

Reviews

Diane Brydon and Marta Dvořák, editors. *Crosstalk: Canadian and Global Imaginaries in Dialogue*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2012. 321 pp. \$85.00.

Crosstalk: Canadian and Global Imaginaries in Dialogue originated in a conference at the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris called “Voice and Vision: Situating Canadian Culture Globally” in 2008. Editors Diane Brydon and Marta Dvořák have ably assembled papers from the conference to address the abiding concerns of the conference and especially the notion of “crosstalk” that gives the book its title. Brydon and Dvořák declare that they are interested in how “readers negotiate meaning in contexts where norms of understandings diverge,” that is, how different subjects might interpret similar materials across different settings. For the editors, these settings are ones that are shaped in particular by a notion of globalization, by movements across and through different nation-states and subject positionings. The rubric for understanding these interactions is what they term crosstalk, which they see “as a metaphor for the ways in which audial and visual imaginaries interact to create complex forms of interference.” The editors focus on Canada, “including Québec,” as a means of focusing on forms of crosstalk that can, in some way, be situated partly in relation to

Canada but that also extend beyond such borderings. They see crosstalk, in particular, “as continuous, ongoing, and co-constructing activity” that relentlessly performs unbordering, resulting in “a field where the Canadian may not disappear but may well become destabilized and rearticulated.” While such a notion of crosstalk provides the overall framework for the engagements found in the volume, subsidiary concerns also structure the book, particularly those of “collaboration, crosstalk, improvisation; dialogism, polyphony, voice; and space, place, and circulation.” Brydon and Dvořák set an ambitious agenda for understanding the functioning of transnational flows in a literary context in Canada, one that remains clearly in the editors’ focus.

The contributors to the volume respond to this structure in a variety of ways. Writer Olive Senior opens the volume with a consideration of “the importance of voice and vision” in her practice. Voice and vision enable Senior to consider how colonial and postcolonial movements between her youth in Jamaica and her being situated in Canada influence her writing. This meditation builds on the address that Senior gave during the initial conference and provides an opening to the book that is situated within a creative practice, thereby complementing the theoretical concerns of the editors in their introduction.

Section one of the book, focusing on the concerns of collaboration, crosstalk, and improvisation, documents literary practices that might fall aslant of more frequently studied aspects of Canadian cultural work. Ajay Heble and Winfried Siemerling collaboratively produce a chapter on their ongoing *Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice* project, a project that focuses particularly on how improvisation—often within the context of jazz—impacts cultural practice. For them, reading through writers like Michael Ondaatje and Wayde Compton, jazz and mixing might provide metaphors for discourse that can demonstrate the political potential in the crossing of borders. Similarly, Daniel Coleman argues, in the following chapter on David Chariandy’s novel *Soucouyant* and Lee Maracle’s novel *Daughters Are Forever*, that these two texts’ use of a notion of melancholia “to describe the residual effects of colonial trauma” might allow for a productive conversation between Caribbean diasporic and Salish Indigenous contexts. Coleman’s goal of “generating an epistemological crosstalk” demonstrates Brydon and Dvořák’s proposed methodology being put to work to politically significant ends. Ric Knowles’s subsequent contribution focuses on the work of Monique Mojica and the workshoping of her performance pieces in order to read for ways in which theatre might “help to suture the wounds inflicted by colonization.” Knowles sees

in Mojica's workshops "a kind of transindigenous crosstalk" that might resituate indigenous discourses at sites of strength rather than at the sites of oppression that persist in Canada. Alison Calder's closing piece to the section focuses on collaborative poetic practices, in particular those of the collective Pain Not Bread, in which she sees a challenge to "the idea that a lyric voice originates in individual experience." The polyphony of collaborative poetics, in Calder's reading, performs an internal form of crosstalk as the singularity of voice is challenged, erased—yet remains as a textual trace.

Section two of the volume, which focuses on the notions of dialogism, polyphony, and voice, picks up on where section one ends. Marta Dvořák contributes the opening section to this chapter. In it, she investigates what she terms "a new form of hypertextual circulation" in metafictional work across texts by J.M. Coetzee, Margaret Atwood, and others. Dvořák's interest is in "hybrid forms" of work that can function as "subversive components of a perlocutionary network of relations set up the world over between the producers of discourse and the receivers." Dvořák's wide-ranging chapter looks to texts that read across geographies and temporalities in order to mutate previous meanings, "transforming intertextuality to intergenerativity, intersemioticity, or rather, intermediality." Frank Davey's subsequent chapter on the sound and concrete poetics of the Four Horsemen provides a sustained means of reading Dvořák's concerns within a single case study, particularly given the Four Horsemen's practice of fragmenting or undoing textuality itself through their polyvocal collaborations, performing what member Steve McCaffery terms work that comes "prior to meaning." For Davey, texts from this group are "to be contemplated and experienced rather than understood or abstracted," textual demands that, for the writers involved, provide resistances to the practices of speech as a mode of fictionalized embodiment. Such resistances need not be strict rejections of meaning per se, however, as Pilar Cuder-Domínguez's subsequent chapter on Dionne Brand's *What We All Long For* and Madeleine Thien's *Certainty* argues. Cuder-Domínguez interrogates how, in a globalizing era, authorship works "at the communal level," either as a representative of a community or as a subject interpolated within global flows. The possibility of "listening to the Other" that Cuder-Domínguez uncovers in both texts demonstrates a working across subjectivities to arrive at new forms of meaning. Sandra Regina Goulart Almeida's chapter, on Dionne Brand's cosmopolitan cities, works with Brand's fiction and poetry in order to witness, in particular, the function of the global city as a site of diasporic crossing. Brand's cosmopolitanism, one that "remains skeptical of both

the universal and the particular concept of cosmopolitanism,” provides a strong reading of this problematic, one that “might be seen as a form of cosmofeminism in the making,” Almeida asserts. Charlotte Sturgess then closes the section by reading across the works of Hiromi Goto and Larissa Lai’s strategies of voice in order to rethink “the terms on which the nation becomes” itself in the contemporary moment.

The third and final section of the book offers considerations on space, place, and circulation. Two essays, by Claire Omhovère and Catherine Lanone, provide, in succession, readings of Jane Urquhart’s *The Whirlpool* and *Changing Heaven*. These readings focus on landscape and the generation of “a multi-sensorial geography” (Omhovère) and “spatial relations as gendered constructs” through practices of intertextuality (Lanone). Christine Lorre-Johnston shifts in the following essay to a focus on Robert Lepage’s *Dragons’ Trilogy*, which she reads in the context of charges that Lepage’s theatrical vision relies on orientalist clichés and stereotypes. Lorre-Johnston reads the *Trilogy*’s stereotyping as a deliberate strategy that has “a destabilizing effect” and that stages “Québec’s racism in order to challenge it.” Chelva Kanaganayakam’s following chapter reads for ways in which diasporic writing about South Asia challenges social and cultural practices back “home” as well as in the diaspora, ultimately unsettling or even eliminating the utility of distinguishing between the two.

The final chapter, by Diana Brydon, provides a strong conclusion to the volume as well as the best case study for understanding how cross-talk might function. Brydon reads the events surrounding the so-called Hérouxville incident in order to understand ways in which competing discourses challenge one another in a transnational world. The events in and surrounding Hérouxville—the notorious 2007 code of town values, generally decried as resoundingly anti-Muslim, that the town published in order to inform prospective immigrants of cultural norms, as well as the subsequent Bouchard-Taylor Commission on “reasonable accommodation” launched by the province—show intercultural tensions at one of their rawest cultural moments in recent Canadian history. Brydon argues against dismissing these events as symptomatic of Quebecois parochialism or of small-town xenophobia and asks readers, instead, to see the Hérouxville code as an attempt to set the cultural agenda ahead of actual cross-cultural encounters. That is, the code operates “as a kind of pre-emptive strike within a contest of cultural imaginaries.” Brydon uses these events—and the ongoing intercultural conflicts that they signal—as evidence of an

ongoing need for crosstalk, for work beyond, through, and between borders of all sorts.

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Herb Wyile. *Anne of Tim Hortons: Globalization and the Reshaping of Atlantic-Canadian Literature*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2011. 294 pp. \$42.95 paper.

When you have one of the best Canadian literature book titles of the last several decades on your cover there is a danger that the contents will not live up to it. Herb Wyile more than delivers on the title's promise. This engaging and lively discussion of contemporary Atlantic-Canadian literature offers far more than an explication of the ideology that situates a fictional creation, the world-famous girl with the ginger hair, within a network of commodities that also contains Canada's favourite doughnut store chain. Simply put, Wyile's impassioned study reminds us why literature matters in neoliberal times. It matters because, as Wyile demonstrates repeatedly, literature can explore the human costs of living in a time of unfettered free-market economics in subtle and creative ways that render visible moral ambiguities as well as social and material inequities.

Wyile begins his introduction with the contention that "the Atlantic Canada of today is very much caught up in the profound economic, political, cultural, and social shifts that have come to be described by the term 'globalization'" (1). Writers from the four Atlantic provinces are thus well placed to critique the fallout from the so-called flows of global capital (that would be the flow that rushes right past your small rural community or through your region's natural resources and on to somewhere else). This is, after, all, a region that is still frequently depicted in the Canadian media and, as Wyile notes, in speeches by federal ministers, as a "have not," cash-sucking part of the nation-state inhabited by people who ought to shut up, ship out, and get a job in the Alberta oil sands. Such attitudes alone would be sufficient to inspire many creative writers to produce counternarratives about their home places, but Atlantic Canadians must also grapple with the popular images that posit their region as a leisure space for tourists and as the site of Folk archetypes and Edenic bliss. In many ways, as Wyile

reveals through his close reading of a staggering range of texts, these images are the trickiest ones for writers to negotiate because they are, in part, self-generated. The Folk haunt the popular and literary culture of Atlantic Canada and form a kernel around which this book is formed. In many respects Wylie's study can be understood as a long conversation with Ian McKay's *The Quest of the Folk* (1994), a seminal critique of the Folk paradigm that has had a profound influence on the contemporary field of Atlantic Canadian studies. One of the achievements of *Anne of Tim Hortons* is that Wylie appreciates McKay's delineation of anti-modernist ideology but that he also successfully fulfils his aim of pushing against the historian's tendency to frame activities associated with the Folk—"fishing, farming, fiddling"—as either naive, ironic, or cynical (25). Rather, through his lively and careful interpretations of novels, poetry, and plays, Wylie is able to identify how "fiddles and shopping malls, lobster boats, and satellite dishes can and do happily and unselfconsciously coexist" (25). At times, the passing of maritime or rural traditions may be elegized or satirized by writers, but the iconography arising from those traditions is also questioned, contemplated, and taken seriously. Here is a body of literature, Wylie argues, that is at once cosmopolitan yet astutely engaged with expectations that it will be anything but that.

The book's introduction offers a compelling synthesis of theory about neoliberalism and globalization, as well as an energetic discussion of how and why contemporary Atlantic-Canadian writers understand and contest the political, economic, and cultural realities that surround them. Keeping faith with the argument that the region's writers are well-placed observers and sophisticated critics of the ways that neoliberal economics reshape work patterns, communities, and understandings of time and place, the book is organized into three sections, each with its own introduction and conclusion. In section one, "I'se the B'y that Leaves the Boats: The Changing World of Work," there are separate chapters on writing that engages with three key work spheres: the fisheries, mining and offshore oil, and the service sector. Section two, "About as Far from Disneyland as You Can Possibly Get: The Reshaping of Culture" consists of two chapters examining work by writers who complicate idealised and "monochromatic" cultural constructions of the region. Finally, the third section, "The Age of Sale: History, Globalization, and Commodification," considers, as the subtitle suggests, how a series of writers represent the region's history and their explorations of the cultural and economic losses and gains sustained in a period of global capital.

One of the benefits of the book's structure (each chapter is also divided into sections) is that Wyile is able to attend to the specific histories of the places, events, and issues that are explored by a wide range of selected writers, and, in so doing, he can highlight some of the important differences, not only between the four provinces but also within them. So, for example, the first chapter of section one focusing on the fisheries examines three novels by Newfoundland writers in which the narrative lens is trained on output communities imbricated in a mesh of macroeconomics and the politics of resource management: Donna Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now*, Bernice Morgan's *Waiting for Time*, and Kenneth J. Harvey's *The Town that Forgot to Breathe*. Here, as in other chapters, Wyile considers how aesthetic aspects of the texts, in particular the use and adaptation of different genres, enable or constrain the power of the novelists to resist didacticism or the retreat into romantic notions of a less complicated past. What emerges from Wyile's reading of these novels and from his consideration of three more that deal with accidents and disasters in the mining and offshore oil industries in the succeeding chapter is a nuanced examination of the capitalist and class relations structuring the working worlds and lives of the communities and protagonists depicted. As Wyile argues, these relations are usually effaced by the Folk iconography and by cultural stereotypes, even though such images are constructed by and through them. Alongside two novels which have garnered international reputations, Alistair MacLeod's *No Great Mischiefs* and Lisa Moore's *February*, Wyile examines, in chapter two, Leo McKay's *Twenty-Six*, a moving and unsentimental novel about the Westray disaster in Nova Scotia and a book that deserves to be much more widely known. The final chapter in section one shifts the focus to service sector work, and here there is a shift in genre as well, as Wyile considers poetry by Sheree Fitch, *Corker*, a play by Nova Scotian writer and politician Wendy Lill, and Ed Riche's satire of education-as-global-commodity, *The Nine Planets*. Writers considered in the other two sections of the study include Michael Winter, George Elliott Clarke, Rita Joe, Frank Barry, Harry Thurston, Lynn Coady, and Michael Crummey.

Throughout the book, Wyile repeatedly and generously acknowledges the work of a scholarly community that he himself fostered through the organization of conferences, his leadership of projects such as the one that produced the online resource *Waterfront Views*, and via the collaborative editing of various publications focusing on Atlantic Canadian literature. In the early twenty-first century, as Wyile notes at the beginning of the book, Atlantic Canadian studies took a deliberately political version of the

cultural turn, and *Anne of Tim Hortons* continues the ideologically engaged and materially situated scholarship made familiar by Tony Tremblay, David Creelman, Jeanette Lynes, and others. It is mostly, although not entirely, smooth sailing. (Ironic puns, as Wyile's section titles indicate, are very much part of the critical discourse about Atlantic Canadian culture in the new millennium.) Partly because Wyile establishes such a convincing politically, economically, and historically grounded methodology in the introduction, the deployment of a Freudian approach to Moore's novel in chapter 2, although credible on its own terms, feels slightly jarring. For me, this was a minor off-key moment in an otherwise tightly argued three-chapter section. Similarly, chapter 7, which begins the book's third section about revisionist and romantic histories of the region, is a little disconnected from the otherwise well-sustained and neatly sign-posted arguments about the operations of global capital and neoliberal ideology. The conclusion to the study more than compensates for this, however, with Wyile re-presenting contemporary Atlantic Canadian writing as "speculative fiction" for the rest of Canada: "an advance glimpse of what life is like when one of the only things that you have left to sell is your past" (243). It is a rousing finale that had me practically bouncing up and down in my seat, such is the energy and passion driving the argument for the literary and political significance of the writing surveyed.

To Wyile's great credit, *Anne of Tim Hortons* is not a polemic aimed at the ROC, nor is it the next episode in a declension narrative about the fortunes of Atlantic Canada. It could easily have been either of these and it would still been a valuable scholarly work because of its impressive critical survey of contemporary Atlantic-Canadian writing. But it is a much better book because it exceeds all of these categories. Wyile's study is a convincing analysis of a literature that articulates and reshapes the cultural and economic effects of globalization in a region that is often considered to be off the map, behind the times, or, at the very least, marginal to the centres of power. Equally impressive and significant is the confidence and clarity of the prose style: here is a book that is written out of a deep feeling for and an extensive knowledge about the literary culture and social history of the four provinces. And that—quite apart from the seduction of the catchy title and the shock of red hair adorning the cover of the book—is the reason why *Anne of Tim Hortons* is such an absorbing study to read.

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Marlene Goldman. *DisPossession: Haunting in Canadian Fiction*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2012.
370 pp. \$95.00 cloth.

The explosion of interest in the field of study that brings together the Gothic, the uncanny, the haunted, and the haunting, together with a postcolonial reassessive method, suggests that perhaps the ghosts and monsters that haunt the nation/subject (from without and within) are finally being heard.
Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte

A desire to listen to the spectres that haunt recent Canadian literature underlies Marlene Goldman's latest monograph, *DisPossession: Haunting in Canadian Fiction*. As she proposes in her introduction, "despite or perhaps because of Birney's suggestion that Canadians are haunted by a lack of spectres, contemporary English-Canadian authors are obsessed with ghosts and haunting" (3). *DisPossession* explores in depth how seven of these contemporary authors deploy tropes of haunting and possession in one or, in the case of Dionne Brand, several of their works. In addition to Brand's corpus, Goldman examines Sheila Watson's *The Double Hook*, Gail Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning*, John Steffler's *The Afterlife of George Cartwright*, Jane Urquhart's *Away*, Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*, and Thomas King's *Truth and Bright Water*. Mobilizing literature's political capacities, *DisPossession* links haunting in these texts to a praxis of engagement with the fraught and troubling strains of Canada's social history and national imaginary. Goldman outlines this praxis most explicitly in her conclusion, "Toward an Ethics of Haunting," where she posits that "Canadian literature that invokes haunting and possession is 'good for us' precisely because it emphasizes the elided histories and resistance of the other" (306). In Canada, she argues, living with ghosts means recognizing without mastering the opaque, unsettled, and unsettling parts of "the complex territory of home" (320).

In keeping with the methodological bent of her previous books, Goldman draws from a range of theoretical frameworks, including postcolonial, poststructuralist, feminist, queer, and psychoanalytical, to tease out the varied contexts and implications of each literary work. She also attends closely to the “cultural and historical specificities” of each text and underscores the influence not just of the Gothic but also of magic realism, Celticism, and Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean spiritual traditions on the individual workings of haunting and possession. The result is a collection of close readings that extend and supplement earlier studies such as Jonathan Kertzer’s *Worrying the Nation: Imagining a National Literature in English Canada* and Justin Edwards’s *Gothic Canada: Reading the Spectre of a National Literature* by opening up the particularities of our “cultural haunting” in its various forms. Goldman unpacks the tropes of haunting and possession not only along the lines of nationhood and citizenship but also of “a broader tendency on the part of western cultures to suppress one side of many perceived dualities, including male/female, civilization/savagery, and reason/passion” (6). As well, she underscores the challenges that these fictional spectres pose to “the settler’s spatial and ontological paradigm of the self-possessed, autonomous man” (or, as she demonstrates with particular force in her readings of *Alias Grace*, *Away*, and, in Dionne Brand’s work, woman) (244).

Although they do not conform solely to Gothic modes, the haunted narratives that Goldman explores in her study all partake of the Gothic’s association of the ghostly form with the “other” that cannot be assimilated. Following Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte, among others, Goldman also underscores the connection between haunting in Canadian literature and “the ‘unhomed’ or ‘spectral’ legacies of imperialism and globalization” (Sugars and Turcotte vii). A constant throughout her book is the (elusive) idea of home: “One reason for the popularity of tales of haunting and possession,” she suggests, “may be the fact that the movement from the domestic sphere into the global marketplace, instigated by global capitalism and diasporic upheavals, has meant that home as a constant has become less of a given, as more and more people are unhomed—often forced to exist in a kind of liminal space traditionally associated with the ghost” (14). As her title intimates, the texts under scrutiny here all share a particular concern with histories of dispossession and possession. At the most basic level, Canada is built on the dispossession of Aboriginal lands by settler-invaders (Goldman’s preferred term). Goldman remarks that, compared with American and European writers, contemporary Canadian authors give a “more central place to the interrogation of the settlers’ right to lay

claim to and take possession of the new world in light of the Native North American peoples' more legitimate and prior claim" (11). The traumas of cultural genocide and unresolved land claims inform, to varying degrees, her readings of *The Double Hook*, *The Cure for Death By Lightning*, *The Afterlife of George Cartwright*, *Away*, and *Truth and Bright Water*.

At the same time, Goldman's selection of texts draws attention to the polyvalence of the trope of haunting and possession, and indeed of colonialism itself, in Canadian literature. To live and speak with Canada's ghosts, she suggests, is to listen to a cacophony of voices that, together, signal "the return of the colonial moment" (to borrow Alan Lawson's formulation) not as a single, monolithic history but, rather, as an assemblage of divergent experiences of loss. In addition to exposing "the uncanny relationship between the settler-invader society and Canada's First Peoples" (34), Goldman reveals "[t]he sense of 'neither here nor there' experienced (albeit in profoundly different ways) by the traveller, immigrant, migrant, and refugee" (14). These settler-invader and diasporic characters in Canadian literature are "doubly haunted" by their own stories of dispossession. In her discussion of Steffler's George Cartwright, for example, the laws of primogeniture that forced him from his childhood home play an equally important role as other "spectral forces," such as eighteenth-century theories of degeneracy and "the ghostliness of other people" in "condition[ing] Cartwright's monstrous, imperialistic behaviour" (65). Other chapters illuminate how literary treatments of the Irish diaspora, the isolation and exploitation of female domestic servants, and the legacies of the slave trade further blur the neat distinction between colonizer and colonized, not to mention the idea of Canada as a unified nation. Under Goldman's scrutiny, Canada's colonial legacies emerge as a multi-layered history of possession and dispossession; yet, in giving the final words to Brand and King, Goldman subtly gives primacy to "the process that Teresa Goddu terms 'haunting back'" by racialized others in particular (7).

The ghosts that Goldman unearths in her study serve less to legitimize settler society's presence here—to root them in place, as it were, with a visible history—than to reveal the settler's claims, and those of the nation as a whole, as precarious and fraught imaginary constructs. Given that this is not always the case (the unearthing of ghosts can also serve the opposite purpose) I would have welcomed more discussion of how we might read these haunted texts either within or against a larger tradition, both contemporary and historical, of Canadian literary hauntings. One of the dangers of close readings is that this larger picture recedes. Nevertheless, Goldman's carefully contextualized readings of each featured text

are also one of the chief pleasures of this book. She delves deep, and her meticulous examination not just of the ways in which haunting informs both the form and content of each, but of the historical contexts that tropes of haunting and possession expose, will be useful to those who study or teach these texts.

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David Fleming. *From Form to Meaning: Freshman Composition and the Long Sixties, 1957–1974*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011. 273 pp.

As I started reading *From Form to Meaning*, a book discussing in great detail the ups and downs of one course at one U.S. university during one decade, I kept asking myself why instructors of first-year English courses at Canadian colleges and universities today would find this text useful. After all, Freshman Composition is widespread in the United States but few Canadian institutions require all their students to take such a course. In addition, the cultural contexts and historical events that have influenced courses offered today at U.S. institutions differ greatly from those that have influenced the creation and development of courses at Canadian institutions.

Why, then, should everyone involved in the teaching of writing and literature to postsecondary students read this book? First, because it is a captivating historical account of an era punctuated by momentous events whose effects have spread farther than one state or one country. Second, because learning about what has happened at other institutions may help reformulate and clarify what has happened and is still happening at our own institutions. Third, and most importantly, because the conversations that were taking place at the University of Wisconsin (UW) during the “long sixties” are still taking place today ... in our own institutions.

The discussions presented in *From Form to Meaning* revolve around a number of topics and questions that are familiar to anyone involved in higher education. For example, is the literacy level of younger generations declining? Are high school teachers responsible for not getting their students ready to meet the demands of higher education? What is the responsibility of the university as a whole and of individual departments in teaching students to think, write, speak, and read well? Should first-year students all take the same universally required course to ensure some homogeneity amongst students at the same institution? Should first-year English courses focus on content (for example, literature) or on form (for example, grammar and style)? How do we decide who needs remedial help and who does not? How do you support a student population that is increasingly diverse in socio-cultural and educational backgrounds and needs? Who should teach undergraduate courses and how should these people be trained, supervised, and evaluated? How can graduate teaching assistants (TAs) juggle with being at the same time instructors and students themselves? How can tenure-track and tenured professors focus on the pressures of research and publication while still remaining involved in undergraduate education? These are some of the many critical and often-controversial questions heatedly discussed at the UW in the sixties, but, as Fleming explains, his is a case study done “on the assumption that the example (the ‘case’) is in some way typical of a broader phenomenon” (21).

For his “case study,” Fleming thoroughly investigated hundreds of documents (such as department meeting minutes, memos, newspaper articles) and other voices (including a number of TAs) to tell this story—a truly impressive accomplishment (at times it reads like a mystery novel). These many voices show how the unsteady times in U.S. history (the launch of the *Sputnik*, the Vietnam war) and the history of the University of Wisconsin itself (riots, bombings, strikes) were the perfect background for a profound pedagogical revolution that ultimately led to the elimination of the Freshman Composition course, English 102, in 1969 and for the next twenty-five years.

The book starts with a discussion about the concerns of Harvard faculty regarding the literacy levels of their incoming students and the first Freshman Composition course that was created there in the 1870s in response to these concerns. Fleming explains that this course has remained quite stable and unique since then: a stand-alone course required of most university students in the U.S. (and some in Canada), it is usually taken early in students’ academic careers and is a preparation for their future lives as students, citizens, and professionals. Fleming calls these features “first,

generality (that is, independence from any particular academic discipline, specialization, or body of knowledge); second, *universality* (that is, applicability to all or nearly all students on campus, regardless of background or aspiration); and third, *liminality* (that is, location at the threshold of higher education—between high school and the major, the every day and the expert” (4). The purpose of this book, then, according to Fleming, is to investigate the history of this unusual course as it evolved since its creation at Harvard by looking more specifically at its evolution in the University of Wisconsin’s English Department, from the *prehistory* (1848–1948) to the turn of the twenty-first century, with, of course, a strong focus on “the long sixties” (1957–1974).

In the next chapters, Fleming describes UW’s expansion, not only in terms of numbers and curriculum but also in terms of pedagogical vision and purpose. As was the case in many universities at the time, the number of students at UW was growing quickly, and faculty members started establishing their own identities and disciplinary credentials by favouring research and graduate teaching over undergraduate teaching. Through the history of how English 101 and then English 102 were created, Fleming takes us through the ups and downs of a complex relationship that still exists today: that of the teaching of literature versus the teaching of rhetoric/composition/writing in first-year English courses. The influence of historical events such as financial crises and the aftermaths of World War I and World War II also demonstrated how student demographics and purpose for pursuing higher education changed. In response to these changes, the English Department initiated a process of stratification, with different sections created for students who had performed high, average, and poor on entrance tests. The resulting “basic (remedial) English” course is still alive and still as controversial today as it was at that time. All in all, however, the fundamental structure of English 101 and 102 remained quite stable for many years, with students writing a large number of in-class short themes and moderate-length research papers based on course readings and examples found in compulsory textbooks.

In the mid-1960s, while Americans everywhere were becoming increasingly involved in issues of social justice, human rights, and the war in Vietnam, things started to fall apart at UW. Fleming talks about “intellectual fragmentation,” “competition among ... faculty, prompted in part by their chase for external research funds,” and an “increasing suspicion felt by students toward the university and its leader, which they came to see as an impediment to the social and intellectual movement they were trying to wage” (63). Not unlike past and present faculty members in several

other U.S. and Canadian universities, faculty members in UW's English Department, wanting to de-emphasize general (undergraduate) education and to focus more on advanced research, became uninterested in the enormous freshman English enterprise; at the same time, the master's and doctoral programs in English were allowed to grow at a hurried pace. TAs organized their first union, asking for better training and supervision along with more independence and the right to decide which approaches and textbooks they wanted to use for the courses they taught. On top of that, according to Fleming, there started to be, for the first time in the U.S., "more candidates for faculty positions than there were jobs" (73). In the middle of these chaotic circumstances, almost overnight and with little discussion, the English Department decided to modify the university's freshman English requirement from two courses to one, keeping English 101 as a remedial course.

As mentioned earlier, *From Form to Meaning* touches on several critical issues for English departments even today. One of these issues is teaching assistants and their conflicting roles as both students and instructors. Chapter 5 presents in detail the roles, challenges, and experiments undertaken by the UW TAs in the 1960s: their increased involvement in the planning and delivery of the courses they taught; their thirst for more knowledge and training regarding the teaching of writing and literature; their discussions about the meaning of writing in students' academic, personal, and professional lives; their experiments with different evaluation and grading methods; their desire to make the course more relevant for their students; their (and their students') political involvement on a strongly politicized and highly volatile campus; and, in short, their "efforts to reinvent Freshman English at UW" (128) by gaining more and more power over the course and wrestling it away from tenure-track and tenured faculty.

Only in chapter 6 (out of eight), after having built some serious anticipation, does Fleming finally tell the shocking story of the "breakdown" (133) in the English Department, which ultimately led to the sudden and startling cessation of English 102. The reasons for this breakdown are many, and Fleming looks at every possible angle (from the faculty's and the TAs' perspectives to pedagogical, administrative, and political reasons). He also discusses at length the difference between "official" reasons (offered on the record to TAs and university administrators) and the "real" reasons behind this decision (but I will not ruin the suspense for you). Of course, this decision fired up a flurry of protestations from junior faculty members in the English Department (most of whom were later denied tenure), TAs (who lost their funding), as well as faculty members and administrators

from faculties and departments across UW (who suddenly had to modify the prerequisites to all their undergraduate programs). The fundamental question behind this uproar and the chaos that ensued was one that has still not been satisfactorily answered at most universities in the U.S. and Canada: Who should be responsible for teaching *all* university students how to express themselves clearly? How can *one* department (usually English) be responsible for such a considerable task? And at the same time, how can individual departments (of, say, biology or history) be responsible for teaching *both* biology or history *and* writing/communication/rhetoric/composition (an argument that a past UW TA called “as absurd as the Math Department telling the English Department that it should be responsible for the instruction in mathematics of English majors” (170)?

The last two chapters talk about the aftermath of this significant decision and its repercussions on the English Department, its programs, and all of its students, as well as on the university as a whole. In these last chapters, Fleming also looks at the literacy crisis that was taking place in the U.S. at the same time and at its positive and negative effects on schools and universities across the country. Twenty-five years later, rhetoric/composition came back to UW’s English Department with the hiring of composition scholars and the creation of faculty workshops, training courses for TAs, a doctoral program in Composition Studies, and finally, in 1994, “a new two-course requirement [for all UW undergraduates] in composition/basic rhetoric [with] course work in the four modes of literacy (writing, speaking, reading, and listening), with primary emphasis on writing, and in the skills of critical thinking” (192).

Although one might assume that reading through the minute details of one syllabus or the recorded words of every person present at a particular department meeting would be tedious, this book is simply fascinating. I only wish Fleming had talked a little more about how English departments at peer universities were handling their TAs, first-year English courses, and other writing-in-the-discipline (or writing-across-the-curriculum) courses. Fleming also brings up the UW’s writing clinic a number of times but does not give any details about its purpose (and it does not seem to be the same thing as the writing centre, mentioned a few times, too). Finally, I wish Fleming had offered a summary of the riots, bombings, and sit-ins to which he refers for those of us outside the U.S. or unfamiliar with the events that took place in Madison and UW at the time, as they seemed so distinctive and so closely related to what was happening within the university. In the end, and in spite of these minor shortcomings, there is absolutely no question in my mind as to why *From Form to Meaning*

received both the 2012 CCCC Outstanding Book Award and the Mina P. Shaughnessy 2012 MLA Publication Prize.

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Tiffany Potter, ed. *Women, Popular Culture, and the Eighteenth Century*. University of Toronto Press, 2012. 344 pp. 18 b and w illustrations. ISBN-10: 1442641819; ISBN-13: 978-1442641815.

First the disclaimer: I have known the editor of this collection and more than half of its contributors, some for more than twenty years, and have edited some of their essays in *Lumen*, the proceedings of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, and *TransAtlantic Crossings*. Given that CSECS has had its own annual meeting since 1971 and that the pool of eighteenth-century scholars in this country is a relatively small one, it would be difficult to find a reviewer who was not connected in one way or another. However, I am not, at present, engaged in any projects with any of the authors in *Women, Popular Culture, and the Eighteenth Century*. In order to minimize a perceived conflict of interest, I intend to steer toward essays whose authors I don't know.

The dust jacket, featuring "A View of the Grand Walk," offers a splendid view of an outdoor concert at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, well attended by women in the latest style of wide-bustled dresses. The first names of the Nuremberg-born engraver who set up a print shop in London *circa* 1744, Johann Sebastian Müller (*circa* 1715–1792), are not given in the credit, and the date of this, *circa* 1751, is missing. He worked with the painter-designer, Samuel Wale, who was a founding member of the Royal Academy in 1768. The design shows a woman, backed by a small group of musicians, singing from an elevated bandstand to a crowd of well-dressed strollers. In an age that knew no film, television, or radio, this was the perfect, genteel (and much healthier) afternoon entertainment.

The editor of this volume has previously published a monograph on Henry Fielding (*Honest Sins: Georgian Libertinism*, 1999), edited Robert Rogers's 1766 tragedy about Pontiac, *Ponteach, or the Savages of America* (2010), and co-edited collections on *Battlestar Gallactica* (2007) and *The Wire* (2009). Some essays fix on more customary subjects, "from the- atres, plays, and actresses, to novels, magazines, and cookbooks, as well

as populist politics, dress, and portraiture” (xi). To demonstrate just how far she is prepared to push the popular-culture envelope, Potter boldly leads this collection with a dazzling leap from *The Rape of the Lock* to the 2009 adaptation, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. *Women, Popular Culture, and the Eighteenth Century* blends eighteenth-century studies with twenty-first century multimedia. If the dust jacket lulled you into thinking a staid gathering was to follow, well ... we’re not in tranquil Vauxhall Gardens any more.

Potter divides this collection into three parts: the first (after her own essay on zombies) more or less rooted in the eighteenth century, the second focusing on reading and writing, and the third bringing us up to speed on recent adaptations of the long eighteenth century in our so far short-lived twenty-first. So this avoids being an exclusive club for period-limited studies but is, rather, a gathering where specialists can let their hair down (something both male and female authors could do) and make connections between their academic interests (which have to combat the stigma of relevance) and their cultural surroundings. Anyone who thinks the eighteenth century is a dry vacuum between the Renaissance and Romantics (or the hole in the Early Modern donut) will be pleasantly shocked to learn more about the role women played in every aspect of life.

Berta Joncus looks at two sopranos who used their enormous appeal to transform their roles. Lavinia Fenton took some of the sting out of John Gay’s satirical lines, turning *Beggar’s Opera* into “a sentimental vehicle” (25). Kitty Clive, who starred in some of Fielding’s ballad operas, had strong views on how best to interpret the script. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams witnessed an argument between Fielding and Clive, sparked by his intention of casting her as the bawd in *The Wedding Day*. Hanbury Williams then recorded their heated exchange in rhyming couplets, published as the first poem in *The Foundling Hospital for Wit* (6 volumes, 1743–1749), which renders the actress lambasting the author thus:

Ye lye! ye lye! ungrateful as thou art,
My matchless Talents claim the Lady’s Part;
And all who judge, by Jesus G—d, agree,
None ever play’d the gay Coquet like me. (*FHW* 1: 1)

Thanks in large part to such extraordinary talents, ballad operas had a ten-year vogue, spawning 160 works and three thousand new tunes before fading in 1737. Such popularity created demand for spinoffs: five engravings of our stage favourites accompany this engaging essay.

Taking her lead from a satirical observation made in 1711 by Jonathan Swift in *The Examiner*, Elaine Chalus explores “the *Women* among us [who] have got the distinguishing Marks of Party in their *Muffs*, their *Fans*, and their *Furbelows*” (92). When it came to politics, fashion was not far behind. Throughout the century, fans could be used to demonstrate opposition to the Pretender during the Rising of 1745/46 or to celebrate the recovery of George III in 1789. In the lead up to elections, candidates were expected to splash out on ribbons, flags, and even decorated chairs. The best cockades, going at 1s. 4d., could cost a political hopeful a small fortune. Candidates for the seat of Newcastle-under-Lyme in the 1790 election found themselves in a fashion-statement war: the outlay on visual materials exceeded the cost of printed matter fifteen times over.

Mary Chadwick explores the fascination with riddles. Jane Austen, for one, dipped into *The New Foundling Hospital for Wit* (1771) for the riddle Mr Woodhouse spins in *Emma*. It was originally asked by David Garrick, beginning:

KITTY, a fair, but frozen maid,
Kindled a flame I still deplore;
The hood-wink'd boy I call'd in aid,
Much of his near approach afraid,
So fatal to my suit before.

Being too quick to answer could be regarded as a faux pas.

The final section brings us up to speed with recent applications of eighteenth-century works, fiction first. Martha Bowden offsets biographical knowledge of Hester Thrale against the fictionalization by Beryl Bainbridge in her 2001 novel, *According to Queeney*. One episode in Thrale's life that does not make it into the novel: her husband Henry made her travel to the brewery in Southwark on a business matter, while late in her pregnancy, during which she lost her baby (235). Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace delves into the gruesome murder committed by a Welsh girl obsessed with fashion that inspired Emma Donoghue's acclaimed novel, *Slammerkin*, published in 2000. The remaining essays by Tamara S. Wagner, Andrew MacDonald and Gina MacDonald, and Claire Grogan explore adaptations of Austen novels for television and film. No other novelist from the period has enjoyed such lavish attention from a devoted following of directors, scriptwriters, and actors. If this collection has one flaw, it is the preponderance of attention given to a single author, but the enormous impact Jane Austen has had on writers—P. D. James's more recently expressed her devotion in *Pemberley*—is inescapable.

The index indicates some curious absences. There are a lot of Jane Austen references, but none for Mary Astell. In one sentence containing three names, Fleishman and Scott are indexed, but the only woman, Virginia Woolf, is not. Henry (but not Sarah) Fielding and Sir Walter Scott (but not Sarah) are present. Neither Hilary Mantel nor *Wolf Hall*, which won the 2009 Man Booker Prize (mentioned on page 226), are indexed, although Stephen Greenblatt, who reviewed the novel is (perhaps because the novel is set in Tudor times and the reviewer is making a blanket statement about “fully realized historical novels”). Joe Wright, who directed *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), chalks up numerous references, but not Emma Thompson who won an Oscar in 1996 for best-adapted screenplay for *Sense and Sensibility* (292). Ronald Paulson makes it to the index, but the woman he agrees with, Lynn Hunt, about the feminized image of Liberty used to downplay the violence of the French Revolution, is absent (64).

Women, Popular Culture, and the Eighteenth Century will be most useful to scholars considering the two-way traffic between eighteenth-century gatherings and twenty-first century multimedia. Who would have thought at the end of the last millennium that Jane Austen would have had such an extraordinary revival in the first dozen years of the twenty-first century? Janeites might be both openly horrified and secretly titillated at having their most celebrated author associated with zombies. And if the many fine film and television adaptations have sated the public appetite, there’s always the recent Cambridge edition of her works to peruse.

In an age when university administrators think professors need to sell their subjects to their students, Potter has found a way to blend the scholarly with the topical. Certainly this is a way of making those students at the back of the class—some more preoccupied with the latest message on their cellphones, pressing emails on their laptops, or urgent commandments from their tablets than the lecture at hand—sit up and take notice.

Tiffany Potter has gathered a fine crowd of eighteenth-century scholars, some with as impeccable credentials as one could hope for, others who are relatively new and fresh to the field. Robert James Merrett must be thanked for bringing the food to this banquet with his consummate array of cookbooks, and the best prize for finding the catchiest quotation goes to Isobel Grundy: “The curly murly fashion of the hair is not much worn now” (144).

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Madeline Ruth Walker. *The Trouble with Sauling Around: Conversion in Ethnic American Autobiography, 1965–2002*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2011. 216 pp. \$35.

The conversion narrative, which broadly speaking follows a tripartite structure of fall, conversion, and redemption, is a master narrative in American culture.¹ Seventeenth-century Puritans framed their experiences in early America according to tropes of conversion: the new world was a testing ground, a “howling wilderness,” where a select few would be “elected” for a heavenly afterlife. Conversion narratives have since permeated American literature and culture. Many captivity narratives, slave narratives, prison life writings, coming-out stories, and addiction recovery narratives (like the personal stories collected in the Alcoholics Anonymous’ “Big Book”), for example, follow the conversion narrative paradigm. The ongoing importance of the conversion narrative to American culture can also be seen in its omnipresence in American electoral politics. Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush, and Jimmy Carter, as well as former house speaker and recent presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich, all employ the conversion narrative in their official autobiographies. While the conversion narrative has been important to mainstream American culture, the conversion narrative has been vital to ethnic American life writing. From the aforementioned slave narratives to immigrant stories, which often articulate experiences of socio-cultural assimilation into or disaffiliation from mainstream American life, the conversion narrative has provided ethnic Americans with a template for experiencing and representing life in a polity that has historically sought their exclusion, whether it be through slavery or Jim Crow segregation or through Nativist immigration policies like the 1921 Emergency Quota Act or its offspring, the Immigration Act of 1924.

Since conversion plays such an integral role in American political, literary, and cultural life, the dearth of critical studies of the conversion narrative in America is surprising. In *Language and Self-Transformation: A Study of the Christian Conversion Narrative* (1993), Peter Stromberg observes that, with few exceptions, there are no “detailed studies of the conversion narrative as a genre” in the United States (5). (Peter Dorsey’s *Sacred Estrangements: The Rhetoric of Conversion in Modern American*

¹ Master narratives, according to Frederick Jameson are “a persistent dimension of literary and cultural texts precisely because they reflect a fundamental dimension about our collective thinking and our collective fantasies about history and reality” (34).

Autobiography, which was published the same year as Stromberg's book, is certainly an outlier, particularly since Dorsey extends his study of religious conversion narratives to more secular expressions of the genre in American life writing.) Similarly, although ethnic American life writings frequently employ the conversion narrative, the archive of ethnic American conversion narratives have rarely been plumbed by academics interested in conversion per se.

The shortage of critical work on American conversion narratives in general, and on ethnic American conversion narratives in particular, makes Madeline Ruth Walker's *The Trouble with Sauling Around: Conversion in Ethnic American Autobiography, 1965–2002* timely indeed. Walker explores the conversion narratives of four ethnic American authors—Malcolm X (and his amanuensis, Alex Haley), Oscar Zeta Acosta, Amiri Baraka, and Richard Rodriguez—in order to complicate the presumption that conversions are wholly benign, epiphanic experiences between converts and their God. Instead, suggests Walker, conversion needs to be understood as articulating a matrix of often competing religious, social, and political interests. As a result, conversions can be coerced or they can be opportunistic inasmuch as they can result from divine intervention.

In chapter 1, “Conversion and the Intractable Saul,” Walker uses her book's “controlling terms,” “Sauling around” and “Pauling around,” to read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965) (6). She gleans these two analytical categories from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*: “‘You start Saul, and end up Paul,’” explains the unnamed protagonist's grandfather. “‘When you're a youngun, you Saul, but let life whup your head a bit and you starts to trying to be Paul—though you still Sauls around on the side’” (quoted in Walker 12). For Walker, “Sauling around” denotes the continuity of a “core self” after a religious conversion, typically a self in contradistinction to the religious self of the convert (43). Conversely, “Pauling around” denotes a religious presence underneath a presumptive secularity, even agnosticism or atheism: “the reliance on religious categories and discourse in a secular setting” (25). Walker argues that Malcolm X frequently “Sauls around” in his autobiography. Although she focuses primarily on dancing and sexuality as sites of “Sauling,” Malcolm also “Sauls around” when he employs street-hustler argot—the speech patterns of his past “self,” Detroit Red—to draw potential converts from poor black communities into the Nation of Islam (NOI), what members of the NOI call “fishing.” Malcolm's invocation of his street-hustler self in his evangelizing not only indexes the presence of a barely repressed identity but also suggests latent desires that had not been fully tamped down by his adherence to NOI doctrine,

proposes Walker. Ultimately, Walker argues, tensions surrounding Malcolm's conversion reveal a deep ambivalence about the strictures of the Nation of Islam. These tensions suggest that Malcolm's conversion cannot be read simply as spiritually uplifting but must also be read as constraining desire and pleasure. Manning Marable's recent Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Malcolm X, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (2011), suggests that Malcolm also "Pauleed around" in his pre-conversion life. For example, Malcolm espoused strong Garveyite beliefs well before his conversion and eventual role as a national political figure who advocated black nationalism, indicating that aspects of his postconversion self were already part of his pre-conversion identity. Walker does not consider Malcolm's "Pauling around," however, because she chooses not to enter into a discussion about Malcolm X's "actual behavior"; she focuses exclusively on his "textual performance" in *The Autobiography* (32).

In chapter 2, "Conversion, Deconversion, and Reversion," Walker considers incidents of "Sauling around" and "Pauling around" in Oscar Zeta Acosta's carnivalesque fictional autobiographies (or "autofictions"), *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972) and *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* (1973). Walker describes how Acosta's conversion to the Baptist Church constitutes what she calls an "assimilative conversion" rather than an instance of spiritual epiphany because he converts primarily to be accepted by the white American community (67). Moreover, it is predominantly his sexual desire for white, "pig-tailed belles" more than any spiritual impulse that incites his turn to Baptism, what Walker identifies as an instance of "Sauling around" (*Revolt* quoted in Walker 60). His eventual break from the Baptist Church and his acceptance of Mexican American Catholicism is similarly the result of social rather than spiritual concerns: he was not granted a sense of belonging in the (predominantly white) Baptist Church, and he found cultural and political meaning, and eventually social acceptance, through an idiosyncratic, Mexican American Folk Catholicism.

In chapter 3, "Serial Conversion and Pauling Around," Walker shows how Amiri Baraka's Marxism in *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones* (1984) is underpinned by conversion rhetoric, even a Puritan typology that divides the world into God's elect—for Baraka, the "blue-black proletariat"—and the damned—for Baraka, the inauthentic "yellow petty bourgeoisie" (Walker 25). Baraka thus "Paul's around" by placing a Marxist superstructure on a religious foundation. Walker wonders whether signifyin(g), a central technique of the African-American literary tradition, plays a role in Baraka's manipulation of Puritan typologies, which is an excellent question

that could have been pushed further in this chapter. Moreover, Baraka's use of conversion to articulate a Marxist agenda appears elsewhere in African-American life writing. George Jackson reconstitutes conversion in Marxist rather than theological terms in *Soledad Brother* (1971), for example. He writes that he is "redeemed" by Marxist literature, and as a result he converts his "black criminal mentality into a black revolutionary mentality" (39–40). Discussing how "neo-Puritanism," an idealization of the black proletariat, and Marxism were common features of African-American life writing in the postwar decades would help further contextualize these features in Baraka's work.

In chapter 4, "Converting the Church," Walker discusses Richard Rodriguez's autobiographical trilogy: *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982), *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father* (1992), and *Brown: The Last Discovery of America* (2002). Walker argues that Rodriguez converts, or seeks to convert, the Catholic church by living as a gay man while also continuing to be a practising Catholic, a kind of "Sauling around" that inverts how conversion typically works: here, a religious institution does not transform an individual according to its traditions; instead, a religious institution is transformed by the individual who redefines the institution's practices, in Rodriguez's case by living as a gay Catholic—a process that Walker calls "browning" Catholicism.

Overall, *The Trouble with Sauling Around* constitutes an important contribution to a largely overlooked field. For me, Walker's book also raises some interesting questions about how the conversion narrative registers power relations between American dominant culture and ethnic American communities. If, as I have suggested, the conversion narrative is a form of ideological common sense in American literature and culture, and if Walker is correct that conversion needs to be read as potentially coercive rather than simply emancipatory (and I think she is quite right here), then can we read ethnic American conversion narratives as forms of social coercion that help enable American dominant culture to maintain (renew, recreate, or defend) cultural hegemony? That is to say, are stories that could otherwise trouble (white) American hegemony domesticated by the conversion narrative, "which support[s] or at least do[es] not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture" (Williams 39)? Is conversion—where someone is wholly transformed and integrated into a new community—a narrative complement to a melting-pot ideology, state and federal assimilationist policies, or an American national identity that is based on the erasure of difference? By comparison, if the

conversion narrative has the *potential* to be coercive, or to win some form of consent (in a dominant American worldview, for example), then can we read Malcolm X, Oscar Zeta Acosta, Amiri Baraka, Richard Rodriguez, and other ethnic American life writers' use of the conversion narrative as instances of what Michel de Certeau calls "tactics" because they "poach in" the "strategic" discourses of American dominant culture? Are these authors adapting the conversion narrative "to their own uses and their own rules" in order to alter American culture from the inside out (Certeau xiv)?

Walker certainly begins to pick up this line of argument. Her discussion of Acosta's conversion to the Baptist church, which provided him with a potential inroad to white Protestant culture, shows the assimilationist potential of the conversion narrative in America. By comparison, her discussion of Richard Rodriguez's "browning" of the Catholic church by living as a gay Catholic suggests a "tactical" use of the conversion narrative: Rodriguez seeks to transform Catholic homophobia by redeploying a Catholic conversion narrative to represent (among other things) his coming out as a gay man. But the theoretical concerns of this power dynamic between ethnic American authors, their communities, and a wider white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture could be further theorized in future studies. Hopefully, *The Trouble with Sauling Around* will be one of many interventions in what is likely to be an increasingly important and lively branch of American literary study.

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