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East-West Cultural Passage is the journal of the “C. Peter Magrath” Research Center for Cross-Cultural Studies. It appears annually and publishes work by scholars interested in the cross-cultural dialogue in areas such as literature, history, film, popular culture, institutions, politics and related subjects. The journal is devoted to the study of cross-cultural understanding with a clear humanistic emphasis. Articles with an interdisciplinary character are particularly welcome. The journal also publishes notes and comments, review essays and book reviews.

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Foreword

The contemporary world we are living in today has become a global space fraught with economic, social, political, ideological, and cultural challenges. Geographical borders are changing; transnational mobility and cross-cultural perspectives are interrogating and revising personal stories and public histories of the past in order to understand the present or to better contextualize a past time period. Foregrounding some of these aspects, the articles in this issue of *East-West Cultural Passage* bring together thought-provoking perspectives examined through various theoretical lenses or through ample textual analyses. Issues such as mobility, history, transition, nostalgia, personal choice, silence, language, cultural perceptions and assumptions, or personal and collective identity are explored in the works of a variety of writers from different time periods, such as De Forest, Faulkner, Ojaide, Endo, Capote, Golding, Morrison, Manning, Bellow, and Brownjohn.

Anca Iancu proposes a reading of De Forest's romance novel read as a travel narrative, which allows a subtle exploration of the cultural assumptions and perceptions about the North and the South during the American Civil War. By looking at how outer movement has triggered inner transformation, De Forest has drawn explicit and implicit connections between individual choice and the formation of an American national identity in the second half of the nineteenth century. Representing individual identity in the American South, informed by personal and public histories, is the main theme of Ana-Karina Schneider's article. Reading a fragment of Faulkner's *Absalom! Absalom!* through Lacan's psychoanalytic

lenses allows a deeper understanding of the connections among identity, “the contractual nature of language,” and “the social function of narration.”

Ogaga Okuyade also discusses aspects of the personal and the public by looking at Ojaide’s autobiography. However, the author foregrounds the environmental issues embedded in the personal autobiography, juxtaposing the nostalgia of childhood (in a peaceful, unspoiled natural setting) to the menace posed to the environment by the intrusion of money-greedy oil companies. Dan-Serban Sava’s article also focuses on nostalgia and childhood but at a more personal level, as he explores the deeper meanings of transitional states in several of Capote’s short-stories. As Sava suggests, these stories are more experimental in tone and narrative technique, trying to capture the elusiveness of transitional states (for example, “the polarity between nocturnal and diurnal, good and evil,” etc.).

In her article, Rodica Grigore debates issues of personal choice and the freedom of religion in Endo’s novel *Silence*. As the author demonstrates, “*Silence* is a grave book about Church and culture, triumph and suffering. But most of all, this novel is about presenting a human nature bent towards God and a God towards his people.” Ana-Blanca Ciocoi-Pop’s article also discusses issues related to the spiritual and the scientific worlds as she examines how positivism, a 19th century ideological trend, influenced Golding’s work. The author explores the novel *Lord of the Flies* and discusses Golding’s beliefs as reflected in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech. In the latter, Golding acknowledged “the necessity of merging the scientific and the spiritual realms,” but also pointed out that the missing “permanent connection between the two worlds” needs to be established. Personal and collective

identity, the spiritual, and silence are issues that Alexandra Mitrea analyzes in her article on the novel *Beloved*. African-American identity, Mitrea points out, “emerges in the flow of discourse,” as “all the black characters are inscribed by their masters’ discourses.” The article demonstrates the significance of individual history and how the collective histories and stories become part of one’s identity.

This issue ends full circle, with Teodor Creanga’s article on cultural perceptions and assumptions on a specific geographical space, the Romanian capital, Bucharest. The choice of this particular space allows the author to examine fictional representations of Bucharest in several Anglo-American postwar novels with a view not only to explore issues of regional and national identity but also to point to some “major repercussions on the imagological coordinates that other European cultures have established for this locus of identity over the centuries.”

We hope you will enjoy the literary travels we propose to you in this issue!

The Editors