

**Empire of Liberalism:
Cultural War on the Social under Cold-War Liberalism and Neoliberalism**

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Introduction

Cultural Displacement of the Social

This dissertation started with a question: how much does the American ideal of liberalism, or “the empire of liberty” as Thomas Jefferson famously put it, resemble the ideal of anarchism when there also is at least an apparent resemblance between the conservative commitment to smaller government and the anarchist ideal insofar as anarchism means to dream of utopia as government without the State? This question, however, is not concerned with an analysis of anarchism, nor of any political philosophy that officially defines the political shape of the United States. It instead looks into “cultures” of America that constitute the climate in which the commitment to smaller government was and is imagined.

Nikolas Rose, the British sociologist who analyzes in a Foucauldian framework our neoliberal condition in terms of his neologism of “advanced liberalism,” argues in “Governing ‘Advanced’ Liberal Democracies” that “[a]lthough strategies of welfare sought to govern *through society*, ‘advanced’ liberal strategies of rule ask whether it is possible to govern without governing *society*” (61). If our historical present is understood as having its base in the postmodern condition under a neoliberal regime, where the erasure of the social in our culture is most symbolically articulated by the neoliberal commitment to small government and market fundamentalism, the project in this dissertation is to find its genealogical origin in the culture of the nineteen fifties. The official policy of the United States of course did not commit to small government during, or even after, the fifties. The New Deal and its aftermath were still influential then, on the one hand; on the other, the Cold War made it impossible to imagine either federal budgets cut or a non-inclusive social policy.

At the same time, however, when Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. tried in nineteen forty-nine to offer a new definition of liberalism, radically different from the New-Deal one, in *The Vital Center*, the cultural imagination of the United States started to admire individualist heroes whose main characteristic is to be an anti-social outsider. During the fifties, social policies were alive and well – if not *very* well –, but the cultural imagination found its calling in criticism of them. In the climate of the Cold War, American culture of the fifties suddenly grew interested in erasure of the social, radically changing the definition of “culture” itself.

My argument consists of a comparison between the fifties and the nineties: the starting era of Cold-War liberalism and the era of the completion of globalized neoliberalism. This means a comparison of two kinds of “liberal” culture. My focus on the analysis of culture aims to relate narratives of what makes it impossible for us to imagine the outside of liberalism, what makes preclusion of the social seem natural for us, and what eventually prepares us for our acceptance of neoliberalization as the sole possible remedy for our situation. Rock’n’Roll, Western movies, what I call the literature of freedom, such as *The Catcher in the Rye*, *On the Road*, *The Adventures of Augie March*, and the new institutionalization of American Studies and the study of American Literature: the culture of the fifties is still influential, if criticized sometimes, in our imagination of what is culture and how it is imagined. To locate the culture of Cold-War liberalism in its inception as the pre-history of neoliberalism and globalization of the nineties dictates what the preclusion of the social is, how it is done and justified and, above all, how important it is to see the suppressed moments of the social, or even the moments of the inherent struggles with the social in the structure of each individual cultural work, in order to understand the liberal culture of the United States in the latter half of the twentieth century.

In other words, this is a project to analyze liberal culture. The point here is to see

American culture as a culture of liberalism. The thesis here is that, in order to understand and analyze the culture of the United States as a comprehensive totality, it should be understood, at least in one aspect, as a culture of liberalism and that if one wants to discuss the culture of liberalism in its totality, one should be able to stand, at least for a moment, outside of liberalism. It is in this sense that in my argument the social is regarded as the constitutive outside of American culture through which the cultures of the fifties and the nineties are explained as comparable arrangements. Needless to say, society was always there whether in the nineties or in the fifties; in a sense, cultural works are always in conversation with the social if we are able to hear latent pieces of conversation. Cultures of liberalism, however, gain their own structure in the struggle to displace the social with the power of culture itself. Nikolas Rose finds the displacement of the social to be the principal element of neoliberalism, but it started in the Cold-War culture of liberalism in the United States.

In the following argument, I call the displacement of the social with the cultural biopolitical containment. For one thing, the term is used in order to show that it started under what Alan Nadel calls “containment culture.” Yet, as I argue, biopolitical containment is not merely the characteristic of Cold-War culture when it means the condition of our cultural imagination in which social imagination is precluded. And, by social imagination, I mean not (only) socialist imagination, but also, more primarily, the vision of society itself as a structured and objective totality in which inherent antagonisms necessarily exist, as opposed to that of community without social structure (such as mode of production, distribution of wealth, and provision of lifelines) or inherent antagonisms (such as class antagonism, while social antagonisms are often understood to be solved merely by dissecting a society into communities), where only belongings as an effect of liberal choice matter. Biopolitical containment as the culturalist and communitarian shackle on our imagination about social

possibilities in a sense worked more strongly after the end of the Cold War.

In other words, what I analyze in terms of biopolitical containment is not only the right-wing assault on socialism. Its typical symptoms are the discourses of post-Marxism and of the end of ideology. Yet it also concerns what can be called the division between the cultural left and the social left, or what Nancy Fraser called the two main principles of left-wing politics: recognition and redistribution. What I call biopolitical containment also covers liberal displacement of the social policy of redistribution with the cultural politics of recognition during and after the Cold War: that is to say, the politics of identity in its wider sense is also analyzed in the following as an effect of biopolitical containment, or as the cultural precondition that, making social imagination impossible, prepares for our cultural sanction of neoliberalism and market fundamentalism.

Analysis of biopolitical containment, therefore, centrally involves an analysis of the displacement of politics with biopolitics. This is the reason why the containment matters as a biopolitical one. Looking into the infusion of political discourses and medical and biological ones, Michel Foucault in *"Society Must Be Defended,"* defines "biopolitics" in contrast to his well-known conception of disciplinary power as the "individualizing" power of "anatomo-politics" that works on "man-as-body." If disciplinary power is individualizing, as Foucault explains, the biopolitics that emerges at the end of the eighteenth century is "massifying," being the politics of "the human race" that is directed at "man-as-species." Put simply, it concerns "a set of processes such as the ratio of births to death, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population, and so on." In other words, biopolitics is a new notion of politics where "illness as a phenomenon affecting a population" is seen as a political matter. In the course of history, according to Foucault, biopolitics' field of attention started to cover "accidents, infirmities, and various anomalies," along with the corresponding

mechanisms of “charitable institutions” and “insurance, individual and collective savings, safety measures, and so on” (244), where it finally tried to modify “the direct effects of the geographical, climatic, or hydrographic environment.” As the essential characteristic of biopolitics, Foucault finally explains: “Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power’s problem” (246). This is the reason, when he uses the word in *History of Sexuality*, he calls it “biopolitics of population” (139).

“*Society Must be Defended*” is Foucault’s lecture at College de France in 1975-76. After this followed the 1977-78 lecture on *Security, Territory, Population*, where he changed his frame of analysis from biopolitics to governmentality, and the 1978-79 lecture on *The Birth of Biopolitics*, where, in spite of the title, neoliberalism is critically analyzed in terms of the nature of governmentality. As Foucault explains in an essay “Governmentality,” the word means “tendency” toward “the preeminence over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline, and so on) of this type of power,” which “may be termed ‘government’” that constitutes “very specific albeit complex form” and “has its target population, as its principle form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security,” resulting both in “the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses” and “the development of a whole complex of knowledges” (219-20). When Foucault argues in *Security, Territory, Population* that the modern forms of governmentality first appeared as that of “the *politiques*” which “gives us police” in the seventeenth century, and then, more than a century after that, as that of “the *économistes*” which introduced us “the fundamental lines of modern and contemporary governmentality” (348), he illustrates the five points in which we are governed while believing that the government is good for us and in fact is our choice. First, the modern governmentality emerges as “a radical break” from the

“cosmological-theological framework” in “the governmental reason of the Middle Ages and of the sixteenth century,” where what “begins to be thought of and analyzed as the naturalness of society” takes place with the help of economic thinking on human nature: “Society as a specific field of naturalness peculiar to man, and which will be called civil society, emerges as the vis-à-vis of the state” (349). Second, the modern governmentality requires a new form of knowledge, exemplified by the economics of the era, which is not literally about the art of government but is seen as indispensable to good governing. That is to say, while the older form of the art of government loses its significance as practical learning, people starts to believe that government “must model its decision” on the new form of knowledge with “scientificity” and “its theoretical purity.” The third factor is that “the sudden appearance of the problem of population in new forms” (351): population, which “will be characterized by the law of mechanics of interest,” is to be seen as “a reality that has a natural density and thickness that is different from the set of subjects who were subject to the sovereign . . .”. The fourth is an effect of the new definition of population: “not only will there be no justification, but also quite simply there will be no interest in trying to impose regulatory systems of injunctions, imperatives, and interdictions” on “the facts of population and economic processes [that] are subject to natural processes” (352). This is the definition of a liberal state, where “[i]t will be necessary to arouse, to facilitate, and to *laisser faire*, in other words to manage and no longer to control through rules and regulations” (353). And, therefore, Foucault brings up the idea of freedom as the fifth factor in governmentality: “Henceforth, a condition of governing well is that freedom, or certain forms of freedom, are really respected. Failing to respect freedom is not only an abuse of rights with regard to law, it is above all ignorance of how to govern properly” (353). Fairly directly following this argument, Foucault starts *The Birth of Biopolitics* with the focus of “this new type of

rationality in the art of government, this new type of calculation that consists in saying and telling government,” or “the self-limitation of governmental reason,” that is “broadly what is called ‘liberalism’” (20).

Toward the end of the nineteen seventies, or, that is, just before Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) convened a conference entitled “Welfare State in Crisis” in nineteen eighty and, subsequently, Thatcherism and Reaganomics started, Foucault changed his critical perspective from that of biopolitics of population to that of governmentality as a critical concept used for the analysis of government of population in terms of freedom, or (neo)liberalism.¹ Foucault’s shift is quite meaningful not only because *The Birth of Biopolitics*, albeit eventually published as late as two thousand eight, is so early a critical analysis of neoliberalism, but also because it sheds a new light on the limit of Foucault’s analysis of micro-power, or “capillary” power, in the earlier works. While he contrasts biopolitics as “massifying” with disciplinary power as “individualizing,” his emphasis was on the ambivalent value of the latter. In *Discipline and Punish*, he insisted: “We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms. . . . In fact, power produces. . .” (194). In relation to this, he further argued in *History of Sexuality*: “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. . . . These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary” (95-96). While the ambivalence of the individualizing power of discipline lies in the paradox of subject formation and subjection enacted by discipline, Foucault’s argument on disciplinary power finally led to where there is no telling resistance from subjugation. When he thus concluded

¹ For the OECD convention, see Leimgruber. For the discourse of the crisis of welfare state, see Moran.

History of Sexuality in the explanation of sex, as the hub of the network of disciplinary power, as the locus of identity politics – “It is through sex . . . that each individual has to pass in order to have access to his own intelligibility (seeing that it is both the hidden aspect and the generative principle of meaning), to the whole of his body (since it is a real and threatened part of it, while symbolically constituting the whole), to his identity (since it joins the force of a drive to the singularity of a history)” (155-56) – it is clear that he was virtually analyzing the limit of identity politics. That is to say, the shift of the critical perspective from biopolitics to governmentality was necessary in order to articulate the limit of identity politics as an expression of disciplinary power’s ambivalence: exercise of individualist freedom under biopolitical regime is and is not resistance.

In this way, it is important to understand that Foucault coined governmentality not as a neutral neologism, but as a critical concept that primarily aims to criticize the ideological aspect of the (neo)liberal regime: (neo)liberal government under the name and the value of freedom, where the subject who has incorporated the ideology of (neo)liberalism believes him/herself to be enjoying the value of freedom, works on the ideology of the end of ideology. Foucault’s shift from biopolitics to governmentality means that the crucial problem of the biopolitical regime lies in what can be called the “governmental shift” involved in the expansion of biopolitics. By governmental shift I mean an understanding of politics with an emphasis on the technology of governing, which in turn emphasizes that politics as a practical technology is not seen as the realization of an ideology: or, put more simply, the truth of politics understood as a succession of provisional countermeasures against numerous problems, not being the result of any planning. Certainly, one of the most distinguished merits of Foucault’s analysis of micro-power concerns the explication of how micro-power works at the level of seemingly non-political dimensions of our everyday life, but this, only

naturally, tends to neglect how ideology, or even planning by utopian imaginations, in fact affects the entire shape of our everyday life. In his arguments both on biopolitics and governmentality, he makes it clear that the seemingly objective force of scientific knowledge, discovered in such fields as biology, medicine, economics, hygienics, demography and so on, affects the birth and expansion of biopolitics and modern governmentality. In this sense, although it is of course indispensable to analyze how biopolitics works in terms of its inherent logic (or illogic), it is equally important to see the birth and expansion of biopolitics as an instance of governmental shift, where biopolitics was legitimated as showing the end of a certain kind of politics, where it was accepted as an instance of the end of ideology, where biopolitics functions as a displacement of politics: it is important, understanding the true meaning of Foucault's critical shift from biopolitics to governmentality, to analyze a regime of biopolitics critically as an effect of a certain kind of governmentality. That is, if Foucault invented the concept of governmentality as a critique of (neo)liberalism that believes in the least government as the best government, what is to be analyzed in a critical analysis of (neo)liberalism is how the birth and expansion of biopolitics worked as the technology of liberal government. This is what the concept of biopolitical containment aims to articulate.

In *New Deal Modernism*, Michael Szalay identifies the official initiation of the biopolitical regime in the United States in the era of the New Deal. "Population" certainly emerged as a new political object when, as Szalay argues, "the first rationalized and comprehensive decennial census in 1930, the subsequent founding of the Committee on Government Statistics and Information Services (COGSIS) by the Department of Labor, the validation of random sampling techniques, and the invention of econometrics" (13) were adopted as governmental technology at the federal level. The "birth of biopolitics" in the red thirties, however, did not involve much biopolitical containment (although I argue in

conclusion that the thirties forms the prehistory of the body of my argument). After the thirties, biopolitical containment was started and propagated in the fifties with the discursive battles of the Cold War, its corresponding re-definition of liberalism, the discourses of the end of ideology. Along with the post-War commitment to the value of nationalism, symbolized by the international paradigm of de-colonization and such politico-philosophical discourses as symbolized by Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the Cold-War containment, I argue, worked with biopolitical displacement of the social with the cultural, where the individualist liberal hero who demonstrates his anti-social essence emerged from the era, maintaining its tremendous influence even into our present.

Something similar also happened in the nineties, where biopolitical containment then worked along with the neoliberal discourses of globalization. Although it is certainly possible to find traces of what I call biopolitical containment in any period after the fifties (or even before then, for that matter), the fifties and the nineties, I argue, are the distinctive periods when biopolitical containment figures quite large in the cultural configurations of the United States and also when a new technology of biopolitical containment was invented in relation to the self-definition of America's liberalism (that is, the nineties, recycling the rhetoric of the fifties, at the same time renovated a new rhetoric of containment).

Biopolitical containment in the nineties relied on the discourses of globalization, neoliberalization, the politics of identity and the end of history. To put them schematically, the international discourse that justified the containment in the fifties, that of the Cold War, corresponds to that of globalization in the nineties; Cold-War liberalism to neoliberalism; Cold-War individualism to identity politics; the end of ideology to the end of history. Concerning this contrast, theoretically I use Fredric Jameson's definition of late modernism in *Singular Modernity* for the fifties and that of postmodernism in *Postmodernism* for the

nineties. If our present understanding finds the culture of the Cold-War fifties, epitomized by the notorious McCarthyism, suppressive, or even ironically and virtually totalitarian with its recourse to the aggrandized threat of the Soviet Union and its totalitarian communism, this perspective only naturally finds the culture of the post-Cold War nineties, epitomized by the discourses of inevitable globalization and neoliberalization that allegedly has no alternative, to be also suppressive and even totalitarian in an ironically inverted sense with its recourse to the aggrandized victory of liberalism after the collapse of the Soviet Union. If the nineties did not repeat the fifties, the configurations of the two are at least symmetrical.

And the nineties fairly directly continue to our historical present. Observing the meanings of Occupy Wall Street movement, Bernard E. Harcourt argued on October 13, 2011 in the *New York Times* that the most important characteristic of the movement is that it is not being the traditional “civil disobedience,” but “political disobedience”:

Civil disobedience accepted the legitimacy of political institutions, but resisted the moral authority of resulting laws. Political disobedience, by contrast, resists the very way in which we are governed: it resists the structure of partisan politics, the demand for policy reforms, the call for party identification, and the very ideologies that dominated the post-War period.

Occupy Wall Street, which identifies itself as a “leaderless resistance movement with people of many . . . political persuasions,” is politically disobedient precisely in refusing to articulate policy demands or to embrace old ideologies. Those who incessantly want to impose demands on the movement may show good will and generosity, but fail to understand that the resistance movement is precisely about disobeying that kind of political maneuver. Similarly, those who want to push an ideology onto these new forms of political disobedience, like Slavoj Žižek or Raymond Lotta, are missing the point of the resistance. (np; original ellipsis)

Harcourt here argues that the Occupy Wall Street movement is biopolitical in the sense in which I use the word insofar as it is fundamentally anti-ideological, its power lies in its

commitment to diversity and its essence is protest against government. Basically, whether or not Harcourt's analysis of the movement is correct does not matter here (although I believe that it is to some degree correct and my argument will be more meaningful if it is correct). Harcourt's argument is significant in the sense that, with the conception of "political disobedience" against being governed, it virtually shows that the movement, as Harcourt understands it, virtually follows the model of resistance and revolution Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri dictate in *Empire*, *Multitude* and *Commonwealth*. Defining postmodernism as the regime of biopolitical production, where manual labor has grown obsolete and the paradigmatic mode of production has become affective labor, Hardt and Negri advocate a biopolitical revolution of love and desire. Not only did Hardt and Negri's argument in *Empire* become quite popular (with its various criticisms), but Harcourt's argument testifies that it virtually reveals the shape not of our political, but of our biopolitical imagination.

My argument on biopolitical containment aims not only to analyze the discourses that define the shape of our everyday life, but also to examine how our imagination of the alternative, or the utopian imagination of how a different world is possible, is suppressed by it. If the movement of Occupy Wall Street is essentially biopolitical, it is the very instance that shows how what I call biopolitical containment is predominant in our historical present. For the problem with the imagination of biopolitical resistance or revolution is that if we are ultimately free, liberated from any form of government, there is no imagination suggested in order to amend the economic inequality in that kingdom of freedom, to put it most simply (a more detailed analysis will be given in the body of my argument). If the ultimate goal of Occupy Wall Street as political disobedience is a kingdom of freedom in which nothing social is imagined, the limitation of the imagination that defines the shape of Occupy Wall Street results from the culture of neoliberalism that basically started in the nineties. If the

imagination that made Occupy Wall Street possible was fundamentally defined by the culture of neoliberalism in the nineties, the neoliberal culture found its legitimacy in the culture of the Cold War in the fifties, where anything social was abominated with the rhetoric of the Cold War after the sudden switch in the definition of the national identity of the United States from the flourishing of social imagination in the thirties and the forties to the superpower of the post-war world.

In other words, if we rather identify Occupy Wall Street, from a viewpoint different from Harcourt's, as voices from the street that demand economic equality, the popular movement testifies how the social imagination concerning economic equality has continually been unpopular in our academic, theoretical or political discourses in the humanities: from this point of view, the voices are a certain kind of "return of the repressed" in our academic climate of anti-social liberalisms. Actually, the fifties is the era when the studies of American Literature and American Studies were institutionalized in the form we know now, and my argument examines how biopolitically the politics of resistance were imagined in literary criticism in the fifties and the nineties. To see our present with reference to the Cold-War fifties is to see the lack of the social in our historical present as a repetition of the era of McCarthyism where, aesthetically, modernism suddenly revived in place of realism, naturalism and socialist realism, and where, politically, it was insisted that a work of art should be appreciated as an aesthetic formation free of any ideology. The amendment to the late modern aesthetics that virtually dictates the ideology of the end of ideology is then imagined in the nineties in the biopolitical forms of identity politics. My analyses of the cultures of the fifties and the nineties reveal how our imagination has been contained inside of the biopolitical governmentality of liberalism. Any valid criticism of our historical present, I believe, must critique the biopolitical containment since the fifties that has been dominating

our cultural imagination, or, more precisely, tacitly legitimating referring to our collective imagination as “cultural” and making it unimaginable to use the word “social” in place of “cultural.” To repeat, the point here is not a mere call for the revival of socialism; what is more crucial is the breaching out of anything social in our collective imagination, whatever shape “society” may take. In the biopolitical imagination, we live in the kingdom of cultures, where we act as if, as Margaret Thatcher once famously commented, there were no such thing as society. In the United States, it is the culture of Cold-War liberalism that prepared the ground for the neoliberal imagination that starts with the preclusion of the social; or, to use Foucault’s term, the Cold-War liberalism prepared the governmentality for neoliberalization in the post-Cold War era.

This dissertation consists of two parts: the analysis of the culture of Cold-War liberalism and of the culture of neoliberalism. And each part contains three chapters. The middle chapter of each part focuses on analyses of movies, while other chapters discuss novels.

Chapter One discusses Richard Wright’s rather neglected novel *The Outsider* (1953). On the one hand, the novel is chosen as an example of what I call the literature of freedom: many novels were written during the fifties in which the plot of the wandering of an anti-social hero symbolizes the American value of freedom. On the other hand, however, the novel at the same time is and is not a typical example of the literature of freedom. The beginning of the Cold War was a time when the aesthetic and literary standard radically changed from realism and/or naturalism to late modernism in accordance with the changes in the political climate that can be symbolized by the Soviet Union’s turning from an ally in WW II to a mortal enemy in the Cold War. Looking at Lionel Trilling’s *Liberal Imagination*

(1950) as an example of the emerging aesthetics of late modernism, I will argue how biopolitical the aesthetics is in displacing the social with the cultural. When Wright's novel is juxtaposed to Trilling's literary aesthetics, it becomes clear that the utopia the novel latently envisions is internationalist in the sense that the predicament of the novel's African American hero is understood not as a problem of racial discrimination, but of the imperial structure of exploitation. I will argue that when the novel takes the form of the literature of freedom, the ultimate intention of the author, who made the ending of the novel a tragedy, was to criticize American nationalism. The critique is all the more interesting because it involves the denial of the politics of identity: the novel underlines the fact that the hero's predicament has nothing to do with the color of his skin. The point of the chapter is that imagination that transcends racial differences is found in what can be seen as the influence of Marxist thinking on Wright, something that was to be keenly suppressed during the fifties.

The fifties are when Western movies were tremendously popular, and, in relation to this, a new grammar of Western movies was established. Choosing *High Noon* (1952) and *Shane* (1953) as examples of the Cold-War Western, I first argue that the new definition of the American identity, demonstrated by such works as Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land* (1950) and R. W. B. Lewis's *American Adam* (1955), is quite closely interrelated with the cinematic imagination. To analyze *High Noon* and *Shane* is meaningful since, for one thing, the individualism the movies demonstrate, what I call Cold-War individualism, is seen as an honest realization of the new definition of American liberalism, demonstrated in such a book as Arthur Schlesinger's *The Vital Center* (1949). Although my analysis focuses on Western movies, Cold-War individualism, or liberal ideology conceived in an anti-totalitarianism where the expression of anti-social individuality constitutes the trinity of truth, beauty and good, which pervades Western movies, Rock'n'Roll music, the literature of freedom and so

on, can be seen as the most influential American “philosophy” in the latter half of the twentieth century. Yet the analysis of the movies also reveals that Cold-War individualism in its ultimate form can only take the form of vacant aesthetics, that is, what can only be achieved in a fictional form of aesthetics as long as individualism has to accept the paradox of Cold-War liberalism: liberalism, being a principle of the government of a nation, should never be seen as a form of ideology.

The latter half of the chapter examines how the aesthetics of this Cold-War individualism influenced theories of revolution in the West in the latter half of the twentieth century. From Deleuze/Guattari to Hardt and Negri, the influential theories of Western Marxism continually tried to imagine a new theory of revolution. While the shared characteristics of the theories are their fear of the totalitarianism that is supposed to be dominant in the social revolutions in the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, their commitment to individualism, where any social change is supposed to start from the inner changes of a self, and an emphasis on the cultural dimension in the process of revolution that defines the essence of a revolution as epistemological rather than “merely” social, they are primarily to be discovered in the vacant aesthetic of the Cold-War individualism demonstrated in such movies as *Shane* and *High Noon*. Furthermore, in this tradition of Western Marxism, or the tradition of what I call cultural revolution, Michel Foucault plays a fairly important role. Tracing Foucault’s argument in this line, I point out that toward the end of his career, he, in spite of the general impression gained from his earlier comments, started to more or less appreciate the value of Marxist thinking, especially when his main target of critique was neoliberalism.

Giorgio Agamben’s *Homo Sacer* demanded radical changes in Michel Foucault’s argument on biopolitics: Defining the Nazi Holocaust as the effect of a biopolitical regime,

Agamben criticizes Foucault's original definition of biopolitics as the power of life and living. Following Chapter Two's argument that tries to situate Foucault's argument in his own historical context, I would also like to situate the polemic between Foucault and Agamben in its historical context: a critique of the technology of government in the welfare state of the twentieth century. And insight into the hidden paradox in the government of the welfare state, I argue, is the theme of J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), another exception in the literature of freedom. The well-known title scene of the novel, the protagonist's dream to be the catcher who prevents innocent kids from falling from a "crazy" cliff, is both the dream of the welfare state (of the perfect safety net for everyone) and the biopolitical impossibility (of the dream of a cultural community of the innocent where no social structure should be found). Actually, we are able to find historically in the paradox involved in the protagonist's dream the anxiety resulting from the tacit and nightmarish transformation of the New-Deal welfare state into a warfare state during WW II. The transformation was to be consolidated with the initiation of the Cold War. If we read the novel literally as the confessions of a madman, as the text implicitly suggests at its very beginning, the novel is to be read as a critique of American imperialism at the beginning of the fifties by the protagonist who has gone mad under the pressure of the Cold-War individualism that coerces him to be anti-social.

Mainly being an expression of individualism, what I call the culture of Cold-War liberalism can be seen to a certain degree as an inherent critique of the contemporary American society whose government worked under the principle of the welfare, if also warfare, state. In the nineties, a new configuration emerged in which, while globalization was supposed to threaten the sovereignty of nation-states, identity politics, or cultural ties imagined in terms of identity, was supposed to protect against the threat. While the

discourses of the nineties that argued the inevitability of globalization clearly flourished as a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall in nineteen eighty-nine (and other succeeding events), what was lacking in the cultural imagination of identity politics was a notion of society which was rapidly transforming under neoliberalization. Biopolitical containment as the cultural exclusion of the imagination for the social flourished during the nineties in a way similar to but different from the fifties.

Chapter Four first epitomizes the beginning of the nineties as the age of globalization with reference to Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?" (1989) and Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations?" (1993). The analysis of these influential essays demonstrates that the globalized world of the nineties was imagined as a neoliberal world that had no outside, where identities were seen as the only meaningful players. The ideology of globalization is neoliberalism insofar as the truth of globalization is to be understood as a repetition of an old story of imperial accumulation of wealth that wants to surpass the boundaries of nation-states, and the truth of neoliberalism is to be grasped as the commitment to market fundamentalism, where the social, as inter-human relationships imagined in order to regulate inherent antagonisms among people, is to be completely displaced by the logic of the market. From this perspective, what Fredric Jameson points out in the concluding chapter of *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) is important: that what we now call identity politics is to be seen as the displacement of the identity politics of the working class. Identity politics imagined in terms of ethnic and sexual identities is liberal in the sense that it does not criticize liberalism itself as far as its goal is the equality of recognition among the participants in the liberal economy, whereas what can be called the identity politics of the working class, or the recognition of the working class as the exploited in the existent liberal society, will logically function as the critique of our liberal world and,

in fact, only the identity politics of the working class can be the fundamental critique of liberalism.

Even if we put aside the theoretical validity of Jameson's argument for Marxist revolution, all the works I deal with in Part II testify that the representation of the working class is the most crucial element in analyzing the cultural works of the nineties under neoliberal globalization. Chapter Four focuses on Thomas Pynchon's *Vineland* (1990), a work that heralded the start of the author's later career. I argue in this chapter the transformation of literary postmodernism around this era whose effect was also the emergence of identitarianism. The postmodern world Pynchon depicts in his novel follows the logic of financial capitalism in which, following the rhetoric of the new economy, the end of production that is insisted on in various advocates for postmodernism, and the logic of biopolitical production that Hardt and Negri argue, wealth is magically produced from nowhere in a world where postmodern magic makes it possible to equate living a life itself with working and producing and where, therefore, it is claimed that there is no such thing as the working class. More precisely, furthermore, I argue that the depiction of the poor in the novel correctly follows the neoliberal policy for social security that was to be realized in the policy of the Clinton administration.

Such movies as *Independence Day* (1996) and *Titanic* (1997) constituted a new kind of blockbuster in Hollywood in the nineties; many other disaster movies were also produced in the same era. While this new kind of blockbuster emerged in relation to the new economic and industrial logic of globalized Hollywood, the popularity of disaster movies signifies that the world of the nineties was fundamentally recognized as a risk society, after the abolition of the safety nets of the welfare state, where to live means to cope with random risks that befall you (although I believe "risk society" to be more or less oxymoronic insofar as "risk society"

implies a world without “society” to provide a safety net). The disaster movies I analyze, especially *Independence Day*, *Armageddon* (1998) and *Titanic*, however, are not meaningful only as contemporary depictions of the emerging logic of risk society. In supposedly depicting risk society, they actually depict how the poor, or losers under the neoliberal regime, are excluded from our cultural imagination. This does not mean that the movies depict a fantasy world in which there are no losers; on the contrary, they do depict those who are exploited and victimized in the logic of the films. In fact, the movies present them as what can be called the part of no-part: they have in them a material part of a movie that depicts the exploited and the victimized, but their totality cannot be imagined without negating the existence of the part. Put simply, the movies demonstrate that the depiction of risk society is possible only with the depiction of victims who should be forgotten as unfortunate losers and not mourned over. In this sense, the movies are excellent examples of postmodernism as the logic of neoliberalism – just in the same way as Western movies in the fifties are to be seen as paradigmatic examples that show the logic and the limit of Cold-War individualism.

Arif Dirlik identifies postcolonialism as literary criticism flourishing in the nineties that takes the form of a certain kind of global multiculturalism, and argues that it works on the basic paradigm of one united liberal globality, or what he calls global modernity, after the end of the Cold War. If one of the main characteristics of literary postcolonialism is its critique of the notion of the Third World, the insistence on the end of the Third World tacitly involves another insistence on the end of the Second World; if the insistence on the end of the Third World is not ideological in the sense that it emphasizes differences in the Third World, the celebration of diversity fits neatly with the celebration of neoliberal globalization where the global market works in, with and for such diversity. Dirlik’s argument enables us to see literary postcolonialism critically as a culturalist project of postmodernism. The genre of

autobiography, then, grew somehow privileged at the junction of postcolonialism and feminism during the nineties. It is from this perspective that Chapter Six argues Jamaica Kincaid's *The Autobiography of My Mother* (1996) to be a certain kind of meta-autobiography written by a diaspora woman author. As for feminism, one of the few good points of neoliberalization is its encouragement of women's social advancement. When the welfare state made it a principle to secure the human right to live a basic life by way of full employment, its technology was the institutionalization of lifetime employment, the family wage and the standardization of the nuclear family. This involved what can be called an institutionalized sexism that normalized gendered division of labor: male breadwinner and female homemaker. Neoliberal criticism of welfarism, then, only naturally involves critique of the institutional sexism, which results in the encouragement of women's social advancement. I explain this as an effect of neoliberalism rather than as a gain by feminists because, since the nineties, some feminist scholars have observed the emergence of new female subjectivities of postfeminism that, following and enjoying the culture of neoliberalism, believe in the end of Second-Wave feminism. The protagonist of Kincaid's novel is a paradigmatic figure of subjectivity living under postfeminism and Dirlik's postcolonialism. Her "autobiography" not only depicts our historical present, but also reveals the truth of biopolitical containment, or how the globalized world is conceived as a totality: exclusion of the working class in postcolonial islands exploited by global capitalism.

Cold-War liberalism and neoliberalism are of course different, but they share the principle of biopolitical containment as the cultural essence of American-style liberalism in the latter half of the twentieth century: a technology that defines liberalism as an ideology-free governmentality. It is the technology of freedom that makes us free from the

nuisances of the social, of individualism that makes us individualistically strong and active, of politics that makes us believe that self-realization is our common political good. It works not only as a criticism of socialism, but also as a cultural apparatus that renders the social unimaginable; we instead think of market and community, neglecting economic inequality. In sum, biopolitical containment constitutes the other side of the belief that economic inequality is fair and necessary as long as liberalism works well: it is an ideological apparatus necessary to maintain liberal government.

In Coda, I trace the origin of biopolitical containment in the thirties, as the body of my argument only covers the fifties and the nineties. The word neoliberalism was coined nineteen thirty-eight. While neoliberalism as a philosophy or an economic theory in general was not popular before the eighties, the notion of the Popular Front as anti-Nazi alliance, where the “liberal” alliance advocated as a warfare logic the alliance over differences of ideologies, also represented the end of ideology, a phenomenon that would be later repeated numerous times more officially and more theoretically. The establishment of the Popular Front is highly significant since it relates to later configurations of the allies and enemies of WW II, with Stalin in the Soviet Union declaring Socialism in One Country, admitting, albeit tactically, nationalism’s primacy to communism, and Trotsky, criticizing the Popular Front, insisting on the goal of the United Front as workers’ movement. If the main feature of the politics of postmodernism is the complete displacement of workers’ movement by liberal politics of identity, as Jameson argues, it was rehearsed then at the celebration of diversity in the Popular Front approximately at the same time when neoliberalism was first imagined as a development of liberalism against totalitarianism. This means how sincere and earnest the struggles of liberals were in inventing the notion of neoliberalism against the threat of Nazi totalitarianism, and, at the same time, how deeply suppressed in our imagination, in the name

of diversity, the structural amendment for the economically exploited.

The thirties, however, is sometimes called red. It is not so difficult to imagine an alternative to biopolitical containment if we look into the culture of the thirties, where, in terms of arts and literature, naturalism and realism were more popular and considered more authentic than what we now call modernism. This dissertation is an introduction to imagine the alternative to the cultures of liberalism that is biopolitically contained although this does not dictate the alternative.

Part I

Culture of Cold-War Liberalism: Late Modernism after Realism and the Poetics of the Anti-Social Hero

Chapter One

The Cold-War Literature of Freedom and Re-conception of Race: Richard Wright's *The Outsider* and Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination*

“Indeed, I’d say to you here who listen to my words that I could convert any of you into Negroes, in a psychological sense, in a period of six months.”

Richard Wright, *White Men, Listen!*

I. Mapping the Studies of Cold-War Culture

In the studies of the culture of Cold-War America, there are basically three axes of analysis.² One axis concerns the emergence of “modernism” in art and literature during the fifties when the former ally of the Soviet Union turned into its main enemy. Another relates the significance of gender roles in the oppressive climate of the era epitomized by McCarthyism. The last focuses on the opposition between conformism and individualism that worked as a paradigmatic polemic among the Cold-War intellectuals. Although my argument stands altogether on these three axes, it can also be safely said that the third one has some critical privilege when I attempt a historical reading of the era’s culture, as far as the paradigmatic polemic was the matter for Cold-War intellectuals themselves. In order to articulate the critical value of the culture that sheds light on the historical meaning of our present in the twenty-first century, the cultural configuration of the third is to be examined with reference to the former two axes.

In *Creating Faulkner’s Reputation*, Lawrence H. Schwartz argues that the blistering critical ascent of William Faulkner after World War II symbolizes a “shift in cultural

² For the history of the Cold War, see Gaddis. For the basic mapping of the Cold-War culture, see Whitfield and Kuznick. For the general mapping of the cultural politics of the era, see Pells and Bell (1963). For analyses of the Cold War in an international or global context, see Engelhardt, Fousek and Westad.

emphasis” on “a formalist aesthetic” that “advocated a solipsistic literary modernism that repudiated 1930s realism”: “The postwar art-for-art’s-sake formalism was a way to evade the world and, in the guise of avoiding the explicitly political, to give the appearance that there were no underlying political criteria for literature” (138-39). In a similar vein, Serge Guilbaut in *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* analyzes the “slow process of de-Marxization and later depoliticization” as the political context of the birth and the appraisal of postwar American formalist art, exemplified by Jackson Pollack. Also in this context, according to Guilbaut, it was understood that “abstract expressionism was for many the expression of freedom” (201).³

From another viewpoint, what Schwartz and Guilbaut explain is the establishment of the ideology of modernism. In *A Singular Modernity*, Fredric Jameson proposes that “the affirmation of the autonomy of the aesthetic” as the ideology of modernism was “not contemporaneous with the modern movement itself,” but “a belated product, and essentially an invention and an innovation of the years following World War II” (164). Jameson here emphasizes that the ideology of modernism is “an American invention” in what should be called “late modernism” that is “a product of the Cold War, but in all kinds of complicated ways” (165).⁴ In short, the belief in the autonomy of the aesthetic and the depoliticization of art form the two sides of the same coin, situated within the late modernism of Cold-War America.⁵

Yet, what is called depoliticization above, which in fact means the liquidation of the naturalism and political realism of the thirties, does not make a world free from the political

³ For the Cold-War cultural politics concerning the criticism of poetry, see Filreis.

⁴ For the underrepresentation of the Marxist cultural legacy of the era, see Wald.

⁵ McClure in *Late Imperial Romance* makes a similar argument in terms of what he calls “Modernist Counter-Romance” (49-53). Siebers’s analysis of “cold war criticism” explains that the commitment to aestheticism in late modernism basically functions as a gesture of anti-war resistance against the Cold War and the climate that advocates Cold Warriors.

when we talk about sexual politics in the works of Faulkner or Pollock. A simple confusion in wording as this may seem, the confusion in fact concerns changes in the definition of what is political that sets the theoretical bottom line of this chapter's argument. In the classic analysis of gender politics during the period, *Homeward Bound*, Elaine Tyler May coined the concept of "domestic containment," which criticizes the Cold-War idealization of the nuclear family as the "home" as being a reinforcement of the fixed gender roles: the male breadwinner and the female housewife. Following this insight, Suzanne Clark demonstrates that "Theodore Roosevelt's arena of strenuous manliness was rearticulated in the Cold War arena and underwrote the new international politics of East and West" when the Cold War, that is, the recognition that Americans were under virtual siege by the communists, made the intellectuals "cold warriors," or people who virtually engaged in the ideological war on the "home" front (5). On the other hand, K. A. Cuordileone reveals in a detailed analysis that the delineation of cold warriors was carried out through an exclusion of the "pinks" and the "lavenders" that associated such political "perverts" as communists and fellow travelers with sexual perverts.⁶

The paradigm of conformism versus individualism is seen obviously in classical writings of the era, such as David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* and W. E. Whyte's *The Organization Man*, making a stark contrast to today's multiculturalist agenda of pluralist identities. Basically, the tension is understood to result from the Cold-War emphasis on masculinity, which celebrated the individualist code of conduct, and the spread of Fordism and industrial modernization in the American fifties, which seemed to increase tacit control of life in general. In a way similar to that in which the post-war formalism of American art was associated with the expression of freedom, the Cold-War commitment to individualism

⁶ See also Meyerowitz, Dean and Ehrenreich.

also is supported in terms of freedom from suppression and alienation. In *Empire of Conspiracy*, Timothy Melley depicts the way that what he aptly calls “agency panic,” where through the fear of conspiracy what one believes one does as an autonomous individual becomes indistinguishable from the effect of ulterior control, derives from the Cold-War obsession with individualist freedom, which historically leads to a more explicit treatment of the anxiety about conspiracy theories in postmodern fiction.⁷ While Melley situates, as the prehistory of postmodernism, the value of individualism in both fiction of the fifties and the cultural analyses in such writers as Riesman and Whyte, Andrew Hoberek’s *The Twilight of the Middle Class* finds the genealogy of the individualist commitment in the economic and social transformation of the definition of the middle class: it is in this era that the traditional definition of the American middle class as the group of individual entrepreneurs (of small mills and large shops) gave place to the new one of salaried workers, where loss of individual freedom emerged as the decline of the common American value.

Adopting the three axes of depoliticization, masculine sexual politics, and commitment to individualism as the main characteristics of the American fifties, I read Richard Wright’s *The Outsider* as a most insightful analysis and criticism of the liberal culture of Cold-War America. The novel, which follows the author’s renowned *Native Son* and *Black Boy*, was written and published while he lived in Paris with his family in a self-imposed exile. My reading might not seem very plausible at first glance since, from the first, the novel was criticized for its detachment from the USA: it was considered to be irrelevant to, rather than critical of, America in spite of the fact that the novel’s hero is a contemporary African-American. One of the first reviews of the novel concludes: “While Wright sits out the threat of totalitarianism in Paris, an abler U.S. Negro novelist sees the

⁷ For the cultural representation of brainwashing in the era, see Seed.

problem of his race differently. Says Ralph (*Invisible Man*) Ellison: ‘After all, my people have been here for a long time. . . . It is a big, wonderful country. . . .’⁸ In this sense, it was placed in a strange context: while the novel and its protagonist look into the value of “outsiderness” as an inherent and healthy critique in and of liberal, or non-totalitarian, culture, the novel was itself seen as an outsider. According to Michel Fabre’s biography of the author, Wright himself “felt that the European intellectual, with his richer cultural background, would be more likely to appreciate [the novel] than the average American reader with no training in philosophy, yet it was to this reader that he addressed his novel of ideas, disguised as a melodrama” (367).

Naturally enough, the reception of such a novel, of an outsider written by an exile, involves problems of nationalism. The structure of American nationalism of this period basically stands on the identification of the American way of life with the universal value of liberalism and freedom against the background of the tensions of the Cold War. Although Paul Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic* mentions little of the context of the Cold War, his re-evaluation of the novel in terms of the notion of diaspora provides an important viewpoint from which to appreciate the novel’s critical value.

In the book, Gilroy argues that, while Wright’s early works, such as *Uncle Tom’s Children*, *Native Son* and *Black Boy*, were evaluated through “what was perceived to be the unchallengeable racial authenticity of their Mississippian author” (152), the “range and diversity of Wright’s works are overshadowed by the fortifications which critics have placed between the work he produced in America and the supposedly inferior products of his European exile” (155). Gilroy especially focuses on Wright’s later works including his non-fiction *Pagan Spain*, *Black Power* and *White Man Listen!*, while the essence of the

⁸ *Unfinished* 369. For the general reception of the novel at the time of publication, see *Unfinished* 365-374.

project by Wright as an exile is epitomized in *The Outsider*, because his life constitutes “another fragmentary part of the history of the international social and political movement known hazily and inadequately by the label Pan-Africanism,” which “challenges our understanding of modern politics precisely because it overflows from the confining structures of the nation state” (151). In *The Outsider*, Gilroy finds, rightly as I believe, the “enduring value of his radical view of modernity” which works through the desire to “escape the ideological and cultural legacies of Americanism” and to “seek complex answers to the questions which racial and national identities could only obscure” (173). It is in this sense that, as Gilroy, reviewing the history of the novel’s evaluation, contends, critics abhorred “Wright’s desire to criticize and experiment with European philosophy” since it is read as “a modernist violation of the literary codes and expectations surrounding Negro literature” (172-173) and that they unwittingly wanted Wright to be a “protest writer” since it was believed that “he should have been content to remain confined within the intellectual ghetto to which Negro literary expression is still too frequently consigned” (173).

Gilroy thus suggests that a re-evaluation of the novel requires putting it in an international context, liberating it from a narrow nationalist understanding. My starting point, however, is that the novel, strongly insisting on the value of liberalism, is obviously a good, if not typical, example of the American novel of the early fifties. The racism that works tacitly in readings of the novel, which Gilroy clearly articulates, is probably the main reason it is *segregated* from contemporary novels, making what they share invisible. And, if the novel shares many characteristics with such novels as *The Adventures of Augie March*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *On the Road*, and so on, what distinguishes it is that what the text suppresses, or, to follow Jameson, the political unconscious of the novel, clearly suggests the

limits of the Cold-War liberal culture, which becomes apparent when it is put in an appropriate international context.

Written after Wright's break with the communist party, the novel strongly emphasizes freedom from any kind of ideology through the voice of its protagonist Cross Damon, although, as Gilroy points out, it is seldom thought to be following the late modernist creed of the autonomy of the aesthetic. Damon is a figure of Cold-War individualism whose basic ingredient is disbelief in the ideological. The novel clearly demonstrates that the appeal to the value of "life," in relation to such a concept as the American way of life, produces the bottom line on which every kind of social and cultural structure is to be conceived. As I argue below, this is the shift from the political to the biopolitical of the realm where the problems of power are to be analyzed, which is what makes possible the conception of liberal culture as a space free of anything ideological. I believe we can trace this crucial shift in Lionel Trilling's tremendously influential *The Liberal Imagination* as well as in Wright's novel.

One of the primary reasons why the novel was problematic from the start is that Damon insists throughout that none of his acts have anything to do with the color of his skin. Gilroy's argument shows that how to understand the location of blackness in the novel is one of the crucial points for every reader. Starting as the author of a "protest novel" with a Marxist background, Wright's trajectory in the fifties, I believe, reflects the way the idea of "race" was transformed along with the radical changes in the cultural and political climate after World War II. It is not only that the communist Soviet Union suddenly turned from being an ally into a mortal enemy, but also that, with the symbolic publication of Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* in 1944, segregation in the South started to be seen by liberal intellectuals as a shameful situation that should be immediately remedied.

How to regard the fifties could be compared to the cliché about a cup half-empty or half-full: the decade was an era when the official racist structure started to be abolished as well as still being dominant. My interest concerns how the idea of “race” changed its meaning in the era rather than to what degree the decade was progressive or politically correct. In fact, one of the main points in my analysis of Cold-War culture is an emphasis on the comparative insignificance of the idea in the era’s predominant paradigm of individualism versus conformism: an individualist, especially a Cold-War one, tends not to affiliate with any group as far as he is a true individualist (and we might add here that all the typical Cold-War individualists were male). If the cup of the Cold War is seen as half-empty, we will see there a regrettable lack of commitment to identity; if it is seen as half-full, we will in fact see there an alternative conception of solidarity influenced by Marxist thinking of the thirties, which more or less resembles what Gilroy advocates under the name of diaspora.

Wright’s criticism of the rhetoric of race is salient not only in *The Outsider*: basically throughout his life he repeatedly insisted that he did not believe in what we now call racial identity. A phrase from *Pagan Spain*, which Gilroy also uses as an epigram in his chapter on Wright, makes clear how Wright articulates his understanding of “race”: “‘I have no religion in the formal sense of the word, . . . I have no race except that which is forced upon me. I have no country except that to which I am obliged to belong. I have no traditions. I’m free. I have only the future’” (21). It is of course no easy task to define and evaluate what “race” means to Wright. I at least would like to show that in what we today may call an anti-essentialist or constructionist view of “race,” what Wright shows in a distinctive way is his keen sense of history and of the idea’s historicity, his relentless contextualization in history of what is called “race,” whenever he tries to think in terms of racial discourse. And in the context of the Cold-War culture, what is suppressed in terms of history is the past ideal

of internationalist Marxism, which had been constantly problematic for the author himself. In the introduction to *Black Power*, called “Apropos Prepossessions,” Wright explains the value of Marxist thinking to him thus: “In presenting this picture of a part of Africa, I openly use, to a limited degree, Marxist analysis of historic events to explain what has happened in this world for the past five hundred years or more. If anyone should object to my employment of Marxist methods . . . , I have to say that I’ll willingly accept any other method of interpreting the facts; but I insist that any other method *must not exclude the facts!*”(xiii; original italics). Wright certainly hates the ideologism of Communism, but, to see this the other way around, Marxism still means for him the realist, factual and even true way to understand history even when he rejects the existent communisms. And this is where Wright was able to signal the critique of the Cold-War liberal culture that was predominant not only in the USA but also in the region called the West in this period.

Needless to say, it was Michel Foucault who initiated the cultural leftist analysis of hegemony in terms of biopower and biopolitics, where his argument virtually starts with the presupposition of Marxism’s invalidity as a political alternative. When *The Outsider* is explicated as a critique of Cold-War liberalism, it ultimately demonstrates that a liberal regime is a biopolitical one and that the final critique of the regime should imagine the *outside* of the biopolitical. In this sense, as I will argue, it is possible to interpret the novel as presenting a viewpoint that criticizes the limit of the Foucauldian framework of biopower and biopolitics. If Foucault’s genealogy of biopolitics derives, be it partly, from observation of Cold-War Europe, Wright’s analysis of Cold-War America written in France, which to some degree anticipates Foucault’s thinking, shows traces of the author’s experience in the thirties and forties of the Marxist solidarity which was in principle structured not in terms of race and identity, but of oppression and poverty.

II. Literature of Freedom

The fundamental text in the analysis of Cold-War culture, George Kennan's "Long Telegram," starts in this way: "The political personality of Soviet power as we know it today is the product of ideology and circumstances" (566). Kennan virtually criticizes the ideology of the Soviets, but, in order to do so, what he actually deals with is not the ideology itself, but the "political personality" as its embodiment. He psychologizes the problem of Soviet power where the political transforms into a "human" matter. This is the reason he is able to find the cause of the Soviet revolution in "a highly convenient rationalization for their own instinctive desires" (567) that happened to be found in Marxist theory. The revolution is not political, either; it is a gratification of desire. Kennan's argument uses the rhetoric of psychologization, which insists that what matters is not the political, but the psychological.⁹

The rhetoric of psychologization prevails in the political discourse of the era. When President Truman expounded what was later called the Truman Doctrine in "Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey," he asserted that Greece had to be helped in order for the nation to "become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy," or that there should be built there "an economy in which a healthy democracy can flourish." The amazing thing here is that in the address there is no specific, factual or practical description about the political, cultural or social structure of the country. "One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States," according to Truman, "is the creation of the conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion." Similarly, he also defines the purpose of the United Nations as making possible "lasting

⁹ In *Containment Culture*, Nadel explains Kennan's psychologizing rhetoric in terms of its aversion to "fluidity," or the dichotomy between containment and fluidity (15-17). For the significance of aversion to fluidity in American fiction after World War II, see Tanner.

freedom and independence for all its members.” The Cold War, which is supposed to be fundamentally an opposition of two ideologies, did not engender apparently political discourse, where the ideal of international relations is articulated in terms of “freedom” and “independence.” In this situation, the shape of a democratic nation is describable only in the rhetoric of manhood: healthy, self-supporting and self-respecting.

Behind the psychologization and genderization lies the translation of the Cold-War opposition of ideologies: communism versus capitalism. Even in Hannah Arendt’s renowned *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), the U.S.-Soviet confrontation is staged as one of totalitarianism and liberalism, where the evil of the Soviet Union is to be associated with that of Nazi Germany: she finds “Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia,” if correctly, “two essentially identical systems which were clearly growing constantly more alike in exterior forms of rule,” where “the leaders of the two countries were quite aware of their similarity and regarded each other with a sympathy and respect which they did not harbor for any nontotalitarian country” (429).¹⁰ The problem with communists is not that they forcibly carry out redistribution of national wealth, but that a communist regime always falls into a totalitarian regime. It is in this Cold-War dichotomy between liberalism and communist totalitarianism that the essence of liberalism is defined as the primacy of freedom and, furthermore, that liberalism is regarded not as a form of ideology or even an idea that informs how to govern a society, but as simply lacking in such matters. In the Cold-War criticism of the communist regime, liberalism does not look like a type of political idea, but rather freedom from political ideas: whatever political idea a nation may choose, a nation-state that is governed thoroughly by

¹⁰ In the new preface, written in June 1966, put to the new edition of the book, however, Arendt observes: “The clear sign that the Soviet Union can no longer be called totalitarian in the strict sense of the term is, of course, the amazingly swift and rich recovery of the arts during the last decade” (xxxvi). Her precise and flexible observation virtually proves that communism per se does not necessarily involve totalitarianism; that is, her original identification of the Soviet with Nazi Germany is, if correct, historically contingent. As I am arguing, the discourse of Cold War liberalism in general, however, does not recognize communism, or ideology in any form, for that matter, in that way.

one political ideal is going to be totalitarian. In concluding one of the best-known definitions of Cold-War liberalism, *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (1949), Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. claims:

The new radicalism, drawing strength from a realistic conception of men, dedicates itself to problems as they come, attacking them in terms of which best advance the humane and libertarian values, which best secure the freedom and fulfillment of the individual. (256)

Here again, the political goal of Schlesinger's "radicalism" is actually void of anything that might sound political: the rhetoric focuses on such words as "humane and libertarian values" and "freedom and fulfillment of the individual." In order to realize freedom, then, any political program must cease to be a program or plan: we must deal with problems "as they come" since political planning is hardly distinguishable from communism in the Cold-War imagination.

The abhorrence of anything political prepares for the shift from the political to the biopolitical: the Cold-War America that commits to Cold-War liberalism aspires to the biopolitical regime where the nation is not governed by anything political, except that every citizen's free will is to be controlled, say, by the hegemony of gender. An epitome of the biopolitical regime of the era can be found the famous "kitchen debate" between Vice President Nixon and the Soviet Premier Khrushchev in nineteen fifty-five, where household appliances were made into a symbol of the triumph of liberalism. Neither Nixon nor Khrushchev wanted to talk about politics per se; what mattered there was the way of life.¹¹

In such circumstances, the task of Cold-War intellectuals came to be to observe whether the American promise of freedom was really being kept. Such figures as David

¹¹ In this vein, Daniel Bell published the well-known *The End of Ideology* in 1960, where he asserts: "The normative consensus emerging in the postwar years in the West held that civil politics could replace ideological politics" (419).

Riesman and William Whyte therefore warned of the prevalence of conformism. As Hoberek argues, they virtually asked if the traditional individualism of America was still alive and well when they looked for those who were able to do what they wanted to do regardless of the social norm.¹²

Yet the Cold-War commitment to individualism was, in a sense, destined to reach an impasse from the start. In 1952, for example, *Partisan Review* ran a now famous symposium “Our Country and Our Culture,” where its “Editorial Statement” reads:

For better or worse, most writers no longer accept alienation as the artist’s fate in America: on the contrary they want very much to be a part of American life. More and more writers have ceased to think of themselves as rebels and exiles. They now believe that their values, if they are to be realized at all, must be realized in America and in relation to the actuality of American life. (284)

One of the reasons why the journal, which had been celebrated as a left-wing forum, showed this straightforward patriotism must have been the tension of the Cold War or McCarthyism as its epitome. While it may sound prescriptive rather than descriptive when the quote says that “more writers have ceased to think of themselves as rebels and exiles,” to criticize or even to be alienated from America was not encouraged when the communist threat was a serious national concern. You should want to be an individualist in that free country called America; yet your individualism is valuable only insofar as it reflects American values. If you start criticizing America, you are going one step too far; but then again, if you do not try to take one step further, are you not a conformist?

¹² Of course it is wrong to reduce *The Lonely Crowd* to a critique of the book’s famous coinage, “other-direction”: as Riesman himself claims in his “1969 Preface,” it tries to be descriptive rather than critical about the social types it depicts, and the critiques of “other-direction,” when they occur, are intellectually nuanced. Yet I believe that it is correct to say that the book’s main thesis is a critique of conformism. For more about this, see Wrong and Hoberek’s “Introduction.”

It is in this antinomy of individualism and conformism that the kind of novel in which an individualist hero knocks around America flourishes. This kind of novel focuses on the lone hero's possible relation with society or how to reach the outside of the existing society, where the hero's journey itself is interpreted as an attempt to express freedom and to celebrate the value of freedom. In keeping with Morris Dickstein calling *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* "one of the *ur*-texts of postwar fiction" (90), this kind of novel, which might be called the Cold-War literature of freedom, almost uniformly follows the pattern of Twain's classic novel on freedom (though it also concerns the social and political structure that negates freedom).¹³ This is why Augie March's narrative (1953) has the title it has, why *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) resembles *Huckleberry Finn* in some crucial ways, and why Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) is seen as a significant response, being an African-American narrative. Although Jack Kerouac, categorized as one of the Beats, is usually put in a different context from the above novels, *On the Road* (1957, written in 1951) still neatly fits the pattern.¹⁴ If we accept *On the Road* in this way then, even in William Burroughs' early two novels, *Junkee* and *Queer* (completed in 1953), the protagonist's senseless roaming is literarily meaningful since it is the manifestation of the commitment to freedom.

It is impossible to consider coincidence the fact that so many works of a shared structure were written in so short a period; the commitment to freedom under Cold-War liberalism certainly defines the shape of the contemporary novels in such a strong way. Apparently, the authors of the literature of freedom believed that the propaganda of freedom

¹³ About the canonization of the novel in the era, see Lynn, Smiley and Arac. Lynn partly argues a similar argument to Dickstein's, albeit critically. As the novel of eighteen eighty-five testifies and, for instance, the academic appraisal of the novel in the nineteen twenties and thirties, along with Hemingway's famous comment, "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*," acknowledges, liberal commitment to individualism in general is nothing particular to the fifties; my point is that liberal commitment to anti-social individualism, with its modifications specific to the era, grew the essential factor in the definition of American liberalism at the beginning of the Cold War.

¹⁴ For the politics of freedom in the Beats, see, for example, Sterritt (83-102).

could not be a propaganda. Here, wandering is the sign of freedom in these novels. In other words, when these novels express the value of freedom, “freedom” here takes the form of an individualist commitment that tries to realize a literary and alternative space where the hero is not oppressed or alienated. If Huck’s adventures are meaningful in that they signify his enjoyment of the space outside of the existing society as well as his critique of the existing society and politics of America, the novels of the Cold-War literature of freedom rather miss the latter point of political critique. Put more simply, the heroes of the fifties want to be an antisocial rather than an intellectual critique of society, and to be the former is regarded as more or less displacing the latter. Certainly, this logic is replayed when Norman Mailer offers a theorization of the individualist novel of freedom in “White Negro,” which declares the aesthetic significance of the antisocial “hipster” as “the American Existentialist” (339) whose qualification is not only racial transgression, or white men following the black hipster’s lifestyle, but also every kind of social outsider Mailer can think of: the “White Negro” is “a ménage-à-trois” of “the bohemian,” “the juvenile delinquent” and “the Negro” (340); “the psychopath,” the another name for the “White Negro,” explores “along the road of the homosexual, the orgiast, the drug-addict, the rapist, the robber and the murderer to find those violent parallels to the violent and often hopeless contradictions he knew as an infant and as a child” (346). As Mailer explains in *Advertisements for Myself*, what became “White Negro” was, in its original conception, a provocative essay on the cultural and social taboo about the miscegenation of Cold-War America, which was eventually *refined* into a literary paean for every kind of outsider. Here again, the political turns into the antisocial.

Richard Wright’s *The Outsider* (1953), a narrative of a Chicago postal worker who, placed in the predicament of having an estranged wife and a young mistress, is misidentified as dead in an accident on the L train and escapes to New York incognito, is a distinguished

member of the novels of freedom in the fifties.¹⁵ The homage to *Huck Finn* is rather clear in the comic scene where the protagonist Damon watches how the people who believe that he is dead react at “his” funeral. Yet, on his way to New York, Damon meets a white district attorney from New York with a handicap (“hunchback”), Ely Houston, who, being an outsider like Damon, instantly recognizes that they have something in common. Again, in New York, a Communist activist Gil Blount and later another party-member Jack Hilton try to use Damon, identifying him as a black victim, for a political purpose, while Damon, hiding his intelligence, plots recrimination. When Blount plans to use Damon as a device for the confrontation with the fascist white supremacist Langley Herndon, Damon eventually kills both Blount and Herndon, and falls in love with Gil’s white wife Eva. Although the murder case is at first officially understood as Blount and Herndon having killed each other, the truth about the crime is perceived by Hilton, who, before this, is already shown as a figure of the cruel political machine, sentencing to deportation Bob Hunter, another party member and an immigrant from Trinidad whom Damon befriended on his way to New York. The episode of Hunter and Hilton describes how cruel the communist party is, its essence being not utopian aspiration but the will to power. In addition to Gil Blount, Herndon and Hilton, Damon kills a black friend of his in the early scene in Chicago just in order to keep the secret that he is not dead. Each of Damon’s four murders is not impulsive but rather calculated and committed rather calmly without much sense of conscience. After falling in love with Damon, Eva Blount also commits suicide when she learns the truth of Damon’s crimes. Being a political (communist) refugee from his homeland, Hunter’s deportation is claimed to mean his death although he only disappears from the text. In the end, after Houston’s discovery of Damon’s

¹⁵ There are actually two versions of the novel: the Harper edition published in 1953 and the restored edition by Arnold Rampersad in the Library of America of 1991. About the difference between the two, see Hakutani 134-140.

crimes, the hero is shot dead fairly abruptly by an anonymous member of the communist party. As in the case of Wright's other fiction, the novel is replete with death.

In the same way as "White Negro," in putting every kind of minority into a universal category of "outsider," seems to be blind to what we now call the pride of black identity,¹⁶ *The Outsider* takes an utterly "constructed" approach to blackness when it reasons that the handicapped and the African-American share basically the same social position as the outsider: "Houston was declaring himself to be an outsider like Cross and Cross was interested" (499), and when the hero repeatedly claims that his actions do not result from the color of his skin, but from his social position as the oppressed: "There was no racial tone to his reactions" (455); "His consciousness of the color of his skin played no role in it" (525); "It was not because he was a Negro that he found his obligations intolerable" (774), and so on. In other words, what is paradigmatic in the novel's epistemology is not the multiculturalist logic of identities, but the Cold-War logic of individualism whose aspiration is to reach the universal outside of the particular local. This is because, as Gilroy observes, Wright's project has as its fundamental purpose the description of black experience as something indispensable and necessary, though painful and ominous, in understanding the development of Western modernity, where, ultimately, the experience is to be comprehended as universal to the structure of modernity, not as something necessarily particular to a race.¹⁷ In other words, in Wright's perspective, the utopian is not envisioned as racially multicultural but as universal in individualist diversity. Wright's letter to Pandit Nehru in 1950 reads:

¹⁶ In "White Negro," Mailer observes that "it is no accident that the source of hip is the Negro for he has been living on the margin between totalitarianism and democracy for two centuries" (340). There has of course been long history of criticism on Mailer's stereotyping and appropriating blackness. About this, see chapter three of Ross, Andrea Levine, Shoemaker and Whiting.

¹⁷ As for the dialectic of the universal and the particular that works in relation to racial experience, Eversley offers a penetrating analysis in reference to the Lafargue Psychiatric Clinic that Wright and Ellison helped to establish in Harlem in 1946.

The changing physical structure of the world as well as the historical development of modern society demand that the peoples of the world become aware of their *common* identity and interests. This situation of oppressed people the world over is universally the same and their solidarity is essential, not only in opposing oppression but also in fighting for human progress.¹⁸

The literature of freedom in the fifties in general does not follow the multiculturalist logic of racial identity, either: Augie March is “American, Chicago born,” Holden Caulfield is “Irish,” which does not mean much to him anyway, the narrator-protagonist of Ellison’s novel is made “invisible” where, at least in the early reviews, it was appraised as “transcending” racial logic into the American ideals as the above quoted review testifies. Put most simply, this is because the novels of freedom gain their literary value in their individualist quest for the ultimate freedom, where the possibility of absolute freedom merges into its impossibility: not to mention the invisible man, Augie is an expatriate cosmopolitan in the present of the narrative, Holden is in a kind of asylum, Sal Paradise fails to catch up with Dean Moriarty, and, in *Borroughs’* case, the junkie is a junkie from the start and keeps on more or less trying to be cured. In this sense, the novels are speculation to depict the shape of utter freedom, where there is no room for solidarity in terms of identity: the first murder Damon commits is of a black friend of his in order to protect his new freedom. And the modernist, or avant-garde, value of such aesthetic projects is obvious when we compare them with the popular novels of the same era whose paradigmatic problem is also the antinomy of individualism and freedom: in such novels as *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (published in 1955, whose ending shows that the hero’s commitment to individualism luckily coincides with his economic and social success), *Marjorie Morningstar* (published in 1955, where the heroine’s individualism eventually finds its goal in a happy marriage), and *Revolutionary*

¹⁸ Fabre 387. Quoted in Gilroy 148. My emphasis.

Road (published in 1961, where, although the complicated pressures in the society clashes the hero's and his wife's commitment to individualism, the hero finally survives in his mundane and economically secure life) that depict social success, if ironically, it is demonstrated that there can be a certain point of balance where the apparent antinomy of individualism and conformism is reconciled.

From the present viewpoint, the literature of freedom does not seem to have much of political value, or may seem to be conservative, in spite of its distinction from the "conformist" popular novels I have just illustrated. Yet, the comparison between the late modernist commitment to ulterior freedom, where the ultimate freedom appears as a dangerous impossibility, and the "realist" negotiation of possible freedom in the existing society in the popular novels shows the intellectual and modernist dimension of the novels of freedom, where their tragic endings touch the limits of freedom inherent in the Cold-War liberalism of America. The novels of freedom demonstrate the modernist imagination in the Cold War that searches out the imaginary, or even transcendental, completion of liberalism, criticizing the existent form of liberalism. This does not mean that "popular" novels are politically less valuable than the modernist attempts, but that the latter are more useful when trying to analyze the culture of liberalism during the era. The search for ultimate freedom by the innocent, individualist hero is a recurring theme not only in the novels of freedom, but also, as I will argue in the following chapter, in popular Western movies of the era and intellectual writings that look for a definition of Americanism, such as R. W. B. Lewis' *The American Adam*, Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land*, Schlesinger's *The Vital Center*, and so on.

The Outsider as a variation of the Cold-War novels of freedom clearly belongs to the paradigm of American literature of the era, wherever it may have been written. It is an

American novel although, or even especially because, it criticizes the limit of the existing liberalism of the USA, looking for a better form of truer liberalism. Yet, the truer liberalism Wright imagines suggests the return of the political when the novel that rejects the rhetoric of race does not look for identitarian solidarity, while the novels of freedom in general imagine “freedom” rather as freedom from the political, thus showing the liberal, biopolitical shift of the era. The literature of freedom makes it clear that the late modernist depoliticization of art, or the claim of aesthetic autonomy, in fact goes hand in hand with the Cold-War definition of American liberalism as an apolitical regime: because the ideal form of American society is a liberal one without any political control that could make the society become totalitarian, the aesthetic space of art, utterly free from anything political, could be conceived as utopian and ideal. The biopolitical shift that sees an ideal liberal society as free from the political is enacted in the negation of naturalism and political realism in the thirties and forties that, under the influence of Marxist thinking, believed that good art should reflect or refer to social and political problems of our society. Wright’s rejection of the rhetoric of race, which probably derived from the influence of Marxist thinking, is not to be seen as his inability to embrace the value of racial identities, but as a sign of his discomfort with the developing biopolitical regime of the era which eventually came to completion in the rhetoric of identity.

III. Rhetoric of Life in *The Liberal Imagination*

Wright was “passionately interested” in French existentialists even before his first visit to Paris in 1946, according to Fabre (320). This biographical fact encourages the tendency to regard *The Outsider* as a didactic novel with salient influence from French existentialism. Indeed, Damon is characterized as an intellectual with a deep knowledge of

philosophy, and he actually makes, toward the end of the novel, a series of tirades on the contemporary situation of the Western world, the problems of modernization, and the human condition in the twentieth century. Yet, to regard a novel as didactic is one thing; to see it as intellectual is another. If the novel's intellectual aspect is to be understood as necessary to enable it to reach the outside of its paradigm of Cold-War liberalism, it can be seen as critical rather than didactic.

Actually, Gilroy observes that a certain kind of racism is involved in the understanding that finds didacticism in the novel. Quoting C. R. L. James' memoir in which Wright claims that "Everything that [Kierkegaard] writes in these books I knew before I had them" and James explains "What [Dick] was telling me was that he was a black man in the United States and that gave him an insight into what today is the universal opinion and attitude of the *modern* personality" (Gilroy's emphasis), Gilroy concludes: "In Wright's mature position, the Negro is no longer just America's metaphor but rather a central symbol of the psychological, cultural, and political system of the West as a whole" (159).¹⁹ To put it rather crudely, the "existential" hero of the novel is the outsider who, as Houston says, is "both *inside* and *outside* of our culture at the same time" (500), where existential philosophy is to be understood as a certain theorization of black experience.²⁰ Houston further observes that Negroes "will not only be Americans or Negroes; they will become centers of *knowing*, so to speak" (original italics). Yet, we must note, it is exactly the historical situation of black

¹⁹ Walker also says that "It is very important to remember when reading the later Richard Wright in a book like *The Outsider*, written after his association with Sartre, that way back there in the thirties, Wright was intensely interested in Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and above all, the novelist Dostoevski" (75).

²⁰ In fact, there are now various studies along these lines. For example, Cedric J. Robinson, referring to Wright's *The Outsider*, argues in his monumental and ambitious work about the problems of traditional Marxist thinking that negates the crucial role of black slavery as the "proletariat" of the global capitalist system, and Lewis R. Gordon examines the relation between European existentialism and the various theories of black resistance. For the specific argument on Wright's treatment in the novel of existentialism as black radical thinking, see Coles.

people, and not anything biologically or culturally inherent in “blackness,” that places them in the privileged position of having a penetrating insight into the modern condition.

Gilroy also mentions the well-known fact that, as Wright explains in “How Bigger Was Born,” the project of *Native Son* starts partly with “the desire to find an answer to the pernicious effects of the portrait of blacks as victims which had emerged unwittingly from his first published volume, *Uncle Tom’s Children*” (154). James Baldwin’s criticism of *Native Son* is also well-known, where he manifests his modernist belief that the protest novel, which structurally stands on stereotyping, virtually works for the stabilization of the society the novel claims to criticize: “The failure of the protest novel lies in its rejection of life, the human being, the denial of his beauty, dread, power, in its insistence that it is his categorization alone which is real and which cannot be transcended” (18). Thinking along these lines, it seems plausible to consider that the project of *The Outsider* started partly with the “pernicious” criticism of *Native Son* exemplified by Baldwin’s famous attack: it is in the author’s serious attempt to transcend the limit of the “protest novel” which Baldwin fiercely criticizes, and which in a sense does present a stereotype of an African-American of the era albeit in a strategic way, that *The Outsider* rejects the rhetoric of race as well as the characterization of the hero as a representative black. And certainly the novel is about “life, the human being” and “his beauty, dread, power.”

Baldwin’s “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” written in 1949, clearly follows the late modernist understanding of literature when it is separated from the interpretation that sees the author’s motive as his complicated psychological relation with Wright his mentor: it is a death sentence for the genre of the protest novel in general, although every reader would find its main target to be nothing other than *Native Son*. The historical context in which Baldwin’s essay was written is the Cold-War one that Schwartz and Guilbaut criticize. It was the

intellectual and literary climate where the post-war re-evaluation of the modernists of the twenties, Fitzgerald, Hemingway and Faulkner, was enacted and where naturalism gave way to late modernism. A critique of didacticism, then, is the fashion in such a climate.

If there is one book that decided the literary climate of the time, it has to be Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination* (1950). Thomas Bender observes:

Beginning in the 1930s, but especially with the publication of *The Liberal Imagination* in 1950, Lionel Trilling advanced a remarkably compelling alternative to the way of talking about politics, literature, and society that had been orthodox among intellectuals and critics on the American left. The essays included in *The Liberal Imagination* all had been published previously, many in the *Partisan Review*, and they reflected that magazine's programmatic ambition to displace Stalinist modes of literary and political judgment. Yet with *The Liberal Imagination*, Trilling reached for a wider and more mainstream audience than the literary and political coterie associated with the *Partisan Review*. He succeeded; the book sold 100,000 copies as one of the first serious paperbacks. Trilling became a public figure, one of the most influential intellectuals of his generation. (324)²¹

Put most simply, the book is well known for its reinterpretation of American literary history in its opening essay "Reality in America," where, with his critique of V. L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Tragedy*, Trilling symbolically chooses Henry James over Theodore Dreiser.²² Thomas H. Schaub explains the meaning of this reinterpretation in terms of the conception of the psychologized, that is, not materialist, reality in the discourses of "new liberals" of the era: "Trilling helped initiate the dematerialization of literary thinking and production by associating 'realism' not with

²¹ In the essay, Bender goes on to say that "In an era of perceived (and real) economic prosperity that expanded the middle class and increased the level of its education, Trilling's issue – 'quality of human life' rather than redistribution – were middle-class issues" (341), which exemplifies the popular rhetoric in criticizing Marxism in the era. Bender's point is that Trilling's relation to the middle class is "dialectic," or that he is at the same time its "guardian and critic" as Delmore Schwartz aptly puts it in his review of *The Liberal Imagination*, which produced Trilling's own version of the conflict between individualism and conformism toward his society, as Hoberek observes (33-34).

²² See also Murphy and Pease.

external facts but with the dialectic form of literary ideas produced by conflicting emotions. This was moral realism, in which literature became politics recollected in anguish” (36-37).²³

The political unconscious of Trilling’s reinterpretation of Americanness is submitted to the fierce and penetrating criticism by New Americanists, primarily starting with Russell J. Reising’s *The Unusable Past*. My point here is that, in addition to Trilling’s essentially conservative cultural politics that work in relation to the Cold-War discourse in general, there are new definitions of “culture” and “politics,” which makes Trilling’s cultural conservatism possible at all, and the subsequent dependence on the rhetoric of life, which characterizes his liberalism, in Trilling’s “alternative” way.

The basic framework of Trilling’s project is clearly articulated in the title of the book: *The Liberal Imagination*, a combination of a political concept and a seemingly non-political source of creativity. In the book’s preface, he declares:

[I]f between sentiments and ideas there is a natural connection so close as to amount to a kind of identity, then the connection between literature and politics will be seen as a very immediate one. And this will seem especially true if we do not intend the narrow but the wide sense of the word politics. It is the wide sense of the word that is nowadays forced upon us, for clearly it is no longer possible to think of politics except as the politics of culture, the organization of human life toward some end or other, toward the modification of sentiments, which is to say the quality of human life. (xvii)

Trilling can display a strong vision about how American culture should be because, going against the grain, he defines liberalism not as a lack of ideology, but as a form of politics. At the same time, however, since liberalism as the regime of freedom cannot be a regime of any kind of strong governmental control, the realm of politics should be relocated from politics

²³ The trajectory of Trilling’s anti-communist and psychologized culturalism during the fifties in fact shares much in common with that of those who are later called neoconservatives (although eventually Trilling and neoconservatives grow clearly different in due course eventually). For this, see Gerson, especially chapter two.

per se to somewhere else: the realm of culture. Trilling clearly articulates that the liberal state consists in political organization of its culture: liberalism is the regime of cultural control.

As Louis Menard sums up in the new introduction to the book, “Trilling’s point” is that “it’s the unexamined attitudes and assumptions – the things people take to be merely matters of manners or tastes, and nothing so consequential as political positions – that require and repay critical analysis” (ix). Trilling’s argument is thus in essence a demonstration of the slogan that later becomes so popular: “the personal is political.” Of course, the political implication of Trilling’s argument and the feminist claim of Carol Hanisch’s 1969 essay are different or even contrary to each other. Yet, the political agenda of Second-Wave feminism, symbolized by the title of Hanisch’s essay, is tacitly prepared for by, or is invented as a counter attack to, Trilling’s conception of liberal “politics.”

Yet, in other words, the whole point in Trilling’s conception of “liberal imagination” is its being apolitical in a certain sense (just as the whole point of the feminist slogan lies in the assumption that the personal does not seem to be political to the naïve eye): liberalism is not totalitarian since it is not ideological. Trilling offers “the politics of culture” as something affirmative in instantly renaming it as “the organization of human life” toward a better “quality of human life”: “the politics of culture” is presented as something fundamentally different from coercive control of culture for a political purpose because it is an attempt to organize “human life” in order to enhance its “quality.” It is in this rhetoric that appeals to the value of life that “liberal imagination” is sanctioned as a non-ideological proposal of Cold-War cultural politics.

Trilling’s conception of the “liberal imagination” stands on what can be called a biopolitical shift, both in that it involves the shift of the political to the supposedly non-ideological realm of culture and in that the shift is approved through the rhetoric of life.

This biopolitical shift in Trilling is further refined in the last essay in the book, “The Meaning of a Literary Idea,” where the insistence on the essential importance of “idea” in literature turns into criticism of didactic literature. Critique of didacticism in literature plays a crucial part in the definition of the liberal imagination.

Primarily, the essay is famous as Trilling’s manifestation of commitment to “negative capability,” or “willingness to remain in uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts,” which he explains is not “an abdication of intellectual activity,” but “an aspect of their intelligence, of their seeing the full force and complexity of their subject matter” (299). Commitment to negative capability simply proposes the value of complexity, or the denial of binary thinking, as the achievement of literary and intellectual thinking against the background of the binary tension of the Cold War.

The essay can read as a detailed explanation of how negative capability is to be realized in terms of “a literary idea.” Lamenting on the weak “passivity” of modern American literature in its relation to ideas (where the examples are O’Neill, Dos Passos, and Wolfe), as compared to the positivity of European literature of the “last thirty or forty years” (such as Proust, Joyce, Lawrence, Kafka, Yeats and Eliot), Trilling observes that the failure of American authors lies in “their having been violated by ideas,” where “it was an excess of intellectual passivity that invited the violence” (299). Yet there are exceptions among American authors whose works demonstrate good examples of novels with ideas, such as Hemingway and Faulkner:

We feel that Hemingway and Faulkner are intensely at work upon the recalcitrant stuff of life. . . . [W]e say that the matter they present, together with the degree of difficulty which they assume it to have, seems to be very cogent. This, we say, is to the point; this really has something to do with life as we live it; we cannot ignore it. (297)

The value of Hemingway's and Faulkner's works are decided in their relation to "life": that is to say, if the post-war new liberals including Trilling insist on the validity of the "psychologized" reality as the alternative to the materialist one, the "psychologized" reality is here validated in its relevance to "life as we live it."

It is within this schema that the problems of didacticism are argued in Trilling. Yet he does not use the word itself: instead, the problem is of course argued in terms of ideology. He argues that, regrettably, the "kind of literature we have" comes from our conception of "ideas to be pellets of intellection or crystallizations of thought, precise and completed, defined by their coherence and their procedural recommendations" (302). We have this wrong conception of ideas, as Trilling says, since we are in fact "rather the people of ideology" (286). Trilling's alternative is to "think of ideas as living things, inescapably connected with our wills and desires, as susceptible of growth and development by their very nature, as showing their life by their tendency to change, as being liable, by this very tendency, to deteriorate and become corrupt and to work harm." As he concludes, only when we conceive ideas to be "living things," "then we shall stand in a relation to ideas which makes an active literature possible" (303). It can be said that he psychologizes the notion of "idea" when he describes its "growth" and "deterioration," depending on the rhetoric of development, and it is also possible to observe that he is very strict in scrutinizing possibilities of ideas, deploying the rhetoric, as he actually says elsewhere: "Ideas may also be said to be generated in the opposition of ideals, and in the felt awareness of the impact of new circumstances upon old forms of feeling and estimation, in the response to the conflict between new exigencies and old pieties" (298). "Ideas as living things" may deteriorate, but still they are better than ideals. This is why he warningly defines Americans in the fifties as "people of ideology," virtually identifying "ideal" with "ideology": "Ideology is not the product of thought; it is the habit or

the ritual of showing respect for certain formulas” (286), while, as the notion of negative capability implies, “[w]hat comes into being when two contradictory emotions are made to confront each other and are required to have a relationship with each other is . . . quite properly called an idea” (298). Daniel Bell later observes “the exhaustion of political ideas in the fifties” in *The End of Ideology*.²⁴ Yet, “ideas” were not in fact exhausted in that decade; they were pushed to a rock and a hard place and then squeezed to death under the biopolitical shift of Cold-War liberalism.

Trilling’s subtle argument shows that under the Cold-War tension, a novel with ideas would suffer the problem of differentiation from a novel of ideology or, more simply, a propaganda novel. And Trilling’s use of the rhetoric of life shows that the liberal imagination he advocates, or Cold-War liberalism, appears as something free from ideology through a biopolitical move that makes the political invisible by making it belong to the realm of “life.” It is surely important to understand that, obviously, Trilling’s commitment to negative capability functions as direct critique of the binarism that consists the part and parcel of the Cold-War rhetoric of the East and the West. For Trilling, the supreme value of literary and artistic activities lies in its transcendence of the binarism with the power of negative capability. If, for Trilling, negative capability defines the essence of literariness to be found in liberal novels, the essence is first depicted by psychologizing the binary tension of “two contradictory emotions” and then legitimized in the rhetoric of life, or ideas as “living things.” “Life” here works as the key concept that guards the richness of the literary against any kind of interpretive reductionism. Trilling defines and advocates the liberal literature as non-ideological achievement by completing the rhetoric of biopower. This is where he virtually follows the rhetoric of the “kitchen debate”: liberalism’s transcendence over

²⁴ For the strong influence of Bell’s argument, see Waxman. For the meaning of the notion for the post-Cold War era, see Judy.

communism is the biopolitical one. *The Liberal Imagination* demonstrates that his criticism of the Cold-War rhetoric is another attempt to further the liberal regime, as this may sound a truism.

It is in this politically loaded context of Cold-War liberalism that Wright wrote the novel that is often looked upon as “didactic.” My point here does not concern whether or not *The Outsider* is truly didactic (about which it would be enough to mention the fact that, as Gilroy notes, even Fabre, who is usually sympathetic to Wright, describes it as such [372]; in other words, it is true that the novel is full of intellectual tirades), but that the novel’s complexity and its radical capacity for the critique of liberalism lie in the fact that, while Trilling advocates for the completion of biopolitics, Wright tries to stand outside of this kind of biopolitics, at the same time depicting the liberal world that appears as commitment to life. In other words, the novel is valuable, especially from the present point of view, in its standing both inside and outside of biopolitics. As Wright’s fiction is always replete with death and murder, the novel in fact consists of the rhetoric of life in a similar way to Trilling’s advocacy of liberalism. I would argue, however, that Wright’s “didactic” novel intentionally rejects the completion of the rhetoric of life, as Trilling suggests, where it is indicated that the biopolitical rhetoric is nothing but another form of politics. While Trilling, in associating “ideas as living things” with negative capability, implies that the “positive” kind of novel with ideas should be free of ideology, Wright wrote an outsider novel that criticizes Cold-War liberalism, showing the limits of the rhetoric of biopolitics. The novel’s alleged didacticism is just another name to criticize its rejection of the era’s predominant political climate of liberalism. It reads “didactic” only to those who advocate the Cold-War conception of liberalism as apolitical.

IV. Biopolitics in *The Outsider*

For Trilling, literature that demonstrates the complexity of psychological reality is the tool for biopoliticalization, where every idea turns into a living thing. Since biopoliticalization is erasure of the ideological from the surface, it coordinates with the claim of the aesthetic autonomy of art in general as well as with the definition of liberalism as non-ideological. What lies beneath the surface of post-war liberalism's depoliticization is the Cold-War biopoliticalization. The Cold-War biopoliticalization that appeals to life, however, is crucially different from its post-Cold War equivalent, which appeals to culture, in its commitment to late modernism, as Jameson explains:

[A]ll the great theoreticians and ideologists of the autonomy of art, the ideologies of modernism (as opposed to its genuine practitioners), from Greenberg to Adorno, and passing through the American New Criticism, are in agreement that the concept of culture is the true enemy of art as such; and that if one opens the door to "culture," everything currently reviled under the term of cultural studies pours in and leaves pure art and pure literature irredeemably tainted. (177)

This is an explanation of the elitist aspect of the late modernist aesthetic (although, as is mentioned even in this quote, it is not high modernism as such, but post-war American late modernism that establishes the ideology of modernism according to Jameson), where high art is deliberately separated from popular art both by left-wing critics such as Adorno and by right-wing movements such as New Criticism.²⁵ As is stated in the "Editorial Statement" of "Our Country and Our Culture," making "the intellectual" the paradigmatic example of the "minority," mass culture's "increasing power is one of the chief causes of the spiritual and economic insecurity of the intellectual minority" (285), so what matters here is ultimately the

²⁵ In other words, Jameson uses the word "culture" in a different sense, or in a way it is used in post-Cold War fashion, while, in the fifties, "culture" is basically used to designate the high "culture."

confrontation between the intellectual and the masses. Trilling also follows this dichotomy when he defines the commitment to “ideas as living things” as the transcendence from “us” of “the people of ideology.” In this context, the outsider becomes both a politically and aesthetically significant figure: as Cold-War liberalism commits to individualist values as resistance to totalitarian tendencies, so late modernist aesthetics locates the artist in the outside of mass culture.

Such a notion of the outsider in principle does not agree with the rhetoric of identity: the outsider is not able to imagine solidarity in terms of identity as far as he is an individualist. Cross Damon is clearly defined as an individualist:

[H]is was not the itch to right wrongs done to others, though those wrongs did at times agitate him. And, above all, he possessed no notion of personal or social wrongs having been done to him; if any such wrongs had existed, he felt fully capable of righting them by his own lonely strength and effort. (573)

This is the reason why he is “too concerned with himself to cast his lot wholeheartedly with Negroes in terms of racial struggle”: “Practically he was with them, but emotionally he was not of them” (525). This logic makes him a perfect Cold-War individualist who “all his life” had been “hankering after his personal freedom,” for “his decisive life struggle was a personal fight for self-realization of himself” (454).

Being an extreme individualist, he is certainly selfish in a sense. Yet, as the text says, he rejects the logic of racial solidarity since he is faithful to the logic of the outsider of an intellectual. Damon wonders:

Were there not somewhere in this world rebels with whom he could feel at home, men who were not because they had been born black and poor, but because they had thought their way through the many veils of illusions? (396)

For one thing, this quote makes it clear that the outsider is an intellectual agency: the outsiders are those who are able to penetrate “many veils of illusions.” And, more importantly, the implication of the quote is that the belief in the value of outsidership presupposes resemblance between truth and taboo. The truth here is not what visits one or embraces one; it is something hidden, suppressed and tabooed that only the outsider can reach with a struggle, and furthermore, one who knows the truth can only be an outsider of society. Truth here is even defined as a hideous secret or vicious shame. It is possible to say that this is the meaning of truth under the Cold-War tension exemplified by McCarthyism. Another way to understand this kind of definition of truth is to see it as a psychologized version, for, in psychoanalysis, truth is generally located in the realm of the avoided, the suppressed, and the unconscious. Abdul R. JanMohamed argues that Wright’s heroes are to be analyzed in essence as “the death-bound-subject,” who suffers from the historical memory of black experience, especially of lynching, and for whom the ultimate truth consists in (the threat of) death. Interesting as his insight is as far as it clearly explains the psychologized locus of the truth in the novel, Damon does not carry the collective memory of black experience as far as the surface of the novel reads. The novel’s hero is not an outsider because he is black; it is rather that he, black as he is, is interested in black experience since he is an intellectual outsider.

Indeed, it is the white, and even cruel, Communist Hilton who has the most penetrating view on American racism. He explains to Damon:

“... You are a Negro and you’ve an instinct for this kind of thing. I don’t mean a racial instinct; it’s a socially conditioned instinct for dissimulation which white Americans have bred in you, and you’ve had to practice it in order to survive. ... Look, every day in this land some white man is cussing out some defenseless Negro. But that white bastard is too stupid in intelligence and deficient in imagination to realize that his actions are being duplicated a

million times in a million other spots by other whites who feel hatred for Negroes just like he does. . . . [Negroes] have to live, eat, have a roof over their heads . . . So they collaborate with people who they feel are their sworn enemies . . . White America has built up something in you that can help the Party now.” (635; the fourth and fifth ellipses are in the original)

Hearing this speech, Damon finds Hilton “astute,” wondering if “the average white American” can even imagine that someone like Hilton does exist in America, and then concludes: “He was a man who . . . was an outsider and was free in what he apprehended” (635).

Yet Damon does not believe in the politics of the communist party. As he kills both the white supremacist Herndon and the communist Gil Blount who tries to use him as an instrument of the party, he looks for a third way, which is represented by “a group of wonderful people, unhappily now extinct, called liberals”: “Full of the juices of human kindness, these people decided that they were going to be good, honest Christians without believing in Christianity which their logical minds found offensive. Let reason prevail, they declared” (756). To this degree, the novel commits to liberalism; in the manner of the literature of freedom, it demonstrates criticism of America as it is now with a logic that aspires to a more perfected liberalism.

When Houston, referring implicitly to Damon, says, “He is the Twentieth Century writ small” (673), it is made clear that Damon as the outsider is a historical product. In the historical view that Damon himself professes, which more or less reads as materialist, the Cold-War ideological conflict appears as just superficial: “what happened in Russia, just as with what happened in America, could have happened under a dozen different ideological banners,” because what matters at the heart of modernity is not ideas but industrialization: “From my point of view, this industrial program could have been accomplished under any dozen different ideological banners. The ideas were not as important as people thought they were; the important thing was the fact of industrialization” (751).

Then, when Damon observes that “industrialization was a kind of war against mankind” (755), he finds himself, in regard to his murders, to be in “the dilemma of the ethical criminals” or “the millions of men who lived in the tiny crevices of industrial society completely cut off from humanity, the teeming multitudes of little gods who ruled their own private worlds and acknowledged no outside authority” (743). In other words, the ethical criminal is “one for whom all ethical laws are suspended” who “acts like a god” (674). Damon’s “dilemma” is thus explained as that of the outsider who commits to absolute freedom in a Nietzschean way, where one can act like a god by creating his own ethical laws. In the Cold-War imagination, such absolute freedom does not spell an epicurean paradise, but a hell of trials and tribulations, as Houston observes that the outsider “must be something of an inferno” or “[s]omething like the original chaos out of which life and order is supposed to come from” (674).

As the outsider who should confront the truth of ethics, Damon finds through the words of Gil Blount that what lies at the very core of communist politics is the will to power: “Gil’s words made Cross at last understand what had been bothering him all along. . . . *Power!* This was power what he saw in action” (583; original italics). Elsewhere, Damon is more articulate in explaining this to Houston: “. . . real communist leaders do not believe in its ideology as an article of faith. . . . The real heart of Communism . . . is the will to power” (783). Yet, what Damon first finds in Blount is more important than the discovery that communists do not pursue a better world but power, for it is “something more recondite than mere political strategy”:

[I]t was a *life* strategy using political methods as its tools . . . Its essence was a voluptuousness, a deep-going sensuality that took cognizance of fundamental human needs and the answers to those needs. It related man to man in a fearfully organic way. To hold absolute power over others, to define what they should love or fear, to decide if they were to

live or die and thereby to ravage the whole of their beings – that was a sensuality that made sexual passion look pale by comparison. (583; original italics and original ellipsis)

In the conception of “life strategy,” the essence of communism is separated from its ideology; it is the mechanism of ruling and governing people that matters here. Subsequently, what matters here does not belong to the proper realm of politics, but to that of everyday life, or, simply, life. Naturally, then, Damon finds the same structure even in the liberal world where ruling and governing matters in the same way:

This systematization of the sensuality of power prevailed, though in a different form, in the so-called capitalistic bourgeois world; it was everywhere, in religion as well as in government, and in all art that was worthy of the name. And bourgeois rulers, along with the men of the church, had forged through time and tradition methods of concealing these systems of sensual power under thick layers of legal, institutionalized, ritualized, ideological, and religious trappings. (585-86)

At least to some degree anticipating Foucault’s argument on power or Althusser’s analysis of ideology in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” Damon, who defines “the will to power” and “life strategy” as something “pre-political” (761), here explains what I called a biopolitical shift. In other words, it is only with the recognition in the quotes above that the significance of the depiction of the hero as the outsider is finally understood: only the outsider can see deeper ethical problems since everybody else is caught in the ubiquitous “legal, institutionalized, ritualized, ideological, and religious trappings.”

This is the reason why Damon says: “The essence of life today is psychological; men may take power with arms, but their keeping of it is by other means” (760).²⁶ The author’s focus is set not on the surface of ideology but on how to rule and control, which makes possible the novel’s critique both of communism and the existing liberalism of the USA. The

²⁶ For the psychologism of the novel, see also Henderson.

focus finds as its final field of analysis the realm of “life strategy” which controls people psychologically through various forms of what Althusser calls “ideology apparatus.” The “life strategy” works in a realm that does not look political; it works in a locus that transcends ideological differences, that is, the realm of “life.” When Foucault first introduces the notion of biopower in *History of Sexuality*, he for example says:

For the first time in history, no doubt, biological existence was reflected in political existence; . . . part of it passed into knowledge’s field of control and power’s sphere of intervention. Power would no longer be dealing with legal subjects over whom the ultimate dominion was death, but with living beings, and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level of life itself; it was the taking charge of life . . . that gave power its access even to the body. If one can apply the term *bio-history* to the pressures through which the movements of life and the process of history interfere with one another, one would have to speak of *bio-power* to designate what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life. . . . [W]hat might be called a society’s “threshold of modernity” has been reached when the life of the species is wagered on its own political strategies. For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question. (142-43)

While Foucault mainly has in mind the scientific discourses in the argument of the book, what Wright demonstrates is something more general and vague. Yet, under the Cold-War shift from ideology to non-ideological liberalism, Wright’s critique of liberalism is only possible with his conception (and critique) of biopower in “life strategy.” And it is only with the recognition of the biopolitical shift that sees the essence of humanity as “his existence as a living being in question” that what does matter in the novel’s plot, as well as Wright’s other novels, is murder; in other words, the only crime that achieves a serious ethical insight into the biopolitical world without ideology is homicide. As JanMohamed implies with the conception of “the death-bound-subject,” the repetitive murders imagined by Wright

evidences the author's attempt to reach and criticize the regime of biopolitics where power works to let people live, where oppression takes the form of the control of our lives.²⁷

It is part of the biopolitical shift that when communist Blunt and racist Herndon supposedly kill each other, the reasons are called "*natural life* motives." Houston then says: "Oh, I know that there is no such thing in law as that. But there will be one day . . . I'm sure of it" (657; original ellipsis). Ideological differences are here translated into the rhetoric of life. On the other hand, it is in this context that Damon's murders, that is, the expression of his commitment to ultimate freedom, are seen as killing "for no motives defined or known in the realms of law" (643). The ethical problem that Damon's murders signify transcends the "*natural life* motives" and thus appears as something incomprehensible. Yet, toward the end of the novel, Damon explicitly observes that "A man today who believes that he cannot live by the articles of faith of his society is a criminal" (785), where the novel's focus on the meaning of freedom is clear. Just as being black is for Damon translated into something more than racial identity, that is, being an outsider who, reaching the outside of society's control, will confront the truth of liberal ethics, so the Cold-War situation of McCarthyism is as well translated into the universal problem of the dialectic between individualism and conformism. This is the reason Gilroy defines the novel as a modernist attempt: it commits to a universalist dimension, where beneath the reality that the novel depicts lies an allegorical level that theoretically tries to understand the problem of modernity itself.²⁸ And this is the reason why the novel needs philosophical arguments in it, allegedly appearing as didactic.

²⁷ In a precise and wide-ranged analysis of biopolitics in novels written under the influence of the New Deal, Michael Szalay correctly explains that the "crucial point" of the novel, among other New Deal novels, is that "death, real or imagined, is not a subject of pathos so much as it is an opportunity for a transcendent political experience" (165). I agree in general with Szalay's analysis of the novel, but I believe that it is more important to focus on the gap between the Dew Deal regime and the more or less Marxist vision of political justice in Wright who eventually became a self-imposed exile. As for the interrelation between the regime of welfare state and biopolitics, see Chapter Three.

²⁸ For another attempt to read the novel in terms of modernism, see Relyea.

V. The Political Unconscious of *The Outsider*

Yet, all in all, the novel is to be seen as a tragedy where Damon in the end dies a sudden and meaningless death. He even expresses repentance in his last conversation with Houston. After summing up his life, “[a]ll of it” was “horrible,” he explains the reason in this way: “Because in my heart . . . I’m . . . I felt . . . I’m *innocent* . . . That’s what made the horror . . .” (840-41; original italics and original ellipses). These last words are to be read as a critique of the novel’s biopolitical liberalism, or the individualist commitment that is validated in the rhetoric of life, since, just before his last words, he indicates that the fact that he “loved life too . . . much” is the reason why he chose to live as the outsider (839; original ellipsis). At the same time, he also says in an impressive phrase, “Man is a promise that he must never break” (839), which means “I wish I had some way to give the meaning of my life to others . . . To make a bridge from man to man . . . Starting from scratch every time is . . . is no good. Tell them not to come down this road” (840; original ellipses). Clearly, on his deathbed, he finally criticizes the individualism that is crucially associated with the value of liberalism in the Cold-War imagination. The tragic ending of the novel is where the possibility of criticizing Cold-War liberalism, to which the entirety of Damon’s life has obviously been committed, is enacted.

The ending is also significant in implying that the notion of “innocence” plays an essential role in Cold-War liberalism. When Damon becomes the outsider, evading his identity after the accident on the L train, he thinks thus about what “innocence” means for him: “There was a kind of innocence that made him want to shape for himself the kind of life he wanted, but he knew that that innocence was deeply forbidden” (456). Although this is important, the notion of “innocence” he refers to on his deathbed should be understood in a

wider context as far as the novel, in a late modernist attempt to transcend the immediate context, tries to depict the theoretical framework of Cold-War liberalism in general, not a form of liberalism that a black outsider happens to think of. In other words, the “innocence” he identifies as the reason for the horror of his life is to be defined not as his own particular “innocence,” but as something that can be called “American innocence” lying at the heart of the conception of Cold-War liberalism. For, in what I called the literature of freedom, such novels as *The Adventures of Augie March*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, and *On the Road*, as well as other manifestations of Cold-War liberalism, like the Western movies of the era and contemporary American studies including *American Adam* and *The Virgin Land*, “innocence” always plays an indispensable role in the appraisal of Cold-War liberalism.

Put simply, my reading of the novel’s ending concerns what is suppressed from the surface of the text under the Cold-War tension in which it was written: I regard Damon’s last words as his last attempt to articulate what had to be suppressed in the text. This ultimately means to relocate the novel in another historical context than the one in which it was written. For a start, we should ask a particular question in order to see the novel under a new light, following Damon’s suggestion: who is the *true* outsider in the novel? This question is meaningful since, as has been argued, Damon is qualified as the well-written figure of the outsider in the sense that he follows the depiction of the outsider that the literature of freedom in general represents. He is the outsider *in* the imagination of the Cold-War liberalism that commits to the value of the outsider, but he is not the outsider *of* the imagination.

This is the reason why the novel needs to include the character of Bob Hunter, a communist illegal alien who is deported by the Party’s cruel betrayal to his homeland of Trinidad to die, and so disappears from the text. He is the outsider of the novel. Yet, or because of his being the true outsider, he is not identified as such; Damon sees him rather as a

loser. According to Damon, Hunter cannot be the outsider since he is not individualist enough: “They [the Party] didn’t *have* to treat Bob that way . . . Bob’ll follow *any* strong person . . . You can take his hand and lead’im . . .” (571; original italics and original ellipses). In fact, since the text says that Damon, just after this observation, “was slowly becoming himself again, but it was a different self,” he finds his true self as the outsider by denying what Hunter symbolizes: that is, the hero becomes the outsider by making Hunter his outsider. Yet, at the same time, Hunter haunts Damon’s imagination as a failure he must not repeat: “He recalled Bob’s squirming on the floor, begging for a mercy that the Party would not grant. No; no, he would not swallow that happening to him” (637). Bob here is a warning of the Party’s cruelty whose victim Damon must not become. It is also possible to understand that what separates Damon from Bob is the dichotomy of the intellectual and the masses: Bob and his wife Sarah fail to identify Damon’s true nature since “Sarah and Bob never expected to see a black intellectual and did not know one when they saw one” (557). Damon is the intellectual, individualist outsider who symbolizes the value of the true liberalism of the fifties; Bob is a helpless victim of the Party as well as what it symbolizes, the cruel machine that works toward its will to power.

All in all, what separates Damon from Bob is the rhetoric of masculinity. Damon, whose death is represented as something tragic, can be a hero of Cold-War liberalism since he is a variation of the Cold Warrior, a masculine soldier who can make his way through the Cold-War battlefield of liberalism against ideology. Bob, who tragically disappears from the text even without the text’s articulating the tragedy of his disappearance, is the ultimate victim in the text and of the structure of the Cold-War imagination that the text depicts. What makes Bob the constitutive outsider of the text is the Cold-War commitment to the value of the intellectual against the fear of the masses and to the value of masculinity under the

Cold-War tension. And the commitment to masculinity that the depiction of Damon as the outsider shows, which excludes what Hunter symbolizes, is in a certain sense a demonstration of liberal and biopolitical amendment to the Cold-War reality, which the novel finally defines as a tragedy. If we try to reach outside of the biopolitical rhetoric, we will find the simple and hard fact of politics, which tells us that the true victim, the true outsider of the novel, is none other than Hunter; the perspective that sees Hunter as the outsider leads to an attempt to imagine the outside of the Cold-War imagination.

This is the reason why Damon appeals to the value of solidarity, “to make a bridge from man to man,” on his deathbed (although the rhetoric is still fundamentally masculine).²⁹ In *Race against Empire*, Penny M. Von Eschen looks into the history of American black diaspora politics from the 1930s to the 1950s, where she points out a drastic re-conception of “race” at the beginning of the Cold War:

In the 1940s, racism had been widely portrayed not only by African American intellectuals but also in popular discourse as located in the history of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism. In the 1950s, the equation was reversed: rather than the result of slavery and colonialism, “race” and “color” were now offered as explanations for them. Marjorie McKenzie argued, for example, that “color” was the “sufficiently blinding” barrier that prevented the West from knowing what to do about colonialism. In the retreat from explanations grounded in political economy, some of the dominant metaphors are easily identifiable. Racism was portrayed as a “disease,” and as a psychological or spiritual problem, or as a characteristic of backward peoples which could be eradicated by “modernization” or, in more psychological language, “maturity.” (155)

²⁹ In his analysis of Wright’s *Black Power* in *American Africans in Ghana*, Gaines starts with this observation: “Cross is a lonely rebel doomed by hubris and his stubborn aloofness from such a community [of black people]. Wright was not. His mobility along the routes of black modernity to Chicago from Mississippi, then across the ocean to exile in Paris and eventually to the Gold Coast, brought him in contact with a community of exiled black intellectuals” (53). After this, he reads *Black Power* as “a historical account of the making of black modernity and radical consciousness as the collective condition of mobility, both forced and elective, shaped Africans and people of African decent” (54).

To make racism a psychological problem by erasing the dimension of political economy, or a critique of slavery, colonialism and imperialism: this is biopoliticalization of racism, where, as Eschen argues, “race” ceases to be seen as the effect of, say, imperialism, becoming instead its origin.³⁰ The biopoliticalization of racism involves a further effect, as Eschen argues citing Walter A. Jackson’s argument, that can be called the domestication of racism, which is symbolized by the publication of Gunnar Myrdal’s *American Dilemma*. Myrdal’s book of course argues racism as going against the American Creed, while at the same time, according to Eschen, causing the “marginalization of Du Bois and [Paul] Robeson as critics of America’s place in the postwar world” (155).³¹ When we consider the domestication of racism, biopoliticalization cannot be seen only as a shift in discourse, academic or popular. As Eschen observes concerning Du Bois:

A rift between W. E. B. Du Bois and Walter White over foreign policy contributed to Du Bois’s dismissal from the NAACP in 1948. Their differences were evident in their conflict over the organization’s 1947 petition to the United Nations, which exemplified the NAACP’s new exclusive focus on domestic discrimination and its silence on foreign policy issues. (116)

As for Robeson, she sums up:

Unable to silence Robeson through fear and intimidation as it had silenced other critics, in 1950 the federal government revoked his passport. The rejection of Robeson’s subsequent appeal plainly revealed that the government regarded anticolonialism and civil rights activism as interlocking issues that threatened national security. . . . Clearly the U.S. government would not tolerate criticism of its foreign policy by civil rights leaders. (124)

³⁰ Another salient example of the psychologization of race is *The Authoritarian Personality* by Adorno et al (1950). For a critical explanation of psychological racism, see Kovel.

³¹ For the geopolitical context in which the American desegregation is necessitated with the domestication of racism, see Dudziak. For the anti-imperialism of Dubois, see chapter six of Kaplan.

As Eschen observes, Walter White's "support of Truman's foreign policy, then, was strategic," but such highly political decisions cannot be explicated in the argument of this dissertation. To put it simply and thus crudely, however, the domestication of racism, or drawing up an agenda to solve American segregation as a domestic matter having nothing to do with other forms of racism in other nations, was the price to be paid in order to make the Civil Rights Movement in the fifties successful. And this could happen only by embracing the biopolitical, liberal and anti-communist line led by the federal government:

The acceptance by White and other key African-American leaders of the proposition that the United States, as the legitimate leader of the free world, was engaged in a fundamental struggle with the Soviet Union had a profound impact on civil rights politics. As early as 1946, with the formation of Truman's Committee on Civil Rights, White and others began to craft the dominant argument of the anti-Communist civil rights liberals. The new argument seized on international criticism of American racism to argue that antidiscrimination measures were necessary for the United States in its struggle against Communism. The dominant liberal argument against racism, using anti-Communism to justify the fight against domestic discrimination and for civil rights, conceded the high ground to anti-Communism. The liberals continued to link foreign and domestic policies but adopted a strategy that embraced American foreign policy while pushing domestic rights. (109-10)

If the biopoliticalization of racism is erasure of the political per se, what is suppressed there is the perspective that sees racism, not as a psychological matter, but as a function of international imperialism and colonialism, where "race" is to be seen not as a source of identitarian pride but as a concrete effect of the past hideous history. Under the Cold War, this perspective needed to be suppressed since it was a legacy of the Marxist viewpoint of the Left in the thirties. In the perspective Eschen tries to revive, the solution to racism means not the establishment of black identity or black pride, as the rhetoric of identity goes, but the

overturning of international imperialism where every kind of racism matters, whatever the victims' skin color might be, where economic inequality matters as well as racism.

This is what Damon's last cry tries to appeal to in his repentance as a Cold-War liberal. For the episode of Bob Hunter, if not intentionally, functions as a clear criticism of the black leaders' domestic shift when what really matter immediately are the civil rights of U.S. citizens. The episode is a distant cry for international solidarity against imperialism. And it is rather tempting to think that the author, even if subconsciously, regarded the presence of this episode as necessary to the formation of the novel, considering his self-imposed exile in Paris and his later works such as *Black Power*, *Color Curtain* and *White Man, Listen!*.³² Of course, Wright was clearly against the Communist Party as a totalitarian organization, which is, as argued, explicitly dictated in the novel; yet, he still believed in the Marxist perspective that sees racism as the structural factor in global modernity.

If, then, Damon's last words are seen as a critique of the commitment to the American "innocence" that figures so heavily in Cold-War liberal discourse, the "innocence" here spells the suppression of history, historicity, and historical perspectives. It is "innocence" that makes possible the conception of the liberal man who is free to realize himself, regardless of his historical responsibility to the world. It is "innocence" that makes Damon free to acquire his new self in abandoning his responsibility to his family, social relations, and cultural responsibility. It is the "innocence" of America that makes her believe, as the leader of the free world, that the Truman doctrine is not a form of imperialism. From this perspective, Damon's repetitive murders are to be seen as a metaphor of military foreign policy of the USA justified under the name of the Cold War and liberalism. The ultimate meaning of innocence here is the suppression of history, where the idea that Cold-War America is a free

³² For Wright's relation to Pan-Africanism and Black Radicalism in general, see, for example, Finley Campbell, Feuser, chapter two of Gaines, and a chapter "Richard Wright and Modern Africa" in Diawara, in addition to the biographical explanation in Fabre.

country means that she can do whatever she believes is right, as liberalism goes, regardless of the actual international context: free here means the liberal freedom of “do what you want to do.” This is the meaning of the “innocence” of Cold-War America. The rhetoric of gender in Truman’s address, as I argued at the beginning of this chapter, endorses this freedom by suppressing the international, historical, and political context in which America’s liberalism should be located.

Read as a serious depiction of a Cold-War tragedy, Richard Wright’s *The Outsider* thus signals what else America threw out with the bath water of Communist totalitarianism: materialist analysis in the global or international context reveals the hard facts of the international regime. In other words, the novel is truly valuable today in its critique of biopolitics or in its perspective that finally reaches an imagination that touches the outside of the biopolitical. In the sense that the critique calls for an analysis of the hard facts of imperialism, the novel could be seen even as a critique of Foucault’s argument about biopolitics claiming, rather emphatically and in a liberal way, the invalidity of a social revolution as opposed to a cultural one.³³ The well-known passage from *History of Sexuality* reads, for example:

Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. . . . These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. (95-96)

The biopolitical conception of power, Foucault argues here, means that every resistance takes the form of everyday resistance with a small “r” and that it is meaningless to imagine a social Revolution that takes place through social planning, revolutionary theory or one ideal with

³³ Atteberry sees one element in Damon’s Tragedy in breaking his “‘promise’ in assuming his death and thus isolating himself from the network of social relations,”(890), but he does not see the dimension in the novel’s tragedy to be understood as a critique of the biopolitical and thus the Foucauldian conception of resistance.

which everyone agrees. In the sense that commitment to the value of freedom negates social intervention or any political (as opposed to biopolitical) intervention, Foucault's "ideology" here is clearly liberal. As the presupposition of this argument, Foucault negates the possibility of "a position of exteriority in relation to power"; in his desperate search for exteriority, however, Wright finds it in what is suppressed in the blind spot of historiography. As the novel implies, what is rather meaningless is the attempt to find universal exteriority in theoretical thinking; it is the existence of the "outside" that the history of the present tries to negate. And in the history of American liberalism after the end of World War II, the "outside" always concerns the Cold-War shift to biopolitics where the legacy of Marxist thinking is negated.

In the combination of Foucault's argument and Wright's tacit commitment to international politics that criticizes American and European imperialism, one may find Foucault's Eurocentricism that does not consider geopolitical differences in the conception of biopolitics and its critique. Actually, however, to sum up what I have argued in this chapter, my reading of *The Outsider* suggests that the commitment to identity, which sees race as a substantial factor in the talk of (bio)politics, virtually displaces the Marxist thinking that offers an ultimately constructionist view that sees "race" as the effect of imperialism and colonialism. Damon's last cry is truly a distant cry for international solidarity, but I would hesitate to call it a cry for a black diaspora, whatever "black" might mean. I do not deny the fact that there is a rich and diverse legacy from the valuable traditions of diasporas in the black Atlantic; however, what Wright had in mind, it seems to me, might be a cry for the solidarity of diasporas, but diasporas without color. It probably is not even a cry for diasporas; it seems to me more probable that what Wright wanted was a universal solidarity that would not exclude anyone. In fact, Bob Hunter is cast out because, when he wants to

organize his own “union,” the Party decides that he “must not proceed any further in [his] attempt to organize any cells in the Dining Car Waiters’ Union” (566). In contract to the Party’s *realpolitik*, Hunter shows his idealism for Marxism and organizing workers. And “union” should mean social, not cultural, collectivity that does not work in terms of racial identities.

Chapter Two

Aesthetic Individualism and the Genealogy of the Cultural Revolution: Cold-War Westerns and the Western Theories of Revolution

“Desire is not restricted to the privileged;
neither is it restricted to the success of a revolution once it has occurred.

It is in itself an immanent revolutionary process.”

Gilles Deleuze, “Dead Psychoanalysis: Analyse”

I. Displacing Society with Culture

There is no better way than to watch Western movies of the time if one wants to confirm that the paradigmatic motif in cultural representations in the early fifties is a contradiction between individualism and conformism. Western movies grew unprecedentedly popular in the era, and, with their increasing popularity, a new style of Western movie appeared, exemplified by such works as *Shane* and *High Noon*, that reveal Cold-War liberalism’s ultimate commitment to anti-conformity individualism. In order to analyze such works, several issues need to be clarified. The first is the correct evaluation of the cultural politics of Cold-War individualism, especially in relation to Foucault’s analysis of power, when individualism was seen as the essence of Cold-War liberalism: why was individualism regarded as the core of liberalism, and what happens to the notion of the political itself when it is thus regarded? The second problem is the meaning of the correspondence between the popularity of the Western and the appreciation of such books as R. W. B. Lewis’ *American Adam*, Henry Nash Smith’s *Virgin Land* and even Richard Chase’s *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, where the former two are seen as primal texts in the post-War formation of American Studies, and the last was tremendously influential in establishing the discipline of

American Literature. Lastly, and in relation to these problems, we must ask how psychologization of the individualist Western movies of the fifties works in a significant way, where the lone hero's fate is almost always deeply entangled with a romantic plot with "fair" and "dark" women.

In Chapter One, I virtually demonstrated that, with Richard Wright's curious and, in fact, tactical rejection of racial discourses, or the author's treating the idea of race not as being itself an end where the realization of racial identity is seen as the goal, but as being a means where the idea is used as a tool to critically analyze the fundamental problems of modernity, what matters in the appreciation of *The Outsider* is Cold-War liberalism's Americanism in both the senses that few contemporary people did justice to Richard Wright's "French" novel under the tension of the Cold War and that, in the novel's structure, what is emphasized as having to be surpassed ultimately are national boundaries and nationalism rather than the color line and racism. In analyzing the shape of the Cold-War individualism expressed in such Western movies as *Shane* and *High Noon*, this chapter tackles the effect of the nationalism that mattered so much at the end of the previous chapter.

By nationalism, however, this chapter's argument does not necessarily mean such things as patriotism, exceptionalism, nativism, or even love of one's own country. By nationalism, it looks for the idea and its effect of the commitment to American culture that result from what I called the biopolitical shift, or, in other words, the consequences when Lionel Trilling claimed that true artists "contain within themselves . . . the very essence of the culture, and the sign of this is they do not submit to serve the ends of any one ideological group or tendency." Criticizing V. L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*, Trilling here argues the importance of understanding the dialectic nature of culture: "it is nothing if not dialectic" (9). Since for Trilling culture is essentially dialectic (as opposed to

Parrington's understanding of it as a certain form of "currents"), "the very essence of the culture" hidden in each and every artist makes it possible for them not to "submit to serve the ends of any one ideological group or tendency."

The conception of a national culture as a singular, independent and autonomous, if not dialectic, formation is an effect of nationalism. For example, when, identifying nation as "an imagined community," Benedict Anderson explicates the three paradoxes of nationalism – "(1) The objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists; (2) The formal universality of nationality as socio-political concept . . . vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations; (3) The 'political' power of nationalism vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence" (5) –, he virtually refers to the "myth" nationalism makes as its fundamental constituent, or the mythic power of nationalism in which we live. Put most simply, nationalism is born to work when we are not able to believe that everyone who has the nationality of a country constitutes its nation, but we want to believe instead that there is something more than the same nationality that is shared by every member of a nation. Culture is one of the most important elements, if not the only one, of this "something more," for, when we share a singular, independent, autonomous culture, we surely constitute a nation.

The focus of this chapter is to scrutinize the commitment to culture, exemplified by Trilling's claim, in terms of its Cold-War characteristics. For one thing, when Trilling suggests that the essence of American culture is to be found in American artworks, he is in fact displacing the idea that American artworks should reflect American society. The commitment to culture replaces the commitment to society, as is more clearly seen in his statement, quoted in the previous chapter, that more obviously shows his biopolitical shift: "clearly it is no longer possible to think of politics except as the politics of culture" (xvii). In

the context of the Cold-War liberals' suppression of communism and socialism, the commitment to culture is a choice of culture over society.

Then, secondly, in the same way that we now worry with respect to multiculturalism, the problem with the commitment to the autonomous national culture is the threat of homogenization. In the Cold-War context, this problem means that, however valuable a culture might be, a suppressive culture is not liberal, but totalitarian. That is to say, the main "dialectic" to be found in the culture of the Cold War is that of individualism and conformism: or, as I will demonstrate gradually through this chapter, it might be more relevant to understand Trilling's "dialectic" as a replacement for the Cold-War culture's true dynamic of the antinomy of individualism and conformism. In terms of the possibilities and limits of individualism as opposed to conformism, the examples of Cold-War culture we see in this chapter end up offering a vacant form of sublimation that only formally resolves the antinomy. In fact, as I am going to argue, it is aestheticization of the vacant form of individualism that is found in such movies as *Shane* and *High Noon*.

Lastly, the significance of analyzing the vacant individualism in the Cold-War commitment to culture lies in the significance of the Cold-War model as a certain archetype for theories of revolution and resistance in the latter half of the twentieth century of the West. We may conceive (in a Foucauldian way) a genealogy of theories of cultural revolution from Foucault's analysis of power through Deleuze/Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* to Hardt and Negri's *Empire*. The fundamental character shared by these theories of revolution is that they are conceived, in contrast to the social revolution realized in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, as a theory of cultural revolution. In the sense that they advocate changes in our identities (or singularities) before changes in institutions, legal systems and forms of government, the revolution they imagine is essentially epistemological: what should be

changed first is how we conceive the world, not how the world actually is. This chapter argues that the first example of such an epistemological revolution is found in the Cold-War demonstrations of vacant individualism, where cultural politics without ideology are needed and imagined, and rebellion without political principle or program, or “rebel without a cause,” is conceived and appreciated.

Tracing the Cold-War origin of the notion of identity, Leerom Medovoi explains that the fifties are “the inaugural moment of identity” when “new political potentialities were born,” in spite of the general understanding that they were “years of reaction in which political possibilities are closed down” (49). Medovoi makes two points that concern the framework of this chapter’s argument. The Cold-War origin of “identity,” the first point in his argument, should yet be understood with some qualification, although it is true that the word “identity” became familiar in that era with the works of Erik Erikson. When Medovoi finds the politics of “identity” in “rebel heroes” such as Holden Caulfield, the beat writers, Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, and James Dean and the “rebel girls” in such films as *Girls Town*, *Imitation of Life* and *Gidget*, it is indispensable, I believe, to consider the contemporary paradigm of individualism versus conformism because the identities Medovoi finds do not basically assume the political function of solidarity as supposed in today’s political rhetoric.³⁴ To put this in a different way, Medovoi, tracing the genealogy of “identity,” virtually clarifies the origin of today’s identity politics in the conception in the fifties of individualist cultural rebellion without political ideology. The “new political potentialities” born in the fifties, that is to say, are the origin of identity politics today, which was conceived along with, for example, Daniel Bell’s famous claim of “the end of ideology,” repeated after the Cold War in Francis Fukuyama’s “the end of history.” It all started under the Cold-War tension, where

³⁴ For another cultural analysis in the similar framework, see Hale.

you had to be ideology-free if you wanted to be meaningfully political in the US; it started from what Arthur Schlesinger called “the vital center” mutilated from both the right and left.

Another important point Medovoi makes is the re-conception of Cold-War geopolitics from that of “a simple squaring off between two postwar superpowers” to that of “a triangulated ‘age of three worlds’”: “U.S.-Soviet rivalry . . . did not play out on a dichotomous globe in a simple scenario of ‘us against them,’ as ‘containment’ approach to Cold War culture implicitly presumes. Rather, it took the form of a triangulated rivalry over another universe that only now became known as the ‘third world’” (10).³⁵ In his argument, the rhetoric concerning the Third World is important because “[t]he United States, stressing whatever anticolonial credentials it could muster, presented itself as the only reliable model for achieving national self-determination” (12). He is pointing out that when what is called the Third World appeared as the crucial areas to be won over under the Cold-War tug-of-war between the US and the USSR, the US’s political discourse for seducing the Third World followed not the imperialist rhetoric of takeover, or even the rhetoric of the natural victory of liberalism, but the nationalist one of autonomy and self-determination. After indicating that “by 1918 then, the ruling ideology of colonialism hinged upon the human life cycle as its master metaphor,” he observes:

The three worlds imaginary of the postwar years constituted a key turning point in this rhetoric, for it envisioned the colonized as having finally begun the passage out of nonage, a transition that Erikson would emphatically associate with adolescence and the quest for identity. Within this network of meanings, the first and second worlds benignly represented, in turn, rival paths to modernization between which the nations of the third world would have to choose as they passed through national adolescence toward maturity. It is within the terms of this global imaginary of emergent sovereignty that the United States competed with the USSR to win client states among the emergent nations. (11-12)

³⁵ “Three worlds” theory itself of course has a long history. For a cultural analysis from this perspective, see also, for example, Denning’s *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds*.

A simple name for “this network of meanings” is nationalism. It is both the US’s and the USSR’s commitment to nationalism as the fundamental principle of international order in the twentieth century that brought about the anti-imperialist encouragement of decolonization for every colony after World War II and made it necessary for both superpowers to employ the rhetoric of nationalism in their talk with client states.³⁶ Although Medovoi rather directly connects the rhetoric of national growth or development with Erikson’s rhetoric of applied Freudianism, what works here more generally is depoliticization of the discourses of International Development as Irene L. Gendzier examines it in *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World*: the repeated appeal to the End of Ideology in discipline during the Cold War.

“Applied first to analyses of contemporary U. S. and Anglo-Saxon political system,” Gendzier argues, “the revisionist view of liberal democracy was then extended into analyses of Third World states, where its apolitical view of politics, its elitist bias, and its pessimism about mass-based social and political movements colored the interpretation of Third World Development” (4). The Cold-War characteristic of fear of the mass works internationally as well as domestically.

Among the theorists of Political Development, it was the association of mass society with “mass politics,” the fear of radical mass-based movements and their destabilization of the existing political order, that took priority. . . . The argument in defense of the “end of ideology,” . . . , found a ready and sympathetic audience among exponents of Political Development – and among the larger professional milieu of which they are a part. (102)

And Gendzier also refers to psychologization that works hand-in-hand with the Cold-War end of ideology:

³⁶ See also Wallerstein, especially chapter three.

Not all students of Third World politics were interested in psychology, psychoanalysis, or social psychology. But among those who accepted the conventions of conservative political theory implicit in the elitist interpretation of democracy, the tendency to adopt psychological explanations of politics was commonplace. . . . By displacing political analysis from the political to the personal level, political differences and conflicts were reduced to matters of deviance and other personality malfunctionings. The approach was convenient, albeit a distraction from the ostensible purpose of political explanation. (168)

When nationalism, or the way of talking about nation-states not in terms of state, saliently flourished in the discourses concerning the Third World, the political program for a third world nation is tactically translated into “natural growth” or its failure, exactly in a way corresponding to Lionel Trilling’s rhetoric I surveyed in the previous chapter.³⁷

This all happened, as Eric Hobsbawm argues in *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, when everybody believed after World War II that evil empires were defeated at last and that the twentieth century eventually had become the century of nationalism. The victory of nationalism after World War II could be seen, at least in a sense, as its victory over Marxist internationalism. I thus suggest that the commitment to nation be seen as a replacement for commitment to state in just the same way that, as mentioned above, the commitment to culture should be seen as a replacement for commitment to society. Thus understood, the victory of nationalism after World War II constitutes a crucial part of what I call biopoliticalization during the Cold War. The rhetoric of nation (as opposed to state) functions as that of “naturalization”: starting with the inalienable value of autonomy and self-determination, it works with the effect of depoliticization, insists on the end of ideology, virtually valorizes the value of what we now call identity, and affirms our choice of culture over society.

³⁷ For the ideology of development theory of the era, see also chapter two of Latham.

In fact, President Truman's address on the Truman Doctrine, cited in the previous chapter as an example of the depoliticized rhetoric of manhood, also focuses on the principle of nationalism (although it refers to Turkey and Greece). Quoting the 1954 comment by the secretary of state John Foster Dulles, "We ourselves are the first colony in modern times to have won independence," Medovoi suggests that the US even imagined itself as a post-colonial nation in the triangulated imaginary. Yet, what was more prevalent in the rhetoric of America's cultural identity was the emphasis on its "innocence" rather than its postcoloniality. In the sense depicted in the previous chapter, the idea of "innocence" in this context basically means the conception of "man" as detached from its political and historical context, where innocence as repression of history, individualism as negation of social context, and liberalism as freedom from ideology form a certain kind of trinity in the culture of the Cold War.

Fiercely attacking the cultural politics in the humanities today, Sean McCann and Michael Szalay in "Do You Believe in Magic?: Literary Thinking after the New Left" trace the origin of the anti-rationalism of the cultural left after nineteen sixty-eight back to Trilling's *Liberal Imagination*. As they quote, when Trilling complains of "organization" that means "delegation, and agencies, and bureaus, and technicians" in order to declare the value of the "politics of culture," Trilling clearly follows Cold-War individualism: individualism as an aspect of anti-ideological liberalism, as demonstrated in *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Organization Man*, where, with the fear of totalitarianism, society is seen as potentially oppressive.³⁸ If the problem with the left-wing politics of culture after the New Left, as McCann and Szalay argue, is "the liberation turn" that, with the emergence of abstract "system" or "them" as the political target to be defeated, sees that "merely providing

³⁸ Quoted in McCann (439). Trilling (xx, xvii).

‘alternative definitions of reality’ could itself be the most radically political of acts” (441), the origin of the shift is surely to be found in Cold-War liberalism.³⁹ In terms of genealogy, at least, the focus on culture, as opposed to society, that makes those who called the cultural left cultural started with the formation of the cultural politics of Cold-War liberalism, which was, as Medovoi correctly observes, the origin of identity politics in the era: that is to say, it started with the Cold-War depoliticization that wanted, under the climate of McCarthyism, to suppress the social, socialist and Marxist imaginations prevalent in the thirties and the forties. In other words, the problem with the cultural left is not that they are not patriotic enough, as Richard Rorty insists in *Achieving Our Country*, but that they started with the Cold-War biopolitical containment that is fundamentally entangled with the victory of nationalism.

II. Locating Identity in the Fifties

In “Identifying Identity: A Semantic History,” Philip Gleason locates the fifties’ origin of the notion “identity” as we use it now: “*identity* is a new term, as well as being an elusive and ubiquitous one. It came into use as a popular social-science term only in the 1950s” (910).⁴⁰ He describes how today’s usage of the word emerged in the course of the decade: it, among other examples, began with Oscar Handlin’s *The Uprooted* (1951), a book that defines immigration as the defining experience for Americans, where the word is used “in an unself-conscious manner as part of the ordinary vocabulary of common discourse” (912), through Will Herberg’s *Protestant - Catholic - Jew* (1955), where, contrastingly, “identity and identification are, in a sense, what the book is all about” (912), although the author’s

³⁹ Although McCann and Szalay is criticizing about Christian Wright Mills’ idea of “the cultural apparatus” in the quote, they say that the same critique could be applied to “Althusser’s ideological state apparatus, Foucault’s discourse, Lacan or Žižek’s symbolic order, Laclau and Mouffe’s hegemony” (439).

⁴⁰ For the genealogy of the notion of identity in academic fields, see Weigert.

concern apparently is religious, to an anthology entitled *Identity and Anxiety* (1960) whose editors “drew attention to a marked shift from concern over conformity to concern with identity” (913).

In this history, according to Gleason, “Erikson was the key figure in putting the word into circulation” (914) as is symbolized by the fact that the publication “in 1963 of a second edition of *Childhood and Society* (originally published in 1950) was a major event,” although “Erikson was concerned as early as 1958 to distinguish his version of identity from other usages” (915). Erik H. Erikson’s aim in *Childhood and Society* is to update the tradition of Freudian psychoanalysis in the post-World War II context in terms of “identity crisis”: “The study of identity . . . becomes as strategic as in our time as the study of sexuality was in Freud’s time” (282). It explores how one’s growth is psychoanalytically affected by environment, referring to the cases of Hitler and the Russian novelist Maxim Gorky as well as the American people. It should be noted here that, for Erikson, “identity” from the start means not only the personal, but also the collective. Medovoi contends that “for Erikson, it was not just persons that sought identity, but also tribes, nations, races and even sexes” (7). Gleason observes that the “rise of Adolf Hitler and World War II contributed to [Erikson’s] interest in the interaction between large-scale historical movements and the development of individual personality, and it was against the background of World War II that Erikson first began to use the term *identity*” (914).

To a certain degree, Medovoi is correct when he associates Erikson’s arguments with those of another popular psychoanalyst of the era, Robert Lindner, in the sense that in spite of the title’s being *Childhood and Society*, the book is “most concerned with the fifth age [of Erikson’s account of the human life cycle], ‘puberty and adolescence’” (6). Robert Linder is best known now for his first book on a case study of a delinquent youth, *Rebel without a*

Cause: The Hypnoanalysis of a Criminal Psychopath, whose title was adopted for the well-known movie.⁴¹ Linder is a strong supporter of the natural necessity of psychological rebellion, as is symbolically testified by the title of his popular essay, or a transcript of his lecture, “Must You Conform?.” The answer is of course no: “Man is a rebel. He is committed by his biology *not* to conform. . . . Unlike other creatures of earth, man cannot submit, cannot surrender his birthright of protest, for rebellion is one of his essential dimensions” (176). Yet, while Medovoi tries to include in the same way both Erikson and Lindner under the umbrella of (origins of) “identity politics,” there is a rather large difference between Lindner’s assertive insistence of anti-conformist individualism and Erikson’s ambitious redefinition of Freudianism in terms of the value of a stable identity.⁴² What Erikson and Lindner share is the invention of psychological rhetoric that defines the rebel as something natural,⁴³ and it is true that, at roughly the same time, the scholars of International Development adopted the parallel rhetoric of the end of ideology and psychologization, as Gendzier argues. In other words, if we put Erikson and Lindner at the starting point of the genealogy that leads to the cultural politics of today, what we see there is a Cold-War replacement by the psychological of the political and a Cold-War commitment to freedom as a hysteric response to exaggerated fear of totalitarianism that sees any kind of political program potentially as another form of totalitarianism. It all happened under the Cold-War tension epitomized by McCarthyism.

In order to see how “identity” is used in a different configuration from today even

⁴¹ For the representation of childhood in the era, see Gilbert.

⁴² This is to say, for one thing, even when Lindner uses the word “identity” in several places as Medovoi carefully shows (33), the word is fundamentally interchangeable with individuality as far as it lacks any implication for solidarity in Lindner’s fierce anti-totalitarian individualism.

For another, when Medovoi theorizes that “At the level of collectivity, identity may therefore be thought of as a *psychologized conception of sovereignty detached from territory and the state*” (8), this thesis is correct only when we understand the word in the way we use it in rather a comprehensive way. That is, as far as Erikson defines the notion of identity in a precise way with relation to his theory of the psychological life cycle, Erikson’s identity does not seem to be applicable to a narrative of national growth and development in a useful way.

⁴³ The psychologization in the fifties, of course, also should be seen in the context of the US reception of psychoanalysis. About this, see Zaretsky, especially chapters ten and eleven.

when it is used in basically the same sense, it is noteworthy that, of the two books Gleason cited as early examples, while *The Uprooted* starts with the author's contention that "the immigrants *were* American history" (3), *Protestant - Catholic - Jew*, which cites Handlin's contention, observes that "by being Jewish they were, in a very curious way, becoming more typically American" (10). What we see here might be called the paradigm of assimilation; yet, this assimilation is not seen in the Cold-War paradigm as problematically suppressive since liberalism as the antinomy of totalitarianism cannot be suppressive as far as each and every member of the nation is a natural-born rebellious individualist.⁴⁴ It is in this sense, I contend, that in the paradigm of the Cold War what matters are nation and nationalism rather than race and racism. And to say this does not mean to believe in the fond dream of American liberalism of the fifties, but to insist that the most critical point in the cultural politics of Cold-War America lies not in where the dream of liberalism failed (such as McCarthyism and the suppression of minorities), but in its latent limit and cruelty even when the dream seems to be successfully achieved.

From this viewpoint, it is interesting that Gleason suggests that the popularity of the term "identity" was prepared by growing interest in social sciences in general, especially in "the study of national character" that was then regarded as "one of the most exciting frontier areas of the social sciences" (923). As Gleason explains,

The belief that different human groups are marked by distinctive characteristics is at least as old as Herodotus, but it had fallen into disrepute in the 1930s as a result of its association with racialism. The new area of scientifically respectable study of national character was inaugurated in World War II by a group of scholars who were called upon by agencies of the United States government to apply their skills to such questions as how civilian morale could best be maintained or what kind of propaganda could be most

⁴⁴ About a positive understanding of ethnic "assimilation" in the early sixties, see Milton Gordon. About the cultural meanings of white ethnicities in the fifties, see chapter two of Freedman. About Anti-Anti-Semitism in the fifties, see Higham's "Anti-Semitism and American Culture."

effectively employed against the enemy. Margaret Mead was the best-known scholar involved. . . . (924)

So it is warfare logic of World War II (and the Cold War) that encouraged the virtual displacement of race and racism by nation and nationalism.⁴⁵ When we see, as well as the changes in the status of Jewish American in post-War years, that Franz Samelson argue how “race psychology,” which, being in fashion in the nineteen-twenties, committed to scientific endorsement of racialism and racism, is altogether replaced by “studies in prejudice,” which, culminating in *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), basically identifies racial thinking as evil prejudice, we will understand the way the growing commitment to thinking in terms of nation virtually makes racial thinking apparently irrelevant (which, however, does not mean that there was not racism [or sexism] worked under the name of nationalism, as I will argue later).⁴⁶

Gleason contends that Erikson “first worked out his ideas on the interaction between ‘ego identity’ and ‘group identity’ in the context of the wartime investigation of national character” (925). If the study of identity became as “strategic” then “as the study of sexuality was in Freud’s time” as Erikson explains his own project, it is nationalism that made the study “strategic.” His nationalism, or American exceptionalism, is fairly clear when he observes that “[i]t is a commonplace to state that whatever one may come to consider a truly American trait can be shown to have its equally characteristic opposite.”⁴⁷ Or, since he

⁴⁵ As for the critique of racism and racial thinking in the twenties in terms of the critique of Victorianism, see Coben.

⁴⁶ It therefore seems rather natural that, among those which constitute what I called the literature of freedom, the only novel that works of the identitarian paradigm is William Burroughs’s *Junky*, where the relevant identity is a medical one of junky. Fairly clearly, the novel is a project that tries to offer a definition of junky as what we now call an identity: “Junk is not a kick. It is a way of life” (xxxix); “If you have never been addicted, you can have no clear idea what it means to need junk with the addict’s special need” (xxxviii); “I don’t spot junk neighborhoods by the way they look, but the feel, somewhat the same process by which a dowser locates hidden water” (58); “Once a junkie, always a junkie. You can stop using junk, but you are never off after the first habit” (97); “It is difficult to fake addiction. An addict knows an addict” (121).

⁴⁷ In fact, he continues that “This, one suspects, is true of all ‘national characters’ or (as I would prefer to call them) national identities . . .”. Yet, while eventually succeeding in clearly articulating the identities of other

actually refers to Parrington's *Main Currents* in the chapter on the US that starts with the above quote, he might be understood to be following the same "dialectic" shift as Trilling's when he then enumerates such examples of the American opposites as "open roads of immigration and jealous islands of tradition; outgoing internationalism and defiant isolationism; boisterous competition and self-effacing co-operation; and many others" (285); these are to be seen as variations of the dichotomy of individualism and conformism. And if Erikson's idea was conceived under the influence of the study of national character, as Gleason argues, the same could be said of American Studies which flowered in the fifties: "Margaret Mead's *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (1942) opened the era in which studies of the American character became a leading growth sector of the knowledge industry, and almost the reason for being of the new discipline (or disciplinary holding company) of American Studies" (924).⁴⁸

It is in this context that I would like to locate Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950) and R. W. B. Lewis' *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (1955). Now it is rather clear in what sense I would like to call them nationalist: it is not concerning whether or not they are parochial or nativist, but the fact that, when Smith's and Lewis' works are generally considered to belong to the school of myth and symbol, the myths and symbols they try to depict constitute what is needed to make America what Anderson calls an imagined community.⁴⁹

"Looking back at the decades from 1945 to 1965," David W. Noble explains in *Death of a Nation*, "one finds agreement that a symbol-myth school provided the dominant

cultures, he does not dare to define American identity as such.

⁴⁸ For this, see also Gleason (1984).

⁴⁹ For the critique of American Studies' nationalism in a more popular sense and the response to it, i.e., the suppression of the voices of minorities in the conception of the American culture and American exceptionalism, see, among others, Kerber and Berkhofer.

paradigm for American Studies during those years,” where the three leaders of the school is Smith, Lewis, and the author of *The Machine in the Garden* (1964), Leo Marx (106). When Noble describes the similarity and difference between the school’s argument and F. O. Matthiessen’s *American Renaissance*, the school’s Cold-War liberal shift is quite salient. “A major characteristic of these men of the symbol-myth school,” Noble says, “was that they wanted only to study the American renaissance,” the reason being that their books were “directly dependent” on Matthiessen’s book although, as if to follow Trilling’s suggestion in *Liberal Imagination*, they “quietly rejected what Matthiessen was saying in his book on Dreiser”:

Instead they focused on what he had said about symbol and myth. In their writings they followed the advice he had gained from Hawthorne, Melville, Henry James, and T. S. Eliot. Smith, Lewis, and Marx did not present themselves as men whose hope in 1940 that national democracy would defeat international capitalism had vanished by 1948. They did not reveal themselves in their writings as having been vanquished on the political battlefield of the 1940s. They now took Matthiessen’s message of 1940 very seriously: national democracy had been defeated long ago by international capitalism in the Gilded Age. (107)

Born under the nationalist paradigm during the war, the myth and symbol school of American Studies tends to neglect the naturalist paradigm with reference to Marxist thinking.⁵⁰ As Anderson cautions in his explanation of the paradoxes of nationalism, it always hides its true origin. Noble calls the ideology of the school all in all “bourgeois nationalism.”

Considering that the myth and symbol school are generally seen as being rather hard to define, Noble’s critique may sound too fiercely left wing. While, quoting Smith, Leo Marx in “American Studies: A Defense of an Unscientific Method” acknowledges “our notorious methodological deficiencies,” or the lack of a clear methodology that defines what the myth

⁵⁰ Denning also argues “American Studies as a Substitute for Marxism.”

and symbol school, Gene Wise in “‘Paradigm Dramas’ in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement” explains the reason: the works of the myth and symbol school are “all passionately intense, personal books” since “post-World War II Americanists still tended to see themselves in the image of a Parrington – that is, lone intellectual adventurers fired by a personal vision of the culture.” Yet, as Wise continues, “those who still envisioned themselves isolated ‘American Adams’ by the 1950s and 60s were largely deceived” (310) because what supported the “Golden Years” of the myth and symbol school is “its *corporate* nature” or, more simply, the supply of “massive foundation grant” (308), which makes a stark contrast with Parrington’s circumstances, having been “refused entry to the Eastern scholarly establishment” (304). The point here is not a simple critique of the “corporate nature,” but a clear realization of the ideal of the Cold-War individualism depicted in American Studies by Wise. While the history the works of myth and symbol school may constitute what John Higham called “the cult of the American Consensus,” each of them was, according to Wise, paradoxically imagined his project as individualist one: making economic problems invisible, each individualist eventually imagines the true American value. This is the happy situation of Cold-War liberalism. When Gayatri Spivak identifies Area Studies as “founded in the wake of the Cold War and funded by federal grants, backed up by the great foundations” (6) in the beginning of *Death of a Discipline*, the discipline is foreign Area Studies although her description seems more or less applicable to American Studies, and, according to Alan Brinkley, “[m]any of the early founders of American Studies became deeply involved in the Congress for Cultural Freedom, funded (unbeknownst to some of them at the time by the CIA), whose goal was to trumpet the superior virtues of American culture to a world tempted by communism” (16).

Smith’s *Virgin Land* starts and ends with Frederic Jackson Turner’s “The Significance

of the Frontier in American History”: what Smith calls “[b]y far the most influential piece of writing about the West produced during the nineteenth century” (250). Looking into how “the West” was talked about, treated, imagined and represented in American culture of the nineteenth century, Book One of the book narrates “the pioneer army moving westward at the command of destiny,” Book Two “the Sons of Leatherstocking performing their improbable exploits in the wilderness,” while Book Three focuses on “the myth of the garden” of “the domesticated West that lay” behind [the frontier] or “the picturesque Wild West” (124). He surveys Western heroes and heroines in dime novels in Book Two but does not see any serious merits in them in general: when the tradition of Cooper’s Leatherstocking tales were translated into dime-novel westerns, as he says, “the Western story lost whatever chance it might once have had to develop social significance” (119).

Smith examines the Turner doctrine in the concluding chapter of the book. According to Smith, the originality of the doctrine, which “does not sound novel now because it has been worked into the very fabric of our conception of our history,” lies in its difference from “the two dominant school” in 1983: “the group interpreting American history in terms of the slavery controversy” and the group that “explained American institutions as the outgrowth of English, or rather ancient Teutonic germs planted in the New World.” Then, naturally, the originality means to locate the West as the central figure in the identity of America:

Turner maintained that the West, not the proslavery South or the antislavery North, was the most important among American sections, and that the novel attitudes and institutions produced by the frontier, especially through its encouragement of democracy, had been more significant than the imported English heritage in shaping American society. (250)

The main improvement Smith gives on the Turner doctrine in the book is to add another aspect of the West as the agrarian myth of garden and to put emphasis on it.

Interestingly, though, Smith declares as the next paragraph begins: “To determine whether Turner’s hypothesis is or is not a valid interpretation of American history forms no part of the intention of this book” (251). This is because Turner’s hypothesis is translated in the book into the myth of the garden out of which “the hypothesis itself developed” and also because, when we look at “a still broader tradition of Western thought” in which the myth of the garden is born, it becomes obvious, according to Smith, that Turner’s hypothesis stands with “the authority of one who speaks from the distilled experience of his people.” Explaining “the authority,” Smith insists:

If the myth of the garden embodied certain erroneous judgments made by these people concerning the economic forces that had come to dominate American life, it was still true to their experience in the large, because it expressed beliefs and aspirations as well as statistics. This is not the only kind of historical truth, but it is a kind historians need never find contemptible. (251)

Lamenting over the defeat against capitalism in the way the quote from Noble correctly underlines, Smith here makes it clear that what he looks for is the kind of historical truth that transcends negligible analysis of “the economic forces.” Several pages later, Smith, explicating Turner’s 1914 address “The West and American Ideals,” repeats the same gesture of detesting the economic: although the address still has the lining of “economic theory,” “new and rich overtones” are introduced into it by its “terminology,” where the reader is “transferred from the plane of the economist’s abstractions to a plane of metaphor, and even of myth.” Although Smith carefully makes sure that “ordinarily Turner kept his metaphors under control and used them to illustrate and vivify his logical propositions,” what Smith finds and appreciates in Turner is his “poetic account of the influence of free land as a rebirth, a regeneration, a rejuvenation of man and society” (253). Smith here honestly clarifies why his argument focuses on myth and symbol, which could refer to cultural notions of “a rebirth,

a regeneration, a rejuvenation” rather than an “economic theory” of “abstractions.”

To use today’s terminology, the “kind of historical truth” Smith commits to is the narrative of the American identity, which, as Smith believes, historians should not find “contemptible” and in order to find which they must choose “beliefs and aspirations” over “statistics.” If the Turner doctrine is to be seen as a historian’s hypothesis that suggests a version of American history where “the slavery controversy” and the influence of “English, or rather ancient Teutonic germs” loses its fundamental historical importance, Smith transforms the hypothesis into an identitarian narrative for which objective truth is irrelevant insofar as it can refer to the life and death, or the growth narrative, of the nation (“a rebirth, a regeneration, a rejuvenation”).⁵¹ It must be noted that, throughout the chapter, or even throughout the book, Smith is not enthusiastically celebrating the Turner doctrine, nor is he singing any patriotic song for America: apparently he is fair and objective both to Turner and the States. The point here is that he is not a nationalist in that sense; yet, as Smith himself clearly explains (in the quotes above), he is building in the book a new dimension of history and historical truth that is identitarian. In a sense, it is only logical that when the objects of Smith’s historical study are myth and symbol, what his history looks for is culture as opposed to economic system, or society, where historical narrative starts to mean the narrative of national identity. To put it simply, Smith demonstrates psychologization of history where history should be told in biopolitical rhetoric.

The body of the concluding chapter’s argument analyzes what Smith calls “Turner’s predicament” (259): “He had based his highest value, democracy, on free land. But the westward advance of civilization across the continent had caused free land to disappear.

⁵¹ In as early as 1953, Marks logically criticizes the inconsistency of Smith’s treatment of “myth” in the book: Smith sometimes makes believe that myth is value-free, where, hence, its relevance to reality cannot matter, and sometimes insists on its positive value, where he advocates its positive effect in deciding the course of history. For a more general explanation of the myth and symbol school, see Kuklick, who also criticizes the limit of typological understanding of history in the school.

What then was to become of democracy?" (257). This "predicament" results from Turner's conception of democracy as "the rise of the common man" against "privileged classes" (252, 256). That is, the essence of democracy in Turner's historical context is a fight against *ancien régime*; or, to use more modern terms, it is seen as rebellion against the Establishment or System, where, as Smith explains, "[a]ll the overtones of his conception of democracy were therefore tinged with cultural primitivism." When "cultural primitivism" thus defines that democracy essentially involves an anti-social aspect, democracy for Smith's Turner was "related to the idea of nature and seemed to have no logical relation to civilization" (257). It is in this context that the West as virgin land appears as the only possible place for a democratic utopia; for Smith's Turner, democracy in essence is a cultural achievement in the void of society, following the ideal of Cold-War liberalism that emphasizes the importance of manly individualism. Specifically, for Turner, the "society" to be criticized should be the industrialized society of the late nineteenth century; yet, when Smith explains that "the conclusion implied by [Turner's] system was that postfrontier American society contained no force tending toward democracy" (257-58), he implicitly makes the critique farther-reaching. He then ends the book by simply calling, perhaps in vain, for a "new intellectual system" with which "the West could be adequately dealt with in literature" and "its social development fully understood" (260).

Although we do not find any advocacy of individualism in *Virgin Land*, it could be seen as preparing the ground for R. W. L. Lewis' *The American Adam* when it envisions a utopia for democracy in virgin land devoid of degenerated society or society as degeneration. In this chapter's argument, while *Virgin Land* is important in order to see how the era's intellectual discourse in American Studies offered the West as a privileged space for America, *The American Adam* is interesting in its attempt to define individualism as *the American*

value and to valorize the value of innocence in the individualism. Lewis' project is rather clearly a nationalist one in the sense I use the word, since he makes it clear that his "intention" is "to disentangle from the writings and pronouncements of the day [from about 1820 to 1860] the emergent American myth and the dialogue in which it was formed" (while Smith does not use the word "the American myth" [even if he virtually talks about it], and he sometimes even refers to American empire).

Lewis' book is a cultural definition of America as a nation of innocent individualists:

The new habits to engendered on the new American scene were suggested by the image of a radically new personality, the hero of the new adventure: an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources. . . . His moral position is prior to experience, and in his very newness he was fundamentally innocent. The world and history lay all before him. And he was the type of creator, the poet par excellence, creating language itself by naming the elements of the scene about him. All this and more were contained in the image of the American as Adam. (5)

Logically speaking, what Lewis demonstrates here is a kind of tautology where the American Adam is innocent ("The world and history lay all before him") because he is an individualist ("an individual standing alone") and yet he is also an individualist ("ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources") because he is innocent ("in his very newness he was fundamentally innocent"). At the core of this tautology lies the definition of "the new American scene" as "emancipated from history": that is, emancipation from history, in Lewis' imagination, at the same time involves emancipation from society, for the emancipated "individual" lacks not only in history, but also in society or any form of solidarity, where what is emancipated is not a mere "individual," but the scene in which the individual dwells. In Lewis' rhetoric, erasure of history is associated with that of

society. This is the reason why his commitment to individualism necessarily entails the valorization and appreciation of “innocence” as freedom from historical context, where the American as the Adamic functions as the most appropriate metaphor. If Smith’s book offers virgin land as the locus of the American scene, Lewis conceptualizes what kind of “new personality” is to live there: Turner’s predicament, a detestation of civilization in exchange for “primitive” democracy, is solved in *The American Adam* when Lewis looks for individualism instead of democracy, hence translating primitivism into the valorization of “innocence.”

After examining the historical discourses of American Adam during the American Renaissance era in the body of the book, Lewis turns to contemporary authors in the epilogue. For Lewis, Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, J. D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* and Saul Bellow’s *The Adventures of Augie March*, where “the hero is willing, with marvelously inadequate equipment, to take on as much of the world as is available to him, without ever fully submitting to any of the world’s determining categories,” stand in the tradition of “their Adamic predecessors: Arthur Mervyn, Donatello, Redburn, Pierre, Billy Budd, Daisy Miller, Isabel Archer, Huck Finn, and all the others” (198).

Yet it is in fact a dangerous trick to conceive the Adamic tradition. For one thing, American Adam is in the first place conceived as a lack of tradition. So, as Lewis explains, the contemporary authors “do not, of course, write simply in order to keep alive some particular American tradition,” nor “is it the tradition they are working in which accounts for their artistic accomplishment”; the point according to Lewis is, then, “the indestructible vitality of the Adamic vision of life” to be found in them. The other problem is that, in modern novels, there is to be found “the hopeful and vulnerable sense of life that makes experience and so makes narrative action possible.” What matters here is that, in modern

novels, it is impossible to keep the hero innocent in the course of the narrative as far as one tries to make “narrative action possible” at all. So Lewis re-formulates his theory so as to insist that “the Adamic vision of life” is the power of the immanent deriving from the hero’s inner space that is still independent of the outer circumstances: so “the hopeful and vulnerable sense of life” is tested by “irony and drama,” where they yet “must create it from within, since they can scarcely find it any longer in the historic world about them” (198). “The historic world” is what is to be precluded: in other words, if the Adamic vision in the American renaissance is an adaptation to and appreciation of the American scene as virgin land, the contemporary Adamic vision turns into what could be called an American soul, something to be found in one’s interiority as a sign of one’s belonging to a tradition, or, more simply, an American identity, which, paradoxically enough, does and does not concern history. In this way, Lewis solves the paradox of the tradition of American Adam with the help of the biopolitical rhetoric of nationalism.

Smith and Lewis thus offer the Cold-War definition of the American identity in terms of virgin land and American Adam. As for the influence and prevalence of this definition, Ihab Hassan’s 1961 book, *Radical Innocence*, could serve as a fitting example. According to Hassan, “the new figure of the hero in contemporary American fiction” appears as “an expression of man’s quenchless desire to affirm, despite the voids and vicissitudes of our age, the human sense of *life*,” which is to be called “*radical innocence*” (6; original italics). It should be called “radical” since it is an individualist expression of his immanent power: “Radical, . . . , because it is inherent in his character, and goes to the root or foundation of it.” And the “innocence” is seen as “a property of the mythic American Self, perhaps of every anarchic Self”: “It is the innocence of a Self that refuses to accept the immitigable rule of reality, including death, an aboriginal Self the radical imperatives of whose freedom cannot

be stifled” (6). Although Hassan does not directly refer to either Smith or Lewis, he is virtually talking about the contemporary American Adam in what is to be seen as a virgin land.

In the course of the book, which discusses the new novelists of the fifties, including Saul Bellow, Jack Kerouac, and J. D. Salinger, Hassan adopts contemporary neologisms such as “anti-hero” and “rebel-victim” with a certain plausibility. In his individualist definition of the hero, “the primary characteristic of the hero is his awareness of himself,” it is only insofar as it is “possible to mediate between Self and World, the anarchy in the heroic soul remained covert.” “The modern hero” therefore is “an anti-hero”: “the World, in our times, seems to have either vanished or become a rigid and intractable mass. The anarchy of nihilism and the terror of statism delimit the extremes between which there seems to be no viable mean.” Since the possible choice in such a situation is “only surrender or recoil,” when the contemporary anti-hero chooses the latter, “knowing that there is always an element of crime in freedom, that indeed freedom may be defined only in terms of rebellion, readied himself to pay the full price of immolation” (327), he turns out to be a “rebel-victim,” who, as Hassan, citing Colin Wilson’s famous book on the outsider, explains, is “also the outsider in search of truth” (28).

In this context, it is noteworthy that Hassan allots his second chapter to “the dialectic of initiation” and that he there locates the American origin of the initiation narrative in the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: when “the dialectic of American culture supplies, besides the neurosis of innocence [that is, ‘a regressive force that prevents the self from participating fully in the world’ (40)], a further impediment to initiation, a second motive for recoil” (39), “[i]n the natural hierarchy of initiates in America, none, it seems, takes precedence over the irreverent Huck Finn” (41). The focus on “initiation” is meaningful since it completes the

rhetoric of “growth” of “life” whose paradigm forces one to see the interrelation between an American and his or her society in a fundamentally different way. Hassan observes: “Twain transforms the process of Huck’s initiation into an extended criticism of the world itself, the implication being that while acceptance of the world is ultimately inescapable, the act of acceptance is a tragic one, the Fall of Adam was both tragic and necessary” (42). Yet, in my opinion, what is really “radical” here is the viewpoint, which derives from the rhetoric that locates “initiation” as the origin of “criticism,” that makes it possible to wonder whether or not “acceptance of the world” is “inescapable” (and then to think of the acceptance as “tragic”). The all-or-nothing question of the inescapability of course precludes the possibility of improving, amending, or positively participating in society: when Hassan says “world” instead of “society,” the unchangeable “world” is seen from the individualist viewpoint as evil, participation in which is always degenerative. If the conception of the anti-hero is the Cold-War individualist shift that transforms the critique of the social system into a biopolitical rebel without a cause, and if the biopolitical conception of the rebel-victim is a translation of political critique into the Cold-War question of individualism or conformism, “initiation” is the last piece that completes the biopoliticalization that attempts to see in the narrative of the novels of the fifties the psychologized archetype of the growth narrative, where politics are to be explained in terms of realization of the self and its discontents, in just the same way that Mr. X understands the cause of the Russian revolution as a “rationalization for their own instinctive desires” in the long telegram.

This psychologizing and anti-naturalist move of biopoliticalization constitutes suppression of history per se. Hassan’s book as a literary study of the era is most interesting in the triumphant re-definition of the history of American literature:

It is sometimes said of American literature that the most significant works produced in

the last two hundred years belong in spirit to the twentieth century. . . . It suggests . . . that a certain quality of American literature strikes deep in the modern consciousness. . . . For Europe has discovered in our century what America seems to have been born knowing: that where the aboriginal Self is concerned, nothing else appears to exist. This realization is the source from which the broad stream of existential awareness in Europe wells. After the death of God, proclaimed by Nietzsche, the dissolution of society was inevitable. Only the Self remained. And the Void all around it. The modern soul is eternally poised on the eve of Creation. This is the song American literature sings. (325-26)

The underlying logic here is that since the twentieth century is “our century,” “our” literature of America belongs to this century no matter when it may be written. When the essence of *Huck Finn* becomes the initiation narrative, the problem of abolition grows only superficial, where Twain’s novel should have the same structure as the novels of the fifties. On the one hand, it is through the paradigm of Cold-War individualism that novels are universally seen in biopolitical terms of the self, life, rebellion and so on. On the other hand, however, Hassan’s shift here is quite important, in a way that reminds one of the patriotic shift in the *Partisan Review*’s symposium “Our Country and Our Culture,” since the quote is a “radical” translation of the lament repeated by such figures as Hawthorne and Henry James, that there is no tangible society in America, into the element that finally makes American Literature into world literature of the twentieth century. The logic goes: insofar as Cold-War liberalism is what should govern the world in the twentieth century, we do not have to worry about the absence of society any more. For Cold-War individualism as the heart of Cold-War liberalism is realized in the narrative of the American Adam and virgin land.

It is along with this biopoliticalization of American literary history that the new definition of “romance fiction” as an originally American genre appeared in Richard Chase’s *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957). In critical analysis of the conception of “the American romance,” both John McWilliams and Geraldine Murphy associate the politics of

the genre with the revival of literary modernism in the fifties. Murphy thus explains the general standing of Chase's argument:

Thanks to the literary criticism written after World War II, when American literature first gained a respectable footing in the academy, the idea that the characteristically *American* literary form was the romance, rather than the novel, has become a critical commonplace of American Studies. Richard Chase, influenced by his older friend and colleague Lionel Trilling, presented the classic statement of this argument in *The American Novel and Its Tradition*. Where European writers depicted the pressure of a social world upon the individual, said Chase, American writers explored the individual consciousness estranged from society. . . . (737)

So the Americanism to be found in romance is a kind of Cold-War individualism. Locating Chase's book in the context after *The American Adam*, Charles Feidelson's *Symbolism and American Literature* (1953), Trilling's "Manners, Morals, and the Novel" (1947) and Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*, all of which, overtly or covertly, acknowledges that the American tradition lacks in what F. R. Leavis in *The Great Tradition* (1948) defines as the essence of the great British novel of manners, McWilliams thus observes in romance a commitment to modernist psychologization:

Chase's formulation of the model of American Romance subsumed as well as promoted important strands of American critical thought. . . . The symbolic mode of American Renaissance allowed for modernist ambiguity, while also arguing for its emergence from America's Puritan or "Manichean" proclivity for allegorical absolutes. For Chase, America's great tradition of Romance, from Brockden Brown to Faulkner, could be claimed to have been historically central because it had been sustained by writers whose devotion to an art about the inner self had left them skeptical of communal values based upon material progress. The theory of the Romance thus allowed America's nineteenth-century novelists to be seen as prototypes of alienated modern artists concerned with the deeper psychology. (72)⁵²

⁵² McWilliams' conclusion is that "Chase's notion of the timeless Romance generic broadly applicable to American fiction from 1780 to 1860, let alone to all of 'the American novel and its tradition,' should be now

It is Murphy who explains the meaning of “modernism” in a more specific context of the cultural front: illustrating an East-West dichotomy, emerged from the discourse of the cultural front, between “a socialist realism controlled by the State” and “a subjective, symbolic, abstract modernism – the kind of art that readily symbolized the independent, critical role of the artist in democratic society,” Murphy contends:

That the romance theory affirmed precisely those “modern” qualities of subjectivity and rebellion in classic American fiction is hardly coincidental. Indeed, “romance” provided a way to square American literature with the aesthetics of high modernism and thereby wrest it from the cultural sphere of the left. While it would be too crude to say that the profile of American Literature was “modern” in the twenties, “representational” in the thirties, and “modern” again by the fifties, Chase did self-consciously continue the recuperation of American classics initiated by Henry James and D. H. Lawrence. That recuperation had been sidetracked (at least from the perspective of Trilling and Chase) by progressive liberalism, the Depression, and the cultural politics of the Popular Front. (738-739)⁵³

In terms of the post-war revival of modernism, McWilliams and Murphy virtually demonstrate Fredric Jameson’s argument on the American formation of late modernism in the fifties as the insistence on the aesthetic autonomy.⁵⁴ In other words, it is true that what Chase argues in terms of romance is utterly different on the surface from Hassan’s anatomy of the contemporary American novel, where Hassan also argues their “modern” and existential aspect; yet, they are talking about the same American identity depicted in literary works, old and contemporary, insofar as they both see the individualism of the American

and finally abandoned” (82).

⁵³ Murphy also points out the influence of the Cold-War climate on the arts of other genres: “By the 1950s, a similar emphasis on subjectivity, brio, and performance informed a variety of creative developments as avant-garde artists foregrounded the creative, creating subject in reaction to the aesthetics of the 1930s or the orthodoxies of New Criticism. The ‘action painting’ of Jackson Pollock, for example, the improvisational jazz of Charlie Parker, and the projective verse of Charles Olson all called attention to the act of composition, valorizing process over product, creative angst over autonomous artifact. In fact, the neo-Romanticism and the machismo of the New York intellectuals, decorous as they were, retrospectively link these writers to the avant-garde figures they most deplored: the Beats” (742).

⁵⁴ For the interrelation between the Cold-War politics and the rhetoric of New Criticism, see Walkout.

Adam and the suppression of the social in virgin land as the essence of Americanism. The nationalist dogma in fact is quite strong in the formation of the American late modernism, and the dogma takes the unchanging form of the American Adam and virgin land.

III. Aesthetic Individualism in *Shane* and *High Noon*

Stanley Corkin observes that the period from nineteen forty-six to nineteen sixty-two “marks an era when A-picture Westerns – large-budget features – burgeoned as at no other time,” which confirms “the tale that is evident in our recall of memorable Westerns.” Paraphrasing “the tale,” Michael Coyne also points out that the “1981 inflation-adjusted table of forty top Western box office hits lists thirteen released during the 1950s” (71). As Corkin states that the “year 1962 marks the end of the full flowering of the Western” (2), the fifties was the decade of the Western in the film history of the States as the thirties was that of the gangster movies.

The “full flowering of the Western,” however, at the same time brought about changes in its nature. Watching especially such movies as *High Noon* (1952) and *Shane* (1953), people saw there the emergence of a new genre of what was called “adult Western.” As early as nineteen fifty-four, Robert Warshow pointed out ways of “violating the Western form” (119) in these two movies and some others. André Bazin argues that they “remain the two films that best illustrate the mutation in the western genre as an effect of the awareness it has gained of itself and its limits” (151-52). Identifying the year nineteen fifty as “the watershed year in which the western took on a new depth, seriousness and resonance” (47), Philip French symbolizes “a stream of new-style westerns” with “the two immediately acclaimed instant ‘classics’” of *High Noon* and *Shane*, “both by distinguished directors who were new

to the genre and never returned to it” (6). Coyne observes that the two films “were, during the decade, generally adjudged the finest of all Western films” (149), and when the nature of American Western films was believed to have changed, the changes were epitomized by *High Noon* and *Shane*.⁵⁵

When Richard Slotkin calls “the cult of the gunfighter” the characteristic of Western movies in the early fifties, he clearly sums up what happened to Westerns then, comprehensively digesting the preceding arguments on the topic. The three characteristics he emulates are psychologization, the cult of the gunfighter and stylization. The first is explained in terms of “the ‘psychological’ Western,” where “one may take a ‘deeper’ look into a mythic figure, emphasizing psychological analysis over ‘action’”: “the use of recognizable psychological concepts and complexes had the desired effect of altering audience expectations and making the genre seem more ‘serious’ and worthy of ‘adult’ attention.” He also observes that, although “much of the ‘psychology’ in these Westerns could be dismissed as the substitution of canned Freudianism for canned history, the same could be said of a good deal of the popular and even ‘serious’ fiction during this period” (380). The cult of the gunfighter simply means the emergence of the kind of Western in which “professionalism in the arts of violence is the hero’s defining character” (379). These two characteristics bring about “a certain kind of *stylization* of the Western and its hero,” which assumes “a particular kind of ideological significance”: “The consonance between the formal character of the gunfighter Western and its ideological content is a genuinely poetic achievement. It gave the gunfighter films ideological and cinematic resonance and made the heroic style of the gunfighter an important symbol of right and heroic action for filmmakers, the public, and the nation’s political leadership” (379-80).

⁵⁵ As Coyne continues, “critical consensus has since eclipsed these in favor of *The Searchers*.”

What should be added to Slotkin's summary is a new kind of commitment to individualism. Even though the kind of person who is called a "cowboy" from the beginning "apparently has nothing to do with cattle" (111) in the early dime novels, as Henry Nash Smith observes, when the gunfighter as a professional appears, not only does he not engage in farming, but he also defines himself as a lone man who does not fit into the everyday community. Slotkin probably did not mention individualism as a characteristic of the Westerns of the early fifties since the Adamic kind of individualism in virgin land had been a continuous characteristic of the genre. Yet the psychologization and stylization of the gunfighter Westerns of the early fifties gives an entirely new dimension to the traditional individualism: an anesthetized individualism.

As argued in the previous chapter, the central paradox of Cold-War liberalism is its definition not as a form of ideology, but as freedom from ideology, against the mirror of the definition of the USSR not as a communist, but as a totalitarian state. What matters here is not politics in terms of ideologies, but how to govern: whether or not the USSR's ideology might be communist, the State is essentially evil because it governs the people in a totalitarian way. In this shift, which Foucault might call a post-ideological one from politics to governmentality, the US as the country of freedom is to be defined as a liberal state with no, or, if any, the least, governing functions. This results in the paradox of liberalism conceived as an absence rather than as a form of governing. This paradox is exactly repeated in the conception of an individualist hero in Westerns such as *High Noon* and *Shane*, where individualism should be absolutely free from any ideology. This is a paradox because, in Cold-War liberalism, the one who lives and dies for an idea resembles too much an ideologue even if he is an anti-social lone hero who does not obey any advice, does not listen to anyone else's reasoning, or follow any rule or norm that is imposed on him. Cold-War liberalism

needs an individualist without ideology: not only should he be free from any politics, but his code of honor must not be an idea, or even a sense, that might someday transform into politics.

In illustrating the shape of the new individualism in Cold-War America, *Shane* and *High Noon* are seen as excellent examples that demonstrate what Cold-War liberalism is. Needless to say, these movies are clearly male-centered and sexist from today's viewpoint; yet, as I am going to argue, what is to be found in the structure of the movie's liberalism is a certain embryo of today's identity politics: a cultural politics of rebellion that sets its foundation on the logic of the self-realization of oneself. Furthermore, as far as Cold-War identity politics takes the form of aesthetic realization, it is also possible to find in the stylization of the Westerns of the fifties a similar logic that supported the resurgence of literary modernism in the era, when what Slotkin calls stylization is to be understood as a form of dehistoricization and departure from realism.

In George Stevens's 1953 movie, a gunslinger whose name is known only as Shane (Alan Ladd) one day drops in on a homestead nuclear family, the Starretts, which consists of Joe (Van Heflin), Marian (Jean Arthur) and the son Joey (Brandon De Wilde). Shane decides to be a guest of the family when he and Joe make friends with each other, and Joey starts to admire him. From the beginning of the narrative, the movie suggests that the family's life is not altogether peaceful: the homesteaders around there have been in conflict with the Rykers, who as earlier immigrants run a huge cattle farm on the open range. As the conflict escalates, the Rykers hire a killer, Jack Wilson (Jack Palance), and, when the Rykers set up a confrontation with Joe, Shane instead takes the part by hitting Joe on the head, knocking him out. In the showdown with Jack Wilson and one of the Rykers, Shane saves the valley by killing them and also getting wounded himself. The famous last scene is where Joe

cries out, “Shane! Come back” when Shane disappears into the mountains after explaining to Joe that it is impossible for him to live on with the Starretts.

The film is a psychological Western in the sense, for one thing, that, when the result of the showdown is obviously anticipated by the audience who know the convention of the genre, what is really interesting concerns the relationship between the Starretts and Shane: how Shane gets along with the family, and whether or not he accepts and is accepted by them. In this sense, the psychologization of the film in substance takes the form of a gendered romance. In the course of the narrative, the film underlines the fact that Marian and Shane are attracted to each other although neither of them dares to admit it in so many words. The concluding message of the narrative that Shane as an individualist lone hero is not able to fit into the community is made persuasive through the impossibility of the heterosexual love between Shane and Marian.

Marian’s love for Shane is represented as complicated when she objects to Shane’s teaching Joey how to use a gun, saying: “We’d all be much better off if there wasn’t a single gun left in this valley.” The scene becomes important since Shane responds to this remark when he explains to Joey why he has to leave the town he has saved: “There’s no going back. Now you run on home to your mother, and tell her everything is all right, and there aren’t any more guns in the valley.” When, reflecting the ambivalence of Shane’s moral value as an outsider who cannot be clearly labeled good or evil, Marian’s sexuality is more or less demonized as being attraction to someone to whom she believes she must not be attracted, he being the other man as well as a gunfighter, we can persuasively see in the ambivalence in Shane’s characterization the Cold-War ambivalence toward the values of war and peace. Especially when Shane defines himself as a certain kind of old-timer, as he wants Joey to “go home to your mother and father and grow up to be strong and straight” after his leaving, he

could be seen as the figure of a World War II veteran: killing was once valuable, and the soldier is to be respected, but, unfortunately, it is to be tabooed under the Cold-War regime. He disappears without the community's public acknowledgment. Yet, it is the ambivalence the movie shows in evaluating Shane's moral value that gives the narrative a certain sense of depth. When one looks at the movie's title, for example, it is clear that the apparent negation of Shane's "violence" has the lining of appreciation of his "courage," or his adamant individualism beneath the surface of the "violence" that makes him stand alone in order to save the valley. Thus reflecting the dilemma of the Cold War that one must be fully capable of fighting and winning although actual fighting is not to be encouraged, *Shane* is an advocate of individualism, which in its advocacy has to kill its individualist hero.⁵⁶ It is this "irony" that gives the movie an aesthetic turn.

The aesthetic actually concerns what we would call identity. In the end Shane explains the essential reason he cannot be a member of the community thus: "A man has to be what he is, Joey. Can't break the mould. I tried it and it didn't work for me. . . . Joey, there's no living with a killing. There's no going back from one." To sum up, the hero confesses that his true identity is that of a killer: he might not be a natural-born killer (his identity as a killer might be constructed by circumstances), but he is no different from a natural-born killer insofar as the mould cannot be broken. The confession might not be so surprising when it is considered that he, as well as Marian, is represented in the film as someone special or someone who belongs to a different category: the clothing, hairstyles and general atmosphere of Alan Ladd and Jean Arthur show a clear difference from the other people in the movie, which makes their falling in love a necessity in the film's visual rhetoric. The audience knows that they

⁵⁶ Coyne argues: "the conflict is between democracy (the homesteaders) and charismatic authoritarianism (Ryker). Again, the protagonist's dilemma is one of isolationism versus interventionism" (76). The same dichotomy of the individualist hero and the "gang" with authoritarian tendencies is underlined also in *High Noon*.

belong to a different “race” from the start, which gives the movie a “mythic” dimension.⁵⁷

Shane’s confession, however, ultimately endows the film with two different interpretations that are incompatible with each other. While the lone hero is the agency of justice saving the town for those who watch it in its right order as the narrative proceeds, for those who watch it in reverse from the last scene, as it were, Shane is just someone who fails to conceal his ominous identity, realizes his hidden desire self-indulgently and commits the crime of murder. These two interpretations are incompatible because, while the former concerns the idea of justice, the structure of the movie offers the latter in a way that makes the idea of social justice virtually irrelevant. In other words, if the former is seen as speculation on the meaning of social justice, the latter essentially concerns justice in terms of identity as we may believe it today, that is, whether or not the hero’s identity is authentically realized: unfortunately or not, Shane’s identity is realized in the end. It is in this way that *Shane* is to be seen genuinely as a movie on the gunfighter: it is speculation about his identity. And the introduction of the notion of identity is seen as necessary in the displacement of the political by the aesthetic in the entire structure of the film.

The film is actually based on the Johnson County War in Wyoming in eighteen ninety-two. As repeatedly referred to in the film, the conflict between the Starretts and the Rykers is in essence a socio-political one between homesteaders and earlier immigrants who use the open range, both of whom were legitimate kinds of settler under contemporary law. In this sense, it is possible, or even reasonable, to see in the Starretts’ ultimate victory over the Rykers the same ideology of the Cold-War era that Henry Nash Smith puts forward in his idealization of homesteaders in *Virgin Land*. Yet the true point of the movie lies in the fact that, although it is true that the clash of interests between the Starretts and the Rykers is

⁵⁷ Bazin sees Shane as “a symbol” and finds aestheticism in *High Noon* (152), Warshow cites *Shane* and *High Noon* as examples of an “aestheticizing tendency” (120), and French compares Shane to “an angel in an otherwise realistic medieval painting” (38).

represented as one between two socio-economic systems, the solution to it is offered not in socio-economic terms but in the film's narrative structure: which side the hero takes. This does not mean that the film's making the Starretts' victory looks forceful. On the contrary, it appears quite natural when the film's narrative makes the effort to represent the friendship between Joe and Shane as spontaneous and plausible.

Or, rather, it might be more correct to understand the film's narrative as using the ideology Smith offers as an instrument to demonstrate the final victory of individualism in the film. The fundamental rhetoric that explains why Shane takes the side of the Starretts instead of the Rykers is that of Cold-War individualism: while Joe is likable and reliable since he is the responsible and independent breadwinner of a nuclear family (in the film's frontier nuclear family, Marian seems to concentrate on housewifery), the Rykers, being represented only as a murky bunch of people whose marginal members do not even have names, stand for the fear of the mass, contagious with totalitarianism: it seems natural that Shane sides with the Starretts because of the contrast between liberal individualism and totalitarianism that the Starretts and the Rykers make. Yet the point here is that individualism shows the Starretts' superiority over the Rykers only in its rhetoric: the film's narrative does not tell us that the former is healthier and thus stronger than the latter, but that, while it is ultimately ambiguous which of the two groups is stronger, Shane takes the part of the former in his commitment to individualism. This problem is epitomized by a recurrent question asked tacitly in the movie, especially by Marian and Joey: which of the two is the better man, Joe or Shane? The easiest way to answer this would be to say that it is up to the audience to decide if this is a moral question: after watching the movie to the end, one can still say that Joe is better than Shane, the evidence being that the ending of the film suggests the final death of the injured Shane; on the other hand, one could counter this by saying that Shane's

devoting his life to saving the valley does suggest his moral superiority. While the movie refrains from answering the moral question, the answer is clear enough if the question is taken as a cinematic, or aesthetic, question that the structure of the film as a whole demonstrates: say the title. It is clear from the start to whom the movie is devoted. The film's structure drives the socio-economic conflict between the Starretts and the Rykers finally to the aesthetic choice of Shane over Joe Starrett by way of the demonstration of the Starretts' superiority to the Rykers in terms of individualism. In this process, individualism is ultimately translated into an aesthetic value that has no reference to the history on which the film's narrative is based. Even if a viewer who is familiar with Smith's apotheosis of homesteaders likes Joe, the film in the end tries to persuade us that Shane is a more appropriate hero of the age than he.

This is the reason why Shane turns out in the end to be someone who is no different from a natural-born killer. Shane's value as the individualist hero is supported only by the movie's autonomous and aesthetic structure and should not be by any other logic or ideology: he is an aesthetic hero. To put this the other way around, he is the Cold-War individualist who has no idea or ideology that coherently explains him. The aesthetic plausibility of his individualism, then, is supported, on the one hand, by making Joe his delicate foil: the movie ultimately insists aesthetically that the Shane who never talks politics or cares about the American ideology that Joe Starrett stands for is a more acceptable hero of the age than the Joe who is responsible, hardworking and enthusiastic about the politics he is involved in. More generally, on the other hand, the film becomes symbolic as the "adult Westerns" of the fifties because of the aestheticization: Shane appears as a symbolic individualist with a "mythic" dimension exactly because he aesthetically transcends the conflict between the Starretts and the Rykers. The film is seen as a classic since it is not a realistic representation

of the Johnson County war; that is, the film presents an aesthetic and “universal” individualist who has no political cause behind him. Shane is universal precisely insofar as he rebels with his immanent logic of rebellion: he is nothing other than a person who realizes his immanent power, or a natural-born killer.

Shane’s “identity” thus depicted may form a different notion from what we usually refer to by the word as far as it is not racialized, and there is no reference to eugenics found in the film. I use the word only in the sense that it refers to something inherent in a person where the person believes in inescapability from its control. However, I believe it is plausible to locate a genealogical origin of the notion in the film, when Shane’s “identity” eventually means something that is recognized as some kind of shame for the self, something that one appeals to in order to explain the illogical or irrational aspect of one’s behavior, something that secures the legitimacy of one’s truth regardless of explanations from the political, economic and historical context. Namely, Shane’s “identity” of a natural-born killer functions in the way Foucault defines sexuality in *The History of Sexuality*. Cold-War individualism finds its expression in the vacant form of anesthetized identity where gendered psychology replaces history.⁵⁸

High Noon, released the year before, shares a very similar structure with *Shane*. In the opening scene, Will Kane (Gary Cooper), quitting his job as marshal of a town called Hadleyville, is getting married to a young bride Amy (Grace Kelly). Bad news then comes that Frank Miller (Ian MacDonald), who has been sent to prison by Kane, has been unexpectedly released and is coming to the town at high noon in one and a half hours’ time: Miller must be coming back in order to take revenge on Kane. Starting from this, the film tells the narrative in such a way that the length of time that passes in the film and that of the

⁵⁸ I owe the basic direction of the analysis of *Shane* and *High Noon* to Cortese’s critique of their “bourgeois myth.”

film's running time are basically synchronized, to the final showdown between the Kanes and Miller's gang.

The experiment with the film's time-length, repetitive use of close-up shots of Kane that emphasizes the importance of psychological drama in the film, the setting in a fictional town Hadleyville (presumably deriving from Mark Twain's Hadleyburg): these testify that the film also follows what Slotkin calls stylization. The movie commits to the superiority of aesthetic autonomy over the realist representation of history.

In fact, as Jeremy Byman shows in *Showdown at High Noon* with thorough research, Carl Foreman wrote *High Noon* as "a parable of what was happening in Hollywood,"⁵⁹ when developing the shooting script. When he was writing it he was subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee where, although admitting his past and brief relationship with the Communist Party, he refused to name names, and, being unable to work in Hollywood with his name on the blacklist, he moved to England two months before *High Noon* was nationally released, eventually to live there for the next seventeen years (90, 91). Foreman explains how he felt thus: "My problem . . . was that I felt very alone. I wasn't on anybody's side. I was not a member of the Communist Party at that time, so I didn't want to stand with them, but obviously it was unthinkable for me to be an informer. I knew I was dead. I just wanted to die well. . . . I suppose that has permeated my work" (74-75; the second ellipses original). So the stylized film is "a parable" rather than a realist work: *High Noon* thus involves interpretive "depth."⁶⁰

As Foreman suggests, the body of the movie's narrative consists of episodes that tell how Will Kane is rejected by the town's people in his attempt to fight Miller's gang and of

⁵⁹ The quote is from Lionel Chetwynd and Norman S Powell, prods., *Darkness at High Noon* (PBS documentary, broadcast September 17, 2002). Quoted in Byman (75).

About Foreman, HUAC subpoenas and the film, see Byman, especially chapter five.

⁶⁰ Because of the nature of McCarthyism, it is hard to know clearly to what degree Foreman's intention was shared by the other members of the film's production. For this, see also chapter five of Byman.

descriptions that show how he is eventually isolated and alienated in the town. His new wife is a pacifist Quaker who, as she tells us, would rather get divorced from him if he fights. The judge who sentenced Miller last time advises Kane to leave town because he himself is leaving since, as he believes, townspeople will support Miller instead of Kane this time. When Kane visits the town's saloon, people there apparently behave as the judge predicted: they know that Kane embodies justice, but they do not care for him. Kane then steps into a church where a service is being held, desperately looking for someone to help him, but one person insists that the fight is "a personal matter between him and Miller" since Kane is no longer marshal, and another observes that since the town would lose economic investment from the North if fighting and killing were to happen here, Kane, good man and good ex-marshal as he is, should not be in the town: "Will, I think you better go while there's still time. It's better for you, and it's better for us." Just as Foreman felt "very alone," so nobody stands on Kane's side. The remark by the retired marshal would most correctly symbolize the movie's tacit critique of McCarthyism and those who did not fight against it: "People gotta talk themselves into law and order before they do anything about it. Maybe because down deep they don't care."

In this way, the movie's narrative functions so as to erase every possible reason why Kane should fight. Nobody tells Kane to stay and fight, in which it is possible to see an echo of Arthur Schlesinger's critique of the contemporary liberals in *The Vital Center* who do not want to fight in the post-War era. When Amy at the beginning of the movie pleads "You don't have to be a hero, not for me!," Kane answers, "I'm not trying to be a hero. . . . This is my town," suggesting that his sense of responsibility to the community is the reason. Yet, after the Sunday church scene, he honestly confesses that he does not know why he does not run away. And in the final scene he throws the marshal's star on the ground, showing his

contempt for the community and for society. Nobody can understand why he has to fight unless it is understood as masculine individualism that transcends logical reasoning of cause and effect. Just like *Shane*, Kane is also a Cold-War individualist whose cause is grasped only in terms of the film's aesthetic effect: the audience can accept the necessity for Kane to fight only in the light of the entire structure of the movie. In other words, *High Noon* as well as *Shane* is a device of Cold-War liberalism that makes Cold-War individualism as a vacant aesthetic form look real and substantial.⁶¹

It is possible to think that, when Foreman quite reasonably found McCarthyism and the intellectual climate of the nation that tolerated McCarthyism to be ultimately distorted, he rather tried to delineate Will Kane as the true American hero. Paradoxically enough, even if Foreman's intention was a critique of the US as it was, Kane ultimately embodies the individualism of Cold-War America when the real object of the political critique of the movie, McCarthyism, is suppressed and Kane is finally characterized as an aesthetic individualist. The dimension of the political critique of McCarthyism, if there is one, is concealed in the depth of the cinematic narrative; the movie explains the code of Kane's individualism only in terms of the aesthetics of gendered psychology. If it was produced not as a realist critique of McCarthy's America but as a "parable" demonstrating the dichotomy of individualism and conformism, *High Noon* ultimately turns out to be another typical work of Cold-War individualism. It is hard to tell whether Foreman's success here is ironic or complete.

High Noon is as much psychologized as *Shane* and in a very similar way. The pacifists are Amy and Marian, where, while Marian functions as the last factor that defines the character of *Shane* of a lone, dangerous and ultimately alluring individualist, Amy implies the

⁶¹ Identifying the Millers as the agency of pure evil, Kreyche sees in the figure of Kane a demonstration of the moral of Kantian philosophy. It might be possible to see the movie as a pure allegory of the conflict between good and evil, but such an interpretation virtually neglects the film's style that underlines psychologization and anesthetization.

final value of Kane when she, eventually casting off her “ideology” of pacifism, joins him to kill Miller. At the same time, however, the psychologism in *High Noon* succeeds in revealing its relation to nationalism with a further twist through another female character: Helen Ramirez (Katy Jurado), a former lover of both Frank Miller and Will Kane who runs the town’s saloon.

In order to appreciate the characterization of Helen Ramirez, it is imperative to see the convention of dark lady and fair lady in the Western. The contrast between the dark and the fair is repeatedly used in Westerns, such as John Ford’s classics *Stagecoach* (1939) and *My Darling Clementine* (1946), where the fair lady is usually represented as sexually innocent, often stereotyped as a school teacher from the East, and the dark lady as sexually attractive, often a saloon girl from Mexico. Ramirez stands out as a critique of this convention (especially in contrast, for example, to Doc Holliday in *My Darling Clementine* who apparently believes that he will marry a Mexican girl in Mexico although he cannot marry his blonde fiancée from the East because of his tuberculosis) when she rather persuasively declares to Amy that if Kane were her man, she would fight with him, implying that she understands Kane more deeply and correctly than Amy. Of course, Ramirez still has a shade of the conventional dark lady: she had a relationship with both Frank Miller and Kane (and in the present time of the film is having one with a deputy sheriff who shows envious rivalry toward Kane), which gives a dimension of psychological entanglement to the film’s plot. From a certain point of view, however, Ramirez seems to be the one who really loves Kane, although the movie of course ends with Amy’s cooperation with Kane, while Ramirez has already decided to leave town for her homeland of Mexico when she talks to Amy.

It is also important that Ramirez is presented as an economically independent woman who owns the saloon (in the course of the film’s narrative, she sells it in order to leave the

town). It is one aspect of the movie's liberalism to make Helen not the second-class citizen of a mere sexual object, but an intellectual and independent woman who even rejects the American deputy sheriff and goes back to her own land to lead her own life. It is certainly possible to praise Ramirez's commitment to the Mexican identity – she says, “I hate this town . . . to be a Mexican woman in a town like this” – from a multiculturalist viewpoint.⁶² The fundamental logic that decides the film's politics of representation, however, is that of nationalism, where Helen's “liberation” is set in exact contrast to, or in mutual complicity with, Amy's “legitimate” subordination. As Slotkin points out, the deportation of Helen functions in the film's symbolic structure as a purification of Kane's “dark side” or the possible association of Kane with the essential evil of Miller through Ramirez (394): it is because Kane chooses Amy over Helen “only naturally” that he can squarely confront Miller and eventually win with Amy. From this perspective, furthermore, Kane's choice of the American girl over the attractive Mexican woman in fact implies his national purity when it seems to be assumed that “miscegenation” between Kane and Helen is impossible. In other words, Kane becomes not only an individualist hero, but also the American hero when his choice is accepted as an inarguable matter of fact. We may also see here Foreman's Americanism in the complicated context of his critique of McCarthyism: *High Noon* is a film about the true American hero that advocates for Americanism, written by a victim of McCarthyism who was unreasonably to be deported from the States. In this context, it becomes understandable how the Mexican woman should be depicted as intellectual and charming and why the hero will choose the American girl who seems less intellectual, if not less charming, than the Mexican: Helen Ramirez is a foil to the good, if feeble, American girl whose rejection by the hero makes the hero a more authentic American. The more attractive

⁶² See Limón (15-18).

the “foreigner” is, the more respectable the hero’s commitment to America is.

The sexual politics of the movie is that of the “domestic” containment: we do not care how much a Mexican woman is liberated since we will marry with an American. In fact, the fifties is when such novels as Saul Bellow’s *The Adventures of Augie March*, Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*, William Burroughs’ *Queer* represented Mexico in a colonial imagination where desire and sexuality grows rampant.⁶³ To repeat, it is possible to appreciate the representation of Ramirez as a mature subject if we ignore the film’s aesthetic structure in which she is placed. When one tries to appreciate the film as a whole rather than just a character in it, the “liberation” of Ramirez functions only as an instrument to insist on the legitimacy of the normative white American girl as a certain kind of housewife, where the logic of domestic containment exactly follows the logic of nationalism.⁶⁴

In this way, both *Shane* and *High Noon* are stylized Westerns that demonstrate anesthetized individualism through the rhetoric of gendered romance. When they try to be free from any ideology or even any ideas, the heroes embody a masculine identity whose logic of formation can be explained only in terms of the film’s aesthetic structure. In their commitment to stylization and aesthetics, Fredric Jameson’s argument on late modernism is still applicable to the “adult Westerns” of the fifties: they are “late modernist” works in Jameson’s sense insofar as they stand on psychologization as depoliticization and dehistoricization where a work starts to have its own autonomy and depth. It is only in this late modernism that a “mythic” hero like *Shane* and a “parable” like *High Noon* is possible, since the individualism the movies advocate is an aesthetic form whose content is vacant: or,

⁶³ Hambert Hambert in Nabokov’s *Lolita* loses Lolita since he rather chooses to put her in school than to go to Mexico to marry with her.

⁶⁴ As Slotkin points out (474-86), the commitment to aesthetic individualism disappears in the sixties as exemplified by *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), where its fundamental ideology is to legitimize white men’s collective aid to the third world (Mexico). Yet, when the seven gunmen, without reasoning, suddenly decide to go back and fight for the Mexican people who have rejected them, the aesthetic ideology functions in the same way as in *Shane* and *High Noon*, though to a different purpose.

we might say, the individualism is a free form of self-realization – that is, both Shane and Kane would be just doing what they want to do if the film’s aesthetic structure were removed from them – as long as it does not lead to any political achievement. As Shane’s last confession attests and as Kane’s last gesture of despising the marshal’s star and leaving the town evidences, the point here is that the film’s structure dares to suggest that the Cold-War hero should not act for any political purpose or the public welfare, but only for a vacant form of achievement where there is only the hero’s own satisfaction with what he has done (and his possible partner’s appreciation).

In terms of late modernism, it is important that *Shane* is a classic because it is mythic and that Kane is the American hero because it is a parable: late modernist works claim their “universal” dimension by way of departure from naturalism and history.⁶⁵ *High Noon* clearly demonstrates how much the “universalization” costs. In nineteen thirty-nine, for example, *Stagecoach* ends with the Ringo Kid (John Wayne) going to Mexico to marry a Mexican saloon girl.⁶⁶ It would be far-fetched to argue an entire shift of paradigms between the Cold-War and the pre-Cold War era just by contrasting the two films; yet, as I argued, it is because Will Kane is to be the representative of the American, embodying the American identity, that he cannot marry Helen Ramirez who loves him, while it is the naturalism or realism in Ford’s movie that makes it possible for the Ringo Kid as an individual in history to be able to get married with a Mexican girl. Since *High Noon* as a late modernist achievement assumes a symbolic dimension (probably as a consequence of Foreman’s tacit critique of contemporary America for the ideal America), Will Kane as the embodiment of American individualism has to demonstrate the “self-evident” impossibility of miscegenation. It is the

⁶⁵ Of course, Zinnemann’s style in *High Noon* is generally recognized as “realist” under the influence of documentary films. In terms of the cinematic style, this would be correct, but, nonetheless, I believe that it is important to appreciate the film’s late modernist dimension in terms of its structure and totality as far as its true ideology clearly belongs to the demonstration of Cold-War liberalism. For the film’s cinematic style, see Prince.

⁶⁶ For Ford’s “multiculturalism,” see chapter six of Berg.

logic of nationalism, which necessarily leads to the conception of national identity through the late modernist scheme, that brings racism into the film as part and parcel of its structure.

I call aesthetic the individualism demonstrated through the figures of Shane and Will Kane primarily because the entire structure of the films works so as to offer a plausible vision of individualism that in fact is logically incoherent: the individualism the films advocates is an aesthetic phantasm, emotionally appealing, that hardly stands up to rational analysis. Of course, this does not mean that the films as well as the individualism in the films are meaningless or useless. On the contrary, the aesthetic ideology of the films, with their liquidating of politics in the older sense, in fact promotes biopolitics that concerns nationalism, heterosexism, and the rhetoric of exclusion and inclusion that supports them. And, more significantly, the aesthetic individualism is important precisely because the plot of the films all in all justifies violence and killing, which happen at the end of the narratives, as demonstration of individualist masculinity: the justification is mythic and ideological as far as it is carried out only in terms of the masculinity of vacant individualism. When the films works as a device that makes the vacant individualism look real and persuasive, they ultimately are the propaganda of the Cold War as far as their latent message, which cannot be logically explained, is that there is a time, for some reason, when a man has to fight: the vacant aesthetic of the Cold-War individualism in the last analysis works for the justification of the war of the self-claimed liberal nation where liberalism means that there is no ideology. Our argument about the aesthetic individualism of the films therefore intimately concerns biopolitics as the liberal logic of governing. As already argued in the case of Lionel Trilling's *Liberal Imagination*, aesthetics in the fifties concerns the Cold-War shift from politics to biopolitics. The political problems with the Westerns in the fifties lie not only in their conservative individualism, but also in the fact that their aesthetic individualism commits to

the displacement of politics by biopolitics.

IV. The Genealogy of the Revolution

When such influential books as *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Organization Man* expressed concern about the future of American individualism, *High Noon* and *Shane* thus offered a new definition of individualism in aesthetic terms. In fact, William Whyte refers to *High Noon* in *The Organization Man* as “one of the most successful movies in years” which is “a clear throwback to the Protestant Ethic,” as opposed to what he calls “the Social Ethic,” as the new norm of conformism (257). He also mentions there Harry Schein’s “The Olympian Cowboy,” in which Schein says:

I see *High Noon* as having an urgent political message. The little community seems to be crippled with fear before the approaching villains; seems to be timid, neutral, and halfhearted, like the United Nations before the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea; moral courage is apparent only in the very American sheriff. . . . *High Noon*, artistically, is the most convincing and, likewise, certainly the most honest explanation of American Foreign Policy.⁶⁷

Schein is correct in overlaying America’s foreign policy on the figure of Will Kane since Kane is depicted as the American hero, that is, a figure of the American identity, and, although Kane certainly worries about the necessity of the final showdown, the movie as a whole eventually legitimates killing. Kane is seen as the figure of America’s unilateralism in the disbelief in international community.

The biopolitical dimension involved in the movie, however, in fact makes it difficult to discern the movie’s ideology, or political message, correctly. This is most clearly shown in a

⁶⁷ Quoted in Whyte (257). Schein (316).

well-known episode told by Lech Walesa, the leader of the Polish union Solidarity. In a newspaper article “In Solidarity,” he explains what happened when Solidarity used the figure of Will Kane in an election poster:

It was a simple but effective gimmick that, at the time, was misunderstood by the Communists. They, in fact, tried to ridicule the freedom movement in Poland as an invention of the “Wild” West, especially the U.S.

But the poster had the opposite impact: Cowboys in Western clothes had become a powerful symbol for Poles. Cowboys fight for justice, fight against evil, and fight for freedom, both physical and spiritual. Solidarity trounced the Communists in that election, paving the way for a democratic government in Poland. (A.8)

Will Kane as the figure of vacant individualism could be appropriated in various ways: even when the Communists’ “misunderstanding,” which saw it as a symbol of rampant capitalist Americanization, is put aside, Schein saw it as one of American unilateralism, and Polish people, probably including Walesa, saw it as one of democratization. One simple way to solve this ambiguity would be to associate it with the complexities involved in the politics of nationalism: to think that Schein shows a case where too much commitment to nationalism turns into jingoism, while the Polish case is one where nationalism works as a tool of liberation from an oppressive regime, so that nationalism itself could be both a good thing and a bad thing. This would be true only when a “healthy” nation is defined as “a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy” in biopolitical terms (as, in fact, nationalism almost always is). Kane’s individualism grows vacant when Foreman’s original context of anti-McCarthyism is suppressed: if *High Noon* were not a Western, but a realist critique of McCarthyism, the appropriations of the figure of Kane would be impossible. Will Kane is the figure of a “rebel without a cause,” where his rebellion is located in the beyond of the old politics: the realm of biopolitics as the politics of freedom. By definition, the biopolitical hero

of freedom could be either a jingoist or a liberationist since his truth lies outside of the old politics. And this is where we should see the origin of the biopolitics of the cultural revolution in the latter half of the twentieth century. The essence of Kane's individualism lies in his final and complete neglect of social norms, which the movie demonstrates only aesthetically. He is a vacant aesthetic hero in terms of old politics, but he could nevertheless be seen as the symbol of a biopolitical hero who demonstrates the identitarian commitment to the expression of the immanent.

The apparent paradox involved in *Rebel without a Cause* testifies to the ambivalence of biopolitics. The frustration that the hero Jim Stark (James Dean) suffers has a clear "cause" from today's viewpoint: his psychological trouble with authority, especially with his "feminized" father. Since the "cause" is essentially psychological, the movie's plot clearly follows the narrative of natural growth: experiencing predicaments that life always involves, or the death of his friends, he eventually grows into healthy maturity, where he makes peace with his "weak" father, prospecting to have his own (nuclear) family and to establish his own manliness. The rhetoric of manliness in the movie also echoes the discourse of international politics about the nation's identity in the same way as Schein argues about *High Noon* and as President Truman used it in his address: frustrated and psychologically unstable as he is, he famously starts fighting only when he is called "chicken," virtually demonstrating the justice of self-defensive war, and the imaginary white couple of Stark and Judy (Natalie Wood) in vain help and guard John "Plato" Crawford (Sal Mineo) as their surrogate kid whose racial identity is ambiguous but is associated with blackness through the maid (Marietta Canty) who acts as a surrogate for his mother, where the racial hierarchy in the film's structure is rather clear. All in all, the movie is a typical demonstration that male individualism is related to the dynamics of gender in heterosexual romance and the nuclear family, where the narrative of

natural growth governs the essential structure. Here, the hero also represents the American identity since, as Medovoi argues, the growth narrative is the technology that overlaps the individual narrative with the national one. This, then, is where, in terms of the legitimacy of nationalism, politics ceases to be relevant and biopolitics becomes predominant. This is the reason why the movie is correctly entitled as *rebel without a cause*: the narrative of natural growth neither offers nor needs any cause since it is free from ideology. It is only “natural”: as Lindner argues, the rebellion is natural. You don’t seriously worry about it; it’s just a stage to be passed through. It is not political; it’s biopolitical.

It is in this context that the collaborative anti-Oedipus project of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari is to be located. In their attempt to connect Marxism with psychoanalysis, or, as the subtitle of the book says, “capitalism and schizophrenia,” they actually psychologize their description of revolution, although the psychologization works against the Freudian narrative of natural growth. They name “desire” as the primal agency of revolution: “if we put forward desire as a revolutionary agency, it is because we believe that capitalist society can endure many manifestations of interest, but not one manifestation of desire, which would be enough to make its fundamental structures explode, even at the kindergarten level.” Desire as the agency of revolution, then, not only supplements, but also nullifies the idea of revolution as social change:

[W]e have not at all minimized the importance of preconscious investments of class or interest, which are based in the infrastructure itself. But we attach all the more importance to them as they are the index of the infrastructure of a libidinal investment of another nature, and that can coincide as well as clash with them. (379)

When they posit the “libidinal” dimension of desire as something more essential than that of “class or interest,” then cultural revolution, or the revolution in terms of the form of our

desire, should precede the revolution that concerns social change. The object of revolution here is the Oedipal norm that governs the form of the growth narrative; yet, the revolution aims not to reject the paradigm of desire and growth, but to change it in order to liberate the multiplicity of desires:

Insomuch as Oedipus arises out of an application of the entire social field to the finite familial figure, it does not imply just any investment of this field by the libido, but a very particular investment that renders this application possible and necessary. This is why Oedipus seemed to us a paranoiac's idea before being a neurotic's feeling. In fact, the paranoiac investment consists in subordinating molecular desiring-production to the molar aggregate it forms on one surface of the full body without organs, enslaving it by that very fact to a form of socius that exercises the function of a full body under determinate conditions. (363-64)⁶⁸

In this schema of revolution as liberation of desire, where, of course, their explication of desire is revealing and the project of its liberation itself is valuable, desire is only naturally posited in opposition to society: "*There is only desire and the social, and nothing else*" (29).⁶⁹ Insofar as desire is seen as the cultural instance of the anti-social, their vision of revolution is the liberation of desire that should abolish the prevalence of the Oedipal: "Destroy, destroy. The task of schizoanalysis goes by way of destruction – a whole scouring of the unconscious, a complete curettage. Destroy the Oedipus, the illusions of the ego, the puppet of the superego, guilt, the law, castration" (311).⁷⁰

The emphasis on cultural, or psychological and epistemological, revolution, rather than

⁶⁸ The dichotomy between "molecular" and "molar" is explained as "one micropsychic or micrological, the other statistical and gregarious" (283). The collectivity of the "molar" only forms an "aggregate" that is associated with "mass phenomena," while that of the "molecular" is seen as "the small machines scattered in every machine" and understood to reflect "the singularities of the living" (286).

⁶⁹ Deleuze/Guattari basically use "the social" in its regular sense, while they define "socius" as "the body that Marx is referring to when he says that it is not the product of labor, but rather appears as its natural or divine presupposition" (10).

⁷⁰ "Schizoanalysis" is the name of their project, the purpose being "to de-oedipalize the unconscious in order to reach the real problems" (81).

the revolution of social change, or of the social system, institutions, and laws, in the traditional sense of the word, is the reason why Deleuze/Guattari carefully put distance between their project and any “political program”: “we are not looking for a way out when we say that schizoanalysis *as such* has strictly no political program to propose. . . . It does not take itself for a party or even a group, and does not claim to be speaking for the masses. No political program will be elaborated within the framework of schizoanalysis” (380). The detachment from politics, on the one hand, is explained by their setting of the project as preparation for politics, where it is detached from a “political” program; on the other hand, it also concerns the individualist antipathy to social planning, engagement in collectivity and participation in society, where it from a political “program” (and therefore they appeal to “molecular multiplicity” instead of society):

The schizo is not revolutionary, but the schizophrenic process – in terms of which the schizo is merely the interruption, or the continuation in the void – is the potential for revolution. To those who say that escaping is not courageous, we answer: what is not escape *and social investment at the same time*? The choice between one of two poles, the paranoiac counterescape that motivates all the conformist, reactionary, and fascisizing investments, and the schizophrenic escape convertible into a revolutionary investment. (341)

A certain kind of “escape” of course can be “the potential for revolution” just as Will Kane’s final leaving the town could be seen as the deepest critique of the contemporary America. Yet, the legitimation of “escape” here, which I believe is plausible, is enacted by the Cold-War imagination that opposes individualist escapism to “all the conformist, reactionary, and fascisizing” attempts.⁷¹

In the preface to the book, Michel Foucault more clearly dictates the Cold-War character of Deleuze/Guattari’s project:

⁷¹ See also Hennessy, especially 70-71.

I would say that *Anti-Oedipus* (may its authors forgive me) is a book of ethics . . . (perhaps that explains why its success was not limited to a particular “readership”: being anti-oedipal has become a life style, a way of thinking and living). How does one keep from being fascist, even (especially) when one believes oneself to be a revolutionary militant? How do we rid our speech and our acts, our hearts and our pleasures, of fascism? How do we ferret out the fascism that is ingrained in our behavior? . . . Deleuze and Guattari, . . . , pursue the slightest traces of fascism in the body. (xiii)

In essence, according to Foucault, the revolution Deleuze/Guattari imagine is one against fascism. In this sense, the critique of capitalism in their project is, if Marxist, not to look to the Communist alternative of a planned economy, but rather to liberate capitalism from its hidden Oedipal yoke, furthering freedom in it. Their project of revolution thoroughly belongs to the politics of freedom, which would be an appropriate subtitle for the book if it had not been used in *The Vital Center*. Foucault’s summary highlights the characteristic of Deleuze/Guattari’s project: it is a liberal revolution in our “life style” that would completely liberate us from the fear of fascism that haunts the imagination of the West under the Cold War.

The project of *Anti-Oedipus* is that of the cultural revolution that dominated the imagination of the left in the West in the latter half of the twentieth century, which was in fact conceived in relation to, or in contrast to, the communist and social revolution that happened in the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China.⁷² It is an individualist project since, in it, the commitment to freedom displaces politics. In other words, the project

⁷² Deleuze/Guattari virtually make the Oedipal symbolize authority. While what I call cultural revolution always takes the form of the politics of freedom against social control (which does not imply any thesis that resistance against control is meaningless), it is necessary to consider another context to understand why the Oedipal is used as the symbol. This is no place to look into the context, but, while the book was originally published in nineteen seventy-two in France and the translation was published in the US in nineteen seventy-seven, the cultural predominance of the Oedipal narrative in the seventies, starting in the wake of the students’ movement in nineteen sixty-nine and epitomized by such works as Harold Bloom’s *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) and John Irwin’s *Doubling and Incest* (1975) in addition to Alan Sheridan’s translation of Jacques Lacan’s *Ecrits* (1977), would provide a guideline.

is not a critique but a completion of the ideal, though not the reality, of Cold-War liberalism: rejecting social revolution, they write a scenario of liberal revolution insofar as they work inside the liberal framework. To repeat, their commitment to multiplicity of desires, for example, surely functions as a critique of the patriarchy of the societies of the era, and yet, what about the neoliberal situation of today where to further the social recognition of sexual minorities is of course still just and fair, but the improvement in the recognition does not seem to function as a critique of capitalism? It is an important point whether the politics of freedom really criticizes capitalism or not, and it is one which we shall revisit later in this work.

The genealogy of the cultural revolution that I have tried to sketch briefly here starts with such works as J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), where Holden Caulfield's psychological reaction to society is usually seen as a deep critique of the "phony" in American culture, and Norman Mailer's theorization in "White Negro" that advocates "set[ting] out on that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self" against "a slow death by conformity with every creative and rebellious instinct stifled" (339), and leads to Deleuze/Guattari's declaration that "[t]here are only resistances" (314). The crucial ambiguity involved in the notion of cultural revolution is that, when it is conceived as part of the way of life, everything one does (including "escape") could be seen as revolutionary. To sum up, this is where revolution seems to become a matter of one's identity: when every act one does is seen as either revolutionary or not, a revolutionary act must be what is done by a revolutionary subject, or vice versa, especially when the value and the perspective of the revolution becomes disconnected from the political ideal: revolution, when it is cultural, is the matter of one's life style, way of life or identity. Cultural revolution thus resembles the logic of self-realization: the goal of revolution is not social change, but realization of one's

own desire. My point here is not to criticize the value of self-realization per se, but, to repeat the point in the previous chapter, to try to see what was thrown out with the bath water of anti-totalitarianism when revolution was gradually translated into something cultural: the social dimension in the imagination of political change that ultimately matters when one tries to criticize today's neoliberal regime. As Nancy Fraser insists in *Justice Interruptus*, when we see in "contemporary postsocialist political life," "the rise of a new political imaginary centered on notions of 'identity,' 'difference,' 'cultural domination,' and 'recognition'" (13), political justice is complete only when both the goals of recognition and redistribution, that is, the redistribution of wealth, or correction of the gap between the rich and the poor, are set in a proper agenda.⁷³

Another origin of the genealogy of the cultural revolution is to be found in Irving Howe's well-known 1954 essay "This Age of Conformity." It focuses more on advocacy of the role of critical and independent "intellectuals" that then lived under "the pressures of conformism [that] are at work upon all of us" (318). Criticizing the misgivings of Lionel Trilling's belief in "liberalism" that considers that "there is an unmistakable improvement in the American culture today over that of, say, thirty years ago," which Howe calls a "disastrous," "pleasant fantasy" (320), and demonstrating instead how the contemporary government, institutions and industry function to carry out the "process of bureaucratic absorption" (321) of intellectuals, Howe contends that "the whole *idea* of independence is losing its traditional power" (323). The vital problem for him is the incorporation of intellectuals into American society, for, in "the past few decades," "whenever [the American intellectuals] become absorbed into the accredited institutions of society they not only lose their traditional rebelliousness but to one extent or another *they cease to function as*

⁷³ For a critique of Fraser, see Nilsson.

intellectuals” (322). So Howe’s critique of conformism in essence lies in the sense that to be an intellectual means to be a nonconformist, if the reverse is not true, and that the intellectual as an outsider is indispensable to a healthy society.

Although Howe’s criticism of conformism can be said to be precise and substantial, he does not seem to be interested in any practical and concrete political agenda against conformism. He argues his fundamental concern in the essay thus:

What is most alarming is that the whole idea of the intellectual vocation – the idea of a life dedicated to values that cannot possibly be realized by a commercial civilization – has gradually lost its allure. And it is this, rather than the abandonment of a particular program, which constitutes our rout. (319-20)

It is true that we could imagine that Howe’s distaste for “a commercial civilization” is a euphemism that conceals an underlying commitment to Marxism. Yet, indeed, nonconformity is here connected to “the idea of a life dedicated to values” rather than any “particular program”: it is an identity rather than an act. For Howe, nonconformity as an abstraction is valuable since, for him, the act of nonconformity is seen as an expression of the nonconformist identity.

Howe’s argument is also gendered. The figure of the intellectual for Howe, separated from a “particular program,” foregrounds his masculinity: the older model of “intellect” he misses shows itself “self-confident, aggressive, secure in its belief or, if you wish, delusions” (320), tolerating the necessary “alienation” from society that makes “strength and boldness” (323) possible. It seems as if the vocation of the intellectual for Howe is also the enactment of the rebel without a cause, except for the cause of being a genuine intellectual. He virtually advises the masculine intellectual in the fifties to commit to nonconformity for nonconformity’s sake: another form of aesthetic individualism.

Howe's point is made clear again in the closing remark of the essay:

The most glorious vision of the intellectual life is still that which is loosely called humanist: the idea of a mind committed yet dispassionate, ready to stand alone, curious, eager, skeptical. The banner of critical independence, ragged and torn though it may be, is still the best we have. (345)

Conclusively, he emphasizes the "intellectual life," not, say, intellectual opinions, which he associates with "the idea of a mind," not the things the mind thinks. So what I called masculinity is needed probably in order to guard "critical independence," another rhetoric that echoes healthy nationalism. If independence functions as the foundation for intellectuals' critical ability and capability, what Howe advocates is, in a certain sense, to maintain the autonomy of the intellectuals as an independent nation. For the essence of the intellectual consists in a certain way of life that is to be encouraged under a "banner."

Howe thus demonstrates the politics of aesthetic identity. And for him, this is a literary act: the lost ideal of "intellect" existed as Bohemia – which, according to him, Flaubert calls "the fatherland of my breed" – to be found in the Greenwich Village of the past. This vision of Howe's is not merely a personal recollection so much as an aesthetic universalism insofar as he even observes that "Concord too was a kind of Bohemia, sedate, subversive and transcendental all at once" (318). And Howe's Bohemia is valuable as the locus of avant-gardism: "All the tendencies toward cultural conformism come to a head in the assumption that the *avant-garde*, as both concept and intellectual grouping, has become obsolete or irrelevant" (340). The avant-garde Bohemians, Howe believes, once realized the aesthetic autonomy and independence of artists and critics. With such a conception of the mythical past, the essence of literary rebellion is believed to be free of any political program and thus to exist for its own sake. It is the conception of the aesthetic, literary nation itself

that signifies the way to the purely aesthetic rebel. In modernist aesthetics, or, more correctly, in the framework of literary modernism that Howe imagines in the fifties, the rebel without a cause is not hysteric nonsense, but the purest form of aesthetic dissidence.

It is at the culmination of this tradition that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri locate biopolitics at the center of politics in *Empire*. Their book turns a new page in the Marxist critique of imperialism when they define what they call Empire as a result of “the transformation of the modern imperialist geography of the globe and the realization of the world market” that “signal a passage within the capitalist mode of production” (xiii). The “passage,” according to them, is most clearly recognized in “the *biopolitical* nature of the new paradigm of power”: “Biopower is a form of power that regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and rearticulating it. Power can achieve an effective command over the entire life of the population only when it becomes an integral, vital function that every individual embraces and reactivates of his or her own accord” (23-24).⁷⁴ Their vision of revolution is basically understood as liberation of the political potential of the multitude as a set of singular individuals, which is most clearly articulated in *Multitude*:

The U.S. revolutionaries in the eighteenth century used to say, “The rising race is all republican.” Similarly today we could say, “The rising race is all multitudinous.” The new movements demanding global democracy not only value the singularity of each as a fundamental organizing principle but they also pose it as a process of self-transformation, hybridization, and miscegenation. The multiplicity of the multitude is not just a matter of being different but also of becoming different. Become different than you are! These singularities act in common and thus form a new race, that is, a politically coordinated subjectivity that the multitude produces. The primary decision made by the multitude is really

⁷⁴ Especially in *Commonwealth*, Hardt and Negri point out the difference between biopower and biopolitics: the former “could be defined (rather crudely) as the power over life” and the latter “as the power of life to resist and determine an alternative production of subjectivity” (57). Yet, at the present stage of my argument, the difference has little significance.

the decision to create a new race or, rather, a new humanity. (355-56)

This is biopolitical, that is, post-ideological: this shows a supremely liberal imagining of revolution where it is to be enacted not by political, but by biopolitical planning. The essence of revolution here lies in “becoming different than you are,” where the individualism of singular subjects is imagined to be capable of sitting side by side with the imperative of collective changes. I put this project of Hardt and Negri at the culmination of the genealogy of the cultural revolution because, in their Marxist project, they retrieve the idea of collectivity in their commitment to the multitude: at the culmination, the notion of social change transforms into the creation of “a new race or, rather, a new humanity.” In other words, more generally, the social is displaced by the communal, where displacement of the social is complete.

And Hardt and Negri in fact find the origin that necessitates their biopolitical shift in the Wild West. The United States holds a complex status in their conception of Empire: it “*does not, and indeed no nation-state can today, form the center of an imperialist project,*” and yet it “does indeed occupy a privileged position in Empire” since “Thomas Jefferson . . . and the other ideological founders of the United States” believed that “they were creating on the other side of the Atlantic a new Empire with open, expanding frontiers, where power would be effectively distributed in networks” and “[t]his imperial idea has survived and matured throughout the history of the United States constitution and has emerged now on a global scale in its fully realized form” (xiv). Empire is a globalized West: “We are experiencing a first phase of the transformation of the global frontier into an open space of imperial sovereignty” (182). According to them, it is what they call “the U.S constitutional project” that is theoretically more important than the historical and contingent fact of the US’s military presence in global geopolitics during the Cold War:

The U.S. Constitution, as Jefferson said, is the one best calibrated for extensive Empire. We should emphasize once again that this Constitution is imperial and not imperialist. It is imperial because (in contrast to imperialism's project always to spread its power linearly in closed spaces and invade, destroy, and subsume subject countries within its sovereignty) the U.S. constitutional project is constructed on the model of rearticulating an open space and reinventing incessantly diverse and singular relations in networks across the unbounded terrain. (182)

My point here does not concern a possible inclination to American exceptionalism in their argument (where, I believe, their focus on the "constitutional project" is effective in order to understand the complex stature of the US in our historical present); what matters here is their ambivalence toward "the U.S. constitutional project," or "the model of rearticulating an open space and reinventing incessantly diverse and singular relations in networks." Their "ambivalence" is in fact a crucial part of their argumentation, as they say "the construction of Empire is good *in itself* but not *for itself*" (42). This is because it is the political struggles in the twentieth century – such as "the communist revolutions of 1917 and 1949, the great anti-fascist struggles of the 1930s and 1940s, and the numerous liberation struggles of the 1960s up to those of 1989" – as the sign of "the revolutionary nature of the multitude" that "have produced Empire as an inversion of its own image" where the multitude "now represents on this new scene an uncontainable force and an excess of value with respect to every form of right and law" (394). In a certain sense, revolution for Hardt and Negri here means to turn a bad West into a good one, making it wilder and wilder with the "containable force" and "excess of value" of the multitude. Their imagination, when they say that there is no outside since "Empire is an *ou-topia*, or really a *non-place*" (190), exactly follows that of the Western where the original state is pictured as an individualist space without unnecessary imposition of social norms or collective rule. Although their critical depiction of the

“constitutional project” is profoundly different from the images we see in Western movies, their essential commitment is directed to the politics of freedom after the end of ideology: the genealogy of the cultural revolution.

My critique of Hardt and Negri is not that their commitment to biopolitical and cultural revolution negates the importance of social revolution. Since they carefully note that they “cannot say at this point” what “specific and concrete practices” (399-400) lie in the task for the multitude even at the end of *Empire* (and similar notes are also repeated in the last sequel *Commonwealth*), they may simply focus on the cultural dimension of their project rather than on the social one in a way similar to Deleuze/Guattari, although they clearly put the biopolitical at the center of today’s political imagination in insisting that “a passage within the capitalist mode of production” has brought about the supremacy of the biopolitical.

Hardt and Negri, as well as Sean McCann and Michael Szalay whose critique of Foucault’s and other theorists’ “liberation turn” is introduced as a guideline at the beginning of this chapter, fail, in my opinion, to notice an important shift in direction in Foucault’s criticism. As his preface to *The Anti-Oedipus* indicates, Foucault’s works in the earlier phase, which basically focus on madness and delinquency, detention and discipline, the excluded and the outsider, could be argued as sharing the fundamental premise that I argued in terms of Cold-War liberalism. In the same way that what I called the literature of freedom looks for the completion of liberalism, Foucault, as well as Deleuze/Guattari, attempted to further liberalize liberalism as it was. The notion of biopolitics was introduced in *The History of Sexuality* in order to think critically about how the modern regime of sexuality became hegemonic in our episteme.

Foucault’s lectures at the Collège de France from nineteen seventy-eight to nineteen seventy-nine, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, “ended up being devoted entirely to what should have

been only its introduction” (2008; 317), as he later sums up: in spite of the title, he focuses on the notion of governmentality when in the lectures he critically traces the genealogy of neoliberalism from the eighteenth century to post-war Germany to the present of nineteen seventy-nine. Elsewhere, he defines governmentality as “the tendency” toward “the preeminence over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline, and so on) of this type of power,” which “may be termed ‘government’,” which has a “very specific albeit complex form,” and “has as its target population, as its principle form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security,” resulting both in “the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses” and “the development of a whole complex of knowledges” (2000 B; 219-20). Since in the summary of the courses he defines biopolitics as “the attempt, starting from the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems posed to governmental practice by phenomena characteristic of a set of living beings forming a population” (2008; 317), it is clear that both the notions of biopolitics and governmentality share population as the object of their exercise when he shifts the central topic of the courses in a way probably unexpected even to himself. As for their differences, while biopolitics is political rationalization of “the problems posed to governmental practice,” governmentality focuses on the more fundamental “governmental practice” whose problems biopolitics responds to, or “the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses” and “the development of a whole complex knowledge” (although, in fact, the differences seem to be rather vague in this explanation).

The shift from politics to governing apparently seems to follow depoliticizing rhetoric. If what matters is rather the art of governing than its political implications in Foucault’s analysis, he even seems to be in accord with Daniel Bell’s well-known declaration of the end of ideology in nineteen sixty:

The nineteenth-century ideological vision, with its roots in the French Revolution, had been framed in terms of the total transformation of society. The normative consensus emerging in the postwar years in the West held that civil politics could replace ideological politics; that the dream of organizing a society by complete blueprint was bound to fail; that no comprehensive social changes should be introduced, necessary as they might seem, without some effort to identify the human and social costs; and that no changes in the way of life (such as collectivization of land) should be undertaken if they could not be reversed. In short, it was – and is – a view that is mistakenly called pragmatism in politics (a word with less philosophical freight would be *prudence*), or what Dewey would have called, ambiguously, “intelligence” – the focus, *within a framework of liberal values*, on problem solving as a means of remedying social ills and inadequacies. (419)

Bell’s distaste for “the dream of organizing a society by complete blueprint” is a typical move of Cold-War liberalism, where the politics of freedom and individualism governs society without ideology. It is this frame of thinking that sets up the Cold-War dichotomy of liberalism as the politics of freedom and totalitarianism as ideological politics. That is, communism is translated into totalitarianism when one believes that what matters is not its ideology, but its art of government: communism as ideology has totalitarianism as its way of government.

Foucault’s invention of the critical concept of governmentality concerns in a serious way this Cold-War rhetoric’s focus on governing. If governmentality is seen as an objective and analytic concept, it certainly functions as an endorsement of what Bell calls “civil politics” as the rationality of the State that governs it. Foucault actually underlines the importance of the commitment to freedom in understanding what he means by the notion of governmentality. Explaining the shape of modern governmentality, he says:

This explains, finally, the insertion of freedom within governmentality, not only as the right of individuals legitimately opposed to the power, usurpations, and abuses of the sovereign or the government, but as an element that has become indispensable to

governmentality itself. Henceforth, a condition of governing well is that freedom, or certain forms of freedom, are really respected. Failing to respect freedom is not only an abuse of rights with regard to law, it is above all ignorance of how to govern properly. The integration of freedom, and the specific limits to this freedom within the field of governmental practice has now become an imperative. (2007 B; 353)

In addition to biopolitics, Foucault here introduces the necessity of the analysis of the politics of freedom through the notion of governmentality, which explains the reason governmentality is indispensable in his critique of neoliberalism.

Especially in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, where Foucault analyzes liberalism and neoliberalism as its peculiar form, governmentality is not an analytic, but a critical concept. At the beginning of the book, he clearly explains that the focus on governing is indispensable since the lecture is on liberalism as the politics of freedom:

[W]hat does “the self-limitation of governmental reason” mean? What is this new type of rationality in the art of government, this new type of calculation that consists in saying and telling government: I accept, wish, plan, and calculate that all this should be left alone? I think that this is broadly what is called “liberalism.” (2008; 20)

Governmentality is not (only) to analyze politics in terms of governing, but is used as a specifically critical concept to analyze liberalism: “only when we know what this governmental regime called liberalism was, will we be able to grasp what is biopolitics is” (2008 B; 22). And it is a critical concept since, most simply, the whole point in thinking of governmentality lies here in the attempt to understand the political meaning of the fact that governmentality always exists with “self-limitation”: that is, the birth of governmentality from the start concerns its effacement, the belief that the smaller the government the better. Foucault in his lectures defines the essence of liberalism as commitment to limited government, or the politics of freedom.

From this perspective, liberalism of course should not be understood exclusively in political terms, but in its relation to liberal economy. Although this point is developed further in the course of my argument, it will suffice here to see the basic definition of governmentality as a concept for the critical analysis of (neo)liberalism:

The governability or governmentability – forgive these barbaric terms – of these individuals, who inhabit the space of sovereignty as subjects of right and, at the same time, as economic man, can only be assured, and in reality it was only possible for it to be assured, by the emergence of a new object, a new domain or field which is, as it were, the correlate of the art of government being constructed at this time in terms of this problem of the relation between the subject of right and the economic subject. A new plane of reference is needed, and clearly this new plane of reference will not be the set of subjects of right, or the set of merchants, or economic subjects or actors. These individuals who are still subjects of right as well as being economic actors, but who are not “governmentable” as one or the other, are only governable insofar as a new ensemble can be defined which will envelop them both as subjects of right and as economic actors, but which will bring to light not just the connection or combination of these two elements, but a series of other elements in relation to which the subject of right and the economic subject will be aspects, partial aspects, which can be integrated insofar as they belong to a complex whole. And I think it is this new ensemble that is characteristic of the liberal art of governing. (2008; 294-95)

This is a crucial turn in Foucault’s entire career, I believe. And the importance of this turn is most clearly understood as his final choice of social revolution over cultural revolution (when he confronted with a surprisingly deep insight the emergence of neoliberalism toward the end of the seventies). More specifically, he makes three amazing turns in criticizing “the liberal art of governing.” The first is a certain kind of appeal to universalism, pointing out the limit of liberalism as its departure from truth:

[O]ne no longer tries to peg government to the truth; one tries to peg government to rationality. It seems to me that we could describe the modern forms of governmental technology as control of government by pegging it to rationality. . . . It is a matter of

modeling government [on] the rationality of individuals insofar as they employ a certain number of means, and employ them as they wish, in order to satisfy these interests in the general sense of the term: the rationality of governed must serve as the regulating principle for the rationality of government. This, it seems to me, is what characterizes liberal rationality: how to model government, the art of government, how to [found] the principle of rationalization of the art of government on the rational behavior of those who are governed. (2008; 312; original brackets)

In other words, Foucault's point here is that liberalism as the politics of freedom is the exercise of an ideology that justifies itself by appeal to governmental rationality (although this is quite an unfoucauldian terminology if one has not read the lectures). This claim, then, leads to Foucault's unexpected sympathy for Marxism as an appeal to the historical truth:

[W]e can say that government regulated according to the truth also has not disappeared. For after all, what in the end is Marxism if not the pursuit of a type of governmentality which will certainly be pegged to a rationality, but to a rationality which is not the rationality of individual interests, but the rationality of history progressively manifesting itself as truth? (2008; 313)

Of course, the quote does not necessarily indicate approval of Marxism; yet, it also demonstrates that in order to imagine an alternative to the politics of freedom that stands on the displacement of the truth by rationality, one has necessarily to appeal to a certain kind of collectivity and planning beyond "the rationality of individual interests."⁷⁵ Foucault's critique therefore, perhaps amazingly, looks to "civil society":

Civil society is, I believe, a concept of governmental technology of government the rational measure of which must be juridically pegged to an economy understood as process of

⁷⁵ The relation between Marxism and the entirety of Foucault's thought is too large a problematic for my argument as far as it is not a study on Foucault. For a basic summary of the topic, see Balibar (1992). For a view similar to my argument concerning Foucault's attitude toward Marxism when his focus is set on the analysis of governmentality, see Lemke (2002). Basically, Foucault criticizes the existent Marxism (especially in France) and attempts to connect his works to what he thinks Marx really meant. For the criticism, see Foucault (1994 A, 1994 B, 1994 F, 1994 G, 2000 A and C). For Foucault's appreciation of Marx, see Foucault (1989 A, 1989 B, 1994 C, 1994 D and 1994 E).

production and exchange. . . . And I think that civil society – which is very quickly called society, and which at the end of the eighteenth century is called the nation – makes a self-limitation possible for governmental practice and an art of government, for reflection on this art of government and so for a governmental technology; it makes possible a self-limitation which infringes neither economic laws nor the principle of right, and which infringes neither the requirement of governmental generality nor the need of an omnipresence of government. An omnipresent government, a government which nothing escapes, a government which conforms to the rules of right, and a government which nevertheless respects the specificity of the economy, will be a government that manages civil society, the nation, society, the social.

Homo oeconomicus and civil society are therefore two inseparable elements. *Homo oeconomicus* is, if you like, the abstract, ideal, purely economic point that inhabits the dense, full, and complex reality of civil society. Or, alternatively, civil society is the concrete ensemble within which these ideal points, economic men, must be placed so that they can be appropriately managed. So, *homo oeconomicus* and civil society belong to the same ensemble of the technology of liberal governmentality. (2008; 296)

As he enumerates “civil society, the nation, society, the social,” his definition of “civil society” is ambiguous here (and even looking through all the lectures, there is nothing concrete). One way to understand the quote is to associate it with David Harvey’s remark in *The Brief History of Neoliberalism*: “The period in which the neoliberal state has become hegemonic has also been the period in which the concept of civil society – often cast as an entity in opposition to state power – has become central to the formulation of oppositional politics. The Gramscian idea of the state as a unity of political and civil society gives way to the idea of civil society as a center of opposition, if not an alternative, to the state” (78). If, then, “civil society” here means what lives together with what Foucault calls “*homo oeconomicus*” under the guise of commitment to freedom and what apparently opposes the State in the acceleration of the self-limitation of governmentality, what is in fact criticized here is what I call the culture of the Cold War, or the depoliticizing displacement of society by culture conceived in the nationalist framework, rather than “society” itself.

In other words, Foucault's argument on governmentality indicates that we should re-think the definition and the political meaning of society if we want to point out the limits of the liberalism we have now, where cultural revolution along the lines of the politics of freedom that looks for individualist liberation of the self cannot be seen as relevant. It is true that Foucault's interest after *The Birth of Biopolitics* goes in the main in an ethical direction in terms of the technology of the self; yet, his argument on governmentality figures as quite important (especially when he is in general regarded as a strong advocate of what I call cultural revolution) in contrast to the general predominance of the concept of cultural revolution in the thinking of the Left in the West in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The genealogy of the cultural revolution has been traced in order to see the Cold-War origin of its politics that seems to be still prevalent in our days. It started with the Cold-War rejection of the socialist aspect of Marxist thinking, flourished with the conception of national culture derived from the Cold-War commitment to nationalism – although its politics is not necessary nationalist, it works with the commitment to culture – and finished with the Cold-War displacement of the political with the biopolitical. Its crucial point lies in making the idea of society, or social solidarity as opposed to cultural solidarity, irrelevant to our imagination of political utopia; to follow Nancy Frazer's terminology, it makes the agenda of recognition prevalent, while rendering that of redistribution uninteresting and unpopular. In the Cold-War paradigm where the liberal ideology of post-ideology brought about the biopolitical focus on the ways of governing, we must see, I believe, another crucial strategy of containment: containment that tries to erase the notion of the social, containment in which the political imagination is alienated from the social. The cultural containment that works on the Western imagination and the political imagination in liberal nations is the containment of politics per se in the obsolete past. This is the form of biopolitical containment that started in

Cold-War liberalism of the USA.

Chapter Three

Late Modernism, Innocence and Imperialism: Antinomies in *The Catcher in the Rye*

“war will have little to do with making me a war writer
– which is the only kind of writer I want to be”
J. D. Salinger, “Sorry for Writers?”

I. Murder, McCarthyism, War and *The Catcher in the Rye*

There is an entry called “Cultural references to the novel *The Catcher in the Rye*” in Wikipedia, where, in addition to the sub-entries for films, television, video games, books, comic strips and plays, there is a list of more than fifty popular songs that refer to the novel. Among the novels I categorized as the Cold-War literature of freedom – *The Catcher*, *The Outsider*, *The Adventures of Augie March*, *Invisible Man*, *On the Road*, *Junkee* and *Queer* – this novel seems to be the most distinctively popular even after the end of the Cold War (at least insofar as someone took the trouble to make such an entry in Wikipedia).

I believe that the novel’s popularity, at least in part, derives from the essential nature of what I called the literature of freedom in Chapter One and the liberal commitment to cultural revolution that I delineated in Chapter Two: the hero’s commitment to individualist freedom against a society conceived as essentially coercive, where the resistance should take on a cultural instantiation that could reside in every part of our everyday life.⁷⁶ The so-called spirit of Rock’n’roll, or rebellion, clearly has affinity with that of the literature of freedom as well as the lone heroes of the Cold-War Westerns. The Western movies may be generally considered conservative, and Rock’n’roll music anti-conservative; yet both have much in

⁷⁶ For studies of Holden Caulfield as a rebel hero, see, as an early example, Paul Levine and, for a general understanding, Rowe.

common when we trace the historical genealogy of the concept of cultural revolution. Between Rock'n'roll and the Westerns I would like in this chapter to locate *The Catcher*, J. D. Salinger's 1951 novel of first-person narrative by Holden Caulfield, who is kicked out of a prep school called Pencey and roams alone around New York City for two days, a novel that has no clear plot structure, although Holden's diatribe with its colloquial and idiosyncratic rhetoric remains both fresh and appealing.

Yet the general schema of the literature of freedom and cultural revolution fails to explain how the novel is exceptional among the early-fifties fiction of freedom. The "cult" status of the novel would be most tragically epitomized by the episode of John Lennon's killing: the killer, Mark David Chapman, having a copy of the novel with him when he was arrested. According to Aidan Doyle, Chapman "wanted to change his name to Holden Caulfield and once wrote in a copy of the book 'This is my statement,' and signed the protagonist's name" (2). In an essay on "a social history" of the novel, Stephen J. Whitfield also reports that "when he was sentenced, [he] read aloud the passage that begins with 'anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids' and ends with 'I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all.'" Whitfield quotes Daniel M. Stashower's observation that Chapman might have wanted to preserve Lennon's innocence by killing him, but, as Whitfield also points out, this may be a misunderstanding of the novel, considering that, in the ending scene, the novel suggests that "[n]o older catcher should try to intervene" (572). Whether or not Chapman's assumed reading is wrong (and what Chapman did, a homicide, is of course evil and unpardonable), this episode seems to testify that the novel's cult status concerns its commitment to the idea of "innocence," or, more correctly, the preservation of "innocence."

The Catcher in the Rye becomes quite an interesting novel when it is read as demonstrating the translation of the liberal ideology epitomized by the literature of freedom

and commitment to cultural revolution into a desire to preserve innocence. Innocence here is posited as opposed to the narrative of growth and development that, as argued earlier, functioned during the Cold War as a dominant narrative of both individual and national identities. Yet my contention here is not that the novel commits to the desire to preserve innocence: it rather demonstrates how this desire can be precarious. It is true that the novel depicts innocence as something to be guarded, protected and preserved, but it is also true that the commitment to it appears as ominous or even self-destructive. Demonstrating innocence as a precarious object of biopolitical commitment is what distinguishes the novel from other works of the literature of freedom as well as the Cold-War westerns.

The Chapman episode grows all the more intriguing because the narrator of the novel in a sense defines himself as a “madman” on the first page. The valorization of the value of innocence that the novel’s narrative tries to effect, in fact, stands on a very delicate balance when the entire narrative is told by a self-identified “madman” as well as when the narrative by the “madman” becomes ambivalent toward that value near the end of the novel. Identifying it as a “cult novel,” Thomas Reed Whissen thus explains the ambiguity in which the novel is involved: “Not all readers, regardless of their enthusiasm, respond to this unique book in the same way. While some find Holden Caulfield a lonely misfit worthy of extreme sympathy, others admire his sardonic wit in the face of insurmountable odds. Still others admire his stoicism, for although he has much to resent about the world he inhabits, he accepts its irritations with grace and humor” (45). Pamela Hunt Steinle in *In Cold Fear*, which contains extensive research on readers’ responses to the controversies on the novel, observes a “paradoxical agreement” that both those who want and those who do not want to remove the novel from the classroom consider it to be “a central novel.” According to her, the paradox is brought about by a curious “general lack of textual exemplification,” which

might be the fault of the readers' political impatience, but also, as she argues, "may be equally a consequence of Salinger's narrative style": "the rambling quality of Holden's 'voice' makes a clear line of argument difficult," which results, as she observes, in "an individualized interpretation" (132). Chapman surely epitomizes such a confusion of readings of the "cult" novel.

In this chapter, I am going to read *The Catcher* in a way similar to the procedure adopted in Chapter One: if Richard Wright's *The Outsider* is ultimately interpreted as critique of the liberal conception of what can be called American Innocence, I would like to associate the confusion around the "cult" novel with the precarious ideological value of the American Innocence about which Holden's "madman" narrative proceeds. The liberal ideology that commits to innocence eventually turns precarious in the sense, put most simply, that the rebellious spirit of Rock'n'roll looks left-wing, while the individualism in the Cold-War westerns seems right-wing. There is, however, something more in the novel than the ultimate political ambiguity of the individualist commitment to cultural revolution as argued in the case of *High Noon*, for the confusion of readings does not happen in the sense that people take their own stands for and against the message of the novel. In this sense, the true problem about the novel does not lie in what the novel truly means, but why (some) people are seemingly so enthusiastic about the novel in spite of the confusion that shows how essentially arduous it is to reduce the novel to one clear and definite message. Thus, this chapter focuses on understanding the ambivalences that Holden's narrative creates as a symptom of the "absent cause" that his narrative suppresses, rather than asking about the novel's conclusion on the value of innocence. This means that I will virtually treat the confusion surrounding the novel's interpretation as if it were the same kind of narrative as the novel itself: Holden's narrative is an assiduous, if hysteric, speculation on the value of innocence, and our responses

to the novel necessarily follow the same form of speculation insofar as we live in the liberal culture of the latter half of the twentieth century. In other words, when one tries to talk about the value of the novel one will virtually end up talking about the value of innocence unless a critical insight can reach beyond the valorization of innocence, explicating what the precarious commitment to innocence as a symptom means.

I would appear to be virtually defining the novel as an “open text,” which is partly true. In the book that decides the present form of the analysis of Cold-War culture, *The Containment Culture*, Alan Nadel offers a penetrating argument about the relation between the discourse involved in McCarthyism and the novel’s narrative. As the subtitle of the book “American Narrative, Postmodernity, and the Atomic Age” suggests, Nadel’s study as a whole aims to locate the containment culture as a certain kind of pre-history of later postmodern novels, which is most successfully demonstrated in chapter six when it is argued that the postmodern and absurd condition of warfare depicted in Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22* and John Ford’s film *The Man who Shot Liberty Valance* exactly corresponds to the reality of the behind-the-scenes confusion in the Cuban crisis. Nadel here offers the historical condition on which “indeterminacy” in representation appears as necessary or even legitimate: “With the emergence of poststructuralist critique, many would argue that this problem [of indeterminacy in representation] is endemic to language. Whether or not this is so, the historically specific conditions of this period [of the early sixties] not only made this indeterminacy visible within the realm of public discourse but also connected it to the conditions of governance and the strategies of containment that had constructed the monologic discourse of the cold war” (191). According to Nadel, it is the containment culture of the era that prepared the conditions for the linguistic philosophy of deconstruction to

flourish.⁷⁷

There is an interval of a decade between *The Catcher* and *Catch-22*, and Nadel is basically specific about the difference between the fifties and the sixties.⁷⁸ I will not conclude that *The Catcher* is a postmodern and deconstructionist text, but it is also true that in *The Catcher* there are characteristics of “the monologic discourse of the cold war” and the symptoms of its disruption. In chapter three of the book, Nadel analyzes the novel in its relation of the discourse of McCarthyism, or “a term that describes generically the growing fear of subversion and the extreme measures to counter it, that developed and heightened from the end of World War II and to the early 1950s” (71). And he concludes that the problem, “cutting across issues of sexual license, sexual orientation, and theological commitment, elevated to the level of national security and dramatized most vividly by the Hiss case,” was “to penetrate the duplicity of phonies” and that this actually “manifests itself in Caulfield’s rhetoric not only in his diatribe against ‘phonies’ but also in a chronic pattern of signifiers that indicate the truthfulness of Caulfield’s testimony” (75) as in his repetitive uses of “if you really want to know the truth,” “I swear to God,” “I really did,” “I admit it” and so on. In short, Nadel depicts the self-contradiction in Holden’s narrative as a symbolic and critical repetition of the discourse of McCarthyism: “his autobiographical narratives betray the same structural authority as that of the historical narratives [of McCarthyism] he critiques, and there are no options left” (73). According to Nadel, Holden, relying on the rhetoric of testimony, talks as if he were someone summoned to one of the hearings of the HUAC, where the novel as a whole shows that its narrative is self-contradictory and Holden himself calls himself a “madman” and also, conclusively, suggests that the answer is not to

⁷⁷ For the subversion of “binary oppositions” in the novel, see Takeuchi.

⁷⁸ Nadel contrasts *Catch-22* of the sixties with *The Catcher*: “In *Catch-22*, Heller deconstructs the normative assumptions of *The Catcher in the Rye* shifting the breakdown from the subject to the rhetoric, that is, from the ‘catcher’ to the ‘catch’” (167).

talk at all.

Revealing as Nadel's argument is, however, to understand *The Catcher* in terms of the evil of McCarthyism in fact repeats, from this dissertation's viewpoint, the gesture of the Cold-War literature of freedom: it is a critique of Cold-War liberalism in terms of the incompleteness of the idea of freedom. Or, since Nadel actually points out in the mode of cultural studies the complicity between the novel and the "historical narratives" of the era, we should probably say that his argument does not reach the point that explains the specific "cult" character of the novel: it is true that the novel as Nadel depicts it turns the discourse of McCarthyism into a self-contradictory *reductio ad absurdum*, but, perhaps naturally enough, he does not seem to treat the novel as anything more than a version of the Cold-War narrative. In other words, what matters most in this chapter's argument is why the *reductio ad absurdum* of the Cold-War narrative turns into a tremendously popular novel: what the self-contradiction that Holden's narrative suffers from signifies in the end. This is the crucial enigma of the novel, as I believe, when one tries to read the novel critically after Nadel's argument.

To put this in a slightly different way, the political effect of reading the novel as a critique of McCarthyism necessarily fails to discern an aspect of the novel that could be used as a critique of our present. For our present ideological condition of neoliberalism is fundamentally, if misleadingly, defined as a refinement of the old (Cold-War) liberalism in terms of the expansion of freedom. In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, for example, David Harvey introduces the ideology thus: "Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (2). It is in this

sense, then, that a critique of Cold-War liberalism concerning its limited commitment to the realization of freedom as well as its partial tendency to be authoritarian (when it fails to acknowledge complete freedom) could prepare for the legitimization of neoliberalism.

My point here is that *The Catcher* could be read not only as a critique of Cold-War liberalism, but also as a latent critique of the neoliberal regime. The latter critique functions in relation to the symptomatic representation of war in the novel as well as the symptomatic self-contradiction in Holden's narrative, which I will argue is symbolic of the unstable representation of war, or, more precisely, World War II, in the work. The intriguing relation of the novel to memory of the war – as is argued later, while Holden cannot have fought in the war, it is very plausible to believe that the author's war experience has cast a grave shadow on the narrative – would partly explain the exceptional nature of this early Cold-War novel even among the literature of freedom: as the author probably started writing the prototype of the novel in the early forties, the novel itself, though published at the very beginning of the Cold-War era, was in fact written to some degree during the war.⁷⁹ This novel that concerns (the limits of) liberalism is at the same time haunted by the war for liberalism in its underside. This is the central predicament of self-contradiction that the novel's narrative suffers from.

While the critical re-evaluation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* played a significant role, as argued in Chapter One, in the emergence of what I call the literature of freedom, the critical ascent of *Huck Finn* happened in a well-known debate about its ending: Leo Marx's critique of the appraisals by T. S. Eliot and Lionel Trilling. The point of my argument here is to understand the logic of Marx's criticism rather than to pass judgment on the point of the debate. Criticizing Eliot's and Trilling's introductions to the new editions of

⁷⁹ For the process of the novel's creation, see Alsen.

the novel, both of which appreciate, in a typical late modernist move, the formal unity and the symbolic dimension of the novel, especially emphasizing the metaphorical significance of the (Mississippi) river as its spine, Marx in “Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and *Huckleberry Finn*” finds a double displacement in their reading: displacement concerning the formal unity and displacement concerning the moral dimension. Being usually keen critics of aesthetic unity and formal balance, Eliot and Trilling, according to Marx, strangely fail to do justice to the cumbersome ending section; this is because they, while talking about the novel’s moral dimension in psychological terms (such as Huck’s Oedipal relation to his father), fail to articulate the essence of the moral issue in the novel: the crime of slavery. It is their suppression of any reference to the true moral dimension of the novel that enables them to avoid finding fault with the novel’s structure. Explaining how the double displacement is brought about, Marx observes:

Is there an explanation? How does it happen that two of our most respected critics should seem to treat so lightly the glaring lapse of moral imagination in *Huckleberry Finn*? Perhaps – and I stress the conjectural nature of what I am saying – perhaps the kind of moral issue raised by *Huckleberry Finn* is not the kind of moral issue to which today’s criticism readily addresses itself. Today our critics, no less than our novelists and poets, are most sensitively attuned to moral problems which arise in the sphere of individual behavior. They are deeply aware of sin, of individual infractions of our culture’s Christian ethic. But my impression is that they are, possible because of the strength of the reaction against the mechanical sociological criticism of the thirties, less sensitive to questions of what might be called social or political morality. (435)

The avoidance of “what might be called social or political morality”: Marx articulates what I called biopolitical containment in the previous chapter. That is to say, Marx here clearly, if also politely, suggests that the consequences of the late modernist shift by Eliot and Trilling, which in this case saliently displaces a shameful social problem of the United States as the

novel's main subject with an interest in aesthetics, should be found in the symptomatic self-contradiction in their analysis of the novel concerning the aesthetic value of the ending.

Traces of biopolitical containment should also be analyzed in the Cold-War literature of freedom. The two ideological shifts in the culture of Cold-War liberalism are argued in Chapters One and Two, where I suggested that liberalism is posited not as a form of ideology but as its lack, and that not only liberalism but also attempts to amend its present form work within a framework that virtually displaces the social with the cultural. With these clarifications on the nature of Cold-War liberalism as a form of ideology, it becomes possible to read *The Catcher in the Rye* so as to find in it a potential critique of neoliberalism as well as of Cold-War liberalism. Or, rather, since the difference between Cold-War liberalism and neoliberalism does not mark any significant index in this chapter's argument (although the difference itself is undoubtedly meaningful in the critique of neoliberalism in general), it would be more correct to say that what is to be traced in the novel is a certain problematic area originating in the fifties that is still meaningful in the critical understanding of neoliberalism today. The problematic area concerns the memory of war that plays a significant role in the novel: or, the antinomy of the discourse of liberalism and that of war, which is formed in Holden's narrative.

Toward the end of *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Harvey thus observes the difficulty to resist the regime of neoliberalism:

I cannot convince anyone by philosophical argument that the neoliberal regime of rights is unjust. But the objection to this regime of rights is quite simple: to accept it is to accept that we have no alternative except to live under a regime of endless capital accumulation and economic growth no matter what the social, ecological, or political consequences. Reciprocally, endless capital accumulating implies that the neoliberal regime of rights must be graphically expanded across the globe by violence . . . , by imperialist practices . . . or through primitive accumulation . . . if necessary. By hook or by crook, the

inalienable rights of private property and the profit rate will be universally established. This is precisely what Bush means when he says the US dedicates itself to extend the sphere of freedom across the globe. (181-182)

This book is certainly one of the first brilliant works that virtually started the present scholarly trend of criticism of the culture of neoliberalism. Interestingly, however, when Harvey tries to explain the difficulty in effectively criticizing the ideology of neoliberalism, his argument suffers a certain kind of disjuncture: if neoliberalism necessarily involves “violence,” “imperialist practices” and “primitive accumulation,” (such as “displacement of peasant populations from the land” as Harvey explains [203]), it surely cannot be difficult to “convince anyone by philosophical argument” that neoliberalism is wrong. According to the quote, it is coincidental that “the neoliberal regime of rights” involves “violence,” “imperialist practices” and “primitive accumulation,” which is the reason why neoliberalism does not appear as “unjust.” Harvey’s argument here clearly, if symptomatically, demonstrates that the notion of historical contingency, which inserts the gap of disjuncture between the ideal of neoliberalism as liberal (and anti-totalitarian) expansion of freedom and its evil consequences, sheds light on the disguise which the political legitimacy of neoliberalism is guaranteed. It is only when “violence” appears as contingent to, or as not something inherent to the definition of, (neo)liberalism that (neo)liberalism comes to look defensible in spite of its obvious evil effects; and it is always defined thus.

In *American Empire*, which examines the schemes of imperialism in the US politics of diplomacy in the latter half of the twentieth century, Andrew Bacevich suggests that we look into the underside of the politics of “containment”:

To conceive U.S. grand strategy of from the late 1940s through the 1980s as “containment” – with no purpose apart from resisting the spread of Soviet power – is not wrong, but it is incomplete. More to the point, such a cramped conception of Cold War strategy actively

impedes our understanding of current U.S. policy. . . .

In short, U.S. grand strategy during the Cold War required not only containing communism but also taking active measures to open up the world politically, culturally, and, above all, economically – which is precisely what policymakers said they intended to do. (4)

After this, Bacevich quotes President Truman's address at Monticello in nineteen forty-seven, where the President does not mention the Soviets, instead outlining "a comprehensive vision for constructing a new international order" (5). If the Cold War officially concerns the containment of the Soviets and communism, the other side of the coin is to have liberalism prevail, especially in terms of its philosophy of the economy. That is to say, if our post-Cold War present features the global hegemony of (neo)liberalism where the central power resides in the United States, this hegemony has its roots in the Cold-War liberalism that was conceptualized in the tension with totalitarianism. If neoliberalism became a global hegemony after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the process was quick since the expansion of liberalism was already well prepared for during the Cold War.⁸⁰

The view that regards the Cold-War containment culture not as something defensive against the invasion of communism, but as something active in spreading the hegemony of liberalism comes from another view that identifies the role of America during the latter half of the twentieth century not as the leader of the free world, but as the imperial expansionist of the ideology of liberalism. The latter view is, to say the least, not popular, and many people would probably find it oxymoronic to call the advocate of "liberalism" an "imperial expansionist." Yet the reason liberalism appears as incompatible with imperialism concerns the disjuncture found in Harvey's wondering: it is when "violence" is presupposedly defined as something antithetic to liberalism that imperialism becomes what cannot be a hidden twin

⁸⁰ Actually, as early as nineteen fifty-five, William Appleman Williams ironically observes that "[o]ne of the central themes of American historiography is that there is no American Empire" in his inquiry into "extension of varying degrees of American sovereignty throughout the world" (379).

of liberalism. It is the suppression of war and imperialism on which our conception of liberalism stands. And, as I will argue, it is exactly from the suppression of this disjuncture that Holden's symptomatic narrative generates itself. In Chapter One, I argued that the notion of "American Innocence" valorized in Cold-War liberalism concerns suppression of history, especially the prehistory before the Cold War of the red thirties; analyzing *The Catcher*, this chapter argues how "American Innocence" stands on suppression of World War II of the forties, or, actually, the fifties of the Cold War themselves.

II. Trauma Theory and Late Modernism

When Alan Nadel interpreted the Cold-War nature of Holden's narrative in terms of its dependence on the rhetoric of testimony, "testimony" also had started assuming a new critical significance through works of such critics as Cathy Caruth and Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub.⁸¹ In fact, it is quite interesting to see a contrast between Nadel's case, where to focus on the testimonial nature involves a tendency to neglect the war experience in the narrative in comparison to its relevance to McCarthyism, and the meanings of "testimony" in so-called trauma theory in literary criticism, which, initiated mainly by Caruth and Felman, is more often than not used to read suppressed references to the trauma of World War II in various texts.

The shadow of World War II is salient in the novel. The best-known example would be Holden's comment that could be considered somehow to predict *Dr. Strangelove*: "I'm sort of glad they've got the atomic bomb invented. If there's ever another war, I'm going to sit right the hell on top of it" (141). Yet, since it is implausible to think that Holden had

⁸¹ For a more expanded way of thinking about the relation between war experience and trauma, see Torgovnick. On the way to interpret the "shadow" of World War II with a nuanced application of Trauma theory, my argument follows Torgovnick's example.

participated in the war, the shadow could only be attributed to the author's mental condition during and after it: according to Eberhard Alsen, J. D. Salinger suffered a nervous breakdown "some time in May of 1945" (8). In other words, this is the way that Holden's capricious anti-war attitude is seen, separated from "war experience," as a part of his general anti-social attitude which is represented in relation to his "madness." On the first page of the novel, Holden calls what he is talking about "this madman stuff" (1), also indicating at the end of the novel that he is being hospitalized in some kind of asylum at the present of the narrative. Being psychologized, Holden is thus identified as one of the rebels of the fifties; for example, as Peter Shaw observes, "Holden properly belongs to the contemporary American novel's procession of sensitive, psychologically crippled but superior characters," where "Holden's insight into the adult world's hypocrisies, . . . , appeared to derive precisely from his being its casualty" (97). In this context, the critic's task is to evaluate the authenticity of Holden's critique of the "phoniness" of the adult world, considering his mental condition; this is substantially what Shaw argues, referring to "the peculiar dynamics of adolescent psychology" (99), where, in a way similar to Robert Linder's argument that adolescence is a special stage when man's true nature of non-conformism fully expresses itself (24), he insists that rebellion and mental instability can bravely co-exist in adolescence. Yet if Holden's narrative fairly precisely reflects the contemporary discourse of the politics of containment, as Nadel argues, it is quite important to see that the most fundamental framework of what could be assumed as Cold-War discourse must be the definition of the Cold War as a suppression of war, or the conception of war without warfare. The novel's narrative, therefore, is to be interpreted not only in its psychological dimension, but also in terms of its symptomatic references to war.

When *Dream Catcher*, the sensational autobiography of J. D. Salinger's daughter, Margaret Salinger, was published in 2000, it seemed to become suddenly possible to locate

the novel not in the post-war context but in the post-Auschwitz one. For it reports: “As a counter intelligence officer my father was one of the first soldiers to walk into a certain, just liberated, concentration camp” (55). In relation to his sarcastic reference to the invention of the atomic bomb, Holden calls himself a “pacifist” (46). Yet, more significant than the specific references to warfare are various scattered references to death in the narrative, which can be grasped through the notion of trauma as a set of symptomatic expressions of the narrator’s obsession with death. The narrative’s salient feature is Holden’s inexplicable death wish, for which the text shows no definite reason: at the beginning of the novel he says, “I felt so lonesome, all of a sudden. I almost wished I was dead” (48); after this, he pretends as if he were dying after being shot (104, 150) and imagines his own funeral (155); in the end, he feels as if he were disappearing and then cries for help to his dead brother Allie (198). If these events are because of trauma, it becomes clear why Holden is strangely attracted to those who are dead: Allie and James Castle, Holden’s former classmate who, bullied by friends, throws himself through a window to his death. If Holden’s mysterious death wish is a displaced expression of trauma, the entire narrative is written as a displaced eulogy for the casualties of war. Here, Allie must be a pun on “allies.”

These are the shadows of war that haunt the text, and, when we notice the shadows, we also notice that another version of the rhetoric of war, namely the rhetoric of exclusion and inclusion, works quite prevalently in the narrative. It is important that Castle is forced to his death owing to his classmate’s bullying, as the novel of an adolescent kicked out of prep school emphasizes the rhetoric of exclusion and inclusion. Although the reason Holden is not able to fit into schools is never really clear (except his poor grades), he complains of Pencey prep that “everybody sticks together in these dirty little goddam cliques” (131) and, explaining how Pencey is “full of phonies,” he says, “Everybody was always *locking* their

door when somebody wanted to come in. And they had this goddam secret fraternity that I was too yellow not to join” (167). Holden’s sympathy for Castle is that for someone excluded and ostracized. Furthermore, it is because exclusion is imagined as the central crime in Holden’s imagination that he depicts in the title scene his utopia as a community of the innocent from which nobody falls away: he wants to be the catcher in the rye who catches “everybody if they start to go over the cliff” and, as he says, “that’s the only thing I’d really like to be” (173). When the novel is considered as structured in this way, it may seem plausible to see it as a traumatic expression at the center of which lies the unrepresentability of Auschwitz, or the crime against humanity that planned the extermination of minorities.

World War II signifies quite strongly in the novel in terms of Holden’s mysterious death wish and his critique of the rhetoric of exclusion and inclusion, but two problems arise when one tries to understand it as an expression of the author’s trauma from the Holocaust. One is that, as the narrative explicitly tells, the narrator-protagonist is non-Jewish: Caulfield is an Irish name, his father is an ex-Catholic and he himself is an atheist (112).⁸² The other is that, as mentioned above, although it is possible to imagine traces of the author’s trauma in the characterization of the narrator, Holden himself, being a non-Jewish American student of prep school, is the last one who could be seen as the victim of the trauma of this crime against humanity.

When Shoshana Felman in *Testimony* (co-authored with Dori Laub) presents the notion of literature in “the age of testimony,” however, she thinks of something completely different from a personal recording of a traumatic experience. Although the book is well known for its chapter on Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah*, the theoretical highlight, I believe, is to be found in

⁸² Although I argue that, for racial identity, the information about the author does not have any relevance, some may find it helpful to know how the author racially identifies himself when we consider the apparent lack of racial discourse in the novel. According to Margaret Salinger, “shortly after Sonny[J.D.]’s bar mitzvah, their parents told them that they weren’t *really* Jewish. Their mother, Miriam, was actually named Marie, and she had been ‘passing’ as a Jew since her marriage to Sol[J.D.’s father]” (20).

her argument on two post-war novels by Albert Camus, *The Prague* (1947) and *The Fall* (1956), which she interprets as significant examples of post-Auschwitz literature of testimony.

One way to understand Felman's project is to see it as an expansion of Paul de Man's theory of deconstruction into the ethical theory of literature concerning the representation of historical events (a chapter is dedicated to the "personal and historical significance" of "de Man's silence" on his anti-Semitic writings during the war [121]): the conception of the "literature of testimony" as "not simply a statement (any statement can but lag behind events), but as a performative *engagement* between consciousness and history, a struggling act of readjustment between the integrative scope of words and the unintegrated impact of events" (114). Yet the project is especially interesting because it is specifically about the historic context in which the performative nature of literary language grows significantly prevalent: the post-Auschwitz age of testimony when "contemporary narrative historically bear[s] witness, not simply to the impact of the Holocaust but to the way in which the impact of *history as holocaust* has modified, affected, shifted the very modes of the relationship between narrative and history" (95).

In this context of the conception of history as something that defies representation like the Holocaust, Felman reads the post-war works by Camus, or "a specifically *non-Jewish* European writer, one who, in his fate as a Frenchman, was nonetheless immediately implicated in the cataclysm of the Second World War" (96). Quoting Elie Wiesel's remark, "There is no such thing as a literature of the Holocaust, nor can there be," Felman argues that the works by Camus in fact responds to the impossibility Wiesel's remark points to: Camus

exemplifies the way in which traditional relationships of narrative to history *have changed* through the historical necessity of involving literature in action, in creating a new form of

narrative as testimony not merely to record, but to rethink and, in the act of its rethinking, in effect *transform history* by bearing literary witness to the Holocaust. I will argue that Camus does indeed exemplify this literary witness to the Holocaust and this new, transformational relationship between narrative and history, even though it is by no means clear or obvious that his texts in any way refer to, or claim to deal with, the Holocaust as such. (95)

The theoretical masterstroke enacted here is to translate the impossibility of literature after Auschwitz into a new definition of literature as performative testimony of the Holocaust as the unrepresentable, or to translate the failure of constative or objective recording of history into a literary achievement of testimony that performatively opens up a new space of negotiation between narrative and history. In this translation, literature, as the literature of testimony, in essence concerns the representation of “history as holocaust,” or as something the objective representation of which could be unethical, rather than the specific way to represent the Holocaust as a historical event. The Holocaust cannot be considered to be merely a single event; it is something that has changed the conception of history in general. And the changes in the definition of history can be traced in Camus’s existentialist novels on death en mass and the crisis of self.

More specifically, Felman sees in *The Fall* the latent relation between the post-Auschwitz literature of testimony and the aesthetic of modernism. First, she identifies the novel as a narrative of its own impossibility: “In bearing witness to the witness’s inability to witness . . . *The Fall* inscribes the Holocaust as the impossible historical narrative of an event without a witness, an event eliminating its own witness. Narrative has thus become the very writing of the impossibility of writing history” (200-201). Felman, then, generalizes Camus’s case into a general theory of modernism: “the cryptic forms of modern narrative and modern art always – whether consciously or not – partake of that historical impossibility of writing a historical narration of the Holocaust, by bearing testimony, through their very

cryptic form, to the *radical historical crisis in witnessing* the Holocaust has opened up” (201). If a historical event of the Holocaust has such a traumatic influence that results in the conception of history as holocaust, then modernist aesthetics is to be seen as the sign of its post-Auschwitz understanding of representation: the Holocaust here not only becomes something necessary, not contingent, to the formation of the modern aesthetic, but what is precluded here is a possibility to see the post-war aesthetic as a failure to grasp the historical reality of the war.

Actually, Felman must be aware of the paradoxical nature involved in her argument when she *historicizes* her version of the definition of literature as a performative act in terms of the age of testimony. Camus’s novels that never refer to the Holocaust can be seen as a literature of testimony that testifies to the impossibility of representing the Holocaust when they are put in the larger context of the age of testimony in which the Holocaust becomes paradigmatic of our understanding of history, or in which history in general is seen as holocaust. According to Felman, the fact that the modernist aesthetic testifies to the impossibility of testimony after the Holocaust

is why contemporary narrative – the narrative of that which, in the Holocaust, cannot be witnessed – has by necessity inaugurated a contemporary Age of Testimony, and why the *age of testimony* has also turned out to be, paradoxically enough, the somewhat unique *age of historical prooflessness*: the age of professional denial, by “revisionist” historians, of the very *evidence* of the historical existence of the Holocaust. (201)

The conception of the literature of testimony, which enables us to read a novel that never refers to the Holocaust as a post-Holocaust novel, constitutes the side of the coin the other side of which is made of the professional denial of the very existence of the Holocaust.

When the focus is on Felman’s argument about the relation between modernist aesthetics and the conception of the literature of testimony, it should be noted that Felman

virtually offers what could be called a poststructuralist explanation of the depoliticization of late modernist belief in aesthetic autonomy, as argued in the first chapter with reference to Fredric Jameson, Lawrence H. Schwartz, Serge Guilbaut and so forth. It is in the conception of liberal culture as free from any kind of ideology, which is formed under the Cold-War paradigm of the tension between liberalism and communism as a form of totalitarianism, that the Cold-War revival of modernism, both in terms of literary creation and criticism, insisted that literariness exists in the autonomy of apolitical aesthetics. It is true, in a sense, that Felman politicizes de Man's aesthetic theory; yet this "politicization," standing on de Man's aestheticism, ultimately solidifies the theoretical foundation of trauma theory that sees history as something that essentially defies representation. When Felman reads Camus's works as late modernist, she in fact offers another justification of late modernism that explains the necessity of the displacement of naturalism and realism by late modernism: the trauma of Auschwitz. Felman's reading is political insofar as the impossibility of representing history *per se* is acknowledged. In other words, she virtually offers a definition of late modernism as the testimony of the impossibility of representing history.

In fact, *The Catcher* is still in accord with Felman's argument at this point: the novel clearly declares its departure from old realism and naturalism and its distaste for history. The well-known opening of the novel reads:

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. (1)

Holden starts his narrative with the clear gesture of identifying the realist mode of Charles Dickens as "crap" and rejecting it. Certainly, this choice of modernism over realism is told

under the disguise of the narrator's reluctance to talk of his identity and background (so it is possible to imagine that Holden's post-Auschwitz choice of modernism has something to do with the author's reluctance to talk of racial identity); yet, the opening declaration correctly summarizes the mode of the entire narrative, where Holden's critique of "phony" society is always voiced from a personal and individual viewpoint, eventually making the critique cultural rather than social. The novel's mode is clearly late modernist insofar as the effect of the narrative concerns not so much its specific and realist content, or the correctness or credibility of each and every instance in Holden's critique, as its modernist and general mode of narration, or the thoroughly critical attitude to the present American culture by the personality of Holden as envisaged as the origin of the narrative.

This concerns the unreliable nature of the content of the narrative. The most conspicuous example is that while Holden, lamenting his elder brother's "prostituting" with Hollywood, cries out, "If there's one thing I hate, it's the movies. Don't even mention them to me" (2), he imitates tap-dancing to kill time, saying, "I started imitating one of those guys in the movies. In one of those *musicals*. I hate the movies like poison, but I get a bang imitating them" (29) (so, here again, one can say his attitude toward movies is traumatic), he later confesses that "I'd been to the movies with Brossard and Ackley before" (37), and also imitates someone being shot, swearing, "The goddam movies. They can ruin you. I'm not kidding" (104); also, explaining the beauty of his sister Phoebe's personality, he uses the example of "this French movie, *The Baker's Wife*": "If you take her to a pretty good movie, she knows it's a pretty good movie" (67). Speaking of Phoebe, it is understood that the self-contradictions in Holden's narrative are inserted intentionally since, though he claims when introducing her that "She's very good in spelling. She's very good in all her subjects, but she's best in spelling" (160), the writing in her notebook shown in the text immediately

after contains several mistakes; and before this, Holden himself points out that Phoebe spells “Hazle” as “Hazel” (68). More generally, even the chronology the narrative relates stands rather on the disputable side: while it is told, in line with Holden’s regular habit of exaggeration, that Ackley takes “about five hours” (36) to get prepared when Holden, Brossard and he are trying to go to see a movie from Pencey, Holden’s father would “turn on the news or something” (178), according to Phoebe, when Holden leaves his parents’ apartment very long after he “sat at that goddam bar till around one o’clock” (150) on his second night in New York City. The reader must choose the psychological effect Holden’s narrative gives over the precision of description of “all that David Copperfield kind of crap.” To follow the de-Manian terms, the performative aspect of the narrative is more important than its constative meaning, which is the reason why it is correctly defined as a narrative by a “madman”: Holden calls himself “the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life” (16). Naturally enough, to acknowledge the unreliable aspect of the narrative would lead to the understanding that, as is most clearly shown by Holden’s ambivalence toward movies, it is no use trying to define in a concrete way what exactly “phony” means for Holden especially when he says, “when I’m with somebody that’s corny, I always act corny too” (60). The essence of the narrative is symptomatic: it is a symptomatic expression where the absent cause that brings about the symptoms, rather than the manifest content of the narrative, should be interpreted. In other words, as Nadel demonstrates in another context, the narrative should be read in terms of what it suppresses.

This is the reason Old Spencer should be a history teacher. Since Holden’s narrative works in late-modernist aesthetics that, presupposing the impossibility of history as Felman argues, stands on the departure from traditional realism, the narrative underlines that Holden fails in history. Spencer testifies: “I flunked you in history because you knew absolutely

nothing” (10). Of course, as the narrative reads, Holden fails in not only history, but every subject except English, but Holden’s departure from Pencey is symbolized in his lack of knowledge of history. In the opening scene, the novel clearly shows its aesthetic of late modernism, where the rejection of “all that David Copperfield kind of crap” is followed by the revelation of the narrator’s disinterest in history.

The novel’s late modernist departure from realism leads to the concern for authenticity, following Felman’s trauma theory or her depiction of Camus’s post-war works. In addition to Holden’s frequent critique of everything “phony,” when he visits the piano bar Ernie’s and is disgusted by what he sees as the snobbish atmosphere the renowned pianist Ernie puts on, he thinks about the paradox of artistic authenticity: “I swear to God, if I were a piano player or an actor or something and all those dopes thought I was terrific, I’d hate it. I wouldn’t even want them to *clap* for me. . . . If I were a piano player, I’d play it in the goddam closet” (84). While this concerns the difference between true artistic value and popularity, where the latter could corrupt the former, he also claims later, regarding the Lunts, that a true artist should be free of self-consciousness: “And if any actor’s really good, you can always tell he knows he’s good, and that spoils it” (117). These examples suggest how the late modernist paradox concerning the notion of artistic authenticity in fact relates to the Cold-War paradigm of high and pure art against mass culture. Symbolized most clearly by his hysteric disgust for Hollywood to which he insists his elder brother sold himself, Holden is a typical late modernist in his conception of art.⁸³

The novel demonstrates the late modernist aesthetic obsessed with war, or death and the rhetoric of exclusion and inclusion. In this sense, the novel rightly fits the definition of post-Auschwitz modernism that Felman expounds brilliantly. Yet, I would argue, it is a

⁸³ For the value of authenticity in the novel, see Cheever.

Cold-War novel rather than a post-Auschwitz one: under the suppression that manifests its existence paradoxically through the symptoms, the novel imagines a war not as something that happened before to end history, but rather as something concurrent and present, if invisible or disguised.

III. Late Modernism and the Aesthetic of Consensus

Since the novel is related exclusively by the first-person narrative of Holden Caulfield, it is Holden's voice that decides the novel's style and form. Although it is important to see the late-modernist aspects in his voice, in so doing, a certain problem arises: those aspects are crucially different from the aesthetics of late modernism as the ideological revival of the aesthetics of the novels of the nineteen-twenties, which Jameson in *A Singular Modernity* uses as the main point of reference. Furthermore, the aesthetic of the novel is to a certain degree even contrived as a reaction to the older aesthetic. Most simply, the novel belongs to late modernism as well as what I call the literature of freedom.

Standing on the disjuncture from history, Holden's voice represents psychological realism.⁸⁴ It is not correct to deny a certain "realist" aspect in the narrative since the first-person narrative with its effective rhetoric of appealing, pleading, exaggeration and impetuosity surely reads "real" to the reader; in the sense that a careful reader necessarily finds in the end that what Holden talks are not necessarily proved altogether correct, it is, paradoxically, nothing if not "real." The point about the novel's realism is that it does not try

⁸⁴ For example, Schaub argues: "The term 'realism,' which had connected art and politics in the thirties, remained in play but was now [at the convergence between the New York critics and the New Critics in the fifties] redefined in ways meant to distinguish it sharply from either 'naturalism' or 'social realism'" where "a positivist (mimetic) expectation of external and social detail seems to interfere with a more dominant focus on psychological and formal characteristics – dramatic tension, conflict, complexity – that directly overlapped with the formalist terminology of the New Critics" (31).

to relate something that could attest to empirical truth, but rather appeals to psychological truth the narrator tries to communicate.⁸⁵

It is even possible to see the novel as a thorough search of the mode of psychological realism because, while the narrative compels the reader to focus on its performative aspect rather than on its references in terms of accuracy, the impressive rhetoric of Holden's narrative is eventually proved to be that of the hysteric or "madman": the gradual movement in the exercise of the rhetoric in the novel ultimately leads to its bankruptcy.⁸⁶ Impressively enough, Holden's last words in the novel read: "Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody" (214). Ultimately, here, the essence of psychological realism is defined as its own negation. It is true that Holden's narrative flourishes variations of majestic rhetoric, but its essence lies in self-contradiction.

In *A Pinnacle of Feeling*, Sean McCann studies, mainly focusing on *The Catcher*, Saul Bellow's *Adventures of Augie March*, and Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, what John Updike later calls "new room for shapelessness for life as it is lived." When the new fiction of the fifties, or the literature of freedom, as late modernist works tried to materialize a new aesthetic, one of the main problems concerned how to conceptualize the aesthetic of freedom, that is to say, an aesthetic that represents what we can now define as freedom of the text from the authorial control: as McCann summarizes it, "if many of the new writers of the fifties became fascinated with the appeal of shapelessness, almost inevitably many of them were therefore troubled to some degree by the question of what would give structure to their artistic, and implicitly political, flights" (105).⁸⁷

McCann finds a parallelism between the literary aesthetic shared by Slinger, Bellow

⁸⁵ For the "reality" of Holden's colloquial voice, see the classic analysis by Costello.

⁸⁶ For the psychological structure of the novel, see Bryan.

⁸⁷ For the commitment to shapelessness of the new fiction of the fifties, see also chapter three of Schaub "Form and Authority" (50-67).

and Nabokov and “the main problem addressed in James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock’s classic work in the theory of public choice, *The Calculus of Consent*” where they “sought to answer a question widely discussed in the pluralist theory that dominated academic political science in the fifties.” The core of the parallelism is the mystical belief in consensus: “In the major fiction of the fifties, just as with Buchanan and Tullock’s highly abstract theory, . . . , satisfaction comes from the way a reassuring collective agreement can seem to arise naturally from the apparent randomness created by individual choice” (110). While John Higham’s critique of “the cult of the ‘American consensus’” in the academics of history in nineteen fifty-nine is well known, McCann makes sure that the belief in the underlying consensus worked strongly even in the discourse of pluralism of the era. As he quotes from “the era’s preeminent voice of pluralist theory,” Robert Dhal observes: “Prior to politics, beneath it, enveloping it, restricting it, conditioning it, is the underlying consensus on policy that usually exists in the society among a predominant portion of the politically active members. Without such a consensus no democratic system would long survive the endless irritations and frustrations of elections and party competition” (117).⁸⁸ McCann explains the Cold-War valorization of consensus results from the reaction against “the cult of leadership” that, epitomized by the figure of Franklin Roosevelt, started with the New Deal and was consolidated by the wartime atmosphere: by the late forties, “[e]ven admirer of FDR now worried about the excesses of executive power. ‘We’ve had our bellyful of great leaders,’ the former New Dealer John Franklin Carter announced in 1953: ‘Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, Churchill and Roosevelt’” (111). As McCann associates Buchanan and Tullock’s pluralist understanding of democracy with that of Hannah Arendt, the Cold-War valorization of consensus is the other side of the coin of the critique of totalitarianism in the Cold-War

⁸⁸ Originally from Dhal (150).

imagination of liberalism.

The cultural representation of Cold-War pluralism is most clearly demonstrated in Sidney Lumet's 1957 film *12 Angry Men*, which, Peter Biskind argues, demonstrates "the end-of-ideology ideology of the corporate liberals" whose other name is "pluralism itself" (16). This well-known classic is a drama almost exclusively conducted in a jury room, where the jury-member hero (Henry Fonda) tenaciously converts the rash verdict of guilty by the other eleven jurors regarding the boy-culprit accused of the murder of his father. As is most clearly shown by the episode in which the last man who resists Fonda's persuasion eventually turns out to be prejudiced against the rebellious youth owing to his own trouble with his son, Fonda embodies the kind of open and impartial liberalism that believes in logical procedure and rationalism, and his victory signifies the achievement of the principle of "innocent until proven guilty." Biskind rightly calls Fonda's liberalism "corporate," however, paying attention to the intimacy emphasized in the movie between Fonda and Juror Number Four played by E. G. Marshall: a Wall-Street Stockbroker. As Biskind points out, "[i]n the thirties, during the New Deal, when an alliance of leftists and liberals, Communists and Democrats, faced an alliance of rightists and conservatives, reactionaries and Republicans, across the abyss of the Depression, Fonda and Marshall would have been enemies" (14). Quoting from David Riesman and Nancy Grazer's "Intellectuals and Discontented Classes" to the effect that "'Liberal intellectuals' and 'Wall Street' had become 'natural allies'" (15) in the fifties, Biskind concludes thus, referring to Arthur Schlesinger's "vital center": "The understanding between Fonda and Marshall forms the backbone of the corporate-liberal alliance of the center" (16). The "center," according to Biskind, stands on a certain kind of pluralism: "Although its nameless cast of characters are meant to be just plain folks, fifties Everyman, they actually correspond to clearly defined political types" (15), where, as the film

demonstrates, “they could adjust their differences by reasoning together, if they would only avoid ideologizing their conflicts.” This is because, with “the example of Nazi Germany and Communist Russia fresh in their minds, fifties corporate liberals blamed ideology for polarizing societies, pitting one class or ethnic group against another, thereby rendering democracy unworkable.” In this sense, as Biskind defines it, the “common language Fonda and Marshall speak” is “pluralism”: “Pluralists believed that America was composed of a diversity of interest groups which competed on a more or less equal basis for a piece of the pie” (16).⁸⁹ This is another explanation of what McCann finds in the mysterious reliance on consensus in Buchanan and Tullock’s argument on “public choice,” where “methodological individualism that that pluralism shared with neoclassical economics” also functions as “the premises” (110).

Naturally, Biskind’s conception of “corporate liberal” involves criticism of its centrist nature: “When Fonda persuades [the dissidents against him] to join the others, he succeeds in domesticating the extremists, making bad reactionaries into good conservatives. Conservatives were the final ingredient in the fifties political pie” (19). Yet, the true problem in the Cold-War pluralism does not lie in its compromising way to forge the consensus:

The fruit of Fonda’s labors has been the unanimous verdict for acquittal. But the verdict itself feels like an anticlimax. What is important in this film is not that the jury acquitted the defendant but that the decision was unanimous. *12 Angry Men* is more interested in consensus than in justice. Consensus, the shared agreement between corporate liberals and conservatives (however reluctant) on fundamental premises of pluralism, was — outside, perhaps, of the H-bomb — the fifties’ most important product. (20)

⁸⁹ As I will argue later about the lack of racial discourse in the novel, what is crucial in Biskind’s explanation of pluralism in the fifties is that it is imagined not in terms of identity, but of interests. In *The Vital Center*, although a book that fundamentally decides the shape of Cold-War liberalism, Schlesinger introduces the suggestion by President Conant of Harvard for “really effective inheritance and gift taxes and the breaking up of trust funds and estates” in order to “use the power of government to reorder the ‘haves and have nots’ every generation to give flux to our social order” rather favorably, saying, “Here is one field which calls for bold and imaginative action” (175). This example clearly shows that pluralism of interests is not merely capitalist drivel and could function in some cases as a power to amend social evils.

To put this in a different way, the film is seen as a precise demonstration of the Cold-War pluralism exactly because it does not fail to show that the pluralism prefers a consensus among juries to the truth of the crime. This explains how difficult and thus important, or important since difficult, the appeal to consensus is in the climate of the Cold War, where the antinomy of individualism and conformism always haunts both artistic and political imaginations. Consensus or agreement is always forged mysteriously, as McCann argues, on the suppression of the truth. The Cold-War pluralism stands on the choice of consensus over truth.

The aesthetic of formlessness attempted in *The Catcher*, *Augie March* and *Lolita* in fact has the structure of persuasion. The aesthetic is that of consensus or agreement, where the first-person narrative of “confession” in the novels ultimately elicits the reader’s agreement. Essentially, when the novels take the form of the narrator’s direct appeal to the reader, their value is secured only by the reader’s approval of the narrator’s personal value, although how the consensus is forged always remains literarily mysterious.⁹⁰ In a certain sense, it is possible to see in this aesthetic of consensus a variation of Lionel Trilling’s appraisal of “negative capability,” or “willingness to remain in uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts,” as the essence of literary or artistic sensibility. For the mysterious consensus to be forged between the narrator and the reader means to accept the self-contradictions in a literary work as they are, avoiding to reduce it to an “ideology.” As readers of *The Catcher* find when they appreciate Holden in spite of his extravagant rhetoric and logic – in accordance with Whissen’s and Steinle’s observation –, the appeal to mysterious consensus invents the literary value of the novel in the beyond of the surface of the text. This is the

⁹⁰ For the aesthetic of consensus, see also Schaub’s chapter “Rebel without a Cause: Mailer’s White Negro and Consensus Liberalism” (137-162).

liberal value of the “confessional” novel of the late modernist aesthetic of formlessness and consensus.

As Buchanan and Tullock’s argument on public choice fundamentally shares the primacy of the notion of “rational choice” with neoclassical economics, however, so Henry Fonda in *12 Angry Men* never resorts to pleading, intimidating or threatening. In spite of the title, Fonda in the movie is actually an exceptional non-angry man. The movie as a whole demonstrates the victory of rationalism through him, where the bad guy has in the end to show his unstable psychology as the reason of his obstinacy. The contrast, then, is clear in *The Catcher*. When Holden’s performance on the whole appears as irrational (being the narrative of a “madman”) through his idiosyncratic rhetoric, the novel’s structure of persuasion appeals to what is in the beyond of rationalism: as Nadel demonstrates in proving Holden’s overemphasis on the testimonial nature of his narrative, he habitually tries to underline the importance of his remarks with the repetitive use of “really” in such phrases as “I really did,” “he really was,” “it really does,” with recourse to additional phrases like “I’ll admit,” “I swear to God,” “I’m not kidding,” “I mean it,” and, most impressively, by appealing to the truth: “if you want to know the truth,” making his narrative apparently confessional (75-76). Most symptomatic of his failure to forge a rational consensus with the reader is found in what he says when he tries to prove the charm of his beloved sister Phoebe: “You should see her. You never saw a little kid so pretty and smart in your whole life” (67). What Holden wants here is agreement or consensus without logic or rationality: he impetuously skips any logical persuasion, heading directly for the reader’s acceptance.

In this sense, it is possible to say that Holden looks for sympathy or intimacy rather than agreement or consensus. Or, it might be more correct to say that the overemphasis on the value of what is said in the narrative symptomatically shows the paradox of Holden’s desire

to gain the reader's sympathy without reasoning and his tacit knowledge of its self-contradiction and impossibility. As he imagines the utopia of "all these kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all" where he works as the catcher and also knows its impossibility (as he says, "I know it's crazy" [173]), his narrative symptomatically shows in exactly the same double bind the desire to forge the community of intimacy with his readers and its predictive impossibility. In his narrative, Holden knows that he wants sympathy and intimacy rather than logical or rational persuasion, and, exactly because he knows that what he wants is illogical and irrational, the performance of his narrative only grows impetuously symptomatic, implying that the essence of the narrative rather lies in the narrator's tacit knowledge of the narrative's own self-contradiction or its own impossibility.

When Holden's girl friend Sally Hazes rejects his abrupt and unrealistic suggestion that, renting a car from a friend of his, they should travel to Massachusetts and Vermont the next day, saying, "We'll have oodles of time to do those things – all those things. I mean after you go to college and all . . ." (133), where it is also indicated that Holden is losing his mental stability by Sally's remark, "Stop screaming at me, please" (132). Holden's answer is: "It wouldn't be the same at all. You don't see what I mean at all" (133). If the answer means that what really matters for Holden is the gratification of his impulse *per se* in doing what one wants to do rather than merely actualizing a plan into reality, it ultimately means that for Holden what is important is to turn the impossible into the possible: he impulsively wants his interlocutor to agree to his impossible plan rather than really go to those places with Sally. In this sense, Holden's narrative always concerns impossibility, the self-contradictions involved in his own narrative, or the vacant desire that desires what it knows to be impossible.

Of course, Holden's commitment to the impulsive rather than to planning clearly reflects the discourses of Cold-War liberalism, where planning is to be seen as a variation of

totalitarianism. If Holden is to be identified as a Cold-War liberal in this sense, then, he in fact is its *reductio ad absurdum*: he is demonstrating in its impossible form the pure desire involved in the definition of Cold-War liberalism which Sally Haze is logically correct in remonstrating with. Holden's narrative should be understood as truly symptomatic when it thus betrays the impossibility, or the gap that is usually concealed by the ideology, of Cold-War liberalism. It is because the narrative as a whole concerns the notion of impossibility that it is appropriately attributed to a "madman."

In the well-known essay "Modernism and Imperialism," Fredric Jameson defines modernism as the suppression as well as the symptomatic representation of imperialism: with reference to E. M. Forster's *Howards End*, he argues that the rhetoric of poetic metaphors in the modernist novel suppresses the reality of the colonial India that influences the daily life of the metropolis of London, where the metaphoric suppression at the same time could be understood as how the novel is written in the global context of imperialism. Although Jameson's object of study there is the high modernism at the beginning of the twentieth century, a late modernist work like *The Catcher*, whose late-modern nature is most clearly signified by its post-historicism and rejection of realism, also works in a similar double bind of suppression and representation. The new fiction in the Cold-War fifties like *The Catcher* looks for the realization of the aesthetic of formlessness in accordance with Cold-War liberalism's anti-totalitarianism, where the aesthetic is realized by making the novel's structure serve for the valorization of the first-person narrator's forging the consensus with the reader. This is where critique of imperialism is displaced by the liberal commitment to anti-totalitarianism; what matters here is that the novel, seeking for consensus, rather demonstrates its impossibility in a symptomatic form. Put most simply, in the case of *The Catcher*, what the narrative states as a narrative could all be turned upside down in terms of

its true performance as far as its narrator is defined as a madman. When Holden puts on a red hunting hat, for example, he could be a Cold-War red hunter, as Nadel observes (71); yet, it seems also possible to regard the hat as a sign of his identifying himself as the victim of the red-hunting. The red hunting hat is a floating sign in the narrative since the truth of the madman's narrative is to be found in its symptom, its self-contradiction, not in any definite meanings it states or performs. The narrative only wants to forge the consensus with the reader doing whatever the narrator could do. And with such "deconstruction" of signs what happens is a suppression of the critique of imperialism.

IV. Biopolitics or Thanatopolitics? : Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben

When Holden's narrative is psychologized, it becomes biopolitical. It may be possible to see Holden as a forerunner of student activists in the sixties, but the rebellious youth of the fifties does not talk about politics *per se*. When, as quoted, he says, "I'm sort of glad they've got the atomic bomb invented. If there's ever another war, I'm going to sit right the hell on top of it" (141), he is sarcastic rather than politically pacifist (and when he calls himself "pacifist," it is actually after losing a fight with his fellow student Stradlater: "I'd only been in about two fights in my life, and I lost *both* of them. I'm not too tough. I'm a pacifist, if you want to know the truth" [45-46]). Then, his main concerns are death, life and sex. Asked by Phoebe to name what he likes, he can only think of the nuns he met (who may also be related to poverty), his former schoolmate James Castle who committed suicide, and his dead brother Allie. At the same time, one of Holden's favorite topics is women: in addition to his two girl friends Sally Haze and Jane Gallagher, the former of whom he dates with and the latter of whom he does not dare to call, his narrative lists Mrs. Morrow whom he got acquainted with

during the train ride, Miss Faith Cavendish whom he calls from the hotel he is staying at, the three women from Seattle he picks up in the hotel's bar room, Lillian Simons whom he met at Ernie's, Sunny or the prostitute he invites to his room at the hotel, and so on. To sum up, on his first day in Manhattan, his activities are almost always involved with women, and on the second day he dates Sally, and after that his concern focuses on Phoebe. He is confused or ambiguous also on the topic of sex: he says, "If you want to know the truth, I'm a virgin" (92); "Sex is something I just don't understand. I swear to God I don't" (62); "Women kill me. They really do. I don't mean I'm oversexed or anything like that – although I am quite sexy" (54).

Although it could be said that when Holden is thus interested in death and sex, he is virtually talking about life throughout his narrative, I believe that the novel's psychologized realism in fact succeeds in depicting a new kind of reality in accordance with its late modernism.⁹¹ Holden's interest in apparently meaningless or inexplicable details, such as the whereabouts of the ducks in Central Park during the winter (60), Allie's baseball mitt all over which poems are written (38), Jane Gallagher's idiosyncrasy of not moving king in checker game (78), broken pieces of a music record Holden gives to Phoebe (163) and so on, shows his special and charming sensitivity and delineates the shape of the "reality" on which this late modernist novel demonstrates its psychological realism. Furthermore, his interest in the details, which traditional realism would have neglected since they are apparently meaningless, is self-referentially explained and justified when he mentions the episode of his schoolmate Richard Kinsella: in the course of Oral Expression, Kinsella always digresses when he tries to talk of something, and it is the digression, rather than the main boy of the speech, Holden loves (178-179). The apparently meaningless details, which digress from Holden's main

⁹¹ Schaub explains the conception of the "new reality" with the emergence of Cold-War liberalism in his introduction, "The Liberal Narrative" (3-24).

narrative, not only function as a part of the psychological realism, but also are meaningful for its anti-totalitarian “digressive” nature.

Psychological realism of the novel stands on the paradigm of biopolitics. Holden’s temperamental critique of everything “phony” and/or “corny” – the former used thirty-five times in the novel, and the latter twenty-two times – in effect translates the object of the critique from something politically amended to what one dislikes and hates. The problem of the translation is most clearly indicated by the episode with Mr. Antolini. The homosexual panic Holden demonstrates when Antolini touches his head while he is sleeping, on the one hand, reflects the climate of the era and, on the other, shows that Holden’s biopolitical narrative necessarily has one biopolitical climax (191-193). In other words, when McCarthyism coordinates its red-hunting with persecutions of homosexuals, the Cold-War regime shows its nature of biopolitical suppression.⁹² What Holden shows in the scene is a homosexual panic in the sense that, although he later wonders if what Antolini did does not imply anything sexual (194-195), he just lights out of Antolini’s apartment, without trying to understand the situation. Just as Holden’s reliance on the notions of “phony” and “corny” essentially means that his value judgment depends on his likes and dislikes, so the characteristic of his attitude toward Antolini’s act does not leave any room for mutual understanding: when he judges society’s or other people’s phoniness or corniness, he acts as if he were in a homosexual panic. However glib he may be in his narrative, he in fact is someone for whom persuasion does not generally work. In this sense, Holden’s narrative is a performance that shows his identity, and identity here means something cultural and not political: or biopolitical in the sense that the identity is comparable here to his nature of

⁹² For the sexual politics of McCarthyism, see, among others, Cuordileone, Corber, Johnson.

When Mr. Antolini warns Holden the danger of “falling” (187-188), it is rather clear from the post-queer viewpoint that Antolini’s argument has a tacit reference to homosexuality, which is perfectly tabooed in the climate of McCarthyism.

personality, which is fixed.

The biopolitical aspect of Holden's narrative is significant when the novel is seen as a Cold-War narrative. For Holden's frequent and peculiar use of the verb "kill" reveals the fundamental nature of the narrative's rhetoric. In addition to the usages in the regular sense, Holden uses the word to show the highest degree both of appreciation and disgust. Explaining how he likes the novel *The Great Gatsby*, he says, "Old Gatsby. Old sport. That killed me" (141). When he talks about or with Phoebe, she "kills" him many times (68, 159, 160, 161, 164, 175, 176, 207, 212). On the other hand, when a rich alumnus of Pencey, Ossenburger, in his speech confesses that he is always talking to Jesus, even when he is driving, after "fifty corny jokes" (16), the phoniness of his speech "kills" him (17). Similarly, when "this Joe Yale-looking guy" was giving "a terrific-looking girl" (85) "a feel under the table, and at the same time telling her about some guy in his dorm that had eaten a whole bottle of aspirin and nearly committed suicide," they "kill" him (86). It is true that the verb is also used in the more regular sense as an exaggeration of punishing, in such cases as when Holden wants to "kill whoever'd written" "Fuck you" on the wall (201) and Phoebe insists that their father will "kill" Holden when he knows of Holden's expulsion (164, 166, 172, 173); Holden's idiosyncrasy here eventually makes him say: Phoebe "killed Allie, too" (69).

Holden's idiosyncratic use of the verb with the inflation of its denotation testifies to the novel's dependence on biopolitical rhetoric: here, everything eventually turns into a matter of life and death. In the background to this, there is his mysterious and symptomatic death wish. For one thing, as I argued in previous chapters, the biopolitical rhetoric reveals the end-of-ideology ideology of Cold-War liberalism: the matter of life and death should be highlighted since it is seen as a last resort, free from anything ideological. On the other hand, however, we should also notice here that, in this nineteen fifty-one novel, the Cold-War

condition is fundamentally articulated in terms of life and death because it essentially is another kind of war condition. Everything turns into a matter of life and death in time of war: since the Cold War is in the last analysis a war, Holden perceives his world in biopolitical rhetoric.

Michel Foucault thus defines biopolitics in “*Society Must Be Defended*”:

What does this new technology of power, this biopolitics, this bio-power that is beginning to establish itself, involve? . . . [A] set of processes such as the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population, and so on. It is these processes – the birth rate, the mortality rate, longevity, and so on – together with a whole series of related economic and political problems . . . which, in the second half of the eighteenth century, become biopolitics’ first objects of knowledge and the targets it seeks to control. It is at any rate at this moment that the first demographers begin to measure these phenomena in statistical terms. (243)

To sum up, the birth of biopolitics means the emergence of the notion of “population” as the object to be governed, where the statistics that makes “population” tangible and treatable starts to embody a new kind of political rationality.

Although Foucault identifies its birth in the second half of the eighteenth century, as Michael Szalay argues in *New Deal Modernism*, the biopolitical regime grew the dominant form of governing with the start of the New Deal in the US, symbolically with the establishment of COGSIS (Committee on Government Statistics and Information Services) and the political and administrative uses of the information of censuses COGSIS regularly carried out.⁹³ Foucault calls the power that works on population “regulatory” in contrast to another form of power that works on body, or “discipline” he explicated in *Discipline and Punish*. The distinction between the two forms is important for Foucault in order to articulate “one element that will circulate between the disciplinary and the regulatory, which will also

⁹³ See especially his introduction (1-23).

be applied to body and population alike, which will make it possible to control both the disciplinary order of the body and the aleatory events that occur in the biological multiplicity”: “The element that circulates between the two is the norm” (252-253). Since discipline is the power that, working altogether in such institutions as army, school, hospital, and prison, “centers on the body, produces individualizing effects, and manipulates the body as a source of forces that have to be rendered both useful and docile” (249), the emergence of biopolitical government like the New Deal administration is then understood as the emergence of “the normalizing society,” where, according to Foucault, “the norm of discipline and the norm of regulation intersect along an orthogonal articulation”: “We are, then, in a power that has taken control of both the body and life or that has, if you like, taken control of life in general – with the body as one pole and the population as the other” (253).

Two things could be observed from Foucault’s theorization. First, Foucault makes it very clear that Holden, and, furthermore, the heroes in the Cold-War literature of freedom in general, should be seen as critics of what Foucault calls the normalizing society: it is because “life in general” is politically controlled under the post-New Deal America that every kind of anti-social activity can always be interpreted as resistance of the controlling society, where the politics of the resistance should take the form of cultural politics that focuses mainly on everyday life. Or, more simply, since the heroes of the literature of freedom sees their society as normalizing in terms not of its ideological tendency, but of its governing technology, they necessarily looks for the anti-totalitarian commitment to freedom.⁹⁴ From this understanding, then, it can be also observed that, when the evil of normalization is considered to result not from any ideology, but from the advancing technology of biopolitical government, the totalitarian state, such as Nazi Germany, and liberal America should seem to constitute either

⁹⁴ For Holden’s biopolitics as a resistance against the system of school as a biopolitical regime, see Brookeman.

side of the same coin: the two have different political tendency, one evil and the other liberating, but the evil of normalization and control does not lie in their difference, but in the similar ways of administration, governing and political technology that, like government through statistics, was brought about under the name of new political rationality.⁹⁵

When Giorgio Agamben critically associates the notion of biopolitics with the atrocities of Nazi regime in *Homo Sacer*, he criticizes Foucault's conceptualization: "Foucault, . . . , never dwelt on the exemplary places of modern biopolitics: the concentration camp and the structure of the great totalitarian states of the twentieth century" (4).⁹⁶ Yet, Foucault's dissociation of biopolitics from genocide cannot be accidental. When he first conceptualizes discipline in *Discipline and Punish*, he argues that the modern disciplinary technology takes place with "the disappearance of the tortured, dismembered, amputated body, symbolically branded on face or shoulder, exposed alive or dead to public view" (8), which is not merely cruel, but follows a different paradigm of governing than our modern one: discipline is a new technology in the sense that it focuses on life rather than death. When he first uses the word "biopolitics" in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, he characterizes it as "a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through" (139). In Foucault's schema that contrasts the sovereign power that can kill and the disciplinary or regulatory power of biopolitics, the latter in essence concerns life, not death.

To the contrary, Agamben epitomizes the biopolitical regime in Nazi atrocities. Biopolitics for him concerns the antinomy of the constituting power, which in essence precedes Constitution since it is the power that establishes Constitution, and the constituted

⁹⁵ For the way surveillance worked in and with the American government during the Cold War, see Donner.

⁹⁶ At the time of *Homo Sacer* being written (it was originally published in nineteen ninety-five), Agamben was not likely to have read Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France. About the secrecy surrounding the lectures, see Stoler (55-94).

power that gains its legitimacy from Constitution, where the antinomy results in the conception of someone who lies both on the outside and in the inside of the polity. The enigmatic figure is *homo sacer* as the bearer of “bare life,” the true object of biopolitics, who “*may be killed and yet not sacrificed*” (8). Agamben shows a wide range of examples of *homo sacer* from the ancient Greek polis, Roman criminal law, Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyè’s treatise, Walter Benjamin’s “Critique of Violence,” and so on. And, eventually, he defines our post-Auschwitz present as the condition where the camp, such as Auschwitz, has become paradigmatic of our everyday life.

Agamben’s argument assumes some relevance to the understanding of *The Catcher*, when, referring to Carl Schmitt’s definition of sovereignty, that is, “[s]overeignty is he who decides on the state of exception,” Agamben depicts our present as an irregularity in a continuing state of exception: “*The state of exception . . . ceases to be referred to as an external and provisional state of factual danger and comes to be confused with juridical rule itself*” (168). If McCarthyism was legitimized as a certain kind of the state of exception under the Cold War, America under the Cold War was then seen as being at war, which explains Holden’s symptomatic references to war and the images of war: his mysterious and also symptomatic death wish too is seen as a hysteric response to the threat of war. In other words, the conception of the Cold War itself, where, in a sense, a nation which is not engaged in a real war defines its condition as that of warfare, is a political articulation of the state of exception: a nation should act as if it were at war when it really is not.

Yet, while Agamben defines the essence of biopolitics as thanatopolitics, Foucault insists that its essence lies in the government of life. Surrounding this difference is the contrast between the philosophical or even philological nature of the former’s argument and the historical rigidity in the latter’s conceptualization. For Foucault, biopolitics is an aspect of

modernization; the victimization of *homo sacer*, which is found to a certain degree all through Western history, even seems more or less inevitable in Agamben's argument. If Agamben's intention in the book is to mourn for the crimes against humanity in Nazi Germany, the act of mourning sometimes verges on the implication of its inevitability. In other words, Agamben's critique of Auschwitz somehow resembles Holden's anti-war sarcasm: "I'm sort of glad they've got the atomic bomb invented. If there's ever another war, I'm going to sit right the hell on top of it." These are critiques of the inevitable state of exception.

The difference between Agamben and Foucault can be understood to derive from how the notion of biopolitics is defined. When Foucault analyzes biopower in another lecture at the Collège de France, *Security, Territory, Population*, he refers to the example of how a State reacts to an epidemic of the plague (10). He is, therefore, certainly aware that a biopolitical regime should select which people are to be saved first and which people not, where the regime is actually killing some people under the name of the statistical protection of life. It is possible in this sense to understand that while Foucault defines biopolitics as the politics of life, excluding the accidental deaths that politics causes from its essence, Agamben demonstrates the definition virtually from the opposite viewpoint.

In truth, however, the difference between Agamben and Foucault is rather antinomic. In "*Society Must be Defended*," he makes it clear that mass murder of population should not be seen as a function of biopolitics. In the lecture, Foucault traces the history of the discourse of race, or, more correctly, that of race struggle: the "history of race struggle that appears in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (72) ends "antiquity" by which he means "that awareness of being in continuity with antiquity that existed until the late Middle Ages" (74). In other words, the discourse of race struggle retroactively discovers "Europe's real

beginnings, its bloody beginnings” with “conquest,” “the Frankish invasion and the Norman invasion” (75), and the emergence of new players on the stage of history who are racially defined, like “the Franks, the Gauls, and the Celts” (75-76) and “more general characters such as the peoples of the North and the peoples of the South” (76), where “[s]omething that will be specifically individualized as ‘the Middle Ages’ begins to appear” (75). Foucault here quotes the example of a sultan of Constantinople’s letter to the doge of Venice that reads, as late as the fifteenth century, “why should we wage war on one another, when we are brothers?” (75). The understanding that the discourse of race struggle posits the “real” and “bloody” beginnings of Europe leads Foucault to the observation that Carl von Clausewitz’s well known thesis on war, “war is the continuation of politics by other means,” is in fact a reversal of “a sort of thesis that had been in circulation since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and which was both diffuse and specific” (48). Foucault insists on the significance of understanding the thesis that “politics is the continuation of war by other means”: “power relations, as they function in a society like ours, are essentially anchored in a certain relationship of force that was established in and through war at a given historical moment that can be specified. And while it is true that political power puts an end to war and establishes or attempts to establish the reign of peace in civil society, it certainly does not do so in order to suspend the effects of power or to neutralize the disequilibrium revealed by the last battle of the war” (15). Virtually incorporating in his argument Schmitt’s notion of the state of exception, Foucault makes it a point that “war was regarded, initially and throughout practically, the whole of the eighteenth century, as a war between races” (239) and that “in the eighteenth century it was essentially, and almost exclusively, the discourse of history that made war the primary, and almost exclusive, analyzer of political relations” (215): in a way that uncannily resembles Samuel Huntington’s notion of “clash of civilizations,” it is

observed here that race makes war which makes history.

After observing that from the nineteenth century onward, “something new” and “something fundamental” began to happen, that is, the birth of a philosophy of history that sees “the truth of the universal” in “the dialectic” (237), Foucault argues that the contingent intersection of biopolitics, which started in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and the discourse of race war, which has its own history as argued, brought about in the twentieth century what he calls “State racism,” as epitomized by Nazism. After clarifying the theoretical context of State racism:

If it is true that the power of sovereignty is increasingly on the retreat and that disciplinary or regulatory disciplinary power is on the advance, how will the power to kill and the function of murder operate in this technology of power, which takes life as both its object and its objective? How can a power such as this kill, if it is true that its basic function is to improve life, to prolong its duration, to improve its chances, to avoid accidents, and to compensate for failings? (254)

Foucault explains:

It is, I think, at this point that racism intervenes. . . . It is indeed the emergence of this biopower that inscribes it in the mechanisms of the State. It is at this moment that racism is inscribed as the basic mechanism of power, as it is exercised in modern States. As a result, the modern State can scarcely function without becoming involved with racism at some point, within certain limits and subject to certain conditions. (254)

And also:

In the biopower system, . . . , killing or imperative to kill is acceptable only if it results not in a victory over political adversaries, but in the elimination of the biological threat to and the improvement of the species or race. . . . In a normalizing society, race or racism is the precondition that makes killing acceptable. . . . Once the State functions in the biopower mode, racism alone can justify the murderous function of the State. (256)

State racism as the form of modern racism is the result of the combination of biopolitics, which is the power that exercises itself on life, and the discourse of race, which is the only discourse that can divide a population into those who should live and those who may be killed. The modern, biopolitical state, which may work on the absolute affirmation of the lives of the population, can survive in complicity with the discourse of racism. Virtually explaining the problems of nationalism identifying nationalism as a variation of racism, Foucault defines the characteristic of modern State racism as a perversion that believes “the elimination of the others guarantees the purity and the survival of our race”: ““The more inferior species die out, the more abnormal individuals are eliminated, the fewer degenerates there will be in the species as a whole, and the more I – as species rather than individual – can live, the stronger I will be, the more vigorous I will be. I will be able to proliferate”” (255).

Agamben sees the essence of biopolitics in the necessary victimization of *homo sacer*; Foucault sees State racism as the result of the historically contingent combination of biopolitics and the discourse of race war. It is still possible to see the difference between Agamben’s definition and Foucault’s as ultimately technical especially when it is fairly difficult, if not impossible, to decide what is contingent, or necessary, in history. What should be noticed here, however, is the larger historical context in which both Foucault’s and Agamben’s argument is perceived: or, the fact that their arguments on biopolitics involve latent references to Cold-War liberalism of the welfare state and neo-liberalism of the post-welfare state as their historical present. In fact, there are two points that should be elicited from the comparison between Agamben and Foucault: the meaning of the antinomy that the contrast between Foucault and Agamben creates and that of the discourse of race that is curiously lacking in Holden’s narrative.

To historicize, arguments on biopolitics in the latter half of the twentieth century are embedded in the context of the welfare state that started, for example, with the New Deal policy in the case of the US. From this viewpoint, Agamben, in mourning the atrocities of Auschwitz, criticizes biopolitics as the politics of the welfare state in reference to its genealogy from the classical age and conclusively points out the devastation of our present as the augmentation of biopolitical control in the name of welfare (where, in essence, the same things are happening as long as the regime is biopolitical, whether or not it is Nazi). On the other hand, Foucault, who believes in cultural rather than social revolution, rather insists on the value of welfare biopolitics *per se* and the importance of separating any regime from the discourse of war and race. What really matters here is why Agamben and Foucault forge such a stark contrast in evaluating the biopolitical/welfare regime, or why Foucault dares to draw a line, by way of contingency, between biopolitics *per se* and its theoretically persuasive entanglement with racism. Indeed, the difference between Agamben and Foucault is crucially important since it concerns the understanding of the politics of our present.

As far as the understanding of *The Catcher* is concerned, the antinomy of Agamben and Foucault should be interpreted as reflecting that of the welfare/warfare state. In *Keywords*, Raymond Williams explains that the term “welfare state” was “first named in 1939” in “distinction from the *Warfare State*” (333). The antinomy of the welfare/warfare state means, for one thing, the impossibility of deciding whether a biopolitical administration in the latter half of the twentieth century is either a welfare or a warfare one when, while the New Deal government, for example, started as a response to the Great Depression, it also survived to form the post-war government with the help of war mobilization and war economy. The relation of the ideal of the New Deal to World War II is truly contingent: nobody expected the war to be of use in the development of the New Deal polity, but, in

hindsight, World War II was essential to the post-war state having the shape it had. For another thing, in spite of the complex interrelation between the notion of the welfare state and that of the warfare state, a welfare state can be a welfare state only when it denies being a warfare state: a warfare state in fact is a hideous twin of a welfare state whose existence should always be suppressed. In other words, the antinomic relation between the welfare and the warfare state is comparable to that of figure and ground: when you see the figure, you neglect the ground, or vice versa.

Tracing the shift from the New Deal governance to the war-time governance, Brian Waddell in “Limiting National Interventionism in the United States” argues that, while the “depression decade . . . created possibilities for a popularly-responsive national governance project” (117),

[m]obilization for war shifted authority and resources from proto-Keynesian New Dealers to military and corporate personnel, and so provided the opportunity to construct a different type of governance project that narrowed policy alternatives and limited the development of the welfare state. (118)

This results in the post-war “[c]reation of a national security state” during the Cold War (123), where the “transition from economic to military containment proved easy because of the postwar institutionalization of the military’s wartime domestic ascendancy” (122).⁹⁷ In a book that surveys in more details the transformation of the New Deal welfare state to the Cold-War warfare state, *The War against the New Deal*, Waddell makes clear how the Cold War was useful for the post-war American policy: “Historian Melvin Leffler’s assertion that ‘identification of the Soviet Union as the enemy eased U.S. policy-making’ is something of an understatement; it also eased the burdens of Truman and made it possible to develop a

⁹⁷ For the relation between the conception of the Cold War and the discourse of the national security, see also David Campbell.

governance project capable of unifying the U.S. state system” (145). The post-war warfare state of America is not, of course, conceived in order merely to forge a war, but it is politically needed in order for the domestic governance. Yet, of course, the warfare state was not straightforwardly needed as a warlike state; here there are two senses that what was needed was a national security state on the pretext of the communist threat and that it was in fact needed for the political and economic reason in “close collaboration between political and economic elites” (95). As Waddell concludes the book,

[T]he military-state alternative that supplanted the New Deal substantially increased the capacity of the national state to intervene internationally while containing its ability to intervene domestically. The resulting warfare state was qualitatively different from the welfare and regulatory state undergoing construction during the New Deal. There was no simple transfer of New Deal state power to the national security state; it was, after all, precisely the democratizing elements of the New Deal that corporate executives involved in war mobilization hoped to defeat by fighting the expansion of civilian-state authority during the war. (163)

Waddell thus clarifies the contrast between the New Deal “domestic activism,” which looked for the amendment of economic inequality in the US, and the Cold-War “international activism,” which worked for the propaganda of anti-communist Cold-War liberalism: “Assertive corporate executives and military officials formed a very effective wartime alliance that not only blocked any augmentation of New Dealer authority but also organized a powerful alternative to the New Deal. International activism displaced and supplanted New Deal domestic activism” (5).⁹⁸ This is what Biskind describes in terms of Cold-War “corporate liberal.”

Yet, of course, the Cold-War international activism was not justified in the name of

⁹⁸ Waddell’s argument of course has its origin in such works as C. Wright Mill’s *The Power Elite* and Fred J. Cook’s *The Warfare State*.

“corporate executives and military officials” even if it was justified by them. In this context, the State of Cold-War America is understood only in terms of the antinomy of the welfare/warfare state: what was happening there was the New Deal welfare state’s tacit and mysterious turning into the Cold-War warfare state, where the truth of the warfare state is officially suppressed under the name of the welfare state. The confusion of the definition of biopolitics demonstrated by Agamben and Foucault here appears only necessary when the antinomy of the welfare/warfare state is thus understood: in fact, the conception of biopolitics is most meaningful when it is seen as a viewpoint that tries to reveal the existence of the antinomy, even if neither Agamben nor Foucault specifically analyzes the United States.

Holden’s mysterious death wish, his hysteric and sarcastic mode of narrative, the consequent indeterminacy that permeates the narrative by the “madman” and, ultimately, the late-modernist structure of the novel that, as McCann argues, looks for the readers’ agreement: all of these are to be seen as the symptom that at the same time suppresses and reveals the Cold-War condition as America’s antinomy of the welfare/warfare state. The novel is about the inexplicability of America’s turning into a warfare state under the banner of the Cold War. Holden is haunted by death, likes only those who are dead, and eventually breaks down as a “madman.” So, if a possible sincere way of reading a madman’s narrative is not to accept it at face value, but, instead, to understand how and why the narrator has become “mad,” identifying the cause of the mental and representational distortion, the absent cause of the novel is the suppression of the recognition of Cold-War America as an imperial warfare state: the “madman” narrative should be read not as an expression, but as a performance of suppression. Paradoxically, it is exactly because the narrative is a performance of suppression that it asks readers to accept it at face value in order for the suppression to be successful, leaving traces of self-contradiction (like “Don’t tell anybody

anything”) as a clue to the reader to look for what is suppressed.⁹⁹

V. Late Modernism and Imperialism

Holden is not typical of the individualist hero of Cold-War liberalism when he eventually ends up as a “madman,” failing to grow into maturity in the way James Dean shows in *Rebel without a Cause*, who in the final scene accepts individualist masculinity, overcoming his anger for his “weak” father. Holden does and does not resemble Will Kane in *High Noon*: he is an anti-social individualist when, going against Sally Haze’s sensible suggestion, he insists on the importance of pursuing his impulse, while the ideal of Holden, who keeps on trying throughout the narrative to get in touch with his friends, acquaintances, and even strangers and to ask advice from his friend Carl Luce and his mentor Antolini, is not to be seen as individualist since it is the formation of a community of innocence where he is the only catcher. In other words, the novel succeeds in demonstrating the Cold-War paradigm of individualism versus conformism, making the unstable narrator shuttle between the extremes at both ends.

If Holden is understood to be checking all corners of the Cold-War paradigm through the narrative, where he becomes “mad” since he ultimately finds the impossibility of getting outside of the paradigm, one of the salient features the narrative demonstrates is lack of racial discourse. While there are names that imply ethnicities, such as Kinsella and Antolini, and, as argued, the rhetoric of exclusion and inclusion certainly works strongly in Holden’s narrative, the narrative never argues racism or racial discourse except when he identifies himself as an

⁹⁹ In “Sorry for Writers?,” a letter published in “Letters to the Editor” section of *Saturday Review of Literature* in nineteen forty-five, Salinger observes, in a way that reminds us of D. B.’s question to Allie in the novel, “who was the best poet, Rupert Brooke or Emily Dickinson[?]” (140), that “war will have little to do with making me a war writer – which is the only kind of writer I want to be” (21).

Irish atheist in criticizing Catholics' inclination to be inquisitive about other people's religion. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Philip Gleason argues in "Identifying Identity" that "identity" was used widely in non-academic discourse in reference to religion, as is exemplified by Will Herberg's popular *Protestant - Catholic - Jew*. This certainly concerns David Caute's observation in *The Great Fear* that the exceptional feature of Joseph McCarthy as a right-wing leader was his utter indifference to the rhetoric of race (21). In the background to this there is of course the Cold-War association of racism with Nazism as the un-American atrocity, while at the same time, although the anti-communism under McCarthyism notoriously adopted biopolitical discourse that regarded communist ideology as contagious like some kind of virus, it was not biological race but someone with a specific ideology that had to be hunted down and prosecuted. When not only racism, but also even racialism, the two of which always share an ambiguous borderline anyway, was better to be avoided due to their possible association with Nazi totalitarianism and the same totalitarianism of the Soviets, the notion of identity has its place first in the analysis of religion rather than of race, especially when religious freedom was seen as a distinctive American merit over against the atheist Soviets.

As Foucault observes that the biopolitical state "can scarcely function without becoming involved with racism," however, the apparent lack of racial discourses does not tell the whole story. Reviewing two neo-Malthusian books published in the United States in nineteen forty-eight, William Vogt's *Road to Survival* and Fairfield Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet*, Kolson Schlosser in "Malthus at Mid-century" examines the traces of eugenics, a by-then discredited word that is not used either by Vogt or Osborn, in terms of the analysis of Cold-War biopolitics. When "[p]ost-war neo-Malthusianism was . . . situated within ongoing debates about the security of the white race in the face of global population growth, much of

which was instigated by Lothrop Stoddard's famous book *The Rising Tide of Color* in 1920, and Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* in 1916" (471), according to Schlosser, "Vogt and Osborn both sought to use scientific data to prove empirically a relationship between resources, scarcity, and war" in line with the fact that "[a]fter WWII neo-Malthusianism increasingly became the subject of scientific empiricism and was important to the harnessing of science towards the ends of the state" (474). To sum up, these two authors, suppressing the word and its previous history, started off post-war neo-Malthusianism as a scientific empiricism concerning the problem of population growth, which defines, as Schlosser argues, "one of the key discursive manoeuvres behind Cold War containment policy" (476).

There are two points in Schlosser's argument that are relevant to mine. The first is Schlosser's insight on biopoliticalization under the Cold War. He correctly points out that the revival of (neo-)Malthusianism itself is to be seen as part of Cold-War liberalism's depoliticization: "Vogt and Osborn removed individual reproducing persons from the broader political-economic, cultural and social milieu within which they make decisions about sex and family size, and instead reduced these decisions to matters of unchecked libido" (473). This is a translation of politics about society and economy into biopolitics about sexuality, gender and culture. Schlosser associates this biopoliticalization with Agamben's notion of "bare life" (476). The other point in relation to the first is that, in Cold-War neo-Malthusianism, the central problem is not the purification of a domestic population, but the global growth of population: in other words, Cold-War eugenics concerns "international biopolitical governance" (477) that worked as part of the Cold-War containment policy. It is even possible to discern another antinomy of eugenics and neo-Malthusianism here: "The dialectic opposition between the bourgeois, socially responsible family and the irresponsible,

recklessly breeding ‘Malthusian couple’ [Foucault’s coinage of the conception of the overly fertile working class family incapable of sexual restraint] was now extended to an international scale. Coding the so-called ‘third world’ as the recklessly breeding ‘other’ was instrumental in constructing a sense of a bourgeois, national ‘self’ with a moral imperative in the world. In this formulation, overpopulation causes (rather than being caused by) poverty, which in turn allegedly creates a breeding ground for communist insurrection” (476-477). The biopolitical discourse of neo-Malthusianism naturally enough defines the cause of poverty not as any kind of social structure but as “the irresponsible, recklessly breeding ‘Malthusian couple,’” where the couple eventually may invite “communist insurrection.”

In “Seeing Beyond the State,” Matthew James Connelly also mentions the episode of President Dwight Eisenhower: at a meeting of the National Security Council in nineteen fifty-eight, he remarked that “In all our discussions of the problem of underdeveloped countries and the kind of assistance which we could effectively provide them, we had not faced up to what was really the most serious problem, namely, that of exploding population growths” and that “something drastic had to be done to solve this problem.” This clearly shows that the Cold-War problem of population control was seen as an international problem, where, even though there was an effort toward domestic population control, the real threat was supposed to lie in the Third World Other. Although Eisenhower’s suggestion was a rather peaceful “two cent contraceptive” (197), his official attitude toward global eugenics/biopolitics was undecided: speaking to a reporter he rejected the idea, saying “I cannot imagine anything more emphatically a subject that is not a proper political or governmental activity or function or responsibility,” and it was “only after leaving office that he backed population control, agreeing to serve as honorary co-chairman, with Harry Truman, of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.” According to Connelly, Eisenhower

complained that “with the proliferating array of welfare programs, including the beginning of federally funded birth control, the United States was ‘spending money with one hand to slow up population growth among responsible families and with the other providing financial incentives for increasing production by the ignorant, feeble-minded or lazy’” (198). The point of international biopolitics as part of the Cold-War containment policy is, as Schlosser and Connelly argue, the export of what is denied to be eugenics: when neo-Malthusianism revives what cannot be called eugenics in terms of scientific empiricism, neo-Malthusianism as a new form of liberal eugenics can show its true identity only when it is projected toward the Third World Other. Put rather schematically, when the foreign policy of eugenics is translated into neo-Malthusianism domestically, eugenics and neo-Malthusianism only form an antinomy.

To follow the Cold-War traces of eugenics shows that the discourses of race in the biopolitical state have nine lives. If one variation of the antinomy of biopolitics and thanatopolitics is that of neo-Malthusianism and eugenics, another is that of race and nation. The utopia Holden imagines is regarded as a nationalist utopia in the paradigm of the welfare state since it can be called a nation of the innocent from which nobody would fall: “I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. . . . And I’m standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff – I mean if they’re running and they don’t look where they’re going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That’s all I’d do all day. I’d just be the catcher in the rye and all” (173). When he repeats after this, “that’s the only thing I’d really like to be,” he virtually insists that he wants to be nothing but the keeper of a welfare state in which the security and welfare of its members is guaranteed. It is structurally emphasized that his utopian imagination is nationalist when Holden worries about the discourse of inclusion

and exclusion, or, that is, the problem of “clique” and “fraternity”: “this goddam secret fraternity” is for Holden what “I was too yellow not to join” (167) and, as for “these dirty little goddam cliques,” all the “guys that are on the basketball,” “the Catholics,” “the goddam intellectuals,” “the guys that play bridge,” and even “the guys that belong to the goddam Book-of-the-Month Club” who “stick together” respectively, well, “that’s all I get out of it [school],” in spite of Sally’s criticism that “Lots of boys get more out of school than that” (131). Holden understands that the discourse of exclusion and inclusion works in an ambivalent, problematic way and thus that nationalist discourse is problematic. He therefore suggests his utopia as a “crazy” imagination: “I know it’s crazy, but that’s the only thing I’d really like to be. I know it’s crazy” (173). Holden’s utopian nationalism of the welfare state should be located against the background of nationalism’s becoming the global paradigm especially for Third World nations after World War II and the nationalist attempts to define the US in terms of its culture by the Americanists of the Myth and Symbol school as well as, to a certain degree, Lionel Trilling, as argued in Chapter Two. Holden’s diatribe in a sense works as a psychologized and yet intellectual observation of the nationalist trend.

In other words, Holden’s obsession with inclusion and exclusion is meaningful since the nationalism that matters here is conceived in the model of welfare state: exactly because welfare state stands on universalism of the protection of its every member’s right to live, whether or not one is included in the relevant group is crucial. The Cold-War model of welfare state shows clear traces in the confusions in Holden’s narrative: sexism involved in the welfarist way of social control through nuclear family and the paradox of egalitarianism and meritocracy.

Demonstrating the biopolitical version of meritocracy, Holden is keenly aware of how popular his friends are, but his narrative grows confusing since he also make it a point that he

loves everybody, insisting his welfarist commitment to egalitarianism. Holden says, “[Stradlater] thought he was the handsomest guy in the Western Hemisphere. He was pretty handsome, too – I’ll admit it,” but in the next lines, he also says, “I knew a lot of guys at Pencey I thought were a lot handsomer than Stradlater” (27). In a larger context, He talks of Ackley as “this one pimply, boring guy” (167), but, at the end of the narrative, he confesses that “I sort of *miss* everybody I told about” (214). As for the two friends, he tells Antolini that “I hated them once in a while – I admit it,” but “if I didn’t see them, if they didn’t come in the room, or if I didn’t see them in the dining room for a couple of meals, I sort of missed them” (186). He does not, and is not able to, love this particular person when he meets him in person, but he insists that he loves, or misses, everybody he knows. The universalism of welfare state dictates egalitarian equality of love, whereas the egalitarianism functions only with meritocracy that, while abolishing the former notion of class imagined in terms of breed, severely ranks the members of the nation in terms of talent or ability. Kicked out of prep schools, Holden is very sensitive of the meritocratic rankings, at the same time clinging to the universalist ideal of the egalitarian love of all. Ultimately, then, this crystallizes in his narrative’s late modernist aesthetic. When he criticizes Ernie and the Lunts as not authentic enough being self-conscious, he follows the same pattern of paradox of egalitarianism and meritocracy: the meritocratic winner, or those who have talents, must be criticized as breaking egalitarianism. In this way, reflection of the welfarist paradox between egalitarianism and meritocracy constitutes at least one aspect of the ambiguities in Holden’s narrative.

Holden’s sexism can also be seen as symptomatic of welfarism. Trying to be a gentleman, he wants to pay for the women in the Lavender Room, the prostitute with whom he did nothing and Sally Haze; in the end, when he cannot help accepting Phoebe’s

“Christmas dough,” he starts to cry (179). It may sound to harsh to call these acts of Holden male chauvinism, but it is clear that his imagination follows the norm of the welfare nuclear family. When he, following the ideal of Cold-War individualism, imagines to go to the West toward the end of the novel, he fancies to pretend to be a deaf-mute (which is a pervert fixation to the imperative of the individualism, for being a deaf-mute means rejection of communication). Holden, growing obsessive and hysteric with the imperative, finds crazy but fascinating). The point here is that to imagine that he pretends a deaf-mute for Holden means to imagine that he gets married with “this beautiful girl that was also a deaf-mute” and that they hide children, if they have, from everybody else (199). Pretending to be a deaf-mute even to his imagined wife, he just follows the norm of nuclear family.

What I call Holden’s sexism, however, can be understood in its full complexity regarding his attitude to his girl friends. When Holden finds the discourse of nationalism a problematic, his narrative as a whole demonstrates a suppression of racial discourse. That is, the apparent lack of the discourse of race in the novel is in fact is suppression, where the post-war antinomy of good nationalism and bad racism decides the shape of the narrative. A trace of the suppression is found in Holden’s strange attitude toward Jane Gallagher and Sally Haze: Jane, whom Holden obviously likes very much but finds himself “not in the mood” to meet or even talk with her (32, 59, 63, 105, 150),¹⁰⁰ and Sally, whom Holden finds look so “terrific” that he feels like “marrying her” the minute he saw her although he knows that the idea is “crazy” (124) since, soon after, he says to her: “You give me a royal pain in the ass, if you want to know the truth” (133). We could say that Holden’s attitude toward them aptly demonstrates a teenager’s psychological complexity toward sexuality, that is, avoidance toward a true love as Jane in ironic balance with reduction to a sexual object of the femininity

¹⁰⁰ Holden once does call her but her mother answers the phone, where he also finds himself not “in the mood” to further his arrangement with her or her mother (116) and once says, “Anyway, I gave old Jane a buzz again, but her phone didn’t answer, so I had to hang up” (136) after his break-up with Sally.

of Sally (with Holden's ambivalence exaggerated by a possibility of his friend Stradlater's having had relations with Jane). Considering that the reason for Holden's strange avoidance of Jane is not explained in the last analysis, however, it is important not to fail to notice that "Gallagher" is usually considered to be an Irish name, while Holden identifies himself as an Irish. Holden avoids an endogamy when he avoids a Gallagher, finding a replacement in a Haze. In other words, he declines a racial tie when, in spite of the natural intimacy, he does not dare to become intimate with Jane, while trying to find a sexual tie in his "phony" relationship with Sally.

Holden's complex relationship with Jane Gallagher can be fully understood only when it is put side by side with his nepotism, or his equally strange attachment to his brother Allie and his sister Phoebe. When, being desperate and exhausted, he feels as if he were disappearing in crossing a street, he cries to Allie: "Allie, don't let me disappear. Please, Allie" (196). The novel ends with the scene where he finds bliss in "the way old Phoebe kept going around and around" (213). If both Allie and Phoebe mean someone special for Holden since they represent innocence, the same is true for Jane, about whom Holden loses his memory when he attacks Stradlater because of the possibility of Stradlater's having breached her innocence. With the avoidance of racial discourse, the narrative shows a twisted logic: in terms of emotional intimacy, while Jane Gallagher functions as an unstable sign that shows Holden's ambivalence and ultimate declination of racial ties, Allie and Phoebe are accepted without reserve since they do not represent a racial tie, but kinship. Holden prefers family to race: this is a form of Cold-War liberalism.

Such a complicated configuration constitutes an important part of Holden's narrative because his utopia is conceived in terms of an ideal community. The utopia Holden imagines in the novel's title scene signifies the true point of how he commits to, or, more correctly, is

controlled by, Cold-War liberalism: it is the full realization of the liberalism as the cultural imagination under welfare state, which also is impossible as the full realization. It follows the individualism of Cold-War liberalism, where community stands on the absence of society. Explaining the role of the catcher, Holden makes sure that “[t]housands of little kids, and nobody’s around – nobody big, I mean – except me” (173); he imagines the least possible control or regulation as a Cold-War rebel, or, that is, he imagines the smallest government. The nation of the innocent in Holden’s imagination is in effect imagined as a community without anything social; it would be plausible to argue that its members should be innocent kids since Holden does not want any kind of social structure or social conflict in the community. Since there is no imaginable structure, system or relation among the members of the nation of the innocent, the nation is imagined as a community rather than a society: it is in fact imagined as a homogenous community of innocent people where no antagonism exists, although it certainly is a “free” one. Holden’s imagination thus clearly demonstrates how Cold-War commitment to nationalism functions as displacement of society. Actually, Holden claims that the ideal utopia is “crazy,” or impossible, because the utopia is imaginable as a utopia only when it dispenses with the essential factor in any utopian imagination: the social.¹⁰¹

Holden’s utopian imagination completes itself with the displacement of society with community, because the democracy the narrative commits to functions not as a rational one of agreement, but as an irrational one of intimacy or sympathy. If Holden imagines his utopia as the nation of the innocent, in a way that literally corresponds to the imagination of

¹⁰¹ One may find a good contrast in a contemporary utopian novel written by the well-known behavioral psychologist B.F. Skinner: *Walden Two*. In spite of the title, whose original certainly is a milestone of American individualism, the novel depicts its utopia exclusively in terms of its society or organization, although the social is treated there as an interiorized norm via behavioral psychology. The novel admits the resemblance between its utopia and a totalitarian society in the sense that perfect control is the ideal in both; it lays out the difference between them in terms of ideology.

McCarthyism, the truth of the nation is a community without social structure where communal ties are imagined in terms of affective sympathy or intimacy that lie in the beyond of rationality, ideas and ideology. In other words, it is fairly important that the small government in Holden's utopia is an imagination against the background of the Cold-War welfare state: when Cold-War individualists are anti-social, they certainly are liberal dissidents against the Cold-War welfare state. And this is the reason Holden calls his utopia "crazy." It is, then, in this context that the narrative is only necessarily attracted to the discourse of race and racial ties, where under the name of Cold-War liberalism the racial rhetoric should then be rejected. Faithfully following the paradigm of Cold-War liberalism, Holden imagines as his utopia a community of sympathy minus ideology. Utopia is where there is no politics; there only is biopolitics involving authenticity, sympathy and identity.

Yet, he calls his vision of utopia "crazy." Although Carol and Richard Ohmann emphasize "[t]he novel's critique of class distinction" (30) in the well-known "Reviewers, Critics, and 'The Catcher in the Rye,'" Holden's attitude to class difference or economic inequality is, I believe, the most important clue to understanding why the narrative should be attributed to a "madman." As Ohmann also says, the most salient examples of Holden's reference to class are when he meets two nuns at a sandwich bar, where he remembers his roommate Dick Slagle. When he finds the nuns have "these very inexpensive-looking suitcases," he says, "It isn't important, I know, but I hate it when somebody has cheap suitcases. It sounds terrible to say it, but I can even get to hate somebody, just looking at them, if they have cheap suitcases with them," and recalls an episode involving Slagle: being ashamed of his "inexpensive" suitcase, Slagle pretends that Holden's Mark Cross suitcase is his own, in spite of the fact that Slagle usually criticizes Holden's as "too new and bourgeois" (108). Although Holden does donate ten dollars to the nuns (110), his concern here typically

focuses on the affective disturbance that economic inequality brings about rather than the economic inequality itself. He worries about Slagle's "phony" pretense, not his having a cheap suitcase: he actually admits, with reference to the nuns' suitcases, "It isn't important, I know." His argument here is exemplary as to how nationalism displaces socialism: the difference between rich and poor itself is not important, since what is really crucial is the affective result brought about when the difference is recognized. And another name for the affective result is class consciousness.

Therefore, it is true that Holden as a Cold-War nationalist is sincerely sympathizing and generous, but his good nature does not work toward the amendment of economic inequality, but rather toward the suppression and subsequent fixation of class difference. If Holden's utopia signifies a sympathetic community of the innocent without social structure, his nationalism demonstrates what I called biopolitical containment against socialism. Symbolically, then, the novel's biopolitical containment is guaranteed by Holden's commitment to innocence. Even so, when the novel is read not as liberal propaganda for the value of the commitment to innocence, but as a narrative by a "madman" that symptomatically reveals the antinomic inconsistencies in the liberal, biopolitical narrative that suppresses the social, it is possible to find traces that show how Holden is paralyzed by possible atrocities involved in the imperialism of Cold-War America.

The discourse of "race" is in fact most clearly adopted when Holden tried to visit the Museum of Natural History to see the figures of "Indians" and "Eskimos." With his memory of his visits to the museum when he was younger, the "innocent" Holden obviously likes the place: as he explains its fascination, "The best thing, . . . , in that museum was that everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move. You could go there a hundred thousand times, and that Eskimo would still be just finished catching those two fish, . . . Nobody'd be

different” (121). Yet he reports that “a funny thing happened,” in that he finally decided not to enter the museum when he arrived at the entrance: “When I got to the museum, all of a sudden I wouldn’t have gone inside for a million bucks.” In just the same way that he simultaneously explains and avoids explaining why he does not try to date Jane Gallagher in terms of his “mood,” he only says innocently: “It just didn’t appeal to me” (122). Even when he explains the fascination of the museum with reference to the unchanging nature of the displays, he adds mysteriously: “The only thing that would be different would be you. Not that you’d be so much older or anything. It wouldn’t be that, exactly. You’d just be different, that’s all. . . . I mean you’d be different in some way – I can’t explain what I mean. And even if I could, I’m not sure I’d feel like it” (121-122).

If we try to analyze the quote more deeply, going beneath the surface of Holden’s “innocence,” then just as the problem of his nationalism of sympathy is to fixate economic class, so also in this case the problem of imperialism, demonstrated in the displays of the museum, is to fixate the “race,” such as “Indians” and “Eskimos,” under the imperial hierarchy. He faces the heritage of imperialism here, but his “innocence” prevents him from admitting the fact: his complex relation with imperialism is only explained in terms of the strange fascination he feels and the inconsistency that, in spite of his fascination, he decides not to enter the museum. Naturally enough, his strange attitude to the museum shares the same structure with his attitude toward race, explained above concerning Jane Gallagher and kinship: inexplicable fascination and ultimate rejection. He is mysteriously and yet apparently naturally attracted by the museum and by Jane, but he does not accept it in the end. This is where the reason that his narrative should only be inconsistent and symptomatic is most clearly demonstrated. And the museum scene also shows the imperialist notion of “race” that clearly resembles Foucault’s definition of race in terms of the notion of race war: race as

the figure of othering. In other words, with his obsession with inclusion and exclusion that only logically results from the paradox of the universalism of welfare state, namely, the universalism that works only within the boundary of the nation, he sees an ambivalence object of fascination in “Indians” and “Eskimos” as the other: when he is obsessed with the fear of exclusion, he is paradoxically fascinated with the figures of the excluded other. If Jane Gallagher symbolizes the notion of race as the tie of community, “Indians” and “Eskimos” show the other, imperial side of it. In his diatribe, Holden virtually speculates on the meaning and the guilt of America’s Cold-War liberalism.

Holden’s narrative appears as “innocent” since he fails to articulate his speculation. Completely following the logic of Cold-War liberalism, he rejects politics, ideas and ideology and commits to the nation of the innocent. In other words, his narrative seems “innocent” when it becomes inconsistent, hysteric and symptomatic and demonstrates the antinomic ambivalences by which Cold-War America is represented as a peaceful world: when a teacher preaches at him at the beginning of the novel that “Life *is* a game that one plays according to the rules,” he says to himself, “Some game” (8). The narrative of the novel, rather clearly, keeps on demonstrating the antinomies of welfare state and warfare state, biopolitics and thanatopolitics, neo-Malthusianism and eugenics, race and nation, and nationalism and imperialism. The mysterious museum scene is where the two notions of nationalism and imperialism create an antinomy, where the one works as the figure on the other as the ground: Cold-War America, even when it defines itself as the advocate of peace and democracy, could always be seen as imperial from another viewpoint. Every antinomy I have discussed in fact hinges upon this antinomy of nationalism/imperialism. And yet, of course, Holden with a red hunting hat on is never able to point out the imperial side of his nation. His narrative only becomes symptomatic of the impossibility of articulating the

antinomies, and ends up with him defining himself as a “madman.”

Following Waddell’s argument, Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin in “Global Capitalism and American Empire” argue:

The shift of “U.S. state capacities towards realizing internationally-interventionist goals versus domestically-interventionist ones” was crucial to the revival of capitalism’s globalizing tendencies after World War II. This not only took place through the wartime reconstruction of the American state, but also through the more radical postwar reconstruction of all the states at the core of the old inter-imperial rivalry. And it also took place alongside – indeed it led to – the multiplication of new states out of their old colonial empires. Among the various dimensions of this new relationship between capitalism and imperialism, the most important was that *the densest imperial networks and institutional linkages, which had earlier run north-south between imperial states and their formal or informal colonies, now came to run between the US and the other major capitalist states.* (13)

Panitch and Gindin claim that imperialism should be understood not in cultural terms but as capitalist imperialism, which “*needs to be understood through an extension of the theory of the capitalist state, rather than derived directly from the theory of economic stages or crises*” (7), where, according to them, the twentieth-century U.S. constitutes “a unique American informal empire”: “the American state developed the capacity to eventually incorporate its capitalist rivals, and oversee and police ‘globalization’ – i.e. the spread of capitalist social relations to every corner of the world” (4). In their definition, an “informal” empire means “the economic and cultural penetration of other states to be sustained by political and military coordination with other independent governments” (8). Informal as it may be, the American state should be seen as imperial, as they argue, since the “internationalization” of the American state means to define “the American national interest in terms of acting not only on behalf of its own capitalist class but also on behalf of the extension and reproduction of global capitalism” (17). As I quoted from Bacevich at the beginning of this chapter (and is

also quoted by Panitch and Gindin), the attempt during the Cold War to expand American liberalism internationally, in this sense, signifies the imperialist effort to accumulate capital as well as the strategy against totalitarianism.¹⁰²

The liberalism of the Cold-War welfare/warfare America stands on the tacit ground of the accumulation of capital. *The Catcher in the Rye* as the literature of freedom is a narrative of a bourgeois teenager's individualist rebellion. If we identify Holden's spirit as revolutionary, his revolution is the cultural revolution of a rich kid. At the same time, however, the style of the narrative signals through its symptomatic rhetoric a critique of Cold-War liberalism as a form of imperialism: Holden's worldview demonstrated by the narrative ultimately reveals a series of antinomies only by the suppression of which could the entirety of the novel be conceived. The late modernist structure of the novel, or its aesthetic of consensus, is only naturally entailed by the inconsistency of the symptomatic narrative: the essence of the narrative lies in the antinomies that result in the inconsistencies the narrative suffers from. In a way that parallels Jameson's schema of the relation between modernism and imperialism, the novel's late modernism thus concerns the unrepresentability of imperialism. The novel should be seen as a penetrating critique of the imperialist factor, or the tacit approval of the accumulation of capital, involved in the conception of liberalism. For this is the ultimate reason Holden should become "crazy" when he sees daily life under the Cold War as a certain kind of warfare.

The hidden imperial aspect of the Cold-War America, then, is the last piece with which the depiction of Cold-War liberalism is to be completed. For, when Schlesinger re-defines the meaning of "liberal" from a middle-of-the-road gradualist to a hawkish cold warrior in *The Vital Center*, for example, Cold-War liberalism becomes the most fitting to the regime of the

¹⁰² For American imperialism (especially in its relation to neoliberalism), see also Veltmeyer.

warfare America under the Cold War.¹⁰³ It may sound a truism to say that the Cold-War America was not perfectly peaceful, but the nervous breakdown of Holden Caulfield depicts in a truly amazing way that how anxiety haunts in the every day life under Cold-War liberalism whose hidden moment is the transformation of the welfare to the warfare state.¹⁰⁴

From this perspective, the most significant insight the novel presents is Holden's conception of utopia as a nation of the innocent. His utopia is "crazy" and impossible, as he himself admits, since it is a displacement of society for the sake of communal ties, or of sympathy and affective consensus. To imagine a community without social structure as a utopia against the liberal, competitive, "phony" world is only destined to fail: this is the novel's message that is still meaningful for us at present. As long as we follow the liberal imagination that imagines a collectivity in terms of cultural identity and that is keen to displace the social under the rhetoric of the Cold War, we can only go "crazy" as Holden does. In *The Catcher in the Rye*, we are able to find a precedent model of the present neoliberal imagination, where globalization is juxtaposed against right-wing nationalism and nativism, and also a critique of it. As the narrative clearly shows, Holden becomes a "madman" because he rejects "all that David Copperfield kind of crap" and the insights of history – because he lives under biopolitical containment.

¹⁰³ Sheldon S. Wolin in *Democracy Incorporated* analyzes how the war effort was mobilized during the fifties under the rhetoric of the Cold War. See especially chapter two.

¹⁰⁴ It is maybe in this context that one can fruitfully associate Holden's trauma with Castle who jumped out of a window, his corresponding obsession with windows – for example, "I got up and went over and looked out the window. I felt so lonesome, all of a sudden. I almost wished I was dead" (48) – and Antolini's reference to "falling" as Holden's tragic destiny with F. O. Matthiessen's suicide in nineteen fifty-one, as Nadel does (85-87).

Part II

Culture of Neoliberalism: Postmodernism, Risk Society and the Representation of the Working Class

Chapter Four

Globalization and Neoliberal Representation of the Poor: Thomas Pynchon's *Vineland*, or the Postmodern Melodrama of the Cultural Logic of Financial Economy

"Maybe *capitalism* decided it didn't need the old magic anymore."

Thomas Pynchon, *Against the Day*

I. The End of the Cold War, the Era of Globalization and Postmodernism

In "Globalization Theory: A Post Mortem," Justin Rosenberg defines globalization as "the *Zeitgeist* of the 1990s." Basically, his critical argument offers two insights. For one thing, the claim made in the literature of the social sciences in the last decade of the last century that "deepening interconnectedness was fundamentally transforming the nature of human society, and was replacing the sovereign state system with a multilayered, multilateral system of 'global governance'" is apparently "falsified by the course of world affairs" (2): "'Globalization' today is yesterday's *Zeitgeist*" (3). This recognition leads to the other argument of Rosenberg's. When he calls it "*Zeitgeist*," he means that it is not "a proto-scientific concept," for "the enormous subjective plausibility of the idea was never matched by an equivalent theoretical potential for orienting coherent social analysis" (15). "Globalization" was just a catchy fad now out of vogue since it is structurally off the mark as a scientific concept for analyzing our world. Critically referring to the literature of "Globalization Theory" by such prominent scholars as "Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, David Held, Tony McGrew, Manuel Castells and Zygmunt Bauman" (4), Rosenberg therefore argues that "[i]nstead of acting as interpreters to the spirit of the age, they became

its ideological amplifiers” (7).¹⁰⁵ The central problem in the concept of globalization, according to him, lies in its presupposition of the opposition between economic connectedness among nation-states and their independent sovereignty. He makes reference to Marx’s argument that “the rise of capitalist society” means “the emergence of two parallel, internally related, dimensions of social space: a public space of delimited territorial jurisdictions, and a private space of contractual material relations of production and exchange” (23). That is to say,

[I]f Marx was right in his general argument about capitalist society, then the widening and deepening of transnational relations is a *normal* feature of capitalist development. Yet if he was also right about modern political sovereignty, then there is no reason in principle to suppose that any amount of widening and deepening spells the end of sovereignty – or even necessarily of its geopolitical offshoots, anarchy and the balance of power. And finally, if he was right about both, then we would actually have to turn the central empirical expectation of Globalization Theory, qualified or not, onto its head: in capitalism we have an historical form of society in which *uniquely* it becomes possible even for relations of production to extend across political borders precisely *without* diminishing the sovereign territoriality of the states involved. (24)

To put simply, for Rosenberg, nothing radically new is happening in what they call globalization: it is capitalist business as usual from Marx’s viewpoint.

Rosenberg does not mean, however, that nothing happened in the nineties; on the contrary, “Globalization Theory” should be criticized, he explains, exactly because it shields the historically specific understanding of the realities of the decade. First, he contends, it was in fact persuasive to believe at that time that a “completely new world” was coming, considering the rapid changes in social realities in both the domestic and international

¹⁰⁵ Rosenberg’s more detailed criticism of Jan Aart Scholte’s, Rob Walker’s, and Anthony Giddens’s globalization theory is found in his *Follies of Globalisation Theory*. His general critique of International Theory is to be found in *The Empire of Civil Society*. For another critique of globalization as an imperial project in a similar framework, see Petras.

contexts (50). This was partly prepared for before the opening of the era: “The 1990s . . . opened with a mutually reinforcing conjunction of a push and a pull. The push came from the accumulated momentum of restructuring in the West (which had already extended into ‘neo-liberal’ policy shifts within the International Financial Institutions). The pull came from the vacuum created by the Soviet Collapse. This is the dominant combination of causes that gives conjunctural definition to the ‘age of globalization’” (48). Then, among other changes in “global” situations, “[t]he EU ‘single market’ came into existence in 1992” (50); the following year “saw the inaugural summit in Seattle of APEC”; APEC was then “joined both by NAFTA and ASEAN” in 1994. In his opinion, “1994 itself was something of an *annus mirabilis* in the institutional redefinition of the post-Cold War international economy. For this same year also saw both the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of the GATT and the transformation of the latter into the WTO.” As he concludes, quoting Thomas Friedman’s remark, “Quit the whining. Globalization isn’t a choice,” “‘globalization’ was the magic word which simultaneously naturalized and dramatized this tiger-leap of capitalist expansion, representing it as the unstoppable, uncontrollable climax of a universal human destiny” (51).

Rosenberg’s thesis about the myth of globalization is most fitting to open the discussion in this chapter, or even that in the latter half of this dissertation, since it, defining the *Zeitgeist* of the nineties, clarifies that the essence of the decade was “the tiger-leap of capitalist expansion” after the collapse of the Soviet union, which was the historical contingency concealed by the rhetorical necessity of globalization, and that the assault on what Rosenberg calls the geopolitical “vacuums” after the end of the Cold War was prepared for by the neoliberalism of the seventies and eighties. In other words, if “globalization” is rhetoric of pseudo-historical necessity that hides the West’s taking advantage of the end of the Cold War, as Rosenberg observes, the truth of the rhetoric is the continuous expansion of

the policy of neoliberalism in the West:

The social change in the West had been underway since at least the 1970s. It was given various names as its various parts unfolded: Thatcherism, monetarism, Reaganomics, neoliberalism, post-Fordism, deindustrialization and so on. But whatever we call it, we know that the hinge on which it ultimately turned was first the crisis and then the partial dismantling of the domestic and international architecture of the postwar settlement – conventionally referred to as Keynesianism and Bretton Woods respectively. (44)

When I use the word “neoliberalism” in this and following chapters to name the ideology that gives shape in a fundamental way to the culture of liberalism in the United States in the nineties, the word then basically signifies the policy and the ideology that aim to dismantle “the domestic and international architecture of the postwar settlement – conventionally referred to as Keynesianism and Bretton Woods respectively”: that is, the culture of neoliberalism.¹⁰⁶

Admitting the differences between Reaganomics and Thatcherism, Rosenberg insists that the “common links” between them are “ultimately more significant”: “the attempted switch from progressive to regressive forms of taxation; political and legislative assaults on the power of organized labor; and a loud revival of Cold War rhetoric and policy” (45). Basically, neoliberalism is, as just defined, the counter-revolutionary attempt to annihilate, in terms of both the domestic and the international context, the basic premises of the welfare state on which the culture of Cold-War liberalism stands; yet, on the other hand, as Rosenberg also observes, the culture of neoliberalism in a certain sense also appears as a repetition of that of Cold-War liberalism, especially of the fifties, when the counter-revolution of neoliberalism took recourse to the rhetoric of war, siege and the state of exception.

¹⁰⁶ For the definition and analysis of neoliberalism, besides the books and the essays mentioned in the text, see Leitner, England, Saad-Filho, Robison, Soederberg, Gill and Brown (2003).

In this sense, the rhetoric of globalization should be seen as something more than a mere cover-up for the truth of capitalist expansion, as Rosenberg implies. When Francis Fukuyama published “The End of History?” in *The National Interest* in nineteen eighty-nine, somehow predicting the fall of the Berlin Wall in that winter, he declared “an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism,” which means, in the Hegelian, or, more specifically, Kojevian, sense, “the end of history as such” qua “the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (4). Samuel P. Huntington then published “Clash of Civilizations?” in *Foreign Affairs* in nineteen ninety-three, which is a certain kind of response to Fukuyama’s argument as the title clearly shows. Huntington’s article argues, somehow predicting ethnic conflicts and racial incidents during and after the nineties, that since the “end of ideologically defined states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union permits traditional ethnic identities and animosities to come to the fore” (29), “the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic” but the “great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural” (22). This, however, is a twisted response to Fukuyama’s argument. Huntington does not refute Fukuyama’s victory speech for liberalism, for the latter never suggested that his “end of history” should mean the end of global conflict: as he clearly states, “[t]his is not to say that there will no longer be events to fill the pages of *Foreign Affairs*’s yearly summaries of international relations, for the victory of liberalism has occurred primarily in the realm of ideas or consciousness and is as yet incomplete in the real or material world” (4). In this sense, the sense of “Clash of Civilizations” is a supplement to rather than a disagreement with the victory speech: global and domestic conflicts in terms of identities after the end of the Cold War happen after and just because of the global triumph of liberalism.

When it is understood that Huntington's conception presupposes a world that has no alternative to global liberalism, it should also be noticed what Fukuyama means what he calls "an unabashed victory" of liberalism. Fukuyama calls the victory "unabashed" because, as he observes,

the century that began full of self-confidence in the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy seems at its close to be returning full circle to where it started: not to an "end of ideology" or a convergence between capitalism and socialism, as earlier predicted, but to an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism. (3)

For Fukuyama, the victory of liberalism essentially means the end of "a convergence between capitalism and socialism." It is the victory of neoliberalism that refutes the validity of mixed economy and social policy, or the ideal of the welfare state. In other words, the series of well-known articles by Fukuyama and Huntington clearly argues that neoliberalism necessarily brings about a clash of identities. It is this conception of globalization as the global stage for incessant identitarian conflicts that thinly hides what Rosenberg calls "the tiger-leap of capitalist expansion" in the nineties. While the culture of Cold-War liberalism, which, being commitment to individualism of the anti-social hero as argued in Part I, partly functions as an inherent critique of the contemporary policy of welfare state, the culture of neoliberalism as commitment to another form of individualism does not contradict with its contemporary policy of neoliberalization. And this is how the culture of Cold-War liberalism prepared the governmentality of neoliberalism.

It is possible to wonder if the "end of history" and the "clash of civilizations" are really necessitated by the end of the Cold War, although it is clear that both Fukuyama's and Huntington's articles were written in response to it, when they actually function as a certain kind of façade for the legitimization of neoliberal, capitalist expansion in the nineties.

Nineteen ninety-one also is the year Fredric Jameson's masterstroke *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* was published. Although this lengthy book is well known for its definition of postmodern aesthetic – the form of blank parody with euphoria, the waning of affect and schizophrenic disjunction in the sense of time, demonstrated impressively by the comparison of Andy Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes* with Vincent Van Gogh's "A Pair of Boots" – mainly explained in the book's introduction, Jameson's focus moves to what he calls "the ideology of difference" in the concluding chapter.

Quoting from Linda Hutcheon's *The Politics of Postmodernism*, a book that offers another well known definition of postmodern parody as political parody that "both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies" (101), Jameson observes what such a cultural strategy as Hutcheon's postmodernism, which argues that "[w]hat is important in all these internalized challenges to humanism is the interrogating of the notion of consensus," involves:

"Tyranny" meant the ancient régime; its modern analogue, "totalitarianism," intends socialism; but "consensus" now designates representative democracy, with its ballots and public opinion polls, and it is now this that, already objectively in crisis, finds itself politically challenged by the new social movements, none of which find the appeal to majority will and consensus particularly legitimate any longer, let alone satisfactory. What will concern us here . . . is, on the one hand, the suitability of the general ideology or rhetoric of difference to articulate those concrete social struggles, and, on the other, the deeper implicit representation or ideological model of the social totality on which the logic of group is based and which it perpetuates – a model which also involves . . . a metaphorical exchange of energies with those other two characteristic postmodern systems (or representations!) which are the media and the market. (341)

In Hutcheon's critique of consensus, Jameson sees "the general ideology or rhetoric of difference": the Cold-War anti-totalitarianism is here translated into the postmodern critique of consensus. Partly admitting the political effectiveness of the ideology, he identifies it as

implicitly based on the “logic of group.” On the one hand, Jameson elsewhere, explaining the logic of group, analyzes it thus:

microgroups and “minorities,” women as well as the internal Third World, and segments of the external ones as well, frequently repudiate the very concept of a postmodernism as the universalizing cover for what is essentially a much narrower class-cultural operation serving white and male-dominated elites in the advanced countries. This is clearly also true. . . . But it is no less true that the “micropolitics” that corresponds to the emergence of this whole range of small-group, nonclass political practices is a profoundly postmodern phenomenon, or else the word has no meaning whatsoever. (318-319)

After the quote, Jameson refers to Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau’s *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* as the example of “the fundamental description and the ‘working ideology’ of the new politics” (319).¹⁰⁷ According to Jameson, postmodernism of what he calls “micropolitics,” or “this whole range of small-group, nonclass political practices,” is a symptom of the “concrete social and historical situation itself” of our age as “war on totality” (400). As Jameson defines, the postmodern condition is that the ideology of difference embodied in the logic of group sees the social totality of our situation paradoxically in “war on totality.”

Jameson regards “war on totality” as one of the defining feature of postmodernism because the war is a necessary effect of late capitalism. The “waning of our sense of history, and more particularly our resistance to globalizing or totalizing concepts,” Jameson argues, “are a function of precisely that universalization of capitalism,” where, repeating the Cold-War rhetoric, the valuable notion of totality is put under siege in the affirmation of anti-totalitarianism: “Where everything is henceforth systemic the very notion of a system seems to lose its reason for being, returning only by way of a ‘return of the repressed’ in the

¹⁰⁷ For a critique of post-Marxism, see also McGee.

more nightmarish forms of the ‘total system’ fantasized by Weber or Foucault or the *1984* people” (405-406). The universalization of capitalism thus leads to the war on totality. The universalization, in the late capitalism of “multinational capital itself” (408), is the defining feature of Jameson’s postmodernism as “what you have when the modernization is complete and nature is gone for good” (ix). In place of nature as the referent, postmodern space is grasped through “two characteristic postmodern systems” of the media and the market, the “two systems of codes [being] identified in such a way as to allow the libidinal energies of the one to suffuse the other” (275). Against this background, the aesthetics of the postmodern depicts “new space” that

involves the suppression of distance (in the sense of Benjamin’s aura) and the relentless saturation of any remaining voids and empty spaces, to the point where the postmodern body . . . is now exposed to a perceptual barrage of immediacy from which all sheltering layers and intervening mediations have been removed. (412-413)

This is how the globalized world is depicted in postmodern culture.

Fukuyama and Huntington define the shape of the world after the end of the Cold War, where, under the predominance of neoliberalism to which there is supposed to be no alternative, identities are the players. Jameson explains the worldview of Fukuyama’s and Huntington’s as the effect of late capitalism. It is at the juncture of Jameson and Fukuyama-Huntington that we identify the globalized world in the nineties, as the neoliberal world after the end of the Cold War, to be the world dominated by the logic of capitalism, as Rosenberg argues: the nineties is epitomized by neoliberal globalization postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism.

While Rosenberg’s focus lies in the emphasis of the cultural logic of globalization is a façade for the economic structure of capitalism, Jameson actually suggests that the politics of

identity, or the logic of group, did not start with the historical event of the end of the Cold War, even if the latter may have accelerated the former, but necessarily with the cultural logic of late capitalism. Of course, this is, partly and simply, because Jameson's project started before the end of the Cold War: in other words, it is possible to say that Jameson more or less predicted the full blooming of the paradigm of identity on the international level, as Huntington argues, before it came true. Jameson defines postmodernism essentially as a necessarily cultural logic of what Ernest Mandel calls late capitalism: "the new mediatic and informational social phenomena had been colonized (in our absence) by the Right, in a series of influential studies in which the first tentative Cold War notion of an 'end of ideology' finally gave birth to the full-blown concept of a 'postindustrial society'; Mandel's book *Late Capitalism* changed all that, and for the first time theorized a third stage of capitalism from a usable Marxian perspective" (400). It is Mandel's conception of late capitalism that makes it possible to understand globalization in the nineties and neoliberalization by which globalization is prepared and encouraged in a larger historical context. Put most simply, postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism is the basic framework in which the culture of neoliberalism is to be analyzed, as David Harvey observes, quoting Thatcher's notorious remark, "Economics are the method, but the object is to change the soul" (23): "Neoliberalization required both politically and economically the construction of a neoliberal market-based populist culture impulse called 'postmodernism' which had long been lurking in the wings but could now emerge full-blown as both a cultural and an intellectual dominant. This was the challenge that corporations and class elites set out to finesse in the 1980s" (42).

My argument in this chapter, however, concerns the changes in postmodern literature under neoliberalization in the nineties. When one tries to examine literary postmodern culture, or the tradition of postmodern fiction, in relation to neoliberalism, an attention should be paid

to its historical changes. I would like to see a certain kind of sea change between the postmodernism Jameson introduces in his introduction, or the postmodern aesthetic of blank parody, and the postmodernism he explains in conclusion, or the postmodern politics of identities. These two are of course continuous in terms of characteristics of postmodernism in general, but my point rather concerns the history of metafiction in the United States: postmodern fiction in the sixties and the seventies more or less follows Jameson's scheme of blank parody, which yet, written mainly by white males, does not apparently concern identity politics. In the eighties and the nineties, however, what could be called the second generation of metafictionists started to write metafiction that concerns identity, especially the identity of America. Three authors who published their first novel in the eighties symbolize the changes: Richard Powers, Paul Auster and Steve Erickson. Powers's *Three Farmers on Their Way to a Dance*, Auster's *The Invention of Solitude*, Steve Erickson's *Days between Stations*, along with the works of some writers who started their career earlier such as Don DeLillo's *Libra*, Kathy Acker's *Empire of the Senseless*, show the thematic interest in America, history and identity, which constitutes, I believe, what deserves to be called a sea change when we consider that those metafictionists from the previous generation do not, at least apparently, care for what is America or the identity of America: John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Thomas Pynchon, among many others, of course might write about America as a geographical setting, but their interest essentially lies in the (cultural or literary) postmodern condition imagined as something as global (if it virtually means inside the limit of the First World).¹⁰⁸ In terms of

¹⁰⁸ Regarding the new mode of postmodern fiction after the eighties, Linda Hutcheon offers in nineteen eight-nine the concept of "historiographic metafiction" that claims that "the intertexts of history and fiction take on parallel (though not equal) status in the parodic reworking of the textual past of both the 'world' and literature" (4) in addition to metafiction's insistence on "intense self-reflexivity and overtly parodic intertextuality" (3). Larry McCaffery also presents the concept of "avantpop" in nineteen ninety-two, with long listing of "avantpop" works, that claims that while "the cultural matrix that produced the first wave of postmodern fiction often seems as distant and old-fashioned to us today" (216), new writers revolutionize the genre in response to the demographic, political and technological changes in the American realities "by producing a wide variety forms, themes, and metaphors for conveying a vivid and varied sense of the *many*

literary history, this change regarding the thematic of identity should be related to the flowering of works by ethnic minorities, including African Americans (whose tradition needless to say is much longer than the range of my present argument), or what is now called the literature of diaspora or postcolonial literature, from the eighties. If then we widen our perspective to include postcolonial literature of the present, postmodern literature or metafiction after the eighties could be seen to revolve around such authors as Salman Rushdie, J. M. Coetzee, Michael Ondaatje, for whom historiographic metafiction means the most suitable way to depict their reality in the global scale rather than a literary experimentalism.

Most simply, identity, or micropolitics, looms large in the definition of postmodern fiction after the end of the Cold War in a way it never used to, which may have brought about some confusion as to what literary postmodernism is. In fact, Rosenberg argues that the “‘rise of neoliberalism’ by the collapse of the Soviet Union” is what “‘tipped the ‘postmodern’ era over into the ‘age of globalization’” (46-47), which fits in well with my argument when we understand globalization as the valorization of identity under the expansion of liberal capitalism. If we place our focus on the policy of neoliberalism, what distinguishes the eighties and the nineties from the sixties and the seventies is the start of Reaganomics and Thatcherism, or the start of neoliberal policy in the US and the UK (and then neoliberalism accelerates itself as the ideology of globalization after the end of the Cold War). I use the term “sea change” in order to describe the contrast between the first and the second generation of American metafictionists because I believe the literary politics of metafiction, in one aspect, deeply changed its meanings and effects around the beginning of the nineties in

different kinds of realities now being inhabited by Americans” (217). Neither of them specifically refers to the notion of identity although Hutcheon’s focus on history relates to the value of history as the parameter of identity and McCaffery’s on plural realities corresponds to the identitarian worldview(s). Using Pynchon’s career as the frame of reference, Palmeri offers an argument similar to mine (although he does not mention neoliberalism).

relation to the emergence of the culture of neoliberalism. As I will argue, the politics of what I call literary postmodernism of the first generation enacts a criticism of power that is historically embodied in the form of the welfare state, and the critique of the welfare state turns out to be indistinguishable from the ideology of neoliberalism in the second generation. My thesis, then, is that when late capitalism, as Mandel defines it and Jameson adopts it, is arranged, regulated and expanded by the ideology of neoliberalism during the eighties and the nineties, literary postmodernism somehow changes its shape, if not its fundamentals, which offers an opportunity for critically re-thinking the conditions of our historical present. When I identify postmodernism during the nineties as a culture corresponding to the capitalist ideology of neoliberal globalization, I treat the neoliberalization of postmodernism of the era as a kind of chance to try to capsize the ideology in a way more or less similar to but fundamentally different from the influential argument in *Empire* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri.

For my project, another valuable point in Jameson's analysis of postmodernism in terms of identity politics lies in its concern for the representation of the working class:

The emergence of the "new social movement" is an extraordinary historical phenomenon that is mystified by the explanation so many postmodernist ideologues feel themselves able to propose; namely, that the new small groups arise in the void of left by the disappearance of social classes and in the rubble of the political movement organized around those. (319)

This claim derives from what can be seen as Jameson's anticipatory critique of the logic of neoliberal globalization. Lamenting that how "classes could be expected to disappear . . . has never been clear to me," he explains:

the global restructuration of production and the introduction of radically new technologies –

that have flung workers in archaic factories out of work, displaced new kinds of industry to unexpected parts of the world, and recruited work forces different from the traditional ones in a variety of features, from gender to skill and nationality – explain why so many people have been willing to think so, at least for a time. (319)

So Jameson argues that “the small groups are, in fact, the *substitute* for a disappearing working class” (319-20): “the new social movements and the newly emergent global proletariat both result from the prodigious expansion of capitalism in its third (or “multinational”) state; both are in that sense ‘postmodern’” (319).

Jameson’s nuanced critique of micropolitics therefore means that, although micropolitics themselves of course have their own merits and gains, they do not demonstrate an essentially fruitful critique of our society if they function so as to suppress what would be imagined as the identity politics of the working class, which in Marxist logic entails a radical critique of the entirety of capitalist social order. Especially when, as Laclau and Mouffe argue, the new social movement is conceptualized as an alternative to the class-based politics, micropolitics as a certain kind of a tacit demonstration of the disappearance of class is actually wagging the dog as far as we believe in the remaining existence of those who are exploited by the existing regime of neoliberal capitalism. As Jameson suggests, identity politics is truly meaningful only when it concerns the representation of the working class since the class is negated in terms of its existence, deprived of its voice, and made invisible in our postmodern condition, because postmodernism exactly stands on the claim of its disappearance.¹⁰⁹

I would like to trace the shapes and meanings of the changes in the culture of postmodernism in studying a novel by the prominent first-generation American postmodernist who is still writing valuable postmodern novels after the end of the Cold War.

¹⁰⁹ For a similar argument, see Kester. For a vision of a possible “identity politics” of the working class, see Özselçuk.

Thomas Pynchon's *Vineland*, which is often considered to be a failure against the ever increased expectation for the author, was published in nineteen ninety after seventeen years' distance from *Gravity's Rainbow*.¹¹⁰ The novel is about neoliberalism, or Reaganomics, where the life of an ex-hippie living in poverty under social welfare, a suitable figure for the first-generation of postmodernism, is told in the present of the symbolic 1984.

II. Neoliberalism and Counterrevolution

In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey, wondering if “[f]uture historians may well look upon the years 1978-80 [mainly referring to the first two neoliberal administrations in the developed countries, that is, Thatcherism and Reaganomics] as a revolutionary turning-point in the world’s social and economic history,” defines it in this way: “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (2). Defining its essence as “accumulation by dispossession,” or in terms of neoliberalism involving not the generation but the unequal redistribution of wealth, he lists five characteristics in this way: privatization and commodification (of governmental, public, official institutions and services); financialization (of economy); management and manipulation of crises (through which violent accumulation by dispossession is enacted); and state redistribution (which works to widen the economic gap even in a nation) (160-163).

When Michel Foucault critically examines the ideologies of neoliberalism –

¹¹⁰ For the general evaluation of the novel, see Green.

specifically Ordo liberalism in post-war West Germany and that of the Chicago school epitomized by Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Gary Becker with its genealogical pre-histories – in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, the trajectory of his inquiry actually proceeds around the concept of governmentality, not biopolitics as his pre-given title suggested, as argued in Chapter Two.¹¹¹ The central question of the lecture is: “what does ‘the self-limitation of governmental reason’ mean?” That is, “governmental reason,” or governmentality, inherently involves in itself self-limitation, or a tendency that voluntarily tries to minimize its practice. Foucault’s answer is: “liberalism” (20). Foucault here defines the ideology of liberalism as an imperative to reduce the exercise of government.¹¹² From this perspective, the essence of liberalism as an ideology that aims for the regime of freedom is to be seen in the conception of neoliberalism.

After showing that in “the middle of the eighteenth century” the concept of the market changed its nature from the site of “jurisdiction” to “something that obeyed and had to obey ‘natural,’ that is to say, spontaneous mechanisms” (31) and, subsequently, that the market, having become “a site of verification–falsification for governmental practice,” determined that “good government is no longer simply government that functions according to justice” (32), Foucault underlines the theory of *homo oeconomicus* involved in neoliberalism. It is the concept of an especially neoliberal kind of *homo oeconomicus*:

Homo oeconomicus is an entrepreneur of himself. This is true to the extent that, in practice, the stake in all neo-liberal analyses is the replacement every time of *homo oeconomicus* as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings. (226; original brackets)

The neoliberal self-entrepreneur means the “flexible” subject who economically manages

¹¹¹ For Foucault’s critique of neoliberalism, see also Lemke (2001).

¹¹² For the concept of governmentality, see also Mitchell Dean and Burchell.

him/herself. Foucault observes that “we are seeing the economic policies of all the developed countries, but also their social policies, as well as their cultural and educational policies, being oriented in these terms” (232), and finds examples, among others, not only in the introduction of a highly fluid labor market through irregular employment such as temps, but also in the changes in social security from welfare to workfare and in the changes in the meaning of adult education as the site for creating knowledge workers who fit the technology of the day.¹¹³

On the other hand, the conception of self-entrepreneur means that labor in neoliberalism is grasped in terms of flexible manageability. This is essentially different from the model in the welfare state, or what Foucault calls normative society. Apparently, the imperative to be flexible makes a stark contrast to that to be normalized. As Foucault observes:

you can see that what appears on the horizon of this kind of analysis is not at all the ideal or project of an exhaustively disciplinary society in which the legal network hemming individuals is taken over and extended internally by, let's say, normative mechanisms. Nor is it a society in which a mechanism of general normalization and the exclusion of those who cannot be normalized is needed. On the horizon of this analysis we see instead the image, idea, or theme-program of a society in which there is an optimization of systems of difference, in which the field is left open to fluctuating processes, in which minority individuals and practices are tolerated, in which action is brought to bear on the rules of the game rather than on the players, and finally in which there is an environmental type of intervention instead of the internal subjugation of individuals. (259-60)

Power in the neoliberal community takes the form of environmental intervention: instead of “internal subjugation,” that is, the paradigmatic form of power in welfare/normative society, neoliberal control only sets the rules of the game, or “environment,” in which each player is

¹¹³ See Rose (1999).

compelled flexibly to realize their “own capital” as both their own “producer” and “entrepreneur.”

This expansion of freedom involves its own kind of ragged individualism as the negation of totality. Concerning the model of the market as the ultimate distributor of collective benefit, or the belief that the free market eventually realizes the greatest good for the greatest number of people by way of “God’s invisible hand,” Foucault observes that, were this the case, “it is absolutely necessary that each actor be blind with regard to this totality”: “Everyone must be uncertain with regard to the collective outcome if this positive collective outcome is really to be expected. Being in the dark and the blindness of all the economic agents are absolutely necessary. The collective good must not be an objective” (279). It is only with the presupposition of the individualist player who never goes out of their way for the collectivity that the free market could play its beneficial role.

Foucault here makes it clear that the market fundamentalism in neoliberalism, or the model of thought that the market functions as a replacement for society and social policies, involves the conceptual impossibility of totality: “Economic rationality is not only surrounded by, but founded on the unknowability of the totality of the process” (282). What is an overdetermined lack of totality in Jameson’s postmodernism as the cultural logic of multinational late capitalism, where also the media and the market function as the concept-metaphor of non-totality, is here explained in terms of the effect of neoliberal economic rationality. According to Foucault, then, when the predominance of governmentality renders the nation “the phenomenal republic of interests,”

the economic world is naturally opaque and naturally non-totalizable. It is originally and definitively constituted from a multiplicity of points of view which is all the more irreducible as this same multiplicity assures their ultimate and spontaneous convergence. . . . [E]conomics is a discipline without totality; economics is a discipline that begins to

demonstrate not only the pointlessness, but also the impossibility of a sovereign point of view over the totality of the state that he has to govern. . . . Liberalism acquired its modern shape precisely with the formulation of this essential incompatibility between the non-totalizable multiplicity of economic subjects of interest and the totalizing unity of the juridical sovereign. (282)

Foucault's argument here corresponds to Jameson's critique of the ideology of difference, where the liberal commitment to difference is found to derive from "the non-totalizable multiplicity of economic subjects of interest" in postmodernism. Neoliberalism is the ideology and the corresponding policy that thus justifies the war on totality as the logic of postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism. In this sense, neoliberalism is the political spirit of postmodernism, where postmodernism as the cultural logic is transformed into official policies. From this perspective, then, the essence shared by postmodernism and neoliberalism is "war on totality," which could take several forms as preclusion, suppression, negation, or denial of the notion of totality.

Liberal disbelief in totalization is in a sense nothing new; as I have argued, it is a recurrent thematic in the culture of the Cold War. Yet the neoliberal "war on totality" is different from the Cold-War commitment to individualism not only in terms of the former's commitment to market fundamentalism, but also in terms of historical context. If Cold-War aversion for totality is one for totalitarianism against the background of the actually existing welfare state, neoliberal war on totality as a critique of consensus find their aim in the critique of the welfare state. After naming "interventionist policies, whether in the form of Keynesian style economics, planning, or economic and social programs" as non-liberalism, Foucault explains:

Criticism of this non-liberalism was thus able to find a double foothold: on the right, precisely in the name of a liberal tradition historically and economically hostile to anything

sounding socialist, and on the left, inasmuch as it was a question not only of criticism but also of daily struggle against the development of an imperialist and military state. Hence the ambiguity, or what appears to be an ambiguity in American neo-liberalism, since it is brought into play and reactivated both by the right and the left. (218)

As is clearly shown in the politics of Reaganomics and Thatcherism, or most symbolically epitomized by Margaret Thatcher's famous comment, "There is no such thing as society," the introduction of neoliberalism is historically advanced as criticism of Statism, bureaucracy and the inefficiency of welfare state.

In other words, neoliberal war on totality apparently has little difference from the New Left's critique of the System or advocacy of freedom from the System, as epitomized by Paul Potter's well-known address, "We Must Name the System" – in just the same way, as argued in Chapter Two, that Daniel Bell's argument about "the end of ideology" stands on the same ground with Foucault's focus on "governmentality" if one neglects the ideological context in which each argument is located. Sean McCann and Michael Szalay's "Do You Believe in Magic?: Literary Thinking after the New Left," and their introduction to the collection in which the essay is included, "Introduction: Paul Potter and the Cultural Turn," persuasively follow this trajectory of the New Left's eventual affinity (at least partly) to neoliberalism, or neoconservatives, to use the term they prefer. Of course, it is not that the critique of the existing government itself can be conservative. Yet, as McCann and Szalay quote from Potter, he chose the word "the System" since he wanted "ambiguity" and, according to him, "Capitalism was for me and my generation an inadequate description of the evils of America, . . . a hollow, dead word tied to the thirties." As McCann and Szalay sum it up:

If [Potter's] speech epitomized the New Left's determination to search out the structural forces that appeared to link together even the most disparate issues, it also exemplified the temptation to assimilate vastly different problems into one hazy rubric. As he described

things, racial terror in the American South, colonial war in Indochina, and the more “subtle atrocities” of the white-collar workplace all came down to the same fundamental problem: “The system that frustrate[d],” the Vietnamese Liberation Front and the system that frustrated young, highly trained workers, at bottom were “the same.” (Introduction 211)

In this way, the critique of the Vietnam War (or racism in the South or workplace discriminations) turns into a politics of Freedom, when the New Left gains enormous popularity: The New Left and neoliberalism share the appeal to freedom.

After analyzing Potter’s intentional adaptation of “ambiguity” as a “cultural turn,” McCann and Szalay in “Do You Believe in Magic?” associate the New Left’s cultural turn with the cultural politics of post-structuralism. Identifying the prototype in C. Wright Mills’ conception of “the cultural apparatus,” which entails “more current formulations of similar ideas (Althusser’s ideological state apparatus, Foucault’s discourse, Lacan or Žižek’s symbolic order, Laclau and Mouffe’s hegemony)” (439), they question the assumption of the Cultural Left that “analysis of these forms itself constitutes significant political action, or, equally, that the ability to affect culture is, independent of other means, also therefore politically efficacious” (441). Their critique is persuasive since their characterization of the cultural politics of the New Left – epitomized by such beliefs as “organized political life in the U.S. had become irrelevant over the course of the postwar decades” (438); as Norman Mailer says, “What seemed significant here was the idea of revolution which preceded ideology” (444); “countercultural street theater . . . became less traditionally political and more committed to self-realization” (444); “The future of the revolution existed in the nerves and cells of the people who created and lived with it, rather than in the sanctity of the original idea” (444-445); Mailer’s other comment: “nothing would define the counterculture or the New Left quite so perfectly as its embrace of risk and the unforeseen” (444) – fairly clearly describes the ideology of neoliberalism, where the depoliticized “revolution” in the

market-place in terms of desire should be enacted by the self-realization of risk-taking entrepreneurs. Both Pierre Bourdieu in *Acts of Resistance* and *Firing Back* and Paolo Virno in “Do You Remember Counterrevolution?” consider neoliberalization as the violent change that happened in many developed counties in the eighties and nineties to be the counterrevolution where the ideals of the New Left are usurped and appropriated to dismantle the institutions of the welfare state. In other words, as far as one thinks ahistorically of the category of the politics of freedom, neoliberalism and the politics of the New Left are the same thing. The New Left criticized the System; neoliberalism criticizes, more concretely, the welfare state. Most crucially, as the most serious problem with neoliberalism is, as David Harvey defines it, its cutthroat furtherance of economic inequality, the new Left that had departed from Marxian ideas basically lies along the same lines insofar as the latter does not concern the amendment of economic inequality. This is the reason Foucault adopts a new critical concept of governmentality in place of biopolitics in order to critically analyze neoliberalism: both the commitment to and critique of politics in terms of biopolitics and biopower do not offer the imagination of the alternative to neoliberalism when the ideology of neoliberal globalization does involve the valorization of identities.

McCann and Szalay’s critique of the cultural Left, however, does not stop at the political point of the New Left’s contiguity with neo-conservatism. Their main point rather lies in the critique of the New Left’s choice of cultural politics over social politics and its consequences. Identifying the political limit of the works of Toni Morrison and Don DeLillo, “the two most critically celebrated American novelists of the past several decades” who, in spite of “their evident differences,” “share more than a little in common” such as their derision of “progress, enlightenment, and reason” and reverence for “the unknowable force of mystery,” or, that is to say, their belief that “the most appropriate attitude toward mundane

political conflict or social tension is the effort to transcend it” (447), McCann and Szalay clearly depict another aspect of postmodernism:

The high-minded irrationalism evident in Morrison and DeLillo’s writing, . . . , has become a prominent feature of turn-of-the-century American life. The deep investment in the therapeutic value of ineffable mystery, like the often knee-jerk disdain for mundane political efforts to work toward imperfect justice, is commonplace. Both are evident not just in the continued vitality of what might reasonably be called America’s Third Great Awakening – the extraordinary wave of popular religious fervor that began to swell in the sixties and has not crested yet – but in a pop culture with a seemingly bottomless appetite for stories of vampires, angels, and witches. But the specifically countercultural contention that mystery might prove to be a higher form of politics has taken root nowhere more powerfully than in our universities’ humanities departments and their now long-running indebtedness to the various crypto-spiritual theories that have combined to form the postmodern lingua franca. (451)

Do you believe in magic?: this is the reason for their essay’s title. Although I would – following Jameson’s procedure that, instead of criticizing, for example, the discourses of postindustrial society, tries to articulate the historical necessity of the discourses, seeing them as a part of the entire constellation of postmodernism – rather first like to inquire than criticize how the value of the “magic” is valorized, McCann and Szalay’s depiction of “a prominent feature of turn-of-the-century American life” seems intriguingly correct in terms of the imagination of our literary and pop culture: what they call America’s Third Awakening and our academic tolerance for mysticism in the humanities.

Their depiction is indispensable especially when Pynchon’s novel of nineteen ninety includes important zombie-like characters called the Thanatoids. The figure of the ghost has become a necessary part of postmodernism in relation to the intersection of the postmodern commitment to memory in place of history and the birth of the society of exclusion in neoliberal imaginations. In fact, with the analysis of *Vineland*, I will argue that the

postmodern commitment to “magic” is a symptomatic struggle to imagine the impossible totality when the liberal logic of capitalism reduces our conception of politics, right or left, to what Jameson calls the logic of group.

III. The End of “Postmodern Politics” in *Vineland*’s Biopolitical World

The main characters of *Vineland*, a novel whose title signifies a fictional town in northern California and whose present is located in nineteen eighty-four, are ex-hippie, semi-professional musician Zoyd Wheeler, his ex-wife Frenesi Gates, “some third-generation lefty” whose parents survived McCarthyism in Hollywood without naming names and whose grand-father was a Wobbly, and their child Prairie who lives with her father. Yet, Zoyd disappears from the narrative after the beginning of the novel, returning at the end; the body of the novel basically – that is, the typical Pynchonian digressions and divergences rather constitute the “body” of the text, in a sense – relates the story of Prairie’s search for the truth about the mother whom she has not seen for a long time. Frenesi’s life is deeply influenced by two important characters: Brock Vond and Darryl Louise Chastain, or simply DL. During the years of the students’ movement, Frenesi worked for a left-wing film collective 24fps, or the “guerrilla movie outfit” (194) that believes that “[a] camera is a gun” (197), but, because of the “uniform fetish,” or “a fatality, a helpless turn toward images of authority, especially uniformed men” (83), she had a relationship with fascist federal prosecutor Brock Vond, eventually becoming complicit, under Vond’s control, with covert action to destroy the People’s Republic of Rock and Roll, or PR³, a nation established with the cession from California of a private polytechnic College of the Surf after the success of the students’ movement. Frenesi’s close friend DL is a security guard for 24fps, who once tried in vain to

assassinate Vond, and works as a kind of mentor to lead Prairie to the truth about Frenesi's past. Known as a talented martial artist as a child, DL, after learning ninjitsu while staying in Japan with his father who worked for the Army, now belongs to the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives in California. In her attempt to kill Vond, she made the mistake of putting a Japanese, Takeshi Fumimota, under the spell of the Vibrating Palm, or Ninja Death Touch, which causes a person to die a year after the mysterious touch without the person under the spell ever noticing anything, and therefore, in order to compensate for her mistake, she becomes a "sidekick" (163) of Takeshi for a year and a day.

It is rather easy to appreciate this novel as postmodern fiction. In the opening episode, Zoyd carries out his yearly ritual of pretending to be mentally ill in order to scam the mental-disability check from the government. When, as argued in Chapter Three, the biopolitical regime of the welfare state is seen as essentially consecutive with totalitarian control society (which is underlined in the novel by the figure of Vond), Zoyd's scam is understood as an act of resistance. In fact, Linda Hutcheon in *The Politics of Postmodernism* defines postmodern parody that "at once inscribes and subverts the conventions and ideologies of the dominant cultural and social forces of the twentieth-century western world" as "paradoxical postmodernism of complicity and critique" (11). The ex-hippie's act of cultural revolution, or resistance that does not dare to change the social system per se even if it changes our "consciousness" (Zoyd's performance is a well-known form of parody that is reported on local news shows every year), constitutes the postmodern parody of complicity with and critique of the welfare state.

If Zoyd is a fake mental case, the narrative in a sense is a story of *sickos*. When Hector Zuñiga, a federal agent of the Drug Enforcement Agency who has been a long-time nemesis for Zoyd, also in the opening of the novel gets in touch after an interval with Zoyd, proposing

to Zoyd to search for Frenesi with his help, he turns out to be a “Tubefreek” escaped from an institution called “National Endowment for Video Education and Rehabilitation” (33) (actually, he frequently and symptomatically quotes from popular TV shows when he speaks and mutters). Furthermore, the narrative lists such medical neologisms as “an attack of THO, or Teen Hair Obsession” (98), “clinical kouxinaphobia, or fear of kitchens” (190), “Trasero-heightened surfophobia” (233). Yet, these new diseases just appear in passing references, and the text never dwells on their effect, treatment or remedy.

Such parody of what could be called medical identities is meaningful since it is juxtaposed to Brock Vond’s totalitarianism. As the text tells us, the “genius” of Vond lies in seeing “in the activities of the sixties left not threats to order but unacknowledged desires for it”: “While the Tube was proclaiming youth revolution against parents of all kinds and most viewers were accepting this story, Brock saw the deep — if he’d allowed himself to feel it, the sometimes touching — need only to stay children forever, safe inside some extended national Family. . . . They’d only been listening to the wrong music, breathing the wrong smoke, admiring the wrong personalities. They needed some reconditioning” (269). Because of this belief, he establishes for the reconditioning a “Political Re-Education Program, or PREP, Brock’s own baby, his gamble on a career coup” (268) (where they use Stelazine and Thorazine when Frenesi is detained there). Vond’s totalitarianism is depicted as biopolitical when the rhetoric of his reconditioning concerns not politics or ideology, but rather cultural politics, such as wrong music, use of drug and admiration for wrong personalities. De-normalized bodies as signified in the new diseases, then, become the resistance to it; even if jokey lists of medical neologisms is to be seen as a mere parody, the parody deserves the name of a postmodern tactic that “at once inscribes and subverts” what Vond symbolizes.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ In his foreword to Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-four*, Pynchon, tracing the resemblance between the novel’s world and contemporary America, suggests a vision that depicts a certain kind of totalitarianism alive in the

Medical neologism is to be seen as a part or a parody of the discourse of “medicalization,” which Peter Conrad and Joseph W. Schneider defines as a way of social control of long history that tries, translating “badness” to “sickness,” to regulate or even cure “deviance” under medical doctor’s control.¹¹⁵ In *Deviance and Medicalization*, an already classic book on the topic that widely surveys histories of principle objects of medicalization such as madness, alcoholism, opiate addiction, homosexuality, Conrad and Schneider, claiming that “[m]edicalization and demedicalization are political and not scientific achievements” (273), observes that “[t]he medicalization of deviance has been nowhere more pervasive than in the United States”: “American Society [is] fertile ground for medicalization” (263). In the appendix added in the nineteen ninety-two new edition, they further contend that “there is some evidence that more deviance is medicalized today than a decade ago” (286-87), referring to such examples as “eating disorder and anorexia,” “compulsive gambling,” “transsexualism,” “menopause,” “premenstrual syndrome or PMS,” “infertility,” “suicide,” “impaired physicians,” “post-traumatic stress disorder,” “chemical executions in the death penalty,” “aging” (287). They are ambivalent toward the political value of medicalization: the good side consists of its being “humanitarian” translating bad to ill (246), “optimistic” making “deviant” curable (247), “more *flexible* and often more *efficient* than judicial and legal controls” (248), and to put “the ‘*sick role*’ to those labeled as deviants” (246) allowing for “the ‘conditional legitimation’ of a certain amount of deviance” (247), while the bad side involves “[d]islocation of responsibility” from the “deviant” (248), “[a]ssumption of the moral neutrality of medicine,” “[d]omination of expert control,” “[m]edical social control” (249), “[i]ndividualization of social control,” “[d]epoliticization of deviant behavior” (250). Certainly, medicalization as a way of social control is a prime example of biopolitics that

world he inhabits.

¹¹⁵ See also Conrad (2007) and Petersen.

translate social politics into the politics of the body. And, as their argument shows, when the biopolitics legitimates depoliticization under the name of flexibility and efficiency, it constitutes a part and parcel of neoliberal governing, where it grows more and more popular with the ascent of neoliberal regime.¹¹⁶

Pynchon adopts neologisms in this context although it is clear in the novel that the “medicalization” by neologisms does not involve any stigmatization. The “medicalization” in the novel is liberal, but it is, more correctly, neoliberal insofar as it translates the problems of social politics into the terminology of the body and desire through the plot of Frenesi’s sexual relationship with Vond as the ultimate evil of totalitarianism. This means, however, that the opposition between the totalitarian Vond and the pair of the ex-hippie Zoyd and the ex-New Left Frenesi should not be seen as the true opposition that constitutes the novel’s ideology. If the novel is to be seen as a postmodern version of Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the point should be that the political framework of anti-totalitarianism is no longer relevant in this postmodern version, when neoliberalism as well as the politics of the New Left criticize big government in unison.

Even at the beginning of the novel, Hector warns the reader: “But it’s no game in Washington – *chále ése* – this ain’t tweakín around no more with no short-term maneuvers here, this is a *real* revolution, not that little fantasy hand-job you people was into, it’s a groundswell, Zoyd, the wave of History, and you can catch it, or scratch it” (27). Hector here is explaining about the federal file on Frenesi, who, after her betrayal of the students’ movement, has been under Witness Protection by the federal government, has re-married with Flash Fletcher who works as an informer for the government, and has had a son named Justin. Her file in the government has been erased under the federal budget cut, and so Hector

¹¹⁶ For a more detailed criticism of the complicity between the rhetoric of welfare and that of medicalization, see Somers. For the use of the rhetoric of medicalization under neoliberal regime, see Greco and Mathieu.

asks Zoyd to help to find her. It is, thus, Reaganomics' budget cut that Hector calls "*real* revolution," compared to which the New Left movement looks like the "little fantasy hand-job you people was into."¹¹⁷

Yet, this does not mean that Zoyd's postmodern critique of the welfare state, or his scam for the mental-disability check, is not important. On the contrary, my point is that the figure of Zoyd, who presides in the opening scenes of the novel, acting as if he were the novel's hero, and disappears from the text only to return toward the novel's end without any consequential role to play, is the key to understanding the true structure and thus the true problematic of the novel. When Zoyd runs screaming into a window glass to feign insanity, he finds something "funny," "no spring or resonance, no volume, only a sort of fine, dulled splintering" since the glass was replaced by "clear sheet candy, which would break but not cut" for the performance (11-12). Zoyd's "political" act just fans the air as if what he does is made disjunct from the body of the novel. In fact, it is later revealed in the course of the novel that Zoyd's regular mental-disability check is an "arrangement" (304) made between him and Vond in order for the federal government to always locate instead of incarcerating him, while, at the beginning of the novel, his fabulous performance of acting crazy certainly reads as a cultural resistance to government. The true meaning of the figure of Zoyd is its ambiguity.

In the novel's postmodern world, the political means biopolitical where the ideal of revolution is ultimately translated into terms of the sexual relationship between Frenesi and Vond, that is, where love and desire are its main agency. Zoyd, being an ex-hippie who is the father of a daughter, symbolizes a new phase of postmodernism in the nineties that concerns the effect of neoliberalization under the Reagan administration, where the critique of the

¹¹⁷ Flash also observes that "We're in th' Info Revolution here" (74), suggesting that the novel is supposed to be set in an era different from the sixties.

System, or the Pynchonian theme of paranoia that once effectively depicted the fear of totalitarianism, is no longer relevant. The true problem of the novel depends on a question: whether or not the ex-hippie, who lives on the check from the federal government that he is forced to accept, is dependent on the welfare state.

IV. “Welfare Queen” Versus “Bartleby”: Postmodern Discourses on Poverty

In that the definition of postmodernism always concerns the paradigmatic changes in economic, industrial and cultural structure of the world, it from the start has its foundation on the arguments on the new and emergent forms of labor and production. Probably starting with Daniel Bell’s seminal *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society* (1973), and then, futurist Alvin Toffler’s series of works culminating in *Powershift* (1990), as well as Jean Baudrillard’s analysis of symbolic economy in *The Consumer Society* (originally 1970), *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (originally 1976), *Simulacra and Simulation* (originally 1981) where it is argued that consumption precedes production, the argument about the paradigmatic shift in the structure of the economy that the predominant mode of production becomes that of knowledge worker in place of the traditional form of labor was frequently repeated, which eventually became in full bloom in the nineties under the name of “new economy.”¹¹⁸ Jameson virtually refers to this history, when he emphasizes the value of Ernest Mandel’s *Late Capitalism* as cited above.

Another branch of this tradition is the argument on post-Fordism. According to *OED*, the word “post-Fordism” is first used in an article, “The Crisis of the Dismal Science” by Seumas Milne, in *The Guardian* in nineteen eighty-eight, which is about the withering of the

¹¹⁸ For a brief summarization of “new economy,” see Webber. For its general critical analysis, see Henwood. For a symbolic and cultural understanding of it, see Marazzi.

Marxist Tradition in economics. As early as nineteen ninety, Stuart Hall in an essay entitled “Brave New World,” summing up post-Fordism as

a shift to the new information technology; more flexible, decentralized forms of labor process and work organization; decline of the old manufacturing base and the growth of the “sunrise,” computer-based industries; the hiving-off or contracting-out of functions and services; a greater emphasis on choice and product differentiation, on marketing, packaging and design, on the “targeting” of consumers by lifestyle, taste and culture rather than by the Register General’s categories of social class; a decline in the proportion of the skilled, make, manual working class, the rise of the service and white-collar classes and the “feminization” of the workplace; an economy dominated by the multinationals, with their new international division of labor and their greater autonomy from nation-state control; the “globalization of the new financial markets, linked by the communications revolution; and new forms of the spatial organization of social processes (24),

calls for the new conception of subjectivity with which the Left-wing politics is possible as a response to the culture of post-Fordism.

While an argument in a similar vein is also found in the Italian autonomist Marxists such as Paolo Virno in *A Grammar of the Multitude* and *Multitude between Innovation and Negation* and Christian Marazzi in *Capital and Language*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in *Empire*, identifying the mode where affective work is predominant as biopolitical production, symbolically formulates the vision of communist revolution under such a mode of production as the liberation of the multitude: “The central role previously occupied by the labor power of mass factory workers in the production of surplus value is today increasingly filled by intellectual, immaterial, and communicative labor power,” which indicates “the importance of production within the biopolitical process of the social organization” (29).

Empire can be read as an advocate for Marxist revolution only when one accepts their theoretical replacement of the proletariat with the multitude as the agent of revolution. While once “the category of proletariat centered on and was at times effectively subsumed under the

industrial working class, whose paradigmatic figure was the male mass factory worker” (52-53), “after so many attempts to transform the poor into proletarians and proletarians into a liberation army . . . , once again in postmodernity emerges in the blinding light of clear day the multitude, the common name of the poor”: “It comes out fully in the open because in postmodernity the subjugated has absorbed the exploited. In other words, the poor, every poor person, the multitude of poor people, have eaten up and digested the multitude of proletarians” (158). Under the biopolitical regime of what they call “empire,” which they appropriates from Giles Deleuze’s concept of “control society” as what comes after what Foucault calls “disciplinary society,” the “proletariat is not what it used to be” (53) since the paradigmatic form of labor in postmodernity is “intellectual, immaterial, and communicative” rather than “industrial,” where “the production of capital converges ever more with the production and reproduction of social life itself” and “it thus becomes ever more difficult to maintain distinctions among productive, reproductive, and unproductive labor” (402). In this postmodern situation, according to Hardt and Negri, the old notion of industrial labor also changes its nature in terms of time and place: while “Empire is the non-place of world production where labor is exploited” since the “universality of human creativity, the synthesis of freedom, desire, and living labor, is what takes place in the non-place of the postmodern relations of [biopolitical] production” (210), the “activity of the multitude constitutes time beyond measure” because “time is reappropriated on the plane of immanence” when the “new phenomenology of the labor of the multitude reveals labor as the fundamental creative activity that through cooperation goes beyond any obstacle imposed on it and constantly re-creates the world” (402). It is in this context, which relates the postmodern emergence of nonmaterial work with the displacement of the proletariat as industrial worker by the global multitude of the poor, that they contend that when “one adopts the perspective of the activity

of the multitude, its production of subjectivity and desire, one can recognize how globalization, insofar as it operates a real deterritorialization of the previous structures of exploitation and control, is really a condition of the liberation of the multitude” (52).

Hardt and Negri thus offers the postmodern world as completion of biopolitics or biopolitical production, where our epistemology (of time and space, and revolution) changes its fundamental nature, and see there the possibility of a new kind of revolution as liberation of the multitude. Being a project that imagines the completion of biopolitics, it is only natural that, with the emergence of new subjectivity, revolution is conceived in terms of love and desire:

Political theory is forced by this new reality to redefine itself radically. . . . [I]n biopolitical society the decision of the sovereign can never negate the desire of the multitude. . . . For generation [in the sense of the generation of life and power] to take place, the political has yield to love and desire, and that is to the fundamental forces of biopolitical production. The political is not what we are taught it is today by the cynical Machiavellianism of politicians; it is rather, as the democratic Machiavelli tells us, the power of generation, desire, and love. (388)

This certainly is the conception of the apogee of cultural revolution: the political here consists of the corporeal, where the social is translated into “the power of generation, desire, and love.” And when *Vineland* depicts the war complicated by love and desire between the totalitarian federal agent and the ex-New Left and the ex-hippie in the medicalized world, the novel fairly clearly follows, or, in fact, predicts, the argument of *Empire*. Both *Vineland* and *Empire* show that love and desire function as the main player in the postmodern conception of cultural revolution of biopolitics. If the Cold-War conception of cultural revolution stands on implicit complicity with the valorization of “innocence,” as argued in Chapter Two, the postmodern conception works with the valorization of love and desire.

One of the main characteristics of the concepts of what I call cultural revolution is, as argued in Chapter Two, the anti-totalitarian commitment to freedom as the trace left by its Cold-War origin. Hardt and Negri insist on the significance of the multitude of the poor as the new agency of revolution not only because of the post-Fordist shift of biopoliticalization of labor, but also because of the limit of the traditional Marxism: “*The dominant stream of the Marxist tradition, . . . , has always hated the poor, precisely for their being ‘free as birds,’ for being immune to the discipline necessary for the construction of socialism,*” while the “*discovery of postmodernity consisted in the repositioning of the poor at the center of the political and productive terrain*” (158): “*What was really prophetic was the poor, bird-free laugh of Charlie Chaplin when, free from any utopian illusions and above all from any discipline of liberation, he interpreted the ‘modern times’ of poverty, but at the same time linked the name of the poor to that of life, a liberated life and a liberated productivity*” (159). Hardt and Negri’s vision consists in seeing the chance for the revolution for freedom, which is free from “any utopian illusions” and “any discipline of liberation,” in the emergence of the poor as biopolitical worker. This is the reason why they ultimately define the multitude of the poor as “biopolitical self-organization” (411).

When Hardt and Negri thus locate the possibility of postmodern revolution in the figure of “the poor” as the replacement of the proletariat, they in fact appropriate the conservative discourse of the neoliberal “new politics of poverty.” One important aspect of the culture of neoliberalism is its new, problematic representation of the poor, which is epitomized by the debates on the figure of “welfare queen.”¹¹⁹ About this, Loïc Wacquant in *Punishing the Poor* offers a persuasive matrix: when neoliberalization ends the ideal of the welfare state that every member of the nation must be taken care in terms of (male)

¹¹⁹ See also McCrate and Moynihan. Moynihan’s argument clearly dictates how the conception of “welfare queen” relates to the belief in the coming of what is called post-industrial society. McCrate’s essay demonstrates a clear and persuasive criticism of what Moynihan believes in.

employment and family wage, the neoliberal state becomes the penal state that stands on “prisonfare,” or the penalization of the poor, as well as workfare, or the policy that “the recipient must accept any job or assimilated activity offered to her [*sic*], whatever the pay and working conditions, on pain of forsaking the right to assistance” (59). As Wacquant argues, neoliberalization in the policies toward the poor means the “shift ‘from carrots to sticks,’” where the government programs treat “the poor as *cultural similes of criminals*” and “the policy of punitive containment of the poor” functions on “*massive and systematic recourse to incarceration*” (60). In a similar vein, Jock Young more simply calls the neoliberalized society “exclusive society” as contrasted to the inclusive society of the welfare state that, at least in principle, aspires to the universal protection of the citizen’s right to live.¹²⁰

Yet, what is more crucial and interesting in reading *Vineland* is, unfortunately, not so much the critique of neoliberal policies toward the poor as the discourse that justifies them. After surveying the arguments by such scholars as Charles Murray and Daniel P. Moynihan, among others, that played a significant role in establishing the anti-poverty policy of the United States, Lawrence M. Mead in *The New Politics of Poverty*, observing that the end of the welfare policy for the poor necessarily results from the emergence of the non-working poor, concludes that the non-working poor

do harbor attitudes that discourage work, as pessimists say, but the origin of these feelings lies mainly in the difficult histories of the most disadvantaged ethnic groups, not in the injustice of the current society. To a great extent, nonwork occurs simply because work is not enforced. Overall, I think conservatives have the better of the barriers debate – the chance to get ahead is widely available. But liberals have the more realistic view of the psychology of

¹²⁰ Although Young’s notion of “exclusive society” is useful to some degree to contrast the neoliberal emphasis on self-help and entrepreneurial self-responsibility with the welfare social policy, the notion in the last analysis is ambiguous, as I argue toward the end of this chapter. Young himself amends some of his argument in *The Exclusive Society* in his next book *The Vertigo of Late Modernity*. And, as Young also argues, there is a change in the mode from disciplinary to environmental intervention also in the neoliberal way of punishment. For this, see, for example, O’Malley.

poverty – the poor do not *believe* they have opportunity, and this still keeps them from working. (133-134)

Thus defining “the psychology of poverty,” Mead offers workfare as the solution to it: “The distinctive purpose of workfare has never been to raise the earnings of clients, although this is desirable, but rather cause more adult recipients to work or prepare for work as an end in itself” (167).¹²¹ Yet Mead, referring to the global situation not restricted in the United States, elsewhere observes that “politics is shifting its focus from class to conduct” where the “most divisive disputes are no longer about unionism or socialism but rather the problems of new ethnic groups, usually immigrants, whom many feel threaten the social order” (211). That is to say, according to Mead, the “objection” to “immigrants or their descendents” is “not that, like industrial workers, they are organizing, striking, and demanding economic protection from government,” but that “they are seen as threatening social order or standards” (228).

Mead clearly articulates how, under neoliberalism, the problem of poverty is translated into that of identities or “minorities” with the shift of the focus “from class to conduct,” where, as Wacquant observes, “the study of incarceration . . . become an *essential chapter in the sociology of the state and social stratification and, more specifically, of the (de)composition of the urban proletariat* in the era of ascendant neoliberalism” (16). What matters here is not politics or ideology, but biopolitics or culture at the alleged end of ideology: when the problem of poverty is not that of class, but of conduct, its amendment is not redistribution of wealth, but the aggrandizement of the social control, or incarceration; the new politics of poverty is a technology that translates economic differences into those of identities. Both to those who criticize the situation and who try to improve it, the problem is

¹²¹ It seems to me that if “the poor do not *believe* they have opportunity” owing to “the difficult histories of the most disadvantaged ethnic groups,” it is obligation of the State to do everything to amend the situation that causes what he calls “the psychology of poverty,” but in the book Mead does not offer any solution for it but workfare of self-help.

thought of only in terms of culture, or the way to control the conduct, when the “non-working poor” are posited as the cause of the problem, with the disappearance of “unionism and socialism” either as a problem or an solution, in the neoliberal discourse. Actually, in Mead’s argument, it is ultimately, if not intentionally, ambiguous as to what initiates the shift “from class to conduct”: whether the discovery of the non-working poor as a fatal problem to welfare policy transformed the problem of poverty into that of social control, or whether the re-conception of the problem of poverty not as that of class, but as of identities led to the problematization of the non-working poor as the target of “moral” indictment. It is in this ambiguity that the shift of the paradigm “from class to conduct” is legitimated in the tautological rhetorical loop (that is, the former legitimates the latter, where in turn the latter legitimates the former). This then is how, according to Jameson, the logic of group grows predominant, repressing a possible conception of totality: the problem of the poor is conceptualized not as the social problem, but the cultural problem of identities, or the cultural problem that should be both understood and resolved in terms of the value of identity.

This is biopoliticalization of poverty. While the neoliberal conservatives put the blame on the “culture of dependency,” as the “identity” of the non-working poor, instead of the social system, Hardt and Negri find the possibility of the postmodern revolution of love and desire in the liberation of the multitude of the non-working poor. Both the right and the left eventually perceive the problem of poverty as that of social control, or its abolition, rather than redistribution of wealth. It is in such a situation that further examples of the left discourse on the discovery of the non-working poor can be found in the sudden popularity in and after the nineties of Melville’s “Bartleby” as the figure of resistance in Continental philosophy.

Gilles Deleuze in “Bartleby; or, the Formula” (1998), describing him as “the man

without references, without possessions, without properties, without qualities, without particularities” (74), concludes that Bartleby of “schizophrenic vocation” is “the doctor of a sick America, the *Medicine-Man*, the new Christ or the brother to us all” (90). Following Deleuze, Giorgio Agamben in “Bartleby, or on Contingency” (1999) sees in Bartleby the paradigmatic figure of his notion of “decreation,” or “the passage from potentiality to actuality, the occurrence of a contingency” (269): “Bartleby is the extreme figure of the Nothing from which all creation derives; and at the same time, he constitutes the most implacable vindication of this Nothing as pure, absolute potentiality” (253-54). When in *Empire* Hardt and Negri also explains that Bartleby’s “*refusal is so absolute that Bartleby appears completely blank, a man without qualities, as Renaissance philosophers would say, homo tantum, mere man and nothing more,*” they clearly follow this line, but they also add that he belongs to the “*long tradition of the refusal of work*” (203) and that what Bartleby signifies as the politics of resistance is meaningful only when the “*project leads not toward the naked life of homo tantum but toward homohomo, humanity squared, enriched by the collective intelligence and love of the community*” (204). Claiming, as a criticism of Hardt and Negri, that “the withdrawal expressed by ‘I would prefer not to’ is not to be reduced to the attitude of ‘saying no to the Empire’” (383), Slavoj Žižek in *The Parallax View* (2006) identifies Bartleby of the figure of absolute refusal – “His refusal is not so much the refusal of a determinate content as, rather, the formal gesture of refusal as such” (385) – as the sign of parallax difference from which the horizon of a new politics is imaginable, in a way similar to Agamben: “Bartleby’s gesture is what remains of the supplement to the Law when its place is emptied of all its obscene superego content” (382). Their interpretations and the political programs that derive from them are thus different and diverse, but their simultaneous interests in Bartleby all come from this schema that Bartleby as a abstract, or even

metaphysical, figuration of the non-working – hence the figure of absolute refusal – is the key to imagine the possibilities of liberatory cultural politics, or cultural revolution.¹²²

It is in this context that Zoyd Wheeler as an ex-hippie who is under a paradoxical control of the State should be read as a strange figure of the non-working poor who rather ironically, if as well comically, shows that the postmodern discourse can treat him only in terms of biopolitics, as opposed to redistribution of wealth. Although Zoyd has “a sideline in crawfish” that is, bringing “the good-eating crustaceans . . . to a string of restaurants catering to depraved yuppie food preferences, in this case California Cajun” (35), he also is clearly “dependent” on the government, just as conservatives say “welfare queens” are, when he fails to live up to the work ethic, smoking “half a joint he’d found in his pocket” (4) while driving. The plot of the novel, which eventually tells the “dependency” is an arrangement for the sake of Vond’s benefit, then implies that Zoyd’s “dependency” results from a certain trap set by the government: the government is to be blamed as the cause. Furthermore, Zoyd’s unwillingness to work, or to follow the work ethic, is represented ambiguously as something cultural as well as political: his being an ex-hippie suggests that his pattern of behavior comes from the hippie culture that is imagined as a form of political resistance.

Being neither Bartleby nor Welfare Queen, Zoyd is the enigmatic figure of the poor at the center of the novel whom the postmodern politics of the left or the right is not able to treat adequately. Pynchon’s version of *Nineteen Eight-four* thus demonstrates the “reality” of the contemporary postmodern discourse under neoliberalization. This is where anachronism in the characterization of Vond grows paradoxically relevant when he is depicted as “a devotee of the thinking of pioneer criminologist Cesare Lombroso (1836-1909)” (272). Although this in a sense is a correct (non-anachronic) slur to the criminalization of the poor as Wacquant

¹²² Jacques Derrida also refers to Bartleby as a figure of resistance in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis* (24). He, however, carefully restricts the argument to a matter of “an idiomatic interest,” “almost . . . an idiosyncratic interest” (2).

argues, Vond is a old-fashioned totalitarian who believes in biological criminology and who eventually turns out to be not the true problem in the novel: he is a wrong imaginary enemy of the postmodern cultural politics that believes that anti-totalitarianism is liberalism's final answer.

V. Thanatoid, Financialization and Resentment

If the totalitarian Vond is the figure of the Evil in the novel, what defeats him is not Zoyd, Frenesi, or any agency from the New Left movement: it is neoliberalism that ends the federal totalitarian politics of the United States symbolized by Vond. Toward the end of the novel, Vond, under "Reagan's so-called readiness exercise, code-named REX 84" (353), hanging from a helicopter Huey with cable and harness, tries to kidnap Prairie, believing for some crazy reason that he is the true father of her. Then,

Suddenly, some white male far away must have wakened from a dream, and just like that, the clambake was over. The message had just been relayed by radio from field headquarters down at the Vineland airport. Reagan had officially ended the "exercise" known as REX 84, and what had lain silent, undocumented, forever deniable, embedded inside. The convoys were to pack up and return to their motor pools, the mobile prosecution teams to disband, all the TDY's in the task forces to return to their regular commands, including Brock, his authorizations withdrawn, now being winched back up, protesting all the way, bearings and brake pads loudly shrieking, trying to use his remote but overridden by Roscoe at the main controls. (376)

Reagan's decision rescues Prairie from Vond. Vond loses his authority when Reagan administration decides so.¹²³

On the one hand, when Reagan's administration basically represented as Reaganomics

¹²³ Hite points out how important it is in understanding the novel's politics that Reagan here is first presented as "some white male," or in terms of his identity.

– as Hector says when he explains to Zoyd the disappearance of the federal file on Frenesi, “Maybe you noticed on the news, on the Tube, all these stories about Reaganomics, a-an’ cutbacks in the federal budget and stuff?” (26), as Justin observes on the same topic, “you should watch MacNeil and Lehrer, there’s all this budget stuff goin’ on all the time, with President Reagan, and Congress?” (87), and as Frenesi herself says to herself, “She understood that the Reaganomic ax blades were swinging everywhere” (90) –, the fate of Vond is interpreted as the effect of the neoliberalism of Reaganomics. What Vond signifies, the totalitarianism of the welfare state whose main technology is the institutional “reconditioning,” and even its critique grow obsolete when a new shape of postmodernism appears with the ascent of neoliberalism: what Vond signifies is abolished by the power of the State. Most simply, under the neoliberal ideal of small government, the institutional totalitarianism is not wanted even by the right-wingers. Under neoliberalism, both the new right, or, more correctly, neoconservative, and the new left agree on the destruction of the federal System.

On the other hand, the novel of course does not represent the neoliberal regime as a utopian state of freedom. A member of 24fps observes: “Then again, it’s the whole Reagan program, isn’t it – dismantle the New Deal, reverse the effects of World War II, restore fascism at home and around the world, flee into the past, can’t you feel it, all the dangerous childish stupidity – ‘I don’t like the way it came out, I want it to be my way.’ . . .” (265). Mucho Maas, reappearing from *The Crying of Lot 49*, is more articulated, when he says to Zoyd, “We’re on into a new world now, it’s the Nixon Years, then it’ll be the Reagan Years —”:

“Just please go careful, Zoyd. ’Cause soon they’re gonna be coming after everything, not just drugs, but beer, cigarettes, sugar, salt, fat, you name it, anything that could remotely

please any of your senses, because they need to control all that. And they will”

“Fat Police?”

“Perfume Police. Tube Police. Music Police. Good Healthy Shit Police. Best to renounce everything now, get a head start.” (313)

And Hector is, too,

“Correct. But did you know he took it away from Brock too? Imagine how pissed off he must feel! Yeah, PREP, the camp, ev-erythín, they did a study, found out since about ’81 kids were comín in all on their own askín about careers, no need for no separate facility anymore, so Brock’s budget lines all went to the big Intimus shredder in the sky, those ol’ barracks are fillín up now with Vietnamese, Salvadorans, all kinds of refugees, hard to say how they even found the place. . . .” (347; original ellipses)

The neoliberal Reaganomics brings about another form of social control, or “fascism at home and around the world,” where Vond’s career is destroyed and Frenesi, with the disappearance of her federal file, becomes free. Neoliberalism, which emphasizes ragged individualism, “I want it to be my way,” and entrepreneurship, “Best to renounce everything now, get a head start,” functions on policing of everything, from “music” to “good healthy shit,” in the form of environmental intervention.

As Hector observes that “since about ’81 kids were comín in all on their own askín about careers,” the novel represents the neoliberal shift as the corresponding birth of a newer generation. Prairie’s boyfriend is someone named Isaiah Two Four, which “his hippie-freak parents laid on him in 1967 [the year of the summer of love],” after the verse in the Bible “about converting from war to peace, beating spears into pruning hooks” (16), but the player in “a local heavy-metal band called Billy Barf and the Vomitones” (20) asks Zoyd to “cosign for a loan” for his “business idea,” in spite of his name, “to set up first one, eventually a chain, of violence centers, each on the scale, perhaps, of a small theme park, including automatic-weapon firing ranges, paramilitary fantasy adventures, gift shops and food courts,

and video game rooms for the kids” that feature something called “Third World Thrills,” “Scum of the City,” “Hit List,” all of which are games where you can enjoy shooting people (19). While Isaiah imagines his business to be “a surprise” for his parents, Prairie finds it difficult to understand Zoyd’s reluctance to cooperate with him: when the dad says, “no bank’s gonna let me cosign no loan, come on,” the daughter replies, “They *love* it when you owe money” (20). The children of hippies have adjusted to the culture of neoliberalism in terms of entrepreneurship and its corresponding financial climate. When Zoyd has no word to counter-argue Isaiah or Prairie, the novel depicts the new culture of neoliberalism in terms of generational gap.

More symbolically, financialization under neoliberalism, where debt and loan are by themselves regarded as production of wealth, is linked with the end of the Cold-War paradigm in the depiction of Takeshi Fumimota’s former business in Tokyo. He investigates “a gigantic animal footprint which only the day before had been a laboratory” of “the shadowy world conglomerate Chipco.” Takeshi doubts if the incident is self-inflicted accident for an insurance scam because “recently Chipco had wanted a floater written in on an inland marine policy, against ‘damage from any and all forms of animal life.’” The footprint is latently assumed as Godzilla’s, if it is real, when, in addition to the floater’s details, it is “[c]learly reptilian” (142) and people use “radiation meters” (145) to search for it, although the text does not mention the name there (and yet the movie is referred to when Zoyd plays the movie’s theme during the flight where he met Takeshi [65]). In the original movie, the monster is seen as symbolic of the Cold-War imagination, being a certain mutant form of dinosaur born from nuclear radiations. In the novel, then, its existence becomes dubious because of the financial scam by a global multinational enterprise.¹²⁴ This is an

¹²⁴ Caesar tries to situate the novel in the history of cultural interrelation between the United States and Japan after World War II. In this context, it is important that Godzilla is supposed to be a mutant originated by

episode that tells the end of the Cold-War imagination; in the neoliberal global world, such imagination is no longer possible.

Fumimota is the key figure for the biopoliticalization of the novel's world: the Japanese completes the process, explaining the meanings of the existence of ghosts in the novel. The strange Japanese – whose “business card, iridescent plastic, colors shifting” (66), which Zoyd gets when he works in “a Hawaiian cruise gig for Kahuna Airlines” where “above 37,000 feet above the middle of the ocean, the festive jumbo was taken, the way a merchant ship and cargo might be by pirates” by a strange craft which they call not “what *we'd* call a UFO” (64) – leads Prairie to where she should go when she search for her mother.

When Fumimota appears again in the course of the novel, he eventually starts to run a karmology clinic (177) that carries out “modern karmic adjustment” on those who called Thanatoids. While the novel does not give a clear definition of “Thanatoid,” it seems to be a kind of zombie: “‘Thanatoid’ means ‘like death, only different’” (170). They need karmic adjustment since they are half dead because of what is “keeping them from advancing further into the condition of death” among which “the most common by far [is] resentment, constrained as Thanatoids [are] by history and by rules of imbalance and restoration to feel little else beyond their needs for revenge” (171). Since Thanatoids form the figure of resentment and revenge, according to the novel's logic, it is helpful to solve their problem by squaring their “karmic imbalance”: as Takeshi explains, Thanatoids are “victims, . . . , of karmic imbalances – unanswered blows, unredeemed suffering, escapes by the guilty – anything that frustrated their daily expeditions on into the interior of Death” (173). Modern karmic adjustment then means, according to Takeshi, that, while in “traditional karmic

radiation from America's nuclear testing. Although Caesar does not refer to the importance of insurance and financial globalization in the understanding of the novel, it is interesting to note the hidden image of the atomic and the nuclear, since Takashi Murakami, a contemporary Japanese artist who argued in *Little Boy* that the post-war Japanese subculture has been haunted by the image of the atomic and the nuclear, epitomizes the “postmodern” culture of Japan that is popular in the global market.

adjustment,” “sometimes it had taken centuries” since death was “the driving pulse” and “everything had moved as slowly as the cycles of birth and death, but this proved to be too slow for enough people to begin, eventually, to provide a market niche,” the traditional problem is solved by “system of deferment, of borrowing against karmic futures”: “Death, in Modern Karmic Adjustment, got removed from the process” (174-175). Modern karmic adjustment, in other words, succeeds in the adjustment of karma without killing anyone for revenge by way of the use of a “system of deferment.”

Thanatoids, then, are the ultimate figure of life as conceived in financial terms: the logic of karmology is explained exclusively by the rhetoric of financial economy, such as balance and borrowing, where trauma is treated in terms of debt and reimbursement. From this viewpoint, furthermore, the modern karmic adjustment, which is innovated for a convenient market niche by adopting a “system of deferment, of borrowing against karmic futures,” is a modernization of the traditional one by way of financialization of future exchanges. When death is removed from the process, what Takeshi brings into the novel’s world is a way to understand life in the neoliberal logic of finance.

Takeshi worked for an insurance company called Wawazume Life & Non-Life when he was in Japan, and he actually identifies karmology with life insurance, if in a jokey way: “Trust me — this [karmic adjustment] is just like insurance — only different! I have the experience, and — better than that, the — immunity too!” (173). If life insurance is a way of tentatively translating one’s life into corresponding economic value, karmology, where what is money in insurance is replaced by karma, is the way of understanding one’s life (and one’s memory and trauma) in terms of the economy of karma. Then, when we understand that, according to Foucault, insurance is an exemplary technology of biopolitics when the possible rise and fall of population as its object and objective is controlled and governed on actuarial

basis,¹²⁵ karmology is seen as the completion of biopolitics: while insurance can only tentatively, and even despicably, translate the value of life into that of money, karmology makes it possible to evaluate life itself without reducing it to any secular value, and, especially in modern karmology where death ceases to be the ultimate problem, even after death, life can be redeemed.

To put this the other way around, life, or to live itself, can be seen as a mode of production and consumption from the karmological viewpoint. What is called nonmaterial labor also takes its ultimate form when karmic adjustment is possible. For it is memory here that works as a certain kind of money that makes your life longer or shorter, or redeemed or in debt. Namely, karma in the novel's postmodern world signifies what is labor in modern capitalism; karma makes modern capitalism up-graded into a post-industrial form, where to live is to participate in the financial market of karma. That is, there is no such thing as non-working poor in the karmic world Takeshi introduces into the novel.

This actually follows, or predicts, Hardt and Negri's argument that, in the regime of biopolitical production, the distinction between labor and leisure blurs, where all our living, or our life itself, constitutes the biopolitical production. This then is also the world that makes it impossible to imagine the outside of biopolitics, where the politics of poverty turns into that of identity and institutional totalitarianism into a control society of neoliberal entrepreneurs that criminalizes non-working poor. Thanatoid, being the ghost of resentment, is the figure that demonstrates that the oppressed in the novel is imagined not as the exploited, but as the excluded.

This neoliberal definition of the poor corresponds to the novel's aesthetic structure. One of the characteristics of Pynchon's (late) style demonstrated in the novel is, as Robert L.

¹²⁵ See Foucault (2003), especially 244.

McLaughlin observes, the “protean narrator”: “Within a section, a paragraph, or sometimes a sentence, the narrator shifts focalization and the temporal setting in complex and potentially confusing ways” (115). James Berger associates this mode of narrative with the notion of trauma as a mode of re-experiencing the past. Most clearly, when Prairie watches the films of 24fps in searching for the truth about her mother, the text explains: “Prairie understood that the person behind the camera most of the time really was her mother, and then if she kept her mind empty she could absorb, conditionally become, Frenesi, share her eyes, feel, when the frame shook with fatigue or fear or nausea, Frenesi’s whole body there, as much as her mind choosing the fame . . .” (199). Here Prairie as the daughter re-experiences the experience of her mother rather than studies it, which, I believe, also symbolizes the proper mode of the reading of the text. The abrupt and frequent shifts in the narrative’s “focalization and the temporal setting” signifies that the text presents the past in the narrative as something to be experienced before it is understood, in accordance with another characteristic of the author’s style, random combination of formal, technical and colloquial wordings that encourage the reader to experience the materiality of the language before it is comprehended. The past, represented in the novel, is put out of joint, appearing as floating fragments losing its proper contexts whose appreciation apparently focuses on experiencing the text rather than translating it to “meanings.” In other words, the dominant mode of the narrative of the past in the novel is to replace history (to be studied) with memory (to be re-experienced).

Memory as the object of experience without understanding functions for what Jameson calls postmodern “schizophrenic disjunction” in time (29). As this tactic is enacted with the technique of wordings, it all in all leads to a certain sense of the autonomy of the text (or what Jacques Derrida explains under the name of *écriture*), which, in Pynchon’s text, most saliently demonstrated in the changes in the mode of narrative such as abrupt and apparently

meaningless insertions of verse or song lyrics where the reader can only aesthetically appreciate the changes. Pynchon's postmodern text completes itself when the reader thus "reads" the changes in the mode of the narrative as the object of experience before trying to understand what is told there.

When history to be understood is replaced by memory to be experienced, it is only natural that what was once called social justice is re-conceptualized in terms of the expression of resentment.¹²⁶ The Thanatoid is a most adequate figuration of the neoliberal conception of the poor when exclusion and resentment is the main logics that define them. Thanatoids, in other words, is the substitute of the working class as the exploited, which in turn is symptomatically implied in the novel in the form of the ambiguous figuration of Zoyd who is never a Thanatoid, and the substitution makes impossible any articulation concerning Reagan's "whim" at the end of the novel. The "whim" of course is a symbol of free choice as the privileged value in the ideology of neoliberalism.

VI. The Postmodern Aesthetics of Anti-totality

Mainly criticizing Bush administration, Sheldon Wolin offers the notion of "inverted totalitarianism" in the essay of the same name:¹²⁷ the neoliberal logic, or even "moral," of self-responsibility and self-help, which stands on the manipulated fear of unemployment and terrorism that rather functions so as to divert people's attention from the politics per se, realizes the regime of "inverted totalitarianism," a world far from the one depicted in *1984* but highly controlled, by environmental intervention, for the benefit of politicians and the

¹²⁶ Wendy Brown clearly explains the logical relation between the commitment to identity and affective attachment to resentment, which is substantially argued in Chapter Six. See Brown (1995), especially chapter three.

¹²⁷ For the expanded version of the argument, see Wolin's *Democracy Incorporated*.

rich. Although the context of Wolin's argument is slightly different from mine, it is useful to use the term "inverted totalitarianism" in order to understand that the novel as a reference to Orwell's novel depicts another form of suppressive political and cultural regime, totalitarianism, that is utterly different from what Orwell once imagined.

In *In Defense of Lost Causes*, Slavoj Žižek proposes to think of "the dictatorship of the proletariat" as "the only way to break with biopolitics" (412). He demonstrates how the "identity politics" of the proletariat is to be thought in the contemporary discourses. Using Jacques Rancière's notion of "part of no-part," he thus defines and explains the proletariat as the excluded:

Insofar as the proletariat designates the "part of no-part" which stands for universality, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is the power of universality where those who are the "part of no-part" set the tone. Why are they egalitarian-universalist? Again, for purely formal reasons: because, as the part of no-part, they lack the particular features that would legitimate their place within the social body – they belong to the set of society without belonging to any of its subsets. As such, their belonging is directly universal. Here, the logic of the representation of multiple particular interests and their mediation through compromises reaches its limit. Every dictatorship breaks with this logic of representation. . . . (413)

Defining the proletariat as the paradigmatic figure of the "part of no-part" of the social totality, Žižek here follows Jameson's definition of postmodernism: the postmodern world appears definitively as utter lack of totality since the proletariat is excluded as the "part of no-part." Putting aside Žižek's (probably intentional) theoretical lapse (how the proletariat still remains being the proletariat at the position and with the power of dictator when the affirmation of its dictatorship is "purely formal"), his argument is fruitful in understanding how the notion of totality is imagined in postmodernity.

In a strange way, Žižek's argument demonstrates how the lack of totality is short-circuited to a possibility of universality: with the introduction of the figure of the

excluded, “the part of no-part,” totality, in exchange with “universality,” is finally put in the dustbin of history under the postmodern condition. When Zoyd as the mysterious figure of the poor, who, appearing only the beginning and the last part of the novel, is and is not a proper part of the novel, is understood to constitute the “part of no-part” of the novel’s formal totality, it is possible to see that the novel’s formal aesthetic insists on the lack of its own totality, or even the formal logic of the “part of no-part”: the novel being made entirely of the assemblage of the parts of no-part when the figure of Zoyd as the unrepresentable poor makes it impossible to imagine the totality of the novel at all.

In addition to the appearance of Mucho from *Lot 49* which underlines the novel’s intertextual “openness,”¹²⁸ when the episode of Prairie’s old friend Ché abruptly introduces into the narrative in the last chapter, for example, the inserted narrative, which shows a sudden leap in chronology, does not seem to have any correspondence to parts before and after it except for its being Prairie’s recalling her past. In addition to the sense of the autonomy of language the text tries to give the reader with the help of the replacement of history with memory, the existence of such an episode like Ché’s then suggests that, in the logic of the novel’s aesthetics, digressions and divergences of the novel constitute the parts of no-part, the parts that are not pieces constitutive of the whole, where, ultimately, there is no such thing as the main body of the novel since, when it is impossible to imagine the formal totality of the novel, every part of the novel presents itself as the part of no-part. In other words, what could be the formal totality of the novel is in fact its lack of such. The novel thus embodies the postmodern aesthetic as the war on totality.

In other words, to follow Jameson, the novel’s formal aesthetic of the war on totality draws a parallel to the logic of identity politics or the ideology of difference as the critique of

¹²⁸ McHale, among others, suggests the possibility that Takeshi Fumimota in the novel is the same person who appears as the one in the “Takeshi Ichizo show” in *Gravity’s Rainbow* (134).

consensus. Just as the notion of identity in identity politics is the expression of the value of difference of the immanent in the self or the immanent of the group to which the self belongs, that is, difference as something that cannot and should not be subsumed into any totality, so digressive and divergent episodes in the novel, at least in one aspect, are put there as something that cannot and should not be assimilated into the totality of the work as its part.

Another clarifying example is how the word “totality” is actually used in the novel. The word is used twice as the noun form of the verb “total” as used when talking about damage to a car or damaging a car so completely that it cannot be repaired: the Thanatoid cars are described as “cars returned, for reasons of road karma, from Totality” (188) and a bus is said “to creep around inches from the edge of Totality” (315). Totality thus means the nothingness of ultimate destruction where car insurance is the only (normal) way for redemption. It is only through financial imagination that one can reach Totality in the novel.

To explain this in a slightly different way, a part of the novel is seen as an entity that exists in its own right, resisting hermeneutic reduction, or interpretation that locates the part in the novel as a part meaningful and useful to the conception of the novel’s whole, when karmology makes it possible to imagine that one’s life as being itself labor is self-contentedly meaningful in its own right. This is as if, when living itself is equal to working, a narrative were working in its own right. That is to say, with the conception of karmology as the magic that makes completion of biopolitical post-industrial society possible, Pynchon eventually finds an aesthetic logic that realizes a mode of fictional language that is only to *be*. As the logic goes, insofar as, for a human subject, to live itself deserves the name of production, to exist by itself for language means to be aesthetically meaningful, where, in other words, the aesthetic value is understood as that of difference as an expression of the immanent.

It is under this formal aesthetic of anti-totality that President Reagan’s neoliberal

political practice appears as a certain kind of “whim,” something inexplicable as to its political, historical, or ideological context: or as a paradigmatic example of an individualist “free choice.” The novel’s world is imagined as one where critical relation to Reaganomics is impossible, despite the fact that not a few critical comments on the Reagan administration appear in the text as quoted (since they do not and must not constitute part of the novel’s whole), so that Reagan’s decision on Vond’s campaign could only appear as a certain kind of *deus ex machina*. The novel foregrounds the *lack* of the context in which Reagan’s “free choice” is to be critically evaluated. In this sense, the novel’s world is depicted as what can be properly called the world of “inverted totalitarianism”: although the totalitarian Vond eventually fails, there is no possibility of a critical standpoint against neoliberalization. In the entire context of the novel, the scene is almost comic in its abruptness, for the novel never explains, for example, how the administration works. In a sense, the novel as a whole appears as a certain kind of slapstick when the “denouement” is an event to which no reference can be made: simply put, if Vond is destroyed by a whim of the president, what is the meaning of the three hundred and fifty or so pages that lead up to it? On the other hand, however, the novel’s world also depicts inverted totalitarianism in another sense that it is presented as a certain autonomous world whose outside is impossible to imagine, where biopolitics, making to live to work, completes itself, or where, more simply, death is removed from the process, so that even life after life cannot be imagined as an alternative, and where everything is eventually decided by the president’s whim.

In other words, to see the “inverted totalitarianism” of the novel is to understand that the true political problem concerning the novel is how to grasp the effect and the meaning of the *false* totality of the karmological world-view that the novel ostensibly offers. It is only by way of revealing the falsity of the totality which the novel offers that the *deus ex machina* is

critically understood, not as a certain kind of whimsical event. In fact, if the episode of Godzilla explained above symbolizes the end of the Cold-War paradigm and the new paradigm of neoliberal financialization that completes itself as the biopolitical logic of the novel's postmodern world, it is exactly this paradigm in which Reagan's whim appears as something transcendently inexplicable, let alone irrefutable: Reagan becomes a figure of neoliberalization that is understood as being desired by both the Left (such as Hardt and Negri) and the Right (such as Mead). The novel thus depicts what can be called the paradigm of neoliberal postmodernity that, as the logic of globalization, became clearer during the nineties. It depicts the changes of postmodernity, or more precisely the politics of postmodern fiction, where what used to be the critique of totalitarianism in the Cold-War paradigm magically, or, with the help of the magic of karmology, transforms into the logic that testifies the impossibility of any alternative to neoliberalism.

In this sense, the novel could be located at the turning point of Pynchon's career. His first three novels, *V.*, *The Crying of Lot 49*, *Gravity's Rainbow* concerns what Timothy Melley calls "agency panic," where whether a totalitarian System exists or it is only a delusion of a paranoia thematizes the value of individualism as opposed to conformism or the autonomy of the subject, while in the novels after *Vineland*, that is, *Mason & Dixon*, *Against the Day*, and *Inherent Vice*, the plot of the paranoiac quest ceases to be the main engine of the narrative.¹²⁹ In *Vineland*, it is possible to see the plot of the quest in the novel, that is, Prairie's quest for Frenesi, but it rather functions as a subplot around which the logic of neoliberal postmodernity is demonstrated than as the main plot of the novel. The three novels after *Vineland*, then, becomes what Linda Hutcheon calls historiographic metafiction that, to

¹²⁹ This follows Tabbi's argument on "cognitive fiction" that maps the structural difference between Pynchon's works before and after *Vineland* (2002; ix-xxvii, 25-53). Berressem also analyses the novel as "the first work of Pynchon's 'late period'" (202). For the relation between the politics in Pynchon's novel and the climate of the Cold-War culture, see also Molloy.

some degree, re-examine the identity, or identities, of the United States.

While the aesthetic of anti-totality is working, with some variations, also in Pynchon's novels after *Vineland*, where it replaces the aesthetics of his novels in the first half of his career in which the totality of a work, being brought into question, functions as its central thematic in terms of control and paranoia, what is significant in *Vineland* is that the ideological meaning of the new aesthetic is actually problematized in its relation to the novel's representation of neoliberalization. If the novel's political limit lies in that it can only represent the exercise of Reaganomics that ends Vond's career merely as a whimsical decision that defies any further analysis, the introduction of the self-contained episodes, such as the episode of Ché, into the novel can also be seen as the liberal sanction of whimsical decisions as the rightful choice when the aesthetic of anti-totality legitimizes the existence of digressions as the rightful expression of differences. Put more simply, when all digressions are legitimate under the aesthetic of the novel as far as they are digressive and different, the novel formally sanctions the value of "whim," or what may be called whimsical episodes, as its "proper" part of no-part.

In other words, under the aesthetic of anti-totality, that is, under the postmodern aesthetics that are completed by the ideology of neoliberalism, the neoliberalism of Reaganomics is thus represented as an innocent personal choice – "Suddenly, some white male far away must have wakened from a dream" – behind which no political analysis is possible, as far as it is the exercise of the sacred right of choice. Yet, the aesthetic deserves the name of an aesthetic since, in spite of its aesthetic resistance to the formal totality, it stands on its own logic of totality: the financialization of life itself, where the ideology of post-industrialism prevails, insisting that living itself is labor. Everything becomes equally meaningful exercises of living as labor when biopolitics claims that there is nothing outside

life; there is no difference discernible between the ideological act of political control and an innocent whim when everything becomes equally meaningful. I have called “false totality” the logic of karmology, or the magical financialization of life in terms of karma. This is because, only naturally, the novel demonstrates that everything is not equally meaningful, despite its structural and aesthetic insistence, when one actually tries to read, interpret and understand it. *Vineland* becomes a truly interesting novel when one tries to focus on places where the novel betrays its own ideological gap.

The pair of the “false totality” of the karmological world-view and the formal aesthetic of anti-totality is a way of demonstrating the neoliberal ideology that the individualist entrepreneurs participate in the site of freedom called the market necessarily without imagining the whole, that is, the site of the neoliberal market that is to be imagined as the assemblage of free individuals for each of whom totality means to deny the notion of totality. When karmology, financializing life, completes biopolitics, the world without totality stands on the model of the free market. And Pynchon sets up a fundamental trick in the novel’s comic world of complete neoliberalism.

VII. The Neoliberal Commitment to Contingency and Identity

From the above, it is clear that the postmodern aesthetic of anti-totality cannot be seen to construct the ideology of the novel in the final analysis. If the postmodern aesthetic makes it possible for the reader to envision the novel’s text as composed of the non-body of digressions and divergences, the aesthetic is made possible at all by a certain kind of commitment to contingency: a view that sees contingent accidents in the novel not as suppression of history, but as something natural and legitimate. Needless to say, Reagan’s

“whim” that puts a period to Vond’s political career is the ultimate example of the commitment: it is ultimate because it, as if it were a point of crisis for the novel’s aesthetic, shows the threshold where the whim that makes the novel’s ending possible could easily turn into a *reductio ad absurdum*, unacceptable in any attempt at a serious novel.

When the postmodern aesthetic of the novel works on the false totality of karmology, where the former and the latter work complementarily to each other, the postmodern pair made of the aesthetic and the cultural logic of financial economy critically stands on this commitment to contingency. The commitment itself then is not contingent: it is necessary for the cultural logic of financial economy to be conceived as (falsely) total under the aesthetic of resistance to totality. In other words, the novel is to be seen as a parody of what could be called a postmodern melodrama of the cultural logic of financial economy: a melodrama where the main constituents are human affects, resentment or memory, understood in terms of karma as a financial unit. It is a melodrama since the drama of affects is played with intensity under the melodramatic structure of contingencies, accidents and coincidences. If the reader accepts as natural and legitimate in our postmodern world the novel’s digressive and divergent structure, it is melodrama; if the reader does not, the novel is seen as its parody.

If melodrama is characterized its deliberate intensity of affects represented in it,¹³⁰ the media of TV and film are the technology to bring in the intensity of reality in the postmodern novel. Hector Zuñiga, the Tubefreek, starts the novel’s search for Frenesi by asking Zoyd the help (since Frenesi’s federal file is erased in Reaganomics’ budget cut), the true aim for Hector of the search is revealed toward the end of the novel: to shoot a film that features Frenesi, tentatively entitled “Drugs – Sacrament of the Sixties, Evil of the Eighties.”¹³¹

¹³⁰ For the nature of melodrama, or the melodramatic, see Cavell and Brooks.

¹³¹ While Hector attempts to realize his dream of becoming a successful film director in his further participation

While Frenesi used to be a member of a film collective, filmmaking thus provides one of larger narrative frameworks for the novel's stories. Another important loop that works on a different dimension is that the novel of nineteen eighty-four under the Reagan administration is at certain places defined as that of Reagan's revival as the president: Zoyd first met Hector "shortly after Reagan was elected governor of California" (22) and Frenesi's father, Hubbell Gates, reflecting Frenesi's present condition, sees "one of American misoneism's most notable hours" in administration by "figures like Roy Brewer of IATSE and Ronald Reagan of the Screen Actors Guild" (289). It may be possible to discern the dichotomy between film and TV when another definition of Thanatoids is given according to which they are people who watch the TV all the time: "Thanatoids spent at least part of every waking hour with an eye on the Tube. 'There'll never be a Thanatoid sitcom . . . cause all they could show'd be scenes of Thanatoids watchin' the Tube!'" (169-170). So the tube makes people, or Thanatoid, passive (or even maybe transforming people into Thanatoids by making them passive), while film, at least in a certain sense, helps people to be active when Prairie experiences who her mother is through the films she shot and Hector conceives anti-drug propaganda film. What is important beyond these differences is, however, that both TV and film are presented as useful or dangerous since they show virtual reality more powerful, or more intense, than reality itself.¹³² This might be evidence that Pynchon in the novel follows the postmodern cliché of virtual reality, and yet, the cliché might well be parodied when films are indicated as the main point of reference to history in their quasi-academic style of putting

in anti-drug campaign, Wacquant criticizes "War on drugs" as "an ill-named policy" that in fact works for the penalization of poverty (61). He quotes this from Michael Tonry's *Malign Neglect*: "The Reagan administration's declaration of a war on drugs resembles Argentina's declaration of war against Nazi Germany in March 1945. It was late and beside the point. . . . It was well known among public officials and drug policy scholars that drug use was in steep decline. . . . Only the willfully blind could have failed to know that no war was needed" (61-62 n). As Slade mentions, there is a joke about President Bush as drug kingpin toward the end of the novel (354-355).

¹³² For the thematic and conceptual importance of TV in the novel, see McHale. McHale argues that TV in the novel essentially works so as to conceive the totality of the novel (113-141). For Pynchon's fabrication of fictional TV programs in the novel, see Olster.

the year of release in parenthesis after the reference.

The screen of film and TV shows people in the novel the “intensity” of reality. That is to say, the ideology of contingency as the suppression of history operates in cinematic or TV-like intensity of reality, which, as argued, works technically with the novel’s style of digressions and divergences. In terms of chronology, Takeshi Fumimota is introduced in the novel’s world when DL with a mistake exercises the Vibrating Palm to Takeshi instead of Vond. Prairie is very articulate in her criticism:

“Now *wait* a minute,” Prairie interrupted, “you’re right there in this superintimate situation [where they have sex] with a guy taking his *clothes* off, and it’s obviously Takeshi here, a stranger, but you’re still calling him Brock?” (151; original italics)

While DL explains that she was wearing contact lenses with the wrong prescription, it is rather plausible, in my opinion, to believe that the text is actually playing with the absurdity of the mistake when it is also underlined that other strangers also previously mistook Takeshi for Vond (150) and that, toward the end of the novel, DL’s mother calls Takeshi “a Jap Robert Redford” (381) (although the text does not refer explicitly to the race of this “Japanese guy” [104, 153]). From this viewpoint, Prairie’s remark in fact reveals how the author is setting up a joke or even providing a sign that reveals the novel’s ideology, which is enacted and more often than not acknowledged by the reader, under the “intensity” of TV-like reality. This is a melodrama, is it not?

DL’s “mistake” is important because the main areal factors in the novel concern the myth of Japan if we consider that Thanatoid is plausible or meaningful only in reference to karmology and ninjitsu. I would like to call these factors those of “romance” in the sense argued in Chapter Two: the tradition of American romance, as opposed to novel, is conceived in the Cold-War climate in order to conceive the identity of America in terms of its culture,

replacing the previous tradition of naturalism.¹³³ The (false) totality of karmology, where the resentment of Thanatoids is redeemed, works under the tradition of American romance against realism.

It is commitment to contingency that makes DL's "mistake" rather acceptable in the course of the novel. That is to say, while the narrative proceeds around the "mistake" as if to insist that what happened is what happened, the ideological trick becomes acceptable since it is placed among numerous coincidences and accidents. For example, all the important characters get acquainted with each other only by coincidence: Prairie and DL (99), DL and Frenesi (117), Frenesi and Zoyd (281-282), and even Frenesi and Vond (200-201). And then, these coincidences are naturalized and made acceptable in the novel's structure of digressions and divergences. The novel thus underlines DL's "mistake" as it is symbolic of the novel's structural commitment to contingency.

It is, then, important in order to analyze how the novel's ideology works not as a melodrama, but as a parody of it, to historicize the novel against its apparent commitment to contingency. When it is put back in the historical context of nineteen ninety, it becomes clear that its main plots actually reflect discourses of the time in a critical way. The novel's postmodern aesthetic of anti-totality in fact is a commitment to contingency. It is an attempt to make an assemblage of contingent fragments, or parts of no-parts, appear to constitute (false) totality under the ideology of karmology (where the novel reads as a melodrama); or, in other words, an attempt to expose the fact that the totality the novel represents is nothing but an illusion under the discourse of postmodernism (where it functions as a critique of the illusion of postmodernism). The postmodern assemblage of contingent digressions and divergences of the novel can give the reader the illusion of totality, in spite of the "clear" sign

¹³³ For the influence in Pynchon's works of the American tradition of romance, see, for example, Schaub's *Pynchon: A Voice of Ambiguity* (146-152).

of DL's "mistake," since it is a postmodern assemblage of the contemporary discourses on postmodernism.

Takeshi's characterization as a kind of Oriental harlequin of karmology, the depiction of Thanatoids as the agency of resentment and memory, and Frenesi as a postmodern *femme fatale* who, exactly on account of her sexuality (that is, not on account of any tactics, jealousy or spite), sleeps with the political enemy: the author constructs these plots very carefully, in my opinion, so that the novel reflects the neoliberal culture of the nineties in the United States. If the novel's text is fundamentally "open" when its body is a non-body of digressions and divergence, it is actually "open" to contemporary discourses in the way it critically reflects them. The novel grows thus "flexible" to the context in which it is located, eventually revealing that the truth the false totality offers is acceptance of contingency.

Around nineteen ninety, Japan, which was economically in the so-called Japanese asset price bubble (1986-1991), was often depicted as a country more advanced in terms of new technology (basically information technology) than the United States, as is shown in *Beyond Computopia* (1988) by the well-known Japanologist Tessa Morris-Suzuki or *Postmodernism and Japan* (1989), a collection of essays by such scholars as H. D. Harootunian, Masao Miyoshi, Norma Field, Asada Akira and Karatani Kojin – where genealogically the identification of Japan as the postmodern goes back to Kojève's *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* through Ezra F. Vogel's *Japan as Number One* (1979) – in balance with publications of popular novels that play with the threat of new "yellow peril," such as Clive Cussler's *Dragon* (1990) or Michael Crichton's *Rising Sun* (1992), whose combination, or the compromise of the two, would be found in the setting of the movie *Die Hard* (1988): a new high-rise intelligent tower of Nakatomi Corporation in Los Angeles where Japanese are killed.

At the same time, Japan is associated with postmodernism or neoliberalism along another line symbolically with the publication of *The Machine That Changed the World* (1990), a best-seller report from five-million-dollar, five-year research on the lean production of Toyotism.¹³⁴ The lean production of Toyotism is then conceived as a one of paradigms of post-Fordism. More generally, Arif Dirlik in “The Postmodernization of Production and Its Organization” points out that the introduction of post-Fordism in business was explained in terms of the emphasis of the importance of “culture” in business management. As he explains, the post-Fordist postmodernization of business started with Tom Peters and Robert Waterman’s “influential best-seller” *In Search of Excellence* (1982) that “pointed to the lack of attention to ‘culture’ as a weakness of management studies,” which is followed by Stewart Clegg’s *Modern Organization* (1990) that, in response to “the Japanese challenge to U.S. business,” declares “culture is good for business” (190). The clash with the Japanese “culture,” which is supposed to nurture Toyotism, works as the starter for the postmodern interest in culture in business. It is with such association of Japan with postmodernism that Albert J. Alletzhauser writes *The House of Nomura* (1991), a non-fiction work that describes the history of the Japanese financial powerhouse of the Nomura group. He starts the book with the story of Black Monday, the stock market crash on October 19, 1987, under the title of “The Day Nomura Helped Save the World”: according to him, the day is symbolic since the ascendancy of the Tokyo market, which was basically controlled then by the Nomura group, was proved when Nomura’s buying ultimately prevented a global crash.

It is in this context that Takeshi completes the logic of biopolitics in terms of financial economy. And yet, he is introduced into the novel’s world by way of the *tour de force* of the misidentification with Vond as if he is not a creation of the author’s imagination, but the

¹³⁴ The book, however, repeatedly tries to counter-argue the prejudice that Toyotism of lean production has nothing to do with mythic “Japaneseness,” but is something that could be adopted in any country.

agency of the power of the discourses in which the text is narrated. The world of karmology or the financial control of life is an illusion the reader can believe only within the “reality” of the discourses of postmodernism in which the novel is written.

Needless to say, then, Thanatoids are another illusion, which yet is a loaded metaphor. McCann and Szalay, as argued, offer “high-minded irrationalism” as a comprehensive framework in which Thanatoids to be understood. When the aesthetic of anti-totality means a reflection of the false totality of financial karmology, the “irrationalism” is to be interpreted, at least in the novel’s context, as commitment to the magical when the financial economy (karmology) invites us to see production as something magical, or as an alchemic something that produces something from nothing.¹³⁵ Alan Nadel, in *Flatlining on the Field of Dreams*, discusses the meanings of “good” ghosts in the films of “Reagan’s America,” such as *Beetlejuice* (1988), *Field of Dreams* (1989), *Ghost Dad* (1990), *Ghost* (1990), *Bill & Ted’s Bogus Journey* (1991). While Nadel associates the ghosts in the films with the decline of patriarchy, all of them depict “ghosts”, in a way that resembles the depiction of Thanatoids, as more humane or even decent than the living who in fact appear as *homo oeconomicus* in neoliberal society: they reflect how Reagan attempted to define America as a spiritual and dream-fulfilling country. In *The Shape of the Signifier*, Walter Benn Michaels points out identitarianism in posthistoricism that the academic discourses of literary New Historicism, epitomized by Stephen Greenblatt’s well-known thesis of a literary critic’s “desire to speak with the dead” in *Shakespearean Negotiations* (1988), and of Trauma Theory as found in Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub’s *Testimony* (1992) with its surrounding discourses on Holocaust, contemporary narratives such as Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987), Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* (1991), Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead* (1991): when they

¹³⁵ For the “postsecular” nature of the novel, see McClure (41-62).

translate history into an object of re-experience, “history” turns out to be a function of identity in the sense that history, ceasing to be an object of objective analysis, is supposed to be shared (only) by those who share an identity. When, as Michaels argues, ghosts in posthistoricism functions as technology that makes re-experience of the past imaginable, or even plausible if irrational, the combination of Thanatoids and karmology in the novel virtually suggests that the identitarian commitment to re-experience of the past as a corrective to the past wrong doings only end in conceiving redemption of the past in economic terms or terms of what can be called the finance of affects.

Another context in which Thanatoids is to be placed is Jacques Derrida’s “hauntology,” as argued in his critique of Fukuyama’s “end of history,” *Specters of Marx*. Here he argues, among other things: “The function of social inactivity, of non-work or of underemployment, is entering into a new era. It calls for another politics” (81).¹³⁶ What Derrida argues here is the conception of social exclusion, which, as argued, translates the problems of poverty into matters of conduct and culture. If poverty is seen not as not having enough money, but as being excluded from society because of intolerance to cultural differences, the victims are then conceived as someone who, being socially excluded, suffers social death, of which Thanatoids, or humane and decent ghosts, form the most appropriate metaphor.¹³⁷ The translation of poverty into exclusion is an identitarian one, where the “spiritual” imagination starts to be the only way to reach for the excluded. What matters here is that, just in the same paradox or irony that the New Left critique of the System can transform into the neoliberal commitment to the small state, what the notion of exclusive society suppresses (poverty) returns in a surprising form: the finance of karma. When the notion of social exclusion works

¹³⁶ For the critique of “the end of history” and its context, see also Perry Anderson, Ryan, Brown (2001) and Niethammer.

¹³⁷ For an analysis of the novel in terms of Derrida’s hauntology, see Willman. For Pynchon’s treatment of ghosts, see Noya and Punday. Cornis-Pope lists up postmodern fiction that contains figures of ghost (22-25).

to invalidate the welfare system of economic security, karmology offers a ridiculous way (redemption of karma) in retrieving the rhetoric of economy.

However, this is ridiculous in a double sense: even if karmology were not ridiculous, how karmology is introduced into the novel is crucially absurd. In other words, the totality that the notion of karmology projects is false since it stands on a fundamental rift, as the completion of the identitarian displacement of poverty with cultural conduct by karmology stands on the misidentification of Takeshi with Vond. While, on the one hand, this plot certainly makes the whole novel more or less humorous, it also, on the other hand, suggests that the interpretation of the novel concerns how the contingent misidentification is to be understood in the final analysis.

The bizarre relationship between Frenesi and Vond is another instance that the novel's narrative is conceived in relation to contemporary popular narratives or the cultural discourses of the era. Put most simply, while the (cultural) politics of the welfare state basically normalizes heterosexual nuclear family by way of the emphasis on unemployment policy as the main tool of social control, the unemployment policy under the welfare state presupposes the norm of life-long employment and the family wage system, where the heterosexual nuclear family with the male breadwinner and the female homemaker works as its most suitable counterpart. If the normalization of the nuclear family constitutes a fundamental part in both cultural and institutional sexism under the welfare state, women's social advancement and the encouragement of it is one, if the only, factor of progressive political effects that neoliberalization brings about: under neoliberalism, at least to some degree and in some aspects, working women are not only permitted, but also treated as the symbol of the new age.¹³⁸ Yet, the treatment is in fact ambivalent.

¹³⁸ See also Donna Haraway's argument on "homework economy" in "A Cyborg Manifesto" (166-169). Postfeminism as a neoliberal transformation of the Second-Wave feminism is argued in Chapter Six.

To put focus on films would be meaningful, considering the important role films and TV programs play in the novel. Working women as a new type of threat, or, that is, *femme fatale*, grew a tremendously popular theme in Hollywood of the era with such films as *Fatal Attraction* (1987) and *Basic Instinct* (1992), to name just two.¹³⁹ At the same time, as is shown in the probably most emblematic cinematic love stories of the decade, *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995) and *Titanic* (1997) (although the former is almost forgotten now), the popular love stories relate the ideal form of love as led, if not dominated, by the female side. While all the four movies above *en masse* identify the essence of love as sexual, the *femme fatale* movies recognizes the human vitality in women as an excess of sexuality, and the latter two define the value of sexual love as that of identity, or the formation of one's own identity, making the most pure love as a secret that happens only once in the life and changes and determines one's life thereafter. It is in this configuration that "sleeping with the enemy" becomes a disturbing and fascinating thematic: there indeed is a film of the title (1991), but *Strange Days* (1995) would show most clear resemblance, or most clear contrast, to the novel, where, with a clear allusion to the Rodney King incident, the hero, who is unable to forget his ex-girlfriend who now is sleeping with the evil enemy, since, with a device called "SQUID" he, or everyone in the novel, can re-experience the lost past, eventually decides to choose political justice (of betraying the truth of the incident in the film that looks much like King's one) over the preservation of the memory. Although the film itself should be read political, what matters here is the depiction of female sexuality as an uncontrollable entity that runs amok against political justice. The novel's misogyny is presented in the same rhetoric.

¹³⁹ As Nadel's list goes, "*Barfly*, *Siesta*, *No Way Out*, *Clean and Sober*, *Gorillas in the Mist*, *Broadcast News*, *Black Widow*, *Fatal Attraction*, and *House of Games* all present women – for the most part successful career women, accomplished professionals – out of control" (124).

Needless to say, the depiction of career women as a new type of *femme fatale* is the nineties' form of misogyny. About this, see Faludi. *Vineland* is profoundly misogynist in this sense, and yet, as I am arguing, the novel's ideology in the last analysis is depicted as a parody of the contemporary discourses.

Yet, Pynchon gives a twisted answer to the problem of female sexuality under neoliberalism. As Frenesi says, “you know what happens when my pussy’s runnin’ the show” (260), Frenesi’s relationship with the totalitarian Vond does not result from anything other than her sexuality:¹⁴⁰ it is not Frenesi’s some political confusion that made her a wrong choice, but she can only love the right-wing fascist when she follows her sexuality. Frenesi’s problematic sexuality, then, is depicted as hereditary:

Sasha [Frenesi’s mother] believed her daughter had “gotten” this uniform fetish from her. It was a strange idea even coming from Sasha, but since her very first Rose Parade up till the present she’d felt in herself a fatality, a helpless turn toward images of authority, especially uniformed men, whether they were athletes live or on the Tube, actors in movies of war through the ages, or maître d’s in restaurants, not to mention waiters and busboys, and she further believed that it could be passed on, as if some Cosmic Fascist had spliced in a DNA sequence requiring this form of seduction and initiation into the dark joys of social control. (83)

In fact, at the end of the novel, Prairie, saying to Vond who is made to disappear out of sight, ““You can come back. . . . It’s OK, rilly. Come on, come in. I don’t care. Take me anyplace you want”” (384), seems to confirm the inheritance. On the other hand, there is no sign of the fetishism depicted in Frenesi’s grandmother, Eula Becker who marries to Jess Becker, a Wobbly. While Frenesi is married with Zoyd for no special reason dictated (except perhaps on the rebound from her experience with Vond) and Sasha is with Hub since “[h]e listened to me, . . . that was the amazing fact. He let me do my thinking out loud, first man ever did *that*” (80), Eula observes, as explaining her marital relationship without reference to sexuality, that “Jess [her husband] introduced me to my conscience. . . . He was the gatekeeper to the rest of my life”: “Wobblies, sneered at by the property owners of Vineland, and even some renters, as I-Won’t-Works, were not known as nest builders or great marriage material, but Eula,

¹⁴⁰ For an analysis of Frenesi’s sexuality in terms of power, see Tabbi.

meeting herself, discovered what she really wanted – the road, his road, his bindlestiff life, his dangerous indenture to an idea, a dream of One Big Union, what Joe Hill was calling “the commonwealth of toil that is to be” (76). So, if the fetish starts with Sasha, the process of the cultural construction of the fetish seems to be demonstrated in relation to World War II, especially when Sasha and Hub marry toward the end of the war:

“The war changed everything. The deal was, no strikes for the duration. Lot of us thought it was some last desperate capitalist maneuver, a way to get the Nation mobilized under a Leader, no different than Hitler or Stalin. But at the same time, so many of us really loved FDR. I got so distracted I quit working for a while even though there were these incredible jobs everywhere, just ‘cause I had to try to think it through. . . .” (77)

When unionism was brought to end under the logic of war mobilization, as Sasha says, “But at the same time, so many of us really loved FDR.” When she first met her future husband, he is “in his government-issue uniform,” as Sasha continues, showing her enthusiasm, “not a tailor-made stitch on him, pant cuffs so high you could see his socks with the extra packs of smokes tucked into ‘em –” (77-78), where the life under war is depicted with rather a cherry atmosphere maybe because of uniforms and the illusion of films: “Oh, the joints were jumping those nights. Uniforms all over the place. Wild and rowdy like the Clark Gable movie” (78). So, all in all, Frenesi’s troubled sexuality of uniform fetish has its model in Sasha’s “perverted” and patriotic love of FDR, for which uniform is a metonymy, that in fact puts the period to the tradition of unionism. In other words, the symbolism of FDR is significant since, as argued in the previous chapter, the war mobilization is seen as the turning point of the New Deal welfare state into a warfare state. The inheritance from Sasha to Prairie is thus explained in fact as a certain cultural history of the end of unionism under Cold-War liberalism, where social justice gives way to the enthusiasm of nationalism. This is as if Pynchon is trying to make a pun between unionism and uniform: the ideal of unionism

turning into the fetish of uniform, where biopolitics eventually flourishes along with the displacement of socialism with nationalism.

From this perspective, the sexuality depicted in the novel is to be seen as an instance of biopolitics. For it is only understandable why Tokyo in the novel has a “white slavery” market (133) to which DL is sent on his mission to kill Vond, while Japan is also the land of ninjitsu and karmology, when it is understood that Japan, all in all, is depicted as a country of advanced biopolitics: rampant sexuality and karmology eventually constitute either side of a coin, where the imaginary Japan symbolizes the completion of the politics in terms of the body from karmology to the commodification of sexuality. The underlining of the politics of the body is one of the most important factors in the depiction of postmodernity in the novel. The fascist called Vond, therefore, becomes toward the end of the novel someone who clings to the fantasy of bloodline, believing in a ridiculous way that Prairie should be his own daughter. Since the truth lies in sexuality in the novel, his victory in the last instance can only be proved in terms of bloodline.

It is only logical, then, that utopia is imagined as a certain kind of expanded family as the novel ends. It is hard to neglect the “coincidence” that Vond turns out to be a desperate, if comical, believer in the bloodline against the background of the Becker-Traverse reunion set up as a certain kind of denouement of the novel. The reunion is held yearly at “Vineland, the Good” (322); at the end of the novel, it is surrounded by jubilant Thanatoids who know, or mysteriously foresee, the death of Vond. Although it seems basically open – “Zoyd was allowed into the Traverse-Becker annual reunions, as long as he brought Prairie” (321) –, its idea is based on family line as far as it is a family reunion, even if a somewhat expanded one; although it is a gathering of the descendants of a Wobbly, it offers the notion not of society, but community. Actually, the family reunion as the site for the novel’s denouement follows

the transformation “from union to uniform” in an exact way: the idea of collectivity loses its political function, gaining instead a biopolitical function. Those at the reunion are good, liberal believers of bloodline; Vond a bad, fascist one.

In this schema of the novel, the problematic of contingency symbolically initiated by the Takeshi-Vond misidentification ends up in the belief in family line that valorizes the value of the communal, or what I have called the politics of biopolitical cultural revolution.¹⁴¹ It is in this sense that the novel essentially concerns the value of identitarianism. For the value of contingency plays the crucial role in the translation of the essentialist conception of identity to the constructionist one. As Anthony Appiah argues in “Racisms,” the problem with the constructionist notion of identity results exactly from what is supposed to be its political gain: unfoundedness. The merit of the constructionism is of course that it liberates the notion of identity from biological determinism: for example, a racist belief that if you are black, you must be a good dancer. Yet, the constructionist notion of “blackness” can be only empty, eventually, if there is no such thing as the essence of “blackness.” In this sense, according to Appiah, the constructionist notion is only borrowing from the historical and determinist notion of “blackness,” translating it into non-determinist cultural construct. This is where “contingency” becomes important. For what is determined in the essentialist notion of identity is translated into contingent in the constructionist politics of liberation: theoretically, identity is not given, but what you can choose.

This constructionist translation in fact suits very well the logic of the neoliberal culture as far as it is commitment to choice, especially when, even if the theoretical liberation that the constructionist translation brings about is itself valuable and politically meaningful, the “theoretical” liberation of the choice of identities cannot be easily acknowledged as real and

¹⁴¹ Thomas clearly analyzes and delineates the limit of the politics of cultural revolution in the novel in terms of its depiction of Kunoichi Attentives (109-150).

actual. The politics of constructionism (of identity) mainly concerns the valorization of the theoretical possibility of choice (in identity). In an essay on Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, Jane Elliott argues, referring to the "white slavery" in *Vineland*, that neoliberal politics is concerned to offer the illusion of choice where choosing from given alternatives in fact makes little difference. When there is a crucial gap between the liberal statement that your identity is your choice and its reality, the structure of *Vineland* as a postmodern fiction assumes a deep critical value since it fundamentally problematizes the ideology of contingency. When one tries to understand the novel in its totality, the reader should neglect the ridiculous contingency on which the entire novel stands, a contingency that can be comparable to what lies at the very base of the constructionist notion of identity. If the "totality" of the novel conceived in such a way is false, the true totality of the novel can only be understood as its lack: the novel is an assemblage of meaningless instances of the contingent. If this is ridiculous, it is as ridiculous as our constructionist commitment to identity, as the novel strongly implies.

In this sense, the novel is postmodern in the final analysis not because it is an assemblage of scattered fragments, but rather because it offers a "false" totality whose structure precisely corresponds to the ideology of identitarianism. This is how *Vineland* belongs to a second phase of postmodernism whose shape is roughly described at the beginning of this chapter. Governed by the aesthetic in which an assemblage of fragments (of contemporary discourses) ultimately questions the difference between the necessary and the contingent, or the valorization of choice in the culture of neoliberalism, the novel structurally problematizes the logic of identity.

Although it does not explicitly deal with racial or ethnic identities, this fragmented novel is more or less multicultural in the sense that the ethnicities of characters are apparently

diverse. In addition to Ché, Hector Zuñiga and Takeshi Fumimota, there are also the Italian-American Mafioso Ralph Wayvone, Alexie the Russian who appears at the end of the novel, and the Vietnamese Thi Anh Tran, a business partner of Blood and Vato, Vietnam Vet tow-truck drivers who work for Thanatoids as well as for the living. There is also reference to the native-American culture of Yurok that actually leads Vond to his final death. Various ethnicities are casually referred to, set in the novel in a way as diverse as the contents of contingent fragments, where the desire to read the novel as somehow coherent is answered by the illusion of postmodernity, the financial logic of karmology as the completion of biopolitical control. This is the world that the novel depicts: a globalized world composed of a mosaic of identities, fragments, and contingencies.

When Brock Vond dies just after the end of his career, he does not become a Thanatoid. He becomes another kind of ghost since he is led by Blood and Vato to Tsorrek, the land of death in Yurok myth. When he gets the glimpse of the land, he sees “all around in the gloom, bones, human bones, skulls and skeletons”:

“They’ll take out your bones,” Vato explained. “The bones have to stay on this side. The rest of you goes over. You look a lot different, and you move funny for a while, but they say you’ll adjust. Give these third-worlders a chance, you know, they can be a lotta fun.” (380)

In the life after life, Vond becomes the victim of “these third-worlders.” This colonialist rhetoric is another twist the author puts at the end of the novel.

The problem of the critique of neoliberal social exclusion, or to criticize the neoliberal regime as a society of exclusion, is that the criticism is viable only when it is presupposed that the welfare regime was not exclusive. Of course, the welfare state was also exclusive not only in terms of sexism, as argued, but also in its racism. Yet, this is where we should see the

structural difference between the two forms of racism under the welfare state and the neoliberal state. If the welfare state, with its complex complicity with the warfare state, commits discrimination in terms of nation, race and ethnicity themselves, the new politics of poverty, as we saw above, uses racism as a way to stigmatize and control the poor: primarily, race is used to explain the limit of the welfare state in terms of one race's culture. This is what the identitarian translation of poverty "from class to conduct" means. Vato mentions "third worlders" in the same way in the quote, meaning that those who are poor and hate Vond are called "third worlders" even if they are not. And we academics actually talk about the third world in advanced countries, do we not? The usage certainly is discriminatory, and such discrimination is only the necessary end of the novel's entire rhetoric that translates poverty "from class to conduct."¹⁴²

Yet, the novel's entirety is an illusion that you can find only when you suppress the contingencies on which the novel stands from the beginning to the end. The way to understand postmodernity critically through the novel is to attempt a reverse translation of the world the novel is supposed to depict, by way of the shift "from uniform to union," "from conduct to class," where we eventually ask the truth of Zoyd Wheeler: whether the ex-hippie is a political or a cultural agency.

In the nineties, what I called the illusion of postmodernism more specifically took the form of the discourse of globalization. As Rosenberg argues, this discourse, which is now receiving severe criticism, was believed by nearly everyone including prominent scholars. The discourse posited its own "reality" in the era, and the novel problematizes this kind of postmodern "reality" of discursive construction that exercises undeniable power in the world we live in. The novel's aesthetic treatment of (the ideology of) contingency is to be

¹⁴² For the race discourse in Pynchon's earlier works, see Witzling.

understood as a critique of how we treat the contingent in our social life. If we accept the (false) totality of the novel, suppressing the contingent formation of the illusionary totality, this entails accepting the contingent formation of our society as only natural, believing, for example, that economic inequality caused by the whim of the free market is contingent, thus natural, and thus fair; only when we are able to critically analyze the contingency on the suppression of which the novel's (false) totality is imaginable will we be able to see the limit of the neoliberal imagination of the contingent community of identities as the negation of the social, or an ultimate form of biopolitical containment. The novel could be read as a narrative of necessity only when we are willing to suppress the ridiculous contingency on which the totality of the novel crucially stands – just in the same way as, according to Rosenberg, the discourse of globalization in the nineties was.

Chapter Five

Neoliberal Risk Discourse and Part of No-Part: *Die Hard*, *Independence Day*, *Armageddon* and *Titanic*

“The World State’s motto, COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY”

The Brave New World

I. Financial Imperialism and Risk Discourse

In the address at the American University Centennial Celebration on February 26, 1993, President Clinton thus defined the end of the Cold War: “Democracy is on the march everywhere in the world. It is a new day and a great moment for America.” This is a rhetoric of (the commitment to) globalization since liberal democracy the President found flourishing is directly connected to economic liberalism: “as philosophers from Thucydides to Adam Smith have noted, the habits of commerce run counter to the habits of war. . . . So if we believe in the bonds of democracy, we must resolve to strengthen the bonds of commerce.” When he repeatedly underlines the point, “it is time for us to make trade a priority element of American security,” he declares that “I’m committed to a prompt and successful completion of the Uruguay round of the GATT talks.” What he means is of course neoliberalization of world trade as he uses the verb, “liberalize,” when he talks about “the Asian-Pacific [*sic*] Economic Cooperation Forum”: “We should work with organizations, . . . , to liberalize our trade across the Pacific as well.” The President’s analysis of the emerging shape of globalization that started in the nineties is correct and precise when he emphasizes the importance of information technology and finance: “Most important of all, information has become global and has become king of the global economy”; “it is time for us to do our best

to exercise leadership among the major financial powers to improve our coordination on behalf of global economic growth.” Another important point when the President demonstrates the rhetoric of globalization, “[t]he truth of our age is this and must be this: Open and competitive commerce will enrich us as a nation,” is that he clearly is a multiculturalist: “Look now at our immigrant Nation and think of the world toward which we are tending. Look at how diverse and multiethnic and multilingual we are, in a world in which the ability to communicate with all kinds of people from all over the world and to understand them will be critical. Look at our civic habits of tolerance and respect.” The other side of the coin that reads “open and competitive commerce” is a society in which people are tolerant and respectful to each other, where the coin itself signifies economic prosperity, or “It’s Economy, Stupid.” This is, according to the President, “what I consider to be the great challenge of this day: the imperative of American leadership in the face of global change.”

In nineteen ninety-nine best seller *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman, the Pulitzer-winning ideologue of globalization, is more honest and articulate. In the concluding chapter, he observes:

Sustainable globalization requires a stable power structure, and no country is more essential for this than the United States. All the Internet and other technologies that Silicon Valley is designing to carry digital voices, videos and data around the world, all the trade and financial integration it is promoting through its innovation, and all the wealth this is generating, are happening in a world stabilized by a benign superpower, with its capital in Washington D.C. The fact that no two major countries have gone to war since they got McDonald’s is partly due to economic integration, but it is also due to the presence of American power and America’s willingness to use that power against those who would threaten they system of globalization – from Iraq to North Korea. The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist. (464)

After the quote, he continues, making a cute pun, that “McDonald’s cannot flourish without

McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the U.S. Air Force F-15”: “And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley’s technologies to flourish is called the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. And these fighting forces and institutions are paid for by American taxpayers dollars.”

Hardt and Negri’s *Empire* was published a year after *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. In fact, the twenty-first century sees various arguments that criticize American imperialism. In addition to Andrew J. Bacevich’s *American Empire* (2002) and “Global Capitalism and American Empire” by Leo Panitch, and Sam Gindin (2004), which I cited in Chapter Three, there are David Harvey’s *The New Imperialism* (2003), István Mészáros’s *Socialism or Barbarism: From the “American Century” to the Crossroads* (2001), Randy Martin’s *An Empire of Indifference* (2007), Costas Douzinas’s *Human Rights and Empire* (2007), just to name a few that are relevant to this chapter’s argument. Harvey’s argument that focuses on how what he calls “accumulation by dispossession” figures large in the imperial project of this century leads subsequently to the argument in his next book, *The Brief History of Neoliberalism*, which criticizes the global and imperialist nature of the neoliberal project in America. Douzinas’s book, which actually refers to President Clinton’s address cited above, explains how contemporary discourses of human rights can and do actually contribute to the justification of imperial projects when the truth of the “liberal” rhetoric of globalization is the new “open door” policy that believes in the imperative that “[o]pen and competitive commerce will enrich us as a nation.”

One reason for the sudden increase of general interest in the critique of imperialism may be the popularity of Hardt and Negri’s book, which does not mean that their analysis is entirely off the point (although I have criticized them with reference to how the resistance to “empire” should be imagined). In other words, another reason for the increase may be, as

John Bellamy Foster argues in *Naked Imperialism* (2006), that the American right started to positively, if not shamelessly, claim the importance of the American imperial hegemony in global geopolitics: he cites remarks by such people as Max Boot, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, Deepak Lal, professor of International Development Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, Ivo Daalder and James Lainsay, senior fellows at the Brookings Institution, and Michael Ignatieff, director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

If, then, we dare to put aside the highly important question of whether or not America's hegemony, or her "leadership" as President Clinton calls it, is unfair and evil, the point that is shared by Mészáros, Martin, and Panitch and Gindin about the new shape of imperialism in the latter half of the twentieth century exercised by the United States is that this imperialism without colonies, as Harry Magdoff put it in his essay of the same title, stands on its complicity with financial capitalism. Defining imperialism without colonies as an "informal empire" that works with the "imperialism of free trade," a coinage by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson by nineteen fifty-three, Panitch and Gindin observe that "by spawning the modern multinational corporation, with foreign direct investment in production and services the American informal empire was to prove much more penetrative of other social formations" (10). In addition to the fact that the informal empire of multinational corporations must work with financial systems, they also argue that after "the unresolved crisis of the 1970s," which defined the contemporary shape of the empire, "explosive development of financial markets has resulted in financial structures and flows that have now, . . . , made 'finance' itself a focal point of global macro-management" (23) that supports "the capacity of the US economy to attract the global savings essential to reproducing the American empire" (24). Offering a definition of the twentieth-century imperialism of America very similar to Panitch and

Gindin's, Mészáros explains:

Protests against “dollar imperialism” are often voiced, but to no avail. The economic imperialism of the country remains secure for as long as the United States retains its overwhelmingly dominant position not only through the dollar as the privileged world economic currency, but also in ruling all of the international organs of economic interchange, from the IMF to the World Bank and from GATT to its successor, the World Trade Organization. (35)

In any analysis of imperialism without colonies, the emphasis should be put on the hegemony over the international market of free trade, where the financial system can only loom large. Martin, however, more diligently envisages the financial rhetoric as the principal logic of the contemporary imperialism, as the subtitle of his book “American War and the Financial Logic of Risk Management” suggests: “My concern is to look at imperial ambitions in the context of the powers of finance, not simply as a form of capital but as a set of protocols for organizing daily life.” Observing that “[s]elf-management is the watchword of personal finance,” he contends that “this framework [that emphasizes the importance of self-management] illuminates aspects of the present occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq and the concept of preemptive war”: “Enemies are to be defeated before they can make their antagonism manifest. Contingencies of the future are to be lived out in the present, blurring the distinction between the not-yet and the now. By converting potential threats into actual conflicts, the war on terror transfers future uncertainty into present risk” (3). Not only Martin, but also Mészáros and Panitch and Gindin underline the analytical significance of American military power in understanding its imperialism, but, in understanding the new form of imperialism, the central point lies in the critical examination of the shape of the global free market that now revolves around financial systems.

While Martin connects his analysis of the discourses of finance with those of risk

management, Richard Godden in “Labor, Language, and Finance Capital” argues that our age of finance capitalism stands on the new shape of reality that is defined by the discourse of risk: “Risk as the all but asset-free matter of the derivative yields a new concreteness, apt to a financial phase of capital, during which financialization itself stands at the structural core of the real” (415). Godden’s argument starts with the inquiry into how “derivative” as a new form of value could be seen as another kind of “real” money. This is because the value is newly imagined in terms of “volatility” or its securitization, where the rhetoric of globalization never fails to underline the value of “connectivity”: “Put tersely,” he explains, “connectivity increases volatility, which increases risk, which promotes the derivative.” In other words, “derivative” is real as far as the management of risk is to be seen as the source of value: “A derivative is an instrument for translating volatility into security insofar as it assesses the cost of risk, for a price” (414). He argues that when a cell phone is made of parts from several different countries and made up in another country, its price can be decided “only if the corporation signing the contract has cost the risk of inevitable volatility in the rate of exchange between the dollar and the rand, yen, peso, and euro”: “out-sourcing of production, a characteristic of the globalization of corporate economics since the early 1970s, has established connections on new scales and in new modes, between North and South, core and periphery, whereby the pricing of risk becomes key to the costing of manufacture” (413).

This chapter argues that the nineties as the decade of globalization are when neoliberal imperialism prevailed and that one of the most important aspects of its culture took the form of risk discourse. I shall try to interpret history of Hollywood disaster movies in the nineties, such as *Die Hard*, *Independence Day*, *Armageddon*, *Titanic*, as the depiction of the vision of “world risk society” as the cultural paradigm of neoliberal imperialism. The disaster movie is

hard to define as a genre, given its proximity to those of action, thriller, science fiction,¹⁴³ but to trace its genealogy, or “history,” in this decade, trying to discern what set of contingencies and necessities led it to take the shape it actually took, certainly shows that the worldviews presented by such movies clearly correspond to the new and ideological paradigm of neoliberal imperialism. The movies listed above were all quite popular, albeit to different degrees, and some of them materialize a new form of movie blockbuster in the new global Hollywood that emerged in the era, although some may find most or all of them merely entertaining, hollow and vacant. I will demonstrate, however, that their popularity testifies that they precisely reflect the *zeitgeist* of the era, even when the *zeitgeist* is the justification of neoliberalization and imperial expansion, and that, reflecting it, they even introduce formal innovation only through which the true shape of imperial neoliberalization is correctly depicted.

“World risk society” is a coinage by Ulrich Beck. The definition of the term is demonstrated in the introduction, titled “The Cosmopolitan Manifesto,” to his nineteen ninety-nine book *World Risk Society*. According to him, the birth of “world risk society” is a necessity of that of “reflexive modernization” that he declared in the book of the same title, published in nineteen ninety-four, written with Scott Lash and Anthony Giddens. In the United Kingdom, the vision that started with reflexive modernization grew in the era into the official state policy under the Blair administration of New Labor as is shown, most symbolically, by Giddens’s publication of *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* in nineteen ninety-nine (and Tony Blair himself published a pamphlet of the same title in nineteen ninety-eight from Fabian Society).¹⁴⁴ In the introduction, Beck succinctly

¹⁴³ For the analysis of the genre, see Keane and Sanders.

¹⁴⁴ Fredric Jameson thus criticizes Giddens’s notion of “reflexive modernity”: “[Giddens’s] proposition will then be rebaptized as ‘radicalized modernity,’ which certainly does not sound terribly different from Harbermas’s brilliant formula of an incomplete modernity, of ‘modernity as an unfinished project.’ But

summarizes the characteristics of reflexive modernity in this way, which predictably treads the same line with Giddens's *Third Way* which lists "five dilemmas" of the age as "globalization, individualism, left and right, political agency and ecological issues":

The former term [first modernity] I use to describe the modernity based on nation-state societies, where social relations, networks and communities are essentially understood in a territorial sense. The collective patterns of life, progress and controllability, full employment and exploitation of nature that were typical of this first modernity have now been undermined by the five interlinked processes: globalization, individualization, gender revolution, underemployment and global risks (as ecological crisis and the crash of global financial markets). (1-2)

Globalization is understood here in couple with "individualization, gender revolution, underemployment," where the new conception of "risk" offers an umbrella term that sees "ecological crisis" and "the crash of global financial markets" as somehow homogeneous.

As "the third way" Giddens and Blair advocate inherently involves critique of the former socialist policy of the "old" Labor, so, as Beck explains, his project concerning "world risk society" starts with criticism of what can be called socialism of the old sociology.

Margaret Thatcher, the former British Prime Minister, once said: there is no such thing as society. Most sociologists believe in what can be called "a reverse Thatcherism," namely there is *nothing but society*. This "nothing but society" sociology is blind to the ecological and technological challenges of second modernity. Risk society theory breaks with this self-sufficiency and self-centeredness. (4)

The insistence on the invalidity of the socialist paradigm is clear originally from his first book on risk, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (1992; German edition in 1986). In

Herbermas's formula remains usefully ambiguous, and allows one to entertain the possibility that modernity is incomplete because it never could be completed by the middle class and its economic system. This is, however, exactly what Giddens would like us to try to do: the commitment of the Third Way to the free market makes a mockery of the socialist phrases he likes to use from time to time" (11-12).

explaining the necessity of the risk paradigm, he observes: “with the globalization of risks a social dynamic is set in motion, which can no longer be composed of and understood in class categories” (39). Risk society is a new world of reflexive modernity, where, as he declares in the manifesto, “the theme of risk unites many otherwise disparate areas of new transnational politics with the question of cosmopolitan democracy” (5). When risk displaces class, the “cosmopolitan democracy” Beck imagines governs “new transnational politics” of globalization.

Risk society frees itself from socialism exactly because it presupposes the invalidity of bureaucratic planning: the “administrative and technical decision-making process” was “previously undertaken with fixed norms of calculability, connecting means and ends or causes and effects. These norms are precisely what ‘world risk society’ has rendered invalid” (4). The criticism of bureaucracy means the appraisal of “flexibility”: “‘Flexibility’ is demanded everywhere – or, in other words, an ‘employer’ should be able to fire ‘employees’ more easily. ‘Flexibility’ also means a redistribution of risks from state and economy to individuals. . . . So, the expression ‘precarious freedoms’ denotes a basic ambivalence between the cultural script of individual self-fulfillment and the new political economy of uncertainty and risk” (12). What is needed in the new age is, then, the strong valorization of self-responsibility, the content of which Beck calls “individuation,” for “[r]isk and *responsibility* are intrinsically connected, as are risk and *trust*, risk and *security* (insurance and safety)” (6): “The ethic of individual self-fulfillment and achievement is the most powerful current in modern Western society. Choosing, deciding, shaping individuals who aspire to be the authors of their lives, the creators of their identities, are the central characters of our time” (9). In other word, what Beck means by “reflexive modernity” is to open up “a field where people *choose* new and unexpected forms of the social and the political” (1);

“new prominence of risk,” according to him, “connects, on the one hand, individual autonomy and insecurity in the labor market and in gender relations, and, on the other hand, the sweeping influence of scientific and technological change” (5).

In this way, Beck summarizes how the postmodern world – although he makes it a point that “a new frame of reference” he envisions concerns how “the Western model” relates to “the *different modernities* in other parts of the world” rather than the question of “postmodernity” (2) – is to be understood as the world without society (with the erasure of the social and with the commitment to individualism) where biopolitics, or what he calls “subpolitics,” as the culturalist alternative to the welfare-state, or socialist, parliamentary democracy. When he explains the model subjectivity in world risk society as “the authors of their lives, the creators of their identities,” it exactly repeats Foucault’s description of neoliberal *homo oeconomicus* of self-managing entrepreneur I discussed in the previous chapter. In this globalized world of self-managing, self-responsible individualists, Beck calls for a new cosmopolitanism:

Voluntary organizations play a crucial role in building a global civil society. They help to generate the public mindedness and civic trust to open up the national agendas for transnational, cosmopolitan concerns. And they constitute a human flourishing in their own right. (18)

With a clear mockery to Marx and Engels, he ends the “manifesto” with the phrase “Citizen of the world, unite!” (18). And this replacement of worker with citizen significantly reveals that the world Beck imagines dispenses with workers.

My survey of the genealogy of Hollywood disaster movies of the nineties shows how correct Beck’s conception of “world risk society” is as the depiction of the world the Hollywood popular movies presuppose and try to advocate. It is a world haunted by

unpredictable and yet inevitable “risks,” where each individual should survive as an individualist who cares only for his or her loved ones and where the survival is meaningful fundamentally as self-realization, not as an achievement of altruism, public welfare or social justice. The analysis of the movies will, then, clarify the true effect of Beck’s identification of “ecological crisis” and “the crash of global financial markets”: the rhetorical and ideological move that implicitly insists that both are natural and inevitable. I have chosen disaster movies as the main subject of analysis in this chapter since, I believe, the popularity of these movies testifies that the decade is when the “disasters,” or the violations of social justice and social welfare, caused by neoliberal imperialism were naturalized and thus justified by the discourse of risk that functioned for the corresponding formation of neoliberal subjectivity whose only hope lies in adaptation to the discourse.

In a certain sense, disaster movies in the nineties correspond to western movies in the fifties, as, among the films I discuss, there are clear references to westerns or cowboys in *Die Hard*, *Armageddon* and *Titanic*. While westerns demonstrate the aesthetic of individualism inherent in the formation of Cold-War liberalism, disaster movies are seen as a showcase of individualism with family values under the neoliberal discourse of risk. Both share individualist displacement of “such a thing as society,” or social justice and social imagination. While a small town in the frontier is an adequate space to imagine an individualist community without social structure, the situation of disaster provides a space where society is made irrelevant and unreliable as the neoliberal commitment to small state or watchman state insists. The comparison between westerns and disasters will show how the American culture of liberalism grew and changed in the fifty years after World War II.

II. Roll-out Neoliberalism of the Nineties

The tacit neoliberalism of Beck's argument becomes clear when it is compared with a very similar argument by Nikolas Rose. In a chapter in *Powers of Freedom* (1999), Rose offers the neologism "advanced liberalism," insisting that "over the closing two decades of the twentieth century, beyond the politics of the right, a new way of thinking about objects, targets, mechanism and limits of government has taken shape which shares many of the premises of neo-liberalism" (139): "advanced liberalism" means a "new diagram of government" (140) on "the inherent rationality of the different domains to which government address itself . . . and new ways of allocating the tasks of government between the political apparatus, 'intermediate associations,' professionals, economic actors, communities and private citizens" (139-40). The essay refers to Thatcher's administration and not to Blair's or to New Labor, but Rose's conception of "advanced liberalism" draws a clear parallel with Giddens's "third way" that, as he says in the preface to *The Third Way*, concerns the future of "social democracy" focusing on the "close and direct contacts between New Labour and the New Democrats [in the US]" (viii).

On the other hand, Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell in "Neoliberalizing Space" propose to contrast the Reagan/Thatcher administrations and the Clinton/Blair ones as "roll-back neoliberalism" and "roll-out neoliberalism." The former means "one preoccupied with the active *destruction and discreditation* of Keynesian-welfarist and social-collectivist institutions (broadly defined)," which moves "during the 1980s" to the latter "focused on the purposeful *construction and consolidation* of neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations": "It is this more recent pattern of institutional and regulatory restructuring, which we characterize . . . as a radical, emergent combination of neoliberalized economic management and authoritarian state forms. . ." (384). They explain

the characteristics of roll-out neoliberalism as its being “essentially represented responses to previous market, state, and governance failures partly (or even largely) initiated by [roll-back] neoliberalism” (390), its “complex (and often indirect) extensions of national state power, most notably in the steering and management of programs of devolution, localization, and interjurisdictional policy transfer” in cooperation with “international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) [that] establish and police neoliberalized ‘rules of the road’” and its “twin processes of financialization in the realm of economic policy and activation in the field of social policy” (391). Rose and Giddens insist that Clinton’s and Blair’s policies are a variation of neoliberalism that is not neoliberalism since they are Democrat’s and Labor’s; Peck and Tickell find that the New Democrat and the New Labor only refined neoliberalism.¹⁴⁵

In the chapter of “Advanced Liberalism,” Rose finds the origin of the liberalism in a strange agreement between the left and the right on the limit of welfarism: “Indeed, many on the left agreed with the arguments put forward by neo-liberal critics of welfare, that public expenditure on health, housing and security were largely paid for by the poor and largely benefited the middle class, that measures intended to decrease poverty had actually increased it and that attempts to advantage the deprived actually locked them further into disadvantage” (141). Against this background, “[a]ll aspects of *social* behaviour are now reconceptualized along economic lines – as calculative actions undertaken through the universal human faculty of choice” in “advanced liberalism,” where the “human beings who were to be governed . . . were now conceived as individuals who were *active* in making choices in order to further their own interests and those of their family”: “The powers of the state thus had to be directed to empowering the entrepreneurial subjects of choice in their quest for self-realization,”

¹⁴⁵ For the continuity between Reagan’s and Clinton’s administration in more specific terms, see Meeropol.

where individuals are seen not as mere objects of government, but as “partners” who bear “a portion of the responsibility for their own well-being” (142). Rose also adds another context of globalization that allegedly necessitates the self-responsible subject: “while national governments still have to manage the affairs of a country, the economic well-being of the nation and of its population can no longer be so easily mapped upon one another” when the “mobility of finance capitalism is perceived as weakening the possibility of political shaping, let alone resisting, the pressures of market.” This is where “[t]he social and the economic are now seen as antagonistic” (144). This is where freedom is “redefined.” It no longer means “freedom from want,” but “the capacity for self-realization which can be obtained only through individual activity” (145).

Identifying the origin of (roll-back) neoliberalism’s attack on bureaucracy in “an international trend which became known as ‘the new public management,’” Rose explains that the “solution was not to seek to govern bureaucracy better, but to transform the very organization of the governmental bureaucracy itself and, in doing so, transform its ethos from one of bureaucracy to one of business, from one of planning to one of competition, from one dictated by the logics of the system to one dictated by the logics of the market and the demands of the customers” (150), where “experts, as knowledge workers, no longer merely manage disciplinary individualization or act as functionaries of the social state,” but instead “provide information – for example, risk assessments – that enables these quasi-autonomous entities to steer themselves” (147). Rose’s analysis here is important since it lucidly articulates that when the model for social control changes from that of welfarist bureaucracy to that of neoliberal market, the model for desirable subjectivity also changes, correspondingly, from that of “disciplinary individualization” to the acknowledgment of market-model “freedom” for “quasi-autonomous” individuals.

In the neoliberal acknowledgment of market-model “freedom,” according to Rose, what are focused on are accounting and accountability: “The new forms of accountability that were to breach the enclosures of expertise were strikingly similar to those which were used in the reconfiguration of the state apparatus,” where “the fulcrum of governability was financial” whether “in the residual public sector, in quangos, [or] quasi-private organizations of private providers of services” (149). In such a situation, Rose observes the virtual changes in the meaning of “accountability”: “the terms of accountability” are not those of “professional” but of “accounting.” Hence a “new financial rationality was . . . thrown over the organizational life of these institutions and those who worked within them” (152). Referring to Michael Power’s notion of “audit society” (153), Rose also explains that the focus on the new accountability leads ultimately to the notion that “accountability in itself becomes a criterion of organizational health” when “[r]endering something auditable shapes the process that is to be audited.” It is important here to emphasize that Rose explains that the “accountability” is defined in financial terms when he admits that it has become the measure of organizational health. The neoliberal critique of bureaucracy in terms of the closure of expertise and expert jargons only results in evaluation and justification in terms of economic performance (which, as Rose points out, formally pays respect to the experts’ professional independence and freedom [as far as it pays!]) with the advent of audit society.

When Rose departs from the field of financial control, he lists the characteristic of neoliberal governmentality as “litigious mentality” in its legal aspects, which “ensures that ‘the shadow of the law’ itself acts as a means of managing professional activity” (156), and “flexibilization” of labor, which is not only that “an increasing number of people are employed part-time,” but also that “there has been a return to casualization, short-term contracts, zero-hours contracts, the growth of the ‘black economy.’” As for the

“flexibilization,” he correctly comments that “more significant is the fact that such economic insecurity is now given a positive value in economic strategies” (158). Such a situation, what Rose correctly calls the transformation of “employees to entrepreneurs” is the end of the Fordist paradigm of lifelong employment, where “[l]abour, through the wage contract, regularized, individualized and disciplined labourer”: “And labour linked the ‘family machine’ into the ‘productive machine’ by means of the male family wage and all that went with it”: therefore, as Rose puts it, “[u]nemployment was to become the site of a whole new range of policies at the junction of the economic and the social domains” (157). With the advent of the new post-Fordist, neoliberal paradigm, Rose declares that “[p]erpetual insecurity becomes the normal form of labour,” where the “division of work and life [which the Fordist paradigm was eager to emphasize] has not only become blurred at the level of reality, it has also become permeable at the level of images and strategies” (158).

Risk matters much at this juncture of “advanced liberalism.” When insecurity (in terms of one’s social and economic status) is conceived to be perpetual, it is only natural that, as the discourse of risk dictates, “[i]ndividuals and families should insure against the costs of ill health through private medical insurance, should make provisions for their future through private pensions, should take an active role in securing themselves against all that could possibly threaten the security of their chosen style of life.” As Rose suggests, there are, concerning this situation, “an industry of risk . . . seeking out and creating markets for products in the interests of its own profit” (159) and “a politics of risk, as politicians warn about the future of social pension and insurance schemes. . .” (159-60). Rose, however, also finds here a cultural aspect about the anxiety of risk, what he calls “new prudentialism,” a term borrowed from Pat O’Malley, where “[t]hrift is recast as investment in a future lifestyle of freedom” (160). “Insurance expertise is no longer a matter of actuarial wisdom,”

according to Rose, but “works through amplifying the very anxieties against which security is to protect”: “The ethics of lifestyle maximization, coupled with a logic in which someone must be held to blame for any event that threatens an individual’s ‘quality of life,’ generate a relentless imperative of risk management not simply in relation to contracting for insurance, but also through daily lifestyle management, choices of where to live and shop, what to eat and drink, stress management, exercise and so forth.” This is the birth of “world risk society” where, although, as Rose explains, our obsession with risk results structurally from the transformation of our society, natural disasters and the necessary consequences of the transformation such as financial crashes appear as the “same” risk, being decontextualized, depoliticized and naturalized. World risk society is just another name for the neoliberalized society where the idea of social safety net is precluded as an impossible option.¹⁴⁶

Another important point Rose observes about roll-out neoliberalism called “advanced liberalism” is the changes in the nature of education: what he explains as “disciplinary pedagogy to perpetual training” (160). This corresponds to changes in the mode of production from Fordism, where labor is understood from the model of industrial worker for uniform and monotonous work that requires a disciplined and well-controlled body and subjectivity, to post-Fordism that insists on the value of flexibility. “The new citizen,” according to Rose, “is required to engage in a ceaseless work of training and retaining, skilling and reskilling, enhancement of credentials and preparation for a life of incessant job seeking: life is to become a continuous economic capitalization of the self” (161). This precisely agrees with Foucault’s analysis of neoliberal *homo oeconomicus*, and Rose also observes, agreeing with the argument on poverty in the previous chapter, that “[u]nemployment now was conceptualized as a phenomenon to be governed. . . through

¹⁴⁶ For the relation between neoliberalization and the notion of the social, see also Gough.

acting on the conduct of the unemployed person” (162). He also gives a clear explanation of the difference between welfare and workfare: “Assistance, in the form of unemployment benefits, was perhaps the central ‘right’ of welfare states; now it is no longer a right of citizenship but an allowance which must be earned by the performance of certain duties, and labour alone is to be the means by which the poor can acquire the status of citizen – a status which is itself now increasingly a matter of consumption rights” (164).

Rose, then, in a curious turn, connects this emphasis on consumption to “the ‘active citizen’ who was to be counterpoised to the ‘passive citizen’ or the social state” (164): “the citizen is to become a consumer, and his or her activity is to be understood in terms of the activation of the rights of the consumer in the marketplace” (164-65). This is where he gives the final definition of the risk discourse under the neoliberal regime: “it appears that individuals can best fulfil their political obligations in relation to the wealth, health and happiness of the nation not when they are bound into relations of dependency and obligation, but when they seek to *fulfil themselves* as free individuals” (166). Under roll-out neoliberalism, it is individualist *homo oeconomicus* who believes not in society, but in the market that is supposed to be the only political actor as a risk-taking “positive citizen.”

In this sense, neoliberalism surely is to be seen not as a radical change in the notion of liberalism in the US, but as a kind of continuation of Cold-War liberalism, for the emphasis on individualism against the social and socialist imagination is what Cold-War liberalism insisted on, as argued earlier, in the Cold-War Westerns and the Cold-War literature of freedom. Of course, there is a significant difference here in that the neoliberal individualist positively believes in the market and consumerism. As Rose explains,

The citizen as consumer is to become an active agent in the regulation of professional expertise; the citizen as prudent is to become an active agent in the provision of security; the

citizen as employee is to become an active agent in the regeneration of industry and much more. Even in politics, through new technologies such as focus groups and attitude research, the citizen is to enact his or her democratic obligations as a form of consumption. (166)

And predictably, when Rose continues on about the possibility of “active” political commitment under neoliberalism, he underlines the value of community:

But this citizen was not to remain the isolated and selfish atom of the free market, the single-minded pursuer of purely personal interest and advantage. The citizen was to be located in a nexus of ties and affinities that were not those of the social, but appeared to have a more powerful, and yet more natural, existence: community. (166)

What Rose does here is to theorizes Fukuyama’s “End of History” with the new definition of liberalism that works with the collectivity not of society, but of community: the end of the social is theoretically acknowledged here with the commitment to “community” as something “more powerful” and “more natural” than society.

The political function of Rose’s theorization becomes clear when it is compared with Naomi Klein’s *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. In that book, Klein demonstrates with numerous examples – Chile and other South American countries, China, South Africa, East European countries after the end of the Cold War, the USSR, East Asian nations and so on – that with the excuse of “shock therapy,” an economic term that justifies “necessary” pain in radical changes in economic and industrial structure, (neo)liberalization – liberalization of trade that works with neoliberalization of social structure – is forcibly enacted without democratic discussion or agreement as good fishing in troubled water. Rose’s conclusion clearly reveals that (neo)liberalization, as the destruction of the social structure and the extinction of socialist imagination, should be upheld with the appeal to the displacement of the social with the “more powerful” and “more natural” communal. In this sense, the “active citizen” is only naturally imagined as a risk-taking survivor through the

destruction of the existing society.

In other words, when Klein's book tells us that (neo)liberalization is justified by the naturalized rhetoric of disaster, or the insistence that the changes are natural and necessary since they are initiated by a natural disaster that is unavoidable, we can see that Rose's argument, in a careful way, makes clear that "advanced liberalism" is brought about by the ideological discourse of globalization. In the first part of the essay, he observes:

And it is suggested other changes, such as globalization, the information revolution, the end of the Cold War, the rise of ecological risks, the ageing of the population, the rise of individualism and active models of identity and the like, have also contributed to the necessity to rethink social government. But which factors are given salience, where and how? And how are they conceptualized and their consequences calculated? Government, . . . , is a work of thought. And it was through thought, not through brute reality, that rationalities of social government began to crumble. (140)

In a certain sense, Rose here admits that (neo)liberalization is not a necessity that is caused in response to "brute reality," but an ideological formation, or changes of political rationalities that is itself caused by the changes in our "thought," although he does not use the word "ideology." Then his demonstration shows a strange gap of logics after he explains the discourses of globalization:

Irrespective of the accuracy with which these trends [of globalization, the mobility of finance capitalism, "dialectic of the global and the local" and a "global economy" of "world cities"] are portrayed, the economic problems of government are rethought in terms of a revised image of economic space and the means by which it can be acted upon. (144)

This is where it is most precisely and persuasively demonstrated how "rationalities of social government began to crumble" "not through brute reality," but "through thought" – as far as it is "irrespective of the accuracy" of the understanding of reality that the need for changes is

insisted upon. In other words, Rose's advocacy of a new politics with the communal tie under "advanced liberalism" is a castle in the air in terms of a politics in reality, insofar as the (neo)liberalization that brought about "advanced liberalism" does not reflect the reality of the era, but is fabricated in an ideological formation. The analyses of disaster movies in the nineties will show not only that the predominance of risk discourse in "advanced liberalism," but also the fantasies of risk-haunted disaster, which could be understood at one level as an allegory of the neoliberal world, betray their own phantasmagoric nature, their dissociation from reality with attempts at suppression.

III. Welfare Disaster versus Neoliberal Disaster: *Towering Inferno* and *Die Hard*

Die Hard (1988) is the first movie I would like to look at in order to trace the genealogy of Hollywood disaster movies in the nineties. It is a precursor of the movies I will treat below, being not exactly released in the nineties, with the project certainly being conceived before the collapse of the Berlin Wall. There is admittedly room for discussion as to whether the movie – the story of NYPD officer John McClane (Bruce Willis) fighting against armed robbers pretending to be political terrorists in a high-rise building in Los Angeles on Christmas Eve – is to be seen as a genuine disaster film, although strict specification of the genre does not affect the course of my argument. Yet, the plot's ambiguous relation to the genre involves significant meanings in two senses. The depoliticizing function of the plot, that is, its setting of the appearance of political terrorists whose true purpose is desire for money, precisely predicts the depoliticizing, and biopoliticizing, current of the disaster movies of the decade of globalization after the end of the Cold War: it is as if when the nineteen eighty-eight movie revealed that the truth of

politics is greed, the succeeding disaster movies in the nineties repeated the end of politics in the neoliberal, biopolitical world. The other sense is that the setting of the action in a high-rise certainly intends to follow the tradition of successful disaster movies like *Towering Inferno*. Although the plot in fact does not concern disaster, but robbery, to repeat, the film certainly looks, pictorially speaking, as if it belongs to the convention of preceding disaster movies when McClane shows off his action in the high-rise. In this sense, *Die Hard* is a neoliberal parody of *Towering Inferno*: it concerns the impossibility of a disaster movie like *Inferno* at the end of the eighties and the transformation of the genre under neoliberal globalization.

Towering Inferno (1974) was released at the apogee of welfarism. This successful all-star cast movie is well known for the double featuring of Steve McQueen, in the role of chief firefighter Michael O'Hallorhan, and Paul Newman, as the architect of the high-rise site of the disaster Doug Roberts. Their rivalry, which resulted even in the well-known diagonal arrangement of their names in the credit in order to make it impossible to tell which one is the first, also means that the rivalry between O'Hallorhan and Roberts functions as the main interest of the movie's plot. In the final scene, O'Hallorhan says to Roberts, "One of these days, they'll kill 10,000 in one of these firetraps. And I'll keep eating smoke and bringing out bodies until somebody asks us how to build them," to which Doug replies, "OK. I'm asking." O'Hallorhan's answer, "You know where to reach me. So long, architect," forms the last words of the film. Their rivalry obviously stands on the gap between the elite architect and the working class firefighter, which is underlined throughout the movie by the contrast between the saved, members of the fabulous party of the rich and politicians held for the opening of the building at its top floor, and the savor, firefighters collectively struggling to help them. As far as the rivalry is the engine of the film's narrative, it is about social class, or

the necessary antagonism involved in a society as a totality; this does not mean that the film solves the antagonism, but that the antagonism is the core around which the film's narrative evolves.¹⁴⁷ Because of this, the movie opens with the subtitle of the dedication to the likes of O'Hallorhan, "To those who give their lives so that others might live / To the fire fighters of the world / This picture is gratefully dedicated," and, while the bad guy in the movie is electrical engineer Roger Simmons who apparently has married for money and gets kickbacks from the construction company for the building's electric installation, Roberts as one of the film's heroes is defined as someone who gives clear priorities on security over economy. In fact, the hostile conversation between Roger Simmons and Roberts show how far the neoliberal common sense has come from the previous ideal of welfarism. Roberts blames Simmons not because he violated the legal code, as Simmons says, "Every piece of the wire I put in is strictly up to code, inspected and approved," but because Simmons did not follow Roberts' request of "installations way, way above standard." To repeat, the good guy here is Roberts, not Simmons. To Roberts' criticism, Simmons answers: "Buddy, you live in a dream world. I deal in realities." And, to repeat again, Simmons is the bad guy here.

The impossibility of this kind of plot after the eighties gave birth to *Die Hard* and its hero John McClane. It is true that McQueen's presence and performance play a significant role in the movie, but O'Hallorhan is a hero basically not as an individual, but as a virtuous professional, or chief firefighter, as the dedication at the beginning of the film emphatically indicates, while, although McClane's fighting capability is explained by his being a cop, his heroism, being a cop who visits Los Angeles on his holidays, is ultimately attributed to his personal credentials. Put more simply, O'Hallorhan most of time works with his staff and,

¹⁴⁷ Stephen Keane observes: "Of particular note, for example, is the fact that they [disaster movies in the seventies] tend to take place in contemporary settings and the characters represent a cross-section of American society. Class conflict is a major resulting factor in this respect and further representative clashes are engendered by the isolated settings and situations" (13-14).

even when he works alone, he does so as a chief under orders from his higher-ups, whereas McClane most of the time fights alone at his own discretion and, even when he uses help, the help comes not as orders, but as friendship. The hero under the welfare regime works with the organization; the neoliberal hero works against it.

In other words, criticism of bureaucracy is very clear in *Die Hard*. After McClane finds himself the only one who can fight the armed robbers in the building, he succeeds in getting in touch with Sergeant Al Powell (Reginald VelJohnson) outside. Although Powell is cooperative with McClane, Powell's boss, Deputy Police Chief Dwayne T. Robinson (Paul Gleason) who arrives on the scene later, does not accept Powell's information, suspecting that what McClane says could be misinformation. Robinson, who rejects information that the audience knows to be correct, is depicted as a fool in the film. He eventually orders an armed police unit to break into the building against McClane's warning. Watching the scene from the upper floor, McClane says to himself, "You macho assholes. No! No!" The good guys in the film are McClane and Powell who believe in friendship and human ties; the fool is Robinson, a bureaucrat who believes in and uses the organization.

The contrast between O'Hallorhan and McClane has a significant difference in plot at its bottom. The virtue of O'Hallorhan is understood as professional and social since he struggles as a (chief) firefighter when there is no one in the building who has personal ties with him. On the other hand, McClane in the last analysis fights his personal fight because his wife is one of the hostages. Although there is no evidence in the film suggesting that McClane lacks in civic virtue (though there are implications of his individualist vigilantism as a tough police officer), it is the reconciliation of McClane with his estranged wife Holly Gennaro-McClane (Bonnie Bedelia) who has started pursuing her professional career, living separately from her husband in Los Angeles, that sets the basic framework of the film's story.

McClane flew from New York to the city in order to talk with Holly and meet their children; Holly, who used the last name Gennaro at the beginning of the film, decides to use McClane instead in the end, impressed by John's act of love (in saving her from the evil robbers [where the last showdown parodies *High Noon*]). In this sense, *Die Hard* is about the collapse of the norm of the nuclear family and the corresponding encouragement of women's social advancement under neoliberalism (and the conservative persuasion of male power saving the weaker sex), a thematic that was obsessively popular around this era, as argued in the previous chapter. It is in this framework that McClane is a neoliberal individualist hero, forming a stark contrast with the firefighters of the previous decade.

McClane fights alone using his own contrivances. He uses whatever comes to hand, makes traps of his own ingenuity, and says to himself, "Think!," implying that there must be a way (if you are a qualified neoliberal individualist). It is in this context that he, who calls Robinson "You macho asshole," finds himself not a macho. There is an attempt at redefining masculinity in the film: "macho" is the foolish older bureaucrat who believes in the power of organization, the establishment or even the State, while the neoliberal hero, who is eventually accepted by the new woman who believes in her career, is supposed to symbolize the new masculinity under the neoliberal world as far as he is a self-managing and flexible individualist who always tries to cope with new situations. The same theme of the heroism of flexible individualism is repeated in another popular series that started in nineteen ninety: *Home Alone*.

From this viewpoint, the merit of *Die Hard* as the precursor of the disaster movies in the nineties lies in its naked reference to money or finance capitalism (which ceases to be the case with those of the nineties). The logic of globalization whose truth is capitalist expansion is predicted in the film when the enemy of McClane first appear as German political terrorists,

requesting the release of other terrorists from prison, which in the course of the film turns out to be a mere disguise in order to open the lock of the safe that contains their true aim: financial bonds. This, however, does not mean that McClane is a bounty hunter: as is also the case with later disaster movies I will argue, he only looks for self-realization, or to recover his love. In this sense, to call him a self-entrepreneur may be misleading; when the huge amount of bond certificates the robbers were after fall like rain, dancing in the air, on John and Holly McClane, among others, in a scene near the end, the message is clear that, while bad guys are greedy, good Americans just want to maintain their way of life. This represents the *culture* of neoliberalism: if the essence of neoliberalism is the accumulation of capital by dispossession, as Harvey defines it, the movie offers as heroic the code of action that neoliberalism prescribes, i.e. flexible individualism, without revealing its greedy truth. McClane is a neoliberal, but he certainly is not greedy; he only represents the good side of neoliberalism that tells us how to survive in the neoliberal world without seeing its totality.

More specifically, it is possible to identify the ideology of the film as neoconservative. While the scope of *Towering Inferno* can be called universalist in the sense that, although the site is a building in San Francisco, its thematic range covers concerns for science, progress, planning, elitism, human sacrifice, corruption, and so on, irrespective of the specific site, *Die Hard* is a global film in the sense that, although the site is located in Los Angeles, McClane in fact is an American who is forced to fight as a certain kind of settler, involved in a money war between Japan and Germany. Released in nineteen eighty-eight, the high-tech building of the film's location is called Nakatomi Plaza, owned by the Nakatomi Corporation for which Holly works, whose money is targeted by the German robbers who disguise themselves as German terrorists. If what John McClane finally secures with his heroic act is "family values" with Holly and their children, the threat to the values is represented by the Japanese

corporation that has allured the wife from the husband and the Germans who actually menace their lives. In this context, the ending message of the film, where the McClanes follow their own way of life, regardless of and overcoming the foreign threat, is clearly anti-globalization: although John McClane is a neoliberal individualist, he follows the American tradition (which is, as argued, partly true) and his flexible capability is to be used for, and to protect, American, not foreign, wealth and happiness.

In fact, the film's nationalism redefined in the context of neoliberal globalization is fairly salient. If one may find in the film's setting of America versus Japan and Germany a shadow of World War II, it is also significant to note that no American is seen to be killed in the film (although some Americans seem to be dead), while the killings of Joseph Takagi, executive of Nakatomi Corporation (by one of the robbers), and of the German robbers (by the hero) are designed as attractively shocking scenes (the exception may be the crash of the FBI helicopter, but the pilot is depicted as a crazy Vietnam veteran and the FBI chopper represents bureaucracy anyway). As far as the hero struggles against the threat of Japanese and Germans, the film anticipatingly depicts the (economically) globalized world in terms of what Huntington calls the "clash of civilizations." This is also the reason why the film ends not only with the affirmation of family values, but also with body politics, or the tie between the white hero McClane and his African friend Al Powell. When the movie happily ends with John and Holly McClane's retrieval of their love for each other, and the retrieval of the American way of life over the bodies of Japanese and Germans, it stands as the Christmas film of nineteen eighty-eight.

IV. Biopolitical Posthistoricism and Part of No-Part: *Independence Day* and *Armageddon*

In “Spectacles of History: Race Relations, Melodrama, and the Science Fiction/Disaster Film,” Despina Kakoudaki argues that “[t]he 1990s have indeed been dominated by one US disaster/apocalyptic/science fiction epic after another” (115).¹⁴⁸ The “science fiction” epics she mentions, such as *Tank Girl*, *Apollo 13*, *Mars Attacks* and so on, do not directly concern my argument, and there are the kind of disaster movies, like *Twister*, *Volcano*, *Dante’s Peak* and *Hard Rain*, that are important but do not assume the globalist dimension I argued above. The four movies are not globalist insofar as their story concerns a rather limited locality, but they are still neoliberal disaster movies when, against the backdrop of disaster that falls on everyone in the locality, they gradually puts focus on the rescue of the hero’s loved one, not the unanimous “people,” in the course of the narrative. They are the allegory of risk society, where everybody is on risk and therefore you can help only the few you choose, as opposed to the ideal of the welfare state that stands on the commitment to the universal right to existence.

Arguing about the “seemingly mindless, heartless flicks” (118) of disaster films of the nineties, saying that “[c]ompared to the supremely allegorical films of the sixties and seventies, films of the nineties have evacuated the didactic narrative of human responsibility,” Kakoudaki yet finds the political dimensions in them in terms of identity:

Throughout the nineties, apocalyptic and disaster films portray the negotiation of racial and gender difference as the necessary and central moral issue of the survival story, and at the

¹⁴⁸ As Kakoudaki lists, “In 1995 alone, *Waterworld* (dir. Kevin Reynolds), *Tank Girl* (dir. Rachel Talalay), *Outbreak* (dir. Wolfgang Petersen), *12 Monkeys* (dir. Terry Gilliam), *Apollo 13* (dir. Ron Howard), *Species* (dir. Roger Donaldson), and *Strange Days* (dir. Kathryn Bigelow), to name a few, were released; in 1996 *Twister* (dir. Jan de Bont), *Independence Day*, *Mars Attacks!* (dir. Tim Burton), and *Mimic* (dir. Guillermo del Toro); in 1997 *The Postman* (dir. Kevin Costner), *Volcano* (dir. Mick Jackson), *Dante’s Peak* (dir. Roger Donaldson), *Men in Black* (dir. Barry Sonnenfeld), *Alien Resurrection* (dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet), *Starship Troopers* (dir. Paul Verhoeven), and *Titanic* (dir. James Cameron); in 1998 we saw *Hard Rain* (dir. Mikael Salomon), *Event Horizon* (dir. Paul Anderson, UK/US), *Deep Impact*, *Species II* (dir. Peter Medak), *Armageddon* (dir. Michael Bay), *Godzilla* (dir. Roland Emmerich), *Virus*, and so on. And this list does not include the many films released in related genres, positing disaster as the result of terrorist attack, police work, or blackmail, or those depicting the destruction of property common in action films generally” (115).

level of production, they have themselves negotiated the changing position of African American actors within Hollywood hierarchies. (119)

This argument is meaningful since it suggests the necessity, in analyzing the politics of the movie blockbusters of the nineties, to look at the larger structure of film production, “Hollywood hierarchies,” as well as its inner logic. What Kakoudaki calls the evacuation of “the didactic narrative of human responsibility” is a salient characteristic of the disaster movies that represent the emergence of risk society during the nineties, where survival is ultimately defined as depending on luck (as its essentially being the matter of risk). In a curious way, then, risk society thus depicted works on the rhetoric of identity such as race and gender according to her.

Kakoudaki is correct, I believe, in observing the predominance of the discourse of identity in the disaster films in the nineties. Or, more correctly, not only do negotiations between identities matter much in those films, but also the characters in them are basically described in terms of identity. This feature is most clearly observed in an apparently multiculturalist blockbuster that features three heroes of white Anglo-Saxon, Jewish and African-American characters: *Independence Day* (1996), a film Michael Rogin calls “the defining motion picture of Bill Clinton’s America” (13). The valorization of identity in the nineties of course relates to the rhetoric of globalization, or what Huntington calls clash of civilizations. In fact, “globalization” in the nineties is a vision that the world is a mosaic of diverse identities where each of them is regard as equivalent. Yet, the cultural equivalence between identities only works for the suppression of inequalities when there are them in terms of the social and economic conditions. *Independence Day*, though “seemingly mindless, heartless,” in fact does refer to the limit of its own “multiculturalism” in a way that is very

characteristic of the neoliberal era.¹⁴⁹

It is a film easy to sum up. One day, huge UFO's appear above metropolises of the world and attack them, and earthlings counter-attack in vain. David Levinson (Jeff Goldblum), a computer engineer, thinks of using a computer virus to break down the shield that protects the UFO's. When Levinson heads on the fourth of July for the enemy mother ship in the alien's captured spacecraft that USMC Captain Steven Hiller (Will Smith) pilots, President Thomas J. Whitmore (Bill Pullman) declares a new Independence Day for the earthlings, explaining the film's title. Of course, the attack succeeds this time, and the film ends with the scene of the President greeting Levinson and Hiller coming home alive, while the rubble of the UFO's falls like fireworks.

One of the important characteristics of the film is what can be called its biopolitical posthistoricism: that is, (the superiority of) scientific technology proves to mean nothing, following the postmodern disbelief in grand narrative, where configuration of biopolitical powers instead appears as the relevant meta-narrative. Although obviously the aliens have scientific technology superior to ours (earthlings can attack the mother ship only by the captured spacecraft), the aliens are depicted only as the other, not as a superior species with whom we can communicate, where we can beat them regardless of their superiority (by using the captured spacecraft). When the final attack is scheduled, the plan is sent all over the world through Morse code (probably in order to avoid the aliens' eavesdropping). Levinson's idea that eventually beats the enemy, a computer virus, is also treated as a biopolitical device rather than a superior technology: it is when Levinson's father advises his son who has become desperate, "We have to remember what we still have. You still have your health," that it occurs to Levinson to make the aliens' system "catch cold" by the "virus." In fact,

¹⁴⁹ Booker characterizes the film as "almost entirely devoid of social or political satire, . . . lack[ing] the thoughtfulness that is often associated with the best science fiction" (238).

Levinson is characterized as a devoted ecologist who is not so much interested in worldly success, which is the reason his former wife Constance Spano (Margaret Colin) has run away from him and is now working for President Whitmore as White House Communications Director. The ecological plot completes itself when the aliens as the other are discovered to be “like locusts” that “move from planet to planet,” consuming “every natural resource” there.

The film’s neoliberalism works with this biopolitical posthistoricism. Before the final attack, the United States has tried in vain to destroy the enemy with nuclear bombs. The Secretary of Defense Albert Nimzicki (James Rebhorn), the one who suggested the use of the bombs, strongly disagrees with the final attack that only works with the conceit of the virus. The President finally fires him, saying, “My only mistake was to appoint a sniveling weasel like you as Secretary of Defense. However, that is one mistake I am thankful to say that I don’t have to live with.” In the biopolitical posthistoricism of the film, the bad guy is Secretary of Defense who is willing to use atomic bombs, and, in a larger context, the firing of the bad guy signifies the neoliberal ideology of a successful overcoming of bureaucracy when the final attack after the firing is carried out by a certain kind of postmodern army that entirely consists of civil volunteer pilots (since the official pilots have been exhausted in the previous attack), including President Whitmore himself.¹⁵⁰

The President joins the postmodern army, at least partly, because his wife has died in the aliens’ attack: the final attack is justified as his personal revenge. This is where the film’s neoliberal individualism is most salient. That is to say, the case is just the same for the other two heroes. By joining the final attack and showing his heroism, Levinson retrieves the love of his ex-wife, who had given up on him for his urban, sophisticated and ecologist

¹⁵⁰ Wegner adds to the list the conspiracy of the CIA, mainly concerning Area 51, depicted in the film (159-160).

gutlessness. Captain Hiller finally decides to marry his cohabiting partner Jasmine Dubrow (Vivica A. Fox) before the attack, which he previously found difficult, having been afraid that the marriage to a stripper with a child would hinder his ambition of joining NASA. When the happy ending of the film is shown by way of the scene of Levinson's and Hiller's safe return greeted by the President with Levinson's ex-wife (and his father) and Hiller's new wife (and their child), it becomes clear that the film is a love story as well as an adventure. What makes the happy ending happy is the heroes' self-realization in the form of love; they happened to save the earth in the course of their pursuit of themselves and their own happiness. The difference of this from a plot in which a hero becomes happy by saving the earth is significant, since biopolitical posthistoricism, as a cultural reflection of neoliberalism, does not believe in the progress of history, social justice or public welfare, or scientific technology.

The ideology of the film is lucidly articulated by President Whitmore's new Declaration of Independence, addressed to the volunteer pilots preparing for the final attack:

Good morning. In less than an hour, aircraft from here will join others from around the world. And you will be launching the largest aerial battle in the history of mankind. Mankind. That word should have new meaning for all of us today. We can't be consumed by our petty differences any more. We will be united in our common interest.

Perhaps it's fate that today is the Fourth of July. And you will once again be fighting for our freedom. Not from tyranny, oppression or persecution. But from annihilation. We're fighting for our right to live, to exist. And should we win the day. The Fourth of July will no longer be known as an American holiday, but as the day when the world declared in one voice we will not go quietly into the night. We will not vanish without a fight. We are going to live on. We are going to survive. Today, we celebrate our Independence Day.

It is possible to understand the film as a demonstration of neoidealism in International Relations theory, as Cynthia Weber argues, as opposed to realism in IR theory or the

Huntingtonian alarmism of clash of identities, where, with the global cooperation of England, Iraq, Japan, Russia and so on, “mankind” is re-defined in terms of “our common interest” instead of “our petty differences.”¹⁵¹ In fact, when we compare the address by President Whitmore with the one by President Clinton cited at the beginning of this chapter, it is found that the aliens’ attack in the film functions as a kind of metaphor for globalization, an external and inevitable pressure that is supposed to change the shape of our world fundamentally, especially when we consider that the aliens are more or less depicted as allegorical figures with fairly weak characterization. When “we celebrate our Independence Day,” this virtually declares the founding of the new, global America.

The “petty differences” is neglected by biopoliticalization of politics: when the President insists that the day deserves the name of new Independence Day since we “will once again be fighting for our freedom,” the freedom we fight for is not from “tyranny, oppression or persecution,” but from “annihilation.” The film offers a situation where “tyranny, oppression or persecution” does not matter, and what matters is only to survive, and yet the President of course does not say that there is no “tyranny, oppression or persecution” any more (because of course there is). This is a suppression of politics that can amend tyranny, oppression and persecution: it is a biopoliticalization of politics where the only fight imaginable is the one to “live on.” This is the essence of biopolitical posthistoricism as an epistemological limit of biopolitical containment, where social politics is supposed to have gone forever.

The supreme point of the film’s rhetoric is that it makes it clear, by the rhetoric of Independence Day, that the biopoliticalization is to be understood as the expansion of

¹⁵¹ Wegner explains this situation as “a textbook illustration of Laclau and Mouffe’s claim that all collective political agency is fundamentally constituted in negativity” (152). The similarity between the film and Laclau and Mouffe’s argument endorses my, as well as Fredric Jameson’s, critique of the ideology of difference in Laclau and Mouffe.

American liberalism as the global standard, or what can be called liberal imperialism of America. Actually President Whitmore's call for the postmodern army of volunteers – where various people assemble to fight for the freedom from annihilation, which, as he insists, results in the euphoric re-definition of mankind as a new global agency of survival, and where, as the movie demonstrates, the happy ending signifies the accomplishment of self-realization – draws a significant parallel with Hardt and Negri's biopolitical call for revolution, where, as quoted in Chapter Four, “the political has yield to love and desire, and that is to the fundamental forces of biopolitical production,” and where, as quoted in Chapter Two, “[t]he primary decision made by the multitude is really the decision to create a new race or, rather, a new humanity.” The utopia President Whitmore's address imagines takes the form of a neoliberal completion of liberalism, where the Cold-War definition of liberalism as the absence of the social finds its goal in the biopoliticalization of politics, or the reduction of politics into the terms of love, desire and survival.¹⁵²

While Hardt and Negri insist that the biopoliticalization curiously turns into an opportunity for revolution (since biopoliticalization also means that our own life becomes capital), Whitmore's address casts a more ironic shadow: his celebration of “our Independence Day” is in fact the kickoff address for the final attack. He exhorts the value of life to those who go to the battle (at least for some) to die. The new definition of “mankind” stands on the sacrifice of lives devoted to the definition. It truly is biopolitical as far as the desire for survival is redeemed only by lives; and this is a correct depiction of risk society.

In other words, the fighters in the final battle are those who are willing to risk their lives for the new identity of “mankind”: if some of them might die, the identity of “mankind,”

¹⁵² As early as 1998, Rogin has analyzed the biopolitical aspect of the movie, saying: “Sanctioning the shift from high ideals to biological survival, this reduction to the life process culminates the sustained national emergency from the end of World War II that justified a military industrial expansion devoid of any higher purpose”(64). Putting the main focus on the parallel between the film's plot and the situation of World War II, Rogin does not inquire much as the film's posthistorical aspect.

which is invaluable according to the President, will survive; or, what is guaranteed to survive is the identity when it is impossible to tell who will survive before the battle. The primacy of “identity,” that is to say, its primacy over each actually living individual, is accomplished by the film’s “multiculturalism” as well as its commitment to biopolitical posthistoricism.

There are of course criticisms of the “multiculturalism” in the film: its perfunctory setting of Anglo-Saxon, African-American and Jewish heroes does not deserve the name of true multiculturalism.¹⁵³ At the same time, however, the featuring of Will Smith as Hiller certainly shows and helps to ameliorate “the changing position of African American actors within Hollywood hierarchies,” as Kakoudaki observes, especially when we consider the successful career of Smith after the movie (even if the film cannot be said to be the only one that contributed). In this sense, the bottom line is that the basic structure of the film is constructed around the discourse of race or racial identity, whether or not its political message is meaningful.

Actually, with Levinson being a sophisticated, urban engineer (whose father is an earnest believer in Judaism) and Hiller beating an alien in hand-in-hand combat with foul language (and whose partner, to repeat, is depicted as a single mother working as an erotic dancer), the “multiculturalism” in the film means equality of stereotypes. It is still possible, however, to insist that, especially in Hiller’s case, the film depicts how someone like Hiller could and should overcome the stereotype to achieve self-realization. This is where we see that the discourse of the film follows what Paul Gilroy in *Against Race* calls “racialized biopolitics” that is “achieved almost exclusively through the visual representation of racialized bodies . . . engaged in characteristic activities,” or, that is, “an outgrowth of the pattern identified as ‘identity politics’ in earlier periods” where “the person is defined as the

¹⁵³ For example, see Rogin (41-53).

body and in which certain exemplary bodies at various times during the 1990s . . . could become impacted instantiations of community” (185). When Gilroy explains the “biopolitics” as another form of racism after Martin Baker’s “New Racism” (33), or racism in terms of culture instead of biology, this obviously corresponds to what Hardt and Negri in *Empire* call “imperial racism” under what they call Empire: “As Du Bois said nearly one hundred years ago, the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of color line. Imperial racism, by contrast, looking forward perhaps to the twenty-first century, rests on the play of differences and the management of micro-conflicutalities within its continually expanding domain” (195). And Etienne Balibar’s critical concept of “neo-racism” would supplement Hardt and Negri’s explanation: “the latent presence of hierarchic theme today finds chief expression in the priority accorded to the individualistic model . . . : the cultures supposed implicitly superior are those which appreciate and promote ‘individual’ enterprise, social and political individualism, as against those which inhibit these things” (25). Ceasing to be what Foucault calls “State racism,” or racism as the (inherent) policy of the State, racism in the nineties hides in “cultural racialism” about “differences” and their management, where both its origin and solution are understood only in individualist terms. Namely, racism, as depicted in the film, is reduced to be something that is justified, or at least excused, by the rhetoric of neoliberal risk-management.

From this perspective, the “multiculturalism” in the film should be analyzed in a larger context. The nineteen nineties put the meaning of the notion in a different context, for example, with a well-known speech by Patrick J. Buchanan on August 17, 1992:

My friends, this election is about much more than who gets what. It is about who we are. It is about what we believe. It is about what we stand for as Americans. There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself. And in that struggle for the soul of

America, Clinton & Clinton are on the other side, and George Bush is on our side. And so, we have to come home, and stand beside him.

Following the Huntingtonian rhetoric of clash of identities, this appeal to “culture war” clearly translated politics, where discussion and mutual understanding is the solution as far as democracy goes, into biopolitics, where identity is the political player as far as the goal of politics is considered to be management of population.¹⁵⁴ It is fairly persuasive and natural that multiculturalism is defined to mean commitment to racial diversity under this paradigm of identity, for example, as Christopher Newfield and Avery F. Gordon define “Multiculturalism’s Unfinished Business”:

Multiculturalism, in the stronger sense we’ve described here, has, since the 1970s, not assumed that its primary goal of improving the lives of people of color can be achieved through assimilation. It thus links its promotion of a multiracial terrain to finding alternatives to common culture. (108)

At the same time, however, the well-known anthology *Mapping Multiculturalism*, in which the quoted essay by Newfield and Gordon is included, in fact contains at least six essays (by Robinson, Brown, Appelbaum, Bonacich, Smith, Lipsitz) that insist on the importance of social politics (basically concerning economic inequality under capitalism) rather than multiculturalism per se. Actually, Newfield and Gordon themselves, primarily being the advocate of multiculturalism, admit its culturalist limit:

Multiculturalism is and will remain a type of cultural pluralism. But it promotes norms of its own, alternative ground rules, a different starting point. . . . It does not predict the kind of substantive policy, political and economic alterations, the social reconstruction, that could follow. Will multiculturalism promote racial justice? Will it link racial justice to the redistributive project necessary for economic equality? . . . No. Not really. Not in itself. But multiculturalism may be viewed as a precondition for these different kinds of work. (108-9)

¹⁵⁴ For an insightful genealogy of “culture war,” see Singh.

The culturalism in their multiculturalism is explained as “a precondition,” probably and persuasively needed as a counter-attack against such neo-conservative discourse of culture war as Buchanan’s, which yet effects in completing the rhetoric of identity when even in the left-wing critique “culture” and “identity” are imagined as the starting point, “a precondition,” that is more fundamental and thus more important than society, social justice and the critique of capitalism.

In other words, “culture war” did not only signify in the nineties the identitarian political mapping between the Democrats and the Republicans in the US. With the huge picture of a giant monster’s foot almost stamping on a man from Roland Emmerich’s movie subsequent to *Independence Day*, *Godzilla*, *The Economist* ran an article “Culture Wars” on September 12, 1998. It is about global “culture war,” as its lead reads: “Is American culture, like a horror-monster’s foot, about to crush the world? Only in film does America really rule – and cultural protection is no answer.” It is about “Hollywood’s empire,” which “now gets roughly half its revenues from overseas, up from just 30% in 1980.” Yet, this does not simply mean Americanization of the global cinema market, according to the article, for “from the earliest days [Hollywood] was open to foreign talent and foreign money” (115) and “[s]everal of Hollywood’s most successful films have drawn heavily on international resources” (116). So the global expansion of Hollywood means both its inner and outer globalization: “It may even be argued that it is less a matter of Hollywood corrupting the world than of the world corrupting Hollywood,” where “[t]he more Hollywood becomes preoccupied by the global market, the more it produces generic blockbusters made to play as well in Pisa as Peoria.” As Hollywood changes its nature and structure as a global industry, so the movies it produces should also change their nature and features: “They eschew fine-grained cultural observation for generic subjects that anybody can identify with, regardless of national origins. There is

nothing particularly American about boats crashing into icebergs or asteroids that threaten to obliterate human life” (116). To sum up, beneath the surface of the clash of identities and debates on protectionism and its critique lies the truth of the neoliberal globalization of market capitalism.¹⁵⁵

In “In Deregulation We Trust: The Synergy of Politics and Industry in Reagan-Era Hollywood,” Jennifer Holt argues that, under Reaganomics that is “extremely tolerant of mergers and conglomerate growth” (26), “a wave of intense mergers and consolidation rolled through the industry, and the major studios returned to a structural economy of vertical integration after almost 40 years of government-enforced divestiture,” where, along with “new technologies [redefining] the industrial economy and new delivery systems [transforming] the media landscape,” “synergy” became “the foundational principle upon which vertically integrated entertainment conglomerates were built during the 1980s in order to exploit the rapidly collapsing boundaries between film, television, and cable, and between production, distribution, and exhibition outlets” (22). This neoliberalization under Reagan administration lays the ground for the blockbusters that the author of “Culture Wars” believes “are driven by special effects that can be appreciated by people with minimal grasp of English rather than by dialogue and plot” (116).

In the nineties, then, according to *Global Hollywood 2*, with the replacement of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which ends in nineteen ninety-three, with World Trade Organization (WTO), which starts in nineteen ninety-five, the post-war paradigm of international trades, which admits to a certain degree the necessity of protectionism especially in the realm of national culture, shifted to a new, neoliberal

¹⁵⁵ For analyses of multiculturalism in the context of global economy, see chapter two of Jacoby, Rieff and Rouse.

paradigm symbolized by the “Washington Consensus.”¹⁵⁶ Under the new regime, “movie,” which used to be put under the category of “culture” and was protected, is now regarded, certainly along with the technological changes in the industry, as part of “information” that can never be protected. It is in this larger context of neoliberal globalization of the decade that Hollywood should be “preoccupied by the global market.”¹⁵⁷

Nineteen ninety-six, the year of *Independence Day*, rests in this context. Its “multiculturalism,” set in the globalized story line of the film, shares the interest with the expectation for the global and diverse audiences. The film’s gesture of commitment to diversity in the form of its “multiculturalism” in casting and plot reflects its being a new blockbuster of the global Hollywood, as an aspect of multiculturalism in America could be regarded as a certain kind of globalization of the American culture, an attempt to call various kinds of cultures honorably American, especially when one emphasizes its culturalism. *Independence Day*, a film about the new independence day for a “new” mankind as a global entity, is designed as a global blockbuster in the age of neoliberal globalization. And the “multiculturalism” is an integral part of it. In this way, this is *the* movie of the president of globalization, as Rogin defines.

The globalist character of the blockbuster is to be found not only in its commitment to diversity. On the contrary, the most interesting point in the film’s depiction of race and culture lies in its calculated failure to the commitment, where the truth of the film’s globalist “multiculturalism” is revealed to have the discourse of risk as its meta-narrative. In the final attack, missiles from fighter jets, including the President’s, are eventually exhausted before the enemy aircraft falls. It is the suicide attack of a fighter piloted by a Vietnam veteran called Russell Casse, whose missile launcher turned out to be malfunctioning, that eventually

¹⁵⁶ For a succinct explanation of the Washington Consensus, see Williamson.

¹⁵⁷ For the globalization of Hollywood in the nineties, see also Balio.

beats the enemy. Casse, an alcoholic crop-duster, is depicted as a borderline psycho, believing that he was once kidnapped by aliens and that this is his chance for revenge. He is also associated with the Hispanic population in the US in a vague way: in addition to his last name, he has children who speak Spanish as well as English, while he apparently does not have a wife in the film's present. In this way, Casse's suicide attack shows a crucial gap in the film's ideology. On the one hand, a suicide attack is the necessary solution in the film's complete commitment to biopolitics: only life as the final weapon in biopolitical posthistoricism could beat the enemy when the attack becomes possible by making the enemy "catch cold" after the ultimate weapon of the atomic bomb is proved to be useless. And, at the same time, Casse as a crazy alcoholic is the most appropriate victim in the biopolitical risk society of the film: he is a biopolitical failure who only naturally cannot survive in the neoliberal world. This biopolitical logic is interrelated to the racial discourse in the film. The film's logic of ostensible "multiculturalism" involves the victimization of the Hispanic population who lack a proper representative; or, when the identitarianism of the film makes race-free representation of characters impossible, the victim must be someone other than white, African-American or Jewish, someone to whom a piece of the racial mosaic of multiculturalism has not yet been allotted in the mainstream discourse of Hollywood in the middle nineties. Casse is represented not only as a biopolitical failure who is not able to manage himself as a neoliberal citizen, but also as the proper victim from an unrepresented race under the multiculturalist regime. Here again, the neoliberal discourse of risk that insists that risk management is grave self-responsibility works predominantly; it is a combination of multiculturalism and the neoliberal discourse of risk that makes Casse an "appropriate" victim. When the neoliberalism of the film wants a necessary victim in order to demonstrate the predominant discourse of risk – "risk" cannot be represented unless someone is

victimized –, and when its biopolitics makes it necessary that the victim risks life, it is only logical that the combination of neoliberalism and biopolitics finds a failure who fails to manage his own life (as a crazy alcoholic) in a race that is excluded from its “multiculturalism.”

In this way, it is possible, or even plausible, to find in the film a critique of the limit of the multiculturalism that grew complicit with neoliberalism during the decade. Yet, what is more revealing about Casse’s victimization is the context in which it is placed in the film. Although a major says to Casse’s son, “What your father did was very brave. You should be proud of him,” the remark appears against the background of the control room where people are all completely jubilant about the victory. The President just says, “Good Luck, buddy,” when Casse’s plane crashes into the UFO. And after this scene, the film immediately turns to another one about heroes, Hiller and Levinson; Casse is never mentioned again till the end of the film. Except for the major’s remark, there is no mourning for Casse. The film has a happy ending to the degree that it is considered to be a Hollywood blockbuster with expensive special effects and no concern for human interest. It is a blockbuster without tragedy: Casse’s tragedy does not really constitute a part of the film.

The same structure is actually repeated in a similar movie of nineteen ninety-eight, *Armageddon*. It is about the disaster of a meteor crashing into the earth. In order to explode the meteor with a nuclear bomb that should be planted deep below its surface, a group of oil drillers is hired by NASA. The same critique of bureaucracy is repeated when the outlaw oil drillers (called “cowboys” at one point in the film) prove more efficient, skillful and intelligent than the NASA elite. In the latter half of the story, the disaster film changes into a love story where, eventually, the leader of the oil drillers Harry Stamper (Bruce Willis) sacrifices his life in order to save the earth and A. J. Frost (Ben Affleck), a fellow driller who

is also his daughter's fiancé. The end of Harry is broadcast live to the control room on the earth. Before the huge screen that shows Harry talking to his daughter Grace Stamper (Liv Tyler), Grace breaks down crying. Then, however, the film in the next scene shows the happy ending of the wedding scene of A. J. and Grace. In this case, Harry's death may be mourned, but it does not impair the euphoria of the ending as well as of the entirety of the film.

The predominance of risk discourse decides the peculiar structure of *Independence Day* and *Armageddon*. These blockbusters show that casual victims do not vitiate a happy ending in the world risk society: or even that a victim of risk is a necessary ingredient in the happy ending in risk society. Risk discourse dictates that our happiness necessarily stands on the forgetting of the necessary victim of risk: suppression of risk victims is an essential part in order for risk society to complete itself. What is remarkable about this is not that the films do not create a world without victims (when they fail to represent risk society), but that they fairly overtly demonstrate the "suppression" of victims about whom the audience is ready and willing to forget. In this sense, the victims in them constitute "part of no-part" of the film's structure. These Hollywood blockbusters, which appeared in relation to neoliberal globalization, are postmodern films in the sense that they are deeply and structurally fragmented, so that the aesthetic entirety is conceivable only by involving a part that is theoretically excluded from its entirety. In this sense, aesthetically, they are films about "part of no-part," or an overt and cruel exclusion that is not conceived as evil since it is legitimate. In this way, the films critically reflect the neoliberal risk society we live in – as far as we consider the films not to be tragedy, but to be something that do not include "the didactic narrative of human responsibility," being "driven by special effects that can be appreciated by people with minimal grasp of English."

V. Love in Disaster and Representation of Labor

While such films as *Die Hard*, *Independence Day* and *Armageddon* offer the thrilling entertainment of disaster that eventually leads to a celebration of heterosexual love, *Titanic* (1997) is an attempt at their inversion: why not make a love story with a garnish of disaster? As a logical consequence of the development of the successful disaster movies of the era, this movie achieved tremendous popularity as well as overall victory in the Academy Awards. “Disaster” in the films I discussed above is essentially metaphoric: it plays its role satisfactorily as long as it demonstrates the destruction of existing society and indoctrination into risk society, whatever the cause of the destruction might be. With the façade of natural or inevitable disaster, what the films try to depict is the necessity of globalization and neoliberalization. In other words, when the inevitable advent of globalization was trumpeted, as in President Clinton’s speech, with the neoliberal declaration of the end of social welfare, the audience found reasonable, if politically perverted, solace in the depiction of neoliberal heroes who successfully survive in the risk society: they found consolation in the survival against “natural” disasters (they would have found not consolation but disgust if what they watched had been a naked description of neoliberal globalization), but this consolation in the last analysis derives from the metaphorical dimension in “natural” disasters. With the true thematic of the disaster movies of the nineties being the “naturalization” of the emerging risk society, or legitimization of risk society by insisting that its birth is just natural and inevitable, what is most important in their demonstration is not the truth of the disaster, but how people cope with it. *Titanic*, a translation of a disaster movie into a love story, in this sense forms the logical culmination of the logic that defines the popular disaster movies of the era. When it becomes a love story, how to survive is clearly more important than the depiction of disaster;

that is to say, although the process of the ship's crash and sinking is meticulously detailed in the film, it becomes moving and beautiful as a successful movie only when the process is essentially understood not as analysis of the disaster, but in terms of the obstacles to and also the intensifier of the love that dominates it.¹⁵⁸ To put this the other way around, the film reveals how important the plot of love had been in the previous disaster movies of the decade, insofar as "love" is the last resort in risk society that negates the social and advocates the communal. In a sense, all the disaster movies in the decade had been love stories; *Titanic* simply made this apparent.

Being published in 2002, Kakoudoki's "Spectacles of History" starts with her confusion and puzzlement in talking about disaster after 9.11: "I thought it was an ad for a new blockbuster movie,' 'I thought I was in a disaster film,' 'This was just like Independence Day,' were some of the responses I heard from friends and in news reports. Such references to disaster films are not surprising given how many of these films were released in the last decade, and how successful they were in terms of box office, video, DVD and merchandise sales" (109). Although I do not hesitate to acknowledge the importance and moral obligation of appreciating the traumatic nature of the true tragedy, I also have to point out the ideological move involved in the perspective that sees a resemblance between the terrorists' attacks to the World Trade Center and "disaster" in such films as *Independence Day*: how do the terrorists resemble the aliens in the film, whether or not you believe the terrorists to be ultimately evil? The resemblance lies only in "disaster," or the resulting effect of the attacks, since their objectives, their ideologies, their intentions completely differ. The point here is that *Independence Day* comes to resemble the tragedy of 9.11 necessarily because the

¹⁵⁸ For the director's well-advertised obsession with the replication of the ship and the incident, see Wyatt, Keller and Sobchack.

disasters in the disaster films in the nineties are hollow and metaphoric. It is because we, in a sense correctly, appreciate the depicted “disaster” in the films as something whose essence lies not in its cause, but in its effect that we find the resemblance.¹⁵⁹

In a larger context, then, the conception of “disaster” as effect with vanishing cause is part and parcel of the risk discourse that scholars like Beck try to demonstrate. Beck argues for risk society, identifying “financial crisis” and natural disasters as the same risk: risk society is conceivable only when every kind of disaster is to be seen as essentially the same as an indicator of risk. Risk ceaselessly haunts our society, making it risk society, when everything is reduced to varying degrees of risks. The resemblance between the terrorist attacks and the disaster films results not from the nature of the attacks, but from the nature of the films, the propaganda for the emerging risk society the films demonstrate, and the ideological power of the predominant discourse of risk in which we live. We can enjoy the films, but the real attacks must not be seen as a variation of the propaganda.

The virtuosity of the director James Cameron makes it possible in the love story in *Titanic* not to see a naked sanction of neoliberal society of rat-race competition as it is. When the latter half of the ship stands up straight after the ship has been broken into two, the hero Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio), as a neoliberal, flexible talent, promptly and cleverly urges to the heroin Rose (Kate Winslet) to move to the other side of the ship’s rail; those who are not as clever as Jack hangs down from the rail, while Jack and Rose can sit on its other side. The film carefully depicts those people falling one by one: a young woman falls after making eye contact with Rose, with neither Jack nor Rose trying to help her, sitting neatly side by side. The scene shows Cameron’s ironic mastery when the eye contact signifies that their not helping is a rational choice rather than a hesitation or an effect of panic: the love

¹⁵⁹ For the possibility to understand 9.11 attacks as biopolitical ones, Diken. The argument to some degree plausible as far as the attacks are also made under the situation of (post-) globalization, but I believe that it is fairly important to understand them in terms of politics rather than biopolitics in the sense I use the words.

story is impressive exactly because it works as a justification for neoliberal individualism. With the excuse of love, “disaster” here is defined as the object of survival, not as something to be collectively fought against. The film does not preach that world risk society is a cutthroat competitive world where selfishness is not a sin, but that it is only natural for desperate lovers to be preoccupied with their own survival. The neoliberal individualism is, in this way, accepted as a sweet message in a great love story.¹⁶⁰

Titanic is about love between different classes. Rose DeWitt Bukater, a first-class passenger, is on board with her fiancé Cal Hockley (Billy Zane), the son of a Pittsburgh steel tycoon. Rose is being forced to marry Cal in order to solve the financial problems of the Bukaters. Jack, a poor artist who happened to get a third-class ticket for the ship in a card game, gets acquainted with Rose when he dissuades her from committing suicide. After Jack dies in saving Rose, she renames herself Rose Dawson, escaping from her fiancé. At the end of the film, the old Rose (Gloria Stuart) throws away a precious diamond necklace, the “Heart of the Ocean,” from a ship that floats above the site of the wreckage, showing that for her the expensive diamond does not mean money, but her memories of Jack.

Even if a huge amount of money, which means a great deal for the name of the Bukaters, does not mean much to Rose herself, the essence of the love between classes is represented not as appreciation or tolerance of poverty, but as modern and liberal liberation of Rose’s corporeality and sexuality. The most salient example is the sequence from the first class dinner-party, where Jack in a borrowed tuxedo shows flexibility in fitting into the stiff conversation of the upper class, to the escape of Jack and Rose to the third class dancing party, where Rose wildly enjoys physical pleasure in dancing. This leads to Rose’s allowing Jack to draw her nude wearing the Heart of the Ocean, which culminates in their sexual union

¹⁶⁰ For the “survivalism” of the film, see Negra.

later in an automobile in the ship's cargo hold. Their love is essentially physical and sexual, but the film's message is that Rose is not sexually driven but physically liberated. Jack talks about a dream of teaching Rose how to ride a horse – “like a real cowboy, not that side saddle stuff” (so the allegorical cowboy is the heroine, not the hero, in this film) –, how to chew a tobacco and how to spit like a man, the last of which seems so attractive to Rose that they really try it on board. For Rose, to love Jack means to be liberated from the norms in which she has been raised. This message is most dramatically represented in the most famous scene of the film: Rose, standing together with Jack at the very top of the ship's bow with her arms horizontally opening, exclaims, “I'm flying!” With this scene (rather than that of their making love) symbolizing their love, its essence is the sense of corporeal liberation of Rose: liberating herself from the norms imposed on her, she enjoys her own liberated corporeality to which sexual gratification is merely subordinate. The difference between the class Jack belongs to and the one Rose belongs to is thus represented as biopolitical: it concerns the internalized norms to which resistance means liberation of corporeality.

When Cal criticizes Rose's taste for new paintings by Degas and Picasso, Rose's desire for liberty is associated with modernity: the norms that bind Rose are the remains of old and staid customs whose very symbol is the arranged marriage for the sake of the family's name. Set in nineteen twelve, the film depicts the coming of a new age, a new century that will become the American century. While a minister reads from Revelation, “I saw a new heaven and a new earth [for] the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,” when the ship is sinking, Jack can declare that “I'm the king of the world,” standing at the very top of the modern, gigantic ship (re-enacting the scene of Rose's “flying”), since he believes there that he is catching the cutting edge of time. When the new age is shown in contrast to the older time that holds Rose in bondage, then, liberalism prevails, appreciating corporeal and sexual

love free from the notion of class. As Rose, becoming a Dawson, grows into a liberated woman after the death of Jack, the film memorizes the very start of the twentieth century as the century of American liberalism. And this is made more impressive by the film's structure in which the older Rose (Gloria Stuart) reminiscences about the sinking from the present of nineteen ninety-six: it is possible to understand that the film's neoliberal lining is the effect of its retelling from our neoliberal present.

It is very important that the film's message is the victory of liberalism, since it is demonstrated through the love between different classes. On the surface, Jack Dawson seems to be the figure of the poor, although what makes him charming is a certain kind of liberalism he demonstrates, whose truth is neoliberal flexibility, rather than the culture of the working class. Within the setting of the ship's discriminatory structure of first class and third class, Jack apparently belongs to a "class" lower than Rose's, in spite of the fact that Jack, who has been to various places including Paris, seems more globally experienced than Rose. Obtaining the ticket by winning a card game suggests he must be broke, while Leonardo DiCaprio's performance makes Jack assume a certain kind of "elegance" (at least as far as those who love the movie would insist). If Jack is the figure of the poor, how are "the poor" defined in a film that declares the triumph of (neo)liberalism?

Jack's neoliberal characterization is significant since the film does include the working class of its world. The film is revealing since it, in a sense even overtly, demonstrates how it completes itself with the process of the erasure of the working class. When Rose and Jack escape from Cal's valet Spicer Lovejoy (David Warner), they, after going through corridors like a labyrinth, eventually enter the ship's engine room where engineers are stoking the ship's engine. Running through them cheerfully with Rose, Jack even hails: "Carry on. Don't mind us. You're doing a great job! Keep up the good work!" He clearly does not belong to

those who are toiling with sweat in order to keep the ship moving when it is thus revealed that there are people who are working, literally as well as metaphorically, below even the third class. Jack is liberal because he is above the working class. (And then Rose and Jack end up in the automobile, the symbol of the middle-class way of life in the coming twentieth century, in the hold to make love.)

In other words, Jack's neoliberal masculinity (a charming aspect of which is worldly flexibility) is represented as charming by being precisely differentiated from that of the working men. In this sense, the prince charming who liberalizes Rose is a "non-macho" like John McClane in *Die Hard*. Rose's love is defined as one toward a lower class that correctly criticizes the hypocritical convention of the upper class, but it is also carefully defined as not toward those who are structurally suppressed and exploited.¹⁶¹ In fact, the love becomes perfect when Jack personally victimizes himself for Rose. The true love thus means to choose the lover instead of the social justice.

Of course, an objection is possible since Jack sketches someone on deck as well as drawing the nude of Rose: he is working then since he is an artist. The artist as the symbolic neoliberal figure of self-entrepreneur – the artist as the primal *homo oeconomicus* as far as his life is the process of investment in his own "talent" as his only "capital" – is the significant logic in the film that works not only in understanding the truth of Jack. Those who pilot the ship are depicted as doing nothing truly effective when disaster strikes (in the line of neoliberal critique of bureaucracy), and the only impressive "work" shown in the film is done by musicians: some members of the ship's band play on deck in order to help ameliorate the panic when people start moving to the lifeboats, and, after once finishing playing, they

¹⁶¹ Lehman points out in the film "a reformulation of the lower-class 'earth/body man' from that of a physically overbearing manual laborer [of the convention of "a fantasy wherein a working-class man awakens sexuality within an attractive, upper-class woman"] to that of an artist, embodied in . . . DiCaprio" (106). Munich observes that "Jack, an orphan, is actually neither classless nor working class; he emerges, the film suggests, from the solid middle class of the Middle West" (160).

silently decide to continue playing rather than join the ugly rush for life and the lifeboats. Adorably, they choose to work, to pursue their professional identity, above joining a vain competition for survival. It is shown here that, in the film's neoliberal paradigm, the typical labor is cultural and non-material as epitomized by the "work" by the artist(s), which explains how Jack is charming in the film as a painter. The film's neoliberal logic explains that, as a self-investing artist whose own capital is talent, he is a model neoliberal, so the paradigmatic labor is the non-material work of performance.

In other words, the film's neoliberalism is depicted in a structure containing the working class in a part of no-part. The survival of the third class passengers is treated as an important theme in the latter half of the film where there is a scene in which, under the leadership of Jack, they smash the gate that secures the rule of the first class first. In stark contrast to this, everybody, both the characters in the film and its audience, completely forgets in the latter half of the film about those who work in the engine room: they are part of no-part of the film since they exist but are "naturally" excluded from it after their brief appearance. If they constitute the figure of the working class in the film, the third class passengers represented by Jack in fact form the middle class in the film's world since the engineers are working, at least partly, for the passengers who have bought their tickets – especially when what Jack symbolizes is the ideology of liberalization.

In this structure, the last piece of the film's neoliberalism is found in the depiction of Jack Dawson as the non-working poor: he is not one of the exploited in the capitalist world, but a rebel against the cultural norm with, and in spite of, potential "talent" as a self-entrepreneur. The film is truly revealing in its structural depiction that the neoliberal critique of the ship's upper class by Jack works with the erasure of the working class. Jack should be identified as the postmodern figure of the non-working poor since his rebellion is

the cultural critique of the existing norm, exactly following Lawrence Mead's depiction, discussed in the previous chapter, of the new politics of poverty's change of focus from class to conduct, when he is the rebellious poor one who attracts Rose. While Mead talks about the State politics of poverty, then, the film vividly presents a situation in which, when the official politics of poverty tries to define it in terms not of class but of cultural identity, resistance to it is also imagined as critique not of the social structure but of the cultural norm. In this way, the film neatly fits into the American tradition of cultural revolution whose latest version is Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, where social change is imagined to start with the cultural rebellion of the multitude.

The postmodernism of *Titanic* essentially lies in the erasure of labor by way of containing the working class in the film's part of no-part, which results in highlighting the cultural rebellion of Jack and Rose as the only possible critique of the existing society. Furthermore, the film not only highlights the critique, but also even celebrates it as a form of supremely romantic love: the liberal love between different classes that never cares who runs the ship. In fact, the scene of Rose and Jack sitting cozily, watching their fellow passengers falling into the dark sea, tacitly rehearses the invisible drowning of the engineers in the engine room: it is under the predominance of risk discourse that the commitment to romantic love justifies survival, making everyone else (as potential competitors) people who do not belong to one's party, or the part of no-part. Under the logic of late capitalism, postmodern love defies totality as an ultimate obstacle to survival.

In the postmodern configuration, it would be possible to see in the figuration of Jack as the rebellious poor, whose main friends are the Italian Fabrizio (Danny Nucci) and the Irish Tommy (Jason Barry), an allusion to the figure of immigrant workers, insofar as Mead observes that the effect of the new politics of poverty makes the "most divisive disputes" "no

longer about unionism or socialism but rather the problems of new ethnic groups, usually immigrants, whom many feel threaten the social order.” As President Clinton celebrates “how diverse and multiethnic and multilingual we are” in “our immigrant Nation,” so the film makes one “whom many feel threaten[s] the social order” its prince-charming liberal hero. Thus I do not hesitate to find the movie potentially multiculturalist, but the crucial problem here is Jack’s ultimate death: the true winner of the film is Rose who survives.

Criticizing Clinton’s nineteen ninety-six reform of the welfare system, that is, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, or PRWORA, Loïc Wacquant in *Punishing the Poor* analyses how the roll-out neoliberalism under the Clinton administration works as a script for turning the social control of the US into that of the penal state. Put most simply, the turn is symbolized by the change of the meaning of “social security” from social welfare, or security from unemployment, to law and order, or security from crime. This is, according to Wacquant, mainly enacted by criminalization of the poor, which in fact is a predictable development of Mead’s new politics of poverty that focus on the control of conduct. In its actual mechanism, as Wacquant surveys, the “quadrupling of the US carceral population in two decades [of the eighties and nineties]” results from “*the extension of recourse to confinement for a range of street crimes and misdemeanors that did not previously lead to a custodial sanction, especially minor drug infractions and behaviors described as public disorders and nuisances, as well as from the continual stiffening of sentences incurred*” (125), while, in fact, “in the mid-1970s, the three leading revisionist historians of the prison, David Rothman, Michel Foucault, and Michael Ignatieff, agreed with radical sociologists Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull, as well as with mainstream penologists Hermann Mannheim and Norval Morris, that it [prison] was an institution in inevitable decline, destined to be replaced in the medium run by more diffuse, discrete, and diversified

instruments of social control” (6n).¹⁶² In correspondence to this, he argues furthermore that “[o]f all the items that make up public expenditures at the three levels of US political organizations, the county, the states, and the federal government, ‘corrections’ is that which posted the fastest expansion from 1975 to today – and by a wide margin”: “This growth of the budgets and personnel of the carceral sector is all the more remarkable for having occurred *during a period in which the weight of the state was continually shrinking* in the economic and social life of the country and when direct spending for vulnerable populations suffered drastic cuts” (153).

Wacquant argument sheds light on the analysis of *Titanic* when he explains that the penalization of the state involves a new configuration of gender:

90 percent of welfare recipients in the United States are mothers. The quartet formed by the police, the court, the prison, and the probation or parole officer assumes the task of taming their brothers, their boyfriends or husbands, and their sons: 93 percent of US inmates are male (men also make up 88 percent of parolees and 77 percent of probationers). This suggests, in line with a rich strand of feminist scholarship on public policy, gender, and citizenship, that the invention of the *double regulation of the poor* in America in closing decades of the twentieth century partakes of an overall (re)masculinizing of the state in the neoliberal age. . . . (15)

The new politics of poverty involves the gendered double standard of workfare for women and prisonfare for men. My argument in the previous chapter – that feminization of labor and obsessive figuration of the working woman as a new kind of *femme fatale* is enacted by neoliberalism as critique of welfare state whose main device of social control is the normalization of the nuclear family – should be supplemented by Wacquant analysis of the double standard. Most simply, the changes in femininity under neoliberalization should be understood in couple with those in masculinity: criminalization.

¹⁶² See Also Cohen.

Hence the punishment of Jack Dawson is necessary. The film as a whole should be understood as an allegory of the new gender configuration under roll-out neoliberalism. All in all, the film's main plot is liberalization of the heroine who, turning into Rose Dawson, lives her life after Jack Dawson as a working woman. The liberalization is enacted by Jack's cultural rebellion against the norm of masculine and patriarchal society. In this plot, the new gender configuration can only indicate the "happy ending" in the feminization of labor and the criminalization of masculinity: Jack must die as long as he assumes the new masculinity of a non-macho prince charming of neoliberalism.

My point does not concern the politics of the new gender configuration that seems to stand on the victimization of the male; neither does the film's structure in the last analysis. The plot of the victimization of Jack most likely has much to do with the film's popularity, but what matters most in the last analysis is the structural erasure of the working class as its part of no-part.¹⁶³ For, in the same way enacted concerning the happy ending in *Independence Day* and *Armageddon*, the film completes itself by a structural paradox whose imperative is to negate the existence of a part of the work. In other words, it is the erasure of the working class the film once depicted that makes possible the depiction of the new gender configuration by making Jack's rebellion against the norm an authentic politics of resistance in postmodernism: if Jack and Rose, as well as all the audience, did not forget the people toiling in the engine room, the story would be entirely different. Forgetting a part of the society to which one belongs, making it a part of no-part, and thus erasing entirely the possibility of totality is the core political move necessary for the discourse of risk to be effective as a working ideology. In an ironical way, *Titanic* demonstrates how central the depiction of the working class is in our world risk society. When a work of art cannot help

¹⁶³ Krämer offers an interesting view that the film is a rearrangement of action-adventure films popular in the era for a female audience.

positing its totality in order to be a complete work, such films as *Independence Day*, *Armageddon* and *Titanic* show that we are not able to imagine totality without recourse to the paradoxical structure of part of no-part. They are postmodern art where the juxtaposition between the postmodern imperative of war on totality and the aesthetic imperative to the formal totality finds its only solution in paradox.

The film's moral is, then, that the victory of (neo)liberalism the film dictates stands on making the working class its part of no-part. As the neoliberal society of the penal state that Wacquant analyzes continues even today, today's most popular political engagement tends to take the form of multitudinous protests such as what is called the Arab Spring, large demonstrations in various places in Europe, various "occupy" movements and so on, as Hardt and Negri predicted and indeed encouraged. These street rebellions against oppressive penal states that force suppressive norms on everyday conduct are, needless to say, good and hopeful. Yet, if their goal is only the attainment of freedom, for the expansion of liberal principles, and if their movement fails to look for social totality, for retrieving what we have turned into part of no-part of our society, they will not succeed in radically changing our political reality. Even *Titanic* teaches us so.

Chapter Six

Critique of Autobiography, Postfeminism and Postcolonialism: Jamaica Kincaid's *The Autobiography of My Mother*

“Better to be dead than red – that’s me.”

Jamaica Kincaid, Interview with Dwight Garner

I. Critical Discourses and Identitarianism in the Nineties

At the end of Chapter Four, I summarized identity politics as the aporia of contingency management. The anti-essentialist translation of the notion of identity as a biological destiny into a cultural construct can guarantee a positive political value when one’s identity is to be seen as a consequence of one’s liberal “choice,” while, in actuality, one can more often than not freely “choose” one’s own identity. Of course, there are admittedly many cases where a political claim is made on the basis of one’s identity not being one’s deliberate choice, such as insisting that the language I speak should be protected exactly because I did not choose that language as my mother tongue. In both cases, however, the politics is essentially understood and imagined in terms of how to manage the contingent, as opposed to a choice, in one’s subjectivity in the liberal framework that appreciates a person’s freedom and right: the contingent becomes politically valuable when it is translated into a choice, while it is treated as the object of protection when it is not.

Theoretically, a symbolic scene is found in Judith Butler’s remark in her conversation with Slavoj Žižek and Ernesto Laclau in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (2000):

Just as Jungians never did supply a satisfactory answer for why the term “feminine” was used when anyone of any gender could be the bearer of that principle, so Lacanians are hard-pressed to justify the recirculation of patriarchal kin positions as the capitalized “Law” at the same time as they attempt to define such socially saturated terms in ways that immunize them from all sociality or, worse, render them as the pre-social (quasi-)transcendental condition of sociality as such. The fact that my friends Slavoj and Ernesto claim that the term “Phallus” can be definitionally separated from phallogocentrism constitutes a neologistic accomplishment before which I am in awe. I fear that their statement rhetorically refutes its own propositional content, but I shall say no more. (153)

Butler’s concern here is a suspicion that in the Lacanian scheme of the Real and the Symbolic Order, the Phallus as the transcendental signifier smuggles heterosexism into psychoanalysis, when Žižek and Laclau insist that the signifier of the Phallus only works as a contingent factor, reducing the apparent heterosexism into pure logics, since the Phallus as the transcendental signifier is absolutely empty. Žižek and Laclau claim that the contingent should be understood as the contingent under theorization; Butler, carefully paying attention to the political effect of the contingent remaining in the Lacanian theorization, insists that, paradoxically, the contingent is the locus of true politics in universalization. In their argument on “contemporary dialogues on the left,” the essential point of disagreement is how to understand the contingent, to such an extent that the prominent thinker of queer politics eventually gives up in talking with her friends, the other prominent thinkers of politics.

The quote also symbolically shows that toward the end of the last century, the politics of subjectivity, that is, politics involved in the formation of the subject along with the Althusserian and Foucauldian thesis of subject formation as possible subjugation, was central to the political thinking on the left in the humanities. This political climate can be mapped, if reductively, in reference to the three influential books by the authors of *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*. Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) opened up the full possibilities of queer theories as a new mode of inquiry

into identities, at the same time changing the landscape of political thinking in the humanities in general. Introducing Lacanian psychoanalysis to the political analysis of ideology (or, especially, the Althusserian definition of the political), Slavoj Žižek's *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989) blazed the way for using psychoanalytic insights as a way of understanding world politics. Co-authored with Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985) defines a new form of post-Marxism with the emphasis on the Gramscian notion of hegemony as the key to imagining new and contemporary ways of political resistance. Their ground-breaking works did change the popular understanding among academics of what left politics is, where left politics is imagined basically as free of Marxism and instead as dealing with the valorization of the arguments concerning the value of identity.

It is quite understandable that the genre of autobiography grew quite popular in both the academic and publishing world under such a political climate, if we believe that autobiography is by nature a narrative in which the author inquires about the process of his or her subject formation. It would be of course incorrect to assume that the influence of such thinkers as Butler, Žižek and Laclau accelerated the publication of autobiographies. Yet, Leigh Gilmore, for example, starts his book *The Limits of Autobiography* with this observation: "Suddenly, it would seem, memoir has become *the* genre in the skittish period around the turn of the millennium" (1). Gilmore refers basically to the increase in the number of autobiographies published in the era, although it is also important to see behind the claim the prominence of autobiographical studies during the same era. I would like to explore the cultural and political climate of the nineties that supported both the new definition of left politics in terms of identity and the popularity of autobiography and its studies.

Publishing her first book *At the Bottom of the River* in nineteen eighty-four, Jamaica Kincaid, the Antigua-born Caribbean novelist who immigrated to the US in nineteen

sixty-five, achieved her fame with two autobiographical novels: *Annie John* (1985) and *Lucy* (1990). The former is a story about a girl who grows up in Antigua under imperialist hegemony eventually to leave the island for England. The latter narrates the story of an au pair girl from the West Indies working in the US for a wealthy Caucasian family. So, when the novels are called “autobiographical,” this does not mean that they are strictly based on the experience of the author: it rather means that they are understood as demonstrating the Caribbean experience in the native land and the US in terms of the identity of the author under the paradigm of diaspora or postcolonial literature in vogue during the era (and probably to the present).

This chapter focuses on Kincaid’s third novel, *The Autobiography of My Mother*, and the novel is the reason why I believe that her first two novels are to be seen as autobiographical. As the title clearly suggests, her third novel cannot be an autobiography in a simple sense; or, more bluntly, it is an impossible book as far as the “autobiography” declares itself not to be written by the author. While the novel continues to treat important themes that appear in her first two novels, such as (post)colonial situation, mother-daughter relationships and bodily resistance to the hegemonic culture, it also enacts inquiry into the politics involved in the genre of autobiography and its prevalence.¹⁶⁴ The starting hypothesis of this chapter is that the author tried to write an impossible “autobiography” in order to analyze the political meanings and effects involved in the genre after she had attained the fame as the author of autobiographical novels of diaspora experience.¹⁶⁵ In this sense, the novel with its oxymoronic title can be called a meta-autobiography, where the author’s inquiry into the identity goes together with another inquiry into the ideology of the genre.

¹⁶⁴ Although I argue the novel as genuinely postcolonial in the sense Dirlik analyzes, I sometimes use the epithet (post)colonial since, as I also argue, the *privatized* narrative covers both the periods of colonial and postcolonial Dominica without depicting much difference between them.

¹⁶⁵ For the “autobiographical” nature of Kincaid’s oeuvre, see Gilmore.

Kincaid's characteristic style, which is often associated with the Caribbean culture as well as magic realism, grows full gloom, affecting the entire structure, in the third novel, while the first two, though the style is of course working, are basically narrated in a realist mode.¹⁶⁶ For the author for whom the mother-daughter relationship had always been haunting, the attempt to write an "autobiography" of her "mother" is an ultimate form of the inquiry into the self both culturally and aesthetically.¹⁶⁷

Needless to say, postcolonialism and diaspora literature are another important factor in understanding both the critical and cultural popularity of autobiography during the nineties. When Azade Sayhen, for example, observes that "[m]odern immigrant writing is almost exclusively autobiographical in nature" (180), it seems fairly natural that postcolonial study encourages academic interest in autobiography. Although "postcolonial" literally means the situation after de-colonization, however, postcolonialism in literary studies did not flourish in the actual period of de-colonization after World War II and does not merely mean the de-colonized situation per se. Considering influential studies of postcolonialism such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *The Post-Colonial Critic* (1990), Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) and Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), it can be safely said that what we now know as postcolonialism in literary studies gained a substantial presence during the nineties. If it is thus defined, then, postcolonialism is historically contextualized as a certain kind of response to the discourse of globalization after the end of the Cold War when it concerns diaspora, immigration and the new situations of areas and nations in what was once called the Third World.

Actually, Rey Chow in *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism* offers a radical critique of contemporary commitment to ethnicity in the globalized world. One line of

¹⁶⁶ For example, see Gregg.

¹⁶⁷ For the themes of the mother-daughter relationship in Kincaid's earlier works, see Ferguson. For the theme in the novel, see chapter six of Bouson and Morris.

argument Chow demonstrates is to underline an aspect involved in the notion of ethnicity as the biopolitical technology of governing. Following Michel Foucault's argument after *History of Sexuality*, she expands Foucault's anatomy of "modern sexuality" into that of ethnic identity, where the claim of ethnicity is interpreted to be complicit with capillary control of biopolitical power.

Keeping in mind Foucault's insights, it is now possible to describe well-intentioned, liberalist telos of anthropological culturalism itself as inherent to the expansionist logic of biopower. The discourses of tolerance, acceptance, and understanding that are crucial to anthropological culturalism are, in this light, part and parcel of the multiplication and democratization of networks having to do with classified lifeworlds, populations, demographic movements, ethnic differences, dispositions of particular social groups, and so on in late capitalist society, in which racial or radicalized discourse is not necessarily "opposed to emancipatory claims; on the contrary, it effectively appropriates them." (14)

Chow's argumentation stands on an insightful re-interpretation of Foucault's well-known criticism of the "repressive hypothesis." When Foucault observes that what he calls modern sexuality is constituted not through the explicit discourse that articulates it, but through the kind of discourse that tries to prohibit, oppress and control sexuality as tenacious trouble, where modern sexuality is brought into being as the discourse's retroactively-posed "origin," Chow makes it clear that such birth of modern sexuality eventually means the emergence of an ideological paradigm in which sexual gratification, and, further, the conception of the gratification as self-realization, is defined as the meaning of life. This is a biopolitical field where the realization of sexual identity has grown paradigmatic, and sexuality here functions as the technology to govern the sexualized people.

Chow then adds that the same is true for contemporary ethnic identities, as far as exploited immigrant labor is encouraged to make their life meaningful through the realization of ethnic identities, when "ethnicity," which is *in principle* something that every human being

has, works as the name of the immigrant *in reality*, and the claim of ethnic identity or, in the first place, labeling immigrants as ethnics, in such an unsymmetrical situation, never changes the economic structure of neoliberal exploitation.

The other line of Chow's argument relies on Max Weber's critique, as her title suggests, of the complicity between capitalism and what is sanctioned as culture. If the American culture of the protestant ethic worked rather cooperatively with the development of capitalism, today's culture of multiculturalism, Chow suspects, also aids the contemporary globalization of Capital: that is, ethnic as the name of poor immigrants cleverly works as a useful disguise that conceals not only economic, but also cultural inequality. An example of the hidden inequality is found in the fact that while a white American can "perform" the culture and habit of an ethnic minority, ethnics are prone to the danger of assimilation and abandonment of identity when they try to "perform" white culture (117). As Chow concludes, "articulations of ethnicity in contemporary Western society are thoroughly conditioned by asymmetries of power between whites and nonwhites" (31).

Chow maintains that the contemporary discourse that advocates resistance by way of the claim of ethnicity works in the tradition of Georg Lukács' theory on the proletarians' resistance. When Lukács appeals to "humanity" as "an a priori, originary condition" in the "alienated" proletarians, as Chow argues, ethnicity is just another sophisticated label for imaginary "humanity" (38). Chow points out the limit of Lukács' argument by saying that, when Weber reveals that the protestant ethic can and did encourage the development of capitalism, what he demonstrates is the fact that the appeal to humanity is a highly sophisticated rhetoric of the ideology that succeeds in producing good-willed hard workers who are happy to join the system of capitalism (47).¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Although I agree with Chow's critical analysis of ethnic identity as technology of cultural control, I do not with Chow's simplified understanding of Lukács as a kind of obsolete liberationist. For a more nuanced

When the claim of ethnicity is sanctioned as fair and rightful, it may help develop the diversity of ethnicities and tolerance of ethnic others, but it does not structurally change the “asymmetries of power between whites and nonwhites” insofar as it only multiplies the number of ethnic minorities and their rights and does not undermine the foundation of the hidden ideological structure on which white as non-ethnic resides: it rather prospers on the concealment of the structure. Demonstrating in this way, Chow offers an axiom that defines “the ethnic in the age of global capital”: “I protest, therefore I am” (47). This means that ethnic protest in our contemporary situation, as far as it is a cultural one, does not work as a critique of global capital from its outside, but rather functions as an inherent part. Although Chow never criticizes the significance and value of each and every protest bravely endeavored by people of various ethnicities, what matters for Chow in essence is the fundamental structure in which our critique of global capital *should* take the form of ethnic protest rather than the fruit of each protest. There is an ideological structure that makes the desire for ethnic self-realization real and appealing for ethnics.

In this way, the ethnicized autobiography in diaspora literature, according to Chow, essentially functions as the biopolitical technology of formation, as well as expression, of ethnicized identity just in the same way as Foucault argues that the discourses around sexuality in essence function to produce the technology of confession by which the human subject who is supposed to have sexuality as its “truth” is to be liberally governed. In fact, the whole of humanity imagined as a mosaic of ethnicities is fundamentally the same as what Samuel Huntington presupposed in his declaration of the end of the Cold War in “Clash of Civilizations?,” even if the multiculturalist sincerely looks for the harmony among diverse ethnicities instead of their clash. Both are an identitarian understanding of globality, where,

understanding of Lukács’ politics in relation to sexual politics, see Hennessy (96-97) and Floyd (39-78).

in a way that follows Francis Fukuyama's argument on the end of ideology and thus history, the liberal expansion of capitalism is made invisible and tacitly sanctioned.

Although Chow's argument ultimately focuses on discrimination, or racism, involved in the discourse of ethnicity, this chapter's analysis of the ideology of autobiography as genre through Kincaid's novel mainly concerns the critique of culturalism, with the discourse of identitarianism, involved in the conception of autobiography, postcolonialism and feminism. For, as argued in Chapter Two, Foucault's shift of critical concept from biopolitics to governmentality emphasizes that, while the analysis of biopolitics can be an effective way to imagine forms of resistance under the big government of the Welfare State, it is a fact that, as Foucault famously stated ("Where there is power, there is resistance") in *Discipline and Punish* (95), resistance imagined in terms of biopolitics, or cultural resistance against the cultural norm to be imagined as political resistance, virtually works as complicit in the neoliberal regime that made Foucault find the need for a new concept of governmentality as a critique of the neoliberal belief in the less government, the better. The neoliberal regime insists on itself as the regime of freedom, where ideological coercion is translated into personal choice with sleight of hand. As neoliberalization presents itself as the critique of welfare statism, personal resistance, which was proper political resistance before neoliberalization, only works for tacit affirmation of the ideology of neoliberalism in the nineties. Kincaid's meta-autobiography, I will argue, actually demonstrates how the neoliberal ideology of self-government or self-management is incorporated in the ethnicized subject and, further, how the incorporation limits the subject's "freedom" in its true sense. Written as a critical speculation and even a tacit critique of autobiography as a privileged genre in postcolonialism as well as feminism, *The Autobiography of My Mother* in fact reads as a critique of the contemporary situation of the nineties as the age of globalism.

First, I am going to survey Arif Dirlik's criticism on the culturalism of postcolonialism. I will then move on to an analysis of what is called postfeminism, where, after the studies of autobiography in the eighties mainly led by feminist scholars, autobiographical narratives are to be seen as a privileged site not only of the analysis but also of the praxis of feminism. This backgrounding will clarify what Kincaid's project of meta-autobiography signifies in the nineties, if not as a critique of our present. What "autobiography" means for Kincaid's novel explains the shape of our cultural imagination under the neoliberal regime where the cultural seems to have succeeded in displacing the social.

II. Arif Dirlik's Critique of the Culturalism of Postcolonialism

In "Culturalism as Hegemonic Ideology and Liberating Practice," Arif Dirlik draws a line between good culturalism and bad culturalism. Especially for "non-Western radicals," according to Dirlik, the question of culture "has been of immense significance" (18) because "[r]evolutionary socialists in the Third World have repeatedly stated 'cultural revolution' to be one of their central goals, the other being an economic revolution to secure liberation from capitalist domination" (18-19): "Third World revolutions have done much to dramatize the importance of the question of culture . . . because of questions raised by the imperatives of economic development" (19). The true problem for him, however, is "not whether the question of culture is a significant one, but rather how to conceive of a culture that may serve liberating rather than hegemonic purposes" (20).¹⁶⁹ For, in the contemporary "postcolonial" situation, Third World intellectuals are trapped in the false dichotomy of "the confrontation between native tradition and the West" (17) where the only possible choice is "escape into

¹⁶⁹ For the idea and ideal of cultural revolution, see also Fredric Jameson's "Cultural Revolution."

tradition (and, therefore, the past) or absorption into the West (which is the present and the future) – not much of an alternative since culture, viewed as tradition is little more than a congealed and therefore dead culture” (17-18), while what is really needed is “a new culture, the making of which must accompany the making of a new world” (19). Dirlik thus identifies “the hegemonic culturalism of the West” as a kind of meta-culture that makes us understand “culture” as tradition: those who take recourse in “the affirmation of a pre-Western tradition as a source of contemporary identity, or simply reject that tradition in favour of Westernism as an obstacle to development, only serve as grist for the mills of Western cultural hegemonism which finds confirmed in them its own tendency to view those societies as prisoners between the past and the West”:

To the extent that these intellectuals distance themselves from the present of their societies by taking refuge in the past or the West, they not only produce a hegemonic relationship between themselves and their societies, but facilitate the distancing of their societies in the hegemonic culturalism of the West. (33)

Under the hegemony, as he explains, the Third World intellectuals, experiencing “‘decentering’ as a condition of existence” (47), are denied the “right to recognition as a subject of history” (42). This is the central problem of identitarianism for Dirlik.

Although Dirlik’s main object of address is “Third World intellectuals,” it is quite important to recognize that the definition of “culture” he analyzes is applied not only to “non-Westerns.” When he observes the use of “culture” as a displacement of social reality, the definition is relevant to what I have argued in terms of the culture of liberalism or neoliberalism:

A hegemonic culturalism abstracts culture from its social and political context in order to present it as an autochthonous attribute of entire groups and peoples that is exterior to, and

independent of, social relationships. Culture, thus abstracted, is alienated from the social present, and is made into a timeless attribute of peoples that determines the character of the relationships into which they enter with others. It serves as a principle for organizing time and space, with the culture of the self at the center of space and the apogee of time. (45)

The “culture” Dirlik depicts of course constitutes the global mosaic of ethnic identities for us.

Obviously, Dirlik’s argument involves deep criticism of (part of) the discourse of literary postcolonialism during and after the nineties. Aijaz Ahmad observes in “The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality” in nineteen ninety-five that “the current discussions of postcolonialism in the domain of *literary* theory produce in me a peculiar sense of *déjà vu*, even a degree of fatigue” since, although there had been “in the 1970s, in the field of political theory, a fulsome debate on the issue of postcolonialism, but with specific reference to the type of postcolonial states that arose in Asia and Africa after postwar decolonisations,” “this same term resurfaces in literary theory, without even a trace of memory of that earlier debate.” Ahmad concludes that the birth of literary postcolonialism concerns the large framework of postmodernism: “what used to be known as ‘Third World literature’ gets rechristened as ‘postcolonial literature’ when the governing theoretical framework shifts from Third World nationalism to postmodernism” (1).

In a similar vein, then, Dirlik associates literary postcolonialism with neoliberal globalization. Calling Third World intellectuals’ subjugation to the “hegemonic culturalism of the West” “Third World sensibility and mode of perception” (328), Dirlik in “Postcolonial Aura” defines the essence of the literary postcolonialism of the nineties as “the increased visibility of academic intellectuals of Third World origin as pacesetters in cultural criticism” (329). With this definition, which he observes started from the mid-1980s with “a new world situation that has also become part of consciousness globally” (330), he underlines the importance of the distinction between “postcolonial” as a “description of intellectuals of

Third World origin” (331), which is “an expression not so much of agony over identity, as it often appears, but of newfound power” (339), and as a description of the “world situation” under globalism that “mystifies both politically and methodologically a situation that represents not the abolition but the reconfiguration of earlier forms of domination” (331). Dirlik admits that there are “[p]ostcolonial critics [who] insist that they are Marxists,” but their approach to Marxism is, according to him, “to rephrase it in the language of post-structuralism, in which Marxism is deconstructed, decentered, and so on”: “In other words, a critique that starts off with a repudiation of the universalistic pretensions of Marxist language ends up not with its dispersion into local vernaculars but with a return to another First World language with universalistic epistemological pretensions” (342). This observation leads him to contextualizing postcolonialism in the larger framework of postmodernism. Criticizing the confusion of “culture” and “history,” as argued, in terms of ethnic identity, he contends: “Postcolonialism’s repudiation of structure and totality in the name of history ironically ends up not in an affirmation of historicity but in a self-referential, universalizing historicism that reintroduces through the back door an unexamined totality” (345). This is a serious problem, for:

Within the institutional site of the First World academy, fragmentation of earlier metanarratives appears benign (except to hidebound conservatives) for its promise of more democratic, multicultural, and cosmopolitan epistemologies. In the world outside the academy, however, it shows in murderous ethnic conflict, continued inequalities among societies, classes, and genders, and the absence of oppositional possibilities that, always lacking in coherence, are rendered even more impotent than earlier by the fetishization of difference, fragmentation, and so on. (347)

So, only naturally, he concludes his critical analysis of literary postcolonialism in this way:

“Although postcoloniality represents an effort to adjust to a changing global situation, it

appears for that very reason as an exemplary illustration of this predicament [of complicity in the consolidation of hegemony in the very process of questioning it]" (348).

In other words, admitting that "[p]ostcoloniality represents a response to a genuine need, the need to overcome a crisis of understanding produced by the inability of old categories to account for the world" (352), Dirlik does not hesitate to criticize "a culturalism in the postcolonialist argument that has important ideological consequences." The culturalism involves the "denial of capitalism's foundational status": or, more specifically, that "the postcolonial repudiation of the Third World is intimately linked with the repudiation of capitalism's structuring of the modern world" (346). In the form of answering Ella Shohat's question, "When exactly . . . does the 'post-colonial' begin?," he asserts: "the answer is, with the emergence of global capitalism, not in the sense of an exact coincidence in time but in the sense that the one is a condition for the other" (352). Literary postcolonialism as a variation in postmodernism is a speculation that presupposes the post-historical worldview of global capitalism along with liberalism after the end of the Cold War. Regarding globality as postcoloniality became influential after the collapse of the Soviet Union, although, to repeat Dirlik, there is not "an exact coincidence in time." Dirlik adds:

What is truly remarkable, therefore, is that a consideration of the relationship between postcolonialism and global capitalism should be absent from the writings of postcolonial intellectuals, an absence all the more remarkable because this relationship, which pertains not only to cultural and epistemological but also to social and political formations, is arguably less abstract and more direct than any relationship between global capitalism and postmodernism. (352)

Considering Fredric Jameson's observation, mentioned in Chapter Four, of postmodernism as the valorization of identity politics – the "whole range of small-group, nonclass political practices is a profoundly postmodern phenomenon, or else the word has no meaning

whatsoever” –, however, it might be understandable that literary postcolonialism as a variation of postmodernism is destined to be limited to its characteristic culturalism that does not recognize “social and political formations.”

Dirlik grows more historically specific when he virtually criticizes neoliberalism. Arguing that “the most important consequence of the transnationalization of capital is that, for the first time in the history of capitalism, the capitalist mode of production, divorced from its historically specific origins in Europe, appears as an authentically global abstraction,” he observes that, when “non-European capitalist societies now make their own claims on the history of capitalism,” “[c]orresponding to economic fragmentation, in other words, is cultural fragmentation, or, to put it in its positive guise, multiculturalism” (350). He understands such multiculturalism not as a critique of globalization, but as its function, since he finds that:

Focusing on liberal arts institutions, some conservative intellectuals overlook how much headway multiculturalism has made with business school administrators and the managers of transnational corporations, who are eager all of a sudden to learn the secrets of East Asian economic success in “oriental” philosophies, who cannibalize cultures all over the world in order to better market their commodities, and who have suddenly become aware of a need to internationalize academic institutions (which often takes the form not of promoting scholarship in a conventional sense but of “importing” and “exporting” students and faculty). (354-55)

Then he concludes: “What they ignore is the possible relationship between the Reagan economic revolution and these cultural developments. That is, in their very globalism, the cultural requirements of transnational corporations can no longer afford the cultural parochialism of an earlier day” (354). It is neoliberal globalization, starting with the neoliberalization of “the Reagan economic revolution,” which defines what we call multiculturalism. Not only multiculturalism, but also postcolonialism as the larger framework

that advocates global “multiculturalism,” then, stands on the ideology of neoliberalism, although, of course, multiculturalists and postcolonialists themselves are sometimes the fiercest critics of neoliberalism without reference to the historical context in which their knowledge is produced. As quoted above, the problem is that they face the predicament of “complicity in the consolidation of hegemony in the very process of questioning it” as far as they fail to include the critique of liberal capitalism in their frameworks, working against the imperative of the postmodern negation of the social structure.

Virtually identifying how the regime of neoliberalism works, Dirlik explains that “under conditions of global capitalism, control is not to be imposed, [but] it has to be negotiated,” “[t]he complicated social and cultural composition of transnational capitalism makes it difficult to sustain a simple equation between capitalist modernity and Eurocentric (and patriarchal) cultural values and political forms” (354), and, tacitly agreeing with Jameson’s definition of postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism, “totalizing structures [of global capital] persist in the midst of apparent disintegration and fluidity.” The true problem in the era of globalization is to identify the hidden totality of the imperative of the global market, looking beyond the multiculturalist worldview of globality as a mosaic of ethnic identities: “While capital in its motions continues to structure the world, refusing it foundational status renders impossible the cognitive mapping that must be the point of departure for any practice of resistance and leaves such mapping as there is in the domain of those who manage the capitalist world economy” (356).

Dirlik’s critique of literary postcolonialism entails his conception of our age during and after the nineties as that of “global modernity.” In “Global Modernity?: Modernity in an Age of Global Capitalism,” he offers the notion primarily as “a period concept, to contrast it with a preceding period which, for all its complexities, was indeed marked by Euro/American

domination and hegemony.” It is conceptualized for the critical analysis of globalism: “The nearly unchallenged domination by the United States of the world presently is a continuation of the power relations of modernity, but in a world that has been transformed significantly in its economic and political configurations.” And the criticism involved in it mainly stands on the insight that our modernity has reached another stage of globality: “in all the concentration of naked power, this world, when compared to a previous period of modernity dominated by Euro/America, is decentered ideologically and organizationally, including in the emergent values and organizations of political economy, which makes it possible to speak of a ‘globalcentrism’ against an earlier Eurocentrism” (276).

According to Dirlik, two main features that characterize contemporary global modernity are the completion of the decolonizing process and the neoliberal claim about the end of socialism. For one thing, decolonization enables the formerly colonized to participate in modernity or the process of modernization: “Decolonization since the Second World War has restored the voices of the colonized, and opened the way to recognition of the spatial and temporal co-presence of those whom a Eurocentric modernization discourse had relegated to invisibility and backwardness” (276). Yet, at the same time, Dirlik also points out that the completion of the process of decolonization is to be seen as a necessary condition for globalization: “While globalization is a negation of colonialism in opening global economic and political power to the formerly colonized, it also represents the fulfillment of a colonial modernity in its realization of the ideological hegemony of capitalist modernity” (154), as he observes in “Modernity in Question.” It is not only the vanishing of colonialism that contributes to the start of globalization, as he argues in “Global Modernity?” that “[d]ecolonization owed much to socialism as ideology, and the presence of socialist states”: “The decline and fall of socialism in the course of the 1980s opened the way to the

globalization of capital. It also eliminated socialism as a crucial obstacle to cultural appropriations – and, therefore, the proliferation – of modernities, which now find expression in the fragmentation of a single modernity into multiple and alternative modernities” (276).

So Dirlik’s conception emphasizes global modernity in the singular. This is the critique of the Huntingtonian or multiculturalist viewpoint of cultural diversity: “while cultural differences have been present all along, what distinguishes our times from times past is a willingness to listen to invocations of cultural legacies not as reactionary responses to modernity but as the very conditions of a global modernity” (284). The commitment to a plurality of modernities in our global age, or “multiple modernities,” is nothing but the “framing of modernities within the boundaries of reified cultural entities” according to him. The culture we conceive in the multiculturalist mosaic is “reified” since “nations, cultures, civilizations, and ethnicities” are “the products themselves of modernization” (285). Culturalism with the reified notion of culture is “the legacy of contemporary discussions of an earlier modernization discourse” when modernity was still Eurocentric (287). And it is therefore irrelevant as a critique of global modernity.

Global modernity as Dirlik depicts it is a variation of global imperialism as far as it is another name for “the globalization of capital”: “With the disappearance of socialism (and, hence, of the Three Worlds), there is only one world of modernity – capitalist modernity – where everyone is in the same temporality, struggling over the future of modernity,” as he argues in “Modernity in Question” (255). Yet, he underlines that “the driving force behind globalization” is “a structured imperialism characteristic of the global domination of transnational corporations.” This of course concerns the (neo)liberalization of the world market after the destruction of the international regime of the Bretton Woods system: “globalization has brought real benefits to limited sectors of populations who were excluded

from the top-down developmental policies of an earlier day” (151). In his review on Hardt and Negri’s *Empire*, “*Empire?*,” he observes more clearly: “What is new about the current class project is precisely the element of transnationality: while there is no doubt about the weight of the United States in the world economy or politics, ruling class interests in the United States may be realized best not in antagonism to but in cooperation with ruling class interests elsewhere, through transnational organizations which now include representatives from all societies, with their different and conflicting but common claims on global modernity – with a globalized capital at its core” (213).

In sum, Dirlik argues that multiculturalist postcolonialism grew popular in the nineties exactly because it was an era of globalization after the vanishing of socialism as the alternative modernity, where reified culturalism worked complicitly with the logic of capital in replacement of the social with the cultural. Actually, my intention to examine Dirlik’s argument is not, at least directly, intended to criticize postcolonial studies; it is needed instead because Dirlik offers quite an illuminating framework with which Kincaid’s novel can be appreciated. As I will argue, the “autobiography” Kincaid writes is a *privatized* narrative of a postcolonial self who lives in a neoliberal world of global modernity, where the limit of multiculturalist postcolonialism is symptomatically expressed when the narrator believes that there cannot be any viable alternative to a world grasped in terms of identities. As the notion of global modernity suggests, the postcolonial world that Kincaid depicts in the nineties in fact has no essential difference from the United States she lived in in the sense that both are governed in terms of neoliberalism, resistance to which is imagined only in terms of culture.

III. The Narrative of Autobiography as Performative Act

Jamaica Kincaid's third novel is "autobiography" of a Xuela Claudette Richardson (79) who grows up in Dominica and lives there, being some seventy years old at the present of the narrative (223). The narrative starts with the fact of the traumatic death of Xuela's mother at her birth, "[m]y mother died at the moment I was born" (1), the mother being "a Carib woman" (15) called Xuela Claudette Desvarieux (79). Claudette Desvarieux is the name of the nun who raised the narrator's mother when she was found, being "perhaps a day old" (29), at the gate of a convent. The narrator describes the Carib People as "they were extinct, a few hundred of them still living, my mother had been one of them" (197). The narrator's father, a policeman, is Alfred Richardson (79, 181): "his father was a Scots-man, his mother of the African people" (181). While the narrator grows up with a wet nurse, Ma Eunice Paul (5), her father gets a new wife, a nameless being called "my father's wife," who gives birth to Xuela's half-brother, named Alfred following the father, and half-sister Elizabeth. According to the narrator, her stepmother is evil, trying to poison her. She describes her father, who gets very rich in the course of the narrative, as "a part of a whole way of life on the island which perpetuated pain" (39).

Xuela the narrator goes to school from Ma Eunice's place, an exceptional case for girls in the island then made possible by her father's "unusual request" (12), where she learns the words "THE BRITISH EMPIRE" as "the first words I learned to read" (14). She then moves to her father's house with her stepmother and, after that, works as a servant for Monsieur Jacques (60) and Madame Lise LaBatte, where Xuela gets pregnant by Jacques only to have an abortion by drinking "a cupful of a thick black syrup" from an abortionist called "Sange-Sange" (82). After this, returning again to her father's house, she witnesses the death from a mysterious illness of her half-brother, beloved and idealized in vain by her stepmother

as the male heir of the family. She also helps her half-sister Elizabeth to get an abortion when the latter gets into “a clandestine relationship with a young policeman” (115) and is expelled from school; Elizabeth is seriously wounded in an accident in the course of the relationship, and Xuela sleeps with the young policeman whom she says she despises while Elizabeth is hospitalized, having become “a semi-invalid for the rest of her life” (125). After this, Elizabeth finally gets married with the policeman. Xuela, on the other hand, starts a relationship with the British doctor Philip Bailey (205), who sees Elizabeth and, giving poisoned tea to his wife Moira (155), according to Xuela, in agreement with Moira’s wish, marries him after Moira’s death. While the narrator has a relationship with the future husband she says she does not love, she is intimate also with a stevedore named Roland, her true love, as she says, whom she has no intention of marrying. Toward the end of the narrative, Xuela lives alone with the husband she does not love, hearing “the sound of emptiness” (226).

The story is difficult to sum up not only because of the complexity of human relations and names, but also because there are numerous contradictions in the narrative. As for the father to whom the narrative allots the largest part, the narrator describes him thus: “[m]y father’s skin was the color of corruption” (181); yet also, “perhaps I loved him, but I could not bring myself to admit it” (185). A similar paradox is found, too, when she says, “My father took a long time to die. He suffered much pain and his suffering almost made me believe in justice” (209), and “When I looked down at him, I felt a great sadness. I felt such pity, for he was dead” (212). This could be understood as an expression of the plausible mixed feelings of a daughter toward her father (and his death), but it is clear here that the narrator does not try to integrate her “mixed feelings” into a comprehensive statement, as she actually declares at the beginning of her narrative: “Who was he? I ask myself this all the time, to this day” (39). From the present of the narrative, she actually explains that her

narrative is made not of answers, but of questions.

As for her mother, Xuela explains the obsessive dream about her also at the beginning of the book: “To this day, she will appear in my dreams from time to time . . . coming down a ladder, her heels visible and the white hem of her garment above them” (32). This is from when the narrator spends her first night in her father’s house with the evil stepmother. When she dreams the dream for the first time, she says, “When I awoke, I was not the same child I had been before I fell asleep” (18). With some more references to the dream repeated impressively (19, 198), it is clear that the image of the lost mother constitutes an important factor in the narrator’s identity. Yet, she also thus observes when, toward the end of the novel, she speculates on the meaning of the entire life of her mother: “My poor mother! Yet to say it makes me feel sad not to have known her would not be true at all; I am only sad to know that such a life had to exist” (201). She here states that, although she sympathizes with her mother’s poor life, she does not miss her mother or her having not seen her mother while the mother was alive, but the dream apparently suggests that the mother’s death functions as a traumatic incident that, at least partly, forms her identity – as already quoted, the narrative starts with the declaration, “My mother died at the moment I was born” – to the degree that the incident is obsessively repeated in her dream. This is not to say that the narrative is implausible or ineffective: it is in a sense plausible that if a death is truly traumatic, the effect of the trauma may appear as denial of the shock. And the novel as a whole works as a very effective narrative because of the contradictions involved in it. It is important to note here again, however, that the narrative accomplishes its effect by offering not a clear representation, but a complexity that begs questions.

The contradiction is more clearly articulated when the narrator explains the relation between her love and her marriage: “I married a man I did not love, but I would not have

married a man I loved at all” (205). According to her, she needed to be married since the marriage “allowed” her to “make a romance of [her] life” although, or because, “[r]omance is the refuge of the defeated” (216). If some may find a marriage without love not so unusual, maybe what is really contradictory is the latter half of the first quote: her declaration of never marrying with her true love. She introduces her true love Roland in this way: “In the moments when Philip was inside me, . . . , my mind turned to another source of pleasure. He was a man that was Philip’s opposite. His name was Roland” (163). Positing Roland as the “opposite” of Philip the husband, the symmetry of the contradiction is complete, but, while she says, “At that time I loved [Roland] beyond words” (176), and narrates that “I said, ‘I love you, I love you,’ and [Roland] said, ‘I know’” (167), it is already narrated in the beginning of the novel that, as she explains the situation of the island, “any expression of love, then, would not be sincere, for love might give someone else the advantage [in the imagined competitive situation there]” (48). The question here is how and why Roland can deserve the name of her true love when she has explained: “To mistrust each other was just one of the many feelings we had for each other, all of them the opposite of love, all of them standing in place of love” (48). Since this quote is, strictly speaking, about the school children she goes to school with, some may find the contradiction I point out more or less far-fetched. Yet, the narrator also says elsewhere: “I believe my entire life was without such a thing, love, the kind of love you die from, or the kind of love that causes you to live eternally, and if this was not actually so, I cannot be conceived of an otherwise” (216-17). My point here is, then, that the text is systematically written in the way that begs questions about its consistency; actually, that the essential problem about the novel’s form lies in this intentional underlining of its own inconsistency which eventually begs the question of the novel’s ideological formation as an autobiography.

Xuela does not explain whether or not she loves Monsieur LaBatte when she sleeps with him although the bed scene is described in detail. Instead, she explains her “deep friendship” with Madame LaBatte, “perhaps the only one I ever had” (67), in which, as she insists, she could communicate with her without words that Madame LaBatte “wants to make a gift of [Xuela] to her husband” (68). When Monsieur LaBatte asks her to remove her clothes, as she says, she was “quite sure of [herself], knowing what it was I wanted” (70): as she further explains, “He was not a man of love, I did not need him to be” (71). So an answer might be that she gave herself to Monsieur LaBatte for Madame LaBatte – although, when she (believes that she) understands Madame LaBatte’s intention, she says to herself, “You were foolish; you should not have let this happen to you” (68) –, but, in spite of the fact that Madame LaBatte’s intention is, as Xuela understands, that “she wanted a child I might bear” (77), Xuela in the end aborts the child she conceives. This is where Kincaid’s mastery of narrative and language becomes salient: in a sense what Xuela does is plausible and rational, her being “quite sure of herself,” but all in all what she goes through is what is usually understood as irrevocable and tragic, being made “a present” of and aborting a child. Yet the autobiographical narrative functions as an expression of the narrator’s identity when it concludes the end of the episode to be a triumph: as she declares after the abortion, “I was a new person then. . . . I had carried my own life in my own hands” (83). When she defines herself as a daredevil who always affirms what she has done in hindsight, what matters here is the formal ideology of autobiography, the ideology of the form of a retrospective narrative of oneself that claims the authenticity of one’s own narrative of one’s own life. The autobiographer’s claim of self-assurance in the novel is completely surrounded by incessant contradictions. In a sense, then, this is how the novel is an “impossible” autobiography.

One of the strangest scenes about the depiction of Xuela’s sexuality appears when she

sleeps with the future husband of her half-sister. The narrator and Elizabeth are never to be on good terms, but, as Xuela says, “She became my sister when shortly after she was expelled from school she found herself with child and I helped her rid herself of this condition” (114). Yet, after this observation, she sleeps with the father of the aborted child, while her sister is hospitalized because of an accident on her way to see him. The narrator thus explains her act:

When I left my sister’s bedside to go to see him, I was driven by curiosity, but it was not a curiosity of any intensity. In the end I wanted to see if it was not too late to dissuade her from making permanent the presence of this unworthy man in her life; in the end I did not care, and in the end again, it did not matter anyway. (126)

It is possible to understand that since Xuela’s sexual life started with such an irrevocable experience with Monsieur LaBatte, she has grown not to see much meaning in whoever she sleeps with. Yet, what is more important here is that, for Xuela, “curiosity” is answered by a corporeal relationship with its object, defying articulated understanding except for the conclusive assertion of “unworthy man,” following how she sums up her experience with Monsieur LaBatte, or the assertion of her triumph that does not allow room for any re-consideration. Her forceful assertion is supported, in this case, by another assertion that she does not care and that it does not matter (while the narrative does not explain why). When the text is woven by questions and contradictions that cannot be reduced to a comprehensive meaning, what matter are the narrator’s assertions because, in autobiography, they are performative utterances whose effect is to tell the formation of the narrator’s self. In other words, when the narrative enumerates fragments of her life, what matters in this autobiography is not what happened to her, but who she is regardless of what happened, or, more correctly, how she survives those incidents that can be represented only as

contradictions in the process of her subject formation.

In this way, the autobiographical novel should be read as performative insofar as the bundle of contradictions of the text should be read as an imperative to believe in the narrative's authenticity. The tactic of performativity is carried out with the help of Kincaid's poetic and allegorical style, which came into full bloom after the two realistic novels of *Lucy* and *Annie John*. For example, the novel's last paragraph reads:

The days are long, the days are short. The nights are a blank; they harken to something, but I refuse to become familiar with it. To that period of time called day I profess an indifference; such a thing is a vanity but known only to me; all that is impersonal I have made personal. Since I do not matter, I do not long to matter, but I matter anyway. I long to meet the thing greater than I am, the thing to which I can submit. It is not in a book of history, it is not the work of anyone whose name can pass my own lips. Death is the only reality, for it is the only certainty, inevitable to all things. (228)

The first sentence is, if not contradictory, at least poetic; "Since I do not matter, I do not long to matter, but I matter anyway" is apparently contradictory, although I believe it possible to imagine a context in which the phrasing reads in a meaningful and necessary way. Without reference to details, contexts, or specific facts, almost all the sentences in the quote only read allegorically: it is anti-realistic in the way that the reader imagines them to be an abstraction in which facts and contexts are washed away.

As is most clearly shown in the phrase "they harken to something," a way to define the nature of the novel's narrative is to associate it with magic realism. "Magic realism," however, is a contested category in the postcolonial context. Liam Connell, for example, argues that "[t]he formal characteristics of a literature described as Magic Realist are hard to distinguish from the formal characteristics of early-twentieth-century Modernism": "Western nations . . . are characterized as progressive, developing, *modern*. They then are allowed

literary forms called Modernism, where their non-Western counterparts can only write Magic Realism” (95). Connell especially criticizes the liberal imperialist assumption of “Magic Realism as the product of an oppressive social environment.” Quoting from *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* that “the fact that information can easily be manipulated or even commandeered by power groups makes truth a far more provisional, relative entity” in “countries previously ruled despotically as colonies and subsequently negotiating independence with no long-established institutions of freedoms” (101), Connell points out the relation of James Joyce’s style with the movement of Irish Independence, which, as Connell adds, is to be understood as “similar literary practices” in *Negritude* by Aimé Césaire, who was associated with “the Modernism of 1930s Surrealism” (102), and criticizes the neglect in *The Cambridge Guide* of “the context of the black-lists of McCarthyism and American anti-Communism stretching back at least to the 1930s, or the prohibition prior to 1961 on Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, or the book-burning of Fascism,” where “the practices of Modernism begin to appear as negotiations of the constraints on free expression” (101). Although more comprehensive argument is obviously needed to decide the final relevance of Connell’s argument, “magic realism” in a novel written primarily for American readership by an American author born in Antigua should be carefully treated with inverted commas in relation to its indistinguishableness from modernism, or even postmodernism under “global modernity.”

For “magic realism” in the novel is also surrounded by contradictions. The narrative is “magic realist” in the sense that Xuela apparently believes in *obeah*, or folk magic and religious practices in the West Indies. This is the reason why the quote above insists that the nights “harken to something”: at the beginning of the novel, the narrator, feeling alone and helpless in her father’s, or her stepmother’s, house, feels “the long sigh of someone on the

way to eternity,” which “would disturb the troubled peace of all that was real” (43). Before this, she put the necklace her stepmother had given her onto the neck of the dog the mother kept, and “within twenty-four hours he went mad and died” (34-35): *obeah* certainly works in the novel. The most impressive scene in which the novel’s magical world is represented is, however, where Xuela’s schoolmate drowns and disappears, attracted by a mysterious “beautiful woman” (35) standing in the middle of a river: she is supposed to be a *jablesse*, a devil woman in *obeah*, since the narrator explains her as “not a woman,” “a something that took the shape of a woman.” The narrator explains, however, that those who watched the scene “do not themselves believe what they are saying; they no longer believe what they saw with their own eyes, or in their own reality” (37). The narrator, then, ascribes the reason to the effect of imperialism that works even on epistemology:

Everything about us is held in doubt and we the defeated define all that is unreal, all that is without mercy. Our experience cannot be interpreted by us; we do not know the truth of it. Our God was not the correct one, our understanding of heaven and hell was not a respectable one. Belief in that apparition of a naked woman with outstretched arms beckoning a small boy to his death was the belief of the illegitimate, the poor, the low. I believed in that apparition then and I believe in it now. (37-38)

To pounce on this fierce criticism of (post)colonialism, the stepmother gives Xuela the hexed necklace because she believes in *obeah*: so she must believe in the *jablesse*. Of course, this does not mean that the criticism in the quote is off the point: that the “culture” of Dominica is condemned against the Western enlightenment as “the belief of the illegitimate, the poor, the low.” Actually illustrating how the category of “magic realism” is needed against Connell’s argument, the quote translates the problem of magic realism into “clash of civilizations,” or politics of (epistemological) difference where “culture,” or “civilization,” works as the agency of identities. In other words, as the last sentence in the quote clearly testifies, the

problem of *obeah*, at least in the rhetoric of this autobiography, also works as the declaration of the narrator's identity and subjectivity.¹⁷⁰

What I have referred to as contradictions that haunt the text of this meta-autobiography is used in order to underline the nature of autobiography conceived as performative expression of the self: as the record of speech act that show the traces of the formation of the independent self, not only do contradictions in what is spoken do not matter, they are also seen as part of the formation of a flexible identity.¹⁷¹ The text of contradictions can be seen as an example of open text that begs questions for the reader, in correspondence to the liberal value of transformative identity. Still, I would like to call the text a meta-autobiography because the novel, in the last analysis, questions the liberal value, or the ideology of the framework of autobiography as the performative literary act.

IV. Postfeminism and the Neoliberal Self

The mode of autobiography in the novel can be understood more clearly when it is analyzed in terms of what is called postfeminism under global modernity rather than postcolonialism. In *The Aftermath of Feminism*, Angela McRobbie defines postfeminism as “a situation which is marked by a new kind of anti-feminist sentiment which is different from simply being a question of backlash against the seeming gains made by feminist activities and campaigns in an earlier period, i.e. the 1970s and 1980s”: “Drawing on a vocabulary that includes words like ‘empowerment’ and ‘choice,’ these elements [of older feminism] are then converted into a much more individualistic discourse, and they are deployed in this new guise,

¹⁷⁰ For the cultural politics of the scene of *jablesse*, see Cobham. For the Caribbean tradition in the novel, see Gregg.

¹⁷¹ For the narrator's “postmodern self,” see Bernard. For the theories of autobiography in general as performative act, see Ashley.

particularly in media and popular culture, but also by agencies of the state, as a kind of substitute for feminism” (1). Of course, the “anti-feminist sentiment” is a crucial problem for McRobbie since it prevails among women, or in postfeminist terminology girls or grrrls: “the idea of feminist content disappeared and was replaced by aggressive individualism, by a hedonistic female phallicism in the field of sexuality, and by obsession with consumer culture which . . . I see as playing a vital role in the undoing of feminism” (5).¹⁷²

The critical definition of postfeminism by McRobbie should not be seen as a moralist lament from the older generation to the emerging one, since the basic framework of the cultural and social changes postfeminism symbolizes fits in clearly with what Fredric Jameson argues as the characteristics of postmodernism: individualist commitment to micropolitics under the logic of market. Actually, in “Postfeminist Media Culture,” Rosalind Gill points out “a profound relation between neoliberal ideologies and postfeminism.” While McRobbie offers as the symbolic episode in the culture of postfeminism “the trend for pole-dancing being promoted as yet another form of women’s empowerment” (3), Gill, arguing that postfeminism should be understood as “a sensibility . . . rather than an analytic perspective” (148) because of “the contradictory nature” involved in it, enlists “the relatively stable features” in this way:

the notion that femininity is a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; the emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and discipline; a focus upon individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; a resurgence in ideas of natural sexual difference; a marked sexualization of culture; and an emphasis upon consumerism and the commodification of difference. (149)

If the “emphasis upon consumerism and the commodification of difference,” as well as “a

¹⁷² It would be apt in fact to say that the definition of postfeminism is still now in process. For other definitions, see, for example, introductions in Budgeon, Tasker and Genz.

resurgence in ideas of natural sexual difference” as the politics of difference, are understood as the feature of postmodernism, “the emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and discipline” in order to answer, or fulfill the desire for, the “focus upon individualism, choice and empowerment” exactly corresponds to the definition of the neoliberal self as the self-managing subject as Foucault and Rose explain.¹⁷³ Postfeminism in this sense is a neoliberalization of older Second Wave feminism; or, in other words, it is posthistoricism applied to feminism under the neoliberal globalization after the end of the Cold War. Just as the Left-wing politics in general, or under the male leadership, transformed into the Third Way policy of Anthony Giddens or the conception of risk society by Ulrich Beck, feminism as the progressive politics collapsed into postfeminism that insists on the irrelevance of social policy. The “dominance of a makeover paradigm” is nothing but a symptom, among others, of the forceful advocate for the flexible identity.

Postfeminism emerged not merely in consequence of the transformation of the self in relation to neoliberalization in general. Valerie Walkerdine in “Reclassifying Upward Mobility” argues “the positioning of the female worker as the mainstay of the neo-liberal economy” (238). Observing that under neoliberalization “the social problem of inequality was understood as produced through the pathologisation of working-class practices, which were understood as simultaneously reproducing poverty and inequality at home, school, work and also as producing affluent workers, with the embourgeoisment and the ‘end of the working class’” (329), Walkerdine contends that with the emphasis on self-help and self-responsibility that undermines the rhetoric of class and class struggle, the “neo-liberal subject is the autonomous liberal subject made in the image of the middle class” (239). The implicit use of “the image of the middle class” involves a crucial problem, as she argues, for,

¹⁷³ For the rhetoric of empowerment, see Baistow and Cruikshank. For the meaning of the commitment to the body in postmodernism in general, see Jameson’s “The End of Temporality.”

while “[w]hat used to be the working class is now dispersed into service industries [when the scope is domestically limited] based on individual contracts, piecework, home work and work in call centres, with jobs for life having disappeared” (241), “the central carriers of the new middle-class individuality” of the paradigmatic neoliberal subject of self-management is “ascribed to femininity . . . , building upon the long-established incitement to women to become producers of themselves as object of the gaze” (242). The neoliberal commitment to the flexible, self-managing self happens to find the apt image in appropriation of the traditional idea of femininity as “producers of themselves,” and then it is the sleight of hand of the rhetorical translation of neoliberal workers as the middle class self-manager that aggrandizes the discourse of the end of the working class and prohibits imagination from thinking of the neoliberal working condition of flexibility in terms of exploitation. It is in this situation, as Walkerdine advances, virtually criticizing Rose’s notion of active citizenship, that to “become somebody” becomes “the task of neo-liberalism,” where “the goal of happiness is invested in the endless becoming of the unitary subject through turning oneself into a commodity and thereby owning the means to consume” (247).

When neoliberalization of labor works in such complicity with the rhetoric of femininity, the consequence is the simultaneous re-definition of the female body as the locus of femininity and the object of self-management. For feminism under neoliberalization, the self-management of a woman’s body grows the privileged metaphor for the neoliberal act of social, cultural and commercial self-management. This is the reason why, as Gill argues, postfeminism emphasizes femininity as a bodily property, where a “resurgence in ideas of natural sexual difference” is naturally entailed. In other words, the neoliberal commitment to the self-managing self finds its most appropriate expression in the discourse of women’s corporeal self-inquiry, making it the metaphor for the neoliberal axiom of social, cultural and

commercial self-management. Gill observes that “[o]ne of the most striking aspects of postfeminist media culture is its obsessive preoccupation with the body” (149), where sexualization as “the extraordinary proliferation of discourses about sex and sexuality across media forms, . . . as well as . . . the increasingly frequent erotic presentations of girls’, women’s and (to a lesser degree) men’s bodies in public spaces” is enacted (150).

Gill furthermore argues, echoing Foucault and Rose, that “the self has become a project to be evaluated, advised, disciplined and improved or brought ‘into recovery’” under neoliberal postfeminism (156). When this observation is coupled with Gill’s other observations on choice such as “[n]otion of choice, of ‘being oneself’ and ‘pleasing oneself,’ are central to the postfeminist sensibility” (153) and that women are “not straight-forwardly objectified but are portrayed as active, desiring sexual subjects who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interests to do so” (151), the self as project which also is the self-gratifying desiring subject actually supports the academic notion of the subject with fluid identities who is constituted by the performative. As for the meaning of gender norm in postfeminism, Gill points out that “achieving desirability in a heterosexual context” is re-articulated as “something done for yourself, not in order to please man” in the “modernized, neoliberal version of femininity” (154): it is the rhetoric of individualism and individual achievement, translated into terms of corporeal desire, that gratifies what was once recognized as servitude to patriarchy.

What matters here in the confusion of individualist postfeminism and (Second-Wave) feminist critique of patriarchy is the lack of the social analysis and criticism postfeminism despises and tries to eliminate when the postfeminist critique of, and desire of liberation from, the cultural norm can only imagine the goal of individualist self-gratification and self-realization. Actually, in *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism*,

Rosemary Hennessy criticizes Judith Butler's well-known argument of gender performativity as being "postmodern fetishizing of sexual identity" (121).¹⁷⁴ According to Hennessy, Butler can propose drag as "a subversive act," or "not merely a matter of clothing or cross-dressing, . . . [but] a discursive practice that discloses the fabrication of identity through parodic repetitions of the heterosexual gender system" since, for Butler, "heterosexuality is a regime of power and discipline that affects people's lives" (116). Hennessy finds the limit of Butler's culturalism in this scheme:

Throughout her work, Butler's approach to the problem of identity begins with the premise that identity is only a matter of representation, of the discourses by which subjects come to be established. This notion of the discursively constructed subject is heavily indebted to Foucault, and, . . . , it is his problematic concept of materialism and of discursive practices that troubles Butler's analysis as well. Given Butler's reduction of the social to discourses, it is not surprising that she understands history in very local, limited terms, a feature of her work that is in keeping with its poststructuralist roots. For example, at one point she admits that gender parody in itself is not subversive, but rather that its meaning depends on "a context and reception in which subversive confusions can be fostered." She quickly passes over the problem of historical "context" (it appears in one of her frequent series of rhetorical questions). But it is, I think, a crucial issue for queer politics now. (117)

Hennessy insists that the historical context is indispensable since she speaks from the present of neoliberal "late modernity." After claiming that "the naturalized version of sexual identity that currently dominates in the United States and the oppositional versions that contest it are conditioned by more than just their local contexts of reception," she contends that "[r]ecognizing that signs are sites of social struggle, . . . , ultimately leads us to inquire into the social conditions that enable and perhaps even foster the slipping and sliding of signification" (120). For her, one of the social conditions that are ignored by the cultural left in the nineties and that eventually helps make it impossible to criticize the increasing

¹⁷⁴ For a similar critique of Butler's theorization, see Adkins, especially chapter one.

economic inequality under neoliberalism is the relationship between sexuality and commodification. She sees complicity between queer theory like Butler's and the flashing visibility of gay culture in the market of the era and after (where of course she admits the visibility itself is a good thing although it has an apparent limit):

Much like queer theory, the appropriation of gay cultural codes in the cosmopolitan revamping of gender displays the arbitrariness of bourgeois patriarchy's gender system and helps to reconfigure it in a more postmodern mode where the links between gender and sexuality are looser, where heterosexuals are welcome, even constituting the vanguard, and where the appropriation of their parody of authentic sex and gender identities is quite compatible with the aestheticization of everyday life into postmodern lifestyles. In itself, of course, this limited assimilation of gays into mainstream middle-class culture does not disrupt postmodern patriarchy and its intersection with capitalism; indeed, it is in some ways quite integral to it. (137)

By "the aestheticization of everyday life," Hennessy means the encouragement of "the pursuit of new tastes and sensations as pleasures in themselves while concealing or backgrounding the labor that has gone into making them possible," where "the social relations cultural production depends on are even further mystified" (132). Hennessy thus sees identity politics as a corollary of the rhetoric of the choice of "lifestyles," which is "a way of making sense of social relations crystallized in the 1980s in the United States as new forms of middle-class professionalism became the focal point for heightened involvement in consumption and the promotion of cosmopolitanism": "'Lifestlye' obscures these social hierarchies [constituted around the standard of the middle class] by promoting not only individuality and self-expression but also a more porous conception of the self as a 'fashioned' identity" (132). According to Hennessy, it is the historical context in which Butler advocated gender parody as a way of criticizing the heterosexist norm, where the parody can be easily absorbed in the more tenacious matrix of neoliberal regime of flexible

self-management.

The narrator of *The Autobiography of My Mother*, whose autobiography consists of contradictions that depict in terms of the performative the formation of the individualist subject, is a postfeminist who demonstrates postfeminist femininity with neoliberal self-management. Actually, among the proliferating contradictions that haunt the text, the recurring and central one concerns the narrator's inquiry into herself, or her body, as one may find natural for an autobiography.

V. "The Political is Personal," or the Privatization of Autobiography

Among the contradictions that haunt the text of the novel, the central ones are those that concern the narrator's self. While the text, as an autobiography, mainly consists of the narrator's inquiry into herself, it sometimes claims the autonomy of the self – "it was clear to me who I really was" (42), "The sight of my changing self did not frighten me" (58), "I had carried my own life in my own hands" (83), "I began to worship myself" (100), "My face was beautiful, I found it so" (174), "I was alone and I was not afraid" (223) – and, also, sometimes confesses the fear of her own self – "my loss [of the mother] had made me vulnerable, hard, and helpless" (3-4), "I came to know myself, and this frightened me" (99), "It is sad that unless you are born a god, your life, from its very beginning, is a mystery to you. . . . Who you are is a mystery no one can answer, not even you. And why not, why not!" (202), "In me is the voice I never heard, the face I never saw, the being I came from. In me are the voices that should have come out of me, the faces I never allowed to form, the eyes I never allowed to see me" (227-28) – showing that the contradiction of knowing and not knowing oneself virtually works as the engine that moves the contradictory narrative forward.

In this way, the autobiographical narrative is constituted as performative act that generates the anti-essentialist identity that lives with inner contradictions.

In other words, the autobiographical narrative is the record of a consistent attempt of self-management. How the narrator's desperate act of self-management works is clearly depicted in the passage that narrates how her fear of her own self is translated into a form of narcissism:

I came to know myself, and this frightened me. To rid myself of this fear I began to look at a reflection of my face in any surface I could find: a still pool on the shallow banks of the river became my most common mirror. . . . It was this picture of myself – my eyes, my nose, my mouth set in the seamless, unwrinkled, unblemished skin which was my face – that I willed before me. My own face was a comfort to me, my own body was a comfort to me, and no matter how swept away I would become by anyone or anything, in the end I allowed nothing to replace my own being. (99-100)

The clear allusion to the Greek myth of Narcissus, which typically demonstrates the allegorical characteristic of the narrative, is in a sense misleading because, when the narrator “wills” her face before her in order to overcome her fear of knowing herself, her “narcissism” in fact is a desperate and deliberate act of self-management in spite of the disguise of self-indulgence. The allusion, in this sense, is an attempt to claim the façade of her autonomy, which tries to conceal the imperative and the necessary instability of self-management.

The quote explains how the imperative of self-management leads to the narrator's interest in her own body, in a way parallel to how the postfeminist interest in the body and sexuality works in the paradigm of neoliberal self-management. The self-management is enacted on the body as the object of the self. This is the reason why the autobiography focuses on the narrator's autoeroticism, expressing a typical, if exaggerated, postfeminist interest in one's own body and sexuality. When Xuela starts living in her father's house with

her stepmother, she hears at night the voice of ghosts and spirits, and as she says, “it ended only after my hands traveled . . . all over my own body in a loving caress, finally coming to the soft, moist spot between my legs, and a gasp of pleasure had escaped my lips which I would allow no one to hear” (43). When she has a relationship with Monsieur LaBatte, it begins when he sees the “scene of me placing my hand between my legs and then enjoying the smell of myself” (70). The “smell” of her body constitutes an emphasized rhetoric of her narcissistic autoeroticism, where Monsieur LaBatte seeing the scene is not understood as a coincidence, but a necessity: “in private, then as now, my hands almost never left those places [of her armpits and between her legs], and when I was in public, these same hands were always not far from my nose, I so enjoyed the way I smelled, then and now” (58-59). Her narcissism, then, is explained as an expression of her resistance in relation to postcolonialism:

My human form and odor were an opportunity to heap scorn on me. I responded in a fashion by now characteristic of me: whatever I was told to hate I loved and loved the most. I loved the smell of the thin dirt behind my ears, the smell of my unwashed mouth, the smell that came from between my legs, the smell in the pit of my arm, the smell of my unwashed feet. Whatever about me caused offense, whatever was native to me, whatever I could not help and was not a moral failing – those things about me I loved with the fervor of the devoted. (32-33)

So her narcissism and autoeroticism is to be understood as a certain kind of the declaration of pride: pride in her identity. Yet, it is important to repeat here that the narrative surely tells us that the autoeroticism makes her the prey of Monsieur LaBatte’s lust and, furthermore, that the love as she understands never brings her redemption, but despair, in terms of marriage. She only feels “emptiness” at the end of the novel.

If it is the loneliness and helplessness Xuela feels toward the stepmother she believes

hates her that makes her masturbate for the first time in the narrative, her autoeroticism should be interpreted as resulting from the trauma of her mother's death. When she accidentally breaks, at the beginning of the narrative, "the only plate of its kind that Eunice [her wet nurse] had ever owned" (8) with "a picture of the English countryside idealized" on it, which Ma Eunice believes to be "a picture of heaven, offering as it did a secret promise of a life without worry or care or want" (9), Xuela finds Eunice's punishment to be

redolent as it was in every way of the relationship between the captor and captive, master and slave, with its motif of the big and the small, the powerful and the powerless, the strong and the weak, and against the background of earth, sea, and sky, and Eunice standing over me, metamorphosing into a succession of things furious and not human with each syllable that passed her lips, . . . (10)

When it is observed, then, that Ma Eunice is someone "who was not unkind to me but who could not be kind because she did not know how – and perhaps I could not love her because I, too, did not know how" (5-6) because "[i]n a place like this, brutality is the only real inheritance and cruelty is sometimes the only thing freely given" (5), the relation between the wet nurse and the narrator, symbolized by the punishment for breaking the plate, should be understood as allegorical of the (post)colonial situation of Dominica. In this context, furthermore, when Xuela introduces her lost mother as "a Carib woman" (15) who "had been defeated and then exterminated, thrown away like the weeds in a garden" (16), the death of Xuela's mother is to be understood not as coincidental, but rather as symbolic of the cruel history in which the narrator should live. For, at the very beginning of the novel, she observes: "My mother died at the moment I was born, and so for whole my life there was nothing standing between myself and eternity; at my back was always a bleak, black wind" (3).

Toward the end of the novel, the narrator also observes that she, along with her

husband, lives in “the spell of history” (218). Under “the spell,” the trauma of her mother being lost from the start of her life is understood as the sign of the atrocity of the imperial and colonial history. In other words, the impossible autobiography, as the title suggests, gains its allegorical dimension by translating the history of Dominica into the terms of the narrator’s corporeal life: her trauma, sexuality and body.¹⁷⁵ The narrative actually compels the reader to read it as the allegory of the cruel history when Xuela insists, for example, that her loveless marriage is justified by the spell of history, that her narcissism is a form of resistance, that Eunice’s punishment is not a just, but a suppressive practice of power. The narrative as a whole insists that Xuela’s body is the site of resistance where her breaking of the norms should be seen not as selfish but as political, although the narrative as a whole also suffers from numerous contradictions.

To put this the other way around, Xuela is constituted as a postcolonial subject, internalizing and incorporating into her body and sexuality the atrocity of imperial history when she understands herself as being “under the spell of history.” Especially when the reader pays attention to the mother-daughter relationship is the long-standing theme for Kincaid, it is fairly tempting, or even perhaps plausible, to think that the lost mother in the novel symbolizes the diasporic condition under postcolonialism: the lost mother is symbolic of the lost mother tongue, the lost mother land and so on, while the troubled relationship with the surrogate mother, such as Ma Eunice and the stepmother, suggests the oppressive situation of postcoloniality.¹⁷⁶ Yet, although, for the diasporic subject, the life in the alien land without the use of the mother tongue may most appropriately symbolized by the life without the loving mother, there is something uncanny in understanding Xuela with the lost mother as a paradigmatic postcolonial subject: if Xuela scorns Ma Eunice’s idealization of

¹⁷⁵ For the identitarian reading of the novel as the autobiography of the other, see Donnell.

¹⁷⁶ For the diasporic nature of Kincaid’s writing, see Soto-Crespo, and for the analysis of the novel in this vein, see Adams.

“the English countryside,” she fundamentally in a similar way idealizes the alternative world where her mother were not lost when she believes that the cruel world she lives in essentially results from the loss of her mother. That is, if Xuela lives under “the spell of history” and also if her postcolonial situation is caused by the death of her mother at the time of her birth, “history” for her means the death of her mother. This is the reason why in the novel her resistance is epitomized by her sexual and corporeal transgressions of the existing norms. However apt the lost mother is as the metaphor for the postcolonial situation, not every people under the postcolonial situation actually suffers from the situation because of the loss of his or her mother, but because of real and specific historical conditions.

In other words, it is rather apparent in fact that Xuela appropriates the discourse of postcolonialism as one that justifies resistance against power when she attempts to deny the validity of Ma Eunice’s “punishment” after breaking the precious plate and never saying, “I am sorry” (10). As long as it is not necessary to identify oneself as a postcolonial subject because one’s mother died at the moment of one’s birth, Xuela adopts and makes use of postcolonial discourse when she tries to understand Ma Eunice’s “punishment” in terms of “the relationship between the captor and captive, master and slave.” The point here is not whether or not her adoption is good or evil, but that it is not necessary and is, rather, ideological in the sense that it is contingent. Xuela articulates her subjectivity with a fixation on postcolonial discourse that depicts reality as oppressive owing to the loss of what the ideal mother symbolizes; in this autobiography, Xuela’s self is formulated under the “spell” of the postcolonial discourse of the lost mother, rather than of history.

As Chow defines the postcolonial subject as the subject of compulsory resistance, Xuela’s “postcolonial” subjectivity defined by the irreversible loss of the mother can only see the situation “under the spell of history” in which she lives as something irreversible in which

the alternative utopia is impossible and to which resistance is the only choice: Xuela resists, therefore she is. Furthermore, the only possible resistance conceivable for Xuela is sexual and corporeal transgressions of the norm as long as the postcolonial situation is translated into the psychological trauma of the loss of what the ideal mother symbolizes. Actually, in this framework, the autobiography of Xuela is *privatized* as the record of her private resistance, as the text actually reads at the end that “all that is impersonal I have made personal.” Although it is impossible in the allegorical and poetic narrative to precisely identify when the narrator lives in history, if we assume the present of the narrative as the present of the publication of the novel, Xuela was born somewhere around the nineteen twenties; the autobiography, however, does not refer to any historical and social events, such as World War II, the Cold War or the independence of Dominica. “Autobiography” in the novel thus means a private narrative that only tells the private and psychological aspects of the narrator’s life: it is the biopolitical narrative of the total negligence of the social. In this sense, Xuela is a neoliberal postfeminist who only believes in the postfeminist inversion of the Second-Wave feminists’ axiom: for Xuela, “the political is personal,” since, for her, her own situation of postcoloniality is something most aptly symbolized by the death of her own mother. In fact, in her neoliberal individualism, everything is personal in the novel.¹⁷⁷

VI. Trauma, Memory, Myth

Actually, postfeminism is also described, sometimes, as a struggle between generations or between mothers and their daughters: it is sometimes said that postfeminists are those who claim that, after the achievement of Second-Wave feminism, the older framework of the

¹⁷⁷ Budgeon observes in terms of what she calls “a politics of the self” that the inversion, “the political is personal,” is the general feature of postfeminism. See chapter five.

Second Wave is no longer relevant.¹⁷⁸ This rhetoric is significant since it reveals how the definition or self-identification of postfeminism is enacted by the privatized rhetoric of the psychological, not by that of history or progress. McRobbie suggests in *The Aftermath of Feminism* that considering that the “spiraling of feminine discontents and disorders in relation to body image [such as cutting themselves, endlessly on diets, fearful of their weight, prone to low self-esteem, frequently anorexic] . . . reached new heights” in the nineties when postfeminism grew popular, “the post-feminist discontent” (96) should be understood as the effect of feminism having become “something that is lost and becomes melancholically preserved”: that “feminism has become, for young women, in rather indiscernible ways, an object of loss and melancholia” (94). If postfeminism is a neoliberal *privatization* of Second-Wave feminism, feminine discontents and disorders against the background of the popular discourse of postfeminism are to be regarded as symptomatic of the loss of the social that the former feminist movement embodied.

My reading of the novel as the depiction of the neoliberal *privatization* of autobiography is not a subversive one since there are certain points in it, among the numerous contradictions that haunt the text, that reveal the ideological formation of the novel and its autobiographical subject. Although the narrator emphasizes the trauma of the loss of her mother is the primary scene for her subject formation, as argued, she also makes clear that it is her memory, rather than her actual experience, that makes the loss traumatic:

My mother died at the moment I was born, and so for my whole life there was nothing standing between myself and eternity; at my back was always a bleak, black wind. I could not have known at the beginning of my life that this would be so; I only came to know this in the middle of my life. . . . (3)

This fact of my mother dying at the moment I was born became a central motif of my life. I

¹⁷⁸ For the generational rhetoric of postfeminism, see chapter seven of Budgeon.

cannot remember when I first knew this fact of my life, I cannot remember when I did not know this fact of my life; perhaps it was at the moment I could not recognize my own hand, and then again there was never a moment that I can remember when I did not know myself completely. (225)

Both at the very beginning and end of the narrative, Xuela makes sure that the loss of her mother is a myth that defines her self. The myth consists in such a claim that “there was never a moment . . . when I did not know myself completely.” Furthermore, Xuela also claims elsewhere that “If I speak now of those first days [in school] with clarity and insight, it is not an invention, it should not surprise; at the time, each thing as it took place stood out in my mind with a sharpness that I now take for granted . . . ” (15). Most crucially, then, the narrative thus reveals the ideological foundation on which this autobiography stands: When Xuela as a child speaks at all for the first time in her life,

I said it in English – not French patois or English patois, but plain English – and that should have been the surprise: not that I spoke, but that I spoke English, a language I had never heard anyone speak. . . . But no one noticed; they only marveled at the fact that I had finally spoken and inquired about the absence of my father. (7)

Xuela, then, thus explains the reason the language should be English: “That the first words I said were in the language of a people I would never like or love is not now a mystery to me; everything in my life, good or bad, to which I am inextricably bound is a source of pain” (7). The use of English as Xuela’s language, or the language imposed on Xuela, is therefore reasonable as literary technique, if not as an autobiographical record of fact.¹⁷⁹ That is to say, the novel is the expression of (post)colonial critique of imperialism with the ideological use of the genre of autobiography. At the same time, the narrative in this way underlines the ideological use with the symptomatic recurrence of contradictions that converges into the

¹⁷⁹ For the politics of various languages used in the novel, such as “standard” English, “vernacular” form of English, and Patois, see Anatol.

impossible. If the symptoms are to be understood as the returned of the repressed (of the truth of Xuela that the genre of autobiography suppresses), it is the discourse of the identitarianism of postcolonialism and postfeminism and of the neoliberal commitment to individualism that imposes the form of autobiography on Xuela's self-expression and subject formation. This is what the assertion of the impossible, Xuela's speaking English without ever hearing it spoken, indicates. Under the guise of magic realism – for another example, as the narrative reads, “the rain did not stop for many, many days” so that it seems that “after it stopped, nothing would be the same” (72) when Xuela lost her virginity – the narrative in fact questions the ideology of its own form.

In *State of Injury*, Wendy Brown argues the limit of identity politics in reference to Nietzsche's notion of *ressentiment*. When “[l]iberalism contains from its inception a generalized incitement to what Nietzsche terms *ressentiment*, the moralizing revenge of the powerless, ‘the triumph of the weak as weak’” (66-67), according to her, “the characteristics of late modern secular society, in which individuals are buffeted and controlled by global configurations of disciplinary and capitalist power of extraordinary proportions, and are at the same time nakedly individuated, stripped of reprieve from relentless exposure and accountability for themselves, together add up to an incitement to *ressentiment*” (69). Under such circumstance, as she argues, “identity structured by *ressentiment*” – which “produces an affect (rage, righteousness) that overwhelms the hurt,” “produces a culprit responsible for the hurt,” and “produces a site of revenge to displace the hurt” – “at the same time becomes invested in its own subjection”: “This investment lies not only in its discovery of a site of blame for its hurt will, not only in its acquisition of recognition through its history of subjection (a recognition predicated on injury, now righteously revalued), but also in the satisfactions of revenge, which ceaselessly reenact even as they redistribute the injuries of

marginalization and subordination in a liberal discursive order that alternately denies the very possibility of these things and blames those who experience them for their own condition” (70). If, according to Chow, identity is the technology that makes the subject who is compelled to resist, the resistance is prescribed to be impotent, as Brown contends: “Politicized identity, premised on exclusion and fueled by the humiliation and suffering imposed by its historically structured impotence in the context of a discourse of sovereign individuals, is as likely to seek generalized political paralysis, to feast on generalized political impotence, as it is to seek its own or collective liberation through empowerment” (70-71). Brown’s critique stands on the observation that identity politics is the politics of “late modernity,” or, to follow Jameson’s terminology, postmodernity, insofar as it exactly mirrors the political culture of our age: “Politicized identity . . . enunciates itself, makes claims for itself, only by entrenching, restating, dramatizing, and inscribing its pain in politics; it can hold out no future – for itself or others – that triumphs over this pain. The loss of historical direction, and with it the loss of futurity characteristic of the late modern age, is thus homologically refigured in the structure of desire of the dominant political expression of the age: identity politics” (74). In other words, Brown’s critique of politicized identity is the critique of its limit of culturalism: when “politicized identities would forfeit a good deal of their claims to injury and exclusion, their claims to the political significance of their difference,” “we might ask to what extent a critique of capitalism is foreclosed by the current configuration of oppositional politics, and not simply by the ‘loss of the socialist alternative’ or the ostensible ‘triumph of liberalism’ in the global order” (61). In just the same way as Jameson, she suggests that “identity politics may be partly configured by a peculiarly shaped and peculiarly disguised form of class resentment . . . insofar as these identities are established vis-à-vis a bourgeois norm of social acceptance, legal protection, and relative

material comfort” (60).

When Brown explains how the political commitment to identity structured by *ressentiment* logically ends up in its own subjection owing to the limit of its culturalism, this clearly depicts the predicament of the narrator in the *privatized* autobiography that proceeds with the claim of self, or subject formation, in the cultural discourse independent of the social situation she lives in. The autobiographical narrator, whose work is to establish herself through the cultural discourse with which she survives, is the victim of the discourse of neoliberal individualism that rather encourages the politics of identity.

The narrator’s victimization is initiated by a trauma; or, more correctly, the autobiographical narrator’s own identification of the trauma of her mother’s death as the initial myth of the birth of her self. In Chow’s critical analysis of ethnic identity, she underlines “coercive mimeticism, which, . . . , interpellates ethnic subjects into acts of confessions about themselves, in what may be called self-mimicry” (138). As she explains,

If an ethnic critic should simply ignore her own ethnic history and become immersed in white culture, she would, needless to say, be deemed a turncoat (one that forgets her origins). But if she should choose, instead, to mimic and perform her own ethnicity in her work – that is, to respond to the hailing “Hey, you!” that is issued from various directions in the outside world – she would still be considered a turncoat, this time because she is too eagerly pandering to the orientalist tastes of Westerners. Her only viable option seems to be that of reproducing a specific version of herself – and her ethnicity – that has, somehow, already been endorsed and approved by the specialists of her culture. (117)

In this analysis of the formation of ethnic identity through the process of Althusserian interpellation, Chow consults Žižek’s redefinition of the interpellation in *The Sublime of Object of Ideology*. According to Žižek,

[The] external “machine” of State Apparatuses exercises its force only in so far as it is

experienced, in the unconscious economy of the subject, as a traumatic senseless injection. Althusser speaks only of the process of ideological interpellation through which the symbolic machine of ideology is “internalized” into the ideological experience of Meaning and Truth: but we can learn from Pascal that this “internalization,” by structural necessity, never fully succeeds, that there is always a residue, a leftover, a strain of traumatic irrationality and senselessness sticking to it, and that *this leftover, far from hindering the full submission of the subject to the ideological command, is the very condition of it. . . .* (original italics 43)

While Žižek insists that “a residue, a leftover, a strain of traumatic irrationality and senselessness” is the key with which the interpellation successfully works as the ideological process of subject formation, Chow concludes that in our constructionist conception of the anti-essentialist ethnic identity, the ideological formation of ethnic identity works rather automatically exactly because one’s ethnic identity appears as violently “meaningless”: “ethnic identity in multicultural Western society . . . may be conceived through this irrational process of being interpellated” (110). Xuela’s narrative, then, fairly clearly traces and demonstrates the process of Žižek’s version of the Althusserian interpellation: the myth of her subject formation as the result of the traumatic death of her mother shows that it is the traumatic that defines her identity. Her identification of the trauma as the initial event for her self is a metaphor for the ideological process of ethnic interpellation that is essentially meaningless and traumatic, which succeeds exactly because it is meaningless and traumatic. The myth, in other words, is a symptomatic displacement of the trauma with which she is formed as an ethnic subject.

To underline the function of the traumatic in the process of interpellation is, however, important in order to analyze the meaning of identitarianism in the entire framework of the notion of interpellation as the process of subject formation. In other words, what lacks in Žižek’s sophistication of Althusser is how to criticize the ideological dimension of interpellation, especially when Žižek emphasizes its unconscious dynamism in which we

enjoy, according to him, “what we might call the ideological *jouis-sense*, enjoyment-in-sense (enjoy-meant), proper to ideology” (43-44). Arguing that “[h]ow to reconcile memory with history has emerged as a major concern over the last decade or two, most significantly with regard to questions of the Holocaust and World War II but also over questions of revolutionary legacies” (19), Dirlik in “Revolutions in History and Memory” observes that “since the publication of Maurice Halbwachs’s classic *The Collective Memory*, which underlined the constructedness and partialness of memory, memory has emerged as a competitor with history in opposition to the latter” (48). He finds “the proliferation of memory” as “an indication of the impossibility of history” and also as “the proliferation of histories” where “many histories . . . do not cohere, and have no hope of doing so.” When “the fragmentation of history may be tied in with the ethnicization of politics,” according to him, “it also has a depoliticizing effect”: when one sees the past in terms of memory, “it becomes impossible . . . to distinguish one kind of revolution from another, or even revolution from reaction. ‘Terror’ and ‘genocide’ takes over as the common element that marks all revolutions” (49). As a conclusion, Dirlik quotes from Charles Maier’s “Surfeit of Memory?”:

“the surfeit of memory is a sign not of historical confidence but of a retreat from transformative politics. It testifies to the loss of future orientation, of progress toward civic enfranchisement and growing equality. It reflects a new focus on ethnicity as a replacement for encompassing communities based on constitutions, legislation and widening attributes of citizenship” (49)

And the autobiography as the privatized narrative of one’s self grows a privileged genre under the influence of “the surfeit of memory.” In this context, trauma as the privileged site of memory functions as the technology that justifies memory’s replacement of history. That is to say, when Žižek defines trauma as the indispensable part of interpellation, the

subjectivity he offers in fact is the self that is made fundamentally disjunct from, and thus universalized out of, history. The autobiography has trauma as the constitutive part of the narrative when it puts itself outside of history, where memory becomes the content of the narrative as opposed to the historical context or history itself. In fact, autobiography such as the novel works in the identitarian time that has no history, where it starts with trauma and ends in the utter lack of futurity.

This is the reason why Xuela is desperate at the end of the narrative, as she says: “Death is the only reality, for it is the certainty, inevitable to all things.” She in fact is not under “the spell of history,” but under that of memory. Or, the narrative reflects the cultural condition that “history,” as opposed to memory, is imagined as impossible, where the narrator can imagine “history” only as a name for the collective memory of the colonized. In this sense, the fictional autobiography truly reflects the postcolonial condition insofar as it describes how the memory of the colonized defines the identity of the narrator even after colonialism itself has ended. It is the shock of the trauma (as the metaphor for the violence of imperialism and colonialism) that curses the spell of memory and identity to the narrator. Through the traumatic internalization of colonial and imperial discourses, the narrator actually suffers from fixation to the discourse, where she is not able to imagine history after colonialism. From the novel’s perspective, postcolonialism means living under the shadow of the trauma of colonialism and imperialism.

This is the reason why Xuela tells us that, having married with the man she does not love, she and her husband live under the spell of history without love. She says, “To reverse the past would bring me complete happiness” (226), but she knows it impossible when she says so, and she is not able to imagine an open future apart from the past: history virtually is a memory as the traumatic here since it is a curse that defines and limits her present. The

curse is further elaborated when Xuela tries to understand the meaning of the marriage between her mother and father. For she sees the imperial power relation in the marriage between his father, the son of a Scots-man and an African, and his mother of the Carib people, “balanced precariously on the ledge of eternity, waiting to be swallowed up in the great yawn of nothingness” (198). Or, more correctly, when Xuela’s analysis of the marriage is detailed in the next-to-last chapter, it offers a context in which Xuela’s own is to be understood. She thus imagines when her father first saw her mother:

no doubt to him her beauty would have lain not in the structure of her face, the litheness of her figure . . . , an intelligence that he could sense from the expression on her face; no, it would have lain in her sadness, her weakness, her long-lost-ness, the crumbling of ancestral lines, her dejectedness, the false humanity that was really defeat. (200)

In this imagination, the mother is the figure of the victim of a racial genocide, which makes the marriage essentially the male conquest of the female. The quote demonstrates a translation of romantic love into an imperial relationship, understood in terms of ethnic identities: understanding of gender relation in terms of imperialism. What is more, the gendered imperialism, or imperialism internalized in terms of love, is also what defines Xuela’s own marriage: her marriage with the white man she does not love.¹⁸⁰ In a sense, Xuela repeats her mother’s marriage with a traumatic fixation.

It is indeed Xuela’s feminist and postcolonialist critique of her mother’s marriage that makes her say, “My poor mother! Yet to say it makes me feel sad not to have known her would not be true at all; I am only sad to know that such a life had to exist,” fiercely, as well as hysterically and traumatically, skewering the imperial project of the extinction of the Carib people; and only naturally, if also ironically, the traumatic criticism involves the traumatic

¹⁸⁰ For the depiction of sexuality in the novel in terms of power, see Holcomb. For the “neocolonial family romance” in the novel, see Yelin.

fixation: Xuela repeats the mother's interracial marriage which should be understood only as a smaller model of an imperial project. The autobiographical memory that is initiated by a trauma only makes one's "history" a repetition dominated by the trauma. Narrating her mother's life and marriage, Xuela actually says, when she finally refers to the fact that both her mother and she were abandoned at birth:

How to explain this abandonment, what child can understand it? That attachment, physical and spiritual, . . . , which was absent between my mother and her mother was also absent between my mother and myself, . . . , and though I can sensibly say to myself such a thing cannot be helped – for who can help dying – again how can any child understand such a thing, so profound an abandonment? I have refused to bear any children. (199)

It is made clear here that, owing to the trauma, the autobiographical memory is defined essentially as lack of history: disconnection between generations that is only traumatic, being "so profound an abandonment," making it impossible to imagine one's relation with the past in terms of historical continuation. When Xuela explains that the traumatic disconnection is the reason she refuses to bear a child, with the traumatic fixation to the trauma, she finally explains the fundamental structure of her autobiographical narrative, or her autobiographical life. The narrator of the novel is a neoliberal postfeminist and postcolonialist who lives under the spell of traumatic memory where the *privatized* autobiography demonstrates that there is no such thing as society.

VII. Postmodernism, or Not Loving the Working Class

Xuela's autobiographical narrative is structured initially by the fixation of the trauma of her mother's death; the fixation is structured around the identitarian and culturalist discourse of postcolonialism of the nineties, as Dirlik depicted, which makes it possible to

imagine the deprivation of the maternal, that is, the mother tongue, the mother land and so on, as the fundamental evil of imperialism and colonialism. From this viewpoint, there is not a little evidence that symptomatically reveals the narrator's suffering from the fixation. The novel's second chapter, for example, begins thus: "It perhaps was inevitable that as soon as I came to know the long walk from my father's house to my school in the next village like the back of my hand, I was to leave it behind" (47). After a few pages, she also confesses that on the road "which I came to know so well, I spent some of the sweetest moments of my life" (50). As she believes, it is "inevitable" that she should lose what she starts to love because she starts to love it since she is obsessed with the fixation that she should lose what she loves because her life starts with the loss of the one she loves most: her mother. Actually, the strange insistence that she speaks the language of the oppressor, English, from the first even when she has never heard anyone speak it is the clearest, if realistically improbable, sign of the fixation: the autobiographical project of Xuela's narrative should be told in English since its birth is initiated by the fixation to the postcolonial narrative of the West. To put this the other way around, the true problem for the author is how to analyze the ideology of the genre of autobiography through which alone her postcolonial narrative is imagined to be possible when she established herself as a successful author with the use of the genre. In this sense, the ideology of autobiography as a genre is important to the author exactly because it is a privileged genre in the contemporary postcolonialism and (post)feminism.¹⁸¹ Most symbolically, Xuela's claim that "Since I do not matter, I do not long to matter, but I matter anyway" explains what the fixation means for the narrator: that she does not long to matter because she does not matter is the most clear articulation of her fixation and its perversion with the postcolonial discourse, but she does matter anyway exactly because the fixation is a

¹⁸¹ My analysis of the ideology of the genre of autobiography focuses on its complicity with neoliberal individualism (of privatization). For other analyses in this line, see Schaffer and Slaughter.

perversion: it does not tell the truth of her condition. The reality of the postcolonial situation from which Xuela suffers lies elsewhere.

What I call the postcolonial discourse to which Xuela's narrative is fixated is what is depicted in Dirlik's critical analysis of the culturalism of postcolonialism. That is to say, although its chief feature lies in identitarian understanding of globality in terms of a multiculturalist framework, as the other side of the coin of the Huntingtonian clash of civilizations, it does not entirely commit to the so-called essentialist notion of the fixed identity. It is true that, theoretically, we are able to see the traces of essentialism when Xuela emphasizes the importance of her bloodline, especially of her mother's line of the vanquished Carib, but it is not in terms of bloodlines that she believes that her future is foreclosed:

I am of the vanquished, I am of the defeated. The past is a fixed point, the future is open-ended; for me the future must remain capable of casting a light on the past such that in my defeat lies the seed of my great victory, in my defeat lies the beginning of my great revenge. My impulse is to the good, my good is to serve myself. I am not a people, I am not a nation. I only wish from time to time to make my actions be the actions of a people, to make my actions be the actions of a nation. (216)

At another point, she also observes that she "know[s] now more than ever" the "crime" of identities (226). So, although she identifies herself as "of the vanquished" and "of the defeated" and the goal for her achievement is articulated as "my great revenge," her identitarianism in the end means "to serve myself." While this clearly articulates how her "identitarianism" is conceived as an expression of *ressentiment* as Brown explains, it can be also understood as pointing out the limit of identitarianism that could work as the spell of memory or identity, that is, claiming freedom from identity. Her individualist claim on freedom from identity, however, also reflects the discourse of globalization, or the insistence that, with the ending of the validity of national economy, the prosperity of a nation does not

necessarily accord with that of its members, and the corresponding claim by postfeminists that sees the priority of individual happiness over “feminist” solidarity.

In fact, the quote is the crucial point that reveals that the truth of Xuela as the postcolonial, autobiographical subject is the neoliberal, postfeminist subject living in global modernity. She is an individualist as far as she declares that she is “not a people,” “not a nation.” For her, goodness is personalized and privatized, without any dimension of sociality or totality, in a matter-of-fact way: “My impulse is for the good, my good is to serve myself.” And when her project of life is to serve herself, she envisions herself as a risk-taking self-entrepreneur, which is the reason why she believes that in her “defeat” lies the seed of her “great victory.” In this way, Xuela’s autobiography is the system of establishing her neoliberal identity and pride as well as the system of her self-auditing.

This, however, does not mean that she is not a postcolonial subject. The narrative rather indicates that in her postcolonial situation her project of resistance against imperialism could only be imagined in terms of neoliberal project.¹⁸² The *privatized* autobiography under the paradigm of postcolonialism and postfeminism is the genre in which subjectivity is defined under neoliberal terms. In other words, the moment of the critique of neoliberalism is imagined in the novel only as the impossibility of resistance. The impossibility of resistance for Xuela, then, is delineated in terms of love in the privatized narrative without any reference to the social. Xuela’s postcolonial consciousness succeeds in depicting hybridity in her bloodline in terms of power relations. She does not see hybridity itself as good; hybridity itself is the effect of imperial project. This insight articulated in terms of identity indicates the

¹⁸² In this context, it would be important to the novel is published after her nonfiction *A Small Place*, a fierce critique of the political situation of her homeland Antigua, which was first rejected by the *New Yorker* because of its angry and bitter mode of writing and which received bitter reviews after the publication from Farrar, Straus and Giroux. The predicament the author faced with this piece of nonfiction could be seen as the reason for the novel’s mode of writing and politics. For the situation of the publication of *A Small Place*, see Edwards (77-79). For Kincaid’s politics in the nonfiction, see Scott. For Kincaid’s “postmodernism,” see King.

possibility and the impossibility of resistance under global modernity.

When the framework of the fixation reveals the recognition that Xuela's marriage is to be seen as a repetition of her mother's, it is Xuela's true love, Roland, as the other to the marriage who shows the inversion of the fixation. While Xuela insists on the truth of her love of Roland (albeit in contradictions that, as argued above, haunt the text), she can only explain the reason for the love with the help of distinctively unstable metaphors that forcefully make him symbolize her (post)colonial situation: "His mouth was like an island in the sea that was his face; I am sure he had ears and nose and eyes and all the rest, but I could see only his mouth . . ." (163). With the comparison of Roland's mouth with "an island" in such a "magical" way that it seems more or less implausible, undecidability is introduced into the text concerning the unstable metaphor: whether Xuela loves Roland since his mouth looks like an island or his mouth looks like an island since Xuela loves Roland. Actually, when Xuela explains that at the moment she falls in love with Roland, she has "sunk deep within [herself], enjoying completely the despair [she] felt being [herself]" (165), it is implicitly suggested that her "love" of Roland is the effect of a reaction formation she makes against the harsh condition of postcoloniality: she needs to love someone who is (imagined to be) associated with the island she lives in when she finds no way to fight against the postcolonial condition in which she lives. Yet, as long as the text of the autobiography proceeds with the rhetoric of subject formation, self-assertion and pride, there is no room to admit the reaction formation in her psychology. In this way, the undecidability introduced by the unstable metaphor leads to another undecidability: it is undecidable whether Xuela is unable to marry Roland because she does not love him or she loves, or asserts to love, Roland since there is no way imaginable for her to get married with him. It is undecidable since in the autobiography, or maybe in autobiography in general, when the narrator states that she loves

him, she does love him.

Symptomatically, Xuela demonstrates another undecidability in another situation concerning love. When she imagines the relationship between her mother and father, she exceptionally grows ambiguous:

And this woman [Xuela's mother] whose face I have never seen, not even in a dream – what did she think, what thoughts crossed her mind when she first saw this man [Xuela's father]? It is possible that he appeared as yet another irresistible force, the last in her life; it is possible that she loved him passionately. (201-2)

Xuela is not able to finally decide whether or not her mother loved her father. This is fairly important when contrasted to her usual rhetoric of assertiveness, for example, concerning the effect of *obeah*. Xuela here confesses that psychologically, she is not able to reach the truth of her mother when it comes to the topic of love. Paradoxically, it is because the *privatized* narrative focuses on the psychological aspect of one's life that "love" at the heart of the psychological appears as the dead end that the autobiographical narrative finally reaches: love is located at the center of the narrative in the autobiography. Xuela's autobiographical narrative symptomatically fails at love. Love is and is not the crucial point of resistance.

It is in this undecidability that Roland is depicted in the narrative as a figure of the impossibility of love. This does not mean that Xuela does not love Roland; it rather means that in the last analysis it is impossible to tell whether or not Xuela's love of Roland is true. Namely, the truth of the love Xuela claims toward Roland is to be explained in terms other than love. Why Xuela claims to love Roland is explained in a rather impressive way. This is how Xuela first "talks" to Roland:

so I called out my name, and I knew he heard me immediately, but he wouldn't stop speaking to the woman he was talking to, so I had to call out my name again and again until he stopped,

and by that time my name was like a chain around him, as the sight of his mouth was like a chain around me. (166)

This strange scene is an example of what can be called reverse-interpellation of Althusser's: the subject is not hailed, but asserts her own name. This is an imagined scene of the individualist subject formation where the autobiographical self-appellation makes the birth of the subject. And the object of the self-assertion, or the person to whom the self-assertion is intended and meaningful, is Roland. It is persuasive, and even logical, that the object of self-assertion is defined as the object of the autobiographical narrator's true love. As Roland's mouth signifies the origin of Xuela's love for Roland, so Xuela's self-assertion is what makes Roland love Xuela.

This, however, does not solve the undecidability of whether Roland's mouth like an island is either the cause or the effect of the love, nor of whether the impossibility of the marriage is its cause or effect. Roland is depicted in the narrative as a figure of the impossibility of love: for Xuela, Roland is someone she loves but cannot love. Or, as she puts it, "I looked out toward the horizon, which I could not see but knew was there all the same, and this was also true of the end of my love for Roland" (178). She loves Roland, always knowing its end. However strongly Xuela emphasizes her love for Roland, her claim cannot be accepted at face value in the structure of the novel; or, her emphasis itself could be understood as a sign of her own ambiguity about the love. In this sense, Xuela's subjectivity as self-contradicting subject has the paradoxical love of Roland at its center: if it is her fixation with the postcolonial discourse that makes her a split subject, the ideological meaning of the fixation is most clearly betrayed concerning the impossibility of the love.

Answering the question, "But who was he?," Xuela thus defines Roland:

He did not sail the seas, he did not cross the oceans, he only worked in the bottom of vessels

that had done so; no mountains were named for him, no valleys, no nothing. But still he was a man, and he wanted something beyond ordinary satisfaction . . . for it would all end only in death, for though no history yet written had embraced him, though he could not identify the small uprisings within himself, though he would deny the small uprisings within himself, a strange clam would sometimes come over him, a cold stillness, and since he could find no words for it, he was momentarily blinded with shame. (176-77)

For one thing, he is someone excluded from history: “no history yet written had embraced him.” In such a condition, although he longs for something utopian above the everyday, “he wanted something beyond ordinary satisfaction,” he is not able to imagine how his longing is to be achieved since he is not able to properly recognize the impulse for resistance in himself: there are “the small uprisings within himself” that he cannot identify and denies, the failure to recognize which brings him “shame.” With the deprivation of “words for it,” he is someone who is, in spite of the aspiration, made alienated from history.

While Xuela’s husband, the British doctor she does not love but is married to, is depicted as a ruin of imperialism, “He was an heir, and like all such people the origin of his inheritance was a burden to him” (220), the point of Roland’s unstable association with “island” lies in dispensation of him with the reference to his racial identity: as Xuela observes that “he was from an island, a small island that was between a sea and an ocean, and a small island is not a country” (167), he is not depicted in terms of ethnic identity even if his being non-Western origin is apparent from the circumstances. That is to say, the problem of imperialism shifts its axis from the matter of identities to that of exploitation, the one between the exploiting and the exploited after the introduction of Roland into the text since he is defined as “a stevedore.” Xuela thus laments how it was possible for her to live without knowing Roland:

his existence was ordinary and perfect and parallel to mine, but I did not know of it, even

though sometimes he was close enough to me for me to notice that he smelled of cargo he had been unloading; he was a stevedore. (164)

Xuela repeats about the smell of Roland: “he smelled of curry and onions, for those were the things he had been unloading all day; other times . . . he would smell of sugar, or flour, or the large, cheap bolts of cotton. . .” (169). The essence of Roland is as a member of the working class, which is “ordinary and perfect.” And Xuela did not understand – as she says “I did not know of it,” she presumably understands at the present of the narrative – that his being a member of the proletariat makes his existence “parallel” to hers. Roland is a figure of the impossibility of love since his essence is defined in terms not of ethnic identity, but of structural exploitation.

This is where the autobiography’s revealing truth is told that Xuela does not love Roland since he belongs not to any category of ethnic identity, but to the working class. In Xuela’s nuanced narrative she is not able to love a working-class man not because she despises and believes herself to be above that class, but because she believes that her “existence” is parallel to his. This is where the neoliberal ideology of Xuela’s autobiographical narrative is dictated: as far as her goal is to serve herself, or as far as she defines herself as a risk-taking self-entrepreneur, she is not able to love the poor. In a sense, this is not an ideology of Xuela’s own; it rather is the ideology of the culturalist postcolonial discourse to which she is obsessively fixated and only through which her autobiographical narrative is told. When the discourse negating the socialist critique of imperialism tries to understand the amendment to globalization in terms of multiculturalist frames, there is no way for it to be imagined that the working class is defined as an object of love, or even of attention, for that matter. (So, to put this more sarcastically, the negation of the working class is an ideological necessity when a postcolonial author writes a novel for a liberal and

globalizing market.) While identity politics was in the arena of debate from both the right and the left in the nineties, there were “no words for it” to articulate the utopia Roland could and should imagine as his goal for resistance: this is the reason why he suffers from shame for not having a way to recognize “the small uprisings inside himself.”

Fredric Jameson, as cited in Chapter Four, defines one of the main features of postmodernism as displacement of the identity and the politics of the working class with what we usually call identity politics that is imagined as a derivative or a critical development from Marxist politics of the working class. Xuela’s narrative of the privatized autobiography clearly shows that the epistemological exclusion of the working class in contemporary postcolonial and postfeminist politics is the effect of biopolitical containment. The narrative concerns such terms of biopolitics as psychology, sexuality, the body, ethnic and racial identities, where, with the displacement of politics with biopolitics, the social domain is excluded from the realm of the cultural narrative of *privatized* autobiography. Actually, in the last chapter, Xuela, talking about her life with her husband, says that they move away from the capital of Dominica, since “wars are fought” in “places like Roseau,” where “there are no victories, only a standoff, only an until-next-time” (220). This is how they avoid the social, or the traces of the social conflicts. And yet, as we understand reading Xuela’s narrative, the social conflicts that are avoided only returns as the repressed in the form of cultural and psychologized conflicts, as we have seen the quote: “To mistrust each other was just one of the many feelings we had for each other, all of them the opposite of love, all of them standing in place of love.”

In this way, Xuela’s narrative in fact demonstrates the symptoms that betray the biopolitical containment the culturalist discourse of postcolonialism and postfeminism tries to impose. Or, more correctly, the structure of the novel of the performative contradictions as a

whole seems to be designed to imagine an aesthetic and formal way to imagine the possible outside of the containment. The paradoxical title of the novel in fact suggests that the text is imagined as an attempt at a fictional autobiography that is itself an impossible oxymoron. *The Autobiography of My Mother* is literally an impossible text that should come from nowhere, that can be produced only by an impossible agency who is and is not “my mother.” By the end of the narrative, Xuela thus tries to explain the enigma of the title:

This account of my life has been an account of my mother’s life as much as it has been an account of mine, and even so, again it is an account of the life of the children I did not have, as it is their account of me. . . . This account is an account of the person who was never allowed to be and an account of the person I did not allow myself to become. (227-28)

On one level of interpretation, then, the enigma of the title concerns the traumatic disconnection between mother and daughter that eventually makes one the repetition of the other under the spell of the traumatic memory.¹⁸³ Actually, when she explains with reference to the crime of identity that her “body” mourns her “heart’s and mind’s decision never to bring forth a child” since she does not “have the courage to bear” the “crime of these identities,” it seems that when, with the traumatic displacement of history with memory, her life seems a repetition of her mother’s in terms of memory, she refuses to have a child since she thinks that she knows that her child’s life should necessarily become another repetition.¹⁸⁴ With the displacement of history that results in obsessive repetition of generations, the autobiography of her, her mother, and her child is eventually conceived as

¹⁸³ In the interview with Dwight Garner just after the publication of the novel, Kincaid explains the title by saying that “the main character is a fertile woman who decides not to be” and that “all her [Kincaid’s mother’s] children are quite happy to have been born, but all of us are quite sure she should never have been a mother.” Kincaid, living in the US, has two children. If the novel is to be read as a depiction of the (post)colonial predicament in a Caribbean island, Kincaid’s harsh words for her mother could be understood as an expression of the lament for that fact that “such a life had to exist.”

¹⁸⁴ Except for the chapter in which the narrator imagines the love between her mother and father, there are actually very few references to her mother (although those few references are impressive), making the image of the mother traumatic.

the one and same thing. In other words, when one can think only under the identitarian, biopolitical paradigm of traumatic memory that forecloses the idea of history, one can only have “history” as the generational repetition of the same, or the postmodern time of the everlasting present at the end of history with the triumph of liberalism.

The point of this rhetoric is that it makes parallel the text’s mode of production and the narrator’s idea of reproduction. That the autobiography is thus entitled since it is at the same time hers, her mother’s and her children’s means, in other words, that the text is conceived as an impossible production since the origin of the text stands on Xuela’s decision never to have a child: negation of reproduction is thus translated into the structural impossibility of the autobiography’s production. Xuela believes that she lives at the dead end of history where history is imagined only as an eternal repetition with the traumatic memory, and this is the reason why her autobiography is necessarily imagined as a record of the eternal repetition. Yet, the whole point of this project is that the narrative is a realization of the impossible.

Xuela’s autobiography is a memoir initiated by the traumatic memory of her mother’s death that symbolizes her postcolonial situation, but the autobiography is logically impossible because it should be her mother’s when the narrative thus conceived should exactly be the traumatic repetition of her mother’s life. It is in this paradox that the narrative, or narrating and recording, of the autobiography becomes both a record of the obsessive fixation to the trauma and an attempt at liberation from it. When the traumatization of her mother’s death is culturally enacted by the culturalist discourse of postcolonialism that only makes the birth of the postcolonial subject a reaction formation to the cultural violence of imperialism, to narrate the autobiography as an attempt at liberation from the trauma means to try to imagine the outside of the culturalism of postcolonial and postfeminist discourse. It is in this context that Xuela’s refusal to reproduce should be understood as the return of the repressed working

class.

After the abortion, Xuela thus explains her status as mother:

I would never become a mother, but that would not be the same as never bearing children. I would bear them in abundance; they would emerge from my head, from my armpits, from between my legs; I would bear children, they would hang from me like fruit from a vine, but I would destroy them with the carelessness of a god. . . . It is in this way that I did not become a mother; it is in this way that I bore my children. (97-98)

She does not become a mother, but, as she insists, she still bears children. In this “magic realism,” the narrator describes an imaginary way to reproduce without becoming a mother. This is the imagination of reproduction without following the traditional norm for mother, family and marriage. And when the traditional norm is rejected, the mode of reproduction actually does not narrowly concern the notion of having a child. In other words, reproduction here is in fact imagined as a way of production; or, the quote shows how production is imagined and articulated under the paradigm of biopolitics where production should be articulated essentially as the production of life. This is how production is imagined under the biopolitical containment in which reproduction can be imagined only as the repetition of identities at the end of history; this is how production under biopolitical terms can be imagined only as the imaginary, or magical and areal, as the autobiography of one’s mother is impossible. In this sense, Xuela’s imaginary image of (re)production is the return of the repression of her rejection of Roland as a working-class male.

Just as I stressed in Chapter Three that the way to truly appreciate *The Catcher in the Rye* should be to analyze it as the narrative of a “madman” as the text literally suggests, so Xuela’s autobiographical narrative should also be analyzed as the record of the trauma from her mother’s death, as the narrator suggests at its very beginning. That is to say, what is most important in the narrative is the way the narrator tries to be liberated from the trauma only in

a symptomatic way. Xuela's trauma is meaningful as a tool for foregrounding the neoliberal ideology of biopolitics, culturalism and identitarianism that involved in the contemporary academic discourses of postcolonialism and postfeminism. As Xuela is traumatically fixated to these discourses, the narrative on the surface relates the process of the subject formation of Xuela with a performative narrative of the assertion of the self, but, at the same time, as the totality of the narrative is posited as a fictional text of an impossible autobiography, the symptomatic gaps in the text can be mapped as the traces of the text's forceful exclusion of, or biopolitical containment against, the social. The crucial point in an attempt to critically analyze the culture of neoliberalism is that, when the ideological foundation of neoliberalism lies in the negation of totality in accordance with its faith in the market fundamentalism, where the social is to be displaced with the market as the negation of totality, the cultural text of neoliberalism, as Jameson argued in terms of postmodernism, involves the lack of its own totality as its most important feature. In this sense, *The Autobiography of My Mother* as an impossible text that cannot be produced is, first and foremost, an attempt to posit an impossible totality, using and in complicity with the neoliberal privileged genre of autobiography, under the cultural hegemony of neoliberalism. Xuela observes:

We were never to trust each other. This was like a motto repeated to us by our parents . . . : You cannot trust these people, my father would say to me, the very words the other children's parents were saying to them, perhaps even at the same time. That "these people" were ourselves. . . . (47-8)

This may be a good description of the postcolonial situation. Yet, even if it is so, it is also a true description of our neoliberal world of what Dirlik calls global modernity, which Jameson calls postmodernism, of world risk society with its commitment to the "liberalized" free competition of market fundamentalism. We do not trust others, and in fact we are the others

when there is no such thing as society and there only are individuals and families. (Neo)liberalism with its ideology of the end of ideology only works with the emphasis on the end of totality as the internalized norm that individuals follow with their own rational choices. Kincaid in the novel shows that the nation of trauma and its corresponding obsession can be an appropriate tool to demonstrate how the (neo)liberal norm can be internalized as pseudo-freedom from ideological control. The internalized norm as lack of ideological control results in incessant attention to the self and the body of self-auditing that is understood as the performative process of the autobiographical making of the self. The novel as a postcolonial meta-autobiography in fact depicts our world of global modernity under the disguise of postcolonial “magic realism” (when in fact, as argued in Chapter Four, we postmoderns believe in magic even in the so-called First World): it is not a story of a far-away country.

In nineteen eighty-six, Fredric Jameson in “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital” caused a fierce debate in arguing that “[t]hird-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic – necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory”: “*the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society.*” Jameson explains his intention as, when “one of the determinants of capitalist culture, that is, the culture of the western realist and modernist novel, is a radical split between the private and the public, between the poetic and the political, between what we have come to think of as the domain of sexuality and the unconscious and that of the public world of classes, of the economic, and of secular political power: in other words, Freud versus Marx,” “the relations between them are wholly different in third-world culture” (69). In a certain sense, the trend of postcolonial and diaspora literature seems to act against

Jameson's racist or orientalist suggestion.¹⁸⁵ For, when we look at the enormous popularity of autobiography, the genre, which fundamentally stands on performative and identitarian authenticity in establishing the self of the narrator in the way that it is so when I say so, is meaningful mostly in defying the way of interpretation Jameson suggests: that is, to read it not as an authentic declaration of the self, but as a contextualized allegory of the political situation where the autonomy of the identitarian self is put in question. My reading so far, however, followed his suggestion since, with the attempt to posit the totality for the impossible autobiography, the novel demonstrates the dead end of the autobiographical with the political climate of neoliberalism where the individual claim of the self works as the ideological subjugation rather than resistance to the hegemony. With the underlined utter lack of "Marx," with the narrator's avoidance of social conflicts, the text focuses on "Freud" to such a degree that it is tacitly indicated that what matters in the text is the absence rather than the protocol of the autobiographical as the privatized genre under neoliberalism. Written in English for American market in the age of neoliberal globalization of the nineties, the novel correctly concerns neoliberal individualism under global modernity rather than a national allegory, but it is a supreme postmodern novel that criticizes our postmodern condition in delineating the destiny of "Marx" foreclosed from it. Jameson should have insisted that not merely the third-world text, but all great texts should be read as a political allegory, which seems to accord more correctly his most famous axiom: Always Historicize!¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ For evaluation of Jameson's essay, see Ahmad (1987), Szeman, Chow (97-100), and the introduction of Brown.

¹⁸⁶ Jameson more fully argues the disjunction between "Freud" and "Marx" in the historical context in the conclusion of *Postmodernism* (esp. 410-413). In fact, I believe that *Postmodernism* is a demonstration of how to historicize the culture of postmodernity bridging the postmodern version of the gap between them, and I have just followed the procedure.

Coda

Origins of Anti-totalitarianism

My argument on biopolitical containment essentially means critical analysis of imperialism in the twentieth century at its two important phases of the fifties and the nineties, whether the imperialism is to be understood as that of a global sovereign, as Hardt and Negri explain, or what can be called American imperialism, as Panitch and Gindin insist – or, more vaguely, an economic and cultural phenomenon, rather than a political formation, of postmodernism, as Jameson demonstrates. Imperialism of the twentieth century, now called globalism, that worked along with the Pax Americana is the next phase of imperialism that succeeds from the British empire of the nineteenth century. It started with decline of the British empire and replaced it with global hegemony; that is to say, it is not a mere repetition of the former imperialism, but a new system of imperialism under the postmodern condition of finance capital, the international division of labor and global (post)modernity. This means that the new imperialism under which we live virtually justifies itself as a critique of the old imperialism. The crucial point here is that imperialism of the twentieth century envisions a “liberal” empire. It is an imperialism of liberalism: it is not inimical, but hospitable to liberalism. At the beginning of the twentieth century, new liberalism in Britain was the emerging fierce criticism of imperialism. After WW II, liberal decolonization put an end to the hegemony of the former empire. The empire of liberalism lived with them, continually grew in spite of them, and took the shape it has now with the global paradigm of a multicultural mosaic of nations.¹⁸⁷

Although it is beyond reach of this dissertation to depict the correct and precise shape

¹⁸⁷ For new liberalism, see Sylvest. For decolonization, see Louis.

of imperialism of the twentieth century, István Mészáros, for example, provides a guideline for a schematic understanding of the transformation of imperialism thus:

1. *Early modern colonial empire-building imperialism*, brought about through the expansion of some European countries in the relatively easily penetrable parts of the world;
2. *“Redistributive” imperialism, antagonistically contested by the major powers on behalf of their quasi-monopolistic corporations*, called by Lenin “the highest state of capitalism,” involving only a few real contenders, and some smaller survivors from the past hanging on to their coattails, coming to an end in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War; and
3. *Global hegemonic imperialism*, with the United States as its overpowering force, foreshadowed by Roosevelt’s version of the “open door” policy, with its pretenses of democratic equity. This third phase was consolidated soon after the Second World War, and became sharply pronounced with the onset of the capital system’s structural crisis in the 1970s, when the imperative to constitute the all-embracing political command structure of capital under a “global government” presided over by the globally dominant country became pressing. (50-51)

My argument traced how Cold-War liberalism in the fifties and neoliberalism in the nineties worked in some aspects as the ideology of “global hegemonic imperialism” through their rhetoric of biopolitical containment. This is not to say of course that liberalism is evil; the point is that the historical forms of American liberalisms sometimes worked toward helping and encouraging the imperial hegemony of the United States.

As is mentioned in David Harvey’s *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, the Mont Pelerin Society, established in nineteen forty-seven under the leadership of Friedrich Hayek at Mont Pèlerin, Switzerland, is known as the bastion of neoliberalism. Its members include winners of Nobel Prize in Economics, such as Milton Friedman, George Stigler, James M. Buchanan, Gary Becker, Vernon Smith, and it is still alive and well as its homepage testifies (<https://www.montpelerin.org/>). With regard to the influence of the Mont Pelerin group, as Harvey argues, when Hayek thought that “it would probably take at least a generation for that

battle [of neoliberalism] to be won, not only against Marxism but against socialism, state planning, and Keynesian interventionism,” “[t]he Mont Pelerin group garnered financial and political support” (20): “In the US in particular, a powerful group of wealthy individuals and corporate leaders who were viscerally opposed to all forms of state intervention and regulation, and even to internationalism sought to organize opposition to what they saw as an emerging consensus for pursuing a mixed economy” (20-21).

In the postface to *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of Neoliberal Thought Collective*, Philip Mirowski indicates that the true significance of the Mont Pelerin society is found in its organizational logic rather than its ideology: “neoliberalism has not existed in the past as a settled or fixed state, but is better understood as a transnational movement requiring time and substantial effort in order to attain the modicum of coherence and power it has achieved today. It was not a conspiracy; rather, it was an intricately structured long-term philosophical and political project, or in our terminology, a ‘thought collective’” (426). According to Mirowski, neoliberalism was materialized at all through international network of liberal association, which, although not officially sanctioned, spread in contrast to the decline of international communist network in the West during the Cold War: “Unlike most intellectuals in the 1950s, the early protagonists of MPS [Mont Pelerin Society] did not look to the universities or the academic ‘professions’ or to interest group mobilizations as the appropriate primary instruments to achieve their goals. The early neoliberals felt (at that juncture with some justification) that they were excluded from most high-profile intellectual venues in the West.” (430). Mirowski likens the structure of the thought collective to that of a Russian doll. The smallest piece at the innermost core is made of “the MPS . . . as a private members-only debating society whose participants were handpicked . . . and who consciously sought to remain out of the public eye”; the next layer of “one emergent public face of the

thought collective” consists of “specific academic departments where the neoliberals came to dominate before 1980,” and the next to this is “general-purpose ‘think tanks’ . . . that sheltered neoliberals,” which lies inside “their own next layer of protective shell, often in the guise of specialized satellite think tanks poised to get quick and timely position papers out to friendly politicians or to provide talking heads for various news media and opinion periodicals,” which is in turn surrounded by “‘Astroturfed’ organizations consisting of supposedly local grassroots members, frequently organized around religious or single-issue campaigns”: “Outsiders would rarely perceive the extent to which individual protagonists embedded in a particular shell served multiple roles, or the strength and pervasiveness of network ties, since they could never see beyond the immediate shell of the Russian Doll right before their noses” (430-31).

In a sense, it is quite natural that a neoliberal organization takes the form of a loosely-connected free association since one of the main claims of neoliberalism is the denial of social control: Mirowski’s argument, correctly enough, proves that the form follows the ideology in the Mont Pelerin Society. “Although the role of national institutions is indispensable in explaining the advance (or retardation) of specific doctrines across countries,” Mirowski argues, “the origins and the advance of neoliberalism cannot be explained without careful considerations of the transnational discourse community created by the founders of the Mont Pèlerin Society.” His point, however, lies in the significance of their organizational logic: “Whereas leading neoliberals denied any possibility of mere mortals outcompeting the market as processors of highly dispersed knowledge, their own efforts succeeded in constituting and deploying elaborate social machinery designed to collect, create, debate, disseminate, and mobilize neoliberal ideas. By doing so, they greatly advanced the understanding of a modern reengineered division of intellectual labor with proper roles

assigned to academic and other professionals, in what amounts to a new technology of persuasion” (432). Namely, his argument reveals, if we put it upside down, that the “thought collective” of a loosely connected international free association, which cannot be controlled by any “party line,” is the form and organizational logic of neoliberalism, or the form that fits most to the ideology of neoliberalism where the social is to be understood in terms of fair and free competition.¹⁸⁸

In the introduction to *The Road from Mont Pèlerin*, then, Dieter Plehwe narrates an interesting prehistory to Mont Pelerin Society. It started with the publication of Walter Lippmann’s (*An Inquiry into the Principles of) The Good Society* in nineteen thirty-seven, which, according to Plehwe, “marked the beginning of a new dawn in the history of neoliberalism.” As Plehwe explains, the book, whose “core message was the superiority of the market economy over state intervention, a principle that was (to say the least) leaning against the wind in the depths of the Great Depression,” was “enthusiastically welcomed by the liberal intellectuals in Europe, perhaps even more so than in America.” French philosopher Louis Rougier, according to Plehwe, “was quite taken with the book and organized a conference in Lippmann’s honor, the eponymous Colloque Walter Lippmann, in Paris in 1938”: “Fifteen of those who were invited . . . would subsequently participate in the founding of the Mont Pèlerin Society nine years later.” It was in the Colloque Walter Lippmann that the term neoliberalism as adopted as the name for their principle in “debates over the dangers of collectivism and the pitifully weak state of liberalism” (13).

Plehwe’s argument brings us back to the primal scene of the birth of neoliberalism. It was at an international colloquium in nineteen thirty-seven, a year before the Nazi-Soviet Pact. The nightmarish pact, which directly brought about the outbreak of WW II, had as its

¹⁸⁸ For a contemporary example of how neoliberalism actually works in liberal association of networks (in the case of education), see Ball.

background Joseph Stalin's doctrine of Socialism in One Country, or abandonment of world communist revolution, another, apparently paradoxical, effect of which was the approval of the Popular Front. After the death of Vladimir Lenin in nineteen twenty-four, Joseph Stalin became dictator of the Soviet Union, triumphing over his competitor of Leon Trotsky. Stalin as the new leader of the Soviet chose the "real politics," following the war logic, such as the doctrine of Socialism in One Country, the spread of the Popular Front policy and the Nazi-Soviet Pact in order to secure the survival of the still new communist country (which in fact succeeded to some degree in the course of the Cold War).

The point here is that the Popular Front, advocated through the Comintern by Stalin as the anti-Nazi alliance, is a loosely connected international free and liberal association. The nature of the politics of the Popular Front grows clear when it is contrasted with that of the United Front that Trotsky, Stalin's rival, advocated in criticism of the Popular Front. Joseph Choonara explains:

In 1934 the mood of Socialist and Communist militants, horrified by the victory of the Nazis in Germany the year before, forced their leaders into united action against attempts to bring far right governments to office in France and Spain. There were huge demonstrations on the streets of Paris in February and a rising in Asturias in Spain in October. But at this point a new line emerged from Stalin in Moscow, that of the "popular front". This meant Communists seeking alliances not just with the social democrats, but also with "liberal" mainstream capitalist parties. Any notion of political struggle was subordinated to Moscow's foreign policy goal – the formation of a military alliance with French imperialism, and hopefully British imperialism as well. (np)

The Popular Front was welcomed in such countries as the United Kingdom, France, Spain and the United States because it is a conception of a "liberal" alliance in which people are united in spite of difference in their political ideologies – only to oppose the threat of the Nazi. It was friendly to political diversity: in fact, the entire point of the Popular Front, as a

certain kind of realization of the warfare logic, is its acceptance of political diversity for an anti-Nazi alliance. It then is Leon Trotsky who fiercely criticized the political limit of such a liberal alliance. Calling it “people’s front,” he thus explains in “Committees of Action – Not People’s Front” how the acceptance of the diversity eventually functions as the suppression of the working class:

“The People’s Front” represents the coalition of the proletariat with the imperialist bourgeoisie, in the shape of the Radical Party and smaller tripe of the same sort. The coalition extends both to the parliamentary and the extra-parliamentary spheres. In both spheres the Radical Party, preserving for itself complete freedom of action, coarsely imposes restrictions upon the freedom of action of the proletariat. (np)

From this perspective, what is needed for Trotsky is “the United Front” as a coalition of the proletariat instead of “the People’s Front”:

At the time when the masses by their votes and their struggle seek to cast off the party of the Radicals, the leaders of the United Front, on the contrary, seek to save it. After obtaining the confidence of the masses of workers on the basis of a “socialist” program, the leaders of the workers’ parties then proceeded to concede voluntarily a lion’s share of this confidence to the Radicals, in whom the masses of workers have absolutely no confidence. (np)

For Trotsky’s goal is to put an end to the suppression of the workers:

Such tasks as the creation of *workers’ militia*, *the arming of the workers*, the preparation of a *general strike*, will remain on paper if the struggling masses themselves, through their authoritative organs, do not occupy themselves with these tasks. Only Committees of Action born in the struggle can assure a real militia numbering fighters not by the thousand but the tens of thousands. Only Committees of Action embracing the most important centres of the country will be able to choose the moment for transition to more decisive methods of struggle, the leadership of which will be rightly theirs. (np)

In Trotsky’s vision, difference between the Popular Front as coalition with the bourgeoisie

and the United Front as an alliance of the working class is crucial. This is because the Popular Front follows the logic of warfare whose goal is the survival of the USSR and the United Front is a utopian logic for the liberation of the exploited.

While the Popular Front had significant influence on the contemporary culture of the United States as Michael Denning argues in *The Cultural Front*, its logic of the loosely connected international free and liberal association has the same logic as the neoliberal “thought collective,” which was also initially imagined as the counter-measure against the threat of Nazi totalitarianism. For one thing, what we see here is a rehearsal of the sanction of non-ideological “liberalism” as the appraisal of diversity against totalitarianism, which is to be repeated in the fifties as the logic of Cold-War liberalism against the “totalitarianism” of the USSR, although, while the logic constituted the mainstream of the official American culture under the Cold War, neither the logic of the Popular Front nor that of the neoliberal thought collective seemed to be mainstream then. It was during the thirties under the war logic of the coming WW II that the prototype of the discourses of Cold-War liberalism was invented.

The same is true of neoliberalism. As mentioned in Chapter Four, identifying one of the essences of postmodernism to be the proliferation of the micropolitics of identity politics as the politics of segmentalization, Fredric Jameson in *Postmodernism* argues that the proliferation of identity politics, or the “new social movement,” should be seen as the “substitute” of the politics of the working class (320). When Trotsky failed to win, claiming the political significance of the United Front over the Popular Front, against the international political background of the thirties, the liberal popularity of the Popular Front shows most clearly its role of substitute for the politics of the working class, as imagined as the United Front. The predominance of postmodern identity politics is prefigured then in the struggle for

power between Trotsky and Stalin. And the liberal victory of the Popular Front (as the nationalist logic of war against totalitarianism as governmental nightmare) over the United Front (as social and socialist politics for the working class) signifies the liberal victory of biopolitics that displaces politics, making it invisible. It actually started with the implicit victory of nationalism over universalist internationalism that the ideal of communism symbolizes, which was involved in Stalin's choice of Socialism in One Country. When Stalin made the USSR's socialism a principle for the government of a country, nationalism as the international paradigm of the twentieth century won over any kind of political internationalism. This constitutes the bottom line of the superiority of biopolitics as the politics of government to politics per se as a way to realize a political utopia, which still dominates the political imagination of our historical present.

From this viewpoint, today's political demonstration on the street, such as Occupy Wall Street, should not be seen as biopolitical resistance, as Bernard Harcourt and Hardt and Negri insist, but rather as disruption of biopolitical containment that looks for the retrieval of politics per se that has been lost for many years. Those who argue for the end of ideology or the end of history insist that we have been suppressed by ideological and partisan politics; what I have argued in this dissertation, on the contrary, is that we have been suppressed exactly by the discourses of the end of ideology and the end of history, by the lack of what they call ideological politics, or, that is, by what is truly an alternative to the regime of the biopolitics in which we live. It is only natural to believe that the alternative is the suppressed; if so, then, what has been repeatedly suppressed, or repeatedly told to be dead and buried, in our history of liberal cultures in the previous century is the "ideological." I believe I have delineated, if not exhaustively, the shape of what is excluded in the American cultures of liberalism in the twentieth century, which constitutes the outside of the cultures of

liberalisms. The alternative lies in the constitutive outside of our imagination, and not somewhere far or beyond, as the word utopia may suggest. The truth of the alternative to our existing society consists of what is daily criticized, ridiculed, excluded, or denied as impossible in our everyday discourses of liberal culture: the social, as the alternative to the cultural or the communal, in which we do actually live.

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Films

Armageddon. Dir. Michael Bay. Touchstone Pictures, 1998. DVD.

Basic Instinct. Dir. Paul Verthoeven. TriStar Pictures 1992. DVD.

The Bridges of Madison County. Dir. Clint Eastwood, 1995. DVD.

Die Hard. Dir. John McTierman. Twentieth Century Fox, 1988. DVD.

Fatal Attraction. Dir. Adrain Lyne. Paramount Pictures, 1987. DVD.

High Noon. Dir. Fred Zinnemann. United Artists, 1952. DVD.

Independence Day. Dir. Roland Emmerich. Twentieth Century Fox, 1996. DVD.

The Magnificent Seven. Dir. John Sturges. United Artists, 1960. DVD.

My Darling Clementine. Dir. John Ford. Twentieth Century Fox, 1946. DVD.

Rebel without a Cause. Dir. Nicholas Ray. Warner Brothers, 1955. DVD.

Shane. Dir. George Stevens. Paramount Pictures, 1953. DVD.

Stagecoach. Dir. John Ford. United Artists, 1939. DVD.

Strange Days. Dir. Kathryn Bigelow. Twentieth Century Fox, 1995. DVD.

Titanic. Dir. James Cameron. Paramount Pictures, 1997. DVD.

12 Angry Men. Dir. Sidney Lumet. United Artists, 1957. DVD.

Vita

NAME Reiichi Miura

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

- 2010-present Professor, Graduate School of Language and Society, Hitotsubashi University
- 2001-2010 Associate Professor, Graduate School of Language and Society, Hitotsubashi University
- 1998-2001 Associate Professor, The Graduate School of Languages of Cultures, Nagoya University
- (1997-1998 Visiting Scholar at Literature Program, Duke University, sponsored by the Ministry of Education of Japan)
- 1996-1998 Associate Professor, Faculty of Languages and Cultures, Nagoya University
- 1994-1996 Assistant Professor, Faculty of Languages and Cultures, Nagoya University

EDUCATION

- M.A. Tokyo University, English and American Literature, March 1991
- B.A. Tokyo University, English and American Literature, March 1988

PUBLICATIONS

(Titles are aptly translated into English; all are written in Japanese unless otherwise noted)

Monographs

Donald Barthelme and Literary Postmodernism (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, 2005)

Co-edited Anthologies

New Literary Studies in English and American Literature (Tokyo: Kenkyu-sha, forthcoming)

Reading Gender IV: Liberalism and Feminism (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, forthcoming)

Keywords for Our Historical Present (Tokyo: Kenkyu-sha, forthcoming)

Kazuo Ishiguro and Globalization (Toyo: Sairyu-sha, forthcoming)

Thomas Pynchon Reader (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, forthcoming)

All about Literary Theory (Tokyo: Shinsho-kan, 2006)

The Location of the Bodies: Pop-culture and Corporeality (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, 2004)

Problems of Cultural Identities: Hitotsubashi International Conference (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, 2004)

Translations

- Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (Tokyo: Ibun-sha, forthcoming) co-translation
- Cornel West, *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight against Imperialism* (Tokyo: Hosei UP, forthcoming) co-translation
- Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Tokyo: Sakuhin-sha, forthcoming) co-translation
- Edward Said, *Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said*, ed. Gauri Viswanathan (Tokyo: Ohta-shuppan, 2007) co-translation
- Walter Benn Michaels, *The Shape of the Signifier: 1967 to the End of History* (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, 2006)
- Donald Barthelme, *Paradise* (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, 1990)

Articles

- “Choice, Neoliberalism and Multiculturalism: *Harry Potter* as Literature of Globalization,” *Studies in English Literature: The Journal of the English Literary Societies of Japan* 88 (2011).
- “Modernism and Imperialism in the US in the Fifties: Cold-War Liberalism in *The Catcher in the Rye*,” *Language and Society: The Journal of Graduate School of Language and Society, Hitotsubashi University* 5 (2011).
- “How Cold-War Individualism Represented Woman: *Shane* and *High Noon* as Cold-War Western,” *Reading Gender III: Class, Nation, Colonialism*. Ed. Asako Nakai and Yuri Yoshino. (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, 2011).
- “Disease, Hippie and Neoliberalism: Thomas Pynchon’s *Vineland*,” *The American Review: The Journal of the Japanese Association for American Studies* 45 (2011).
- “What Kind of Revolution Do You Want?: Punk, the Contemporary Left, and Singularity.” *Mediations: Journal of the Marxist Literary Group*. 25.1 (2010) (English).
- “Nationalism, Contingency and the Traffic of Women: The Structure of *Absalom, Absalom!*,” *Faulkner: The Journal of the William Faulkner Society of Japan* 12 (2010).
- “Autobiography or Negation of Allegory: Jamaica Kincaid’s *The Autobiography of My Mother*,” *Language and Society: The Journal of Graduate School of Language and Society, Hitotsubashi University* 3 (2009).
- “Politics of Identity and Sexual Difference: Judith Butler and Post-Cold War Configuration of Sexuality,” *Reading Gender II: Representation of Identities*. Ed. Chizu Nakano and Hiromi Ochi. (Tokyo: Akashi-shoten. 2008).

- “The Readers’ Communities: Jamaica Kincaid, Tim O’Brien, J. D. Salinger.” *The Rising Generation: English Education and English and American Literature* 150.4/5 (2004).
- “Communication that cannot be Named: Raymond Carver’s ‘Cathedral.’” *Ray, Talk with Us: A Memorial Essays on Raymond Carver*. Ed. Takaki Hiraishi and Toshifumi Miyawaki. (Tokyo: Nanun-do, 2004).
- “On the Globalization of Literature: Haruki Murakami, Tim O’Brien, and Raymond Carver” *Electronic Book Review*. 2003:
<http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/internetnation/bungaku> (English).
- “Men without Aura: Images of Gender and Transformation of ‘Literature,’” *Culture and Image (Series from Special Research Project, Nagoya University)* (2002).
- “Queer Theory and Postmodernism: Donald Barthelme’s ‘Style,’” *Studies in Language and Culture: The Journal of Graduate School of Languages and Cultures, Nagoya University* 22.2 (2001).
- “Representation of the Failure: Singularity in *Tender Is the Night*,” *Re-Contextualizing American Literature*. Ed. Toshio Watanabe (Tokyo: Kenkyu-sha, 1996).
- “When a Story Is Over: Hypertext and Poststructuralism,” *Computerization of Humanities and the Internet (Series from Special Research Project, Nagoya University)* (1996).
- “How to Use Literature: Homo Economicus in *The Great Gatsby*,” *Strata: The Student Journal for the Department of English and American Literature, Tokyo University* 8 (1993).
- “Postmodern Parody in Donald Barthelme’s *The Dead Father*,” *The Journal of St. Luke’s College of Nursing* 19 (1993).
- “The Fragmented, Given Dreams of Donald Barthelme’s Paradise,” *Strata: The Student Journal for the Department of English and American Literature, Tokyo University* 7 (1993) (English).

LECTURES AND CONFERENCE PAPERS

- “Risk Society and ‘Postfeminism,’” Symposium “In Memory of Prof. Kazuko Takemura” at Tokyo Branch Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, June 2012.
- “Culture of Cold-War Liberalism: from Richard Wright to J. D. Salinger,” American Literature Society of the University of Tsukuba, March 2012 (invited lecture).
- “*Titanic*’s Social Policy: Resistance under Neoliberalism,” Tokyo Branch Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, November 2011.
- “Disaster Movies and Globalization: Roland Emmerich’s *Independence Day*,” Symposium “Reading British Visual Culture in the Nineties” at the Annual Conference of the English Literary Societies of Japan, May 2011.

- “Our Globalized Present and *Harry Potter*,” the Annual Meeting of Japan Society of Children’s Literature in English, November 2010.
- “Liberalism’s Everybody’s Revolution: The Cultural Politics of *The Catcher in the Rye*,” Nagoya American Studies Summer Seminar, July 2010 (invited speaker) (English).
- “‘Race’ under the Cold War: Biopolitics, Race and the Outside,” Symposium “Biopolitical Modernism” at the Branch Meeting of the English Literary Societies of Japan, November 2009.
- “Narrating the History of a Nation from Inside: *Absalom, Absalom!*,” the Annual Meeting of the William Faulkner Society of Japan, October 2009.
- “How Is *The Great Gatsby* So Popular?: Modernism, Identity, Brand,” Symposium “Capitalism and American Literature” at the Annual Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, May 2008.
- “*The Great Gatsby* and Our Globalized Present: Modernism, Identity and Power,” Tokyo Branch Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, January 2008 (invited speaker).
- “On Singularity and Postmodern Pluralism,” Marxist Literary Group Summer Institute on Culture and Society at UIC, June 2007 (English).
- “Race, Innocence and Popularity,” Symposium “Salinger and the Post-War America” at the Annual Meeting of the *Japanese Association for American Studies*, June 2006.
- “Globalization and Identity,” Symposium “Japan and Germany: Two Successful Models of Americanization?” at Goethe Institute, Japan, November 2004 (invited speaker) (English).
- “Globalization of Literature and Corporealization of the Subject: J. D. Salinger, Tim O’Brien, Jamaica Kincaid,” the Annual Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, October 2003 (invited speaker).
- “Innocence in *The Catcher in the Rye*,” the Annual Meeting of Japan Society of Children’s Literature in English, October 2003.
- “What the Author Does Not Tell, What the Reader Does Not Read: Queer Reading of Raymond Carver’s ‘Cathedral,’” Branch Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, September 2002.
- “I am Not What I Am: Identity and Materiality in Donald Barthelme’s *Snow White*,” Moderator and Speaker, Branch Meeting III “Identity and Materiality” of International Symposium *The Future of Civilization: Purification or Hybridization?* at Hitotsubashi University, April 2002.
- “The Freudian Question: Donald Barthelme’s *The Dead Father*,” Symposium “Under Beneath Word Play: Re-Contextualizing Metafiction” at Chubu Branch Meeting of the

American Literature Society of Japan, October 2001.

“Gender in Arthur Ransom’s *The Swallows and Amazons*,” the Annual Meeting of Japan Society of Children’s Literature in English, October 2000.

“On Textuality: Modernism and Postmodernism,” moderator and speaker, Symposium “What Is ‘Literariness’?” at Chubu Branch Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, April 2000.

“*The Swallows and Amazons*: How Children’s Literature Adopts Realism,” the Annual Meeting of Japan Society of Children’s Literature in English, October 1996.

“Illusion of Postmodernism?: Donald Barthelme, Art of Absence and the Question of Entity,” Chubu Branch Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, June 1996.

“Politics of Identity in *Tender Is the Night*,” the Annual Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, October 1995.

“Romance and Patriarchy in *Tender Is the Night*,” Chubu Branch Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, November 1994.

“Postmodern Parody in Donald Barthelme’s *The Dead Father*,” Tokyo Branch Meeting of the American Literature Society of Japan, September 1991.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Editorial Board, *The American Review: The Journal of the Japanese Association for American Studies* (2012-present)

Head Office of Tokyo Branch of American Literature Society of Japan (2008-present)

Editor in Chief, *Tinker Bell: The Journal of Japan Society of Children’s Literature in English*. (2007-2011)

Director of English, Hitotsubashi University (2009-2010)

Associate Director of the Graduate School of Language and Society, Hitotsubashi University (2003-2005)

Editor in Chief, *Strata: The Student Journal for the Department of English and American Literature, Tokyo University* (1992-1993)

CURRENT PROJECTS

“Bridging Social Left and Cultural Left: Focusing on Marx and Freud,” Project in Graduate School of Language and Society, Hitotsubashi University, Project Leader (2012-2016)

“Imagining the Outside of Neoliberalism: American Culture and Literature and Identity Politics after the Nineties,” Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Project Leader (2011-2013)

“Post-WWII ‘English and American Literature’: Transpacific Literary Imagination and Its

Politics,” Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Project Member (2012-2016)

“Transgression and Locality in Modernisms,” Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Project Member (2011-2013)