

organic and gradual development in Pynchon's apprenticeship years that already points forward to the magnum opus.

Finally, there's this curious thing about the volume and its relation to theory. On the one hand, two interesting articles – Medoro's and Jordal's – succeed in spinning a complex web of Agamben/Eliade/Feminism and de Man/Hölderlin/Benjamin respectively. On the other hand, the two most illuminating contributions – Dalsgaard's and Dickson's – don't seem to make much of hardcore theory. In a way this adds to their coolness. They show that even nowadays high-quality Pynchon criticism manages without overt references to trendy theory. Perhaps theory is on the way to becoming smoothly immanent. Which is okay as long as the cool doesn't backslide into a cold turkey attitude.

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Axel Nissen, *Bret Harte: Prince and Pauper*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000. xxiii + 326 pages, 26 black and white illustrations, index; ISBN 1-57806-253-3; cloth \$ 28.00.

Bret Harte (1836-1902) was once a well-known figure in American literature all over the world.<sup>12</sup> He left the East Coast for California at the age of 18 and worked there as, for example, a schoolteacher, drug-store clerk and typesetter. In 1868, *The Overland Monthly* was established with aspirations to becoming 'the *Atlantic Monthly* of the West,' and Harte was appointed its first editor. *The Overland Monthly* made his stories popular in the United States. In 1878, Harte left his home country for good and worked as a consul: first in Crefeld in Germany, and soon afterwards in Glasgow, Scotland. He finally settled in London. During most of the time he lived in Europe he was separated from his family members, who remained in America.

Harte is widely recognized as one of masters of the American short story. According to Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, Harte

who had traveled to the goldfields and mining camps of California, published the stories of *The Luck of Roaring Camp* in 1870, ... won acceptance for an entire new realm of discourse by bringing into literature a world of drunks, rogues and vagabonds, described with an emotional and vernacular freedom that challenged the moral strictures of the Gilded Age and prepared the way for the greatest master of the entire genre, Mark Twain, who followed it to worldwide popularity.<sup>13</sup>

12. For example, some of Harte's short stories, such as 'Miggles,' 'The Luck of Roaring Camp,' and 'Notes by Flood and Field' were translated into Finnish as early as 1874 (*Tarinoita Kalifornian kultamaalta*). *Thankful Blossom: beraettelse från amerikanska frihetskriget år 1779* appeared in Stockholm in 1877 and *Tvillingerne fra Table Mountain og andre Fortællinger* in Copenhagen in 1879.

13. Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1991), 192.

Ruland and Bradbury succinctly sum up Harte's later reputation: he was destined to remain in the shadow of Twain. However, during the 1990s a new interest in Harte's work has arisen. This is due to two scholars, Gary Scharnhorst and Axel Nissen, who have seen to it that Harte's work has been revisited from a new and different angle. Axel Nissen's biography of Bret Harte, subtitled *Prince and Pauper* (2000) is a major example of this revival.

In his biography of Harte, Nissen approaches his object of study from several fresh perspectives. First of all, Nissen abandons the old model of biography which was supposed to tell 'the truth' about the author. Instead, he wonders if 'it is possible to ask if anyone really *knew* Bret Harte' (xvii). Nevertheless, Nissen relies on his or other like-minded biographers' positivistic skills: 'It is our task ... to shape the narrative recreation of a life in such a way as not to falsify the evidence, to allow others to understand the basis for our conclusions, and to give meaning to a heterogeneous mass of facts and details' (xvii). Nissen also makes use of Hayden White's concept of 'emplotment,' which characterizes the transition of biography from mere chronicle to the historical narration of people's lives. Nissen's biographical method, the so called 'biographical narrative,' means that 'the biographer for a time steps into the story world; he abdicates omniscience for a time, taking on the role of casual observer' (xxii). On the one hand, Nissen does not believe that biography can reveal any inner truths about an author; on the other, though, he seems to believe that he can capture those very special moments in Harte's life which will tell the readers something essential about the writer. Secondly, Nissen's book promises to touch on two aspects of Harte's life which have not been discussed in earlier studies: his Jewish heritage and homosexuality.

Nissen's biographical narrative is present in many parts of *Prince and Pauper*. Many of the chapters begin with a casual observer's view. These imaginary observers may be Harte's friends, family members or even the reader of Nissen's book. Many of the chapters begin with such sentences as 'Had we been in the vicinity of Clay Street ...' or 'Had anyone happened to be walking down Second Street ...,' giving us the illusion that we might actually have seen Harte walking in the streets of San Francisco, Crefeld, Glasgow or London. This kind of *fronesis*, as a style of writing a biography, is fascinating, but for some reason the method seems to diminish toward the end of Nissen's book. Indeed, the latter part of *Prince and Pauper*, which tells about Harte's years in Europe, is a more traditional biography than the beginning of the book promises. From Nissen's depictions of Harte's years in Germany and England we learn about his health, financial situation and the high society with which he was involved.

It is important to keep in mind that Nissen's *Prince and Pauper* is a biography, not a study of Harte's work. However, whenever Nissen does discuss Harte's stories he shows his talent as an interpreter of Harte. Indeed, for contemporary readers Harte's stories include highly attractive depictions and explorations of the West, and it is therefore interesting to read about them through the framework of the new scholarship in American Studies offered by Nissen. For example, in describing the famous short story 'The Luck of Roaring Camp,' Nissen mentions Nina Baym's theories of how

the all-male Western discourse excluded women and feminized the land. In addition to Baym, Nissen could also have referred to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's idea (in *Between Men*) of homosociality, which would have helped even more in theorizing male bonding in the West.<sup>14</sup> Nissen's work also provides valuable background information about Harte's less-known works, such as his unsuccessful and only novel *Gabriel Conroy* (1875) and the play called *Ah Sin* (1877), which he co-authored with Mark Twain.

Nissen imparts more information on Harte's Jewish background than earlier biographical writings, such as William MacDonald's introduction to Harte's *Stories and Poems* (1947).<sup>15</sup> Even if Harte kept his background hidden from the public, he implicitly criticized anti-Semitism in a poem entitled 'That Ebrew Jew' (1877). Except for this poem, Nissen does not find any other Jewish features in Harte's writings. Indeed, in the United States of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a strong anti-Semitic tendency as well as racial prejudice against other ethnic minorities. As Nissen writes, Harte also attacked anti-Chinese sentiments in his 'The Heathen Chinees.'

Compared to Harte's Jewish heritage, the question of his potential homosexuality is more complex. Indeed, Nissen cannot find any evidence of Harte's relationships with other men. There are, however, several conventional hints, such as his interest in Greek literature and mythology (for example, *Tales of the Argonauts* was the title of one of Harte's books, published in 1875). Referring to ancient Greek stories of love between men, Nissen writes: 'Harte chose to interpret and mythologize the West in Greek terms' (235). Moreover, many of Harte's stories are about men without women in the West. Importantly, as Nissen points out, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was also the time of the Oscar Wilde trials in London, and Wilde may have become a warning example for Harte. Nissen's arguments about Harte's relationships with men (for example, with Mark Twain or Colonel Arthur Collins) are quite understandably speculative, and is more successful when he changes his subject from Harte's life to his fiction. However, as Nissen claims, there are not many explicit stories of love between men. According to him, the story entitled 'In the Tules' 'was the most blatantly homoerotic story Harte ever wrote' (237).

Even though Nissen succeeds in outing Harte neither as a Jewish man nor as a 'gay author,' *Prince and Pauper* is an important study of Harte. Moreover, it is an excellent depiction of the period it covers. Harte was one of the early writers who characterized the West; he also followed Henry James on the path of expatriation. Harte died in England in 1902. In a very interesting way, two tendencies of late 19<sup>th</sup> century

14. Nina Baym, 'Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors,' *American Quarterly*, 33, 2 (Summer, 1981), 123-139; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

15. William MacDonald, 'Introduction,' in Bret Harte, *Stories and Poems by Bret Harte*, Selected and Edited with an Introduction and Notes by William MacDonald (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), ix-lxxv.

American literature were combined in Harte: the new influences of the West and the new heritage of Europe. *Prince and Pauper* offers a lot of valuable information about Harte's life, his obscure marriage, his background and his various kinds of friendships. It also helps, to a greater or lesser extent, to contextualize some of Harte's stories. Even if Nissen's book represents traditional biography, its viewpoints are usually fresh and sometimes even surprising. One may hope that Nissen's book will encourage other scholars besides the biographer himself to read and analyze Harte's work, since – as *Prince and Pauper* shows us – Harte was an exceptional author worthy of further studies. Harte's biography is eloquently written and one cannot but envy Nissen's impressive command of English. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the dissertation on which Nissen's biography is based was awarded His Majesty King Harald V's Gold Medal in Norway in 1997.

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Joy Porter, *To Be an Indian: The Life of Iroquois-Seneca Arthur Caswell Parker*. Foreward by William N. Fenton. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001; xxiv + 309 pages. Notes, bibliography, index, illustrations; ISBN 0-8061-3317-1; \$34.95, cloth.

Arthur Caswell Parker, a pan-Indian spokesman and intellectual, deserved his reputation as a person who could 'get things done' (199). Indeed, Joy Porter's vivid account of his life will leave the average workaholic feeling downright lazy. Born on the Cattaraugus Reservation of the New York Seneca Nation (Iroquois) in 1881, of a white mother and a part-Seneca father, Parker was the great-nephew of Ely S. Parker, the Seneca who achieved high rank in the Union army during the Civil War, later becoming Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Such a cross-culturally successful ancestor was a major inspiration to Arthur Parker, who as a young man launched himself into a stunning variety of professions. He became an archaeologist and a museologist (his own coining for one who transforms museums into institutions of popular education and outreach). He was a folklorist, collecting and publishing material about his own and other Indian peoples. Passing up the chance to pursue a doctorate under the massively influential Franz Boas, Parker also became an anthropologist, if not a university-trained professional. He served as secretary-treasurer and president of the intertribal Society of American Indians, and as editor of its publications. In 1936 Parker was lauded as 'the most famous person of Indian ancestry in the United States' (205). He believed that Indians could integrate into American life while retaining their identity. Yet being neither fully Seneca (around 1903 he was adopted into the Bear Clan) nor fully white, he himself occupied, writes Porter, 'a liminal position within white and Indian society. He was, therefore, a person in between' (4).

A senior lecturer in American history at Anglia Polytechnic University, England, Porter thus focuses upon one of those early twentieth-century Indian intellectuals who sought to mediate between cultures. Previous important treatments of such 'cul-