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**Queer Communal Postcolonial Happiness in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness***

Katherine Jane Gutiérrez-Glik

**Abstract:** When one examines recent scholarship on queer and postcolonial individuals, happiness is generally not the first quality that comes to mind. This paper will demonstrate, however, that while queer theory's insistence on the right to be unhappy appears contradictory to the politics of postcolonial happiness, queer theory's concepts of alternate temporalities and queer futurity have much to add to the conversation surrounding postcolonial happiness, as put forth by Ananya Jahanara Kabir in *The Postcolonial World*.

An application of the concepts of queer temporalities and queer futurities to the lens of postcolonial happiness can serve as a way to increase postcolonial resistance, reclaim pleasure, and resist disempowerment for the future postcolonial subject. In this paper, I will apply the lens of postcolonial happiness and queer temporality to Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* and NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*. I intend to demonstrate the varied range of possibilities for increasing postcolonial pleasure and resistance, both individually and communally, using queer temporalities. My dual analysis of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* and *We Need New Names* will highlight the postcolonial resistance within the text, including a return to—or creation of—happy memories and a production of a queer, alternate temporalities: spaces and places. My examination of the differing approaches to postcolonial happiness will reveal how a construction of distinctly queer postcolonial resistance is present in the familial structures within the text, modeling a literary representation of queer, postcolonial, and trans activism for future generations.

**Keywords:** African studies, colonialism, imperialism, postcolonialism, postcolonial approach, queer studies, queer theory

**Cognitive Dissonance in Nella Larsen's *Passing***

Caresse Ann John

**Abstract:** In 1957, Leon Festinger published his findings on cognitive dissonance, and subsequently his theory became an important staple in social psychology. However, the concept of cognitive dissonance has not often been applied in the field of literature. Nella Larsen's *Passing* makes a strong case for the usefulness of cognitive dissonance, particularly when it comes to teaching our students not what to think but how to think in our current complex conversations about race and the multiplicity (and often conflicting nature) of our lived experiences. Passing narratives often show how the act of passing allows individuals access to certain freedoms typically unavailable to them;

but *Passing*, by being imbedded within Irene's troubled cognitive space, also shows us the confining nature of a world in which passing acts as one of the only pathways to these freedoms. Teaching our students how to use cognitive dissonance—both the dissonance that exists within the story and the dissonance that can come from the story—is a way toward freedom: a freedom that does not transgress boundaries but destroys them altogether.

**Keywords:** African American Lit, cognitive dissonance, identity formation, liminality, Modernism

## **'Under This Yok of Mariage Ybounde:' Aristocratic Husbands and Authoritative Wives in The Merchant's Tale**

Rachel Lea Tharp

**Abstract:** Separating the Merchant's Prologue from his tale leaves the Merchant's character incomplete. Without considering the Merchant's motivation for telling a fabliau, his tale remains a mere addition to the well-established tradition of anti-feminist medieval literature. Merchants held a tenuous position in the three-estate system after the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 challenged the traditional social hierarchy. They were viewed as inherently sinful by the Christian clergy, and their conspicuous wealth allowed for social mobility, threatening the aristocracy and the static estate system. In his tale, the Merchant mocks January, a representative of the nobility, for his foolish, sinful behavior, revealing that the second estate is no better than the others.

**Keywords:** Canterbury Tales, fabliau, Geoffrey Chaucer, marriage, merchant, Peasants' Revolt of 1381, social commentary, wifehood

## **The Necessity of (Dis)memberment: The Intersection of Mixed-Race, Gender, and Hero in Duffy and Jennings's Adaptation of Butler's *Kindred***

Pilar DiPietro

**Abstract:** Around the time Butler wrote *Kindred* the prevailing theories of African American literary criticism involved conflicting views of the genre—views that previously supported historical narrative but that were progressively evolving toward deeper, more evocative criticisms. This developing narrative, at a distanced view, perhaps offered a mirrored understanding of then-contemporary African American concerns. Often these newer criticisms pitted black women against black men, yet Damian Duffy and John Jennings's graphic novel adaptation of Butler's *Kindred* melds the identities of male and female in Dana, the androgynous protagonist of the story. Dana represents the struggle of a mixed American who, fostered by the time travel paradigm, embodies a heroic woman grappling with the side of herself that is white. In this article, I base my argument on the African American critical theories of Hortense J. Spillers and Jonathan Brennan. Joining the ideas of these two African American theorists adds credence to my contention that the character of Dana not only must accept the white side of herself but must escape the oppression of her past by leaving a part of her body, a physical dismemberment, behind as proof of freedom from the confines of the situation, of the page, and even of herself.

**Keywords:** African American Lit, African American studies, gender studies, identity formation, literary theory

## **Finding Oneself in Print: *Robinson Crusoe*, Metonymy, and the Ideologically Constructed Self**

Brian McCarty

**Abstract:** Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* dramatizes the extent to which the racism endemic to colonialist discourse mediates the titular character's interactions with his island environment, thus precluding the empiricism valued during the eighteenth century. While scholars often assert that Crusoe's discovery of the footprint initiates a drastic change in how he perceives the island, the footprint merely reinscribes the positionality that has dictated his mode of relating to this setting all along. The nature of the danger confronting Crusoe becomes evident in the semiotic transfer of cannibalistic signifiers to the structures he constructs to safeguard him from them. These structures, designed to replicate English enclosure, impose onto the island an artificial order that, by neglecting its topographical particularities, transform it into a discursive space, especially when considering that fear of "savages" motivates his interactions with his environment. The cannibal trope employed by colonialist rhetoric to justify exploitation of New World inhabitants and resources alike dictates virtually every decision he makes after landing on the island and serves to render illegible both the island and the Other. Indeed, the novel participates in a more pervasive discourse whereby the era's privileging of empiricism conflicts with representations of cannibalism and savagery in cartographical and literary representations of the New World. This epistemological dissonance manifests in "Great Newes from the Barbadoes," a report of a failed slave revolt; the document emphasizes its veracity, which it unintentionally conflates with violence, while employing racist stereotypes. As evinced by Crusoe's refusal to abandon his fortified home despite concerns over its structural integrity, it is this ideological construction of the Other that endangers him, rather than any threat posed by New World "savages." What disturbs Crusoe about the footprint is that it compels him to confront the contradictions of a racist dialectic that constructs alterity according to conflicting Christian, capitalist, and feudal paradigms, each of which seeks to justify further imperialist pursuits. Defoe thus explores the interiority of the interpellated self, using the footprint to foreground the challenge of circumventing biases in order to arrive at an empirical understanding of the spaces one inhabits and traverses.

**Keywords:** British imperialism, colonialism, Daniel Defoe, Great Newes from the Barbadoes, *Robinson Crusoe*, semiotics, spatiality

## **The Djamila Phenomenon: How the Confinement of Two Algerian Revolutionaries Was Translated for a French and Global Public, 1956-1962**

Mary Anne Lewis Cusato

**Abstract:** Two female Algerian revolutionaries, Djamila Bouhired and Djamila Boupacha, both members of the Front de libération nationale (FLN), were captured by French troops in Algeria, tortured, tried, and sentenced to death, approximately three years apart. After their sentencings, both

their cases would go abroad, moving from Algeria to France and from France elsewhere. It is the movement of these women themselves—as well as their legal cases, the associated press campaigns, and the ways that writers, lawyers, artists, journalists, and activists in France represented both the cases and the women at their center—that interests us in this article. Indeed, the cases and faces of both Bouhired and Boupacha became the canvases upon which French media and intellectuals reflected on Algeria and the Algerian question: existential questions of freedom and constraint, nuances of second-wave feminism, and even France’s own nationhood and identity. And what began as the literal confinement of two young female Algerian revolutionaries would emerge and evolve as a challenge to cultural confinement and hierarchy on the levels of gender and colonial status alike.

**Keywords:** collective memory, colonialism, imperialism, postcolonialism, cultural studies, feminist studies, French and Francophone studies, transnationalism

## **New Woman as a Progressive Housewife: Reformed Domesticity in Vicki Baum’s *Zwischenfall in Lohwinkel* (1930)**

Victoria Rust

**Abstract:** The period from 1928 to 1933 represents a decisive break in which both the political culture and the socioeconomic circumstances of the Weimar Republic changed dramatically and thus had a pronounced impact on the discourse about women’s role in society. While the seductive and androgynously clad flapper dominated the image of modern femininity in the early 1920s, by the late 1920s and into the early 1930s this icon gradually transitioned into a less provocative type with reenforced traditional attributes. As seen in the fashion publications and beauty contests around 1930, more feminine fashions and images of motherhood accompanied the representation of women. In popular literature, urban liberal writers such as Vicki Baum created “New Women” who combined progressive elements with more conservative aspects.

Taking these considerations as a starting point, this paper investigates Baum’s vision of domestic space and marital relations as seen in her novel *Zwischenfall in Lohwinkel* (1930). While best known for her poignant novels about professionally employed women in the Weimar Republic (*stud. chem. Helene Willfüer*, *Pariser Platz 13*, and others), especially in their depictions of modern public spaces such as hotels (*Menschen im Hotel*) and retail shops, in *Zwischenfall in Lohwinkel* Baum features a provincial housewife. I argue that with this novel Baum proposes her view of a reformed marriage by drawing attention to the psychological and emotional effects of her heroine’s confinement—in a dilapidated house, in an unromantic marriage, as well as in a small town. In addition, I explore how the novel interweaves the contemporary debates about the modern kitchen and the New Woman with the so-called maternalist ideology in order to devise the parameters for motherhood and domesticity, thus capturing the shifting feminine ideal on the eve of the Nazi takeover.

**Keywords:** confinement, domesticity, the New Woman, the Weimar Republic, women and gender studies