

Overall, this is a truly outstanding collection, even if the quality of the essays is sometimes uneven. The editors deserve due recognition already for the idea of writing a scholarly volume about Schwarzenegger and for putting the idea into life quickly—the conference took place in September 2009 and the book was on my desk in October 2011—and efficiently. The essays are well-edited and organized into a coherent whole. The volume will be engaging for scholars of several disciplines and could appeal even to readers from outside the academia, if one bears in mind the recent media interest in Schwarzenegger's personal life.

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Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, David Mauk, and Ole Moen, eds., *"E pluribus unum" or "E pluribus plura?" Unity and Diversity in American Culture*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011. 306 pages.

The very title of the collection *"E pluribus unum" or "E pluribus plura?" Unity and Diversity in American Culture* points to the broad framework of an ambitious interdisciplinary project which owes its publication to the European Association for American Studies Biennial Conference in Oslo in 2008. The volume is divided into three sections, devoted respectively to cultural, literary and historical explorations of unity and plurality, homogeneity and diversity, fusions and severances that infuse American Studies in all their conceivable research areas. In contrast to more run-of-the-mill collections which tend to concentrate only on one reading of the "e pluribus unum," usually in the form of historical analyses of the nation's formative years or cultural explorations of racial and ethnic identification, Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, David Mauk and Ole Moen, the editors of this volume, decided to include essays that shed an altogether new light on the eponymous notions. After all, the tensions between the centrifugal and centripetal forces that weigh on the matrix of the American public and private life can be discerned not only in the classic struggle between assimilated (or freely chosen) identities and those that were violently imposed but also in a subtle juxtaposition of literary stimuli in poetry, unremitting friction between federalist and anti-federalist tendencies in politics, political agency and subversive authority of national emblems, or even in imaginary and imagined architectural space that allows its inhabitants to escape or, conversely, to merge with the thronging multitudes.

Since each of the eighteen contributors brings a wholly unique perspective on the intersections of "e pluribus unum" and "e pluribus plura," it might be expedient to map out

a few smaller themes that are dispersed throughout the collection. The first of these revolves round the ideological underpinnings of American Studies and the transformations which this part of academia is currently undergoing. In a comprehensive essay “The Romance with America: Approaching America through Its Ideals,” Winfried Fluck contends that after the founding myths, of which European scholars used to be so enamored in the past, have crumbled under the heavy weight of revisionist critiques, only the narrative of perpetual trauma remains standing. He warns his fellow scholars that by focusing on transnational, transcultural and transdisciplinary studies, in which diversity, otherness and marginality constitute the focal points, they may be in fact perpetuating the romance with America and its utopian promise, which though not (as yet) realized is undeniably appealing. The shift from perceiving the US as an exceptionalist nation to a profane one might just be the way to avoid such romantic misconceptions. Nevertheless, as of now the project put forward by Winfried Fluck is still to be developed and implemented.

A much appreciated essay by George Blaustein outlines the beginnings of American Studies in postwar Europe—“‘Other’ American Studies: The Salzburg Seminar, American Intellectuals, and Postwar Europe.” He offers a valuable insight into both the lecturers and students of the Salzburg Seminar and the problematic nature of exporting American democracy to Europe ravished by war and stripped off of its intellectual and moral dignity. Blaustein provides not only a meticulous historical analysis supported by massive biographical research, but, even more importantly, he notes that the duality of America, which has inspired so many contemporary debates on the limits and scope of American Studies in Europe, is a part of a long-standing discussion, inaugurated perhaps more than sixty years ago in Salzburg.

Questions of identity form a second thread that emerges in a number of essays. Here, the eclecticism is in high demand, and rightly so, as the contributors analyze a number of absorbing, if a tad unrelated, subjects. Struggle over one’s identity and ethnicity form the backbone of Hans Bak’s “Language, Identity, and Politics in Multicultural New York: Chang-Rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*” in which he demonstrates how the city can be read as both the arena of multicultural and interracial conflict and an open-ended possibility to negotiate the instances of being silenced and of regaining a voice, of being visible and remaining invisible, all accomplished through linguistic exertion and semantic games. Bak splendidly reveals how Lee’s novel shares a number of affinities, as well as curious discontinuities, with Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, primarily in terms of painting urban milieu as the site of assimilation, rebellion and cultural (re)negotiations between dominant white English-speaking city dwellers and non-white immigrants bringing their own incorrect, but ultimately instructive, versions of hyphenated English.

Though African-American experience often comes to the foreground in explorations of the “unum” and “plura,” in this collection the two groups that enjoy most prominence are those of Jewish Americans and the Southerners. The former group is perhaps best represented by Susan Winnett’s instructive essay “Back to the Fold: Memoir, Conversion, and Community,” in which she analyzes the memoirs of people discovering their hitherto unacknowledged or unknown Jewish origins. Showcased as a process of inscription rather than conversion, the newly-found identities prove a shared need to access the “postmemory” which is invariably mediated through their families’ traumatic pasts. Commenting further on the importance of returning to one’s original community is Dana Mihăilescu with her elegantly written “Lower East Side Fiction and the Displacement of Unified Jewishness.” The essay proves how apparently unified and homogenous groups were, or still are, highly diversified. Such “diversity within unity” transpires particularly well in Lower East Side Jewish fiction in which this specific New York borough is presented as “a place of dislocation and transformation” (225), even though it eventually offers the Jewish immigrants a reformulated sense of community.

The issue of southernness is explored by Marcel Arbeit in “Southern Writers outside the South and Their Identities: The Case of Elizabeth Spencer.” Arbeit probes how southern identities are (re)constructed in order to handle, on the one hand, the fossilizing stereotypes ubiquitous in mainstream representations of the South, and on the other hand, the heterogeneity of newly-sprung identities. The southern subject reappears in Jan Nordby Gretlund’s “Unifying and Diversifying: Southerners Caught between Jefferson and Hamilton,” which examines how the two politicians’ early debates saturate contemporary southern art. It is always refreshing to observe how seemingly unconnected interpretative paths come together in a scholarly work; in this case, Gretlund aptly demonstrates how political and social discussions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century reverberate not only in twentieth-century literature but also in country music. Moving even further South, Susan Castillo in “George Washington Cable’s Caribbean Gothic” seamlessly fuses postcolonialism with economics while investigating the “violated boundaries” of the phantasmatic protagonists in Cable’s works. The in-between-ness and indeterminacy of these characters are correlated not only with territorial violations, colonial abuse and slavery, but with gender, class, nationality and race.

Stimulating readings like those already mentioned are supplemented by essays that cover a truly diverse territory beginning with the impact of Japanese prints on Amy Lowell’s poetry in Elisabetta Marino’s superbly written essay, through the history of jazz reception in the Czech Republic in Josef Jařab’s text, Sophie Vallas’s examination of the urban locale in Ed McBain’s police procedural novels, Jude Davies’s rigorously

researched concept of “solidarity across difference” in Theodore Dreiser’s non-fiction, and ending with Laurence Gervais-Linon’s investigation of the paradoxical nature of gated communities, to name just a few. The collection’s very eclecticism and essential interdisciplinarity do, however, result in somewhat erratic jumps between the subjects covered by the contributors, whereas the assessment of “e pluribus unum” and “e pluribus plura” professed by the title is only marginally present in some of the texts. Nevertheless, the volume’s impressive range shows the wealth of contemporary American Studies research which encompasses not only conventional ventures into literary and cultural quarters but also highly illuminating explorations of political thought, architecture, jazz, the methodology of teaching and transformations of American academia. All in all, it is undoubtedly an inspiring volume that fittingly demonstrates the breadth and depth of American Studies and the increasing diversity of research conducted in Europe.

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Jerzy Durczak and Paweł Frelik, eds., *(Mis)reading America: American Dreams, Fictions and Illusions*. Kraków: Universitas, 2011. 472 pages.

The volume *(Mis)reading America: American Dreams, Fictions and Illusions* offers a rich and varied perspective on different aspects of American culture. The collection is divided into five sections dedicated respectively to readings of American identity, explorations of the past, interpretations of dystopian futures or alternative histories, reflections on ethnic literatures and media analyses. The overall emphasis of the collection, as already suggested by its title, is on the idea of constructing, interpreting, misinterpreting and remapping the image of America. The idea of a metaphorical, but also physical cartography is strongly present in the first essay the opening section. Andrea O’Reilly Herrera’s article, indeed entitled “Cartographies of Knowledge: The Remapping of American Literature and Culture,” suggests the emergence of a perspective on American studies that is increasingly transnational in scope, emphasizing experiences of mixed and hybrid forms of national or personal identity. This view emerges in opposition to the increasing visibility, found in contemporary American politics, of a discriminatory and intolerant discourse. On the other hand, Maciej Masłowski’s piece concentrates on the notion of reading and interpreting America, focusing on two different modes of interpretation, represented respectively by seventeenth-century Puritan hermeuntics and the con-