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Marilyn Chin's *Revenge*: Rewriting the Racial Shadow

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Abstract: In this paper I discuss the trope of the racial shadow in Asian American literature, as first defined by Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong, and then demonstrate how Marilyn Chin's *Revenge of the Mooncake Vixen: A Manifesto in 41 Tales* (2009) disrupts and repositions the trope via her inter-ethnic twin protagonists. Instead of an internal battle with the racial shadow, Chin's twins battle the systematic inequities they encounter in a society that privileges young, white, educated, Christian, able-bodied men. Moonie and Mei Ling Wong fight back physically and mentally against their oppressors, while Chin demonstrates their individuality further by crafting a unique (and very humorous) narrative form. I argue that Chin uses the suggestion of a racial shadow to express the possibilities of identity. By this I mean that the palimpsest of a racial shadow underlying much of the narrative undercuts and redefines our image of the stable relationship between the "traditional" ethnic and the "modern" American. The suggestion of a racial shadow reminds readers of an Asian American literary history populated by alienated binary identities, while simultaneously showcasing the exciting possibilities that arise from interethnic encounters.

A Long Way from Prague: The Harlem Renaissance and Czechoslovakia

Charles Sabatos

Abstract: The connections between Europe's small nations and America's minorities offer marginalized perspectives on modernist cultural development that have so far remained largely unexplored. During the period of the Harlem Renaissance, African-American intellectuals were keenly aware of global political developments, but their models of liberation were drawn less from colonized Africa than from territories such as Central and Eastern Europe that had recently been freed from imperial rule. Democratic and multicultural Czechoslovakia, in particular, provided these writers with an example of self-determination that was later obscured by the Cold War division of Europe. Locke's comparison of Harlem as the capital of the "New Negro" with Prague as the capital of the "New Czechoslovakia," which is frequently cited but rarely interpreted, can be traced to the journal *Survey Graphic*, which featured special issues on both cities. Langston Hughes features a poet from Prague in one of his most enigmatic short stories, "Luani of the Jungles," and evokes the wartime suffering of the Czechs in his later politically engaged writing. Together with Hughes's influence on the Czech poet Ivan Blatný, these references demonstrate that the relationship of the Czechs and other small nations to the European powers, and the struggle of African-Americans within American society, had inter-ethnic parallels that were familiar to the writers of the Harlem Renaissance.

The Language of Pained Bodies: History, Translation, and Prostitution in Cristina Rivera Garza's *Nadie me verá llorar* (1999)

Julio Enríquez-Ornelas

Abstract: In *Nadie me verá llorar*, novelist Cristina Rivera Garza rewrites fin de siècle Mexico by appropriating ruined objects from Mexican history. In doing so, Rivera Garza reimagines the assumptions novelists Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera and Federico Gamboa make about the prostitute in their fiction. Moreover, when Rivera Garza incorporates the narratives of marginalized people into her body of work—specifically the stories of the insane, the indigenous poor, and the prostitutes found in obscure and virtually forgotten medical records—she destabilizes the commonly accepted historical narratives of this period. This essay brings together prior critical conversations that have treated Rivera Garza's use of history and the figure of the prostitute separately. I further these two approaches by bringing them together, seeing Rivera Garza's emphasis on the abject of Mexico—and on the prostitute in particular—as a particularly powerful undoing of the master narratives of Mexican history. I propose that in Rivera Garza's novel, the echo of history and of translation that persists across the iterations of language, gender, and history is the voice of pained bodies. For her, texts are bodies, and she acts as a forensic surgeon who, when confronted by these textual bodies, reads them carefully, makes them speak, interrogates them about the past trapped within them, remixes them, and recontextualizes them by recycling, copying, and excavating them. For her, this textual forensics is a political act.

Perishability and Desolation: Disaster and the Racialization of Suffering in the Neoliberal Therapeutic Memoir

Corinne Wohlford

Abstract: This essay examines several memoirs written by Americans visiting disaster zones in Haiti and Japan after their 2010 and 2011 respective natural disasters. Depictions of both Haitian and Japanese suffering are diagnosed in accordance with American racial fantasies, wherein Haitians are ill adapted to the neoliberal order and Japanese are hyperadapted. The ways in which race is deployed in these texts challenges Walter Benn Michaels's contention that attention to racism in the neoliberal memoir distracts us from the class inequalities wrought by neoliberalism. Race is, instead, an explanatory rubric for the neoliberal order, one that forces neoliberalism to make sense by naturalizing suffering. The retreat from geopolitical redress, in turn, allows neoliberal writers to transform these devastated spaces into fertile ground for their own aesthetic and therapeutic uses. Haiti and Japan—and the suffering in both places—are commodities to be mined for meaning and personal identity, as well as for capitalist development and away from governmental intervention.