Various Aspects of Identity as Represented in Jewish American Literature: Diaspora, Holocaust, Israel

BABA, Minako

According to a questionnaire, conducted in 1989, on a set of elements that make up Jewish Americans’ sense of ethnic identity, the holocaust was ranked as first, followed by Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur as second and anti-Semitism as third. Interest in Israel is also prominent not only among the polled ordinary citizens but also among some writers. This article attempts to make a survey of the literary themes of diasporic identity, holocaust survivors, and the concern for Israel as mutually related topics. In the process of the survey, the article tries to shed some light on the tradition of Jewish liberalism, which is in keeping with the American democratic ideal. It also points out motifs suggestive of multicultural or transnational identities in the texts discussed.

One of the features of Jewish American diasporic identity represented in literature is yearning for pastoral America. The protagonist’s acquisition of a country house in New England in Saul Bellow’s Herzog is one example. Herzog, a failed scholar of 20th century democracy, identifies himself with the Pilgrim Fathers, who tried to build a new Jerusalem. Mixed with his assimilated viewpoint is his sense of Jewish peoplehood, holocaust, and Judaism. On the other hand, in Philip Roth’s American Pastoral, the gentrified protagonist’s daughter becomes a violent leftist criminal in the 1960s and destroys the protagonist’s pastoral American dream and creates the counter-pastoral. Furthermore, there is a clue to transnationality, even though absurd, in the form of the Jewish-Irish daughter who finally turns into a follower of Indian Jainism.

Holocaust survivors who are living in America have been through diasporic existence three times over. Bellow’s Mr. Sammler’s Planet portrays a survivor who comes out of the deadly state of existence back into humanity and recovers a religious sense of covenant as well. Cynthia Ozick’s novella, “Rosa,” is a fine example of depicting a female survivor. The Fifth Son and The Forgotten, written by survivor writer Elie Wiesel, deals with the problems of difficult relationship between
survivor parent(s) and the American son and of the need for testimony and its transmittance. Both novels also pose the question of revenge against perpetrators of crime and deny the act of revenge as un-Jewish and inhuman. Wiesel’s two novels are significant in underscoring the Judaic ideal of non-violence and peace, presenting the second generation’s point of view, and bridging over two generations of survivors.

How to grapple with Israel is problematic for Jewish American writers. Both in his journalistic work and in his travelogue, Bellow is concerned about Israel’s welfare but also shows sympathy for the Palestinians. Two of Roth’s novels, The Counterlife and Operation Shylock, portray militant Zionists, liberal post-Zionists, and militant Palestinians, while at the same time they present images of American diaspora Jews in the critical eyes of Israelis and Arabs, both of whom are in distressed situations. Roth’s ethical standpoint toward the Middle East remains ambivalent in the two novels. Anne Roiphe’s Lovingkindness is a unique contribution to the novels about visits to Israel in that it portrays a loving transatlantic mother-daughter relationship and also a sympathetic Orthodox community, from a liberal feminist’s point of view.

Finally, the article returns to fiction with the theme of diaspora, in search for multicultural motifs and outlooks. Grace Paley’s stories give voice to Others, such as Black women, Chinese women, and an old Jewish man who cherishes his Black-Jewish grandson. In Roth’s latest novel, The Human Stain, the pale-complexioned Black protagonist, who has passed as a Jew all his adult life, is transformed from a liberal academic into a “racist,” due to a willful misinterpretation of his innocent word. His existence, however, embodies racial/ethnic fusion. Furthermore, his friendship with the narrator, who shares his secrets, along with his sister’s argument for teaching Black history in an integrated context, possibly points toward a positive multicultural outlook that may be read as Roth’s response to separatist multiculturalism today.
In April 1975, over 86,000 South Vietnamese arrived in the United States as refugees within a span of a few days. Now, nearly two million Vietnamese Americans live in Little Saigons and other places throughout the country. After they settled, many started writing their autobiographies. Most of them were co-authored with Americans because of the language barrier. Young Vietnamese Americans also have started creating fiction, poems and biographies. Since they migrated when they were children, most of them are bilingual. The aim of this paper is to illustrate the formation of Vietnamese American literature and its literary scholarship, and to explore the ways in which the young Vietnamese writers such as Lan Cao and Andrew X. Pham mediate between their “memory” as refugees and the American dominant culture. They represent their hybrid identities with their experience as a cultural mediator.

Two features for the formation of Vietnamese American Literature can be pointed out. One of them is that the literature emerged as “voices” of the refugees which were collected and analyzed by social workers and editors. The other characteristic is that they are written by both the older generation and the younger generation and are concerned mainly with place and displacement caused by migration, and they engage themselves with the sense of self which is threatened to be eroded by displacement.

The autobiographies by the older people who arrived in the United States as grown-ups feature their re-construction of the self as a “Vietnamese.” This is “Identity Politics One,” which Stuart Hall calls the crucial moment of the search for roots. The younger people’s search for roots are more complex as they have to reconcile their ethnic background with late-capitalistic American consumerism.

Lan Cao and Andrew X. Pham pursue the theme of “displacement, decolonization, and disidentification” that Lisa Lowe mentions as the “crucial grounds for the emergence of Asian American critique.” Lan
Cao delineates in her novel, *Monkey Bridge*, that the narrator, Mai Nguyen, learns the fact that her mother and grandmother were oppressed under the Confucian feudalistic regime and the Vietnam War. In order not to follow her mother's victimized life, Mai tries to create her new "normadic" identity in American society. Andrew X. Pham also describes his pluralistic identity in his autobiography, *Catfish and Mandala*. He fails in his search for roots in Vietnam, and he recognizes that he comes from Vietnam and he is also Asian and American. He expresses himself from all three identities. Lan Cao and Andrew X. Pham show their strenuous literary effort to create their new cultural self which bridges a gap between Vietnam and the United States.

An Exile’s Counter-Narrative of Nation-Building:
The U.S. Literary Study’s Cultural-Critical Self-Fashioning and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

NITTA, Keiko

Since the huge explosion of multiculturalism in the U.S. literary institutions in the late 1980s, the primary approach to American national identity has focused on the cultural differences such as gender, race, and ethnicity. This multicultural turn of the U.S. literary study in the past decade is, moreover, crystallized as discussants' own fashioning of their scholarly selves as sorts of decentralized or deterritorialized American subject. Such a performative characteristic of the multicultural literary criticism is particularly motivated to reshape “America” from the vantage point, as Carolyn Porter puts it, of the “other America which is not ours.” This attempt resituating the U.S. in a broader context of America certainly created a postcolonial possibility of investigating formerly "othered" subjects both inside and outside its territorial boundaries in terms of their cultural agency. Critics' self-celebratory gesture of border-crossing, however, signifies an ambivalent point of this paradigm at which their border-crossings, or discursive manifestations of transnationalism, are subsumed into another version of expansionist American exceptionalism.
Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's autobiographical narrative, *Dictee* (1982), usefully demonstrates the tension, frustration, and pain that the Korean exile experienced in the process of her own physical and cultural border-crossings. Her anxiety of border-crossing, therefore, provides us with a textual resource by which we can indicate critics' own romancing of the concept of border-crossing in the current discourse of American studies. Put into a dialogue with the transnationalist strand of multicultural criticism in the U.S., Cha's texts exemplify a poetics that at once critiques a universal national ideology and presents an individual frustration as a "national experience." This complex authorial position informs the style of her national narrative, one that generally rejects the first-person category. Cha's inability to narrate herself and her nation in terms of "we," ultimately, implies that her border-crossing is no happy, progressive, postmodern subversion of the traditional sense of nationality.

Cha's self-expression concentrates on representing the events concealed in the existing discourse on the nation; she then reveals the suppressed lives within the American national borders; and ultimately, she demands the reader to suspect concepts informing the legitimacy of national determinants. Now that the term "subject" only makes sense as the state of subjugation for Cha, the authorial subject position from which she describes her sense of losing Korea as well as alienation in the U.S. cannot escape the discursive realm of the nation. More specifically, her intervention in the American national narrative through her experience as a Korean emigré demonstrates that the national narrative cannot always be unilateral and institutional, but private and multivocal. *Dictee*'s critique of American cultural hegemony tactically disrupts the conventional epic framework of the heroic national romance, while it recuperates certain subordinate subjects' dreams that are frustrated or interrupted.

While providing analyses of those thematic significances of *Dictee*, this essay attempts to illuminate the paradoxical relationship between the author's self-expression and the hegemonic idea concerning American citizenship in her personal history. The two disparate images of the body represent the tension between the text and its context: one shapes the text's resistance to the dominant assumption of national identity and language, while the other presents the author's recognition of the general desire for one's national identity under the condition of
Multiculturalism and Integrationism: A Study in Intellectual History

KAMISADA, Shuichi

Multiculturalism has often been charged with fueling the so-called “culture wars,” which have supposedly thrown the United States into the state of an “identity-crisis.” However, though exaggerated by the media hype on the controversial program of affirmative action, the PC debates, and identity politics, the current situation of dissent is not entirely new; for the irresolvable contradiction or conflict has been a hallmark of Americanness since the birth of this multi-ethnic nation. For all contradictions and dissent one’s Americanness is predicated on his or her commitment to the national creed of liberty and equality. From this civic perspective, the multiculturalist assertion of racial, ethnic, or cultural “difference” never poses a threat to the solidarity of the people united by the common bond of citizenship. Fear of assimilation or erasure of identities lies behind separatism, particularism, and essentialism; but the democratic ethos respects difference while turning antagonism and conflicts into a potential site for mutual understanding, reconciliation, or dialogue.

The appeal to this liberal-democratic principle, at the heart of all multiculturalist demands for the equal rights, has been the traditional source of American optimism — America is “a land of opportunities” and everyone has the right to claim an equal share of the spiritual and material riches the country offers. However, Lockianism, at the core of American liberalism, is basically a disruptive force within the society, because of its justification of sheer competition among selfish individuals, which undermines the communal feeling, compassion, and patriotism. Against the strong individualistic tendency of the native Lockian spirit of free enterprise, Hegelianism can function as a counterbalance for the establishment of the ideal equilibrium between freedom and responsibil-
ity, or between the liberal principles and the necessity of political order. More than a justification for federalism with its emphasis on unity over diversity, the Hegelian spirit is congenial to the venerable national motto "e-pluribus unum" — "one out of many." The Hegelian synthesis of the individual and the universal, or the dialectic resolution of the opposites, appears to be the most appropriate description of a multi-ethnic nation. It is Hegel alone who allows the coexistence of the opposites — "the identity-in-difference" — within a single totality, or an organic whole which makes the inherent contradictions a drive toward further development.

As a powerful "nation-state" ideology, Hegelianism supports cultural pluralism and any state policy promoting the united efforts of the different racio-ethnic groups toward better realization of the collective ideals. Despite its anti-integrationist stance, multiculturalism betrays the same integrationist motive behind cultural pluralism, especially in its embrace of the Hegelian civic ideal of the "equal recognition" of dignity among (multicultural) citizens. However, the Hegelian state is the guarantor of the plurality of values and the individual rights for those within and forming the state, but not for those outside it. As evidenced in the past records of racial oppression and ethnic assimilation, the concept of the "nation-state" so much idealized by Hegel, is actually not entirely responsive to the voices of minorities both inside and outside the state. Without the awareness of the inherent limitation in the Hegelian logic of integration and its complicity with Lockian capitalist expansionism, multiculturalists' hanging on to liberal ideals merely enhances the state power, now allied with the triumphant mobile corporate power, ready to incorporate all ethnicities to generate a larger political influence.

Because of its ambivalent but strong ideological ties to both Lockeanism and Hegelianism, multiculturalism now serves the purpose of national integration and therefore forms part of the movement that struggles to reconstruct the American national identity. Far from being an agent of national disintegration, multiculturalism in the United States turns out to be another recuperative effort to patch up the crisis-ridden national consciousness of the Americans in the post Cold War era. With the vision of consorted efforts of all Americans of different racio-ethnic backgrounds to create a national solidarity, multiculturalism reaffirmed the necessity of their political commitments to the time-honored national
ideals of freedom and equality, which are at the same time the worldwide transnational ideals, still effective as the powerful ideological instrument by which the United States stands against the rest of the world.

Cape Cod as "Another World":
What Thoreau Found at the Edge of the World

FUJIOKA, Nobuko

Most critics in the past believed, and in fact many still believe that Thoreau's creative power and imagination sadly dwindled after Walden. Affirmative and inspiring, Walden is considered a classic presentation of an American self. In such a critical tradition which has privileged Walden, Cape Cod whose content, style and voice are radically different, has been more or less dismissed as a lesser work which does not deserve a minute study. For example, Walter Harding says bluntly that Cape Cod is "Thoreau's sunniest book — and least profound." It is true that the sociable vein prevailing in the opening chapters of the book is striking (because of the popular image of Thoreau as a heroic spokesman of Truth), but his accounts are unusually "sunny" only at the beginning. This article, then, is an exploration of the rest of the book, a gloomier and more desolate world of sand, waves, and the savage ocean.

As Thoreau journeys up the beach towards the edge of Cape Cod jutting out into the Atlantic Ocean, he witnesses human values gradually erode away and his initial light-heartedness gives way to a solemn meditation on the desolate landscape and the wild ocean. On a beach Thoreau calls "a wild, rank place," he becomes fully aware of the presence of "naked Nature" and its total indifference to man. Daunting and disheartening as it may seem, he finally finds it "inhumanly sincere" and comes to terms with a new knowledge upon which man's relation to the world might be re-established anew.

"Wishing to get a better view than I had yet of the ocean...of which a man who lives a few miles inland may never see any trace, more than of
another world, I made a visit to Cape Cod..." says Thoreau in the opening passage of Cape Cod. The passage on the surface seems plain enough, though when read carefully there is an allusion to his true motive for the journey; he reveals here that he wanted to get a better view of "another world" on the strange shores. Even in Walden, readers often find strange instances in which Thoreau gets momentary glimpses of "another world" and finds himself at one with the life-giving force of wild Nature. In Walden, however, he comes in contact with "another world" only by getting "lost," as he says that "it is surprising and memorable, as well as valuable experience, to be lost in the woods any time." These moments of getting "lost" are essential in his literary scheme because Thoreau considers that "not till we are completely lost...do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature" or "not till we have lost the world, do we begin to realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations." Thus it can be said that Thoreau is an author who seeks "another," more fluid world as a vital force for his creative imagination. The attraction that Cape Cod had for Thoreau seems to be boiled down to the fact that it is a place where he can get not just glimpses but an open view of "another world."

Also in this article, the impact that Darwin's Voyage of the Beagle seems to have had on Thoreau is explored. Thoreau read the book soon after his first two trips to Cape Cod and left extensive memos in the Journal. When seeking literary expressions for his experience on the cape, Thoreau seems to have picked up various hints from Darwin's wondrous accounts of the unknown seashore. The visit was, as Thoreau himself remarks, "not intended to be a sentimental journey" after all. It was a quest into an ocean wilderness where he sought an opportunity to come into direct contact with "another world," or "the vastness and strangeness of nature."
Personal Story and Collective History in a Slave Narrative: Harriet A. Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*

NISHIMOTO, Azusa

Harriet A. Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself* (1861) is a challenging text in which conflicting and contradictory elements produce a unique narrative tension. This narrative tension reflects not only the author's struggle to gain her voice in the antebellum United States in spite of her peripheral position as a black woman and an ex-slave, but also the transition of her self-consciousness in the process of the very act of writing her autobiography.

This slave narrative, however, had long been neglected because most scholars were skeptical about its historical authenticity and Jacobs' authorship: many believed it was fiction by its white abolitionist editor Lydia Maria Child. It was not until the 1980s, when the discovery of Jacobs' letters proved her authorship and Jean Fagan Yellin published the Harvard UP edition with detailed historical notes, that its reevaluation was started. Although its status as the most important female slave narrative is now beyond question, the scholarly works on *Incidents* still remain on their early stage.

The critical studies, mainly from viewpoint of African-American studies and feminist criticism, have agreed that *Incidents* succeeds in attaining its own narrative autonomy and undermining the antebellum American social values trying to keep blacks and women silent others. I agree with these critics in their fundamental point. On the other hand, however, I'm not satisfied with the fact that most of them tend to be engaged in dichotomic discussions, where *Incidents* is examined only in terms of its power relations to the outside groups: white abolitionists vs. black fugitive slaves, white women vs. black women, white men vs. black women, and black men vs. black women. Such discussions often ignore the individual position of each slave within the slave society in the South or personal differences among black women; as a result, it comes to look as if black slaves or black women could be lumped together as an abstract homogeneous group, and Jacobs were its typical representative.
Her individuality and uniqueness as a slave and a black woman have
been almost neglected.

In this study, I will analyze Jacobs' position not only in relation to the
outside groups but also in relation to the inside groups she belongs to. In
reading the text closely, in spite of her narrative stance as a representa-
tive of female slaves, the first three-fourths of Incidents dealing with her
plight as a slave reveals her privileged position in the Southern slave-
holding society: what is being told is a life story of an elite individual who
is light-skinned skilled house slave. Then how could she persuade
herself to write her personal story as the collective history of two
millions of black women? Wasn't there a private process in which she
came to identify herself with her people for all the differences among
them? I will argue that it was Jacob's encounter with the North, the
promised land manqué, that urged her to realize the whole structure of
racist oppression and the shared condition of slaves in the South. And
in the very process of writing her autobiography, she incorporated her
personal story into the larger collective story of her people.

The Politics of Women's Voices: The Strategy of
Difference and Displacement in Trinh T. Minh-ha's
Film, Surname Việt, Given Name Nam:
"There is no real me to return to."

KAWAGUCHI, Keiko

As a postcolonial writer and filmmaker living in the U.S., Trinh T.
Minh-ha uses strategic discourses such as "in-between", "interval" and
"on the borderline" to explain her position, that is, her refusal to be
classified as either "Vietnamese" or "Vietnamese American". While
these discourses are used to deconstruct the "First World"/"Third
World" dichotomy, they also tend to blur her political alertness. This
paper examines her films, with a particular focus on her third documen-
tary Surname Việt, Given Name Nam, to clarify her political filmmak-
ing.
An overall view of her filmography shows thematic change from representing other cultures to her own and the importance of women's voices as cinematic devices to represent culture. *Surname Việt, Given Name Nam* represents a turning point. The film was made to convey Vietnam's postwar difficulties to Western viewers, whom she criticizes for lacking a sustained interest in Vietnam. The question was how she could achieve this task and balance her film without favoring either the West or Vietnam. To do this, the concept of difference was employed in the use of women's voices.

This paper first illustrates how the six kinds of women's voices including voiceovers are interwoven to create a site where the inside/outside border is displaced and even dissipated within the film. Among the voices, it is first-person dramatized monologues performed by ex-patriate Vietnamese women living in U.S. that convey the political realities of post revolutionary Vietnam. They read the translated testimony of the "real" Vietnamese women in highly accented English in reenacted interviews shot in U.S. The connection of the speaking subject, the language, and the place where it is spoken, the notion presupposed by the nation-state, is thus decentered. Here again the inside/outside border is displaced and even the North/South border disintegrates as the role of the woman from the North is played by the woman from the South. The question remains as to why Trinh employs such deceptive devices which risk the truth-value of the testimony.

This paper then goes on to examine the process of filmmaking in detail, beginning with Trinh's discovery of the original text, *Việt nam, un peuple, des voix*, her interests in the author's personal history and cultural background as a second-generation exile born in New Caledonia. Assuming the whole filmmaking process to be an act of translation (the author's transcription of the voice of "real" Vietnamese women in the original interviews into the text; Trinh's quoting, translating from French into English, and directing; ex-patriate women's acting scripted roles), this paper concludes that the final voices represented in the set-up interviews are the "grafting of several languages and cultures" of all the ex-patriate Vietnamese women, as mediators/ translators with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, who are themselves products of Vietnam's history of colonization, the anti-colonial movement, war, revolution and reunification. In this we can recognize Trinh's view that "There is no real me to return to," a phrase that acknowledges heter-
ogeneity and hybridity both in her identity and her culture.


HIGURASHI, Yoshinobu

The purpose of this paper is to delineate from the standpoint of the dilemma between "justice" and "mercy" the political processes involved in the release of Japanese war criminals in the period from 1952 to 1958, a subject which has received almost no attention up to now. The main focus of the analysis will be on the interaction between Japan and the United States, and also the policies of the other governments of the former allied nations.

In April 1952, as the Treaty of Peace with Japan went into effect, there were 1244 Japanese war criminals imprisoned by the governments of the allies. In Article 11 of the treaty, the Japanese government would make a recommendation for clemency toward prisoners, and the governments which imposed the sentences would come to their decisions. Acting on the principle of humane compassion, the Japanese Diet and pressure groups in Japan made strong appeals to the Japanese government for release of the prisoners. As a result of these domestic politics, the Japanese government appealed to the concerned nations for release, emphasizing a western orientation.

However, in almost all cases, the governments concerned were unable to respond to the request of Japan. Firstly, public opinion was opposed to the mercy that would be shown in clemency. Secondly, it was thought that such a show of mercy would undermine the justice proposed by the war crimes trials. Thirdly, in the case of governments detaining German war criminals, they were afraid that acceptances of Japanese request would excite people in West Germany.

Thus, release of war criminals involved a touchy psychological issue which would simultaneously incite Japanese nationalism and the punitive sentiments of people in the allies. In the end, the United States was
the last nation to incarcerate war criminals. This paper finds the substantial reason for this in the fact that the United States was adhering to the legal principle of parole to appease the public opinion and to sustain the legitimacy of the trial.

However, the Western nations, in their final decision, subordinated the logic that had its origin in the war to the logic of cold war or the logic of relations to Japan. The factors behind this were firstly the need to oppose the peace offensive of the Eastern bloc and to join Japan to the West. Secondly, those nations, in anticipating the release of Japanese prisoners in other nations, were fearful of their own isolation. The linkage of these fears brought about the final solution to the problem of Japanese war criminals.

In a word, Japan and the United States adjusted to a new post-war relationship, thus escaping from the dilemma between “justice” and “mercy”.

The Russo-Japanese War and Japanese Folktales:
Japanese Image in Alice Bacon’s
*In the Land of the Gods*

SUNADA, Erika

This paper analyzes the image of Japan and the Japanese in *In the Land of the Gods*, a storybook on Japan written by Alice Mabel Bacon (1858–1918) and published in the United States in 1905. By focusing on the ways in which Bacon portrayed Japanese women, I explore how she attempted to draw a certain image of Japan and the Japanese to her American audience during the Russo-Japanese War.

Due to her childhood friendship with Stemaz Yamakawa, one of the first Japanese girls to be educated in the United States and who later became the wife of Count Iwao Oyama, Bacon sympathized with the Japanese and tried to promote an understanding of the Japanese among her fellow Americans. During the Meiji period, she spent three years in Japan as a teacher in prominent girl’s schools. After she returned to the United States, she published three books on Japan. *In the Land of the*
Gods was her last book.

Although Bacon was a close friend of Japanese women who were educated in the United States and had written about them earlier, she did not write about these modern women during the Russo-Japanese War. Instead, in In the Land of the Gods, Bacon wrote about Japanese women who were rather backward and superstitious. I argue that this was because Bacon was trying to allay the fear her fellow Americans might have felt toward Japan, a rapidly modernizing nation that had become powerful enough to challenge Russia (and eventually win the war). By portraying the Japanese as helpless and exotic people in her folktales, she presented them as a pre-modern people, rather than as a people who could potentially threaten the hegemonic presence of Euro-American powers in Asia. Thus Bacon's folktales not only satisfied the exoticism of her American audience but they also served her political purpose of constructing a rather benign image of the Japanese in the United States.