Notes

1 Introduction

1. Oprah Winfrey’s Book Club has attracted a good deal of critical attention, as in Mark R. Hall’s “The ‘Oprahfication’ of Literacy: Reading ‘Oprah’s Book Club’” in College English and Trysh Travis’s “‘It Will Change the World if Everybody Reads This Book’: New Thought Religion in Oprah’s Book Club” in American Quarterly. Entire books published by university presses have been devoted to the subject of the Book Club, including Reading with Oprah: The Book Club That Changed America by Kathleen Rooney; The Oprah Affect: Critical Essays on Oprah’s Book Club, edited by Cecilia Konchar Farr and Jaime Harker; and Stories of Oprah: The Oprahfication of American Culture, edited by Trystan T. Cotten and Kimberly Springer, though the latter deals with more than just the Book Club. Much remains to be said about the topic and about these diverse studies, but it may be especially worth noting, in light of the spirituality theme in 1990s fiction, that critics such as Trysh Travis and Kathryn Loftin (whose essay “Reading Religiously: The Ritual Practices of Oprah’s Book Club” appears in Farr and Harker’s collection) discuss in detail the contemporary religious dimensions of Oprah’s approach to reading.

2. A complete bibliography of the history of language and gender research is not within the scope of this chapter, but more information can be found in the texts mentioned within this chapter, in the journal Gender and Language, and in a great many other publications, including the following selected examples: Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet’s Language and Gender; Janet Holmes and Miriam Meyerhoff’s The Handbook of Language and Gender; Suzanne Romaine’s Communicating Gender; Deborah Cameron’s The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader; Mary Bucholtz, A. C. Liang, and Laurel Sutton’s Reinventing Identities: The Gendered Self in Discourse; Susan Philips, Susan Steele, and Christine Tanz’s Language, Gender, and Sex in Comparative Perspective; Dennis Baron’s Grammar and Gender; William Labov’s “The Intersection of Sex and Social Class in the Course of Linguistic Change”; Jennifer Coates’s Women, Men, and Language and her Language and Gender: A Reader; Camille Roman, Suzanne Juhasz, and Cristanne Miller’s The Women and Language
Debate: A Sourcebook; Deborah Tannen’s Gender and Discourse and her Gender and Conversational Interaction; and Kira Hall and Mary Bucholtz’s Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self.

3. A complete bibliography of stylistics, poetics, or linguistic approaches to literature is outside the scope of the present study, but these two are classic texts: Donald Freeman’s Linguistics and Literary Style and Elizabeth Traugott and Mary Louise Pratt’s Linguistics for Students of Literature. The journal Language and Literature is devoted to the subject of language in literature. Books such as the following can also introduce students to linguistic approaches to literature: Paul Simpson’s Language Through Literature or his more recent Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students; Peter Verdonk’s Stylistics; Laura Wright and Jonathan Hope’s Stylistics: A Practical Coursebook; Richard Bradford’s Stylistics; Derek Attridge’s Peculiar Language; and Jean Jacques Weber’s The Stylistics Reader: From Roman Jacobson to the Present. Studies such as the following aim to build theoretical models for stylistics: Jacqueline Henkel’s The Language of Criticism: Linguistic Models and Literary Theory; Barbara Johnstone’s The Linguistic Individual; Approaches to Corpus Stylistics by David Hoover, Jonathan Culpeper, and Bill Louw; The Text and Beyond: Essays in Literary Linguistics edited by Cynthia Goldin Bernstein; or Sara Mills’s Feminist Stylistics. Still others investigate specific literary topics, such as Mary Jane Hurst’s The Voice of the Child in American Literature: Linguistic Approaches to Fictional Child Language or Janice Stout’s Strategies of Reticence: Silence and Meaning in the Works of Jane Austen, Willa Cather, Katherine Ann Porter, and Jane Didion. Of course, innumerable studies of literature focus on gender issues, but only some, including the following selected examples, are dedicated intentionally to gender and language in literature: Elsa Nettels’s Language and Gender in American Fiction: Howells, James, Wharton, and Cather; Christine van Boheemen-Saat’s The Novel as Family Romance: Language, Gender, and Authority from Fielding to Joyce; and Deborah Clark’s “Gender, Race, and Language in Light in August.”

4. Literary connections between selfhood and language have been noted in numerous studies, including, for example, Mary Jane Hurst’s “Characterization and Language: A Case Grammar Study of William Faulkner’s As I Lay Dying,” or Leland Person’s “Hester’s Revenge: The Power of Silence in The Scarlet Letter.” The following exemplify a few of the many book-length studies related to the self and language in literature: Arnold Weinstein’s Nobody’s Home: Speech, Self, and Place in American Fiction; Louise Barnett’s Authority and Speech: Language, Society, and Self in the American Novel; Margery Sabin’s The Dialect of the Tribe: Speech and Community in Modern Fiction; Alphonso Lingis’s The Community of Those Who Have Nothing in Common; Jessica Berman’s Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and
the Politics of Community; and Kim Worthington’s Self as Narrative: Subjectivity and Community in Contemporary Fiction.

5. Two valuable studies of community with applications for but also beyond literary analysis are Mary Louise Pratt’s “Criticism in the Contact Zone: Decentering Community and Nation” and Lesley Milroy’s Language and Social Networks. The number of explicit analyses of community in American literature is not, however, as large as might be expected. The following represent a few examples in addition to the titles named within the body of this chapter: James Peterson’s “Linguistic Identity and Community in American Literature” in the collection Language in the USA: Themes for the Twenty-First Century; David Bromwich’s A Choice of Inheritance: Self and Community from Edmund Burke to Robert Frost; Philip Page’s Reclaiming Community in Contemporary African American Fiction; Stephen Tchudi’s Community in the American West; and Sandra Zagarell’s “Narrative of Community: The Identification of a Genre.” Linda J. Holland-Toll’s As American as Mom, Baseball, and Apple Pie: Constructing Community in Contemporary Horror Fiction shows how strategies of exclusion are used to construct communities in horror fiction. The volume Community at Loose Ends, edited by the Miami Theory Collective, contains essays on community by Jean-Luc Nancy, Jean-François Lyotard, and others, many of whom make connections between language, literature, and community. Overall, no simple summary can be provided about these various studies except that they demonstrate a diversity of responses to the concept of community in literature and in life.

2 Finding One’s Place by Finding One’s Voice in Ernest J. Gaines’s A Lesson Before Dying and Alice Walker’s Possessing the Secret of Joy

1. Gaines has reported that in retrospect he would have preferred for Vivian’s character to have been named Gloria but did not think of that name until it was too late to change (Lowe, “Interview” 302). The name Gloria has similar connotations as the name Vivian, which has its roots in the Latin verb vivo, which means to live or to be alive, and which is etymologically related to English words such as vivid or vivacious.

2. It is not possible in a short space to do justice to the rich body of research that exists on the topic of African American Vernacular English, but, as a starting point, analyses of the linguistic features of AAVE can be found in the work of researchers named in this chapter (Dillard, Baugh, Rickford, Green, Wolfram, and Smitherman). Numerous articles and books have been written on AAVE’s history; its
lexical features, sound structures, and syntax; its relationships to other varieties of English, especially those in the Southern United States; its relationships to other languages, especially those in West Africa; its socioeconomic and sociopolitical contexts; and its implications for instructional practices. It should also be pointed out, as Phillippa Kafka has observed, that ignorance of specific African/African American rhetorical techniques and traditions in literature perpetuates the invisibility of a rich and vital heritage and that “any hyphenated example of American literature—Asian American or Native American or Chicano or Jewish American or whatever—contains unique rhetorical and aesthetic devices that are not European American alone” (10).

3 Language and Gender in the Academic Communities of Ann Beattie’s Another You and John Updike’s Memorials of the Ford Administration

1. The name Beattie assigned to her corporation is “Irony and Pity,” a phrase she says she took from a conversation Jake Barnes has with friends in Ernest Hemingway’s The Sun Also Rises (Plath, “Counternarrative” 369). Connections between Beattie’s and Hemingway’s writing styles and emotional tones have been noted by a number of critics, including Robert Beuka in a Hemingway Review article. Updike, incidentally, also says in the foreword to his collection The Early Stories that Hemingway was one of his greatest influences.

2. Daniel Maltz and Ruth Borker surveyed a wide range of earlier studies of gender and language and then theorized, on the basis of the findings in those earlier studies, that men and women learn distinctive ways of speaking from their experiences with language in childhood peer groups. That is, according to Maltz and Borker, boys and girls develop sociolinguistic subcultures with different assumptions about language through the very different ways that all-boy groups or all-girl groups learn to use language to hold an audience, maintain group cohesion, signal status, express solidarity, and so on.

3. According to David Rosen, “studies of masculinity show that no definitive masculine ideal exists and that none is embodied in actual practice. Instead, a loosely related set of shared stereotypes and norms exist. Rather than producing conformity, these produce stress in those expected to observe them” (xiii). Some notable book-length studies on the topic over the last two decades, in addition to Rosen’s The Changing Fictions of Masculinity, include the following: Eric Anderson’s Inclusive Masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities; Kenneth Clatterbaugh’s Contemporary Perspectives on Masculinity; Tim Edwards’s Cultures of Masculinity; Richard Howson’s Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity; Peter F. Murphy’s collection
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Fictions of Masculinity: Crossing Cultures, Crossing Sexualities; David Gilmore’s Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity; and the collection Constructing Masculinity edited by Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson.

4 Balancing Self and Other through Speech and Silence in Chang-rae Lee’s Native Speaker and Amy Tan’s The Hundred Secret Senses

1. Shirley Geok-lin Lim’s “Complications of Feminist and Ethnic Literary Theories in Asian American Literature” provides an analysis of important developments in Asian American literature and literary criticism. Sau-ling Cynthia Wong’s influential essay “Denationalization Reconsidered” calls for new directions and priority setting in Asian American cultural criticism. Responding to Colleen Lye’s plea in America’s Asia for “a dialogue between social constructionist theories of race and ethnic literary studies” (Jerng 185), Mark Jerng interrogates the concept of Asian American in his essay “Nowhere in Particular: Perceiving Race, Chang-rae Lee’s Aloft, and the Question of Asian American Fiction.” Other notable critical accounts that question and consider as well as recover all kinds of Asian American writings include, in addition to the many studies referenced in the text, the following: Amy Ling’s Between Worlds: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry; Literary Gestures: The Aesthetic in Asian American Writing, edited by Rocío Davis and Sue-Im Lee; The Ethnic Canon: Histories, Inventions, and Interventions, edited by David Palumbo-Liu; Jinqi Ling’s Narrating Nationalisms: Ideology and Form in Asian American Literature; Sheng-mei Ma’s Immigrant Subjectivities in Asian American and Asian Diaspora Literatures; Rachel Lee’s The Americas of Asian American Literature: Gendered Fictions of Nation and Transnation; Guiyou Huang’s The Columbia Guide to Asian American Literature since 1945; and Helena Grice’s Asian American Fiction, History, and Life Writing: International Encounters.

2. In the analysis of narrative forms, the term coda refers to the post-resolution stage of a story that signals the close of the tale and returns the narrative to the present time. Narrative patterns in literature are well known, but the patterns of narratives in natural conversations (abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda) have also been well described by researchers such as William Labov in Language and the Inner City, Livia Polanyi in Telling the American Story, and Barbara Johnstone in Stories, Community, and Place, all of whom link narrative forms to cultural and community identities as well as to universal features of language.
3. Other critics have also observed Whitman’s presence in *Native Speaker*. Notably, Christian Moraru writes that in *Native Speaker* “Whitman is here both an other and a forebear, hence Lee answers—positions his novel—concurrently inside and outside America. Making and remaking himself into a turn-on-the-millennium Whitman” Lee thus revises Whitman “to the next level in the context of ‘postethnic and ‘postnative’ America” (72).

5 LOVE, DESTRUCTION, AND WOUNDED HEARTS IN THE FICTION OF LOUISE ERDRICH AND MICHAEL DORRIS

1. The search for five-hundred-year-old documents and the efforts to interpret them are also central elements in Leslie Marmon Silko’s novel *Almanac of the Dead*. In Silko’s “bleakly satiric characterization of millennial America” (Stein 138), the stories “serve to rouse the dispossessed to various forms of combative actions” (Stein 140).

A number of authors responded in the 1990s to the five-hundred-year anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in North America. Gerald Vizenor’s *The Heirs of Columbus*, unlike *The Crown of Columbus*, engages in “a radical imaginative revision of history from a native perspective” (Bak 115). The novel’s villain, whom Bak sees as “a viciously ironic intertextual reference to *The Crown of Columbus*” is named “Doric Michéd (an anagram of ‘Michael Dorris’ and Louise ‘Erdrich’?), a crossblood who serves on museum boards and who is instrumental in the commercial exploitation of tribal cultural remains” (Bak 117). Deborah Madsen contrasts Vizenor’s book, which she describes as a “narrative of survivance” (“On Subjectivity” 71), with the “fundamentally multicultural, or even what Stanley Fish calls a boutique multiculturalist, position” in *The Crown of Columbus* (77). However, Susan Farrell argues that “much of the critical distaste for *The Crown of Columbus* arises from expectations of what American Indian literature should be, as well as from misunderstandings of Dorris and Erdrich’s thematic intent and narrative strategies” (121).

7 TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY REFLECTIONS ON AMERICAN VOICES AND AMERICAN IDENTITIES

1. *Nepantla* is a Nahuatl word referring to a middle time or place. AnaLouise Keating in *this bridge we call home* refers to Gloria Anzaldúa’s “belief that we’re living in a time/place of nepantla, a point we’re exiting from the old worldview but have not yet entered or created a new one to replace it” (19), and this belief seems to be borne out in many fictional visions from the 1990s.
2. More information and additional perspectives on the 1990s connections between time and death in American cultural and literary imaginations can be found in a number of sources. In *Genealogy and Literature* and *Millennial Seduction: A Skeptic Confronts Apocalyptic Culture*, Lee Quinby addresses the relationship between literature and cultural practice, themes of death and resistance in millennialism, and the absolutism of apocalyptic thinking. Paul Boyer’s *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* also examines the traditions of prophetic belief, and Samuel Cohen’s *After the End of History: American Fiction in the 1990s* analyzes the historical self-consciousness and millennial thinking in late-twentieth-century fiction.

3. Issues related to language and community are linked with immigration and population shift, key topics in the early twenty-first century. For instance, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1990 the Hispanic population in the United States was about 22.4 million, or 9 percent, and about 35.3 million in 2000, or 12.5 percent (http://www.census.gov). In 2008, 25% of all U.S. children younger than five were Hispanic, and the total U.S. Hispanic population stood at 46.9 million, with the 2050 Hispanic population projected to be 132.8 million. In 2000, according to the Modern Language Association, about 18 percent of Americans spoke a language other than English at home, while in 2005 the percentage increased to about 20 percent (www.mla.org/map), though the majority of those speaking a language other than English at home also claimed to speak English well or very well. The greatest recent linguistic growth has been in Spanish, but other languages have also seen increases, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Korean, Hindi, and Arabic, while other languages have seen decreases in numbers of U.S. speakers, including French, German, and Italian.

4. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, which tracks only thirty large companies but is often seen as a general indicator for economic conditions, stood at 2,810 on the first day of trading in January 1990, but by the first day of trading in January 2000 had quadrupled to 11,522. The Nasdaq Composite, an index of technology stocks, reached a high in March 2000 at 5,132.52, five times its 1995 level. The dot-com bubble burst soon after the Nasdaq reached its high, and the index fell back to its 1995 levels but has since recovered to about half of its high point. The Dow, meanwhile, reached a zenith of over 14,000 in October 2007, but plummeted to 6,547 in March 2009, and then recovered some ground to close on the first day of trading in 2010 at 10,543, a figure below where it had stood a decade earlier. More financial information can be found in a number of sources, including the online “Market Data Center” section of *The Wall Street Journal* (http://online.wsj.com/mdc/public/page/marketsdata.com).
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