

---

Dorothea Fischer-Hornung  
Heike Raphael-Hernandez (eds.)

# Holding Their Own

*Perspectives on the Multi-Ethnic Literatures  
of the United States*

---



Melus Europe

**STAUFFENBURG  
VERLAG**

# ZAA Studies

---

## Language Literature Culture

Buchreihe zur

*Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*

*A Quarterly of Language, Literature and Culture*

This series of publications presents outstanding monographs and anthologies from the entire spectrum of English and American Studies. Following the general programme outlined in the "Editorial" of the *ZAA: Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik – A Quarterly of Language, Literature and Culture*, the *ZAA Studies* series has been designed to accommodate the more traditional areas of studies in language, literature and culture along with the more recent developments of our discipline.

The essays collected in *Holding Their Own* reflect the scope of scholarship in the field of U.S. multi-ethnic literatures. Among the authors are eminent scholars such as Michel Fabre, Elaine Kim, Nellie McKay, and Daniel Walden, with additional contributions by scholars from seven European countries and the United States. These articles demonstrate the broad range and variety of approaches in the field, each chapter dealing with a fundamental question posed in contemporary ethnic literary studies: "double consciousness" as a model for ethnic awareness; the politics of location as reflected in space, place and home; the (un)translatability of culture among ethnic groups; aesthetics and oppositional poetics based on ethnicity; and the shifting categories of margin and center. Among the numerous authors treated here are, for example, Toni Morrison, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Bharati Mukherjee, Audre Lorde, Cynthia Ozick, Helena María Viramontes.

ISBN 3-86057-739-5

## **ZAA Studies**

---

**Language Literature Culture**

Buchreihe zur  
*Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*  
*A Quarterly of Language, Literature and Culture*

Herausgegeben von  
Edited by

Helmbrecht Breinig (Erlangen-Nürnberg)  
Brigitte Georgi-Findlay (Dresden)  
Thomas Herbst (Erlangen-Nürnberg)  
Ekkehard König (Berlin)  
Barbara Korte (Tübingen)  
Albrecht Neubert (Leipzig)  
Gerhard Stilz (Tübingen)  
Günter Walch (Berlin)

**Band 10**

Dorothea Fischer-Hornung  
Heike Raphael-Hernandez (eds.)

## **Holding Their Own**

*Perspectives on the Multi-Ethnic Literatures  
of the United States*

**STAUFFENBURG  
VERLAG**

*Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme*

**ZAA studies** : language, literature, culture ; Buchreihe zur Zeitschrift  
für Anglistik und Amerikanistik. – Tübingen : Stauffenburg-Verl.,  
Buchreihe ZAA studies zu: Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik  
ISSN 1434-0348

Bd. 10. Holding Their Own – 2000

**Holding Their Own** : perspectives on the multi-ethnic literatures  
of the United States  
Dorothea Fischer-Hornung ; Heike Raphael-Hernandez (eds.). –  
Tübingen : Stauffenburg-Verl., 2000  
(ZAA studies ; Bd. 10)  
ISBN 3-86057-739-5

© 2000 · Stauffenburg Verlag · Brigitte Narr GmbH  
P.O. Box 25 25 · D-72015 Tübingen

All rights, including the rights of publication, distribution and sales, as well as the right to  
translate, are reserved. No part of this work covered by the copyrights hereon may be  
reproduced or copied in any form or by any means – graphic, electronic or mechanical  
including photocopying, recording, taping, or information and retrieval systems –  
without written permission from the publisher.

Printed by digidruck, Neuhausen

Printed in Germany

ISSN 1434-0348  
ISBN 3-86057-739-5

## Contents

Preface	ix
<i>Dorothea Fischer-Hornung and Heike Raphael-Hernandez</i> Introduction	xi
 <b>Chapter I That Double Consciousness and More</b>	
<i>Nellie McKay</i> African American Literature and MELUS Europe: A Necessary Connection	3
<i>Michel Fabre</i> “In emulation, but without jealousy”: On the Literature of the New Orleans <i>gens libres de couleur</i>	17
<i>Ineke Bockting</i> “That Double Consciousness”: Chicana/o Literature between Loyalty and Betrayal	33
<i>Tobe Levin</i> Ill at Ease with Mariam, Gloria Naylor’s Infibulated Jew	51
<i>Gabriele Pisarz-Ramirez</i> Bilingual, Interlingual – Language and Identity Construction in Mexican American Literary Discourse	67
 <b>Chapter II The Politics of Location: Space, Place, Home</b>	
<i>Elaine H. Kim</i> Myth, Memory, and Desire: Homeland and History in Contemporary Korean American Writing and Visual Art	79
<i>Yesim Bajarir</i> Bleak Expectations: O. E. Rølvaag and the Legacy of Non-fulfillment	93

<i>Lene Johannessen</i> The Meaning of Place in Viramontes' <i>Under the Feet of Jesus</i>	101
<i>Alison D. Goeller</i> Illness as Metaphor: The Italian American Immigrant Experience in Tina De Rosa's <i>Paper Fish</i>	111
<i>Antje Kley</i> "There is no place / that cannot be home / nor is": Constructions of 'home' in Audre Lorde's <i>Zami: A New Spelling of my Name</i>	119

### Chapter III The (Un)Translatability of Culture

<i>Mita Banerjee</i> Pork Chops and <i>alu gobi</i> : The (Un)Translatability of Culture in Mukherjee's <i>Jasmine</i>	143
<i>Dorothea Fischer-Hornung</i> An Island Occupied: The U.S. Marine Occupation of Haiti in Zora Neale Hurston's <i>Tell My Horse</i> and Katherine Dunham's <i>Island Possessed</i>	153
<i>Cathy Waegner</i> Toni Morrison and the 'Other'-Reader: Oprah Winfrey and Marcel Reich-Ranicki as Mediators?	169
<i>Dominique Marçais</i> The Presence of Africa in Melville's <i>The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade</i>	181
<i>Monika Müller</i> Nineteenth-Century Constructions of Race: Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe	191

### Chapter IV Oppositional Poetics

<i>Harryette Mullen</i> "Incessant Elusives": The Oppositional Poetics of Erica Hunt and Will Alexander	207
---	-----

<i>Barry Maxwell</i> "I hate it when things become so pat as to be oppressive." Staying Out of Range of the Commonplace in Nathaniel Mackey's <i>Bedouin Hornbook</i>	217
<i>Kirsten Twelbeck</i> "Elle venait de loin" – Re-reading <i>DICTEE</i>	227
<i>Carmen Birkele</i> "There is plenty of room for us all": Charles W. Chesnutt's America	241
 <b>Chapter V The Margin Sustains the Center ?</b>	
<i>Frances Smith Foster</i> Race, Region and the Politics of Slavery's Memory	261
<i>Daniel Walden</i> Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud and Cynthia Ozick: Dealing with Existentialism, Evolving Moral Essentialism	275
<i>Susanne Klingenstein</i> The Margin Sustains the Center: Eccentric Sources of Inspiration in Recent Jewish American Fiction	289
<i>Marina Cacioppo</i> Italian American Crime-Fiction From the 1890s to the 1930s: Bernardino Ciambelli, Prosper Buranelli and Louis Forgione	305
<i>Carolyn Burmedi</i> Star Trek: Multi-race, Multi-species, Multicultural?	315
Contributors and Editors	331
<i>William Boelhower</i> Afterword	335



Wind tugging at my sleeve  
feet sinking into the sand  
I stand at the edge where earth touches ocean  
where the two overlap  
a gentle coming together  
at other times and places a violent clash.

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*

## Preface

Early in 1997 an idea was born: MELUS Europe, a European chapter of MELUS US, The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States. The thought was inspiring - a "home" for all those scholars in Europe researching the wide and varied field of U.S. ethnic literatures. As exhilarating as this concept was, it was also intimidating: Would others respond because they too felt the need? How could a founding conference be financed? Where could we hold it? These questions and many more we had not anticipated arose. Many were answered by the overwhelmingly positive response to our call for papers for the First MELUS Europe Conference, which was held in Heidelberg in June 1998 as a joint project of the University of Maryland in Europe and Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg. The "founding moment" was a heady one, with over 200 scholars, students and friends from several continents, meeting to join in a leap of faith that global scholarship and understanding were indeed necessary and possible. This collection of essays has grown out of that conference, reflecting the stimulating ferment that occurred at that meeting of minds.

As in all such projects, there is an unending list of people who must be applauded, acknowledged or simply thanked for essential support along the way. It is not always self-evident to all scholars in the United States that there is significant research on the Americas going on outside of its own geographical borders; Nellie McKay, Frances Smith Foster, Amrit Singh, John Lowe, Daniel Walden, William Boelhower and Cheng Lok Chua as founding members of MELUS US, as well as Manju Jaidka from MELUS India, came to Heidelberg to support the new fledgling organization. Martina Kohl from the U.S. Embassy, then in the process of moving to Germany's new/old capitol of Berlin, gracefully guided our initial requests for funding through Embassy procedures, resulting in a bank account in the black rather than in the red. This seed money enabled the first meeting of a nascent MELUS Europe. Thanks to Giulia Fabi, Helmbrecht Breinig, Susanne Opfermann, Brigitte Georgi-Findlay, Alfred Hornung, Tobe Levin, and Alison Goeller - those brave souls who at our initial meeting shared their ideas and spirit - who sifted, kneaded, molded and sometimes even pummeled the submitted abstracts into a shape fit for a conference. A special thanks to Günter Lenz for his dexterity with grant applications as well as to Dieter Schulz, Chair of American Studies at Ruprecht-Karls-University, for his support.

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft provided us with a grant to cover the costs of the conference, enabling the invitation of our distinguished plenary speakers: Michel Fabre, Elaine Kim, Nellie McKay, Juan Bruce Novoa, and Daniel Walden. Their scholarship and spirit were inspiring. The German-American Institute in Heidelberg generously opened their doors to our conference

"home" - literally from the rafters to the cellar - for three days. Special thanks to its director, Jakob Köllhofer and his staff, who "kept their cool" even in the most heated moments. We are grateful to all our workshop chairs, who so skillfully guided our motley crew of scholars. The University of Maryland in Europe provided funds for a memorable conference gathering on *The Heidelberg* cruising, yes, we admit it - romantic - Neckar River. A special thanks to Paula Harbecke for recognizing that such moments are essential.

Convinced that the subject of our scholarly pursuits - literature - often gets short shrift at conferences, we approached Beate Weber, Lord Mayor of Heidelberg, who generously funded an enchanting evening of readings.

The conference marked the formal founding of MELUS Europe, which now has a growing list of committed members from many countries. To all those conference participants who helped us through those first precarious steps - who helped us believe that this project was and is a worthy effort - our deep indebtedness.

The team at Stauffenburg Verlag has been very supportive: Jürgen Freudl attended the conference and was an enthusiastic advocate of this publication from the onset. Brigitte Narr generously shared her limited time as well as unlimited ideas and enthusiasm. We owe a special debt to Brigitte Georgi-Findlay who provided valuable editorial guidance.

Our particular gratitude goes to Alison Goeller, Tobe Levin and Monika Müller, special friends who supported us through the highs and lows of the conference preparation and implementation - there were surely moments when their patience was stretched to the limit. We owe an inestimable debt to our students, who picked up the torch and carried it with such enthusiasm, who convinced us that they considered it a privilege rather than a burden to participate - they provided the infrastructure ranging from registration over making coffee to acting as tour guides and interpreters for our guests. Of these, several require particular mention: Iris Lochbaum, Anja Geyer, and Birgit Splitt, whose blood, sweat and tears during the preparation of both the conference and this manuscript made the impossible happen. And our final-but-should-be-initial thanks goes to those who were so often our sounding board, providing the bedrock that kept our feet firmly planted throughout this project - our families: "Thank you" is incommensurate. It is to all of these individuals and organizations, as well as to the innumerable unmentioned colleagues, students and friends that we offer our thanks - it is humbling to receive so much.

*Dorothea Fischer-Hornung and Heike Raphael-Hernandez*

## Introduction

Since the founding of the United States the discussion of the significance of the numerous ethnicities within its geographical borders has continued unabated. Native Americans, who inhabited the land which was to become the object of desire for generations of Europeans, African Americans, who were ripped from their ancestral Africa to be enslaved, and immigrants from Europe and from throughout the world began a long and difficult struggle over diverse definitions of what it means to be American. This debate has continued with changing emphases as waves of immigrants from differing parts of Europe and increasing immigration from other continents have changed the tonalities and resonance of America as the "nation of nation."

Europe, which experienced significant migrations in its early history, has experienced increased migration in this century as a result of the displacements of World War II and the post-war economic boom, the end of colonial rule as well as the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Iron Curtain. Therefore, Europe has certainly not been exempt from discussions concerning ethnic migration and is currently experiencing heated debates on the acceptability or even feasibility of immigration of groups from within and outside Europe - with all attendant ethnic strife. The various European countries are affected each in their own way. On the one hand, the European Union is now a reality as is the movement toward a united Europe not only *de jure* but in spirit; yet on the other hand, during the preparation for the First MELUS Europe conference virulent ethnic conflict resulted in a war in former Yugoslavia and abhorrent "ethnic cleansing" - a great shock for many. Reality not only caught up but moved beyond theory. Against this backdrop and recognizing that national boundaries no longer define where we live, who we are, nor how we approach our scholarship, MELUS Europe was founded to provide a forum for scholarly interchange among European scholars conducting research on the ethnic literatures of the United States. The founding conference in Heidelberg provided a rich pool of papers, a selection of which is published in this volume.

The discussion over the canon and whose literature is to be included in the concept "American literature" has initiated a renaissance in the study of ethnic literatures, often as documentation of an independent literary tradition and aesthetics. There has also been an attendant call for a new, transcendent American literary canon - not only the call for the inclusion of neglected works or traditions, but also for a redefinition of "mainstream" or "dominant" culture as such. Not only a common, homogenous "core culture" and a plurality of various subcultures as satellites, so to speak define U.S. literature, but in all its forms American literature is molded by its multi-cultural and intercultural nature -



"they were also there" or a harmonizing synthesis are not enough. Whether one views the ethnic mix in the United States as a melting pot, a salad, a stew, gumbo or any other form of culinary delight, multi-culturalism, ethnic pluralism and identity politics are vibrant sites of contention.

It can come as no surprise that European philosophy and commentary on the United States has influenced U.S. scholarship. It is equally unsurprising that initial U.S. studies in the field of ethnic literatures often emphasized their independence from European scholarship. On the contrary, scholars in fields such as African American, Asian American or Chicano/a literature often defined their field by clearly marking their distinction and separation from European thought and artistic creation, seeking their roots in the continents of their diasporic origin – the Black Aesthetics debate of the 1960s serves as an example.

European scholars have often been eyed with suspicion or, perhaps even more fatally, simply ignored. Yet an interchange between "insiders" and "outsiders" can often provide a valuable perspective. We believe that the linguistic and cultural skills of European scholars can prove to be a valuable resource and we envision a multidirectional exchange between Europe and the United States. A comparative and complementary perspective – rubbing with and against the grain, using different methodologies, based on different histories, and traditions – aims at a "multilog" between the "Old World" and the "New World," while challenging the Euro-centric/US-centric hypothesis of the very terms "old" and "new." Also the contemporary focus on race, gender, class and ethnicity (all of which could appropriately be put in quotation marks) cannot be ignored, but must move in the specifically European post-colonial context toward metissage, creolization, liminality, and hybridity. The traditional definition of culture limited to one's own territorial boundaries, traditions and homogenous population no longer holds true – if in fact it ever did. "Insider" and "outsider" have become vascilating positions.

A look at the essays included in this volume, written by established as well as younger scholars, make this palpable: a Turkish scholar's study of Norwegian U.S. immigrant literature; Norwegian and German studies of Chicano/a literature; a U.S. scholar's study of African Americans in Europe, to name just a few examples. Many of our contributors are "trans-nationals," U.S. citizens who reside in Europe or Europeans who have resided in the United States: European Americans or American Europeans? Can Michel Fabre's contribution to African American scholarship, for example, be classified as exclusively "French"?

This volume contains a number of essays originating in African American studies, directly reflecting the actual conference contributions but also the past and present impulses which have emanated from this field. Regrettably, some notable fields such as Native American literature are absent, perhaps unfortunate serendipity. Nevertheless, we have aimed at as much diversity as possible. The texts have been divided into chapters to unify a decidedly non-unified

project. The divisions revolve around five key concepts: "double consciousness"; "politics of location"; "(un)translatability of culture"; "oppositional poetics" as well as the questions of "margin and center."

Nellie McKay's introductory essay illustrates how African American literature offers valuable lessons to European scholars who wish to understand the ethnic literatures of the United States. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, many African Americans found Europe a more hospitable place than the United States, providing respite from U.S. racism and a space where Africans Americans could be educated, write and travel. DuBois, Wright, Baldwin, Himes are only a few examples. McKay explores the reasons for this, pointing out some difficulties a now ethnically fragmented Europe faces, and encouraging Europeans to study U.S. ethnic literatures as a model.

Michel Fabre explores the early literature of the Louisiana Creoles of Color. Originally written in French, this literature challenges easy classification according to race. For these people of color, who themselves were often slave holders, class and culture (francophone vs. anglophone) were often more significant. Fabre's essay demonstrates how complex cultural contexts can be and makes the potential contribution of European scholars with expertise in both European and U.S. culture particularly apparent.

Taking as a starting point W.E.B. DuBois's famous passage on double consciousness, Ineke Bockting analyzes the various ways in which different groups of immigrants in the United States have expressed a similar kind of "twoness" in autobiography and fiction, focusing more specifically on the experience of Mexican Americans, their position between philia and phobia, as well as the precarious balance of loyalty and betrayal that it entails.

Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez explores the varied range of polyglossic forms and writing strategies in Chicano/a poetry of Alfredo Véa and Francisco Alarcón, who combine English, Spanish and indigenous Indio languages in their poems. The interlingual form points to cultural tension that produces a cultural and linguistic inter-space, textualizing the hybrid in Chicano/a literature and investing Chicano/a literary discourse with an alternative consciousness.

How ethnic positionality can inform, influence, and complicate inter-ethnic reading is explored by Tobe Levin. Her reading of Gloria Naylor's *Bailey's Cafe* delves into the "troubled waters" of genderism and racism – the human rights issues of genital mutilation and anti-Semitism. Naylor portrays Mariam as an infibulated Beta-Israel – a factual inaccuracy with dangerous consequences for Naylor's readership, according to Levin.

Against the backdrop of the Korean War, which has been essentially eliminated from U.S. discourse, and a divided Korea, Elaine Kim explores the work of contemporary Korean American writers Heinz Insu Frenkl and Patti Kim, as well as of the visual artist Y. David Chung. From the interstices of discourses on Asia and America, blackness and whiteness, feminism and patriarchal state



nationalisms, these artists construct U.S. narratives of national identity, creating alternative spaces from which occluded experiences might be remembered and different futures imagined.

Yeşim Başarır explores how place plays a dominant role in the formation and celebration of community mood in O. E. Rølvaag's fiction. Norwegian immigrants have been distinctive in their experience of geographical consciousness, building and replenishing a representation of their new homeland with the familiar topology of the remembered homeland. In their regional remoteness, the prairies brought a new kind of detachment which resulted in the decreation of space as closure, becoming the predominant force that prepared for their ethnic displacement and emotional non-fulfillment.

Lene Johannessen also explores how the metaphoricity of place can be read in Helena María Viramontes' as a meta-discourse of loss and fragmentation, yet also retrieval and integration. The dialectical balancing of landscape in relation to its mental inscape, gives rise to a distinct discourse of in-betweenness which provides the map for a different topography, resonating beyond neither/nor to both/and – as well as beyond the actual locale of the U.S. borderlands.

The dislocations of families caught between the Old and the New World is also the focus of Alison Goeller's study of illness as metaphor in Tina De Rosa. As "white" ethnics, Italian Americans, like Norwegian Americans, have long been ignored in the field of ethnic studies. The inability to integrate the remembered past and homeland with the situation in the not-always-easy new homeland leads to illness as a physical metaphor for the psychological state in De Rosa's Italian immigrant family.

Antje Kley demonstrates that an exclusionary reading of Audre Lorde as 'the black Lesbian voice' constricts the complexity of Lorde's 'biomythography,' which cuts across gender, ethnic and generational divisions. Lorde's transgressive trickster figure protagonist, oscillating between many circles of insiders and outsiders in uneasy alliances, challenges uni-dimensional universalized definitions of identity – identity not as stable, but as an unending process.

Mita Banerjee explores the difficult task of "reading" cultural signs between cultures, both in their specificity and difference. The (un)translatability of culture either precludes or enables cultural understanding on the one hand, just as it precludes or enables cultural appropriation on the other – the United States cannot be read in *Dairy Queen*, nor India in *alu gobi*, nor an amalgamation.

Dorothea Fischer-Hornung explores Katherine Dunham's and Zora Neale Hurston's portrayal of the U.S. Marine occupation of Haiti in the context of their research on Haitian folk culture, dance, music and voodoo in the mid-1930s. Both "doubly marked" outsiders to Haitian culture – as African Americans and as women – their respective interpretation of U.S. imperialism differs significantly in the period shortly after American troops had withdrawn and the scars

of the past and continuing American economic and cultural domination were still strongly felt.

By means of an internet inquiry, Cathy Waegner demonstrates how participatory reading by non-African American, but interested "other" reader and reading strategies are revised in the electronic age. Popular televised book-review shows like the *Literarisches Quartett* (Literary Quartet) in Germany and the Oprah Winfrey Show in the United States and Germany, have attempted to mediate Morrison's fiction in sometimes very different ways, an example of the difficulties involved in "translating" culture.

Ethnicity is not only mediated in contemporary media, but an understanding of meaning of ethnicity over time enables a more complex understanding of many canonical texts considered "non-ethnic." Dominique Marçais' discussion of Melville's *The Confidence Man* demonstrates how an ethnic approach to Melville's use of African American and African oral and material culture enables an understanding of Melville's critic of nineteenth century race politics.

In a similar vein, Monika Müller illustrates how social issues attaining to race and ethnicity in the nineteenth century are played out in fictional space: the figuration of racial otherness and various definitions of "race" reflect the displacement of racial conflict in Fuller, Hawthorne and Stowe. The prickly problem of the racialized other as well as interracial desire is fictionalized in fantasy, leading to interspecies, rather than interracial liaisons.

Harryette Mullen's discussion of Erica Hunt and Will Alexander, two aesthetically unconventional black poets not included in the *Norton Anthology African American Literature*, reflects a post-canonical stance. While Hunt is associated with the "Language Poets," avant-garde and politically conscious writers deeply engaged with critical theory, and Alexander's work is obviously influenced by French, Afro-Caribbean, and African Surrealists, in practice, both poets exist on the boundaries of mainstream aesthetics, black aesthetics and practice which Hunt has called "oppositional poetics."

Barry Maxwell elucidates how a long-forgotten traditional form, the hornbook, is used by Nathaniel Mackey to deconstruct contemporary forms of jazz, myth and kinship, "bending" them to avoid the commonplace. Maxwell provides an example of how European philosophers such as Adorno and Bloch can be used to define a utopian vision – the "not yet" as opposed to the available and inevitable – essential to understanding Mackey.

Kirsten Twelbeck's re-reading of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha confronts the what she sees as politically motivated debate about cultural ownership. She explores the potential reader's response by employing a double strategy – initially "de-canonizing" and then "re-canonizing" the text within a broader context of Korean American literary production and secondly arguing for a reading which enables readers to experience their "Otherness."

Carmen Birkle demonstrates how Charles W. Chesnutt suggests a multicultural America which dissolves the hierarchically and centrally organized social structure of white center versus black margin, embracing a mingling or melting of races. In the same way, genres lose their rigidity when Chesnutt rewrites them, playing with issues of assimilation and passing but finally rejecting these while reaffirming ethnicity and African Americans' Americanness.

Frances Smith Foster tackles the fundamental question of who speaks for whom, who narrates whose history. Deeply rooted in the past negation and denial of slaves or formerly enslaved people to narrate their own history, this discussion has a direct relevance to a wide range of contemporary U.S. culture from literature to the media. Foster emphasizes the significance and responsibility of the academy in shaping the twentieth century controversy over who has the right to narrate history.

In his discussion of Bellow, Malamud and Ozick, Dan Walden elucidates how each writes out of a specifically U.S. but also the global context of the post-holocaust era, with minimal space between the religious and the secular: Bellow's and Malamud's very American context; and Ozick's quest for "Jewish authenticity" between Hellenism and Hebraism. Between the 1950s through the 1980s, these authors were under the influence of existentialism but with the volition to move to moral essentialism.

Susanne Klingenstein's discussion continues where Walden's left off, with Ozick marking the transition from the earlier phase to the latest phase in Jewish writing. Ozick's Jewish "particularist" to her "post-Judaic" phase documents the move of many Jewish writers. But Jewish writers who have moved from the margins of U.S. society to the center as *American* writers, often now find their "identity" in the margins of *Jewish* culture.

Marina Cacioppo's discussion of early Italian American crime fiction takes us back to the early twentieth century. This genre, originally published in Italian, but later also increasingly in English, attempted to represent an Italian American community beyond general stereotypes (sometimes to the detriment of other ethnic groups) and led to the creation of the tough but honest Italian American law enforcer who was to serve as a model of the self-made Italian American.

And in a final switch from the early to the late twentieth century, Carolyn Burmedi discusses the explicitly political goals targeted in the liminal space of the *Star Trek* series. Racial and ethnic epithets are displaced in parallels to alien races, making race and species synonymous. The series serves as an example of how deeply racial and ethnic difference is ingrained in the U.S. national psyche and how discussions of multiculturalism over the years have been reflected in the changing strategies of the series. In other words: This volume is committed to the whole *mishpocha* that is the field of ethnic U.S. literatures and scholarship.

## Chapter I

### That Double Consciousness and More