PLACE AS A PARTICIPANT IN MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN LITERARY NONFICTION

A dissertation submitted to the

Caspersen School

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Letters

Advisors:

Dr. Laura Winters

Dr. Karen Pechilis

Fredrica Bearg Glucksman
Drew University
Madison, New Jersey
May 2024

ABSTRACT

Place as a Participant in Mid-twentieth Century America Literary Nonfiction

Fredrica Bearg Glucksman

The Caspersen School of Graduate Studies

Drew University, Madison, New Jersey May 2024

This dissertation examines exemplary works of four writers of mid-twentieth century American literary nonfiction to understand the influence of place on humanity, and that of humanity on place. However deftly the point of view may be camouflaged or employed, John Hersey's *Hiroshima,* Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood,* James Baldwin's *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985*, and Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and *The White Album* are the artful products of their authors' on-site research and encounters with participants in real life dramas that their readers know as the "news." The authors depict true geographic and atmospheric exteriors as well as invoke America's globally known myth, the American dream, and its citizens' understandings about and yearning for this ideal to point to moral interiors and ethical behaviors of American society.

The concept that informs this study is that proposed by twentieth century, literary theorist M. M. Bakhtin, author of *The Dialogic Imagination.* While Bakhtin limited his interpretation of characters and meaning in fiction (and, by implication, to nonfiction) to the accumulation of actions over time in a single scene or place (i.e., a "chronotope"), this dissertation expands the territory to include the entire United States and its actions around the globe. In this light, the most persistent and pervasive quality about place in the

United States is its idea about itself. Even in the twentieth century, the country's founders' expectations of living in a New Eden on the American continent, i.e., the American dream and its adaptation to an increasingly industrialized and capitalistic society, is a tacit assumption among the authors, a motivation of the people whose lives they feature, and an atavistic concept of American readers. As this dissertation demonstrates, Hersey, Capote, Baldwin, and Didion filter this national belief into their commentaries to contrast a chaotic present. While the reader's consolation is that the place still exists and time has not run out, these works of literary nonfiction remain not merely as myths or as the news of the past, but they resonate as lived and witnessed cautionary tales for the present.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Esther Becker Bearg and Arnold Bearg, who created a safe place for their children in a chaotic world.

To Joel and our sons Seth, Jesse, and Alec, and their families, for whom love needs no place.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Reading, researching, and writing about literary nonfiction for this dissertation has not been done in isolation. I am grateful to Dr. Laura Winters and Dr. Karen Pechilis at Drew University for agreeing to be my readers and for helping me to shape the topic, and to Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien, who long ago mentioned in passing M. M. Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope. I am also grateful to the university for its Meet-Ups, weekly sessions for graduate students in the throes of writing dissertations. Led by Dr. Christina McGrath, a nurturing influence and a guru of information about form and scholarly practice, these meetings also obliged me to keep deadlines for completing work. In addition, I am grateful both for the camaraderie that developed within the group as members shared research and progress in their own dissimilar topics as well as for information that sparked me to investigate facts and expand upon ideas in my own research. I respect these members of my academic family.

I am also indebted to art and media historian Dr. Sara Beth Levavy for leading me to sources about documentary films, which reinforced my understanding that documentary film and reportage (here, literary nonfiction) convey the truth—according to its writers, editors, and sponsors; to Phyllis G. Sorkin, a brilliant teacher and my late sister-in-law, who spoke with great fervor about Hersey's *Hiroshima* decades ago, and to Dr. Tamar Frank, for conversations that always led me to fascinating and relevant texts.

A real thrill about researching this project as a graduate student was having the official permission to read archives—original letters to and from the writers, galleys of articles, ephemera, and publications as well as Capote's handwritten diary on

microfilm—in the New York Public Library, both in the Stephen A. Schwartzman Building and, for Baldwin, in the Shomberg Center for Research in Black Culture. I am grateful to the librarians, who answered all my questions, guided me as I used technology to access sources, and provided me with the library's preferred way to list the authors' collections in the bibliography.

Another delight was visiting sites in Didion's essays in Los Angeles: Howard Hughes's former office building at 7000 Romaine, which is a setting in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, as well as Didion's large and now lovely home on Franklin Avenue in Hollywood and the recording studio on Sunset Boulevard, where Didion conducted a non-interview with the Doors, both of which appear in the first essay of *The White Album.* Visiting these sites was not like making pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, or Mecca, but it was awesome, nonetheless. For this, I thank two of my sons and their families, whose residences in Los Angeles made the field trip convenient. I also thank my husband, Joel, for his curiosity about my project, for reading drafts, and for his deftness in combatting the traffic on the roads of Los Angeles.

PREFACE

I was born five years after the end of World War II, the epicenter of the twentieth century, and grew up in one of America's new, Edenic enclaves: the suburbs. That time and place translated into a belief in the fiction of global stability. I did not grow up fearing headlines and broadcasts on the radio and in movie theaters of the war in Europe or the neighborhood blackouts and food rationing that affected the daily lives of American citizens during the war. Despite close relationships with cousins who had survived the death camps of World War II, world-wide upheavals seemed remote: my adult cousins, who had become naturalized Americans, already had acquired skills, secured jobs, and thrived as members of the middle class, working hard to maintain their homes in suburbia and to enjoy the lifestyle promised by the American dream.

I was alive but too young to have understood the televised sessions of Senator Joseph McCarthy's hearings against the perceived threat of communism in the United States during the Second Red Scare, but I do remember the fuss over and fear of a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union during air raid drills in elementary school. Incongruously, kneeling and bending head-down beside a wall in the hallway was supposed to keep children safe during air attacks by foreign nations—like those seen in broadcasts of battles of World War II on Walter Cronkite's *The Twentieth Century*. I could not imagine that scenario, nor could I imagine a state-of-the-art nuclear attack. It had only occurred one time in a distant land, and I, as a grade-schooler, knew little about it. At the same time, though, the school sent home curious pamphlets that correlated the effects of radiation with the proximity to an atomic bomb's impact. That information came with

illustrations, and it was scary. I remember talk about building fallout shelters, but no one I knew built one.

I did worry when, broadcast from the United Nations in New York City in 1960, Nikita Khrushchev, first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, declared, "We will bury you," and punctuated it by hammering his shoe on a lectern.[1] (I printed a note to the Kremlin for easy reading. No one responded to my plea for peace.) Later, the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Robert F. Kennedy, all of whom had advocated concrete pathways for American society to achieve the harmony of its original Edenic intent, gnawed at my certainty of safety and peaceful unity on the American continent. Then, the protracted war against communism in Vietnam led to the draft of young men into the armed services via a lottery based upon their dates of birth. This solution for replacing dead soldiers, rationally thought-out by mature government officials, sparked my initiation as an adult American. I was a sophomore in college when the place, normally an Edenic institution, erupted into protests against police treatment of students at Kent State University, who had protested the war in Vietnam. The spring semester of 1970 in my college, like that of many colleges that year, ended abruptly. I was aware that in response to that war and to American society's values, inconsistencies, and inequities, many young adults and adolescents of the middle class rejected society's norms and expectations and left their homes to live in communes and places with other like-minded aggregates of people. In

[1] Harrison Salisbury's *New York Times* article "Khruschev in the UN; The Shouts and the Pounding Are Seen As a Soviet Cry to Change the World" confirms this memory. Interestingly, the event is not verified today by United Nations sources.

retrospect, mid-twentieth century America had changed, and its citizens were disillusioned, desperately clinging to the old American ideal of creating a perfect place.

M. M. Bakhtin, Russian literary critic and author of *The Dialogic Imagination*, applies this type of understanding to literary art. He asserts that place both in fiction and in nonfiction (99) is more complex than locale, geography, or the arrangement of furniture in a scene. He would have insisted that my experiences of place—both those intensely influenced by family, region, nation, and their cultures as well as those aligned with my interests and curiosities—have informed my perspective of the world and the content of literary texts. Within a text, Bakhtin opined, the understanding or interpretation of a place includes a writer's real and imagined personal experiences as well as that of the writer's characters (or, in nonfiction, the citizens, politicians, etc.) over time. Bakhtin calls this layering of experience in one place a "chronotope." Moreover, readers' interpretations of a text's characters, who exist in certain times and places, are influenced by their own experiences of time and place. Thus, in each text, a physical or geographical place exists in a symbiotic relationship with all human beings—imagined or alive—that act in or encounter it. To Bakhtin, this inclusive consideration of humanity over time creates meaning.

In this way, the literary nonfiction that this dissertation examines reports on the people and places immersed in dramatic public events in a chronotope of the United States while the texts share each writer's unique view of a particular occasion. Chapter I will establish literary nonfiction as a unique albeit controversial genre that includes texts often classified as the nonfiction novel, literary journalism, New Journalism, or other taxonomies in which the author intentionally uses narrative techniques and artful rhetoric

to provide insight into a contemporary event or concern. It will also describe twentieth century literary nonfiction by reviewing salient precursors, practitioners' intentions, and literary critics' views of the genre. To this end, it will suggest applying Bakhtin's theory of the "chronotope," a place where people interact in one scene over time, to texts of literary nonfiction. Chapter II focuses on John Hersey's *Hiroshima,* first published as an article in *The New Yorker* in 1946, which tells the tale of two countries—overtly, the geography, culture, and inhabitants of the vanquished Japan, and by implication, the morality and ethics of the victorious United States—after the United States's detonation of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, one of Japan's strategic cities. Chapter III examines Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood,* also published first in *The New Yorker*, in 1965, not for the gory details of a respected, civic-minded family's slaughter, but for its implicit exposition, aftermath, and psychology of the fatal consequences of the unequal distribution of wealth in Holcomb, Kansas (which is, ironically, part of the United States's Bible Belt). Two desperate, destitute men conspire to steal from and, if seen in the act, to murder four members of a wealthy family to gain their American legacy, the prosperity and good life of the mid-twentieth century American dream. In contrast, Chapter IV considers James Baldwin, whose writing, not murder for money, elevated him from a life of poverty. In *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985,* Baldwin reveals mid-twentieth century America through the lens of an African American, a member of a group that legally, economically, and socially suffered (then as now) under systemic racism in the United States. Situated in New York, California, the South, and Europe, the essays present Baldwin's direct, logical, agile mind and eloquent voice, which gain credibility from his personal involvement in racial inequities in those places.

Chapter V analyzes the American character as seen in essays in Joan Didion's *Sloughing Towards Bethlehem* and *The White Album*. The exposition for Didion's ultra-personal, often impressionistic early essays is usually California, her home state, but her observations have national implications.

All of these writers control their subjects via effective uses of point of view. Hersey and Capote, who, respectively, travel to Hiroshima, Japan and Holcomb, Kansas appear to adhere to a twentieth century journalist's objective point of view in the sustained stories that they tell. However, each writer's selection of details as well as his presentation of places, derived from observations, research, and interviews with inhabitants reveal his views. Baldwin and Didion's collections of essays, each originally published in magazines, often concern events where they live or in which they are both on-site observers and actors. They record their reactions, often subjective, to the events. All frame their tales about public events within narratives, enhanced by literary conventions. Thus, place is a stage and a participant in the affairs of human beings in the texts.

A crucial issue about these texts, however, is that the underlying themes that these writers of prose assert remain concerns in America: the meaning of progress; morality of the use of advanced but lethal technology; the morality of executing murderers; the persistent myth of the American dream and its lack of accessibility to all Americans from all socio-economic groups, religions, and races; traditional values and their active effects on family, community, and nation. This is the importance of this study.

By definition, "the news" signals change. The people and series of events that become newsworthy stories may challenge the cultural myths, behavioral expectations,

national and religious beliefs, and the laws of the times and the places where they occur. This study examines the ways in which the literary nonfiction of John Hersey, Truman Capote, James Baldwin, and Joan Didion go beyond reporting “the news”: they capture, organize, and interpret both the cataclysmic as well as the mundane events about locations within and those influenced by the United States of America. To one who survived these changes in the United States in the middle of the twentieth century, the results are extraordinary revelations about the personality and morality of the United States and real cautionary tales for the present.

CHAPTER ONE: THE TRADITION OF LITERARY NONFICTION

DEFINING A CONTROVERSIAL GENRE

For centuries, scholars, writers, and readers have disagreed about the nomenclature for well-researched, artful prose that narrates a contemporary event. Often, the writer has participated in the event, relates the story in the first person, and organizes it in concrete scenes with dialogue. In a 1966 review of the then newly published *In Cold Blood*, William Phillips observes that "newspapers do not recognize any ultra-modern category between fiction and nonfiction" (102). Others cleverly identify nonfiction as a noun that describes what it is not (the *non) (*Lopate *To Show 3;* Root 243), and further classify literary nonfiction as creative nonfiction, literary journalism, the nonfiction novel, or New Journalism as a subgenre of nonfiction that is related to "the personal essay, the memoir, narrative reportage—also known as literary journalism, and expressive critical writing, [which is] also called personal academic discourse and personal cultural criticism" **(**Root 255). Literary nonfiction, the term that many favor over others (Voss 85; Lopate *To Show* 3; Weber 1), is a work of well-written nonfiction that includes both the characteristics of fiction—a story with characters and events told by an author—and that of the reportage typical of a news article, i.e., a researched, factual report of current events. Phillip Lopate's experience as a writer of contemporary literary nonfiction is that the genre originates from the writer's "curiosity" about a current issue (13). Additionally, Lopate claims that while the author is a presence, the text's primary focus is not on the self, as it would be in an autobiography, a memoir, or an editorial. The

writer controls the telling of the story, but usually not the place, the plot, or the time; the events happen independent of the artful writer-researcher.

The genre is not new; in fact, it has a tradition. Modern literary nonfiction is a descendent of the essays or articles of writers like Seneca, Plutarch, Montaigne, Addison, Steele, Lamb, Fielding, Hazlitt, Twain, Dos Passos, Hemingway, and others, whose animated nonfiction gave readers a personal eye on the public events of their times (Kerrane and Yagoda 17-83, Root 246, Fishkin 3, Wolfe and Johnson *The New Journalism* 52-68, among others). Of his early professional epiphany as a journalist Wolfe writes, "it was possible to write accurate non-fiction with techniques usually associated with novels and short stories . . . [and] to use any literary device . . . to excite the reader both intellectually and emotionally" ("Like a Novel" 28).

One historical but accessible progenitor of this writing is English author Daniel Defoe (1659-1731). Known for his realistic novel, *Robinson Crusoe,* Defoe is the author of lively literary nonfiction, particularly *The True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild,* written in 1725. Both works profile the lives of adventurous souls—the former, that of a shipwrecked sea captain, loosely based on reality; the latter, a real, rapacious, unrepentant thief, brought to justice via execution (Kerrane and Yagoda 23-28). Commenting on the kinship between realistic fiction and literary nonfiction, Kerrane observes that while "[Defoe's] novels, rich in realistic detail, read like documentary reports, . . . his [literary] journalism shines with literary quality" (23). If the method and writing style of the two genres are similar, the content differs in that Defoe's literary nonfiction delivers an immediate message about a societal issue—in the latter book, crime—by highlighting the real people who live it. Defoe's report on

Jonathan Wild's execution, a topic relevant to Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, is especially illustrative of Capote's social commentary.

"The True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild," fascinates readers with Wild's creative life in crime, but it points to society's inability to police or to reform him, to protect London's citizens, and to prevent individuals from needing to steal. Defoe's portrait of Wild presents a person who is at extreme odds with his society: both a criminal and a charlatan, he masquerades as a man of wealth in a class-conscious society. He is a man who is equally as comfortable stealing from the poor as he is from the rich; from a stranger, as he is from an employee. Scenes include dialogue to which Defoe could not have been privy. Kerrane states that Defoe, like literary journalists of the mid-twentieth century, claimed that his reportage came from one "encounter" with Wild as well as from many "interviews with victims and jailers, and even with the underlings in Wild's crime ring" (23). One scene "shows" Wild's gentlemanly interview with a woman of means. The dandified Wild, garbed in "his Callimancoe night-gown," assumes the role of a hero by valiantly offering to retrieve the gentlewoman's stolen gold watch. Feigning nobility in demeanor and intent, Wild also refuses recompense, claiming that his sole goal is the restoration of the woman's property. Appearance belies reality in multiple ways, especially to the unsuspecting woman. According to Defoe, who narrates the story, Wild is familiar with London's pickpockets and their territories; he had "stolen" the watch from the pickpocket by threatening her with jail. Moreover, after he takes a portion of the fee from an intermediary, who delivers the watch to the lady, he also meets the grateful woman in a private audience and "reluctantly" accepts the victim's grateful finder's fee to please her.

The incident recounts a grand deception. Fittingly, Defoe's portrait ends with Wild's execution in a London prison for his life of crime and for his responsibility in recruiting "'above 120 miserable creatures'" who participated in his schemes and, consequently, were hanged "at the gallows" for their crimes before him (28). Good certainly appears to defeat evil, affirming society's values. The last scene, filled with irony and ignominy, would have been particularly satisfying to a reader of that time. Albeit mitigated by wearing his "Callimancoe [woolen] night-gown" and by the laudanum that he had smuggled into the prison and ingested, Wild still must suffer public execution. Thus, unlike an objective news story that audiences beginning in the early twentieth century might have expected (Schudson in Roggenkamp 179 48n.), Defoe's account frames the verifiable scenes (but ones not necessarily experienced by the author) in pejorative and moralistic language. Defoe's words mitigate all sympathy for the artifice in the master thief's deceptions. Described but unstated, however, is the lesser societal "crime": Wild is a thief whose method "overreaches" his station, an affront to class-conscious British society. No mention in the article's excerpt is made of any killing involved with Wild's theft; consequently, four hundred years later, an American reader questions the morality of state-mandated death as a punishment for theft. Equally as important would be to question the unequal distribution of wealth in British society of that time that would prompt people to steal.

In comparison, two reports of executions in the twentieth century deal with the seriously existential aspects of the punishment. George Orwell's "A Hanging" (1931) and Rebecca West's "Greenhouse with Cyclamens I" (1946), articles which first appeared in magazines and then in books and anthologies, would have been read by Hersey, Capote,

Baldwin, and Didion.[1] Written two hundred years after Defoe's account of Wild's end, George Orwell's short but powerful "A Hanging" is an eye-witness piece that does not support British colonialism and its treatment of the empire's indigenous populations abroad; rather, the article comments ironically on it. A Probationary Assistant Superintendent of Police in Burma in the 1920s, Orwell is an outsider to local society and a new staff member in the prison. He must observe the execution of an unnamed male prisoner whose crime is unstated. At first, Orwell's subjective narrator's details of the event suggest that this punishment fits no crime—at least, not for this "criminal." Most notable is that the criminal is a Hindu, who, the reader infers, is a vegetarian who would not knowingly hurt another living being. The hopeless and compliant convict also chants a prayer at the gallows. Compared to the tall, stout, armed warders, who bring the handcuffed man from the "condemned cells" to the gallows, the prisoner is small in height and narrow in physique. Orwell's opinion is understood in his observation that a dog genially runs up to the prisoner and licks him. More than being likeable, the man is a human being. Orwell shows this trait when the prisoner walks around a puddle. Hugh Kenner cites this detail as being the hallmark of journalism: "'. . . the artifice of seeming to be grounded outside language in what is called fact—the domain where a condemned man can be observed as he silently avoids a puddle and your prose will report the observation and no one will doubt it'" (qtd. in Clark 14). To the reader, it is also compelling. More explicitly, in the middle of the piece, Orwell interrupts the narration to condemn the "unspeakable wrongness . . . of cutting a life short when it is in full tide"

[1] John Hersey may not have been influenced by West's piece, because his article, "Hiroshima," was published in *The New Yorker* in August 1946, the same month that West's "Greenhouse with Cyclamens I" was published in *Commentary*.

(2), lists characteristics of a "healthy conscious man" (2), and reviews the small man's bodily functions that the large, imposing guards will stop. The geographic and physiological details of the scene at daybreak convince the reader that the prisoner could not have committed a crime worthy of execution.

Clearly, Orwell's choice of details and commentary, both often ironic, means to critique British practices in its empire. The jail's superintendent is a doctor, who, by profession, should be committed to saving a life; a "Eurasian" is a "friend" of the hanged man, who tries to impress the British Orwell with his silver cigarette case; everyone in the yard, including Orwell, laughs once the execution is complete. The implication is that all are relieved, but all are complicit in the murder of another human being. Only the dog, "man's best friend," prances up to the condemned man on the way to the gallows. Unlike Defoe, Orwell's choice of "character" and detail do not support capital punishment. To Defoe's vivid, ironic description of place and personage, Orwell adds personal reflections about the sanctity of human life and comparisons of physical details and societal rank. "A Hanging" is a negative social commentary about executions, British colonial rule, and human apathy.

British reporter Rebecca West's account of her experience as a journalist covering the post-World War II Nuremberg trials in Germany, which ended in the executions of Nazi murderers, infuses her well-crafted narrative with yet another set of unexpected observations and conclusions. West's "Greenhouse with Cyclamens I" uses the occasion to question Western society and its laws. The article is of particular importance to this study, because Capote himself credits her as being one of his models (Plimpton "The Story" 25). "Greenhouse with Cyclamens I," a first-person narrative, imbues physical

descriptions of the 21 Nazi defendants with details that indicate their emotional states. The words she uses also reflect her own and Western society's opinions of the perpetrators of war and genocide. For example, Goring's "imperial gestures" were "vulgar" (4), and "particularly when his humour was good, [his appearance in court] recalled the madam of a brothel" (5); Hess's "skin was ashen . . . and he had the classless air characteristic of asylum inmates" (5). Like Defoe and Orwell, West is factual and descriptive, but she colors the account with words slanted against defendants: they are presumed guilty. The effect is ironic, because these men, presented here as being pathetic, were known around the globe to have wielded great power and to have used it to plan for, to order, and to implement the slaughter of millions of human beings whom they considered to be inferior to them. Like Defoe, West unambiguously supports society's condemnation of these murderers.

Interestingly, West's personification of place broadens her message. The essay begins with landing in Germany. "There rushed up towards the plane the astonishing face of the world's enemy: pine woods on the little hills, grey-green glossy lakes, too small ever to be anything but smooth . . . and pumpkin-steeple churches that no architect over seven could have designed" (3). Inverted in its syntax and intent, the sentence achieves a kind of irony as it both confirms and denies readers' expectations. She tacitly acknowledges that the German government had perpetuated the war and its destruction, at the same time that she declares the landscape's bucolic lushness was independent from the pernicious Nazi government that had prevailed over it. She also describes the greenhouse, lush with flowers, especially cyclamen, at a villa, a *Schloss,* outside of Nuremberg that housed journalists. In fact, sales of lovely potted plants thrived as small

businesses in war-devastated Germany. In contrast, while never condoning the Nazi regime, she describes the unremarkable, everyday life in post-war Nuremberg. “Shabby streetcars” brought people to work. Barter, not money, acquired goods and “foodstuffs,” and to get to the town’s tower, “one had to walk a long way over the rubble, which exhaled the double stench of disinfectant and of that which was irredeemably infected, for it concealed thirty thousand dead” (10). This verbal picture of the place belies the ideas and motives that created it, however.

Implicit in West’s article is that while the Nazis’ victims lay dead in battlefields in other countries and in concentration camps, the destruction of the city had been the work of the Allies. Fittingly, the Nuremberg tribunal condemns eleven of the Nazi defendants to death. Yet West reports that the hanged war criminals choked and gasped for air before they died. West notes that under German law, an axe would have accomplished the same purpose more efficiently than a noose. Her implication is that the Allied powers treated the murderers less ethically than the post-war German government would have. Thus, the narrative ends ironically, questioning the mores and virtue of all governments, a manifesto against genocide, war, and vengeance.

LITERARY NONFICTION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Set in a historical context, the increasing number of texts of literary nonfiction as well as their popularity in the twentieth century makes sense. Wildly subjective and interpreted reports, particularly about the Spanish-American War at the end of the 1800s, triggered the public’s call for “professionalism,” heralding an “objectivity” in reporting the news (Roggenkamp 122; Fishkin 207). This preference occurred while ealistic fiction, which highlighted a “paradigm of actuality,” became popular in the late nineteenth

century (Connery 15). Some scholars connect the resurgence of literary nonfiction to the popularity of American realistic fiction. Of Harte Crane's realistic stories about the California gold rush at the end of the 1800s, Stegner asserts that "'there are a hundred firsthand accounts that give a more faithful picture in the mines than his stories do'" (qtd. in Connery 4). Stegner's belief is that in America, the nonfiction account was a compelling form of literature. Moreover, because these earlier texts, like those of Hersey, Capote, Baldwin, and Didion that later followed suit, were published first in newspapers and magazines and then in books, they were accessible to a wide audience. In them, as in realistic fiction, "the community is, properly, both [the writer's] subject and his audience" (Roth 233). The community, that is, and individual people, are the subjects and objects of the writer of literary nonfiction. The topics covered varied from the immediacy of Whitman's mid-nineteenth century journalistic accounts of the destruction, homelessness, and "loss of memories of affection and companionship" of the Civil War (Fishkin 21); to Dreiser's turn-of-the-century articles about miners, the plight of poor, sick women, who were victims of industrialism, and "'the average person, swept by unknown forces into an unknown hardly understandable world [of capitalism]'" (Dreiser qtd. in Fishkin 104-105); to a fire in Joseph Mitchell's "Up in the Old Hotel," a narrative that takes place in New York City's Fulton Fish Market, but that humanizes the working class of people who inhabit that place (Sims "Joseph Mitchell" 85). Clearly, the two genres have co-existed and borrowed traits from each other—as their prose often has from the elegance of poetry—for many years. To judge one better than the other is to set up a false dilemma, but clearly, the "fourth genre," which captures verified truth about the human condition, was well-established by mid-twentieth century.

Unlike Stegner, however, poet T. S. Eliot declared that the realistic novel had ceased to exist after Flaubert had penned his last text (L. Trilling 246), and literary critic Lionel Trilling faulted literary nonfiction for causing the death of the novel (249). In addition, Trilling opines that the novel "deals with reality and illusion in relation to questions of social class, which . . . are bound up in money" (249). His claim is that after World War II, Americans resisted abstracting theme and morality from the concerns of social class: "Indeed, before what we now know the mind stops; the great psychological fact of our time which we all observe with baffled wonder and shame is that there is no possible way of responding to Belsen and Buchenwald. The activity of mind fails before the incommunicability of Man's suffering" (256). The camera and many writers were drawn to this type of narrative; audiences, to the tales. In the literary world, though, the popularity of literary nonfiction remained suspect.

In 1961, novelist Philip Roth expressed a similar discomfort about the state of fiction. Ironically, Roth's repudiation of the genre provides a description of literary nonfiction. His article for *Commentary* magazine articulates his distress with engaging writing that is not a writer's imaginative reflection of reality (i.e., fiction), but of reality itself. He bemoans the plight of the twentieth century writer/novelist, who "has his hands full in trying to understand, and then describe, and then make credible much of American reality. It stupefies, it sickens, it infuriates, and finally it is even a kind of embarrassment to one's own meager imagination" (224). Among the real events he cites are the first televised presidential debate between Nixon and Kennedy in 1960. About the encounter, though, Roth comments that he wishes that he had "invented" the scene—or that

"*someone* had invented it, and that it was not real" (225). To him, the performances of real "characters" and events of the 1960s outperformed a fiction writer's imagination.[2] Yet David Lodge, British novelist and academician, comforts his reader with his dispassionate observation that realistic novels still were being written, but that a new crop of writers, like Durrell, Murdoch, Vonnegut, and Barth, crafted a new fiction that had displaced realistic fiction. Lodge states that the new novel combines myth, allegory, or science fiction with reality (*Crossroads* 6). Lodge points to a cause for the evolution of the prose narrative when he cites Scholes's contention that cinema conveys a realistic setting better than the printed word, because "'one picture is worth a thousand words, and one motion picture is worth a million'" (6). In fact, he lauds Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood,* as being an exemplary "nonfiction novel," a term Capote himself coined to describe the genre: a visual, well-written and doggedly researched, artfully organized, and compelling narrative about real murders that were followed by capital punishment.

This last point is one that Scholes came to acknowledge some thirty years later, in 2005, in *The Crafty Reader*, a text about genre theory. In it, Scholes genially recognizes literary nonfiction as a separate genre in the form of "the monstrous personal chronicle" (104-137). These narratives deal with individual writers' personal perceptions of and impressions about living through national and cultural events. (This descriptor would exclude autobiography.) In addition, they are "monstrous" because some of these texts are mammoth in size, and while their concerns target both the "quotidian" and the earth

---

[2] However, times change, and writers do, too: in *The Plot Against America,* published in 2004, Roth obscures the line between fiction and reality by writing in the first person, including the names and layout of real streets and the high school of his youth, and invoking real personages of the time—Roosevelt, Hitler, Lindbergh—in his alternate but plausible history of the post-World War II era.

shattering, a singular slant on the known, and a candid discussion of previously unmentionable experiences, the manuscripts always expose the societal implications of these witnessed experiences. To this, critics—many initially from 1976 to 1988—add analyses of the language and structure of the genre (Russell 414).

In contrast, Mas'ud Zavarzadeh's observes that the writer of literary nonfiction begins with verifiable facts. In his highly technical, quasi-scientific *The Mythopoetic Reality: The Postwar American Nonfiction Novel* (1976), Zavarzadeh echoes Trilling and Roth's concern about the era—that it is a "post-absurd world" (3)—by pointing to real events of the 1960s that seem so inexplicable, so unnatural, that they could be fiction. He contends that his neologisms best describe precisely how the new literary nonfiction works. While the many observations are descriptive and faithful to the genre, the terms that Zavarzadeh coins have remained unique to his text. For instance, the *acteme* indicates the series of events that leads to suspense, since in nonfiction the writer does not create a plot; the *actant* is the initiator of the *actemes* (83-84)*;* the *actee* is the "recipient of ideas or actions" (84); *people* are other real individuals of the texts (68-89). These terms reflect reality. They are part of the documentation of literary nonfiction. More helpful is the term *architectonics*, which refers to elements of writing: point of view, organization, and scene. In addition, Zavarzadeh diagrams the "functions of fact in prose narrative" (65), "anatomy of the nonfiction novel"—the "imaginal component" versus the "experiential component" (76), and internal versus external reference, which describes the amount of similarity that a nonfiction novel has to a "fictive novel" (78). All terms describe the genre's artistic singularity even as Zavarzadeh "defends" the genre's integrity in the increasingly scientific, technological century.

The point of many of the descriptions and analyses of literary nonfiction in its various forms, though, is to justify its validity and to demonstrate its art. It is interpretive rather than objective, constructed with *bricolage,* relevant tangents that foster insight (Russell 418), rather than with a lead, the fixed five *w's,* and other traits of the conventional news article. Lee Gutkind, longtime writer, editor, and professor of creative nonfiction, asserts that by the last decade of the twentieth century, when the National Academy for the Arts changed it fellowships for "'belles lettres'" to "'creative nonfiction,'" the genre had achieved official credibility among academicians (*The Fine Art of Literary Fist-fighting* 190). The problem is that both critics and readers have questioned its authors' habits of occasionally embellishing a scene or of creating dialogue, Thereby detracting from a text's accuracy, credibility, and truth.

IS LITERARY NONFICTION MORAL? IS IT THE TRUTH?

Because writers of literary nonfiction embed themselves in their stories to report the facts, they face ethical dilemmas about how they may affect their stories as well as how their subjects affect them. Writer Anne Hull believes that getting the facts and observing the ways that the people in her story act and solve their own problems is her "job." Hull feels that it is not a journalist's role to intervene in the lives of the people in the story (183). Joan Didion's professional response to a query about finding a five-year-old girl reading a comic book and tripping on LSD affirms this view. "'Let me tell you, it was gold. . . . You live for moments like that, if you're doing a piece. Good or bad'" (Didion qtd. in R. Mead n. p.). On the other hand, Tracy Kidder, guided by "law and ethics," talks to his subjects before he becomes involved in an assignment. His goal is to clarify both the "potential consequences" of a subject's involvement in the "story" as

well as to inform the subject that while he is being paid for his job, he cannot pay them for their information ("Securing" 177). Isabel Wilkerson agrees that a "narrative journalist [has] . . . a dual responsibility—to the reader and to the subject" ("Playing" 176). Her belief is that the writer cannot become "too close" to her subjects. In a kind of moral tango, Wilkerson notes that "lending a hand where appropriate" may not "fundamentally alter [the] lives" and conditions about which she reports at the same time that the journalist gains insights into people's lives, increasing an account's veracity. Clearly, "the moral imperative lies with the writer" (Boo 177). This last statement rings true—neither irresponsible and ambiguous, on the one hand, nor condemnatory, on the other. If the utilitarian definition of an ethical judgement or action originates from a "universal point of view," one grounded in considering the preferences and needs of those affected by a decision or action (Singer 1-15), then writing an essay or book that will inform the public about a subject's issues or difficulties is an eminently moral action—more so, if it influences readers to resolve the subject's problems.

Moreover, it grieves any serious person who is delighted by literary nonfiction but pulled by morality to admit that a text may include details that do not entirely jibe with the *truth* as the individuals in the text know it. Add to this the disappointment that comes with knowing that in logic, if a statement is partially false, it is false. In all honesty, scholars and reviewers acknowledge that literary nonfiction is a genre that straddles the "borderline between fiction and nonfiction, [where writers of the genre feel] the freedom to invent, appropriate, or embroider" (Lopate *To Show* viii). In fact, its interpretative quality differentiates literary nonfiction from conventional journalism, which, theoretically, gives just the facts and, perhaps, the background. Obviously, its emphasis

on real people, locatable places, and the chronology of real incidents separates literary nonfiction from the *roman a clef,* which may represent real people or places with fictitious names and a partially or largely fictional world, manipulated by the author. For example, as Ferrell explains, Orwell's *Burmese Days* is based on the writer's experience as a civil servant in Burma in the 1920s. The piece conveys the writer/participant's negative opinions about the British empire, but the characters and the narrative, while believable and familiar, are fabricated (101).

However, other representations of "real" reality are open to the same criticism as literary nonfiction. For example, Civil War photographer Matthew Brady heralded that "'the camera is the eye of history'" (qtd. in Sontag 52), but modern viewers of his work are disappointed to learn that during the Civil War, at least one of Brady's men in the field moved the real body of a dead soldier to a more "photogenic" site: one photograph, which deliberately posed a dead man with a weapon inappropriate for his specialty, confirms this practice (Sontag 53-54). While the picture contains at least two errors, the *truth* it conveys is that Americans died horrible deaths fighting in a war on their native soil. Americans could see it. Likewise, both film scholars and audiences debate what constitutes a documentary film. According to Grierson, the artistic documentary movie evolved from the French travelogue and the "peacetime newsreel" as well as sports and nature "shorts," which were visual "lectures" about the topics (81-92). Focusing on real people, topics, and places, it requires a director, a screenwriter, an editor, and sometimes re-creations of scenes and actors playing parts of real people (Nichols 1-16, 32-41). It is obvious that each of the creators, editors, and actors can affect the story's slant, hence its veracity.

One such film that stretches the definition of what a documentary is, is *Triumph of the Will,* written and directed by Leni Riefenstahl in 1934. According to Riefenstahl, the film was a documentary that depicted "'real events on film, without alteration'" (Riefenstahl qtd. in Stroetgen 2). Two arguments have been made against Riefenstahl's post-World War II claim. First, the occasion itself was a week-long rally in Nuremberg for Germany's rising National Socialist Party. Its intent was to unify German citizens by recruiting them as zealous members in the party and soldiers fanatically loyal to the state: propaganda. Second, Riefenstahl's treatment of the schedule of events was romantic and "ceremonial," lacking meetings of the Reich Party, where the business of the state was done (Stroetgen 2). What the film shows are images of Adolf Hitler, descending in an airplane through the clouds to earth. He meets an adoring crowd of countryfolk, uniformed soldiers, Hitler Youth in shorts and knee socks, and mothers with babies. Camera shot after camera shot and scene after scene at different places and times of the day repeat the image of a glorified *fuhrer,* surrounded by throngs of enthusiastic Germans. Stroetgen points out that in lieu of commentary, the "rhetoric" is largely music in a major key, selected for its folkloric familiarity—the *Horst Wessel Song* about a hero who sacrifices himself for his country, march music that emphasized the soldiers' steps, and the "Awaken Chorus" from *Meistersinger von Nurnberg,* "then as today . . . known as the *defacto* National Socialist opera" (5). Riefenstahl concludes the intent of the music and the cinematography as well as the film with the logic of Rudolf Hess, "The Party is Hitler! But Hitler is Germany, as Germany is Hitler!" (*Triumph of the Will*). The hyperbolic slant to promote enthusiastic, sacrificial obedience to National Socialism, Hitler, and war is unmistakable and breathtaking.

Clearly, the problem in determining whether the truth communicated in both written and visual representations of real life is true enough depends upon how much of a "hand" the writer or the film writer, editor, narrator, or studio has had in the piece. Equally as important are the perceptions and recollections of members of the audience, who may have experienced the real event that the author, screenwriter, or director present. Likewise, similar considerations of the truth of literary nonfiction—the writer, the reader, writing style, and the nature and interpretation of reality—all relate to the time and place in which a text is written and read. Clearly, place is the setting and a silent participant in the reality that unfolds in a nonfiction text.

A THEORY OF PLACE

Basic to the above discussion—and crucial in an analysis of the societal implications in the nonfiction by Hersey, Capote, Baldwin, and Didion—are assumptions about place. Clearly, place is a location at a particular time. It is the "stage" upon which real people or fictional characters act. There, the "players" reveal themselves; writers, their societies and themselves. Place, though, is more than a backdrop. Location links feelings, sense impressions, and personal and public history to the present moment. While writers of novels and verse assert that "their" place evokes these qualities for them in what they write,[3] this sensibility is true for writers of literary nonfiction. This certainly was true of Defoe's reportage in his city, London, and it will be shown to be true of the

[3] Two essays in Weatherby and Core's *Place in American Fiction: Excursions and Explorations,* Wendell Berry's "Imagination in Place" (71-81) and Donoghue's "Eudora Welty's Sense of Place" (133-146) are particularly evocative of the connection of place, time, and the inner lives of human beings.

work of writers in this dissertation, particularly that of James Baldwin and Joan Didion, whose hometowns sparked insights into "human geography" in their articles.

The converse is true, too, however. Authors who are not native to a locale or who have traveled the globe often interpret a new place through their "international" memories and associations of places. Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, a nuanced analysis of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a Nazi leader who was responsible for ordering the slaughter of thousands of innocent, non-Aryan Europeans during World War II, is informed by such a multinational view. Born in Germany in 1906 and educated at its universities, the political theorist and writer does not excuse Eichmann's deeds, but she does understand him. Arendt notes that Eichmann's testimony reveals his belief that the ideals of *duty* and *morality* toward others, a humanitarian notion, was a duty and morality to the state. She observes, however, that his government propagated immoral laws. Eichmann, an average citizen, did not particularly dislike the people whose deaths he arranged during the Third Reich (136): hence, Arendt coined the term "the banality of evil." Nevertheless, Arendt, a Jew who had fled Nazi Germany, travelled through Europe, and became an American citizen in 1950, questioned the morality and legality of Eichmann's arrest—kidnapping—by Israelis (209-210, 238). Surely, M. M. Bakhtin, Russian literary scholar of the twentieth century, would have attributed Arendt's logical and objective view to her exposure to ideas of the many cultures in the many places in which she had lived and taught. He also would have understood that those with differing views—fascists, survivors of the Nazis' death camps, citizens of the new State of Israel, and those who justly feared anti-Semitism (Elon vii-xxiii)—were, in turn, influenced by their experiences of place and time. Authors like

George Orwell and Rebecca West and, in this study, John Hersey and Truman Capote are such "outsiders" who observed and analyzed the societies and places about which they wrote.

All writers of literary nonfiction, though, are "homodiegetic" narrators in their nonfiction texts: they "are characters (even if unnamed) in the stories they tell" (Lehman 50). Unlike the storytellers of fiction, most actually participated in the event. Hence, the "story" of a public event or an encounter, which occurs in a precise time and place — including history; the people who inhabit it, their attitudes, and their socioeconomic condition; the consequences of its climate, landscape, and topography; the events that happen there—is always an interpretation—by definition, subjective—forever open to debate from others who shared the experience and future readers who reinterpret the experience based upon their eras.

BAKHTIN'S THEORY OF THE CHRONOTOPE

Russian philosopher and literary theorist M. M. Bakhtin includes this view of place in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays,* published in Russia in 1975. Bakhtin credits Albert Einstein's dazzling, twentieth century theory of relativity in mathematics (84) for his own observations about the unity of space and time in fiction and coins a word for it: the "chronotope" (86). To Bakhtin, examining a chronotope, one place at a particular time and then seen at different moments over time, is a way to understand the characters and the culture in a novel.[4] Hence, meetings on a road or in a parlor, gatherings in a castle, a town square, or at a threshold are some of the chronotopes that

[4] Holquist, Bakhtin's editor, is helpful in further defining "chronotope" (425-426).

Bakhtin highlights when he discusses the fiction from many ages and countries. Each chronotope provides "a weaving of historical and socio-public events together with the personal and deeply private side of life" by placing characters in the present with markers from different eras, making time concrete and providing a perspective on the present (245). A corollary to this is that when an archetypal chronotope, e.g., a scene, is repeated at a different time (with different characters), that chronotope becomes a motif that provides insight into character, theme, and the text's society. technically, it contributes to the unity of the text.

Conversely, Bakhtin recognizes that chronotopes in ancient epics reveal their cultures, but unlike their appearances in modern (realistic) novels, he finds them limited in the development of the hero and his moral or inner life. He asserts that epics concern a "national heroic past," told from "the reverent point of view of a descendant" (depending upon the culture, one infers a *rhapsode,* a *griot*, a *maggid,* or the like) to other members of posterity (13). Thus, the epic embodies the culture's history and atavistic beliefs. As a result, the epic's language, tone, characters, and societal practices—all of which are seen in the narrative's chronotopes—are part of a terminated, "valorized" past (19)—not part of the present. Moreover, while chronotopes typical of the epic are the "meeting by the road" and the "encounter," the epic's lack of concrete detail about locale, characters' interior lives, biology, dress, and biographies, and the like make them vulnerable to the control of "timeless" forces: chance, fate, or the gods. Bakhtin calls this "empty time" a "temporal hiatus" (91); consequently, the heroes of epics are "passive, completely unchanging" (105), triumphing because of who they are (e.g., royalty favored by the gods), not because of what they have learned. Interestingly, in his Bakhtinian analysis of

Dostoevsky's works, Morson adds that the modern equivalent of the ancient epic would be a work guided by a single ideology: "utopian socialism, materialistic determinism and divine omniscience" (110). These works negate life as a "process" of learning. Moreover, Morson adds that the most important part of what should make a hero is his "responsibility" to society and his ethical treatment of other human beings.

Both Bakhtin and Morson, his modern interpreter, assert that the realistic novel, a descendant of classical satire, locates characters and heroes in contemporary, identifiable times and places; addresses the issues that concern them; and provides narration and dialogue in contemporary, often spoken, language (Bakhtin 5-40). Accordingly, chronotopes in novels include descriptions of homes, towns, landscape, and clothing—additional attributes that suggest a particular era as well as a character's background, preferences, and motivations. The details move the narrative from the abstract to the concrete. Hence, the hero's personal response to a given setting animates the plot in which the present-day hero fashions his own fate and that of others (84-258). In a very practical sense, this description resembles fine literary nonfiction.

In fact, for Bakhtin, realistic language is the key to fictional "verisimilitude," to bringing all "aspects of reality" (e.g., sociology, history, politics, literature, weather) into the chronotopes that compose the world of a novel (321). This, he calls "heteroglossia" (301-331). In a fully realized novel, the author "refracts" the narrator's voice about a given topic or character with "a character's inner speech" (319), dialogue, pronouncements of authority figures, idioms and maxims, letters, etc. Therefore, closely aligned with a language's linguistic variation are "social and ideological" differences, or

social class, within a given language (67-68). In this way, the novel provided a linguistic world that was parallel to that of the contemporary reader.

Likewise, in the 1960s, Tom Wolfe asserts his vision of literary nonfiction as:

> . . . the recording of everyday gestures, habits, manners, customs, styles of furniture, clothing, decoration, styles of traveling, eating, keeping house, modes of behavior toward children, servants, superiors, inferiors, peers, plus the various looks, glances, poses, styles of walking and other symbolic details that might exist within a scene. ("The New Journalism" 47)

Wolfe asserts that the genre is not new (57). Just as Bakhtin recognized that the origins of the novel were in classical literature, Wolfe sees the foundations of literary nonfiction in the novel. As noted above, though, the writer of literary nonfiction often enters a contemporary place and interacts with the people who inhabit it; thus, that writer becomes a participant and sociologist, who engages in "'field work,' observational research, and [. . . views] the social life of the group from inside that group" (Meisenhelder qtd. in Mosser 18).

Finally, Bakhtin includes readers, who are influenced by their own eras and places, as participants in texts (252-254). He cautions readers not to:

> confuse . . . the represented world with the world outside the text (naïve realism); [or . . .] the author-creator of the work with the author as human being (naive biographism); [or . . .] confuse the listener or reader of multiple and varied periods, recreating and renewing the text, with the passive listener or reader of one's own time (which leads to dogmatism in interpretation and evaluation). (253)

Clearly, the first injunction relates to fiction alone, but the second and third are relevant to readers of nonfiction. The message paraphrased for participating in a nonfiction narrative would be that readers must be aware of an author's "hand-in-the-text" but must concentrate on the text; in addition, readers must participate actively in a community of readers of a text. Thus, Bakhtin's theory anticipates Americans' re-interpretation of their cultural and national heroes and icons—among them Columbus and colonialism, the

founding fathers who were also slave owners, names and symbols of sports' teams that stereotype Native Americans, etc.—to reflect the many voices that always have represented America. Before that, though, his insistence on recognizing the role of place in chronotopes in works of fiction prefigures the method of literary nonfiction.

LITERARY NONFICTION THROUGH BAKHTIN'S LENS

This study examines the effect of place on real people in several of the works of four writers of American literary nonfiction that were published between 1946 and 1985. The texts present globe-altering as well as regional events through the lives of individual human beings, who absorb and accommodate to the effects of society's inequality or instability (i.e., change). In John Hersey's *Hiroshima,* place is a victim of American technology (the detonation of the first atomic bomb), a mute character that is transformed into an existential threat to the citizens of a Japanese city—both to their physical survival and to their views and beliefs. Hersey exposes the secret of the effects of the atomic bomb. Place also becomes a warning to Americans and citizens of the world that such a fate could befall them. By inference, the city of Hiroshima becomes a symbol of the perversion of the American ideal of progress: of immorality condoned by a state of war. Conversely, place in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* presents a paradox: stereotypically wholesome Holcomb, Kansas is the place of the wanton murders of four members of the civic-minded, wealthy Clutter family. Paradoxically, it is Kansas, the "heartland" of America, that is the site of the state-mandated executions of the two troubled and impoverished murderers, who sought their share in the American dream. The chronicle prompts Americans to question their national mythology as well as the justness of the death penalty. In contrast, James Baldwin's *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction*

1948-1985 examines systemic racism in the writer's portrayal of the Harlem neighborhood of New York City, Paris, and other towns and cities in North America and Europe. These places are crucibles for human conscience and ethics. Finally, the critical essays in Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and *The White Album* present the contrasting layers of the past and the present in chronotopes, often in California, her home state, to question the decisions made and actions taken by individuals who created and affected some of mid-twentieth century America's public events and habits.

One caveat, however, is that while these writers' lives overlapped, they were not part of an intimate salon.[5] Unlike the German and English Romantics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, their American iteration (the Transcendentalists) in nineteenth century Boston, the Bloomsbury group in London of the early twentieth century, or the Algonquin Roundtable of the same era in New York, the writers were not bound to each other by a lifestyle or a political or personal philosophy--nor did their affinity for each other and their ideas create new print media, as twentieth century London's Bloomsbury Group created the Hogarth Press and New York's members of the Algonquin Round Table created and contributed to *The New Yorker.* In fact, while Hersey, Capote, Baldwin, and Didion lived in or near New York, it is not clear that they had a particular affinity for each other. The writers were chosen for this dissertation to illustrate the variety in approaches to the genre of literary nonfiction and to analyze their presentation of place. Collectively, the conversation about place among the texts—from America's

[5] John Hersey's life spanned 1914-1993; Truman Capote's, 1924-1984; James Baldwin's 1924-1987; and Joan Didion's, 1934-2021. However, both Hersey's *Hiroshima* and Capote's *In Cold Blood* were first published in *The New Yorker.*

bombing of Japan, to murders in the Midwest, to a black writer's reaction to race in America, to a personal reaction to dramatic as well as mundane lifestyles in America—provides a story with astute commentary, not merely a report, about the United States in the middle of twentieth century that is still relevant to Americans of the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER TWO: HERSEY'S *HIROSHIMA*

Published first as the only article in the August 31, 1946 edition of *The New Yorker*, *Hiroshima,* by American journalist-novelist John Hersey, appeared as a book that fall. At the time, the text was the only source of information about the effect of America's August 6, 1945 detonation on Japan of the world's first atomic bomb, the occasion that forced Japan to surrender. Hersey had not been an eyewitness to that event. However, his account, chronicles the event from the viewpoints of six Japanese survivors, whom he interviewed.

RACE AND GOVERNMENT OF PLACE

Stories about an "ultimate weapon" before the bombing of Hiroshima were part of Western culture, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At that time, they belonged to the genre of science fiction.[1] Patrick B. Sharp notes that in these "future-war-stories" (435), the authors projected the near-annihilation of cities inhabited by white "everymen," hence Western civilizations, by (often) technologically superior Japanese aggressors. Sharp posits that the victorious Japanese in the Russso-Japanese war of 1905 and the Japanese alliance with the Axis powers during World War II, including that country's bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, contributed to the characterization of the Japanese as the "Yellow Peril." Newspaper articles and radio programs spread the stereotype, and movies popularized it (435-438). Isolating Americans of Japanese descent

[1] Sharp points to I. F. Clarke's "The Battle of Dorking" (1891); H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *The World Set Free* (1914), which coined the term "atomic bomb"; Jack London's "The Unparalleled Invasion" (1910), and comic strips like *Buck Rogers* and *Flash Gordon* (435-438).

in internment camps during World War II (from 1942 to 1945) in the United States, their native country, was another aspect of inheritance of American wartime xenophobia and racism.[2]

These cultural assumptions and behaviors serve as partial explanations of the American public's acceptance of its government's paucity of information about the long-term effects of dropping "Little Boy," the first atomic bomb, on Hiroshima and then "Fat Man," the first plutonium bomb, on Nagasaki, Japan, both days apart in August 1945. Neophyte President Harry S. Truman, who had approved the action, reflected that the atomic bomb was "'the greatest thing in history'" (Truman qtd. in Wallace and Weiss 233). He understood that "the gadget" (127) would change the nature of warfare, diplomacy, and life on Earth.[3] William Laurence, writer for the *New York Times* on loan to the War Department, in Los Alamos, New Mexico (the atomic bomb's birthplace), shaped public opinion with his reverence for its creation. In fact, he won a Pulitzer Prize for his knowledge of the bomb's fabrication and the possibilities of nuclear power (Lifton and Mitchell 15-19). On August 9, three days after "Little Boy" had annihilated Hiroshima, Laurence, who accompanied the crew on its flight over Nagasaki, exulted about "Fat Man's" anticipated effects: "'Does one not feel any pity for the poor devils about to die? Not when one thinks of Pearl Harbor or the death march on Bataan'"

---

[2] A growing number of sources, among them Schmitz's *Enemies Among Us: The Relocation, Internment, and Repatriation of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans During the Second World War* (2021), mitigates but does not excuse the possible charge of racism in the United States's creation of Japanese internment camps. Similar camps existed in the United States for first generation Americans, naturalized citizens, and those on visas from other enemy countries.

[3] Interestingly, while *Hiroshima* describes in detail the horrors of the atomic bomb, Hersey wrote an even-tempered sketch for *The New Yorker* in 1952 about a day in the life of Harry S. Truman, the president who ordered the bomb to be dropped. The piece, contained in *Life Sketches* (229-253) is a testament to a fair-minded journalist.

(Laurence qtd. in Wallace 241). Accordingly, in September of 1945, a national poll recorded that while the American public was concerned about the bomb's devastation of land and property, it accepted the bomb as a decisive way to end World War II as well as to anticipate the technology's "'useful development of atomic energy in the future'" (Gallup qtd. in Wallace and Weiss 250).

Elsewhere in the world, the response was not optimistic. Two weeks after the explosion, E. B. White, a columnist for *The New Yorker* reflected the magazine's trademark irony when he juxtaposed where he was —in his kitchen, cooking—while a city on an island in the Pacific Ocean was being destroyed. His conclusion, however, expressed metaphysical concerns: he felt that the scientists who had conceived and created the atomic bomb had engaged in other worldly activities: "'stealing God's stuff'" (13). In October 1945, writer George Orwell thought concretely about the future, envisioning the practical implications of the bomb. Writing from Britain, he noted that historically, the discovery of a new weapon always has led to a change in political and social power; consequently, he predicted that the development of such an expensive weapon would lead to "two or three monstrous super-states, each possessed of such a weapon by which millions of people could be wiped out in a few seconds, dividing the world between them" (*Essays IV* 6). Unlike early descriptions of the United States's victory, directed by the government and enforced by General Douglas MacArthur, the supreme commander of the occupying forces in Japan, and Lieutenant General Leslie Groves, who had overseen the Manhattan Project's development of the atomic bomb (Blume 42-47), Orwell's piece did not applaud the United States's political triumph through scientific superiority. Yet Orwell had not reported from Japan; his trepidation

that the "A-bomb" would destroy humanity and alter global politics adversely was speculative. In fact, from September 5, 1945 to February 1946, no *New York Times* reporter was assigned to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the bomb sites. During the American occupation of Japan after the war, reports relayed the rebuilding of the cities and the "'distinguished attention'" that survivors received from American doctors (Lifton and Mitchell 50). The government's official narrative allowed only photographs of sections of the city's rubble without showing images of the disabling or the lethal injuries to Japanese civilians (59-61).

In contrast, John Hersey's article humanized the Japanese people for Americans and other citizens of the Western world by citing the experiences of six residents of Hiroshima who suffered injuries from the bomb's blast as well as from the long-term effects of its radiation. He provided information that the government had not: a "'sensory representation of the cataclysm'" (Lifton and Mitchell 89). Thus Hersey's 30,000-word article, which was published as a book in the fall of 1946, evokes place to describe the event's tragic effect on the Japanese. Interestingly, Hersey summons his own place and is mindful of his reader's place as he gives a voice to the atomic bomb's victims, Japanese civilians.

THE AUTHOR'S AND HIS AUDIENCE'S PLACE

Relevant to Hersey's spare volume of nonfiction is Bakhtin's observation that an author's place affects the writing of both fiction and literary nonfiction: the events that occur in an author's lifetime and in discrete geographic locations as well as the cultural understandings and language of these places affect the writer's choices of subject matter and his slant on them (Bakhtin 254-258). In fact, this is the premise of Hersey's most

recent biographer, Jeremy Treglown, who connects Hersey's background to his global worldview (ix, 1-19). Hersey's wartime articles, profiles for *Time* in the 1940s, and fiction are all largely based on international events and support Treglown's thesis. Certainly, the form, "characters," and tone of *Hiroshima* originate from Hersey's "place."

A paradox about *Hiroshima* is that for the writer, who had recently been awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (*A Bell for Adano* in 1945), the work of nonfiction's attitude toward World War II is both revolutionary and predictable. Earlier, as a war correspondent sent to the South Pacific by Time Incorporated in 1942, Hersey wrote about World War II from the point of view of the soldiers fighting the war. This assignment introduced Hersey to the battlefield, and the story of a three-day skirmish became *Into the Valley*, first published in the same year. Like that book, *Hiroshima* also centers on the survival of ordinary human beings during a war that they themselves neither instigated nor designed—though *Hiroshima* highlights the plight of civilians living in an antagonistic country. As one might expect of a piece commissioned by the publisher of popular American magazines, however, the slant of *Into the Valley* is ardently pro-American. He captures the banter, i.e., Bakhtin's "heteroglossia,"[4] of individual Marines: "'Private sir,--[is] most popular rank in the service'" (10). He records the experience and "toughness" of Captain Rigaud's experienced company (34) and the heroism behind the morphined smile of Utley, a terribly wounded corpsman (88-89). Hersey acknowledges an understated farewell to him at the end of the battle in which sixty Marines died—more casualties than any other battle on Guadalcanal to that point. A

[4] Here, the language of the Marines reflects the "social, historical, meteorological, [and] physiological" conditions of the place (Bakhtin 428).

Marine jokes: "'I guess you got a lousy impression of the way us guys operate . . .. We're not the bums of the world, really'" (109-110). Hersey notes that his heartfelt assurance is that he will contact Company H's kin when he returns to the States and that one Marine says that what he wants most is "'pie,'" but pie endearingly symbolizes place: home, family, safety. Restraint and resilience on the battlefield is the sum of the details and the dialogue that Hersey chooses to communicate to his reading audience at home.

Yet while *Into the Valley* includes the American soldiers' dedication to their homeland, it simultaneously records the anti-Axis stance and, frankly, the racism of these men under fire in a strange land. In a forward to the book written in 1989, almost five decades later, Hersey recollects that in his original draft, he edited the Marines' language, substituting expletives with milder diction. Replacements, like "'golludingwhiz,'" echo another sort of heteroglossia, that is, the language permissible to the publisher and to the public. Indeed, these words conform to his publisher's requirements of that era as well as to the expectations of his readers. At the same time, Americans under fire still appear to be restrained, hence noble.

Hersey's reference to "Japs" in his narration reflects a negative connotation for the enemy on whose ground the Americans fight, however. Contributing to this censure is a fear for their lives; a disorientation in place, "'the fog of war'" (11). One infers that the language also betrays a cultural xenophobia transplanted from an America that sent Japanese Americans to internment camps that same year. Hersey quotes one Marine:

> "I wish we were fighting against Germans. They are human beings, like us. Fighting against them must be like an athletic performance—matching your skill against someone you know is good. Germans are misled, but at least they react like men, But the Japs are like animals. Against them you have to get used to their animal stubbornness and tenacity." (47)

Hersey's foreword to the 1989 edition justifies with regret the inclusion of the comparison of the Japanese to animals as being a "truthful" inclusion of the words of a Marine of that time and place. At the same time, he rues that "to [his] own shame, [he wrote] . . . "I envision 'a swarm of intelligent little animals' fussing around the mortar tubes on the other side of the river" (xxvii). Yet he keeps the diction in the book, noting that he was a product of his time and place (Bakhtin's heteroglossia): the son of missionaries to China, who empathized with that country's people in 1939. He writes of his horror at the "arrogance and cruelty" of the Japanese in that country's occupation of China and recalls, like so many Americans, the United States's "humiliations of Pearl Harbor and Bataan" (xxviii). Thus, Hersey admits that place influenced his view; his view, his language.

What is groundbreaking about *Hiroshima* is that Hersey writes about the bombing of Hiroshima from the viewpoints of Japanese victims—not from that of the United States government, or of scientists or generals, or of the crew of the *Enola Gay.* The private citizens are not parts of the machinery of an inscrutable, belligerent government. Most are moral, self-sacrificing individuals, who struggle for their own survival as well as for the preservation of their community. By design, Hersey and William Shawn, his editor at *The New Yorker,* agreed that unlike other news sources, Hersey would go to Japan to report "'what happened not to buildings but to human beings'" (Hersey qtd. in Blume 47). More fundamental to his change of attitude toward the Japanese would seem to be his upbringing. As missionaries, his parents built and served a community of people in China who shared neither the family's race nor its culture. For their son, this good will toward all human beings was an atavistic trait (Treglown 23), thus a predictable attitude

toward the Japanese, who, suffering the effects of the atomic bomb, were people living under extreme duress. (This absence of malice is reminiscent of Hersey's attitude toward President Truman, mentioned earlier, despite the president's fatal decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.)

Hersey's immediate place also influenced his "writerly" choices in composing *Hiroshima.* Convalescing from the flu in a destroyer's infirmary on the way to Hiroshima in 1946, Hersey took Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey,* a novel set in Peru in which six characters die during the fictitious bridge's collapse, from the ship's library. Hersey's illness on the ship was fortuitous, because the book inspired him to tell his real tale from the points of view of six survivors of the bomb (Blume 58). Of the 25 to 50 people whom he interviewed, Hersey chose six people, unknown to each other before the explosion, who found their ways to the same place (as Wilder's characters did to a bridge), the city's Asano Park (87).

A more complex consideration of the author's and his audience's places challenges Sanders's claim that the book's six subjects are "random survivors" (42). Hersey's childhood, informed by his parents' strong Christian faith, had to have drawn him to the narratives of two Christian clergymen: Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge, a Jesuit priest from Germany, and the Reverend Mr. Kiyoshi Tanimoto, a Japanese citizen and Methodist pastor, who was educated at Emory College, in Atlanta, Georgia. One infers that strategically, these individuals would also appeal to Hersey's audience: readers of *The New Yorker.* In this vein, tales of two other survivors are useful to the narrative and are rooted in the place. By virtue of their profession, the two doctors, like the clergy, would have been identifiable and venerable to Western readers. Like the altruistic

ministrations of the clergy within the city, the wanderings of Dr. Terufumi Sasaki, a surgeon in the Red Cross hospital, led him to provide urgent care for the many wounded residents of Hiroshima. In this way, Dr. Sasaki's thread of the story connects readers with the atomic bomb's effect on the city's population as well as on its landscape. Conversely, Dr. Masakazu Fujii, a doctor-capitalist (a spin on the professional that with whom Americans would understand), owned a hospital, but the bomb destroyed both his home and his hospital. The two remaining residents of Hiroshima whom Hersey follows post-bomb are women. Hard workers, Mrs. Hatsuyo Nakamura, the mother of three, young children and a tailor's widow, and Miss Toshiko Sasaki, a clerk for the East India Tin Works, whose emotional and financial concerns center on her family, lived in modest, subsistence-level conditions. Sadly, faith, medicine, industriousness, family responsibility, and civic responsibility—all qualities that Americans always have esteemed—could not protect these citizens and their place against the product of America's progressive technology. Although, as Yavenditti notes in "American Conscience," Hersey describes the bomb's destruction through the eyes of these six survivors, his style is subdued; he does not preach (35).

Hersey's selection of citizens is deliberate in other ways as well. None of the survivors served in the Japanese military or the government, nor did any of them perform any other task that would be offensive to his Western readers. In fact, the Reverend Mr. Tanimoto was a member of his neighborhood's association to protect civilians against American B-29 bombers, the expected instrument of destruction. Moreover, unlike Nazi Germany, which required even its "'very ordinary Germans'" to join various age- or gender-related fascist hate groups (Jahner 326), Hersey's non-military, Japanese citizens,

who lived on islands largely isolated from other cultures, were unified in their absolute allegiance to the emperor*:* they were loyal to "the spiritual embodiment of their homeland" (Wallace 245). At base, these individuals were no threat to anyone or to any country.

Hersey also appeals to American and global *pathos* when he notes that the "Japanese wartime diet" was meager for all, and that because of the rations of beans and black bread, the tall, thirty-eight-year-old Father Kleinsorge was weak and malnourished: "he was tired all the time," and like Father Cieslik, he suffered from "painful and urgent diarrhea" (*Hiroshima* 11). Hersey's narrative explicitly links Father Kleinsorge's malnourishment with the politics and psychology of place: ". . . [the priest] felt the strain of being a foreigner in an increasingly xenophobic Japan: even a German, since the defeat of the Fatherland, was unpopular" (11). Yet all the people who lived in Hiroshima were victims of the prolonged war, and however weak the priest remains after the atomic bomb is detonated, Father Kleinsorge's salient, selfless efforts to comfort and rescue members of the entire community convinces traumatized Japanese souls to convert to Catholicism—the permanently disabled Miss Sasaki, for one (85-87). Undoubtedly, he earns the esteem of readers. In addition, in the wake of the bomb, the community that is left works together to rebuild the city. Emblematic of this unity would be two new friends: Father Kleinsorge, the Catholic priest from Germany, and the Reverend Mr. Tanimoto, a Japanese Methodist minister, who was educated at Emory University in the United States (84). Before the bomb, the Japanese were suspicious of both men, because they represented alien beliefs and practices. Oddly, it is Mr. Tanimoto who is questioned by police (4). Yet these leaders of Western faiths in an Asian city extend themselves in a

noxious place and assist each other in comforting injured civilians of Hiroshima. Especially resonant for Hersey's readers is the way the clerics' spirituality manifests itself in soul-supporting actions.

THE DESTROYED CITY: LOSING PLACE

Hersey's chronicle covers about a year, but it reads like one continuous, menacing present about the city, described by six survivors from Hiroshima's four-square mile inner district. The six lives are transformed by "a tremendous flash" that hits the place in each of the six testimonies. Details about the landscape and life in the city before the bomb are relevant only in their absence: each individual faces the very real, existential dilemma of making sense of a life ruined by the loss of loved ones, injury to self, and total loss or major damage to property.[5] Indeed, the atomic bomb affected the basic elements of life and place—earth, air, fire, and water. Hersey's article-turned-book bares the ways in which the atomic bomb and its lingering effects contaminated the elements of nature to create an inferno that destroyed the city's infrastructure, razing houses, apartments, hospitals, places of business, and houses of worship: obliterating neighborhoods. In turn, this place injured and killed the people, obliterated possessions—leaving only the memories attached to them—and quashed expectations of the future that the survivors associated with their lives in Hiroshima. To paraphrase Russell Shorto, whose article about Hersey's piece appeared in *The New Yorker* almost 75 years after the bombing, *Hiroshima* bears witness (1).

---

[5] Interestingly, Patrick Sharp compares images of destruction in *Hiroshima*'s to the haunting images in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land,* written 23 years earlier, when the atomic bomb was a fantasy of science fiction. Sharp notes that Eliot's poem focuses on the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—that are part of the destruction caused by America's bomb.

Hersey structures the event like fiction, beginning *in medias res,* with the explosion's "noiseless flash" above Hiroshima, which becomes the title of the first section. In this way, Hersey initiates his readers into the civilians' lived experience of America's resolution of World War II six times (5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16). The chronotope is Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 "at exactly fifteen minutes past eight in the morning" (1), and each resident's sensory and physical memories from a different location within the city registers the initial effects of the flash,[6] the blast, and the aftermath.

While traditional stories of combat do not often focus on women. Hersey validates the perceptions and experiences of two of the women under siege. Miss Yoshiko Sasaki, a clerk at the Asia Tin Works, describes the bomb's intensity to Hersey. She says that when she saw a "blinding light," she was not facing the windows. Sixteen hundred yards from ground zero, her office collapsed on her, and she "lost consciousness" for about three hours. When someone does rescue Miss Sasaki, she requires months of hospitalization at different places, because her left leg is seriously damaged. Hersey concludes this portion of his interview with Miss Sasaki: "There, in the tin factory, in the first moment of the atomic age, a human being was crushed by books" (16). Ironies abound. The matter-of-fact reiteration of the horrors that befell Miss Sasaki gains a breathless momentum and power via polysyndeton, the use of the word *and* to link the various assaults of the setting on the human being after the blast. More obvious is Hersey's caustic astonishment, which ends the first chapter: "There, in the tin factory, in

[6] Strategically, Hersey, steeped in the Bible as a child, does not distract his reader's attention from the narrative of the bomb's horror by contrasting the bomb's destructive "flash" with the light of Creation. in Genesis 1:3. He leaves it to the reader to contrast (or to find the irony in) the immorality, fatal fallibility, and *hubris* of humanity (of the United States) with the benign creativity of the Bible's Creator.

the first moment of the atomic age, a human being was crushed by books" (16). Of course, the blast maimed Miss Sasaki, but since the books appear to contain information about personnel, it also damaged employment records—one proof of human existence—about the workers in the tin factory. Finally, Hersey grimly teases the reader with the generic understanding of the purpose of books: they contain information and lead to knowledge and understanding. In this instance, the bomb's blast transformed books into secondary weapons, capable of maiming human beings.

Likewise, the night before the explosion, Mrs. Nakamura, a tailor-turned-soldier's widow, expected an attack by conventional bombers—a familiar, wartime occurrence in Japan. She reports that she took appropriate measures to protect her three young children. Exhausted but awake in the early morning, she saw a flash, "whiter than white," outside her home, and she, too, was thrust into the air. She tells Hersey that she remembers that she "seemed to fly" to her children in the next room, but that she was then thrown down and covered by rubble. The language used to describe this mother's personal war against the bomb-animated setting in her own home is suitably dramatic, replete with language that recalls sense impressions, not logic. She "freed herself," responded to her five-year-old child's "cry," and "started frantically to claw her way toward the baby," the only one of her children whom she could "see" or "hear" (9). While still weak and stunned, she instinctively located her buried but living children (8-9). Mrs. Nakamura and her children survive, but they must rely on the kindness of her in-laws until she can build a hovel near the site of her former home.

The bomb had no respect for social class. The affluent, "hedonistic" Dr. Masakazu Fujii had feared an attack of B-29 aircrafts on the "untouched city" and sent

his family to other locations. He sensed "a brilliant yellow" while reading a newspaper on his porch at his house on the grounds of his private hospital, 1550 yards from ground zero. He reports that he was instantly catapulted from the porch to beams that remained standing from the destroyed hospital, where he hung helplessly on the crossed bars, dipping into the Kyo River (9-11).[7] He sustained injuries but lived to rebuild his hospital, share drinks with American occupying forces, and reestablish his sybaritic life.

Dr. Terfumi Sasaki, a young, new doctor at the Red Cross Hospital 1650 yards from the explosion, recalls an intense "photographic flash" of light from the window behind him. The hospital's only unhurt doctor, he remembers losing his glasses and being thrown to the floor, but his patients screamed or died as the hospital ceilings fell and the building's foundation shook. He says that what was left was "plaster, dust, blood, and vomit" (46). Wrapping patients' new wounds and treating thousands of new patients, Dr. Sasaki's story is one of ceaseless motion amid unimaginable confusion in his hospital and in the city. His report of a discovery added to the characteristics of this unusual bomb: three days after the explosion, the hospital's vice-chief found exposed X-ray plates in the basement's vault (56). Since Hersey's readers were not privy to details of the development of the atomic bomb, it is fair to say that this observable effect of radiation and its implications in Hersey's chronicle was part of the literary primer that Hersey wished to provide his reading public.

Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge, the German priest, recounts that sitting in his residence at the Society of Jesus 1400 yards from the blast, he saw something like "a

[7] Since Hersey presents Dr. Fujii as an entrepreneur whose field is medicine, it is probable that this vision of Dr. Fujii only describes the tremendous effect of the blast's force on Dr. Fujii's body. It does not appear to suggest that Dr. Fujii is a Christ-like figure.

large meteor" that he had read about in science fiction stories as a boy, and that "he went out of his mind" (12-13). After the explosion, the wounds that will not heal and the nausea that does not abate do not prevent him from actively attempting to help his flock. Reverend Mr. Koyashi Tanimoto, the American-educated pastor of the Hiroshima Methodist Church, also recollects that he saw "a flash of light cut across the sky . . . [that] seemed [like] a sheet of sun" and "felt a sudden pressure" two miles from ground zero (5). Certainly, a person's candid recollection of the blast and subsequent challenges and improvised strategies for survival correct the world's dearth of information about how the atomic bomb's effect on their country affects the physical and mental states of all human beings. Ironically, it is Japanese civilians, who, like most citizens of the world at that time, could not imagine an atomic bomb, but who provide the most authoritative description of it.

Collectively, the narratives of these survivors introduce readers since its publication in 1946 to the atomic bomb's pervasive destruction of place and its concomitant injuries to or displacement of human beings. Equally as compelling are the atomic bomb's psycho-social effects on the survivors of Hiroshima. Clinically depressed about her smashed and infected left leg, which, after months of rest and treatment, was three inches shorter than her right leg, Miss Sasaki was too distracted by her physical pain and then despondent about her appearance to entertain a suitor. Responsible, the disabled Miss Sasaki made sure that her parentless younger siblings were cared for, and then, because she found comfort in Father Kleinsorge's ministrations, she converted to Catholicism and became a nun. Initially, the impoverished Mrs. Nakamura rests, dealing with her own nausea and loss of hair, her baby's nausea, and her son's nightmares about

his friend's death. Hersey notes that Mrs. Nakamura's listlessness, digestive disorders, "feeling of oppression, [and] sense of doom" aligned with the long-lasting symptoms of many survivors of that place. These injured people were called *hibakusha.* Because their injuries affected their physical and mental health, they could not do their jobs. Hence, employers found them unreliable, and either did not hire or fired them. Moreover, for many years, the government failed to aid them, because the Japanese government alleged that it had not caused their problems (97). Mrs. Nakamura faced her situation, however, with a kind of resignation that Hersey claims originates in Buddhist belief: "*Shikata ga nai*." Even Dr. Fujii's life changes. He refused to go to Asana Park for relief, because he felt "ashamed . . . that he looked like a beggar" (34). However, his wealth contributes to his resilience: he opens another hospital. Hersey observes that all—even Dr. Fujii—"still wonder[ed] why they lived when so many others died" (2), that is, they felt survivor's guilt.

The bomb causes the narrative's "minor characters" in Hiroshima to lose their psychological grounding as well. Mrs. Kamai carries her dead, putrefying infant for days, searching for her husband (40, 58). In addition, a mother's absence for many days causes the young Kataoka children great upset (62). Hersey also reports Father Kleinsorge's tale of Mr. Fukai, the diocese's secretary, who refused the priest's attempt to rescue him. Mr. Fukai runs back to the city to die in a conflagration near the mission house (27-29). To readers, Mr. Fukai's response is curious until they understand that Mr. Fukai's reaction is an atavistic, cultural response to his city's devastation and his country's obvious defeat—the same cultural reaction of other city dwellers: "'All for the country'" (Tanimoto qtd. in Hersey 88). Likewise, a scholar and his son, trapped under debris, die "'calm'" after

declaring loyalty to the emperor, *"'Tenno-beika, Banzai! Banzai! Banzai!'"* (88), and 13-year-old school-girls, alive long enough to know that they are dying from the bomb's noxious fumes, sing the country's national anthem, *Kimi ga go* (88). Clearly, identification with place and loyalty to the symbolic caretaker of it gives the citizens of Japan purpose and comfort in death.

Hiroshima, however, is a tale of two places: of course, it focuses on what happened in Japan on August 6, 1945, but, by implication, it concerns the United States. Hersey departs from sharing the microcosmic view of each victim's life several times. He reminds readers of the larger chronotope, that is, time and place: After about 135,000 people had evacuated Hiroshima in anticipation of conventional bombing (4), "a hundred thousand people were killed by the [atomic] bomb" (2). The latter fact he repeats several times during the chronicle. His account anticipates the reader's experience of dramatic irony: "At the time, none of [the Japanese] knew anything" (2). Conversely, as Hersey notes in the piece's *denouement*, within a year of the bomb's detonation, General MacArthur's censorship of the facts about the bomb in Japanese publications could not prevent that country's scientists from researching and sharing with each other the bomb's impact and effects. At the same time, the American public remained ignorant about the depth and breadth of destruction that their country's advanced scientific discovery wreaked upon Japanese civilians (82). It was Hersey's article in *The New Yorker* that provided the information.

ASANO PARK

Hersey could have chosen Hiroshima's train station on August 12, six days after "Little Boy's" explosion, for his account's central chronotope, the "place where the knots

of the narrative are tied and untied" (Bakhtin 250). Incongruously, the train station's electricity worked even though the rest of the city was a heap of rubble. Here, the city's populace—incapacitated parents supported by their injured children—gathered before loudspeakers that carried a speech by Hirohito the Emperor Tenno on a radio broadcast. Never before had the public heard their deified emperor on radio. If the format were unique, the content also broke with Japanese mores. The strain of Japanese culture that had urged absolute allegiance to nation and emperor, "pro rega patria mori" became a requirement of sections of the Japanese military in the last year of World War II (Ohnuki-Tierney 157-185), yet over the loudspeaker, the emperor himself commanded his people's "'whole-hearted sacrifice for the everlasting peace of the world'" by surrendering to the Allies (Tanimoto qtd. in Hersey 65). Hersey frames the scene in Mrs. Nakamura's response. Dispossessed of her modest home and acting as the sole protector of her three children, her undoubtedly enervated reaction to hearing news from her sister of the emperor's voice is one of relief. A product of her culture, Mrs. Nakamura thinks that the Japanese have been victorious. Her inference is that if the emperor were alive and the bombing had stopped, then the Japanese must have won the war. Of course, Mrs. Nakamura soon learns the truth.

Yet Hersey chooses Asano Park, the open landscape where thousands of the city's inhabitants retreat to escape their bombed and burning homes. Since focusing on this chronotope is a conscious choice (the characters in Hersey's model, Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* converge at a bridge), it bears discussion.

Asano Park, originally named after a nobleman but now called Shikkeien,[8] is a *daimyo* garden cultivated in the 1600s. It survived both fires and the atomic bomb, albeit with reconstruction ("History of Shikkeien" n. p.). Hersey's American audience, largely Judeo-Christian New Yorkers, would have associated it—consciously or unconsciously—with America's contemporary gardens—parks, natural landscapes, backyards—based on what Leo Marx, a founding professor of American Studies, calls the American "pastoral ideal," its "dream of a retreat to an oasis of harmony and joy" (3). However, in his groundbreaking study of American culture through its literature, *The Machine in the Garden* , published in 1964, Marx also juxtaposes the reality of the ideal's opposite: "progress," in the form of industrialization and capitalism.[9] As Marx suggests about American culture, the "learned instincts" of Hersey's audience (whose attitudes and beliefs created and are reflected in its literature, art, historic documents) had to juggle and/or justify the dialectic of the American *chronotope* when they translated its ethics to the Japanese landscape and population: the United States had used the atomic bomb to win the war for the Allies. At the same time, it destroyed the homes of 43,000 military personnel of the Second General Army, shipyards, an airport, an aircraft parts factory, wood-framed homes of civilians, houses of worship, hospitals, the railroad, roads, etc. (Wallace and Weiss 72). Mostly, Hersey's book forced Americans to grapple with the fact that Little Boy slaughtered 100,000 human beings (Hersey 2) and caused thousands

[8] The English spelling varies within the article and among different soources.

[9] Marx served in the Pacific in the United States Navy for four years. Of Hiroshima, he fittingly reflects that "no other event in my lifetime so effectively dramatized the nexus between science-based technological progress and the cumulative, long-term degradation of the environment" (*Machine* 369).

of others to suffer long-term illness and disfigurement from radiation illness (i.e., the *hibakusha*).

While Hersey's reference to Japanese customs and spirituality is subtle, these qualities are present in the creation of that nation's parks. Luke notes that semiotician Roland Barthes referred to Japan as "'an empire of signs'" (66), and Asano Park, a *daimyo* garden, supports this statement. The place had been a home to nature but not a natural expanse. Both before World War II, as well as after the park's reconstruction in 1949, civil engineers and landscape architects reconstructed and augmented the original place ("History of Shikkeiem"). Paradoxically, Asano Park was constructed to feature nature, and its deliberately placed ponds, stones, and plants hold a spiritual symbolism that evokes a unification with nature and a peaceful oneness of being (Dougill 26-29; Habib *et. al*. 13-18). For residents of Hiroshima during the bombing, then, Asano Park was both a physical and a spiritual setting.

At first, Asano Park remained "intact," and crowds of the city's dwellers ran or staggered there to escape their homes, which had been incinerated by the bomb. It was a place of refuge. Still, there was no escape from the bomb's heat—for example, a pumpkin had baked on the vine (*Hiroshima* 39) and an "electric smell" from the bomb's ionization filled the air (35). Readers cannot help but be troubled by the people unknowingly quenching their thirst in the river's water, contaminated and made lethal by the bomb's radiation and detritus. Later, hellishly heavy raindrops and a whirlwind, both meteorological effects of the bomb, assaulted the people (38-39). In these ways, the atomic bomb transformed Asano Park, a spiritual space in two cultures, into a toxic wasteland from which thousands of Hiroshima's residents could not easily escape.

A chronotope, Asano Park, designated an evacuation area during the war, is where three of Hersey's six, dissimilar survivors go and interact with others.[10] Mrs. Nakamura and her children leave home with no belongings, most notably the sewing machine that was her dead soldier-husband's source of income (and potentially her own), rush past a neighbor (who soon dies), and enter the park, where they feel thirsty and nauseous, and they vomit for an extended period of time. While the Nakamuras achieve an equilibrium, a physically unscathed neighbor sitting near them in the park dies at the end of the first day. No one could know then that this was radiation illness. Yet Toshio Nakamura, the boy, is excited to see a friend in a boat on the river that passes them. Hersey's inference is that "it was difficult for all of the children . . . to sustain the sense of tragedy" (52-53). The Reverend Mr. Tanimoto recalls that all people to whom he brought water expressed their thanks. No one—not even children—cried, but Mrs. Matsumato soon died. He also cannot help his 28-year-old neighbor, Mrs. Kamai, who, like the other survivors, is in shock. She asks him to find her husband, but Mr. Tanimoto, who knows that Mr. Kamai was stationed in Chugoku Regional Army Headquarters, which suffered severe damage, is probably dead. "'I'll try,'" the minister promises, opting for hope over futility. Meanwhile, she still carries her dead infant in her arms (40-41). That each situation is replete with irony is a pale point in the face of its overwhelming sadness.

Activity characterizes the responses of both Mr. Tanimoto and Father Kleinsorge, whose painful back wounds remained unhealed for months. Together and separately, they

[10] Days after the explosion, Miss Sasaki remains trapped under her factory's books and rubble before she is transported to several hospitals over a period of months to treat her crushed and gangrenous leg. Dr. Sasaki, the only uninjured doctor at the Red Cross Hospital, loses his glasses, but treats patients. The enterprising Dr. Fujii, injured by the collapse of his private hospital, avoids associating with the injured poor in Asano Park by recovering at a friend's home, where he treats patients a month after the bombing.

attempt to bring food, water, and medical care to the park. Among the incidental horrors that are strewn in their paths are children wandering without parents, in the park (52-3); people exhibit yellow wounds earlier in the day that turn "red and swollen with the skin sloughed off" and putrid by the evening (45); Father Kleinsorge attempts to bring water to one soldier but finds 20 soldiers, whose "wholly burned" faces frame empty eyesockets oozing fluid from "melted eyes" (51). Suffering from fatigue and, unknowingly, radiation illness, the enervated Father Kleinsorge also continues to do his job: he listens to Mrs. Murata, a woman whose response to the catastrophe is to chatter. Despite their heroic efforts, the clergymen cannot save lives. They can only comfort the wounded. The separate strands of their experiences in the Asano Park chronotope provide facts about the aftermath of a nuclear weapon's detonation, "humanize" the Japanese enemy that Hersey had stereotyped in *Into the Valley*, and demonstrate empathy and altruism in a place of nature as well as a spiritual retreat, that defied faith in its random perniciousness to life.

PERSPECTIVE: THE POWER OF PLACE

The American government's reaction to the detonation of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Japan, on the one hand, and Hersey's literary nonfiction about it, on the other, illustrate Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic nature of reality. As noted above, the "authoritative discourse"[11] of the United States government, maintained by newspaper editorials and censorship of articles, tersely acknowledged two consequences of the

[11] Bakhtin uses this term to denote the expressed words, beliefs, and opinions of government officials, parents, teachers, clerics, which may contradict the understandings of the individuals over whom they have power or influence (342).

atomic bomb: it caused Japan to surrender, which ended World War II; it also significantly destroyed the enemy's "place," which is characteristic of all wars (Lifton and Mitchell 40-64). Interestingly, President Truman, in Washington, D. C., officially ended wartime censorship in August 1945, but General MacArthur, acting as supreme commander for the allied powers of the West in Japan, maintained censorship by preventing correspondents' planes from flying to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, providing only restrictive, "guided tours" of the sites, and requiring all articles to be approved by censors in Tokyo (45-50).[12] In this case (as well as in governing the occupied land), because General MacArthur resided in Japan, which was under his domain, the general's power over that place undermined that of the American president, an elected official. A year later, though, Hersey eluded MacArthur's censors by traveling via China to get to Japan, where, after reading scientific studies about radiation and other preparatory documents, he stayed for a month to conduct interviews with members of the *hibakusha* (Wallace and Weiss 251; Blume 87). "Hiroshima," as an article and then as a book, gave voice to the human experience of the explosion, significantly augmenting the government's peremptory monologue about place. As Bakhtin would have noted, Hersey's strategy enhances the understanding of the event and the American government's decision to detonate the atomic bomb by giving his American readers the personal views and experiences of the everyday Japanese "characters," who suffer yet survive in a setting that betrays them.

[12] According to Lifton and Mitchell, on September 5, Australian reporter Wilfred Burchett managed to evade American censors and to publish his article, "The Atomic Plague," in the *London Daily Express;* moreover, American reporter Bill Lawrence had his article "delayed" by censors but published it in *The New York Times* (48-49). Censorship increased after these articles were published.

Part of the art of Hersey's literary nonfiction is that he advances the narrative by juxtaposing place (cause) with each survivor's daily life (effect). For example, the text's repetition of each survivor's proximity to the blast presents a microscopic view of the historic "chain reaction" of how a city destroyed by the atomic bomb cosmically altered the lives within it. Thus Hersey focuses on those left to suffer from the initial radiation sickness—nausea, vomiting, fever—rather than those closest to the blast, and whose stories ended with deaths from damage to homes, industries, infrastructure, and hospitals.[13] Having survived the blast, the survivors, the *hibakusha,* reconstruct their lives while suffering in a humanly induced pernicious environment, experiencing various non-genetic ills—among them, keloid scars, leukemia and carcinomas, cataracts, anemia, stunted growth in children, children born with microcephaly when exposed to radiation *in utero,* and miscarriages—for the rest of their lives (105). As a result, this changed place also affected the psychology and sociology of its inhabitants: in spite of the diminished male population caused by the war, women whom the bomb had made physically disabled and barren (like Miss Sasaki) lost their "marketability" as brides. Despite her disappointment, Miss Sasaki's adaptability and intelligence lead her to excel in a non-Asian way of life: she becomes internationally known as a Catholic Sister of Charity.

Chronic ill health affects other societal structures. Ill health caused by radiation sickness and wounds caused by the blast prevents some from being reliable workers; hence, *hibakusha* are not desirable employees (92). It also affects the city's societal mores. Radiation-caused infertility and birth defects in fetuses—realistic fears—caused

[13] However, Hersey notes that the outlines of many of these vaporized souls, who were engaged in their outdoor activities, were captured on "discolored concrete," granite, and other building materials (72-73).

both arranged and love matches to be broken (119-120, 150). Of course, the deaths of loved ones and friends as well as the destruction of their symbols and mementos further disturb the survivors. One of the many sad ironies is that Mrs. Nakamura finds her dead tailor-soldier-husband's sewing machine, but she must sell the treasured possession, losing a tool to provide future income but gaining ready funds for the moment (91).

In "Aftermath," written in 1985, Hersey also notes the impact of the initial blast on the most sacred of Buddhist rites: unidentified corpses felled by initial blast were given "mass cremations"; therefore, "nameless souls might still, [40 years later], be hovering there, unattended and dissatisfied" (109). Georges Bataille observes Hersey's book presents a "'sensory representation of the cataclysm'" wrought on Hiroshima, including on its population (qtd. in Lifton and Mitchell 89).

The other culture that *Hiroshima* reveals is that of the United States. Hersey's account of the effects of the atomic bomb in Japan was a revelation to the American people. The responses of radio broadcasters in American to the article are preserved in box 966 in the New York Public Library. One day in advance of *The New Yorker's* August 31 distribution, Martin Agronsky of WCFL in Chicago urged listeners to read the article: "For Fifteen Cents—An Epic!" (*A Survey* 22). His three-page script, heard on 135 ABC-affiliated stations, also suggested a focus to his listeners: "'Mr. Hersey writes of Hiroshima but you can't help thinking of American cities as he tells his story of this Japanese city'" (24). Agronsky alerted his readers to the possibility of destruction anywhere by recalling a passage about Hiroshima's four-square miles of city blocks being "scarred" reddish brown down to the earth "with here and there a crude sign erected on a pile of ashes and tiles . . . reading 'Sister, where are you,' then the name of a

searching brother" (25). In contrast to Hersey's quiet language, Agronsky's commentary becomes a diatribe.

> And when you're done with the story of Hiroshima, arrived at the last horrible word, you feel like shouting across the ocean to the men of Paris, to the men in the Kremlin and in Buckingham Palace and to the man in the White House, too. 'No, that's wrong,' you feel like screaming to those men. 'Remember the atom! Stop your writing of preambles to peace treaties, your squabbling over frontiers, your calculations over reparations, your perpetuating of national rivalry. Stop and remember the atom. (25)

To Agronsky, "that" place, Hiroshima, is all places.

Sadly, an updated version of Hersey's *Hiroshima* quashes the enthusiasm for global awareness and unity against the proliferation of nuclear bombs that Agronsky and others initially expressed. While Hersey's original narrative began with the chronotope of six civilians in one city, Hiroshima, who survive the atom bomb's blast, "The Aftermath" (originally an article in *The New Yorker* and added to the text in 1985) acts as a denouement that intersperses announcements about nuclear tests conducted in remote areas *around the globe* in a sketch about the aged, peace-obsessed Reverend Mr. Tanimoto. (Characteristically, Hersey chooses ironic juxtaposition, not accusation.) From 1946 to 1974, the United States admitted to four tests; the Soviet Union, two; Great Britain, two; France, one; India, one; China, one (91-152).

After having written the text, Hersey abandoned his pretext of journalistic objectivity by admitting that while writing about the atomic bomb over Hiroshima, he was "'terrified all the time'" by the thought that one instrument created by human beings could cause so much damage in one instant (Hersey qtd. in Lifton and Mitchell 87). It must have been an enormous disappointment and cause of concern for Hersey, particularly as the son of Christian missionaries, who had learned about redemption through benevolent behavior via cautionary parables, that the world still had not

heeded—in 1985 (and, if he were alive, now)—the instructive narrative against the total war waged in Hiroshima that he had penned.

CHAPTER THREE: TRUMAN CAPOTE'S *IN COLD BLOOD*

PLACE AND LITERARY CULTURE

In 1955, Truman Capote was among a select group recruited to accompany a troupe of performers to Leningrad to attend a rare cultural exchange during the Cold War: the presentation of the American opera *Porgy and Bess* to a Soviet audience. His commentary, "The Muses are Heard," covers the opera, the personalities involved, its reception, and the story of its translation from the United States to the Soviet Union. Curiously, when, on November 15, 1959, Truman Capote paged through *The New York Times* to find a unique issue to cover, he rejected world- and nation-altering topics (i.e., the Soviet Union's launching of *Sputnik,* which initiated the space race; the civil rights movement, and the upcoming presidential election). As he recalls, he stopped at a small obituary about the murder of a prosperous, nationally recognized farmer, his wife, and the youngest two of their four children in the modest town of Holcomb, Kansas on the night November 14 (Malin *Casebook* 7). With a literary calculation reminiscent of Poe's choice of death to create a "single effect" in his writing ("The Philosophy of Composition" 163-168), Capote determined that homicide would be "'a theme not likely to darken and yellow with time'" (Capote qtd. in Plimpton *Truman Capote* 199). Like Poe, writer of singular poems and the inventor of the short story, particularly the detective story, Capote, too, intended for the homicides to be the subject of a unique genre, the "'nonfiction novel,'" a term that he claimed to have coined for the genre he claimed to have originated (198). Capote's "story" would "[employ] all the techniques of fictional art" but be "'immaculately factual'" (198), including verbatim conversation, visual detail, and research. At the same time, it would tell the tale via the techniques of

fiction. Well-practiced in writing profiles for *The New Yorker*, Capote's intended focus would be the neighbors' reactions and psychological coping mechanisms to "'the [Clutter] family, up to and including the murders'" (Clarke 321), which William Shawn, editor of the magazine, approved (Clarke 318-319). Capote had not anticipated that after the Kansas Bureau of Investigation's (KBI's) apprehension of the murderers six weeks after the deaths in the Clutter family, the story would expand beyond revealing the fears and grief of residents in Holcomb, Kansas. More to the point, he could not have predicted that the project would take six years to follow, research, and write. Capote presents a sociological study of a town in the American Bible Belt, an analysis of the perversion of one of America's foundation myths, a study of the minds of "homicidal psychopaths" (Capote interview with Buckley *Youtube*), and a vivid critique of America's judicial system, including its death penalty. In all, place is a looming figure.

A Southerner transplanted in New York and a world traveler, Capote was always acutely aware of the potential that place has had in illuminating people, their societies, and their times. This Bahktinian consciousness is obvious in *In Cold Blood*, and Capote's handwritten diary entries about filming the book in 1968 confirm the author's concern for the potential for revelation via realistic detail, particularly about place. After observing that Robert Blake, the actor who played Perry Smith, bore a strong resemblance to the murderer, Capote discusses revisiting River Valley Farm, home of the murder victims, which leads to a philosophy of composition.

> The rooms looked precisely the same as they had when I examined them in December 1959—that is, soon after the crime was discovered. . . .All art is composed of selected detail—either imaginary or, as in *In Cold Blood,* a spin off from reality. As with the book, so with the film; except that I had chosen my details from life, while [the director] had chosen his from my book; reality twice transposed, and the art truer for it. . . . [Thus,] Dick's eyes [explore the landscape

> through the [window] slats, his heart pounding from fear that the crash of four shotgun blasts might have roused the countryside. And now the actor impersonating Dick . . . is on the verge of repeating these actions. (NYPL Box 11, Jan. 2020)

Thus, Capote opines that part of the art of writing a work of nonfiction involves the author's choice (and one infers the order) of details from reality, not a dry, chronological reiteration of all that transpires about an event. This goal points to the unity and focus of a work of art.

Tompkins, Voss, and others fault Capote for weaving into his text factual errors and exaggerations. Some of his letters request precise information to create scenes that did not happen or in which he was not present (as noted above). *The Times of London* opined that Capote crafted an "'enriched biography'" (qtd. in Capote *Letters* 392). While waiting five years after the trial for the process of justice to run its course, that is, for the murderers to be hanged, Capote continued composing and refining the text. More than reportage, he was creating a work of art.

One such request to enhance the book's art was made on September 15, 1962. Writing from Spain, Capote asked Alvin Dewey, the KBI agent who captured the Clutters' murderers, for the location of Dewey's father's grave in Valley View Cemetery and for the words on the inscription on the deceased Dewey's tombstone (*Letters* 364). With this information, Capote crafted—not reported—the book's gothic, final scene, which takes place in 1965, after Smith and Hickock's executions. In Capote's book, Susan Kidwell, visiting Nancy Clutter's grave, and KBI Agent Dewey, visiting his father's, meet unexpectedly in the cemetery. (The young woman, who had discovered the Clutter family's dead bodies several hours after their murders, had served as a witness in the case.) As Dewey leaves the cemetery, Capote ends the book: "Then, starting home, he

walked toward the trees, and under them, leaving behind him the big sky, the whisper of wind voices in the wind-bent wheat" (343). The Kansas sky, prominently described in the book's first paragraph, and the alliterated *hw* sound, which serves as both a synecdoche for the prairie's wind as well as a simulation of a Midwestern accent, bring readers back to the place, the "lonesome," "high wheat plains" of western Kansas (3). The graveyard scene, which removes humanity's ambitions (particularly Herbert Clutter's achievements and his murderers' pathetic efforts), legal and socio-economic constructs, and industry from the narrative, brings the reader back to Holcomb's initial, desolate description. Artistically, Capote crafts a scene/place that serves as a denouement to his "nonfiction novel" and as a sensory suggestion of universal human destiny: the wind is the negation of life, the sound death. Indeed, the graveyard's auditory emptiness does seem like a gothic homage to Macbeth's reaction to his wife's death: "Life's but a walking shadow . . ./ full of sound and fury/ Signifying nothing (*Macbeth* V.v. 27-31). Thus, Capote adds a scene—a place—to enhance his dogged research and information. While critics may question the absolute truth of Capote's representation of the occurrence that begins and ends in Holcomb, Kansas, he does so in the service of his nonfiction novel.[1]

Capote's relationships with members of law enforcement as well as with the murderers, led him to tales of trails to different places that provide relevant background about the murderers' motives. Accordingly, his article expanded into a manuscript, *In Cold Blood*, which *The New Yorker* published in four, consecutive issues and that

[1] Still, Sarah Weinman's *Op-Ed* piece in the April 20, 2023 edition of *The New York Times* about "true crime" nonfiction--almost 60 years after the book's publication—faults Capote for "making things up for effect." She cites the final, heart-rending-but-false scene as well as an inaccurate interview with a prisoner as evidence. She claims that for the latter offense, Capote "landed in jail" rather than reveal his embroidery (A22).

juxtaposed the culture and concerns of the residents of Holcomb with the murderers' lives and motives, the KBI's chase to capture them, their trial in Garden City, Kansas, and their time in jail before their executions. Like reportage of the time, *In Cold Blood*'s narration usually avoids subjectivity.[2] Distinct from journalism is the text's organization: its ironic juxtaposition of scenes, its selection of information, its slant, and its images. Of the latter, Capote's Greenwich (Connecticut) High School English teacher, Catherine Wood, wrote, "'I see the area, the people and I hear them'" (Clarke 361). Published as a book in 1965, *In Cold Blood* expanded the boundaries of literary nonfiction by more than fulfilling its original purpose—evincing the psycho-social states and motivations of the survivors in a quintessentially American town, a microcosm of the nation. In the process, it illustrated America's mythology and ethos: capitalism, heroism on the frontier, and the nation's character. However, the bulk of the book's content concerns a topic that Capote had not originally intended: the perpetrators, Perry Smith and Dick Hickock. The stories of their lives and executions question the validity of Americans' assumptions about themselves, their beliefs, and their place.

[2] Among the exceptions are: Capote writes that Kansas Bureau of Investigation Agent Harold Nye told "a journalist" that the agent felt "'sheer excitement'" in reaction to apprehending the murderers on January 2, 1960 (216); at the trial, Capote observes that Perry Smith stopped chewing a piece of gum when he "recognized a face very like the face of the man he had killed" (280); Capote explains Dr. Jones's interpretations of Smith's and Hickock's motivations and actions had the State of Kansas followed the more lenient Durham Rule (in which "mental disease or mental defect" exculpates an accused person from a crime) and not the M'Naghten Rule (which does not recognize insanity as an excuse for a crime, if the accused knew right from wrong at the time of the crime) (296-302). Voss cites other descriptions as well (*Legacy* 72-73).

PLACE: THE CONTEXT OF A CULTURE

Capote's initial descriptions capture Holcomb's mid-twentieth American industry and machinery, but he also evokes the bucolic, sacred ethos of an earlier era in Kansas. Inhabitants still call the place "'lonesome'" (*In Cold Blood* 3), a personification that suggests the area's vastness and the nation's potential compared to its small population.[3] In fact, the description precedes introductions of those who inhabit the flat land that edges on Colorado, the Far West, which Kansans call "'out there'" (3). Cattle and grain elevators, ironically referred to as "Greek temples," imply the local industry and, ironically, the farmers' devotion to their livelihood. Capote's observations juxtapose ageless nature, the Arkansas River, with the recent, human-made highway. Powerful, nature has its way with human construction: the "congregation of buildings" are weather-worn dilapidated structures on unnamed, unpaved streets. The metaphors to ancient and modern organized religions are intentional and fitting; this is the Bible Belt. Thus, the language that depicts Holcomb's landmarks and natural features—the place—presents a metaphorical sociology of its residents' primary world view and chief occupation. They are Christian farmers who live in the Bible Belt.

The area's meteorology also hints at the residents' personality traits. At first, Capote's initial observation about Holcomb's "hard blue skies and desert-clear air" (3) seems irrelevant or, even illusive, but he soon clarifies the image. The area is usually arid: its "shallow precipitation" (4) challenges the farmers to grow grain. In the fall of 1959, when Capote enters the scene, the farmers are enjoying income from a bountiful

[3] Voss notes that Robert E. Morris sees this description as part of the novel's gothic motif (57-58).

harvest, generated by an unusual and auspicious rainfall. Still, he notes, many landowners are well-to-do, because of their own efforts: they are resourceful and tenacious. Moreover, with modern technology, they ensure a comfortable income every year by selling the natural gas that is under their land. In this way, Capote reports Holcomb's "human geography," the sociology of place.

While the narrative is allusive and smooth, its fit with a pastoral motif is a bit more complex. Capote's language continues to conjure an archetypal, albeit altered, place, a biblical Eden. In the biblical place, human beings live without effort or care until they defy the Deity by eating an apple from the tree of knowledge. In Holcomb, Kansas (near *Garden City*) of the twentieth century, though, human beings—not a deity—work to shape and maintain the arid land that is "without form, and void" (King James Bible Genesis 1:2): because of the way they farm their land and raise their cattle, they profit from their labor. In fact, Capote tells us that their goals exceed simple survival. More precisely, the lives of these hardworking farmer-entrepreneurs on the former frontier of America evoke the concepts and literary portrayals—the mythology—about the American colonies and the new nation that both Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* and R. W. D. Lewis's *The American Adam* observe about American literature, philosophy, and culture.[4] Like the Americans of history and fiction from colonial times through the nineteenth century, the denizens of Holcomb epitomize what Marx judges to be a uniquely dualistic attitude. On the one hand, they embody the agrarian spirit and

[4] Interestingly, Marx's book was first published in 1964; Lewis's, in 1955—within a decade of *In Cold Blood.* As Capote's biographer notes, as a young writer, Capote had been schooled by his mentor and older friend, Newton Arvin, respected critic and distinguished professor of American literature at Smith College (Clarke 119). Lewis, then a professor of literature at Smith College, acknowledges that he discussed ideas about a "native" American mythology with Arvin, among others (i). In this environment, Capote could not fail to have been familiar with academic approaches to literature of the time.

primitivism of the Bible's pre-lapsarian Adam, whose world was controlled by nature (*Machine* 97). Unlike the original Adam, the American Adam fled from the corrupt Old World to a new continent and carved out a new identity for himself. In Lewis's words, the American Adam "emancipated [himself] from history bereft of ancestry" (5). In Emerson's view, the New Adam lives in nature but is "self-reliant." The Adams of the New World do not live leisurely lives; they work. Yet if the land requires the farmers' labor, the farmer-ranchers are also rational and enthusiastic "progressivists" (*Machine* 197-207), who, as noted above, use their innate ingenuity and technology to cultivate land in an uncooperative climate. Lewis adds that nineteenth century's "new Adam" also trusted scientific discovery (34). Likewise, Capote's portrayal of Holcomb's contemporary farmers is that they are working Adams, who re-create their fields from the inhospitable dirt and climate each spring. As farmers and raisers of livestock, they might resemble the Creator, but every year they must tap their financial resources, physical strength, knowledge, and ingenuity to farm fields and raise cattle. Their financial success and physical survival depend upon their response to the weather, a force beyond their control. Surely, living this close to nature is humbling; the farmers of the Bible Belt are at the mercy of a higher power: their adherence to Christianity, its rituals as well as the supportive community it offers, makes sense.

A PROFILE OF ADAPTATION: THE VICTIM IN HIS PLACE

Into this place, Capote situates 48-year-old Herbert W. Clutter, a married man and the father of four children, an agronomy major at Kansas State University, and a farmer. A master of the profile, or biographical sketch (see *Portraits* 179-232), Capote notes that Mr. Clutter is the second richest man in the county. This profile is an extended obituary

that indicates both Mr. Clutter's instinct and Capote's awareness that the farmer is living the Edenic myth in America. Enthusiastic members of the Methodist church, the Clutters named their eldest child "Eveanna," a portmanteau of the names of the Bible's first woman and Jesus' grandmother. The daughter's name attests to the deep faith of the Clutters and Holcomb's society. If language is a function of a culture, Eveanna's name mirrors the belief of the local culture. Bakhtin would call this real detail heteroglossia (*The Dialogic Imagination* 301-331). The narrator also catalogues the new Adam's interests and achievements, which his community acknowledges. The "son of plain, farm people who are not on visiting terms with [Clutter's] well-to-do and cultivated" in-laws (*In Cold Blood* 26), Clutter is a self-made man, "widely known" for his agricultural innovations in the county" (6). In fact, because of his accomplishments in farming, he was member of the Federal Farm Credit Board in Eisenhower's administration. Later in the chronicle, Capote notes that Mr. Clutter is a leader in the community's 4-H Club. So humble and inclusive is he that he befriends Mrs. Ashida, a Japanese immigrant whose husband is a tenant farmer, and he brings her to the organization's conferences. Clearly, this American Adam is a role model for all Americans. Even his appearance belies his success, he maintains a "trim" build—although he is not towering—and he wears rimless glasses. Moreover, while his 14-room home is capacious, it is decorated modestly in a conventional, "modernistic" style, like that of his neighbors.

Mr. Clutter's efforts produce an idyllic farm and community, but Capote's chronicle also reveals the disturbing psycho-social setting in which this new Adam lives. Mr. Clutter (as the author usually refers to him) wears a wedding band "on a finger once mangled by a piece of farm machinery" (6). Even successful farmers face personal

dangers. Symbolically, the image conveys that the marriage itself is difficult. Mr. Clutter's wife, Bonnie, is needy and dependent.[5] After the birth of her youngest child, Kenyon's, she stays in her room and absents herself from family and community gatherings: "the affectionate and charming Bonnie her friends cherished . . . could not summon the social vitality her husband's pyramiding activities required" (27). In one scene of great pathos, Capote reports a conversation about miniature "gewgaws" that Bonnie has with Jolene Katz, a local girl who waits for Nancy, the Clutters' third child, to be coached in pie-making. Capote also notes that Mrs. Clutter had spent two months in Witchita "for treatment" (27), and, most likely according to Mrs. Helm, the housekeeper, Bonnie Fox Clutter fears making decisions or acting, because she worries that she will make a mistake: as a consequence, Bonnie Clutter's husband and daughter, Nancy, take on her daily chores. Mr. Clutter so thoroughly compensates for his wife's frailty that he is the one who bakes prize-winning pies for the local fair. Thus industry, perseverance, intelligence, success, and civic activism mark Mr. Clutter's public achievement in Holcomb, Kansas; loyalty and sensitivity, his personal life. Mr. Clutter is the embodiment of the American Adam.

Many of these descriptions occur as Capote narrows his focus to the Clutters' activities on the last day of their lives. The nonfiction novel's first section provides the Clutters' activities on November 14, 1959. He gleans them from interviews with Mrs. Helm, the housekeeper; the Stoeckleins, who worked and lived on the farm; Bobby Rupp, Nancy Clutter's boyfriend (84); Nancy's girlfriends; neighbors; and a teacher—all of

[5] Voss notes that the Clutters' surviving daughters, Beverly English and Eveanna Miller, dispute the characterization that their mother was "mentally fragile" (*Legacy* 195).

whom witness the family on its last day. The diary of sixteen-year-old Nancy Clutter also provides information about the family's life-affirming attitudes and activities (84). Appropriately, the motif of Eden pervades the Clutters' day. Capote writes that the land beside the river on Mr. Clutter's River Valley Farm successfully grows fruit trees, particularly apple trees, and he reports that sources said that Clutter used to muse that "'an inch more of rain and this country would be paradise—Eden on earth'" (12).[6] Thus Mr. Clutter sees his faith in his daily toil; Capote, a motif to unify his nonfiction novel as well as to imply the limitations of human effort.

The allusion to the American version of the biblical creation tale becomes unmistakable when Capote relates Herb Clutter's last day. In fact, Capote bookends the day with "apple" scenes. The self-made man and wealthy farmer begins his last morning, a typical one, by eating an apple and drinking a glass of milk (10). Readers infer that either Mrs. Helm or Al Stoecklein has told the interviewer about Mr. Clutter's meals and habits, particularly about his last day. Capote also chooses to include that Mr. Clutter never smokes a cigarette or a cigar with his breakfast, nor does he smoke or drink coffee or "spirits" on his last day or any day. Among other attributes, Mr. Clutter's self-discipline and diet of indigenous, unprocessed food suggests his Emersonian self-sufficiency as well as his mental and physical health. In fact, on his last day, Mr. Clutter qualifies for a forty-thousand-dollar life insurance policy that guarantees twice that amount if the death is "accidental" (48). The document, signed twenty-four hours before his death, is one of many ironies in the nonfiction novel.

---

[6] Whether the sources are real or apocryphal, the point Capote makes about the place is that Mr. Clutter has created an Eden despite the landscape's harsh conditions.

The second apple scene occurs that night, several hours before the Clutters' murders. According to Bobby Rupp's report to the police after the family's deaths, while Nancy Clutter and Bobby Rupp watch television in the Clutters' family room, Mr. Clutter eats two apples and reads one of Kenyon's young adult novels. The scene is endearing. A father, who is not at all interested in the programs on television—nor seemingly in his son's book—acts as a chaperone for his daughter and her boyfriend. In the context of the Western Kansans' religiosity and Capote's summoning of Edenic images of the place, the scene also suggests that Herbert Clutter safeguards the young couple from committing original sin. The irony is that Clutter's worry is misdirected.

Admittedly, parts of these scenes may have been authorial exaggerations or contrivances (Tompkins in Malin 44-58; Voss 80-99), but the inclusion or fabrication of the apple scene underscores Capote's identification of Herbert Clutter with the American Adam, a creative, hardworking figure who engenders hope for the future (Lewis *American Adam* 79). On his isolated, thriving farm in Holcomb, Kansas, Mr. Clutter fiercely guards his way of life, that is, his innocence: he shoos the pilot of a crashed small airplane off his land and sues the pilot (*In Cold Blood* 13); refuses to employ workers who smoke or drink (10); likes Nancy's boyfriend, but disapproves of Bobby, because the Clutters are Methodists, and Bobby Rupp's family is Catholic (20); and sends Nancy to the local high school, not to the college preparatory school, in Garden City, even though Nancy is college-bound. These actions and practical preferences may not be broad-minded, but they are extensions of the creation and preservation of Clutter's American idyll and personal myth (21). These scenes provide layers to the chronotope of Eden in America.

Harold Nye, a Kansas Bureau of Investigation agent, condenses the community's reaction to the Clutters' murders, "'Of all the people in all the world, the Clutters were the least likely to be murdered'" (85). As one would expect in the culture of a paradise, the community responds to the murders with a united effort. Too late on Saturday night and too isolated from other farms, no one—not even Al Stoecklein, who lived on the farm—could come to their aid. On the following Monday, four of Mr. Clutter's friends return to River Valley Farm, a place where they had gone hunting together, to clean up the blood and burn the "blood-soiled bedclothes, mattresses, a bedside rug, a Teddy-bear doll" (78). Insurance salesman Bob Johnson, who "'hadn't put [Mr. Clutter's check for $80,000 on a double indemnity policy] through'" (71) at the time of Mr. Clutter's death, does the "'moral thing,'" and deposits it. Like the shocked reactions of Nancy's friends, Susan Kidwell and Bobby Rupp, the community's initial responses to the tragedies are attempts to provide a balm to heal the pastoral ideal: the townspeople cooperate with agents of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and, implicitly, with Truman Capote and his friend, Nell Harper Lee (Clarke 319), by answering questions about the Clutters. But the Clutters have been murdered; the place--Holcomb's culture—has changed.

Clearly, "The Last to See Them Alive," which is the book's first section, fulfills Capote's original purpose: through a literary obituary of the Clutters, it presents a picture of the idyllic community transmogrified by the murders. Holcomb's positive emotional setting deteriorates to the gothic environment suggested initially by its description as a natural setting hostile to human intervention. Most immediately, it is children (read, innocents), two of Nancy Clutter's girlfriends, who find her body on a Sunday morning before church and are the first to experience the horror (*In Cold Blood* 60). Erroneously,

the KBI's first "prime suspect" is Bobby Rupp, whose adolescent love for Nancy Clutter keeps him at the farm just hours before the murders (72). Fear for general well-being is the pervasive reaction. Capote remarks that conversations among the males in Hartman's Café reflect this "'wide-eyed'" terror: if Mr. Clutter cannot defend his family, others doubt that they can. Mrs. Bess Hartman, owner of the café, says, "'If something like this could happen to them, then who's safe, I ask you?'" (70). Mrs. Hartman observes that citizens distrust each other. They speculate about who among them would have known about the Clutters' home and farm. As a result, Holcombians lock their doors and keep lights on at night. Marie Dewey, wife of KBI Agent Alvin Dewey, jettisons her dream of moving to a custom-built home on a large tract of land that is in a more remote part of Kansas; it would be unwise and unsafe. Conversely, it takes no psychotherapist to understand that the few townspeople who critique Mr. Clutter try to differentiate themselves from him. They want to convince themselves that Mr. Clutter's status in society—his place--differs from theirs and that no one would have cause to murder them. Perceptive, Mrs. Myrtle Clare, the local postmistress, asserts that one of the effects of the fear that grips her community is small-minded criticism of Mr. Clutter. She claims that Mr. Clutter was a busy, successful, popular man whom neighbors envied. She says, "All the neighbors are rattlesnakes. Varmints looking for a chance to slam the door in your face'" (69). Agitated, the townspeople also press Agent Alvin Dewey to "'arrest somebody'" (150). Fortuitously, a team of KBI agents ends the community's acrimony when it captures the murderers, who only had planned only a robbery, less than two months after the slaughters. However, Capote establishes that the murders change the culture of the place, a place that Mr. Clutter had nurtured.

DIALECTICAL PROFILES: THE MURDERERS AND PLACELESSNESS

Interwoven in the first section's scenes of the Clutters and their neighbors in Holcomb's idyllic setting are the murderers' peripatetic preparations for their mission and, increasingly, the tales of their lives. Their goal is pecuniary and, unconsciously, meant to upset society's equilibrium: to rob the fortunate Herbert Clutter—and, as Dick Hickock insists to Perry Smith, to take "*no* witnesses. . . . The only *sure* thing is that every one of them [in the house] has got to go'" (37). As a narrative ploy inserted here, the remark contributes to both realism and tension, since readers know the outcome. The murder serves as the inciting incident (a good, fortunate Christian man and his family die in a senseless murder), and the book's remaining three sections braid law enforcement's efforts to capture and deal justly with the murderers: with their movements, capture, biographies, and punishment. Holcomb—its landscape and its population's culture—before the murders remains the central, orienting frame of reference, the initial layer of the chronotope. Its Edenic qualities contrast both the town's transformation after the murders as well as the murderers' lives and misguided journeys. In this way, Capote presents a dialectical portrait of the place: on the one hand, the Clutters and Holcombians, and on the other, the personalities and motivations of the murderers, Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, who, ironically become the main characters.[7] Thus, three of the book's four sections use interviews, letters, the men's own statements (in the era before Miranda

[7] It is true that Perry Smith and Dick Hickock are murderers and thieves, traits that would qualify them as the book's antagonists. However, their stories fill most of the book. In addition, Capote's artful treatment of Perry Smith is more like an extended report of a social worker. *Antagonist*s seems like an inappropriate term for them.

rights),[8] and court record to follow the men's behaviors in place after place to understand their personalities and psychological motivations as well as their criminal responsibility. Capote hints this focus in the book's epigraph, a prisoner's plea for pity abstracted from *Ballade des pendus,* a poem by Francois Villon. Like the genre of the "diagnostic criminal biography" that many courts accepted in midcentury America, Capote's book becomes biographies that focus on Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, the being instigator of the homicides. Like the genre, it provides evidence that "deterministic forces have shaped [the] subject[s'] actions [thereby increasing] our sense of the subject's personal responsibility" (Guest *Sentenced to Death* 7). Place is a major force.

One of the insights that Capote's nonfiction novel provides about the murderers is that like Herb Clutter and all Americans nursed on or inspired by the American myth of success and plenty, Perry and Dick want a better life. Unlike Mr. Clutter and other successful Americans, they are not American Adams: they do not have the interim goals (a focus, education that would provide skills and knowledge or an apprenticeship in a chosen field, and positive social skills). At the outset, Capote signals the difference symbolically and realistically by inserting a description of Perry Smith's breakfast. In lieu of Mr. Clutter's healthy apple and milk, which probably from his own farm), Perry has "three aspirin, cold root beer, and a chain of Pall Mall cigarettes" at a cafe (*In Cold Blood* 14). The opposition between health promoted by the land, on the one hand, and medicated, self-inflicted illness (because, as readers learn, Perry suffers from leg injuries

[8] In 1966, the United States Supreme Court ruled that "defendants are clearly informed their rights as they are being detained and interrogated" ("Miranda Rights," n. p.).

sustained in a motorcycle accident) is clear. Unlike his treatment of Mr. Clutter, Capote animates the two men's biographies to explore why some of the best citizens in the United States were murdered "in cold blood."

Poverty links Dick and Perry's lives. Having committed crimes separately, they meet as cellmates in Kansas State Penitentiary when Dick is 26 years old and Perry is 30. Poverty manifests itself in place. Dick Hickock's intact, "'semi-poor'" family of birth lives in a four-room house, and he claims that his father was "'strict'" (277). The text mentions that Dick has the intelligence but not the finances to go to college. Moreover, neither Dick nor his parents appear to have imagined the opportunities that a college education could afford him, nor the ways to fund it. However, during the murder trial, the prosecutor demonstrates the excuse that Dick Hickock's father uses to protect his son. The elder Hickock claims that injuries to Dick's body and head came from an automobile accident in 1950 are the causes of his son's anti-social, criminal behavior. In truth, Dick had gotten in trouble with the law for having stolen a neighbor's gun in 1949. In his late adolescence and early adulthood, though, Dick does not demonstrate his father's loyalty to kin. Before and after the murders, Dick writes bad checks and counts on his father to pay them. Moreover, well before the Clutters' murders, Dick, as head of his own family, had two children with a woman he claims to have loved but whom he left to marry another woman, whom he had impregnated. He felt that he was acting responsibly by making that child legitimate. In addition to this self-serving behavior, Dick also finds himself moored to a place in which professional and financial opportunities seem limited, and while his "'strict'" father may have insisted on rigid routines and chores in Dick's youth, the elder Hickock, as mentioned, habitually covered for his son's crimes. Of

course, in prison for the first time, when Dick's cellmate, Floyd Wells, suggested that the latter's wealthy, former boss, Herbert W. Clutter, would make a good "score," the least complicated solution to Dick's life of poverty became obvious.

Perry Smith's poverty differs from Dick's; it tarnished his soul and, as Capote relates Perry's life history, he evokes pathos in readers. Perry grows up in multiple settings in the Midwest and California with faulty and often hostile family connections. His parents, Julia "Flo" Buckskin and John "Tex" Smith perform in rodeos and transport their four children from place to place until Flo leaves the abusive marital relationship and her four children, becomes an alcoholic, and dies. All the while, she ignores young Perry's needs. One symptom of this is that young Perry wets his bed and, when forsaken in inhospitable orphanages (one run by the Salvation Army; another, by nuns), the nominally charitable people who should be his caregivers abuse him. Tellingly, a dream that mirrors danger that persists from childhood, from "when he was seven years old, a hated, hating half-breed child" (93), deals with his unremorseful theft of an orange-sized diamond from a tree, guarded by a snake: a golden parrot "taller than Jesus" punishes the snake (his oppressors) and spirits Perry to "'paradise'" (92-93). Never religious, Perry's childhood and adult mind conflates his safety with the American dream (wealth) as a much desired but unattainable gem for which he does not work and could not possibly attain. Undoubtedly, his residence in two Christian orphanages provide the places for the life-threatening encounter and his rescue. (A modern child might conjure a superhero as a savior.) In addition, Perry's formal education stops in third grade. Like Dick, he sustains debilitating injuries, this time, to the legs from a motorcycle accident. When he lives with his father in Alaska, a twentieth century American frontier, having served in the

Merchant Marine and the Army, the two starve in their hunting lodge and nearly kill each other over a biscuit. Some people are kind to him—Joe James in Alaska (134); Willy-Jay in his first jail (143); and Cookie, who nursed him after his motorcycle accident—but most are not. Two of his siblings commit suicide; his only surviving, resilient sibling, Barbara Johnson, sends him a long letter of blame and rejection when he is in jail; his father, who writes a rosy biography to gain Perry parole for his first stay in prison, does not come to Perry's murder trial. Thus poor, crippled, and solitary, the then adult Perry secures survival best alternately by odd jobs, profits from theft, and residence in government housing: the military and prison. No place in his life offers life-giving sustenance, safety, and society.

Clearly, Perry and Dick loathe the status, i.e., place, assigned to them in American society: they live in penury and suffer from the ramifications of it. They are envious of wealthy Americans, and they resent them for it. Yet Perry and Dick do not work to model themselves after self-made Americans, that is, American Adams like Herbert Clutter. Perry has no love for or from his closest relationships. He tells his sister that he resents their parents for not letting him go to school; his three older siblings, for being able to go to public school (185). He begrudges the Clutters for what they represent, admitting to his Army friend, Don Cullivan, "' . . . [I killed them not] because of anything the Clutters did. They never hurt me. Like other people. Like people have all my life. Maybe it's just that the Clutters were the ones who had to pay for it'" (290). In analytical discourse, Novelist Kurt Vonnegut echoes this psychology of poverty in America through his character Howard W. Campbell:

> "It ain't no disgrace to be poor, but it might as well be.' It is in fact a crime for an American to be poor. Every other nation has folk traditions of men who were poor

> but extremely wise and virtuous, and therefore more estimable than anyone with power and gold. No such tales are told by the American poor. . . . [Americans'] most destructive untruth is that it is very easy for any American to make money. . . . The most startling [result], a thing without precedent, is a mass of undignified poor. They do not love one another because they do not love themselves." (*Slaughterhouse-Five* 164-165)

Unlike Vonnegut's 1968 sardonic, World War II novel, written during the same era as *In Cold Blood,* the tone of Capote's nonfiction novel is sober, but this passage and Capote's murderers express similar views about the ill effects of America's social class structure and the implications that America's national mythology, based on capitalistic success, has for those who are poor.

THE UNHOLY ODYSSEY

Capote's diagnostic criminal biographies also include the men's unholy American odyssey. Impenitent after they leave prison at the same time, Dick's original plan to murder "'witnesses'" is incidental to the burglary (*In Cold Blood* 37). Their logic is that Mr. Clutter's money will underwrite their idyllic lives in Mexico. However, they could not imagine that their prison informant, Floyd Wells, had given them the wrong information and that the wealthy Mr. Clutter did not keep his money in a vault at home. Additionally, their fantasy about a contemporary paradise in Mexico shows their misinformation and delusion. They are unprepared for the reality that even in a coastal retreat in Mexico, heaven on Earth is expensive. For readers, the men's murders of the Clutters underscore a move from their alienation from American society's laws and mores to their lethal psychopathology. In terms of their goal, once the murders are completed, the men feel real urgency to flee from Kansas to live their "American" dream, without the anticipated money and, as they discover, without decent work, anywhere.

The road trip across the American frontier begins, replete with legal, moral, and epic error. Perry acquiesces to Dick's plan, but still, each man knowingly breaks the geographic and social limitations of his parole by meeting the other, a released felon. They travel 800 miles from Olanthe to River Valley Farm, where they kill the Clutters, and back in one night. First, though, Dick steals the murder car from his employer and pilfers the murder weapon from his father, deceiving the latter about his destination. On this journey of ill intent, they purchase supplies to kill witnesses, commit the murder, and drive back to Olanthe, and sleep well. Thus their "call to adventure" (Campbell 245) is counterfeit, lacking a purpose beyond self-profit by any means.

Part of Capote's art—and his intent—is to present an ambivalent portrait of murderers, particularly of Perry Smith, in a variety of places in his life. (Nothing about Dick Hickock redeems him. He betrays the trust of his parents, his wives, his two sons, and his employers.) Perry's life experiences evoke the reader's pity: his abandonment in his pathetic childhood; his self-taught accomplishments in music, drawing, vocabulary, and writing; his voluntary enlistment in the armed services; his perverse kindness to make Mr. Clutter comfortable while killing him; his preventing Dick from raping Nancy Clutter before Perry kills her; his nobility—or honesty—at the trial to save Dick's mother pain by admitting that he was the one who murdered all four Clutters, and his haplessness in Mexico, where he shares a room with Dick as Dick sleeps with a prostitute. He is not a mythic prince or leader who proves his worth by defending a national ideal or way of life, nor is he an American Adam who tames the frontier. His dominant attitude is one of false superiority, indignation that no one appreciates his cultivated talents or intellect. He commits small crimes for money, and then, he kills the Clutters. Dick is the instigator of

and the accomplice in the Clutters' murders. Both want a share in the American dream. Perry collects roadmaps for a journey to Mexico, which he romanticizes as an inexpensive place with a congenial climate, where he will be able to lead an ideal life. Yet neither formulates a legitimate plan or has the ambition to work long and hard for it. These apparently incompatible characteristics, mostly conjured by Perry, reinforce the slant that Capote suggests by including Villon's poem as the epigraph: imprisoned criminals have the same human desires as everyone else.

The account of the second leg of their road trip—the journey to Mexico—is irrelevant to the actual commission of the crime—except that Capote notes that Perry still wears the shoes that left cat's paw prints on a mattress box in the Clutters' cellar. This evidence later implicates the two men when they are captured in Las Vegas. In addition to the authentic as well as the novelistic tension that the unholy odyssey creates, the ignoble "protagonists'" journey is a warped version of the biblical chronotope of Eden and the American dream. The men do not represent Eden's snake, however. If the Bible's Lucifer was a once-favored, fallen angel, these men never experience anyone's favored.

In Mexico, Dick and Perry's available cash is negligible; their skills are hard to market, and wages are low. Consequently, the men cannot afford their imagined paradise. Unlike the heroes of epics, Dick does not find women to be the mothers, temptresses, or virgin goddesses that the mythological heroes that Campbell considers encounter (*The Hero* 109-126, 297-314). Women are useful as objects of sex, and one of the two prostitutes with whom Dick sleeps even pays him for his service and lends him more money. Similarly, Otto, a German lawyer on vacation and an instant acquaintance of Dick's, provides the men with food and diversion on a boat in exchange for entertaining

him by telling jokes, singing songs, and posing for nude (Dick) and semi-nude (Perry) sketches. Still, after one week in paradise, the men must sell the car and buy bus tickets to California. Perry mails his worldly possessions, including the shoes marked by the cat's paws, in one box to Las Vegas. The places change, but the men's personalities and skills remain the same.

Just as Floyd Wells, fellow inmate in the prison where Dick and Perry met, gave the men the flawed information about a safe in Mr. Clutter's home that led to the men's failed robbery and pointless, cold homicides, the journey to paradise, routed well by accumulated maps, is a failed aspiration. The men, particularly Perry, equate warm weather and a place by the sea with paradise. Unlike the American Adam and Herbert Clutter, they do not understand the American dream's constant requirement of labor, skills, economics, and innovation. In this way, Capote reports on a "current event" but also highlights the socio-economic dialectic between the American myth and the American reality.

FINAL PLACES: THE GARDEN CITY JAIL AND "THE CORNER"

The first prison scene that Capote describes from his own on-site knowledge is on the fourth floor of Finney County's courthouse, in Garden City (which is an actual place but an ironic name for this nonfiction novel). Capote describes the citizens, who flock to see the murderers after they are arrested, as a "congregation" (*In Cold Blood* 247). Associated with religious gatherings, the word brings readers back to the book's beginning, where the word is used metaphorically to describe clusters of buildings in Holcomb. Once again, the word reminds readers of the place, the Bible Belt. Capote underscores the region's sociology by noting that while the townspeople wait for Dick

and Perry to arrive, they call for "'an eye for an eye," but when the men arrive, the good Christians greet Dick and Perry with silence. Capote suggests that the citizens are surprised that alleged murderers "are humanly shaped," that is, they do not look demonic (248). This scene probably happened, but the dramatic silence of this ad hoc assembly of citizens has the effect of a chorus to an episode in an ancient Greek play: Capote suggests to readers that however fallible they are, the men share a humanity with the crowd. Capote also chooses to include other sympathetic moments: Mrs. Meier, Finney County's undersheriff's wife, cooks for the men and initially comforts Perry when he expresses his horror at the vocal hatred that the crowd outside the jail directs at him. According to Capote, she likes Perry's shy manner and finds Perry endearing for training Red, a squirrel; his cleanliness, laudable. She observes him sketching animals, women, and Jesus (as he had for Willy-Jay, when he serves time in jail earlier for another offense). A religious woman, Mrs. Meier lets Perry host a dinner for his Army friend, Don Cullivan, who travels from Massachusetts to serve as a character witness at Perry's trial. A devout Catholic, Cullivan's motivation is to save Perry's soul. The latter mission is fruitless, but as Capote's highlights, Perry does trust these nurturing people with information about the murder. He accepts full blame for committing murders of people whom he knew only for an hour. He writes to Cullivan that his crime "'was unforgivable,'" but when Cullivan visits Perry in Finney County's jail, Perry justifies the murders by saying that there is no difference between Perry's deed and that of soldiers in war, who "'get medals'" for murder. Capote notes that Cullivan judges Perry to be "devoid of conscience or compassion" (291). In contrast, Perry asserts that he has found Cullivan's correspondence, ending with "'your friend,'" more spiritually fulfilling than religion.

Capote's juxtaposition of Perry's gratitude for the kindnesses that few people—here, Mrs. Meier and Don Cullivan—have shown him in his life with his expressed lack of remorse for (or justification of) his cold-blooded murders further indicates his disturbed mind. On the other hand, this scene suggests that had Perry been reared in a stable, nurturing environment, he might have been able to sublimate frustrations and channel his energies in positive ways.

In addition to the psychological contradictions that Perry exhibits in this prison scene, Capote critiques the trial and its outcome, which takes place while the men are in the jail in Garden City. Judge Tate, who has a "textbook" approach to the law (268), adheres to the M'Naghten Rule, which requires defendants (via their lawyers) to prove their inability to know right from wrong at the time of a murder in order to escape execution. At that time and place, an alternative sentence of life in prison without parole was not permissible. Accordingly, Judge Tate only accepts that Dr. W. Mitchell Jones's psychiatric examinations of Dick and Perry find that the men were aware of their behavior during their murders of the Clutter family. No elaboration or nuanced detail is admitted. The men are condemned to death.

Ironically, the five years that the men spend in "the corner," Kansas State Prison in Lansing's death row, may have been the most stable period of Perry's life, but it is a dramatic and unimaginable contrast to the stability of the Eden that Herbert Clutter had achieved and the paradise that the men had coveted. Dick and Perry's world shrinks to the size of two cells, one for each man, in "the corner," where they live without entertainment and daily showers for five years. Each cell, "seven by ten feet . . [furnished only with] a cot, toilet, a basin, and an overhead light bulb that is never extinguished

night or day" (310), permits its resident to see the prison's courtyard, but no one can see the condemned prisoner. Here, Dick and Perry exhaust three appeals and are hanged in the "warehouse" on April 14, 1965. In literary terms, this place is the story's resolution. However, its details show the corner's effects on the health and spirit of the two young men even as it questions America's laws, courts, and the application of justice.

Obviously, the corner affects each person who enters it. While Perry leaves the courtroom, joking with Dick about the jury that condemned them, "'No chicken-hearted jurors, they!'" (306), he soon begins a fast that lasts for 14 weeks. During this time, even with intravenous feeding, the convict's weight drops from 168 to 115 pounds. He refuses to be part of the corner's society. He barely talks to Dick. In prison, he cannot select the people with whom he associates, and he despises Lowell Lee Andrews, a college student, who humiliates Perry by correcting the latter's grammar. Once again, Perry is alone and shamed, this time by a post-adolescent. What is notable in the corner, though, is that the random coupling of Perry and Andrews in the same place confirms one shared trait of some murderers: their mental dissociation with those whom they murder—and for Andrews, it is his family. Moreover, George Ronald York and James Douglas Latham, two soldiers-turned-multiple-and-vile-assassins on death row, expand the scope of Perry's earlier statement about committing multiple murders. "'We hate the world,'" they say (325). Thus, however different the corner's congregation of residents appears to be in age, appearance, and background, their criminal personalities share resemblances.

Conversely, in the corner, Dick reads salacious material, on the one hand, and legal books, on the other. He has appeals filed in his case. He and his *pro bono* lawyers argue that the men's confessions were taken before they had legal counsel, that the

attorneys were inept, that the KBI agents gained evidence without search warrants, and that Perry and he should not have been tried in a venue in which the well-known victims lived. His claims may have merit, but the United States Supreme Court denies to hear the appeals three times. Though the men committed the crimes, the process of justice seems flawed, and the American ideal fails Dick Hickock and Perry Smith once again. Yet, as Capote tells it, the bonhomie that Dick shares with a reporter (probably Capote) several days before his execution as well as greeting and shaking hands before his hanging with the KBI agents who captured him seem curious and incongruous. Dick says, "'I just want to say I hold no hard feelings. You people are sending me to a better world than this ever was'" (399). Ironically, again, as Capote tells it, Dick still believes that Paradise awaits him.

PERSPECTIVE: MURDER AND ITS PLACE IN THE UNITED STATES

Capote's nonfiction novel has not prevented murder nor, by itself, changed American society. Capote's sentiment does reflect that of Americans in Gallup Polls taken between 1953 and 1966, which record a decrease from 68 percent in favor of capital punishment to 45 percent (Guest xii). The book's innovation is an artistic one, as Capote had intended, in which place animates the genre. At the outset, Capote said of his choice to write about a murder in the Midwest that "'the place being altogether unfamiliar, geographically and atmospherically, [would make everything] seem freshly minted—the people, their accents and attitudes, the landscape, its contours, the weather'" (Capote qtd. in Plimpton *Truman Capote* 199). Correspondingly, his opening narration about Holcomb's contemporary landscape uses biblical, classical, and American allusions to holy or idyllic chronotopes with which readers are familiar. In this way, he portrays the

society of the Midwest. This literary ploy contrasts the placelessness the purposelessness of the two murderers. In turn, the clash of the two experiences of place, which create irony and tension, lead to the horrors that the reader expects (at the very least, because the case was in the newspapers), but hopes will not happen.

Also related to craft is the revelation of character through place. Herbert W. Clutter cultivates his land; its abundance, his generosity. Little is said about Mr. Clutter's background—although Capote notes that his parents were plain folks, whom his wife's more fortunate family avoided. However, human life on the inhospitable, arid plains of Kansas is, of necessity, civic-minded, and Mr. Clutter, a native Kansan and college-educated agronomist, finds the region's terrain and society congenial with his skills, ambitions, and personality. While the only scene in church is the Clutters' funeral, Capote chooses details that illustrate that Christian values pervade Holcomb, a town in America's Bible Belt. Thus, Capote begins with the region's sociological norm and contrasts it with the novel-length diagnostic biography of the two murderers, whose poverty and corruption are manifest in place. Richard Hickock's intact family lives in a four-room home. Perry Smith's family is troubled and itinerant. In contrast to the self-sacrificing, heroic journeys of biblical and classical protagonists as well as the journey to and across America that Americans want to believe about their forbearers, Dick and Perry's infernal journey from Olanthe to Holcomb features lying, cheating, and thievery, murder in Holcomb, more debauchery from Holcomb to and in Mexico, and even more illegal and immoral behavior from Mexico to Las Vegas—all in six weeks. As noted above, unlike the heroes of epics and novels, the journey of Perry and Dick, the real main characters of this nonfiction novel, improves no society, nor does it spark a novelistic

epiphany within the men that redeems them (in spirit—not in their past deeds). They do not change their behaviors or attitudes. Ironically, when they return to Garden City, in Finney County, they are imprisoned near a locality, the Clutters' farm, that Capote had established as Eden. After they are judged guilty, they serve five years in prison, amidst other murderers, who are their sociological and psychopathic equals. While Dick and Perry's behaviors in various places highlight their psychopathology and ill-intent, their journey moves the very real plot forward.

Place also plays a part in the nonfiction novel's flashbacks. They are set appropriately within the text and "'reconstructed'" (Capote qtd. in Plimpton *Truman Capote* 207) from letters to the characters and to the author; interviews with the murderers, their families, and acquaintances in different places; statements and testimonies of witnesses; and legal documents that provide sometimes unexpected information about both the murderers and the Clutters. These passages, which Capote choses to include, come from different places and times and provide insights into states of mind. They also humanize the characters, evoking pathos for the Clutters, and oddly, also for Perry Smith, the family's murderer. Capote did not create the characters or their movements (the plot), but he does select what he would include. Finally, while seemingly objective, Capote's choices of scenes, which provide contrasting layers in the chronotope in Kansas from November 1958 to April 1965, control readers' responses to the characters. The paradox of creating empathy in readers both for the Clutters and for Perry Smith is a *tour de force*.

While Capote's application of aesthetic technique depicts a discrete event—murder—that involves the reader in the real place and the real time, it also illuminates a

transcendent American reality: the attraction of the American Eden. Scholars (noted above) have seen this belief in documents and narratives about the American continent. It is a goal that most Americans hope to realize. The caveat in America is that Eden requires work as well as investments of capital to purchase and cultivate the land or to achieve the goal. As Capote demonstrates, in this land of "liberty and justice for all," not everyone can achieve America's promise. Herbert W. Clutter is a good man and a hardworking capitalist who reaps the rewards of his efforts. On the other hand, both murderers seem to be psychologically disturbed, poor men whose perceptions of the inequities inherent in America's socio-economic class structure are correct. Neither they nor their parents ever enjoy the American dream. This reality leads to disastrous results. The men succumb to the lure of capitalism in the guise of idyllic plenty in a peaceful place. Moreover, of the two perpetrators, Perry Smith is Capote's focus. Readers recognize both Perry's guilt and his troubled soulfulness. As a result, the State of Kansas's sole reliance on the M'Naghten Rule to determine his sentence seems unfair, especially since this ruling was not then uniform throughout the United States. Thus, the microcosm of this murder case in a hamlet of Kansas prompts readers to consider the ramifications of dramatic gaps between socio-economic classes as well as the inconsistent application of justice in the macrocosm that is the United States.

CHAPTER FOUR: JAMES BALDWIN'S *THE PRICE OF THE TICKET: COLLECTED NONFICTION 1948-1985*

CONTEXT ON BALDWIN'S PERSONAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND

If the twentieth century neatly frames James Baldwin's life (1924-1987), the mid-twentieth century period defines his span of writing nonfiction—book reviews, articles, and personal essays—as well as fiction, plays, and poetry (1947-1985). For the 698-page *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985,* published in 1985, Baldwin himself selected 52 essays from his prolific career. Because the volume's chronologically arranged essays follow the "plot" of Baldwin's life, they form a true-life *bildungsroman:* the compilation traces Baldwin's reaction to the era's national and world events and trends, but more significantly, they give voice to Baldwin's growing consciousness of self as a Black male in American society from his youth as a child in Harlem through his maturation as a world resident, global thinker, and adroit writer.[1] As such, these essays capture the mid-twentieth century chronotope of African Americans in the dominant, subjugating, white society of the United States. Paradoxically, Baldwin's writing style is strategic. His essays are written in eloquent English, the heteroglossia of readers of *The New Yorker, The Nation, Commentary, The Partisan Review,* and other such magazines: one infers that his audience is white America. In at least one early essay, he acts as a tour guide through Harlem. His persona speaks inclusively, using the first-person plural, *we,*

[1] Significant as well to Baldwin's identity is his homosexuality; however, as Emanuel Nelson comments, Baldwin's homosexuality is "rarely" a topic in the writer's non-fiction prose (qtd. In Brim 24). In "No Name in the Street," Baldwin remarks that Eldridge Cleaver fails to trust him, because the latter associated Baldwin "with all those faggots, punks, and sissies . . . in prison [that] must have made him vomit more than once" (545). The last essay in the collection, "Here be Dragons," was written for *Playboy* and published in 1985. It focuses on gender identity.

to point to the curiosities of the place. This choice also signals Baldwin's consciousness both of his employer as well as of his early, largely white readership.[2] Still, because Baldwin sees his subjects through the lens of race in mid-twentieth-century America, the essays provide narratives with commentary on the lack of availability of the American dream to the nation's Black population as well as the omnipresent moral blight and sad reality caused by the country's tacit assumption of white supremacy.

Baldwin's interpretation of national and world events is informed by two additional views of life: Christianity, embraced by his step-father, a preacher who spurred the young Baldwin to become a child preacher, and socialism, the philosophy that was especially compelling in the United States during the Great Depression (Baldwin's adolescence) and was espoused by his dear friend, Eugene Worth.[3] An incisive, independent thinker, Baldwin rejects the ritual and dogma of religion and the doctrine of socialism. What remains, as Baldwin details many of his experiences, is a synthesis of Christianity's emphasis on love and acceptance of all humanity as well as socialism's dualisms of reality and human behavior. Interestingly, Baldwin's principal attitude toward life in the United States in the middle of the twentieth century evolves from sources that differ from those of the nineteenth century's fortunate, white

[2] Baldwin's early essays, published mostly in magazines with white readerships, often opt for inclusive pronouns. As will be discussed, he uses these pronouns in essays about and directed to Black separatists to emphasize the necessities and benefits of including all citizens in a truly *United* States. Of course, autobiographical essays are first person accounts.

[3] Baldwin's "Notes of a Native Son" and both sections of "The Fire Next Time" describe David Baldwin's influence on his son. "The Price of the Ticket" acknowledges Worth's impact on the writer. David Leeming's *James Baldwin: A Biography* (1994), expands on both influences.

Transcendentalists, but the intent is the same: the unification of humanity for the good of American society.[4]

THE LITERATURE OF PLACE

The essays in The *Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985* are grounded in the writer's inherited and chosen experiences, shown in scenes from his life. These tableaux form a progression from an original chronotope (i.e., time and place), introduced and analyzed by Baldwin. Particularly revelatory are the scenes originating in the abject poverty of his youth, in the African American neighborhood of Harlem, New York during the worldwide Depression of the 1930s.[5] Leeming's biography of Baldwin underscores the physical effect of the times on the writer, noting that the writer was such a frail, underfed youngster that one of his elementary school teachers purchased and fed him cod liver oil (12). Likewise, financial necessity required Baldwin to end his formal education after high school. Baldwin writes that he worked in "Dickensian" jobs to help support his mother, who, after caring for her disillusioned and increasingly disturbed husband, became a widow and gave birth to her ninth child ("Price of the Ticket" 1). In spite of living in an inhospitable national milieu and physical space, Baldwin's determination to be a writer was encouraged by family, teachers, and friends. More

[4] This observation expands on Nick Aaron Ford's statement that "James Baldwin is one of the most talented American essayists since Ralph Waldo Emerson" (23). Both capture the diversity of the American psyche.

[5] Fern Marja Eckman's *The Furious Passage of James Baldwin* (1966) takes the form of an extended sketch over a period of 29 months. It discusses the author's life and works as well as it presents a microscopic view of his personality and mannerisms at gatherings. Biographer David Leeming, a scholar who was Baldwin's part-time secretary in the 1960s and lifelong, trusted friend provides a chronological, scholarly study of the author's life, his *oeuvre,* and the people and events that influenced him.

critically, in his young adulthood, the role models of Black writers and artists from Greenwich Village, whom he met through a friend at parties and other gatherings, crystallized his resolve. Notably, Marian Anderson, the intrepid, Black contralto, convinced Baldwin that he should not let white society define him, that, in his words, "not only was I not born to be a slave: I was not born to hope to become the equal of the slave-master" ("The Price of the Ticket" 2). This directive challenges the original chronotope of the Black race in America. In an Abrahamic response, Baldwin left his family, his neighborhood, and his country, casting off negative stereotypes about people of color—both those imposed on him by white Americans and those accepted or endured by Harlem's residents—for Paris, France in 1948, to gain a perspective about his native land as well as to define himself as a capable American writer and a champion of Black Americans.

Ironically, Baldwin's essays about the African American experience in America belong in this place. They fall into a traditional, American literary genre, the jeremiad.[6] In *The American Jeremiad,* Bercovitch elucidates the genre's form and purpose.

> Rhetoric functions within a culture. It reflects and affects a set of particular psychic, social, and historical needs [and that the colonial American jeremiad was] a mode of public exhortation that originated in the European pulpit, was transformed in both form and content by the New England Puritans, persisted through the eighteenth century, and helped sustain a national dream through two hundred years of turbulence and change. The American jeremiad was a ritual designed to join social criticism to spiritual renewal, public to private identity, the shifting "signs of the times" to certain traditional metaphors, themes, and symbols. . . .[It] has played a major role in fashioning he myth of America . . . in literary and historical terms. . . . Ultimately, its effectiveness derives from its functional relationship to facts." (xi)

[6] By 1965, in "The American Dream and the American Negro," Baldwin recognizes this quality in his writing (408).

Eckman also aligns Baldwin's writing with this genre, recognizing "the power of his jeremiads" (*The Furious Passage of James Baldwin* 15). As the stepson of a preacher and himself a lapsed "child preacher," the young Baldwin heard biblical linguistic techniques and accepted wisdom every Sunday. In a turn of expectations, as an adult writer, Baldwin used these tropes in his own speaking and writing to challenge the morality of Americans. However, Eckman does not connect the artistic and moral tension between the white, Puritan form and the mid-twentieth century secular, moral intent of Baldwin's adolescent sermons and adult essays, articles, and speeches (15). Baldwin himself often reminds his readers that he is the descendant of African slaves, cut off from his ancestors' country and culture. Early in his *oeuvre*, Baldwin comments that he "has been strangely grafted" onto Western culture ("Stranger in the Village" 94). The irony is that Baldwin uses a genre that white Americans inherited from white Europeans, his sometimes unwitting but often intentional oppressors, to exhort the United States's power structure for its innate white supremacy.[7]

Baldwin twists the genre in another way. As Bercovitch notes, the American jeremiad's message, particularly seen in Reverend Samuel Danforth's "Brief Recognition of New England's Errand in the Wilderness" (1670), claims that the journey to and development of the "promised land," that is, the American wilderness, is a "process," not a promise, at the end of devout lives (Danforth in Berkovitch 23). Baldwin also recognizes process and uncertainty, but his concern is rooted in this world—changing

[7] Others, but most notably Frederick Douglass, the self-educated, nineteenth century former slave-turned-orator-and-writer, used the same strategy to censure white Christian Americans for practicing slavery and retaining its practices after the Emancipation Declaration of 1862. In Taylor and Foner's edition of Douglass's work, the writer-orator's "The Church and Prejudice" (3-4), "The Word 'White'" (275), and "The Meaning of the Fourth of July to the Negro" (188-206) are particularly powerful, and their tone and slant g Baldwin.

American attitudes and laws to embrace all of its citizens. Baldwin enters this conversation in 1948 with the publication of "The Harlem Ghetto," in *Commentary.* In the article, he charges that because Americans and their government deny Black citizens the country's foundational promise, the American dream, the residents of Harlem and by implication, most African Americans, live in substandard conditions; they live in deep poverty, are condemned to menial jobs, and have little education and poor housing. Many require social services.

Clearly, Baldwin sees the United States's history and its mid-twentieth century reality through an African American lens. In "The Price of the Ticket," the essay written to begin the collection, the writer observes that "the will of the people, or the State, is revealed by the State's institutions. There was not, then, nor is there now, a single American institution which is not a racist institution. And racist institutions . . . are meant to keep the nigger in his place" (9). He adds, historically and prophetically, that "a mob is not autonomous: it executes the real will of the people who rule the State" (10). Over time and terrain—New York City, Europe, the United States, and Africa—Baldwin's essays present vivid scenes that demonstrate the way place affects Baldwin and his understanding of himself and his society, other people of color, and, by extension, the whites who inhabit the locale and the country. The place defines the country and culture; the country and culture, the place.

HARLEM, NEW YORK IS EVERYTOWN, UNITED STATES

Interestingly, a prelude to the style and sentiment in the essays of Baldwin's maturity can be found in Baldwin's first article. "Harlem—Then and Now" was a research project, suggested by an administrator for "Jimmy's" junior high school literary

magazine (Eckman 53-55).[8] The 13-year-old fashioned a century-by-century account about Baldwin's birthplace that begins with the Dutch colonization of the wilderness in the seventeenth century. Unveiling the voice of the social critic that he was to become, the adolescent Baldwin ends this section with his distinctive rhetorical (here, his use of onomatopoeia and visualization) and oppositional view: "But the Indians did not like it. The squeak of the cartwheels and swish of the scythes warned them that their 'happy hunting grounds' would soon be taken away from them" (Baldwin qtd. in Eckman 54). He notes the progressive urbanization and creation of the area's infrastructure in intervening centuries, and he concludes with an editorial comment on the effect of it all in the late 1930s.

> "Today, as we all know, Harlem is a large, thickly populated urban community—a city within a city, with fine streets and avenues, parks, playgrounds, churches, schools, apartment houses, theatres, etc.
>
> However, there is still great room for improvement. The tenements people were once so proud of are now rather dangerous firetraps and should be rebuilt. There has been some effort on the part of the Housing Authorities to improve them, but as yet they have only operated in the very small field.
>
> Now we, who are interested in Harlem, hope that the future will bring a steady growth and improvement." (Baldwin qtd. in Eckman 55)

Young "Jimmy" Baldwin speaks for a "congregation" of people as he recognizes Harlem as a deteriorating part of a great metropolis. He points to the city's officials as

[8] His biographers note that teachers took an active interest in the precocious young Baldwin's education. In this instance, Harvard-educated Bill Porter, a first generation freed Black and Baldwin's junior high school math teacher, who was an advisor to the literary magazine, brought Baldwin to the main branch of the New York Public Library to do the research as well as to introduce the writer-to-be to a new world. This essay provides insight into those published in *The Price of the Ticket.*

being responsible for the predicament. With caution, he calls on an unidentified "future" to fix the neighborhood's poor living conditions.[9]

Writing from Paris in 1948, a 24-year-old Baldwin, commissioned by Robert Warshow, editor of *Commentary,* again writes about his hometown (Leeming *James Baldwin* 51). The result is the brilliant, but caustic "The Harlem Ghetto."[10] Like Capote, Baldwin begins the article, and his collection of articles, with this description of place. The title links its two nouns—the locale and its "rejected" (this time, not Jewish but African American) population (17). In a Bakhtinian move, Baldwin evaluates Harlem from the perspectives of people to whom the place is important: the lived experiences of the African American inhabitants; the non-resident whites (who may work in Harlem or travel through it), and, based upon his own family's two-generational residency in Harlem, Baldwin's own view.

With dire detail, Baldwin catalogues the community's disintegration, which is symptomatic of the city's neglect of its African American community and of that populace's acceptance of the situation. The buildings and streets are in disrepair. Employment and wages in the ghetto's post-World War II economy are low. Prices of food and clothing are high. The area is densely populated. Moreover, Baldwin's rhetoric

---

[9] However precocious the young Baldwin was, one wonders if an adult had a hand in shaping the call to action that concludes the piece. One assumes that publications from the city's schools were sent to New York City's Board of Education and available to and/or disseminated throughout the community.

[10] Schwartz's 2019 article for *Time*, "How America's Ugly History of Segregation Changed the Meaning of the Word 'Ghetto,'" capably traces the history of the word *ghetto* from a "legally compulsory and physically enclosed Jewish enclave" in Venice, Italy in the early sixteenth century to the "residential segregation" of Blacks in the early 1900s (n. p.). Schwartz neglects to mention Baldwin's 1948 essay when he credits African American scholar Kenneth Clark for having popularized linking the term to the Black urban condition in *Dark Ghetto,* published in 1965.

personifies Harlem by its troubles. Harlem's physical appearance is "desperate." The area's "congestion [is] like the insistent . . . pounding in the skull that comes from trying to breathe in a very small room with all the windows shut" (13). Burdened by unbearable conditions, the residents, Baldwin claims, feel that they are powerless to affect change. In juxtaposition, the "casual [white] observer" of Harlem "wears" a "casual face . . . [no more] sinister or more wretched than any other slum" (13). Baldwin underlines the irony of this attitude, recalling the menacing presence of the police, the sad origins and stories of African Americans, and the Harlem riots of 1935 and 1943. Clearly, if the meaning and viability of a place relies upon the combined efforts of its residents, business owners, and the government, all have failed.

Like the conclusion of his junior high school essay, "The Harlem Ghetto" cites those who have neglected to improve life in the ghetto. The Black residents themselves are the first group that Baldwin blames. The "Negro leaders'" efforts to aid the community have been limited to building one playground in the ghetto, and they have not been able to improve literacy in the local schools.[11] Undoubtedly, the Black leaders in Harlem find themselves in the same position as Black leaders in Atlanta, which Baldwin discusses in "Journey to Atlanta," written that same year. In the latter article, Baldwin observes that "the Negro representative, by virtue of his position, is ever more removed from the people he ostensibly serves" (31). The consequence is that the community's needs and opinions, sanctioned by voting for a delegate, are null and void. Clearly, the problem of effective advocacy for the Black urban community in America is ubiquitous.

---

[11] Particularly venomous is Baldwin's opinion of American education. It "provide[s] a market for the *Reader's Digest* and the *Daily News*" (14). Surely, he reasons, "Negro leaders" could help Black children achieve this minimal level of literacy.

"The Harlem Ghetto" critiques other aspects of the Black community. He condemns both the white and the "Negro press" for focusing on the "sensational." Celebrity columns in the best of the dailies deal with national events, ignoring the problems that Black citizens face in the ghetto.[12] He infers that slavery's progenitor, white supremacy, is the real issue, which is "as old as the country itself" (16). The neighborhood's spiritual centers also contribute to the ghetto's dysfunction. Church services are conducted in "unclassifiable lofts, basements, store-fronts, and event private buildings [that] assemble enthusiastic congregants nightly and are [led by] Holyroller ministers, spiritualists, self-appointed prophets and Messiahs" (19). Baldwin opines that these spiritual leaders undercut the community's natural instinct to strive for health, which would be to insist on access to the American dream. He faults the clerics for preaching passive acceptance of the congregants' lot, that is, the reality "imposed" upon them (by whites): they pontificate that "the injustice of the white American [will be rewarded in the afterlife with] his certain and long overdue punishment" (19).[13] Thus Baldwin also exposes to the white community the undercurrent of resentment of Harlem's Blacks against it. Baldwin's revelation also chastises Harlem's holy men, not its populace, for uttering vicious wishes for the white race, a part of humanity. The irony is that the prediction is reminiscent of the white Puritans' promise of eternal damnation for sinners. For Baldwin, the most destructive element of the preachers' sermons, though,

---

[12] Here, Baldwin condemns Black columnists who wrote against the House Un-American Activities Committee's attack on communism in Hollywood movies. Baldwin's view is that *Gone with the Wind,* which idealizes the South's plantation system, was more anti-American than *Watch on the Rhine,* which views Nazi Germany during World War II..

[13] Baldwin also notes the irony of the persistence of the Christian faith of Black Americans that white Americans imposed upon their African slaves.

is that they counsel followers to wait—not to demand action and to work for change. Like the limp guidance of Harlem's political leaders, the advice is not constructive; it does not remediate the residents' problems. Rather, it maintains the pernicious stasis of the place: the ghetto.

As Baldwin sees it, both the white establishment and Harlem's Black residents are guilty of failing to achieve vital services and a motivation for a better life in New York City—let alone gaining sure access to the American dream for its "inarticulate, hungry population" (22). The sad irony inherent in the essay is that the presumptions have been that slavery was a nineteenth century, Southern institution, and that life has always been better for African Americans in the North than it has been in the South. According to Baldwin, he truth is that the white supremacy that fostered slavery in the United States of the past still exists in Baldwin's time—and in his place. The author observes with sad irony that the hungry and impoverished denizens of his hometown identify with the biblical oppression and homelessness of the Jews in the Hebrew Bible, yet they see white Jewish outsiders, who own many of the businesses in the community, to be their oppressors.[14] Baldwin himself rejects that notion. He insists that the origin of racism is in the "American scene" or the "American reality" (22), and that not only is racism widespread at that time, but that white supremacy is the nation's inherited, quasi-folkloric belief. From the adult perspective of having attended school (notably the academically selective De Witt Clinton High School, in the Bronx) and worked and traveled outside of

[14] Baldwin expands upon this sentiment in "Negroes are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White," published in 1967. He says, "Not all of these people were cruel, but …all of them were exploiting us, and that is why we hated them" (429).

Harlem, Baldwin provides a kaleidoscopic view of the community's ills.[15] He ends this early essay with his observed wisdom: "But just as a society must have a scapegoat, so hatred must have a symbol. Georgia has the Negro and Harlem has the Jew" (23). Thus Baldwin's "The Harlem Ghetto," which depicts the writer's place of birth—its demographics, attitudes, infrastructure, schools, culture, and economy—as a populous and tragically forlorn place in New York City. The ending pivots back to the original assertion, the title. Baldwin implies that the Blacks of Harlem—originally free people from Africa, who became slaves in America and then free American citizens subjected to Jim Crow laws —and the modern Jews—originally victims of prejudice and pogroms in Europe and then the twentieth century's Nazi genocide in Germany (but more recently from the suburbs), share the kinship of enduring society's prejudice and exclusion. On Harlem's turf in the 1940s, Jews are white outsiders, however. As Baldwin notes later, all outsiders who work in Harlem—the welfare workers and the policemen of all races and religions—can leave the ghetto and are ensured "safety" and "a future" for their children ("Negroes are Anti-Semitic" 431). The Blacks of the ghetto cannot. Written for *Commentary,* a magazine with a large Jewish readership, the intent of "The Harlem Ghetto" would seem to enlist its readers to aid and defend Harlem's population.[16] The author becomes the advocate for his place.

Like "The Harlem Ghetto," which is an insider's guide to the neighborhood's personality and its context within American culture, "Notes of a Native Son" is a

---

[15] This article appeared before "Notes of a Native Son," where Baldwin relates his experiences outside of the ghetto in New York City and in New Jersey, but not yet in the South.

[16] "A Talk to Teachers" (1963), written for *The Saturday Review*, adds insight into the failure of American education for Black children. The curriculum teaches the ideology of "the white republic," whose myths exclude Blacks from its heroes and freedom-fighters.

personal reflection on one day in Harlem, July 29, 1943. The day marks the death of the writer's stepfather, David Baldwin.[17] The older Baldwin's personal life becomes a microcosm of the community's life. The essay illuminates the ways in which the place influences the beliefs and behaviors of its residents. The wartime labor market plummets; dissatisfaction soars. Crime is rampant. Race riots break out in July. Baldwin again personifies Harlem as being a sick character, "infected by waiting" (146). The context of this pause differs from the clerics' earlier admonition to wait for divine justice to be passed on the white population. Recognizing diversity in the ghetto, Baldwin writes that active hordes of Harlemites, who are poles apart in their morality and behavior, take to the streets. Physical, social, and emotional boundaries disappear.

> But that summer I saw the strangest combinations: large, respectable churchly matrons standing on the stoops or the corners with the hair tied up, together with a girl in sleazy satin whose face bore the marks of gin and the razor, or heavy-set, abrupt, no-nonsense older men, in company with the most disreputable and fanatical "race" men, or these same "race" men with the sharpies, or these sharpies with the churchly women. Seventh Day Adventists and Methodists and Spiritualists seemed to be hobnobbing with Holyrollers and they were all, alike, entangled with the most flagrant disbelievers; something heavy in their stance seemed to indicate that they had all, incredibly, seen a common vision, and on each face there seemed to be the same strange, bitter shadow. (147)

The ultimate unifier of these disparate Americans in the hot, congested streets is their worry for a son or family member, or a "lover," or a friend who is in the United States Army during World War II: what happens abroad is likely to have a fatal effect on this community. The implied irony is that Black citizens will die for the United States, but they still are not allowed to share the American dream. Moreover, while all Americans of the era may have shared this apprehension, the community in Harlem faces

[17] "Notes of a Native Son" was first published in *Harper's Magazine* in 1955.

an additional, grim concern—one that undermines its fear that its "future" will die, honorably and heroically, in war. It is their fear that as Black Americans, the soldiers in basic training in the South are vulnerable to the violence and murder that that region has imposed upon the race since free Africans were forced to come to the American continent as slaves. In this way, Baldwin uses place—the United States's "macrocosm's" effects on Harlem's "microcosm"—to layer the Harlem community's emotional response to the country's urgent imperatives as well as to its historic and lethal racism.

This awful picture of the effect of a "popular" war on Harlem's community, though, provides the context for Baldwin's personal experience: Baldwin sees the correspondence between the life of his stepfather, David Baldwin, and the man's final time and place, his chronotope. A first-generation free man who fled New Orleans and its Jim Crow laws in 1919, David Baldwin found neither comfort nor capital in New York City. Downtown, in a "white world,"[18] he found menial work that did not sustain his wife and children, who were stuck uptown, in Harlem. While the writer recalls winning his stepfather's delighted attention when the former was a child who sang solos in church or, later, gave sermons as a child-preacher, more recent memories of David Baldwin are of his moodiness, temper, and abuse. If the North's broken promise of a better life disappointed Mr. Baldwin, one senses the double betrayal that the preacher must have felt when young James gave up preaching for writing. Harlem served David Baldwin daily disappointment.

[18] "White world" is the way Baldwin describes his first sight of New York City outside of Harlem, in "A Talk to Teachers" (1963).

James Baldwin suggests that however organic his stepfather's psychological deterioration may have been, it was equally emblematic of the environment's ability to contaminate the personality. Angry at the nation's white power structure that treated him poorly both in the South and in the North, he is "outrageously demanding and protective of his children" (138). He played roughly with his children; hit his hungry, wild children with a strap, and "paralyzed" them with fear while helping them with homework, but he is enraged when a well-meaning, white, female teacher treats young Jimmy to the theater, a place that David's religion also prohibits (141). In "The Fire Next Time," Baldwin also recalls that after a Jewish friend from junior high school left the Baldwin apartment, David "slammed [Jimmy] across the face with his great hand": the schoolmate was a member of the race of white oppressors as well as of an "unsaved" religion (352). Memorable to his stepson, then, is that the eve of funeral of the intemperate David Baldwin coincided with an "explosion" in Harlem (153). Mobs looted and damaged closed stores in Harlem. The juxtaposition of events is factual, but the effect conveys a sad irony—a literary psychosocial pathetic fallacy originating in and returning to place: the violence reflects the emotional bathos and behavior of Baldwin's father, and it is punctuated by the residents' handicapping poverty and frustrated hopes during the Depression.

Furthermore, Baldwin cites Harlem's ignored and trashed infrastructure to argue that the United States means to segregate and ignore African Americans.[19] In this piece, Harlemites, who are prohibited from living downtown in Stuyvesant Town, resent

[19] "Fifth Avenue Uptown," published in *Esquire* in 1960, makes the poverty of the slum, past and present, concrete (212-220).

housing projects like Riverton, which was built in 1948, when whites fled from Harlem. Harlemites consider the police to be toxic bullies who enforce the biased rules, self-seeking-understandings, and prejudices of the white supremacist government that—even outside of the South—does not recognize Blacks as legitimate citizens.[20] He recognizes that some whites live in intolerable conditions, too, but that this state of being is not a "consolation" to Blacks—especially because the latter have lived in America for centuries (more years than many immigrants) and have never been granted the equality of opportunity that white immigrants have. Moreover, he observes that while whites can move out of a slum like Harlem, most Blacks are condemned to stay in place. Of the rarified group that achieves success, among them Sammy Davis, Jr., Baldwin reasons that "the inequities of the many are in no way justified by the rise of the few" (215). As seen in Harlem's example, Baldwin feels that the outlook for Blacks is bleak: "No Negro in this country who has ever made much money . . . [can escape] persecution" (215). The music and fellowship of Black night clubs may provide an escape from the repression imposed by whites from outside,[21] but Baldwin's reader is not left to wonder why Harlem periodically becomes a combustible crucible of disappointment in the American democratic experiment.

Likewise, Baldwin finds that for African Americans, the New York area, to which Baldwin's parents fled, is an urban, industrial version of the agrarian, post-slavery South. In "Notes of a Native Son," he describes the visceral rage that prompted him to violent

---

[20] Baldwin says, "Northerners . . . feel that because they fought on the right side of the Civil War, and won . . . ignore what is happening in northern cities because what is happening in Little Rock or Birmingham is worse" (319).

[21] Baldwin discusses this in "Color" (325-329).

action. In 1942, before his stepfather's death, Baldwin held a post high school job at an army base near Princeton, New Jersey. He writes that outside the base, he experienced, among other inequities, the cruelty of segregation in the white suburbs: a waitress at an eatery ignored him and refused him service. In response, he "hurl[ed] a mug with all [his] strength at [the waitress]." He reflects about the cold dualism that he "could have been murdered . . . [and] that [he] had been ready to commit murder" ("Notes of a Native Son" 145). This realization about the psychological effect that his first experience of a place outside of Harlem and New York City has on him has an existential effect on him.

Consequently, Baldwin's experiences of a polarized America inform his perception of literature, as seen in his review of Ross Lockridge's novel *Raintree County*.[22] Baldwin credits Lockridge with having attempted to write an American epic: the *oeuvre* is 1,066 pages. Baldwin notes that the archetypally American characters meet in scenes set on the Fourth of July, a celebratory chronotope for most Americans. The work of fiction incorporates the demographic diversity of which the United States boasts. Yet Baldwin's criticism is that while Lockridge's novel hints at the reality of "national contradictions," it does not address the fact that "so many versions of the same myth are used for so many warring purposes" (25). Baldwin opines that Lockridge's book shines "superficial sunlight" on the United States of America, preferring to suppress "the [nation's metaphorical inheritance and practices of] darkness by a perpetual insistence that darkness is not possible: or at any rate, not possible in America, 'the last best hope of earth'" (27). Certainly, as a Black reader and critic, Baldwin's reaction of restrained

[22] "Lockridge: 'The American Myth'" appears in this collection of nonfiction (24-29). The novel was published in 1948. Baldwin's review first appeared in *The New Leader* that same year.

antipathy to Lockridge's work is influenced by his own encounters with racial prejudice in general, the poverty he experienced in Harlem, and the explosive riots in Harlem in the 1930s and 1940s. What Baldwin finds troubling is that Lockridge's fiction views America through naïve, white eyes.

Mid-career, Baldwin points to one salient, national trait—America's long history of racial prejudice—that is part of what contributes to his skepticism about the possibility of societal unity. In an unpublished letter to a judge, "Upon my Soul: The Case of Tony Maynard," written in London on January 10, 1968, and in article in his collected nonfiction, "No Name in the Street," first published in 1972, Baldwin provides a vivid example of the depth and breadth of the United States's racism and white supremacy.[23] Racism, the letter asserts, is a national assumption. He cites elected officials, Governor George Wallace of Alabama, Senator James Eastland of Mississippi, and Governor Ronald Reagan of California, for their shamelessly racist rhetoric and discriminatory policies. However, Baldwin's particular concern is the injustice of the legal system and its enforcers, the police, that imprisoned Tony Maynard, Baldwin's friend and occasional bodyguard. Already cleared of two spurious arrests in the United States—one for gambling, and one for the possession of narcotics—Maynard is again arrested—this time, in Germany—for a homicide for which he already had been freed in United States. According to the article, Maynard did not fit the description of the assailant in size or

[23] The letter can be found in the New York Public Library's *James Baldwin Papers*, Writing Unpublished Reviews and Other, MG936, Box 58/20.

temperament, and after spending months in a jail in Germany, is tried and freed in the United States. This inequity, Baldwin claims, is dramatic, but nothing new. Baldwin's first-person point-of-view bildungsroman of nonfiction provides vivid reasons in numerous articles written for a variety of periodicals over his 37-year career for his impoverished "protagonist" to lament conditions of Blacks of his hometown and his oblivious country. In his early adolescence, he claims that the fears about powerful, randomly punitive white America that he sensed in and absorbed from his parents "drove [him] into the church" ("The Fire Next Time" 348). However, he left the church when he reasoned that the God to whom he was praying was not African, but white, "and if His love was so great, and if He loved all His children, why were we, the blacks, cast down so far?" (349). This epiphany puts the young Baldwin in an incongruous position. He feels that white America rejected his ancestors long ago, and he rejects the religion and lifestyle that African American society has fashioned for itself in the United States. Likewise, he charges later, that police action is based on white supremacy and its attendant laws. Autobiography is his vehicle to reveal American society's attitude toward and philosophy about race. In 1962, well after his early articles about Harlem were published, a letter to his nephew, entitled as "My Dungeon Shook," accuses his "country and countrymen" of obliviously destroying the lives of the black race. He says,

> Now, my dear namesake, these innocent and well-meaning people, your countrymen, have caused you to be born under conditions not very far removed from those described for us by Charles Dickens in the London of more than a hundred years ago. . . . I know the conditions under which you were born, for I was there. (339)

The above accusations, articulated by a 38-year-old Baldwin, comprehend the lack of congruence between being an American citizen and being an African American citizen that his 18-year-old self could not understand. The mature Baldwin worries

about the violence that Black citizens suffered from the United States's agents of peace, the police, on the one hand, and the self-harm of young, disillusioned African American citizens because of it, on the other. Of his own state of mind, he says, "By the time I was twenty-two, I was a survivor—a survivor, furthermore, with murder in his heart" ("Every Good-bye Ain't Gone" 652). As he says in many articles, he does not accept the identity that white society has foisted on him even though he always knew that he wanted to be a writer.

Yet Baldwin's decision to leave Harlem is not an easy one. Once again, he articulates his sentiments with a *yin-yang* balance. He says that he worried that his "departure" would be a betrayal of his widowed mother and eight younger siblings—who loved him and might have benefitted from his employment in New York—as well as of the community that looked out for him in his childhood. In addition, Harlem was the place where, as a child-preacher, he learned to write for an audience. He observes, however, that "some things had happened to me because I was black, and some things had happened to me because I was me and I had to discover the demarcation line, if there was one" ("Every Good-bye Ain't Gone" 652). Muted in Baldwin's essays is the fact of his fine public-school education in an integrated environment in the 1930s and 1940s. Outside of Harlem, school influenced him to take action to survive, to write, and to achieve. Leeming notes that Harlem Renaissance poet Countee Cullen, who was his French teacher at Frederick Douglass Junior High School, a school north of Harlem, encouraged Baldwin's writing and spoke about his own experiences living in France. At DeWitt Clinton High School, a city-wide, selective boys' high school in the Bronx, Baldwin's group of friends also introduced him to ideas and people whom he had not

known in Harlem's ghetto (23-31). School did not mitigate Harlem's inauspicious conditions, but it did show Baldwin possibilities, and he made them his reality.

FRANCE AND EUROPE

In 1948, the Paris that was familiar and congenial to Baldwin's Black mentors (artist Beauford Delaney, poet Countee Cullen, and writer Richard Wright) seemed like a hospitable place for the aspiring writer to find a positive identity and to start a productive career.[24] From a scriptural view, Baldwin's abandonment of his beloved family, his home, and his country to "recreate" himself is Abrahamic, a tale with which the child-preacher would be familiar. From an American view, it is puzzling; it is a "reverse commute." However, like the early settlers, Baldwin's abandonment of his country frees him. Baldwin observes that historically, "those who were making it in England . . . did not get on the *Mayflower*" ("Educating Blacks" 335). Abroad, he writes about the inequitable conditions that African Americans—especially those that a perceptive, articulate Black writer identifies—still endure in the "land of the free" almost a century after the end of slavery.

Baldwin and his readers come to understand the paradox that overwhelmed this part of his life: he had to leave America to understand that he is an American. A charming piece that he writes for *Commentary* about his first days in Paris, "Equal in Paris," published in 1955, reveals this epiphany. Still impoverished, he slept in an old, dusty, poorly ventilated hotel, that was owned by a confused, old hermit. He notes that such accommodations for renters in his income bracket were the norm. Most of each day,

[24] Biographer David Leeming especially discusses these influences on the young Baldwin (36).

though, he worked and socialized in cafes. Moreover, he says, "in those days in Paris, though I floated on a sea of acquaintances, I knew almost no one" (124). Not knowing the history, language, laws, and the mores of France also separated him from its mainstream culture. Thus, he had no place, and he did not know this place. Arrested for a crime that he did not commit,[25] he is surprised that the French policemen did not "despise" him as they did ""Arab peanut vendors"; he was an American. Yet Baldwin says that he was fearful, because he did not know what would happen to him for an offense that is not punishable by the guillotine. Isolated because of language and cultural expectations, he recalls waiting in a cell with strangers from North Africa who really had committed petty theft, waiting for a trial for several days during the Christmas season. Indeed, a *deus ex machina* in the form of an American interpreter puts him in touch with an attorney, who freed the American. Of course, Baldwin was relieved, but if slavery is America's "original sin," sitting in court, listening to the sentences meted out to impoverished foreigners, most from French colonies, allowed Baldwin to see that despite its being a paragon of culture and style, France had its fatal flaw.

> It seemed to me that all of the sentences meted out that day were excessive; though, again, it seemed that all the people who were sentenced that day had made, or clearly were going to make, crime their career. This seemed to be the opinion of the judge, . . .of the prisoners, . . . of the lawyers, state lawyers for the most part, who were defending them. The great impulse of the courtroom seemed to be to put these people where they could not be seen—and not because they were offended at the crimes, unless, indeed, they were offended that the crimes were so petty, but because they did not wish to know that their society could be counted on to produce . . . a whole body of people for whom crime was the only possible career. Any society inevitably produces its criminals, but a society at once rigid and unstable can do nothing whatever to alleviate the poverty of its lowest members, cannot present to the hypothetical young man at the crucial moment that so-well-advertised right path. And the fact, perhaps, that the French

[25] He slept on bedsheets that he borrowed from another ex-patriot from New York, who stole them from another hotel in Paris.

> are the earth's least sentimental people and must also be numbered among the most proud aggravates the plight out of lowest, youngest, and unluckiest members, for it means that the idea of rehabilitation is scarcely real to them. (133-134)

The condemnation that a venerable, long-evolved, advanced, and Christian culture ignores its minorities underscores the persistence of Baldwin's early beliefs. He is an areligious adult, but he still holds the beliefs of his youth: the sanctity of all human beings. At the same time, it would seem, it is an overseas accusation of the United States, which condemns its underclass to substandard conditions. Yet Baldwin bases himself in France, and his last days are spent at his residence in Saint Paul de Vence. He accepts the identity that the place confers upon him: being an American writer in France is more salubrious to him than being an African American writer in the United States.

Baldwin voices other epiphanies about being a foreigner in another culture and place. In "Stranger in the Village," published in 1953, he describes his stay in Loeche-les-Bains, a remote village in the Swiss Alps, in the winter of 1951. The village, uncomplicated by the expectations of twentieth century American culture, had "no movie house, no bank, no library, no theater; very few radios, one jeep, one station wagon; and, at the moment, one typewriter—mine, an invention which the woman next door to me had never seen" (90). Ironically, the village's 600 residents, hosts of tourists looking for cures in the village's hot springs, are familiar with disabled people, but they have never seen a Black person. Creatures of their own culture, they treat him kindly, but they consider him to be a "wonder"—not a human being. They call him a *"Neger!,"* the same appellation that they label the unseen, distant Africans for whom they collect money to underwrite missionaries' trips to Africa to convert souls to Catholicism. Moreover, to celebrate this tradition, they don black faces and wiry wigs at *carnaval* before lent. At

this point in his life, that the village's residents know so little about people with black skin is as much a curiosity to him as his existence is to them.[26]

In turn, Baldwin assesses the white villagers from his own culture and place. To him, they are primitives, who are, incongruously, the inheritors of the great ideas and literature of Western civilization; they are like the unassimilated, "discontented Europeans" (96) who colonized North America and created a culture that thrives on white supremacy. Writing in 1953, he says that this village is a microcosm of "the West into which I have been so strangely grafted. . . . The most illiterate among them is related, in a way that I am not, to Dante, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Aeschylus, Da Vinci, Rembrandt, and Racine" (94). These villagers, who consider Baldwin to be "an exotic rarity" (94), also represent the people who came to Africa during the colonial era and conquered and enslaved his ancestors. This epiphany, incited by human geography, both enrages and engages him.

In Paris in 1951, Baldwin analyzes his human setting via the relationships among agemates who reside there—African Americans, American Caucasians, European Caucasians, and Africans from the French colonies. Written from an objective point of view, "Encounter on the Seine: Black Meets Brown" is an intensely personal yet sociological article about an African American's place (or status), in that city. He declares that "the American Negro in Paris is very nearly the invisible man" (41). In the article, Baldwin notes the alienation that his fellow African Americans have from each

---

[26] In his 1956 review of Otto Preminger's *Porgy and Bess*, in "Catfish Row," Baldwin is less tolerant of a white Westerner's presentation of people with black skin: "The director . . . knows nothing about the life that produced them. We still live, alas, in a society mainly divided into black and white. Black people still do not . . . tell white people the truth and white people still do not want to hear it. . . . [The] director is entirely at the mercy of his ignorance and of whatever system of theories or evasions he has evolved to cover his ignorance" (186).

other. On the one hand, in post-World War II Paris, most young African Americans are veterans whose studies, funded by the G. I. Bill of Rights, may distract them from forming social ties. On the other hand, he posits that they may want to cast off the "past humiliations" associated with their status in the United States; they may want to begin new lives (47). His conversations with white American counterparts offer no comfort. If civility is to be maintained with white strangers, the talk concerns the present—not life back home, where the place is replete with conflicting assumptions about race and class. The Europeans, he claims, assume that the media's presentations of American life, which preserve the American myth, apply to all Americans. Not knowing the language well but wanting to please, he rues his disingenuous answers. Finally, he feels isolated from the African student from a French colony, who, Baldwin intuits, may feel disoriented and angry in a new setting. Unlike an African American, though, other Black students have an African homeland. If Baldwin's realization in the Swiss village is that the villagers' culture is white culture, and white culture is not Baldwin's, he realizes from the African Black in Paris that the African American suffers an "alienation of himself from his people and his past" (49). In 1950, Baldwin writes that for 300 years, since white Europeans brought Blacks to the New World as slaves, all African Americans have been cut off from their African ancestry, that is, oral history, customs, religion and sacred rites, and the languages that communicate the various African cultures. Baldwin cuts to the heart of what the legacy of slavery in the United States deprived modern African Americans when he says that it obliterated their African "birthright" (50), their right to connection with and pride in a past. This understanding leads to a life-changing realization. However displaced and abused his ancestors in America were, he reasons, their experiences are

part of the inheritance as Americans, too. In France, Baldwin confronts the idea of finding an inner peace by accepting all African American experience in his identity—both an ancestral "memory of the auction block" in the United States as well as a newly understood pride that is an inheritance of ancient ancestry in Africa (50).

At this point in his life, Baldwin's writing remains introspective and cautious about America's future. He is tentative about believing that all Americans of all races and ethnic and religious backgrounds will acknowledge their shared past to find a national identity that will build a strong nation. About his place of birth, he says:

> . . . one day, he [the African American] will face his home [the United States] again; nor can he realistically expect to find overwhelming changes. In America, it is true, the appearance is perpetually changing, each generation greeting with short-lived exultation yet more dazzling additions to our renowned façade. But the ghetto, anxiety, bitterness, and guilt continue to breed their indescribably complex of tensions. What time will bring Americans is at last their own identity. It is on this dangerous voyage and in the same boat that the American Negro will make peace with himself and with the voiceless many thousands gone before him. ("Encounter on the Seine: Black Meets Brown" 50)

The metaphor recalls the Black slave's journey to the new world, but in forming a strong, equitable nation, both races share the "boat." Ironically, the real "journey" is dangerous not because of the seas, but because of the interactions and the outcomes that may occur on "deck," a human place.

Again, he articulates to a national audience the need for Americans to synthesize and surpass all historical experiences of intolerance in his 1962 landmark treatise, "The Fire Next Time." This time, his writing is direct, insistent, and prophetic. He insists that all Americans, which includes people of all races and all backgrounds, "need each other" (382). Accordingly, African Americans must be partners in every aspect of American life, including constructing and enacting the laws that all Americans accept and follow. The United States cannot remain "an indifferent fortress of white supremacy" (384), but

"everything now, we must assume, is in our hands; [alert and active Blacks and Caucasians] have no right to assume otherwise" (386). Baldwin concludes with an allusive threat from a Biblical slave song: "'God gave Noah the rainbow sign. No more water, the fire next time'" (387). Readers understand that having written about race and the United States for 14 years, having seen that segregation is still present in the South in spite of the Supreme Court's *Brown v. the Board of Education* of 1954 as well as the dire conditions of ghettos and the lingering ills of societal prejudice against African Americans, which spurred the then-nascent civil rights movement, Baldwin's prediction reveals his realistic frustration and the nation's possible future. In fact, five years later, in 1967, many cities experienced riots based on racial inequity.

PLACE: THE ILLUSIVE AMERICAN DREAM

For Baldwin, then, the United States is more than a geographical site in North America and other points on the globe. It is a chronotope in which all of its inhabitants share all historical memories, engage in the present, and have the right to envision a shared future. Both Baldwin and Bakhtin would agree that implicit in this understanding of place are the psychological and moral underpinnings of history and citizenship.

In "East River, Downtown" (1961), Baldwin writes that Africa is a land where Blacks are "related to kings and princes in an ancestral homeland" (275). Baldwin's straightforward statement about his racial past is an affirmation of self-worth and an inspiration for the possibilities for Americans of African descent. However, the diversity of opinion at the international gathering of Black, intellectual luminaries in Paris at a conference of *Le Congres des Ecrivains et Artistes Noirs* challenges Baldwin's notion of a shared history. He reports that the conference began by detaching its concerns from

traditional history, "'the Western interpretation of the life of this world'" ("Princes and Powers" 52), which historically had subjugated people of color. As such, the lectures catalogued the ways that African art and its theory, long ignored, differ from that of the West. The questions, he notes, are, "'What is culture?' and 'Is it possible to describe as a culture what may simply be, after all, a history of oppression?'" (59). In other words, the morality of place affects its art, and a work of art reveals a culture's assumptions and attitudes. The speakers suggest that the existence of brute force over a race affects its perceptions of life and its artistic creation. Baldwin does not express his own opinion about the aesthetics of race and place. Noting the variety of backgrounds and recording the differences of opinions between the European and the African worlds that Black attendees voiced, Baldwin reports that the one point upon which the intellectuals can agree is planning future meetings. He seems relieved—or he wishes to relieve his readers—by ending his piece in the streets of Paris, where "the people were [engaged in the practical matter of] queueing up before the bakeries for bread" (74). In this record of an international meeting, Baldwin acknowledges its members' desires to define their intellectual and emotional territory, a concern that Baldwin's articles indicate that he must have had about the creation of his own *oeuvres.*

Baldwin's *bildungsroman* continues, however, and his affirmation of the application of *Le Congres des Ecrivains et Artistes Noirs's* assumptions about the cultural repression of race appears in childhood memories that are included in "The Fire Next Time," written in 1962. Baldwin recalls that he was 10 when a white policemen frisked him, cruelly berated him and his family, and threw young Jimmy "on [his] back in one of Harlem's empty lots" (344). Moreover, three years later, when he was approaching one of

America's bastions of culture, the Forty-second Street library, a policeman advised him to "'stay uptown where [he] belong[s]'" (344). Clearly, in America of the 1930s, he felt early the effects of white privilege and power that the conference's writers and artists deplored and sought to examine in their sessions. In fact, Baldwin identifies with other instances of white, Christian superiority. He reflects that:

> …the fact of the Third Reich alone makes obsolete forever any question of Christian superiority, except in technological terms. White people were, and are, astounded by the holocaust in Germany. They did not know that they could act that way. But I very much doubt whether black people were astounded—at least, in the same way. For my part, the fate of the Jews, and the world's indifference to it, frightened me very much. I could not but feel, in those sorrowful years, that this human indifference, concerning which I know so much already, would be my portion on the day that the United States decided to murder its Negroes systematically instead of little by little and catch-as-catch-can. I was, of course, authoritatively assured that when had happened to the Jews in Germany could not happen to the Negroes in America, but I thought, bleakly, that the German Jews had probably believed similar counsellors, and, again, I could not share the white man's vision of himself for the very good reason that white men in America do not behave toward black men the way they behave toward each other. (360-361)

Clearly, Baldwin understands that historically, world-wide white superiority has made safety and equality for nonwhites and minorities tentative and tenuous conditions of life.

Always logical, Baldwin's first-person testimony also considers the opposite: an America without whites. In 1962, Baldwin visits the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's home in New York City, which serves as the headquarters of his Nation of Islam. Baldwin senses that Muhammad, who had been preaching a message of hatred against whites for three decades, is a man whose time has come. Baldwin does not mention the civil rights movement and the establishment's negative response to it, but he acknowledges that the country is in a state of unrest and that African Americans are ready for a new way. In addition, Baldwin recognizes that it is Muhammad's faith, more than

Christianity, that has helped African Americans to lead healthy lives in concrete ways, and it has attracted a growing number of African Americans. However, Baldwin does not feel that the answer to white supremacy is Nation of Islam's tenets and behaviors. He writes that ". . . the Negro has been formed by this nation, for better or for worse, and does not belong to any other—not to Africa, and certainly not to Islam. The paradox . . . is that the American Negro can have no future anywhere, on any continent, as long as he is unwilling to accept his past" ("The Fire Next Time" 374-375). Hence, he rejects the group's advocacy of a separate African American state within North America and its adoption of Islam as a religion. However, Baldwin, acting as America's Jeremiah, warns his reading audience that a growing dissatisfaction among African Americans in the United States could be "'the fire next time!'" (387).

While the momentum of the civil rights movement during the following decade prompted the government to enact the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which forbade discrimination of any sort against all citizens, as well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Baldwin's book-length, stream-of-consciousness piece, "No Name in the Street," published in 1972, introduces a somber view of the country's practice of white supremacy. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. attributes this attitude to Baldwin's attempt to assuage the "late 60s Baldwin-bashing" of younger, militant political and intellectual leaders in the Black community, Eldridge Cleaver, Amiri Baraka, and Ishmael Reed ("The Fire Last Time" 16). Yet while Baldwin's nonfiction shows signs of avuncular appeasement—or toady acquiescence—it also voices the writer's own sense of disillusionment, the origins of which are both personal and societal. Writing in his late forties, Baldwin again reviews scenes from his life. He describes a scene in the Harlem apartment of a childhood friend.

Baldwin and the friend, who is a government worker, reminisce, but Baldwin's drinking, smoking, repudiation of religion, and stance against the war in Vietnam rattle the friend and his parents. In contrast to his friend, who is loyal to the country that provides his salary, Baldwin considers the war to be a "racist folly" (459). His view is that it is a war that enlists unemployed Black boys "standing futureless on a corner" to be murdered doing the "slave master's" business (459). Earlier, he had written, "It comes as a great shock to see Gary Cooper killing off the Indians, and, although you are rooting for Gary Cooper, that the Indians are you" ("The American Dream and the American Negro" 409). Always intelligent and aware, Baldwin's reading, conversations with people from wide-ranging places and backgrounds, and travels in the United States and around the world shape his views of the modern world, but they also estrange him from beloved members of a past—albeit not his family—who remain unchanged.

More profound is Baldwin's expression of angst at his alienation from his birthplace. He had believed in and written about being an "integrationist" (500), that is, welcoming a shared inheritance of the country's good and bad with all Americans. He had anticipated and participated in the civil rights movement. In the mid-1960s, though, Baldwin finds it difficult to accept the new layers of life-altering "betrayals" imposed on the chronotope of his country's African American citizens. In an essay written in 1965, he ridicules former Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy's patronizing remark that an African American might be elected president in forty years. Baldwin writes, "From the point of view of the man in the Harlem barber shop, Bobby Kennedy only got here yesterday . . .. We were here for four hundred years and now he tells us that maybe in forty years, if you are good, we may let you become President" ("The American Dream

and the American Negro" 411). Baldwin has been a witness to the error—the lie--compounded by the violence, of school segregation, wrongful arrest, and the lack of accessibility to the American dream and ownership of property. These scenes do not occur in the same physical chronotope, but they do occur in the United States, and they all involve the country's legal and social deprivation of the rights of all citizens to African Americans. He quotes Malcolm X to articulate what he feels should be a moral assumption and a self-evident truth, "'If you are an American citizen, . . .why have you got to fight for your rights as a citizen? To be a citizen means that you have the rights of a citizen" ("No Name in the Street" 501). Paradoxically, more than the myth of Eden, Baldwin, via Malcolm X, articulates here the pragmatic, American belief that motivated the American behavior of the early settlers and the American patriots: no citizen should tolerate a place that is immoral and hostile to one's existence.

Baldwin's "moral authority"[27] also considers socio-political events to critique the conduct of white citizens toward each other. He laments the immoral corruption of officials of government for personal power. This violation of a secular "sacred" duty causes the concomitant institutionalization of white Americans divided against white Americans. He cites Senator Joseph McCarthy's post-World War II, anti-communist House Un-American Activities Committee of the 1950s to provide proof of (white) immorality. Not only did McCarthy hijack morality for personal power by making accusations against citizens based upon association, not upon proof, but white liberals also abandoned the accused, fearing the government's charges of guilt by association.

[27] Julius Lester applies this term to Baldwin in "Some Tickets are Better: The Mixed Achievement of James Baldwin" (134).

More potent is what Baldwin sees as confirmation of white immorality in the 1960s. He charges that white adolescents and people in their twenties abandoned the comforts and advantages of their middle-class parents' homes to move to San Francisco's Haight Ashbury District to protest the war in Vietnam. He suggests the logic that begins with a morality spawned from American capitalism. The chain of thought begins with government's funds (gathered from the parents' taxes), which are allocated for arms and ammunition. This sum then provides a profit for parents, whose businesses provide the materials for the fabrication of the weapons. In turn, the weapons kill the children sent to fight the war, which was declared by their parents. Accordingly, the children judge their parents, who supported the draft of soldiers, which, in turn, includes and imperils the children's lives. The progeny, Baldwin reasons, became "flower children," replacing their parents' bullets, with flowers. The effect is that the children in Haight-Ashbury, whose instinct was survival, judged and punished their parents, who thoughtlessly supported war and not their children. To Baldwin, thoughtless middle class white parents, then, are the sources of their own diminished future. Here, the sad implication of place is that it is no wonder that the middle-class, whites' self-interest, which trumps loyalty to its children, would treat African Americans thoughtlessly as well.

"No Name in the Street," however, is more a cry from a heart and soul that experienced trauma in his birthplace during the 1960s; hence, he is left disillusioned. Public figures had counted among Baldwin's private friends and respected associates, and he especially grieves the brutal deaths of Rev. King and Malcolm X, who were assassinated in cold blood while claiming their rights as Americans. About King's death,

he admits that "something has altered in me, something has gone away" (453).[28] What is important in this piece, though, is Baldwin's analysis of America's unique issues. While it is clear that Baldwin speaks of his own memories and perceptions, as always, he speaks for all African Americans when he warns the American audience of "the shape of the wrath to come" (558). This prophecy echoes the words that end "The Fire Next Time," but they lack the force of the earlier forecast, reflecting, no doubt, the writer's understanding that a deaf, white ear had met his last threat of Armageddon.

In two of the last essays in this collection, Baldwin uses the language of doom to characterize life in the United States: "Dark Days" and "Notes on the House of Bondage," each published in a separate magazine in 1980. In the former, one trigger for Baldwin's despair about the United States is the twenty-two year delay between the bombing of a church in Birmingham, Alabama and the trial of J. B. Stoner, a loud and avowed racist, who was accused of the targeted explosion. Baldwin cites the "delusion" of white supremacy for the lag in justice and for obstructing Black autonomy despite gains believed by many to have been made by the civil rights movements. He worries about the moral education of white children, whose parents seem to have missed the point about what it means to be human, and he is worried about Black children, whom he feels the "Republic's educational system" will destroy. Furthermore, he writes that "there is not a single institution in this country that is not a racist institution—beginning with the churches, and by no means ignoring the unions" ("Dark Days" 670); hence, Baldwin

[28] "The Dangerous Road Before Martin Luther King," published in *Harper's Magazine* in 1961, depicts Dr. King in scenes of his personal and public life to humanize the public figure and to extol his leadership qualities. Baldwin maintains that Dr. King's goals—"to prepare Negroes for first-class citizenship" as well as to prepare the country for the "total integration of Negroes in all levels of the. national life"—were, at that time, bold visions of a moral America that required bravery and stamina. (264-265).

asserts that the presidential election of 1980 is a futile ceremony. “Notes on the House of Bondage,” the penultimate essay in the collection, continues this lamentation. The title’s metaphor, of course, refers to the United States, which, he claims, grants respect and social mobility, that is, a share in the American dream, to white people from other countries but not to Black citizens. Likewise, echoing the meaning of words in “Dark Days,” he charges that “the American institutions are all bankrupt” (678), certain that the Black vote does not mitigate “the mortal danger” in which citizens with black skin live. He does believe that a vote to re-elect President Carter would be “a means of buying time” (680), a way to stave off the effects of a candidate like former California Governor Ronald Reagan, who responded harshly to the Black Panthers and Angela Davis in California, and who, worst of all, had no sympathy for the poor.

He equates the United States with Nazi Germany when he claims that the Black vote could “outwit the Final Solution. . . . No black person can afford to forget that the history of this country is genocidal from where the buffalo once roamed to where our ancestors were slaughtered (from New Orleans to New York, from Birmingham to Boston) and to the Caribbean to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Oh yes, let freedom ring” (680). In both essays, Baldwin finds the United States’s failure eliminate the nation’s tradition of white supremacy to be tremendously terrifying. Ironically, this state of mind resembles that of his stepfather, whose opinions and behaviors he had scorned.

The adult Baldwin cushioned himself from many of the harsh injuries that America’s whites inflicted on African Americans by living in Paris and by finding a refuge in his home in Saint Paul de Vence. Yet during his periods of escape, he wrote about African American life in the United States. Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. acknowledges that

"Baldwin insisted that it was outside of the United States that he came to understand the country more fully" (xiv). To all appearances, Baldwin himself more than achieved the American dream. He accrued enormous professional success, attained societal renown, and owned land (his Eden), albeit in France. The final irony of Baldwin's life and writing is that despite these achievements as well as his (and others') efforts to advance the equality of all Black Americans in mid-twentieth century America, he was profoundly disillusioned by the nation's historic and apparently unassailable layers of social, legal, and political immorality and inequity toward the Black community. Moreover, Baldwin's nonfiction sees through the sometimes well-meaning but often nugatory and ineffective solutions to the chronotope that began with Black slaves being ushered into the white New World.

PERSPECTIVE

Always aware of the theory of writing and conscious of the effect of his writing on his reader or audience, Baldwin's comments about the novelist's and playwright's goals are relevant to his nonfiction. He writes in 1964 that "no reader will believe you if you simply tell him what you want him to know. You must make him see it for himself. He must somehow be trapped into the reality you want him to submit to and you must . . . walk the reader to the guillotine without his knowing it" ("Words of a Native Son" 403). Baldwin's nonfiction, of course, does tell. He often begins with (but always bares) his "place," his psyche: for a good reason, a sub-sub heading of "The Fire Next Time" is titled "Letter from a Region of my Mind."[29] Vivid and complex, Baldwin's thoughts

[29] Fried's research indicates that editor William Shawn, the article's authoritative reader for *The New Yorker*, created this metaphor of a "letter" to justify printing an essay about personal experience,

about places from his past inform those of his present and require his reader to reconsider the country's original African American chronotope, the blighted myth of the availability of the American dream to all. Always logical, his nonfiction in this collection of essays uses the white man's language and style (heteroglossia) to frame the African American's reality of America (mostly) for a white American reading audience in the mid-twentieth century.

Accordingly, James Baldwin's autobiographical essays enter the American "biography" and conversation about race *in medias res*. Just as Frederick Douglass's voluminous writings, particularly his 1852 speech, "The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro," forced contemporary and future audiences to view American history from the African American point of view, Baldwin's writing adjusts the interpretation of America from the conventional "western system of reality" ("The American Dream and the American Negro" 408). He reminds his readers that African Americans, first brought to the continent well before other immigrant groups, came as slaves—not as idealists searching for political and religious liberty—and that despite laws passed in the 1960s, their condition remained unchanged. Hence both the physical space and the residents of the Harlem ghetto are personified as being ill and forgotten.

Ironically, Baldwin, hence his reading audience, gains a greater understanding of the African American identity from the writer's travels abroad. France, which treats him like any independent American, is a refuge from the stereotypes and treatment of Blacks at home. Africa, where Blacks compose the majority culture, triggers Baldwin's

---

which was unusual for the magazine at that time (71). One infers that the original title, "Down at the Cross," is a reference to a place of moral abandonment and divine revelation.

awareness about being born in the African diaspora and about being severed from Africa's indigenous culture. He reasons that African Americans are the inheritors of two cultures, and because they have resided in the United States for hundreds of years, they are entitled to share the country's ideas, rights, privileges, and responsibilities In this vein, Baldwin posits that there was no "whiteness" in the Old World; it developed in America when the settlers needed slaves to cultivate the continent.

In "Stranger in the Village," Baldwin writes that the difference between slavery in the Old World and that in America, is that the Africans, who were transported to America without their consent, had no hope of liberation in America. Thus originated America's heritage of white supremacy. Baldwin opines, "At the root of the American Negro problem is the necessity of the American white man to find a way of living with the Negro in order to be able to live with himself" (99). In other words, America had transformed from an idea about freedom for European settlers, to the reality of taming and maintaining the wilderness, to an exposition of psycho-social racial geography, justified by legends, laws, and lies. As Roediger notes about Baldwin's nonfiction, particularly "On Being White and Other Lies," the writer's understanding of "the formation of racial categories" in America—through learning in "schools, churches, neighborhoods, factories, and families"—is "enduringly fresh and edgy" (*Working Toward Whiteness* xvii). Ultimately, Baldwin's *bildungsroman* argues that the United States of the mid-twentieth century remains a racial battleground. To Baldwin, the African American has become the morally superior ideological sparring partner of the white American in the chronotope of America in the mid-twentieth century. The battle, of course, is for all African Americans to wrest their inheritance of the American dream

from white Americans, who have used and abused African Americans to maintain it. In 2020, Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. concurs that Baldwin's vision of a "New Jerusalem" does not refer to a physical *topos*; it is "a world and a society that reflects the value of all human life" that is yet to be born (206).

CHAPTER FIVE: JOAN DIDION'S *SLOUCHING TOWARDS BETHLEHEM* AND *THE WHITE ALBUM*

PLACE AND THE AUTHOR

A writer of fiction and nonfiction, Joan Didion published her first collection of essays, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* in 1968; her second, *The White Album* in 1979. Like James Baldwin's essays, Didion's literary nonfiction about topical, cultural events first appeared in a variety of magazines. More to the point, both Baldwin and Didion's subjective voices relay their apprehensive reactions to places that are familiar to them. Unlike Baldwin, Didion's subjects do not necessarily pose existential threats to her person or to her status, i.e., her position in society. In addition, her string of observations about a place, like Eliot's "objective correlatives," often articulate unanswered queries before they make judgments or admonitions.

Didion's investigation into the nature of mid-twentieth century America is informed by her family's stories. Her family's lore contributed to America's, particularly California's, history and mythology. In her memoir/family story, *Where I was From,* published in 2003, Didion shares with readers that she is a descendent of residents of the "Virginia and Carolina frontiers," and that her great-great-great-great-great grandfather was a veteran of the American Revolution (3). As she narrates it, the family's diaries, oral histories, and photographs correspond with California's history and the nation's myths about its pioneering spirit as well as its westward migration to California. Most dramatic are references to the Donner-Reed Party's selective cannibalism to avoid total starvation at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountain range during the winter of 1846 to 1847. Didion's family had detached itself from the wagon-train's untried, shorter, and

eventually snowed-out route. To Didion, the family's escape from death appears to be of lesser consequence than its luck in preserving its morality by avoiding cannibalism. One of her references to the event relates it to the macrocosm of the Golden State's values: "Did not the Donner-Reed Party, after all, eat its own dead to reach Sacramento?" ("Notes" 171). This question demonstrates the irony and morality born out of social consciousness that characterize Didion's literary nonfiction.

Nostalgia about her native California—both from family stories and her own lived experience—triggers insights into and concerns about mid-twentieth century America. In fact, these essays support one of Bakhtin's notions about fiction: a scene or a "story" captures a place at a particular time, a chronotope, simultaneously infusing it with an author's perceptions and sensibilities. Thus, Didion's microscopic analysis of mid-twentieth century America examines the present through a layered lens of the past, often the writer's ancestral past. Didion's memories—past time—of place, both those she was told about family and place as well as those she experienced in her youth, influence, and, perhaps distort her perceptions of the present. In "On Morality," originally written for *The American Scholar* and contained in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, Didion compares the Donner Party's moral failure with a sad but heartening episode from the news: a talc miner guards the dead body of a drunk driver on the road between Las Vegas and Death Valley Junction; concurrently, the miner's wife, a nurse, transports the driver's wife to a doctor. Didion quotes the nurse, "'You can't just leave a body on the highway . . .. It's immoral'" (157-158). Didion contrasts the contemporary event with the experience (cannibalism) in which her ancestors were prescient enough to avoid. Clearly, Didion's contemporary counterexample of the Donner-Reed Party judges that it had abandoned the

"social code," i.e., the ethical understanding that "the ephemera of civilization" pale in the face of danger to "primary loyalties" (158), that individuals are responsible for each other.

Didion herself recognizes her unique view of contemporary life, particularly about the West. She senses that she is "'a woman who for some time now has felt radically separated from most of the ideas that seem to interest other people'" (Didion qtd. in Menand 7). In 1980, having read and considered Didion's work to that point, Barbara Grizutti Harrison agrees with qualification. Harrison connects the slant of Didion's writing to her upbringing as a California blue-blood: Didion's "language is suffused with that peculiar sentimentality one associates with an Englishman who once enjoyed the glories and the privilege of the Raj—an imperialist mentality is at work here . . . that ignores the realities of class and economics and remembers only the long shadows on the green grass on a summer afternoon" ("Joan Didion: Only Disconnect" 136). In "Out of Bethlehem," Louis Menand evaluates Didion's oeuvre thirty-five years later, also recognizing that Didion's circumscribed but incisive view is different. However, Menand's evaluation is that "she's not like us. She's weird. That's why we want to read her" (7). Clearly, Didion's peers respect her intimate understanding of her subjects, and they acknowledge her unique slant and theme. Perhaps her critics also wrestle with her novel approach to American literary nonfiction.

The contrast between Didion's generational beliefs about place—and the meanings and connotations they generate (part of Bakhtin's "heteroglossia")—and the reality that she sees and reports also reveal a temporal change. In "Why I Write," originally published in *The New York Times* in 1976, Didion states that she writes to

answer her own questions. She admits that her view is subjective: ". . . writing is the act of saying" (Friedman *Essays* 5-10). To highlight that her intent is to distill reality through her personal filter, Didion concludes "Notes from a Native Daughter"[1] with an excerpt from Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem "Margaret": "Margaret, are you grieving/ Over Goldengrove unleaving? . . ./ It is the blight man was born for,/ It is Margaret you mourn for" (186). Here, Didion's reference to Hopkins's poem in a personal essay identifies herself with the poem's female character, who witnesses with sadness a change in nature that mirrors a change in herself. Ellen G. Friedman is right in her pithy observation that Didion is "suspicious of universality" ("The Didion Sensibility" 81), but more than that, Didion's overarching theme in presenting contemporary events is the change that she sees in contemporary society. While Didion's essays are lively, her assessment of change (and, once again, change is the basis for all news articles) in places familiar to her is usually dark. Thus the essays that Didion selects for her first two collections of essays use place to discuss the changes to it, which reveal her view of mid-twentieth century America.

AMERICA'S HEROES AND AMERICA'S VALUES

Two of the early essays in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* focus on larger-than-life personalities. Didion's intent, however, extends beyond providing animated biographies. "John Wayne: A Love Song" is a golden encomium to the eponymous actor, written in

[1] Undoubtedly, the title is an allusion, perhaps with some irony, to James Baldwin's autobiography *Notes of a Native Son*, first published in 1949.

1965; "7000 Romaine, Los Angeles, 38," written two years later, focuses on Howard Hughes, the wealthy American entrepreneur. Each sketch distills American values by examining public figures and their places. Interestingly, her brief portrayals of these men are reminiscent of characterizations of the ancient heroes of national epics. Unlike those long-dead or fictionalized heroes, the living Wayne and Hughes dwell and work in modern California; they are not static, "memorialized" in a "valorized past" (Bakhtin 19) that resembles historical fiction or fantasy. Like the heroes of yore, though, their "exploits" are well-known, albeit sometimes exaggerated by the word of mouth of modern *rhapsodes.* Didion's profiles, penned endearingly about Wayne, who died in 1979, and objectively about Hughes, who died in 1976, present the mid-twentieth century American folk hero and the shibboleths and mores that persist in the United States of the mid-twentieth century.

Only by inference does Didion suggest that her "acquaintance" with the actor pre-dates meeting him. She does this by invoking memories of a physical place. The United States had been fighting in World War II for over two years, and Didion recalls the hot winds, the "tar-paper barracks," and temporary structures and roads on the Army base in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where her father was stationed and the family lived (29). The visualization of this place indicates a dearth of material items, physical comforts, and the accoutrements of culture in her "neighborhood." What this remote outpost in the high desert did have was a movie projector in a Quonset hut, which provided Didion and her brother images, or idealizations, of life in America that were outside of their daily experiences "three or four times a week" (29). Certainly, Didion found *War of the Wildcats*, originally titled *In Old Oklahoma,* and its protagonist, John

Wayne, appealing. One infers that the young, creative Joan identified with the out-of-the-way setting, undeveloped Oklahoma, and however fanciful, the script also must have served as a visual affirmation of her family's stories and the nation's folklore: moving West in stagecoaches away from family on the East Coast; facing harsh, unfamiliar physical elements; and even more challenging, adopting the unyielding wills necessary to conquer the newest part of the country. Certainly, on an army base during World War II, the interest in the conflict between the "good guys" (in white), who win, versus the "bad guys" (in black), who lose, would have carried an allegorical significance.

Thus, Didion's first encounter with John Wayne at the age of eight, in 1943, was with a mythic character. Her view of Wayne was larger than life: he was the protagonist of *War of the Wildcats*, projected on a movie screen in a Quonset hut (29). In retrospect, she writes with poetic grace that "he rode through my childhood, and perhaps yours . . . [and] determined forever the shape of certain of our dreams" (30). Her analysis is that his charismatic persona represented not the "paralyzing ambiguities" of the world (e.g., the forces of the past that resulted in World War II), but " a place where a man could move free; could make his own code and live by it; a world in which, if a man did what he had to do, he could one day take the girl and go riding through the draw and find himself home free . . . at the bend in the bright river, the cottonwoods shimmering in the early morning" (30-31). In this way, Didion's view that Wayne's character shaped his environment is reminiscent of R. W. B. Lewis's archetypal American Adam.

Didion also tells us that in real life, Wayne, born Marion Morrison, was an American success story—an Iowan, from the heart of America, who migrated to Lancaster, California (a town in the Mojave Desert); to the fertile Glendale, where he was a Boy

Scout, a football hero, and a fraternity man; to the University of Southern California; and finally to Fox Studios, where his reliability and presence moving props on the set brought attention to his healthy masculinity, and led to his becoming a "star" (31). Once again, Joan Didion casts the hardworking John Wayne as the incarnation of the American dream.

Didion transitions to the Wayne of 1965, whom she observes in person several times for her article. The article's penultimate scene occurs on the set of *The Sons of Katie Elder,* his one hundred sixty-fifth film. One suspects that Didion's purpose was to give the film advanced publicity. However, the article's cultural value is its reinforcement of America's national mythology—and hers. Didion observes and converses in the flesh with the silver screen's champion of ethical behavior both on desolate Western frontiers and in geopolitical confrontations of World War II. The real man still sweeps her off her feet. He is benevolent; his support crew on the set, loyal to him. Didion records their reminiscences. Among other incidents, Wayne recalls that in all of his staged fights, he hit only one man "'accidentally'" (36). "They treated the oldest among them respectfully; they treated the youngest fondly" (39), she says. Never does she mention the word *cancer,* but throughout the article, Didion suggests that her hero is not impervious to life's end. His trainer of eleven years observes that many entertainment columnists focus on Wayne's illness: "'. . . sick, sick, sick, . . . he's got pains, coughs, works all day, *never complains.* That guy's got the best hook since Dempsey, not sick'" (37). Despite having a cold and a cough and needing an oxygen inhaler on the set, the Duke comes to work and manages to joke with the crew. Didion calls this artful artlessness "the code."

Finally, Didion ends her profile with a moment of transcendence. In this last place, Didion and her husband dine in Mexico with her ailing, life-long hero and his family at a fancy, distinctly non-rustic restaurant. She recalls their pleasant inebriation and the sudden appearance of guitarists, playing songs from Wayne's films.[2] For Didion, the auditory stimuli trigger memories of the Wayne of her youth, who embodied "the dream" (41), which also brings readers of her present (and future), back to the Wayne that epitomizes the American myth.

As Didion shapes her article, John Wayne never exists as "one of us" in time or place. He is, after all, a celluloid hero, created by writers and a director—all paid by a Hollywood studio—who animates the imagination of a precocious, young girl. However, Wayne confirms the child's imagination and transcends time and place by maintaining a generous yet stoic persona—even while suffering from cancer decades later—when the adult, professional Didion meets her mortal idol. In the process, she fashions Wayne, many of whose movies take place on the New World's difficult but unadulterated frontier, as a national figure, an American Adam.

Didion also certifies Howard Hughes as being another post-World War II figure whose qualities suggest that he is an American folkloric hero. Her fascination with her fellow Angelino, she claims, leads her to drive past his office in West Hollywood "in the same spirit that Arthurian scholars visit the Cornish coast" (68). However, just as the archetypical sovereign was remote to his subjects and, most certainly to modern

---

2 Interestingly, like Capote's conclusion to *In Cold Blood,* Didion's graceful ending unites past places and associations with those of the present. Just as Capote brings Detective Alvin Dewey together with Nancy Clutter's friend, Susan Kidwell, in Holcomb's cemetery after the deaths and the murderers' trials, Didion's article recalls music from a film in which Wayne was young and healthy. While critics doubt the veracity of Capote's scene, Didion's is plausible: they dined together, and her mind made logical associations.

academics, so, too, is Hughes detached from his curious public. Didion admits that she never has met him. Consequently, the portrait lacks the particulars that reveal the man behind the myth: Hughes's mannerisms, physical traits, turns of phrase, posture, and clothing. Hughes is disembodied—unseen and distant—but at the time that Didion wrote the piece, his effect was potent and ubiquitous in American life.

Incongruously, the secular Didion portrays the American Hughes as the ancients represented celestial beings. Like that of folklore, Didion's information comes from unverifiable, word-of-mouth stories. One tale has it that Hughes is so rich that he pays former employees not to work for someone else—even if they do little or no work for him. The inference, od course, is that he buys their loyalty. Didion also catalogues the intricate terms and conditions of deals, often done outside of common business hours and in unconventional places. Her formal research reveals that *Fortune* magazine once reported that Hughes's aim was "'to preserve his power as the proprietor of the single largest pool of industrial wealth still under the absolute control of a single individual'" (38). Of course, Hughes neither confirms nor denies the tales for the article. He is a living myth. Accordingly, the profile catalogues the entrepreneur's many "emanations" on Earth—not the flora, fauna, or geological features credited to the deities of old and glorified in holy books, epic poems, and the art and writings of American transcendentalists, but the homes, places of business, and the institutions that Hughes conceived, constructed, acquired, or sold in urbanized, industrialized America of the twentieth century. His diverse businesses—"machine manufacture, foreign oil-tool subsidies, a brewery, two airlines, immense real-estate holdings, a major motion-picture studio, and an electronics and missile operation" (68)—are operated from an Art Deco

building that is Hughes' headquarters in Los Angeles: 7000 Romaine Los Angeles 38: the place is the man and his effect on Americans—as Camelot was for the era and domain of King Arthur and his subjects. In a curious turn, the incarnation of King Arthur in the United States of the 1960s is an entrepreneur.

Unlike her portrait of Wayne, Didion's portrayal of Hughes as an American "hero" is fraught with irony. Yet her dualistic view of Hughes's advances in industrial progress and technology, fueled by science and capitalism, is reminiscent of nineteenth century transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson's qualified acceptance of the advent of the railroad, industry, and other inventions on his hallowed American landscape, a "divine hieroglyph" (Marx 236). A man of faith, Emerson believed that "the incalculable effect of place upon the native consciousness [will] make all the difference in the way his countrymen [as opposed to those who live in the Old World] use the new power" (236). In Los Angeles of the mid-twentieth century, Didion's essays evince no such creed, and this essay expresses little confidence that "'the land . . . is the appointed remedy for whatever is false and fantastic in our culture'" (Emerson qtd. in Marx 236). More important than her fascination with Hughes, who "remains not merely antisocial but grandly, brilliantly, surpassingly asocial" (72), is her understanding that he has become an American "hero," the epitome of values-put-into-action that Americans admire.[3] "He is the last private man, the dream we no longer admit" (72). Thus, Didion's portrait shows how Hughes's adherence to the playbook of "American ingenuity" and effort extend the wealth he inherited. More importantly, the seemingly innate qualities of the

[3] In fact, the essay's title is metonymy for the man, who in his lifetime controlled his massive business enterprise from 7000 Romaine, a white, immaculate art deco building, which even at this writing is occupied but immaculate and untrafficked in a busy section of Los Angeles..

American hero afford him a unique and privileged independence. Yet, as Didion sees it, his example breaks the American "code." However intriguing his wealth, power, and persona, Hughes is an American Lucifer, a favored angel who betrays America. Compared to Didion's treatment of the unpredictability of events later in her canon of nonfiction, Hughes's sketch follows a predictable pattern for one who does not follow "the code." Clearly, "7000 Romaine, Los Angeles 38" is a cautionary tale.

Clearly, Didion presents dialectical portraits of two well-known Americans who live in the same time and place. In real life and in his cinematic persona, Wayne represents a rustic character whose grit, physical prowess, and ethical code tame America's Western wilderness, and his will fights cancer. Conversely, Hughes mostly inhabits urban areas, effectively—albeit mysteriously—dominating a variety of industries and individuals. Moreover, like the hero of an epic, each has a tragic flaw. Wayne's illness stains his mythic persona with mortality; Hughes, both a modern myth and a mortal, embodies the capitalistic success that Americans prize despite challenging Didion's "code." Still, Didion chose well: since the mid-twentieth century, each man and his achievements has been imprinted on the nation's consciousness, because each represents basic American values. Each earned his own independence and created his own success. Clearly, Didion includes these American archetypes at the beginning of *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* to establish reference points for her social commentary about America and Americans.

THE AMERICAN FALL

If two of Didion's essays depict variations of the modern American Adam, other essays fail to recognize a present-day Eden. Of Newport, Rhode Island, she sees in the

present the sins of the past. The great houses do not represent Americans striving for the national ethos, that is, the American dream, but they have pursued the crass materialism—the "consumption ethic" (210) of the ultra-*nouveaux riches* ("The Seacoast of Despair"). The "landscape [is] less to be enjoyed than [to be] dominated" (210), unlike William Randolph Hearst's castle in San Simeon, on the Pacific Coast, which, she feels, celebrates nature (and her home state). Moreover, the houses have no place for women. Built by men for men; they are "factories, undermined by tunnels and service railways, shot through with plumbing to collect salt water, tanks to store it, devices to collect rain water . . ." (212). Nowhere is there room for the "social code."

Of Hawaii, a tropical, vacation retreat that became a state in 1959, Didion writes not of its Edenic attributes but of ships sunk in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor: the *Utah* and the *Arizona*, that are unseen memorials to the losses of World War II. She exposes the false impression of racial harmony and integration and of the archipelago's false economy, tourism.[4] One might feel that the article is pessimistic, lacking balance. On the other hand, Didion presents the underbelly of a place in America that is idealized as its Eden by setting it in its historical context and providing social commentary. She corrects the uninformed imaginings of tourists and dreamers, who, in her view, myopically consider only Hawaii's tropical scents and weather, crystal-clear ocean, and comfortable hotels. More than leis, luaus, and volcanoes, Hawaii owes its success to

[4] Moreover, Didion avers that sailors sent to Hawaii during World War II and Vietnam remained on the islands, disrupting the peace and island culture with public intoxication and Western ideas, and the power of five families, which formed an entrenched financial and political oligarchy. It was never, she claims, a utopia. "Letter from Paradise," written in 1966 appears in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (187-204).

American capitalism and its political ramifications. As such, American self-interest controls "Eden," not the Deity.

In "In the Islands," in *The White Album,* Didion expands her critique of the place, but she begins with a fact and two admissions, all ominous. First, she, her husband, and her young daughter are in Hawaii for a week's vacation. At the same time, the territory expects within minutes tall waves from the effects of a serious earthquake in the Aleutians, a natural Didionian juxtaposition. Then, too, this fact of nature mirrors a personal storm, divorce: she begins this piece with what in fiction would be pathetic fallacy. Didion and her husband are working to avert the dissolution of the marriage by going on a vacation. The other admission—that she has "bad nerves," agitated not only by the projected tidal wave but by a "state of profound emotional shock on the larger cultural breakdown [with its attendant] alienation and anomie" (135)—is anticipated by her disclosure in "The White Album," the first essay in the volume of the same title, of a psychiatric report that interprets Didion's mental state in 1968: her

> "personality is in the process of deterioration with abundant signs of failing defenses and increasing inability of the ego to mediate the world of reality and to cope with normal stress. . . . Emotionally, patient has alienated herself almost entirely from the world of other human beings. [. . .] In her view, she lives in a world of people moved by strange, conflicted, poorly comprehended, and, above all devious motivations which commit them inevitably to conflict and failure . . ." (14-15)

As her psychiatrist asserts, Didion's own sensitive mental constitution contributes to her serious, medical angst, but her research and insight into the places about which she writes cannot lessen her torment.

Patently, the world does not live by Didion's moral "code." Didion's writing demonstrates Bakhtin's assertion that an author's life and view are infused in a story, whether fiction or nonfiction. Bizarrely, in these early essays in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and *The While Album,* the author's articulate but distraught, neo-Poevian detail about place and the people and events that inhabit it is redolent of gothic literature. Of course, her subjects are not medieval castles or ghosts, but Didion, the often-terrified narrator focuses on the dark side, often emanating in the landscape, in daily American life in the mid-twentieth century. The landscapes, like the detached observer-narrator, are lonely, geographically separated from a fabled hearty American society in which a middle-class family, like Didion's, is happily looking at an album of photographs of its venerable ancestors, posed in front of large expanses of desert, mountains, or ocean—or is living the same lifestyle, or following the same philosophy. Her "protagonists" may be outcasts, misfits, selective isolates or drop-outs, or people who violate "the code." Moreover, her view is a woman's view, a subversion of the traditional male commentary in her accounts of current events. Didion acknowledges the link between the mind and its perception of the physical and social world reflected in an early essay, "Notes" (1965). She writes that ". . . [her] mind is troubled by some buried but ineradicable suspicion that things had better work here [in California], because here, beneath that immense bleached sky, is where we run out of continent" ("Notes" 172). Three essays—"Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream" (1966), "Slouching Towards Bethlehem" (1967), both in *Slouching*

Towards Bethlehem, and "The White Album" (1968-1978), in *The White Album*—particularly illustrate Didion's dark—but stunningly insightful—projection of her mind onto the American landscape as well as the external scene's reciprocal effect on her.

The fact situation of "Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream" is that a court in San Bernardino County, California finds the pregnant Lucille Marie Maxwell Miller guilty of murdering her drugged and sleeping husband, dentist Gordon ("Cork") Miller, in their Volkswagen in the early hours of the morning on October 7, 1965. However, much of Didion's 28-page essay, which first appeared as an article in *The Saturday Evening Post,* dwells on the setting that prompted Lucille Miller to murder her husband.

Before she details the mariticide, Didion describes the story's physical location. The San Bernardino Valley is east of Los Angeles, removed from salubrious sea breezes, lush vegetation, and an established, sophisticated population; the absence of each creates a hauntingly gothic setting. It is:

> an alien place . . . haunted by the Mojave just beyond the mountains, devastated by the hot dry Santa Ana wind that comes down through the passes at 100 miles an hour and whines through the eucalyptus windbreaks and works on the nerves. October is . . . the month when breathing is difficult and the hills blaze up spontaneously. There has been no rain since April. Every voice seems a scream. It is the season of suicide and divorce and prickly dread, wherever the wind blows. (3)

In a reversal of pathetic fallacy, Didion's incantatory prose claims that powerful natural forces overwhelm tempered, moral, sane human behavior. As Bayer-Berenbaum observes of Gothic literature, the article's opening captures "the theme of [the] unnatural or supernatural" as well as "the sense of obstruction in the ordinary course of events" (51). Accordingly, Didion notes that the first Caucasians, a group of Mormons, found the setting so severe that they moved further west, but that the area's lure in the 1960s is the availability of housing in new "subdivisions" as well as the promise of a new lifestyle: a

fictional construct, she claims, derived from "the movies and the newspapers" (4). Much of Didion's critique of San Bernardino's contemporary cultural geography highlights its convenience store approach to religion and morality: Dial-a Devotion, temporary marriages—each with a trendy number of children, who are given the popular names of the day, and a "literal interpretation" life through art. Specifically, Billy Wilder's 1944 film noir *Double Indemnity,*[5] which is set in Los Angeles appears to prompt a real murder.

The allusion to the movie is deliberate. The particulars of the court case, like those of the movie, involve a couple in an extramarital affair. In the movie, the male character wants a relationship; the female, money. Together, they kill the woman's husband to win his life insurance. Not only does the movie forecast the particulars of the 1964 court case 100 miles east of Los Angeles, but it leads to Didion's diagnosis of San Bernardino County's ills: both natural (the toxic weather) as well as the enticing, modern cultural forces (movies made in Hollywood) of the place pervert the moral choices of human beings who are ignorant of the limits to the freedom that California seems to offer. Mid-twentieth century transplants to California and its sub-divisions break the human "code" of moral conduct.

The gothic features continue as Didion joins place with the fantasy of the movies, personifying this "season of trouble" (9) and "place where little is bright or graceful, where it is routine to misplace the future and easy to start looking for it in bed" (16).

---

[5] While the movie is in black and white and has many haunting, nocturnal scenes, including a murder, it gets its pathetic fallacy wrong: stormy confrontations between characters are mirrored in rain outside. Southern California is dry. Made in Hollywood, the movie relies on a traditional Gothic trope. Didion gets it right, though. Her invocation of the real weather, prompted by the Santa Ana winds in October, represent a genuine California Gothic.

Assistant District Attorney Don Turner asks for the death penalty for the defendant, Lucille Miller. Convincing evidence indicates Lucille's infidelity to her husband. Lucille Miller also lied to her loyal, college-age babysitter, with whom the defendant shared many intimate details and dates of trysts with her lover. Tapes of Mrs. Miller and her lover, attorney Arthwell Hayton, reveal competing stories and words of betrayal. In the final trial—a prior mistrial occurred because of information Hayton leaked to the press—the prosecution reveals the name of one other lover, and the value of Dr. Cork Miller's life insurance: $80,000, with an additional $40,000 for accidental death, a provision for double indemnity.

Conversely, readers might wonder if, like the women charged with witchcraft in America's Salem witch trials in the 1600s, Lucille Miller is persecuted (hence, prosecuted) for society's ills, that is, because it is convenient to blame the woman. The babysitter testifies that on one occasion, Lucille Miller saved her husband, despairingly unhappy as a dentist, from committing suicide, and the well-dressed Mrs. Miller, raised by fervent Seventh Day Adventists, responds candidly to the questions posed to her. The author also states that the defendant had organized the Heart Fund Ball, which likely highlighted the difference between Mrs. Miller's public face and the prosecution's assumption of her personal guile and/or self-deception.

Didion's opinion is clear. She informs readers earlier that no one was charged for the death by an overdose of a drug of Lucille Miller's "old friend," Elaine, Arthwell Hayton's wife. Arthwell had been on Catalina Island, and Lucille had spent time with Elaine that night. (Like the female character of *Double Indemnity*, Lucille Miller is likely

to have murdered a woman to achieve her American dream.)[6] The verdict, which competes for headlines about the Academy Awards and Stan Laurel's death, holds that Lucille Miller would be confined for ten years in the California Institution for Women at Frontera, ironically, near the home that Cork Miller bought for her. However, Didion's article is also a revelation about the place. She blames the weather for sparking the worst in those unaccustomed to it: recent settlers. In a Gothic but newsworthy twist, her example is unexpected: Lucille Miller is a 35-year-old pregnant murderer. Replete with both "biblical wrath and dispassion" (Klinkenborg, n. p.), the article reminds readers of the error of being lured to the land of entertainment and illusion. For these transplants, California is seen as an escape from the protective net and kindness of family and religion, financial responsibility, and the basic moral "code." A native Californian, Didion is distant from the new values, and she observes matter-of-factly that "a lot of California murderesses live [in the California Institute for Women at Frontera], a lot of girls who somehow misunderstood [California's] promise" (25). Lucille Miller epitomizes the population.

AMERICAN ENTROPY

"Slouching Towards Bethlehem"[7] lacks the atmospheric noir of "Some Dreamers." It focuses on human geography. The details Didion chooses to include about

---

[6] In an article published in the *Los Angeles Times* in 2022, the Millers' now-retired daughter, Debra, who as a teen had defended her mother, reveals that while in prison, the enterprising Lucille enlisted her children "to supply contraband," alcohol, to prisoners. Of her mother, Debra reflects, "she ran the entire illicit alcohol supply in the prison and was never caught" ("Op-Ed," n. p.).

[7] As Zehelein reminds readers, the title is taken from the last line of Yeats's "The Second Coming," a nightmarish poem that abstracted Ireland's Easter Uprising of 1916, an occasion which transfigured that country's society (n. p.).

the deterioration she sees and feels in the Haight-Ashbury District of San Francisco in the spring of 1967 reveal American society through its children, that is, the country's future. As James Baldwin observes in "No Name in the Street," white, middle-class children without their parents flock to the District from everywhere. Didion has written about the westward migration of her ancestors as well as that of new residents of California's subdivisions, but this exodus from everywhere differs from the earlier resettlements. Didion captures the "hippies'" lifestyle in discrete scenes that appear in short blocks of narration. Although the scenes appear to be a chronological presentation of her on-site visit to the District, the traditional cause and effect of a traditional narrative is not strong; the piece is impressionistic. What happens in each scene/place does not affect the next scene, but it does create a picture of the place. The breaks, which appear as white spaces on the page and indicate separations between scenes, make artistic and psychological sense, because they mirror the detachment of human beings from each other that Didion sees in the place.

The introduction centers on the irony of place: after World War II, the United States enjoyed an era of financial stability, apparent peace, and a sense of "high social purpose" (84). The opening that precedes it, though, speaks of unrest in parallelisms reminiscent of Dickens's A *Tale of Two Cities.* In lieu of time, Didion focuses on place.

> The center was not holding. It was a country of bankruptcy notices and public-auction announcements and commonplace reports of casual killings and misplaced children and abandoned homes and vandals . . .. It was a country in which families routinely disappeared, trailing bad checks and repossession papers. Adolescents drifted from city to torn city, sloughing off both the past and the future as snakes shed their skins . . .. (84)

The allusion is apt. Dickens's book concerns the French Revolution. Didion depicts dramatic societal change in the United States. Her images of America's ruination

point to adult mismanagement as the cause of the country's entropy. Adults cannot manage their capitalistic economy; their government and its agents cannot protect members of society; parents themselves fail to maintain their own families, which are society's basic structures. Didion includes a bereft mother's poem, which hangs as a sign on Haight Street. The mother asks passersby to tell her son that she misses him: "I need him now/ I don't care how/ If he needs bread/ I'll send it ahead . . . (85). The parent's expression of sorrow is apparent, but her poem shows no awareness of the cause. Didion articulates the problem as she describes the effects. This urban "Eden" is a haven away from parents. Various young inhabitants claim that they have run away from parental mandates about going to church, bans against boyfriends or girlfriends, and scoldings about poor grades in school and styles of clothing. The solution, as one young resident voices, is living a life that is "a triumph over 'don'ts'" (88). To this end, as Didion observes, the denizens spend an inordinate amount of time getting high on drugs. Paradoxically, during these sessions, they share the same physical space, but their minds are focused on an internal reality. What also unifies the District is a common language (Bakhtin's heteroglossia) that Didion's articles often capture: *groovy, baby; trip* (not a fall or a physical journey); *tab* (and other names for recreational drugs), for examples. Didion cites two of the District's shared opinions. She calls them "mythologies," implying shared cultural stories that express values, if not actual truths. In the District, the mythologies, though, are as recent as the dwellers' arrivals. They involve the District's still extant, newly minted "folk heroes." They believe that Arthur Lisch and the Diggers are advocates for them (99). He is; they are. In truth, Lisch's efforts as a quasi-social worker may supersede the job his employers expect him to do, but he is paid for

the work. The residents also believe that Chester Anderson's printing press will print what they want. Didion claims the Anderson is sympathetic to those who live in the District, but that he only publishes what he wants (100). Otherwise, the scenes that Didion chooses to include reveal an imperfect idyll.

It is unclear in this article how the District's city dwellers afford their lifestyle. Vicki sings with a group. Barbara likes to bake, but she takes on occasional, part-time jobs modeling and teaching kindergarten, because "she dislikes earning more than ten or twenty dollars a week" (113). Fifteen-year-old Debbie says that she could get a job as a babysitter or a clerk in a dime store. What Gerry "does" is to write verse, which according to Didion, forms a portfolio of "very young girl's poems." It is not an income. Tom writes, but it is not clear that the occasional effort provides an income. True, Chet Helms "runs the Avalon Ballroom" (103). Several residents spend time at the Warehouse, a theater, where they may work, but Didion does not mention their salaries. Once, Deadeye conceives of a profitable plan via a "connection" (107): he links a dealer of drugs to a user. Geographically close to Palo Alto, a growing center of technology, some residents might work in that industry, but Didion does not indicate that anyone does.

Not only do visits from the outside entities, the health department and narcotics agents, indicate that the District's lifestyle is unhealthy, but, Didion tells us, its reliable folk hero, Arthur Lisch, articulates the same concern as well. She overhears his side of a telephone conversation with VISTA: "'We already *got* an emergency . . .. We don't get help here, nobody can guarantee what's going to happen. We've got people sleeping in the streets here. We've got people starving to death. . . . All right . . .. So they're doing it by choice. So what'" (98-99). Didion affirms the truth of Lisch's apprehension about

America's future near the end of the piece, reporting that a psychiatrist comments that a "real social crisis" often leads to a "social movement" and to a "return to innocence." The psychiatrist asserts that this innocence is vulnerable to "authoritarianism" (120). While the reader expects that the writer's report of the community gathering for a Janis Joplin concert in the Panhandle will be the coming together of this society at the end of the narrative, like the conclusion of a comedy by Shakespeare, Didion astonishes the reader with a horrifying scene that verifies the psychiatrist's knowledge. Peter Berg and black-faced members of his Mime Troupe circulate in the crowd. The pretext is that it is "street theater," but they "jab" the few Black attendees with dime-store knife-sticks and harass them with threatening signs and slogans against the young Blacks' lack of action on their own behalf in the overwhelmingly white, middle-class milieu. Authoritarianism here comes from the political left, but the hippies in the street do not know how to interpret it.

Clearly, the sociological sermon that Didion wrests from the hippies' lifestyle in the Haight-Ashbury District of San Francisco condemns the middle class parents whose perceived neglect sent their children to the place. She blames them for failing to anchor their children in the traditional values of family, neighborhood, and country. Early in the piece, she opines that "children who were never taught [could] never now learn the games that had held the society together" (84). This failure affects more than one generation's expression of Manifest Destiny to redress the older generation's inadequacies. It affects America. Didion leaves readers with the twin images of Susan, a five-year-old who is in "High Kindergarten," often getting "stoned" on acid and peyote, and of Michael, the three-year-old who does not yet speak. Michael starts a fire and burns himself, but his mother is more distressed about the Moroccan hash that his fire has

damaged than she is about her son. If Didion's reduction of the place to an unguided, mindless, speechless generation that will inherit the future troubled her—and her readers—at the time, one takes consolation that, many decades after the publication of the article, the District's culture did not become the norm for the entire nation. One might dismiss that community as an aberration confined to the era, but one cannot ignore the images and outcomes of the residents' drug-induced, solipsistic Eden. In this way, the individuals in the District were as self-involved as Howard Hughes was, and neither followed Didion's moral "code."

DISCOVERING HOME

"The White Album," which was written between 1968 and 1972 and is the first article in *The White Album,* reports on current events that compose a critical chronotope in and around Didion's hometowns, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Didion's article conforms to Bakhtin's observation that each writer's experiences, perceptions, and values are imprinted on the written product. The title alone alludes to the Beatles's untitled, white-sleeved, double-disked album that was released in 1968. According to Kakutani, Didion found the album to be "ominous and disturbing, an album inextricably connected to the Manson murders and the dissonance of the 1960s" (31).[8] The effect of this response to the times and the place can be seen in two ways. Like "Slouching Towards Bethlehem," written about the spring of 1967, Didion's narrative is told in a pointillistic

[8] The connection between the Beatles's album and Charles Manson, the cult leader who ordered his followers to murder seven people in the summer of 1969, is that Manson felt sure that "'the Beatles were spokesmen . . . speaking to [him], through their songs, letting him know from across the ocean that this is what was going to go down. . . . He considered their songs prophecy, especially the songs in the so-called White Album'" (Jakobson qtd. in Bugliosi 322). Didion seems to be reacting to Manson's bizarre interpretation of the lyrics, not necessarily to the lyrics themselves, in her reaction to California of that era.

fashion (in numbered sections, separated by white spaces)—not in a sustained story line or plot. More importantly, dramatic events of that time and that place compete with Didion's mental and physical status. Didion writes early in "The White Album," "I was supposed to have a script [for life], and [I] had mislaid it" (12). The world she has known—her youth in California—and, as she relates in this article, the mind and body that she has taken for granted are in precarious states whose prognoses are unpredictable and scary.

While it is true that an on-site narrator is the customary view for the works of writers of literary nonfiction, Didion includes a report from her psychiatrist early in the piece. It certifies the writer's troubled mental state. If disorder inhabits Didion's mind, she finds her place—her home and its environs—to be unexpectedly odd and disturbing as well. She and her husband live in a large, rented house on Franklin Avenue, in Los Angeles, that she describes as being in gothic disrepair, because the owner plans to raze it and build a "high rise apartment building" (16).[9] In her home, she hosts parties, often attended by strangers. The encounters are "devoid of any logic save that of dreamwork" (19) and, she feels, threaten her well-being. Conversely, she catalogues proof of having achieved great recognition and success in her professional life during the last five years, but she claims that her mental activity consumes her. Preoccupied with her writing, she is "interested only in the picture of [the people about whom she writes] in [her] mind" (44). One infers, then that her observations about her neighbors contribute to her agitation: the members of Synanon reside next door; across the street, members of an

[9] At the time, Didion was probably correct in describing the house's fate. In fact, field research in 2022 found that a painted and well-manicured 500 Franklin Avenue is still a single-family dwelling. A neatly painted, black, iron gate in front of a thick, green hedge surrounds it.

unnamed therapy group live in a boarded-up house; Ramon Novarro, a 69-year-old silent film actor is murdered nearby. She does not mention intact families. What is truly insidious is that Novarro's murder violates Didion's code on many levels: the murderers are brothers, who commit the murder to steal the fortune that they think Novarro keeps in his home, and then to survive, each brother blames the other, ignoring both societal and familial ties.[10]

As Didion depicts it, both her interior and exterior places do not conform to the conventional expectations that Americans would have for a safe, sane, and congenial existence. Indeed, she is alarmed by the possibility of her own misperceptions and interpretations, which her psychiatrist's report supports. Her words express anxiety about impermanent and unsafe housing as well as bewilderment about how to react to one-time, bizarre encounters with people who, without warning, appear at her home or telephone her. As she notes at the outset, what troubles Didion most is that she "began to doubt the premises of all the stories [she] had ever told [herself]," and she could not appropriate a "narrative line" to fit over the "disparate images" of her life (11). Certainly, the reader remembers the family values and the moral "code" that she endorses in other articles. This uncertainty about reality extends to the chronotope of the sixties that she is paid to interpret for her readers.

Nevertheless, Didion continues, artless to make sense of this layer of the sixties' chronotope by assigning the pattern of a discernable plot or a narrative device to the "paranoia of the times" and the place. She can only provide a catalogue its incongruities.

---

[10] Interestingly, like Capote's Smith and Hickock, the Ferguson brothers believe that murdering Novarro and then burglarizing the actor's house will make them rich. Like Smith and Hickock, they find about 20 dollars in the home ("Ramon Novarro," *Wikipedia)*.

Apropos of this disconnection is the fact that she watched former Attorney General Robert Kennedy's funeral and reports about the My Lai massacre in Vietnam from a verandah at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Honolulu. Learning of unnatural deaths and their aftermaths while she vacations undoubtedly added to the writer's perception of global breaches of morality and responsibility to others as well as to her own powerlessness to fix it. The article implies that other vacationers, none of whom had televisions in their rooms, abandoned Didion and her husband, John Gregory Dunne, to watch the three-hour special about Robert Kennedy's assassination and its aftermath alone, confirming that many private Americans of the 1960s ignored disturbing public matters: once again, citizens removed themselves "'from the idea of the nation as a community'" (Denevi A20).[11]

Didion sees another microcosm of this mundane self-absorption when she attempts to report on the Doors. She is drawn to the band's unconventional approach to music and meaning: "The Doors were the Norman Mailers of the Top Forty, missionaries of apocalyptic sex" (21). However, she jettisons a full-length story about the group's recording session, because the group's lead singer and song writer, Jim Morrison, is woefully late for a session and, as she describes it, unmistakably drugged beyond reason. The group's members, who are aware, no doubt, of the observer, respond to Morrison's behavior with silence. Didion reports what she sees, but readers can fill in the blanks. Morrison betrays the basic trust and need that bandmates have in each other to be present

[11] Timothy Denevi adds this information to Didion's original scene in a *New York Times* "Opinion" article ("The Solving A20) in which he cites discussion from a 1971 recording of writer Jean Stein's interview with Didion and Dunne.

to create art—and, in the process, to generate their shared income. He breaks the "code" of being responsible to others. The "code," though, has no place in his story.

Another layer that Didion adds to the chronotope of San Francisco is that of race. When the privileged, white Didion returns to her hometown, San Francisco, to report on Huey P. Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, two leaders of the Black Panther Party, her findings challenge her white expectations. First, she attends a press conference in the Alameda County Jail in the spring of 1968, where Huey P. Newton is an inmate awaiting trial for the murder of a police officer. Always candid with her readers, Didion advises that she does not judge Newton guilty or innocent and that she understands that the goal of the Black Panthers is to protect and empower Blacks—if necessary, "at the end of the barrel of a gun" (31). Her goal, she says, is to report on the demonstrations in support of Newton outside the jail. According to Didion, Newton smiles and is cordial and affable to members of the press and fellow members of the Black Panthers until his lawyer starts a tape recorder. Then, he assumes his public persona and speaks "a wall of rhetoric" (30), the party line. He invokes James Baldwin's claim that "'to be black and conscious in America is to be in a constant state of rage'" (30).[12] Didion's assumption is that Newton's impoverished background leads him to fight for his rights by establishing the organization and becoming its minister of defense. At the same time, she wonders if the organization is using the young man. The latter well may have been the case, but the

[12] It is likely that Didion and Baldwin attended the same press conference. Baldwin voices support for Newton and the Black Panthers' goal of self-defense, despite his suspicion that the party's young members find his thoughts and strategies outdated ("No Name in the Street" 537-549). Henry Lewis Gates, noted above, confirms this. From what Didion observes, however, the Black Panthers appreciate Baldwin's direct statements about racism.

former (her assumed narrative) is not. She had thought that Newton's case "illustrated a collision of cultures, a classic instance of an historical outsider confronting the established order" (33). Research indicates that Newton not only attended college but that he is "'a Kaiser'" (33); he has health insurance, a perquisite of middle-class status. Didion leads the reader to ponder the conditions in America that would motivate an intelligent, young Black man from the middle class to become a Black militant. The facts suggest that racism affects all Blacks and that Huey Newton felt a need to confront and to change society. Ironically, Newton's affiliation and actions on behalf of the Black Panthers is both militant and idealistic, a "Didionian dialectic"—and it is explosive.

In 1968, similar understandings about caste and class come from Didion's interview with Eldridge Cleaver in his apartment with his wife, parole officer, and other Black Panthers. Before she can interview Cleaver, the white reporter must pass an inspection, as she did before she saw Huey Newton. Ironically, she must prove that she is unarmed, safe, and trustworthy. The crowded scene she sees in the apartment is unexpected, but its domesticity is calming since Cleaver's wife is cooking dinner. Finally, Didion and Cleaver, both writers, talk about the "commercial prospects" of his newly published *Soul on Ice.* Her recognition of Cleaver as an equal and a co-professional yields an amicable one-hour interview. Here, amidst a crowded, chaotic room in an anarchic time and place, the outcome is unexpected, yet serendipitous: a collegial conversation about business links a Black, male revolutionary who is a writer with a white, female writer whose instinctive concern is to conserve the integrity of her family's mythology and a familiar social structure.

Trivial coincidence reinforces the narrative's inventory of random "news" from the West Coast when Didion's mind links a history of dresses with the murder trial of Charles Manson and his cult. The connection of dresses and Manson proceeds through several mental coils before the link becomes apparent. In Los Angeles, Didion writes of her interview with Linda Kasabian, a former member of Manson's Spahn Movie Ranch commune, who was given protection at the Sybil Brand Institute for Women so that she could serve as the "star witness for the prosecution . . . [at] the Manson trial" (18). Many years before Didion interviews Kasabian, movie director Roman Polansky (and husband of Sharon Tate, an actor who suffers a gruesome death at the hands of Charles Manson's cult), spilled wine on the dress that Didion had worn to her own wedding. The link is that while Didion's intent is to write a story about Kasabian, who, on Manson's command, drove three other members of the cult to murder seven people, the writer, at the request of Kasabian's lawyer, is pressed into buying Kasabian a suitable dress for the imprisoned driver to wear to court. Didion admits that the tie between her dress and Kasabian's[13] is "an authentically senseless chain of correspondences" (45): sartorial concerns pale compared to the slaughter of human beings. However, it is the coincidence of living in and writing about life in California, one place—not a divine plan or a plot pattern—that governs this accumulation of linked and sometimes trivial events.

Clearly, Didion's discussion of people who are "emblematic of those years" (48) adds to that chronotope of the United States. However, she concludes by rejecting the

[13] Kasabian's story, as Vincent Bugliosi, prosecutor at the Manson family's trial, tells it, would have made a fine sequel to "Slouching Towards Bethlehem." Sixteen when she ran away from an abusive stepfather and an inattentive mother, Kasabian "wandered" west and "lived in communes and crash pads [and took] drugs [and] had sex with almost anyone who showed an interest" before she felt welcome at Manson's Spahn Movie Ranch commune (339).

belief that Linda Kasabian expresses before the Manson trial, that "everything was for a reason" (18). The patterns of the nation's and Didion's family's myths and symbols do not fit the 1960s and on the West Coast. They also do not fit her physical condition as well. In the penultimate section of "The White Album," Didion reveals that her doctors have diagnosed her as having multiple sclerosis, an unpredictable disease of the central nervous system. Didion does not provide a direct correspondence between her perception of a disconnected, meaningless macrocosm to her individual diagnosis, but her medical condition does appear to reinforce the state of being. Moreover, her examples refute the causal constructs of stories that Americans and her family always have told themselves "in order to live" (11). Didion's dark, gothic truths are that in mid-twentieth century America, predictions are impossible to make; expectations of people and institutions are doomed to failure; traditional responses to various situations are irrelevant. If, as Whitley notes, the songs in Beatles's white album represent "'postmodernism' [and] re-evaluate the modern desires for unity, objectivity, enlightenment and progress" (105), Didion's depiction of American reality makes sense. Each breaks an accepted "code": the Beatles, lyrics and music; Didion, meaning as well as organization and technique in the literary nonfiction that interprets the world that continues to surprise and distress her.

PERSPECTIVE

Joan Didion's death on December 23, 2021 provided journalists with an occasion to eulogize the author as well as to preen their own profession. Critic A. O. Scott counts Joan Didion among the essayists and writers of fiction "born in the first half of the 1930s . . . [who represent] a literary greatest generation" ("An Appraisal" C2). Scott asserts that she is among an iconocloastic group of writers (Cormac McCarthy, Toni Morrison, John

Updike, Susan Sontag, and Philip Roth), each presenting to the public a singular perception and voice, "none remotely resembl[ing] . . . another" (C2). Conversely, referring to Didion alone, Harvard Professor Dale Keiger says that Didion's nonfiction before "The White Album" exhibits "lots of glossy sentences and a striking voice that applied varnish to skimpy reporting, sketchy reasoning, and confirmation bias" ("The Making of Joan Didion: From Fuzzy Facts to Peerless Prose" n. p.). Keiger does praise Didion for the writer's later work, but Keiger's bias appears to indicate her own need to instruct her students in orthodox journalism. Rather, the reasoning in Didion's early literary nonfiction, as represented in this study, is inductive—not "sketchy": she presents catalogues of sensory, historical, and contemporary details. Moreover, Didion's topics achieve an immediacy, because she presents in vivid detail her perceptions about the time and place, the chronotope of California during the 1960s. Surely, Bakhtin would agree that the descriptions, insights, and concerns of her on-site investigations are informed by her long-term personal knowledge of the place and its history. Indeed, they provide layers for understanding the social evolution/revolution—the news—of California in that era. Likewise, Bakhtin's literary theory anticipates the sensitive and perceptive psychological and emotional nature that contributes to Didion's insights about the United States in the mid-twentieth century.

Accordingly, Didion's translation of "the news," i.e., changes in society as seen in public events, is often bleak. In *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and *The White Album,* only an early essay, "John Wayne: A Love Story" glows with gratitude about John Wayne, whom she knows first from her youth as an idealized, mythic movie hero. His character is a stoic cowboy from the West (place), who embodies Didion's personal and

family's "code." He fights the heathen and his country's enemies. In movies, which make visual the notion of this American Adam, he puts his community and his country before his own welfare.[14] The subjects of Didion's other sketches about personalities and articles about the news fall short of Didion's expectations of good citizens and healthy places.

On the other hand, as Romanoff notes, Didion "establish[es] geographic particulars and insinuate[s] atmospheric dread . . . by plac[ing] herself in the timeline of cultural history [and . . . explor[ing] America in a moment of political and social fracture" ("The Power" n. p.). Thus, in "Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream," the Santa Ana winds and a role model from a Hollywood movie heighten Mrs. Lucille Miller's desire to achieve her American dream (unrefined capitalism) her own way. Her method is to move to a new subdivision in California with her dentist-husband and then to acquire wealth by murdering him. Likewise, it is the promise of place, San Francisco's Haight Ashbury District, in the 1960s that attracts disaffected young people to San Francisco, a translation of individuals akin to the Pilgrims coming to the New World ("Slouching Towards Bethlehem"). Unlike the Pilgrims, though, they inhabit places that are ready-made (though not particularly sanitary) and, according Didion, do not exhibit the traits of the American Adam (i.e., John Wayne). Didion claims that they spend time in states of drugged unconcern for their children and their community, a state of being that challenges Didion's inherited wisdom. Furthermore, nothing makes sense in Los Angeles in the late 1960s. Didion presents a picture of cognitive dissonance in which her expectation is for Americans to work together in community, but self-absorption is what

[14] At the time, Didion and most white Americans did not understand systemic racism and its manifestation in cinematic portrayals of Native Americans.

she finds. She should have known that paradise does not exist: her articles about Hawaii (in both collections of essays) signal it. For this, traditional research enhances on-site observation. Tourists travel to Hawaii for its climate, clean ocean, and opportunities to retreat from cares, but they have no idea about the machinations of the government or its economy. They ignore wrecks of vessels sunk in the harbor during World War II. They have no idea that the islands are way stations for bodies returning from Vietnam. Didion recalls Hawaii's past and the island's politics and economics to provide corrective lenses to outsiders who have romantic about the place ("Letter from Paradise").

Clearly, Didion's nonfiction, always written from the subjective point of view, presents an intimate view of the news of the America of her times. Unique settings figure boldly in her articles, yet Didion's evaluation of human nature, or her social commentary, is her primary focus. Her concern focuses on Americans' misinterpretation of the basic element of social life. Like Charles Manson's self-absorbed interpretations of the meanings of the Beatles's songs in the white album, Americans ignore or misinterpret the moral "code" that she learned from her ancestors and from the fine literature that she read.[15] That code involves creating a cohesive community by helping neighbors, a basic "'wagon train morality'" ("On Morality" 11). However, the preponderance of evidence that Didion sees and records about the chronotope of America in the 1960s does not support this view. Instead, for Didion, "'things fall apart" (Yeats qtd. in Didion *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* ix).

[15] Bugliosi's sources describe Manson's self-serving interpretations of the songs on the Beatles's album (322-327). Among other ideas, Manson's "'hidden lyrics'" communicated to him that he was a prophet who, during Armageddon, caused by a race war (365), Manson would lead his followers to safety.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation examines the works of four writers of mid-twentieth century American literary nonfiction to understand the influence of place on humanity, and that of humanity on place. The artful product of a writer's on-site research and encounters with participants on the scene, each text presents its writer's slant on actual news events (however deftly camouflaged by the point of view it may be), confronting the reader with secret, hidden, and/or under-acknowledged truths about the United States. In all, though, the authors expose the interplay between the people who live and propel the real stories and the real places where the events or incidents occur. Actual geographic and atmospheric exteriors, as well as American culture's myths and understandings about place, point to moral interiors about American society: the moral choices and ethical conduct of Americans living during these times and in these places, i.e., the chronotope. Coined by Russian literary theorist M. M. Bakhtin, whose worked was translated into English in 1981, this term articulates the modern novel's insights into the moral and ethical underpinnings of character and culture, one of the traits that differentiate it from an epic. Bakhtin asserts that the novel conveys these understandings by repeatedly situating characters and their interactions in a single setting or place over a period of time. This study extends Bakhtin's theory of understanding "character" and culture in fiction by applying his notion of the chronotope to literary nonfiction written about the United States during the middle of the twentieth century. As has been discussed, the vehicles for this study are John Hersey's *Hiroshima,* Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, James Baldwin's *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985,* and Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and *The White Album.*

The United States of America in the middle of the twentieth century was almost 200 years old, and, unlike Europe and England in the wake of World War II, its triumphant had led to undiluted prosperous. The war had not been fought within its continental borders. Americans did not face shortages of supplies, materials, or food, nor did they need to excavate themselves from the mounds of debris caused by enemy air strikes.[1] Instead, as Didion writes about California, when Americans of the era built homes and moved to "subdivisions" in the suburbs ("Some Dreamers" 5). It must have seemed logical to Americans that all citizens could enjoy the American dream—i.e., Eden is the backyard—and, by extension, that all of the world's citizens, with America's assistance, would have had access to the same hale health and prosperity. John Hersey's work points to the specious nature of this assumption about the application of the American dream to the global scene. Truman Capote demonstrates the results of a misinterpreted view of this ideal; James Baldwin, the deprivation of it. Lastly, Joan Didion voices distressed bewilderment that Americans dangerously abuse their "birthright." In each, America's most cherished myth about itself, the American dream, which is an idea about a place, is a silent, salient participant in each author's chronicle of the era's "news."

Hersey's *Hiroshima* describes the physical and human geography of one place—Hiroshima, Japan—to allude to a fatal moral and ethical flaw in another, the United States. The chronicle begins *in medias res* at the moment that the United States dropped

[1] Two sources of nonfiction related to this condition but not mentioned in the body of the dissertation are Helene Hanff's short, epistolary piece, *84, Charing Cross Road,* which reveals the shortages of food, especially during the Christmas season, many years after World War II, and W. G. Sebald's *On the Natural History of Destruction*, the author's first-person childhood memories of the shortages of all goods, mountains of rubble in streets, and silence about their cause in Germany in the decades after World War II.

Little Boy on Japan to initiate its victorious culmination of World War II in 1945. Readers note that the book begins with six bomb blasts, allowing each one of Hersey's six eyewitnesses to recollect the sights and sounds of the bomb's single detonation in the city, which was a strategic, industrial hub. Clearly, Hersey's artistic strategy is psychological: to draw the reader into a chronotope of lethal confusion and other assaults on human life. Through the points of view of the five, still-stunned, Japanese civilians, who represent the defeated nation, as well as that of a German clergyman, who selflessly tends to his Japanese flock, Hersey's piece, published a year after the attack, reveals the United States's lingering secret about its pyrrhic victory: the terrible force and enduring effects of an atomic bomb. What is important, though, is that however bereft these six noncombatants felt about their losses of home, planned futures, hale health, loved ones, community, necessities, and confidence in country's cultural beliefs as well as the chaos that ensued from the bomb's destruction, they survived, albeit with what American culture now calls post-traumatic stress disorder. As Hersey describes in "the Aftermath," the survivors did not receive financial aid from their government for many years, because Japan attributed its citizens' problems to the actions of the United States government. Yet Hersey writes that the *hibakusha,* "'the explosion-affected persons'" (92), often helped each other while they worked to overcome their own troubles.

One example activism in the face of defeat and community concern is Reverend Tanimoto. In spite of some criticism from his countrymen and betrayal of private American sources that had offered to help him for his efforts, Reverend Tanimoto, who lost his church's building and its funds, embarks on a lifetime of traveling to the United States to raise funds for projects to help the Japanese, particularly for plastic surgery for

girls with keloid scars and other wounds from the explosion. Another is Miss Sasaki, whose painful injuries from the atomic bomb's blast took many years of medical care and personal resolve. Miss Sasaki converts to Catholicism and enters the Sisters of Charity. Her intelligence, background in accounting, and innate compassion led her to helping many fellow civilians; her efforts, to being honored by the religious order. Such actions bespeak the resilience both of humanity and of the innate strength of the Japanese character. While the intellectual or cultural strength may have come from a different source, including this trait in the text would appear to evoke in American readers of *The New Yorker* and, later, of the book the idea of the American Adam, the individual who confronts the wilderness and conquers it. While the goal of Hersey's 1985 addendum, again published in *The New Yorker*, to his original article remains as a warning to the planet of the atomic bomb's immediate and long-term effects, one underlying understanding is that both the Japanese and the Americans come from traditions that sanctify gardens, i.e., perfect worlds. On the one hand, the author plants idea that the former adversaries share a belief in working hard to heal and perfect the planet. On the other hand, the author admonishes the United States for using advanced technology against civilians. In this way, he questions the idea of progress, which, as mentioned above, Emerson had added to the American dream.

Removed from global concerns is Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, a narrative about the slaughter of a wholesome, well-to-do, civic-minded, hardworking family in Holcomb, Kansas, and the pathos of the lives of their murderers. Capote's one-chapter encomium to Herbert Clutter establishes the farmer as a "new Adam." As discussed above, Capote's rhetoric about Mr. Clutter's lifestyle and agricultural achievements

suggest and reinforce the notion that his efforts bore an American Eden: he attained the American dream. This chapter sets the norm for the idea of the possibility of American prosperity.

Capote juxtaposes this ideal with three chapters about the lives of Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, the men who concerned themselves with how to rob Mr. Clutter's hard-earned fortune—not on emulating the way he made it. These are the men who murdered Mr. Clutter, his wife, and two of his four children. Readers learn about the men's families, the time they spent in the same prison for separate burglaries before they murder the Clutters, the murder itself, the men's escape from Kansas, their journey to Mexico, their capture, their incarceration and trial, and their deaths. Ironically, they share with Herbert Clutter, who had not been born to prosperity, a desire to have a share in America's myth of Eden on Earth.

Perry Smith and Dick Hickock do not represent snakes in Eden. They do not know or tempt the stalwart Mr. Clutter. Their goal—to steal Mr. Clutter's money—is basic, but when they discover that he has little cash at home, they kill him. While Capote never condones the murderers' deeds, he does include letters to and about the men as well as memories—in flashbacks—of places that provide information about the murderers' families and interactions with others. These remembrances make the murderers' motives plausible—however unethical they are. Oddly, they evoke pathos in the reader. Poor, misguided, and psychologically unbalanced, Perry Smith and Dick Hickock are lonely thieves who have little allegiance to any place, or to the people who might inhabit it. While Perry and Dick share the American dream that motivates the country's citizens and immigrants, the myth has been elusive for them. They disregard—or never were taught—

the American means of attaining it: hard work. Capote suggests that parental abandonment and abuse, unmitigated physical pain, and a lack of a supportive community, obstructed the ethical development of the young Perry Smith. Conversely, Capote attributes the immoral behavior of Dick Hickock, a bright student who chooses not to go to college, to his aversion for the poverty of his intact family and on a traumatic brain injury. As Capote tells their stories, the men's misperceptions of America's foundation myth, arising from the environment, physical injuries, individual psychopathology, and a hot but flawed tip from a fellow prisoner, Floyd Wells, about Mr. Clutter's wealth, lead to their attempted theft at the Clutters' farm. Tragically, when they find no stash of money that will fund their grandiose imaginings of a heaven on earth, they find it reasonable to kill the Clutters.

Yet while Perry and Dick's damaged minds and impoverished, ineffective families cause the Clutters' murders, Capote's portrayal of place also implicates the aberrations in the United States's procedures in achieving its ideals—aberrations which result in the deaths of all six Americans (the Clutters and the murderers). The men are correct in perceiving the unequal distribution of wealth in a land that professes the possibility of the American dream. Once again, unlike Mr. Clutter, Perry and Dick's method of achieving the American dream and men's murders of the Clutters are wrong; however, if time in a "penitentiary" for rehabilitation were American society's best response to Perry and Dick's earlier thefts, it fails. In fact, prison facilitates the Clutters' murders. Society is the victim of the state's artless vigilance in preventing crime and in fostering good citizenship. It is in jail that the men learn about Mr. Clutter's wealth and the location of his farm. Moreover, as Capote shows it, Perry and Dick's trial is flawed

by the state's inattentive care of the indigent men, a breach of institutional morality, if not of judicial ethics: the court appointed doctors were not psychiatrists and could not verify with certainty that the men's psychopathology conformed to the M'Naghten rule—that is, "not guilty by reason of insanity" while committing the crime—which this court (but not all courts uniformly in the United States) used to determine guilt at the time and place of a crime. Another problem related to their poverty was that because the men could not afford their own lawyer, they relied on the state's defense lawyer, who might not have been particularly invested in the case.[2] To contemporary readers, who have access to 24-hour news cycles about murders across the nation by perpetrators whose histories include a lack of social responsibility, the book's presentation of the Clutter's case provides layers in the country's chronotope the psychological effects of the nation's achieved ideal versus the thwarted ideal. To be explicit, redemption and Eden on this Earth were beyond Perry and Dick's grasp. Paradoxically, Capote's narrative about the case prompts an involved reader to pity both the deceased residents of a modern Eden as well as their murderers, who could not realize this ideal.

Conversely, the articles that James Baldwin selects for *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985* provide an African American's subjective and logical commentary about America and America's resistance to honoring the African Americans' rightful entitlement to the American dream. Like Hersey and Capote, Baldwin situates his readers in a location: this time, the writer's place of birth, Harlem

[2] In "Capote's Crime and Punishment," Diana Trilling charges that Truman Capote behaved unethically. Her claim is that because the nature of the genre promoted an intimacy between the writer and at least one of the subjects, Capote, who would benefit financially from the publication of the book about the case, should have hired a private lawyer for the men (106-113).

However, Baldwin's narrative about growing up in the Harlem of the post-Harlem Renaissance (in the 1930s and 1940s) does not recall the halcyon days of his youth. There were none. It introduces readers to the systemic urban dystopia that imprisons American Blacks. The community's poverty is sustained by the abandonment of commercial opportunities, the government's neglect and hostility toward the place (seen in Harlem's decayed dwellings, its blighted infrastructure, and the city's implicit application of Jim Crow laws, and the city's victimizing police force). All of these elements promote the community's lack of a positive identity. Later, Baldwin expands on America's jaundiced, long arm of the law and its reflexive hostility to Blacks when he discusses the unjust arrest overseas, imprisonment, and flawed stateside trial of his friend and bodyguard, Tony Maynard ("No Name in the Street" 528-532) as well as the incarceration of Black activist Huey Newton, a founder of the Black Panthers whom Baldwin finds to be reasonable, educated, and guilty only of self-defense (544-549).

Baldwin reminds all readers that for African Americans everywhere in the country, including those who migrated to the North, the American condition of slavery is an atavistic part of the nation's consciousness. Culturally, slavery—more efficient than the atomic bomb in Japan—cut the African American race off from the language, tales, and rituals of its free, African ancestors, a condition that denied the heteroglossia, a unique language and its nuances, that Bakhtin considers to be emblematic of a "place" and vital for social cohesion. Moreover, conditions in the ghetto generate a lack of employment and a lack of income, which spawn a Black self-hatred that Baldwin exemplifies in the behavior of his abusive step-father. Such an actively insidious

environment/role model infects the Black writer's view of his hometown and his country, and it prompts him to leave Harlem, which he finds to be an oppressive place.

A former child preacher and a gifted writer, however, Baldwin's response to being excluded from the American dream is to write. Bakhtin would find the interplay between the language in which the Black author's essays are written to articulate his concerns and their intended audience to be intriguing. Ironically, Baldwin's practice in his essays is to use standard (white) English to argue his points, usually in standard (white) magazines and newspapers (that everyone can purchase, of course), about the moral failure of the (white) government and its citizens to share the American dream with Blacks. For much of his professional life, Baldwin's nonfiction decries these experiences in the United States, "the land of the free," but he is skeptical of the converse, the Black separatist movement and mythology of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam. In 1962, he insists that "we, the black and the white, deeply need each other here if we are really to become a nation . . . to achieve our identity, our maturity, as men and women" ("The Fire Next Time" 382). Equality of opportunity, especially the right of African Americans to participate in the country's politics (i.e., in crafting and passing laws that all Americans must follow), is what Baldwin claims is every American's ethical right.

Baldwin's nonfiction records a change in its trajectory in the latter part of his writing life. This occurs when Baldwin instinctively understands the Bakhtinian chronotope. In "The American Dream and the American Negro," first published in *The New York Times* in 1965, Baldwin indicates that the United States is poised for punishment. He prophesies that since the ancestors of Black Americans helped to build the United States as much or more than contemporary white Americans, the white

establishment's continued denial of the American dream to Black Americans will lead "by [African Americans'] very presence to [the]wreck [of the country]" (412). Black Americans, he says, insist on their rightful place, i.e., their station, in America. Particularly after the decline of the civil rights movement and the ascendancy of an era of race riots in many American cities in the 1960s, punctuated by the assassinations of two of the men who were his agemates, his friends, and respected social activists, Malcolm X (in 1965) and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (in 1968), Baldwin's articles still lament inequality for African Americans, but they bare a lack of hope. Disillusionment replaces belief in possibility in Baldwin's view of race in America.

If James Baldwin's articles analyze the ways in which hundreds of years of systemic racism had deprived the Black race of living the American dream (beginning with forcing African Americans to live in segregated places that resemble penal colonies set apart from the country's mainstream society), Joan Didion's articles in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and *The White Album,* articulate the ills of an individual's willful isolation from others within the same place. In "The White Album," for example, Didion writes that she is a hostage both to her illness and to an unhealthy place. She begins matter-of-factly with her psychiatrist's documentation of her vertigo, nausea, alienation from others, and "'libidinal preoccupations many of which are distorted and bizarre'" (14), and it ends with a nod to her neurologist's diagnosis of her multiple sclerosis. She writes of the organic disease that "the improbable had become probable, the norm: things which happened only to other people could in fact happen to me" (47). The article begins with alarm and ends with the acceptance of sad and unmitigated inevitability. As shown in this study, Didion's perception of her place often has the ring of pathetic fallacy

applied not to the weather but to her view of mid-twentieth century America, i.e., the broken world reflects her state of being. The accretion of details about her local experiences as well as that of public events in Los Angeles and San Francisco, the latter reported in the media and then confirmed in her interviews with the participants in the events, though, form the bases of her fears. As she writes in many articles, the California that she anticipated inheriting from her ancestors no longer exists. It is, in Bakhtin's description of the worlds of national epics, a "valorized past."

Didion's distress about the state of her post-lapsarian world, usually the American West, also relates to her perception of the lack of correspondence between individual behavior and the moral (philosophical) and ethical (behavioral) needs of a cohesive society. Her adult reality, informed by lessons, values, and memories she learned from her nurturing, fortunate, white family and its lore as well as the steadying presence of her larger supportive community, clings to this Edenic place. She recounts that while her family chose to leave the Donner-Reed Party in the 1800s, those members of the larger group who remained were more focused on their own survival than they were on the welfare of the group. She expects more of American humanity of the mid-twentieth century. Consequently, Didion's various articles lament the housewife who murders her husband for money; the cult leader who enjoins his followers to murder innocent people for money, vengeance, and his own self-edification; the hapless children who liberate themselves from abusive parents; students and activists who promise violence in public but are cordial in private, and reveling Hawaiian tourists who willfully ignore news about the death of an American patriot. All act with little regard for improving the present or the future of American society. They break Didion's family's moral "code." Indeed, the

writer's deliberate, updated layers on the chronotope of the morality of the West demonstrate that her family's code of ideal human behavior is confined to a "closed" chronotope. Large and small historic and contemporary aberrations from the Eden of the Bible and Didion's California family saga appear to be the norms in Didion's commentaries on California of the 1960s. Whether imperfectly or mystically connected, as Didion presents the events in the places about which she reports, however, the malaise of a non-Edenic, antagonistic modern mirrors her inner being.

John Hersey's *Hiroshima,* Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, James Baldwin's *The Price of the Ticket,* and Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and *The White Album* render "the news" of the 1960s vividly and artfully via on-site reporting and scrupulous research. Usually, one does not inhabit the others' scenes or places. Rather, the writers' works of literary nonfiction fit like interlocking pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that complete a picture about the morality and ethics of the United States in the mid-twentieth century. Collectively, the chronotope that includes the news of the era includes the toxic and long-term medical, societal, psychological, and environmental effects of America's blanket destruction of an antagonistic place during a world war; some of the consequences of the unequal distribution of wealth, particularly the behaviors that come from disappointed expectations; the flaws in America's judicial system and the country's counterproductive penitentiaries; a theory of systemic racism and its enduring presence throughout the country; and the societal implications of self-absorption, self-deception, and breaches of trust in human relationships.

For all of these authors, then, an idealized picture of America and the promise of its dream—one that Norman Rockwell's paintings of that era often offer his viewers—is

not a reality, but it is a subliminal reference point. Joan Didion was correct when she noted the difficulty for the American writers of the 1960s to "[impose] a narrative line upon disparate images" ("The White Album" 11). However, if "the news" signals change and altered expectations, these interpreters of American reality in the middle of the twentieth century, all of whom engage in their country's blessing of freedom of expression, offer depth and insight to the real stories of their times by summoning (consciously or unconsciously) in their readers the country's most cherished atavistic belief. Because of and despite the era's ills, the American dream provides a context and constant contrast for this study's writers and their readers to evaluate and interpret the stories of about their "place," the United States of America.

WORKS CITED

Agronsky, Martin. "For Fifteen Cents—An Epic!" 30 Aug 1946. Box 966, Folder 4. MssCol 2236. *The New Yorker* Records. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library. Accessed 17 Jan. 2020.

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.* Penguin Books, 1963.

Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Holquist, University of Texas P, 1981.

Baldwin, James. *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985*. Beacon Press, 2021.

Bayer-Berenbaum, Linda. *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art.* Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1982.

Bemong, Nele, Pieter Borghart, Michel De Dobbeleer, Kristoffel Demoen, Koen DeTemmerman, Bart Keunen, editors. *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives.* Academia Press, 2010.

Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The American Jeremiad*. University of Wisconsin P, 1978.

Bloom, Harold, editor. *James Baldwin: Bloom's Modern Critical Views.* Chelsea House Publishers, 2007.

Blume, Lesley M. M. *Fallout: The Hiroshima Cover-up and the Reporter who Revealed it to the World.* Simon and Schuster, 2020.

Boo, Katherine. "Truth and Consequences." Kramer and Call, pp. 177.

Brim, Matt. *James Baldwin and the Queer Imagination.* University of Michigan P, 2018.

Bugliosi, Vincent, and Curt Gentry. *Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders*. W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1994.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Bollingen Series XVII. Princeton UP, 1973.

Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences.* Vintage Books, 1993.

---. Interview. Conducted by William F. Buckley, Jr. *Firing Line.* 3 Sept. 1968. *YouTube.* www.youtube/watch?v=2OnH2WLHxVU&+=25s. Accessed 11 Nov. 2022.

---. "The Muses are Heard." Capote *Portraits,* pp. 74-178.

---. *Too Brief a Treat: The Letters of Truman Capote.* Edited by Gerald Clarke. Vintage International Books, 2004.

---. *Portraits and Observations: The Essays of Truman Capote.* The Modern Library, 2007.

Christensen, Peter. "Major Works and Themes." Waldmeir and Waldmeir, pp. 221-229.

"Civil Liberties Violations: Selective Internment and Exclusion." German American Internee Coalition. *Google.* https://gaic.info/history/world-war-ii-civil-liberties-violations-of-german-americans-and-german-latin-americans-by-the-united-states-government/ -:~:text=During World War II, the US Government interned at least,and children were American citizens. Accessed 6 June 2023.

Clark, Roy Peter. "The Line Between Fact and Fiction." *Creative Nonfiction*, no16, 2000, pp. 4–15. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/44362952. Accessed 26 June 2020.

Clarke, Gerald. *Capote: A Biography*. Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 1988.

Connery, Thomas B. *Journalism and Realism: Rendering an American Life.* Northwestern UP, 2011.

Dean, Michelle. *Sharp.* Grove Press, 2018.

"Death Penalty in the U. S." *FindLaw.* Thomson Reuters. 2020. www.criminal.findlaw.com/criminal-procedure/the-u-s-and-the-death-penalty.html#:~:text=In%20the%201950s%2C%20however%2C%20public,to%20turn%20against%20capital%20punishment.&text=Whereas%20there%20were%201%2C289%20executions,reached%20an%20all%2Dtime%20low. Accessed 3 Jan. 2021.

Denevi, Timothy. "Opinion: The Solving of a Joan Didion Mystery Tells us a lot About our own Troubled Era." *New York Times,* vol. CLXXII, no. 59,822, 17 June 2023, pp. A20.

Didion, Joan. *Slouching Towards Bethlehem.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968.

---. *Where I Was From.* Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

---. *The White Album.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979.

---. "Why I Write." Friedman, pp. 5-10.

Donoghue, Denis. "Eudora Welty's Sense of Place." Weatherby and Core, 1313-146.

Double Indemnity. 1944. Directed by Billy Wilder, Universal Studios. Turner Classic Movies, DVD, n. d.

Dougill, John. *Zen Gardens and Temples of Kyoto : A Guide to Kyoto's Most Important Sites.* Tuttle Publishing, 2017.

Douglass, Frederick. *Selected Speeches and Writings.* Edited by Philip S. Foner, abridged and adapted by Yuval Taylor, Lawrence Hill Books, 1999.

Eckman, Fern Marja. *The Furious Passage of James Baldwin*. M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1966.

Elon, Amos. Introduction: The Excommunication of Hannah Arendt. Arendt, pp. vii-xxiii.

Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America.* The Johns Hopkins UP, 1985.

Ford, Nick Aaron. "The Evolution of James Baldwin as Essayist." Bloom, 23-42.

Fried, Ben. "James Baldwin's Readers: "White Innocence and the Reception of 'Letter from a Region in my Mind.'" *African American Review*, vol. 55, issue 1 (Spring 2022): 69-85. *EbscoHost.* https://eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds/pdgviewer/pdfviewer?vid=9&sic=1b41328d-578a-4077-a004-73c9cf2b6d1a%40redis. Accessed 18 May 2022.

Friedman, Ellen G., editor. *Joan Didion: Essays and Conversations.* Ontario Review P, 1984.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. "The Fire Last Time." Bloom, 11-22.

Glaude, Eddie S., Jr. *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and its Urgent Lessons.* Crown, 2121.

Grierson, John. "First Principles of Documentary." Aitken, pp. 81-93.

Guest, David. *Sentenced to Death: The American Novel and Capital Punishment*. UP of Mississippi, 1997.

Gunther, John. *Inside Asia.* Hamish Hamilton, 1939.

Gutkind, Lee. *The Fine Art of Literary Fist-Fighting.* Yale UP, 2024.

Habib, Farah, Sara Nahibi, and Hamid Majedi. "Japanese Garden as a Physical Symbol of Japanese Culture." *International Journal of Architecture and Urban Development.* Vol.3, No. 4. Autumn 2015, pp. 13-18. *Google*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259592239_Japanese_Garden_as_a_Physical_Symbol_of_Japanese_Culture . Accessed 26 Jan. 2022.

Halliwell, Martin. *American Culture in the 1950s*. Edinburgh University Press, 2007. *ProQuest Ebook Central,* https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/drewebooks/detail.action?docID=292360. Accessed 26 Feb. 2019.

Harrison, Barbara Grizzuti. "Joan Didion: Only Disconnect." *Off Center: Essays by Barbara Grizzuti Harrison*. Dial Press, 1980, pp. 113-137.

Hersey, John. "Harry S. Truman." *Life Sketches*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1989. pp. 229-253.

---. *Hiroshima.* Vintage Books: A Division of Random House, 1987.

---. *Into the Valley: A Skirmish of the Marines.* Schoken Books, 1989.

---. *Life Sketches.* Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.

"History of Shikkeiem." Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum. *Google.* www.shikkeien.jp/history. Accessed 26 Jan. 2022.

History.com Editors. "Miranda Rights." *HISTORY.* https://www.history.com/topics/united-states-constitution/miranda-rights. Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.

Hull, Anne. "A Dilemma of Immersion Journalism." Kramer and Call, pp. 182-183.

Jahner, Harald. *Aftermath: Life in the Fallout of the Third Reich, 1945-1955.* Trans. by Shaun Whiteside. Alfred A. Knopf, 2022.

James Baldwin Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library-Schomberg Center. Accessed 4 Aug 2023.

John Hersey Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library. Accessed 3 Jan. 2020.

Kakutani, Michiko. "Joan Didion: Staking out California." Friedman, pp. 29-40.

Keiger, Dale. "The Making of Joan Didion: From Fuzzy Facts to Peerless Prose." *Nieman Reports.* 14 Jan. 2022, n. p. *Google.* https://nieman.harvard.edu/stories/the-making-of-joan-didion-from-fuzzy-facts-to-peerless-prose/. Accessed 22 Dec. 2023.

Kerrane, Kevin. "From *The True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild:* Daniel Defoe." Kerrane and Yagoda 23-28.

---, and Ben Yagoda, editors. *The Art of Fact: A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism.* A Touchstone Book of Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Kidder, Tracy. "Securing Consent." Kramer and Call, pp. 176-177.

King James Bible Online. 2020. www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Sitemap.php. Accessed 24 Oct. 2020.

Klinkenborg, Verlyn. "Editorial Observer: Re-reading the Landscape of an Essay by Joan Didion." *The New York Times.* 29 Jan 2005. *The New York Times*. www.nytimes.com/2005/1/29/opinion/rereading-the-landscape-of-an-essay-by-joan-didion.html. Accessed 15 Oct. 2022.

Kramer, Mark, and Wendy Call, editors. *Telling True Stories.* A Plume Book, 2007.

Leeming, David Adams. *James Baldwin: A Biography.* Arcade Publishing, 2015.

Lester, Julius. "Some Tickets are Better: The Mixed Achievement of James Baldwin." Bloom, pp. 133-139.

Lewis, R. W. B. *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century.* The U of Chicago P, 1955.

Lifton, Robert Jay, and Greg Mitchell. *Hiroshima in America: Fifty Years of Denial.* G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

Lodge, David. *The Novelist at the Crossroads and Other Essays on Fiction and Criticism.* Cornell UP, 1971.

Lopate, Phillip. *To Show and to Tell: The Craft of Literary Nonfiction*. Free Press: A Division of Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2013.

Luke, Timothy W.. *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition*, U of Minnesota Press, 2002.

McCarthy, Mary. Letter to the Editor: "The Hiroshima *New Yorker." Politics.* November 1946, Vol. 3. Greenwood Reprint Corporation, 1968. *Google.* americainclass.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/03/mccarthy_onhiroshima.pdf.

Accessed 16 Feb. 2022.

Malin, Irving, editor. *Truman Capote's* In Cold Blood: *A Casebook*. Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1968.

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America.* Oxford UP, 2000.

Mead, Rebecca. "Cultural Comment: The Most Revealing Moment in the New Joan Didion Documentary." *The New Yorker.* October 27, 2017. www-newyorker-com.ezproxy.drew.edu/culture/cultural-comment/the-most-revealing-moment-in-the-new-joan-didion-documentary/amp. Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.

Menand, Louis. "Out of Bethlehem: The Radicalization of Joan Didion." *The New Yorker.* 24 August 2015. vol. 91, issue 24. pp. 66-1. *The New Yorker*. www-newyorker-com.ezproxy.drew.edu/magazine/2015/08/24/out-of-bethlehem. Accessed 10 Dec. 2019.

Miller, Debra. "I Thought Joan Didion's Article Would Ruin my Life. But Something Else Happened." Op-Ed. *Los Angeles Times.* 23 Jan. 2022. n. p. *Google.* https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2022-01-23/joan-didion-some-dreamers-golden-dream-lucille-miller-california. Accessed 20 Oct 2022.

Morson, Gary Saul. "The Chronotope of Humanness: Bakhtin and Dostoevsky." Bemong et. al., pp. 93-110.

Mosser, Jason. *Participatory Journalism of Michael Herr, Norman Mailer, Hunter S. Thompson, and Joan Didion: Creating New Reporting Styles.* Edwin Mellen Press, 2011.

Nichols, Bill. *Introduction to Documentary.* Second Edition. Indiana UP, 2010. pp. 1-16, 32-41.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History.* U of Chicago P, 2002. *EBSCOhost*,

Orwell, George. *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell: Essays IV*. Edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus. Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968.

---."A Hanging." *Google.* piper.asu.edu/sites/default/files/orwell_hanging.pdf Accessed 23 Feb. 2020.

Phillips, William. "But is it good for Literature?" Malin, *A Casebook*, pp.102-106.

Plimpton, George. "The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel." Malin, *A Casebook*, pp. 25-43.

---, editor. *Truman Capote, in which Various Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances and Detractors Recall His Turbulent Career.* Doubleday, 1997.

Poe, Edgar A. "The Philosophy of Composition." *Graham's Magazine,* vol. XXVIII, no. 4, April 1846, 28:163-167. The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore. 3 Jan. 2021. *Google*. https://www.eapoe.org/works/essays/philcomp.htm. Accessed 9 Mar. 2021.

Roedigger, David R. *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White, the Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs.* Basic Books, 2018.

Romanoff, Zan. "The Power of an Imperfect Didion." *The Cut.* March, 10, 2017, n. p. *Google*. www.thecut.com/2017/03/the-power-of-an-imperfect-didion.html. Accessed 21 Dec. 2023.

Root, Robert L., Jr. "Naming Nonfiction (A Polyptych)." *College English*, vol. 65. no. 3, 2003, pp. 242-256. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3594256. Accessed 29 June 2020.

Roth, Philip. "Writing Fiction in America." *Commentary.* March 1961, pp. 223-233. *ProQuest.* www.search-proquest.com.ezproxy.drew.edu/docview/199513706/citation/C65AF99C7E5D4618PQ/1?accountid=10558. Accessed 27 July 2019.

Russell, John. "'No Guides Need Apply'": Locating the Nonfiction Novel." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 3, Spring 1990, pp. 413-432. *Project MUSE,* www.muse.jhu.edu/article/51259. Accessed 7 Dec. 2018.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. "Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality." *Narrative*, vol. 5, no. 2 ,May 1997, pp. 165-187. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/220107114. Accessed 10 Dec. 2019.

Salisbury, Harrison. "Khruschev in the UN; The Shouts and the Pounding are seen as a *York Times Late City Edition,* vol. 110, no. 37,509, pp. 18. *EBSCOhost*. drew.libanswers.com/chat/session/chat-4c00e6c7560094ff10c60ec1cabb8b2f36bef26aa05e6c4087be63202f6af80c/upload/50007be0-7294-11ee-ba94-0a92197fae5f?instId=3053. Accessed 12 Oct. 2023.

Schmitz, John E. *Enemies Among Us: The Relocation, Internment, and Repatriation of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans During the Second World War.* University of Nebraska Press, 2021. *EBSCOhost,* eds-s-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.drew.edu/eds/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=6c4c06b2-6a38-4960-a420-

58b1d1860f58%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=2955216&db=nlebk. Accessed 7 June 2023.

Scholes, Robert. *The Crafty Reader*. Yale Press, 2001.

Schwartz, Daniel S. "How America's Ugly History of Segregation Changed the Meaning of the Word 'Ghetto.'" *Time,* 24 Sept 2019. *Google*. www.time.com/ghetto-word-history/. Accessed 2 June 2023.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth.* Washington Square Press, 1992.

Sharp, Patrick. "Yellow Peril to Japanese Wasteland: John Hersey's "Hiroshima." *Twentieth Century Literature*. vol. 46, no. 4, Winter 2000, pp. 434-452. *JSTOR.* www.jstor.org/stable/827841. Accessed 3 Dec. 2019.

Shorto, Russell. "John Hersey, the Writer who let "Hiroshima" Speak for Itself." *The New Yorker,* Aug. 31, 2016. https://www-newyorker.com.ezpoxy.drew.edu/culture-desk/john-hersey-the-writer-who-let-hiroshima-speak-for-itself. Accessed 12 Dec. 2019.

Sims, Norman, editor. *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century.* Oxford UP, 1990.

---. "Joseph Mitchell and *The New Yorker* Nonfiction Writers." Sims, pp. 82-109.

Singer, Peter. *Practical Ethics*. Cambridge UP, 2011.

Sontag, Susan. *Regarding the Pain of Others.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.

Stamberg, Susan. "Cautionary Tales." Friedman, pp. 22-27.

Strotgen, Stefan. "'I Compose the Party Rally . . .': The Role of Music in Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*." Translated by Anita Ip. *Music & Politics*. vol. II, no. 1, Winter 2008, pp. 1-14. *Google.* doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0002.101. Accessed 24 Feb. 2021.

Tompkins, Phillip K. "In Cold Fact." Malin, pp. 44-58.

Treglown, Jeremy. *Mr. Straight Arrow: The Career of John Hersey, Author of Hiroshima.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019.

Trilling, Diana. "Capote's Crime and Punishment." Malin, pp. 106-113.

Trilling, Lionel. *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society*. Anchor Books, 1953.

Triumph of the Will. Directed by Leni Riefenstahl, Reichsparteitng, 1935. *You Tube.*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZB99bX0aGoU. Accessed 17 Jan. 2023.

Truman Capote Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library. Accessed 10 Jan. 2020.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five or the Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death.* A Delta Book, Random House, Inc., 1969.

Voss, Ralph F. *Truman Capote and the Legacy of in Cold Blood*, University of Alabama Press, 2011.

Waldmeir, Joseph, and John C. Waldmeir, editors. *The Critical Response to Truman Capote.* Greenwood Press, 1999.

Wallace, Chris, and Mitch Weiss. *Countdown 1945: The Extraordinary Story of the Atomic Bomb and the 116 Days that Changed the World.* Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2020.

"Wealthy Farmer, Three of Family Slain." *New York Times.* Nov. 16, 1959, pp. 39. Malin, *Casebook,* pp. 7.

Weatherby, H. L., and George Core, editors. *Place in American Fiction: Excursions and Explorations*. U of Missouri P, 2004.

Weber, Ronald. "Hemingway's Permanent Records." Sims, pp. 21-52.

West, Rebecca. "Greenhouse with Cyclamens I." West, pp. 3-72.

---. *A Train of Powder: Six Reports on the Problem of Guilt and Punishment in our Time*. Ivan R. Dee, 1955.

White, E. B. "Talk of the Town: Notes and Comment." *The New Yorker.* vol. XXI, no. 27, 18 Aug. 1945, pp. 13. *The New Yorker*. Accessed 11 Nov. 2021.

Whitley, Ed. "The Postmodern White Album." *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society*. Edited by Ian Inglis. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2000. 105-125. *Google Scholar.* https://ddoi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-62210-8_6. Accessed 10 Nov. 2022.

Wilder, Thornton. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. Harper Perennial-Modern Classics, 2014.

Wilkerson, Isabel. "Playing Fair with Subjects." Kramer and Call, pp. 172-176.

---. "Like a Novel." Wolfe and Johnson, pp. 23-36.

Wolfe, Tom and E. W. Johnson, editors. *The New Journalism with an Anthology*. Picador, 1996.

Yavenditti, Michael J. "John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of "Hiroshima." *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 43, no. 1, Feb. 1974, pp. 24-49. *JSTOR*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3637589. Accessed 3 Dec. 2019.

Zavarzadeh, Mas'ud. *The Mythopoetic Reality: The Postwar American Nonfiction Novel*. University of Illinois Press, 1976.

Zehelein, Eva-Sabine. "'A Good Deal about California Does Not, on its own Preferred Terms, add Up': Joan Didion Between Dawning Apocalypse and Retrogressive Utopia." *European Journal of American Studies*. [Online], 6-3 | 2011, document 6, Online since 27 Sept. 2011, connection on 10 Feb. 2020. https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.9324. Accessed 2 Dec. 2019.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aitken, Ian, editor. *The Documentary Film Movement: An Anthology.* Edinburgh UP, 1998.

Agronsky, Martin. "For Fifteen Cents—An Epic!" 30 Aug 1946. Box 966, Folder 4. MssCol 2236. *The New Yorker* Records. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library. Accessed 17 Jan. 2020.

Als, Hilton. Foreword. Didion, *Let Me Tell You What I Mean,* pp. vii-xxxv.

Anderson, Chris. *Style as Argument: Contemporary American Nonfiction*. Southern Illinois UP, 1987.

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.* Penguin Books, 1963.

Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Holquist, University of Texas P,1981.

Baldwin, James. *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985*. Beacon Press, 2021.

Bartkevicius, Jocelyn. "Welcome to our Country: Four Men Toss Around the Nonfiction Football." *Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction*, vol. 16, no. 2, Fall 2014, pp. 147-159. *Project MUSE*, www.muse.jhu.edu/article/5522853. Accessed 13 Dec. 2019.

Bayer-Berenbaum, Linda. *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art.* Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1982.

Bemong, Nele, and Pieter Borghart. "Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives." Bemong et. al., pp. 3-16.

Bemong, Nele, Pieter Borghart, Michel De Dobbeleer, Kristoffel Demoen, Koen DeTemmerman, Bart Keunen, editors. *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives.* Academia Press, 2010.

Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The American Jeremiad*. University of Wisconsin P, 1978.

Berry, Wendell. "Imagination in Place." Weatherby and Core, pp. 71-81.

Bloom, Harold, editor. *James Baldwin: Bloom's Modern Critical Views.* Chelsea House Publishers, 2007.

Blume, Lesley M. M. *Fallout: The Hiroshima Cover-up and the Reporter who Revealed it to the World.* Simon and Schuster, 2020.

Bone, Robert A. "James Baldwin." Kinnamon, pp. 28-51.

Boo, Katherine. "Truth and Consequences." Kramer and Call, pp. 177.

Borghart, Pieter, and Michel De Dobbeleer. "Eulogizing Realism: Documentary Chronotopes in Nineteenth Century Prose Fiction." Bemong et. al., pp. 77-89.

Botting, Fred. *Gothic.* Routledge, 1996.

Branch, Michael P. Review of *Landscapes with Figures: The Nonfiction of Place. Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2008, pp. 153-156. *Project MUSE,* https://doi.org/10.1353/fge.0.0041. Accessed 13 Dec. 2019.

Brim, Matt. *James Baldwin and the Queer Imagination.* U of Michigan P, 2018.

Browne, David. "Tom Wolfe." *Rolling Stone.* 14 June 2018, Issue 1315/1316, pp. 44-49.

Bugliosi, Vincent, and Curt Gentry. *Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders*. W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1994.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Bollingen Series XVII. Princeton UP, 1973.

Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences.* Vintage Books, 1993.

---. "In Cold Blood: An Unspeakable Crime in the Heartland." *The New Yorker*. 18 Sept. 1965. *Google,* https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1965/09/25/in-cold-blood-the-last-to-see-them-alive. Accessed 25 Dec. 2020.

---. Interview. Conducted by William F. Buckley, Jr. *Firing Line.* 3 Sept. 1968. *YouTube.* www.youtube/watch?v=2OnH2WLHxVU&+=25s. Accessed 11 Nov. 2022.

---. "The Muses are Heard." Capote *Portraits,* pp. 74-178.

---. *Too Brief a Treat: The Letters of Truman Capote.* Ed. Gerald Clarke. Vintage International Books, 2004.

---. *Portraits and Observations: The Essays of Truman Capote.* The Modern Library, 2007.

Christensen, Peter. "Major Works and Themes." Waldmeir and Waldmeir, pp. 221-229.

"Civil Liberties Violations: Selective Internment and Exclusion." German American Internee Coalition. *Google.* https://gaic.info/history/world-war-ii-civil-liberties-violations-of-german-americans-and-german-latin-americans-by-the-united-states-government/. Accessed 6 June 2023.

Clark, Roy Peter. "The Line Between Fact and Fiction." *Creative Nonfiction*, no16, 2000, pp. 4–15. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/44362952. Accessed 26 June 2020.

Clarke, Gerald. *Capote: A Biography*. Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 1988.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me.* Spiegel and Grau, 2015.

Cohen, Deborah. *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial: The Reporters who Took on a World at War.* Random House, 2022.

Connery, Thomas B. *Journalism and Realism: Rendering an American Life.* Northwestern UP, 2011.

---. "A Third Way to Tell a Story: American Literary Journalism at the Turn of the Century." Sims, pp. 3-25.

Core, George. "Introduction: A Ball of Golden Thread." Weatherby and Core, pp. 3-12.

Cosandey, Roland. "Some Thoughts on 'Early Documentary.'" *Uncharted Territory: Essays on Early Nonfiction Film.* Edited by Dean Hertogs and Nico de Klerk. Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1997. pp. 37-50.

Davidson, Sara. "A Visit with Joan Didion." Friedman, pp. 13-21.

Dean, Michelle. *Sharp.* Grove Press, 2018.

"Death Penalty in the U. S." *FindLaw.* Thomson Reuters. 2020. https://www.findlaw.com/criminal/criminal-procedure/the-u-s-and-the-death-penalty.html. Accessed 3 Jan. 2021.

Dehner, Kirsten. Interview with Tom Wolfe. *Columbia: A Journal of Literature and Art,* no. 7, Spring/Summer 1982), pp. 141-162. *JSTOR.* www..jstor.org/stable/41806816. Accessed 3 Dec. 2019.

Denevi, Timothy. "Opinion: The Solving of a Joan Didion Mystery Tells us a lot About our own Troubled Era." *New York Times,* vol. CLXXII, no. 59,822, 17 June 2023, pp. A20.

Didion, Joan. *Let Me Tell You What I Mean*. Vintage, 2021.

---. *Slouching Towards Bethlehem.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968.

---. *Where I Was From.* Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

---. *The White Album.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979.

---. "Why I Write." Friedman, pp. 5-10.

Donoghue, Denis. "Eudora Welty's Sense of Place." Weatherby and Core, 131-146.

Double Indemnity. 1944. Directed by Billy Wilder, Universal Studios. Turner Classic Movies, DVD, n. d.

Dougill, John. *Zen Gardens and Temples of Kyoto : A Guide to Kyoto's Most Important Sites.* Tuttle Publishing, 2017.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, a Slave*. 3rd English ed., Joseph Barker, 1846.

---. *Selected Speeches and Writings.* Edited by Philip S. Foner. Abridged and adapted by Yuval Taylor. Lawrence Hill Books, 1999.

Dudley, Marc. *Understanding James Baldwin.* University of South Carolina P, 2019.

Eason, David. "The New Journalism and the Image-World." Sims, 191-205.

Eckman, Fern Marja. *The Furious Passage of James Baldwin*. M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1966.

Elon, Amos. "Introduction: The Excommunication of Hannah Arendt." Arendt, pp. vii-xxiii.

Fadiman, Anne. *Ex Libris.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998.

Ferrell, Keith. *George Orwell: The Political Pen.* M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1985.

Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America.* The Johns Hopkins UP, 1985.

Ford, Nick Aaron. "The Evolution of James Baldwin as Essayist." Bloom, 23-42.

Ford, Richard, and Michael Kreyling, editors. *Eudora Welty: Stories, Essays, and Memoir.* The Library of America, 1998.

Flanagan, Caitlin. "Joan Didion's Magic Trick: What was it that Gave her Such Power?" *The Atlantic.* June 22. *Google.*

www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/06/chasing-joan-didion-california/629633/. Accessed 16 May 22.

Fried, Ben. "James Baldwin's Readers: "White Innocence and the Reception of 'Letter from a Region in my Mind.'" *African American Review*, vol. 55, issue 1 (Spring 2022): 69-85. *EbscoHost.* https://eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds/pdgviewer/pdfviewer?vid=9&sic=1b41328d-578a-4077-a004-73c9cf2b6d1a%40redis. Accessed 18 May 2022.

Friedman, Ellen G. "The Didion Sensibility: An Analysis." Friedman, pp. 81-90.

---, editor. *Joan Didion: Essays and Conversations.* Ontario Review P, 1984.

Gallivan, Martin. "Ephraim George Squier and the Development of American Anthropology." *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 31, issue 2, Spring 2007, pp. 339-343. https://doi.org/10.1353/aiq.2007.0023. Accessed 13 Dec. 2019.

Garrett, George. "Places We Have Come From, Places We Have Been." Weatherby and Core, pp. 25-45.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. "The Fire Last Time." Bloom, 11-22.

Glaude, Eddie S., Jr. *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and its Urgent Lessons.* Crown, 2121.

Grierson, John. "First Principles of Documentary." Aitken, pp. 81-93.

Grover, Jan Zita. "The Girl of the Golden West." *Women's Review of Books.* vol. 10, no. 6, March 1993, pp. 8-9. *JSTOR.* https://www.jstor.org/stable/4021384. Accessed 3 Dec. 2019.

Guest, David. *Sentenced to Death: The American Novel and Capital Punishment*. UP of Mississippi, 1997.

Gunther, John. *Inside Asia.* Hamish Hamilton, 1939.

Gutkind, Lee, editor. *The Essayist at Work: Profiles of Creative Nonfiction Writers.* Heinemann, 1998.

---. *The Fine Art of Literary Fist-Fighting.* Yale UP, 2024.

Habib, Farah, Sara Nahibi, and Hamid Majedi. "Japanese Garden as a Physical Symbol of Japanese Culture." *International Journal of Architecture and Urban Development.* Vol.3, No. 4. Autumn 2015, pp. 13-18. *Google*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259592239_Japanese_Garden_as_a_Physical_Symbol_of_Japanese_Culture . Accessed 26 Jan. 2022.

Halliwell, Martin. *American Culture in the 1950s*. Edinburgh University Press, 2007. *ProQuest Ebook Central,* https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/drewebooks/detail.action?docID=292360. Accessed 26 Feb. 2019.

Hanff, Helene. *84, Charing Cross Road*. Grossman, 1970.

Harrison, Barbara Grizzuti. "Joan Didion: Only Disconnect." *Off Center: Essays by Barbara Grizzuti Harrison*. Dial Press, 1980, pp. 113-137.

Hellmann, John. "Death and Design in *In Cold Blood:* Capote's 'Nonfiction Novel' as Allegory." *Ball State University Forum* vol. 21, no.2, 1980, pp. 65-78. *Google Scholar.* Accessed 22 July 2019.

---. *Fables of Fact: The New Journalism as New Fiction*. University of Illinois P, 1981.

Henderson, Katherine Usher. *Joan Didion.* Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1981.

---. "*River Run*: Edenic Vision and Wasteland Nightmare." Friedman 91-104.

Hersey, John. "Harry S. Truman." *Life Sketches*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1989. pp. 229-253.

---. *Here to Stay.* Bantam Pathfinder Books, 1966.

---. *Hiroshima.* Vintage Books: A Division of Random House, 1987.

---. *Into the Valley: A Skirmish of the Marines.* Schoken Books, 1989.

---. *Letter to the Alumni.* Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.

---. *Life Sketches.* Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.

---. *The Wall.* Pocket Books, Inc., 1966.

Heyne, Eric. "Where Fiction Meets Nonfiction: Mapping a Rough Terrain." *Narrative.* vol. 9, no. 3, Oct. 2001, pp. 322-333. *JSTOR.* 12 Mar. 2019. www.jstor.org/stable/20107261. Accessed 3 Dec. 2019.

History.com Editors. "Miranda Rights." *HISTORY.* https://www.history.com/topics/united-states-constitution/miranda-rights. Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.

"History of Shikkeiem." Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum. *Google.* www.shikkeien.jp/history. Accessed 26 Jan. 2022.

Hobson, Christopher Z. *James Baldwin and the Heavenly City: Prophecy, Apocalypse, and Doubt.* Michigan State UP, 2018. Accessed 2 May 2023.

Hollowell, John. *Fact and Fiction: The New Journalism and the* Nonfiction *Novel.* The University of North Carolina P, 1977.

Homans, George C. "Reviewed Works: *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* by Joan Didion; *The White Album* by Joan Didion." *Theory and Society*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1982, pp. 239–241. *JSTOR*. www.jstor.org/stable/657262. Accessed 16 Dec. 2019.

Howe, Irving. "A Protest of his Own." Bloom, pp. 129-131.

Howell, William. "The Mother of Literature: Journalism and *The Grapes of Wrath.*" Sims, pp. 53-81.

Hughes, Richard T. *Myths America Lives By: White Supremacy and the Stories that Give us Meaning.* University of Illinois P, 2018.

Hull, Anne. "A Dilemma of Immersion Journalism." Kramer and Call, pp. 182-183.

Huse, Nancy L. *The Survival Tales of John Hersey.* The Whitston Publishing Company, 1983.

Jahner, Harald. *Aftermath: Life in the Fallout of the Third Reich, 1945-1955.* Trans. By Shaun Whiteside. Alfred A. Knopf, 2022.

James Baldwin Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library-Schomberg Center. Accessed 4 Aug. 2023.

John Hersey Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library. Accessed 3 Jan. 2020.

Jones, Beau Fly. "James Baldwin: The Struggle for Identity." *The British Journal of Sociology,* vol. 17, no. 2 (Jun, 1966), pp. 107-121. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/589050. Accessed 12 Mar. 2023.

Kakutani, Michiko. "Joan Didion: Staking out California." Friedman, pp. 29-40.

Keiger, Dale. "The Making of Joan Didion: From Fuzzy Facts to Peerless Prose." *Nieman Reports.* 14 Jan. 2022, n. p. *Google.* https://nieman.harvard.edu/stories/the-making-of-joan-didion-from-fuzzy-facts-to-peerless-prose/. Accessed 22 Dec. 2023.

Kenner, Hugh. "The Politics of Plain Style." Sims, pp. 183-190.

Kent, George D. “Baldwin and the Problem of Being.” Kinnamon 16-27.

Kerrane, Kevin. “From *The True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild:* Daniel Defoe.” Kerrane and Yagoda 23-28.

---, and Ben Yagoda, editors. *The Art of Fact: A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism.* A Touchstone Book of Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Kidder, Tracy. “Securing Consent.” Kramer and Call, pp. 176-177.

Kiley, Frederick. “Beyond Words: Narrative Art in Joan Didion’s *Salvador.*” Friedman, pp. 181-188.

King James Bible Online. 2020. www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Sitemap.php. Accessed 24 Oct. 2020.

Kinnamon, Keneth, editor. *James Baldwin: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974.

Klaus, Carl H.. *The Made-Up Self : Impersonation in the Personal Essay*, University of Iowa Press, 2010.

Klinkenborg, Verlyn. “Editorial Observer: Re-reading the Landscape of an Essay by Joan Didion.” *The New York Times.* 29 Jan 2005. *The New York Times*. www.nytimes.com/2005/1/29/opinion/rereading-the-landscape-of-an-essay-by-joan-didion.html. Accessed 15 Oct. 2022.

Kramer, Mark, and Wendy Call, editors. *Telling True Stories.* A Plume Book, 2007.

Lacy, Robert. “Joan Didion: Daughter of Old California.” *The Sewanee Review*. vol. 122, no. 3, Summer 2014, pp. 500-505. *JSTOR.* www.jstor.org/stable/43662887. Accessed 2 May 2022.

Leeming, David Adams. “An Interview with James Baldwin on Henry James.” *The Henry James Review*, vol. 8, no.1, Fall 1986, pp. 47-56. *Project Muse*, https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.drew.edu/article/363935/pdf. Accessed 2 May 2023.

---. *James Baldwin: A Biography.* Arcade Publishing, 2015.

Lehman, Daniel W. *Matters of Fact: Reading Nonfiction over the Edge.* Ohio State UP, 1997.

Lemann, Nicholas. "John Hersey and The Art of Fact." *The New Yorker*, vol. 95, no. 10, 29 Apr. 2019. pp.66-70. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/04/29/john-hersey-and-the-art-of-fact. Accessed 15 Feb. 2022.

Leonard, Sophia K. "Journalism as Artistic Expression: The Critical Response to Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*." *Tulane Undergraduate Research Journal*. 2015. pp. 6-13. www.journals.tulane.edu/index.php/celt/article/view/206/163. Accessed 22 July 2019.

Lester, Julius. "Some Tickets are Better: The Mixed Achievement of James Baldwin." Bloom, pp. 133-139.

Lewis, R. W. B. *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century.* The U of Chicago P, 1955.

Lifton, Robert Jay. *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima.* U of North Carolina Press, 1991.

---, and Greg Mitchell. *Hiroshima in America: Fifty Years of Denial.* G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

Lodge, David. *The Art of Fiction.* Viking Press, 1992.

---. *The Novelist at the Crossroads and Other Essays on Fiction and Criticism.* Cornell UP, 1971.

Lopate, Phillip. "Curiouser and Curiouser: The Practice of Nonfiction Today." *The Iowa Review*, vol. 36, no. 1, Spring 2006, pp. 3-15. *JSTOR*. www.jstor.org/stable/20152115. Accessed 13 Dec. 2019.

---. "James Baldwin, Prophet vs. Writer." *A Year and a Day: An Experiment in Essays.* New York Review of Books, 2023.

---. *To Show and to Tell: The Craft of Literary Nonfiction*. Free Press: A Division of Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2013.

---. *A Year and a Day: An Experiment in Essays*. New York Review Books, 2023.

Luke, Timothy W., *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition*, University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Lustig, Jeff. "Review of *Where I was From.*" *California History*, vol. 82, no. 2, 2004, pp. 66-68. *JSTOR*. https://www.jstor.org/stable.25161728. Accessed 3 Dec. 2019.

McAleer, John, J. "*An American Tragedy* and *In Cold Blood*: Turning Case History into Art." Waldmeir and Waldmeir, pp. 205-219.

McCarthy, Mary. Letter to the Editor: "The Hiroshima *New Yorker." Politics.* November 1946, Vol. 3. Greenwood Reprint Corporation, 1968. *Google*. americainclass.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/03/mccarthy_onhiroshima.pdf. Accessed 16 Feb. 2022.

Macdonald, Dwight. *Masscult and Midcult: Essays Against the American Grain,* edited by John Summers, New York Review Books*,* 2011.

Malin, Irving. "The Album of Anxiety." Friedman, pp. 177-180.

---. *New American Gothic.* Southern Illinois UP, 1962.

---. editor. *Truman Capote's* In Cold Blood: *A Casebook*. Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1968.

Marcus, James. Introduction. Marcus et. al., pp. vii-xiii.

---, and The Staff of the *Columbia Journalism Review,* eds. *Second Read: Writers Look Back at Classic Works of Reportage.* Columbia University Press, 2012.

Martindale, Wight. "Tom Wolfe and the Rise of Donald Trump: A Review of Wolfe's Writings." *Academic Questions.* Dec. 2018, vol. 31, issue 4, pp. 476-488. 13p. Doi:10.1007/s12129-018-9735-z. Accessed 3 Dec. 2019.

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America.* Oxford UP, 2000.

---. *The Pilot and the Passenger: Essays on Literature, Technology, and Culture in the United States.* Oxford UP, 1988.

Maxwell, William. "Why James Baldwin's FBI File was 1,884 Pages." *Publisher's Weekly.* 20 February 2015. https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/tip-sheet/article/65641-why-james-baldwin-s-fbi-file-was-1-884-pages.html. Accessed 20 Mar 2023.

Mead, Margaret, and James Baldwin. *A Rap on Race.* J. P. Lippincott Company, 1971.

Mead, Rebecca. "Cultural Comment: The Most Revealing Moment in the New Joan Didion Documentary." *The New Yorker.* October 27, 2017. www-newyorker-com.ezproxy.drew.edu/culture/cultural-comment/the-most-revealing-moment-in- the-new-joan-didion-documentary/amp. Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.

Menand, Louis. Introduction. Macdonald, pp. vii-xxii.

---. "Out of Bethlehem: The Radicalization of Joan Didion." *The New Yorker.* 24, August 2015. vol. 91, issue 24. pp. 66-1. *The New Yorker.* www-newyorker-com.ezproxy.drew.edu/magazine/2015/08/24/out-of-bethlehem. Accessed 10 Dec. 2019.

Miller, Debra. "I Thought Joan Didion's Article Would Ruin my Life. But Something Else Happened." Op-Ed. *Los Angeles Times.* 23 Jan. 2022. n. p. *Google.* https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2022-01-23/joan-didion-some-dreamers-golden-dream-lucille-miller-california. Accessed 20 Oct 2022.

Morson, Gary Saul. "The Chronotope of Humanness: Bakhtin and Dostoevsky." Bemong et. al., pp. 93-110.

Mosser, Jason. *Participatory Journalism of Michael Herr, Norman Mailer, Hunter S. Thompson, and Joan Didion: Creating New Reporting Styles.* Edwin Mellen Press, 2011.

Muggli, Mark Z. "The Poetics of Joan Didion's Journalism." *American Literature,* vol. 59, no. 3, Oct. 1987, pp. 402-421. JSTOR. *JSTOR.* https://www.jstor.org/stable/2927124. Accessed 3 Dec. 2019.

Nichols, Bill. *Introduction to Documentary.* Second Edition. Indiana UP, 2010, pp. 1-16, 32-41.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History.* U of Chicago P, 2002.

Orwell, George. *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell: Essays IV.* Edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus. Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968.

---."A Hanging." *Google.* https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/a-hanging/. Accessed 23 Feb. 2020.

Porter, Horace. "The Significance of 'Notes of a Native Son.'" Bloom, pp. 69-80.

"U. S. History Primary Source Outline-Overview: Post War United States, 1945-1968." Library of Congress. *Google.* www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/post-war-united-states-1945-1968/overview/. Accessed 7 Nov. 2023.

Passas, Nikos, and Robert Agnew, editor. *The Future of Anomie Theory.* Northeastern University Press, 1997.

Pauly, John J. "The New Journalism and the Struggle for Interpretation." *Journalism*, vol. 15, no. 5, 2014, pp. 589-604. *SAGE.* www.doi:10.1177/146-4884914529208. Accessed 3 July 2019.

---. "The Politics of the New Journalism." Sims, pp. 110-129.

Pei, Mario. *The America We Lost: The Concerns of a Conservative.* An Onal Book: The World Publishing Company, 1968.

The Pentateuch and Haftorahs. Edited by Dr. J. H. Hertz, Chief Rabbi. Soncino Press, 1950.

Phillips, William. "But is it Good for Literature?" Malin, pp.102-106.

Plimpton, George. "The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel." Malin, pp. 25-43.

---, editor. *Truman Capote, in which Various Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances and Detractors Recall His Turbulent Career.* Doubleday, 1997.

Poe, Edgar A. "The Philosophy of Composition." *Graham's Magazine,* vol. XXVIII, no. 4, April 1846, 28:163-167. The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore. 3 Jan 2021. *Google*. https://www.eapoe.org/works/essays/philcomp.htm. Accessed 9 Mar. 2021.

"Ramon Novarro." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia.* 15 Oct 2022. *Google*. www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramon_Novarro. Accessed 11 Nov. 2022.

Rance, Nick. "'Truly Serpentine': New Journalism, *In Cold Blood* and the Vietnam War." *Literature and History*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2002, pp. 78-100. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.7227/LH.11.2.6 Accessed 25 July 2019.

Ricketson, Matthew. "'What Inna Name of Christ is This?'" *Literary Journalism Studies.* Fall 2018. vol. 10, issue 2, pp. 138-161. *Google Scholar*. https://s35767.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/origins138_161.pdf. Accessed 13 Dec. 2019.

Roedigger, David R. *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White, the Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs.* Basic Books, 2018.

Roggenkamp, Karen. *Narrating the News: New Journalism and Literary Genre in the Late Nineteenth Century American Newspapers and Fiction.* The Kent State UP, 2005.

Romanet, Jerome de. "Revisiting 'Madeleine' and 'The Outing: James Baldwin's Revision of Gide's Sexual Politics." *Melius*, vol. 22, no. 1. Spring 1997, pp. 3-14. https://doi.org/10.2307/468077. Accessed 29 July 2023.

Romanoff, Zan. "The Power of an Imperfect Didion." *The Cut.* March, 10, 2017, n. p. *Google*. www.thecut.com/2017/03/the-power-of-an-imperfect-didion.html. Accessed 21 Dec. 2023.

Root, Robert L., Jr. "Naming Nonfiction (A Polyptych)." *College English*, vol. 65. no. 3, 2003, pp. 242-256. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/3594256. Accessed 29 June 2020.

Roth, Philip. "Writing Fiction in America." *Commentary.* March 1961, pp. 223-233. *ProQuest.* www.searchproquest.com.ezproxy.drew.edu/docview/199513706/citation/C65AF99C7E5D4618PQ/1?accountid=10558. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Russell, John. "'No Guides Need Apply'": Locating the Nonfiction Novel." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 3, Spring 1990, pp. 413-432. *Project MUSE,* muse.jhu.edu/article/51259. Accessed 7 Dec. 2018.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. "Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality." *Narrative*, vol. 5, no. 2 ,May 1997, pp. 165-187. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/220107114. Accessed 10 Dec. 2019.

Salisbury, Harrison. "Khruschev in the UN; The Shouts and the Pounding are seen as a Soviet Cry to Change the World. *New York Times Late City Edition,* vol. 110, no. 37,509, pp. 18. *EBSCOhost*. https://www.nytimes.com/1960/10/04/archives/khrushchev-in-the-un-the-shouts-and-the-pounding-are-seen-as-a.html. Accessed 12 Oct. 2023.

Sanders, David. *John Hersey: Twayne's United States Authors Series.* Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1967.

---. *John Hersey Revisited.* Twayne Publishers, 1991.

Schmitz, John E. *Enemies Among Us: The Relocation, Internment, and Repatriation of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans During the Second World War.* U of Nebraska Press, 2021.

Scholes, Robert. *The Crafty Reader*. Yale Press, 2001.

Schuette-Hoffman, Allison. Review of *In the Middle of the Middle West: Literary Nonfiction from the Heartland. Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2004, pp. 137-140. *Project Muse*, https://doi.org/10.1353/fge.2004.0044. Accessed 13 Dec. 2019.

Schwartz, Daniel S. "How America's Ugly History of Segregation Changed the Meaning of the Word 'Ghetto.'" *Time,* 24 Sept. 2019. *Google*. www.time.com/ghetto-word-history/. Accessed 2 June 2023.

Scodel, Ruth. *Listening to Homer: Tradition, Narrative, and Audience*, University of Michigan P, 2002. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, http://www.ebookcentral-proquest.com.exproxy.drew.edu/lib/drew-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3414793. Accessed 24 June 2020.

Scott, A. O. "An Appraisal: McCarthy, Riding into a Blood-Red Sunset." *New York Times*, vol. CLXXII, no. 59,820, 15 June 2023, pp. C1-2.

Scranton, Roy. "Reporter Without Borders." *New Republic*, vol. 250, issue 7/8, 27 June 2019, pp. 48-52. *Master FILE Elite*. ezproxy.drew.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db+fth?AN=137193891&site=eds-live&scope=site. Accessed 20 Nov. 2019.

Sebald, W. G. *On the Natural History of Destruction.* Translated by Anthea Bell. Random House, 2003.

Shakespeare, William. Macbeth. Washington Square Press, 1992.

Sharp, Patrick. "Yellow Peril to Japanese Wasteland: John Hersey's "Hiroshima." *Twentieth Century Literature*. vol. 46, no. 4, Winter 2000, pp. 434-452. *JSTOR*. www.jstor.org/stable/827841. Accessed 3 Dec. 2019.

Shorto, Russell. "John Hersey, the Writer who let "Hiroshima" Speak for Itself." *The New Yorker,* Aug. 31, 2016. https://www-newyorker.com.ezpoxy.drew.edu/culture-desk/john-hersey-the-writer-who-let-hiroshima-speak-for-itself. Accessed 12 Dec. 2019.

Sims, Norman, editor. *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century.* Oxford UP, 1990.

---. "Joseph Mitchell and *The New Yorker* Nonfiction Writers." Sims, pp. 82-109.

Singer, Peter. *Practical Ethics*. Cambridge UP, 2011.

Sinkoff, Nancy. "Fiction's Archive: Authenticity, Ethnography, and Philocentrism in John Hersey's *The Wall*." *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society.* vol. 17, no. 2, Winter 2011, pp. 48-79.

Sontag, Susan. *Regarding the Pain of Others.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.

Stamberg, Susan. "Cautionary Tales." Friedman, pp. 22-27.

Strotgen, Stefan. "'I Compose the Party Rally . . .': The Role of Music in Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*." Translated by Anita Ip. *Music & Politics*. vol. II, no. 1, Winter 2008, pp. 1-14. *Google.* https://doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0002.101. Accessed 24 Feb. 2021.

Thompson, Willie. *What Happened to History?* Pluto Press, 2000.

Tompkins, Phillip K. "In Cold Fact." Malin, pp. 44-58.

Treglown, Jeremy. *Mr. Straight Arrow: The Career of John Hersey, Author of Hiroshima.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019.

Trilling, Diana. "Capote's Crime and Punishment." Malin, pp. 106-113.

Trilling, Lionel. *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society*. Anchor Books, 1953.

Triumph of the Will. Directed by Leni Riefenstahl, Reichsparteitng, 1935. *You Tube.* www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZB99bX0aGoU. Accessed 17 Jan. 2023.

Truman Capote Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library. Accessed 10 Jan. 2020.

Tynan, Kenneth. "The Kansas Farm Murders." Waldmeir and Waldmeir, pp. 129-134.

Ulin, David. "Joan Didion's Slouching Towards Bethlehem." Marcus et. al., pp. 156-163.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five or the Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death.* A Delta Book, Random House, Inc., 1969.

Voss, Ralph F. *Truman Capote and the Legacy of* In Cold Blood. U of Alabama Press, 2011.

Watkins, Mel. "The Fire Next Time this Time." Bloom, pp. 177-182.

Weinman, Sarah. "What Happened to the 'True' in True Crime?" *The New York Times.*vol. CLXXII, no. 59,764, 20 Apr. 2023, pp. A22.

Waldmeir, Joseph, and John C. Waldmeir, editors. *The Critical Response to Truman Capote.* Greenwood Press, 1999.

Wallace, Chris, and Mitch Weiss. *Countdown 1945: The Extraordinary Story of the Atomic Bomb and the 116 Days that Changed the World.* Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2020.

Wakefield, Dan. "The Personal Voice and the Impersonal Eye." *The Atlantic Monthly*. June 1966. pp. 86-90.

"Wealthy Farmer, Three of Family Slain." *New York Times.* November 16, 1959, pp. 39. Malin, *Casebook,* pp. 7.

Weatherby, W. J. *James Baldwin: Artist on Fire.* Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1989.

Weatherby, H. L., and George Core, editors. *Place in American Fiction: Excursions and Explorations*. U of Missouri P, 2004.

Weber, Ronald. "Hemingway's Permanent Records." Sims, pp. 21-52.

---. *The Literature of Fact.* Ohio UP, 1980.

Welty, Eudora. "Place in Fiction." Ford and Kreyling, eds., pp. 781-796.

West, Rebecca. "A Grave and Reverend Book." Malin, pp. 91-98.

---. "Greenhouse with Cyclamens I." West, pp. 3-72.

---. *A Train of Powder: Six Reports on the Problem of Guilt and Punishment in our Time*. Ivan R. Dee, 1955.

White, E. B. "Talk of the Town: Notes and Comment." *The New Yorker.* vol. XXI, no. 27, 18 Aug. 1945, pp. 13. *The New Yorker*. Accessed 11 Nov. 2021.

Whitley, Ed. "The Postmodern White Album." *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society*. Edited by Ian Inglis. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2000. 105-125. *Google Scholar.* https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-62210-8_6. Accessed 10 Nov. 2022.

Wilder, Thornton. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. Harper Perennial-Modern Classics, 2014.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origin of our Discontents*. Random House, 2023.

---. "Playing Fair with Subjects." Kramer and Call, pp. 172-176.

Winchell, Mark Royden. *Joan Didion.* Twayne Publishers, A Division of G. K. Hall & Co., 1980.

Wolff, Cynthia Griffin. "'Play it as it Lays': Didion and the New American Heroine." Friedman, pp. 124-138.

Wolfe, Tom. *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test.* Picador, 1968.

---. "Like a Novel." Wolfe and Johnson, pp. 23-36.

---. "The New Journalism." Wolfe and Johnson, pp. 37-51.

Wolfe, Tom and E. W. Johnson, editors. *The New Journalism with an Anthology*. Picador, 1996.

Yavenditti, Michael J. "John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of "Hiroshima." *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 43, no. 1, Feb. 1974, pp. 24-49. *JSTOR*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3637589. Accessed 3 Dec. 2019.

Zavarzadeh, Mas'ud. *The Mythopoetic Reality: The Postwar American Nonfiction Novel.* University of Illinois Press, 1976.

Zehelein, Eva-Sabine. "'A Good Deal about California Does Not, on its own Preferred Terms, add Up': Joan Didion Between Dawning Apocalypse and Retrogressive Utopia." *European Journal of American Studies.* [Online], 6-3 | 2011, document 6, Online since 27 Sept. 2011, connection on 10 Feb. 2020. https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.9324. Accessed 2 Dec. 2019.

Zinsser, William, editor. *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir.* Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.

VITA

Fredrica Bearg Glucksman
Place and date of birth: New York City, New York 3.16.50
Parents' Names: Esther Becker Bearg and Arnold Bearg
Educational Institutions:

School	Place	Degree	Date
High School:			
Livingston High School.	Livingston, NJ	----------	1968
Collegiate:			
New York University.	The Heights, NY	Bachelor of Arts	1972
Graduate:			
Columbia University	New York, NY	Master of Arts	1973
Drew University	Madison, NJ	Doctor of Letters	2024