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# A Multidirectional Memory Approach to Representations of Colonization, Racism, and Genocide in Literature

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A Multidirectional Memory Approach to Representations of Colonization, Racism, and  
Genocide in Literature

A Dissertation Presented

by

PAMELA LAGERGREN WILLIAMS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
Of the requirements for the degree of

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Department of English

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## DEDICATION

To my husband, Raymond: without his love for me,  
encouragement toward me, and unwavering faith in me,  
none of this would have been possible

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ABSTRACT

A MULTIDIRECTIONAL MEMORY APPROACH TO COLONIZATION, RACISM,  
AND GENOCIDE

MAY 2013

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This dissertation explores where historical memories concerning colonization, genocide, and racism intersect, merge, and overlap in multidirectional ways. The text opens by exploring the possibilities of using a multidirectional model of world history and then moves to a discussion of certain aspects of world political history that interrogates why some nations have dominated others. The focus then shifts to England's attitude toward perceived "others" in the crucial late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries by examining contemporary theater drama. From there, the text moves on to current voices that have spoken out against the racism and genocide that have emerged as byproducts of empire building. Finally, possibilities for where we, as citizens of the world, can go from here in thinking through framing justice and equality for all its occupants is given the final voice in this text. My approach may be thought of as somewhat philosophical.

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## INTRODUCTION:

### A MULTIDIRECTIONAL MEMORY APPROACH OVERVIEW

A Klee painting named “Angelus Novus” shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (Benjamin 257-58)

Scholars familiar with Walter Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History” will recall that Benjamin took a dim view of what others referred to as “progress.” Benjamin realized that much evil and destruction has been perpetrated by humans against other humans in the name of progress. I am reminded of the familiar painting, *American Progress* (1872), by John Gast which shows what appears to be an angelic Columbia depicted as flowing across the North American continent, dispelling darkness as she goes, with American Indians, buffalo, and other wild animals fleeing her approach. Light follows in her wake, followed by Euro-Americans and the trappings of civilization such as telegraph wires, a wagon, a coach, and plowing farmers with their oxen. No doubt the

Indians thus depicted would not have agreed that the lauded changes were beneficial for them. Apparently, no room could be found for the Indian in this vision of American progress. Benjamin, a German Jew, who lived in pre-World War II Germany and spoke out against Fascist “progress,” could have found little satisfaction in “being right” as the Nazi noose tightened around his neck, figuratively, and, eventually, more literally when his escape was closed off to him. Jews, and other so-called undesirables, had to make way for Nazi “progress.” My purpose is not to excavate the use or misuse of the term “progress” in examining what humans have done to and for each other and the planet in the name of progress. I am, instead, interested in interrogating how people remember these kinds of horrific histories and how these events bleed into and interact with each other. I desire for us to imaginatively stand alongside Benjamin’s angel as he and we try to make sense of the wreckage.

In this text, I work at the intersections of three fields of study: colonization, genocide, and racism. Although vast archives of research exist in each of these areas as separate entities, I am interested in the interstices where the areas converge with and diverge from one another. All too often, they are treated as separate areas of inquiry, whereas, in reality, they often intertwine with one another. I use the term, *multidirectional memory*, a concept developed by Michael Rothberg in his book-length text of the same name in order to delineate my approach. One of my primary premises is that colonization, genocide, and racism are interrelated, and I interrogate literary representations of these worldwide phenomena as though that is the case. Because these modes of victimization have been practiced so widely throughout much of human history, I will limit my investigation to several specific manifestations of them, especially as they

apply to African Americans, Native Americans, and Jewish victims of Nazi Germany. Within the academy, these groups are often studied in separately funded departments or, at least, in special emphasis “study programs.” The separate programs are as variously titled as Native American Indian studies, post-colonial studies, African American studies, Judaic studies, and Holocaust studies. In many instances, the departments find themselves in competition for the same funding dollars, as if they need to prove which of them is worthy of greater resources. In reality, however, some of the victimization these groups have experienced is implicated and referenced in each other’s histories.

American Indians, African Americans, and European Jews have all suffered their own brands of colonization, genocide, and enslavement. Just as American history, in general, is best understood in the context of transatlantic and transnational studies, colonization, genocide, and enslavement and their effects on population groups are best grasped with a transatlantic or transnational approach. For my expanded examples, I restrict my observations of transatlantic history to the so-called modern age of slavery, the late sixteenth century, the time when England came into its own as a world power after the sinking of the Spanish Armada in 1588. I focus mainly from this period forward endeavoring to illustrate the development of England’s attitudes toward American Indians, Jews, and Africans during the critical Elizabethan/Jacobean age when England first embarked on its fledgling overseas enterprise of empire building. I then move to more modern times showing how the attitudes of empire prevalent in the eras of Elizabeth and James were still prevalent in more recent history.

When I first read Michael Rothberg’s book, *Multidirectional Memory*, the theoretical position taken up by Rothberg was so obviously true that I connected with his

text. Rothberg's work on how the histories he investigates are coimbricated in one another seemed common sense to me—once the curtain was lifted. But his showing why this is important and the dangers of viewing histories as separate entities seemed worth pursuing. I appreciated his discussion of multidirectional methodologies, although they are not really new and are already in use in notions of reading traditional texts across the grain and seeking out countertraditional ones. I also appreciated the stress he laid on the importance of providing generous reading lists for those who follow in this kind of research because multidirectional trails and connections are not necessarily apparent. In this dissertation, I picked up the same trail followed by Rothberg because I believe that to be a viable approach to a kind of work that promotes following trails—they are, presumably, already there; they are not being “invented,” after all, and then, from there, following whichever way the trails may lead—which are in multidirectional ways. I would also like to promote the possibility of seeing multidirectional approaches developed to study an assortment of academic disciplines.

I am particularly interested in the notions of *bare life* (as imagined by Giorgio Agamben) and *boomerang effect* (from Aime Cesaire's *un choc en retour*) as articulated in Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory*. An example of *bare life* representations in literature would be human existence as experienced by Holocaust concentration camp inmates, African American plantation slaves, or Native Americans relegated to the reservations as Americans moved westward. Agamben's discussion of life in prison camps is a useful way to consider the experiences of these people. And, although these groups suffered in ways that may be considered dissimilar to each other, they all did so because a dominant culture deemed them as somehow less than fully human. The

*boomerang effect* is a phenomenon that takes place when perpetrators, who have granted only a bare life existence to others, see some form of suffering return unto their own heads in some fashion. Cesaire refers to this boomerang effect as an aftershock returning to the metropolis from which it was originally sent. The aftershock (return of the repressed) is fascinating and, documentation exists which proves that under certain circumstances, the phenomenon does occur. Rothberg considers Cesaire's *choc in retour* one key to "conceptualizing multidirectionality. The *Discourse's* most significant legacy [. . .] lies in two key terms" that map and define the working out of the shock effect (87). "Cesaire," explains Rothberg, "mobiliz[es] [. . .] discourses of shock and return to unsettle binary and linear conceptions of culture, violence, and history and to construct in their stead a model of relationality and ripple effects" (87). In addition, this also makes *Discourses* a primary contribution to trauma studies (87).

The Introduction is designed to show what a multidirectional memory approach is and the value of its use. Chapter 1 gives an overview of world history, especially over the last several centuries, highlighting European world domination through expropriation, colonization, and slavery. Chapter 2 examines several Elizabethan and Jacobean plays in order to examine attitudes of empire in England as the English embarked on a mission to dominate the world. (England had already colonized and was colonizing Ireland, Wales, and Scotland.) Chapter 3 includes an essay that demonstrates the value of a multidirectional memory approach in literary studies. Chapter 4 offers suggestions for where we can go from here in being able to live in a multidirectional, global community.

As part of proposing a methodology for examining the possibility that multidirectional memories exist in any given area, Rothberg suggests beginning with the

commonplace methodology in cultural studies of starting with the dominant discourse accounts of the events under discussion (those accounts created by those in power, accepted because they are so often repeated) and then moving to countertraditional discourses (created by dissenters of the dominant discourse) (1-29). Both kinds of accounts are designed in accordance with their own inner logic: first, identify the memories and identities represented in the dominant records and then look for the availability of non-dominant (countertraditional) accounts to examine if other versions of a story can be located or “uncovered.” Often, lurking beneath the two kinds of accounts, their stories and histories can reveal intersections or interweavings where colonialism, slavery, and decolonization are intertwined, not neatly segregated from each other for easy reference. Countertraditional histories often have roots that hearken back to activists and intellectuals of times past with extensions into the present. One of the reasons this is true is that the counter-traditions may continue to affect people into the present. In the process of tracing out intersections, collective memory and group identity appear less rigid and more fluid across so-called identity groups (Rothberg 1-29).

Rothberg argues “that far from blocking other historical memories from view in a competitive struggle for recognition, the emergence of Holocaust memory on a global scale has contributed to the articulation of other histories—some of them predating the Nazi genocide [ . . . ] and others taking place later”(6). Among these, Rothberg includes racism, slavery, genocide, colonization, and the accompanying struggles for independence by the colonized. In fact, because of what Rothberg refers to as “the Holocaust’s salience to the relationship of [and among] collective memory, group identity, and violence,” he explores “its ongoing public evocation in multiple national

contexts” and uses it as the central “example of [his text’s] exploration of multidirectional memory” (6).

Accordingly, Rothberg states that multidirectional memory is a comparative approach to examining “histories of victimization,” and that the discussion that grew up around Holocaust memory not only “enabled the articulation” of other horrors but also “that public memory of the Holocaust emerged in relation to post war events” that involved the histories of other groups that seemingly had little to do with the Holocaust, histories involving colonialism, racism, and slavery (6-7). In fact, “early Holocaust memory emerged in dialogue with” an important period of decolonization—1945-1962, a period which “contains both the rise of consciousness of the Holocaust as an unprecedented form of modern genocide and the coming to national consciousness and political independence of many of the subjects of European colonialism” (7). Rothberg continues by claiming that this is no arbitrary conjunction but that it provides illumination “into the dynamics of collective *memory* [italics mine] and the struggles over recognition and collective *identity* [italics mine] that [. . .] haunt contemporary, pluralistic societies” (7).

According to Rothberg, when memory wars are waged by comparing “degrees” of victimization by defenders of the uniqueness of the Holocaust (such as Elie Wiesel, Claude Lanzmann, and Steven Katz) on the one side and those such as Khalid Muhammad, who see the history of racism against African American people as completely different from and bearing no similarity to the Holocaust on the other side, this “is part of a refusal to recognize an earlier conjunction of these histories” (6-9). To miss a conjunction of actual histories is to miss a conjunction of *memories* and to miss a

conjunction of memories is to miss a conjunction of *identities*. Acknowledging where these histories can be “cross-referenced” with one another is the beginning of acknowledging that one or more groups may actually share much in common with other groups, whereas they thought they shared little or nothing. At that point, they may then begin to use their resources to work toward common goals and solutions rather than using them against one another.

Rothberg endeavors to set up a theoretical framework that decidedly opposes what he frequently refers to as “zero-sum logic.” He begins by taking up Walter Benn Michaels’s discussion of what appears to be the incompatible legacies of Jewish Holocaust genocide and African American slavery competing for real estate space on the Washington D.C. Mall. Benn Michaels quotes racist statements made by African American activist Khalid Muhammad who expresses outrage that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has been erected when there was no such construction to commemorate and mourn American slavery. Although Benn Michaels denigrates Muhammad’s denials of the Holocaust, he seems to agree somewhat with Muhammad’s logic that the presence of the Holocaust memorial and absence of a slave memorial indicates that the Holocaust memorial has somehow crowded out the memory of slavery. Apparently, to Benn Michaels, Muhammad, and others, historical collective memories must compete with one another for perceived scarce public resources, including that of real estate. It seems that whichever memories can clamor the loudest to gain the most public attention and government funding are the winners, while those that cannot are the losers, as though the victims are competing with each other in a high stakes, winner-take-all lottery. Or perhaps, memories could be considered as ratable according to national significance,



according to their popularity with what it is that Americans like to believe about their national story. A winning rating could earn its namesake a building at the National Mall (or at least some real estate somewhere), while an unpopular rating might warrant that those memories receive no more than occasional footnotes in scholarly articles. Rothberg calls this a “zero-sum struggle for preeminence” (3).

Rothberg points out, however, that, even as the worthiness of the Holocaust memorial is debated against that of a memorial to American slavery, the debaters use current awareness and terminology surrounding the historical Holocaust to reframe a discussion surrounding racism in America (3). An interaction of this nature is an illustration of multidirectional memory at work. Historical memories matter because they continue to exert pressure on the present in some way. If we could observe history standing alongside Walter Benjamin’s Angel of History, we might observe that, if all of history really is one continuous catastrophe instead of many isolated incidences since the arrival of humankind on the planet, then all of the traumas experienced within that unfolding catastrophe are somehow interconnected, perhaps causally, but at least philosophically, at any rate. A multidirectional approach to memories and histories looks for these connections where they may exist, imaginatively or in reality, not fabricating them, but noticing and calling attention to them.

In developing a theoretical, multidirectional memory approach, Rothberg rejects the notion that memory and identity are interconnected and confirmed by each other in what he calls a straight-line approach, the approach taken by Muhammad and Benn Michaels. For Muhammad the identity is pure and for Benn Michaels it is tainted, but the line is straight and sure for both. For Rothberg, that line is neither direct nor straight but

multidirectional, and this multidirectionality implicates people whose identities are considered very different from one another within each other's histories (3-7). With the exposure to these "commonalities" (his word), Rothberg believes the "intercultural dynamic of multidirectional memory [. . .] has the potential to create new forms of solidarity and new visions of justice" (5).

Rothberg challenges the notion that collective memory and group identity are fixed and permanent and need to compete with each other but proposes, instead, that thinking and discussing memory in multidirectional ways allows room for new constructions of identities. The public sphere becomes a place with new ways of being and seeing. It is even possible, in these new spaces of dialogic interaction, that formerly rigidly hardened postures as traditional foes may eventually soften and have a possibility of being reshaped into a form more capable of appreciating similarities with and less "otherness" concerning people formerly considered as "totally other" (5).

Also inherent in arguing against the attitude of competitive memory is the recognition of the impossibility that identity groups can draw borders around their own historical group memories in such a way as to somehow neatly separate their collective memories from that of other groups. As Rothberg argues, "[m]emories are not owned by groups—nor are groups 'owned' by memories" (5). To refer to a math analogy, memories are not really like those tidy circles children study in elementary school math textbooks, with group A in one circle, group B, in another, and perhaps A and B overlapping neatly in a clearly designated area between the two in a third illustration. Collective memories infringe upon each other between groups and in group combinations in rather messy, indeterminate, undelineated ways. Memories, it turns out, are anachronistically

amalgamous borrowings of times distant and current, foreign and domestic. They are often more publicly than privately owned and are constantly being rearranged and reorganized into newer forms. These possibilities seemingly burst forth from older patterns. As a group's collective memories collide with those of other groups, they appear to take on altogether different configurations. When these realignments occur, those who in former generations may have stood against each other may now stand with each other in demands for justice. One consequence of these interactions, Rothberg explains, is that articulation of one kind of traumatic memory can actually open up the opportunity to speak about other traumatic memories rather than fear that the memories from one group will block all others from view (2-12). For instance, memory of the Nazi genocide of the European Jews was invoked by author David M. Stannard when he titled his book length treatment of the genocide of American Indians, *American Holocaust: the Conquest of the New World*.

In fact, in this new dialogic space, new identity groups can form from these interactions. To return to the math analogy, if the memories of groups A and B intersect, then, within the area of intersection, the two groups form a border group which contains the identities of both A and B but in combinations that cause this third group to have an identity of its own. To go further, the borders of memory are also the borders of identity. The histories and memories of individuals and groups determine their identities or who they think they are as well as how others relate to them. But, in constructing identities, individuals, as well as groups, "borrow" heavily from the memories of others across both time and space. These new creations can be great sources of inspiration for new groupings. For example, even a cursory perusal of the religious stories and spirituals of

African American slaves shows how heavily and creatively they “borrowed” from the Old Testament concerning the Hebrews’ bondage in and deliverance out of slavery in Egypt. Following the storyline of the Scriptures, the saga of the Hebrews in Egypt occurred half a world away, several millennia before, to a people group unlike the African American slaves in ethnicity, language, religious structure, and even variety of slavery. Nevertheless, the African American slaves refashioned and revised these sacred stories into a form useful to themselves. In a real sense, the African American slaves’ imaginative (if not always accurate) use of these ancient Hebrew tales created an intersection of slave memories, ancient and modern, which was vital to fashioning African American self-identity. (See Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*.)

A major obstacle to considering the Holocaust in relation to other memories of genocidal terror is the critical claim that the Holocaust is unique and somehow unrelated and unrelatable to all other world history. Functionally, however, declaring a moratorium on comparing and examining the Holocaust in relation to world history is, of course, actually invoking such a comparison and such an examination. To say, “Do not compare,” is to compare. A main hindrance to perceiving where histories may impinge on one another is the view that “one’s own history, culture, and identity are a ‘separate and unique thing’” (Rothberg 7). This view is held as an almost uncontested doctrine among some commentators on the Jewish Holocaust. Rothberg points out that when such towering figures as Elie Wiesel, Claude Lanzmann and Steven T. Katz seemingly hold to such beliefs and Holocaust scholars such as Deborah Lipstadt suggest a link between those who compare other events to the Jewish Holocaust with those who deny its

existence, it is no wonder that such policing vigilance practiced along these lines has frightened some scholars away from commenting on connections between or among differing histories (8-9).

Rothberg believes that it was necessary, in the years immediately following World War II, to claim a specificity for the Holocaust in order to break public silence about it, but when this notion of uniqueness “emerged, and in direct response to it, intellectuals interested in indigenous, minority, and colonial histories challenged the uniqueness of the Holocaust,”; which, in turn, led to “research into other histories of extreme violence, ethnic cleansing, and genocide” (8). In truth, all of these violent collective histories carry their own specific markers of how, when, why, and where they occurred, and, yet, they are, unfortunately, very much a part of the human history of man’s inhumanity to man. They are only ahistorical in the poetic sense of being incomprehensibly absurd to the human psychic capacity to understand or absorb traumatic horror.

Rothberg asserts that separating the Nazi genocides from “other histories of collective violence” to be intellectually and politically dangerous, that “creat[ing] a hierarchy of suffering (which is morally offensive) [is to] remove [. . .] that suffering from [. . .] historical agency [. . .] (which is both morally and intellectually suspect)” (9). Indeed, Raul Hilberg’s well-researched historical text, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, has come under some criticism precisely because it leaves little question that genocide of the European Jews was a bizarrely logical, if extreme, possible consequence of the history leading up to it. In fact, Adolf Hitler can be said to have followed suggestions outlined by theologian Martin Luther in his 1543 tract “On the Jews and their

Lies” by separating the Jewish population from the German one. It should be understood that Luther was not only an iconic religious figure but also an important political leader in German history. Although one might hope that Luther would not have endorsed Hitler’s fanatical and extreme use of the theologian’s suggestions, it is not difficult to conclude that it would be most productive to place the Nazi persecution of the Jews (as well as Luther’s tract) within the larger scope of German history. Even when histories are clearly implicated with one another, as in the case of the French official, Maurice Papon, who rounded up Jews in the Vichy period and later authorized the brutalization of Algerians immediately previous to the time of Algerian decolonization, Richard Golsan worries that the media focus on Papon’s later crimes against French Algerians may rob from an emphasis on Papon’s former role in crimes committed against French Jews (Rothberg 9). Instead, Rothberg offers the long view of Papon’s crimes against humanity as a fruitful approach to multidirectional memory and uses Papon’s abuse of power as a springboard to launch his own academic detective work. Another concern for many is the ethical consideration involved in comparing all genocides to the Holocaust to evaluate if they are worthy of concern, and, if they are not, they may get little attention in other parts of the world (10). Journalists and, ultimately, historians decide how horrific events are to be narrated.

Although some scholars have proposed Sigmund Freud’s screen memory theory as a way to negatively interpret what they see as American enchantment with the Holocaust (as a diversion to avoid American acknowledgment of its own involvement in committing atrocities), Rothberg proposes this memory “displacement” as a way to “open up lines of communication with the past” instead of as a way to “close them off” (as

others have proposed) (Rothberg 12). Freud, in his work on trauma and memory, questions why some childhood events that powerfully affect a person at the time they occur are, apparently, forgotten while other inconsequential events which occur at about the same time as the more important (perhaps traumatic) ones are accessible to the person in vivid detail. Freud's investigations lead him to conclude that the screen memories cover over the more disturbing ones (Freud III). And yet, this very act of substituting one memory for another, of hiding one event behind another event, connects the events to each other in multidirectional ways; it implicates one event in that of another. But, as Rothberg points out, in the case of collective memories of trauma, traumatic events are being substituted for other traumatic events, not pleasant ones, as in the case of personal screen memory recollections. These screens are actually ways that multidirectional memories can work—now hiding, now revealing histories that may be implicated with each other, perhaps in reality, but, at least, imaginatively (12-16). Rothberg states that a possible explanation for this may be that “the content of memory has no intrinsic meaning but takes on meaning precisely in relationship to other memories in a network of associations” (16). Rothberg incorporates French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs' interpretation that all memories are collective as well as individual. They are individual in the sense that, really, only the individual human mind is capable of remembering, but “individuals are imbued with frameworks common to the collectives in which they live. The frameworks of memory function something like language—they provide a shared medium within which alone individuals can remember or articulate themselves” (15).

Rothberg further refines his argument by incorporating Avishai Margalit's differentiation of separating collective memories into those which are “common” and

those which are “shared” (15). When people have experienced a certain event that they experienced in common, but the memories remain an “aggregate” of individual experiences, then this is a common memory that people experienced individually. If, however, an event is discussed among the participants and others, until it takes on the form of a collective memory that is shared among a population in a general form, this collective memory is called a shared memory. When memories become “mediated through networks of communication, institutions of the state, and social groupings of civil society,” they are shared memories (15). These shared memories are what interest Rothberg, and they are what he proffers for interrogation to observe how one direction of a certain kind of memory might converge and intersect with that of another and then perhaps another and another in multidirectional ways. And yet, he cannot concur with either Halbwachs or Margalit’s belief that collective memories can ever “converge into ‘one version’” (16). Multidirectional memories are collective because the memories are “formed within social frameworks” and shared because they are “formed within mediascapes that entail ‘a division of labor’” (15). But “multidirectional memory differs from both of these others because it highlights the inevitable displacements and contingencies that mark all remembrance” (16).

Individual and collective memories emerge and recede, especially traumatic memory (Rothberg 16-17). Events, images, and even words, can act as triggers to bring forth suppressed or forgotten memories, and these triggers often work across multidirectional fields. I first became interested in multidirectional memory work before I was aware of the term or of the approach. Because of my academic work as a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, I found myself immersed in



multidirectional thinking. As an American studies scholar who is also interested in transatlanticism and global studies, I found myself simultaneously pursuing studies in memory, postcolonialism, trauma, oral history, cultural work, the Holocaust, law and legal studies, Native American and African American literature and theory, as well as other related studies, working in the interdisciplinary ways that all American studies students are taught to work. I found similar scenarios laid out across cultures and continents connected sometimes in reality, sometimes imaginatively. Often a trigger word or several words that had similar meanings would set me to musing, sometimes uncomfortably, as to how they all seemed uncannily related. For instance, with such words as “ghetto,” “work camp,” “concentration camp,” “internment camp,” “prison camp,” “reservation,” and “plantation slavery,” I wanted to know for what political or sociological ideology people were placed in these situations and how the people who did the placing had come to believe that these ideologies were true. Often, a text useful for understanding what happened in British India might provide useful ways of thinking about other parts of the colonized earth, whether the colonizing was done by England, France, Belgium or another nation. Rothberg noted that, in France, for example, the term “torture” could possibly bring up a discussion of both the Holocaust and Algerian Independence, whereas in other parts of the world it might bring up a discussion of United States policies after September 11, 2001. Discussion of these policies may, in turn, lead to discussion of other triggers that may relate to past histories and present policies in various parts of the world, whether justified or not (17).

Comparative (as opposed to competitive) thinking concerning memory and history is multidirectional and allows for “travers[ing] sacrosanct borders of ethnicity and

era” (Rothberg 17). Neither Rothberg nor I advocate that any particular collective traumatic history is identical to another. They all have their own unique historical fingerprints; however, there can be similarities or connections among them. As Rothberg notes, “It is precisely that convoluted, sometimes historically unjustified, back-and-forth movement of seemingly distant collective memories in and out of public consciousness that I qualify as memory’s multidirectionality” (17). In moving from a competitive memory focus to a comparative one, Rothberg addresses what he refers to as “[a] central methodological problem and opportunity” for a multidirectional approach, that is, what is the archive for comparison to consist of? It is “irreducibly transversal [. . .] [and] cuts across genres, national contexts, periods and cultural traditions” (18). A multidirectional-“comparative critic must first constitute the archive by forging links between dispersed documents” (18). “A change in vision” is required, and multidisciplinary is mandatory in order to interrogate “cross referencing between the legacies [. . .] but many of those moments [of historical intermingling and] contact occur in marginalized texts or in marginal moments of well-known texts” (18). Scholars need to answer the call to construct these multidirectional archives by carefully annotating their cross reference work so that others can follow in their tracks. This work depends on “opening up the separate containers of memory and identity” currently managed by those who might endeavor to own and protect them in a competitive fashion. Rothberg considers

[t]he greatest threat to the visibility of this [. . .] archive [. . .] [to be] the kind of zero-sum thinking that underwrites [. . .] competitive memory, [but] [t]he greatest hope for [. . .] comparatism [multidirectionality] lies in opening up [. . .] separate containers of memory and identity that buttress

competitive thinking and becoming aware of the mutual constitution and ongoing transformation of the objects of comparison. (18)

An argument leveled against multidirectionality is that to compare events means to equate them, but Rothberg concedes that dissimilarity is the rule because no two events are ever alike, and proposes that “intellectual energ[ies]” pursue “investigating what it means to invoke connections nonetheless” (18). The links forged are, in the main, imaginative ones that allow for the linking of people with differing histories to realize that their histories may share commonalities with that of others. As these links are forged, they, in turn, can “produc[e] new objects and new lines of sight” (19). This may lead “to unexpected acts of empathy and solidarity; indeed multidirectional memory is often the very grounds on which people construct and act upon visions of justice” (19). Although I set out to extend, somewhat, Rothberg’s critique by applying it to the texts and events I wanted to discuss in this dissertation, eventually I moved to a definition and understanding of multidirectionality beyond what Rothberg perhaps intended. I believe this may be a natural by-product of working in a field that is already radically interdisciplinary and slippery by definition at the outset and seems, to me, to be readily applicable to memory work in a number of disciplines. At this juncture, I really do not know what the limits are to the uses of multidirectional memory. I believe that remains to be seen. Nevertheless, I endeavor to use some multidirectional memory applications to shine a light into several late16<sup>th</sup> and early17<sup>th</sup> English dramas, as well as into two modern works, *Maus* by Art Spiegelman and *The Chaneysville Incident* by David Bradley, to see what reimagining them in multidirectional ways might illuminate.

The battles for collective recognition in the public sphere mean that the victorious will attain power in how they choose to be represented. Power over how groups will be recognized and represented is part of the high stakes game of a group winning its “share” of justice, a road to possible short term gains but long term losses in human relations. True justice and equality should never be based on who conducts the most ambitious public relations campaigns, but, rather on equity and fair play. C. S. Lewis, in *Mere Christianity*, wryly notes that “[i]f you’re on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man” (28). When people allow their sympathies to run in multi-directions, they may choose to be like the Good Samaritan who stops along a lonely country road to minister first aid to a traumatized Jewish man, a fellow traveler, beaten, robbed, and discarded as human garbage. Culturally, ethnically, and nationally, the men were marked out to be enemies. And, yet, the Samaritan gave of his time and personal resources so that the Jewish man would be well cared for until he could heal (Luke 10:25-37).

In less than positive ways, the Samaritans and the Jews were implicated in each other’s histories. They were hostile national neighbors, yet, *this Samaritan* is referred to as “good” because he is a good neighbor to a national “enemy.” Benjamin’s Angel of History desires to make all that was ruined whole again. He cannot; no one can. But people can render aid to fellow travelers and consider that if they, in some way, find themselves traveling on a road with those they may be consider to be “others,” the very fact that they are on the same road probably implicates them in each other’s histories in

some way. In the following chapter, I investigate how the scales of power became so unequal in our current global economy that it allowed bad neighborliness to flourish. Although I have somewhat restricted the more extended examples to certain manifestations of victimization in specific locations, I have also explored the worldwide quest (of the last several centuries) of certain nations as they endeavored to establish empires through various methodologies, including colonization. In this vein, I have found a handful of contemporary “popular histories”—including Francis Fukuyama’s *The Origins of Political Order*, Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Charles Mills’s *The Racial Contract*, and Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*—helpful for the ways they have summarized (albeit at times reductively) some of the global conflicts and their dynamics. Thus, these texts have helped me to attain somewhat of a bird’s eye view of culturally and temporally diverse histories that, in turn, enabled me to assess how these histories might have intersected with each other in multidirectional ways.

## CHAPTER I

### POLITICAL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW FOR HOW THE WORLD HAS GONE SO TERRIBLY WRONG

The purpose of this chapter is to sketch out and color in a historical backdrop for the rest of this work. This chapter discusses a historical politics of power and power distributions. It is within the political histories discussed herein that certain people groups—American Indian, African, and Jewish—begin to cross paths in multidirectional ways. I am not pretending to present an overview of political world history, but only that which pertains to these very specific people groups. I bring some prominent and sometimes controversial voices into this conversation: political economist, Francis Fukuyama; scientist, Jared Diamond; and political theorist, Charles W. Mills, and sociologist, Paul Gilroy. These men, of course, follow their own agendas and present arguments to further their own political ends, but part of their rationales appears to be the belief that if people know more about where they came from and why they do what they do, maybe that knowledge can be used in the service of acquiring wisdom for positive change. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to display a political history backdrop in the hope that a new drama, with more social and political equity, can be staged in what could become the world history of tomorrow.

Political economist Francis Fukuyama has written an impressive overview of political world history in *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution*. His overall goal, by the end of the text, is to have fashioned a viable theory for why and how the world political systems or states developed in the ways they did. He certainly makes a compelling argument to demonstrate how lives lived under accountable governments are, potentially, more desirable than those lived under

governments that are not accountable. Fukuyama presents “Denmark” as more than a country, but a “mythical place [. . .] known to have good political and economic institutions: it is stable, democratic, peaceful, prosperous, inclusive, and has extremely low levels of political corruption” (14). But how did Denmark arrive at this current happy position, and is it possible to enable developing nations to get there? The dilemma of “creating modern political institutions” within dysfunctional states is referred to as “getting [them] to Denmark,” and, hence, is why Fukuyama refers to it as a “mythical place” or a mythical destination (14). Enabling nations to get to Denmark seems to be Fukuyama’s overall goal for his text. Part of his overall strategy is to trace the history of humans in groups—familial, tribal, and national—to find out where we have come from so that we can know where we are going or where we might choose to go.

Fukuyama begins by asking questions regarding the nature of man. This is done, it would seem, in the hopes that if man has created governments in his own image, then to interrogate what man’s nature is should be a worthwhile place to start a quest for what those governments would look like. In a chapter entitled “The State of Nature,” Fukuyama addresses this question by comparing the arguments of Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*, John Locke’s *Second Treatise on Government*, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundation of Inequality Among Mankind* with each other and with a study of man’s supposed evolutionary closest cousin who lives in nature, the chimpanzee. The juxtaposition of philosophers and chimps can seem a strange starting point for a serious political treatise, yet, since Fukuyama wants to begin with the nature of man “in man’s beginnings,” and is, apparently, persuaded of human evolutionary theory, then Fukuyama’s organizational logic makes sense. The main

quarrel that Fukuyama has with these philosophers (Hobbes and Rousseau) is that, according to Fukuyama's understanding of evolutionary theory, humankind did not exist at first in the form of individuals roaming the globe who only later learned to be social and sociable. Humankind was "born" social, and only later, much, much later learned to be individualistic, which is still decidedly not a universal condition for people in many cultures. People formed into bands at first and later into tribes, and will naturally revert to kinship bonds in preference to loyalty to state if left to human nature (26-30). Fukuyama believes "Aristotle was more correct than these early modern liberal theorists when he said that human beings were political by nature. [. . .] [T]he [genuine] state of nature suggests [that] [. . .] there was *never* a period in human evolution when human beings existed as isolated individuals" (29-30). Fukuyama offers two kinds of cooperation based in nature: kin selection and reciprocal altruism. A refrain to which Fukuyama returns again and again throughout the entire text is that: "[t]he desire to pass resources on to kin is one of the most enduring constants in human politics," but that people will also cooperate with genetic strangers if it is based in reciprocity (30). Therefore, "[h]uman sociability is not a historical or cultural acquisition, but something hardwired into human nature" (34). This sociability has a dark side as well: people as individuals do not tend to attack others (or even consider doing so unless mentally unhinged in some way) but will readily do this when they are in "groups" and their "groups" are directed to attack (kill, injure, steal from, enslave, and the like) those from outsider groups for the good of their own groups, just as bands of chimps will do (31-34).

After Fukuyama establishes what he believes to be the nature of man, he moves on to his main text in Parts II-IV, "State Building," "The Rule of Law," and



“Accountable Government.” Once he establishes the definitions, theories, and histories of these three concepts and where nations stand in relation to them, in Part V he then moves on to discuss political development, political decay, and hopeful possibilities for our global futures if people can intelligently harness lessons from political world history. Fukuyama examines how in their political development, some states have excelled at either state building, or rule of law, or accountability, or combinations of these three. In Fukuyama’s assessment, the happiest situation for a people is to be a part of a strong state that can protect its citizens from outsiders and from each other, as well as being bureaucratically efficient enough to provide the goods and services its citizens need; at the same time, the citizens, as well as their leaders, are ruled by the same laws and not by whim, with government accountable to its people. According to Fukuyama, democracy, even if it is not a fully functioning democracy, is becoming the default form of government around the world as globalization is occurring and people are demanding more say over their lives.

One issue with which Fukuyama seemingly has no trouble agreeing with Hobbes and other like-minded philosophical misanthropes is that making war in order to pursue the interests of one’s own group at the expense of another group has been a primary characteristic of the history of humankind. People do appear to cluster into groups which, at times, may act aggressively toward those of other groups under the headings of various rubrics, from large impersonal “groups” (nations) to local ones. The group heading is, perhaps, not so much the crucial factor to understand as it is to know if membership within a given group is based on permission to act aggressively and to take unfair advantage of members of other groups or if it is to look for ways to help those of one’s

own group and also help those of other groups. People are, after all, members of a mega group called humanity and can learn to understand that they live in a global community.

Along these lines, when Charles W. Mills, in *The Racial Contract*, asserts that white people will work together to keep “white privilege” securely in the hands of whites, thereby blocking nonwhites from having access to these privileges, doing so makes sense only if people prefer to act like sophisticated, marauding chimps instead of enlightened humans living in a global society. One of Mills’s section headings is aptly titled: “The Racial Contract is an exploitation contract” (31). In times past, this “working together” could be and was verbalized among whites and was well understood by all. Today, “white privilege” is often carried out by sleight of hand, but it is still carried out. Mills’s succinct solution to these injustices is that people of color refuse to tolerate “unprivilege” and that whites refuse to cooperate in the white privilege system. Mills even dedicates his book to “the blacks, reds, browns, and yellows who have resisted the Racial Contract and the white renegades and race traitors who have refused it” (copyright page). Of course, this simple solution is asking that whites deal altruistically with their nonwhite fellow human beings. (In reality, of course, most whites are as biologically connected to people of another color as they are to those similarly hued to themselves.)

Again, when we revisit Fukuyama’s assertion that people have traditionally shown that they will readily work for the advantages of others they are not related to for “altruistic reciprocity,” we find a hopeful sign that people can be educated to view the possibilities of viewing their global neighbors with “altruistic reciprocity” and can even, perhaps, learn to interact within multiple groups in a global neighborhood. People are going to cluster in groups but can be educated away from the notion that a purpose for a

group is for aggression or for taking unfair advantage of people in other groups. Again and again, Fukuyama urges his readers to move away from a Malthusian world view that resources are limited and that one person's gain must, of necessity, be another person's loss, and that war, disease, or famine ensure that the winners or survivors will have enough left over (at the expense of the losers) to live. This brand of Social Darwinism may possibly have described the world prior to 1800, according to Fukuyama; but, if it ever did, it no longer does (460-68). Fukuyama asserts that the world's resources are now, thanks to modern technologies, more than capable of supporting everyone.

Although Fukuyama's premise is, of course, debatable, most would agree that war and other aggressive forms of destruction rob the world and world groups of their resources, human and planetary. These forms of aggression, therefore, must be vigilantly avoided. For this reason, only groups of nations who are advised by disinterested "think tanks" of those educated in the benefits of peace and the costliness of war should decide jointly about the advisability of aggressive punitive actions (Fukuyama 460-68).

The historical pattern of human groups endeavoring to, and succeeding in, aggressively overwhelming each other in order to take one another's lands, resources, or even persons for labor, is a constituent component of the narrative in Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. In the three-part *National Geographic* documentary series made from Diamond's book of the same name, viewers are whisked from continent to continent and from culture to culture, sometimes with startling juxtapositions: for example, that of a New Guinean jungle contrasted with an American city, and another of a group of current day New Guinean hunter-gatherers with that of American farmers harvesting fields of wheat with massive combines. Diamond says that a question posed to him thirty

years before by a New Guinean named Yali, “Why you white man have so much cargo [material goods] and we New Guineans have so little?” ought to have had an obvious answer, and yet it did not (Ep.1, 2). Answering the question of why some population groups have so much when others have so little became an obsession of Diamond’s for the next thirty years with the end result being his book, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, followed by a documentary series of the same title. Diamond is a scientist, a biologist by training, not a historian, although his work is historically intelligent. He is more interested in overarching patterns. And in endeavoring to discern the patterns internal to the vast panorama of human history and giving attention only to the details that Diamond cares about, that is, “Why you white man have so much cargo and we New Guineans have so little?” he arrived at a simple but compelling argument that adds to the knowledge historians would probably tend to pay little attention to (Ep.1, 2).

In order to find the roots of inequality, Diamond believed he needed to look as far back as prehistory to find a time when population groups were living under about the same circumstances; these groups were eking out their livings as hunter-gatherers, hunting animals, fishing, and foraging for food, although many anthropologists counter that hunter-gatherer groups did produce surplus and even settled in villages in certain environments. Then around 12,500 years ago, at a time when the Great Ice Age conditions which had appeared to be diminishing began to return, certain hunter-gatherer groups in the Middle East, who found life on the move to be too precarious, discovered that they could plant fields of wheat and barley near permanent water supplies enabling them to enjoy a steady supply of food. Their populations could then establish villages in which they were able to live year round. (Hunter-gatherer groups must, generally, remain

quite small and give other groups wide latitude in order that enough food be available to all.) They also quickly learned to domesticate animals: sheep and goats gave them a dependable supply of meat, milk, wool, and leather; horses and oxen supplied muscle power to pull plows and transport carts. Once fewer people could supply more food, surplus food was available for some of the people to do work other than raising food, eventually enabling people to advance new technologies such as metal-working and communications systems such as writing. This kick-start in the ability to farm and raise animals, which, in turn, led to the increase of surplus food supplies beyond what was possible with foraging alone, led to some of the people having the time to invent technological innovations. These were possible because of accidents of geography. The notion that world history is based in accidents of geography, not in the innate superiority of any particular groups of people, is the overarching theme of Diamond's whole argument. Wheat and barley could be grown more easily than many other crops, and, after harvesting, stored for years. But wheat and barley were native to the Middle East, not other parts of the globe that did not have these crops until they were eventually carried there. And of the large animals that could be raised for food, clothing, or muscle power, all of them, except the llama (which was not suitable for pulling plows), were native to Eurasia (Diamond Ep.2, 2). The animals most important to farming—goats, sheep, cattle, and pigs—all originated in the Middle East.

Although the Middle East, or to be specific, the Fertile Crescent in the Middle East, was the first beneficiary of this extraordinary head start, the area's ecosystem was too fragile to support sustained farming and over-grazing, thus forcing the peoples who lived there to head east and west, taking their animals, crop seeds, and innovations with

them. These migrations bring another of Diamond's important premises into play, that geographical latitudes were crucial in human development. The crops and animals these early people took with them thrived everywhere they were transplanted because the people were moving along latitudes that were not unlike where they had left. They had continued moving horizontally along the Northern Temperate Zone (Ep.1, 11).

Diamond takes little interest in population groups or their cultures once they move east (or of those who were already in the East by his starting point in prehistory). The Europeans are the ones he really cares about since they are the ones who went on a world-wide conquering quest, establishing empires with their concomitant colonies. Diamond scarcely acknowledges the Chinese in his series, other than to mention that they raised a food crop, rice, unrelated to the barley and wheat of the Middle East and that, because of the agricultural advantage rice gave them, they were able to develop a high culture; the Chinese are later mentioned again only in relation to European colonialism. Diamond does not really address why the Europeans used their head start advantage to launch an assault on the world, whereas the cultural groups that arose to the east of the Fertile Crescent, who also benefited from the head start advantages of wheat, barley, and useful animals, were not as prone to sail the seas in search of new territories to conquer, although they did conquer new territories. (Consider Indian history, for example.) Addressing these kinds of advanced political questions is within the realm of what drives Fukuyama's *The Origins of Political Order*, not Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. It would seem, according to Diamond, that the Europeans moved forward, endeavoring to achieve worldwide empires because they could, and they wanted to; the driving forces behind what caused these cultures to make those decisions is left unanswered. They could

go forth to conquer; so they did. Diamond leaves the more nuanced approaches up to historians and political scientists.

Although no attention is given to the development of European interest in long distance ocean sailing, the documentary follows the Europeans across the Atlantic to the Caribbean, North, Central, and South America, as well as into Africa, as they bring their guns, germs, and steel (swords) with them, as well as horses, pigs (which carry a host of diseases), and a greedy attitude. One of the details Diamond never addresses, however, is why or how people have tended to cluster into ethnic groups to take advantage of other ethnic groups. That is a detail on which Mills bases his text, *The Racial Contract*. European world domination did not come about because of some innate superiority of Europeans. Europe rose to power on the backs of colonial peoples and African slaves (33). The major premise of Mills's text is that a global power block made up of White people has worked to exploit those who are designated to be nonwhite. Mills differentiates between "white," a designation of race, and, therefore, a benign consequence of genes, something over which people have no power, and "White," which is a political force that people can choose to participate in. He prefers to use the term "race" instead of "ethnicity" because "to the extent that 'race' is assimilated to 'ethnicity,' white supremacy remains unmentioned, and the historic Racial Contract [. . . the] connection between race and personhood is ignored, these discussions [. . .] fail to make the necessary drastic theoretical correction" (125). He uses the term "Racial Contract" to indicate the political contract White power circulates among whites, demanding their consent as signatories. They are the subjects of the contract. The objects of the contract are, of course, nonwhites who are expected to acquiesce in the contract

(11-12). He says that his term, “[t]he ‘Racial Contract’ [is offered . . .] in keeping with the spirit of the classic contractarians—Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant,” which is to say, like them, Mills is attempting to “*explain* the actual genesis of the society and the state, the way society is structured, the way the government functions, and the people’s moral psychology” (5). Eliciting discussions surrounding social justice is a secondary concern. Mills uses Rousseau to describe the differences between a “*nonideal*” (sic) society based on a *nonideal* contract and an ideal society based on an ideal contract. Rousseau’s example finds, in prehistory, a [fictitious] happy, pre-social people living in a state of nature who are duped into accepting a “deceitful social contract,” that they had no hand in writing, one that will hold them in bondage to classism and poverty. The ideal society is a just society ruled by an ideal contract which explains how this “just society would be formed” and promises “moral government and [. . .] a defensible moral code” (5). For Mills’s purposes, the *nonideal* contract is what he is most interested in: the ideal is to be “endorsed,” whereas the *nonideal* “is to be demystified and condemned” (5), although, in this text, Mills does not claim there has ever been an ideal society anywhere. The Racial Contract is the *nonideal* contract on which a *nonideal* global society has been built. He wants his readers to “see through the theories and moral justification offered in defense of” the Racial Contract, a contract based on oppression (5).

Mills’s three overarching claims are (1) *existential*, “white supremacy, both local and global, exists”; (2) *conceptual*, “white supremacy should be thought of as itself a political system”; and (3) *methodological*, since white supremacy is a political system, it can “illuminatingly be theorized as based on a ‘contract’ between whites, a Racial Contract” (7). The text takes up a discussion of the political system of white supremacy



on a global scale. It has developed its own “particular power structure of formal or informal rule, socioeconomic privilege, and norms for the differential distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits and burdens, rights and duties” (3). An important point to understanding a power key in the operation of white supremacy is that it is “the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today”(1).

To understand the modern world map and the influence of white supremacy in making that map, it must be realized that “the voyages of ‘discovery’ [are . . .] more appropriately called expeditions of conquest” (Mills 20). The world as we know it “has been [. . .] *shaped* [...] by [. . .] *European domination and the gradual consolidation of global white supremacy,*” that has enabled Europeans to reign as “the lords of human kind” (Mills 20). In order to make fellow whites feel comfortable with this arrangement, they have “invented [. . .] a ‘consensual hallucination,’” [. . .] with “invented Orient[s] [. . .] Africa[s] [. . . and] America[s],” occupied by invented people such as “Calibans and Tontos, Man Fridays and Sambos [. . .] who attain a virtual reality” (Mills 18-19). This virtual reality is “psychically required for conquest, colonization, and enslavement” (Mills 19). The “structured blindnesses” are “prescribed by terms of the Racial Contract” (Mills 19).

The papacy’s underwriting of world domination through *Dum Diversas*, a papal bull issued in 1452, is, by now, (at least in academia) common knowledge. If indigenous peoples refused to convert, they risked losing all, including their lives and land. Race replaced religion over time—people could, after all, convert, but they could not change their skin colors (Mills 23). By “1914, Europe held a grand total of roughly 85 percent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions, and commonwealths,” and

all this was calculatedly aimed at economic exploitation (Mills 29, 32-33). Thus, the modern world is built on the Racial Contract (Mills 30-31). Europe and people of European descent around the globe grew wealthy at the expense of impoverishing the rest of the nonwhite world (Mills 34-39).

Mills, a political philosopher, uses the “social contract” as described by Locke, Hobbes, Kant, and others, as the basis for describing the Racial Contract. According to these contractarians, all men are created equal in a just society. On the other hand, the contractarians, including Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Hume, John Stuart Mill, and Hegel make statements that would show that “all men” does not include men (and women) of color (94). So it seems, distinctions arise between who counts as fully human, the “all men” who are included in the social contract, and those who are outside the contract, those who are not considered fully human: the subhuman. Thus, the Racial Contract underwrites the social contract, or it could be said that it is an addendum to the social contract, explaining who counts as fully human and who does not, or as Mills puts it: “[A]pparent racist violations of the terms of the social contract in fact *uphold* the terms of the Racial Contract” (4). He argues further that “[a]ll whites are *beneficiaries* of the Contract, though some whites are not *signatories* to it [not in agreement with it]” (11). The Racial Contract is how things work in the real, as opposed to the abstract, world of the social contract (4). Although personhood can be “taken for granted” by some, it must be “fought for [...by] Native American[s], black American[s], and Third and Fourth world [peoples]” (111). Subsidiary contracts to the Racial Contract are (1) the expropriation contract, (2) the slavery contract, and (3) the colonial contract (24). Peoples of color have found themselves to be the objects of one or more of these exploitative

contracts, contracts enforced through violence when people did not want to cooperate with their oppressors. To elicit cooperation, any means might be applied because “it is possible to get away with doing things to subpersons that one could not do with persons, because they do not have the same rights as persons” (56).

Mills refers periodically throughout his text to the *invisibility* of white supremacy. It is invisible because it is taken for granted; it is perceived by many to be how things ought to be. Because the writers of textbooks, who are mostly white, “take their racial privilege so much for granted that they do not [. . .] see it as *political*, as a form of domination;” they neglect to note that this political system is “the most important political system of recent global history—the system of domination by which white people have historically ruled over and, in certain important ways, continue to rule over nonwhite people” (1-2). This contract requires white consent, and requires whites to work together to keep these unfair power structures in place (14). Although the Racial Contract is quite visible to the nonwhite world, it is invisible to most whites. Thus, whites tend to be mystified as to why the world is the way it is:

*Thus in effect, on matters related to race, the Racial Contract prescribes for its signatories an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance, a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions (which are psychologically and socially functional), producing the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made. (Italics are Mills’s 18)*

For whites to be a part of the solution to making the world a better place for everyone, it would seem indispensable that they have a clear vision for how things got the way they did.

According to Mills, it became a psychological necessity for the white world to view the nonwhite world as subhuman and in need of subjugation; they needed to believe in, according to American Indian legal scholar Robert Williams, “the rightness and necessity of subjugating and assimilating other peoples to the [European] worldview” if they were going to be able to cooperate with each other for the common purpose of exploiting nonwhite peoples (a phenomenon only several centuries old) (qtd. in Mills 21). This is one of the reasons for suppressing and downplaying the historical accomplishments of subjugated peoples, such as not giving the credit of the development of a Pan-African civilization to darker skinned Africans or the common belief that American Indians had no written language, when, in fact, the Spanish had destroyed the books of the Aztecs.

Mills devotes a section to the racing of space—some places are considered civilized while others are considered uncivilized or even wild. The uncivilized or wild spaces are, unsurprisingly, populated by darker skinned people groups. Those are the areas of the earth that have traditionally been marked out for exploitation, areas today still downtrodden and in need of international fair play if they are ever to have a chance at being prosperous world players (41-52).

People of good conscience did not necessarily view colonialism or slavery “as wrong in their denial of autonomy to persons; what [was] wrong [in their estimations, was] the improper administration of those regimes” (Mills 26). The “Indian laws, slave

codes, and colonial native acts [that] formally codified the subordinate status of nonwhites and [. . .] regulated their treatment,” was justified so long as these “separate categor[ies] of beings” were not abused according to the laws Europeans established for them (Mills 26). In the accepted order that “*only Europeans were human*,” the political and moral theories were grounded in Racial Contract thinking (Mills 27). Most people of European descent were submerged in and reflected the attitudes of the Racial Contract, including “‘most professional humanists’ who could not ‘connect’ the ‘sordid cruelty of [. . .] slavery, colonialist, and racial oppression and imperial subjection’ and the sentiments that found their ways into the writings of the philosophers, poets, and novelists” (Mills 27). According to Mills, “[b]y the nineteenth century, conventional white opinion casually assumed the uncontroversial validity of a hierarchy of ‘higher’ and ‘lower,’ ‘master’ and ‘subject’ races, for whom, it is obvious, different rules must apply” (27). Jared Gardner’s text, *Master Plots: Race and the Founding of American Literature, 1787-1845*, explores how American literature during the period designated in the title promoted white identity and excluded racial others such as blacks and American Indians.

Mills poses the question: “How were people able consistently to do the wrong thing while thinking that they were doing the right thing?” (94). Mills asserts that “[i]n part, it is a problem of cognition and of white moral cognitive dysfunction [. . . and, thus could usefully] be studied by the new research program of cognitive science” (94-95). He then offers an approach developed by Alvin Goldman called “naturalizing ethics” that suggests three areas in which cognitive science may have implications for moral theory: (a) the ‘cognitive materials’ used in moral thinking, such as

the logic of concept application, and their possible determination by the cultural environment of the agent; (b) judgments about subjective welfare and how they may be affected by comparing oneself with others; and (c) the role of empathy in influencing moral feeling. (95)

Mills demonstrates how the above areas may be applied to the development of cognitive dysfunction in whites when race is an issue:

Because of the intellectual atmosphere produced by the Racial Contract, whites will (in phase one) take for granted the appropriateness of concepts *legitimizing* the racial order, privileging them as the master race and relegating nonwhites to subpersonhood, and later (in phase two) the appropriateness of concepts that *derace* the polity, denying its actual racial structuring. (b) Because of the reciprocally dependent definitions of superior whiteness and inferior nonwhiteness, whites may consciously or unconsciously assess how they're doing by a scale that depends in part on how nonwhites are doing, since the essence of whiteness is entitlement to differential privilege vis-à-vis nonwhites as a whole. (c) Because the Racial Contract requires the exploitations of nonwhites, it requires in whites the cultivation of patterns of affect and empathy that are only weakly, if at all, influenced by nonwhite suffering. In all three cases, then, there are interesting structures of moral cognitive distortion that could be linked to race. (95)

In essence, many whites have been indoctrinated into the Racial Contract to such an extent that they are not able to think through the actual dimensions of what the contract

means in terms of human fair play or in the suffering it has caused throughout human history.

This same inability to grasp the reality of the pervasiveness of racism has also led to the seeming inability of “orthodox political theory [. . . in] making sense of the multidimensionality of oppositional nonwhite political thought” (Mills 118). In the current day, part of what adds to this difficulty is that the historical realities of racism are minimized in mainstream history. In America, for example, the educational texts downplay the genocide of the American Indian and the horrors of American slavery. Whereas, “[w]hite supremacy was a generally assumed and accepted state of affairs in the United States [and . . .] Europe’s empires, [. . .] statements of such frankness are rare or nonexistent in mainstream white opinion today, which generally seeks to rewrite the past so as to deny or minimize the obvious fact of global white domination” (Harold Isaacs qtd. in Mills 27). How is it possible that as many as 100 million American Indians (North and South American) died off after contact with Europeans “through mass murder and [European] diseases [. . . in] the single greatest act of genocide in human history,” and many Americans today believe in the virgin land myths of a vast open country ready for the taking that had a few tribes of wandering nomads with no real use for so much land (Mills 98)? It is now estimated that “thirty to sixty million [African] lives” were lost to slavery “in Africa, the Middle Passage, and the ‘seasoning’ process [the breaking in of new slaves]” even before slaves were subjected to “slave life in the Americas” (Mills 99). These are amazing statistics to make disappear. It may be that “[i]n the ideal polity one seeks to know oneself and to know the world,” but to the racist, “such knowledge may be dangerous” (Mills 98).

The truth is that the United States “is a white settler state on territory expropriated from its aboriginal inhabitants [. . .] [by] military force, disease, [. . .] and a [long history] of broken treaties” (Mills 28). The American Indian did not just vanish away as popular mythology would have it. In fact, many are still here; some are quite visible, while others are hidden in plain sight. No, this “expropriation involved literal genocide [. . .] of a kind that some recent revisionist historians have argued needs to be seen as comparable to the Third Reich’s” (Mills 28). In Mill’s view, it is a harsh reality that white settler states such as “Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Rhodesia [modern Zimbabwe], and South Africa—were all founded on similar policies: the extermination, displacement, and/or herding onto reservations of the aboriginal population” (Mills 28), and no sleight of hand magic tricks can make these histories disappear. The term, *extermination*, above may be viewed as problematic or even inaccurate by some because the settler societies needed laborers to work on their farms, mines, and industries. Also, the power of some indigenous societies enabled them to survive.

Feminist critics have noted that male theorists throughout the ages have been uniform in their views regarding the subordination of women, no matter how much they may have differed on other issues (Mills 93). As also noted previously, the classical contractarians were in line with each other regarding the subordinate status of nonwhite peoples (Mills 94). It would seem that a different point of view is called for in order to see clearly how people are affected by sexism and racism and this clearer view in “standpoint theory” is the bottom up approach instead of the top down (Mills 109). Unsurprisingly, it turns out that the people on the bottom have a better handle on what the reality is than those looking down from above (Mills 109). The “schism running through



the white psyche,” has led to the supposition that nonwhites suffer less than whites do when subjected to the same traumas (Mills 96). Mills says that “[t]his partitioned moral concern can usefully be thought of as a kind of ‘*Herrenvolk* [master race] ethics’” (96). The notion of *Herrenvolk* ethics is reminiscent of Fukuyama’s discussion of how people will work together in groups to exploit those of other groups even when, as individuals, they might have moral concerns about this behavior.

Within the framework of the Racial Contract, the Jewish Holocaust is not incomprehensible. That many people of European descent believe there was no precedent for such an occurrence shows “an astonishing white amnesia about the actual historical record. Likewise, the despairing question of how there can be poetry after Auschwitz evokes the puzzled nonwhite reply of how there could have been poetry *before* Auschwitz, and *after* the killing fields in America, Africa, Asia” (Mills 102-03). The sad reality is that “the racial mass murder of Europeans is placed on a different moral plane than the racial mass murder of [nonwhite] non-Europeans” (Mills 104). Unfortunately for Europe, “[a]ttitudes acquired during the subjugation of other continents now reproduced themselves at home” (Mills 104). Hitler only took already existent European racism some steps further by eliminating the Jews (and Gypsies, as well as some other groups) from German personhood. Mills explains that by Hitler’s time, Jews would not have been viewed as somehow nonwhite, but rather as “off-white” and had been accepted as European. They were considered to have been “assimilated into the population” (104). Hitler, obviously, did not agree with European consensus regarding the personhood status of either the Jews or the Gypsies, targeting both groups for elimination for purely racist reasons. It can be said that “the Nazis [. . . were] in local violation of the global Racial

Contract by excluding from the club of Whiteness groups already grudgingly admitted, by doing to Europeans (even borderline ones) what (by then) was only supposed to be done to non-Europeans” (104). What the Nazis attempted to do “can be seen as the attempt to turn the clock back by rewriting a more exclusivist version of the Racial Contract than was globally acceptable at that time” (78). Mills notes that “King Leopold’s Congo [had] cast before it the shadow that was to turn into Hitler’s empire inside Europe” (104).

This phenomenon is what Aime Cesaire coined a “*choc en retour*” or a “boomerang effect.” A *choc en retour* or a boomerang effect occurs when a cultural trauma moves from the traumatized other back toward the metropole from which the trauma originated (22). Similarly, in Freudian psychology, the return of a trauma can be termed the “return of the repressed” to describe the return of repressed traumatic symptoms to a trauma victim or occasionally to the perpetrator of a trauma. Mills suggests that panics over so-called Red, Yellow, and Black perils are actually European and American fears of the boomerang effects of their own dirty deeds coming home to roost or fear of one’s victims taking revenge once they get the upper hand (114-15).

In an important passage from “Discourse on Colonialism,” Cesaire graphically illustrates the process of shock and aftershock resulting from colonial oppression:

First we must study how colonization works to *decivilize* the colonizer, to *brutalize* him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred, and moral relativism; and we must show that each time a head is cut off or an eye put out in Vietnam and in France they accept the fact, each time a little girl is raped and in

France they accept the fact, each time a Madagascan is tortured and in France they accept the fact, civilization acquires another dead weight, a universal regression takes place, a gangrene sets in, a center of infection begins to spread; and that at the end of all these treaties that have been violated, all these lies that have been propagated, all these punitive expeditions that have been tolerated, all these prisoners who have been tied up and “interrogated,” all these patriots who have been tortured, at the end of all the racial pride that has been encouraged, all the boastfulness that has been displayed, a poison has been instilled into the veins of Europe and, slowly but surely, the continent proceeds toward *savagery*.

And then one fine day the bourgeoisie is awakened by a terrific shock: the gestapos are busy, the prisons fill up, the torturers around the racks invent, refine, discuss.

People are surprised, they become indignant. They say: “How strange!” (2-3)

Put in these terms, the aftershock or boomerang effect experienced by the metropolises seems to be logical consequences of their overseas “activities.”

Mills states that “it remains the case that the white tribe, as the global representative of civilization and modernity, is generally on top of the social pyramid” (30). He further asserts that the various pan-organizations, Pan-Indianism, Pan-Africanism, Pan-Asianism, and the like, “arose in response to an *already achieved* white unity, a Pan-Europeanism formalized and incorporated by the terms of the Racial Contract,” or to quote Robert Knox in his 1850 *Races of Man*: “That race is everything is simply a fact” (qtd. in Mills 113). The work of Charles Darwin was further used by many

to place races into hierarchies that played out in notions of who was fully human and who was not quite human (Mills 113). It is common knowledge that Hitler's ideas concerning the evolution of man influenced his placement of humans into superior and subhuman categories based on race.

The oppression of population groups based on skin color historically caused a kind of "racial self-identification," of different nonwhite groups so that they identified with each other to the end that "nonwhites everywhere [. . .] [saw themselves] engaged in some kind of common political struggle, so that a victory for one was a victory for all" (Mills 116). As nonwhite people around the globe pushed against the oppressions of "slavery, colonialism, Jim Crow, the 'color bar,' European imperialism, [and] apartheid," for one group to win was for all to win (Mills 116). Sharing multidirectional memories allows people to recognize that they have common heritages of oppression in common, that a victory for one is a victory for all and not somehow a diminishment for any. When W.E.B. Du Bois made his famous 1900 statement that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line," he did not say African-line or black people-line; he said *color line*, thereby including all people of color (which seems in keeping with his overall writings) (5). When subjugated peoples work together for the good of all, they can help enable each other to move from subpersonhood to personhood in their own eyes. For one example, they can recognize that white bodies' characteristics are the norm for whites, including notions of beauty, not for nonwhites. In other words, these groups need to work together to take back what has been taken from them, psychically as well as materially (Mills 53-62). Primo Levi, the Italian Jew who wrote *Survival in Auschwitz*, describes what it is like to go from feeling fully human to feeling subhuman when he is

processed into subhuman *Hafiling* status on his arrival at the Auschwitz concentration camp. He says that it is “to lie on the bottom” (27). He says that “for the first time we became aware that our language lacks words to express this offence, the demolition of a man” (26). He says, I have “learnt that I am *Hafiling* [prisoner]. My number is 174517; we have been baptized, we will carry the tattoo on our left arm until we die” (27).

Frederick Douglass, the former American slave, on the other hand, illustrates in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* what it is like for a slave to become a man when he refuses to be beaten by the abusive slave breaker, Mr. Covey, and battles with him for two hours. After the fight, Douglass remarks of the change he senses within himself as a result of standing up to Covey and the slave system that Covey represents:

This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave [. . .] and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. [. . .] I felt as I had never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing me.

From this time I was never again what might be called fairly whipped, though I remained a slave four years afterwards. I had several fights, but was never whipped. (54)

For a “sub-person” like Douglass to assert his manhood to attain full personhood in his own eyes was risky to his safety. It is certain that some other slaves who asserted themselves in the same way that Douglass did paid with their lives. Douglass was aware of the risk, but valued his estimation of himself above his own life. Of course, for many nonwhites around the world today, the reclamation may be more psychical, especially in formerly colonized areas where the hegemonic presence of Europeans, for generations, may have led to the loss of self-esteem in many of the native inhabitants. (See the work of psychiatrist-revolutionary Frantz Fanon for more on the psychopathology of colonization.)

Mills points out that the solution for racial cooperation is not for any races of people to gain ascendancy in order to rule over the others. The whites ruled over the others only because they could. Records from just prior to and during World War II show that the Japanese would have ruled over the other racial groups if they could have (128-29). The desire to be dominant seems to be in the nature of man, although this is debatable. Mills offers peaceful solutions for cooperation among all people groups, which I will revisit in my final chapter.

Mills calls on whites to stand up for equity and fair play by refusing to participate in the Racial Contract:

There *is* a real choice for whites, though admittedly a difficult one. The rejection of the Racial Contract and the normed inequalities of the white polity [. . .] require[s] one [. . .] to speak out and struggle against the terms of the Contract. So in this case, moral/political judgments about one’s “consent” to the legitimacy of the political system and conclusions about

one's effectively having become a signatory to the "contract" *are* apropos—and so are judgments of one's culpability. By unquestioningly "going along with things," by accepting all the privileges of whiteness with concomitant complicity in the system of white supremacy, one can be said to have consented to Whiteness. (107)

For many whites, continued participation in the Racial Contract is a forgone conclusion and is the way they have lived for generations. For them, any other train of thought or lifestyle would be unthinkable. Others live in such beautifully integrated communities and work places that these racial problems may seem unreal to them or, at least, an issue of the distant past. But others live in communities and in cultures in which they may be thought of as "race traitors" when they refuse to participate in the Racial Contract (Mills 108). For them, the sacrifices may be keenly felt.

Another important voice I wish to bring into the conversation is that of sociologist, Paul Gilroy. His text, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, addresses the global African diaspora as a hybrid population. He warns against an insistence on notions of black or Africanist essentialism or the belief that the only authentic history of black people is rooted in Africa, ignoring slavery as a historical aberration to be forgotten. The formerly enslaved people of African descent are a population that has been changed by their slave history and the history that followed. Their countries of origin have been changed by these histories, and even Africa itself has been changed by exposure to western blacks. Gilroy sets this up as a dichotomy of essentialism versus pluralism. Gilroy also introduces the concept that people are products of the routes of where they and their ancestors have traveled at least as much as they are

products of the roots of their distant origins. He usefully incorporates the motif of the ship and people traveling all over the Atlantic world as he discusses routes, roots, and rootlessness. He stresses black agency in the modern world and reminds his readers that the blacks of the diaspora have helped make the modern world the economic powerhouse that it is. That it has been partly built on slave and other forms of black labor is an important truth that bears remembering. Gilroy encourages contrasting Afrocentrism with Eurocentrism as a means of bringing blacks to the center of western civilization instead of assigning them to forgotten margins. Gilroy also examines tradition in the light of modernity and views modernity as being a product, or, at least partially a product, of slavery. Two other themes that inhabit Gilroy's text almost as motifs are music and terror. Gilroy is fascinated with black music, from African, to slave, to modern rap music. He uses the term *terror* throughout his text to explore the experiences of the middle passage, slavery, lynching, and various forms of racism. In his final chapter, he explores connections between the Jewish diaspora and the African diaspora in their histories, goals and aspirations, and ends by expressing a hope that blacks and Jews can consider what they have in common and will endeavor to work together to help enable the fruition of some common purposes:

This is a difficult line on which to balance but it should be possible, and enriching, to discuss these histories together. . . . [I]t seems appropriate to ask at this point why many blacks and Jews have been reluctant about initiating such a conversation. I want to argue that its absence weakens all our understanding of what modern racism is and undermines arguments for its constitutive power as a factor of social division in the modern world. The way that the history of



scientific racism and eugenics in the Americas has been overlooked as a factor in the development of German racial science provides a striking example of this failure. Black and Jewish writers have missed untold opportunities to develop this critical dialogue. (213)

Gilroy reminds his readers that the very “term ‘diaspora’ comes into the vocabulary of black studies and the practice of pan-Africanist politics from Jewish thought” (205).

Gilroy, like Mills, Diamond and Fukuyama, chooses to end his text on a slightly hopeful note. Perhaps these men need to be hopeful or there may be no purpose for the writing of their books. If they said, “This is how it is, has been and probably always will be; we are all locked into a relentless world system,” then these men would not be the visionaries they are. They seem to be somewhat hopeful that if people know their histories, then, perhaps, they may have wisdom to craft better futures. Although the emphases of these histories are different, all complement and dovetail into each other. The histories, as well as the works, show threads of multidirectional intertwinement with one another.

For my next chapter, I examine English beliefs and values in regard to people the English viewed as “other” at the beginning of England’s fledgling forays into imperial enterprises. I do so by examining what the English people, commoners and aristocrats alike, found entertaining: going to the theater. I examine several of William Shakespeare’s and one of Christopher Marlowe’s most popular plays to “take the pulse” of attitudes of empire in Elizabethan and Jacobean England.

## CHAPTER II

### REMEMBERING ATTITUDES OF EMPIRE THROUGH DRAMA AS THEY DEVELOPED IN THE ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN PERIODS

In this chapter, I focus attention on the period in which England literally and figuratively set sail in quest of empire. When the English empire builders set forth after defeating Spain, their great imperial rival, in the sinking of the Spanish Armada in 1588, they carried with them their own preconceived attitudes regarding how they would choose to view the “others” they encountered, and, at times, conquered and colonized. I discuss some of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama’s most popular plays, *The Jew of Malta*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*, all written between 1588 and 1611 to illustrate this stereotypical views of Jews, Africans, and American Indians that were common cultural currency in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Of course, ascertaining the difference between what may be primarily only convenient artistic caricaturing and what appears to be a more broad-based, insidious and pervasive national preoccupation with profiling and stereotyping is difficult to ascertain, but I believe and endeavor to demonstrate that the imperial gaze was already well entrenched in English society when the colonizers set forth from their homeland.

A more complete study of English empire building and colonization would have to include England’s treatment of the Welsh, Scots, and Irish as these indigenous people’s lands and persons were absorbed into what became known as Great Britain. Some of the colonization had been completed prior to England’s more far-flung colonizing enterprises; some were contemporaneous with them; the colonization of Northern Ireland, arguably, continues to our day. Intriguingly, the Plantation of Ulster in

Northern Ireland, undertaken privately in 1606 to squelch the resistance of Irish chieftains, became an English/Scottish national project in 1609 under King James; the settlement of Jamestown, part of the Virginia Colony was undertaken in 1607.

Conceptualizing Great Britain's present borders as a product of colonization is paramount to realizing that the national project of empire building was already well established in precedents and procedures before the English set their sights on distant horizons.

Although the differences in skin color would later become more crucial in allowing the objectification of "others" that would become a notable feature in the oppression of some groups by other groups, skin color was by no means requisite to the project of exploitation. As previously stated, although Great Britain's local colonization projects are important to keep in mind, it is beyond the scope of this work to include that history.

School children are commonly taught that in 1588 Great Britain somehow managed to sink the Spanish Armada, mainly due to a sea storm that is viewed as either a fluke of nature or something akin to a miracle, depending on the persuasion of the teller. The aforementioned school children are told that, when Spain lost to England in this 1588 naval battle, the future of world history would be written to show that after this date, leadership for the continued acquisition of lands, resources, and people throughout the world would fall to England rather than to Spain. Queen Elizabeth I had reigned from the English throne for thirty years and would reign for another fifteen when the British fought and won the Battle of the Spanish Armada. King James VI of Scotland would succeed Elizabeth I in 1603 to become known as King James I of England and Ireland and would rule until 1625. James would unite all three kingdoms (England, Scotland, and Ireland) into one during his reign. In this time of relative peace and prosperity, the

English dramatic and literary arts flourished under the influence of William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Thomas Kyd, Sir Philip Sidney, John Donne, Francis Bacon, Walter Raleigh, and Edmund Spenser.

Thanks to the influence of New Historicist literary theorists, literary studies once again place literary texts squarely within the historical frameworks in which they were written. In order to understand what an English person's worldview may have looked like at the beginning of England's colonizing endeavors, a profitable place to look is as close at hand as what a Londoner found entertaining in the London theaters. Playwrights were, after all, seeking to sell tickets to eager theatergoers and would, presumably, avoid writing plays that could not enjoy a popular appeal by deviating far from audience expectations. In fact, a primary reason that studying these plays can yield such rich rewards in uncovering cultural attitudes of the period is that the playwrights "had to engage with the deepest desires and fears of [their] audience[s], and [Shakespeare's] unusual success in his own time suggests that he succeeded brilliantly in doing so" (Greenblatt 12). Further, Stephen Greenblatt asserts that "Shakespeare's plays were always decisively out of the closet: they were, and are, in the world and of the world" (12). We might say that they are windows into Shakespeare's world. James Shapiro writes that "the formation of [English] identity depended on fears and projections that are more often revealed in works of art and literature than in archival records that historians have long relied on. Imaginative works, then, become a powerful lens through which these cultural processes can be examined" (212). Shapiro concludes that in centuries subsequent to the writing and early performances of *Merchant of Venice*, "the drama of

the national poet, Shakespeare, [. . .] provided a vehicle for expressing some of the most powerful anti-Jewish sentiments” (212).

In the same way that Shakespeare’s plays reflect Shakespeare’s world, as outrageous as Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* is in embracing over-the-top Jewish stereotypes (even down to the oversized nose of Barabas), Marlowe’s play should be considered as merely reflecting some of Elizabethan England’s more egregious prejudices rather than as inventing them. Marlowe’s Barabas, the very incarnation of Satanic evil, is only an exaggeration (albeit, an extreme one) of the worst forms of Jewish stereotypes held by Elizabethans. General scholarly consensus holds that Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice* in order to capitalize on Marlowe’s very popular *The Jew of Malta*. People familiar with both plays know that Shakespeare’s Shylock, although he is the villain of *The Merchant of Venice*, is a notable improvement over Marlowe’s Barabas on a scale of absolute versus relative evil. Shylock wants only to extract a pound of flesh from one particular enemy who has repeatedly provoked and persecuted him publicly, at every possible opportunity, over many years. Although *Merchant* is useful for highlighting Elizabethan stereotypes regarding Jews, Shylock’s main fault is that he fails to show mercy to his enemy when he is expected to by the Gentiles around him. The same Gentiles are also incapable of displaying mercy toward Shylock, although arguably, they may be expressing mercy toward him according to the understanding they have. For example, Antonio demands that Shylock convert to Christianity at the end of the play, according to some critics, more to save Shylock’s soul than to punish him. But then again, this is the same Antonio who, we are told, has spit on, cursed at, and berated

Shylock on a number of occasions. Shylock says that he has learned from the Gentiles around him how to seek revenge (3.1.52-73).

Typical of Shakespeare's brilliantly complex portrayal of his characters, antagonists/villains are not without somewhat sympathetic qualities (at least up to a point), while the protagonists/heroes are flawed. In the same way that Shakespeare's Shylock is provoked into his bad behavior, so is Marlowe's Barabas. But Barabas is diabolically wicked. Whereas Shylock targets one enemy who has attacked him personally, Barabas goes on a murderous rampage, wreaking spiteful havoc all out of proportion to the wrong he has suffered. Before I begin a critique of Jewish stereotypes in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice*, I want to make it clear that neither Marlow nor Shakespeare would have had the opportunity to meet real Jewish people in Great Britain: Jews had been banished from the nation in 1292 under Edward I in the Edict of Expulsion and were not readmitted until 1656 under the Puritan leader, Oliver Cromwell.

Of course, a small number of Jews were probably working incognito in England, but most people around them would not have realized they were Jewish. Jews who had converted to Christianity were somewhat freer to move about in England and, apparently, were not considered Jewish, although their biological origins were not necessarily forgotten because a converted Jew's religious loyalties were not beyond question. Fears abounded that some Jews might be making only an outward pretense of Christianity while secretly practicing Judaism. A converted Jew whose Christian sincerity came under scrutiny was Rey/Roderigo Lopez, Queen Elizabeth's Portuguese-born, personal physician who was tried and convicted of participating in a plot to poison the Queen, the

crime of which he was probably, but not incontestably, innocent. He was, reputedly, guilty of offending the Earl of Essex by mentioning abroad some of the earl's embarrassing health issues and had, unwisely, become entangled in Spanish politics. After being tortured on the rack, Lopez finally admitted to giving some consideration to participating in the aforementioned poison plot (or, perhaps, was only weary of proclaiming his innocence under torture) and was executed by being hanged, drawn and quartered on June 7, 1594. When standing on the scaffold just prior to his execution and asked if he had anything to say, Lopez "declar[ed] with his last breath amid the derision of the spectators that he loved the queen as well as he loved Jesus Christ" (Jewish Encyclopedia). Lopez's last words are astonishing for their ambiguity, not from his intention necessarily, but as to how they could be interpreted or twisted by those who heard him speak or who read of the account. He was either giving an honest plea from a broken heart, or he was slyly confirming the accusations of his enemies with impudent sarcasm. Greenblatt is persuaded that the cruel laughter at the foot of the scaffold arises from the predisposition of the eyewitnesses of Lopez's execution to believe that they were viewing a real life Barabas speaking with equivocation regarding his love for God and queen. Goldblatt contends that "[t]raditional hatred of Jews and the particular topicality of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* (whose antihero, one might recall, began his career as a doctor who poisoned his patients) gave Lopez's Jewish origins an important place in the narrative of his conspiracy" (275). Marlowe's successful play had been in the London theaters only a year or so before Lopez's arrest and was immediately revived after his very public execution. Lopez's detractors could have seen a similarity between Lopez's last words and Barabas's intermittent equivocations that are sprinkled throughout the play

which are finally followed by his braggadocio confession as he boils in oil at the end of the play. As Greenblatt observes, “The laughter turned Lopez’s last words from a profession of faith into a sly joke, a carefully crafted double entendre: ‘he loved the Queen as well as he loved Jesus Christ’” (277). Did the crowd receive Lopez’s last words as a bizarre entertainment? In capital punishments, criminals seem to have been expected to put on a good show by dressing for the occasion, showing themselves brave and so forth. Goldblatt asserts his suspicion that many around the scaffold were quite amused because they “concluded that the ambiguity was deliberate. Lopez the Jew was practicing an art perfected, it was said, by the Jesuits: equivocation. He was trying to protect his family and his reputation by fraudulently insisting on his innocence while at the same time subtly telling the truth” (277). In *Shakespeare and the Jews*, Shapiro mentions that, ten years before his trial and execution, Lopez had already been reputed to exercise skill in poisoning in a scurrilous publication titled *Leicester’s Commonwealth*. The anonymous 1584 tract, primarily an attack against Queen Elizabeth’s favorite courtier, Robert Dudley, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Leicester, also referred to “‘Lopez the Jew’ and (proleptically) credit[s him] with skill in poisoning” (Shapiro 73). Essex may have had this tract in mind a decade later when he accused Lopez of plotting to kill the queen. Shapiro notes that even “[d]ecades after his execution, woodcuts depicting ‘Lopez Compounding to Poison the Queen’ continued to appear in books recounting plots and treasonous acts” (73). Regarding Shakespeare’s possible use of Lopez as a model for Shylock, Shapiro notes that “[a]s Arthur Dymock put it in 1894, ‘If Lopez did indeed supply Shakespeare with his greatest villain, he inflicted lasting injury upon his own unhappy race’” (73). Shapiro maintains “for many Anglo-Jewish writers (and non-Jewish ones as well) ‘it is almost an



act of faith that Lopez's innocence be affirmed.' Were Lopez exonerated, a long shadow would be cast on interpretations that portrayed Shylock as one who truly conspired against the life of a Christian" (73). Shapiro builds a case that *Merchant* was used extensively as an argument on behalf of continuing the legal exclusion of English Jews for citizenship in a full chapter treatment of the issue, "Shakespeare and the Jew Bill of 1753" in *Shakespeare and the Jews*.

On the other hand, Stephen Greenblatt, viewing Shylock in the light of Barabas, envisions Shakespeare as using Shylock to answer back to Marlowe. In fact, Greenblatt even envisions Shakespeare as standing among the crowd at the foot of the scaffold, figuratively and perhaps even literally, and getting too close to both the condemned and the mockers. Based on internal evidence found within Shakespeare's plays, Greenblatt believes that Shakespeare may have attended the execution because "[h]e was fascinated professionally by the behavior of mobs and fascinated too by the comportment of men and women facing the end" (276). Indeed, Shakespeare seems to have been somewhat of a connoisseur (276). *Merchant* feels more like a tragedy than a comedy, and the reason is that Shakespeare shows us more of his villain's heart than he does any of the other characters in the play. The characters who mock Shylock the most, "Salerio, Solanio, and Graziano are probably the least likable. [. . .] They are not depicted as villainous, and their laughter echoes through the play, but their grating words are repeatedly registered as embarrassing, coarse, and unpleasant" (280). The comedic aspects seem to bleed away into despair along with Shylock's protestation of "If you prick us [Jews] do we not bleed?" (3.1.64). Greenblatt believes that what unsettles *Merchant* is that although "[a] comic playwright thrives on laughter, [. . .] it is as if Shakespeare had looked too closely

at the faces of the crowd, as if he were repelled as well as fascinated by the mockery of the vanquished alien, as if he understood the mass appeal of the ancient game he was playing but suddenly felt queasy about the rules” (280).

In order to conceive of Barabas, Marlowe needed no historical precedent such as the Lopez trial to serve as his prototype. Indeed, no flesh and blood human could serve as a workable model for Barabas because Barabas is only a caricature of a set of the worst of negative Jewish stereotypes. Barabas defies believability and only works as a stand-in for something akin to human if an audience has no clear notion of a Jew as a human. But to an Elizabethan audience, Jews were less flesh and blood people than they were a set of images or ideas.

When the audience first meets Marlowe’s Barabas, he is surrounded by heaps of gold and is recounting how he came into such fabulous wealth. Unfortunately for Barabas, as well as the other Jews of Malta, Governor Furneze demands that they each immediately turn over half their estates to him, enabling the Maltese to meet Turkish demands for tribute. When Barabas protests, Furneze seizes all his property, turning Barabas’s house into a convent. Barabas’s daughter, Abigail, pretends to be a Christian convert in order to regain access to the family home, from which she recoups her father’s hidden gold. Barabas uses some of this to buy a Turkish slave named Ithamore to help him carry out an array of murderous schemes that are more ludicrous than chilling. At the end of the play, when he inadvertently falls into a pot of boiling oil that he has set as a trap for someone else, Barabas proudly confesses to all his misdeeds after he realizes that no one will rescue him. The action of the play proceeds rapidly and adheres to the Elizabethan dramatic convention that the greater the body count by the end of the play,

the more the successful the tragedy. Character development is marginal to say the least, and the characters perform actions merely because Marlowe needs them to do so in order to advance the plot. They kill, woo, wage war, or die on cue simply because they do, the audience called upon to accept the most implausible of actions.

When I perused *The Jew of Malta* online, I saw that it is still occasionally performed. An actor of no less stature than Oscar winner F. Murray Abraham, who is Jewish, played Barabas in a 2007 revival at New York's Theatre for a New Audience. The theater offered a double bill of both *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice* with Abraham playing the parts of both Barabas and Shylock. Elyse Sommer, a reviewer of *Malta*, wrote, "While neither of these plays is on the hit parade of much produced Elizabethan dramas, the events of the Nazi era made them even more controversial and less likely to have frequent productions." Ms. Sommer stated of *Malta* that "[e]ven a terrific production [. . .] couldn't make this improbable tale of villainy something with great appeal to modern audiences." According to Sommer, the 2007 revival of *Malta* was emphatically not a terrific production because of some controversial choices made by the director, David Herskovits. Although these choices were flatly tasteless (such as a priest having sex with a corpse as well as a masturbation scene, neither of which is in the original play), the fundamental flaw, in Sommer's estimation, seemed to be that Herskovits made the decision "to play up the cartoonish aspects of *Malta*." And yet, in truth, Mr. Herskovits interpreted Barabas correctly by positing him as a cartoon character. Barabas is Marlowe's interpretation and appropriation of both a Jewish and a Machiavellian villain. In Barabas's case, he is plainly called a Machiavellian.

Critiques of *Malta* are fairly consistent in noting that not one religious group, Jewish, Christian, or Muslim come off well in this play. Marlowe is known for his atheistic views, views which caused him intermittent trouble with English authorities in a period not celebrated for its religious tolerance. But for my purposes, what I am most interested in is the portrayal of Barabas as an example of the stock Elizabethan dramatic character known as “the Jew” which grew from the cultural stereotypes with which Elizabethans would be familiar. In brief, “the Jew,” as a dramatic character, represented someone who was already an alien, an outcast, a greedy and unprincipled villain. Many of the racist stereotypes prevalent in Europe in Marlowe’s time had already survived little changed for hundreds of years and would still be common cultural currency in the Nazi era. I culled the following list of anti-Semitic stereotypes from Internet sites that purport to show Nazi era propaganda against Jewish people. Nazis depicted Jews in the following ways: as criminals, as cruel, as sexual predators, as inferior, as bacteria or vermin, as unpatriotic and in league with communists, as cheaters, as greedy and miserly with money, and as liars (*Holocaust Research Project*). Most of these Nazi stereotypes are prevalent in Marlowe’s Barabas. In “THE PROLOGUE SPOKEN AT COURT,” the audience is bluntly told that Barabas is a Machiavellian:

We humbly crave your pardon. We pursue  
The story of a rich and famous Jew  
Who lived in Malta. You shall find him still,  
In all his projects, a sound Machevill;  
And that’s his character. (5-9)

In addition to the above prologue, in a third prologue that is simply referred to as “PROLOGUE,” a character who says of himself, “I am Machiavel, ” goes on to ask that the audience “grace [Barabas] as he deserves, / And let him not be entertained the worse / *Because he favors me* [italics mine]” (7, 33-35).

Renaissance political theorist/writer, Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), according to American (German-born) political philosopher, Leo Strauss (1899-1973),

is the only political thinker whose name has come into common use for designating a kind of politics, which exists and will continue to exist independently of his influence, a politics guided exclusively by considerations of expediency [a politics most fully explained in Machiavelli’s *The Prince*], which uses all means, fair or foul, iron or poison, for achieving its ends—its ends being the aggrandizement of one’s country or fatherland—but also using the fatherland in the service of the self-aggrandizement of the politician or statesman or one’s party. (297)

According to *Merriam-Webster*, the adjective, *Machiavellian* (capitalized because of the close association with the source), means, in the second definition, “suggesting the principles of conduct laid down by Machiavelli; *specifically*: marked by cunning, duplicity, or bad faith” (*Merriam-Webster*). Whatever Machiavelli’s intention, he has become associated with any proposal in which the end justifies the means (Strauss 297). Machiavelli did not write *The Prince* until he fell from political favor and was perhaps trying to ingratiate himself with the new ruling faction in Florence. In fact, he dedicated *The Prince* to the new prince, Lorenzo de’ Medici. Machiavelli’s personal history should have been known to Marlowe’s audience and, thus, would have lent thematic value to

*Malta*. To drive home his point, Marlowe's audience is told in two straightforward addresses, in a prologue and again in a prologue to the prologue, that Barabas is a Machiavellian, which would have been a great reproach in Elizabethan England.

Accordingly, Barabas and the other Jews in the play are outsiders to a political system in which they must live and work. It is because they are aliens, not citizens, that the governor can, with impunity, demand that the Jews pay the Turkish demand for tribute. Furneze, the governor, has no one to answer to when he makes unreasonable demands on Jewish properties. In the *Malta* text, this alien status is referred to as the Jews being "strangers" or "infidels." Barabas acknowledges this status by referring to the Jews of Malta as strangers and the demanded tribute as being a Maltese responsibility and not a Jewish one, as the Jews are, after all, only aliens:

BARABAS. Are strangers with your tribute to be taxed?

SECOND KNIGHT. Have strangers leave with us to get their wealth?

Then let them with us contribute.

BARABAS. How, Equally?

FURNEZE. No, Jew, like infidels.

For through our sufferance of your hateful lives,

Who stand accursed in the sight of heaven,

These taxes and afflictions are befall'n,

And therefore thus we are determined.—

Read there the articles of our decrees.

OFFICER. (*Reads*) "First, the tribute money of the Turks shall all be

levied among the Jews, and each of them to pay one half of his estate."

(1.2.59-70)

Furneze and his officers can make these demands on Barabas because he is an alien without citizenship status, and, like the alien he is considered to be, Barabas will sell out the Maltese to the Turks and, after that, the Turks to the Maltese, but in the process, he will destroy many innocent people, including his own daughter. Thus, he will act the part of the Machiavellian villain in order to effect his own purposes: “We Jews can fawn like spaniels when we please, / [a]nd when we grin, we bite; yet are our looks / [a]s innocent and harmless as a lamb’s” (2.3.20-22).

Barabas is a law unto himself, a lying psychopathic criminal, a crafty predator. In an aside, he tells the audience, “Now will I show myself to have more of the serpent / than the dove—that is more knave than fool” (2.3.36-37). Barabas gives the following self-description to his newly purchased slave, Ithamore:

BARABAS. As for myself, I walk abroad a’ nights,  
And kill sick people groaning under walls;  
Sometimes I go about and poison wells;  
[. . . . .]  
Being young, I studied physic, and began  
To practise [*sic*] first upon the Italian;  
There I enriched the priests with burials,  
[. . . . .]  
And, after that I was an engineer,  
And in the wars ‘twixt France and Germany,  
Under pretence of helping Charles the Fifth,

Slew friend and enemy with my stratagems:

Then, after that, was I an usurer,

And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,

And tricks belonging unto brokery,

I fill'd the gaols with bankrupts in a year,

And with young orphans planted hospitals,

And every moon made some or other mad,

And now and then one hang himself for grief,

Pinning upon his breast a long great scroll

How I with interest tormented him.

[. . . . .]

But tell me now, how hast thou spent thy time?

(2.3.175-77, 182-84, 187-99, 202)

When Ithamore, Barabas's Muslim-Turkish slave answers his new master's question quoted in the last line above as to how he has spent his time, his answer of setting Christian villages on fire, cutting the throats of unsuspecting victims as they sleep, and the like, meets with hearty approval from Barabas (203-217).

Marlowe's offering up of traditional anti-Semitic stereotypes in *Malta* would not be complete without heavy emphasis on Barabas's love of money. The plot, in fact, turns on this theme. The first glimpse audiences get of Barabas is of him sitting in his counting house surrounded by great heaps of gold as he muses about the various trading ventures that have helped him to acquire all these riches. In the first act, the audience learns that Barabas is not only richer than anyone else in Malta, but that he is richer than everyone



put together in Malta. He makes it clear that he is rich because he is Jewish when he says, “thus we are on every side enriched. / These are the blessings promised to the Jews” (1.1.102-03). This by itself would seem to be a delightful benefit except that Barabas says, because of this prosperity, he is hated. He goes on to say that some men are poor because they have a conscience (by implication, indicating he does not), but these unfortunate, conscience-stricken men are definitely *not Jewish*. Barabas does not say all Jews are rich, but he does seem to imply all rich men are Jews (1.1.112-25). After giving an accounting of a number of rich Jews he knows about, he says, “[a]y, wealthier far than any Christian” (1.1.126). Again, this might be a happy state of affairs, except that Barabas and the other Jews of Malta must forfeit half their estates (and Barabas, all of his) at the whim of a governor who seems to believe all of the Jews’ wealth legally belongs to the state if it is demanded of them.

If Barabas were enraged with, and only seeking revenge against, those who had unjustly seized his estate, he could be viewed as a somewhat sympathetic character. But, even after he has stolen back many of his assets from the unjust Maltese government, Barabas sets about to accomplish a vengeance all out of proportion to any logical referent. His unnatural love of money and his fury at being bereaved of it drains away his capacity for normal human compassion for anyone who may only inadvertently annoy him. Because of his relentless drive for revenge for the wrongs he has suffered, Barabas has the distinction of being considered the first psychopath featured as a main character in English drama. Depicted in this Elizabethan play are most of the main racial anti-Semitic stereotypes later found in Nazi propaganda (as listed previously): Jews are depicted as criminals; cruel; sexual predators; inferior; as bacteria or vermin; unpatriotic

and in league with enemies of the state; as cheaters; greedy and miserly with money; and as liars. The only item on this list not clearly noted in Barabas's character is specifically that of "sexual predator." Yet Marlow hints even at this when he has Barabas respond to one of Friar Barnardine's string of open-ended accusations that the Friar begins and Barabas completes by Barabas confessing to "[f]ornication? But that was in another country; and besides, / the wench is dead" (4.1.42-43). In the course of the play, the audience has already learned that Barabas does not hesitate to commit murder in order to leave no witnesses who can testify to his crimes. Barabas confesses to fornication but is able to state with confidence that he knows with assurance that "the wench is dead" (4.1.43). It is hard to ignore Marlowe's possible suggestion that Barabas fornicated with (raped?) the woman and then murdered her, completing the aforementioned list of anti-Semitic stereotypes. Barabas is the result of Marlowe's quest to craft a virulent villain, capable of cruelty without conscience. Greenblatt rhetorically asks, "Where was Marlowe in all of this? Where was his audience? The spectators were invited to share imaginatively in the homicidal reverie, a reverie built out of the recycled religious hatred of centuries" (266).

It is difficult to say precisely how the Elizabethans might have envisaged Jewish people, a group of whom almost none had any first-hand knowledge. "The Jew" seems to have been more of an idea, a symbolic notion in Elizabethan consciousness, rather than tangible flesh and blood. Even in European countries that had Jewish populations, Jews were, for the most part, sequestered away from general populations in ghettos or in their own neighborhoods or villages. Contrary to Marlowe's depiction of Barabas, in *The Merchant of Venice* when Shakespeare's Shylock speaks of himself as having feelings in

his famous “I am a Jew. / Hath not a Jew eyes?” speech, Shakespeare has humanized his villain (Merchant 3.1.58-59). Part of Shakespeare’s brilliant characterization is that his heroes are neither wholly virtuous nor are his anti-heroes thoroughly evil. Almost all are moved by what appear to be complex and not always easily discernable inner motivations. Shylock is *provoked* into a desire for revenge against Antonio. Shylock desires to deprive Antonio of a pound of his flesh because Antonio has deprived Shylock of his human dignity by persecuting him at every turn as well as in depriving him of his income by offering interest-free loans to people who might otherwise be prospective customers. And yet, we may consider that Shakespeare stoops to have Shylock respond to his circumstances according to an inner logic that is bound up with Shakespeare’s notions of Shylock’s Jewishness.

Aspects of *Merchant’s* plot pertinent to my discussion run as follows: An insolvent aristocrat named Bassanio, desiring to court a rich woman named Portia in style, asks a loan of 3000 ducats from his friend, Antonio, whose assets are, unfortunately, tied up in retuning trade ships. Antonio takes Bassanio to a Jewish money lender named Shylock who hates Antonio for his verbal and physical abuse of him on numerous occasions. Shylock suggests that Antonio forfeit a pound of his flesh if unable to repay the loan, and Antonio strangely agrees to this unusual demand. Predictably, Antonio’s ships are reported to be lost at sea, leaving him in the hands of an enemy who has no capacity for mercy. Thankfully for Antonio, Bassanio has fared better than his friend by winning the hand of Portia. Dressed as a male lawyer, Portia defends Antonio, winning his release on the legal technicality that although Shylock is entitled to a pound of Antonio’s flesh, he is not entitled to the blood in the flesh and can only take the flesh if

he is able to do so without spilling blood. Shylock leaves the court in disgrace and must convert to Christianity.

Shakespeare's Shylock can be played in such a way as to make him a somewhat sympathetic character who has just cause to hate Antonio who has, on numerous occasions, spit on him and kicked him while berating him publicly for no other reason than that Shylock is a Jewish money lender (1.3.106-12). That being said, Shakespeare still resorts to building Shylock out of the material of stock racial anti-Semitic stereotypes available to him from his Elizabethan culture. With *Malta's* first recorded performance in 1592 and *Merchant's* between 1596 and 1598, it seems more than probable Shakespeare had Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* in mind when he wrote *The Merchant of Venice*. Since *Malta* was a popular play and Shakespeare a shrewd businessman who "had to draw some 1500 to 2000 paying customers a day into the round wooden walls of the playhouse" (Greenblatt 12) and managed to do so in a brutally competitive market, it would seem to be a given that he would write his own "Jewish play." Greenblatt wryly notes that "Shakespeare was singularly alert to whatever attracted London crowds [. . . and] neither Shakespeare nor his contemporaries were squeamish about stealing from one another" (294). Also, as I mentioned previously, a provocative possibility in Shakespeare's fashioning of *Merchant*, especially of the play's celebrated trial scene, is that Shakespeare may have had in mind the notorious trial of (the aforementioned) Roderigo Lopez, personal physician to Queen Elizabeth, who was accused of trying to poison the queen and imprisoned for a time in the Tower of London before being executed at Tyburn (now part of London). Certainly, Shakespeare must have been aware of these events taking place in the same city where he lived and worked and occurring

only several years prior to *Merchant* being written. Even in considering Shakespearean authorship debates as to who actually wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare, it seems implausible that whoever wrote *Merchant* would not have been aware of the news surrounding the trial. If Shakespeare had Lopez's trial in mind when he crafted the Antonio/Shylock dispute, then that lends a certain poignancy to Shylock's being allowed to go free to return to his home at the end of the trial. Nevertheless, the trial begins as Antonio's trial and, by a sleight of hand, ends as Shylock's. Even though Shylock and Antonio have entered into a legal agreement, Shylock may face the death penalty because he is considered to be an alien who has conspired against the life of a Venetian citizen (4.1.346-63).

Shylock's representation as the Jewish alien is not only a dramatic stereotype but a reality in the lives of Jewish people in the time *Merchant* was written. In this period of European history, many people lived lives outside of citizenship status. Entrance into citizenship, including voting rights, often required land ownership and other prerequisites that were beyond the means of the poor, for example. Women could not be citizens anywhere in Europe in Shakespeare's time. The representation of Jews as aliens was still firmly rooted as late as the Nazi era and beyond, but this notion of "aliennes" was somehow viewed as the fault of Jewish people instead of as a form of persecution against them. Although the 1935 Nuremberg Race Laws' removal of citizenship status from German Jews seems shocking, historically, Jewish insider status had been precarious, at best, in Germany as well as in other European and Middle Eastern nations. Caliph Al-Mutavallil of Persia issued an edict in 853 that Jews in his realm wear yellow badges (*JewishHistory.org*). Hitler and his Nazi henchmen did not one day creatively decide *ex*

*nihilo* that Jews should be forced to wear yellow badges to set them apart from those around them.

Shakespeare does not design his Shylock to exhibit every Jewish stereotype as Marlowe does with Barabas. Shakespeare is too brilliant a playwright to succumb to presenting only caricatures of either his heroes or his villains. A Shakespearean protagonist or antagonist should exhibit *hamartia* or, in popular shorthand, a fatal flaw which inevitably leads to his or her downfall. Shylock is a complicated man, yet his *hamartia* is in character with his stereotypical Jewishness. Shylock's two main flaws consist of greed and lack of mercy. Shylock demonstrates a miserly greed which is only superseded by a desire for revenge that cannot be reasoned with by pleas for clemency. Even the demand for a pound of flesh resonates uncomfortably with damaging, inaccurate accusations from medieval times that Jews used Christian blood (and perhaps flesh) to prepare their Passover Matzah. An often quoted passage that illustrates Shylock's miserly greed and his desire for justice without mercy is Shylock's reaction to the discovery that his daughter, Jessica, has run away in order to marry a Gentile Christian and in the process has carried off 3000 of her father's ducats and some jewels. In what must be intended as a comical scene, Shylock alternates again and again between mourning the loss of his daughter and the theft of his ducats as he cries out for justice and the law. The following lines are spoken by two relatively minor characters, Solanio and Salerio, to a group gathered at Belmont, Portia's estate.

SOLANIO. I never heard a passion so confus'd,

So strange, outrageous, and so variable

As the dog Jew did utter in the streets,

“My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!  
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!  
Justice! the law! my ducats and my daughter!  
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,  
Of double ducats, stol’n from me by my daughter!  
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,  
Stol’n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl,  
She hath the stones upon her and the ducats.”

SALERIO. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,

Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats. (2.8.12-24)

The loss of daughter and ducats may be what pushes Shylock into his desire for revenge, a revenge that cannot be reasoned with by Portia in her elaborate explanation of the virtues of Christian mercy in the trial scene. Presumably, because Shylock is not a Christian, he is incapable of responding to Portia’s urgings for leniency. The following lines certainly purport to express a comparison between *mercy* (New Testament) versus *judgment/justice/law* (Old Testament):

PORTIA. It [mercy] is an attribute of God himself;--

And earthly power doth then show likest God’s

When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,

Though justice be thy plea, consider this,

That in the course of justice, none of us

Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,

And that same prayer doth teach us all to render

The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea,  
[.....]  
SHYLOCK. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,  
The penalty and forfeit of my bond. (4.1.195-203, 206-07)

When Shylock is forced to convert, he not only loses his religion but, presumably, also his source of livelihood since Christians were not allowed to lend at interest. The question of where the mercy is, in relation to granting it to Shylock, begs an answer.

African peoples, another ethnic group who faced European prejudices that were formed well before England embarked on its overseas quest of empire, also found unflattering representation in Elizabethan drama. Several African characters appear in Shakespeare's dramas, among them, Aaron from *Titus Andronicus* and Othello from *Othello*. Aaron is a theatrical psychopath and mastermind of all the evil found in what is famously considered to be Shakespeare's most violent play. The play is seldom performed today, partly because of the graphic and unrelenting horrors depicted in a work that falls more into the category of a revenge play than that of a true tragedy. The difference between a revenge play and a tragedy seems to be a matter of emphasis. Titus and his enemies are mainly concerned with trying to outmaneuver one another in perpetrating revenge, with no grand notions of hamartia easily identifiable in anyone's character, including that of the titular protagonist. In regard to Titus, rather than search for one "fatal flaw" in an otherwise noble literary hero, the audience instead must search for anything in him that might speak of human character or virtue, only to come up empty-handed. Because of this, Titus does not really provoke audience pity in the way



that a true hero should. It seems little wonder that some lovers of Shakespeare prefer to believe he did not write this play. It is not within the scope of my argument, however, to address Shakespearean authorship, but rather to examine how Aaron represents Elizabethan racial/ethnic stereotypes in regard to people of African descent.

Before moving to a discussion of Aaron, I will first give a very brief overview of the plot of the play. The storyline runs more or less as follows: After returning to Rome from ten years of war with the Goths, General Titus Andronicus sacrifices Goth Queen Tamora's eldest son to his own twenty-one dead sons who lost their lives battling the Goths. In a remarkable piece of misfortune for Titus, the new Roman emperor, Saturninus, immediately takes Tamora for his queen, enabling her, her Moorish slave and paramour, Aaron, and her two surviving sons to perpetrate the most excruciating revenges on Titus and his surviving children. At the encouragement of Tamora and with the manipulative guidance of Aaron, Tamora's two sons, Chiron and Demetrius, murder Titus's new son-in-law, Bassianus, brother to the emperor, then rape his wife, Lavinia, daughter to Titus, after which they cut off her hands and rip out her tongue so she cannot identify them. When all this mayhem is complete, Chiron and Demetrius frame two of Titus's three remaining sons, whom the emperor speedily executes. For trying to stop the executions, Titus's only living son, Lucius, is banished. The son promptly escapes to the Goths who rally to him in order that he can return to make war on Rome. Titus, meanwhile, finds an opportunity to kill Tamora's sons, turning them into pies to serve to their mother. By the end of the play, practically all the principle players are dead or dying, leaving Lucius to be Rome's new emperor by popular decision (Shakespeare, *Andronicus*).

After *Titus Andronicus* had fallen out of favor for most of the nineteenth century, Peter Brook revived the play in 1955 with Laurence Olivier starring in the title role and Vivien Leigh playing Lavinia. Of this event, Norrie Epstein writes in *The Friendly Shakespeare*,

The headlines said it all: “Brook’s production has them dropping in the aisles.” Literally. Patrons, sickened by the spectacle on stage, had to be carried out gasping for air while an ambulance stood ready and waiting at curbside. The usually genteel Shakespearean crowd was unaccustomed to anything quite so shocking. There were generally at least two fainting spells per night, with an all-time record of twenty-two. [. . .] Nonetheless, people flocked in droves to see the production, and *Titus* was the most popular play of the 1955 Stratford season, with every performance playing to a full house. (313)

Thus, the play was an enormous hit with the Elizabethans and, then again, with the so-called “genteel Shakespeare crowd” of 1955 in Stratford, England, who waited in line for the opportunity to stand in the sold-out theaters and who overran the refreshment stand in order to brace themselves with tonic water so that they could make it through the play (Epstein 313).

Much credit for the multiple miseries inflicted in the course of the drama goes to Aaron, slave-lover to Queen Tamora. Aaron embodies the worst of Elizabethan stereotyping surrounding the notions of black cruelty to other people. Stereotypes surrounding black people from Elizabethan down to more modern times vary depending on sex, age, status and other considerations. For example, historically, stereotypical

labeling concerning the Southern American slave versus the Northern free black varied significantly. Furthermore, typical stereotypes held by the Southern American slaveholding societies varied, predictably, according to the work done by the slaves, whether the slaves cared for the master's children, served at the masters' tables, or worked in the masters' fields. Even among slaves, a house slave could hold considerably different ideas concerning his or her relationship to the slaveholder than did a field hand, as acerbically noted by Malcolm X in his speech entitled, "A Message to the Grassroots." Minstrel shows of the nineteenth and even the first half of the twentieth centuries capitalized on developing caricatures fashioned from ready-made plantation stereotypes. But, in Elizabethan times, the caricatures were not yet so plentiful and highly developed as they later became. Some of the main caricatures regarding blacks were/are as follows: seen as servile; as primitive and superstitious; as simple-minded and, thus, easily manipulated; as comedic, sometimes inadvertently so; as driven or motivated by sexual lust; as using witchcraft, drugs, or occultic means to serve their ends; as warlike or violent; and as prone to thievery and criminally bent.

Certainly, these stereotypes are fully ripe by the time D. W. Griffith and Thomas Dixon collaborated to produce *Birth of a Nation* in 1915 in which "[t]he film's subtitles repeatedly portrayed the slaves as 'happy, contented, and well cared for . . . joyous as a bunch of school children,' as though the obsequious characters on screen did not adequately convey the message" (Blight 394-95). But, in this scenario, once blacks were freed from their positions as slaves, they quickly reverted to savagery. Hence, Griffith and Dixon portray the Ku Klux Klan as a vigilante response organization that must save the fallen South from "sex-crazed blacks" who have been granted "unwarranted political

power” (395). The Klan is supposed to be viewed as heroic “[w]hen Gus, a renegade black soldier who has symbolically raped and murdered a white girl, is thrown upon the ground by Klansmen who have castrated and murdered him” (395). I concur with Shapiro when he muses that “[i]n the course of writing this book [*Shakespeare and the Jews*] I have developed a good deal of respect for the vitality of irrationality, and of the power of stories to lead people to act in ways that are difficult to comprehend” (226). Stories can lead people astray. Two fictional characters who exhibit some of the more extreme stereotypes mentioned above are Aaron and Othello.

Aaron, certainly a major character and the inventor of most of the schemes of revenge and cruelty in *Titus*, appears to others, even to Tamora’s own sons, to be the attentive, even servile, slave to Queen Tamora, when in reality, in their private relationship, he is her lover and her equal. Tamora adores him and steals away to be with him at every opportunity. Since her slave has completely won over the heart of his mistress who is Queen of the Goths and now Empress of Rome, and, since their relationship hints at being quite physical, I believe I can safely add the “driven or motivated by sexual lust” stereotype to that of the other stereotypes regarding Aaron’s character. Just in case the audience might mistake Aaron’s attentions in regard to his mistress to be that of only a dutiful slave, Shakespeare has Tamora give birth to Aaron’s child later in the play, a situation she must hide from her emperor-husband, Saturninus. Some aspects of Aaron’s persona seem even comedic, as noted by E. M. W. Tilly in *The Riverside Shakespeare* when he refers to the “magnificent comic villain Aaron” (1065).

Aaron appears early in Act 1, Scene 1 and does not exit until very near the end of the drama when he arrogantly declares that he is happy for all the wickedness he has perpetrated and only wishes he had the opportunity to do much, much more:

AARON. Ah, why should wrath be mute and fury dumb?

I am no baby, I, that with base prayers

I should repent the evils I have done.

Ten thousand worse than ever yet I did

Would I perform if I might have my will.

If one good deed in all my life I did,

I do repent it from my very soul. (5.3.184-90)

When Tamora's sons quarrel with one another concerning their "love" for Lavinia, it is Aaron who suggests how they might work together to rape her in the forest where her cries will go unheeded after they first murder her husband, Bassianus (2.1.105-131, 2.3.30-50):

AARON. The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull.

There speak, and strike, brave boys, and take your turns,

There serve your lust, shadowed from heaven's eye,

And revel in Lavinia's treasury. (2.1.128-31)

It is at Aaron's urging that Chiron and Demetrius cut off Lavinia's hands and rip out her tongue, thereby preventing her from identifying them as her rapists and as the murderers of her husband, Bassianus. Before the evil deed has even begun, Aaron has already plotted to frame two of Titus's sons for Bassianus's murder (2.3.1-306).

Aaron, a heartless embodiment of absolute evil, who is granted the authority by his mistress that enables him to supersede his position as a slave, uses this power to generate terrifying suffering in those who fall within his grasp. His cruelty is the stuff of horror depictions. His is the substance of the kind of black villainy to which Frantz Fanon alludes in *Black Skin, White Masks* when he observes that “[i]n [boys’] magazines [of the 1930’s], the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Spirit, the Bad Man, the Savage are always symbolized by Negroes or Indians; [since the boys identify with the] [. . .] explorer[s], [. . .] adventurer[s], [or] [. . .] missionar[ies] ‘who face [. . .] the danger of being eaten by the wicked Negroes’” (Literary Theory: An Anthology 464). Fanon, a psychiatrist as well as an anti-colonial revolutionary, elaborates concerning how the black was represented in popular culture as an object of terror: “The Negro is a phobogenic object, a stimulus to anxiety. From the patient treated by Serieux and Capgras to the girl who confides to me that to go to bed with a Negro would be terrifying to her, one discovers all the stages of what I shall call the Negro-phobogenesis. There has been much talk of psychoanalysis in connection with the Negro” (Anthology 466). The official term for a fear of black people, to which Dr. Fanon refers, is *Negrophobia*. Aaron is a phobogenic object, a monstrosity, not really quite human, created to excite terror and loathing in Shakespeare’s theater audience. Aaron’s name itself is, perhaps, a mark of otherness, a Jewish name that had not been widely appropriated as an English first name at the time of Shakespeare.

I will leave off discussing Aaron and listing his villainies to move on to Shakespeare’s more famous racist portrayal of Othello, the Moor. That *Othello* is a racist portrayal of a black male has, obviously, already been extensively documented. That being said, I think it important to revisit some aspects of this play’s racism in order to

comprehend what Elizabethans thought of Africans even prior to the English being significantly involved in the slave trade. The implausibility of *Othello's* plot has received much commentary and seems possible only if the audience is asked to believe Othello will not act or react like other men in a situation in which his wife's fidelity is thrown into question. The only characteristic about Othello marking him as different from other men is that Othello is a Moor, a dark-skinned African, living among Venetians.

Othello, a middle-aged, African Moor who has wooed and wed the young, white Desdemona earlier in the night, is called to an emergency meeting of Venetian noblemen who ask him to sail immediately for Cypress to defend it against invading Turks. At this same meeting, he must answer his new father-in-law's accusation that he has used witchcraft to win Desdemona's hand; otherwise, why would a white woman marry a black man (1.3.60-64)? But Othello eloquently convinces the noblemen that he has won Desdemona's favor by entertaining her with his exotic tales (1.3.128-71). At the meeting's termination, Othello, a notable warrior/general, immediately departs for Cypress accompanied by his wife (who sails on another ship). Within possibly as little as a day and a half after their arrival in Cypress, the play's villain, Iago, has convinced Othello that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him by taking one of Othello's officers, Cassio, as her lover. Othello, overcome by jealousy, strangles Desdemona, and upon learning of his mistake, stabs himself, taking his own life. The most immediate lesson to be learned from the tale is probably that Desdemona's father was right; after all, what was she thinking about by marrying a black man when she could have married "one of her own kind" (1.2.63-75)? Is it possible that Othello's fatal flaw or hamartia is tied up with his blackness? Absolutely! Unless Shakespeare's audience is willing to believe that

something within Othello makes him prone to react the way he does to Iago's lies, the play makes little sense.

Part of what triggers Othello to respond the way he does is the deeply racist environment of Venice. Caryl Phillips's *The Nature of Blood* follows Othello's sojourn in 1480 Venice from the time of his arrival there until his departure for Cypress. (This is same year that three Jews, also in Phillips's text, are unjustly accused of blood libel and burned at the stake in Venice.) Othello comes to realize that although he is a high ranking military leader, courted by city leaders because of his importance to the security of the city, he is and must remain an outsider because of his skin color. Even the gondolier sent by a Venetian senator to transport Othello to the senator's home for dinner disdains him. Othello observes, "[t]he gondolier nodded a terse greeting, which I took to indicate his disapproval of having to propel his vessel to my unfashionable lodgings in order to convey a passenger whom he no doubt deemed unworthy of transportation"(122-23). Phillip's shows Othello's courtship of Desdemona, which is remarkable for its brevity as well as its power. Othello is simply overwhelmed by Desdemona's attention and kindness toward him and almost immediately offers to marry her. It would seem that the only person in Venice to embrace Othello in his humanity is Desdemona, and he responds with extreme emotion and gratitude.

Probably the greatest difficulty of the play is that the audience is asked to accept that Othello believes his wife has committed adultery with Cassio on a number of occasions when no time has been allowed for this possibility. Othello and Desdemona marry and then immediately set sail for Cypress, with Cassio on a ship separate from Desdemona. Desdemona disembarks her ship and is still on shore when her husband



arrives. Husband and wife spend the rest of the day and that night together. On the day following, Iago suggests to Othello that Cassio and Desdemona are committing adultery together and have done so “a thousand times” (5.2.210-13). This, of course, is not only improbable but quite impossible because not enough time has elapsed for Desdemona to have had an opportunity to commit adultery even once! A. C. Bradley, in *Shakespearean Tragedy*, wrestles with the incredible time frame that Shakespeare is asking his audience to give credence to in this play. Bradley submits various theories that defenders of Shakespeare have put forward to make sense of the “time problem” presented by *Othello*. Bradley finally concedes that none of the theories really hold up under scrutiny and concludes, “Shakespeare did in *Othello* what he seems to do in no other play. I can believe he may have done so; but I find it very hard to believe that he produced this impossible situation without knowing it [. . .] and he appears to have imagined the action in *Othello* with even more than his usual intensity” (246). If Hamlet the Dane’s rather clear-headed, cerebral musings cause him to hesitate to his own destruction, Othello the Moor is the inverted Hamlet in rashly murdering his new bride on the most circumstantial of “evidence,” which is mainly comprised of a disappearing and reappearing handkerchief that she cannot account for! How could an audience accept Othello as a tragic hero and yet still accept him as capable of murdering his wife with no provocation on her part unless the audience also believes there to be something inherent in Othello’s nature which make this outcome plausible?

Othello is gullible, dangerously jealous, and violent because he is black. His hamartia is supposedly inherent in his race. This is obviously why Shakespeare chose for Othello to be black; I argue that the play can only work when the audience believes

Othello to be acting as a black man might when he is misled by a, presumably, more intelligent white man and provoked into a jealousy that moves instantly from suspicious to insane. Although Othello is a military general, he cannot recognize Iago's guerrilla warfare tactics when they are leveled against him and does not consider that he has only very recently passed Iago over for a promotion in favor of Cassio. Iago, in fact, hates Othello for several reasons: first of all, because he has been slighted for a promotion (1.1.8-33); secondly, because Othello is black (1.1.1-117); and thirdly, because he believes Othello has committed adultery with Emilia, Iago's wife (1.3.368, 2.1.275), apparently, because he must believe Othello to be an over-sexed black male. That Iago is mistaken in believing Othello has been with Emilia is to Othello's credit, but an Elizabethan audience would have understood some of Iago's concerns surrounding Othello's Moorishness. Kwame McKenzie writes in his article, "Big, Black, and Bad Stereotyping"

[the] imagery [. . .] [of] black-hypersexuality [. . .] has a long history and is difficult to shift. It was so pervasive and prevalent even in the 17th century that Shakespeare could write *Othello* knowing that his audience would understand the Moor stereotype. As Kristin Johnsen-Neshati, Associate Professor of Theatre at George Mason University notes in her writing on the subject: "Moors were commonly stereotyped as sexually overactive, prone to jealousy and generally wicked. The public associated 'blackness' with moral corruption, citing examples from Christian theology to support the view that whiteness was the sign of purity, just as blackness indicated sin. (McKenzie, "Stereotyping")

Iago's belief system leads him to design a scheme to uncork Othello's bottled-up, raging violence. If Iago can move quickly, he can cause Othello to get himself whipped up into a jealousy so furious that he will destroy Iago's intended victims (Othello included) before he can come to his senses.

Referring back to my list of racist stereotypes in evaluating Othello's nature or character, he is certainly neither servile nor comic. However, he can be seen as, in some sense, primitive and superstitious; simple-minded, and thus, easily manipulated; warlike and violent; criminally bent. In addition, he is believed by Brabantio to use witchcraft or occultic means to serve his own ends, and he is believed by Iago to be driven or motivated by sexual lust. That Othello can present himself as a gentleman and be received as one (provisionally, at least), but instantly turn murderously against people whom he has claimed to love such as Desdemona and Cassio, hints that bestiality lurks immediately beneath a veneer of civility. Iago gestures toward this interpretation when he repeatedly refers to Othello in animalistic terms by calling him such names as "an old black ram," "a Barbary horse," and a "beast with two backs" (1.1.88, 111, 116). Iago says of Othello that he is noble only because he is in love "(as they say base men being in / love have then a nobility in their natures more than is / native to them)" (2.1.215-17). Iago may believe that if he can destroy Othello's love for Desdemona, he can move him back into his supposedly "base" or vulgar nature.

In my previous discussion of the ease and speed with which Iago is able to utterly corrupt Othello's faith in his wife and in his friend Cassio, I believe I have already demonstrated how simple-minded and easily manipulatable Othello is. Iago says of him,

[t]he Moor is of a free and open nature,

[t]hat thinks men honest that but seem to be so,  
[a]nd will as tenderly be led by th' nose  
[a]s asses are. (1.3.399-402)

In *Faultlines*, Alan Sinfield advances the notion that Iago's lies are believed because they are

“Probal to thinking” (2.3.329). Iago's stories work because they are plausible—to Roderigo, Brabantio, the Senate, even to Othello himself [as well as to Elizabethan/Jacobean audiences]. As Peter Stallybrass has observed, Iago is convincing not because he is “superhumanly ingenious but, to the contrary, because his is the voice of ‘common sense’, the ceaseless repetition of the always-already ‘known’, the culturally ‘given.’” The racism and sexism in the play should not be traced just to Iago's character, therefore, or to his arbitrary devilishness, but the Venetian culture [or Elizabethan/Jacobean culture] that sets the conditions of plausibility. (745)

Sadly, Othello admits that he “lov'd [Iago?] not wisely but too well” (5.2.344). The play could not have enjoyed the kind of popularity it did when it was first performed unless the audience was able to grant plausibility to the actions of the play's main character. And, apparently, they were also able to tolerate tremendous gullibility in the play's hero as well.

Moving to Othello's fulfillment of another racist stereotype, that of the violent and even criminally bent black male, in a dialogue among his admirers Othello is referred to as “the warlike Moor Othello,” and Othello himself calls war “glorious,”

fulfilling what is commonly referred to as the “Mandingo” or “Mandingo warrior” stereotype applied to some black males (2.1.26, 3.3.354). That Othello is violent would seem to go without saying since he arranges for Cassio’s failed assassination, accomplishes Desdemona’s murder, wounds Iago by stabbing him, and finally stabs himself to death as he is explaining how he murdered a Turk with whom he had taken offence (5.2.352-56). Once enraged, Othello himself engineers this murderous rampage, holding himself above the law, even killing himself rather than allowing himself to be held accountable to Venetian law. Shortly before Othello kills himself, Lodovico, a kinsman to Desdemona, asks him, “What shall be said to thee? (5.2.293) O thou Othello, that was once so good, / *Fall’n in the practice of a [damned]slave*” (5.2.291-92) [brackets in original; italics, mine]. Othello’s response to this accusation is insightful: “Why any thing: / [a]n honorable murderer, if you will / [. . .] I did [. . .] all in honor” (5.2.293-95). According to this passage, Othello seems to be saying that because he killed Desdemona with good intentions, people should see this deed in a favorable light. Whereas Othello holds his actions as honorably intended, the white Venetians view them as criminal, yet they seem to understand that Othello holds to moral laws that are different from, but incompatible with, their own.

When Brabantio accuses Othello of bewitching Desdemona in order to win her love, this accusation plays on the stereotype that people of African ethnic origins commonly use witchcraft, drugs, or occult magic to achieve their goals. When Brabantio accuses Othello before the noblemen of Venice, Othello must give account; Brabantio’s accusations are taken quite seriously (1.2.62-81, 1.3.60-64). Furthermore, Othello himself

actually puts great emphasis on the power of magic when he speaks of the lost handkerchief he has given Desdemona:

OTHELLO.                    That handkerchief  
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;  
She was a charmer, and could almost read  
The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it,  
Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father  
Entirely to her love; but if she lost it,  
Or made a gift of it, my father's eye  
Should hold her loathed, and his spirits should hunt  
After new fancies. She, dying, gave it me,  
And bid me, when my fate would have me wiv'd,  
To give it her. I did so; and take heed on t  
[.....]  
To lose't or give't away were such perdition  
As nothing else could match.

DESDEMONA.                    Is't possible?

OTHELLO. Tis true; there's magic in the web of it.

(3.4.55-65, 67-69)

Othello knows that Desdemona no longer has the handkerchief because Iago has told him that Desdemona has made a present of it to Cassio (although Iago has stolen it and planted it in Cassio's room). Othello has warned Desdemona in the above passage that should she lose the handkerchief or give it away, the magic will work in reverse and

rather than love her he will loathe her. I see no reason not to take Othello at his word here; he believes that the handkerchief has magical properties in it capable of effecting good or evil.

In concluding with my list of black racial stereotypes in *Othello*, I have already touched somewhat on the final stereotype of Othello as the over-sexed black male—not that Othello is over-sexed—but that Iago believes he is. As I mentioned previously, Iago believes that Othello has committed adultery with his wife, Emilia, although he offers no proof or motive as to how he knows this adultery has supposedly taken place or why (1.3.368, 2.1.275, 4.2.147). For Iago, the proof could be simply that Othello is black. Iago calls him “a lascivious Moor” (1.1.126), and, as mentioned before, refers to Othello’s relations with Desdemona in the most bestial of terms (1.1.88; 1.1.111; 1.1.116-17). Among the characters in the several dramas I am discussing for this chapter, Othello is unique among the others in that he is considered to be a true tragic hero, an otherwise noble and admirable man, with one critical hamartia or flaw capable of destroying him and those around him. It is true that in the end his jealousy drives the dramatic action of play, but the precipitating flaw that leads to all of his other excesses is his extreme and simple-minded gullibility. Othello’s gullibility—a trust that defies logic and strongly resembles brute stupidity—seems like a strange flaw to craft in order to drive a powerful drama. In the last analysis, the play can only work if an audience is willing to believe Othello cannot help who or what he is and what he is capable of perpetrating once provoked. Othello’s hamartia is signaled in the color of his skin and will manifest in his actions if his true Moorishness is allowed to surface. If Othello had only remained a Mandingo warrior fighting on behalf of white Venice, presumably, all would have

remained as it should have. When he steps out of his place by entering into a miscegenous marriage, events quickly go awry for him and those for whom he is responsible.

The final play I wish to examine for attitudes of racism at the dawn of England's quest for world empire is Shakespeare's romance, *The Tempest*, which was first performed in 1611 for King James I and VI at Court and yet again as a part of Princess Elizabeth's wedding festivities during the winter of 1612-13. It is commonly believed to have been the last play that Shakespeare wrote by himself. (He is believed to have collaborated with John Fletcher in the authorship of *Henry VIII*, *Cardenio* [a lost play], and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* after writing *The Tempest*.) Of Shakespeare's thirty-seven (or so) plays, only the plots of *Love's Labor Lost* and *The Tempest* are believed to be completely original. Even so, Shakespeare drew heavily on recently published travel literature, most notably, accounts of a ship wreck in the Bermudas. My main focus for the purpose of this work centers on the character Caliban and on Prospero's (and some of the other characters') notions surrounding colonialism as reflected in this play.

Act 1, Scene 1 opens on board a ship at sea. The ship's occupants are endeavoring to survive a violent storm. From a nearby island, the former Duke of Milan turned magician, Prospero, explains to his daughter, Miranda, that, with the aid of spirits and magic, he has orchestrated this storm for his own purposes. She learns, for the first time, the whole story of how she and her father were cast adrift at sea by her uncle who desired to be duke in her father's stead. The usurping uncle was able to do this with the connivance and support of the king of Naples. As good fortune would have it, all of these miscreants are currently on board this failing ship. Prospero's servant-spirit, Ariel,



arranges for all of the characters necessary for the main action of the play to be swept overboard but still arrive safely onshore—in separate groups that are unaware of the survival of the other groups. The king’s son, Ferdinand, arrives onshore alone. The ship and crew find shelter and anchor in a hidden bay until they are needed again at the end of the play. In the process of time (only several hours), these shipwreck survivors have learned the error of their ways (except for Prospero’s brother who remains unrepentant); Ferdinand and Miranda have become engaged to be married, and all is made right again before everyone who is on the island boards the Naples-bound ship to return home to Italy—everyone, that is, except Caliban, the original island inhabitant, and the numerous spirits who are native to the island.

Prospero lost Milan to Antonio, because Prospero chose to be a titular ruler only and preferred for his younger brother to be the actual ruler, thus enabling himself to pursue his private interests. When the play opens, Prospero and Miranda have lived on the island for twelve years, and it has been on this island that Prospero has learned to rule, a rule that has extended to his daughter, the island spirits, and Caliban. As a recent arrival to the island, it is hard to understand why Prospero should rule over the indigenous inhabitants, but, rule over them he does. It would seem that the audience is supposed to see this as somehow the right order of things, presumably, because Shakespeare seems to intend that Prospero be viewed as superior to the island natives.

Shakespeare leaves the island’s location indefinite, and, although there are some references that seem to point to the Mediterranean, the main inspiration seems to be the Bermudas. According to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, “[the island] reflects the Bermuda described in two printed pamphlets and a manuscript letter which Shakespeare read”

(1656). These accounts, *A Discourse of the Bermudas, Otherwise Called the Isle of the Devils*; *The True Declaration of the Estate of the Colony in Virginia*; and *The True Repertory of the Wrack and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates*, document the shipwreck of the *Sea Venture*, the flagship of a fleet of seven ships bound for Jamestown, Virginia, which had left Plymouth, England on July 2, 1609. The ship, carried among the 150 passengers and crew, Admiral Sir George Somers, as well as the future governor of Virginia, Sir Thomas Gates. The ship became separated from its companion ships during what was probably a hurricane and finally ran aground onto the Bermuda island then known as the Isle of the Devils; in fact, all the Bermuda islands were known as the Devil's Isles. To the astonishment of the people of Jamestown, two pinnaces (small ships) arrived with survivors from the *Sea Venture* nearly a year after those people had been given up as drowned. The formerly shipwrecked survivors told of the bounty of the Bermuda island which sailors had previously avoided because it was believed to have been infested with demons. According to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, "[t]he English found no devils there; instead the island proved to be delightful, furnishing them with food, shelter, and wood to build the pinnaces for the remainder of their voyage" (1657). In *The Many-Headed Hydra*, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker use the Sea-Venture account to lay out some premises regarding the birth and growth of capitalism as practiced by the English in their transatlantic ventures, early seventeenth century style. Linebaugh and Rediker tie not only Shakespeare's play into their project but Shakespeare the entrepreneur. They put their project forward as follows:

We are by no means the first to find historic significance in the story of the *Sea-Venture*. One of the first—and certainly the most

influential was William Shakespeare, who drew upon firsthand accounts of the wreck in 1610—as he wrote his play *The Tempest*. Shakespeare had long studied the accounts of explorers, traders, and colonizers who were aggressively linking the continents of Europe, Africa, and the Americas through world trade. Moreover, he knew such men personally, and even depended on them for his livelihood. Like many of his patrons and benefactors, such as the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare himself invested in the Virginia Company, the spearhead of English colonization. His play both described and promoted the rising interest of England’s ruling class in the settlement and exploitation of the New World. (14)

Internal evidence from the play reveals that Shakespeare did indeed read the aforementioned accounts or at least was very familiar with them.

In addition to the *Sea-Venture* accounts, Shakespeare was also acquainted with John Florio’s 1603 translation of Montaigne’s “Of the Cannibals,” which is “essentially Montaigne’s praise of primitive American Indian society, as he has heard it described by explorers” (Smith 1657). According to Hallett Smith, “(*Cannibal* derives from *Carib* and originally had no connection with the eating of human flesh), [and that actually] Montaigne “thinks of [the so-called, ‘primitive American Indian society’] as an ideal state, superior to Plato’s republic” (1657). *The Tempest* demonstrates sufficient internal evidence to prove that Shakespeare freely used the voyage accounts as well as Montaigne’s essay in this play, but as that has already been well documented by other scholars in their writings and is readily available, I will avoid getting bogged down quoting *The Tempest*’s Gonzalo quoting Montaigne on ideal government (Linebaugh,

*Hydra*, Smith, “Tempest”). If Montaigne has American Indians in mind, however, when he refers to Cannibals, it is not manifestly clear that Shakespeare has American Indians in mind when he invents Caliban, although Caliban can clearly be viewed as a colonized subject. Interestingly, the original account of the shipwreck of the *Sea-Venture* mentions that two American Indians were on board: “Two Native Americans, Namuntack and Matchumps [. . .] were returning to the Powhatans in the Chesapeake after a voyage to England” (Linebaugh 27). Whether Shakespeare had these Powhatans in mind when he invented Caliban is, of course, unknowable.

General consensus holds the name *Caliban* as one of Shakespeare’s playful word creations based on the word *Cannibal*. As it turns out, the Romani (Gypsy) word *cauliban*, *kaliban*, and *caliban* is the word for “black or blackness” and *kaliban* or *caliban* is Arabic for “vile dog.” “Caliban,” according to Linebaugh and Rediker, “embodies African, Native American, Irish, and English cultural elements” (27). Shakespeare endows Caliban with a “genealogy” that is ambiguous to say the least. His deceased mother, Sycorax, an African native exiled from her homeland for witchcraft, came to be marooned on the same island on which Prospero and Miranda will later be marooned. The audience is not apprised of whether she is a spirit or a human. The father is said to be “the devil himself” (1.2.319). Whatever his parentage may be, poor Caliban is not represented as endowed with supernatural powers. The text shows Caliban “curse” Prospero, but it does not indicate that his curses have any substance to them other than that they annoy Prospero, causing Prospero to curse Caliban—and Prospero’s curses do have power (1.2.321-29). Nothing about Caliban seems supernatural. He is referred to several times as a deformed slave and seems wholly earthy, devoid of any supernatural

gifts, even without language until Prospero's arrival, and he is utterly limited to the physicality of the island.

Caliban initially welcomes Prospero and teaches him how to use the island resources to survive. In a remarkable passage early in the play, Caliban, the colonized other, pours out his bitter complaint:

CALIBAN. This island's mine by Sycorax my mother,  
Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,  
Thou strok'st me and made much of me,  
[. . . . .]  
And [I] show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,  
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren places and fertile.  
Curs'd be I that did so! (1.2.331-33, 337-39)

Caliban claims first rights over the land because he was living there when Prospero arrived. Prospero is at first kind to him until Caliban teaches Prospero all he knows about how to forage from the land. Now Caliban says he is cursed because he did so. Prospero, in turn, says that he and Miranda have brought enlightenment in the form of language and knowledge to Caliban, but since Caliban has proven himself unworthy, he must now work as Prospero's slave. When Caliban complains, Miranda reminds him that he is an "[a]bhorred slave, / [w]hich any print of goodness wilt not take, / [b]eing capable of all ill" (1.2.351-53). She tells him that she has taken "pains to make [him] speak, taught [. . .] / one thing or another," and did so when he was such a "savage" that he did not "know [his] own meaning [. . .] but wouldst gabble like / a thing most brutish" (1.2.354-55, 356-57). She says further that he comes from a "vild [*sic*] race" and is now "[d]eservedly

confin'd into this rock, / [w]ho hadst deserv'd more than a prison" (1.2.358, 361-62).

Admittedly, Caliban says he desired to people the island with Calibans using the unwilling sexual aid of Miranda to do so, but Caliban is confined only when Prospero and Miranda are not forcing him to do the work of a slave (1.2.350-51). The spirits of the island, even Prospero's esteemed Ariel, are all in servitude to Prospero. Prospero threatens even Ariel with imprisonment when Ariel reminds him that Prospero has promised him freedom for good service (1.2.242-97). So it makes little difference whether the island inhabitants are "good" or "bad"; Prospero presses them all into his service. Each of the indigenous characters is a colonized other because Prospero has the attitudes of a colonizer and the ability to enforce his colonialist agenda. Prospero's hegemonic influence over the island's inhabitants is so pervasive that all of them except Caliban do not seem to question Prospero's right to rule. According to Antonio Gramsci, *hegemony* can be understood as follows:

- 1 The "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.
- 2 The apparatus of state coercive power which "legally" enforces discipline on those groups who do not "consent" either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed. (Anthology 673)

Prospero has indoctrinated his “subjects” into accepting his absolute authority by both means defined by Gramsci: persuasion and coercion.

According to Ania Loomba in *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*, beginning in the mid 1980’s, critics commenced to offer up *The Tempest* as “a sustained reflection upon the violence, the asymmetry, as well as the intimacy of the colonial encounter” (163). These critics were latching onto debates that had sprung up around the use of *The Tempest* outside academia. In the aftermath of Madagascar’s anti-colonialist revolts of 1947, Octavio (also, Octave) Mannoni, a French-Italian psychoanalyst and writer declared in his *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* that “all colonized peoples suffer, like Caliban, from a ‘dependency complex’, which is to say they need the firm hand of a ruler to keep them from insanity” (163). Although his analysis is more complex than I can hope to capture in this single quotation, suffice it to say that Caribbean intellectuals took exception to Mannoni’s appraisal of subjected people needing to be saved from themselves by paternalistic outsiders. Thus they promptly appropriated *The Tempest* for their own uses. These intellectual writers included Roberto Fernandez Retamar, Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, and novelist, George Lamming. Aime Cesaire wrote his own play based on *The Tempest*, called “*Une Tempete (A Tempest)*”, to picture a resistant and highly articulate Caliban who, unlike his counterpart in Shakespeare’s play, does not need Prospero’s gift of language in order to curse” (163).

As can be seen from the tumultuous intellectual grappling over ownership of *The Tempest*, Shakespeare’s plays continue to have resonance in our own day. But in Shakespeare’s time, according to Loomba, Shakespeare’s theater, “The Globe, was enormously influential in forming public opinion around the world” (7). According to

Loomba, a Swiss tourist named Thomas Platter, who was visiting London in Shakespeare's time wrote, "the English pass their time, learning at the play what is happening abroad [. . .] since for the most part the English do not much use to travel, but prefer to learn of foreign matters and take their pleasures at home" (qtd. in Loomba 8). By 1600, an astonishing eighteen to twenty thousand people visited the London theaters each week. In consequence, "[t]he bulk of these visitors got their images of foreign people from the stage, rather than from books or from real-life interactions. Thus the theatre deeply shaped English imaginings of outsiders" (Loomba 8). Accordingly, a Londoner's worldview was much influenced by what he or she "learned" at the theater. Loomba notes that within the plays can be located "alienness and a disturbing familiarity in the many 'outsiders' they insistently portray. Indians, gypsies, Jews, Ethiopians, Moroccans, Turks, Moors, 'savages', the 'wild Irish', the 'uncivil Tartars', as well as non-English Europeans, were repeatedly conjured up on public as well as private stages" (8) and the "disturbing familiarity" alluded to by Loomba is that these stereotypes are still among us today.

Shapiro claims "[c]ontemporary scholars have traced the origins of modern racism and nationalism back to the sixteenth century, a time when European nations were coming into contact on an unprecedented scale with other peoples [. . .] [T]he words themselves—*race* as well as *nation*—only began to acquire their current meanings at this time" (170). That the theater both reflected and shaped public opinion was for many years overlooked by the critics, but now it is coming to be understood that interrogating the "others" of Shakespearian drama "help[s] us scrutinize the very boundary between European and non-European, and see how it is constructed at a time when Europe's



interactions with other worlds were becoming increasingly complicated” (Loomba 8).

Shapiro argues “that a central reason for the continuing fascination with Shakespeare and the Jews has to do with the increasing identification of Shakespeare with English culture” (77). He is, in essence, England’s national poet and has been held in that position since “the early eighteenth century, the historical moment when *The Merchant of Venice* was so successfully revived and would hence become a mainstay of the repertory” (77).

Arguably, Shakespeare may be seen as England itself: “[T]o claim Shakespeare is to claim a stake in what is [. . .] English, and to assert a Shakespeare sympathetic to the Jews or critical of them has become as much a political as a literary judgment” (77). This is why, according to Shapiro, “unresolvable questions such as how many Jews there were in Shakespeare’s England, or whether Shakespeare was an anti-Semite, or Lopez innocent, never go away” (4). These questions cannot go away because they are “poor but necessary substitutes for what is really being fought over: the nature of Englishness itself and who has a right to stake a claim in it” (4). As Europeans set sail in quest of acquiring empire, they took their attitudes with them: “In this period, descriptions of outsiders helped to shape actual interactions with them, to institute patterns of diplomacy, trade, colonization, and enslavement” (Loomba 10).

For my next chapter, I shift gears away from Early Modern English drama to make a foray into two modern American literary texts to consider some aspects in which they can be considered as intersecting in multidirectional ways. The two texts are Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* and David Bradley’s *The Chaneysville Incident*, both of which focus on memory work. The former probes into Holocaust memory, the latter, slavery and its aftermath.

## CHAPTER III

### MULTIDIRECTIONAL MEMORY ESSAY: THE INTERSECTION OF HISTORY, MEMORY, AND THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION

#### Introduction to Essay

This chapter is a literary essay that serves as an example of a multidirectional approach to history, memory, and creative imagination when they intersect in either historical fiction or historically responsible fiction. The main literary texts for this essay are David Bradley's *The Chaneyville Incident*, a text addressing the horrors of American slavery and Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, which concerns the nightmare of the Genocide of the European Jews. *Chaneyville* and *Maus* are heavily dependent upon the younger generations' interrogation of the older ones so that the memories of the previous generations are not forever lost.

#### The Intersection of History, Memory, and the Creative Imagination

In this essay, I examine where and how history, memory, and the creative imagination intersect and I argue that there is no purely-objective history—all history is subjective, to some degree. A culture's narrative history is made up of many imperfect memories; it is what a culture tells itself about itself and where it has been. A recent, frequently-heard complaint is that Americans currently live in a time of revisionist history. And, in truth, we do. Just as true, however, is that at no time in America's existence has America's narrated history not been comprised of revisionist constructs. History does not narrate itself; it is narrated by historians and amateur historians who possess their own worldviews. Historical creations cannot help but reflect history as processed through the ideologies of historians. I use David Bradley's *The Chaneyville*

*Incident* as one of my main literary texts and John Washington, its protagonist, as a model of a fictional historian. I use Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and Spiegelman as a model of literary documentary work, in order to facilitate a discussion of history, memory, and the creative imagination in the production of historical works. I also use several relevant non-fictional texts to help me demonstrate the value of merging history, memory, and the creative imagination, including Hayden White's *Tropics of Discourse*, James E. Young's *At Memory's Edge*, and Sam Durrant's *Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning*.

It is worth noting that Bradley based his tale on a real incident that occurred in the area of Pennsylvania where he grew up. In Chaneyville, Pennsylvania, thirteen unmarked slave graves were found on a nearby farm, and local legend tells of a group of runaway slaves who had chosen to fight rather than be returned to slavery. *The Chaneyville Incident* would earn Bradley a PEN/Faulkner Award and an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, both in 1982.

In *The Chaneyville Incident*, protagonist-historian, John Washington, an African American, is consumed with recovering an unrecoverable past. In the process, he learns that traditional means of historical research will not work to decode the riddles he wants solved. He discovers that the hard-earned information he has uncovered is nothing more than a list of seemingly unrelated events, leaving him with frustratingly incomprehensible gaps. John laments repeatedly that if only he had the requisite imagination of a good historian, he could make the necessary mental connections to see how the puzzle pieces his dead father has left him fit together to form a picture. But, he insists, he has no imagination. Finally, when he can go no further, he gives himself over to the voice of the

wind—the wind in which he can hear the panting of ghostly runaway slaves as they race along the path of the Underground Railroad. John experiences something akin to a channeling of the spirit of his ancestor C. K. as C. K. answers questions that will transform John’s dry list into a real narration. Setting aside the supernatural dimensions, John’s experience may be viewed not as the literal channeling of ancestors but as John’s finally allowing his creative imagination to roam free in order to produce a real narrative story. Fictional historian, John Washington, models the need of real-life historians to creatively fill in the gaps of the historical record, explaining what can seem inexplicable, bringing meaning to and even moralizing about that which might seem bewilderingly incomprehensible and amoral to the uninitiated.

John, a history professor who is an African American, lives with his white girlfriend, Judith, a psychiatrist, in a relationship fraught with John’s distrust of, and anger toward, all white people. John has numerous personal issues and idiosyncrasies but seems to function well enough professionally, although he confides to his readers that he is struggling in that area of his life as well. A late-night phone call from his mother brings John to the bedside of his lifelong friend and surrogate father, Jack Crowley. Because Jack’s cabin is relatively near John’s mother’s house, when he is not at Jack’s bedside, John spends his time rummaging through his father’s attic study. Between Jack’s storytelling and his father’s notes, John begins a quest to learn why his father, Moses, committed suicide when John was a boy. As John continues to examine his father’s papers, he realizes that his father intentionally left behind clues for him to follow. This trail leads John to discover that, on his father’s side, he is related to a runaway slave who fought for his freedom and was killed in the process. His ancestor was among a group of

slaves massacred near Chaneyville and later buried there by a sympathetic farmer. John also discovers his father, in an act of identification with his ancestor, C. K., committed suicide at the site of the graves. In the course of the novel, Jack tells John when he and Moses were young men, they rescued their friend, Josh, from being lynched and were nearly caught in the process. Thus, the name of the novel could refer either to the massacre or to the near-lynching. The end of the novel is ambiguous, leaving the reader unsure of whether John will commit suicide in an act of identification with Moses and C. K. or whether he will choose life with Judith.

According to historian Hayden White, that historical narration reflects the narrators of histories is as it should be, provided that the writers and readers are aware of this. The problem at hand is that many historians pride themselves on their objectivity, and the public has been assured that good history is always completely objective. To be sure, a good historian handles the historical record responsibly and fairly, but writers are human and their writings necessarily reflect historical events as the writer views them. The reading public needs to understand that the so-called objective historical narrative is just one more style of writing—a style in which the writer carefully avoids any self-reference. Thus, history seems to have scientifically documented its own case studies. It seems to say, “I, History, know all. I have seen how human events have played out and why, and I can tell you who the heroes and villains are.” This, of course, is an illusion. It can make for compelling and enjoyable reading, but it is an illusion nonetheless.

Accordingly, White asserts that a historian chooses from the four available modes of emplotment, the strategies basic to Western culture: romance, comedy, tragedy, and satire. White also suggests that the mode is dependent upon the ideological worldview

held by the writer: an anarchist may tend to work in romance; a conservative, in comedy; a radical, in tragedy; and a liberal, in satire, although any historian of classical stature will hold various aspects of the emplotment in tension with the other forms of emplotment in order to produce a complex work (Tropics 70). To illustrate his point that the emplotment strategy is in the eyes of the historical beholder, White uses the example of four historians who write about the French Revolution. All of these writers are working with the same primary documents, but Michelet emplots a romance; Tocqueville, a tragedy; Marx, a comedy; and Burke, a satire (Tropics 59-61). If history were truly objective, this would be ludicrous.

Provocatively, in David Bradley's novel, *The Chaneyville Incident*, John Washington, the historian-narrator of his own history, models the aspects of historian behavior and angst that White alludes to. For instance, *The Chaneyville Incident* is set up as a journal of sorts, with extended daily entries for each chapter. Likewise, John explains his need to order and color-code each historical datum when performing research. He explains that he "realized early on that the key to all was chronology [. . .] and so I [. . .] developed a system of color-coded [...] events [. . .] the time dating expressed as a string of numbers, year, month (in two digits), date (in two digits) and time of day (in twenty-four-hour military-style expression), followed by the day of the week" (144). Also, each chapter heading begins with John's numbering system, reinforcing the premise that the novel is set up as a journal with not only that day's events, but also, presumably, every thought, memory, and reasoning John has experienced. John loves this ordering. He says of it, "That was how I learned history. That was where the magic came from" (144). In true historian fashion, John tells the reader, "The truth is usually in the footnotes, not in

the headlines” (345). White agrees, stating that the historian’s “task is usually conceived [. . .] as that of ‘finding’ the story or stories that are supposed to lie embedded within the welter of facts reported in the record” (Tropics 111). White does not concur, however, that the “embedded stories” or “footnotes” so few people have supposedly noticed, present themselves as meaningful stories; the historian still provides the meaning (Tropics 111-12).

Despite any professional shortcomings John exhibits, he does provide a clear portrait of a sincere historian. He agonizes about the possibility of overlooking crucial information that could lead to “cold official records that preserve the facts and spoil the truth” (Bradley 48). He says that heaven, for historians, would allow them to know the answers to their questions and allow them to see how close they may have come to being correct. He admits, “We *know* we’re not right (although it would be nice to see exactly how close we came). It’s just that we want to, really, truly, utterly, absolutely, completely, finally, *know*” (Bradley 264). What seems to deeply trouble John is the agonizing possibility that, if one premise is wrong, the whole argument is “suspect.” This would spoil a historian’s lifework (Bradley 265).

John considers the two main impediments to deciphering the mystery his father has bequeathed him to be that he has insufficient information and that he has no imagination. He complains, “if [. . .] I could learn to imagine just a little bit, I could understand. But I had no faith that I would do it. I had never done it before” (Bradley 224). He laments he has put all the facts together and yet sees “nothing. Not a thing. Oh, I had seen the facts [. . .] but I could not discern the shape [. . .] they filled in. There were [. . .] too many gaps [. . .] not too many gaps; only too many for me, my mind. For I

simply could not imagine what I should see” (Bradley146). Within this same passage, he asks the impossible of himself. He believes he cannot understand what it is he needs to see unless he sees what his father, Moses Washington, saw in the way he saw it. But how can he? It can be a useful technique for historians to attempt to see through the eyes of the historical people they are researching as long as they understand they are only imagining what has motivated and driven the people to do what they have done. John takes this a step further by also trying to fill in vast gaps in the historical record available to him.

In *Chaneyville*, John searches for meaning within the mass of what appears meaningless. But what will give his facts meaning—and what meaning and whose? This maze of conflicted meaning is well summed up by Paul Valery:

History is the most dangerous product evolved from the chemistry of the intellect . . . History will justify anything. It teaches precisely nothing, for it contains everything and furnishes examples of everything . . . Nothing was more completely ruined by the last war than the pretension to foresight. But it was not from any lack of knowledge of history, surely?  
(qtd. in. White, *Tropics* 36)

John is not unaware of this danger when he gives the following definition of bad, mediocre, and good historians:

For any complex issue is surrounded by questions, most of them obvious, most of them meaningless, all of them false. A bad historian picks the wrong ones [. . .] A mediocre historian [. . .] spends his time doing background [. . .] that, when stated, will seem [. . .] obvious. A good



historian [. . .] hop[es] to find [. . .] one [. . .] cornerstone [question] that answering it will answer all the rest. (Bradley 193)

In trying to follow the clues Moses has left him, John needs to find meaning in the data (Bradley 161). John's toddy mixing and drinking appear to be a ritual he uses when he is in the process of discussing, musing about, or sorting through data in his search for meaning. The ritual seems to work for him; after all, when he finally gives himself over to receive from the "spirits" who are singing in the wind, he is sipping a toddy (Bradley 394). He never actually appears to be intoxicated, but these ritual enactments seem to help him enter a necessary mental state. In fact, while in this mind-frame, he and his dead ancestor, C. K., are both listening, simultaneously, for the runaway slaves. John tells Judith that he (John) "can hear them as they pass. I can't see them—it's misty. But I can hear them" (Bradley 394). In the middle of this, he sips some of a toddy and says, "[C. K. has] 'been listening for them [too]. [. . .] He started a day ago'" (Bradley 394). This is even better than seeing with his father's eyes. He is listening with C. K.'s ears and he begins to see with C. K.'s eyes and to think with C. K.'s mind. Every question John has entertained is answered. John eagerly listens as the story of the runaway slaves is downloaded to him from the spirit realm (Bradley 402). Perhaps John is receiving a supernatural transmission, or, perhaps, he is finally setting his imagination loose to fill in the gaps that any historian must struggle with in order to produce a reasonably coherent narrative with the standard prerequisite of a beginning, a middle, and an end. John is, in essence, now able to interpret the data he has wrestled with.

White explains this to be a common phenomenon among historians:

[I]n his efforts to reconstruct “what happened” in any given period of history, the historian inevitably must include in his narrative an account of some event or complex of events for which the facts that would permit a plausible explanation of its occurrence are lacking. And this means that the historian must “interpret” his materials by filling in the gaps in his information on inferential or speculative grounds. (Tropics 51)

By the end of his “channeling” experience, John has become what White relates that R. G. Collingwood insists a historian must be—“above all a story teller” (Tropics 83).

White also agrees with Collingwood when Collingwood

suggested that historical sensibility was manifested in the capacity to make a plausible story out of a congeries of “facts” which, in their unprocessed form, made no sense at all. In their efforts to make sense of the historical record, which is fragmentary and always incomplete, historians have to make use of what Collingwood called “the constructive imagination,” which told the historian—as it tells the competent detective—what “must have been the case” given the available evidence and the formal properties it displayed to the consciousness capable of putting the right question to it. (Tropics 83-4)

John’s “channeling” provides him with a complete and dramatic although perhaps untrue story.

In the novel, as Judith quietly listens to John interpret and explain the tale of the runaway slaves, she enables him to fulfill his role as historian-storyteller. Furthermore,

John's development as a storyteller brings out the literary artist or dramatist which White suggests is also a prerequisite for a good historian:

By suggesting alternative emplotments of a given sequence of historical events, historians provide historical events with all of the possible meanings with which the literary art of their culture is capable of endowing them. [. . .] And our understanding of the past increases precisely in the degree to which we succeed in determining how far that past conforms to the strategies of sense-making that are contained in their purest forms in literary art. (*Tropics* 92)

White points out that the recognition of the fictive writing elements in historical writing does not undermine its authority. Of this position he explains:

So too, to say that we make sense of the real world by imposing upon it the formal coherency that we customarily associate with the products of writers of fiction in no way detracts from the status as knowledge which we ascribe to historiography. It would only detract from it if we were to believe that literature did not teach us anything about reality [. . .] [W]e experience the "fictionalization" of history as an "explanation" for the same reason we experience great fiction as an illumination of a world that we inhabit along with the author. (*Tropics* 99)

In fact, White suggests that historians make use of such artistic forms as "impressionistic, expressionistic, surrealistic, and (perhaps) even actionist modes of representation for dramatizing the significance of data which they have uncovered" (*Tropics* 47). When John finally develops into a storyteller, I believe he is "participat[ing] actively in the

general intellectual and artistic life of our time” (Tropics 48). If more historians did this, White believes “the worth of history would not have to be defended in the timid, ambivalent ways that are now used” (*Tropics* 48).

Not only ought historians to liven up their craft by using the arts, but they also ought to prove the value of the study of the past in ways that make it meaningful for the people of their own generation. It is helpful for societies when historians do not allow themselves to transform into “kind[s] of cultural necrophile[s] [. . .] who [find] in the dead and dying a value [they] can never find in the living,” but, instead, “provid[e] perspectives on the present that contribute to the solution of problems peculiar to our own time” (White, *Tropics* 41). (This approach to history can make multidirectional work particularly fruitful.) According to White, literary and dramatic artists have popularized and perpetuated the stereotypical portrait of the stodgy, pedantic historian since the time of Nietzsche, and Nietzsche set the pattern. If it were possible, Nietzsche detested religion less than he despised history. He probably would have agreed with M. O. Gershenson who said that the world needs to be relieved of the “burden of history” (*Tropics* 37). White sums up Nietzsche’s prejudice against focusing on the past with the following statement:

The sense of history was the product of a faculty which distinguished man from the animal, namely memory, also the source of conscience. History had to be “seriously ‘hated,’” Nietzsche concluded, “as a costly and superfluous luxury of understanding,” if human life itself were not to die in the senseless cultivation of those vices which a false morality, based on memory, induced in men. (*Tropics* 32)

But, if it can be conceded that *false* moralities may develop because of *inaccurate* memories, then might cultures develop more true and equitable moralities based on more accurate memories? White believes for historians to narrativize, they must moralize. Indeed, their cultures need to allow them the space to do so (“Value” 407). Historians, in turn, ought to handle their culture’s memories responsibly, and, in order to be taken seriously by the intellectuals of their eras, they “can claim a voice in the contemporary cultural dialogue only insofar as [they take] seriously the kind of questions that the art and the science of [their] own time demand[s] that [they] ask of the materials [they have] chosen to study” (*Tropics* 41).

Concerning using the past as a lens to study the present, Carolyn Kitch, in her article “Anniversary Journalism, Collective Memory, and the Cultural Authority to Tell the Story of the American Past,” quotes Barbie Zelizer in explaining that “the study of collective memory [. . .] is much more than the unidimensional study of the past. It represents a graphing of the past as it is used for present aims, a vision in bold relief of the past as it is woven into the present and the future” (58-9). Of course, selective memory (meaning, also selective amnesia) is a problem in the cultural enterprise of assessing histories or memories, but this has apparently been the case since history began to be narrated (Kitch 48). Part of this process is what historian, critic, commentator, and theorist Raymond Williams called the “continual selection and reselection of ancestors” (qtd in. Kitch 51). For example, Jay Fliegelman, in *Prodigals and Pilgrims*, produces an elaborate argument to demonstrate how the adoption or selection of George Washington as father of his country took place (208-14). How much historians have been responsible for inventing, perpetuating, or only recording America’s favorite myths continues to be

debatable. In *The Chaneyville Incident*, Bradley endows John's ancestor, C. K., and John's father, Moses, with almost superhumanly mystical capabilities in evading the law. In the novel, the law protects the guilty and punishes the good—such as in the near-lynching of Josh White. The men who attempt to lynch Uncle Josh are not renegades from the law; they are their community's law. Even though the Ku Klux Klan members are wearing sheets, Jack Crawley, a shoeshine man, recognizes a number of city officials among the would-be lynchers by their shoes. Moses, as a kind of anti-hero ancestor of mythic proportions, later discretely destroys every one of these K. K. K. members. Jack relates the account to John:

“But somebody didn't leave it be, on accounta every month or so something bad would happen to one of them sheets. One went blind from drinkin' leaded shine. One fell in a ditch an' broke his leg an' caught pneumonia an' died. 'Nother one's wife left him. On like that. Jest bad news. Not too much at any one time, but steady; somethin' got every one of 'em. An' inside a 'bout three years wasn't none of em around here no more. Some moved on. Bout half was dead. Somebody didn't leave it be.”  
(Bradley 111-12)

At first observation, Bradley seems to have subverted this ancestor-worship by having both Moses and C. K. be bootleggers and murderers. He is, however, merely using slightly different criteria in selecting ancestors for worship. It is difficult not to be thrilled when Moses dispenses justice to these wicked men whom the law will not punish.

Another way in which John does the work of the quintessential historian is that he is willing to work with cultural trauma:

Moreover, the greatest historians have always dealt with those events in the histories of their cultures which are “traumatic” in nature and the meaning of which is either problematical or overdetermined in the significance that they still have for current life, events such as revolutions, civil wars, large-scale processes such as industrialization and urbanization, or institutions which have lost their original function in a society but continue to play an important role on the current social scene.

(White, *Tropics* 87)

William Faulkner summed this up well when he said “The past is never dead; it’s not even past” (*Requiem* 73).

In other words, the past intrudes into the present. John believes traces from the past continue to exist in the present. He says he can smell the reek of the trauma of the past: “So what it comes down to is atmosphere. The place stinks. It makes me choke. It’s not the people; it’s not the mountains; it’s not anything in particular. It’s just a stench, like somebody buried something, only they didn’t bury it quite deep enough, and it’s somewhere stinking up the world” (Bradley 275). This odor not only remains in the air to remind people of the nastiness of what lies buried from the past, but it also affects the present. John tells Judith, “Whatever it is that’s in the air, it makes people be just as bad to each other as they can be. It makes them treat each other like dirt” (Bradley 275). John even claims the rotten stench to be perpetual: “Because when the wind is right, I think that I can smell the awful odor of eternal misery. And I know for certain that if I allow myself to listen, I can hear the sound of it. Oh, yes. Surely, I can hear” (Bradley 214). Significantly (as if to reinforce the reference to eternity), immediately following this last

passage, John launches into a description of Jack Crawley's coffin which is "hermetically sealed, guaranteed for five thousand years or until the Day of Judgment, whichever came first" (214). Ironically, John knows that the odor of the near-lynching Jack experienced, along with Josh and Moses, cannot be hermetically sealed. It will continue to "stink up the world."

Whereas John Washington must depend on a trail of notes and clues his deceased father has left him to follow, Art Spiegelman, had a living father to interview for what would become *Maus*. *Maus*, presented in two volumes, is Spiegelman's account of his father and mother's Holocaust experiences and would eventually go on to win a 1992 Pulitzer Prize Special Award for Spiegelman. It won a special award because the award committee claimed it defied classification. The *Maus* texts switch back and forth between present and past as Art interrogates his father concerning his Holocaust years. In the present, the reader becomes privy to Spiegelman's troubled relationship with his father, a relationship that is worked into the narrative in ways that are sometimes sad and, at other moments, quite comical. Vladek's (Art's father's) past is told, primarily, beginning several years before the Holocaust, when he meets and marries Anja, Art's mother, until several years after the Holocaust when the Spiegelmans immigrate to America.

The most fascinating aspect about this remarkable work is that it is presented in the style of a comic book. Many people associate comics with comedy, but comic books have not been exclusively comedic since the inception of works like *Dick Tracy* or *Superman*. James E. Young says that "[w]hile Spiegelman acknowledges that the very word *comics* 'brings to mind the notion that they have to be funny,' humor itself is not an intrinsic part of the medium. 'Rather than comics,' he [Spiegelman] says, [. . .] 'I prefer



the word commix, to mix together, because to talk about comics is to talk about mixing together words and pictures to tell a story”” (*Memory’s Edge* 18). The effect powerfully pulls the reader into a narrative that seems compellingly life-like. Young sums up the method and result as follows:

The narrative sequence of Spiegelman’s boxes, with some ambiguity as to the order in which they are to be read, combines with and then challenges the narrative of his father’s story—itsself constantly interrupted by Art’s questions and neurotic preoccupations, his father’s pill-taking, the rancorous father-son relationship, his father’s new and sour marriage. As a result, Spiegelman’s narrative is constantly interrupted by—and integrative of—life itself, with all its dislocutions, associations, and paralyzing self-reflections. It is a narrative echoing with ambient noise and issues that surround its telling. The roundabout method of memory-telling is captured here in ways unavailable to a more linear narrative. It is a narrative that tells both the story of events and its own unfolding as narrative. (*Memory’s Edge* 18)

The result is, in fact, so effective that the reader gets swept along in a story in which Jews are represented as mice, Germans as cats, Poles as pigs, Americans as dogs, French as frogs, Swedes as reindeer, and Gypsies as moths. Yet, every aspect of the tale seems absolutely believable. Although *Maus* is entertaining and Spiegelman a great storyteller, he takes on the task of creating *Maus* with the diligence of a documentary-historian. Young writes that “[a]t no place in or out of *Maus* does Spiegelman cast doubt on the

facts of the Holocaust. Moreover, he is positively traditional in his use of documentary artifacts and photographs as guides to describing real events” (*Memory’s Edge* 38).

The *Maus* narrative begins when an adult Art Spiegelman shows up at his father Vladek’s house one day in Rego Park, New York, requesting that his father share his Holocaust experiences with Art. He asks his father to begin several years prior to the Holocaust, specifically when Vladek meets Art’s mother, Anja Zylberberg. Vladek does get around to discussing meeting and marrying Anja, which he virtually admits was for both love and money, but first divulges details concerning a previous relationship with a lover named Lucia. After he and Anja marry, because his father-in-law is both rich and indulgent, Vladek and Anja enjoy a lavish newlywed lifestyle. Vladek works for his father-in-law; the marriage produces a baby boy, Richieu; Anja becomes severely depressed after the child’s birth, and Vladek must accompany her to a sanitarium for several months where she receives treatment. After that, as World War II begins, he is called up by the Polish army to fight. He is captured, becomes a POW, and is later reunited with his family in Sosnowiec, Poland. The rest is pretty painful reading as the Spiegelman/Zylberberg family becomes more and more entrapped and is forced to move from the Zylberberg’s luxurious home into a crowded ghetto. Vladek and Anja send their beloved son, Richieu, into hiding with Anja’s sister, Tosha, who is living in what is, presumably, a safer ghetto. Vladek and Anja later learn that Tosha had made the difficult decision to poison Richieu, as well as the other children she was caring for (and herself), to save them from going to the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Even though the Spiegelman/Zylberberg family endeavors to hide, they are betrayed. The family is finally completely broken up as various family members are taken in “selections” to be

transported to death camps, from which almost none will survive. Vladek and Anja are able to hide for a time but, eventually, are betrayed and sent to Auschwitz as well.

Because Vladek and Anja are separated when Anja is sent to Birkenau, another part of Auschwitz, the reader learns mainly of Vladek's experiences at Auschwitz. Art learns, at the end of *Maus I*, that his father burned Anja's memoirs in a fit of grief after her 1968 suicide.

*Maus II* begins with the separation of the Spiegelmans upon their arrival at Auschwitz. The rest of *Maus II* tells of how Vladek manages to survive in Auschwitz, partly due to Vladek's resourcefulness and partly due to luck. After liberation, Vladek manages to return to Sosnowiec where he finds Anja. Although the text ends when Vladek and Anja reunite after the war, in the course of the story, the reader has learned that the Spiegelmans move to Sweden, post-war, where Art is born and, from there, will relocate to America.

*Maus* follows two stories: the past, which I have just briefly described, and the present, in which Art endeavors to wring Auschwitz memories out of his father while, at the same time, struggling with his very difficult relationship with his father. In *Maus*, at least Art has a living father from whom he can piece together a comprehensible narrative. Yet, Vladek can answer very few of Art's questions concerning Anja's experiences at Birkenau. He cannot adequately explain how she managed to survive and admits to Art that he did not even read Anja's memoirs before burning them. Anja's memories are now beyond the grasp of her son. Young writes of this loss that,

Spiegelman does not attempt to retell Anja's story at all, but leaves it known only by its absence; he is an accomplice to the usurpation of his

dead mother's voice. It is a blank page, to be presented as blank. Nancy Miller has even suggested, profoundly, that 'It's as if at the heart of *Maus*'s dare is the wish to save the mother by retrieving her narrative; as if the comic book version of Auschwitz were the son's normalization of another impossible reality: restoring the missing word, the Polish notebooks.' As a void at the heart of *Maus*, the mother's lost story may be *Maus*'s negative center of gravity, the invisible planet around which both the father's telling and Spiegelman's recovery of it revolve.

*(Memory's Edge 30-1)*

In *Maus*, Art endeavors to ask questions that will be relevant to his own purposes, teasing out his father's memories. In *Chaneysville*, John Washington must use the clues his father left him in his attic study before he committed suicide years before. Actually, John has not only the written notes his father left for him, but also, his father's old friend, Jack. John knows that "[a] bad historian picks the wrong [questions to ask]" (*Chaneysville* 193). John does not want to be a bad historian. In like manner, Spiegelman takes on his project with the sincere dedication of a true documentarian (*Memory's Edge* 38-9).

I do not wish to diminish John's metaphysical, spiritualized view of the past as it reflects on the present, but this can also be viewed as John's projection of the images, odors, and sounds within his own imagination onto the world around him. After all, John *knows* the history of the area and, of course, cannot see the countryside around him without also imagining the events that occurred there. According to Young,

Some people claim intuitively to sense the invisible aura of past events in

historical sites, as if the molecules of such sites still vibrated with the memory of their past. Shimon Attie is not so naïve. [Attie is an American artist who lived and worked in Europe in the 1990's.] He knows the presence of the past is apparent only to those already familiar with the site's history or to those who actually carry a visual memory of this site from another, earlier time. For Attie, memory of a site's past does not emanate from within a place but is more likely the projection of the mind's eye onto a given site. Without the historical consciousness of visitors, these sites remain essentially indifferent to their pasts, altogether amnesiac. They "know" only what we know, "remember" only what we remember. (*Memory's Edge* 62)

Attie put his artistic talents to use by enabling others to view the ghosts who peopled his imagination whenever he visited the former Jewish Quarter in Berlin by producing a work called *The Writing on the Wall*. Attie found a number of photographs of Berlin from the 1920's and 1930's, and, in many instances, he was actually able to locate (in the early 1990's) the addresses where the photographs had been taken and match them with the current addresses. Fortunately for Attie's project, the Scheunenviertel (prior to World War II, the Jewish Quarter) is in an ignored section of former East Berlin where buildings and property are too unimportant to either tear down or renovate. Attie enlarged the photographs and projected them (at night) onto the sites where they had originally been taken. At these outdoor sites, from 1991 through 1993, Attie set up one installation at a time, leaving them up for a night or two. During this time, Berliners and other visitors were able to see a pre-war Jewish section of the city projected onto a modern Berlin

neighborhood. The result was both surreal and disturbing. Young states, “Attie’s memory and imagination had already begun to repopulate the Scheunenviertel district [. . .] with the Jews of his mind” long before he produced *The Writing on the Wall* (*Memory’s Edge* 67).

Attie, through his creative imagination, was able to transfer his “personal memory [and personal artistic vision] to public memory” (*Memory’s Edge* 66). Attie, haunted by Jewish absence, wants others to sense the same haunting. To accomplish his ends, Attie “simultaneously looks outward and inward for memory: for he hopes that once seen, the images of these projections will always haunt these sites by haunting those who have seen his projections. The sites of a lost Jewish past in Europe would thus retain traces of this past, if now only in the eyes of those who have seen Attie’s installations” (*Memory’s Edge* 64). Young calls Attie’s work a “literal metaphor for the artist’s projection of his inner desires onto the walls around him” (*Memory’s Edge* 73). But what, then, is Attie trying to project and what are his inner desires? Young believes Attie is not attempting either to bring the dead back to life or to heal the wounds of the present. Nor is he even seeking to show what has been lost. He is, instead, exhibiting “that loss itself is part of this neighborhood’s history, an invisible yet essential feature of its landscape” (*Memory’s Edge* 73)—or, as John Washington might say, the area has the smell of eternal misery about it—the odor of inconsolable loss.

Inconsolable loss is part of the theme of Sam Durrant’s book *Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning*. Although the text is mainly concerned with how people process and work through the memories and the mourning resulting from colonization, the principles are applicable to people who have suffered loss as a result of

all varieties of cultural or national trauma, including the Holocaust and slavery. Durrant analyzes J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*, a postmodern retelling of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. In *Foe*, the main locus of attention is the colonized and speechless Friday. Durrant begins by presupposing Coetzee's native South Africa and its history of colonization and apartheid to be the psychic frame within which Coetzee is working. Durrant opens his argument by reasoning that reconciliation could be a motivation for writing *Foe* (published 1986). He strips down and restates the purpose and vision of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (established 1995) as follows: to help the various South African racial groups to work through their differences so they do not repeat their past failings (23). But Durrant begs the question as to how people work through these differences. He asks, "Is reconciliation simply dependent on 'establishing the [. . .] truth in relation to past events' or does it require some demonstration of grief on the part of victims and perpetrators alike?" (23). Once people are fully apprised of past and current sins and have grieved over them together, does this mean they are then free to forget about them? Is it wise to forget? Does remembering these stories have ambivalent value? In his writings on *Maus*, Young touches on this issue:

What do these stories do to the rest of the lives in which they are embedded? Shouldn't they foul up everything they touch with their stench? Can we keep such stories separate or do they seep into the rest of our lives, and how corrosive are they? Maybe, just maybe, we can live with these stories, after all.

"Why should we assume there are positive lessons to be learned from [the Holocaust]?" essayist Jonathan Rosen has asked in an article

that cuts excruciatingly to the bone of Spiegelman's own ambivalence.

“What if some history does not have anything to teach us? What if studying radical evil does not make us better? What if, walking through the haunted halls of the Holocaust Museum, looking at evidence of the destruction of European Jewry, visitors do not emerge with a greater belief that all men are created equal but with a belief that man is by nature evil?”

*(Memory's Edge 37)*

Just as we see in *Maus* and *The Chaneysville Incident*, Durrant argues that Coetzee's narratives refuse to assimilate and then forget the past, but instead, keep them in an indigestible, inassimilable form:

[W]ritten during the 1980's, at the height of the apartheid era, these novels testify to the suffering engendered by apartheid precisely by refusing to translate that suffering into a historical narrative. Rather than providing a direct relation of the history of apartheid, Coetzee's narratives instead provide a way of relating *to* such a history. They teach us that the true work of the novel consists not in the factual recovery *of* history, nor yet in the psychological recovery *from* history, but rather in the insistence on remaining inconsolable *before* history. (24)

Like the traumatic portrayals of terror in *The Chaneysville Incident* or *Maus* these are not histories that can or should be forgotten.

How do people commemorate the lives of other people who suffered or died under colonialism or the Holocaust or slavery? The answer is that people do what they are skilled at doing. Art Spiegelman commemorated the Holocaust with his *Maus*



“commix” because he was already a skilled comics’ illustrator, and David Bradley wrote *The Chaneyville Incident* because he is a creative and talented fiction writer. Sculptors sculpt, painters paint, and writers write because that is what they are skilled at doing. In Durrant’s terms,

To create art seems blasphemous in the face of excessive suffering but, equally well, art may be the only means of remembering this suffering, of giving “suffering its own voice.” [. . .] In an attempt to arrest the slide from remembrance to forgetting, Coetzee creates works of art that attempt to remember their own inability to remember, narratives that draw attention to their own incompleteness, the silence at their core. (29)

In this agony of *trying to remember*, of not explaining every aspect of a plot, of not tying up loose ends, the work becomes inassimilable and, therefore, cannot be easily forgotten.

Durrant believes this to be Coetzee’s goal, to keep the reader from being able to assimilate Friday but, instead, to mourn with and for him. Durrant further elaborates this concept with the following insight:

In his foreword to Karl Abraham and Maria Torok’s *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, Derrida describes this failure of integration as an “encryptment” of the dead within the living: “Cryptic incorporation marks an effect of impossible or refused mourning.” [...] Both senses of the “cryptic” are drawn on here: the dead remain secretly entombed within—internal to but sealed off from—the consciousness of the living, and they also remain enigmatic, coded, untranslated. The fixation on the body of the dead evoked by the idea of burial is further emphasized by the

term *incorporation*. While successful mourning is a movement of transcendence that allows the soul or spirit of the dead a kind of secular afterlife in the memory of the living, unsuccessful mourning is the failure to move beyond the corpse, beyond the fact of physical death. While successful mourning is a movement of *idealization* in which the dead are abstracted into a *memory*, unsuccessful mourning *incorporates* the dead as a foreign body, as a material *trace*. (31)

Durrant terms this “failed or inconsolable mourning” and says this is how he would categorize Coetzee’s novels (32). John Washington also seems to have encrypted C.K., the runaway slaves, Moses, and his dead brother, Bill, within his psyche to such extent that there is no room left for the living. For Art Spiegelman, the death of his mother is a felt—an inconsolable loss—at the very heart of *Maus*. When we see an aged and dying Vladek, at the end of *Maus II*, mistake his son, Art, for Richieu, when he tells Art goodnight, we know that Vladek is experiencing the resurgence of a deep memory as it imposes itself on the present. This is a voiceless grief, beyond the reach of words. And all of these manifestations hint at the multidirectionality of these histories.

Durrant speaks of voicelessness in literary trauma when he relates that in *Foe*, Friday is silent because his tongue has been cut out. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Friday might as well not have a tongue because Defoe gives him no voice or agency. Crusoe is his voice and presumes to speak for him. Durrant calls this “ventriloquizing Friday’s desire” (33). When Friday “lays his head under Crusoe’s foot and has this gesture interpreted by Crusoe ‘as a token of swearing to be my slave forever.’ Coetzee’s text marks the violence of this act of ventriloquism” as violent because it “represent[s] Friday as always already

silenced” (Durrant 33). C. K. and the runaway slaves are silent for people like Judith who cannot hear them. It is up to John, who can hear them, to share their story. But there is no indication John intends to relate their account to anyone other than Judith, and, probably, he only tells her because she is present. Because Anja Spiegelman’s notebooks had been left unread before Vladek burned them, her direct voice is absent from *Maus*. Art does not presume to speak for his mother but only tells about the parts of her life that are related to him by Vladek or that Art is personally acquainted with. But her loss seems to haunt *Maus* like a ghostly presence/absence.

An intriguing visual image that Durrant highlights from *Foe* is that of phantoms, the inassimilable others who haunt our dreams, similar to the way Anja Spiegelman seems to haunt *Maus*:

Would we be better or worse . . . if we were no longer to descend nightly into ourselves and meet . . . our darker selves, and other phantoms too? [. . .]” [D]escent into the self is ultimately an encounter with that which is irreducibly other within the self [. . .] [I]t is this nightly encounter with our own encrypted otherness that enables us to be “better” rather than “worse,” to relate—ethically—to the otherness of those we encounter in our *daily* lives.

Foe then goes on to speak of another “descent”—Dante’s descent into hell—and of grief: “One of the souls was weeping. ‘Do not suppose, mortal,’ said this soul addressing him, ‘that because I am not substantial these tears you behold are not tears of a true grief.’” (35)

Strangely, Anja, in her absence, seems to both speak and yet be silent. The terror experienced by C. K. and the runaway slaves is an ongoing horror—it does not seem to have been diminished by time, leaving John to believe he has made a connection with these traumatized others in the present. They and their sufferings have entered into and connected with his soul. Because the novel ends abruptly and ambiguously after this soul-encounter, it is difficult to say whether John’s experience gives him the capacity to be a more humane person. Scholar Gerald Vizenor describes phantoms like these as “images,” “constructs,” and “imprinted pictures” and says that George Steiner observes “[i]mages and symbolic constructs of the past are imprinted, almost in the manner of genetic information, on our sensibility. Each new historical era mirrors itself in the picture and active mythology of its past or of a past borrowed from other cultures” (145). Vizenor goes on to assert that “[T]he *indian* is an imprinted picture, the pose of a continental fugitive” (145). Similarly, C. K. and the slaves are forever fugitives on the run.

One common theme that emerges in memory studies is the improbable but necessary need to merge common memory with deep memory in relating events. In his text, *At Memory’s Edge*, Young relates that “Friedlander [. . .] draws a [. . .] distinction between [. . .] ‘common memory’ and ‘deep memory’ [. . .]: common memory as that which ‘tends to restore or establish coherence, closure and possibly a redemptive stance,’ and deep memory as that which remains essentially inarticulable and unrepresentable, that which continues to exist as unresolved trauma just beyond the reach of meaning” (12, 14). That deep memory is “inarticulable” and “unrepresentable” does not mean it stands by politely and unobtrusively. This poltergeist may break in from the edges at any moment in the form of the “intractable return of the repressed and recurring deep

memory,” intruding to haunt common memory (14). Accordingly, Young explains that “to some extent, every common memory of the Holocaust is haunted by that which it necessarily leaves unstated, its coherence a necessary but ultimately misleading evasion” (14). Young questions whether interaction between these two kinds of memories in “a [kind of] working through [will] remain the provenance of artists and novelists, whose imaginative flights bridge this contradiction even as they leave it intact” (12). A significant artistic example of the interaction between common and deep memory, a return of the repressed to haunt the present, is represented in *Maus II*, when “the dying father, Vladek, addresses his son Artie with the name of Richieu, Artie’s brother who died in the Holocaust before Artie was even born. The still apparently unassimilated trauma of his first son’s death remains inarticulable—and thereby deep—and so is represented here only indirectly as a kind of manifest behavior” (14). Vladek’s deep memory is inarticulable and, though Spiegelman does not try to represent the shape or form of the returned repressed, he does articulate its presence, devoting the last frames of his text to it, thereby signifying its importance.

Bradley, too, chooses to leave John in a state of inconsolable grief at the end of *The Chaneyville Incident*. John’s great obsession has been to solve the mystery surrounding C. K. and the runaway slaves, but once he has, he is neither content nor fulfilled. Instead, he is shattered, fractured, and, perhaps, suicidal. Even after the loose ends are tied up, the slaves are still forever panting; the misery is still eternal; and John is still a broken, inconsolable, grief-stricken man. For John to really come into his own as a historian, he must leave behind his aloof, hyper-objective, pedantic ways and set his imagination free along with his heart—to explore historical memory creatively and

fruitfully. Then again, perhaps in John's case, he does go too far in his later subjective involvement. Obviously, no one desires that historians get so involved with their research that they despair of life. And too, unless John really is getting his information directly from the spirit world, then he is bordering on using too much invented material and has entered the realm of historical fiction. Nevertheless, since all historians must bring their human reasoning to bear when they research historical records that are, unfortunately, less than complete, their work will always, of necessity, be subjective. Their worldviews are reflected in their representations of cultural memory—or history—if you will. Since this is an unavoidable occurrence, then historians' unashamed use of their creative imaginations should make their writings and their other work more satisfying to them and to the cultures in which they labor. In a similar vein, Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, in a sense, is Vladek's memoir, which grew from a base of Vladek's storytelling and his working through of his memories. Yet, in the hands of his son, Art, *Maus* becomes something very different from a traditional memoir. When Art expresses his father's story in the form that he does, he is able to reach more people and in ways that it is difficult to imagine that Vladek's story could have in a more traditional form. *Maus*, truly, is a brilliant merging of history, memory, and the creative imagination.

Bradley and Spiegelman both bring history to life in ways that grip their readers' hearts and imaginations. All pasts are, in a sense, unrecoverable if people are incapable of either identifying with or caring about the people of another era. For them, it may be just so much information they have had to memorize in school. People can read the statistics of mass atrocities without much of it registering on their psyches. But when thirteen slaves with names and personal stories must choose between life in slavery or death—and

they choose death, the effect of their decision is haunting. Readers are confronted with the need to examine what their own choices may have been under those circumstances, making the horrors of historical slavery seem more real and personal. When a Jewish man named Vladek repeatedly risks his life to acquire food for his beloved Anja when they are hiding from the Nazis, the reader admires him for it. When members of a particular Jewish family are ripped from each other in selections that carry them to Auschwitz, the effect is nearly unbearable to read. When Vladek's deep memory resurfaces at the end of his life, and he mistakes Art for Richieu, the son he lost in the Holocaust, the reader feels the emptiness, the devastating, irreparable value and loss of one little boy. These amazing literary creations are obviously based in history, and these writers are certainly indebted to the facts they and others have been able to research in the archives. But when these writers combine their creative imaginations and skills with historical accuracy, they produce a world of characters that are tangible to their readers, characters that readers care about and will not be able to forget.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE IN OUR MULTIDIRECTIONAL, GLOBAL COMMUNITY?

An appropriate text to initiate a discussion of the future of global justice is Nancy Fraser's "Reframing Justice in a Globalizing World," previously mentioned in the "Introduction." Fraser, a professor of political and social science at The New School in New York City, presents an informative analysis of why justice, as it has been practiced for the last several hundred years, is no longer adequate. She quickly segues into presenting strategies for rethinking justice in ways appropriate for transnational needs. According to Fraser, claims for justice generally fall within these two areas: "claims for socio-economic redistribution and claims for legal or cultural recognition" (1). She also adds an important third area: claims for political recognition (5). Any viable theory of justice must include all three of these areas (5). Traditionally, these three claims were viewed as national concerns to be advanced by national governments; people demanded justice within the framework of their own states. Citizens appealed for national level interventions to end unfair economic practices and discrimination. Across borders, locally as well as nationally, the main concern was the threat of invasion, not the concern for either the economic well being or the human rights violations of one's neighbors. This is not to say that previous generations of aware individuals have not been concerned about their global neighbors, but that within what Fraser calls "Keynesian-Westphalian [political] framework," what happened within the borders of the nations was the business of those nations (1-2). Fraser defines her idiosyncratic use of the term "Keynesian-Westphalian frame" as follows:



The phrase “Keynesian-Westphalian frame” is meant to signal the national-territorial underpinnings of justice disputes in the heyday of the postwar democratic welfare state, roughly 1945 through the 1970’s. The term “Westphalian” refers to the Treaty of 1648, which established some key features of the international state system in question. However, I am concerned neither with the actual achievements of the Treaty nor with the centuries long process by which the system it inaugurated evolved. Rather, I invoke “Westphalia” as a political imaginary that mapped the world as a system of mutually recognizing sovereign territorial states. (2)

What became known as the Peace of Westphalia ensued when dominant Western European nations signed a series of treaties between May and October of 1648 that ended the Thirty Years War and the Eighty Years War. By ratifying these treaties, the countries were agreeing to honor each other’s sovereign borders. As a consequence, a different way of viewing the sovereign rights of neighboring countries, and of allowing them to address issues within their own borders without interference from neighboring states became the model that lasted for centuries. Fraser notes,

It might be assumed that, from the perspective of the Third World, Westphalian premises would have appeared patently counterfactual. Yet it is worth recalling that the great majority of anti-colonialists sought to achieve independent Westphalian states of their own. In contrast, only a small minority consistently championed justice within a global framework—for reasons that are entirely understandable. (Fraser 2)

Within this ideal practiced by free states and admired by those who yearned for freedom, “the modern territorial state [. . .] [w]as the appropriate unit,” for addressing “what [. . .] citizens owed one another” (Fraser 2). The proper *who* under consideration were the citizens of the state. But currently, because of globalization and “post-Cold War geographical instabilities, many observe that the social processes shaping their lives routinely overflow territorial borders,” making the state framework outmoded (Fraser 3). People’s lives are impacted, often fundamentally and decisively outside their national borders:

They note, for example, that decisions taken in one territorial state often have an impact on the lives of those outside it, as do the actions of transnational corporations, international currency speculators, and large institutional investors. Many also note the growing salience of supranational and international organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental, and of transnational public opinion, which flows with supreme disregard for borders through global mass media and cybertechnology. (Fraser 3)

Our lives are affected transnationally. It is precisely because our lives are affected in transnational ways that people are linking up to form transnational communities to handle problems in transnational forums. For example, corporations can either easily move their production processes to areas of the world where they can find cheap sources of labor, or they can threaten to move if workers try to demand more wages where they are currently located (a serious situation dealt with extensively by Joseph E. Stiglitz in *Making Globalization Work*). With “the associated pressures of the ‘race to the bottom’, once

nationally-focused labour unions look [. . .] for allies abroad” (Fraser 3). In “the global economy [. . .] large corporations and investors [. . .] escape” the power of the states to regulate or tax them (Fraser 3). Currently, people in various movements are linking up with other like-minded people across the globe to reform local, state, national, and international laws. Examples of this cooperation can be found in the women’s rights movement when movement participants carry out local campaigns while taking advantage of mass media and cybertechnology to garner international support (Fraser 3-4). Other kinds of groups, such as “religious and ethnic minorities, who face discrimination within territorial states, are reconstituting themselves as diasporas and building transnational publics from which to mobilize international opinion” (Fraser 4). Indigenous peoples and “impoverished peasants” have also acquired a global platform from which they can disseminate information relevant for their needs (Fraser 3). In addition to the aforementioned examples of international cooperation, coalitions of activists worked transnationally toward the establishment of an “International Criminal Court, which can punish state violations of human dignity” in instances when peoples’ rights have been trampled (Fraser 4). Since transnational issues flow over national borders, crisscrossing the globe, and thereby affecting the quality of peoples’ lives everywhere, traditional national frameworks are insufficient for handling them. Fraser proposes a more transnational framework to meet today’s needs. The national framework for addressing violations of maldistribution (economic inequality), misrecognition (legal or cultural inequality), and misrepresentation (political inequality), are generally adequate as long as infractions are fully contained within their states of origin, as in cases of citizen against citizen violations, or state against citizen violations, and as long as states

are not violating the human rights of their own citizens and refusing to rectify the inequalities. The national framework is inadequate when human rights violations are either state-sanctioned or when the cause of the violations have originated from outside sources.

Fraser uses the device of framing to help her readers envision that some people, who are within a given frame, can make justice claims on others who also reside, somehow, within that same frame. These people can be said to be part of the same community (somewhat in the same sense as Benedict Anderson's use of the term "imagined communities"). People living within these national communities, but not on par with others of their communities due to maldistribution, misrepresentation, or misrecognition (because of their being part of a minority ethnic or religious group or because of gender status) have recourse to petition for a degree of fair play. Misframing occurs when people who should be considered to be a part of a frame are left out of it, as though they did not belong in it. Many population groups could be mentioned in connection to being left out of national frames in countries where they live, such as the groups I have focused on in this work—European Jews (and Gypsies), American Indians, African Americans. Outside opinion and pressure from global neighbors have helped to right discriminatory practices in the past and continue to do so in the present. For example, consider the derision the United States incurred during the Cold War when the State Department endeavored to export democracy abroad while African Americans at home were denied the most basic democratic rights. Misframing can also leave some people as a part of one community but excluded from others to which they should belong:

The result can be a serious injustice. When questions of justice are framed in a way that wrongly excludes some from consideration, the consequence is a special kind of meta-injustice, in which one is denied the chance to press first-order justice claims in a given political community. The injustice remains, moreover, even when those excluded from one political community are included as subjects of justice in another—as long as the effect of the political division is to put some relevant aspects of justice beyond their reach. Still more serious, of course, is the case in which one is excluded from membership in any political community. Akin to the loss of what Hannah Arendt called “the right to have rights”, that sort of misframing is a kind of “political death.” Those who suffer it may become objects of charity or benevolence. But deprived of the possibility of authoring first-order claims, they become non-persons with respect to justice. (Fraser 8-9)

These people are excluded from political life because their “community’s boundaries are drawn in such a way as to wrongly exclude [them] [. . .] from the chance to participate *at all* in its authorized contests over justice” (Fraser 8).

Fraser contends that the process of globalization is causing the no-man’s land of political non-personhood to become visible. Sometimes it is not necessarily true that these powerless people are non-persons in their own countries, but if their countries are weak and powerless, their countries cannot protect them from international predation. Fraser lays out this invisible injustice as follows:

Today, [. . .] globalization has put the question of the frame squarely on the political agenda. Increasingly subject to contestation, the Keynesian-Westphalian frame is now considered by many to be a major vehicle of injustice, as it partitions political space in ways that block many who are poor and despised from challenging the forces that oppress them.

Channeling their claims into the domestic political spaces of relatively powerless, if not wholly failed, states, this frame insulates offshore powers from critique and control. Among those shielded from the reach of justice are more powerful predator states and transnational private powers, including foreign investors and creditors, international currency speculators, and transnational corporations. Also protected are the governance structures of the global economy, which set exploitive terms of interaction and then exempt them from democratic control. Finally, the Keynesian-Westphalian frame is self-insulating; the architecture of the interstate system protects the very partitioning of political space that it institutionalizes, effectively excluding transnational democratic decision-making on issues of justice. (Fraser 9-10)

To insist on not looking beyond a Keynesian-Westphalian intra-state frame when global conditions beg otherwise, is to endorse “a powerful instrument of injustice, which gerrymanders political space at the expense of the poor and despised” (Fraser 10).

In rethinking a more inclusive frame capable of incorporating people across borders, it can again be useful to turn to the notion of community. Global communities are made up of people who share commonalities other than just living in close proximity

to one another, although they may do so. An “all-affected community,” or as Fraser refers to the concept, the “all-affected principle” includes people within its frame who are all “affected by a given social structure or institution” (13). As such, they acquire “moral standing as subjects of justice [. . .] [not by] geographical proximity, but by their co-imblication in a common structural or institutional framework” [13]. Their involvement in this system “sets the ground rules that govern their social interaction, thereby shaping their respective life possibilities, in patterns of advantage and disadvantage” (Fraser 13). A key question to be answered, of course, is *who* has been affected by “a common structural or institutional framework” (Fraser 13-15). Fraser suggests the following useful guidelines:

What is needed, [. . .] is a way of distinguishing those levels and kinds of effectivity that are sufficient to confer moral standing from those that are not. One proposal, suggested by Carol Gould, is to limit such standing to those whose human rights are violated by a given practice or institution. Another, suggested by David Held, is to accord standing to those whose life expectancy and life chances are significantly affected. My own view is that the all-affected principle is open to a plurality of reasonable interpretations. [. . .] That said, however, one thing is clear. Injustices of misframing can be avoided only if moral standing is not limited to those who are already accredited as official members of a given institution or as authorized participants in a given practice. To avoid such injustices, standing must also be accorded to those non-members and non-

participants significantly affected by the institution or practice at issue.

(Fraser 14-15)

The “all-affected” would have a democratic, dialogic voice in arriving at solutions for their problems instead of solutions arising from either hired technocrats or even from well-meaning, top-down monologic approaches to social justice (Fraser 18). The above guidelines are not intended to supplant the Keynesian-Westphalian systems of governance, but only to supplement them when necessary (Fraser 13). And it is necessary when a state is violating the human rights of its own citizens or when the violations are global in nature. In order to right these wrongs, individual states should be held accountable to cooperate with other states in order to bring an end to injustices that cannot be controlled by any one state. Unilateral decisions that affect other nations negatively, made by rogue, superpower nations, have no place in this approach, but only multilateral cooperation.

A first order of business in rethinking frames, so that they do not exclude people who rightly belong in them, is for nation states to cooperatively establish institutions that are capable of being forums for deciding who belongs in which frames and how this process can most effectively be accomplished. I believe people must be given space to exist in some political frame or another, or they will simply not exist in any frame and thus suffer the fate of non-personhood with little or no substantive human rights. These should be dialogically-driven, democratic forums that include the voices of those who are affected by structures or institutions that are shaping the scope of the frames in which they find themselves. At present, the desires for such forums are still only just that: desires. Fraser complains that “[l]acking any institutional arenas for such participation,



and submitted to an undemocratic approach to the ‘how’, the majority is denied the chance to engage on terms of parity in decision-making about the ‘who’” (17). What is needed then are “formal institutions that can translate transnational public opinion into binding, enforceable decisions” (16). Therefore, Fraser continues, “transformative movements are demanding the creation of new democratic arenas for entertaining arguments about the frame” (16). Fraser offers the World Social Forum, headquartered in Brazil, as an example of how “some practitioners of transformative politics have fashioned a transnational public sphere where they can participate on a par with others in airing and resolving disputes about the frame. In this way, they are prefiguring the possibility of new institutions of post-Westphalian democratic justice” (16).

Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-systems studies regarding global capitalism explains why some nations have grown so disproportionately rich and powerful in comparison to other nations that have lagged behind, regardless of the natural resources and people available in their own territories. In his text *World Systems Analysis: An Introduction*, Wallerstein titles his second chapter, tellingly: “The Modern World-System as a Capitalist World-Economy.” Said another way, the modern world system is a capitalist world economy. Capitalism is a defining feature of the modern world, having been with us since only the sixteenth century. In its origins, capitalism began “primarily in parts of Europe and the Americas [. . .] [and] expanded over time to cover the whole globe” (23). Although individuals have worked for wages, and individuals and firms have worked for profit for thousands of years, they were not capitalists until they began to “accumulat[e] capital in order to accumulate still more capital, a process that is continual and endless” (Wallerstein 23-24). Wallerstein contends that “[a] world-economy and a

capitalist system go together. Since world-economies lack the unifying cement of an overall political structure or a homogeneous culture, what holds them together is the efficacy of the division of labor” (24). In order to understand the global macro-conditions of labor divisions, Wallerstein usefully discusses the terms *world-systems*, and *core periphery*, and *core-periphery processes* or nations. Wallerstein defines *world-systems* as follows:

Note the hyphen in world-system and its two subcategories, world-economies and world-empires. Putting in the hyphen was intended to underline that we are talking not about systems, economies, empires *of the* (whole) world, but about systems, economies, empires that *are a* world (but quite possibly, and indeed usually, not encompassing the entire globe). This is a key initial concept to grasp. It says that in “world-systems” we are dealing with a spatial/temporal zone which cuts across many political and cultural units, one that represents an integrated zone of activity and institutions which obey certain system rules. (16-17)

Much of Wallerstein’s text hinges on his discussion of core-periphery relationships, a definition “developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and the subsequent elaboration of ‘dependency theory’” (11). Wallerstein gives the following helpful explanation regarding the terms *core* and *periphery* and how they work in the world-system:

The axial division of labor of a capitalist world-economy divides production into core-like products and peripheral products. Core-periphery is a relational concept. What we mean by core-periphery is the degree of

profitability of the production processes. Since profitability is directly related to the degree of monopolization, what we essentially mean by core-like production processes are then those that are truly competitive. When exchange occurs, competitive products are in a weak position and quasi-monopolized products are in a strong position. As a result, there is constant flow of surplus-value from the producers of peripheral products to the producers of core-like products. This has been called unequal exchange.

[.....]

The normal evolution of the leading industries—the slow dissolution of the quasi-monopolies—is what accounts for the cyclical rhythms of the world-economy. (28-30)

Within these cyclical rhythms, however, peripheral states tend to remain peripheral, core-peripheral states tend to remain core-peripheral, and core remain core unless there is a shake-up that can lead to a changing of the guard, so to speak, as appears to be the case regarding the changing position of China in coming forward to take a lead in the global economy.

In examining the positions of strong versus weak states, Wallerstein opens a discussion on space in relation to world economies, a discussion to which David Harvey notes that “[g]eopolitical rivalries for influence or control [by the core-process nations] over other territories inevitably result. This rivalry helped produce two world wars between capitalist powers in the twentieth century” (108). These unwholesome situations mean that “[r]egions are forced into some hierarchy of powers and interests such that the

richer regions grow richer and the poor languish in indebtedness” (Harvey 109). Charles Mills asserts that

[i]t was far from the cause that Europe was specially destined to assume economic hegemony; there were a number of centers in Asia and Africa of a comparable level of development which could potentially have evolved in the same way. But the European ascent closed off this development path for others because it forcibly inserted them into a colonial network whose exploitive relations and extractive mechanisms prevented autonomous growth. (35)

Very often, people who live in either periphery nations or live in the periphery status of refugees in countries that treat them as less than fully human are the people that Fraser refers to when she says these people have been denied the right to have rights (9). They can be the people that Giorgio Agamben refers to in *Homo Sacer* as persons who live in *bare life* conditions (77). When people have no citizenship status (or are citizens of low status nations), they exist as people without the protection of citizenship. Presumably, the importance placed on human life is based on the inherent humanity of the human life form, and yet, we all understand that not all human life is considered equal in importance in real world conditions. Full citizenship is a great protector of human life. People living at the level of Agamben’s “bare life” should be treated as valuable because they are human, and yet, they are *bare* or politically naked, and, therefore, left in unprotected situations. Consider, for example, the long and uncomfortable history of refugee status for Jews dispossessed from ancient Israel, and Roma (Gypsies), dispossessed from their homeland (presumably India), who found themselves living among their European

neighbors, and consider the Palestinians living in Israel today. Consider, too, the low status and precarious existence endured by African Americans and American Indians in the United States in years past. Until people are granted full citizenship status, they do not have the right to have rights. In assessing the plight of refugees, Agamben notes,

The figure of the refugee [is] so hard to define politically.

Since the First World War, the birth-nation link has no longer been capable of performing its legitimizing function inside the nation-state, and the two terms have begun to show themselves to be irreparably loosened from each other. From this perspective, the immense increase of refugees and stateless persons in Europe [. . .] is one of the two most significant phenomena. The other is the contemporaneous institution by many European states of juridical measures allowing for the mass denaturalization and denationalization of large portions of their own populations. (77)

In the early twentieth century, the nations of France, Belgium, Italy, Austria, and finally, Nazi Germany revoked the citizenship of segments of their populations who were deemed unworthy:

[O]ne of the few rules to which the Nazis constantly adhered during the course of the “Final Solution” was that Jews could be sent to the extermination camps only after they had been fully denationalized (stripped even of the residual citizenship left to them after the Nuremberg laws). [. . .] [N]ation states [. . .] discriminate[d] between a[n] [. . .] authentic life and a life lacking every political value. (Nazi racism and

eugenics are only comprehensible if they are brought back to this context.) On the other hand, the very rights of man that once made sense as the presupposition of the rights of the citizen are now progressively separated from and used outside the context of citizenship, for the sake of the supposed representation and protection of a bare life that is more and more driven to the margins of the nation-states [. . .] (Agamben 78)

The experiment of suggesting that human rights exist without concomitantly extending political rights has failed to materialize human rights protections for all people. Perhaps a productive move is to draft something that can be thought of as global citizenship that includes the right to have rights, to have a forum to be able to make claims for justice. Again, referring back to Fraser's arguments, such constitutions, laws, and institutions would supplement, not supplant, the nation states who participate in these global structures. Nation states must move to protect those who currently either have no right to have rights, or might as well have no rights because they live in so-called third-world nations that seemingly have no rights among the other nations. The stronger nations should do right because it is the right thing to do. Agamben warns that "[b]are life is no longer confined to a particular place or a definite category. It now dwells in the biological body of every living being"—under certain conditions, no one is completely immune from being submitted to the conditions of a bare-life (81). Unless we protect all people, none are truly safe.

Doing the right thing is also what drives Joseph Stiglitz's text *Making Globalization Work*. Stiglitz, who won the 2001 Nobel Prize in Economics, is currently a professor at Columbia University. He was chief economist and vice president at the

World Bank from 1997 to 2000 and, before that, under President Clinton, was a member of and, later, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors from 1993-1997. It would seem that Stiglitz has been in a very special position to see into the ways and purposes of global economics. Stiglitz is a man with a conscience; speaking his conscience is what reportedly cost him his job at the World Bank. He writes,

I became convinced that the advanced industrial countries, through international organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the World Bank, were not only not doing all that they could to help these countries but were sometimes making their life more difficult. IMF programs had clearly worsened the East Asian crisis, and the “shock therapy” they had pushed in the former Soviet Union and its satellites played an important role in the failures of the transition. (“Introduction” IX-X)

Stiglitz’s suggestions for making the world a better place for everyone is an ambitious project indeed, as a cursory look at the table of contents of *Globalization* proves. Stiglitz discusses the equitable development of global spaces; fair trade; how the legal issues surrounding patents and profits are being abused at the expense of saving lives; helping developing nations truly profit from their resources; global environmentalism; reining in the power of multinational corporations; relieving poor nations of their debt burdens; overhauling the Global Reserve System; and finally, bringing democracy to globalization. In each chapter, Stiglitz concisely explains the parameters of the issues he is addressing and then outlines clear plans that will work to rectify the problem areas. Stiglitz appeals to both high-ranking government officials and grassroots lay people to become

knowledgeable and proactive in doing the right thing. If Stiglitz's plans could be set into action, the world truly could start to heal itself. Stiglitz advocates that:

As the world becomes more globalized, more integrated, there will be more and more areas in which there are opportunities for cooperative action, and in which such collective action is not only desirable but necessary. There is an array of global goods—from global peace to global health, to preserving the global environment, to global knowledge. If these are not provided *collectively* by the international community, there is a risk—indeed, a likelihood—that they will be underprovided.

Providing global public goods requires some system of finance.

(281)

Part of the dilemma of the current state of globalization is that

[w]e have become economically interdependent more quickly than we have learned how to live together peacefully [. . .] [W]ithout peace, there cannot be commerce[. . .] [A] century ago [. . .] war set back [. . .] globalization; it would take more than half a century for globalization [. . .] to resume where it had left off [. . .] [A]t the end of World War I, the United States [. . .] turned its back on multilateralism when it walked away from the League of Nations, the international institution created to help ensure global peace. The Bush administration, [. . .] having previously announced its rejection of the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, and major agreements designed to contain the arms race,



also walked away from the UN when it went to war in Iraq with a preemptive attack in violation of international law.

The UN proved the value of deliberative democracy: after carefully weighing the evidence presented of an imminent threat from weapons of mass destruction, it concluded that the evidence was insufficient to [. . .] embark on preemptive warfare. The conclusion proved correct; no weapons of mass destruction were found. (291)

Because of this unattractive history of noncooperation, Stiglitz concludes that the United States, “[t]he world’s sole superpower has simultaneously been pushing for economic globalization and weakening the political foundations necessary to make economic globalization work” (291). Stiglitz contends that the U. S. has “justified its actions as strengthening democracies globally, but it has undermined global democracy” (291). Stiglitz calls on America to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do and because doing the wrong thing is not only unconscionable but also globally disastrous. At one point, Stiglitz even calls on other nations to place trade sanctions on the U. S., if necessary, a move that would bring the U. S. around to cooperation more quickly than any other measures that could be taken. For example, Stiglitz mentions trade sanctions in regard to

[t]he renunciation of the Kyoto Protocol by the United States [which] shows that we need some way of pressuring countries to participate. If moral suasion does not work (which it hasn’t) and we cannot find enough carrots, there are effective sticks—and their very existence means that

they may not even have to be used. There is already a framework for doing this: international trade sanctions. (176)

He also mentions that America's global neighbors could impose higher tariffs on American products which would provide a strong incentive for America to cooperate in a global effort to reduce greenhouse emissions (177).

Stiglitz insists that what will "make globalization work [. . .] is an international economic regime in which the well-being of the developed and developing countries are better balanced" (285). Stiglitz considers that what is required in order to find a balance that is fair for all nations is a *global social contract* (285). I am including the full contract (except for very slight exceptions, designated by ellipses), as Stiglitz writes it, because this document is so important. The contract is as follows:

- A commitment by developed countries to a fairer trade regime, one that would actually promote development [. . .]
- A new approach to intellectual property and the promoting of research, which, while continuing to provide incentives and resources for innovation, would recognize the importance of developing countries' access to knowledge, the necessity of the availability of lifesaving medicines at affordable prices, and the rights of developing countries to have their traditional knowledge protected.
- An agreement by the developed countries to compensate developing countries for their environmental services, both in preservation of biodiversity and contribution to global warming through carbon sequestration.

- A recognition that we—developed and less developed countries alike—share one planet, and that global warming represents a real threat to that planet—one whose effects may be particularly disastrous for some of the developing countries; accordingly, we all need to limit carbon emissions—we need to put aside our squabbling about who’s to blame and get down to the serious business of doing something: America, the richest country on earth, and the most energy profligate, has a special obligation—and one of its states, California—has already shown that there can be enormous emission reductions without eroding standards of living.
- A commitment by the developed countries to pay the developing countries fairly for their natural resources—and to extract them in ways that do not leave behind a legacy of environmental degradation.
- A renewal of the commitments already made by the developed countries to provide financial assistance to the poorer countries of 0.7 percent of GDP—a renewal accompanied this time by actions to fulfill that commitment. If America can afford a trillion dollars to fight a war in Iraq, surely it can afford less than \$100 billion a year to fight a global war against poverty.
- An extension of the agreement for debt forgiveness made in July 2005 to more countries: too many countries’ aspirations of development are being thwarted by the huge amounts they spend on servicing their debt—so large, in fact, that, as we noted, net flows of money in some recent years have been going from developing countries to the developed.

· Reforms of the global financial architecture that would reduce its instability—which has had such a crushing effect on so many developing countries—and shift more of the burden of the risk to the developed countries, which are in such a better position to bear these risks. Among the key reforms is a reform in the global reserve system, [. . .] which, I believe, would not only lead to enhanced stability, from which all would benefit, but could also help finance the global public goods that are so important if we are to make globalization work.

· A host of institutional (legal) reforms—to ensure, for instance, that new global monopolies do not emerge, to handle fairly the complexities of cross-border bankruptcies both of sovereigns and companies, and to force multinational corporations to confront their liabilities, from, for instance, their damage to the environment.

· If the developed countries have been sending too little money to the developing world, they have also been sending too many arms; they have been part and partner in much of the corruption; and in a variety of other ways, they have undermined the fledgling democracies.

· The global social compact would entail not just lip service on the importance of democracy but the developed countries actually curtailing practices that undermine democracy and doing things to support it—and especially doing more to curtail arms shipments, bank secrecy, and bribery.

For globalization to work, of course, developing countries must do their part. The international community can help create an environment in which development is possible; it can help provide resources and opportunity. But in the end, responsibility for successful, sustainable development—with the fruits of that development widely shared—will have to rest on the shoulders of the developing countries themselves. Not all will succeed; but I believe strongly that with the global social contract described above, far more will succeed than in the past. (285-287)

Stiglitz agrees with Fraser when he says: “The challenge in making globalization work is to universalize these concerns and to democratize the procedures” (289). This is critical because “so much is at stake—not just economic well-being, but the very nature of our society, even perhaps the very survival of society as we have known it” (288).

Whereas Joseph Stiglitz and Nancy Fraser call forward democratically run forums sponsored by responsible leaders of nation states (or, at least this is my interpretation of their intent), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, originating from a place far different from Stiglitz and Fraser politically, call forth the world’s multitude in *Multitude*. They do so in order to inaugurate a new, truly democratic world order run by all who care to be involved. Although Hardt and Negri’s multitude seems too nebulous to be imagined as running a new world order, newly forming Internet communities are doing just that, at least to some extent. Or, it can be said that Internet communities are becoming powerful enough to sway public and sometimes national opinion. Hardt and Negri refer to these multidirectional activist associations as “distributed network organizations” (86). Global

conditions, plus the Internet, have allowed people with divergent backgrounds and interests to work together for common concerns. In reference to these associations, Hart and Negri make the following observation:

One of the most surprising elements of the events in Seattle in November 1999 and in each of the major such events since then is that groups we had previously assumed to have different and even contradictory interests managed to act in common—environmentalists with trade unionists, anarchists with church groups, gays and lesbians with those protesting the prison-industrial complex. The groups are not unified under any single authority but rather relate to each other in a network structure. Social forums, affinity groups, and other forms of democratic decision-making are the basis of the movements, and they manage to act together based on what they have in common. That is why they call themselves a “movement of movements.” The full expression of autonomy and difference of each here coincides with the powerful articulation of all. Democracy defines both the goal of the movements and its constant activity. (86-87)

I believe that Hardt, Negri, and Fraser are correct in their assessment of the possibilities of the global persuasive power of those associations and, with the advent of the Internet, no government, institution, corporation, or individual has the power to block out the instant transmission of news, images, development of organizational formation, and plans for action, both locally and globally. Organizations now send out information along with petitions and pleas for donations in electronic transmissions that can be posted and

reposted by all interested parties to everyone they know using rapidly expanding forms of social networking media such as Facebook and Twitter, with minimal expense.

Stiglitz and Hardt and Negri use the English land enclosures of previous centuries as an analogy for the current process of patents, held by pharmaceutical companies in rich nations, which are being used abusively to close off access to life-sustaining medicines to those who are too poor to afford them. This impoverished “group” includes most of the populations of the world’s poorer nations and those in any nation who do not have access to health insurance. Prior to the land enclosures, English peasants (commoners) enjoyed the (common) right to use lands (the commons) to sustain themselves by farming, mowing hay, grazing their animals, running their pigs, and gathering fuel. The rights of the commoners to support themselves provided the distinction for the term “commonwealth” (support for all) versus “common good,” which indicates national wealth. The arable lands of central England, and some other parts of the nation, were organized into this open field system before the enclosures forever changed a traditional way of life. In general, the English kings opposed enclosure and the wealthy elites supported it. Interestingly, evidence may be coming to light that the enclosure controversy may have been an underlying cause of the English Civil War when King Charles I stopped and then reversed the enclosure movement (Bilderberg.org). If this is the case, then Charles may have been a martyr for the rights of the common English people. But this possibility is still speculative.

Some enclosing of the commons occurred in early Medieval times but enclosure only began to be somewhat widespread during the sixteenth century. The process accelerated between 1760 and 1832 when an estimated one thousand villages had to be

abandoned, sometimes because villagers were unable to support themselves, sometimes because those who had gained legal deed to the land destroyed the villages outright.

George Orwell, writing in 1944, calls the enclosures what they were, theft:

Apropos of my remarks on the railings round London squares, a correspondent writes” “Are the squares to which you refer public or private properties? If private, I suggest that your comments in plain language advocate nothing less than theft, and should be classified as such.”

If giving the land of England back to the people of England is theft, I am quite happy to call it theft. In his zeal to defend private property, my correspondent does not stop to consider how the so-called owners of the land got hold of it. They simply seized it by force, afterwards hiring lawyers to provide them with title-deeds. In the case of the enclosure of the common lands, which was going on from about 1600 to 1850, the landgrabbers did not even have the excuse of being foreign conquerors; they were quite frankly taking the heritage of their own countrymen, upon no sort of pretext except that they had the power to do so. (207)

Ownership of the English land is a point of contention in England to the present day.

Land control by the affluent may be an instance of attitude of empire that erupted when the wealthy Puritans (not to be confused with the Pilgrim separatists who tended to be poor and uneducated), upon their arrival in New England, contended with the American Indians over land ownership. The Native American notions of land ownership



may have appeared to the Puritans to be like the English notion of the commons. The American Puritans, newly arrived from England, tended to be people of means, wealthy people favoring enclosure in England, and, because of this, not known to be on especially friendly terms with King Charles I. In fact, back in England, their English Puritan counterparts, under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, deposed and eventually beheaded the king. How the English notions of land ownership and the dismantling of the English commons may have played out in the New England Puritans attitudes toward the local American Indian tribes' notions of land use is unclear, however, and calls for further study.

Accordingly, when Stiglitz, Hardt, and Negri use the enclosing of the English commons by a wealthy minority, who were able to force their will on multitudes of people who did not have the power to oppose them, it is an apt analogy for current policies that put profits ahead of the public good (and goods). The analogy works whether the public good be access to life-saving drugs and basic healthcare, concern for environmental issues, or access to knowledge and the Internet.

Stiglitz as well as Hardt and Negri view the enactment of TRIPs (Trade-Related aspects of Intellectual Property rights), and other similar agreements and legislation that make it illegal for non-patent holding companies to manufacture life-saving generic drugs for the poor people of impoverished nations, to be akin to closing off a commons of emergency medical aid. Non-patent holding companies are prevented from manufacturing and distributing life-saving drugs even in pandemic situations like AIDS in Africa. The common good of humanity loses out to the desire of corporations for higher and higher profits (Hardt and Negri 284, 398; Stiglitz 103-05, 116-17, 303-05).

The commons analogy is invoked yet again when examining pollution, which tends to eventually spread beyond original pollution sites, whether of land, water, or air. Pollution affects everyone. Preventing a toxic living environment is, therefore, everyone's business, and, regarding pollution, the whole planet can be thought of as a gigantic commons belonging to every person (Hardt and Negri 186-89, 304; Stiglitz 161-86, 107-12, 294-96).

Another commons area is that of knowledge. Stiglitz, Hardt, and Negri discuss how innovation is most productive when knowledge is accessible and research conducted in teams, with more researchers free to do follow-on research (research carried out closely on the heels of previous research) without fear of infringing on patents. This freedom and innovation approach is how research is typically carried out in universities and government funded programs, and it is documented that this research model yields ground-breaking, rich results. On the other hand, the stranglehold pharmaceutical companies exercise over control of, as well as access to, their knowledge is why innovation and discovery of truly new and different medicines is so sparse among them. Each company must develop its own versions of drugs that address the same health issues, instead of launching out into the new. Also, unfortunately, because the emphasis remains on profits, developing drugs that can combat diseases endemic to poorer areas of the world (such as malaria) often remain underfunded (Hardt and Negri 338; Stiglitz 103-32).

The Internet is another commons area where infringement (enclosure) affects everyone. In the early days of this exciting new frontier, developers enjoyed a wide latitude of freedom, which helps to explain how and why the web system expanded in the

exponential way that it did. But now, those who are endeavoring to patent every current and future Internet component possibility are threatening to turn the Internet into private property. Their move to enclose the Internet commons must be resisted. There is simply too much at stake since the Internet should belong to all people (Hardt and Negri 185-86, 266, 301, 337-38; Stiglitz 20, 43).

The Internet is an amazing facilitator, enabling people with multidirectional memories and histories to connect with each other from around the world. The Internet allows people to work together for their common good with greater ease. Although I have chosen to focus on the ways people of African, American Indian, and Jewish descent share much in common in their cultural histories of victimization, when people examine their histories in the ways Michael Rothberg suggests, they will realize that multidirectional memories can flow in ways beyond that of occupying the same or a similar position in relation to a history, for example, that of a victim position. For instance, historically, African Americans, American Indians, and a handful of Jewish Americans (Leo Frank, S.A. Bierfield, and Albert Bettelheim for instance) have been lynched in the United States. But, the lynchers, who obviously shared in the lynching events, also shared in the same histories, from different vantage points, as those who were lynched. Descendants of the lynched, as well as those who did the lynching, often still share the same land as well as the same histories. All need to know the truth of those events. Reconciliation is based upon a truthful reckoning and a heartfelt “repentance,” when needed, for the misdeeds of one’s foreparents so that, as much as possible, the wrongs of the past can be righted in the present. Sweeping these kinds of events under the national carpet and away from the national conscience is not good faith or good politics.

But the children of the oppressors ought to be invited to help right the wrongs of the past instead of being subjected to reverse discrimination, which is also unjust.

The descendants of the slaves and the slaveholders, the colonized and the colonizers, all share in each other's histories (and lands) and all hold the keys to bringing into being a future with hope and equity. Rothberg uses current antagonisms between Jews and Palestinians to stress how they actually share much in common in both land and memories [and, in some cases, actual DNA] and suggests that both groups should endeavor to find ways to move toward a more hopeful future with one another (309-13). In the same way, in the Americas, the descendants of both oppressed and oppressing peoples share lands, histories, and, very often, DNA. Fear of talking about these truths must be resisted when discussions are raised in a desire to design a better world.

In actuality, all population groups should be able to relate to those who have experienced histories of oppression because, on some level, all population groups have been oppressed. When Frantz Fanon mentions the seemingly strange occurrence of white-on-white oppression in Nazi Germany as though this were a bizarre aberration out of character with European history, this depiction is not entirely accurate. Historically, the overwhelming majority of Europeans were either peasants or serfs who had to spend their brief lives trying to scratch a meager living out of the land, often while trying to avoid the ire of their exacting landlords. European history is replete with the most unspeakable acts of inhumanity against the common people. Even in England, where the yeoman farmer and those below in rank had enjoyed the rights to the commons, commoners found themselves cast off the land, homeless, jobless, and hungry. They were forced to move to the cities in search of work, to wander as vagrants, or to be shipped against their wills to

other parts of “the world” to provide what amounted to white slave labor. According to Linebaugh and Rediker in *The Many Headed Hydra*, “[a]erial photography and excavations have located more than a thousand deserted villages and hamlets, confirming the colossal dimensions of the expropriation of the peasantry,” giving substance to Oliver Goldsmith’s poem of lamentation, written in 1770, “The Deserted Village” (17). These unfortunate people, dispossessed of their former homes and livelihoods, found themselves vagabonds. Vagabondage was illegal, and, yet, in the time of Henry VIII, vagabonds numbered around 75,000 souls (Linebaugh 18). During the reigns of the various Tudor monarchs, penalties inflicted upon vagabonds for the “crime” of being homeless included: being whipped, having ears sliced off, being hanged, having “their chests branded with the letter *V*” followed by “enslave[ment] for two years,” or being “whipped and banished to galley service or the house of correction” (Linebaugh 18). Naturally, crime escalated as desperate, hungry people wandered the countryside. Stealing a loaf of bread could result in being hanged. People flooded the cities in hope of finding wage labor, which, often, was unavailable. Naturally enough, rebellions and uprisings became a defining feature of the age (Linebaugh 18).

Fear of uprisings caused the English elite to view sending their poor to colonies abroad as a solution to problems at home. Linebaugh and Rediker state the matter as follows:

Expropriation and resistance fueled the process of colonization, peopling the *Sea-Venture* and many other transatlantic vessels during the first half of the seventeenth century. While some went willingly, as the loss of lands made them desperate for a new beginning, many more went

unwillingly [. . .] Arguments in favor of colonizing Ireland in 1594 or Virginia in 1612 held that “rank multitude” might thus be exported and the “matter of sedition [. . .] removed out of the city.” An entire policy originated from the Beggars Act of 1597 [. . .], whereby vagrants and rogues convicted of crimes (mostly against property) in England would be transported to the colonies and sentenced to work on plantations, within what Hakluyt saw as a “prison without walls.” Here was the place for the inmates of London and indeed the whole realm. Thousands [. . .] would [be sent to the colonies under these unfortunate circumstances]. (20)

It seems little wonder that the colonial government in Virginia enacted laws making it illegal for the English settlers to desert. When one out of seven English settlers ran away to live with the Powhatan Indians between 1609 and 1610, it is not surprising that the fledgling colonial government made it a capital offense to do so (Linebaugh 32-35). In fact, because early colonial whites were known to consort and conspire with American Indians and enslaved blacks against colonial elites, laws were established in many locales to prevent them from doing so. Propagandistic wedges were hammered between the “races” by white elites in divide and conquer strategies. Shakespeare represented just such a conspiracy in *The Tempest* when he has Caliban, the colonized other, and Trinculo and Stephano, the disgruntled commoners conspire to overthrow Prospero, ruler of the island. Shakespeare lifted this *Tempest* subplot from the real life *Sea Venture* shipwreck accounts. Historically, the English “commoners” staged five different rebellions against the English elites so that they could remain in Bermuda. They did not want to build the light sailing ships they were ordered to build because they had no desire to sail on to

Virginia (Linebaugh 26-32). The fact that these commoners preferred to live as well-fed castaways in Bermuda instead of resuming their trip to Virginia is very telling. They simply had no vested interest in the colonial enterprise and preferred to live on a lonely, but well-stocked island, separated from the oppression of English governing bodies.

White-on-white oppression in Europe seems to have been no aberration. Even if we restrict our enquiries to England alone, we see that ethnic outrages were carried out by the English against the Irish and Scots, and before that, the Welsh, not to mention discrimination against other groups such as Jews and Gypsies. For a time, it was illegal for not only Jews but also Gypsies to live in England. If white-on-white violence in colonial times was the rule while laying the earliest foundations of American history, it was still very much a part of the edifice that was slowly erected because, in more modern times, the willingness of government and wealthy industrialists to work hand in glove in annihilating every attempt by laboring classes to organize themselves into unions has played a tragic part in American history. As Howard Zinn wryly remarks in *A People's History of the United States 1492-Present*, in an aptly titled chapter, "Robber Barons and Rebels":

It [the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890] was the climax to four hundred years of violence that began with Columbus, establishing that this continent belonged to *white men* [emphasis mine]. But only to certain white men, because it was clear by 1896 that the state stood ready to crush labor strikes, by the law if possible, by force if necessary. And where a threatening mass movement developed, the two-party system stood ready

to send out one of its columns to surround that movement and drain it of vitality.

And always, as way of drowning class resentment in a flood of slogans for national unity, there was patriotism. (295)

War was seen by some leaders as a way to cause people in the United States to drop their differences and band together to fight perceived threats. As Zinn notes, “Theodore Roosevelt wrote to a friend in the year 1897: In strict confidence [. . .] I should welcome almost any war, for I think this country needs one” (United States 297). Americans, as well as people everywhere, do not need another war. What they need to do is to learn to work together. When people come together, many times they find that their similarities and concerns outweigh their differences.

When people begin to examine their collective memories and histories in the light of possible multidirectionalities, they may find they share much more in common than they had previously realized. These histories may cross or collide in interdependencies that are intricate or casual. For example, Virginia Woolf’s privileged English housewife, Mrs. Dalloway, though she never meets combat veteran and PTSD victim, Septimus Warren Smith, upon learning of his suicide, feels herself to be kindred spirits with him in his plight and betrayal, although Clarissa Dalloway’s life is not indicative of either plight or betrayal. When people set their creative sympathies free to imaginatively endeavor to intuit the feelings of those who seem to be like and those who seem to be unlike themselves, they will transcend borders, nationalities, ethnicities, genders, and religious affiliations. This imaginative capacity is what facilitates humans to enter more fully into their own humanity, the “multitude” celebrated by Hardt and Negri. Otherwise, the



oppression of one group may only be followed by their oppression from their former oppressors, keeping an endless cycle of catastrophe swirling around Walter Benjamin's Angel of History.

In consequence of these cycles of victimization and retaliation, Mills pleads that “[h]uman rights are for people [all people]” (89). He uses the “discovery” of post World War II documents found in Japan that speak of a Japanese desire for the Yamato “Race” to rule the world, based on its supposed intrinsic superiority to all the other “races” of humankind. As Mills points out, if the Axis powers had won the war, “[t]he Yamatos and the Aryans would [. . .] have [then] had to fight it out to decide who the real global master race was. So there is no reason to think that other nonwhites (nonyellows?) would have fared much better under this version of the Racial Contract” (128). Mills continues along these lines with the following observation:

The point, then, is that while the White Racial Contract has historically been the most devastating and the most important one in shaping the contours of the world, it is not unique, and there should be no essentialist illusions about anyone's intrinsic “racial” virtue. All peoples can fall into Whiteness under the appropriate circumstances, as shown by the (“White”) black Hutus' 1994 massacre of half a million to a million inferior black Tutsis in a few bloody weeks in Rwanda. (128-129)

Mills' rather obvious conclusion is that no one “race” should be in charge of the other “races.” To restate Mills' plea: “Human rights are for [all] people” (89).

A more multidirectional outlook would enable people to join sympathies and ranks with each other based on causes rather than skin color. Thomas Bender is

advocating just such an approach in the writing of histories when he shares the following story in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*:

The task before such a new history is to notice the evidence of transnationalisms previously overlooked or filtered out by historians. For example, close examination of the Harlem press in the era of World War I reveals frequent discussion of and intense interest in Irish nationalism and the Easter Rebellion. An assumption that African-American intellectual life is bounded by Harlem, by the black community, or by the national borders of the United States is all too likely to define such discussions as extraneous, making for the all too common tendency to pass over such accounts. To do that is to shrink the territory occupied by black intellectuals, and it also misses a clue to a more complex history of the relationship between African Americans and the Irish in America. (12)

In Bender's approach to writing history, he argues for a multidirectional viewpoint. In recent centuries, the writing of national histories took precedence over all other historiography and rewarded historians accordingly. Because a national history is, more or less, designed to narrate a story, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, much of what actually happened in a nation and in the linkages it has to other foreign national stories, falls away, in some aspects, probably unavoidably so. In the process, however, history becomes so simplistic that it is no longer historically accurate. Bender instead encourages historians to understand the implications of the following:

My argument and that of this book is not for increasing the study

of American foreign relations, although that is important. The point is that we must understand every dimension of American life as entangled in other histories. Other histories are implicated in American history, and the United States is implicated in other histories. This is not only true of this present age of globalization; it has been since the fifteenth century, when the world for the first time became self-consciously singular. (6)

Bender grants that although a national history cannot “contain all the narratives that shape the subjectivities of those within its formal bounds, [. . .] it may claim to contain the more important ones” (11). Of course, it cannot really succeed. Thus, Bender exhorts historians to endeavor to do the following:

The task of historians is to look for the ties that bind a multiplicity of historical narratives to one another under the canopy of American history, even as they explore ways these histories connect the United States to histories outside of its bounds—sensitive in both instances of seams and fissures in the surface unity. The nation thus becomes a partially bounded historical entity imbricated in structures and processes that connect to every part of the world. Too fixed a notion of the nation will obscure all of these vital aspects of history and of historical understanding.

The historian needs to be a cosmopolitan. (11)

Consequently, it can be demonstrated that multidirectional memory and historical work can be practiced on macro as well as micro levels. A multidirectional approach will prove

fruitful not only to memory and history, but to a range of other studies in the humanities in which the human condition is the primary focus of attention.

In the beginning of my text, I illustrated the fruitful productivity of researching for interconnectedness in historical memory using Rothberg's model for multidirectional memory. I then moved to a discussion of several historical/philosophical explanations by major modern thinkers who are bold enough to offer a global history. (Micro, not macro, histories tend to be the modern fashion among writers of history.) I then used several of Shakespeare's plays to reflect Elizabethan/Jacobean attitudes regarding peoples they viewed as "other" at the dawn of England's quest for world empire. After that, I took a journey through a small selection of literature as an example for multidirectional work. Finally, in this chapter, I have proposed some models and ideas that are intended to encourage people with multidirectional histories and memories to find creative, multidirectional ways to work together. One provocative question that arises is how groups sharing violent multidirectional histories with other groups can acknowledge these pasts but, at the same time, move toward acceptable futures? I do know that endless cycles of retaliation are not appropriate answers. Dialogue is certainly a beginning: after that, more, much more, multilateral dialogue is called for until people can find their ways out of long histories of misunderstanding.

The great twentieth-century French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, who himself spent several years in a Nazi concentration camp, suggests in the epilogue of his last work, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, that forgiveness can be the answer to breaking these cycles. Ricoeur does not say that perpetrators ought not be held accountable for their crimes; they must be. But, how could Germany, past and present, and the Nazi perpetrators and

their descendants ever truly pay for their crimes? Quite simply stated, it is impossible for them to do so. When former perpetrating communities offer public gestures of contrition and restitution and are, subsequently, forgiven by their former victims and the descendants of victims, these acts have possibilities for freeing both communities. Former victim communities experience the release from the need for retaliation that the lack of forgiveness demands and the suffocating torment that lack of forgiveness breeds in the heart. Former perpetrating communities are released from unproductive guilt as well as the need to justify or downplay the wrongs of the past. Ricoeur's forgiveness cure is bold, but it seems to be one possible aid to breaking cycles of hatred and retaliation. It is to Ricoeur that I will give a final voice in my text because Ricoeur, as I did in beginning this work, contemplates Benjamin's angel of history.

Ricoeur asks a question of historians and then provides part of the answer when he asks and then posits,

[i]s it not the ambition of every historian to uncover, behind the death mask, the face of those who formerly existed, who acted and suffered, and who were keeping the promises they left unfulfilled? This would be the most deeply hidden wish of historical knowledge. But its continually deferred realization no longer belongs to those who write history; it is in the hands of those who make history. (499)

After this assertion, Ricoeur then provides Benjamin's description of Klee's figure, Angelus Novus, the description I used to begin this work. To Benjamin's statement "[t]he storm is what we call progress" Ricoeur poses some questions when he asks:

What, then, is for us this storm that so paralyzes the angel of history? Is it not, under the figure of progress which is contested today, the history that human beings make and that comes crashing into the history that historians write? But then the presumed meaning of history is no longer dependent on the latter but on the citizen who responds to the events of the past. For the professional historian there remains, short of the receding horizon, the uncanniness of history, the unending competition between memory's vow of faithfulness and the search for truth in history.

Should we now speak of unhappy history? I do not know. But I will not say: unfortunate history. Indeed, there is a privilege that cannot be refused to history; it consists not only in expanding collective memory beyond any actual memory but in correcting, criticizing, even refuting the memory of a determined community, when it folds back upon itself and encloses itself within its own sufferings to the point of rendering itself blind and deaf to the suffering of other communities. It is along the path of critical history that memory encounters the sense of justice. What would a happy memory be that was not also an equitable memory? (500)

Ricoeur, an old man when he wrote these words, believed that what people needed in order to be at peace were what he called "happy memories." Happy memories were only possible when people were willing to forgive the past and open themselves to the possibility of acquiring future memories that are positive. Ricoeur offers a statement of hope at the end of his long, and at moments, almost theological text in what appears to be something akin to a prayer that a philosopher might offer: "Under the sign of this

ultimate *incognito* of forgiveness, an echo can be heard of the word of wisdom uttered in the Song of Songs: 'Love is as strong as death.' The reserve of forgetting, I would then say, is as strong as the forgetting through effacement" (506). The extending of forgiveness and the desire to begin anew for the sake of future generations, between formerly enemy peoples, would seem to be an excellent place to begin a dialogue and to find a starting point at which to make future memories that can be happy because they are equitable.

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