shares an incestuous secret. Melville's Isabel in Pierre (1852) is a bastard, and in Moby Dick (1851) Ishmael signs on as a whaler to escape a cruel stepmother; Billy Budd has no family ties, and Redburn is an orphan sadly dependent on

his deceased father's out-of-date guidebook to lead him through the horrors of Liverpool. Poe's Arthur Gordon Pym takes to the sea to escape his parents, while Crane's Maggie eventually drowns herself after she is turned out by both her lover and her drunken, abusive parents.

Clearly, orphans and disaffected offspring abound, yet parental influence is felt all the more; Robert Con Davis's The Fictional Father: Lacanian Readings of the Text observes that the influence of the father is overwhelmingly found in the trace of his absence.[43] Fiedler's thesis of literary fatherlessness actually attests to America's obsession with paternity and genealogy, despite the protestations of characters (or authors). Fiedler's attendant proposition that American literature tells the story of adulthood postponed as protagonists flee society and its commitments of marriage and parenthood further proves the central role of family: the degree to which marriage and parenthood are assiduously avoided attests to the weightiness of these social institutions. Additionally, so conditioned to life within the family structure is the American hero that even when happily freed from the confines of parents and siblings, he eagerly forms a makeshift family. Fiedler's roll of orphans doubles as a list of surrogate parents and siblings: Jim is alternately father and mother to Huck, much as Chingachgook and Uncas are Natty's father and child, respectively. Ishmael and Queequeg bond as brothers and even as husband and wife at times; Hawthorne's Roman travellers--Miriam, Hilda, Donatello, and Kenyon--both natural and willful orphans as well as fugitives from authority, form a family among themselves.

The grand Adamic figures of Cooper's novels, Emerson's essays, and Whitman's poetry share with the humbler foreigners of ethnic literature this American penchant for discontinuity and renewal, the desire to throw off the eternal yoke of the past. All are determined to recreate themselves by leaving home or renouncing their origins, and yet none is ever completely free from history. Adam and ethnic immigrant alike are American antinomians who reject received lessons in favor of free choice, unaware that they nonetheless repeat the pattern of incessant change.[44]

Berthoff asserts that Americans ignore history, Sollors that they disrespect heredity; the basis for both of these related claims is choice unconstrained by dictates of the bloodline. Theoretically, the U.S. grants its citizens the opportunity to mold their fate regardless of their origins. The promise that consent rather than descent would dictate life in the new world drew English laborers to colonial America, where, after serving the terms of their bond, they became property holders. Such freedom has spurred voluntary migrations to the U.S. ever since those indentured servants achieved social and economic mobility. This power of consent over descent also drove the civil rights movement, as a people fought for their right to be judged on "the content of their character," thus on the basis of their moral and ethical expressions rather than on the color of their skin, a trait determined solely by descent. The presumed preeminence of willful behavior over genetic determinism also underpins the argument for lifting the military ban on homosexuals; many proponents of change argue that conduct, what one

chooses to do, provides a fairer gauge of rectitude than the accident of one's sexual orientation.

There are obvious and important exceptions to the rule of freedom of choice as the official American *modus operandi*. The dictates of biology, in the form of skin color and gender, have determined the course of many lives in the U.S. Africans who were enslaved and exported to the American colonies did not leave their homelands by choice. Furthermore, the "one drop of blood" rule that segregated and disenfranchised blacks until the middle of the twentieth century proves that the social code remained firmly rooted in genetics; in the case of the African American, an achieved identity was not allowed to pre-empt an ascribed one.[45] Nor did Native Americans, pushed west under the U.S. government removal policy, elect their migration. And while American Indians often deemed heredity superior to rational choice (as in the belief of some that leadership was passed on through bloodlines and thus the reluctance to elect tribal chairmen as the U.S. government had instructed[46]), those who embraced Anglo-conformity programs in the Indian schools and sought to remake themselves as white citizens were not later accepted into the dominant culture. American Indians were driven back to the reservations by their extremely low employment rates in the mainstream trades for which such schools as the Carlisle or Haskell Institutes had trained them.[47]

Women and children seem the other obvious exceptions to the rule of freedom of choice and expression of will in American life. Many were

immigrants and are thus rightfully included in the ranks of those who voluntarily transplanted themselves to America, but they were often reluctant travellers, powerless over their destinies as the family patriarch charted the old world exodus. Yet just as Annette Kolodny finds in The Land Before Her (1984) that frontier women had their own dreams of westward resettlement and were receptive to change, many immigrant women were similarly resilient and resourceful. Social historian Dorothy Weatherford recounts that among the Bohemians, women were the advance scouts who travelled alone from Czechoslovakia to America to work in cigar-making shops and to establish living quarters before sending for their husbands and children. Irish and English Canadian women also came unaccompanied in large numbers.[48] Helen Barolini's novel Umbertina (1979) attests to the woman as initiator of change. Her title character is the matriarch who orchestrates her family's flight from their impoverished Calabrian village so that they might pursue a better life in America; she remains a spur to action for her extended family throughout the four-generation saga.

Immigrant children, though initially little more than their parents' baggage in the trek to the U.S., are actually the true representations of American choice once they are transported. Lodged in the facsimile of the old world which their parents tried to recreate but beckoned by the new one, the offspring of immigrants frequently sacrificed their ethnic heritage to forge their own identity. In Harry Mark Petrakis's Lion at My Heart (1959), for instance, immigrant Angelo Varinakis intends for his sons to marry Greek women so

that they will continue the traditions of his beloved homeland. But his eldest son Mike, a U.S. army veteran of World War II, foils those plans. In love with Sheila Cleary, a woman of Irish descent who is as Americanized as he, Mike scoffs at his father's old-fashioned ideas: "That old country crap is for the birds. If you love a girl, it don't make any difference whether she is damn Greek or not." Angelo views his son's interest in Sheila as the renunciation of heritage; he maintains that for Mike to marry a non-Greek would be to "forget church and house you born in. Forget memory of mother. Forget father and brother and everything."[49] Mike nonetheless breaks with his father over the marriage, and the two men never reconcile. Yet those who chose acculturation rather than total Americanization were also arbiters of their identity as they forged a compromise between the competing demands of descent and Anglo-conformity, selecting which American and old country aspects to incorporate into their new lives. Such is the case with Amy Tan's daughters in The Joy Luck Club (1989), whose American lives are enriched by lessons learned from their Chinese immigrant mothers. Furthermore, hope of change through self-empowerment also underlies accounts of the failed American dream; the revocation of seemingly proffered opportunity drives such tales of prejudice and social injustice as Michael Gold's Jews without Money (1930), a bitter lament of ruined lives on New York's impoverished Lower East Side.

Fulfilled or broken, the promise that consent rather than descent shapes lives in the U.S. pervades canonical and marginal literature alike. Belief in the opportunity to determine the course of one's life drew immigrants to America,

and it fuels the contest between self-reliance and social responsibility. The perceived right of both native- and foreign-born Americans to exercise their elective power as they are seemingly released from the dictates of the past underlies those themes which Berthoff explains are integral to all "literature in the American situation": choice is central to both the "covenants of settlement and community" and the "fortunes of liberated and unsponsored selfhood."[50]

Berthoff's integrative view of fiction is the antithesis of much pluralist criticism. Under his gaze, the self and society are not torn asunder to be featured separately in different literatures, as determined by an author's ethnicity or what some might judge to be a lack thereof; instead, the unyielding impulse for choice and change sets off a struggle between the self and society that ranges throughout all literature in America. Andrew Delbanco, on a tack like Berthoff's that is similarly integrationist and yet attuned to diversity, perceives immigration as the paradigm for American life. He maintains that risk, renewal, and the attendant need to balance the competing demands of self and society when the newcomer is faced with increased personal liberty define the American experience. Delbanco's model is further integrationist as he extends that paradigm of willful new beginnings from the Puritans, who fled Anglican England for Massachusetts in the seventeenth century, to the most recent immigrants from battle-scarred southeast Asia.

Delbanco's connection between early WASP settlers and the immigrants who later suffered under Anglo-centric nativism (as well as his lack of

attention to the persecuted indigenous peoples, a justified criticism) often strikes revisionists as sacrilege. Yet many reformers are unprepared to recognize the human vulnerability of the Puritans and instead construe the early colonists as flat figures or rabid idealogues. The basis of many theorists' interest in seventeenth-century Anglo Americans is condemnation: J. Hillis Miller for the Puritans having "massacred the Indians and established the self-righteous religion and politics that determined American ideology"; Bercovitch for their having used "the Biblical myth of exodus and conquest to justify imperialism before the act"; Ann Kibbey for their having subordinated their religious beliefs to the goal of "communicating the absolute rightness of their own social ideals [through] extreme act[s] of prejudice [and] mass killing."[51] Francis Fukuyama places Anglo Americans beyond the scope of his discussion of ethnic groups in the U.S.; he nullifies the deracinated circumstances of their old world exodus by asserting that the English were "never immigrants or outsiders....They were, rather, the dominant social group."[52]

Oscar Handlin certainly exaggerates when he exclaims in the opening of his Pulitzer prize history The Uprooted (1951, 1973) that "immigrants WERE American history"[53] [his emphasis]. If immigration implies a willful relocation, Native Americans and African Americans are then effectively excluded from Handlin's view of history. Yet the Puritans, as America's first deliberate immigrants, set in motion that cycle of continuous discontinuity that would subsequently propel massive waves of voluntary immigrants to the U.S. who ultimately account for the majority of the population (though of course

not all who share this predominant heritage of relocation by choice belong to the dominant culture). An American newcomer's decision to change his or her life and the communal repercussions of this willful act, despite the variables of national origins and dates of entry, link immigrant writing as disparate as John Winthrop's sermon A Modell of Christian Charity, which he delivered aboard the Arbella while en route to Massachusetts Bay in 1630, and Le Ly Hayslip's When Heaven and Earth Changed Places (1989), the account of her flight from Vietnam to the U.S.[54] Both texts, one quintessentially WASP and the other of dual alienation as female and Asian in America, reveal the complicated negotiations between the self and the group in a strange and new environment.

Winthrop's sermon, hailed as "the first great communitarian statement in American literature,"[55] actually appeals to self-interest in order to achieve the cohesion necessary to erect the "city on a hill," the model for succeeding ecclesiastical plantations in America and Europe. While he cites love for one another as the bonding agent that will unite the New England Puritans as though a close-knit family or single functioning human body, the way to this harmony is self-love:

> ...the Lord love the creature, soe farre as it hath any of his Image in it; he loves his elect because they are like himselfe, he beholds them in his beloved sonne. Soe a mother loves her childe, because shee thoroughly conceives a resemblance of herself in it. Thus it is between the members of Christ. Eache discernes, by

> the worke of the Spirit, his owne Image and resemblance in another, and therefore cannot but love him as he loves himself.[56]

Winthrop's message is not self-denial as much as it is self-expansion. Love of humanity is inextricably tied to love of the self, in whom the "other" is mirrored. The success of Calvinist polity in New England hinged on a series of choices: unfallen Adam's original bond with God, which was the covenant of works whereby man promised but failed to regulate his life according to the law of nature; the covenant of grace, in which God promised Abraham that He would grant salvation to those who believed, and which replaced that earlier, broken pact;[57] and the anguished decision of the individual immigrants to flee to America where they might retain and perfect their religion, which in Europe was becoming a mere regimen of self-discipline or a savvy business practice.[58] Yet, ironically, pivotal to these voluntary covenants is the agreement to limit the freedom to choose, to keep the self in check by thwarting the individualistic impulse toward dissension or non-conformity with a commitment to the common purpose. Personal concern, however, does not fall by the wayside: for though the group could save the Church, people were saved individually.

Hayslip's book, as well as many others that deal with emigration and resettlement, recapitulates this symbiotic relationship between individual and group interests as a new identity is forged. America is a safe haven for Hayslip after she flees the Viet Cong. Yet later as an American citizen visiting her homeland, she longs to remain in Vietnam and rejoin her native culture

and her extended family. Love for her sons and the opportunities available to them in the U.S., however, convince her to return to America, a selfless yet self-gratifying act since her children's welfare nourishes her pride and sense of accomplishment.

While Delbanco respects the hardship and commitment of the New England Puritans, he posits their significance for American history not in any inherent Anglo transcendence but in the rather mundane fact that they initiated the pattern of willful relocation that later immigrants followed. In fact, far from vaunting their exceptionalism, his text The Puritan Ordeal (1989) takes full note of the Calvinist settlers' human limitations, presenting them first and foremost as foreigners beset by fear and uncertainty in a strange environment. He further de-emphasizes the especially American nature of this immigration theme begun with the Anglo colonists by regarding their movement out of the native land as a broad pattern of general human behavior: as life-cycles evolve through childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, offspring naturally, regardless of nationality, move away from the safety of home into the unknown world. Yet Robert Bellah in Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (1985) returns to American possession this theme of removal and relocation. He concludes that no culture evinces as strong a tendency as the American drive to sever family ties as one generation distinguishes itself from the previous one; the American Dream is lost, in effect, if children merely recreate their parents' lives and assume their same socio-economic station. He finds as peculiarly American the ready

acceptance of an offspring's departure for distant locations to pursue ambition.[59]

Placing the WASP beyond the pale of ethnicity as many multiculturalists do disallows the common ground that ranges throughout the human consciousness as it evolves over time in America.[60] In the spirit of dissensus, descent-based ethnicity "separates Americans of different ethnic backgrounds and most especially all white Anglo-Saxon Protestants...from all non-WASPs...[and] assumes that there is no shared history and no human empathy."[61] But while some contemporary ideological critics employ "ethnicity" as a means of unreconcilable division that juxtaposes a myriad of non-Anglo subgroups against a bland, homogenous mainstream, Werner Sollors is egalitarian in his use of the term. He observes that contrastive uses of the word denote both a feared alien and an attractive alternative, yet he rests with a definition of ethnicity as a marker erected between groups. These cultural constructions--moral, mental, social, and aesthetic--function as moveable boundaries. No group possesses fixed borders or an essential ethnicity; rather each constructs its content as a means of social distancing or is the recipient of a label likewise intended to segregate.[62] Ethnicity then is unfailingly renewable and democratic because it can apply to every group in America. This inclusive definition of ethnicity is not a procrustean attempt to forge a uniform history, for Sollors concedes that America's consent-based cultures also reveal significant differences among them, just as Delbanco cautions that similarities among immigrant groups must not be exaggerated.[63]

But while ethnic differences are real, they need not impede mutual understanding nor limit the recognition of greater syncretisms and cultural convergences,[64] such as that voluntary relocation and reinvention is exactly the history that many Americans share.

Construing immigration as a willed decision to leave home and begin one's life anew makes possible a comprehensible narration of paradigmatic human events.[65] To examine this phenomenon at its inception, in the immigrant roots of Puritan New England, is to uncover the cultural interplays that unite a good number of Americans across the ages. Differences in national origins and accompanying cultural traditions remain, of course, yet they become points of distinction among broader overlap and similarity.

The metaphor for immigrants as a chosen people being led out of exile into the American promised land recurs throughout ethnic literature. Interpreting their migration figurally, the Puritans were biblical types on a divine mission to prepare the way for Christ: as they increasingly saw themselves as distinct from the old world, America became the "new Canaan" and the "new Israel," its leaders often described as "new Moses" or "John the Baptist."[66] Late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish writers similarly invoked ancient Hebrew millennialist rhetoric to describe their fortunate journey to America, as Mary Antin does in The Promised Land (1912) and Sidney Nyburg in The Chosen People (1917). Writers from other ethnic groups also employ this theme of exodus and deliverance, though the well-being these novels celebrate is decidedly more material or psychological than the religious

health which Puritan writing examined: Stuart David Engstrand's They Sought for Paradise (1930) recounts the eventual fulfillment of the lives of his Swedish immigrants; in The Free Man (1943), Conrad Richter tells of a German indentured servant who comes to prosper in America; a Greek community in Mary Vardoulakis's Gold in the Streets (1945) transplants itself from Crete to a Massachusetts milltown, where it soon flourishes; a hardworking Sicilian immigrant ascends the economic ladder in Mario Puzo's The Fortunate Pilgrim (1964); Evalina Chao's Gates of Grace (1985) is the story of a Chinese family's upward mobility in the U.S. In addition to these portentous titles, "golden mountain" or "beautiful land" are frequent names for America, particularly among characters in Chinese-American novels.[67] Even those novels which tell the grim side of immigration employ the paradise motif, as they invert it to convey disenchantment and frustration: No Adam in Eden (1967) is Grace de Repentigny Metalious's woeful tale of a French-Canadian family's disintegration in a Massachusetts milltown; Terez Stibran's The Streets are not Paved with Gold (1961) describes a Hungarian-American family's hardship and disillusionment in Cleveland.

Exodus, which of course is integral to any immigration story, is an irrefutably constant strain throughout the history of the ancient Jews, the New England Puritans, and the foreigners who came to America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But persecution attendant upon minority status, a related theme of the immigrant experience, is frequently overlooked in the case of the Puritans, and it is a slight or omission which further isolates the Anglo

American from the national history of immigration and seals the later ethnics in exceptionalism. Claims that English culture transported easily to America and dominated the land without challenge or competition[68] disregard the pressures exerted on the Anglo immigrants. It is true that the Puritans had no intention of absorbing the culture they found in America, a position that later immigrant groups could not reasonably take (except those small religious sects which sought to isolate themselves in enclaves, as Marcus Bach depicts in his 1949 novel, The Dream Gate, about a community of German Hutterites relocating in South Dakota). But to assume that they easily transplanted their English ways or met no obstacles or demands from competing cultures wrongly diminishes their experience as immigrants. Such a diminution ironically magnifies their migration beyond the realm of human nature by implying that as religious missionaries the Puritans were morally impervious to the conflicts and temptations that beset later immigrant groups. But the record of the Puritans as insecure yet hopeful mortals rather than as unearthly, arrogant, and moralistic "saints" overlaps significantly with the sagas of later American immigrants. (In fact, Puritan use of "saint" designated their humble status as members only of the visible church of striving sinners, those uncertain of but longing for membership in the invisible church of God's elect.[69]) In fact, the ranks of the colonists were reduced not just through sickness, warfare with Native Americans, or return migrations, but through assimilation into Indian society. Native American culture proved seductive for many whites: incidents of settlers fleeing their villages to live with Indians in

the wilderness or to recreate that way of life on their own are noteworthy, as are accounts of women who refused to rejoin the white community when they were "rescued" from Indian captivity.[70]

Furthermore, like the Jews who were expelled from Russian *shtetls*, the Armenians who escaped massacre by the Turks, or, in a more general sense, the European and Asian peasant classes who fled hunger and poverty, all to seek refuge in America, the Puritans were a persecuted minority before they ever left home. As Protestants seeking to purify the Church of England of Roman Catholic vestiges approved by the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559, Puritans were enemies of the state. Animosity within their ranks divided them as well: Presbyterians believed in state-mandated membership in a church comprised of geographical units and overseen by a governing hierarchy; in contrast, Congregationalists held that a member's voluntary commitment to a covenant with God was the basis for self-governing churches. These two factions, which opposed each other as well as the Episcopal Anglicans, also clashed with Puritan Separatists, those who committed what was tantamount to treason by blatantly breaking with the national Church to found the openly Congregational colony at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620.[71] Perry Miller maintains that the stress typically exerted on an outgroup never subsided for the Puritans, but rather intensified after the ostensibly Presbyterian removal to Massachusetts Bay in 1630. European Calvinists saw New England's covert Congregationalists as betraying the Reformation; as the old world grew skeptical, hostile, and eventually indifferent to the colonial contingent, the New

Englanders' "errand into the wilderness" lost its meaning, both in Europe and in America. What remained was an overwhelming sense of loneliness, a fear that they were forsaken not only by their church in England but by God as well.[72]

Although Perry Miller describes the Puritan outgroup status as ongoing, it persisted, in part, by the New Englanders' own design, for it lent their undertaking a useful cohesiveness. Before emigrating, the Puritans formed a solid coalition against Church corruption; they were "pressed into comradeship by their sense of difference....forged as a spiritual movement in a minority experience."[73] But alone in New England and an ocean away from their persecutors, they lost their sense of solidarity. Fearing their own dissolution and weakened common purpose, the foundering Puritans sought a cause around which they could again rally; they found it in persecuting Indians, Antinomians, Quakers, and suspected witches. By viewing themselves as different from and threatened by heathens and dissenters, they temporarily shored up their identity. Ultimately, though, they lost the essence of the faith, for sin, in the early Calvinist view, was estrangement from God, not something as crude as evil located in another.[74]

Much multicultural writing reveals a similar indebtedness to the label of "other." While ethnic literature attests to the hostility and hardship endured by those who differ from the cultural mainstream, it illustrates as well that those who define themselves oppositionally often accept and utilize the animosity directed at them as outsiders, for ostracism can preserve a subgroup's

solidarity. Many Armenian-American writers who recall the Turkish massacre and mourn the irrecoverable loss of their native land celebrate the trauma they endured as immigrants in America. In The Dove Brings Peace (1944), for instance, Richard Hagopian credits the poverty that his Armenian immigrants experience in their Massachusetts shoe factory town with keeping family members dependent on each other and connecting the entire ethnic community to their cultural traditions. Hunger is the overwhelming sensation that Levon, Hagopian's narrator, recalls from his childhood. Ill health and old age prohibit his parents from holding consistent employment, so Levon and his siblings are responsible for supporting the family. But when Mary, the eldest daughter who has excelled in school, gets the opportunity to pursue a lucrative career in the larger community, her father forbids her from taking the job, a refusal which the narrator affirms. Though the family desperately needs the income she could provide, the possibility that a profession might lure one of their own away from the Armenian enclave looms too great. Similarly, when Levon's brother Reuben wants to marry May, a woman from outside the tight Armenian circle, his parents force an end to the relatinship: Though the intended bride is, like Reuben, working-class and presumably of immigrant stock, she is unsuitable because she is not Armenian. The entire family is relieved by the break-up, as they recall the disgrace that a distant relative brought upon his family by marrying an Irish woman. Ironically, America protects the Armenian immigrants from Turkish genocide, yet the freedom and security which the U.S. provides threaten to weaken their culture through

dilution. To be labelled as "other" and thus separated from the dominant culture grants ethnics an effective means to reinforce and preserve their own distinct identity, as they in turn apply that label to all who do not belong to their subgroup.

This anti-assimilationist theme, prevalent in many Armenian novels[75] and recurring widely in the literature of other immigrant groups, seems antithetical to the American agenda of breaking with the past to forge a new existence. Yet as fervently as American immigrants since the seventeenth century have embraced the prospect of renewal, they have also sought to mitigate its countervailing mandate, change. Certainly immigrants welcomed the fresh start that America offered, and many were eager to throw off the bonds of the past. But the drawing card for many newcomers was not the opportunity to forget their old lives, but the chance to live those same lives in the new world, where they and their children could live them better. Consistent with this preservationist vein, the Great Migration from Europe to the American colonies was not undertaken as a radical act of schism but rather as a crusade to protect and purify the corporate Church by eliminating its traces of Catholic or Episcopal practice. Before setting sail for the new world, Puritans took vows of conformity to the Church of England. Since a break with the established Church would brand the Puritans as subversive, many were covert Congregationalists and ostensibly Presbyterian. And while at the time of departure many were separatists at heart and then later in fact, they always believed themselves adherents to the true church, its sole guardians.

America allowed them to be intolerant of the tolerance which ranged in Britain and threatened the dissolution of the Church. Under suspicion of separatism, new world Puritans regularly had to reassure their English counterparts that they were not deserters.[76] But the threat of dissension loomed not just between the old world and the new, but within New England itself. Winthrop's Arbella sermon explicitly forbade heresy and nonconformity in the ecclesiastical Massachusetts colony, yet the ranks of the settlers remained vulnerable to division. When Thomas Hooker took his congregation from Boston to Connecticut, a change which according to Perry Miller owed more to Hooker's need to escape John Cotton's immense popularity than to ecclesiastic rebelliousness, the move fanned fears of nonconformity and secession.

Although Perry Miller repudiates the notion that Hooker erected a democratic settlement in Connecticut and argues that the Hartford Settlement was in fact a theocracy consistent with the Boston model,[77] individual empowerment eventually spelled the end of English Calvinism in America. The Puritans had left England not as bold rebels breaking with the Church, but as conservatives hoping to save it from British leniency and to keep themselves from settling into an increasingly mercantilistic society. Andrew Delbanco explains that their preservationist efforts ultimately failed.

> The founding of New England was a retreat from the eruption of the modern self--the self as a disciplined being committed to vocation, to ambition, and to self-definition....Upon their arrival they began--with pain and eloquent lament--to succumb to their

> sense of failure in their project of escape. They became moderns in the sense that their deference to the workings of a traditional society and to an all-disposing God receded before the ascension of their identities as self-governing individuals.[78]

Immigrant Puritans became Colonists and then Americans, softening the harsh Dortian Calvinism they brought with them from Europe as their piety turned into worldliness. The covenantal relationship between God and the redeemed, important to Augustinian piety but even more so with the passage of time, complicates this issue of increased self-mastery and its corresponding limits on God's sovereignty. The belief that man entered the covenant of grace as God's peer or partner imputes a contradictory measure of agency to man:[79] God alone can make man receptive to grace, but man must partake of the covenant willingly.[80] And though man was utterly powerless before God, he fell into depravity by his own choice and through his own actions; man was thus solely responsible for his own corruption but utterly incapable of affecting his own salvation. Under New England ecclesiastical polity, which, on the congregational model, regarded an individual's voluntary bond with God as a more solid church foundation than any central corporate authority, the bounds of human initiative were broadened. The self gained ascendancy even among those holding opposing viewpoints on human efficacy. Thomas Hooker, though not recanting his faith in unconditional and seemingly arbitrary predestination, preached a doctrine of preparation by which the elect readied themselves for salvation: through introspective meditation the chosen

prepared for their predetermined justification, thus "turning toward God"[81] before conversion actually occurred. Antinomians, perhaps best represented by Anne Hutchinson, condemned this preparationist human agency as heresy. Yet despite Hutchinson's charge against the preparationist's emphasis on a renewed covenant of works--on pious behavior as evidence of justification--she too elevated the role of the self in conversion. Stressing the elect's personal and immediate communion with the Holy Spirit, she denied "that the ministry was needed as an intervening 'means of grace' between God and man."[82] So while Hutchinson refuted Hooker's stress on the active role of the sinner over the efficacy of God's grace, she still empowered the self by eliminating the mediating clergy from a saint's direct communication with God.

Although Jonathan Edwards later strove to reconfirm the tenets of man's innate depravity and complete impotence by insisting that a man's heart-based inclination toward God arose not from individual impetus or free will but by God's design, human agency, of course, won out. The voice of the governed gained strength, eventually appealing for democracy guided by man's right reason. In his 1645 speech to the high court John Winthrop had pressed for the subjection of inferiors to superiors, warning that natural liberty turned man into a depraved brute[83]. John Wise later subverted that image in "Vindication of the Government of New England Churches," contending instead that by the "original liberty instamped upon his rational nature" he was a "creature which God has made and furnished essentially with many ennobling immunities which render him the most august animal in the

world."[84] Again stressing the covenantal terms, Wise explains that man willingly resigns his natural liberty to a government which in turn respects and guards that freedom, as it "cultivate[s] humanity and promote[s] the happiness of all, and the good of every man in all his rights, his life, liberty, estate, honor, etc."[85] Though the purpose of immigrating was to safeguard the true Church, Puritanism in America became the march toward the empowered self, the antithesis of Calvin's impotent man prostrate before a righteous but unknowable God.

Just as the Puritan migration was a conservative but ultimately failed effort to save the Church and stave off the emerging self, Jewish immigrants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries looked to America as a refuge where they could practice and preserve the religious and cultural customs that were endangered in Europe. Before the founding of Israel, Judaism was more compatible with life in America than in most other lands; Jews in the U.S. found safety from pogroms and the opportunity to profess their faith openly, though they have never been completely free from anti-Semitism. Yet in America, freedom of religion often became freedom from religion. Many novels, such as Anzia Yezierska's Bread Givers, recount a break both with Judaism and the Jewish community as immigrants or their descendants pursue individual, American identities. In the New York ghetto of Bread Givers, survival is a group effort. The Smolensky women--Sara along with her three sisters and their mother--combine their labors to feed and shelter the family. In the worst of times they fall back on the support of sympathetic neighbors.

That their shared sacrifice frees Reb Moisheh Smolensky, Sara's father, from the workaday world so that he can devote himself completely to the Talmud is meant to grant them vital religious sustenance as Jews. But Sara grows bitter over the burdens placed on her by her family's needs and her father's strict religious observance. Her plaintive, "I want to do something. I want some day to make myself for a person and come among people,"[86] becomes a steady refrain until she finally rejects her faith and her home to mold an independent future. She leaves the Jewish enclave to pursue her training as a teacher, in part modelling herself after her gentile classmates.

Even those immigrants who fled oppression other than religious came to America to preserve what was threatened in the old world, most often their family unity and their continued means to a livelihood. Oscar Handlin, though he praises the fortitude of the immigrant, has tacitly conceded to the view of the foreigner as "backward men of beaten nations." He emphasizes the extreme hardship and deprivation which nearly extinguished the peasant classes in Ireland, Southern Italy, Poland, and elsewhere in Europe during the mid- to late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and he marvels at their successful escape. Thomas Bodnar, however, revises Handlin's thesis as he describes the immigrants not as the "uprooted" but as the "transplanted." His shift in metaphor softens the harsh conditions of the relocation ordeal. Whereas Handlin contends that many Europeans would have perished if they had not left, Bodnar argues that those who emigrated chose to from a position of not insignificant strength. The truly indigent, he explains, were those

unable to leave. Some immigrants were artisans or small-scale farmers, while many others were marginal owners or landless workers saving to acquire property or accumulate capital. Most left for the U.S. when European capitalism intruded upon their household economies and threatened the small but vital enterprises, such as raising crops or weaving cloth, that were a family's financial mainstay or their source for necessary supplemental income. Urban industrialization undercut the independent artisan by flooding rural markets with cheaper manufactured goods, just as the shift to large-scale surplus agriculture jeopardized subsistence farming. The decision to emigrate in response to this encroaching modern capitalist system was more pragmatic than desperate, as Handlin wrongly maintains, for it supplied those who departed with the opportunity to protect their status or to increase their chances for bettering it. Emigrants often hoped to make enough money "to return and increase their holdings...[and] to achieve a more respectable status as self-sufficient owners or even craftsmen in their homeland."[87] When many decided not to return, it was often because in the U.S. they could more effectively recreate and improve on what small but nonetheless real success they had known before emigrating. Bodnar argues that in the immigrant mind, a sustained or improved standard of living was inextricably linked to the preservation of the family household, that unit which many lived by in Europe, Asia, and Central America[88]: "As long as individuals were concerned about insuring familial and household survival they would continue to be

realistic. They would do whatever had to be done to meet changing economic realities, including a move to America."[89]

Upon making that move, immigrants initially found, contrary to popular notions of fragile families being ripped apart by the demands of the wage economy, that industry in the U.S. was quite hospitable to the kinship networks which had operated in the old world. Bodnar explains that the collective enterprise of the family and neighborhood adapted to and thrived under the marketplace economy.

> Family members were continually instructed in the necessity of sharing and notions of reciprocity were constantly reinforced. Parents, children, boarders, and others who shared particular households were all assigned a series of duties and obligations. By working together, pooling limited resources, and muting individual inclinations, families attempted to assemble the resources sufficient for economic survival and, occasionally, for an improvement in their standard of living.[90]

As immigrants responded collectively to the demands of industry, the factory and marketplace, for the most part, supported and benefitted from the worker's cooperative ideals. At a time prior to government welfare aid, ethnic fraternal organizations assisted the newcomer in matters of housing and credit, filling the need for social communion as well. In the eyes of the American capitalist, such associations bouyed up a robust workforce by effectively initiating foreigners into their strange, new environment. And as management

often looked to employees to recruit additional cheap labor, ethnic workers could easily comply via their kinship attachments.[91] Tightly-knit families and strong ethnic ties further aided industry, for when siblings were accustomed to contributing to the family's income as they had done in the old country, wages could be kept low. In fact the paycheck which the head of the household brought home rarely covered a family's living expenses, but the rest of the family routinely made up the difference--children by quitting school to work in factories or by doing piecework at home, married women and mothers, if unable to hold outside employment, by taking in boarders.[92]

Pre-migration patterns of collective enterprise facilitated the foreigner's transition into the American workplace, but group goals would not indefinetely supersede individual ones; the gains promised by bourgeois capitalism made such values as sharing and reciprocity increasingly difficult to live by. For instance, the ethnic community that had once provided the immigrant entrepreneur with a vital economic base eventually proved constrictive. To expand his clientele, the ambitious immigrant merchant often dissociated himself from the community to strike out for larger markets, down-playing the ethnicity that initially helped supply him with a solid foundation for business.[93] Many families continued to strive as a unit, satisfied by the hope that future generations would reap the benefits of their labor; but Bodar reports that as families became established and generations evolved, children were often prone to see the home as an obstacle to individual success. Parental measures intended to harness offspring to the group need--

interrupting educations, cancelling career plans, arranging marriages, breaking engagements, and garnisheeing wages[94]--drove many children away from home and out of the ethnic enclave. The drive for self-definition, which Delbanco explains destroyed the self-denying Calvinism that the Puritans had hoped to safeguard in America, imperiled as well the family structure which the foreigner had looked to immigration to preserve. Yezierska's account of Sara Smolensky fleeing the ghetto to gain self-liberty is a familiar theme in ethnic literature, much as it is in mainstream fiction.

The paradigm of American immigration yields further parallels that cut across national origins, dates of entry, and sites of relocation. Like other transplanted people who would enter the U.S. over the next three centuries, the Puritans were prone to doubt the wisdom of their having left home to start new lives in America, despite their religious motive for relocating. These misgivings contributed to a steady rate of return migration among New Englanders, a phenomenon of American history from the seventeenth-century onward. By 1660, some settlements saw as many as one-twelfth of their citizens driven back to England by economic or environmental hardship, a yearning for home, or by crises of faith.[95] Such factors are not unlike those which sent back one quarter of the sixteen million Europeans who had emigrated to the U.S. between 1880 and 1930.[96]

Homesickness and disillusionment with America are frequent themes of immigrant writing throughout the centuries. Beret in Ole Rolvaag's Giants in the Earth (1927) aches for the familiar landscape of her seaside village in

Norway and for the family and routines that filled her days there; the isolation and harsh conditions of the Dakota Territory in the 1870's drive her mad. Ralph Chang in Gish Jen's Typical American (1991) is overwhelmed by the strangeness of the U.S. and rendered helpless and despondent; he initially despises his adopted home, which he deems inferior to China in every point of comparison. Ann Stanford's study of Anne Bradstreet, daughter of Thomas Dudley and wife of Simon Bradstreet, two prominent leaders in the 1630 removal to Massachusetts, reveals a similarly disaffected immigrant. Repelled upon her arrival in the colony, Bradstreet writes "I...came into this Country where I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose."[97] The degree to which this English immigrant is bereft and disoriented by her bleak new environment is commensurate with the strength of her ties to the old world. The poetry she writes soon after arriving in Massachusetts is modelled closely upon the English cavaliers; Stanford believes that such imitation is Bradstreet's attempt to preserve the European civilization she regretfully left behind, the likes of which, she could presume, would never flourish in the American wilderness. Stanford contends, however, that aided by faith in the holy purpose of the Puritan mission, Bradstreet eventually adjusts to these surroundings to become America's first poet: she "celebrate[s] America as a homeland.... describ[ing] the land and her new home with affection...no longer seem[ing] conscious of the mysterious wilderness and the loss of her native country; her description makes the new world seem a satisfactory home."[98]

Just as Bradstreet's resistance to her adopted home recurs as a theme in immigrant writing, so too does her gradual acceptance of and allegiance to America. In Peder Victorious, (1929), the sequel to Rolvaag's Giants in the Earth, Beret has recovered her senses and is the family matriarch. Her toil on the American prairie has actually strengthened her, and she in turn raises a strong family that prospers as it never could have in Norway. Likewise, Gish Jen's Ralph Chang not only adjusts to life in the U.S. but, as a successful entrepreneur, strives to embrace every aspect of American culture, for good or ill.

But as a transplant writing in her newly adopted homeland, Bradstreet's work raises questions about the American or otherwise ethnic (English, in this case) character of her poetry, questions that complicate the seemingly authentic ethnicity of much art that is hailed as multicultural. Like Ann Stanford, Albert von Frank testifies that early immigrants were staunchly committed to preserving English culture in the new world, a conservativism which challenges Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis that settlers spontaneously severed ties with Europe to produce a distinctive American culture. Von Frank argues instead that the colonists, pained by the loss of home, held fast to British arts and ideas, a dependence that only later would spur Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Margaret Fuller, and Emerson, among others, to encourage indigenous American artforms. What actually evolved as conspicuously American culture, von Frank contends, came not from a conscious decision to renounce Britain and embrace the frontier, but from this failed attempt to

retain and replicate English culture 3,000 miles from England. Committed to the impossible feat of preserving the arts and ideas that continued to evolve in their absence, these "conservatives simply retrenched and made the forms themselves, apart from any vital present context." The result was provincialism, artificial versions of English art cultivated in an American hothouse and "detached from the societies and environments that had given them birth and nourishment."[99]

Despite dissimilarities between the particular immigration experiences of English colonists and those foreigners who came later from beyond northwestern Europe and are frequent subjects of ethnic studies, Puritans and multiculturalists share a commitment to cultural conservatism, the seemingly progressive pluralist agenda notwithstanding. Just as the Puritans hoped not to adjust to the wilderness but to resist it by adhering to English culture, ethnic pluralists aim to resist assimilation and preserve distinct ethnic identities by concentrating on the native cultures of America's immigrants. They likewise share the provincialism that results from seeking to resist external influences so as to preserve a "pure" culture.

Von Frank qualifies his use of the term "provincialism." He employs it not to signal artistic inferiority or vulgarity, for provincialism, he attests, has given rise to "works of art of lasting, worldwide significance"[100]; it describes, rather, the unavoidably altered product of a program to retain, replicate, or recapture a culture in the absence of its original generative conditions. This "cultural holding action" requires a fixation on the past, an eye to models

which are out of reach and which continue to evolve in ways the would-be protectionist, estranged from the homeland, does not participate in or even observe. As preservationists become self-conscious and defensive about their native culture, their relation to that tradition changes, as does the very culture they labor to preserve.[101]

Von Frank takes as his subject the culture of the American frontier from 1630 to 1869, but the conditions that create provincialism, peoples with ancestral ties to foreign lands who seek to retain or recover their distant culture, recur throughout the ages in the U.S., and even more so now with the current heightened interest in ethnic roots. All immigrants hoping to transplant intact their old world ways and cultivate them in America--the Puritan and those who followed over the next three centuries--are unwitting architects of an indigenous American culture, a hybrid form, a provincial imitation of a foreign original inexorably but fortuitously changed by separation from its source and by the inescapable imprint of the new American environment. The immigrant's inevitable break with his or her native culture is not a mortal wound so much as it is the dissemination upon which creativity and renewal depend, a fortunate and fruitful rupturing that "pure pluralism" would circumvent.[102]

America's aboriginal art predates, of course, the Puritan landing; the two-thousand-year-old glyphs etched and stained on rock at Barrier Canyon, Utah, are remnants of prehistoric lore, and they mark the origins of American culture.[103] Yet besides the Indian voice which sounded in myth and song

prior to 1635, indeed centuries before 1492, and continued to do so thereafter despite efforts by whites to annihilate that native culture, the by-product of the Puritan's untenable attachment to English arts and tradition is also an indigenous American cultural expression, which is renewed as succeeding waves of immigrants attempt a similar and inevitably faulty transmission.

As Sollors points out by noting the diverse cultural forces which influenced Horace Kallen--ironically a strenuous advocate of "pure puralism"--monoculturalism is impossible in America. What many ethnicists celebrate as the unbroken ancestral character, rooted in the "historical...ethnic memory [as] a set of instincts, feelings, intimacies, expectations, patterns of emotion and behavior...for individuals--and for the people as a whole--to live out...[and which] is passed on to us in ways we do not choose,"[104] is largely wishful thinking. John Higham, for instance, insists that the suburban Jewish writers who tell the stories of their immigrant ancestors are drawing "on the softened contours of memory"; for them "the ghetto [is] reborn in a shimmer of nostalgia."[105] The tendency to romanticize the past is strong, and can even resist a forthright attempt to debunk ethnic mythology. In Mount Allegro (1943), for instance, Jerre Mangione exposes his immigrant parents' penchant for clinging to their former lives in Sicily, which have been "prettified beyond recognition by the tricks that memory can play."[106] Gerlando Amoroso, Mangione's protagonist in this autobiographical novel, is brought up short by the blighted, impoverished country he finds on his first trip to his ancestral land; he realizes that the stories he has grown up on--happy tales about the

island paradise from which his elders emigrated--were more fantasy than honest recollection. Yet the immigrant's memory is not the only one blurred by nostalgia. Mangione's working-class Sicilian Americans are a contented lot whose purposeful lives are shaped by large families of eccentric but loving and lovable characters, plus abundant food, drink, and good humor. His book is rife with the stereotypes which Mario Puzo, who likewise grew up in an Italian ghetto, explodes. Puzo explains that

> as a child...I never heard an Italian singing. None of the grown-ups I knew were charming or loving or understanding. Rather they seemed coarse, vulgar, and insulting. And so later in my life when I was exposed to all the cliches of lovable Italians, singing Italians, happy-go-lucky Italians, I wondered where the hell the moviemakers and storywriters got all their ideas from.[107]

Puzo's bleak experience undermines the veracity of Mangione's recollection yet is so extreme that it too is probably not wholly accurate; memory as the basis for historiography is an uncertain source.

The Puerto Rican writer Nicholasa Mohr is frank about the inescapably hybrid nature of ethnic art, in her case that mix of ancestral island culture with the present reality of life in New York, and she cites memory as the matrix in which facts are retained and fantasy bred. Nostalgia is a powerful and welcome muse, she explains, but writers must stay cognizant of their own idealizations or creative renderings of the past: "The Puerto Rico that we were

taught to believe in was largely based on the reminiscences of our parents and grandparents...[who] had nostalgically presented to their displaced offspring a 'paradise'...a mythology [that] had little or nothing to do with...reality."[108] Island art, if defined by its place of origin, is not extant on the mainland U.S. in any unadulterated form; thus Mohr, unlike many Puerto Rican novelists, chooses to write in English instead of Spanish, a decision which prompts many of her peers to question her ethnicity. She draws criticism as well for setting her fiction on the continent rather than on the island protectorate.[109]

Writers from virtually every ethnic group throughout American history display this tendency to romanticize their forebears as they attempt to preserve the past. Many are not as candid about their inclination toward such idealization as Mohr is, but most reveal an emotional dependence on that first generation of Americans. By conceiving of their ancestors in legendary proportions, descendants of both early and later immigrants fashion a guide to steer themselves through uncertain times, or they employ the forebears as a standard against which to gauge their own performance. Nostalgia is the core of Marcus Hansen's thesis that "what the son wishes to forget, the grandson wishes to remember," which he advanced in 1939 and which still holds considerable sway.[110] His triangular, generational design, a dismissal and subsequent affirmation--or at least conciliatory understanding--of the values and traditions belonging to the immigrant American, is the crux of many ethnic novels. In Hansen's view and that of many historians and social commentators, the "sons"[111]--the second generation--are "degenerate" and

"treasonous," "traitors" or "dilutees" who "have deliberately [thrown] away what had been preserved in the home." All hope is pinned on the "grandsons"--the third generation--who redeem the ethnic traditions and values which the second generation squandered and flouted.[112]

Hansen's model of generational declension and renewal, though still operative, is not without its contemporary critics. Many oppose his paradigm's rigid successional form and rule it inaccurate, since Hansen himself is a second-generation Swedish American dedicated to U.S. immigration history and thus living defiance of his own "law."[113] Yet in looser form Hansen's general thesis of rift and reconciliation across the generations does recur in ethnic fiction. Sometimes the familial break and return occur within the second generation, as in Yezierska's Bread Givers (1925), where Sara finally reaches out to her authoritarian father after his strict observance of orthodox Judaism has driven her away, or in Mario Puzo's The Godfather (1969), where Michael Corleone renounces his mafiosi family yet becomes the heir to their underworld business. In other instances the return to ancestral roots occurs with the fourth generation. In Helen Barolini's Umbertina (1979), the U.S.-born daughter and grand-daughter of the title character, an Italian immigrant, are dissipated by the affluence made possible by first generation's hard work and sacrifice. It is Tina, presciently named for her great-grandmother, who invokes the memory of that matriarch as her guide for a more purposeful life. Abraham Cahan's The Rise of David Levinsky (1917) in many ways is the tale of the break from and return to the old world values within a single

generation. David leaves his poverty, his mother, and his orthodox Judaism behind in Antomir, Russia, to emigrate to the U.S., where he becomes a successful American cloak-maker. Yet his "metamorphosis" is not complete because his new identity does not fit him satisfactorily. David is plagued by the empty materialism of his life in America and haunted by the rich tradition and spirituality he left in Russia. The novel closes with his bitter realization that "the poor lad swinging over a Talmud at the Preacher's Synagogue, seems to have more in common with my inner identity than David Levinsky, the well-known cloak-manufacturer."[114]

By historicizing Hansen's rhythm of ethnic recovery, Sollors reveals the triangular model of succession to be a cultural construction, a design spun out of myth and fiction rather than grounded in reality. Yet despite Sollors's skepticism about the subjective memory's purported veracity, as well as those sound claims against Hansen's deceptively neat pattern of declension and renewal, the underlying premise of the generational paradigm is valid: interest in ancestry, albeit interest that is often based on myth, grows over time as succeeding generations attempt to recoup the old world heritage which assimilationist forebears either rejected or diluted on their way to Americanization. In part, the circumstances of immigration dictate this generational pattern. Many educated immigrants such as Jerzy Kozinski, Vladimir Nabokov, and Abraham Cahan learned English quickly and became novelists. Other immigrant intellectuals published in their native language, Isaac Bashivas Singer in Yiddish, Ole Rolvaag in Norwegian, and so sizeable a

number in German that mid-nineteenth-century Milwaukee was dubbed "German Athens."[115] But for the most part, foreigners who came ashore in the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century immigration waves were typically absorbed by the sheer labor of survival, and they lacked the education and time to create literature. Quite naturally then, a family might not produce a writer until at least the second generation; when an ethnic American reflected on the evolution of his or her lineage in U.S., the logical starting point was the immigration ordeal.

The resulting story was usually an account of the American Dream with a dark twist. The immigrant flees an economically, politically, or spiritually repressive homeland for America-- unknown and often inhospitable--so that future generations might know the liberty, opportunity, and dignity unattainable in the old country. By dint of new world values (hard work and determination can change the course of a life) that were balanced by old country traditions (devotion to church and family produces meaning and stability), the immigrants provide a secure life for their children. The offspring, through education, enterprise, better health, and, often, exogamy, in turn supply their own children with greater security or even affluence.

An initial conflict in the stock story-line comes from the children's growing shame over their parents' visible traces of the old country and their own rising identification with mainstream America: the offsprings' pull toward assimilation divides the family. But even when Americanization is successful, realizing the dream rarely matches dreaming it. The second conflict

is often an internal one as, bereft of spiritual values or disillusioned by material gain, the adult child seeks to recover the meaningful traditions of the parent. Or, as Hansen posits, the conflict is between the second and third generation: the grandchild observes that a parent's social ascent is accompanied by spiritual decline or emotional numbness and instead makes a moral model out of the immigrant ancestor. Guilt over the parents' extreme sacrifices prompts other second-generation protagonists to reconsider the immigrant's life. In Dorothy Calvetti Bryant's Miss Giordano (1978), for example, the title character, a high-school English teacher who has watched her immigrant father, a coal miner, succumb to black-lung disease, must reconcile herself to the memory of her parents' wretched existence if she is to live her own life. Variously inspired by gratitude, guilt, or even anger, as is the case with James T. Farrell's Studs Lonigan, who despises the comfortable, middle-class berth his parents have attained, ethnic fiction is driven by the descendants' need to come to terms with the lives of their forebears.

Renewed attention to the first generation is so ubiquitous in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnic literature that Grace Paley mocks the cliche in "The Immigrant Story" (1975) where her character Jack explains as if by rote that his father decided "to go to America, to 1. stay out of the army, 2. stay out of jail, 3. save his children from everyday wars and ordinary pogroms."[116] Yet this psychological dependence on the forebears' fortitude is also rooted in the experience of early New England. The founders' beliefs were crystallized in the old world under Anglican persecution; children

born in the new world never developed the stalwartness which church oppression and the early years in the Massachusetts wilderness had imparted to their parents' Calvinism. The half-way covenant, that compromise which would keep the church rolls steady only by granting partial membership to the growing number of unconverted among the founders' children, attests to the declension of the second-generation ministry.[117] The immigrant generation became the boon and scourge of the lax progeny: accounts of the elders' lives were the jeremiads which both chastened and encouraged the sinful offspring in their holy struggle.

Doubting their own ability to continue the religious mission begun by their immigrant parents or, perhaps more unnerving, questioning the mission itself, second- and third-generation Puritans reassured themselves by transforming the founders into powerful models of religious devotion and probity. According to Robert Middlekauff, as the second- and third-generation New Englanders venerated their ancestors, they enlarged the immigrants' objective from preservation of the true Church polity to wide-scale conversion.[118] And even when the American progeny speculated on the human frailties of their forebears and sensed the uncertainty with which they had left Europe, they exalted the founders, hoping to quell the fear that they themselves were heirs to a grand mistake. As the forebears' faith and fortitude became legendary and their example difficult to follow, the children, even in religious decline, found further use in mythologizing their parents: if the founders' religious devotion was exceptional, it was then literally

inimitable.[119] Among Puritan historiographers in nineteenth-century New England, Lawrence Buell questions whether the belief in an heroic forebear was not surpassed by the belief in the need for such a grand figure.[120]

American immigrants, from the Puritans to those who continue to arrive from third world countries, are not alone in lionizing their ancestors in times of change, doubt, or danger; classical literature is replete with such hero worship. Homer routinely introduced his soldiers by citing their royal or divine genealogy--Agamemnon as the son of Atreus; Achilles, son of Peleus; Pyrrhus, in turn, as the son of Achilles--as though to gird a warrior for battle by invoking his lineage. Virgil's Aeneas, that wandering immigrant who would found the Roman empire, is shielded from harm by his goddess-mother, Venus, and guided by the wisdom of his father, King Anchises, whose counsel he seeks in a sojourn to the underworld.

The "Invention of New England" is Middlekauff's name for the progeny's glorification of the founders, through which offspring attempted to reconcile the fact of their new world nativity with their inherited mission conceived in the old world.[121] This myth-making, in which the "age of the fathers...[is] the touchstone of all value,"[122] is at work again in what Werner Sollors terms the "Invention of Ethnicity,"[123] the celebration of ancestral roots, even when that history is more fabrication than fact. Because Puritans and later immigrants had "left it to the next generation to make retrospective sense of their act of migration,"[124] the children who recount their parents' lives are more aptly described as "custodians and interpreters"[125] than transcribers:

their accounts of history are subjective versions which often serve to make the past more noble, the present more certain, and the future less formidable.

Despite enlarging the presence of the ancestors so as to create moral guides, the second and third generations ultimately betrayed their forebears' conservative cause: they transformed themselves into Americans, whether through a Puritan's capitulation to the emerging self or an ethnic offspring's assimilation into mainstream society, changes often viewed ambivalently as decline as well as progress. A qualified link to the past in the form of hero worship mitigated this transformation, easing the children's guilty conscience without impeding their forward movement. By revering the elder, the progeny paid their filial respect and remained connected to their ancestry; yet by elevating their predecessors to the level of icon, the children gained distance from them since icons are remote and ultimately unknowable. Attempting more a feat of taxidermy than of resurrection, as Lawrence Buell claims was the goal of some Puritan memorialists,[126] filiopietists could honor their immigrant parents and also part company with them. Their paeans glorified the past and in so doing neutralized its real power, thus settling the conflict between the desire for renewal and the fear of change inherent in new beginnings. Hawthorne's "Main-Street" (1849) reveals the efficacy of praise as both a bond with history and a boundary against it when the narrator, watching a pageant of his Puritan forefathers, proclaims, "Let us thank God for having given us such ancestors; and let each successive generation thank Him,

not less fervently, for being one step further from them in the march of ages."[127]

This theme of reconciling the present with the past to blend an American identity with a foreign one is central to ethnic literature in the U.S. By narrating the immigrant experience of the founding generations, ethnic-American writers square the impulse for change with the desire for constancy. The writers and their protagonists, for ethnic novels are usually autobiographical, journey back to their families' old world ties and American origins: by writing the book, the author acknowledges the past, even when embellishing it with fiction; their characters often make literal journeys to the homeland. Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club culminates in second-generation Jing-Mei (June) Woo's first trip to China, a conciliatory mission; having spurned the traditional customs that her mother, now deceased, had held dear, June travels to the ancestral land, where she meets the Chinese half-sisters she has never seen and tells them of their mother, whom they have never known. Of course the journey to the old world is often more metaphoric than actual. In her autobiographical novel The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts (1975), American-born Maxine Hong Kingston does not travel to China, though she frequently returns to her parents' home in the enclave of Chinese immigrants in Stockton, California. The book itself, rather, is the return to the past through which Kingston validates her own life as a liberated American woman of Chinese descent. As a girl growing up in California, Kingston watches her mother conform to the traditional submissive role for

Chinese women; in America Brave Orchid is merely a "ghost," having lived her "real" life back in China where she was independent and successful as a midwife who had the respect of her village and the comforts due one of her station. Kingston is ambivalent about her own feminism: she defies the strictures her patriarchal culture places on women, but she is keenly aware of the disappointment such nonconformity causes her parents, particularly her mother. By delving into her mother's past and articulating Brave Orchid's story of cultural defiance, professional success, and high esteem in China, Kingston finds ancestral sanction for her own rebelliousness in America. She challenges tradition yet remains consistent with the past.[128]

The ethnic novel bridges generations and worlds, yet its conciliatory properties extend beyond the circumstances of a particular author's life. Immigrant fiction conciliates not in that the marginalized author propitiates the literary mainstream to gain admission into the canon, but in that, despite claims from cultural conservatives and liberals alike, it plays out and improvises on many themes long regarded as central to the American experience. That claim is neither revolutionary nor reactionary, since in a nation whose history is largely dominated by immigration, the literature of the American ethnic would naturally yield significant parallels to the writing of the mainstream, which itself is rooted in rupture, relocation, and renewal. In fact it is ironic that the current and often hostile debate over the place of multicultural and Anglo-centric writing in the American canon features the two literatures as binary opposites. In many ways, ethnic writing updates and

extends the American literary experience as it narrows the gap between popular notions of the outsider and the insider.

America's many literary figures have always been in transit, from the Puritan colonists, to the seemingly unattached adventurers of the American Renaissance, to the newcomers who arrived in the U.S. at the end of the nineteenth century and thereafter. Though significant differences set ethnic protagonists apart from each other and from those of the mainstream, they fully share the traditional hero's wanderlust, since America is the "territory" for which the immigrant "lights out." Regardless of route or destination--from the old country to the new world or from the village to the city and then out to the frontier--all American heroes grapple with the competing demands of self and society when the promise of mobility beckons. The ethnic, however, proves most adept at resolving the tension between the impulse to ramble and the need to put down roots. Like his American counterpart who follows the sun or withdraws into the wilderness, the immigrant maverick also heads west, forsaking the old world for the new. The immigrant's quest further evokes that of the traditional lone hero, for the ethnic American often disengages once again--from the family and community--so as to pursue personal autonomy, flights which critics who are intent on finding unwavering group commitment in non-mainstream writing frequently ignore. Yet the ethnic American's travels are more sojourn than escape, as many take a circuitious route that returns them to family and community. But even in coming full circle, the ethnic explorer continues to evoke those canonical

figures whose hard-won self-awareness deepened their sense of social responsibility. Thoreau and Sinclair Lewis's George Babbit, for example, are better citizens for having become individuals, as is Huck Finn when his excursion with Jim is seen as an extended imbroglio in sticky social problems rather than as an escape from life's worries and his final flight is read as an option which Huck considers on the last page of the novel rather than as the book's central action, as it is often misread. Like these Anglo-counterparts, many ethnic heroes are better prepared to contribute to society for having chosen to cultivate the self, as American liberty allows.

Ethnic renegades, whether foresaking the homeland or the immigrant enclave to forge a new, American identity or, conversely, hyphenating their U.S. citizenship with a foreign allegiance, share much common ground with the canonical hero. Rupture and renewal, those joint themes of much immigrant writing, situate the literary ethnic among those other iconoclasts who defy tradition while unwittingly observing that American tradition of such dissent.

Notes

1. See Columbia Literary History of the United States, gen. ed. Emory Elliott, (New York: Columbia UP, 1988). Also, Sacvan Bercovitch, as general editor of the most recent Cambridge History of American Literature, finds the strength of this multi-volume work in its tentative tone and ability to rest with contradiction and discontinuity rather than to impart a false sense of uniformity, certainty, and closure, as pre-1980's literary histories have done. See Annette Kolodny's "The Integrity of Memory: Creating a New Literary History of the United States," American Literature 57 (1985): 301.

2. Eric Cheyfitz, "Matthiessen's American Renaissance: Circumscribing the Revolution," American Quarterly 41 (1989): 344, 345.

3. George McMichael, ed., Anthology of American Literature: Volume II, Realism to the Present, Fourth Ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1989) 183-184, 191-192, 228.

4. Cheyfitz 350.

5. Michael Colacurcio, "The American-Renaissance Renaissance," The New England Quarterly 64 (1991): 445-493.

6. R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1955) 1, 8-9.

7. Lewis 5.

8. Lewis 128.

9. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Between Individualism and Fragmentation: American Culture and the New Literary Studies of Race and Gender," American Quarterly 42.1 (1990): 11.

10. Robert W. Hemenway, Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography (Urbana: U of IL P, 1977) 97; for Virginia Woolf's influence on Toni Morrison see Henry Louis Gates, Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars (New York:

Oxford UP, 1992) xvii; for Ralph Ellison's formative interest in Marx, Freud, Eliot, and Hemingway, see Jim Sleeper, The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York (New York: Norton, 1990) 234; see Werner Sollors, "A Critique of Pure Puralism," Reconstructing American Literary History, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986) 256 for information on Farrell's literary background; Paule Marshall cites her early interest in Thackeray, Hardy, and Dickens in Daryl Cumber Dance's, "An Interview with Paule Marshall," The Southern Review 28.1 (1992): 18; Gates observes the Negro spiritual's reliance on the King James Bible in Loose Canons xvii.

11. Fox-Genovese offers this example of "two-ness" from Henry Roth's Call It Sleep (1934) in Feminism Without Illusions: A Critique of Individualism (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1991) 205-206.

12. Dexter Fisher, Minority Language and Literature: Retrospective and Perspective (New York: MLA, 1977). Fisher is just one critic among many calling for new and revised ways of reading ethnic writing.

13. Paul Lauter, "The Literatures of America: A Comparative Discipline," Redefining American Literary History, eds. A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and Jerry W. Ward, Jr. (New York: MLA, 1990) 16.

14. This is the thrust of Joyce Warren's The American Narcissus: Individualism and Women in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1984). See especially 1-19.

15. Gates, Loose Canons 151, 175.

16. Dorothy Skardal, The Divided Heart: Scandinavian Immigrant Experience through Literary Sources (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1974) 47.

17. Werner Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture (New York: Oxford UP, 1986) 12, 13.

18. Fox-Genovese goes on to advocate for an eclectic canon that is weighted both by classics and multi-cultural texts, but she nonetheless makes this claim in "Between Individualism and Fragmentation" 19, 20.

19. Werner Sollors challenges this "isolationist, group-by-group approach that emphasizes 'authenticity' and cultural heritage within the individual, somewhat idealized group--at the expense of more widely shared historical conditions and cultural features, of dynamic interaction and syncretism." He posits instead "trans-ethnic" literary inquiry by which "ideas entertained by Anglo-American, Irish-American, Jewish-American, and Afro-American writers can be discussed TOGETHER [instead of]...separat[ing] men and women, immigrants and American-born authors." See Adam Meyer, "The Need For

Cross-Ethnic Studies," MELUS 16.4 (1989-1990): 26. Fox-Genovese echoes Sollors's lament of the dualistic bent of pluralism studies: "The cultures of women, African-Americans, working people, and ethnic groups are normally considered for their specific dynamics and in relation to the canon or dominant groups that excluded, oppressed, or ignored them, but rarely in relation to other previously ignored groups. Identity in this perspective becomes primarily identity in relation to other members of the group, and community becomes primarily the community of the group itself." See Feminism Without Illusions 203.

20. Carolyn Heilbrun, "A Response to 'Writing and Sexual Difference,'" Critical Inquiry 8 (1982): 808, 809.

21. Heilbrun 809.

22. Ellen McCracken, "Sandra Cisneros' House on Mango Street: Community-Oriented Introspection and the Demystification of Patriarchal Violence" in Breaking Boundaries: Latina Writing and Critical Readings, ed. Asuncion Horno-Delgado, et al. (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1989) 69, 70.

23. Thomas Paine, "Common Sense," The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volume One, Second Edition, ed. Nina Baym, et al. (New York: Norton, 1985) 585-592.

24. Lauter, "Literatures of America" 15, 16.

25. Helen Barolini, The Dream Book: An Anthology of Writings By Italian American Women (New York: Schocken Books, 1985) 20.

26. Herman Melville, Moby Dick: A Norton Critical Edition, ed. Harrison Hayford (New York: Norton, 1967) 374. Many critics cite this passage to prove Melville's sense for the terror of abandonment, as does Delbanco in Puritan Ordeal 238.

27. Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage and Selected Prose and Poetry, ed. William M. Gibson, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968). See Maggie: A Girl of the Streets 136-200; "The Blue Hotel" 377-407; "The Open Boat" 269-294; The Red Badge of Courage 411-538.

28. Jane Tompkins, Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860 (New York: Oxford UP, 1985) 14.

29. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Ethan Brand," in The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, vol 11 (Ohio State UP, 1974) 90 and 99.

30. Richard Millington, Practicing Romance: Narrative Form and Cultural Engagement in Hawthorne's Fiction (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992) 62, 136.

31. David Marr, American Worlds Since Emerson (U of Massachusetts P, Amherst, 1988) 214.

32. Warren 23-53, especially 26.

33. Lawrence Buell, Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance, (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1973) 105.

34. Merton Sealts, Jr., Emerson on the Scholar (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1992). Sealts argues that Emerson's transition from social inactivity to engagement was complete, yet not without misgivings along the way. See especially "The Scholar and Reform," 175-187.

35. Leslie Fiedler credits Washington Irving with introducing flight and escape as the American's method of choice for dealing with life, and Twain for having popularized it in Huck Finn. See Love and Death in the American Novel (New York: Dell, 1969) 171, 338, 339.

36. Annette Kolodny, "The Integrity of Memory: Creating a New Literary History of the United States," American Literature 57 (1985): 296.

37. Kolodny, "Integrity of Memory" 302.

38. Fox-Genovese, Feminism Without Illusions 223.

39. Kolodny, "Integrity of Memory" 291-307.

40. Warner Berthoff, "Continuity in Discontinuity: Literature in the American Situation," New Pelican Guide to English Literature, vol. 9 (New York: Penguin Books, 1988) 662.

41. Lewis 5.

42. Fiedler 62, 63.

43. Robert Con Davis, The Fictional Father: Lacanian Readings of the Text (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1981).

44. Berthoff 652.

45. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 37, 38.

46. Leonard Dinnerstein, Natives and Strangers: Blacks, Indians, and Immigrants in America, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 1990) 238.

47. Dinnerstein 233.

48. Dorothy Weatherford, Foreign and Female: Immigrant Women in America, 1840-1930 (New York: Schocken Books, 1986) 208.

49. Harry Mark Petrakis, Lion at My Heart (Boston: Little, Brown, 1959) 9, 148.

50. Berthoff 656.

51. Andrew Delbanco, The Puritan Ordeal (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989) 7, 217, 259.

52. Francis Fukuyama, "Making It," rev. of Tribes: How Race, Religion and Identity Determine Success in the New Global Economy, by Joel Kotkin, The New Republic 19 April 1993: 43.

53. Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People (Boston: Little. Brown and Co., 1951, 1973) 3.

54. Le Ly Hayslip, When Heaven and Earth Changed Places (New York: Doubleday, 1989).

55. Delbanco 74.

56. Delbanco 74.

57. Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1956) 61, 62.

58. Delbanco 54-57.

59. Robert Bellah, Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1985) 82, 83.

60. Delbanco 257, 258, n. 4.

61. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 12, 13.

62. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 27.

63. Delbanco 15, 16.

64. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 25-36.

65. Delbanco 7 and 258, n. 4.

66. Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 40-45.

67. See for example Louis Chu, Eat a Bowl of Tea (1961; New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1993) and Maxine Hong Kingston, The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

68. See Fukuyama 43 or consider Delbanco's remark that the Puritans came to a place "free of obstructive and competing cultures" 15, 16.

69. Edmund S. Morgan, Visible Saints: A History of a Puritan Idea (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1963) 3.

70. Annette Kolodny cites several fictional and historical instances of willing miscegenation in The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860 (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984) 69, 70, and 76, as does Richard Slotkin in Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan UP, 1971). Note the numerous citations in his index but see especially 217-218.

71. Perry Miller, The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry, (New York: Columbia UP, 1956) 1-5.

72. Miller, Errand 15.

73. Delbanco 13.

74. Delbanco 14, 15.

75. Other Armenian-American novels which strongly urge cultural persistence include Richard Hagopian's Faraway the Spring (New York: Scribner's, 1952); Peter Najorian's Daughters of Memory (Berkeley: City Miner, 1986) and Voyages (New York: Pantheon, 1971); William Saroyan's Rock Wagram (New York: Doubleday, 1951); and Peter Sourian's The Gate (New York: Harcourt, 1965).

76. Delbanco 96.

77. Miller, Errand 16-47, especially 47.

78. Delbanco 222, 224.

79. Perry Miller explains that "man has not only been in relation to God as creature to creator, subject to lord, but more definitely through a succession of explicit agreements or contracts, as between two partners in a business enterprise....In the covenant of grace, God, observing the form, contracts with man as with a peer." Errand 60, 61.

80. Norman Pettit, The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life (New Haven: Yale UP, 1966) 105. Though Pettit disputes Perry Miller's reading of the covenant as a contract into which man entered as a bargaining partner, contending that such negotiating rights would challenge the Puritans' belief in divine sovereignty, he faces the contradictory bind of man's complete dependence of God for grace and his need to enter the covenant voluntarily. See 105 and 220.

81. Pettit 93.

82. David Hall, ed., The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1968) 18.

83. John Winthrop, "Speech to the General Court," in The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry, Perry Miller, ed. 90-93, 122.

84. John Wise, "Vindication of the Government of New England Churches," in The American Puritans, Miller, ed. 127.

85. John Wise, "Vindication," American Puritans 136.

86. Anzia Yezierska, Bread Givers (New York: Doubleday, 1925; Persea Books, 1975) 66.

87. Thomas Bodnar, "The Homeland and Capitalism," in The Transplanted (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987) especially 54-57.

88. Bodnar focuses mainly on European Americans, but he includes immigrants from Japan and Mexico in his discussion of the household as a model of cooperative group management both before and after immigration. See 74.

89. Bodnar 56.

90. Bodnar 72.

91. Bodnar 137. But the same attachments which supported industry--family ties and ethnic connections--also proved troublesome, to a degee, when labor organizers pressed for workers to form unions. Bodnar maintains, however, that few immigrant workers who came out of family economies were union supporters. More were interested in preserving the family and community than in radical ideology. See Bodnar, "Work, Unions, and Radicals," 85-116.

92. Bodnar reports that among the Irish working in the Massachusetts mills in the 1860's, most men could only provide 54% of a family's minimum subsistence level. Between 1910 and 1920, a Chicago packinghouse worker

earned only 38% of what a family of four needed; by 1922, his income had risen to only 48% of the subsistence level. See 76.

93. Bodnar 131, 138.

94. Bodnar 73, 74.

95. Delbanco 188.

96. Mark Wyman, Round-Trip to America: The Immigrants Return to Europe, 1880-1930 (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993). Wyman acknowledges that many immigrants intended to return even as they first departed from their homelands. Over four million of the thirteen million immigrants who entered the U.S. between 1880 and 1930 went back to their native countries. See 7-14.

97. Ann Stanford, "Anne Bradstreet," Major Writers of Early American Literature ed. Everett Emerson (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1972) 35.

98. Stanford, "Anne Bradstreet," Major Writers 41.

99. Albert J. von Frank, The Sacred Game: Provincialism and Frontier Consciousness in American Literature, 1630-1860 (New York: Cambridge UP, 1985) 9.

100. Von Frank 4.

101. Von Frank 7.

102. Werner Sollors, "A Critique of Pure Puralism," Reconstructing American Literary History, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986) 250-279.

103. N. Scott Momaday, "The Native Voice," Columbia Literary History of the United States, ed. Emory Elliot (New York: Columbia UP, 1988) 5-15.

104. Michael Novak, The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics (New York: Macmillan, 1972). My quotation conflates his essentialist definition of ethnicity cited on xvi, 47, and 48.

105. John Higham, Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America (New York: Atheneum, 1975) 100-101.

106. Jerre Mangione, Mount Allegro (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1942) 143.

107. Mario Puzo, "Italians in Hell's Kitchen" in The Immigrant Experience: The Anguish of Becoming American ed. Thomas Wheeler (New York: Dial Press, 1971) 35.

108. Nicholasa Mohr, "Puerto Rican Writers in the US, Puerto Rican Writers in Puerto Rico: A Separation beyond Language," Breaking Boundaries 115, 116.

109. Mohr, "Puerto Rican Writers in the US," Breaking Boundaries, ed. Horno-Delgado 111-116.

110. Marcus Lee Hansen, "The Third Generation in America" Commentary, 14 (Nov. 1952): 494. Quoted as well by Sollors in Beyond Ethnicity, 214.

111. Hansen's disturbingly sexist language matches that of his contemporary and friend, Oscar Handlin. Both men wrote their most lasting work in the 1950's before the advent of the women's movement, which, presumably, might have raised their consciousness. Like Hansen, whose generational paradigm is exclusively male ("What the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember"), Handlin suggests that immigration and the subsequent identity crisis were hardships borne only by men. Women are consistently lesser--even silent--beings in Handlin's Uprooted: he consistently refers to the immigrant with the third person, masculine pronoun and reserves the feminine pronoun for trouble and set-backs, such as "calamity" who often found "her entree to the peasant household" 20.

112. Sollors Beyond Ethnicity 214-218.

113. Victor Greene, "Old-time Folk Dancing and Music, 1920-50" in American Immigrants and Their Generations: Studies and Commentaries on the Hansen Thesis after Fifty Years ed. Peter Kivisto and Dag Blanck (Urbana: U of IL P, 1990) 148-163. Greene uses the career of musician Frankie Yankovic, a member of the second generation, to dispute further the rigidity of Hansen's generational paradigm, particularly that the American-born are uninterested in or embarrassed by the old country. He reports that Yankovic, better known as The Polka King, drew huge crowds throughout the 1960's with his Polish dance music. As a third-generation Polish American who grew up in an ethnic community, I know firsthand of Yankovic's popularity. His songs, many sung in Polish, played regularly at the social gatherings that followed noon Mass on Sundays in my Catholic parish. He was popular among my parents' generation, the very group that Hansen contends wanted "to forget everything: the foreign language that left an unmistakable trace in [their] English speech, the religion that continually recalled childhood struggles, the family customs that should have been the happiest of all memories." See Hansen, "The Third Generation in America," Commentary 14: 5 (Nov 1952) 494.

114. Abraham Cahan The Rise of David Levinsky (Harper & Brothers, 1917; rep. New York: Penguin, 1993) 530.

115. Robert Bishoff, "German-American Literature," in Ethnic Perspectives in American Literature (New York: MLA, 1983) 60.

116. Grace Paley, "The Immigrant Story" in Enormous Changes at the Last Minute (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1975) 174. Sollors quotes this story too in Beyond Ethnicity 255.

117. Sacvan Bercovitch sums up the consensus among scholars on the half-way covenant as the "*locus classicus* of the theocracy's decline." The Puritan Origins of the American Self (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979) 94.

118. Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596-1728 (New York: Oxford UP, 1971) 96-99.

119. Delbanco 224.

120. Lawrence Buell, New England Literary Culture from Revolution Through Renaissance (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986) 201.

121. Middlekauff, "The Invention of New England," Chapter Six in The Mathers, 96-112.

122. Delbanco 226.

123. The Invention of Ethnicity (New York: Oxford UP, 1989) is a collection of essays edited by Werner Sollors which, for the most part, criticize the popular trend to present ethnicity as a "natural" and timeless category. The thrust of his argument is that ethnicity is wrongly presumed to be eternal and essential, rooted in past generations and ever-blooming in the present; it should rightly be recognized as a social construction, an outgrowth of modernism. See his introduction, ix-xx.

124. Delbanco 225.

125. Buell New England Literary Culture 196.

126. Buell New England Literary Culture 208.

127. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Main-Street" in The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, vol. 11, (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1974) 68. Sollors cites this story as well in Beyond Ethnicity 221.

128. Roberta Rubenstein explores harmonious bridging more fully in Boundaries of the Self: Gender, Culture, Fiction (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1987), where she applies the concept in women's relationships beyond inter-generation conflict. See particularly 172-180.

CHAPTER THREE
John Winthrop, Le Ly Hayslip, and the Emigrant's Goodbye: You Can Go Home Again

To look for mutually corroborating evidence of a shared experience among immigrants in such extreme examples as John Winthrop's "A Modell of Christian Charity" (1630) and Le Ly Hayslip's When Heaven and Earth Changed Places (1989) seems, initially, an exercise in creative interpretation. Winthrop delivered his lay sermon aboard the Arbella, as his fleet of eleven ships sailed from England to America, where the travellers would found the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Hayslip's memoir recounts her flight from her native Vietnam to the United States in 1970 when she was twenty years old. Along with the centuries separating these works are, of course, vastly different circumstances which led each of them to emigrate and which, in turn, shaped their experiences and their writing.

John Winthrop, born into the English aristocracy in 1588, was educated at Cambridge and spent his early adulthood presiding over the family manor at Groton. He later served as a Court attorney until, deciding to sail to New England, he was elected Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, a post he held with only brief interruption for the rest of his life.[1] Le Ly Hayslip, or Phung Thi Le Ly, her name before marrying, was born to a family of Buddhist peasants in Ky La, a small farming village near Danang in central Vietnam.

The England of Winthrop's youth was beginning to assert a global presence through imperialism and its powerful navy. Hayslip's country was torn apart by civil war and centuries of foreign colonial aggression. As it is generally interpreted, Winthrop's exodus was a grand scheme to accomplish a higher goal: his holy charge was to implement a religious and civic program that would purify and preserve the Church of England and its true adherents.[2] Hayslip's departure from Vietnam is one woman's escape from a war-ravaged land.

Despite the many historical, cultural, religious, and social differences between these writers, however, other elements point to their works as a logical pair for a study of immigrant literature. Whereas many texts about relocating to America are written by descendants who recount a forbear's experience, "A Modell of Christian Charity" and When Heaven and Earth Changed Places were written by immigrants themselves, and neither one addresses the actual resettlement in the new land. Both are "emigrant" texts, focusing more on the place departed from than on the site in which they arrive.

In Winthrop's piece, the reason for the lack of specificity concerning America is obvious: he delivered his oration mid-journey before reaching his destination; he could not write about a land he had not yet encountered. But forward-looking though he is, as he anticipates the church polity he would erect in Massachusetts, his plans are shaped by the world he has left behind. In his estimation, English Protestantism had fallen into decline through

emergent capitalism and a creeping preparationism that was too rooted in Roman Catholic practice. His agenda, therefore, was one of reform, a move to restore and preserve the true church. His sermon is thus a bitter valediction, for it outlines what Christians must avoid and achieve in the new world against the past poor ecclesiastic record.[3] Correspondingly, although Hayslip lived nineteen years in the United States before writing her memoir, she barely mentions her life as an American and omits entirely her orientation upon arrival, an experience which must have been harrowing because of the social and political turbulence of the early 1970's and the racism she most likely faced.[4] Instead, the main concern of her autobiography is Vietnam--the events that led her to leave it and her reception upon returning there to visit her family.

Given the "extra-American" settings of both writings, they might seem merely tangential to a study of literature about becoming American. But Winthrop's sermon, its off-shore origins notwithstanding, has been "enshrined as a kind of Ur-text of American literature."[5] Because the removal from England was fraught with as much fear as hope, Winthrop delivered "A Modell of Christian Charity" to inspire optimism and quell anxiety by stressing the migrants' holy purpose. The sermon, with its professed faith in destiny, is regarded as the prototype from which other American millennialist writing followed. And Hayslip's memoir, despite the humble scale of her lone departure, is squarely situated in this grand rhetorical tradition: throughout the course of her autobiography, as Hayslip comes to terms with her own

status as a Vietnamese expatriate, she increasingly imbues her emigration with a sense of mission and fate. Winthrop's sermon, the test case of immigrant writing which established a divine calling as the apology for leaving home and venturing to America, can be seen as a literary precedent for When Heaven and Earth Changed Places, Hayslip's justification for her flight from her native land.

Perry Miller posits the Puritan fast-day or political sermon--the New England jeremiad--as America's first distinctive literary genre.[6] Exceptionalism resonates throughout colonial writing, which features the settlers as God's chosen migrants running His errand into the new world wilderness. Yet even more distinctly American, according to Miller, is the sermon's self-rebuke, the colonists' lament over faltering in their special mission and thus failing to elevate the New England church-state into a moral beacon for all the world.[7]

Miller dates New England's first jeremiad a few generations after the Great Migration of 1630, making it contingent upon the time it took for the descendants of the immigrants to become prodigals and, subsequently, to mourn their eroded ideals and exalt their stalwart American progenitors (a development which became a convention of immigrant literature). Sacvan Bercovitch, however, places the conception of that American genre earlier, at Winthrop's delivery of "A Modell of Christian Charity." As their offspring would do over time, first generation colonists--including Winthrop--became filiopietists. The Massachusetts founders invoked not the Anglican church

fathers whom they had left behind, but revered such figures of biblical history as Moses or John the Baptist, whose religious quests, they believed, paralleled their own journey.

But what in Bercovitch's appraisal most distinguishes the American sermon from the English jeremiad which the Puritans brought with them is the "unshakable optimism" that eluded Miller, who was more attuned to the sermons' castigation and lament.[8] In Bercovitch's reading, the rhetoric of chastisement carried a counter-strain of hope and exultation, for New Englanders construed divine retribution as a reaffirmation of their holy purpose and their progress toward its fulfillment:

> They...turned threat into celebration. In their case, they believed, God's punishments were *corrective*, not destructive. Here, as nowhere else, His vengeance was a sign of love, a father's rod used to improve the errant child. In short, their punishments confirmed their promise.[9]

Bercovitch does not suggest that the Puritans dismissed their own failings, nor does he dispute that they were deeply anguished by the threat of God's wrath. But he insists that their typological epistemology and their faith in covenant theology lent their enterprise a sure sense of direction. Because Puritans interpreted the Bible figurally, finding the New Testament encoded in the Old, they believed that their prophecies would be fulfilled through a series of unfolding parallels. Thus, their future was evident: if the colonists could

manage to keep their end of the covenant with God, their own redemption and the success of their plantation were certain.[10]

The typology underpinning Puritan thought and informing the New England jeremiad was conciliatory in nature: it made the future comport with the past. Accordingly, Jewish history foreshadowed the course of Christianity; Puritans were the new chosen people on an exodus out of degenerate England. Such reasoning supplied a conciliatory bonus: backsliding--a precedent set by the failure of the Jews to accept Christ as the Messiah--became proof of chosenness and ultimate deliverance. Believing the conversion of the Jews and Christ's ultimate forgiveness of their apostasy would portend his second coming, they, as new world Israelites, perceived both a mandate and pardon for the transgressions by which they mirrored their Old Testament precursors.[11]

These apparent contradictions, such as that failure foretold success, were foundational to the Massachusetts theocracy. New Englanders proclaimed their objective to be purifying the Anglican rite of its Romish embellishments so as to recover pristine Biblical dictates as the basis for their congregationalism, yet they committed themselves to the modernization which the new world permitted.[12] Though church members professed the absolute power of God, they increasingly exercised their own will and agency. Founders transplanted England's stratified class structure (which they regarded as God-ordained), yet they created widespread entrepreneurial

opportunities for personal advancement. Furthermore, Puritans gauged the state of their sacred mission by their civic and social success.

In Miller's view, these contradictory impulses locked the Puritan theocracy into a death grip. He contends, moreover, that the colonists' outpouring of self-rebuke was mere lip-service to repentance and actually allowed their decline to continue unchecked.[13] But in Bercovitch's reading, those same contradictions between principle and practice sustained the Puritan ideal. He maintains that the founders' vision survived

> through a mode of ambiguity that denied the contradiction between history and rhetoric--or rather translated this into a discrepancy between appearance and promise that nourished the imagination, inspired ever grander flights of self-justification, and so continued to provide a source of social cohesion and continuity.[14]

The obvious "wish fulfillment" that pervaded New England thought, Bercovitch asserts, was much more than a means to rationalize laxity or to smooth over conflicts. Their seeming reconciliation of opposites--or their penchant for overlooking what was at odds in their theocracy--was "a *realistic* way to deal with crisis and change,...a source not only of revitalization but of rededication as well."[15] Much like positive and negative charges which produce an electrical current when crossed, the polarized tension within New England Puritan theology was a power supply. While conceding the obvious, that the actual theocracy collapsed, Bercovitch insists that the ideal of the

orthodoxy lived on: "the fact is that the vision survived--from colony to province, and from province to nation."[16]

The capacity to absorb opposites rendered Puritan thought resilient. Bercovitch traces early New England's tradition of simultaneous exultation and lament into the nineteenth century and beyond. Even those giants of the American Renaissance who criticize the status quo--Emerson, Melville, and Thoreau, among others--affirm the nation's millennialism, for they object not to America's premise, but to its slow progress.[17] The legacy of Puritan rhetoric, the ability to turn contradiction into complement, remains particularly viable in immigrant writing throughout American literary history, as newcomers often settle the conflicts between cultural codes by simultaneously adapting the old and adopting the new. Le Ly Hayslip, though a recent arrival in the United States and a new "new" immigrant, one of non-European origins entirely, fully utilizes the rhetorical mode bequeathed to her by the Puritan founders of her adopted home. Like the Bay Planters, she chooses to operate under terms which are "not *either/or* but *both/and*."[18] In When Heaven and Earth Changed Places Hayslip recounts or, more accurately, reworks her flight from Vietnam and her return there after sixteen years in the United States to reconcile the fact of her willful departure with her self-image as a loyal daughter of Vietnam.

Bercovitch calls the Jeremiah of New England Christian theology a Janus-faced prophet, a seer who looked back over what the settlers had wrought and then forecast, on the basis of their accomplishments, or the lack

thereof, what lay ahead. Imbued by the New Englanders with the bi-directional vision of that mythological god, Jeremiah came to obviate the troublesome divisions between the past and the future, the secular and the sacred, or self-interest and communal welfare.[19] This "two-faced" facility for sustaining the mission by making contradictions correspond suggests an inherent hypocrisy in Puritan rhetoric: Miller comments wryly on the founders' "genius...for finding ways to reconcile irreconcilables,"[20] Andrew Delbanco on the long history of "Puritan dexterity" and their "intellectual flexibility."[21]

Hayslip employs a similar casuistry to achieve a reconciliation of her own. The transmogrification implicit in her memoir's title, When Heaven and Earth Changed Places, is just one in a series of inversions by which the passage described in her subtitle, A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace, is made complete. The journey to which she refers is both her escape to an American safe haven and the resolution she finally achieves for having made that remove. By retrospectively renegotiating the terms of her flight to the United States, Hayslip makes her emigrant status compatible with her native identity. As an expatriate in America who returns to Vietnam, Le Ly wonders if she will be met with envy for the many material assets she has acquired in the United States or with "pity for the spiritual things--a life with [her] family in the land of [her] ancestors--[she] gave up to obtain them."[22] By writing her memoir, she resolves this painful dichotomy, maintaining her

adopted American identity and recovering the spiritual meaning that her life as an exile has lost.

Paramount in both Winthrop's sermon and Hayslip's autobiography (indeed, in much immigrant writing) is the need to reconcile a voluntary uprooting with a sense of unflagging family fealty. The Massachusetts Bay Colonists, though non-conformists, were emphatic about their status as non-separating members of the Church of England. They sought through their rhetoric to distinguish themselves from the dissenters who, ten years before their own migration, had openly avowed separatism when founding the Plymouth Colony. Likewise, they ostracized the separatist Roger Williams as a radical. Winthrop's "Humble Request of His Majesty's Loyal Subjects," which he composed before leaving Southampton port, passionately reiterates the emigrants' bond to what they were leaving. The document features the Church of England as "our dear Mother" and beseeches those left at home to pray for the colonists as though for their absent brothers.[23]

But the fact that the Bay colonists chose to put three thousand miles between themselves and England remains uncontrovertible. All the more ironic, therefore, is Winthrop's insistence in "A Modell of Christian Charity" on unriven unity. Certainly, every level of the Puritan undertaking--their dangerous sea voyage and survival in the very real New England wilderness,[24] their program to set up a Christian commonwealth, and, much more ambitious, their mission to erect the site of the millennium--seemed to hinge on the strength of the immigrants' commitment. But Winthrop's

insistence on unity in the face of what appears to be an act of schism suggests equivocation. Perhaps as much as to forge cohesion among his small and shaky band of migrants for the work that lay ahead as to reassure themselves and England of their oneness with the Anglican church, Winthrop's sermon celebrates love as the virtue which binds together all Christians by overriding dissent and nullifying apparent disparities.

The sermon is a masterpiece of rhetorical reconciliation, at once underscoring and erasing a host of differences. Winthrop reminds the immigrants who were leaving the restraints of the English legal system behind to venture into the untamed colony that social stratification was set by God and as such was meant to be preserved: "Some must be rich, some poore, some...highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subjeccion" (76). One who practiced Christian love did not seek to raise his status nor did he covet another's possessions, for envy and acquisitiveness would upset God's holy order. Likewise, it was incumbent upon the wealthy to provide for the needs of the less fortunate by extending loans when repayment seemed manageable or bestowing gifts outright when another's burden was too great to assume a debt. Humanity thus hierarchically differentiated attests to the glorious variety of God's creation. But while counselling an acceptance of the disparity that is represented in the status quo, Winthrop acknowledges the instinctive desire to seek out what is similar and to reject that which is unfamiliar, and, hence, the threat of antagonism which an overly rigid class structure could breed. Thus, while preaching the

preservation of these vast social inequities, Winthrop urges an over-arching inclusiveness, a recognition and appreciation of a "sympathie of affeccions" (86) in all church members. He reasons that just as God loves a human being, "soe farre as it hath any of his Image in it," when a Christian "discernes by the worke of the spirit, his owne Image and resemblance in another, [he] therefore cannot but love him as he loves himselfe" (87). By design, humanity is both differentiated and similar in kind; at times it is judicious to note the distinctions and then again to ignore them.

Winthrop glosses over another paradox when he turns his attention to the emerging individualism which was endangering communitarianism in England. In the new world, he maintains, "perticular estates cannott subsist in the ruine of the publique" (90). Yet while positing self-initiative as a sin against the omnipotent Creator and the collective good of mankind, his sermon is a hymn to human agency. The very terms of the covenant, while professing abject powerlessness before God, arise from a strong act of will. The Puritans themselves, as Winthrop explains, skillfully negotiate their contract with God: "wee are entered into Covenant with him for this worke, wee have taken out a Commission, the Lord hath given us leave to drawe our owne Articles wee have professed to enterprise these Accions upon these and these ends, wee have hereupon besought him of favour and blessings" (91-92).[25] Human will is exercised under the cover of obedience.

The rhetoric Le Ly grew up on echoes Winthrop's call for extended family unity. The metaphors of family bonding are equally as ambiguous and

versatile for her, as they are employed by both sides in the war. The nationalist Viet Minh, who fought French imperialism throughout the 1940's until the mid-1950's, and the Viet Cong communists, who, after the French withdrawal, opposed the South Vietnamese Republic and its American allies, demanded the same solidarity that the Massachusetts founders strove to achieve. Because the Viet Cong, supported by Le Ly's family and most other peasants, were outnumbered and undersupplied in comparison with the government troops of the South, they were utterly dependent upon the organized resistance of a people united in common cause. The Vietnamese saying, "by sticking together the tiny ants can carry the elephant," pointed to their most precious resource and effective weapon--their own cohesiveness. "The American elephant," Le Ly remarks, "could rage and stomp on the Vietnamese anthill, but time and the weight of numbers guaranteed that it would eventually be the ants, not the elephant, who danced on the bones of the victims" (222). The metaphor also points to the undifferentiated status of the Viet Cong supporters. Winthrop explains that early Christians "served not for wages or by Constrainte but out of love...the sweete Sympathie of affeccions which was in the members of this body one towardes another" (86). Similarly, the Viet Cong drove home the point that like ants in a colony, the Communists worked together not for individual profit or honor but for the cause by which, as a whole, they would survive or, should the South win, perish.

To achieve the solidarity which Winthrop described as everyone's "need of other, and...all knit more nearly together in the Bond of brotherly affeccion" (77), the Viet Cong also cast their countrymen as members of one Vietnamese family united against the Southern traitors and the American invaders who blocked the nation's reunification. By framing the civil war as a question of family loyalty and genealogical purity, the Communists employed a metaphor that was meaningful for the villagers, most of whom, as Buddhists, revered their ancestors and the land which held their bones. Scorning the notion of the French imperialists that "one nation could have two fathers," the Viet Cong hailed Ho Chi Minh, or "Uncle Ho," as they taught the villagers to call him, as a trusted relative who would reunite the divided nation and preserve its sacred traditions. They featured Ngo Dinh Diem, the Republican President of South Vietnam, in contrastingly negative terms: he was an absentee landlord, a Catholic traitor whose Western allegiances would destroy Vietnam's ancient way of life, a warmonger who presided over an army of foreign mercenaries.

Like the social compact among New England's Congregationalists, which demanded that "all...be marshaled into one united array...functioning for a definite purpose, with all parts subordinate to the whole,"[26] the effort to preserve the larger Vietnamese family required that every member contribute. Sons were expected to escape government conscription by fleeing to the North for military training, after which they were to fight alongside the Viet Cong, as Le Ly's two brothers and an older brother-in-law do. Under the guise of performing farm labor, parents, including Le Ly's father Trong and her mother

Huyen, dig trenches and build bunkers for the Northern-backed communist soldiers, and they devise clever systems to gather and relay intelligence to the cadre leaders. Vietnamese youth are prized for their agility, their nimble fingers useful for wrapping bandages or rigging coconuts with explosives. Children also conduct espionage. When at age twelve, Le Ly helps thwart a Republican attack by informing the Viet Cong of the troop movement she has observed, she is honored in poetry and song as "Sister Ly," the daughter of the cause.

In the Arbella sermon Winthrop features the desired synergy of the New England Puritans as a single human being, a conceit which describes the linked life system whereby organs sustain the body and are in turn sustained.

> The mouth is at all the paines to receive, and mince the foode which serves for the nourishment of all the other partes of the body, yet it hath noe cause to complaine; for the first, the other partes send backe by secret passages a due proporcion of the same nourishment in a better forme for the strengthening and comforteing the mouthe. (88-89)

The Viet Cong press for a similar reciprocity between themselves and the villagers. The survival of one--soldier or civilian--depends on the other. Resistance fighters are literally an underground army. Living a shadow existence by day beneath the villagers' houses, they sleep in the tunnels farmers have dug for them under their own beds and eat the food which families funnel to them along passages beneath their cookstoves. Their close

proximity reinforces the sense of blood relations. "Even though they were mysterious," Le Ly remarks of the resistance fighters, "I did not fear them....Unseen, they protected us like our ancestors" (18).

The Viet Cong equated their ability to defeat the Southern traitors and to expel the Western invaders with the degree of suffering which the villagers were willing to endure for the cause. Winthrop's example for the similar sacrifice he demanded is Christ, who "out of his good will in obedience to his father, becomeing a parte of this body...willingly yielded himselfe to deathe to ease the infirmities of the rest of his body and soe heale their sorrowes" (85). Le Ly explains that same willingness among her neighbors in Ky La to give their lives to communism. During bombing raids, villagers readily offer their bodies as human shields to protect the youngest infant or the womb of a pregnant woman, in the hope of preserving a line of resistance well into the future. Villagers remain stoical when the Viet Cong execute a civilian suspected of treason, for they "all were convinced...that it was necessary to bring 'Communist happiness'" (xii). When Le Ly is repeatedly arrested by the government police, who suspect her collaboration with the North, she submits to torture rather than reveal the locations of resistance hideouts or munitions stores; she attests that she is prepared to commit suicide, the act which the Viet Cong teach is the valiant response to being captured.

What is significant in juxtaposing the cant from both texts is not simply that Winthrop and Hayslip were well versed in metaphors of family unity and the loyalty which that language could inspire, because history proves such

rhetoric to be enormously effective as a rallying call. More interesting is the schism that each effects, despite, or under cover of, their professed *esprit de corps*. Winthrop's plea for his fellow migrants to remain one in the Church is a double-entendre of sorts; his meaning is ambiguous, as he commands fidelity either to the Church of England or to the "true church" within that larger body, which his contingent of the elect will comprise if they remain godly. Likewise, Hayslip, despite shifting her allegiance from the North to the South and then voluntarily removing herself from her home and family, casts herself as ever faithful to her native land, the cultural essence of which she claims to extract and, by seeking shelter in America, preserve.

Le Ly's break with the Communists is slow in coming, but her memoir documents the traumatic events which cause her loyalties to shift. Her beatings by government interrogators who suspect her allegiance to the Viet Cong are severe but brief, for Huyen bribes Republican officials to get her daughter released. The short duration of Le Ly's detentions arouse the suspicion of the Viet Cong, who, after one of their raids on a unit of South Vietnamese infantry is ambushed, condemn her as a traitor. Raped rather than murdered by the soldiers ordered to shoot her, she and her mother flee from Ky La to Danang and eventually to Saigon. There the two women are bumped from one menial job to another, their situation made worse by the birth of Le Ly's son Hung, the child of a rich Vietnamese industrialist in whose house she and her mother briefly worked as servants.

The atrocities which the Communists perpetrated against her and others eventually convince Le Ly that the resistance has betrayed its own ideals. Acts of kindness and fairness which she observes among the Republican troops direct her sympathy from the North to the South, and more particularly to the Americans. After several dangerous years of managing to survive and to support her family through a combination of black marketeering, prostitution, and money from a series of American GI lovers, Le Ly marries Ed Munro, a civilian contractor from the United States, who is forty years her senior. Shortly after Munro's return to America, Le Ly leaves Vietnam to join him in San Diego, taking along her son Hung, whom her new husband has adopted, and their infant son Thomas.

Though in the United States Le Ly finds security and presumably fulfillment, she continues to yearn for home. At age thirty-six, after she has twice married, been twice widowed, and is financially independent as a Los Angeles restauranteur and real estate owner, she returns to Vietnam for a brief visit. Her trip is fraught with danger and anxiety, since her earlier death warrant for suspected treason against the Viet Cong puts her at risk of imprisonment or execution. Yet she most anticipates and fears the reception she will receive from her surviving relatives back home. For, despite the rest of the Phung family's outrage over Viet Cong cruelty, their allegiance has remained with the Communists. Le Ly's favorite brother, Sau Ban, gave his life as a resistance soldier, a loss his parents found more acceptable than if he had served in Diem's Republican army. Her eldest brother, Bon Nghe, after

his own tour of duty with the Viet Cong, has become a functionary in Ho Chi Minh's government. Regardless of the ambivalence her family feels about communist rule, they have accepted the reality of the new government. To fraternize with the *Viet Kieu*, those Vietnamese expatriates who moved to the United States and who are widely, though most often groundlessly, suspected of fomenting a counter-revolution, is to risk internment in a communist re-education camp or even death.

Thus, Le Ly's transformation from communist to capitalist and Vietnamese national to American citizen is much more than a social or political breach. It is a defection that severs her bond to her family, their land, and their shared history. As a child, Le Ly was deeply influenced by her father's devotion to his home as the land of his forebears. Even when warned of an impending raid on Ky La, Trong would remain behind to guard the Phung ancestral shrine while others fled to safety in the woods. Moved by the example of his filiopiety, Le Ly makes a "solemn oath to be a dutiful, perfect daughter[:] I would stay close at hand when I grew up and help them when they were old. I would let nothing prevent me from repaying their love" (5). Later, when Le Ly is the last child living with her parents, Trong entrusts to her the care of the family's home, their past, and their future. As father and daughter work the fields together, Trong recounts the canon of his brave ancestors and the series of attackers--Chinese, Japanese, and French--whom they fended off. He concludes with the story of Phung Thi Chinh, a distant

relative, who, though pregnant, protected her land against an incursion of the Han. Le Ly, he instructs, must emulate that woman warrior.

> Your job is to stay alive--to keep an eye on things and keep the village safe. To find a husband and have babies and tell the story of what you've seen to your children and anyone else who'll listen. Most of all, it is to live in peace and tend the shrine of our ancestors. (32-33)

The genre of memoir affords Hayslip the advantage of time and distance as she reconsiders and records this interchange some twenty years after it occurs. From her mature standpoint as she reflects on her father's earlier words, she comments that "only later would I learn what he truly meant" (29). While age guarantees neither perspicacity nor objectivity, the thrust of her autobiography is the certainty that, through her informed perceptions, she has fathomed and fulfilled her father's wishes. Le Ly's actions, however, belie her claim to fealty for, despite her strong sense of identity as a Phung family member and a citizen of Vietnam, the land for which her ancestors died, she forsakes her home, remarking as she leaves, "I avert my eyes--look away and look out for number one. Isn't that how people survive?" (125).[27] Such self-interest is unforgivable among a people to whom the family unit is not simply one organizing principle but "*the* foundation of social structure[;]....aid from blood relatives is mandatory, and reciprocity within the family is standard."[28] The defensiveness in Le Ly's musing about looking out for herself is, therefore, all the more pointed. But in the tradition

of the American jeremiad, Hayslip the autobiographer "transform[s] self-doubt into consolation,"[29] inverting Trong's hope that Le Ly "stay alive...to keep the village safe" in order to "tend the shrine of our ancestors" into his sanction for her flight from her family and her homeland.

Ostensibly, the title of Hayslip's memoir refers to the horrendous upheavals her nation underwent during the long and bloody war. But the transformation she effects in When Heaven and Earth Changed Places is of equally cosmic proportions, for she must turn defection into devotion. The divided sequence through which she narrates her story helps her bring about that change: passages that relate her later trip back to Vietnam are interposed between scenes which move Le Ly forward to her emigration. Tension mounts as she moves alternately in both directions, toward leaving and coming back to Vietnam, for exit and re-entry alike involve much anguish, as well as stealth and bribery. The two time frames converge near the end of the book when her departure and homecoming are complete. The effect of this narrative coupling is as though in returning she has never left, or in leaving she has remained. The differences between these two acts--staying and going--lose their significance. But in blurring the distinction between renegade and patriot, Hayslip does much more than assuage a guilty conscience. For just as the Puritans, in Bercovitch's reading, successfully rededicated themselves to their ideals by divorcing fact from rhetoric, Hayslip's rationalization ultimately allows her to recommit herself to safeguarding her heritage. The key to accomplishing this cultural mission is her ability to

present her departure from home as an act of love for her family and her country.

Both Winthrop and Hayslip cite Providence as inspiring, and thus justifying, their removals. Early in life, Winthrop had sealed his holy covenant when he vowed to "live where God appoints me."[30] That sense of destiny drove the Great Migration and was built into the Arbella sermon as proof of God's sanction: "If the Lord shall please to heare us, and bring us in peace to the place wee desire, then hath he ratified this Covenant and sealed our commission."[31] In other words, getting to New England proved that the colonists were meant to go to New England. Throughout the early history of the New England theocracy, Puritans continued to read the events of their days providentially as affirmation of their mission and their progress. Even happenstance was imbued with gravity: for instance, Winthrop construed God's guidance in his wife's discovering a spider in the porridge she was about to serve her family. That she found it was testament that God had blessed their enterprise.[32] Similarly, God verified that the Anglican Church must be reformed when mice ate through the pages of Winthrop's Book of Common Prayer but left his Bible untouched.[33]

Le Ly too looks to Providence, which she terms "fate, or luck, or god" (158, passim) to guide her through life and to verify the wisdom of the choices she makes. Her mother's story of her difficult birth and precarious infancy provides Le Ly with early evidence of her exceptionalism. She was a sickly baby whom the villagers and many of her siblings neither wanted nor

expected to live. By gender alone, Le Ly, the fourth daughter born to the Phungs, was a burden to her family, a strain exacerbated by her ill health, which drew Huyen, her middle-aged mother, away from her many responsibilities to her other children and to her community. Though the midwife who assisted at the delivery directed Huyen to suffocate her baby, Le Ly lived and grew strong.

Le Ly's sense of having been spared for a special purpose was reinforced throughout her childhood when, after routinely sheltering herself against the strafe of gunfire, she would often rise to find that many beside her had been killed. Over time she refined her capacity for determining the reasons behind the events of her life, and they consistently pointed to her departure from Vietnam and then to her return visit. When she first meets Ed Munro, the American she eventually marries, she is repelled by the thought of a man of sixty seeking the company of a teenager. She tries to elude him in the busy streets of Saigon but because he finds his way to her apartment anyway, she believes she is "up against something more formidable than the law of averages" (329). Likewise, she makes love to him because "it would have been disrespectful of fate--maybe even sacrilegious--to further resist the forces that pulled [them] together" (332). Years later at the Vietnamese embassy in Bangkok, where Le Ly considers halting her complicated journey back into her native land, she awaits her cue from Providence: "I know from experience that such a sign can take many forms...I must be vigilant to recognize these signs....I must let the hand of fate or luck or god guide me as it

will" (56). Affirmation comes in the shape of a Caucasian woman entering the embassy: somehow, she is a signal that the trip was meant to be.

Though both Winthrop and Hayslip felt that a higher power propelled them away from home and drew them to America, there were also numerous pragmatic but compelling reasons behind their emigrations. Primogeniture loomed if not as poverty for Winthrop's younger sons who were coming of age in England then as diminished means. Furthermore, offspring faced reduced inheritances and a shrinking base of influence as the Puritan gentry remained resistant to the legalism of financial exchange: e.g. as landlords many were reluctant--or unable--to raise the rents that were due them, though their tenants' resources often increased under England's growing wage economy.[34] Settlement in New England beckoned as a way to retain status for their children.

Le Ly too is genuinely motivated by maternal concern for Hung when she vows, "[I will] put my son's and my own interests first" through "buying my way out of the country" at the expense of "conscience, honor, and money" (256). Though the particulars of her escape plan remain vague, she begins to work toward emigrating to the United States by saving a larger portion of her black market earnings and supplementing her income with a brief but lucrative stint as a prostitute. She also begins courting the affections of U.S. servicemen. While, as an adolescent, Le Ly commonly used the expressions "round eyes" and "long nose" as insults to deride the Westerners who passed through her village, those same facial features become attractive to her when

she is bent on becoming a war bride. She comments specifically on the "big blue eyes and...handsome American nose of a nice-looking American" whom she hopes is interested in her (262). When Huyen objects to her daughter's dating American GIs, Le Ly assures her that her "eyes are not getting round" (277); in fact, she buys false eye lashes to make her "narrow Vietnamese eyes look bigger, rounder, and more American" (282).

But Le Ly knows that her status as an unwed mother, black marketeer, and Viet Cong fugitive makes her undesirable to the young GIs she hopes will propose marriage. Indeed, she lives with a series of American lovers, but each leaves her when his tour of duty ends. Though marriage to Ed Munro, whom she perceives as elderly, will be all *no* (debt or gratitude) without any *duyen* (physical attraction or affection), she cannot pass up the "golden opportunity to flee the war, or at least to enjoy the easy life of an American housewife" (344).

The personal aspirations and financial worries of Winthrop and Hayslip, though understandable as realistic human concerns, are nevertheless mundane if not, to a degree, crass. Yet both of these immigrants are endangered within the power structures of their native lands for acting on selfless, deeply-held convictions. The decade prior to Winthrop's migration saw militantly anti-Puritan churchmen climb to power; Charles I, who succeeded to the throne in 1625, supported their "catholicizing," Arminianist platform. Puritan pietists who refused to adopt Laudian liturgical requirements, which they regarded as

sacrilegious deviations from the dictates of the New Testament, were increasingly fined, silenced, and imprisoned.[35]

Hayslip was accused of treason by the Communists and Republicans alike. When the Viet Cong learn that she has evaded execution, they revoke her death sentence on the condition that she give herself up and resume her espionage in Ky La. But her allegiance has shifted to the Republican cause, because the Viet Cong, who had won the support of Buddhists by alleging to preserve their sacred traditions, have forbidden the practice of religious rites as counterproductive to the war effort. Though the proffered stay of execution would allow her to return to her village as she longs to do, she refuses to betray the cause of the South. Her death warrant, issued by the side which seems ever more likely to win the war and thus with whom she will have to reckon if she stays in Vietnam, remains in effect.

Fear for one's life under creeping tyranny and oppression is a reasonable motive for flight, but such an explanation opens the emigrant to charges of desertion. Winthrop, well before setting sail and at the prodding of fellow reformers as well as his own conscience, was forced to consider the adverse effects of his departure. A friend hoping to dissuade him from leaving England argued that the "church and common welthe heere at home hathe more neede of your beste abyllytie in these dangerous tymes, than any remote plantation."[36] Attempting to allay such misgivings (as well as the suspicions of the throne and the Anglican Church), Winthrop published "Arguments for the Plantation of New England," a document promoting the

Bay Colony as an enterprise that would benefit his country and his church by extending the reach of Christendom.[37]

But the skepticism of many English Puritans continued, and some charged the Bay Planters with "inflicting damage on their cause"[38] by diminishing Puritan effectiveness at home and spurring harsher measures against other non-conformists. Even worse, it was feared that by forsaking degenerate England for some distant asylum and thus reducing the numbers of the elect back home, the colonists increased the chances that "God [would] bringe some heavye Affliction upon [the] land, and that speedilye."[39] English Puritans entreated those who were set to emigrate: would it

> not be 'a great wronge to our owne country and church to take away the godly people' and thus increase the likelihood of covenantal judgment? Should not Christians 'stay and suffer for Christ' in the teeth of worsening conditions?"[40]

Le Ly grapples with, and at times tries to evade, similar charges of desertion. Realizing that her family will view her marriage to Ed Munro and her immigration to the United States as "'defection' to the land of invaders" (255), she conducts most of her emigration plans in secret. Though she invites her family to her wedding, none attends. Her father has died by the time Le Ly marries, but her elder sister Ba Xuan conveys the pain and outrage her parents feel:

> You betray your ancestors!....Do you see now what you're doing?...Americans are *thu vo thuy vo chung*--they have no

> beginning and no end. They don't care about their ancestors. Because they don't know what reincarnation is, they think they're free to do any cruel thing they want in this life--no matter how much it hurts others....[Mother] calls you a spoiled rotten child! She says you're acting ungrateful toward your parents and soiling the family name. She says that even though our father's dead, you have made him sad with your decision (348).

Le Ly leaves Vietnam without saying goodbye to her mother, allowing Huyen to learn of her daughter's departure only after she is gone.

Le Ly's homecoming sixteen years later does not immediately abate the Phungs' sense of betrayal. Bon Nghe, Le Ly's only living brother and a government official, is cold and guarded at their reunion in Danang. He is mainly concerned that Le Ly follow the protocol for tourists during her stay, and he refuses the American gifts she lavishes on the family. He will not even accept the candy she offers, as he recalls that American and South Vietnamese soldiers had often booby-trapped candy during the war. Le Ly knows the reason for his remoteness, and she articulates it as though to a confessor: "I married one of your enemies--an American civilian worker--and left the country while you were still fighting" (230).

Her eldest sister Hai, a bent and wizened snail seller, reacts much more dramatically to her sister's return. When Le Ly surprises her in the marketplace, Hai reels in terror: "Please--for the love of god--go home! Go back to Tinh's [the home of the niece who is hosting the reunion] and wait.

But for god's sake--get out of here! Take pity on us please. Let us live a little longer!" (218). Other family members share Hai's fears. Though Le Ly has gone through the proper channels to arrange her visit, her siblings do not want to alert communist informers to their sister's presence; if the alleged war crimes in Le Ly's past are revealed, they all will be punished for harboring an enemy of the state. Her Westernized look--not just her stylish, expensive clothing, her cosmetics, or her groomed hair, but her erect posture and bold stride--is hard to disguise. Back at Tinh's house, they close the shutters against onlookers and burn the wrapping from Le Ly's gifts.

Huyen postpones her trip from Ky La to the reunion in Danang for several days, a delay which Le Ly reads as her mother's unwillingness to forgive her. When the two finally meet, Huyen's reluctance to welcome her daughter home is clear. Her greeting is formal, and she holds herself rigid to fend off Le Ly's embrace. Besides this cold reception, she expresses little interest in Le Ly's life in California and the welfare of her grandchildren, using the opportunity instead to extol Bon Nghe's virtues. Le Ly's brother's life is a direct inversion of her own, and she feels her mother's censure in her praise for Bon Nghe's stalwart allegiance to the Viet Cong, his contributions to the communist party, and his strict adherence to Vietnamese custom. The exception for Huyen is her son's choice of wives, but again Le Ly feels the intended rebuke: Bon Nghe disappointed his mother by marrying a woman from Hanoi rather than someone from their village in central Vietnam; Le Ly's

marriage to a man of a different race, religion, nationality, political ideology, and even age group is contemptible beyond words.

Her mother continues the indirect but painful attack by rebuking Lan, Le Ly's sister, whose life more closely parallels her own. So little regard did Huyen have for her daughter, a "tea girl" who was paid by nightclub owners to dance with servicemen, many of whom she spent the night with, that she gave away or carelessly lost the jewelry Lan sent her. "I didn't want the stuff," Huyen explained.

"It was *lam cuc kho*--bad luck with the sweat of someone else's labor all over it" (246). In response to charges of disloyalty and abandonment and to nourish the bond to their native lands, both Winthrop and Hayslip defend their departures similarly--to themselves as well as to their accusers--as necessary to preserve the values and institutions that are jeopardized back home. Whereas Winthrop and Hayslip both worried about the immediate safety and economic security of their own children, each went beyond self-interest to express a larger concern for the future welfare of their people. Emerging capitalism in England, the decline of Protestant Church, and the foiled efforts of the Puritans to save it produced a land which, according to Winthrop, had "'grow[n] weary of her Inhabitants'....human beings were considered vile and burdensome in England."[41] Moral laxity and the rapacity of a growing market economy caused parents to fear for "a child's sense of his Englishness....They were strangers at home....England was become permanently monstrous."[42] The Bay Colonists, then, would rescue England. By describing

the New England theocracy as a "model" in his Arbella sermon, Winthrop presents not just a design for a church-state, but an example for "men...of succeeding plantacions" to imitate (93). The Puritan exodus was a crusade to save the souls of English posterity.

But the future was not to be secured through a breach with history, for Puritans cast their exodus as a means of recouping the past, of preserving the essence of "Englishness" that was being dissipated by the ethics of exchange in England.

Though in the new world colonists were pulled inexorably forward, despite Winthrop's conception of the migration as "a holding action against the evident future,"[43] the restorationist agenda was a bulwark against that inevitable progression. When American Revolutionaries one hundred and fifty years later invoked the Bay founders as visionaries who had waged the first round in the fight for independence from Britain, they misrepresented Puritan intentions. To the first colonists, "liberty" denoted the freedom to bind themselves to the dictates of the Bible so as to live and worship as the early Christians had done. Their goal, as Theodore Bozeman's study of Puritan primitivism reveals, was "to live ancient lives."[44]

Selective genealogy informed Puritan ancestor worship and made it easier to effect change while simultaneously maintaining constancy. By renouncing filial ties to George III during the Revolution and invoking instead the New England founders as the fathers whose traditions they would continue, American patriots could feature themselves as committing an act not

of "patricide but...filiopietism."[45] First-generation Puritans exercised this same choice in heredity (their "official" line of non-separation notwithstanding) by regarding themselves not as sons of the Anglican ministry but as heirs of the apostles and prophets they hailed in their sermons. They did not discard the past in breaking with the English prelates but rather shifted their devotion to different figures of veneration in their shared Christian history.

Le Ly's emigration takes on a similar tone of filial duty as she features herself to have been commissioned by her father and even by the collective but unspoken will of her nation to win the war against modernization that Vietnam was losing. Echoing the primitive cultural preservation which is the subject of Theodore Bozeman's To Live Ancient Lives, Hayslip explains that the peasants of her homeland had hoped that by supporting the Communists against the American-backed South Vietnamese government, they would gain "the ability...to live [their] lives in accordance with [their] ancient ways" (xii). But just as Puritans had begun to feel like foreigners in England, Le Ly laments well before she emigrated, "I was a stranger in my own homeland" (195). The decline her nation suffers is most painfully observable in her village. Leaving her refuge in Saigon, Le Ly risks Viet Cong arrest to visit her father in Ky La, where, refusing to vacate the family home, he lives alone. She is more appalled by the desecration she finds there than by the devastation.

> Houses could be rebuilt and damaged dikes repaired--but the loss of our temples and shrines meant the death of our culture itself. It meant that a generation of children would grow up without

> fathers to teach them about their ancestors or the rituals of worship. Families would lose records of their lineage and with them the umbilicals to the very root of our society--not just old buildings and books, but *people* who once lived and loved like them. Our ties to our past were being severed, setting us adrift on a sea of borrowed Western materialism, disrespect for the elderly, and selfishness. The war...had become a fight to see just how much and how far the Vietnam of my ancestors would be transformed. (195-196)

Ironically, to locate a rudder amid this "sea of borrowed Western materialism" and to bind herself to her heritage, she moves ahead in her decision to flee to America. Although she never tells her father of her desire to emigrate, she extrapolates his approval for her flight from their conversations. "When you see all those young Americans out there being killed and wounded in our war," he tells her, "you must thank them...for helping to put us back on our life's course. * Don't worry about right and

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*Trong's directive for Le Ly to be grateful to American soldiers is the impetus for her own "selective paternity." His advice gives her permission to shift allegiance from Vietnam to the United States and to adopt new father figures there. Her memoir reads as though, posthumously, Trong has passed his mantle of paternity to the American men in Le Ly's life. Most of those with whom she becomes sexually involved are not really her lovers, at least not in the sense that they could threaten her father's hold by turning Le Ly into anything other than a daughter. They become more like guardians, surrogates who assume Trong's responsibilities when he can no longer fulfill them. One boyfriend is her "America knight" (274), while her first husband is her "American savior" whom she likens to a "grandfather" and a "village elder" (365, 311, 327). Her second husband, Dennis Hayslip, is the man "who took responsibility" for her and her children (vi).

wrong. Those are weapons as deadly as bombs and bullets. Right is the goodness you carry in your heart--love for your ancestors and your baby and your family and for everything that lives" (200-201).

Trong's actions belie his advice to preserve life at all costs. Harassed by both North and South Vietnamese soldiers and afraid of being forced off his land, Trong takes his life by drinking acid. On an unacknowledged level, his suicide seems to release Le Ly from Vietnam, as though the reality of emigrating is closer when she no longer need confront her father about her desire to leave. But Le Ly interprets his death as much more than a dispensation; her escape becomes the duty she owes him, a means to resurrect his spirit.

> Our country's past, like the Republican cause, was on the verge of being lost forever. But with a two-year-old son on my knee...and a Phung Thi woman's heart in my chest, I concluded that such idle mourning must be left to other people. If baby Hung and I and my father's spirit were to survive the death of Vietnam, we would have to turn our eyes elsewhere--to the West--to the direction of the rising, not setting, sun; and pray that the sun would one day shine again on our country (239).

New England Puritans rebutted charges of desertion with the reasoning that the Church was universal, or, in the words of Thomas Hooker, "that God is generally present, as once with the Ark, whenever and wherever his ordinances are rightly observed."[46] Le Ly makes a similar case as she argues that the Vietnamese ethos is an intrinsic and eternal part of her being,

regardless of where she makes her home. When her sister Ba Xuan denounces her as a traitor for planning to marry an American and to emigrate to the United States, Le Ly counters that geographical location has no bearing on cultural and religious observance. "Can't I be married to Ed without becoming an American myself?" she asks her sister as much as herself. "Can't I keep an altar in my house and pray to our father and to Sau Ban and to Grandma and Grandpa Phung, even if Ed doesn't believe in it himself?" (348). Whether she turns her desire for religious constancy into a reality is never known, for in When Heaven and Earth Changed Places Hayslip alludes to the American tastes and habits she has acquired in California but includes no evidence of her continued devotion to Buddhism. But while she maintains that culture is portable, defining home as "a place you find in your heart, not on a map. People are raised to think their native country is their home, but that's not always true" (64), she also admits to a deep loss. The United States has become for Le Ly a limbo of sorts. She is proud that her sons are "well-fed, healthy, stereo-playing American boys" (193) but grieves that she is "something else: not quite Vietnamese anymore, but not so American as they" (307).

Hayslip's liminal existence is further impetus for her to reconnect to her cultural heritage, yet the Phungs' own familial instability in post-war Vietnam threatens any real reunion. The bond among her family members has grown so slack that her nephew cannot understand the reason for her return visit. "Everyone knows you have a good life in America and Vietnam has pitifully little to show its visitors," Bon Nghe's son remarks. "Why would a rich *Viet*

Kieu like you ever want to come back?" (306). Le Ly is disheartened that her nephew does not understand her need to reunite with her mother and siblings: "Has Vietnam gone so far down the road toward materialism--the very thing Bon Nghe and everyone else fought against for twenty years--that the magnet of simple family love has lost its power to attract even the most opposite of relatives?" (306).

In relating further evidence of the discord into which the Phungs have fallen in communist Vietnam, Le Ly presents herself as the one who, having escaped the full brunt of the war and its horrific aftermath, can restore family harmony. But the incidents she provides also undermine the premise behind her vindication for leaving Vietnam--that she understood and was following her father's wishes. For Le Ly is not the only Phung who professes to know Trong's mind: her siblings and her mother often presume to speak for him. For instance, during the sixteen years that Le Ly has been in the United States, she regularly sent gifts to her sister Ba in Danang, whom she assumed would distribute the goods to the rest of the family. Ba, however, kept most of the presents for herself, convinced that her need was the greatest since her husband, an official in Ngo Dinh Diem's government, had been interned by the Communists after the war. (Her first husband had gone to Hanoi to be trained by the Northern army, just as Le Ly's brothers had.) Angered by such greed, the rest of the Phung family has shunned Ba; Le Ly's mother defends that ostracism as something that "your father would've understood" (247). The Phungs claim Trong's endorsement even as they argue with one another.

Huyen, eventually urging Bon Nghe to accept Le Ly's proffered gifts, contends that "your father would have wanted you to do your duty to your sister!" (251). Adamantly refusing, Bon Nghe uses that same phrase, which becomes a mantra in When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: "That's what Father would have wanted" (251). When Le Ly senses that her family is leery about the wealth and possessions she has accumulated as a capitalist, she exonerates herself with Trong's sanction: "He taught me that material things are just a vehicle to help me get through life. Lots of Americans feel that way" (242). The ease with which the Phungs cite Trong's endorsement to justify a myriad of moral positions and behaviors renders his supposed benediction meaningless.

In her autobiography's acknowledgements, Hayslip declares her book, and the reconciliation it is meant to achieve, to be "the mission of my life" (v). Her memoir shows her becoming increasingly confident of that duty, as in her proud response to an embassy attache's question about any reason she might fear arrest upon returning to Vietnam. "The best reason of all," she answers. "I have promised my father's spirit that I will tell everything I have learned to my family, my people, and the world....[by] writing a book" (60). But by including the Phungs' varying interpretations of Trong's will, Le Ly--wittingly or inadvertently--relates that she can understand her father only subjectively. In acknowledging other perspectives on her family history, Hayslip seems to accede that her memoir is just one version of their life story. She offers further proof of the idiosyncratic grounding of her narrative when she relates that Bon

Nghe has a literary mission of his own. "I want to write a book--like you--to tell our family's story," her brother announces. "I want to learn how he [their father] felt about the war" (253). As a former Viet Cong and an official in Vietnam's new communist government, Bon Nghe would produce a memoir that is strikingly different from that which his sister writes. Moreover, he promises to ask the hard questions about Trong's suicide that Le Ly avoids, possibly because, choosing to die rather than be forced off his land, her father contradicted what she perceived as his imperative to survive at all costs and, hence, as his permission for her escape to the United States.

But what must be regarded as truth, Hayslip seems to say, is the meaning that transcends facts and which a mere reportage of events belies. She opens the "Prologue" to When Heaven and Earth Changed Places with a tribute to her father as well as to herself as the daughter in whom he vouchsafed his values.

> My father taught me to love god, my family, our traditions and the people we could not see: our ancestors. He taught me that to sacrifice one's self for freedom--like our ancient kings who fought bravely against invaders; or in the manner of our women warriors, including Miss Trung Nhi Trung Trac who drowned herself rather than give in to foreign conquerors--was a very high honor. From my love of my ancestors and my native soil, he said, I must never retreat. (ix)

On the surface, Hayslip may be seen to have failed every lesson that her father tried to teach her. She has not sacrificed herself in the noble tradition of the women warriors, as her father instructed by the example of his own suicide. Rather than eluding the "foreign conquerors" through death, she marries one of them in order to live. Told to cherish her country, the land of her ancestors, Hayslip flees to America. But in the tradition of the American jeremiad, Hayslip's autobiography "denie[s] the contradiction between history and rhetoric."[47] In her mind she has not shirked the duties her father set before her, but has fulfilled them differently, more valiantly than she could have if she had remained behind. Rather than merely deluding her family or herself, Hayslip effects a transformation that achieves her conciliatory cause. Just as the New England Puritan sermon employed an ambiguity which was "progressive because it denie[d] divisiveness--and [was]...therefore impervious to the reversals of history,"[48] Hayslip's rhetoric is similarly dynamic and forward-moving, for it ultimately allows her to accept herself and to be accepted by her family.

In the spirit of Winthrop's Arbella sermon, Le Ly counsels charity among her severed family, their war-scarred nation, and between the eastern and western worlds.** In pleading for love, she prompts their forgiveness of her. Through numerous examples, the memoir proves that she is indeed a "model of charity." She holds no grudge against Lien, the former employer

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**Hayslip's epilogue is a plea for American aid for the East Meets West Foundation, the charitable trust she runs which funds, builds, and staffs health clinics in Vietnam.

who had thrown the teenaged Le Ly into the streets of Saigon for conceiving a child with her husband. In the United States Le Ly has helped Lien's refugee sons; understanding Lien's maternal anguish, Le Ly seeks her out with good news of her children's welfare. Though Lien's husband Anh never took responsibility for Hung, the illegitimate child whom Le Ly's husband Ed Munro adopted, Le Ly forgives her former lover and addresses him as her son's father, as he has come to regard himself.

More importantly, Le Ly's return to Vietnam occasions the Phungs' reconciliation with Ba, the family outcast. They settle their feud with her on the example of Hayslip's own generous spirit, which they find to be reminiscent of Trong's good-heartedness. Moved by Le Ly's capacity to forgive, her mother exclaims, "you got that from your father. You've done your homework, Bay Ly.*** The rest of us--well--our whole world turned upside down because we didn't learn our lessons about getting along. And we're still in trouble for it, aren't we? We need to listen to our higher selves, Bay Ly--as you have done" (358). Le Ly's transformation is complete: the child who had forsaken her family is the one who restores them to harmony; the daughter who seemed to defy her father's lessons is the heir who succeeds him as teacher. When at the end of her memoir she again leaves her family--this time with their full blessing--she harks back to the day when her father first charged her with protecting the Phung land. The closing passage

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***"Bay" is the ordinal number six, "Bay Ly" the pet name which denotes Le Ly as the sixth child born into the Phung family.

resounds with a clarity of purpose and pride in its accomplishment: "To the east, there is a small, bald hill overlooking the rest, where an older, wiser entity--almost finished with its quest for perfection--bestowed on a younger spirit the object of her journey" (362).

Like the New England jeremiad, the rationalization at work in Hayslip's narrative betrays the doubt, guilt, and ethical confusion it seeks to resolve. But, also consistent with Puritan rhetoric, Hayslip's "flights of self-justification" through which she overlooks the "discrepancy between appearance and promise" supply the Phung family with a needed "source of social cohesion and continuity."[49] Many scholars of American Puritanism contend that the millennialism of the New England migration was an *ex post facto* motive. They maintain that the remove which Winthrop described to his wife as an escape "to a shelter and a hiding place for us and ours"[50] was only later cast as a heroic pilgrimage to bolster or defend what was increasingly seen as desertion or a wasted effort.[51] Cotton Mather, a third-generation New Englander, boosted the flagging reputations of the founders when, writing his grandfather Richard's biography, he praised the elder's wisdom and valor in leaving degenerate England. In Magnalia Christi Americana (1702), Mather describes his grandfather as a "noble exile, banished to the wilderness of America for his devotion to the true Church order."[52] Le Ly Hayslip, as three separate characters in her memoir--the girl who leaves home, the woman who returns, and the author who writes about it--undertakes the transformatory work which the offspring of Puritan immigrants performed for their founding

generation. In terms that are too harsh yet still apt, she performs her own damage control as she turns her flight from Vietnam into a campaign to save it.

Perry Miller and Sacvan Bercovitch diverge in their appraisals of the effect and range of the Puritan experiment. For Miller, the dubious process of divorcing fact from rhetoric, by which Puritanism was sustained, taints the overall product; he pronounces the grand New England errand a failure that was salvaged as an effort toward "Americanization" when England lost interest in Massachusetts.[53] Bercovitch, looking beyond the means to the end, or, rather, perceiving that the means, as a ritual, can eternally defer an outcome and thus postpone defeat, declares the Puritan mission a success.[54] **** Likewise, when the actual manner of Hayslip's accomplishment does not overshadow what she has wrought, her emigration becomes the brave American errand to which she was dispatched by her father. Writing three hundred and fifty years earlier, Winthrop demonstrated the way to leave home and yet remain attached, for the Puritan founders of the Bay Colony effect what is tantamount to schism while avoiding the label of Separatist. Hayslip's resignation to the moniker of apostate or renegade would have precluded her return to Vietnam and, presumably, the production of her memoir. But by reworking her emigration so that her decision to "look out for number one" (125) becomes a bold and magnanimous measure to protect her cultural

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**** Bercovitch testifies to the efficacy of Puritan consensus-building without affirming its effect, which, as a Marxist-leaning theorist, he indicts as culminating in American middle-class, capitalist society.

heritage, she actually can return home and perform that duty. For When Heaven and Earth Changed Places is the paean which Hayslip owes to the past. Her autobiography is the vehicle by which she reconciles herself to her nativity and thus enhances her life in the United States. By reconnecting with her homeland, Hayslip both settles her cultural debt and regains the spiritual, cultural, and familial ties that will sustain her in America.

Notes

1. Edmund S. Morgan, The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958) 1-53.

2. Perry Miller's thesis of Puritan millennialism, most succinctly argued in Errand into the Wilderness (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1956) but pervasive throughout the corpus of his scholarship and reiterated, to a large extent, by Edmund Morgan in such of his works as Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1963), among others, continues to hold sway in the debate of the early New England mind. But there have been reconsiderations of note. For diverging theories on Puritan thought and responses to Miller, see Sacvan Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1978); Theodore Bozeman, To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1988); or Andrew Delbanco, The Puritan Ordeal (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1989).

3. Delbanco contends that England's nonconforming Puritans who elected to migrate did so not to fulfill a glorious mission but to escape their own imminent depravity and God's ensuing wrathful judgement upon their Anglican homeland. Their jeremiads reminded them of what they had escaped and what they needed to be vigilant about resisting. See "Errand out of the Wilderness," in Puritan Ordeal, 41-80.

4. Hayslip wrote a second book, Child of War, Woman of Peace (New York: Doubleday, 1993), which overlaps chronologically with When Heaven and Earth Changed Places, filling in the narrative gap in her life story between her arrival in the United States in 1970 and her visit to Vietnam in 1986. While this second memoir covers her orientation to the United States, it remains significant that the time frame of the first book she elected to write included nearly two decades of her life in America yet omitted references to those intervening years, concentrating instead on the world she had left behind.

5. Delbanco 72.

6. Perry Miller, "The Jeremiad," The New England Mind: From Colony to Province (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1953) 27-39, especially 29.

7. Miller, The New England Mind 27-39, especially 28, 29.

8. Bercovitch 7.

9. Bercovitch 8.

10. Bercovitch 8,

11. Bercovitch 75-80.

12. Bercovitch explains the American Puritan jeremiad as "the ritual of a culture on an errand--which is to say, a culture based on a faith in process. Substituting teleology for hierarchy, it discarded the Old World ideal of stasis for a New World vision of the future. Its function was to create a climate of anxiety that helped release the restless 'progressivist' energies required for the success of the venture" (23). See also Darrett Rutman, Winthrop's Boston: Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630-1649 (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1965) 2-22.

13. Miller explains that the castigating fast-day sermons were "not a blood-letting and a cure, but an increase of appetite that grew by what it fed upon." See The New England Mind, 28.

14. Bercovitch 17.

15. Bercovitch 18.

16. Bercovitch 17.

17. Bercovitch 11.

18. Bercovitch 12.

19. Bercovitch 33, 78, and 86.

20. Perry Miller, Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, 1630-1650 (1933; New York: Harper, 1970) 84; cited in Delbanco 67.

21. Delbanco 66.

22. Le Ly Hayslip with Jay Wurts, When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace (New York: Doubleday, 1989) 193. All other references to this source with be cited parenthetically in the text.

23. Lee Schweninger explains that while Winthrop might not have actually written the "Humble Request," he did in fact read and sign that document. See John Winthrop (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1990) 40, 41.

24. Edmund S. Morgan, "John Winthrop's 'Modell of Christian Charity' in a Wider Context," The Huntington Library Quarterly 50.1 (87) 145-151. Despite his title, Morgan examines the sermon in a narrower context. Assuming that Winthrop was aware of the threat of mutiny on the dangerous sea crossing, he speculates that the Governor delivered his sermon while the Arbella passengers were receiving Communion. The message of the sermon, coupled with the taking of the sacrament, it was presumably hoped, would achieve the "concord and amity" (146) necessary to complete the first leg of the Puritan errand--the Atlantic voyage.

25. For a discussion of the unprecedented assertion of human will in Winthrop's sermon see Scott Michaelsen, "John Winthrop's 'Modell' Covenant and the Company Way," Early American Literature 27 (1992): 85-100.

26. Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness 5, 6, 143.

27. Hayslip actually makes this remark later in her autobiography, but when she utters it, she says it describes the same emotions she felt upon leaving Vietnam in 1970.

28. The preeminent role that family plays in shaping individual identity is clear from the order in which Vietnamese names are written, with the family name placed first to emphasize a person's heritage. See Paul James Rutledge, The Vietnamese Experience in America (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992) 139, 153. Moreover, Le Ly and her siblings place further weight on family membership as they frequently call one another by names which mark their order of birth. Le Ly, the sixth-born, is often called Bay Ly, "Bay" meaning "sixth."

29. Bercovitch 16.

30. Schweninger 19.

31. John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," in Puritan Political Ideas, 1158-1794 ed. Edmund S. Morgan (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965) 92. Other references to the sermon are from this source and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

32. Schweninger 22.

33. John Winthrop, "Journal," in The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry, Perry Miller, ed (New York: Columbia, 1956) 41.

34. Delbanco 12, 47, 60-62.

35. Bozeman 101-107.

36. Schweninger 38.

37. Schweninger 36-39.

38. Delbanco 100.

39. Schweninger 37.

40. Bozeman 95.

41. Schweninger 37.

42. Referring specifically to William Bradford's fear that his family, while living in Holland, would lose their attachment to the mother tongue, Delbanco maintains that the Puritans felt this same estrangement without leaving England. See Delbanco, 70.

43. Delbanco 76.

44. Theodore Dwight Bozeman, To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1988).

45. Bercovitch 123.

46. Delbanco 91.

47. Bercovitch 17.

48. Bercovitch 16,17.

49. Bercovitch 17.

50. Schweninger 30.

51. For instance, Bozeman maintains that the migration was initially intended to recover the first forms of Christian worship. The Puritans' crusading exemplarity, he contends, was a revisionist construct by which the offspring exalted the founders. See 116-119. Consider as well Delbanco's explanation that as the offspring faced their own decline they magnified the objectives of the immigrant generation, whom, he believes, had simply sought to escape degenerate England. The grand design, imputed to the founders by their children, was intended to make their own failings more understandable in light of such exceptionalism. See 226-230.

52. Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596-1728 (New York: Oxford UP, 1971) 195.

53. Miller, Errand into the Wilderness 10-15.

54. See Bercovitch 10-19 for his discussion of Miller's views on the failure of Puritanism and his own case for the effectiveness of Puritan self-justification.

CHAPTER FOUR
Flight from the Ethnic Enclave: Escape or Sojourn?

The divide between canonical and ethnic writing in American literary study is maintained in part through semantics. "Ethnic" as a designation of minority status in the United States is a coveted and contested signifier. Slovakian-American Michael Novak vigorously defends that descriptor for Americans of Eastern European descent, those he describes as "unmeltable ethnics" who are unwilling and, indeed, unable to assimilate into the WASP American mainstream.[1] Definable difference is the premise of such recent scholarship as Princes, Peasants, and Other Polish Selves: Ethnicity in American Literature (1992) or The Republic of Armenia and the Rethinking of the North-American Diaspora in Literature (1992)[2]: attributes of descent and circumstances of emigration are found to shape and distinguish American fiction by authors of Eastern European origin, in these examples, and place it outside the WASP mainstream.

Other scholars of multicultural American literature, however, dispute any European-American claim to ethnic status. Bonnie TuSmith echoes popular sentiment in pronouncing Americans of Southern or Eastern European descent would-be minorities. Her primary basis for distinguishing ethnicity is physical appearance. She maintains that to label Jews, Italians, or the Irish, for

example, as "ethnic" is a misnomer, since these Americans easily blend into white America.* Members of these groups who regard themselves as cultural minorities, she contends, practice an "effortless ethnicity" through voluntary involvement in religious rites or personal choice in dietary habits. TuSmith would reserve "ethnic" for those who, by visible characteristics of race, are easily identifiable as "other": Blacks, Asians, Hispanics, and American Indians. Proposing that "ethnic" be used to denote only people of color, she declares "WASP," "Anglo," "European American," and "white" as interchangeable terms to describe all white Americans of European origin.[3]

But beyond tagging physical characteristics as evidence of ethnicity, TuSmith, as a custodian of the cultural divide, undertakes to "distinguish...Eurocentric culture or literary tradition [which she defines as homogeneously European--Western or Eastern, Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish] from ethnic traditions in this country."[4] Foundational to such cultural categorization is what has become an accepted watershed in classifying American literatures: self-interest is the presumed rule for Eurocentric fiction, while communitarianism is thought predominant in ethnic writing.[5] The title of TuSmith's book reflects this division. All My Relatives posits a kinship

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* TuSmith's claim, of course, overlooks bigotry based on physical (quite aside from cultural) differences among European immigrant groups. Consider, for example, Alexander Portnoy's anguish over his appearance--"you have got J-E-W written right across the middle of that face--look at the shnoz on him." Philip Roth, Portnoy's Complaint (New York: Random House, 1967) 168, or the cruel judgement of steelmill management in Thomas Bell's Out of This Furnace that the Slovaks' prominent brow and heavy jaw befit them for nothing other than brute labor. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1941).

between and among Asian-American, African-American, Native American, and Chicano writers with respect to their affinity for community. Because members of each group prize their own relatives--their community--they in turn are related to one another by virtue of such neighborliness, and they sharply contrast the European emphasis on privacy, competition, and personal achievement.

To highlight communal affirmation within minority literature, TuSmith reiterates as contrast Richard Chase's thesis that the hallmark of classic American literature is the hero's romantic escape from society into a solitary existence where "human virtues are personal, alien, and renunciatory."[6] Yet while TuSmith disparages as naively and unnaturally dualistic the literary traits which Chase identifies as classically American--such as the Manichaean melodrama of good and evil--she and many other multiculturalists fall back on similarly flawed absolutes.[7] To acclaim the collectivist ethos of ethnic writing and reserve radical individualism for Euro-American literature is to rest unwisely on a false dichotomy.

A bi-directional domino effect results from TuSmith's reliance on Chase, who in turn cites Hawthorne to prove his thesis of American individualism. Like Chase, R.W.B. Lewis also counts Hawthorne's heroes--specifically Hester Prynne--among his American Adams who step out of history to make themselves anew.[8] But, ironically, The Scarlet Letter defies the binary logic that would oppose ethnic and Anglo-American writing, for in many ways that novel joins rather than divides majority and minority literature of the U.S.

As a nineteenth-century romancer, Hawthorne displays a fondness for the past which is usually deemed central to ethnic writing. As many scholars of multiculturalism propound, minority writers are keenly interested in the art of storytelling, for the narrative is their link to an endangered history.[9] According to Dexter Fisher, narration and tradition are indivisible.

> Storytelling *is* the art of making connections, of establishing relationships with people and the creative process, with nature, feelings, and the self with one's heritage and progeny. Storytelling generates continuity, linking the past to the future and 'contextualizing' individual histories within the framework of tradition.[10]

In contrast, Euro-centric literature is often thought heretical in its irreverence for the past and desire for originality,[11] as indicated by the modernist dictum to "make it new" or, earlier, Emerson's oft-repeated "American Scholar" charge that "we have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe." Hawthorne, however, is loath to part with the past. In his preface to The House of the Seven Gables (1851), he describes his authorial intention as "the attempt to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us." He presents himself as a scribe who helps "a legend prolong...from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our broad daylight."[12] He considers this debt and duty to history at greater length in "The Custom House" and undertakes to fulfill it in The Scarlet Letter (1850).

Like many ethnic-Americans whose fiction reveals that in confusion, despair, or even anger they turn to their forebears for guidance, Hawthorne, in his time of need, delves into New England's past, which is his personal and national history. "The Custom-House" explains that the Whig victory of 1848 meant the end of his government position, a loss of income that would further destabilize a precarious writing career. Aid comes in the legacy of his "official ancestor," Mr. Jonathan Pue, the customs surveyor of the previous century who purportedly first recorded the

saga of Hester Prynne. Hawthorne gives his imagination free rein in The Scarlet Letter (indeed, "The Custom-House" clarifies that the story is both fiction and fact), but he nonetheless casts himself as the vehicle for his forebear's story: "With his own ghostly voice, [Surveyor Pue] exhorted me, on the sacred consideration of my filial duty and reverence towards him...who might reasonably regard himself as my official ancestor,–to bring his mouldy and moth-eaten lucubrations before the public."[13] As narrator, Hawthorne presents himself as the channel through which lore is passed and preserved. By re-telling the tale, he is promised to derive profit if he gives the "predecessor's memory the credit which will be rightfully its due" (43).

Hawthorne's tale of an adulterer's punishment in the Boston Colony, moreover, is the story of his own ancestry. Old Salem is his "native place" (19) where his family's "deep and aged roots...[have] struck into the soil" (20). The description of his first immigrant ancestor, a "grave, bearded, sable-cloaked, and steeple-crowned progenitor...[who] had all the Puritanic traits, both good

and evil" (20), suggests the stern elders who stand in judgment of Hester Prynne. The tone of that description also suggests the ambivalence that later ethnic writers would feel for their forebears and which the act of writing was hoped to settle. Hawthorne does not gloss over his progenitors' faults, for "The Custom House" recounts their zealous persecution of suspected sinners and witches. But the tale that follows, though it conveys the characteristic severity of historical and invented Puritan characters alike, also exonerates Hawthorne's kinsmen. Despite their cold-bloodedness, New England figures of authority prevail as the able voice for the common good. While much scholarship celebrates Hawthorne as a writer ahead of his time, a feminist precursor who boldly articulates social parity for women,[14] The Scarlet Letter is ultimately conservative in reaffirming the status quo. In Jonathan Arac's new historicist reading, the novel is propaganda against change.[15] Likewise, Sacvan Bercovitch speaks to the novel's reactionary bent as Hawthorne squelches Hester's radicalism, which represents dangerous political upheavals at home and abroad.[16] In exploring his national history and personal past--even as he augments the patina of age with imagination--Hawthorne prefigures later American immigrant fiction which focuses on familial roots. His narrative pose as a storyteller who retells a factual yet fanciful tale disproves (or at least problematizes) the multiculturalist claim that Eurocentric literature discounts cultural continuity and ignores the storytelling process.[17]

But the bridge between Anglo- and ethnic-American literature which The Scarlet Letter provides is buttressed by more than shared interest in

cultural continuity through storytelling. The alignment with tradition which Hawthorne achieves through his narrative method repeats in the story itself, for the plot of The Scarlet Letter largely affirms the New England way. Such easy absolutes as "leaving is...the permanent solution...in Eurocentric literature"[18] neither capture the complexity of Hawthorne nor prove the presumed gulf between ethnic and mainstream writing. Flight is not the final or foregone conclusion it is taken to be in much American literature, nor is it absent in ethnic literature. Protagonists in ethnic and mainstream American literature alike leave home and family behind, often with the same results. In a sequence of events quite like the mythic hero's three-part journey of separation, initiation, and return, protagonists are often tried and strengthened by their remove, and they go back to bestow their wisdom on those whom they have left behind. Flight from the immigrant enclave--whether a Puritan colony or an ethnic ghetto--is often a sojourn; the renegade returns empowered by travel beyond the home boundaries to revitalize the community and thus keep an endangered culture viable.

Hester Prynne is a deceptively easy mark for critics who would level charges of romantic nihilism against Eurocentric literature.[19] Her social and moral offenses are too glaring. At the outset, she is linked to Ann Hutchinson, the antinomian who challenged Calvinist doctrine to impute redemptory powers of faith to the individual. Like the heretical Hutchinson, Hester's thoughts and actions are "against the law." Her illicit union with Dimmesdale is both a sin and a crime against the Puritan theocracy, and the act is made

more egregious by her sacrilegious defense that it "had a consecration of its own" (186). Moreover, she flouts the patriarchy by refusing to name her child's father, not only by willfully withholding information which the elders seek but by implying through her silence that paternity is of small consequence. Having spurned Puritan convention, Hester breaks the social compact. Her moral restiveness is as dangerous to the precarious colony's welfare as the dark wilderness that threatens to reclaim their settlement.

Despite enduring images of Hester Prynne as statuesque and impassive before her accusers or as an observer frozen on the fringe of activity, she is a dynamic character who is often in motion. In many ways, The Scarlet Letter is Hester's story of restless outward mobility: as a Massachusetts Bay colonist she is an English immigrant whose wanderlust remains seemingly unabated by removal and resettlement. To the woeful Dimmesdale, whom she meets in the forest seven years after their first tryst, she counsels flight and forgetfulness. Exclaiming that the wide world beckons them, she urges that they follow the forest-track, not "backwards to the settlement...but deeper...into the wilderness...from a world where thou hast been most wretched, to one where thou mayest still be happy" (187). She is giddy with the possibilities of re-invention that await them in the woods or across the sea in Europe, and she exhorts her lover to "begin all anew....Give up this name of Arthur Dimmesdale, and make thyself another, and a high one, such as thou canst wear without fear or shame" (188). She instructs that the break with society is to be abrupt and complete: "let us not look back....The past is gone" (192).

Although her escape with Dimmesdale never comes to pass, Hester makes an internal migration through her radical self-direction. As a free-thinker, she poses a threat to the social order, for she muses over a transformation that would strike at the very base of the community--its gender roles. To her way of thinking, "the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built up anew....the very nature of the opposite sex...is to be essentially modified, before woman can be allowed to assume what seems a fair and suitable position" (160). But Hawthorne does not hail the changes Hester would affect; he denounces them, for he presents her as a sick soul who is devoid of a moral touchstone. Her heart has "lost its regular and healthy throb;" she wanders "without a clew in the dark labyrinth of mind" (160).

Hawthorne follows up this image of Hester meandering a moral abyss with the terse but cryptic statement that "the scarlet letter had not done its office" (160). To Bercovitch, this line proves Hawthorne's conservatism in that Hester has not been reformed as she duly should be.[20] But the syntax shifts the emphasis of the sentence away from her, for the subject is not Hester but the letter, to which an ambiguous injuriousness is imputed. On one level, the "A" has simply not accomplished what is intended by its application: it has not tamed Hester's rebellious impulses. But by failing "its office," it has actually worked against the desired rehabilitation. The scarlet letter has stigmatized Hester, further separating her from the community in such a way as to heighten her radical nature. Hawthorne criticizes the emblem as a vehicle of further transgression, which literally denotes a journey, an exceeding

of due bounds: "the scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread. Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers,--stern and wild ones,--and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss" (190).

Hester and the Bay colonists are unwitting conspirators in her revolution. As they stigmatize her with the scarlet letter, she brightly embroiders it, intensifying its capacity to set her apart from the community. She is wrong to exempt herself from social regulation, but the settlers err as well by participating in her ostracism. Her sequestration then is both self-imposed and community-reinforced. Townspeople warm to her as she conforms--albeit outwardly--to social expectations, for they regard her as "our Hester--the town's Hester" (157). Yet their fondness reinforces her marginality: she is a character, quaint but peculiar, who is decidedly different from "them."

A headstrong individual and an unyielding community form a potentially hazardous combination in their mutual repulsion. The colony continues to be at risk when a "mind of native courage and activity,...[is] outlawed, from society" for Hester has become "habituated...to such latitude of speculation....[that] she had looked from this estranged point of view at human institutions...criticizing all" (189, 190). Society is implicated in Hester's radicalism, for seclusion breeds errant thought. Both shunned and self-sequestered, Hester imbibes the spirit of revolution that had caused political upheaval in the world of the Puritan seventeenth-century and in Hawthorne's mid-nineteenth.[21] The effect of her detachment is ominous: "she assumed a

freedom of speculation...which our forefathers, had they known of it, would have held to be a deadlier crime than that stigmatized by the scarlet letter" (159).

The narrator settles much import upon the general collective in The Scarlet Letter. There is heavy emphasis on the state of public welfare, the sting of public shame, and the relief of public forgiveness. Dimmesdale reaches out to Pearl several times during the course of the novel, but only when he publicly acknowledges her as his daughter does he feel forgiven, even though he makes his disclosure before an uncomprehending crowd. Likewise, the gesture has a healing effect on the child only when it is made openly: Pearl is unmoved by Dimmesdale's previous fatherly overtures toward her, but his public admission of paternity is strong enough to pull her into the ranks of humankind where she can "develop all her sympathies...[for] human joy and sorrow" (238).

Hawthorne affirms the weightiness of public opinion and the priority of the common good. When Hester and Dimmesdale plan to flee the colony together, Hawthorne concedes to the allure of their reckless flight but does not condone it. He describes the realm the fugitive lovers would construct as an "unredeemed, unchristianized, lawless region" (191). Dimmesdale's reason for forgoing flight and remaining in the colony is compelling: admitting culpability will resolve the painful contrast between seeming and being,[22] but evading responsibility will perpetuate that grievous contradiction. The minister wrongly assumes that Hester has "made a clean breast" of her

transgression when he exclaims, "happy are you...that wear the scarlet letter openly upon your bosom! Mine burns in secret!" (183). Yet even as he over-estimates Hester's contrition he articulates the virtue of confession and reconciliation. When Hester suggests to her partner that the mental anguish he suffers has fully absolved him of sin, he sharply refutes her logic: "Of penance I have had enough! Of penitence there has been none!" (183). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the critical difference between these two related terms is the behavior they produce: "penance" denotes regret for an offense, an inner sense of remorse; "penitence," in contrast, is an outward expression of repentance, contrition for an offense coupled with an act of expiation.[23] Dimmesdale is deeply sorry for his adultery, his tacit repudiation of Pearl, and his false show of purity, but inner torment provides no measure of atonement and, thus, no reconciliation. But by amending his misdeeds by openly embracing Pearl, he restores himself and his child to the human fold, which is where Hawthorne maintains they belong.

Hester proves more recalcitrant. Despite her years of quiet servitude, she has only mimed penitence. But long after her departure for England following Dimmesdale's death, a wiser Hester returns to Boston where she makes retribution in earnest. The narrator describes Hester's sin and shame as "the roots which she had struck into the soil" (83); the self-indulgent act which divides the sinner from the community is the very flaw that binds one to another and, in fact, improves them all as social constituents. Her transgression--her boundary-crossing--has taught her a greater understanding

of the human heart and mind; upon her voluntary return, she imparts that knowledge to her community. Hester's sin--the illicit union and the mental and literal retreat that follow--proves to be her *felix culp*a, the fortunate fault that could "deeply touch her, and thus humanize and make her capable of sympathy" (176)[24] and produce the same effect in others. A younger Hester regarded her "knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts" (89) as a curse that forced an ugly and unwanted awareness upon her. In contrast, a mature Hester sees sin as the basis of kinship from which to reach out and, significantly, be received as "one who had herself gone through a mighty trouble" (244). She has learned that "love requires, more than a consecration of its own, the consecration of history and community."[25]

Hester gives up the vision of herself as a prophetess chosen to reorder gender relations, yet she remains an agent of change nonetheless. As the radical who spurned society is at last one with the people, the community that had shunned her as a reprobate is likewise moved to find itself in her. Those whom Hester counsels also commiserate with her: they recognize that they are joined by virtue of the "wounded, wasted, wronged, misplaced, or erring and sinful passion" (245) that makes them human.

By effecting change which strengthens and improves her community, Hester assures its durability. For notwithstanding the historical decline of Puritanism, the balance of these competing impulses--change and continuity--keeps New England viable. In a scene near the novel's end, Hester, snug in her cottage on the Massachusetts shore, connects to her posterity by knitting

baby-garments for her grandchild in England and receiving Pearl's gifts, which are "tokens of a continual remembrance" (244). Rootedness and stability, the domestic idyll suggests, ensure the near inverse of that static condition--the extension across time and space. Such is Hester's final enduring feat. The tombstone which marks her deep and still grave continues to pique the "curious investigator" who keeps her legend alive.

Hester Prynne's second journey, a mental and physical retreat from the new world community after the initial remove to America, stands as a modern archetypal quest in ethnic literature of the U.S. Young immigrants like Hester, met with previously unimagined social freedoms, often bristle under the weight of old world authority in their new environment. Caught between the claim of heredity and the competing lure of self-invention, they often abandon the ethnic enclave to seek personal liberty. This restlessness parallels Hester's behavior not only in departure but also in return, for the route from the immigrant ghetto often doubles back to deliver the renegade back home. As a cross-sampling of immigrant literature reveals, the sojourn into the world beyond the home boundaries often prepares the dissenter to appreciate, adapt and, thus, preserve the way of life he or she has renounced.

The subtitle of Anzia Yezierska's Bread Givers (1925), "A Struggle between a Father of the Old World and a Daughter of the New," sums up the inter-generational conflict that often drives ethnic young from home. Sara Smolensky, the youngest of four daughters in a family of poor immigrants on New York's lower east side, refuses to live by her father's harsh dictates,

which are backed by centuries of Jewish tradition. Pious Reb Smolensky practices the Old Testament dictum which he routinely preaches: "It says in the Torah, only through a man has a woman an existence. Only through a man can a woman enter heaven."[26] The wife and daughters of the Talmudic scholar labor for meager wages on which to run the household so that he can spend his days in study, either at the synagogue or in the private quarters he has cordoned off in the crowed family tenement. Sara's future is mapped out in her older sisters' miserable marriages: each is forced to abandon the mate of her choosing to make a marriage which Reb thinks will be more lucrative. An unwise matchmaker, he turns his daughters into veritable servants in penniless, loveless marriages.

Sara, however, refuses to bend to her father's will. She defies Jewish tradition, foreswearing subservience to anyone and vowing instead to "make herself a person" (21) by attaining an education and entering a profession. Her stubborn drive for autonomy seems compelling support for TuSmith's contention that even non-WASP European immigrants join the Anglo-American in disengaging from the community to pursue self-interest. Indeed, Sara's road to success leads her beyond the limits of her home. She walks out on the family's fledgling grocery business to earn and save her own pay as a laundress, which is one step on her way to college degree. A prized aspect of the dreary accommodations she rents for herself is the private entrance to her room. The door represents for Sara a means of control, over herself and the world beyond.

> A separate door to myself--a door to shut out all the noises of the world....My hands clutched at the knob. This door was life. It was air. The bottom starting-point of becoming a person. I simply must have this room with the shut door (159).

Sara will brook no compromise in her campaign for self-development. Her regimen of work and study is her new religion; time spent relaxing or visiting her family is a sinful waste. When Shenah makes the difficult errand to deliver a feather bed to her daughter at her new quarters, Sara is grateful but adamant in her refusal to repay her mother's kindness with a trip home. Her justification is simple: "I can't take time....Every little minute must go to my studies...my minutes are like diamonds to me....I could see you later. But I can't go to college later....I have so much to learn before I can enter college" (171, 2).

Six years later, upon finishing night school and graduating college, her transformation is complete. She exclaims to her reflection in a mirror that she has been "changed into a person!" (237). "My Honeymoon with Myself" is a telling title for the chapter in which she attains her teaching credentials. In a clean, spacious hotel room, she celebrates the momentous occasion with her "precious privacy" and "beautiful aloneness" (241). Even when she tries to reunite with her family, at the sad occasion of her mother's funeral, her development seems to divide her from her family. Although Sara is back on familiar ground, she is out of place. For instance, in accord with Biblical law and Jewish custom, the undertaker moves to tear the clothing of Shenah's

husband and daughters. Ruled by Yankee common sense, however, Sara refuses to participate in the rite of mourning: her funeral outfit is her only good suit; she needs it for work and will not ruin it through a symbolic gesture. Her community interprets her attitude as betrayal, and they unite against her. She explains that "a hundred eyes burned on me their condemnation: 'Look at her, the *Americanerin*!'" (255).

Although Bread Givers reads as a veritable allegory peopled with stock types--Reb Smolensky as the tyrant, his wife Shenah the martyr, and Sara the hero[27]--Yezierska's tale of generational conflict is complex and nuanced, and Sara's sentiments are not easily graphed or catalogued. This deceptively simplistic novel explodes the binary logic which supports oppositional assessments of ethnic and Euro-centric literature as it works through a conflicted sense of personal and public responsibility. Sara's disengagement from family and larger community seems consistent with classic American tales of dissociation, yet as with them, the protagonist's flight from home provides a social dividend. Like Hester Prynne, whose isolation ultimately strengthens her communal orientation, Sara becomes more committed to her culture for having ventured away from it. Seclusion permits Sara to develop her own resources; distance grants her an objective appreciation for her home life. With these endowments, Sara ultimately preserves rather than parts with Jewish tradition.

That Sara would reap success individually and then make her family and larger community the beneficiaries of her accomplishments is

foreshadowed early in the novel. In the first chapter, Sara, a mere child of ten, doubles her small investment in herring as a fish peddler. She is thrilled with the profits which make her feel "richer than Rockefeller" (22), but her real pleasure is altruistic rather than selfish, as she remarks

> I was always saying to myself, if I ever had a quarter or a half dollar in my hand, I'd run away from home and never look on our dirty house again. But now I was so happy with my money, I didn't think of running away, I only wanted to show them what I could do and give it away to them (22).

Her desires are dual but not duelling: she wants to apply herself without restraint so as to help others through her talents. In short, she wants to be both breadwinner and breadgiver.

Sara's earning power makes her feel "independent, like a real person" (28). And while the residual effect of her first success is a separation of sorts within her family, the individuation actually strengthens their sense of togetherness. The extra income she brings in grants her family members the dignity of eating with implements of his or her own. Shenah is able to buy "enough plates and spoons and forks and knives" for them to "all sit down by the table at the same time and eat like people...instead of from the pot to the hand as [they] once did" (29). Sara's strong desire for privacy is less defensible as indirect altruism, yet Yezierska presents solitude as a basic need. Because the family tenement teems with life--not all of which is human--Sara naturally longs for a bright, clean space that is free of noise and vermin. And though

she longs to be alone, she never intends to sequester herself completely. She opposes Reb Smolensky's venture into the grocery business not because she knows him to be a poor businessman but because relocating to New Jersey removes her from her neighborhood. She misses the activity of the ghetto, "the crowds sweeping you on, like waves of a beating sea." But even more, she fears that the loss of community will strip her of her humanity.

> What would become of me if I remained out here, day in and day out, without friends...I'd forget how to shake hands. My tongue would grow dumb in my mouth. And all my longing for people would shrink in my frozen heart (129).

In fact throughout Sara's odyssey toward selfhood, Yezierska presents isolation as anathema. Sara wants independent control over the routine of her days, but she remains a social creature who longs for human interaction. It is her strong sense of purpose that continually divides her from others. The shop girls at the laundry come together to gossip about boyfriends and their evenings out, aspects of life which Sara has forgone in order to study. Additionally, her eagerness at night school indirectly exposes the other students as dullards, and they openly resent her. The resulting ostracism is painful. Sara admits an urge to "throw myself at the feet of the girls and cry out to them, 'Say anything you like. Do anything you like. All right--hurt me. But don't leave me out. I don't want to be left out!'" (180).

Moreover, Sara's departure from New York to attend college is neither a rejection of her ethnic community nor an attempt to enter the ranks of the

WASP co-eds. It is, rather, a continued quest for the camaraderie and intellectual interaction she has always sought. At school Sara hopes to find "the inspired companionship of teachers who are friends! The high places above the earth, where minds are fired by minds....[by] the flash from eye to eye, from heart to heart" (224). But these gratifying connections never form. Over-worked teachers are too busy to cultivate an outside interest in Sara. The middle-class students--"real Americans" in Sara's perceptions--stick to themselves. Their lack of their concern for her is the veritable nullification of her existence. She alternately describes herself as "nothing and nobody" and a "ghost" (219). In a world which threatens to cancel out her presence, her vow to "make myself into a person" stands as brave survival.

Yet despite Sara's resolve to break with tradition in order to make herself anew, she actually holds tightly to models from the past. The animus in her relationship with Reb stems from the strong affinity between them; indeed, Sara is a daughter formed in her father's image. Like him, she demands the right to assert her will and develop her mind, an impulse deemed unnatural and dangerous in a female. Sara, however, continues to hope that her father will recognize her as a kindred spirit. Proud of her strong convictions as she declines the marriage proposal of a rich man who would deny a woman an education, Sara believes her father will affirm her decision. She reasons that Reb too "had given up worldly success to drink the wisdom of the Torah. He would tell me that, after all, I was the only daughter of his faith" (202).

Reb vehemently denounces Sara's refusal of the wealthy suitor, as is consistent with his character. More interesting is Sara's Old Testament defense for bucking Jewish tradition. She breaks with her heritage and crosses her father yet presents herself as an exemplar of orthodoxy: "I had lived the old, old story which he had drilled into our childhood ears--the story of Jacob and Esau. I had it from Father, this ingrained something in me that would not let me take the mess of pottage" (202). Her models are Biblical figures, learned at the knee of her father. Like other revolutionaries throughout history, she looks into the past for precedents which make resistance and departure a continuing program of change rather than an instance of patricide or rebellion.[28]

Reb Smolensky, however, will not grant his daughter this religious parallel for her behavior. He rebuts her position with his own Biblical evidence: "It says in the Torah, breed and multiply. A woman's highest happiness is to be a man's wife, the mother of a man's children. You're not a person at all" (206). Stripped of Judaic support, she sums up her state in characteristically dramatic terms: "This is what it cost, daring to follow the urge in me. No father. No lover. No family. No friend. I must go on and on. And I must go on--alone" (208). But Sara is not alone, for she casts about for other historical precedents to justify her quest and finds them in American culture. As she sets out alone for college, she likens herself to "Columbus starting out for the other end of the earth." She feels "like the pilgrim fathers who had left their homeland and all their kin behind them and trailed out in search of the New World" (209). Sara's reliance on early American founders

proves her need to remained connected historically. After Sara parts with her father in what is actually a mutual repudiation, for he disowns her as she breaks from him, she is not so bold as to sally forth as an orphan. She adopts an American heritage, a kinship born of shared love for adventure, exploration, and discovery.[29]

Besides turning to Judaism and American history for validation, Sara also draws support from her personal past. She excels in a psychology course in part because she recognizes the value of her formative years. Memories of hawking fish on Hester Street, arguing with her father, and even protesting a cafeteria's scanty portions present themselves as meaningful lessons in self-assertion, when earlier they had seemed examples of "privations and loss" (222). Newly grateful for her upbringing, she cherishes her past and wonders what other "countless riches lay buried under the ground of those early years...thought so black, so barren, so thwarted with want!" (222). Yezierska reveals that Sara actually adapts and modifies the cultural values she thought she had jettisoned, such as the sharply defined gender roles which seemingly turn women into servants. For as Sara realizes her likeness to her headstrong father, she accepts her affinity with her mother, the self-sacrificing nurturer. From her deathbed, Shenah pleads with her daughter to care for Reb in his old age, in response to which Sara explains, "I felt literally Mother's soul enter my soul like a miracle" (252). Indeed, seemingly self-interested Sara comes to evince the maternal attributes of Shenah.

Although Sara revels in her accomplishments, she is not absorbed by her own happiness. She explains that her "joy hurt[s] like guilt" (281) when she can not share her success with others. She becomes intensely aware of the less fortunate around her, in whom she sees herself. The "lines upon lines of pushcart peddlers...crouching in the rain...like animals helpless against the cold, pitiless weather" (281) recall for her her earlier, desperate existence. Though she would like to step lightly through the city, she notes "my winged walk [is] dulled by the thick, shuffling tread of those who walk beside me." Her shoulders, "always held so straight, sag...because of the bowed backs that hem [her] in" (282). Having attained her goal of professional status and economic security, she wants only to reach out to others: "I felt as if all the beauty of the world that ever was ached in me to pour itself out on the people around. I felt like the sun so afire with life that it can't help but shine on the whole world" (282). The nurturing qualities she inherits from her mother develop and blossom in her role as teacher. She refers to her poor young students as "my children" and sees herself in them as they "murder the language as [she] did...as a child of Hester Street" (271). Her personal investment in the progress of a little Aby Zuker or Rosy Stein reflects her wider identification with the ghetto poor who surround her.

Part of Sara's homeward turn is her attraction to her future husband, Hugo Seelig. She is initially impressed by his position as a grammar school principal and his facility for English, a reaction that seemingly speaks to her assimilationist drive. Yet it is their shared foreign roots that draw them

together. Immigrants from neighboring villages in Poland, they rejoice that they are "'*Landsleute*–countrymen! We talked one language. We had sprung from one soil" (277-8). When Sara confesses to only dim memories of the old country, Hugo puts her in closer contact with her heritage. The ostensible reason for their first few dates is to "try to remember more about Poland" (279).

As an agent of cultural renewal, Hugo also helps Sara reconnect with her father. Although he has worked hard to learn English and holds a good position in the American school system, he asks Reb Smolensky to teach him Hebrew, an interest that attests to his high esteem for his native Judaism. Her awareness broadened by Hugo's values, Sara reassesses her troubled relationship with Reb and recognizes him not just as one who has blocked her ambition but who has inspired her as well. She asks herself

> How could I have hated him and tried to blot him out of my life? Can a tree hate the roots from which it sprang? Deeper than love, deeper than pity, is that oneness of the flesh that's in him and in me. Who gave me the fire, the passion, to push myself up from the dirt? If I grow, if I rise, if I ever amount to something, is in not his spirit burning in me? (286).

Some scholars criticize Sara's acceptance of the tyrannical Reb at the end of the novel as a feat of super-human kindness,[30] but the foundation for her forgiveness is laid at the outset in the other-directedness of Sara's hard-won rewards. Moreover, Yezierska imbues the reconciliation with realistic

ambivalence. Sara assumes her filial duty with some regret, for she fears that by including her father in her new life with Hugo she will surrender the home they plan to make together. Hugo counsels, however, that "our home will [be] the richer if your father comes with us" (296), and Sara ultimately concurs. Upon forsaking her family home, a younger, impetuous Sara had cried out to her father, "I'm going to live my own life. Nobody can stop me. I'm not from the old country. I'm American!" (138). A more experienced Sara knows that she is also a Jew. Reconciled with her father, she feels a sense of heaviness descend upon her which, she explains, is not "just my father, but the generations who made my father whose weight was still upon me" (296). As Yezierska's aforementioned metaphor for Sara as a thriving tree reveals, heritage is the weight that keeps her firmly rooted so that she can branch out and flourish.

Bread Givers ends in union and reunion: Sara comes to accept herself and be recognized as daughter and wife, woman and professional. The final reconciliation refutes TuSmith's claim that division is a permanent solution in European-American fiction.[31] Indeed, Yezierska is adamant that such parting is a dreadful loss. Her more overtly autobiographical writing speaks wistfully of the revitalizing return she wishes she had actually made. In an essay called "This Is What $10,000 Did To Me," the author laments her success as a Hollywood scriptwriter, for upward mobility divides her from her own:

> As I sit alone in my room, watching the wonder of the sunset, I look back and see how happy I ought to have been when I was

> starving poor, but one of my own people. Now I am cut off by my own for acquiring the few things I have. And those new people with whom I dine and to whom I talk, I do not belong to them. I am alone because I left my own world.[32]

Her autobiography, Red Ribbon on a White Horse (1950),** written at age sixty, resounds a similarly plaintive note, for she blames her flight from the ghetto for her loss of concentration and creativity: "without a country, without a people....I could not write any more. I had gone too far away from life, and I did not know how to get back."[33] But her protagonist Sara Smolensky does get back. The novel leaves her at the threshold of a new life, prepared to reap the rewards of her labor and to share them as well.

In contrast to Sara's realization that old world attributes give her the stamina to rise in America and that her position in the new world enables her to adapt and preserve her ancestral heritage, another Jewish immigrant, Abraham Cahan's Yekl, finds it impossible that the past might comport with the future he desires. Although a comic romance, Yekl (1896) tells a poignant tale of assimilation as complete renunciation of family and heritage, and, additionally, as personal decline. Cahan reveals that sustained efforts to blot

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** The title for her autobiography appears twenty-five years earlier as a phrase in Bread Givers. Sara, trying to persuade Reb to allow her sister to marry the destitute poet she loves, reminds him of his own praise for penury as a force that binds a family. He describes poverty as "an ornament on a good Jew, like a red ribbon on a white horse" (70), a mark of honor and solidarity.

out the past sap psychic energy and render impotent any attempts at lasting gratification.

The title character, after leaving Russia to earn a better living in America's sweatshops, vaguely reassures his wife Gitl that he will send for her and their son Yossele once he is established in the U.S. But Yekl's real interest lies in his own reinvention. Life, he feels, began only upon emigrating, after which he has "lived so much more...than in all the twenty-two years of his previous life."[34] Family attachments cease to exist for this new man: Gitl has been "transmuted into a fancy" and his past is nothing more than "a dream" (26). As though to erase his heritage, he drops his surname, Podkovnik, and changes "Yekl" to "Jake." Well-groomed and beardless, he fashions himself a "'*regely* [regular] Yankee'" (8) who spends the Sabbath either at work behind his sewing machine or engrossed in his favorite American pastimes--following baseball and boxing or dancing at Professor Peltner's Dance Academy, where he passes for a bachelor.

When his father dies back in Russia, Yekl is forced to prepare for Gitl and Yossele's passage to the U.S. He is loathe to give up his carefree lifestyle, although the death prompts him to recollect fondly of the old world. But memories of his devout father only aggravate his conscience: so divorced from the old ways is Yekl that he no longer knows how to pray for the dead. As shame for his sins against the past washes over him, Yekl imagines he is being strangled by the ghost of his father. Even the ticking of the clock which marks the impending arrival of his wife and son suggests strangulation to him with

its resounding "'Cho-king! Cho-king! Cho-king!'" (33). For him, history is a malign force that must be obliterated.

When Yekl fetches his newly-arrived wife and son from Ellis Island, it is portentous that immigration officials do not believe the unlikely pair to be married. Indeed, even in reunion the couple is hopelessly estranged. To Yekl, Gitl is "uncouth and un-American" (34) in her rustic dress and matron's wig by which she observes her faith. Gitl, stunned by what she perceives as her husband's regal transformation, "mentally scan[s] the Yekl of three years before...and [feels] like crying to the image to come back to her and let her be *his* wife" (36). That the arranged marriage which had functioned in the old country is doomed in America becomes increasingly clear when Yekl compares Gitl with Mamie Fein, the flashy Americanized Jew who has been his steady partner at the dance academy. With her large savings account and proficiency in English, the independent Mamie completes Yekl's picture of himself as an *"American feller."* His old-fashioned wife, whom he sees as an incorrigible greenhorn, seems to mock that coveted image. But in the perceptions of the unassimilated Bernstein, the Podkovnics' orthodox boarder and countryman, Gitl is an ideal wife. He shares her piety, appreciates her domestic skills, and yearns for a son like her Yossele.

Yekl's ambitions, fed by a narrow and rigid notion of what an American is, force an end to his marriage as he further distances himself from his heritage. The couples realign themselves more suitably--Yekl with Mamie and Gitl with Bernstein. Ironically, while Yekl operates with an eye toward his

personal progress, he restricts his future by renouncing his past, for in divorce he also parts with his son as Gitl explains to the boy, "you have no papa any more....he is dead" (87). Children are conspicuously absent from Yekl and Mamie's future plans; their legacy instead will be a dance academy, an enterprise of further Americanization much like the one where they met in which "English was the official language" (17). Rather than make the traditional wedding wish for a long and happy life to be graced with many children, Mamie blesses their marriage thus: "may the two of us have...many thousands of dollars--and [be] *business people*, too" (82).

Cahan reveals that Yekl the cad is ultimately a fool. When, after finalizing his divorce, he approaches city hall, the cite of his impending civil wedding to Mamie, Yekl feels "a great burden to have rolled off his heart" (89). His sense of lightness is a sharp counterpoint to the weight of generations which Sara Smolensky feels pressing down upon her at the conclusion of Bread Givers. Yet the heft of her cultural inheritance, Yezierska reveals, is Sara's ballast, the stabilizing force that enables her to soar. In contrast, Yekl, unbound, founders. He has lost control of his life, as his reluctant ride in the lurching streetcar which delivers him to a hastily-planned second wedding indicates. Recognizing himself as "the victim of an ignominious defeat" (89), he can only fantasize about reclaiming the wife and son he has relinquished. His future "loom[s] dark and impenetrable" (89), for he navigates without the purpose and direction which the past provides. But while Yekl rejects tradition as he attempts to make himself anew, Gitl adapts it to her present

reality. This former country rustic becomes a savvy American entrepreneur, her acculturation, in fact, supporting her Jewish traditions. On the resources of her divorce settlement, Gitl plans to purchase and run a grocery store while her new husband studies the Torah. Bernstein's future is similar to that which Yezierska suggests for Hugo Seelig: he will provide the community with language instruction--in English and Hebrew.

Like the foregoing immigrant tales, Louis Chu's comic Eat a Bowl of Tea: A Novel of New York's Chinatown (1961) features the clash between the old world and the new as a young immigrant struggles against a patriarchal community to exercise his individual prerogatives. But unlike Yekl, who forfeits his familial and cultural affiliation, Chu's protagonist Ben Loy eventually reaffirms the cultural traditions he renounces. Yet unlike Hester and Sara, whose escape routes are circular as they re-enter the communities they have fled, Ben Loy's exit is linear. Emphasizing the imperative of individuation, Chu proves that immigrant youth must challenge their dogmatic elders if they are to become adults themselves. But he insists as well that the ethnic young must retain their native tradition as a guide to navigate the new world. The acculturation which Chu asserts is mutually supportive of the individual and the group: when the immigrant offspring are free to strike out beyond the insular ghetto, they hybridize their ancestral traditions, effecting a crossbreeding which allows the transplanted culture to take hold and thrive rather than wither and die.

Ben Loy, instead of making his solitary way in America as Yekl does, emigrates at the behest of his father, Wah Gay. He joins the patriarch, who left China forty years earlier, in New York's "bachelor" society of Chinese men whose wives were barred from the U.S. by exclusionary legislation.[35] Thus, Ben Loy's connection to his native culture remains immediate, for Chinatown elders look to him as their hope for the future: he and his potential offspring will be their means for immortality. Ben Loy serves in the U.S. army shortly after immigrating, but he primarily remains his father's dutiful son. He lives and works where Wah Gay decides he should, and he marries the bride his father chooses for him. Although some American women of Chinese descent are available for marriage, Wah Gay scorns them. "Girls born in China are better," he explains. "They are courteous and modest. Not like these *jook sings* born in New York. They can tell good from bad" (18).[36] As instructed, Ben Loy marries Mei Oi during a return visit to China and, since immigration laws have been relaxed, he settles his new wife in New York, where he undertakes to provide the community with the heir they expect.

But Ben Loy, though sexually active as a bachelor, is impotent as a married man. Mei Oi politely describes his problem as a "lack of manliness" (77) and a "decline of masculinity" (242), but her euphemisms are more apt than evasive. As "impotent" denotes, Ben Loy is "not strong" enough to be a father or husband, for he has never grown up. Mei Oi, interpreting her husband's sexual failing as her own lack of feminine appeal, is vulnerable to the attentions of a local philanderer, Ah Song. When she becomes pregnant by

him and word of her infidelity leaks out, Ben Loy bears a heavy burden: heartache, derision, and responsibility for his father's shame which the old man explains will be legendary even back in China.

Ironically, Ben Loy's impotence, as a failure to comply with his father's demands for an heir, is his first step toward manhood, a necessary rebellion against the dictates of the oppressive patriarchy. He begins to assert his independence from the older generation by disrupting their rigid plans for his future; he takes another step toward maturity when he chooses to forgive his wife despite community pressure to divorce and deport her.

The conflict between Ben Loy and his father over the troubled marriage is really the clash of ancient and modern views on love and family. Wah Gay and his Chinatown cronies have lived their adult lives a world away from their wives. Even though the immigration ban has been lifted, Chu's women decline their husbands' invitations to join them in America. The elders are comfortable with--even relieved by--gender separation, for as a character quoting a Chinese seer explains, "'male and female are not to mix socially'" (133).

In contrast, Ben Loy's marriage, though arranged by his father according to Chinese custom, has become a modern marriage based on love. His relationship with Mei Oi is patterned more on the romantic American movies he loves to watch than on the polite, formal arrangement his elders share. The father's advice that "your wife is no good, go get yourself another" (200) is anathema to the son. Rather than seek a divorce, Ben Loy forgives his wife's

adultery and holds himself partly responsible for her extra-marital affair, since he believes his earlier promiscuity and bouts of venereal disease have rendered him impotent. Their reconciliation further shames Wah Gay, who has taken it upon himself to avenge the family honor by physically attacking Ah Song. He interprets the couple's reunion as proof that his son is "a slave to that female" (201).

Because saving their marriage means violating the traditions and wishes of the elders, Ben Loy and Mei Oi leave New York to resettle in San Francisco. Their departure seems to suggest that self-interest and group allegiance are contradictory commitments, and that to assert their American prerogatives immigrant children must sever their ancestral ties. Indeed, upon relocating with his wife and the newborn son he claims as his own, Ben Loy muses that

> New York represented parental supervision and the reckless mistakes of youth....[but now] the proverbial parental shackle had been cut. For the first time Ben Loy knew and enjoyed emancipation. New frontiers, new people, new times, new ideas unfolded. He had come to a new golden mountain. (245, 246)

But in fleeing the stultifying environment in which the future was constrained the past, Ben Loy does not reject tradition as much as he resituates himself within it. In moving to San Francisco, which he invokes as "golden mountain," the name his immigrant forebears bestowed upon that city where they sought their fortune, he "returns to the city where Chinese-America first began."[37] He leaves his father but is drawn to the place of his fathers to start over.

The ancient cure for Ben Loy's impotence reveals that lessons of the old world must guide life in the new. The medicine a Western-trained physician prescribes for Ben Loy produces no results, but a Chinese herbalist's advice for him to "eat a bowl of tea," together with the changed surroundings, restores his virility. One critic rules Chu's unusual wording of that imperative--which is the novel's title--to be a "liability of direct translation."[38] Li Shu-Yan insists that the author errs by not glossing the literal translation of the Chinese expression in a footnote. But it seems more likely that the odd formation is intentional, for it is rich with meaning. Because characters routinely describe the frequent act of tea-drinking as to "sip a cup of tea" (236, passim), the unusual phrasing of the herbalist's directive is noteworthy: "eat a bowl" in lieu of the customary "sip a cup" raises the act to a higher power; in fact, the words function as superlatives. Used in this single, special instance, the phrase emphasizes the high degree to which Ben Loy, the new American, must re-engage native custom.

Eat a Bowl of Tea underscores the merits of acculturation, which both broadens and maintains boundaries of identity. Chinatown's cultural purity, which Wah Gay pursues by controlling his son, body and soul, would result in sterility, a veritable extinction of the "bachelor" society he hopes to save. But Ben Loy, ignoring patriarchal dictates and accepting instead another man's child as his own, reveals that "illegitimate beginnings lend strength and continuity to a new generation of Chinese-Americans."[39] He fights for the rights of his American citizenship--privacy, autonomy, and consensual love--

but joins them with the legacy of his past. Happy in their new home, the defiant couple looks ahead to their yet-to-be-conceived second child's haircut party, a customary Chinese celebration, on which they plan to reunite with their estranged elders.

A somber yet lyrical tone distinguishes Sandra Cisneros' The House on Mango Street from the latter two light-hearted romances, but it also features heretical attitudes on sexual intimacy and procreation as the ironic means to preserve an endangered culture. Life is brutal in Chicago's Hispanic quarter, but the barrio fights back with its own unrelenting life force, a steady birth-rate which perpetuates the overcrowding. Esperanza Cordero, the eldest child in a family of six, is as forward-looking as her name suggests. Desiring autonomy and solitude, she pledges to break this cycle of oppression by avoiding the trap which snares many women in her neighborhood--early marriage and motherhood.

Esperanza and her young friends both welcome and fear their nascent sexuality which seems to determine lives in the barrio. The girls are excited by the male attention they draw as they strut about in a neighbor's cast-off high heels, but as stares turn to leers and then to propositions, they learn that to be attractive is to be vulnerable. Feeling threatened, they become "tired of being beautiful"[40] and hide the shoes. Sexuality gives them power, but it is a volatile force that can either spring them from the mean world of their parents or doom them to that same existence. Those who seek freedom in sexual activity, Esperanza learns, do not rebel as much as they surrender. Her friend

Sally marries before she finishes the eighth grade in order to flee from father, who becomes abusive when she enters puberty. But Sally's husband is just as cruel and suspicious, for he forbids her from leaving their apartment or even looking out the window. Esperanza recognizes this escape route's dead-end in the fortunes of another friend who "left her mother's house by having a baby" (88). Foreswearing sexual relationships, she perceives a husband and children as "the ball and chain" (88).

Esperanza's flinty resolve for self-survival seems to harden her against intimacy and stifle her own vitality. A fan of the cinema like Ben Loy, she finds a role model there in a character with "red lips who is beautiful and cruel...who drives the men crazy and laughs them all away. Her power is her own. She will not give it away" (89). As many young girls do, Esperanza nurtures an image of unrealistic domestic bliss, but her idyll is devoid of romantic or interpersonal connections. A vignette titled "A House of My Own" underscores her wish to separate from others as she enumerates items on her wish-list. She wants

> a house all my own. With my porch and my pillow, my pretty purple petunias. My books and my stories. My two shoes waiting beside the bed. Nobody to shake a stick at. Nobody's garbage to pick up after. Only a house quiet as snow, a space for myself to go, clean as paper before the poem (108).[41]

Her covetousness suggests selfishness, the uncluttered space a barrenness. The novel's biographical information about the author echoes this notion of victory

in the lack of personal attachments, for Cisneros is described as "nobody's mother and nobody's wife."[42]

Although Esperanza wants autonomy and the opportunity to develop as a poet and storyteller, she is aware that escape from the barrio can mean the betrayal of her community. Many who sense her ambitions remind her that she "will always be Mango Street. You can't erase what you know" (105). Their reproach causes Esperanza to feel "ashamed for having made such a selfish wish" (105). Those who encourage her to break away from Mango Street--predominantly women--are, significantly, neither wives nor mothers. Most forceful in counselling her departure are three elderly Chicana sisters, otherworldly women who are beholden to none but themselves. But far from stripping Esperanza of her culture or indoctrinating her into a cult of sterility, these midwives deliver Esperanza to her own creative powers, which, they reveal, are centered in her community. While they urge her to "go very far," they caution as well that "when you leave you must remember always to come back....You can't forget who you are" (104, 105).

These sisters echo the "four skinny trees" that grow outside Esperanza's bedroom window, which, she claims, "understand me" (74). That she in turn understands the trees is no small feat, for their message to her--"keep, keep, keep, trees say when I sleep" (75) is vague and inherently ambiguous. The Oxford English Dictionary lists fifty-eight variations of definitions for "to keep."[43] Yet it is precisely because the trees' directive has such a broad range of interpretations that Esperanza comes to recognize the vast possibilities of

her future. And because some of the meanings of "keep" are almost antonyms, she can resolve the tension between seemingly contradictory impulses to leave home and stay put.

A principal meaning which the OED cites for "keep" is "to maintain, retain, or cause to continue," a usage that fits Esperanza's charge to preserve her urban, Hispanic culture. But such an imperative is tantamount to a life sentence if it requires her to stay in the barrio and forfeit her plans, for "keep" also means "to retain in place by moral constraint; to cause or induce to remain." This nuance is further conveyed in the idioms "keep back" and "keep down," expressions of restraint or subjection. But if Esperanza pursues her goal to move away from Mango Street by becoming a writer, she can yet "keep" her culture, for the verb also denotes "to observe or solemnize" and "to tend or have watch of." This use transmutes her position of subjugation into one of mastery, for she, as the creator of sketches about her Hispanic community, is a celebrant and guardian of her culture. The trees are thus more likely to encourage her to continue her pursuits with such idioms as "keep at" or "keep on."

By word and example the trees teach Esperanza that her seemingly competing desires are all of a piece. With the metaphor of deep roots and broad branches similar to that by which Yezierska solves Sara's dilemma of family loyalty and personal ambition, Cisneros reveals that Esperanza's origins actually outfit her for flight and fealty: the trees can stretch towards the sky precisely because "they send ferocious roots beneath the ground" (74). Far

from rejecting the hallmark of her home environment--the fecundity with which the crowded barrio pushes back at life's demands--Esperanza decides to channel her creative energy into vignettes of family and neighborhood. She heeds the warning not to "erase" Mango Street (105) and instead "put[s] it down on paper" (110) to give it lasting life. Although her talk of change and escape likens her to the assimilationist Yekl, she is a cultural hybrid, for she maneuvers to inhabit the space where Chicana sentiment and American social liberality overlap and support each other. She, like the author of the novel, leaves home but remains centered there by telling its story in prose and verse. The four trees, which "grow up and...grow down" (74), instruct her that with roots intact she can reach beyond the barrio. Mango Street cannot keep Esperanza, but she will keep Mango Street.

Multiculturalist scholarship routinely celebrates the spirit of connectedness within ethnic literature: Houston Baker has observed the collectivist ethos of African-American writing; Elaine Kim, the community orientation of Asian-American fiction; and Tomas Rivera, the intensity of Chicano solidarity.[44] But self-interest, ambition, and wanderlust, often dubiously judged the defining attributes of WASP literature and the antitheses of ethnic sensibilities, are the very traits which trigger a homing instinct in a broad representation of American literary protagonists. In fact, immigrant renegades from a variety of groups--WASP, Jewish, Chinese, and Chicano--often cross and recross the divide between the home community and the

unfamiliar world beyond. In their wide-spread sojourning, we can read across the cultural divide to locate the common ground in between.

Notes

1. Michael Novak, The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in the Seventies (New York: Macmillan, 1972).

2. Thomas Gladsky, Princes, Peasants, and Other Polish Selves: Ethnicity in American Literature (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1992); Lorne Shirinian, The Republic of Armenia and the Rethinking of the North-American Diaspora in Literature (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen P, 1992)

3. Bonnie TuSmith, All My Relatives: Community in Contemporary Ethnic American Literatures (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1994) 2, 8.

4. Tusmith 21.

5. See for example Joyce Warren's The American Narcissus: Individualism and Women in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1984), which indicts the writers of the American Renaissance for pathological self-interest, or "The Literatures of America: A Comparative Discipline," in Redefining American Literature History, eds. A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and Jerry W. Ward, Jr. (NY: MLA, 1990), in which Paul Lauter affixes the theme of "defining an isolated, heroic self against the forces of nature" to the "American white males [who] have constituted the received canon" and proclaims that "social issues...the difficulties of sustaining community," while of little concern to these writers, were more the main subjects of minority writers" (16).

6. TuSmith 183.

7. TuSmith 19,20.

8. R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1955) 110-114.

9. TuSmith 25

10. Dexter Fisher, The Third Woman: Minority Women Writers of the United States (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980) 577.

11. TuSmith 186.

12. Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables (1851; New York: Macmillan, 1962) 15.

13. Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter (1850; New York: NAL-Signet Books, 1959) 42, 43. All other references to the book in this chapter will be cited parenthetically in the text.

14. See for example Warren 187-230 and Kristin Herzog, Women, Ethnics, and Exotics: Images of Power in Mid-Nineteenth-Century American Fiction (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1983) 7-16.

15. Jonathan Arac, "The Politics of The Scarlet Letter," Ideology and Classic American Literature, eds. Sacvan Bercovitch and Myra Jehlen (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1986) 247-266.

16. Sacvan Bercovitch, "Hawthorne's A-Morality of Compromise," Representations 24 (1988) 1-27.

17. TuSmith 186.

18. TuSmith 182

19. TuSmith 183.

20. Bercovitch, "Hawthorne's A-Morality of Compromise" 1.

21. In "Hawthorne's A-Morality of Compromise," Bercovitch cites the seminal work of Larry Reynolds which shaped for his own insights into Hawthorne's reactions to political revolution. See Larry Reynolds, "The Scarlet Letter and Revolutions Abroad," American Literature 57 (1985): 44-67.

22. Dimmesdale describes "his bitterness and agony of heart, at the contrast between what I seem and what I am," The Scarlet Letter 182.

23. "penance" and "penitence," The Oxford English Dictionary, 1971 ed.

24. These words are in reference to Pearl, but by extension they are fully applicable to Hester.

25. Bercovitch, "Hawthorne's A-Morality of Compromise" 1.

26. Anzia Yezierska, Bread Givers (1925; New York: Persea, 1970) 137. All other references to the novel in this chapter will be cited parenthetically in the text.

27. See Elizabeth Ammons' discussion of Bread Givers as folk lore and fairy tale. Conflicting Stories: American Women Writers at the Turn into the Twentieth Century (New York: Oxford UP, 1992) 167, 168.

28. Bercovitch takes up this ironic American phenomenon of looking to history for sanction for upheaval and, thus, of casting change as continuity in The American Jeremiad (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1978). See in particular 132-150.

29. I interpret Sara's identification with legendary American figures as a conservative strategy, a means to retain some sense of historical belonging after her father withholds the Judaic endorsement. Mary Dearborn, however, interprets Sara's fondness for American patriots as testament to the far extent of her rebellion and evidence of a vigorous and violent renunciation. See Pocahontas's Daughters: Gender and Ethnicity in American Culture (New York: Oxford UP, 1986) 74-77, 88, 89.

30. Ammons calls it an unrealistic, "happily-ever-after fastforward wrap-up" 168.

31. TuSmith 182.

32. Anzia Yezierska, "This Is What $10,000 Did To Me," Hungry Hearts and Other Stories (1925; New York: Persea Books, 1985) 315.

33. Alice Kessler Harris, "Introduction," Bread Givers x.

34. Abraham Cahan, Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto (1896; New York: Dover Publications, 1970) 25. All other references to the novel in this chapter will be cited parenthetically in the text.

35. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 accounted for a disproportionate sex ratio in Chinese American enclaves through the 1940's. See Vincent N. Parrillo, Strangers to These Shores: Race and Ethnic Relations in the United States 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1994) 271.

36. Louis Chu, Eat a Bowl of Tea (1961; New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1993) 18. All other references to the novel in this chapter will be cited parenthetically in the text.

37. Jeffery Chan, "Introduction to the 1979 Edition," Eat a Bowl of Tea 5.

38. Li Shu-Yan, "Otherness and Transformation in Eat A Bowl of Tea and Crossings," MELUS: The Journal of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States 18.4 (1993-1994): 103.

39. Chan, "Introduction," Eat a Bowl of Tea 5.

40. Sandra Cisneros, The House on Mango Street (1984; New York: Random House, 1989) 42. All other references to the novel in this chapter will be cited parenthetically in the text.

41. TuSmith attempts to square this example of Esperanza's acquisitive selfishness with her thesis of ethnic communalism. She flatly insists that it is wrong to "draw the conclusion that the implied author advocates individualistic values (by rejecting her insider status) since the protagonist intends to leave her barrio (by going outside)" (167). It is a hard sell. It seems more reasonable (indeed, the ending points to the reasoning) that precisely by becoming an individual and distinguishing herself from the group, Esperanza will be better equipped to serve them. Individualism can support rather than destroy an ethnic culture.

42. Cisneros, Mango Street, "About the Author."

43. "keep," The Oxford English Dictionary, 1971 ed.

44. Houston Baker, Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984); Elaine Kim, Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1982); Tomas Rivera, "Chicano Literature: The Establishment of Community," in A Decade of Chicano Literature, ed. Luis Leal (Santa Barbara: Editorial La Causa, 1982); see TuSmith, 21.

Epilogue
Difference, Dialectics, and Dialogicity: The Example of Rudolfo Anaya and Moby-Dick

As a fact of America's history and a fixture in its letters, immigration provides a solid thematic foundation for comparative study of the diverse literatures of the United States. In such subject matters as flight from home, re-establishment of community, inter-generational conflict, and acculturation, marginal and dominant cultures meet. Sermons and journals of early seventeenth-century Puritans, novels of the American Renaissance, and fiction by late nineteenth- and twentieth-century American writers of Asian, Hispanic, and Southern and Eastern European descent reveal that willful uprooting, relocation, and attendant though often reluctant identity transformation intersect a broad range of American ethnicities. The abundant writing on this theme reveals that throughout the centuries and quite irrespective of national origin, newcomers have employed common strategies to resolve their shared ambivalence about leave-taking and resettlement. Literary production in general--the articulation of the saga of rupture and renewal--stands as an homage to an old world past, a means of fulfilling a cultural debt or connecting with a distant heritage in such a way as to maintain yet attenuate the ancestral bond with the abandoned homeland.

As a focal point, the immigrant ordeal allows one to query sameness and difference across the spectrum of literature that concerns itself with the process of becoming American. When juxtaposed in relation to this common theme, classic and noncanonical texts, often regarded as ethnocentric monologues, respond to each other as though in dialogue. In such correlation, Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin contends, the meaning of a literary work is formed, for language, as a plural construct, is used and understood interactively. The word, in Bakhtin's view, can only be shared but never owned: it "lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's."[1]

Side-by-side readings of seemingly dissimilar American literatures create the interchanges that reveal the fluid, polyvocal nature of authority, yet such juxtapositioning is not without pitfalls. To oppose readings of mainstream and minority texts in paired sets can unduly heighten their contrastive qualities, throwing into perhaps unnaturally sharp relief the extremes between "us" and "them," "WASP" and "ethnic," or folk art and *haute* culture.[2] And while such Manichaean allegory can sensationalize difference, Hegelian synthesis errs in the reverse through forced homogenization. As Barbara Johnson warns, a multiculturalist agenda often masks imperialist motives under the reasoning that "difference is a misreading of sameness....[which] must be represented in order to be erased."[3] Such a platform, she contends, ultimately seeks to colonize, convert, and, hence, "prove" the univerasality of Western humanism.

Perhaps the soundest foundation for comparative study of American literatures takes shape in Arnold Krupat's reasoning. In his view, the proper thrust of curricular multiculturalism is to engage otherness in order to provoke an interrogation of what is ordinarily thought familiar[4] and to uncover an affinity in what is normally regarded as unrelated. In such dialogicity, otherness is neither rigidified through contrast nor muted through coerced conformity. Instead, as diverse texts "converse," in a sense, they "tell" an optimally full story of the American experience.

To capture the intellectual depth and breadth of "ethnocriticism" of literature of the United States, Krupat replaces the conception of dualistic categories in American literary study with the trope *oxymoron*. Comparative pluralism, he explains, should survey that which is "apparently oppositional, paradoxical, or incompatible...in a manner that nonetheless allows for decidable, if polysemous and complex, meaning."[5] As a controlling conceit for multicultural inquiry, oxymoron signifies the comprehensible complementarity achieved through the dialogic paradigm. The image opens up an ever wider range of mutually interrogative readings among and between American literatures. Notwithstanding very real, practical problems of space and time limits regarding course syllabi and reading lists,[6] there is room for traditional and multicultural writing when the two categories are rightly viewed as all of a piece. The wealth of material which multicultural publishing furnishes does not loom as the extinction of American classics, for ethnic fiction is not necessarily poised to replace them.[7] Rather, the study of American letters is

revitalized by the consideration of the full range of national writing when diverse texts are read in relation to one another. The following example, "Literary Eclecticism: The Golden Carp and the White Whale," illustrates this expanded and fertile paradigm for dialogic readings of mainstream and marginal fiction beyond the thematic constant of immigration. Unlikely subjects for pairing, Herman Melville's Moby-Dick (1851) is often hailed as the brightest star in the canonical firmament; Rudolfo Anaya's Bless Me, Ultima (1971) a Chicano novel, has earned acclaim for its "cultural uniqueness."[8] Yet beyond the expected differences and a less obvious Melvillian influence on the later work, the juxtapositioning of these texts produces a call-and-response exegesis on the antithetical yet composite self as represented across two centuries in the American experience. Only in such fruitful pairing of like and unlike, as Tzvetan Todorov explains, is the full story heard: "We are not only separated by cultural differences; we are also united by a common human identity, and it is this which renders possible communication, dialogue, and in the final analysis, the comprehension of Otherness."[9]

Literary Eclecticism: The Golden Carp and the White Whale

In Bless Me, Ultima, Rudolfo Anaya presents a world of opposites in the New Mexican village of Guadalupe. The parents of the young protagonist Antonio are a quarrelsome couple, as different from each other as the terrains from which they hail. Maria Luna Marez, the pious daughter of Catholic farmers from the fertile El Puerto valley, steers her son toward the priesthood

and a ministry in an agrarian settlement. Gabriel Marez, Antonio's adventurous father, is descended from a long line of nomadic horsemen; he expects his son to share his wanderlust, and he hopes that as compadres they will explore the vanishing *llano* (plains). The thrust of Anaya's bildungsroman, however, is not that maturation necessitates exclusionary choices between competing options, but that wisdom and experience allow one to look beyond difference to behold unity.

Historic continuity and spiritual harmony are recurrent strains in much of Anaya's work as he often laments man's weakened connection to the earth, to the past, and to the myths that reveal the proper balance of the cosmos. Anaya is critical of the heavy toll which economic and political realities exact from the fragile landscape of the Southwest and its ancient cultures, but, a conciliator, he also cites some merit in change. Rather than condemning or shunning innovation, as do many who like Anaya want to protect an endangered heritage, he advocates a measured application of modernization. "Technology may serve people," he reminds those whom he claims are wont to retrench in the old ways, but "it need not be the new god."[10] Likewise, informed engagement in the legislative process, a political reality of the here-and-now, can serve the cause of preserving the landscape and the cultures it sustains. Anaya urges that just as the present can safeguard the past, historical awareness can "shed light on our contemporary problems."[11] He reaches back through the centuries to the Toltec civilization of Tula to bring instructive parallels to bear on current rapacious materialism in the United States.[12]

As a writer, Anaya practices the rich admixing across time and space that he preaches, for his novels of the American Southwest blend diverse cultural strains. In Bless Me, Ultima he draws deeply on Native American mythology and Mexican Catholicism,[13] and, though the novel is written in conventional English that the protagonist deems a "foreign tongue,"[14] the prose is to be read as a translation of the Spanish which most characters speak. When his characters use English, they typically engage in code-switching.[15]

Bless Me, Ultima is lauded for such distinctive Chicano features as its use of Aztec myth and symbol, its thematic emphasis on family structures, and its linguistic survivals.[16] Furthermore, Anaya is renowned as one of the "Big Three" of the Chicano canon, alongside Tomas Rivera and Rolando Hinojosa.[17] Set in a sacred place imbued with a spiritual presence and long inhabited by indigenous peoples, his book presents a world where the Anglo is of little consequence to its strong Chicano characters.[18]

Yet this highly celebrated ethnic novel also reveals the strong imprint of Anglo-American belles-lettres. Many critics observe Anaya's reliance upon James Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man to relate the anguished rites of passage of his own protagonist.[19] Both Antonio Marez and Stephen Dedalus ask bold questions about the nature of good and evil as they examine their roles within the families and Church that circumscribe their lives. William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, and Katherine Anne Porter, among others, have also been cited as literary influences on Anaya.[20] But in a novel that uncovers shared tenets among seemingly discordant worldviews by an author

who prizes cultural eclecticism, Anaya goes even further afield in choosing his literary models. Though lauded as a masterpiece of the margins, Bless Me, Ultima bears a strong relationship to that text which is perhaps most often cited as the epitome of the white, northeastern literary paradigm--Herman Melville's Moby- Dick.

Anaya's graduate work in the 1960's emphasized the traditional canon, and he cites an abiding interest in American Romanticism.[21] It is not altogether surprising, therefore, that the parallels between Bless Me, Ultima and Moby-Dick are stark and foundational. Both novels tap into biblical and mythological archetypes as their main characters plumb the mysteries of the creation. In their quests for experience, knowledge, and mastery, the protagonists in each book break religious taboos and push the limits of human awareness as they try to fathom the unknowable mind of God. In fact, both novels have drawn similar criticism for their weighty, abstract subject matter and for their individualist rather than social focus.[22]

But to detect a Melvillian influence in Bless Me, Ultima is not to charge Anaya with being derivative, nor is it a back-handed attempt to "prove" the universality of the traditional canon by asserting that it presciently accommodates the Chicano experience. For in many ways, Anaya's book testifies to the triumph of the Chicano cosmology. As presented by Melville, the negative romantic and "sick soul,"[23] the world is a place of horror and despair; Anaya, revealing his Jungian bent as he taps into the collective unconscious, finds vigor, beauty, and order there.[24] Indeed, Anaya's text

reads as though he, along with Ishmael, has survived the wreck of the Pequod but that he has lived to articulate the harmonies of the universe which Melville's sailors could not recognize. In Bless Me, Ultima, Anaya reconciles into a unified whole the dichotomies which rend the cosmos and loom chaotic in Moby-Dick.

Both Melville's Ishmael and Antonio Marez, the schoolboy protagonist of Bless Me, Ultima, are novices. Generally untrained in the ways of whaling, Ishmael proves to be a quick study after signing on as a deckhand aboard the Pequod. He is ostensibly in pursuit of whales and then more specifically the whale, after Ahab commandeers the crew to his own vengeful mission. But more significantly Ishmael pursues experience and wisdom, goals which make him a milder version of the blasphemous Ahab, who lashes out at the Godhead to avenge his own human limitations. Antonio, also seeking to understand the complexity of life, tracks a fish of his own, the legendary golden carp, the avatar of an Aztec nature-god.[25] By sighting the river-god which swims the waters that surround Antonio's village and by hearing its history of sacrifice for the salvation of others, Antonio hopes to learn the secrets of the universe. His journey into paganism is an exhilarating quest but one which induces guilt and anxiety as he breaks the first commandment of his Christian faith.

Guadalupe, an isolated village that is set apart from the greater New Mexican landmass by a river which encircles it, is at once as insular and internally diverse as the Pequod, the island-ship which sails the world's

oceans. Melville's sailors represent widely differing nationalities and religious beliefs: Ahab is a Quaker-turned-atheist, and Ishmael a Presbyterian; the harpooners are described as heathens, Queequeg as a Polynesian idolater and cannibal, Daggoo as a "gigantic, coal-black negro-savage," and Tashtego an "unmixed Indian."[26] Of Ahab's secret East Indian crew, Fedallah, a Parsee, is a fire-worshiper. A varied constituency also comprises Antonio's world. Besides the stark differences in the mores and temperaments of the peaceful farmers who are his maternal relatives and his raucous, rootless paternal uncles who ride the *llano*, Antonio finds sharp contrasts among his friends. Catholic and Protestant classmates taunt each in the schoolyard about their conflicting beliefs of heaven and hell, while those secretly faithful to the cult of the golden carp, such as Cico, Samuel, and Jason, are contemptuous of these arcane concerns. Children of no particular religious persuasion, some of whom are eerily animal-like in appearance and endowed with preternatural strength and speed, watch the squabbles in amusement. All are terrified by the three Trementina sisters, who are legendary for practicing black magic.

Both Melville and Anaya ascribe a mystical, seductive beauty to the natural world--or more specifically to bodies of water--for, as Ishmael explains, "meditation and water are wedded for ever" (Melville 13). In "Loomings," the first chapter of Moby-Dick, Ishmael describes the magnetic pull of the ocean. Seeking a spiritual sustenance not found in the commerce that occupies them during the workweek, "crowds of water-gazers" gather at the wharfs during their leisure. Ishmael pronounces these "thousands upon thousands of mortal

men fixed in ocean reveries" (12) to be narcissists, for they seek in their reflections thrown back by the mirror-like "rivers and oceans...the ungraspable phantom of life...the key to it all" (Melville 14). Ishmael, of course, is no exception to these questers. Hoping to learn the secrets of the "wonder-world," he says he is drawn to the whaling voyage by "a portentous and mysterious monster [that] raised all my curiosity" (Melville 16).

Later in "The Mast-Head" when Ishmael is assigned watch high above the ship's deck, he experiences the dangerous allure of pantheism. As a meditative man surrounded by the glory of the universe, he fears he could lose himself both literally and figuratively in the beauty of nature.

> Lulled into such an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie is this absent-minded youth by the blending cadence of waves with thoughts, that at last he loses his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every...undiscernible form, seems to him the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it. In this enchanted mood, the spirit ebbs away to whence it came; becomes diffused through time and space.... (Melville 140)

To yield rationality to revery, Ishmael cautions, is to lose one's footing and plummet to the sea; to merge with the natural world is to surrender one's distinct identity. He concludes his warning with the stern note, "heed it well,

ye Pantheists" (140), and Melville proves that it is advice best followed. In "The Life-Buoy," a subsequent chapter, a crew member who passes into a "transitional state" while posting lookout from the crow's nest falls to his death in the sea.

Pantheism is an equally strong contender for the religious affections of the soul-searchers in Bless Me, Ultima. Anaya handily debunks the merits of dogmatic Catholicism in the cold and ineffectual Irish priest whose sole method of reaching his first communicants is a meaningless catechism. The children respond by rote but have no deeper understanding of the faith to which they are being indoctrinated; Father Byrnes neither encourages nor facilitates any fuller awareness. Antonio's pathologically devout mother, though honest and loving, is further testament to the Church's ineffectuality and harm. A fearful, superstitious woman for whom religious devotion means passivity, she is the epitome of weakness that Melville derides in Roman Catholicism as "feminine...submission and endurance" (Melville 315).

Worship of nature--wild, free, and also benevolent--is an attractive alternative to the Catholicism which many in Antonio's world find stifling. (The parish church, in fact, is described as dark, dank, and musty). But Anaya, like Melville, also conveys the danger of pantheism. When the cult member Cico seeks to convert Antonio to his pagan beliefs, he is careful to caution the initiate about the possible hazards that loom in a mystical merger with nature. Like Ishmael, Cico is a "water-gazer," one who is drawn to the river by its "strange power [and] *presence*" (Anaya, Ultima 108; his emphasis).

He recounts to Antonio that he became spellbound while perched on an overhanging cliff high above the hidden lake, and that he only narrowly resisted the strange music that beckoned him to the depths below: "It wasn't that the singing was evil," Cico explains. "It was just that it called for me to join it. One more step and I'da stepped over the ledge and drowned in the waters of the lake" (Anaya, Ultima 109).

Actual fatalities follow Cico's close call. Narciso, a pantheist (whose name echoes the narcissists who gaze into the water to find their bearings at the outset of Moby-Dick) is, like the drowning victim of Melville's "Life-Buoy," trapped in his own "transitional state." Pegged as the pathetic but good-hearted town drunk who has lost control over his faculties, Narciso is eventually murdered by the villainous Tenorio Trementina. Another casualty of nature-worship is Florence, Antonio's friend, whose tortured boyhood has destroyed his faith in God. Though scornful of the limitations and cruel paradoxes of Catholicism, Florence is no simple heretic. He searches for "a god of beauty, a god of here and now...a god who does not punish" (Anaya, Ultima 228). He is drawn to the lake, much as Antonio and Cico are, but, unable to resist the beckoning water, he drowns. Florence's death dive is described as an underwater exploration that lasts too long.

In seeking to resurrect the spirit of the land and the power of ancient myth, Anaya is certainly sympathetic to Cico, the believer in "many gods...of beauty and magic, gods of the garden, gods in our own backyards" (Anaya, Ultima 227). Yet when Cico counsels Antonio to renounce Christ, whom he

calls a jealous deity that would instruct his priests to kill the golden carp, Anaya does not endorse the pantheist's bifurcated vision. For though Cico observes the link between the natural and the divine, he does not recognize the affinity between Christianity and pantheism. The kinship of Christ with the nature-god, who transformed himself into a carp so as to live among and protect his people who were likewise transformed into fish as punishment for their sins, is lost on Cico.

With his blindered vision, Cico is reminiscent of those Melville characters who also reduce the complex unity of the world to polarities. Richard Slotkin has named "consummation" as the main thrust of Moby-Dick, a merger conveyed through such metaphors as the Eucharist, marriage, and, more literally, the hunt. But he explains that, finally, Melville delivers no such consolidation since his characters achieve no lasting spiritual balance or cosmic bonding.[27] Ishmael, for example, heeds too well his own warning to pantheists. While he warns that mysticism can leach away individuality, he also bemoans social interdependence as one of life's "dangerous liabilities" (Melville 271).[28]

Ahab, like Cico, is unable to reconcile seeming opposites; like Ishmael, he perverts the notion of unity. If Ahab sees a "common creaturehood" with Moby Dick, his own self-loathing forces him to destroy what he perceives as an extension of himself (Melville 545). And if Moby Dick is an avatar of God and the wound it inflicts is a punishment, the whale represents the power which Ahab covets and can attain only by subduing. For the monomaniacal

sea captain, there is no co-existing with the white whale, no possibility that Moby Dick is a mediator between the human and the divine. Ahab believes he must either kill the whale, or be killed by it. His binary vision makes him hopelessly paranoid: what he cannot fully understand he construes as malign and warranting pre-emptive destruction.[29]

It is Ultima, an ironic counterpart to Ahab in their shared capacity as mentors, who teaches Antonio to look beyond difference to recognize transcendent parallels. Though their worldviews clash, the *curandera* (medicine woman) of the New Mexican *llano* and the captain of the Pequod are similarly enigmatic and powerful figures. Their marred outward appearances attest to their intense engagement with life--Ahab with his ivory leg and the scar that runs the length of his body and Ultima with her shrunken frame and wizened face. Both are cut off from family. Ahab was orphaned before his first birthday, and as an adult he chooses Moby Dick and the sea over the wife and infant son he leaves in New England. Ultima, aged and apparently childless, is homeless until Antonio's father Gabriel moves her from the unsheltered *llano* into his home in Guadalupe.

The most significant parallel the two share is their own hybridity from which they draw their awe-inspiring strength. Captains Bildad and Pelag, the Pequod's owners, aptly sum up Ahab's contradictory nature: "He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man....Ahab's been in colleges, as well as 'mong the cannibals" (Melville 76). "Old Thunder" vows to lash out at the sun should it insult him, a threat he later carries out by smashing the quadrant that requires

him to rely on the heavens to determine his bearings in the sea. Yet he clearly "has his humanities," as when he consoles the crazed Pip or recalls the warm home he has left behind. He is vulnerable too, dwarfed and deformed as he is by his uncontrollable obsession. Such dualities within Ahab do not comport well; they are in constant conflict and drive him to war with the universe. His internal chaos manifests itself in his fractious nature, which causes him to perceive a fragmented outer world. He will brook no compromise nor accede to any mediation: Moby Dick is pure evil and Ahab must destroy him, or lose his life trying.

Ultima is not without her own dark side, since she too encompasses dualities. "La Grande," as she is called, is part saint but also part witch. Her ability to cast out demons and to remove curses derives from her own acquaintance with evil. Yet her dualities do not taint or confound her; they complement her. In fact, her understanding of evil enhances her capacity for goodness. Recognizing that the disparate elements of creation work in concert, she instructs Antonio to respect rather than to fear difference, for "we fear evil only because we do not understand it" (Anaya, Ultima 236). Her universe, in all its splendid diversity, is coherent, not chaotic.

In the broad sweep of Ultima's vision, cooperation rather than competition is the driving force of the cosmos. For her, pagan and Christian precepts are not mutually exclusive. Whereas Cico counsels Antonio to renounce the Christian trinity as impostors so that he might pledge his faith to the golden carp, Ultima, who also worships the golden carp, integrates her

heterogenous beliefs. Her spirit, embodied in the owl which always hovers near her, suggests at once Christ as dove and Quetzalcoatl as eagle.[30] There is no hypocrisy or sacrilege as she joins Maria in praying to the Virgin of Guadalupe, nor in her attendance at Sunday mass with the Marez family. Yet as much as she is a companion to the devout Maria, she is the compatriot of Gabriel, the begrudging Catholic and restive villager. He is unfulfilled by the Church and reluctant to join Maria in praying the rosary. Instead he draws spiritual sustenance from the *llano*, where he finds "a power that can fill a man with satisfaction." Ultima, who participates in Catholic rituals but whose faith is never dictated by dogma, shares Gabriel's reverence for the untamed plains and responds in kind to his praise for the land: "and there is faith here...a faith in the reason for nature being, evolving, growing" (Anaya, Ultima 220). The merger of her pagan and Christian beliefs is complete in her answer to Antonio's plea, which is the title of the novel. As she offers her blessing, she adopts the cadence of the Catholic benediction and invokes her own secular, benevolent triune: "I bless you in the name of all that is good and strong and beautiful" (Anaya, Ultima 247).

As Ultima's apprentice, Antonio learns that Christianity and pantheism are compatible. Initiated into the awareness that the whole is comprised of its many parts, he resolves as well the conflicting agendum his parents set for him. When Antonio dreams that he is being riven by his parents as each issues a self-interested plan for his future, Ultima intercedes on his behalf. Maria claims that her son is a true Luna, a child of the moon who was

baptized by the holy water of the Church and thus destined for a vocation as a priest; Gabriel counters that the boy, like all Marez men, is a product of the restless salt-water sea, and that he is therefore meant to ride the plains. Ultima refutes his parents' false and limiting dichotomies to reveal an underlying mystical holism:

> You both know...that the sweet water of the moon which falls as rain is the same water that gathers into rivers and flows to fill the seas. Without the waters of the moon to replenish the oceans there would be no oceans. And the same salt waters of the oceans are drawn by the sun to the heavens, and in turn become again the waters of the moon. (Anaya, Ultima 113)

Ultima's insight into the harmony of the universe is the understanding which Ahab lacks. Her cosmology features no aspect of creation as foreign, superfluous, or malign, for each has a contributing and complementary role. "The waters are one," she tells the relieved Antonio. "You have been seeing only parts...and not looking beyond into the great cycle that binds us all" (Anaya, Ultima 113). Just as Antonio comes to comprehend the kinship of the golden carp and Christ,[31] he realizes the obvious--that as the offspring of his mismatched parents he is living proof that opposites can integrate. As Ultima's eventual successor, he will grant his mother's wish for a priest by ministering to the needs of others and by mediating between the natural and the supernatural; and, blending his Christianity with pantheism, he will fulfill

his father's desire for an heir who is in touch with the spiritual forces of the earth.

In writing Bless Me, Ultima Anaya borrows a page from Melville's book, but it is a page that he revises, for the union strived for in Moby-Dick but always thwarted is achieved in Antonio Marez. Aboard the Pequod, co-mingling is misconstrued as a blurring of identity that threatens the extinction of the self, or as a dominion over another. Queequeg's taste for human flesh and Stubb's relish for freshly killed whale meat further perverts the Eucharist into cannibalism. Suggestions of fertility and fruition merely tease, as in the crew members' coming together to manipulate the spermaceti in "A Squeeze of the Hand," a pleasurable and erotic bonding but one that is ultimately frustrating and unproductive.

That Ahab works against rather than with nature is clear in his uneasy alliance with the instruments by which he navigates the seas, such as the quadrant that he destroys and the compass which reverses itself. The interchange over the ship's log and line, tools for gauging speed and direction, further reveals that he is out of sync with the dynamism of the universe. When the rotten line snaps and the log is lost, Ahab announces that he "can mend all" (Melville 427). The claim is self-delusory, since Ahab, having denied the synergism in the complex world around him, cannot forge the vital nexus he desires. In proposing to "mend the line" as he reaches out to Pip, who then urges that they "rivet these two hands together; the black one with the white" (Melville 428), Ahab suggests that he will continue and fortify his lineage

through crossbreeding. But the union will not hold: the partners are not of sound mind as they take their vows. One is "daft with strength, the other daft with weakness." Reeling in the broken line as Ahab departs with his young black "mate," the Manxman prophetically observes, "here's the end of the rotten line...Mend it, eh? I think we had best have a new line altogether" (Melville 428). The prognosis for any new hybrid "line" is grim, since Ahab persists in seeing the world as inexorably oppositional: He dies pursuing the whale that he maintains is wholly evil, the ship and crew go down, and Ishmael, the lone survivor, is left afloat on a coffin until the Rachel, on its own death watch, picks him up.

When in Bless Me, Ultima the townspeople of Guadalupe object to the sacrilegious over-reaching of science as manifest in the atomic bomb tests that are conducted south of their town, they could easily be describing Ahab's quest for omniscience. "Man was not made to know so much," they contend. "[T]hey compete with God, they disturb the seasons, they seek to know more than God Himself. In the end, that knowledge they seek will destroy us all" (Anaya, Ultima 183). Ahab, dissatisfied with what he deems his lowly place in the universe, seeks mastery through destruction. In contrast, Antonio, who, like Ahab, pursues and attains wisdom, is not antagonistic in his search for knowledge. He comes to luxuriate in the synchronized workings of the world, for Ultima has taught him to "listen to the mystery of the groaning earth and to feel complete in the fulfillment of its time....through her I learned that my spirit shared in the spirit of all things" (Anaya, Ultima 14).

Communion in Moby-Dick is perverted by a murderous urge; man's relationship to nature and to God is adversarial, and his goal is destruction or the absorption of another. True "marriage," Richard Slotkin asserts, occurs only when there is a mutual acceptance of each by the other, in which neither is destroyed.[32] Bless Me, Ultima achieves this beneficent reciprocity. In tune with the cosmic harmonies, Antonio joins together diverse and discordant beliefs, temperaments, and values, for he realizes that he can "take the llano and the river valley, the moon and the sea, God and the golden carp--and make something new" (Anaya, Ultima 236). His communion is neither conquest, as it is for Ahab, nor the cancellation of the self, which Ishmael fears; it is true consummation.

In Bless Me, Ultima, Anaya's method is his message. The worldview which Antonio achieves by reconciling a host of opposites is repeated in Anaya's own literary eclecticism. Drawing on the Bible and Indian mythology, Mexican and Spanish lore, and, as evidenced by the echoes of Moby-Dick, the traditional canon, Anaya reveals his pluralistic cultural consciousness. He attains the "integrity of memory" which coheres across boundaries of time, ethnicity, and ideology.[33] Such mutually respectful and beneficial co-existence is the mode of being that Anaya advocates for Chicano literature in the United States, even as he seeks a broad readership for his work.[34] Chicano writing need not be self-sequestered nor shunted aside by others under a dubious celebration of "difference" to be legitimated, nor should it be stripped of distinguishing characteristics so as to gain entry into the traditional

canon. "I believe that Chicano literature is ultimately a part of U.S. literature," Anaya maintains, continuing to see the whole as comprised of its elements. "I do not believe that we have to be swallowed up by models or values or experimentation within contemporary U.S. literature. We can present our own perspective....But ultimately it will be incorporated into the literature of this country."[35] The thematic and tonal link between Moby-Dick and Bless Me, Ultima--as well as the divergent outlooks and resolutions of the two--attest to cross-cultural interconnections amid rich heterogeneity.

Notes

1. This line from Mikhail Bakhtin's "Discourse in the Novel" is ubiquitous in multicultural criticism. See Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed. "Race," Writing, and Difference (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985) 1; Arnold Krupat Ethnocriticism (Berkeley: U of California P, 1992) 19; or Jules Chametzky's paraphrasing Our Decentralized Literature: Cultural Mediations in Selected Jewish and Southern Writers (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1986) 4. M.H. Abrams provides a useful gloss on Bakhtin under "Dialogic Criticism" in A Glossary of Literary Terms 6th ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993) 230-232.

2. Krupat's Ethnocriticism undertakes to mediate such distinctions in mainstream and Native American literature. His sound logic is useful in traversing the middle ground between ethnic and canonical literature in general. See 25 and 29 specifically.

3. Barbara Johnson, "Thresholds of Difference: Structures of Address in Zora Neal Hurston," "Race," Writing, and Difference 323.

4. Krupat 236, 237.

5. Krupat 28, 29.

6. See Richard Ohmann, "The Shaping of a Canon: U.S. Fiction, 1960-1975" Critical Inquiry 10 (1983): 199-223 and E.D. Hirsch, Jr. Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know (Boston: Houghton, 1987) for opposite opinions regarding canon formation and reading lists of works of literature.

7. These fears and objectives, misguided though many of them are, are articulated in the popular press. The title of Arthur Schlesinger's extended essay on cultural pluralism, The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multi-Cultural Society (New York: Norton, 1992) aptly conveys his sense of foreboding over widespread recognition of the multicultural character of the United States, as the chapter "E Pluribus Unum?," pp. 119-138, does more specifically regarding curricular expansion in history and literature courses. Ishmael Reed voices the opposite of such dread. In "The Ocean of American

Literature" he triumphantly indicts white proponents of multiculturalism ("Omniscient Boomers") who horn in where they do not belong and are not wanted. Those who classify themselves as "white" are veritable non-entities in the pluralist camp, which is poised, he explains, to lure readers away from the mainstream. The Before Columbus Foundation Fiction Anthology: Selections from the American Book Awards 1980-1990 eds. Ishmael Reed, Kathryn Trueblood, and Shawn Wong (New York: Norton) xxi-xxvii, especially xxiv.

8. Joseph Sommers, "Critical Approaches to Chicano Literature," The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature, ed. Francisco Jimenez (New York: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingue, 1979) 143-152, especially 146-147.

9. Tzvetan Todorov, "'Race,' Writing, and Culture," "Race," Writing, and Difference 374.

10. Rudolfo A. Anaya, "The Myth of Quetzalcoatl in a Contemporary Setting: Mythical Dimensions/Political Reality," Western American Literature 23 (1988): 198.

11. Anaya, "Quetzalcoatl" 198.

12. Anaya, "Quetzalcoatl" 195-200, especially 199.

13. More specifically, the Indian lore reflects Nahuatl thought, that of the Mexican and Central American tribes. See Carmen Salazar Parr, "Current Trends in Chicano Literary Criticism," The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature, ed. Francisco Jimenez (New York: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingue, 1979) 139.

14. Rudolfo A. Anaya, Bless Me, Ultima (Berkeley, CA: TQS Publications, 1975) 53. All other references to the novel in this chapter will be cited parenthetically in the text.

15. Translating and discussing "Degradacion y Regeneracion en Bless Me, Ultima," by Roberto Cantu, Cordelia Candelaria notes Cantu's more grim observation about language use in the novel. Claiming that Antonio undergoes a loss of spirituality, Cantu cites a progressive absence of Spanish after Antonio enrolls in school as evidence of this decline. See "Anaya, Rudolfo Alfonso," Chicano Literature: A Reference Guide, eds. Julio A. Martinez and Francisco A. Lomeli (Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 1985) 47.

16. Sommers, "Critical Approaches to Chicano Literature," The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature 146-147.

17. Juan Bruce-Novoa, "Canonical and Noncanonical Texts: A Chicano Case Study," Redefining American Literary History, eds. A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and Jerry W. Ward, Jr. (New York: MLA, 1990) 196-209.

18. The setting of Bless Me, Ultima is often regarded as a world apart, a separate and protected enclave. The German critic Horst Tonn, however, detects the encroaching Anglo presence--in the highway that runs near the idyllic town of Guadalupe, in the tours of military duty which Antonio's three older brothers must serve during World War II, and in the atomic bomb tests run close to the Marez' New Mexican village. See "Bless Me, Ultima: A Fictional Response to Times of Transition," Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies 18.1 (1987): 59-67.

19. See Raymund Paredes, "The Evolution of Chicano Literature," MELUS 5.2 (1978): 101. See also Robert M. Adams, "Natives and Others," rev. of Bless Me, Ultima, by Rudolfo A. Anaya, New York Review of Books 26 Mar. 1987: 33-34.

20. Candelaria notes the influence of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha stories in the way characters from Bless Me, Ultima return in Heart of Aztlan (1976). In Anaya's third novel, Tortuga (1979), Candelaria finds echoes of the persistent turtle from The Grapes of Wrath and of Katherine Anne Porter's use of a hospital as a microcosm of humanity in Ship of Fools. See "Anaya, Rudolfo Alfonso, Chicano Literature 34-51.

21. Juan Bruce-Novoa, "Rudolfo A. Anaya," Chicano Authors: Inquiry by Interview (Austin: U of Texas P, 1980) 188.

22. See Paul Lauter, "The Literatures of America: A Comparative Discipline," Redefining American Literary History 9-34. Lauter maintains that literature of the American Renaissance is tantamount to escapist fiction in its portrayals of single (white) males striking out for a frontier of some sort--the sea, the woods, the prairie. Many minorities, he reminds us, faced the other side of the adventure, invasion. Lauter contends that for them, "individual confrontations with whales or wars were never central, for the issue was neither metaphysics nor nature but the social constructions called 'prejudice,' and the problem was not soluble by or for individuals...but only through a process of *social* change" (his emphasis, 16). See also Hector Calderon, "The Novel and the Community of Readers: Rereading Tomas Rivera's Y no se lo trago la tierra," Criticism in the Borderlands: Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture, and Ideology, eds. Hector Calderon and Jose David Saldivar (Durham: Duke UP, 1991) 112-113. Calderon uses Anaya and Bless Me Ultima as examples of a too-heavy emphasis on meditative abstractions and individualistic introspection. Antonio's egocentrism comes at the expense of a collective vision.

23. See William James' discussion of the opposing temperaments, sick souls and healthy minds in Writings, 1902-1910/William James (NY: Viking, 1987).

24. Candelaria discusses Anaya's use of Jungian themes in "Anaya, Rudolfo Alfonso," Chicano Literature 36-39. Elsewhere she is critical of Anaya's penchant for happy endings, which she charges gloss over unpleasant or grim realities. Anaya's search, Candelaria contends, "always finds its uplifting grail of enlightenment and happiness. Alienation, irony, ambiguity, and the myriad uncertainties of a dynamic cosmos, whether ancient or modern, seem to lie beyond the boundaries of his fictive universe." See Cordelia Candelaria, "Rudolfo A. Anaya," Dictionary of Literary Biography: Chicano Writers, First Series, vol. 82, eds. Francisco A. Lomeli and Carl R. Shirley (Detroit, Mich: Gale Research, 1989) 34.

25. Herminio Rios and Octavio Ignacio Romano, foreword, Bless Me, Ultima, by Rudolfo A. Anaya (Berkeley: Quinto Sol Publications, 1972) ix. They connect the myth of the golden carp to Atonatiuh, the first cosmic catastrophe in Nahuatl cosmology.

26. Herman Melville, Moby-Dick, ed. Harrison Hayford and Hershel Parker (New York: Norton, 1967) 107. All other references to the novel in this chapter are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

27. Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1973) 538-565.

28. On numerous occasions Queequeg and Ishmael are happily in sync and mutually served by each other, as in "The Monkey Rope" for example. Yet Ishmael remains ambivalent at best about their interdependence. Consider D.H. Lawrence's reading of Ishmael's casual regard for Queequeg after bunking with him at the Spouter-Inn in "A Bosom Friend": "You would think this relation with Queequeg meant something to Ishmael. But no. Queequeg is forgotten like yesterday's newspaper. Human things are only momentary excitements or amusements to the American Ishmael." Studies in Classic American Literature (Hammondsworth, NY: Penguin Books, 1977) 156.

29. Richard Slotkin discusses Ahab's Puritanical response to the spirit of nature, which allows only two lines of action: he can either be nature's captive or its destroyer. See 547-548.

30. "Anaya, Rudolfo Alfonso," Chicano Literature 39.

31. Vernon Lattin, rather than seeing Antonio's accommodation of Christianity and pantheism, contends that Antonio rejects the Church to embrace the pagan gods. See "The Quest for Mythic Vision in Contemporary Native American and Chicano Fiction," American Literature 50 (1979): 625-40. Likewise, Raymund Paredes sees Antonio affecting no reconciliation of his parents' conflicting ambitions for him. He maintains that "at the end of the

novel, Antonio rejects the confining traditionalism of the Lunas in favor of the Marez' doctrine of personal freedom." See Paredes 101.

32. Slotkin 554.

33. See Annette Kolodny, "The Integrity of Memory: Creating a New Literary History of the United States," American Literature, 57 (1985): 291-307. In service of canon revision, Kolodny urges Americanists to dissociate themselves temporarily from reassuringly well-known texts to become immersed in the unfamiliar. The result she foresees is an awareness made full by interconnections and new decipherings previously unrecognized.

34. See William Clark, "The Mainstream Discovers Rudolfo Anaya," Publishers Weekly 21 Mar. 1994: 24. Anaya, "wanting to reach a wider audience," has recently completed a six-title contract with Warner Books. The mass marketing deal includes paperback and color-illustrated hardcover editions of Bless Me, Ultima.

35. Bruce-Novoa 190.

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