the emergence of a colonial empire in America. Richly documented, the volume will serve as a valuable resource for students of Anglo-American religious and cultural history. History instructors at school and academic levels will find in it a wealth of illustrative material for teaching religious, family and economic history of seventeenth-century New England and England in the Atlantic perspective. A broader non-academic audience is likely to be attracted to it by fascinating insights into the world of values, feelings, dilemmas and the vicissitudes of very real people living unusual lives almost four hundred years ago. For all those reasons, *Abandoning America* deserves a place on reference shelves of academic, school and public libraries.

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Mita Banerjee. *Color Me White: Naturalism/Naturalization in American Literature*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2013. 484 pages.

In her recent study, Mita Banerjee analyzes the intersection of canonical works of American naturalism and the contemporary naturalization debate. At the turn of the twentieth century, due to unprecedented numbers of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants and radically increased ethnic diversity, American courts considered numerous naturalization and race prerequisite cases, and their decisions revealed the tenuous character of whiteness as a racial category. Banerjee refers to these legal narratives to enrich her readings of seminal naturalistic novels. She traces the parallel between "legal impressionism" and the impressionism of the literary naturalism (3–14), convincingly arguing for the racial character of the color code in the naturalistic tradition. Methodologically, she both appropriates and reverses the logic of the Critical Race Theory. She highlights the textual character of legal documents and reads literature as law, trying to determine if a given work naturalizes its characters or, to the contrary, revokes their citizenship.

Banerjee points to the deep preoccupation of American naturalism with "borderline white" characters, non-Anglo-Saxon Europeans of different ethnicities, and to the simultaneous absence of black, Asian, or Native American characters from the texts (132, 144, 202). She claims that this tendency underscores the salient relation between naturalism and naturalization, since the novels feature only the characters that are naturalizable. In the first chapters of the study, she also juxtaposes naturalistic representations of univocally white characters with the depictions of ethnically marked whites and argues that aesthetically pure whiteness is represented as dynamic and variable, liable to blush or get tanned, whereas off-whiteness is unchangeable, and its particular shades suggest inherent traits, e.g. the Irish red triggers associations with alcoholism and aggression.

Most of the following chapters examine novels that depict different non-Anglo-Saxon ethnicities: many canonical works of naturalism such as Stephen Crane's *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, Frank Norris's *The Pit* and *McTeague*, Theodor Dreiser's *Jennie Gerhardt* and a local color fiction text, Willa Cather's *My Ántonia*. In her analysis, Banerjee points to the dominant representational strategy of contrasting different ethnicities in order to whiten and naturalize one group "on the back" of another, which can be traced in most of the examined texts with the notable exception of Dreiser's narratives. She also explores the parallel between the perspective of the naturalistic narrator and the gaze of the social reformer: both inspect the private sphere of working-class homes from a privileged viewpoint. Under such a gaze, the "unholy sink" of Mary Murphy in *Maggie* becomes the evidence that she cannot be naturalized or defined as white, and the black teeth of a German midwife in *The Jungle* indicate her non-whiteness more persuasively than the color of her skin. Both in the public discourse of the day and in naturalistic narratives, the alarm over immigrants' lack of hygiene is expressed as a threat of contagion, indirectly galvanizing the fear of miscegenation. Such eugenic anxiety over "the gene pool of the nation" frequently coincides with naturalistic depictions of procreation that juxtapose white sterility and repulsive off-white overabundant fertility. As Banerjee demonstrates, the racially-charged discourse of cleanliness is closely related to the professionalization of medicine, which in turn intersects with the naturalization debate, with the desire for standardization as the driving force behind both. Hence, not only does the naturalistic narration mimic health inspection and diagnose the character as fit or unfit for citizenship, but also representations of immigrant medical practices are marginalized and contrasted with professionalized modern medicine.

Banerjee's study is an original and valuable contribution to whiteness studies, spanning many naturalistic classics and numerous extra-literary discourses such as law, medical history, and anthropology. She manages to synthesize a number

of insights about American society and literature at the turn of the twentieth century. At this dynamic time, the USA went through a series of identity crises and panics, brought about by rapid urbanization, the rise of corporate economy, massive waves of immigration, emancipation of African Americans, and the end of the frontier. Examining these processes and their connection to the realm of literature, Banerjee focuses on the racial category of whiteness, yet she also demonstrates how complexly it intersects with class, nationality, religion, sexuality, and gender.

The sweeping proportions of the study, however, translate into some short-comings. Examining works of literature as if they were court cases does highlight naturalism's preoccupation with naturalization; however, at some points it seems to limit the interpretative possibilities to the question: "Is the character naturalized by the narrative or not?" This problem could be remedied with references to the already available readings of the analyzed texts. Unfortunately, Banerjee's research on American naturalism seems to be based mostly on Winfried Fluck's detailed essay from a history of American literature, and it largely neglects book-length studies of the subject (Donald Pizer, Alan Trachtenberg, Donna Campbell, Jennifer Fleissner, or Walter Benn Michaels, to mention just the most influential authors). Positioning her reading in the context of the existent research would enhance the analyses of the canonical novels and additionally help Banerjee forge a stronger link between naturalism and local color fiction. Also regarding research, several long quotations from Wikipedia might strike a more conservative reader as falling short of academic standards. As for the structure, the main line of argument in the study would not suffer if the chapter on the race-change of Rudolph Valentino, very interesting on its own, was published as a separate piece. Finally, the editing of the book could be slightly improved by providing an index, by adding the illustrations of analyzed images, and by supplying English translations of quite extensive quotations from German sources.

Despite these weaknesses, *Color Me White* manages to shed new light on the canonical works of American naturalism, and it excellently conceptualizes the complex intersections between race, gender, sexuality, class, and religion in fin-de-siècle America, demonstrating the relational, arbitrary, and regionally variable character of these categories. Written in a very logical and comprehensible way, it can be recommended to students and scholars interested in whiteness studies and American literary canon.

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Julia Faisst. *Cultures of Emancipation: Photography, Race, and Modern American Literature*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012. 247 pages.

As the title of the publication suggests, its aim is very ambitious: Julia Faisst attempts to discuss modernity, which she defines after Louis Mennard as the nineteenth-century period of industrialization of image making when "mimesis becomes a social power," along with the aesthetics of the photographic medium, the history of the concept of race, the political notion of emancipation, and the genealogy of modernist literature. This is certainly a multi-disciplinary task, worthy of a mutli-volume study, but Faisst nevertheless is determined to handle it on her own in a 247-page-long book.

Cultures of Emancipation begins with a thesis about the relation between photography and identity, with special emphasis on the political aspect of visual representation. The author claims that nineteenth-century photographic portraiture marks the beginning of what she calls "identity fluidity" (17), echoed since then in various modes of self-fashioning through images. The fluidity of identities is the locus of the emancipatory potential of photographic images. If Faisst had anchored this part of her argument in the context of the trope of fluidity in modernist aesthetics and turn-of-the-century philosophy, as well in the recent work of Judith Butler about the politics of "framing" as the crucial aspect of making and reading photography, it would certainly gain theoretical depth and political rational. Instead, Faisst prefers to rely on more conservative sources, e.g. John Berger's 1982 *Another Way of Telling*, and to base her interpretations in claims such as "capturing character is one of the major aims of photography" (20). Well, is it? The very notion of "capture" received so much theoretical interest that today it is almost inappropriate to make statements of this kind. Faisst also writes that a photograph "can be captivating, even liberating, as well as disciplining, if not imprisoning" (20). In response to such claims, Butler could answer: but what about the context outside and beyond the frame, and how does the context reframe the frame? Similarly, Jacques Rancière, who has written extensively on photography in the context of the aesthetic, representational, and ethical regimes, would have a lot to say about Faisst's claim that the key "attribute" of early twentieth-century photography is individuality. Simply put, Faisst relies on definitions and concepts that have long been challenged in contemporary criticism of visual culture. The fact that Faisst uses these concepts to discuss the subject of race does not redeem them as correct and sufficiently accurate.

Cultures of Emanicipation examines how writers from Frederick Douglass to Gertrude Stein (they are: Harold Frederic, Henry James, Jean Toomer, Charles Chestnutt) use visual strategies of photography "to gain political and aesthetic emancipation" (22). In line with Rancière's analysis of modernist claims to

artistic emancipation, however, one could argue against Faisst that although her timeline of political uses of photography is correct, her interpretation of the modernist manipulation of the visual medium is outdated, as the emancipatory gestures of the modernists, when read through the prism of the economic status of art at the beginning of the twentieth century, appear as desperate spectacles of self-fashioning that mask the sad reality of the loss of artistic freedom in the world governed by the laws of the market (Rancière). Which is to say, their emancipatory function is purely declarative but lacking power. The fact that Faisst does not even acknowledge Rancière's notion of aesthetic regime or his *Emancipated Spectator* might be disturbing for those readers who, like myself, expect from contemporary publications a thorough and up-to-date bibliographical *quaerenda*.

No less troubling is Faisst's assertion that *Cultures of Emancipation* is the first full-length study on the relation between photography and literature that "goes beyond the simple reproduction of the self in fiction" (23). What about Carol Schloss's *In Visible Light: Photography and the American Writer, 1840–1940,* or *Literature and Photography Interactions, 1840–1990: A Critical Anthology* edited by Jane Rabb (which actually are Faisst's references)? What about Linda Rugg's 1997 *Picturing Ourselves: Photography and Autobiography* (which is not)? If anyone of those authors links photography to the notion of reproduced selfhood, Faisst would be the closest choice. And proclamations about the "pivotal role of photography in modernist literature"—even if you dub the trend "photographization"—are as illuminating and scholarly valid as statement about the pivotal role of film, war or the telegraph.

In the first chapter, devoted to Douglass's self-fashioning through photographic images, Faisst refers to the democratic symbolism of the photographic medium (41) to argue, through the analysis of pictures from *Life* and Eyerman's famous 1850 framed daguerreotype portrait of Frederick Douglass as well as Douglass's texts, that photography was "an adjunct to his speeches and writing" (37). The diachronic study of frontpieces from Douglass's autobiographies proves his passage from a respectable slave to a distinguished statesman; however, the analysis offers no comparison to the romantic aesthetics of those stylizations, which seems necessary to complete the historical depth of the study. On the other hand, an interesting point is made about Douglass's creation of a "mixed-genre" of visual and verbal elements (55)—an observation which can be a good starting point for the study of the evolution of the genre up to contemporary photo-blog phenomenon.

The second chapter is said to be about Harold Frederic and Henry James—the writer intrigued by the technologies and commercialization of representation—but it tends to focus almost exclusively on Harold Frederic's "Marsena." Albeit

acknowledging James's novels, the chapter features no mention of "The Real Thing" which is one of James's most outspoken commentaries on the commercialization of portraiture. Following this brief study of proto-modernist literature, there comes the chapter on Gertrude Stein, Man Ray and the usage of photographic medium to "explore artistic identity" (122). In this section, Ray's photographs are interpreted as attempts to mute Stein's literary self by amplifying the painterly character of the photographs, while Stein is presented as using these techniques against their grain, in order to emancipate her literary self from photographic prison, by theatrical exaggeration of their formality in non-referential but self-reflective literary style of "continuous presence" of the figure of the writer (126; 142). The length of Stein's phrases mimics the time of exposure, emulating the work of the photographic apparatus. In a like fashion, Ray's solarization technique is mirrored in Stein's poetics of negativity, through which she achieves her artistic sovereignty. Or, to put it in Faisst's language: Stein's "photo-essay demonstrates that we can know humanity once more: through the deeply human being Stein is. If we think about Stein in relation to the question of evacuated subjectivity… this question must be answered in the affirmative. For Stein, the post-sovereign subject that seems to be emptied of all self-determination and democratic potential is yet plastic" (170).

The last chapter entitled "Shadow Archive" promises to deal with lynching photography. The topic is highly relevant to the study attempting to capture changes in the development of photographic ethics across centuries, but the style of Faisst's argument slips from register to register at time becoming dangerously moralistic. This is Faisst introducting Sontag's ideas on photography: "[i]n *On Photography*, the book that ensures the author's legacy like no other"; "[i]n *Regarding the Pain of Others*, the last book she published before her own untimely death" (172). The dogmatic tone gains momentum with every page of the chapter, with photographs being "monstrous" "appalling" and "bewildering" and Jean Toomer's language, the exposure to which is "enthralling" (194), is an "uncontaminated" and "beautiful" "vehicle of substance" (189). If there is any topic with respect to which the critic should resist doctrinaire political correctness it is definitely torture photography. Faisst does not seem to realize that, thus providing us with a work which is a recommended read for all instructors of academic writing in search of material for teaching how not to write.

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