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About

Gender forum is an online, peer reviewed academic journal dedicated to the discussion of gender issues. As an electronic journal, *gender forum* offers a free-of-charge platform for the discussion of gender-related topics in the fields of literary and cultural production, media and the arts as well as politics, the natural sciences, medicine, the law, religion and philosophy. Inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier in 2002, the quarterly issues of the journal have focused on a multitude of questions from different theoretical perspectives of feminist criticism, queer theory, and masculinity studies. *gender forum* also includes reviews and occasionally interviews, fictional pieces and poetry with a gender studies angle.

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Editorial

1 With target essays focusing on a wide range of issues from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial historical documents to the discourse of masochism in Austrian nineteenth-century novellas as well as to recent postcolonial American historiographic metafiction, **Rac(e)ing Questions II** investigates interactions of gender and race in the (post)colonial from interdisciplinary perspectives. It thus continues the examination of gender- and race-biased power relations of **Rac(e)ing Questions I** in an endeavour to provide a broadened insight into contemporary theoretical approaches to questions of gender and racial difference.

2 Drawing on Foucauldian notions of power and discourse, Norbert Finzsch's article "Discourses of Genocide in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century America and Australia" explores the representation of the colonized other in documents by British travelers and colonizers of the period. Starting from a comparison of the British expansion in North America and Australia, Finzsch scrutinizes the strategic discursive dehumanization of Aboriginals, in which gender played a contradictory role. Finzsch illustrates how the explorers on the one hand cast the discovery and subjugation of the unknown territory as the conquest of a female body, while on the other hand the native's allegedly cruel treatment of women served as a justification of the colonial project.

3 In "Trials of Rituals: Female Bonding and the Colonial 'Other' in Marianne Wiggins's *John Dollar*," Ralph Poole argues that Wiggin's postmodern historiographic metafiction not only offers an alternative account of gender, sexuality, and race in colonial Burma in the early twentieth century, but also a queer reevaluation of the history of the colonial cannibal tale as such. Poole utilizes the textual politics of resignification as conceptualized by Judith Butler to explore the strategies through which the 1989 novel reassesses the roots of present homophobic and xenophobic attitudes in the past.

4 Sabine Wilke's article "Wanda's Endings: Transforming the Discourse of Masochism" investigates Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*, set in a nineteenth century colonial context. In a cross-reading of masochistic and colonial discourses, Wilke shows how the colonial images in Sacher-Masoch's novella simultaneously refer back to the iconography of the cruel woman and serve as indicators of the European male's anxiety about white woman's increased independence and role as master in the colonies. Arguing that male masochist pleasure in the novella rests upon the suspension of the woman's desire, Wilke explores how Aurora Rümelin, von Sacher-Masoch's companion and later wife, re-writes the masochist scenario from a feminist and queer perspective in her own novellas, published under the

pseudonym Wanda von Sacher-Masoch.

5 The fiction section of **Rac(e)ing Questions II** presents the short story "Opening" by US fiction writer KR Randen. Reviews deal with recent monographs by Peter Boag and Roger N. Lancaster, as well as an essay collection edited by Diane Richardson and Steven Seidman.

Discourses of Genocide in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century America and Australia

By Norbert Finzsch, University of Cologne, Germany

Abstract:

I suggest that Australian sources of the late Enlightenment and Romantic period, written between 1788 and 1850, do portray Indigenous Australian populations as nonreligious, indolent and idle, hideous and uncivilized cannibals. The men are portrayed as less repulsive than the women, who are constantly under the oppressive power of their men. On the other hand, promiscuity and loose morals on the side of women seemed to demand a firm hand of the men over the women. Aborigines represented in these sources do not own the land because they do not till it, they disrespect property rights and live as nomadic hunter/gatherers without fixed houses and useful implements. Their number was thought to be rapidly decreasing, due to their cultural backwardness. Their lack of a proper language with a developed vocabulary made them less than human, almost on one level with primates. If one takes these discursive entities together, there evolves an image of a 'creature' that is utterly rejected and excluded from humanity.

1. Theory

1 My initial contention is grounded in the notion that colonial projects have their own mindset and although specific colonialisms differ in respect to time, place, and agents, as a phenomenon of the eighteenth century, they would have certain things in common (see Elbourne 29). These commonalities constitute the basis for a comparison of British expansion in North America and Australia. As I have argued elsewhere, historical judgments tend to be implicitly comparative, especially if historians insist on the singularity of events or structures. Comparative history as a method therefore seeks to bring out and expose the implicit structure of comparative categories residing in historical evaluations (see Finzsch, "Reconstruction" 4). The basis for a comparison of North American with Australian discourses of genocide is based on the following assumptions:¹

2 Immigrants from various parts of the world have settled both countries, but English language, customs, and British laws and institutions, subsumed under the term *Anglosphere*, influenced the underlying cultural and political structures for the first decades, if not centuries, after settlement. Both settler societies were affected deeply by the existence of peoples of non-European descent that had settled the country a long time before Europeans arrived, and in both societies European settlers perceived these peoples as savage, barbaric, wild, or uncivilized. Although in both societies the relations between indigenous and settler

¹ Geoffrey Bolton makes a convincing argument for a comparison of English expansionism in Australia with the American case in "Reflections on a Comparative Frontier History" (see Bolton). I must insist, however, that the use of the "frontier" concept in both areas is problematical, since it supposes the idea of an empty land.

societies went through periods of peaceful interaction, cultural accommodation, and mutual adjustment, in the long run these indigenous peoples were eventually driven from their lands, both by high and low intensity wars, infectious diseases, ecological shifts, government policies, and by more or less peaceful expansion of settlers and squatters called the "taking of the land." This process/expression was clearly gendered (see Romaine 238). The progression of expansion pushed indigenous populations further into the backcountry. Therefore, I suggest that the practice of white-indigenous interaction and subsequent white settlement is virtually identical with simultaneous processes of invasion and displacement of indigenous populations. These processes of interaction were always and inevitably gendered in the sense that the social hierarchy, which allowed for the submission of the colonial Other, always referred to gender as a hierarchical stratum defining the place of humans on the great chain of being of the seventeenth century or the nested hierarchy of the eighteenth century (see Marks 6).

3 One has to bear in mind the differences as well: Whereas colonial expansion in North America started as early as the seventeenth century, in Australia it began only in 1788 after the American colonies had gained their independence from England and on the height of "Enlightenment" (see Gascoigne). Whereas in North America settlers were looking for political and religious freedom, in Australia the first colonizers were convicts accompanied by a detachment of British marines. This historical specificity helps to explain why it was possible that both military men and convicts had had some previous knowledge about indigenous peoples without ever having actually seen Aboriginals before their ships anchored in Port Jackson. British soldiers and officers had been fighting in the French and Indian Wars of North America as well as during the American Revolution, and in both colonial conflicts, Native American troops had played a major part, both as allies and as enemies of the British troops.

2. Dispositive/Discourse

4 Any policy of genocide, extermination, colonialism, or expansion rests on two pillars. It needs agents and perpetrators who serve as carriers of this policy and it needs a discourse that endows these agents with the knowledge/power, justification, and rationale for their practices. Mind-management necessarily complements military and economic power in the repertoire of colonialism and imperialism. The foci of this essay are not actual acts of killing, dispossession, dispersal, or cultural oppression of indigenous populations. I will not deal with the way British colonials, bureaucrats, officers, and settlers treated Native Americans and

Australian Aboriginals. Instead, I focus on the discourses of primitivism and exclusion that abounded in the *Anglosphere* after 1788. These discourses are part of a greater dispositive of colonialism, which prevailed before the impact of scientific racism in the 1860s.

5 Michel Foucault developed a methodology of the analysis of power. In his methodology he invokes five precautionary measures that ought to be observed in any history of power relations. One precaution is to conceive of power as a strategy without a strategist, as unintentional, meaning that there is no global strategy that allows for the manipulation of discourses, introduces practises, or founds institutions. Another precondition is to conceive of power as having no center. The "ruling class" or "international capitalism" are not external to power, but they, too, are subject to that power. Power is not something that one group possesses and other groups do not. Power has to be understood as permeating all institutions, discourses, and practises. The third axiom of the analysis of power is to study it as rising from below, from the smallest elements and mechanisms, up to the more general forms of domination. The fourth precaution is to understand power as something that is present in the body of subjects, although differing in distributions and quantities. The fifth and final precaution posits not to analyze power from the perspective of ideology because the microtechniques are more and less than formalized ideologies, effective instruments for the collection and generation of knowledge, methods of observations, techniques of recording, procedures of investigation and retrieval of information. They are, in fact, apparati of verification (see Foucault, *Faut Défendre* 25-30; Foucault, *Discipline* 174).

6 In my analysis I want to take Foucault's precautions seriously and I will therefore only speak of a small part of that dispositive of colonialism, i.e. the discourses. We conceive of dispositives as conditions for the acceptance of certain knowledge. The very fact that this colonialist knowledge was accepted as "self-evident" or self-understood is an effect of a dispositive that tended to naturalize power relations. Often early travelers, observers, ethnographers, and amateur anthropologists provided the arguments for a classification of human groups and their subsequent subjection to a hierarchy of qualities. Charles Darwin's mentor John Stevens Henslow wrote in 1837:

To obtain a knowledge of a science of observation, like botany, we need make very little more exertion at first than is required for adapting a chosen set of terms to certain appearances of which the eye takes cognizance [sic], and when this has been attained, all the rest is very much like reading a book after we have learned to spell, where every page affords a fresh field of intellectual enjoyment. (Henslow 115)

7 Observation was not only a way of reifying the objects of the visible world, it was also a way of giving the colonial gaze the character of scientific truth. Discourse and genocide are

connected. Discursive formations do not suppress or mystify social relations but rather establish them, by defining what is real and true (see Cloud). Central to the definition of genocide is the concept of intent, the paramount wish that the other group should cease to exist, be it as a consequence of adverse economic and ecological conditions or kidnapping of children. General Jeffery Amherst, commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America, expressed that wish very clearly, when he wrote in 1763: "I wish there was not an Indian Settlement within a thousand miles of our Country, for they are only fit to live with the Inhabitants of the woods: (i.e., *wild beasts*), being more allied to the *Brute* than the *human* Creation" (Parkman 647). Amherst did not only wish the extermination of the Indians, he acted accordingly and ordered all Native Americans who participated in the uprising against British colonial forces to be put to death. He also saw to it that Native Americans who participated in an uprising against the British in 1763/64 were contaminated with the smallpox virus and died in the thousands (see Amherst; Fenn). Before acts of violence and dispossession could be committed, perpetrators and silent witnesses had to agree on a taxonomy of primitivism that would allow viewing Native Americans and Aboriginals as somewhat less than equal, somewhat less than civilized and somewhat less than human. I argue that the indigene best fits Giorgio Agamben's description of the *homo sacer*, a human being that could not be ritually offered, but whom one could kill without incurring the penalty of murder and who is defined by the possession of his bare life (see Agamben). I am aware of the limitations of this approach because it voluntarily blocks out the multiple forms of interaction, mutual dependency, economic cooperation, and intermarriage of white and indigenous populations (see Attwood and Forster 22-23).² The crucial question is, nevertheless, how killings and dispossession of the Native Americans and Aboriginals would have been possible, had it not relied on abjection and consequent violence during a large part of European-Aboriginal interaction. What I want to suggest is a discourse on assumed qualities of Aboriginal populations, in the language of the time, the "character" of the indigene that transcended the narrow space of the tiny colony in Sydney because it was common knowledge about the "Savage" in the Anglosphere at the time (see Elbourne 29-33). In order to make my argument, I used primary sources of white people that actually went to Australia, saw indigenous people with their own eyes, and came to conclusions about the "character" of "Savages." The evaluation of the "Savage" however, although developed through first hand observation and interaction, was not inscribed on a *tabula rasa* but was based on an episteme of colonial knowledge about what was to be expected on the borders of

² Unfortunately, Attwood and Foster do not give a correct quotation for Rowse's statement. As for the problems inherent in both Lemkin's and the United Nations' definition see Hinton.

the civilized world.

3. Enlightenment

8 This episteme of colonial knowledge antedates modern forms of knowledge as defined in Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things*. Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century knowledge was not yet fragmented in the way that modern science is. Eighteenth-century knowledge was organized as different forms of a "homogeneous science of order" with knowledge arranged in two-dimensional tables of identities and varieties.³ At the end of the eighteenth century an epistemological transition occurred. With the expansion of European powers into the remotest corner of the world, the body became the focus of new technologies of power that tried

- a) to subject the individual body to a reign of discipline, and
- b) to focus on the population as a whole, as bio-mass. This technology witnessed the birth of racism at the end of the eighteenth century, a racism that was not defined by scientific definitions of "race" as in the case of the post-Darwinian biology, but a racism that aimed at the regulation of the bodies as it claims the right to let live and let die. Racism, thus defined, fragments the biological field and constitutes a method by which to differentiate groups within the bio-mass of the population: "Race, racism is the acceptance of killing in a normalizing society. Wherever you find a normalizing society, wherever you find a power that is primarily a bio-power, racism is the necessary condition for the killing of another person, to be able to kill another person" (Foucault "Leben machen", 18; see Magiros and Bernauer).

9 At about the same time, the foundations for a second epistemological shift were laid, i.e. the replacement of the two-dimensional arrangement of knowledge as "identities versus differences," conveyed through a system of classification of visible objects, by "an area made up of organic structures" (Foucault, *Order* 218). Whereas the "character" of things and people, defined as the essential "nature," had hitherto been determined by analyzing the spatial form (pheneticism), the emerging science of biology broke with the fundamental visibility of classical natural history. It posited organic structure as the fundamental means of determining character, instead.⁴ This epistemological shift in the life sciences, based on the idea of functions of organs and evolution, only broke through with Georges Cuvier and Charles Darwin and its impact in quotidian discourses was felt no sooner than in the 1860s.⁵ My remarks are therefore limited to the period between 1788 and the 1850s, dubbed the

³ Other than in the modern age, in which knowledge becomes a "volume of space open in three dimensions," at the end of the eighteenth century knowledge is still arranged two-dimensionally in tables (Foucault, "Leben machen" 347).

⁴ Jean-Baptist Lamarck, one of the key players in this new field, however, continued to insist on the notion of character as representation of place of a species in a table of identities and differences (see Ereshefsky 60-65; 199-237).

⁵ For the later periods see Wolfe.

"romantic Age" by Iain McCalman, the period before the onslaught of Darwin's theories as summed up in the *Origin of Species* (1859) (see McCalman; Butcher). I shall not address the second half of the nineteenth century, which witnessed the emergence of a new scientific racism that relied on biological explanations for human differences. This part of the story is well researched for Europe and North America and it is safe to claim that scientific racism held much of Europe, North America and Australia in its sway until the middle of the twentieth century (see Finzsch, "Wissenschaftlicher Rassismus"; Allen; Baker; Barkan). It should, however, not dilute the importance of that earlier thread of racial thinking, which was instrumental in setting up colonialism in its early stages.

4. Axes of Classification

10 What does this have to do with the history of genocide within American and Australian colonialisms? In order to understand the mind-set of white people, discoverers and settlers, military officers and officials that came in contact with the indigene, one has to ask the sources about the categories used in describing the indigenous objects of white scrutiny. Two basic models of description had been developed during the seventeenth century, the Ignoble or Primitive Savage and the Noble Savage. Without going into detail, I would decidedly argue that the concept of the Noble Savage, although widely used in anti-feudalist critique during the eighteenth century, had been discarded by the end of the eighteenth century and was only resuscitated after Indigenous populations, in both America and Australia, ceased to constitute a threat to colonial societies.⁶ The image of the Primitive Savage, on the other hand, continued to be used throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a justification for chattel slavery, colonial domination, and economic exploitation.⁷ The assessment as "Savage" was largely based on observation, i.e. the European gaze on the indigenous body. This gaze did not only constitute the obvious instrument of contemporary scientific research, it also served as a microtechnique of power in the sense that it empowered and engendered colonial conquest through the "dominant gaze," a term

⁶ James Cook kept switching uneasily between both stereotypes, when he wrote in 1770: "They may appear to some to be the most wretched people upon Earth, but in reality they are far happier than we Europeans; being wholly unacquainted not only with the superfluous but the necessary Conveniencies so much sought after in Europe, they are happy in not knowing the use of them. They live in Tranquillity [sic!] which is not disturb'd by the Inequality of Condition." (Cook, Journals, vol. 1, 399 quoted in Hughes, 54) I cannot give all the references to the genealogy of the Noble Savage. It may suffice to refer my readers to the following books: Alexander; Cro; Ellingson; Fairchild; LeBlanc; Woolmington.

⁷ Literature on the image of the "ignoble savage" is less abundant. See Barnett; Meek. In order to avoid lengthy quotes from verbose eighteenth-century sources, I "outsourced" my sources into an online-text. These sources can be accessed under Norbert Finzsch, Genocidal Discourses: A Selection of Texts Pertaining to 18th- and Early 19th-Century Racisms, http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/histsem/anglo/html_2001/Finzsch/genocide.xls, March 11, 2005.

borrowed from Laura Mulvey, denoting as male gaze that cannot be returned by the object of inspection, thus perpetuating sexual (and racial) inequality by forcing the viewer to identify with and adopt a perspective which objectifies and dehumanizes women/indigenous people (see Mulvey; *Schroeder*). In Walter Johnson's book *Soul by Soul* the power of the male white gaze over black female bodies is palpable in extreme ways, since it is clear that this gaze is backed up by the power to buy and "take" the body of the slave and since the gaze is discursified in the writing about this gaze (see Johnson).

11 Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), described the virtuous man as a "spectator," devoted to "the [disinterested] very survey and contemplation" of beauty in manners and morals (Shaftesbury, vol. 2, 45). His conception of beauty resonates his conception of virtue. Indeed, Shaftesbury posits that proper taste in morals and proper taste in art turn out to be much the same thing, and that this is because the beautiful and the good are identical. This concept of *καλοκαγαθία* originated with Plato, exerted great influence during the Middle Ages; it was revived by Shaftesbury and the German Christoph Martin Wieland (see Norton 116-120; Guyer 439-40). Beauty meant virtue and hideousness meant sin (see Norton 176). For the European gaze at the indigenous body this implied that inner morality and ethics of the indigene could be measured by its external beauty or ugliness, by shapes of limbs, wooliness of hair, and complexion. In his seminal work on the history of European racism, George L. Mosse gave a very simple, but useful definition. Speaking about the eighteenth-century foundations of racism, he delineated racism as a "visual ideology based upon stereotypes" (Mosse xii). At the heart of racism, according to Mosse, lay a visual ideology based on observed stereotypes, meaning that the appearance, the looks of indigenous peoples would carry a specific meaning. In the history of pre-scientific racisms, aesthetics played a crucial role, since it relied on the visible only. Mosse also left no doubt that visual ideology ultimately led to the mass killings of Jews in the twentieth century (see Hinton).

12 In the eighteenth century, complexion meant more than just skin color. It included temperament and disposition, since they, too, were deriving from climate and interaction of the climate with bodily humors. Complexion also entailed moral judgments, especially after 1770, when the old distinction between Christians and Pagans gave way to aestheticised judgments based on skin color (see Wheeler). Intimately connected with this aesthetic theory was a theory on the origin of humanity and its speech abilities. Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, going back to Hugo Grotius and Samuel von Pufendorf, developed a taxonomy of cultures that imagined a process of civilization, consisting of four stages (see Barnard; Hont). The lowest stage was marked by an economy based on hunting, followed by the next

step of evolution, an economy of herding. Then came cultivation, defined as labor on the land on a fixed residence, and the final and highest stage was industry and commerce, only lately achieved by the members of European nations. Carl Linnaeus had invented a species that he called "Orangutan," which in his definition had included imaginary cave people, chimpanzees, and the Asian Orangutan. Based on Linnaeus, Edward Long claimed that Africans were closer to primates than to humans and that Africans were in fact interbreeding with apes. Thus, Africans and Europeans belonged to different species (see Long). At about the same time, the eccentric James Burnett, Lord Monboddo, published two works that flatly contradicted Long, in so far as Monboddo stated that apes could be taught to speak, since humans had evolved from apes. Without going into the details of that controversy, what I have said so far may suffice to explain why the question of language and speech capability was paramount for a definition of humanity or barbarism (see Monboddo 1776; Monboddo 2001). I therefore included speech acts about the linguistic abilities of the "observed" Aborigines in my analysis.

13 By looking at the indigenous body and listening to indigenous speech, it was thus possible for the European observer to place this body in a matrix of progress and civilization, morality and ethics, growth or extinction. The ethnographic text that was the result of this observation, and discourse had the same effect as a peephole for the gaze of a male observer: It fixed the gaze and transformed it into a tool of power. This thinking was not biological racism in the sense that it attributed internal characteristics to unchangeable races, but it was a culturalist racism because what "distinguished the different races was culture not biology" (Gascoigne 149). Racial variation was attributed to environmental rather than biological factors (see Gascoigne 150). But this also meant that the "savage environment" (geology, botany, climate, society and family) had to be described and evaluated much more rigorously than for the later theories of scientific racism, which focused on inherent biological qualities of groups. Once fixed in written texts and published in books and journals, destined for consumption in England, this descriptive and classifying discourse became "writing that conquers" (Certeau xxv).

14 The allegory of America, the continent depicted as a nude woman in many pictorial representations, exposed for the European gaze in books and pamphlets since Johannes Stradanus, "draws on a long tradition of male travel as an erotics of ravishment" (McClintock 22). The image of the nude America has been so pervasive that even in seventeenth-century Dutch Bibles, America is shown as demi-nude woman (see Visscher; Vrient). This European gaze is not only a yard stick for the establishment of a position of the indigenous Other on a

scale of acculturation, but it is also a "projection into the New World of European representations of gender — and of sexual conduct" (Montrose 178). This gaze interprets nudity as a sign of low evolutionary status and as a promise of effortless access at the same time. This "coherent hermeneutical strategy of feminization and eroticization" that makes "gendered difference" one of the meanings of the New World can also be observed in the travel descriptions of Australia after 1788 (Zamora 157). European consciousness, in both America and Australia, is encoded as masculine. In Stradanus' book Vespucci discovers an uncovered woman; America is a male "voyeur's paradise" (Mason 171). Territorial conquest equals possession of the abstract and literal female body and rape often follows gaze. What does the "persistent gendering" (McClintock 24) of imperial conquest have to do with America's and Australia's discoveries and settlement? Gender is a way of portraying "relationships of power" (Scott 42). Woman, as allegory and as subject, has no name, no identity, no history of any real value before man arrives and gives her a name and her life — for his purpose and his possession.



Fig. 1.: Stradanus America

5. "Hideousness" and Gender

15 In Stradanus' picture, there is one other very important element of difference, albeit in the background. There is a cannibal meal going on in the center background. This reference to America as a continent of female cannibals lays bare "the mark of unregenerate savagery" (Hulme 3). America is, according to Anne McClintock, "simultaneously naked and passive and riotously violent and cannibalistic," a combination that requires European intervention in order to restore male mastery (27). America and Australia, as the ultimate opposites of the European way of life and the source of male anxiety, must be subjugated/penetrated (see McClintock 26-27). Thus, it becomes understandable that a lot of the American as well as Australian sources are obsessed with the question whether indigenous populations were indeed cannibals or not.

16 A second concept is crucial for the understanding of both American and Australian colonial expansionism: the idea that the conquered continent was virtually uninhabited and had no owner, a concept expressed in the Australian context as *terra nullius*. Over time, the colonialists systematically downplayed the number of Indians and Aborigines, thereby echoing Cook's description of the land as thinly populated, and increasingly conceived of indigenous peoples as a "dying race," as they also did in North America (see Kennedy; Dippie; Lyman). The question of the indigenes' right to their lands thus became salient in the early years of colonization and the ensuing process of taking over the lands formerly possessed by Aborigines and Amerindians. Legal arguments centered on the issue of settlement versus conquest. Settlement of Australia rested on the premise that the native inhabitants held no territorial claims to the lands they occupied. In the American case, although both the British colonial as well as the American governments recognized the land rights of Native Americans, they forced Amerindians to give up the titles to their lands through military conquest and through fraudulent sales. In the Australian case, Aborigines were defined as occupants — not owners — of the land. In contrast, in North America, at least in the legal fiction that served as the basis for Indian treaties, Amerindians were the initial owners of the land that they subsequently sold or lost to the colonial and American governments. Both cases share the notion that white settlers are entitled to indigenous lands because the original owners/occupants did not use it, but remained in a state of migrants. I argue that even before the legal concept of *terra nullius* was legally formalized in *Attorney-General v. Brown* (1847), colonials had virtually adopted this legal doctrine from 1788 on, as it had been previously laid out in both international law and Blackstone's commentaries to the Common Law (see Vattel §§207-210; Blackstone vol. 11, 104).

17 I reconstructed a matrix of fifteen categories of racial observations from a number of sources dealing with the Australian indigenous populations (see Gascoigne; Mosse; English and Van Toorn). This matrix is based both on the research of Australian and American scholars on the importance of Enlightenment discourse for the development of European racism and on the connection of colonial discourse and gender. It entailed extensive research on Native American History. The matrix constitutes a system of references that follows the logic of eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries "observations" of indigenous peoples. They presuppose a set of types of "institutions" including family, law, religion, political system, and economy, which do not fit the ways in which Indigenous communities within nation states dominated by settler populations structured their societies.⁸ In this matrix of observations I inserted remarks about the fields of religion/spirituality, work, the imagery of bodies, observations on the level of "civilization," descriptions of clothes, evaluations of gender and sexual relations among the indigenes, glimpses at the "morality" and "ethics" of Aboriginals, portrayals of their relationship to property and food, comments about their language and their demography, and conclusions about their houses, weapons, alleged cannibalism, and diseases. In short, I tried to reduplicate exactly the same types of statements as the ones that had been made by the contemporary observers at the time under consideration. This "happy positivism" (Foucault, *L'Ordre* 72) as displayed in Foucault's *L'Ordre du Discours* serves the purpose of describing the discourses and their basic units, the enunciations. Rather than remaining in the field of Foucauldian archeology, I shall also develop a crude genealogy by attempting to reconstruct the origins and development of the discourse of pre-scientific racism by showing its rootedness in a field of forces. This coarse genealogy displays two stages, one in the period of 1788-1800, with a rupture at the very end of the eighteenth century. The earlier phase supports an almost "neutral" image of the indigene, whereas the later period (1800-1860) is marked by contemptuous and continuing

⁸ There is something singular in the Conduct of these Evites, for if ever they deign to come near You, to take a Present, they appear as coy, shy, and timorous, as a Maid on her Wedding Night [...] but when they are, as they think out of your Reach, they hollow and chatter to You, Frisk, Flirt, and play a hundred wanton Pranks, equally as significant as the Solicitations of a Covent-Garden Strumpet. [...] indeed, if it were not for the nauseous, greasy, grimy appearance of these naked Damsels, one might be said to be in a state of Tantalism, whenever they vouchsafe to permit US to come near them; but what with stinking Fish-Oil, with which they seem to besmear their Bodies, & this mixed with the Soot which is collected on their Skins from continually setting over the Fires, and then in addition to these sweet Odours, the constant Appearance of the excrementitious Matters of the Nose which is collected on the upper pouting Lip, in rich Clusters of dry Bubbles, and is kept up by fresh Drippings; I say, from all these personal Graces & Embellishments, every Inclination for an Affair of Gallantry, as well as every Idea of fond endearing Intercourse, which the Nakedness of these Damsels might excite one to, is banished. And I can assure You, there is in some of them a Proportion, a Softness, a roundness, and Plumpness in their Limbs & Bodies, were they but cleanly, that would excite tender & amorous Sensations, even in the frigid Breast of a Philosopher" (Worgan 47-8). Texts like the one quoted are also found in North American texts dealing with native American women (see Finzsch, "Meriwhether").

attacks on aboriginal individuals and cultures.

18 Out of the fifteen types of enunciations, it turns out that observations of the "looks" and the body types of the indigenes are among the most prevailing. Here, early descriptions that seem almost to be purely descriptive and resonate the image of the Noble Savage are replaced by later utterances that reinforce the image of abject hideousness (see Dampier; Bradley 87; Collins 2, 180). Equally dense is the discourse about "civilization" of aboriginal culture. As in the case of physical appearance, observations shift from the earlier image of the Noble Savage to that of utter abjection (see Cook 92; Tench 59, 62, 252-253, 257-258; Grant 158, 167-170).

19 The same can be shown for the discursive field of aboriginal gender relations: Whereas the buccaneer Dampier in 1691 flatly admits to his ignorance about how marriage is organized among aboriginal peoples, Watkin Tench in 1789, praised as "extraordinary" by his editor Tim Flannery, goes into lengthy details about the cruelty of indigenous men against their wives, a pattern to be reproduced over and over again in the following forty years (see Tench 161-162, 264). The discourse on gender is accompanied by intensive discussions about clothing and nudity. Again, a shift seems to be apparent, as early sources comment on the lack of clothes with a passing remark, whereas enunciations after 1800 are performed with rhetorical means that resonate with the eroticized hints of boudoir novels (see Dampier; Cook 84; Worgan 2, 6, 18; Sturt). In the field of ethics and morality, enunciations are generally less frequent. The only thing that is repeated over and over again is the perception of indigenous people as deceitful thieves, a consequence of the evident cultural differences in relation to personal property, as experienced by numerous Europeans and Indigenous (see Sturt).

6. Labor

20 Another discursive field is that of work. According to the mentioned theory of the four stages, the kind of work performed by a group determined its evolutionary stage. Hunter/gatherers had remained in a lower state of development than people working the land and constituted little more than human animals. William Robertson's influential *History of America* (1777) had reinforced the notion that North American Indians were examples of arrested development because of their supposed lack of agriculture. This argument was very strong throughout the beginning of the nineteenth century and was consequently taken up and refined by the French liberal Charles Dunoyer in 1825 (see Dunoyer 146-147). In the middle of the nineteenth century, this contention was fortified by the prediction that because of their lack of work ethic, Native Americans would soon die out (see Greeley). In the early sources

on Aboriginals this argument figures prominently and is connected with the apparent lack of fixed habitations (see Darwin 462, 469).

7. Civilization and government

21 General evaluations of indigenous civilization and government are closely connected to statements about the stages of development in relation to the forms of labor performed. The argument goes as follows: since Aboriginal societies have not evolved beyond the stage of hunters and gatherers, there is no government in the form of hereditary chiefs or elders. By the same reasoning, the low state of civilization reflects the animal-like state of existence and vice versa. The following excerpt sums up this assertion quite nicely since it explicitly compares the Aboriginals with Native Americans:

We may, I think, in a great measure impute their low state of civilization, and deficiency in the mechanical arts, to the nature of the country they inhabit, the kind of life they lead, and the mode of government they live under. Civilization depends more upon the circumstances under which man is placed than upon any innate impulse of his own, — the natural inclinations of man tending toward the savage state, or that in which food is procured with the least possible effort; [...] In primitive communities, generally speaking, the chiefs must be hereditary, and must have acquired power to control the others, before much improvement can take place; when, if these chiefs exercise their power with justice, and secure the inviolability of persons and property, industry will soon be encouraged, and various useful arts originated. [...] The North American tribes form an apt illustration of these observations, — the chiefs being mere advisers, as it were, possessing no power to enforce their counsel, and consequently no means of breaking up the old savage habits of the tribes, and impelling them onward in the path of civilization. (Cunningham vol. 2, 46-47, 49-50)

8. Morals/Ethics

22 These arguments are intimately linked to other discursive fields, like morals/ethics, gender relations and sexuality, about which I shall speak next. In the field of morals and ethics, a certain trajectory of the "noble savage" is still tangible, fitting the genealogical division of an older and a younger discourse (see Cook, *General Descriptions* 86). However, most of the time, Aboriginals are portrayed as fickle, treacherous and as thieves (see Sturt).

9. Sexuality and Gender Relations

23 People who allegedly had such low regard for honesty and decorum were also supposed to have very low morals when it came to marital affairs. In general, gender and marriage relations among the indigenes were perceived as violent domination of the men over the women. This judgment is completed by Aboriginal sexual deviance, as exemplified by the alleged exchange of women, bordering on prostitution. The following quote is a

representative example.

One of the surest marks of the low position of the Australian savage in the scale of the human species, is the treatment of their women. The men walk along with a proud and majestic air; behind them, crouching like slaves, and bearing heavy burdens on their backs, with their little ones stride on their shoulders, comes [sic!] the despised and degraded women. They are the drudges in all heavy work; and after their lords have finished the repast which the women have prepared for them, these despised creatures contentedly sit at a distance, and gather up the bones and fragments, which the men throw to them across their shoulders, just as we should throw meat to a dog. (Angas 82-83)

Primitivist discourses have cast Aboriginal women as rampantly sexual and uninhibited in their desires, thereby following the example of the colonialist thread in other areas of the world. In North America, African American women were portrayed as voluptuous "jezebels" and Native American women as "easy squaws." This ideological tradition, although stemming from the earliest days of the European colonial project and applied previously both to Native American women and African slave women, persisted in Australia throughout the nineteenth century and was still in force in the twentieth century (see Lake 382).

24 The assessment of the Aboriginals as Savages was to a large extent based on the perceived treatment of indigenous women. At the same time, gender relations of the male colonialists in relation to Aboriginal women were shaped by the colonial gaze and a desire for indigenous women who represented not only sexual gratification, but also symbolized Australian land and its conquest. Indigenous women thus were othered in a double sense, as part of a "savage" society and in relation to their gender, since substantial parts of enlightenment theory construed European women as Savages (see Rendall 7-32). Quite often, when Australian sources raise the problem of Aboriginal gender relations, there is a tone of tacit complicity and ironic complacency. On the one hand, Aboriginal bodies must not be the object of desire because of their status as abject, on the other hand, a male-writer-to-male-reader understanding is conveyed that the white male colonialist could "possess" the indigenous women if he wanted because of her low morals and the promiscuity rampant in indigenous society.

25 The fixed male gaze on Aboriginal bodies and its subsequent ossification in written texts is the single most reifying element in the construction of the ignoble savage. Its impact is reinforced by the notion of cannibalism. Again, the chronological structure seems to be that of a split between an older generation of enunciations that flatly deny the existence of cannibalism among the Aboriginals to a more recent set of speech acts implying that anthropophagy was rampant among them (see Bradley 142; Cunningham vol. 2, 15, 36-37; Abler). It is only fitting then that these people lack a proper language, since they were devoid

of humanity: Statements like "[...] their Language is excessively Loud & harsh & se[e]ms to consist of a very short Vocabulary" very much sum up what observers had to say about the Indigenes (see Fidler and Ryan, 58; Grant 157).

10. Conclusion

26 In summing up, I suggest that Australian sources of the late Enlightenment and Romantic period, written between 1788 and 1850, do portray Indigenous Australian populations as nonreligious, indolent and idle, hideous and uncivilized cannibals. The men are portrayed as less repulsive than the women, who are constantly under the oppressive power of their men. On the other hand, promiscuity and loose morals on the side of women seemed to demand a firm hand of the men over the women. Aboriginals represented in these sources do not own the land because they do not till it, they disrespect property rights and live as nomadic hunter/gatherers without fixed houses and useful implements. Their number was thought to be rapidly decreasing, due to their cultural backwardness. Their lack of a proper language with a developed vocabulary made them less than human, almost on one level with primates. If one takes these discursive entities together, there evolves an image of a "creature" that is utterly rejected and excluded from humanity. In the introduction to *Bodies that Matter* Judith Butler describes the constitutive other, the abject as "those 'unlivable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the 'unlivable' is required to circumscribe the defining limit of the subject's domain" (3). This position of abjection is analyzed in Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Sacer*, which shows how political power is most effective when it does not deal with politics per se, but with human existence as an object of bio-power. Foucault's theory of bio-power described how knowledge/power institutionalizes some invented ideal body, which individuals then accept and begin to reproduce in their actions and everyday lives (see Foucault, "Body/Power"). Bio-power was also exemplified by the prison structure, the disciplining effects of schools, factories, armies, and mental institutions that paved the way for the regulation of populations. Bio-power constitutes a form of power/knowledge that is inscribed on bodies and that becomes visible on the body, especially through a panoptic gaze. Groups and individuals that remain outside of the desired effects of bio-power are "unlivable," threatened to be defined as unworthy of life. Both Agamben and Foucault did not reflect the possibility to perceive the Indigenous as *Homines Sacri*, the abject outlaws, human beings that can be legally killed because they are not part of civilization. In premodern western society, early forms of bio-power, as discussed

in my paper, allowed for the exclusion of Indigenous peoples in the absence of a racist discourse based on biology. Thus, these discourses formed the necessary, but not sufficient conditions for two centuries of dispossession, discrimination, dissolution and genocide of Indigenous societies in North America and Australia.

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Trials of Rituals: Female Bonding and the Colonial "Other" in Marianne Wiggins's *John Dollar*

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Abstract:

My claim is that by projecting backwards into the past present homophobic and xenophobic attitudes, Wiggins makes a forceful attempt in reassessing their roots in colonial literature. The context Wiggins reexamines addresses above all the silenced subject matter of interracial lesbian desire. Does this imply that *John Dollar* is a 'lesbian text?' What is a lesbian text, after all? The willingness to decipher a hidden subtext or to engender an ending that is not the anticlimactic hoax, which the 'failed' solution of *John Dollar* at first glance seems to be, envisions a lesbian narrative space of transgression. It is from this focus that I attempt to queerly read Wiggins's resignifying narrative strategies as means to undermine the master plot which, as Farwell puts it, 'is not just androcentric or phallogentric, it is also basically heterosexual' (95).

Anyone reading this will wonder why there are no men: We ate them. (Wiggins, *Separate Checks* 8)

1 Susana Onega, discussing postmodern re-writings of the Puritan Commonwealth, quotes Christopher Bigsby, who in his lecture "Backwards to the Future" makes out a backward looking trend among British writers, artists and entertainers of the 1980s for which he offers a twofold explication: It expresses, on the one hand, a longing for a past "safely fixed and transformed by nostalgia. The past is turned into icon. It is a past, moreover, in which Britain had seemed secure, powerful, confident, the past of empire and war supremacy." On the other hand, Bigsby continues to claim,

there is a counter current in that the past revisited was a past which tended now to be changed with 80s insecurities. [...] Contemporary doubts about gender roles, racial attitudes and national myopia are projected backwards into the past where their roots are presumed to lie. [...] Those who wish to change the future must first change the past or lay claim to it on their own terms. (qt. in Onega 439-440)

Linda Hutcheon has classified this trend of rewriting the past as "postmodern historiographic metafiction," namely "novels that are intensely self-reflexive but that also both re-introduce historical context into metafiction and problematize the entire question of historical knowledge" (285). Hutcheon takes J. M. Coetzee's novel *Foe* (1986) as one example to show the difference between Daniel Defoe's handling of fiction and fact - of "story" and "history" -, and that of Coetzee. While Defoe's narrative strategy in *Robinson Crusoe* makes claims to veracity actually convincing readers of the story's factuality, "most readers today (and many then) had the pleasure of a double awareness of both fictiveness and a basis in the 'real'" (Hutcheon 287). Coetzee's novel, on the other hand, reveals the futile attempts of "telling the

truth." Not only do storytellers silence and exclude certain past events and people: historians have done the same. Featuring a silenced female storyteller who actually was a castaway on "Cruso"'s [sic] island but thinks herself not capable of relating the story adequately, the novel reflects on the absence of women in the traditional histories of the eighteenth century. Historiographic metafiction like Coetzee's self-reflexively "acknowledges the paradox of the reality of the past but its (only) *textualized* accessibility to us today," says Hutcheon (295).¹

2 Marianne Wiggins's novel *John Dollar* (1989) takes part in this trend. Although starting out sometime close to our present and somewhere close to St. Ives in Cornwall, the major part of the narrative dates back to events that take place in colonial Burma when the "Treaty of Versailles was signed" and "Parliament in London passed the Government of India Act, excluding Burma" (*John Dollar* 27). Charlotte Lewes is a young English World War I-widow seeking employment as a teacher in the colonies. In 1917, "God and history" takes her to Burma where she is to "foster and preserve the standards of the Empire in English children" (9-10). After the British annexation of the Burmese kingdom making it a province of India in 1886, Burma has been prone to complex cultural struggles. Charlotte's purpose as "cultural missionary," i.e. as a means to bolster a deteriorating empire and help to maintain social rituals of racial difference, turns out to be futile, however. Marooned on an island off Burma, eight girls - pupils of Charlotte - witness and practice violent acts murder and cannibalism. The sole survivors of these catastrophic events are Charlotte and one of the girls, Monkey, who spend the rest of their lives together in what I perceive to be a homosocial, if not homoerotic alliance. The death of Charlotte and Monkey's burying her mark both the narrative's present point of reference and the effort on Monkey's behalf to remember these past experiences.

3 To place Wiggins in the revisionary field of gender, race and nationality that Bigsby has described, actually calls for some provisional explanations. Above all, Wiggins is an American author primarily concerned with current American affairs, as most of her other texts verify and to which the title of her novel *John Dollar* points as well. However, in this particular narrative, Wiggins follows the traces of British colonial literature much in the sense of Bigsby's "counter current:" as an attempt to resignify the past. Wiggins herself claims that while the title relates to the power of the United States as perceived outside the U.S., her intent is to write about this kind of power as expressed by Britain in the days of the Raj (qt. in

¹ For a reading of yet another similarly puzzling example of a historiographic metafiction, namely the queering of Defoe's novel in Michel Tournier's *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* (1967), see Poole, "Michel Tourniers Analyse."

Morris).² Thus, revisiting the British Empire to comment on yet another empire, *John Dollar*, says Wiggins, is "a book about imperialism and the United States is an empire, the empire of the dollar" (qt. in James, "Stress"). In this sense, Wiggins's interest corresponds to what Maggie Kilgour finds to be a present "concern with our cannibal past - not our savage prehistory, but the history of imperialism and its subsumption of 'cannibal' societies - as well as our cannibal present - the modern world of isolated consumers driven by rapacious egos" (241).

4 The close relation between the longstanding tradition of the cannibal narrative and colonialism has been revalued from different angles. As Peter Hulme points out, until recently "histories and analyses of cannibalism were written from firmly within the European or Western tradition, which saw itself as fully civilised. For this tradition, cannibalism was a feature of life in many non-European parts of the world: pre-Columbian America, the Pacific, Africa" ("Cannibal Scene" 3). This seeming imperial verity has undergone a thorough revision in current studies on cannibalism where the colonizer's claim of the existence of cannibalism is deciphered as a tool of imperial drive for power, i.e. as an outgrowth of a disturbed European imagination. In literary and cultural studies, according to Hulme, cannibalism now mostly figures as "as a term within colonial discourse to describe the ferocious devouring of human flesh supposedly practised by some savages" ("Cannibal Scene" 4).

5 However, *John Dollar* is more than just a parable of imperialist cannibalism. It marks a singular variation in the colonial tradition of tales about ritualized anthropophagy and is, as I shall propose, a queer revaluation of the history of the colonial cannibal tale as such. The larger part of the novel takes place at a time when stories about traveling to colonies, accounts of ship wreckages, isolated islands and savage cannibals are well known and read. Most works that *John Dollar* explicitly or implicitly alludes to as intertextual cross-references like Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Robert Michael Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* center around male — or rather male homosocial — experience of undergoing a utopian experience that nevertheless clearly remains within the boundaries of European colonial attitudes. Although Defoe's "noble savage" Friday differs from his ferocious cannibal "brothers," the narrative asserts the distinction between colonizing Self and colonized Other until the end. Crusoe's description of Friday marks this crucial difference since it evokes a "monstrous

² It is noteworthy to mention that Wiggins published *John Dollar* while being 'expatriated' in London: Before getting a divorce from Salman Rushdie in 1993, she lived in forced exile with her husband. *John Dollar* (dedicated to Rushdie) has been compared to his *Satanic Verses* which in turn is dedicated to Wiggins (see James, "The Ayatollah's Other Victim").

double" behind the seemingly noble savage:

He was a comely, handsome Fellow, perfectly well made; with straight strong Limbs, not too large; tall and well shap'd, and as I reckon, about twenty six Years of Age. He had a very good Countenance, not a fierce and surly Aspect; but seem'd to have something very manly in his Face, and yet he had all the Sweetness and Softness of an European in his Countenance too, especially when he smil'd. His Hair was long and black, not curl'd like Wool; his Forehead very high and large, and a great Vivacity and sparkling Sharpness in his Eyes. The Colour of his Skin was not quite black, but very tawny, and yet not of an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, as the Brasilians, and Virginians and other Natives of America are, but of a bright kind of a dun olive Colour, that had in it something very agreeable; tho' not very easy to describe. His Face was round, and plump; his Nose small, not flat like the Negroes, a very good Mouth, thin Lips, and his fine Teeth well set, and white as Ivory. (Defoe 205-206)

The monstrous double figures as compilation of all that Friday is not ("large," "fierce," "curl'd," "black," "flat," etc.). Gregory Woods points out that this specter never quite vanishes: "The good black man, who having learnt to wear clothes proceeds to learn, never loses the phantom who stands at his side: the bad black man, or savage, or cannibal. His clothing never entirely succeeds in civilising his body. There is about him always the threat, which is also the forlorn dream of postcolonial white racists, that he will 'go back' to 'where he belongs'" (135).

6 I have used the expression "homosocial" to describe the relationship between men with the implications Eve Sedgwick has supplied. It is Sedgwick's aim to "draw the 'homosocial' back into the orbit of 'desire,' of the potentially erotic, [...] to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual" (1). Although most critics have asserted the lack or elimination of sexuality in Defoe's novel, some do note a romance going on between Robinson and Friday (e.g. Hulme in *Colonial Encounters* 208-214), or even claim a reference to an archetypal homosexual pairing. Leslie Fiedler here speaks of "a tradition of the pseudo-marriage of males" in the European novel that has led to "dark spouses" in the American novel from Chingachgook (in James Fenimore Cooper) to Queequeg (in Herman Melville):

Robinson Crusoe, in particular, seems to embody an archetype much like that which haunts our classic fiction; and this is proper enough for a novel so bourgeois and Protestant that one is tempted to think of it as an American novel before the fact. The protagonists are not only black and white, but they exist on the archetypal island, cut off from the home community by the estranging sea. Cannibal and castaway, man-eater and journal-keeper, they learn to adjust to each other and to domesticity, on what is surely the most meager and puritanic Eden in all literature. (363)

While Defoe's male-relationship remains rigidly within the class-pattern of master and servant, Ballantyne's "colonial romance" depicts a harmoniously egalitarian, albeit desireless

homosocial bonding between the group of three boys that is described as being both truly unproblematic as to any homosexual implications and devoid of any racial and class-related complications: "There was, indeed, no note of discord whatever in the symphony we played together on that sweet Coral Island; and I am now persuaded that this was owing to our having all tuned to the same key, namely, that of *love*! Yes, we loved one another with much fervency while we lived on that island; and, for the matter of that, we love each other still" (124). Wiggins, however, not only resignifies racial biases; in focusing specifically female experience she comments on all three main types of colonial island narratives as categorized by Gregory Woods:

In one, marooned children of both sexes grow through adolescent rites of passage into a "natural" heterosexuality and division of gender roles. In another, isolated males form a relationship with landscape and the elements, then relate homosocially and homoerotically to each other, in febrile renegotiations of their masculinity, before returning to white heterosexual civilisation. In yet a third, an ideal community is conjured up in order to recommend the author's own political theories. (126)

My claim is that by projecting backwards into the past present homophobic and xenophobic attitudes, Wiggins makes a forceful attempt in reassessing their roots in colonial literature. She partakes in the precarious textual politics of resignification that Judith Butler has claimed to be a continuous recirculation of trauma. The naming of a trauma is a sort of repetition "that is, strictly speaking, not remembered, but relived [...]. Social trauma takes the form, not of a structure that repeats mechanically, but rather of an ongoing subjugation, the restaging of injury through signs that both occlude and reenact the scene" (*Excitable Speech* 36-37). A restating or counter-appropriation of trauma, Butler explains, is to be seen as a "ritual chain of resignification whose origin and end remain unfixed and unfixable" (14). This means that counter-speech understood as a performative act is not constrained to its originating context: "Not only defined by social context, such speech is also marked by its capacity to break with context" (Butler, *Excitable Speech* 40). The possibility of resignification, according to Butler, requires the misappropriating of the speech's force from the prior context and the opening of new contexts, "speaking in ways that have never yet been legitimated, and hence producing legitimation in new and future forms" (41). The context Wiggins reexamines addresses above all the silenced subject matter of interracial lesbian desire. Does this imply that *John Dollar* is a "lesbian text?" What *is* a lesbian text, after all?

7 According to Lillian Faderman, "perhaps literature need not confront the matter of same-sex sexuality head on to be 'lesbian'" (51). Instead, she says, a work might be considered lesbian, "if it can be shown that lesbian subject matter is somehow encoded in it" (54). Faderman adopts Adrienne Rich's call for re-vision as "the act of looking back, of seeing with

fresh eyes, of entering old texts from a new critical direction" (Rich 90) for her own attempt of redefining a lesbian canon. Discussing the issue of a "lesbian perspective," Bonnie Zimmerman insists on the primacy and duration of women-bonding and female friendship. For her, a lesbian perspective calls for a lesbian resisting reader who creates new possibilities and transforms old realities by resisting "heterotexts" and "privately rewriting and thus appropriating them as lesbian texts." This reader resists what is expected or desired, i.e. she is highly conscious of her own agency taking "an active role in shaping the text she reads in accordance with her perspective on the world" (Zimmerman 139). What is at stake is the unveiling of hidden subtexts of female friendship as well as the reversal of old destructive cultural stereotypes and literary conventions attached to the idea of lesbianism. Resisting canonical readings means also to grasp various possibilities that a text offers no matter whether the author has willfully intended them or not. This calls for an envisioning of an end to the story other than marriage or death, claims Zimmerman: "The self-conscious lesbian reader sees or imagines other possible endings" (145). The willingness to decipher a hidden subtext or to engender an ending that is not the anticlimactic hoax, which the "failed" solution of *John Dollar* at first glance seems to be, envisions a lesbian narrative space of transgression. This deconstructive twist happens most often, according to Marilyn Farwell, "when two women seek another kind of relationship than that which is prescribed in the patriarchal structures, and when it occurs in the narrative, it can cast a different light on the rest of the novel, even on those portions that seem to affirm heterosexual patterns" (98). It is from this focus that I attempt to queerly read Wiggins's resignifying narrative strategies as means to undermine the master plot which, as Farwell puts it, "is not just androcentric or phallogentric, it is also basically heterosexual" (95).

8 Above all, there is one girl, Monkey, who is singled out in more than one way. She is the only major non-white character, she openly articulates a lesbian desire towards one of the other girls, and she enters a life-long partnership with the teacher, eventually. The narrative frame establishes the importance of this character: The novel opens and closes with her narrative focus. It is precisely her female bonding with Charlotte that forms the crucial means in the critique of colonialism. Both female characters are signified as colonial Others in very different, yet complementary ways. Joining them, the narrative deconstructs the two powerful but false premises which, according to Laura Stoler, colonial authority relied on:

The first was the notion that Europeans in the colonies made up an easily identifiable and discrete biological and social entity; a "natural" community of common class interests, racial attributes, political affinities, and superior culture. The second was the related notion that the boundaries separating colonizer from colonized were thus self-evident and easily drawn. (52)

Monkey's real name is Menaka, but the other girls call her Monkey telling her she is ugly, "half a loaf" (*John Dollar* 52). Monkey is born of an Indian mother and a British father: "Her parents had succumbed to an insanity they thought was Love, white man, black woman, and they'd made a hybrid child" (54). Monkey as a concubine child poses a classificatory problem, since she not only represents a danger to the idea of racial purity and cultural identity, but due to her ambiguous legal status is subject to the scrutiny and imposed charity of the white community. As a living proof of "cultural contamination," Monkey takes both part in the colonial activities like all other (white) children and remains apart by an internal racial segregation. This hybrid status becomes obvious when the group of girls is stranded on the island without any guidance at first. The girls quickly establish a hierarchy according to their age and form a circle whenever they are meeting. The text suggests that they unconsciously rely on a traditional ritual image: the circle. As Lesley A. Northup points out, few ritual images "encapsulate the spirit of women's ritualizing as effectively as the circle" (117). Casting a circle not only creates a safe space, such "a configuration makes it possible for ritual participants to interact most fully with one another" (Northup 117). Nevertheless, Wiggins's female communal interaction operates on the grounds of exclusion. Monkey remains a pariah, "our slave-y" (*John Dollar* 176), as "they've left her from the circle, like a satellite" (124). Monkey has no voice in the proceedings of the girls' community; she is the abject colonial Other:

Monkey's race nullifies privilege in their view, in her view as well. Hers is the role of submitter, conceding, of seeking permission, of earning their yes. Less than a guest at their table, hers is the part of an upstart, the bastard relation. Tacit and sacrosanct, theirs is dominion in which she colludes. To be any way other than that, to rebel, to object, to abjure the text would be outlawed, illegal. (*John Dollar* 121)

Monkey's ethnic hybridity is doubled by her ambiguous gendered and sexual identity. Her femaleness is at stake by the "hate speech" she encounters: the girls call her "Brother Monkey" (125).³ And quite contrary to the other girls, Monkey harbors a distinct lesbian desire. She is in love with one of the girls, Jane: "She waits for Jane to notice her, or answer. While she waits, she wonders what it would be like if Jane ever would look at her. She wonders what it would be like to touch her" (60). Resignifying her status as outsider, she claims not to mind being left from the circle: "Monkey likes where she's sitting because she can stare at Jane all she wants and not one can see her [...]. Jane looks perfect, Monkey thinks" (124). While the others girls ignore or discriminate against her, she takes advantage of

³ It is remarkable that besides Monkey and Charlotte there is a lot more 'gender trouble' in *John Dollar*: the twins Sloan and Sibyl reject girlish things (48) while their brother seems like the perfect daughter (49); Nolly's real name is Norris (52) and Amanda's "resemblance to her father was grotesque" (64).

this enforced exclusion by joyously watching her beloved. Monkey erotically charges her touching Jane in what I take to be a mock ritual of racial submission with the "slave" cowering at the "master's" feet:

She dared to hold Jane's feet, to rub them through the blanket. Her heart was beating fast. (89) (You can put your head down on my feet, Jane murmurs.
May I - ? Monkey whispers. You won't mind?
- go ahead.
- Thank you.
- *Pleasure*, Jane recalls.) (130)

The homoerotic resignification of ethnic and class difference is reinforced by Monkey's internalized (racial) self-hatred that in turn points toward the colonial logic of Orientalism as Edward Said has described it. Monkey's father remains an absent, yet powerful figure in Monkey's life, while her mother has been marked as the beautiful oriental woman, a label that Monkey has adapted from the memory of her father: "All he ever asked her to do was to take care of her mother, watch over the most beautiful of women [...]. [Why] was she so wayward, so perverse, so bad? Why was she unworthy of anybody's trust, of everybody's love - ?" (145). Monkey's position as a "product" of colonial concubinage implies a double standard. The notion of "insanity" as to an interracial love(-affair) has been retrospectively applied, whereas concubinage actually was quite common and tolerated in the colonies until the early 20th century. Moreover, even after its official ban in 1909, concubinage in the British Empire was tacitly condoned and practiced long after.⁴ Surprising as it may sound, "the colonized woman living as a concubine to a European man formed the dominant domestic arrangement in colonial cultures through the early twentieth century" (Stoler 59). Unlike prostitution with its undesired side effects like syphilis and subsequent infertility of European men, concubinage kept men under control and out of brothels or - what was thought to be even worse - homosexual relations (Nandy 9-10, also Hyam, "Empire" and "Concubinage"). It is even more striking, therefore, that Monkey is designated as "queer" in every conceivable sense.

9 Besides Monkey, Charlotte is the other Other in Wiggins's novel. From the outset, Charlotte presents a serious challenge for the colonial society: she is single and keen on making new experiences that not always conform to British standards of behavior. Her colonial experience is troublesome because of two serious impediments: Firstly, the death of her husband has left her "unsexed" (10). Gradually, she realizes the fictitiousness of her

⁴ In 1909, the Colonial Secretary, Lord Crewe, issued a circular known as the "concubinage circular" or "Crewe circular" that expressed a strong disapproval of colonial officers becoming involved with local women (see Callaway).

former life:

What had previously defined her world now served to torment her - she went searching through their old books looking for some words of comfort and heard herself screaming in her mind at stupid heroines instead. Through *Clarissa*, through Jane Austen, through the Brontës, through Flaubert, she hungered for a different sort of story, one to reinvent the world she knew. (14)

The female experience offered in these readings and sufficient until then, now no longer serves Charlotte as a way to describe her own life. Seeking a substantial relocation, she chooses asylum abroad.

10 Secondly, she is badly equipped with information on her future home in the colonies. Again, literature does not provide her with an understanding of what she wants and needs: "Her knowledge of the East was sketchy, based on Kipling and a desultory reading of descriptions of the tenets of Islam and the myths of Hinduism, which were required for the personnel of schools receiving grants-in-aid from Government in Burma, even though the Burmese were devotees of the Buddha" (10). Charlotte may not altogether be aware of the inadequacy of the information provided: The Burmese had indeed received from India the Buddhist culture, but does she know that the Burmese had transformed and modified it? And although she may have read Rudyard Kipling's poem "Mandalay," she probably does not know that Mandalay was the place where in 1897 the first of a number of Buddhist societies had appeared that marked Burmese opposition to British rule. In short, Charlotte is unaware that 1917, the year of her arrival in Rangoon, "seemed disastrous" (Aung 36) for the British armies before the United States joined the allies in that year. The date indeed coincided with a change in Burma's colonial situation leading to an emergence of nationalism that primarily took place in the realm of education, i.e. the very field of Charlotte's reason for being there.

11 During the time of the enforced incorporation of Burma into India pursued by the British, India had encouraged Christian missionaries to found schools by offering them "grants-in-aid." These mission schools that "soon turned out to be almost the only means of modern education in Burma" (Fredholm 26) were known for their criticism of Buddhism. The alternate model was the government schools whose teachers, British and Indian, were civil servants unwilling to continue old educational traditions. The British favored this mode, but only few schools were actually established. The Burmese who attended the new schools managed to gain higher education, some of them in London. The Burmese people looked upon them as new leaders because they called for political independence by giving attention to the national religion, culture and education. In 1906 they founded the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) - patterned after the Young Men's Christian Association - and

established a number of schools supported by private donations and government grants-in-aid. By 1919, however, Burma felt excluded from the reforms introduced in India by the British (cf. the Government of India Act). The YMBA led the Burmese in a nationwide protest that asked for Burma's separation from India, a call to be granted the same measure of self-government as the Indians had been given, and involved a boycott of British goods as well as of mission and government schools. Not until 1923 were constitutional reforms granted; but until then the YMBA had opened their own schools, now calling them "National" schools where they taught Burmese history, literature, and language rather than the English language. In 1917, the YMBA also passed a resolution condemning marriages between Burmese women and foreigners which was "the first open expression of the Burmans⁵ claim of having a unique and superior bloodline" (Fredholm 28).

12 Thus, as this short excursion makes clear, Charlotte's appearance in colonial Burma is concurrent with an unstable political situation, a fact that the text does not explicate. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Charlotte does not "fit" the colonial community in Rangoon. On the one hand, the British in Burma⁶ find her "odd" because any "self-respecting single woman" would want to settle for blissful matrimony: "They interpreted her dedication to her work as one more admirable example of the ethic of self-sacrifice in the female of their species and never entertained the shadow of a doubt that what she really came for, what she'd come around the world for, was a husband" (*John Dollar* 24). Charlotte, however, has no intention to remarry, and a gradual estrangement evolves that draws her "farther and farther away from the people who believed they were her own" (25). Launching a "small rebellion" (22), she dresses as Burmese men and women do, takes walks in the bazaar alone, smokes native tobacco, and even enjoys opium. The Burmese inhabitants of multicultural Rangoon, on the other hand, find her exceptional. Her two-colored eyes ("one blue, one green: the independent signs of her two natures" [4]) lead them to believe she is something not quite human:

Among the Chinese, Indians and Burmese she was made to feel that she was from a different Heaven [...]. Others were afraid of her - the Hindu women hid their children's faces from her gaze. She was said to have a second head she kept somewhere [...] which held the matching eyes to this one. She was said to sleep with one eye always open (the green one! which could watch the spirits of the dead!). She was said to have been born without the aid of parents, to exist on a higher plane of

⁵ As Lwyn notes, "[the] term 'Burman' refers to the majority ethnic group of Burma. The term 'Burmese' refers to all the ethnic nationalities who make up the Nation-State" (18).

⁶ Originally, Wiggins had planned for India to be the setting of her novel. When she learned that British colonists in India always sent their children back to England to school, however, she changed the location to Burma (cf. Morris). For differences between the various countries in Southeast Asia especially concerning British Victorian traveling women see Susan Morgan.

humanity, to be luminous at night, to be free of sensual desire, to feed on no known food except the crystal distillation of pure joy, to be nearer to nirvana than a monk: she was said to be half-man half-woman. (23)

It suits Charlotte well, however, this experience of being (considered) a hybrid, of living "somewhere between known boundaries, extraterritorially" (23). She willfully starts to lead a double life: By day she succumbs to her celibate role of unsexed woman, by night, however, "she was another sort of ghost - she was invisible by race, by reason of extreme minority among a crowd in whom she was the one exemption, minority of one" (31). Her double identity gradually takes on a symbolic meaning: "She liked to feel she was amphibious, swimming through a double life. She was neither one thing nor the other, not a gill-fitted English woman who'd gone troppo nor an indiginous [sic] inhabitant of the native land" (23). Her feeling amphibious leads to an extraordinary confirmation, a spiritual and indeed corporeal rebirthing. One night, she sees some dolphins, jumps into the water, and mingles with them: "As they swam it seemed they made a single body. The dolphin that she held to took its air in rhythm with her breathing [...]. In a fold of skin along its belly she found two nipples" (35). What first seems to be a highly erotic female-to-female experience leads to a metamorphic climax, however:

Through the light which lifted off the water she was sure she saw the dolphin running upright, taking off his shirt and running toward her on his legs, a vision of a man who ran toward her across a field of light, this man who rushed to her as if he lived for nothing else but running to her, on the water. (36)

This mythical Dionysian male actually materializes in the figure of John Dollar, a stranger of whom "[n]o one knew where he had come from" (36). Cross-referentially, this scene both confirms Charlotte's state of ambiguity as woman/man/animal - a "mermaid" as John Dollar calls her (37) - and John Dollar's own ambivalent status of what turns out to be an impotent Eucharist.⁷ Although John and Charlotte enter a sexual relationship, this must be seen on the screen of a mythical narrative, which in turn resignifies the function of John as heterosexual male lover. As Teresa de Lauretis remarks,

[in] the mythical the hero must be male regardless of the character, because the obstacle, whatever its personification (sphinx or dragon, sorceress or villain), is morphologically female - and indeed, simply, the womb, the earth, the space of its movements. As he crosses the boundary and "penetrates" the other space, the mythical subject is constructed as human being and as male; he is the active principle of culture, the establisher of distinction, the creator of difference. (43-44)

Here, while John indeed marks difference, Charlotte is, in de Lauretis's diction, not just "an

⁷ Originally, Wiggins had considered to title her novel *Eucharist* (cf. Gehr).

element of plot-space, a topos, a resistance, matrix and matter" (44), but susceptible to transformation. The dolphin-swim is part of Charlotte's ritual passage taking her from heterosexual wedlock via the chimerical love affair with John Dollar to homosocial coupling with Monkey. At first, however, Wiggins casts a dark vision of female homosociality. The island community she depicts, remains within the heterosexist, patriarchal, and thus extremely destructive system. Trying to negotiate their identities, all they can think of are cannibal fairy tales like "Hansel and Gretel" and "Little Red Ridinghood," while Monkey's stories in which "no one ever ended in another being's stomach" (*John Dollar* 160) remain untold. As Steven Connor rightly states, "[d]eprived of fathers and their law, the girls are in a sense forced to become the authors of themselves, but, without any clearly-formed sense of identity, their acts of self-authorship are parasitic upon the absent law of the father" (89).

13 Thus, finding the paralyzed John Dollar on a deserted beach poses an extraordinary strain on the fragile female community. While it seems that with him male authority is restored, John Dollar actually fails: he cannot prevent the girls from witnessing their fathers being burnt and eaten by a tribe of cannibals. Having conceived the natives as "tiny naked people, other children" (182), the girls try to make sense of this horror: "When there is nothing left to do within one's understanding of the world one does what can't be understood [...]. [The] other children left defecations, [...] like offerings. Amanda is the first to understand their meaning. Falling with a cry onto her knees, she smears her face with some, her neck, her chest, she eats it" (187).

14 This scene again resignifies what Hulme calls "the primal scene of 'cannibalism' as 'witnessed' by Westerners" which most often (see Defoe, for example) is of its aftermath rather than its performance: "[There] is no more typical scene in the writing about cannibalism in whatever genre than that in which a witness stumbles across the remains of a cannibal feast" ("Cannibal Scene" 2-3). Here, the girls actually witness the cannibal feast, which as the text suggests leads to the breakdown of their communal covenant. The devouring of the remains of their fathers marks the transgression of the paternal law and symbolically borders on incestuous behavior. Yet building "a kind of totem" of the cannibalized bones inaugurates the law again with a difference: a sacrificial principle is affirmed and the worship is transferred to the surrogate father, John Dollar:

Without speaking, they withdraw from it [i.e. the totem], understanding it is never to be spoken of, never to be touched, the bones, never to be broken, that perimeter, its ultimate offense, obscenity, its inviolability. They are different now. Even those whose fathers were not massacred are different. They are silent, changed, contaminated, beyond grief, ecstatic. Day is dawning. John is waiting for them. Blacked with shit and whitened with the sand, they gather things they hope will please him - pretty shells, a

rock, a shrimp, a cinder. (187-188)

Nolly and Amanda, the two oldest girls, now pass from the former communal female ritualizing to yet another form of ritual: "Every night they had been paring skin off him, eating morsels from his legs, his flesh, stanching his blood with a hot brand from the fire which he couldn't feel but which left him charred and rotting" (207). Their ritual is meant as a sort of incantation, assembling bits and scraps of both the Lord's Supper and the pagan sacrifice:

Everything - their spoken words, their gestures, their exertions - had been shaved, reduced to the demotic, emblematic, everything the ritual contained became symbolic of its former self, symbolic of its former symbol like a love that calls itself a love when it's grown loveless, like a love that is a war. (206)

Nolly and Amanda act as high priestesses taking "literally one of the predominant symbols of the Anglican church: the Eucharist," as Gail Dohrmann points out. "They have consumed the body of their savior" (71). This is more than just a "perversion" of the strictly homosocial biblical ritual of the Holy Communion into yet another primal scenario of incest. The transformation and dehumanization of John Dollar from a mythical Dionysian figure "into a drugged abstraction that fulfills their need for worship and allows them to forget the urgency of survival" (Dohrmann 71), mocks the ritual function of the mythos of Dionysus who not only turned men into dolphins (i.e. symbols of rebirth), but was torn apart by a group of woman followers and experienced resurrection in a Christ-like manner.

15 At the same time, the cannibal ritual as performed by the adolescent girls suggests an instance of resignification on the level of postmodern historiographic metafiction. Accordingly, the devouring of John Dollar functions as comment on the imperialist discourse operating in colonial Burma. Tinzar Lwyn speaks of the "messiah complex" constructed by colonial discourse, giving "the rescuer a sense of agency, privilege and superiority" (9, 11). The belief in the colonizer's own superiority was a central tenet of the imperialist discourse as was the alleged need of the colonized Other to be saved from his/her own barbarous tradition. "Contemporary colonial discourse," says Lwyn, "perpetuates such a messianic relationship through representation of Burma that serve to reaffirm the privileged place of the identity of the Western subject. The identity of the West as saviour presupposes and necessitates the existence of the Other as an object to be rescued" (7). Here, Burma is resignified as West's barbaric Other: While Burma remains the site of barbarity, John Dollar — the mythical Western Messiah — is devoured by daughters of the ruling colonizing class. John Dollar's "penetrating" the feminized space of Burma climaxes in a violent parody of his mythic potency. Instead of proving as the "Western phallic father" who, according to Lwyn, is "the

bearer of 'civilisation' and 'provider' for the women and children" (12), John Dollar himself must passively wait to be released from his torturous treatment, and his sacrificial death does not promise resurrection.

16 Moreover, with John Dollar's demise both the heterosexual and colonial plot come to an end as well. Charlotte, being temporarily blinded, does not know that the girls are on the same island as she is. Only when Monkey finds her, is her sight miraculously restored. This symbolic act of being finally able to see again refers to the notion of passage that has been introduced to Charlotte early on and should be seen, I think, as an metatextual instance pointing toward an understanding of the novel as a whole. Already on her way to Rangoon, she is confronted with Cavafy's homoerotic prints of boys as well as his poem "Ithaka" both of which point toward her own destiny: "As you set out for Ithaka / hope your road's a long one, / full of an adventure, a discovery. / Arriving there is what you're destined for" (Cavafy qt. in *John Dollar* 17). What Charlotte arrives at, what she is capable of "seeing," is her bonding with Monkey. Only after reading the novel to its end does one understand that the two have been living together for six decades in total seclusion. The reader hardly gets any information about their lives:

She was unused to men. She was unused to people. Charlotte and she had lived for six decades on high land where rock was the backbone just under the earth. They had done nothing. They looked at the sea [...]. [They] took single meals never breathing a prayer of thanksgiving [...]. [When] they spoke, if they spoke, they were careful of saying not much. Birthdays were always forgotten. The seasons were never rejoiced. The summers in Cornwall were never too hot to remind them of where they had come from, of Hell. They lost their religion to silence, they lost their forbearance to fear. Year after year they refused to forget, to look forward, look inward, look anywhere, but to sea [...]. Nothing progressed. Nothing changed. Except Charlotte was dead and soon, the Indian knew, she herself would die, too. (5)

It is not until Charlotte's death that Monkey must confront a crisis that in turn triggers her memory and the ensuing narrative. For the first time since leaving the island together with Charlotte, Monkey encounters both men and their laws. Reflecting on how to bury Charlotte, Monkey relives her own fate as colonized Other by applying cannibal imagery to describe the former colonial masters:

The english [sic] makes laws [...]. This law, exclusive, ecclesiastic, for keeping the dead from the dead, under ground [...]. He buries his dead so the other white castes will not cook them and eat them. Worms and the maggots are better than teeth of one's enemies, that's why the white caste is always at table. He eats and he eats [...]. He eats people. Her name was something a long time ago that the english had chewed from its whole state of 'Menaka,' into a word they said 'Monica' into the status of 'Monkey,' for short. He translated her person, he chewed and he chewed. The Indian knew a translation, though, too. She translated his laws into liquid, into the likely suspicion of outlawry, floating face-up on her being, pretending a surface, a sea: she could bury, o

yes. She had buried before. (7)

At the very end, it becomes clear that *John Dollar* is above all the story of Monkey and of her claim to ethnically unbiased lesbian desire:

When she [i.e. Monkey] thinks about that day she thinks about it from above as if she were the smoke, she sees the way that Charlotte took her hand and made her heart feel whole again, as if it were still possible to feel some sort of love [...]. [And] they walk, Monkey sees, refusing to see what happened next: they walk and they walk and they walk and they walk and they walk and they walk, she believes. (214)

The interaction of colonizer and colonized as manifested in the queer relationship between Charlotte and Monkey indeed may be seen as an act of resistance and as subverting strictly dichotomous and essentialist colonial arrangements. It is not so much the barely unveiled homosocial bond as such that is at stake here, but rather the task of remembering and relating the story of past and ongoing "craziness." Monkey actually claims both herself as well as Charlotte of being "crazy," of endlessly burying the dead and the memories related to them: "Sixty years, or a lifetime, just digging, she judged" (8).

17 At the end, it is up to the queerly resisting reader to make sense of the outset of the novel. Monkey, who was not able to tell her stories to the other girls, turns out to be the one who survives and *is* capable of story-telling, "a modern-day Scheherezade with the texts of a hundred and one stories in her memory" (Greiner 123). Monkey's story is like the stories of women on the border who, according to Lwyn, "act as an antidote against the 'truth' of the colonial voice. The absent voices destroy the dichotomy between victim and agent in explaining issues of women's subjectivity, and the notion of the West as Burma's saviour" (17). The story Monkey tells challenges colonialist discourse, but it does so by a reliving of her trauma in the "Last Act of the Apostle" as the first chapters first subtitle announces. She remembers *John Dollar's* strange burial: "Charlotte had picked up his bones. The arms and the legs and the head. Then she and Monkey had puzzled them out in the earth till they looked like a man. Place his head facing Hell, Charlotte said. Monkey twisted the skull. 'Place him eyes-down in the earth'" (8). Clearly, this burial is a resignified ritual: *John Dollar* is buried face down designating him as damned.

18 The solution of the island cannibal experience here obviously differs from William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the intertext that unmistakably comes to mind when reading *John Dollar*. Marianne Wiggins herself admitted to have reread Golding's novel thinking: "Wrong, guys. Girls wouldn't do it this way" (qt. in Stead). As Stefan Hawlin in his critical reading of Golding's novel has shown, *Lord of the Flies* "is a seriously imperialist text" (133). Read against the background of British cultural politics in the 1950s, the novel shows a deep

ambivalence concerning the ongoing decolonizing process. Thus the text, Hawlin claims, only thinly disguises "the cliché about bestiality and savagery of natives, the 'painted niggers' in the forest" (125). Moreover, Hawlin quotes Kipling who called the African "half devil, half child" (131), a reference that evidently reappears in Wiggins's girls watching the "tiny naked people, other children" (182) devouring their fathers. This cliché, reaffirmed by Golding and resignified by Wiggins, is based on the cultural misrepresentation linking blackness, childishness and savagery. The regression of Golding's boys into savages mirrors the fate of the natives without the "parental guidance" of their white colonizers. In Wiggins's novel, unlike Golding's, there is no rescuing naval officer: in *John Dollar*, the dysfunctional savior, is eaten up, and with him all that he signifies. Does this render *John Dollar* a utopian or rather dystopian narrative?

19 Discussing William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* in the context of utopian and dystopian fiction, Kathleen Woodward points toward the similarities of both forms, since both advocate social change. Utopian - as well as dystopian - literature embodies "a critique of existing social organization" and alerts us "to the possible negative impact on society of certain practices, desires and arrangement of power" (202). The principal use of utopianism is theoretical, not practical, and it is here that in Woodward's reading, *Lord of the Flies* does not actually qualify as dystopian fiction but rather as "realistic," a term Golding himself used. According to Woodward, Golding is not critical to his own form of government, "his vision is politically conservative, even reactionary" (203).⁸

20 *John Dollar* here contrasts most queerly as (dys)topia. It does not matter what the reader does not know about the time Monkey and Charlotte spent together, it is the fact that they *chose* to live a life of seclusion, silence, and solitude that matters. Apart from any sense of sexual affirmative identity politics, their unspoken of shared life is the ultimate resignification of abject Burmese tradition. Viewed from a colonial perspective, passivity marks the "Oriental" woman. According to Lwyn, however, there is a difference between passivity and quietness: "Quietness interpreted as passivity in the West: as absence." Within Burmese quietness exists the space of resistance, instead. In living in quietness, Monkey and

⁸ Although I quite approve of Woodward's reading, I still would claim that Golding's novel depicts a distinct homosociality that is "characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality" (Sedgwick 1). I find it most difficult, therefore, to agree with Woodward's remark that by choosing "a homogeneous group of middle-class white children, all of whom are boys," Golding does not portray a "society" but rather a collection of people with "no racial tension, no sexual tension, no tension of cultural difference [...] no bonds of love or even close friendship. [...] It cannot even reproduce itself. It is small wonder that it turns pathological" (208). On the contrary, I would claim that it precisely is the precarious relational negotiation between the males which leads to the plot's escalation, and not an absence of any societal ties among the boys.

Charlotte have queerly resignified the idea of passivity into the site of resistance: resistance to the "englishman's devil" (5), to patriarchy, to colonialism, and to heterosexuality, ultimately.

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Wanda's Endings: Transforming the Discourse of Masochism

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Abstract:

I want to show that the scenario of male masochism as displayed in Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's novella has less to do with the actual pleasure that is felt during physical punishment than with the prescriptive construction of a position for the female subject that is inspired by the iconographic tradition of Venus paintings. The scenes in the novella which include the African servants provide a metonymical tie to the iconography of the cruel woman prescribed by the masochistic fantasy. In my reading of the text, however, the scenes that include the African servants mark, at the same time, the exit of the cruel woman from the masochistic scenario and the entrance into the psychic economy of sadism which follows a completely different dynamics and which disempowers the male masochist and his control over Venus in Furs. When Rümelin as Wanda von Sacher-Masoch begins to write novellas herself, her cruel women no longer subject themselves to the space and location afforded to them within the male fantasy.

1 There are at least three endings to Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's novella *Venus in Furs* (1869), the classical tale about a male protagonist, Severin, and his masochistic fantasies that are projected onto his female lover Wanda: first of all the masochistic scenario described in the internal narrative ends when the male masochist receives his last brutal beating by Wanda's new lover and companion, Alexis; exit Wanda and "the Greek." Second, the I-narrator's pleasurable reading of this internal narrative which takes up most of the space of the novella and in which Severin recorded his experiences and in the end pronounced his cure from masochism breaks off — i.e., we have an ending simply by pronouncement; and thirdly, the novella itself ends by returning to the conversation between Severin and the I-narrator in the narrative frame reaffirming the impossibility for a relation between the two sexes based on equality at this moment in our time and in our culture: In this context Severin lectures "[t]hat the woman as nature has created her and as men have trained her these days is his enemy and [that she] can only be his slave or his despot, *but never his partner*. She will only become his partner when she has equal rights, [and] when she is his equal in education and in work" (138). This perspective, however, remains utopian within the novella. In the historical and cultural situation the protagonists of this story find themselves in one still has to choose whether to be the hammer or the anvil. As far as I can tell there is no compelling reason within the psycho-dynamics of the masochistic scenario why the entrance of another player would necessitate the destruction of the scenario itself. All of these endings seem rather abrupt and upon closer scrutiny forced. Why wouldn't Severin and Wanda be able to continue their master-slave relationship after the entrance of a third player? What kind of "cure" is that

that is pronounced by Severin and which John Noyes has characterized as a simple shift in Severin's relationship vis-à-vis the structure of his drives, more like "a secondary reversal of masochism" ("Der Blick des Begehrens" 27). As a matter of fact, one could easily argue that the essence of literary masochism as established by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch in his *Venus in Furs* can be characterized as a discourse of suspended endings where pleasure is derived from the control of the cruel woman (Wanda) by male masochist fantasies (Severin/Gregor).

2 Let me explain this idea further. I am claiming that the functioning of the male masochist pleasure in this story rests upon the suspension of the woman's desire. Traditionally, masochism has been understood in the wake of Freud as a problem of psychic economy where the pleasure principle (*Lustprinzip*) is suspended by the affliction of pain and where the experience of pain is redirected into an experience of pleasure. Masochism is thus localized "beyond the pleasure principle" which is the reason why Freud had problems with explaining the phenomenon of masochism in the first place. In his treatise on "The economic problem of masochism" from 1924 Freud posits an erotogenous masochism (*erogener Masochismus*) which undergoes all of libido's developmental phases, the primitive oral phase (i.e., the wish to be eaten by the totem animal), the sadistic-anal phase (i.e., the wish to be physically punished by the father), and the phallic phase (i.e., the fantasy of castration) (see 348). Masochism is thus a form of regression, i.e., a form of behavior which provokes regressive fantasies of physical punishment. Freud's masochist, therefore, partners up with the needs of the sadist in the need for receiving and/or administering punishment.¹

3 Several interpreters have compared the plot of Sacher-Masoch's novella with the articulation of Richard von Krafft-Ebing's clinical findings in his *Psychopathia Sexualis* and Freud's later theories of masochism and concluded that the literary work anticipates later psychoanalytical findings. Gertrud Lenzer, for example, claims that

what Sacher-Masoch could not say was left to later psychoanalytic discovery and analysis, which affirmed the fetish as penis substitute and emphasized its significance for fantasizing the female or maternal phallus. Fetishistic representations such as foot, hair, eye, and fur — to name the most common in Sacher-Masoch's works — because they are not generally recognized as sexual symbols, are therefore not subject to social censorship. (Lenzer 299)

Gilles Deleuze, in his afterword to *Venus in Furs*, has tried to rescue the concept of masochism from its merger with sadism: "Deleuze contends that the term sadomasochism assumes the existence of a pleasure-pain substance that is in fact an abstraction from the concrete formal conditions in which the coincidence of pleasure and pain arise" (Derwin 473).

¹ See the emergence of a theory of masochism as it relates to fetishism in Freud's essays "Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie," "Trauer und Melancholie," and "Zur Einführung des Narzißmus."

In other words, even though the sadist and the masochist both enjoy the affliction of pain, this may be a very different form of pleasure. Inflicting pain is not identical with suspending pleasure while being beaten; it may be structurally analogous but the economic processes involved in each case are entirely different. In short, "the aesthetic economy of sadism sexualizes reason, that of masochism sexualizes resistance to reason" (Derwin 474). The point is that we cannot look at Severin in the internal narrative of *Venus in Furs* as a masochist who teams up with Wanda, the sadist, and whose pleasures converge in the same activity. That interpretation would be tantamount to declaring the sadomasochistic scenario as open-ended and feeding internally from each other. I want to show instead that the scenario of male masochism as displayed in Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's novella has less to do with the actual pleasure that is felt during physical punishment than with the prescriptive construction of a position for the female subject that is inspired by the iconographic tradition of Venus paintings. And it is the location for this position that ends the masochistic scenario as will be argued later.

4 I don't think there is a single passage in the text at which pleasure as derived through pain is explicitly articulated. Severin experiences pleasure only in two scenarios: when in actual or imagined embrace with Wanda and when Wanda performs in her prescribed role as cruel Venus in Furs: "I want to be your slave, serve you, endure everything from you, only do not push me away from you" — that is his condition for the role play (von Sacher-Masoch 37). The primary condition of the masochistic scenario is therefore the understanding that the cruel woman only functions according to a prescribed role and that she may never step outside of that role. It is "her noble nature" that guarantees her restriction to this position (49). And this male masochist fantasy is defined by the parameters of the iconography of the cruel woman in art history as will become clear in a moment.

5 Wanda, when confronted with the parameters of her role reacts with the incredulous remark: "A woman wearing furs is, therefore, nothing other than a big cat, a reinforced electric battery" (44). Once Wanda accepts the restrictions of the construction of the cruel woman — i.e., when she acts out her role and starts drafting the masochistic contract — she begins to articulate the sadistic pleasure that informs that construction thereby walking a very fine line between performing her role according to the prescriptions of Severin's fantasy of the cruel woman and articulating an actual female desire. Her statements in which she is beginning to articulate the pleasure that she feels in her role as dominatrix are nearly always coupled with words of reason that suspend the role as such: "now I fulfilled your crazy fantasy, let's be reasonable, happy, and let's love each other and within a year I'll be your

wife" is her closing argument to Severin and his insatiable appetite for cruelty and the whip (54). She sees herself as his goddess who will occasionally sneak down from her Olympus to visit him (see 61).

6 The entrance of a female girlfriend and later a Russian prince and the German painter do not threaten the masochistic equilibrium. Severin continues to enjoy pleasurable thoughts at his fantasy of slavery and Wanda acts within her role as cruel woman and leaves that role sporadically to reassert her love for him. This arrangement continues even through Severin's signature of the masochistic contract that strips him of his name, his passport, his money, and turns him into the slave Gregor. It even continues throughout their move to Florence where Wanda rents a villa at the outskirts of town, takes on three female African servants, and starts mingling with society. Severin/Gregor's second deliberations on her powers for abuse are quickly brushed aside by his reassertion of Wanda's noble character: "Sometimes it is a little bit uncanny to give myself over to a woman so unconditionally. What if she misuses my passion, her power? [...] It is a curious game she plays with me, not more. She loves me, and she is so good, a noble nature, incapable of disloyalty" (64).

7 The topic of the colonial servant shows up for the first time in the context of the Russian nobleman's entourage who is seen walking through the Polish spa that serves as the location for the first part of the text with his two servants, an African man dressed all in red atlas silk and a man from one of the East Asian nations dressed in full armor, a figure that is quite possibly a model for the tartarian outfit and oriental features of Franz Kafka's doorkeeper in the parable of the same name (see 65). As this interesting detail is mentioned explicitly but not developed further in the novella, at least not on the plot level, I will argue that it has a metonymic function by providing a link to the colonial context of the events, specifically Wanda's African servants and their treatment of Gregor later on in the novella. Upon their arrival in Florence, Wanda draws up the masochistic contract and the suicide note. Right after signing both documents and delivering his passport and money to her, Wanda has her three African servants put Gregor in bondage: "She suddenly kicks me away with her foot, jumps up and rings the bell, upon the sound of which three young and slender Africans step in, as if carved from ebony and all dressed in red atlas silk, each carrying a rope in their hands" (von Sacher-Masoch 89). The African servants proceed to tie up his legs and hands with his arms in the back and Wanda gives him a serious whipping after which he is sent outside to work in the garden and await further commands. But even after this unexpected turn of events Wanda and Severin continue to play their roles in which he fantasizes her as the cruel woman and where she acts out that role ever more persuasively, on occasion stepping

out of it to tell him that she is only doing all of this to satisfy his fantasies and that she truly loves him (see 97). When Severin receives his next treatment it is again the African servants who are tying him up in order to torture him with their golden hair pins and then putting him in front of a plow like an ox: "Then the black devils pushed me into the field, one was leading the plow, the other was leading me with the rope, the third was driving me with the whip, and Venus in Furs was standing next to it and looking on" (99). In order to complicate the situation further, Severin does not fail to notice the beauty and attractiveness of one of the servants and is severely punished for that forbidden gaze by a jealous Wanda.

8 What is the meaning of these scenes? Why did Sacher-Masoch add these references to European colonialism to his novella, elements which seemingly have no plot function at all? Deleuze has suggested that we need to look at the dynamics of action and suspense if we want to understand how the masochistic scenario works. In fact, on the example of this scene we can see the significance of actual bodily confinement (to the plow) for the role of the male masochist and the freeze to a pose for the cruel woman which resembles an image at a standstill, a photo perhaps (see 188). As indicated earlier, I believe that the iconographic source for this "photographic" scene stems from the art historical tradition of Venus paintings which is also referred to in the novella, primarily Tician, Rubens, and Monet.² And this tradition also includes the black servant clothed in red Atlas silk. In other words, the scenes in the novella which include the African servants provide a metonymical tie to the iconography of the cruel woman prescribed by the masochistic fantasy. In my reading of the text, however, the scenes that include the African servants mark, at the same time, the exit of the cruel woman from the masochistic scenario and the entrance into the psychic economy of sadism which follows a completely different dynamics and which disempowers the male masochist and his control over Venus in Furs. This is the real ending of *Venus in Furs*. The masochistic scenario only comes to an end when Wanda leaves the prescribed position of the cruel woman constructed for her and takes control over her own desires; and she accomplishes this by stepping into a differently organized economy. Venus's mirror image steps out of the painting in these scenes of photographic standstill and takes on a life of its own. In her incarnation as the Venus in Furs which functions for the male masochist, the cruel woman did not have a subject position; in fact, she did not even have a gaze. She only existed as the object of the male desiring gaze. As Suzanne R. Stewart has shown, it is the space between Tician's allegory of the art historical transformation of love into a sublime object and the German

² I have argued this in detail in the essay on Kafka and Sacher-Masoch entitled "Der Ellbogen ruhte auf der Ottomane: Über die sadomasochistischen Wurzeln von Kafkas *Der Proceß*." *Journal of the Kafka Society* 21 (1999): 67-78.

painter's painting of Severin and Wanda in which she is nothing but a representation of the masochistic subject that Wanda is allowed to move (70): "As long as the painter cannot paint, he can direct his masochistic gaze of desire at Wanda; as soon as he paints and thus stops the mirroring, he must in some fundamental sense relinquish his desire. He must sublimate" (85).

9 In fact, Krafft-Ebings's definition of masochism modeled after the plot in *Venus in Furs* includes this important reference to the situation of the male masochist as painter (utilizing the literal meaning of the German word "ausmalen") in his description of masochism as sexual perversion whose victims were

dominated in the realm of their sexual feelings and ideas by the idea of being completely and unconditionally subjected to a person of the opposite sex, of being treated by this person in a domineering manner, of being humiliated and even abused. This idea affords the pleasure; the person thus seized revels in fantasies in which he paints to himself such pictures; he often attempts to realize them and is often, due to his perversion of his sexual drive, increasingly unable to respond to the normal attractions of the other sex; he becomes incapable of a normal *vita sexualis* — that is, he becomes psychically impotent. (Krafft-Ebing 104-5; cited in Stewart 60).

Just like the male masochist has the control of the gaze, he is the one that paints in his mind. And it is this capacity of looking at himself in the masochistic theatrical scenario that is lost in the scene where he is beaten by Alexis, the Greek. As John Noyes has argued,

if in the end it becomes clear that the contract makes possible the arbitrary exchange of the position of the perpetrator, then Severin's capacity to look at himself while being beaten as if from a transcendental position seizes at the same time. Being beaten always means being beaten *by a certain person*. If, however, this person looks like the father, the masochistic spell is broken. ("Der Blick des Begehrten" 27)

Deleuze has explained this need of proceeding from the masochistic contract — which excludes the father and gives all rights (of punishment) to the mother — to the archaic ritual which is performed by the African servants in the following way: according to Deleuze, the rite of plowing the field and cultivating the soil calls up a buried sensitivity and protected fertility, but also a strict archaic order of working the land (Leopold von Sacher-Masoch 243). He suggests further that the plow may symbolize the unification with the mother, that the golden needles and the whip have a parthogenic function, and that the pulling by the rope may be an image for the son's rebirth (see Leopold von Sacher-Masoch 244). While the psychoanalytic details of this scene are revealing in and of themselves, I would like to come back to the interpretation of the masochistic fantasy in a cultural-critical context. It is important, I believe, that Sacher-Masoch inserts the colonial context into these crucial scenes thus giving us a glimpse into the anxieties of the male European masochistic psyche from the last turn-of-the-century which is fed by the seemingly innocent and sublimated iconography

of Venus paintings. Reread from a colonial perspective the European male masochist is libidinally investing the figure of the African slave in a fantasy of matriarchal regression that becomes the ultimate test for the masochistic scenario, a test that it does not pass. To come back to where we left off in the beginning of this essay, the masochistic scenario does not end where the novella ends or where the reading of the internal narrative ends, it self-destructs by reading the colonial context back into the masochistic scenario and redefining the prescribed role for the cruel woman.

10 It is important that we dwell on the connection between sexuality and power if we read masochism into colonialism and vice versa. As Suzanne Stewart has observed,

[m]asochism as a theoretical construct has become a favorite object of analysis in gender and cultural studies and an object of consumption in both popular culture and so-called subcultural practices. What these different articulations share is a perception of masochism's critical power, its subversive position vis-à-vis mass culture and consumer capitalism. Paradoxically, however, such a critique is achieved precisely through a staging of those same commercial relationships, on the one hand, and the mass consumption of masochistic scenarios, on the other. The masochistic contract between slave and dominatrix is the most capitalist of all relations because the masochist insists on the right to sell himself. (2)

The practice of masochism, therefore, reaffirms the structure of violence that it presupposes. The connection between masochism and modernity thus has to be rethought as one of ambiguous and constant renegotiation since the masochistic scenario, "whether in literature, music, the visual arts, or deicalized diagnoses of the fin-de-siècle *malaise*, staged the male shriveled body as a body that submits to an aestheticized and eroticized gaze and voice, thus conceiving of man as deeply penetrated by relations of political and sexual power" (Stewart 13-14). Masochism is, therefore, a response to the crisis of liberalism, but a response that intends to reintroduce the male gaze as controlling. It is thus a political phenomenon and, if you read the colonial context back into it, one that has to do with the anxieties of the European male vis-à-vis the new woman and the strong and independent white woman in the colonial situation. According to Rita Felski, the "parodic subversion of gender norms reinscribes more insistently the divisions that the text ostensibly calls into question, revealing deep-seated anxieties about both gender and class in the strenuous repudiation of a vulgar and sentimental aesthetic" (1094). And these anxieties are frequently projected onto women, "so that the female body functions as a primary symbolic site for confronting and controlling the threat of an unruly nature" (1102). And this gender role reversal, as I have argued, denies the female body the location of a subject position; it denies her a gaze. This projective mechanism is also at place in the context of masochism and colonialism where the African colonial subject, although in a position of powerlessness, is nevertheless eroticized. The female

African servants in Sacher-Masoch are remnants of the strong proto-masochistic undercurrent which, according to John Noyes, characterizes colonial fiction as evident in the excessive display of the sufferings involved in the act of colonialism (see "Civilizing Woman and Male Masochism" 50). The sexualization of the colonial subject and scenes of colonial regression, therefore, display the European's fantasies of sexuality and violence as criticized by Frantz Fanon and others. The colonial context also informs the European male's anxiety about the newly independent role for white women in the colonies. Peter Horn has shown on the example of Hans Grimm's novellas that the white women who were sent to marry the colonial farmers in Africa frequently turned out to behave as cruel women: "Precisely because in the wilderness she is (or could be) a 'master' she corresponds to that unapproachable idol of virgin-mother that, surrounded by ice-cold frigidity, demands adoration without permitting a single human or animal-like movement" (321). As "master," the white woman in the colonial context belonged to the public realm of European mastery over Africa and it is the irony of the male settler that he has to denounce that which he came to find in the colonies: freedom, sexual liberation, and fantasies of primitivism in order to rule and dominate as master.

11 What I wish to focus on next is the transition between Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's model of masochism introduced in *Venus in Furs* and the beginning of Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's authorship (a pseudonym for Aurora Rümelin, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's companion and later wife). What happens to the structure of the masochistic scenario when retold by a woman? When Rümelin as Wanda von Sacher-Masoch begins to write novellas herself — many of them collected in the volume *Damen mit Pelz und Peitsche* (1881/82) — she envisions different endings for her stories, i.e., endings that transform the discourse of masochism and leave the prescriptive role for the idealized cruel woman — the Venus of art history — behind. Although Wanda von Sacher-Masoch adopts some of the basic parameters of masochism on the plot level (the idea that the two genders are enemies, the pre-industrial settings and winter landscapes of Eastern Europe which have the effect of "naturalizing" societal hierarchies, the fetishistic representation of the fur coat as symbol of female power and mastery, etc.), she makes some crucial changes in the constitution of her main characters and how they relate to each other. Her cruel women no longer subject themselves to the space and location afforded to them within the male fantasy, they no longer write up masochistic contracts, and there is no space in her novellas for regressive fantasies that feed of colonial anxieties. Instead, Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's cruel women claim subjecthood and mastery over their fate. The novella endings, in other words, project the utopia of an emancipated relationship between men and women based on a relation of equality that was not conceivable

for the characters in Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's model of male masochism.

12 In her essay on Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's autobiographical confessions (*Meine Lebensbeichte* 1906), Katharina Gerstenberger has argued that the existence of female autobiography constitutes a threat to the male literary work "by obscuring the truth about female sexuality while putting into words those aspects of male sexuality better left unspoken" (83). This threat may also explain the negative reception of this text which was received as a correction to the male literary text by the scholarly establishment at the time. According to Gerstenberger, Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's confessions challenge the master text "with an act of subversive intertextuality" (88) by revising the lines and the role of the cruel woman while preserving the basic structure of masochism. In the confessions, the most audacious change to the masochistic scenario is the construction of a space in which the cruel woman is the object of lesbian desire thus offering a radically different interpretation of the female role. Ironically, however, this erotic relationship between women "restores the narrator to the traditional female position denied her in the masochistic relationship with her husband" (Gerstenberger 93). Wanda von Sacher-Masoch thus "reinstates the possibility of traditional gender roles within nontraditional constellations" (Gerstenberger 93) as condition for a female subject position that is not prescribed by the male masochist scenario, thus envisioning very different kinds of endings. I will argue that in her literary texts Wanda von Sacher-Masoch leaves the confines of male masochism behind — a move that she was not prepared to make in her life and in her confessions.

13 In Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs* we have seen that the masochistic scenario constructs a scripted role for the cruel woman as the all-powerful punishing mother of regressive sexual fantasies that are fueled by colonial images indicating the level of anxieties experienced by the European male at the time vis-à-vis sexualized projections of colonial primitive female sexuality and white women as cruel women. Wanda von Sacher-Masoch envisions instead strong aristocratic women that are equal, if not superior, to men in their coldness of heart (see 8). Similar to Leopold's text, these women are frequently compared to animals, especially cats (or lions), or they are likened with historical figures such as Russia's Catherine II; they wear furs, and they are cruel punishers. But, as opposed to Leopold's text, these stories are not told from that perspective. Although they reinscribe a polar construction of the two genders as warriors as I have pointed to above, Wanda's cruel women primarily seek the fulfillment of their own sexual desires and will not let the masochistic male paint them into a corner from which they do not have a voice. Here are a few examples of how this works: In the story "Die Begin," the title character is a beautiful

aristocratic widow who buys beautiful male slaves, uses them for sexual gratification until she becomes tired of them, and then kills them. When the husband of a young country girl gets infatuated by this widow and serves as her slave and lover for a while, the battered wife collaborates with the widow to take him back in order to have him punished and, in the end, killed. The widow has him whipped on his feet a hundred times and during that scene rolls around naked in orgiastic fashion on her fur-covered pillows. The young wife has successfully ridden herself of an unloving and brutal husband and received a ransom on top. The novella thus ends with the articulation of both women's satisfaction. This ending departs significantly from the plot of the male masochist scenario, which stuck to the masochist perspective. Once Wanda leaves the masochistic scenario we do not really know anything about her except for what she cares to tell Severin in her letter to him several years later and we certainly never encounter passages which articulate her sexual gratification — precisely because masochism builds on the suspense of female desire as I have argued above. But in Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's stories, the unfolding of female desire drives the plot as well as the narrative perspective and therefore leads to very different endings.

14 In "Das Todeslos," for example, a young German nobleman, Georg Rainau, meets his neighbor, the young and beautiful widow Karola von Hammerstein, who lives a quiet and independent existence. When their relationship becomes one of friendship, she dictates the terms by telling him when he has permission to see her. Rainau falls the more in love with her the more she assumes the role of Venus in Furs. When the cruel third person, the military officer Steinau, arrives on the scene, the masochistic scenario is revitalized with the rivalry of both men's courtship for the baroness. They decide to let fate decide over the ownership of the woman and meet in the woods for a duel. But the cruel woman shows up on the scene determined not to have them dictate the terms: "And you believe that I will chose the one who is left over? — You believe that I will let you gamble for myself in such a dubious manner? I will belong to the one that I love, and I do love one of you. The other one should accept that and leave" (Wanda von Sacher-Masoch 70). She then proceeds to load one of the pistols and return the other one unloaded and after one shot the military officer is struck down on the ground. As opposed to Wanda in *Venus in Furs*, Karola von Hammerstein does not fall for the brutality of the cruel male, neither does Rainau, but we get to watch how she pursues her own sexual wishes on her own terms.

15 Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's women in furs also pursue their fantasies of male-female relations in a destructive sense as we have seen in the above example by killing unloving husbands and suitors, revenging treason, or simply getting rid of their lovers after one night.

But as opposed to the masochistic scenario which ended with the exit of the cruel woman as conceived by the male masochist and her reentrance into the differently defined psychic economy of sadism, Wanda's cruel women are the products of male brutality. Their cruelty is the result of years of emotional neglect and/or beating by their husbands, and they have hardened under these circumstances. "The modern form of marriage, with its false appearance of happiness to the outside and its internal wasteland, has hardened the pure, gentle constitution of Hanna, she became hard and cold" (Wanda von Sacher-Masoch 124) is the typical explanation for the particular condition Wanda's cruel women find themselves in. And on the basis of this life experience they decide to take their fate into their own hands and pursue their desires without getting too caught up in the game. The stories seem to be pleading for a different kind of relationship between the sexes, one that is not based on the masochistic suspense of gratification and projection of sexual fantasies onto a constructed image of the female but on a reaffirmation of a need for mutual respect as condition for love among equals. Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's texts are, therefore, no doublings of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's literary productions but counter narratives, as Christa Gürtler has argued in her afterword to the new edition of a collection of Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's stories. Gürtler claims that although Wanda von Sacher-Masoch reaffirms her husband's perspective on the nature of the two sexes as warriors under present social conditions, societal critique remains a non-thought in his works whereas it is articulated in her texts at least as a project: "In her stories the fur becomes a symbol of female power and mastery. [...] These cruel women no longer want to submit to others, not even to masochistic contracts" (Gürtler 160-61). And the most obvious difference between these two models for sexual relations are the differences in endings. Wanda's endings include sexual gratification and punishment where the moral law was violated. About the story entitled "Die Tierbändigerin" Gürtler writes: "The promiscuous male is killed by the monogamous (?) woman: While within the masochistic ritual punishment replaces the sexual union and triggers the ritual over and over again, here the death sentence is executed in form of a circus event in the rink" (163). These cruel women are virtuous and they punish promiscuous transgression if need be. But both scenarios, the fulfilled union with the sexual partner as well as the death sentence of the amoral transgressor, rest on the possibility of an egalitarian relationship between men and women.

16 As opposed to Wanda von Sacher-Masoch who introduced important changes into the literary conception of male and female sexual relations, the contemporary German filmmaker and critic Monika Treut fleshes out Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's image of the cruel woman after she left the masochistic scenario. In Sacher-Masoch, we do not hear from her again until

Severin receives a letter and painting in the mail several years after the events. Treut emphasizes the subversive nature of masochism when she claims that "[m]asochistic obedience violates the rules of disciplined sexual behavior" and by violating the code of normalization that undermines our understanding of normal sexual relations. Against Fanon and Žižek she claims that "even when S/M practices possess moments of actual violence (the masochist is beaten, he experiences pain and exposes himself to a 'cruel' scenario of unconditional obedience), it is in fact fantasy that is the determining factor" ("Female Misbehavior" 107). While that is true, Treut, in my estimate, underestimates the powers of play and the structural similarities with capitalist economies of exchange. Even playing with the idea of dependency recreates an essential connection between sexuality and violence and it is not readily apparent to me why that form of "destructive obedience is the sign of self-conscious fantasy placing into question every form of actual violence and dependency" (Treut, "Female Misbehavior" 110). As a matter of fact, it seems to me that the structures of violence and dependency are de-historicized with this move. I do not understand how the practice of sado-masochism and its fetishized use of black leather can escape the association with violence and remain unblemished. It might be true in some limited way that "sado-masochistic mise-en-scènes liberate sex from the deep entanglements that have tyrannized it for hundreds of years" (Treut, "Female Misbehavior" 112), but Treut's claim that the destructive obedience in masochism negates actual violence, that it does not reproduce violence and instead nullifies it does not take the impact of the structural — and non-ironic, I might claim — recreation of sexual violence into account.

17 Treut first articulated her theory of the subversive elements of sadomasochism in her 1984 dissertation on the image of woman in Sade and Sacher-Masoch in which she claims that the sadistic female in Sade is liberated from all traditional values, especially in a moral, religious, and aesthetic sense (see *Die grausame Frau* 11). In Treut's reconstruction, a radically free form of authorial reason such as Sade's produces the idea of sovereignty, which leads to the positive utopia of a liberated and libertine human being that transgresses all operative rules in its radical search for sexual gratification. Sade's cruel women are libertine thinkers; they have androgynous features, they foster an anti-motherly resentment, and they are equipped with enormous dildos which not only makes them into active members in the sexual role play but also transforms them into man's toughest rival so to speak. And in Treut's scenario, Sade's parodistic rendition of normal and perverse sexuality destroys the societal yoke under which woman was trained in her second nature (see *Die grausame Frau* 71). Treut resorts to the same explanation as Wanda von Sacher-Masoch in that she shows that in Sade

these cruel women are libertine, because they were brutally enslaved before and now they outdo their male colleagues in excessive violence and passion.

18 Treut has struggled with the artistic expression for this position in her film *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* of the same year where she has her main character, Wanda, lecture to the audience about the pride of the masochistic slave and the roots of that pride in fetishism "with an ironic grin" as she claims: "The slave deifies these substances that count in our culture as the most disgusting ones imaginable. This has to do with the most extreme form of fetishism known to us. To manage it properly is not easy. Neither for the submissive nor for the dominant partner. It is a reciprocal process of education" ("Female Misbehavior" 108). Unfortunately, I believe, the ironic rendition of this position is lost in the structural translation into cinematic images as I have argued elsewhere (see "The Sexual Woman and her Struggle for Subjectivity" 255-56). The film, in my opinion, simply shows a female tyrant in control of her "gallery" in which sexual perversions are staged and how she loses that control. What happens in Treut's recasting of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's masochistic fantasy of the cruel woman is the eradication of the historical context of colonialism and the reinsertion of a de-historicized context of queerness. And this move has certain consequences that I wish to outline in what is left.

19 The film *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* indeed shows Wanda as the agent in heterosexual as well as in homosexual love relations which has caused critics to claim that the film makes a productive contribution to current discourses on perverse desire and that it "creates a space to investigate, rearrange, and reverse sexual and gender configurations" (Mennel 154). Barbara Mennel further argues that while the film portrays lesbian desire and fetishism, it does not do so from the perspective of a lesbian etiology: "The political and aesthetic significance of Treut's film lies in its resistance to the representation of a lesbian etiology and to its simultaneous insistence on the political and sexual transgressiveness that results from recasting traditionally gendered and heterosexual spectatorial and psychological models" (154). To that respect it can be compared to Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's recasting of the masochistic scenario in her confessions which include the author/narrator as object of lesbian desire that is ironically restored to her traditional sexual role. But Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's articulation of her relationship with another woman did not necessarily translate into a transgressive recasting of the masochist scenario; in fact, masochism was thrown out the window entirely in the literary renditions that featured cruel women in pursuit of their sexual gratification by the simple fact that the narrative perspective shifted over to the women. They were the agents of their (hi)stories. Treut's cruel woman, however many

lectures she gives about the consciousness of the slave, is still inherently tied to the idea of staging. Mennel claims that "[m]asochism's inherent staging of domination and submission allows for a reading of subversion: performativity foregrounds and appropriates domination and submission in the existing system and therefore subverts it: Yet it also allows for a reading of conservatism: reenactment reproduces and reinscribes the status quo" (155). And this conservatism is connected with the paradigm of theatricality and the reenactment of the masochist scenario even though it is significantly altered. Mennel sees a potential for transgression in this portrayal of perverse desire and in the invitation to create multiple identificatory and disidentificatory moments and spectator positions: through the deployment of masochism, an autonomous female desire is represented and the woman is constituted as speaking subject (see 160).

20 I do not want to engage in a detailed analysis of the film at this point since that is really not my focus in this essay, which deals more with shifts in the discourse of masochism through a comparison of its endings. To bring the argument back to the function of endings and the question of the colonial context, I wish to dwell a little bit on a fact that Marcia Klotz has pointed out in her analysis of Treut's radical queer political program. Klotz has argued that although straight relationships are queered in Treut's films, lesbianism is also queered at the same time (see 69). In fact, the queer haven portrayed in Treut's films is curiously devoid of issues of race and class. On the example of *My Father is Coming* Klotz writes: "The fact that most of the people on that street corner are black leads one to wonder just what the relation might be between race and class here — or why the sad, coerced kind of sex is at home in a black neighborhood while the world of the erotic dance club is all white" (72). This observation leads Klotz to wonder about the transgressive nature of Treut's sexual representations: "Although we see a number of instances in Treut's films of how straightness threatens to violate the boundaries of the queer haven and how these threats are repelled, neutralized, or destroyed, inequalities based on class or race never seem to threaten the queer space at all" (Klotz 75). This essentializing tendency in Treut's conception of queerness mirrors Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's utopian project of gender relations based on equality.

21 Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's stories were also devoid of colonial subjects and placed in a non-specific time somewhere in Galicia. While Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's novella afforded us a superb glimpse into the inner workings of the male European masochist's psyche during the later half of the nineteenth century when the major European players (including the neighbor Russia) were engaged in the conquest of Africa and other regions of the world, the female authored texts by necessity lack that historical framework and instead

focus on the essence of gender relations from a feminist and a queer perspective. Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's narrative ends with the self-destruction of the masochist scenario. After that, there is nothing more to say. The colonial context provides the historical specificity for the masochistic plot. Wanda von Sacher-Masoch's tales only begin after the reentry of the cruel woman into a psychic economy of sadism which is devoid of ethnic diversity and colonial power relations. They end with the establishment of a gender equilibrium either in life or in death in a non-specified time. Wanda's endings sketch the outlines of this utopian project that is located beyond the pleasure principle of the male European masochist. It rests, however, on the strategy of decontextualization, thereby failing to acknowledge the significance of the colonial subtext.

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Peter Boag: *Same-Sex Affairs: Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

By Jon Robert Adams, Western Michigan University, USA

1 True to its subtitle, Peter Boag's marvelous study, *Same-Sex Affairs*, details the myriad shapes of same-sex relationships in the United States' Pacific Northwest as well as how they developed, became defined, were labeled, and, ultimately, how they were controlled. Clearly a labor of love and certainly a research triumph, Boag's book propels the reader through tantalizingly detailed narratives of male-male desires and public response to them in and around Portland, Oregon, during the early part of the twentieth century. Boag has a special talent for making the lives of his subjects leap from the page and for interweaving complex theories of gender and sexuality with specific historical information so that the reader witnesses as philosophy becomes embodied. Among many fresh ideas for understanding same-sex sexuality during the early decades of the twentieth century, Boag's most compelling arguments include his revision of the implications for working-class transgressive sex acts, his determination that the modern, urban-centered, gay identity grew out of the middle class, and his suggestion that Progressive Era attempts to control homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest lay the groundwork for later assays nationwide.

2 Boag develops these discoveries in the individual sections of *Same-Sex Affairs*, each of which historicizes its thesis. The first section discusses working class same-sex affairs both outside the urban settings, in the Pacific Northwest's transient and seasonal working populations, and within the city. Using studies compiled by contemporary observers of the transient workers' lifestyle, Boag presents evidence of what he determines to be the prototypical male-male relationship within these working communities, that between an adult and a juvenile, and he unveils much about both the nature of such relationships and the physical acts consummated in them. Boag describes how the adult in such relationships, often called the "wolf" or the "jocker," and the youth, called a "punk," may have partnered for any variety of reasons, including survival, the loneliness of isolation, and sincere emotion. Boag contends that given the overwhelming majority of males in the Northwest's population, male-male relationships were commonplace and ordinary even while mainstream society would have seen them as unusual and corrupt. When making his conclusions about the same-sex affairs of the transient workers, Boag astutely separates his work from other historians of sexuality, including George Chauncey, by describing how the transient "punk" differed from the city-centered "fairy" Chauncey describes in Gay New York. In doing so, Boag answers to

his self-asserted need for "increased historical attention to the conditions affecting homosexuality in nonurban settings" (17).

3 Boag describes the lifestyles of migrant workers both to show how the hierarchies and expectations of same-sex relationships would re-emerge in Portland's working-class communities and to emphasize the shift that takes place as the transient lifestyle disappeared and middle-class modes of comprehending same-sex desire and sexual activity were impressed upon the working class. Before this imposition, Boag argues in Chapter 2, surveillance of same-sex affairs by urban police forces occurred not because of any specific sexual identity imputed to the participants, but rather because of their racial or ethnic makeup which, along with commonly-held attitudes about their inferiority, automatically implicated the men in generally transgressive sexual activity. In other words, *Same-Sex Affairs* determines, minority men engaging in male-male relationships were scrutinized as part of assaults against their racial or ethnic status more than against their perceived sexual identities.

4 As Part II details, however, the Rose City's 1912 scandal changed how the middle class would come to see working-class sexual activity, as well as all forms of male-male desires. Though preceding historically the 1913 "Greek Scandal" detailed in chapter 2, the 1912 scandal, centered at Portland's YMCA, involved members of the middle class and embroiled the entire city in discussions of moral propriety and especially of interaction between men and boys. Boag claims that the YMCA scandal was evidence of a developed middle-class system of same-sex relationships enabled by the emergence of corporate capitalism, which provided white-collar workers income, independence, and leisure time. In this theory, he differentiates *Same-Sex Desires* from earlier studies that emphasize the role of formative categories in the development of emergent homosexual subcultures. Another significant effect of the scandal, as Boag outlines in Chapter 4, was to connect definitions of the homosexual in the Pacific Northwest to those being proffered by sexologists, like Havelock Ellis and Kraft-Ebbing, during and in the wake of the Oscar Wilde trials in England in the late nineteenth century. While categorizing homosexuality as inborn "never completely took hold among the general populace" (146), the deputy district attorney charged with prosecuting the participants in the 1912 Scandal, Frank T. Collier, presciently argued for the inclusion of sex acts outside the scope of the trial as a means to establish homosexual identities for the defendants. Boag concludes that the middle class increasingly judged the sexuality of the working class and immigrants on terms solidified in the aftermath of the 1912 scandal, which, as Boag contends in his concluding section, led to harsher punishments for the "Greek Scandal" participants than for those in the 1912 YMCA debacle.

5 In his final section, Boag turns to describing the controlling forces directed at homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest as a result of the Rose City's blemish. In Chapter 5, *Same-Sex Affairs* establishes how much of the outrage generated following the scandal's disclosure resulted from the politicization of animosity between supporters of the working class and Portland's business elite, many of whom initially defended the YMCA, if not the scandal participants. Working class newspapers identified, in eugenicists' terms, the scandal as evidence of the degeneracy of the middle class. Boag delineates how in an attempt to prevent future recurrences of male-male sexual relationships, especially those involving men and boys, Progressives called for reforms involving sexual education, hygiene, and abolishing the Victorian double standard demanding chastity of women but not of men. Boag reminds readers in Chapter 6 of the positive legacy of Progressive era reformers, perhaps to blunt their intimation in persecution of homosexuals. The historical record as he presents it, however, speaks for itself, and *Same-Sex Affairs* catalogues the intriguing ways in which juridical adjustments accounted for newly identified categories of sexual activity while simultaneously reducing punishment for heterosexual activities now viewed as less deviant. In so doing, Boag elegantly demonstrates the efficacy of French philosopher Michel Foucault's theories outlining how the dominant discourse continually assimilates changes in public definitions of deviancy and the norm.

6 Peter Boag completes his study with a short epilogue in which he draws parallels between reactions to Portland's 1912 scandals and 1950s witch-hunts for homosexuals, and in so implying, he succeeds in laying informational groundwork for the histories chronicled in Neil Miller's *Sex Crime Panic* and John Gerassi's *The Boys of Boise*. *Same-Sex Affairs*, then, provides a vital look at the early development of categories of same-sex desires in the United States and proves insightful reading for scholars of the history of sexuality.

7 The most problematic aspect of *Same-Sex Desires* involves the sense of confusion created by discussing the 1913 "Greek Scandal" *before* the 1912 YMCA scandal. As described initially, the mode of prosecuting the "Greek Scandal" does not appear to demonstrate Boag's thesis about changes in commonly held perceptions of sexuality in the working classes *after* the 1912 scandal, as the first section argues that the Greek arrests were ethnically driven. Only in the third section of the book do readers discern that while outrage was more extreme in 1912, punishments were more severe in 1913 as a result of increased surveillance of acts linked to homosexuality. Also in terms of organization, readers unaccustomed to rhetorical methods of historical writing might find the book's introductions and summaries to chapters needlessly repetitious. In terms of style, frequent misplaced

modifiers encumber some passages.

8 The content of *Same-Sex Affairs* is certainly provocative in its ability to coalesce theories of gender and sexuality with their specific manifestation in the Pacific Northwest. But scholars well versed in those theories may find Boag's summaries of them somewhat repetitive, as *Same-Sex Affairs* demonstrates rather than extends previous work in general sexuality studies with the notable exception of his new theories for the Pacific Northwest. For this reader, the importance of details involving how personages in Portland utilized the 1912 scandal to their own ends subordinated an interest in the more intimate particulars concerning how relationships formed in both the working and middle classes or how word spread about their communities and lifestyles. But these weaknesses, if they may be called such, do not detract from readers' amazement at the vagaries of desire the text presents, their delight in learning about politics and sex in the past, and their acquiescence to Boag's lucid portrayal of a bygone era.

Roger N. Lancaster: *The Trouble with Nature: Sex in Science and Popular Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003

By Heather Merle Benbow, School of Languages, University of Melbourne,
Australia

1 U.S. anthropologist and "unreconstructed socialist" Roger N. Lancaster has produced a wide-ranging and entertaining book which seeks "to critique the naturalization of heterosexuality in recent science and [seeks] an understanding of how bioreductivist ideas relate to ongoing changes in sexual culture" (308). Over some 350 pages of text, Lancaster shows how, in the wake of movements such as gay liberation and feminism, which have problematized "the quest for an authentic self" (7), US-American culture is "awash with highly-publicized (and publicity-sensitive) studies asserting a genetic source, a hormonal cause, and/or a hardwired, gendered brain as the basis for all manner of human traits and practices" (8).

2 Lancaster relies heavily on previous scholarship in synthesizing a compelling critique of the claims of "[s]ociobiology and its offshoot evolutionary psychology, which explains our attitudes and behaviors in terms of natural selection" (11). Scientific attempts to find a biological basis for (usually male) homosexuality (such as the wildly over-hyped quest for a "gay gene") and the search for "proof" of the naturalness of human gender relations by reference to the animal kingdom are also roundly critiqued. Lancaster demonstrates, by providing a plethora of counter-examples, that the scientific case for a "natural" gender hierarchy based on the US-style post-war nuclear family depends on selective citation of zoological examples and a good deal of "projection, ideology and outright fantasy" (59). Lancaster dubs such attempts by scientists to shore up a preexisting social order "biological folklore, fables contrived out of prejudice, and related forms of pretend knowledge" (15).

3 Lancaster's analysis of "bioreductivism" extends beyond the science itself to its reception and representation in sources from media and popular culture such as advertising, reality television, sitcom television and reporting on scientific matters in publications such as Time and Newsweek. Situating his critique in the realm of cultural studies and queer theory, Lancaster nonetheless draws extensively on his primary discipline of anthropology (whose practitioners, he admits sheepishly, are the "heroes and heroines" [64] of his book) to refute also any normalizing claims based on hunter-gatherer societies:

The basic facts about hunters and gatherers remain open to question. One could mobilize contradictory evidence from widely differing foraging societies to show that a sexual division of labor is or isn't practiced, that life-long monogamous pair bonding

is or isn't practiced, that men or women are or aren't equal, that homosexuality is or isn't condoned. The only thing we cannot reasonably conclude is that any of this has anything to do with the time of human origins, with humanity in the raw, with the basic human blueprint. (67)

4 Lancaster links Darwin's "logical inconsistencies" (87) and Eurocentric heterosexism to the "maximalist logic" of modern geneticists and sociobiologists, who make all manner of absurd claims on behalf of genes. What troubles Lancaster most is the social conservatism underlying this "biomythology," which proceeds on the assumption that:

We are selfish because of our genes. We are selfish because of "the cold, calculated process of evolution," which everywhere inculcates and rewards selfishness. It is therefore not only futile but most likely counterproductive to try to change social inequities. They serve a purpose, and they are hardwired into our deepest human nature. (95)

5 Lancaster's book will provide satisfying reading for those who have long been infuriated by the uncritical reception of the "findings" (opinions?) of sociobiologists, which seem to "prove" what western societies claim to have "known" all along about gender roles and sexuality. Feminist readers will be pleased to find much important feminist work acknowledged and invoked here. However, the book is characterized in this reviewer's opinion by some lost opportunities and, perhaps, some "logical inconsistencies" of Lancaster's own.

6 Lancaster at one point dubs himself an "unreconstructed socialist" and criticizes the failures of the liberation approach of the 1970s gay movement, maintaining "we socialists had-have-the better theory" (312). Yet this skepticism of liberalism seems to at times abandon Lancaster's analysis-like a liberal op-ed columnist he inveighs against the "endless crusades against tobacco and alcohol" and the "antipornography crusades of the 1980s" (334), condemning the interference of a "Daddy state" (333) and lobbying for a "laissez-faire approach to personal life" (341). The socialist constructionist who is able to discern "male domination and female subordination" (310) in modern, heterosexual marriage, sees nothing but a benign "free flow of sexual representations" in the big business that is pornography. Incongruously, Lancaster suddenly musters a "you-can't-stop-progress" argument in defense of internet porn: any impediment to its rapid growth "would likely do harm to technological development at its most innovative edge" (334).

7 Also disturbing is the vitriol directed at radical feminists, whose critique of the purported naturalness of male domination and female subordination Lancaster (apparently unwittingly) shares. Drawing on Alice Echols's account of "cultural feminists," Lancaster seems unaware of the existence of a radical feminism as committed to the critique of

heterosexist, patriarchal discourses on gender as he is. Instead, he repeatedly condemns the straw woman of "cultural feminism," which, he argues, is indebted to a notion of immutable biological difference and which seeks nothing more than to invert the gender hierarchy. As Denise Thompson effectively demonstrates, "cultural feminism" is a pejorative term, a figment of the collective imagination of socialist feminists:

Behind socialist feminism's antagonism to radical/"cultural" feminism lies its continuing adherence to the Marxist materialist account of history/society [...]. It is this adherence which explains the curious oxymoron involved in the socialist feminist insistence that "cultural" feminism is "biologistic." The reasoning behind the contradiction appears to proceed as follows: "cultural" feminism is "cultural" because it is not sufficiently "materialist." And it is not "materialist" because it ignores class relations, and hence takes no account of the "real material base" of society, i.e. the forces and relations of economic production. But because, in socialist feminist eyes, all accounts of social relations must necessarily appeal to the "real (material) world," "cultural" feminism must be appealing to another kind of "materiality," i.e. "biology." But "biology" [...] is the "wrong" kind of "materiality," [so] it must be "ideological," i.e. "cultural." (Thompson 128)

8 Thompson amply demonstrates that the construct "cultural" feminism with its alleged biologism stems from misreading and antagonism on the part of the socialist feminists who coined the term. Lancaster's casting of "cultural" feminism as the evil twin of sociobiology continues this unfortunate socialist tradition of denying a radical feminism which has at its heart the rejection of bioreductivism and as its goals the eradication of hierarchical gender roles and compulsory heterosexuality, aims not at all dissimilar to Lancaster's.

9 As disappointing as the caricatures of radical feminism, though, is the missed opportunity to thoroughly critique the gender essentialism emerging from transsexual/transgender discourses. For whilst Lancaster mounts a robust challenge to inatist gay rights discourses which peddle the politically expedient, apologetic line that people are "homosexual by nature" (279), he stops short of applying this analysis to transgenderism. Offering a convincing account of the origins of the "born this way" strategies of gay rights activists in the Evangelical USA, Lancaster argues that to assert that homosexuality is a "natural" deviation is to "play a dangerous game indeed" (279). Lancaster's failure to refute the essentializing of gender in the transgender movement is even more frustrating because he seems about to do so in his introduction when he cites comments by a US female-to-male transgender activist claiming "'I knew I was a boy [...] You look at pictures of me [...] and I literally look like a little boy that's been put in a dress'" (17). Lancaster expresses sympathy with this "sense of discomfort with the ascribed gender roles" and allows that a person's "sexual identity is a deeply seated aspect of who they are" (17). The much needed critique of the reinforcement of gender roles which the above quote represents remains unchallenged

beyond a couple of gentle rhetorical questions ("Just what is a little boy or girl supposed to look like?") and transgenderism is celebrated as an oppositional practice elsewhere in the book. How claims to gender authenticity such as the above mentioned challenge "the two-sex system" whose demise Lancaster cheerfully announces (223) remains unclear.

10 This reader had the impression that-despite his ability to strongly critique the gay rights movement-Lancaster resorted to uncritically lumping together numerous groups, on the basis of their opposition to bioreductivist discourses, in a kind of rainbow alliance. "Feminists" are included in Lancaster's lists of gender warriors, but presumably he does not mean those feminists who critique the reinforcement of gender hierarchy in pornography, who are dismissed as "neo-Victorians" and "paleo-Victorian fundamentalists" (334). This is a trite dismissal of the work of anti-pornography feminists, which seeks to align them with the moral conservatism of the nineteenth century. Of course radical feminist critiques of pornography have nothing to do with morality and everything to do with a vigorous challenge to misogyny and heterosexism.

11 Whilst it is unfortunate that Lancaster does not more sincerely engage with the radical feminism he so roundly condemns as essentialist, many readers of a "constructionist" bent will enjoy his lively critique of bioreductivism and the confidence with which he demolishes both the science and the naïve reception of it.

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1 What is normal? This question, or rather, the challenge to traditional notions of what qualifies as normal, healthy, and natural in regard to sexuality is at the core of a thriving area of study known as gay, lesbian and queer studies (GLQ). With the *Handbook of Gay and Lesbian Studies*, edited by Diane Richardson and Steven Seidman, at long last a much needed and welcome introduction to GLQ Studies has been published. Twenty-six review essays provide a guideline through this complex and intriguing area. In the best sense of a handbook, this collection both introduces the student to the theory and research done over the last thirty years and serves as a reference book for the general reader already acquainted with the basics and interested in exploring the diverse aspects of GLQ studies.

2 Opened by a lucid, easy to read introduction by the editors, the Handbook is divided into four larger parts, "History and Theory," "Identity and Community," "Institutions," and "Politics." The introduction is directed at a student audience and well deserves its name. On a mere 11 pages, it succeeds in presenting the key debates and positions of GLQ studies from a historical perspective, starting with the early 20th century. It also serves as a general introduction to the four main parts which cover as diverse aspects as politics, health, education, cyber-queers, concepts of space and gender, the queer diaspora, age, queer families, religious views of homosexuality, globalization and national identity from a queer perspective.

3 I would recommend reading the first six essays under the heading "History and Theory" first, since it provides the reader with some of the basic concepts, historical developments and recurrent questions helpful to the understanding of the complex issues and individual aspects discussed in the remaining three sections. Barry D. Adam's essay on the state of GLQ studies at the turn of the twenty-first century, for example, gives an account of "the rise of queer theory" and its productive if at times problematic relationship with gay and lesbian activism. Charting the past, present and future of "The Heterosexual/Homosexual Binary," Sasha Roseneil gives an excellent overview over both modern and postmodern conceptions of sexual identity and the impact queer theory has had in this respect. This impact is manifest in what she calls "queer tendencies" that include an "auto-critique" within lesbian and gay communities, which produce a fracturing of modern homosexual/lesbian/gay identities, a decentering of heterorelations and the emergence of a "hetero-reflexivity," i.e. the fact that heterosexuality increasingly becomes "a conscious state which has to be produced,

self-monitored, thought about and, for some, defended." (35) Peter M. Nardi's contribution on "The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Studies?" engages in a meta-debate about the effects GLQ studies can have on the mainstream (mainstream culture, mainstream sociology) without becoming assimilated. This essay might be of special interest to the student because Nardi examines several introductory sociology textbooks and the ways in which they address or ignore queer theory and the issue of sexuality. Lynda Birke's foray into the ways homosexuality is conceptualized in science, especially biology, is both fun to read and equips one with all the arguments needed to defy the stereotype that homosexuality is "unnatural" or some defect in the genes.

4 The approach of the *Handbook* is predominantly sociological, but reaches out into other disciplines and thus provides a map of the intersecting discourses on GLQ in the academia. The contributions inquire into a wide range of issues from, for example, politics, cultural studies, human geography, biology, theology, education, social work, law and criminology. This shows the extent to which GLQ studies are an interdisciplinary field that can serve as a valuable interface and forum for discussion between the disciplines. Even under this restriction to a predominantly sociological focus, the volume extends well over 450 pages. Given this fact, it is perhaps pedantic or utopian to complain about the relative absence of the humanities, but I will risk incurring both charges. While Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick are quoted throughout, the main body of research and theory done in the fields of literature, drama, film, philosophy, cultural history etc. is largely ignored or enters the discussion only obliquely as discursive traces. A complementary project from this perspective would certainly be very welcome to students and scholars alike.

5 The collection is assembled by two leading scholars in the sociology of sexuality and the list of contributors reads like a roll call of eminent UK and US scholars. Some contributors, however, are only just embarked on their academic career or have avoided the structures of academia altogether and come to GLQ studies from an activist's or journalist's perspective. I mention this not in order to belittle their contributions - on the contrary, their essays are outstanding in scope and extremely well written - but because this deliberate disregard of institutional hierarchies is typical of GLQ studies.

6 To sum up, the *Handbook of Gay and Lesbian Studies* offers an up-to-date portrait of the latest state of GLQ studies, its theoretical aspects as well as its political agendas. The essays function as an introduction to individual areas of research and, bolstered by at times extensive bibliographies, as an incentive to further reading and research. The concise overview over historical developments in the field, which some of the essays provide, endows

GLQ studies with a tradition (always important for a relatively young, and highly contested area of study). Moreover, they highlight the interconnectedness and contingencies of the field, a perspective very much characteristic of queer discourse itself. In keeping with this, most essays also suggest future agendas to be explored and self-critically point out blind spots that need to be addressed. What makes this volume so intriguing, then, is not only the outstanding quality and accessibility of the individual essays, but the constant crossing of lines between disciplines, within the academic hierarchies, between scholarly research and activism which deconstructs these categories and show the extent to which the concerns of GLQ studies are at the core of contemporary social dynamics.

7 All in all, if you wish to study the sociology of sexuality from a queer perspective, the *Handbook of Gay and Lesbian Studies* is the volume you will want to work with. The price of £ 85.00 for the hardcover is a bit daunting, though, and the *Handbook* will probably be found on a library shelf rather than at the student's bedside.

Opening

By KR Randen

Her conversation with him went something along the lines of this:

I want to see other people. I can't do this long distance thing; there are too many things I want to see and do and feel and be, and I can't feel chained to you while I want to explore. I still love you, I still care for you. If you can handle my being with others, then that's wonderful. If not, I must go.

And that of course, was how she, and he, and the conversation, went.

Naturally it's not that easy. It didn't go just like that. That was the tidy summary she presented to everyone, the tidy wrapped up boxed and bowed version she explained to friends by e-mail, by telephone, by coffee. Two lumps.

Most people bought into it. Some believed her as she spoke with eyebrows raised, grinning, because they didn't want to interject. Her stories were vivid, lush, tangible. Exciting. Some were glad; they didn't like him anyway. They said. Some wanted nothing more than to have her shut up. Valid reasons, all of them. But everyone seemed to accept her decision, consumed her logic, fed her ego.

One of us was more skeptical. 15 months don't go by without any attachment. Experience sat on shoulder, murmuring adages, all clich's and reiterations, of how body and soul can't be shared then rejected, laundered, returned, and exchanged. Or shouldn't.

Skepticism sat still, behind a nodding head, behind a vacant stare, behind disbelief. As she spoke of a dwindled relationship, he thought of any opposition he might interject, and the proverbial horse led to water, not drinking. She continued on, repeating herself, hoping by virtue of repetition abstraction could congeal.

A week later, filled with unfaltering acting, impeccable verbal positioning, she had a showing, a gallery opening. Of sorts. It was an opening, at any rate. Private invitations, one guest of honour. Said Honoree sat behind the curtain, attendant for the unveiling. The velvet ropes

pulled, the curtain spread. There it was, she, her, female, assumedly our new object of affection. The elite applauded, smiled, how creative, how innovative, how utterly chic: *lesbianism*.

Unprecedented became the word de rigueur, conceived that night behind curious eyes, behind surprised society.

Skepticism stood, for the appearance of contributing to the standing ovation, hands clapping silently. Appearances were required by this suddenly rigid association, appearances were kept. A tired conscience escaped from Skeptical's smiling teeth.

The applause died down, and those assembled gathered around to awe and worship, to congratulate, to enjoy. Hors d'oeuvres were passed, champagne presented, bubbles burped. Skepticism trailed a waiter into the kitchen, across the tiles, past the chef, past discarded entrails, into the alley, into a cab.

Lunch dates were maintained but embellished with this new opening, as skepticism hovered around, revolving like the third wheel, watching, commenting, enjoying. Pretending. He watched the thrill of this newness, of a new toy, destined to be left by the wayside, and muttering what if what if what if. If. If what? Possibility carried newness and with it carried hope, the solitary refuge of Pandora.

Lunch dates ceased. Died, or rescheduled, depending on the point of view. Such magnificence subjected to such one-sided interpretation. One can't argue with taste. One argues with logic. Skepticism found no debate, and left Pandora to her box, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, hewn from ebony, and varnished to perfection.

List of Contributors

Norbert Finzsch teaches North-American History at the University of Cologne. He received his education in Cologne, Bordeaux and Berkeley. After a lengthy stint in Hamburg from 1992 to 2000, he came back to his alma mater in 2001. Among his main areas of interest and research are gender history, the history of sexuality and theories and methods of historiography. Since 2005 he serves as the university's provost.

Ralph J. Poole studied American Literature and Culture, German literature, music pedagogy and social psychology in Heidelberg and Munich. As Associate Professor he currently teaches English Literature at Fatih University of Istanbul. He has written his PhD thesis on avantgarde theatre (*Performing Bodies: Transgressions of Gender Boundaries in the Theatre of the Avant-Garde*. Peter Lang) and his habilitation on cannibalism and literature (*Kannibalische (P)Akte: Autoethnographische und satirische Schreibweisen als interkulturelle Verhandlungen*. Forthcoming.). Further publications deal with puritan and oriental romantic poetry, melodrama and soap opera, Wild West and regional culture of the 19th century, serial killers, popular culture and queer theory.

Sabine Wilke is professor of German. She is also associated with and teaches in the Cinema Studies program, the European Studies Program, and the graduate Program in Critical Theory. Her research and teaching interests include modern German literature and culture, intellectual history and theory, and cultural studies. She has written books and articles on body constructions in modern German literature and culture, German unification, the history of German film and theater, contemporary German authors and filmmakers including Christa Wolf, Heiner Müller, Botho Strauss, Ingeborg Bachmann, Elfriede Jelinek, Monika Treut, and others. Wilke is currently collaborating on the creation of an Internet research web site for the study of turn-of-the-century Viennese culture and has begun a larger project about German colonialism and postcoloniality.

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KR Randen grew up in six different countries before moving to America. While attending the University of Michigan, he considered dropping his only creative writing class, but continued at the insistence of the professor. Shortly after graduating, he moved to Chicago. He continues to write and perform open mics, inspired by the fringes of the city, its urban tribes, and concrete jungle. More of his work is available at www.krranden.com.