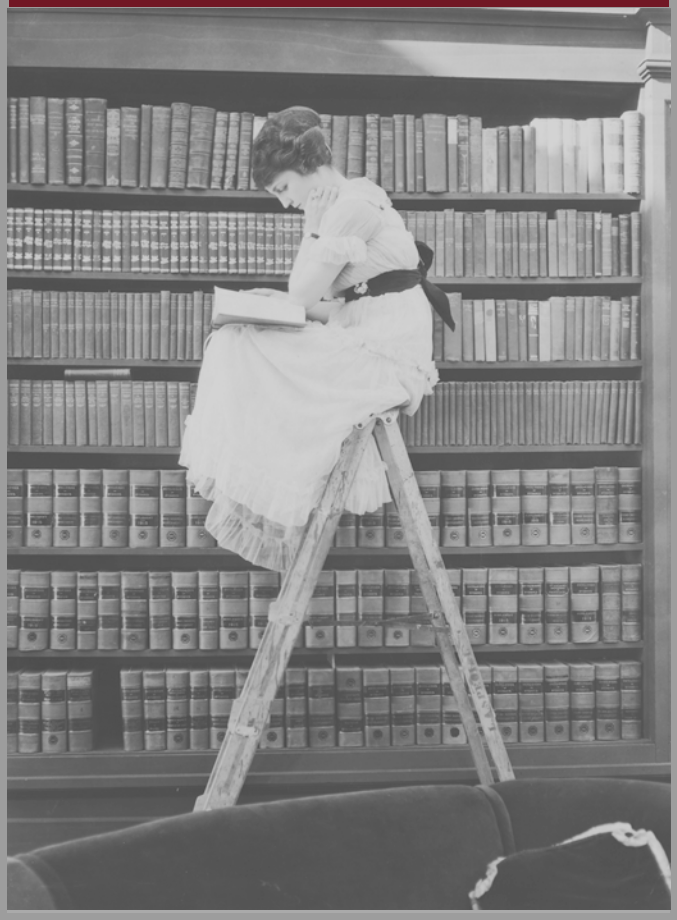
Armin Paul Frank

Off-Canon Pleasures

A Case Study and a Perspective



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Preface

> . . . remember the conversations at the
> literary parties at which he and I had occasionally met.
> Here people talked about few books, but the books they
> talked about were the same: it was like the Middle Ages.
> Randall Jarrell

This is, admittedly, a paradoxical book. It's meant to be. It is a book of criticism written against an excess of criticism and theory. For I hope to persuade readers to take theory and criticism in small doses and to concentrate on the reading of literary works. I want to recommend in particular books which are out of favor with contemporary theorists, critics, and scholars but are, in my reading experience, at least as great a joy to read as many a canonical one.

In the debate over the literary canon in recent decades, the term has sometimes been used as a synonym for corpus, a body of texts. But since the long and controversial semantic history of the canon began when an end of cane was first cut in order to serve as a measuring rod, yardstick, or standard, there is always something regulative, something exclusionary about this concept, rightly understood. Besides, it is unnecessary to use the term in order to replace the word corpus, found as it is in every college dictionary.

At the same time, there is, of course, no doubt that canons and corpora correspond. Canons are instruments to define corpora and, in turn, are supported by them. I submit that different canons can be clarified by examining the ways in which pertinent corpora are interrelated. I offer a brief distinction of canons along these lines in Appendix I.

At this point, I only want to suggest that it makes sense to complement if not to replace the term canon by the term visibility. A work becomes visible when it is included in a literary survey which one is likely to consult if one wants to learn what is pertinent or important in a country's literature. Surveys of this kind are comprehensive anthologies, extensive literary histories, and encyclopedias of literature. Visibility offers a lighter touch than canon. It does not lend itself so easily to lordly gestures.

It is, of course, true that the idea of visibility originated in response to the debate over the canon, both recent and not so recent. But whereas proponents of a literary canon tend to have their minds set on the selection for which they claim canonical status, I take an interest in the works that were eclipsed by canonization or that have always been in eclipse. For a few hundred literary works selected for canonical purposes, there are, after all, in any substantial literature tens of thousands that have constantly been neglected and a few dozen that had once been canonized but were later rejected. It would be arrogant to claim or imply, without reading them anew, that all of them are worthless.

Literary worth, as I see it, is not necessarily aesthetic impeccability. It surely is not tantamount to moral probity, social concern, or political correctness. I expect a high degree of artistic achievement with elbowroom for historical importance; but a document even of historical eminence though lacking in imaginative scope and intensity of style would not do. The best historical – religious, cultural, social, political – background does not, in itself, make an achieved literary work.

The monograph study at hand presents a perspective on these matters and a supportive case study (*Problemaufriss*). For this purpose, I tried to find two near-contemporaneous works, a neglected one which never really achieved visibility and one that went into eclipse during the reshuffling of the canon in the last quarter of the twentieth century. They are quite different but turned out to be connected in unexpected ways.

I eventually settled on Leo Rosten's *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* (1937), published under the pseudonym Leonard Q. Ross, and Archibald MacLeish's *Air Raid* (1938). The first is much more and much better than the baggy-pants comedy it has been made out to be. It is a modest masterpiece of Jewish-American, Yiddish-English humor in the historical context of the selective policy which governed U.S. immigration between about 1880 and 1920. Set in a night-school for adults where newcomers from different countries struggle with the rudiments of English and Civics, Rosten celebrated a kind of antihero, whose English is abysmal but gloriously inventive, who is intelligent and competent much beyond the level to which he is held down by his limited command of the American language, who eventually shows a modest improvement of his language competence, who occasionally bests his instructor in linguistic matters, and who rises to a benign, to a humane attitude that transcends the pressures and vicissitudes of the classroom situation.

Air Raid is an even rarer bird, a unit radio play somewhat in the style of Irving Reis's Workshop of the Columbia Broadcasting System. It is a play in which the author took an imaginative stand *vis-à-vis* the military crises in inter-war Europe and, in particular, those of the middle and later 1930s. The tension – not the suspense – governing this play originates in the belief held by the womenfolk of an unidentified small country town somewhere in Europe that the war that is about to erupt will, like all the ones before, by-pass them and leave them unscathed. This conviction is set against the knowledge shared by the male characters that military

strategy is changing, and a new terror is looming: all out air war. Overleaping the frontiers and front lines, the air force is, by that time, in a position to carry out massive strikes at civilians in order to break a nation's morale. This is a totally new war aim. The play ends on a true note of tragedy when the women, in their mistaken belief that the enemy planes will not attack when the pilots recognize women on the ground, rush out into death and mutilation when the planes swerve to bomb and strafe.

The two works are linked by the idea of internationality. The international theme of *Air Raid* is self-evident. A part of the internationality of the Hyman Kaplan matter was pinpointed when Rosten observed that the classroom at the night-school for immigrants has always reflected the geography of the current international crises. In fact, the clashes, however mitigated, between members of the different national groups over English, Civics, mores, and, on a late occasion, Mussolini, suggest that there is indeed such a thing as an internal internationality in a country of immigrants such as the United States.

In a study of visible works, one can usually rely on a reader's familiarity with them at least in broad terms. When works in eclipse are the subject, it is, I believe, not only appropriate but necessary to present them in greater detail. Of course, if one expatiates too much, a reader may get bored and close the book; if, on the other hand, one offers too little substance, the result may be the same. If I erred, I did so on the side of greater explicitness.

As every student of American literature will expect, the works are discussed in their proper contexts, religious, cultural, political, poetological, etc., whatever may apply. By context, I do not mean the givens of a place and a time in general but those historical elements with which a particular work is tied in – historical elements that originate in various places and times and are incorporated into the structure of the work in question and hence, in a pregnant German pun, *aufgehoben*: They are canceled as history but preserved in and as literature. Such text-context connections can, as a rule, be identified briefly and to the point. The case of *Air Raid* is somewhat more complicated. Insofar as this radio play responds not only to Picasso's collage-painting *Guernica* but also to the saturation bombing of the Basque country town of the same name during the Spanish Civil War, I feel that a more comprehensive approach is not only appropriate but necessary. For this particular air raid on 26 April 1937 is not only the best known and most widely discussed incident of the war between the Popular Front Republic and the Franquist Insurgents; it has remained controversial to the present day. For these reasons, I think it is apposite to offer not only a careful analysis of the major documents which MacLeish is likely to have known but also of later studies which, though they cannot have gone into the writing of the play, will help to see this historical air raid in perspective. Since the circumstances make it inadvisable to take shortcuts, I make room for a detailed discussion in Appendix II.

It is, I believe, evident that I have not lived my life in the United States of America, although I look back on a number of enjoyable and enlightening years there of study, research, travel, and, occasionally, teaching. Even so, I cannot rely on what may be self-evident to an American but must needs quote chapter and verse, which may not always appear appropriate and pertinent to a person of lived and living American experience. But there may also be an advantage to the semi-foreign – better, perhaps, four-fifths foreign – perspective I bring to my subject. The need to be more attentive and circumspect in my way with texts and contexts offers the chance to observe details which may escape a reader who has home-country habits and customs in gear when reading. This difference has made it seem appropriate not to hesitate registering my presence in the text.

There is a short note on style on which I should like to end. Historical events are being discussed in the past tense. The discussion of literary works, which are, potentially, ever-present and, in actuality, present until the last copy has been destroyed, is couched in the present tense. For lexicon and spelling, I attend to the tenth edition of *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. There is, as a rule, a tendency to reflect historical or regional usage in my own text. If, for instance, my focus is on the 1930s and I refer to the war of 1914 to 1918, I do not speak of the First World War because nobody could really know that there was going to be a Second; I employ the period term, the "Great War." Words in quotation marks refer to a particular context, in this case to the 1930s, but normally to a more specific one. Words in italics indicate an important concept under discussion. The use of italics and quotation marks to identify titles follows received practice. General references are relegated to the back of the book, often in cumulated form; references to a work consistently under discussion in a given section are in-text. There are hardly any Notes because what is important should, in principle, go into the main text and not under it. The Literature Consulted Section does not only incorporate the Reference Section but, as a rule, also includes literature mentioned in passing in the main text.

Göttingen, May 2011 Armin Paul Frank

Contents

1 Introduction

In these pages, I plan to explore how, at a given moment in time, the visibility which literary works have in U.S. writing for the most part in English relates to internationality. My focus is on internationality both in the obvious sense of addressing an issue in foreign affairs, broadly understood, and in the not so usual sense of representing aspects of the internal diversity of a country, particularly of an immigrant country such as the United States of America; for if comers from many nations bring their own language, folkways, outlook, literature, etc., there arises something like an intra-American internationality in action, as long as assimilation has not whittled away the differences.

If *internal internationality* is a modest neologism, so is, I submit, my use of *visibility*. A literary work is visible in this sense when it has a place – preferably a prominent one – in a literary history or other comprehensive compendium of a country's literature which serious students consult in order to obtain a survey of their chosen field. I have in mind something simpler than *canonicity*, this overworked warhorse of a quarter-century of skirmishing, both critical and uncritical, which I avoid also because its root word posits something strict and binding: a rule, standard, norm, or, indeed, a dogma. The idea of *canon* presupposes an authority that aims at perpetuating both the norm and itself; visibility, by comparison, connotes a measure of prominence which a work may have in one compendium but need not in the next.

My test case embraces two works of the late 1930s. Leo Rosten's *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*, originally serialized in the *New Yorker* and published in book form in 1937, pokes good-natured fun at the serious efforts, on the part of recent and not so recent immigrants from several countries and primarily of Jewish extraction, to prepare for naturalization. Its visibility has always been quite low. The work focusing on problems abroad is *Air Raid* (1938), the second of Archibald MacLeish's early radio plays. While the author dramatized defeatism in *The Fall of the City* (1937), he now brought home to a nationwide audience the threat to world peace posed by the powers behind the Spanish Civil War of 1936 to 1939. Indeed, the *Anschluss*, the take-over of Austria by Hitler Germany in March 1938, and the *Sudeten* crisis, which came to a head in September of the same year, make *Air Raid* a particularly timely piece of work. The limited visibility which MacLeish, deemed a second-order writer, had in the third quarter of the twentieth century has since

gone into virtual eclipse. The high radio quality, particularly of *Air Raid*, has hardly ever been appreciated.

1 Internationality, external and internal

It is always a pleasure to find one's own critical perspective confirmed in the literature on a given subject but not acted upon. In one of the few readings of Rosten's *Education of Hyman Kaplan*, D. S. Shiffman addressed conflicts between cultural insiders and outsiders: "In the 1930s, these tensions became particularly acute as more ethnic Americans gained a stronger presence in public life and as the nation sought unity in the face of rising fascism abroad."[1] A strikingly similar point had been made earlier by Rosten himself in *O Kaplan! My Kaplan!* (1976), the final but overwrought compilation of the Hyman Kaplan matter: "Mr. Parkhill always bore in mind that many of his students entered the portals of the A.N.P.S.A [American Night Preparatory School for Adults] because of the world's political upheavals: a revolution in Greece, a drought in Italy, a crisis in Germany or Cuba, a pogrom in Poland or a purge in Prague – each convulsion of power on the tormented globe was reflected, however minutely, in the school's enrollment or departures."[2] The link made between external and internal internationality is, indeed, striking.

Rosten recorded a situation in which people who were expelled from their own country or who felt that they had no choice but to seek refuge abroad meet in a plurinational classroom in the United States in a common effort to learn the language and the civic values of their adopted land. Shiffman's emphasis is more conflictive. He suggested that, at the time, an increasing non-English-speaking immigration might tear at the seams of life in America, perhaps even counteract the political effort to unify the nation in the face of an increasing threat from abroad. My own focus is on writing strategies that both respond and contribute either to U.S. international affairs or to the "internal internationality" that characterizes much of U.S. domestic life. A first step towards defining this concept consists in examining the two points where I differ from Shiffman, the second in briefly elucidating distinctions involved in the concept of internationality itself.

A designation such as "ethnic Americans" tends to stigmatize non-English speaking immigrants as "dialect speakers" and as "provincial." It is a language-based "Anglo" perspective. In Shiffman's study, as in most other writings on ethnicity by Rosten and others, the three terms, ethnic, provincial, and dialectal, are near-synonymous.[3] But since dialects are either regional or social variants of a given language or both, the blends of immigrant languages with American English that are often spoken by first-generation immigrants, such as "Yinglish" or "Germerican," are not dialects but contact languages or creole developments of contact languages, regardless of their regional or social implications.[4] Furthermore, the overtone of "provincial" is that of a cultural backwater. There is indeed a rich tradition of literature set in the boondocks and written in varieties of American English.

The main problem with a terminology such as Shiffman's is that it stacks the cards against American speakers of languages other than English and foregrounds a social and cultural valuation that, though still widely assumed, does not really characterize Kaplan's world. For he and his classmates did not acquire English in order to slough off their ethnicity but because they needed language competence and a modest familiarity with American norms, values, and customs in order to pass the citizenship test. Others, like the real-life Leo Rosten, went on, I believe, in order to have a fuller share in the life of their adopted country, and especially in the life of the mind.

Another terminological stacking of cards occurs in the point about rising "fascism." Like other political terms, *fascism* has been used in several, sometimes glaringly contradictory senses.[5] The Roman lictors' *fasces* played a part in the French Revolution and were later adopted as a symbol of unity by Italian socialist and anarchist circles. In 1919, "fasci di combattimento" were founded by Mussolini as representatives of the "left wing of national democracy" (no printing error).[6] The rapid transformation into a form of totalitarianism was a development of the early 1920s. The rise to power of National Socialism in Germany in the early 1930s led to Mussolini's grandiose claim that his kind of fascism was on the point of conquering the world. Hitler and other leading National Socialists adopted a vacillating attitude towards Italian fascism, though they admired the political strongman south of the Alps. A completely different meaning, i.e. the unambiguous subsumption of most non-communist countries under fascism, was invented in Stalin's Moscow and promulgated by its international arm, the *Comintern*. The canonical Communist definition of 1933 reads: "Fascism is the undisguised terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinist, and imperialist elements of finance capitalism."[7] In discussing the American 1930s, writers will want to make sure whether they agree with orthodox Communist ideology or not. In the controversies of the times, MacLeish had reasons to devise a definition of his own.[8]

For the sake of historical precision, I prefer to give these terms national scope: Fascism in Italy, National Socialism in Germany, and Spanish Falangism, which is not quite the same as Franquism but should do. Totalitarianisms all, they have much in common and something to distinguish them; and they share traits with Leninism-Stalinism.

Internationality, whether external or internal, does not necessarily presuppose the involvement of a large number of nations or of a large number of nationals. Two nations will do as long as internationality is understood as providing a theater for actions at dividing lines, be they boundaries, borders, or barriers. And since there are such things as barriers of the mind, an inter-situation may occur whenever two people meet, particularly if they are loyal adherents of rival groups or institutions. A few topical distinctions short of a theory of dividing lines will help to characterize the inter-situations involved in the works selected here for study.

It is helpful to distinguish lingual, ideational, institutional, and territorial dividing lines, to ascertain whether, in a given situation, they are permeable, semi-

permeable, or impermeable, and to determine in what way they are perspectival, how they look different from either side. Dividing lines often exclude but about as often serve as challenges to attempt a crossing. Much depends on what is on the other side or, perhaps more often, what is believed to be there.

High on the scale of exclusion are *language barriers*, which are also typical barriers in the mind. Immigrants who speak nothing but a language that is totally unrelated to the English of the United States are, when unassisted, completely excluded not only from intellectual life but also from many common pursuits. Such a Chinatown mentality tends to form narrowly circumscribed territorial enclaves in English-based U.S. society and culture, enclaves which are, at the same time, exclaves of their culture of origin abroad. Differences between closely related languages do not bar lingual communication completely. Language boundaries of this sort permit partial recognition and make learning easier. But they often spring the trap called "false friend."

Language boundaries are perspectival. They look different from either side. In one of his verse anecdotes, looking at U.S. America from a Germerican point of view, Kurt M. Stein described, in 1925, an encounter between an "old settler" and a greenhorn hailing from a German-speaking country.[9] The newcomer's English question displays German phonological, lexical, and syntactical interferences as well as a word in British English: "Par-dong, Sir, holds ze tramway here?" The German-American does not understand. But when he claims that he speaks fluent German, his interlocutor rephrases his question in impeccable colloquial German: "Wo hält denn hier die Strassenbahn?" Now the local has an opportunity to hold forth:

> "Ah, wo die street-car stoppeh tut!"
> Sag ich, "das willst du wisse'!
> Well, schneidt hier crast the empty Lots,
> Der Weg is hart zu misseh' [!],
> Und dort, wo du das Brick House siehst,
> Da turnst du and läufst zwei Block East."[10]

The point of the anecdote is the speaker's firm belief that he is the only one to preserve the purity and beauty of German, the *schönste Lengevitch*. His grammar and syntax are indeed heavily German, the lexicon at least as heavily American-English. The joke is on *us*, the German-Americans.

By the evidence of Dave Morrah's *Fraulein Bo-Peepen and More Tales Mein Grossfader Told* (1953), the perception of German and Germerican, on the part of speakers of English, produces an entirely different impression. The stories in prose and verse are in a language *mein Grossfader* never spoke: a blend of English with a baffled English speaker's perception of the mysterious ways Germans have with prefixes, suffixes, gender, and word order. In this respect, the language invented by Morrah, unlike Stein's Germerican, is not based on a language spoken in the United States or anywhere else. Rather, it reflects the impression which speakers of American English have of one of the enclave languages when they begin to study it.

The text thus travestied is a Mother Goose rhyme *mein Grossfader* certainly never told because it has not entered German lore. The Mother Goose "Jack and Jill," brought along or imported from Britain, circulates among Anglo-Americans, as does Mother Goose's "Little Bo-Peep [who] has lost her sheep," whose boy-wise and inflected older sister was also invented by Morrah, *Fraulein Bo-Peepen* who "ben losen der sheepen."[11] The joke, aimed across the language line, is on *them*, the German-Americans:

> Jack and Jill upwent das hill
> Ein pailer mit water upfillen.
> Jack ben trippen and ober-geflippen
> Und Jill der water ben spillen.
>
> Der reasoner Jack ben getrippen iss simplisch –
> Jack ben attempten ein kisser onputten.
> Jill ben ein cutischer fraulein und dimplisch,
> Und Jill ben upsetten das Jack mit der footen.[12]

Verses such as Stein's and Morrah's require readers who straddle two languages. Other readers are excluded to the extent that the texts are language games. But since they are also literary works, however modest, they have an assured share on the ideational level, where exclusion is less absolute than at the level of language. It is only when readers are unaware of or disregard the traditions which a writer has made use of that they will be excluded from the complete enjoyment of a literary work.

Among the *institutional dividing lines*, money is completely exclusionary. Bills carried from one country to the next become worthless printed paper unless facilities for exchange are in place or the foreign currency serves as an international underground currency. Legal systems are also mutually exclusive, though a common tradition such as Roman Law may make similarities recognizable at the ideational level. To the extent that home country institutions have become part of an immigrant's mind set, they tend to cause serious problems for acculturation.

Institutional dividing lines normally coincide with *territorial borders*, lingual dividing lines do so only on rare occasions, as in MacLeish's *Air Raid*, where the rules of old-style war and, perhaps, a sense of common humanity make a friendly meeting this side of verbal communication possible between occupying soldiers and citizens of the occupied country. *Intra-national dividing lines* are characteristic not only of immigration countries but also of long-established empires that have, in their long history, accumulated much territory occupied by members of different nations. A pertinent historical example is the *Österreichisch-Ungarische Doppelmonarchie*, the Austrian-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, a. k. a. "Hapsburg" Empire, that was dissolved at the end of the Great War of 1914-1918. Many of the "new immigrants" who populate Hyman Kaplan's world hail from those parts.

It is against this cautionary background that I should like to make my case for Rosten and MacLeish.

2 Leo Rosten and Archibald Macleish

Leo Calvin Rosten (1908-97), who came to the United States as an infant in 1911 when his Jewish family emigrated from Poland, made literary, scholarly, and political contributions to his new country. His first two books, both published in 1937, are characteristic of this spread. His Chicago Ph. D. dissertation, *The Washington Correspondents*, was an innovative study of the Washington press corps, linking sociopolitical and communications perspectives. And a series of immensely popular stories and sketches, most of them hilariously funny, which had previously appeared pseudonymously in the *New Yorker*, were now published under the title, *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*, and, again, the pseudonym Leonard Q. Ross. The subject-matter is the schooling in English and Civics received by recent immigrants from various nations in preparation for their naturalization.[13] The book and its two sequels (1959, 1976) thus focus on a characteristic phase of the experience of a large number of non-English-speaking immigrants. As a prototypical nation of immigrants from many nations, the people of the United States had their intercultural work cut out for themselves. Having brought along mentalities of their own, languages, religions, cultures, and often literatures, and frequently living in areas set apart, whether ghetto, select suburban residence, or agricultural zone, they needed to learn the common Anglo-American language, the privileges and duties of citizenship developed on principles based on British and French ideas, mostly, and the ways of life that they found around them. I propose to read the Hyman Kaplan matter as a comedy whose generating principle is the clash between the different capabilities of recent immigrants – the education and habits which each has brought along – and the corresponding requirements of the predominant culture, in which they need to, and most of them want to, obtain at least a modicum of education so that they can participate more fully in the life of their adopted country. As a comedy, it treats this clash and the corresponding transformations benignly without, however, turning a blind eye to the tensions that arise.

Archibald MacLeish's first two radio plays address foreign-relations problems in radio terms. The best way of approaching the external internationality in question is, I submit, to remember Woodrow Wilson's address to the U.S. Congress of 2 April 1917 asking for war not on the German people but on its imperial government, in an effort to make the world safe for democracy.[14]

As a poet, MacLeish (1892-1982) – also the son of an immigrant but from Scotland, born in Chicago, Yale graduate, and with a Harvard law degree – had first come under the influence of, and contributed to, High Modernism, writing intensely introspective verse. But in response to the two preeminent threats of the 1930s, the world economic crisis consequent to the Wall Street crash of 1929 and, helped by the Great Depression, the rise to power of various totalitarian movements in Europe, he struck out in a different direction. Like many, he perceived the Spanish Civil War as a trial run of the combined Falangist, Fascist, and National Socialist movements in their campaign to overthrow elected governments

everywhere. What went, for the most part, unrecognized or, if recognized, was not always taken seriously enough is the part played by the Soviet Union and the Comintern in the concerted action to transform the Spanish People's Front government into a totalitarian regime patterned on the Soviet system, as was, and continued to be, Soviet practice in many European countries since the early 1920s.[15] The disillusionment caused by the Berlin-Moscow Pact came later, in 1939. As a poet and verse dramatist, MacLeish responded to these crises by embracing the idea of a kind of public poetry that takes a stand without lapsing into journalistic or propaganda modes. Radio was the immediate medium of the time, and the most public. It therefore makes excellent sense to read *Air Raid* as a distinct poetic response to the war threat originating in Europe at the time.

3 The critical standing of Rosten and MacLeish

The two authors are complementary not only in addressing internationality but, to an extent, also in their critical standing. Rosten's literary efforts have, if noticed at all in academic criticism, often been denigrated as pieces of commercial sentimentality. Rosten has never been anywhere near getting canonized. MacLeish, in turn, has long had the assured standing of a second-order writer but has since been marginalized in recent literary histories or been excluded altogether.

3.1 Rosten's perceived sentimentality and commercialism. The Education of Hyman Kaplan and its sequels were well received. Each graced the best-seller lists for several months, and the reviews in the periodical press were, on the whole, positive. But scholarly responses have been marginal at best. I have come across but two handfuls of short pieces. In my reading, only two of them, L. S. Dembo's "Carnivalizing the Logos" (1988) and D. S. Shiffman's "Comedy of Assimilation" (2000), address matters that are essential to the work they studied. [16]

The success and popularity Rosten had enjoyed were apparently taken against him, most of the time, in recent literary historiography. He merited sixteen friendly words but no bio-bibliographical entry in the American literature volume of B. Ford's *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature* (1988), whereas MacLeish received such an entry but no mention in the text. Rosten also made it into E. Elliott's *Columbia History of the American Novel* (1991) but by default. The *Education*, we read, "reduced problems of acculturation to the low comedy of the dialect tradition"; it belongs to a "commercialized" kind of literature which "pandered to the sentimentality and self-satisfaction of their readers" but nevertheless got one point right: "Although Hyman was a baggy-pants comic, he had a better feel for living language than the smug WASP teacher who narrated the novel."[17] It is a sign of the attention with which the critic read Rosten's book that he misremembered the night school teacher as the narrator. Nor is the teacher necessarily WASP – or if WASP, then one who invests much sympathy and thoughtfulness in preparing his non-English pupils for naturalization – and, therefore, indeed, *not* WASP.

The very brief mention in volume 6, *Prose Writing, 1910-1950*, of S. Bercovitch's comprehensive *Cambridge History of American Literature* (2002) follows the pattern set by the *Columbia History*. Rosten entered as the "ethnic writer [. . .] of Hyman Kaplan fame" who provided the "story" for the movie *The Dark Corner* – which is true but culturally much less important than his invention of the matter of Hyman Kaplan. And he was soon ushered out some ten pages later as the negative part in a comparison with Philip Roth: Roth does not, like Rosten, "put the reader in the comfortable position of the standard-English speaker who finds amusement in the fully humorous dialect of the kind that Leo Rosten [. . .] created with great public resonance."[18] By a similar logic, Henry Kissinger and Madeline Albright would have been something like ethnic Secretaries of State.

Two encyclopedias of American literature carry brief entries on Rosten. The one in J. D. Hart's *Oxford Companion* ([5]1983) describes *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* as containing "humorous sketches of a New York evening school for adults and its immigrant students' unorthodox approach to the English language"; the one in G. Perkins' *Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature* (1991) is, on the whole, less detailed but refers to a separate entry for the *Education* with a slightly estranged perspective. Perkins omits any reference to the comprehensive bicentennial edition, *O Kaplan! My Kaplan!*

3.2 The near-complete eclipse of MacLeish. The critical light that has fallen on MacLeish is also considerably stronger in general than in scholarly terms but not quite as one-sided. He is the recipient of a number of coveted literary prizes. The most important ones lead off with the 1933 Pulitzer Prize for poetry for *Conquistador*.[19] His *Collected Poems, 1917-1952*, earned him his second Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1953 as well as the National Book Award for that year; there was, in addition, the more general recognition of the Bollingen Prize in Poetry. In 1959, he was almost as successful, with *J.B.* earning him the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Tony Award for Best Play. Finally, in 1966, he received the Academy Award for Documentary Feature for *The Eleanor Roosevelt Story*. The critical attention with which he met in the periodical press is about evenly divided among popular and academic responses. But in terms of comprehensive studies, MacLeish's work has remained the topic of unpublished doctoral dissertations. The two exceptions that have come to my notice are a book by S. L. Falk in a series designed for college students and a biography by S. Donaldson.

The assessment of Archibald MacLeish in the comprehensive literary histories of the third quarter of the twentieth century is strikingly uniform. In R. Spiller's *et al. Literary History of the United States* ([1947] [4]1974), he was perceived as a second-order poet: as "a kind of middleman of taste between the experimenters and the general public"; his poetry from 1925 to 1939 is a "chronicle of the dominant new influences in that period."[20] Likewise, in H. H. Waggoner's genre history of 1968 [[2]1984], MacLeish was labeled, somewhat abrasively, "our poetic weathercock"; and it danced to the same tune as in Spiller *et al.*: "A glance at his work in any dec-

ade will tell us which way the wind of thought and feeling and poetic fashion was blowing."[21] All literary histories written from the modernist perspective (including M. Schultze's German one[22]) noted a reorientation, in mid-career, from an introspective, private, to an extrovert, public poetry. His radio plays of the 1930s were also assessed similarly. Repeating the general characterization, the Spiller *Literary History* felt that, in *The Fall of the City*, MacLeish "caught up some of the tones and accents of the younger poets, particularly Auden"[23]; elsewhere, it was mentioned, together with *Air Raid* and, half-erroneously, *Panic*, as a 1930s approach to verse drama by way of radio."[24] The radio plays get tiny notices in the author entry in both J. D. Hart's *Oxford Companion* and G. Perkins' *Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia*.

I take these broad assessments, at their level of abstraction, as correct readings of MacLeish's career, with two clear exceptions: I agree with E. M. Sickles that, on closer inspection, the reorientation of the 1930s was not the about-face of a suddenly politicized poet to encompass a cause but the consistent development of a particular poet's art.[25] Likewise, I wish to suggest that his radio plays of the 1930s are everything but derivative. Even in an international perspective, MacLeish's particular talent and his new emphasis on public poetry made him an excellent innovator: He was one of the first to pick up poetry and radio writing as he found them in the United States and to develop aspects of the poetry that is possible in this medium as well as to transform spoken poetry into radio art.

But the literary historians of the close of the twentieth century have lost all interest in MacLeish, whether as poet, dramatist, or essayist. As in the comprehensive *Columbia Literary History* (1988), MacLeish remained a nonentity in J. Parini's *Columbia History of American Poetry* (1993), where he survived in two brief and unexplained comparisons.[26] In 1988, he had received four short mentions, in part self-contradictory, for political reasons: first, that, at the Communist-engineered second American Writers' Congress in 1937, he "linked the cause of Spain with the cause of democracy and morality."[27] He was, one should add, one of the twenty-two prominent writers to sign the invitation, and he served as chairman of the opening session.[28]

In his address, in which he made it clear that he was not a communist and spoke as an independent, he argued that the case of Spain was only a special case of anti-fascist struggle, and that the writers of the world who contend for freedom were, "whether [they] so wish or not, engaged."[29] It is equally clear that he meant this intercession as a call for international intervention in support of the Popular Front regime in the Spanish civil war. He was, perhaps, most outspoken in a verse "Speech to the Scholars," which he read, later in the year, at Columbia University's Phi Beta Kappa ceremonies.[30]

The *Columbia Literary History* also claimed that Charles Sandburg's *The People, Yes* (1936) was "a somewhat excessive tribute [. . .] to the New Dealish affirmations of Archibald MacLeish," an arch opinion that has an echo in the observation that he "was one of the white Federal Writers' Project beneficiaries."[31] Again, it seems appropriate to add that the reverse is at least as true. D. Donaldson de-

scribed MacLeish's "rave review" of Sandburg's work for the American communist *New Masses* as the celebration of its realism as a corrective to ideological partisan abstractions.[32]

The longest passage is a drubbing administered to MacLeish for his "ringing testament for intervention," *The Irresponsibles* (1940).[33] In the words of the author, D. Aaron, historian of the literary left, MacLeish's leading argument had been that writers like Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos had "done more to disarm democracy in the face of fascism than any other single influence." The greater part of the passage consists of quotations from, and summaries of, critiques of the position taken in *The Irresponsibles*: that MacLeish wanted to "turn literature into a certain Stars and Stripes" and that he had become one of the "critic-patriots" who, willingly or unwittingly, had fallen in line with "geopoliticians like Henry R. Luce, publisher of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines and unsavory prophet of America's coming economic and political hegemony." Aaron added: "Forgotten was Randolph Bourne's warning to writers to shun the dangerous embrace of the state."

I find this emphasis puzzling. For if it is true that, as Aaron also wrote in *Writers on the Left*, "between 1936 and 1939, an overwhelming majority of the American intelligentsia [. . .] regarded the Spanish war as 'a testing ground for war with fascism in general,'" the position which MacLeish took at the second Writers' Congress is not exceptional.[34] But why, then, fault him for holding on to this position in the 1940s? This was now the time when Hitler's Germany had, indeed, attacked its neighbors. Seen in this context, the argument is illogical. Maybe it is an artist's responsibility in a time of extreme crisis to support the democratic republic where he has the good fortune of spending his lifetime.

An assessment similar to Aaron's was made by R. Ruland and M. Bradbury in 1991, though both leaned more heavily on works of the modernist era. They promulgated the superficial view of MacLeish's development as a reversal, in the late 1920s, from irresponsible formalism to a poetry of "public speech" but, despite its political and social concern that reaches beyond the borders of the United States of America, classified it as "cultural nationalism."[35] In this way, they antedated the charge of his having become a "critic-patriot" by an entire decade. In their characterization of MacLeish's contribution to modernism, they came close to adopting the view of the Spiller *Literary History* that MacLeish's "Ars Poetica" (1924), culminating in the lines "A poem should not mean / But be," was an extreme document of the aestheticist poetics of modernism[36]; for they regarded the two lines rephrased as prose, "a poem should not mean but be," as a late but representative statement of "formalist doctrine."[37] Ruland and Bradbury would have profited from a little more reading before they wrote, especially in MacLeish's *Poetry and Experience*, where they might have come across the definition, "a poet's art is a *means to meaning*" and other suggestions as to how a poem means.[38] Even "Ars Poetica" does not state that a poem should not be meaningful. Being what it is, poetry does, of course, have meaning. But it is not the meaning accustomed from journal-

istic, historiographical, and other discursive writing but the one that is appropriate to the poem's mode of existence. "Ars Poetica" offers instances of poetry replacing discourse, among them, in an allusion to Ezra Pound, "For all the history of grief / An empty doorway and a maple leaf."[39] To put it in critical terms: MacLeish followed Pound (and Eliot) and, indirectly, Henry James in their insistence that art should show, not tell: should show insightful images, not unleash rhetoric. In this view, the artist's job is not to write a history of grief but, if grief is the matter, to invent images which, also evoking pertinent emotion, are equivalent to grief.

Returning to their unproductive misreading of "Ars Poetica," Ruland and Bradbury later intruded it upon a bit of information on MacLeish's 1930s views apparently gleaned from Aaron: The "American 1930s," they felt,

> was not really a time to develop the more personal art of poetry. Archibald MacLeish, defiantly insisting that 'a poem should not mean but be,' was one of many who resisted the call to commitment: 'How to conceive in the name of a column of marchers?' he asked."[40]

Even the sparse information offered by the recent references, largely hostile, makes one thing quite clear: the claim that MacLeish resisted the call to commitment is, to put it politely, contrafactual. He was one of the most articulate and persistent promoters of the cause against Franco's Spain, Hitler's Germany, and Mussolini's Italy.[41] He did not, as so many of his contemporaries did, and as the unintelligent among the intellectuals continue to do, have a soft spot if not for Stalin's Russia then for Lenin's, which was not really any better. The statement faulted by Ruland and Bradbury makes sense, though, if one understands it in its immediate co-text of the "column of marchers." This fragment is from a heavily ironic poem of MacLeish's, and therefore not easily fathomable, "Invocation to the Social Muse" (1932), to which Aaron gave a good deal of attention.[42] A gloss on this line may be taken from an article of MacLeish's on Maxim Gorky: The Russian writer "thought with 'the direct sensuous mind of the artist: the stupid, blunt, shrewd, delicately-fingering artisan mind of the artist,' and not with the lockstep logic of the committed intellectual."[43] What MacLeish rejected at this point was not commitment to a cause but the generalities of propaganda: abstractions, collectivist formulae, partisan slogans – *Schlagworte*, in the German sense of words that hit and beat.

Given the political and ideological vacillations of the recent histories of American literature, the solutions found by Hubert Zapf's *Amerikanische Literaturgeschichte* (1997) and the pertinent two volumes of the new *Cambridge History of American Literature* (volumes 5 and 8, *Poetry and Criticism, 1900-1950* and *1950-1995* [2003 and 1996]) are ingenious: MacLeish has simply ceased to exist.

4 Summary

The Education of Hyman Kaplan has never touched canonical status even with a long pole. The case of MacLeish is more complex. His early image was that of a poet of

moderate stature who faithfully reflected the changing poetical tastes in his own work. After a social and political *prise de conscience* at the turn to the 1930s, he developed his art so that it allowed him to take a stand without selling out to propaganda. His two great causes at the time were a responsible economic policy at home and an international effort to keep the European dictatorships from fomenting all-out war. For a few years, he served as a cultural representative in the Roosevelt administration. The literary histories at the close of the twentieth century either dropped him silently or rejected him explicitly for political reasons in arguments which are, on occasion, self-contradictory. Though now disregarded, his 1930s radio plays of international concern remain artistic challenges to readers who have an affinity for the issues and who have an interest in aural poetry in an electric and, later, electronic medium. Their study is, I submit, of particular interest when linked with Rosten's comedy of inner-American mental, lingual, and cultural tensions. To put it briefly and, therefore, in a simplified form: MacLeish's interventionist internationalism, though American if not as apple pie then as Woodrow Wilson's objective of making the world safe for democracy, differs from the kind of opinionated internationalism manifest in, for instance, William Carlos William's prose or the intertextual internationalism of poets such as Ezra Pound or T. S. Eliot. But I submit that Rosten and MacLeish offer art that deserves to be rescued from oblivion.

2 Leo Rosten and the Matter of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N

The exuberantly asterisked name in red crayon outlined in blue is much more than Mr. Kaplan's school signature. It also celebrates the irrepressible ego – I'm tempted to say, eagle – of an immigrant American who continues to carry on a running battle with English pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar in the "beginners' grade of the American Night Preparatory School for Adults ('English – Americanization – Civics – Preparation for Naturalization')."[1] The "multicolored characters" are, according to Rosten, "an assertion of individuality, a symbol of singularity, a proud expression of Mr. Kaplan's inner self." Even so, he has already been Americanized a good deal, having adopted a typographical equivalent of the Times Square glare of advertising for oneself. At the same time, the star-spangled layout is the implied author's signature for the entire Hyman Kaplan matter from the episodes which began to appear in *The New Yorker* in 1935 and their prompt collection in *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* (1937) through the account of a second year in the beginners' grade in *The Return of Hyman Kaplan* (1959) all the way to *O Kaplan! My Kaplan!* (1976), where the two books have been combined in an expanded and rewritten form. Appropriating Mr. Kaplan's Abraham Lincohen as seen through Valt Viterman's "O Captain! My Captain!," Rosten suggested the mock-august position to which the Eastern Jewish immigrant had risen in consequence of his schooling. But the bicentennial *summa* suffers from an overkill of language humor, as though the author had dumped every single one of his filing cards of more or less hilarious blunders into it – tongue-in-cheek mistakes which, most of the time, spring from a calculated meeting of Yiddish with English but do not bear all that much repetition.

Two contexts are particularly significant for an understanding of the matter of Hyman Kaplan. There is the socio-political history of schooling the "new immigrants" from Eastern and Southern Europe to become good citizens, and there is the theme and manner of the Eastern Jew in American humor.

1 The "new immigrants" and Americanization

In a sense, all immigrants are new when they arrive in their adopted land. Some, it is true, are newer, are "greener" than others. There is, for instance, a natural state

of preparedness, both lingual and, to an extent, cultural, when immigrants come from the country to which their new country owes the largest part of its heritage – from the United Kingdom of Great Britain to the United States of America. And one should not overlook the degree of preparedness obtained by those immigrants who spent the long weeks of travel – and especially the ocean crossing under sail – studying primers of English.

In American immigration history, the so-called "new immigration" of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a vastly increasing influx from Southern and Eastern Europe, whereas the "old" one had come from the North and the West. People hailing from Great Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia were felt to have more in common among themselves than with immigrants from Sicily and the Ukraine. This feeling was especially strong when the latter arrived by hundreds of thousands per year. The old immigration decreased from 93 percent of all comers in the 1840s and 1850s to 17,4 in the 1910s, whereas the new rose at the same time from less than one percent in the middle of the nineteenth century to 70,8 in the 1900s, with a decrease of 11,8 percentage points in the 1910s due to the Great War.[2] From 1820 to 1880, the total number of immigrants was slightly more than 10 million or almost 1,5 million per decade; in 1880 to 1920, the number jumped to almost 23,5 million or in the neighborhood of 6 million per decade, which amounts to a factor of four.[3] Since some immigrant groups were commonly thought to be incapable of assimilation, such as the Chinese, and great difficulties perceived for the assimilation of the "new immigrants" from Europe, efforts were made to exclude some and to control others by selection, not by quota. As a consequence, the four decades from 1880 to 1920 are known as the "Selective Period of qualitative controls."[4] In fact, radicalization of labor unrest toward the end of the first decade of the twentieth century due to the "increasing activity of 'new' immigrant individuals in the labor disputes and unrest which developed in the New England industrial area and elsewhere" suggested to some that "a program of inculcation and education of the immigrants" was a better plan than exclusion and repression.[5]

It is no coincidence that organizations were founded on both sides of the issue in the early 1890s. The *Immigration Restriction League* tried to bar immigration from countries whose population was felt to be undesirable. These efforts were met by attempts to "Americanize" the newcomers, first upon the initiative of individuals, then of public-service organizations, and, finally, of Federal agencies.[6] One of the most effective public-service organizations seems to have been the *Educational Alliance* in New York City, "established on the lower East Side in the 1890s to 'Americanize' the Jewish immigrants from central and eastern Europe." According to I. Howe, "it became for several decades a major source of help to the new immigrants, as well as a major source of contention between uptown and downtown Jews."[7]

The circumstances of and in the American Night Preparatory School for Adults in *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* suggest that it was not set up under the auspices of the *Educational Alliance* but rather followed the laws and guidelines

originally initiated and issued by the Theodore Roosevelt Administration in the 1900s and said to be continuing, in principle, to the present day.[8] When tracing the ideas, policies, and procedures involved, one needs to remain open to the likelihood that Rosten's imagination and his focus on the challenges which the English language poses to non-English-speaking immigrants introduced emphases and nuances of his own which he considered important in the 1930s.

According to N. Pickus, the ideas that have gone into the Federal program to Americanize immigrants are part of President Theodore Roosevelt's "New Nationalism." They combine what I would call elements of *ethnos* and *ethos*. The New Nationalism was set against parochialism – the "patriotism of the village" – and cosmopolitism – the extinction of all nationalism, as Roosevelt thought –, as well as against the narrow fanaticism of the Know-Nothing and Nativist parties of the nineteenth century[9]; it was explicitly opposed to the idea of national pluralism implied in Randolph Bourne's view that all Americans, including the immigrants from English-speaking countries, are hyphenated.[10] In terms of *ethnos*, Roosevelt argued that Americans combined the "best racial traits of the English, German, Irish and Norse" and – in this respect subscribing to the germ theory of American national character – owed their *ethos*, their national virtue of combining liberty with self-control, to "their Teutonic ancestors."[11] In this view, the core of the U.S.-American nation derived from the "old" immigration; but it was possible to absorb the "new" immigration if newcomers capable of assimilation received proper training.

As far as requirements not for immigration but for naturalization are concerned, Roosevelt developed a Federal policy intended to institutionalize a uniform formal process. In the past, he felt, immigrants and "often the native-born laborers as well" had suffered injustice because of a "policy of 'Let alone.'" But, in a high-minded formula so characteristic of U.S. political life, he asserted the need to "impress upon the immigrant and upon the native-born as well that they are expected to do justice as well as to receive justice."[12]

The policy Roosevelt sought to instigate consisted of positive and negative elements. On the positive side, assimilable immigrants were to be given the opportunity to work, to learn English, and to learn about and, perhaps, to take object lessons in, the ways of American civic life. The latter element was introduced under the term of "civic nationalism" as expounded by Herbert Croly in *The Promise of American Life* (1909).[13] On the negative side, Roosevelt stood for the "eradication of ethnic identity." In contexts such as these, *ethnic* connotes the non-Anglo traits in the immigrants' character – a great deal indeed: "their foreign speech, habits, dress, and especially language"; Roosevelt expected immigrants also to Americanize their names.[14] By moving immigration from the Department of the Treasury to the newly established Department of Commerce and Labor in 1903, Congress recognized that these matters were primarily a question of the labor force.[15] It was consistent to reorganize naturalization under the direction of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, too. This move was enacted in 1906 in a law which also prescribed uniform

procedures; they were exclusively vested in Federal courts.[16] Readers not familiar with such high legal matters are likely to be struck by the repeated, explicit, and detailed insistence that applicants renounce allegiance to their countries of origin. The only positive requirement, explicitly stipulated, is a speaking knowledge of English.[17] But since applicants were also required to declare, under oath, that they were willing to support the Constitution of the United States, it was held, not unreasonably, that they should also show a degree of familiarity with Civics.[18]

In due course, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization in the Department of Commerce and Labor developed educational material and programs designed especially for immigrants. It also offered courses in cooperation with Public Schools. A *Student's Textbook* was given free of charge to immigrants when they formally declared their intention to naturalize. There were also a *Teacher's Manual* and a *Syllabus of the Naturalization Law*. A particularly interesting document is a pamphlet published by the U.S. Department of Labor in 1922, *Suggestions for Securing and Holding Attendance of Foreign-Born Adults upon Public-School English and Citizenship Classes*. It addresses common problems encountered in courses taught in preparation of naturalization requirements: extremely low enrollment figures for a long period of time and very considerable dropout rates. In the cities and regions with a substantive share of non-English-speaking and non-naturalized immigrants, there was no dearth of courses offered by public agencies as well as by private organizations including factory schools. In the opinion of a historian of education, "[p]erhaps the most important reason why these massive educational programs failed to attract and hold their intended audiences was because they concentrated almost exclusively upon the teaching of the English language, Civics, and the 'American Way.'"[19] If this was indeed a failure, there was a major problem of communication. For the first two subjects were essential for naturalization. It does not seem unreasonable to spend the tax dollar on essentials and to look to other sources for extras.

English and, to a less extent, citizenship are the courses taught in Leo Rosten's A.N.P.S.A. But as the title suggests, the book is in no way concerned with the statistical success or failure of the naturalization program. Its focus is on a single participant. As a reader, I want to take the *Education* of the title seriously. And I submit that one cannot take it seriously unless one also takes the literary context seriously: Jewish-American, Yiddish-English humor.

2 Jews in twentieth-century American humor

The stereotype of the "Hebrew comic" as the "butt of ridicule" joined the stage Irishman, German, and Black at the turn to the twentieth century and remained so in burlesque and vaudeville through the 1930s.[20] According to L. Harap, the American tradition of the comic Jew as central character in fiction originated in Montague Glass's Potash and Perlmutter stories collected under this title in 1910.[21] The comic pair speak "in outrageously ungrammatical English with Yiddishized word

order," and their business practices are characterized by "sharp dealing" and "petty dishonesty." In fact, "sharp practice," Harap wrote, "seems second nature to them and somehow pertains to their Jewishness." This description strikes me as an excellent brief characterization. But I should like to add that, in my reading, non-standard English with Yiddish or German grammar, idioms, and, occasionally, words mixed in, is what all characters speak, among them Philip Noblestone – formerly Pesach Edelstein:

> "Believe me, Mr. Zudrowsky," Noblestone replied. "It ain't such an easy matter these times to find a young feller with brains what ain't got no money, Mr. Zudrowsky, and such young fellers don't need no partners neither. And, anyhow, Mr. Zudrowsky, what is five thousand dollars for an inducement to a business man? When I would go around and tell my clients I got a young feller with five thousand dollars what wants to go in the cloak and suit business five thousand dollars goes no ways."[22]

In my reading, clauses such as "It ain't such an easy matter," "what ain't got no money," and "such young fellers don't need no partners neither" are non-standard English not restricted to Jewish-American speakers. The major calque in this passage is "what is five thousand dollars for an inducement to a business man?" The perfect German counterpart is „Was sind schon fünf tausend Dollar für ein Anreiz für einen Geschäftsmann," and it is a form of emphasis to put the sum of money into front position.

Harap worried why Jews make jokes at the expense of other Jews and, in so doing, confirm anti-Jewish stereotypes. He went to Sigmund Freud and Peter Gay for an explanation.[23] I do not claim to have a better one; but I should like to suggest a perspective derived from something close to a worst-case scenario, a perspective from which an answer may, perhaps, be derived for less extreme cases.

In both his autobiographical novel, *Die Bertinis* (1982, The Bertini Family), and his autobiography, *Erinnerungen eines Davongekommenen* (2007, Memoirs of One Who Got Away), Ralph Giordano, ten years of age when Hitler came to power in 1933, evoked the horror of a Jewish-German family when it dawned on them before long that they were now living under the permanent threat of violent death. The three teenage youngsters developed a routine of *Jüdeln*, of play-acting the Jew, in which they out-caricatured the fiendishly hostile caricatures in *Der Stürmer*, the National Socialist party organ. This practice recurs, ritual-like and at crucial moments, and on each occasion I wondered why. Is it possible that, finding oneself permanently at the receiving end of a constantly growing threat to one's very existence, one tries to outdo the enemy on his ideological stomping ground? Hey, we know better things than you do on the only gauge by which you measure us: the gauge of anti-Semitism! Would this be a psychological way of tipping the scales in favor of the persecuted minority? Some such bind must have existed; after all, the young Bertinis/Giordanos stopped this practice from the moment of liberation.

I wonder whether the practice of *Jüdeln* may have served as a mental kind of preventive inoculation. In an immensely mitigated form, Rosten's jokes at the expense of a group told by members of this very group, provided that they are very good, would seem to serve the same purpose.

More generally, "[l]aughter at distortion of language" has been characterized as "an invidious and basically primitive form of humor, since its suppressed premise is the superiority of the laugher."[24] It is so, I submit, only in a static situation. But for anyone who has undergone the same or a similar learning process, there is room for the recognition that the former struggles with the then foreign language, taken so seriously when they were being fought, sometimes resulted in what, in retrospect, are hilariously funny language forms. Seen in this light, to unfold a treasury of *recherché* howlers is a way of celebrating victory in this struggle, is to demonstrate that I now have the formerly threatening foreign language under my thumb. The laughter provoked by the way which Mr. Kaplan has with English is the liberating laughter of one who, unlike Rosten's heroic anti-hero, has handsomely overcome all difficulties.

Leo Rosten had first-hand knowledge of these difficulties, of what goes on at the language barrier when a speaker of Yiddish (or German) learns American English, and this knowledge went into his word plays. It is only on rare occasions that he allowed an exuberant sense of comedy to overrun the facts of Yiddish-English contrast. Extant criticism shows little interest in these linguistic matters so that my reading is the first to appreciate Rosten's practical knowledge of contrastive linguistics.

As a next step, I propose to analyze outstanding elements of Rosten's narrative art at this language barrier in preparation for a narratological reading of *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*.

3 Narrating a Night School for Adults

3.1 A narrative not only of language learning. There are several narrative measures which Rosten took in order to make such a victorious retrospective possible. The basic narrative situation in a Language and Civics School for immigrants is, of course, a very good start. To take this situation seriously is to recognize that it is unwise to expect *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* to have the kind of closely knit developmental structure – and, to add, the cultural comprehensiveness – characteristic of a full-fledged *Bildungsroman* such as *The Education of Henry Adams*, as L. S. Dembo seems to have done when he complained that "despite the title, neither Hyman Kaplan nor his teacher, Mr. Parkhill, undergoes any real development."[25] To look for a "rite de passage," as Dembo did, is, perhaps, too much to expect of a beginners' class. It would suffice for Mr. Kaplan to learn that the paradigm is not "bad, worse, rotten" but ". . . worst," and to make more modest progress of this order. For in terms of Rosten's *donné* – which is not Henry Adams' or, for that matter, Goethe's or Rousseau's –, there is recognizable if modest development even in the collection of

1937, and more in the comprehensive *O Kaplan! My Kaplan!*, the text studied by Dembo.

Students make "progriss," as Mr. Kaplan puts it on several occasions, failing to do so in this respect. The Jewish immigrant is not the only one to find the lessons extremely difficult, and progress is, on the whole, very slow. This slowness is part of the *donné* and, I believe, part of the circumstances of original publication. A sequence of short stories offers multiple occasions to enjoy the liberating kind of laughter mentioned above. More basically, it offers many opportunities to strike comic sparks from the clash between the rather limited competence, in English, of an intelligent, assiduous immigrant of no mean intelligence, sociability, and self-esteem. And to the extent that this approach makes for repetitiveness, it seems evident that stories separately published in the pages of a magazine tolerate a greater total number of examples of the same problems for students of foreign languages than when they are compacted between the two covers of a collection.

On the other hand, the continuity of a book makes it easier to recognize subtle changes of attitude on the part of Mr. Kaplan towards his "faller-students" (20). Incidentally, this phrase is a characteristic example of the presence of the implied author. For what happens at the level of the character is simply the phonological failure to distinguish short *e* from short *a*, a frequent mistake in *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* and out of it. But, in back of the character, the implied author blinks an ironic eye at the ideal reader, suggesting that some fellow-students – candy-chewing Mrs. Moskowitz is prominent among them – will often lie idle, as arable land sometimes will: fallow.

Since this subtle irony is not the only instance of this kind, I am satisfied that such a reading is not merely a matter of one reader's ingenuity. If a critic should insist that it is, I would concede that it is a kind of ingenuity that springs from the author's narrative art.

This confessional place may be right for a note on protocol. It is part of the social atmosphere in the A.N.P.S.A. that both the narrator and the teacher, unlike the other characters, always use the polite form of address. I preserve this practice, not least in order to avoid a stylistic clash between quotations and my argument.

3.2 Adult immigrants going to school. It is, I believe, self-evident that the teaching of adults differs essentially from the teaching of children for whom learning, both formal and informal, is the way of life. Among adult immigrants, there were such as had long been through their own learning phase; and there was a sizable portion of "new immigrants" who had not had any formal education to speak of. The pertinent U.S. Department of Labor pamphlet on teaching foreign-born adults of 1922 noted: "Pupils must be treated as intelligent adults, and there must be from the beginning a sincere desire to help them in the way they desire to be helped, without familiarity and with the courtesy and dignity to which adults are entitled."[26]

Fair enough. There must be no patronizing. But why is it necessary to insist that adults learning a second language must be treated as intelligent persons? The

pamphlet does not say. But this is where the problem is located. In their native language, people converse at their level of intelligence. When they begin to learn a foreign language, and particularly when they are barely familiar with its rudiments, words and grammatical forms fail, and the impeded speakers are likely to hem and haw as stupid persons might in their native language. It is here that Harap's disrespectful laughter has its point of attack. And this is precisely why one does well not to judge people by their restricted performance in a foreign language.

What is probably worse is that speakers limited in this way will suffer by this language-imposed sense of stupidity: of being unable to express themselves at their accustomed level of intelligence. Reduced to topics in which they are no longer interested – as poor Mrs. Sadie Moskovitz is in the course final (140) –, they may simply lose interest in the new language or even develop an unconscious but ever-increasing antagonism towards this immigrant's straightjacket.

In adult instruction in a second language much depends on obviating such obstacles. For if a student develops a sense of a steadily growing facility, he may successfully transform immigration from a physical move that ends with the first step on the soil of one's adopted land to a continuing experience of becoming more and more at home.

Seen in this light, immigration amounts to a true transcendence. To acquire a second language is, in a technical sense of the word, to "negate" what one has brought along by avoiding false friends, at all levels of a language, when building up one's new capabilities. For the respective immigrant's language shows most conspicuously when it is in contrast with features of the language to be acquired. In each language pair, these contrasts are most in evidence in the newcomer's trained incapability: where the self-evident command of one's native language at whatever level of proficiency makes it difficult to perceive the different foreign ways or, if and when made perceptive, still difficult to adapt without fail.

Much of Rosten's language-based humor exploits such contrasts in pronunciation, vocabulary, morphology, and syntax. A simple phonological example is Mr. Kaplan's speech habit of replacing "-ing" forms by "-ink," for the substitution of an unvoiced *lenis* in end position for the voiced variant, such as b, d, g, is the rule in Yiddish (and German) but not in English. This particular foreign presence needs to be eradicated before the speaker's English is correct at this point. This is good contrastive linguistics. But when Rosten had Mr. Kaplan transform "knife and fork" into "knife an' fog," he commited one of the few witticisms that run counter to Yiddish-English contrast (87). An attentive reader may well overhear the hint that English is for Kaplan a fog so thick that he cannot cut it with a knife. But in interlingual fact, "knife and fog" would inevitably come out as "knife an' fok" in Yiddish- or German-instilled English. The similarities between Yiddish and German depend on the historical fact that the former is based on a Middle High German dialect; it also includes Hebrew and Slavic language habits.

Another language-related problem is the entire metalingual terminology that will make learning English particularly difficult for Mr. Kaplan and his classmates, all of whom are, by all evidence, blue-collar workers with little native interest and little formal training in the ways of a language – any language including their own. Mr. Kaplan's constant effort to shift the focus of discussion from matters of language to subject-matter would seem to follow from precisely this unease. Indeed, a brief exchange in the very first chapter points into this direction. Asked to "give a noun," Mr. Kaplan, "smiling," offers "door."

> It seemed to Mr. Parkhill [the instructor] that "door" had been given only a moment earlier, by Miss Mitnick.
>
> "Y-es," said Mr. Parkhill. "Er – and another noun?"
>
> "Another door," Mr. Kaplan replied promptly (5-6).

Mr. Parkhill feels that Mr. Kaplan "might, perhaps, be a little more *serious* about his work." A less considerate observer who should find Mr. Kaplan's response impertinent is invited to read this incident in a different light. For to repeat the answer which the teacher has just accepted as a valid response to the same question addressed to another student is not the worst idea for someone who is not sure what nouns are. And to give "another door" in response to the request for "another noun" combines the same strategy with treating "noun" not as the metalingual term it is but as any other noun: another door, another noun, another window. . . .

A careful reader of the *Education of Hyman Kaplan* might point out that barely three pages earlier, Mr. Parkhill recognizes that in an exercise Mr. Kaplan did identify nouns correctly. I will later turn to that passage. For the moment, I should like to suggest that the order in the text is not necessarily the order in narrated time. Being part of Mr. Parkhill's review of Mr. Kaplan's achievements, the "door" incident may, in narrated time, have preceded the exercise on nouns. In fact, it looks like a reasonable preparation for precisely such an exercise: to ascertain whether students know what nouns are.

It is true that in *O Kaplan! My Kaplan!* the "door" incident follows the exercise on nouns also in narrated time. But it is unwise to impose a later revision upon the earlier version, both in principle and particularly in Rosten's case where drastic changes make the work of 1976 not so much an education as a non-alphabetical lexicon of what the Yiddish tongue and mind might do when learning English.

3.3 How to narrate learning. The critic who has come closest to this perspective but failed to take a decisive step is S. L. Dembo. Quoting from the Introduction to *O Kaplan! My Kaplan!*, he noted Rosten's characterization of Mr. Parkhill, the teacher, as a man of patience, kindliness, and fortitude: "He never loses faith in the possibility of teaching anyone the rudiments of English."[27] Dembo commented: "*Rudiments*: herein lies a clue to the whole problem, for Parkhill is, as no doubt his syllabus requires, devoted to rudiments to the exclusion of everything else." There is an excellent example from the second chapter of the version of 1976, from

which Dembo quoted, and which is also present in the 1937 *Education of Hyman Kaplan* in slightly modified form: The trouble with rudiments, Dembo wrote, is

> that anything that threatens to overflow the narrow banks of English grammar and vocabulary is quickly rechanneled or dried up by neglect. Student autobiographies are read only for use of language, even when – especially when – beneath their inarticulateness they reveal suffering or powerful emotions. When Mr. Kaplan submits an essay on his job complaining about working conditions ("Why should we svet and slafe in a dark place by chip laktric and all kinds hot? For who? A Boss who is salfish, fat, driving a fency automobile??"), Parkhill tells him, "We must confine ourselves to simple exercises. . .before we attempt political essays." And Mr. Kaplan replies, "So naxt time should be no *ideas*. . . . Only plain fects? "'Facts,' Mr. Kaplan, not 'fects,'" answers Parkhill.[28]

The teacher backs away even from answering a legitimate question about what he expects of his students and does what he has been hired to specialize in, namely to correct his students' English.

Rosten concluded this particular exchange by noting: "Mr. Kaplan's expression left no doubt that his wings, like those of an eagle, were being clipped." Dembo took this methodical restraint as germane to introductory language instruction: "That one stick to the facts of grammar and vocabulary, attend conscientiously to one's accent, and in general exercise self-restraint are, as I have implied, principles essential to a successful language class."[29]

Possibly. But the way in which Mr. Parkhill cuts down Mr. Kaplan falls short of the respect which should prevail in adult education. In terms of substance, it is a matter of what is encompassed by "rudiments" and what part subject-matter is supposed to play. I am prepared to argue that, at this point, the teacher slams on the brakes because Mr. Kaplan's ideas are "redical." This misspelling on the part of the character amounts to the implied author's pregnant pun, for radicalism was not alien to Eastern European Jews employed in New York sweat shops.[30] For in later episodes, especially towards the end of *O Kaplan! My Kaplan!*, Mr. Parkhill tries to inspire in his students an enthusiasm for the right kind of ideas: those that are central to the American political mainstream. He regularly manages to do so.

To conclude this part of my argument: It is true that much of Rosten's humor targets Hyman Kaplan's slowly, very slowly improving English. But there is often a kind of humor beyond language that depends on his hero's eristic, almost forensic skills in maneuvering away from language into "ideas, not fects." If this second kind of humor is not normally appreciated, this is so, I believe, because readers are easily dazzled by the surface glitter of language-oriented humor. There are occasions when this humor beyond language depends on international relationships between members of the beginners' grade.

4 The opening situation

Like other critics, I begin the examination of *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* with a reading of the opening chapter. Unlike everyone else, I adopt a narratological perspective and plan to look at pertinent developments in the entire book.

"The Rather Difficult Case of Mr. Kaplan" begins with the teacher's, Mr. Parkhill's, recognition of a problem: Three weeks into the term, he "was forced to the conclusion that Mr. Kaplan's case was rather difficult" (3). The arch phrase suggests a particular classroom attitude – not one of the worst – according to which the teacher does not pass personal judgment on his students but, against his personal inclination, he is "forced" to judge a "case" negatively. On this occasion, he recognizes an objective shortcoming and puts pedagogical measures into gear. The same attitude is also recognizable in passages of reported thought: "He decided that here was a student who might, unchecked, develop into a 'problem case.' It was clearly a case that called for special attention" (3). I.e., in making a decision, the teacher responds to a call emitted from a paradigmatic objective situation. Even without yet another revelation of a piece of the teacher's mind – "Mr. Parkhill decided he had not applied himself as conscientiously as he might to Mr. Kaplan's case" (4) – it would have been evident that he is, indeed, conscientious, as far as his tasks are concerned, and, most of the time, extremely tactful in his ways with his students. He has indeed something of a grandiloquent pedant when he "diagnosed" a common error of German-speaking and Yiddish-speaking students of English as the "case" of "inability to distinguish between 'a' and 'e'" (5). The fact that Rosten made the teacher's and not the student's mind accessible to the reader suggests that in the rhetoric of the book the focus is on the point of view of the knowledgeable speaker of (American) English. In terms of the American Night Preparatory School for Adults, the ideal reader is the person who, like Rosten himself, has learned to master all the topics taught, and more.

An occasion for the implicit characterization of Mr. Kaplan is the very first instance of language humor, an exercise in plural forms. His paper includes the following set:

> house...makes...houses
> dog..... – ...dogies
> libary... – ...Public libary
> cat..... – ...Katz (3)

The first is a correct example, and the last, according to S. I. Bronner, comes from the repertory of the older, cruder Jewish stereotype humor.[31] To go by this paradigm is to estimate that 25 percent of the humor in the *Education of Hyman Kaplan* is in this old-style manner. "Dog" – "dok" in Kaplan's pronunciation – transformed into "dogies" seems to follow the grammatical paradigm of "house" into "houses" but is, instead, a phonological parallel. Just as he would later hum "Heppy Dace Is Here Vunce More," Mr. Kaplan was probably whistling "git along, little dogies"

through his teeth.[32] The real give-away, however, is the one involving the "libary." The exercise had been to give fifteen common nouns and their plural forms (3). *Cat*, *dog*, and *house* are about as common as the other seven of the first ten in the *Little Golden Book*. In comparison, "libary" and "Public libary" are far advanced. Our hero knows where the books are. Indeed, Mr. Kaplan must have used some of them some of the time somehow. For when Mr. Parkhill encourages him to become active in the oral exercise of "Recitation and Speech," he "answered promptly":

> "Vell, I'll tell abot Prazidents United States. Fife Prazidents United States is Abram Lincohen, he vas freeink de neegers; Hodding, Coolitch, Judge Vashington, an' Banjamin Frenklin."
>
> Further encouragement revealed that in Mr. Kaplan's literary Valhalla the "most famous tree American writers" were Jeck Laundon, Valt Viterman, and the author of "Hawk L. Barry-Feen," one Mock-tvain. Mr. Kaplan took pains to point out that he did not mention Relfvaldo Amerson because "He is a poyet, an' I'm talkink abot writers" (4-5).

This mix of some basic information and a few basic errors does not tell what exactly Mr. Kaplan has read or "read abot" (At one time, he proudly declares that he read an English newspaper [131]). The form "Hawk L. Barry-Feen," it is true, reads like an uninformed guesss at what he heard pronounced. But on the whole, his knowledge is not so bad for a student in the beginners' grade of a night school for immigrants. The distinction between poet and writer, for instance, is a respectable one, though Emerson is, of course, not the best example, especially in a context which includes Whitman. On another occasion, he quoted Shakespeare, though in bowdlerized form (13).

It is here that Mr. Parkhill responds by merely noting the mix-up between *e* and *a*. The observation is correct. It is also mindless. I wonder where he would have got had he, instead, raised a few questions at the substantive level. Late in *O Kaplan, My Kaplan!*, S. L. Dembo might have noted that the class exercises of "Recitation and Speech" have now become a lively medium of expressing oneself in tolerable English whenever a topic touches the students' unanimous interest. An example is the chapter "A Glorious Pest" (I know, I know, *a* again sacrificed for *e*). Students show great enthusiasm and remarkable fluency when the task is to write a composition on a famous figure or incident of the American Revolution.[33] It is an atmosphere of liveliness in which Mr. Kaplan is allowed to snap at a fellow student: "If in Italy you had a Petrick Hanry *before*, you vouldn't have a Mussolini later." You're probably right, Mr. Kaplan, although such a political remark is out of the question in *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*. Of course, had Mr. Parkhill been the experienced pedagogue at this early point in the sequence that he seems to have become late in the next term, the readers would not have gotten as much fun out of the difficult English language and, never to forget, Mr. Kaplan's eristic prowess. – In addition to the

glimpses of character one obtains from Mr. Kaplan's forays into English, Rosten offered two paragraphs of explicit characterization in the first episode. Mr. Kaplan

> was in his forties, a plump, red-faced gentleman, with wavy blond hair, *two* fountain pens in his outer pocket, and a perpetual smile. It was a strange smile, Mr. Parkhill remarked: vague, bland, and consistent in its monotony (4).

In one's forties, a man is likely to have settled in life. As a cutter, Mr. Kaplan has one of the better-paid manual jobs in the clothing industry, although it does have its shortcomings. His blond hair, but not his physique, suggests that he is almost one of the Kirk Douglases among Jews. The author surely wanted his readers to notice that the two fountain pens are a badge of Mr. Kaplan's pride in being literate. His trademark, however, is his exceptional smile. Introduced at this point, it is featured as something like the ingratiating mask which persons feeling underclass adopt when facing their betters. But it turns out to be a most variable means of expressing or dissimulating emotion, and the reader who does not watch its multiple changes misses one of the fine points of Rosten's art and foregoes one of the pleasures of reading *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*.

In the same incident, Mr. Parkhill comes off as a teacher with limited intercultural competence or imagination:

> The thing that emphasized it [the smile] was that it never seemed to leave the face of Mr. Kaplan, even during Recitation and Speech period. This disturbed Mr. Parkhill considerably, because Mr. Kaplan was particularly bad in Recitation and Speech (4).

As class continues, readers are offered further characterizing observations: "Mr. Kaplan was an earnest student. He worked hard, knit his brows regularly (albeit with that smile), did all his homework, and never missed a class" (5).

Here is an adult in his forties, with his settled convictions and preferences, surely fluent in his native language, and doubly reduced to a beginner's level in English. His limited English makes it difficult for him to express adult thought, though he usually has ways of getting his meaning across; and he is purposely held back by the teacher: "Mr. Parkhill felt that perhaps Mr. Kaplan had overreached himself, and should be confined to the simpler exercises" (5). This is precisely the method to hold an adult immigrant to a lower level of intelligence than his native one.

The plays on Mr. Kaplan's smile and the ways in which the characters are made narratively present are of particular interest in view of future developments. The first chapter establishes the direct narrative presence of Mr. Parkhill and Mr. Kaplan. The only other student mentioned, Miss Mitnick, is present indirectly, through a character's mind – the teacher's. By allowing the readers to have glimpses of the teacher's mind but not of the mind of any of the pupils, Rosten drew a clear lingual-mental dividing line. The standard of correct English and the judgment of the immigrants' efforts are constantly kept in the foreground, and the

immigrants, who are always regarded and presented from an outside perspective, inevitably appear as inscrutable foreigners: foreigners to "our" world, the world of English-speaking Americans. In this way, the status of the immigrants, before naturalization, as resident aliens is imitated by narrative perspective.

The ways which Rosten has with "smiling" on this very early occasion contributes to this impression of exclusion. The first characterization of Mr. Kaplan's smile as "strange," "vague, bland, and consistent in its monotony" is, as has been noted, Mr. Parkhill's. He relies on his authority as teacher. But how firm is it? Mr. Parkhill is disturbed because the smile does not leave Mr. Kaplan's face even when his performance is well below par, in the teacher's judgment. But it is particularly on an occasion such as this that an ingratiating smile comes in particularly handy.

When the teacher calls upon Mr. Kaplan for his contribution, his own smile, both in his mind and with the narrator's authority, is "encouraging" (4). He gets the gross phonological misrepresentations of the "Hawk L. Barry-Feen" type for his pains and continues to be disturbed about that perennial smile on Mr. Kaplan's face.

Shortly afterwards in narrative presentation, Mr. Kaplan responds quickly to a question which the teacher asked the class: "He was all proud grins" (6). When called upon, he "rose, radiant with joy." The question is, What does "vast" mean in "the vast deserts of America"? Mr. Kaplan thought it was one of the four directions. Is this phonological confusion again, including the old a/e case and another bone of contention, v/w? Very likely. But Mr. Kaplan is, after all, right: the White River Badlands, Death Valley, the Mohave Desert, etc. – are all of them out West, the vast Western wastelands. Advised of his language error, Mr. Kaplan now offers "de cawt, de pents, an' de vast" of a suit of clothes, as a cutter will surely know (7). When told by Mr. Parkhill that he has "used still another word," the narrator, in an outside perspective just like the teacher's, concludes: "Oddly enough, this seemed to give Mr. Kaplan great pleasure." Another big grin? Attentive readers have a task cut out for them: What kind of mistakes give Mr. Kaplan what kind of pleasure? What kind of attitude towards education is it to get pleasure from mistakes?

It is part of Rosten's art that the very next incident, the one on which the first chapter closes, shows a solution without telling the readers how they should respond. In narrative reality, Rosten made Mr. Kaplan turn the tables on Mr. Parkhill. In the first place, it is now a form of instruction called "Open Questions" where, unlike on the earlier occasion, it is not the teacher who, asking a question, determines the situation – to the extent that asking a question determines the speech situation – but the student:

> "Plizz, Mr. Pockheel," asked Mr. Kaplan as soon as the period opened. "Vat's de minnink fromm –" It sounded, in Mr. Kaplan's rendition, like "a big department."
>
> "'A big department,' Mr. Kaplan?" asked Mr. Parkhill, to make sure.
>
> "Yassir!" Mr. Kaplan's smile was beauteous to behold. "In de stritt, ven I'm valkink, I'm hearing like 'I big de pottment.'"[34]

A reader who is more attentive than Mr. Parkhill will notice that Mr. Kaplan, beaming in Romantic terms, seems to try to keep his teacher from climbing out on the wrong limb: It is capital *I*, not lower-case *a*. But this is not the entire problem. To anticipate the point of the joke: What Mr. Kaplan renders as "I big de pottment" is "I beg your pardon" in standard English. But by the a/e rule of mispronunciation, which Rosten consistently recognizes as one of Mr. Kaplan's phonological problems, stressed "beg" would never rise to "big" but be lowered to "bag" or, more likely in the phonological reality of German-English and Yiddish-English contrasts, to "bak." On a later occasion, Rosten rendered correctly how Kaplan's incorrect pronunciation of "I beg your pardon" strikes a speaker of English: "I back you podden" (116). Even if one assumes that, in the case of "I big de pottment," Mr. Kaplan has not heard a speaker of standard English but another immigrant's mispronunciation, it is very difficult to see how "you" ended up as "de," often a derivative of "the." Is this due to the writer's neglect or is it a meaningful detail?

As soon as Mr. Parkhill has completed his explanation of a department store, Mr. Kaplan comes up with his favorite, "Simms to me it's used in anodder minnink" (9). And although Mr. Kaplan again suggests that maybe the phrase sounds "a leetle more like '*I* big de pottment," Mr. Parkhill knows no better than to chalk it up to "Mr. Kaplan's own curious audition" and to "attack" the problem by a renewed and even more elaborate description of the nice things one can get in a department store. This is, incidentally, not the only instance of Mr. Parkhill's method of inundating his class with a *suada* that is beside the point. Mr. Kaplan "smiled throughout with consummate reassurance." If, as I think is the case, the narrator here renders Mr. Parkhill's impression of Mr. Kaplan' smile, the teacher is just as mistaken as when he did not pay attention to his student's emphasis on the first person pronoun. On the other hand, a reader who takes the "consummate reassurance" as the narrator's objective description of Mr. Kaplan's attitude has no choice but to recognize that the wily immigrant smiles his better, the unwary teacher, into his downfall – which would be a genuine piece of American humor as practiced and explained by the author that Mr. Kaplan knows as "Mock-tvain" – not bad, this evocation of the double mock.

Eventually, the narrator asserts that Mr. Parkhill "assum[ed], in his folly, that Mr. Kaplan's smiles were a testimony to his exposition" (9). But if they were not, what were they in truth? Trusting the teller less than the tale, one may remember that, a short narrative while ago, Mr. Kaplan "rose, radiant with joy," in his folly of believing that he knew the explanation of *vast*. Now he "rose" again: "His smile was broad, luminous, transcendent; his manner was regal" (10). It is now his part to reveal folly: Mr. Parkhill's, of believing that he had the explanation of *I big de pottment*: When, standing in the street, Mr. Kaplan explains, and one is accidentally pushed by a passer-by, one "says, 'Axcuse me!' no? But sometimes, an' *dis* is vat I minn, he's sayink, *'I big de pottment*'" (10).

Presently, Mr. Parkhill wondered whether Mr. Kaplan should not be advanced immediately to the next-higher grade: "Another three months of Recitation and Speech might, after all, be nothing but a waste of Mr. Kaplan's valuable time." It is, in Mr. Parkhill's characteristic manner of a teacher of English, the concession of defeat at the hands of an immigrant whose English is no show but whose intellect and eristic skills nevertheless are superior. Is he beyond construing an example of incorrect English in order to show up his teacher? His own "I back you podden" weighs on the positive side. But however a reader may decide – to begin a book on the pains and joys of language learning in this way is to suggest that its subject-matter is not restricted to language – far from it.

5 The wide world of *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*, the wider world of *O Kaplan! My Kaplan!*

In *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*, about twenty of the members of the beginners' grade" are identified by name. The recognizable nationalities include Italian, Spanish or Latin American, and Lithuanian; one immigrant has come from Croatia or Serbia, and three bear Polish names. The others are, apparently, Eastern Jews.

At the beginning of *O Kaplan! My Kaplan!*, Rosten enlarged the beginners' grade by adding to the above spread two Germans, one Greek and one Russian. Other nationalities follow in later chapters. But as far as participation in the action is concerned, the most active group still consists of Eastern Jews. Of course, the teacher as the focus of consciousness is narratively present in all chapters of *Education* except one, "Mr. Kaplan's So-and-So," when he is substituted because of illness. It is also a matter of course that Mr. Kaplan, who is never ill, has a leading part in all chapters, even when he is absent, as in his function of the speaker of the "Buyink an' Deliverink to you a Prazent Committee" (60); his name appears on all but about ten pages, that is on slightly over 130.

The other characters are grouped around this pair in circles of decreasing importance. The inner circle consists of Miss Rose Mitnick (on about 50 pages), by far the best student but a very shy person, always to the point when criticizing Mr. Kaplan's English but helpless against his astounding defenses; the other members of this group are Mr. Norman Bloom (40-odd pages), a steady assistant to Miss Mitnick in criticizing Mr. Kaplan, and Mrs. Moskowitz (some 30). Mrs. Moskowitz is one of the poorer students who yet enjoys some matronly privileges; she is often reacting adversely to Mr. Kaplan.

The next small group, Sam Pinsky and the most prominent non-Jewish character, Miss Carmen Caravello, play limited parts on about 12 pages each. All others appear about a handful of times or less and do not really make any significant contribution.

The five more or less central ones make their joint appearance in the second chapter, "Mr. Kaplan, the Comparative and the Superlative," in a characteristic

grouping. The first is Mrs. Moskowitz – not by a contribution but by way of her feet, over which Mr. Kaplan stumbles on his way to the blackboard, mumbling "Vould you be so kindly," a recognizable rendition of the appropriate German idiom, „Würden Sie so freundlich sein"; the other four make their entrance as critics of Mr. Kaplan's English in the sequence of Miss Mitnick, Mr. Bloom, Miss Caravello, and Mr. Pinsky (15-16).

6 Language humor and beyond

No doubt, *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* is a book to which one can go for laughs about the havoc a beginning student can wreak upon the English language. Mr. Kaplan, needless to say, provides by far the most and the best examples. But language problems are only the starting points for Rosten's characteristic humor of socio-psychological struggling. A brilliant example is in the fourth chapter, "Mr. Kaplan and Vocabulary," where the task is to form sentences using difficult words provided by the teacher, with dictionaries permitted. After a near-perfect start with Mr. Bloom's examples, including "In her red hat she falt conspicuous," Mrs. Moskovitz simply "worked havoc with 'niggardly' ('It was a *niggardly* night')" (30). Rosten played on the obvious misunderstanding of a word still widely circulating among the lower classes at the time but taboo in polite usage.

Mr. Kaplan's struggles with the subject are accompanied by his characteristic facial work. Taking out his writing utensils, "he smiled more broadly than ever" for "a chance to use his crayons always intensified Mr. Kaplan's natural euphoria" (28). When he comes to using them, he "smiled with the sweet serenity of one in direct communication with his Muse." Finally, when copying his sentence on the blackboard, "Ecstasy illuminated his face" (29). The ingenuity with which he handles his task fully deserves this supreme enthusiasm. One of his three words being "pitcher," he jumped to one of his favorite conclusions, namely that there are "two minninks" involved, *pitcher* and *picture* – indeed a reasonable conclusion if one takes the slurred familiar pronunciation into account. He tests both meanings in separate sentences. Reading them under his breath, he hopes to trick Mr. Parkhill into giving a clue. When this stratagem fails, he finds a single solution which ingeniously leaves all options open: "Oh, how beauriful is dis *pitcher*" (30). From the exchange with Mr. Parkhill that follows it would appear that this sentence is a trap set for the teacher. Language is only an occasion for a matching of minds:

> Mr. Parkhill saw that Mr. Kaplan had neatly straddled two words by a deliberately noncommittal usage. "Er – Mr. Kaplan. The word is 'p-i-t-c-h-e-r,' not 'p-i-c-t-u-r-e.'"
>
> Too late did Mr. Parkhill realize that he had given Mr. Kaplan the clue he had been seeking.
>
> "Mr. Pockhill," Mr. Kaplan replied with consummate simplicity, "dis void *is* 'p-i-t-c-h-e-r.'"

> "But when you say, 'Oh, how *beautiful* this pitcher is,'" said Mr. Parkhill, determined to force Mr. Kaplan to the wall, "you suggest – "
>
> "Ah!" Mr. Kaplan murmured, with a tolerant smile. "In som houses is even de *pitchers* beauriful."
>
> "Read your next sentence, Mr. Kaplan" (30-31).

It is clear that Mr. Kaplan has the better of him. All that occurs to the teacher to save face is to enforce the classroom situation.

7 An international problem in beginners' grade

Although feelings often run high and the task of correcting one another's English mistakes does not only result in the "zest of competition" but unleashes veritable partisan power struggles, there is a lack of nation-based antagonisms. Their presence in U.S. society has been well documented by H. L. Mencken in "our huge repertory of opprobrious names for them [i.e. the 'aliens in (our) midst']," from which I select those which apply to the matter of Hyman Kaplan[35]:

> For German: *dutchie, squarehead, heinie, kraut, pretzel* and *limburger*.
> For Greek: *grease-ball*.
> For Italian: *dago*, *wop, guinea* and *ginzo*.
> For Jew: *kike, sheenie, arab, goose, mockie* and *yid*.
> For Latin-American: *spiggoty* and *spick*.
> For Pole: *polack*.

There are only two incidents, in *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*, when feelings clash over national issues. At one point, Mr. Kaplan rejects Miss Caravello's idea that Shakespeare is an English Dante: "To me is no comparink a high-cless man like Shaksbeer mit a Tante" – with an aunt, in German (110). The more significant instance goes against the grain of the U.S. naturalization project in a chapter whose title ironically alludes to a sublime national moment in American poetry: "O Kaplan! My Kaplan!" The occasion is the School celebration of Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays, which regularly includes a recitation of Whitman's elegy, "O Captain! My Captain." This period in the school year, spoofed as the "Ides of February and March" by Mr. Parkhill, is a "nerve-sapping ordeal" because the classroom always reverberates with pieces of well-meant but ill-executed patriotic rhetoric (77). Most of it is U.S.-American; but Rosten also relates two incidents that run counter to the School's objective of "injecting a patriot fervor" for "Wonderful U.S." (76).

When Miss Caravello announces, in Recitation and Speech, that "I will spik ona Garibaldi," Mr. Parkhill's incipient "surge of gratitude" rapidly subsides (77). For what the patriotic immigrant does is to celebrate her national hero in precisely the clichés in which George Washington was praised in the school ceremonies. Student comments are correspondingly lame. But Mr. Kaplan shows "icy scorn": "How you can comparink a Judge Vashington mit a Gary Baldy? [. . .] Ha!" (78-

79). By way of "quickly spread[ing] oil on the troubled nationalistic waters," the teacher calls on Mr. Kaplan to make his contribution. His "ever-incipient smile burst[ing] into full bloom," the star rhetorician, as usual addressing "Ladies an' gantleman, faller-students, an' Mr. Pockheel," announces a discourse not only on both Washington and Lincoln, but also on Jake Popper. Mr. Parkhill's tactical move works both better and worse than anticipated. Soon Mr. Kaplan gets carried away:

> ". . .But ve shouldn't forgat dat Vashington vas a beeg ravolutionist! He was fightink for Friddom, against de Kink Ingland, Kink Jawdge Number Tree, dat tarrible autocrap who –"
>
> "'Autocrat'!" Mr. Parkhill put in, but too late.
>
> " – who was puddink stemps on *tea* even, so it tasted bed, an' Jawdge Vashington trew de tea in Boston Hobber, dressed op like a Hindian. So vas de Ravolution!"
>
> The class, Mr. Parkhill could not help observing, hung on Mr. Kaplan's every word, entranced by his historiography (80).

His eulogy of Lincoln culminates in another one of the rare and mild off-color jokes in *Education*: "Lincollen gave ot the Mancipation Prockilmation. Dat vas, dat all men are born and created *in de same vay!* So he vas killed" (82).

Not unlike Miss Caravello, Mr. Kaplan now also drags in a compatriot, but not one from the old country but a Jewish-American. All the clichés are unfurled again: ". . . a fine man, mit a hot like gold. Ve called him 'Honest Jake.'" The cymbals of bathos clash, accompanied with the perfect Woody Allen gesture: "'Jake Popper had a delicatessen store.' (The modest shrug which accompanies this sentence makes it live and breathe: 'Jake Popper had a delicatessen store.')" (82-83). He was well beloved because he gave free lunches to honest indigents.

As Mr. Kaplan brings the narrative of Jake Popper's fatal illness to its sad close, he seems to have his audience rapt with sympathy. But I am afraid that his listeners – and, I believe, Rosten's readers – cringe, as they are meant to, when he cribs the culmination point of this paean from Whitman and not, as he believes, from Miss Higby's "voids." Producing a veritable poetic malapropism, he rhapsodizes:

> "O hot! hot! hot!
> O de bliddink drops rad!
> Dere on de dack
> Jake Popper lies,
> Fallink cold an' dad!" (84).[36]

He loses his fellow-students' goodwill when, anticlimactically, he admits that all this was nine years ago, and he did not even attend the funeral (84-85). Mr. Bloom's angered outcry "*Why you didn't?*" accuses him, "with a knowing nod to the Misses Mitnick and Caravello," for an Un-Jewish activity:

> Mr. Kaplan's face was a study in sufferance. "Becawss de funeral vas in de meedle of de veek," he sighed. "An' I said to mineself, 'Keplen, you in America, so tink like de *Americans* tink!' So I tought, an I didn't go. Becawss I tought of dat *dip* American idea, *Business before pleasure!*'" (85).

If this is Americanization, it is a tongue-in-cheek-affair. It is an oblique comment on Jewish funerals as illustrated, for instance, by Randall Jarrell in a chapter of *Pictures from an Institution*.[37]

8 Mr. Kaplan's education

"To educate" means to lead (a person) out of (something). While details are important, the ultimate question is whether there are respects in which Mr. Kaplan is led beyond his part of a student who is well-meaning, intelligent, and combative but abysmally poor in English. If he receives an education during his year in beginners' grade, it must show at least towards the end. But Rosten did not make it easy for his readers to see any progress. In the second-to-the-last chapter, "Mr. Kaplan's Dark Logic," part of this purportedly idiosyncratic manner of reasoning about language surprisingly turns out to be Mr. Parkhill's, at which Mr. Kaplan now outdoes his teacher. This surprise is the more surprising since Mr. Kaplan's remarkable achievement is embedded in the kind of spiels, usually at his expense, which Rosten's readers have, I trust, learned to enjoy; for otherwise they would not have progressed this far in the book. Since all depends on the relationship between language facts, beliefs about language, and the rhetoric of Rosten's fiction, I have no choice but to go into some detail again.

Mr. Parkhill at first believed that Mr. Kaplan's atrocious English was due to "sublime and transcendental ignorance" and later, for a while, felt that his problem student was too impulsive to perform well. Eventually, he came round to the theory that what governed Mr. Kaplan "was Logic. A secret logic, perhaps. A private logic. A dark and baffling logic. But Logic" (126).

One time, Mr. Kaplan gives "skinny" as the opposite of "rich" (125). Gathering all his conscientiousness and pedagogical devotion, Mr. Parkhill finds that, in Mr. Kaplan's experience, "rich people were fat. Grant this major premise and the opposite of 'rich' *must* be – it was all too clear – 'skinny.'" In the light of the "dialectical genius of his most remarkable student," it is equally clear that the three principal parts of the verb "to die" cannot but be "die, dead, funeral" (126).

Newly enlightened by these exhibits of what is indeed idiosyncratic Kaplanesque reasoning about language – which, nevertheless, makes oblique sense –, the reader is treated to what seems to be another, a major example of the same. It is introduced as the most recent incident in the perennial Kaplan-Mitnick feud. The modest star student had just diffidently corrected another student's faulty use of a past tense form by correctly naming the three principal parts of the verb, "bite, bit, bitten" (127). Mr. Kaplan politely questions "bit," and the teacher "glimpses a

golden opportunity," the opportunity, apparently, to demonstrate that there is a public, a common logic to the English verb. He offers "hide, hid, hidden" as the paradigmatic analogy (128). But Mr. Kaplan, the acute dialectician, sees through what Rosten's narrator aptly calls a "semi-syllogism" and asks why there is no form "bote." I will admit that, at first glance, "bite, bote, bitten" strikes me as clumsily elegant in a funny sort of way. But even those who do not share this particular sense of humor will remember the paradigm "write, wrote, written." Surprisingly, Mr. Parkhill's special student has the same item in mind: "'Vell,' sighed Mr. Kaplan, with a modest shrug, 'if it is »write, wrote, written« so vy isn't »bite, bote, bitten«?'"

A grave tremor shakes Mr. Parkhill's authority as a teacher of current English. One half of the answer to Mr. Kaplan's question is, of course, that analogy is a poor advisor in language matters. To prove his point, the teacher invokes the analogy of "hide, hid, hidden" although there is also "ride, rode, ridden." If this is logic, it is, indeed, dark, secret, baffling. But if one goes by the teacher's own – mistaken – method, Mr. Kaplan's choice "wrote" is phonologically closer to the paradigm of "to bite" than the form "hid," which Mr. Parkhill introduced as paradigmatic.

The other half of the answer is a matter of language history. Even if historical grammar should not have been one of the requirements for English teachers such as Mr. Parkhill, the *Oxford English Dictionary* does not only list the "rode/wrote" past forms as regional variants alongside historical "rid/writ" forms but also an early English "bot(e)" form in the same morphological context.

Mr. Parkhill is, of course, right to insist that it is not logical that there should be such a word as "bote" (129). But this is not so because it is logical, as he argued, that "bit" follows "hid." It is for historical, not for syllogistic reasons that both "bote" and the verb form "writ" did not survive. In class, Mr. Parkhill again quelled Mr. Kaplan's initiative by means of rhetoric. He "recapitulat[ed] the exercise on regular and irregular verbs," cited a dozen examples, and went all over "the whole system of verb conjugating," putting one or the other student to sleep. He "spoke with earnestness and rare feeling. He spoke as if a good deal depended on it" (129).

True enough: his prestige as an English teacher is on the line. His method, unfortunately, is verbal browbeating: And Mr. Kaplan sees the light and submits (129).

Tyranny indeed. In my reading, supported in part by Rosten's characterization of Mr. Parkhill's analogy of "hide, hid, hidden" as a semi-syllogism, Mr. Kaplan really sees the light when he recognizes his teacher's pseudo-argument. But the rhetoric of the chapter on Mr. Kaplan's "Dark Logic" is calculated to wipe out the impression of the student's better insight by reducing him, in the end, to the idiosyncrasy of the "rich-skinny," "die, dead, funeral" kind. When advised by Mr. Parkhill that all newspapers are grammatically neuter, Mr. Kaplan suggests that papers bearing "real mascoolin names" had better fall into a different category; and he gives, as example, "*Harold Tribune*" (133).

Rosten's narrative strategy is ambiguous in the second-to-the-last chapter. Readers who focus their attention on the narrated events alone will notice a point

where Mr. Kaplan's education goes beyond Mr. Parkhill's training on his very home turf, English Grammar. But when guided by the rhetoric of narrative, one will continue to feel that the idiosyncratic logic is, by and large, Mr. Kaplan's, not Mr. Parkhill's. Is this ambiguity a fault or does it make narrative sense? A closer look at the concluding chapter, "Mr. Kaplan Cuts the Gordian Knot," will offer a solution.

It is examination period, and, according to the text, the Gordian Knot is the essay question which Mr. Kaplan chose for himself: Which form is correct, "It is I" or "It is me"? (His solution is not grammatical but pragmatic.) But there is also another dilemma: Mr. Kaplan's correct assessment that his English is not good enough for passing and his sense of a close relationship that exists between him and the teacher, based on their common humanity and, in part, on the few occasions in which he proved Mr. Parkhill's better.

Readers enter this chapter by way of the teacher's reflections on passing and failing students. Mr. Kaplan, it appears, would deserve high marks for effort and attitude, if such marks were awarded by the A.N.P.S.A:

> Mr. Kaplan was certainly his most energetic and ebullient pupil. He never missed a lesson; he never grew discouraged; the smile of undaunted hope and good-will never left his cherubic face (134).

One should certainly add that he is very considerate and ever-ready to help. And one has, together with Mr. Parkhill, to face the inevitable: His English is nowhere near passable. As so often, Rosten characterized this level by the usual, by the expected examples – each fine in itself but trying in their aggregate force: "high blood pleasure," "cold, colder, below zero," suspecting that "knees" has "*two* minninks. . . Vun, a pot mine lag," the other "[m]ine brodder's daughter" (135-36). A single sample of Kaplan's answers to the combined spelling-vocabulary test shows that he still has a good ways to go. His sentence using the dictated word "Excite" reads: "In a theatre is the Insite, the Outsite and the *Exite.* (for Fire)" (138). The least one can say of a fire in a theater is that it is "exciting."

During recess, a modest character development seems to have begun, late but not too late. Although Mrs. Moskowitz – poor soul and poorer English – had often sided with Miss Mitnick, Mr. Kaplan has now forgotten former torts and even goes against the teacher's instructions in his effort to encourage her, now that they face the same situation: "I'll *halp* you mit de haxemination." He hums for her a few bars of a song that sounds, in Kaplanese, "Heppy Dace Is Here Vunce More" (138). When, after this part of the examination has gotten under way, Mrs. Moskowitz complains, in vain, to Mr. Parkhill that she cannot think of a subject, there is something almost like magic in the room:

> Suddenly a gentle whistle soared through the air. It was soft, but had a haunting vibrance. Everyone looked up. The whistle caressed the lilting refrain of "Heppy Dace Is Here Vunce More."
>
> "Mr. Kap – "

> A disembodied whisper rose from the front row. "Sobjecks for composition . . . 'Should Ladies Smoke?' . . . 'Is Dere a God, Ectual?' . . . Tink abot a *qvastion*" (140-41).

Mr. Kaplan gave a piece of advice worthy of an experienced teacher. Mrs. Moskowitz handed in an essay on "Should be Dad Panelty for Murdering?" (142). Unfortunately, Mr. Kaplan did not take his own advice. The topic he chose, ""Tinking About' (Humans & Enimals)," is simply abstruse. He fails at least as much for ambition as for faulty English.

But though still not passable, Kaplan's English shows a very modest degree of improvement. There is now no blatant malapropism; all -ing forms are correct; and there is some progress on the a/e front: yes, there still are "haxemination," "edvences," and others of this ilk; but there are also "sad," "asking," "ans(w)er," etc., some of which were spelled differently on earlier occasions.

What strikes me more than improved spelling on the concluding pages is Mr. Kaplan's considerateness, a sense of common humanity which was often absent from the competitive atmosphere of the classroom. Indeed, to help Mrs. Moskowitz as effectively as he did is to transcend the party lines cut in ever so many quarrels over questions of English and beyond. Indeed, to give aid (suggesting a topic) and comfort ("Heppy Dace . . .") to a classroom enemy and thereby to transform this relationship into a genuinely friendly one may, perhaps, come close to the change of heart which L. S. Dembo missed.

Mr. Kaplan's irenic mood is not reserved for a fellow-student but also extends to include the teacher. In the first place, he chose the ill-starred argumentative, almost philosophical topic in order to avoid boring Mr. Parkhill with yet another story; for he expects that most other students will hand in one (143).

In the second place, the book ends on a note of pure sweetness and light. There is a postscript to Mr. Kaplan's paper: "I dont care if I dont pass. I *love* this class" (144). The *a's* are now in place as never before. The English is wrong by as little as a single apostrophe error made on two occasions. The sentiment is one of gladly accepting the inevitable and of encouraging the teacher to do what he must without feeling bad. Blessed the teacher who has a Mr. Kaplan in class.

9 Summary

If I see it correctly, Leo Rosten's American Night Preparatory School for Adults works, on the whole, on the basis of President Theodore Roosevelt's policy of the "new nationalism." The purpose is to minimize tensions between national immigrant groups and to inculcate a new national identity by teaching the official language and the political values of the United States of America. I believe that Rosten's major achievement in *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* is five-fold:

(1) Rosten was extremely successful at highlighting the language problem by devising blunders – many of them funny and some truly hilarious – primarily along

the line of demarcation between Yiddish and English or, in cultural terms, between Jewish and American. Most but far from all of the time, the examples reflect Yiddish and German *vs.* English contrastive language problems correctly.

(2) This success seems to have blinded the few commentators attracted by the *Education* to the humor beyond language. It rarely originates in intercultural tensions between different immigrant nationalities. In 1937, they were limited to two altercations between Kaplan and an Italian student about the relative artistic status of Dante and about the comparative stature of George Washington and Garibaldi. In fact, on these occasions Kaplan adopts the position not of an immigrant from Poland but of an American national.

(3) As for the major tension beyond language: it erupts between Mr. Parkhill and Mr. Kaplan. There is more than one occasion on which Mr. Kaplan seems to challenge the teacher's authority, and there are three when he clearly bests him – the notorious case of the dual p-i-t-c-h-e-r, the invidious case of "I big de pottment," and the glorious case of the write-wrote-written paradigm. The second is the most important instance. While in the first Mr. Kaplan is the better eristic psychologist, he now proves to be a better theoretical linguist in the school of Mr. Parkhill.

(4) These altercations between the teacher and his most willing student, who is also his intellectually most rebellious one, tell much about the education which the eponymous hero has received in beginners' grade. Despite the write-wrote-written case, his overall progress in English, while noticeable, is so modest that a sequel in beginners' grade is likely. During the final examination, he rises to two moments of greatness of soul: when he helps a fellow-student who was, most of the time, opposed to him during term to find a manageable topic for the composition task and when he admits that his English is not good enough for passing but does not mind to repeat the grade under Mr. Parkhill's tutelage.

(5) This growth in humanity and the modest transcendence of classroom party lines have a bearing on the historical situation in the mid-1930s. In *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*, Leo Rosten imagined how it might be possible to meld the immigrants from different nations and to integrate them in U.S.-American society. Such developments were, conceivably, desirable when the country was struggling to get out of the Great Depression at a time when totalitarian regimes in Europe threatened their neighbors in ways that eventually lead to another World War.

3 Archibald MacLeish and the Theme of Imminent War

Among the themes which Archibald MacLeish had very much on his mind in the mid-1930s, the financial and economic crisis at home and the threat to world peace posed by European totalitarian regimes were felt with particular urgency.[1] While the failure of nerve which, according to MacLeish, was at the root of the Great Depression is the theme of his stage play, *Panic* (1935), the international crisis is prominent in his first two radio plays, *The Fall of the City* and *Air Raid*. Broadcast on 11 April 1937 from New York by the Columbia Broadcasting System and rebroadcast from the Hollywood Bowl about a year later, the former drew a combined audience of an estimated one million listeners.[2] According to R. W. Thompson, it is the first American verse play for radio in print and, in J. Liss's estimate, "one of the first and surely the finest verse play in radio."[3] Though an equally good case for radio excellence of this kind can at least as well be made for an Anglo-Irish poet, Louis MacNeice, such a comparison is not my objective.

One and a half years later, it was agian the Columbia Workshop to produce *Air Raid*: on 27 October 1938. It is a fictional on-the-spot report of an attack on civilian objectives in an unnamed small town in an unidentified European country. Four days later, Columbia broadcast Orson Welles's spectacular production of H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, rewritten as an on-the-spot report of a Martian invasion in the greater New York area.[4]

The Fall of the City was published separately in 1937 in both New York and London, found its way into five American anthologies (1937 to 1957) as well as an Australian one (1949), and was also kept in print by MacLeish (1961, 1980). It was made into a dance drama in 1938, set to music in 1942, and transformed into an opera in 1960.[5] For *Air Raid*, I have come across an American and a British first edition (1938, 1939). There is also a 1939 reprint in a British anthology and it was also included in the reissues of 1961 and 1980 under the author's own name.

Contrary to the valuation implied in the publishing history and despite opinions such as Liss's, I prefer *Air Raid* to *The Fall of the City*. I read the earlier play as a writer's high-minded first attempt to make radio over into a medium for his kind of dramatic verse and to adapt his poetry to a medium that had so far been rather

unpoetic in the United States, and the later one as a modest success along these lines. Even so, I do not think that *Fall* is as bad as Randall Jarrell made it out to be in his hatchet work of 1943.[6]

Neither do I plan to argue comparatively because I do not wish to show what neglected or forgotten piece of work is not so good; I am interested in a good work that has been disregarded. Even so, it may not be a bad idea to give an example for my view that MacLeish's first radio play leaves something to be desired.

As others have observed before me, *The Fall of the City* makes sense as a poetic exploration of the theme sentence of President F. D. Roosevelt's first Inaugural Address, "we have nothing to fear but fear itself."[7] But MacLeish did not quite manage to bring his heterogeneous material together to form a coherent world of the imagination governed by this perspective.[8] To the extent, for instance, that the tall Conqueror wears armor, he fits in with the impression, previously evoked by the descriptions of scene and action, that the time and place of the play are those of the Spanish conquests in America. On the other hand, his raised arm as he turns to face the prostrate crowd may be – and has been – taken as an evocation of the Fascist and National Socialist salute and, therefore, as an allusion to the contemporary, "anti-fascist" component of the play – with *fascism* here understood in MacLeish's sense.[9] But how does the surprising fact fit in that the Conqueror's armor is, in fact, empty? Just a moment or two ago, the Announcer has been quite emphatic about it:

> There's no one! . . .
> There's no one at all! . . .
> No one! . . .
> The helmet is hollow!
> The metal is empty! The armor is empty! I tell you
> There's no one at all there: there's only the metal:
> The barrel of metal: The bundle of armor. It's empty!
>
> The push of a stiff pole at the nipple would topple it.
>
> They don't see! They lie on the paving. They lie in the
> Burnt spears: the ashes of arrows. They lie there . . .
> They don't see or they won't see. They are silent . . .[10]

The image of the tall, empty armor confronting the unseeing crowd, prostrate, strikes me as an overwhelming image of fear producing more fear. For if one is afraid to look, the unseen becomes even more fearful. The one false note – indeed, a blaring disharmony – is the line about the push that could so easily topple the Conqueror. It breaks faith not only with the reality of the *conquista* but also with that of the contemporary situation, to the extent that the two have been incorporated into the play. It is, I submit, a singular underestimation of the military and cultural power that the Conquistadores brought to bear on the demoralized Aztecs

and even more so of the military and ideological power exercised by the modern totalitarian regimes and makes the play vulnerable at a crucial point.

There are also a few jarring notes in *Air Raid*, which will be duly noted. But they are not, by far, as fundamental as the misrepresentation in *The Fall of the City*.

In order to appreciate the position from which MacLeish approached his early radio plays, it is necessary to take his politics, his poetics, and the kind of radio into account for which he wrote. Furthermore, the most important context for *Air Raid* is the new doctrine of unlimited air war that had originated during and after the Great War of 1914 to 1918. Finally, there is Picasso's monumental collage-painting *Guernica* (1937) to take into account, as is the saturation bombing of the small Basque town a few months earlier.

1 Context of politics, poetics, and radio

1.1 U.S. policy with regard to totalitarian regimes. In the mid-1930s, the F. D. Roosevelt administration adopted the British majority response to the rise to power of nationalist totalitarian regimes and their potential threat to world peace, as in contemporaneous Spain. The answer was non-intervention, indeed, active appeasement. Those who objected and agitated for intervention on the side of the elected Popular Front government tended to overlook, slight, or deny that the same threat emanated from the Soviet Union. The non-communists among them tended to be deceived by Moscow's successful window dressing in the form of the democratic-sounding new Constitution of December 1935 and, a few months earlier, an apparently new policy on the part of its international arm, the Comintern. But, as D. T. Cattell has shown, this was merely a change of tactics.[11] The new approach was the bid to form "common front" organizations and, if possible, "popular front" governments that brought all "anti-fascists" into line; at this point of my argument, "fascism" appears in the Communist sense of the word.

Ever since the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in August, 1935, the term "anti-fascism" was brought into play whenever Moscow believed that it was possible to hoodwink left-leaning parties.[12] In the later 1930s, the objective was to collect opponents of Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini under a single antithetical term designed to dissimulate the dictatorial and imperialist policies of the Leninist-Stalinist system.[13] Like the British Labour Party in 1934, MacLeish came to see through this strategy and, in "The Affirmation" (1939), argued vigorously for a "*pro*-democratic policy" to supplant ideological anti-fascism.[14] He rejected the Communist agenda as a faulty analysis that played into the hands of the Soviets.[15] Nevertheless, he had earlier cooperated with communists in the campaign to defend the Spanish Popular Front Republic against the insurgent Falangists and their Italian and German allies. But he had always made it clear that his was strictly a tactical alliance.

The international crisis, as he saw it, just as did many American liberals including the Roosevelt administration, was due to the failure of capitalism in its 1920s form. But, according to MacLeish, fascism was not, as communists claimed, a product of historical necessity, namely the inevitable "coup d'état of a frightened and desperate capitalism" in its death-throes but the miscalculation of a class that had arisen between unbridled capitalism and the Industrial Revolution, "the class which the Industrial Revolution, with its need for specialized labor and its liberal theories of education, pulled up and away from the masses who labor with their hands – the class which the capitalist money system, with its limited opportunities and its materialistic values left just above brute labor, just below comfort and decency and self-respect."[16] For the task at hand, there is no need to decide whether this claim is good social and economic history. It is important because it outlines a position which has an immediate bearing on MacLeish's plays of the 1930s.

The crisis of the Spanish Civil War was not the only and last crisis that broke in the pentad that led to the Second World War. As far as *Air Raid* is concerned, the *Anschluss* (takeover) of Austria, early in 1938, by Hitler's Germany was another significant one; so was the September crisis over Czechoslovakia when the National-Socialist *German Reich* found ways, just short of war, of exerting effective pressure on the small country founded in the aftermath of the Great War and now abandoned by its major guarantors, France and Soviet Russia.

Czechoslovakia owes its existence to the tenth of President Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points on peacemaking of 1918, which stipulated that the "peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development."[17] This opportunity was fully vested in the 6,7 million Czechs, who did not quite come up to half of the inhabitants of a country of 13,5 million. According to a census of 1921, there also lived 3,1 million Germans, 2 million Slovaks, almost 750,000 Hungarians, and close to 500,000 Ruthenians, as well as smaller contingents of Jews, Poles, Rumanians, Gypsies, and others within the borders of the country.[18] The promise made repeatedly and in writing by the Czech representatives at the Versailles peace talks to find a solution based on the model of the Swiss cantons was never implemented.[19] In September 1938, Hitler's Germany obtained the cessation of those of Czechoslovakia's borderlands that were inhabited by a majority of Germans.

This exercise in brinkmanship, as far as it could be publicly known, was brought home to Americans by the extensive, highly informative broadcasts by CBS star commentator H. V. Kaltenborn, from 11 September to 2 October 1938. Though MacLeish kept *Air Raid* free from any direct reference to this crisis, many listeners will have brought their fear of imminent war to it, which these broadcasts had conveyed barely a month before. In addition, Kaltenborn's listeners were certainly familiar with two ideas on warfare which are basic to *Air Raid*: to the idea of an ultimatum and to the view that modern wars can start by surprise air force attacks on civilian objectives in the hinterland.[20]

1.2 MacLeish's poetics of the 1930s leans on two Aristotelian moments. He concluded his manifesto-like "In Challenge, not Defense" (1938) by invoking Aristotle's distinction between historiography and poetry: "history draws things which have happened but poetry things which may possibly happen." This possibility, according to MacLeish, is "human possibility [. . .,] things which are possible to man."[21] They are possible because imaginable and are made palpable by poetry. Poetry thus conceived has always something Utopian or Dystopian about it. The second tenet derives from the same passage in the *Poetics*: Poetry is more philosophical than historiography or any other craft, such as high-class journalism, which deal with statements of fact. If I call the one "factography," it is possible to pinpoint MacLeish's view by saying that factography is particular and specific in its objective, and frequently abstract, as far as human experience goes; poetry, by comparison, which employs a more permanent material ("the wind-proof stone, the time-withstanding brick"[22] – though ebony is about as durable), speaks to mankind.

The idea that poetry makes experience palpable reappears in "Poetry and the Public World" (1939) in the observation that poetry, like any art, "is a method of dealing with our experience of this world, which makes that experience, *as* experience, recognizable to the spirit."[23] The key word now is *spirit*, not reason (or intellect), the latter understood as the generalizing calculator which is interested in the result of experience. In order to imitate (in the Aristotelian sense of the word) the experiencing of an experience, it is necessary to engage sensuous concreteness provided by the "direct sensuous mind of the artist: the stupid, blunt, shrewd, delicately-fingering artisan mind of the artist."[24] If one does not allow oneself to be misled by formula, one might say that, in this view, factography is specific and abstract, poetry, mythic and concrete – the "concrete universal" or "World's Body" of J. C. Ransom's contemporaneous poetics.[25]

1.3 Sound broadcasting, in the United States a commercial medium that serves commerce, came into its own in the 1920s.[26] The characteristic play form turned out to be the daytime serial. The unit play had a more precarious existence, partly because it is difficult to compose fifteen- or thirty-minute actions that pull enough artistic weight, partly because there was hardly a broadcaster or a writer who knew how to go about it, and partly because advertisers were interested in safe, long-running programs to carry their messages. In the 1930s, there were at least some very few network-sustained programs. Prominent among them was the Columbia Workshop – run by a dedicated engineer, Irving Reis, who was particularly interested in the art of sound effects and what they mean for the radio play –, which offered a platform free from commercial interests for prospective radio authors.

As T. S. Eliot suggested, one of the prerequisites for writing great poetic plays is the presence of an unquestioned popular medium, a "crude form, capable of indefinite refinement."[27] And J. P. Bishop, to whom I owe this reminder, felt that just as Eliot profited from Music Hall in the late 1920s and early 1930s, MacLeish profited from radio. *Air Raid*, Bishop said, is "addressed to that immense audience

which nightly hears the news broadcast"; it is the "poetic equivalent of a report from the scene of a catastrophe."[28]

The most pertinent radio news context is the *March of Time*.[29] It began strictly as a business proposition in 1928, when R. E. Larson, managing editor of *Time Magazine*, founded five years earlier, had ten-minute previews of the current issue produced for use, free of charge, by radio stations. This program, whose single purpose was to promote sales of *Time* and which at first consisted of a potpourri of news items but soon developed a certain coherence, proved attractive to listeners, and, early in 1931, the Columbia Broadcasting System took over and began producing a regular thirty-minute program under this title, which remained on the air through 1945; the later newsreel counterpart survived through 1951. *The March of Time* used a central, omniscient narrator, "The Voice of Time," to provide continuity for a carefully designed contrastive set of pseudo-documents: of ostensibly authentic scenes, which were, as a rule, fictitious, showing what may have happened as the historical event transpired.

In their form of presentation, *March of Time* pseudo-documents offered suggestions for the right kind of listener response. Whereas, in fiction, scenes set abroad usually appear in the readers' or listeners' own language, and scenes in a genuine on-the-spot report are, inevitably, in the respective foreign language, with translation or commentary appended or in the form of voice-over, the *March of Time* approach ranges in between. Hitler or Mussolini, for instance, harangued in caricatured English, thus standing out as lingual idiots. E. Breitinger was, I think, right when he called the program a well-made news melodrama, "ein wohlstrukturiertes Nachrichtenmelodram."[30]

2 Doctrines of air war

In *Air Raid*, MacLeish evoked the radio image of an unnamed small, provincial European town at some distance from the border. Of no recognizable military value, though apparently heavily defended by anti-aircraft artillery, it was yet attacked from the air shortly after an ultimatum, otherwise unspecified, had expired. To describe this situation as one in which the enemy air force "overleaps" the ground defenses and purposely attacks the civilian population instead of military installations is to link the play to air war strategy as developed, for the most part, in the aftermath of the Great War. Air war strategy is, indeed, a major context of MacLeish's second radio play.

Since military history is not my chosen field, all I can reasonably do is attend carefully to pertinent surveys. I have profited most from a British and a German work. J. M. Spaight's *Air Power and War Rights*, in its 1933 edition, is singularly instructive both on air war strategy and practice primarily on the British side, with some comparative glances at French views and actions and with an occasional glimpse of Germany. Among German writings, A. Meyer's 1935 examination of

international martial law pertaining to the protection of the life, health, and property of the non-belligerent population according, for the most part, to the Hague Convention of 1907, is as meticulously researched as Spaight's study. The concluding paragraphs pay lip service to the National Socialist regime. But just as the accolades to the most recent Communist Party resolutions with which studies in the humanities in the former German Democratic Republic used to begin did not *per se* detract from whatever scholarly substance the work may have possessed, the conceptual precision and the comprehensive grasp of Meyer's arguments remain unaffected by the political coda. There will also be occasion to refer to a more limited work on air war strategy, G. Douhet's *Il dominio dell'aria* (1921), because I find it cited as the blueprint of air wars of the 1930s, notably by the Italian air force in Ethiopia and by German and Italian air force detachments on the Falangist side in the Spanish Civil War.[31]

By the 1930s, substantial land and sea war rules had been in force for several decades. For obvious reasons, the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 did not address air war. A draft of air war rules (The Hague, 1923) has never been ratified. Though there had been a developing code implicit in the practice of the airmen, 1914-1918, it was never formalized.

2.1 The two modern doctrines of war. According to Meyer, there were two doctrines of war in the 1930s. The one goes back as far as J. J. Rousseau's 1762 view that war is not a matter between persons but between states (or governments). The war aim is the destruction of the enemy's military personnel and material – and, in principle, nothing else – in order to make the country indefensible in military terms.[32] In the other view, the war effort is not limited to the military but engages entire nations. The objective is to break the enemy nation's morale, its collective will to carry on the fight.[33]

The essential difference between the two doctrines is best illustrated by the fate of the civilian population. Non-combatants are, in principle, protected by the war-between-states doctrine and, in principle, unprotected by the other. But practice is never quite as clear-cut. Even when the intention is to target nothing but military objectives, incidental civilian losses are hardly avoidable and were much less so in the 1930s than they are now. The important issue is to define what unintended damage to civilian property and lives is acceptable. In the war-between-nations doctrine, on the other hand, where the civilian population is regarded as a legitimate – in fact, the primary – objective, the issue is to define what must not be attacked. Both doctrines are agreed that institutions of religious and medical service as well as objects of artistic value are especially protected. Beyond this point, there are characteristic differences. In the first case, civilian protection is, in a sense, a question of how many percent upward from zero of civilian losses can be condoned, and in the second, how many percent downward from one hundred can be spared without jeopardizing the war objective.[34]

The conclusions which Meyer drew seem reasonable enough. Because opinions were divided on what was legitimate in air war, he recommended to prepare for the worst case and to take both passive and active measures.[35] Passive air defense includes the building of air raid shelters and advance warning systems, active air defense, the deployment of anti-aircraft artillery and the build-up of a fighter force.

2.2 The war between nations in democratic and other countries. The distinction between the two doctrines was not explicitly made by J. M. Spaight. But he clearly argued in support of a view recognized though not embraced by Meyer, namely that the war-between-states doctrine has become obsolete. It is no longer necessary, the British historian of air war doctrine and practice said with disarming candor, to "slaughter" armies; wars can now be decided by directly attacking "the people of the enemy country"; for since "Governments in all modern States are servants of the people," victory depends on shattering the people's morale.[36]

The thought that democracy should make the slaughter of civilians inevitable as a war objective is a sobering one.

The military arm that was uniquely effective in carrying the war to the enemy civilians was, in the 1930s, the air force flying independent missions, i.e. not in support of ground or sea operations but in pursuit of a strategy of its own. It would seem likely that strategic minds with a grasp of what the air force was like at the time and of ideas on how to develop it would come to similar conclusions independently of each other and of their national or ideological affiliation. I am not surprised, therefore, that the views of Spaight's British authorities are identical, in this respect, with G. Douhet's ideas. Spaight gave no sign of being aware of the earlier Italian strategist. If I see it correctly, the main difference between the two is that the former developed a ruthless blueprint for total war whereas Spaight, quite as ruthlessly, drew a picture of such a war, perhaps in the hope of shocking competent readers into clipping the air force's wings at least a bit.

A short list of views shared by Douhet and by Spaight's authorities embraces six major points. (1) The two men are agreed that future wars will differ fundamentally from those of the past.[37] (2) According to one of them, this change "is due to revolutions in strategy, tactics, and martial psychology" in general, whereas the other looked to the distinctive capabilities of the air force for this "revolutionary [. . .] change" but later also took psychological motives into account.[38] (3) Both also agreed, in the words of one of them, that the distinctive ability of the air force was "the power to overleap the enemy's defenses" and to fly missions that are "direct and penetrative in nature"; the other made the same point by observing that the new kind of war was made possible by the air force's capability to be "effective without hardly a limitation across the entire enemy territory."[39]

(4) As a consequence, the two writers envisaged an air war with the power "to devastate the social, administrative, and economic base of the [enemy] nation," an air war where, as the other put it, "the bombing of civilian objectives will be a primary operation of war, carried out in an organized manner and with forces which

will make the raids of 1914-18 appear by comparison spasmodic and feeble. [. . .] The attacks on the towns will be the war."[40] (5) The two were also agreed on the psychological effect of total air war. It will, as one of them put it, "create a 'complex of defeatism' in the national mind of the enemy," in the view of the other, it will "break the enemy country's physical and psychological will to resist."[41] The one believed that this strategy will, therefore, make it possible "to win total victory in an extremely short period of time so that any kind of dictatorial treaty can be imposed," and the other predicted that the "success" of the air raids on the towns will "mean victory for the side which can deliver them in sufficient strength."[42]

(6) Douhet and Spaight also looked with regret at what they felt was the premature ending of the Great War. According to the former, it "ended before it was possible to design, produce and thoroughly test fighting machines specially made for independent [strategic] air operations."[43] The latter, pointing to four British and two French models of long-range bombers especially designed for this purpose and "ready to start to attack Berlin" or in the final stages of construction when the war ended, felt that "in some respects it was unfortunate that the war ended when it did"; had these planes seen action, "we should today be able to form a clearer idea of air power."

Winston S. Churchill was sure what would have happened. On 21 March 1922, he said in Parliament: "Had the war lasted a few more months, or possibly even a few weeks, there would have been operations from these coasts upon Berlin and in the heart of Germany, and those operations would have increased in magnitude and consequence had the campaign been prolonged all through the year 1919." But peace intervened "owing to our having run short of Germans and enemies before the experiments were completed."[44] In his retrospect on the Great War, he declared that had Germany continued to fight, poison gases of "incredible malignity" would have been employed; "[t]housands of aeroplanes would have shattered their cities."

The authorities whose ideas Spaight synthesized were political leaders and prominent military officers. He credited, in particular, "three distinguished ministers who have held the office of Secretary of State for Air," Sir Samuel Hoare, Lord Thomson, and Captain F. E. Guest, quoted for opinions in 1927 and 1928.[45] As early as in 1914, Sir George Aston envisaged a situation in the near future when "the issue between nations may be brought to a conclusion in the air." Among military sources, Spaight named Lieutenant-Colonel Gill (1919), Colonel J. C. F. Fuller (1920), and Wing Commander (later Air Vice Marshal) C. H. K. Edmonds, D.S.O., O.B.E. (1923).[46]

The most concise statement of British military and governmental air war doctrine was made in 1927 by the highly decorated British Vice Air Marshal, Sir Frederick Hugh Sykes, who served, for a time, as Chief of the Air Staff:

> "Air War," says Sir Frederick Sykes, "in spite of any and every international agreement to the contrary, will be carried into the enemy's country, his industries will be destroyed, his food supply disorganized, and the will power

> of the nation as a whole shaken.[. . .] Various proposals, such as the control of the air effort, service and civil, of all countries by the League of Nations, and even the complete elimination of aviation, have been put forward as a means of avoiding the horrors of aerial warfare and its appurtenances, but they are untenable, and any power wishing and able to sweep them aside will undoubtedly do so. A future war, as I see it, will begin something after this manner, provided either side possesses large air forces. Huge day and night bombers will assemble at the declaration of war to penetrate into the enemy's country for the attack of his centres of population, his mobilisation zones, his arsenals, harbours, strategic railways, shipping and rolling stock."[47]

This is how war begins in *Air Raid*, except that the town under attack is not really a center of population and heavy industry.

3 Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*

In 1980, MacLeish invoked Picasso's painterly vision of total war, the collage-painting *Guernica*, as his immediate inspiration. Calling it, not inappropriately, a "screaming picture," he explained that when he first saw it, he "*heard* it – began to hear it: the women's voices at their work, the children calling." First thing in the painting, he remembered the "shrieking woman," her child dead.[48]

To regard *Air Raid* as the acoustic equivalent of what may well be Picasso's most famous work indeed offers an excellent approach to the play, which is very much a sound-painting. But such a view is, at the same time, misleading because the sounds are those of an air raid, though nothing in the collage-painting except its title remembers the air raid that erased the small town of Guernica on 26 April 1937. The figures which Picasso arranged over the fallen swordsman evoke a more general terror.

The dissimilarities of medium and magnitude are evident. *Guernica* was designed as a huge mural – 11 foot 5½ by 25 foot 5¾ – for the Spanish pavilion at the 1937 Paris World Fair, the time slot for *Air Raid* is an acoustic miniature of thirty minutes duration. But the concepts of art which govern the two works are similar enough. When MacLeish wrote his play, he could not have known Picasso's method. But in 1980 he had a clear understanding of the Spaniard's kindred aesthetics.

At this later date, MacLeish's recollection of the historical incident was uncertain: He thought that "on the twenty-eighth of April that year [1937] German planes, using the Spanish Civil War as practice ground for the Nazi conquest of Europe already planned, bombed the undefended city of Guernica without warning or even declaration of war." The date is not that of the air raid but of the most prominent newspaper report, that of G. L. Steer in the London *Times* and the *New York Times*. The "city of Guernica" was, at the time, a small town of not more than 7,000 inhabitants and an estimated 3,000 refugees plus an indefinite number of Basque militiamen falling back from the rapidly crumbling front. It is true that the

Spanish Civil War (17 July 1936 to 1 April 1939) was an undeclared war. But by the time of the raid on Guernica, the war was in its tenth month. Because of the discrepancy between what was known and believed at the time and what historical research has brought to light since, a survey of the developing historical insight has been included in Appendix II.

Picasso was violently opposed to the Falangist cause. A striking document – according to H. P. Chipp one of the two instances when Picasso produced "true propagandist art" – is a surrealist poem accompanied by eighteen panels of etchings, which caricature the Insurgent leader as a grotesquely inhuman monster. Published in early January, 1937, *Sueño y mentira de Franco* seems to have been the occasion for the Popular Front government to invite the artist to contribute a mural for the Spanish pavilion at the Paris World Fair later that year.[49] As Chipp explained, Picasso hesitated because of the propaganda and popular aspects of the project and also because he still smarted from what he had experienced as slights suffered at the hands of a government official.[50] Eventually he accepted, and some of the imagery of *Sueño y mentira* reportedly found its way into *Guernica.*

The stages of composition are well documented by a series of photographs by his then companion, Dora Maar. It is of the greatest importance for the assessment of *Guernica* as art that Picasso, who later, after the end of the Second World War, asserted "his adherence to the French Communist party," removed every trace of Communist emblems found in the early sketches and drafts, most obviously the raised fist clenching hammer and sickle.[51] Instead, he found prominent places for images that had already had powerful associations in his earlier work, most notably his bullfight emblem consisting of *toro* and the picador's gored horse. The group, according to Chipp, evokes the *duende*, the Spanish glorification of "walking on the brink of death."

This potent image was combined with an image of military defeat, the fallen warrior, below. At both ends of the painting, there are agonized women: on the left-hand side, one with a dead child, on the right hand, one falling back into a cubist fire. The center is marked by the intersection of extensions of angular movements. There is a woman dragging her leg from the lower right hand corner diagonally up and staring into the same direction. It is unclear what precisely her focus is, the horse's screaming head, the feeble glare of an electric bulb, or an oil lamp held by another woman, apparently also screaming, her arm and head thrust into the scene from a window on the upper right-hand side. This female figure is, I believe, at the center of MacLeish's compact but poignant reading of *Guernica*:

> *Guernica* is not a political protest. It is a work of art. A work of art which *sees*. And what it sees is a new world – a new world of war. A new and unspeakable horror of war. A war waged not by armies against armies but by machines in the blind sky against cities, against the women and children of open cities. The lamp thrust in by an arm from elsewhere to the center of

> the screaming picture is the lamp of art that sees and shows. With the painting of *Guernica* the inhumanity of man saw its human horror.[52]

The image of the woman with the lamp as the muse of an art which does not duplicate what has happened or exemplify a party line but sees what is new and makes others see – that is an aesthetic tenet which applies to *Guernica*, *Air Raid*, and a good deal of other modernist art. *Guernica* is art, not journalism nor propaganda, because Picasso withdrew both from the details of the bombing run on Guernica and a partisan view of the Spanish Civil War and offered a vision of humanity undivided in its wartime suffering, though the title remembers the military incident. Because of his acoustic medium, MacLeish remained stuck with an air raid. In this play, his is an art that hears but otherwise is motivated very much like Picasso's had been before.

Because MacLeish later explicitly linked *Air Raid* with *The Fall of the City* in their contemporaneous context, a brief look at his 1980 opinions is in order. By the 1930s, he said,

> [t]oo many nations had walked away from freedom [. . .] and accepted tyranny in its place – Lenin's tyranny first . . . Mussolini's . . . Hitler's. And even in the United States the double talk of those who had lost heart had taken the place of Jefferson's honest English. "America first" meant, not that the old American commitment to human liberty came first, but that it didn't.[53]

Six years later, prompted by B. A. Drabeck and H. E. Ellis, MacLeish further explained that his 1929 trip to Mexico, which had, among other things, resulted in an invasion poem, *Conquistador*, had also impressed on him the image of the Zocalo, the vast square at the center of Mexico City, as a great opportunity for the imagination.[54] The "theme of *The Fall of the City*," he added, was motivated by the expected *Anschluss*, the "takeover of Austria by Hitler." It is the "proneness of men to accept their own conqueror, accept the loss of their rights because it will solve their problems or simplify their lives." There were other historical reasons for the takeover of Austria. But as MacLeish saw it, there was also a link between the theme of accepting, almost of making one's own conqueror and the historical *conquista* insofar as "Cortès was accepted even by Montezuma when he originally came."

No doubt, this identification of the theme at the center of *Fall* is compatible with the earlier principled theme of 1980, which had focused on a failure of nerve in the face of the twentieth-century totalitarian regimes. But the 1986 inclusion of *Air Raid* into the same scheme fails to convince on more counts than one. MacLeish now explained the topicality of his second radio play in different terms:

> The relation to events is very much the same [as in *Fall*], much more deliberate in this case. That is when Guernica had happened and it was very natural to try to imagine a city which was going to undergo that kind of an

> attack. You kept thinking of the horse who breaks into the right hand side of the picture – rumor, fear, terror.[55]

The error about city is repeated. The identification of Picasso's gored horse as "rumor, fear, terror" is a possibility. But the animal has its place clearly on the left-hand side of the picture. What breaks into the right-hand side is the muse with her lamp, if it is the muse.

MacLeish then began to reflect on his "own deep personal concern in and about the Spanish war." Because of it, "the apprehension at the beginning, the sense of coming – in this case of the planes coming, not the conqueror – is more moving to me than the beginning of *Fall of the City* but, nevertheless and notwithstanding, the play *Air Raid* just doesn't do the same thing."

It is intriguing to see the two causes of suspense, the coming of the conqueror and of the planes, linked under the head of apprehension, a suspense-making device. But this perspective carries only so far. The responses of the characters are critically different. Defeatism plays a part only in *Fall*; the main issue of *Air Raid* is ignorance, the mistaken reading of modern war on the part of the women, not the men.[56] MacLeish's remark that the later play "just doesn't do the same thing," does not refer to this essential difference of plot and theme. It carries a value judgment: In *Air Raid*, "I was really doing the same thing over [as in *Fall*] but in a different way. . . . But it just doesn't work as well."[57]

I am prepared to argue that it works better if one allows it to pull its own weight and does not also saddle it with that of *Fall*. But later comments picked up these errors and added others.

In his 1992 biography of MacLeish, S. Donaldson read *The Fall of the City* quite simply as a "warning against the fascist oppressors" which came true "when the Nazi tanks clanked into Austria."[58] Adopting MacLeish's conqueror-planes equation, Donaldson opined that *Air Raid* was "on a similar theme." Once again the poet "depicted the advent of a conqueror, except that this one hurls destruction from the skies at innocent women and children." In his characterization of Picasso's *Guernica* as a "vivid rendering of that undefended Spanish city," the erroneous "city" of MacLeish's statement of 1986 crops up again.

Donaldson correctly reported MacLeish's intention to convey "the generic horror of modern warfare." But in order to characterize the "intolerable timeliness" of *Air Raid*, he imported yet another error: "The October broadcast, according to *Time*, provided a 'straight projection' of the Nazi *Anschluss* against Czechoslovakia the month before." The time is correct, the victim is correct, but there was no *Anschluss*, no take-over and political incorporation of an entire country, as in the case of Austria. September 1938 was, it will be remembered, the month when Germany occupied those border areas of Czechoslovakia that were inhabited by a large German majority.

That much said and done, I believe that the best approach to *Air Raid* is to read it as a response to Picasso's "screaming picture" and as a small work of art

which obtains its dramatic structure from having one's ears cocked for the sound of approaching airplanes – sounds that have since become an earmark of modern total war, though our military now prefer unmanned missiles and drones.

4 Old style war and new in *Air Raid*

As far as air-war doctrine is concerned, I am far from claiming that all MacLeish did was dramatize a view such as Sykes's. I do not even know whether he was familiar with Douhet's or Spaight's work. But he was well informed. *Air Raid*, it will be remembered, is about a war "waged not by armies against armies but by machines in the blind skies" against civilians. This is precisely the tension which gives life and shape to the play: that between old style military war and modern total war. In *Air Raid*, the targeted civilians are the women and girls of a small agricultural town – the men are away for the day's work in the fields –, and they are represented as speaking for themselves. They form the collective hero of the play, just as the hero of American expressionist plays of the 1920s and socialist plays of the 1930s was often a collective. MacLeish had responded with enthusiasm to the living theater of, for instance, Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty* (1935).[59]

In the play, the air raid, if it was to happen, would mark the beginning of a war somewhere between the Tiber and the Somme. By now, an ultimatum has lapsed.[60] While attempts are being made to connect the studio with the on-the-spot Announcer, the Studio Director invokes both the old war-between-states doctrine and the war-between-populations doctrine:

> In the old days, they watched along the borders:
> They called their warfare in the old days wars
> And fought with men and men who fought were killed.
>
> We call it peace and kill the women and the children (6).

Later in the play, when an Old Woman comments on the approaching planes, she is absolutely sure that they will pass by; for she knows war as a threat exclusively to the government and the military. Her diction is more concrete, more down-to-earth than the Studio Director's. Part of her speech is reminiscent of *The Fall of the City*:

> It's not for housewives in this town they're coming.
> They're after generals: they're after the cabinet ministers.
> They're coming to capture the square in the capital city.
> They always have: they always capture the city (24).

Here are, bunched together, the general (there is only one in *Fall)*, the cabinet ministers, and the large square of the earlier play.

Another woman character goes even further. In her recollection, the war which she experienced as a young girl was perfectly idyllic. Enemy troops in their colorful uniforms were at bivouac "by the stream in the water-meadow" nearby

and shared milk with girls from the town (14-15). Later in the play, a collective of women's voices is sure that, as of old, war will never affect them.

> They're always marching past to capture something!
>
> [. . .]
>
> They've never troubled us yet!
>
> They've never harmed us!
>
> They never will (25-26).

When the Police Sergeant, ordered to see to it that everyone take shelter in basements or the church vault, tries to persuade the women by speculating that this may be a new kind of war fought against the civilian population, they defeat him with "a great shriek of laughter" (28). When the planes swing around in attack formation, they believe this to be an error:

> Show it our skirts in the streets: it won't hurt us!
>
> Show it our softness! Show it our weakness!
>
> Show it our womanhood!
>
> Into the street! (34).

In a sense, the third person singular neuter pronoun, applied only by the women to the attacking air force, suggests that their appeal to chivalry, perhaps humaneness, is doomed from the outset (32). In this image, it is a single entity that attacks – mechanical, non-human, neuter. In the street, which, only minutes ago, had echoed with their scoffing, the women are now met with another burst of sound: a crescendo of roaring engines, explosions, shots, "a crazy stammering of machine guns" that annihilates everything that may have been chivalrous and humane in the war between states (35). It is an attack also on the listeners' sense of hearing, springing total war out of their sets into their rooms. In Reis's sense, sound effects become argument. MacLeish's emphasis on the machine-gunning of civilians harkens back to the title of George Steer's *New York Times* article on the bombing of Guernica.

Employing terms of MacLeish's poetics, one may say that this is, basically, how *Air Raid* renders the experience of the transition from old-style chivalric war – to the extent that war has ever been chivalric – to modern total war.

5 The radio art of *Air Raid*

In order to appreciate whether and, if so, how MacLeish's poetic objective works in this play – the objective of making an audience experience an experience –, it is necessary to study it not as a newscast nor as a poem but as a work of radio art, where there is no journalistic news value, and the poetic word is only one – albeit the most important one – of the signs of radio language, somewhat in the semiotic sense of the word; the others are voice, sound, music, radiophonic effect, acoustic

quality, distance, and, in stereophonic radio, direction.[61] To the extent that *Air Raid* draws on the radio news schema of the on-the-spot report, one focus must be on the relation between authenticity and fictionality; in so far as the radio crew has an overview over the small town and its surroundings and shifts the attention according to where the action is, it is a good idea to study location and timing in terms of sequence and segment; since it is a play for radio broadcast by the Columbia Workshop, it makes sense to watch how MacLeish comes to terms with Irving Reis's notion of the essential art of the sound effect; finally, it pays to look at *Air Raid* in terms of dramatic irony, in the sense of discrepant awareness, because a structure by points of view and levels of information is an important instrument for translating concepts into the experience of concepts in action. I plan to focus on each point as it works in a part of the play without anxiously keeping each in isolation from the others.

5.1 The issue of authenticity and fictionality is, perhaps, most prominent in the opening sequence when the Studio Director sets the theme while attempts – fictional attempts – are being made to establish the connection with the on-the-spot Announcer. Since the technicians fail twice, it makes sense to assume that the first segment includes the Studio Director's premeditated text whereas his later statements are more or less improvised.

VOICE

When you hear the gong sound . . .
The time will be . . .
Ten seconds past two A.M. precisely . . . .

(*Gong signal*)

VOICE

WABC . . . New York . . . .

STUDIO DIRECTOR

Ladies and gentlemen:
You have only one thought tonight all of you

You who fish the fathoms of the night
With poles on rooftops and long loops of wire

Those of you who driving from some visit
Finger the button on the dashboard dial
Until the metal trembles like a medium in trance
And tells you what is happening in France
Or China or in Spain or some such country

You have one thought tonight and only one:
Will there be war? Has war come?
Is Europe burning from the Tiber to the Somme?

You think you hear the sudden double thudding of the drum

You don't though . . .

Not now . . .

But what your ears will hear within the hour
No one living in this world would try to tell you.
We take you there to wait it for yourselves.

Stand by: we'll try to take you through . . . .

(*The station cuts out: there is a moment's delay: it cuts in again.*)

STUDIO DIRECTOR

One moment now [. . .] (3-4).

In the Columbia Workshop production, *Air Raid* was announced as a play, and attentive listeners will not have expected anything else. In fact, even the authentic-sounding time signal took on a quality of fiction and will always do so when the play is broadcast at any time other than ten seconds past two A.M. A gong signal is authentic – it marks time – only when there is a double relation, with the surrounding words one of definition, and one of coincidence with the pertinent time zone. Saying as much is to relate this poetic moment in radio art to an important tenet in MacLeish's art of poetry. There is, he suggested, a relationship between the sound structure and a poetic technique of providing – "the capacity of the words to mean more than their ordinary meanings."[62] When the relationship of the gong signal with the course of terrestrial time is severed, it becomes, I submit, free to adopt a meaning that differs from its ordinary one. It may well announce a perspective on the sound effects in the entire play: that they, too, are likely to adopt meanings beyond the usual ones. It makes sense to keep an ear on this matter.

The Studio Director's first nineteen lines are a rhetorical attempt to form the right kind of audience for *Air Raid*, one whose most burning question is whether peace will prevail. MacLeish could be certain that it was shared by many in October 1938. F. L. Allen, author of an eminently readable history of the American 1930s, rich in detail but not without miniscule errors of fact, stated:

> Not until 1930 had there been such a thing as a world-wide broadcast; now one could hear, in quick succession, voices from London, Paris, Berlin, and Prague, and millions of Americans were hanging on every word."[63]

His compact roll call of aggressions begins with Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. Early next year, Germany sent its troops into the Rhineland zone that had been demilitarized after the Great War. In the same year, Germany, Italy, and Soviet Russia took sides in the Spanish Civil War. The Japanese attacked China in 1937. In March 1938 – encouraged, apparently, by the message of Prime Minister Chamberlain sent by special envoy that London would accept certain changes in Czechoslovakia, Austria, and in the area of Danzig, provided they were "brought about by

peaceful developments" and in the light of "equally encouraging [. . .] auguries" on the part of France[64] –, Germany made Austria over into one of its provinces. In September, Hitler fomented the crisis over those of the border districts of Czechoslovakia inhabited by a large German majority.[65] In the second half of September, the developments were extensively reported by H. V. Kaltenborn, news commentator for the Columbia Broadcasting System. Americans grew accustomed to news programs containing passages such as "'. . . We take you now to Prague.' A pause, while the mind leaped the Atlantic in anticipation; then another voice: 'Hello, America, this is Prague speaking. . . .'"[66]

The crisis over the Czech borderlands, it was felt, brought Europe to the brink of war. As a consequence, Hitler's assurance that their cessation was the last of his territorial demands was welcomed by the main negotiator, Neville Chamberlain, as "peace for our time."[67] In March 1939, when Hitler bullied the Czech President Emil Hácha and his Foreign Minister into signing the treaty that made the remainder of their country over into the *Reichsprotektorat Böhmen und Mähren*, he gave the lie to his assurance about territorial demands[68]; but peace was preserved.

Was it really? It lasted no longer than another five months. On 1 September 1939, Hitler's Germany invaded Poland. Earlier, in October 1938, MacLeish could certainly count on quite a number of his listeners to remember the fear caused by the *Sudeten* crisis of September and the relief when it ended peacefully. So when he had his Studio Director declare that all of his listeners had "only one thought tonight," the highly metaphoric lines about fishermen of the fathoms of the night or, perhaps, people fishing in the depths of the night, with its alliterations, the more intricate orchestration in lines such as "With poles on rooftops and long loops of wires," and the intruding end rhymes when overseas areas are named and when, finally, the anticipated thought is spelled out in the dammed up rhythm of "Will there be wár? / Has wár cóme?" – when MacLeish made these lines poetic in his sense of sound patterns adding to the meaning of semantics and syntax, he could be sure that listeners would recognize this language as one not encountered in a regular newscast. So what is it they are listening to? Perhaps something quite extraordinary? For France, unlike Spain and China, is not a location on the international map of military crises of the later 1930s. Has this country merely been imported in order to provide an isolated and, hence, emphasis-marking rhyme with the spiritistic comparison of the radio set with "a medium in trance"? Perhaps – but not merely. For to make the list of potential but unnamed crisis states open-ended by means of almost a disparaging phrase, "or some such country," is also to open up a potential sequence of assonances and rhymes, with a French River, "Somme," in a fairly prominent position and culminating in a line which spreads out the acoustic war signal over an extended space, again in terms of a sound pattern: "You think you hear the sudden double thudding of the drum." This time, it is the regular, determined march of seven iambs onomatopoetically evoking drum beats.

Was all this in the listeners' minds, too? Is this all that was in the listeners' minds? Of course not. But even so, there is, after all, the suggestion that the next hour will tell. The blank deixis in "We take you there to wait it for yourselves" is intriguing. It is as indefinite, in reference, as "some such country." In a sense, the play as it unfolds amounts to a definition, in terms of palpably concrete details, both of the local adverb "there" and the most inconspicuous pronoun "it."

When the Studio Director is on again, he has another nineteen lines to bide time until the next attempt to reach the on-the-spot Announcer is made. This time, he mentions, as a matter of course, an ultimatum: "The ultimatum you remember was for sunrise by their clock: / Midnight by ours" (4). The Studio Director then invokes a sunny morning in all of Europe to the west of the "east Baltic" and the "Tyrrhenian Sea," where the crises over Austria and Czechoslovakia had taken place. And in another expansive onomatopoeia, he suggests the sound of airplanes:

> The visibility is perfect. . . .
>
> You think you hear the lonely droning danger of the planes
>
> You don't though. . .
>
> Not yet. . . .
>
> (*The station cuts out: cuts in again.*) (5).

The phrase "Not yet" causes a problem. Its counterpart "Not now" in the first segment implied *but possibly later*. It was, therefore, perfectly logical to take listeners to be ear-witnesses of whatever was about to happen. But the negation "Not yet" suggests *not now but at some later moment*: There is no doubt that war planes will eventually come. If I see it correctly, this change is motivated not by the morning sun over Central and Western Europe nor by the idea of an ultimatum. For while the openness of "Not now" was at variance with the very title of the play, the "Not yet" now brings the developing play into line with it, with an air raid that can be expected, in the imagined world, because it has been announced in the title.

At this point, dramatic irony, barely perceptible at first, begins building. What is going to happen in the play is that the radio crew's fuller grasp of reality – for instance its implied knowledge of what the ultimatum spelled out – will prepare attentive listeners to expect for certain an attack on civilians in a provincial town of no recognizable military importance, "where the papers / Come tomorrow morning and the wars / Come years ago or in some other country" (5). From this more inclusive, up-to-date perspective, the actions of the collective hero of this play, the women in the nameless town, are woefully inadequate: in fact, are self-destructive. While making sense only in their antiquated conception of war, their actions are, in dramatic fact, fatal errors: errors that bring about their death. Listeners aware of this particular clash of the two perspectives – that of the listeners instructed by the radio crew and that of the women observed by it – will experience the tragedy of the townspeople more poignantly: If only they were able to see, as we do, that they

are headed for disaster! I propose to look at the dramatic dynamics implied in the structurally unequal distribution of knowledge at a later point.[69]

In this third segment – nineteen lines again –, the "Not yet" and the "Not now" are, at first, co-present: "The planes will come though – if they come at all" (5). But presently, in a soul-searching reflection that conveys a sense of deep feeling, the Studio Director outlines the position from which to assess all that is going to happen. An important part of both the poetry and the rhetoric of the play depends on the shuffling and reshuffling of the pronouns. Who is the *we* and the *us* and the *our* at each moment? As a consequence, the central statement is truly outrageous:

> Strange and curious times the times we live in:
> You watch from kitchens for the bloody signs:
> You watch for breaking war above the washing on the lines.
>
> In the old days they watched along the borders:
> They called their warfare in the old days wars
> And fought with men and men who fought were killed:
>
> We call it peace and kill the women and the children.
>
> Our women die in peace beneath the lintels of their doors.
>
> We have learned much: civilization has gentled us:
> We have learned to take the dying and the wounds without the wars.
>
> Stand by please: we take you through now. . . . (6).

The inclusive "we/our" of "the times we live in" and "civilization has gentled us" makes *us*, the listeners, killers of women and children – indeed an outrageous claim, it would seem. Where have *we* bombed women and children? There is a strident tone of sarcasm: to be "gentled" into accepting non-combatant war victims ("the dying and the wounds") without admitting that they are victims of war – what a perversion!

Indeed, the new kind of war is perverse. But hit hardest is the *word* "peace." The real outrage is a perversion of language. This is our responsibility: whenever we do not call a spade a spade. Our words must be a true reading of reality. *War* is *peace* is the kind of newspeak later satirized by George Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949).

Apart from being a local outburst of this sort, this passage is crucial for an understanding of *Air Raid* and the dramatic irony involved. But it is necessary to examine the location of the on-the-spot Announcer and the corresponding structuring of segments and sequences first.

5.2 Location, segment, and sequence. The third attempt to establish a connection with the mountain town works. The Studio Director spells out the technique in an impressive way, which bears full quotation, by the evocation of topographical traits, rendered in neatly orchestrated verse, as though seen from an airplane that flies as fast as speech moves. In Ezra Pound's terms, MacLeish offered a convincing combination of *phanopoeia* with *melopoeia*[70]:

We take you now across the traveler's sea
Across the trawler's coast
the parson's orchard
Across the merchant's villa with the vine above the porch
Across the laborer's city with the flames above the forges
Across the drover's plain
the planter's valley. . . .
The poplar trees in alleys are the roads
The linden trees in couples are the doors
The willows are the wandering water flowing
The pines in double lines are where the north wind burns the orchards
Those are the mountains where no meadow is squared nor a
Stream straight: nor a road: nor water quiet
The town is in those mountains: you are there (6-7).

An Announcer takes over in a new tone of voice, "(*flat: dry*)" (7). Stationed on top of a "kind of tenement," soon identified as a "four-story building of women" from where the men – "Many sleep in the house here: [. . .] sleep in the village" – have gone to the fields for the day's work (8). Listening and looking toward the east into the rising sun, the Announcer's only thought is on the planes that are expected to come. Before dawn, the wind in the "valley cedars" misled him into believing he heard engine noises (7).

In the original broadcast, in temporal proximity to the crises over Austria and Czechoslovakia, it would not have been totally amiss for listeners to believe that this was the end of "peace for our time" in Europe. On the other hand, it is highly unlikely that there were four-story tenement buildings in villages or, for that matter, in small agricultural towns anywhere between Poland and France. Agricultural laborers used to live if not in hovels then in rows of one-floor cabins. And there are no cedars – trees of Lebanon and the Atlas – in Europe except when cultivated in a park. But anyone who should feel that the poet was confused will do well to consider that this may have been a planned fusion. For, as will be remembered, MacLeish thought that poetry differs from statement by being sensuously concrete but referentially complex. In *The Fall of the City*, for instance, though the city is clearly an archaic structure South of the Rio Grande, there are planned anachronisms such as the presence of "cabinet ministers."[71] Similarly, the tenement building and the cedars may well be regarded as "anatopisms." After all, the nameless town "smells of a summer morning anywhere" (13).

Under these conditions of concrete universality, the radio crew on location literally looks down and eavesdrops upon the women, married, widowed, and unmarried, and on the children, all of whom are almost alone all day. What is continuously ob-

served and broadcast might well be called a scene, provided *Air Raid* were a stage play. But particularly because MacLeish employed radio techniques not only mimetically but inventively, it is important to review the concept of scene in radio terms.

5.3 Excursus: How to describe what one reads with one's ears. From the moment that the on-the-spot Announcer takes over, the play consists of a single space-time continuum. All this time, the actions and the suffering take place in one and the same small town during an unbroken continuity of about twenty minutes duration, until the enemy planes strike. There is a single overarching *point of view*, that of the Announcer on top of a four-story building, looking down and around, listening, and describing what he perceives and narrating the events he observes.

It is obvious that such a lookout cannot register and present everything. The inevitable selectivity can, I submit, be best described in terms of E. Miner's *Comparative Poetics*.[72] The different objects made present in narration and description are *points of attention*. As the play unfolds, they do not usually follow in the comprehensive contiguous order they have in empirical reality. Sometimes, selected points of attention – or, perhaps better, small areas of attention – are set side by side by the abrupt technique of the "cut." On another occasion, dialog that has been carried on by voices alone, without any background noise whatsoever, is, all of a sudden, overlaid by the voice of a woman that has been practicing scales all along, unheard, while, at the same time, a new background noise of barely audible distant explosions begins to make itself felt (28). If this noise is to be taken for anti-aircraft fire, the rising and falling of the singing voice alludes to the siren's warning.

Such juxtapositions of selected points of attention taken from a single space-time continuum are forms of abbreviation capable of suggesting meaningful units of experience in the order of art that have no counterpart in the order of empirical reality. If one calls such a constructed unit a *montage*, the term *collage* offers itself for such units of experience collated from more than one space-time continuum. In the rare cases that such constructions remain heterogeneous, without being unified artistically, one may speak of an *assemblage*.[73] There are no collages and assemblages in *Air Raid*.

Montage techniques are characteristic forms of composition in radio plays. While their component parts are relatively short, the longer parts of the respective space-time continuum that have a place in radio play may be called *segments*, which are linked syntactically or rhetorically or by association to form *sequences*.

5.4 Location, segment, and sequence resumed. The first sequence set in the mountain town consists of ten segments either spoken by the Announcer or overheard by him. They are in no way scenically linked. But they have a common theme: They build the perception of a feminine idyl in harmony with nature and at variance with – indeed, superior to – the male world.

Only the first segment is introduced by the Announcer. The women in the four-story tenement building are

filling the court with their quick talk
[. . .]
They rinse the shirts in the first real shine of the morning:
They talk – their arms to elbows in the tubs –

WOMEN'S VOICES

Who did she say?
When did she say so? (8).

Evidently, they gossip over their hard work. One of them complains about the grease on "his" shirt. Another woman blames "a man like yours" for his roving eye and is met with a perfect retort: "And you to talk! – you with that red-headed lolly-pop! / [. . .] If it's only his eye with him that wanders I wonder. . ." (8-9).

I agree with E. Breitinger that, in passages such as these, MacLeish enlisted the listeners' familiarity with soap operas.[74] It is good dramatic strategy to make the audience first feel completely at home with the play before bringing about its truly unsettling ending. The question is whether MacLeish rose above this level, and if so, how? There is nothing really extraordinary in the next two segments:

AN OLD WOMAN'S VOICE

A fine day I told him: a fine day:
A fine willing day: he could trust it for certain:
He could hay today and cock it tomorrow for certain.
Ah those arctic stars he said. . .

A BOY'S VOICE (*calling*)

Harry!
Harry! Be quick Harry! Be quick! Quick!

THE OLD WOMAN'S VOICE

Men are the fools: they have no trust in the world:
To make a crop of hay you're bound to trust it:
There's no sin but not to trust the world (9).

The transition from the washerwomen to the old woman reminiscing works perfectly if one trusts the poetry of the pronouns. Since "him" in the very last line of the washerwomen's segment refers to a husband, the same association will come natural in the old woman's first line. Her pet peeve is that men do not have any trust in the world; women, by contrast, do. That is to say, here and in several of the later segments, the women's contribution is down to earth practical experience. Again, soap opera buffs may be reminded that "strong" women characters such as Ma Perkins in the serial of the same name tended to offer "home philosophy."[75]

This leaves the boy's call cutting across. It will intrude similarly on two later occasions and finally form part of the coda, after the raid has ended. In terms of basic broadcasting technique, "calling" implies that while the old woman's part is

spoken close to a microphone, without the slightest echo (at the time often in a "dead booth"), the boy's voice is louder, at some distance from the microphone and acoustically suggesting open space. There is thus spatial discontinuity between the two segments. The nature of their relationship depends on how the boy's speech is handled in the broadcast. If it begins low, reaches a climax, and fades out again, it is safe to assume that the listener is meant to imagine that the boy, searching for Harry, is running by.

There is no indication in the text that this is what MacLeish intended. It is, therefore, at least as appropriate to read this interpolation as a montage of two segments taking place in the same town but at some distance from each other. Neither speaker is aware of the other; each pursues a purpose independently. The old woman's is dead-husband-bashing. In the boy's call, it is not important who Harry might be. E. Breitinger offered brother, friend, or dog.[76] To notice that "Be quick" is correct English while "Hurry up" would be more idiomatic is to realize that there is, perhaps, a special emphasis on quickness. By the evidence of the *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary*, the first meaning of *quick*, in modern English, is "not dead" and the second, "acting or capable of acting with speed."[77] The exclamation clearly implies the second meaning; but in the immediate conjunction with the theme of the dead husband, one may well overhear an overtone of the first. So that when, at the very end, after the air raid has claimed its civilian victims, the boy again calls for Harry three times, there is reason to assume that Harry is no longer "quick" in the first sense of the word. – These may be subtleties; but poetry – and modern poetry in particular – is a subtle matter, even on the air.

The transition to the next, the "girls'" segment – that of the unmarried women – is also managed by subtle links. "There's no sin but not to trust the world" is an adage earned by a lifetime's experience (9). The girls, from the beginning of their gossip, focus on a similar shortcoming on the part of young men: They don't live in the here and now. They never accept life as it is but are always planning and waiting for the plans to materialize:

> Life's more like itself for us than
> Them. They're always meddling with it –
> Always making life come true (10).

A very similar line-up of gender roles was represented by Per Hansa and his wife Beret in O. E. Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth* (1927) and will reappear, in 1944, in Ellen Webb's parents according to Mildred Walker's *Winter Wheat*.

At this moment in *Air Raid*, there is another intrusion, similar to the boy's call: *"Over the laughter and the voices a woman's voice, very high and clear and pure, singing a scale – Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! . . ."* (10). Is there a singer visiting? Is there a village girl studying singing? What counts is, again, the intrusion of an acoustic, a musical element which is extraneous to what has just gone on. Here, it marks the transition between two

segments. The next one again brings the listeners close to women talking. Whether they are the washerwomen or others in the village is unclear but not really important.

While the women in this segment also upbraid men, they are now on to a new topic, war. I wonder whether soap operas of the 1930s ever touched on this issue. It is common knowledge that it was in the sponsors' interest to avoid controversial issues.[78] The theme of war would seem to be particularly divisive. According to J. F. MacDonald, "Network polic[y]" was to "adher[e] to neutrality before war erupted."[79] Of course, the easiest way of being neutral is not to mention the threat of war at all.

As far as *Air Raid* is concerned, war is, of course, the decisive topic; and it is, in this segment, handled similar to other themes in previous ones, with gossiping eventually turning into a moment of wisdom. The upshot now is that the male worship of a hero's death is branded as puerile, for: "It's sticking to this giddy world that's hard – / Not turning limp and letting loose and tumbling" (11).

In the sequence under discussion, this is the apex and the turning point. It is, in a sense, punctuated by the boy calling again for Harry (who seems to be a real slowpoke). The sequence concludes with a moment of comic relief. The girls' voices come on again. In a kind of rap before the name – "a chanting beat which works into a kind of tuneless tune" –, they indulge in pure gossip such as:

> Where will she go in the silk of her petticoat?
>
> Who [!] will she show the silk of her petticoat?
>
> How would he know it was silk in her petticoat? (12).

With a shriek of laughter, the chant fades under the Announcer's second segment, which introduces the second sequence in town, the one involving the late risers: the sick, the very old, and the lovers.

5.5 Dramatic irony. If I approach the matter of discrepant awareness – the different points of view and corresponding levels of information – in terms of G. G. Sedgewick's *Of Irony: Especially in Drama* (1935), I do so not primarily because of its contemporaneity but because, in my reading, this classical study opens a portal in English critical thought: Sedgewick combined previous arguments on the subject matter in a way which introduced an important new perspective. He dissociated the term irony from the rhetorical sense of saying one thing but meaning something else, usually the opposite. By enlisting ideas that originated among German writers around 1800, he defined two closely connected features of a wide variety of plays.

For a play to interest an audience, Sedgewick thought, it must elicit a detached sympathy combined with superior knowledge. If the sympathy with, say, the tragic hero were not detached, the theatergoer would see things exclusively through the hero's eyes. But to the extent that a play offers inside information also from the antagonist's point of view, the audience is in a position to develop a comprehensive knowledge that embraces what each party in the play can know.[80]

Apart from this general, this structural irony in drama, Sedgewick also identified "specific dramatic irony." If one relies less on his cold-blooded summaries than on

his examples, there is specific dramatic irony whenever a character exults in a course of action which the audience – but not the character – recognizes as erroneous. This action is, as he put it, contradicted by reality[81]; it leads to the catastrophe.

Though Sedgewick's focus is on Greek, Shakespearean, and Ibsenian tragedy, his ideas also apply to such an apparently lightweight play as *Air Raid*, whose catastrophe, however, is weighty enough.

In MacLeish's radio play, structural irony is based on the fact that the listeners hear the Announcer, knowledgeable about the ultimatum and its circumstances, that they overhear actions in the town below and also earwitness the planes approaching. The women – but not the men – are ignorant of the international tensions and the corresponding danger. Specific dramatic irony, I submit, becomes effective when the women are immediately confronted with the danger they are in but upbraid the Police Sergeant, whose first appearance is accompanied by intrusive male voices shouting "Air Raid!" and "The bombers!" and who tries to make them aware of it (22). Yet instead of taking shelter, they rush out into the open because, in their firm but mistaken conviction, the enemy pilots will not attack when they recognize that they are women, and they rush to their mutilation and death because of the tragic misapprehension of their true situation.

An action such as this is, of course, totally unrelated to Guernica, whether market town or collage-painting.

As noted earlier, there are both highly visible and relatively unspectacular signs of structural irony in *Air Raid*. The recognition that modern war is not restricted to the military but is total in the sense that its objectives include everything and everybody, and, above all, civilians, is, it will be remembered, introduced in no uncertain terms by the Studio Director and shared by the male characters. It is, in terms of this play, a masculine insight or idea. Its feminine counterpart is the belief that the present war will be as chivalric as all previous ones have been and, therefore, will again bypass the womenfolk. In the play, this idea emerges in the early context of men-bashing when the town's women claim that talk about war has always come out of beer bottles and, as far as they are concerned, "it's always talk" (11). The first full invocation of old-style chivalric war, where there is nothing to fear for civilians, occurs in a sick woman's reminiscing motivated, in part, by the fears of her little son, who has read and heard that the enemy kills children. She, on her part, remembers how enemy soldiers in picturesque uniforms at bivouac in meadows by a stream near the town befriended teenage girls (16-17).

In order to gain insight into this aspect of MacLeish's radio art, it will do to analyze but a few moves and countermoves in the contest of opinion between the Police Sergeant and the town women (22-28). Their quarrel occurs under the pressure of a countdown of the minutes, from ten down, between the sounding of the siren and the expected arrival of the planes in the sky above the town. Most of the time – ten, eight, four – it is the Announcer who watches the clock; but when, at

the exact moment, the Police Sergeant, in the town, warns that there are only five minutes to go, it is clear that the expectation is true to the reality of the play.

The best-argued positions in this altercation occur late in the scene: less than five minutes before the anticipated attack. Here, the voice of experience of an Old Woman has thirty-six lines – interrupted once by the Announcer's clock reading of four minutes to go and once by a women's chorus of assent – to develop a sustained argument, not without touches of rhetorical irony, for the feminine perspective on war. The Old Woman's main point is that wars have never targeted women directly, because they are a unique, separate nation:

> THE OLD WOMAN'S VOICE
>
> We're women. No one's making war on women –
> The nation with no land: without history:
> The nation whose dates are Sunday and Monday: the nation
> Bounded by bread and sleep – by giving birth:
> By taking death to keep: the ancient nation
> Settled in the seasons of this earth as
> Leaves are and oblivious as leaves:
> Neutral as summer in the fierce divisions (25).

In this suasive passage, which picks up motives from the sick woman's narrative of idyllic war and other feminine pronouncements, women have an assured position beyond history and in nature. It is, if you will, a mystique of the motherly women so that an interpolation on the part of the women's chorus, in *Air Raid*, regarding the enemy – "They've never troubled us yet! / They've never harmed us" – comes to an apparently logical conclusion when the Old Woman opens it up into the future: "They never will." She ends with a reminder of the "history of this neighborhood" where, on all previous occasions, the military have been a nuisance but never a real danger (25-26).

With that much argumentative meat on the feminine side, the Police Sergeant begins to try to persuade them instead of giving orders. Interpreting his superiors, he invokes the idea of historical change – "and not for the better" (26). But his historicist argument is so much at odds with the transhistorical mystique of womanhood that it does not really come as a surprise that his suggestions of the kind that "It may have been thought: this enemy kills women" are met three times with increasing bouts of jeering laughter. It does come as a surprise, though, that when he adopts a more personal view – "I say it may be thought / *He* [the enemy] *makes his wars on women!"* –, "the laughter drops sharply away," the series is broken (27). There is, indeed, an extended "dead silence" when the Police Sergeant explains that this may be an unusual enemy who does not aim at conquering countries but at conquering life and who kills women because they are "most life-like." Examined carefully, this argument seems well designed to meet the feminine mystique of womanhood not as part of any nation in history but of nature's nation. The silence,

it would seem, suggests that the women are rethinking their position. But they are not convinced when the Police Sergeant sums up his argument by repeating: "It may be thought he / *Makes his war on women.* . . . It is possible." The play makes a decisive advance in a threefold montage of sound effects:

> *The women's voices rise again in a great shriek of laughter. Over the laughter, clear and lifting and lovely as laughter itself rises the Singing Woman's scale. Under it, dull, heavy, flat come soft explosions (28).*

This double turn – first towards the possibility that the women will realize their error and now, right at this point, back again to their mistaken belief that war will always remain the same – is an amazing moment in radio art. Its effectiveness depends on the acceptance of the mystique of womanhood. MacLeish must have thought that this notion served the purposes of *Air Raid* better than the actual objective of modern air war, the demoralization of the civil population. Towards this end, he relied on an element of historical semantics, manifest in the motherly type in the radio of the 1930s (e.g. Ma Perkins or the Jewish mother in *The [Rise of the] Goldbergs*, 1929-), on the stage (e.g. Bessie Berger in Clifford Odets' *Awake and Sing*, 1935), and in fiction (e.g. Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, 1939).

5.6 The art of sound effect. A main point of Irving Reis's legacy to the Columbia Workshop is the art of sound effect. Deftly handled by MacLeish, meaningful sound effects, present throughout, dominate the last minutes of the play and carry the argument. In the above mix, the laughter amounts to a definitive answer in the dialog with the Police Officer: The women will not be persuaded. The scale-singing woman, who has drifted in and out on several occasions, comes in as an acoustic device in support of the very last time that women laugh in the play. A definitely new element is the sound of the anti-aircraft defense which will be a distinct and increasing presence up to the catastrophe.

At the same time, the women now respond to the sound of the approaching anti-aircraft fire with a hilarity that borders on hysteria. By making them over into a taunting myth –

> WOMEN'S VOICES
>
> It's an ogre is coming!
>
> The devil is after us!
>
> Hide in the church from the devil!
>
> I know him –
>
> I've seen his face in the photographs. Oh but he's fierce! (28)

– they take final leave from the fire and steel of modern war. In the play, sound effects take over some of the narration – sounds which, unlike speech, cannot lie:

> *The police whistle blows sharply. Under the voices the explosions are always louder. Under the explosions the inaudible vibration of many planes swells painfully into heavy suffocating sound (30).*

As mentioned above, the climactic catastrophe speaks only with sounds: the engine roar, the explosions, the "shattering noise" of the guns, and the "crazy stammering of machine guns" (35).

Presently, MacLeish turned sound into a subdued, elegiac coda. Its status is not quite clear. It consists either of the sounds captured by the open microphone of the radio crew who have also been wiped out or it is some kind of objectified reminiscence. Because of the Young Man's contribution – the fiercest irony of all because in its original place an expression of deeply pulsing everlasting love but here contextually inverted into an image of the dead body, immobile for quite a different reason –, I tend towards the second alternative. Whatever the case may be, even the spoken words exist, to a large extent, for their acoustic value:

> *. . .then the voices are gone and the guns are gone and the scream of the planes closes to a deep sustained music note level and long as silence. After a moment comes the Boy's voice rising on each word, breaking off.*)
>
> BOY'S VOICE
>
> Harry! Harry! Harry! . . .
>
> (*The diminishing music note again – level – long.*)
>
> THE VOICE OF THE YOUNG MAN
>
> Stay as you are: do not move:
> Do not ever move. . .
>
> (*The diminishing music note again. Over it the voice of the Singing Woman rising in a slow screaming scale of the purest agony broken at last on the unbearably highest note. The diminishing drone of the planes fades into actual silence.*) (35-36).

6 Summary

Air Raid is an excellent early example of the unit play in American radio. Its timely objective was to alert the American public to the threat posed by the European totalitarian regimes that originated during the Great War of 1914 to 1918 and thereafter: in chronological order, Soviet Russia, Fascist Italy, National Socialist Germany, and Falangist Spain. In fact, the participation of Italy and Germany on the side of Franco and that of the Soviet Union and the Comintern-organized "international brigades" on the side of the Popular Front regime had made an international conflict of the Spanish Civil War. The other major threat was the rollback, staged by Hitler's Germany, of some of the exceptionally severe peace conditions of 1919. The two that were particularly timely for *Air Raid* are the *Anschluss*, the incorporation of Austria into the German *Reich*, and, shortly thereafter, the oc-

cupation of those of the *Sudeten* regions of Czechoslovakia that were populated by a German majority. These conflicts were settled by international agreements.

The air raid on the civilian population of a small country town around which MacLeish structured his play is part of a new concept of war which replaced the traditional idea that war is a matter between governments and involves only the military. In the 1920s and early 1930s, strategists extrapolating from the air war in the final phase of the previous war and, later, from the Italian campaign against Ethiopia developed the concept of total air war that targets primarily the civilian population in order to destroy a nation's will to resist. MacLeish gave the idea of modern war a particular feminine twist. Apparently inspired by the screaming and wide-eyed women so prominent in Picasso's collage-painting *Guernica*, he had the Studio Director declare that there is an enemy somewhere in Europe who makes war on life by killing women. The remainder of the play translates this thesis perfectly into radio terms according to the principles that governed the Columbia Workshop.

According to the printed text, MacLeish consciously employed all six signs of radio language then available: *word*, *voice*, *sound effect*, *music*, *acoustic quality*, and *distance*. Guided by the ideas of Irving Reis, the Director of the Workshop, he gave particular attention to sound effects. The other two signs, *radiophonic effect* and, in stereophonic radio, *direction*, came later in the history of radio art.

6.1 Words. The *wording* of *Air Raid* shows an achieved poet's hand. MacLeish emphasized *phanopoeia* and *melopoeia* combined. Excellent in evoking visual perceptions in surprising auditory patterns, his language renders the concreteness which his poetics demands. The first three lines of the Studio Director's claim that modern war targets women cumulate in a surprising visual effect:

> Strange and curious times these times we live in:
> You watch from kitchens for the bloody signs:
> You watch for breaking war above the washing on the lines (6).

Strange and curious the combination of breaking war and washing on the lines, especially since this homely detail is expressly emphasized by one of the very rare rhymes in the play. Because of its rarity in *Air Raid*, rhyme is not part of a schema. An expressive element, rather, of melopoeia, it serves to poeticize the "washing on the lines" – never before in poetry, I should guess – by linking it with a prominent detail of great and not so great tragedy: "bloody signs."

6.2 Voice. While MacLeish occasionally marked a speaker's voice ("The Announcer *(flat: dry)*" [7]) his major use of *voice* is the contrast between male voices – Studio Director, Announcer, Police Sergeant, and unidentified men – who know about modern warfare on the one hand and, on the other, women's voices who continue to hold on to their experience of the chivalrous war of the past, which, in their experience, always by-passed women so that they believe they are a separate nation untouched by the wars of men.

This neat vocal contrast is an occasion to emphasize again what I take to be a shortcoming of *Air Raid*. If in the "old days" wars were "fought with men and men who fought were killed," they came close enough to women because the men were sons or husbands or fathers (6). It is a note of callousness to brush off the violation women have suffered in old-style war in two lines of an "Old Woman's" speech:

> Nevertheless it is true that few have suffered –
> Maybe a girl would be rumpled a little. . .
> (There is a guffaw of women's laughter.)
> not many (26).

I wonder whether the credibility of the play would not have profited from the recognition that women have always been victims of war. The difference between the old-style indirect victimization – a more or less indirect one – and the direct targeting in modern total warfare is, I submit, clear enough for the point MacLeish wanted to make.

6.3. Sound effects. To characterize *Air Raid* as a play of acoustic realism is not only to say that the text directs the sounds which usually accompany actions and occurrences to be broadcast at the appropriate times. By having the Announcer repeatedly allude to his listening for the noise of approaching aircraft, MacLeish alerted the listeners to these sounds even while they are absent. It is part of the dramatic structure of expectation and fulfillment or disappointment that he familiarized the attentive listeners with the characteristic sound in a short interlude when "[o]ne of the home ships" circles high above the hills (16). Prepared in this way, listeners will probably catch the "*inaudible vibration of many planes [which] swells painfully into heavy suffocating sound*" (30) underneath other sound effects at a fairly early moment in the play.

In the end, the "*sound is huge, brutal, close*," and the decisive insight that modern war is indeed a war on women is conveyed wordlessly: "*For an instant the shrieking voices of the women, the shattering noise of the guns and the huge scream of the engines are mingled. . .*" (34, 35).

The directing of this play on the air is a delicate matter. For continuous loud sound effects in the background tend to make the spoken word difficult to understand. But there are points in the play calculated to render precisely such moments, as for instance when the sound blots out the Announcer's words as the planes dive:

> They're dead on the town: they're nosing:
> They're easing over: they're over:
> There they go: there they –
> (*A crazy stammering of machine guns hammers above the rising roar.*) (35).

6.4 Music. The acoustic realism of the play does not leave much room for *music.* Evidently a part of the object world is the "*tinny piano*" which is heard "*far off"* playing mood music, "*a few indistinguishable phrases of summer morning music"* (13). So is, at first, the woman's voice singing a scale (10). Repeated, there is a moment when it

mimics the siren's air raid signal and another when it serves to demarcate one segment from the next. The most critical musical moment occurs when the machine gun attack on the women and on the listeners' ears ends, when "*the voices are gone and the guns are gone and the scream of the planes closes to a deep sustained music note level and long as silence"* (35).

What the text requires is a low dark hum which is reminiscent both of airplane noises in the far distance and something like an insistent cello vibrato.

6.5 Distance and acoustic quality. The examples under *sound* and *music* will have indicated some of the uses of *distance* made in *Air Raid*. Though *acoustic quality* is explicitly referred to only once in the play, I expect that a careful director would make repeated use of it. The term applies, for instance, to a quality of sound that makes the Studio Director's speeches recognizable studio utterances whereas the Announcer's words should have an acoustic quality of speech in the open. MacLeish recognized this difference at the moment of transition by the direction *"The 'note' of the station changes*" (6).

6.6 The play's dramatic structure. *Air Raid* is a thirty-minute play. Since the title sets the theme, there should be no doubt, on the listeners' or readers' part, that there is going to be an air raid before the play ends. It is not a question of whether there is going to be such an attack but what the circumstances are.

The play consists of two major parts, formally separated. The first, of four to five minutes duration, is set in a broadcasting studio in New York City. While efforts are being made to establish the connection with a reporter on location somewhere in Europe, the Studio Director keeps the listeners informed. The most important point is the distinction between old-style war that involved only government and the military and a new kind of war whose preferred target are civilians, and, in particular, women.

The main part of under twenty-five minutes' duration is set in an unnamed small agricultural mountain town in an unidentified European country. The presentation is governed by the on-the-spot Announcer, who has about the same background information as the Studio Director, describes what he sees and narrates the action he observes and, apparently, monitors the sounds – dialog and noises – that are picked up and transmitted. The structure of presentation, therefore, depends on a single point of view and a variety of points of attention. The shift between points of attention in a radio play makes for a structuring by *segment* that differs from the structuring by scene in a stage play, thus taking the particular radio quality of *Air Raid* into account. A change of scene is brought about by the complete or partial exchange of *dramatis personae*, a change of segment by a shift of attention on the part of the implied author. Besides, segments are considerably shorter than scenes usually are. Segments explicitly linked by thematic, syntactic or rhetorical devices may conveniently be called *sequences*.

Although the title makes the outcome clear, *Air Raid* is suspenseful in ways which critical readers will recognize as traditional dramatic techniques. While the

comprehensive suspense is a matter of dramatic irony, there is incidental suspense in terms of *moments of acceleration* and *moments of retardation*.

One such incidence occurs in the second sequence on location when the late and difficult sleepers awaken. By this time, about eight minutes into the watch over the mountain town, it will have become sufficiently clear that it is important to listen for the sound of airplane engines. When engine sounds fade faintly in, it is not unlikely that attentive listeners or readers will jump to the conclusion that the moment of attack is near. But when, perhaps a minute later, the Announcer identifies a home plane, the expectation of the imminent danger has been disappointed in a psychological move that is known as a moment of retardation among students of classical drama.

Dramatic irony is a matter of discrepant awareness. The male personnel – both the radio crew consisting of Studio Director and Announcer and, among the inhabitants of the town, the Police Sergeant and a few anonymous men – are agreed that what is to be expected is a new kind of strategy that directs its attacks on women. The women, on the other hand, work on a completely different level of information. They go by their recollection that wars have always bypassed them and are convinced that this will again be the case.

One cause of suspense is the question, Who is right, who knows what modern war is like? But since I am under the impression that the idea of total war is authoritative in the play, I respond to a further twist of suspense: Will the women recognize their true situation in time to seek shelter?

Seen in these terms, the catastrophe is not merely physical. The tragedy is not simply that the women fall victim to the peculiar kind of war posited in the play, the war to kill what is "most life-like." The true tragedy is a matter of misinformed conviction. The women are dead sure that they will be spared when the attackers recognize them for what they are. They rush out into the open – and are terribly mistaken.

Perspective

This brief study marks the beginning of a more comprehensive project which pursues the present perspective through the 1980s. The starting point was my recollection that each work to be included was a good read. Several of them were on the reading list of my course on forgotten or neglected American literature. The only exception is Josephine Miles's 1946 *Local Measures*, selected at a later time as the second work for the 1940s.

1 Ten more works of low visibility

Winter Wheat (1944, re-issued 1992) by Mildred Walker (1905-1998) is my first candidate. The author has been ignored by literary historians, and her work has but rarely found the attention of scholarly critics. With the exception of an article in 1985, the few items I am aware of date from this century: They include a biography and a study of Walker's modernism. *Winter Wheat* is the story of Ellen Webb, an intelligent girl from the Montana dry farming area, narrated from her point of view as it expands and matures while she enthusiastically begins to work her way through college in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She also suffers serious setbacks when a poor harvest forces her to return home after but one year and when she loses her boyfriend, the son of a University of Minnesota Professor, to the differences of background and upbringing as well as to the fear which the vastness of Montana instills in the refined, town-bred young man. A major interest is how Ellen overcomes the despondency into which she sinks due to her losses, so that her life finally becomes as sturdy, deeprooted, and resistant to hardships as the winter wheat of the title.

The internationality of *Winter Wheat* is submerged but essential. Its focus is on Ellen's relationship with her Russian mother Anna Petrovna, who came to America as the wife of a GI who had served with the American "Polar Bear" expeditionary force fighting in Northern Russia in the last year of the First World War and a while after the weapons had fallen silent elsewhere. The felt foreignness of her mother, together with the submerged animosity of an adolescent daughter, are slowly translated into true understanding when Ellen – Yeléna to her mother – begins to realize what it may take to hold the man one loves. To what extent this

thematic internationality is complemented by Walker's use of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry as a source of country values needs to be examined with special care.

As far as the second 1940s work is concerned, I was only sure that it was to be lyrical poetry. I took guidance from *Annals of American Literature, 1602-1983* (1985) by R. M. Ludwig and C. A. Nault, Jr., which offers lists of seventy to one hundred titles per year in the mid-twentieth century. I also found the *Hollins Critic* useful because the magazine features comprehensive articles on less-known poets. I chose Josephine Miles's *Local Measures* (1946) because I like her spare diction, the scrupulous exactitude of her verse, the careful orchestration employing the oboe rather than strings or brass, and her tendency towards the gnomic without arriving at the aphoristic. A definitory poem such as "Denial" suggests that hers is a passion of the mind not altogether dissimilar from that which is often displayed by John Crowe Ransom:

> Denial
>
> Events like the weeping of the girl in the classroom
> Bring to the demands of objects
> Denial pure and simple.
>
> Denies the sun, desk, hand, head of the girl,
> Denies the book, letter, document,
> Denies the ether of the natural will,
>
> Any event like the crying of girl
> In the chair in the sun
> In the passion of denial.[1]

Randall Jarrell (1914-1965), one of the two representatives of the 1950s that I have selected, is well represented in pertinent literary histories as a poet. His prose satire, *Pictures from an Institution: A Comedy* (1952, re-issued 1980), has been noted in only a single literary history, a German one. The mordant portrait of the President and the Creative Arts faculty of a fashionable women's college owes its internationality, at the level of characters, to the presence of an immigrant from Austria, Dr. Gottfried Rosenbaum, a way-out modernist composer:

> He loved hitherto-unthought-of, thereafter-unthinkable combinations of instruments. When some extraordinary array of players filed half-proudly, half-sheepishly on to the stage, looking like the Bremen town musicians – if those were, as I think they were, a rooster, a cat, a dog, and a donkey – you could guess beforehand that it was to be one of Gottfried's compositions. His *Joyous Celebration of the Memory of the Master Johann Sebastian Bach* had a tone-row composed of the notes B, A, C, and H (in the German notation), of these inverted, and of these transposed; and there were four movements, the first played on instruments beginning with the letter *b*, the second on instruments, [!] beginning with the letter *a*, and so on. After the magnificent

> group that ushered in the piece (bugle, bass-viol, bassoon, basset-horn, bombardon, bass-drum, bagpipe, baritone, and a violinist with only his bow) it was sad to see an Alp horn and an accordion to come in to play the second movement. Gottfried himself said about the first group: "Vot a bunch!" When I asked him how he had thought of it he said placidly: "De devil soldt me his soul."[2]

In this witty way, Jarrell has many acute observations to make about the creative arts curriculum of a liberal arts college and about America and Europe. Rosenbaum's family – wife, husband, housekeeper, and more – is introduced as follows:

> The Russian Irene, the Austrian Gottfried, the Bavarian Else, the Persian Tanya – the cat was named Tanya – these and the Simca, a French car manufactured under Italian patents often made me think of Europe and America, the Old World and the New. To think of such things is a confession of ignorance, and I was not so ignorant as not to know that; but I couldn't help myself. I thought about them, talked about them, even. When Gottfried cut his cantaloupe into squares with a knife and put sugar on the squares, it was as if I had seen Europe buckling into the Alps: I would feel, *How very European!* and then try to recall whether it was European or just Gottfried; the same thing happened with Irene; and with Tanya I must often have felt, *How very Persian!* when really it was only cat.
>
> It was hard to know whether to be just or patriotic. As you thought of Else you could be both: a Tasmanian, as he thought of Else, could have felt proud of the past and confident of the future. But sometimes as you thought about Gottfried you felt your trust in yourself shaken: it seemed to you too late to do anything about yourself – as much, that is, as needed to be done – and you felt that it wasn't just Gottfried, but Europe. Gottfried knew more than you did, and could do more with what he knew; and when you looked for a clause, beginning with *but*, that would end the sentence in your favor, you could not find one.[3]

My other choice from the 1950s is quite different. *Klumpendal/Clogs Valley* (1955) by a sixth-generation Pennsylvania German, Ralph Charles Wood (1904-?), is my stand-in for American literature written in languages other than English. A book in High German and, apparently, publishable at the time only outside the United States in a local venture in Northern Germany, it is so invisible that I did not find a single pertinent study when I looked into the matter for a conference in 2003.[4]

Klumpendal is a wryly comical and, at times, loudly humorous cultural rather than political portrayal of German-American life. Wood took cognizance of a multiple set of tensions and loyalties characteristic of an enclave/exclave community. Self-confident German-Americans resident in Illinois stick to their own ways and their own language, which is described as a blend of two German dialects, some English, with a few Gaelic curses thrown in by the McDonoughs, whose Westering

wagon broke down in Klumpendal.[5] To the extent that they resist Anglicization, they prove loyal to the archetypal American virtue of self-reliance. In the 1930s, they are civically and personally loyal to the United States, while not forgetting their cultural ties with the country across the Atlantic, about whose politics they know little and condone less. Their loyalty remains without a flaw during the Second World War.

The internal internationality of the United States is fully recognized when English America is defined as a foreign country in relation to the German-Americans of Klumpendal. The narrator's parents

> stammten beide aus dem Klumpendal, und der Vater wurde auch dort erzogen. Er spielte Klarinette, Gitarre und Mundharmonika und drückte sich am besten im Klumpendaler Plattdeutsch aus. Aber die Mutter geriet schon als kleines Kind unter den Einfluß des Auslandes, als ihre Eltern nach Chicago übersiedelten. Sie war klein, rundlich, und schusselig, nicht wie die Mädchen vom Tale, die mittelgroß und schlank sind. Sie nahm zwei Jahre Klavierstunden.[6]
>
> Both parents were born in Clogs Valley, and Father was also educated there. He played the clarinet, guitar, and mouth organ and was most at home in the German valley dialect. Mother, on the other hand, fell very early under the sway of foreign parts when her parents moved to Chicago. She was small, a little on the plump side, scatterbrained, and not of medium height and slender like the girls from the valley. She took two years of piano lessons.

In this conceit, you cross an international border when you move from Klumpendal to Chicago. It is also a social move. The instruments Father plays are associated with folk and rural music, and to learn to play the classical, not the jazz piano is a middleclass and urban aspiration. A dividing line in terms of language is implied in the statement that Father found the valley dialect most congenial. This dialect was certainly not spoken in Chicago. Mother's language was English or the kind of High German a culturally aspiring family is likely to have cultivated, though inevitably not without a touch of English, or, most likely, both.

To relate the publication of *Klumpendal* at Wolfhagen-Scharbeutz in 1955 to the extensive German-language publishing in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Cincinnati, and Chicago in the second half of the nineteenth century is to mark an era. The German-Americans who lived in the United States in 1900 – well over five million – enjoyed German culture, literary and otherwise, which seemed to be here to stay. Among the literary manifestations in German, the most telling ones are not the publications of verse and narrative prose, the theatrical productions, and the periodical press but German translations of English-American literature marketed by publishers usually addressing an English-speaking audience. German America was, indeed, firmly established. There was promise of good business in publishing English-American masterpieces for this large reading audience. The War of 1914 to 1918

brought about a drastic change, and Wolfhagen-Scharbeutz, 1955, marks something like the point of occlusion of the German-American literary enclave/exclave.

My choices for the 1960s are (Nelle) Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960, constantly in print) and *The Lilies of the Field* (1962) by William E. Barrett (1900-1986).

As a one-book author, Lee (1926-) has, of course, a hard time finding a place in any literary history – I have come across but two short mentions –, although the novel is among the most popular books in and out of school curricula. On the other hand, it is quite likely that it is precisely this kind of popularity that has barred it from literary histories, which do not normally extend a welcome to boys' books, unless by someone like Mark Twain. After all, *To Kill a Mockingbird* tells the story of two children, Jeremy, son (ten years of age) and daughter (six), invariably nicknamed Scout, of Atticus Finch, an Alabama lawyer, during three years when they begin to leave their children's games behind and have first glimpses of what adult life is like. Set in the 1930s, the plot has two centers. The first has its focus in Arthur "Boo" Radley, a man living as an involuntary recluse in the neighborhood, whom the children build up as a horror but who, in fact, tries to befriend them but is thwarted by his father. The victim-hero of the second is Tom Robinson, a young black who, falsely accused by a white character of the drinking class sarcastically named Robert E. Lee Ewell, is tried by the all-white, all-male jury usual at the time. Mr. Finch, who has been appointed counsel for the defense, proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that Mr. Robinson was physically unable to commit the crime of which he is accused: the assault and violation of a white woman. In a note of mordant irony, Lee presented it as a success of Mr. Finch's efforts that the verdict of guilty is not returned within minutes but only after several hours of deliberation.

There is a poignant element of internationality in the novel when some Alabamans fault Hitler for the persecution of Jews but fail to recognize that they do, in a sense, persecute the Negroes (to employ the term then widely in use). The two parts of the action are brought together in an incident which strains a bit at credibility. When the Finch children return at night from a school pageant, they are attacked, with murderous intent, by Robert Ewell, who rightly feels that Mr. Finch has publicly shown him up for a liar at the trial, and they are saved by Arthur Radley. In 1962, a movie garnering three Oscars and later a number of plays not only for school theaters but also for the professional stage were derived from Lee's novel.

In William L. Barrett's short novel, *The Lilies of the Field*, the prolific, versatile Roman Catholic writer had representatives of two outsider communities begin to cooperate, at first uneasily, but successfully in the end: a young black who received his honorable discharge from the Army and, traveling in the West, meets a handful of nuns originally from Communist East Germany who are engaged in setting up a religious community in Arizona. The 1960s, it will be remembered, was the period when two American prejudices came to an end: when the discrimination of Negroes – colored people – Afro-Americans – blacks was burned out in the violent struggle over Civil Rights, and the belief that Roman Catholics were questionable citizens

because they were, apparently, subjects of a foreign power no longer prevented the election of an Irish Catholic, John F. Kennedy, to the highest U.S. office.

The Lilies of the Field is an extreme case of popular success and academic neglect. The story made its way through the media. A movie version, directed and produced by Ralph Nelson, won Sidney Poitiers an Oscar in 1964. An adaptation to the stage by F. Andrew Leslie dates from 1967. There is a record of a Broadway Musical, *Look to the Lilies* (1970). The novelette was promptly translated into German (1963, second, popular edition 1971); so was the sequel, *The Glory Tent* (1967).

The Lilies of the Field was occasionally reviewed. But the author is a nonentity in the literary histories and the MLA Bibliography.

At first glance, the reception of one of my chosen books for the 1970s, *The Confessions of a Child of the Century by Samuel Heather* (1972) by Thomas (Hunton) Rogers (1927-2007) is not altogether dissimilar. Though Rogers was a professor of English and Creative Writing, his novels have remained totally invisible in scholarly criticism; but while his first novel, *The Pursuit of Happiness* (1968), was widely reviewed and made into a 1971 movie, *Confessions* was as good as ignored. The two of the three 1972 reviews which I was able to see are nondescript.

Theophilus North (1973) by Thornton (Niven) Wilder (1892-1975), my other choice for the 1970s, is similar to *Confessions* in a fundamental respect. Both are "alternative lives" in the sense that each hero when young leads a life that is recognizably very close to that of the respective author's. But at a crucial moment he makes a decision which the author did not and begins to lead a life of his own.

Like Thomas Rogers, the child of the century is a Harvard undergraduate. Other than in the case of Rogers, his violent prank of exploding a stick of dynamite on the bank of the Charles River ends his college career before graduation. In order to escape the consequences, he enlists in peacetime but quickly finds himself in Korea when war breaks out. His war experiences are not quite as spectacular as those of Forrest Gump, and unlike him he is captured by the enemy. And now the novel takes a turn which, in my reading, makes it truly exceptional: At the ceasefire settlement, the child of the century becomes one of the twenty-one GI's who chose to defect to Communist China.

The few reviews do not indicate whether this act of treason might have contributed to the book's neglect. The development beyond this point is striking for its depiction of life in China, based as it may be on documents or the imagination or on both; at the same time, it is vintage Rogers because, not unlike in *The Pursuit of Happiness*, the youthful rebel – surely an extreme case in *Confessions* – becomes a conformist in old age.

Wilder's valedictory novel is a comedy written as a gift when the author's personal friend, Chancellor Robert Maynard Hutchins of the University of Chicago, was seriously ill. Like the author, Mr. North – a transposition of a part of the writer's first name – quits his exhausting job of French master at an Ivy League prep school. Unlike the author, he returns to Newport, Rhode Island, where

Wilder had served with the Coastal Artillery for a short period of time during the First World War. Mr. North begins to work as a tennis coach for children. Additional jobs – reading to the sick and elderly or as private language instructor – bring him into contact with people from all walks of life, ranging from millionaire to low-life crook. *Theophilus North* both resembles a picaresque novel and differs from it. It is fast-moving and often funny in its portrayal of a given society. But its hero never swindles people out of their fortunes. I am unable to resist saying that he swindles them into their good fortune.

Wilder's visibility as a writer is in some respects similar to MacLeish's. His plays were, at first, highly praised, but his novels have always been regarded as being outside the main tradition. His literary standing has markedly decreased as time went by. There is only one comprehensive literary history – a German one by M. Schultze – to allot some space to *Theophilus North*. It is the one that also includes a brief discussion of MacLeish's *The Fall of the City*.

Theophilus North has been moderately popular. In 1978, it was turned into a movie, directed by Denny Huston, which runs counter to the character of the novel by marrying the benign *picaro* off to one of the heiresses. In 1988, the book was republished under its movie title, *Mr. North*; a stage version by Matthew Burnett came out under the original title in 2004.

My favorite case for the 1980s is, I admit, the darkest of dark horses, Felicia Lamport (1916-1999). I was surprised to find that her light verse, which I consider of the highest order, commanded no popular or scholarly interest whatsoever. Not a single anthology of light verse offers selections from her work. Neither the *Book Review Digest* nor the MLA Bibliography mentions her. None of Lamport's three collections of light verse are available anywhere in Germany. But for an opportunity to celebrate light verse, I am ready to forego my second theme, internationality – unless there is a touch of it in "Incitement to Diet":

> The loud repercussions of diet discussions
> Can set you to groaning aloud
> By raising the issue of adipose tissue
> With which you feel overendowed.
>
> You determine to lose, but which method to use?
> They're all couched in such intricate terms
> That you long to get hold of those wise men of old
> Who sponsored the Diet of Worms.[7]

I also plan to include Garrison Keillor (1942-) because *Lake Wobegon Days* (1985) did not come too late to be taken cognizance of in a literary history of 1991. But it is mentioned only once, and the characterizing remark ("a comic return to Winesburg"[8]) is the kind of tag literary historians are prone to. It suggests both continuity and change where there is neither. I find the saga why Lake Wobegon is not on the map more to the point: When Minnesota was surveyed, Keillor fabulated, four

teams of surveyors, starting at the four corners of the State and moving inward, found, when meeting roughly in the middle, that the four quadrants did not fit within the boundaries legislated by Congress and showed an overlap in the center. Instead of ordering a second attempt, the State Legislature eliminated the overlap, which encompasses exactly the 50 square miles of Mist County where Lake Wobegon is located. The map is now perfect but the lake has been calculated off it.[9] But where else can one find the Norwegian American enclave/exclave once its native language has been turned into Mark Twain's vernacular as spoken and written by Garrison Keillor?

I believe that the mid-1980s are the very latest point in time to end my project. But even this date may be too close a call for the literary historians of the 1990s to cast their nets. Who would not have liked to include Kathy Acker or Barbara Kingsolver? But it would not be fair at this time to assess their visibility by the criterion of literary historiography.

2 Invitation

I welcome responses from readers who feel strongly about my topic, and especially if they find fault with my arguments. I would also appreciate having works brought to my attention that have been excluded from comprehensive surveys despite their literary worth and cultural significance. Please send mail to mapfrank@t-online.de.

2013 Postscript:
Due to insurmountable copyright difficulties, the project was abandoned. Those who have read this little book will, perhaps, informally pursue their own exploration of pleasures beyond the preserve of the canon. Whoever does so, will, I trust, find publishable treasures in earlier periods.

Appendices

Appendix I – A Brief Propositional Examination of the Canon

The debate over the canon is not primarily a debate over bodies of text but over values that motivate the selection of texts for canonical purposes. Values invoked in this debate are not only intrinsic but have, on occasion, included other values as well, for instance economic ones such as bestseller status; I tend to regard values of the second kind as attributes.

It should go without saying that there is a close correspondence between criteria that define a given canon and canonical texts. If canonical criteria determine the selection of canonical texts, canonical texts in turn support the canon in question.

There is another cautionary note to begin with. While the focus here is, of course, on literary canons, there are also canons of writings that are not literary in the sense of fictional or poetic. A propositional examination of the canon will do well to remain open to such further possibilities.

Discussions of the canon tend to focus on that part of a larger body of text that has been canonized. But the logic of the canon and of related phenomena such as repertory requires four further steps. The most important one is taking into account the status of the third corpus that is involved in these matters, i.e. those texts that have not been canonized. Then there is the difference between closed and open canons. Another important point involves the question for whom a given corpus is intended. And it makes sense to distinguish between canons by definition and canons brought about by the circumstances of their use.

For brevity's sake, I will call the three bodies of text involved in canon formation *pars* (the selection), *totum* (the entire corpus from which the selection has been made), and *residuum* (the non-selected part). If I see it correctly, there are four relationships prominent in the debate over the canon and related phenomena: (1) The selection is being made or has been made for the purpose of rejecting the leftovers (*pars contra residuum*). (2) The selection is being made or has been made for the purpose of identifying exemplars that are regarded as better than the remaining works (*pars supra residuum*). (3) The selection is being made or has been made for the purpose of guiding readers towards the non-selected works (*pars ad residuum*). (4) The

selection is being made or has been made for the purpose of providing texts for use when time limits are in force, as in the case of the school year (*pars pro toto*).

(1) The principle of *pars contra residuum* is one of exclusion, employing the knife-edge decision of what is authentic and what is not. Canons of this type tend to produce closed corpora. The principle of *pars contra residuum* has a place in such diverse fields as theology, textual criticism, and folklore studies. The Holy Bible, for instance, assembles those writings by several hands which are deemed to be truly inspired and excludes those that are not. I am aware that not all theologians will find this statement precise enough. But I am prepared to argue that the included writings are canonical because they are the ones from which the rules of a Christian life are to be derived. While this canon varies slightly in time and between denominations, there is no question that it is always believed to contain the authentic Word of God and nothing but the authentic Word, and that no word elsewhere is authentic in this theological sense.

By analogy, the authentic word of a writer, secular or not, is also governed by a canon. Typically including a writer's complete works (e.g. the Shakespeare canon), it lays down the rules as to which works one must study if one wants to study Shakespeare and not someone else, for instance an anonymous imitator. In a similar sense, folklore (though not author-specific) is distinguished from fakelore. It would appear that the idea of authenticity is at the core of the genuine canon.

(2) A similar construct but emphatically not the same is the canon based on the principle of *pars supra residuum*. The *residuum* is not *anathema* as in the canon based on the principle of *pars contra residuum* but is considered a waste of time. This principle defines what, on a large scale, has variously been called the Pantheon, the Great Tradition, or the Western Canon. There are smaller-scale canons of this type at the national level.

This concept of canon applies in particular to literature and, perhaps, to other arts as well. Differences depend on the question for whom this kind of canon is obligatory and whether it is open or closed.

A corpus guided by the *pars supra residuum* rule and open in principle is, for instance, the "Western Canon" of worth-while reading as explicated by Harold Bloom. Strong authors have entered into it and are capable of doin so in the future by means of the adversarial writing strategies Bloom has discerned. If, on the other hand, a canon results in the selection of model texts intended to train both the readers' and the prospective writers' tastes, we are in the presence of an Alexandrinian or academic canon. History has shown that it takes the authority of an agency such as an academy, a board of education, etc. to police such a canon. And yet such a canon and the pertinent rules of good writing will not remain in force permanently.

(3) The principle of *pars ad residuum* leads beyond the pale of canonical thinking. Sometimes it is explicitly stated when the compiler of an anthology – a *florilegium* – says something to the effect that the flowers culled from the garden are

intended to make the reader eager to visit the garden itself in order to see and enjoy all the flowers there. The selected flowers may or may not be the most beautiful or characteristic exemplars; but they serve this purpose best if they are the most attractive ones.

(4) The three principles have in common that there is no narrow restriction, usually of time, on the use of the selected writings. Where such a restriction prevails – as, characteristically, in the case of the college survey or of a literary history "for the hands of students" –, canonical choices have to be made in view of a given format. The best selections for purposes such as these are those that are representative of the *totum*; they follow the principle of *pars pro toto* in a specific sense of the phrase. I will admit that I often tried to teach survey courses rather in the spirit of *pars ad residuum*. But because of the limits imposed by the situation in which they are used, they tend to assume the exclusionary force of the genuine canon. It may, therefore, make sense to speak here of circumstantial canons.

Appendix II – Reporting Guernica – Questions of Knowing

1 An air raid and its repercussions

The fact that Archibald MacLeish linked his play *Air Raid* not only to Pablo Picasso's monumental collage-painting *Guernica* but also to what easily is the best known, best-examined, and yet still controversial incident of the Spanish Civil War makes it advisable to have a closer look at the reporting of the saturation bombing of the small town of Guernica in the afternoon of 26 April 1937 by a few Italian bombers and a contingent of German *Legion Condor* planes flying raids for the Insurgent ground forces in their drive on Bilbao, the capital of the short-lived Basque Republic.

Independent *Euzkadi*, consisting of the provinces Alava, Guipózcoa, and Viscaya, was founded in October 1936 with the consent of the *Cortes*, the Spanish parliament.[1] By fulfilling a Basque desire of long standing, the Popular Front government won a staunch ally, although the traditional Catholicism that prevailed among the Basques was under large-scale, violent attack elsewhere in Republican Spain. In a brief summary, P. Knightley listed twelve bishops, 283 nuns, 4,184 priests, and 2,365 monks among several ten thousands of victims. Also mentioning the atrocities committed by the Insurgents, he noted: "The brutality on both sides was extraordinary."[2]

The international repercussions of the attack that destroyed Guernica were extraordinary, too. It was widely reported by the international press. There is evidence that the single most important article to foment the outrage that was felt and to motivate a swing of public opinion against Franco's Insurgents is George L. Steer's news report of the incident and its interpretation as an outright, methodical attempt to terrorize the civilian population into submission.[3] This is, as H. R. Southworth so memorably put it in 1977, "the Guernica story the world knows."[4]

At the time, Steer was special correspondent of the London *Times* for the Basque campaign. His article – in E. C. Oppler's estimate "the most frequently cited account"[5] – was "featured [. . .] as the turnover column of the leading page" of the Imperial and Foreign News Section on 28 April and was first-page news in *The New York Times* of the same day.[6] When H. L. Chipp declared, in 1988, that "George L. Steer's long eyewitness account has become the only newspaper article to survive as an accurate and impartial history of the event," he recorded a belief widely held.[7] But as long as fifty years earlier, in his book on the defeat of the Basque Republic, *The Tree of Gernika* (1938), Steer had offered a considerably revised version of the events. I was surprised to find that not one of the dozen or so writers whom I was able to consult of those who have since looked into the matter had cared to compare the two versions.

My objective is, first, to make this overdue comparison and, second, to have a look at studies that have been made on the subject more recently.

Steer's article was featured as an eyewitness account in the London *Times*; but, according to the text, what Steer witnessed was not the attack itself but only its aftermath. A matter of the greatest interest is, therefore, what the authority was on which he narrated the event. What did he know? How did he come by this knowledge? What else was possible for him to know? What was outside his range? Of course, the questions, What did he know but not say? and, Is there something he said although he knew better?, should not be disregarded either.

2 A war correspondent's ways of knowing

A war correspondent works under conditions of situational one-sidedness. At best, he knows facts of the observation and their proper context only on his side of the front. This is a technical sense in which he cannot but take sides. But in the Basque campaign, side-taking went much further. Introducing *The Tree of Gernika*, Steer said that it was customary for journalists in Spain to refer to the side on which they were working by an including "we" or "our," but he denied that he "participated in any way in the struggle."[8] His biographer, N. Rankin, showed that Steer's side-taking went further than that.[9]

Again speaking technically, a war correspondent can often learn the avowed intentions or motives on his side in ways which make it possible to distinguish them from propaganda fabrications. This inside information, if combined with a degree of sympathy for the side where he operates, will color his reporting and his interpretation of the facts he has learned. By the ethics of the press, such coloring should fall short of writing outright propaganda, though P. Knightley has caught quite a number of journalists red-handed.

As far as the other side is concerned, the war correspondent cannot rely on much more than distant observation, often collected at considerable personal risk and sometimes so vague that what he has got is more the specter of a fact than the fact itself. As far as the recognition of intentions and motives is concerned, they

are inevitably based on remembered actions of, or preconceived notions about, the other side. They are a matter of attribution. A correspondent's conclusions about the other side are as good or as bad as his guesswork is.

Avowed intentions, which always originate with the person or persons who act, and attributed intentions, which are always an observer's construct, are not necessarily the true ones. Common decency demands that the critical historian will give the first kind the benefit of the doubt unless there is strong evidence to the contrary in the particular case or the person in question has an indubitable history of fabrications. The others are of the iffy kind.

Guided by these cautionary considerations, I propose to undertake a philological study of Steer's *New York Times* article; for this one addresses U.S. readers.[10] The one in the London *Times* will serve for comparison.[11] I will quote from the two short documents without page references. After a brief descriptive glance at the context in the newspaper and a brief textual comparison of the two newspaper versions, my second focus is on Steer's article regarded as a piece of journalistic craft. I will then compare the newspaper article with Steer's own 1938 revision. At each point it is important to observe the chronology of what was known, what was knowable, what was impossible to know under the circumstances, and what is known now. The two most important contexts are, of course, the campaign as seen from the Basque side and as seen from the side of the Insurgents.

3 George L. Steer: Launching the story of Guernica

Titles and subtitles, I take it, are the editor's responsibility. They serve to attract and direct the prospective readers' attention. Striking a note of noble restraint, the London *Times* titled, "The Tragedy of Guernica: Town Destroyed in Air Attack." The *New York Times* opted for details emphasizing the extent of atrocities against civilians and featured a particularly news-worthy item at the time, the participation of a large number of "German-type planes"; for National Socialist Germany kept denying large-scale involvement in Spain. The American title reads: "Historic Basque Town Wiped Out; Rebel Fliers Machine-Gun Civilians: Waves of German-Type Planes Fling Thousands of Bombs and Incendiary Projectiles on Guernica, Behind Lines, as Priests Bless Peasants Filling Town on Market Day."

In the *New York Times*, Steer's article is featured by a position at the top of the front page and a special layout. It is framed by columns in the usual layout for articles, unsigned or signed, with the distinctive tall, narrow upper case letters for the titles employed at the time. On the left-hand side, there is a general news item on the War in Spain. The credit line of Steer's article specifies, "by Special Cable"; his name is given below the title set in wide italics extended over an exceptional two columns width. The sixth of nineteen paragraphs of uneven length continues on page 4, as does the general account to the left.

Two short notes, both credited to Associated Press, fill space below the end of Steer's feature article. According to the first, the Basque government reported more

than 800 dead; more recent competent estimates are considerably lower. The other records the Insurgents' denial that their planes had been ordered to bomb Guernica, blaming the fire on the enemy. When the Basque town of San Sebastián fell to the Insurgents, it was found that, indeed, part of it had been burned by retreating troops, but probably not by Basques. But Guernica was definitely attacked from the air.

By the printed evidence, the articles in the two *Times* are based on the same text. Among the differences, there are obvious ones between British and American usage, others that can, I think, be traced to different house styles, and an occasional printer's error. The origin of a handful of substantial differences is open to speculation.

As for differences of usage, I shall quote but two. East of the Atlantic, survivors were, as was to be expected, evacuated in "Government lorries," West, in "government trucks." In the United Kingdom, readers learned that "thenceforward the bombing grew in intensity"; in the United States, this was so "from then on." What I take to be *New York Times* house style is attention to greater syntactic, stylistic, and lexical explicitness. In the first paragraph, "insurgent air raiders" (London) were embellished as "General Francisco Franco's Insurgent air raiders" in New York. Better readability was the apparent objective when a British prepositional phrase was elevated to the status of independent clause for American readers:

> The whole town of Guernica was soon in flames except the historic Casa de Juntas with its rich archives of the Basque race, where the ancient Basque Parliament used to sit

crossed the Atlantic to become

> Virtually the whole of Guernica was soon in flames. An exception was the historic Casa de Juntas with its rich archives of the Basque people, where the ancient Basque Parliament used to sit.

Indeed, there is the hint of a substantial difference: The Casa de Juntas is either the one and only exception or, apparently, one among several. Such stylistic differences are not infrequent. One of the very few textual oversights appears to be "*Rey Viscaya*" (London) instead of "Rey de Viscaya" in New York.

There are five differences which are clearly substantive. All but one are of no great moment. The London *Times* reads:

> It is impossible to state yet the number of the victims. In the Bilbao Press this morning they were reported as 'fortunately small,' but it is feared that this was an understatement in order not to alarm the large refugee population of Bilbao.

The *New York Times* is succinct and clear: "It is impossible to state the total number of victims." One possibility is that the second sentence is missing because Steer cabled to New York before the Bilbao morning press had appeared, another, that the editor cut it because of the Associated Press release quoting more than 800 dead.

Part of a second omission in the American version, "When I revisited Guernica this afternoon most of the town was still burning and new fires had broken out. About 30 dead were laid out in a ruined hospital [London]," has been carefully worked into the opening sentence: "Fire was completing today the destruction of Guernica, ancient town of the Basques and center of their cultural tradition, which was begun last evening by a terrible onslaught of General Francisco Franco's Insurgent air raiders." The opening of the London text adheres to the chronology of Steer's two visits: "Guernica, the most ancient town of the Basques and the center of their cultural tradition, was completely destroyed yesterday afternoon by insurgent air raiders."

Another statement missing in the New York version is interesting because of a curious historical coincidence. Only British readers learned that "[a]n elderly priest named Aronategui [!] was killed by a bomb while rescuing children from a burning house." According to G. Thomas and M. M. Witts, Arronategui [!], mentioned not as dead but as missing in Steer's book version of the incident and whom, it appears, he later interviewed, was fairly young at the time and lived to an old age.[12]

The *New York Times* concluded its account with a variant of an incident recorded much earlier in the text of the London *Times*, which reads: "All the villages around were bombed with the same intensity as the town itself, and at Múgica, a little group of houses at the head of the Guernica inlet, the population was machine-gunned for 15 minutes." American readers found, instead, the names of five villages but not the name of the "little group of houses" situated, strangely enough, "at the head of Guernica"; but they also learned that there were refugees there. Placed at this point, the paragraph is a kind of anticlimax. It may owe its position to a late editorial adjustment of length.

In turn, readers of the *New York Times* completely missed the grand finale of the London *Times*. It is a long quotation, in English, of the Basque President's call for resistance. If it also formed part of the text offered to the *New York Times*, the editor may have decided that it was not news but propaganda.

4 "Historic Basque Town Wiped Out" as news story

The article is, first of all, a testimony to Steer's experience as a war correspondent. In 1935, he had covered the Italian air and poison gas war on Ethiopia for the London *Times*. The dispassionate tone, with an occasional subdued note of sardonic humor ("A large herd of sheep being brought in to the market was also wiped out"), add a sense of stiff upper lip to his account. Steer also showed a fine sense of anecdote. The "heroism of the Basque clergy" is illustrated by their blessing of, and praying for, the "kneeling crowds, – Socialists, Anarchists, Communists, as well as the declared faithful – in the crumbling dugouts." I read this as a sarcastic comment because the devout Roman Caholics – the overwhelming majority of Basques – receive spiritual aid together with the non-believers, from whom they had no good turn to expect in Popular Front Spain. Throughout, Steer knew what the most newsworthy items were and featured them accordingly.

The text is formally divided into four parts. The first six paragraphs offer basic information and provide political and cultural contexts. The main contribution of paragraphs seven to sixteen, broken up into three parts by a thematic subtitle, "Demoralization Held Aim," and an incidental one, "Deaths Put in Hundreds," is the marshaling of details in an effort to substantiate an "appreciation" of the objective pursued by the bombing. The coda is subtitled "Priests Pray For Crowds," although this characterization applies only to the first of the three paragraphs at the end.

4.1 The action and the main circumstances. Steer's professional experience is evident from the very beginning. By dealing at once with six of the seven topics which, ultimately going back to Aristotle, traditionally serve to identify an action or an incident and which, in one form or another, often are part of a journalist's training, he made a claim to being in command of the facts. The six questions immediately answered are: *Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, [cur,] quo modo, quando?* The first paragraph tells *who did what* and adds place and time: "General Francisco Franco's Insurgent air raiders" destroyed Guernica on 26 April 1937.

The second paragraph begins with the description of Guernica as an "open town far behind the lines," a characterization that is central to Steer's message, so much so that, despite the economy of cable communication, he repeated its component parts. "Open town" recurs in paragraph sixteen, and the variant "not near the lines," combined with "not a military objective," in the seventh. The second paragraph also specifies the time span. The exact time (4:30 to 7:45 P.M.) follows later. The questions *how?* and *by what means?* are closely connected. Bombers unloaded "bombs weighing up to 1,000 pounds and two-pound aluminium incendiary projectiles. It is estimated that more than 3,000 of these projectiles were dropped."

At the same time ("meanwhile"), low-flying fighter craft machine-gunned "civilians who had taken refuge in the fields." The description, as it stands, suggests the modal *thoroughly*, which crops up in the twelfth paragraph as "systematically." The manner of attack, it is implied, was as methodical and systematic as the one which, according to Spaight, will decide wars in the future.[13]

The question *why?*, so far omitted from the topical seven, will become the main issue of the later, interpretive part of Steer's article.

The next two paragraphs develop from this survey of facts. Steer first offered some information on the great importance Guernica has in Basque democratic culture, past and present. The humanitarian appeal made by the graphic description, in the fifth paragraph, of the enormity of the destruction and the plight of the survivors is preceded by a note stating that the correspondent visited Guernica at 2 A.M. and that he personally witnessed only the destruction some six hours after the attack, not the raid as it happened.

4.2 The attribution of an objective. Steer claimed that the raid on Guernica was "unparalleled in military history" on three counts: because of the "form of its execution," the "scale of the destruction," and its "objective." Guernica, he averred, was "not a military objective." A "factory producing war material" and "two bar-

racks" located outside the town – which, as he insisted, lay "not near the lines" – remained "untouched." He concluded:

> The object of the bombardment seemingly was the demoralization of the civil population and the destruction of the cradle of the Basque race. This appreciation is borne out by the facts, beginning with the day the deed was done.

The day was market day, and the town full of incoming peasants. At 4:30, "church bells rang the alarm for approaching airplanes," and the population sought shelter. A single German bomber appeared and dropped "six heavy bombs" and "a shower of grenades" from a "low altitude," apparently aiming for the station. "Five minutes later," a second bomber threw the "same number of bombs into the center of town." From about a quarter of an hour later onward, the bombing became intense and continuous, and the town "was slowly and systematically pounded to pieces"; so were the villages and isolated farms in the neighborhood.

After invoking some particularly grim incidents – forty-two wounded militiamen dying when the hospital was destroyed and some fifty people, "nearly all women and children," trapped under burning wreckage –, Steer focused on his message. Hammering it home, he repeated it in three tightly woven short paragraphs. He began on an apparent note of sarcasm:

> The tactics of the bombers, which may be interesting to students of the new military science, were as follows:
>
> First, small parties of airplanes threw heavy bombs and hand grenades all over the town, choosing area after area in orderly fashion. Next came the fighting machines, which swooped to machine-gun those who had run in panic from the dugouts, some of which had already been penetrated by the 1,000-pound bombs, which make a hole twenty-five feet deep. Many of these people were killed as they ran. [. . .] The object of this move apparently was to drive the population underground again, for next as many as twelve bombers appeared at a time dropping heavy and incendiary bombs upon the ruins.
>
> The rhythm of this bombing of an open town was, therefore, logical: first, hand grenades and heavy bombs to stampede the population, then machine-gunning to drive them below, next heavy and incendiary bombs to wreck houses and burn them over the victims.

Since Steer was not present during the raid – how did he collect the information needed for such a clear and precise assertion? Perhaps his revised story will tell.

5 George L. Steer: Revising the story of Guernica

In 1938, expanding on his invocation of the "students of the new military science," Steer published a book, *The Tree of Gernika*, subtitled "A Field Study of Modern War."[14]

The new account is longer and more detailed, and it shows the same knack for picturesque detail in narrating actions not witnessed by the author. Steer straightened out the discrepancies between the descriptive and the interpretative parts and elaborated on the terror spread by the raid. And he now provided information on Guernica as a military objective. Also, he now named an authority for the events which he had not witnessed.

5.1 No terror bombing. Steer now dropped any reference to a "logic" or "rhythm of death." There is no counterpart to the paragraphs interpreting the "tactics of the bombers" as a raid intended to demoralize the civilian population. Instead, he was more elaborate and forceful describing the terrorizing effect which the raid had. What also disappeared completely is the claim that Guernica was an open town and not a military objective.

What counts first is the repetition of the original statement that on Monday, 26 April, the weekly market day of Guernica, the town "lay well behind the front": the "armies were beyond Markina, miles to the East, and at Oitz, miles to the south."[15] This may sound reassuring. But on a current road map – country roads in the mountains do not change much –, there are some twenty-six kilometers (or sixteen miles) of winding mountain road between Guernica and Marquina and about fourteen (or less than nine miles) between Guernica and Guerricaiz, plus three or four from there to Mount Oiz, as the name reads on my map. It would take but a few hours of determined walking to cover these distances. The front was close enough, if this was the front. But, by the evidence furnished in the book itself, there no longer was a front. There was not even an orderly retreat.[16] Whole battalions abandoned their position without a shot fired.[17] Steer spoke of "chaos." By Sunday, 25 April, "the Basques were in disorganized movement homeward. It looked like the finish."[18] All roads from Marquina and the East converge in Guernica.

The new version is more specific on the involvement of bombers and fighters. While the bombers dropped fifty-, hundred-, and thousand-pound explosive bombs until the people in the cellars and dugouts "panicked," the

> escort of Heinkel 51's [. . .] were waiting for this moment. Till now they had been machine-gunning the roads round Gernika, scattering, killing or wounding sheep and shepherds. As the terrified population streamed out of the town they dived low to drill them with their guns. Women were killed here whose bodies I afterwards saw. It was the same technique as that used in Durango on March 31st, nearly a month back.

This particular link with the raid on Durango revokes the claim made by Steer in 1937 that the Guernica incident was unprecedented. But there are also continuities. The later version also sparkles with Steer's mixture of lively imagination and fierce irony, with an occasional dash of picturesque empathy:

> The little fighting planes came down in a line, like flashing dancing waves on shingle. They burst in spray on the countryside as they merrily dived.

> Twenty machine-guns working together in line, and the roar of breakers behind them. Always they flew nose towards Gernika. For the pilots it must have been like surfing.

When many of the inhabitants had rushed back into the shelters, Guernica was "smudged out" by two and a half hours of heavy bombing by low-flying planes. Steer specified six hundred feet – the question of attack height will be taken up later – and recognized that the clouds of dust and smoke must have made it difficult to sight the targets. Even so, the planes, spaced in several waves and proceeding "without mercy and with system," were said to have chosen their sectors in the town "in orderly fashion," dropping a mix of explosive and incendiary bombs. Steer picked up, for evidence, three casings with the markings of the German producer.[19]

One of the most striking features of the book version is the empathy with which Steer detailed the terror which the raid instilled in the inhabitants:

> By now [late in the bombing] something like a spirit of passive resistance had been built up in them. Gernika's face was turning to ashes, everybody's face in Gernika was ash-grey, but terror had reached a condition of submissive stubbornness not seen before in Viscaya. [. . . N]o other diversion remained but to allow terror to expand those hours [of the bombardment] past days into months and years. Years half-spent in dug-outs that might crash at any moment, and half-spent in streets of an unrecognisable town looking for people who may now be unrecognisable. [. . .] Time [. . .] passed slowly. [. . .] To the people within Gernika it was [. . .] a question of [. . .] inquantitative and immeasurable terror. All they could hear was the drumbeat of the engines and the split of the explosions again and again until they sounded dull enough. They could see no more but the trembling doors of their refuges and their own helpless faces, and sometimes when they were in the streets the points of fire where the silver tubes struck.[20]

5.2 The question of communications. I admire Steer for finding words for the suffering of the civilian population that is clearly beyond words. This suffering is not a bit belittled when Steer, in 1938, acknowledged a military objective. When describing Guernica's location as "well behind the front," he added "on part of its communications with Bilbao; to destroy it would cut off the retreating armies from the General Staff and their base."[21] Three little words, "to destroy it [i.e. Guernica]," make all the difference. It is obvious that to cut communications at Guernica would also make it impossible to bring the retreating personnel and material back as reinforcements for the defense of Bilbao. This was, as Steer had learned a few days before the raid, the objective of the Basque General Staff. In the book, he quoted the Chief of Staff, Colonel Montaud, to the effect that "my object now is to withdraw my men gradually upon the *cinturón*, without loss of effectiveness or material."

In another aside, which changes a similar accusation in the newspaper account, Steer offered evidence that the air attack conceivably had the objective of cutting

off the Eastern Basque contingents. Originally, he had suggested that the "villages around" Guernica also suffered terror bombing: "they were bombed with the same intensity as the town itself"[22]; now he spoke of "bombardments all along the communications that day, from Markina to Arbacegui-Guerricaiz." No doubt villages were damaged or destroyed. But there was a recognizable military objective: to slow down or prevent the Basque retreat.

5.3 The eye-witnesses consulted by Steer. In the newspaper article of 1937, Steer did not waste space on an account of the authority for the events which he had not personally observed. One year later, he described the people he had interviewed: When he visited Guernica in the night after its destruction, he found survivors.

> In the plaza, in the dark shadow of the Casa de Juntas which made the only shade in Gernika that night, people sat upon broken chairs, lay on rough tables or mattresses wet with water. Mostly women: some hundreds of them were littered around in the open space, and as we passed they groped about, fiddled with dirty pillows, tried to sleep, tried feebly to walk. We talked to them: they told me all that had happened. This stricken people were my authority for all that I have written. Two priests were with them: Ar[r]onategui was not to be found, and they supposed him dead. They conversed in tired gestures and words unnaturally short for Spain, and they made the funny noises of bombers poising, fighters machine-gunning, bombs bursting, houses falling, the tubes of fire spurting and spilling over their town. Such was the weary, sore-eyed testimony of the people of Gernika, and it was only later that people who were never in Gernika thought of other stories to tell.[23]

It is a ghastly scene. The most shocking detail, to me, is the image of people with a grievously reduced ability to express themselves.

Steer also furnished different versions of the eye-witnesses he consulted. According to N. Rankin, the London *Times*, after printing his article, requested "further judicious statement" on 28 April. The reply as quoted in *Telegram from Guernica* contains the amazing statement: "I have spoken with hundreds of homeless and distressed people, who all give precisely the same description of the events."[24] Perhaps outraged by what he may have taken as the newspaper's questioning of his veracity, he made an outrageous reply; for to make good this claim, interviews would have to have lasted for days. Evidently they didn't. A variant of this statement is Steer's assertion that he and the other four correspondents stopping at Guernica interviewed "hundreds of real eyewitnesses."

Three months later, in a letter to the editor of the *Spectator* of 30 July 1937, Steer again defended his article against the charge of professional incompetence:

> I did not, as Mr. D. Jerrold alleges, pay a "hurried visit" to Gernika. I was walking in and around Gernika between 11 P.M. and 1 A.M. in the evening of April 26th-27th carrying out the careful enquiries which the situation demanded. In order to make absolutely certain of the facts, I chose not to

> hurry back to Bilbao and send a story that evening, but to wait until the next afternoon. By that time, I had questioned about 20 of the homeless people in Gernika, and 80 more in Bilbao next morning. They showed no signs of war-hysteria.[25]

There is no way of telling how much time Steer needed to question a person carefully. Even if an unlikely five minutes should have sufficed, the interviewing of eighty witnesses makes an exceptionally long and busy morning indeed; by the same criterion, the time he had at Guernica for interviewing and inspecting the burning town with his own eyes is not really all that long. When he finally wrote about the matter in 1938, he did not care for any of these details but named a collective entity that he saw that night in the destroyed town: "This stricken people were my authority for all that I have written."

The number of eye-witnesses dwindled as time went by and was eventually merged in a mystique of something like the "folk."

I am not sure what symptoms Steer regarded as "signs of war-hysteria." But the women of Guernica described in his 1938 account were clearly under shock. How reliable is information collected from people in such a state? To go by common sense: anyone involved in a traffic accident or witnessing one knows that accounts of the same event vary. P. Knightley observed that most war correspondents soon discover that eyewitness accounts are frequently contradictory.[26] Steer, too, sometimes contradicted himself. In the article in the two *Times*, he said he had visited Guernica at 2 A.M.; in the *Spectator* letter it was between 11 P.M. and 1 A.M.; and in the book he gave no time for the visit; he only said that he set out from Bilbao by car after learning about the air raid at ten o'clock.[27] This makes an arrival between 11 and 12 P.M. more likely than at 2 A.M., particularly since the Bilbao fire brigade took about an hour.[28] On that evening, he recorded, there was a fairly large party

> having dinner at eight-thirty in the Torrontegui [hotel, including] some other journalists. [. . .] The dinner was going fairly well, when at ten o'clock Antonio Irala rang up. "Gernika is in flames," he said.
>
> We got cars, threw our napkins on the floor, and drove out into the dark.[29]

Noting Steer's account, N. Rankin said that another journalist, Noel Monks, remembered the dinner at the Torrontegui differently:

> Monks says they had finished their first course of beans and were waiting for their bully beef, at around nine-thirty, when a government official came into the dining room with tears streaming down his face saying, "Guernica is destroyed. The Germans bombed and bombed and bombed."

Telephone call or weeping messenger – the difference is so striking that it looks as though these were two different dinner parties; they weren't. The differences are apparently due to divergent recollections or dramatizations. A review of just the most prominent accounts of the raid indeed differ on a number of points, among

them whether the alarm was given by church bells (Steer 1937) or by sirens (Onaindía 1937).

5.4 The upshot of the comparison. (1) On different occasions, Steer gave different times for his night visit to the burning town of Guernica. (2) He was also inconsistent about the number of eye-witnesses he interviewed. His claim that all of his informants gave the identical story is hardly credible. (3) In his book of 1938, he silently dropped the accusation of his 1937 article, namely that the objective of the raid on Guernica was to terrorize the civilian population. (4) Stating that he learned of the Basque General Staff's plan to withdraw personnel and material to the iron ring around Bilbao a few days before the raid on Guernica, he tacitly admitted that he had known of the military importance of the river crossing near Guernica and the passage through the town before he wrote his *Times* article accusing the Insurgents of terror bombing. (5) In 1938, he gave a military reason for the destruction of the town (my emphasis): "*[T]o destroy it* [Guernica] would cut off the retreating armies from the General Staff and their base."

By 1938, it was, therefore, clear that those who remember Steer's article of 28 April 1937 as "the Guernica story the world knows" remember the wrong story.

6 Later accounts

In the 1970s, major areas of further evidence were opened up, sometimes with intent to fight the old battles over again. V. Talón's *Arde Guernica* (1970) and C. Uriarte's *Bombas y Mentiras sobre Guernica* (1976) combined offer an excellent photo documentation. The latter also includes important Basque written documents; for different reasons, the two authors' accounts are not worth reading. In 1975, a comprehensive collection of Condor Legion documents from the German military archives and some important private material was published and studied by K. A. Maier, a military historian, in *Guernica, 26.4.1937*. The same year saw *Guernica: The Crucible of World War II*, G. Thomas' and M. M. Witts's narrative of the events based primarily on interviews with surviving witnesses on both sides as well as on private notes and diaries (reprinted in 1991). To call H. R. Southworth's documentation *Guernica! Guernica!* (1977) exhaustive is to pay respect to the researcher's diligence and thoroughness with which he surveyed the reporting and the debate world-wide but with a focus on Great Britain and France. I have found V. Talón's second book, *El holocausto de Guernica* (1987), particularly useful for Spanish and Italian documents. In the same year, H.-H. Abendroth brought further Condor Legion documents to bear on published opinion.

A study of a different order but of some relevance is P. Knightley's examination of "the war correspondent as hero and myth-maker from the Crimea to Kosovo," as *The First Casualty* is subtitled in the form I have seen, the expanded edition of 2000. He confronted Steer's 1937 account of the bombing of the Guernica area as a methodical act of terrorism not with the book of 1938 (from which he nevertheless quoted) but with the modified opinion of two specialists who had earlier

subscribed to the terror theory in their studies, H. Thomas and H. R. Southworth. In their correspondence with Knightley, they cautiously – "probably," "tend to show" – backed away from their view that there were no military reasons for the raid. The author concluded: "So Steer's original accusations, the birth of the legend of Guernica – that the town was not a military objective and the purpose of the bombing was the demoralisation of the civilian population – now stand contradicted."[30] They had stood contradicted since 1938. In 2008, J. S. Corum, a military historian, was quite positive:

> The Condor Legion bombed Guernica as a routine tactical air operation. The attack burned about half of the town and killed approximately 300 people, mostly civilians. The facts about the bombing of Guernica bear little resemblance to the myth. Guernica was a small town of 5,000-7,000 people, and not a "city" as described by the media of the day. In April 1937 it was located just behind the front lines of the Basque army. Its importance at the time was clear on the map. The Basque army was being pressed hard by the Nationalist forces, and Guernica had a bridge and an important road intersection that was vital for the withdrawal of twenty-three battalions of Basque army troops located East of Guernica. If the route through Guernica could be closed, the Basque forces would be hindered in their retreat to the heavily fortified defenses around Bilbao and could be cut off and destroyed. At least two Basque army battalions were stationed in Guernica, the 18th Loyola Battalion and the Saseta Battalion. The Nationalists were also rightly concerned that the Basques might turn Guernica into a fortified position. By all the rules of international warfare in 1937, Guernica was a legitimate target for aerial attack.[31]

My objective now is to continue the inquiry into what was known and what was knowable. Obviously, much depends on what evidence was available at a given time.

The validity of three of these studies requires comment. A major exhibit of Maier's is the private diary of Lieutenant Colonel Wolfram von Richthofen, a cousin of the Red Baron of World War I fame, who served as Condor Legion Chief of Staff during the drive on Bilbao. At the height of the April offensive, he had time for hurried notes only. He said he developed them into a full text after 5 May.[32] Maier surely was right to take it for granted that Richthofen was aware of the political repercussions when he wrote the passages on Guernica. But he was also convinced that Richthofen's account was true because he had, in Maier's opinion, kept several passages in that incriminate him.[33]

This may well be the case. But there is, I submit, a more cogent military reason to doubt that Richthofen falsified the record. According to the military historians consulted, the continuous, extensive, and close cooperation between ground and air practiced in the Basque hill country was unprecedented. The German air force High Command had the greatest interest in this new tactics. It is difficult to believe that a responsible staff officer aware of this circumstance would detract from the

military value of his diary by falsifying details for whatever reason. When the Condor Legion experience was reviewed in Berlin, Richthofen made a clean copy confidentially available to the officer in charge. According to Maier, there are no copies of, quotations from, or references to the diary in the official papers.[34] But conclusions from Richthofen's Spanish experience turned up in German air force guidelines for the support of rapidly advancing ground forces, and he was given the opportunity personally to put his experience to practice as commander of the air group that supported the *Blitzkrieg* in Poland and elsewhere.[35]

A different way of putting this is to say that it is easy for civilians to tell the untruth. Military personnel falsifying military documents can expect disciplinary action.

Thomas' and Witts's work raises a different problem. It is not one of collecting evidence but of presenting it. Taking the published material into account – the bibliography of the text copyrighted in 1975 is up to date with three books of 1974 and two of 1975 –, they interviewed all surviving eye-witnesses they were able to find some 35 years after the event. Some of them had kept their own written record. Some cooperated but refused to be identified by name.[36] The authors listed forty-two Guernicans or former Guernicans and twelve Condor Legion men including a staff officer and two of the squadron leaders having flown the raid. Like Maier, the authors also saw documents at the German military archives and consulted Richthofen's private papers.[37] In fact, Maier's study is listed among works cited.

If all this speaks for the authors' circumspection in obtaining evidence, the manner of its presentation is exceptional in historiography. Thomas and Witts wrote a kind of historical novel, one where all characters are identified as historical personages.[38] It seems inevitable, though, that much of the dialog is invented, as are, apparently, some of the actions, including the following picturesque detail:

> Father Iturran spurred his donkey toward the convent door, where Lieutenant Gandaría still shouted orders.
>
> "My son," the priest said, "I wish to speak to you."
>
> Gandaría gave no sign of having heard. He continued to issue orders. Raising his voice, Father Iturran added, "It is a matter of some urgency and importance that we must speak about."
>
> The lieutenant paused and looked quickly at the old priest.[39]

This makes for engaging reading; but the relation to evidence is tenuous. The authors cited evidence comprehensively and in general terms for each chapter. In this particular case, they mentioned Iturran's papers and a discussion between him and another eye-witness, who passed information on to his son who told the authors; they also referred to conversations with Ramón Gandaría and two Guernicans who had witnessed the priest's clash with the lieutenant.[40] It is, therefore, not possible to assess the validity of the evidence.

As I see it, a major problem with Thomas' and Witts's straightforward narrative approach as against a more conventional one in which generalization and ar-

gument predominate is that contradictory evidence simply does not figure. To give an example that affects their story at a crucial point: Their account of the actual raid is a perfect and perfectly rounded piece of story-telling, featuring a well oiled, inexorably single-minded war machine, exclusively German. But by that time, documents published by Maier indicated that an Italian detachment also participated in the raid. If this is correct, as documents published in Talón's *Holocausto* establish, reality is more complex than Thomas' and Witts's neat account admits. Or do they have definitive proof that Italians were not involved? If so, their narrative approach makes it difficult to establish that an event believed to have happened did not in fact occur.

If historians fail to demonstrate that apparent evidence to the contrary does not apply, credibility is a problem. H. R. Southworth found *Guernica: The Crucible of World War II* "totally lacking in scholarly precision."[41] I would probably drop the adverb. For in order for such a work to deserve credibility, the major propositions and actions must be factually true; detail may well be handled more loosely.

Such a major proposition is, I submit, Thomas' and Witts's claim that by the middle twenties of April, military and civilian authorities began to work towards converting Guernica into a defensive stronghold. If, as Steer suggested in 1938, the Basque General Staff planned to buy time for reinforcing the defenses of Bilbao, such a plan for Guernica no doubt makes military sense. According to Thomas and Witts, Lieutenant Gandaría, Staff Officer of the Loyola Battalion, was in charge for the military and Francisco Lazcano, Presidential Aide, for the civilian part of the preparations. The plan called for the regrouping of retreating troops and their deployment in and around Guernica while getting ready for the evacuation of the civilian population by midweek. On the other hand, it is a relatively minor question whether Lieutenant Gandaría ordered a teenage boy to march troops singing to their new defensive positions or whether he used some other method of deployment. The air raid put an abrupt end to this plan, if it existed.

It is, I think, important to keep in mind that C. Uriarte, in his long critique of Thomas' and Witts's book, dismissed this plan as "imaginario," as an invention.[42] One of his twenty-four points of fault-finding concerns "Francisco de Lazcano," whose task it was, according to Uriarte, to keep the Basque President directly informed on military developments. When he stopped in Guernica after an inspection of the Eastern front, he issued an order which Thomas and Witts also noted, namely to remove all parked vehicles from the streets downtown. But this, Uriarte insisted, was strictly a safety measure and had nothing to do with a special defense plan. Uriarte's authority is his "friend Lazcano," with whom he said he talked these matters over just a few days before writing.[43] And to another friend, Juan de Beiztegui – Beiztegi in Thomas and Witts –, commander of the Loyola Battalion and at the time absent in Bilbao, he attributed the information that there was no Lieutenant Gandarias [!] under his command.[44] But this detail is not in the London version of Thomas and Witts which I have seen, so that Uriarte denied something which Thomas

and Witts apparently did not say. He went on to state that, as a consequence, there was no dispute involving Monseñor Iturrarán – the Parish priest of Santa Maria whose name is Iturran in Thomas and Witts – about making the church a part of the defenses, nor was there any military control of the Unceta factory. The other activities of Thomas' and Witts's Lieutenant Gandaría [!] remain uncommented.

Other points of Uriarte's critique are of a similar nature. Stating, for instance, that he himself had been chief of the fire brigade since 1928, he faulted Thomas' and Witts's account of the fire station, its equipment, and fire chief Juan Cilauco. He absolutely denied that there was such a person in Guernica.[45] But neither is there a person of this name anywhere in the London edition of Thomas and Witts included in Uriarte's bibliography: not under "the people of Guernica" on the list of "Personae," not on the list of eyewitnesses, and nowhere in the text.[46] But there is a "fireman Juan Silliaco," whose description may have nettled Uriarte: He was a

> dark-eyed man of forty-five with powerful biceps, a bushy moustache, and a hard, lean body [who] knew more about firefighting than did any of his colleagues. Even the fire chief – an elderly man who nowadays rarely attended a fire – knew that Silliaco was effectively the group's leader.[47]

This brief confrontation between the two books will, I hope, suggest that each of them is problematic in its own way, though neither can be dismissed as of no use whatsoever. I will use both with discretion after a brief look at the status of Southworth's study.

I read the book with the screaming title ***GUERNICA! GUERNICA!***: *A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda, and History* (1977) as a labor of love and hatred. Not having seen Southworth's *La destruction de Guernica: Journalisme, diplomatie, propagande et histoire* (1975), I can only speculate that the 1977 *Guernica!* is an updated version of the French text. After all, Maier's *Guernica* (1975) is used to fault Thomas' and Witts's *Guernica* of the same year.[48]

Since the book is structured so as to trace the repercussions of the raid on Guernica, Southworth introduced Steer's 1937 article at an early point:

> This is the basic document in establishing world opinion about the destruction of Guernica. It is quoted in full as it appeared in the *Times*:
>
> THE TRAGEDY OF GUERNICA
> TOWN DESTROYED IN AIR ATTACK
> EYE-WITNESSES'S ACCOUNT
> From our Special Correspondent. Bilbao, April 27.[49]

Given Southworth's objective, there is no quarrel with this move. Difficulties begin when one realizes that this is not quite the text as it appeared in the London *Times*. Among minor deviations, the plural "eye-witnesses" is factually but not textually correct. In the copy of the *Times* I have seen, the word is singular, attributing greater

authority to the correspondent from the outset. No such claim was made in the *New York Times*.

A different question is the right point to introduce Steer's revised version in the *Tree of Gernika*, occasionally quoted from by Southworth. From the point of view of providing perspective, it makes sense to give an early warning. But as the subtitle suggests, Southworth's interest was to trace the history of opinion, not the facts of history as it happened. They come towards the end, in the third chapter of Book III, "How Was Guernica Destroyed? By Whom? Why?"[50]

Having cited Maier, who asked and answered the same questions, the best approach would, I believe, have been for Southworth to give Maier's findings as critical a discussion as he might think fit.[51] The first two answers should have pleased him: The destruction was wrought by Condor Legion planes and an Italian detachment. The plan was to cut communications in the North between Rentería and Guernica by the air force and to have Insurgent ground forces block the Basque retreat South of Guernica.[52] Condor Legion documents published in Maier do not show that retreating Basque militia had any share in the destruction, as Insurgent sources and their sympathizers, under perpetual attack by Southworth, continued to maintain.

As it stands, "How Was Guernica Destroyed?" is a strange piece of work. It has no place whatsoever for Steer's 1938 revision. Documentation is quite uneven, and there are allegations without factual support or contrafactual claims, and guesses masquerading as facts. A passage, not untypically, reads:

> The two responsible for the bombing, the Spanish Nationalist command and the Condor Legion officers, in order to cover their act, lied to everybody, including the air officials in Berlin. We can be certain that cablegrams were exchanged between Berlin and the Condor Legion when Berlin learned of the reaction to the bombing. We lack copies of these cablegrams, as well as many other messages concerning Guernica, but obviously Berlin inquired about the true situation and obviously a reply was given. We can deduce that the Condor Legion chiefs answered Berlin with the same version as that found in the May 7 telegram of Salamanca, for it is inconceivable that the Spaniards would have asked that the Condor Legion lie to Berlin, if they had not known that their telegram was a confirmation of the news already sent to Berlin by the Condor Legion. The actual message from the Condor Legion to Berlin on May 7 has not been found, but presumably it relayed the information found in the Salamanca telegram of that same date.
>
> The hypothesis that Salamanca and the Condor Legion presented a common front before the whole world, including Berlin, to hide their act finds support in the testimony of Adolf Galland, who wrote that "no one spoke willingly about Guernica" and whose account was that bad weather and primitive bombsights changed a routine bridge bombing into an attack on a town.[53]

As the wider context suggests, the "act" is the terror bombing of Guernica according to the story originating with Steer in 1937. The argument that there is no evidence ("we lack copies") but that one "can be certain" that this evidence exists is a twist that may be of interest to anyone who does not have a case but wants to make one. The idea that one can, in a military command structure worth its name, lie to one's superiors with impunity or refuse cooperation cannot be seriously entertained. Of course the German High Command was truthfully informed. Documents in the German military archives tell as much. I will take them up in due course.[54]

According to Southworth, the most important among the documents to deny that terror was the objective of bombing Guernica is the statement of the Condor Legion Chief of Staff at the time. Wolfram von Richthofen is quoted:

> He said that in order to cut off large forces of the enemy in retreat, a number of attacks were carried out on "cross-roads and bridges" and that of these, "that on Guernica was the most successful." He did not make any references to the destruction of the town.[55]

Southworth did not give a source. In Maier's book, cited by him, one can find Richthofen's statement of 28 April that there is certain intelligence that the raid had indeed destroyed Guernica; after his visit on 30 April, he repeated this statement and gave details.[56]

Southworth's chapter ends in an odd conclusion. "We shall never know with certainty," we read, "why Guernica was destroyed in the brutal manner that it was."[57] The alternatives, it would seem, are terror bombing (Steer 1937) or cutting communications (Steer 1938). Or are they? Southworth continued: "There are, in all probability, people still living in Spain and in Germany who know the precise motive for the terror bombing."

If I read Southworth correctly, the issue is whether it was terror bombing or terror bombing. His rhetoric makes everyone who concludes that Guernica was a military objective over into a neo-Franquist.[58] If so, not only Lieutenant Colonel Richthofen of Condor Legion but also the officer in charge of the defenses of Bilbao, Colonel Montaud, is one. For the two Chiefs of Staff, looking at the matter from their opposing perspectives, are in essential agreement, though they never met. After all, Montaud's planned retreat in order to reinforce the defenses of Bilbao depended, for the large contingents dislodged on the South-Eastern front and pushed North towards Marquina, on the viability of the roads near Guernica, Rentería Bridge, and of the passage through the town. During the early twenties of April 1927, much of the planning of Richthofen's was concentrated on precisely this area.

Though it is hardly possible to straighten out differences of reporting and interpreting in a way which will satisfy everybody, I want to examine the evidence brought forward on four major points: (1) the military value of Guernica and its environs; (2) the mix of bombs; (3) the precision of targeting; and (4) the movement above the target area.

6.1 The military value of Guernica and its environs. Montaud's and Richthofen's conformable assessments of the military importance of Guernica depend on location and infrastructure. The Basque Chief of Staff's plan to funnel personnel and materiel through the town in order to strengthen the defenses of Bilbao lends a degree of credibility to Thomas' and Witts's account of turning the town into a military stronghold. "A few days" before Sunday, 25 April, they wrote, efforts began to "turn Guernica into a defensive fortress."[59] Early Monday morning, presidential aide Francisco Lazcano arrived to supervise the civilian measures.[60] The front was expected to come close by Friday.

This estimate was too optimistic. Since late Sunday afternoon, retreating troops had been arriving at Guernica. Assembling in front of the headquarters of the Loyola Battalion, the Convent of La Merced on the Rentería side of the bridge, they were, it appears, deployed in and near the town. The plan apparently also called for turning solidly constructed buildings into machine gun nests – and this meant, much of the time, churches and convents. Militia was, for instance, reported in the Convent of Santa Clara on the Western edge of town overlooking the historic parliament and oak tree, which would certainly have suffered in a battle. By 9:30 P.M., the total number of militia in Guernica was estimated at about two thousand.[61] This account squares with Insurgent reconnaissance reporting militia concentrations at or near Rentería Bridge.[62]

The only evidence for this plan that exists is the comprehensive kind of documentation in Thomas and Witts. A competent historical inquiry might show whether the Basque government was indeed ready to sacrifice this historical and cultural center in order to buy time for reinforcing the defenses of Bilbao. Yet such a plan, if it existed, has no conceivable bearing on Condor Legion action because it could not have been known. Neither is there any evidence that the decision to attack Guernica was made because of market day. Condor Legion command was guided by the developing military situation.

Planning on the Insurgent side depended on the close cooperation between Colonel Vigon, Chief of Staff of the ground forces, and Richthofen for Condor Legion and, in diplomatic indirection, the Italian air force. The air force served, much of the time, as complement for the poor field artillery on the side of the Insurgents. From 20 April onward, when weather again permitted air attacks, Richthofen's diary twice records plans or attempts to capture enemy contingents by means of local pincer movements.[63] After the collapse of the Basque front on 24 April – also recorded by Steer in *The Tree of Gernika*[64] –, he successfully ordered attacks to block road intersections preferably in villages and hamlets in such a way as to turn the retreat due North so that "large enemy contingents might be captured in the Marquina-Guernica area."[65] On the 26th, after an early coordination by telephone with Vigon, Richthofen targeted "Guernicais [Guerricaiz], two villages at the intersection West of Marquina, in order to interfere with or block enemy retreat." After a second coordinating call, Richthofen not only noticed another local

possibility for a pincer movement; he also recorded the decision that had been reached: "Operational order for pursuit and light fighter planes to attack roads in the Marquina-Guernica-Guerricaiz area." This, apparently, is part of the action recognized by Steer in 1938 when he recorded attacks on the lines of communication precisely in that area.[66] The same order continues:

> Heavy bombers (upon return from Guerricaiz), midsize bombers, and Italians attack roads and bridge as well as suburb just East of Guernica. We just *got to* slam the door there in order to be successful against enemy personnel and material. Vigon promised to push forward and to block all roads South of Guernica. If successful, we've got the enemy in the bag near Marquina.[67]

As documents in the German military archives show, the daily report made to Berlin on the very same evening by General H. Sperrle, commanding officer of Condor Legion, confirms Richthofen's order: "Attack on retreating enemy on roads North of Monte Oiz and on bridge and roads East of Guernica."[68] Monte Oiz is located South of Guerricaiz, the village that figures prominently in Richthofen's order.

The concurrence of order and report on the very day of the action is crucial for an assessment not only of Condor Legion tactics but of the veracity of Richthofen's diary certainly in this matter of supreme importance. Even if one should assume that the Condor Legion Chief of Staff rewrote some of his diary entries in the light of later developments, he could not change this order because it was impossible to change Sperrle's report made well before there was any sense of adverse press reactions.

On the next day, Richthofen recorded the alarming news, as he put it, that fires seemed to have blocked the passage through Guernica but rather heavy traffic bypassed the town in the East and, South of the town, swung West towards Bilbao. The ground forces had failed to cut the roads there, and the Basque troops escaped.[69] But without knowing, Condor Legion had frustrated any hope which the Basque authorities might have entertained to stop the enemy at Guernica. The town was occupied on 29 April.

In order to further characterize the position taken by Condor Legion, it should be added that, according to Maier, participants in the raid were, on the very same day, ordered not to discuss it and to deny it when questioned.[70] And on 28 April, before any report of international repercussions is likely to have reached Spain, Richthofen issued the "strictest" order not to attack the town of Bilbao except when explicitly ordered, effectively revoking the relative freedom which Condor Legion squadron leaders enjoyed for initiatives of their own over the target area.[71]

6.2 The mix of bombs dropped on the target area is frequently taken as an indicator of the true, not the avowed motives of the raiders. Most accounts specify a combination of high explosive and incendiary bombs. Thomas and Witts and after them W. L. Bernecker said that antipersonnel bombs (shrapnel) were also used.[72] The first reference to shrapnel that I am aware of was made in debates in the Brit-

ish House of Commons.[73] The presence of incendiary bombs or incendiaries plus shrapnel in the bomb mix was taken as proof that the objective was not to destroy a bridge and roadways:

> We have written above that the military authorities who ordered the attack and those who carried it out did not know what the military results would be, and especially did not know what the propaganda and diplomatic results would be. Professor Trythall, a recent biographer of Franco, has written that "the Nationalists were clearly unprepared for the international cry of horror that was raised." This does not signify that their intention was not to burn Guernica down to the ground. Guernica was burned as part of a plan, not by accident. (The accidental part came from the presence in Bilbao of Steer and the other correspondents and from the passing through Guernica of Father Onaindia.) The incendiary bombs were not loaded onto the airplanes by error. If this was done to break Basque morale and speed the war to an end, is it not possible that the Nationalist request to the Condor Legion was a request to fire bomb Guernica to break Basque morale rather than a routine request to destroy a bridge or cut a road? "The bombardment certainly exceeded what was militarily justifiable except inasmuch as civilian morale is a factor in war," wrote Trythall.[74]

Instead of insinuation and the asking of rhetorical questions, Thomas and Witts preferred to engage sarcasm: After having suggested that the total load was far in excess of the objective of destroying a small bridge, the authors stated that the "antipersonnel bombs would have little effect [on a stone bridge], and the one thing incendiaries could not do was burn down an all-stone bridge" – it was, apparently, made of concrete.[75] They also asserted that if Richthofen "was intent on hitting *only* the bridge," he had four ideal planes for the task, four Stuka dive bombers capable of carrying a 1,000 pound bomb, with "a high chance of taking out the bridge with one direct hit."[76] They also assumed, contrary to Richthofen's diary entry, that he "may not have known [. . .] or even considered that a short ways South of the town, the Mundaca was easy to ford," so that the destruction of the Rentería bridge would not have achieved the objective of trapping the enemy.

Thomas and Witts are sarcastic particularly in their harping on *only* a bridge. The obvious implication is that there was an unacknowledged objective, that Richthofen was after bigger game, and that the name of the game was Guernica.

As far as incendiaries are concerned, the authors quoted one of Richthofen's staff officers, Hans Asmus, to the effect that they could set a truck on fire, and that this was "the best way to block a road." It is evident that they attributed little credence to this testimony. And I admit that Richthofen's description of how explosives and fire combined to make Guernica impassable for at least twenty-four hours made their point of view plausible to me[77]: Forget about trucks: The incendiary bombs were loaded especially to burn the woodwork of the houses of Guernica.

But there is, as I learned, a problem with this view. The mix of explosives and incendiaries was not only used on the Basque town. It was, according to H.-H. Abendroth in 1987, the standard mix Condor Legion used for raids on solidly built bridges, irrespective of whether near to or far from built-up areas. He mentioned in particular incombustible bridges across the Ebro River during the Republican Summer offensive of 1938.[78] Seen in this light, Asmus' statement about trucks is anything but misleading.

The case of shrapnel does not help much either. If antipersonnel bombs were indeed among the munitions, they were ineffective not only on bridges but also on people in air-raid shelters. Their targets of choice are military concentrations in the open. Their use on that occasion – if they were really used – would rather confirm that the plan to interdict troop movements on roads and intersections was high among Richthofen's objectives.

But there is no indication that shrapnel was actually used. In a 1938 assessment of his experience in the Basque campaign, one of the commanding Condor Legion officers who participated in the raid, Karl von Knauer, stated that the use of the 10 kg anti-personnel bomb available at the time was discontinued by mid-1937 because its effectiveness was out of all proportion to the danger it posed to crew and ground personnel and because wartime conditions were unfavorable to the complicated upkeep of the temperamental („empfindlich") device.[79] I do not wish to suggest that 26 April is mid-1937 but it is, I submit, close enough to assume that Condor Legion personnel were, at the time, well aware of the danger and did not use the bomb unless absolutely necessary. There is no evidence in the Condor Legion documents compiled and examined by Maier and Abendroth that shrapnel was used on Guernica, nor did Steer, who was careful to pick up casings of incendiary projectiles, record any.

It seems reasonable to conclude that Condor Legion used a mix of explosives and incendiaries not particularly in order to firebomb Guernica but because it was standard for attacks on bridges. It is also evident that Legion Command did not mind that the town had become impassable as a result of the raid. The question why the bridge was missed and the town was hit raises a further question.

6.3 The question of the precision of targeting is the subject of another one of Thomas' and Witts's sarcasms. Richthofen, they concluded, "was prepared to use about 400 pounds of explosives for every square yard of bridge he wanted to destroy."[80]

Again, their own text suggests why this is only an apparent overkill: The Spanish Civil War, they said, was a war "when bombing inaccuracy was standard." As early as in 1938, Steer had noted: "They [Condor Legion] wanted to hit factories; and more often than not, they missed," and added: "I personally saw it [a temporary mortar factory] bombed three times, without injury to machinery," but people at a distance were killed by stray bombs. He did not specify the distance but writes as though it was not inconsiderable. His complaint was that even if military objec-

tives in built-up areas were missed, there were civilian losses, and terror was spread. Targeting errors have apparently been part of the tragedy of Guernica.

German military documents examined by Abendroth show that targeting difficulties were massive in the Spanish Civil War. From a contemporary perspective, it seems unbelievable that during the Republican Summer offensive of 1938 two iron bridges near Mora de Ebro were bombed on nine consecutive days, which means that they were missed for eight days in a row. But this is what the record says.[81] If one considers the total tonnage raining down on the two bridges – 432 tons of explosives and 38,664 incendiary pieces –, the count for missing Rentería Bridge, 100,000 pounds or 45 tons in Thomas' and Witts's estimate and about 26 tons according to Abendroth, together with an estimated 3,000 incendiaries, is something of a bargain.[82]

Contrary to Thomas' and Witts's claim, an attack by dive bombers would not have been a solution either, both for circumstantial and practical reasons. According to the documents examined by Abendroth, the four planes available to Richthofen were Henschel model 123-A, capable of carrying 110 (one hundred and ten) pounds. The model specified by Thomas and Witts as carrying 1,000 (one thousand) pounds is the Junkers 87. In the drive on Bilbao, such powerful 500 kg bombs were not available to Condor Legion forces. (Steer's article of 1937 errs also in this respect). At that time, a single Ju 87 testing and trial machine was stationed elsewhere in Spain. The first regular Ju 87 A-1 seeing action in Spain was near Teruel in February 1938.[83]

Besides, there is evidence that dive bombers were much less effective than Thomas and Witts assumed. Another Condor Legion report of June 1938 on the Spanish experience concludes: "Even attacks by Stuka dive bombers and attacks by low flying bombers did not destroy bridges."[84] The report adds that it is unrealistic to expect that solidly built bridges can be destroyed from the air except by a lucky hit. The failure to destroy Rentería Bridge was an early instance of this record.

6.4 The raid. Finally, there is the issue of what planes flew the attack, what their movements were above the target area, and what the attack altitude was. According to the reports, the raid lasted from about 4:30 P.M. to about 7:45 P.M. and the planes came up the valley from the sea and flew in a southerly direction. There is no agreement beyond this point.

Steer, it will be remembered, depended on informants. In 1937, he identified Heinkel 111 and Junkers 52 bombers as well as Heinkel 51 fighters. It should perhaps be added that the Junkers were converted transport planes using a particularly primitive targeting device („Görzvisier"[85]). First, Steer wrote, there were two single bombers following each other at a short interval, the first dropping bombs near the railroad station and the second closer to the center of town. A chain of three Junkers 52s followed after some fifteen minutes. Then the fighters attacked, and the raid ended with continuous heavy bombing.

In 1938, Steer identified the two advance planes as Heinkel 111s using 50 pound bombs (not available to Condor Legion[86]) and lowered the number of the Junkers 52 group following them.[87] After the fighter intermezzo, he said that Heinkel and Junkers bombers participated in continuous runs lasting for about two and a half hours, with waves of three to twelve planes following one another every twenty minutes.[88] And the statement that some flew as low as six hundred feet suggests that targeting precision must have been very high.[89] It appears that the raid ended with the last bomber departing.

Thomas and Witts presented the raid in a well-rounded narrative. The planned attack altitude, they said, was 6,000 feet, which made misses likely.[90] One should, perhaps, add that this height offered absolute protection of men and materiel against small arms including heavy machine guns, and relative protection against anti-aircraft guns. According to the authors, an advance group of four Heinkel 111s was led by Rudolf von Moreau who, together with his bombardier, had an "enviable record of bull's-eyes."[91] Moreau first flew across the target area alone and without bombing in order to test air defenses. Confident that there were no anti-aircraft guns, he returned for "a textbook bombing run at about 4,000 feet." But, as the authors noted not without irony: "Von Moreau and his bombardier, despite their proved reputation for accuracy, had dropped their bombs hundreds of yards from the Rentería Bridge, in fact near the railway station plaza in the center of Guernica."

On a map in scale in Uriarte's book, the railroad station near the easterly end of town is at about 300 meters' distance, i.e. some 330 yards, in a direct line from the bridge in a southerly direction.[92] This topography is a blueprint for a miss of this kind. If it was not a miss but an intentional throw, I take it that a railroad station is not a surprising target when it is a question of interdicting enemy movement, though this time it was not the primary one. It will be remembered that, up to then, Condor Legion flight commanders had considerable leeway over the target area.

On the question of distances, Thomas and Witts stated that "[o]n the map, Guernica was about three hundred meters west of the bridge."[93] But on Uriarte's map, three hundred meters (i.e. about one thousand feet) up Calle de San Juan take one to the center near the town hall and another one hundred meters to the western edge. If I read this map correctly – which dates from the time of the raid, highlighting as it does the location of the public shelters –, houses are contiguous on both sides of the bridge.[94] On a photo of the bridge after the attack there is debris of a building in its immediate vicinity, and an official map documenting the damage caused by the raid shows that buildings contiguous with the bridge on either side were destroyed, and there was heavy damage in the center of town.[95] There was not much maneuvering room, and I think that 1930s military technology made it impossible not to hit the town when attacking a bridge in such a location.

Thomas and Witts continued by saying that after his solo bombing run, Moreau led the other three Heinkel bombers in, protected by six high-flying Messer-

schmitt 109 fighters. Bombs were dropped from as low as 2,000 feet over an area from near the bridge to, indeed, the center of town.[96]

Their description of the subsequent raid by ten Heinkel 51 fighters flying extremely low – around 200 feet[97] – fits Steer's 1937 account of strafing by low-flying craft, chasing people back into shelters so that bombers could the better carry out their lethal work. But the authors had earlier offered a different explanation. In the raid on Durango, fighters low over the town had almost been hit by bombs of the Junkers 52s above.[98] The maneuver over Guernica served to avoid this danger.

By 6:00 P.M., one hour and a half into the attack, the "main bomber force – twenty-three Junkers-52s" approached from the North.[99] The three squadrons flew at a higher altitude than the Heinkel bombers and at considerable distances from one another in a single run approach. The three chains of three planes each of Karl von Knauer's No. 1 *Staffel* were, in turn, separated by 500 to 1,000 meters.[100] The leader of the second squadron, Hans Henning von Beust, "found it impossible to identify any target" and dropped the bombs indiscriminately.[101] When the third and last squadron approached the target area, its leader Ehrhart Dellmensingen von Krafft noticed that the Rentería bridge was still intact. He led his squadron over it, but is quoted as reporting that the nine heavy bombs that fell in that general area failed to hit the main target.[102] Thomas' and Witts's manner of general and collective referencing makes it impossible to trace and verify this information.

Unlike Steer, Thomas and Witts had the raid end with a particularly ruthless action of war-time cruelty, with the fighter planes "just going back and forth, back and forth, machine-gunning," and leaving at seven-thirty.[103]

If Steer and Thomas and Witts told somewhat differing stories, Condor Legion documents do not square with either. They rather show that the raid was flown by two Heinkel 111 model planes, one Dornier 17 E, eighteen Junkers 52, and three Savoia Marchetti 79.[104] There were, as a matter of course, fighter escorts.

If there were only two Heinkel 111 flying over the target area, Steer's 1938 account is more reliable than Thomas' and Witts's of 1975, except for one point: When no anti-aircraft defense was expected – and this was the case over Guernica –, standard Condor Legion procedure was first to send in a plane for testing, not for bombing, as in Thomas' and Witts's narrative.[105] On the other hand, there is another, late document that further questions the reliability of the two authors as far as top ace Moreau is concerned: In 1974, Knauer noted that "Squadron Moreau did not attack G. on 26 April 1937."[106] If this is true, the linchpin of their irony is knocked away. Knauer's statement is quoted from and printed in its entirety in Maier's *Guernica*, which is, in turn, listed among Thomas' and Witts's sources.

The attack height for his own run was, Knauer said, 1,500 meters (about 5,000 feet); the leader of another squadron specified more than twice this height for his, i.e. 3,500 meters or almost 12,000 feet.[107]

As far as the attack altitude is concerned, it seems appropriate to refer again to the 1938 Condor Legion report. Accordingly, small arms fire can be lethal up to

800 meters or about 2,700 feet; anti-aircraft guns will make hits as high as 4,500 meters or 15,000 feet.[108] There were, therefore, very strict limitations for low altitude attacks.[109] But even a low altitude attack was no guarantee that an object such as a bridge could be hit. The Condor Legion report cited above states that a low altitude attack, while it failed to make the targeted bridge impassable for the retreat of as many as two divisions, resulted in thirteen of the fifteen Heinkel 111 bombers being damaged by direct hits.[110] A responsible commander will undoubtedly see to it that his men and materiel avoid such a danger whenever possible.

The participation of Italian planes has sometimes been questioned.[111] But evidence collected by Talón from published and unpublished sources – military documents, pilots' diaries, and various recollections – would seem to indicate that three Savoia Marchetti 79 bombers, escorted by Fiat CR 32 fighters, were the first over Guernica. There is no record of coordination between Condor Legion and the Italians, who dropped 36 bombs of 50 kg or 110 pounds weight from a height of 3,600 meters or 12,100 feet at 4:30 P.M. They observed some unidentified plane movement below. Though they aimed for the bridge, the bombs fell wide. One pilot saw them hit the railroad station, another recorded that they fell into the fields.[112] They probably did both.

Italian participation may help to explain a significant discrepancy between Steer (1937) and Thomas and Witts. Steer's witnesses stated that the first plane to come in at 4:30 P.M. dropped bombs near the station. According to Thomas and Witts, the first plane came in at that time at about 6,000 feet, well above small arms range, for the standard trial run without as yet the use of bombs. But what about the first bombs which, according to Steer, fell at the same time? If one assumes that they were dropped from the Italian planes at more than twice this height, it is not unlikely that the townspeople, fearfully aware of the lower-flying German machine, thought that the latter was the responsible agent.

This is the last moment to recall a mysterious item in the pages of Southworth, which has been attributed to different authors and has apparently been forgotten. It begins as follows:

> At five o'clock, we were passing in the Rentería quarter, when an airplane came over our heads and dropped nine bombs on the Rentería bridge. The bridge was not destroyed, and immediately afterwards a crowd gathered to view the damage done by the projectiles.[113]

If there weren't the discrepancy in time, these nine bombs could be the ones which the Italian airman saw falling into the fields. But if one remembers the various times of the clock Steer gave for his stop in Guernica, a half-hour difference probably does not count under the circumstances.

7 Conclusions

If I were asked to give an account of the events in and around Guernica on 26 April 1937, I would elaborate on the following major propositions, which I take to be factually correct: (1) In the drive on Bibao, Condor Legion and the Italian air force contingent, operating as they did under an agreed policy of "no regard for the civilian population," acquired a record of effectiveness and ruthlessness by severely damaging – before the raid on Guernica – small towns and villages such as Durango, Ochandiano, Elgueta, Ermura, and Guerricaiz.[114] (2) The objective of the raid was a tactical one: to interdict the retreat of the Basque militia on the three roads from the East and Southeast converging in or near Rentería and on across the bridge linking the village with Guernica, presupposing that the ground forces would block, as agreed, the smaller passages towards the South. (3) The mix of bombs was standard for Condor Legion attacks on any kind of bridge in any location but proved particularly devastating on the woodwork in Guernica. (4) In all theaters of the Spanish Civil War, Condor Legion has an abysmal record when attacking pin-point targets; Rentería Bridge is not the first but an early instance. (5) Some of the attacking planes flew in an arrow-like formation, which is unusual for pin-point targets, and suggests that they rather targeted the area around the bridge. (6) What was destroyed is not the bridge but the town. (7) The usual evening report to Berlin stated as objectives the bridge, roads, and suburbs on the Eastern edge of Guernica. (8) This report squares with Condor Legion documents on the tactical planning of the reaid. On the day after the raid, Richthofen noted the disturbing (*beunruhigend*) report that Guernica, aflame, was bypassed by rather heavy traffic in southwesterly direction. Syntactically, the tone of regret is directed at the conflagration; but given the military objective, it is more likely to refer to the escape of the Basque militia, all the more since there is a touch of admiration in his report, after an on-the-spot inspection, according to which the total destruction of the town made it impassable for at least twenty-four hours, implying, it would seem, that there was enough time for the ground forces to block the roads to the South and West of the town.

On the very evening of the raid, well before there could have been any news of adverse press coverage, Richthofen issued an order of secrecy. The military command in Berlin records appears to have ordered secrecy only a whole week later, after 4 May.[115] Shortly before the final attack on Bilbao, Richthofen revoked the relative freedom squadron leaders had so far enjoyed over the target area. At the same time, in a letter home, obviously written under conditions of military censorship, he confessed, with a certain emphasis, that he had behaved rudely (*rüpelhaft*) in the case of Guernica.

A particularly sensitive point is Nr. 5, above. The effect was the same. The destruction of the town effectively cut communications, as Steer had recognized in 1938 and Richthofen recorded in 1937.[116] If I see it correctly, a number of factors contributed to this development. In the light of the order issued for the battle of

Bilbao, the relative independence of squadron leaders above the target area would seem to figure prominently. Yet there were also other aggravating circumstances, among them the primitive *Görtzvisier*, as well as seriously impaired sight for the later waves of Ju 52 bombers and a pilot's routine never to return with bombs aboard but to drop them, if need be, indiscriminately.

The bridge was missed and the town grievously hit. The raid was not a feat of heroism. It was what wars have always been: a successful horror story for one side and, for the other, horror, period.

References

1 Introduction

[1] Shiffman, p. 49.
[2] Rosten, *O Kaplan*, p.4
[3] Cf. Schiffman, pp. 49-52; S. L. Gilman; Trommler.
[4] Rosten, *Joys*; on Germerican, cf. Shell/Sollors and Shell; on *dialect* in relation to *language* and *creole*, cf. Welte, pp. 581-94, and McArthur, pp. 289-96.
[5] Cf. Nolte.
[6] Nolte, pp. 329-30.
[7] Translated from Molte's German, p. 232.
[8] Cf. below, Chapter 3, Section 1, "Contexts of Politics, Poetics, and Radio."
[9] For a more detailed discussion of Stein and Morrah, cf. Frank, "Borderline Cases."
[10] Stein, p. 18.
[11] *Mother Goose*, p. 6, and Morrah, p. 11.
[12] Morrah, p. 54.
[13] On naturalization, cf. below, Chapter 3, Section 1, "The 'new immigrants' and Americanization."
[14] Cf. Wilson, p. 131.
[15] For a concise survey of Comintern activities in Europe at the time, cf. Pfaff.
[16] For Dembo's critique, cf. his *The Monological Jew*.
[17] Elliott, *Columbia History [. . .] Novel*, p. 504.
[18] Bercovitch. *Cambridge History*, vol. 6, pp. 449, 479.
[19] I rely on the combined information in Ethridge and in Locher, p. 330.
[20] Spiller *et al*., p. 1351.
[21] Waggoner, pp. 485-92 at 486.
[22] Schultze, pp. 371-72 at 371.
[23] Spiller *et al*., p. 1351.
[24] Bogard *et al*., pp. 260-61; Schultze, p. 371; "half-erroneously" refers to the fact that *Panic* started on the stage and was published in radio form in *Six Plays* (1980).
[25] Cf. Sickles.
[26] Parini, pp. 60, 563.
[27] Elliott, *Columbia Literary History*, pp. 749.
[28] Cf. Donaldson, pp. 264-65.
[29] MacLeish, *Time*, p. 100..
[30] Donaldson, p. 266; cf. MacLeish, *Time*, pp. 97-102.
[31] Elliott, *Columbia Literary History*, pp. 257, 866.
[32] Donaldson, p. 263.
[33] Elliott, *Columbia Literary History*, p. 755; subsequent quotations, pp. 755-56.
[34] Aaron, p. 173.
[35] Ruland/Bradbury, p. 317.
[36] Cf. Spiller *et al*., pp. 1394-95; the periodical publication date of the poem is 1924.
[37] Ruland/Bradbury, p. 261.
[38] MacLeish, *Poetry*, p. 17.
[39] MacLeish, *Poems*, p. 107.
[40] Ruland/Bradbury, p. 348.
[41] Cf. Buitenhuis.
[42] Cf. Aaron, pp. 281-84.
[43] Since the article is inaccessible, I quote from Donaldson, pp. 262-63.

2 Leo Rosten and the Matter of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N

[1] Ross, p. 3; next quotation, p. 11; subsequent references to *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* are in-text.
[2] Cf. Bennet, p. 30.
[3] According to Bennett, p. 15, the exact figures are 10,189,420 and 23,465,374.
[4] Bennett, p. 15.
[5] Hartmann, p. 267.
[6] Cf. Hartmann, p. 267; next quotation. p. 25.
[7] Howe, p. 230.
[8] On policy, cf. Pickus, p. 19.
[9] Cf. Pickus, pp. 86-89.
[10] Cf. Pickus, pp. 90.
[11] Pickus p. 88; cf. Kliger.
[12] Pickus, p. 90.
[13] Cf. Pickus, p. 87; next quotation, p. 58.
[14] Cf. Pickus, p. 90.
[15] Cf. Lemay/Barkan, pp. 89-90.
[16] Cf. Lemay/Barkan, pp. 93-97.
[17] Cf. Lemay/Barkan, p. 96.
[18] Cf. Pickus, p. 97.
[19] Seller, p. 203.
[20] Cf. Harap, pp. 29-30.
[21] Cf. Harap, p. 30; the same for next quotation.
[22] Glass, p. 13.
[23] Cf. Harap, p. 32.
[24] Harap, p. 33.
[25] Dembo, p. 59.
[26] U.S. Department of Labor, p. 8.
[27] Dembo, p. 59; Rosten, *O Kaplan*, p. x; next quotation, Dembo, p. 59.
[28] Dembo, p. 60; Rosten, *O Kaplan*, p. 26; similarly Ross, pp. 13, 15.
[29] Dembo, p. 69.
[30] Cf. Ross, p. 13; cf. Howe, *passim*.
[31] Cf. Bronner, p. 35; similarly Shiffman.
[32] On "Happy Days," cf. Ross, pp. 138-39.
[33] Cf. Roaten, *O Kaplan*, p. 291; next quotation, p. 290.
[34] Ross, p. 7. Later, Rosten repeated this spiel with "A room is goink around" for "A rumor is going around," Ross, p. 92.
[35] Mencken, p. 294; next quotation, pp. 294-95.
[36] "Hot" is Kaplanese for English "heart."
[37] For a funeral as a Jewish social event, cf. Jarrell, Chapter 3.8.

3 Archibald MacLeish and the Theme of Imminent War

[1] Cf. Buitenhuis.
[2] Cf. MacLeish, *Reflections*, p. 109.
[3] Cf. Thompson; Liss, p. 5.
[4] Cf. Donaldson, p. 269.
[5] Cf. Larkin; cf. Anon., *New York Times* (1 Feb. 1942); cf. Anon., *New York Times* (2 March 1960).
[6] Cf. Jarrell, *Kipling*, pp. 101-11.
[7] Roosevelt, p. 3; cf. Breitinger, p. 315.
[8] For details of MacLeish's poetics, cf. below, Section 1, "Context of Politics, Poetics, and Radio."
[9] Cf. MacLeish, *Fall*, p. 93; for his definition, cf. below, p. 42.
[10] MacLeish, *Fall*, p. 92.
[11] On the Constitution cf. Ploetz, pp. 773-73; on the new tactics, cf. Cattell, p. 25.
[12] On anti-fascism, cf. Nolte, pp. 334-35.
[13] Cf. Pfaff.
[14] On the Labor Party, cf. Nolte, p. 334; cf. MacLeish, *Time*, pp. 8-9.
[15] Cf. MacLeish, *Time*, pp.9-11.
[16] MacLeish, *Time*, pp. 11-12.
[17] Transcription courtesy of *Avalon Project* at Yale Law School, www.ourdocuments.gov.
[18] Cf. Schultze-Rhonhof, p. 15; I quote the statistics, not the author's opinions.
[19] Cf. Schultze-Rhonhof, pp. 61, 95.
[20] On ultimatum, cf. Kaltenborn, *I Broadcast*, pp. 24, 55, 212, 223, 228, on deeply penetrating surprise air force strikes, pp. 15, 50, 65.
[21] MacLeish, *Time*, p. 7.
[22] The article in the *New Masses* (August 1936) being unavailable, I rely on Donaldson, pp. 262-63.
[23] MacLeish, *Time*, p. 84.
[24] Quoted in Donaldson, p. 263.

[25] Ransom, *World's Body* and "Ontological Critic."
[26] Cf. MacDonald.
[27] Eliot, p. 63.
[28] Bishop, p. 305.
[29] I gratefully adopt and develop an idea of Breitinger's and refer to Fielding.
[30] Breitinger, p. 201.
[31] I have seen only a German translation, *Lufthoheit* (1935).
[32] Cf. Meyer, p. 37; for Rousseau, cf. *Le Contrat social*, Book 1, Chapter 4.
[33] Cf. Meyer, pp. 43, 141, for the next arguments, pp. 43-45.
[34] For a fairly detailed account of the first position, cf. Meyer, p. 140.
[35] Cf. Meyer, pp. 144, 148, 243.
[36] Spaight, pp. 1-30 at 1.
[37] Cf. Douhet, p. 14; cf. Spaight, p. 1.
[38] Douhet, p. 17; Soaight, p. 1.
[39] Spaight, pp. 44, 1; Douhet, p. 15.
[40] Douhet, p. 16; Spaight, p. 12.
[41] Spaight, p. 5; Douhet, p. 16.
[42] Douhet, p. 16; Spaight, pp. 16, 24
[43] Douhet, p. 14; next quotations, Spaight, pp. 6, 8.
[44] Churchill, *Speeches*, p. 3267; next quotation, *Armistice*, p, 482.
[45] Spaight, p. 14; next quotation, p. 13.
[46] Cf. Spaight, p. 16.
[47] Spaight, p. 12.
[48] MacLeish, *Six Plays*, pp. 98, 97; next quotation, p. 97. The measurements of Picasso's collage painting, 3,49 by 7,77 meters, has been taken from Oppler, p. 9.
[49] Cf. Chipp, pp. 11, 17; for *Sueño*, cf. Picasso.
[50] Cf. Chipp, p. 4.
[51] Chipp, p. 195, cf. p.67; next quotation, p. 97.
[52] MacLeish, *Six Plays*, p. 98.
[53] MacLeish, *Six Plays*, pp. 67-68.
[54] Cf. MacLeish, *Reflections*, pp. 106-07; next quotation, p. 107.
[55] Cf. MacLeish, *Reflections*, p. 112; the same for next quotation.
[56] A similar error is Breitinger's (p. 325) when he links *Panic* with *Fall* and *Air Raid* as plays where a fateful sequence of events intrudes upon the place of action from outside. The crucial difference is, to insist, that, unlike in *Panic* and *Fall*, there is no defeatism in *Air Raid*.
[57] MacLeish, *Reflections*, p. 112.
[58] Donaldson, p. 269; next quotation, p. 270.
[59] Cf. MacLeish, "Question of Audience," *Time*, pp. 47-80.
[60] Cf. MacLeish, *Air Raid*, p. 6; subsequent references to the play are in-text.
[61] On radio language, cf. Frank, *Hörspiel*, pp. 78-100.
[62] MacLeish, *Poetry*, p. 22; cf. pp. 69-71.
[63] Allen, p. 253, reviewed in terms of Angermann, pp. 196-210, and Craig, pp. 697-708.
[64] Craig, pp. 701-02.
[65] Cf. Allen, pp. 256-57.
[66] Allen, p. 253.
[67] On territorial demands, cf. Ploetz, p. 729; on peace, cf. Allen, pp. 256-57.
[68] Cf. Craig, p. 210.
[69] Cf. below, Sub-Section 5.5, "Dramatic Irony."
[70] Cf. Pound, p. 25.
[71] MacLeish, p. 70.
[72] Cf. Miner, pp. 181-212.
[73] Cf. Frank, *Literaturwissenschaft*, pp. 25-43.
[74] Cf. Breitinger, p. 332.
[75] Breitinger, p. 74.
[76] Cf. Breitinger, p. 333.
[77] *Quick* in *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.
[78] Cf. Breitinger, p. 65.
[79] MacDonald, p. 57.
[80] Cf. Sedgewick, pp. 32-39.
[81] Cf. Sedgewick, pp. 36, 49.

4 Perspective

[1] Miles, p. 65.
[2] Jarrell, *Pictures*, p. 121.
[3] Jarrell, *Pictures*, p. 151.
[4] Cf. Frank, "Borderline Cases," pp. 221-24, 233-38.
[5] Cf. Wood, p. 6.
[6] Wood, p. 6.
[7] Lamport, p. 53.
[8] Ruland/Bradbury, p. 393.
[9] Cf. Keillor, pp. 90-91

Appendices

[1] Cf. H. Thomas, pp. 228-29; Uriarte, p. 179.
[2] Knightley, p. 214.
[3] For the swing of public opinion, cf. Knightley, p. 220.
[4] Southworth, p. 160.
[5] Oppler, 160.
[6] Knightley, p. 221.
[7] Chipp, p. 40.
[8] Cf. Steer, *Tree*, p. 14.
[9] Cf. Rankin, p. 134.
[10] Cf. Steer, "Historic Basque Town Wiped Out."
[11] Cf. Steer, "The Tragedy of Guernica."
[12] Cf. Steer, *Tree*, pp. 244,247; Thomas/Witts, p. 289.
[13] Cf. Spaight, pp. 12-23.
[14] On Guernica, cf. Chapter 20, pp. 236-45.
[15] Steer, *Tree*, pp. 236-37.
[16] Cf. Steer, *Tree*, p. 219.
[17] Cf. Steer, *Tree*, p.232.
[18] Steer, *Tree*, p. 233; next quotations, p. 238.
[19] Steer, *Tree*, pp. 238-39, 241, 240, 245.
[20] Steer, *Tree*, pp. 239, 240, 241-42.
[21] Steer, *Tree*, p. 237; next quotation, p. 224.
[22] Steer, "Historic Basque Town"; next quotation, *Tree*, p. 242.
[23] Steer, *Tree*, pp. 243-44; Onaindía (p. 164) also noted that "[s]tupor was written on all their faces."
[24] Rankin, p. 127; next quotation, Steer, *Tree*, p. 247.
[25] Southworth, p. 140; next quotation, Steer, *Tree*, p. 244.
[26] Knightley, p. 8.
[27] Steer, *Tree*, p. 242.
[28] Cf. Uriarte, p. 76.
[29] Steer, *Tree*, p. 242; next quotation, Rankin, p. 118; for Onaindía, cf. p. 163.
[30] Knightley, p. 226.
[31] Corum, p. 134.
[32] Cf. Maier, p. 80.
[33] Cf. Maier, p. 64.
[34] Cf. Maier, p. 18.
[35] Cf. Corum, pp. 157-64.
[36] Cf. Thomas/Witts, pp. 5-6, 301-02.
[37] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 303.
[38] Cf. Thomas/Witts, pp. 13-14.
[39] Thomas/Witts, p. 131.
[40] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 295.
[41] Southworth, p. 495.
[42] Uriarte, p. 154; though the London edition is cited, there is evidence that the Spanish version was used.
[43] Cf. Uriarte, p. 170.
[44] Cf. Uriarte, p. 170.
[45] Cf. Uriarte, pp. 160-61.
[46] Thomas/Witts, pp. 13, 301-02.
[47] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 38.
[48] Cf. Southworth, p. 495. The author's footnote management is somewhat hasty at this point – as may be mine on occasion – because when referring to "Richthofen's diary" he gave the pages for Maier's brief account of the diplomatic repercussions.
[49] Southworth, p. 14.
[50] Cf. Southworth, pp. 371-86.
[51] Cf. Maier, pp. 12, 66-67.
[52] Cf. Maier, pp. 55-56.
[53] Southworth, pp. 374-75.
[54] Cf. Abendroth.
[55] Southworth, pp. 379-80.
[56] Cf. Maier, pp. 107, 109.
[57] Southworth, p. 386.
[58] Cf. Southworth, p. 378.
[59] Thomas/Witts, p. 37.
[60] Cf. Thomas/Witts, pp. 174-75.
[61] Cf. Thomas/Witts, pp. 128-31, 136, 138; on convents and other details, also cf. Talón, *Holocausto*, p. 49.
[62] Cf. Maier, p. 57.
[63] Cf. Maier, pp. 219, 233.
[64] Cf. Steer, *Tree*, pp. 219, 233.
[65] Cf. Maier, p. 102; next two quotations, p. 103.
[66] Cf. Steer, *Tree*, pp. 226-27.
[67] Maier, pp. 103-04 (my translation).
[68] Cf. Abendroth, p. 113.
[69] Cf. Maier, p. 104.
[70] Cf. Maier, p. 59.
[71] Cf. Maier, pp. 64, 57-58.
[72] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 211; cf. Bernecker, p. 147.
[73] Cf. Southworth, p. 114.
[74] Southworth, p. 381.
[75] Thomas/Witts, pp. 212, 213; cf. Maier, p. 56
[76] Thomas/Witts, p. 212; next two quotations, pp. 212, 206.

[77] On Richthofen, cf. Maier, p. 109.
[78] Cf. Abendroth, p. 118.
[79] Cf. Maier, pp. 150-51.
[80] Thomas/Witts, p. 212; next two quotations, p. 232, Steer, *Tree*, p. 178.
[81] Cf. Abendroth, p. 118.
[82] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 212; cf. Abendroth, p. 118.
[83] On 500 kg bomb, cf. Maier, pp. 150-51; on the bombing of Mora de Ebro bridges, cf. Abendroth, pp. 119-20.
[84] Cf. Abendroth, p. 120.
[85] Maier, p. 60.
[86] Cf. Maier, p. 150.
[87] Cf. Steer, *Tree*, pp. 237, 238.
[88] Cf. Steer, *Tree*, p. 239.
[89] Cf. Steer, *Tree*, p. 240.
[90] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 206.
[91] Thomas/Witts, p. 223; next two quotations, pp. 226, 227.
[92] For the map, cf. Uriarte, pp. 168-69.
[93] Thomas/Witts, p. 206.
[94] Cf. also Maier, p. 56; for the map, cf. Talón, *Arde*, at p. 256..
[95] Cf. Talón, *Arde*, p. 97.
[96] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 233.
[97] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 245.
[98] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 209
[99] Thomas/Witts, p. 250.
[100] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 258.
[101] Thomas/Witts, p. 261.
[102] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 264.
[103] Thomas/Witts, p. 274.
[104] Cf. Abendroth, p. 117.
[105] Cf. Abendroth, p. 119.
[106] Maier, p. 159.
[107] Cf. Maier, pp. 158, 156.
[108] Cf. Abendroth, p. 120.
[109] Cf. Abendroth, p. 121.
[110] Cf. Abendroth, p. 121.
[111] Cf. Thomas/Witts, p. 304.
[112] Cf. Talón, *Holocausto*, pp. 147, 149.
[113] Southworth, p. 27.
[114] On civilian losses, cf. Maier, p. 46; on the bombing of towns, cf. Abendroth, p. 111.
[115] Cf. Abendroth, p. 115.
[116] Cf. Maier, pp. 106, 107, 109.

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The inclusion of works in a canonical list creates a large body of exclusions. But among these neglected works there are not a few that nevertheless are worth reading. Literary worth is not necessarily aesthetic impeccability. A literary work recommends itself by a high degree of artistic achievement with elbowroom for historical importance. The present study focuses on Leo Rosten's immigration novel The Education of Hyman Kaplan (1937) and Archibald MacLeish's radio play Air Raid (1938). The first is more than the apparent compendium of language-based jokes. Read in the context of immigration policy from Presidents Theodore Roosevelt to F. D. Roosevelt and of Jewish-American humor, it displays Kaplan's moral and intellectual growth, which extant commentary denies, and exhibits the "interior internationality" of an immigration country. Air Raid is one of the few achieved American radio plays to take a stand on foreign affairs in a context that does not only consist of broadcasting and Picasso's collage-painting Guernica – the "screaming picture" which MacLeish transposed into the acoustic medium – but also of the historical saturation bombing of the Basque town.

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