

array of primary and secondary material to sharpen her findings, she has concentrated almost entirely on the pension files themselves. This leads her to see the lives of veterans in a vacuum, defined solely by their quest for pensions and nothing else. More worryingly, it sometimes leads to her making basic errors of fact because she has not checked her pension file findings with other sources. For instance, she claims that Jeremiah Everett from Columbia County, New York, 'never received' (81) a disability pension, even though he clearly appears on a number of easily accessible and readable Congressionally-approved pension lists dating back to the 1790s. This is just one of many such poorly supported statements to be found throughout her text.

In terms of her quantitative analysis, Teipe's findings (derived from an examination of over a thousand pension files) appear to be sound, but, again, they do not tell us anything we do not already know. Resch had already come to similar conclusions over twenty years go. This, of course, helps to validate his work, but it does not move the field any further. Moreover, it is very difficult to ascertain just how Teipe has gone about generating her statistics, as she does not make it clear, even in her endnotes, what methodology she has used. For the general reader, this is not a major problem, but for those engaged in similar research it is rather frustrating. Given the general scholarly sloppiness displayed throughout *America's First Veterans*, I would have been more confident of her findings if I could have seen how she derived them. Without such explanations, the statistics she has presented raise methodological questions that should be answered in an academic monograph such as this.

Overall, *America's First Veterans* can be seen as a useful, though flawed, introduction to the Revolutionary War pensions and those who benefited from them. Where this book really falls short is in its treatment of the wider historical picture. Teipe does a good job of highlighting the difficult conditions in which many veterans lived, but she does not relate these to the broader history of the early American republic. The creation of a pension establishment was a radical break with the past that, for the first time in US history, established the federal government as a major source of public welfare. Teipe, however, hardly acknowledges this. This is a shame, as it is only by doing so that we can fully appreciate the significance of Revolutionary War veterans as a force for change within America. Not only did they help win American independence as young men, their suffering as old men forced the government to get involved in taking care of some of its most needy citizens. It would seem, therefore, that these men truly deserve the title 'Revolutionary' veterans, almost as much for the latter achievement as for the former.

Daniel Blackie

The Renvall Institute, University of Helsinki

Maria Holmgren Troy, *In the First Person and in the House: The House Chronotope in Four Works by American Women Writers*. Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 1999. 235 pp.; ISBN: 91-554-4532-2; \$50.50, paper.

Past, present and future give the house different dynamisms, which often interfere, at times opposing, at others, stimulating one another. In the life of a man, the house thrusts aside contingencies, its councils of continuity are unceasing.

Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*

Bachelard's phenomenological praise of the house's unceasing 'councils of continuity' might well be extended to the unflinching persistence of the house chronotope in American literature. This continuity emerges from Maria Holmgren Troy's examination of the house in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) by Harriet Jacobs, Elizabeth Stoddard's *The Morgesons* (1862), Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), and *Housekeeping* (1980) by Marilynne Robinson. The critic emphasizes that in these novels the first person autodiegetic female narrator tells a story of the constitution of her identity, to which the house chronotope is most germane. Indeed, according to Bakhtin's theory, which lies somewhere between phenomenology and materialism (Bernard-Donals 161), the growing consciousness of the protagonist is shaped by external material and historical circumstances. Therefore Holmgren Troy decides to employ Bakhtin's category of the chronotope as a most congenial tool for examining the dependence of the protagonists' selfhood on social, gender, racial and economic relations – in spite of gender's absence in Bakhtin's considerations. Nor is the author put off by one feminist critic's remark that the philosopher's rhetoric projects a traditional opposition between the feminine and the masculine. Following the ideal of dialogism, Holmgren Troy duly informs the reader in the Introduction of a variety of opinions concerning Bakhtin's lack of sensitivity to feminist and gender issues, placing these remarks in footnotes. Very aptly indeed for scholarship employing Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, the footnotes play a very important dialogizing role throughout the whole book, reminding the reader of the manifold and often contradictory readings of the texts analyzed by the author.

Holmgren Troy thus presents her aim as an experiment in an extended application of an apparently anachronistic, if quite fashionable, and admittedly – at least from some feminist critics' point of view – fruitful (See Howard 49-50, 66-67) theory: 'my study explores the possibility of using Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope to examine the house as a point where complicated issues of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nationality intersect – spatially and temporally – ...' (11-12). In applying the category of the chronotope in a new historical and ideological context, the author simply follows Vice's observation – unfortunately cited only in a footnote and not presented as a supporting argument for her methodological choice in the main body of the text – that 'Bakhtin's categories can generate meaning in the way he claims meaning is always generated: by a repetition of a structure or utterance in a new context, or with altered content' (Vice 224 quoted in Holmgren Troy 15). Holmgren Troy invokes Bakhtin's by now classic definition of chronotope as an intersection of spatial and temporal axes and a fusion of indicators in which time becomes artistically visible, while space becomes infused with time and responds to the movements of plot and history. Moreover, the fact that the chronotope expresses a world view, or embodies ideology as well as projecting a literary genre, and that it significantly

determines the image of the human (Bakhtin 85) is of paramount importance for the author's examination of the four narrators' construction of identity in the discussed novels. Yet, as the author shows, it is an interplay, or a dialogue, of the most important chronotopes in the novels that provides a more accurate clue to understanding the complexities of the narrators' selfhood formation.

The first chapter consists of a general introduction to the primary texts, setting them in their historical, social and literary contexts. Holmgren Troy herself points out that 'The stress in this chapter, however, is on the nineteenth century' (21). Thus the two nineteenth-century novel chronotopes are discussed in greater detail due to the fact that 'nineteenth-century issues concerning the house chronotope provide a background for twentieth-century concerns' (21). The author discusses particular genres, such as slave and neo-slave narrative, the domestic novel, and spiritual autobiography, and examines the issues related to the house chronotope in all the primary texts, such as the originally nineteenth-century notion of domesticity and its later impact. This discussion brings to mind the idea, particularly apposite in this context, of the Wittgensteinian *family* resemblance of the chronotopes in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, *The Morgeson's*, *Kindred*, and *Housekeeping*.

In the second chapter, 'Cramped Conditions: Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*,' Holmgren Troy points to the interplay of the main chronotope of the narrative, that of the narrator's, Linda Brent's, grandmother's house, and the Gothic chronotope of the garret in which Linda, as a runaway slave, spends seven years hardly able to stir or stretch – all of which is significant for the formation of a black female's subjectivity. The choice of the phrase 'cramped conditions' is apt because in suggesting the literal lack of living space for individual growth and metaphorically comparing slavery to imprisonment, it is the epitome of the social, racial and moral contradictions embodied in the relationship between the grandmother's house chronotope and the garret chronotope.

Holmgren Troy emphasizes that 'the garret is ... both part of and not part of the house' (77). Suffering the cyclical, seasonal changes of weather Linda, while in the garret, experiences cosmic time, the time of nature. One could at this point press Holmgren Troy's observations a little further and add that nature thus presented seems harsh, cruel, and indifferent but, as in Emily Dickinson's poetry, is independent of the historical world and treats with equal severity all its creatures, without racial discrimination. This understanding of nature stands in sharp contrast with the Southerners' particular historical construction of it as repulsively manifested in the allegedly animal characteristics attributed by them to black slaves.

On the other hand, the grandmother's house is steeped in the historical time of the Southern town. This is the eventless, cyclical time typical, according to Bakhtin, of the small town chronotope (247-248). However, this oppressive eventlessness stems, Holmgren Troy claims, from the stagnation caused by the system of slavery. Therefore, although it is an attempt to construct a chronotope embodying the antebellum

middle class ideal of domesticity – which, instead of embracing the Southern model of ideal womanhood, assumes the Northern ideology of real womanhood – with a respectable and respected black woman at its center, the grandmother's house is extremely susceptible to the inroads of slave-holders' reality.

The apparent, deceptive openness of the house, which conceals the Gothic space of a runaway slave's confinement, makes it what Holmgren Troy calls a 'double voiced' structure, a Bakhtinian term, elaborated by Gates in an African-American literary context (Gates 51 quoted in Holmgren Troy 80-81). She astutely observes that the scene in *Incidents*, where white man and a free black man servile to slave-holders visit the house in which a slave is hiding, 'chronotopically "flesh[es] out"' and sums up 'Jacobs's scathing critique of antebellum American society: the impossible contradiction of the existence of slavery in what is said to be a progressive, enlightened democratic society' (Holmgren Troy 81).

Moreover, Holmgren Troy draws the reader's attention to the fact that the double-voicedness of Linda's grandmother's house with its garret is emblematic of the narrator's and the whole narrative's double-voicedness. In telling her story Linda must negotiate the ideal of real womanhood realized by her grandmother because its inherent sexual purity is notoriously threatened in the slave-holders' society in which the 'image of the pure, sensitive Southern Lady was co-constructed with the image of the black woman as an over-sexed animal, excluded from the category of woman' (Holmgren Troy 26). In choosing as her addressee a white middle class Northern woman, Linda acknowledges the values informing the ideology of Real womanhood, and asks her virtuous reader to have pity and pardon her for the decisions made as a teenage slave-girl, decisions concerning her extra-marital sex and bearing children to a white man whom she does not despise. On the other hand, as Holmgren Troy points out after Davie (95, 102 quoted in Holmgren Troy 90), another voice – assertive, critical, and 'decidedly unsentimental' – exists at the same level of the narrative as the sentimental one, and argues against applying the same ethical standards of purity and piety in judging slave women. Thus, the critic concludes 'Linda, as protagonist and narrator, is shaped negotiating the values that the grandmother's house as chronotope embodies, and Jacobs negotiates the image of ideal mid-nineteenth century American womanhood by giving the central house of the narrative a black woman owner' (Holmgren Troy 93). In her narrative, already innovative on account of the ex-slave female autodiegetic narrator, Jacobs welds the conventions of the slave narrative and the domestic novel in order both to give her addressee 'something that she is familiar with' (Holmgren Troy 92) and to demonstrate difference.

Although Linda has acquired a very fragile and relative 'racial safety', she has not achieved 'social safety' at all because she is not an independent house owner. It is only when considered as complementary that Linda's and her grandmother's models of womanhood seem to testify to Jacobs's intuition or perhaps awareness that the struggle for abolition and civil rights for blacks must become inseparable from women's struggle for equal rights. Although Holmgren Troy mentions this issue only

briefly in the Introduction, in connection with her discussion of slave and neo-slave narratives, she devotes more attention to the intersection of gender and race issues in chapter four.

It must be stressed, however, that the critic thoroughly examines connections between identity, property and liberty in the third chapter of her book, 'A 'Sense of Property': Elizabeth Stoddard's *The Morgesons*.' Unlike Linda Brent, Cassandra Morgeson, the protagonist of the novel, becomes the owner of a secluded family house in Surrey, New England. In view of property's important role in the formation of American identity, this house, which she constantly leaves and returns to, constitutes, as the critic stresses, a governing chronotope in the novel. Holmgren Troy points out that the novel thus illustrates Bakhtin's view that the chronotope to a great degree determines the image of an individual in literature. She examines Cassandra's 'journey from childhood to maturity and marriage' as presented 'in the form of a New England domestic picaresque' (Holmgren Troy 94). Cassandra's movement between different house chronotopes parallels the rapid changes in the United States: 'despite the regional setting of *The Morgesons*, the house chronotopes in Stoddard's novel provide a sense of national as well as individual transformation' (Holmgren Troy 95). Hence, Holmgren Troy emphasizes, the houses and towns in the novel can be interpreted as a 'literary representation of, if not the whole, at least the northern parts of the United States just before the mid-nineteenth century' (147).

However, the critic argues, it is her family house that embodies the tension that finally shapes Cassandra's identity. Holmgren Troy defines it as the tension between Romantic individuality and mid-nineteenth-century American models of womanhood. Moreover, the critic shows how in repudiating Puritan piety and dismissing the Victorian ideal of purity by becoming a sexual agent aware of her own desires, Cassandra questions both True and Ideal American womanhood. She is an independent subject who marries a man of her choice – her soul-mate – and whose ownership of the house lends authority to her writing. Nevertheless, Holmgren Troy points out that the house chronotope is relatively unstable because it is permeated by changing economic, historical and existential circumstances. Also, Cassandra is only partly independent because she still lives on her father's money.

At this point some general properties of the house chronotopes in the four novels discussed by Holmgren Troy would be worth considering. Perhaps for fear of 'monologizing' Bakhtinian heteroglossia by making 'totalizing' interpretations the author shuns generalizations. After all, the critic's thorough and conscientious examination of the house chronotope's centrality in Jacobs's and Stoddard's novels, as well as in the novels analyzed in chapters four and five, calls for some general conclusions. One such conclusion concerns the preponderance of the spatial component in the principal chronotopes in the nineteenth-century novels discussed – though different temporalities inherent in these chronotopes are significant too – whereas in the twentieth-century house chronotopes it is the time component that seems to be foregrounded. Moreover, the domination of a particular component of the chronotope typifies its sta-

bility or lack thereof. It comes as no surprise that the 'temporally' oriented twentieth-century house chronotopes are fragile, permeable and unstable in comparison with the 'spatially' oriented nineteenth-century ones. This also coincides, it seems, with the narrators' responses to modernism in America. The nineteenth-century house chronotopes serve as sites for the negotiation of modernist values, whereas the twentieth-century house chronotopes embody a female re-writing of a mostly male, traditional critique of the modernization of America. Butler's novel could be interpreted as a response to what Lewis P. Simpson calls 'the idea of the plantation as a homeland of the life of the mind' (23), whereas Robinson's novel presents a rebellion in the spirit of Thoreau – and other American Transcendentalists – against the 1950s de-spiritualized model of domesticity; a model that the critic comments on in chapter one.

What is also notable is the fact that in lending themselves to transformations, the nineteenth-century chronotopes seem to reach out into the future, whereas the twentieth-century chronotopes appear to hark back nostalgically to the nineteenth century. In this context it is appropriate to observe that 'nostalgia' was originally a medical designation for homesickness. Indeed, in its 'sickness' – shatteredness and uprootedness – the twentieth century seems to long for the home that can be found in the nineteenth-century ideal of domesticity, an ideal that appeared to guarantee clearly determined gender, class, and racial hierarchy, roles, and duties, as well as the separation of the public and private spheres. On the other hand, nineteenth-century American traumas are echoed in the twentieth century, making the house chronotope in twentieth-century prose uncanny – that is, *unheimlich*, or un-homely – and confirming thereby Holmgren Troy's observation concerning its fragility and instability.

Such an unstable chronotope, which 'works as a time machine that transports [Dana, the black protagonist-narrator of *Kindred*] into an acutely racialized familial and national past that still influences the present in the United States' (Holmgren Troy 162), is examined in the fourth chapter, 'Housebound Time Travel: Octavia Butler's *Kindred*.' The critic examines a hybrid genre of the novel that welds together science fiction and neo-slave narrative. She cogently argues that 'what triggers [Dana's] time travels is the presence of the interracial married couple, Dana and Kevin, in the house' (Holmgren Troy 162). Inexplicably transported, sometimes on her own and sometimes with her husband, into nineteenth-century Maryland, to the plantation of a slave-holder (who, she discovers, must have been her ancestor), black Dana becomes intimately acquainted with the plight of black slaves in the early nineteenth-century. Her travels in time forge an indissoluble bond between the chronotope of the Californian suburban house and that of the Weylin mansion and plantation. During one nineteenth-century episode, Dana reacts startlingly on seeing Weylin's, a cruel slave-holder's, mansion. She calls it home. Kevin entertains similar feelings. Holmgren Troy explains this by pointing to the traces of the idyllic chronotope in Weylin's house, and invokes Bakhtin's definition and typology of idyllic chronotopes (Bakhtin 224-236) in order to classify 'parts of *Kindred* as a kind of (twisted) combination of the family and agricultural idyll' (164). However, rather than being a family and agricultural pastoral chronotope, Weylin's house seems to be more an ironic reflection on

the Southern ideal, discussed by Lewis P. Simpson, of the plantation as 'a pastoral social order, in which the chattel is the gardener' and which 'is a homeland of the life of the mind' (23), with the owner who is 'a singular figure in American and, you might say, in Western literature: the patriarch-philosophe – the slave master and man of letters – of the Southern plantation world' (24). After all, Weylin is hardly literate and the library in the house had always been the domain of Hannah, his first, educated, wife. Thus, by placing a female in the center of the plantation as the literary, cultivated mind, and showing that she is replaced by an illiterate upstart, Butler ironically emphasizes the unlikelihood of putting into effect either the Southern project of a pastoral plantation without racial discrimination, or equality and liberty of women. By the same token the writer points to the affinity of racial and gender discrimination, which Holmgren Troy discusses at length in the chapter. Like Jacobs, Butler strips naked the 'double-voicedness' of the Southern culture.

What is striking in Holmgren Troy's discussion of *Kindred* is the omission of Dana's comparison of slavery to concentration camps, a comparison that seems to contribute to the critique of American modernism: Dana's own, direct, unmediated experience of the treatment of the slave's body by slave-holders makes her compare the slaves' physical suffering to that of concentration camp inmates, about which she reads in Kevin's books: 'Stories of beatings, starvation, filth, disease, torture, every possible degradation. As though the Germans had been trying to do in only a few years what the Americans had worked at for nearly two hundred' (Butler 117). Giorgio Agamben comments on the connection between modernity and the concentration camp, and rather than regarding the camp as an anomaly belonging to the past, he sees it as 'the hidden matrix and nomos of the political space in which we are still living' (166). He argues that the camp's inhabitants were transformed into the 'bare life' (Agamben 171) and regards the camp as a 'Biopolitical Paradigm of the Modern' (Agamben 117, 119-143). He notes the connection between absolute power over the human body and the deprivation of rights. Agamben's conclusions seem to coincide with Dana's observations. Thus, instead of being interpreted only as a proof of the twentieth-century house chronotope's permeability and instability, the inexplicable severing of Dana's arm can be seen as a reminder of the physical concreteness of the tortured slave flesh, embodying the still-felt grip of Southern tradition on the black body – the bare life.

The fifth chapter, conversely, explores the mental housekeeping of an immaterial family house reconstructed in the memory of the protagonist-narrator of *House-keeping*, who in the 1950s abandons her inherited, material house in a small town in the West. Holmgren Troy convincingly argues that the house chronotope in the novel is constituted by a palimpsest of spatio-temporal relations determined by the succession of house owners. This palimpsest contributes to the fashioning of what Holmgren Troy designates a transient 'I,' an identity which refuses to be defined materially or socially and ends up as a 'plural absence' (201). It should be stressed that such a construction of female identity stands in sharp contrast with the image of woman central to the 1950s American ideal of standardized suburban domesticity, and is a

female re-writing of the American celebration of individuality, which can be traced back to Puritan and Transcendentalist tradition.

Maria Holmgren Troy's study thoroughly examines how the issues of race, gender, and nationality interact in the particular spatio-temporal context of the house chronotope. The critic convincingly demonstrates the relative stability of this chronotope in the American literary tradition. However, she also demonstrates how the values and ideology it carries are negotiated by female protagonist-narrators in the nineteenth century and to what extent they are contested by twentieth-century narrators. Last but not least, in discussing the dialogicity of the house chronotope Holmgren Troy's study itself becomes a site where different discourses, readings, and disciplines meet, making *In the First Person and in the House* a fascinating text in its own right.

### Works cited

- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Dialogic Imagination*. Ed. by Michael Holquist. Trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Bernard-Donals, Michael F. *Mikhail Bakhtin: Between Phenomenology and Marxism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Butler, Octavia E. *Kindred*. Boston: Beacon Press, (1979) 1988.
- Davie, Sharon. "Reader, My story Ends with Freedom": Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, ' in *Famous Last Words: Changes in Gender and Narrative Closure*. Ed. By Alison Booth. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993.
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Holmgren Troy, Maria. In *In the First Person and in the House: The House Chronotope in Four Works by American Woman Writers*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1999.
- Howard, Jacqueline. *Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Simpson, Lewis P. *The Dispossessed Garden: Pastoral and History in Southern Literature*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983.
- Vice, Sue. *Introducing Bakhtin*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997.

Zofia Kolbuszewska

Catholic University of Lublin, Poland

Russell Duncan and David J. Klooster (eds), *Phantoms of a Blood-Stained Period: the Complete Civil War Writings of Ambrose Bierce*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002. xiv + 352 pp.; ISBN: 1-55849-328-X; \$19.00, paper.

Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914?) was the only major American author to have seen significant military duty in the Civil War. Some lesser writers, such as John W. De Forest, also saw action, but their standing in American literature is far lower than Bierce's. What is more, Bierce not only wrote some of the most chilling short stories about the conflict – most of them collected in *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians* (1891), later expanded as *In the Midst of Life* – but also several bracing memoirs of his own