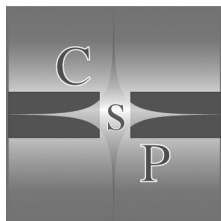


Representing Minorities

Representing Minorities
Studies in Literature and Criticism

Edited by

Larbi Touaf and Soumia Boutkhil



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INTRODUCTION

At no other time has the question of minority been so crucial than it is today. As the world is made to shrink to a yet smaller village, it is also made to look more and more the same. In the process, the cultural diversity of the world is at risk of been wiped out by the bulldozers of global economy and consumer culture. When we called for the first international conference on minorities and minor literatures almost three years ago, our plan was to bring together scholars to discuss the issues and conditions of small minorities (ethnic, religious, linguistic...etc.) and “unknown” literary and artistic productions that do not usually make it to the global market. We soon realized that with the actual drive towards the uniformisation of culture and taste across the globe, a redefining of minority and a change of focus was needed. Indeed, ‘minority’ is no longer to be viewed and even theorized in opposition to ‘majority’ but most likely against the vacuum of late capital consumerism and the anxiety of rootless identities and the postmodern indeterminacies. Thus, the second international conference on minorities and minor literatures the proceedings of which make up the present book intended to widen the scope and include not only the traditional view of what constitutes minority by also any individual, or group recalcitrant and reluctant, not to say resistant, to the generalized lobotomy operated by the above mentioned uniformisation. For in the ruins of “the end of history” and its context of violence and Manichean politics, any opposition to the “general consensus” could be dismissed as anti-historical and atavistic. The objective of the conference was precisely to counter such rhetoric and underscore the necessity of cultural diversity and the right to difference.

Obviously, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guatarri’s study *Kafka: towards a Minor Literature* (trans. 1986) remains the theoretical armature of most discussions of minor literature, for according to the authors, a minor literature is not a literature written in a ‘minor’ language, rather it is that written in a major language, or as in the case of formerly colonized countries of Africa and Asia, the literature written in the coloniser’s language. In this perspective, most postcolonial literatures can be said to be minoritarian, at least for the fact that they are written in major European languages. The use of these media gives rise to the dilemma that postcolonial writers face and which Deleuze describes as the impasse that bars access to writing [for the minority] and turns their literature into something impossible -- the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in [a major language], the impossibility of writing otherwise”(16).

Besides the controversial idea that whether they like it or not these writers represent and speak for their groups, communities or nations which seems to be inseparable from Deleuze's argument, it seems important to consider the ways in which such representation is actually both possible and impossible. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical model needs to be refocused in the light of the postmodern crisis of representation, including the political one, and the redrawing of the boundaries not only between centres and peripheries but also between all the major "structural" categories or binary oppositions. Creative writing, like any artistic activity, being basically subjective, it is quite legitimate to contend that writers create their own language just as they create their own worlds. In this sense the meaning of minority shifts completely to denote idiosyncrasy.

This book contains what can amount to a critical response to the current context of confusion surrounding the postmodern condition that arguably dominates most societies. It stresses the issue of ethics not only in world politics but also in literature and criticism which is our main focus here. In fact, the interest in minority issues is in itself an ethical concern that contributes to give substance to the idea that postmodernity opens the gates for the long-suppressed identities and sensibilities to emerge and demand recognition. So, in bringing together people from different parts of the world our goal is to stimulate reflection and debate on the issue of minority at a time where cultural specificities are more than ever threatened. Indeed, the tightening of borders to isolate and seal off the wealthy North from the impoverished South, doesn't impede the free north-to-south circulation of commodities, not only food and technology but above all cultural products. In the process, cultural diversity is at risk of being a thing of the past, obliterated by the hegemony of consumerist culture generated by the global economy. Therefore, the fate of the social, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities as well as their different forms of expression is the real indication by which we not only gauge the health of a society but that of humanity as a whole.

This volume intends, therefore, to contribute to the recent ethical turn that seems to take place in scholarship worldwide. Concomitant with this ethical turn operated mainly by what is referred to as postcolonial studies is an important shift that turned literary criticism and cultural studies into the site where a sense of literature can be envisioned that is not at all *universalist*, or reflecting the hegemonic temptations of the new world order. Instead it seeks to present a patchwork of minor literatures, in the sense that besides the "major" literatures/languages, there are myriads of minor voices that express dissimilarity oftentimes under the umbrella of those major languages and literatures themselves. Writing from a *minoritarian* position already signals certain scepticism towards the grand narratives of modernity and its promise of

an enlightened and progressive humanity. In fact, the colonial experience and its aftermath left no doubt as to the bankrupt state of such discourses so that the Eurocentrism that dominated the literary tradition has been shaken in the wake of decolonisation. This is not merely because European critics have finally begun to notice the existence of literatures outside Europe, but more importantly, they have started to learn the hard lesson that not only the European notion of humanity was ethno-centric, but the very notion of a general idea of humanity was itself only a part of the universalising and totalising tradition of modern western thought. Therefore it is of crucial necessity that literary criticism and theory take stock of the many *différends* (J-F.Lyotard) that constitute the condition of postmodernity and postcoloniality.

If there is anything that serves today to unite thinkers on either side of the great north/south gap, it is the rejection of foundationalist and essentialist myths that unfortunately continue to structure the discourse of power that is wrecking the world. The contributors to this book agree that the very survival of human civilization is contingent upon people interacting within and between nations in a genuinely ethical manner. Their inquiries into the *minoritarian thing* attest to the impossibility of harmonizing its heterogeneity with either the meta-narrative of the nation-state or that of the realization of the Eurocentric idea of humanity. The scholarship presented here is a testimony that the emergence of minor literatures (and identities) is not a recent matter; rather, every great literature (and nation) is a patchwork of minor elements. This is a view that challenges the need for legitimation from a greater unity, and that performs a reading that seeks to do away with the violence and exclusion of literary nationalisms. It is a reading of the frontiers and borders that exist within and against the claims to "greatness", to majority, of any national literature or identity. That is to say, to locate and evocate the minor and its *differend* where it is least expected.

The book is divided into four thematic parts: I) Textual (De)constructions of nation, race, culture, and identity; II) Women, Identity, and Gender constructions; III) (Re)visions of the Past: History, Memory and Identity in Literature; IV) Exile, migration, and cultural encounters. These parts focus on some of the key issues and debates that have taken place in many areas of literary studies and critical theory and articulate an overlapping set of concerns with identity, nation, race, gender, memory, history, exile, and migration. Although these divisions may seem clear-cut, many of the chapters could have featured in more than one part, for the overall theme that brought them together is "the ethics and politics of [de]constructing identity in literature, art, and the humanities". The issues presented and debated are emblematic of the concerns of scholars around the world. While the geographical and historical scope of this book is not exhaustive, we have tried to be as inclusive as possible in presenting the notion of minority under different angles of visions, and under many guises.

In addition to widening the notion to comprise subjectivities that wouldn't normally be thought of as minorities (such as women in constraining social orders and in circumstances where their consciousness is made hypersensitive) we have redefined it as a position from which the enunciation of singular and or communal subjectivity articulates a critical engagement with the reality of society and its history.

I) Textual (De)constructions of nation, race, culture, and identity

The question of identity is a key issue in this book; in this section it is looked at from different perspectives and studied in relation with a number of concepts such as race, nation, African metropolis, colonial realities and postcolonial consciousness. Thus, in "Double Slavery: (De)Constructions of Race and Gender in the United States" Lucy Melbourne traces the notion of slavery as a racial and gendered construction, and of black women as therefore doubly enslaved. The author first explores the discourse surrounding definitions of slavery during the 18th and 19th centuries, especially the notions of Montesquieu, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Jefferson, and Mary Wollstonecraft. She then specifically discusses the classic slave narrative, "Narrative of Frederick Douglass", and Douglass' betrayal of the early women's rights movement in solidarity with white males, thereby gendering slavery as female, freedom as male. The author concludes by examining contemporary black women writers in light of the black feminist Bell Hooks' notion that black women have been constrained by the black male patriarchy to deconstruct their gender in order to reconstruct their race; in short, that black women as both black AND women--have been effectively silenced. Ms Melbourne's paper posits a gradual shift in the notion of slavery from race to gender and suggests that only recently have some black women found a voice that affirms both their racial and gender narratives.

Taking on the issue of race and identity Sarita Cannon argues in her paper "Will the real Indian please stand up: the work and life of Sylvester Long Lance" that the archetype of the person who pulls himself up out of poverty and becomes an upstanding, financially secure citizen is quite popular in U.S. literature, bolstering the myth of a meritocratic American society in which all members have equal opportunity for success. But when a person crosses racial lines rather than class lines, this is frequently seen as a betrayal, not a triumph. Ms Cannon discusses the ethics of creating a new ethnic or racial identity by examining the life of Sylvester Long, a man who was born into a coloured community in North Carolina in 1896 and transformed himself into an American Indian athlete, journalist, and film actor named Chief Buffalo Child

Long Lance. The author discusses how his fabrication of a Native identity may have perpetuated stereotypes of American Indians and capitulated to the racist, pseudo-scientific thinking of the time. She further examines the effects of Long Lance's ethnic performance, reinforced by his 1928 autobiography, and explores the ramifications of his "ethnic fraud" not only for Long Lance himself but also for the Native American communities he claimed to represent.

There is, perhaps, nothing more estranging than to feel oneself or one's identity being addressed in political discourse as a "problem" simply because one belongs to a minority. In "Identity, Incompletion, and the Advent of the Political: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Dialectic of Race and Nation" Ainsworth A. Clarke argues that the question "How does it feel to be a problem?" defines better than any other formulation available the scope of what recent criticism has come to understand as Du Bois's critical project. Refracted through the prism of this question is the notion of race that underpins nineteenth century American racialist discourse and the conception of the 'Negro' that it produces. But this question also lays bare the instability of this notion of race and of the idea of the 'Negro' at its core. It is from the site of this instability that Du Bois's earliest theoretical texts reformulate the notion of race from which late nineteenth century racialist discourse presents the 'Negro.' It is through his investigation of the contours of African American identity that his reformulation of the inherited notion of race occurs.

Increasingly, the postcolonial city --Tangier in Chourouq Nasri's "Reinventing Tangier in Anouar Majid's *Si Youssef*", and Lagos in Ian Munro's "Mapping the postcolonial metropolis: three recent novels from Nigeria"-- has become the site for representation of new identities. Ms Nasri argues that Anouar Majid's novel describes the psychological journey of Lamin (Majid as a young man) into the idealized past of Tangier. Tangier, the writer's native city becomes the locale of identity. It is transformed into a symbolic space onto which multiple tales and diverse identities transmitting the rediscovered memory of the past are projected. The novel invites readers to question fixed definitions of identity and to take a journey towards diversity and plurality. However, Ian Munroe presents Lagos as an alienated city. The author examines the exploration of imaginary sites that point toward the mapping and situational representation of the postcolonial metropolis by the individual subject, in relation to what Jameson calls "that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structure as a whole."¹

¹ "Postmodernism of the Logic of Late Capitalism", Thomas Docherty (ed), *Postmodernism A Reader*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) 89.

II) Women, Identity, and Gender constructions

In this section women's identity construction posits at least two positions for women in relation with discourse: either as objects of male discourse or as subjects/agents of their own. Historically, identity question and feminism have always been the most discussed issues in the literary world because their very polemical nature makes them open to endless arguments. Thus, approaching the question of identity from a feminist perspective, feminists and women writers construct a sense of unified selfhood, a rational, coherent, and an effective identity. They all seek a "subjective identity", a sense of effective agency, and a history for women that they had been denied because of male domination. In "The evil eye: Re-presenting woman in Moroccan literature in French" Soumia Boutkhal (co-editor of this book) examines how the male gaze in Moroccan Francophone fiction constructs an identity for woman and present her as an object of spectacular fantasies. She argues that some supposedly pro-feminist works of literature not only consolidate woman's status as the eternal victim of the social order but actually contribute to the perpetuation of the stereotypical image of woman as a subject deprived of agency. Arguing that this constitutes a form of "symbolic violence", the author discusses the problems that arise from the ambiguity of what she calls the "romantic" representation of women that prevails in most works of Moroccan literature in French and how these stereotypes subvert the "liberatory, pro-female" discourse that seems to animate such works. Similarly, Hassan Zrizi argues in "Narrating Domestic Frontiers: Unbecoming Daughters of Patriarchy" that the historical, social, political and psychological "domestication" of the female in Moroccan society has taken multiple forms and various proportions. For Moroccan women writing in French, the appropriation of language and narrative is a means to dismantle the patriarchal order and to forge a female voice that breaks the "domestic frontiers". The author examines some examples of Moroccan women writers narrating domestic frontiers in the light of the new Moroccan family law, the rise of the feminine NGOs, the democratisation of the political scene, and international migration of feminist values.

In her contribution "*Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) The Yellow Wallpaper: the feminist identity paper*", Meryem Ayan performs a feminist reading of identity in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* and presents a portrait of a woman gaining identity and freedom through actions rather than words especially after her madness. The author discusses how women struggle to gain their own identity regardless of their relation to man, concluding that even if this struggle ends with madness, it is still worthwhile. On her part, Bouchra Belgaid in "Subjectivity, Mourning and Gender Construction in Contemporary American Feminist Writings" dwells on how

feminist texts represent female identity within a consumer postmodern American culture and the ways they represent issues of gender, community, and home. In her reading of two contemporary American feminist novels, Bobbie Ann Mason's *In Country* (1985) and Anne Tyler's *A Slipping Down Life* (1983), the author argues that sexual differences have become the focal point in contemporary American culture and literature, and that the construction of female identity is enacted through the structure of mourning: mourning the American soldiers lost in Vietnam. Concluding that mourning presents a dark picture of female identity within a consumer culture that reflects an image without a body, Ms Belgaid asserts that both novels do not offer a sustained vision of new possibilities of sexual identity and so remain reactionary in their model of the female self.

While the majority of the contributions in this section analyse or seek to give voice to the voiceless, Alejandra Moreno Álvarez studies women's silence. In her contribution "The Empowerment of Women's Silence in *Unless* by Carol Shields" Ms Moreno Alvarez argues that Carol Shields' novel *Unless* is a multi-layered examination of a woman's life (Norah) that highlights women's lack of a language of their own. Using the poststructuralist feminist theories of Luce Irigaray and Rosi Braidotti, the author analyses the speechlessness/voicelessness of women in Carol Shield's novel concluding that this work of fiction reminds us of how little has really changed and what is still to be done for and by women both at the individual and the social level.

III (Re)visions of the Past: History, Memory and Identity in Literature

The task of minority writers has often been to find a means of representation and expression, to open the historical record, to revisit the past and assert an identity, within a system that systematically excludes difference. This section focuses on how a sense of minority writing allows for the expression of hybrid and contingent subjectivities, opening spaces that allow the marginalized to exist without being subjected to the forces of oppression and control normally exerted over the space of the other. Thus in "Native Stages: The Revision of history in Witi Ihimaera's *Woman Far Walking*" Paloma Fresno-Calleja examines Witi Ihimaera's first play, *Woman Far Walking* (2000), looking at the ways in which its specific dramatic features dismantle western conceptions of Maori identity and offer an alternative version of post-contact history from an unofficial and indigenous perspective. The author argues that while the play engages in the military and political resistance of the Maori community, presenting and favouring a Maori version of events, it becomes a hybrid text which combines western theatrical elements, with Maori song and

ritual, and native conceptions of theatrical time and space in order to validate Maori heritage as an essential constituent of New Zealand's/Aotearoa's national identity. Similarly Feryal Cubukcu's contribution, "Reverberations of Identity in Contemporary Native American Poetry", proceeds to show how the contemporary native American poets, Joy Harjo And Leslie Marmon Silko use what is left from the old times to reflect the feelings and thoughts of today's Indians and what their poems reveal about the identity of Indians living in the Southwest and Northern Plains.

Approaching the traumas of the past, Penny Tucker argues in "Traumatic Traces: Slave Narratives, Post-Traumatic Stress, and the Limits of Resistance" that collecting and analysing the evidence of traumatic experience in slave writings can add important scholarly depth to our understanding of how minority subject formation occurs in situations of political oppression, occupation, an discrimination. While slave records have been traditionally used to reassemble the histories of enslaved and oppressed persons, focusing on strategies of resistance, almost none has searched for the residual effects of trauma or analysed the resulting implications for the politics of empowerment. The author argues that trauma and traumatic stress played a significant, though underanalysed, role in the cultural construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of the identities of enslaved persons.

While history remains the official and authoritative way through which the past is preserved, the debate on its propensity to exclusiveness is still open. In this perspective, Larbi Touaf (co-editor of this book) argues in "Memory, history, and Narrative Ethics in the writings of Edmond Amran El Maleh", that the monumental work of Moroccan Jewish writer, El Maleh, initiates a narrative ethics wherein memory revisits the history of his country to trace the presence/absence of the Jewish community. The author argues that such writing renews our vision of the past and widens our perspective on the present/future so that the historical reality may open possibilities for the yet-to-come. In this sense, even though presence cannot be separated from absence, the attempt to salvage memory from oblivion contains the hope that what had been an example of "living together" and coexistence could serve as a lesson for us in these troubled times.

Speaking from the margins of history or society, minority authors' fragmented narratives deconstruct fossilized distinctions as Jennifer Wawrzinek explains in "Nomads in the Desert: Mapping Subjectivity in Morgan Yasbincek's *liv*." Morgan Yasbincek who is a Croatian/Australian poet speaks from a marginalized position within an Australian Anglosaxon context, inhabiting and using a borrowed language, but refusing to be fixed within it. Ms Wawrzinek argues that the cross-circuiting of the various narratives, languages and geographical positions in *liv* dismantles categorical distinctions to allow

hybrid and contingent forms of identity to emerge such that transcendence, and agency, are engendered within a process of chaotic and unpredictable mappings within three-dimensional space.

IV) Exile, migration, and cultural encounters

Ever since Homi Bhabha's celebrated idea of "third space" appeared, scholars and readers of migration and postcolonial literatures have looked at exile as an emancipatory experience, one that allows writers to challenge and ultimately subvert conventional boundaries—whether those pertaining to language, religion, politics, gender, or literary genres. Thus in "Writing in/on the Front Lines of Exile: Political Dissidence, Memory and Cultural (Dis)location in Francophone Literature of the Maghreb", Valérie Orlando studies the extent to which authors of the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia), living in exile, influence the political climates and socio-cultural discourses of their homelands. Analyzing the novels of some of the most prominent contemporary exiled writers of the Maghreb, professor Orlando argues that these men and women write politically engaged narratives which challenge the socio-political and cultural climates of their homelands. Authors, playwrights, and journalists such as Salim Bachi (Algeria), Alec Toumi Baylee (Algeria), Tahar Ben Jelloun (Morocco), Ali Bourequat (Morocco), Gisèle Halimi (Tunisia), Leïla Marouane (Algeria), Albert Memmi (Tunisia), Abdelwahab Meddeb (Tunisia), and Malika Mokeddem (Algeria), among others contribute to a new literary consciousness that has been formed outside of the Maghreb, opening up new political discourses that encourage the historical revision of colonial and postcolonial eras and forcing postcolonial regimes to acknowledge egregious infractions of human rights.

The vision of the native land from the vantage point of exile, the recurring themes in patterns of binary oppositions, the linguistic experimentations in the form of fragments, mute dialogues, and abrupt time-shifts, the use of situational irony and sudden changes in point of views are some of the features common to the literature of exile. This is what F. Elizabeth Dahab-Haydn studies in "Exilic Writer Saad Elkhadem and two transnational novellas." Couched in two languages, Arabic and English, two countries, two awarenesses, and an array of shifting perspectives partaking in the larger postmodern vision shared by many, Elkhadem's works are neither short stories, novellas, novels, diaries, nor biographies per se, but hybrid reconstructions and deconstructions of elements of each. In fact, as is often the case with literatures of exile, it is the very notion of genres that seems to have undertaken a major reshuffling. Similarly, Nadine A. Sinnó's "The Power of Place and Space: (Re)Constructing Identity and Selfhood in Ahdaf Soueif's *Eye of the Sun*" addresses some of the topics that

are pertinent to the literature of exile namely, “minority subject formations,” “ethnic narratives,” and “hybridity and ethics of cultural encounters.” Ms Sinno asserts that Asya, *Eye of the Sun*'s main protagonist, is highly affected by the place and space in which she exists. Arguing that Asya owes her complexity to the various places and spaces which she encounters at different stages in her life, the author examines the significance of place and space in Asya's life and the way place and space-- both at home and overseas-- shape Asya's sense of identity and allow her to (re)construct a new self and a mode of life that are not bound by place of origin, but that rather draw on the various resources that she benefits from as a result of her authentic encounters with other places and cultures.

Considering the literature of/on Minorities as reflecting and refracting experiences of various ethnic groups namely Arab Americans in the United States of America, Fatima Radhouani Saidani in "From Amin Rihani to Edward Said: the Quest for the Prophecy of the Out-Placed" highlights the productions of two Arab American exiled writers from both end of the 20th century: Amin Rihani and Edward W. Said. Focusing on Amin Rihani's novel *The Book of Khalid* (the first novel written in English by an Arab writer) published in 1911 and Edward Said's Memoir, *Out of Place*, Ms Radhouani Saidani argues that these samples of Arab-American literature attempt to prophesize a land that could embrace distinct cultures. The author asserts that Rihani's *The Book of Khalid* reveals the writer's desire to reconcile the East and the West through an endorsement of a cross-cultural dialogue, while Said's *Out of Place* emanates from a distinct identity that is juxtaposed amid an experience in the land of exile where he was in the: " richest position of speaking for two opposed constituencies one Western the other Arab."

On the European side and as Sabrina Brancato affirms in “Picaros of our Times: narrating Migration”, the presence of increasing numbers of migrants from developing countries in Europe has stirred a growing native interest for alien communities. Together with various forms of documentary literature produced both by locals and new citizens, new genres are proliferating which give voice to the individual experience of the expatrié. Immigrant autobiographies in literary form (self-authored in some cases or co-authored with the assistance of a local intellectual) are being published all over Europe. These texts constitute a re-elaboration of the old picaresque genre adapted to the reality of contemporary multicultural Europe. Ms Brancato addresses migration narratives by Sub-Saharan Africans in Southern and Western Europe. She argues that the sense of alienation and the development of survival strategies typical of picaresque characters acquire the specificities of intercultural and interracial (dis)encounters. The subjective experience becomes emblematic for a whole community and foregrounds a cultural confrontation between a minority

and a dominant group, raising questions about the implications of being black in a white country, of being African in Europe. In this sense, these texts are the pioneers of a nascent Afro-European literature, characterized by linguistic and cultural plurality (for the different languages, origins and locations of the authors) and yet finding a common ground both in the narrative strategies and in the thematic focus on identity and cultural interaction.

Larbi Touaf

Part I

Textual (De)constructions of Nation, Race,
Culture, and Identity

CHAPTER ONE

DOUBLE SLAVERY: (DE)CONSTRUCTIONS OF RACE AND GENDER IN THE UNITED STATES

LUCY MELBOURNE

Introduction

In an address to the World Congress of Representative Women in 1893, Anna Julia Cooper, an erudite champion of black women's rights, said:

All through the darkest period of the colored women's oppression in this country her yet unwritten history is full of heroic struggle The white woman could at least plead for her own emancipation; the black women doubly enslaved, could but suffer and struggle and be silent (Cooper in hooks, *Woman*, 2).

Anna Julia Cooper here locates the black woman's experience in the double enslavement of a racism and sexism. From both a theoretical and literary perspective, this presentation traces the construction of woman as slave--and that of the black woman as doubly enslaved. As I researched this discourse, however, I began to experience it as a vivid and ongoing conversation crossing centuries, gender, and race. I tried to capture the powerful thematic echoes and resonances of this conversation in the handout that should help you follow the presentation and give you a sense of the living dialogue that has arisen around the theme of black women as doubly enslaved.

Part I: Theory

Enlightenment theorists such as Montesquieu as well as later 18th and 19th century advocates for women's rights such as Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill, frequently compare women's situation to that of slavery. Enlightenment thought was founded on the principle of natural rights and Montesquieu, for example, in his *Esprit des Lois* (*Spirit of the Laws*) saw

slavery as unnatural. He gives this resonant definition: "Slavery, properly so called, is the establishment of a right which gives to one man such a power over another as renders him absolute master of his life and fortune. ("Of Civil Slavery," *The Spirit of the Laws*, in *Humanities*, 254). By this definition, then, women of the time would be classified as slaves in their total want of rights and in their subjugation to patriarchal masters. Montesquieu also points out that this unnatural master-slave relationship as morally debilitating: the slave seeks only to please while the master is inevitably corrupted by the use of unchecked power. Montesquieu uses this wonderful phrase about the masters, saying they inevitably become "fierce, hasty, severe, choleric, voluptuous, and cruel." In his initial draft of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson, another Enlightenment thinker, includes as his final charge against King George aggression against "human nature itself" in permitting the slave trade. This allegation is today fraught with painful irony given Jefferson's own unsavory practices as a slave holder, including the fathering of children on his slave mistress, Sally Hemings, an egregious (yet, as we have come to learn, all-too-common) example of racist patriarchal coercion. (One is reminded of Montesquieu's admonition against the master's use of power rendering him, among others, "voluptuous.") Double slavery, then, lies at the compromised heart of our nation's founding fathers and--to include Sally Hemings--founding mothers.

In the 19th century, the analogy between women and slavery becomes overt. Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill describe a subtle form of white women's enslavement by a benevolent but nevertheless authoritarian patriarchy. Wollstonecraft, for example, in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), questions whether "one half of the human species, like the poor African slaves, [is] to be subject to prejudices that brutalize them," astutely noting that women have been indirectly denied that *sine qua non* of any patriarchal definition of the human--reason. In 1861, Mill argues in *The Subjection of Women* that despite the abolition of slavery in England, it nevertheless continues in the slavish dependence of women in a society that denies her all natural, social and civil rights: "Slavery, from being a mere affair of force between the master and the slave, became regularised and a matter of compact among the masters . . . The slavery of the male sex has . . . been at length abolished, and that of the female sex has been gradually changed into a milder form of dependence. But this dependence . . . is the primitive state of slavery lasting on" (*Subjection in Humanities* page). Mill clearly recognized the raw power underlying even a benevolent patriarchy. Interestingly, Mill critiques oppositional definitions of gender and anticipates contemporary theories that see oppression as originating in the creation of an Other, a process whereby stereotypical masculinity is affirmed against so-called "feminine" qualities and masculinity can emerge as

the definition of autonomous subjectivity, of humanness: "[Men] have therefore put everything in practice to enslave [women's] minds. . . . All women are brought up . . . in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men: not self-will, and government by self-control, but submission, and yielding to the control of others. All the moralities tell them that it is the duty of women, and all the current sentimentalities that it is their nature, to live for others; to make complete abnegation of themselves (*Subjection in Humanities* 342). In short, Mill sees that patriarchal dominance consists in a form of brainwashing; women are to internalize their Otherness and thereby permit psychic enslavement, surrendering autonomy to their masters—men.

Part II: Reality

While Enlightenment thinkers such as Montesquieu, and later theorists such as Wollstonecraft and Mill explore the theory of slavery as an analogy for women's situation, the harsh realities of slavery by color continued in the United States. In his classic *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, the great abolitionist and orator riveted 19th century Americans with his vivid description of the indignities and brutalities of slavery and of his psychological liberation. Douglass's eloquent masterpiece testifies to the notion that the path from slavery to freedom in both a literal and figural sense is not only an escape from actual bondage but, even more importantly, a liberation from feelings of inferiority and Otherness. As an escaped slave, Douglass is to address an abolitionist rally but has yet to overcome his internalized sense of degradation. He describes his breakthrough into full human autonomy this way: "The truth was, I felt myself a slave, and the idea of speaking to white people weighed me down. I spoke but a few moments, when I felt a degree of freedom, and said what I desired with considerable ease" (*Narrative* 69). Liberation for Douglass as a black man is thus gendered, in imitation of white patriarchy, as male self-assertion in public life. Douglass's description of his liberation becomes the prototype for subsequent male-dominated black liberation movements: freedom, in other words, meant being a MAN.

Initially, however, abolitionists were closely allied with the early advocates for women's rights. The former slave Sojourner Truth, one of the earliest voices for black women, famously asserted that women were just as capable as men of enduring pain and physical hardship, histrionically baring her breast and exclaiming, "and ain't I a woman?" Indeed, the first women's rights convention in history, the Seneca Falls convention of 1848, was based on anti-slavery tactics and organization. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *Declaration of Rights and Sentiments*, rhetorically modeled on the Declaration of Independence,

proclaimed that "all men and women are created equal" (*Declaration*, in *Humanities* 339). Cady Stanton shocked even her most loyal supporters, however, by a final amendment calling for women's right to "exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise" (*Declaration*, in *Humanities* 340). Hotly debated, this radical amendment was only passed because of Frederick Douglass's impassioned defense. Thus, from the outset of discourse surrounding the woman's movement, the metaphor of slavery bridged the fragile alliance between abolitionists and those fighting for women's rights. In 1869, however, this tenuous alliance was shattered along lines of race and gender in Cady Stanton and Douglass's vituperative debate over the 15th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, an amendment designed to ensure all males--especially recently freed black men--the right to vote. It pointedly excluded women from the franchise.

Video Clip

Cady Stanton felt betrayed by men--both white and black men--who had achieved patriarchal solidarity in denying women the right to vote. At that moment, then, sexism proved stronger than racism: maleness of whatever color trumped femaleness in this patriarchal symbiosis. White women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were outraged, but Sojourner Truth also felt betrayed by black men: "there is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored woman; and if colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before" (Truth in Hooks 4). The metaphor and reality of slavery had sharpened focus: henceforth the terms of this discourse on slavery were to apply only to constructions of women.

Sojourner Truth obviously clearly understood that sexism was as oppressive as racism. Although she sided with Anthony and Cady Stanton, her position as a black woman in the debate over universal male suffrage becomes emblematic of black women's stance caught on the one hand between what had clearly been revealed as a white racist women's movement--Cady Stanton's racial invective is painful to witness--and, on the other hand, the sexism of the black male. While Sojourner Truth nevertheless chose to ally herself with Cady Stanton in her fight against sexism, most black women in the 20th century have viewed black and women's liberation as inimical, mutually exclusive. Bell Hooks asserts that, "black women disassociated themselves from feminist struggle when they were convinced that to appear feminist, i.e. radical, would hurt the cause of black liberation" (*Woman* 176). Twenty years ago, Hooks' contention that black women's choice to ignore what they perceived as white female constructions of

liberation inevitably enmeshed them once again in double slavery: now, in addition to racial prejudice and discrimination by whites, black women were coerced by arguments of racial solidarity into adopting a subservient role toward a patriarchal civil rights movement largely dominated by black men, and hooks explains: "Racist, sexist socialization had conditioned us to devalue our femaleness and to regard race as the only relevant label of identification. In other words, we were asked to deny a part of ourselves--and we did" (1). She concludes that black women, caught between white women liberationists and black male patriarchs, express only "the silence of the oppressed" (1).

Conclusion: Contemporary Responses

Hooks' conclusion that black women have been silenced echoes Anna Julia Cooper's phrase: "the black women doubly enslaved, could but suffer and struggle and be silent." Does this still hold true? Have contemporary black women's voices been silenced? Writers like Alice Walker and Toni Morrison have specifically addressed this issue of double slavery both as black artists and black feminist advocates. In her essays, short stories, and novels, Walker has consistently articulated what she calls "womanism," a distinctive form of black feminism, and--in the essay "One Child of One's Own" 1979-- attacked those white feminists and black people who would deny the black woman her womanhood by defining the issues of liberation solely in terms of blacks or women, missing the obvious fact that black people come in both sexes. Walker decries black women's rejection of feminism as a betrayal of the tradition of Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, and as a global betrayal of all women of color. Her best-known work, *The Color Purple*, was vilified by the black community who accused her of sabotaging the race and unfairly portraying the black male.

The Nobel-prize winner Toni Morrison is perhaps the pre-eminent writer today on the black woman's experience. To interpolate James Joyce in another context, her project is to "forge the consciousness of [her] race." In novels like *Beloved* and, in *Paradise*, she specifically addresses the theme of double slavery. In *Beloved*, the freed slave Sethe's haunting by the accumulated horrors of her life of slavery as a woman threaten to overwhelm her and paralyze her daughter's future. Used as a breeder of slaves, brutally beaten, Sethe nevertheless eventually escapes with her children but is forced to murder them rather than accept their recapture. In *Paradise*, Morrison further explores the race and gender divisions between a multi-racial women's commune-cum-women's shelter and an all-black town dominated by racial and patriarchal myth. The novel begins with black men murdering the women and, in retrospective narrative, explores the underlying causes for this event. Clearly, Morrison has moved beyond portraying black women exclusively and toward a racially

encompassing feminist perspective, thereby redefining her previous discourse of division between men and black women.

Like most contemporary black feminist theorists, Toni Morrison views race, gender, and class as interlocking cultural constructions, and in her wonderful essay "Friday on the Potomac" (in *Race-ing Justice, En-Gendering Power*, 1992), she examines the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings as a ritual of black social constructs in which the black male triumphs by allying himself with white patriarchy. But Morrison is especially intrigued by the new rhetoric of the black woman: "It would have been more comfortable to remain silent. . . . I took no initiative to inform anyone. . . . I could not keep silent" (Hill in Morrison). Anita Hill's accusations of harassment reflect a new voice: Anita Hill refuses to be silenced. Morrison concludes--and her reply resonates in response to Frederick Douglass, Anna Julia Cooper, and bell hooks--"In matters of race and gender, it is now possible and necessary, as it seemed never to have been before, to speak about these matters without the barriers, the silences" (Morrison *R J, E P*).

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CHAPTER TWO

WILL THE REAL INDIAN PLEASE STAND UP?: THE LIFE AND WORK OF SYLVESTER LONG LANCE

SARITA CANNON

I. Introduction

The archetype of the person who pulls himself up out of poverty and becomes an upstanding, financially secure citizen is quite popular in the American literary imagination. But when a person crosses racial lines rather than socioeconomic class lines, this is frequently seen as a betrayal, not a triumph. Indeed, what are the ethics of creating a new ethnic or racial identity? I will discuss this question by examining the life of Sylvester Long, a man who was born into a colored community in North Carolina in 1896 and transformed himself into an American Indian athlete, journalist, and film actor named Chief Buffalo Long Lance. Some argue that Long Lance's racial impersonation was justified; during a time of political upheaval and racial violence, Long Lance escaped life as a Black man in the best way he knew how. On the other hand, perhaps Long Lance was merely one of thousands of people who "play Indian" for their own personal gain. Moreover, perhaps his fabrication of a Native identity perpetuated stereotypes of American Indians and capitulated to the pseudo-scientific racist thinking of the time. Both of these perspectives are valid; but more important than determining whether Long Lance was a hero or a coward is critically unpacking what Long Lance's life tells us about the past and present construction of race in the United States.

II. Legacy of Self-Made Man

The archetype of the man who goes from rags to riches because of hard work and perseverance is central to the construction of a national American identity. What makes the United States great, many have claimed, is that anyone,

regardless of background, can be a success. Benjamin Franklin, particularly as he represents himself in his autobiography, first published in 1791, embodies one of the earliest examples of this self-made man. As Laura Browder writes: “More than anyone else Franklin introduced Americans to the notion that the self was not a historically determined structure, and this was what would be distinctive about American life. The self in this model is mutable” (Browder, 3). The stories of Ragged Dick by Horatio Alger (which were first serialized in 1867) bolstered this collective belief that anyone in America can make it if he tries hard enough. Perhaps the most salient modern-day example is Oprah Winfrey, who survived a childhood of poverty and abuse in the American South, went on to create a career for herself as a news anchor/talk show host, and is now one of the most wealthy and influential people in the United States, if not the world. Of course the danger in believing in a meritocracy is that one may be more likely to fail to recognize the institutionalized practices of racism, sexism, and homophobia that make it much harder for members of certain historically marginalized groups to succeed. Nevertheless, the person who pulls himself up by his bootstraps is an essential element of the American spirit. While socioeconomic mobility is valued, even venerated, racial mobility is not. Passing, particularly racial passing, is often seen as a betrayal rather than an act of nobility or bravery or wit. What accounts for this difference?

III. Racial Passing

Part of the answer to this question of why Americans as a whole find racial passing so threatening lies in the history of race relations in the United States. As a nation established by Europeans who used the labor of Africans and the land of indigenous peoples, the United States has a long legacy of racial hierarchy. Louis Owens explains the connections between racial classification and capitalism in the following excerpt from his book *Mixedblood Messages*:

If it takes only the most minute drop of “black” blood to make a person black, why must it take a preponderance of “Indian” blood – or a government number – to make a person a real Indian? Could we be dealing with a question of commodification? Could it be that white America bears a powerful residue of the old slave-owning sense that it is always most economically profitable to label a man or woman black if possible? A black person was once worth money to white America. And could it be that the same white America wants, deep, deep down in its colonial soul, to be Indian so desperately that such a quality becomes a bitterly contested value, a highly eroticized value, as the recent abominable movies *Dances With Wolves* and *Pocahontas* make painfully clear? America wants to strip itself bare, like Dunbar in *Dances With Wolves*, bathe in purifying baptismal waters, and confront – and in confronting possess – Indianness. (Owens, 199)

The idea that somebody who was considered Black because of the one-drop rule or hypodescent could “pass” as a white person was (and still is, in many cases) frightening to members of the dominant group. Visual cues such as skin color and hair texture are not always accurate markers of racial or ethnic identity. Race itself is an unstable, fluid category, and thus the power of those in the ruling class is also unstable and contingent.

IV. Long Lance Biography

The topic of this essay is a man who crossed the color line in order to better his own life. His life is a testament to the mutability of racial identity. Sylvester Long was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 1896 to two parents who claimed that they were white and Indian (Croatan, to be exact). But because of the racial binary in the South at the time and the “logic” of the one-drop rule, anyone who was not fully white was considered Colored (Smith, 23). Thus Sylvester’s parents taught him that in order to survive in the South, he had to abide by the written and unwritten laws of Jim Crow culture. Early on, Sylvester looked for away to escape life as a Black man in the South, and his first opportunity came when he applied to and matriculated at Carlisle Boarding School, claiming that he was part-Cherokee and part-Croatan (Smith, 41). Although rumors swirled at Carlisle that Long had some black blood, he was generally accepted by his peers and teachers. After writing a letter to President Woodrow Wilson in 1915 in which he claimed to be a full-blooded Cherokee, Sylvester was accepted as a presidential appointee to West Point, an institution that was not open to Black people at that time (Smith, 51). But just as he was about to take his entrance exams, he fled North to Canada, the first of many flights to escape possible inquiries into his past. He earned a reputation as an excellent journalist in Calgary, Alberta, doing field research and writing articles about various Native American tribes. It was during this time that Long Lance changed his official Indian story and claimed to be a full-blooded Blackfoot chief (Smith, 109). Yet even as he documented the lives of Native peoples, some Indians were suspicious of Long Lance’s version of his own life story. As a result, he consistently made attempts to legitimate his status as an Indian. For instance, in 1928, he published an autobiography entitled *Long Lance*, which was a fabricated tale of growing up as a Plains Indian (Smith, 206-7). Even as he gained fame as a prominent figure in New York society, as a well-known writer, and as an actor, many people, mostly Indians, openly contested his claim to being a full-blooded Indian (Smith, 242-3). Over time these scandals took an emotional toll on him, and as a result Long Lance became depressed, started drinking, and killed himself with a single gunshot to the head in 1932 (Smith, 312-3).

V. Heroic Trickster?

It is possible to view Long Lance's lifelong racial masquerade as an act of subversion against a racist system. From a young age refused to follow the rules by which young colored men in early twentieth-century South were expected to live. Long Lance used his creativity and his intelligence to gain entry to various communities that were barred to African Americans at the time. Like many people who cross the color line, Long Lance seemed to enjoy the thrill of tricking white America.¹ Long Lance also embodies characteristics of the trickster figure that is central to both African American and Native American oral traditions.

In the introduction to her study of trickster figures in modern literature by women of color, Jeanne Rosier Smith describes tricksters as "shape-shifters who fell on borders, at crossroads, and between worlds" (1). Indeed, one of the most common traits of the trickster in multiple cultural contexts is his liminality, a characteristic that is also shared by the mixed-race figure. In addition to being situated at "crossroads and thresholds," tricksters are "uninhibited by social constraints," can "escape virtually any situation," and have a "boundless ability to survive" (Smith 8-9). While the trickster figure exhibits behavior that places him on the margins of society, he is also central to cultural survival and actually reinforces core community values. Like the African American trickster seen in folklore such as the Uncle Remus tales, Long Lance often cleverly manipulated language in order to fight oppression. His 1928 autobiography exemplifies his ability to use the printed word to bolster his identity as a Blackfoot chief. Long Lance literally wrote himself out of blackness and into an Indian identity. And like the Native American trickster, especially its iteration in Creek and Cherokee folk tales, Long Lance faced a seemingly insurmountable challenge. In order to fulfill his goal, he must "transform himself racially or change social norms. He tries several times but fails, and though he may be punished or killed he endeavors to try again and again" (Wiget, 91-94). Far from being an unequivocally triumphant hero, trickster is often vulnerable and foolish – like humans themselves. Probably because these figures embody our own foibles, these tricksters often evoke laughter. An example of Long Lance's role as a

¹ Werner Sollors writes about this phenomenon: "Passing may even lead an individual who succeeds in it to a feeling of elation and exultation, an experience of living as a spy who crosses a significant boundary and sees the world anew from a changed vantage point, heightened by the double consciousness of his subterfuge. Thus persons who pass may enjoy their role as tricksters who play, as does the 'ex-colored man,' a 'capital joke' on society, or who, as Langston Hughes puts it, 'get a kick out of putting something over on the boss, who never dreams he's got a colored secretary'" (Sollors, *Neither Black Nor White*, 253).

trickster is the famous photograph of him posing in full tribal regalia. Even though Long Lance's identity was called into question (or perhaps *because* it was perpetually called into question), he continued to prove his Indian-ness by any means necessary. Long Lance's biographer, Donald B. Smith, describes the photo: "The pants probably came from the Crow in Montana, the tobacco pouch from the Bloods, the vest from the Blackfoot. On his head Long Lance wore a wig and the headdress used in the Chicken Dance" (Smith, 148). While Long Lance's dress may have appeared "authentic" to the average Anglo-American viewer, anyone who was familiar with differences among Native American tribes would have recognized the inconsistencies in his clothing.

VI. Pitiful Wannabe?

On the other hand, we can see Long Lance as yet another example of a non-Native person taking on Native identity for fame and profit. Philip Deloria has written extensively about the numerous ways in which non-Indians and Indians alike have deployed various versions of Indian-ness for multiple purposes. "Playing Indian" manifests itself in the Indian hobby craze that swept the nation in the 1960s as well as in the numerous "Indian" mascots that exist in college and professional sports today. In her book entitled *Going Native*, Shari Huhndorf explores how European Americans have appropriated aspects of Indian culture and identity in order to create and solidify a white national identity (Huhndorf, 15). One of the most notorious examples of this behavior is the life of Asa Carter, also known as Forrest Carter, a card-carrying member of the KKK and speechwriter of George Wallace's infamous speech "Segregation Now, Segregation Forever!" who published the *Education of Little Tree* in 1976 (Browder, 132). This "autobiography" was supposedly the story of Carter himself, a young Cherokee boy who grew up with his traditional grandparents. The book was quite popular, most likely because it fed into the "fantasy about Native American primal spirituality" (Browder, 134), until Carter's true identity as a violent racist was revealed in 1991. While Long Lance's deception, I would argue, is not as sinister as Carter's impersonation, one could argue that both men did buy into stereotypes of Indian people and ultimately strengthened false or misinformed images of Native people that have been circulating for many years.

VII. Ramifications

The personal consequences of Long Lance's ethnic impersonation are double-edged. He did gain money and fame, but Long Lance could never relax and enjoy the fruits of his labor. He was constantly on edge, preparing to deal