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# Expatriate Spaces, Ex-Soviet Places: Narratives of Americans Abroad in Turn-of-the-Millennium Post-Communist Europe

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# EXPATRIATE SPACES, EX-SOVIET PLACES:

# NARRATIVES OF AMERICANS ABROAD IN

# TURN-OF-THE-MILLENNIUM POST-COMMUNIST EUROPE

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Title: Expatriate Spaces, Ex-Soviet Places: Narratives of Americans Abroad in Turn-of-the-Millennium Post-Communist Europe

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The arrival of countless young North Americans into post-Cold War Central and Eastern Europe coincided with a U. S. recession, the collapse of Soviet influence in the former Warsaw Pact countries, and the consequential easing of travel restrictions. I show how overlooked narrative representations of sojourning Western twentysomethings carving out a space for themselves and negotiating their role in a newly internationalized place demonstrate a redefining of the American expat identity as a performance.

Relying on the overarching "monomythic" theory of Joseph Campbell, I investigate how several anti-heroes' literal and psychological journeys in post-Communist Europe are constructed in visual, cinematic, and prose narratives. In historicized and psychoanalytic readings of works by American sojourners John Beckman, Nancy Bishop, D. A. Blyler, Robert Eversz, Jonathan Safran Foer, Jonathan Franzen, Paul Greenberg, Richard Katrovas, Douglas Lytle, and Arthur Phillips, I examine how the transformation of character through the three integral phases of the monomyth—departure, initiation, and return—is revealed. Each of these sojourning writers, whose narratives are set in the unique period between the fall of Berlin's Wall and the fall of New York City's World Trade Center, commemorates and criticizes the "intentionally lost generation" of Americans living in 1990s post-Communist Europe.

In Chapter One, I illustrate how the departure phase relocates protagonists from their "ordinary world" of residence in North America to the new "special world" of post-Communist Europe. In Chapter Two, American sojourners face the past in the form of xenophobia—the condition of fearing "the Other"—as articulated by themselves and the natives of their adopted culture as stereotyping and anti-Semitism. In Chapter Three, youthful sojourners overseas confront their provisional adulthoods, a spirit of the present expressing itself through persons Jeffrey Arnett identifies as "emerging adults" in a condition Alexandra Robbins and Abby Wilner label the "Quarterlife Crisis." In Chapter Four, the collective sojourner considers the aesthetic of a potential future, an unfortunate manifestation of economic and cultural globalization that Benjamin Barber formulated as "McWorld." Chapter Five deconstructs the anti-hero's homecoming, which could be problematic or unredeemed. Reverse-culture-shock and Nancy Bishop's "rex-patriatism" characterized the faulty or non-return of some turn-of-the-millennium American expats.

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My motivation for pursuing this topic came partly from my friend Bernard Offen, a *Sho'ah* survivor I had the pleasure of knowing while living in Poland. Bernard prompted me to write about my experiences abroad, and share what I had witnessed in the interactions between my American peers and the indigenous Europeans. Many thanks to Dr. Janusz Arabski of *Uniwersytet Śląski* (University of Silesia) for first suggesting to me that the idea that earning a doctorate was entirely possible and to Dr. Kazimierz Adamczyk of *Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* (Jagiellonian University) for formally introducing me to the literature of the Holocaust. I am likewise obliged to my comrade Mark Hall, a diehard Arizonian expat in Poland who truly understands my wanderlust; he has actively encouraged me to pursue the subject of this project since its inception. My sincere gratitude goes to my professors from Spring Hill College—Dr. Mike Williams, Dr. Robert MacAleese, and Dr. Alex Landi—who have advocated for my success every step of the way. My in-laws, Denis and Karen Marino, also deserve many thanks for their endless graciousness on my behalf.

Without my loving family, I could not have gotten here. My long-suffering parents are precious to me; they have patiently weathered my own exhausting performances of provisional adulthood and wayward behavior. My affinity for travel and love for lifelong learning stems from them. I credit my persevering brother, Forrest, for reminding me of the quest's significance; he too is a former expatriate. I also value my talented brother Creighton's accomplishments historicizing our family narrative; that and his love for storytelling have been a true inspiration to me.

Expatriate years aside, my sojourn with Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Literature and Criticism doctoral program represents one of the most significant and influential chapters of my life. My decision to come here introduced me to the treasure of my existence: my bride, confidante, and constant companion, Allyson. With her help, this leg of the journey has come full-circle; I dedicate this labor, which demanded so much of my time, to her.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION: DEPARTURE FROM THE ORDINARY

> "The more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily is one able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision. The more easily, too, does one assess oneself and alien cultures with the same combination of intimacy and distance."
>
> —Edward W. Said[1]

In his essay "The World As I See It," Albert Einstein remarked, "each of us is here for a brief sojourn" (8). On a large scale, and in the metaphysical sense that everyone resides in a place for some temporary, but extended, period of time, even if it is the state of existence between life and death, we are all figurative sojourners. On a smaller scale, however, some people move beyond the allegorical, physically relocating themselves from one place to another. Such persons are sojourners who choose not to forever bind themselves to the same geographical places where they were born and raised, and with which they are identified by others. When they find themselves in the company of others similarly persuaded, they constitute a small community of sojourners within a larger host community.

It is a truism that to know where one is going, one must know where one has been—a mantra useful partly for the act of contemplating one's own life journey, and also for the examination of one's place in a community that journeys and sojourns together. The arrival at such a cognition validates and provides the comfort of meaning. My connection to the topic of this dissertation, late twentieth-century American expatriatism, revealed itself to me as one worth exploring several years after the reflection and digestion of what turned out to be a defining chapter in my life-journey: that is, the period when I sojourned in Poland, as an

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[1] In his 1978 critique of the West, *Orientalism*, Said reacted to "a significant quotation from Hugo St. Victor's *Didascalicon*: 'The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is a foreign land' " (Said 259).

American expatriate, from 1993 to 1999. It turned out that the challenge of working, traveling, and residing in Central Europe over such an extended period of time not only enlightened, entertained, and exercised my sensibilities; it also transformed my self-identity in ways that I could not fully recognize until after my eventual return to the United States. Just as I struggled through the process of adapting to expatriatism, I struggled with the difficulties of repatriation. Throughout this analysis of post-Communist Europe in the late twentieth century, I will provide personal, autobiographical details that connect my own experiences to others who sojourned there and recorded their impressions in narrative.

Allow me to begin by situating my own life experiences with this subject. Prior to my departure from the United States, I had never thought of myself as anyone other than a son of the South and native of the Gulf Coast, a virtual neighborhood that reached, in my mind, from New Orleans to, at least, Pensacola. At its worst, I felt that my cultural identity was realistically destined to remain Southern and, in some abstract fashion, American. So, in 1993, after completing a prolonged, six-year baccalaureate, at least three things haunted my under-stimulated psyche and need for direction. Firstly, having once been schooled and boarded in two nineteenth-century Alabama military institutions—retrospectively, it was my first experience as an in-state expatriate—only later to be withdrawn and mainstreamed in a public Mississippi high school, I understood that my past had yet to satisfy my impending sense of wanderlust. Secondly, my present was uncertain, but tentatively open for interesting possibilities. Thirdly, as I had repeatedly transferred from one source of employment to another, each one progressively worse in compensation than its predecessor, I felt increasingly disenfranchised and came to the daunting conclusion that my immediate,

economic future did not appear all that promising.[2] It certainly wouldn't be feasible to afford a year of leisurely back-packing and Eurail train-hopping through the capitals of Western Europe, a naïve fantasy that I had nurtured for six years as an art major. Graduation proved to be a defining moment, and my connections to past, present, and future were calling for a decisive change.

The change I encountered would prove to be in the form of expatriation when, in 1992, I had discovered a bill tacked to the university Department of Foreign Languages bulletin board promoting work as an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher/participant in a sister-city exchange program between Mobile, Alabama, and Katowice, Poland. In 1993, with little hesitation or heed for parental advice, I relocated, like many other Americans of my age group at that time,[3] to the newly opening world of post-Communist Central Europe, where I remained until the end of 1999. Upon arrival, I was summarily quartered in an Upper Silesian, working-class settlement named Giszowiec and taught English (from the perspective of an art major) at a public elementary school in an adjacent district to the north called Szopienice-Burowiec. After a year of working in the Polish primary school system, I was transferred to the postsecondary one, working as an ESL-EAP lecturer for the *Uniwersytet Śląski* (University of Silesia) by day and as an

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[2] It is important to remember that in October of 1987, the U. S. stock market suffered a notable crash (Goodfriend 1-3). In 1990, the U. S. entered the first Gulf War and endured an economic depression until 1991 (Hansen 281). This situation left a number of college graduates, such as myself, unable to make a quick transition into the professional world and in a suitable position to emigrate temporarily for, among other things, reasons of employment. Working abroad sounded pretty good to the numbers of American youth who answered the bohemian call of Prague.

[3] By 1992, the American press had finally caught on to what was happening in post-Communist Europe. For example, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that, in Prague, alone, ten thousand American citizens had registered themselves as legal residents and that there was no way to account for the numbers who were living there illegally (Powers "Land" E1-2). Matt Welch, founder, editor, and owner of the highly successful *Prognosis* –witty because it sounds like "Prague-nosis"—an English-language newspaper staffed by international expatriates in Prague, wrote in 1994, "Everybody gets a kick out of watching the estimates for the number of YAPs (Young Americans in Prague) grow exponentially. The highest number Welch had seen reported, in a Canadian magazine, was "50,000, or about 4 percent of Prague's population."

instructor for private language schools by night. In my down time, I trained some local artisans in the trade of airbrushing designs on garments at their tattoo parlor, began an apprenticeship—in exchange for the airbrush lessons—as a professional tattooist, traveled extensively through Europe (with a concentration in Denmark, the United Kingdom, and the Czech Republic), and mastered my new craft at conventions and foreign studios as an invited guest-artist.

Ultimately, I opened, owned, and operated a series of tattoo studios in Kraków, Poland with three different company names and at two locations, all of which were the first of their kind to ever manifest in the historical market square.[4] With 1993 Alabama far away and in my past, I had been able to transform myself in ways that satisfied my past and present. I had reclaimed and built upon another expatriate kind of identity known formerly—albeit for only two years—from my days at military school, and capitalized on unique financial opportunities largely unavailable to my "present" in the 1990s United States. I would have, naturally, been unqualified to teach at either the primary school or postsecondary level there, much less in the field of English. When I realized that custom, garment airbrushing did not exist in Poland in the way it did for the tourist-ridden Gulf Coast, I seized the opportunity to introduce it. When I realized that Communist-era tattoo shops were grossly under-versed in marketing ability, ignoring an emerging market of European youth ripe for MTV and Western fashions such as body modification, I likewise

[4] In October 1995, I inaugurated "Dragon Tattoo," the first legal tattooing establishment ever to exist in the Kraków *Stare Miasto* (Old Town), on *Ulica* (Street) Floriańska with co-proprietors Jacek Noworyta and Krystyna Michalczyk. In February 1997, the business was reorganized and subsequently reopened as "Studio: ¿Tattoo? Piercing!" with Krystyna Michalczyk. Following the lead of existing establishments in post-Communist Europe such as "New York Bagels" and "American Restaurant," in September 1998, I founded the "Alabama Studio of Tattoo and Piercing" on *Ulica* Grodzka, themed with Native Alabama Indian motifs. It was both trendy and controversial to have business signs in English. Many Cracovian natives were quick to follow suit with imitation-type parlors, also with English business signs in hopes of attracting an international clientele.

moved to exploit that situation to its fullest. My initial quest for self-fulfillment, sidetracked by my journey's particular siren song,[5] had led me to become something even more despicable than an "ugly American"[6] traveler. Like some of the characters in the American-created narratives about this region in the 1990s, I had willingly become a trendy, post-Communist entrepreneur.

At the end of 1999, personal circumstances in Poland had changed and I was eventually compelled to return to the United States, even with the hope of it being a temporary homecoming. While living abroad, I had already fully absorbed an expatriate persona as an integral part of my identity and, as a consequence of my return to the South, experienced a long period of "reverse culture shock"—the culture shock[7] one receives from one's own native culture—and reassimilation issues. Quite simply, I wanted to return to Europe but found it harder, after the millennium, to duplicate the situation I was able to enjoy in 1993. By the end of the decade, the reformed governments of Poland and other former Soviet satellite states were demonstrating their intent to officially join the European Union, by conforming to its laws, tightening their rules on immigration, work visas, and minimum requirements for teaching qualification. Post-Communist Europe's economy had greatly improved too, making living there less of a bargain for Americans looking for one. A stint of self-employment in Biloxi, Mississippi, motivated largely by the desire to repay

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[5] The symbol of Warsaw is a mermaid, a design I had tattooed on my arm in 1994.

[6] The phrase "ugly American" owes its origins to the 1958 book of the same name by William Lederer and Eugene Burdick. It deals with an American diplomat in a fictional Cold War Southeast Asian nation who, although he was considered attractive by American social standards, was indeed "ugly" to the Asian both physically and behaviorally. It has since found common usage to refer to loud, obnoxious American travelers abroad who make no allowances for cultural tolerance, often feeling like their own culture is superior to the one of their foreign host country.

[7] "Culture shock" is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) as "a state of distress or disorientation brought about by sudden immersion in or subjection to an unfamiliar culture." An expat experiencing "reverse culture shock" has exactly the same symptoms—sometimes worse—although it stems from the individual's native culture after having been separated from it for a very long time (Storti 51; Cushner 13; Kruempelmann 55).

some incurred debt from my final international business venture, led me subsequently to Las Vegas, northwestern England, and, in 2002, back to the Gulf Coast in Grand Bay, Alabama. My ongoing journey had brought me full-circle, but I was no nearer to my original goal of reinstating my expatriate condition in post-Communist Europe.

My liberal arts-focused master's program granted me opportunities to visit Europe via graduate-level, study-abroad initiatives. Through Spring Hill College in Mobile and Western Washington University in Bellingham, I spent the summer of 2002 in Ireland, a 2003 semester intersession in England, and the following summer in Poland (2003) negotiating my now relapsed expatriate identity with one as an American student abroad. In a post-9/11 American political climate where hawkish, jingoistic rhetoric—especially in the South—overpowered my unpopular, cosmopolitan[8] perspective, each overseas visit reinforced my disconnect with twenty-first-century American-centric culture and the heartbreak of separation from my fading expatriate identity. My doctoral program led me to western Pennsylvania, in winter a cold and snowy, highland environment of northern Appalachia that couldn't be much more geographically, or gastronomically, different when contrasted with the flat, humid, and sub-tropical Gulf of Mexico region. Once again, I found myself living as an expatriate within my own country. Belatedly, I began to appreciate just how influential the post-Communist Europe leg of my life journey had been. The chronological and emotional distance between my past and present gave me perspective on

[8] By cosmopolitans, I mean those who consider themselves to be world citizens. For example, consider expatriate Wendell Steavenson, author of *Stories I Stole* (2002) and "Gika" (Fishman 79). She was born in New York in 1970, a Generation Xer, grew up in London, lived for several years in late 1990s Tbilisi, the capital of the former Soviet Republic of Georgia, the subject of her narratives, and, as of 2003, lived in Iraq as a foreign correspondent (265). I would also include expatriate Gary Shteyngart, who doesn't like labels like "Jewish writer" or "immigrant writer" but thinks that "global writer" best categorizes authors like him (Shteyngart, Interview). He was born in Leningrad in 1972 and moved to the United States at age seven. As of 2003, he was splitting his time between New York and Rome (Fishman 265).

how awkward the blurry, expatriate identity could be. Of her adopted home,[9] Jazz Age expatriate Gertrude Stein once asserted that America was her home, but Paris was her hometown (Caesar 110). Whether I was pining for a seemingly freer, less complicated existence or simply nostalgic over my "other" cultural hometowns of Katowice and Kraków, I came to the conclusion that, for many, the expatriate condition—as I have come to understand it—can be indelible, like the ink in a tattoo. To adapt a proverb popular, one may be able to remove the expatriate from his adopted culture, but one cannot completely remove the adopted culture from the expatriate.[10]

## Justification for a New Expatriate Study

With so many worthy areas of culture and literature available to explore, why are the narratives written by and about a scene of American sojourners at the turn-of-the-millennium of any significance? For myself, the answer to that question came after completing my doctoral comprehensive examinations on the literatures of the Holocaust and the Irish famines. Even though these are both important and interesting topics, a summer-long visit to Poland in 2004 forced me to realize that I was, in fact, better equipped to contribute something new that combined the representation of the American expatriate condition/experience with the historical reality of late twentieth-century post-Communist Europe in narrative. By 2004, the body of published narratives and short commentary on

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[9] The concept of the "adopted hometown" is one also advanced by Scott Russell Sanders in *Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World* (1993) and discussed at length in James M. Cahalan's "Teaching Hometown Literature: A Pedagogy of Place" (259-60). In *Staying Put*, Sanders asserts, "If I am to have a home, it can only be a place I have come to as an adult, a place I have chosen" (xiv).

[10] In *The American Treasury, 1455-1955*, editor Clifton Fadiman attributed the quotation "You can take a boy out of the country but you can't take the country out of a boy" to American humorist Arthur "Bugs" Baer (1009).

this subject was growing. My primary residency in Poland, and long-term stays from 1993 to 1999 in the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, and England—the first four of which are post-Communist countries—would naturally inform my agency in the subject.

For others, I reiterate that the study of expatriate narratives,[11] in general, reveals an infrequently visited insight about humanity—as implied in the opening Said epigraph—from those who have left their native countries behind, even if temporarily, and pondered it from afar. Expatriates frequently share the assertions of James M. Cahalan's "hometown literature" students and writers—both American and international—who are "rooted to their places" (249). In many cases, the expatriate writer writes about an adopted home rather than the places of birth or upbringing. When this happens, the expatriate has the added ability to view this hometown as a slightly more objective newcomer.[12] Furthermore, where travel literature merely exoticizes the "Other" who is visited, the American expatriate narrative frequently exoticizes—or, highlights the peculiarities of—the American, whether the subject is an obnoxious tourist or an expatriate who flounders in a new environment like a fish out of water.

More than any other literary category, prose narratives of Westerners traveling, living, working, or just loitering abroad—especially on a long-term basis—have influenced my interests, hopes, dreams, and the direction I wanted to take my life from a very young

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[11] Because I am approaching this subject through various cultural theory perspectives, with the word "narrative," I mean to include not only a cross section of conventional literary prose narratives such as short fiction, the novel, and the travel narrative, but also, where applicable, the cinematic narrative and the lyrical narrative. My aim is to explore the "story" of the turn-of-the-millennium American expatriate in contemporary art, regardless of the source.

[12] The BBC's Alistair Cooke and NPR's Romanian Andrei Codrescu are two favorite examples of authors who routinely write about the United States, for example, as outsiders who also live here. Expatriate American writers do essentially the same thing for the countries they write about.

age. As an adolescent, I experienced escape through books about living in, adapting to, and eventually going native in new environments and cultures as did the mongrel Buck in Jack London's *Call of the Wild* (1900) and John Blackthorne in James Clavell's *Shogun* (1975). Later, I would also regard much of fantasy and science fiction to be kinds of imagined expatriate literature, particularly those narratives about people who have migrated away from their aboriginal homes to live and work in either outer space or strange, new worlds. In high school, I discovered George Orwell's semi-autobiographical *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933). Although its protagonist, Orwell, was British, this hobo idea of living abroad as a free, self-made, English teaching vagrant opened the door to an interesting, and even exiting possibility as a lifestyle alternative or educational experience. In remembering why I was drawn to finding some "place" better and more interesting than my original "home," I am struck by Scott Russell Sanders' assertion in *Staying Put: Making a home in a Restless World*:

> Claims for the virtues of shifting ground are familiar and seductive to Americans, this nation of restless movers. From the beginning, our heroes have been sailors, explorers, cowboys, prospectors, speculators, backwoods ramblers, rainbow-chasers, vagabonds of every stripe. Our Promised Land has always been over the next ridge or at the end of the trail, never under our feet. One hundred years after the official closing of the frontier, we have still not shaken off the romance of unlimited space [. . .] In our national mythology, the worst fate is to be trapped on a farm, in a village, in the sticks, in some dead-end job or unglamorous marriage or played-out game. Stand still, we are warned, and you die. (104-05)

As an adolescent, I empathized with this sentiment but, growing up in Escatawpa, Mississippi, I never encountered a single kindred spirit who had fathomed such a blasphemy. Resistance to conformity came at a great price and, to escape a life of erratic shipbuilding industry employment, those who wished to break away from such predictability either joined the service or applied to universities. I put my daydream of tramping around the world on my own terms aside for a while but, as a college underclassman, Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) rekindled my interest. The narrative of protagonist Robert Jordan, an American professor who volunteered to fight fascism in a foreign civil war, helped stoke the fire of my wanderlust. Like the roving characters of my other favorite stories, and those I have now chosen to study, I knew that I would have to make a drastic break with convention and the past to do something different with my life. In my case, it was higher education that proved to be, according to the journey metaphor popularized by mythologist Joseph Campbell, the biggest "threshold guardian" of my chosen path (*Hero* 77; Volger viii). Once through, I was free to follow my bliss (Campbell, *Power* 113), and journey to a new "old" world—or, former U. S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's "new Europe" (Smith, C. A10)—to see what life could teach me.[13]

I submit that certain connotations and outright misunderstandings exist in this country about the designation "expatriate," or "expat" as most contemporary ones prefer to be called.[14] Expatriate culture is, plausibly, a distinct counter culture, but the label is

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[13] Despite Rumsfeld, "New Europe" may become the next popular signifier for the countries of post-Communist Europe. In January 2008, a new television program debuted for the Travel Channel entitled "Michael Palin's New Europe." It focuses exclusively on nations formerly allied with the Warsaw Pact. Michael Palin is known for his previous acting career with the U. K.'s Monty Python comedy troupe.

[14] According to both the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) and the *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* (2006) the word "expat" began circulation in print as a shortened, colloquial form of "expatriate" in the 1960s. Because "expat" is the term that the media and scores of publications (the bibliography merely scratches the surface) consistently use to reference late twentieth-century Americans and Britons living abroad, I propose that it be used, where applicable, in place of the word "expatriate." Not only would the shorter

sometimes misused. In the distant past, "expatriate" has even been used as an insulting epithet. However, the contemporary denotation of expatriatism has absolutely nothing to do with being banished,[15] as may have been the case in the eighteenth century (Harper), or being a former or "ex-patriot," although that frequent misspelling is a homonym for the noun "expatriate." As disenchanted as we may have been, neither I nor any expatriates (hereafter, "expats") I've ever known have strictly defined themselves as persons who have categorically "renounced allegiance," in some official capacity, to their homeland.[16] Indeed, many self-identifying American expats resent the prejudiced assumption that their own love of country is somehow flawed.[17] However, expats would be more likely to reject polarizing views of the world—forcing a choice between one identification or another—and embrace multi-faceted identities. Although an expat is entitled to feel, at times, like an "exile," an "inner-exile,"[18] an "immigrant," an "emigrant," an "émigré," or a "refugee," the term

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"expat" form help circumvent the common confusion with the misnomer "ex-patriot," it better differentiates the newer group from the well-publicized American expatriate writers of the early twentieth-century.

[15] It should be noted that exile is a form of penalty historical to many countries, where citizens can be officially banished from their native lands. Although non-citizens may be legally deported (Pauw 305), and American citizens have the constitutional right to renounce their own citizenship or send themselves into a state of "personal exile" ("Who Belongs?"), the forced exile of American citizens from United States territory is unconstitutional and thus, impossible (D'Amato). This is where banishment and exilement differ markedly from expatriatism, especially American expatriatism.

[16] *The American Heritage Dictionary* suggests that an expatriate, in its second or third meaning, is one who has "renounced allegiance" to his or her homeland. I take issue with this sweeping generalization, since some of the most "patriotic" American citizens are and have been, in fact, expatriates.

[17] Not all American expatriates "went native," or abandoned their Americanness completely. Rather than staging anti-American protests, large numbers of American expatriates could be found around post Cold War Europe working—or loitering—in their own embassies, attending consular socials, organizing election parties overseas, browsing hotel lobbies for English-language newspapers, following professional American sports and music programs by shortwave radio, satellite television, and the fledgling Internet, or simply promoting intercultural studies by teaching American English at foreign language schools or opening American-themed businesses.

[18] Sara Forsdyke, in her introduction to *Exile, Ostracism and Democracy*, claims that "literary critics recognize the category 'inner exile' as a way of describing the alienation of a writer or artist from his native community" (8). It is a loose definition that "can apply to everybody in some sense" and allows readers "to connect those who are physically separated from their country with those who, even while present, suffer a sort of internal exile due to their loss of certain abstract attributes of community membership" (8). Ireland's James

"expatriate," from which "expat" is derived, should not be confused with the former terms. Those are different concepts, and each of them has their own respective fields of study. An exile, for example, is someone who has been actually *forced* to leave their homeland. Expats are merely sojourners in the truest sense of the word, meaning that they are individuals who reside somewhere that is not their original home for a temporary and unspecified amount time.

There is simply no warrant for either the repugnance or hostility that others and myself have received from some non-expat Americans over this naturally atypical, alternative, and transcultural identity. For the financially self-sufficient person, expatriatism, may be more about voluntarily living in another country, and not depending on it for income. Expats are not emigrants but, for those who are there to work in situations of long-term (impermanent) employment—in some cases because they have been invited—there may be a surface resemblance to persons known as migrant workers who are sometimes documented and sometimes not. In my experience, migrant workers, such as Polish tomato-pickers working in Italy, fully intend to return home with their pay after a season is complete. Bona fide expats, more often than not, are not locked into employment requiring unskilled labor, although language teachers, for example, may travel during their off-season: the summer. When one either can or is compelled to obtain both legal and gainful work overseas, such as in a period of economic hardship, chances are the expat-minded person will indeed relocate if for no other reason than convenience, opportunity, or adventure. However, in some cases, spouses of expats do not work and yet still consider themselves to be expats. In some states, cohabitating individuals might be considered

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Joyce (Gray, P.; McCarthy 75) and Samuel Beckett (Eagleton), for example, are two writers regarded as having existed in states of self-imposed inner exile. Both have been constantly called (wrongly, I maintain) "exiles."

married by "common law" if they routinely present themselves to their community as a wedded couple. In some sense, the expat is also an expat if this is the identity she or he wants to assume. I have certainly met people such as study-abroad students in Ireland, who were not expats by the "employment" model but still claimed to be. They may have been embracing what the unnamed husband of "Melissa" in Richard Katrovas's "Letter from Prague" called an "expatriate of the heart" (36). Likewise, there are expatriates who do not embrace the expat persona or label, even though other expats would certainly consider them to be peers, or have rejected it altogether for something else, such as James Joyce did for his preference "exile" (McCarthy 75). Still others, such as the DKE characters "Steve McQueen" and "Marlon Brando" in John Beckman's "Babylon Revisited Redux," would tell Dan Quayle that they were "not ex-patriots [sic]" but instead "*re-patriots.*" They were "Polish Americans, the pride of [their] generation, and [they were] returning to rebuild the country in [their] image" (190).

To reiterate the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s (*OED*) assertion, if one keeps his or her native citizenship but takes up a residence abroad, then he or she is an expat. It is, for sure, a blurry area to define if questions about how much time must pass before one can be considered technically an expat. For example, expat Wendell Steavenson, writing about the former Soviet Republic of Georgia in the 1990s, began her narrative "Gika" with the line, "One autumn day in Tbilisi, Georgia, where I lived" (Fishman 78). Although her piece is non-fiction, her choice of phrase emphasized to the reader that she was not a short-term traveler passing through. No specified amount of time must pass for the meaning of the word "expat" to take effect. Late twentieth-century American expats defined themselves, quite simply, as Americans who lived beyond the legal boundaries of U. S. territory. Only Britain's *OED* accurately limits expatriates and expats to those who live "in a foreign

country esp. by choice" and it is that choice that truly differentiates the expat from its distant cousins such as the exile, someone who has been barred from their country for punitive reasons;[19] the migrant, an itinerant person who moves from place to place; the émigré, a person who has left their country often for political reasons; the emigrant, a person who leaves their native country to permanently settle in a new one;[20] the immigrant, a person who arrives in a new country to settle there permanently;[21] and the refugee, the person who has been forced to leave, usually for some reason of danger.[22]

Even among those who fully appreciate the complexity of expatriatism, there is a tendency for disdain and negative stereotyping toward young male Americans abroad on both sides of the fence. For example, in Jim Sheridan's cinematic narrative *The Field* (1990), indigenous Irish characters exemplify a scorn for the Irish-American "Yank" who expatriated himself to Ireland. But, such contempt can likewise come from one's own countrymen. My parents, for example, did not fully endorse my choices to expatriate. Reading Paul Greenberg's *Leaving Katya* (2002), I sympathized with protagonist Daniel, who returned to the U. S. married to a Russian national after living in the final days of the Soviet Union, when he was constantly badgered by his psychologist father to explain when

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[19] Since American expatriates in the 1990s removed themselves from the United States only on a voluntary basis, the expression "self-exile," perhaps, is more appropriate for American expatriates claiming to be escaping from something. In my own experience, this "reason" was seldom revealed openly with American expatriates.

[20] Both kinds of "migrant," the emigrant and the immigrant, are often confused. To clarify, the emigrant, from the perspective of the country departed, has emigrated *to* another place. The immigrant, from the perspective of the new destination country, has immigrated *from* another place.

[21] Semantically, the word "expatriate" implies no guarantee of permanent settling in the state of relocation, as the word "immigrant" does.

[22] The word "refugee," referring to one who flees seeking sanctuary or asylum, suggests an undesired displacement and can incorporate descriptive traits from both the émigré (such as oppression) and the immigrant (such as permanence) since a refugee sometimes evolves into one of these conditions. Specifically, the underlying motivations for a refugee's actions—as opposed to the expatriate's—seem to be fueled by either necessity or survival rather than some trivial or ideological desire. Some newspapers, though, did call expatriates in Prague "recession refugees" (Welch).

he was going to move beyond his "Russia Phase" (Greenberg 10). I will show later how the residual nature of the expat identity can make life difficult for some expats, even after they have returned to their original homes.

Western popular culture, too, has helped keep certain myths alive. For example, turn-of-the-millennium, mainstream American cinematic narratives, such as Anthony Waller's *An American Werewolf in Paris* (1997), Jeff Schaffer's *Eurotrip* (2004), Mike Bigelow's *Deuce Bigalow—European Gigolo* (2005), Eli Roth's *Hostel* (2005), and Jay Chandrasekhar's *Beerfest* (2006) reinforce the young-American male-in-post-Cold-War-Europe archetype by repeatedly characterizing them as loud, obnoxious frat-boys looking primarily for promiscuity, mayhem, or some reason to demonstrate why Americans are superior and special. Expat writers have also done this with "traveling" American characters. In one-time American expat John Beckman's short story "Babylon Revisited Redux," an imagined, former American Vice-President Dan Quayle appears as the protagonist, a naïve former brother of the DKE—or, "Dekes"—fraternity at DePauw University. In the course of the narrative, Quayle is duped and exploited by two young American expats in Kraków, using their status as fellow Dekes[23] to scam him into promoting their entrepreneurial activities.

There is a real need to distinguish the imagined casual tourist from long-term travelers and expats who are, in my experience, less superficial and more deferential to the new cultures in which they find themselves immersed. The narratives in this study show that being an expat involves an authentic journey of the internal—as well as the external—self.

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[23] Beckman's decision to call the fraternity "Dekes" is witty because the word "deke" means, in hockey jargon, to deceive an opposing player with feigned movements.

The American expat, as represented in narrative, may not resemble the two-dimensional, party-happy wastrel in the exact way mere American tourists in Europe have been represented. However, the characterizations that do exist seem nearly as shallow. The most common of those characterizations portrays American expats in post-Communist Europe as a new lost generation consciously imitating their perception of their famous predecessors, the historical Lost Generation of American expatriates in interwar Paris. For example, in lyrics from her LP *Soviet Kitsch* (2004), Russian-immigrant recording artist Regina Spektor admonishes a "Poor little rich boy" for thinking "all the world is okay." She continues: "You're reading Fitzgerald, you're reading Hemingway / They're both super smart and drinking in the cafés." Much like the persons described by *Centropa Quarterly*'s John Marks in "Lost Generation," I too was one of these "middle-class brats" whose master list of objectives came to include "adventure, sex, art and enlightenment" or "the same lures that drew Americans of another generation to Paris in the 1920's" (par. 1). Especially in the beginning, my presence there may have seemed exceptional to me but, to other observers, I was merely one in thousands who had done the exact thing, thanks to some very influential media-hype.[24] In his novel *The Russian Debutante's Handbook*, expat author Gary Shteyngart's alter-ego Vladimir Girshkin goes to "Prava," in the "Stolovaya Republic"—Shteyngart's literary pseudonym for Prague, Czech Republic—and produces some great satire on the American expat scene in the 1990s, particularly homogenous "white Middle Americans with a fashionable grudge [. . .] bonded by the glue of their mediocrity" (226).

[24] On October 1, 1991, Alan Levy—seasoned American expatriate journalist, editor, and founder of the English-language *Prague Post*—generated a sensationalized hype about post-Communist Europe in his inaugural issue. Levy touted Prague as "the new left bank" (Levy) and inspired thousands of young Americans to flood "the world of Mitteleuropa," or, the "geographical region bound on the western side by the borders of Germany and on the eastern edge by Russia" (Marks). Like many other American twentysomethings, I read the commentaries on this story when it was subsequently picked up and republished by U. S. papers.

Although the protagonists differ in age, the narrative themes of aimlessness, insecurity, and frustration are all ones that late twentieth-century expats in post-Communist Europe share with their American predecessors in Western Europe between the wars. However, when the myths unique to the original, and now archetypal, Lost Generation are systematically transferred to the more recent group of expats—as the media has been guilty of doing—the newer movement loses its distinctiveness. It is right to compare the two scenes, but they were not, by any means, mirror images.[25]

In addition to the drunkard, escapist, promiscuous, and even intellectual poseur stereotypes connected with the expat identity, there are contrasting ones that should be explored. Besides the exploitive, capitalist slant one could use to paint Americans who move overseas for gainful employment, there is the coming-of-age or bildungsroman aspect of the young life-traveler as a lost soul trying to either fit in or make his or her own unique path. It is this concept (in the form of broadly defined encounters) that I want to use to thematically frame the body of my argument. Young American expat characters who reveal the struggle to adapt, mature, or otherwise transform through their periods of provisional adulthood—a much-discussed phase of development akin to prolonged adolescence—are well represented in contemporary cinematic narratives. For example, the American expat characters of Richard,[26] in Danny Boyle's adaptation of *The Beach* (2000); Charlotte, in Sophia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* (2003); Alice and Anna, in Mike Nichol's adaptation of *Closer* (2004); Nola, in Woody Allen's *Match Point* (2005); and Jonathan, in Liev

[25] Yasmin Dalisay, for example, who taught Arthur Phillip's *Prague* in a writing course at Purchase College in Burgos, Spain suggested that in her next attempt at presenting this book to a class, she would like to have her students compare and contrast its central themes and characters of 1990s Budapest with the one ones found in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and 1920's Paris (Dalisay).

[26] In Alex Garland's novel of the same name (1997), protagonist "Richard" is a British expat and the antagonist "Sal" is an American expat. In Boyle's 2000 adaptation, these nationalities are reversed in the same characters.

Schreiber's adaptation of *Everything is Illuminated* (2005) all exemplified the young American living abroad, coping with the adversity of finding personal fulfillment in another culture.

While each of the characterizations I have described can be found in some expat character, none of them are exclusive. Some characters, as represented in narrative, are further along on their journeys than others; some look inward for answers while others look to their environments. In the narratives of American expats in post-Communist Europe, it is the geography or "place"; the persistent, but eroding, Communist culture of their time; and the emerging post-Communist Europeans themselves, warts and all, that give these young American characters—and their unique category—a group commonality.[27]

In the body of this dissertation, I pursue two major tasks. First, I outline, validate, and classify an emerging body of transnational narratives that share similar themes on the same subject matter, place, and time. This space centers on a decade-long, cultural phenomenon of American travelers and expats in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe as a viable, new literary space. The time period of each narrative's setting is limited to the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a new fin de siècle episode better understood as the dozen years between the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Ash 69, Schmemann, "A Jubilant" A1) and the fall of the World Trade Center towers in 2002 (Marks; Hoberman 6). I refer to these texts as expat narratives and they include, but are not limited to,[28] Richard Katrovas's book of short stories, *Prague*, *USA* (1996), set in 1989-96

[27] John Marks, a reviewer for the *Centropa Quarterly*, contends that "though quite distinct, most of [these] works share certain characteristics" such as their settings' location and time period, and the shared themes of emerging capitalism and the Holocaust (par. 3).

[28] In the interest of time and space, I have not discussed these works which should also be grouped with American expatriate narratives set in 1990s post-Communist Europe: Lily Brett's *Too Many Men* (2001), Wendell Steavenson's *Stories I Stole* (2002), Katherine Shonk's *The Red Passport* (2003), Holly Payne's *The Color of Blue* (2005) and Craig Mracek's *A Bohemian Odyssey* (2006).

Czech Republic; Robert Eversz's novel, *Gypsy Hearts* (1997), set in 1992 Czech Republic and Hungary; Jonathan Franzen's novel, *The Corrections* (2001), set partly in 1998-99 Lithuania; Arthur Phillips's novel, *Prague* (2002), set ironically in 1989-91 Hungary; John Beckman's novel, *The Winter Zoo* (2002), set in 1990 Poland; Jonathan Safran Foer's novel, *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), set in 1997 Ukraine; Paul Greenberg's novel *Leaving Katya* (2002), set in 1990-91 Russia; D. A. Blyler's novel *Steffi's Club* (2003), set in 2000 Czech Republic, and Boris Fishman's edited collection of short stories *Wild East: Stories from the Last Frontie*r (2003), all set in the 1990s Glasnost-era Soviet Union and post-Communist Europe.

Second, by presenting my examination of the collective American expat experience in late twentieth-century Europe as three distinct encounters of past, present, and future—borrowing from and taking creative license with the framework of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843)—I demonstrate how the young American expat narrative can be understood as part of a larger life-journey sequence, according to the "monomythic" model of Joseph Campbell. My point in using the monomyth is not to endorse it as an essentialist, hegemonic, or universal metaphor; my intention, rather, is to show how the theory of story-telling, created within a Western tradition and reliant heavily on psychological theory and Carl Jung's archetypes (Volger 2), is still entrenched in—and, apparently rewarded financially by—the popular American consumerist imagination. The model is influential not only with Hollywood screenplay writers, as Christopher Volger indicates was especially true in the 1990s (3), but also in this particular area of contemporary American narrative. Whatever postmodern themes can and will be gleaned from American expat literature, the hero's journey, Campbell's structural contribution, can still be discovered.

To accomplish this without focusing exclusively on Prague, the usual recipient of all the attention, I look at the larger picture by analyzing a cross section of narratives that highlight American expat encounters in a variety of ex-Warsaw-Pact nations. In three consecutive sections, I use Dickens's "spirit" allegory to examine how the roles of the past, present, and future are featured in the convoluted relationship between twentysomething American expats and their post-Communist European environment. Each encounter is a conflict. Their encounters with the past expose a mutually historic xenophobia (the fear and dislike of foreigners). Their encounters with the present are manifested in the complicated transition to an already delayed adulthood overseas. Their encounters with the future reveal their paradoxical resistance to the resolute values of their own native culture—a foreshadowing of economic and cultural globalization. Together, these encounters transform American expats and embolden them to revisit their own places in time: their pasts as American residents, their presents as European residents, and their futures as cosmopolitans, or virtual citizens of both locations at the same time.

In my next chapter, I explore how the protagonists of many expat narratives—in an initiation stage of their journey representative of the past—encounter xenophobia in its many manifestations. After what some considered a humiliating defeat in the Cold War, not all post-Communist Europeans were happy about the young, "compassionate conquerors" (Katrovas 95) and "benevolent" occupiers (Phillips 52) from the United States, and many exhibited openly a longstanding distrust of the Roma, referred to openly as *Cygański* (Gypsies), a highly derogatory appellation. In particular, I focus on the expats' reactions or indifference to—and sometimes participation in—anti-Semitism, indicative of ethnographical hatred; anti-Judaism, indicative of religious hatred; and a little-discussed, flippant attitude toward the historical Holocaust, or, what I will call "passive anti-Semitism."

Post-Communist Europe may be a region haunted by a long, sordid history of prejudice and ignorance—the Soviets, in turn, inflicted much historical revisionism on their satellite states—but American expats, too, bring in their own preconceptions and misunderstandings. Like the Cold War era Communist Europeans before them, representations of post-Communist Europeans, too, have fallen victim to oversimplification and stereotyping in American cinematic and literary narratives. I argue that some American expat writers contribute to the destructive, xenophobic, myth-making process in their own narratives about the indigenous post-Communist citizenry.

In Chapter Three, I explore the ways in which the young American expat's encounter—or lack of encounter—with the present is affected by the struggles of provisional adulthood, the transitory period between late adolescence and full adulthood. Expat twentysomethings, the predominant age group of these narratives' primary characters, battle not only their conflicting senses of cultural allegiance but also their inner senses of purpose, unresolved emotional issues they may have carried even before their expatriation from the United States. Using the generational brand popularized by one-time Canadian expat Douglas Coupland's novel *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture* (1991) and then legitimated though numerous mainstream sociological studies such as William Strauss's *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (1991), Ron Zemke's *Generations of Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace* (2000), Lynne Lancaster's *When Generations Collide* (2002) and, most recently, Polish-Canadian expat Margaret Malewski's *GenXpat: The Young Professional's Guide to Making a Successful Life Abroad* (2005), I refer to the demographic of twentysomething American expats in the 1990s as "Generation X," borrowing that ubiquitous term and situating it abroad.

When young American expats and travelers attempt to find fulfillment in the life changes standard for their social norm—such as graduating from college, getting their first job, or even expatriating—but later find themselves mentally unprepared to accept the challenges and responsibilities of those decisions, it is not uncommon for insecurity and, in some cases, depression to emerge. This difficult period of life for contemporary Americans, usually in their twenties, is called "emerging adulthood" by specialists such as Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, author of *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties* (2004), and Jennifer Lynn Tanner, with co-author Arnett of *Emerging Adults in America: Coming of Age in the 21st Century* (2005), who focus exclusively on this subject. When the suffering of those some perceive as "selfish, slackers" (Arnett, "Suffering" 23), reaches a crescendo, it can result in an age-specific behavioral pattern that Alexandra Robbins and Abby Wilner refer to as a "Quarterlife Crisis" in their book *Quarterlife Crisis: The Unique Challenges of Life* in your Twenties (2001), Robbins's *Conquering Your Quarterlife Crisis: Advice from Twentysomethings Who Have Been There and Survived* (2005), and Wilner's *The Quarterlifer's Companion* (2005).

The "Quarterlife Crisis" phenomenon has become the subject of several copycat publications,[29] received a flood of media attention since its release,[30] and inspired both a Hollywood film and a new American television series.[31] Since it is perceived by its

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[29] For instance, Birgit Adam's *Quarterlife Crisis: Jung, Erfolgreich, Orientierungslos* [Young, Successful, Unoriented] (2003), Christine Hassler's *20-Something, 20-Everything: A Quarter-life Woman's Guide to Balance and Direction* (2005), Jason Steinle's *Upload Experience: Quarterlife Solutions for Teens And Twentysomethings* (2005) and Bess Vanrenen's *Generation What?: Dispatches from the Quarter-Life Crisis* (2007).

[30] For example, see the bibliographic citations I use in this study for Natasha Degen, Keturah Gray, Lisa Marshall, Paul McFedries, Kathlyn Von Rohr, Eliza Thomas and Catherine Toth for a mere sampling of the articles written about the "quarterlife crisis" buzz initiated by Robbins and Wilner in 2001.

[31] In 2006, Kiran Merchant directed the independent film *Quarterlife Crisis* (*IMDb*) and, in February 2008, the NBC twentysomething drama *Quarterlife*, transitioned from online-only "webisodes" to broadcast television. (Strauss, G.).

"victims" to be a legitimate disorder, I argue that it has a place for discussion in the framework of young expat narratives. I contend that the emotionally immature American expat, frequently depicted in narrative as one dwelling on the short term and living on the principle of immediate gratification, is in agreement with the zeitgeist of post-Communist Europe's present. Like the young expats in their quest to transform, adapt and survive, post-Communist Europe too found the courage to change itself via a series of what were called *Sametová revol*, or "velvet" (soft, smooth, and largely nonviolent) political revolutions. However, it soon floundered in the aftermath, struggling to move forward and forge a new identity.

In the fourth chapter I show how the future of post-Communist Europe, as it appeared in late twentieth century expat narratives, was systematically Americanized under the precepts of Western-dominated globalism. As an American small-business owner, I too played a role in selling a new service that was first learned in the United States and then duplicated haphazardly in post-Communist Europe. Where the 1990s American expat, during his or her sojourn, adopted a second identity, born from, but still covered with the ashes of the old, so did post-Communist Europe, as a spirit of what may come, reincarnate as an old world with a new attitude. I assert that the attempt of American-style globalization to replace the remnants of Soviet-style globalization in the region was not only unsuccessful, it was, in many cases, ludicrous. What resulted was not philosopher Gottfried Leibniz's "best of all possible worlds" (228), but rather a mishmash of two economic and cultural traditions, a combination of the worst from both, and this is represented in expat narratives about 1990s post-Communist Europe. I explore a popular culture concept [32] that expats and

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[32] For example, on the digital discourse of the World Wide Web, one Melbourne-based, electronic musical act identifies itself with the moniker "DJ CliCHE (sic) McCommunism," wittily incorporating the

travelers alike—taking their cue from 1990s scholarship such as George Ritzer's *The McDonaldization of Society* (1995), Benjamin Barber's *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (1996), and George Cohon's *To Russia with Fries* (2001)—have dubbed "McCommunism" in post-Communist Europe, a kind of globalization unique to the region, and how it is represented in narrative as a disturbing possible future.

In my conclusion, I discuss the problematic return of the American expat in narrative. Joseph Campbell maintained that all journey tales, if charted as a circular path, and after a period of initiation in a new world, end with the hero's return to the place of departure—the old world—where s/he demonstrates a mastery of the two worlds and a freedom to cross into both (Campbell *Hero* 229; Volger 5). In Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, for example, this return is straightforward; Scrooge awakens transformed in the place he started, wiser, kinder, and with his prize, the freedom to live (see Appendix C). The conventional bildungsroman too, which introduces the reader to a sojourn of suffering and trial, generally ends with an enlightened, educated, or otherwise improved protagonist. But, what if the protagonist is a picaroon, or rogue character; what if the protagonist is a post-modern, anti-hero, as are some of the characters in American expat narratives? In such cases, the journey's hero will sometimes not return whence she or he came. The non-returning expat, having transformed the latest residence abroad into a new "home," may, at the end of the narrative, simply depart on a new journey to another place.

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nickname of Ernesto Guevara in the word "cliché." The accompanying logo is an Andy Warholesque, pop-art depiction of Stalin with headphones with the motto: "In McCommunist Russia, Music Plays YOU" ("DJ"). A website called Nationstates.com—based on satirist Max Barry's novel *Jennifer Government* (2004)—has a farcical "Spotlight on: The Populocratic State of McCommunism," a fictional Utopia whose flag is red with two golden arches crossed by a golden hammer ("Spotlight"). Mario Grech's Internet parody site, *McDonald's: Exposed*, includes an entire "McCommunism" section that, as a joke, draws fabricated connections between the old Communist system and the new presence of McDonald's in post-Communist Europe (Grech).

For the American expats who do return, the results can still be complicated, and conditional. In narrative, these returns are not always represented by a comfortable reintegration with the former, original society. I myself experienced periods of what Elizabeth Kruempelmann (55), Craig Storti (xiv) and others have identified as "reverse culture-shock" on, for example, my returns from years at military school and post-Communist Europe. I was not alone. American military, Peace Corps, and even Mormon missionary narratives, whose subjects sometimes "go native"[33] while abroad, will frequently exemplify the phenomenon of outward resistance to the old culture on their return. A fine example of this pattern can be found in the returned Irish missionary priest Father Jack Mundy, a character in Brian Friel's theatrical narrative *Dancing in Lughnasa* (1990). For American expats, the final variation on the return sequence is something longtime American expat Nancy Bishop explained in cinematic narrative as "rex-patriatism" in her mockumentary film *Rex-patriates* (2004). "Rex-patriates," as explained by Bishop's characters, are former expats who return to their home countries and find that, after some unbearable "reverse culture shock"—the humiliating reentry experience of culture shock in reverse—they cannot comfortably adjust and reassimilate. These former expats then expatriate again—re-expatriate—to the country they recently left. While the narrative itself is a satirical fiction, the idea it is based upon is not. I have several expat colleagues who have "rex-patriated" and I battle the urge to do this myself on a daily basis.

Finally, I suggest some further areas of study for a category of narrative focused on turn-of-the-millennium American expats in post-Communist Europe and how the

[33] This is a term used frequently—sometimes derogatorily—in expatriate circles. According to the second edition of the *Cambridge Idioms Dictionary*, "if you say that someone living in a foreign country has gone native, you mean that they have lost some of their own character because they have started to behave like the people in that country" (Walter). Joyce Osland discussed this phenomenon at length in her dissertation "The Hero's Journey: The Overseas Experience of Expatriate Business People" from 1990 (210).

terminology used to discuss it might be streamlined. My objective is to ultimately undo the academic oversight of this group of narratives by clarifying its possibilities. Instead of venerating what it meant to be an American and a global citizen at the turn-of-the-millennium, the authors of these works have effectively ridiculed it with their problematic, postmodern characterizations. However, this assertion should not be used to invalidate the entire body of work. On the contrary, American expat literature is a useful construct for either research or teaching strategies concerned with the issues of transnational culture, American subculture, identity, bildungsroman, coming-of-age as a provisional adult, the monomyth, Generation X, nationalism, globalization, race and ethnicity studies, and late-twentieth-century history.

# CHAPTER II

## TURNING POINT WITH THE PAST: (EN)COUNTERING XENOPHOBIA

"Superstition, bigotry and prejudice, ghosts though they are, cling tenaciously to life; they are shades armed with tooth and claw. They must be grappled with unceasingly, for it is a fateful part of human destiny that it is condemned to wage perpetual war against ghosts. A shade is not easily taken by the throat and destroyed."
—Victor Hugo[1]

The "cultural phenomenon" (Sudan 11, 14) of xenophobia has been defined differently according to context. For example, in the field of Social Theory, Gerard Delanty and Patrick O'Mahony assert that the term has been used by some "to mean hatred" and sometimes hostility toward foreigners. They are proponents of the word "fear" (163). In the discipline of Conflict Studies, Alan Tidwell describes xenophobia as an "unfounded fear of other cultures" (142). In *The Genetic Seeds of Warfare* (1989), arguing that a combination of environmental factors and certain evolved behaviors have created a propensity to conflict, Paul Shaw and Yuwa Wong define xenophobia as a "fear, hostility, and aversion toward strangers" (78), something like an immune system that can be identified and quantified across the species spectrum. Shaw and Wong's use of the noun "stranger" is more faithful to the word's Greek origin and much more inclusive than the restrictive words "culture" or "foreigner." In *Containment Culture* (1995), Alan Nadel situates xenophobia in the postmodern age and, like some of the aforementioned scholars, agrees that it is more plainly explained as a "fear of the Other" (14; Delanty 163; Sjöholm 48; Tidwell 142; Lechte 221).[2] In my study, xenophobia may be understood as one or any combination of these—fear, aversion, hatred, or even hostility toward the Other, including strangers, foreigners, and other cultures.

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[1] From Norman Denny's translation (1982), Part 2, Book 7, Chapter 3 (Hugo 1206).

[2] With regard to the geography of this study, it seems noteworthy to mention that philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas, who played a role in generating the popularity of the phrase "the Other" (Steinfels B6) in his monumental work *Totality and Infinity* (1961), was from Lithuania, a northeastern European country that is today post-Communist.

Where xenophobia may be, according to hypothesis, "produced through the paranoic construction of the other" (Sudan 7), might it also be considered a "source" of aggression? Although it is not yet considered a clinical phobia,[3] xenophobia is a trepidation that has lead to "disastrous social consequences" and "tragic manifestations" (Jonte-Pace 12-13). Some of these consequences and manifestations, including bigotry, prejudice, racism, and—pertinent to this study—anti-Semitism, have certainly been shown, historically, to harbor aggressive characteristics. The connection here, according to sociobiological studies on animals (Schellenberg 44), is that one possible—and frequent—reaction to fear is aggression[4]. In humans, the "fear-induced aggression" theory (46) finds some similarity with John Dollard and Leonard Berkowitz's—now dated[5]—sociopsychological use of "frustration-aggression theory" to explain aggression "as a response to a threat or annoying stimulus" (51; Pulkkinen 242). Could those annoyed or threatened by the Other be apt to react aggressively? Or, are aggressive manifestations of bigotry and prejudices merely conditioned behaviors passed on from one generation to the next? (Schellenberg 52; Bowser 285; Allport 113-14). Such polarizing questions form a nature versus nurture dichotomy, and the narratives in this study present good evidence for the influence of both.

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[3] Xenophobia is not specifically listed, but the American Psychiatric Association's *DSM-IV-TR* (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*) classifies most other phobias as "Anxiety Disorders" (429-84). Some experts argue that, rather than a psychological issue, xenophobia is instead a " 'social disease' that has deep-seated roots in the unconscious" (Bohleber 332).

[4] Another reactionary option to fear, using this model, would be "to flee" as in Walter Cannon's explanatory "fight or flight" response in animals responding to threat from *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage* (1915, p. 275-77).

[5] Dollard's seminal text on the subject was entitled *Fear and Aggression* (1939) and Berkowitz's was *Aggression: A Social Psychological Analysis* (1962).

In literature, authors such as Victor Hugo—writing in *Les Misérables* (1862)—compared bigotry and prejudices to tenacious ghosts and shadows.[6] Such allegorical ghosts and shadows continued to haunt post-Communist Europe and its visitors at the turn-of-the-millennium. In particular, there was one persistent ghost that—to paraphrase Hugo—clung to the time of pre-Cold-War Europe. In narratives by and about American sojourners in post-Communist Europe, the encounter with that ghost—the Spirit-of-Europe-Past—is a metaphor that bears the persistent scars of the Second World War. For the American sojourner, the external evidence of World War II was already partially discernible in the natural environment, for example, in the empty urban spaces where bombed-out buildings had never been rebuilt, in the abundance of monuments that highlighted the bravery of liberators and freedom fighters, in the visibly imbalanced ratio of women to men, and in the seemingly overwhelming absence of previously abundant multi-ethnicities. However, this ghost's psychological facets—racism, intolerance, and anti-Semitism—were generally realized only after some level of engagement with the post-Communist Europeans themselves. What such displays revealed was xenophobia, an outward fear or distrust of foreigners, strangers, or anyone unlike them—somewhat comprehensible when the list of those distrusted included former German and Russian invaders, but distressing when it included either visiting or returning American and Israeli Jews. It was an archaic, paranoid mentality still reeling from the crises of the twentieth century's first half.[7]

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[6] William VanderWolk, in his *Victor Hugo in Exile* (2006), translated the first line of this famous verse, "*Superstitions, bigotismes, cagotismes, préjugés, ces larves, toutes larves qu'elles sont, sont tenaces à la vie*," as "Superstition, bigotry, hypocrisy, prejudice, these larvae, larvae though they may be, cling to life" (VanderWolk 191).

[7] World War II, the international conflict that encompassed the most horrific years of the Holocaust, lasted from 1939 to 1945 (Davies, *No Simple Victory* 1). However, tendencies toward nationalism and anti-Semitism existed long before Adolph Hitler's coming to power in Europe (Lazare 130; "*The Longest*").

Why I Write: The Trauma Of History

In 1944, my paternal grandfather, a Southerner of mixed Native American extraction, fought in the *Schlacht im Hürtgenwald* (Battle of Huertgen Forest), a "70-square-mile woodland [. . .] just south of" Aachen, Germany (Hobbs, C.). Now buried in the nearby Flanders fields of Belgium, he died of wounds received in action against the *Wehrmacht*, the German armed forces who served a fascist, xenophobic dictatorship that ordered its *SS* (the *Schutzstaffel* or Shield Squadron),[8] *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing units) and Order Police[9] to kill millions for imperialistic goals that included the "purification" of the *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans) or what Nazis called Europe's "Aryan race" with so-called "cleansing actions" of non-Aryans (Dawidowicz 65; Yahil 237, 309; Hilberg, *Perpetrators* 95, 102, 279; Wistrich xii) and a "final solution," the annihilation of all Jews by systematic genocide (Yahil 3, 104 Wistrich 236-239). My father, an infant at the time, never knew his father. In this way, my family was greatly affected by the losses from that war, as were the families of countless others around the world. The trickle-down effect of that event affects me personally, so, it is with an utmost degree of reverence that I approach the subject of the Holocaust in post-Holocaust narratives written by American sojourners.

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[8] In *The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945*, Lucy Dawidowicz explains that the "SS came into being early in 1925, by Hitler's order, as a select corps drawn from SA [the *Sturmabteilung*, or "brown-shirted" Stormtroopers] membership to serve as an efficient, elite, and completely dependable bodyguard for the party's leadership." Under the command of Heinrich Himmler, it was transformed into 'the real and essential instrument of the Fuhrer's authority" (70).

[9] In rural, underdeveloped areas where "streamlined, mass killing […] such as Auschwitz-Birkenau and Treblinka" were not yet built, the "*Einsatzgruppen* and police battalions hunted down Jews and executed them in gruesome pit killings, in forests, ravines, and trenches" with "more primitive 'archaic' methods" (Wistrich xiii). The "men who joined the *Einsatzgruppen*, in contrast to the ordinary *Wehrmacht* recruits, were already committed to National Socialist ideology and thoroughly imbued with the notion that Jews were […] the 'mortal enemy' of the German people and the German State" (Dawidowicz 125).

I therefore consider it a horrendous *understatement* to characterize the collective Holocaust narrative as simply one of gross religious intolerance, racism, and anti-Semitism—to list only a few manifestations of xenophobia, because the reality is so much greater than it appears typed on a piece of paper. Each of those repressive attitudes—perspectives that fueled the aggressive Nazi ideology of hate and mass murder—appears in the rhetoric used in expat narratives to characterize both American expats and post-Communist Europeans alike. I am critical of the American writers in this study who do not clearly demarcate their impressions of bigotry and discrimination from the massacres of the Holocaust. In some cases, both expat and indigenous characters seem to be either under informed or misinformed about the deplorable relationship between fear, hate, antagonism, and history—issues that are hopelessly intertwined and often inseparable. In addition to the textual evidence of nationalistic, homophobic, and anti-Semitic sentiments, many of these characters are also prejudiced against Roma (Gypsies), Africans, and, in some cases, even African-Americans, reinforcing their usual stereotypes, a persistent artifact from the horrors of World War II. I will return to the literary treatment of these groups and their relationship to the crimes of the Holocaust, but first I want to outline how post-Communist Europeans themselves have been and are presently portrayed in American narrative, especially in the context of their encounter with American sojourners.

## (Re)Constructing the Negative Post-Communist European Archetype

In his tome *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), Gordon Allport maintained that "Ethnic prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization" that "may be felt or expressed" (9). Antipathy is a kind of antagonism and is rightly grouped with other

hostile expressions like racism and anti-Semitism. In selected American expat narratives set in the post-Communist Europe, Allport's "inflexible generalizations" are being expressed as negative stereotypes across the board. American characters, Gentile and Jewish, express ethnic prejudice toward European characters, Gentile and Jewish, and vice-versa. Sojourning American writers, it seems, don't always pit their American characters as morally superior to the peoples of their host country. Instead, they level the stereotyping playing field, in many cases, by making *most* of their characters into bigots. Furthermore, they discard certain archetypes once popularized in twentieth-century Cold War narratives, and reinforce new ones devised for the shifting, turn-of-the-millennium paradigm.

By archetype, I mean the constructed generalization of a person's personality or group identity that is used repeatedly as a familiar motif or point of reference for its audience. Carl Jung, in his adaptation of the archetype for his theory of the collective unconscious, traced the idea's earliest uses from the texts of Philo Judaeus (4) and the primitive narratives of "myth and fairy tales" (6). A writer might try to epitomize a particular personality type or group affiliation by using an archetype laden with universalizing and sometimes offensive stereotypes. In their worst incarnations, archetypes become dimensionless, stock characters. For example, the paranoia of the Cold War, a period of ideological conflict between NATO and Warsaw-Pact nations that lasted from 1945-1991,[10] inspired a villainous Communist archetype bent on undermining and discrediting the Capitalist West with subversion and military aggression. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, so went the apparent "usefulness" of that particular archetype for

[10] Most standard reference works—including, for example, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *Merriam-Webster*, the *New Oxford American Dictionary*, and the *American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*—concur that the latter half of the twentieth century's "Cold War" roughly lasted from the cessation of World War II (1945) to the demise of the U. S. S. R. (1991).

American writers. The former enemy had become the newest ally. It therefore comes as no surprise that post-Cold-War literary and cinematic narratives alike retaliated with replacement—and often contradictory—archetypes for the citizens of what Donald Rumsfeld libelously dubbed the "new Europe" (Smith, C. A10). One archetype, for example, is a Central European or Eastern European opportunist or embryonic globalist bent on exploiting and profiting from Western benefactors. Another common depiction is a nostalgic nationalist or neo-fascist who feels her or his country is undervalued and unappreciated. In both cases, post-Communist European characters are frequently clown-like. These emerging stereotypes, especially as presented in cinematic narrative, are ones I have come to regard as "stage" post-Communist Europeans. The descriptor "stage" is a handle used originally to reference the cartoonish, two-dimensional, vaudeville or theatrical portrayals of non-Anglo[11] ethnic groups (Duggan; Dorman 110).

These artificial "stage" post-Communist Europeans are being routinely portrayed in many contemporary American narratives as connivers, crooks, racists, buffoons, or worse. To understand why this is happening, it is helpful to remember that the United States and the United Kingdom have made a tradition of stereotyping Central and Eastern Europeans since the beginning of the Cold War. However, the Western representations of Cold-War-era Soviet Europeans were different from the way post-Cold-War Central and Eastern Europeans are portrayed now. Then, stereotyped characterizations ranged from the intolerably cruel to the hideously pathetic. In fact, there was a highly polarized approach to

[11] Of particular relevance in American history are the "Stage Irishman," discussed at length in George Duggan's seminal work *The Stage Irishman: A History of the Irish Play and Stage Characters from the Earliest Times* (1937) and the "Stage Negro," as outlined by James Dorman in his article "The Strange Career of Jim Crow Rice" (1970).

representing Soviet-era Central or Eastern Europeans: They were represented categorically as either oppressors or those who were being oppressed.

Perhaps one of the most recognizable stereotypes in the category of "oppressor" was the archetypal, cruel Russian spy or villain. Heartless—and sometimes mindless—militaristic Soviet brutes surfaced not only in late, American Cold-War-era pulp-fiction narratives such as Martin Cruz Smith's *Gorky Park* (1981), and Tom Clancy's *The Hunt for Red October* (1984), but also in the cinematic narratives of Clint Eastwood's *Firefox* (1982), Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky IV* (1985) and Peter MacDonald's *Rambo III* (1988), for example, as the stylized incarnation of all things Communist.

Women were no exception to this characterization. Whether it was the ridiculously two-dimensional "Natasha Fatale" from "Pottsylvania" in Jay Ward's animated *Rocky and Bullwinkle Show* (1959) "Tatiana Romanova" from the 1963 film adaptation of Ian Fleming's *From Russia with Love* (1959), or "Anya Amasova" from the 1977 film adaptation of Fleming's *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1962),[12] Cold War-era Eastern European females were frequently represented as little more than machine-like seductresses and spies designed to foil American male protagonists. On the other extreme, the Soviet-era working class of Central and Eastern Europe were stereotyped as lifeless, colorless automatons as in the 1986 television advertisement from the Wendy's restaurant about a Russian fashion show (Ferla C14; "Wendy's"). Elizabeth Goering traces the American representation of the Russian, for example, from the beginning of the Cold War until its end in the early 1990s (35).

[12] Although Ian Fleming was British and most of the Bond films based on his books were British-made, both series were popular with American consumers. Other Soviet-era, female characters with Slavic-sounding names included "Pola Ivanova" from *A View to a Kill* (1985) and "Kara Milovy" from *The Living Daylights* (1987), both directed by John Glen.

Interestingly, that mid-to-late-twentieth-century paradigm of the stereotyped Soviet-era, Communist European has now been transmogrified in the following ways: for example, fictional Central and Eastern European characters once represented as hard, unmerciful Soviet soldiers or KGB agents are now represented as hard, unmerciful, and perhaps more frightening, Mafia soldiers, sometimes known as *Bratva* (The Brotherhood) or *Organisacja* (The Organization). This new archetype can be witnessed in any number of North American-made films since the new millennium; one of the most recent is David Cronenberg's *Eastern Promises* (2007). To demonstrate how prevalent the subject has become in the narrative of Western popular culture, consider the controversial and user-created *Wikipedia*; it has an entry devoted entirely to documenting all known examples of literature, film, television programming, and even video games that depict the post-Communist Russian Mafia in some way. However, the stereotype of organized crime doesn't seem to be limited to Russian nationals in American narrative.

For instance, Quentin Tarantino and Eli Roth's film *Hostel* (2005) is a travel-fiction narrative set in post-communist Bratislava. It is a disturbingly violent and uninformed representation of the American horror/slasher film genre that irresponsibly stereotyped Slavic women as both promiscuous and morally depraved "girls gone wild" desperate enough to do anything for hard, Western currency. The overly sophomoric, sexist, and distasteful plot followed the journey of three naïve, backpacking, American frat-boys who were systematically lured by sleazy European con artists promising sexual fulfillment. Their journey ended in a student hostel operated by a group of thugs who made their living in a trade that—in line with the expression, "snuff film"—can only be described as "snuff-tourism." This snuff industry sold murder-vacations targeted primarily toward wealthy foreigners, who were willing to pay exorbitant fees for the thrill of either killing or torturing

someone—in a top-secret, underground house of horror—without legal repercussion. In effect, these "clients" custom-ordered their victims according to their preferences of gender and nationality through this clandestine, post-Communist Slovakian operation. Surprisingly, this film enjoyed enough box-office success to have spawned a sequel. In 2007, *Hostel: Part II*, also set in the post-Communist Slovak Republic, was released.

American expat narratives do not ignore the Central/Eastern European Mafioso. For instance, D. A. Blyler's novel *Steffi's Club* (2003), set in 2000 Pilsen, is focused on an American ESL teacher named Daniel Fischer who lectures at a Czech university by day and gives private English lessons by night to the female "employees" of an elite bordello. Blyler's heavily romanticized noir view of the expat life includes the compulsory references to absinthe drinking and the indispensable assortment of Gypsies, Russians, and Mafiosi so familiar in the other books in this emerging genre. In this case, there is a clash between the local Gypsy mafia—which is run by a Romanian midget named Tony—and the local Czech mafia. The story ends, not surprisingly for short American novels that resemble screenplays, with a final confrontation between Daniel and the evil Central European mafia characters. The American Daniel, naturally, defeats these post-Communist European "bad guys," rescues the prostitutes, and then relocates to a safer, more civilized place in the Greek Islands (171).

The representation of the working class as a beaten-down, grey-clad, head-scarfed babushka or a soulless, bureaucratic apparatchik transformed after the Cold War into a new kind of monster: a repulsive, ill-mannered, backward, and working-class version of the older "Eurotrash" stereotype—which was a demeaning epithet formerly reserved for wealthy Western Europeans who either expatriated or traveled abroad, particularly to the United States. This stereotype is found in works by American travelers and expats who, since the

turn-of-the-millennium, have begun to publish a growing body of work about their experiences in 1990s post-Communist Europe. The collective "stage"—or grossly stereotyped—post-Communist European is now frequently portrayed by many American writers as either a clown, schemer, neo-Nazi, criminal, or anti-Semite. I want to focus on five narratives, each of them novels, that exploit this trend in their post-Communist European characters. These works are Paul Greenberg's *Leaving Katya* (2002), Robert Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts* (1997), John Beckman's *Winter Zoo* (2002), Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* (2001), and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* (2003).

Greenberg's *Leaving Katya* (2002) is an example of expat narrative that unfairly stereotypes post-Communist men and women, particularly ones who are first-generation American immigrants. It presents them as a morally impoverished people, unable to cope with the changes in their own country and equally inept in their new one, the United States. This depiction speaks to the desire of the protagonist, a complicated, American sojourner also named Daniel, to repair Russian and American relations. He is a Russian Studies major, living in Russia, and interested in all things Russian, including his girlfriend there, Katya. His disappointing failure to make his relationship with Katya work parallels the United States initial infatuation and subsequent disillusionment with the new government of democratic Russia.

Daniel is a difficult character to appreciate; his outlook is pessimistic and he exhibits a subtle sense of constant paranoia. After completing his university degree in Leningrad, Daniel left Katya behind and returned to his family home in New York City. Following the coup of Boris Yeltsin, Daniel arranged to bring Katya over for a visit and was ultimately compelled to marry her so that she could acquire a green card and stay in the country. For a time, Katya even supported Daniel financially when he could not seem to hold down

anything more than a part-time job during a recession. This story is a good illustration of the complications many American expats from this period experienced when they returned and tried to re-assimilate back in to mainstream, turn-of-the-millennium American society. More importantly, however, is that Greenberg depicted the Russian Katya as an obsessive cheater who, with the help of other Russian immigrants in New York, may have pulled an elaborate scam on Daniel, now the victim of the narrative. While it should come as no surprise that the issue of failed romantic relationships[13] with post-Communist European nationals who accompanied American sojourners to the United States is one frequently discussed in expat circles,[14] *Leaving Katya* negotiates the difficulties of a post-Communist European immigrant's attempt to adjust to a radically different Western culture in the 1990s. If read in historical context, this narrative is useful for contrasting the American experience of expatriation to Russia with the Russian experience of emigration to the United States—a didactic, learning tool for understanding and overcoming prejudice. However, without such context, it could leave uninformed readers with the impression that post-Communist European women, like the ones portrayed in Eli Roth's *Hostel*, were simply looking for young, naïve Americans to hoodwink.

Greenberg's xenophobic portrayal of turn-of-the-millennium New Yorkers, unable to fully accept new Russian immigrants either as spouses for their children or tenants in their

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[13] Consider the transcribed comments of New York's Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman of the 1998 U. S. House of Representatives' Committee on International Relations: "A byproduct of our increasingly interdependent globe has been an increase in the number of American citizens marrying citizens of other Nations. It's a sad fact of today's society that a high number of marriages results in divorce and these international marriages are subject to the strains that affect marriages and so as between citizens of the same country. In fact, there may be additional strains caused by the differences in culture in such relationships" (United States, *Markup*).

[14] Quoting late twentieth-century sources, Charles Hall, of Michigan State University College of Law, in a 2004 brief from the *Berkeley Electronic Press* (bepress Legal Repository) regarding domestic relations, claimed that, since World War II (3), there has been a "rise in both international marriages and divorce rates along with increased ease of travel" (1).

buildings, rested on the idea of distrust, particularly of post-Communist Europeans. Robert Eversz continues this theme in *Gypsy Hearts* (1997), but places the idea of a female, post-Communist European scam artist back in post-Communist Europe. Eversz's title is supposed to be witty because it plays on the double meaning of someone with a "gypsy" heart. On the one hand, it refers to the restless, nomadic spirit of the expat protagonist. On the other hand, it refers to what Eversz perceives as the "exotic" Roma heritage of the love interest/antagonist. After living in post-Communist Czech Republic for so many years, one would think that Eversz might have developed a greater sensitivity for the Roma people he portrays in his story.

The narrative reads completely in first person from the perspective of protagonist Nix, an American expat and pathological liar named after Richard Nixon. Nix gets by in post-Communist Prague and Budapest through elaborately planned cons that allow him to live out his perverse fantasies by stealing from both the native population and tourists alike. Like Richard, the British expat protagonist of Alex Garland's *The Beach*, Nix frequently experiences life—in his own mind—as if it were a well-formulated, Hollywood production. In a plot twist similar to one in Frank Oz's film *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (1988), Nix is conned by a female swindler named Monika and gets himself involved in a complicated and reckless liaison. Monika, one of several post-Communist European antagonists in the narrative, is painted as a seductive con artist who swindled unsuspecting American men overseas. Novels such as Eversz's act to reassign the "stage" stereotype of the collective post-Communist Central/Eastern European criminal as an organized group of soldier-like criminals to an unorganized society of autonomous criminals. For example, other post-Communist European criminals in Eversz's novel include disgruntled and corrupt Czech and Hungarian police officers and a band of Romany moneychangers—whom the Central

Europeans insist on calling "Arabs"—who beat Nix to a pulp after he gives them counterfeit American banknotes to change. In his narrative, Eversz tries to level the playing field and avoid the stereotyping blame game by painting all of his characters as flawed, bigoted, or corrupted: American expats, foreign tourists, the indigenous post-Communist European locals of varying ethnicity, and even officers of the law.

The disgruntled Communist or ex-Communist European police officer, as an archetypal figure, has appeared in other, more mainstream cinematic narratives. One key example of this is Polish filmmaker Agnieszka Holland's English-language, Hollywood film *To Kill a Priest* (1989), with Western actors Ed Harris as police officer Stefan; and Christopher Lambert and Tim Roth playing the other leading Polish characters. Another is HBO's *Citizen X* (1995) with actors Donald Sutherland, Max Von Sydow, and Stephen Rea portraying very disgruntled Soviet and post-Soviet Russian criminal investigators in a highly corrupted bureaucracy who must continually threaten and blackmail one another to leverage power (*IMDb*).

John Beckman's *Winter Zoo* (2002) continues the trend of bridging Mafia stereotypes of post-Communist Europeans and other types of independent, criminal activity. The bulk of the narrative is set in Kraków, Poland and its environs. Protagonist Gurney flees there from Iowa because he doesn't want to have to deal with the fact that his American girlfriend has just given birth to his first child. His moral-relativist Polish-American cousin Jane, who is already expatriated there, gives him an open invitation, a place to live and a world full of self-absorbed drama. Given the freedom to explore his hedonistic tendencies, the feckless Gurney wreaks havoc all over the town. For example, he takes a job as a craps table dealer in a local casino, unwittingly helps one of his lovers win big at his station, sleeps with his cousin, moves into the flat of another American expat

burnout that he knows has been murdered—by a mad Polish professor who wants to murder him—sets up a Neverland-type haven for local Polish lost boys, and ultimately organizes a public free-for-all Christmas orgy in Kraków's best hotel. The question of moral depravity in this novel seems to rest not only with the decadent American Gurney but with the Polish community—as represented by Beckman—that empowers him to act this way. *Winter Zoo* also spends some time developing the Polish antagonist Zbigniew, a professor and embittered divorcé who murdered an American expat who tried to sleep with his daughter. The professor is represented as one who formerly had a position of power within the Communist Party—frequently traveling abroad to have affairs himself—and has now lost a certain degree of prestige. He seems to truly resent Americans for what they have come to represent to him after the Cold War.

The non-expat American reader may be more familiar with Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* (2001). This narrative introduces yet another kind of post-Communist European criminal—the cyber criminal. Part of the fragmented narrative of *The Corrections* relates the story of Lithuanian Gitanas and his scheme to rip off American investors via the Internet from his home country. Like *Winter Zoo*'s Zbigniew, *The Corrections*' Gitanas has come to hate the United States. He tells Chip Lambert, the American protagonist of *The Corrections*, "Your country which saved us also ruined us" (110).

As a former expat, Chip is a sojourning character with whom I can identify. He is a forty-year-old, English Ph.D. graduate, disgruntled, and an unpublished writer when he gains employment with the dodgy, former ruling party member of Lithuania, Gitanas Misevičius (the husband of Chip's lover). Franzen even spells out to his English-speaking readers that Misevičius sounds a lot like the English-language word "mischievous." As a public relations consultant, Chip is supposed to lend "legitimacy to [Gitanas's] project"

(116) and hack government websites that publish post-Communist Lithuania's dismal economic statistics. Franzen contributes to the proliferation of the "stage" Eastern European by assigning Gitanas a uniquely post-Communist flavor of sleaze:

> After his party was voted out of power and the Russian currency crisis had finished off the Lithuanian economy [. . .] he'd passed his days alone in the old offices of the VIPPPAKJRIINPB17 devoting his idle hours to constructing a Web site whose domain name, lithuania.com, he'd purchased from an East Prussian speculator for a truckload of mimeograph machines, daisy-wheel printers, 64-kilobyte Commodore computers, and other Gorbachev-era office equipment—the party's last physical vestige. (127)

As a self-proclaimed "governmental entrepreneur" (109), Gitanas created an Internet site that satirized his own county's predicament with the ad line "DEMOCRACY FOR PROFIT: BUY A PIECE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY" and then planted return links in high-end investment sites (127). He defrauded visitors by asking them to donate funds to his party and get streets in Vilnius named after them or have a portrait of them placed in the national gallery and so forth. When Chip asked him if the profits he made from this swindle will really go to his defunct political party, Gitanas responded, "Ok, so my philosophy about that is in transition" (128). Franzen seems to frame his post-Communist European character not only as an unethical embezzler but also as an incompetent buffoon in a hopelessly backward country. Gitanas's part in the overall narrative serves as comic relief, another indicator of the "stage" performance or stereotype. This clown stereotype naturally translates his natural language into a bastardized form of English, much like the recurring "Czechoslovakian Brothers" characters, Georg and Yortuk Festrunk, as portrayed in late 1970s television sketches by Dan Ackroyd and Steve Martin (respectively) on NBC's

*Saturday Night Live*[15] and the vaguely identified, archetypal Eastern European character "Balky" from the 1980s American television program *Perfect Strangers* (*IMDb*).

## Post-Communist Nationalism and Anti-Semitism

In *Nationalism and Social Theory* (2002), Delanty and O'Mahony argue that xenophobia—the fear of the Other—"is not the same as racism [a belief that one race is superior to another; discrimination based on race] or fascism [an oppressive, authoritarian system of organization]" (163), two "isms" seemingly related to nationalism and anti-Semitism. My position is that xenophobia, as a root, contributes greatly to the differing concepts of racism, fascism, nationalism (extreme patriotism; anti-international advocacy of independence), and anti-Semitism (prejudice, discrimination, or hostility towards Jews or Judaism) in Europe. When even one of these emerges in a large way, the others are often not far behind. In "The Presence of the Past" (1995), Werner Bohleber insisted that the apparent links between "Xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and nationalism are complex, multifariously determined phenomena, that can only be explained within the framework of interdisciplinary cooperation" (332). Thus far, I have tried to accommodate Bohleber's assumption by sanctioning fields additional to traditional literary criticism for this discussion.

Although expat and traveling authors are uncommonly nationalists themselves—in the sense that nationalists are those devoted to the cause of national independence or a

[15] Said "Georg" in a thick accent on Episode 1 from Season 3 (1977), "My brother and I are from Czechoslovakia, even though no one can tell. We escaped during the '75 riots, by throwing many rocks at a Russian tank. We ran from it to come to America, but, boy, we gave up many things. Back there, we have a nice, groovy apartment, three cars and a summer house, which the government now owns! [laughs] Back there, we have medical degrees—but here in America we must be salesman for decorative bathroom fixtures. There, we are brain surgeons!" ("Two").

strong national government—they do imagine them in their writings. These fictional characters, often stereotypic portrayals of their post-Communist European hosts, show evidence of xenophobic insensitivity toward the Holocaust. Sometimes intolerance and the aforementioned "isms" are also attributed to the American characters. As suggested earlier, my intention is not to indict post-Communist Europe at the turn-of-the-millennium as a space that was *exclusively* backward or intolerant, even though that aspect did exist; I witnessed such attitudes on a regular basis. I simply wish to show how some American sojourners from this time and place have chosen to represent their characters' encounters with the highly charged subject of neo-nationalism in post-Communist Europe and its historical connections to anti-Semitism. In some cases, they do so with alarming insensitivity. In other cases, some of their xenophobic characters—including the American ones—are ultimately redeemed, albeit slowly and at an emotionally painful price. It would seem that the reading audience, the writer and the fictional characters engage these difficult subjects together and therefore have a difficult time negotiating their way through them.

With the demise of what was supposed to be—but failed to be—an anti-fascist, communistic system of government in Europe, a new incarnation of nationalism has made a space for itself in the socio-political discourse. "Following the initial euphoria after the collapse of Communism, and the subsequent rebuttal of the Communist era," wrote Marius Dragomir in "Curing the Past," some post-Communist European countries embraced a dated attitude of "nationalism [that] has once again come to the fore" (par. 2). One of the more puzzling issues to me and other American sojourning "outsiders," is why, after a history of brutal occupation, abuse, and political domination by nationalistic and imperialistic powers in the twentieth century, certain elements of the new, post-Communist European societies would foment their own "ugly" (Miller, L.), homegrown breeds of radical-right nationalism,

manifested in many cases as either organized skinhead or other neo-Nazi-affiliated organizations (Szayna 122, 138, 143). The formation of these hate groups were, for some, a reaction to the departing outside influence of Communism and the incoming outside influence of globalism, two ideologies equally understood as a challenge to a newly regained sovereignty.[16] Such groups could be seen goose-stepping the streets of Kraków on national holidays and at political events, and I even had the misfortune of tattooing a few of them in my studio—with Polish eagles, not swastikas. Having a grandfather who was killed by soldiers serving the regime of Adolf Hitler, I could not appreciate groups that venerated an infamous, homicidal maniac. The popularity of hate groups disguised as nationalists is documented at length[17] in case studies such as Paul Hockenos's *Free to Hate: The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (1993) and Sabrina Ramet's *The Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe Since 1989* (1999). In line with the spirit of this chapter, the Spirit-of-Europe-Past, Hockenos's third chapter is entitled "Hungary: The Ghosts of Conservatism Past" (105).

Some of the concerns of these groups—the related issues of the Holocaust, anti-Judaism, and anti-Semitism in Europe—were ones that the American expat was bound to encounter at some point in his or her sojourn in late twentieth century, post-Communist Europe. They are boldly reflected in the narratives. In my own experience living among post-Communist Europeans, there was frequently a demonstrable impertinence about the

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[16] Ironically, since the following example should be understood as a globalist import, even groups identifying themselves as the Ku Klux Klan—American's contribution to hate-groups—have made inroads into post-Communist Romania, Bulgaria, and Czech Republic (Hancock par. 17; Tritt 2).

[17] In fact, the revival of nationalism in post-Communist Europe is so discussed that Internet bookseller *Amazon.com* has a "Listmania!" catalog of such offerings for its customers to peruse called "The Extreme Right in Eastern Europe." As of April 2007, this directory—created and maintained by editor of the book series *Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*, Andreas Umland of Kyiv's Shevchenko University—had at least twenty-three listings in English and links to eight other such bibliographies.

particulars of the Holocaust, not from nationalist groups but by ordinary citizens. Such persons were not Holocaust deniers, since they believed it really occurred. However, they were comfortable approaching the topic with an air of what might be construed as "Holocaust flippancy," a phrase I am reluctant to even write. It was an explicitly flippant attitude where either black humor jokes or off-color remarks about the historical Holocaust were not off limits. I assert that what was really happening here is best understood as a casual or passive anti-Semitism, a behavior informed by xenophobia.

Passive anti-Semites are, among other things, persons insecure about their feelings of intolerance. They hope to feel out their audience by rationalizing or softening their real opinions. In my experience, even innocent discussions of Judaism with turn-of-the-millennium, post-Communist Europeans would ultimately lead to the subject of the Holocaust, a topic on which very few of a certain generation seemed to *not* have an opinion. Some, such as the parents of one of my post-Communist European contacts, were quick to inform me that they themselves didn't hate Jews, per se—one obvious reason being that they didn't know any—but often had, for example, a didactic, family anecdote to share about some older relative who had suffered the abusive end of a working relationship with some unnamed Jewish employer or land owner before the war. These people were in a collective state of denial regarding their fear of ghosts—people they had never met. Their passive anti-Semitism was directed towards their parents' collective *memory* of the Jews. Oftentimes, it was difficult to make a distinction between the covertly hateful tones that lay just beneath the surface and the openly flippant ones that did not.

Certain post-Communist Europeans held xenophobic prejudices towards any Americans, in general, because they could rarely predict their ethnicities. They could identify Israeli Jews, for instance, because they often traveled in large groups with an

interpreter and in air-conditioned tour buses, or wore easily recognizable yarmulkes.[18] Americans, post-Communist Europeans knew, could be of any religion or ethnicity, and guilt-ridden property-owners were haunted by lingering suspicions that incoming American visitors might be the surviving descendents of former Jewish refugees, returning to investigate and lay legal claims to their stolen property.[19] In my experience, such conversations could be overheard in hushed tones even on the tramway lines—if I wasn't mistaken by some senior citizen for being a German, it was often for perhaps being an American Jew. This paranoia is brought up repeatedly in the late American expat Charles Powers's *In the Memory of the Forest* (1997), a post-Holocaust narrative written during his years in Poland.[20] "More sensational," he wrote about the rumors that began to circulate after the collapse of Communism, "was the fear, which spread like an outbreak of the flu, that certain houses in the village were about to be claimed—or reclaimed—by families of those who had owned them before the war. The Jews" (177).

After the gossip had a chance to be "circulated and recirculated, embellished and embroidered" (178) as it passed to everyone in the town, such conversations could be heard:

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[18] Postwar Jews of any nationality were right to be apprehensive about their visits to old family neighborhoods and the killing fields of the Holocaust. In Poland, for example, they were often met with hostility (Bauer, *History* 371). Even though World War II ended for Europe in May of 1945, postwar pogroms conducted not by Nazis but Polish villagers and townspeople continued to occur. For example, pogroms with Jewish fatalities, took place in Kraków on 11 August 1945 (Cichopek 221); and in Kielce on 4 July 1946 (Bauer, *Flight* 151). In an article about Kielce's first permanent, public memorial to the pogrom, a conceptual sculpture by American artist Jack Sal, correspondent Ruth Gruber quoted Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel's remarks on the tragedy: "Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka, Belzec, Chelmno [were] German inventions; Kielce was not. Kielce's murderers were Poles. Their language was Polish. Their hatred was Polish."

[19] Zeev W. Mankowitz writes, in his *Life Between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany*, that "even if the returning Jew did manage to overcome his repulsion, his Polish neighbors would not leave him alone, for he would be seen as an accuser, risen from the grave, who had come to remind them of their sins of yesterday—handing over the innocent over to the Nazis and then claiming their property" (28).

[20] Charles T. Powers, who died at 53 in October 1996, served as the Eastern European bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times* in Warsaw, Poland from 1986 to 1991 (Kalfus BR7). In 1997, his post-Holocaust novel *In the Memory of the Forest* was published posthumously (Cowell par. 2); its plot dealt with Poland's mishandling of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust during the years of Communism.

"I hear they're coming back to Hungary," Janowski, the baker, told Powierza and me.

"Who is?" asked Powierza.

"The Jews," Janowski said.

[. . .]

"They are coming to Prague in flocks, too," Janowski went on.

"They are looking up old records. They want their property back." (178)

In another part of the story, a priest looking for a map of a certain old Jewish cemetery is asked by an old record-keeping janitor:

"Are they coming back, Father?"

"Pardon?"

"The Jews. They're coming back? Trying to get their property again? Is that it?

"No, I don't think so."

"Well, I hear that Father. They're going to come back. You know why?"

"No." Father Tadeusz handed him the folder.

"Just what you'd expect. They want their money." (249)

It was no real leap of faith for sojourning American writers to imagine their post-Communist European characters in the 1990s as closet anti-Semites: reluctant to be openly hateful, but certainly indifferent—or perhaps even resentful—to the plight, the tragedy, and the history of European Jewry. In personal conversations with post-Communist Europeans I have known, save certain progressive members of the *inteligencja* (the intellectual class), some unwittingly or indifferently made themselves into easy targets for accusations of passive anti-Semitism. Consider, for example, a recorded exchange between American

correspondent P. J. O'Rourke and his Polish-language interpreter "Zofia," from his travel narrative "What They Do for Fun in Warsaw" (1986). At an "upscale" Warsaw dance club designed for foreigners, a mere three years before the decline of Communism, O'Rourke tried to be funny by noting that there was "a tragic lack of black people behind the Iron Curtain, which explains the dancing." Zofia told O'Rourke, "The only ethnic group we ever had was the Jews and they only dance in circles" (81). Even though O'Rourke may have instigated the callous remark with his own uninformed generalization about African-American dancing abilities, contextually, his comment can be understood as a compliment, even if it was a crude one. Zofia's reply, however, was constructed in a manner that complimented neither Jewish dance moves—the one she referred to is known as the "*Oro*," the "*Horo*," or the "*Hora*" to several Eastern European cultures—nor Polish Jewry.[21] The tone of this actual conversation, as reported by O'Rourke, is indicative of the thinly veiled hostility persistently revealed by either the writers or literary characters connected to this body of narrative.

I find it significant that such examples of prejudice are openly documented by turn-of-the-millennium, sojourning writers—as slightly more objective outsiders—who were able to accurately recreate the mentality of paranoia or greed in their narratives. It is one thing when American expat writers point their fingers at post-Communist Europeans by characterizing them as an Old World people with a penchant for xenophobia. Even if this is a mainstream stereotype, it is still one born out of a record of pogroms that precede and follow the Second World War. It is quite another thing, however, when American writers

[21] With regard to the Roma, the *other* ethnic group that O'Rourke's Zofia forgot to mention, a sizable minority still exists in post-Communist Europe. Perhaps the greatest injury some post-Communist Europeans could do to the Roma was to leave them out of the conversation altogether. Expat Robert Eversz wrote in *Gypsy Hearts,* "even the most casual observer perceived the hostility [that Gypsies] engendered in the Czechs" (68).

depict their American characters—often a reflection of themselves—as similarly uninformed and intolerant on the subjects of race relations, ethnic tensions, anti-Judaism, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, and World War II—all separate but connected issues in the countries of post-Communist Europe. One possibility is that such authors wished to show their own particular journey from ignorance and bigotry to understanding and compassion.

For example, in Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts*, its protagonist Nix can be viewed as one such problematic American character—one with a personal superiority complex and an expressed disdain for Gypsies; the Czechs and Hungarians of the two countries he has invited himself to live in; and, parallel to his namesake President Richard Nixon, persons of Jewish heritage.[22] In one part of his narrative, Nix described a chase scene where he was distracted by "a swarm of tourists looking for the guidebook graves of dead Jews" (49). In this case, the Jewish characters are foreigners, possibly American Jews, who are depicted as irritants to the American protagonist. Scenes similar to one Nix outlined—ones of persons attempting to follow the footsteps of filmmaker Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993)—were common when I lived in Kraków. Tim Cole, University of Bristol's resident Holocaust scholar, has written critically on "Shoah Business" and what the controversial Norman Finkelstein has dubbed the "Holocaust Industry" (36) and the resultant "post-Holocaust tourists"[23] they encourage (*Selling* 182). Much like the irony that American expat

[22] President Nixon was problematic because he outwardly despised Jews but, paradoxically, did much to employ and surround himself with them—of particular note is Henry Kissinger (Dalin 41). Much has been written about Nixon's anti-Semitic remarks on record. In Leonard Dinnerstein's *Antisemitism in America* (1994), Nixon made "scurrilous references to 'kikes' and 'left wing' Jews, attributed leaks of news stories to 'our Jewish friends,' and blamed 'a Jewish crowd in Baltimore' when federal attorneys investigated accusations that Vice President Spiro Agnew took bribes while in office" (232). According to *Jews in American Politics* contributor David Dalin, "uncomplimentary comments about Jews" in his "more than four hundred hours of Nixon White House tapes, made public in summer of 1999, reveal a level of antisemitic prejudice unique among American presidents" (41).

[23] In *Hitler and the Holocaust* (2001), Robert Wistrich also questions "the sensationalist appetite for horror stories […] in the rapacity of a so-called Holocaust industry" (239). Tim Cole explains that, since the Holocaust is in the past and can never be truly recreated for purposes of visitation, there can be "no authentic

authors create when they present a book bemoaning European anti-Semitism with an anti-Semitic American protagonist, so it goes with a field demanding more reverence that has partly condoned the inappropriate "Disneyization" of its own Holocaust exhibits.[24]

The theme of Holocaust survivors and the descendants of Holocaust survivors returning temporarily to post-Communist Europe, as suggested in the quotations from Polish characters in Powers's *In the Memory of the Forest* (1997)—is prevalent in other American narratives by and about sojourners. It is a theme that demands a moniker other than the dated and inappropriate "returning Jew," a term formerly used to denote Diasporic or Zionist Jews who return permanently to Israel (Bruen 22).[25] In the following sections, I explore the sojourning American writer's literary treatment of Holocaust survivors returning to post-Communist Europe to seek, remember, or process their ordeal, the post-Holocaust descendants of survivors visiting the region for the first time, and the idea of "passive anti-Semitism"—a kind of aggression fed by xenophobia, i.e., a *fear* of the other[26]—as evidenced

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'Holocaust tourist' experience." What people experience are either remnants or reconstructions of the event, giving only "a partial" retelling for what John Urry has called "the post-tourist" (*Selling* 182).

[24] In his book *The Disneyization of Society* (2004), University of Leicester's Alan Bryman maintains that the "idea of Disneyization springs from a conviction that there are changes to our social world" that can be exemplified in theme parks such as the Disney Corporation's. "[T]heming, hybrid consumption, merchandising, and performative labour" are all dimensions of some thing, place, or idea that has been Disneyized (vii). In an article for the *New York Times*, "The Holocaust Boom: Memory as Art Form," Frank Rich suggested that the Washington Holocaust Museum, for example, has intentionally put "the occasional Disneyland touches" with things such as "the you-are-there 'passport" (A27).

[25] In addition to the reason already given, using this expression without a place qualifier—as some have done (Kugelmass 323; Mankowitz 28)—would be inappropriate if one would like to distinguish between Jews who left Europe long before the Holocaust and those who left because of the Holocaust. Another problem has been its previous use in old, openly anti-Semitic texts, such as T. T. Timayenis's *The American Jew: An Exposé of His Career* (1888). There, "returning Jew" denotes a Jewish-Christian convert who re-converts from Christianity back to Judaism (175). The expression calls to mind an older one used since the Middle Ages, "the Wandering Jew" (Felsenstein xiii) and by Charles Dickens in both *Great Expectations* (112) and *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (550).

[26] In the preface to his seminal text, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), Gordon Allport suggested that "[p]rejudice and discrimination"—attitudes reflected in anti-Semitism—"may well draw nourishment" from fear (as in xenophobia) as much as does from "economic exploitation, social structure, the mores" or other hypothetical taproots (xviii).

in the dialogues. The first setting is post-Communist Czech Republic in a case study of three short narratives from Richard Katrovas's *Prague, USA* (1996): "Lincoln, Nebraska," "Empire," and "Why We Hate the Germans." In the following sections, I continue my exploration of these themes for post-Communist Hungary in Arthur Phillip's *Prague* (2002); post-Communist Poland in John Beckman's *Winter Zoo* (2002); and post-Communist Ukraine in Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* (2002).

## Xenophobia in Post-Communist Czech Republic: *Prague, USA*

The fear of the other—xenophobia—and the passive anti-Semitism it informs, play heavily in at least three short narratives in Richard Katrovas's *Prague, USA* (1996). Katrovas is a Virginia-born, American poet and Fulbright scholar who has lived in Prague, Czech Republic, since the months preceding the 1989 Velvet Revolution (Katrovas "Biography"). His book, about which very little scholarship exists, is a series of short stories, each written in a different style with unrelated characters, that, according to Czech Jewish author and Holocaust survivor Arnošt Lustig, portrayed "post-revolution Prague" as "Hemingway portrayed Paris of the twenties" (Katrovas, "Reviews"). Like Hemingway's Robert Cohn in *The Sun Also Rises,* Katrovas imagines some problematic Jewish characters.

For example, in his narrative "Lincoln, Nebraska," Katrovas presents Jerry Han, an aging refugee and Holocaust survivor, whose parents left Czechoslovakia at the dawn of the Second World War—with him as a child—and resettled in the United States. Now, Jerry is an old, married man suffering from Alzheimer's disease. In the 1990s, Jerry returns with his wife to the Czech Republic for the first time and something unusual begins to happen. Jerry Han, a naturalized American citizen with an American-sounding name, regresses into

someone named Jiří Hanzlík—an alternate identity he assembles from an assortment of patchy memories and fragmented dreams. Jiří is not one of Katrovas's expat characters. He is presently a visitor to post-Communist Europe, a former Czech national sojourning in two countries—his adopted home and his abandoned home. And, as a sojourner in post-Communist Czech Republic, Jiří is visited by the Spirit-of-Europe-Past.

As the story opens, Katrovas doesn't specify the reason why Jiří's parents left Czechoslovakia, although anyone already familiar with Holocaust narratives would understand this as a foreshadowing. By feeding his readers snippets of Jiří's past in disjointed segments, Katrovas employs the element of suspense as his vehicle for unraveling the protagonist's ethnicity. Jiří's connection to the Holocaust is not clearly revealed until the end of the narrative. Along the way, while looking for old pre-war, childhood friends, Jiří got lost in the city, and approached a near-nervous breakdown as he intermittently spoke in Czech to Sarah—his traveling companion and non-Czech-speaking, second-generation American wife of Scandinavian heritage—and to some Czech locals in English. For instance, on one occasion, he asked a native for a place whose name began with an "M" that sells hamburgers (25). Like some blurred-identity expats of the late twentieth-century,[27] Jiří seemed to be a man living simultaneously in two places and two times while wholly residing nowhere. Only as the narrative progresses does the reader finally begin to receive clues that perhaps Jiří's experiences in World War II Czechoslovakia had something to do with the Nazi occupation.

For example, while pointing to a building from the seat of a Prague taxicab, he yelled to Sarah in Czech, "*Má Maminka, má sestra* [my mother, my sister] . . . I wanted to help, but

[27] A profound multiplicity in one's innate sense of place seems to be one of the possible, emotional side effects of the expatriate condition. Alienation, as was the case for American James Baldwin, is another (Tomlinson 135).

the soldiers had guns . . .” (Katrovas 23). At this point in the narrative, Jiří’s exclamation seemed either like profound cultural disorientation or senile nonsense. Later, after running away from his hotel alone and eating at the McDonald’s on Wenceslas Square (25), he thought he had gone “home,” when in actuality he returned to the Prague apartment building of his youth. When a dark-skinned woman with long, wavy black hair answered the door, the reader is mislead slightly about Jiří’s ethnicity and disposition. Jiří asks the lady, “Who are you . . . You are a gypsy. What are you doing here?” Was Jiří himself a racist, intolerant of the Roma? Was he a Christian Czech? After some dialogue, Jiří shifted mental gears—albeit involuntarily, it appeared—and blurted out, “I ran away . . . I heard them screaming, and I couldn’t bear it, so I ran away . . . Father told me I would have to be the man of the house but I couldn’t stop it. I hid behind the big chair by the window” (27).

At this point in the narrative, the reader has been given enough information to determine that Jiří’s family was one that had suffered some form of persecution in Prague during the war, perhaps a round-up of “undesirables” as depicted in Czechoslovakian Ján Kadár’s 1966 Academy award-winning *Obchod na korze* (*The Shop on Main Street*). Evidently, Jiří was not of Roma extraction. When Jiří finally realized that he had been wasting time at the wrong flat, he ran up one more flight of stairs to the residence of Jitka, a woman he then seemed to remember clearly—as a little girl—from childhood. “Remember?” he asked her in English, “We played on the Square. Our mothers were friends.” The woman at the door was surprised to see Jiří. Unmistakably, the old Jitka remembered the young Jiří but was puzzled. “I thought you were taken away with the others,” she answered him in Czech (Katrovas 28).

The pieces of the puzzle at last began to fall in place as Jiří continued his rant, “I hid a long time, you know. Until the war was over. I ran to Petr, and he hid me in the

basement. He shared his food with me, and then he took me to America. He died, you know [. . .] Have you seen my mother?" Perplexed, Jikta responds, "Jiří, they were taken to Terezin. It is where many were taken in the beginning" (28).

As an expat living in Prague, Katrovas would have been aware of nearby Terezin. Renamed Theresienstadt by the Nazi occupiers, this old, nondescript fortress town (Bauer, *History* 203) underwent a "beautification" project (Levin 295-97). Heinrich Himmler converted it into a "model" Jewish ghetto (Dawidowicz 137; Yahil 301). Even the International Red Cross, upon an invited visit, managed to provide Theresienstadt with a "stamp of approval" (Feig 234) by allowing "themselves to be fooled" by the phony cafés and freshly planted flowers (Bauer, *History* 206). Although Theresienstadt retained its official title of "ghetto" for propagandist purposes, in 1941, SS Colonel Reinhardt Heydrich "transformed [it] into a transient concentration camp" that ultimately funneled "83,000 Jews, including small children, to the extermination camps in the east" (Feig 237-38).

In the final paragraph of "Lincoln, Nebraska," Jitka recalls playing with Jiří Hanzlík as a child when they would "pretend they were famous actors."[28] One gets the impression that Jitka is a bit self-congratulatory about the fact that her "family had always been open-minded." However, she does not invite her old friend in or try to calm him in any way—after all, it appears that she may now be in possession of his family's apartment. She instead calls the police so that, perhaps, "they could help him" (Katrovas 29). Thus ends the narrative, in a note of irony, since the child Jiří had once actively evaded the authorities on his way out of the Czechoslovakian nightmare of the late 1930s.[29] All these years, he had

[28] For what particular reason Katrovas chose the name "Jiří Hanzlík" for his protagonist is unknown but a *Google* Internet search indicates several references to an actual actor by this name who played a minor role in a 1971 Czech television series entitled *F.L. Věk* ("Jiří").

[29] The Munich agreement, made at a conference in Munich on September 29, 1938, awarded Adolf Hitler the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia and allowed him to temporarily avert war via its annexation

remained "uncaught." Had Jiří's childhood experiences in Europe become repressed memories, only to be restimulated on his first visit back? Or, did the effects of his Alzheimer's disease (21) "dislodge" and reshuffle his fragmented memories? If Jiří had processed the trauma at some point in his life, perhaps the memory of *that* no longer existed. At the turn-of-the-millennium, on his first return to the historical land of his birth, the wandering Jiří found his destination. This time he *was* caught, not by the Nazis but by his encounter with the nightmarish past he—and many like him—had left behind. American expatriate James Baldwin expanded upon Irish expatriate James Joyce's famous sentiment "history is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" ("Stranger" 34). Baldwin suggested that history was "a nightmare from which no one can awaken" ("The Price" 81) and added elsewhere, "People are trapped in history, and history is trapped in them" ("Stranger" 163).

In "Lincoln, Nebraska," the sojourner Jiří and his parents were driven out of their country by people who feared their presence as "Others" and would soon react aggressively. In this story, Jiří had two realities or two lives. One reality was his life as Jerry, a life he knew, remembered, and was comfortable with. He identified himself as an American from Lincoln, Nebraska with a Scandinavian wife. Jerry's "Other" reality as Jiří was one that was hidden from him, a former world of fear he was forgetting and afraid to forget. Perhaps Jerry had been terrified to confront this Other, previous existence until he was very old. Were Jerry's bittersweet memories of the childhood Jiří ones he had repressed before his ability to remember was affected? Were the handful of fragments that Jerry/Jiří was able to recall all that were left? At a point in his life where Jerry/Jiří would like to remember,

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(Dawidowicz 133; Lee, S. 342). After the pact, which also made territorial changes to Hungary, "about three thousand Jews were expelled and left destitute in the new border areas" (Yahil 109).

confront, process, and heal, he may now no longer be able to do so. It is apparent that Jerry's Other remembrance of self will soon be lost to him and it represents a double tragedy: As a living witness to history, when the memory of Jiří is completely lost to Jerry's Alzheimer's disease, so will his complete testimony of those atrocities be lost to the past. In this narrative, Katrovas's take on the past strongly urges the mantra "never forget." To forget is something we should all fear.

If Katrovas used "Lincoln, Nebraska" as a means of resurrecting the already established theme of surviving, Jewish-American refugees returning to Central and Eastern Europe,[30] he took the opportunity in his short story "Empire" to utilize another theme common to this body of narrative—the North American descendants of Central and Eastern European survivors and refugees to the lands of post-Communist Europe. In this narrative, he switches locations from the Czech Republic to Austria. Though not post-Communist, Austria is in the heart of Central Europe and played a significant role in the creation of Communist Europe through its alliance with Nazi Germany. The protagonist of "Empire," a North American expat of Czech heritage who has relocated to the Czech Republic, visits Austria. She thinks Austria is a joke—a shallow nation that, like its people, appears beautiful on the outside and lifeless on the inside. It seems to be unapologetic about its role in the Holocaust. Once again, Katrovas reprised the shadows of World War II as a bitter, underlying encounter for the reader and characters; it is the Spirit-of-Europe-Past. Katrovas's decision to stereotype the Germans as oddly dressed, two-dimensional and

[30] For example, eight years earlier, Polish director Krzysztof Kieślowski had directed a *very* similar "story about a mature, Jewish woman who had left Nazi-occupied Central Europe—in this case, Poland—during World War II as a child. *Dekalog, Osiem* [*The Eighth Commandment*], from 1988, depicts 'Elżbieta' as a U. S. citizen who is visiting Poland to find and confront the lady who had once saved, then betrayed her. The manner of her escape had been quite traumatic as she was moved along from house to house by Catholic Poles aiding the resistance who didn't want to chance getting caught aiding a Jew. During Elżbieta's return, she jumps out of a car and 'loses' her companion host as she tries to locate the very block of flats she remembered hiding in, if only briefly" before her departure (Hobbs, B. "A Contortion").

soulless creatures may be his attempt to echo what Austrian Nazis once did to its own Jewish population.

In the story "Empire," a "healthy looking woman" (Katrovas 52) from North America[31] who has moved from place to place before finally settling in Prague, made an unusual visit to Innsbruck, a quaint little village in Tirol, a western region of Austria. Her name is never revealed and, as in "Lincoln, Nebraska," neither is her true ethnicity. The narrative is epistolatory, unfolding its plot as an unsigned confession to the unnamed protagonist's grandmother, whom she affectionately referred to as *Babičko* (Granny). The reader learns that *Babičko* speaks Czech, but does not know if she is Christian or Jewish and what her connection to the Holocaust would have been, if any. If, as is only hinted at (Katrovas 55), *Babičko* lived in the Czechoslovakian region of Bohemia, where Prague is located, she could have very well been a "Czech-speaking Jew" (Rozenblit 186).[32]

The protagonist was, at the time of her writing, in the final stages of a terminal illness that could not be "beat" (50). Unbeknownst to her American husband, whom she had sent away so that this written declaration could be made in privacy, she had found in Innsbruck the "perfect place from which to pass the earth" (49). It was "perfect for death," she wrote, because of its "pure lack of life" and "absence of *duch*" (51), a Czech word meaning spirit or soul.

It was not only the region of Tirol, a place that *Babičko* visited as a child (49) and the protagonist's husband referred to sarcastically as "Yodelsburg" (52), that was so weird to

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[31] Clues in the text indicate that she may be either from or a former resident of Vancouver, Canada (Katrovas 49, 55).

[32] Holocaust survivor and author Arnošt Lustig, for example, is a Czech-speaking Jew as was Ladislav Grosman, author of *Obchod na korze* (The Shop on Main Street). Jews in other regions of Czechoslovakia would have also spoken German (Bohemia and Moravia), Hungarian, (Slovakia), and Yiddish (Eastern Slovakia) in addition to understanding Czech (Rozenblit 186).

her; it was the "whole country." The protagonist seemed quick to paint Austria with broad, sweeping strokes. The inhabitants, she reasoned, were historically "German and not German. They were occupied by the Nazis, and were themselves the most passionate anti-Semites" (52). Perhaps her knowledge of the Austrians' role in Hitler's Final Solution, is another clue to her ethnicity. Perhaps *Babičko* visited Austria as a child in an escape from trouble-ridden Czechoslovakia. The protagonist's understanding of history was soon put to the test when, while drinking in a local pub, she was invited by a young Austrian professor to join his mixed group of American and English-speaking local students.

There is a notable effort on the part of the Americans in this story—one is described as a "sprightly coed, probably from Georgia" (53)—to sweep the topic of the Holocaust under the rug. The group had been debating the finer points of a lecture they had recently attended by an American expat writer who spoke about "being a Jew in Vienna for twenty years." One of the students, a young woman, commented, "it was 'ghastly' that her summer-school-abroad program had invited someone to talk on such a sensitive subject. Weren't they being bad guests? Didn't the residents of this clean, quiet, pretty little city deserve not to be embarrassed in such a fashion?" When the protagonist disrupted the direction of this conversation by asking the professor if there were "many former Nazis" in Innsbruck, he answered, "A lot of these old guys walking their dogs on the promenade along the river must have served as Nazis. Most of the Death Camps were run by men from this part of Austria, men like Stragl (sic) at Treblinka" (52).

Here, Katrovas reveals his partial knowledge of an aspect of the war sensitive to Austrians who are embarrassed by their country's involvement in the Holocaust and try to either downplay or rationalize it. It is true that Franz Stangl—misspelled "Stragl" by either Katrovas or his publisher—was an Austrian, Nazi SS officer who began his career as a

policeman and ultimately became the commandant of both the Sobibór and Treblinka extermination camps in Poland (Yahil 361; Pauley 491). By the end of his speech, the tone of Katrovas's unnamed Austrian professor would parallel what some historians, such as Columbia University's István Deák, have said about the "large number of Austrians among the officers in charge of the final Solution, such as […] Franz Stangl" and others. In *Essays on Hitler's Europe* (2001), Deák claims that their presence "does not necessarily prove that the Austrians were more zealous Nazis than the Germans. Rather, as latecomers to the Reich, they may have been given the less desirable assignments" (79-80). Noted Holocaust historians such as Raul Hilberg might take issue with Deák's—and Katrovas's fictional professor's—leniency on Austrian participation. Because of the Austrian military's integration "into the German army, Austrians rose in rank and some of them obtained important commands. Austrian business expanded its influence in the Balkans [and] had territorial preserves in several parts of Germany's Europe" (37). This is the attitude that the protagonist of "Empire" expects to hear—but doesn't—from the Austrian professor, during her visit to his perfect "little city of Innsbruck" (Katrovas 50)

In "Empire," it is difficult to ascertain which characters are the most passively xenophobic. On the one hand, the horrified "summer-school-abroad" (52) students who didn't want to embarrass their hosts seemed to hope that by avoiding the issue, it might go away. The defensive Austrian professor, in his evasion of the protagonist's questions, reallocated the blame for anti-Semitism in Austria to the rest of the world. Lastly, the plucky protagonist, who seemed to join the discussion as a matter of self-amusement, showed some level of antagonism toward both the Austrian people and her fellow non-expat Americans. After the professor's "calm and measured lecture" that attempted to explain, from the Austrian point of view, why Hitler was able to woo his countrymen into accepting

annexation as a "substitute for the 1918 loss of empire," the protagonist redirected her previous question about the men on the promenade to him. Now, she wanted to know if the "young Austrian professor" (52)—a representative of the next generation of Austrians—hated Jews. While the Georgian student cringed, the professor's "convincing" and dignified answer in the negative prompted her follow-up question, "Do you believe the old men who walk their dogs on the promenade along the river hate Jews?" The professor, who claimed that he could not speak for them, turned the tables on the protagonist's attempt to generalize him and countrymen. He proposed that old North American men walking their pets along promenades in their own countries could very well also harbor a hatred for Jews (53). The protagonist conceded agreement with the professor's assertion, as did I, but his new question was a clever way to avoid a direct engagement of the issue: was xenophobia in Europe destroyed along with the Third Reich? By forcing his inquisitor to ask the same question about her own country, he effectively accused her of hypocrisy. In other short stories from *Prague, USA*, Katrovas will use a similar technique of reciprocity with his European characters.

Thus far, I have characterized the expression of post-war anti-Semitism in post-Communist Europe as a persistent, malignant "spirit" from the past. In "Empire," Katrovas's protagonist felt that Austria exuded an indescribable *lack* of spirit. When pressed, the professor agreed with this assessment adding, "perhaps something is missing, not just here but throughout" the region (53). He theorized that the protagonist was sensing in Austria a collective "guilt so powerfully repressed [that] it has become, to use a popular figure from astrophysics, a collapsed star in the heart, a black hole" (54). At one time in

history,[33] the Austrian empire was perceived as a star in Europe, giving birth to both Jewish and Gentile notables such as Sigmund Freud, Viktor Frankl, Gustav Klimt, the Strauss composers, Fritz Lang, and a host of other famous Austrians. In some ways, the region has since become a shrine to its own past—a museum of great accomplishments that seem to end around the war years. The protagonist gave no comment on the professor's "black hole" theory but the answer is there. In the old heart of the former Austrian-Hungarian Empire, Katrovas would have us believe the consequences of stereotyping the Other have left it a spiritual void. Like the destructive cancer that has left the protagonist "healthy looking" on the outside and eaten up on the inside, so has Austria been consumed by hate.

Katrovas's depiction of turn-of-the-millennium Austria shows it with a present that is informed by its past in certain, disturbing ways. Whether the nation was virtually *Judenfrei* (Jew-free)[34] or not, the bigotry of pre-war Central Europe did not vanish with the departure of the war or the Jews. When the professor mentioned that "an old synagogue [would] be rebuilt" in the region, the protagonist wondered, "who would require the services of a synagogue?" She concluded, "[T]he thought of a people for whom anti-Semitism is a defining cultural feature building ('rebuilding' he said) a synagogue where there are no Jews seemed an aesthetic corollary to the ubiquitous phenomenon of Jew-hating where there are no Jews" (54).

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[33] Before 1918 (Davies, *Europe* 920), the boundaries of the Austro-Hungarian empire included parts of territories now belonging to the following contemporary, post-Communist sovereignties: Hungary, Czech Republic (Bohemia and Moravia), Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Poland (Galicia), Ukraine, and Romania (Simpson 132, Lunsford 70, *American Heritage Dictionary*).

[34] A remark on the commonly interchanged words *Judenfrei* and *Judenrein*: Thanatological (the study of death) specialist Elizabeth Best, director of the *Shoah Education Project* clarifies the word *Judenfrei* (Jew-free) as a descriptor with "a slightly different connotation than *Judenrein* [Purified of Jews]: to merely free Europe of all the Jewish citizens who lived there and helped build Europe was not enough for the Reich: [the Nazis] wanted the blood lines of Europe free of any trace of Jewish blood, or what we now understand as DNA" (Best, E.).

The protagonist concludes her thoughts on the Holocaust by writing in her letter to *Babičko*, "It's hard to believe that a few hundred miles from here genocide is occurring again in earnest" (54). Indeed, at the time of Katrovas's writing, atrocities were beginning to be documented in another post-Communist country, the former Yugoslavia,[35]—the very place that kicked off World War I for Austria.[36] The late twentieth-century conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, still going on in Kosovo when I lived in post-Communist Europe, gave pause to socially conscious, American expats haphazardly returning to the scenes of Nazi crimes.[37]

"Empire" is an epistolary short story and, like an epistolary novel, incorporates a fictional first person narrator to address another fictional character mentioned within the narrative to relate an autobiography. The failure of Katrovas's protagonist to find "spirit" in Innsbruck parallels—to quote from Franz Kafka (a Jewish native of Prague)—her own "dislocation of soul." In a letter to his "Milena," Kafka wrote, "The easy possibility of letter-writing […] is, in fact, an intercourse with ghosts [spectres], and not only with the ghost of the recipient but also with one's own ghost which develops between the lines of the letter where one letter corroborates the other and can refer to it as a witness" ("Prag" 229). Since the protagonist of "Empire" is presumably dead by the time we, the readers, read her

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[35] The present-day, post-Communist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina shares a history with Austria because it was occupied by the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1878 and annexed in 1908 (Cornwall xi).

[36]Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb student (Davies, *Europe* 877), killed Austro-Hungarian heir to the throne Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his Czech wife Sophie (Cornwall 61), on June 28, 1914 in Sarajevo (31) This event is considered the pretext that prompted Austria-Hungary to attack Serbia, thus beginning World War I (Davies, *Europe* 877-79).

[37]Some historical context for the setting of Katrovas's narrative: From 1992 to 1995, Serbia, a former component of the Austro-Hungarian empire and later of the multicultural, Communist Yugoslavia, saw brutal conflicts between the Orthodox Christian Serbs, Catholic Christian Croats, and Muslim Bosniaks (the primary ethnic groups), which resulted in a mass homicide of 200,000 victims committed by the Serbs against the Muslims in Bosnia (Smith). Katrovas's *Prague, USA* was published by Portals Press in 1996. The Kosovo Conflict, in which NATO and the United States were involved, lasted from 1996 to 1999.

letter to *Babičko*, who may also be possibly dead, this discourse too could be interpreted as a conversation between spirits from a place without a spirit.[38]

Katrovas again gives us a picture of how the fear of the Other manifests itself in the narrative of a North American sojourner. In "Empire," the unnamed expat protagonist encounters fear of the Other from her new neighbors to the south. For them, their Other is also their past. Neither the young Austrian professor nor his young American study abroad students are completely comfortable discussing it. It is an Other they fear to take on directly. To some degree they fear her, an Other to them, for forcing them to confront the reality that Austrian anti-Semitism is still alive and well in the land of a dead empire. The protagonist, who does not fear this Other of the past, does fear the Other of her immediate future. It is an Other she does not know—a stranger. It comes bearing a life-threatening cancer but she does not know if it also means death. Here in this Other world of Austria, she imagines it to be an appropriate place to meet another other, the angel of death.

In the sense that the peoples of post-Communist Czech Republic were once targets of German hate, in Katrovas's "Why We Hate the Germans" (87-96), the roles are reversed. A sojourning American character also joins the discourse. The narrative, told by a third-person omniscient narrator, is an *in media res* conversation between an American expat living in Prague, Michael, and his Czech business colleague, Alena. They have planned a negotiation conference with a team of foreign corporate representatives in a family-owned, Soviet-era, pre-fabricated country cabin that they, like many natives from this part of the world, used for

[38] Epistolarity, a concept that Janet Altman discussed at length as "the use of a letter's formal properties to create meaning" (4) is used by Jonathan Safran Foer in his novel about 1997 Ukraine, *Everything is Illuminated* (2002).

weekend retreats in the warmer seasons.[39] The team that they would be meeting for the first time, it is eventually revealed, were German nationals.

"Have you ever actually spoken to one?" was the narrative's opening line, a question asked by Alena (87). The "one" referred to anyone from Germany, a detail that the reader cannot verify until a bit later in the dialogue. Michael, as it turned out, was not especially fond of Germans while Alena held her own prejudices against Americans.

The basis of their informal debate concerned which Western nation had, historically, been the most unpleasant toward its neighbors and its own inhabitants (90-91). It was a juvenile contest of words between two persons of differing nationalities who each used working stereotypes of the Other, but took offense at being included in the stereotypes themselves. It began when Alena challenged Michael's disposition for his expressed revulsion for Germans and their language. Michael "found the German language revolting to hear, and revolting, too, though less deeply so, the very sight of Germans once he had identified them as such" (87). Although reported in 2002, this sentiment echoes a sentiment expressed by Zdena Nemcova, an elderly Czech national who lived among the *Sudetendeutsche* (Sudeten German) in the 1930s. "We hated the Germans so much, we even hated the sound of the German language" (Wheeler).

To Michael, this newly-found and acknowledged prejudice was both "terribly wrong" and something to be "exorcised." However, he still felt that, on the whole, it didn't measure up to other, more well-established cultural biases. For Michael, hating Germans "wasn't the same as good ol' red-blooded Am'r'can bigotry; it wasn't the same as hating

[39] I spent much of my holiday and downtime in the country houses of various friends and colleagues; in post-Communist Europe, before car ownership became the standard, it showed status to have one. As a result, the *dacza*, is it was called in Polish, ranged in quality from veritable Lincoln-Log ski-palaces to glorified, corkboard shacks. The paradigm shift in the ownership of *dachas* (summer cottage/cabin or second country home) concerning the post-Communist Russian middle class is well documented in the chapter "Post-Soviet Urbanization?" of Stephen Lovell's *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710-2000* (2003).

nigspickhimeyqueerchinks, or any other redneck gumbo of irrational loathings, stirred slowly over the low and constant heat of mindless chauvinism" (87).

Michael wanted an ally in his hatred and tried to goad Alena into admitting, at least, some dislike for Germans. Part of the narrative includes a play of the word "you" as a word that can be understood as singular or plural depending on the context. Alena speaks English as a foreign language and Michael is never completely sure which "you" Alena implies (93). Throughout the narrative, Alena could be using "you" as singular or plural and she is evasive when asked for clarification. Since she clearly understands this "defect in the English language" (94), we must assume that, in many cases, she is being facetious by implying both meanings at the same time. In the same respect, Michael does not always articulate this distinction himself. When he asks "You don't like them much either do you?" he seems to be asking her to give her personal opinion and, in this case, she appears to. Alena replied in the negative but justified her position in that she had "heard stories on [her] grandmother's knee about the Nazis." Her mother and father also recalled the occupation, she explained. Michael, who felt Alena was being hypocritical, wanted to group her personal dislike for Germans with the categorical dislike he suspected that older generations of Czechs felt towards them. Alena felt her own reasoning for disliking Germans was different and should be justified separately. When Michael asked her if Germans were "generally disliked" she agreed but tried to emphasize the new anti-nationalist, political correctness that the European Union was supposed to produce in its new, post-Communist partners. From her perspective, "the Other" now represented that which wasn't European. She asserted, "[W]e're all Europeans now, and that makes us other than you, you Americans" (88).

Michael, who stereotyped Germans and Czechs as two disconnected groups, continued to try and get the answer he wanted to hear and eventually got Alena to admit her impression that there was "a certain tension" in the relationship between contemporary Czechs and the Germans who vacationed and did business in the Czech Republic. The "Czechs," he maintained, "want their money." When Michael jokingly interjected that Czechs seemed to want everyone's money, Americans and Germans alike, Alena once again came to their defense. "Yes," she replied, "but the Germans are so close, and we do have much in common." Michael agreed that were surface-level commonalties, but a fondness for dumplings and beer were hardly enough to keep them united. Alena wanted to emphasize the "strong German-language culture" (88) as the valid link between Germany and the Czech Republic. It is true that notable German-speaking notables such as Gregor Johann Mendel (Hynčice), the father of modern genetics, Sigmund Freud (Příbor), the father of psychoanalysis, and writer Franz Kafka (Prague) were born in regions now part of the Czech Republic ("Famous").

On the flip side of this picture of fraternal love, there was the sensitive issue of "the Sudeten krauts!" that Michael wanted Alena to acknowledge. Again, using the plural form of "you" in such a way that seemed to include her in his accusation, Michael exclaimed, "you guys made quick work of them!" (Katrovas 89).[40] Alena, who was once married to "Bert," a different American expat who had came over with the Velvet Revolution, was still bitter and grouped him, Michael, and all American men together. Her generalization about them was that they were "typically self-absorbed" with ethical bases that were "fairly broad,

[40] Slavic Czechs and German Czechs once co-existed in Czechoslovakia. In 1938, Nazi Germany annexed the *Sudety* (Sudentenland), a region of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia with ethnically German inhabitants, and committed crimes against its non- *Sudetendeutsche* (Sudeten German) residents. After the war, Czechoslovakia retaliated by forcefully expelling nearly all of the *Sudetendeutsche* population of *Sudety*, in 1946. This highly emotional, and controversial, topic has been revived in recent years with accusations of war crimes and even genocide (Jenkins).

yet thin as the first icy sheets that crystallize along the banks of Bohemian ponds in late November" (91). She was quick to condemn Michael's prejudice against Germans but even quicker to judge Americans as a whole. As Michael had done to her, she now grouped him with others of his nationality. "You Americans," an expression she used repeatedly, "lack perspective." Alena continued, "It is the source of your heroism and utter foolishness [. . .] You Americans wear guilt like military ribbons. You are covered with guilt yet shameless" (93). Alena's implied relationship between one's "guilt," the factual knowledge of having done an injustice, and "shame," the actual distress or dishonor some people experience from having done an injustice, is featured again later in their conversation. It is a theme that was also featured prominently in Katrovas's "Empire" as a collective sin still borne by the citizens of Austria.

Because Michael feels neither guilt nor shame, he is finally offended and contests Alena's pretension as an arbiter of culture. Even in her reply to him, Alena generalizes, "I beat you up a little, and you start that American dance of condescension" (93). So far, Alena has characterized all Americans as condescending, guilty, and shameless. Since this narrative was indeed written by an American, the reader could be left to wonder if Katrovas actually experienced Americans characterized this way by Czechs in the 1990s—a point I would find difficult to dispute based on my own experiences during this time—or, if this was how he felt personally about the "typical" American. Alena revisits the issue of America's guilt, in this case of racial injustice, and its apparent lack of shame by asking Michael how he felt personally "about African slavery and the genocide of red Indians?" (94). Keep in mind that Alena is a second language speaker, so her diction here may have been an archaic translation of the common Czech word for "Native American." It my experience, language textbooks and dictionaries were expensive in turn-of-the-millennium

post-Communist Europe, so it was not uncommon to see language students using outdated material from the Communist era. In Alena's desire to be perceived as an enlightened, new European, her mysterious use of the offensive term reveals as much about her as it does her culture.

Michael, who appears to be puzzled by this expression, queries, "Red Indians?" Because many Americans associate the word "Indians" first with Native Americans—and not the citizens of India[41]—in American English, of course, the use of the expression "Red Indian" should seem as politically incorrect as "Black African," "Yellow Asian," or "Brown Mexican." Does the unnecessary "red" qualifier imply that Czechs think Native Americans exist in differing colors that should be distinguished, or does it suggest a particular political affiliation? As in the English language, there is still a socially acceptable use of one word that does not distinguish between Native Americans and citizens of India without the addition of another word. Alena tries to excuse herself with an apologetic explanation. "It's what we called them as children, *Indiani* [American Indians] as opposed to *Indove* [Asian Indians]," as if that somehow made it acceptable. In early twentieth-century America, Central and Eastern European immigrant laborers were collectively disparaged as "bohunks" and "hunks," a xenophobic distortion of "Bohemian Hungarian" (Harper) and a possible origin of the epithet "honky," (*OED).* The fact that political incorrectness was once the result of ignorance or xenophobia does excuse it for the more enlightened, turn-of-the-millennium.

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[41] It is disheartening to know that, as of 2005, the *New Oxford American Dictionary* (*NOAD*) still lists "of or relating to the indigenous peoples of America" as its *first* definition for the adjective "Indian" and "an American Indian" as its first definition for the noun "Indian." Even though there are now acceptable alternatives to Christopher Columbus's geographical blunder such as "Native American," "Amerindian," and "Native People," the original, intended referent—the inhabitants of India—still takes a backseat in the *NOAD* as the second meaning. A footnote suggests the acceptability of "Asian Indian" as a way to differentiate.

Alena returns to her original question to Michael about how he feels about Native Americans. Michael replies, "This is your point? I'm supposed to say 'guilty' so you can *ah-ha* me? Besides, the Holocaust is not analogous to the collective crimes of America." (Katrovas 94). Clearly, Michael will not engage in a game of comparison between crimes against humanity. Does this mean that, to him, the Holocaust was something much worse than the slave trade of "Black Africans" (94) or the genocide of Native Americans? Given his previously stated abhorrence for Germans, it seems logical to assume so. With Michael's avoidance of Alena's question, both she and the reader must assume that she is correct to conclude Michael feels no shame or guilt for America's crimes. They happened before he existed, thus excusing him and his generation. Alena wants Michael to accept the same rationale for her generation of Czechs and Germans, the new Europeans, for the collective crimes of World War II Europe.

Alena was intent on making a distinction between younger Germans, who had nothing to do with the Holocaust, now feeling burdened with historical guilt and those older Germans, who had much to explain for their role in the Holocaust, simply denying the guilt and their own humanity with it. Michael suggested that Alena made Germans "sound like the most noble creatures of the planet" to be able to walk "around with tons of guilt on their heads" (95).

Alena's real point of contention is what she saw as the United States' misguided concept of "heroism," a characteristic for which she had accused Michael's Americanness earlier (93). Her final diatribe on the Germans began with a denial of Michael's retort that she was trying to somehow dignify the Germans (95). She disagreed and clarified her position that "[n]obility is about heroism, and most Germans, most Germans with any sense, have given up all claims to it." To her, that's "what made them monsters." Now, "the best

of them are so painfully pathetic one cannot really speak to them." Alena concluded that "the tragedy of the Germans" was in their historical nature to dichotomize. It is true that in the Third Reich, persons with mixed ethnicities presented a challenge to the Nazi ideology of purity—but, is it fair to generalize all Germans in this way? Too many Germans, Alena speculated, "are either monstrously industrious or pathetically industrious" and too "few have found or even sought a middle path" (95). Perhaps she was referencing the persistent, superficial divide between the capitalist *Wessies* (West Germans) and the post-Communist *Ossies* (East Germans). If Alena's theory were true, it would make sense that a culture made famous for its xenophobia had a tendency for binary thinking. Earlier, I discussed xenophobia as a fear of "the Other" and the hypothesis that links displays of aggression to fear. For example, the innate "fight or flight" response to a fear or perceived threat is as black-and-white as thinking can be.

When Michael asked Alena to explain why this might be so, she paralleled his earlier evasion of her question to him about "Red Indians." Alena answered Michael's question with a question: "Why do the best of Americans believe absolutely that change is holy? That by changing one sheds the guilt of all past transgressions? Why does America ignore its collective sins and call that ignorance renewal?" (95). Where Alena had tried earlier to link certain aspects of the Czech and German cultures—diet and language, for example—she has now done the same for Germans and Americans. She characterizes the ideology of both nations as essentially "absolutist" in sense that they subscribe dogmatically to the belief that principles are unchanging and never relative. Alena's criticism is leveled at the notion that, for instance, a criminal's "change" changes nothing in the guilt associated with the criminal. The only change is the outward behavior and the way the criminal begins to feel about her or his past—without shame. Granted, there are problems with such an approach.

But what would Alena say about the criminal, or the country, that does not change? If a country or religious organization apologizes for its role in wholesale, national crimes but refuses to really transform, is that something to be applauded?

In a fashion characteristic of this particular conversation, Michael did answer Alena's question about America's love affair with change, but instead made a fresh allegation: "You sound as though you think we Americans are as bad as the Germans." Equality with the Germans is a prospect Michael does not want to accept because he has such a low opinion of them. Alena's reply has relevance for the Spirit-of Europe-Future—something I will explain later as a metaphor for globalization—as well as the Spirit-of-Europe-Past. "No," she responded, "you are much better. It is better to be occupied by the Americans than by Germans, though actually it is now a joint occupation." Alena later referred to her first husband, who was an American, as a representative of the "compassionate conqueror[s]" (95). With two good references to Alena's husband Bert and the personality traits that made him, in her opinion, an archetypal American, the reader has more reason to see a second manifestation of her fear of the Other—now represented by Michael, the American expat sitting across from her—that she doesn't not understand.

In "Why We Hate the Germans," Katrovas employs the fear of the Other in several ways. In the first instance, both Michael and Alena express a fear and aversion of the Other they don't fully comprehend, the Germans. They are united in that they dread having to do business with them. Michael's prejudice is fed by fear because his knowledge of Germans is only what he's read and heard from other Czechs. It is particularly hypocritical since he can't remember when he's ever spoken to a German. Alena is conflicted; she doesn't appreciate the stereotype that, in her opinion, the Germans seem to live up to. In a similar way, Michael, an American, and Alena, a Czech, have their own fear or reservations of

another Other that exists only between them. For Michael, that Other is the Czech people—he stereotypes them as gold diggers and collaborators. For Alena, the American people represent an Other incapable of feeling shame. An American has hurt Alena in the past—she fears one may again, perhaps it will be Michael. There might be a complicated triangle of fear at work if the reader had the perspective of the German clients Michael and Alena are waiting for to compare. The idea of hope in this narrative comes in the form of the European Union, another uncertainty. If Alena's wish comes true, the European Union will transform her continent into one that can not only acknowledge its past, as the United States has done, but to go one step further by expressing regret for its past actions and accepting the responsibility of rectifying wrongs.

In *Prague, USA* Katrovas showed that his characters' xenophobia is what it means: a fear of the Other. However, the fear of the Other can be likened here to a fear of the past. For the characters of "Lincoln, Nebraska," "Empire," and "Why We Hate the Germans," the past is a stranger and a foreigner—an entity that each of them is hesitant to confront. Jerry Han is child survivor whose past is terrifying, and he fears "re-remembering"[42] and disremembering that past simultaneously. The unnamed protagonist of "Empire" finds that the people she meets in Austria are also afraid of confronting their past, an Other time that, to them, should be rationalized and explained in such a way to alleviate them from the discomfort of guilt. The subject of Michael and Alena's fear, the Germans, also represent a past for them. More than the Germans themselves, the crimes of Nazi Germany remind them of their own respective countries' regrettable pasts—the crimes against humanity towards Native Americans, African Americans, Jewish Czechs, and Sudeten Germans.

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[42] In *Child Survivors of the Holocaust in Israel: Finding Their Voice* (2005), Sharon Kangisser Cohen discusses the concept of "re-remembering" and child survivors in greater detail (130, 137).

Xenophobia in Post-Communist Hungary: *Prague: A Novel*

In a work not to be confused with Katrovas's book of short stories *Prague, USA,* Arthur Phillips's more briefly titled, historical novel *Prague* (2002) begins with a certain degree of deception. On its cover, the first American edition has what would appear to be appropriate, a photograph of the *Karlův most* (Charles Bridge), a landmark tourist-attraction in Prague (Rozen 136). The actual storyline of *Prague*, however, had little to do with the capital city of the Czech Republic, Prague, except as a recurring reference to the place that Western expats living in other post-Communist cities would rather be. The setting of *Prague*'s narrative is, instead, in Hungary's capital, the city of Budapest between the years 1989 and 1991 (12). Minneapolis-born Phillips lived and worked in post-Communist Budapest from 1990 to 1992 (v). Phillips's chief protagonist John Price and his older brother Scott were Jewish American expats from the West Coast who moved to Budapest during this opportune period.

Unlike Richard Katrovas in *Prague, USA*, Phillips did not make his readers guess at the ethnicities of his Jewish characters. However, the names of his Jewish characters, like his own, are distinctly non-Jewish.[43] Perhaps the fictional Price family was trying to pass itself, in name, as non-Jewish.[44] Scott Price, whom Phillips described as a formerly obese,

[43] In a published interview with Robert Birnbaum of *Identitytheory.com*, Arthur Phillips, who has since relocated to Paris, went on record to say, "Despite recent brouhahas, I'm Jewish." He also comments on what it is like, for him, to an American Jew in Europe: "I don't feel there's any particular Jewish problem to be worried about. Certainly not in Paris, and the problems that do exist are of a very different nature than they were 50 years ago. People who say otherwise are frightened, maybe understandably, I wouldn't be nervous about being a Jewish-American in Paris" (Birnbaum).

[44] In his *History of the Holocaust* (1982), Yehuda Bauer discussed the "constant shadow" of anti-Semitism that American Jews had to endure in the interwar period (74-75). In *Racial and Ethnic Relations* (1978), Joe Feagin reported that in "the World War II period large numbers of Jewish Americans changed their

"blond Jew in a family of more traditional models: short, slim, curly-haired, olive-skinned," was the first to relocate overseas so that he could "put his college degree to use as Assistant Head of Programs at the Institute of the Study of Foreign Tongues, a privately held chain of schools—first Prague, then Budapest, Warsaw, Sofia, plans afoot for Bucharest, Moscow, Tirana—hawking that most valuable commodity: English" (9).

John Price came to Budapest later than Scott, in hopes of a reconciliation with an older sibling who both hated and blamed him for his unhappy, awkward childhood. Shortly after his arrival, John anticipated a pronounced Hungarian prejudice against Jews. When his new acquaintance, Hungarian-American Charles Gábor, ordered a cocktail for John from an unresponsive, "stone-faced waitress," John supposed that she looked "pissed off." He guessed that it was "probably because [he was] so obviously a Jew." Phillips's third person narrator affirmed, "while physically his self-assessment was undeniably true, his grim assessment of anti-Semitism in Hungarian waitresses killed the mood at the table" (12). Charles, who wanted John's transition into Budapest to go smoothly, tried to reassure him that those in the Hungarian service sector were generally equal-opportunity offenders, that is, they were rude to everyone, regardless. In my experience, this was often true. Unless John was being facetious, it is more likely that the waitress was rude because they were foreigners. Or, perhaps she was annoyed that her table waiting career would never afford her the luxury that so many of these foreigners in her country could enjoy—a leisurely café

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names" (180). Alan Wald, in *The New York Intellectuals* (1987) suggested that after World War II, some "radical Jews assumed non-Jewish names for party or professional reasons" because of a "bias against Jewish ethnicity" in certain political movements "and perhaps even a manifestation of Jewish self-hatred" (15). Some Americans' reasoning for this change may be linked to theories proposed by Mortimer Ostow in *Myth and Madness: The Psychodynamics of Antisemitism* (1995). "The Jew," Ostow explained, "may not be a stranger after living in the same community for years or generations, but he remains an alien and his alienness will be communicated to non-Jewish children by their non-Jewish parents." Even in late twentieth-century America, "non-Jewish Americans recognize Jewish names, occupations, speech patterns, and some modes of behavior as distinctive." Such distinctiveness can carry "a positive or negative sign or both" (96).

existence. Post-Communist Europeans were notoriously bad tippers and waiters expected this from natives but not from foreigners. Expats, when they learned that tips were not expected from locals, would often stop tipping themselves, giving their Hungarian service one more reason to be disappointed. In one broad stroke, Charles managed to counter one preconceived, cultural generalization (that all Hungarians did not want to serve Jews) with another (that all Hungarian waiters were discourteous to everyone). It would seem that he wanted to defend them from any false charges of anti-Semitism.

Budapest's unique incarnation of anti-Semitism would resurface when Charles helped John secure accommodations in the city. A senile, old Hungarian landlord named Dezső Szabó, who "knew two words of English (*New, York*) and a smattering of German," supposedly told Charles (who translated the message to John) that there was good news. He had "no problem at all with Jews living here" (21). Szabó, who was not mentally present, had subconsciously merged the events of World War II and the Cold War into one event and thought that John was part of a liberating American army under the command of Eisenhower who should overlook that fact that he was forced to join the Communist party (22). Therefore, when John moved in the following day, "he felt no trepidation [. . .] being alone with the old man, who proudly welcomed Jews." John's sense of ease was not because the old man was exceptionally tolerant but because he admired John's high station in life at such a young age. The previous evening, Charles had admitted that he "invented that [anti-Semitic] comment because the negotiations had grown so boring" (23). Charles, like other expat characters I will discuss, was a kind of prankster who liked to make fun at the expense of others.

Much like John's mishap with the café waitress, Phillips used black comedy here to reveal his perception of xenophobia in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Hungary.

Not only would Hungarians show some anxiety toward Jews, Jewish Americans too would never be completely sure where they stood with the locals without testing the waters first. Charles's outward indifference to xenophobia is especially ironic when it is revealed that an anti-Semitic climate in Cold War Hungary almost certainly prevented him from ever claiming a personal connection to Judaism. In a flashback to his youth in Cleveland, Ohio, Charles's parents—who never truly assimilated as melting pot American immigrants—recalled their persistent and nostalgic fondness for Hungary. "She was a Jew," Charles's non-Jewish father said in his reminiscence of the first girl he had ever kissed, "and even though I did not know what the term meant, I knew something about it was dangerous and I thought I was very brave, because my father would have found it quite alarming" (47). Charles, like John, had developed an awareness of anti-Semitism in Hungary long before his arrival there. Both characters seem desensitized enough to make light of something that an older generation may have taken more seriously.

Post-Communist Hungary has a complicated historical connection to both World War II and anti-Semitism, which Phillips addresses at length in his side storyline about Imre Horváth,[45] the heir to a two-century old publishing house. Hungary's fifty-year association with the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, actually tolerated a relatively "Golden Era" for Hungarian Jews, which began with their emancipation in 1867 (Braham, *Politics* 22). Things began to go downhill, however, after the loss of World War I and the formal dismemberment of the empire in 1918. Some may be surprised to know that it was Hungary—not Germany—that was recognized as the first post-World War I European country to formally adopt anti-Jewish legislation in flagrant "violation of the Minorities

[45] Not to be confused with the non-fictional American television producer and director of the same name (*IMDb*) or the Hungarian Foreign Minister who served from 1956 to 1958 (Nagy).

Protection Treaty." In 1920, the *numerus clausus* act severely limited Jewish enrollment in Hungarian universities (22). In 1938, limitations were created for Jews in many Hungarian occupations, and in 1940 mixed marriages between Hungarian Christians and Hungarian Jews were declared illegal (Wistrich 159).[46]

In Charles's flashback to childhood, he remembered a disagreement his father had with his "eleventh-grade history textbook and its single mention of Hungary's appearance in the Second World War, included in a sidebar list of Other Fascist Countries" (Phillips 49). Phillips fully engages the idea of how one nation's explanation of international political history could so vastly differ from the interpretation of another. Sometimes counted as "Europe's first Fascist," former Hapsburg admiral Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya, the conservative interwar regent of Hungary (Davies, *Europe* 934), was a "misunderstood" man, Charles's father explained (Phillips 48). He felt that the polarized, self-righteous American perspective could not tolerate perspectives of history that did not fit into a neat, easy-to-understand dichotomy. "Horthy," he continued, "kept the Nazis out as long as he could *and* fought the Russians. Who else does your little school think could do that? Churchill?" (49). To Charles's father, Horthy—a man ultimately vilified by both Communists and Fascists—was at first more of a hero to Hungarian Jews than he was a monster. Where Horthy had once been resistant to Nazi influence in his country (Dawidowicz 379), he ultimately caved in at Hitler's insistence and began to deport Hungarian Jews. At one point, he defied the Nazis by ordering a transport of Hungarian Jews to be stopped (Yahil 514; Bauer, *History*

[46] Germany put pressure on Hungary to enact the anti-Jewish employment laws of 1938 (Dawidowicz 381). The later marriage restrictions of 1940 were modeled on the "so-called 'Nuremberg Laws' were adopted unanimously by the Reichstag" in 1935. The laws effectively legitimized "racist anti-Semitism" and legally categorized the "purity of German blood." Mixed marriages and extramarital relations between Germans and Jews or " 'nationals' of Germany who were not German" became forbidden (63).

348), but this only resulted in his replacement with an "extremist" (Hilberg 85). Horthy would be remembered as a leader who could have done much but did too little, too late.

A renowned expert on the Holocaust in Hungary, Randolph Braham wrote that Horthy "consented to, among other things, the transfer to the Reich of hundreds of thousands of 'Jewish workers' " or slave laborers ("Hungary" 206). While it is true that Horthy claimed in his autobiography that he did all he could possibly have done to assist the Jews of Budapest (Horthy 228), an account that can be confirmed, oddly enough, by a published interview with Adolph Eichmann (232), this doesn't actually exonerate him. Robert Wistrich, head of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's SICSA (Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism), would also take issue with Charles's father, if he were not a fictional character. Horthy demonstrated a "spinelessness" and "hostility of ordinary Hungarians who seemed to sympathize more with the persecutors of the Jews than with the victims." Horthy's administration allowed "no fewer than thirty-five thousand Hungarian denunciations and betrayals of Jews in the first weeks of the German invasion" (Wistrich 158; Braham, *Politics* 809).

Other examples of Hungarians who purposefully emphasized the Jewishness of Jewish characters are interdispersed throughout the rest of Phillips's narrative. For example, on one occasion, when John Price and his blonde brother Scott were approached by an elderly, Hungarian Jazz singer named Nádja who performs in English, she told them that they were an "intriguing pair [. . .] One brother Jewish, the other Danish." For John, Nádja's tone sounded offensive. "As a rule," *Prague's* narrator said, "the sound of a European-accented voice merely saying the word Jewish was enough to set [him] on edge." John's retort to Nádja's comment about his ethnicity aimed to match the conversational tone. "I

make it a practice," he said, "never to exchange genetic histories with a woman I've just met" (Phillips 96).

On another occasion, a stereotyping remark that ranked Hungary's experience with Nazis as somehow more tolerable than its experience with Communists—both Others for Hungary—came not from a Gentile character, such as Charles' father, but a Jewish one. The character was Krisztina Toldy, the personal assistant to the last Imre Horváth, a Hungarian refugee who had returned to his country to reclaim his press from the now post-Communist state. One irony in this character was the moniker of "Christ" in her first name. Like John and Scott Price, could her family have been trying to pass as Gentiles? Krisztina's second irony was her undying devotion to Imre Horváth, a man John Price judged upon meeting him as a probable "rank anti-Semite" (210). I will return to the Horváth family shortly. In Krisztina's first conversation with Charles, as a potential financial investor courted by Imre, she told him an anecdote about her Jewish family. In her Hungarian-accented English as second language, she stated, "Who was worst, my father was often ask, the Nazis or the Communists? He always say: The Nazis put me in camp and they say they will destroy me; then the Communists put me in camp and say they will teach me be a better man. At least, my father say [. . .] at least the Nazis were honest with me" (174). While Krisztina's joke was meant to be a shot against the Communists, it revealed a kind of tolerance for Hungary's occupation by Germans that was not paralleled for their occupation by Soviets. Was the Soviet occupation really worse for Jewish Hungarians than the Nazi one or was this simply a position that Krisztina anticipated non-Jewish Hungarians wanted to hear? Her experiences, like all Hungarians, were inextricably linked to history.

Phillips took measures in part two of *Prague* to set up the problematic history of xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Hungary through the side story of the Horváth Kiadó

printing press (127). He accomplished this by first sketching the character of the original Károly Horváth, the press's heir, a colorful bigot who helped lay the foundations for the anti-Semitism a future Hungary would exhibit toward the plight of Hungarian Jews. This record of the Horváth families rise and fall as Hungarian printing magnates allows the reader to encounter the complications of post-Communist Hungary's link to its past.

The back-story of a later Károly Horváth, son of the "second" Imre Horváth of the printing press dynasty, begins in the nineteenth century when, against his father's wishes, he began to buy into the then-populist notions of nationalism (150). Imre, who was *not* xenophobic "relied heavily on" what his young xenophobic son Károly had referred to as "the continued so-called inspiration [of] so-called Hungarian so-called geniuses" (147). Károly felt that his father had taken the family press in the wrong direction. To Károly, the press should have been safeguarding "the memory of the *Hungarian* people" by printing only "*Hungarian* writers." Writers whose works were "foreign" and "un-Magyar" were "*not* real Hungarians," because they did not "address what concerns the Magyar" (147). Károly was citing his father Imre's "so-called" false Hungarians: artists, writers, and thinkers of the KB, an active political discussion group, who patronized in words—and were financially patronized by—the family press.

Károly's xenophobia was based on his belief that Jews living in Hungary were and always would be outsiders—people with ideas that "real" Hungarians should fear, not promote. It was, for Károly, preposterous to think that either they or society should ever consider Hungarian Jews as truly Hungarian. Károly let himself be convinced that in addition to "Liberal liars" and corrupt cosmopolitans from Budapest, "Jews were not Magyars" and that "the foolish, chattering voices of liberals, Jews, and self-proclaimed artists and intellectuals created an intolerable cacophony in the house that was once the

memory of the Hungarian people" (147). In 1899, at the age of twenty-one, Károly made an attempt to expose his father Imre for betraying the preservation of the Hungarian memory. Károly accused him one evening, after returning home hungover, of being a consorter with "Jews and scribblers." He happily quoted from the *Awakening Nation*, a "small, struggling, nationalist, anti-Semitic newspaper" that had been printing a series of columns by an angry nationalist named "Pál Magyar," who "put into words all the disgust [Károly] felt for his father's false friends." The article read:

> It seems to me [. . .] that the Jews and scribblers who pollute our stages with their little plays, and pollute the city with their little cafés, and turn Budapest into an absolute Sodom and Gomorrah with their unnatural habits are putting us real Magyars at a terrible risk. I for one do not wish to be in the theatre watching a sordid little play written by moneylenders when the nation finally rises up in disgust and tears the actors and writers limb from limb . . . (148)

Ironically, the author of the column, "Pál Magyar," turned out to be "a leading light of the KB" named Endre Horn (149), a fact that Imre noted immediately upon being shown the article by a rather naïve Károly (148). If Endre Horn were around today, his satirical antics might be compared to someone like comedian Stephen Colbert of Comedy Central's phony television news program *The Colbert Report* (*IMDb*). Like Colbert, Horn is actually a liberal but only pretends to be a raging, xenophobic nationalist. He is so believable that some conservatives, in the blindness of the their dichotomic thinking, do not immediately recognize the parody, failing to get that it is only a farcical act, a ridiculing of their own, deep-seated beliefs. Endre Horn, under his pen name "Pál Magyar," something Károly now called a "nom de mockery" (149), had created an inside-joke for his friends in the KB and a

colossal prank on *Awakening Nation*, the radical paper Károly admired and wanted to emulate. Out of the principle Károly felt his father no longer possessed, he informed the offices of the *Awakening Nation* the following day in person so that "the editors would not repeat their error" (150). The members of the KB, it seems, are somewhat like the contemporary Jewish American expats John Price and Charles Gábor who confront xenophobia directed towards them without fear. In fact, they take it to another level. They acknowledge it and negate it with their use of black comedy.

Xenophobia, in the form of anti-Semitism, continued to play a role in Phillips's subplot about the Horváth family. By 1913, Imre the second had died and Károly, then thirty-five, inherited the press (150). His qualification to run a press came not from a university degree but from life experience. At this point in the narrative, Phillips does something peculiar. He interjects an entire section into chapter nine highlighting the subject of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. His device is a fictional, and sarcastic, MBA exam administered to Károly between 1914 and 1947. Each of the seventeen essay questions is a word problem—not always phrased as questions—that parallels the issues of Károly's life. The exam problems focus primarily on the way anti-Semitism informed his decisions as the president of the family press between the end of World War I and the end of World War II. Each item of the exam begins with a historical setup—a demonstration of Phillip's careful research—and ends with a situational "business" scenario to be solved. By explaining Károly's personal history as a series of tests, Phillips shows how a fear of the Other affects a xenophobe's decisions about himself and the lives of strangers—people he does not even know.

The exam instructions direct the examinee to pretend that he is "the head of a small but highly successful family-owned publishing business. Please outline your corporate

decisions after each of the following seventeen events takes place in your country of operations" (151). Most of these are a critique of Hungarian Communism but many of them are motivated by xenophobia. For example, event "iii" reads: "A violent Communist dictatorship emerges and nationalizes your press. You lose everything and are arrested. The Communist regime is nearly 70 percent Jewish, a statistic that strikes you as highly significant. Your execution is tentatively included on the Communist's busy schedule" (152). The revolution of 1919, which led to a worker's-council-approved constitution based on the Soviet model, and the creation of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic is a verifiable fact of history. Béla Kun, a Jewish ex-prisoner of war, exploited nationalist fever and led Hungarian communists into a situation where all "industry was nationalized; church property was confiscated [and] priests and peasants were subjected alike to compulsory labour" (Davies, *Europe* 932). Historian Robert Wistrich put the number of Communists who were Jewish at two-thirds (159). This doesn't mean, however, that two-thirds of Hungary's Jewish population was Communist. Capitalists such as Károly, a press owner, would have been jailed by the Communists. Phillips uses the sarcastic tone of this essay problem to emphasize the unfair stereotype that linked Communism with all of its Jewish population that many non-proletariat and non-Jewish citizens of early twentieth-century Hungary subscribed to.

Event "v" of the crude MBA exam summarizes the following historical events:

> After only four months of Communism, a right-wing counterrevolution is successfully launched. You are freed from prison, your firm is restored to you (you fire your three staunchly anti-Communist Jewish employees on allegations of crypto-Communist sympathies), and you are personally

> congratulated for our courage by the new head of state, a regent/vice admiral." (152)

Here, Phillips is correct about a few other details. For example, the dictatorship of the proletariat in 1919, interwar Hungary was, indeed, short-lived (Wistrich 159; Braham, *Politics* 21). Although Phillips did not explicitly mention him by name here, the regent his anti-Semitic exam referred to is none other Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya, the Prince Regent and admiral of a "landlocked" country (Hilberg 85). Horthy's ruined reputation was defended earlier by Charles Gábor's father who claimed the man was misunderstood by history (Phillips 49). Also, after Horthy's rise to power, the "new conservative nationalist regime began its rule by unleashing fury against suspected supporters" of the revolution, "above all the Jews" (Braham, "Hungary" 202). Although "the overwhelming majority of Jews had opposed the Communist dictatorship [. . .] and probably suffered proportionately more than the rest of the population," popular opinion in Hungary "tended to attach the blame for the abortive dictatorship to Jewry as a whole" (Braham, *Politics 21*). Again, in an apology that came too late to help anyone, Horthy's own published memoir asserts that the crimes of the Hungarian Communists were unjustly attributed to Hungary's Jews (Horthy 208).

Essay situation "ix" read as though from a history book, save for the fictional insertions from Phillips about Károly's role. It reads:

> Elections subsequent to the Depression unsurprisingly favor the fascists. The regent's new government flirts with Mussolini and Hitler and pushes through laws setting quotas on Jews admitted to universities and the professions, then declaring them an alien race. Please detail your firm's extensive opportunities for profit and acquisition. (Phillips 153)

In 1920, Hungary "enacted Law No. XXV, the so-called *numerus clausus* act which restricted the admission of Jews into the institutions of higher learning" (Braham, "Hungary" 203) making it the first modern country in post World War I Europe to enact anti-Jewish legislation (Wistrich 159). Here, Phillips shows how the Hungarian government's unjustified fear of Jews as Communist sympathizers prompted its own sympathy for fascism and the legislation of anti-Semitism (153). The word "alien" is the government's politically charged version of "stranger,' or, "Other."

Essay problem "xi" picks up at the beginning of World War II and provides the following setup:

> Forced to pick sides, your country wades delicately into the war as a member of the Axis and shyly helps invade the Soviet Union. The Government forbids marriages between Jews and non-Jews. Please estimate how many government-edict posters you can produce and paste in Jewish neighborhoods on short notice" (152).

Wistrich reported this act as the "third anti-Jewish law of July 1941" which was "much more openly racist" than the first two (Wistrich 159) and, according to Braham, "in many respects identical to the Nuremburg Laws" previously enacted by Nazi Germany (Braham, "History" 203). The MBA exam, as imagined by Phillips, coldly reduces the racist oppression waged against Jewish and Gentile couples into a trite, mathematical word problem to be negotiated by Károly (153). Trouble for Hungarian Jews becomes an opportunity for profit for some non-Jewish Hungarians.

By essay problem "xii," the Holocaust is well underway in Hungary. It reads:

> At the German's repeated insistence, the Hungarian government grudgingly, quietly declares war on the United States and Great Britain. New Laws force

> Jews to wear yellow stars and live in a Pest ghetto. After initial efforts to ship Jews to death camps, the government halts deportation when the Budapest police responsible for the roundups threaten to rebel. Please recalculate poster revenues, including both the deportation orders and their revocation. (153)

Horthy's autobiography verifies that on December 12, 1941, five days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he was informed by Prime Minister Bárdossy that "Hungary considered herself at war with the United States of America" (Horthy 233). Britain had already declared war on Hungary on December 5. Horthy described in detail the "sharply anti-Semitic policy" of the occupying Nazi regime that compelled "all Jews to wear a clearly displayed Star of David and to degrade them to second-class citizenship" (266). But, Horthy also alleged that it was he who "instructed the Chief of the Budapest gendarmerie to assist in preventing the forceful removal of Jews" (268), a claim bolstered by Adolf Eichmann's testimony in his interrogation transcripts (Eichmann 232). By revisiting the poster theme of essay problem "xi," Phillips's black humor reveals the disturbing juxtaposition of the morbid and the absurd. On one day, Hungarian printing presses would have had to print public bills that sent Hungarian Jews to their deaths. On another day, it would be print placards that reversed that order. In either instance, the press would be collecting revenue for its services.

Essay problem "xiv" is lengthy. The setup includes British and American bombings and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. As this happens, the Germans and "their Arrow Cross partners […] make a last stand." Jews "are murdered in the streets and along the lovely Danube riverfront quays, where they are tied together" and pushed "into the ice river." The test taker's problem is to "[p]lease explain how to continue profitable press operations

despite your crippling grief, thoughts of suicide, and the country's near-total economic collapse" (154). Now that Károly's wife had died, ostensibly as a result of Allies' invasion, he is falling to pieces. Unless he has a heart of stone, he will be forced to someday consider his own role in the events that brought his country to its knees.

In essay problem "xvi," the setup describes Hungary's defeat in yet another world war. Without currency, raw materials, and an infrastructure, conducting business is now impossible. The exam questioner, who now appears to be Károly's own conscience, must now let him reap what his extremist, nationalist views have sown. The setup ends by explaining how some "surviving Jews begin to return and reclaim their looted apartments, furniture, and other possessions. Please operate your family business in the current chaos, and with scarcely enough energy or desire to get out of your reeking bed" (155). While Phillips's use of absurdity made it appear that he was joking, he was not. Like Endre Horn, the ghost writer who fooled the young Károly, Phillip's straight-sounding language is really sarcastic, a ruse to carefully expose the irrationality of anti-Semitism in post-Communist Europe. Károly's extraordinary "test" was from the university of life, the sum of his experiences. Károly had wrongly predicted that the ideology of his unconventional, cosmopolitan, philo-Semitic father Imre—a love for the Other—would be the ruin of Hungary. As things happened, it was the nationalist, anti-Semitic dogma that he, Horthy, and other Hungarian leaders adopted that reduced it to shambles. By retaining his fear of the Other, Károly failed his test. Like Hungary's alliance with Germany, Károly chose the wrong friends with the wrong ideas. Phillips's negotiation with the historical complexities of post-Communist Hungary, call his characters into a state of accountability. For him, exorcising the ghosts of the past require some sort of meaningful confrontation with them.

Xenophobia in Post-Communist Poland: *Winter Zoo*

In Poland, my most impressionable encounter with something that resembled a "flippant" reaction to the Holocaust came not from a native or loudmouth tourist. It was from a Jewish-American expat who spent part of his year in Kraków and part of his year in San Francisco. The story begins one day in my former tattoo studio on Floriańska Street. An older gentleman, with glasses, a full white beard and hair, balding in the front, a long pony-tail in the back, came in one day, looking around with interest and speaking Polish in a funny, Yankee accent. I presumptively identified him as an American and asked him, as I would any client, if he would like me to give him a tattoo. "No thanks," he said smiling, "I already have one." "Could I see it?" I asked. Without a word, he pulled up the sleeve of his blue denim shirt and pointed to a crudely executed line of fading, tattooed characters on his forearm that read "B-7815." I recognized it immediately as the Auschwitz survivor's calling card. Thus began my friendship with Bernard Offen, a Jewish Holocaust survivor and filmmaker who has dedicated his life to helping other survivors process their repressed emotional pain and creating "second-generation witnesses" to the Holocaust by leading guided tours of areas related to his personal history.[47]

It was in turn-of-the-millennium Kraków and its environs where I based many of own my post-Communist European experiences and where Iowan John Beckman put the locus of his narrative *Winter Zoo* (2002). Beckman, who was there in 1990, would have been very familiar with Kraków since he also taught there (Goodheart). Like Phillips's *Prague*, Beckman's *Winter Zoo* was a first novel and made the *New York Times* most

[47] Bernard's Holocaust and post-Holocaust experiences are recorded a trilogy of documentary films: *The Work* (1983), *My Hometown Concentration Camp: A Walk in the Kraków Ghetto and Plaszów Camp* (1997), and *Process B-7815: My Auschwitz Tattoo Number* (1999).

"notable books" of the year list in December of 2002 ("Notable"). Unlike *Prague*, however, *Winter Zoo* doesn't take in-depth looks at historical anti-Semitism or call attention to the unheroic players in the Holocaust. *Winter Zoo* takes its stabs at organized religion, Judaism being no exception, and the culture of tourism that has grown up around Holocaust memorials in post-Communist Poland. Beckman's protagonist, Gurney, was a red-headed, dead-beat dad from Iowa who wanted to escape the impending and unwanted responsibilities of being a brand-new father, and perhaps enjoy one final fling as a carefree, wayward youth, by escaping to Poland, newly opened to the West, where his Polish-American cousin Jane had already expatriated herself.

Reviewers have made much of the decadence in *Winter Zoo*, but have failed to highlight another notable characteristic: the tendency of some of the novel's characters to make light of the Holocaust. For example, shortly after arriving to Kraków, Gurney found himself lost in the labyrinth of the medieval city. Upon rescuing him from some drunken, Cracovian locals, Jane's friends Jackie and Linda explained to Gurney that he was "hardly lost." He was "in Kazimierz." For them, it was a place to have fun. Aware of its history, they found the prospect of cavorting with "ghosts" invigorating. Surprised by Gurney's lack of response to their explanation, Linda asked, "You don't know Kazimierz? The old Jewish Quarter? Jane hasn't shown you? [. . .] I'd think you'd remember [. . .] It's completely haunted by the Holocaust" (Beckman 57). While many visitors to Poland might agree that, from a Jewish point of view, the country seems like a graveyard, Linda's comments foreshadow a morbid pleasure her friend Jackie gets from being in the presence of death. She wanted Gurney to share in this exuberance.

Notwithstanding Linda's remarks about Kraków's former Jewish populace, Gurney's internal and psychosomatic external reactions to the concept seem to be an inappropriate

response: “He thought of the cyanide smell and shivered” (57). Here, Beckman references an earlier incident where Gurney smelled the scent of cyanide gas from the smoke pollution he saw belching from a factory (54). Beckman intentionally juxtaposed this very recent memory with Linda’s new revelation that Gurney was standing in a place where countless Polish Jews died. Anyone familiar with Holocaust narrative would certainly get this inference to a smelling of the gas. But, realistically, why would Gurney? Beckman has given no indication that he is Jewish, nor someone familiar with Holocaust narrative. Until Linda’s qualifying rejoinder, Gurney gave no reaction to being in Kazimierz, as if he didn’t know why it was significant. His credibility as a believable character is called into question if careful readers stop to consider why an ordinary American twentysomething would, firstly, know that Zyklon B—if this is the chemical Beckman was insinuating—was indeed even made of cyanide, and, secondly, possess an olfactory “memory” of cyanide to respond to in the first place. The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state on their government website’s entry for “cyanide” that this chemical “does not always give off an odor, and not everyone can detect this odor.” Outside of the often-published description of a “bitter almond” scent, perhaps Gurney (or, Beckman) had read Czech Holocaust survivor Arnošt Lustig’s collection of short stories, *The Smell of Bitter Almonds.* But, that compilation was not published in English until 2001. While the hypothetical possibility of Gurney as a reincarnated “spirit” who died from gas at a death camp is certainly an intriguing one, his supposed “recall” of the cyanide smell is only helpful to readers if they are aware that “Hydrogen cyanide, under the name Zyklon B, was used as a genocidal agent by the Germans in World War II” (“Emergency”). Zyklon B—the hydrocyanide (prussic acid) based pesticide marketed as a disinfectant by I. G. Farben (Hilberg 220, Yahil 311)—had everything to do with the gas chambers of

Auschwitz-Birkenau (Dawidowicz 135) but not with the Kazimierz Ghetto[48] so why would Gurney make that connection? Is it simply misinformation or a confusion of the facts? Beckman doesn't offer a literal connection between cyanide and Zyklon B until later in the chapter (64).

Jackie, Linda's friend, then reveals her indifference for both the religious beliefs and deaths of millions in her follow-up to Gurney's ignorance of Kazimierz. Here, she refers to a place I am familiar with; in the summer of 2004, I rented a flat within walking distance of it. Understanding that Gurney knows nothing about his new environment, Jackie adds, "Then you haven't seen the graveyard" (57). When Gurney inquired, she answered, "It's the best part of Kraków, hands down. Remuh Cemetery, just three blocks from here. You can't see it from the street because it's hidden behind this big wailing wall" (58). Perhaps Jackie meant to imply a big "whaling" wall, as if the wall was of enormous proportions. However, Beckman's spelling here matches the spelling of Jerusalem's "Wailing" or "Western Wall," the final remnant of Herod's temple and a place of pilgrimage, lamentation, and Friday prayers. There's only one authentic "wailing wall" and it isn't in Kazimierz. Despite this, Beckman references it again later in the narrative (260). Almost all the major travel guides for Kraków now refer to the wall made of Jewish tombstone fragments in Remuh cemetery as the "wailing wall" (Moore 105). Perhaps this is where the characters, or Beckman, got their information.

Jackie's choice of words in her appraisal of Remuh Cemetery's sacred ground, a place where, in 1994, an old man still prohibited the entry of men not donning a yarmulke, read as if from a formulaic "off-the-beaten-path" description from the *Lonely Planet* travel

[48] There is a famous account of Adam Czerniaków, chief of the Warsaw Ghetto's *Judenrat*, taking a cyanide tablet (Dawidowicz 301), but that was not in Kraków and why would tablets have a distinctive smell as opposed to a distinctive taste?

guide. "You go in through this apartment building," Jackie continued, "that used to be a synagogue and come out into this graveyard that's all crammed with tombstones, all in Hebrew and covered with vines. It smells *great* in there, like dirt and mulch and life" (58). At this point, even the most uninformed reader might presume that Linda was either completely ignorant of her cultural faux pas or just completely apathetic. The reader may wonder if Jackie had a non-existentialist, optimistic philosophy with her ability to see only life in such a place of death. Or, perhaps her enthusiasm for cemeteries indicates a macabre fascination with the memory of the deceased. It is only a foreshadowing of her later behavior.

Where some people fear the dark or the night in a dichotomy that represents them as unknown "Others," Jackie embraced them. Her amusements coincided with the technical beginning of a Jewish day.[49] "I only go there when the sun's going down," Jackie explained, "that's when the sky's still light but the trees are black and there are all of these oil lamps burning on the graves. More importantly, that's when the snails come out. That's why I really go there" (58). She admitted to Gurney that she harvested the snails living there to "poach them like eggs" and "eat them with garlic butter." Beckman contrasts the beauty of one person's remembrance of the dead with the lighting of lamps and a view that the place is one reserved for spiritual reflection with another person's indifference of the dead and a view that the place is her personal farm to be cultivated for material sustenance.

If a Gentile knowingly defiles a Jewish cemetery, it might be perceived as an anti-Semitic action. If a Jew knowingly defiles a Jewish cemetery, it begins to look more like a religious transgression. The reader learns that Gurney is a Gentile by his own admission

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[49] A *halachic* (Jewish legislated) day is defined *not* as period delineated by midnights but rather by sunsets. Thus, a new day begins shortly after sundown (Rich, T.).

(63). However, it is never revealed if Jackie Witherspoon is Jewish, a fact that might cast light on her behavior. Whether she was or wasn't, her braggadocio in a Jewish cemetery insulted, at least, three tenets of cleanliness in, at least, orthodox forms of Judaism—eating nonkosher animals, touching nonkosher animals, and touching things that have touched the dead, which just so happened to be her food. Kosher dietary restrictions traditionally prohibit the consumption of snails as they belong to a class of creatures that "goeth upon the belly" and are therefore considered "detestable" (*Tanakh*, Vayikra 11:42). Secondly, although the snails were presumably alive when Jackie collected them from the Jewish cemetery, and touching a dead one would also be impure by an altogether different religious rule (*Tanakh*, Vayikra 11:24), she ultimately, and unashamedly, ate mollusks that had, in poetic probability, crawled or fed upon things that had, in turn, touched the dead, thus creating a further state of uncleanliness and a violation of another kosher prohibition (*Tanakh*, B'midbar 19:11). Beckman's characterization of Jackie seemed to emphasize that she was a dirty person who thrived in the nighttime.[50] Might her blaspheming acts indicated any traces of ethnic self-loathing? Beckman's own experience with that burial ground, for the purposes of researching his novel, must have differed from mine. He was in Kraków in 1990; I was there in 1993. By then, the graveyard was being locked at night, so Jackie's nocturnal adventures either happened before the gates were being locked or were imagined by Beckman as an act of criminal trespassing. Christian cemeteries are usually open at night and almost always have candles burning on the tombstones. Jewish ones were locked and

[50] This analogy is remindful of the first stanza of French poet Charles Baudelaire's *Le Mort Joyeux* (The Joyful Corpse) from 1857 which reads: "*Dans une terre grasse et pleine d'escargots / Je veux creuser moi-même une fosse profonde, / Où je puisse à loisir étaler mes vieux os*" (140). Translation by William Aggeler (1954): "In a rich, heavy soil, infested with snails, / I wish to dig my own grave, wide and deep, / Where I can at leisure stretch out my old bones."

later guarded, perhaps, to prevent the potential of vandalism, something recklessly encouraged by the fictional Jackie.

Despite Jackie's disturbing impiety, Gurney became fascinated with her. He would parallel Jackie's callousness with his own inappropriate behavior at a memorial for the dead. Gurney agreed to accompany Jackie and Linda on a visit to Oświęcim, the proper Polish place name for Auschwitz (59). But how was one supposed to approach a visit to Auschwitz? Would one set out as if to any other tourist attraction? Linda and Jackie, upon being asked by Gurney if they hadn't yet been to the exhibit, indicated one way to approach this unknown Other. "Of course we have," Linda answered him, "But it's good to go back" (59). Like Jackie's nighttime strolls through the Jewish cemetery, Linda would soon demonstrate an outward pleasure for her visits to Auschwitz in a way that didn't seem tantamount to either altruistic motivations or even academic interests. Linda and especially Jackie's eagerness actually turned Gurney on. The "thought of kissing her and eating her snails" made him re-imagine the Kraków region as "one big playground" of surreal proportions where they could "go to the graveyard and go to the zoo and climb the mossy walls of the castle" and "of all things, [go] to Auschwitz" (59). Their excursion to *Panstwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau* (The People's Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau), a scene that Beckman covered in about nine pages of the fifth chapter (59-67), proved to be an insightful critique of how some American sojourners try to make the post-Holocaust experience enjoyable as opposed to remorseful or educational.

Many expat narratives have dealt with the question of how to appropriately confront and respond to the issues of ethnocentrism, racism and the memory of the Holocaust in post-Communist Europe. For example, Richard Katrovas presented characters in "Empire" who approached these topics sideways and indirectly, while in "Why We Hate the Germans" the

characters approached them directly. Beckman's characters display an outward performance of triviality about their encounter with the memory of the Holocaust. On the bus the following day to the city of Oświęcim (Auschwitz), while eating donuts, Gurney asked Linda—sans Jackie—why she had said it was "fun" for her to go there. When they got closer to their destination, she asked, "Do you think you'll have a good time?" (61). He thought of the books by Elie Wiesel, Jerzy Kosinski,[51] the made-for-television miniseries Holocaust, and a poet survivor he had met through his parents before contemplating that "maybe this visit could be an act of nostalgia [. . .] maybe he could manage to enjoy it that way [. . .] A good time at Auschwitz!" (62). Gurney felt conflicted by his own thoughts and Linda admitted the peculiarity of her own fetish: "I kind of like it [. . .] I don't know why. I guess it's not a normal thing to like" (62).

Linda wasn't the only character with atypical reactions. Gurney too could show that he was either bored or unable to be moved by the subtext of Nazi iconography. At the gate, Linda translated aloud the ironic "ARBEIT MACHT FREI" arching over the top. Gurney, who "had seen countless photographs of the gate," responded indifferently: "I know, I know" (62). It had become, to Gurney, a meaningless cliché and even seeing it in person had no effect. Linda left Gurney at the museum, which looked to him like "a small college campus," another inability to make a mental connection with what must be common images of prisons and military barracks. Linda advised Gurney to find and fall in with a tour group already in progress, presumably to cheat the exhibit out of its fee. Gurney felt that it "was

[51] Unlike Arthur Phillips, who used fictional historicisms about old Dutch painters and Albert Einstein, John Beckman's literary references are mostly factual. Protagonist Gurney was likely referring to the highly controversial *The Painted Bird* (1965) by screenwriter Jerzy Kosinski who committed suicide in 1991 (Taylor, J. 24) and Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel's *Night* (1958), which made Oprah Winfrey's celebrated "Book Club" list in 2006. Winfrey also selected Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* for her book club in 2001 ("Oprah"). The Holocaust mini-series was also real. Directed by Marvin J. Chomsky, Gerald Green's Golden Globe winner *Holocaust* first aired on NBC in 1978 and featured the performances of Meryl Streep and James Woods (*IMDb)*.

nice to be alone. In this oddly peasant setting, he rather felt like a tourist again" (62). Although he still seemed to be in an outward denial about having fun, a few paragraphs later the narrator explains, "Here he was, enjoying himself at Auschwitz!" (63). In the infamous block of death exhibit, Gurney wished that "he could give at least the impression of horror (maybe by mustering sniffles or tears, maybe by closing his eyes in prayer)."[52] After looking at the photographs of children, a display that Beckman does well to commemorate in detail, Gurney "realized, too late, that he had been smiling" (64-65).

Gurney expressed no desire to see the crematoria, the one testimony to the atrocities most visitors to Oświęcim actually want to witness. Perhaps his repugnance was connected to his earlier shivering reaction to his thought of cyanide's smell in Kazimierz. He could seemingly confront everything about the Holocaust victims' experience before the moment of death—the ominous gate, the shabby barracks, the piles of suitcases, children's clothing, prosthetic devices, hair, and photographs—but not the actual gas chambers and ovens. Linda seemed to be looking for ways to soften the impact of the exhibit herself. As he and Linda walked by the gas chamber exhibit, she couldn't resist offering her commentary on the hatches from which "pellets of Zyklon B had been poured." They "had been added for effect sometime in the fifties," (65) she said, parroting a classic case in point that rank-and-file Holocaust deniers routinely love to list as one of the "proofs" to their revisionist arguments (Pressac 124; Stern 3). As the tour guide showed "how bodies were lifted by a

[52] Because it was released in 1993 (*IMDb*), director Steven Spielberg's adaptation of Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's List* (1982) could not have been one of Gurney's references since Beckman's chronology puts him in Poland in 1990. By 1993, however, Spielberg's *Schindler's List* had reintroduced the topic into the American mainstream—*Winter Zoo* was published in 2002, so Beckman should have been familiar with it. Gurney's impudence in this particular scene is strangely reminiscent of "The Raincoats," episodes 82 and 83 from Larry David's 1990-98 hit television series, *Seinfeld* (*IMDb*). In these episodes, protagonist Jerry and his girlfriend canoodle during a screening of *Schindler's List* and are discovered by his antagonist neighbor Newman, played by Wayne Knight. Because of their perceived disrespect for the sensitive subject matter of the film, Newman openly labels them as anti-Semites (David; *IMDb*). The difference between these vignettes is that Larry David, Jerry Seinfeld, and the character "Newman" are all Jewish. In *Winter Zoo*, Beckman's protagonist Gurney is not so identified (Beckman 63).

conveyor and then inserted by fours into the kiln [. . .] Linda looked on with no discernible expression" (65).

Gurney's character had several personality flaws; self-absorption, insensitivity, and a fear of an Other type of life—the one of adult accountability—were only a few of them. By the novel's end, Gurney performs an about face and tries to atone for his sins by giving back to the Kraków community. This is symbolized by the multiethnic party he organized, that included Roma participants, funded Robin Hood style with the same money he scammed from a casino. After his post-Holocaust experience at Auschwitz, Gurney never mentions issues related to xenophobia again. When Gurney decided to finally accept the responsibility of caring for his daughter, upon his return, did he ever think of the suffering little children endured in Nazi death camps with a "smile" as he did at the Auschwitz museum? Did Gurney want his child to grow up and enjoy the same degree of unbridled "fun" he had had exploring graveyards and visiting exhibitions in post-Communist Kraków, a reality denied to millions of children who died in the Holocaust?

Before Hitler's Final Solution, the word "holocaust" signified a Jewish ritual of sacrificial offering that was "wholly consumed" (*OED)* by flames "on an altar" (*NOAD)*. The metaphor of a sacrifice, the relinquishment of something highly valued for the promise of receiving something even more worthy, can never truly be linked to the postwar meaning of "Holocaust" as "the genocidal killing of millions of Jews" (Wilson 227) if nothing "worthier" ever emerges from our knowledge of the event. Were these deaths a "sacrifice"? If so, by whom and for whom? In *The Hero's Journey* (1990), Joseph Campbell comments on one of humanity's most base levels of thought, the drive of an "animal master" concerned with "the mystery of death, and the participation in this order of life, which is that life lives on life" and, too often, "lives on killing." This "sacrifice of animals," or humans, for

survival must in some way be reconciled in the individual psyche (71). However, when the killing is a demented, meaningless crime, there is no sacrifice metaphor or overarching rationalization to be found. Campbell's "monomyth" (see Appendix D) is one way to approach meaning in *Winter Zoo*. Part of Gurney's subconscious quest was to learn the meaning of sacrifice as a soul-healing elixir. By abandoning his infant child in the United States, in his phase of separation from the ordinary world, Gurney may have thought that he had sacrificed a conventional life for an unconventional one as an expat. In the course of his encounters along the road of trials, Gurney comes to understand that his base "fight or flight" reaction compelled him to run away from everything. Much like his refusal to confront the horrific reality of the Holocaust in Kazimierz, Remuh Cemetery, or at Auschwitz, Gurney wasn't confronting or sacrificing anything. Once Gurney is able to understand that the real sacrifice, for him, is the surrender of his self-centered, libertine lifestyle abroad for a life of unselfish giving to his daughter and her mother, he overcomes the "refusal of the return" stage and makes a huge step toward the reconciliation of his psyche. By crossing the "return threshold" between post-Communist Europe and the United States, Gurney leaves the special world of Poland—his personal world of unconsciousness—behind. He is reborn in time to heal the damage done to his newborn.

Unlike Arthur Phillips's sojourners in *Prague*, Beckman's other redeeming characters, it would appear, are Polish. Grazyna, the Polish woman Jane and Gurney were staying with, recalled how her own mother had "stopped talking" and "describing the hush of the transports" and her father's ability to "see over the walls into the ghetto" sometime "in the fifties." Grazyna's father "had never talked about it at all" (296). When her daughter, Wanda, lost her soccer ball in Remuh Cemetery, Wanda was apprehensive about seeming disrespectful. Wanda thought of a story her father had once told her about "the

wailing wall," a back wall of the cemetery "built from the remnants of Jewish headstones that had been shattered by Nazis during the war." Now, this "wailing wall was a place for reverence and prayer" (260). Unlike Americans Gurney, Jackie, and Linda, Polish Wanda was affected. Of these "holy and forgotten remains of a culture" and the "persecuted religion that for hundreds of years had shaped their nation, bringing richness and wealth and wisdom," she remembered her mother saying "Jewish memory" and her father saying "Polish shame" (231). Through Wanda, Beckman tries to portray a new generation of Poles who are ready to remember what their parents' generation wanted to forget.

## Xenophobia in Post-Communist Ukraine: *Everything is Illuminated*

Anti-Semitism and Jewish self-loathing, two outward, aggressive expressions of the unknown Other, played prominent roles in Jonathan Safran Foer's celebrated first novel, *Everything is Illuminated* (2002) and its cinematic adaptation by director Liev Schreiber in 2005. Of all the works covered in this study, this may be the best known. In this comedy of errors, Jonathan, a young American Jew, goes to late 1990s Ukraine—a country that once had a sizable Jewish population—to seek out evidence of the lady who saved his family from the Holocaust, only to discover that no one could recall the location of the shtetl called Trachimbrod. Both Alexander Perchov, a.k.a Sasha (Russian for Alex), Jonathan's initially xenophobic co-protagonist, and Sasha's senile grandfather, who was also named Alex, were commissioned by the father's personal tour guide business to oversee Jonathan's quest. By novel's end, the Perchov family would ultimately discover that, after all of their intolerant prejudices and misconceptions, that their grandfather had been an eyewitness to Nazi atrocities at Trachimbrod and a murderer—he fingered his best friend Herschel, a Jew, to the

Nazis. In the cinematic version, Sasha's grandfather would rediscover that he himself was a Jew who had escaped certain destruction in the Holocaust years due to a little luck and the assistance of a "righteous Gentile."[53]

*Everything is Illuminated* should be understood as the narrative of one American sojourner written by a similar American sojourner in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Ukraine. Even though *Prague Pill* editor Joshua Cohen categorized Foer as an expatriate writer, along with Arthur Phillips and Gary Shteyngart (Cohen), his classification as an authentic American expat is difficult to defend since his stay in Ukraine and Poland may not have been for the purpose of relocating there. Foer's protagonist "Jonathan" is likewise in Ukraine for an unspecified amount of time in the story; Foer was really there for five days. However, it is apparent that Foer did go there to work—he researched a book—and sojourned long enough elsewhere in post-Communist Europe to gather sufficient data to create a believable narrative based loosely on actual experience. In an interview with publisher Harper Perennial, Foer claimed that he returned to post-Communist Prague to write the story, something he didn't set out to do in the beginning (Interview). In a different interview, he told Robert Birnbaum that it took him two years from starting the project to completing the first draft (Interview with Jonathan). In any case, Foer is still an American sojourner whose profile parallels the other young American writers in this category, such as Arthur Phillips, Paul Greenberg, D. A. Blyler, and John Beckman. Foer was twenty years old at the time of his journey and nearly finished with college, a provisional adult. His fictional book *Everything is Illuminated*, written as if it were a work of creative non-

[53] Gentiles who purposefully follow the seven Noahide laws have been referred to by Talmudic rabbinic scholars as "righteous among the gentiles" (Schultz 363-64). Included among this privileged subgroup are Gentiles who actively helped to rescue Jews from the Holocaust. Such righteous persons, when discovered, are given a special award and recognition by Yad Vashem and the state of Israel (Paldiel 5).

fiction—i.e., "books that communicate information (reportage) in a scenic, dramatic fashion" (Gutkind)[54]—or straight travel fiction, still follows my framing device of three major encounters in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe. In addition to protagonist Jonathan's encounter with xenophobia, discussed at length here, he also encounters the Quarterlife Crisis and globalization, both discussed later.

Foer definitely created mysteries about himself, his own connection to history, and his experience in post-Holocaust Ukraine when he gave his own name to his narrative's protagonist. After reading several published interviews with Foer, I began to wonder if his "novel" was secretly an autobiographical account of the actual time he spent in the Ukraine or if he invented everything except the "hero's" name. While the novel's supporting characters and narrative could very well be straight fiction, "Jonathan Safran Foer" himself, or at least a person endowed with the same name, served as one of the co-protagonists—Sasha would be the other (3). Wouldn't the narrative have worked equally as well with a different name for the protagonist? Does it matter that the "ingenious Jew" (7) Sasha is so happy to have met is named Jonathan Safran Foer, or if his narrative is a furtive work of creative non-fiction or historical fiction? For legal purposes, Foer's copyright page reads, "This is a work of *fiction*. Names, characters, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination, except in the case of historical figures and events, which are used fictitiously, and, of course, the case of JSF himself" (viii, emphasis mine). Foer's disclaimer conveniently freed him from any factual accountability about his time in Ukraine and granted him the ultimate artistic license to omit, misremember, re-tell, or invent any aspect

[54] Lee Gutkind "founded the creative nonfiction program and MFA degree in the genre—the first in the world—at the University of Pittsburgh" (Gutkind). Creative non-fiction sounds, to some, like a contradiction of terms. In literature focused on the Holocaust, Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (1986) fits into this category. While *Maus* centers on a first-person, historical account of a Holocaust survivor and his son (the author), characters of Jewish ethnicity are graphically represented in the text as cartoon mice and Nazis are portrayed as cats.

of the narrative he wanted to relate.[55] Foer's apparent intention is to entertain and his unorthodox approach allowed him the best of all worlds. By writing what could be his own travel story in the guise of fiction, Foer follows in the tradition of writers such as Geoffrey Chaucer[56] and posits himself as the antithesis of authors recently discovered to have written fiction in the guise of their own memoir,[57] an issue of special concern to Holocaust narratives.[58]

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[55] In his article, "The Autobiographical Contract Revisited" (2002), Orla Vigsø of *Nordens Folkliga Akademi i Göteborg* (The Nordic People's Academy at Gothenburg) reexamined Philippe Lejeune's *Le pacte autobiographique* (The Autobiographical Pact) from 1975 and posited that, occasionally, it can be difficult differentiating between the genres of fiction and autobiography. Lejeune, as quoted by Vigsø, defines autobiography as "a retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his own existence, focusing on his individual life, in particular on the development of his personality" (1). It must, according to Vigsø's clarification of Lejeune, meet the following conditions: it may be in the linguistic form of either narrative or prose; its subject must involve an individual life's or personal history; the author must be situated in the identity between author (whose name designates a real person) and narrator; the narrator must be positioned in such a way that the narrator and protagonist are identical; and the narration must be oriented as a retrospection. To count as autobiography, a text must comply with all of these stipulations or otherwise be categorized as a "biography, first person novel, diary, [or] self-portrait" (2). By the same effect, Lejeune prescribed several qualifying conditions for texts claiming to be works of fiction (3). One of the impossibilities, as quoted by Vigsø, is "a work of fiction in which the name of the protagonist is the same as the name of the author" (3). According to Vigsø's explanation, even "if the narrative is, in historical terms, completely false, it will be a lie (which is an autobiographical category) and not fiction." He added, "there is nothing preventing such a combination from being tried out by an author," as Foer has presently attempted, "but if such a case were to happen, 'the reader has the impression that there has been a mistake' " (4). Under Lejeune's rules, *Everything is Illuminated* is neither autobiography nor fiction. Because it has violated an understood "contract" with the reader about what fiction is supposed to be, it is a lie. Vigsø conducts a case study on two Danish novels that likewise use the author's full name as the narrative's protagonist: Peter Høeg's *De Måske Egnede* (Borderliners: A Novel) from 1993 and Klaus Ribjerg's *Marts 1970* (March 1970) from 1970.

[56] Chaucer, it is believed, actually took a pilgrimage similar to the one he used as a framework for his collection of fictional narratives, *Canterbury Tales* (Pollard xxxii).

[57] An example close to Foer's publication date (2002) is James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* (2003), a work that was originally published as a creative non-fiction memoir about the author's life of decadence and rehabilitation in the 1990s. After a six-week investigation by *The Smoking Gun*, the publishers were forced to retract their backing of the author and now classify Frey's work as a fiction ("A Million"). Frey's explanatory note in the preface of the 2006 edition is his admittance to the fraud (Frey). More recently, Margaret B. Jones, a pseudonym for Margaret Seltzer, confessed to the *New York Times* that her recent memoir, *Love and Consequences*, was largely fabricated (Rich, M.).

[58] For example, Polish Holocaust survivor Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* (1965) weathered a good deal of controversy. In his "Afterward," which is actually the introduction to the 1976 edition (xi-xxvi), Kosinski explained how the novel was at first touted, wrongly, by its reviewers as an autobiographical account of his Holocaust experience. When Poles who thought that they were the characters portrayed in his book claimed Kosinski was a liar, he was attacked as a fraud. Kosinski claims that he purposefully made the details in his novel vague and never claimed or intended it to be understood as his own story. Perhaps Foer wanted to avoid a similar situation.

Borrowing from the facetious English language title of Tadeusz Borowski's collection of Polish short stories, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*—originally published in 1948 (Vedder 9) as *Pożegnanie z Marią* (Farewell to Maria)—Matthew Leon titled his review of Liev Schreiber's film adaptation of *Everything is Illuminated* (2005), "Ladies and Gentleman: Pop Genocide." The adjective "Pop" is a fitting description for the novel, as well, since Foer's irreverent style seemed to bridge the ever-widening gulf between post-Holocaust awareness and American popular culture. A line-by-line analysis of each instance of xenophobia in *Everything is Illuminated* warrants a project much larger in scale than can be presented here.

Much like Richard Katrovas and Arthur Phillips, Foer uses black humor as an overall tone for his juxtaposition of absurd situations and language with the tragic history of Ukrainian Jews. Phillips did this in *Prague* (2002) with Hungarian Jews, and the pattern continues in narratives contemporary with his. For example, much in the way Jewish comedian Sacha Baron Cohen stereotyped Kazak characters such as "Borat,"[59] who, in turn, stereotyped other ethnic groups in his mockumentary film,[60] Jewish novelist Foer stereotypes Ukrainians with his Perchov characters who, in turn, stereotype Jews and African Americans. In fact, Foer's characterizations came first; it would be interesting to see how much his "Sasha" character is in fact, duplicated in Baron's "Borat."

There is also internal parallelism within *Everything is Illuminated*. As a Jew himself, Foer atypically derides a prewar Jewish shtetl society in Russian-controlled Poland and

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[59] The character Borat hails from Kazakhstan, the planet's ninth biggest nation, a polity who territory west of the Ural river falls within the eastern most limits of Eastern Europe (Fergus 20).

[60] It took the fictional Kazakhstani character "Borat Sagdiyev" in *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan* (2006), to match Sasha Perchov's level of offensiveness. Both *Borat* and *Everything is Illuminated* included post-Communist characters that intentionally and unintentionally belittled Jews, and African-Americans.

Ukraine[61] in a fanciful, and completely farcical, episodic parody as a secondary narrative sandwiched between the contemporary primary narrative of Jonathan and the Perchovs. Foer's fantastic representation seems to tribute Yiddish humorist Sholem Rabinovich (Aleichem)'s fictional memoirs of shtetl life in Tsarist Russia, *Tevye the Dairyman* (1894), the source of the Broadway production *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964). However, rather than a celebration, Foer's narrative is a mockery of the traditions associated with Eastern European shtetl culture and can hardly be understood as work that captures the true spirit of this nearly extinct way of life. Foer's stereotyping of his own people is paralleled by Sasha and his grandfather who berate American Jews—for they seem to know little of Ukrainian Jews—and their perception of how American Jews live in a more multicultural United States. The irony is that the Perchovs themselves are Jews, although they do not know it until the end of their journey with Jonathan.

In order to separate the voices of his colorful characters, Foer incorporated several "inventive techniques" (Apte). One technique was the mitosis of Jonathan Safran Foer. The actual or original Jonathan Safran Foer is the person who wrote the novel; hereafter, I will refer to him as "Foer." The second Jonathan Safran Foer is a mere player in the story with the Perchovs, whom I will refer to hereafter as "Jonathan," a fictional character that, except for the narrative itself, shares every other trait, such as being a writer, with the "real" Foer. Author Foer split himself into two identities, with his creation of a doppelgänger, to serve a twin purpose—as the fictional Jonathan whom narrator Sasha refers to as "the Hero" in the 1990s Perchov narrative and as the outside narrator of a collection of backstory fragments

[61] The outer regions of present-day western Ukraine were once situated within the prewar eastern national boundary of Poland. The area was given back to Ukraine after World War II (Subtelny 481). This explains why there are references to the Polish culture (Foer 12, 15, 50-51) that surrounded the areas Jonathan and Sasha explored. Today, those areas are seated within contemporary Ukrainian national borders.

about a now vanquished shtetl called Trachimbrod.[62] The name split is paralleled elsewhere in the novel. The Perchovs have three Alexanders, the grandfather, the father, and the son. The Perchov family only refers to the youngest Alexander as "Sasha," the Russian diminutive of Alexander, or "Shapka," a Russian word that means "fur hat" (Foer 1) and sounds similar to "Sasha." He even refers to himself and to his family, as Sasha but to Jonathan as Alex. There are two Sashas—the one who he is and the one who he wants to be. A similar dichotomy exists for the Perchov grandfather. At one point in the book, it is revealed that his real name is "Eli," a simple village man from a shtetl called "Kolki" (152, 252). Neither Sasha nor his father knew this about "Eli." They had always understood that Grandfather was Alexander Perchov the first who had come from Odessa (5). The grandfather too, then, had two versions of himself—a public identity as "Alexander" and a secret identity as "Eli."

Foer's other inventive technique was in his organization of the Trachimbrod chapters. This fantastic subplot, which incorporated elements of magical realism (Watman), is divided into disconnected sections and then interdispersed within the primary narrative sections set in the 1990s. Foer/Jonathan's coarsely imagined history of his ancestors,[63] doesn't come across as ethnically self-loathing,[64] per se, but is demonstrably *critical* of

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[62] Foer's fictional shtetl of "Trach*im*brod" is a slight misspelling of an actual, historical shtetl called "Troch*en*brod" (Eisenberg, R.) or "Troch*in*brod" (Barco) that also once existed near the city of Lutsk and was later renamed "Zofiowka," a near-homonymic match for Foer's "Sofiowka" (Foer 7).

[63] Foer, who as Jonathan was accused of being "uninformed" by Sasha (25), got more than a few "facts" wrong about Jewish Ukrainian/Polish history in this novel. For example, in certain places in his Trachimbrod narrative of the 1800s, Foer made mention of Klezmer music (95, 141, 268). However, "the term *klezmer* is a recent phenomenon [first] coined and applied [in] the 1930s when it was first used to describe the type of music a Jewish folk musician played" (Nidel 299). The roots of the modern Klezmer music Foer may have heard during his time in turn-of-the-millennium, post-Communist Ukraine "arose from the meeting of jazz and Jewish folk music in America in the twentieth century" (Watson).

[64] The University of Chicago's cultural and literary historian Sander Gilman quantified self-loathing as a concept resulting "from outsider's acceptance of the mirage of themselves generated by their reference group—that group in society which they see as defining them—as a reality. This acceptance provides the

himself, Judaism, and the social effects of performing organized religion, in general. While overtly imaginary, the Trachimbrod sections are the only parts of the overall narrative presented to the reader with Jonathan as the outside narrator. They include the comical, misadventures of shtetl Jews with blatantly stereotypical—or invented—names such as Trachum, Trachim B, Hanna, Chana, Bitzl Bitzl R, Yankel D, Sofiowka N (Foer 9), Shloim W, Isaac M, Pinchas T, Mordechai C (10), Menasha, Shanda, Avrum R (12), Froida Y, Eliezar Y (13), and a "Well-Regarded Rabbi" (9). It seems unlikely that Foer consulted one-time-resident Eleazar Barco's account of the non-fictional shtetl of Trochenbrod which listed the actual names of its prominent Jewish citizens who, upon comparison, are entirely different from the ones in *Everything is Illuminated*.

Like *Prague*'s Arthur Phillips, Foer is a Jewish-American writer (Birnbaum, Interview with Arthur; Interview with Jonathan). Both created equally fictitious histories for their respective, non-fictional towns—Budapest and Trochenbrod. However, unlike Phillips, Foer belittles the memory of a Ukrainian village destroyed by the events of the Holocaust. In *Everything is Illuminated*, the character Jonathan is a writer who is composing a tale about his "great-great-great-great-grandmother" Brod, a one-time resident of "Trachimbrod" (16). Jonathan sends Sasha the Trachimbrod story in chunks and gets his feedback in Sasha's letters. The Trachimbrod narrative is replete with paradoxical pronouncements.

Consider, for example, this surreal snippet of a lengthier dialogue from Trachimbrod's "Venerable Rabbi" (17). In all caps, Jonathan's indication of "screaming," the Venerable Rabbi, "always starting his sentences with 'and,' " instructed, "AND AS

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criteria for the myth making that is the basis of any communal identity" (Gilman 2). Foer definitely created a myth about Trachimbrod, a town lost to history, and Sasha, who comes to grips with his own links to Judaism later in the story, reinforced the Ukrainian popular myth of the Jew as outsider.

GOD ASKED ABRAHAM TO SHOW ISAAC THE KNIFE'S POINT, SO IS HE ASKING US NOT TO SCRATCH OUR ASSES! AND IF WE MUST, BY ALL MEANS WITH THE LEFT HAND!" (17). If this strange comparison—God's request that Abraham sacrifice his son and a rejoinder that shtetl citizens refrain from scratching—weren't disturbing enough, he concludes with equally blasphemous conclusion. He informed his synagogue audience, "WE FULFILL THE LAW BY TRANSGRESSING IT" (18). As narrator, Jonathan's choice of tone and language—entirely in uppercase—forces the reader to wonder if the *real author* Foer is demonstrating Jewish self-loathing, or if these characteristic only belong to the hyper-fictional, alternate-reality Jonathan. Perhaps Foer felt he was safe in his irreverence because he could hide behind the fact that he wrote about a fictional town called "Trachimbrod," spelled with an "im" instead of the historical "Trachenbrod" which was spelled with an "en" or "in." By doing so, he may have hoped to dodge the possibility of insulting any real personages, such as his own family, who may have descendants, such as Foer, that exist today because their grandparents survived the Holocaust.

Except for a few of the chapters that are told in conventional, first person narrative from the perspective of Sasha as storyteller, the other chapters are strictly epistolatory in form. They are composed as letters from Sasha to Jonathan, after his return to the U. S., and provide not only Sasha's questions about and criticism regarding Jonathan's ethnographic fiction of Trachimbrod—which had been submitted to Sasha in separate, progression of mailings over a period of time—but also the body of the primary narrative. Thus, the two young men each exchanged chapters of their "story." Jonathan's series of fairytale-like vignettes poked irreverent fun at the Trachimbrod of yesteryear.

Sasha's use of "self-taught" (Borenstein 34), "broken, thesaurus-driven English […] misuses verbs, idioms, and conventional writing styles" and makes "for often humorous, though sometimes irritating reading" (Broder par. 2). His literary voice has been aptly described by reviewers, in both the novel and film adaptation, as the sound of someone who "culled from a few late-night acid trips" (Leon par. 3) with a "Russian/English dictionary in one hand" (Watman par. 29), and a "Roget's Thesaurus" in the other resolving "to treat all the secondary definitions as primary" (Borenstein 34). Sasha's account unintentionally ridicules Jonathan, himself, and his own family in his recollection of their recent adventures in Ukraine, even when he is trying not to. Jonathan's letters to Sasha were not included in the literary mix so the story is one-sided in this regard. They were referred to only in Sasha's correspondence to Jonathan. Perhaps Foer felt Sasha's voice added authenticity to the story.

Sasha's struggle to find the right words reveal his initial inclination to stereotype the Other. For example, when he Sasha met Jonathan for the first time at the train station, he imagined that Jonathan "would think that the yellow and blue papers" decorating the depot for Ukraine's constitution day, "were for him, because [he knew] that they are the Jewish colors" (Foer 31). When Sasha finally found Jonathan, he "was very flabbergasted by his appearance. This is an American […] And also, This is a Jew? He was severely short [and] wore spectacles and diminutive hairs not split anywhere, but rested on his head like a *Shapka* [Russian fur hat]" Sasha was surprised that Jonathan "did not appear like either the Americans [he] had witnessed in magazines, with yellow hairs and muscles, or the Jews from the history books, with no hairs and prominent bones." Furthermore, Jonathan "was wearing nor blue jeans nor the uniform" and Sasha "was underwhelmed to the maximum" (33). As if from the unintentional and naïve "mouth of babes," Sasha would typically

express misunderstanding for why his comments were considered offensive. Sometimes, the reader is left to wonder, has Sasha purposefully chosen his words to insult Jonathan or is he just a simpleton, honestly expressing his views the way that he learned them? In a later development, Sasha confides that he tells Jonathan non-truths to protect him. That is why he tried "so inflexibly to be a funny person" (226).

The Perchovs' apparent racism continues when "the hero"—the phrase with which Sasha "dubs" Jonathan in the parts of the narrative he narrated—is asked to "roost" in the backseat of his grandfather's car with a dog that made him nervous. "Grandfather" was, in turn, made nervous by the untranslated English language exchanged between Jonathan and Sasha, a language he did not understand. "Tell him to shut his mouth or I will drive us off the road," Grandfather told Sasha in Ukrainian, "The Jew must be silenced. I will kill us" (Foer 58). Previously, Sasha's grandfather, who was practically blind, had complained that he did "not want to drive ten hours to an ugly city to attend to a spoiled Jew" (24). The "Seeing-Eye bitch," as Sasha so eloquently referred to his grandfather's dog, was named, ironically, "Sammy Davis, Junior, Junior,"[65] a moniker both Ukrainian men pronounced in English. Whether or not Sasha and his grandfather—characters both symbolically blind themselves—actually knew that the historical Sammy Davis was blind in one eye is not revealed. It would represent a parallel between the grandfather and Davis. Sight-deficient Davis, gave up his Gentile designation and converted to Judaism; Sasha's sight-deficient grandfather, as the cinematic version reveals, gave up Judaism to pass as a Ukrainian Gentile. The final absurdity with the dog is that its namesake was male, something Jonathan and Sasha should have found peculiar since the dog was female.

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[65] The final part of the dog's epithet "Junior, Junior" is reminiscent of the ridiculously named character "Major Major Major Major" from Joseph Heller's 1961 novel about World War II, *Catch-22* (85).

Neither Sasha nor his grandfather saw the final irony of the dog's name because of their ignorance of the fact that the real Davis was a Jewish proselyte. "A convert," Jonathan told the unbelieving Sasha. "He found the Jewish God." Upon hearing the translation, Sasha's grandfather screamed in Ukrainian, "Sammy Davis, Junior was not a Jew! [. . .] He was the Negro of the Rat Pack!" Sasha, who was not yet referring to Jonathan by his name, told his grandfather, "The Jew is certain of it." "The Music Man?" Grandfather asked, "A Jew? This is not a possible thing!" Outraged, Grandfather immediately renamed the dog "Dean Martin, Junior," after the Italian-American Rat Pack singer, and recalled her to the front of the car (58). Such blatant misunderstandings of all things Jewish or non-Ukrainian persists throughout the entire narrative and gives readers an overall sense of the cultural divide that had separated post-Communist Europe, a region seemingly frozen in time since the 1950s, and Westerners like Jonathan who were equally ignorant of Central and Eastern Europe.

In *Everything is Illuminated*, each of the primary characters on the journey, who are lost at the narrative's beginning, experience their own separate transformations and truly find themselves. In the case of Sasha and his grandfather, their previous fear of the stranger or the Other is transformed into a love and respect for the Other. Their real obstacle had been their misidentification of the Other. For Sasha and his grandfather, the true stranger was not Jonathan as a Jew and an American or any Other to be found outside of themselves. For them, the Other they couldn't quite recognize *was* themselves. In her book, *Strangers to Ourselves* (1988), Julia Kristeva discusses the idea that the meaning of xenophobia, the fear of the stranger, is actually a fear of something within the individual. The stranger or foreigner, she argued, "lives within us" and by recognizing "the hidden face of our identity" within "ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself" (1). For as long as Sasha and his

father had been alive, Jews and foreigners had represented the Other. The Perchovs' grandfather had been a vocal anti-Semite with a xenophobia he passed along to his children and grandchildren. However, when Sasha's grandfather remembered, thanks to Jonathan's investigation of Trachimbrod, that he himself had somehow played a role in the death of a Jew, he found absolution in his eventual suicide.

In the cinematic adaptation, there is a different ending. Schreiber reinterpreted Grandfather as someone finding resolution after he remembers that he is Jewish, an identity he had split away from and repressed after nearly being killed in the Holocaust. Sasha too, in this version, was able to find peace when he realized that the Jew he feared was himself. When Sasha found that he had no reason to fear Jews—in fact, he had come to like Jonathan who was already breaking down stereotypes for him—he also had no more reason to fear or hate himself.

In Sasha's last letter to Jonathan in the novel, he no longer closes with "Guileless, Alexander" (5). Instead, he writes "Love, Alex," as if to a brother. In both versions of Foer's narrative, the Perchovs make the healing transition from xenophobia to xenophilia.

## Where American Post-Holocaust Narratives Have Value

Post-Holocaust narratives such as the ones found within American expat texts have value in that they may reach an audience not actively seeking the Holocaust as a topic. They are American narratives written by young American writers and would likely have some appeal to young American readers. As an educator, I see their potential as a learning tool or a way in to a real discussion of the historical Holocaust. It is important to keep the underlying issues of xenophobia and the mayhem it creates as an ongoing discussion.

According to a study from 2004, Ellen Broido claimed that American college-aged "Millennials" differ from their Generation X predecessors—the mainstay of authors and characters from this literature—on issues of equality, justice, prejudice, and intolerance (73). "Most indicators," Broido reports, "point toward Millennials having more open attitudes toward issues of diversity and social justice, although there are a number of trends challenging that perspective" (76). It is these trends for which we must remain alert. For example, on the topic of "Race and Racism," she warned, "The Millennial generation has grown up with more mixed messages about race and race relations than perhaps any previous generation" (77).

Perhaps such inconsistency exists because xenophobia, intolerance, and a "suspicion and identification of strangers" (Shaw 66) are part of a long, historical narrative that did not, unfortunately, find a welcomed conclusion with either the liberation of concentration camps, the introduction of atomic warfare, the creation of the Internet, the fall of the Berlin wall, or the fall of New York City's World Trade Center towers. And, whether our scientific disciplines ultimately determine[66] that such anti-social, survival-inclined behaviors are either environmentally-spawned/learned or merely "surface-level [expressions] of more complex primordial structures" (Shaw 66) such as genetic tendencies, they still represent a hindrance to social progress and justice in the region. Writing as a Southerner who was also raised in a region once troubled and divided, I have come to understand that hate, even if uninformed, self-perpetuates itself. As the supporting Czech character Monika tells protagonist Nix, in American expat Robert Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts* (1997), "the story doesn't end there. Each

[66] As with other social issues like identity and IQ, the nature versus nurture debate on why behaviors such as ethnocentrism exist is still unresolved. In their thesis on conflict, Paul Shaw and Yuwa Wong, citing Rutgers anthropologist—and poet—Robin Fox, claimed that "nature versus nurture" and "humans versus animals" structures are "obsolete and untenable" false dichotomies (Shaw 66). For example, both deterministic options/assumptions ignore the historically philosophical, and theoretical, possibility of free will.

generation passes its history to the next. The story never ends" (Eversz 71). If Monika's pre-millennial story is *still*[67] one of traditionalist, misinformed prejudices, it will be up to a community of civic-minded educators to counter-balance the trend and, hopefully, begin its reversal it in this era. In the epigraph to this chapter, Hugo pessimistically warned that "it is a fateful part of human destiny that it is condemned to wage perpetual war" against the likes of prejudice, the gateway to bigotry (Hugo 1206). This, however, seems to be the easy way out. Let those of us who still advocate self-determinism concur with American social critic Henry David Thoreau—writing in *Walden* (1854)—that especially in this postmodern age of possibility,[68] for Generation X-era writers, it "is never too late to give up our prejudices" (329).

[67] In his consideration for "the conditions necessary for the creation of modernist-type histories" and subsequent argument "that these have disappeared," Jean Baudrillard maintained in *The Illusion of the End* (1992) that "there will be a new sort of history in the future of a type which we have not yet seen, histories 'without end' " (Jenkins, K. 34).

[68] In *Postmodern Moments in Modern Economics* (2003), authors David Ruccio and Jack Amariglio suggested that the "discursive and semiotic play" of self-reflexive, postmodern, "deconstructive styles of writing," as "opposed to the minimalism and parsimony of characteristic of 'high modernist' moments in culture and theory," signal "a new age of possibility" in its "proliferation of meanings" and "voicing of previously repressed desires" (Ruccio 22). In 2001, the New York based marketing research and consulting firm PortiCo released the results of a four month film documentary project entitled *Twentysomethings—Coming of Age in the Age of Possibility* (Cavalieri) that attempted to explain "an elusive demographic coveted by marketers" sometimes dubbed as the "last of the Gen X-ers." The findings of this project put a more positive spin on the American "options generation" as one that was busy "creating a culture of possibility" ("Twentysomethings—Coming").

# CHAPTER III

## TURNING POINT WITH THE PRESENT: PROVISIONAL ADULTHOOD

. . . and in the middle of investigation / I break down
Out of college, money spent / See no future, pay no rent / All the money's gone, nowhere to go . . .

—John Lennon and Paul McCartney, "You Never Give Me Your Money" (1969)

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"The crisis of today is the joke of tomorrow."—H. G. Wells (66)

"Now what?" These were the words that flashed on the screen in the opening of Ben Stiller's film *Reality Bites* (1994), a generation-defining narrative about a group of 1990s Houston twentysomethings who had just graduated from college. Although I had left the United States by the time it was released,[1] in retrospect its subject matter paralleled my own concerns at the time. In 1993, I was twenty-five years old, still well within the limitations of what Gail Sheehy[2] defined in 1974 as "provisional identity" in *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life* (49): a tentative period where young Americans between twenty and thirty, according to Daniel Bagby, fearful "of making long-term commitments and decisions" try to "buy themselves time to work on the recipe of embracing the requirements of adulthood" (4). In retrospect, I can see now that I didn't yet know who I was or what I really wanted. Unaware that I had been living what James Hollis says "constitutes a false self" (7), I was enacting what numerous psychological studies have long referred to as a "provisional

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[1] *Reality Bites* was renamed *Génération 90* for its overseas French audience ("Generation"). This fact is worth an expository comparison to Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz's 2002 documentary for Polish Television, *Pokolenie '89* [*Generation '89*] which highlighted, to quote myself, a very different "generation of Polish young people that led a revolution in their country in 1989, effectively overthrowing the influence of one of the most powerful superpowers at the time, the Soviet Union, which overtly ghosted much of the policy-making for Communist Poland through puppet leaders like General Wojciech Jaruzelski" (Hobbs "When").

[2] Sheehy, who helped popularize the expression "midlife crisis" in her original study, wrote an updated version in 1995 for the cohort of Americans she refers to as "the engendered generation," or, those born between 1966 and 1980 (*New Passages* 25).

adulthood" (Morton 46; Sheehy, *Passages* 87; Sheehy, *New* 48; Hollis 7). Born in 1968, I am a part of an American cohort commonly called "Generation X,"[3] the nameless successors to "The Greatest Generation" and the "Baby Boomers."[4] Like the implied speaker in Lennon and McCartney's lyrical narrative, I too had finally completed my undergraduate education, something I thought my social structure expected me to do. Government-provided grant money and assorted work-study campus jobs would no longer be available to me.

Approaching what several English dictionaries refer to as my "adultescence,"[5] my immediate present—from a naïve, twenty-five-year-old's perspective—did not seem to capture the spirit of what living in the moment was supposed to encapsulate. During my years at community college, I had once held a job as an art director at an innovative embroidery factory in Mississippi, where I had trained designers who already had their baccalaureates in applied art to work underneath my authority. Every authority figure in my life counseled me to quit this job and finish college at a four-year institution, which I did, by

[3]The word "Generation X," as a generational descriptor, has been evidenced in written circulation long enough to circumvent a lengthy essay in apologetics. It refers chiefly to a kind of imagined community of North Americans, depending on the source, born during the "early 1960s," according to the *American Heritage Dictionary* (*AHD*), or after the year 1965, if the *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* is to be trusted. The *AHD* cuts off membership to Generation X for those born in the late 1970s while Princeton University's *WordNet 3.0* grants inclusion for babies born at anytime in the 1970s. The *Oxford English Dictionary* [*OED*] specifies that Generation "Xers" are an age group of young Americans who would have reached "adulthood in the 1980s and 1990s" and are "perceived to be disaffected, directionless, or irresponsible, and reluctant to participate in society." In a more general sense, the *OED* paints Generation Xers as "A generation of young people about whose future [in America] is uncertainty" and, more interestingly, "a lost generation."

[4]In their 1991 book, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*, William Strauss and Neil Howe dated the Boom Generation as those born between 1943 to 1960 (Howe 36). In his 2004 revisit to that era, *Boomer Nation: The Largest and Richest Generation Ever, and How It Changed America*, author Steven Gillon wrote that while there "is no agreement about the dates that make up the Baby Boom [. . .] most observers define it as those born between 1946, when births started their dramatic climb, and 1964, when widespread use of the Pill contributed to a decline in birthrates" (Gillon 13).

[5] The *New Oxford American Dictionary* (2005) defines "adultescent" as a lexical creation of the 1990s that means "middle-aged person whose clothes, interests, and activities are typically associated with youth culture." *Webster's New Millennium Dictionary of English* (2007) lists the word as a synonym of "kidult" and emphasis the middle-age *desire* "to be associated with youth culture and whose choices in clothing, activities, etc. reflect this" (Kipfer).

relocating to Mobile in 1990. In the summer of 1993, with a bachelor's of art in hand, I had, on paper, completed what those mentors predicted I would need. Naïvely, I prematurely concluded that the most difficult part my quest was then completed.

Did I want to take a chance at working at some sweatshop screen-printing operation or other manufacturing plant under some old-timer who was probably less qualified than I? Getting through college was a struggle, during which I had humbled myself to near-poverty conditions in a recession-stricken economy where each successive job demanded more hours from me for less pay. My resignations from these jobs almost always centered around an employer's refusal to cooperate with my changing class schedules. I had watched the Berlin Wall come down from afar. I had read the newspaper articles about a new "Left Bank" scene in post-Communist Europe. At the cusp of a millennium without a Cold War, I wanted to be a part of something different, something historical, or something important. In *Beyond the Myths: The Journey to Adulthood* (2007), Daniel Bagby, paraphrasing Sheehy, wrote that provisional adults might use their twenties to go to graduate school, join the military, or find "another form of temporary distraction" from the agony and "restless discomfort over not feeling ready" for long-term commitments (2). I was lost, and after investigating my immediate options, I felt I had nowhere to go except to the place that Boris Fishman and other American expats were calling the "Wild East" (xi). I didn't know at the time that my present particular crisis—that is, a failure to find direction or real meaning in my current situation—would be something shared by so many other Americans in my age group.

This chapter concentrates on one notable aspect of the zeitgeist, or present, of Generation X American expats in late twentieth-century post-Communist Europe. In Robert Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts* (1997), Nix's Czech love interest, Monika, connected the present—

her 1990s "present"—to her interpretation of American art and entertainment exported to post-Communist Europe. She informed him that, like the film industry, he was "so American [. . .] Movies are now. Movies don't live in the past. Just like Americans" (70). Literary narrative, with its frequent intertextual connections with cinematic narrative (Allen 174), also lives and speaks for the time period in which it was created. Many of the expat-themed narratives published thus far about late twentieth-century post-Communist Europe surfaced shortly after the turn-of-the-millennium—2002, for instance, was a prolific year ("Notable")—while the topic was still relatively fresh in the moment.

In this loosely adapted analogy from Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843)—the sojourner's encounter with the Spirit-of-Europe-Present differs from the Spirit-of-Europe-Past in that, rather than confronting what was usually an outside source of antagonism, the focus of this experience is a personal, inner-struggle. The encounter is often acted out externally, though, and borrows chiefly from a theory of understanding American twentysomethings recently publicized as the "college-to-career stalling phenomenon" known by its "sociopsychological label: the Quarterlife Crisis" (Lawrence). Understanding this crisis helps clarify many issues pertinent to the characters of American expat narratives that use the coming-of-age, bildungsroman model.

## The "Quarterlife Crisis" Syndrome

Alexandra Robbins and Abbey Wilner's "Quarterlife Crisis" is defined as a pattern of maladjusted behavior, as outlined in their 2001 book of the same name. They posit this condition as the challenging and uneasy phase of existence some young adults experience between the angst of adolescence and the well-established "crisis" associated with middle

age. In an interview with Robbins, ABC reporter Keturah Gray wrote that while "cutesy names have been suggested for [sufferers of these] very real feelings, like the twixter[6] (they're 'betwixt and between') or the adultolescent [sic], scholars and sociologists recognize this period as a legitimate developmental stage" (Gray, K.). Given enough study and attention, perhaps this millennial, popular-psychology phenomenon might someday find itself listed in a future edition of American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*) as one more variety of "Adjustment Disorder," (American 679-684) a category[7] that has already been suggested (Kruger 1299) for victims of the better-known "midlife crisis"[8]—a phrase coined by Elliot Jaques in 1965 (Elliot 502).

The core of Robbins and Wilner's theory—the chronic symptom of "instability" in late-twentieth-century twentysomethings—is one that has also received scholarly attention. For example, the University of Maryland's Jeffrey Jensen Arnett—a psychologist who authored *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road From the Late Teens Through The Twenties* (2004) and *Emerging Adults in America: Coming of Age in the Twenty-First Century* (2006)—works on the same problems from a quantitative, academic approach

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[6] In 2005, Lev Grossman wrote an article for *Time* magazine called "Grow Up? Not So Fast. Meet the Twixters" (42).

[7] Under the subheading "Diagnostic Features," the American Psychiatric Association's DSM IV-TR defines the "essential feature of an Adjustment Disorder [as] a psychological response to an identifiable stressor or stressors that results in the development of clinically significant emotional or behavioral symptoms [that] develop within 3 months after the onset of the stressor(s)" (American 679).

[8] Though similar in name, a midlife crisis and a Quarterlife Crisis are different (Heathcote). A Quarterlife Crisis is not a midlife crisis suffered early in one's twenties, although the two crises can be understood as counterparts. Their primary difference is that, in a midlife crisis, one suffers from "a doomed sense of stagnancy" and the feeling that—much like writing a dissertation—life has been "set on pause while the rest of the world rattles on" (Robbins and Wilner 3). The midlife crisis, then, is about too much *stability*, predictability, and security in one's life without enough change or choice available to break the monotony (Iginla 49). The symptoms of the Quarterlife Crisis are reversed: an abundance of *instability*, unpredictability, insecurity, self-doubt (49), "constant change, too many choices, and a panicked sense of helplessness" (Robbins and Wilner 3). One idiosyncrasy that the two crises share is the inability to comfortably adapt to a new stage of life, something that "is always in flux" (Britt).

(Arnett, "Emerging" 8). Arnett, who specializes in this age group, is frequently cited alongside Robbins and Wilner in media buzz about the Quarterlife Crisis[9] and has been credited with bringing a new, energized focus to the area (Gibbons). He acknowledges that an identity crisis of "instability and uncertainty in work"—characteristic of protagonists in turn-of-the-millennium American expat narratives—occurs at the emerging adult age, roughly eighteen to twenty-five (Arnett, *Emerging* 151). All three observers[10] share the notion that, at the heart of this period of emerging adulthood "is an identity crisis" (Robbins and Wilner 7) or "an age of identity exploration" (Arnett 8). This is the theoretical framework on which the American expat's second key encounter in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe hangs.

The symptoms of instability and identity crisis are followed closely, according to Robbins and Wilner, by a sense that life is forcing one to gamble on uncertainties, feelings of "procrastination and denial" about the establishment, or being "stalled" in life's natural progress (8), and an overwhelmingly pessimistic "disappointment" (9) over—or disillusionment about—how life has developed so far and how dismal the near future seems to appear. Arnett's position adds that twenty-first-century American twentysomethings,

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[9] Because it crosses into his own line of work, Arnett retains a skeptical view the media's portrayal of the Quarterlife Crisis as pandemic. For him, the Quarterlife Crisis may be an age-related "angst" that only some of the emerging adult population experience, but not all (Rohr). Regardless of which writer will win nominal ownership of this life phase, a full study that looks into its role in the American expatriate narratives of turn-of-the-millennium, post-Communist Europe has never been conducted.

[10] While Arnett's work seem to be centered more around the group-affected-by-the-crisis rather than the crisis-affecting-the-group approach that Robbins and Wilner take, their work does overlap, and I discuss Arnett's work, not only as a counter to Robbins and Wilner's more instinctual claims, but to build a workable bridge between the two theories for the purposes of literary criticism. Because of the media's recent attention to the Quarterlife Crisis phenomenon and its natural gravitation towards Robbins and Wilner's easier to swallow formula, formal criticism of twentieth and twenty-first century American literature with twentysomething protagonists should give it more consideration. One Robbins and Wilner agendum that Arnett rejects is their fondness for the restrictive label "twentysomethings" (Robbins and Wilner 13) in lieu of *"emerging adults*" to tag the group of people between "extended adolescence" and "young adulthood" (10). Both terms, however, share applicability for this study.

particularly college graduates, simultaneously experience an unrelenting sense of betweenness with both self and society and the established categories of adolescent and adult, a distressing period of sorting out options and possibilities ("Emerging" 470), feelings of instability (471), "identity exploration," and an intense focus on the self as opposed "to responsibility for others" (473). An overwhelming majority of the protagonists in turn-of-the-millennium expat narratives exhibit many of these traits.

Although discussion of the Quarterlife Crisis in the publishing world has risen drastically since the new millennium[11]—as Arnett acknowledged the term in his book, *Emerging Adulthood* (151)—its existence can be traced to an earlier time. The expression has been misattributed to Robbins and Wilner, who published in 2001 (Wilner, "Hi") and misinformed journalists often give them credit for coining it (Deering; Marshall D01).[12] The phrase can actually be found in printed circulation as early as 1998 (McFedries) when Michael Stroud and Joe Schlosser used it to critique the demographic of the Fox television

[11] After the publication of Robbins and Wilner's *Quarterlife Crisis* in 2001, scholarly and media buzz about the Quarterlife Crisis continues to emerge across the disciplines. A few examples include Thomas Denham's 2002 dissertation "Literature Review: Factors Affecting the Development of Generation X and Millennials. Societal Factors Affecting Education" which called for a more in-depth study of the Quarterlife Crisis (13). By 2003, the phrase "Quarterlife Crisis"—in English—had gone international, getting itself featured in German author Constantin Gillies's nostalgic *Wie Wir Waren: Die Wilden Jahre der Web-Generation* [*As We Were: The Wild Years of the Web Generation*] (17, 231). In 2004, Minnesota *Utne Reader*'s Eliza Thomas did a cover story entitled "Transcending the Quarterlife Crisis: Twentysomething (sic) Angst Has Launched a New Movement" which highlighted Quarterlife Crisis coverage by Oprah Winfrey and its potential to overtake and replace the midlife crisis (Thomas 71). In 2005, Christina Butler's "Age-Related Paradigms" identified the Quarterlife Crisis as something unique for late twentieth-century young adults for *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* (Butler 62, 65). In *Generations and Globalization: Youth, Age, and Family in the New World Economy*, from 2006, Jennifer Cole and Deborah Durham linked economic theory to the Quarterlife Crisis (14)—as I informally began to do in my chapter on globalization. As of June 2007, an Internet search for the exact phrase "Quarterlife+Crisis" in the *Google Books* search engine produces 47 book entries that use the phrase somewhere in the text while the same search in *Google Scholar* produces 31 academic articles.

[12] Robbins and Wilner also offered no visible citation for Jacques Elliot's coinage of "midlife crisis," (Elliot 502) the very concept they supposedly used as the basis for their own theory.

program *Ally McBeal*.[13] More important, however, is former Canadian expat to Japan Douglas Coupland's 1991 novel *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*,[14] in which a character mentioned undergoing a process called the "Mid-twenties breakdown" (27) and, in other places, a "mid-twenties crisis" (73). In a right hand margin—college textbook style—Coupland wittily described this syndrome as a veritable gateway to a full-blown existential crisis[15] or meltdown[16] as a "period of mental collapse occurring in one's twenties, often caused by an inability to function outside of school or structured environments coupled

[13] The exact quotation from a 1998 issue of the *Broadcasting and Cable* trade magazine read: "Fox's *Ally McBeal* is making its retail inroads with a new line of 'loungewear' aimed at women in 'quarterlife crisis' and women with 'double standards to live up to' " (Stroud 38).

[14] A detailed synopsis of Coupland's insight into 1990s North American popular culture and discontented youth would prove to be slightly off-topic for this study. However, it is worth noting that the frame narrative of his novel *Generation X*—like Geoffrey Chaucer's fourteenth century *The Canterbury Tales*, a collection of stories that various narrators tell one another—parallels the various examples of American expatriate prose I have highlighted in several ways. Firstly, both the narrative's time period and the age group of his fictional protagonists (Claire, Andy, and Dag) fit the demographic of the American expatriate antiheros I have been dissecting. Likewise, the emotional baggage that the characters of the *Generation X* novel brought with them on their journey from "old" environment to new are remarkably similar. They felt increasingly disenfranchised in their bleak, overly commercialized "home world" with its thankless, dead-end jobs—Coupland coined the word "McJob"—and, ironically, unaffordability provided their level of education. Secondly, like some American expatriates who relocated overseas in the 1990s, the three co-protagonists of *Generation X* moved themselves away from the economic dissatisfaction and overly predictable mundaneness of late twentieth-century American suburbia to the contrasting otherness of the Mohave desert in California. Shortly before my own spontaneous move to Poland in 1993, my slightly younger sibling and I had cooked up earnest designs on relocation to the West Coast—Seattle—upon completing our undergraduate degrees.

[15] This unique "crisis of meaning" or conscience, referenced frequently as a legitimate neurosis or disorder by the late Holocaust survivor and Logotherapist Viktor Frankl (Frankl, *Viktor Frankl* 42, 49, 151, 153, 169), is quoted by disciple Genrich Krasko, writing in 2004 (xviii), to signify a symptom of a modern world where "more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for" (Frankl, *Unheard* 21). A recent cinematic narrative that featured a protagonist having an existential crisis is the character Albert Markovski, played by Jason Schwartzman, in David O. Russell's film, *I Heart Huckabees* (2004).

[16] The "existential meltdown," or the "reaching of the bottom," (Homer 97) has been explained by two Canadian writers on leadership technology as a post-modern crisis that can happen to individuals who "define their essence by the choices they make" when they begin "to question their position in relation to" everything else (Nesbitt). In her dissertation, "A Life Disrupted: Still Lived," Judith Jarosinski described this kind of meltdown as a phase when an individual has accumulated enough self-doubt to begin struggling with not only philosophical issues like "What is the central truth here?" and "How do I arrive at truth?" but also ontological ones like "who am I *really*?" (112). The trendy phrase has been recently re-energized in American popular culture in a series of televised, mock-insurance advertisements where a certain passive-aggressive English-speaking Cro-Magnon, dressed "smart-casual" and sarcastically critiquing the campaign says, "Now, if Geico had said that instead of 'it's so easy a caveman can use it,' I wouldn't be sitting here right now having an existential meltdown!" (Geico).

with a realization of one's essential aloneness in the world." He added, it often "marks induction into the ritual of pharmaceutical usage" (27). Coupland's sardonic definition of the mid-twenties breakdown, then, became one of the theoretical building blocks for Abby and Wilner's Quarterlife Crisis theory and the generation it first affected—a generation that, before the publication of *Generation X*, according to its inside flap, was referred to only as "twentysomethings."

## The Bildungsroman Narrative and The Quarterlife Crisis

I want to provide examples of how the Quarterlife Crisis has featured in selected narratives. If the criteria outlined by Robbins, Wilner, Arnett, and even Coupland are carefully applied, one could likely discover a literature in the Western humanities "filled with young people at loose ends, unsure of how to make their way in the world" and in a general "malaise" such as "Rabbit Angstrom from John Updike's *Rabbit, Run,*" Rick Carstone of Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*" or even William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Britt), a cross-category application for the Quarterlife Crisis lens.

Twentieth-century American cinematic narrative, too, is replete with characters enduring a Quarterlife Crisis as early as the 1960s. Mike Nichols's *The Graduate* (1967), for example, portrays Benjamin Braddock, a recent college-grad who must, in his mid-twenties, endure his own Quarterlife Crisis while having an affair with his neighbor, Mrs. Robinson (Degen; Goldstein "The Quarter"; Sims; Thomas 71). In "Surviving a Quarter-life Crisis" (2004), *Boston Globe* reporter Meredith Goldstein referenced Joel Schumacher's *St. Elmo's Fire* (1985), a story about Georgetown University grads who deal with post-

collegiate life and provisional adulthood,[17] as another cinematic narrative with a Quarterlife Crisis theme. By the time of the nineties, the same period of time that young Americans were flocking to post-Communist Europe, the Quarterlife Crisis plot in cinematic narrative became an even more definitive theme for turn-of-the-millennium twentysomethings. For instance, Cameron Crowe's *Singles* (1992) and the previously mentioned Ben Stiller's *Reality Bites* (1994), are both films that focus on Generation X and that have been acknowledged, post factum, as dealing with the Quarterlife Crisis (Goldstein "Surviving"). This is an important context for turn-of-the-millennium expat narratives that would depict similar American characters abroad.

Working from the observation that the Quarterlife Crisis was represented in narratives about North Americans in the 1990s, was the condition something unique only to them? Did it only say something about North American culture or had it, like other indicators of globalization in the nineties, spread across the pond to Europe, for example? In Paul Greenberg's *Leaving Katya*, Daniel and his new Russian wife Katya, after relocating to the United States, shared a run down apartment they could barely afford with friends, jumping from one temporary, part-time job to another, always exhausted and unable to even afford the possibilities that New York life has to offer. At one point she asked him, "What am I doing here? [. . .] I'm already twenty-three years old." It didn't take Katya long to recognize a disparity between the way post-Communist Russians and Americans—with their Quarterlife Crises—conducted themselves in their twenties. "In St. Petersburg," she continued, "people my age don't behave like this. They're adults. They have children, and

[17] One plot synopsis described the co-protagonists, played by actors Emilio Estevez, Rob Lowe, Andrew McCarthy, Demi Moore, Judd Nelson, and Andie MacDowell, as "all self-centered and obnoxious" (*IMDb)*. The film title is now linked retroactively with the Quarterlife Crisis angst on several popular Internet film review sites such as *FilMogs.com*, and *Wikipedia.com*.

families, and, and . . . a life!" (53). To Katya, as imagined by Greenberg, American twentysomethings in the 1990s were not projecting themselves in a way that older generations and other parts of the world consider adult. At the turn of the millennium, many twentysomething Americans were still coming-of-age. In his review of six American expat novels for *The Nation*, "Was It Sexy, or Just Soviet? The Post-Communist Expat Safari Novel Has Its Day" Eliot Borenstein agrees with this assessment. "Ultimately," he hypothesized, "the post-Communist expat's story is a fundamentally male narrative of conquest, submission and *coming of age*" (36, emphasis mine). The crux of the "adultescent" bildungsroman is the very belated coming-of-age theme in twentysomethings.

Bildungsromans have, conventionally, centered on the trials and epiphanies of adolescent protagonists. However, in late twentieth-century narratives, in a social environment where the *cultural* threshold of American adulthood has risen in age,[18] bildungsromans now seem to cover the coming-of-age process for near-adults. In "What if I'm Scared to Stop Being a Kid?" Robbins and Wilner discuss the blurring of childhood and adulthood in great detail through case studies (50-60). "Being a twentysomething today," they write, "is a far different experience than it was when the baby boomers came of age" (64), especially in the sense that many do not consider even the mid-twenties as a marker of adulthood. The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) backs up this claim. In "Coming of Age in 21st-Century America: Public Attitudes Towards the Importance and Timing of Transition to Adulthood," NORC director Tom Smith reported that a large majority of Americans believe that adulthood is not something achieved by reaching a

[18]The delayed maturity in cultural or emotional age to the late twenties in Americans is intriguing because the legal age of maturity, for example, the age of criminal responsibility, age of license (working, driving, voting, etc.), age of consent, and age of majority—various benchmarks that have been used to determine maturity—have not changed. Depending on the state, those markers remain at the ten, fifteen, sixteen, eighteen, nineteen, and twenty-one-year-old levels.

certain age but something achieved in stages over time, climaxing around the age of twenty-six years (2). Furthermore, American young people seem to be hitting the conventional benchmarks of adulthood—for example, moving out, getting full-time work, finishing school, getting married, having a child, and being able to fully support a family, about five years later,[19] on average, than their parents did (2).

One particular variation of bildungsroman protagonist pertinent to turn-of-the-millennium narratives about sojourners is known as the *picaró* (rogue) or picaroon (Longrie 294; Hagan 24). The picaroon characterization paints the hero as a clever, sometimes loveable, rascal "of low social degree living by his or her wits in a corrupt society" ("Picaresque"). Much like the picaresque characteristics of Pip and Hebert (Hagan 54; Lynch 58) in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861) and Tom and Huck (Trilling xvi; García 64) in Samuel Clemens's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), several Generation X sojourners in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe also have a grand time getting into mischief. Gurney and Jane, in John Beckman's *Winter Zoo* (2002), Nix and Monika in Robert Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts* (1997), and Chip and Gitanas in Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* (2001), go beyond the pale in their modern reenactments of antiheroic picaroons, or thieving scoundrels, in American expat narrative since the 1990s.

For example, young, deadbeat-dad Gurney was such a rascal. He freeloaded from his distant relatives in Poland, found sexual gratification with his cousin's underpants (Beckman 56), and scammed his workplace—a post-Communist Kraków casino—to

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[19]CBS's Martha Irvine reported that "much of [American] society seems to be embracing the notion of delayed adulthood" which can be indicated in "a whole line of increasingly common sayings" such as " '30 is the new 20' and '40 is the new 30' " (Irvine). One doesn't have to look far to find evidence of this. For example, the so-called "Good Driver Plan" offered by the Geico General Insurance Company, states in section C of my own policy under the subheading "Inexperienced Driver" that "a young driver is defined as 29 years of age or less for males and 24 years of age or less for females" ("Good"). Most of the American expatriate protagonists in narratives regarding 1990s post-Communist Europe fall within this age range.

sponsor an abandoned apartment of decadent lost boys and fund his elaborate high jinks. Gurney's vampish cousin Jane, also an American twentysomething expat, manipulated Cracovians and other expats alike with her juvenile mind-games, jealous bisexual affairs, and incestuous liaisons. Failed writer and amoral Nix survived in his post-European stomping grounds by robbing tourists and conning the locals, while the family-wrecking—and also failed writer—Chip went to work for a post-Communist Lithuanian internet scammer, the very man he had cuckolded, to help sellout his country and lure eager, but naïve, American financiers into a bogus, investment scheme. The journey of these expats may fall into a particular bildungsroman category described by Richard Lynch as "a type of narrative that, especially in its emphasis on escape from the effects of primary socialization (the influence of parents and other conservative institutions), deals heavily with the protagonist's attempt to gain social freedom" (58).

When the late-twentieth-century picaroon character of the picaresque bildungsroman is viewed through the lens of the Quarterlife Crisis, a picture of the American expat in narrative, such as Gurney and Nix, emerges. Although they are anti-heroes, their narratorial pattern is somewhat analogous to Joseph Campbell's archetypal hero (*Hero* 36-37) and follows in his celebrated "hero's journey" or "monomythic" formula as a calculated movement of separation from an old world, a transformative initiation along a road of trials in a special, new world, and a return that signifies healing, reconciliation, or a mastery of two worlds.[20] I understand the picaresque bildungsroman to be a manifestation of Campbell's monomythic "hero's journey" in this way: the traditional German

[20] In his classic book *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), Campbell put forward his "nuclear unit" for the apparently ubiquitous monomyth—separation, initiation, and return—as thus: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man" (30). This structure works even for the late twentieth-century, antiheroic American expat protagonist (see Appendix C).

bildungsroman tracks "the organic development of the hero toward maturation and social integration" (Kontje 29) and, as one scholar of the *Harry Potter* series has noted, "most heroes journey as part of their development" (Whited 58). Appendix E illustrates the monomythic concept as a circular path through various initiation phases that serve to transform the hero. Though Joseph Campbell never contributed scholarship about his monomythic model to Robbins and Wilner's Quarterlife Crisis (he died in 1987), I maintain that this anxiety can often be detected in the hero/anti-hero's journey of the picaresque American sojourner in narrative.

Here is one way that the American Generation X expat might experience a separation/initiation/return in narratives regarding post-Communist Europe: the protagonist becomes "stricken" with the Quarterlife Crisis at some stage in "adultescence," usually after college in the late 1980s or 1990s. This is followed by a separation from the familiar, stagnant, American world and a passage into new, unfamiliar world, in this case, post-Cold War, post-Communist Europe. After crossing the threshold and entering the symbolic "belly of the whale" (Campbell, *Hero* 90) the protagonist encounters a series of bizarre tests and obstacles to overcome, learn from, before being initiated into adulthood. Healed, changed, evolved, or improved, the transformed hero, since she or he is not an exile from, emigrant to, or permanent resident of the new world, reluctantly "returns" in some way, either to their place of origin or on to a new adventure abroad with a new, different set of complications. To "teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed," according to Campbell, is the final defining moment of the hero (*Hero* 20). Expat writers, or their alter-ego protagonists who are identified as writers,[21] might be interpreted as having given their home

[21] For example, "Nix," from Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts*; "Jonathan," from Foer's *Everything is Illuminated*; and "Chip," from Franzen's *The Corrections*, all identified themselves as writers.

world—the United States—a "gift," a common final element of the monomyth, through the record of their experiences in their publications.[22]

I have, thus far, presented the Quarterlife Crisis as something that 1990s American expats may have brought with them, but only faced, or encountered, after their arrival to post-Communist Europe. This is not an unusual way for the model's logic to play itself out. However, in some cases, Quarterlife Crisis symptoms show up in American protagonists prior to their expatriation. In the monomythic structure, Campbell allowed for such variations within the prescribed chronology of events. The adaptability of the monomythic pattern is "why the hero has a thousand faces" (Volger 13).

## Connecting the Dots: The Quarterlife Crisis and What Made This Generation Expatriate

In situations where Quarterlife Crisis symptoms are present in sojourners before expatriation, the unresolved Quarterlife Crisis itself might be understood as the impetus for leaving. Looking backward, this may have been the case with Irishman James Joyce, who created such a character in his alter-ego protagonist Stephen Dedalus (Segall 156) from *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (1916), a quintessential twentieth-century bildungsroman. In *Face to Face* (2000), Jeff O'Connell and Gabrielle Warnock claim that Joyce designed Dedalus to "cut and run" after college (O'Connell 264). Historically, Joyce—like his alter-ego Stephen—really left Ireland for continental Europe where he lived

[22] This motion of progress is charted in Appendix C, a modified version of a map created by Shelley Tuama in her book *Archetypes in Life, Literature, and Myth* (33). It condenses information from Appendix E into a graph and plots, in the top tier, how the hardened, miserable, cynical, contrary, and life-hating Ebenezer Scrooge, the analogical model for the American expatriate protagonist of the 1990s, can be plugged in alongside them into Campbell's monomythic journey model.

as an expatriate, teaching English for the Berlitz language school and later working as a writer in Italy, Switzerland, and France (Joyce, *Occasional* i).

In a similar way, late twentieth-century, Generation X, American expats, as represented in the narratives about sojourners in post-Communist Europe, were a disaffected group that had either attempted or completed college, and subsequently lost faith in its promise of assuring satisfying employment. On a continent with no remaining frontier to explore, relocate to, or escape to, the older world of Central and Eastern Europe—a forbidden zone once inaccessible to twentysomethings on the American side of the Iron Curtain—suddenly became a new and exotic place. It was an opportunity many young Americans took to "cut and run," leaving their bad career options at home, for a semi-permanent "safari" (Borenstein 33) in the newly post-Communist world. Some, like Dedalus, would go on to teach English or become writers.

The "expatriate mentality" of the 1990s was "a tough thing to explain easily," Mark Ames and Matt Taibbi maintained in *The eXile: Sex, Drugs, and Libel in the New Russia* (2000). Ames and Taibbi felt that any "affluent or even middle-class American who renounce[d] the good life of sushi delivery and 50-channel cable television to relocate permanently to some third-world hole [had] to be motivated by a highly destructive personality defect." Of course, Ames and Taibbi were being sarcastic, but the American twentysomething's desire to do something different and meaningful is where the Quarterlife Crisis theory for Generation Xers in the 1990s sometimes begins. Ames and Taibbi added, "something about home create[d] psychological demons that in turn create[d] the urge for radical escape" (30). In Gurney's case, the protagonist of Beckman's *Winter Zoo* who was not ready for fatherhood, this idea of escape is very pronounced. For other sojourners, escape may have been motivated by something as simple as career dissatisfaction.

In bildungsroman narratives about young American sojourners, there is a recurring theme of disillusionment with the educational systems that produced and prepared them and the economic systems they were expected to join afterwards and uphold. In *Leaving Katya,* Greenberg's Daniel is a Russian Studies major who cannot find work in New York City suitable to his training. In *Winter Zoo*, Beckman's Gurney does nothing with his college degree. Instead, he learns a new trade as a croupier in Kraków and is later sacked from that post. In *The Corrections*, Franzen's Chip cannot put his doctorate to good use. He is a failing writer and turns to Internet fraud as an alternative, and more lucrative career choice. In *Gypsy Hearts*, Eversz's Nix is also supposed to be a screenwriter by trade. His use or misuse of the profession leads him to no prosperity and he resorts to petty theft and elaborate scams for financial support. This theme of a temporary mismatch between one's training and one's actual employment links with Robbins and Wilner's claim that a growing disenchantment with the emptiness, uncertainty of direction, and frequent unskilled employment of day-to-day life—after years of "preparation" for their life career in college—are other key indicators of the Quarterlife Crisis (17-19). In fact, routine skepticism about academia and its promises are nothing new in many American coming-of-age narratives.[23] In his book *Sport and the Spirit of Play in Contemporary American Fiction*, author Christian K. Messenger wrote that "the anti-school *bildungsroman* is the great American tradition" (218).

[23] Much like James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the plots and subplots of American J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963), and Pat Conroy's *The Lords of Discipline* (1983)—as examples of mid-to-late twentieth-century American bildungsromans—also utilize narrative patterns centering on the difficulties involved with either higher education or college-preparatory boarding schools. Furthermore, like protagonist Dorothy Gale's ordeal in Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), Salinger's, Ellison's, Plath's, and Conroy's bildungsromans each involved a literal "moving away" from home, the familiar, to a new place of residence where protagonists must negotiate their own identities with the ones tolerated in the "new land."

In his article "The New Lost Generation" (1961), James Baldwin expressed the opinion that what Europe, as a new or different land for Americans, "still gives the American Expatriate is the sanction, if one can accept it, to become oneself" (113). As with earlier generations, expatriatism to Europe allowed American individuals to drop pretensions and anxieties and just naturally transform into themselves. This alone was enough to motivate some.

In a reversal of the old paradigm that once painted the United States as a novel, capitalist frontier, the newly opened spaces of post-Communist Europe at the turn-of-the-millennium offered American sojourners a different world of career opportunities, primarily entrepreneurships and language teaching, and the added opportunity to grow emotionally in a different environment, away from their parents and away from a stagnant economy. It was a chance for some young Americans to either find or reinvent their identities through their own, self-defined bildungsroman journey. However, since the Quarterlife Crisis was often an integral part of these sojourners' baggage, the process of expatriation would prove to be either a step towards their cure or a trigger for pandemonium. This may have been because—before some could reach the final enlightenment stage of their journey—some sojourners had to first undergo a period of adjustment in survival-mode.[24] In a comparison between early twentieth-century expatriates like Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald and the "new American abroad," Arnold L. Weinstein suggested in *Nobody's Home: Speech, Self, and Place in American Fiction from Hawthorne to DeLillo* (1993) that postmodern writers had redefined "the world" as an "extended version of the virgin

[24] In 1915, Walter Cannon described animals in threatening situations defaulting to a "fight or flight" response (275-77). In a more rational and symbolic sense, the first "flight" occurred for Quarterlife Crisis sojourners when, facing adversity, they chose to flee their country, rather than staying on to "fight" the causes of their problems. In their new home, they would have to fight to make it work, or else flee again back to their original home.

American west," a place that was "no longer open to tourists and explorers in the same way." As a result, Weinstein claimed, "the American *bildungsroman* has been turned on its head" and the former "educational scheme has become one of survival" (292).

Traveling or relocating to new—or, at least different—lands for many American, Generation X, twentysomethings in the 1990s would have been consistent with Arnett's "period of emerging adulthood." That period of transition, he claimed, would have been the ideal "time for trying out unusual work and educational possibilities. For this reason, short-term volunteer jobs in programs such as Americorps and the Peace Corps are more popular with emerging adults than with persons in any other age period." For those who were uninterested in the commitment such services required, some emerging adults chose to "travel to a different part of the country or the world on their own for a limited period, often in the context of a limited term work or educational experience." Such adventures can play a big part in "their identity explorations" and a role in "expanding their range of personal experiences prior to making the more enduring choices of adulthood. ("Emerging" 474)

In the nineties, I knew several American twentysomethings who did just what Arnett suggested, join the Peace Corps. My acquaintance and colleague John Deever, author of the non-fiction narrative *Singing on the Heavy Side of the World* (2002) was a Generation X twentysomething who served in the Peace Corps in Ukraine from 1993 to 1995 as a language teacher. My younger brother, who followed in my footsteps to Germany and Poland to teach ESL in 1994, had a twentysomething roommate in Katowice, Poland who was in the U. S. Peace Corps. I have a friend in Montgomery, Alabama, and another who still lives in Kraków, Poland, who were both volunteer Peace Corps English teachers for Ukraine in the early 1990s. The Peace Corps was sometimes received by post-Communist Europeans as simply one more capitalist endeavor, even if a weakly represented one.

Despite their noble intentions, in 2002, thirty Peace Corps volunteers were first asked to leave Russia because they were "ill-prepared for their positions" as language teachers (Tavernise) and later faced accusation by the FSB (the former KGB) for engaging "in gathering information about the sociopolitical and economic situation in Russian regions, about employees of organs of power and administration and about elections" ("Russia").

Robbins and Wilner concur that sojourning abroad could be either a symptom of the Quarterlife Crisis or a trigger for it. They discuss how some encountered their Quarterlife Crisis when "the year of travel in Europe" turned out to be "more of a wallet buster than previously imagined—even with nights in youth hostels and meals of ramen." That, or "maybe the move to a hip, new city just didn't turn out to be as fabulous a relocation as expected" (Robbins and Wilner 9). For most, however, it seems that the disappointment felt by Quarterlife Crisis sufferers, especially for American sojourners in the 1990s, may have had more to do with their lives *before* expatriating to post-Communist Europe. At a time when twentysomethings frequently want to "nail down the meaning in their lives" so that it can be "more fulfilling," many "drastic life changes" can occur (9). Robbins and Wilner provide the example of "an investment banker [who] breaks off his engagement and volunteers for the Peace Corps" (9). However, only periods of reduced responsibility are conducive for the possibility of sojourning. When twentysomethings have real responsibilities, such as an ill parent in need of their care, they "probably wouldn't take that year off to travel in South America" (9).

Echoes of both Arnett's "emerging adult" pattern and Robbins and Wilner's "Quarterlife Crisis" can be found in most American expat narratives with twentysomething characters. In order to reconstruct a mental picture of the Quarterlife Crisis in progress, Robbins and Wilner anchored their qualitative study's discussion to scattered, interview-

based reports of pseudonymous, twentysomething Americans. They are organized as small vignettes so that readers can develop a mental picture of someone going through a Quarterlife Crisis. Borrowing from this idea, I present two vignettes based on analyses of young American expats Gurney, from Beckman's *Winter Zoo,* and Nix, from Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts*. While it can be argued that the characters in Phillips's *Prague*, Franzen's *The Corrections*, Foer's *Everything is Illuminated*, and Greenberg's *Leaving Katya* are also ones with a Quarterlife Crisis, I have chosen the protagonists of Beckman and Eversz simply because they are extreme examples and, therefore, more fruitful to analyze. Theses analyses will show how two irresponsible young American sojourners deal with life in their twenties in post-Communist Europe, avoid any semblance of adulthood, escape accountability at every opportunity, and flounder in their efforts to resolve their identity crises. In the first case, one protagonist will come full circle, mature, and outgrow his initial anxieties about adulthood. In the second, one protagonist will fail his tests along the road of trials and remain in the special world, prolonging his provisional adulthood indefinitely.

Gurney's Quarterlife Crisis Bildungsroman—The Spawn of Peter Pan and Pinocchio

In *Winter Zoo* (2002)*,* John Beckman, at various times, compares his childlike protagonist, Gurney, to the fictional characters "Mr. Magoo" (6), because he endeavors to pursue things blindly, "King Midas" (28), because he seems to be able to get by on his gift of charm, "Ronald McDonald" (44), because he is an American clown, and "Narcissus," (49) because he was a handsome youth in love with himself. Because he likes to run away from things, he could also be characterized as "the gingerbread man," a metaphor Beckman used elsewhere with Grazyna, a secondary character in *Winter Zoo* (296). While each of

these characterizations, on its own, tell the reader a little about Gurney's personality, chiefly that he is reckless, fluky, carefree, escapist, and self-absorbed, I find that his performance of the Quarterlife Crisis is equally compared with the antics of two other fictional characters from children's literature: J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904) and Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* (1883). Gurney's dual-identity illustrates a person who would like to be human but not an adult; it is informed by two psychological theories I will come back to.

If the Quarterlife Crisis were a crime, profiling Gurney, as a Generation X, twentysomething, American expat hopelessly caught up in its talons, would not be difficult. Gurney was the right age for a Quarterlife Crisis according to Robbins and Wilner's twentysomething stipulation (Robbins 4). The setting of his narrative was 1990 (Beckman 209); he was twenty-two years old (32)—born well before the 1978 cut-off date Generation X (Strauss, W. 36)—and, as of August that year, a recent college graduate (Beckman 8). The demographics fit perfectly.

Furthermore, Gurney seemed to doubt the validity of his "transition to adulthood," a symptom that Wilner would consider an early indicator of Quarterlife Crisis (Goldstein). He ran away from his new responsibility—in his case, a newborn child—and tried to keep any knowledge of her or the baby's mother (Beckman 23) away from his new friends and relations in post-Communist Poland. Gurney laughed uncertainly when he said, "I'm an adult now, a graduate" (17). Gurney's remark reflected something that Robert Dupont, author of *The Anxiety Cure,* had told Robbins and Wilner about the new roadmaps to adulthood. Dupont said that the old rite of passage for twentysomethings "came with college graduation." In the 1990s, he inferred, American grads were expected "to go out and figure it out" for themselves (qtd. In Robbins and Wilner 6). This is what Gurney would have to do too.

However, figuring things out takes a certain degree of social functionality combined with motivation, and Quarterlife Crisis sufferers, Wilner told ABC's Keturah Gray, "are not properly equipped with the skills and resources" to "figure things out" and "eventually "settle down" (qtd. in Gray, K.). Gurney had been, indeed, a slow starter and even he realized that about himself. At twenty-two, the American legal system already categorized citizens of his age group as adults but, still, he "felt he had been rather slow to mature" (Beckman 7). According to Jeffrey Arnett, the late twentieth-century social matrix of postmodern, North American, capitalist culture actually provided no single, universal, and all-defining "communal ritual" to mark the passage into adulthood (*Emerging* v); some Americans celebrate age sixteen—with elaborate "sweet sixteen" parties—as the legal driving age, some celebrate eighteen as the age of majority, and yet others celebrate age twenty-one as the legal drinking age. Neither these traditional milestones nor religious confirmations, bar/bat mitzvahs, joining the military, high school graduation, or college matriculation provide a demonstrable ability to operate independently on either an emotional or financial level. Even commencement didn't bestow this comfort upon Beckman's Gurney and Greenberg's Daniel in *Leaving Katya.* In her article "The New Graduate," Natasha Degen reported that recent graduates such as Beckman's Gurney are routinely expected to somehow "adjust to the startling reality of independence" (Degen). Meredith Goldstein suggests that twentysomethings may battle feelings of confusion, misery, and even stupidity because they have never been walked through the process of how to live independently (Goldstein).

Fear of making the *wrong* decisions, too, steers some sufferers of a Quarterlife Crisis into a full-blown avoidance of any decision-making processes (Marshall 301; Robbins and Wilner 134). Gurney was not a decisive person throughout the first half of the narrative. He

had been the type of person who had gotten through life running on autopilot. Trouble, as a consequence of flawed choices, was something new for him. Before his Quarterlife Crisis, nothing "bad had ever happened to Gurney. He had swerved through life like Mr. Magoo" (Beckman 7).

Is it possible, in a nurture-*over*-nature scenario, that Gurney's parents either coddled or enabled him to stay child-like? Beckman gives the reader very little detail on Gurney's situation in Iowa before he left, but did reveal that he felt bad about not acknowledging his mother's birthday (191-94) and that he had stolen from the casino an amount three times what his father earned per year at age forty-five (282). He probably did not live with Sheila, the mother of his child, since, at some point during her pregnancy, she stopped returning his phone calls (6). If Gurney did still live at home with his parents before leaving for Poland, this would not have been unusual for a twenty-two-year-old emerging adult male in the 1990s.[25] Jane was unaware of her cousin Gurney's cowardly deception of his parents concerning his plans to expatriate—he had left them notes with his new address to find afterwards (23). Jane did, however, know how his family operated and thus expressed some surprise at Gurney's over insistence that his parents "were cool" with his decision to relocate (17). "They're finally letting little Gurney grow up," she told him at the Kraków train station, "that's sweet" (18).

The uncertainty, insecurity, and indecisiveness that plagued American Quarterlife Crisis sufferers in the 1990s attacked Gurney the way sharks might take to a drowning sailor. As he held Baby Sarah—his newborn child—in an Iowa hospital, he knew that'd he

[25] According to information from a report by the United States Bureau of the Census titled "Young Adults Living at Home, 1960–2002," fifty-eight percent of all reported American males aged nineteen to twenty-four, between 1990 and 1999, either lived at home with their parents, or in dormitories as dependents of their parents.

would be impulsively running away to post-Communist Europe, without telling anyone, within minutes (5). At this point in the narrative, Gurney over thinks the challenge before him. Rather than confronting his fear, he bypasses conscience and allows the demons of procrastination and evasion—symptoms indicating that his Quarterlife Crisis was already in progress—persuade him to cross the threshold into another world—the monomythic special world. Robbins and Wilner report that *recovering* Quarterlife Crisis sufferers recognize the absurdity of a cerebral, over-analysis of each and every point in a given choice and have learned the benefits of incorporating more intuitive, "gut instincts" at difficult moral and professional crossroads in their lives (139). Gurney, however, is not yet recovering. He would take the more cowardly—and reckless—path of least resistance: avoidance, or, the refusal to take a stand. Gurney, faced with the prospect of assuming an adult role appropriate to his age and circumstance, "feared the decision in his head. How could one person make such a decision about life [?]" (8).

Gurney's resolution to revert toward adolescence "was a moment so heavily hung with meaning" that Sigmund Freud might have "called it overdetermined" (Beckman 5), or having more than one decisive psychological factor. Beckman's estimation of Freud is accurate since Gurney had an acute case of the Quarterlife Crisis, a condition that can pit the anxieties of indecisiveness against real fears associated with changing one's mind once it has already been made (Robbins 34). This personality trait is not uncommon to the other expats of Gurney's generation, time, and, place. While Beckman may not have known Robbins and Wilner's ideas when he drafted *Winter Zoo*, perhaps one of the subliminal clues he provided readers about the anxieties making Gurney sick was in his character's name, which meant "hospital bed" (Beckman 21).

If Gurney was unwell, psychologically, then one of his biggest obstacles to mental clarity might have been his love-hate relationship with himself, an identity crisis consistent with the Quarterlife Crisis. Sometimes, he came across as so self-absorbed that an acquaintance of his landlady's daughter dubbed him "Narcissus" (49). Gurney's immature decision to abandon his child and run away "would send seismic tremors into everyone's future, send rifts and splinters through so many possible lives" (8). This would fit with Arnett's claim that the period of emerging adulthood is "the most self-focused age of life" ("Emerging" 8). In Robbins and Wilner's study, some of their subjects felt that being a single twentysomething gave them license "to be selfish without it negatively affecting others" (156). But egocentrism, the prioritization of the self—is seldom without consequence and Gurney was no exception.

At other times, Gurney invalidated his self-love and estranged himself from it. He vacillated from one polar extreme (narcissism) to the other (self-hatred). One of the first things he ever said to his daughter Sarah was "I hate myself" (Beckman 9). This may have been because Gurney had his mother's conscience (232), so his disgust for himself and his actions inevitably led to shame and regret. The shame of his selfish actions drove Gurney to symbolically protect his cousin Jane—someone he actually loved other than himself—"from all the terrible things that had followed him from America" (16). The flip-flopping of his opinion about himself was characteristic of his "trademark tedium" which was "dumb self-doubt," as Jane told him later (232). Gurney had no direction, no idea of what he wanted or expected to find. By running away to post-Communist Europe, a place that neither knew him or judged him, "Did he hope to find better? Did he hope to be free?" (8). Was he "scared to stop being a kid" as is the title of Robbins and Wilner's second chapter (Robbins and Wilner 45)?

J. M. Barrie's high-flying traveler from *Peter Pan* (1904), of course, was the prototypical little boy who didn't want to grow up, an almost anti-coming-of-age story for him. Gurney, who likewise flew in to post-Communist Kraków, initially dramatized himself as an American dandy, both as a young "King Midas" (Beckman 28) and a "Roving Prince of Causality" (232). His feral, boyish antics, as represented in Beckman's version of the Quarterlife Crisis bildungsroman echoed sentiments expressed in earlier works of pop-psychology such as Dan Kiley's *Peter Pan Syndrome: Men Who Have Never Grown Up* (1983). In "Never Gonna Be a Man" (1997), Stacy Wolf assessed Kiley's text, which has not been revisited in literature for sometime, as a heterocentric hypothesis that put some of the blame on women[26] for the enablement of a prolonged adolescence in men (509), an idea Beckman may have alluded to in the background information about Gurney's mother. But, as Jacqueline Rose noted in her criticism of Barrie's *Peter Pan*, Beckman's narrative gave his readers "the child but [did] not speak to the child" (Rose 1). Both texts speak to adults who harbor a hypothetical inner-child.

Other childish associations can be made with clowns and puppets, imaginary representations of something or someone else. In my experience teaching public elementary school in Poland, pupils would often single out for me the rare child whose hair was red, or, as they described it, orange. Wanda's Polish friends compared Gurney, who could detect that he had dyed his natural "red hair black" (Beckman 29), to "Ronald McDonald" (44), the Western commercial clown, and another figure singled out as an entertainment for children. But, redheaded Gurney once compared himself to Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* (1883), the

[26] Using Kiley's heterocentric model, perhaps a case could be made for Gurney's cousin Jane as a "Wendy," or substitute mother figure, a parental role that Peter himself found to be "very overrated" (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 38). Gurney would also differ slightly from Kiley's understanding of the American male as solely heterosexual. By the end of *Winter Zoo*, Gurney demonstrates that he has been either bi-curious or a closeted bisexual before he finally came out (325-26).

Italian story of a marionette who wanted to be a human boy—and whom Gurney remembered, wrongly,[27] as a fellow "redhead." By dying his hair an artificial color, Gurney assumed the trait of a puppet with artificial hair. He also made his own contributions to stereotypes about redheads. "Redheads never really grew up," Gurney thought (Beckman 28).

Where one thing can be read into the Peter Pan Syndrome, a refusal to lose the innocence, magic, or irresponsibility of childhood, several things can be read into the multilayered "Pinocchio Syndrome,"[28] a literary trope about any inhuman character's desire for humanity ("Pinocchio"). One is that, like a marionette that "acts," Gurney is an actor and a pretender of what he really is. Marionettes are painted blocks of wood and costume that pretend to be something or someone else; Gurney is an adult performing as something he is not, a child. Also, unlike Peter Pan, a human who didn't want to grow up, Pinocchio was a non-human entity who wanted to be human, or a "a proper boy" (Collodi 285). Being an adult wasn't really the initial concern of either the wooden Pinocchio or the superficial Gurney. Both Pinocchio and Gurney wanted their strings cut so that they could enjoy the freedom of mischief others were enjoying. Before their respective calls to adventure, each

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[27] Collodi, in chapter twenty-three, mentioned that Pinocchio could not even pull out his own hair because it was painted on his skull (259), but did not specify a color. In chapter thirty-six, when Pinocchio was transformed into a human boy, he saw in the mirror that his hair was chestnut brown (459), not red. He may have had a red hat though. There is still a parallel, however, in that Gurney "painted" his own red hair black, to change his appearance.

[28] Not to be confused with the many differing applications of the "Pinocchio Syndrome," such as in traditional medicine, where, two Polish doctors used it to describe "Scleroderma-like lesions in phenylketonuria" in 1972 (Lebioda 49) or in psychotherapy, where two Swiss doctors used it to describe the "scenic function of the ego" in patients with psychosomatic disorders in 1975 (von Rad 237). Since then, "Pinocchio Syndrome" has been used by counselors to describe a lying trend in their clientele in 1992 (Miller, M. 27), and by British neurologists to describe "a peculiar form of reflex epilepsy" in 1993 (Sellal 936). ). In David Zeman's novel of the same name, the *Pinocchio Syndrome* (2003) is a fictional disease that alters its victims' appendages into mule-like physical deformities. More recently, political commentators have used the phrase as a euphemism for blatant lying in a climate where some politicians feel entitled to the creation of their "own reality" (Elisberg).

character had been tied down—Pinocchio to his role as a puppet, Gurney to his role as a new father. To truly understand Gurney, I submit that linking him to Pinocchio is just as significant as his connection with Peter Pan.

In an article from the *Transactional Analysis Journal* (2000), Michele Novellino described the "Pinocchio Syndrome" as "a personality type that manifests characteristics of both narcissistic personality disorder and antisocial personality disorder" (292). While these clinical disorders may represent the extreme behaviors of people who are no longer able to function socially, Gurney is certainly narcissistic (Beckman 49) and none of his "self-focusing" behaviors help him move toward what should be an emerging adult's "goal" of "self-sufficiency," according to Arnett (*Emerging* 13-14). In some regards, Gurney is also antisocial, the condition of someone acting "contrary to the laws and customs of society" (*New Oxford*) or "disrespectful of others" (*American Heritage*). Gurney is a liar, evidenced in the information he withheld from Jane and his parents, a pretender, and disrespectful, as evidence in his behavior at the Auschwitz museum. Like, Pinocchio, he literally ran away from home. His refusal to respond to the communications he received by post from friends and family (Beckman 37), his workplace thievery (276) and blatant violation of Jane's privacy (101, 208) proved he possessed antisocial tendencies. Gurney had finished college (8) and Robbins and Wilner note just how difficult it is for some postgrads to socialize outside of the university scene (*Quarterlife* 181). For example, at the Kraków Halloween party, with the help of Jane, Gurney was symbolically transformed into an ass—like Pinocchio in the hedonistic Funland (Beckman 357)—with the insertion of big donkey ears on his King Midas crown (96-97). Boys who tried to escape from society, as Pinocchio's friends did, and a person who ruins anyone he touches, as Midas's curse does, are indicators of the antisocial personality.

By acknowledging Gurney's temporary, metaphorical proximity to Pinocchio—he did find himself living on a Pinocchio-like "Funland" in post-Communist Kraków. Gurney wondered if "maybe his essence was elsewhere" (28). String-puppets are naturally incapable of doing anything except what their puppeteer masters want them to do. They are fated to perform someone else's game. Gurney was imprisoned or constrained by his own guilt and by the things he did not want to confront. He had designed his own limitations. A well-adjusted human being, unlike a marionette, does not usually exhibit all of the symptoms of the Quarterlife Crisis. Post-Quarterlife Crisis individuals play their own game, makes their own decisions, and interact with life as a participant. By the novel's end, Gurney leaves post-Communist Kraków, his "special world of unconscious desire"—according to the Campbellian monomyth (See Appendix D)—and reintegrates with the world he had left behind, his home world, ultimately providing his child Sarah with the gift of the father-daughter relationship.

## Nix's Quarterlife Crisis Bildungsroman—Tricky Dick versus Pink[29] Prague and Budapest

Where Beckman created an image of the Quarterlife Crisis in Gurney as either abnormal or deviant behavior, something that could, conceivably, be interpreted as a performance, Robert Eversz takes Nix, his protagonist of *Gypsy Hearts* (1997) to an entirely

[29] My pun here on the word "pink" is not only a reference to Richard Nixon's famous mudslinging campaign, "Tricky Dick versus the Pink Lady" (Swint 163), and its Cold War connotation of the word to mean leftist political views that lean toward red, or communism (*OED*), but also to the infamous pink tank incident in Prague where a Soviet Army tank on display—erroneously credited as the first liberating tank to enter Prague in 1945—was painted pink by the parliament in 1990. See Douglas Lytle's chapter "The Pink Tank" in his *Pink Tanks and Velvet Hangovers: An American in Prague*, from 1995 (217-226). The color pink symbolically neutralized the implied power of a regime represented in monument by a killing machine. Eversz's "Nix" might be thought of as someone with an aggressive nature who used the peaceful nature of turn-of-the-millennium, post-Communist Czechs to his own advantage.

new level. Nix operates differently than Gurney. Where Gurney, who behaves badly because he can, has good intentions, Nix, who also behaves badly, seems to derive pleasure from the emotional pain of others. Like Gurney, Nix easily fits the Quarterlife Crisis profile. American, Generation X expat Richard Milhous Miller was, at minimum, a twenty-five-year-old (Eversz 5) emerging adult from Southern California (4) who floated between post-Communist Prague and Budapest roughly sometime in the late twentieth-century before March of 1992.[30] Also like Gurney, there is a layered play in the narrative with Nix's name.

Nix's family name, "Miller," might have been an allusion to the way in which he unashamedly ground out Hollywood-style screenplays in his head by simply plugging in his recurring fantasies (3-4) into a simplified version of Campbell's monomyth template, much like the famous one Chris Volger devised for screenwriters in 1992. He was nicknamed "Nix" by his "scion of a used-car dealership empire" father (6), presumably, for thirty-seventh U. S. President Richard Milhous Nixon. Any reader aware of Richard Nixon's nickname of "Tricky Dick" (Swint 166) would notice the appropriateness and self-fulfilling, prophetic quality of the name choice for Nix Miller's character. Nixon's own nickname, "Dick," has another, blue connotation that will accurately inform the reader's own personality assessment of Eversz's Nix.

The name "Nix" is homonymous with the British colloquial expression "nicks," a transitive verb than means, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "to trick, cheat, defraud [or] obtain something from (a person) by dishonest or unfair means." The

[30] Eversz doesn't specify the exact dates of Nix's adventures in post-Communist Europe but he does provide a few clues for those in-the-know. With his mention of Nix's acknowledgment of signs advertising the upcoming, first McDonald's restaurant in Prague (46), those who were there might remember that the date was before March 20, 1992, since that is when it historically opened on Vodickova street ("McDonald's").

connotation of "Nix" offers yet another layer of significance to both his name and occupation in post-Communist Europe. Nix's eventual love-interest, Monika, asked him if he was aware of this connotation when he met her in a famous Budapest café (Eversz 57). The other most literal—and vulgar—implication of "Tricky Dick" implies the deceitful tactics he employed to defraud and seduce post-Communist European women. Finally, Nix and Gurney were, to a large degree, "tricksters," an archetype Joseph Campbell referenced frequently in his discussion of players in his monomythic model. The trickster does not have to be a supporting character or "helper." The trickster can just as well be the protagonist of the narrative (Campbell and Moyers 157, 275).

Like the picaroon Pip in Dickens's *Great Expectations*, picaroon Nix is both the protagonist and narrator of his own tale. Unlike Pip, who wanted to be a gentleman, Nix is not overly concerned with bettering himself—at first. Nix is, like Beckman's Gurney, what some writers on the Quarterlife Crisis have identified as a "slacker" (Wilner and Abby 67, 190-91; Hassler 82), a "young person (esp. in the 1990s) of a subculture characterized by apathy and aimlessness" (*New Oxford*) who "shirks work or responsibility" (*American Heritage*).[31] As a slacker, Nix's place in the scheme of the Quarterlife Crisis bildungsroman reveals a scoundrel just as unwilling to explore legitimate sources of income as Gurney in *Winter Zoo*. This may be because, as Arnett postulated, "Although the identity explorations of emerging adulthood make it an especially full and intense time of life for many people, these explorations are not always experienced as enjoyable" ("Emerging" 474). While living as an expat in post-Communist Europe, Nix made "a confession" to his readers that he had a demonstrable set of struggles with his past—his identity, his potential for self-

[31] At the same time, others writing about provisional adulthood and emerging adults, such as Jeffrey Arnett, have tried to downplay the condescending "slacker" epithet as an unfair stereotype of persons struggling during this period (Arnett, "Suffering" 23; Lawrence; Lee, Shelley 4).

sufficiency, and his interpersonal or sexual relationships (Eversz 4). One would not expect to find such issues in a well-adjusted adult but, rather, in an emerging adult, in crisis.

Nix, who had initially introduced himself as the "hero of this fool's tale" (6), later described himself as one not conforming to the archetypal "faux villain, someone who initially appears to be evil, but—as his motives and character come into focus, an unhappy childhood here, a good deed sprinkled amid the bad there" turns out to be "not such a bad fellow after all." He was "not a hero with a tragic flaw." He had begun "low and [would] end no higher" (39). In his self-rationalization, Nix painted his own portrait as an ordinary Joe going through whatever it was that he was supposed to be going through at his age. Because Nix is such a pathological liar as a character within the narrative, it is difficult to trust what he says as narrator. However, by the end, it is true that Nix has not made huge advances on his peculiar anti-hero's journey.

Arnett pointed out that the typical emerging adult is at a stage where he or she is still exploring "identity issues" ("Emerging" 473). In *Conquering your Quarterlife Crisis*, Alexandra Robbins said that twentysomethings often "feel forced to figure out [their] identity" immediately (160). Such pressure could lead to some contrived attempts to get it right. With regards to identity, Nix clearly did not know who he was! He began his narrative, admittedly, with a "False start!" He had to let the reader know that he was then going to "begin with the truth" (Eversz 5). Was he really a screenplay writer from Hollywood? The reader is never really quite sure since Nix lived, part-time, in a fantasy world of his own creation.[32] In this respect, Nix is also reminiscent of yet another Richard,

[32] The biographical information in Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts* states that he previously lived in Los Angeles as a screenwriter and moved to Prague in 1992. With that knowledge, the read cannot help but wonder if expat Nix is an alter ego of expat Eversz in the same way expatriate Stephen Dedalus was to expatriate James Joyce.

the Generation X British expat in Alex Garland's *The Beach* (1997), who routinely slips into daydreaming, watching the life he wishes for unfold in his mind as if it were a cinematic narrative.[33]

In addition to Nix's mental fabrications, there were gross inconsistencies in his self-conception. In some places in the text, Nix did not regard himself as either a con or a thief, both of which he was, but rather, a kind of ill-fated Satan (Eversz 38-39)—another puppet-like insinuation—whose role in life's drama was to provide his "victims" with a good time (31). One may "as well blame Lucifer for being a devil," was Nix's amoral attitude about his nature (17). Even though he brazenly introduced chaos into the lives of others, he had constructed a convenient false sense of identity for himself as a kind of progressive do-gooder who supplied a necessary service. However, in other places in the text, he confessed that others "instinctively understood" his "true monstrousness" and that he was a "disgusting, loathsome, vile [. . .] beast, to be beaten and kicked into submission" (18). Robbins found that it was not unusual for twentysomethings enduring a Quarterlife Crisis to dislike themselves (*Conquering* 203). Whether Nick really loved or loathed himself, he was clearly confused about his identity.

In her interviews, Robbins discovered that so many twentysomethings had problems with "work life" that she titled chapter eleven of *Conquering Your Quarterlife Crisis*, "Will I Always Hate Going to Work?" (96-102). Nix's incapacity to support himself in his own trade of screenplay writing, either at home or in post-Communist Europe leads the reader to

[33] Because Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts* and Garland's *The Beach* were both published in 1997, this highly similar plot detail in both narratives seems to be a coincidence. In 2006, Marc Forster directed a film called *Stranger than Fiction* in which the protagonist, played by comedian Will Ferrell, hears an audible narration of his own life, as it happens, in his head.

wonder if he was truly capable of legitimate self-sufficiency.[34] Arnett suggested that one indicator of the transition from emerging adulthood to young adulthood is self-sufficiency. "Financial independence," he said, is "crucial to self-sufficiency" ("Emerging" 473). Nix was like an adolescent who routinely steals cash from his parents but doesn't really consider it stealing because of an inherent sense of entitlement. Nix felt he was genuinely entitled to a good time, albeit at the expense of others. If he were truly self-sufficient, and ethical, he should haven been able to adequately support himself without resorting to illegitimate means.

Was Nix financially independent? If the reader considers passing counterfeit banknotes and routine, petty theft a *legitimate* occupation, something Nix ironically hated the Gypsies, moneychangers, and black marketeers for allegedly doing, then the answer is yes. However, if larceny cannot be rationalized as an equivalent to self-sufficiency, then the reader understands that Nix was, in fact, quite *dependent* on the convenience of naïve tourist girls he could prey upon by picking their pockets and subsequently offer to "rescue" financially—with the same money he had just stolen from them—until they could sort out their loss (Eversz 31). He also used this as a ploy to sleep with strangers he would never have to see again. Even so, Nix still spent a lot of his life in post-Communist Europe hiding from people he didn't want to run into, a somewhat irresponsible approach to life. Like the adolescent model his life more closely resembled, Nix tended to view work, even the illicit variety he did perform, "not as occupational preparation but as a way to obtain the money that will support an active leisure life" (Arnett, "Emerging" 473).

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[34] The fact that Nix cannot support himself without stealing is another reason to distrust his narration. He had boasted in the beginning of the narrative that his screenplay-writing career had allowed him to lead the good life (Eversz 4-5). Apparently, his good life was one devoid of money since he had none to draw from in post-Communist Europe. Any legitimate career as a Hollywood screenwriter that Nix was supposed to have had may have been just another of his many delusions of grandeur.

Nix's inability to foster a work ethic—or ethical principles of any kind—led to shallow interpersonal relationships. "Some people," Nix wrote in his narration, "have known [him] for years and have yet to discover anything genuine about [his] character" (Eversz 16). Nix's difficulty in finding suitable friends is consistent with what Robbins and Wilner discovered in their interviews with twentysomethings who claimed that, beyond the matrix of the college environment, it is "much harder to meet people in the real world" (181). For Nix, one reason he may have had problems finding friends is the fact that he was living between two countries—Czechoslovakia and Hungary—where he did not speak either language. Nix's role as a slacker shines through again. It takes work to learn and appreciate a foreign language, effort Nix was reluctant to do. He once described the language of two quarreling Poles as a noise "that sounded to [his] ears like grinding glass" (Eversz 5) and thought it was unreasonable for post-Communist Czechoslovakians—the country split in 1993—to expect him to learn "a language with seven incomprehensible grammatical cases in a country of sixteen million impoverished creatures" (24). Since five million of those poor "creatures" spoke Slovak, not Czech, Nix demonstrated his unwillingness to do the work of research—surprising for someone posing as a serious screenwriter—and learn a language. His observation of poverty in 1992 Czechoslovakia was notable for one more reason. By refusing to study the local language(s), sojourners such as Nix, who were living abroad for an indefinitely long time, limited themselves to social interactions only with the elite population of Czechoslovakia, those privileged with enough money to afford English language tutors or lessons at private language schools.

For all his big talk, Nix really exemplified an antisocial personality. In his narration, he said that he "normally shun[ned] casual travel acquaintanceships as the lowest form of human interaction" (7). On one occasion, Nix provoked Andrew, his only real male

colleague in the story, into a physical altercation after disagreeing at a club. Andrew, like Nix, was one of the many "young Americans in Prague" (14), or "YAPs" as the mass media popularly referred to them (Pratt 268; Welch; Gross 30), and a totally unqualified English language teacher (Eversz 78) who like "[m]ost American" would probably stay "a year, perhaps two, if particularly desperate to avoid responsibility," according to Nix's own assessment of them (13). Andrew felt theirs was "an empty, stupid lifestyle" (14). When Nix, who admitted in his narration that he was "not a very likeable person" proclaimed Andrew a "Mother Teresa with a penis" he took a "childish blow" across his jaw (15).

In one turning point, Nix demonstrated his ability to make a leap from antisocial person to sociopath, an established personality disorder with more "aggressive" antisocial behavior (*American Heritage*) and lacking "a sense of moral responsibility" (*Random House*) or "conscience" (*New Oxford*). In a rare and unwitnessed act of courage, Nix had managed to defend himself against Sven, the phony Danish "brother" of Monika, accidentally killing him in the process. Again, this may have only been the way he imagined it. Monika accused Nix of "the guts to face him" and that Sven had been stabbed in the back (Eversz 341). Only by accident and in his imagination would Nix ever appear brave—his regular outward actions painted him as a pathetic, coward (342). Rather than going to the authorities, Nix had left the body floating in the Danube river (332). The post-Communist Hungarian police, who found Nix to be "a sick and repulsive" (31) "smooth operator" (30) had been tracking his shenanigans, with the Czech police, since the beginning of the narrative and doubted that he actually had "the guts to kill anyone" (335). The police didn't have evidence to convict him of any wrongdoing but considered framing him anyway to wrap up the case and settle their old scores with him. In the end, Nix was absolved from the crime but not from being an antisocial.

In addition to conventional, interpersonal relationships, Nix also had issues with romantic relationships and intimacy. In *Quarterlife Crisis*, Robbins and Wilner claimed that, "for twentysomethings, the idea of love at first sight meets with reactions ranging from skepticism to hope, but most of the people with whom we spoke said that the idea was basically a myth" (133). As aberrant as Nix's non-sexual interactions with people were, his carnal encounters were equally warped. Nix's "attempts at intimacy have always met a bitter and lachrymal end." Of himself, he said that he "was more capable of murder than love" and that "the more skins peeled from the atrophied onion of [his] heart, the more pungent the odor" (Eversz 16). Arnett claimed that for "people who wish to have a variety of romantic and sexual experiences, emerging adulthood is the time for it, because parental surveillance has diminished and there is as yet little normative pressure to enter marriage" (*Emerging*, 10). Nix was so immature, according to Arnett's standards, that his romantic relationships were still on an adolescent level. In adolescence, Arnett posited, "explorations in love tend to be tentative and transient; the implicit question [being], Who would I enjoy being with, here and now?" ("Emerging" 473). Robbins and Wilner concluded that it was common for twentysomethings, like the fictional Nix, to gamble and "wonder if they should hang onto a good relationship or shop around for a better one" (132). Because of the commitment, responsibility, and accountability a long-term relationship with someone would require, Nix had no real interest of pursuing one while in post-Communist Europe. He routinely hopped from the bed of one victim and into another. His affair with Monika ended up being longer than he expected only because he was, ironically, being conned in reverse by her and her phony Danish brother.

Not only was Nix pessimistic about the possibility of having a relationship with others, he was also pessimistic, at times, about himself. In a survey conducted in 2000,

Arnett discovered that many emerging adults, especially those from Generation X, saw "the condition of the world as grim and are pessimistic about the future of their society" ("High" 267). Some pessimistic sojourners like Nix were sick with boredom in their own native society and felt that it too was sick with recession. For Nix, such pessimism manifested itself, at times, as hypochondria, when he imagined himself developing a brain tumor from his excessive head pain (Eversz 35). In reality, his splitting headache resulted from a combination of his recent beatings and excessive alcoholism. Even within the private sphere of his mind, Nix couldn't accept responsibility for the things in his life that were really ailing him.

Twentysomethings in a Quarterlife Crisis are sometimes characterized as having a cynical outlook, and Nix was no exception. In his case, perhaps there was a parallel with his namesake, Richard Nixon. In his recent biography of Nixon, *The Invincible Quest* (2007), Conrad Black claimed that the historical Tricky Dick "was a cynic, certainly. This came from his defensive and pessimistic nature." Eversz's rendition of Tricky Dick, Nix, could have likewise been a poster child for either the cynical pessimist or the pessimistic cynic. For example, Nix "never considered acting" on "the occasional wild impulse to do good." For him, the "nobler sentiments of altruism and charity seemed irrelevant to the demands of the modern world" (Eversz 15). Robbins deduced that it was "all too common" for twentysomethings to "go through [a] cynical phase" in their Quarterlife Crisis (*Conquering* 4). Nix expressed resentment at what he perceived as insincere performances. Like the real Richard Nixon, he held a "resentment of the hypocrisy of the falsely pious, even though he emulated them at times" (Black). On one occasion, Nix attended a concert of Gregorian chanters, but his cynical disbelief that grown people could have real religious faith caused to him to laugh so loudly that a monk bounced from the church (39).

Nix was also cynical towards the motives of his own countrymen. When he discovered that the secret lover of his fellow American expat Andrew was a Czech girl with a clubfoot, Nix once again expressed his distrust of virtue (15). Nix assumed that Andrew was not a noble person for being blind to her deformity but, instead, the type of man "who could scarcely contain [. . .] excitement around women with one or more amputated limbs" (79). Nix thought that the "weakness and deformity in others hardened certain of [Andrew's] tissues while softening his heart" (79). For Americans, he felt that the love of money, not art, came first. Nix believed that "not many people are interested in or capable of intellect" (84). To further his cynical point of view, Nix contrasted the American film industry with the European film industry. He felt that Europe produced art for a minority of intellectual minds while Hollywood made "films based on emotions" always pandering "to the lowest common denominator" and resulting in "a fat paycheck" for the creators (84).

Unlike Gurney, who seemed to have reached a sense of closure on his Quarterlife Crisis at the end of Beckman's *Winter Zoo*, Eversz's Nix, by the end of *Gypsy Hearts*, appears to have only partially worked through his. Rather than finding a way to mature, accept responsibility, and either return to the United States or redeem himself in Czechoslovakia or Hungary, Nix ran away again. He vowed a fresh start in Bucharest, Romania (349), a nation that, according to a report by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), may have "the largest Roma population in Europe and possibly the world" (Ivanov 12). Monika had revealed earlier that she was part Roma (Gypsy), the one minority in Czechoslovakia Nix had consistently despised throughout the narrative (351), and the inspiration of the book's title, *Gypsy Hearts*. Such a decision by Nix may have indicated, at least, some level of intellectual and emotional growth for him. Nix's wish was "to claw a new foothold of identity" and to devote himself "to a new concept of being"

(349). He would find a "poorly paid" job "that might benefit others and thus ennoble the spirit." He considered the Peace Corps or Greenpeace, two North American founded organizations—The Greenpeace Foundation began in Canada (Ostopowich 5)—with an organized presence in post-Communist Europe. "English teachers were needed everywhere" and he was even "willing to go hungry in the service of a good cause" (350). Whether or not Nix and his "gypsy heart" were telling the reader the truth or once again fantasizing the basis of another screenplay idea, is impossible to know for certain. However, if Eversz's readers decide to take an optimistic approach to Nix's new resolutions, then there is hope that he will make progress toward emerging from the prolonged, "provisional adulthood" phase into the mature period of "first adulthood" (Sheehy, *New* 9).

## Turning Points in the Quarterlife Crisis Bildungsroman

Crisis demands resolution, yet the narrative of modern Western bildungsromans frequently resists a formal closure. The endings are often open-ended. An expat's encounter with the Quarterlife Crisis in post-Communist Europe—as an encounter with the Spirit of the Present, or the self—may not be neatly concluded before other encounters begin. For the expat in narrative, the Quarterlife Crisis might resolve itself by the story's conclusion, as it did for Gurney in *Winter Zoo*, for Jonathan in *Everything is Illuminated*, or for Chip in *The Corrections*. Or it may be suggested that the Quarterlife Crisis will linger on well after the sojourn abroad is complete and the return home is over, as happened with Nix in *Gypsy Hearts*, and Daniel in *Leaving Katya*. In a bildungsroman narrative, if it is a journey of self-discovery, its conclusion should offer evidence of eventual growth, formation, transformation, or coming of age in the chief protagonist. But, this is not always

the case. As in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), a bildungsroman may end in actual or eminent departure for the protagonist, very often for the big city, a device that virtually cries out for a sequel, as his *Ulysses* (1922) seemed to be. Richard Lynch wrote that at "the end of the *bildungsroman*, the protagonist is almost always on the road to some undefined destination, with an old identity left behind and a new one still in the process of forming" (Lynch 59-60). Nix certainly gives evidence of this on his train ride to Romania, the final scene of *Gypsy Hearts*, as he explores his possibilities.

Much like the bildungsroman's leaving behind of an old identity, the end of the monomyth suggests a new fused identity for its hero by demanding a reintegration with the world that was left behind, some evidence of a mastery of two worlds with the gifts/lessons obtained from the quest, or a symbolic or literal healing (see Appendices C and D). So, when narratives about sojourners who are "sick" with the Quarterlife Crisis paradigm reach their end, the question remains, were they ever healed? Even more so, how? Robbins and Wilner, authors of the works that brought the Quarterlife Crisis to light, are criticized for offering little to their readers in the way of a cure. Like literary critics, perhaps they are better equipped to identify issues, not find solutions.

Not everyone believes that a true cure exists. Some believe that the anxieties of the Quarterlife Crisis are just something sufferers must learn to cope with. Others believe there is no Quarterlife Crisis at all. For example, some of the criticism that followed Robbins and Wilner's original thesis was that it read too much into a "postgraduate culture shock" (Toth 1E), a "malaise" for twentysomethings that has been known about—and discussed—for years (Britt; Coupland 27). Some reviewers of their book, especially those from the twentysomething readership base, criticize Robbins and Wilner for having gone overboard with the definition or justification of the problem by rehashing their primary data—mostly

interviews with twentysomething Americans—when they could have focused more on analysis, interpretation, and workable solutions to it (Jewitt). Perhaps in response to this, Robbins, who seems to have broken off with Wilner after their first book together, lets the fans of her theory offer the solution in *Conquering Your Quarterlife Crisis: Advice from Twentysomethings Who Have Been There and Survived* (2004).

Wilner teamed up with Cathy Stoker but only found ways to "manage" the Quarterlife Crisis in their joint publication *The Quarterlifer's Companion: How to Get on the Right Career Path, Control Your Finances, and Find the Support Network You Need to Thrive* (2005). Together with Lizz Aviles, the three maintain an online Quarterlife Crisis support group. Now, a problem identified in the electronic age can be also handled electronically. Certainly, for those who feel they have it, Quarterlife Crisis assistance is much easier to find than it would have been for American expats in the 1990s. As of 2005, wrote Kathlyn van Rohr, "a Google search for 'quarterlife crisis' pull[ed] up nearly 3 million Web pages" that sufferers can access to find support from their peers (Rohr). Now that the crisis has been identified, given a label, and brought out in the open, a routine search on Amazon.com, for example, will likewise bring back dozens of titles about how to deal with anxiety in the twentysomething years.[35] Help is only a click away.

Effective therapy for the Quarterlife Crisis, it seems, is different for everyone since each experiences the ordeal in a way unique to them. I'm not even sure that completing my

[35] Listing all of the self-help books that spawned from Robbins and Wilner's thesis would be space-intensive. A scholarly survey that compared and contrasted all of their different approaches would be a worthwhile project. A few notable examples are *20-Something, 20-Everything: A Quarter-life Woman's Guide to Balance and Direction* (2005) by Christine Hassler, *What to Do When You're Twenty-Two: A Survival Guide for the Quarter-Life Crisis* (2005) by Mandy Schomas, *Upload Experience: Quarterlife Solutions for Teens And Twentysomethings* (2005) by Jason Steinle, and *My Quarter-Life Crisis: How an Anxiety Disorder Knocked Me Down, and How I Got Back Up* (2007) by Lee Wellman. Even Germany got on the Quarterlife Crisis bandwagon in 2003 with Birgit Adam's *Quarterlife Crisis: Jung, Erfolgreich, Orientierungslos* (Young; Successfully, Orientationless).

master's degree solved mine completely. But, there is one final possibility for resolving the Quarterlife Crisis resolution in the expat narrative sequence. As intense as the trauma of relocation and culture-shock was for some turn-of-the-millennium expats in the beginning of their sojourns, the process they underwent to actually leave their native, home environments behind—something Campbell called "the crossing of the first threshold" (*Hero* 77)—may have been, ironically, the initial trigger for many recovery stories. The relief that some sojourners received through the actual process of expatriation may have been what two reviewers of Arnett's *Emerging Adults in America* (2005) refer to as "turning points" (Gibbons), a phrase the *OED* dates to 1836 as one that means a crisis or critical point "at which a decisive change of any kind takes place." The authors of "Resilience in Emerging Adulthood," chapter seven of Arnett's book, claim that, for some, usual and easily identifiable turning points or "catalysts for change" could be "internal motivation, epiphanies, [. . .] conversion experiences," sometimes "engendered by mentors who offer[ed] a helping hand along with hope, as they open doors to the future" (Masten, et al. 187). The resistant mentee/insistent mentor encounter echoes a critical set of phases in Campbell's monomythic model (See Appendix D). In any event, a "romantic relationship or [the] birth of a child," (Masten, et al. 187) as was the case for *Winter Zoo*'s Gurney, may also serve as turning points/catalysts for change. His time spent with Grazyna's daughter Wanda, who grew up conflicted about her divorced, nomadic father, was Gurney's epiphany that his own daughter was better served with him in her life. For him, this is what brought closure for his Quarterlife Crisis.

Connecting the Quarterlife Crisis to the subject of twentysomething American expatriatism in the nineties, Jerold Starr discovered through interviews that, for many emerging adults who volunteered for the Peace Corps—summarily living and working

offshore for at least two years—was a major turning point in their lives (Starr 137). In their review of Arnett, Gibbons and Ashdown even speculated, as unlikely as it sounds, that overseas missionaries[36] for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (hereafter, LDS) might also experience this "turning point" phenomenon (Gibbons), although it may have actually had an unexpected effect on their Quarterlife Crises.[37] While Nix was neither a missionary nor a Peace Corps volunteer, he did consider making such a move at the end of his narrative (Eversz 360). Nix's primary turning points were, as Star suggested, the actual relocations themselves. His novel begins with his relocation from California to Europe (4). At some point he is inspired to move from Paris, if his internal monologue is to believed, to Prague, and then to Budapest (5). As necessity behooves him, he moves back and forth between the two post-Communist European capitals until his final turning point, an epiphany to add more meaning to his life, inspires his final sojourn to Bucharest. It may be a long time until sojourners such as Nix has passed enough turning points to reach closure on their Quarterlife Crises.

While the so-called "turning point" of expatriation might have signaled the beginning of a Quarterlife Crisis recovery for some, it was actually the beginning of

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[36] LDS church members in good standing between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five are openly encouraged to serve two years away from home (*The Best*) doing service for their faith in the field, usually abroad ("Get"). In my own experience, there was certainly no shortage of LDS missionaries in 1990s post-Communist Europe, and, with the exception of the rowdiness regular expatriates enjoyed, I count them among the expatriate experience in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe. In June 1994, the *Prague Post* reported that there were "115 missionaries in the Czech Republic, mostly Americans, working out of 14 branches" (Calbreath). I actually tattooed a pair of these LDS "companions" who visited my studio in Kraków on one of their "preparation days."[36] One could frequently find these nineteen-year-old "elders"—obtrusively Waspy, necktied, and name-tagged—proselytizing in many public spaces, often directly across from Jehovah's Witnesses. Paul Greenberg mentioned their presence frequently in *Leaving Katya* (22).

[37] In *Get the Fire!*, a PBS funded documentary by filmmaker Nancy du Plessis—an American expat in Europe—an objective and thorough look at the LDS missionary experience, through the voices of the Missionaries themselves, reveals that some of them began to question their own faith after their service to the church was concluded. This and several other cinematic narratives about LDS missionaries could be investigated for rhetoric of the Quarterlife Crisis and twentysomething Americans working abroad. Their own story of the 1990s is documented in Kahlile B. Mehr's *Mormon Missionaries Enter Eastern Europe* (2002).

Quarterlife Crisis-related anxieties for others. For example, some turn-of-the-millennium American sojourners, in their encounter with the culture shock of what they perceived as a globalized and virtual "Bizarro World"[38] in 1990s post-Communist Europe—the topic of the next chapter—may have gotten to experience a degree of introspection that they could have very well missed out on at home. Further study in this area should look for and analyze exceptions such as *Gypsy Hearts*: American sojourners who were not "healed" of their Quarterlife Crises either before, during, or after their expatriation experience, especially ones who eventually returned home, repatriated, in an effort to find some relief. This, I believe, is where the conventional bildungsroman model and Campbell's monomythic model can find a bigger challenge.

[38] Just as Dickens's Ebenezer Scrooge saw his own *doppelgängers* during his encounters, D. C. Comic's Superman also has such a ghostly-double. His name is "Bizarro" and he is a steel-skinned variation of Superman who lives on Htrae—Earth spelled backwards—in "Bizarro World" a parallel universe that operates under "Bizarro Logic," which is to say, anything done there is "in contravention to the rules of [Earth's] human society" (Daniels, Les 110). For example, like post-Communist Europeans in the 1990s who differed slightly in habit from mainstream American GenXpats by drinking lukewarm beer and using the triangle to represent a male, people from Bizarro World would eat "cold dogs" on their square planet. A trivial bit of information pertinent, at one time, only to avid comic book character fans, the term was popularized in 1996 by comedian Jerry Seinfeld, in an episode of *Seinfeld* entitled "Bizarro Jerry." Jerry explained the meaning of Bizarro to Elaine as someone's "exact opposite, who lives in the backwards Bizarro World. Up is down. Down is up. He says 'hello' when he leaves, 'goodbye' when he arrives" (Mandel). The *OED* entry for "bizarre" states that one word it may have derived from is the old Italian "bizzarro" which meant "angry" and "choleric." Bizarro is now used frequently as a modification of the word bizarre, to describe extraordinary situations where either the reasoning—or syntax—is warped or things are the reverse of how they *should* be, thus its applicability to the perspective of extremely fresh, unseasoned travelers abroad or other "ugly Americans" who have relocated offshore.

# CHAPTER IV

## TURNING POINT WITH THE FUTURE: THE GLOBALIZATION AESTHETIC

If Poland blows, or maybe / The Magyars rise again.
Or possibly the Uzbeks / Spew skyward like the yen.
Let's hope, sealed and beribboned / In some dark White House drawer.
We'll have a plan in being / The Russians can't ignore.

—W. H. von Dreele, "The Ghost of Christmas Future" (1988)

This sarcastic, Cold War era poem was published in William F. Buckley's biweekly conservative magazine, the *National Review,* in December of 1988 (Dreele 19), at least five months before revolutionary activities in Poland set off a chain reaction of events across Communist Europe. Spirits of the future, as in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, show only the shadows of "what may be" as opposed to "what will be" (108) making the vision of von Dreele's ghost, in 1988, a particular future of blowing, rising, and spewing that never came to pass. In 1989, however, a new vision of the future came to both the emerging post-Communist Europe and the American sojourner.

From my perspective, this vision began with the well-received end of the Cold War and all the fear-mongering and cultural stereotyping that construct had inflicted on the American people. Born in 1968, I grew up at the tail end of American Cold War rhetoric, raised in a Southern religious tradition that had indoctrinated my generation into believing that Soviets were a godless race of monsters with no regard for life who would happily eradicate our liberty and enslave us if given the chance. President Reagan had called their home an "evil empire" in 1983 (Lewis, A.). The propagandist themes of Cold War narrative in a plethora of popular songs such as Nena's "Ninety-Nine Red Balloons" (1984), Elton John's "Nikita" (1985), and Hollywood films such as *Red Dawn* (1985) and the television

mini-series *Amerika* (1987), were ones that not only predicted an eventual confrontation with the Warsaw Pact nations, but also how life in the United States, under Soviet-style Communism would look: frightening and ugly. Since the 1950s, the political language of the day had been polluted by simplistic, ideological binaries, as articulated by Ben Want, "The Cold War was a rhetoric, a narrative, a moral drama propelled by the Manichean myth of apocalyptical struggle between forces of good and evil, between capitalism and communism, between democracy and totalitarianism, rationality and barbarism" (48). The National Security Agency defined the Cold War as a "confrontation between the Soviet Union—the 'slave state'—and the United States, the 'free state' " (Singer). In the Cold War dichotomy, the struggle was easy to explain and easy to understand. It was either us or them.

However, by the late 1980s, many people my age felt differently. Soviet kitsch—also the name of a post-millennium album by Regina Spektor—and the Soviet aesthetic had penetrated American culture.[1] It wasn't exactly ugly; it just wasn't American or Western European. Books such as Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984) made Czechoslovakia look like an inviting place to have an overseas adventure or romantic liaison

[1] This subject certainly warrants its own study, but I can shortlist, at least, a few ways that European communism penetrated the 1980s American mainstream consciousness outside of the political arena. In the early 1980s, American eye surgeons finally adopted innovative—but controversial—refractive surgical techniques pioneered by the Ukrainian ophthalmologist Svyatoslav N. Fyodorov in the 1970s (Vronskaya). Russian tractors, for example, found a place in the American market when 1980s, recession-hit farmers found the imported equipment to be effective but cheaper (McDowell 1+, Farnsworth D1). Hungarian Erno Rubik's trendy puzzle game, "*Buvuos Kocka* [Magic Cube]" was invented in 1974 but debuted at Western toy fairs in 1980 (Bellis). Likewise, the "Tetris" video game from Russian Alex Pajitnov (Herman) became very chic items to own. Latvian dancer and Soviet defector Mikhail Baryshnikov captured the interest of America when he starred in the Hollywood film *White Knights* (*IMDb*) and became a naturalized U. S. citizen in 1986 (Rimer A1). In 1987, scores of American celebrities, such as Billy Joel, toured the Russia, making it a sexy, "in" place to be (Barringer 11). Actor Sylvester Stallone helped reinforce farcical, Cold War, Soviet stereotypes with *Rocky IV* 1985 and *Rambo III* in 1988 (Goodman H1) as did other Cold War themed films. The Helsinki-based, avant-garde rock group "Leningrad Cowboys,"—their moniker essentially prophesying the globalization aesthetic in post-Communist Europe—formed in the late 1980s and enjoyed artistic success throughout the 1990s as over-the-top parodies of Soviet style as was evidenced in their campy, cult film from 1989, *Leningrad Cowboys Go America* (*IMDb*).

(Welch; Goodheart).[2] For some twentysomethings, Kundera's Czechoslovakia was different in an exotic way and untainted by the universalizing sameness and predictability of American tastes in the eighties and nineties. Not only that, but the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev, with his new Soviet policies of *glasnost* (openness or transparency) and *perestroika* (reconstruction),[3] and the lyrical narratives of musicians such as The Scorpions and Sting had taught us that "We share the same biology / Regardless of ideology" and that "What might save us, me, and you / Is if the Russians love their children too" (Sting). By 1990, Americans were hearing—from the Scorpions—that people following "the *Moskva* / Down to Gorky Park [were] Listening to the wind of change" (Meine).[4]

I clearly remember the eventful day when East Germans broke through Berlin's city wall in 1989 (Ash 69; Schmemann, "A Jubilant") perhaps just as well as I remember the epic Space Shuttle Challenger explosion in 1986 and, much later, the 9/11 terrorist attacks. As much as the impending millennium would ever prove to be, the end of the Cold War marked the end of one narrative and the beginning of another. This new narrative of the United States at the turn of the millennium, one that American sojourners will venture into and carve out a space within, is globalized. It doesn't have the same binary divider of the old Cold War narrative. It is international and interdisciplinary, stretching into both the

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[2] The influence of Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984) is felt elsewhere in the Prague expat scene. For example, Jonathan Safran Foer borrowed a line from Kundera's prose to name his own novel: "in the sunset of dissolution, *everything is illuminated* by the aura of nostalgia, even the guillotine" (4, emphasis mine).

[3] The period of *glasnost* is commonly translated as a greater political candor or frankness as called for by the former USSR's Mikhail Gorbachev after he came to power in 1985 (Schmemann, "From" 2). Because of the corruption, he meant for the government to become more overtly "transparent" to the people so that the leaders could be "fully subject to public scrutiny" (Gorbachev 34). *Perestroika,* a Russian word Gorbachev sensationalized in 1986, suggested a new era of economic and bureaucratic reform.

[4] The Scorpions were a West German music group that recorded in the English language. Their rock ballad "Wind of Change" (1990) enjoyed success on the airwaves in both the U.S and Europe throughout the early 1990s. The title became a popular media sound bite in the West when the transformation of Communist Europe was referenced.

United States and post-Communist Europe, into cinematic, lyrical, literary, and travel narrative. In the 1990s, it was America's turn to return the favor of the Soviet aesthetic. The U. S. would now export its own globalist aesthetic—a pastiche of American iconography.

In 1993, I barely knew what globalization meant. The word had definitely not yet made it into my everyday vocabulary. In 1995, three years after I had expatriated to post-Communist Poland, a British colleague loaned me her copy of Benjamin Barber's *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (1995) to read on a coach ride to Germany. It was then that my level of awareness changed. I had encountered what looked to be the future. Poland had no Jihad movement, in the sense that we understand it post 9/11, but it did have what Barber meant by the term: a tendency for tribalism, or conservative values. Basically, any culture still rooted in the concepts of intolerance, fundamentalism, nationalism, or ethnocentricism risked the designation "tribal" and was, according to him, a threat to democracy. This was easy to understand. In chapter two, I discussed the resurgence of nationalism. Just a few post-Communist countries to the East, ethnic factions in the former Yugoslavia were engaged in a mutual slaughter, so I could definitely see that possibility. But tribalism, or Jihad, was only one of two paradigms he predicted would soon take center stage. There was also the concept of "McWorld," a trendy euphemism for globalization—capitalism on a global scale. The corporate goals of McWorld see no national or cultural borders: Make everyone into mass consumers and make them all want the same stuff, preferably the stuff McWorld sells. I suddenly realized that everything I had been seeing and experiencing so far in post-Communist would soon be irrevocably transformed; I was, perhaps, seeing the last of a place that would soon be overrun not only by Westernization, but largely Americanization.

Negotiating a Game of Post-Communist Schizophrenia

Parts of post-Communist Europe in the late 1980s, as many American sojourners found it, was in a state of economic and mental depression. In, "What They Do For Fun in Warsaw," P. J. O'Rourke once told Grzegorz, a Polish punk rocker, that, in America, his generation rebelled because it was "bored with commercialism" and "bored with materialism." Grzegorz replied with a sigh, "They're rebelling here from lack of this." Such was part of the backdrop of the Velvet revolutions that were soon to happen across Central and Eastern Europe.[5]

Stunted by forty-five years of Communism, the region looked much like one would have expected the world to look like after World War II. Nevertheless, an influx of Westerners and their ideas of globalization and capitalism were on their way. In the 1990s, American sojourners and post-Communist Europeans alike found themselves to be the willful participants of a new culture that was being melded from the influence of two. In a literal and symbolic sense, the West had been brought to Central and Eastern Europe. In urban, cultural centers such as Prague, Budapest, Kraków, and Moscow, people could experience the unusual sensation of being in several places—and times—at once; it was a feeling of being neither in the United States nor the United Kingdom, although the signage and products on display looked like it, nor in Old Europe, although the architecture and infrastructure hadn't really changed. Like McWorld, it was everywhere and nowhere. How can such an experience be accurately illustrated? Perhaps Charles Dickens encapsulated

[5] This side of the story, and the role punk rock music played in transforming the political situation of late 1989 Poland, is well documented in Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz's documentary *Pokolenie '89* (Generation '89).

best the fusion of dichotomic opposites that is echoed in the spirit of globalization in post-Communist Europe. The first paragraph of his *Tale of Two Cities* (1859) famously begins,

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way. (1)

In 2004, this sentiment was echoed by Austrian political scientist Eva Schrottshammer who said that "the opening words from [Dickens's] epic novel appropriately sum up the contradictory and ambiguous mood" that was prevalent "in all the new democracies of [post-Communist Europe]." She claimed that on "the one hand, the collapse of communist rule created a 'spring of hope,' which promised a new era of democracy, prosperity, and sovereignty to the people of this much-abused region." However, on "the other hand, it has led to growing worries about the future, as the pains of market-oriented economic reform and resurgent nationalism have generated fears about the emergence of various forms of authoritarian nationalism in at least some of these post-communist countries (1).

Based on my own experiences there as an American expat, I want to take Schrottshammer's assertions one step further by suggesting that both "contradiction" and "ambiguity" were key traits of globalization in turn-of-the-millennium, post-Communist Europe—a highly postmodern combination, by any standard—and a third recurrent theme, after xenophobia and provisional adulthood, in American narratives with sojourners from this time and place. Furthermore, the aesthetic that resulted from the intervention of

globalization showed American sojourners what post-Communist Europe, and perhaps the world, would look like in the near future. Like Scrooge's vision of his own future, the future of post-Communist Europe could very well have produced a horror.

Scrooge's Spirit-of-Christmas-Yet-To-Come is often characterized on stage as a black-robed and hooded grim reaper. However, the American sojourner's Spirit-of-Europe-Future is not nearly that morbid. Globalization in late twentieth-century post-Communist Europe did not produce a beautiful synthesis of the best from two opposing ideas, such as "McWorld" and "Jihad" or "Capitalism" and "Communism;" as represented in narrative, it was quite the opposite. The European Griffin, as a symbol, is part eagle and part lion; as both the king of the air and the king of the land, it allows for a particularly gifted creature to rule its world. Because the globalization of post-Communist Europe is a mixed metaphor, if it were given its own herald, it would not be so graceful. A postmodern rendition of globalization needs a symbol that represents both contradiction and ambiguity. I liken it to a Janus-faced, or two-headed, phoenix.[6] A system, a culture, a people, and a place that continually change and are transformed by rising from their own ashes is somehow fitting. Yet, globalization in post-Communist Europe also fosters an inharmonious blend of distinctive traits from both the older parent of its past, Soviet-style globalism, and the younger parent of its present, Western or Capitalist-style globalism. In its infancy, the Spirit-of-Europe-Future was not utopia. To reword Leibniz, it was, aesthetically, the *worst* of all possible worlds.

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[6] Though they are not phoenixes, it is interesting to note that Romania, Moldova, Montenegro, Albania, Russia, the Czech Republic and Poland, for example, are post-Communist European nations symbolized in their coats of arms by fantastic, mythological birds that, in their original forms, predate 1990s Europe (see Appendix F). Albania and Russia have two-headed eagles, the Czech Republic has one that is "checkered" while Poland has one that is all white. One example of literal transformation is in the Polish eagle's head. During Communism, it lost its crown. After the election of President Lech Wałęsa, it suddenly reappeared ("The Polish National Flag"). So, like the phoenix, that particular bird died, went away for a while, and was then resurrected.

Transformation and change, then, are central traits of globalization in post-Communist Europe and are evidenced even in the language employed by American narratives about sojourners. Late twentieth-century American vernacular, influenced by the media, plays a definite role in this determination.[7] For example, in the 1960s, a political movement now referred to as "neoliberalism" blended "traditional liberal concerns for social justice with an emphasis on economic growth" (*American Heritage*). It denoted a modification or change in the conventional understanding of "liberalism" that now favored "free-market capitalism" (*NOAD*). In the 1980s and early 1990s, the subtext of *change* began to be gleaned from the use of the catchphrases *glasnost* and *perestroika*—words largely forgotten and unused today—and thus opened the gates for later political catchphrases such as "globalization."[8] One such connection can be found in the "Notes and Asides" along with Dreele's supercilious verse, "Ghost of Christmas Future," in Buckley's *National Review* (1988). Contributor Stan Ridgley suggested to Buckley that Western propaganda such as the *National Review* were no longer a threat to the USSR as evidenced by the Soviets' neglect to confiscate the magazine upon his arrival—Ridgley had given his copy to a black marketeer. Ridgley[9] wondered if the magazine had become "a beneficiary of *glasnost*" ("Letter" 19). Buckley replied, sarcastically, in a way that accurately

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[7] American political rhetoric of this media-driven millennium has, thus far, been influenced culturally by sensationalistic, emotionally-charged neologisms. Some of them are either misappropriated or oxymoronic, such as "Y2K" (Davis, L. C3), "Patriot Act" (Lewis, A.), "Katrina refugees" (Whoriskey), "Islamic fascism" (Applebaum A24) or troop "surge." Just as these words help define the contemporary *Zeitgeist*, so functioned popular expressions from the preceding decade.

[8] Even though the word "globalization" was popularized in the 1990s, the *OED* records its usage as early as 1961.

[9] Presumably, this Stanley Ridgley is the same person who, as of 2003, wrote regular columns for the *National Review Online* (*NRO*). According to the footnoted blurb at the bottom of his articles, Ridgley has served as "the president of the Russian-American Institute" (Ridgley "College").

foreshadowed a globalized near-future: "Terrific! We are negotiating with Pepsi-Cola—one copy of *National Review* with each carton of Pepsi" (Buckley 19).

## Defining Globalization in Post-Communist Europe

The earlier referenced words "*glasnost*" and "*perestroika*" predate the late 1980s and early 1990s collapse of Europe's "Iron Curtain," a phrase coined by Winston Churchill.[10] It wouldn't be extant Russian words, but made-up, postmodern English-language words that would celebrate and usher in globalism in turn-of-the-millennium, post-Communist Europe. For example, as early as 1992, one-time American expat David Lempert began using the construction "Pepsi-stroika" with the publication of his University of California, Berkeley dissertation.[11]

In 1993, the idea of "Market-Leninism"—a word *The New York Times* circulated as early as 1993 (Kristof A1)—was reinforced as an English language expression by one popular Internet watchdog of such neologisms, *Word Spy*. In 2001, *Word Spy* contributor Howard Scott defined "Market-Leninism" as an "economic system that combines aspects of both capitalism and communism" (Scott). This definition does well to describe the economic portion of globalization but says nothing of the cultural aspect, something implied in narratives about sojourners.

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[10] Churchill made that East-West distinction clear in his famous "Sinews of Peace" speech, given at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri on 5 March 1946 (Churchill 300).

[11] Lempert's ethnographic formulations about the Americanization of the former Soviet union were later reworked as the journal article "Pepsi-stroika: American Cultural Influence on the Russian Political and Legal System" for *Legal Studies Forum* (1996) which was ultimately republished in Mike-Frank Epitropoulos's *American Culture in Europe: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (1998). His dissertation was published in a multivolume book form—*Daily Life in a Crumbling Empire*—in 1996, and used the "Pepsi-stroika" expression as part of its lengthy subtitle.

Terms relating to Communism, such as "Market-Leninism," have surfaced in daily newspapers and on the Internet—as evidenced above—in trade publications, scholarly journals, and even college literary magazines. For example, a post-millennial volume of the student-published *New Growth Arts Review*, included a work of literary prose[12] by Dominic Covolo dubbed "McMarxism™," complete with a rather overt trademark symbol in the title. The title of the short narrative suggested that Communism—or, at least, the former Communist marketplace—had been purchased and copyrighted by a globalist, corporate entity such as McDonald's, a company famous for combining the prefix "Mc" with ordinary words,[13] and filing lawsuits on others who use this combination, a subject I will return to. Covolo's protagonist was an everyman expat who overheard a discussion on the evils of globalism, consulted with the ghost of Karl Marx about the "Politics of the Soul" (4), and reached the conclusion that symbols "do not denote that which they stand for. They are not what it is they signify" (5). According to Covolo's paraphrase of Ferdinand de Saussure, this kitschy word creation is, at best, only an echo—or, maybe a shadow—of the signified concept, "McMarxism™."

The concept of globalization in post-Communist Europe needs its own word that differentiates it from general globalization. Especially for examining this concept in American narratives about sojourners, writing "globalization in post-Communist Europe" is simply too long and one can only stand to see the word "post-Communist" so many times on

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[12] Covolo, a student-writer at Indiana U of Pennsylvania at the time, was awarded the 2004 *New Growth Arts Review* prize for this submission.

[13] Just some of what are popularly known as "McWords" include "McLibel," a 2005 film from Cinema Libre Studio; "McJob, [ . . . ] a low-pay, low-prestige, low-dignity, low benefit, no-future job in the service sector [ . . . ] considered a satisfying career choice by people who have never held one" (Coupland 5); and, finally, "McWorld," a virtual place in which political theorist Benjamin Barber claims even major American CEOs "do not find foreign countries foreign" (23-26).

one page. Post-Communist only means "after Communist"; it says nothing about the weird combination of contradiction and ambiguity can be read into it.

Taking a cue from George Ritzer's *The McDonaldization of Society* (1995), Benjamin Barber's *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (1996), and George Cohon's *To Russia with Fries* (2001), others before me[14] have put a suitable word into circulation (Grech; "Spotlight"; "DJ"). That word is "McCommunism," and I argue that is the best word to encapsulate the peculiarity of globalization in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe, as humorously represented in American narratives about sojourners. Used in the way I am proposing, "McCommunism" [15] blends capitalist and communist versions of economic globalism and cultural imperialism with a dash of cynicism thrown in, for good measure. It can likewise be used to indicate post-Communist Europe's Spirit-of-Europe-Future, in a much more specific way than Covolo's "McMarxism™" and more comprehensively than Scott's "Market-Leninism."

Where Benjamin Barber's word "McWorld" is often used as a euphemism for a "corporate-dominated" or globalized society (Clarke 28), the concept underlying the proposed word "McCommunism" manifests an uncomfortable blend of that same "McWorld" with Soviet-style globalism in certain communist and recently post-Communist countries. "McCommunism" as an indicator of globalization in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe, represents neither an ideal form of Marxist economics, the

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[14] As of June, 2006, a keyword search in the internet search-engine Google produced 192 hits, or instances, of the word "McCommunism" in web-based publications. The word, however, was already in popular circulation among veteran expatriates in 1990s post-Communist Europe.

[15] The patronymic prefix "Mc" is actually an abbreviated version of the Gaelic "Mac," which signifies "son of" (Givens). The idea of "McCommunism," then, as the son or inheritor of Communism, with a capital "C," is therefore one that warrants further discussion elsewhere.

centralization of "all instruments of production in the hands of the state" (Marx 19), nor a full realization of capitalist goals, the "private ownership and control of the means of production" so that "surplus value" can be extracted (Marsh 58). Instead, it is more of a transmogrified beast with feet planted in each sphere.

American sojourners have documented this word's use for some time in their own narratives.[16] For example, Kevin R. Patterson—a former history teacher—published his narrative on a website documenting his travels to post-Communist Budapest, Hungary. "In the gift shop," wrote Patterson, "in the [park full of surviving Soviet-era statues] they sell hip cynical T-shirts combining communist and capitalist symbols. One shirt advertises McCommunism." Wherever it rears its head, "McCommunism" exemplifies the worst that both sides of the former Iron Curtain had to offer.

Whatever this concept is ultimately called, globalization in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe really had little to do with the core philosophy of Karl Marx or Vladimir Lenin. It may still represent a socialist bureaucracy, but many key ideas those men advocated for are, for the most part, now gone. All that remains are the shadows of Communism, old artwork and architecture that will forever remind natives and visitors alike of the past.

On its own, pure globalization would prefer to eradicate the remnants of Communism and avoid the comparisons altogether. But, in the 1990s, it didn't manage to do that. That is why it is "globalization in post-Communist Europe." It represents more than

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[16]The "McCommunism" phenomenon is no longer unique to post-Communist Europe. In China, for example, "McCommunism", blends elements from the free-market such as "employment" in American-style fast-food industries with socialist fiscal policy. User "dennyb24" from *Travel Pod: The World's Original Travel Blog*, has two wonderful photos of McCommunist themes from China posted in 2005. Both are real depictions of beautiful Chinese architecture in a classical architectural style with Western fast-food chain signs—McDonald's and KFC—written in Chinese and protruding from the roofs. The first picture is captioned, "I'll have a Big Mao and a Cultural Revolution Extra Value Meal, please!" and the second reads "What would The Colonel, The Chairman, and Grimace think?" ("Shenzhen").

the simplistic idea of two blended economic or cultural systems; the botched attempt to harmonize them is a much better understanding. In narratives about American sojourners, globalization in post-Communist Europe is something that must be conceptualized with imagery or figurative language. American sojourners convey globalization in post-Communist Europe as a rude amalgamation of random, visual stereotypes from American-styled capitalism, such as cigarette-smoking cowboys John Wayne and the Marlboro Man, denim blue jeans,[17] Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, and other icons of American popular music, and highly recognizable corporate and national logos, such as coca-cola, the golden arches and the Statue of Liberty, to name a few. Mix your mental images of those icons with cultural stereotypes of European-styled communism, tractors, horse-and-buggies, billowing smokestacks, cement buildings, large black statues of workers and farmers, and the color red, and one gets closer to a visual image of globalization in post-Communist Europe, the Spirit-of-Europe-Future. If Andy Warhol were alive, he might say he'd already done that with pop-art images of historic personages such as *Che Guevara* (1962) and *Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* (1972).

In Joe Kincheloe's *The Sign of the Burger: McDonald's and the Culture of Power* (2002), a direct comparison is drawn between the previously prolific number of Vladimir Lenin statues in post-Communist Europe and the newly erected ones of Ronald McDonald (Kincheloe 63-64). Imagine, if you can, something I and hundreds like me saw every day in the bustling cities of post-Communist Europe where, in the 1990s, there was an abundance of hulking, blackened, bronze sculptures of Vladimir Lenin and other Soviet heroes on

[17] In the sixth chapter of Mike-Frank Epitropoulos's *American Culture in Europe: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (1998), Steve Fox discussed "African-American Images in German Advertising, 1987-1992" (Epitropoulos 145-162). Part of the divided Germany then was post-Communist East Germany, which reintegrated with West Germany in 1990 after the wall segregating Berlin began to be dismantled in 1989. In my experience, Fox's observations about the German fascination with American-made jeans and the urban, African-American music scene proved to be just as true in late twentieth-century, post-Communist Europe too.

antiquated European streets lined with crumbling, drab examples of functionalist, mechanistic, or Constructivist architecture being systematically—albeit sporadically—dismantled. Increasingly, it seemed that the sovereignty of some post-Communist public spaces was being challenged by a full-color statue of a grinning seven-foot clown with red hair and oversized shoes made from polished fiberglass and resin. It would not be unusual, in some cases, to even see the contrasting icons of the United States and old, Communist Europe—for example, Karl Marx and the Burger King or Vladimir Lenin and Colonel Sanders—co-existing within the same realms of vision, each covered with graffiti and pigeon excrement while gesturing the working-class pedestrians towards "progress" as understood by either one fiscal ideology or another. "The empire of Ronald," Joe Kincheloe suggested, could potentially effectuate an even greater globalist impact than the empire of Vladimir and his successors (63-64)

Such is the pattern of imagery in American narratives about sojourners in late twentieth-century post-Communist Europe. For example, in Liev Schreiber's film adaptation of *Everything is Illuminated* (2005), there is an assortment of shots focused on protagonist Jonathan's arrival to the Ukraine of both him and the chief supporting characters riding through the streets of Odessa. The montage takes Jonathan's perspective of this different world and contrasts the iconic image of a new, McDonald's restaurant with an iconic, Soviet-era sculpture, and finally a Byzantine-style architectural structure complete with highly ornate, onion domes. On the presence of American fast-food icons in post-Communist Europe, travel writer Rick Steves wrote in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that when McDonald's first came to Budapest, "Ronald McDonald stood on the street corner like a heretic prophet cheering on the downtrodden proletariat, while across the street, wannabe capitalists drooled over window displays featuring fancy tennis shoes that cost two months'

wages" (Steves). The ridiculous American icon was so well known to post-Communist Europeans that Gurney, the protagonist of John Beckman's *Winter Zoo*, because he had curly red hair, was likened by a Cracovian to Ronald McDonald (43). To envision this scenario is to begin the visualization of globalization in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe.

The early stages of globalization in antemillennial, post-Communist Europe had everything to do with its transitional, awkward, pubescent period of development. Another way to look at this period of massive change reflects what some sojourning writers—such as Neil Wilson, writing in "Prague Today"—have referred to as a "communist hangover" (8). Douglas Lytle preferred the expression "Velvet Hangover," as the title of his narrative about Prague in the 1990s. When writers humorize the pain of globalization in post-Communist Europe, they not only assist in processing that pain, they also provide insight into many of the satirical, critical, and otherwise ironic observations available in the turn-of-the-millennium American narratives about sojourners.

For example, in 1993, in one of my earliest conversations with an indigenous post-Communist European, I was told an often-repeated joke about the United States during the Cold War years. This was before I had developed a working grasp of the Polish language, and the joke was translated for me into rudimentary German by Lukwika, the wife of Jarek, the "teller." The narrative is that—at some point during the world superpowers' space race of the 1960s—the Soviet Union, in an effort to hurriedly proclaim Earth's moon as a liberated, Communist space, sent their cosmonauts there to paint it entirely red. The Americans, not wishing to be outdone or miss a golden opportunity for a free-market enterprise, quickly sent up their corporate-sponsored astronauts and painted on the moon the words "Coca-Cola" in white. In effect, it became an ad that the whole world would be

forced to look at, the Soviet world included. This simplistic approach to the encroachment of Western capitalism into the Communist sphere of Europe was one of my own first encounters with the awareness of globalization. On a personal level, the proverbial truths in Jarek's joke had much to me inform me about my own country's system and how the peoples of post-Communist Europe felt about the United States' tendency to be intrusive with their market. It also made the claim that a corporate logo like Coca-Cola's said more about the United States, to post-Communist Europeans, than a star-spangled banner. Post-Communist Europeans, then, "got" the idea of what a globalization aesthetic might look like even before anyone had suggested such a term for it.

For Jarek, the fictional globalization of his country, as told in a Cold War era joke, had already begun to come true with the arrival of Westerners and Western businesses. Similarly, expat narratives reveal a progression of the globalization aesthetic as witnessed by both post-Communist European and American characters who are portrayed at different times in 1990s post-Communist Europe. In other words, as things in post-Communist Europe increasingly "Westernized," manifestations such as culture shock, for example, became less pronounced with American sojourners who arrived on the scene later in the 1990s. Such themes are evidenced in their narratives.

## Recognizing Globalization in Turn-of-the-Millennium Post-Communist Europe

There are at least three ways that the theme of globalization in post-Communist Europe has manifest itself as an encounter with the American sojourner in expat narrative. One is whenever the author makes allusions to the intrusion of Western globalism into post-Communist Europe. For example, when post-Communist Europeans adopt an English-

language word for a product rather than developing their own. This was something I witnessed in Poland in the case of the words "beeper" and "notebook computer," for example. Or, when negations go into effect for a Western company buyout of famous local companies. This not only happened with E. Wedel, the "Hershey's" equivalent of Poland, but also in the Czech Republic with the Budwar/Budweiser brand of beer. Anheuser-Busch, the American owners of a much younger company called "Budweiser" tried to buy the older—and superior—Czech brewery Budwar/Budweiser so that they could sell their own product there without a branding confusion. I also remember a Polish student telling me in a language class that his father would get very upset at seeing American-made television commercials for feminine hygiene products, something that hadn't been advertised on television during the years of communism. "Here I am trying to eat," he told his son, "and this comes on to make me sick!" Douglas Lytle, in *Pink Tanks and Velvet Hangovers* (1995), recalls the inundation of new "foreign goods [that] continued to flood into [Prague] on a weekly basis: Uncle Ben's Rice. Palmolive. Pampers." On one occasion Lytle and his friend "encountered a woman handing out free samples of Tampax tampons. Little white tampons were heaped everywhere." When they inquired as to why this product was being displayed in such an unexpected way, a yellow-smocked salesgirl told them it was because "people have never seen these before, and they're afraid of them [. . .] Some people think they are giant firecrackers or some kind of snack for dogs!" (306).

Another way to recognize the presence of globalization in post-Communist Europe in narrative is when the writer presents an illustrative description of the absurd, and often ironic, dualities present in the juxtaposition of stereotyped, cultural paradigms. For example, a post-Communist European business that specializes in making weather-proof photographs that can be attached to tombstones begins to sell Western brand ice-cream from

a cart outside its door. An American fast-food establishment installs a "toilet guard" to collect money for using the restrooms and to ration off the bathroom tissue. Local manufacturers of products such as tobacco create new brands in English to improve their branding. I saw brands in Poland with names such as "West" on the pricey end and unfiltered ones named "Sex Sport" on the bargain end. Douglas Lytle remembered seeing some cigarettes called "Start" in Prague. "Start what?" Lytle asked, "To Die?" (104).

Finally, the spirit of globalization in post-Communist Europe can be evidenced in the discourse about the "new" capitalists of post-Communist Europe and their innovative, uninformed, or otherwise peculiar approaches to free enterprise. In other words, this is when the sojourning characters actually discuss the issues of globalization, as the characters of Arthur Phillips's *Prague* do in the opening sequence as they sit together at a café and comment on the changes taking place around them. This is the easiest to identify and most frequently used method.

I now present two cultural documents relevant to turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe as separate case studies. I show a few ways in which the "spirit" of globalization presents itself through problematic binaries, primarily in the political and cultural spheres. For the first artifact, I take some creative license with "Occidentalism"—Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit's inverted theory of Orientalism that takes a stereotyped view of the West—to characterize the United States and its ideals through the eyes of east-of-the-Iron-Curtain Communist Europe. This is accomplished through a re-reading of a graphic artwork pertinent to the beginnings of globalism in post-Communist Europe in political representation.

For the second artifact, I show how an American cinematic perspective *resembling* Orientalism—Edward Said's theory that the Western discourse constructs their concept of

the East as a stereotyped, hostile "Other" (1, 48, 56)—exoticizes various European countries while it struggles to find parallels. Late twentieth-century Europe is scrutinized through a shallow, American popular culture perspective in an excerpt from a cinematic narrative that accurately captured the *zeitgeist* of American expats and their experiences on an increasingly globalized, post Cold War continent. The narrative fragment unmasks American globalism in Europe through cultural representation. Thus far, I have been constructing a metanarrative text based on the collective experiences of American sojourners as represented in an assortment of narrative texts. Both of the following case studies are "inter(con)textual"[18] in the sense that they refer simultaneously to the concepts of intertextuality (texts relating to other texts and their own subtexts) and contextuality, where the context is also a "text." In other words, the context of the artifact, which is itself a text, speaks not only to the artifact itself, but also to the contexts of the other narratives (texts) of this study. Both readings establish the tone for and offer the cultural and historical context to globalism in American narratives about sojourners necessary for the second half of the chapter.

## Cowboys in Europe: How the East Was Won

As previously mentioned, cultural globalization in post-Communist Europe had its beginnings in the much more ideologically polarized Cold War era of the late 1980s. This early representation of globalization is reflected in narrative art, for example, in the literal

[18] Inter(con)textuality is frequently used in the field of biblical exegesis, a few key examples being Jean Kim's " 'Uncovering Her Wickedness': An Inter(Con)Textual Reading of *Revelation* 17 from a Postcolonial Feminist Perspective" and Tat-Siong Benny Liew's *Politics of Parousia: Reading* Mark *Inter(con)textually*, both from 1999. Graham Allen, in *Intertextuality*, credits Julia Kristeva for introducing the idea of intertextuality to scholarship in the 1960s (Allen 3) and Kim notes her influence from Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, for "dialogicity," which is to say, "the intersection of texts and contexts" (63).

and metaphorical black-and-whiteness of a very late Communist European political poster [19] owned by Indiana University of Pennsylvania (see Appendix G). "*Solidarność: W Samo Południe* 4 *Czerwca* 1989" (Solidarity: It's High Noon, June 4, 1989) is one part of the university's large collection of award-winning placards from Poland, a country well established in the printmaking tradition (Sarzynski).

In this now famous political campaign poster for Poland's first legal, independent trade union, citizens are reminded of their forthcoming day of free elections, the result of which marked the formal end of communism in Europe (Ash 45). It seems to be an early, symbolic look toward the stereotyped West—in this case, the historical American West of gold miners, notorious outlaws, Native-Americans, and cowboys—as a model. It is a little known fact in the United States that "Westerns," as literary and cinematic narrative, were very popular behind the Iron Curtain.[20] The placard clearly shows a black and white image of Gary Cooper, portraying cowboy sheriff Will Kane from the Fred Zinnemann film *High*

[19] Can visual art be read as a text? After the work of Ferdinand de Saussure (Allen 175) and Roland Barthes, academia reexamined the esoteric subject of what could be, within reason, considered a text and read as one. In his lectures given between 1906 and 1911, Saussure posited that what society had conventionally designated as language, was little more than a man-made matrix of symbols, or signs—two-part structures composed of a "*signifiant*" and the "*signifié*" (Saussure 75). A *signifiant* could be, for example, the word "cowboy." That *signifiant* was an arbitrary acoustic image (Barthes 113) that merely pointed to a *signifié*, (114) which would be an actual cowboy in the material universe. The acceptance of that concept opened up a discussion of what might also be considered signs. In 1957, Barthes speculated in *Mythologies* that any sort of image (120)—such as a photograph, filmed image, or other artistic rendition of a cowboy—could also be a *signifiant*, leaving the possibilities open for newly readable texts like performances, or even a physical environment (Stables 189) such as the manifestation of McCommunism in 1990s post-Communist Europe. This environment would be subsequently "read" in the prose narratives of both the post-Communist European native and the expatriate artist.

[20] Unknown to many Americans was the popularity of American "cowboys and Indians" to Europeans living in Cold War Central and Eastern Europe thanks, in part, to German author Karl May (1842-1912). May's Native-American protagonist "Winnetou"—who appeared in a series of books that have sold over 100 million copies, and later European-made films, highlighting the "wild West" aspect of Americana—was enjoyed by such notables as Franz Kafka and Albert Einstein (Kimmelman B5). In the early1960s, before Italian-made "Spaghetti Westerns" had begun to be filmed in Spain, German-made "Sauerkraut Westerns" based on the characters of Karl May were being shot in Communist Yugoslavia (Young). The Soviet Bloc nations of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania also made Western-themed films and these were nicknamed "Red Westerns." In my own experience, I found that the American-made *Bonanza* series was very well known to even younger post-Communist Europeans, the series' theme song often being the vehicle for many inside jokes.

*Noon* (1952), and has been altered slightly so that he is seen carrying a ballot that says "*Wybory*" (Choice, or Election).

Any other symbol for urgency or strength from Poland's long history of romantic rebellions or national victories—and its cultural representation—could have been chosen. For example, the famous Polish "winged" Hussars that helped defeat Ottoman forces at the Battle of Vienna in 1683 (Davies, *God's* 483), or General Józef Piłsudski, who organized a score of resounding military victories against the Red Army of the fledgling USSR in the Polish-Soviet War of 1919 (Watt 415), or Pope John Paul II, the staunchly anti-Communist Karol Wojtyła, who became the first Pole ever to obtain the Papal helm in 1978 (Koven). Any of these might have also incited the Polish people into a patriotic fervor regarding the election. Rather than using a more contemporary, Slavic shipyard worker, such as then *Solidarność* union leader Lech Wałęsa (Tagliabue), a fabricated, American cowboy from an old pulp, Hollywood film—highly reminiscent of former President Ronald Reagan, who had portrayed cowboys in his earlier acting career[21]—was chosen to represent this "kind" of freedom. At this critical stage of self-determination for the nation (1989), the poster seems to ask the opponents of communist rule to emulate "Americans" who as Charles Gabor's father said in Phillips's *Prague,* "have no appetite for anything other than black or white" like their "cowboys-and-Indians John Wayne movie[s]" (49). It also shows a willingness on the part of Poland, a soon-to-be post-Communist nation, to absorb some of the associations identified with the United States, the soon-to-be "winner" of the Cold War.[22]

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[21] Like Gary Cooper and John Wayne, Ronald Reagan portrayed cowboys in films. Of note are *The Bad Man* (1941) and *Law and Order* (1953). Reagan's pose in the original poster for *Law and Order*—unable to be duplicated due to copyrights—is remarkably similar to Sarnecki's use of Cooper. See images at www.allposters.com.

[22] Another reading of the poster would come from the plot of the film, if Poles were aware of it. In the film, Kane is "personally compelled to face a returning deadly enemy" and "finds that his own town refuses to help him" (*IMDb*). The people of Poland, as represented by the *Solidarność* worker's union, saw themselves

The idea of the cowboy[23] and the "free" American is persistent. Knowing this, in 1993, Robert Eversz, author of *Gypsy Hearts*, even presented a theatrical narrative in Prague called *Cowboys and Indians* (Orel 79). The play "re-presented" (77) the "culture clash" (73) and "intercultural confrontations" (74) between American tourists and post-Communist Czechs in the newly freed city. Americans were, naturally, depicted as "cowboys" while the post-Communist Europeans, speaking in chopped English, were represented as "Indians"—perhaps, a prophecy of Barber's *Jihad vs. McWorld*, the ideas of globalization and tribalism are represented by cowboys and Indians. When a straightforward shift to recognizable, American-style paradigms did not occur in post-Communist politics, as may have been anticipated on all sides, a terrible globalized "beauty was born," to paraphrase W. B. Yeats.[24]

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as going it alone against their enemy, the Communist administration that declared martial law on them. Other countries, it seemed, would not intervene—it was up to them to take back control of their country.

[23] Arthur Phillips, author of *Prague: A Novel*, was not the only American expatriate writer to reference the idea of the cowboy as a recurring concept of America by post-Communist Europeans. For example, expatriate Richard Katrovas, in his short story "The Troll," portrayed the meeting between a Marine assigned to the U. S. embassy in Prague and a Czech voice over actor who dubbed many of America's "greatest war movies." To Czechs, he *was* "John Wayne, Gregory Peck, George C. Scott [. . .] heroes and anti-heroes" of the American armed forces (44).

[24] In the poem *Easter 1916*—a reflection upon the failed but highly inspirational and transformative Irish uprising of the same name—the famous line "a terrible beauty is born" could easily be one of the more memorable refrains in English poetry, according to Yeats biographer Roy Foster (Sanford). Some observers, such as biographer Barbara Maddox in *Yeats's Ghosts*, liken the expression to a sense of culpability that could be linked to his earlier work, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902) which seemed to suggest that violence can be beautiful (369). Other critics have suggested that the recurrent reference to this birth of a terrible—an adjective that can also mean "great," "impressive," and extremely "formidable" in Irish English—"beauty" to represent a "rhetoric of sacrifice." In other words, this painful delivery pitted "the beauty of the indomitable spirit in [a] dialectic with the terrible nature of violence" (Mackin). In contrast to the failed and bloody events of 1916 Dublin, the remarkably painless parturition of the newly independent Warsaw Pact nations—in their period of "Velvet" revolution—may very well have had much to do with what enticed the initial waves of American sojourners into post-Communist Europe during the 1990s.

When Subcultures Collide: Escapism as a Commodity

Echoes of the conflicted, McCommunist model can also be evidenced in an isolated segment from the cinematic narrative of Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994). The narrative approaches the theme of the American sojourner in the 1990s from its back-end. The character of Vincent Vega, played by John Travolta, is a returning American expat whose dialogue adequately encapsulated the globalist mood that was already established in Western Europe and under construction in post-Communist Europe at the time of the film's release there. In the film's second scene, Vega crudely expounded upon the more enlightened or disturbing subtleties between two different cultures existing in the same globalized world.[25] Vega was an American mobster who had previously sojourned in continental Europe for reasons of "employment." To fellow heavy Jules Winfield, portrayed by Samuel L. Jackson, Vega explained that "[a] lotta the same shit we got here, they got there, but there they're a little different."

These sometimes-subtle variations in expectation were enough to make the everyday experience for the incoming American expat seem either commendable or altogether intolerable and is part of the ongoing commentary in expat literature. For example, "in Amsterdam," Vega continued, "you can buy beer in a movie theatre. And I don't mean in a paper cup either. They give you a glass of beer, like in a bar. In Paris, you can buy beer at McDonald's." Although beers were not available, to my knowledge, in the American fast-food franchises of turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe, it was available in the new, American-style cineplexes that began to appear in the outskirts of urban centers. Since

[25] In this case, the referent country is Holland, but the principle idea remains the same for post-Communist Europe in the 1990s.

the drinking age was lower in pre-EU, post-Communist Europe than the standard twenty-one-years-of-age in the United States, younger American expats and travelers especially took advantage of this McCommunist perk. It became part of the propagandizing dialogue that enticed more Americans, frequently the acquaintances of expats already there, to continue their invasion of post-Communist Europe.

Vega also explained why Europeans, due to the metric system, "wouldn't know what the fuck a Quarter Pounder [with cheese] is." The French, for example, called it a "Royale with Cheese" and renamed another famous American sandwich as "le Big Mac." This will seem more relevant to the discussion when I point out the fast-food variations that were available in 1990s post-Communist Europe. Vega took great pleasure in his description of how the Dutch drowned their fried potatoes in mayonnaise, rather than ketchup, and how, for individuals who wanted to indulge in hashish, it was

> . . . legal to buy it, it's legal to own it and, if you're the proprietor of a hash bar, it's legal to sell it. It's legal to carry it, which doesn't really matter 'cause—get a load of this—if the cops stop you, it's illegal for this to search you. Searching you is a right that the cops in Amsterdam don't have . . . (Tarantino)

Vega's words[26] highlight a fuzzy area of European law that made mood-altering substances legal in some situations and illegal in others. I mean that it was fuzzy to Americans until they understood the rules. In the U. S., street drugs such as hashish or marijuana were illegal to possess, so any type of exchange—financial or otherwise—was

[26] Vega's commentary on drug use in Europe, as a quotable cinematic sound bite, was an especially popular selection on the bartender-controlled, soundtrack playlist of expatriate-frequented drug dens and dives in southern Poland during my own time there. One place, in particular, was known as "The Hobbit" and resembled, remarkably, the clichéd, expatriate hangout in Pilsen called "The Devil's Happy Lap" in D. A. Blyler's *Steffi's Club*.

likewise illegal. In pre-federalized Europe, each country had its own rules. Certain continental European counties such as the Netherlands and the newly opened countries of post-Communist Europe had the situation described by Vega where selling was illegal but possession wasn't. This too had the spirit of globalization in post-Communist Europe: not quite one thing and not quite the other but, rather, something less specific, floating in-between. Like the beer in the cinema scenario, this particular "liberty" became one more lure for a certain demographic of American twentysomethings who wanted to live cheaply in a drug-friendly environment. Where absinthe had once defined the mind-altering drug of choice for expat scenes earlier in the century—although it was still readily available in the Czech Republic—the psychotropic byproducts of cannabis became the most accessible choice for American sojourners in late twentieth-century post-Communist Europe. Whereas American corporations were busy globalizing Europe with hamburgers, Europeans were globalizing their American guests with recreational drugs.

## The Globalization of Cuisine in Post-Communist Europe

Earlier, I discussed Vega's commentary about his overseas adventures with food in *Pulp Fiction*. His observations were significant for another reason. They aptly described a kind of corporate-American globalization that had already planted its feet in Western Europe but was just beginning to move forward in post-Communist Europe. In any hypothetical discussion of the globalization of cuisine in post-Communist Europe, the proposed word "McCommunism" becomes especially appropriate. Most of the American narratives about sojourners reference this particular aspect of their encounter with the Spirit-of-Europe-Future.

"Communism was dead," wrote Beckman in *Winter Zoo*, and the "corporations were circling" (52). In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1999), Thomas Friedman posited that international globalization is the "system that has now replaced the old Cold War system" (ix). In the 1990s, the time was ripe for the Western corporate victors to fill the void Communism had left, when it finally left. Some post-Communist European leaders saw globalization as a threat while others opened their doors to it. For example, in Wendell Steavenson's "Gika" (2003), Steavenson recalls the late Guram Sharadze[27] as someone who, in 1998, had "finally given up demonstrating about the McDonald's opening next to the statue of Rustaveli" (96). I remember a similar argument going on in Kraków[28] when McDonald's bought a bank building to open up a second location in the famous market square where a monument to Adam Mickiewicz—the greatest Romantic poet of Poland in the nineteenth-century—resides on one side of the medieval cloth hall. McDonald's eventually won and opened their franchise. Because this restaurant chain has become one of the most referenced symbols of globalization, Benjamin used the word "McWorld" to describe what he understood to be the goal of Western economic giants. That is, the international commercialization of the planet through the expansionist models of megacorporate entities such as McDonald's.[29]

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[27] Sharadze was a former professor of Georgian philology who became a staunch nationalist after the fall of Communism. He wanted Western globalization, something he saw as dangerous to sovereignty as Soviet globalization, out of post-Communist Georgia. Shota Rustaveli is a revered Georgian poet from the twelfth century.

[28] For example, in 1994, Canadian Dr. Mark Sexty, of Memorial University of Newfoundland, posted an online socio-economic debate about the "Americanization" of Kraków for his students to consider. The culture-war discussion had to do with the McDonald's corporation's wish to expand their franchises into the main market square (Sexty).

[29] Megacorporate doesn't just mean giant corporation. It means a collection of companies that form one corporation. At various times, the McDonald's corporation has owned, operated, or had a financial stake in the Boston Market, Pret a Manger, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Donatos Pizza, and Redbox video franchises.

According to Claude Vignali in "McDonald's: Think Global, Act Local—The Marketing Mix," globalization involves the development of "marketing strategies as though the world is a single entity, marketing standardized products in the same way everywhere" (97). While globalization in post-Communist Europe could be interpreted as just one more form of Western cultural imperialism, it fortunately does not *yet* have the unyielding principles of total "standardization" of Vignali's definition. It does, however, have some of the cooperative characteristics of internationalism. The face of globalized merchandise and ideas continually adapted and evolved so as to appear more palatable to the tastes—and wallets—of the turn-of-the-millennium's newest consumer market.

This is where the earlier discussion of Vincent Vega's diatribe on Europe's adaptation of the fast-food menu becomes relevant to Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* (2002). Ukrainian co-protagonist Sasha Perchov spoke of a fast-food television advert that promoted "McDonald's McPorkburgers" as an item on the Ukrainian menu (Foer 7). While the "McPorkburger" is probably a sarcastic fiction from the twisted mind of Foer, it is true that beef is not really a *staple* meat in the diet of post-Communist countries such as Poland (Nowak 562) and Ukraine (Deever 8, 48-49), two countries that have very deep historical ties. Pork is the staple meat product there ("Peace Corps") and McDonald's and other franchised restaurants from the West have created products for the post-Communist market unavailable to consumers in America, the place many of these corporations originated. During my time in post-Communist Europe, I could find new McDonald's within walking distance of the train stations hawking, for example, beer and "McCroissants," while in Kraków, Poland, McDonald's tried to market "McKielbasa" to unsuspecting Polish

customers (Gumbel). Once, when I brought this topic up in a language class, a student asked, "They don't sell McKielbasa in U. S. McDonalds?' "[30]

To the degree that the McDonald's enterprise in post-Communist Europe is depicted in expat narratives as a caricature of everything wrong with turn-of-the-millennium American society—exactly the way I felt about Las Vegas after trying to live there for seven months in 2001[31]—it is presented equally as either a despicable joke or a cruel irony. For example, in Robert Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts* (1997), while protagonist Nix is receiving paid sexual favors in a Prague back alley from "a midget Gypsy whore" (Eversz 44) he noticed that "a billboard had been riveted to the side of the nearest peeling baroque town house." He blinked at the "iconic hamburger and golden obelisk of fires as though confronted by a hallucination." There was irony in that the "first sign of a free market economy had arrived to the street of whores: Prague was soon to have a McDonald's franchise" (46). Nix's audible laughter at the situation, echoed the sentiment expressed by other expat writers abfout McDonald's and the type of "free market" it represented.

[30] A few non-fictional cases-in-point would include "Vegetable McNuggets" and the "mutton-based Maharaja Mac" available only in India, "Teriyaki burgers" in Japan, "McSpaghetti" in the Phillipines, grilled salmon sandwiches called "McLaks" in Norway, poached egg hamburgers called "McHuevo" in Uruguay, and, finally, in regards to Foer's "McPorkburger," the Thailand McDonald's industry serves a product called "the Samurai Pork Burger with sweet sauce" (Vignali 99). During my own time in the 1990s U.K., McDonald's offered variations of their products with the prefixes "Masala" and "Tandoor" for their South Asian clientele and a pure "vegetable burger" that is currently unavailable in the United States. This omission from the American menu seems to indicate a poor business understanding of vegetarian buying power since rival Burger King does offer a "veggie" burger to American customers.

[31] From January to August 2001, I worked at "Ray's Desert Ink Tattoo Inc. & Exotic Piercing" on West Charleston Boulevard.

The Globalization of Institution in Post-Communist Europe

Where the globalization of cuisine addresses the influence of Western style marketing on local post-Communist European food culture, the globalization of institution addresses how globalization had affected Central and Eastern European religious culture and business culture, two formerly repressed institutions now allowed and encouraged to proliferate openly. And what globalization has wrought to these institutions, as represented in expat narratives, is not generally regarded as an overwhelming improvement. Just as economic globalization as blurred the national boundaries the nations that do business together, in some post-Communist European cases, it has also blurred the lines between religious endeavors and business endeavors. Although Barber's *Jihad vs. McWorld* focused more on the emerging dichotomy between globalism and tribalism, he did have a few things to say about post-Communist Europe just prior to 1995—the year he copyrighted his work—that adequately captured the "spirit" of the West's attempt to globalize the Church. One of them had to do with the strange relationship between the formerly contained institution of Christianity and the newly endorsed institution of capitalism. In the former Soviet Union, the "Russian Orthodox church, even as it struggles to renew the ancient faith, has entered a joint venture with California businessmen to bottle and sell natural waters under the rubric Saint Springs Water Company" (Barber 5). Hungarians, too, experienced outward change in some of their religious landmarks. For example, when "the Hilton came to the Hills of Buda, a local architect grafted the new [hotel] structure onto a thirteenth-century monastery" (12). When I lived in Kraków, a monastery had begun marketing an herbal headache powder through Polish pharmacies. In Richard Katrovas's "Letter from Prague," his unnamed expat protagonist spoke of the growing "vast, boring constancy" of the

globalization aesthetic that had begun to blur the iconography of old world religion and new world capitalism. From "city to city," he noticed, there was "Jesus Jesus Jesus […] Mary Mary Mary […] Angel Angel Angel […] God God God […] More than ten billion sold […] McChrist on a a cross […] The Burger King of Kings […] Flying buttresses […] Golden Arches […] What's the difference? (32).

Even war looked different when journalism became an opportunity for marketing product placement. The once very present sense of "tribal communism" in formerly Communist Europe, Berber maintained, has since "yielded to capitalism" (Barber 6). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, where ethnic "tribes" were cleansing their territories of the Other, minority ethnicities with religions that were no longer welcomed, they greeted Western globalization with open arms. Even while fighting, Barber reported, "Serbian assassins wear Adidas sneakers and listen to Madonna on Walkman headphones as they take aim through their gunscopes at scurrying Sarajevo civilians looking to fill family watercans" (5).

Historical institutions, city landmarks, monuments, and other architectural indications of civilizations that predated the United States by hundreds of years, were now beginning to look as if Western marketing iconography had been there all along. For example, in the famed Marx-Engelsplatz of East Berlin, native and visitor alike could once witness:

> the stolid, overbearing statues of Marx and Engels fac[ing] east, as if seeking distant solace from Moscow: but now, circling them along the streets that surround the park that is their prison are chain eateries like T. G. I. Friday's, international hotels like the Radisson, and a circle of neon billboards mocking them with brand names like Panasonic, Coke, and GoldStar. (Barber 6)

Some of these grand, Western ventures were premature and turned out to be bad investments. I clearly recall when a T. G. I. Friday's restaurant opened in the coastal city of Gdańsk[32] in the early 1990s. Then, as financially dependent as I was upon the post-Communist European economy, I found that my "middle-class" Polish income was not sufficient to afford a proper three-course meal at this establishment. When I returned years later, with U. S. dollars in hand, I found that the same establishment had been shut down.

The Reception of Globalism in Turn-of-the-Millennium Post-Communist Europe

Something quite similar to the Gdańsk T. G. I. Friday's incident happened with the Wendy's restaurant in a beautiful old brownstone corner of the Kraków city center. A popular expat rumor was that red tape with the pre-1990s Communist government took Wendy's builders approximately ten years to resolve. By the 1990s, when it finally opened its doors to post-Communist consumers, the franchise was failing after only a few years of operation. Apparently, the public was already familiar with Big Macs and Whoppers, giving certain other Western fast-food staples an economic advantage. Loaded jacket-potatoes, watered-down chili, and "Frosties," it seems, just never caught on. Later, a different eatery opened up in the same location—using the same furnishings—called "American Restaurant." It had a salad bar and served *bigos* (Polish sauerkraut and sausage).

An early franchise attempt of the Dunkin' Donuts chain[33] suffered a comparable fate when its over-sweetened and overpriced donuts found little appeal with a working-class

[32] Gdańsk is also known by its German-language name of Danzig. In recent history, it is remembered as the first location bombarded by Hitler in 1939, thus formally beginning World War II. Gdańsk is also the city where the famous shipyard strikes lead by union-leader and future president Lech Wałęsa took place.

[33] On the corner of *Ulica* (Street) Basztowa and Westerplatte.

culture that already had a long tradition of apple-jam-filled donuts called *pączki*, a snack readily available for pennies at any operating bakery on the street. At the time, the reception of all these Western establishments was mixed and made for good discussion between expat and indigenous post-Communist Europeans alike. Misguided, arrogant failures of improvised models of American urban sprawl, as well as unexpected success stories, colored globalization's fiscal adventures in 1990s post-Communist Europe. Culturally and financially, many American schemes—including my tattoo studios—ended in disaster. Some post-Communist European investors also lost on risky plans to get rich. For example, pyramid schemes such as Amway and Nutrilite were making great inroads with the Polish working-class when I was there. Reflecting on this situation, Gitanas Misevičius, the post-Communist Lithuanian antagonist of Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* tells Chip, his new American business partner, "Your country which saved us also ruined us" (Franzen 110).

Analyses of narratives written by and about American sojourners reveal that much of the discourse about globalization consistently utilizes easily recognized, consumerist icons, such as McDonald's as a referent to the issue. For example, in the novel *Prague*, where events begin in the year 1989, Phillips described how "throbbing serape-clad romantics [Gypsy street musicians] screen[ed] the view" for American expats living the café lifestyle from "a blocks-long line of Hungarians, some in finery for the occasion, eager to sample Hungary's first McDonald's" (Phillips 7). Later, one of Phillips's characters dodges "the velvet ropes corralling the line of people awaiting admission to McDonald's, [and runs] past the similar line at the store that sold one Western-brand athletic shoe and the mysteriously empty and lineless store that sold a different Western brand of athletic shoe" (35).

In the early 1990s, the "new" countries of post-Communist Europe were what the United Nations now calls "transitional countries," which is to say, countries that are "in

transition from centrally planned to market economies" (United Nations). The emerging free-market was still too new in late twentieth-century post-Communist Europe to label it completely capitalist, in the sense that much of Western Europe already was. There was simply just too much of the old infrastructure embedded in the even older, well-established cultural patterns. In *Gypsy Hearts*, Eversz wrote how, in 1989, the city of Prague,

> . . . had yet to become money-friendly. With the notable exception of public transportation, nothing and no one worked. There were few shops and fewer goods. Restaurants served food no more sophisticated than pork and dumplings, offered everywhere for less than two dollars a meal. Hotel rooms were criminally overpriced, but beyond that it was impossible to spend money [as a visitor] because there was nothing to buy [except beer] . . . Money was an alien concept in Czech society. (Eversz 169).

Eversz was not alone in this observation. The very presence of big-time, Western fast food industry giants and their corporate friends in the midst of this economic situation made them seem all the more ludicrous to native and visitor alike. Western trade-name products designed for the American working-class did not find a comparable market in post-Communist Europe of the early 1990s. At first, the acquisition of these products or services could only be attained by the upwardly mobile middle classes.

I observed that the ceremony of eating at the newly installed McDonald's establishments in post-Communist Europe was, at first, indeed a status symbol normally afforded to the financially advantaged. Working-class locals, however, spent money they had saved for a long time in order to be seen in such establishments, even if only to consume the most inexpensive item on the menu: a hot tea in a screen-printed Styrofoam cup. Fashion-conscious youths commonly loitered together at tables in the McDonald's of

Katowice, Poland for as long as possible—while sharing a small package of American French fries—before being asked to leave so that a new group of students could occupy the space. These places were not only climate-controlled; they eventually got public toilets that didn't require payment to a toilet guard, although some reverted or instituted a policy of requesting a key from the counter staff—for paying customers only—after the "privileges" were abused.

At the same time, in the bigger cities, young American expats from the east coast, often with no more than a few hundred dollars in their bank accounts could be seen loitering in the streets of post-Communist Europe. With their beat-up Nike athletic shoes and tattered Levi's denim jeans with holes in the knees,[34] they ate breakfast in hotels paid for with maxed out credit cards,[35] and generally appeared to be reckless and eccentric aristocrats with the way they carelessly abused their own status symbols. Thus, pillaging, carpet-bagging foreigners (Eversz 13), it seemed, were able to partake of more from post-Communist Europe than many of the native, working-class residents.

Because of such complications, post-Communist European locals were often mixed in their sentiments about the recent changes. It was hard for them to ascertain where, exactly, they fit as post-Communists within the quickly fading socialist-capitalist paradigm.

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[34] I mention such working-class trade names purposefully as such "authentic" brands were, at that time, still considered "elitist" (and hard to acquire) by the typical, post-Communist European consumer. A disheveled or otherwise unkempt appearance was not what most natives expected to see in their preconceived idea of an American. Furthermore, ragged, obviously unwashed clothing or footwear was not an acceptable fashion statement that had caught on with a public that still tried to take pride with what little they had. At best, it seemed impudent and, at worst, appeared to be a brassy flaunting of one's wealth (a *faux pas*). It appeared that Americans were wealthy enough to intentionally trash or disrespect their own name-brand items and then dine in places on a regular basis that post-Communist Poles could afford only on occasion. The irony is that most of these Americans didn't consider themselves wealthy at all. The earliest expatriates were from the East Coast for the simple reason that this area afforded more economical travel arrangements between continents (fewer flight connections).

[35] Eversz's assessment of finances—an example of irreverent, McCommunist humor—in the early 1990s of post-Communist Europe is correct when he observed, "credit cards were strictly a foreign phenomenon. The biggest joke of all: There were no checks in Czechoslovakia" (Eversz 170).

Before 1989, their situation seemed much clearer. For example, people waited in queues for cans of tuna but they didn't have to wonder where the money would come from to pay for an operation. In the transition, it was all of the inbetweeness of the various political, economical, and societal transitions that left many overly preoccupied with a sense of alterity, or otherness. In Beckman's *Winter Zoo*, which begins in 1990, a year after Eversz's comments, the protagonist, Gurney, learned from the daughter of his landlady that, except for her father, "nobody else is Marxist, not even the Communists . . . Nowadays Poland is nothing at all (Beckman 22) . . . Corporations are at the gate, drumming their fingers, and Poland's pissing its pants to let them in. Money, sweetheart. Money's what's happening" (23).

Globalization as Frontier Capitalism in American Narratives about Sojourners

Globalization in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe can also be understood, in what the marketing and economics disciplines call "frontier capitalism." Barbara Parker, in *Introduction to Globalization and Business: Relationships and Responsibilities* (2005), outlined Christopher Farrell's three-stage evolutionary process of "frontier capitalism," a type of free-market strategy incorporated by countries such as "Russia and mainland China." In the first phase of frontier capitalism, Farrell wrote, "following alteration or collapse of a state-run economy, black marketeers or gangsters gain enormous profits, and government corruption spreads." In the second phase, he continued, "independent business people and entrepreneurs with limited capital begin to flourish. Because commercial laws have not yet developed, these entrepreneurs develop operating standards that can become commercial rules." In the third and final stage of frontier

capitalism, "economic growth is brisk, particularly as financial markets begin to evolve. This attracts foreign investors who demand higher returns to offset their risks" (Parker 245).

Farrell claimed that "frontier capitalism is brutal and very often criminal," in developing countries characterized as "bleak, Dickensian world[s] of worker misery and raw social and political tensions" (Farrell 16). In my experience, much of the new, small-time, free enterprise that was happening during the 1990s—as shown in this body of literature—came from at least three primary sources, two of them homegrown: former black marketeers, former Communist party parliamentary members, and citizens of the west who were often expatriated and sometimes of Central or Eastern European heritage. Routinely, these outsiders struck cooperative deals with post-Communist Europeans—especially in cases where foreigners were not yet allowed to incorporate or legally own business property in post-Communist Europe.

## Post-Communist Entrepreneurship: The Former Black Marketeer

The first of these grass roots, neighborhood entrepreneurs, black marketeers, fit in neatly with Farrell's first assertion (Parker 245). As a cohort, this demographic had a mixed reputation. Some American businessmen, who were visiting Communist Europe in its final years, considered them heroes of the free market; consider Stan Ridgley's letter to William F. Buckley's—mentioned earlier—which suggested that the gift of his magazine to a black marketeer might hasten the progress of *Glasnost* (Ridgley, Letter). On the other hand, some Americans, such as expat writers living there, considered this profession to be another form of villainy. For example, Nix, the protagonist of Robert Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts*, told the

police that black marketeers were "creatures" comparable to "Gypsies," "money changers," and "thieves" (Eversz 32).

One way to understand the black marketeer and his or her connection to "frontier capitalism" is to see them as products of economic Darwinism; natural selection's strongest survivor from the non-ruling classes. These former owners and operators of the infamous black market, who functioned during communist times outside of the system by providing goods unavailable in state-owned magazines, were the prototypical, primitive capitalist class. They already understood the principles of supply and demand, economic ingenuity, and initiative. The folks who once managed to smuggle in Led Zeppelin vinyl from their visits abroad, for example, later opened up the first "real" music shops where anything could be legally imported. They didn't always come highly respected, and narratives with American sojourners are quick to report this observation. In Paul Greenberg's *Leaving Katya*, for example, Daniel's girlfriend Katya described Misha, the person she sat with on her flight to the U. S., as "some disgusting man from the black market" (Greenberg 39).

For example, a former black marketeer owned the thirteenth-century building where I rented a space for my business. During communism, this landlord sold highly sought-after fashions from the West to well-to-do party members. After the changes, he started a chain of exclusive boutiques that catered solely to Poland's highest socioeconomic classes. His Polish-made suits changed to chic Armani, his writing utensils to Mont Blanc, and he was the first in town to drive an imported American SUV. All of this—combined with an inlaid diamond, horoscope pinky ring and a 14-karat gold mobile phone the size of a Tic Tac package—could not camouflage his rural village dialect and primitive understanding of high culture. He was a prime example of the tawdry, post-Communist *nouveau riche* at its finest.

In *Steffi's Club*, D.A. Blyler created characters comparable to this in both Steffi (22) and Tony the Midget (45). These two rival Czech proprietors of the local brothels openly operated a category of business—still in the legal gray zone that pervaded post-Communist Europe in the early1990s—that was once reported to have not even existed in a communist system.[36] Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* also incorporated a similarly seedy character in the father of co-protagonist, Sasha Perchov. Perchov operated a tourism agency in Lutsk, Ukraine, called "Heritage Touring" that was tailored specifically for American Jews who wanted to visit their family's previous homes in post-Communist Europe. The level of professionalism advertised to Americans was in no way met by either Sasha or his grandfather as the firm's designated translator and driver.

Post-Communist Entrepreneurship: The Former Ruling Class

The second kind of local industrialist—using Farrell's "second phase" of frontier capitalism—took full advantage of a situation that had not yet developed "commercial laws" to govern their activities (Parker 245). It was no accident that this class of entrepreneur, who would have been fully aware of business law, came not from the ranks of the illegitimate black market of yesteryear but from the equally "respectable" former communist party. Robert Eversz wrote that "most of the first Czech entrepreneurs were Communists or

[36] In a 1957 issue of *Time* magazine, an article titled "Oldest Profession" stated, "There is no specific law against prostitution in the Soviet Union or in the Soviet satellite countries, because the founders of Soviet socialism, Marx, Engels and Lenin, held that prostitution was a capitalist evil which simply could not exist in their 'new system of social justice.' " According to "Sex and the Soviet Man" by Laurence Anthony, a writer for the Republican rag *National Review*, the Soviet press begin to admit the existence of prostitution in 1986 and the government officially admitted it in 1987 when it passed laws against it. In 2004, the French Press Agency (AFP) reported that the Czech government had "approved draft interior ministry plans" to legalize prostitution ("Czech Government"). In a similar vein, the Russian police commissar featured in Chris Gerolmo's *Citizen X* (1995), a narrative based on true events, claimed that homosexuality, considered a capitalist mental illness, also did not exist in the Soviet Union.

their relatives, as the rumor went, because the Communists had so long looted the country, they were the only ones with any money" (Eversz 170). This "rumor" seemed to ring true in many of the new post-Communist nations. Where several European political parties dropped the word "communist" from their official titles in order to distance themselves from the historical baggage associated with the word (Asmus), the actual membership of such parties, in many cases, remained primarily the same. This resulted in a non-transferal of economic power for the political elite and, in many cases, the elevation of former apparatchiks to *nowo bogacki* (*nouveau riche*), who, as some scholars suggest, were the real impetus for the change (Kotz 125). When the stock of formerly state-owned industries began to go public, it was sometimes the case that corrupted members of parliament got first dibs or, at least, the first news of such sales. Thus, in another twist of irony for post-Communist Europe, after the revolutions,[37] the former rulers became the new rulers.

The narrative in Franzen's *The Corrections* also looks at a former member of parliament turned independent capitalist in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe. Gitanas Misevičius is a Lithuanian running a globalist operation on two fronts: the United States and post-Communist Lithuania. He hired American sojourner Chip to help him alter existing webpages, from other sources, to help Lithuania look like a better country then it was for American economic investment. It's no mistake that Gitanas's last name "Misevičius," when pronounced correctly, sounds a lot like the word "mischievous." Gitanas's road from politics to "frontier capitalism" is explained by Franzen as something that happened after he and "his party was voted out of power" as former Communists and

[37] Ash claimed that these revolutions are better understood as "refolutions," that is to say, "reform" plus "revolution" (Ash 14).

> the Russian currency crisis had finished off the Lithuanian economy [. . .] he'd passed his days alone in the old offices of the VIPPPAKJRIINPB17 devoting his idle hours to constructing a Web site whose domain name, lithuania.com, he'd purchased from an East Prussian speculator for a truckload of mimeograph machines, daisy-wheel printers, 64-kilobyte Commodore computers, and other Gorbachev-era office equipment—the party's last physical vestige. (127)

Gitanas called himself a "governmental entrepreneur" (109) in hope the title would impress someone in America. He also created a website that somehow glorified Lithuania's dire pickle with the headline, "DEMOCRACY FOR PROFIT: BUY A PIECE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY." To make it look legitimate, he put return links to high-end investment sites all over the page (127). Those interested in the prospect of "buying some democracy" were requested to make financial donations to his political party so that they could get government favors such as having Vilnius city streets renamed for their kids or portraits of them placed in the national gallery. Chip asked Gitanas if the profit made from this scam really went to the dying political party. His reply that his "philosophy about that [was] in transition" reflected the globalizing transitions happening in his country, his country's economy, and culture (128).

## Post-Communist Entrepreneurship: The Alien

Carpetbaggers were Northerners who showed up in the American South to clean up, financially, after the War between the States at the expense of those being reconstructed. In post-Communist Europe, the West claimed victory in a Cold War and, likewise, sent in its

profiteers. To incorporate globalization into a narrative with an American sojourner as its hero believably, the job of "English teacher," thought Nix from Robert Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts*, wouldn't be "the right occupation" because, as Nix sees it, English teachers aren't representative of American entrepreneurship. For the lead role in a screenplay about an American expat in post-Communist Europe, Nix clarifies that the protagonist should be "a young American businessman. Not a carpetbagger capitalist, but someone with ideals" (62).

The final classification of entrepreneur, investor, or seeker of assorted ways in which the fluctuating conditions of late twentieth-century post-Communist Europe could be used to improve one's station, tap into new resources of wealth or otherwise exploit a unique situation to one's advantage would belong to the *cizinece* (foreigners), particularly the Western variety, who expatriated themselves in order to get what they could, while they could. Foreign "investors,"—I use the word sardonically—who came to post-Communist Europe demanding "higher returns to offset their risks" played into the third stage of Christopher Farrell's model of frontier capitalism's evolutionary process (Parker 245). Some of this group included young teachers, who didn't need to be especially experienced or conventional, such as protagonist Daniel in D. A. Blyler's *Steffi's Club* (Blyler 24) and Scott Price in Arthur Phillips's *Prague* who both benefited immensely by "hawking that most valuable commodity: English" (Phillips 9).

Because of my time teaching in the public and private education sectors of Burowiec, Katowice and Sosnowiec, Poland,[38] I found many shared experiences in narratives regarding barely-qualified, American English-teachers-for-hire in 1990s post-

[38] *Publicznej Szkoła Podstawowa* (Public Elementary School) Nr. 47 in Szopiencis-Burowiec; Euro Lingua, Euro 2000 and The American Academy of English in Katowice; *Uniwersytetu Śląskiego Wydzial Filogiczny Instytut Filologii Angielskiej i Jezykoznawstwa Ogólnego* (University of Silesia's Institute of English Philology and General Languages) in Sosnowiec.

Communist Europe as told by Peace Corps volunteer John Deever in *Singing on the Heavy Side of the World* (Zhitomir, Ukraine), *Bloomberg News* writer Douglas Lytle and his *Pink Tanks and Velvet Hangovers* (Prague), and former *Forbes* staff writer Craig Mracek and his *A Bohemian Odyssey* (Pardubice, Czech Republic). Some of these writers, who probably profited little from these publications, may have been caught up in the craze to emulate foreign correspondent Ernest Hemingway's experiences abroad and then publish them, hopefully, for a living.

It is another breed of foreigner, however, that is more frequently represented in the narrative of the American sojourner as a carpet-bagging financial investor, eager to find someplace easier than the United States to start a lucrative, new financial undertaking. Franzen's protagonist Chip Lambert, like an American fellow I knew in Sosnowiec who always handed out professionally-printed calling cards containing his name and then "Businessman" underneath as his occupation, needed an impressive, made-up title to fill the dead spaces of his vita and floundering career. Chip and Gitanas tossed around a number of titles for his new job designation: "International Wire Fraud Consultant," "First Deputy Co-Conspirator," and "Vice President for Willful Tortious Misrepresentation" (Franzen 114).

Arthur Phillips introduced the slightly schizophrenic, Hungarian-American Charles né Károly Gábor as his entrepreneurial co-protagonist in *Prague* (Phillips 46). Much the opposite of Jerry/Jiří in Richard Katrovas's "Empire," a man who left his American name in the U. S and recovers his European one in Czech; Phillips's Charles/ Károly leaves his European name in the U. S. with his parents and embraces his European one in Hungary. Unlike Jerry, whose parents escaped with him from Europe because of Nazis, Charles was the child of parents who had escaped from Europe because of Soviets. The Gábors had fled to the U. S. after the failed anti-Communist uprising in 1956. Now, Charles found himself

"one year out of business school" working as "a venture capitalist [ . . . ] in a riverfront office [in Budapest] that was larger and more luxurious and with a better view than the U. S. ambassador's" (45). After growing up mindful of the lost splendor of his family's *real* Hungarian home, he expatriated himself there in 1989 (49) to reclaim their stolen property, apartments in the first and fifth districts (47). He would also represent his employer—"a New York venture capital firm" (45)—as the Hungarian-speaking purchase negotiator for a formerly state-owned printing press, recently returned to Hungarian Imre Horváth.

Globalizing, entrepreneurial interactions between post-Communist Europeans and American sojourners—such as those illustrated by the characters of Steffi and Daniel, Gitanas and Chip, and Charles and Imre—continued until at least the end of the second millennium. In D. A. Blyler's *Steffi's Club*, the narrator proclaims that no one "could protect the citizens [of the Czech Republic in 2000] from the encroachment of capitalism. Storefront windows of nearly every newsagent and *veczerka* [grocery store with late hours] were decorated with Marlboro's red and white insignia" (Blyler 12, 176). The Internet too, a Western creation, was slowly finding its way into the new post-Communist bourgeoisie. Blyler's Steffi, the owner of an old-world bordello in Pilsen, Czech Republic learned English from online chatrooms so that she could "improve" her business by offering English-language services for foreign merchants (21). The opportunity—or, even possibility—of social and economic advancement became a popular motivation for post-Communist Europeans to expend time and effort learning English in the 1990s.

The amount of rhetoric tying the effects of globalization to the language of war in this mostly male-dominated set of narratives is significant. Blyler's "encroachment" was one of the milder terms used to describe the sudden onslaught of globalization and its American representatives in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe. Eversz had

already referred to them as carpetbaggers (Eversz 62). Richard Katrovas, author of *Prague, USA*, called the Americans in post-Communist Europe "compassionate conqueror[s]" (Katrovas 95) but Arthur Phillips, author of *Prague* saw them as an "occupying army, benevolent, offering [their] vanquished, erstwhile foe an open hand and a fresh start: smart investment opportunities, top-notch language instruction, and a whole generation of neo-retro-hippies, bad artists, and club kids. Just like MacArthur in Japan" (Philips52). Hungarian Nádja, who before the fall of communism was in "the sorority of refugees" living "elsewhere [. . .] for long stretches," saw that her country was now "invaded by handsome young men of the West, who c[a]me to write in the paper about us and to teach us their guttural, overly complex tongue and sell us better athletic equipment." She sarcastically toasted the American expats, "To our invaders" (9).

Like Phillips and Katrovas, Blyler also drew some parallels between the Western-dominated scene of the late twentieth-century in post-Communist Europe and the various invasions and resultant cultural imperialisms of the region's recent past, namely those of Communism and Nazism. He seemed to insinuate that the restructuring attempts of invaders sometimes reaped positive rewards. Blyler's narrator claimed that a "*benefit* of Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia was the establishment of efficient tramlines" (32, emphasis mine). This is an unexpected conclusion to draw from a time normally remembered as a sadistic breakdown of civilization. I reiterate that the conclusion is from Blyler's narrator, not from a post-Communist European character. However, it does leave the reader with the question: will post-Communist Europeans someday see the intrusion of Americans in the 1990s as an insignificant accident of history or as something that left discernable signs of improvement on their society?

It is true that the privatization of formerly state-owned institutions, like the telephone companies, brought about the possibilities of telecommunication for the masses and not only the already highly networked elite. When I arrived to post-Communist Poland in 1993, the waiting list for a home landline was still about ten years long. In a relatively short time, however, the previously established cellular phone markets from the West swooped in—in some cases bought up the suffocating state-run telephone/telegraph systems—and equipped almost anyone with a job the possibility of mobile communication. Long overdue (and previously badly needed) public phone booths went virtually obsolete even as they were being installed. By the late 1990s, in this comically globalized scenario, it wasn't entirely unusual to witness, for example, a farmer driving an antiquated horse-and-buggy through his village with a mobile phone to his ear.

## The Ironies of Globalization

Globalization in post-Communist Europe represented a future-bearing visitor, that is to say, a foreshadowing of what the region could possibly resemble if it kept on its present course. However, there were ironies in its characterization. For example, Phillips described in *Prague* how newly expatriated westerners to post-Communist Europe warmed up to the outdated, and impractical footwear fashions—go-go boots—that "women from eighteen to sixty-five" were condemned to wear as waitresses. However, these misinformed sexists were "baffled that people a few months into post-Communism wouldn't pull down their mandatory go-go boots with the same liberating fervor that had demonstrated in pulling down their tyrannical government" (Phillips 11). The expats thought it was ironic that new

fashions didn't follow the new government and, presumably, sojourners from the West.[39] The real irony, however, is that most of the post-Communist women I knew—and know—felt that Americans were the ones who were fashion-deprived. While they may have felt behind in other ways, they still felt a sense of pride at being able to emulate Parisian fashions or event contribute something of their own, as is the case with the infamous, extremely elongated and pointed toe of the high-heel shoe from Poland.

There is another irony about globalization in post-Communist Europe, particularly the city of Pilsen, the Czech city which served as the setting for D. A. Blyler's *Steffi's Club*. Pilsen, which was liberated from the clutches of Nazi invaders by American soldiers in World War II, would find itself visited once again by Americans in the 1990s. It had other ties to America that would also come back as an invasion of their country. Pilsen was the hometown of McDonald's founder Ray Croc and an objective outsider might have found it ironic that Americans, on the whole, were not interested in eating at the restaurant chain that was almost synonymous with their own country. Most "self-respecting expatriates wouldn't be caught dead in Ronald's place unless stoned and afflicted with midnight hunger pangs," claimed Blyler (81). However, post-Communist Europeans couldn't get enough of the American novelty and likewise marveled at the Americans' resistance to their own culture.

Although it is supposed to be a vision of the future, a final irony in the globalization of post-Communist Europe lies in its virtual hybridization of past and present. In his 2003 *The Nation* article, "Was It Sexy, or Just Soviet? The Post-Communist Expat Safari Novel Has Its Day," New York University's Russian and Slavic Studies chair Eliot Borenstein

[39] As mentioned in Chapter Two, many Americans went into post-Communist Europe with a preconceived, and misinformed, stereotype about fashion in that part of the world. The Wendy's commercial about a Soviet Fashion Show in the 1980s did much to promote the image of headscarves and rubber boots as indicative of Communist era fashion. In 1987, Ruth Ferla, writing for the *New York Times* reported that it might surprise Americans to know that "about 100 fashion magazines are published in the Soviet Union" (Ferla C14).

offered a colorful explanation of this duality. He explained that the spirit of post-Communist Europe in the 1990s—as represented in the prose narratives he reviewed—reflected the cynical "absurdities of late capitalism" in "Young America," combined with that of the newfound "earnestness" of "too-late capitalism" in "Old Europe" (36). What was cynical for the American seemed earnest for the post-Communist European and what should have been timely—market reform—was thrown upon a region largely unprepared for it.

## The Sojourner's Spirit-of-Europe-Future and Scrooge's Ghost-of-Christmas-Future

I have explored, then, in American narratives about sojourners set in 1990s post-Communist Europe, a multifarious spirit—or metaphor—for the immediate and near future. What parallels were there between the characteristics of this younger, more recent spirit and the century-old geezer of Dickens's creation? In stave IV of *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge informed his supernatural caller:

> You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us [ . . . ] Ghost of the Future!" he exclaimed, "I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. (Dickens, *Christmas* 95-96)

The aptly named "Last of [Dickens's] Spirits" revealed Scrooge's vision, dream (Boege 95), hallucination (Matus 428), or actual encounter with the spirit "of Christmas yet to come" (Dickens 95) as an event analogous to a premature meeting with his own future. It

bore visions of possible outcomes and a lonely, unacknowledged death was the prediction old Scrooge was given. In other words, this grim visage was an undeniable certainty for him if some radical life changes were not soon implemented. However, the American sojourner's encounter with the Spirit-of-Europe-Future was one that foreshadowed a far less certain prospect. While at once epitomizing many characteristics of the region's recent past,[40] it simultaneously represented a future replete with possibility. The globalization of post-Communist Europe, as represented in narrative, clumsily synthesized the old with the new.

Just as the French citizens of the 1790s emerged from an overturned regime in Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, post-Communist Europeans in the 1990s were awakening from their own recent revolutions "born as much of hopes as of discontents" (Ash 135). And, the American expats who joined them in post-Communist Europe discovered that their near future would be, like them, one with a difficult-to-define, blurred identity. Earlier, when I likened globalization in post-Communist Europe to a zeitgeist-phoenix—a new thing of "terrible beauty" (Yeats 180)— I meant that it was composed of a "high degree of uncertainty about the future" (Hanson, S. 1), frustration, and the "threat of public nostalgia" (Davis, R.) for the more innocent, but "bad-old-days" of yesteryear.

While the late twentieth-century provided ample cause for "genuine excitement, hope, and idealism" (Howard, "Weakness" 163) for some post-Communist Europeans, it merely brought out the spirit of opportunism in others. Globalism in post-Communist Europe, as represented in narrative, was indeed something terrible, or awesome, to behold,

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[40] For example, leftover and run-down Soviet-era architectural styles, fashions and a general sense of expressed and cynical "ironic discourse" in the artistic populace of the 1990s period (Koehler) in post-Communist Europe. For a time, suggested former editor of the *New York Times Book Review* and *The New Yorker* Charles McGrath, such irony was "the preferred (and often necessary) method of Eastern European writers like Vaclav Havel and Milan Kundera" and, before them, Franz Kafka.

but it brought with it a certain amount of destruction to facilitate its reconstruction. It was a paradox befitting the penchant for absurdity and sense of irony so often evidenced in the Eastern European literary culture[41] that emerged from the preceding decades (Vishevsky 546). Timothy Garton Ash commented in his eyewitness account of the actual dissolutions of four post-Communist European governments that, in the early 1990s, there was a "historical irony . . . For in large measures communism created the social unity which contributed decisively to the end of communism" (Ash 146).

Scrooge feared his "Ghost of the Future," he said, more than the ones which represented the past or the present (Dickens, *Christmas* 82). American expats and post-Communist Europeans alike in late twentieth-century, post-Communist Europe might have been equally as apprehensive about their encounters with globalization. Radical, uncharted change is frightful, especially when it is characterized by something so alienating as the influx of new languages and cultures, and the establishment of new political and economic models. So, perhaps the explosive action in late 1980s Communist Europe that von Dreele feared in his poem, "The Ghost of Christmas Future," did come true after all. Only, instead of launching a salvo of American-made missiles, the United States launched invading hordes of American-made sojourners. each capable of causing their own particular form of adultescent mayhem.

[41] In his introduction to *Prague, USA*, Richard Katrovas wrote that the Czechs were "masters of irony, laugh heartily at [American expatriates] and, because they are a wise people, at themselves" (iii-iv).

# CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION: PROBLEMATIC RETURNS

"I'm not the man I was [. . .] I will live in the past, the present, and the future! [. . .] I don't know how long I've been among the spirits. I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. Never mind. I don't care. I'd rather be a baby."

—Ebenezer Scrooge, in *A Christmas Carol* (108-12)

I've shown how some American sojourners, represented as provisional adults in narratives, demonstrate a heightened aptitude for immaturity. However, babies or not, the heroes of any metaphorical journey narrative, or any story worth its salt, according to the precepts of Joseph Campbell's monomyth, must mount a return, preferably with either a literal or symbolic transformation. *The Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, and Tolkien's *The Hobbit* are all classic examples of a transformative pattern (see Appendix E). The transformative process evolves during the course of the adventure, which starts with a separation from the ordinary world, continues with a series of trials, and culminates, ideally, with a return to the homeland (*Myths* 209; see Appendix C). The return, which can also be allegorical, is often represented in myth with a hero, who has already healed him/herself, bringing an elixir, sometimes in the form of new knowledge, to heal the land (see Appendix D). The hero bestows this gift among his or her brethren, thus validating the journey and all the pains it took to complete it. Ebenezer Scrooge, for instance, returned from his dreamscape journey in *A Christmas Carol* as a changed person: kinder, more sympathetic, and with a new appreciation for what little of his life remained. Scrooge shared his elixir, the knowledge he learned from his encounters that giving and sharing is better than its reverse, with the people in his life, his "homeland," to heal it from the damage he had formerly inflicted.

Hypothetically, in a contemporary monomythic structure, the American sojourner, in narratives about turn-of-the-millennium, post-Communist Europe, should also experience the idyllic return, welcomed by his or her countrymen, eager to learn from his experiences, and helpful in establishing his or her rightful or restored place in society. In this hypothetical journey, the protagonist also returns home matured and with a newfound sense of awareness—the mastery of two worlds. However, the postmodern world presents new ways to tell a story and the maturation of the postmodern protagonist is often ambiguous. For example, Beckman's Gurney does show clear maturity at the end of his narrative while Eversz's Nix does not. The monomyth is still present in postmodern, expat narratives, but the reader looking for it has to dig deeper than in an easy-to-swallow, cinematic narrative such as George Lucas's *Star Wars* or adolescent fiction such as J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*. For one thing, the American sojourner is frequently not a typical hero with an Achilles heel or tragic flaw. The American sojourner is, more often than not, a classic example of the anti-hero, a non-redeemable character with few conventionally heroic characteristics. The anti-hero is mostly flawed. Robert Eversz's Nix, in *Gypsy Hearts*, and Paul Greenberg's Daniel, in *Leaving Katya*, are notable examples. Sometimes, it is the post-Communist European characters who are presented as anti-heroes, especially when it is difficult to tell if the character is an antagonist or co-protagonist. Post-Communist Kazakh "Borat," in the film of the same name, is a prime offender. In Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated*, post-Communist Ukrainian Sasha at least redeems himself in the end. To be fair, so does John Beckman's America sojourner Gurney, in *Winter Zoo* and Jonathan Franzen's Chip, in *The Corrections.* Usually, these protagonists do mature, but not always.

What each of these characters have in common is that their narratives require a "crossing of the return threshold," one of the final obstacles to overcome in the monomythic framework. Beckman's Gurney, made the humiliating journey home and made amends with the mother of his newborn child he had abandoned at the beginning of the narrative. Gurney leaves the reader with the impression that he will now assume responsibility for the child. Franzen's Chip also runs away from the post-Communist Lithuanian thugs who try to kill him and his business partner, manages to return home and assume the responsibility he had been avoiding for years, taking care of his elderly parents. Foer's "Jonathan" finally grows up a little and, because of his journey, restores the lost Jewish identity to Sasha and his post-Communist Ukrainian family. Sasha, as co-protagonist, is likewise transformed from an anti-Semitic ethnic Ukrainian to an accepting Jewish-Ukrainian child of a survivor with aspirations of becoming a writer, like his symbolic brother Jonathan. Eversz's Nix, probably too far gone to ever represent redemption, did the best he could by giving post-Communist Europe the most valuable gift he could muster: his departure.

When sojourners make a return, especially if they are non-nostalgic types who do not yearn for a homecoming, there are some specific issues unique to them. While there may certainly be more than what is presented next, I highlight three variations on the return that I label as problematic. I call them the "faulty return," the "no-return return," and "rex-patriation."

The first problematic return, and foreseeably the most common, is what I call the "faulty return," a return that involves neither a ticker-tape parade nor a real appreciation of the journey by the sojourner's friends and family. This type of return generally involves long-term sojourners who, for reasons related to their employment or immigration issues, are unwillingly repatriated to their country of origin, that is to say returned alive, not their

corporal remains. To further complicate matters, the "faulty return" delivers a dose of what Craig Storti, Elizabeth Kruempelmann, and others refer to as "reverse culture-shock" to the sojourner who has either gone native while away, or been away long enough to develop a blurred, expat identity that no longer conforms to their old, American one. Unlike culture shock, which is "a condition of confusion and anxiety" (*New Heritage*) or "feeling of disorientation experienced by someone who is suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, […] set of attitudes" (*NOAD*), "or milieu" (*New Heritage*), "reverse culture shock," according to Kenneth Cushner and Richard Brislin, is "the culture shock stemming from *reentry* into one's own culture." Reverse culture shock can often be "more intense than the initial culture shock" (13). Because of reverse culture shock, some expats face real problems with reassimilation. In classic monomythic fashion, the journey here is presented as being re-born, or, beginning again in an endless cycle of journey adventures, with a new set of initiation phases.

Reverse culture shock is a phrase that is frequently used, but few realize that it is a real condition that expats can suffer from.[1] In *The Hero's Adventure: The Overseas Experience of Expatriate Business People* (1990), Joyce Osland insisted that the complications associated with repatriating should be considered by society to be an integral part of the entire, expat experience and not an unrelated, separate issue (2-4). The distress of experiencing one's own native culture is the flipside of culture shock—reverse culture shock—and is a phenomenon experienced by most people who have lived in a different culture for any substantial period of time (Kruempelmann 55). Family, friends, colleagues,

[1] The *ProQuest* dissertation database is loaded with entries on reverse culture shock—and how it affects the identity—based on interviews with missionaries from all faiths; Peace Corps and military vets; foreign aid workers; children of expatriates; and even study-abroad students. None, however, deal with the phenomenon in American narratives about sojourners.

and other persons who have never worked or served overseas, particularly employers, are generally unaware, and sometimes unsympathetic, to the emotional difficulties of repatriation.

Reverse culture shock, as conceived by former Peace Corps volunteer Craig Storti in *The Art of Coming Home* (1997), is but one of three stages of reentry, a stage much "more difficult than adjusting overseas ever was" (xiv) because any difficulty associated with it can "sometimes be very unexpected" (Callahan 34). Storti's statistics looked at, among other groups, soldiers, of whom seventy-five percent found the experience "difficult, time-consuming, and acrimonious" and American adolescents of whom only seven percent reported feeling "at home with their peers in the United States" (xiv). Even highly-briefed, twentysomething Mormon "Returning Missionaries," or, "R. M.s" as the LDS church refers to them, have also reported the symptoms of reverse culture shock as part of their reintegration process (Callahan 67-69). Kurt Hale's cinematic narrative *The R. M.* (2003), which warrants recognition in the sojourner narrative category, exemplifies the results of reverse culture shock in protagonist Jared, a "Returned Missionary" as its core theme.

Simply traveling abroad can be a life-changing experience for many, but actually living overseas for an extended period of time, and consequently adapting to that culture, can have an even stronger effect when the same person must leave it. Personally, it took me years to really overcome the virtual aftershock of switching mental gears from the somewhat stagnant, post-Communist European way of life—something I had practically "gone native" over in the 1990s—to the much less static, millennial American one.[2] Although I didn't feel

[2] A great illustration of this phenomenon can be found in essayist Bill Bryson's *I'm a Stranger Here Myself: Notes on Returning to America after Twenty Years Away* (1999). An easy read, this collection of narratives allows American readers to see their own country—again—as if from the eyes of an alien outsider only it is, ironically, from the perspective of a U. S. citizen. Although Bryson's experience abroad was in the U. K., the reverse cultural shock he and his family experienced has applicability to the post-Communist European experience. For expatriates, such as myself, to go "there"—for example, 1990s post-Communist

it was important before, I had evidently missed out on six vital years of popular culture, the veritable, cultural glue and mainstay of American conversation! Diane Jansson suggested in her article "Return to Society: Problematic Features of the Re-Entry Process" (1975) that returning expats sometimes no longer share a mutual history with their native "group" and, thus, are marginalized within it (Jansson 137). As a returned expat, I experienced this myself—I was a real minority in post-Communist Europe and when I returned home, I felt like one in the United States too. For me, repatriating was a double bind for, at the time, I could not *be* in either place. For personal and economic reasons, I had little choice but to repatriate, but I no longer felt at home, began to conjecture that perhaps I never did, and actually experienced homesickness for the other world. I was in a new existential conflict with myself; even in my early thirties, my own lingering provisional adulthood and questions of place and self-identify were definitely still running their course.

Like Hale's *The R. M.*, Greenberg's narrative *Leaving Katya* begins with a focus on the final phase of his expat experience, the homecoming and subsequent readjustment pains of "deculturation" and "re-acculturation."[3] Daniel, the protagonist, came back to the U. S. to a bitter, resentful family who found it aggravating to pick him up from the airport (28), a father who dismissed his expat experience—and his wife—as a silly phase (203), and, while still under the first President Bush, a deepening economic recession (10) that actually diminished both his employment prestige and standard of living, in comparison to how he could have lived in 1990s post-Communist Russia as either an English teacher or translator.

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Europe—was akin to traveling into the past. Returning "here," to the U. S. at the turn of the millennium, was like going—to borrow from the title of Robert Zemeckis's popular film—"back to the future," or, Jerry Seinfeld, a reverse-Bizarro World.

[3] *The Random House Unabridged Dictionary* defines "deculturation" as "the loss or abandonment of culture or cultural characteristics of a people, society, etc." "Re-acculturation" is to be acculturated—adopt an alien culture—once again, or culturally reassimilated (*Oxford English Dictionary*; *WordNet*).

To some degree, Chip, in Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections*, still had to confront his old ghosts and family politics on his return to the States (536), even though he had a frightening experience trying to leave Lithuania (530-35). He was grateful to be alive but saddened to deal with the reality of being in debt to his sister (546) and now having to care for his aging parents (550). Chip's attempt to "describe in some detail his activities in Lithuania" was something I could sympathize with when I tried to do the same with my own friends and family, but, for them, one may "as well have been reciting the tax code in a monotone" (544) for all they really cared. Robbins and Wilner discussed the "guilt" and apparent frustration that one of her case studies felt for having "to prove to [her]self and [her] parents" that her "great education"—which is what living overseas is, after all—"wasn't all for naught" and actually worth something "beyond expanding and becoming a richer person" (32).

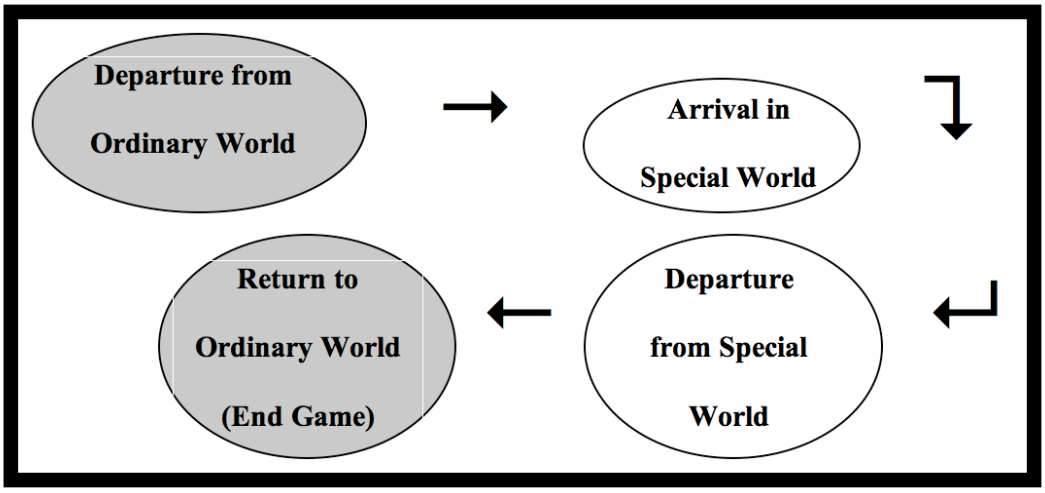
In addition to "reverse culture shock," another complication in the "faulty return" of the American sojourner is something called "The Parent Trap," a concept discussed at length in the literature of provisional adulthood, and borrowed from a 1961 Walt Disney film of the same name.[4] The "Parent Trap" is the turbulence created and experienced by provisional adults compelled to move back in with their parents (Robbins and Wilner 32, 55). Moving back in with the parents is something that many twentysomething sojourners in the late twentieth-century may have had little choice in doing, since it was difficult to arrange new living arrangements from abroad, especially in a world where the Internet existed only in cafés, albeit ones—much like the cinema houses *Pulp Fiction*'s Vincent Vega mentioned—where you could buy a beer. Like Greenberg's Daniel and Franzen's Chip, I had no choice

[4] In turn, *The Parent Trap* is based on a 1949 children's book by Erich Kästner entitled *Das Doppelte Lottchen* (The Double Lottie) and known to English language readers as *Lottie and Lisa*.

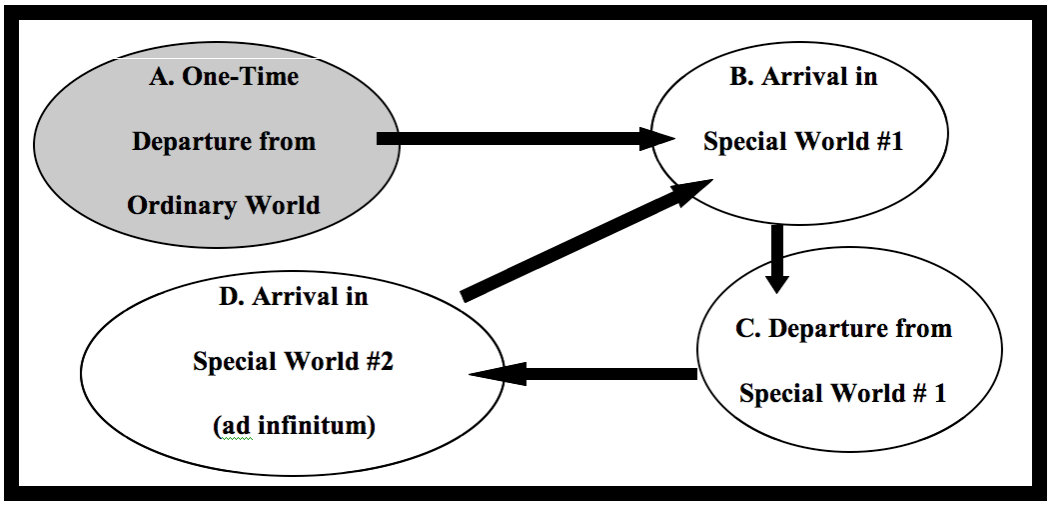
but to first appeal to my parents, until I could sort things out, on my return to the United States. It was a humbling experience after living so many years on in my own space and on my own terms. In "From Conflict to Companionship: A New Relationship With Parents," Jeffery Arnett suggested that, just as some twentysomethings who divorce early or return from military service, emerging adults "who left home for independence […] react in a range of ways" after they "return to the nest" of their parents (*Emerging* 52).

For some, this awkward "return home is a bumpy transition" (53). Having to move in with anyone during provisional adulthood can be distressing for all parties involved. This concept is represented well in the quintessential American Quarterlife Crisis film of 1994, *Reality Bites*, when supporting character Vickie informs her twentysomething flatmate, and protagonist, Lelaina that full-time slacker Troy needed "a place to stay till he can find a new job and get his own place." Lelaina responded, "Vickie, that's the American dream of the nineties. That could take years!"

The second paradigm of a problematic return for the American sojourner in narrative is the one that involves "no return." The "no return" return is when a sojourner completes the narrative components essential to a journey model but does not return to his or her homeland, that is, their country of origin. This kind of sojourner crosses the "return threshold" into a new "special world" instead. According to Joseph Campbell, the hero's home world is the "ordinary world." The special world is the other world that the hero travels into. Instead of the regular monomythic model that might appear as follows,




the modified model of the "no return" return would look like this:




In narratives about American sojourners in turn-of-the-millennium, post-Communist Europe, this model is seen in the example of *Gypsy Heart*'s Nix, *Steffi's Club*'s Daniel, and *Prague's* John. Nix's narrative ends with him leaving Czechoslovakia and Hungary behind, and all the trouble he'd caused there. His closing thoughts come on a train to post-Communist Romania, home of the Roma, or, Gypsies that feature in Eversz's title. Since Nix is a "gypsy" at heart, he, effectually, is returning home, a perfect example of the metaphorical return. John Price too, from Phillip's *Prague* is, at the end of his narrative, no longer in Budapest, Hungary. He has adopted the model of his older brother, Scott who, like

Nix, had also left for post-Communist Romania, specifically Transylvania, likely in hopes that by traveling further East he would encounter fewer Americans—a common sentiment, in my experience. John, however, does not follow him there, as he did when he followed him to Budapest. Instead, John relocates to Prague, the actual title of the narrative, in the Czech Republic. As the narrative's underlying theme, Prague was really the place to be for Americans in post-Communist Europe; the sojourners there, everyone imagined, were having the most fun. This was where John really wanted to be so, at the end of his journey, he too returns "home." In Blyler's *Steffi's Club*, Daniel leaves the Czech Republic for the Greek Islands. By killing a man in Pilsen, he too has left a big mess. Regardless, Daniel is not ready to return to his place of origin. He is an expat at heart and will continue moving on, if necessary. Perhaps the "no return" sojourners of these narratives will eventually return to the United States, their shared place of origin. Much like James Joyce's Stephen Dedalus who, at the end of his bildungsroman *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), does not return home but, instead, leaves Ireland for the European continent, narratives that employ the "no return" conclusion device rarely leave the reader with the impression that they will return.

The third example of problematic return for the American sojourner in narrative is a combination of both the "faulty return" and the "no return" varieties. It's called "rex-patriatism" and is based on a concept propagated by American expat filmmaker Nancy Bishop in her docufiction of the same name (2004). Her "rex-patriate," I add, is the incurable expat who confounds the conventional monomythic pattern. I will revisit this mysterious word shortly.

What happens when expats return to their native lands, only to discover that they no longer consider that place-of-origin their real home and, simultaneously, begin to suffer the

pains of an incurable bout of nostalgia,[5] a longing for the "foreign" place they have recently repatriated from? When the returned expat's psychological concept of "home"—in this case, a psychological space—becomes identified with their former, foreign place of residence, a fascinating irony concerning the expat's problematic return emerges, especially when the subject develops a homesickness for it. This situation is ironic because the monomythic model anticipates a hero's return to his or her place of original departure. Instead of a happy, glorious return, this "false return" to a "false home" becomes, instead, the "final ordeal" for some sojourners in narrative. In the monomythic model, the final ordeal is a great test along the road of trials that comes before the journey's end (see Appendix D).

For some returning sojourners in narrative, reverse culture shock, the regression to a lower living standard, and the inability to comfortably readjust or rediscover one's place again—in other words, a prolonging of provisional adulthood—has lead some to the little known condition of "rex-patriatism." The "Rex-patriate" (a portmanteau term invented by Nancy Bishop in her cinematic narrative of the same name) represents a particularly neurotic variety of expat who first returned to his or her country of origin, eventually decided that, for whatever reason, s/he could still no longer feasibly live there, and then ultimately expatriated again, or "re" expatriated, abroad.[6] American twentysomethings who had left

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[5] Linda Hutcheon, in her article "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern," recalled how the word nostalgia—"*nostos*, meaning 'to return home' and *algos*, meaning 'pain' "—was "coined in 1688 by a 19-year-old Swiss student in his medical dissertation as a sophisticated (or perhaps pedantic) way to talk about a literally lethal kind of severe homesickness" that "allowed for remedy: the return home, or sometimes merely the promise of it" (193).

[6] Again, James Joyce was a pioneer of this psychological complex. Joyce had his own share of negative experience returning home after being away for a long time (Ellmann 291). After a performance of his play *Exiles* (1918), someone remarked to him, "Exiled? People who return to their own country!" Joyce responded, "But don't you remember how the prodigal son was received by his brother in his father's house? It is dangerous to leave one's country, but still more dangerous to go back to it, for then your fellow-countrymen, if they can, will drive a knife into your heart" (qtd. in Svevo 150). After having coming back to

their home countries for the "Second Chance City"—Alan Levy's nickname for Prague in his debut *Prague Post* article ("Us")—after failing to make a fresh start, might have gone "home to America, take[n] a job, maybe go[ne] to law school, maybe d[id] well in America but c[ould]n't get Prague out of his or her blood and return[ed] to Prague to live again" (qtd. in *Rex-patriates*). The nostalgic "rex-patriate" sought a second, second chance to realize any aspirations unfulfilled the first time around, a familiar syndrome that, on the surface, resembles a midlife crisis as much as it does a "quarterlife" one. Robbins and Wilner, in *Quarterlife Crisis*, point out a demarcation between the two crises, by explaining that that the midlife crisis finds a person reflecting on the past, comparing their present life to the one they'd hoped to achieve in twentysomething years, desperately looking forward "at the time" they felt that they have left (2).

In 1902, at the turn of the previous century, Franz Kafka wrote to Oscar Pollak, "Prague doesn't let go [. . .] This old crone[7] has claws. One has to yield or else" ("To Oskar" 5). For many turn-of-the-millennium, Generation X Americans who lived in that region of the world, Kafka's words still ring true. So much, in fact, that actress and casting director Nancy Bishop produced and directed a film about it based on a screenplay by Tony Laue (O'Shea). It is the only example from the emerging category of American narratives regarding sojourners in post-Communist Europe to represent the absurd.[8] Her comedic "mockumentary" chronicled the misadventures of a motley crew of American rex-pats from

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Ireland for only a couple of times—in 1909 and in 1912—Joyce finally had enough and left for good, never to return (Ellmann 292, 322; Pindar 65).

[7] In his autobiography of Kafka, Ronald Hayman translated this as, "This little mother has claws . . . One has to give in or else—" (37).

[8] Gary Shteyngart's *The Russian Debutante's Handbook* (2002) and Larry Charles's *Borat* (2006) are also absurdist narratives about post-Communist Europe and post-Communist Europeans, but do not really qualify as American in the conventional sense.

the original 1990s scene. A musician, a street performer, a writer wannabe, and a womanizer represented a sampling of almost all the clichéd archetypes from the post-Communist European expat scene. Interspersed throughout her project are interviews with the real Alan Levy (Cockrell 23), the late American correspondent and cultural icon who first labeled Prague as "the new left bank of the nineties" (Levy 1) and character "Professor Phylis Gardner," played by Andrea Miltner, a Ph.D. candidate who hailed from the highly dubious "School for Pathology and Psychosis" of Britain's "East-North Anglia College." Gardner, who moved "back and forth between Prague and London doing research on her dissertation "Ex-Patriotism [sic] in Prague: a dysfunctional co-dependency of cross-fertilizations during the pre and post millennial period" ("What's"), produced a theory, discussed throughout the film, that rivaled Robbins and Wilner's "Quarterlife Crisis" as a form that seemed to mainly affect "rex-patriates" in Prague.

The fictional Gardner was supposed to have had "diagnosed" a disorder she named the "Prague Delusional Reality Syndrome, or PDRS [. . .] in 1996." She had "studied the Prague expatriate scene since 1991 but by 1996 she noticed that many long term expatriates were suffering under a type of trauma that was unique to Prague. This has come to be known as PDRS." Its description is hauntingly familiar, albeit in a more humorous way, to Robbins and Wilner's "Quarterlife Crisis" syndrome. Gardner claimed that around "the third or fourth year" PDRS takes hold in certain repatriated expats and "rex-patriates." One of its manifestations is that the affected "individual begins to create a reality that is comfortable and pleasant but absolutely imaginary. The final stage of PDRS is self annihilation." She claimed that this negative outcome could be avoided "if earlier symptoms can be detected and treated." Some of its symptoms "include but are not limited to paranoia, fatigue,

chronic depression, anger, resentment, memory and identity loss, liver failure, debauchery, hives, sloth, impotency, untidiness, fear, turrets and gas" (*Rex-patriates*).

As for a cure, Gardner told Red Mackey—the fictional expat filmmaker depicted in the film—in a faux interview to promote the film, "The only effective treatment is emigration and a return to the native country." Gardner claimed that, unfortunately, PDRS "prevents [its] victims from seeking the necessary treatment to save their lives. They develop what we call an Iron Curtain Complex. They literally believe there is no way out of the city. This is when the disease becomes especially dangerous" ("What is").

"Art," argued Pablo Picasso, "is a lie that makes us realize the truth" (qtd. in Wakabayashi 16). Bishop's *Rex-patriates*, of course, is a spoof—a comical lie based on comical truths—in the tradition of other American mockumentaries like Rob Reiner's *This is Spinal Tap* (1984), Christopher Guest's *Best in Show* (2000), and more recently, Larry Charles's *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan* (2006). Nonetheless, *Rex-patriates* has academic worth in what several professional comics have pointed out as a legitimate value in tragedy's flipside. For example, the late Danish comedian Victor Borge said in an interview, "There is more logic in humour than in anything else. Because, you see, humour is truth" (Robinson 8) while American filmmaker Carl Reiner composed the aphorism "The absolute truth is the thing that makes people laugh" (Lavin 10). Like post-Communist European satirist Gary Shteyngart's *The Russian Debutante's Handbook*, Bishop's *Rex-Patriates* lampoons the American expat scene in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe (Orel 73) and, in the process, reveals some identifiable truths for those who were there.

For me, the relative truth in *Rex-patriates* is that, like other American expats in late twentieth-century post-Communist Europe, I really did come back to the States for awhile—

in the summer of 1994—with the notion that, perhaps, I had done enough globetrotting and identity exploration outside of my native cultural construct, and was equipped to reintegrate back into 1990s American society. To the disappointment of my friends and family, it didn't take me very long to find bitter disillusionment with that notion. I went back to post-Communist Poland, and its environs, to remain for another five years.

Daniel, in Paul Greenberg's *Leaving Katya*, also had a "rex-patriate" experience. When he first came back to the states from Russia, he hastily married his former Russian girlfriend (Greenberg 71), who immigrated to the U. S. for that possibility (61), and subsequently watched their rocky relationship disintegrate. He found that his quality of life was worse than it would have been in Russia (53). In despair, he accepted an offer to go back to Russia and work for the television industry (152).

To some extent, Richard Eversz's delinquent Nix, in *Gypsy Hearts*, might also be considered a chronic "rex-patriate." He had relocated from California to Hungary and from Hungary to Czechoslovakia. He moved back and forth between the two post-Communist countries and, by the novel's end, he was not returning to the U. S. but, instead, re-expatriating to Romania. In Arthur Phillip's *Prague*, Scott Price, who had been living happily in Hungary with his Quarterlife Crisis until his younger brother John arrived on the scene, also re-expatriates by making "a permanent move to Romania—specifically, Hungarian-speaking Transylvania—to teach English and music, respectively" (276). By the novel's end, John too moved his place of residence from Hungary to the Czech Republic (366-67). He had left Budapest as an expat and he arrived in Prague as an expat. Some sojourners, it seems, are determined to remain sojourners.

Where to Go Now

Throughout this project, I have argued that the collective experience of the American sojourner in turn-of-the-millennium, post-Communist Europe is represented in narrative as an allegorical journey of encounters with the past, present, and future. Along a road of trials, their meetings with xenophobia, provisional adulthood, and globalization helped shape their new identities as expats, global citizens informed by more than one world, for better or for worse. It therefore seems appropriate, in a study focused on voyage, to ask at its conclusion, where else should it go? As with any emerging body of narrative, there is plenty of space available for further exploration, and the framework I've laid is entirely provisional. In addition to the need for a widening of discussion of my three primary themes, I propose three other directions for further exploration: the establishment of a suitable nomenclature; a discourse on the overrepresentation of Caucasian males in American narratives about sojourners in turn-of-the-millennium, post-Communist Europe; and an investigation of post-Communist Europe's reception of this theme.

There is a great need for a nomenclature that fairly and accurately encapsulates the concepts of turn-of-the-millennium American narrative regarding post-Communist. Concise words would help in representing this body of narratives' time period, writers, subject, geographical location of the settings, political climate, and primary themes. There is also a need for a term that encapsulates the entire body of narratives as an item. It is rather cumbersome to write—and read—something as imposing as "Generation X, twentysomething, American sojourner/expatriate narrative regarding late twentieth-century/turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe"—even though that is *exactly* what defines this category in a growing body of work (see Appendix B). Whether it is a real

category or a theme, it still needs a name. The ideas that come into one's mind when one hears the descriptor "Expatriate Literature" are exactly why those words simply will not do. Most people, understandably so, identify "Expatriate Literature" with the body of works written by a scene of American expats in the Parisian Left Bank during the period between World War I and World War II—and that from just two little words! This newer group of narratives, set between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the Twin Towers, needs its own term too. Previously, I advocated for and used the word "expat" to describe the newer group. It is not only the epithet that this group of Americans prefers uses to refer to itself, it is also the predominant form of the word "expatriate" currently in use. In her book *GenXpat: The Young Professional's Guide to Making a Successful Life Abroad* (2005), Margaret Malewski has taken the initiative to call this group "GenXpats." It is short, catchy, postmodern, and to the point. There's no doubt about whom it refers to—perhaps it will catch on?

The "Lost Generation" is also useless for the same reasons as "Expatriate Literature" and the "New Lost Generation" of James Baldwin and the 1950s. *The Orlando Sentinel* reviewer of Phillips's *Prague* and the jacket copywriters were bold enough to suggest the "Intentionally Lost, Lost Generation" (Phillips iii), which I think is particularly clever. In *Steffi's Club*, D. A. Blyler uses "the Jaded Generation," a term that carries more weight when coined by one of its constituents.

Furthermore, phrases such as "the problems of provisional adulthood" or "adultescent angst" skirt around the already popularized term of "Quarterlife Crisis," which should be used in their stead. Sufferers of the "Quarterlife Crisis," tend to refer to their condition with the acronym "QLC." The very writers who credit themselves for coining the term, Abby Wilner, the co-author of *Quarterlife Crisis*; Cathy Stocker, the co-author with

Wilner of *Quarterlifer's Companion*; and Lizz Aviles, the McGraw-Hill Publicist for *Quarterlifer's Companion*, actively use the abbreviated "QLC" on their joint website *QuarterlifeCrisis.com: A One Stop Info-Shop for Recent Grads and Beyond* for the expression "Quarterlife crisis." Each considers the "QLC" to be a type of personality or behavioral disorder, much in the way the acronyms AD/HD [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder], OCD [Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder], LD [Learning Disability], ED [Eating Disorder or Emotionally Disturbed], and even PMS are currently used to shorten the lengthy monikers of other mental illnesses, personality disorders, or anxieties.[9] Those who suffer from a "QLC" are, in turn, referred to by some commentators, such as Lisa Marshall, as "QLCers" (D01).

By the same standard, the word "McCommunism," as trendy and cute as it seems, is more succinct; colorful, as it should be; and zeitgeist-specific to the 1990s than "Western/American globalization in post-Communist Europe." It is also more narrow and precise that the broader "McWorld" of Benjamin Barber. Yet we may have to wait until such terms become more popular and thus comprehensible to a wider readership, such as the word "twentysomething" already has.

The overtly homogenous face of the American protagonist in this literature is a point worth more discussion. One feature that this group of narratives may *really* have in common with the work from the original "Lost Generation" is that it is not really informed by multiculturalism, in the sense that term is understood for contemporary American literature. For a group of writers representing the United States, there is a noticeable lack of ethnicity beyond the European-American in both the authorship and character lineups. Is

[9] An entire list of healthcare related acronyms can be found at <www.addforums.com> and <anxiety-panic.com/dictionary/en-dictp.htm> (2008).

post-Communist Europe in the 1990s one of the spaces where the "white" American voice is now? Did economic class have something to do with the abundance of Waspy males in post-Communist Europe? There were Slavic-American, and Jewish-American characters but where were the Latina/o and African-American characters? Will this period produce a James Baldwin? In Phillips's *Prague*, a U. S. Marine whom John Price interviewed for a *BudapesToday* article asked him, "You ever notice I'm the only black man in Budapest?" (196). Based on my experience, there is some truth to the fact that working African-Americans were very underrepresented as sojourners in turn-of-the-millennium post-Communist Europe, although I did know one Afro-Caribbean disc jockey who worked for RFM radio in Kraków. Furthermore, with the exception of bi-curious Gurney at the very end of *Winter Zoo*, why are there no homosexual characters? And, why is it seemingly so male-gendered? Perhaps Eliot Borenstein was correct when he suggested that there was a certain male, hetero-centric logic to these narratives. He conjectured:

> . . . the post-Communist expat's story is a fundamentally male narrative of conquest, submission and coming of age. The expat experience was a perfect juncture between self-congratulatory Western machismo and the cultural anxieties of the cold war's losers and victims. One of the commonplaces of the post-Soviet media, for example, is that Russia (always represented as female) has fallen prey to Western despoilers, who ravage the country's national resources, corrupt the morals of innocent youth and turn its women into a valuable commodity for export. (33)

The publishers of these works, apparently, realized this too. One only need look at the book jacket covers for a few of the novels to see how sexualized imagery was used in their marketing strategy (see Appendix H).

On the whole, female writers and protagonists in American narratives about sojourners in post-Communist Europe are noticeably lacking in the overall conversation. Two notable exceptions are Wendell Steavenson's *Stories I Stole: From Georgia* (2002) and Holly Payne's second novel, *The Sound of Blue* (2005). Steavenson's book is a collection of journalistic stories she wrote while living in late twentieth-century, post-Communist Georgia, and Payne's narrative tells the fictional story of a female American Harvard reject (she didn't get in) who moved to Budapest in 1993 to teach English but ended up working in a Croatian refugee camp. It is my hope that more narrative prose about female and minority American sojourners in post-Communist Europe at the turn-of-the-millennium will be published to counter this unsettling imbalance. There should also be more scholarship on female characters, as imagined by sojourning male writers.

I will be interested to learn more of post-Communist Europe's reception of these narratives. Since the post-Communist European characters in these narratives have been so poorly imagined and marginalized, even by the writers who were really there, one cannot help but wonder how much effort Americans abroad put into getting to know their subjects. No doubt, many Europeans will take offence at being represented as blatant racists, backwards simpletons, and naïve suckers who let Americans come in to properly "educate" them, violate the women, and generally have their run of the place. Some online reviews by post-Communist Czechs of a showing of Bishop's *Rex-patriates* in Prague have already begun to show some evidence of having felt insulted. The inside jokes within these narratives will likely go over the heads of many, and, since many of them will probably not see translation in Central and Eastern European languages for some time to come, it may be awhile before we know the answers.

To conclude, these narratives all belong to a category that brings awareness to defining historical events, such as the abandonment of Soviet-era Communism, the turn-of-the-third-millennium, the ushering in of a global economy, and the consequential resurgence of nationalism, as witnessed and imagined by American writers who traveled, worked, lived, and wrote in late-twentieth-century Central and Eastern Europe. It is a category of narratives that I would not like to see forgotten by time, pushed to the side, or confused with other movements. In the process of presenting this material as a collective journey, I have called attention to key ideological issues prevalent in the transitional countries of Central and Eastern Europe at the turn of the millennium—not in the voices of those countries' citizens, but in the voices of Americans who chose to live there. Narratives about sojourners, such as these, still serve a social function by promoting alternative ways to be an American, and express one's Americanness. They validate individuals who do not always conform to societal norms and expectations. By exposing racial and ethnic intolerance in other lands, American readers are forced to consider the shortcomings of their own society. In showing the effects of Americanization, one hopes to see the difference between the global citizen and the globalizing citizen.

Perhaps echoing Ebenezer Scrooge's epiphany that he would "live in the past, present, and future," (Dickens, *Christmas* 108), Walt Whitman wrote in his preface to *Leaves of Grass*, "Past and present and future are not disjoined but joined" (12). For the places of post-Communist Europe, this sentiment will, perhaps, still hold true for the immediate future. Many of the Americans who lived and wrote about the spaces they occupied there have effectively made themselves a part of that common thread. They—and we—would do well to remember that.

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Appendix A: Timeline of Key Historical Events in Late Twentieth-Century post-Communist Europe (Shaded) in Relation to the Settings of Selected Works of Sojourn Narrative (Non-shaded).

| Date | Event |
|---|---|
| 1984 | An English translation of Milan Kundera's postmodern and kitschy *Nesnesitelná Lehkost Bytí* [*The Unbearable Lightness of Being*] was published by Harper and indirectly inspired disaffected Czech-American youths to visit the forgotten part of Europe now portrayed as rife with Slavic irony and promiscuous sex (Banville, Borenstein, Welch). |
| 1987 | Hordes of visiting, self-promoting American celebrities made the collapsing USSR seem like a "sexy" place to be (Barringer 11). |
| 02 May 1989 | Hungarian frontier police began removing fortifications on the Austrian border (Kurz 19). |
| 04 June 1989 | The "formal" end of Communism occurred in Poland (Ash 45, Tagliabue A6). |
| 16 June 1989 | Former anti-Soviet Primer Minister Imre Nagy was reburied in Hungary (Ash 47, Kamm A1). |
| 09 Nov. 1989 | The Berlin Wall was opened (Ash 69, Schmemann, "A Jubilant" A1). |
| 17 Nov. 1989 | The "Velvet Revolution" began with protests in the former Czechoslovakia (Ash 80, "Riot" L7). |
| 29 Dec. 1989 | Václav Havel elected President. End of Velvet Revolution (Ash 125, Whitney A1). |
| 1989 (to 1991) | The fictional events in Arthur Phillips's *Prague*, published in 1992. |
| 1989 (to 1996) | The fictional events in Richard Katrovas's *Prague, USA*, published in 1996. |
| Aug. 1990 | The fictional events in John Beckman's *The Winter Zoo*, published in 2002. |
| 1990 (to Aug. 1991) | The fictional events in Paul Greenberg's *Leaving Katya*, published in 2002. |
| 19 Aug. 1991 | The failed 3-day "Russian August" coup began in the USSR (Clines A1). |
| 01 Oct. 1991 | In his inaugural issue of *Prague Post*, expatriate editor Alan Levy generated a sensationalized hype about Prague as "the new left bank" that inspired thousands of young Americans to flood post-communist Europe (Levy). Story is subsequently picked up by U.S. papers. |
| 25 Dec. 1991 | The USSR was formally dissolved (Schmemann, "The Soviet" A1). |
| 13 Jan. 1992 | *L.A. Times* correspondent in Central Europe, Charles Powers, reported that 10,000 American "twenty-somethings" have relocated from the U.S. to Czechoslovakia ("Land" E1). |
| 1992 | The fictional events in Robert M. Eversz's *Gypsy Hearts*, published in 1997. |
| April-May 1992 | Lesley Stahl of CBS's *60 Minutes* visited Prague and taped a follow-up to Powers's story (Welch). |
| 01 Jan. 1993 | The "Velvet Divorce" of the Czech and Slovak Republics occurred (Engelberg A1; Lytle xii). |
| 1993 (to 1999?) | The fictional events in Nancy Bishops *Rex-Patriates*, released in 2004. |
| 1997 | The fictional events in Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated*, published in 2002. |
| 1998-99 | The fictional events in Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections*, published in 2001. |
| April 2000 | The fictional events in D. A. Blyler's *Steffi's Club*, published in 2003. |

Appendix B: Listing of American Sojourn Narratives Set in Turn-of-the-Millennium, Post-Communist Europe (Ordered by Date of Setting).

| Fiction and Films | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Date of Setting** | **Title of Narrative (Date of Publication)** | **Author** | **Location of Setting** |
| 1988 (to 2002) | *Wild East: Stories from the Last Frontier* (2003)* | Fishman | CE Europe |
| 1989 (to 1990) | *In the Memory of the Forest* (1997)* | Powers, C. | Poland |
| 1989 (to 1996) | *Prague, USA* (1996)* | Katrovas | Czech Republic |
| 1989 (to Jan. 1991) | *Prague* (2002)* | Phillips | Hungary |
| 1990 (and 2003) | "Babylon Revisited Redux" (2003)* | Beckman | Poland |
| Aug. 1990 | *The Winter Zoo: A Novel* (2002)* | Beckman | Poland |
| 1990 (to Aug. 1991) | *Leaving Katya* (2002)* | Greenburg | Russia*** |
| 1992 | *Gypsy Hearts* (1997)* | Eversz | Czech & Hungary |
| 1993 | *Cowboys and Indians* (1993)* | Eversz | Czech Republic |
| 1993 | *The Sound of Blue* (2005)** | Payne | Hungary & Croatia |
| 1993 (to 1999?) | *Rex-Patriates* (2004)* | Bishop | Czech Republic |
| 1997 | *Everything Is Illuminated: A Novel* (2002)* | Foer | Ukraine |
| 1998-99 | *The Corrections* (2001)* | Franzen | Lithuania |
| Late 1990s | *Stories I Stole: From Georgia* (2002)** | Steavenson | Georgia*** |
| April 2000 | *Steffi's Club* (2003)* | Blyler | Czech Republic |
| 2005 | *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America* (2006) | Charles | Kazakhstan*** |
| **Non-Fiction Prose** | | | |
| **Date of Setting** | **Title of Narrative (Date of Publication)** | **Author** | **Location of Setting** |
| 1986 | "What Do They Do for Fun in Warsaw?" (1988)* | O'Rourke | Poland |
| 1990 (to 1991) | *A Bohemian Odyssey* (2002)** | Mracek | Czechoslovakia |
| 1990 (to 1993) | *Pink Tanks and Velvet Hangovers* (1995)* | Lytle | Czech Republic |
| 1993 (to 1995) | *Singing on the Heavy Side of the World* (2002)** | Deever | Ukraine |
| 1998 (to 2000) | "Gika" (2003)* | Steavenson | Georgia*** |

*Indicates narratives analyzed for this study.

**Indicates narratives noted, but not analyzed for this study.

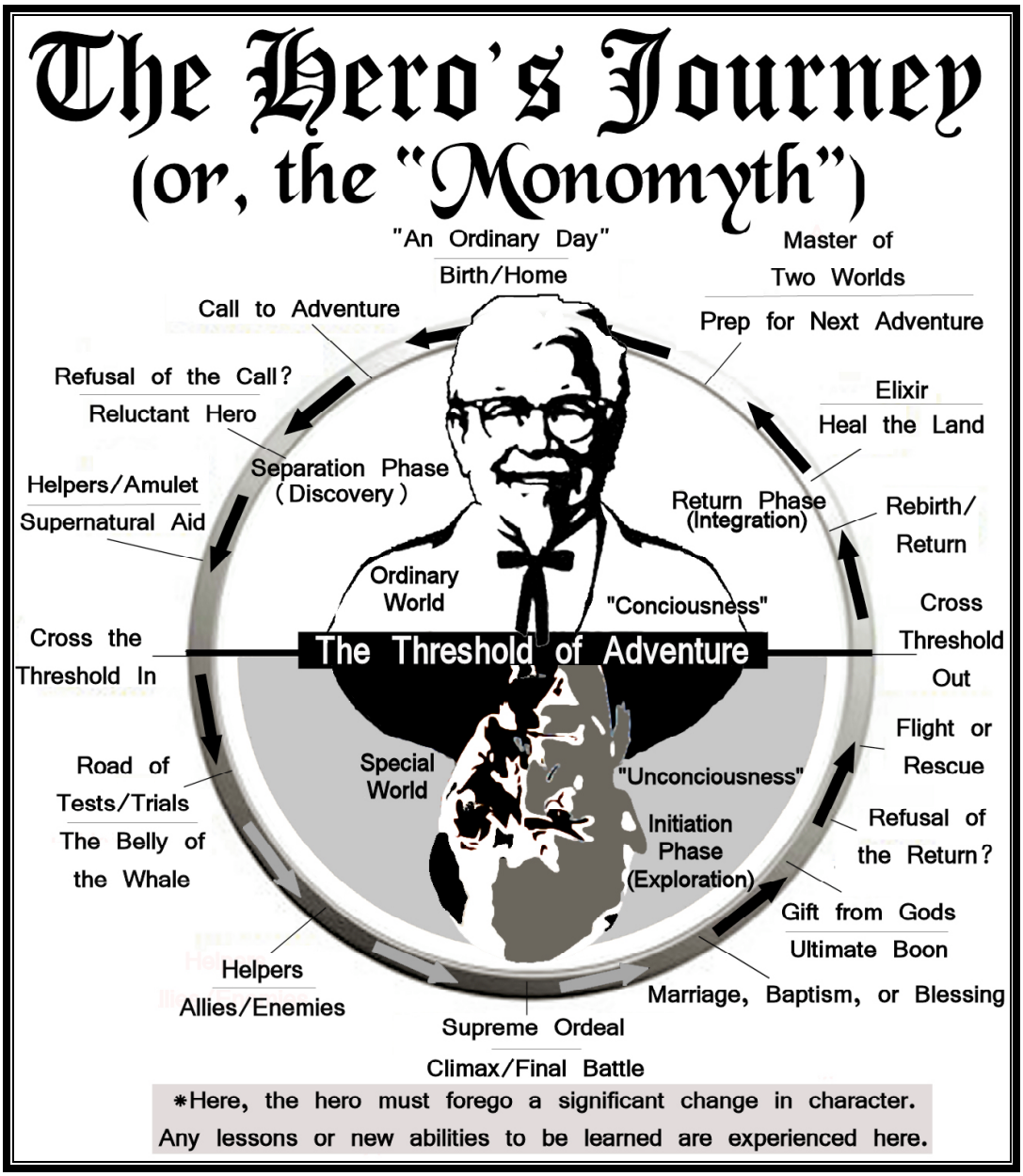
***Russia, Georgia, and Kazakhstan are "transcontinental" Eurasian countries that lie between the boundaries of Europe and Asia. This means that they can be considered to be a part of either continent (Deverson; Merriam; "Country"). Although the Borat film is about the meeting of Americans and a post-Communist Eurasian character, it is a British production. I include it here because it is discussed.

Appendix C: Comparison of Three Characters in the Monomyth Structure of Joseph Campbell--Dickens's "Scrooge," The "Quarterlife Crisis" Victim, and the American expatriate as represented in narrative. NOTE: "QLC" is an acronym for "Quarterlife Crisis."

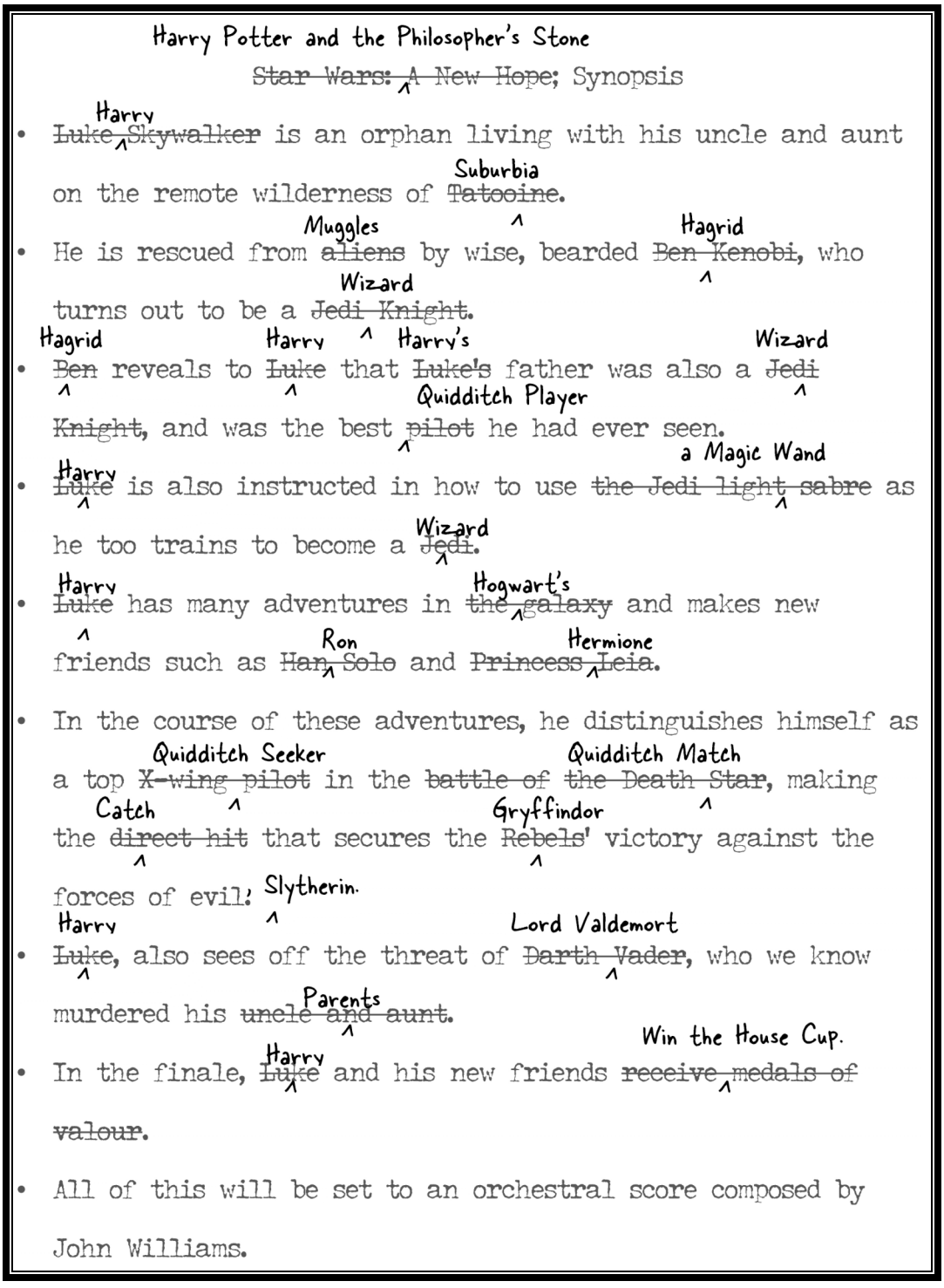
| **Nineteenth-Century Literary Hero* Figure** | **Phase of Separation →** | **Phase of Struggle and Initiation →** | **Phase of Return and Reintegration →** | **Gift/New Power** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ebenezer Scrooge from Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* | An ordinary day of work ends with a series of alien encounters that transport him to others places (and times). | Spirits representing past, present, and future of his environment (Christmas Eve) serve to educate, frighten, awaken, enlighten, or otherwise change him. | Symbolically reborn, he returns to his old world with his literal awakening. Spiritually, or morally "awakened," he sets out to reintegrate himself with his environment by righting wrongs. | Where before his adventure, he was clueless, Scrooge now has the "spirit" of Christmas, an attitude or philosophy of charity that gives his life new meaning. Scrooge "grows up." |
| **Twentieth-Century Victim of the QLC** | **Phase of Separation →** | **Phase of Struggle and Initiation →** | **Phase of Return and Reintegration →** | **Gift/New Power** |
| Representative twenty-something (as the protagonist of his or her own life) suffering from a QLC according to Robbins and Wilner's described symptoms | Post-graduation blues - End of safe, secure, collegiate years—where grossly unprepared individual feels/knows purpose—leads to separation from old world and encounter with the cruel, new one. Beginning of melancholy, anxiety, and feeling that sufferer is in a unique situation, alone. | QLC blows into an identity / existential crisis where individual, feeling lost and disoriented, struggles with depression, dissatisfaction over new environment, job ennui (changes often), life outside work, and how reality contrasts with previous hopes/expectations Struggles with being a "slacker." | After some self-analysis and reflection, some QLC sufferers learn to integrate into new role by refusing isolation and joining or creating social peer groups appropriate to goals and finding a connection to the community (Deering). Some marry, return to graduate school, or expatriate themselves. | Well adjusted sufferer finally reaches "maturity," restores order, meaning to life, ready for long-term commitments like grad school, marriage or children (or other new quest), ready to give back to world rather than always taking, serve as role model. |
| **American Sojourn Narrative Anti-Hero** | **Phase of Separation →** | **Phase of Struggle and Initiation →** | **Phase of Return and Reintegration →** | **Gift/New Power** |
| Representative Generation X, American expatriate protagonist from narratives regarding late twentieth-century, post-Communist Europe | An ordinary life leads protagonist to (either) a typical QLC and subsequent separation from country (or) an opportunity requiring the protagonist to leave country and subsequently into a QLC. In both instances, for this model, post-Communist Europe becomes the new world. | Encounters with phenomena unique to the expatriate and his or her environment, force a rejection or reconciliation with each conflict so that the journey can continue. The antihero could be repulsed, rejected, or invalidated before reaching a state of acceptance or compromise. | After absorbing, internalizing or rejecting the lessons or examples of the new world, the wiser, more well-adjusted expatriate comes to terms with his or her QLC and finds or accepts the identity previously in question. Antihero is an expatriate, not an exile, and does not usually remain in host country permanently. | Wherever the protagonist "returns," home or to a new land, he brings along the wisdom gained and stable, existential perspectives. Knowledge gained could be passed along to fellow novice expatriates or recorded and published as entertainment in prose fiction or travel memoirs. |

* Because of their oversimplified and characteristically unheroic qualities, a more accurate label for many of these protagonists would be "anti-hero." This chart is a modified version of a map created by Shelley Tuama in her book *Archetypes in Life, Literature, and Myth* (33).

Appendix D: The Circular Path of the Monomyth, based loosely on the charts of Campbell (*Hero* 245) and the University of California, Berkeley's "History through Literature Project" (Delattre); liberally adapted by author based on additional data from Joseph Campbell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). Imagery added and modified by author; © 2004 Kentucky Fried Chicken; "lenin" © Morten Lonvig.



Appendix E: A Sample "Hero's Journey and Transformation" Narrative Template, adapted from Kal M. Bashir's e-book, *Complete Hero's Journey*: *188 Stages* (2007).



Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

~~Star Wars: A New Hope~~; Synopsis

- ~~Luke Skywalker~~ (Harry) is an orphan living with his uncle and aunt on the remote wilderness of ~~Tatooine~~ (Suburbia).
- He is rescued from ~~aliens~~ (Muggles) by wise, bearded ~~Ben Kenobi~~ (Hagrid), who turns out to be a ~~Jedi Knight~~ (Wizard).
- ~~Ben~~ (Hagrid) reveals to ~~Luke~~ (Harry) that ~~Luke's~~ (Harry's) father was also a ~~Jedi Knight~~ (Wizard), and was the best ~~pilot~~ (Quidditch Player) he had ever seen.
- ~~Luke~~ (Harry) is also instructed in how to use ~~the Jedi light sabre~~ (a Magic Wand) as he too trains to become a ~~Jedi~~ (Wizard).
- ~~Luke~~ (Harry) has many adventures in ~~the galaxy~~ (Hogwart's) and makes new friends such as ~~Han Solo~~ (Ron) and ~~Princess Leia~~ (Hermione).
- In the course of these adventures, he distinguishes himself as a top ~~X-wing pilot~~ (Quidditch Seeker) in the ~~battle of~~ ~~the Death Star~~ (Quidditch Match), making the ~~direct hit~~ (Catch) that secures the ~~Rebels~~' (Gryffindor) victory against the forces of evil (Slytherin).
- ~~Luke~~ (Harry), also sees off the threat of ~~Darth Vader~~ (Lord Valdemort), who we know murdered his ~~uncle and aunt~~ (Parents).
- In the finale, ~~Luke~~ (Harry) and his new friends ~~receive medals of valour~~ (Win the House Cup).
- All of this will be set to an orchestral score composed by John Williams.

Appendix F: Sampling of Four Post-Communist European Coats of Arms Bearing Fanciful and Fictitious Symbolic Birds, digital images from *Wikimedia Commons*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 21 Aug. 2006 <http://commons.wikimedia.org>.


[2] According to the entry, "Image:Albania state emblem.png" from *Wikimedia Commons*, "this image is in the public domain because it contains materials that originally came from the United States Central Intelligence Agency's *World Factbook*." The "Contributors and Copyright Information" section of that U.S. government publication states, "The [*World*] *Factbook* is in the public domain. Accordingly, it may be copied freely without permission of the Central Intelligence Agency" (United States).

[3] This public domain image has "no copyright existing in it in the Russian Federation and possibly other jurisdictions. This is because the copyright is disclaimed under Article 8 (Works not Protected by Copyright) of the Law of the Russian Federation on Copyright and Neighboring Rights. Specifically excluded from copyright protection under this provision are official documents (laws, court decisions, other texts of legislative, administrative or judicial character) and official translations thereof; State emblems and official signs (flags, armorial bearings, decorations, monetary signs and other State symbols and official signs); works of folklore; communications concerning events and facts that have informational character" ("Image: Russia").

[4] "According to the Czech Copyright Act, this image is in the public domain. (Law No. 121/2000, Article 3, Section a)" ("Image: Coat of Arms").

[5] "This image is in the public domain because according to the Polish Copyright Law Act of February 4, 1994 (Article 4, case 4) 'governmental symbols, documents, materials and signs are not subject to copyrights' " ("Image: Herb").

Appendix G: Political Placard "*Solidarność: W Samo Południe* 4 C*zerwca* 1989" ("Solidarity: It's High Noon, June 4, 1989"), Photograph taken by Lee Hobbs (2006) of a design by Tomasz Sarnecki[6] on semi-permanent display in the Stapleton Library of Indiana University of Pennsylvania.


[6] According to the copyright notice on *Wikimedia Commons*, an online media database to which anyone can contribute, and one of several places this poster has been reproduced, "This image is in the public domain because according to the non-retrospective copyright law of July 10, 1952, of the People's Republic of Poland, all photographs by Polish photographers published before the law was changed on May 23, 1994 without a clear copyright notice are assumed public domain. This applies worldwide."

Appendix H: American Sojourn Narrative Book Jackets with Sexualized Imagery.