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Introduction

I am sure that every student of American Studies has been asked at least once to read J.H. St John de Crevecoeur's Letters of an American Farmer. In this text from 1782, he poses the famous question: "What, then, is the American, this new man?" This search for the American identity and to what extent it is exceptional resonates very strongly in American Studies even today (Campbell and Kean 2006: 2). I have always been convinced that students of American Studies who are not from the United States should go to America and stay there for a while in order to get a better grip on this question. Therefore, I did an internship at a non-profit arts organization in Washington, DC, during my BA program. For the same reason I went back to the United States to study abroad during the MA program, but this time I went to Laramie, Wyoming, which was a totally different environment and experience. This hands-on approach has been of vital importance for my understanding of the key themes in American Studies. This portfolio contains all research papers and other noteworthy essays that I have written at the University of Wyoming and Utrecht University as a student of the MA program in American Studies. This introduction functions as a framework for the papers in this portfolio, because key themes from these papers will be analyzed and discussed, as I will place them in a larger academic context.

This introduction will discuss how scholars of American Studies have approached the question of American identity from the beginning of the academic field onwards. Even though this question is still key and very much alive within the field of American Studies today, the methodology that is used to find an answer to the question has been

constantly contested. At the same time, the outcome of research that focuses on American history, culture, and identity, constantly evolves as well. As a result, the field has changed dramatically over the decades. I have used two main sources in the process of writing this introduction, which are Neil Campbell and Alasdair Kean's *American Cultural Studies* (2006) and numerous essays from *Locating American Studies*, edited by Lucy Maddox (1999). Both works illustrate methodological and theoretical developments in the field of American Studies, and the book by Campbell and Kean also nicely demonstrates the kind of research students of American Studies can do.

The Myth and Symbol school is generally identified as the first American Studies method, whose ideas dominated American Studies theory of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Gene Wise wrote an overview of developments in methods of American Studies from its inception up until the late 1970s, in which he also gives an overview of the main characteristics of this school. According to scholars of the Myth and Symbol school, a single holistic "American Culture" is expressed in the more or less homogeneous "American Mind". They were trying to locate "the quintessential 'American Character'" that could be found in every American, but that is expressed most coherent in America's "high" culture; the "Great Books" by the country's leading thinkers like Emerson, Melville, Whitman, Twain, and so on (Wise 179,180). The purpose of the movement is to "demonstrate the way in which these 'collective' images and symbols can be used to explain the behavior of people in the United States" (Kuklick 73). When defining the American culture, the scholars connect myths and symbols with the "great isms," like Puritanism, Individualism, Isolationism, Transcendentalism and other classic topics in American history (Wise 180,206).

An example of this can be found in H.N. Smith's *Virgin Land* (1950), which is a typical work of this School. The title of the book refers to the myth of America as a new Eden, which according to him "will be recognized as the core of what we call isolationism," an idea that, according to Smith, would be shared with all Americans (Kuklick 82). This holistic concept of American culture is very generalizing, for which no empirical evidence is offered. This is also the case in Alan Trachtenberg's *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (1965), in which is stated that the Brooklyn Bridge was the symbol that captured the American identity and exceptionalism, present in the minds of every American. The bridge constituted a symbol of harmony between the pastoral and the modern America and also what American culture was capable of.

Because of the consensus existing in the Myth & Symbol movement that reinforced rather than critically analyzed the dominant culture, Bruce Kuklick rightly states that there was a lack of methodological discussion (Kuklick 90). The existing concept of culture held by Smith and Trachtenberg was critically challenged from the middle of the 1960s onwards, as events of that time shattered the myths and symbols that had been embraced before. During the turbulent times of political assassinations, university confrontations, urban riots, and the escalation of the war in Vietnam, the statements of scholars like Smith and Trachtenberg appeared to be far too generalizing about the American experience (Kuklick 81).

In his influential essay *Literature and the Historian* (1974), Gordon Kelly proposes that, instead of using just "high" literary works like scholars of the Myth and Symbol school do, scholars of American Studies could and should also use other literary works like fiction for children, in order to present a better analysis of American culture.

Kelly argues: “we can hardly avoid employing more inclusive concepts of culture and more complex social models than are implicit in the doctrine of literary power. The assumptions frequently carried over into American Studies from the study of literature [...] must be severely qualified, if not abandoned completely; for these assumptions appear now to hold only for the simplest model of culture and have little predictive or explanatory power for American society, past or present” (Kelly 95). This quote shows how a new generation of American Studies scholars proposes to broaden the boundaries of the discourse. Due to the turbulent 1960s, a more multi-dimensional rather than a holistic view of culture emerged in American Studies during the 1970s. (Campbell and Kean 11). Instead of looking upon culture as a piece of literature, culture would now be regarded more from a sociological and anthropological perspective, as a ‘way of life’, which caused a huge paradigm shift in American Studies.

Instead of trying to integrate the whole culture, America now should be looked upon from a “variety of different, often competing, perspectives,” because there were more voices to be heard (Wise 192). Also, the idea that the American culture was expressed best in “high” culture was contested. Consequently also “other forms of cultural expression, drawn from popular culture [and] mass media” could now be a study object in the search for the American identity (Campbell and Kean 13). This caused a further widening of the discourse’s boundaries, which made black studies, popular culture studies, women’s studies, and the like possible (Wise 185,186).

Because of the interdisciplinary character of American Studies, it is possible to study these topics using other materials than traditional texts, for example a piece of art, or a product of popular culture. According to Campbell and Kean, to use just works of

high arts and literature when studying the American identity and culture, would omit a great part. They also state that analyzing materials from popular culture can be just as complex as the “serious” works. Moreover, they add that studying popular culture may “open up questions of national identity and its construction [and] move us beyond conventional disciplinary boundaries” (Campbell and Kean 5-7). In *The Greenwood Guide to American Popular Culture*, Thomas Inge states that it is also important to study popular culture, because “there is no more revealing index to the total character and nature of a society” (xvii). According to Inge, popular culture is also the place where new art forms emerge, for example film, photography and jazz that have become “a distinctive form of American art” (xvii,xviii). Popular culture, often in combination with high arts and literature, creates room for a very dynamic and interdisciplinary study of American identity.

In three different courses I looked further into the subject of American culture and identity. I not only studied how people from other countries like the Netherlands looked upon American culture, but also what the American people thought what was American. I used sources for these research papers that scholars of American Studies probably would not have approved of only a couple of decades ago. For the class *Introduction to American Studies* we had to pick an American artefact and write a mini-essay about how the American identity was reflected in that piece. I chose Edward Hopper’s famous painting *Nighthawks* in which he portrayed strikingly the loneliness of a large, American city. For the class *American Cultural Influence*, we focussed on how (products of) American culture have been disseminated, received and perceived in Europe since the

Second World War. The subject in this course that really grasped my attention was cultural diplomacy, also known as soft power.

After World War II, American diplomats believed that the United States could amass more power by exporting American culture to Europe. Examples of the cultural products that were used are films, television broadcasts, literature, radio programs, academic exchange programs, newspapers, magazines and advertising. They practiced cultural diplomacy through organizations, such as the United States Information Agency (USIA), to counter propaganda of Communist regimes during the Cold War, to improve the international reputation of the United States and because they believed the spread of American culture would entail democracy (Gienow-Hecht 2000: 467,468). When America started doing this, they were forced to think about what products they should use. How did they want people abroad to look upon America? On the one hand they wanted to export cultural products that would make America look appealing and unique, and moreover, that would make people choose democracy and freedom over communism.

The paper I wrote for American Cultural Influence, “Time for Jazz. Dutch Youth Embracing American Jazz, 1945-1960”, examined how American jazz music was embraced by Dutch youth between 1945 and 1960. I looked at jazz as an American cultural product, how jazz reached the Dutch and how a youth culture was developed in the Netherlands during the 1950s. It was particularly interesting too look at how Jazz was not used as a product of cultural diplomacy until 1955, because in United States diplomats and the USIA were the least interested in using jazz. They thought that jazz was considered as the lowest form of American culture. Still, it was one of the most

popular American cultural products abroad. After 1955, the United States government started using jazz as a Cold War weapon because of this popularity. Also, by means of using African American culture in the propaganda for America, they wanted to show people abroad that American democracy was color-blind, even though this was not a true image of America. The use of cultural diplomacy forced the United States government to acknowledge that African American culture was also part of American culture as a whole.

This subject returned in a class I took at the University of Wyoming, called Cold War Culture. This class was a research project on Cold War material culture, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Kitchen Debate between Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and U.S. Vice President Richard M. Nixon. This debate took place in the kitchen at the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM) in Moscow's Sokolniki Park in the summer of 1959. During this course, we explored the Kitchen Debate by looking further into this exhibition, its significance, the context in which it took place, and how people received it. The first essay I wrote for this class was "Jackson Pollock. A Cold War Warrior?" This essay examined the peculiar role of Abstract Expressionism as a cultural commodity abroad during the Cold War. As with Jazz, the USIA did not think that Abstract Expressionist art was suitable to represent America at European art exhibitions. But in the end, the people who wanted to propagandize the diversity in American art and the freedom to paint what the artist wanted to paint reached the upper hand. In the research paper "The Shape of the Future" I explored the way people lived at the time the Kitchen Debate took place. Because most of Europe lay in ruins after World War II, the United States had become the economic, technological,

political, military and cultural hegemon. These times of progress and prosperity caused justifiable feelings of excitement and optimism, which nourished a forward look, a look into the future. “The Shape of the Future” looked at how this forward look was expressed in domestic material culture and design.

One of the things I have learnt from these courses is something that the people from the USIA also encountered. It is very difficult to choose one artifact, one cultural product, myth, or symbol, that truly encompasses American culture, the American way of life. The reason for this is that the United States, and therefore also American culture and the American identity, consists of so many different people, histories, stories, works of art, religions, etcetera, that a student of American Studies should look at these differences in order to get a better grasp on the question of American identity. This is a point that Campbell and Kean also want to bring across. According to Campbell and Kean, the ideological myths that are presented in the Myth and Symbol School truly are not necessarily false, but the consensus and unity that these symbols presented was only possible because of hidden differences by “the practice of power” (3). Groups on the margins of power that were silenced by the dominant, white, male, middle-class, heterosexual perspective, have promoted the development of critical “cultural studies” (11).

According to this paradigm for American Studies, myths and ideological forces need to be contested through interrogation and critical review, because then lines of power structures will appear (10). Campbell and Kean state that American culture consists of a “living mix of stories,” “an assemblage of texts,” and it should also be approached like that (Clifford 41, Campbell and Kean 13,18). Therefore, they adhere

great importance of the interdisciplinary character of American Cultural Studies, because the boundaries of the discipline need to be *dynamic* in order to give the marginalized perspectives a voice. By means of studying at and across the boundaries of American culture, the dominant perspective can be *contested* and views that have been marginalized will come to the foreground, because at the boundaries cultures “meet, clash and grapple with each other” (Pratt 6-7). This is what we did in the course *Topics in American Diversity: Ethnic Experience in Multicultural Context*. For this class we read literature of various ethnic groups from the United States. Other texts we read were drawn from other disciplines, such as cultural history, the social sciences, and literary and cultural studies, which made the approach very interdisciplinary.

By means of using a variety of sources from different disciplines we had to write two essays. The first (mini-) essay I wrote for this class was “Paradoxes in Native American Struggle”. For this essay I read a novel by Sherman Alexie and several theoretical texts from several disciplines. My research paper for this class, “The Storm After the Calm”, was about second-generation Holocaust literature. For this paper I read and used two novels, and I also used texts from other disciplines as well. It took a really long time for me to write these papers, because I found it difficult to combine texts from different disciplines with each other. I think that interdisciplinary research works well in theory, but, in my experience, when I have to write a short essay, or a relatively short research paper, I sometimes feel like there are just too many sources to choose from, too many viewpoints I can take, which also makes me think that my research efforts are pointless. In order to make interdisciplinary research more useful, students of American

Studies first need to practice and learn how to make use of sources from a great variety of disciplines.

I think that I got a much better grasp on interdisciplinary research when I was studying at the University of Wyoming. I took a course called *Governing Utopia*, which had a rather unorthodox approach to thinking about the governing process with a special emphasis on the role of administration and bureaucracy within it. The course examined various images of utopia as depicted in literature, films, and academic writing. In the background of the course we were often looking at the American government and American bureaucratic institutions, but we were more looking into questions, such as, can an image of utopia serve to provide an organizing principle for politics and administration, should such an image be used for governing, and is it possible to carry out governing without some sort of image? This was a really intense course because we had a lot of reading to do, five essays to write, and we also had to hand in a weekly (informal) journal. Whereas in the Netherlands I often felt as if I was stuck in a pattern that seemed to repeat itself every course, in this course at the University of Wyoming I really learned to handle and process a great amount of texts, also from different disciplines. But more importantly, I learned to really create my own opinion about these texts, instead of looking for some other scholar's opinion that would closely reflect what I thought.

The third course I was enrolled in at the University of Wyoming was *Railroads in American History*. Through the lens of the railway industry, this course examined a variety of issues in American history. Examples of topics that were discussed in class were slavery and race relations, work and the labor movement, the nature of the firm, the tensions between local control and industrial capitalism, and the emergence of the

regulatory state. This was also an intense reading course, for which we had to read ten books. We had to choose six books about which we had to write book reviews. For the three remaining books we had to write an informal personal response.

To conclude, I think that this portfolio reflects the work of an average, contemporary student of American Studies pretty well. Unlike the practitioners of this study field during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, students nowadays look at American history and culture from many different angles, using sources from a great variety of disciplines, while continuously widening the boundaries of the discipline. Even though I believe that the sky is the limit with interdisciplinary research, I would also like to argue that professors of American Studies need to guard the quality of research and closely guide students in their effort to do cultural work.

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Andrew Hopper's *Nighthawks* and The American identity

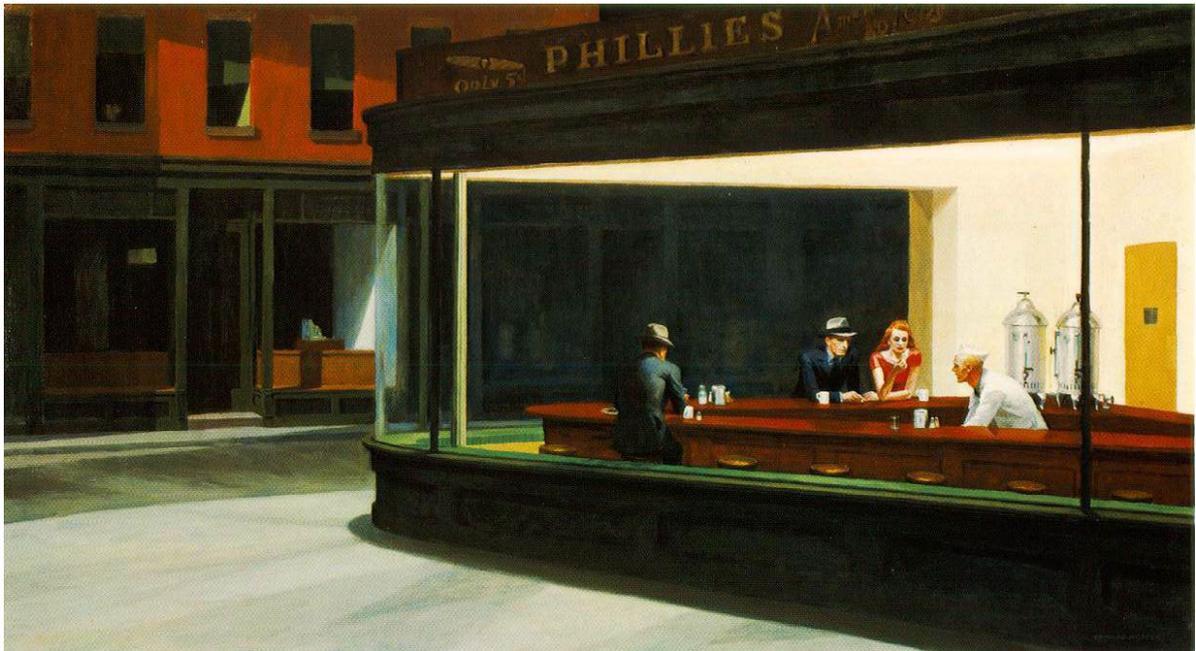


Image 1

Jitske Jonkman (0321834)
Introduction to American Studies
Derek Rubin
Mini-essay
10-26-2007
816 Words

In 1782, J.H. St John de Crevecoeur was the first to pose the question “What, then, is the American, this new man?”. This search for the American identity and to what extent it is exceptional has been a central topic for discussion in American Studies from the beginning of its existence (Campbell and Kean 2006: 2). Because of the interdisciplinary character of American Studies, it is possible to study these topics using other materials than traditional texts, for example a piece of art, or a product of popular culture (Campbell and Kean 2006: 6). This essay will exactly do that, for it analyses Andrew Hopper’s *Nighthawks*¹ (1942), the most renowned work of one of America’s finest and most influential realist painters, as an American cultural product. Firstly, this essay will explore the notion of American exceptionalism in Andrew Hopper’s work. Secondly, this essay argues that Hopper’s *Nighthawks* is often referred to and parodied in American popular culture, for it is a painting that is known by a large segment of the American population. This is because of the theme of the painting that signifies a fundamental aspect of American society, which is recognizable to many Americans.

Edward Hopper (1882-1867) believed that American art had to free itself from the European tradition (Levine 1992: 31): “[W]e are not French and never can be and any attempt to be so, is to deny our inheritance and to try to impose upon ourselves a character that can be nothing but a veneer upon de surface” (Hopper 1945: II). Therefore, Hopper tried to capture exceptional aspects of the United States in his works, painting “the face of modern America – the city, the small town, the country” (Goodrich 1949: 8). Back in 1949 Lloyd Goodrich stated that the American city is exceptional because of its “restless energy that is always building, tearing down and rebuilding” and “its scale and spectacularity and ... its architectural disorder” (1949: 3).

¹ See: “Image 1” on the front page.

According to Hopper, however, “a nation’s art is greatest when it most reflects the character of its people” (Hopper 1945: II). Therefore, his approach to portraying the American identity was not to paint spectacular buildings, but instead to focus more on “[the] intimate, concerned with the surroundings of everyday life” (Goodrich 1949: 8).

Hopper has painted a great number of paintings in which he portrays a large variety of “intimate” city-locations, of which the diner in *Nighthawks* is most famous. This mysterious painting shows four people in a diner in a quiet city at night, of which three people sit at the counter and one clerk stands behind the counter. Taking a closer look at the painting, none of the people seem to be communicating with each other and you start to wonder why they are at the diner. Maybe they also have nowhere better to go to? Hopper himself states that he was “painting the loneliness of a large city” (Levin 1995: 349).

His work is often described as a “representative of the modern sensibility, of alienation and loneliness in the wastelands of urban America” (Campbell and Kean 2006: 190), which are notions that are also evident in *Nighthawks*. Perhaps what causes the appeal of *Nighthawks* to so many, is the experience of what Berman well describes as: “[living] a life of paradox and contradiction in



Image 2



Image 3

an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and our world – and, at the same time, threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are” (1983: 14-15). As a result of this, the “sense of ambiguity about life in the city” (Campbell and Kean, 2006: 192) in Hopper’s *Nighthawks* has often been parodied in American popular culture, by replacing the people from the painting by for example characters of animated television series, like *The Simpsons* (Image 2 and 3).



Image 4

Image 4 is a poster of the television hit series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, which is about a team of forensic investigators that solve murders in the Las Vegas area. On the poster we see a man is lying

dead on the countertop of the diner, presumably murdered. Also, the leading characters of the series looking outside of the window, from the inside of the diner. The interesting part here is that the murder victim sits in the exact same spot as the most mysterious man portrayed in Hopper’s *Nighthawks*, whose face we cannot see. The message the makers of this poster are trying to send off is that because of the techniques they have, the investigators can “walk” into the diner (which has no door!) and solve this case. Perhaps then, that mysterious man in Edward Hopper’s *Nighthawks* is “the American, this new man”! Unfortunately, in American Studies we do not possess crime-solving techniques like the characters of *CSI*. Although, more and more is possible in

American Studies in this search for the American identity, as boundaries of disciplines are being explored.

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Time for Jazz

**Dutch Youth Embracing American Jazz,
1945-1960**

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American Cultural Influence 200500276
2007-2008, 1st semester
01-30-2008
7610 words

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*Intro*²

By Jules Deelder

Jazz is. Jazz leeft. Gebeurt. Beweegt. Jazz neemt. Jazz geeft. Jazz weet. Jazz spreekt. Jazz doet. Jazz laat. Jazz komt. Jazz gaat. Uniek. Muziek. Van vlees en bloed. Jazz waagt. Jazz wint. Breekt baan. Jazz bonkt. Jazz staat. Jazz valt. Is overal. Ontroert. Verwarmt. Grijpt bij de keel. Jazz knettert. Knalt. Ontketent. Heerst. Jazz heelt. Jazz zuivert. Lichaam. Geest. Jazz swingt. Jazz vecht. Is waar. Is echt. Geen loze kreet. Geen leeg gebaar. Jazz werkt. Versterkt. Ontwapent. Toont. Jazz laaft. Jazz loont. Is water. Brood. Jazz lacht. Jazz huilt. Jazz in. Jazz uit. Legt bloot. Daagt uit. Jazz kookt. Jazz bruist. Jazz troost. Jazz bijt. Jazz bloedt. Heeft schijt. Is zwart. Is wit. Is rood. Niet grijs. Jazz vloekt. Jazz moet. Verbroedert. Zoekt. Jazz vindt. Jazz wijst. Jazz schokt. Jazz eist. Jazz hoog. Jazz laag. Jazz voor. Jazz na. Jazz rookt. Jazz jaagt. Is eigen baas. Vereent. Verzoent. Begeestert. Woedt. Bevrijdt. Bewijst. Begrijpt. Vervoert. Jazz spreidt. Jazz sluit. Bezielt. Verrijkt. Geeft hoop. Verblijdt. Jazz schittert. Glanst. Jazz flitst. Jazz danst. Verhit. Zweept op. Bemint. Verleidt. Jazz roept. Jazz voelt. Jazz groeit. Jazz bloeit. Jazz blaakt. Jazz blijkt. Betovert. Geilt. Jazz ademt. Zweet. Jazz fluistert. Schreeuwt. Ontmaskert. Snijdt. Jazz glijdt. Jazz sluipt. Jazz slijpt. Jazz spuit. Jazz klinkt. Jazz dwingt. Jazz lonkt. Jazz blinkt. Jazz vraagt. Jazz raakt. Verlost. Verbaast. Viert feest. Verklaart. Is bitter. Zoet. Is hot. Is cool. Jazz ijlt. Vooruit. Voorbij. Ver weg. Dichtbij. Paraat. Bereid. Op weg. Altijd. Jazz was. Jazz is. Jazz blijft.

² Jules Deelder, *Jazz*, 7-8. 1992

Introduction

‘You have to try to follow jazz music,’ Frits said. He was sitting on a chair close to the set. ‘Can’t you turn off that fuss?’ his father asked, and rose to his feet. ‘No,’ Frits said, ‘you should listen, and then you will hear it is no rigmarole. The orchestra sets the rhythm; the sax plays the melody and the improvisations.’ ‘But it can be turned down,’ the man said, en he turned back the switch. After that he lay down again. Frits grabbed the switch and turned it back to the right little by little, at moments when only a weak drum was to be heard.³

In *De Avonden* (1947), a novel by Gerard Reve, generational conflicts like above are the order of the day. In this novel, Frits van Egters’ father symbolizes the criticizing older generation in the Netherlands of that time. What he thinks is worth listening to on the radio are the news broadcasts and a Viennese waltz every once in a while. Frits, on the other hand, symbolizes the youth of the Netherlands after World War II (WWII). He seems to be in a constant state of annoyance about everything his parents say and do. He detests listening to the waltz and likes improvised, American jazz instead. He tries to explain to his father why he should listen to jazz, but his father does not want to, and cannot understand. The excerpt above is a good example of the many generational conflicts that Frits and his father are having in *De Avonden*, in which radio and American music are often points of controversy.

After the liberation, young people celebrated the popular culture that coincided with the arrival of American soldiers in Europe. Just like Frits van Egters, many youngsters in the Netherlands were listening to American popular music that was broadcasted by for example the *American Armed Forces Network*, that was originally set

³ Gerard Cornelis van het Reve *De Avonden: een winterverhaal* (Utrecht: Bosch, 1947), 62.

up to entertain the American soldiers. According to Rob Kroes: “A whole generation which were in their late teens at the end of the war were held in thrall by the radiance of vitality of American culture. Tuning in the mesmerizing sounds of the American Armed Forces Network late at night, watching American movies in solitary darkness, was their *rite de passage*; it would last a lasting sediment, layer upon layer over the years, a substratum of affection and affinity.”⁴ This paper will examine how American jazz music was embraced by Dutch youth between 1945 and 1960. I will be looking at jazz as an American cultural product, how jazz reached the Dutch and how a youth culture was developed in the Netherlands during the 1950s. Thereupon, I will analyze Dutch literature, written or set in 1945–1960, in which the writers tell how and why they embraced jazz when they were young. This research will show that Dutch youngsters used jazz music as a means to escape from oppressive and paternalistic social climate of that time. By preferring modern, American jazz, they were acting anti-authoritarian and rebellious against older generations, therefore choosing the modern life that had come to the Netherlands after WWII.

The writers I will use in this study are Jules Deelder, Remco Campert, Bernlef, Henk Romijn Meijer and Gerard Reve. These writers have been selected because they were all born in or before WWII. Adding to that, most writings that are used for this research paper are autobiographical or semi-autobiographical and were written between 1945 and 1960, or they are set in this period. In some writings more clearly than the other, the authors talk about events in their daily lives and Dutch mentality and culture of that time. Jazz also plays an important role in the lives of these poets and novelists and in their works. Although the non-biographical writings remain a *fictive* reflection of life, I

⁴ Kroes, Rob ed. *Image and Impact. American Influences in the Netherlands since 1945*, “The Nearness of America” (1981), 11-12.

will still be able to use them as representations of the real world, for the biographical materials and scholarly texts will show that for many Dutch youngsters, the feelings which for example Frits in *De Avonden* felt were very real.

There are several reasons for focusing on the late forties and the 1950s. Firstly, the year 1945 marks a period of reconstruction and new beginnings in many ways for the Netherlands, for in this year the Dutch were freed by the allied forces from the occupation of Nazi Germany. On the one hand, people wanted to change their lives back to the way they were, but on the other hand, modernization and the influx of American cultural products that accompanied the American policies and soldiers in Europe, invited them to move forward. The liberation also signified a new start for jazz music. During the German occupation, jazz was banned, but this did not mean that time had been standing still for this music style. A more modern and improvised kind of jazz had arisen in the United States that also came to Europe: *Bebop*. The Dutch had heard of the term, but they had no clue what to make of this new music.⁵ This was also the case for other cultural products that flooded Europe after WWII. A fierce discussion started about the influences of American cultural products on the people and the cultures of the receiving countries, also referred to as Americanization. As will become clear, not everyone in the Netherlands was as positive about the influx of American culture as the teenagers that Kroes portrays. It was also in these years, 1945 – 1960, that jazz was used as a bad example of American cultural influence, which makes it an interesting object for research.

⁵ Kleinhout, Gerrit Willem Hendrik. "Jazz als probleem. Receptie en acceptatie van de jazz in de wederopbouwperiode van Nederland 1945-1952." Ph.D. Diss. (University of Utrecht, 2006), 411.

Secondly, the post-WWII period is an interesting period, for it marked the rise of a youth culture in the Netherlands. Dutch youth started to turn away from the way children were brought up during the pre-WWII period. Back then, adults would set the tone, and the goal of raising children was to keep them tied to set norms. Instead of blindly accepting what they were told, the youngsters now wanted to sing a different song, one that was experimental and improvisatory.⁶ The seemingly innocent act of Frits, turning up the volume of the radio even though his dad told him to turn it down, actually created a foundation for the next generation. By means of analyzing the way Dutch youth embraced jazz after WWII, and looking at how it made them feel, effects on culture and mentality of American cultural products like jazz in the Netherlands at that time may become clear.

The first chapter will explore American cultural influence after WWII in Europe and the Netherlands, and the reactions it raised from the Dutch government and the youth. The second chapter will focus on jazz as an American cultural product. I will examine the ways in which it penetrated Dutch society and how it came to be a tool for cultural diplomacy during the Cold War. Chapter three will further discuss changes and continuities in Dutch society and the emergence of a youth culture during the 1950s. Chapter four will present an analysis of the role jazz played in the selected novels, poems and short stories.

⁶ Arjan Dieleman, "De late jaren vijftig of de vroege jaren zestig?," in *Nuchterheid en Nozems. De Opkomst van de jeugdcultuur in de jaren vijftig*, ed. Ger Tillekens (Muiderberg: Dick Coutinho, 1990), 11.

Chapter one

American Cultural Influence

From the beginning of the twentieth century, Americanization has taken place in Europe. It originally started out as a process made up of initiatives from the private sector in the United States, in which American businesses were exporting their products, companies and values to Europe.⁷ Europeans have always been fearful about Americanization, because it felt like the United States was imposing “its economic and cultural will.”⁸ After WWII however, the United States had become the most powerful nation in the world and Americanization became much more pervasive. Right after the liberation, the presence of American culture became most apparent because of the encampment of American soldiers all over Europe. Besides cigarettes and canned food, they also brought their language, attitudes and cultural products along with them.⁹

After Nazi Germany was defeated, the United States made themselves known around the world as “the guardians of democracy on the one hand and of Western civilization on the other.”¹⁰ As communist Soviet Union consolidated its position in Eastern Europe, the United States started to form a block in Western Europe by means of military and economical reinforcements. In order to amass more power without risking an expensive, nuclear and total war, both the United States and the Soviet Union practiced *cultural diplomacy*. The United States did this through organizations such as the United States Information Agency (USIA), to counter propaganda of Communist regimes during

⁷ Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream. American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 38.

⁸ Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans have loved, hated, and transformed American culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 188-189.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 41.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 39.

the Cold War, to improve the international reputation of the United States and because they believed the spread of American culture would entail democracy.¹¹ Examples of the instruments that were used are film, television broadcasts, literature, radio programs, academic exchange programs, newspapers, magazines and advertising. Through this, the United States could nationalize international affairs through implementing their culture and democratic principles all over the world.¹²

Initially, most people were euphoric about everything that was American. Logically so, for the Americans were of great importance because they liberated the European people. A few years after the war, the Marshall Plan aided the European economies in their recoveries, leading to a rise of productivity, employment rates and mass consumption which caused rapid modernization in Western European societies.¹³ Therefore, the processes of modernization that was radically changing European daily life came to be known as American, hence the connection that was made between modernization and Americanization in the public discussions.¹⁴

According to Pells, “The deluge of American products in the postwar years revived the Western Europeans’ fear that their societies were becoming too ‘Americanized’. The memories of the liberation and the Marshall Plan, and the desire for economic development and a rising standard of living, were gradually supplanted by a dismay at the proliferation of sugar-saturated soft drinks.”¹⁵ This was also the case with the Dutch. On the one hand they admired the political culture that influenced the Netherlands after WWII and the advantages of modernization, but on the other hand, they

¹¹ Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, “Academics, Cultural Transfer, and the Cold War - A Critical Review” *Diplomatic History* 24 (2000): 467-468.

¹² *Ibidem*, 475.

¹³ Pells, *Not Like Us*, 189.

¹⁴ Mel van Elteren, “I’m free and I do what I want,” in in *Nuchterheid en Nozems. De Opkomst van de jeugdcultuur in de jaren vijftig*, ed. Ger Tillekens (Muiderberg: Dick Coutinho, 1990), 167.

¹⁵ Pells, *Not Like Us*, 188.

wanted to avoid the negative consequences of Americanization that were threatening their nation's identity, for they wanted to preserve their nation's "unique characteristics."¹⁶ The people feared that American culture would cause "cultural suicide" in the Netherlands; it would kill the country's identity and heritage. Moreover, it would cause the "destruction of all the rustic simplicities and familial bliss that had supposedly been central to the European past."¹⁷ Tomlinson charges that this was a myth, "[it was] simply the spread of modernity, a process of cultural loss."¹⁸

To many young Europeans American mass culture did not feel like import, firstly because its "conventions and formulas [were deeply imbedded in] the consciousness and daily experience of young Europeans."¹⁹ Secondly, as Reinhold Wagnleitner points out, American mass culture was inherently anti-authoritarian and rebellious, hence its popularity among youth all over the world.²⁰ And thirdly, the *low brow* characteristics of American culture gave the people the opportunity to escape from the "esthetic suffocation" that was present in their own countries."²¹ Especially the *low brow* aspects of American culture caused resistance from cultural and political authorities. Henk Kleinhout concludes in his dissertation about the reception of jazz in the Netherlands that these paternalistic and traditional institutions were concerned about the bad influence American culture would have on Dutch youth. The European intelligentsia was eager to point out the vulgar and commercial characteristics of the products. Besides that, they feared that the interest in American popular music, including jazz, would work at the

¹⁶ Ibidem, 190,193.

¹⁷ Ibidem, 202, 269.

¹⁸ Tomlinson quoted in: Gienow-Hecht, "Academics, Cultural Transfer, and the Cold War," 481.

¹⁹ Pells, *Not Like Us*, 205

²⁰ Reinhold Wagnleitner, "The Empire of the Fun, or Talkin' Soviet Union Blues: The Sound of Freedom and U.S. Cultural Hegemony in Europe" *Diplomatic History* 3 (1999): 500.

²¹ Pells, *Not Like Us*, 245.

expense of *high brow*, western classical music.²² For example the Minister of Culture from 1946-1947, Gerardus de Leeuw, regretted that Dutch youngsters instead of engaging themselves in folk dancing, they danced and sang along with the “newest negro products.”²³ In public discussions, American culture was generally perceived as low culture, and European culture as high culture. According to Lawrence Levine, “one could understand what Culture was by looking at the characteristics of jazz and reversing them”. Whereas jazz was new, raucous, discordant, accessible and spontaneous, Culture was something traditional, harmonious, complex and exclusive, only to be accomplished by studying hard.²⁴

Evidently, the discussion about the nature of jazz shows many resemblances with the discussion about American cultural influence. Moore claims that “Jazz is the exact musical reflection of modern capitalistic industrialism.”²⁵ Levine nicely states that “Jazz was attacked not only for returning civilized people to the jungles of barbarism but also for expressing the mechanistic sterility of modern urban life.”²⁶ Therefore, this research paper fits into the bigger academic discussion about the motives and consequences of American cultural influence.

²² Kleinhout. “Jazz als probleem,” 411.

²³ H. van Dulken, “De cultuurpolitieke opvattingen van prof. dr. G. van der Leeuw (1890-1950),” in *Kunst en beleid in Nederland*, ed. H. van Dulken (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1985), 130.

²⁴ Lawrence W. Levine, “Jazz and American Culture” *The Journal of American Folklore* 102 (1989): 12.

²⁵ Moore, quoted in Levine, “Jazz and American Culture,” 12.

²⁶ Levine, “Jazz and American Culture,” 12.

Chapter Two

Jazz on the Radio

During WWII, Dutch broadcasting stations lost autonomy to the occupiers who would only allow “Aryan music” to be played. It was strictly forbidden to play or listen to American Jazz on the radio. Still there were devotees of jazz who would secretly tune in to the *American Forces Network* (AFN) established in the United Kingdom in 1943, the BBC, and a few American broadcasting stations that could only be reached with an ultra short-wave receiver.²⁷ Because radios had to be handed over to the Germans in 1943, it can be said that except for a handful of people, the Dutch were not reached by American jazz music from the radio. As soon as the south of the Netherlands was freed, Philips started to broadcast *Herrijzend Nederland* (The Resurrecting Netherlands) with a transmitting station that was able to cover all of the Netherlands with its programs.²⁸ Relatively much jazz was played on a daily basis, though mostly prewar records. On the contrary, AFN would play American, modern jazz music during and after the war for the American soldiers stationed in Europe. Especially by the end of the 1940s and in the beginning of the 1950s, more and more modern jazz was played while big band music was played increasingly less, this influx also caused the breakthrough of bebop in Europe. Music from the AFN played a huge role in penetrating the European youth with American music and culture. However, AFN’s weekly radio program reflected the music

²⁷ Kleinhout. “Jazz als probleem,” 198.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 199.

that was broadcast in the United States, so when jazz became less mainstream in the USA after 1953, the AFN would play less jazz music as well.²⁹

Herrijzend Nederland already ceased to exist in 1946 after being politically pressurized by other broadcasting stations which were compartmentalized along socio-political lines and against a national radio broadcasting company. The most popular Dutch alternative was introduced by the VARA, one of the denominationalized Dutch broadcasting stations. There Pete Felleman presented *Swing & Sweet from Hollywood and 52nd Street* (SES). He was the first Dutch deejay to introduce bebop in the Netherlands in 1947.³⁰ With help from Dutch pilots who flew to the United States he was able to obtain the latest jazz records.³¹ The modern jazz sounds by Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker were just as popular and controversial as his American style of presenting. Felleman would try to create an American sphere, similar to that on the AFN, by for example using English jazz jargon and talking easily and smoothly, which was fairly unprecedented in the Netherlands. Whereas some people enjoyed these modernizations on the radio, others did not think this music was worth the attention it was getting and they were afraid the modern music and the modern way of presenting would cause vulgarization in Dutch society.³² The show *USA Cabaret* soon followed SES on the radio, in which Felleman would visit a fictitious jazz club. By adding sounds of applause, laughter and clinking glasses, Dutch listeners could imagine themselves being in an American jazz club.³³ In 1951 SES changed to *LP Parade*, in which he would continue to

²⁹ Ibidem 206.

³⁰ Ibidem 213.

³¹ Wim van Eyle, "Nederlandse jazzgeschiedenis: 1945-1966- Bloei en terugval" Nederlands Jazz Archief. <http://www.jazzarchief.nl/geschiedenis> (accessed January 20, 2008).

³² Kleinhout, "Jazz als probleem," 213-214.

³³ Jean-Luc Bostyn, Hans Knot en Ger Tillekens, "De prehistorie van de hitparade: Over Billboard's uitvinding van de hitparade en hoe die de Lage Landen bereikte." Volume 2, February 2000. http://www.icce.rug.nl/~soundscapes/VOLUME02/Prehistorie_van_de_hitparade.shtml (accessed January 20, 2008).

play all kinds of jazz music through the 1950s. Felleman was not the only one to present the Dutch with jazz music. From 1951 to 1958, Michiel de Ruyter also presented a popular jazz radio show every other week on AVRO, another Dutch public broadcasting association.

Jazz as a product for cultural diplomacy

The popularity of American jazz in the Netherlands and other European countries did not go unnoticed by the Americans. In an article in *The New York Times* (November 6, 1955), Felix Belair describes jazz as a “Secret Sonic Weapon” that Europeans had fallen captive to: “All Europe now seems to find American jazz as necessary as the seasons.” Even more so, together with “many thoughtful Europeans,” Belair cannot understand “why the United States government with all the money it spends for the so-called propaganda for democracy, does not use more of it to subsidize the continental travels of jazz bands and the best exponents of the music. [...] Nobody plays jazz like an American. That is why Europeans are puzzled when a famous exponent of the art goes unnoticed by the official representatives of American life in Europe.”

Contrary to many other cultural goods from the United States, jazz music was not a product of American cultural diplomacy in Europe. Even though jazz music made the United States seem “unique and appealing,” the U.S. government excluded jazz from the list of products for soft power.³⁴ The paradox here is that the U.S. government wanted the Europeans to choose democracy and freedom, while excluding jazz from the repertoire, because jazz music was considered as the worst of American culture.³⁵ However, jazz

³⁴ Pells, *Not Like Us*, 86.

³⁵ Wagnleitner, “The Empire of the Fun,” 513.

was actually a product of American culture that was really popular with the youth, who were for example listening to AFN and Felleman's and De Ruyter's jazz shows on Dutch radio. They were attracted to jazz music because it is based on improvisation and therefore it represents a sense of freedom. In an article about Conover (*New York Times* September 13, 1959), John Wilson ascribes the success of jazz to this element of freedom: "They love jazz because they love freedom."

After 1955, the United States government started using jazz as a Cold War weapon because of this popularity. The United States was also being criticized for the treatment of African American citizens. Therefore, the black freedom struggle became an important issue in America's foreign politics. By means of using African American culture in the propaganda for America, they wanted to show people abroad that American democracy was color-blind, thus blackness and race operated culturally as "an image of American nationhood that was more inclusive than the reality."³⁶ The propaganda of jazz abroad was bipartite. On the one hand the U.S. government sent American jazz artists like Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie to play music for people all over the world. Wagnleitner even argues that they were America's *real ambassadors* in the Cold War.³⁷ Artists like Armstrong and Gillespie were sent as cultural diplomats to Eastern European countries and new countries in Africa and Asia, to keep them out of the throws of communism by propagating American culture and democracy instead. On the other hand, radio broadcasts by Willis Conover on Voice of America (VOA) helped to create a

³⁶ Penny M. Von Eschen *Satchmo blows up the world: jazz ambassadors play the Cold War*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 4.

³⁷ Wagnleitner, "The Empire of the Fun," 513.

foundation for those jazz ambassadors and he could also reach the people who could not attend the concerts.³⁸

Conover's daily jazz show, *Music USA*, began in 1955 and continued for more than three decades. In the early beginning of *Music USA*, it was only to be heard in Scandinavian countries. Soon after, letters were coming in from jazz-lovers from all over the world asking for its scope to be expanded. In the *New York Times* (September 13, 1959), Wilson argues that in 1955, already 30 million people in 80 countries were reached by Conover's show that was broadcast during peak hours. Within the next decade over 100 million people would tune in to VOA: "*Time for Jazz. Willis Conover in Washington, DC. With the Voice of America. Jazz Hour.*"³⁹ In his article Wilson quotes an Egyptian weekly from 1959 which declared that "Conover's daily program has won the United States more friends than any other daily activity." Belair, also in the *New York Times*, quotes a German Swiss who even stated that "jazz is not just an art; it is a way of life." Looking at the range and number of people that were reached through Conover's jazz shows and the reactions they brought about, it can be said that jazz shows on the radio have been extremely important for the spread of jazz and thus American culture over the world as a product of soft power. However, Conover did not really talk about American democracy in his shows, according to himself, "Jazz is its own propaganda," he saw jazz and its structure as an embodiment of American freedom.⁴⁰

³⁸ Von Eschen, *Satchmo* 13.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 14.

⁴⁰ Von Eschen *Satchmo* 16.

Chapter three

The Rise of a Youth Culture in the Netherlands

Whereas in the Netherlands thoughts about the 1960s usually evoke lively, exciting and spectacular images, the 1950s on the contrary, are often seen as having been immobile, boring and starchy. The latter was often perceived merely as some kind of breathing space between WWII and the hectic 1960s. In the 1990s, however, scholars have endeavored to change this image of the Netherlands in the 1950s. Nowadays, in public and academic discussions the changes that occurred in Dutch society in the sixties and seventies are thought of as unthinkable without the *quiet revolution* that the Netherlands went through in the 1950s.⁴¹ Van Os, a Dutch art historian, portrays how he experienced this *revolution*: “Acting secretly. To have sex in very concealed locations. [...] To like jazz and modern art, because it was forbidden [...] To talk at night about absurdity, estrangement, secularization and existential experiences, and if God was only a projection.”⁴² This quote describes how on the level of culture and mentality, traditions and norms were considerably undermined.

After the first years of recovery after WWII, modernization would transform the Netherlands in the same way it had already changed the United States. Like the rest of Western Europe, the Netherlands became more prosperous, which led to an increase of productivity, employment rates and thus consumption.⁴³ Subsequently, a strong rise in investments occurred in Europe from American companies that wanted to take advantage of this. A rampant process of modernization was now taking place in Europe, which had

⁴¹ Paul Luykx and Pim Slot, “Preface,” in *Een stille revolutie? Cultuur en mentaliteit in de lange jaren vijftig*, ed. Paul Luykx and Pim Slot (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997) 7-8.

⁴² Van Os quoted in: Paul Luykx and Pim Slot, “Preface,” 8.

⁴³ Pells, *Not Like Us*, 189.

considerable consequences for Dutch society: “A welfare state superimposed on a market economy, a shift from blue-collar to white-collar occupations as manufacturing jobs vanished to Asia and Latin America, greater social mobility, more two-income families with fewer children, [...] a decline in the political and cultural importance of villages and small towns, [and] a diminished sense of community.”⁴⁴

In the Netherlands, consequences like these gave people more leisure time and money to spend on mostly American luxury products like cars, freezers and phonographs. This of course affected Dutch family life and Dutch youth. For example, the phonograph gave people the opportunity to develop a taste of music and to listen to what they liked instead of what the broadcasting stations preferred to play. Moreover, because of a diminished sense of community the leisure culture of the youth was no longer rooted in the local context, but was shaped by ingredients from further away, in which radio and music played a crucial role.⁴⁵ In the 1950s, to be young was no longer a short and hectic period in which one struggled to grow up. It had become an independent phase, in which freedom, fun and dissoluteness set the tone. The acceptance of the American mass culture was part of this process. Following the example of American movies and music stars, young people created their own life style, outside the spheres of influence of family, school and work. This especially happened on high schools. Because high school students were in great numbers and more or less financially independent, they soon became a significant force within society.⁴⁶

In the Netherlands in the 1950s, the upper-middle class youth starts to develop a lifestyle that deviates from their parents’ lifestyle. This broad subculture is made up of a

⁴⁴ Ibidem, 202.

⁴⁵ Mark van den Heuvel, ‘Jeugd tussen traditie en moderniteit. Transformaties van naoorlogse jeugdcultuur en het beheer over de jeugd,’ in *Een stille revolutie? Cultuur en mentaliteit in de lange jaren vijftig*, ed. Paul Luykx and Pim Slot (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997) 188.

⁴⁶ Dieleman, “De late jaren vijftig.” 25-26.

cultural mishmash of a Dutch version of French existentialism as an expressive social movement and elements from the American *beatnik* culture. A renowned Dutch pacer for this movement was Simon Vinkenoog, a writer and poet who traveled between Amsterdam and Paris on a regular basis. The Dutch youth reduced the existentialist philosophy to just a few superficial elements: authenticity, freedom and the escape from smugness.⁴⁷ In the beginning, a small core group gathered around Vinkenoog, but in the course of the 1950s, more and more groups of young people were drawn to this subculture and they are often called the *artistiekelingen* (the ‘arty types’). They imitate French existentialism, they read and discuss modern literature, drink red wine and listen to jazz music – in particular bebop and cool jazz. Mel van Elteren maintains that the youngsters use this culture in their romantic resistance to the prevalent, narrow-minded and oppressive social climate. Jazz music gives them a chance to escape from this everyday life.⁴⁸ For example, Dutch writer Martin Schouten (1938) was brought up with Christian songs, which he describes as “howling reed organ.”⁴⁹ In an interview he describes how a generational conflict arose after WWII. Schouten would listen to jazz from the AFN and Pete Felleman’s jazz shows. Back then, he says: “if you chose for jazz, then you chose against the conventional, dull culture, and in favor of everything you hated as an 18, 19-year old. Almost all parents were against jazz music.”⁵⁰

Through an increase in leisure time and money, Dutch youth were able to develop their own leisure culture. In this, they used aspects from French existentialism and the American *beatnik* culture. Products of American cultural influence have had a great

⁴⁷ Mel van Elteren, “I’m free and I do what I want,” 176.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, 178-179.

⁴⁹ Wim Noordhoek, *Schrijvers en Jazz*. Radio program. An interview with Remco Campert, Hendrik Jan Marsman, Henk Meijer and Martin Schouten. Leeuwarden: VPRO, 11 March 1988.

⁵⁰ Idem.

influence in this. The modern American music that was to be heard on Dutch radio was jazz, which also was an element from American culture they used in their subculture. The next chapter will focus on four writers who took part in these events and who discuss the role of jazz in their lives in their writings.

Chapter four

Jazz in Dutch Literature

This chapter will focus on four Dutch writers: Henk Romijn Meijer, Bernlef, Remco Campert and Jules Deelder. Besides using their writings, I will make use of an interview by Wim Noordhoek from 1988, in which the writers (with the exception of Deelder) talk about jazz in their youth and literature. In their works all four writers describe how they were introduced to jazz when they were young and how their love for jazz caused generational conflicts. Looking at the stories about the daily lives of these writers, I will analyze the role of American jazz in the cultural and mentality changes in the Netherlands in the 1950s.

Henk Romijn Meijer (1929)

Because everyone in his family played the piano, Henk Romijn Meijer also had to. He was told by his parents that the piano was a respectable instrument and on a violin one could put one's heart and soul into the music. He hated the piano lessons, he thought they were depressing.⁵¹ Everybody knew about classical music, but what the needle was scraping from a jazz record was a big mystery. Was jazz music? This was a serious question, which was most of the time convincingly answered in the negative. According to Meijer, all the better: "Jazz was, to say the least, sounds from an other world that brought about a glow of excitement, which sounded like a hullabaloo in a classroom the teacher could not handle."⁵² In *A Blue Wave at the Coast. Jazz Memories* (1986), Meijer

⁵¹ Wim Noordhoek, *Schrijvers en Jazz*.

⁵² Henk Romijn Meijer, *Een blauwe golf aan de kust. Jazzherinneringen* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1986), 13.

tells how he was first introduced to jazz music. His parents told him that jazz was uncivilized music, and that respectable people should not to listen to it. But in his friend's house he could listen to jazz, because the father of the family had died young. The older brother of the family, who bought a new stereo from his self-earned money would always work through a large pile of records on Sunday morning, probably out of protest against the churchgoing.⁵³ Once Meijer laid his hands on his first jazz record, evil could no longer be repressed. By means of listening to jazz he rebelled against the authorities. Instead, he sought alliance with the elder kids.

Apparently, jazz music offered Meijer something mysterious that he used to escape from the oppressive situation he lived in. He liked jazz and he probably thought that his piano lessons were so depressing because his parents said it was a respectable instrument to play. He also made a connection between the sounds of jazz and disobedient students that rebelled against their teachers. At his friend's place however, there was no leading figure of an older generation who could stop the older brother from listening to jazz. Besides some complaints of the grandmother there was no opposition; the children were free which was fantastic to Meijer.

Bernlef (1937)

In the interview with Wim Noordhoek Bernlef describes how he grew up in a very musical family and in his memory he endlessly had to listen to Mozart, which he describes as an infection, because he hated the effeminate music. Thereupon, he tells an anecdote about how his affection for jazz music came into being. During the endless piano lessons, his teacher always hit him on the fingers with a stick whenever he played a

⁵³ Ibidem, 12.

wrong note: “After I made a mistake for the sixth time in a prelude of Bach, and after she hit me for the sixth time, I ventured to say ‘but this also sounds well.’ Then she said: ‘That is not what this music is about, one has to play what is on the sheet.’ To me, this was wrong. I wanted to improvise, do what I felt like doing.”⁵⁴ In *How to fall down the stairs* (2006) Bernlef continues this story: “But when my piano teacher went home, I would sit down at the piano again and I would hit random keys and chords, without looking at the musical notes and symbols in front of me. Fascinated, I would listen to the sometimes melodious, sometimes unbearable sound combinations that I produced. It became clear to me that the sheet music in front of me was separating me from an awe-inspiring world of sound that was hidden in those keys. But for the time being I had no access to that world. Obediently, I would climb up and down the scales under the supervision of my teacher.”⁵⁵

This anecdote about Bernlef’s piano lessons describes well what in academic texts is meant by the *quiet revolution*. His most rebellious acts were standing up to the piano teacher by disagreeing with her and improvising on the piano when she left the house. To the people from later generations, who were kids in the decades following the 1950s, this probably seems meaningless and innocent. However, as has been mentioned before, since the 1990s, scholars agree that small rebellious acts like these have actually established a foundation upon which the later generations could further work on. Bernlef still was still listening to his parents back then by going to the piano lessons, but he clearly did not believe and accept everything he was told by leading figures in his life anymore.

⁵⁴ Wim Noordhoek, *Schrijvers en Jazz*.

⁵⁵ Bernlef, *Hoe van de trap te vallen* (Amsterdam: Querido, 2006), 9-10.

In another short story in *How to fall down the stairs*, Bernlef recalls how he rebelled in a more obvious way against his school principal and fellow students who did not have the same musical taste and idea about what was exciting as he did. As chairman of the cultural committee, Bernlef was responsible for organizing school social evenings. As a votary of bebop, he saw his way clear to let them hear the music of his choice. He invited *The Diamond Five*, who played unadulterated American jazz. He spent the whole budget for the evening on this jazz band. A number of students and of course the school principal were outraged, so soon after he was fired from the committee. He quite enjoyed the tumultuous time and could not care less about the consequences of his act. He thinks Charlie Parker's ('*Bird*') death was a lot more shocking: "1955. Charlie Parker was dead and all the teachers at school were still alive. A great inequity."⁵⁶ Shortly after this evening and Charlie Parker's death, he painted *Bird Lives* on the school walls, just like the people in New York.⁵⁷

Remco Campert (1929)

Campert was first introduced to jazz music during WWII, which was then called *dance music*, because listening to real American jazz was not allowed by the Germans. After WWII, however, the Americans came and brought jazz and other cultural products that have left a considerable impression on him. He would listen to the AFN that would play jazz music. Later on he would listen to Willis Conover's jazz show on VOA. In the interview he tells that to him and probably many others, the sentence '*Time for Jazz. Willis Conover in Washington, DC. With the Voice of America. Jazz Hour*' is very

⁵⁶ Bernlef, *Hoe van de trap te vallen*, 11.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 13-15.

nostalgic. Besides Conover's show, Campert would also listen to Pete Felleman on the Dutch radio.⁵⁸ The period of time after the liberation and the Americans meant a lot to him and he states that he felt as if the people who were criticizing jazz were even denying his existence.⁵⁹ In *The Gangster Girl* (1992), Campert describes how he would meet up with his friends in jazz bars instead of reading Homer. Besides that, he would wear suede shoes and floral patterned American shirts. He describes jazz music as being awkward, but at the same time familiar, as if it had been written for him, it made him feel recognized.⁶⁰

In Campert's case, no rebellious acts are mentioned in the interview or in his novel, but he gives a good picture of the influence the Americans and their cultural products have on boys of his age, after the liberation of the Netherlands. In the interview he also tells that music did not play a significant role in his family, but he nevertheless listened to the jazz shows on the radio. He was also part of a group of friends who would listen to modern jazz and hang out at jazz clubs and wear outfits with an American tone. Campert did not use jazz to rebel against teachers or parents, but he used it to live a life different from his parents' and to be part of a social age group, and have fun instead of acting like a grown-up.

Jules Deelder (1944)

Deelder's first introduction to jazz was in 1954, one month before his tenth birthday. His sister, who was seven years older, threw a birthday party that a friend of hers attended who had recently been to America. He was wearing American clothes and he had brought

⁵⁸ Wim Noordhoek, *Schrijvers en Jazz*.

⁵⁹ Idem

⁶⁰ Remco Campert, *Het Gangstermeisje* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1965), 52.

several records with him, and one of them played Chet Baker. Because Deelder was just a kid, he had to go to bed early, even though he wanted to stay up and listen to that music. “I found myself between being awake and dreaming and I could hear Chet Baker straying through my head and along the stairs. Something had awakened within me that would never go sleep again. A far, unfulfillable desire.”⁶¹ In this excerpt, Deelder describes how American music had made him aware of something that has had a great impact on him and would last forever.

In his short stories in *Jazz* (1992) he describes how he and his friends were part of a subculture which caused turmoil with the grown-ups. They would buy denim suits and bomber jackets from the American army’s surplus trade, wear blue suede shoes and eye-liner on their upper lips. The principal of the school would fulminate about what was to him a vulgar way of presenting yourself. Deelder however, does not understand this: “During the summer we were not even allowed to wear our shirt over our trousers! That is something we should leave to the Americans.”⁶² Here Deelder nicely puts how older generation Dutch people were afraid of a vulgarization and Americanization of Dutch society, which would kill Dutch culture. To Deelder, to be fond of the rebellious and anti-authoritarian American culture and music was all about escaping from esthetic suffocating and the traditional and paternalistic surroundings: “In Italy Chet Baker was serving time because of dope. We liked that. We were young and susceptible to legends. We felt misunderstood, which gave us satisfaction. We wanted modern jazz.”⁶³

According to Deelder’s principal, jazz was chivari that could be useful in the jungle, but apart from that an attack on one’s hearing: “A primitive cacophony that made

⁶¹ J.A. Deelder, *Jazz: Verhalen en Gedichten* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1992), 23.

⁶² *Ibidem*, 13.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, 11-12.

the youth lose their head and that made a strong appeal to ‘lower instincts.’”⁶⁴ Apart from the fact that American jazz was perceived as vulgar, it was also labeled as *low* culture. As mentioned in Chapter one, the *low brow* aspects of American culture caused resistance from cultural and political authorities. They also feared that the interest in American jazz would work at the expense of *high brow*, western classical music.⁶⁵ Meijer and Bernlef had to play the piano when they were young but they hated it. They did not like that music had to be played in the way the older generation told them to. In other words, they no longer unthinkingly wanted to live and think in the fashion their parents did. Deelder says he wants modern jazz; something had awoken within him when listening to Chet Baker. He wants the modern life, which was brought to him by the Americans. The parents of these writers feared the influences of modern jazz on Dutch culture and the mentality of their children.

The German Swiss who was quoted in Chapter two probably told the truth for many Dutch people in the 1950s: “jazz is not just an art; it is a way of life.” This life he referred to was the modern life which also had far-reaching consequences for all aspects of Dutch life. As Tomlinson argued, the influx of American jazz did not cause total Americanization in Dutch society, but it was the spread of modernity that went hand in hand with a process of cultural loss. By choosing American jazz and by wearing a floral-patterned shirt, Dutch youth demonstrated that they had made the choice for modernity, by means of embracing all aspects of it, even the vulgar ones.

⁶⁴ Deelder, *Jazz*, 13.

⁶⁵ Kleinhout. “Jazz als probleem,” 411.

Conclusion

By looking at jazz as a product of American cultural influence, how it reached the Dutch, the rise of a Dutch youth culture and jazz in Dutch literature, this paper examined how American jazz music was embraced by Dutch youth between 1945 and 1960. After the liberation, a time of reconstruction and new beginnings started, in which the Americans played a significant role. As the guardians of democracy and Western civilization, it was of vital economical and political importance for the U.S. government to keep Western European countries out of the hands of the communist Soviet Union and to make new countries in Africa and Asia choose for the United States. In order to make this happen, U.S. government for example aided Western European countries to recover from the devastating war years. With help from the Marshall Plan, recovery and modernization soon set in. With the money the people earned they could now buy luxury products from America. At the same time, a huge influx of American cultural products in Europe took place. As was shown in Chapter four, as a teenager, Campert was full of awe about the American soldiers and their music, and he feels like they have radically changed his life for the best. Jules Deelder, as well as Campert, describes how he and his friends would wear clothes that would refer to the Americans, for example floral patterned shirts or pilot jackets. Clearly, American culture has left a significant impression on the youngsters of that time.

The people of the older generation were experiencing many changes after WWII. In general, they welcomed American economical and political interference in European life after the hardships they had encountered during WWII. Nevertheless, they were often

less enthusiastic about the American cultural products like movies and popular music, for it was perceived as being vulgar, *low brow* and a threat to Dutch culture and youth. Contrary to prewar generations, they were now seen as teenagers instead of young adults, and they no longer had to grow up so fast. On the one hand, the older generations tried to hold them back in their attempts to reconstruct Dutch society to the prewar model. On the other hand, modernization and the cultural products that came along were very appealing to Dutch youth, like for example American modern jazz. The Dutch young people did not think the American cultural products were having a bad influence. Through increased prosperity and leisure time, in combination with an influx of the American way of life, Dutch youth developed their own youth culture in which they used French existentialism in a combination with the American *beatnik* culture.

Like the writers that have been discussed, many youngsters made the choice for jazz, and therefore the modern life. The leisure culture of the youth was now more shaped by what was to be seen in movies and what was played on the radio than by local, traditional influences. Through this, one could show one's aversion against the prevalent, narrow-minded and oppressive social climate in the Netherlands. Jazz music gave them the opportunity to escape from their everyday life that could be suffocating to them. American culture appealed to them because it offered the improvisational, *low brow* and democratic characteristics they were looking for. The older generations were anxious about jazz, because they thought it would vulgarize and Americanize them. It would not have made any difference if they would have banned jazz out of the youngsters' lives, for it was an inevitable process of cultural loss that takes place in a modernizing country.

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Jackson Pollock

A Cold War Warrior?



Jackson Pollock (American, 1912–1956)
Cathedral, 1947
Enamel and aluminum paint on canvas
Dallas Museum of Art, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis, 1950.87
© Pollock-Krasner Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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Essay 1
3 May 2009

Introduction

The period from the late 1940s until the mid-1950s marks an era in US history during which the war against communism within the United States was probably the fiercest. The term McCarthyism is often used to describe the practices in this period, that caused much anxiety, paranoia, and especially fear among US citizens, but perhaps even more so with the US government itself. It is not surprising, then, that fierce anti-communism had vast consequences for US society, but the promotion of America as a beacon of freedom and democracy was also experienced by people abroad. However, when one compares how US government propagandized the American Way of Life in foreign countries, with how it was actually experienced within America, it is not uncommon to stumble across many contradictions and hypocritical governmental behavior (Whitfield, vii). Even though the crusade softened during the second half of the 1950s, many inconsistencies would last.

For example, Von Eschen points out how jazz musician Louis ‘Satchmo’ Armstrong was lauded abroad and how he was seen as Cold War warrior during the late 1950s, while at the same time, he was not given the very same freedoms in America that he was promoting abroad (Von Eschen, 4). Thus blackness and race operated culturally as “an image of American nationhood that was more inclusive than the reality”. Likewise, abstract expressionist art was also used abroad as a tool of cultural diplomacy, which was the first American art movement that influenced art worldwide. During the 1950s, New York allegedly had surpassed Paris as the center of avant-garde art. Art works by Pollock, de Kooning, and Rothko were exhibited in museums all over Europe and some also at the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM). Jackson

Pollock was promoted overseas as a Cold War cultural warrior whose work represented freedom. It was also said to be improvisational and individualist, just like the United States. However, it was not after the death of Pollock in 1956 that a significant number of people in America started to show interest in his work. It also was not until then that the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) and the Metropolitan Museum started to pay good money for his works.

By using Jackson Pollock's *Cathedral* as a vehicle, this essay will take a closer look at the peculiar role of Abstract expressionism as a cultural commodity abroad during the Cold War. This essay will show that a share of the body of thought behind Pollock's work was partly misconstrued. Pollock's abstract art became a symbol for American democracy and a tool to propagandize modern industrial capitalism, while the artist was actually fairly critical of American society himself. The first section will discuss the USIA and the controversy that arose about which art works were suitable to represent America in the art section at the ANEM, and which were not. The second section will look further into the way that people in America looked upon Pollock's work, and how it was used as a cultural commodity by US government abroad.

Section One

US government started to soften its public diplomacy and campaign against communism in 1953, the year that Stalin died. In that same year, the Eisenhower Administration founded the United States Information Agency (USIA) in its efforts to create a more positive image of the United States abroad and counter Nikita Khrushchev's "New Course". The tasks that were outlined for the USIA had rather schizophrenic characteristics, which also typified the difficulties that the organization would encounter. On the one hand, the USIA was assigned to portray a true image of the United States abroad, by means of showing people in foreign countries that America was a free and peace-loving country, and what it had to offer. On the other hand, however, its task was to also propagandize American institutions and worldview (Pells, 84). Not only did America want to improve its international reputation, US Government also believed that the spread of American culture would entail democracy (Gienow-Hecht 467-468). By creating the USIA, the Eisenhower Administration institutionalized this linkage between the two goals. Examples of the products that were used in the propaganda campaign are film, art, television broadcasts, literature, radio programs, academic exchange programs, newspapers, magazines, and advertising.

One of the major events that the USIA organized was the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM) in the summer of 1959. The main goal of this exhibition was to give the Soviet people a better understanding of the United States, but according to Llewelyn Thompson, the US ambassador to the Soviet Union, it was also designed "to make the Russian people dissatisfied with the share of the Russian pie which they now receive," (Castillo, 261). It was at this exhibition, in a fully geared General Electric

kitchen, where the renowned Kitchen Debate took place between Khrushchev and Vice-President Nixon. But besides a life-size model modern home, American toys, books, art, fashion, cars, music, drinks, architecture, and even voting machines were exhibited to show to the Soviet people the merits of democracy that the American people enjoyed. Some sections at ANEM were harder to put together than others. For example, the developing of the art exhibition gave rise to much controversy in both the United States and the Soviet Union, which serves as an interesting example of the peculiar task of the USIA.

As mentioned above, US government wanted America to be portrayed at the ANEM as a free and peace-loving society. Adding to that, because the United States was not particularly well-known for its legacy of “high” culture, they wanted the USIA to send high quality art works to Moscow, which “cannot be used as a proof of the decadence existing under a capitalist system” (Williams quoted in Kushner, 10). According to several politicians and conservative organizations, quite a few of the selected art works did not meet these prerequisites. In addition to the works of art in which American society was being criticized, many were alarmed about the abstract expressionist. Many people could not make anything of the movement, and they therefore did not acknowledge the quality of the art. For example, Jackson Pollock’s *Cathedral*, a “drip style” painting that was selected for the ANEM, was denounced by Wheeler Williams as “a meaningless scribble” (Williams quoted in Kushner, 15).

Moreover, Francis E. Walter, Democrat and the chair of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), announced in Congress that over half of the 67 artists that had been chosen to represent America were affiliated with Communism (Kushner,

10). They saw abstract art as a Communist weapon that was a threat to the American way of life. It would therefore be incorrect to use art from that movement as a weapon of cultural diplomacy, because this would prove to the Soviet people that America was a hotbed for Communism. This resulted in a clash with the people who thought that it was more important for the art exhibition to show that artists actually had freedom of expression in America, and therefore their political affiliation or style of art should not be of concern. (Kushner, 12). Not surprisingly, this discussion also caught the attention of the Soviet newspapers, who used Walter's concern of using works of "communist" artists as proof for anti-freedom sentiments in the United States. Because artists who worked under the authoritarian Soviet regime were not allowed to paint in any other style but Socialist realism, it is rather ironic that the Soviet newspapers were criticizing the US government for not respecting the freedom of expression of American artists, yet they were making a valid claim.

Although the works that Williams and Walter criticized were not excluded from the exhibition, the USIA actually did censor art exhibitions that in their opinion were not suitable for representing America abroad previously in the 1950s (Sandler, 70). In the end, in the discussion about the arts section at the ANEM, the people who wanted to propagandize the diversity in American art and the freedom to paint what the artist wanted to paint reached the upper hand. On the one hand, this can be seen as a sign that public diplomacy became less hypocritical. On the other hand, the fact that there was so much controversy caused seems to assert that America itself was still really divided about what to make of abstract art. The next section will look further into the abstract

expressionist movement, and how the ideas behind Pollock's work were misconstrued for the purposes of cultural diplomacy.

Section Two

Today, Jackson Pollock (1912 - 1956) is celebrated as one of the most important and greatest American artists of the 20th century. Taking into consideration that he did not perfect his “drip” technique until 1947, this is quite a spectacular achievement. Because he died at a very young age in 1956, he had had the chance to paint in the abstract style of art for only a few years. Until the late 1930s, Pollock still painted in the regionalist style. In these works, Pollock demonstrated “an interest in the American scene, in further exploring an art of social contract” (Doss, 328). After 1938, Pollock’s style shows a shift from regionalism to abstract expressionism. Although his later paintings are non-objective, this does not mean that Pollock left his interest in America and the social contract. According to Pollock, the postwar era required new techniques: “It seems to me that the modern painter cannot express this age, the airplane, the atom bomb, the radio, in the old forms of the Renaissance or of any other past culture. Each age finds its own technique” (Pollock quoted in Doss, 331).

Pollock used the abstract imagery for personal expression and healing. Because his work is non-objective, the social meaning is less obvious than with regionalism, however, Pollock still proposed social change. When one considers Pollock’s political thoughts and the reasons behind his choice for abstract art, it seems very peculiar why Pollock is nowadays seen as a Cold War warrior. According to Erika Doss, Pollock’s abstract work reflects his anxiety with postwar American society in which he experienced social alienation. The artist was particularly critical of the consensus, conformity, consumerism, and shallowness that in his opinion characterized the postwar American Way of Life (Doss 347). By means abstract expressionism, Pollock (and his peers)

thought that the works would be free of ideology. By these means, Pollock aimed to “avoid any potential commercial and/or political manipulation of [his] own modern art” (Doss, 354). He did this to steer clear of misinterpretation and misuse of art, something he had witnessed more than once with works by his regionalist teacher Thomas Hart Benton.

As we know now, the abstract expressionists did not succeed in this effort. The main reason behind this is because of another element of Pollock’s work, which was its strong individualist character. This aspect made his works very suitable for US government to embrace the movement, and use it as a tool of cultural diplomacy. Because abstract expressionism was a-political, improvisational, truly individualist and free from aesthetic rules, Pollock’s work seemed perfect to counter socialist realism from the Soviet Union, which was characterized by tradition, stagnation, and authority. For the reason that socialist realism was very political, abstract expressionism came to be the opposite of the Soviet style, and as a consequence it was translated into a symbol for modern capitalistic industrialism. Bearing in mind Pollock’s critique on American society that was caused by capitalistic industrialism, it seems very strange that his art was chosen for the exhibition in Moscow.

Paradoxically enough, the non-objective character of abstract expressionism was another characteristic that made it possible for the USIA to appropriate it. Because it was not figurative, the art works had no clear references to the outside world. The people who would look at the paintings would not immediately recognize Pollock’s personal critique on American society; but they would be able to make it their own, giving it their own interpretation. Moreover, by selecting *Cathedral* and other abstract art for the ANEM, as

well as more traditional and figurative American art, the USIA aimed for the Soviet people to recognize the variety of art movements in the United States, as well as the lucid differences between socialist realism and abstract expressionism. Whereas it was mandatory for Soviet artists to paint a certain way with a fixed subject matter, American artists were allowed to express themselves in the way they wanted to.

The Soviet people who visited the art section in Moscow were there to see for themselves what America was really like. Many of those people did not know what to make of the abstract expressionist art, and they described Jackson Pollock's *Cathedral* as "mocking" and "grotesque". But whether they liked it or not, it did spark a discussion among the people about political freedom, so the USIA had succeeded in their aim (Kushner, 19). The visitors saw that the American people were free to paint other styles, and they understood that artists were allowed to criticize their government, for example. The way in which Pollock's art work was commodified by the USIA shows another example of how the image of America that the US government promoted abroad only partly corresponded with Pollock's ideas. By means of abstract expressionism his work revealed a strong sense of individualism and spontaneity, something he could not have done in the Soviet Union. However, this individualist aspect of his work was used to propagandize a way of life from which he himself felt alienated.

Conclusion

Although the period of 1947 to 1950 is commonly seen as the years of Pollock's breakthrough, the website of the Dallas Museum of Art states that there were a total of only three museums worldwide that owned a painting made by Pollock, when they received *Cathedral* (1947) as a gift in 1950. Without denying the greatness and beauty of Pollock's work, I agree with Cockcroft when she states that politics played a very important part in the triumph of abstract expressionism (Cockcroft, 43).

In 1959, *Cathedral* became one of many American artifacts to promote the American Way of Life at the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM). This essay showed the schizophrenic aspects of the role of the United States Information Agency (USIA) during the Cold War. On the one hand, the organization had to show the "real" America abroad, but at the same time they also had to propagandize it. As a result of this, images of America came to be presented abroad that was more inclusive than American society in reality was. The way that the USIA commodified abstract expressionism also shows several incongruities. For example, within the United States, Pollock's art was seen by some people as a meaningless, un-American scribble. However, Pollock's *Cathedral*, which he made for personal expression and healing, in which the consensus and shallowness of American society was criticized, came to represent the American Way of Life at the ANEM. This example neatly shows the difficult task of the USIA as it commodified cultural products for political purposes abroad.

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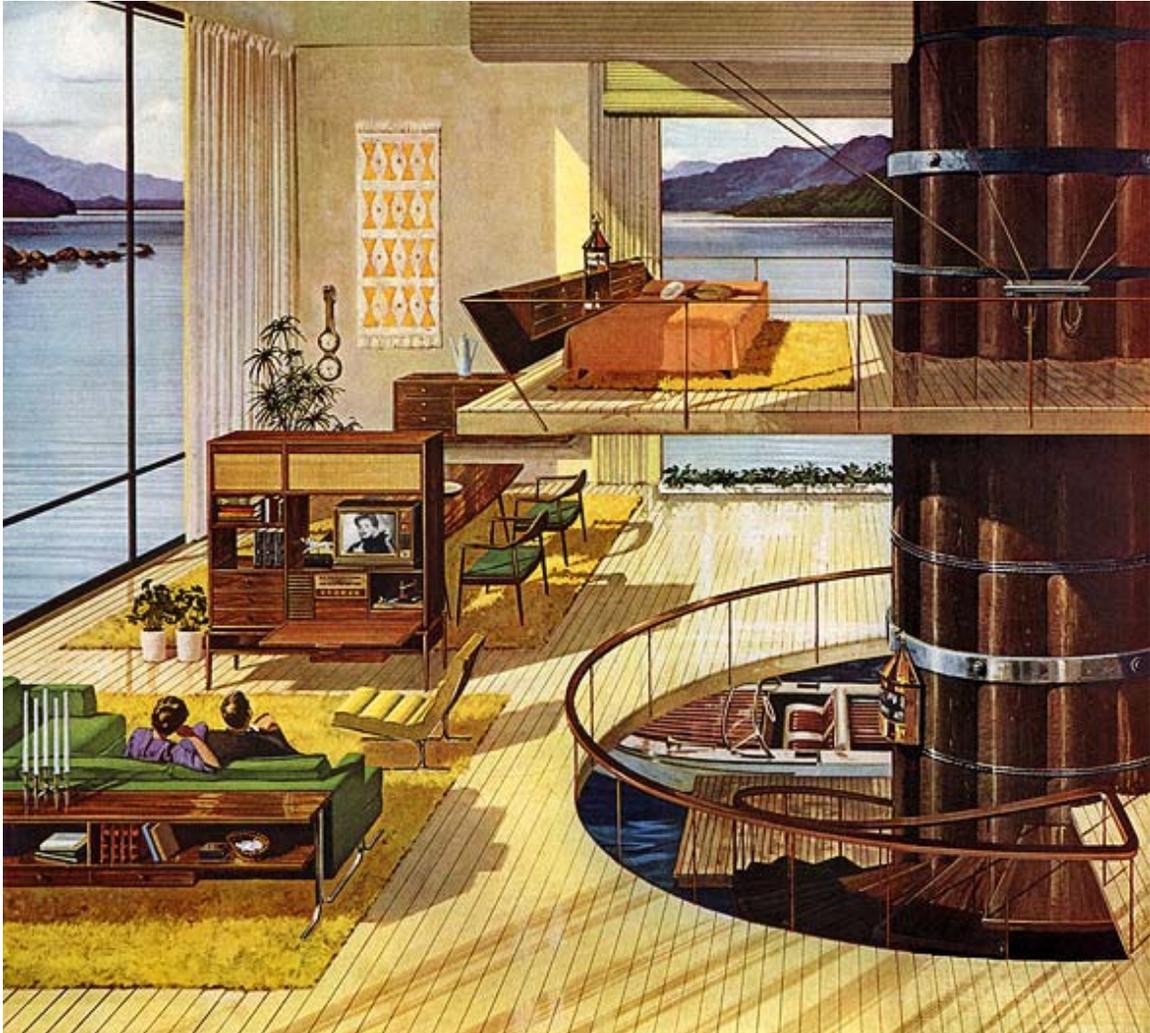
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The Shape of the Future



Motorola, 1962

www.plan59.com

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Cold War Culture
Final paper
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Introduction

Because most of Europe lay in ruins after World War II, the United States had become the economic, technological, political, military and cultural hegemon. Whereas before, America had sometimes been insecure about its standing in the world, the newly acquired world dominance gave an incredible boost to the country's confidence. With the arrival of the 1950s, America was the place for countries overseas to look to for inspiration. They were envious of American homes, their products, and the "American Way of Life". One characteristic of this way of life was that a large share of the population never had it so good, for the reason that the purchasing power had strongly increased, concurring with the wealth of the nation.

The lives of American people seemed to be changing faster than ever before, as technology and wealth became available to more and more people. Being average and ordinary was not satisfying anymore. These times of progress and prosperity caused justifiable feelings of excitement and optimism, which nourished a forward look, a look into the future; the sky became the limit. In this period, "the greatness of America would be expressed by enrichment of the environment, and by the addition of new equipment to the household, and by giving up European models and, instead, finding aspiration in the American past, and most of all, the future" (Hine, 4).

The aim of this paper is to show how the American people expressed this forward look. Which shapes did they use to indicate the future? What were the aesthetics of the future? By looking at shapes and designs of American homes, clothing, and furniture, this paper will argue that the fascination of the American people with the future can be found

the shape of pieces of furniture in their homes, and even in what the people were wearing. The images I am referring to in the text can be found in the appendix in the back of the essay.

The boomerang shape

In *Populuxe*, Thomas Hine argues that a common feature of American artifacts from the 1950s was that they were fun, fashionable, fantastic, and futuristic. The fascination of the American people with the future can also be seen in the aesthetics of items from this period. For example, high fashion and pieces of furniture from the 1950s often look rather futuristic, and had a modern feel to them, even though the functionality of these products did not differ from lamps, tables and dresses from the 1940s. Also, the shapes of these items also seem to fit well together in their home, which means that they need to have a certain commonality. The images that will be discussed in this section will show that this commonality was that all items gave out a certain modern elegance, and the shapes were often characterized by bent, aerodynamic curves.

According to Hine, the pointed boomerang is the most distinctive shape of the 1950s. Where cabinet handles, coffee tables and table-legs would before have been straight or square, as the 1950s unfolded these lines were more and more bent, creating the boomerang shape (Hine, 113). It is not really known where the shape originated from, but during the 1950s it was the shape of the future. The aerodynamic curves resembled forward movement, flight, and speed. This has also to do with the fact that the shape was

similar to that of wings and fighter planes. When the angle of the boomerang was pointing up, it would remind people of upward movement, like a rocket taking off for space.

Images 1 to 3 are pieces of furniture that originate from the 1950s and that were designed by Vladimir Kagan. Born in Germany, Kagan moved to the United States in 1938 where he would become a celebrated designer of several iconic pieces. His modernist sensibility has influenced the designs and shapes of the 1950s. The first image shows Kagan's *Countour Rocker*. Practically all curves that are incorporated in the chair and the foot rest have the aerodynamic boomerang shape. The upward pointing boomerang shape of the support of the foot rest resembles the 1959 logo of Chrysler Corporation, which according to Hine referred to the space age (Hine, 114). Image 2 is a photo of another rocking chair designed by Kagan from ca. 1955. The rocking support of this chair is very pointy in the back, which gives it this extra futuristic look.

The blob and sheath shape

The third image shows a coffee table designed by Kagan, and the form just breathes the 1950s. The leg of the table has the boomerang shape that can be seen from all sides, because the tabletop is made of glass. Not only the glass gives it an extra modern look, but the tabletop itself also has the same dynamic feel as the boomerang leg, although it is slightly different. The shape of the tabletop is known as the "blob," which according to Hine demonstrated "modern ideas and sophisticated taste" (Hine, 116). The

round, organic form resembles the biomorphic shapes of the pallet and the amoeba, which are also forms that are often used in modern designs, but also in avant-garde art.

In some instances, avant-garde art would be used to make designs look even more modern. In March 1951, fashion magazine *Vogue* showed high fashion dresses displayed by models in front of a Jackson Pollock painting (Image 4). According to Erika Doss, the photographer did this to make the dress look more elegant and appealing. Moreover, it elevated the outfit “to the category of extraordinary” (Doss, 408-409). The dress in the photograph is definitely high fashion, and not something many women would commonly wear in and around the house during the 1950s. However, it is still useful to look at high fashion, because the form, fabric and style that is used in high fashion does designate what people thought of as modern and elegant at that time. As a result, the looks, shapes and lines that are used for the designs of “mainstream clothing” can be traced back to high fashion. The model in the photo is wearing a black, hourglass-shaped dress. On the back of the dress a boomerang-shaped piece of fabric is sticking out to accentuate the woman’s body shape.

Especially the strong accentuation on the woman’s waist-line was very fashionable at that time. The sheath shape was not only used in fashion, but it was also often used in lamps and consumer products, for example. The advertisement for Jantzen swimsuits shows how those designs also incorporated the sheath shape (Image 5). The advertisement says that Jantzen’s designs have “glimmer for glamour”. By looking at the lines, shapes, colors, and also the effect that it apparently had on men, the 1950s were truly fun, fashionable, fantastic, and futuristic. It is also interesting to see how the

boomerang shape was even used in the lines and the strapless top parts of the swimsuits of both the metallic and the pink swimsuit on the left side of the advertisement.

The Flying Saucer

As I have mentioned above the United States had become the world leader in both science and technology after World War II. Technological changes made the people optimistic and excited about the future, as it seemed more and more as if it would not take long before technology and scientific research would solve all problems for humanity (Tyler May, 156). The idea that anything was possible was strengthened by the developments in space exploration. Now space travel and satellites was close to becoming a reality, people felt like the future really had arrived. During the 1950s, the race for military power and technology with the Soviet Union would set off the “space race”. Officially, the space age began when the Soviet Union successfully launched Sputnik I, which was the world’s first artificial satellite, but the preoccupation of the American people with the space age was translated into mythical representations in designs and imagery already before that.

One of the most fascinating designs that was used in space age aesthetics was the flying saucer, because people were not only preoccupied with going into space, but also with creatures that could come to Earth from outer space. The threat of creatures coming to Earth caught the imagination of many American people during the 1950s, which was expressed in many different ways. For example, the flying saucer was a very popular

subject in science fiction movies, novels, and graphic novels. The design was also used in roadside architecture in an attempt to grab the attention of the people who were driving by (Hine, 118).

The space age shape could also be found in more surprising places, like the decoration of homes. Images 6 to 8 each show how the flying saucer was regularly used in the design of lamps. As was mentioned before in this essay, the functionality of these lamps did not differ from lamps from previous decades. However, the imagery of the design caught the imagination of the people, because of the spacey look. With these lamps, they created a more futuristic feel in their houses, which suited their excitement and imagination of the 1950s.

Appendix

Image 1 *Contour Rocker*

Vladimir Kagan

ca. 1955

Source: www.vladimirkagan.com

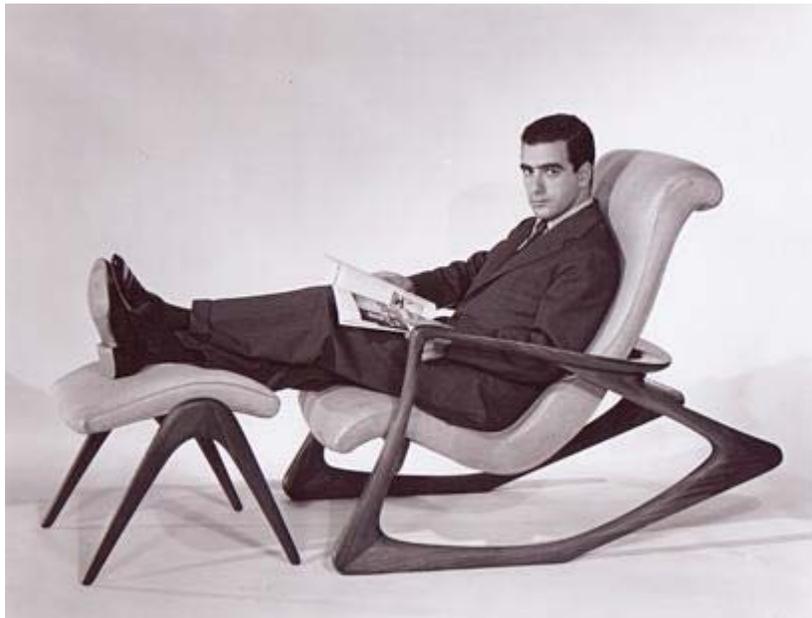


Image 2

Rocker

Vladimir Kagan

Year unknown

Source: www.vladimirkagan.com



Image 3 *Boomerang Shaped Coffee Table*

Vladimir Kagan

Year unknown

Source: www.vladimirkagan.com



Image 4 *Spring Ball Gowns*

Cecil Beaton

Vogue, 1 March 1951

Source: <http://static.open.salon.com>



Image 5 *Glimmer for Glamour*

Pete Hawley

1954

Source: <http://blog.voyou.org>



glimmer
for glamour...

with
Jantzen
"shape-insurance"

Jantzen
best of all swim suits

Image 6 *Flying Saucer Lamp 1*

SightLight M.G. Wheeler Co. Inc., Greenwich

ca. 1955

Source: www.flickr.com



Image 7 *How to keep an executive (happy)*

Edward Lehman

1959

Source: www.plan59.com



Image 8 *Flying Saucer Lamp 3*

Year unknown

Source: Thomas Hine. *Populuxe*. Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press
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Paradoxes in the Native American struggle

According to Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson, “the image of the vanishing Indian has proved a myth,” for the Native American population has become more visible since the 1960s, due to urbanization and a firm foothold that Native American literature has gained in America (1994, 519). Therefore, Native American protest movements have also become more apparent in American society. These movements put forward the struggles faced by Native American society and the campaign against *white* interference, and in favour of Indian self-determination. This essay will argue that it is very paradoxical that Native American writers and protest movements struggle for the preservation of Native American culture, through the government authorities that have caused the economic, cultural, ecological and political destruction for the American Indians. The writers also abandon Native ways of storytelling and their oral tradition, actually placing themselves in the writers’ community. Therefore, the Native Americans actually might have become more *invisible* than before. To substantiate my thesis, Sherman Alexie’s *Indian Killer* (1998) and several theoretical texts will be discussed.

Alexie’s *Indian Killer* exposes social questions that are dealt with by Native Americans in the form of a murder mystery. The novel brings several points of criticism concerning white interference in Indian culture to the foreground. Alexie’s main focus is

on the struggle of John Smith, a schizophrenic Native American adopted by white parents, who struggles to belong somewhere: “John knew that his silence was acceptable, but he also knew that he could have asked about her tribe, that Indians quizzed Indians [...] He was afraid she would discover that he was an Indian without a tribe” (Alexie 1998, 35). John finds himself living within two cultures, which is very damaging to his mind and body. This eventually leads to his death by suicide, which allows him to end his suffering. The adoption of John by white parents and his tragic course of life serve as an example of the consequences of harm being done by white people, even when they try to do well. In *A Declaration of Indian Purpose* from 1961, Indians also state: “What we ask of America is not charity, not paternalism, even when benevolent” (Hurtado 1994, 522). You could state Sherman Alexie agrees, given John Smith’s struggle and that of other Native Americans in his novel.

Another complex situation that Alexie puts forward is about Dr. Mather, a white anthropologist who teaches Native American Literature. His friendship with Reggie, a Native American student, was broken when Reggie was told about the tapes on which Indian stories were recorded. Dr. Mather thinks these tapes are of vital importance to the Indian community, because recording them is the only way for the stories to survive. However, Reggie argues that the recordings can only harm Native American culture: “‘Stories die because they’re supposed to die,’ Reggie said. [...] ‘I’m sure the elders definitely didn’t understand how these stories were going to be used. [...] Burn the tapes’” (Alexie 1998, 137-138). This discussion between Reggie and Dr. Mather mirrors the situation Sherman Alexie is in, as a writer. Before the Europeans came to America, the Indians were storytellers. The paradox here is that Alexie is not part of that tradition, and

now finds himself within the writers' community, writing in the English language about the Indians' struggles with a largely white audience. According to Ortiz, this does not lead to a diminishing of authenticity, for it is typically Indian to appropriate the other (1981, 12). But when you start to appropriate the ways of the people that are actually destroying your culture, you could conclude that it will eventually lead to cultural self-destruction, for two cultures gradually become one. Lauter argues that people need to read the stories of the people that were previously ignored and marginalized, in order for their culture to survive (1990, 31). Alexie nicely puts forward what happens when professors like Dr. Mather is teaching students about that literature. According to Marie and Reggie Polatkin, the literature that is presented comes in no way near to a representative view of for example reservation life. Then what culture is surviving here, really?

Several essays and documents by Native Americans about the struggle for self-determination describe how Indians try to preserve Indian culture and identity by means of Federal law-making. Ada Deer, for example, describes how she fought for her land and people. The way she succeeded was by "making the system work" (Hurtado 1994, 525). She realized that a powwow dance would not solve her problems; she tells in an almost cynical way she really had to "get involved," and stay persistent, even if it took to bribe the people from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Hurtado 1994, 527). Apparently, she had to get involved in the *white man's world*, do it their way, to make something happen for her community.

An example of an important document that also shows legal action against white interference is the *Indian Child Welfare Act* from 1978. In this article, minimum Federal

standards are set for removal of Indian children from their families. The goal of these standards is that the break-up of Indian families will be prevented, by means of for example finding a solution for problems that concern children within the Native American community. For instance, this could have meant for John Smith that he would have been adopted by Indian parents in stead of white parents. To what extent, however, are you still preserving your culture, and moving towards self-determination, when you succumb to *their* way of dealing with these kinds of situations, actually empowering white people to make final decisions about your people's children, your future? It might look as if solutions like these are empowering Indians, but does this it really result in a loss of power and authenticity instead?

Perhaps the Native Americans have actually become invisible, as John Smith suggested in *Indian Killer*. “John the Indian was walking and his audience was briefly interested, because Indians were briefly interesting. White people no longer feared Indians. Somehow, near the end of the twentieth century, Indians had become invisible, docile” (Alexie 1998, 30). One the one hand it looks like Native Americans are making progress in preserving their culture and identity through for example law-making and the preservation and recognition of the Indian stories and struggles. On the other hand, the stories are written down in English and analyzed by white anthropologists. Also, the laws are made by the same institution that has a history of only making destructive moves towards Indian culture, and that has the final vote in the issues. It will not change a past of broken treaties for the Native Americans, who will more and more melt into a dominant American culture.

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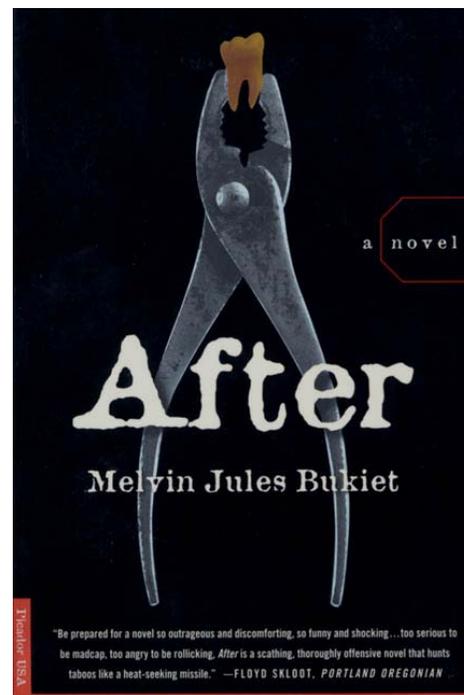
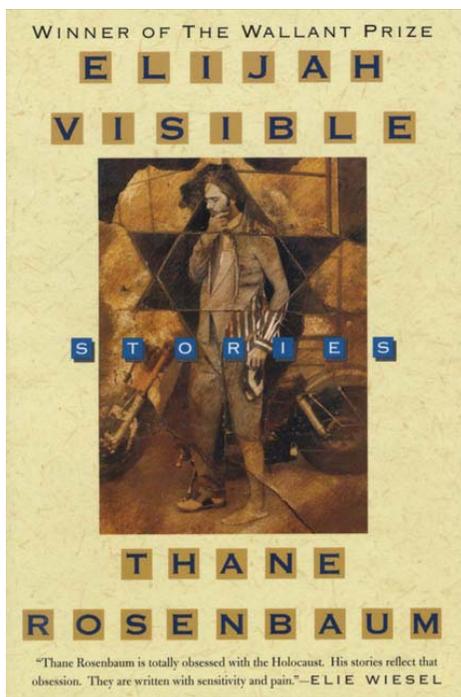
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The Storm After the Calm

Two works of fiction by second-generation writers



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Introduction

Whereas the Holocaust these days has become an accepted topic in cultural expressions, the Holocaust did not loom large in American movies, theatre, and literature until the late 1970s. In *In Search of American Jewish Culture* (1999), Stephen J. Whitfield argues that the scale and the inconceivability of the horrors of the Holocaust had paralyzed the consciences of the American Jews (169). In 1957, Nathan Glazier performed a survey on the significance of the Holocaust for the American Jewish people. He was surprised by the outcome, because it indicated that the Holocaust had had a “remarkably slight” impact on the lives of American Jews. Glazier concludes that American Jews were mainly busying themselves with assimilating into suburbanized America, instead of mourning the past (Whitfield 171, Gans 438). Roughly thirty years after Glazier’s findings, a 1989 survey shows that the interest of American Jews in the Holocaust had increased strongly over just a few decades. Contrary to the 1950s, the Holocaust now functioned as the symbol that American Jews identified themselves with most, above Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, American anti-Semitism, and even God (Whitfield 186).

There exists little consensus on the causes behind this rise of interest and affinity with the Holocaust. According to Peter Novick, the entry of the Holocaust into American discourse was consciously planned by “Jews [who played] an important and influential role in Hollywood, the television industry, and the newspaper, magazine, and book publishing worlds” (208). Their objective was not only to make the American people more aware of the Holocaust, but also to raise more sympathy for Israel (208). Herbert J. Gans makes a more subtle statement, suggesting that the mass media, which was indeed dominated by Jews, was simply reacting to the rising interest in the Holocaust (440). Whether intentionally or not, several Holocaust-related events took place in different segments of American life during the late 1970s that were covered widely in the American press. For example, in April 1978, the immensely popular NBC mini-series *Holocaust* appeared on TV. In 1977 and 1978, there was a nationwide indignation when American neo-Nazis sought the right to march in Skokie, Illinois, where many Holocaust-survivors lived. In addition to that, the Justice Department’s Office of Special Investigation was

established in those same years, which was designed to track down Nazi war criminals (Whitfield, Gans, Novick).

Eye-catching events like these show that the silence around the Holocaust was shattered. This development is also noticeable when looking at subject matter in Jewish American literature. Until the 1980s, Jewish American literature could often be characterized by post-immigrant writers whose subject matter was focused on assimilation in America. According to Judith Burnstein, a renewed interest in ethnic identity and the Holocaust led to a New Wave in Jewish American literature that took shape in the 1980s, in which young writers started to look back to their ethnic past (6). A special group of writers that belong to this new wave are the children of Holocaust survivors, also known as the second generation, of which approximately 150.000 live in the United States today. Returning subject matter in Jewish American literature by the second generation is what inheriting the Holocaust has meant for the second generation and their ethnic identity in the United States (Berger).

The aim of this research paper is to explore this subject matter by researching works of fiction by second-generation writers. The writings that will be used are the novel *After* by Melvin Jules Bukiet (1996) and Thane Rosenbaum's collection of short stories, *Elijah Visible* (1996). Both authors are children of Holocaust survivors and discuss the impact of the Holocaust on personal and collective Jewish identity in the aftermath of the catastrophe. The first section of this research paper will look at the powerful novel *After*, in which Bukiet portrays the lives of a group of survivors who try to survive in immediate postwar Germany, searching for meaning and identity after the Holocaust. The second section will focus more on the generational effects of the Holocaust by exploring several short stories from Rosenbaum's *Elijah Visible*. The central figure in these stories is struggling with his family's past, which is conveyed by on the one hand a refusal to grant Hitler a posthumous victory, holding on to Jewish traditions and his Jewish ethnic identity, but on the other hand he is at a total loss with practicing Jewish rituals, they do not create the same stir with him as they did with his parents. This research paper argues that these

second-generation novelists display a great sense of loss of belief, rituals, symbolism, and spirituality. By means of showing this they want to confront the readers with what they and their parents have been denied because of the Holocaust. Adding to that, they also want the readers to see the continuing impact of the Holocaust on their lives and on collective Jewish identity.

1.

After

As a member of the second generation, Bukiet feels that he has the responsibility to tell the people to “Never Forget!” (Bukiet, Introduction 16). His raging novel *After* will not make one forget soon, as it grabs the attention of the reader with black humor and cynicism, powerfully confronting him with the loss of values, beliefs and customs that people have caused the European Jews during the Holocaust. Although *After* belongs to the genre of Holocaust literature, it does not touch upon the Holocaust itself. Bukiet, like most second-generation novelists, considers it to be off-limits for himself as a novelist and disrespectful to the survivors to enter the realm of the Holocaust with his imagination. Nonetheless, what he does know best as a child of Holocaust survivors is the aftermath. After all, “[t]he Second Generation's very existence is dependent on the whirlwind their parents barely escaped” (Bukiet, Introduction 13). Therefore, the story starts off with the liberation of the lagers in immediate postwar Germany, where three young men who survived the concentration camps end up together. In a small German town they start a gang of swindlers that manages to get by with fraudulent activities on the local black market. Together they live in a room of a German landlady who serves as a cover for their business. The leader of the trio, nineteen-year-old schemer Isaac Kaufman, calls it an ideal Union, “Germans and Jews working together to skin the Yankees,” but he has bigger plans than just a few small scams (163).

One day he discovers a large cube filled with “Eighteen tons of golden ingots created from fillings pried from the teeth of the Jews of Eastern Europe,” kept safe behind the gates of a US Army installation (101). In the course of the novel, a plan is forged to get to the gold. Isaac’s companion, Dr. Marcus Morgenstern, also dentist and forger, says: “Think of the pain it represents” (101). Isaac replies: “Screw the pain. Think of the money” (102). *After* is filled with

harsh remarks like these and they underline the differences between the lives of the leading characters before and after the Holocaust. The scars that the Holocaust has left on the Isaac's soul have given him a cynical view of the postwar world where morality does not exist anymore. Already soon after the Holocaust, Isaac observes that "[a]ll his ideas about life were no longer valid" (12).

Among the losses after the Holocaust mentioned in *After*, a strong focus lies on the loss of spirituality, as religious symbols and traditions do not serve a purpose anymore. For example, during a belated celebration of Passover in Dachau, a group of survivors do not intend to make sacrifices by eating just ritual foods in Seder like matzo. At this celebration an ex-prisoner cries out: "Any bread is good bread as far I'm concerned. Raisin bread. Corn bread. Onion bread with caraway seeds. Tortilla. Chapatis. Baguettes". Then another person present replies: "It is the bread of affliction," The ex-prisoner claims: "No bread can ever symbolize affliction again" (34). Here something like food that before was a symbol for affliction now has a very different significance to the survivors now, because they will now eat anything just to stay alive. The survivors at the dinner also ask for non-kosher food such as pork and Yorkshire pudding. They not longer care about the symbolism behind this ritual, because the affliction they endured in the concentration camps is so much larger than what some bread could ever symbolize.

Besides the loss of meaning of rituals and symbolism, the novel also refers several times to a loss of belief. During a heavy drinking session, former yeshiva boy Fishl says: "'Tell me about a God who gives the world to the German murderers and to us, who bow and pray, he gives worse than nothing, he gives...' 'Dreck and claptrap,' Isaac declared. 'He gives dreck and I've never heard such self-indulgent claptrap in all my life.' [...] 'If this is what freedom brings, then put me back into the lager where I can understand what people are saying. [...] The last thing I needed then and the last thing I need now is theology'" (121). Without morality, symbolism, rituals, and belief, it is no longer clear to Isaac what it means to him to be Jewish in this new world that is being shaped after the Holocaust: "Did Jews survive? I don't know what a Jew is

anymore. I don't think that I bear any resemblances to my father or my grandfather or some ancestor with camels. Things are different now" (156-157).

Another lasting consequence of the Holocaust that is portrayed in *After* is the loss of knowledge and tradition. A striking example of this loss takes place in a paper factory, where Fishl witnesses the destruction of several dozen encyclopedic volumes from the archives of the Jewish community of Lodz, which was necessary to supply the postwar world with paper it desperately needed. To Fishl, the destruction of the books resembles the systematic exhaustion and killing of the Jews in the concentration camps: "The books moved along until the conveyor belt looped underneath itself and the books dropped off the edge in a fashion that reminded Fishl of the workers at Mauthausen" (210). Together with the destroying of the millions of human lives and pages, centuries-long worth of history and tradition was destroyed too, which would never be passed on to the next generation again. The people who survived the Holocaust were often young, orphaned Jews. They would often miss out on knowledge about their family history, religion, and traditions that are very important in giving somebody an ethnic identity.

The things the characters do know from before seem to serve no real purpose anymore after the Holocaust. For example, in the case of Isaac, Bukiet describes how "Born free into the rubble, [Isaac] worried that time Before was merely a tantalizing fantasy. Life began in May of 1945, and everything before that was primordial flux" (197). However, this is even the same with Fishl, the former yeshiva boy, because he does not come to the factory to stop the destruction of the books, but because the gang of swindlers needs the paper that the factory produces to make false identification cards, which they use to trick the Americans who actually saved them from the lagers. This shows that, in Bukiet's *After*, even for the most orthodox Jews, ethnic history, tradition, and knowledge have taken on a different meaning, or in some cases even lost their meaning due to the Holocaust.

This section discussed how loss of spirituality, belief, knowledge, and morality after the Holocaust is displayed in *After*. Bukiet's novel repeatedly draws the reader's attention to the

differences between the lives of the survivors before the Holocaust, and after the Holocaust. By using harsh cynicism and black humor he gives away his rage about these losses that the survivors would have to carry with them for the rest of their lives. In the introduction to *Nothing Makes You Free: Writings by Descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors* (2003) Bukiet writes: “Fifty some years ago, the End of Days arrived for one third of the Jews on earth. Nonetheless, the literature of the Khurbn, with few exceptions until now [...] has not been written in the voice of lunacy and apocalyptic frenzy. That voice explodes with renewed vigor in the Second Generation, whose fury at what they have been denied—history, deity, grandparents—comes out on the page” (Bukiet, Introduction 21). This most certainly also applies to his own novel *After*. He shows the physical and mental scars that the Holocaust left on the survivors of the concentration camps, but he also shows how they were confronted with the improbable task to put all their memories and feelings away in order to move forward.

2.

Elijah Visible

The front cover of Thane Rosenbaum's *Elijah Visible* shows an image of a contemplating man whose body is partly dressed in a nice suit, partly in the typical striped garment of a concentration camp prisoner. In the background stands a motorcycle, presumably owned by the man, and a Star of David surrounds the man in the picture, exemplifying his Jewish identity. This image nicely displays Adam Posner's life in *Elijah Visible*. *Elijah Visible* is a collection of nine short stories about Adam Posner, who is severely traumatized by a tragedy he never faced. His parents survived the Holocaust and moved to the United States to leave their European past behind them forever, but they never managed to leave the Holocaust behind them. By taking a close look at several short stories from the book, this section will deal with the generational consequences of the Holocaust in Rosenbaum's work, as well as the effects of modernity on Jewish identity in the United States.

Adam's world is introduced in the startling opening story, *Cattle Car Complex*. In this story, Adam is a young and hardworking attorney. Late at night, he is on his way home when his descending elevator stalls. Locked in this tight space he becomes very anxious and starts to panic. In this panic attack he imagines the space around him being transformed into a cattle car, like one that was used to relocate his parents. Severely confused he mistakes the people who want to help him for Nazis and he starts to yell at them: "Why should we be forced to resettle? This is our home. We are Germans! We have done nothing wrong! Nazis! Murderers!" (8) When he is freed from this distressing place he is still puzzled. He thinks he has arrived at the camps where he will be selected for mass murder: "right or left, in which line was he required to stand?" (11). This baffling story shows how an unlamented past can traumatize people in a next generation, such as Adam who is clearly damaged by the inherited memories of his parents.

Each tale shows Adam in a different phase of his life. In *An Act of Defiance* he is a professor in Holocaust Studies, who drowns himself in his parents' memories. His parents have passed away, but he feels the need to keep on carrying their burden. He has small ways of "denying a victory for the Nazis," for example by always showing up at appointments too late, because the Nazis were always on time. But because he had not actually been in the camps, he feels inauthentic doing these things. He even feels guilty for not having been in the Holocaust: "I had created my own ghosts from memories that were not mine. I wasn't there, in Poland, among the true martyrs. Everything about my rage was borrowed. My imagination had done all the work—inventing suffering, without the physical scars, the incontestable proof" (59).

In this story, his Uncle Haskall from Belgium comes to visit him in New York, which makes him very excited because Uncle Haskall is a Holocaust survivor, like his parents. However, he is not at all the person Adam expected him to be. Unlike Adam's parents, Uncle Haskall is an optimistic man who tries to enjoy his life despite of what he had to go through in the past. "They wanted to kill us all, and they failed. I won't give them the satisfaction by living an unhappy life. You see, Adam, my life, with all the riches and pleasures I allow myself, is an act of defiance. I am an assassin to their mission" (66). He has a very different way of dealing with the Holocaust than Adam's father had. Uncle Haskall describes Adam's father as a man who silently suffered all his life: "A private death traveled with him, wherever he went, a ghost always on his shoulder, whispering into his ear, not letting him eat, work, rest" (66). When Uncle Haskall makes this comparison it becomes painfully clear that Adam bears many resemblances with his father. He has a very pessimistic view of the world, and continues the suffering of his father.

In *Romancing the Yohrzeit Light*, Rosenbaum focuses more on the effects of modernity on Adam's ethnic identity. Rosenbaum presents Adam as an artist who has a hard time connecting to his Jewish identity. He is a tall blond man with blue eyes who likes to ride his motorcycle. He never attends synagogue, he eats non-kosher food, and he dates Gentile women. His mother would often let him know that she did not approve of this: "I didn't survive the camps

so you could walk around looking and acting like a camp guard. Look at you. Nothing Jewish that I can see” (20). When the story starts off, it has been one year since his mother died. He finds it difficult to deal with her death, and he feels a certain obligation towards his mother to practice a ritual and value certain symbols, in order to keep something intact of what the Nazis have tried to destroy. Therefore, he goes out to buy a Yohrzeit candle so he can properly mourn her, following Jewish tradition. However, when he comes home and lights the candle, it does not give the same comforting and magical feeling as when his mother used to practice this ritual, which makes him feel utterly alone and lost.

His girlfriend Tasha even disrupts the ritual by paying him an unexpected visit and she asks him to have sex with her on the table where he had just placed the candle. He succumbs to this long-anticipated suggestion and agrees to turn off the candle. The first section of this research paper already showed how a group of young concentration camp survivors in *After* had difficulties with practicing Jewish rituals, not remembering how to be Jews. According to Burnstein, in these works by Rosenbaum and Bukiet, “Jewish ritual practice is moribund – weakened by ignorance and contaminated by worldliness. [...] [C]orrupt rituals articulate the residue of Holocaust damage in both personal and collective Jewish life. [...] [T]heir protagonists cannot remember how to be Jews” (Burnstein 132). Obviously, in *Romancing the Yohrzeit Light*, Adam failed miserably in his first attempt in a long time to complete a Jewish ritual. This shows how his modern American life makes it extra hard for Adam to honor his mother’s wishes and find his ethnic identity. When Tasha moves into his house, they celebrate his first Christmas together. With envy he watches her decorating the living room, which is an annual ritual that makes here feel like home, and even makes her cry. This only makes Adam feel more out of place. Neither does he feel at home celebrating Christmas, nor could he finish a simple Jewish ritual. Thus Adam also does not know how to be Jewish, nor can he let this part of him go.

Elijah Visible shows Adam at different ages, in several cities and professions. For example, in *An Act of Defiance* Rosenbaum describes Adam as a professor in Holocaust Studies

who does not know how to ride a bike, but in *Romancing the Yohrzeit Light* Adam is an artist who hardly has a connection with his Jewish identity and likes to ride his motorcycle. Nevertheless, in every face of his life, Adam is always and everywhere affected by the Holocaust. Berger states that, “by means of this post-modern aesthetic that collapses time and space, Rosenbaum illustrates the continuing impact of the Holocaust on [the second generation]” (79). Rosenbaum himself also recognizes this about his work in *Who We Are: On Being (and Not Being) a Jewish American Writer*, for he states: “I focus on the looming dark shadow of the Holocaust as a continuing, implacable event; how it, inexorably, is still with us, flashing radioactive teeth, keeping us all on our toes, imprinting our memories with symbols, and metaphors for, mass death” (Rosenbaum, “Law and Legacy” 245). Although Rosenbaum does it in a different fashion than Bukiet, they both aim for the same goal, to make people “Never Forget!,”

Conclusion

After World War II had come to an end, it would still take several decades before the silence around the Holocaust and the impact of the Holocaust on the lives of American Jews would break. The Holocaust surfaces compellingly in American Jewish literature during what Burnstein calls the “new wave,” in which the second generation has taken a great part. This research paper looked at two works of fiction from second-generation writers who have written with great vigor about the continuing impact of the Holocaust on the lives of the survivors and their children. Both Rosenbaum and Bukiet express their rage about all they have been denied because of the Holocaust, and about many other ways in which the Holocaust continues to affect their lives and that of their parents. In the introduction to *Nothing Makes You Free: Writings by Descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors*, Bukiet wants the readers to take responsibility for what happened in the past: “Go to our museums. Go see our movies. Go read our books. Look at what you did. Behold” (Bukiet, Introduction 23). Rosenbaum too wants people to remember. He even wants to “reinvigorate” the annihilation of the European Jews with his novels (Rosenbaum, “Law and Legacy” 239). However, about what he wants most of all, he says: “[T]he child of survivors in me longs mostly for justice—in whatever form it takes, in whatever manner it can be delivered, demanded and experienced” (Rosenbaum “Law and Legacy” 248).

Bukiet and Rosenbaum each have their own way of making the readers remember what was silenced for so long. In *After*, Bukiet shows how a group of survivors try to rebuild their lives after the Holocaust. During the process of starting anew in the direct aftermath of the Holocaust, Bukiet confronts the reader with the major losses of spirituality, belief, knowledge, and morality, all caused by the Holocaust. Because of these losses, the characters in the novel no longer have a sense of what it means to be a Jew, or how to be a Jew. With the short stories in *Elijah Visible*, Rosenbaum shows how these same losses have a continuing impact on the lives of the second generation. He does this by telling stories about leading character Adam Posner at different stages

of his life. The reader sees Adam at many different phases of his life, and also as many different persons. However, in every story Adam is presented as a man who is severely affected, at some points even traumatized by an atrocity he never had to face. On the one hand Adam refuses to grant Hitler a posthumous victory by holding on to Jewish traditions and his Jewish ethnic identity, but on the other hand he is at a total loss with practicing Jewish rituals. In some respects Adam shares the same faith as Isaac, the leading character in *After*, for Adam too does not know how to be Jewish, or what it means to him to be Jewish.

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In *Death Rode the Rails*, Mark Aldrich describes the evolution of railroad safety. In this study, he pays much attention to the influence of the *technological community*, which consisted of the railroads, individual inventors and entrepreneurs, supplier firms, technical societies, and the trade press that was a powerful force for technological improvement (Aldrich, 5). Another important focus of Aldrich's work are the different forms of safety regulations, and how they evolved in the 19th- and 20th-century. Aldrich identifies three forms of safety regulation, being the "hard" controls that were imposed by government regulation, a "softer" approach (*voluntarism*) often induced by public pressure, and the accident liability rules.

In this book, the author states that the process of *voluntarism* was much more effective at convincing railroad companies to make safety improvements than the more formal safety regulations. The idea behind the sort of "soft" regulation, which Aldrich also calls the "Adams approach" named after Charles Francis Adams Jr. of the Massachusetts board, was that railroad companies would make more safety improvements under public pressure and by negotiation than by laws and rules set by the government, this process functioned as a "gun behind the door" (Aldrich 71-72). What I personally found interesting is how both Aldrich in *Death Rode the Rails* and Usselman in *Regulating Railroad Innovation* touch upon this subject of government intervention and

regulatory attempts to improve railroad safety, but how they have a slightly different view on this subject.

For example, according to Aldrich, the Massachusetts board gained “a reputation for expertise and good judgement and its findings were widely and respectfully reported” (Aldrich, 72). This implies that, as long as it did not come directly from the government but more from the *technological community*, the railroad companies took a much more favorable stance towards implementing safety improvements. Usselman, however, is more negative about this. He claims that the railroad companies were much more opposed to government intervention than Aldrich suggests: “The threat of legislation hung constantly over them in many forums” (Usselman, 123). Even though Adams was not in favor of government intervention, his actions did induce compulsory legislation. For example, as Usselman argues, state regulations would introduce bills to Congress because they were inspired by Adams’ call for better safety regulations (Usselman, 122).

I do not see the difference, however, between the public pressure and negotiation, with the threat of government regulation, and real government intervention, or “hard” controls. What really is voluntary about a policy when there is a “gun behind the door”? The first gave the railroad companies more room and power to prioritize certain improvements. For example, railroad companies would rather make changes first to things that would also be economically beneficial, like certain brakes and couplers. Aldrich states that the “soft” approach was much more effective, because the changes that were made as a consequence of the “soft” measures had diminished the “minor” accidents, which according to Aldrich caused the most headaches with the railroad companies. However, I think that these improvements not only were made because of the

“soft” approach, but I think it is also important that the institutional technological network, which had become increasingly science-based, was also in the position to make those changes. Those changes were also in line with the goals of the railroad companies to make their practices technologically better and more efficient. If the changes that were pushed for by the “soft” approach (for example by the Safety First movement) were mandated by the government, they would also have enhanced the safety by reducing the number of “minor” accidents.

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Eric Arnesen, *Brotherhoods of Color. Black Railroad Workers and the Struggle for Equality*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2002.

In the United States, the railways provided jobs for tens of thousands of black men, who often worked as firemen, brakemen, and porters. These were attractive jobs, because the industry provided them with a relatively good income, they gained a higher social status within the black community, and thus the work enabled entrepreneurial ambitions for the African American workers. However, there were also many negative aspects to the job. Besides the harsh working conditions, African American employees had to deal with many discriminatory policies. For example, there were limited possibilities for occupational advancement. Also, they were restricted to specified positions and they encountered enforced segregation in many places. In the beginning of the 20th century, black railroad workers started to challenge their subordinate position in the highly segregated railway industry. In *Brotherhoods of Color*, Eric Arnesen aims to show that the black railroad workers were involved in organized resistance over a period of fifty years, and they left an even longer legacy of individual resistance. In this bold attempt to give a fuller picture of black protest and American labor in the 20th century, Arnesen mainly focuses on the first six decades of the 20th century.

Railway managers hired black men, they argued, because they were cheap, efficient, obedient, and they worked long hours. Adding to that, black labor could be used by the managers as a bulwark against trade unions, to ensure control over their white

labor force. However, the managers did not have any doubts about the inferiority of their black laborers. Especially in the South, the sense of superiority of white citizens towards the African American population was deeply rooted. There was not only a lot of denigration towards the black laborers, white railroad workers actually wanted to eliminate the African Americans from their occupations in the railroad industry. The entry of the United States into World War I raised many expectations as it provided black labor with mechanisms that they could use in their resistance against labor discrimination and other hardships they encountered in their work in the railway industry. Firstly, labor shortage and new fields of labor in the North made it increasingly difficult for Southern employers to hold their black laborers. Secondly, federal agencies like the United States Railroad Administration (USRA) and MacAdoo's General Order no. 27 gave black labor yardsticks to confront their managers on a legal basis. Thirdly, black workers now could use a language of patriotism and Americanism in their efforts to demand their rights.

These conditions brought about an upsurge of African American unionism, but their actual results were disappointing for several reasons. Racial practices and railroad companies lagged behind the promised improvements of the USRA. Poor lines of communication between the federal agencies and the members of black railroad communities prevented black railroad workers from expressing their complaints about the flawed implementation of the improvements. Adding to that, the organizational reach of African Americans was limited because of geography, craft divisions, and the need to retain support of white managers. Finally, they received much resistance from hostile white labor movements. On practically all southern railroads, African Americans were under physical and contractual attack, as whites sought to restore the prewar racial order,

which they were remarkably successful at. Arnesen uses the Memphis “hate strike” of 1919 to illustrate the white anxiety about African American railroad workers. This was only one of many incidents where local committees of white laborers enforced rules that would reassert the prewar racial status quo.

According to Arnesen, unions like Asa Philip Randolph’s Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), and the Joint Council were more about race than about class. They used the racial disadvantages as an organizational asset which transformed trade unions into civil rights associations. Important for Arnesen’s argument is that these unions laid important groundwork for future civil rights struggles, but besides that, the accomplishments for the black laborers were limited, because they could not create a united front due to conflicting personal ambitions and organizational rivalries. Despite the industrial unionization, black railroaders suffered disproportionately from the Great Depression and the general decline of the American railroads. Violence against railroad workers also sharply increased during the Great Depression, as white anxiety and hatred actually resulted in a murder wave in which black firemen and brakemen were shot on the job. Moreover, 1934 amendments like the Railway Labor Act gave white brotherhoods the mandate to bargain on behalf of all workers, so also the African Americans.

Thus New Deal labor legislations did not at all benefit the African American railroad workers. These hardships and setbacks show that “what had been an industry of opportunity [...] had become an industry of decline, black workers struggled to retain the few positions they still had” (p. 128). Arnesen uses the story of the Red Caps to illustrate how independent unions could be more successful than large unions like the BSCP

during the 1930s and 1940s. When the white members of interracial United Transport Service Employees of America (UTSEA) left the organization, it left the union more or less powerless. Led by Willard Townsend, the IBRC/UTSEA became an independent organization that was now in the position to directly negotiate with managers, and by those means accomplished considerable improvements, as they gained seniority rights and shorter working hours.

Sometimes the struggle for equality even led to a real confrontation, as it did between the Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC) and railroad managers in September 1943. Examples of racial discrimination and other hardships were presented extensively by the FEPC, but their directives were never implemented. This even shows how, even though they spoke with a clear and united voice, their attempts still were not successful. It seems like the bolder the efforts by black unions and organizations, the more resistance and hostility it created with white unions and railway companies, and thus less chance for success. In the last chapter of *Brotherhoods of Color*, Arnesen shows how the outlook for African American railroad workers changed rapidly with the 1964 Civil Rights Act. What had seemed impossible for decades had now become a reality. Black laborers could now become members of previously all-white unions, and occupational advancement had become possible. Although actual changes came slowly during the 1960s and 1970s, African Americans were presented with effective mechanisms, like the new laws and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), to fight the labor discrimination.

In *Brotherhoods of Color*, Arnesen states that one of the reasons for the failure of efforts by black railroad workers and unions to change racial inequality in the workplace

was that they did not voice their moral, political, and economical critique as one collective. Yet the FEPC campaign can be seen as an attempt where railroad workers did work together, where they did seem to present their distress with unreasonable labor discrimination as one voice, and they did offer concrete goals. Still, besides experience in organized resistance, they gained nothing from it. On the other hand, the smaller independent unions like the UTSEA of the Red Caps proved to be more successful. To me, this shows that it probably would not have mattered much how collective the voice of the African American railroad workers would have been until 1960, because the country was not ready yet for the big changes that the FEPC asked for, which ultimately came with the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Racism and discriminatory labor laws were so deeply rooted in American history and culture, especially in the South, that the country needed more time. But not only white Americans were not ready yet, I think black Americans neither were ready. As Arnesen points out, during the 1950s, black laborers also did not believe yet that real changes would be presented to them soon. In the end, it would require much more than collective resistance from a black railroad union to really make a difference.

Book Review

987 Words
March 5, 2009

Gerald Berk, *Alternative Tracks: The Constitution of American Industrial Order, 1865-1917*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

In the lion's share of historical accounts business historians and political scientists hold the notion that the emergence of the American modern corporation, a political economy also known as "corporate liberalism," was unavoidable. The modern corporation is often seen as a natural entity that inevitably arose due to market and technological developments in the United States. In *Alternative Tracks*, Gerald Berk challenges this idea by arguing that corporate liberalism came into being as a result of sets of political decisions, mostly made in courts. According to Berk, the course political economy eventually took, was not inevitable, but came about after a long political struggle in which the state was an important actor. In effect, corporate liberalism turned out to be the victorious railroad strategy, not because it was economically necessary, but because it was politically contingent. Moreover, he contends that there was an equally economically viable alternative, namely "regional republicanism," which is a political economy that competed, and often clashed, with corporate liberalism in Congress and the courts over regulation, finance, and corporate structure.

In his study, Berk mainly focuses on the late nineteenth century, which he sees as a "constitutive period" in the development of American political economy. In the period after the Civil War, the railroads played an important part in the conquering of the West

and they instigated an era of unprecedented economic growth in the United States, as the first “big businesses.” He uses the history of railroad regulation as a vehicle, because it reflects well which political decisions were made and what the reasoning behind them was. According to Berk, the railroads formed the battleground upon which was decided which model of industrial order would be followed: the philosophy of corporate liberalism or regional republicanism. In *Alternative Tracks* the development of both philosophies is explored, in which Berk also focuses in periods in which they clashed.

The aim of the first part of the book is to show that American politics constituted a victory for corporate liberalism. Postbellum fiscal policy, investment and the new commercial banking structure were an important drive for the creation of an interterritorial, national railroad system. Investors in Europe and large cities like New York who could provide the credit to build such a system dominated the railroad business, and they favored large-scale railroads. Berk contends that the transformation of the American economy, in which the structure of the modern corporation and the market landscape was determined, was political, not technological. The massive savings that were channeled into railroad development created railroad overcapacity. This made the industry very unstable, which regularly led to the collapse of railroad companies. As a result of this, many railroad companies fell into court-ordered receivership. From the 1880s onwards, federal courts started to see railroad companies as natural entities that were embodied by the managers, not the owners of individual lines. By means of this, the federal courts shaped the market landscape by reinforcing “big businesses” that practiced economies of scale.

An important feature of economies of scale was national-market ratemaking, that was characterized by rate discrimination to guarantee long-haul, high-volume bulk freight. This subject received much resistance from the regionalist republicans, because it imposed serious impediments against regional specialization. Berk uses the Chicago Great Western Railroad under the lead of A.B. Stickney as an example of an economically viable regionalist railroad. The “Maple-leaf” railroad focused on economies of scope, pursuing the creation of successful regional markets, rather than national markets. Berk argues that the Granger laws and the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) under Thomas Cooley were a victory for the supporters of regional republicanism, because the initial rulings advocated the regulation of competition by enforcing schedules, for example.

However, by the turn of the century, railroads were no longer seen as public entities, but as natural entities, and the high court had decided that the corporation had the right to set their own rates. In the end, corporate liberalism was clearly triumphant. By 1910, the focus of the ICC had switched to regulating monopoly, as railroad concentration and market centralization had become a fact. Berk argues that by the turn of the century, the politics of the “constitutive period” were replaced by “politics of power” in which a bitter stalemate emerged. Adding to that, Berk states that the policy of regulating monopoly laid the foundation for the decline of the railroads in the course of the twentieth century.

In *Alternative Tracks* Berk makes the philosophy of regional republicanism sound so attractive that it makes it hard to understand why it was not triumphant in the end. If it was as successful and more compatible with the American ideals and the notion of liberty

and democracy, then should regional republicanism not be the “natural entity” in the American case? Perhaps the alternative track that Berk deals with was not as “objectively possible” as he thinks it was (p. 17). Even if it was economically viable, the alternative political economy of regional republicanism was not viable in the political culture of the United States. The centralized political authority that would have been needed to undermine the power of corporate liberalism was not in place because of the impediments that the Constitution imposes. Among other things, the Constitution prevents the federal governments from acting “tyrannically,” by taking away authorities from state and local governments, which would be needed to pursue an industrial order of regional republicanism.

Adding to that, Berk fails to convince that an alternative to corporate liberalism would have emerged if different sets of political decisions would have been made in the courts. He presents the Chicago Great Western Railroad as a rather exceptional case as he states that the Maple Leaf’s form and location were a “mixed blessing”. It is hard to believe that the national system, that was already in place, could have changed into the form of the industrial order of the Great Western, enjoying the same level of prosperity.

Jitske Jonkman – W05643171
Railways as American History – HIST 5600
Book Review
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Railroad Crossing: Californians and the Railroad, 1850-1910. By William Deverell.
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

When Collis P. Huntington, Mark Hopkins, Leland Stanford, and Charles Crocker of the Central Pacific Railroad Corporation took up the task to complete the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s, the Californian people initially looked upon them as heroes. With help from the press the executives of the Central Pacific, also known as the “Big Four,” had convinced the Californians that the railroad would bring prosperity and prestige for all and that it would unite the country. However, as the merger with the Union Pacific came closer, the intrusiveness of the railroad and the pervasiveness of the Central Pacific on the lives of the Californian people became increasingly apparent. The popular reception of the coming of the tracks slowly began to wane and some started to express their dislike for the railroad. Evidently, not everybody was so sure anymore if the transcontinental railroad would be as beneficial for California as the Big Four had led them to believe.

Railroad Crossing by William Deverell explores the development of railroad antagonism in California from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. He uses the history of the opposition in California as a vehicle to shed new light on the maturing of the state, whose social and political history developed along the tracks of the railroad. After the completion of the transatlantic railroad in May 1869, the railroad did not immediately bring what everybody had so anxiously anticipated for. Henry George had envisaged

rightly how the introduction of industrial capitalism to the Far West would not bring fortune to everybody, “but only to a portion” (21). Most Californians lost their economic independence, which was subsequently replaced by monopolistic corporate power, economic downturns, and an influx of unwanted immigrants. According to many Californians, the Central Pacific was to blame for all it. It therefore did not take long before their excitement was replaced by hostility aimed at the railroad itself and the corporate combination of the massive Central and Southern Pacific railroad. The Southern Pacific was also referred to as the “Octopus,” because the railroad company’s tracks were seen as far-stretching “tentacles” that had a strong grip on all aspects of Californian society and politics, and it was there to stay.

Resistance against the Southern Pacific was not an easy task. During the 1870s, angry Californians would be faced with the political influence of the Southern Pacific and its control of many newspapers. Because of this, politicians and the press typically took a favorable stance towards the railroad company. However, as railroad antagonism and state regulation increased in the 1870s, both the Democratic and the Republican parties started to put anti-railroad leaders forward. The politicization of the hostility towards the Southern Pacific greatly contributed to the weight of the protest movements. Deverell shows how a Progressive movement emerged over the course of time, which owed their success entirely to their hostile stance toward the railroad antagonism.

Scarcely paying attention to quiet 1880s, *Railroad Crossing* mainly deals with hostility during the 1890s, focusing on the Pullman strike and the Los Angeles “Free Harbor Fight” that both aimed at the seemingly unassailable Southern Pacific. Deverell concludes that the hostility towards the Octopus had substantially institutionalized during

the Pullman strike of 1894. At that time, people knew that the railroad was there to stay and some of them joined organizations like the American Railroad Union (ARU) to add force to the protests against the corporate power. However, rather than to fully support the statements of the ARU, the Californians would use the organization merely as a means to continue their opposition to the Southern Pacific. During and after the Pullman strikes, the Southern Pacific was continuously attacked for their high debts with the government. Populists started to call for nationalization of the railroad, making the Californians think they would gain back their control and independence from the corporate system.

John Lauritz Larson's *Bonds of Enterprise* (2001) also touches upon railroad antagonism by looking at the Iowans and John Murray Forbes's Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. *Bonds of Enterprise* shows how the resistance of the Iowans towards the railroad was characterized by a persistent pursuit of localism. They seemed to be in particular disagreement with the arbitrary power and rate discrimination by capitalists from the East. Mostly, the Iowans wanted to return to the "original conditions" to gain back local control. The Californians, on the contrary, observed the railroad developments in other states and they were aware of the fact that the railroad was there to stay. They were more concerned about the influence and the domineering control of the Southern Pacific on every aspect of Californian society. They were looking for other solutions, calling for nationalization of the railroad, for example.

Deverell's *Railroad Crossing* is a thorough and interesting account about the resistance of the Californians directed at the seemingly impregnable power of the Octopus. The author made use of a wide variety of sources, such as newspaper articles,

letters, and the novel *The Octopus*, to get a sense of the thoughts of the people towards the Southern Pacific, and how their perception and politics changed between 1850 and 1910. A downside of this aspect is that Deverell had access to an abundance of sources during the tumultuous 1890s, which has resulted in very detailed chapters about the Pullman Strike, the Free Harbor Fight and the novel by Frank Norris. Because there was little railroad antagonism during the 1880s he almost skips the entire decade, only dedicating a few pages to that period. *Railroad Crossing* could have been even more comprehensive if Deverell would have shed more light on the quiet times, because it would have placed the Californian experience in a broader context. It would have been interesting to see, for example, whether the quiet was just caused by economic prosperity in larger industrial America, or if there also were certain local circumstances involved that caused the antagonism to diminish.

Frank Dobbin, *Forging Industrial Policy: The United States, Britain and France in the Railway Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

This is one of the best written and most interesting and sophisticated books I have read in quite a while. In *Forging Industrial Policy*, Frank Dobbin states that in the course of history, distinct ideas about order and rationality emerged in different nations. This is particularly expressed in national industrial policies, as they often reflect the countries' political culture. Also, countries have the tendency to tackle new problems by re-applying policies that were used to solve earlier problems. As a result of this, "nations may attribute macro-industrial efficiency to any number of different rationalized processes, and strategies that are rhetorically similar, such as those of the United States and Britain, may be based on radically different precepts". Therefore, industrial policies should be looked upon as social phenomena. Here he challenges economic theory, political analysts and institutionalists/statist, as they underemphasize the role of meaning, according to Dobbin.

Dobbin explores this subject by comparing the industrial policies of the United States, France and Britain, focusing on the railroads. He does this by looking at the planning, finance, the technical and managerial coordination, and the pricing and competition policy of each country towards railroads. By looking at what the different countries saw as problems, and at what solutions they proposed to solve those problems, the author shows how ideas in countries about what policies were effective and desirable "products of identifiable social and historical forces".

This work gives useful insights in why it almost never seems to work when countries try to impose their industrial order onto other countries. For example, institutions as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) often help poor countries out by lending them enormous amounts of money. As the United States invests a lot of money in these institutions, they also have a large say in the policy. The countries that are provided with loans almost always need to meet certain conditions before they can receive the money or lower interest rates, for example. Main examples of these conditions are the implementation of a “free market” by privatization, deregulation and the reduction of trade barriers.

These countries are often not located in Europe or North America, but in South America, Asia and Africa. Dobbin shows that there exist great differences in for example ideals, ideas about problem-solving and state interference between countries like France, Britain and the United States. It is probably safe to say that these differences turn out to be relatively small when one starts to make similar comparisons between these three countries and the countries that receive the help from institutions like the IMF. I think it would be a very interesting object of study to make these comparisons. If political culture is as important as Dobbin states, it is probably not wise to impose such drastic changes in industrial order on these needing countries, as it will be less effective. It would be in the interest of both the lending countries and the receiving countries if the loans would be given on conditions that suit the industrial characteristics and the political culture of the receiving countries instead of the characteristics of the lending country, because if the program is successful, then the chance that the lending countries will actually be given their money back also significantly increases.

Jitske Jonkman – W05643171
Railways as American History – HIST 4990
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994 Words

Bonds of Enterprise: John Murray Forbes and Western Development in America's Railway Age. By John Lauritz Larson. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2001)

Railroads have played a decisive role in the progress of the economy of the United States (US) from 1830 onwards, when the first tracks were laid, until 1916 when railroad mileage reached its peak. In the mid-nineteenth century, the West of America was seen as the future towards which the railroads were built. Slowly a network of railroads came into being that collapsed both space and time, and generated new trade flows. Along its tracks new capitalistic markets emerged and traditional communities with their local markets disappeared. A complex relationship developed between the large corporations from the East that led the transformation, and the farmers in the Midwest. Initially, farmers met the entrepreneurs with enthusiasm, because the railroads created new market opportunities for them.

Nevertheless, it did not take long before the large corporations were faced with resistance from the farmers who had once enjoyed some sort of independence, but who now had become dependent on the merciless and arbitrary railroad barons from the East. This tension would lead to a long-lasting struggle that led to the emergence of the regulatory state and far-reaching lawmaking, among many other things.

In *Bonds of Enterprise*, John Lauritz Larson explores all these facets of Western development by means of an integrated and historical narrative about the life of John

Murray Forbes of Boston, his Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad and the Iowans who were served by the Burlington tracks. Forbes was one of those “heroic” entrepreneurs who played a leading role in the transformation of the American countryside and who was a part of all those features of the *railroad question*. Larson’s study starts off in Canton, China, where Forbes was active as a Boston trader in his early years. In China he acquired the vision that aided him to see the opportunities of the railroads in the US, and his experiences as a trader on a foreign market helped him overcome barriers he would later encounter in the US.

Forbes, who saw himself as a merchant “in the liberal sense of the word,” (24) started his career in railroads when he financially rescued the Michigan Central Railroad in 1846. *Bonds of Enterprise* explores the complex love-hate relationship between the railway executives and the local people by using the story of Forbes and his complex relationship with the Iowans and the Burlington tracks as a vehicle. Forbes is presented as a real benefactor, a man who stood for sustainable progress and freedom who was often misunderstood by the Iowans. They begrudged the arbitrary power of men like Forbes, who took away their independence.

The economic development in the West created a lot of local hostility. Initially, Iowa was a yeomen society that aspired “natural” economic growth, but the transportation revolution forced them to give up this objective and so they became subjected to the hardships of the capricious rate makers from the East. When the rates did not improve after the Civil War, they protested and expressed their dissatisfaction higher up. Subsequently, Larson’s historic narrative deals with the interference of Congress that led to the emerging of the *Granger Laws*, and the development of the *Interstate*

Commerce Act (1887) later that consolidated the rise of the regulatory state. These regulations gave *localists* a sense of power, but were despised by men like Forbes.

Bonds of Enterprise shows a great understanding of the railroad question and the historical narrative makes it a breath of fresh air in railroad literature. It allows the reader to get to know the minds of people like Forbes and the Iowans, who saw major changes in America in those sweeping times, whose communities were in fact shaped by the railroads. This in-depth study about Forbes' life is an interesting read about how the railroads have shaped America and how it affected people's lives on so many levels in the mid-nineteenth century. Larson presents the relationship between Forbes and the Iowans as a struggle between the misunderstood benefactor and the ignorant *localists*. This suggests that, however this book is presented as an integrated model, it is more a story about Forbes' perspective on the developments than of the people of Iowa and the Burlington.

Adding to that, this narrative shows great admiration for Forbes from Larson's part. He created an image of Forbes as a heroic entrepreneur with a great sense of duty. In his view, Forbes was a man who wanted to perform "a great public good," who did not approve of the monopolistic abuses in ratemaking that damaged his reputation as a do-gooder. Nonetheless, history has shown us that "men like Forbes," as Larson describes them, often were not like Forbes (24). Other railroad barons, such as Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, "Uncle Daniel" Drew, and Jay Gould also played a large part in the development of the economies in the west, contributing greatly to the rapidly changing the markets in America. They, however, did not just want to perform a "great public good," since they are known not only for their accomplishments, but they were also stock

manipulators and rate discriminators who made a fortune at the cost of rural communities in the West.

With *Bonds of Enterprise*, Larson wrote a very readable historical narrative that touches upon many subjects related to the railroad question by means of focusing on John Murray Forbes, the Iowans and the Burlington. Even though this book is informative and a very interesting read about the fascinating life of Forbes, the strong focus on Forbes' experiences and views creates a lopsided history of eastern capitalists in the West. One could say that the story of Forbes is a rather unique story. Therefore, it is questionable to what extent this interdisciplinary line of approach in the form of a narrative about John Murray Forbes has added value to the existing literature about the American railroads.

Jitske Jonkman
Railways as American History
HIST 5600
Book Review
April 14, 2009
1,178 Words

Scott Reynolds Nelson. *Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

In the course of the 19th century, the lives of many American people were transformed by the arrival of the railways. Although the whole country was affected considerably, each region in the United States was affected in a different way, and also dealt with the changes differently. Scott Reynolds Nelson's *Iron Confederacies* examines the history of the southern railroads, in which he mainly focuses on the Civil War and the decade that followed. In this ambitious study, he convincingly demonstrates how the southern railways played a great role in the history of themes like state power, the emergence of *big business*, and race and labor issues during this period. He thus embarks upon the fields of labor, political, economical, cultural, and business history, which has resulted in a very interdisciplinary work that presents very interesting findings.

Nelson aims to show how the southern railways profoundly transformed the economic history of the Reconstruction South. Before the Civil War, the railways in the South had a very different character from the ones in the North. In the South, there was no such thing as a coherent railway system. The southern railroads had a more local character, so railroad promoters needed to integrate the railroads with the state and the plantations to make it an economically viable operation. Among the Southerners, there were many emotional and constitutional barriers against the centralization of power that was needed to build an interstate railway system. However, the needs of the Civil War

forced the Confederate government to form an Iron Confederacy. Although it was a brittle system, the region was unified, but it had not come in time. When the Civil War ended, the railroads appeared to be more durable than state power, which drastically waned after the War.

It was the Seaboard Inland Air Line that gained more power and influence as state power weakened. According to Nelson, “a new south was in the making” (p. 47). Men like Alexander Boyd Andrews and Moncure Robinson of the Seaboard Inland Air Line began to unify the South by means of organizational innovation such as the *through* bill of lading, making the South more and more one market, one entity. As the railroads became increasingly consolidated, it also bound the South more strongly to the financial centers in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. Even though there still was much antagonism against the railways, Nelson argues that it did not take long before the capitalists of the railroad companies came to replace the power that the states once had over local economies, which changed the national order of the United States. This claim seriously challenges the claim of Robert Fogel, who maintains that the economic history of the United States would not have taken a different course without the railroads.

However, there were also competitors, like Tom Scott’s Pennsylvania Railroad, who aspired to further consolidate the South by buying up state stock in the late 1860s. Robinson and General Mahone put the public opinion up against the Penn at these times in which there was a growing respect for things Confederate. Robinson and Mahone used Confederate language to stall Scott’s plans. They attacked the northern railroads by making the Penn a symbol for another Yankee invasion, blaming Tom Scott for the decline of southern towns and cities that had experienced economic blows due to the

regional changes that had reshaped the South. In *Iron Confederacies*, Nelson shows how in states like Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, this rhetoric of corruption “boiled down complex changes in transportation, credit, and shipping technology in a simple racist formula, and a powerful explanation for southern poverty” (p. 5).

Men like Benjamin Hill and Josiah Turner used the same rhetoric of “railroad corruption” to justify violence against black voters. By focusing mainly on Klan violence in Alamance County, North Carolina, and the upper piedmont of South Carolina, Nelson shows how railway corridors became centers of political violence. The regional changes in the South had rearranged racial and gender borders, which had helped black communities to gain more economic and political independence, who benefited from the growth of an interstate railway system. Conservative Democrats tried to put a hold to these developments by driving “black voters away from the polls, while threatening whites who voted Republican” (p. 97). In the attempt to stop this Klan violence, severe political controversies had arisen in the Southern states.

According to Nelson, states gave up their control over the railroad corridor to avoid more problems. At these times when the states lost even more power, Scott gained control of the railway corridor by means of the first American holding company in the early 1870s, the Southern Railway Security Company. Nelson argues that the Southern absorbed state organs like the penitentiaries and agricultural societies, which created a New South. Now there was the possibility of cheap labor, cheap delivery of staples, aggressively promoting fertilizer and efficient delivery, an apparatus was designed in which everybody in the South became more and more subjects of “King Cotton and Queen Tobacco” (p. 178). So on the one hand, Scott’s corridor from Richmond to Atlanta had changed the South, but on the other hand, it also preserved it, in the way that the corridor only more embedded poverty,

cheap labor, and a racial caste system in this region. According to Nelson, up until now, scholars have not shed enough light on the linkage between the economic and organizational changes in the south and the political history of the Reconstruction, as “the process of corporate reconstruction depended in part on the relative weakness of the southern states, states that had helped bring southern railways into being”.

Nelson’s study connects nicely to the more recent work by David O. Stowell ed., *The Great Strikes of 1877* (2008). In this bundle, Hoffman’s essay convincingly challenges the idea that the labor uprisings show a definite change from issues of race to issues of labor and capital, which also meant a move away from Reconstruction. Although this might have been largely the case for the North, Nelson points out that by the 1870s, the feelings towards the Confederacy and against black economic independence were still very strong. This also shows how, in a large share of the body of literature on the railroad history of the United States, scholars have been too preoccupied with the North. Whereas the South is often treated as a backward area, Nelson shows how, at times, the South was also the leading edge of change with for example the first holding company that Scott set up. With this claim, Nelson challenges the Stover thesis, which “separates the political history of the Reconstruction [...] from the history of the emergence of the modern company” (p. 6).

These works by Nelson and Stowell are historiographically important works, for they show that it is of vital importance to shed more light on other American regions, like the South, for it will give a more well-rounded and sophisticated account of the role of the railways in US labor, political, economical, cultural, and business history.

Jitske Jonkman
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David O. Stowell ed. *The Great Strikes of 1877*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Among the majority of scholars exists the notion about the Great Strike of 1877 that it was a watershed event, which not only heralded violent clashes between labor and capital during the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era, it also played a great role in the changing focus of white northerners away from race towards class. In the majority of literature about this salient period of social upheaval in the history of the United States, the Great Strike is described as a decisive moment, when the concern for Reconstruction was replaced by the focus on social problems that came with capitalist development. In *The Great Strikes of 1877*, edited by David Stowell, six carefully written essays challenge this narrative by arguing that, firstly, scholars in the past have had the tendency to overlook the social and political continuity that existed during the build-up of the Great Strikes and during the Gilded Age in general. Secondly, they state that scholars have been too preoccupied with the North, while barely paying attention to, or in some cases even ignoring, the experiences and perception of the American people in other parts of the country, which has created a rather lopsided view of the event.

Instead, Stowell's bundle follows the experiences of the Great Strike further on the railroad tracks to the South and towards the Pacific, by also focusing on Chicago, the Mid-South, and California in its study, which adds a different meaning to the event for US history. Adding to that, by means of extensive use of local newspapers as one of their

sources, the authors give a new dimension to the existing body of literature on the Great Strike, because newspapers are a valuable source for showing the sentiments of the people about the hardships they had to endure and, for example, what they thought were the reasons behind it.

The first thing that these sentiments from other parts of the country reveal is that the Great Strike was more a culmination of sometimes decades-long struggles between labor, race and capital, rather than a fundamental change. The essay by Shelton Stormquist shows that an organizational vehicle for industrial action was in place well before 1877, as the Brakemen's Brotherhood in Hornellsville, NY, already formed a well-organized interunion cooperation in the early 1870s in their conflict with the Erie. Richard Schneirov maintains that in Chicago, the stage for the great collision of 1877 was also set years before the strikes, as the combination of deep polarization and a weak governmental apparatus already led to dramatic events that preceded the Great Strike.

Secondly, by focusing on how the Great Strike was experienced in other regions of the United States, the aim of the essays in Stowell's bundle is to show also that the Great Strike was more than labor history. Several essays maintain that, besides labor and capital, race still was a prominent issue during the strikes and in the events leading up to the event. For instance, Steven Hoffman argues that the Mid-South capitalized the opportunity the Great Strike presented to put the North in a bad daylight, by placing the conflict between labor and capital in a sectional context. Even though uprising by laborers eventually did take place in Louisville and Nashville, in Memphis labor peace was kept because the city was successful in using the strike in the North to their own advantage. Besides that, the essay maintains that race was still a very important issue, as

Hoffman states: “The South clearly had a place for African American workers, and that place was not in labor action” (p. 126). This challenges the existing body of literature on the Great Strike that holds the notion that the Great Strike shows a definite change from issues of race to issues of labor and capital, and a move away from Reconstruction, as Hoffman shows that this was not the case in the Mid-South.

Two other chapters that focus on California add strength to this challenge. Michael Kazin argues that the riots in California took place in a long history of anti-Chinese sentiments, where the people condemned the Chinese immigrants for the troubles, rather than the railroad industry. The strikes in the North presented the Californians with the opportunity to lash out on the Chinese immigrants, especially in San Francisco, which racialized labor antagonism. David Miller adds to this that the culmination of Sinophobia that presented itself during the Great Strike of 1877 led to a change of the Californian Constitution, which was already called for back in 1859. Another fascinating subject in Miller’s chapter is how people of Mexican descent in California used the labor troubles in their resistance to the loss of their economic status and their “white” identity, by aligning with white citizens on issues of politics and economy, again racializing labor by pointing the finger at the Chinese immigrants. These chapters about the social upheaval in California show how the Great Strike was perceived in the West more as an issue of labor, capital, race and railroad monopoly, than just labor and capital.

Lastly, the articles by Brown, Miller, and Schneirov give more insight in how industrial solidarity and important ideas and laws, which already developed in the early 1870s with the Brakemen’s Brotherhood and the Workingmen’s movement, took a more

formal shape over the years, which ultimately culminated to the emerging of the Knights of Labor. These writers charge that the take-off into the Progressive Era was greatly accelerated by the Great Strike, but its roots of organized labor and greater participation in government stemmed from the decade leading up to the collision. This also challenges the existing legacy of the strikes, for it shows that the Great Strike was more a salient issue in the ongoing struggle between labor, capital and race on a national level, than a watershed event that was most significant in the North.

David Miller is absolutely right when he states that Stowell's account "allows to consider the meaning of the strike in a new way" (p. 166). For a long time, studies about the first national strike and the first major strike against the railroad industry have ignored other regions in the United States than the North, and have failed to look at the social, political, regional, but also ethnic framework in which the Great Strike of 1877 took place. Stowell's grand work can be seen as a postmodern perspective on that decade, as he partly denies the grand narrative of the Great Strike, which says that it was a watershed event that mainly affected the North. By vast interdisciplinary research, and looking at other US regions, for example, Stowell successfully challenges this dominate notion. Indeed, Stowell and the contributors to this bundle add a new dimension to US history by "pushing the historiography in a much needed southerly and westward direction, ... [filling] a hole in our knowledge of the strikes" (p. 9).

Steven W. Usselman. *Regulating Railroad Innovation: Business, Technology and Politics in America, 1850-1920*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Steven Usselman's book focuses on how Americans have tried to manage and regulate technical innovations. As Usselman states, this history reveals a "window into dynamics not just of technical change but of American history" (Usselman, 5). In this personal response to *Regulating Railroad Innovation*, I would like to focus on a late 19th century development in innovation regulation, which quite possibly has influenced American political thinking.

In Part II of his study, Usselman describes how a new breed of managers came into being as rising competition, government legislation and the economic crisis of the 1870s forced railroad companies to become less experimental. In this time of uncertainty, railroads "looked for reliability more than novelty" (Usselman, 213). Railroad companies started to pursue a set of substantive ends or objectives, trying to increase productivity by becoming more efficient rather than by trying new, risky techniques. Consequently, railroad companies went through several reforms to be able to make this purposive policy successful. For example, railroad policy more emphasized testing and research, and the managerial power of the railroads became more centralized as "managers sought to diminish the degree of personal autonomy that had long characterized railroad innovation and to impose order over their technical affairs through bureaucratic control" (Usselman,

141). Adding to that, in order to create more uniformity in railroad companies, innovation in railroad more and more became a “bureaucratic exercise” (Usselman, 187).

When I was reading these chapters, I noticed that there are quite some similarities between this purposive policy of the railroad companies that emerged in late 19th-century, and late 19th- and 20th-century political theory in which there seems to be a growing emphasis on governing a country like a manager leads a corporate enterprise, pursuing a coherent set of substantive ends. In this movement, government decision-making becomes more centralized in order to accomplish a set of state purposes. Also, in this “vision of a state as a purposive association,” scientific knowledge plays a large role, that is used so that “individual actions can be harnessed toward the attainment of certain concrete ends or results sought by the state” (Spicer, 23). In order for a government to become more effective and efficient, this vision argues that a powerful administrative practice needs to be in place in the pursuit of particular ends, because an efficient bureaucratic apparatus can make a community more uniform, which is needed if a government wants to reach certain goals.

It would be interesting to see to what extent these changes in the structure of innovation regulation of railroad companies have influenced American political thought, and / or how American political thought maybe has inspired railroad managers to change the design and goals of their companies.

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Create tolerance

Member of the Dutch Lower House and leader of the PVV (*Party for Freedom*), Geert Wilders, garnered worldwide media attention with his movie *Fitna* (Arabic for *test of faith in times of trial*) that calls for driving back the *islamization* of Dutch society. Today it was announced that the Dutch Public Prosecutor is going to take legal action against Wilders for the anti-Islamic statements that he has made over the past few years and in *Fitna* in particular. Even though freedom of speech is considered a valuable right in Dutch society, the Court of Justice wants to draw a line. The multiple comparisons that Wilders has drawn between Nazism and Islam, and *Mein Kampf* and the Koran, are deemed unacceptable and seen as a threat to democracy.

The fact that Wilders can make such a movie and attract a considerable number of followers in the Netherlands shows that the Netherlands no longer deserves the reputation of a highly tolerant nation. Since 2002, it has become increasingly harder to enter the Netherlands for people who want to flee from oppression. Even refugees who have lived in the Netherlands for over 10 years, among them a good friend of mine, are being sent back to their countries of origin.

If I could change Dutch society unilaterally, I would turn this trend around. People should not be ashamed of their country, but should be proud of what it is and what

it is capable of. In order for the Netherlands to become an open and tolerant society, we need to open up our minds and our borders. In a country of roughly eight million atheists, seven million Christians and one million Muslims, there should not be a segregated school system. Tolerance comes from understanding and knowing things about one another. In order to fight ignorance, the growing segregation of our society must be stopped. Atheists, Christians and Muslims should live, work and go to school together. Dutch society needs to be transformed into an intercultural society where cultures can live side by side, enriching each other while respecting universal human rights and the rules of democracy.

Stop patronizing people

Recently, the Dutch government has tried to increase control over the lives of its citizens by taking away their people's right to choose. New laws have ordered the closing of *coffeeshops* located near schools. Also, a recent ban on "magic" mushrooms has caused most *smartshops* to shut down. The odd thing about Dutch drug policy is that even though the government tolerates the sale and use of cannabis and hash for personal consumption, it is illegal for the shops to actually buy the drugs.

If I had the ability to unilaterally change the Dutch government's drug policy, I would fully legalize soft drugs and undo the ban on mushrooms. For a presumably open-minded society where heroin addicts are actually given free heroin to help them quit, I don't see the reason for legalizing some soft drugs and not others. Once a government

starts applying restrictions on soft drug policy, it will eventually lead to a full ban on all soft drugs. To prohibit people to buy and use soft drugs would be totally inconsistent with the Dutch ideals and the Dutch way of life that the government supposedly upholds. Adding to that, societies like the United States show that a strict drug policy does not necessarily lead to a decrease in drug use. On the contrary, up until now, a low national rate on hard drug use has proven that an open-minded approach to soft drugs really works as a means to drive back hard drugs. Fully legalizing soft drugs, as opposed to the current policy of tolerance that will probably soon disappear, will give government even better means to supervise drug traffic, combat hard drugs and other (often related) crime sources.

Transform culture of mediocrity

The final change that I would make to Dutch society is something Prime Minister Balkenende actually wants to change as well, and a relatively new phenomenon in Dutch society taking place in high schools and universities. Even though the level of education has always been high in the Netherlands, the students have become indifferent to performing to the best of their ability. Students hardly ever do their homework and are perfectly fine with just passing the exam instead of striving for top marks. This culture of mediocrity is called the *zesjescultuur* in Dutch, translates to “D-culture” in English. In fact, most Dutch students would ridicule you if you were to publicly say you want to become the best student of a class.

However, I also do not approve of the “rat-race” that exists in American schools and universities. It is not in the nature of Dutch people to be like that and fierce competition will not bring out the best in people. However, if I could make changes in Dutch society I would provide more incentives for students to study harder and perform better. For example, right now it is too easy for Dutch students to get into good universities in the Netherlands and abroad. Furthermore, many students work overtime to buy expensive clothes and gadgets, leaving hardly any time to focus on their schoolwork. Students need to be taught to look towards their futures. Right now it is important to study, and later they can work all they want.

Jitske Jonkman

Governing Utopia

Essay 2

January 28, 2009

In the movie *The Lathe of Heaven* (1980), a young man called George Orr lives a troubled life because of his ability to dream “effectively”. George uses a lot of drugs as a means to suppress these dreams, for which he has to undergo ‘voluntary’ treatment. His psychiatrist William Haber treats George for his drug abuse and promises to cure him from his effective dreams. However, when Haber becomes aware of the potential of George’s talent he begins to abuse that power. By means of telling George what to dream, Haber has the ability to unilaterally change his life and society at large to his liking. Not thinking about the consequences these dreams may entail, Haber uses George to create peace on earth, and to make an end to racism and overpopulation.

Last week I wrote an essay about three changes I would make in my society, if I had the power to “dream effectively”. Not thinking about unintended consequences, I wrote that I wanted to make Dutch society much more tolerant and open-minded by ending certain existing divisions and having people learn about each other. Secondly, I would fight crime and stop the patronizing of people by fully legalizing soft drugs. Lastly, I would end the current culture of mediocrity in high schools and universities. However, after seeing *Lathe of Heaven* it has occurred to me that I should be careful about what I wish for. For instance, when Haber instructs George to dream about a world where no racism exists, George wakes up in a world where everybody is gray. Also, the

problem of overpopulation is solved by a worldwide plague that kills all his family and friends and an invasion of the moon by aliens creates world peace.

These consequences are clearly unintended, but also undesired. When I had to choose three things that I would change in my society, I realized that world peace or solving the problem of overpopulation would not have the results in Dutch society that I would like to see. I therefore made a conscious decision to propose changes that would make me happier as a person and more proud of my society. However, after seeing *Lathe of Heaven* I realized that my wishes for Dutch society might not bring what I had intended.

In order to create a more tolerant and open-minded society, I wanted the Netherlands to welcome refugees and end segregation. Thinking further down the line, this could have larger consequences for Dutch society than I expected. It can negatively influence international relations, for it can create tensions with the neighboring countries and even in the European Union (EU). For example, strict laws have been created to fight human trafficking. Therefore, countries like Belgium, France and Germany would not like the Netherlands to open up its borders while they try to close them to illegal aliens.

But much more serious unintended consequences could occur within Dutch society if the changes I want to make would become reality. Whereas I would like the Netherlands to become an intercultural society in which cultures live side by side, respecting each other and the rules of democracy, I still have a picture in my mind of a Dutch culture pretty much the way it is now, but then enriched. However, the people who might come in great numbers may have a different interpretation of the open-minded and enriched society that I have in mind. This could lead to a point where Dutch people are

asked to be tolerant to the extent where Dutch society will not at all look like the society I had in mind. If that would be the case, why then would I want to create an open-minded and tolerant society if it would mean that I have to give up everything I love about Dutch society in its current state?

An open-minded approach to the Dutch drug policy may also have unintended consequences for international relations. I believe that fully legalizing soft drugs will bring down the use of hard drugs and fight other (often related) crimes, and I also believe that the Dutch people are very responsible about the freedoms they have and the choices they can make. However, the Dutch laws and way of life do not apply to countries like Great Britain, Germany, Belgium and France, which are all geographically close to the Netherlands. Even if legalizing soft drugs would make it easier to fight crime within the Netherlands, it will also attract foreign criminals. Neighboring countries and also the Netherlands itself will probably not tolerate that. As a consequence, this might affect Dutch society more negatively than not legalizing soft drugs would.

Lastly, I wanted to change the present culture of mediocrity in education in the Netherlands. Applying the doom mongering from *Leath of Heaven* to this change, this “effective dream” could transform the education system in the Netherlands into the kind of rat race that I loathe. If the Dutch educational system would become too rigid, Dutch students would lose qualities that employers, at home and abroad, now often have high a regard for. Dutch people are known for being productive people and independent, creative thinkers. These qualities can be more sought-after in government institutions and the business world than the qualities of people who just know how to get high grades in school and how to live up to the expectations of an institution. A rigid educational system

in Dutch society might create people who do not develop those qualities that used to distinguish them, which would be undesirable for a tiny country like the Netherlands that needs special qualities for other countries and economies to notice them.

Jitske Jonkman – W05643171
Governing Utopia – POLS 5420
Essay Three
Gregg Cawley
February 18, 2009

Contemporary United States: a Purposive Association

In *Public Administration and the State: A Postmodern Perspective* (2001), Michael Spicer argues that two competing visions of the state have dominated Western political thought since the Middle Ages. The first vision he terms a “civil association,” in which “men and women see themselves as essentially free to pursue their own particular interests and values,” as long as the people abide by the rules of conduct that are established by the government (Spicer 21). The second understanding of the state is what he calls a “purposive association,” which he sees as a form of political association in which the activities of individuals “must be organized around the pursuit of a coherent set of substantive ends” (Spicer 22). What these visions have in common is that they “both propose a form of social order or cooperation among individuals” (Spicer 21).

According to Spicer, the original constitutional system of the United States reflects a vision of the state as a civil association. Rather than promoting any substantive ends of the state, the Constitution provides a set of rules for the American citizens to comply with. The task of the government is to “elucidate, to protect and to enforce the rules,” not to organize and direct the actions of the American people (Spicer 64). Adding to that, political power is fragmented by the Constitution so as to prevent any particular group in the community to impose their objectives on American government that might infringe rights of other citizens. Even though American society was built upon a vision of

a state as a civil association, in this essay I argue that contemporary American public administration, with respect to gay and lesbian rights, more reflects a society organized by what Spicer calls a purposive association.

In contrast to a civil association, the government in a purposive association is teleocratic. The actions of citizens in a purposive association must promote the substantive ends of the state that are determined by the government. Examples of a vision of the state as a purposive association are presented in the novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986) and the movie *Persepolis* (2007). *The Handmaid's Tale* is a dystopian novel set in the United States where Christian fundamentalists have overthrown the government and have subsequently established a new theocratic government called the Republic of Gilead. *Persepolis* is the memoir of Marjane Satrapi in which she describes her life as she was growing up under the regime of the Islamic fundamentalists. In both *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Persepolis* the people are oppressed by a theocratic government that promotes a particular array of religious beliefs. People in the novel and the film who oppose the ends of the state, or interfere with the promotion of those ends, are killed or excommunicated.

At first glance, this vision of a purposive association it does not seem to have anything in common with contemporary public administration of the United States that strongly holds on to principles as democracy and freedom. However, something that American public administration has in common with the public administrations in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Persepolis* is that all three adopted laws in the governmental process that are based on a guide of behavior that is founded on certain ethics that the government holds. The stories of Offred and Satrapi show how a society may or can look

like, and how a whole society can be controlled, when theocratic governments pursue such teleocratic policies. Like these teleocratic governments, the United States government supports a government based on the rule of law. However, they state that they hold a different set of values, ethics and morals. Writers of public administration and the American government argue that America is a civil society in which equality, liberty and freedom prevail, whereas the Republic of Gilead and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran are theocracies in which the only freedom that the people have is the freedom from sin.

According to Spicer, the vision of the state as a civil association in a postmodern political culture can be imperiled when “promoting purposes and values held by some political and cultural groups while at the same time ignoring or even trampling on the purposes and values held by others” (Spicer 99). Spicer also argues that the role of the government in a civil association is to make sure that citizens abide by the rules of conduct, and besides that, it also needs to make sure that no particular substantive set of purposes or objectives for the community are achieved. The reason for this is the belief that individuals and groups of people will cause damage to each other if no constraints are set to their behavior. An issue in America that violates the view of contemporary United States as a civil association is the fact that in America, same-sex marriages are not legal. The American Constitution is based on a set of liberal values that do not correspond with this limit that is imposed on the freedoms and rights for gay and lesbian people and therefore, contemporary American society is better characterized as a purposive association.

The main reason that adversaries give for opposing same-sex marriages, is that it is not in line with what they think is favorable for the American community. Firstly, they believe that this institution would be inconsistent with the ethics on which the behavioral guide and thus the laws are based in America. Secondly, adversaries argue that legalizing same-sex marriages will devalue the institution of marriage, which they see a contract between a man and a woman. Thirdly, religious believes are used many times as a reason for a ban on same-sex marriage. This shows that opponents of same-sex marriage hold a rather teleocratic vision of government, which is not at all in line with the liberal ideology upon which the Constitution was based. As Theodore Lowi's scheme of ideal types of ideology shows, one of the characteristics of the liberal ideology is that citizens in a country are linked with each other by an agreed upon social contract between the people and the government that needs to be held up by both sides. Secondly, in liberal ideology, there is no room for morality in public discourse. Lastly, the First Amendment to the Bill of Rights says that American government should be neutral to religious creed as a means to prevent individuals or groups of people to be excluded from community.

Looking at the ban on same-sex marriage from this point of view, it does not go hand in hand with this vision of a state as a civil association which is put forward in *Public Administration and the State*. The ban on same-sex marriage fits in better with the ideology held by people on the right side of the political spectrum with a vision of the state as a purposive association, which looks surprisingly similar to the societies envisioned in *Persepolis* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. Neither the film, nor the novel displays a community in which individuals and groups of people are free to pursue their own interests and values. On the contrary, in both *Persepolis* and *The Handmaid's Tale*,

the governments hold a vision of the state in which community is deemed more important than a social contract, as the citizens need to pursue a set of substantive ends in order to fit in with the community pursued by the government.

The fact that it is illegal in America for gay and lesbian people to get married shows that American governments promotes a particular set of values held by a certain group of people in American society, while ignoring the values held by another group, which is exactly what characterizes a vision of the state as a purposive association. Therefore, contemporary United States is characterized better as a society organized by what Spicer calls a purposive association than by a civil association, because public administration draws more on the ideologies on the right side of the political spectrum than on America's constitutional traditions, which are originally based on liberal values. Moreover, it shows that American government not only keeps an eye on American society, making sure everybody abides by the rules of conduct, but it also has certain teleocratic characteristics, promoting certain substantive ends while ignoring values of other individuals and groups of people, like gay and lesbian people.

Introduction

The aim of this essay is to explore four theorists of public administration, to be exact Luther H. Gulick, Elton Mayo, Herbert A. Simon, and Dwight Waldo. A section will be devoted to each writer and it will assess whether their writings reflect a vision of the state as a purposive association or as a civil association.

Luther H. Gulick

At first glance, Luther H. Gulick seems to support a vision of the state as a civil association. However, his proposals for administrative reform show discrepancies with this vision, because he suggests changes that create room for a government to become more teleocratic. Therefore, this section will argue that Gulick's theory contains purposive association themes. Gulick's idea of society looks civil, because he sees it as a free market where government is only to intervene when the market fails. He believes that the role of the state is to maintain the equilibrium in society, always striving to maximize freedom for the people, but besides that it should be limited in order to prevent the government from becoming totalitarian. According to Gulick, a totalitarian state is not desirable in a pluralistic society, because "there is no place for an exclusive pursuit by the central government of national goals and programs embracing public and private activities" (Fry and Raadschelders, 91). Gulick maintains that government policy should

be based on interdisciplinary research in which both the voices of “special-interest groups” and the “ordinary public” are dealt with (Fry and Raadschelders, 91).

However, Gulick’s suggestions for reform contradict his idea of the role of the state. He maintains that the system of checks and balances, as it exists in the United States, paralyzes the American government as it is now “virtually powerless” (Fry and Raadschelders, 93). Political power is fragmented by the Constitution so as to prevent any particular group in the community to impose their objectives on American government that might infringe rights of other citizens. Gulick proposes to enlarge executive power so that the behavior of “willful, strong, and selfish human beings” can be coordinated more efficiently. He wants to redistribute power in government by leaving the planning, proposing, and implementation of policies up to the executive branch. Then the legislative branch has the ability to veto or approve those policies (Fry and Raadschelders, 86).

As stated above, Gulick argues that government needs to act when private actions of people in the free market are “inadequate”. It is interesting to see how Gulick on the one hand argues that government should be limited and that it should not act single-handedly, but he also wants to enhance executive power so that it can eliminate inadequate behavior. He does not define what he means with inadequate, but since this is for the government to determine, it creates room for them to act more teleocratic, especially when there are fewer checks and balances to impose impediments for totalitarian governmental behavior. Even if there still is a legislative branch that can reform or even veto policy proposals, history has shown that this does often does not

constitute a hindrance for totalitarian governments, as they have enough power to control that.

Gulick thinks that democracy in America is solid enough to prevent the government from acting tyrannically, as it will be the “common man” who eventually will make the final decision, despite of the more concentrated executive power. This vision is too optimistic, because centralized power reduces the ability of the people to express their dissatisfaction with a particular policy or line of thought. Other suggestions on Gulick’s part can also create openings for governments to become more teleocratic. Besides enlarging executive power, Gulick also argues that public policy would be more efficient if it was stated clearly, supported by the public, and moreover, if it would rest on a “singleness of purpose” (Fry and Raadschelders, 94). This expresses a vision of the state in which a policy inhibits a particular set of substantive ends or purposes, which is one of the main characteristics of a purposive association. Gulick’s idea about the application of science on administration contributes to this conclusion.

According to Brian Fry and Jos Raadschelders, Gulick was a strong supporter of applying Scientific Management to administration, which could be used find “principles” and “immutable laws of administration” which then could be applied to make public policy more efficient (95). A problem that could arise in a civil society with applying this concept is that by accepting the notion that human behavior is predictable, one denies the idea that a community exists of a dynamic group of diverse individuals. In a pluralistic society, there will most likely not be an “immutable law” because society is too fragmented for that. In short, the principles that will be found by applying Scientific Management to administration will promote certain substantive ends while ignoring

values of other individuals and groups of people. Fry and Raadschelders state that this brings up the problem of the danger of scientific expertise in administration. Because the field of science has become increasingly specialized, it no longer aims to encompass the whole society, but just small particles of it. Therefore, if government adheres to a specific profession, it creates a situation in which a small, but powerful group of scientific experts will have a say over the fate of a large group of people.

Again, Gulick argues that this will not cause any problems, as long as the common man can decide for himself what is beneficial for him. Nonetheless, his proposed system creates room for more teleocratic governmental behavior that can limit the possibilities for the common man to do so, which is why Gulick's suggestions show a vision of a state as a purposive association. On the contrary, Gulick states that societies will become *more* democratic as they become more efficient by implementing the changes in public administration that he proposes, but he does not explain how that would work. He does not make clear statements on how and where to set the boundary on the enhancement of executive power and the application of scientific methods on administration. As the system of checks and balances is no longer in place, Gulick's proposed changes leave too much room for a teleocratic government to emerge as less and less people have more and more to say about the citizens.

Elton Mayo

Mayo argues that in the past there was religion that secured "voluntary cooperation" among the people, but modern society has become increasingly secular due to economic and social changes, which has caused society to disintegrate. Nowadays,

society is moving back to a state of anomie where there is only one rule, that is, self-preservation. People no longer have a “sense of social function” anymore and they suffer from “manic-depressive psychosis characterized by solitude and pessimism” (Fry and Raadschelders, 148). One of the places where this disintegration can be observed is in industry, where individuals no longer have the sense that their work is “socially necessary” (Fry and Raadschelders, 149). According to Mayo, the problems he sees in industry are also reflected in larger society. Therefore, government now needs to cure the people, preventing the society from further disintegration. It needs to bring society “back on track” by securing spontaneous cooperation between the people again. This section will conclude that Mayo’s proposed changes for public administration show elements of a vision of a state as a purposive association.

As with Gulick, on the surface Mayo seems to be an adversary of the idea of the state as a purposive association, because he acknowledges that one should always be aware of the potential of tyrannical behavior by the state, which he does not conceive of as desirable. The role of the state should therefore be limited and it should not “exceed its moral function by undertaking social direction” (Fry and Raadschelders, 143). Instead, he believes that people need to be provided with freedom to pursue their own goals, and government should act in critical cases only (Fry and Raadschelders, 146). In his view, government does not need to create a set of substantive ends or purposes for its civilians as a means to make the democracy more efficient, for the reason that Mayo does not see community as “a horde of individuals,” but he sees people as “social animals” whose nature it is to voluntarily cooperate with other people as long as their supervisors have created the proper social conditions (Fry and Raadschelders, 146, 155). By forging the

right conditions, Mayo believes that democracy will be enhanced as more personal freedom for the people and even the possibility of world peace will emerge, as conflicts will be replaced by better cooperation between people and societies.

Mayo belongs to the strain of critical theorists who believe that government has a therapeutic role besides its political role. According to Michael Spicer, “these [theorists] argue that a therapeutic approach to political activism can help communities become psychologically better adjusted and, as a result, more willing to work for changes that will remedy the economic, political, and social ills that serve to oppress them” (Spicer, 67). The solutions that Mayo proposes to cure society from disintegration and industrial unrest indeed seem to imply a vision of the state as a therapeutic enterprise. His work field is the industry, where conflict and social disorganization are most visible. Mayo sees it as one of the tasks of modern society to find a substitute for religion in the workforce that will give the people a sense of purpose in life. One of the means to find a substitute is by doing empirical research that is focused on gaining more insight into human behavior. He argues that it is the role of the managers to find the most effective ways to unify the workers and make them toe the line, because industry and democracy will function more efficiently when there will be less conflict.

From his study at the Southern California Aircraft Industry, one of the things Mayo concluded was that there are always “irregulars” in the industry, who are people who are not a member of the group or team. The goal of science is to gain more insight into what moves these maladjusted irregulars, so that managers will know how to “cure the disease” and make their behavior in line with the rest of the group. Mayo does not see these measures and goals as possibly tyrannical, because he believes that management

will be benevolent, because they will receive positive incentives as their employees will perform better as management treats them well. However, even though it was not the goal of Mayo's research to find ways to increase productivity, it probably is the goal for many managers who have the executive power. Fry and Raadschelders are right to argue that when the ability to create other conditions for the workers is shifted from the government to more "peripheral" organizations like industries, it gives managers power to act tyrannically "disguised by the vocabulary of 'human relations'" (167).

It can therefore be concluded that reallocating power from the federal government to peripheral organizations does not necessarily lead to less tyrannical behavior, as the managerial and instrumental characteristics that are needed to act teleocratic are in place, although on another level. In this scenario the behavior of people can still be coordinated towards the pursuit of a set of purposive ends, even though it looks less authoritative. Another suggestion that Mayo makes, creates the same problem. He argues that it is the task of federal government to change the education system. Society can be cured when government forms public opinion and unites the people through education. By creating a favorable opinion with the people from the bottom up, federal government creates the right conditions for the people to cooperate voluntarily and makes its citizens more adaptable to change without having to act tyrannically. Even though this behavior may look humane and unauthoritarian at first glance as it seems like it comes from the bottom up, it shows a purposive vision of the state as a therapeutic enterprise.

Herbert A. Simon

Spicer mentions Herbert Simon many times in *Public Administration and the state* (2001), because he fits really well in Spicer's argument about 20th century public administration theorists. According to Spicer, a key characteristic of the state as a purposive association is the idea that individuals in a political association are "bound together for the joint pursuit of some coherent set of substantive purposes of ends" (14). These purposes are set by a teleocratic government, which also develops instrumental rules that are created to promote these ends. In order to find out which policy is most efficient it is often suggested that there should be a science of administration that needs to be focused on how the objectives of the state are reached most efficiently. Because Simon's idea of the state corresponds with these criteria for a purposive association, this section will argue that Simon's writings clearly show purposive association themes.

Simon sees government as an organization "whose task it is 'to bring the organizational components of its parts [...] into conformity with the objectives of the organization as a whole'" (Spicer, 59). Adding to that, Simon maintains that "complex problems could be simplified into measurable facts," this is also necessary in order to find the right instrumental policy (Fry and Raadschelders, 332). There is a need for simplifying and devaluating decisions because human rationality is bounded and limited. As the decision making process becomes more comprehensible, it will also be more efficient as the purposive ends will be pursued more easily. It also creates the opportunity to set certain principles of public administration so that government policy becomes more predictable. This notion shows an idea of the state as a purposive association, because in a pluralistic society there are simply too many clashes and interpretations that cannot be

reduced to a fundamental law, because these decisions will always harm groups of people and empower other groups.

Simon also argues that people's own particular interests should be replaced with activities aimed at the pursuit of the substantive ends set by the organization, because the "rational individual is, and must be, an organized and institutionalized individual" (Fry and Raadschelders, 229). Adherents of a civil association say that this is not possible as society is so complex and dynamic that the existing problems in society cannot be diminished to a few comprehensible elements or principles, as this will lead to the promotion of a particular set of values held by a certain group of people in society, while ignoring the values held by another group, which is exactly what characterizes a vision of the state as a purposive association. Another purposive element in Simon's idea of the state is that individuals are shaped by their environment, rather than that they shape society. People will automatically adapt their interests to the objectives of the state as long as the state provides them with the right directions and information (Fry and Raadschelders, 229). This line of thought also creates room for a government to act teleocratic.

Another feature in Simon's ideas that is in accordance with Spicer's idea of a purposive association is that there is a need for applying value-free science to public administration. By means of science and by looking at administration as it were an organization, Simon makes it seem that administration can be studied as a value-free subject, by for example focusing on rationalization and efficiency in the organization. The goal of this research must be to establish principles of administration and to find out how to make decision making more efficient, which means that research need to assess

what the best way is to bring the people together to reach the government's goals with the least possible means. Again, this shows a vision of the state as a purposive association, because this theory leaves room for a government to act teleocratic. Also, Simon concedes that the extent to which individual behavior can be manipulated by organizations is limited. It is therefore necessary for science to determine what these limits are. However, Fry and Raadschelders argue that it is not possible for science to perform these tasks on a value-free basis are always made within an ideological framework of the society in which the organization is active (243).

One of the points of critique of Dwight Waldo toward Simon's theorizing is that it is "anti-individual" and that his theory "dwarfs and de-humanizes man" (Fry and Raadschelders, 316). This dehumanization that Waldo noted is what makes Simon a theorist with a purposive vision of the state. Simon's focus on simplification, the value-free based science of administration and his argument that people should set their personal goals aside for the substantive ends set by the organization shows that his theory leaves much room for teleocratic governmental behavior in which values held by certain people are promoted while paying no heed to the values held by others.

Dwight Waldo

Fry and Raadschelders give Dwight Waldo a different treatment than they give to other theorists like Gulick, Mayo, and Simon in *Mastering Public Administration*. They pay more attention to his commentary and criticism on other theorists than to his own perspective on things. However, by assessing his commentary on theorists like the ones discussed above, this section will argue that Waldo holds a vision of the state as a civil association. In the chapter of the book about Waldo, Fry and Raadschelders pay much attention to Waldo's ideas about central themes in 20th century discussions about public administration, which have also been mentioned in this essay about the other theorists assessed above. These themes are the "acceptance of the politics-administration dichotomy, a generic management orientation, the search for principles of administration

through scientific analysis, and emphasis on centralization of executive authority, and a commitment to democracy” (Fry and Raadschelders 308). This section will address Waldo’s view on some of these subjects.

Waldo shows extensive criticism on applying science to public administration in the way many theorists would like to see it. Science should not be used to find “principles,” even though Waldo concedes they might exist, these principles may not be favorable for society. Adding to that, he also maintains that scientific techniques are not adequate for dealing with values of human beings as he argues that individuals have their own free will, which means that they hold a wide range of values and they set their own goals in life to which no science can be applied because it is too mechanic for a pluralist society. Like Spicer, Waldo maintains that an ideological framework is implied in works of for example the Classical and Neoclassical approach, which he calls the “Gospel of Efficiency” in which “progress was to be achieved through a planned and administered society” (Fry and Raadschelders, 309).

Setting efficiency as a goal, rather than a using a set of morals as a guide book in public policy led to the pursuit of technical and social efficiency. These theorists tried to create a value-free based science of public administration, but they actually created room for teleocratic governing to emerge. A rigid science of administration can cause a technocracy to arise in which engineers, scientists and other technical experts “solve” societal problems, by which means they could take control of public policy. Waldo warns that one should always be weary of “all philosophies and methods that offered Truth” (Fry and Raadschelders, 328-329). He maintains that the theorists’ emphasis on efficiency is too narrow, as societies are just too pluralistic for such an approach. Adding

to that, Waldo claims that it can be dangerous to maintain that efficiency is value-neutral and to look upon administration as if it was a business. For example, he argues about Mayo's experiments that it "had resulted in 'a much more subtle and sophisticated (and therefore potentially more vicious) paternalism'" (Fry and Raadschelders, 326). This criticism reveals a view of the state as a civil association because Waldo holds the notion that private administration is active in a very different realm than public administration. "Laws" and "principles" that may apply to businesses are not necessary benevolent for a society. It is not the task of government to bind the people together by a common purpose, which is something that companies generally do. Therefore, Waldo rejects theories that leave room for teleocratic, technocratic and totalitarian rule.

Administration often clashes with democracy, but according to Waldo, this does not necessarily mean these two cannot go together, for administration also plays a very important part in the support of democratic values. However, as problems in society become increasingly complicated, it also becomes progressively more difficult for administration to maintain the democracy. Waldo states that theorists of public administration should not be looking for principles of public administration, nor for ways to optimize efficiency in administration. Instead, they should busy themselves with seeking "an optimal mix of democracy and bureaucracy," whilst always keeping the spontaneity and freedoms of the people in mind (Fry and Raadschelders, 323).

This shows a rather clear vision of the state as a civil association, because Waldo maintains that it is more important to keep democracy intact, leaving room for the people to set their own sets of purposes, than to make public administration more efficient. The rules that a state sets should not be designed to promote certain values or purposes, but

they should be focused on resolving the clashes that exist between the great diversity of values that are present in a pluralistic society. Therefore, Waldo also argues that empirical research should also be focused on the study of values. One of Waldo's quotes that nicely reveals a vision of the state as a civil association is where he expresses the hope that "reciprocal learning, mutual adjustment, and institutional intervention may now be speeded; that a world unified, but not unitary, harmonious, but not homogenized, may develop'" (Fry and Raadschelders, 332).

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The Ethics of Science and Technology in *The Chrysalids* and *Neuromancer*

Introduction to the novels

With the cyberpunk novel *Neuromancer* from the 1980s, William Gibson has proven that he is quite the visionary. He foresaw certain technological developments like the Internet, he rightly predicted the rise of reality TV, and he coined words like “cyberspace”. The novel is set in the future, in which the world has grown a sky with “the color of television, tuned to a dead channel” (Gibson, 3). In the era in which the protagonist Case lives, there are no more trees and plants, and horses have gone extinct. The cities now look more like some sort of dystopian underworld; they are extremely overpopulated and people get constantly high on drugs to fill a void of emotion and to create space for themselves. Another way to do this is to plug into the virtual reality of cyberspace, where people can be free from their bodies. One of the larger subjects of the book is the ways in which technological advancements can impact the lives of people, and it opens up the debate about how much a society can and should take for the sake of technological progress.

John Wyndham wrote the novel *The Chrysalids* in Britain in the early 1950s, just a few years after the atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. People all over the world were very anxious about the threat of nuclear annihilation, but also

about the aftereffects of such an attack, such as radiation fallout. Wyndham's *The Chrysalids* draws upon this fear, as his story is set in the future in North America, which largely has been destroyed by a nuclear war many years in the past. Some people managed to survive, and they are trying to rebuild a society, but they are hampered by many problems in their physical environment.

The Chrysalids

The people in the novel refer to the nuclear disaster as the *Tribulation*; they believe that God did this to them because he wanted to punish the people by letting them suffer. Because of the aftereffects of the nuclear disaster, crops often fail and show deformities, but people do too. The government sees people who are different as "Deviations", even if they only have an extra pinkie toe. According to the laws in Waknuk, the "Ethics", "[everybody] must see that the human form is kept true to the divine pattern in order that one day it may be permitted to regain the high place in which, as the image of God, it was set" (Wyndham, 41). In order to keep the community clean, the "Offences" are killed or excommunicated and sent off to the Fringes, because they were a threat to the community's purity. As was the case in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the government recognizes that these are difficult times for the people, but it is the road that needs to be followed in order to "regain all that had been lost," it was all part of the process in which mankind was "climbing back into grace" (Wyndham, 40).

In *The Chrysalids*, the policies of the theocratic government of Waknuk represent a view of the state as a purposive association, because all actions of the people in the district must promote a particular set of substantive ends. These ends have been established in "Repentances," which hold a particular array of religious beliefs.

Everybody who opposes these ends or interferes with the promotion of them will be killed or excommunicated. Adding to that, because political power is not fragmented, the actions of the people who live in the community are organized and directed by the government, which means that they cannot pursue their own interests: “Only the authorities, ecclesiastical and lay, were in a position to judge whether the next step was a rediscovery, and so, safe to take; or whether it deviated from the true re-ascent, and so was sinful” (Wyndham, 40). These teleocratic policies have grave consequences for the lives of the people who live in that district.

The novel tells about a group of young people who can telepathically communicate with one another. Instead of words, they can send “thought shapes” to each other. Of course, they must try to prevent the government from finding out about this talent, because it would be seen as a deviation. After a while, the government does find out, so they must flee. While they are on their way, they find out about a whole different world that lies far behind the fringes, which is called “Sealand”. In Sealand, everybody has can communicate with each other through thought shapes, and the society is much further developed than the Waknuk district. As they come in contact with a woman from that region they learn more and more about the place, and from the way she talks about it, they assume that Sealand is a Utopian place. The “Sealand woman” also says that Sealand is a much better place than Waknuk and the world of the “Old People,” because they do not have the problem that they could only communicate through words that would always be arbitrary, because thought shapes are not.

The core of her argument is that people and countries do not get along because their “clumsy words” are value-laden. This language and belief barrier withholds them

from thinking collectively: “There was, you see, no real communication, no understanding between them. They could, at their best, be near-sublime animals, but no more” (Wyndham, 156). What she says here is that the people’s individuality stands in the way of progress, because people should not be following their own interests and values, but their ends should be concurring with that of the larger community for the sake of progress and cooperation. Because they always search for means to improve the communication, Petra, the youngest of the group who flees Waknuk, who is better than all the others in producing thought shapes, is very important for Sealand. Even though the people who fled from Waknuk do not have to be afraid anymore of being excommunicated by a reactionary and theocratic regime, one could argue that the people of Sealand also live in a purposive association. In Waknuk, people with deviations were seen as abnormal, but in Sealand the people without the ability to think in thought shapes do not fit in either, because they impede communication and progress. Because the people without the ability to send and receive thought shapes are seen as less, their values and personal goals will most likely not be taken into consideration, because they are considered as being less.

Because the Old People directed the world into obliteration, the people of Waknuk and Sealand are both critical about how the Old People governed. In Waknuk they argue that it must have been “a phase of irreligious arrogance prevailing at the time” (Wyndham, 40). In the past, people had been given too many freedoms, and the purpose of the state should be directed back to a focus on religion and stability to lead the way. In Sealand they have taken another approach, but they also maintain that the governments gave their people too much freedom in pursuing their individual aspirations, letting them

have their own values. In Sealand they argue that such a civil association does not work, because people were not able to communicate and cooperate, which eventually led to destruction. Therefore, everything must be done to maintain and improve collectivity and understanding, by for example encouraging thought shapes that make communication easier. Thus where the people of Waknuk tried to stop the process of change and evolution, the Sealand community tried everything to encourage change for the sake of progress.

Neuromancer

This science-fiction novel revolves around a man called Case, who used to be a “space cowboy,” i.e. a computer hacker: “He’d operated on an almost permanent adrenaline high, a byproduct of youth and proficiency, jacked into a custom cyberspace deck that projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix” (Gibson,6). Although the matrix is ridden with criminality and viruses, it also offers many possibilities and freedom. However, Case made the mistake to steal from his employers, so he was kicked out of cyberspace back into the high-tech, depressing underworld.

Clearly, the world that Case was made to live in is very much different from our contemporary world. New technologies have caused many changes to the world, which the people are trying to cope with. Most of nature has disappeared, and the societies that Gibson describes seem to have become increasingly less moral. Manhattan is now covered by a dome, people can change their bodies through genetic engineering, and people no longer need to die because they can keep on living in cyberspace, or they can

even have their bodies cloned. By creating this image of a dystopian world where quality of life appears to be pretty miserable, it seems at first glance as if Gibson wants to show that if a government does not set boundaries for scientific and technological developments, an immoral world will arise in which humanity will go into decline.

The earthly world in *Neuromancer* shows several similarities with the state of nature that Hobbes discusses. Hobbes states that in a society where there would be no government, there would be a state of war of “all against all,” because there would be only one rule in this state of nature, that is, self-preservation. In this world there are no ethics, nor morality, because people have too many freedoms. When Case was kicked out from cyberspace and sent back to the world outside of the matrix they also removed his ability to plug back in, so he was stuck in this “state of nature”. Clearly, Case had adjusted to the changed culture and society in the matrix, he therefore feels out of place in the earthly world, trapped into his body with all its limitations. As a result, he has become suicidal and he uses a lot of drugs in an attempt to get to the same high that he feels when he is in the matrix. Even though Gibson presents a dreadful future for Earth, he also shows that technologies like virtual reality could function as a replacement for the role that Hobbes presented for government. The new technologies have brought possibilities that people probably would not want to live without, if they were given the choice. It creates a certain order, a culture that has molded Case his individuality into something that would work in a society.

Neuromancer also shows some similarities with *The Chrysalids*. The people in Sealand can communicate with each other through thought shapes, and by these means they understand each other better than the Old People did. In *Neuromancer*, people have

developed techniques to plug into a matrix, which is a visual representation of the cyberworld. In some respects, both advancements have the same outcome. Because people can now let other people feel what they feel, and literally show them what they have seen, they no longer are dependent on words. People can understand each other better because they are no longer limited by the use of arbitrary words. In both *The Chrysalids* and *Neuromancer*, this ability is presented as something that could be an advancement for all of society. Even though cyberworld to many people does not really seem as a place yet one could want to live in, it is still better than to not go along with the changes, because both life outside of the cyberworld and the Waknuk community are portrayed by the authors as backward, dystopian worlds.

Conclusion

Even though both *Neuromancer* and *The Chrysalids* were written several decades ago, both books present us with dilemmas and debates that are still very much alive today. We now live in an age of rapid technological change and scientific developments. As life becomes increasingly complicated it also becomes harder for governments to decide what to do with these developments, because due to the new technologies, the consequences of their decisions could be far-reaching. The reality of cloning people comes closer every day, we have techniques for genetic manipulation, and stem-cell research; but will these advancements do society any good?

One of the difficult choices that governments have to make is whether they will encourage technological and scientific advancements and thus change, or if they should restrict possibilities for change. They also need to make decisions about how and what they want to regulate. On the one hand the novels show that technological changes can

lead to the (near) destruction of the planet, but those changes can also aid the next generation and advance cultures. Moreover, even though developments in technology and science may be the end to society as we know it, both *Neuromancer* and *The Chrysalids* show that people will always adapt to change, one way or another.

The Handmaid's Tale

In last week's class, we watched the movie *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990), which is the screen version of a dystopian novel by Margaret Atwood that goes by the same name (1985). The movie and the book describe how democratic societies could become totalitarian when fundamentalists assume power and establish a theocracy. The novel is set in the United States, where Christian fundamentalists have overthrown the government and have subsequently established a new theocratic government called The Republic of Gilead. In the newly emerged society, the fundamentalists have taken away women's rights and power by reversing everything that feminist organizations once accomplished. Moreover, severe measures are taken by the government to bring the declining birth rates back up. Against their will, fertile women are placed with families that are highly placed in the regime. These women are called handmaids and they are being held to bring forth an offspring for the family. *The Handmaid's Tale* is a story about one of the Handmaids called Offred.

Personally, I think *The Handmaid's Tale* is a great book. In the course of the storyline, the life of Offred from before the Republic of Gilead slowly reveals itself through the flashbacks she had. As a reader you discover that she was a woman who lived the same comforting life as I do right now. There are small things that indicate that there are fundamentalist groups that are actively trying to obtain political influence, but they do not affect the personal lives of most people. Short and fierce flashbacks point out that the Christian fundamentalists did not need much time to take over most of the

country. By means of this, Atwood demonstrates how in a democratic society seemingly small and insignificant fundamentalist organizations can become really powerful within a short period of time. During class it was pointed out that in the 1980s, when Atwood wrote *The Handmaid's Tale*, the *Christian right* could be identified as an influential political force in the United States. Atwood's novel can be seen as a warning for the intentions of the Christian right, by powerfully describing the suffocating life in the Republic of Gilead.

In the Republic of Gilead a small group of men have all the power and all rights have been taken away from the women. The handmaids are treated as the "lucky ones," because all other non-Caucasian and infertile women, as well as political activists have been put in camps. However, handmaids do not have much freedom in their lives. They are not allowed to go wherever they want, they are drugged to keep them submissive, they are not allowed to read or work, nor can they criticize the totalitarian theocracy. Their clothes cover all of their bodies and they wear wings around their faces that they need to wear to "keep [them] from seeing, but also from being seen" (8). Christian fundamentalist women like Serena Joy are also portrayed as unhappy, because life in the Republic of Gilead is not how she expected it would be. Atwood seems to send out the same message that was voiced in the movie *Lathe of Heaven*, that warns that one should be careful for what one wishes for, because it will always turn out differently than how you thought or hoped it would be like.

The *Historical Notes* at the end of the novel gives an extra twist to the story. In a symposium that takes place roughly two centuries after the period in which Offred lived, this period of transition that is described in *The Handmaid's Tale* is looked upon as a

difficult time that was needed to save mankind. This suggests that the fundamentalists are still in power, and the way in which Atwood wrote it suggests that it is just men who go to university. This part of the book is confusing, because it seems like the Christian fundamentalists succeeded in creating the society they wished for. In order to understand their society's history they look at Offred's story, but they do not really criticize what happened to the people back then, and how Handmaids were treated.

As a grad student in International Relations in Historical Perspective in the Netherlands, I look in some courses at how the Dutch governed the Netherlands East Indies for 350 years and, for example, how it has influenced Indonesian society and Dutch politics. Unlike the students in *The Handmaid's Tale*, we do openly criticize colonialism, the patronizing, and the suppression of the Indonesian people. Nevertheless, as a student I also look at the history of my society to understand how my society has become what it is at this time. The *Historical Notes* reminded me to always stay critical of societies and the way history is described. It also made me realize that progress in a society not necessarily means a change from worse to better, but it is also difficult to see what *better* exactly is. Even though the Republic of Gilead is a totalitarian theocracy, syphilis, AIDS, negative birth rates, and biological and chemical warfare no longer tear the country apart.

After watching *The Handmaid's Tale* in class, Josh explained about the difficulties and considerations for moviemakers who make a novel into a movie. It is hardly ever an easy task to transform a 300-page book into a movie script. Frequently, characters are removed from the story line and whole dialogues need to be reduced in length or dropped entirely. Adding to that, moviemakers sometimes bring the story to a

whole different close than the novelist did. This was also the case for *The Handmaid's Tale*. To me, the silence, the hazy flashbacks and hopelessness that are voiced throughout the novel make it a really powerful story, but these facets of the novel are hard to convey on a movie screen. Adding to that, Offred hardly shows emotions in the novel, nor is she allowed to make eye contact with most characters in the novel. If the moviemakers would have copied these aspects literally, the movie would probably have turned out very unappealing to the larger audience. To make it more attractive to watch, scenes have been added to the movie script to make it more exciting, but also to underline morality by making a clearer distinction between the “good people” and the “villains”.

I liked the novel much better than the movie, because the changes that were made for the movie really took away the silence, the hopelessness and the mystery that were so much more pervading in the novel. For example, when the women are relocated, the movie draws many similarities with the deportation of the Jews during the Holocaust. The regime uses cattle cars to transport the people, and when they get off the vehicles they are placed in a line that will determine their future, like the Jews who arrived at the concentration camps. The movie seems less mysterious, because we know Offred's real name and we know more about the political position of the family she is placed with. Also, Offred seems to be much more resistant and rebellious in the movie. Her life looks less hopeless because she does not have to wear the white wings, she can have a regular conversation with other handmaids and she even has a passionate relationship with the chauffeur. The most striking difference between the novel and the movie is that in the novel, the reader does not get to know what has become of her, whereas in the movie, Offred kills the commander and she continues to live with the rebels in the mountains.

Whereas the movie seems to focus on the resistance against the rule of the Christian fundamentalists, the novel rather displays how dangerous the ideas of Christian fundamentalists really are and how a theocracy can destroy all aspects of life in a democratic society that we consider “normal”.

Journal Two

In your reaction to my journal of last week, you asked me to think about what my society looked like two hundred years ago, compared to today. After the Congress of Vienna of 1815, William of Orange, an enlightened despot, became king of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. At that time, my ancestors were doing the same thing as most of my family is doing now; they were farmers in Friesland, a province in the north of the Netherlands. I have to admit that I do not know a lot more about “my society” two hundred years ago than what the students from the “Historical Notes” in *The Handmaid’s Tale* know about Offred’s society. Probably similar to most students from that section of the novel, I would rather live in present-day society, than in the society my ancestors lived in two hundred years ago. However, a significant difference between my reality and the “reality” of the students in *The Handmaid’s Tale* is that current Dutch society is not ruled by Christian fundamentalist, like “current” Gileadean society. Paradoxically, the world Offred lived in before the change was very much more like my present-day world, nevertheless, the students would rather live in their world than in my society, because they do not know anything different.

Secondly, you asked me to compare the movie *Lathe of Heaven* with *The Handmaid’s Tale*. In both stories the “reality” of the people changed drastically, yet an important difference between the two is that people like Offred in *The Handmaid’s Tale*

still remember what the “old” society was like, whereas in *Lathe of Heaven*, except for a handful of people, they seem to have no memories of the changed past.

It is hard to know if Offred would also have criticized the government if she had not known what life was like before the Republic of Gilead. Atwood describes her as a woman with a strong opinion, who could not express her feelings because of her position and the government. Even if she would not have known about pre-Gileadean life, I think she still would have struggled with the power relations in Gileadean society. Michael W. Spicer also shows how a sense of individuality emerged in late fifteenth-century Europe, and how people started to abuse the power of the monarchs as the administrative apparatus grew that controlled the lives of the people (2001, 76). Those people also did not know any other reality from the one they lived in, but still they wanted to make changes.

Here I would like to bring the movie forward that we watched in class last week. *Persepolis* (2007) is the memoir of Marjane Satrapi who describes how she witnessed, as a young and outspoken girl, how her society and her life were radically changed when the Islamic fundamentalists took over Iran. She had to wear a Hijab, her uncle was executed for being a communist, and the government had taken many pleasures and freedoms away from her and the rest of the Iranian people. Iran rapidly becomes a tyrannized society. The movie shows many resemblances with *The Handmaid's Tale*, which also tells the story of a woman's life and a whole society being suppressed by a fundamentalist government. Just like Offred, Satrapi remembers what it was like “before” and she strongly expresses her opinion about the government to, for example, her

teachers in middle school, and later towards a group of men in the university who tell her to dress differently.

Unlike Satrapi, later generations of Iranian girls do not know what it was like not to have to wear a veil, for example. Still, despite of the fact that they do not know what it is like to have certain freedoms, there still is resistance within Iran against the Islamic fundamentalists. The underground parties that Satrapi went to still exist, and the people are still looking to be more individual within the boundaries that are set by the fundamentalists.

Journal 3

In your reaction to my last journal, you asked if I thought if individuality actually has an a priori existence, or if it might be constructed by society / culture. One of the things we discussed in last week's class that is related to this question is Hobbes' state of nature. Hobbes states that in a society where there would be no government, there would be a state of war of "all against all", because there would be only one rule in this state of nature, that is, self-preservation. In this world there are no ethics, nor morality, because people have too much freedoms. Unlike Hobbes, John Locke believed that in this state of nature there is not just chaos. He states that there actually is a sense of ethics, which he describes as "natural law". However, he believes that people are too lazy and selfish to pay attention to this natural law. Locke therefore argues that a government is needed to codify the natural law, defining moral laws.

Even though Hobbes and Locke have different views about what the state of nature looks like, they both argue that, in this state, individuality has an a priori existence (they do not speak very highly of it though). Hobbes argues that "individuals" are not capable of doing anything sensible to the world. Therefore, the world needs monarchs that are above the law to create ethical standards, morality and laws. The novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, the film *Persepolis*, but also contemporary American society have

showed us different versions of what societies can look like when governments adopt laws that are based on the government's definition of what is right and what is wrong.

I think that this sense of individuality still exists in societies with governments. However, the level of individuality is constrained by the laws that are created by the governments. Laws create a social contract that both the government and the people need to comply with. Within the boundaries that are set by this contract, a community emerges. The more rigid a government's justification of the laws is, whether to the left or to the right of the "political spectrum," the more the individuality of the people is curtailed. I am not sure if this is correct, but perhaps as boundaries set by governments become stricter, the agreement among individuals becomes lesser and the contract between the people and the government becomes pressured.

You also asked if we should interpret secret drug parties in the United States as "evidence of political resistance, or simply 'criminal behavior'". You made this comment because I argued that in *Persepolis*, people like Satrapi went to secret western parties because they were looking for ways to be more individual within these strict boundaries set by the Islamic fundamentalists. I did not mean by this that people go to these parties as a means to express their dissatisfaction with the government, but because "human nature" is more liberal than the governments in *Handmaid's Tale*, *Persepolis*, and perhaps also contemporary American society. I now realize that my view of what people are like is perhaps not that different from Locke's view of human nature. I believe that people have some ethical standards, still, this does not mean that everybody holds the same ideas about what is right and what is wrong. So, I guess that these secret parties and

drug parties should be interpreted as criminal behavior, just like stealing and killing is criminal behavior. However, it depends on the government what is deemed as criminal.

The scheme that was presented in class last week showed how right of the political spectrum governments justify their actions by evaluating if conduct is “deemed good or evil in itself”. For example, the government in *The Handmaid’s Tale* forbids Offred to go out, the Islamic fundamentalist government in *Persepolis* does not allow Satrapi to hold her boyfriend’s hand in the car, and American people are not allowed to smoke weed. I do not believe that American people smoke weed to rebel against the government, but because they believe that their action is not harmful in its consequences. Even the commander in *The Handmaid’s Tale* who had a high position in the Gileadean government went to the secret parties because “everybody’s human, after all [...] you can’t cheat nature” (Atwood 237).

Journal Four

I think that last class was really interesting, but also very complicated. In last week's journal I was talking about Locke, amongst other things, and how he thought that life in a "state of nature" was not desirable, so in order to create a more inhabitable space he opted for a government whose job it would be to codify natural law. Locke's ideas have had a great influence on America's constitutional traditions, like the Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson. As you have also mentioned in your comment on my last journal, one of the main ideas behind in the Declaration of Independence was that "the 'official' justification for the new political order was that social conditions in the prior periods had become dysfunctional," just like how the governments in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Persepolis* justified their government change.

However, a big difference between the American governments and the governments in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Persepolis*, is that the American society is not tyrannical. With the Constitution, America entered a social contract which gave it access to this civil society, based on liberal values. One of the ideas behind the Constitution was that it imposed several impediments so it would make it practically impossible for the American national government to become tyrannical. A theme of last week's class was how the introduction of science in government has, among other things, laid a foundation for purposive thinking. As you said in class, people get this notion in the 19th century that they can "change stuff in the way we want it to be". Science is also applied to for

example thinking about society and political thought, and so this notion arises with people and the government that people can be changed into more ethical and moral persons, that government can pursue certain goals for society by “molding” people in the way that would promote substantive ends of the state that are determined by the government.

Another notion that also arises with discoveries in science is that everybody is connected because everything is essentially made out of the same *stuff*, so everybody is part of this larger system. I think this also has contributed to a new thinking about cooperation between individuals. Because if we are all alike, then we can also act alike. In class you presented a quote by Walter Bagehot, who said that “national character is but a name for a collection of habits”. This is really fascinating, because it makes you think about what really has made you become the person you are. To what extent am I an individual and to what extent are my thoughts and habits molded by this society I live in.

Something that you also mentioned in last week’s class that kept me thinking was how Woodrow Wilson said in his 1912 speech *What is Progress?* that the Constitution should be interpreted according to the Darwinian principle: “government is not a machine, but a living thing. It falls, not under the theory of the universe, but under the theory of organic life. It is accountable to Darwin, not to Newton”. Instead of looking at the Constitution as a system of checks and balances that keeps the civil society in control, Wilson wants people to see American society as a living organism, like he does. He thinks that the prior interpretation of the Constitution needs to be changed, as it has become dysfunctional because of the knowledge the people have now. I am not sure if this is true, but this is actually really scary in some way. As I said earlier in this journal,

the difference between American government and the governments in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Persepolis* is that American government is not tyrannical. One of the reasons for this is because of the system of checks and balances set by the Constitution. But here we have Wilson who kind of says that the prior interpretation of the Constitution does not apply anymore, because it has not evolved like society has. Here I am getting really confused, because I do not really know what to make of all this.

Wilson was in favor of a vision of the state as a political association in which the activities of individuals “must be organized around the pursuit of a coherent set of substantive ends” (Spicer 22). But of course the constitution really hampers the American government if it wants to promote any substantive ends for the state. By making these statements, does Wilson undermine the Constitution here? If that is the case, would this also mean that the application of science to governing not only laid a foundation for purposive thinking, but maybe it also created an opening for American national government for more tyrannical or oppressive thinking / behavior in their pursuit of certain ends?

Journal 5

“Mistakes dangerous to the nation’s welfare and security are made when governments prevent scientists from presenting the best evidence and analysis”. Last week I thought this made sense, so I ‘voted’ in favor of this statement. But then I realized that there are many ways for scientists to do research and actually find out things that might improve a nation’s welfare and security. Is government making a mistake when it prohibits or limits animal testing? Or would it be justified to do tests on, let us say, 100 persons, even if they would die, if that would cure breast cancer? In my opinion, it is not. We already touched upon this subject shortly in last week’s class, but many people do not know that a lot of information that we have on genetics and what happens to people when they are left in the cold for too long, for instance, is derived from tests that the Nazi’s performed on twins and other people who had been placed in concentration camps during World War II.

We are told this is wrong, because of a set of beliefs, ethics and morals that our societies are based on. But more recent developments in science make it increasingly hard to make a justification on what is right and what is wrong. For example, developments in science have made it possible to do extensive stem cell research. We now know that in some families almost all women get breast cancer at a certain age because they carry BRCA1, which stands for the breast cancer gene. Women who carry the gene have 80% chance of developing breast cancer in their life. Men can also carry the gene and can pass it on to their children. Because of “science,” doctors can now

screen embryos when they are just a few days old, and find out whether they have this “gene flaw”. They then discard the embryos that have the gene, and they can put the “healthier” embryo back into the women. In general, people are very enthusiastic about this development, even though it is not a cure for breast cancer. Most governments are too, because it is their task to optimize their citizen’s health and this is a great step forward.

However, there are also other consequences of “science” that not everybody is so passionate about. The same technique that is used to find the breast cancer gene, *pre-implantation genetic diagnosis* (PGD), is also used to make “designer-babies”. The *LA Fertility Insitutes* (owned by Dr. Jeff Steinberg, one of the pioneers of IVF) now gives people the opportunity to not only select the sex of their baby, but also the color of the baby’s hair and eyes. Right now, these possibilities are offered to people who are using this technique for medical reasons. But it probably will not be long before everybody who has the money can produce a baby who has the mother’s beautiful black curls and the father’s blue eyes. To me, this sounds pretty unethical, but maybe it is time for me to pull my head out of the sand, which is what Steinberg tells the people to do who oppose the technique. I am pretty sure there is a law that prohibits these techniques in the Netherlands, but I am curious to know how Americans look upon this.

On the website of the PGD foundation (<http://www.phgfoundation.org>) it says that president George Bush argued that he would not allow states to increase their funding for embryonic stem cell research because [he would] “not allow this nation to cross this moral line” (June 2007). I could have used this example for the third essay too to show that contemporary United States is better characterized as a society organized by

a “purposive association,” because Bush obviously made this decision because of his religious beliefs. Bush thought that his decision was in the interest of the community, ignoring the values of a large group of people that do not fit in with Bush’s ideal view of the “community”. Obama has said he would lift the impediments that Bush had placed against stem cell research, but both ideas / policies raise all sorts of ethical problems. Is using human embryos the same thing as using grown-up human beings for science? If not, this also will have consequences for the ongoing discussion between pro-life and pro-choice movements in the United States, for example.

Adding to that, you showed a quote from 1914 by George Hunter, who said that “tuberculosis, [...] epilepsy, and feeble-mindedness are handicaps which it is not only unfair but criminal to hand down to posterity” (P. 261). We also discussed the Eugenics movement, who stated that sterilizing the “feeble-minded” ones was a “benefit to themselves and to society”. There now is a cure for tuberculosis, and people no longer think it is ethical to sterilize people who suffer from epilepsy, or who are “feeble-minded”. There is no cure for breast cancer yet, but for people who carry the BRCA1 gene, we can greatly reduce the chance that their offspring will get breast cancer by screening embryos, making sure that the “sick” embryos will not be born. Is this in the interest of society? If yes, would it not be cruel and criminal to have a baby be born that has 80 per cent chance of having breast cancer in its life? It will also save the government a lot of money if there will be less people with breast cancer among its citizens. Then all people who carry the gene should have their embryos selected. This is definitely not my opinion, but if we keep on going in the direction society is heading at this moment, I think it is quite possible that a modern variant of the influential eugenics movement

comes into being that will propose these statements, bringing science-based government to a whole new level.

Journal Six

In the passed couple of weeks we have watched *Lath of Heaven*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Persepolis* and *Zardoz*. A common theme in these movies is that a group of people is dissatisfied with the “current” state of society. In these movies, these people try to regain control of a society that they think has become dysfunctional. However, the reasons for their dissatisfaction and the solutions they present vary per movie. For example, in *Lath of Heaven*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Zardoz*, not only do they think that there are too many people on the planet, they also think that they do not treat it right. In *Lathe of Heaven* a man with “effective dreams” and a psychiatrist solve this problem by having the man dream that the problem of overpopulation is solved, and when he wakes up he finds out that his dream he has killed the lion's share of the world's population. In *The Handmaid's Tale* a group of Christian fundamentalists overthrow the government, establishing “the Republic of Gilead”. They cleanse their society by killing or transporting everybody who does not fit in, and they have the Caucasian women who can still get pregnant give birth to babies they then place with families who will raise the children to the liking of the Republic.

In the movie we watched last, *Zardoz*, we basically got to see two dystopian worlds on one planet. Set in 2293, the planet is practically ruined by the people. On one hand we see the “Outlands,” which looks like a savage place where a select group of people are allowed to reproduce, and practically all they do is rape and murder, because

they are told by Zardoz, a god created by an other group of people that controls the Outlands. The other group are smart scientists that decided that this place was no longer livable for them, so they created a *vortex*, which isolated them from the rest of the world, where they create a whole new society. At first glance this society looks wonderful to live in, because there is an abundance of food, people seem to be happy, and the trees and flowers are blooming. Also, everybody is fit and young because the scientists know how to control aging, so the people in the vortex have eternal life, which also explains why they are called the *Eternals*. Every time they “die,” their bodies are simply reconstructed by some sort of computer that has control over the vortex.

Life in the vortex is an example of what an overly civilized society could look like. For example, sexuality is drastically declined because there no longer is the need to reproduce, people no longer dream or sleep because they have perfected the use of their brain, so they merely have to meditate. Science is used to “perfect” all facets of the community and life itself, maximizing everything that can be controlled with the use of science. Adding to that, science is also used to make the society more uniform. People who think differently are cast out by other community members, for example by making them senile. So where in *Handmaid's Tale* and *Persepolis* religion is used as a means to control the people, in *Zardoz* the means of exercising power is replaced with science. However, that is the case within the vortex. It is interesting to see how they still use religion to control the outlands. It looks like the Eternals are trying to rebuild society outside the vortex from scratch by first going back to the beginning. They are doing this by, first, getting rid of excess people, and they tell people like Zed that he is a hunter. Later on, they tell Zed he has to make the people cultivate the land. The societies we live

in now also developed like that. First there were hunters and gatherers, later on people started to cultivate land and they would stay at one place more.

I think that live in the vortex nicely depicts what life can look like when the mysteries about the body and the brain are all solved. In last week's journal I already talked about what scientists are nowadays already capable of. We can pick and choose which babies we want to have and which ones we do not want. Fast scientific developments like these also make it increasingly hard for politics to build a sound policy around these developments. It is their task to manage the welfare of the people, but they also have to think about ethics, what do they really want for their society. In the vortex this really has gone out of control, very unnatural things are taking place. There is no more room for love, sex, or death. Is this what we want for our lives on this planet? In the vortex, mortality had become a gift, a privilege. All that the Eternals wanted in the end was to die. I guess this is one of the problems that arises with "depersonalized tyranny". We cannot call scientists out on being wrong, because as far as we know, they are always right.

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Just before we watched the movie *V for Vendetta*, you told us that we would probably notice many new things that we would not have paid attention to before. I cannot even remember how many times I have watched this movie, but you were absolutely right. There were so many subjects this movie touched upon, subjects that we also talked about in class. For example, the far-right government in *V for Vendetta* used science through a bio-terrorist attack to subdue their people, and by those means managed to establish a fascist government. (By curing people after hundreds of thousands had already died, they showed that the government was needed, and by those means silenced them) Also, quotes from the movie like the government's slogan "strength through unity, unity through faith," "the purpose always justifies the means," and "meanings of words began to change" have a different connotation to me now, as we have talked about teleocratic, theocratic, tyrannical and civil societies, and definitions like purposive and civil association.

One of the things I noticed about the movie were the many resemblances with the novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. In both *V for Vendetta* and *The Handmaid's Tale* fundamentalist regimes intervened as society had become dislocated by war and other pressures that created chaos. In both the novel and the film, a teleocratic government that promotes a particular set of religious beliefs oppresses individuals. People who oppose the ends of the state, or interfere with the promotion of those ends, are killed or

excommunicated. People are not allowed to go wherever they want, there is only one TV channel that is under full control of the government, etcetera. Moreover, in both *V for Vendetta* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, the “worst” of it seems to have taken place in the past. As we read in the end of the novel, Professor Pieixoto tells the students that Offred's diary was written in times in which “Gileadean society was under a good deal of pressure, demographic and otherwise, and was subject to factors from which we ourselves are happily more free”. In *V for Vendetta* too, an officer who used to work at the same facility where “V” was held says that at that time says: “We did the best we could,” because back then society was chaotic, but “now things are different”.

Both the professor and the officer do not deny that things were bad at that time, but it was necessary, as it brought society to the place at which it is now. What is interesting to me, is that at first glance, both societies actually do seem to fare pretty well. In most households that are portrayed in the movie, we see that people have flat screen TV's, people take good care of the elderly, and most people appear to live “normal” family lives. In short, this newly established society does not seem all that different from British society the way it is at this time. Of course there are many exceptions, as Evey's boss cannot show to the outside world that he is gay, and many people who watch the news on TV, even young children, realize that they are lied to.

This movie also gave me new food for thought about the question that comes back to us every time during (and after) class, which is the idea of an a priori individual. The movies we have watched during class and the books we have read have left me rather pessimistic about this concept. In *Lathe of Heaven*, *Persepolis*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *V for Vendetta*, (I am not so sure about *Zardoz*) rank and file seemed to be very

passive about the changes they were subject to. Of course there were people who resisted, like Evey's parents in *V for Vendetta*, but not until her little brother got sick. Offred tried to leave the country with her husband, but not until it had gotten pretty bad, and they did not join some sort of resistance. In *Persepolis* too, people go to secret parties, they secretly hold hands in the car, and the families criticize the government inside the household, but besides that, resistance seemed insignificant to me. We did not really get to see the reaction of the people in *Lathe of Heaven*, but the fact that just two people could totally change the lives of the people by merely dreaming it, shows an idea that people just live under the conditions that society has created for them.

In *V for Vendetta*, it is said somewhere that “fear is the ultimate tool” for government to control the people, but I do not think it is that simple. V seems to acknowledge this “problem”. He tells Evey: “everybody is guilty,” that people have been “robbed of their common sense,” and he talks about a “silent obedient consent”. Here, V concedes that people have been passive and therefore also partly responsible for what has happened to the country. Maybe there is also something inside the people that tells them that things are not too bad. As long as you have a flat screen TV, a husband/wife and kids who are healthy, your parents are taken good care of, and you see how other countries like the “former United States” are destroyed by a civil war, then why would you come into action? V still has faith that there is something as an a priori individual, or maybe he sees of it more as a “state of nature”. For example, he tells Evey: “you did what you thought was right”. He also tells her she had forgotten who she was “beneath it all”. According to V, people no longer see what is happening, which makes everybody part of this new “truth”, this new “reality”.

In the end though, I think that this movie does show the idea that the “individual” is a product of social construction, as the people do not come into action until V shows them what is happening, and how things could be and should be different. As he says himself “beneath this mask is an idea,” but one could also see it as just a different idea that will construct a different society, a different truth for the people. V shows the people anarchy, and they follow him. When the movie ends, we see that Parliament has been destroyed (by V), the party leader has been killed (again, by V), but V has died too, which leaves room for a whole new society to emerge. There is feeling of “hope” and “change” in the air, but we do not get to see what will really change. Will a civil society rise from the ashes of the far-right regime? Will gay people finally be accepted? And by whom and in what way will the country be governed next? Considering the fact that people have been passive all these years, I think that in this movie people have also come to partly accept the sets of beliefs and purposes that the government has imposed on them all those years. They have probably been shaped by society to the extent that there is no way they can turn society around.

This might be too big of a leap to take right now, but this made me think that this is probably also why it causes so many problems when authoritarian regimes, like the ones in Iraq and Afghanistan, are transformed into “democratic societies” in a matter of days. People in Europe and the United States often do not understand why women do not take off their *burkas*, for example, and they think that it is because the women are still terrorized and scared what might happen to them if they do. But I think that, even if there is something like an a priori individual, society has so much influence on that individual, as society creates these very important and strong social reference points, that it is really

hard to find out what still is individual within that individual. As V said, everybody is part of the whole ordeal.

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Journal Eight

In last week's class we talked about the game "connect the dots" as a metaphor for how schools impose a certain way of thinking and a set of knowledge that they think we need to know. They "arrange the numbers" for their students, so that students will connect the dots in the order that the education system of that country wants them to connect. This week we again concluded that understandings of purposes drive universities, and that about everything we learn in school is arbitrary. The things we know and learn are reflections of our culture, and they are all "narratives". Per country it also changes what the government things is important to learn in school. For example, one of the characteristics of American universities we talked about yesterday are the university studies, which consist of a body of courses that everybody needs to take. In the Netherlands we do not really have that. But what the systems have in common is that in every country students are presented, through education, with an education system of which the state thinks that it gives the students what they need, and what the state needs from "us".

If we look like education in this way and is pretty much like a purposive association, but as you mentioned in class, this does not immediately mean that everything that is authoritarian is also tyrannical, like many things in society. For

example, in the essay about Mayo in *Mastering Public Administration*, one could conclude that Mayo has a view of the state as a purposive association, because he sees it as a task for the state to “cure” the people from disintegration, because it is “socially necessary”. However, he also states that one should always be aware of the potential of tyrannical behavior by the state, which he does not conceive of as desirable. The role of the state should therefore be limited and it should not “exceed its moral function by undertaking social direction” (Fry and Raadschelders, 143). In class you mentioned that in our essays, we argue that these theorists pretty much all have a view of a the state as a purposive association, because we tend to see their propositions as tyrannical. You also noted that it does not always have to be like that, that in many cases it is much more subtle than that.

I certainly belong to that group of students, for I looked for the third essay at in what ways the suggestions of the theorists could leave room for governments to become more teleocratic, moving away from a view of the state as a civil association. However, I think we are not the only ones to do so, because both Waldo and Spicer tend to do the same, I think. For example, Waldo argues about Mayo’s experiments “had resulted in ‘a much more subtle and sophisticated (and therefore potentially more vicious) paternalism’” (Fry and Raadschelders, 326). Spicer mentions that Mayo belongs to a group of theorists that have “a vision of the state as a ‘therapeutic’ enterprise or a hospital,” and I think he also emphasizes a lot in his book how such a vision is very similar to our idea of teleocratic and tyrannical states, because he says that “the ends of such a state must [...] be sovereign over the ends of all other purposive associations and

that such a state can tolerate the existence of other purposive associations only to the extent that their ends and activities are in harmony with its own” (Spicer, 16).

I more and more start to doubt if a civil association, at least in the way Spicer describes it, really exists in our world. As mentioned above, we see purposive behavior of the state all around us. Fry and Raadschelders also mention how Waldo is often very ambivalent and often pessimistic about this: “Waldo poses heroic demands on public administration, even if he does not necessarily see a heroic future for the enterprise” (Fry and Raadschelders, 334). Waldo expresses much criticism on many theorists because of their vision of the state, but then he does acknowledge that it is good that they try, and he does not really pose a viable alternative.

In this age of postmodern thinking in which societies become increasingly complex and where “we” deny the existence of “reality,” I think the challenge of striving for a civil association becomes more and more difficult. If one holds the notion that there is not one value that supersedes the others, that all values are true (or in that case they all may be untrue), how are we ever going to decide what course to take in public policy? Going back to the connect-the-dots game, you mentioned in class that we saw in *Lathe of Heaven* how the dots of the game were rearranged several times, but every time new problems emerged. Considering that there simply is no real answer to the problems, or one perfect policy (assuming that there is no one truth), then would it not be so much easier to just choose for one *efficient* option that works as well (even though it might have very authoritarian characteristics). I am not saying that it should be like that, I am just amazed with the optimism, considering all these difficulties that public administrators are faced with, that we even have democratic societies that we try to keep as civil as possible.

Just before we watched the movie *V for Vendetta*, you told us that we would probably notice many new things that we would not have paid attention to before. I cannot even remember how many times I have watched this movie, but you were absolutely right. There were so many subjects this movie touched upon, subjects that we also talked about in class. For example, the far-right government in *V for Vendetta* used science through a bio-terrorist attack to subdue their people, and by those means managed to establish a fascist government. (By curing people after hundreds of thousands had already died, they showed that the government was needed, and by those means silenced them) Also, quotes from the movie like the government's slogan "strength through unity, unity through faith," "the purpose always justifies the means," and "meanings of words began to change" have a different connotation to me now, as we have talked about teleocratic, theocratic, tyrannical and civil societies, and definitions like purposive and civil association.

One of the things I noticed about the movie were the many resemblances with the novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. In both *V for Vendetta* and *The Handmaid's Tale* fundamentalist regimes intervened as society had become dislocated by war and other pressures that created chaos. In both the novel and the film, a teleocratic government that promotes a particular set of religious beliefs oppresses individuals. People who oppose the ends of the state, or interfere with the promotion of those ends, are killed or excommunicated. People are not allowed to go wherever they want, there is only one TV

channel that is under full control of the government, etcetera. Moreover, in both *V for Vendetta* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, the “worst” of it seems to have taken place in the past. As we read in the end of the novel, Professor Pieixoto tells the students that Offred's diary was written in times in which “Gileadean society was under a good deal of pressure, demographic and otherwise, and was subject to factors from which we ourselves are happily more free”. In *V for Vendetta* too, an officer who used to work at the same facility where “V” was held says that at that time says: “We did the best we could,” because back then society was chaotic, but “now things are different”.

Both the professor and the officer do not deny that things were bad at that time, but it was necessary, as it brought society to the place at which it is now. What is interesting to me, is that at first glance, both societies actually do seem to fare pretty well. In most households that are portrayed in the movie, we see that people have flat screen TV's, people take good care of the elderly, and most people appear to live “normal” family lives. In short, this newly established society does not seem all that different from British society the way it is at this time. Of course there are many exceptions, as Evey's boss cannot show to the outside world that he is gay, and many people who watch the news on TV, even young children, realize that they are lied to.

This movie also gave me new food for thought about the question that comes back to us every time during (and after) class, which is the idea of an a priori individual. The movies we have watched during class and the books we have read have left me rather pessimistic about this concept. In *Lathe of Heaven*, *Persepolis*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *V for Vendetta*, (I am not so sure about *Zardoz*) rank and file seemed to be very passive about the changes they were subject to. Of course there were people who resisted,

like Evey's parents in *V for Vendetta*, but not until her little brother got sick. Offred tried to leave the country with her husband, but not until it had gotten pretty bad, and they did not join some sort of resistance. In *Persepolis* too, people go to secret parties, they secretly hold hands in the car, and the families criticize the government inside the household, but besides that, resistance seemed insignificant to me. We did not really get to see the reaction of the people in *Lathe of Heaven*, but the fact that just two people could totally change the lives of the people by merely dreaming it, shows an idea that people just live under the conditions that society has created for them.

In *V for Vendetta*, it is said somewhere that “fear is the ultimate tool” for government to control the people, but I do not think it is that simple. V seems to acknowledge this “problem”. He tells Evey: “everybody is guilty,” that people have been “robbed of their common sense,” and he talks about a “silent obedient consent”. Here, V concedes that people have been passive and therefore also partly responsible for what has happened to the country. Maybe there is also something inside the people that tells them that things are not too bad. As long as you have a flat screen TV, a husband/wife and kids who are healthy, your parents are taken good care of, and you see how other countries like the “former United States” are destroyed by a civil war, then why would you come into action? V still has faith that there is something as an a priori individual, or maybe he sees of it more as a “state of nature”. For example, he tells Evey: “you did what you thought was right”. He also tells her she had forgotten who she was “beneath it all”. According to V, people no longer see what is happening, which makes everybody part of this new “truth”, this new “reality”.

In the end though, I think that this movie does show the idea that the “individual” is a product of social construction, as the people do not come into action until V shows them what is happening, and how things could be and should be different. As he says himself “beneath this mask is an idea,” but one could also see it as just a different idea that will construct a different society, a different truth for the people. V shows the people anarchy, and they follow him. When the movie ends, we see that Parliament has been destroyed (by V), the party leader has been killed (again, by V), but V has died too, which leaves room for a whole new society to emerge. There is feeling of “hope” and “change” in the air, but we do not get to see what will really change. Will a civil society rise from the ashes of the far-right regime? Will gay people finally be accepted? And by whom and in what way will the country be governed next? Considering the fact that people have been passive all these years, I think that in this movie people have also come to partly accept the sets of beliefs and purposes that the government has imposed on them all those years. They have probably been shaped by society to the extent that there is no way they can turn society around.

This might be too big of a leap to take right now, but this made me think that this is probably also why it causes so many problems when authoritarian regimes, like the ones in Iraq and Afghanistan, are transformed into “democratic societies” in a matter of days. People in Europe and the United States often do not understand why women do not take off their *burkas*, for example, and they think that it is because the women are still terrorized and scared what might happen to them if they do. But I think that, even if there is something like an a priori individual, society has so much influence on that individual, as society creates these very important and strong social reference points, that it is really

hard to find out what still is individual within that individual. As V said, everybody is part of the whole ordeal.