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Unmasking the Protester: The Meanings and Myths of Collective Civil Resistance Movements in African American and Polish Postresistance Prose Fiction

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Comparative Literature

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UNMASKING THE PROTESTER: THE MEANINGS AND MYTHS OF COLLECTIVE
CIVIL RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN AND POLISH
POSTRESISTANCE PROSE FICTION

(Monograph)

by

Agnieszka Herra

Graduate Program in Comparative Literature

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

My contention is that the narrative framework of social movements, especially the ones deemed “successful” such as the American Civil Rights Movement and the Polish Solidarity Movement, reflects unity, collectivity, and group success in collective memory. During the period of the movements’ duration, this provides a clear rhetorical purpose: to give the appearance of unity in order to be cohesive and give effective voice to the demands. Once the movements end, this vision of collective identity usually continues because of the symbolic and political gains made, even if the mass collective no longer functions as a whole. I argue that the voices that did not fit into the collective movements emerge subsequently to question this monologic language in literary form. I call this “postresistance” literature because of its production after the movements, but also because it examines the ways in which individuals established their political voice within the totalizing narrative frameworks of social movements. This dissertation uses Bakhtin’s notion of dialogic language to argue that novels in the postresistance period challenge the mythical underpinnings of the movements, as well as collective memory, in order to give voice to individual’s experience of the movement. Using postmodern theory, I establish a postresistance analytic framework. The novels I examine resist a narrative of progress from oppression to freedom. Through their fragmented narratives and shifts in time, the individual characters react to the rhetorical frameworks of the movements. I use novels written after the American Civil Rights Movement and Polish Solidarity Movement in order to provide a more complete conception of this postresistance analysis. Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada* (1976) and Stefan Chwin’s *Hanemann* (1995) allow me to discuss how dialogic voices question the conception of place and its imagined link to history and myth. I use Alice Walker’s *Meridian* (1976) and Janusz Anderman’s *Caly Czas* (2006) to focus on individuals within the movements who question the rhetorical motivations of the movements. By unmasking these protesters, these novels offer a more nuanced view of collective civil resistance movements.

Keywords

Civil Resistance, Social Movements, Narrative, Literature, Non-violence, Postresistance, Collective Memory, Myth, Rhetoric, Mikhail Bakhtin, Novel, Solidarity Movement, Poland, African American Civil Rights Movement, United States, Ishmael Reed, Stefan Chwin, Alice Walker, Janusz Anderman

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Introduction

My initial contention in this project is that large scale non-violent resistance movements offer an opportunity to examine the ways that a collective group comes together to struggle against oppression and subsequently create a united narrative. Inevitably, the collective speaks in language that shows the rhetorical goals of the movement and lacks a dialogic element. Further, the end of that movement and the return to “normalcy” demonstrates the way the collective returns to dialogic voices. The dissolution of the movement allows for consideration of the voices that did not fit into the rhetorical motivations of the movement. This project attempts to trace this transition from the monologic to the dialogic through the lens of prose fiction. Cultural products such as novels have a role in creating and upholding the myths that were used to justify the movement. In turn, novels can also play a critical role in questioning these myths. I use the term “postresistance fiction” to refer to novels that engage with these myths and are written after a social movement. Instead of a coherent vision of the movement and the rhetorical myths it uses as a foundation, these novels include a fragmented narrative that reveals the complex components and contradictions that go into the creation of these myths and movements. The conclusion of the narratives also does not end with a utopian vision of freedom from oppression. Instead, these novels depict individuals who must cope with the failure of these myths to provide true freedom, and portray the failure of a collective to remain unified beyond a particular historical moment. My study fills a gap in research about civil resistance movements and their depiction in literature and formulates a critical framework for reading postresistance fiction.

Consequently, this project examines the intersection of narrative and collective memory in the context of non-violent resistance movements. I provide historical background about the movements and their evolution, and acknowledge that the participants did not have all of the same goals. However, my contention is that the memory and the narrative of the social movements, especially the ones deemed “successful”, such as the Civil Rights Movement and the Solidarity Movement, reflect unity, collectivity, and group success in collective memory. Their identity as non-violent movements also denotes a peaceful collective that worked together without any “rogue”

violent elements. The reliance on language to lead a non-violent protest also contributes to the creation of these united narratives. Reading the movements through the lens of collective memory presents a vision of a collective identity. During the period of the movements, this collective cohesion provides a clear rhetorical purpose: to give the appearance of unity in order to give voice to the demands of the protesters. After the movements, this vision of collective identity usually continues because of the symbolic and political gains made, even if the mass collective no longer functions as a whole. But it is the dissolving of the collective identity and how the culture deals with it that fascinates me. How do the voices that that did not fit into the collective movements emerge to question the rhetoric and myth used in the movements?

This question struck me as I was travelling on a train in 2006 from Kraków, in the South of Poland, to Gdańsk in the North. I had been studying at the School of Polish Language and Culture at Jagiellonian University where I was introduced to the idea of messianic martyrdom in Polish culture, and earlier that year I had taken a course on African American¹ literature that had shown me the role of literature as a form of political resistance. Therefore, the link between literature and political struggle was at the forefront of my mind. When an older gentleman on the train found out that I was heading to Gdańsk, he mockingly asked me to thank Lech Wałęsa, venerated leader of the Solidarity Movement, for ruining his life. Because members of my family were staunch Solidarity supporters, and I had only seen the Movement through the lens of freedom from communist rule, I was taken aback. But this incident showed me that the voices of those that had different visions for the future were subsumed in the collective voice. This man from another generation and a location in Poland not intricately linked to the movement was alienated from what seemed like a collective struggle. He, and others whose lives changed for the worst after the movement, or those for whom the movements did not do enough, did not see themselves as included in that resistance. Instead of

¹ I use the term “African American” without a hyphen throughout this study. Since this project focuses on the struggle for African Americans to assert their rights and evaluate how they fit into the American framework, it does not seem appropriate to use a hyphenated term that suggests division and gestures towards African Americans as people who are not fully American.

Gdańsk representing a site of resistance, it is a place of alienation for this man and others like him. The symbols of the movement, such as Wałęsa, are perversions of the concept of freedom, instead of what they would have meant to the participants of Solidarity. His individual voice was not part of the collective rhetoric. Therefore, the period after these large scale movements offers the opportunity to examine these fracturing elements within them because these historical periods are well-documented, represent a distinct period of time, and had a defined goal. They represent a microcosmic example of the relationship between the collective and the individual.

I had already come across some novels in the African American literature course and the School of Polish Language and Culture that treated these ideas of alienation from the representative nature of place, and of the alienation of the individual from the collective. These were novels written after the movements and I began to see connections forming between the ways that each culture engages with and disrupts collective myth and memory.² The authors of these novels were undoubtedly struck by the ideas left out of the rhetoric of the movements and the nuances that did not belong. I see art, especially the novel, as being integral to exploring this fragile relationship between the collective resistance movement and the individual participants and non-participants in the movement. This project may seem to be bringing together two disparate histories, but, in fact, at their core, these histories of resistance engage with similar questions and issues about what it means to participate in and then critique a social movement. I call these novels “postresistance” novels because of their production after the movements, but also because they examine, in various ways, the uncertain transition from the collective to alienated individuals trying to find their place in a world when the rhetoric of the movements lose their meaning.

² The novels mentioned here have still remained part of this project that has been germinating since 2006. In Chapter 3 I look at Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada* (1976) which was a novel I studied in the African American course at Queen’s University, and in Chapter 4, Janusz Anderman’s *Cały Czas* (2006), a novel I had come across in a review of books I had received during the Polish Culture course at Jagellonian University.

I have already indicated that the Solidarity Movement is an important event for my family and their relationship to Poland. Additionally, I have always been interested by the disturbing history of slavery in America and how it still has reverberations in American society today. I do not hide my belief that non-violent resistance movements have the potential to incite change that improves society. This sympathetic view, however, does not preclude my ability to be critical of the way the movement functions. I am fully aware of these assumptions and want to examine the way my assumptions reflect the way collective memory functions. Further, I am interested in the way that literature questions these assumptions. In an article on the way social movement researchers in political science take moral stands, Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh talks about researchers who believe that movements can “increase political imagination, stir the political passion, and intensify the political interest of both movement participants and the public at large”, and calls them “cultural transformation theorists” (495). I am definitely interested in the cultural impact of resistance movements and want to examine their impact on literature. I hope to find traces of these movements in the ways cultures discuss collective action, national mythology, and what it means to be free within a globalized world. I do not intend to attribute value judgments; rather, I hope to create a dialogue on resistance movements and cultures.

One of the guiding principles of this project is the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and his concepts of *monoglossia*, *heteroglossia*, and *dialogism*. *Monoglossia* refers to a homogenous language that dominates a given culture and prevents a plurality of different kinds of language, or *heteroglossia*, from developing (Bruhn and Lundquist 29). The period in which a resistance movement has the most strength and its rhetoric permeates the culture can be seen as a *monoglossia* because of its ability to create a language that fights the oppressor and to drown out languages that threaten its rhetorical power. After the movement has achieved its rhetorical goals or cycled through its rhetorical stages, the postresistance period transitions from a state of *monoglossia* into a period when dialogic voices can come to the fore. During the resistance movement, there is the attempt for political bodies to inhabit the same rhetorical space, limiting the opportunity for dialogism. However, Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism focuses on bodies that occupy different spaces: “Dialogism argues that all meaning is relative in the sense that it comes

about only as a result of the relation between two bodies occupying *simultaneous but different* space, where bodies may be thought of as ranging from the immediacy of our physical bodies, to political bodies and to bodies of ideas of general (ideologies)” (Holquist 20-21). The novels that are a part of this project can be seen as participants in this dialogism after the movements. They offer another perspective by questioning the rhetoric of place or giving us an insight into the individual protester. Bakhtin saw literature as playing an important role in creating meaningful patterns by translating life into language:

Literary texts, like other kinds of utterance, depend not only on the activity of the author, but also on the place they hold in the social and historical forces at work when the text is produced and when it is consumed. Words in literary texts are active elements in a dialogic exchange taking place on several different levels at the same time...simultaneity is a dialogue between the different meanings the same word has at different stages in the history of a given national language, and in various situations within the same historical period. And, of course, simultaneity is found in the dialogue between an author, his characters, and his audience, as well as in the dialogue of readers with the characters and their author. (68-69)

These novels, then, offer an opportunity for capturing a language that did not have a place within the movement. Additionally, at the level of the narrative, the novels engage in a dialogical story that incorporates a multitude of voices, including ones that have been subsumed by the monoglossia of the movements. Part of my analysis examines this reflection of the movement in the narrative.

My conception of the term “postresistance” is meant to highlight the unique effect that a large-scale resistance movement has on a society.³ There is inevitably a “response”

³ The reason that I do not include a hyphen in this term is to link it to the term postmodern. If the term only delineated a time period after the resistance, then a hyphen would be necessary. But because I argue that it not only marks a time period but also critiques the resistance period, it has more of a connection to postmodernism. The nature of this connection will be spelled out below.

to these resistance movements because of their impact, and one of these responses is through literature. This postresistance literature potentially acts as a dialogical intervention to the monoglossia of the movement. The novels I analyze contain narratives that are fragmented, yet the novels are deliberate in their questioning of myths and collective memory. Their structure and themes intentionally refer one back to problematic traces of the movements. Therefore, I am conscious that the term postresistance has connections to the postmodern in its reaction to metanarratives and its engagement with Linda Hutcheon's conception of "historiographical metafiction" (Hutcheon *The Poetics* 5). However, the postresistance holds a specific function within the postmodern by highlighting the impact of a resistance movement in and after its uniting of the collective.

The postresistance novel has a kinship with the postmodern novel because it is reacting to a previous period and crafting a narrative in opposition to a period that was invested in grand narratives. Jean François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) argues that modernism created a splintering of life and art, while postmodernism seeks to depict the unrepresentable in art. Postresistance novels also participate in this kind of project by trying to describe the political and outlining the development of a complicated event such as a resistance movement. Lyotard sees the postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives (xxiv). Protest movements must also create a kind of metanarrative to sustain themselves. The metanarrative of the Enlightenment was about the progressive liberation of humanity through science while the resistance metanarrative assumes an end to political and social oppression by a larger power. The term "post-racial", which has been popular in American discourse since the election of President Barack Obama, also has a connection here. This term is problematic because it assumes an ideological endpoint when there will be no more race categorizations. The term postresistance also hints at an endpoint, but in an ironic fashion. The mistaken belief that the movements no longer have an impact is precisely what the literature of this period is trying to unsettle. The period following the unity of the collective resistance and the disbanding of the collective assumes a resolution of the problems that necessitated the resistance movement. The fragmented narratives and uncertain endings, however, betray the fact that the core ideas of movements are still important, they just have to be reconsidered in a more dialogic fashion. By defamiliarizing the imagined spaces of freedom and

unmasking the protester, the postresistance novels present a more nuanced vision of the resistance period, similar to the postmodern movement losing faith in metanarratives and embracing smaller narratives.

Additionally, the opportunity for a dialogic work that allows for the interaction of various discourses is present in postmodern theory. In *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989), Linda Hutcheon discusses the roots of the theory: "...the postmodern's initial concern is to de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life; to point out that those entities that we unthinkingly experience as 'natural' (they might even include capitalism, patriarchy, liberal humanism) are in fact 'cultural'; made by us, not given to us" (2). Postresistance literature also considers how resistance movements become "natural" in the way they are described. Hutcheon's other important text is *The Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), where she describes her focus on the novel and the concept of historiographic metafiction:

...this book...will be privileging the novel genre, and one form in particular, a form that I want to call 'historiographic metafiction.' By this I mean those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages...In most of the critical work on postmodernism, it is narrative – be it in literature, history, or theory – that has usually been the major focus of attention. Historiographic metafiction incorporates all three of these domains: that is, its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (*historiographic metafiction*) is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past. (5)

The novels I chose to focus on in this project have these self-reflexive historiographic metafictional qualities and the authors are aware of how they are reacting to the history of the movements. I also privilege novels because they offer a more expansive opportunity to analyze disruptions in narrative and character development.

Hutcheon also discusses the way that postmodern criticism of subjectivity has an impact on elements, such as the narration: "The perceiving subject is no longer assumed

to be a coherent, meaning-generating entity. Narrators in fiction become either disconcertingly multiple and hard to locate...or resolutely provisional and limited –often undermining their own seeming omniscience...” (11). Narration will be a key point of inquiry in my project. For example, in Janusz Anderman’s *Cały Czas*, the main focalized protagonist, A.Z., is a compulsive liar, which affects the ways his flashbacks relate to the crisis of the car crash occurring in the frame narrative. Intertextuality and narrativity are other characteristics Hutcheon examines by stating that “we can ‘know’ that past today only through its texts, and therein lies its connection to the literary” (128). Hutcheon engages with many literary texts to demonstrate her theory of postmodernism, including black postmodern fiction. For example, she states that “Ishmael Reed’s consistently parodic fiction clearly asserts not just a critical and specifically American ‘difference’ but also a racial one” (134). Her focus on the way American fiction has contributed to the canon of the postmodern helps me to incorporate the postmodern slave narrative into my consideration of postresistance literature, as Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada* is one of the texts I analyze. The slave narrative is part of the origin of African American literary tradition and is part of the mythology that postresistance authors are reacting to and against.

Another theoretical concept that I use within this project is the notion of collective memory. Collective memory is a somewhat nebulous concept outside of sociological research. When applied to literary study it can be even more uncertain. However, it is a valuable concept to consider in the case of major historical events, such as a resistance movement. Because these movements happened over many years and many elements had to come together to create an impact, they are complicated historical events. Theories of collective memory, such as that from Maurice Halbwachs, argue that remembering these events implies being tied to collective frameworks of social reference points, which allow memories to be coordinated in time and space. Not only are memories acquired through society, they are recalled, recognized, and located socially. They are socially constructed and dependent on individuals within the group to do the remembering (Halbwachs 22). As I highlight in the historical overview of both movements, certain years and events that involved collective action, such as the March on Washington or the sit-ins at the yards in Northern Poland, are more likely to be remembered, and, in turn, they are most strongly

linked to the rhetorical and mythical goals of the movement. Postresistance literature challenges some of these collective memory assumptions.

Myth is also an important concept in this study that is inextricably linked to collective memory. Myth and collective memory can both be considered a kind of metalanguage. Roland Barthes refers to myth as a type of language which comes to assume the status of an unconscious and natural way to communicate within the collective (10). These movements sponsor a myth of the nation or the oppressed group that justifies certain actions and ideologies. The resistance movements I use as examples rely on myth as part of their rhetoric and, subsequently, the language of myth is intertwined with the language of collective memory. These languages combine to create a narrative consensus and a kind of amnesia around ideas that do not fit within the framework. Postresistance narratives criticize this language of myth and collective memory and fragment the power of these kinds of narrative.

Chapter One, entitled “Civil Resistance: The Power of Non-Violent Political Action”, will review the terminology used for social movements, the context for privileging non-violent movements, and the way I am using a comparative approach in this project. The chapter will then go on to give a historical context to both the American Civil Rights Movement and the Solidarity Movement. These historical accounts focus on the “biographies” of the movements: how they transition from an early fragmented resistance to a unified movement which eventually breaks apart.⁴ These histories also reflect the “perfect” narratives of collective memory, a concept used by Jill A. Edy (204). I do this intentionally in order to be able to show the way the postresistance novels question the rhetoric and memory on which the movements were built. The chapter finishes by looking more closely at the rhetorical motivations of the movements, especially the language used to unite many participants. This idea is crucial to understanding how the novels I analyze question this rhetoric.

⁴ The term “biographies” comes from the terminology of Tomasz Tabako, whose work plays an integral role in this chapter. I also refer to these biographies as narrative or rhetorical frameworks of the movement.

The second chapter, called “Literature and the Political Sphere”, details more specifically the role of literature in the respective cultures I use as examples. It focuses on the way art has fulfilled a political role in these cultures. Artists feel the pressure to connect with and describe the collective destiny of the people they are writing about. For example, African American literature has been concerned with the way black Americans fit into or attempt to resist an American culture that continues to oppress them in myriad ways. In a similar vein, Polish authors felt a burden to reflect the messianic martyrdom of Poles. I do this to show that the postresistance novels are both following a tradition of linking art and politics and, at the same time, contributing to a fragmentation of this tradition. These authors demonstrate ways in which there is a resistance to and criticism of these “collective destinies.” This chapter also looks at how the literature influenced the rhetoric of the movements in order to show in my later chapters how the postresistance literature responds to this rhetoric. The end of the chapter looks at two novels, Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* (1952) and Witold Gombrowicz’s *Ferdydurke* (1937), as a way to foreshadow my analysis and indicate how certain literary texts showed an early uneasiness regarding the way resistance movements operate. These are important novels in their respective canons that contain unique narratives about the state of the individual within the collective. The postresistance novels I look at engage with similar ideas of alienation and uncertainty, but through the lens of the Civil Rights Movement and Solidarity. The *Invisible Man* and the narrator in *Ferdydurke* find themselves navigating within spaces and against people who are incoherent and absurd and find themselves becoming unmoored from the mythic. The postresistance novels similarly depict individuals struggling against mythical identities of the nation. However, these identities and myths have been strengthened by their use in the rhetorical motivations of the movements. Therefore, these characters are reacting against this rhetoric and, through the novel’s dialogic function, show its overdetermination and uncertainty. In this section I detail my analytic framework and how I read the influence of the movement in the postresistance novels. I focus on a narrative structure that resists progress and characters that do not allow for the emergence of a clear collective vision of the movement and its rhetorical frames.

Chapter Three, “Postresistance Spatial Alterations”, begins my analysis of postresistance novels. The subject of place in the narrative takes on a central role in the two novels I analyze. These two novels are Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada* (1976) and Stefan Chwin’s *Death in Danzig* (1995). This focus on place is clear in these titles: namely Canada and Danzig (Gdańsk in Polish). These places have taken on a mythical or imaginary role in the fate of the oppressed group. History and myth become embedded in these places, especially in the period of the resistance movement. I see place and the myth of place as integral to the study of postresistance novels because the narratives pivot around the notion of who belongs within the place and how they can get access to that mythic vision of place. However, these novels question this imagined link between history and place. The narratives engage with characters that resist a monologic conception of place. The postresistance novel asks how the oppressed group relates to place after the disintegration of the collective movement. These novels both end with a departure from the mythic place, counteracting the notion that the movement has taken the oppressed group to the “promised land.” The rhetoric of the movements was built on an ideal that will ultimately not succeed and the narrative reflects this.

Finally, the fourth chapter, “Lifting the Mask: The Novel and the Protester” focuses on the individual protester and how they relate to the collective movement in which they took part. Alice Walker’s *Meridian* (1976) and Janusz Anderman’s *All the Time* (2006) unmask the individual protester within the large collective. These novels show the ways in which the characters replicate the disjunction between collective and individual memory after the movements. This unmasking, therefore, works at a narrative level as well by dismantling the myths and rhetoric used to sustain the movements. Collective memory creates a kind of amnesia that contributes to a totalizing effect, erasing the views that do not fit into the narrative. These novels, through their focus on the body and their relationship to time, rewrite the image of the masked and anonymous protester. Through their recollection of the movement and their actions after the fact, these individuals refute mythic visions of the movements. The narratives of both works come together in a fragmented manner, counteracting the “perfect” narratives created by collective memory. The bodies of the unmasked protesters act as evidence to show the

failures of the movement. By “coming out” from behind the mask, they show the shaky foundations of collective memory.

Ultimately, these novels and this project do not reject the potential value of the resistance movements.⁵ However, art is a way for society to examine the way the values and history of the nation are communicated. This project seeks to untangle the historical and mythical foundations of collective resistance movements using the lens of postresistance prose fiction. My conclusion posits that this analytic framework can be used to examine literature of various genres and varied historical and political situations. Reading the narrative disruptions that complicate the rhetorical frameworks allows for a richer conceptualization of civil resistance movements.

⁵ I have chosen texts in my corpus that were written after the resistance movements. They may not have all been critically examined in the context of these movements. However, I am reading them in this light in order to show the cultural impact of a resistance movement through the re-examination of framing narratives. I do not question other readings of these novels, however, I want to add to their potential richness. I have chosen novels that have unexpected elements in their narrative style to counteract the progress narratives of resistance movements. The third chapter on place focuses on novels that do not directly refer to the resistance movements, however, I wanted to show that these novels contain the disorienting traces of a collective movement. These novels struggle with what it means to experience a place as an individual in contrast to collective narratives that emerges during a resistance movement. The novels in the fourth chapter on the protester more directly focus on the impact of the resistance movement on the individual. But they are not only historical fiction narratives. Both novels use fragmented narrative techniques to comment on the undefined nature of being an actor within a resistance movement. I have consciously not chosen texts that simply describe resistance movements. Rather, I wanted to show the myriad complex ways a resistance movement can re-emerge in literature. I know this topic can also be explored with different kinds of texts and I look forward to exploring other works written after the resistance movements.

Chapter 1

1 Collective Movements: Terminology, History and Rhetoric

As I began to write this dissertation at the beginning of 2011, there was a protest movement happening in Egypt, partly inspired by a movement that took place in Tunisia which had resulted in the departure of President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. Many reasons have been given in the media for these largely peaceful protests. The explanation overwhelmingly cited for the riots is economic: rising food prices, high unemployment, and a lack of political representation have affected the youthful and rapidly growing populations of these countries. Many speculated “about a possible domino effect similar to the collapse of Communist governments around Eastern Europe in 1989” (“Mid-East”).⁶ In fact, as of September 2011, there had also been uprisings in Libya and Syria.⁷ Some Western critics also pointed to the use of social media as tools for organizing these mass protests and even optimistically viewed platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, as a means to create a global dialogue among dissidents (“Twitter’s influence”). It is a reality that the world is more connected now and it is easier to gain inside knowledge about the movements from individual protesters. The protester is unmasked in a certain sense here by the world being able to follow his or her journey in the protest movement. However, there is still a divide through the anonymity of technology and the way the individual protester uses the rhetorical language of the collective movement. Can we

⁶ This speculation has proven to be true. In fact, 2011 could be considered the Arab year, not just the Arab spring, if the opposite meaning of the homonym is used.

⁷ Things can change quickly in these kinds of large-scale movements and with so much political power at stake: as of September 2013 Egyptians elected President Mohamed Morsi after the ouster of Hosni Mubarak. In turn, Morsi was deposed by the military when more protests occurred in Tahrir Square and currently Egypt is being ruled by military generals and there is much violence between Morsi supporters and anti-Morsi activists. Syria’s protests turned into a civil war where President Bashar al-Assad is using chemical weapons against rebel forces trying to depose him. In Libya, the uprising led to the death of dictator Muammar Gaddafi. This is to show that these movements can go through many permutations and stages of protest, and can evolve from non-violent to violent. Because these movements have gotten more complicated, it is harder to determine which outcome would be most beneficial to the citizenry, therefore it is harder to construct a “perfect” narrative as has been done with the Civil Rights Movement and the Solidarity Movement. There is more of a distance in time from these movements while the repercussions of the Arab Spring are still ongoing.

really ever understand the individual's specific reasons for being involved in a protest movement? The simpler way to think about resistance movements is to assume that the collective shares the same ideals and reasons for protesting. Additionally, when these movements are rooted in one method of protest, such as non-violent tactics, it is harder to determine varied opinions of the collective because the movement is reliant on a united language to voice their purpose. This simple outlook on these events creates an overreliance on mythic conceptions of the nation and dialogic language about the movement recedes. Further, as these movements become removed in time and become "history", the totalising effect of collective memory potentially furthers a narrative that does not allow for any complexities.

The current domino effect and international dialogue presented by these Arab protests show what can occur when people see the impact of non-violent political protest. It is essential to study how societies change or fail to change after the movements wind down or dissipate. This is especially true if these movements engender this kind of monoglossia. The narratives around contemporary movements, such as the Arab Spring, are still being determined, but it is possible to examine movements whose narratives are completed. This project will focus on two twentieth-century non-violent civil resistance movements: the African American Civil Rights Movement and the Polish Solidarity Movement. They offer case studies of how culture responded to the movements after the need for collective action was over. They are in dialogue with their historical moment as the potential centre of various large movements (Black Diaspora movements and communist rule in Eastern Europe, respectively) and in dialogue with each other because of the overlapping time periods. I am exploring these movements in the context of the literature that followed, and these are some of the questions I will pose and strive to answer: What were the cultural histories and myths before the movement and how did prose fiction engage and question these narratives? How did these civil resistance movements imprint themselves onto the culture? How does prose fiction engender fragmentation and uncertainty to counteract the totalizing effect of movement narratives and collective memory?

It is beneficial to study these movements in a comparative manner because they tell us about how collective groups unite and disband, regardless of the specific political situation. Both movements tell us something about how the narratives of the collective emerge. Further, these movements draw inspiration from each other, so it is valuable to look at more than one in order to think about how their respective methods build rhetorical strength. To show that these non-violent protests do not occur in a vacuum, I turn to a recent publication on the 2009 Iranian protests. In a recent collection of essays about the Green Movement in Iran, there are three articles that explicitly cite the Civil Rights Movement as inspiration for the Iranian protests.⁸ For example Sohrab Ahmari, in “From Birmingham to Tehran: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Green Movement”, refers to Martin Luther King’s legacy as an international one: “[King’s] bequest to the world is a comprehensive methodology for effecting social change that has inspired people of conscience everywhere seeking to assert their universal rights” (Hashemi and Postel 175). A strong leader such as King helped to create the ideals and models for future protests, as in the case of Iran. The actions of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian Independence Movement are also often cited as a model for non-violent collective action. Therefore, comparative study of such movements is vital as a way to see how the past creates a pattern for the future and action in one culture creates models for others. Further, I focus on two non-violent movements specifically because of their reliance on language and demonstrations with a large numbers of participants. These two elements make it more likely that an overarching narrative will emerge that assumes the involvement of the whole population, with no room for alternate narratives or conceptions of freedom from oppression.

⁸ See *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and the Struggle for Iran’s Future*, eds. Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel (New York: Melville House, 2010).

1.1 Civil Resistance: The Power of Non-violent Political Action

The terminology of political protest has consequences for how we conceptualize movement narratives. Some of these terms contribute to the totalizing effect of collective memory. There are many terms to describe large scale action by the population. Many of these terms come from the sociological or political science fields. “Social movement”, “people power”, “civil resistance”, and “non-violent resistance” are some of the most commonly used. Various studies use a specific terminology for a reason. As early as 1974 Anders Boserup and Andrew Mack identified non-violent methods of collective action as an “instrument of power” (14). In this early study, the authors used more general terms to describe the social movement phenomenon when it was still unclear how non-violent methods would shape the remainder of the twentieth century. In 1994, Peter Ackerman and Christopher Krueger talked about the evocativeness of the term “people power.” This term came about after the 1986 ousting of the Ferdinand Marcos regime in the Philippines. However, they prefer the term ‘strategic nonviolent conflict’ to discuss how participants use nonviolent methods, more or less strategically, to achieve vital objectives in conflict (xix-xx). They believe that this is a process “that can be enhanced and extended through careful thought and skilful action” (xx). Here, there is recognition that these movements build on the successes of the previous ones. However, the term strategic may be too strong on occasions when there is no strong central organization for the movement.

Charles Tilly’s 2004 work is a historical overview in which he argues that a “new political phenomenon” was created in the late-eighteenth-century by Western Europeans and North Americans and that social movements are a distinctive form of contentious politics (3). In fact, current research on social movements is a separate field.⁹ Tilly

⁹ Some of these guides to researching social movements include: Doug McAdam and David A. Snow, eds, *Readings on Social Movements: Origins, Dynamics and Outcomes* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010); Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg, eds., *Methods of Social Movement Research* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); David S. Meyer and Sidney Tarrow, eds, *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998); John Lofland, *Social Movement Organizations: Guide to Research on Insurgent*

considers the three elements that create the political complex of a social movement to be: “1) campaigns of collective claims on target authorities; 2) an array of claim-making performances including special-purpose associations, public meetings, media statements, and demonstrations; 3) public representations of the cause’s worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment” (7). These elements emphasize the collective nature of these movements and the performance aspect of non-violent action. This performativity manifests itself in the creation of roles for others to adopt in the theatre of civil resistance. Due to the fact that these protests can be so public and involve a significant segment of the population, it is undeniable that they will have some impact on the culture after the urgency of the protests has dissipated. The term “social movement”, then, effectively highlights the collective and people-driven aspect of these movements.

Howard Clark prefers the term “unarmed resistance” to “people power” and “nonviolent struggle” because it is more accurate, descriptive and inclusive than the others and “the term ‘resistance’ suggests disobedience, refusal and withdrawal, and non-institutional forms of struggle” (4-5). He emphasizes that unarmed resistance was a struggle for self-determination and currently it has expanded to have a transnational focus (8). For Clark, nonviolent unarmed action has the power of refusal to accept conditions as they are and an empowerment of acting as a collective (5). Clark’s terminology focuses on the non-violent and he argues that the resistance is currently going beyond the borders of the state and becoming globalized. Hank Johnston, however, traces the beginning of social movements to the creation of the state. He argues that a social movement is a modern form of protest that has developed alongside the modern state and continues to do so (11). He states that popular protest and the structure of the state “are in a dynamic and mutually influencing relationship, each pushing and constraining the other” (16). Johnston argues that social movements are “people’s politics, not elite politics” which introduces a class dimension that may not be accurate for all movements, but is certainly

an issue in both the Civil Rights Movement and in the Solidarity movement (1). Johnston, therefore, emphasizes the articulation of everyday citizens' demands in the modern state.

All of these terms are important to establishing the way political protest is talked about, but in this project, I will mainly be using the term “civil resistance”, borrowed from Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash’s 2009 volume *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*. The term “civil resistance” works for this project in the context of the literature I have chosen. The “civil” part of the term alludes to the assumption that the people protesting are invested in their status as citizens of a particular nation or group. It also refers to the civil nature of the protests, as they mostly resisted the “incivility” of violence. The protesters are also enacting their worth as citizens of the nation and their desire to be treated as such. This has important consequences because the texts I will be discussing, which are written in the aftermath of these movements, inflict a type of violence on collective memory. “Resistance” recalls the conflict and tension between two groups with different ideas of the world. In the introduction to the volume, Roberts opens by highlighting the importance of civil resistance for the history of the last century. He attributes this prominence to the overlapping causes of decolonization, democratization, and racial equality. His definition of civil resistance explains why this concept has shaped the world so much and why it is appropriate for this project:

Civil resistance is a type of political action that relies on the use of non-violent methods. It is largely synonymous with certain other terms, including ‘non-violent action’, ‘non-violent resistance’, and ‘people power’. It involves a range of widespread and sustained activities that challenge a particular power, force, policy, or regime –hence the term ‘resistance’. The adjective ‘civil’ in this context denotes that which pertains to a citizen or society, implying that a movement’s goals are ‘civil’ in the sense of being widely shared in a society; and it denotes that the action concerned is non-military or non-violent in character. (2)

The authors see this term as the most satisfactory general term to cover the broad range of cases addressed in their book. Since my project deals with two cases which many may

see as very different (though I hope to show that they actually have some vital links), this term also works. Roberts emphasizes the borrowing that goes on between civil resistance movements and each chapter in the book focuses on different case studies, including the Civil Rights Movement and the Solidarity Movement, to show these intersections (23). This term therefore is appropriate to use for this project because it also has a contemporary scope, but in the literary sphere.

However, the main focus of this project is on literature written in a “postresistance” period. By using the term “postresistance” literature, I mean literature written after a period of civil resistance, such as the Civil Rights Movement or the Solidarity Movement. I follow the designation that the “after” period of the civil rights movement is post 1960s (after the assassination of King and the election of Nixon)¹⁰ and post 1989 and the fall of communism in Poland. I recognize that the issues of the civil resistance period do not magically disappear after these periods but the large group movement essentially ended. The effects of racism in America and socialism in Poland still exist in some form but it is also the case that racism is no longer legislated and that Poland experienced an entire socio-political economic change. I use the word “postresistance” as an extension and continuance of resistance literature or texts written for the explicit purpose of addressing the civil resistance movements.¹¹ The term “resistance literature” emerges out of postcolonial theory. Barbara Harlow’s definition of resistance literature is a literature that “calls attention to itself” as a politicized activity (28). I will show that postresistance literature can be politicized by pointing out the ways in which the previous period embraced certain kinds of narratives and mythologies in order to be successful and these narratives may have problematic consequences for the individual after the collective disbands.¹²

¹⁰ This time period designation comes from Doug McAdam’s article “The US Civil Rights Movement: Power from Below and Above, 1945-70” (McAdam “The US” 60)

¹¹ This “post” relationship can be compared to the metaphorical “parent-child” relationship of modernism and postmodernism.

¹² The belief that a cultural product is politicized may be debated by various sides. The word “politics” is one in dispute and can change in different periods. In this context, I mean fiction that explicitly refers to

Some of the terms used in this project need to be defined bearing in mind the fact that queries may arise regarding the validity of a comparison between an oppressed racial group within a nation-state and a nation-state subordinated to a political system outside its own borders. One of the most important terms is the concept of the nation¹³ and its various permutations such as nationalism¹⁴, national identity¹⁵ and nation-state¹⁶. In the context of this project, I use these words to show that Poles or African Americans (at least in the brief time periods when the civil resistance movements were at their height) became more than just random groups of people who happened to live in the same country. Their national feeling (at least in as much as this feeling had to do with language, culture, and history) became heightened in these periods. These movements created the feeling of a nation even as their nation-state rejected them. More often than not when referring to Poland, I will use the word “nation”, simply because Poland at the time was technically seen as a nation, but the People’s Republic of Poland was not fully under the control of the Poles. With regards to the Civil Rights Movement, I use the word “social group” because the African Americans involved were part of the same nation-state but had most of their rights denied in and by that nation-state.

actual events in history and comments on them through their plots. These references are inherently political because of their impact on the authors’ contemporary period.

¹³ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines nation as: “A large aggregate of communities and individuals united by factors such as common descent, language, culture, history, or occupation of the same territory, so as to form a distinct people. Now also: such a people forming a political state; a political state” (“Nation.” *OED*. Web. 20 Sep 2011.)

¹⁴ Nationalism: “Advocacy of or support for the interests of one's own nation, esp. to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations. Also: advocacy of or support for national independence or self-determination” (“Nationalism.” *OED*. Web. 20 Sep. 2011.)

¹⁵ National Identity: “a sense of a nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by (the maintenance of) distinctive traditions, culture, linguistic or political features, etc.” (“National Identity.” *OED*. Web. 20 Sep. 2011.)

¹⁶ Nation-state: “An independent political state formed from a people who share a common national identity (historically, culturally, or ethnically); (more generally) any independent political state” (“Nation-state.” *OED*. Web. 20 Sep. 2011.)

Another point of comparison concerns the form of oppression that each group underwent. For the Civil Rights Movement, the oppression was racist in nature. Racism is “the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.”¹⁷ The clearest example of this superiority came in the form of slavery and, after Emancipation, Jim Crow and other segregationist policies. In the case of Poland, the oppression came in the form of economic control and the suppression of democratic freedoms. This oppression may not have been racist since the Soviets were the same race (although some critics argue that the imposition of communism should be considered colonialist, an oppression which often has racial overtones¹⁸), but it still represented a power that was “Other” in the lives of Poles. After the Second World War, Poland was under the control of the Communist¹⁹ Soviet Union and the Party installed in government followed socialist policies of “state or collective ownership and regulation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange for the common benefit of all members of society” (“Socialism”). The oppression of Poles was more than an imposed economic system; it meant that many freedoms, such as the freedom of expression, were taken away. However, this control was not as severe as in some other Soviet-controlled nations. Timothy Garton Ash argues that the totalitarian ideal “...*aspires* to total control over every aspect of its citizens’ lives, to break every social bond outside its aegis, to destroy what the Enlightenment *philosophes* called ‘civil society.’” However, the Polish communists failed to impose collective ownership and control of the Catholic Church (8). The gradual concessions that the Workers’ Defence Committee (Komitet Obrony Robotników or KOR) and the Solidarity Movement gained, then, were a loosening of this former control. Since the study of literature and rhetoric in this project is so suffused with

¹⁷ “Racism.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. Web. 20 Sep, 2011.

¹⁸ See critics such as Ewa M. Thompson in her book *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000).

¹⁹ “A theory that advocates the abolition of private ownership, all property being vested in the community, and the organization of labour for the common benefit of all members; a system of social organization in which this theory is put into practice” (“Communism.” *OED*. Web. 20 Sep 2011.)

the history of both cultures, brief histories of both movements will follow. I do these overviews using sources which highlight key moments and tactics of each movement in order to show the “biographies” or overarching narratives of these movements. This is needed in order to highlight the ways that the postresistance prose I analyze later reacts to these narratives.

1.2 Movement Histories: Accounting for the Masses

A person does not lightly elect to oppose his society. One would much rather be at home among one's compatriots than be mocked and detested by them. And there is a level on which the mockery of the people, even their hatred, is moving because it is so blind: it is terrible to watch people cling to their captivity and insist on their own destruction. I think black people have always felt this about America, and Americans, and have always seen, spinning above the thoughtless American head, the shape of the wrath to come.

---James Baldwin²⁰

The African American Civil Rights Movement should not be only seen as a series of highly visible marches and protests in the 1960s, but as part of a longer struggle of African Americans to assert their humanity after the inhumane history of slavery. The forced importation of Africans brought to the United States, starting in the seventeenth century, created the conditions for this human and legal rights struggle and for the current socio-economic inequalities that exist in the country (Berlin 6). As Baldwin comments in the quote above, this struggle was an inevitable one. However, part of the totalizing nature of these movement narratives is their identity as unique events. These are periods of time when the rhetoric that is rooted in these historical oppressions gathers force and unites the protesters in an unprecedented way. For the purposes of this project about non-violent civil resistance and postresistance writing this section will deal with the major

²⁰ James Baldwin, *No Name in the Street* (New York: Dial Press, 1972) 194-95.

events of what is considered that Civil Rights Movement, but I also refer to the way those events were informed by the previous history of the oppressed group and by the historiography surrounding the movement. In the case of this movement, there are also a few dates that stand out: 1954 (the *Brown* Supreme Court decision), 1956 (The Montgomery Bus Boycott), 1960 (lunch counter sit-ins), 1961 (the Freedom Ride), 1963 (Birmingham campaign and the March on Washington), 1964 (Civil Rights Bill signed and Freedom Summer), and 1965 (Selma March, Voting Rights Act). I focus here then on the moments of collective action that forced institutional oppression to end. Revisionist Civil Rights historians argue that the Civil Rights Movement started before the events of the 1950s and 1960s (Aldridge III xii), but my focus is on the non-violent civil resistance actions, which involved a large portion of the oppressed group. Additionally, scholars of the movements in the 1970s focused on “leaders and events of national significance” (Lawson 456). Social histories of ordinary people involved in the movement came later, but it is this focus on the political movement that largely influences collective memory.

Although the 1954 *Brown, et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, et al.* decision was not exactly a large scale non-violent action, it provided a precedent in showing that the combination of resistance and challenging laws in court would lead slowly to the dismantling of the Jim Crow South. Civil Rights attorney Thurgood Marshall looked for cases in the South when working for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s (NAACP) Legal Defense and Education Fund (Dierenfield 20). A few cases were argued in local courts. For example, in Clarendon County, South Carolina, two-thirds of schoolchildren were African American, yet they had no free buses to get to school and their schools were run-down, whereas the white students got buses and had up-to-date schools and supplies. Instead of arguing to equalize separate facilities, the decision was made to push for desegregation in public education (Aldridge III 198). In a Topeka, Kansas case where Linda Brown had to travel an hour and half to get to a black school, while white schools were within walking distance, attorney Robert Carter used a social science experiment to show that black children were harmed by segregation. By choosing white dolls over black dolls, black children were demonstrating the self-hatred they had internalized through segregation.

The NAACP lost most of the local cases, but when they were appealed to the Supreme Court, the justices consolidated five cases in order to rule on the legalities of segregation in public education. Thurgood Marshall used the same sociological study to argue the Supreme Court case in 1952. The justices could not come up with a unanimous decision (which they felt was needed to impart a clear ruling on this matter) and the case was heard again in 1953 with Earl Warren, a new chief justice appointed to the court by President Eisenhower when a justice passed away during the break. Warren managed to bring together the various personalities of the justices and “on May 17, 1954, the court announced its unanimous decision, written by the chief justice, reversing *Plessy v. Ferguson* and declaring school segregation unconstitutional” (205).²¹ This was the height of the NAACP’s role in the movement and even though there were flaws in the decision (including the lack of a timeline for the desegregation of schools), it created the impetus for the Movement going forward: “Its shortcomings aside, *Brown* contributes mightily to the Civil Rights Movement. It not only ended legal segregation, it deprived segregation of its moral validity. Most important, *Brown* meant that black people would no longer wait for justice from the courts; they would demand it themselves, now that the law was on their side” (Dierenfield 28). With the recognition that one element of Jim Crow was considered illegal, this decision helped to embolden activists. School integration was not the easiest task due to white Southerners who did not want the South’s way of life changed. For example, nine students who attempted to integrate in Little Rock, Arkansas needed troops to protect them from violence (34-35). The 1957 “Little Rock Crisis” started with the Governor Faubus using the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the students from entering the building and ended with President Eisenhower having to federalize the same guard to protect the students (Aldridge III 224-225). The students were harassed all year, and it was a long ordeal to integrate all schools until the Supreme Court made a stronger statement about the immediate urgency of desegregation, instead of the ruling being implemented with “all deliberate speed.”

²¹ *Plessy v. Ferguson* was a Supreme Court decision from 1896 that reversed the effects of Reconstruction and the 14th Amendment. It still barred racial discrimination by states, but not by individual businessmen who ran hotels and restaurants. This decision created the ‘separate but equal’ doctrine for public facilities (Dierenfield 9).

With a legal decision in their favour about school integration, Civil Rights leaders turned to other aspects of Jim Crow that needed to be dismantled. In Montgomery, Alabama the first large-scale resistance movement was created in reaction to the indignities of being black on the public bus system when most of the drivers were white. There had been acts of defiance in the past against determining where African Americans could sit on the bus, but the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) decided to make a case of the issue after the arrest of Rosa Parks (a socially aware activist) on December 1, 1955 (211). Martin Luther King Jr., a young pastor in the community, was chosen as leader of the MIA and his key task was to appeal to the black middle class to participate in a boycott of the buses. He delivered a speech in a church to encourage the boycott where he cited the Christian faith, racial justice and Gandhi's tactic of non-violence to appeal to a broad range of Civil Rights supporters (Dierenfield 45). Black people (especially the poorer classes who had no access to cars) boycotted the buses for more than a year until the NAACP filed a lawsuit and the Supreme Court ruled bus segregation as unconstitutional. On December 20, 1956 black passengers were officially allowed to sit wherever they wanted on the bus. The boycott showed the world that African Americans were not happy with being subservient, that they had economic clout (the bus companies lost a lot of business with the boycott) and they had the ability to organize for a goal. However, there was infighting within the Civil Rights leaders and after the bus boycott had made King an international figure, he formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in January 1957 with a group of other black ministers. The goals of the group were to use "the untapped power of the church against racial discrimination" (49). The civil rights gains of the late 1950s were modest and Eisenhower's Civil Rights Act of 1957 was weak; therefore, it took college students in the early 1960s to reignite the movement.

The Greensboro Four were four black college students in North Carolina who voluntarily started their own resistance movement with no backing from any of the major organizations, such as the NAACP and the SCLC. In various department stores in the South, black people were allowed to shop, but not allowed to sit at the lunch counter with whites. The Greensboro Four staged a sit-in at Woolworth's in 1960. This action sparked sit-ins all over the South, created a lot of media attention and despite violence produced

some immediate change: “The campaign achieved some immediate successes – lunch counters in San Antonio, Nashville, and about eighty other Southern cities and towns were desegregated by the end of 1960” (Aldridge III 231). These strategies were not always supported by middle class older black people and so impatient students from various organizations met in April 1960 and created something new: “At the close of the meeting, the participants formed an important Civil Rights organization – the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), pronounced ‘snick’ – that spurned formal ties to King’s SCLC. SNCC welcomed white allies, refused to follow a prophetic leader, and distinguished itself by its piercing internal debates, democratic procedures, and ventures into the most dangerous areas of the deep South” (Dierenfield 58). They created the “jail no bail” strategy to show that they would not cooperate with an unjust system and would suffer for their activism (Aldridge III 233). SNCC was an important part of the non-violent struggle until the late 1960s when they became disillusioned with the cooperative approach of the movement and became violent.

In the meantime, activists were facing extreme violence themselves during the Freedom Ride of 1961. Organized by James Farmer, head of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Freedom Ride was meant to address the problem of interstate travel by travelling through the South with an interracial group who would ignore segregation signs and force the states to comply with 1960 Supreme Court decision that segregation in interstate travel was unconstitutional (235). The people who volunteered for this knew they were facing extreme danger, but any non-violent training they completed did not prepare them for the mobs they met in Southern cities, especially an attack they endured in Alabama. Even though President Kennedy had courted black votes to get him elected, he was very slow to support Civil Rights efforts and in this case he did not act to protect the riders until the media coverage made the country look bad in the context of Cold War.²² After the CORE riders had experienced too much violence, the SNCC volunteered

²² Mary Dzubiak’s *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000) details how a domestic issue like black civil rights affected the United States on the world stage. The government had maintained an image of freedom that contrasted with the Soviet Union. Her contention is that this emphasis on image meant that progress was made but the deep issues of race relations and economic realities were never truly addressed.

to continue the rides. In this case, instead of public beatings, these volunteers were immediately arrested in Mississippi and abused behind closed doors, which radicalized many of these activists (241). In September 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission prohibited segregation and the freedom rides end by early 1962. To prevent further public embarrassment, the Kennedy administration tries to convince SNCC to focus more on voter registration efforts than on public disobedience (242).

But the Civil Rights Movement would not be leaving the streets anytime soon. After a few disappointing campaigns for large scale action, Martin Luther King, Jr. and the SCLC needed a strong statement of resistance that built on the things learned in the previous campaigns. They chose Birmingham, Alabama as a target because of the deep racism and violence there, especially embodied by commissioner of public safety Eugene “Bull” Connor and Governor George Wallace. King’s justification was that “if ‘the most segregated city in America’ could be integrated through nonviolent direct action, the back of Jim Crow would be broken throughout the South” (Dierenfield 77). Initially, King was disillusioned by the reluctance among middle class African Americans to participate in the civil disobedience campaign of targeting businesses which maintained segregationist policies. On April 12, an Alabama state court issued an injunction prohibiting any forms of protests by the SCLC. This was a key moment for King because he decided not to obey the injunction and was arrested during a march. In a published “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, King explained the purpose of non-violent action and the imperative nature of acting right away (258). This letter made some impact but the real collective action started when teenagers began to march on city hall. On the first night they marched, 500 teenagers were arrested and put in jail. The authorities tried to disperse the march the next day but instead of detention they used hoses and dogs, which caused nation-wide outrage (261). These actions led to an agreement to desegregate city businesses and caused Kennedy to take a more active role in federal legislation, introducing a Civil Rights Bill to Congress. The SCLC’s victory in Birmingham showed their goals going forward: “The fact that the SCLC trumpeted these modest concessions as a major victory shows that influencing national public opinion, rather than building sustainable local movement, was increasingly the central focus of King and other civil

rights leaders” (262). The collective memory of King and the movement revolves around this wide scope of a national narrative of resistance.

The 1963 March on Washington was the culmination of collective resistance to the institutional segregation in the United States. Squabbling between the various organizations was set aside to plan the march in order to support Kennedy’s Civil Rights Bill. However, the Kennedy administration would only support the march if it was controlled and the message was not controversial. The members of SNCC were not happy about this moderation and Chairman John Lewis had to be talked out of making a more radical speech about the deeper issues of racial justice (266). The movement at this point had to stick with a message of cooperation with political leaders who were taking legal and symbolic action. There was a lot of uncertainty about the March logistics, but on August 28, 1963, a quarter of a million people arrived from all over the United States for the demonstration and it ran more smoothly than anyone could have hoped (267). There were celebrity performances and speeches from the Big Six organizers, including King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech. The media attention rendered it the most remembered march in American history: “The peaceful interracial march did much to make civil rights a respectable, mainstream cause and create a sympathetic national climate for civil rights legislation” (270). After Kennedy’s assassination in November 1963, President Johnson became a surprising supporter of civil rights, signing a strong Civil Rights Act in 1964 which essentially ended segregation and meant that African Americans no longer had to file their own lawsuits against any kind of discrimination (Dierenfield 91).

With the Civil Rights Act signed into law, the last institutional roadblock to equality was voting rights in several states. Voting fraud was a problem that the SNCC tried to confront during the summer of 1964 in Mississippi. The SNCC stayed in the field for several months to help African Americans register to vote in the face of intimidation. Riding the bus with black people was a different matter for white Southerners than allowing them leadership roles in the society (Aldridge III 274). The SNCC needed guerrilla tactics to survive and it involved northern liberal college students to get media attention and possibly as a means of protection. It created the freedom vote (a symbolic election to show that black people had the desire and ability to vote) and freedom schools

to educate young people about African American history (274-279). These attempts led to disillusionment for the SNCC due to racial tensions within the volunteer groups, the murder of three CORE workers and the lack of real progress in getting African Americans registered: “Freedom Summer marked the end of the SNCC’s efforts to appeal to the nation’s conscience and the opening of a more confrontational chapter in the movement” (Dierenfield 107). This change demonstrates one of the reasons that the SNCC is not held up as the representative group of the Civil Rights Movement.

1965 was the last year of what many scholars consider the zenith of the non-violent Civil Rights Movement (Verney 107). The issue was the continued effort to secure voting rights for African Americans. King and the SCLC created another opportunity for media attention with marches on the courthouse in Selma, Alabama. The aim was to register black people to vote but the police brutalized the marchers instead. A man named Jimmie Lee Jackson was murdered trying to protect his mother which led to a larger action: “They decided to publicize Jackson’s murder and to build national support for voting rights legislation that the Johnson administration soon planned to introduce by marching the fifty-four miles from Selma to the state capitol of Montgomery on March 7 and confronting Governor Wallace, who had become the nation’s most prominent symbol of segregationist defiance” (Aldridge III 287). But they never got to Montgomery because they were met by troops at the Edmund Pettus Bridge and when they refused to turn around, there were mass beatings. The media coverage, of what was to be dubbed “Bloody Sunday,” cut into a film about Nazi racism²³ and the parallel shocked the people who were watching (Dierenfield 114). On March 25, 1965 King and 25,000 followers reached Montgomery on the third attempt at a march and on August 6, 1965 Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act signalling the end of an era. After these events, white liberals moved on from this civil rights cause, the gulf widened between the various organizations, the Black Panther party gained popularity and violent riots broke out in

²³ The American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) was showing the premiere of Stanley Kramer’s *Judgment at Nuremberg* (Dierenfield 114).

several northern states (120). The symbolic stage of the Civil Rights Movement was over and a different era of African Americans finding their place within the nation had started.

The historical events described above represent the conventional idea of what the Civil Rights Movement was for the United States and mostly how it exists in American collective memory. Large changes in legislation and the collective unity that forced Americans (particularly in the South) to confront their racism are the key features of this history. This history focuses on the main players (King, the SNCC and especially the men of the movement) and on a particular region (the South, particularly more racist states such as Mississippi and Alabama) and on middle class African Americans, which meant not really addressing the systemic inequalities of American capitalism. There are many challenges to this historiography, which has undergone an evolution in the last few decades. Kevern Verney, in *The Debate on Black Civil Rights in America* (2006), explains this evolution in the historiography. Soon after the end of the movement, the focus in historical study was on biographies of key well-known individuals, especially King-centric studies, which inflated the role of the subject and minimized other influences (87-88). Even though other areas of historical study of the mid-1960s started to expand into examining history from the bottom up, social history was not yet a focus for Civil Rights historians. This entrenchment in the biography had to do with a lack of archived sources and lack of need for originality because these historians were trailblazers in the field (92). Finally in the 1980s, social history became an important part of Civil Rights historiography and overlooked stories and people became the focus. Books about women's roles in the movement²⁴ and regional studies²⁵ were a sign of this change (93). The 1980s and the 1990s also saw new, but more objective, accounts of

²⁴ Examples include *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* by Sara Evans (New York: Knopf, 1979), *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It* by Jo Ann Gibson Robinson (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), and *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965*, edited by Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline A. Rouse and Barbara Woods (New York: Carlson, 1990).

²⁵ For example, William Chafe's book *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford UP, 1980) about the Greensboro sit-in movement

Martin Luther King, Jr. (94).²⁶ There was also a new focus on the influence of Christianity in the movement and the response of other religious denominations to the Civil Rights Movement (99).²⁷ In the 1990s and 2000s, scholarship spread outwards to the relationship of the movement to US foreign policy, especially on the topic of an international black freedom struggle and in the context of the recently concluded Cold War. Scholars have also focused on the role of *Brown* for the movement and its effect on the minds of white Southerners (103). In fact more attention began to be paid to the role of the Southern segregationists in order to balance the “asymmetrical approach” to history which had almost exclusively focused on the protesters. A limitation of the historiography had been “the tendency to view the movement as a bi-polar struggle between two monolithic coalitions” (104-5). It was not always that case the Southern segregationists had unquestioned loyalty to their cause and violence was often less extensive and extreme than described in several histories. Lastly, scholars also “continued to redefine the traditional chronology of the Civil Rights Movement”, by giving more weight to the smaller protests that happened before 1954 and the struggles after the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the scope of the movement is still an issue of contention (107-8). The history that I have detailed provides the generally accepted historiography within American collective memory, despite any revised approaches to the historiography. My goal is to show that the literature that came after has contested the boundaries and conceptions of this collective memory.

The African American Civil Rights Movement has a place in Roberts and Garton Ash’s *Civil Resistance and Power Politics*, as a movement that borrowed from others and whose successes were used by other movements. The book argues that although these cases of civil resistance take place within specific states the chapters in the book “show that there is much learning between cases, and a constant process of borrowing,

²⁶ David Garrow’s *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: W. Morrow, 1986) is still acclaimed as the leader’s most authoritative biography.

²⁷ For example, Mark K. Bauman and Berkeley Kalin’s collection of essays, *The Quiet Voice: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997) examines how Southern Rabbis reacted to the conflicts.

adaptation, ‘demonstration effects,’ and help” (23). In the chapter entitled “The US Civil Rights Movement: Power from Below and Above, 1945-70” Doug McAdam discusses how civil rights leaders drew parallels between Jim Crow policies and lack of freedom for countries in the Soviet Bloc. The leaders tried to “prod a reluctant federal establishment into action by framing civil rights reform as a tool in American’s struggle against communism” (66). This is an example of how civil resistance can exist as part of an international network and how the movements can borrow from the ongoing environmental shifts. In fact, NAACP attorney Charles Houston argued that “a national policy of the US which permits disfranchisement of coloured people in the South is just as much an international issue as the question of free elections in Poland” (66-67). This rhetoric of an international connection shows that way that groups use the external political environment to help “set in motion episodes of popular contention” (60). McAdam argues that the Civil Rights Movement was partly a success because “successful movements depend critically on the capacity of insurgents to recognize and exploit the opportunities afforded them by environmental change processes” (61). The emergence of a sympathetic Supreme Court is one example of an opportunity taken by Civil Rights leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. McAdam also discusses ways that localized efforts of resistance became a national cause. He terms it the “*re-nationalization* of race in post-war America” that transformed the Montgomery bus strike into a movement of national and international significance (70). This *renationalization* took specific forms to appeal to disparate groups who were needed to support the cause in various ways. As in the Solidarity Movement, a specific language needed to be crafted that was suffused with ideas of unity. Therefore, understanding the rhetoric of both movements is another important element in grasping how this perceived group unity was achieved and this idea will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

The other case study in this project is the Solidarity Movement; therefore, what follows is a historical overview in order to highlight the most important points in the progression of the movement. Bartosz Kaliski’s article “Solidarity, 1980-1: The Second Vistula Miracle?” (2006) and Stefani Sonntag’s sociological study of dissent in Poland (2004) present very good overviews of the key events in post-war Poland. Kaliski acknowledges that there are certain dates that stand out in the history of the Solidarity

Movement: “The historiography of the Polish People’s Republic emphasizes great watershed moments, which shook the political order and at times caused fundamental personnel changes in the communist hierarchies. These cataclysmic moments are dubbed ‘Polish Months’, and the following are the most important: October 1956, March 1968, December 1970, June 1976, August 1980, December 1981 and June 1989” (119). I will use these dates to highlight the important events.

After the devastation of World War II, the state socialist system (with the military support of the Soviet Union) asserted itself against non-communist resistance in 1947. The Stalinist phase, which lasted until the mid 1950s, stabilized the situation through the use of terror, but after Stalin’s death intermittent political crises were the norm (Sonntag 5-6). The first major crisis was the June 1956 workers’ revolt in Poznań where workers from factories demanded better working conditions. The authorities acted violently and the protests were put down in two days, but the general population supported Poznań and October 1956 saw renewed demonstrations. The return of Władysław Gomułka and his election to First Secretary was a key move because “he knew how to channel the country’s nationalist mood and direct towards himself the hopes of democratization, economic recovery and especially a larger degree of national sovereignty” (6). Kaliski sees October 1956 as a rejection of the Stalinist model of socialism due to a stabilization period between 1953 and 1956 that created a widening of intellectual freedom, a permanent opening to the West, a temporary suspension of censorship, and the liquidation of collective farms (Kaliski 119-120). This taste of freedom created a “revisionist” group of young people. They were that part of the Polish United Worker’s Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza or the PZPR) which “craved a continuation of the democratic evolution of the system.” But after a few years, this openness started to recede. Worker’s councils, such as the revisionist portion of the PZPR, were shut down, as were any members of the intelligentsia who dared to speak out.²⁸ The Catholic Church and the Party also became more opposed in the 1960s. 1966 saw an ideological duel

²⁸ An example comes with the writing of “An Open Letter to the Party” by Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski in 1964. The intellectuals suffered several years of imprisonment due to their invocation of revisionist ideals in this letter (Kaliski 120).

between the Church's celebration of the millennium of Christianity and the communists' organization of celebrations for the millennium of the Polish State (120).

March 1968 was a harsh awakening to the fact that "the Communist Party differed from the values traditionally associated with the left" (121). This reality came in the harsh reprisals against student demonstrations against censorship and for the rights of the university.²⁹ Many were dismissed and imprisoned and the authorities started an anti-intelligentsia campaign that had anti-Semitic overtones and shocked many. These events certainly created "a constitutive experience for a new generation" that would be part of Solidarity. The intelligentsia had woken up and their union with the workers was on the road to fruition.

Increased food prices right before Christmas in December 1970 led to a revolt in the Baltic region of Poland and 75 people were killed by authorities. The 1960s had seen only small conflicts between the workers and the communist state, but this uprising could only be quelled through the replacement of Gomułka with Edward Gierek and the latter's revoking of the price increases in February 1971 (120-121). The intelligentsia also strengthened its dissident position:

In the 1970s, dissident intellectuals resurrected the tradition of the liberal-leftist intelligentsia, who had played the role of the spiritual guide of the nation in the long period of loss of independence after 1795 and in the interwar years. This pattern included respect for democratic procedures and legalism, and underlined values such as tolerance towards believers and 'other thinkers'. Its adherents sought to purge national history of lies and fill in the 'blank spots', especially in relations with the USSR...The signing of the Helsinki Final Act (1975) by the countries of the Soviet bloc and the ratification of international treaties on UN human rights (1977), gave an additional justification for nonconformist attitudes. (121)

²⁹ One of the triggers of these student protests was the shutting down of the play *Dziady* by Adam Mickiewicz at the Warsaw National Theatre after ten performances, showing the role of art in the arena of resistance (Sonntag 7).

This reliance on historical authority and global ideals of human rights³⁰ is an important idea for this project because I seek to examine whether prose authors re-examine these ideals within the role of the movement.

The early 1970s seemed to be an era of progress and a second stabilization for Poland: “The party leadership decided to seek enormous loans from abroad, purchase numerous Western technologies, increase the production of consumer goods and start the mass building of flats” (121-22). These short-sighted economic policies led to the over-confidence of the authorities who decided that they could pursue changes to the Constitution, “such as formal recognition of the leading role of the Communist Party in the state.” These changes were made but the protests further united factions of the population. Then when the bubble burst economically, the authorities drastically increased food prices in June 1976 and strikes broke out with up to 80,000 workers participating and the intelligentsia raising money for the arrested strikers. Due to mistrust based on class differences and the association of educated people with factory bureaucracy, this was not yet the time for the alliance of workers and the intelligentsia, but the latter group decided to coordinate activity and so “on 23 September 1976, fourteen people established the Committee for Workers’ Defence (KOR)” (122). This body gave support to those persecuted by the authorities and informed the world about Poland’s human rights abuses. The Student Committee of Solidarity (Studencki Komitet Solidarności or SKS) was also formed and both groups faced harassment from the authorities. Signs of resistance started to take shape, such as the formation of an Independent Publication House (Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza or NOWA) and a small opposition party called the Confederation of Independent Poland (Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej or KPN) (123).

By September 1977, KOR’s work on behalf of repressed workers from June 1976 was over so they decided to take the name Committee of Social Self-Defence (Komitet Społecznej Samoobrony or KSS-KOR) to continue their work of defending human rights.

³⁰ Leszek Kołakowski wrote *Theses about Hope and Hopelessness* (1971) which became the “theoretical basis for the activity of post-1968 proto-opposition” (Kaliski 121).

1978 also saw the formation of self-defence committees for farmers and Free Trade Unions, especially in the prominent Baltic ports. These groups were needed because the official trade unions had failed to defend employees against their employer – the state – creating societal disorder: “The average Pole felt identification only with the family circle and national community, perceiving state institutions as hostile and unable to represent and solve their interests (the syndrome of social alienation)” (124). The strength of the national narrative was needed here to withstand the oppressive system. The last event of the 1970s that inched the Poles closer to the creation of Solidarity was the election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła as Pope John Paul II in October 1978. His visit to Poland in June 1979 saw millions of people attending his masses also setting the stage for the power of Catholicism in the next decade (124). He was also a catalyst for *Solidarność* because his call to initiate change from below gave moral and national meaning to the work that KOR was already doing (Sonntag 9).

The floodgates opened in August 1980: “In response to yet another increase in food prices in July 1980, strikes started in many factories in the South-eastern regions of Poland – first, on 8 July, in Swidnik [sic]. In contrast to 1970 and 1976, the strikers did not go out on to the streets, but stayed in their factories. The regional authorities eased the situation with concessions, but this merely encouraged other workforces to put forward similar claims” (Kaliski 124-125). First Lublin railway workers went on strike and the Lenin shipyard in Gdańsk followed.³¹ Although the strike was temporarily suspended two days later, other factories protested because they needed the support. The shipyard continued a solidarity strike and the Gdańsk Inter-factory Strike Committee (Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy or MKS) was created and drafted twenty-one demands: “The right to create free trade unions, independent from the party, was the first of them. The workers also demanded the right to strike, a guarantee of security for strike supporters, as well as freedom of speech and of the press, and the abolition of repression and the release of political prisoners” (125). By the end of the month 700,000 people

³¹ This latter strike was motivated by the dismissal and persecution of Anna Walentynowicz from the shipyard. The leader of the movement was Lech Wałęsa who had been sacked from the shipyard in 1976.

were on strike in 700 factories across the country. These events got worldwide coverage, and both intellectuals and farmers acted to support the strikes. A historic agreement was signed on August 31st that allowed self-governing trade unions which signaled “the first time since the late 1940s, [that] the communist authorities permitted the existence of an independent mass social organisation” (126). Sonntag notes that this official status meant that they were no longer the avant-garde of the working class as they claimed: “On 22 September 1980 the ‘Independent and Self-Administrative Trade Union *Solidarność*’ passed its statute. Lech Wałęsa was elected head of its executive organ, the Commission for National Communication” (10). This official status did not mean complete freedom in the Polish state, but this newly created “Solidarity” produced many symbolic victories for Poles such as legal registration of Solidarity in the courts, the release of certain political prisoners following the threat of a general strike, and the erection of a monument for the dead workers of December 1970. Kaliski also acknowledges the larger ramifications: “...the idea that an independent trade union could claim to represent the workers vis-à-vis the party and state was a pivotal moment in post-war Eastern Europe, and marked the beginning of the end of communist rule, both in Poland and further afield” (128). But the authorities would not give up so easily so they attempted to create divisions within Solidarity and heightened surveillance on Solidarity leadership (129).

In early 1981, moderation became a central tenet of dealings with the Party. When the courts refused to register the large section of Rural Solidarity, and threats of strikes and violence started to emerge, Wałęsa had to compromise with the authorities and cancel any general strike in what was known to be the Bydgoszcz crisis. Some radicals in Solidarity were not happy at these decisions made by the top people in the movement but this was one of the reasons why Jadwiga Staniszkis and Timothy Garton Ash refer to Solidarity as a “self-limiting revolution” (130-131). Jadwiga Staniszkis (writing in 1980 and 1981) introduced the term “self-limiting revolution” into Solidarity history (and Timothy Garton Ash uses it in his 1983 work) to describe this strategy of not pushing the movement too far in order to avoid a Soviet invasion and a stricter authoritarian regime. She believes that the movement did not go far enough in revolutionizing society: “The most striking characteristic of the initial period of the movement’s history was the painful process of cramming that radical wave of protest and class war into a ‘trade union’

formula” (17-18). Staniszki writes that there was a lack of ideology amongst Solidarity’s members that had started with the loose oppositional coalition of the 1970s (including KOR). She describes the identity crises that affected Solidarity as it progressed into a real opposition movement. It lacked economic power, lacked the means to destroy the ruling group’s monopoly of power and lacked the ability to openly discuss ideological differences (21-22).

Although it seemed that the moderates had gained the upper-hand, cracks in Solidarity started to deepen. For example, many delegates at a national congress in fall 1981 no longer wanted to recognize the Communist Party’s role in the Polish state. The Party was also beginning to toughen, especially as the economic crisis began to worsen and there were hunger demonstrations in many cities (Kaliski 132). On December 2, 1981, the authorities “brutally suppressed” a strike at the Warsaw Fire Officers’ School. On December 13, the strong First Secretary General Wojciech Jaruzelski announced the imposition of martial law: “Overnight, the right to strike and the activity of independent trade unions was suspended. Phone connections were cut, publication of all but official party newspapers ceased, and a curfew was introduced. Tanks and armoured vehicles appeared on the streets, and a mass round-up of strikers and Solidarity leaders began...The carnival of Solidarity was definitely over, to be replaced by more than eighteen months of army rule” (133). However, this act of force was really too late as enough had happened in the previous period to wake “millions of citizens from their slumbers, allowing them to feel masters of their own country at last” (134). The legitimacy of the Communist Party had been tarnished by the retelling of history, such as the open discussion of “blank spots”, such as the massacre at Katyń.³² The Catholic Church experienced unprecedented religious freedom, continuing to broadcast Mass on Polish radio during the period of martial law.

³² The Katyń Massacre was a mass killing of Polish prisoners of war (mostly officers and policemen) by Stalin’s security police in 1940. Germans uncovered the burial site in 1943 and tried to use it as a smokescreen for Nazi atrocities, but the truth about who committed the massacre was suppressed by the Allies and the Soviet Union in order to not lose the Soviets as an ally against Germany. The documentation of these events was not revealed until the 1990s (Sanford 1-2).

Practically, however, Solidarity had made no preparations for the imposition of martial law and, by January 1982, almost 13,000 members had been imprisoned and the organization of an effective protest was impossible. However, the group survived martial law (which lasted until July 1983) by going underground and circulating publications and so “*Solidarność* continued to be the symbol of resistance against the regime” (Sonntag 12). After 1985, Jaruzelski and the authorities started the road to compromise with Solidarity due to many economic and political factors. However strikes continued and it was clear that no real negotiations could happen until *Solidarność* was re-legalized, which happened on April 17, 1989. June 4, 1989 was the date of a historic election of the Sejm and Senate where *Solidarność* claimed a huge victory and “Poland became the first country of the Warsaw Pact to acquire a non-communist minister-president” with the election of Tadeusz Mazowiecki in August 1989 (13). Since that time Poland has been considered to be a democratically and economically free society although the transition was not instantaneous.

Kaliski closes with a provocative statement: “Today Solidarity is the mythological founder of the Third Republic of Poland. This is granted by almost all participants in political life in Poland. The idea that Solidarity began the process that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening of the Iron Curtain is taken as read. From such certainties myths are created” (134). The idea that Solidarity creates a clear break in the history of Poland marks an important element of historiography and collective memory. Kaliski takes the position that Solidarity was only a symbolic part of ending the Soviet’s control in Poland and this argument can be made about many civil resistance movements. However, their role of unifying factions of the population can provide a diagnosis of the nation’s unifying myths and rhetoric, an idea that I will pursue. Other histories provide slightly varied perspectives on Solidarity. The historiography of the Solidarity Movement can be divided between accounts written during the height of Solidarity by journalist historians and histories written after the fall of communism. Examples of these journalistic or sociological accounts include those of Jadwiga Staniszkis, Timothy Garton Ash, Neal Ascherson and Alain Touraine, among others. Alternative ways that historians and others detail the history of Solidarity include works about the larger context of communism and resistance in Eastern Europe (such as the chapters by Kaliski and

Sonntag), about the context of Poland's whole history (such as those of Norman Davies), a few works on women's role in the movement³³ and biographies of leading figures such as Lech Wałęsa and Pope John Paul II. Stefani Sonntag presents two approaches to thinking about the genesis of the Solidarity Movement. She sees the opposition period as lasting from 1976-1989:

When it comes to scientifically integrating the *Solidarność* in the larger historic context of political opposition, there are two different approaches: the mainstream approach sees the *Solidarność* as having resulted from the directly preceding political oppositions linked with KOR, mainly representing intellectuals...This interpretation is rejected by those in favour of the 'revisionist approach'. They emphasise that the *Solidarność* was a labour movement whose genesis and development was dependent on its own dynamics...although the representatives of this theory by no means deny that the political opposition may have had some influence. (4-5)

Whatever the case was, I argue that both approaches depended on a national narrative and nationalist rhetoric that gave rise to this unity as an opposition group. The next section will give a short overview of some of the other approaches to Solidarity as a social movement.

In the context of how this movement fits into thinking about civil resistance, some scholars see an influence of the outside world on the movement. Solidarity leaders took advantage of the political environment of the 1970s and 80s. For example, the emergence of Solidarity as a free trade union made the Soviets fear the creation of unions in the rest of the Soviet bloc (97). In Aleksander Smolar's chapter of the Roberts and Garton Ash book, entitled "Towards 'Self-limiting Revolution': Poland 1970-89," the author

³³ Examples include *Polish Women, Solidarity, and Feminism* by Anna Reading (Houndmills: MacMillan, 1992), *We all Fought for Freedom: Women in Poland's Solidarity Movement* by Kristi S. Long (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), "The Gender of Resistance in Communist Poland" by Padraic Kenney (*The American Historical Review* Vol 104, Apr 1999) and *Solidarity's Secret: The Women who Defeated Communism in Poland* by Shana Penn (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

describes the beginnings of Solidarity as it went from a trade union in August 1980 to a mass social movement that included all social groups. The tactics used by the movement were a continuation of oppositions in the 1970s such as “practical solidarity with the persecuted, the fight against the lie in the public sphere, and the use of law – both international and domestic.” There were also external factors that led to the peaceful round-table negotiations in 1989. These were the “rising economic problems, pressure from the West, and Gorbachev’s position of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries” (128). Again, the civil resistance movement benefitted from a larger political shift.

The winding down of the Cold War and the slow concessions that Solidarity won led to the end of communist rule in Poland. Smolar explains that resistance in the Polish tradition was not always pacific but in this situation, slow actions and non-violence were necessary. Poland was the place of national insurrections during the period of the partitions and during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. Smolar describes the characteristics of Polish resistance as heroic, military, tragic, and “associated very much with a romantic and messianic tradition in which Poles identified their country as ‘the Christ among nations’” (128). Part of my analysis of postresistance literature will examine how authors of the resistance period incorporate and play with this messianic national mythology. However, the rejection of violence in the Solidarity period was in part a result of national exhaustion and the great loss of life during the Uprising (129). Another reason for the lack of violence was the influence of the Catholic Church, and especially Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. Therefore, the opposition in the 1970s and the Solidarity Movement were “based on gradual and piecemeal change, not violent upheaval and forceful destruction of the existing system” (131-2). Smolar describes the anti-political strategic choices of the 1970s opposition. The outbreak of social anger during the August 1980 strikes about price increases led to the reprisal of the imposition of martial law. Even if the Solidarity Movement did not use violence as a tactic, violence was exerted upon it through indiscriminate arrests and the lack of freedom to live life normally. The eventual round table negotiations, however, led to the end of communism. Smolar argues that “Poland’s home-grown model of peaceful self-limiting revolution, as it evolved from the seminal opposition re-thinking of the mid 1970s to the pioneering

round-table talks of 1989, thus contributed decisively to the peaceful end of communism in Europe, and the transformation of world politics that followed” (143). This gradual transformation through non-violence leads me to consider whether literature also transformed from a monoglossia about unity and the necessity for discipline to the allowance of dialogic works which allow for criticism of this collective discipline and new ways of thinking about literature and history.

David Ost presents another way of thinking about the formation of Solidarity: its genesis through the idea of anti-politics. Instead of engaging with trying to change the political structure, Ost argues that the opposition movement of the 1970s focused on “civic activity within society rather than on policy outcomes within the state” (1). For Ost, this approach was meant to empower citizens and awaken the value of people as humans and citizens (4). Therefore in 1980, Poland was a place where people had come alive and “where they had begun to act as free individuals able to form a new community apart from the false one imposed from above....They were, in short, acting as the ‘subjects’ of politics” (8). However, with the creation of Solidarity as a societal organization, the revitalization of the public sphere meant that they had to face the question of the state. It was no longer possible to bypass the state and this is the moment when national unity had to deal with the realities of negotiating with the state to gain that eventual freedom (57). This created both unity in the fight against the oppression of the state and fragmentation because negotiation ultimately means concessions. It is this transition from unity to fragmentation that I want to examine in prose works which use the movements as a backdrop.

These historical overviews have shown the general transformations and gains of each movement but, of course, their political contexts are quite different. However, here are some ideas as to why this comparison or juxtaposition is productive in the context of how social movements develop and then continue to be a part of the group’s collective memory. In both cases there is a group collective identity and a clear opposition. The influence of intellectuals is key to the awakening of both movements and subsequently gaining the support of different areas of society, for example the students and the workers in the case of Poland and middle class black people, students, and liberal whites in the

American case. The way that the movements developed is also important: regional strikes and protests gradually led to a movement on a national stage. Also, various political views were subsumed under the larger goal for an extended period of time. Religion and the church also played a crucial role in both movements, and the rhetorical leaders of the movement, Martin Luther King Jr. and Lech Wałęsa, used language steeped in the collective memory of the group they were leading. Lastly, both movements imposed limitations on themselves and chose strategies that would move them forward towards their goals. For both movements, the specific details and ideological disagreements have been largely forgotten and what remains are largely ideas of a strong collective. The rhetoric of each movement played a role in creating a totalizing narrative that is then taken up and critiqued by the postresistance prose fiction I analyze.

1.3 Uniting Stories: The Rhetorical Motivations of Civil Resistance Movements

For rhetoric as such is not rooted in any past condition of human society. It is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols.

---Kenneth Burke³⁴

In order for a civil resistance movement to gain traction, communication needs to happen within the group of protesters, but these protesters also need to create a rhetoric that the outside world will understand. Simply stated rhetoric is “the art of using language effectively so as to persuade or influence others, *esp.* the exploitation of figures of speech and other compositional techniques to this end; the study of principles and rules to be

³⁴ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) 43.

followed by a speaker or writer striving for eloquence”,³⁵ but it takes on a greater importance during social movements. In these cases, rhetoric refers to how the leaders of a movement unite the people involved and how the cultural messages that transmit the group mythology function within the movement. The rhetoric of the movement is often laced with the national myths and cultural values of each group. How the rhetoric evolves affects how the success of the movement. Rhetoric also affects how the movement is discussed in the context of both history and literature. This intertwining of rhetoric and myth reflects the cultural reasons why a large portion of the population feel compelled to join the movement. Some common idea or goal must exist and it must be presented in such a way as to have an effect on an emotional level. It is important to examine the way that the group members connect and use language to communicate their goals, even at a rudimentary level. Detailing the history of both movements is important to show the concept of civil resistance, and to explain the context of the literature. However, the previous section was a macro view of the movements; that background was a history based on the progression of events. Also vital to the history (and to the literature that followed) is the way that the movements developed in the context of rhetoric. These resistance movements sponsored a myth of the nation that postresistance prose criticizes and makes more nuanced.

For the examination of the concept of rhetoric and its power in life and art, I turn to Kenneth Burke and his ideas about language and rhetoric. Burke sees language as the most important fact about a human being because it shapes our experiences of the world and allows us to communicate those experiences (Burke *Language* 481). His theory, quoted above, that language is continually born anew strikes a chord for these movements. The leaders and the people involved in both Civil Rights and Solidarity used the language of the past and adapted this language to the situation, often to justify the turns that the movement took. It is never really new but the symbolic adaptation of that language allowed for a mass identification and cohesion. However, both movements are also striving to create something new in the public sphere and, therefore, reclaiming a

³⁵ “Rhetoric.” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Web. 13 June 2011

specific word or idea from the past or from the opposition can create that new thing. For example, the workers' demands during the Solidarity Movement strikes used the language of Poland's Soviet-created 1952 Constitution, "which states that it was the working class that ruled the country" (Tabako 173). In the case of Civil Rights, Richard H. King writes about the use of the word "freedom" throughout the movement and how it acquired another meaning within Western thought (King 13). These various words and ideas permeate the slogans, songs, and other rhetorical aspects of the movements.

Michael Calvin McGee, in his essay "'Social Movement': Phenomenon or Meaning?" (1980) proposes the way rhetorical studies should approach social movements: "Theoretical descriptions of 'social movement(s),' ...ought to make questions of consciousness 'come first,' focusing on the fact of collectivity and not on the accident of an allegedly pre-existing phenomenon" (244). The fact that it is the collective that makes this rhetoric come alive shows the conscious human element of these movements. He connects social movements to what it means to be human: "Whether one is caught up in political agitation, fascinated by the appearance of pattern and meaning in history, or desirous of being no more than a detached witness to endemic social change, 'movement' is our fondest wish, our dream, a reason to continue living in human society, for it contains an affirmation of human significance" (242). The human element of social change and civil resistance reflects how personal these movements can be, especially when group identity and rights are concerned.

This individual human desire, however, is usually subsumed within a collective framework. Doug McAdam describes the theory of "framing" in "the emergence and development of collective action" (McAdam "The Framing" 338). This kind of framing means "the conscious, strategic efforts of movement groups to fashion meaningful accounts of themselves and the issues at hand in order to motivate and legitimate their efforts" (339). These rhetorical frames influence the way that language uses metaphor, myth, and narrative to appeal to the group. When looking at these past events, framing the movements allows us to describe the events in terms of time, space, and people involved and create these unified narratives. But considered retrospectively the evidence of frames also show what spills outside the picture or draws over it in some way. The

subsequent chapters of this project will attempt to show how prose fiction depicts those events drawn outside the lines of the interpretive frames.

Leland Griffin is one of the first critics to connect rhetoric and social movements in the twentieth century. He focuses on the definition of “movement” to convey its importance to rhetoric and how a student of this discipline should approach it:

In the term *historical movement*, then, *movement* is for us the significant word; and in particular, that part of the connotative baggage of the word which implies change, conveys the quality of dynamism. For as the historical movement, looked upon as a sustained process of social inference, is dynamic, and has its beginning, its progression, and its termination, so the rhetorical component of the movement is dynamic, and has its inception, its development, and its consummation. The student’s task is to isolate the rhetorical movement within the matrix of the historical movement: the rhetorical movement is the focus of his study. (184-185)

The focus on the dynamism and progression of the movement implies constant changes; therefore the rhetoric used by the leaders and the participants has to change alongside it. Both Solidarity and the Civil Rights Movement reflect this dynamism due to their various stages of action and speech. For example, Solidarity described itself as a movement so as not to appear to challenge the State in the political domain.

Twenty years later, Robert S. Cathcart, in “New Approaches to the Study of Movements: Defining Movements Rhetorically,” (1972) critiques Leland Griffin’s approach to social movement rhetoric. He sees Griffin’s definitions as too confining, as lineal and historical rather than rhetorical (83). Cathcart’s concern is “not definitions or characteristics which describe the dynamic *status quo*, i.e., the movements which give it its dynamism, but definitions which describe those collective behaviours which cannot be accommodated with the normal movement of the *status quo*” (86). Cathcart conveys the idea that critics must also pay attention to what happens on the edges of the movement, for example among those who are not swept into the collective behaviour of the group. He sees movements as “carried forward through language, both verbal and nonverbal, in strategic forms that bring about identification of the individual with the movement” (86).

His definition emphasizes the fact that movements are rhetorical in nature. He also describes the two sides that create a dialectical tension:

...for a movement to come into being there must be one or more actors who, perceiving that the 'good order' (the established system) is in reality a faulty order full of absurdity and injustice, cry out through various symbolic acts that true communion, justice, salvation cannot be achieved unless there is an *immediate corrective* applied to the established order. On the other hand there must be a *reciprocating act* from the establishment or counter rhetors which perceives the demands of the agitator rhetors, not as calls for correction or re-righting the prevailing order, but as direct attacks on the foundations of the established order. It is this *reciprocity* or *dialectical enjoinder in the moral arena* which defines movements and distinguishes them from other dramatistic forms. (87)

This reciprocity between the rhetors and the established order is one way in which there is a dialogic language during the time of the movement. But the lack of this dialectical tension within the movement itself is important to the postresistance period. With no dialectical tension and no internal oppositional force, how does the movement adapt as it changes its status in the public sphere? How do the dissenting voices emerge outside of this conflict? Cultural products such as prose fiction have the ability to tease out these tensions and fragmentations that remained beneath the surface when the rhetoric had to present a united front in opposition to the oppressor.

In 1970, Herbert W. Simons also writes about strategies for discussing rhetoric and social movements. He focuses on the leader's conception of persuasion in social movements:

Any movement, it is argued, must fulfill the same functional requirements as more formal collectivities. These imperatives constitute *rhetorical requirements* for the leadership of a movement. Conflicts among requirements create *rhetorical problems* which in turn affect decisions on *rhetorical strategy*. *The primary rhetorical test of the leader – and, indirectly, of the strategies he employs – is his*

capacity to fulfill the requirements of his movement by resolving or reducing rhetorical problems. (2-3)

The leader of a movement takes some of the burden of shaping that movement, as was the case with Martin Luther King Jr. and Lech Wałęsa. They were effective at distilling the message and the call for action for their followers. But they also had to follow the whims of the participants as the movement shifted direction. Simons' focus on the leader leads him to the conclusion that "the leader of a social movement must thread his way through an intricate web of conflicting demands. How he adapts strategies to demands constitutes a primary basis for evaluating his rhetorical output" (7). The shifting attitudes of the participants are also key factors for the movement, but the person who remains leader is the one who manages to shift without seeming to compromise.

Simons defines a social movement "as an uninstitutionalized collectivity that mobilizes for action to implement a program for the reconstitution of social norms or values" (3). The word "uninstitutionalized" here is important because the movements are largely against an institutional power; therefore, new narratives and myths are needed to bind a populace. He points out three main rhetorical requirements for leaders of social movements: "attract, maintain and mold workers (i.e., followers) into an efficiently organized unit," as well as "secure adoption of their product by the larger social structure," and "react to resistance generated by the larger structure" (3). These steps can mould the way that movement progresses. The maintenance of followers and efficiency in order to affect the larger structure support the idea of a movement narrative that does not allow for dissenting voices.

Two studies about the movements of interest to this project use these theories of rhetoric within social movements. These studies describe some of the rhetorical strategies used by the movements which establish the myths and narratives that they were based around. These studies are important for this project to show the kinds of ideas that later prose fiction will question.

In his dissertation project for Northwestern University,³⁶ “Tropes in Action: The Rhetoric of Protest and the Solidarity Movement (1976-1989)” (2004), Tomasz Tabako describes the various rhetorical stages of the Solidarity Movement in terms of framing tropes. He uses Burke’s method of analyzing literary symbolism (the “Four Master Tropes”: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony) to show different forms of language and communication through the evolution of the Solidarity Movement. Through the study of rhetoric he wants to discover how this civil resistance movement came to exist. Here is his initial question:

How did it happen that a movement of ten million members, diverse people all, together comprising most of the country’s adult population in 1981, rose, seemingly, to speak with one voice? A labour union, an insurgent movement, and a cultural trend all at the same time, Solidarity, at one point, demonstrated a great ability to influence and unite groups as different as industrial workers and opera singers, truck drivers and university professors, the young and the old, conservatives and liberals. (86)

This is a question of great interest because civil resistance movements have the potential to be an idealist’s dream in that they can make room for so many different voices and sections of the population while making it seem as if these disparate people are striving for similar goals.³⁷ Although one could say that the African American Civil Rights Movement was a far more cohesive group due to the marker of race, the participants were certainly not devoid of differences of class, gender, age, and profession. In the case of Solidarity, this ideal situation of a large portion of the population gathering together has implications for the future of that nation, and subsequently its art and culture. For

³⁶ Tabako has written a book, *Strajk 88 [Strike 88]*, detailing a strike in the Gdańsk stockyards of 1988 but has not yet published further works on this link between rhetoric and Solidarity. He has a manuscript in progress entitled *Tropes in Action* which will cover this topic. Since the research in his dissertation has relevance to my project, I am relying on this work at this time.

³⁷ It is important to note that these seemingly similar goals were often an illusion (as is shown by, for example, the tensions created by more socialist-oriented Solidarity members or the criticisms of Archbishop Glemp as allegedly anti-Semitic), but these differences were kept out of the realm of rhetoric.

Tabako, the answer to this question about unprecedented unity lies in the way that rhetoric enables both unification and division in the movement.

Tabako sees the movement's "biography" (another way to say that these movements create an internal narrative) as one that transitions from multiple voices into one and then back into a multiplicity. In the mid-1970s (pre-Solidarity), there was a "complexity of voices" in opposition, but this was lost as Solidarity grew. In the second half of the 1980s, Tabako says, "the movement's fragmentation occurred." Therefore the movement's biography is "a transition from many voices into one and back into many" (87). The splitting of one voice into many is what interests me here. This fragmentation allows for unheard voices and stories to emerge to question the verbal and symbolic collective memory.³⁸ His study of patterns in a mass of texts allows him to consider how the movement evolves. He acknowledges that movement rhetoric evolves due to environmental pressures but also due to its intrinsic transformation as a system of movement knowledge: "First, it begins with the 'discovery of truth,' then proceeds when this truth is translated into a broader model of reality needed for action, and ultimately enters a stage of crisis when the dogmatized description of reality no longer explains new facts or aspects of an ever changing world" (6). Therefore, he sees this transformation as an unavoidable evolution as a movement on the periphery emerges into the official public sphere, and as it is affected by the environmental realities of how the State reacts or how the participants see the leader of the movement (2). Approaching movements from the discipline of rhetorical studies, Tabako's central assertion is that movements are mainly acts of the imagination: "They come into initial existence by the simple act of saying *No* to what is and re-imagining reality in a new and radically different way. In doing so, they create a new public language by which to reject the language of the existing power structure and promote alternatives to it" (2). Therefore, language (and the cultural

³⁸ I use Halbwach's theory of collective memory here: "It is in this sense that there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection." Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) 38.

offshoots of language, such as literature) plays a key role in forming the oppositional force.

Tabako describes several metaphoric frames of opposition in the movement. One in particular is that “Poland is a Christ of nations” (126). This frame is most relevant to my project because it provides the most deeply-rooted element of the mythology and culture of the country. It also makes the assumption that the collective nation has few faults. This identification has repercussions for the movement’s fragmentation during the later “Irony Stage” and the prose that came after which challenged this noble statement and its religious zeal. The rhetorical frame also assumes that all of the people stand in for the nation, regardless of their feelings towards the government. It is a tool to unite the majority of the nation to the call of various injustices. Tabako also sees the transformation of this metaphor from religious to political: “Messianism’s centuries-old claim, that the world would be eventually purged of evil by the coming of a Messiah, was adapted by Poles with a patriotic ideology as its core element. Even though the rhetoric of Polish Messianism was eschatological in tone, its aims were chiefly political: liberation, independence, and social justice” (154-55). This myth of Messianism and its connection to Polish borders and place is taken up in the third chapter of this project. In the postresistance period an uncertainty of the meaning of place emerges which counteracts the certainty of suffering experienced in the Solidarity narrative.

These interpretive frames also have a tie to my project because these grand metaphors were created or promoted by poets or public intellectuals:

...the metaphor *revolution is an evolution* saturated the political writings of the dissident historian Adam Michnik. The metaphor *the present is the past* was propagated collectively by dissident publicists and activists, seeking to link their contemporary protest against the party-state to past national struggles for independence. The metaphor *freedom is genuine speech* (and by its reversal, *subjugation is affected speech*) underpinned the works of the poet and literary scholar Stanislaw Baranczak. The metaphor *Poland is a Christ of nations* recalled the Polish Romantic tradition of theological nationalism and the promised Polish

renaissance after much suffering. It was also a major subtext of sermons by Pope John Paul II, a Pole and a poet himself, during his first pilgrimage to Poland in 1979. All these conceptual metaphoric frames provided their followers with a sense of moral superiority, access to truth, and a claim to authority. They neutralized newspeak by turning it into a rhetorical asset. They weaponized cultural mythologies, and transformed the opposition into an alternative power elite. Taken together, they facilitated a *charismatic coup* – a spiritual takeover through successfully addressing people’s axiological hunger in a time of crisis. (127)

The influence of these cultural figures is undeniable in these periods, which is why it is also important to show how writers interpreted the movement in the postresistance period. The fourth chapter will analyze a Polish novel that depicts an author who challenges the role of the writer in creating these kinds of mythologies. The writer as arbiter of the nation becomes a shameful concept as the narrative unsettles the writer’s link to the collective experience of the movement.

Tabako examines how these metaphors functioned within the rhetorical stages of the movement. The “Metonymy-Synecdoche Stage” from 1980 to 1986 characterizes the important period when many voices were unified into one and the government struggled to crush Solidarity as a labour union:

The construction of a simple, unifying, convincing narrative required ‘a choice among the many kinds of plot structures provided by the cultural tradition.’ Accordingly because it was the workers who shaped the August discourse, the emergent narrative was that of an awakening, innocent, missionary working class who had become the successor to the Polish Romantics fighting for equality, justice, and freedom. (175)

The translation of an intellectual view to the outlook of the working class shows the importance of the interplay between classes and the influence of intellectuals in cultural thought and national memory. It also worked against the Polish State because it questioned the claim that Polish society was (and could be) actually classless. This

metonymy stage was made visible through many media including “cartoons, emblems, images, songs, catch phrases, and slogans” (176) that entered into the collective consciousness. For example, Lech Wałęsa was a unifying synecdoche (179). Tabako shows how Wałęsa represented populism, worker self-governance, nationalism, moralism, and religiosity in the movement’s cognitive framework (181).

Tabako also stresses the non-violent aspect of the movement and he makes connections to past movements, showing the importance of examining civil resistance as a larger tradition:

In principle, this moral absolutism was exercised through nonviolent resistance. Solidarity’s nonviolent strategies stemmed in part from the conviction, epitomized by the philosophies of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., that violence is bidirectional (corrupting both the giver of violence and its violence), but because of the lack of resources they were also unable to act otherwise. Rituals of nonviolent resistance include extinguishing lights on the 13th of each month (to symbolically challenge the meaning of December 13), abstaining from purchasing Wednesday newspapers, and boycotting the main TV new program every day. (208)

He acknowledges the lack of firepower and the influence of a pacifist Catholic Church, but also shows the influence of other movements, as shown in Roberts and Garton Ash’s comparative approach to civil resistance. This is why it is valid to look at more than one movement at a time to understand links and influences.

The “Irony Stage” is Tabako’s last section wherein he discusses how the monologic narrative frame transformed into dialogic fragmentation:

...Solidarity faced a growing number of intrinsic contradictions, which prompted fragmentation. The earlier, cohesive network of individual yet interconnected cells gradually broke down into an archipelago of enclaves with diverse, often divergent agendas...Alternative programs began to emerge. The culture of a

unified and moralizing *us* was thereby slowly supplemented by a reemerging culture of *I*, an I that was still rebellious yet now again separate” (230).

Tabako’s study of rhetoric and the Solidarity Movement helps me to answer how rhetoric influenced collective behaviour, and to identify the national myths that propelled the movement. The study of the rhetorical strategies used to unite a disparate group allows me to consider the dissolution of those unifying myths. In the third chapter I look at a Polish novel that centres on a city steeped in the historical myth of Polish national legitimacy through the reclamation of territory. This link between the place and the collective inhabitants gets disrupted by individuals who do not fit into the monologic quality of the myth. The fourth chapter highlights a character that does not have the same intentions for the success of the movement, creating an ironic distance from the narrative progression of the movement.

Rhetoric that fuses religion and politics also played an important role in the African American Civil Rights Movement. Gary S. Selby focuses on how Martin Luther King Jr., in particular, used the Exodus narrative to rhetorically convince his followers of the imperative importance of the Civil Rights Movement. Selby asks a similar question to Tabako:

How, after almost a century of racial oppression and against such overwhelming odds, were African Americans now able to join together in the kinds of sustained, mass protests that would force fundamental change in U.S. society? Certainly, part of the explanation lies in the charisma of King himself...At the same time, African American organizations, most of them closely connected to or extensions of the black church, played a crucial role in the movement. (5)

These similar questions stem from a sense of disbelief at the unification of these diverse groups. The movements show how many elements needed to come together in a specific

time and place for these social movements to happen.³⁹ King's appeal came from his ability to create a "potent master frame" around a "cultural fabrication" rooted in the writings of Leo Tolstoy and Henry Thoreau,⁴⁰ and principles and examples of Gandhi but also articulated with "strands of Christianity, U.S. constitutional law, and democratic theory" (Snow, et al. 235). This master frame helped to mobilize and legitimate the movement.

Religious discourse as one of these strands, therefore, played an important role in how the movement came about and managed to sustain itself. The involvement of the black church as a mobilizing base was beneficial in a practical way, but it also gave the movement a moral high ground. Selby shows how King used the Exodus narrative⁴¹: "From the beginning of his leadership to the final address of his life, King called on the ancient religious drama as a way of creating a symbolic context in which his hearers could experience their present circumstances, representing their campaign for racial justice as the enactment of a modern day Exodus" (10). This symbolic context resembles the Romantic Messianism utilized during the Solidarity Movement, but also points to the reality of African American slavery. The movement gains rhetorical force through this grounding.

Like the Messianism of the Poles, the Exodus narrative allowed African Americans to see these actions as fated. This narrative acted as an interpretative frame:

³⁹ These elements included the managerial skills of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, localized struggles against racial oppression such as the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, the lunch counter sit-ins in 1960, and the Freedom Rides in 1961 (along with the media coverage that came with them) and the international criticism during the Cold War years (Selby 6-7).

⁴⁰ King expressed the influence of Tolstoy and Thoreau in his writing. In a 1959 address, King referenced Tolstoy and *War and Peace* in arguing that the "absence of freedom is the presence of death" and so any nation that deprives individual of freedom is committing an act of moral and spiritual murder" (King, et al 269). In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963), King remembered reading Thoreau's essay on 'Civil Disobedience' and becoming convinced that non-cooperation with evil is a moral obligation, as is cooperation with good. King follows Thoreau in an American tradition of protest (Powell 26).

⁴¹ The simple framework of the Exodus narrative is Israel's liberation from Egyptian slavery and entrance into the Promised Land (Selby 30). The liberation narrative that is recorded in Exodus 1-15 is actually very multilayered and complex (32) and it plays a unique role in African American history. The theme of Exodus has played a role in Negro spirituals, oratory and writing (34-42).

This connection to that story provided them with a sense of identity as the people of God. It theologically legitimated their protest. It explained the successes they experienced, the problems they faced, and disappointments they suffered. It placed King in the undisputed role as the movement's leader, its Moses. The Exodus provided the symbolic context out of which the march emerged as the movement's principal means of mass protest, a form of demonstration whose meaning for the protesters was integrally related to the biblical story. Most of all, the Exodus story assured protesters that they would ultimately be successful in their journey to the Promised Land of racial justice. (10)

Selby, like Tabako, uses Burke's theory of narrative and language to explain the growth of the Exodus narrative during the Civil Rights Movement. While Tabako focuses on tropes, Selby is interested in Burke's ideas about the human appreciation for development within an artistic work: "A central way that humans use language to make sense of their world...is by employing the elements of story – character, plot, setting, and so forth – to situate their experiences within coherent narratives" (17). For example, African Americans identified with the Israelite slaves as God's chosen people and they awaited a Moses figure sent by God to deliver them: "This sense of connection with the biblical story went beyond that of explicitly identifying, by means of analogy, the elements of correspondence between their situation and that of ancient Israel...rather, their songs and sermons emotionally transported them into experiences that transcended the boundaries of geography and chronology" (41). This myth connects African Americans to their past suffering and painful arrival in America, yet places the myth into the context of their present moment.

King needed to show that the biblical story was being re-enacted: "By symbolically framing their experiences within a deeply held religious myth – one that had been traditionally used to create expectations for social change – he could offer a theological justification for engaging in collective action" (43). The power of the story here allowed King to use the metaphor of Exodus in many different contexts and situations and still present a unified and recognizable narrative. However, the poetic and polysemic nature of metaphor allows people to identify with it or buy into it at various

levels. This metaphorical strategy means that language can adapt to the understanding of the people and the timing of the event. In my analysis I examine how different visions of the role of African Americans in the postresistance literature challenge these all-encompassing narratives. The third chapter focuses on the way that places of escape have been invested with concepts of freedom that have no direct bearing on the locative nature of place, which leads to disillusion and fragmentation. The fourth chapter, which is focused on the experiences of the unmasked individual protesters, asks how the African-American community can return to the songs and sermons that influenced the movement, but in a manner that emphasizes community rather than martyrdom and escape.

Both Tabako and Selby trace the rhetorical history of the respective movements. They use a Burkian conception of language and rhetoric to express the way that the movements changed in various stages. The metaphoric frames for the stages show the heightened nature of the movements in the space of the period. The participants were on a stage (both national and global), so the shape and plot played itself out inserting the stories and myths into a language adapted for the movement. This language is linked to the national mythology, the narrative, and historical conception of each movement. The next chapter links these rhetorical frameworks to the literary history of both cultures. It will begin to engage with the contention that the literary can both uphold and challenge the interpretive frames of civil resistance movements.

Chapter 2

2 Literature and the Political Sphere

We are dealing with two opposing currents: the desired homogenization of the collective will in the area of political conflict; and the equally desired need for variety within the collectivity when it is a matter of personal expression. One could compare this to pure ‘white’ and prismatic light. These two divergent categories, these two equally needed virtues and states of attention corresponding to politics and expression, solidarity and solitude, should not be confused.

–Adam Zagajewski⁴²

In the above quote, Polish writer Adam Zagajewski expresses the dilemma that faced an artist in Poland during the Solidarity Movement. He articulates the idea that an artist must choose between writing in the service of the collective good, and writing for personal artistic expression that may not align with collective will. This delineation and struggle is expressed at the level of the protest movement as well: to what extent does the individual protester align with the collective in a “pure” way? The idea of a collective destiny is an all-encompassing consequence of a civil resistance movement because of the need to show a united front through language and united acts of opposition. The two metaphors Zagajewski uses, opposing currents and types of light, express the way that this is a natural dilemma that favours the “pure” light during these volatile political periods when unity within the movement is a primary concern. However, this conflict is also present in less volatile periods as well and may be damaging because of the nationalist rhetoric and myth that are bound up with the collective will. This unity does not allow for diversities which can stifle future growth of the society. The authors who feel this conflict during the movements may desire to explore these currents in the postresistance era by considering individual desire in their writing. This idea underpins this chapter: if African American

⁴² Adam Zagajewski, *Solidarity, Solitude*. Trans. Lillian Vallee (New York: The Ecco Press, 1990) 89-90.

and Polish histories are so bound up with the fate of the people, how do literary authors relate to this collective destiny?

2.1 Literary Histories: Collective Destiny and Personal Expression

In both of my examples, literature acts as evidence that African Americans and Poles have a cultural identity in the face of oppression, but sustaining this role may be an overwhelming task. In the context of this project, I want to ask how writers after the success of non-violent political movements approach this question. How does their personal expression simultaneously invoke and provoke the collective? The previous chapter discussed the collective in terms of the historical situations and their rhetorical underpinnings. This chapter will bring focus to the collective nature of literary history. The assumption for this section about literature is that there are certain traditions and texts that are interpreted as supporting and upholding the national or group consciousness. The historiography and rhetoric of the movements present a backdrop to the focus of this project: how literature responds to and critiques the civil resistance movements and their cultural effects.

To that end, this chapter will provide some background about the general themes and forms in the canon of both literatures. This is important to understanding how contemporary prose fiction has responded to these traditions. For example, the plantation slave and the romantic hero are figures from African American and Polish literature, respectively, who get a revised treatment in postresistance, contemporary prose. Additionally, the myths mentioned at the end of the previous chapter are also important here: the myth of the African American Exodus and Polish messianic martyrdom that were part of the rhetoric of the movements, also play a role in examining the interplay between the collective and the individual. This section will highlight some important themes, ideas, and writers, specifically in the area of prose fiction which is a widely consumed form of literature, although also acknowledging the influence of other forms and genres. This literary history will also be chronological in order to convey how the

literature from their predecessors influenced authors who write and react to the movement. This perspective comes from the idea that the literature I will be analyzing draws on, mimics, critiques, and reacts to the fiction from the past. This literary history section will be followed by a discussion of two important twentieth-century novels in both traditions: Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man* (1952) and *Ferdydurke* (1937) by Witold Gombrowicz. The analysis of these novels will be used as a jumping off point to the subsequent chapters of this project. They have been chosen because they directly reference history and literary tradition but they play with these references and look at moments of crisis in their respective communities, especially how they examine the rupture between the collective and the individual. This section will set up an analytic framework for my analysis in the subsequent chapters.

In order to connect the two sides of this project, I want to highlight the implications of creating a literary history for a nation or a racial group. The designation of authors as either writing in support of the historical claims of the collective or reflecting universal themes, impacts the writing of a literary history. As I will argue in later chapters, specific novels after the heightened nationalistic tenor of a resistance movement react to this established literary history in various ways. Therefore interrogating in what ways literary histories are created is also important to this project. I will consider some views on the formation of literary history in general and African American and Polish literary history in particular.

Linda Hutcheon and Mario J. Valdés engage in a dialogue about literary history which rethinks how literary historians use the term. They mention that the term “literary” is a historically contingent concept that was narrowed to include only imaginative writing when the German Romantics wanted a national literature with aesthetic value (ix). When thinking about ideas of unity during the civil resistance movements, part of the unifying narrative includes the imaginative works that establish a group identity. Hutcheon and Valdés also discuss the implications of the term “history” and how literary production and reception have been negated in the formation of literary histories (x). They also want to emphasize the recognition of ideological underpinnings of literary productions, especially taking into consideration issues such as race and gender. Literary production

and issues such as censorship and publication will not be of primacy for this project; however, the ways that literature creates a history and which works are held up as important in the national and group context are exemplary for how the narrative gets created. They explain the need for this reconceptualization of literary history: “The rethinking of literary historiography that is going on today in many different contexts represents a communal will to explore the ways in which we can understand literary diversity and heterogeneity without imposing a master narrative” (xii). The master narrative is the one that has the most weight in informing the conversation around literary history but there is a need for more diversity in exploring ideas beyond this narrative, as I explore in postresistance literature. The introduction also notes the nostalgic aspect of returning to the “comforts of teleological narrativization” (xii). The novels I will interrogate question the reasons for this sense of nostalgia and desire for the past.

In one of the chapters, Hutcheon and Valdés also examine the national model as part of literary history. The issue with the national model is its premise of ethnic and linguistic singularity, which needs to be rethought in the current globalized multinational world (3). However, when literary histories emerge from marginalized social groups, they adopt the same teleological argument because this is the model that confers legitimacy and collective strength. Although this may seem to stem from the same nostalgia for continuity as the national model, Hutcheon and Valdés argue that it may be the mark of something else: “Rather, it may imply that the strategic power of identifying with an obviously successful national narrative of progress outweighs at least temporarily the dangers of co-optation by a model that, after all, was often responsible for excluding the very groups these literary historians seek to represent” (6). This idea brings me to the examination of African American literary history. This history does follow a teleological narrative in order to bring legitimacy to an identity that was deemed inferior by the dominant white culture. The establishment of African American literature as a separate category and how it has been structured has been a concern in the academic sphere.

Like the Polish authors that Zagajewski describes, African American authors have struggled with the tension between collective destiny and personal expression. The expectation often is that the African American writer should only be writing about what it

means to be black in America. If the work is not explicitly about race, then the author may not be considered part of the canon. This presents a problem for writing a cohesive literary history because of the expectations placed on authors. Recent revaluations of the canon and even of the need for a separate field of African American literature have meant the inclusion of new works that add to the critical work on race in America. This tension also explores the conflict between integration and revolution that underlies African American culture. While the narrative and language created as part of the Civil Rights Movement were ones of integration, the postresistance narrative returns to questioning this assumption.

Joseph F. Trimmer's 1971 monograph on the definition of Black American Literature is a good starting point for the discussion of African American literary history. This short text highlights the problem of yoking together three words: Black, American, and Literature, when on their own these words do not have fixed reference points (1). His study attempts to explore the problem of even attempting a definition for Black American Literature. To start, Trimmer goes back to the conception of the artist who must "strike a proper balance between involvement and detachment" when creating a work that is meant to transcend from the self to the universal (2). He argues that race is another factor that fractures the ability to regulate the relationship between the self and the world. The black artist may have trouble navigating his or her multiple personae, which is not always the fault of the artist but largely due to the "schizophrenic heritage...of being Black in White America" (3).⁴³ This heritage (and what W.E.B. DuBois terms "double-consciousness"⁴⁴) means that the categories of the private and universal are not separate. The challenge faced then is in confronting two opposing theories of the black identity in America: integrationist versus group solidarity. Trimmer highlights the complexities of both views which rely on the acknowledgement by dominant society of what is authentic literature.

⁴³ There are problematic connotations to equating being African American to having a mental illness. However there has been a theoretical tradition, specifically with Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), which has addressed the mental impact of colonialism and racism in similar terms.

⁴⁴ See W.E.B DuBois' 1903 work *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007).

Trimmer has a narrow view of African American literature, largely focusing on the early period when assimilation and the assumption of White superiority were often embedded in literature. His reading of Paul Laurence Dunbar and James Weldon Johnson is limited in this respect. The other major period mentioned is that of the Harlem Renaissance when Alain Locke's "New Negro" and the assertion of Blackness presented another route of African American artistic expression. However, this latter stage of popularity still depended on white approval (8). Therefore, the twin issues of what Black American literature is about and who it is for still resonate today. The key issues are avoiding the assumption that the black writer is speaking to a white audience and that there is an agreed upon aesthetic into which the art must fit (16). Trimmer presents two opposing views of art: that art is a weapon in the revolutionary sense or the art for art's sake position: "...the two polar positions seem to agree that the Black writer must write about what he knows. What they seem to be in violent disagreement about is the interpretation he gives to that Black experience – what form it should take in art and how it ought to be used" (18). He ends by saying that this debate may not actually be of import to the artist who just makes art whether it be political or aesthetic. In fact, these contradictions can bring agony and joy which continuously remind White America of the past's complexity. This examination of the black artist at the height of social upheaval shows the way in which the resistance period was an opportunity for the artist to consider the role of the literature within a highly politicized society. More recent considerations of literary history reflect a view of the African American artist in which early traditions play a more prominent role.

John Ernest also rethinks the role of literary history for African Americans. He questions the term African American when slaves writing in the nineteenth century, for example, would not technically be part of this tradition. He critiques literary histories that reduce the role of race to a feature of identity and avoid complexities of racial history in a field that has become institutionalized. He sees a danger of the field being both a settled and unsettled history: "...American literary history will continue to variously account for and ignore the larger significance of African American experience and aesthetics. African American literary history will continue to carry the burden of representing the discredited but lingering social category of race" (4). Therefore, he sees a need to rediscover the

nineteenth-century African American literature and look at race beyond the identity of the authors and look at “the race that is manifest in the literature and in the web of connections that both lead to and follow from the literature.” Nineteenth-century authors stand out in this regard because “they understood that they had no stable narrative of history or community capable of either shutting out or representing the force of historical experience” (7). These first activist roots should not be elided by only understanding African American literary history in terms of a progress toward the black aesthetic achievements of the twentieth century (8). Ernest’s theoretical framework is chaos theory and his book explores the “shifting instabilities of racial identity and cultural performance during the nineteenth century, and the ways in which African American literature...reveals various pressures that have directed the guiding currents of U.S. history” (10). Because of this complexity and how African American culture has had to shift with the changes in white supremacist culture, he does not want to conceive of this literary history as a linear narrative; rather, he contemplates the way literature exploits the contradictions of the dominant culture. The postresistance narrative draws on this conception of a literary history, yet is also dependent on the linear narrative. The unstable time of the resistance movements presents an opportunity for writers to destabilize the ways they write the nation or group through content and form. However, they also rely on their readers’ knowledge of this linear narrative to destabilize it. This is why the resistance movement and all the rhetorical complexities it provides, allows the literature to be a destabilizing force for the nation or group.

Another recent stream of thought argues that with the social reforms that changed the status of African Americans, literature no longer plays the same function in the society. Critic Kenneth W. Warren engages with a current debate in the academy: what is the relationship of African American studies to American studies? Should the division become a thing of the past and African American texts be read within the scope of American literature? Warren’s text (with the deliberately controversial title *What was African American Literature?* (2011) posits the canon in the past tense and argues that African American literature can no longer be considered a coherent area after the end of Jim Crow. He argues that “African American literature is not a transhistorical entity within which the kinds of changes described here have occurred but that African

American literature itself constitutes a representational and rhetorical strategy within the domain of a literary practice responsive to conditions that, by and large, no longer obtain” (9). By this he means that African American literature was a response to certain conditions which are no longer present and that it was imperative to produce a black literature in order to establish a cultural identity. He argues that after the abolition of slavery, literature became a front of the race’s war on racism (15-16). The paradoxical situation was that the authors were writing to overcome a condition (Jim Crow) which was the very thing that gave their endeavour meaning (18). This is a very narrow view of what African American literature is, but it does provide insight into a conundrum that writers faced: they had to indicate the emptiness of the white society’s ideals while arguing that they deserved the same right (22). They had to convince a population to make a connection between failing moral ideals and the oppression of the minority population. They also had to show that black culture was distinct while lamenting the conditions that produce that difference (27). Warren writes about this as if it was in the past, but I would argue that it is still occurring with systemic racism built into the economic structure and the justice system.

In a later section of his book, Warren specifically focuses on writers in the 1960s and 70s and the shift from universalism to particularity in literature. He references the Black Power and Black Aesthetic writers who face the cultural politics of representing a collective black population and the increasing challenge in the ability to represent a collectivity (63). Warren sees this as a natural shift away from a national literature and argues that in order to understand the past and the present, the pastness of the past needs to be recognized (84). This project stems from this same theorization: that the Civil Rights Movement and the end of Jim Crow symbolize a shift in how authors can approach the collective and how they symbolically represent that past in form and content. Warren’s point that novels collect stories and memorialize events in order for us to reexperience and understand them is also crucial to my project (102). However, his point that writing by black Americans today should not be considered African American literature is more problematic. Of course, black identity and solidarity are less universal,

but can the ties to the past and the formation of a cultural identity be totally severed?⁴⁵ Warren's argument that black literature was a function of the fight against Jim Crow is important, but his view that the postsegregation era offers no specific social justice issues makes this break seem very sharp (110). I do argue that postresistance narratives are marked by a difference, but their subversion of past narratives and rhetoric are still on a continuum that struggles with similar questions of identity and relationship to the larger group.

These debates on the creation of literary history and the complicated notion of an African American literature are a background to these postresistance novels. However, also for the purposes of my project, I will highlight the works that are key parts of canonical African American literature. As Farah Jasmine Griffin points out, there have been some important trends in the last thirty years, including: the increase in African American university level courses, an increase in scholarly monographs, a rise in the production of black commercial fiction and the receipt of prestigious literary prizes for African American authors, among other things (F. Griffin 166). All of these phenomena normalize African American literature and integrate several key ideas about the literature into the general discourse. In most anthologies and overviews, a number of authors and movements are highlighted as the key markers to establishing an African American literary history.⁴⁶ Early literature highlighted by the canon includes Negro Spirituals

⁴⁵ A conceptualization of what "blackness" means has been part of the discourse since the nineteenth century but there is a growing scholarship on blackness in the current cultural sphere. In *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness?* (New York: Free Press, 2011), Touré's aim is "to attack and destroy the idea that there is a correct or legitimate way of doing blackness" through a series of interviews that argue for the malleability of black identity. Marin Japtol and Jerry Rafiki Jenkins in *Authentic Blackness/"Real" Blackness: Essays on the Meaning of Blackness in Literature and Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011) also tackle this question. Some of the essays argue that there is such a thing as authentic blackness and others reject the concept.

⁴⁶ One particular anthology I will highlight in this respect is *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* edited by Henry Louis Gates and Nellie McKay (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004) because it was the first of its kind and it has been adopted by many universities and colleges in North America. The introduction states that "it is most certainly not the first anthology seeking to define the canon of African American literature. But it is the most comprehensive; its sheer scope and inclusiveness enable readers to trace the repetitions, tropes, and signifying that define the tradition" (xlv). The introduction also makes reference to how writers repeat and revise tropes and themes from prior works which creates a chain of tradition. My overview of the African American literary canon is based on this anthology.

(showing the importance of the oral traditions to the history), works by educated slaves such as Phyllis Wheatley (1753?-1784), abolitionists such as Sojourner Truth (1797-1883), and slave narratives from escaped slaves such as Frederick Douglass (1818-1895). It is important to recognize that the publishing of black literature at this point depended on a white person championing and possibly approving the work for publication. The slave narrative as a narrative form has implications that I will discuss in Chapter Three, but it is important to note here that the individual story was used to fight against a collective oppression. This narrative of escape through education and finding a place of freedom, like Canada, echoes the Exodus rhetoric used by King. After the end of the Civil War, non-fiction works such as W.E.B. DuBois' *Souls of Black Folks* (1903), Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* (1901), and writing from Marcus Garvey who encouraged Black Nationalism and a return to an African homeland, speak to the uncertain future of freed slaves in America. The inclusion of non-fiction within the realm of literature shows the reclamation of black voices in various modes of thought. This is an early example of the conflict between integration, on the part of Washington, and complete removal from American society by Garvey. These streams of thought continue throughout the twentieth century, and are especially prevalent for the Civil Rights Movement and the postresistance era.

The evolving nature of poetry within the African American literary canon also shows the conflicting approaches to the situation of blacks in American society. Poets such as Paul Dunbar (1872-1906) and Fenton Johnson (1888-1958) mark an integration of black voices into American literature through a use of black dialect within "traditional" poetic form. The Harlem Renaissance (1919-1940) is a major movement that also draws much scholarly attention.⁴⁷ Langston Hughes (1902-1967) is one of the more well-known writers from this period because of his cosmopolitan background and

⁴⁷ Some recent works on the Harlem Renaissance include: *Images of Black Modernism: Verbal and Visual Strategies of the Harlem Renaissance* by Miriam Thaggert (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), *Word, Image and the New Negro: Representations and Identity in the Harlem Renaissance* by Anne Elizabeth Carroll (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2005), *Deep River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought* by Paul Allen Anderson (Durham: Duke UP, 2001), and George Hutchinson's *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1995).

his incorporation of jazz and the blues into his poetry which appealed to a wide audience. He also remains a touchstone for the period due to the first-hand accounts of the Renaissance in his autobiography. This period began the integration of African American culture into mainstream American culture. The movement wanted to control black representation and to present more positive views of African American cultural contributions. African American migration into the Northern United States after World War I led to more African American cultural opportunities alongside the struggle against Jim Crow and the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement. This is an instance where the decision to represent the collective political will came alongside a flowering of personal expression. This struggle is evident here and remains in the postresistance era through the critical consideration of Civil Rights accomplishments.

The *Norton Anthology* calls the period of 1940-1960 that of “Realism, Naturalism and Modernism.” Although this designation is part of an arbitrary mode of creating a literary history, there is no doubt that this was the period of emergence for many extraordinary writers (Gates and McKay 1355). This is the era when prose works gained prominence through their ability to narratively connect with the black experience in America. The most important writers from this period include Richard Wright (1908-1960), Ralph Ellison (1914-1994), James Baldwin (1924-1987), and Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965). Wright’s *Native Son* (1940) and Ellison’s *Invisible Man* (1952) are two novels in particular that gained attention for their depiction of urban realism, sociological conditions, and black rebellion. The Black Arts Era from 1960-1975 did not produce as many famous “names” in African American literary history, but this was the point. This movement depended on the masses to transform the ways black Americans were seen in the larger culture, in the face of the larger movement for social reform during the Civil Rights Movement. The oral media of mass speeches and religious oratories shaped literature. Amiri Baraka (b. 1934), for example was part of the New Black Poetry. African American literature since 1975 (the specific focus of this project) is marked by prize-winning authors such as Ishmael Reed, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Charles Johnson. African American culture has had a clear influence in the United States and the institutionalization of African American literature means that authors are aware of the traditions they are following.

This contemporary period aims to represent a multiplicity of identities and experiences, including more influence of black women writers and the continual exploration of how music and vernacular culture influence literature (Gates and McKay 2127). Although new collections (such as 2011's *The Cambridge History of African American Literature* edited by Maryemma Graham and Jerry W. Ward, Jr.) resist the strict chronological divisions of the literary history, I still consider the postresistance period as a dynamic one that created opportunities for reconsideration of the group narratives represented in the past literary tradition. The conflicts that keep emerging and that will be the focus of my analysis concern the ability of the individual to stand in for the collective, the conflict between integration versus revolution which naturally included the question of African American place, and the issue of narrative form.

In the case of Poland, the literary canon is also dependent on survival and legitimacy in the face of disappearance from Europe. This is the crux of the collective destiny versus personal expression conflict that Zagajewski expressed. I will highlight a few traditions over the long time span of the Polish nation which remain significant in the second part of the twentieth century. Polish literature has been more oriented towards poetry and drama rather than prose, which is the focus of this project. However, these other genres also have an influence on prose, and prose is still a part of the national literary tradition. For example, in Janusz Anderman's *Cały Czas*, the writer protagonist attempts to write poetry and drama to further his position because these genres are seen to be literary and influential politically. However, he ends up becoming famous for a prose work which allows for an incisive critique of the socialist regime. Additionally, as has been stated, prose offers the opportunity to examine the individual life in a form that can complicate and question myth and collective memory. Further a time of crisis, such as that of the Solidarity Movement, brings out the key ideas that unite a majority of the nation (as I discussed in the section on rhetoric in the previous chapter). Therefore, this period of crisis and the reflection that follows it in the postresistance prose, depends on knowledge of the literary tradition. I will highlight some of the main historical moments of Polish literature in order to better articulate the significance of the allusions in the novels I will be analyzing.

In the Middle Ages, the Polish state consisted of loosely bound provinces with feudal divisions, and an alliance with Lithuania to withstand the raids of the Teutonic Knights (Miłosz 3). At this point, literature was mostly written in Latin and the vernacular had not yet developed fully (9). The late Middle Ages started the development of a Polish literary language but the Polish was still considered “low-brow” in contrast to Latin (21). The prose written at the beginning of the humanist state was mostly religious in nature with some secular legal books (24). Struggles between the Crown and the nobility set the political landscape at this time. The sixteenth century saw the rise of publishing in the vernacular with medieval romances and classical tragedies becoming popular (48). A writer who gained fame at this time was Jan Kochanowski who was a classic poet of Polish syllabic verse (60). His humanist tragedy *The Dismissal of the Grecian Envoys* is an important prototype for future Polish theatre. Set before the Trojan War, the play focused on political decision making and the collective Trojan state rather than on the individual hero. This interplay of the individual and the collectivity has echoes in every major genre and period. Prose at this time was mostly limited to the polemic due to various political and religious quarrels (89).

With various wars, political upheavals, and economic suffering, prose in the seventeenth century consisted mainly of dairies, memoirs, and political writing. The novel failed to develop at this time because of the decline of the bourgeois class. Gentleman farmers had mostly been the authors of major works up to the point (145). The second half of the eighteenth century brought the Enlightenment but also the political upheaval of the Partitions. Poland was divided into three parts, thus losing her independence. The result of this for literature was the spread of Romanticism, which started in 1820 and its concern with the national nature of life. Underlying this political and literary change was the concept of messianic martyrdom:

...when Poland lost her independence, the concept of ‘Polishness’ gradually emerged as an ethereal entity requiring loyalty and existing even without embodiment in a state...An old tendency to idealize ‘golden freedom,’ which had distinguished Poland from her neighbours, the autocratic monarchies, underwent

a mutation: enormous talents for self-pity were displayed, and Poland was presented as an innocent victim suffering for the sins of humanity. (200-01)

Polish Romanticism was imbued with historicism in the hope that this would strengthen the Poles' claims, and poets were meant to reflect the collective strivings of the people. Writers such as Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, and Zygmunt Krasiński became a voice for the partitioned Poland. In particular, Mickiewicz became akin to a national bard with works such as the play *Dziady* (1823-1832, four parts written at different times) and the long poem *Pan Tadeusz* (1834).

Prose in the Romantic period faced many obstacles, including censorship. Writers could not look to analyze contemporary life without looking “for a collective identity in the past, to retreat, so to speak, into the womb of tradition.” In prose, this meant the return to the *gawęda* style, which was a “loose, chatty form of fiction” where the narrator describes episodes in a stylized, personal language (254). The romantic hero motif emerged in this period. Charles Kraszewski analyzes this trend in his study of the noble hero in Polish and Czech literature:

This type of atmosphere inevitably led to the creation of the ‘Promethean’ hero, such as Mickiewicz’s Konrad and Słowacki’s ‘King-Spirit’ in Poland...Such heroes typified the desperate struggle of their particular nations against the empires which oppressed them, and, basing themselves to some extent on Fichte’s philosophy of ‘deed’ as well as Byron’s cult of the individual, emphasised the idea that ‘great souled’ personages can indeed rise to the fore in the most hopeless of situations and change the course of history for the better. (2)

Like the slave figure in the African American slave narrative, the individual Romantic hero fulfilled a literary and political function for the collective. For example, Mickiewicz’s Konrad, in the narrative poem *Konrad Wallenrod* (1828), leads a treasonous military mission in order to defeat his enemy, despite the danger to himself. This sacrificial function means that these figures do not stand on their own as individuals but adopt a language that supports historical and mythic claims. The postresistance prose

protagonists, however, do not necessarily stand in for the collective will; they resist the call of collective destiny and the desire to change history.

An unsuccessful uprising against the Russian Empire in 1863 meant a break from this political Romanticism and the creation of “Positivists”. These young people saw analogies between human societies and biological organisms and so they emphasized “organic growth over revolutionary change” (Miłosz 283). They turned away from the Messianic view that Poland was an innocent victim. They chose the novel as a genre meant to convey the greatness of industry and technology. They focused on simple people instead of the nobility, and the fates of their characters were not to depend on blind chance (285). Examples of these writers include Aleksander Świętochowski, Piotr Chmielowski, and Włodzimierz Spasowicz. Therefore there are roots of Polish realism in the literary tradition. The most important novelist of the period was Bolesław Prus who demonstrated “nineteenth-century realism at its best” in *The Doll (Lalka)* (1890). The novel leads the hero toward “a full awareness of the rift between his dream and the reality of the society around him” which demonstrates the conventions of the genre (298-99). Another important prose writer in the end of the nineteenth century would be Henryk Sienkiewicz, whose historical Trilogy set during the Polish wars of the seventeenth century is still a Polish classic. The action brings the reader back to Poland’s glorious past.

Modern Polish literature begins with a new generation of artists who reject Positivism and call themselves “Young Poland.” Art had to bring value to the world and the artists themselves were hedonists. Most of them also brought to life a neo-romanticism. This stage “brought about a re-evaluation of the national heritage and a renewal of the spirit of commitment to the collectivity, but not in the simple, utilitarian terms of Positivism” (329). 1918-1939 was the period of an independent Poland but there were still many political problems. In the face of this new independence, the political novel was an important part of prose fiction, but at the same time, Witold Gombrowicz played a game of provocation and broke with the “mirror of life” novels. This period can be seen as a prelude to the postresistance period because there was more of an allowance for societal critique because independence had been achieved, and so ‘the national

question' was no longer the main issue for artists. However with the return of political strife in the late 1930s, this personal expression became more difficult. During the Second World War, literature was divided between émigré wing and a domestic wing. After the war there was some resentfulness of the messianic martyrdom paradigm because it had possibly left Poland passive and not equipped to deal with external threats (445). After the war, the quality of the literature was dependent on political circumstance. From 1945-1949 the Party was relatively liberal and it was not until 1949 that the doctrine of Socialist Realism became a decree that significantly lowered the quality of officially published literature. The third period, in 1956, renewed a sense of experimentation after the Socialist Realism fell away (453). Miłosz highlights authors such as Tadeusz Borowski, Kazimierz Brandys and Tadeusz Konwicki as important prose writers after the war.

To end this section, I will expand on Adam Zagajewski's series of essays on the struggle of the writer during political instability. As referenced in the opening quote to this chapter, there is an ongoing tension in Polish literature between collective destiny and individual expression. In a book of essays entitled *Solidarity, Solitude*, Zagajewski questions what part of him should be involved in a political movement: the civic or the poetic. He was involved in the 1970s oppositional movement and traces a line from that movement to the formation of Solidarity. The 1970s movement, according to Zagajewski, had a cultural, spiritual, and political character where there was a consolidation of Polish collective life with a return to tradition but also the desire to take initiative (5-6). Although the movement was not solely focused on artistic production, publishing did play a primary role in the shape of the movement (22).

In one of his essays ("The High Wall"), Zagajewski discusses the self-conception of Poles as a "great, historical nation except they have had an unequal share of bad luck." The three hundred year old illusion that this great and wronged nation has been watched over by a distracted God brings relief to its people (44-45). Thus, if this illusion brings relief, as is also seen with the rhetoric of Solidarity, what happens when the postresistance period undermines this self-conception? After the resistance period, does the population need more relief or can writers play with the concept that a myth can bring

relief? Zagajewski notes that the presence of the Soviet Union in Poland created many corrupt people but also brought out people's desire for truth, freedom, civic society, and history, among other things. Solidarity could not have emerged in an anarchic culture, but instead needed "the resonance between an élite and a popular experience of the world" (65). The term "Solidarity" implies this, indicating the common language that needed to develop using the rhetoric of myth and non-violence. The union of various social classes in the resistance movement meant a greater need for uniting narratives which brought collective destiny into the forefront over individual expression.

In the essay "Solidarity, Solitude", Zagajewski focuses on the role of the artist in Poland which seems to come with the same decrees as being part of a religious order (83). He sees two literatures in Poland: the first that reminds him of literature created in other European countries, which simply reflect the basic emotions and desires of anyone, regardless of nation. The other is literature written by the intelligentsia who see everything that happens in the country. This "collective author" surveys the country with "an intelligent glance" and knows all the people that are part of the society (84). The focus on social groups and *who* authors write about is a repeated pattern in Polish tradition. Zagajewski makes a strong statement about the impossibility of disengaging from this giant of collective destiny: "...there can be only books written by mortals who participate in the strong emotions of collective life (in Poland there is no way *not* to participate in them), but individually and as a part of the experience, as a part of the existence; their other experiences, no less important, will be connected to moments when they are alone" (85). The impossibility of *not* participating in Polish life (even as an émigré⁴⁸) brings with it the pressure of never being fully "alone" in the writing process. The giant is always looking over the writer's shoulder. There is the possibility that the end of an opposition movement bring some relief from this burden.

In the last part of the essay, Zagajewski makes another point with underpinnings to this project: "Except the Polish collectivity defines itself not just in opposition to

⁴⁸ Zagajewski was himself an émigré and so these thoughts on the role of the artist take on even more meaning when the physical connection to the country is lost.

individuality but in a completely different realm, in myth. Myth is Polish society's most enduring cement [...] The myth is a unifying treasure, compensation bestowed upon Poles by their sad fate; it keeps the Polish people together because it represents a mythical heritage expelled from everywhere else, devoured by *ratio*, technology, and the anonymity of 'modern' life" (90-91). This myth is the repeated relief of messianic martyrdom, which has deep historical roots. But it is impossible to live only on myth: "Great collective myths practically demand contradiction, confrontation; they wait impatiently to be touched by the godless hand of the iconoclast" (91). Postresistance authors participate in this contradiction of myth. When the movements end there is less pressure to continue with the language of resistance. The over-reliance on myth throughout the resistance movement may contribute to this unleashed confrontation in the postresistance period.

In 2007, Adam Zagajewski continued his interest in the way that Polish writers think about themselves as writers by editing a collection of essays entitled *Polish Writers on Writing*. In the preface, Zagajewski further addresses the tension that twentieth century writers feel between Imagination and History. Zagajewski queries this tension: "Isn't this what literature is all about? Measuring the strangeness of the external world with the fragile instruments of interiority?" He explains that the twentieth century was a confusing time for Polish writers because they seemed to be under the same call as their nineteenth century predecessors: "Then, the act of writing was often considered as a kind of a collectivist gesture and was judged more in the light of patriotic expectations than as a purely aesthetic object. Writers and their oeuvre seemed to belong to the society, to the nation, and thus privacy was not allowed" (ix). Writers during the interwar period rejected this burden, but World War II reignited the debate as to whether writers had a social and patriotic commitment to the nation (x). This bind once again emerged during the communist era with social realism and political opposition movements. The dual nature of writing in Poland leads to various viewpoints about being an author from authors themselves. Zagajewski's anthology contains excerpts from the work of Witold Gombrowicz, Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska, and Zbigniew Herbert. Their writing reveals some of these tensions.

In this project, the novels I have chosen specifically engage with political issues of the nation after the movements, yet also attempt to critique the notion of a unified collective, so I am working under the assumption that these novels are struggling within the individual expression versus collective destiny binary. This underlying conflict in both African American and Polish literature is more pronounced during the civil resistance period. Although the bind between collective destiny and personal expression is difficult to undo, these novels work within the conflict to critique both sides of it. My analyses of Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke* in the next section will be the starting point for this question and will construct a framework for analyzing prose that critically engages with the languages and narratives of civil resistance movements.

2.2 Towards a Postresistance Analytic Framework

In this general overview of Polish and African American literature, I have shown that the creation of a literary history depends on highlighting works which reflect the political and social situations of their time period. Whether it is within a narrative of a nation or within a racial group, the balance between personal expression and collective promotion seems to teeter on the side of the latter. This is one element that Polish literature and African American literature have in common: the literary output reflects cultural strength in the face of outside control or marginalization. Whether it is in reaction to the Polish partitions or American Reconstruction, literature is part of a cultural project that was able to push back against oppression. The civil resistance movements took this rhetorical approach to survival even farther. But with the loss of an overt and obvious oppressor, how do authors reconceive their role and how do they look back at this oppositional past in the postresistance era when the need for a monologic framework is not necessary? The starting point to the analysis in this project must begin with novels that were written in the nascent periods of the resistance movements. This starting point shows that the narratives of the movements, as well as the critical approach to them, were already taking shape within the culture. Therefore, the postresistance period is rooted in an evolving tradition, but the civil resistance movements crystallize some of these key narrative ideas

and so the postresistance novel is a reaction to the strong narrative frames reflected in the collective memory of the movements.

In this section I want to provide a kind of foreshadowing of my analysis in the next two chapters. The goal of this section is to build on the idea that authors after the movement are reacting to and against literary tradition and assumptions about the society. The dissolving of large scale non-violent protest movements precipitated this introspection because of the loss of this collectivity and the need to understand the alienation of the individual. Therefore I want to touch briefly on two important novels in the African American and Polish literary canon respectively: Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) and Witold Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke* (1931). These novels were published before the movements took their full shape, but the authors are exploring some of the lines of thought that would eventually lead to the movements: race, class and the disaffected artist and individual. These novels lay the groundwork for authors to explore the tension between the individual and collective that becomes a prominent idea in postresistance narratives. Both of these novels are complex and engender many fascinating critical readings. This section, however, will have a specific focus in attempting to build an analytic framework around collective movements, the imposition of narrative frameworks, and systems of control which affect the individual.

Since there is not a single established critical framework on the link between literature and civil resistance movements, this analysis comes together through finding patterns of disruptions in the prose that does not allow for a clear collective vision or a unified narrative frame. The underlying uniqueness of postresistance fiction comes through the author's willingness to complicate the rhetorical language of collective destiny used in the movements. This is reflected in the African American author's exploration of the integration versus revolution conflict and the Polish author's disruption of the messianic martyrdom myth through individual expression. In the area of narrative form, these novels resist a smooth progression from oppression to freedom. This progression is complicated through fragmented narratives or interventions in the narrative that create jumps in time or narrative focus. Unlike the defined dates of the movements as seen in Chapter One, there are no clear markers of progress, and the narrative may end

with a continuation or return to oppression. As expressed in the Introduction, this reading also borrows from Hutcheon's conception of historiographic metafiction which is self-aware of history and fiction as human constructs. These novels are not attempting to rewrite history, but they endeavour to cut through the mythologizing amnesia of collective memory which subsumes individual expression.

The novels I explore also focus on one key character that resists standing in for the collective whole, unlike the characteristics of an African American slave narrative or in the Polish Romantic texts. This character comes into their bodily autonomy and voice over the course of the text and lives outside of the narrative frame of the movement. This means that he or she become acutely aware of the construction and slippery nature of time and place as represented rhetorically by the movement. In Chapter Four, I look at two such characters that resist the idealistic vision of their respective movements. These protagonists also complement multiple other characters in the text that question collective frameworks. For example, Chapter Three examines the uncertainty of the locative and the inability to claim the places free from oppression that the movements strive for. The existence of these characters with differing opinions about the ideals of a place reveals a tension over how the individual relates to the collective. These postresistance characteristics can operate even if a civil resistance movement is not the focus of the narrative, as is the case with the novels analyzed in Chapter Three, but these novels are marked by their resistance to the narrative frames of the movements and their creation of a dialogic voice to counteract the homogenous voice of the collective.

My analysis of *Invisible Man* and *Ferdydurke* will focus on very small sections of the novels, but these sections highlight this analytic framework. In Ellison's *Invisible Man*, the narrator who is never named⁴⁹ begins and ends the novel addressing the reader

⁴⁹ The concept of naming is also a factor in my analysis. Whether the protagonists are named or remain anonymous, their designations as individuals with names that have meaning give them an identity outside of the collective. At the same time, these names may fulfill an allegorical function, but only to point out the absurdities of symbols and myths. This vacillation between the symbolic individual within the collective and the uniqueness of the individual signifies the complicated position of individuals that postresistance novels are teasing out.

as he is living in an underground hole, using as much stolen electricity as possible to be aware of his form and remain alive even as he is invisible to the world and to the collective of which he had been a part. The light that “confirms [his] reality, gives birth to [his] form” is a kind of revelatory light that brings him to the realization that all his attempts to conform ended in failure. His isolation from the world at the outset is the first indication that there is a schism here between his life and the direction of the collective. This isolation frames the narrative and the rest of the novel describes the narrator’s journey to that place. This underground place could be analogous to King’s metaphor of an Exodus from oppression or the notion of Canada as a place of freedom from slavery. It is a trope that recurs through the African American tradition. However, in this version the Invisible Man has removed himself from the world completely and through his narrative we learn that he has been disappointed by a world that rejected him in a myriad of ways. For example, his college president was supposed to give him reference letters for potential jobs for his move from the South to New York but because of his failure to show a “good” version of blackness to a potential donor, these reference letters are not positive. This is the first in a string of incidents where the narrator unconsciously does not conform to an integrationist vision of African Americans. The last incident that leads to his self-imposed exile represents his rejection of a group that want to use violence in the community to further their cause. The stirrings of a civil resistance movement are depicted here, but the collective is not fully unified so the Invisible Man becomes a scapegoat for not representing the Brotherhood in the correct way. Rather than seeing the people of Harlem as an undifferentiated mass, he begins to see its complex humanity as he comes into his own voice. This novel anticipates the unease over having to represent the collective will in the political sphere while still experiencing life and yearning for personal freedom. I will limit my analysis to the prologue and the epilogue of the novel as it exemplifies the critical tensions of the postresistance period.

Gombrowicz’s *Ferdydurke* also depicts a disaffected individual in an absurd world in a three part structure. The narrator named Josio is a writer who feels burdened by the expectations and opinions of society. He does not know himself and the only way he can cope is by returning to the vulgar world of adolescence. When he is forced back to school he relives the way that the works of the Romantic authors are uncritically taught to

the student as being the works of geniuses just because the professor says it is so. There is no place for debate with the professor and so “wszyscy...jednakowo wili się pod brzemieniem wieszczki, poety, Bładaczki i dziecka oraz otępienia” (Gombrowicz 50).⁵⁰ A familiarity with these authors for young people when Poland gained its independence was “considered not only a pedagogical necessity but also a patriotic duty” (Goddard 39). In this novel the focus is not so much on an organized resistance movement but on the systems that depend on myths of the nation for their survival. These myths were subsequently used to rhetorically support the Solidarity Movement. The last part of the narrative has Josio in a country manor that is even more confining and infantilizing than the school in its attempt to maintain stratified class relations. Josio’s friend Miętus is a figure who disrupts the implied power structure between the master and the servant in the manor. Josio runs away from the manor but he cannot completely escape the systems of society so he enters into a romance with his cousin Zosia. However, as Michael Goddard argues, this romance is a Deleuzian assemblage that “would be open to metamorphosis and becoming” (56). Therefore, the ending resists Josio’s return to the confining spaces of the school and the manor that perpetuate systems of conformity. This novel is broken up or interrupted twice by an allegorical tale that comments on the concept of form. This interrupted narrative suggests a “composition as a multiplicity or assemblage” (Goddard 36) that challenges the unified voice of the collective. My focus will be on the first of these interruptions which carries a critique of the desire for literary form and exemplifies Gombrowicz’s refusal of the messianic task of the author.

These two novels were written before both the movements studied in this project were underway but they hint at future conflicts that would develop and examine the rupture between the individual and the collective. The *Invisible Man* references many figures from the past such as Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington and the conflict for the protagonist centres on effects of integration. Therefore, this novel also looks toward the future struggle: “...the Civil Rights Era was still nascent in 1950;

⁵⁰ “everyone’s back was bent beneath the weight of the poet, the bard, the master, his child, and the general torpor” (Gombrowicz, Trans. Mosbacher 48)

nevertheless, the protagonist's underground musings anticipate that period's focus on the stakes of integration" (Hill and Hill 55). The narrative of the novel gives form to the chaos of black experience; Ellison uses a Burkean tragic paradigm that is linear but using circular repetitions to chart "his protagonist's movement from personal and social naiveté to enlightenment" (18). However, this chaos is still present in a resistance to a clear progress towards freedom. This enlightenment is an emergence from the collective into knowledge of oneself within the systems in which the narrator is trapped.

Gombrowicz is central to Polish literary modernism, but critic Michael Goddard also argues that Gombrowicz is an "untimely writer whose work is able to reach forward into the future precisely because of its rigorous interrogation and subversion of the assumptions of modernity and modernism" (Goddard 2). His narrative form is what sets him apart as an author with fluid boundaries of time. Through his subversion of form he allows "the expression of the profound life that is buried beneath the rigidity of form" (29). For example, by having his narrator return to adolescence he is reversing the linear narrative of the *Bildungsroman* (32). The postresistance novels I look at in the subsequent chapters complicate linear narratives through flashbacks and fragmented constructions that challenge a unified collective conception of the time period. Gombrowicz also did not repeat aesthetic styles from the past but created new artistic expressions and, therefore, created a dialogic literary language that counteracted what had come before, as postresistance authors do in their reinterpretive framing of a collective movement (11). In both novels there is a need for escape from the confining nature of form and rhetoric of the collective. This is heightened in the case of postresistance novels where the language of the movements provides no release for individual expression.

The main narrative of the *Invisible Man* does follow a *Bildungsroman* structure in which the narrator matures and comes into self-consciousness. As John Callahan argues, the *Invisible Man*'s quest is one for eloquence (153). The novel can be seen as having a structure of progress; however, the framing of the prologue and the epilogue creates an always already sense of isolation that reverberates through the narrative. The knowledge of his invisibility in the prologue disrupts the narrator's attempts to create political action through his speech acts. His isolation from the world frustrated the character's ability to

become a sacrificial body for the collective. The things he tells the reader in the prologue make it clear that he recognizes the unstable nature of place and time as connected to a construction of the collective. Invisibility gives him “a slightly different sense of time, you’re never quite on the beat” (Ellison 7). This quote alludes to Ellison’s jazz influences where he believes that each improvisation in a group jazz performance represents a definition of identity as an individual and as a member of the collectivity (Callahan 154).

In terms of place, the narrator not only lives underground, but also lives in an area that subverts boundaries:

All they know is that according to the master meter back there in their power station a hell of a lot of free current is disappearing somewhere into the jungle of Harlem. The joke, of course, is that I don’t live in Harlem but in a border area...Now aware of my invisibility, I live rent-free in a building rented strictly to whites, in a section of the basement that was shut off and forgotten during the nineteenth century... (Ellison 5)

The Invisible Man’s journey took him from the South to the North and ultimately Harlem, a space imbued with the promise of a land of racial justice as depicted in the Exodus myth. The narrator does not find that promise there and his residence in a border area marks the uncertainty of the locative framework. The narrator’s different sense of time and place is one of the ways that the narrative of progress is undone. In the epilogue, the anger of the Invisible Man comes to the fore. He hated having to justify the beliefs of others and the “absurd answers they wished to hear” (432), while his honesty was not satisfactory. He rebelled by becoming the invisible man. However, the end of the narrative hints at an end to his hibernation and the belief that he still “has a socially responsible role to play” (439). There is the sense that now that he has embraced his personal strength and recognized the limitations of the collective, he could play a role in a community that embraces dialogic language. The prologue and epilogue act as a narrative frame but this frame eludes the control of rhetoric that guides the collective.

The interruptions in Gombrowicz’s *Ferdydurke* occupy a similar space, in that they destabilize the journey-like narrative form as the narrator encounter various sites of

Polish systems of control. In the first digression entitled “An Introduction to Philifor Honeycombed with Childishness”, the narrator as writer questions the meaning of art and its division from everyday life. He critiques a mentality of both artists and audiences marrying themselves to a form with no input from their own personal feeling. The narrator gives the example of concert pianist playing Chopin to rapturous applause, but perhaps the reason for the applause was that everyone else in the audience was doing so even though no one was swept up by enthusiasm (79). Art is caught up in mankind’s need for myths: “...wiadomo, ludzkość potrzebuje mitów – ona wybiera sobie tego lub owego ze swoich licznych twórców (któż jednak zdołałby zbadać i wyświetlić drogi tego wyboru?) i oto wynosi go ponad innych, zaczyna uczyć się go na pamięć, w nim odkrywa swoje tajemnice, jemu podporządkowuje uczucie...” (84).⁵¹ The feeling here is that these venerated artists adapt to forms already deemed acceptable and linked to the promotion of the collective will.

This critique can also be applied to the situations in which the narrator finds himself. He keeps confronting operations of power that depend on the collective will to sustain them. It is only when the narrator introduces multiple “heterogeneous elements” to these stable binaries that he is allowed to escape (Goddard 51). The underlying idea here is one that can be contrasted with the rhetorical monoglossia of the resistance movement. It is the fragmented and complex thoughts of individuals and a dialogic language that prevent the creation of binding narrative forms from above: “Lecz w Rzeczywistości sprawa przedstawia się, jak następuje: że istota ludzka nie wyraża się w sposób bezpośredni i zgodny ze swoją naturą, ale zawsze w jakiejś określonej formie i że forma owa, ów styl, sposób bycia nie jest tylko z nas, lecz jest nam narzucony z zewnątrz...” (85).⁵² This imposition of form can be a force to deny the existence of

⁵¹ “Mankind, as we know, has need of myths; and it picks out one or the other of its numerous creative artists (who will throw light on the reason for its choice?) and lo and behold! It elevated him above his fellows, starts learning his work by heart, discovers its magic and mystery, adapts its way of feeling to it” (Gombrowicz Trans. Mosbacher 80).

⁵² “But the real situation is this: a human being does not externalize himself directly and immediately in conformity with his own nature; he invariably does so by way of some definite form; and that form, style,

personal expression. Even though both the Civil Rights Movement and the Solidarity Movement involved multitudes of people with diverse experiences and approaches to a future free from oppression, the success of each movement depended on the rhetorical unification of this diversity, for example in the language of non-violence. This was the reality for both movements and this does not mean that these narrative frames were insidious systems of control. However, both Ellison and Gombrowicz depict the need, in the early conceptions of these freedom movements, for recognition of the way the individual operates in and against this rhetorical framing. There is, in a sense, a resistance to the resistance, as the monoglossia of the resistance movement can itself become a form of oppression.

This resistance comes in the individual coming into their voice and recognizing the operations at play in the creation of a collective will and the mythic identities of place. At the end of this narrative digression, Gombrowicz's narrator gives a call to action that echoes in the appeal of the Invisible Man: "...starajcie się przewyciężyć formę, wyzwolić się z formy...Wycofajcie się z tego, czym jesteście na zewnątrz, i niech lęk was ogarnie przed wszelkim uzewnętrznieniem, tak właśnie, jak ptaszka drzenie ogarnia wobec węża" (89-90).⁵³ This call to withdrawal into personal expression connects to the isolation felt by the Invisible Man that allows him to emerge back into the collective in order to be more productive in the resistance movement and be able to continue to resist oppression after the collective movement breaks apart. Gombrowicz's call to resist form reflects this project's claim that postresistance literature shakes free of the movement's monologic rhetorical frames.

way of speaking and responding, do not derive solely from him, but are imposed on him from without..." (Gombrowicz Trans. Mosbacher 81)

⁵³ "Try to set yourself against form, try to shake free of it. Cease to identify yourself with that which defines you. ...Withdraw from what you seem to be from outside, and flee from all externalization just as the bird flees from the snake" (Gombrowicz Trans. Mosbacher 85).

This chapter illustrates that important canonical works in both African American and Polish literature were becoming unmoored from the collective will and questioning mythic foundations. While literature and rhetoric during the movements served more to support the claims of the oppressed, postresistance writers return to examining the way that collective movements set up cohesive narrative frames that need subsequent contextualization. Through the analysis of narrative pieces that deny the possibility of a collective narrative framework and the progress of a character, I presented an analytic framework that will be used to explore postresistance prose in the next two chapters.

Chapter 3

3 Postresistance Spatial Alterations

In the initial stages of this project I thought that my main focus would be on the historical peoples and the fictional characters involved in the mass resistance movements. After all, the physical presence of the people is the reason that civil resistance movements happen. The people also carry the narratives that sustain the movements. The leaders and the groups dictate the direction of the movement and react to the opposition. However, I realized that along with the people, the places of protest are also vital to the shape of the movement. This does not only mean the places where the movements take place, such as the Washington Mall or the northern shipyards in Poland, but it also applies to the historical and imaginary places that accompany the narratives that rhetorically drive the movements. The politics of resistance depends on a deeper sense of the history that the movement is defending and so history is embedded in these places. This means that these places become less physical locations than imaginary concepts that drive the movement. Within an imagined archeological layering of place, the narrative frameworks of the nation and the movement lay just below the surface and the novels I look at unearth these ideas and question them. This examination of place can help set the groundwork for analysis of how individual participants relate to the narratives of the movements, as I do in Chapter Four.

In examining the idea of place within this postresistance fiction I find that place is not a certain physical location. Rather than these places, such as Canada or Gdańsk, denoting a direction, a geographical or spatial understanding, they become an imagined concept imbued with meaning. The characters in these novels invest in and overdetermine the significance of places that do not, in fact, live up to the narrative frames of the movement. Postresistance writers convey the uncertain nature of place in a narrative form that reflects the fragmentation of the movement after the collective breaks apart. This chapter on place will discuss the way novels in the postresistance period question the construction of these places in national myths that are carried in collective memory. It focuses on the collective notions of freedom and narrative conceptions of place. I also analyze novels that contain multiple viewpoints on place, reflecting the large

number of people that took part in the collective movement, but these voices are not unified and they create a dialogic language. The significance of this chapter to the larger work is to show that authors, in what I am deeming the postresistance period, are able to examine the effects of a collective movement and how it fragments and unsettles national mythology and individual relationships to the collective. It follows the previous chapter on literary histories because the novels utilize and challenge many of the literary and historical narratives mentioned. This is a prelude to talking directly about the movements and their impact on the individual protester as I do in the next chapter. The key thread that runs through these chapters is the uncertainty in the narratives of place and protester that were used to hold together large scale civil resistance movements.

In this chapter I look at two places and the narratives they represent for the Civil Rights Movement and the Solidarity Movement, respectively. First I examine the way Canada has figured in the African American imagination and memory as representing a vision of freedom, especially in the slave narrative. This journey towards a symbolic vision of Canada is reflected in the actions that the protesters take, such as the Freedom Rides or the large scale marches. King's use of the Exodus story invoked a journey to the Promised Land of racial justice, echoing the symbolic freedom of Canada. But with so many places closed off because of the institution of slavery, followed by the limitations of Jim Crow, there is a drive to claim places of freedom such as churches or neighbourhoods because the ability to leave the country is not always possible. Additionally, beyond his use of metaphor, King was arguing for integrationist policies that would mean participation in American systems. He was not literally calling for African Americans to leave the South; he was arguing for their ability to participate in the political and social fabric of society. The question of whether African Americans should integrate into American society or create their own space is at the forefront here. While Canada used to be a separate place of refuge from the oppressive slave system in the slave narrative, now it is a fragile concept of freedom that never truly materializes. Ishmael Reed's *Flight to Canada* (1976) is a novel that engages with the question of what Canada represents once the collective movement breaks apart and individual voices explore what a place of freedom means to them.

In the case of Poland, I look at the city of Gdańsk which was an important centre of the Solidarity Movement as it was one of the places where shipyard workers held strikes. The city represents freedom from oppression and occupation because at times in the past it was held by the Germans and called Danzig, and so Poland's ultimate ownership of the city invokes Poland's ability to exist through territorial claims. Gdańsk also represents economic freedom because of its access to the sea, so the city is a symbolic of Polish autonomy. These narratives are complicated by Stefan Chwin's *Death in Danzig* (1995) – in the post-Solidarity period – because we see the people that had to be expelled from the city in order for this autonomy to materialize and hear about the way the city has been shaped by multiple inhabitants, not just Poles. These dialogic voices interrogate the importance of territory and economic control within Polish identity.

This chapter first examines literary conceptions of place and gives some background on the novels. Following that I analyze Ishmael Reed's *Flight to Canada* and Stefan Chwin's *Death in Danzig* in the context of place, mythology and the movements. The places I examine, specifically Canada and Gdańsk, also relate to the notion of movement and who is allowed to move into and out of a place. For example, the escape to Canada by a slave and the question of who can inhabit and leave Gdańsk imply movement and mobility. Additionally, place can act as a stand-in for a social movement. When Tahir Square or Zucotti Park is mentioned in current conversation they act as metonymy for the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street, respectively. In the same way, finding freedom in Canada (or King's "Promised Land") or reclaiming Gdańsk is a symbol of the social movement's victories.⁵⁴ The metaphor of a social movement as a search for place within society has resonance for this project because these postresistance novels imply that the places imagined as free for its inhabitants become illusory. The movements' rhetoric hides the complicated nature of freedom for the individual.

In both novels I will be analyzing the mythical archeology of the place and the individual characters' response to this conception. I will also examine how these novels

⁵⁴ An important reason for the emergence of Gdańsk as a site of the Solidarity Movement is the fact that Lech Wałęsa came from a Gdańsk factory and became the leader of the movement.

narratively meld together a mythological past with contemporary concerns of the movement which question history, memory, and the passing of time. Neither of the novels I examine is set specifically during the historical time of the movements, but they are written in the wake of the movements. Reed includes 1960s anachronisms within the setting of the Civil War era, while the turmoil of the Solidarity Movement echoes within the flux of post-World War II Poland in Chwin's novel. In a larger sense, the postresistance period allows for narratives that diverge from national mythology to emerge. I use the analytic framework to examine how the narrative resists a clear framework of progress towards the imagined place of freedom and employs a multiplicity of voices (with Raven and Hanemann representing the characters disillusioned by the places and most aware of their constructed nature) to move toward a polyvocality in the postresistance novel. These novels, through this relationship between the individual, the collective and the place, attempt to reconfigure a different view of the place in the wake of the protest movements. This vision complicates the cohesiveness and rhetoric of protest movements.

3.1 Theories of Place

The theory of place in literary studies has been addressed in an evolving way. Leonard Lutwack distinguishes between place and setting: "For literary purposes, then, place is inhabitable space, 'lived space' or *erlebter Raum*. Even objects – an automobile, a box, an old boiler – may be considered as places as long as they are susceptible of human occupation, either actual or imagined" (27). Setting, in contrast, denotes a place of action but "is not adequate to describe the use of places unrelated to action, such as metaphors or evocations of places in the speeches or consciousness of characters" (28). For the purposes of this project, place links the characters and the narrative structure to the sites of mythic imagination: Canada/ the Southern plantation and Gdańsk/ Danzig. I put these names in opposition to each other not only to link the two postresistance novels I am examining (*Flight to Canada* and *Death in Danzig* respectively) but also to show the way these binaries are complicated in the novels. From the point of view of the national mythology and the resistance movements, the former evokes positive associations of

freedom while the latter represents the slavery and occupation that is feared by those who were involved in the social movements. Lutwack shows that places hold a literal and symbolic value because there is nothing affective about the physical properties of place which means that values are easily attached to them in literature (35). It is no wonder then that certain places evoke these mythic associations through literary connotation and collective memory, but the reversal of these associations undoes these symbolic values and reveals the uncertain nature of place after the resistance movements.

Peter Brown and Michael Irwin link the concept of place to the formation of identity, “whether personal, social, or national” (22). They see an individual’s process of self-discovery as enacted in relation to place and through the character’s attempt to understand it. This is true for the novels I am analyzing as the characters do go through a process of discovery in relation to place in the novel. In these postresistance novels the characters become critical or even reject the mythical rhetoric of the place; they come to oppose the symbolic elements of the movements. In fact, Brown says that it is sometimes the perceived transformation of place that creates identity: “personal individuality may be said to depend upon a sense of difference in relation to place, however formative it may have been” (22). From Raven Quickskill discovering a Canada that is almost a simulacrum of the United States he escaped, to Piotr discovering the tragic story of Hanemann in Gdańsk, these characters are faced with the strangeness of the mythological place. In the wake of the collective resistance, these places are re-examined in opposition to their mythological origins and the embedded nature of collective memory.

The denial of place and time for oppressed groups by a dominant white culture is a central cultural touchstone for African Americans. Beginning with the Middle Passage as a chronotope for being both within and outside national boundaries, many myths centre on the idea of return, escape, and the search for place in American society.⁵⁵ Lack

⁵⁵ It is therefore not surprising that Paul Gilroy in his influential work, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993), uses the image of the ship to denote a motion across the spaces of Europe, America, Africa, and the Caribbean: “ships were the living means by which the points within that Atlantic world were joined. They were mobile elements that stood for the shifting

of place and timelessness are recurring themes in African American literature and they both develop from these myths and add to them. Jane Campbell shows why myths are especially important to the African American community:

Because the black artist invariably writes from an intensely political perspective, he or she searches for rhetorical devices that will move the audience on the deepest possible level. Myths, by definition, voice a culture's most profound perceptions, and, when given fictional form, can awaken the audience's strongest impulses. Thus, black artists who rely on myth have the potential to provoke whatever response they wish: to move the audience to consciousness, to attitude, even perhaps to action. (ix)

The formation of myth can also affect an audience in the converse way: when an artist questions a culture's most profound perceptions and undermines a myth, this also provokes a reaction. The postresistance period then produces a second radical act. Campbell points out that myth-making in African American historical fiction is a radical act because it subverts racist mythology and creates mythology from a black perspective (x). The novels I am exploring in this chapter disturb the monologic nature of myth and examine a multiplicity of voices.

Philip Page explores this perpetual search for place and a community in African American novels and describes some of these myths: "Myths abound of heroic returns to Africa, such as the flying African(s) or Africans walking back across the ocean to Africa. Escaping slavery to the North or to Canada became a reality for some and a legend for others, and slave narratives, documenting and embellishing such passages, became the first widespread form of written expression by African Americans" (2). But the lack of the heroic escape is magnified by the outcome of the Civil Rights Movement. The Movement itself is a struggle to occupy places in which African Americans were not

spaces in between the fixed places that they connected" (16). The Middle Passage represents the geographical and cultural dislocation of black people in modernity (133).

allowed: department store lunch counters, the front section of buses, and other segregated areas. When institutional segregation started to disintegrate because of the gains of the Movement, those places are no longer part of a larger struggle and the impetus to escape to the North is not as pronounced. However, there are still places where black people are implicitly not welcome, even though officially slavery and segregation are dead. In this postresistance period, place, identity, and escape become more complex because binaries that sustain the myth are no longer viable. This is why I see Reed's anachronistic blending of the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement as part of this complication. The Civil War period made it clear: escape from the space of the plantation and the South and enter into the freedom of the North. But for Quickskill, even with the ability to take a yacht to Canada and get as far away from the Swille and the plantation as possible, there will never truly be an escape, as is the case for post Civil Rights America.

Page discusses the "idea" of the South in the African American imagination:

For African Americans who migrated to the urban North, the South becomes a special kind of Other, two edged and bittersweet, emotionally burdened both positively and negatively... While the North is present and tangible, the South is absent and memory. It remains in the mind because it is the site of the birth of African-American culture, the locale of one's ancestors, and therefore the source of one's collective and individual identity. It is like a ghost, haunting the consciousnesses of northern African Americans, always already both present and absent, undying yet inaccessible. (7)

For Raven Quickskill in Reed's novel, the North becomes ghost-like and unstable, while the South becomes a tangible place of return. The novel is framed by this incongruous return to the South that disrupts the mythical nature of the North. After the Civil Rights Movement, novels depict this ambiguity in the nature of both the South and the North. This movement from South to North and back is part of that unsettled nature of the novels and contributes to the metaphor of mobility and myth that characterizes this chapter.

For African Americans the notion of migration is a central subject of literature. Lawrence R. Rodgers argues that all African American literature could be considered migration literature. He defines a migration novel as one in which a real or symbolic journey from South to North occurs and shapes the protagonist: “These novels explore the spatial, relational, and psychological differences between the present and former worlds inhabited by characters whose identities are shaped by their participation in a real or symbolic migration” (3-4). This idea of migration also links with the notion of the slave narrative, which I will explore in more detail in the section on Reed’s novel. *Flight to Canada* can be seen as migration novel, but it is an inverted migration, where we never see the actual flight from the plantation, followed by Canada not being able to fulfill the expectations of freedom and Raven’s return to the plantation once Uncle Robin has taken it over. This inverted migration comes in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement because of the new uncertainty over what place African Americans could inhabit. The symbol of the North and its use by certain postresistance authors re-engages with collective memories about place and freedom that were part of the narrative of the Civil Rights Movement. What is the significance of striving for more rights for the African Americans living in the South? Does this fight also reconceptualize the depiction of the North? In this novel, the North is less welcoming than imagined in both the real and mythological sense. The South is at least a place where Robin and Raven can create a space of their own.

A similar idea about the link of myth and place occur in Polish mythological imagination. Geneviève Zubrzycki argues that the two main national myths of Poland, its intrinsic Catholicity and messianic martyrdom, have been combined into one coherent national mythology in the twentieth century through the multiple attacks on its borders:

The reconstruction of the Polish state, in 1918, was thus interpreted and narrated as Poland’s ‘rebirth’ (*Polska odrodzona* – Poland reborn), World War II was Poland’s ‘Fourth Partition’ and new cross to bear, while the communist period – commonly referred to as the ‘Fifth Partition’ – was interpreted as yet another crucifixion. That interpretive frame carried emotionally loaded analogies between

present misery and the painful experience of statelessness during the Partitions, and emphasized Poland's historical suffering... (27)

Place is important for Poles largely because of historical uncertainties concerning the location of the country's borderlands. Following the partitions of the eighteenth century, the messianic narrative, or the notion that Poland has always been under attack from its neighbours, grew in strength. The events of the twentieth-century invoked this narrative in an extreme sense. An independent Poland was finally declared after the First World War, but the German attack during World War II and Soviet rule after the war reasserted this Messianic martyrdom outlook. Similar to Jane Campbell's notion of black mythology, Polish mythology also voices a culture's deep sense of self and history.

The city of Gdańsk is a northern city in Poland and it has been held both by the Germans (referred to as Danzig) and the Poles over the long history of the region. It is uncertain who actually has claim over the land, but it is now Polish with the past German presence largely covered up through the necessary rebuilding after World War II (Tighe xvi). Like the South/North binary in African American mythology, Gdańsk also contains a complex doubleness. The place existed as Danzig for Germans and Gdańsk for Poles which produces a layering affect in the city. But from the point of view of Poles, one version of the city is associated with Polish identity while the other disappears from collective memory. However, once again, in the wake of the Solidarity Movement and the reclamation of Polish freedom and identity, there is a potential to problematize this disappearance. There is more ambiguity about how history has shaped the nation once the collective disbands.

The novel that I am examining, Stefan Chwin's *Death in Danzig*, plays with the notion of place and identity with the multiple characters that exist in the narrative. These characters experience a Gdańsk that both subscribes to and counters the messianic martyrdom myth. While Piotr and his family arrive in Gdańsk after the Second World War, they have to confront the past associations of the place through the character of Hanemann, which complicates the narrative trajectory of Polish freedom. Chwin uses the character of Hanemann to oppose the messianic martyrdom myth because he is a tragic

character who is slowly pushed out of Gdańsk and must accept the fact that the city is no longer his home. He tries to hang on to his home as everyone else leaves, but like Quickskill, he realizes that the place no longer embodies the same characteristics and his identity cannot continue there. Piotr and his family now inhabit the place but Piotr's interest in Hanemann makes him realize the complicated notions of identity and collective memory. He is unsettled in the same way that Quickskill is disillusioned by his arrival in Canada. The question of how freedom has been denoted in a place is at the forefront in these novels.

3.2 Ishmael Reed's *Flight to Canada*: Slave Narrative out of Place

In 2013, Quentin Tarantino received a Best Screenplay Academy Award for his film *Django Unchained* (2012). In the film, Django (played by Jamie Foxx) is an escaped slave who wants to rescue his wife Broomhilda (played by Kerry Washington) from the plantation on which they were enslaved. He gets help in his quest in the form of German dentist and bounty hunter named Dr. King Schultz (played by Christoph Waltz who also won an acting Oscar for the role). The movie ends with Django saving his wife and riding off into freedom while the big house on the plantation burns behind him containing the bodies of the flamboyantly evil Calvin Candie (played by Leonardo DiCaprio) and Uncle Tom house slave Stephen (played by Samuel L. Jackson). This film fits well into Tarantino's body of work because it has all the hallmarks of a violent revenge fantasy that he is known for in films such as the *Kill Bill* series (2003-4) and Hitler revenge fantasy *Inglorious Basterds* (2009). The burning down of the place that enslaved Django and Broomhilda is part of the unconventional narrative of a slave taking control of his own fate. The film does have its share of problems⁵⁶ but it is part of a wider interest in telling stories of slavery, but telling them in a new way. The film could be described as a neo-slave narrative or a postmodern slave narrative (terms used by Ashraf Rushdy and

⁵⁶ The fact that a *white* Dr. King helps Django but gives him very little agency is the one of many.

Timothy A. Spaulding respectively that I will discuss later in this chapter) in film form as the conventions of the slave narrative are part of the story but they are subverted in some way.

James Olney writes about the conventional, or in fact, repetitive, characteristics of the slave narrative. This repetition means that the slave narrative also has mythical characteristics because the conventions become an expected trope. Part of the goal of these narratives was their use for abolition societies, so their repetitiveness fulfilled a political function to drive home the inhumane practice of slavery. These characteristics include: a description of a cruel master, a record of the barriers against slave literacy, description of the slave auction and the “description of successful attempt(s) to escape, lying by during the day, travelling by night guided by the North Star, reception in a free state by Quakers who offer a lavish breakfast and much genial thee/thou conversation” (153). What drives the narratives is the fact that the slave is writing it from a place of freedom and so can reflect on those key moments. While the goal of slavery is to turn the man into a thing, the slave narrative reasserts the humanity of a man. Frances Smith Foster notes that “the slave narratives are concerned with the movement from enslavement to freedom” (84). In a novel such as Reed’s *Flight to Canada*, the narrative subverts this structure through the return to the South, so the literary tradition still remains but the outcome aligns with contemporary concerns.

The reason that I mention Tarantino’s film is that it could be seen as a companion piece to Reed’s *Flight to Canada*. Sadistic and charismatic Calvin Candie is essentially an updated Arthur Swille from the novel. The horrors of the Southern plantation are reflected in the madness of these two merciless and mentally disturbed slave-masters. Django saving Broomhilda could be seen as analogous to Raven’s attempt to enlighten Quaw Quaw. Both the movie and the novel contain Uncle Tom characters. However, Tarantino’s subversion of the slave narrative rests on Django enacting the horrific acts of violence that he had been subjected to, and ultimately destroying the space of the plantation. Although seemingly triumphant and satisfying, this ending ultimately echoes the illusory end of the Civil Rights Movement: which space does the African American inhabit once the symbols of oppression have been destroyed? Reed’s postresistance

retelling of the slave narrative engages with this question of what freedom really means after the tangible symbols of oppression have ceased to exist.

There is currently an interest in the depiction of the slave era in film. Seven new films about slavery will be coming out in 2013, including Steve McQueen-directed *12 Years a Slave*, based on a slave narrative by Solomon Northup. Most likely not all of these films will diverge from the conventional slave narrative, but this trend shows how strong that narrative still is in American culture.⁵⁷ The narrative has taken hold, becoming myth and so a strong impact can be made by countering the conventions of that myth. In a postmodern era there is a desire to see these ideas in unexpected lights that challenge and question grand narratives. I see the same thing happening in the postresistance narrative. The pieces that helped forge the resistance movement fall away and then the question of how these pieces continue to exist and interrelate in a multiplicity still remains. I see Ishmael Reed's *Flight to Canada* as an attempt to bring these voices together in the two historical dimensions of post Emancipation and post Civil Rights America and question the assumptions of both narratives. The place of the plantation and Canada is explored in the light of these changes. While Tarantino blows up the plantation, Reed blows up the concept of Canada.

The basic plot structure of the novel consists of Raven Quickskill, an escaped slave from Arthur Swille's Virginia plantation, trying to make his way to freedom in Canada. He learned to read while being a house slave at the plantation and he uses this skill to become an anti-slavery writer and orator after he escapes. The money from his poem "Flight to Canada" allows him to get to Canada. The poem is addressed to "Massa Swille" and tells him how he has escaped to Canada and how he undermined his master during his time as a slave. The poem enacts a kind of slave narrative before he actually

⁵⁷ In an article about this proliferation of slave films this year, "How 2013 Became the Year of the Slavery Film", some critics mention the confluence of these films with the Obama presidency and the desire to remember the "good old days." Another critic adds that there is a comfort level in looking at black people in the past, rather than depicting contemporary black people. The article ends with the point that these films do very little to nuance the history of slavery and a larger cultural discussion about the legacies of slavery needs to be had (Samuels).

makes the trip to Canada which undermines the narrative frame of captivity to freedom. It also opens the novel which foreshadows the events of the novel and so narratively disturbs this progression. This journey from Emancipation City to Canada is not completely necessary for Raven since the Emancipation Proclamation has been signed, but the truly evil nature of Swille and Quickskill's symbolic desire for a place of pure freedom drive Quickskill to get to Canada. He journeys to Canada with Quaw Quaw, who is a Native American princess and the husband of Pirate Jack, who built Emancipation City. She is having an affair with Quickskill and is representative of another minority under threat by the dominant American culture, but she does not understand Quickskill's interest in talking about race until she finds out the unsavoury history of her husband and his conquest of Native Americans. Once Quickskill gets to Canada he sees that there is not much difference between the two countries: violence against minorities still occurs and the same modern corporatization of culture exists, wherein downtown St. Catherine's looks like any American strip.

The narrative shifts between Quickskill's story and the story of Uncle Robin, another house slave who stayed on Swille's plantation. Uncle Robin has a lot of power in Swille's household, and, as we learn after Swille's violent fiery death, Robin fixed the will so that he gets the plantation instead of Swille's relatives. This reversal of the Uncle Tom character trope is one of the many satirical upendings of narrative tropes. The narrative ends as it began (making it not completely linear) with Quickskill's return to the plantation, after his disappointing time in Canada, to live with Uncle Robin. Quickskill is in the process of writing Robin's slave narrative after Robin rejects Harriet Beecher Stowe's offer to write it. He does not want his story stolen in the way that other slave narratives had been appropriated by white publishers. Robin trusts Raven: "Quickskill would write Uncle Robin's story in such a way that, using a process the old curers used, to lay hands on the story would be lethal to the thief" (Reed 11). Beecher Stowe is a person of ridicule in the novel because she is accused of stealing Josiah Henson's

narrative to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁵⁸ The notion of who is writing the story and the power that narrative has are key elements of the novel, reflecting the resistance to a narrative meant to represent all people.

This novel blends two major upheavals in African American history: the Civil War and Emancipation, and the Civil Rights Movement. Even though the novel is set in the Civil War era, the two time periods seem to exist in parallel dimensions. These historical time periods involve a rupture and a shifting of what freedom means for African Americans and, therefore, contribute to the fractured relationship between Canada as a location and as a concept. There are many examples of anachronism in the novel, best exemplified by Raven and Quaw Quaw watching footage of Lincoln's assassination on television. Other examples include Robin flying on a plane to get supplies for the plantation or Mrs. Swille referencing the term "free love". This unstable nature of time melds the Civil War period and the Civil Rights Movement and gives the appearance that nothing has changed, but also adds to the questioning of collective memory and the multiplicity of voices present in the novel. Nothing is stable in this melded time. The fact that things have not progressed, while at the same time, familiar narratives do not exist, unsettles the novel. Raven is the character that is most aware of these disjunctions of time and place after his disappointment in Canada and so he understands the burdensome nature of collective destiny and narrative frames. The non-linear narrative and the poem at the beginning are the signs that the narrative is resistant to the concept of collective protest and to the mythic concept of Canada as a place of freedom. This novel is rich with meaning and has produced multiple critical approaches, some of which will be investigated below.

Many critics respond to Ishmael Reed as a writer who marks a turning point in African American writing. A self-consciously historical kind of writing emerges with

⁵⁸ Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) is an anti-slavery novel whose popularity helped to fund and bring support to the abolition movement in the 1850s. She did reveal in *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* that she took inspiration from the narrative of Josiah Henson. With his newfound popularity, Henson published another two versions of his narrative that sold well and so the relationship of Stowe and Henson was a "profitable" one (Foster 147).

Reed. He is important to my argument because, temporally, he is writing after the Civil Rights Movement, and responding to it; he also plays with the historical and narrative paradigms of the movement. History and myth being embedded within a place figure prominently in his work. For example, Reed's 1972 novel *Mumbo Jumbo* is set in Harlem and includes many references to literary figures linked to the place. *Flight to Canada* explores both the space of the plantation and the conception of Canada.

Reed is also part of the New Black Aesthetic which links to the methodological view of this project that culture is vital to understanding the values of a particular group. This generation of writers in the New Black Aesthetic implicitly saw writing as a means of survival on a material racial and spiritual level but, as Reginald Martin details, they also believed that some action had to be taken against inequity (Martin 3-4). So a "call to action became the standard grid through which writings of the 1960s were to be viewed, and these writings became a part of the *new* black aesthetic at that point" (15). Reed is also part of a tide of writers who, after Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940), were less likely to write an accommodationist novel and more likely to write a militant protest novel (Schraufnagel ix). *Flight to Canada* undoubtedly advocates for dissent from the dominant society (including by working within the slave system to bring down the master), but not by violent means. Rather, the novel argues for recognition of multiculturalism, as many critics have pointed out. Some of these critics include Patrick McGee who says that Reed sees 'blackness' as "a dimension of a larger cultural process of formation that he sometimes identifies as multiculturalism" (10). Richard Walsh also believes that Reed is advocating an anti-hierarchical 'multiculture' (68). This is important because his critique is that the collectivity of the movement was really speaking in a monolingual manner about what it means to be black in America, so the idea of multiple voices and the allowance of a multiculture fosters various outlooks on blackness. However, Christine Levecq complicates this argument slightly. She looks at how Reed critiques race-based nationalism in *Flight to Canada* by calling for a new global vision epitomized by Canada, what she calls a "postnational, postmodern gesture" (281). But she concludes that with Quickskill's return to the South at the end of the novel, "Reed retreats from this postmodern vision back into a nation-based philosophy, in which multiculturalism carries the hope of a nation without racism" (296). Therefore, this novel

is complex in that it ultimately reverts to the protagonist in the South; however, I see the disillusionment with Canada as a powerful critique of the grand narrative of escape from slavery. There is no true place of freedom so the resistance has to take place within and through multiple viewpoints.

The novel, then, has engendered numerous and varied critical perspectives.⁵⁹ Therefore, I will highlight some approaches to the novel, but my focus will be on place and the voices of the collective in relation to the Civil Rights Movement, as well as some of the examinations of the slave narrative that have influenced this dissertation. One of these critical perspectives is from Christian Moraru's article on the textual references in the novel. The novel presents a theme of cultural appropriation in the literary sphere and this kind of intertextuality works to unseat official history (101). According to Moraru, *Flight to Canada* 'parasitizes' the slave narrative genre. This metaphor of the parasite relates to the postresistance writers using the narratives of the resistance movements and presenting a new vision that disrupts the monologic ideal of collective action and shows the multiplicity within it.

Much of the criticism is focused on defining the generic conventions of Reed's novel and what category it fits into. Specifically, many critics respond to it in terms of the conversation around postmodernism, although many also see Reed as rejecting the classifications of dominant culture. For example, Glen Anthony Harris argues that Reed's novels can be considered postmodern, although through a black method (especially with the incorporation of the "Voodoo" aesthetic, a desire to bring back African and Haitian religious traditions to the African American community) in order not to repeat the way that ante-bellum slave narratives were co-opted by white abolitionists.⁶⁰ His is an "open work" in which "the articulation of a distinct Afro-American political and cultural history

⁵⁹ For example, Michael A. Chaney looks at the role of technology and the slave cyborg in the novel. Laura L. Mielke argues that the novel challenges the description of Reed as a misogynist and gives a feminist reading of the novel. Richard Walsh includes it in his work on innovative American fiction or fiction that is inventive in form and argument (Walsh *Novel*).

⁶⁰ For more on the Voodoo/ hoodoo aesthetic in Reed see Glenda R. Carpo (2005), Patrick McGee (1997) or Madhu Dubey (2003) who discusses it in the context of postmodernism

is a major goal” (471). Harris also notes that the way that Reed extends the “institutional forms of oppression from the past into the present” supports the idea that slave narrative tropes made their way into Civil Rights Movement narratives, showing the continuation of oppressions based on race, such as lack of voting rights and mobility. His last point, that “the strategy of Reed’s fiction is to confront the norms of society with counter-norms, with a difference that cannot be assimilated without exposing the contradictions of the system”, also offers another angle on the use of postmodernism (472).

Most significantly, there are multiple critics who include *Flight to Canada* as part of a genre entitled the “postmodern slave narrative.” Timothy A. Spaulding believes that these contemporary writers “create an alternative and fictional historiography based on a subjective, fantastic, and anti-realistic representation of slavery.” These non-mimetic texts claim authority over the history of slavery and play with its foundational narratives. He suggests that writers such as Reed, Toni Morrison or Octavia Butler “force us to question the ideologies embedded within the ‘realistic’ representation of slavery in tradition history and historical fiction” (2). According to Spaulding, these works engage with the postmodern, though rooted in black history, to create a more nuanced view of black identity (3-4). Both the slave narrative and the postmodern slave narrative are a cultural critique along with an expression of identity (10). The postmodern slave narrative is connected to the postresistance era because the narratives of the movement seek to create one vision of black identity while *Flight to Canada* argues for multiple identities and narratives, especially in and through the individual’s relationship to place.

In a similar vein, Ashraf Rushdy deems narratives like Reed’s “Neo-slave narratives”, or contemporary novels that assume the form of an antebellum slave narrative (3). Rushdy, Spaulding, and Brian Norman each contend that something established in a culture can be reworked and rewritten in a new social climate. Rushdy specifically states that “from the social, historiographical, and intellectual change in the sixties emerged the four Neo-slave narratives of the seventies and eighties” (5). Among the texts he analyses is *Flight to Canada*. Further, he acknowledges that there is certain nostalgia but also a critical examination of the movement because each author started writing in the time period when they became enamoured of, but then disenchanted with,

Black Power politics (5). He also sees these neo-slave narratives as engaged with the movement because they saw the appropriation of the slave narrative in the 1960s so they wanted to challenge the duplication of what happened in the antebellum period, when white people regulated this form (6). As well, these writers, including Reed, “wished to return to the literary form in which African American subjects had first expressed their political subjectivity in order to mark the moment of a newly emergent black political subject” (7). The resistance movement, because it combines the protesters into a collective, creates a subject subsumed under various narratives about blackness and power that may not apply to all. The postresistance period allows for the emergence of a subject that negotiates through these narratives and questions how they fit into their individual subjectivity, and not just collective memory.

Rushdy sees *Flight to Canada* as being in dialogue with the 1960s (99). The novel, according to Rushdy, participates in a debate between “ideals of resistance and accommodation, between myths of slave docility and romances of slave resistance, between symbols of black messianism and black nationalism” (103). The playing with character, time, and place in the novel allows for reconceptualizations of these myths and symbols. Rushdy also talks about the narrative creation of the characters in *Flight to Canada*, and how the slaves perform their racialized stereotypical roles which creates a caricatured effect. He also supports my point that this novel contains multiple voices. Even though most of the story happens through Raven’s eyes, the narration also allows a glimpse into the places that Raven has escaped from, not allowing the reader to ever forget Raven’s master just as Raven can never truly escape his bonds of slavery. This is seen in a larger sense through the theme of writing: “we find Raven referring to the process by which stories become merged so that the writing is no longer about the self or the other, but about the intersubjective relations between the two” (Rushdy 128). Rushdy calls these novels “discontinuous in their play with voice and their insistence on intersubjectivity” and argues that other voices subvert the ‘original’ narrator’ (231). This is a key issue of social movements: how they affect the voices of individuals of the collective and how the collective interacts after the movement. We can see this play out in a metaphorical sense in these novels with their heightened notions of time, history, and narrative. The antebellum slave narrative did focus on one voice and challenge a singular

voice: “The four Neo-slave narratives written in the seventies and eighties produce communal voices that capture the best spirit of the social movements of the sixties while resisting the extreme version of individualism the author of their formal prototype endorsed. It is but one more means by which they contest the dictates of master texts and recall the social origins of contemporary African American subjectivity” (232). This reassertion of subjectivity is important, as is the fact that there are multiple stories about place to be told. These stories do not all align with collective memory and myths.

Rushdy is not the only critic who deals with transformations in African American literature after the Civil Rights Movement. Brian Norman has written about what he calls the neo-segregation narrative. In fact, Norman calls the two genres “fraternal twins” because even though they are born in the same era, they look at different historical disenfranchisements (44). These narratives are “contemporary fictional accounts, often historiographic, of Jim Crow” (3). These narratives also highlight the presence of Jim Crow in contemporary society even if desegregation is thought to be complete. My examination of postresistance narratives also points to the lingering problems that the movements were not able to tackle before the collective movement disbanded (20). These kinds of critical examinations allow for the idea that literature can have a historiographical impact by questioning how we tell the stories of the past.

However, these readings mostly focus on how the slave past is depicted in literature, while I am interested in the intersection of the narratives of the slave past with the narratives of the Civil Rights Movement. Richard Walsh is the main critic that discusses the anachronistic connection between the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement extensively. He sees how both events led to little advancement in black rights and that the modes of oppression have now just become more abstract. The ways black people are perceived in society has not changed; there has just been an evolutionary transformation of actual slavery into cultural slavery. He argues against the monoculture of a society that still enslaves all of the ostensibly freed slaves (Walsh “‘A Man’s Story’” 63). Reed’s conceptions of the need for more cultural diversity “compel a revolution in America’s concept of itself” (71). In a narrative sense, Reed disregards the sequence of historical events, mixing the historical understanding of the Civil War with the

technology and views of the 1960s. Walsh understands this disruption as a negation of history as a linear evolution and as a way to undermine the Civil War's "conventional significance as a watershed in Afro-American history" (59). Just as culture does not change over time, borders also do not matter to the emancipation of slaves. This is why Quickskill's venture into Canada is unsuccessful, as it is not the liberating place it appears to be from the slave narrative (65-66). This idea connects to my point about the movement destabilizing place and the question of *where* people are actually free.

Most major African American artists focus on the past, as Keith Byerman points out (1). He sees these narratives as trauma stories that describe the psychological and social effects of suffering, and, more importantly, "they tell of the erasure of such history and, as a consequence, its continued power to shape black life" (3). Reed's focus is not so much on the erasure of history but on trying to understand the multiplicity of voices which emerge from the movement in a fractured way. He is also reclaiming history in the way in which characters can overcome trauma through their own visions of power and expands the horizons of black experience through the character of Quickskill.

The issue of horizons brings me to another aspect of how critics have approached the notion of place in African American literature. One focus for critics has been the shifting view of cities. For example, Alain Locke in *The New Negro* (1925) looked at Harlem as a visionary city (Scruggs 4). This concept of the city as a community or home continues in the black tradition, and could be extended to Emancipation City in *Flight to Canada*. Charles Scruggs sees a shift in black literary criticism after the Civil Rights Movement, where the visionary city of Locke turns into a "City of Dreadful Night." With the rise of violent resistance in the 1970s and the economic and political failures of the movement, the city becomes a hell. This is a similar vision to the one in *Flight to Canada*. Raven Quickskill yearns to go to Canada where he will be truly free (even though he already lives in Emancipation City), but that dream changes into a hell when he finds out what Canada is really like and the dream dissipates.

Scruggs shows that the visionary city as a symbol of community, civilization, and home is buried underneath the brute fact of the city in the twentieth century (4). These are

some of the ideas that *Flight to Canada* complicates: both Emancipation City and Canada turn out to be uncertain places that do not offer that idea of community, while the plantation as the space of suffering turns out to be the place of return and community with Uncle Robin. The Civil Rights Movement fractures notions of which spaces are safe for African Americans. Scruggs believes that it was Civil Rights activism that made visible those that were invisible: “The conjunction of Civil Rights activism in the south, rebellion in the northern cities, and technological revolution in the media gave black Americans national attention they had rarely received since the abolitionist agitation one hundred years earlier. By the end of the 1960s there was massive public evidence of crisis, produced in large part by an Afro-American militancy that drew attention to the social conditions of their oppression” (6). This visibility accomplished through collective appearances in the public areas of the country created the need to consider the true places where African Americans ‘belonged’ in the country. Just as the movement operates on narrative frameworks that depend on language to maintain unity and coherence, the imaginary conception of place depends on narrative to create it.

Reginald Martin discusses the vision of Canada in the African American narrative imagination: “Canada is used in the novel on various levels of meaning. First, it is used as the literal, historical region where slaves might flee to be free. Secondly, Canada is used as a metaphor for happiness, that is, any set of physical constructs or circumstances which combine to make an individual character happy or satisfied may be referred to as Canada and are joined and placed on a periodic, temporal plane for the rhetorical end of asserting that there is not – yet must be – a Canada” (96). These two levels work to create the grand narrative that there is a visionary place to escape to once the either literal or metaphorical chains are broken.

Another critical perspective to consider in relation to place is the Canadian one. Canadian writer George Elliot Clarke, in an article on African Canadian identity, argues that African American blackness is a kind of model blackness and is a way to conceive and organize African Canadians. This is the case even though African American discourse on Canada as a promised land has become an archetype in African American thought (Clarke 2). He explains how “black idealizations of Canada stem from the

abolitionist propaganda of the 1850s, promulgated by writers such as Mary Ann Shadd” (4) so these images are built around narratives that effect collective memory. He mentions Reed’s *Flight to Canada* and how the novel offers a “slashing critique” of Canada and depicts it both as a “hallowed space of deliverance and as a U.S. puppet state with its own tawdry racisms” (7). This outsider perspective on the American vision of Canada from a Canadian connects to the strange multiplicities and uncertainties in the novel that question collective memory and do not allow a reader to be comfortable or knowledgeable about the narratives taking place. By presenting the unstable concept of Canada from the point of view of former slaves who want to integrate, those who want to resist, Uncle Tom Slaves and slave masters, the novel compels the reader must unpack the imagined nature of this location.

One of the key elements of the novel that gives it its uncertain and, at times, absurd qualities is the names of the characters. Along with the anachronism, the names are meant to signal that we are in a world that is slightly divorced from the real world. While we recognize real historical names such as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Abraham Lincoln, such names as Barraccuda, 40s, Raven Quickskill, and Quaw Quaw place the emphasis on the people of colour who are trying to find their place in the world in the two dimensions of post Civil War and post Civil Rights America. Robert Eliot Fox discusses the significance of the naming in the novel. Allegorical naming has significance in the postresistance period because it signals a use of history and mythology to create familiar associations, while also undercutting them. Because *Flight to Canada* in particular is playing with exaggerated stereotypes, the names also have obvious significance, but as Fox point out, they have myriad meanings:

Flight naturally suggests escape, the fugitive slave’s bid for freedom. It is a literal flight as well, since Quickskill travels by jumbo jet, and the name Raven (a black bird) reinforces this image. We are likely to make an immediate association with Poe’s raven, with his everlasting cry of ‘Nevermore.’ Quickskill, whose surname suggests both inventiveness and spontaneity, is unable to countenance slavery any longer and therefore ‘flies.’ Canada stands for the North, which was the dream of both slaves and post-Emancipation blacks – a dream which, like the

American Dream itself, often proved false and elusive. In a sense, then, this is a flight to *Ca-nada*, a flight to no-where, to no-thing. Reed would have us understand that slavery and freedom are not geographically determined, which is why we find Raven back in the South after his 'escape'. (69-70)

This analysis touches on a few key points: Raven's name resisting a simple meaning, Raven's character in conversation with the other voices of the novel about the symbol of Canada and the idea of escape and mobility. These postresistance novels question narratives of resistance and create multiplicity and uncertainty out of a seemingly cohesive collective. The results of the collective movement and the consequences of the past are underlying issues in these novels.

The critique of Canada is a repeated motif in the novel and most distinctly shows the dialogic concerns of the postresistance novel. We hear multiple characters give their view of Canada which shows the unstable nature of this geographic area in the novel. Each character's vision of Canada adds a metaphorical archeological layer to the conception of the place. Quickskill is undoubtedly the most idealistic about the freedom that Canada will offer. However, it seems that he has a reason to be because it is clear that a proclamation by Abraham Lincoln would not do much to dissuade Swille from sadistically getting his slaves back. Emancipation City may seem by its name to be a haven for Quickskill but Quickskill still has to escape from Swille's slave catchers while he is there. He also experiences an existential kind of slavery even when he has escaped. Even when he is in Buffalo at a meeting of an anti-slavery society and very close to reaching Canada, he feels the looks of other slaves in the establishment:

Slaves judged other slaves like the auctioneer and his clients judged him. Was there no end to slavery? Was a slave condemned to serve another Master as soon as he got rid of one? Were overseers to be replaced by new overseers? Was this some game, some fickle punishment for sins committed in former lives? Slavery on top of slavery? Would he ever be free to do what he pleased as long as he didn't interfere with another man's rights? Slaves held each other in bondage; a

hostile stare from one slave criticizing the behaviour of another slave could be just as painful as a spiked collar – a gesture as fettering as a cage. (144)

This perpetuation of structures and behaviour that slaves were born into is a real fear for Quickskill. How does one break the metaphorical chains of the slavery after the physical ones have been broken? This kind of perpetuation can be seen in the postresistance era with the split between those who believed in non-violent methods of resistance versus militaristic forms of resistance embodied by the Black Panthers. How does one prevent a reconceptualization of Jim Crow in another form?⁶¹ As the collective movement disbands in what ways will oppression be replicated? This is what Raven fears in both dimensions of time.

But of course there is also the real physical threat for Quickskill as an escaped slave. A man on the yacht that is taking them to Canada asks why he is running away now that the war is over and Raven replies that Swille “sees me as his chattel, and he won’t rest until he recovers me” (145). Raven’s deep desire to escape is partly felt in this knowledge that he will always be property as long as Swille is alive so it is a matter of simply being in a place where that reality can potentially escape his mind. Raven and Quaw Quaw find out that they are on Yankee Jack’s yacht and Quaw Quaw confronts Jack about his actions of raiding her tribe. Quaw Quaw is upset and asks Raven to turn back. However, there is nothing that will dissuade Raven now: “I mean, Quaw Quaw, I’ve been looking forward to this all my life. Ever since I was a kid, the old people talked about Canada. I have to have my Canada” (149). This mythic vision has taken root from childhood which also shows the way in which a narrative permeates within the collective. Yankee Jack tries to disenchant him about the wonders of Canada, but Raven is adamant that “Canada is beautiful” and that he hears that “on some of the Canadian freeways trucks aren’t even allowed” (150). His utopian vision of Canada continues and it is one where Canada is pure and not as affected by technology as the United States. The

⁶¹ Many have argued that a new Jim Crow has taken root in the United States with a prison industrial complex that incarcerates African Americans at a much higher rate than whites. See Michelle Alexander’s book, *The New Jim Crow* (2010).

narrative builds towards this cathartic arrival in this ideal place, following the archetypes of the slave narrative.

Finally comes the moment of what should be the catharsis of Raven Quickskill as he nears the banks of Canada. Because of Raven's certainty, there is anticipation to see him gain his freedom joyously. However, "he was too tired and depressed to greet this prospect with joyful exclamation of former slaves who reached this moment of Jubilation" (154). After this sentence, the narrative inserts italic text of someone who had ferried slaves to Canada in the past. There is a stark contrast to Raven's subdued reaction:

"They said, 'Is this Canada?' I said, 'Yes there are no slaves in this country'; then I witnessed a scene I shall never forget. They seemed to be transformed; anew light shone in their eyes, their tongues were loosed, they laughed and cried, prayed and sang praises, fell upon the ground and kissed it, hugged and kissed each other, crying, 'Bress de Lord! Oh! I'se free before I die!'" (155).

This powerful testimony that supports the Canada myth is undercut by Raven's reaction and his experience in Canada. This narrative insertion encapsulates the ideal progressive nature of the slave narrative and the rhetoric of the Exodus story. Instead, Raven experiences a Canada devoid of this imagined meaning. He has not been there long after reuniting with Quaw Quaw when he sees his friend Carpenter who has been beaten up and is returning to the United States. Raven calls St. Catherine's "aesthetically unsatisfying" when Carpenter shows him a picture of which "looked like any American strip near any American airport." Carpenter tells them about vigilantes harassing fugitive slaves and the fact that "of the ten top Canadian corporations, four are dominated by American interests" (160). Quickskill gets more and more depressed and when Carpenter finally tells him that Swille is dead, Raven does not have an excited reaction: "To tell you the truth, I don't really care at this point, Carpenter. After what you've said about Canada. All my life I had hopes about it, that whatever went wrong I would always have Canada to go to" (161). This quick disillusionment means the Raven does not waste any time crossing the border back to America and returning to Uncle Robin's plantation. The

reversal of the North and the South in the trajectory of the narrative places Raven outside of the frame linking place and freedom.

Raven's return to the South bookends the novel, but again the narrative does not depict this return, which again undermines the journey aspect of the slave narrative. Fox comments on the significance of the South to the novel: "However, Quickskill's return to the South also reflects a return that many blacks have made in more modern times, both as a result of changes in the South and long years of frustration in the North...One's roots are in one's soul, and so they can 'travel,' but when one is also a son of the soil, as they say in Africa, one always wants to return to the place of origins. This is one principal reason why Quickskill goes back, after Canada, to 'ole Virginny': it's the South in him" (75). Even if Canada had not worked out, why does he return to the plantation, the site of his slavery, rather than to a place like Emancipation City? Well, first Emancipation City seems to be a strange middle ground of the novel. The name makes it seem as if this could be a place of real liberation preferable to the ideal that is Canada. However, the slave catchers can still get in and Raven seems to live an itinerant existence there by house-sitting for Abolitionists (61). This is not a true home for him and even in the Slave Hole Café, where the community congregates, the North Star is prominent on the wallpaper that "shows a map of the heavens" (66). The emancipation in this place is not enough; it is merely a stop-gap in trying to attain true freedom. The novel shows a multiplicity of options to enact narratives of freedom but they are never enough and end in disappointment. So Raven's eventual return to the plantation when it is under Uncle Robin's control is also complicated and uncertain. Will the space of the plantation ever be truly 'home' or a space of freedom? Or is just the fact that Raven will be able to write there enough to satisfy his desires? Once a resistance movement claims a place to protest, that place is imbued with meaning and does not easily disconnect from the political which makes these narratives difficult to question.

This is Raven's experience of believing in the idealist vision of Canada and then getting confronted with reality. But there are multiple voices in this story that comment on the Canada myth, its instability and its lack. Uncle Robin uses the ideal of Canada to reassure Swille that he is loyal to him. Swille asks him what he thinks of Canada and

Robin responds: “Canada. I do admit I have heard about the place from time to time, Mr. Swille, but I loves it here so much that...that I would never think of leaving here. These rolling hills. Mammy singing spirituals in the morning before them good old biscuits. Watching ‘Sleepy Time Down South’ on the Late Show. That’s my idea of Canada. Most assuredly, Mr. Swille, this is my Canada. You’d better believe it” (19). Although the narrative has not made it clear how Robin gets possession of Swille’s castle, the reader knows that this is an ironic response since he is only playing the Uncle Tom character. However, as Raven finds out, Canada does not fulfill mythic expectations so Robin’s vision of the South as a version of Canada does come true in the end. This ironic turn is part of Reed’s exploration of how African Americans are looking for their place in America. Since the passage from Africa to the Americas, their place has been determined for them, while in the post Emancipation and post Civil Rights eras, newly acquired freedoms meant determining what doors were open to them and whether the utopian Canada exists. This creates the opportunity for a dialogic language that makes the notion of place unstable. At the end of the novel, as Robin stands on his new property, he muses about what Raven found in Canada: *“I wonder did he find what he was looking for in Canada? Probably all that freedom gets to you. Too much freedom makes you lazy. Nothing to fight. Well, I guess Canada, like freedom, is a state of mind...I couldn’t do for no Canada. Not me. I’m too old. I done had my Canadas”* (178). Robin comes from the perspective that he can create his own version of freedom and he does not have to subscribe to how others describe freedom. His takeover of the plantation creates a different kind of escape from slavery that does not involve a journey. Robin is willing to fight, however, for his version of freedom while there are other voices who deny that the narrative of freedom even exists.

A slave called Cato who is described as a “butterscotched version” of Swille, implying that Cato is Swille’s son with a female slave, is another kind of Uncle Tom who serves Swille and has a dislike for Robin. He finds out about Raven’s poem and that Raven is hiding in Emancipation City. He tells Swille that there is no such thing as Canada: “The part about Canada is just done to throw you off his trail. That nigger ain’t in no Canada. There ain’t no such place; that’s just reactionary mysticism. I never seed no Canada, so there can’t be none. The only thing exists is what I see. Seeing is

believing” (52). This disbelief in Canada shows that some narratives do not take hold for everyone in a cultural group. It emphasizes that not everyone had the same vision for the post Civil Rights period. Barracuda, the mammy figure of the narrative who takes care of Mrs. Swille, is yet another kind of Uncle Tom character and thinks of the idea of escaping the plantation as pure insanity:

She say she'd heard that 40s, Quickskill and Leechfield were having a hard time of it and that Quickskill had gone crazy and was imagining that he was in Canada. She said that she always knew Quickskill was crazy. As for Canada, she said they skin niggers up there and makes lampshades and soap dishes out of them, and it's more barbarous in Toronto than darkest Africa, a place where we come from and for that reason should pray hard every night for the Godliness of a man like Swille to deliver us from such a place. (57)

This view completely distorts the Canada narrative myth. Unlike Cato who does not believe it at all, Barracuda imagines Canada as a hell-scape that is worse than the slavery they are experiencing in America.

Lastly, the mythic idea of a Canada as a place of freedom can also be appropriated by those committing the atrocities that create the need for that myth. One can see the power of myth when it penetrates multiple segments of the society. When the rhetoric of the movement gets beyond the voices of the oppressed collective it can either change outlooks on the issue or be used by the oppressors to conceal the oppression they are causing. Arthur Swille is a sadist in more ways than just being a slave owner. He is part of a group of Sadists led by Lord Gladstone (a friend of the Marquis de Sade) who love whips and flagellation. This Sadist group wants to make the South their headquarters and “they’ve referred to Virginia as the Sadist’s Canada” (127). The myth of Canada is also applied to the proclivities of the main villain of the novel. The slave master invoking the concept of Canada for himself undermines the power that it can have for those who actually need the myth. Critic Reginald Martin points out that Canada is used as metaphor for happiness and this metaphor is “placed on a periodic, temporal plane for the rhetorical end of asserting that there is not – yet must be – a Canada” (96). Therefore

Canada as a place plays an important role in the novel as the title indicates. However, it is an unexpected role that goes against the tropes of slave narratives and undercuts collective frameworks

As we see from all these versions of Canada, Raven as the main character is not the only voice in the story. Of course, Raven is a central character and his poem drives the narrative but his story is not one of progress and catharsis: after all he ends up in the same place that he escaped from. He is one of a few characters who provide a kind of counter-history. These multiple voices that make up this strange anachronistic world perform a postmodern vision that is different from the dominant discourse (Byerman 24). The other two slaves that escape with Raven have completely different visions of how to continue their lives after slavery. Leechfield makes money by mailing out photographs of himself as a slave, essentially renting himself out as a slave for the day. He is benefiting economically by perpetuating the culture of slavery. He criticizes Raven for not understanding what he does because Raven was a house slave. Leechfield thinks he can just send Swille money for his freedom and be done with everything. Raven responds with the critical argument that they should not have to pay for themselves because they were kidnapped in the first place. However Leechfield says that this fact does not matter because “this is a white man’s country” (74). Therefore his solution is to work within the system already constructed and not try to change it. This was the mentality of many after the Civil Rights Movement. Now that certain rights were granted they were content to integrate and not change the underlying economic system.

The other slave that escaped, named 40s, has a different way of approaching the world after his escape. He turns to isolation and guns to protect himself from Swille’s slave catchers so his approach is the militaristic and potentially destructive one. Unlike Raven who thinks he can escape to Canada and therefore escape from the plantation, 40s knows this is impossible. When Raven tells him to put down the gun because they’re not in Virginia anymore, 40s responds this way: “That’s what you think. Shit. Virginia everywhere. Virginia outside. You might be Virginia” (76). His is a paranoia that extends to worrying about immigrant and Papal plots to take over the country, and a refusal of Raven’s entreaty that if they pulled together they could be stronger. But he rejects any

notion of an organization: “You have a organization, they be fighting over which one gone head it; they be fightin about who gone have the money; then they be complainin about things, but when it come down to work, they nowhere to be found” (79). This isolationist and militaristic approach to post-slavery also reflects the post Civil Rights approach of those who wanted to attack issues of oppression from the outside, such as the Black Panthers, rather than working within.

The last approach in this dialogic conception of place and freedom is from Quickskill who is the thinker and poet who thinks he can change the world through words. When he tells 40s that it is his poem that may get him into trouble with Swille’s men and that “words built the world and words can destroy the world”, 40s responds that he will take the rifle while Raven can take the words (81). This belief that writing can persuade and be a political act is also a part of civil resistance. The Black Arts Movement and political African American writers show the legacy of this view. There is, however, also an economic component to this endeavor like there is for Leechfield, but Raven believes his art counters the system of slavery and allows him to have a voice and power in the situation. Raven connects his writing to his vision of Canada because the money he gets from his writing gets him to Canada:

While others had their tarot cards, their ouija boards, their I-Ching, their cowrie shells, he had his ‘writings.’ They were his bows and arrows. He was so much against slavery that he had begun to include prose and poetry in the same book so that there would be no more arbitrary boundaries between them. He preferred Canada to slavery, whether Canada was exile, death, art, liberation, or a woman. Each man to his own Canada. There was much avian imagery in the poetry of slaves. Poetry about dreams and flight. They wanted to cross that Black Rock Ferry to freedom even though they had different notions as to what freedom was. They often disagreed about it, Leechfield, 40s. But it was his writing that got him to Canada. ‘Flight to Canada’ was responsible for getting him to Canada. And so for him, freedom was his writing. (88-89)

Here he acknowledges that he has a different vision of freedom than the others but he holds on to that which gives him confidence. This link between the ability to read and write as a form of freedom and Canada as a place of freedom is an important one for Raven. Not everyone agrees that writing can have an impact on changing minds but even if he does not impact anyone else, it is a powerful tool for Raven to keep believing in himself. Even when Canada is not the place he wants it to be and he returns to the South, his writing remains an integral part of him. As I have indicated, many critics believe that Reed is putting forth an ideal of multiculturalism in this novel that goes beyond the nation-state. I also see in this postresistance period a need to discover why the collective movement breaks apart. And these differing opinions and approaches to freedom may be part of the reason, which is why isolating the constituent elements of this multiplicity is integral to understanding the movement and how the oppressed group copes with this multiplicity.

The conception of Canada in Reed's *Flight to Canada* represents the indefinable nature of freedom and place after the Civil Rights Movement. The narrative resists the slave narrative form through Raven's return to the South and the slippery notions of time that represent the infinite forms of oppression that are continually not resolved. The mythical binaries of place are reversed as Canada is not what it has seems in slave narratives, while the South presents an opportunity to regain power and a place of one's own. The presence of multiple voices which manipulate the myth of Canada for their own needs questions notions of collective memory and the narrative framework of the Civil Rights Movement. This novel comes from the postresistance period which reflects this feeling of uncertainty and fragmentation. This fragmentation of place, time, and voice also reflected in the Polish post-Solidarity period.

3.3 Occupation within the Walls: Stefan Chwin's *Hanemann [Death in Danzig]*

In Stefan Chwin's semi-autobiographical text, *Krótką historią pewnego żartu* (1991) [*A Short History of a Certain Joke*], Chwin's younger self watches his father remove wallpaper from a room in their Gdańsk home. This removal reveals old newspaper pages

that, among other things, show pictures of the Gdańsk streets, but they have German names instead of the Polish ones he is familiar with. The young Chwin lives in post-war Gdańsk so he is amazed that this evidence of the German past was lying dormant within the room and also feels a kind of fear and strange desire for these traces to survive (19). Through the use of this kind of archeology of the city along with a child narrator who is naive about politics and history, we see him come into contact with elements of the past and discover a connection to past German inhabitants of the city (Bossak-Herbst 123). The imbedded mythological archeology of the city destabilizes the notion of place through different time periods and perspectives. This discovery of similitude challenges the binary of bad German/ good Pole and the Polish myth of continued attack upon its borders which is the basis of the messianic martyrdom national myth. History and myth are embedded in this city, but it is the individuals within the narrative of the city that challenge the intrinsic connection between the imagined place and the physical location.

The Polish city of Gdańsk can be seen as a microcosm for Polish national narratives of attack and occupation. A port city in the north of Poland, it has at times been held by the Poles, Germans, and at other times deemed a “Free City.” The treaty of Versailles after the First World War determined that Danzig (as it was called then since it was mostly inhabited by Germans) would be a free city, as a compromise. But this caused grief for both side as Poles only had a small corridor access to the sea. After the Second World War the area was given back to Poland officially (although their historical claim on it was dubious) and any German inhabitants remaining had to leave as the Red Army approached. Carl Tighe, who has done an extensive study on Gdańsk and its history, argues that “Poland’s claim to Danzig was part of the mythologising in which the new state indulged, part of its creative compensation for the years of partition” (94). The communist government after the war used this narrative of constant attack, especially from the years of Partition in the eighteenth century, to establish the Polishness of the city and to legitimize itself as not in every respect anti-nationalist. For example, “by the end of May 1945 a special commission was at work to change all the place – and street – names from German into their Polish equivalents” (206), and the Soviets ‘repopulated’ the city with people from eastern areas which had been annexed by the Soviet Union, a fact that makes the myth of Poles coming back to their homeland more dubious. Names

matter in this city, as we will see in the work of Stefan Chwin. To favour Polish Gdańsk over German Danzig is to make a “historical claim” on these lands for one side or the other (xix).

The history then shows us how this city is a locus for the narrative of messianic martyrdom that has permeated Polish collective memory. Zubrzycki claims that the archetype of messianism “provided a grammar for Poles to make sense of the political situation in which they lived and a vocabulary to talk about it” (27). This myth then has rhetorically shaped the nation since the Partitions, similar to the one whereby the slave narrative from the antebellum period has provided a way to talk about freedom. Zubrzycki also states that messianism has provided a “framework for interpreting Polish history in its entirety” (28). Therefore, the idea that novels such as Chwin’s disrupt this framework of Polish messianism is important for the encounter of different voices and narratives. The fact that Poland has been occupied or partitioned by various powers has always created an air of victimhood in Polish memory so the fact that Gdańsk has seemingly endured through these changes in language and ethnic residents creates a symbol for the enduring nation despite occupation. Chwin’s novel gives voice to other victims of the attacks on Poland, which complicates this kind of victimhood.

To reflect back to research from earlier in this project on the stages of the Solidarity Movement, Tomasz Tabako shows how the metaphor of *Poland as the Christ of all nations* was used to give followers a sense of moral superiority and a claim to authority that allowed the Solidarity Movement to keep going. Gdańsk was the city in which the Solidarity Movement that led to the end of Soviet occupation began and flourished. The northern shipyards, especially the Gdańsk shipyard (then called the Lenin shipyard), were the birthplace and the centre of labour unrest, reasserting the power of Poles over the direction of their national affairs and leading to the fall of the communist government. Therefore, the space of the shipyard as a kind of reclamation of the spaces of city echoes the transformation from Danzig to Gdansk. The Solidarity Movement reclaimed the space from the Soviet regime, not a German one, but both instances reflect the myth of an occupier that had to be resisted. The Solidarity Movement is another permutation of Polish messianism that survived after the fall of communism. The art that

comes after the resistance movement, then, is able to question the ways that the narrative was used. The ability to see the experiences of non-Poles reflects the opportunity for dialogism after the strikes and large scale protests cease. The movement from collective protest to individual experience in the postresistance period opens up a space for questioning mythology and collective memory. Zubrzycki shows that “this questioning of national mythology has been a key feature of the post-communist transition, as the recovery of an independent state has seriously weakened the political valence of a dominant mythology primarily articulated in the context of statelessness and colonial domination” (53). The city-space allows us to analyze these changes after the movement because of the relationship of these places to narratives of freedom from the domination and injustice that the movements are fighting.

I have already mentioned Stefan Chwin’s *The Short History of a Joke* and the trope of Gdańsk as a backdrop continues in his 1995 novel *Hanemann* [translated as *Death in Danzig*] which describes the experiences of an anatomy professor called Hanemann, a German who stays in Gdańsk after World War II and is witness to death in the form of people and objects, changes in language and political freedoms. According to critics such as Teresa Halikowska-Smith, these regional narratives written after the Solidarity Movement suggest that Polish prose is moving away from nationalist narratives and focusing on personal histories or “small homelands”. Post-Solidarity prose remakes and deconstructs the narratives of collective memory that were part of the resistance movement, not only because of the increased freedom for writers, but also because of the symbolic transition from collective to individual experience. The focus on the alienated non-Polish individual figure and the tragic way he is affected by these narratives questions collective memory. Instead of the collective nation of Poles being attacked and occupied, the tragic element is located in the individuals who can no longer inhabit the city. In the following analysis I will examine the narrative techniques in the novel that allow for the multiple conceptions of Gdańsk as a place and the way the city adapts to political changes. Like Raven in *Flight to Canada*, Hanemann is a character who experiences disillusionment with a place that is meant to evoke personal freedom. He disrupts the narrative frame of the city that is suffused in collective notions of history and myth.

Stefan Chwin is a prose author with a solid amount of critical attention for his novels, partly due to his niche focus on writing about the city of Gdańsk, signalling an interest in regional Polish literature. This complication of the myth through the concept of place is a feature of Chwin's writing. He is usually referenced in critical work on the city of Gdańsk and about Polish-German relations as well, which may not always be literary in focus. For example, Dagmar Wienroder-Skinner discusses how the topic of "Polish East-West expulsion and displacement was excluded from public discourse by the centralist communist government until 1989, and instead officially treated as a 'repatriation' procedure- quite an indoctrinating term, as the 'repatriates' had never lived in those areas before" (265). Therefore, it is important that Chwin is writing after 1989 because he can refer to the issues that were silenced by the communist government such as the movement of Poles after WWII and the reconstruction of Gdańsk as a Polish city. He can bypass the separation of memory and history imposed by the communist government that disallowed discussion of several traumatic events. Chwin also represents a turning point in Polish prose where writers could turn away from the heroic trend of the Romantic tradition and patriotic writing and turn towards private life, psychology, and social behaviour (Czermińska 110). Małgorzata Czermińska describes the novel as the story of a man living "in a time and a place where the pressure of these powerful forces of common life deals exceptionally brutally with the individual" (117). We see then the literal effects of historical changes and national mythology on an individual but the universal situations of personal suffering are at the forefront.

Hanna Gosk also focuses on the notion of history in the novel and the way that the narrator is reflective of a local history where he reads events according to his local knowledge and understands the past only in as much as it connects to his family (184-6). The novel then destabilizes the relationship between the history of the nation and the context of individuals (38). Barbara Bossak-Herbst also writes about the changing image of Gdańsk and how it was reconstructed after the war to reflect its identity as a Polish city, supporting the myth of an eternal Polishness (108-09). She adds that contemporary Gdańsk wants to be perceived as a town of the Solidarity Movement and as a multi-cultural city rather than as a common Polish city, the latter being the image that communist authorities tried to impose through the myth of repatriation and architectural

reconstruction which is questioned by Chwin (118). Teresa Halikowska-Smith also thinks that the Gdańsk school of writers in the 1980s and 90s were reappraising history that was expunged from communist historiography and rediscovering a multicultural history of their homeland (922). Chwin especially is interested in revealing the remains of things left behind and erased by collective memory in order to show the way people have been shaped by history and myth (926).

Przemysław Czapliński is a critic who has done extensive work on post-1989 prose in Poland. He discusses Chwin in the context of the mythic homeland and questions the myth of tolerance and idyllic place. The modern hero inhabits imagined places which are more dependent on memory than history. This homeland reveals itself to be a narrative that the inhabitants create and the way this idea manifests itself is in the incorporation of a kind of archeology of possessions that reflects the lives of people in the city (Czapliński “The ‘Mythic Homeland’” 363). This novel is a way to perform this kind of archeology and uncover the dialogic voices and contradictory history that is kept silent during difficult times, such as during a civil resistance movement. Czapliński also writes about these Chwin novels through the notion of nostalgia and the idea of a house or things giving that feeling of stability (Czapliński *Wzniosłe* 114). He talks about “nostalgiami chronicznymi” or “chronological nostalgias” that create a longing for passing times and missing past permanent times such as childhood (14). This nostalgia is once again not for a lost nation but for the lost locality and personal home. He argues that contemporary heroes in Polish prose do not evaluate themselves based on their nation, but on the fact that they are escaping from the nation (123). This shift in literature reflects the desire to be critical of the myths that contribute to distorting the past.

The story of *Hanemann* comes from a first-person narrator observing the changing appearance of Gdańsk after WWII. However, the first-person narration is distanced from the actual narrator. The reader does not actually know who the narrator is until well into the story. The narrator’s disconnection and distance similarly produces the effect of the protagonist standing outside of the constructed mythical framework. Piotr, the narrator, tells this story through what Czapliński calls a renarration, piecing together his memory as a child along with the memory of others, as history will not tell the whole

story (201). Another kind of archeology occurs here as Piotr digs beneath the surface image and the official history of the city. For example, a major event that opens the novel and creates a tragic air is Hanemann finding out that his beloved has drowned on a sunken ship by seeing her body on the table as he is teaching at the Anatomy Institute. Piotr reconstructs this event through the memories of people that were there that day and observed Hanemann afterwards. For example, this is colleague Alfred Rotke's memory of the event: "Posługacz Alfred Rotke, który zapamiętał bardzo dobrze tamten dzień – bo przecież trudno nie zapamiętać czegoś, co zdarza się nagle i burzy w nas wszystko, co dotąd wiedzieliśmy o deliktnej pajęczynie związków między tym, co rzeczywiste i tym, co możliwe – nie zapamiętał jednak jak wyglądała twarz Hanemanna w tamtej chwili" (10-11).⁶² We see the frailty of memory through this form of narration and the way that Hanemann is distanced from the reader to give the impression that he is fading from the city in the same way that Danzig is fading as Gdańsk is developing. Piotr, through his association with Hanemanna, is also able to see the constructed nature of the city, dependent on language and common nationality.

The narrative, then, is dependent on the memories that Piotr is putting together. He talks to people such as Franz Zimmerman, who now lives in Sweden, who reflect part of that fading away of the German inhabitants:

„Cóż ona naopowiadała pańskiej matce...” – chociaż pani Stein już dawno nie było, tak jak nie było już Miasta. I tylko z ciemnych fotografii, które wisiały nad stolikiem ze szkła, przy którym piliśmy kawę, fotografii z atelier samego Ballerstaedta, płynęła ku nam miękka ciemność ulic biegnących ku Motławie, połysk drobnego bruku na Mariackiej i mleczone światło latarni na Szerokiej, które co wieczór zapalał Hans Lempke, sąsiad pana Zimmermanna z Osieku,

⁶² “Although he remembered that day very well – and it’s hard to forget something that comes hurtling out of the blue and shatters all our previous conceptions about the flimsy web that links the possible to the real – Alfred Rotke nevertheless could not recall Hanemann’s face at that particular moment” (Chwin trans. Boehm 7).

podjeżdżający do każdego słupa na starym rowerze ,Urania', by z drabinki sięgnąć płomykiem pod klosz. (22-23)⁶³

Only photographs manage to preserve what has now been covered over, renamed or changed. This passage also reflects the way that Piotr's family interacted with some of the Germans left in the city, such as Mrs. Stein and Hanemann. This interaction unsettles the messianic martyrdom myth by proposing that the change from German to Polish in the city was not a clean break and created relationships that were not based in hatred of the occupier. This kind of narration creates a distance from the character of Hanemann which reflects his symbolic association with the former German inhabitants but also, his disruption of the monologic conception of the city. The reader does not identify with him in this narration, as a first-person narrative style does, but there is sympathy in observing the sorrows he encounters. The narration provides a feeling that the prose does not provide a home, the same way Hanemann feels towards Gdańsk. There is also the chance for the narrative to include multiple voices and visions of what Danzig/Gdańsk means to them.

The narrator is literally in the womb when his parents come to Gdańsk after the war symbolizing the birth of the Polish identity in the city, but the narrative mostly remains with Hanemann as the main character that is unable to live in the city and eventually has to leave. However, the story of Piotr and his parents arriving in Gdańsk is also very affecting. This passage when Piotr's parents come to Gdańsk and claim a house acts as reclamation of the city by the Poles:

Ojciec szedł więc z coraz większą pewnością, że wreszcie trafili na miejsce i patrząc to w prawo – na białe pola lotniska z ciemną linią sosnowego lasu w

⁶³ “‘The things she told your mother...’ he repeated, leisurely, though Mrs. Stein as well as the Free City of Danzig were both long since gone. Gone was the soft darkness of the streets that sloped down toward the Mottlau River, gone were the glistening cobblestones on Frauengasse and the milky light of the streetlamps along Breitgasse, lit every evening by Hans Lempke, Mr. Zimmermann's neighbor from Osseck, who rode from lamp to lamp on his old Urania bike, stepping on a ladder to hold his flame to each one – all gone, save for the dark photos mounted above the little glass table where we sat drinking our coffee original prints from the Ballerstaedt studio itself” (Chwin trans. Boehm 21).

Brzeźnie, to w lewo – na lipy Pelonker Strasse, za którymi ciągnęły się łagodne bukowe wzgórza, mówił do Mamy, że może warto zatrzymać się tu na dłużej, a może na zawsze – nie, tego jeszcze nie powiedział, bo wolał, by czas, który mieli przed sobą, pozostał otwartą obietnicą. A ja szedłem z nimi, uśpiony, pod sercem Mamy, głową w dół, z piąstką pod brodą i stopami śmiesznie zwiniętymi ku sobie, w ciepłej zatoce wód, opleciony żyłkami, które łączyły mnie z jej ciałem.
(67)⁶⁴

They can choose a house in which to start their lives and the fact that Hanemann lives upstairs is of no consequence. Piotr emerges from the womb into the city and developing a relationship with Hanemann makes him confront this conflict of a German remaining in the reclaimed Polish space.⁶⁵

Hanemann becomes a German tutor for Piotr and they forge a relationship. Piotr as a young boy discovering the city, understands the alienation that Hanemann feels towards the city. We see this reflected in the archeology of the city, as even the Polish names are foreign to Piotr: “Dębinki, Traugutta, Tuwima, Morska...Gdy Ojciec wieczorami opowiadał o spółce ‚Antracyt’, w której pracował od stycznia, te nazwy ulic powtarzały się jak nazwy zamorskich krain” (82).⁶⁶ Danzig becomes Gdańsk and the markers of the city change as well. Street signs and building names change to reflect the

⁶⁴ “So Father walked on, more and more convinced that they had finally found what they were searching for. He looked right, off to the east toward Brzeźno, at the white airfield and the dark line of pines, and then to the left at the linden trees along Pelonker Strasse and the gentle hills with beeches stretching off in the distance. Maybe, he said to Mama, maybe we should stay here for a while, maybe even forever – no, he didn’t say that yet; he preferred to treat the days that lay ahead as an open promise. And I was walking with them, upside down and fast asleep, tucked away under Mama’s heart, with my little fist under my chin and my feet comically twisted around, in the warm gulf of water, that tangle of veins that connected me to her” (Chwin trans. Boehm 70).

⁶⁵ The allegorical nature of the name Piotr, or Peter, and its connection to St. Peter as the rock of the church cannot be discounted. A major part of the messianic myth is linked to the fact that Poland is a Catholic country. Piotr represents the next generation reclaiming Poland and so it is significant that he recognizes the complicated nature of the place.

⁶⁶ “Dębinki, Traugutt, Tuwim, Morska...the recently renamed streets sounded like faraway countries when Father came home in the evenings and talked about his job at Antracyt, the coal and coke company where he’d been working since January” (Chwin trans. Boehm 87).

new inhabitants, erasing the cityscape of the past. For Hanemann these names are hard to pronounce and difficult to remember: “Mirchauer Weg nazywało się teraz Partyzantów, a Hochstriess – Słowackiego. Na Langfuhr mówiono ,Wrzeszcz’, na Neufahrwasser ,Nowy Port’, a na Brösen ,Brzeźno’. Były to nazwy trudne do wymówienia i zapamiętania” (86).⁶⁷ The delicate net of Gdańsk is jostled for Hanemann (Czapliński *Wzniosłe* 203). The cultural frameworks of the city that connect him to the past are shifted enough for him to feel strange there. Hanemann gets to the point that he cannot even remember more concrete elements of the city: “A zmiany najdotkliwsze, raniące skrycie, podstępnie ściszone, ledwie wyczuwalne? Wracając do domu późnym popołudniem Hanemann uświadamiał sobie, że nie potrafi już odtworzyć w pamięci dawnego koloru fasady domu Bierensteinów, chociaż właściwie nic się nie zmieniło, tylko tynk, leciutko przyprószone kurzem czy sadzą, nabrał odcienia drzewnego popiołu” (Chwin 145).⁶⁸ The change in the city is a superficial one and the past is simply covered over, which means that the past has to potential no re-emerge and effect the present. Hanemann’s inability to remember shows the impact of the conflict over the city on its inhabitants. The nostalgic link to the past is gone and there is no way to find the signs of the place again. Like Raven, Hanemann must eventually leave the place that is imbued with his vision of a home. The strangeness of the home no longer being there is a criticism of the way that the city has been used to advance national narratives.

In contrast to the new life and opportunity surrounding the narrator Piotr and his family, Hanemann is associated with death and exile. For example, his lover drowns in a ship accident and he sees her body on his anatomy table. This scene opens the novel and this body haunts the whole narrative because there is mystery surrounding what actually happened to her, but it also portends the end of German life and fertility in Gdańsk. The

⁶⁷ “Mirchauer Weg was now Partyzantów, and Hochstriess had been renamed Słowacki...The Langfuhr district was known as Wrzeszcz, Neufahrwasser as Nowy Port, and Brösen as Brzeźno. The new names were hard to pronounce and difficult to remember” (Chwin. trans Boehm 92).

⁶⁸ “But the most painful changes were hidden, lurking, deceptively quiet, barely perceptible. Coming back home one late afternoon, Hanemann realized that he could no longer remember what color the Bierensteins’ house had been. The old color hadn’t been changed; layers of dust and soot had simply made the stucco look like ash” (Chwin trans. Boehm 154).

narrative never reveals the real reason for the woman's death but her body signifies the death of Danzig. There are many other instances of death. Hanemann intends to leave for Germany on a boat with another family before the Soviet Army enters Gdańsk, but at the last minute he does not get on and learns later that the ship was bombed and the family did not survive. This decision allows him to stay in Gdańsk for a longer period, but it is an unsettled space in which he remains and he remembers that family often. Czapliński notes that it is at this point that the city transforms from *locus amoenus* to *locus horridus* for Hanemann (207). Initially, even though the street names change and the population changes, Hanemann thinks he can blend in and remain in the city that makes him whole. After being questioned by the communist authorities as to why he is still in Gdańsk, he realizes that he will never be able to disappear unless he does so physically:

Hanemann pomyślał o domu na Lessingstrasse. Chociaż nie liczył na wiele, miał jednak wbrew wszystkiemu nadzieję, że zostawią go w spokoju. Właściwie czym się różnił od innych mieszkańców dzielnicy między Kronprinzenallee, Pelonker Strasse i Katedrą? Może tylko odrobinę twardszym akcentem. Tak przynajmniej sądził. Wydawało mu się, że utonął wśród ludzi i nikt nie będzie sobie zaprzętał głowy jego osobą. Nosił taki sam płaszcz w jodełkę jak choćby pan K., którego rzeczy wniesiono niedawno na piętro do kamienicy Bierensteinów. Kiedy patrzył w lustro, widział mężczyznę, jakich wielu można było spotkać na ulicach Langfuhr. (105)⁶⁹

Hanemann, though an important part of the narrator's family, is also associated with a fading photograph. When the day is almost over and he finally has time to think, old memories resurface: "A potem, koło szóstej, gdy w głębi dzielnicy zaczynały bić dzwony Katedry...przed oczami stawały znów dawne miejsca, domy, pokoje, twarze, lecz serce

⁶⁹ "Hanemann thought about his home on Lessingstrasse. Although he hadn't counted on them to leave him alone, he had hoped against hope that they might. After all, why was he any different from his neighbors? Only a slightly harder accents, or so he believed. He had imagined that he'd vanished in a sea of people and that no one would pay attention to him. His herringbone coat was the same as Mr. K's, who'd just had his things carried up to the second floor of the Bierensteins' house. And when he looked in the mirror, Hanemann saw a man like any other you might meet on the streets of Langfuhr, or Wrzeszcz as it was now called" (Chwin trans. Boehm 110).

nie odnajdywało już niczego bliskiego w obrazach miasta, którego już nie ma – tak jakby pamięć tylko niedbale tasowała zbrązowiałe fotografie przed wrzuceniem ich w ogień” (90-91).⁷⁰ The narration reflects his fading away from the city and his memories being buried away. He no longer belongs and increasingly feels like he is being pushed out.

Therefore, the text makes it clear that Hanemann is someone who disrupts the monologic collective as they try to reclaim the city as their own. Later in the novel, Piotr’s family hires a housekeeper named Hanka, a Ukrainian woman who has suffered some kind of trauma in her past. The house comes alive with her in it, but it is obvious that she is struggling mentally when Hanemann saves her as she is about to commit suicide (Chwin 155). Hanka recovers but attacks Hanemann for saving her. Things get better when Hanka finds a homeless mute boy named Adam who had hidden from the Germans during the war. Hanka and Adam forge a connection and Hanka and Hanemann’s relationship is repaired when Hanemann teaches Adam sign language (188). Piotr describes the close bond that Hanka, Hanemann and Adam create as they face a city that increasingly ostracizes them. At the end of the story, the three characters that question the messianic myth are expelled from the city. The German, the Ukrainian and the deaf boy must escape from the weight of Polish pressure. Piotr understands the tragedy of this moment:

Hanka podała mi rękę. ‚No, Piotrze, podziękuj mamie i ojcu za wszystko’. Hanemann lekko potargał mi włosy, naśladowując jej dawny gest, który tak lubiłem. ‚I nie zapomnij o nas’. Zapomnieć? Ją? Hanke? Adama? I tego wysokiego mężczyznę, który mieszkał nad nami? Przecież w jednej chwili ulica Grottgera zrobiła się zupełnie pusta. Jak to? Bez nich? Jakże to możliwe? Dlaczego? ‚Hanka – starałem się uśmiechnąć – to ty o nas nie zapomnij. (225)⁷¹

⁷⁰ “And later, around six o’clock, the bells of the Cathedral began ringing in the center of Oliva...and then the old places, homes, rooms, faces resurfaced: images of the city that no longer existed. But they were far away, distant from his heart, as if his memory were simply shuffling a pack of yellowed photographs before they were tossed into the fire” (Chwin trans. Boehm 96).

⁷¹ “Hanka held out her hand to me. ‘Well, Piotr, thank your mother and father for everything they’ve done.’ Hanemann ruffled my hair, using the same gesture as always. ‘And don’t forget us.’

The people who wanted to call Gdańsk their home become outcasts in the service of those who claim the city in the service of a national myth. Again, the allegorical nature of names here is important as Adam is expelled from a kind of paradise in the eyes of the narrator. He sees the man, woman, and child leave behind the space of the city in a moment filled with nostalgia.

We see multiple people give voice to the way they are affected by the reclamation of Gdańsk. And it is not just people that are affected; another unsettling part of the narrative is several long passages of the personification of the possessions left behind by the Germans. There is no third person narrator here, we simply learn that in the moment when the Germans are preparing to leave, the objects that are part of the home are also preparing:

Już teraz, w ciszy napelniającej miasto, odbywał się ostateczny sąd – zajmowanie dogodnych miejsc, miękkie podsuwanie się pod dłoń, by być zawsze na widoku i zdążyć na czas. Rzeczy, bez których nie można żyć, oddzielały się od tych, które pójdą na zatracenie...Tylko przedmioty drobne i łatwe do chwycenia w chwili ucieczki nabierały wzdorliwej pewności siebie. Pędzel do golenia, brzytwa w skórzanej pochewce, ałun, okrągłe mydło, pudełko blaszane z proszkiem do zębów ,Vera', butelka wody kolńskiej Amielsa. Puszyste ręczniki, trudne do zwinięcia, wstydliwie gasły w kącie łazienek, ich miejsce zajmowała chłodna uroda płóciennych płacht, które łatwo się darło na długie pasma dobre do tamowania krwi. (27-30)⁷²

Forget Hanka? And Adam? And that tall man who lived above us? How could I? In one single instant Grotter Street had become deserted. How did it happen? Why? How could we go on without them? 'Hanka' – I tried to smile – 'don't you forget about us'" (Chwin trans. Boehm 241).

⁷² "At that precise moment, in the quiet that was filling the city, a last judgment was already taking place – a repositioning, a gentle movement to be always in view and within reach so they could make it on time. Things that were indispensable separated themselves from things slated for destruction...only small objects, ones easily grabbed in an escape, flaunted their smug self-assurance – a shaving brush, a razor in a leather sheath, alum, a round bar of soap, a tin box of Vera tooth powder, a tiny flask of Amiels cologne. The more luxurious, fluffy towels shrank in bathroom corners, ashamed at their unwieldy bulk, and ceded their place

These personifications add to the melancholy nature of the novel which evokes the tragedy of this city being the centre of this problematic national mythology. In this case the linen being used to staunch a wound may allude to the wound left in the city after this expulsion. These descriptions continue after the Germans leave and they give the impression of an emptied out city rather than a symbol of Polish life and return. All of the dialogic voices of the city must be expelled for the myth of repatriation to come true but the narrator sees the problematic costs of this expulsion. Even though the objects and the buildings remain, the meaning of the city is a fluid concept that becomes uncertain in the postresistance period.

One of the last images in the novel is a graveyard: “Na płytach z szarego i czarnego marmuru, które ustawiano wzdłuż ścieżki – krawędź przy krawędzi, jak kostki domina – gasły w kurzu zatarte imiona ‚Friedrich, ‚Johann’, ‚Aron’⁷³, Cmentarz umierał powoli, nienatarczywie, w cichym szeleście przesypanyj ziemi, podobny do zachodzącego słońca, które deszczową porą niedostrzegalnie gaśnie w popiele mgły” (229).⁷⁴ After Hanemann leaves, even the tangible signs of German existence fade away and it seems that only the narrator’s small family remains in the narrative. The tragic air of the novel, then, is not a celebration of the Polish nation recovering lost lands. The Polish collective is missing from the narrative; the patriotic national exclamation of a reclaiming does not exist. This postresistance novel demands a reflection on the consequences of a fervent movement to claim of a place of freedom. This narrative asks for reconsideration of those who were not part of the movement and how they were

to the cool charm of linen canvas, so easily torn into long strips good for staunching wounds.” (Chwin trans. Boehm 26-28)

⁷³ The name “Aron” here evokes a Jewish identity. Jewish Germans are also a category of people who influenced the conception of the city but have been violently removed.

⁷⁴ “Slabs of gray and black marble lined the path like dominoes, the worn names fading in the dust: ‘Friedrich’, ‘Johann,’ ‘Aron.’ Slowly, unobtrusively, the cemetery was dying, in the quiet rustle of sprinkled earth, like a sun going out unnoticed in the ash gray fog of an evening rain” (Chwin trans Boehm 246).

affected by the rhetoric laced with these mythologies. This desire for reflection translates into reality in the wake of the Solidarity Movement. The concept of place is just one of the ways of reading the narrative frameworks of resistance in the postresistance novel. The next chapter in this project asks the question of how the individuals fit into the collective movement when they do not have the same intentions as the rest of the masses.

Chapter 4

4 Lifting the Mask: The Novel and the Protester

Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2011 was "The Protestor" (Fairey)⁷⁵, reflecting the public and the media's fascination with the social unrest that happened as part of the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street Movement and as part of world-wide economic austerity movements at the beginning of this decade. It is interesting, however, that this "honour" was bestowed on the individual protester within the larger group movement. In the realm of collective memory, it is often either the large protesting crowds or the single charismatic leader that are remembered; the individual nameless protester does not often have a distinct face. Still, the *Time* magazine cover reflects this indistinguishable nature of the protester: it depicts the protester with their mouth covered by a bandanna and head covered by a knit cap. This physical description could apply to any number of the protesters, but the question is what happens when this mask is lifted and we enter into the experiences of a person involved in the movement? We often get another side of the story and a more nuanced view of motives and ideals that may not always align with the larger collective memory. While the previous chapter focused on novels after the movements that offered alternative visions of collective narratives through the notion of place, this chapter focuses on novels written explicitly about the movements (and by authors who were involved in the movements) and how the movements affected individual participants.

The ideas in this chapter will focus on how the individual relates to the collective actions in the movement and their relationship to national and group narratives that were discussed in the previous chapter. I argue that the focus on the individual body of the participant acts as a site of protest against the way narratives are manipulated for the goals that the movement wants to achieve. There is an attempt to achieve recognition of

⁷⁵ The *Time* cover image was created by artist Shepard Fairey (who designed the Barack Obama "Hope" poster), and it is based on a photograph by Ted Soqui. Soqui's photograph depicts Occupy LA protester Sarah Mason. The image is a close up of her face. She is wearing a knit cap and a bandanna across her mouth. Due to *Time* magazine's licensing fees, I was not able to include this image in this project, but it is easily found by searching for "Time magazine + Protester" on the web.

the individual complexity within the movement which is what the postresistance period seeks to unveil. The violence, pain, and threat to life that these bodies endure in that narrative act as an inversion of the non-violent ethos of the movements. On another level, these novels are performing a symbolic violence on the collective memory of the movements and their lasting effects on individuals. The characters are working through the suffering endured through the movement and its resulting impact. They resist being part of the collective vision of the movement and are aware of the rhetorical constructions created by the movement. My critical reading of these novels will engage with the way that the characters react to the movement history and language to offer a more complicated view of the movements. The fragmented narrative structure of both novels resists the perfect constructed narrative of collective memory. These postresistance narratives focus on the ideas that the movements failed to achieve and the actions that did not belong in the group's goals.

Beyond memoir and biography, the novel is a way in which we can get a closer view of the individual protester within the movement. The novel offers a space where collective memory can be questioned apart from media and political depictions. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) focuses on the novel as a way for the imaginations of all national citizens to be connected. More specific visions of the past can presumably affect the way we view history and the way we remember. That collective memory has an impact on how we live in the present and contributes to an amnesia effect around the specific details of the past. There is also the tradition of the novel being linked to individualism. The writer (only with the help of a Muse) sits down and writes from their individual perspective. Many theories of the novel also point to the fact that the novel's primary criterion is "truth to individual experience – individual experience which is always unique and therefore new" and does not have to fit into set generic conventions (Watt 13). The novel marks a "growing tendency for individual experience to replace collective tradition as the ultimate arbiter of reality" (14) and the novels examined in this chapter offer stories set apart from collective tradition. The form of the novel can make it harder to appropriate movements into larger progress narratives and, further, fictional accounts comment on the production of collective memory (Metress 148). Of course there are instances where novels become too didactic and lose the sense of the individual

– as in the case of socialist realism. However, the novels I explore play with form and focus in on an individual character who challenges a broader conception of collective thought and memory of a period. For example, Christopher Metress argues that literary representations of the Civil Rights Movement are a “valuable and untapped legacy for enriching our understanding of the black freedom struggle of the mid-twentieth century” (141). The experiences of (fictional) individuals in these novels help to expand the conception of the individual invisible protester.

It is not yet clear how contemporary social movements, such as the Arab Spring, European austerity protests and Occupy Wall Street will affect the rights of people and become collective memory. However, we can look back on the important political protests of the late twentieth century and their representation in literature to analyze the significance of the protester or social activist in memory. These novels disrupt metanarratives or master narratives that were needed to unite disparate groups during the period of resistance. Lyotard writes about the danger of consensus: “...consensus does violence to the heterogeneity of language games. And invention is always born of dissension” (Lyotard xxv). The works echo the postmodern tradition of allowing for other stories to come to the forefront. The narrative techniques used in these novels help to explore the way that individual people were affected by and experienced these mass movements. The focus on specific characters and the way they reacted to these conflicts challenges a broad historical memory. The authors use these historical contexts to explore the effect of the movements on the protagonist physically, emotionally, and as a part of an imagined national community.

In this chapter I look at two novels, from the Civil Rights Movement and the Solidarity Movement respectively, that challenge us to look at the effect of the movements on individuals. Alice Walker’s *Meridian* (1976) focuses on a protagonist who leads her life in a selfless manner and who continues to participate in non-violent struggle after the community and the narratives of freedom have disappeared or changed shape. In contrast, the protagonist or anti-hero in Janusz Anderman’s *All the Time* (2006) leads his life based on deception and does not believe in the aims of the movement, yet feels lost when it ends. Both novels show how these civil resistance structures were built on

rhetoric and actions that created a unified collective in that historical moment. The characters' belief or disbelief in what the movement could accomplish point to the way that the individual related to the collective action. However, when the history is written, the individual people are often subsumed by the collective action, as reflected in the masked protester figure. The loss of a significant role in the society takes a toll on their actions in the postresistance period. The elements of society that have been changed by the movement undoubtedly deserve attention, such as changes in the political system and basic human rights. However, these social movements also shape cultural values and sometimes lead to the erasing of cultural history. *Meridian* shows how civil rights activists became subsumed into mainstream white society once they gained some economic stability and felt that the fight was over. The novel shows that, for example, the music that had sustained African Americans has been left behind. *All the Time* questions the belief that everyone involved in the Solidarity Movement fought for the noble cause and that the nation returned to normalcy after the end of communism. Additionally, the downplaying of, for example, women's contribution to Solidarity means that the patriotism is defined through a male heteronormative cultural memory and *All the Time* reflects on this denigration of women.⁷⁶ These novels unmask individual protesters in order to allow for a more multifaceted memory of the movement.

⁷⁶ For example, Julia Holewińska's play *Ciała obce* [*Foreign Bodies*] (2010) depicts the life of Adam who became Ewa, a transsexual, after her involvement in Solidarity. Essentially her contributions were erased from the history (this play is loosely based on the real life story of Ewa Hołuszko). The playwright comments on memory of the movement in an interview: "To była moją intencją...odczarowanie tego mitu narodowego, mitu solidarności, tej czarno białej historii która jest tak najczęściej przedstawiana że: oto byli ci wspaniali opozycjoniści i źli komuniści – bo tak to jest przedstawiane najczęściej (albo na odwrót). A mnie zainteresowało to co jest pośrodku, postać która nie pasuje do tego....Tak, na pewno, to była moja intencja żeby rozczarować ten mit, ale żeby też pokazać rozpad wspólnoty, pokazać inne spojrzenie na historie, historie lat osiemdziesiątych ale też inne spojrzenie na lat współczesnych, na to co marginalne, co nie pasuje na społeczeństwa." ["That was my intention...the disenchantment of this national myth, this solidarity myth, that black and white history which is most frequently portrayed this way: here were these magnificent oppositional forces and evil communists – because this is how it is presented most frequently (or vice versa). I was most interested in that which was at the middle, the figure that does not fit this. Yes, for sure, my intention was to break the spell of this myth, but also to show the breakdown of the community, to show a different perspective on history, the history of the eighties but also a different perspective on contemporary society, at what is marginal, that which does not fit into society." [translation mine] (Port Kultury. "Ciała obce w Teatrze Wybrzeże: Julia Holewińska" Interview with Julia Holewińska. 2012 Web. 15 Sep 2012)

James W. Pennebaker explains that “Collective memories are most likely to be formed and maintained about events that represent significant long-term changes in people’s lives” (17) and I argue that movements such as the Civil Rights Movement and Solidarity engender these kinds of memories because of shifts in politics, economy, and human rights. However, these movements are often simplified in collective memory. Metress argues that the “short” Civil Rights Movement (the time between *Brown v. Board of Education* and the March on Washington) is a dominant narrative that distorts the real long-term struggle for African American civil rights. As Walker’s novel shows, there is no end to Meridian’s civil rights commitment. In turn, Michal Kopeček shows that in thinking about the communist past in countries such as Poland, “communism in a grossly simplified way is a historical distortion, an interlude, an aberration from the supposed natural path of national history, an ‘Asiatic despotism’ imported from the ‘East.’” This interlude theory depicts “the whole period as the result of foreign interference [and] somehow helps to exculpate both the ordinary citizen and cultural and political elites from their responsibility for the communist dictatorship” (Kopeček 77). The character of A.Z. in Anderman’s novel shows that the ordinary citizen is not always an innocent bystander. There is very little nuance to the narratives that create collective memories, which is part of their rhetorical goal and why they manage to maintain their hold. This is especially true of the civil resistance movements that relied on these strong rhetorical frameworks. Postresistance fiction attempts to complicate the certainty of these narratives.

These examples link with the idea that collective memories become, potentially, “perfect” narratives that refuse any addition of nuances. Jill A. Edy points to the creation of narrative cohesion that is hard to break through: “...as collective memories evolve, they achieve a kind of perfection unattainable by either real life or narrative fiction. They remain embedded in the real events that were their genesis – they tell of real events that really happened. Yet they also acquire a narrative coherence that is impossible for any real event. They resolve ambiguous events and complex characters into simple, moral tales populated by heroes, villains, and fools” (Edy 204). In the case of the Solidarity or Civil Rights Movements, an easy and clear binary emerges between communist forces and Solidarity members or white Southerners and African American marchers. Edy

continues: "... [collective] memories become a kind of common cultural currency– the shared language that one must be able to speak if one wishes to communicate with others about a shared past, even if one's goal is to challenge that shared memory" (3). Many accounts of the past provide order and coherence for a large population. However, some narratives shine a light on the complexities within the movement and these are the narratives that I highlight. Walker's novel critiques the coherent narrative that African Americans achieved equal rights after the movement and that no more non-violent struggle was needed, while Anderman's novel questions the noble motivations of Solidarity writers. Entering into the emotional and physical worlds of these protagonists focalizes the individual struggles of the protester removed from collective experience. However, the protagonists' stories cannot be essentially separated from the collective experience that shapes them. This creates a dialogue between the protester as part of the collective and the individual living in a specific historical time. The unique situation of a large scale civil resistance movement provides a platform to think about how individuals are both shaped by, and resist, collective frameworks.

4.1 Lone Descent from the 'Mountaintop': The Search for the Collective in Alice Walker's *Meridian*

"But don't you think the basic questions raised by King and Malcolm and the rest still exist? Don't you think people, somewhere deep inside, are still attempting to deal with them?" (Walker 206).

The above are questions posed by the character of Meridian Hill in Alice Walker's 1976 novel *Meridian*. She continuously fulfills her function as a character who reflects on the implications of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Her individual journey leads her to re-enact the journeys of King and Malcolm and deal with the impacts of the movement on herself and collective society while those around her just want to move on. The titular character is a black woman activist during the Civil Rights Movement and beyond, when she becomes a lone protester against racial and economic injustice. The novel's main setting is the southern United States in the 1970s, yet

Meridian does not seem to realize that the large-scale marches and sit-ins are no longer occurring and that other activists have retreated into safe, middle class environments. Meridian inhabits a kind of tenuous zone where she performs non-violent protests that are no longer part of the collective action, and therefore seem radical. This lone protester figure creates unease and incongruity in the narrative because at this stage in American history her actions seem, at times, futile and silly. Other characters in the novel comment on this futility yet Meridian seems to rise above her naysayers, and history itself, to demonstrate the need for a long term struggle extending from the period of civil resistance. The novel also comments on the short-sightedness that is present in the “short” historiography of the Civil Rights Movement, how the resistance had its roots in acts of opposition during the time of slavery, and how the socio-economic lot of African Americans did not necessarily change after the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In terms of the collective memory of the movement, *Meridian* argues for the value of examining the stories of protesters beyond the famous leaders. While these leaders have been assassinated or receded, it is up to the individual protester to carry on the questions they posed. This makes the novel an important postresistance narrative for this project because it shows the resistance movement at a remove and casts a critical eye on the way the movement is remembered, along with examining its accomplishments and failures. Another level to the novel is Alice Walker’s own involvement in the movement and her disillusionment at the way women were treated by their male counterparts so there is a personal, individualistic view to the story (Stein 129). The structure of the narrative uses flashbacks to fill in Meridian’s past, but equally important are references to the past history of the United States creating a larger continuity or a “quilt” effect, a term which Walker uses in an interview about her novels. In fact, she calls it a “crazy quilt” (Tate 176), signaling the futility of a coherent narrative about the movement and its impact on its participants. The notion of collective progress is disrupted by this fragmented narrative. In fact, Meridian often times disappears from the narrative altogether, even though her name is the title of the novel. Despite these narrative shifts, her narrative function is to connect the disjunctions between the collective movement and individual desire that occur after the movement is over. Meridian connects two sides of history: the pre and post Civil Rights era in America. Her bridging of this gap and her

presence on both sides of history make her an important figure. She is simultaneously part of the collective movement and an individual protester; she is on the verge of death and yet struggles through life; she believes in non-violence, yet the question of killing is never far from her mind; she is present-and-yet-not in the major points of history and her final epiphany comes in a church, a link between the present and the hereafter. By eliding a specific orientation in history and movement narrative through Meridian, Walker is able to consider the unique collective nature of protest movements and their consequences.

The quilt effect of the novel means that the plot of the novel is less important than the revelations about the past that come through flashbacks. However, the core plot of the novel is important to understanding how the movement comes into Meridian's life. Meridian Hill is at the centre of the novel, which is encapsulated by a long dictionary definition of the word "meridian" at the beginning of the novel. The definition creates a pause before the narrative starts, by relating the main character's name (and title of the novel) to the imagery of midday, the middle, distinction, highest point, and the south.⁷⁷ These images relate to the way Meridian is at the centre of the narrative but it also sets up an expectation that her central role is one of acclaim and attention when that is not always the case. She does not always represent the will of the collective and struggles to discover ways in which to conquer the failures of the movement. Instead, Meridian's story radiates onto the stories of others, especially through the small and large histories of black Americans that permeate the narrative, as a means to create a dialogic conception of the movement.

To return to the plot: Meridian gets pregnant and married while very young and does not realize the life she has condemned herself to because of lack of knowledge. It is

⁷⁷ There may also be a connection here to Martin Luther King Jr's sentiments of being to the mountaintop in an April 3, 1968 speech in Memphis, Tennessee. This is a speech in which he argues vehemently for nonviolence: "Men, for years now, have been talking about war and peace. But now, no longer can they just talk about it. It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence in this world; it's nonviolence or nonexistence. That is where we are today." These words reflect Meridian's beliefs. He also advocates economic withdrawal here as a form of nonviolence. (King Jr., Martin Luther. "I've Been to the Mountaintop." Mason Temple, Memphis, TN. 3 April 1968. *American Rhetoric*.Web)

a pattern that she repeats from her mother, who felt trapped by the manner in which raising children limited her life. Meridian wakes up to the fact that she could have a different life after she encounters a house full of civil rights workers and becomes aware of what is going on in her town and in the country. She finds out later about the bombing of this house and this violence shakes her out of her predetermined house-wife fate: “And so it was that one day in the middle of April in 1960 Meridian Hill became aware of the past and present of the larger world” (70). She starts to make connections between various kinds of violence that she has encountered and how these encounters have constituted her world. For example, her father had always been fascinated by the plight of Indians in America and she realizes the connection with the black people being ruled by a dominant majority.

This realization of violence brings her into the non-violent Civil Rights Movement where she gains strength by being able to do things such as marching and registering voters. This coming into non-violent action through an act of violence represents the various forces that affect Meridian as she tries to navigate through her mission, whether it be the interplay between domestic life and engagement with the community, her call to activism along with her education and her complex identity as a black woman. The issue of non-violence versus violence is one that directs much of the narrative. Her fellow civil rights fighters pose a question to her when the movement starts to become more militant: would she kill for the revolution? (19). She says no with difficulty at the time, but as her non-violent work continues, she constantly reevaluates the question as she reconsiders the fate of black people in America. This reconsideration of the question of violence becomes part of the postresistance dialogue about the movement. The awakening of action due to violence leads to a question of why violence was not used in retaliation right away. The contemplation of racial power imbalance is important, but the postresistance period leads to questioning about how much was actually accomplished in this finite, non-violent period. Her awakening after the bombing of the house leads her to leave her husband, give up her baby, join the movement and go to Saxon College. This is the time in her life when she meets Truman Held, a pretentious yet well-meaning leader of the movement in Atlanta. They have a brief relationship which results in Meridian getting pregnant, but when it is clear that Truman has no desire to be

with Meridian, she gets an abortion and refocuses her life as Truman moves on with Lynne Rabinowitz, a Jewish Civil Rights worker. The second half of the novel focuses on Truman and Lynne's relationship and their inter-racial dynamic, along with Lynne's place as a white woman within an African American group. The novel keeps returning to the impact that Meridian has on Truman and Lynne's lives and the way that Meridian navigates a society that has given up the civil rights struggle. More memories, histories, and vignettes are sewn into the "crazy quilt" until Truman takes Meridian's place as a lone protester in the small fictional southern town of Chicokema, Georgia, and Meridian moves on to a different Southern town to continue her mission, creating hope for a continuous renewal of non-violent struggle.

The novel's opening scene is actually centred on this final moment of Meridian passing the mantle onto Truman, but Walker does not return to it again until the end, showing the circuitous nature of the narrative which keeps doubling back into history to explain the contemporary moment. This narrative movement reflects Meridian's desire to keep the past in the forefront in order to tackle the problems of the present. This opening scene is important to examine because it introduces some of the postresistance ideas that I want to highlight. The first scene of the novel, and the foundation for the metaphorical quilt narrative, introduces the character of Meridian from an outsider's point of view and presents Meridian as a rebellious character. The reader sees Meridian through the eyes of Truman. Walker reveals these connections later in the narrative, but we see that Truman holds an outsider vision while at the same time having an intimate connection to the scene he observes. Truman is an outsider because he understands the scene (along with the reader) through a conversation he has with another man who explains the dynamic of the community to him. At the same time, it is clear that he knows Meridian and we see later that he experiences nostalgia as he observes the state of Meridian's house: "She owned no furniture, beyond the sleeping bag, which, on inspection, did not appear to be very clean. However, from his student days, working in the movement in the South, he knew how pleasant it could be to nap on a shaded front porch. With a sigh of nostalgia and anticipation, Truman bent down to remove his hot city shoes." (9) This reflective observation of non-violent action displays the postresistance themes of this novel: what happens when we look back at the movement without a group action and narrative

coherence? The lack of a linear narrative and the focus on individuals within a group action allows for consideration of this dilemma of civil resistance. How do we reflect on its successes and failures? Truman points to the period of postresistance as a reflective point from which to examine one's participation as a protester. Truman's presence as an observer of Meridian's continued protest heightens this idea. Characters such as Meridian's friend Anne-Marion simply fade into "normal" society, no longer engaging in these questions. Truman's return to the South from New York returns these questions to the forefront for him. With this return he gets a glimpse of the struggles in which Meridian is engaged and how they have affected her.

As Truman arrives in the town he witnesses Meridian leading a group of black children through the streets. These children are only allowed to see inside a circus wagon once a week, while the white children always get access. This wagon contains the remains of a white woman who was murdered by her rich husband for having an affair. The husband strangled her and threw her in a lake but when she up washed six years later he decided to make an example of her and make some money in his old age. So now the skeleton of Marilene O'Shay with red hair (her identifying feature) lies in a coffin contained within a circus wagon that boasts a sign that says: "Marilene O'Shay, One of the Twelve Human Wonders of the World: Dead for Twenty-Five years, Preserved in Life-Like Condition." Underneath the sign, four stars contain the words "Obedient Daughter", "Devoted Wife", "Adoring Mother" and "Gone Wrong" (4).⁷⁸ The ability to see this sideshow may not seem very important, but it is these small inequalities that Meridian is fighting as she leads this group of children against the town's tank which had "been bought during the sixties when the townspeople who were white felt under attack from 'outside agitators' – those members of the black community who thought equal rights for all should extend to blacks" (2). The tank as a violent relic from sixties presents the conundrum of the postresistance period. While the dominant society still has the

⁷⁸ Many critics have pointed out that this "fallen woman" early on in the text is meant to highlight the same way Meridian could be seen by society. The novel frequently returns to the issue of what is an "acceptable" woman's role and highlights how women do not often conform to them. See Paul Tewkesbury (2001), Elliot Butler-Evans (1993) and Michael Cooke (1993).

“tools” of oppression, even if they may be more covert, the power of black people in America has not necessarily increased. Meridian facing off against a tank and “winning,” however, points to the continued need for pushback. As Truman observes this faceoff, a local man explains to Truman that rights after the Civil Rights Movement are not necessarily assumed to be natural yet:

‘...some of the children wanted to get in to see the dead lady, you know, the mummy woman, in the trailer over there, and our day for seeing her ain’t till Thursday.’

‘*Your* day?’

‘That’s what I said.’

‘But the Civil Rights Movement changed all that.’

‘I seen rights come and I seen ‘em go’ (3)

This passage sets the stage for the novel to show what the Civil Rights Movement changed for the South and what it did not. For Meridian it is these small causes that she needs to somehow fight for in order to uphold anything that was gained in the previous decade.

The first scene features the reflective nostalgia of postresistance, along with Meridian’s effort to keep the non-violent resistance going as she struggles with the question of violent revolution. This struggle affects her both emotionally and physically. After fighting for the children to see inside the wagon she collapses and four men bring her home, “hoisted across their shoulders exactly as they would carry a coffin, her eyes closed, barely breathing, arms folded across her chest, legs straight” (10). This vision of Meridian held aloft and appearing on the verge of death brings to the forefront the imagery of her as a bridging figure that stands outside of constructed frameworks.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ This moment also aligns her with Marilene O’Shay, the elbamed woman who acted outside of her prescribed role.

Therefore the plot-driven opening, before the novel gets to the “crazy quilt,” lays out the key ideas of this project. The subsequent quilt narrative gives depth and understanding to how Meridian got to this place personally because of the movement and her relationship with the narratives of black history.

This project looks at *Meridian* through the lens of civil resistance and collective memory, an area that has not received full focus in the criticism of the novel. Most often, critical reception of *Meridian* is centred on the fact that it is a black feminist novel because of its strong central female character.⁸⁰ This is rightly an important area of criticism because of Walker’s depiction of black womanhood and the centrality of motherhood and female power. Critical studies with this scope include those by Susan Danielson (1989), Patricia Ferreira (1991), Joni Lynn Jones (1998), Gloria Wade-Gayles (1984), and Donna Haisty Winchell (1992).⁸¹ My focus is on the novel’s implications for postresistance and although the feminist critique is part of a larger dialogue about this novel, I see a dearth of criticism about the novel’s questioning of collective movements. As well, most of the critical work was done in the 1980s and 1990s, but I believe that the novel can be recontextualized for a new era of civil resistance. There have been a few critics who focus on both the feminist and the revolutionary aspects of *Meridian*. Roberta M. Hendrickson argues that Walker wanted to remember the original vision of the movement that was not tarnished by the Black Power Movement and their oppression of women. She sees the novel as an affirmation of the movement: “Though the Civil Rights Movement was declared dead, *Meridian* is a novel that affirms the Movement’s vision of

⁸⁰ Walker refers to her work as “womanist” rather than feminist to delineate the way second wave feminism has often erased the experiences of women of colour from the struggle for equality. (Hendrickson “Remembering” 113).

⁸¹ There are many other critical readings of Walker’s *Meridian*. Rudolph P. Byrd (1991) analyzes the call and response tradition of African American literature and Walker’s other literary influences. The novel is also a part of the critical dialogue about depictions of the American South, such as Madhu Dubey’s “Postmodern Geographies of the U.S. South.” (2002). Part of the novel depicts an interracial relationship and Paul Tewkesbury (2001) looks at *Meridian* in this context. The spiritual aspect is also important to Meridian’s journey, as shown by Joseph A. Brown (1989), and Martha J. McGowan (1981).

freedom and nonviolence, affirms blackness and African American heritage in a racist society that failed to value and continued to destroy black lives, and focuses on black women and their participation in the Movement, refusing to make them less than they had been” (Hendrickson, “Remembering” 113). This affirmation presents an idealized view of the time of the movement, yet the novel also displays cynicism towards that era with the actions of activists and the effects of the movement on Meridian as a person.

Hendrickson also focuses on Walker’s own participation in the movement and its influence on writing the novel, as does Karen F. Stein. Stein notes that “...while she wrote of the Civil Rights Movement with unreserved approval in 1967, she would later contend that it continued to oppress women and so failed in its mission of human liberation” (129). Stein’s article is a highly referenced work in *Meridian* criticism. Her description of Meridian’s journey is important: “Only by replacing the inhumane old order with life-affirming values, can a new world be built. *Meridian*’s eponymous hero enacts this quest in her journey from adolescent unawareness to mature self-knowledge, from death to rebirth, from confrontations with revolutionary ardor to a spiritual vision” (130). Her reading of Meridian’s journey is one of progress and advancement to a higher plane. However, I want to add the reflective aspects of the novel and the questioning of how the movement happened. Undoubtedly Meridian grows throughout the novel but there is no clear indication of where she and her movement are going, either literally or metaphorically as her name again suggests that they are only half-way there or potentially going in a circle. She continues her position outside of the boundaries of history and memory. Stein sees Meridian’s opening march as “caricature of the historic Civil Rights marches” and shows the dilemma of the movement: that it broke down the social barriers of equal access but opened up an ugly society (131). Stein argues that Meridian “upholds the spiritual ideals of a human liberation movement” because she has the strength of purpose to struggle with the “recalcitrant self” (130). Stein focuses on the individual journey here which is very important but there needs to be more focus on how the the narrative frames of collective action impacted the individual.

While focusing on the effects of the movement on Meridian as an individual, this project seeks to extrapolate the larger implications of social movements and how they

connect rhetoric and narrative. John F. Callahan discusses the issue of Meridian coming into her voice, not only as a way to reclaim her personhood, but also as a way to connect to her ancestors, therefore fusing Meridian with her ancestors. His work about the pursuit of voice in twentieth-century black fiction theorizes the black writer's attempt to "conjure the spoken word into symbolic existence on the page" in narrative form and for a political pursuit of freedom and equality (14-15). Callahan argues that Walker uses a variety of voices that may seem incongruous to "fuse personal, racial, and national history with myth" (218). To heal the violent revolutionary rhetoric of the late 1960s, Meridian listens and responds to the voices of the dead in order to regain a connection with the effects of violence. She realizes that the past is a "touchstone of contemporary politics" (222). Callahan points to the way that the novel has no official narrative voice or storyteller, therefore inviting others and the reader to participate in the work that has been left unfinished (225). Using Callahan's work the reader can reflect on the importance of the slave narrative to literally write the slave experience into being. This novel records the actions of Civil Rights protesters so it brings their voices into being, but Meridian's repetition of these actions haunts the streets where the bodies of protesters and their voices used to be.

There have been critics who have focused on how the movement is depicted in the text. Melissa Walker examines the work of black women novelists after the Civil Rights Movement, including *Meridian*. She argues that the novel shows the personal price that young activists paid for the things they did for the movement. She points out how the unstructured, narrator-free text "portrays [the] experience as chaotic, fraught with conflict, and rarely smoothly progressive" (174). *Meridian* seems to leave no mandate for a future racial struggle. I agree that the narrative presents a movement that seems to be unfinished and that Meridian is pointing to the ways in which goals were abandoned. However the collective memory of the movement, and the way former participants Anne-Marion and Truman refer to it, make the movement seem like a finite event that has had no residual effects. The novel presents both of these visions of the movement. Meridian bridges these opposing visions by both enacting the rhetoric of the movement and questioning its dissolution.

Henry Louis Gates and K.A. Appiah's collection of critical perspectives on Alice Walker also provides a few important critical readings of *Meridian*. These essays help to contextualize my argument because of their focus on *Meridian* as a reflection on the American postresistance era. For example, Elliot Butler-Evans writes about the historical implications of a novel that sees history occurring through the eyes of specific characters: "Presenting historical events in this manner constitutes a displacement of the larger public history by a privatized version of historical events" (117). Walker's interest in how the private interprets the public is part of why these novels that look at the individuals that were involved in the collective are important. Some of the other articles in this collection will be important to the forthcoming analysis.

One of the sites of analysis that is lacking in this criticism centres on *Meridian*'s physical and mental wellbeing and what that says about the larger activity of civil resistance. Early on, the narrative shows the frailty of *Meridian* and how she is beaten down by continuing her activist role. We learn that this sole activist role is hurting *Meridian* physically, but she accepts it as part of the process: "It did not surprise *Meridian* that her hair came out as she combed it, any more than it surprised her that her vision sometimes blurred. She was too driven to notice; and it seemed essential to her then that whatever happened to her she should be prepared to accept" (98). The effect of keeping the movement going without any group support seems to do damage to the individual body. The larger group movement of civil resistance seemed to symbolically offer protection from ill effects, while *Meridian* is vulnerable on her own, due to the movement's failure to establish itself as a long-term one. In this in-between state she is not in her full power because she is not getting full support from past protesters, yet she is drawing strength from a past and present community of black people. This sacrifice is part of a larger mission of joining a community of black people:

...among the impoverished, badly nourished black villagers – who attempted to thrive on a diet of salt meat and potatoes during the winter, and fresh vegetables without meat during the summer – she did not look out of place. In fact, she looked as if she belonged. Like them, she could summon whatever energy a task that had to be performed required, and like them, this ability seemed to her

something her ancestors had passed on from the days of slavery when there had been no such thing as a sick slave, only a ‘malingering’ one...Like them, it seemed pointless to her to complain. (153-54)

Her body reflects the image of both the contemporary southern African Americans who suffer from the movement’s lack of economic critique and of her slave ancestors, acting as a bridge for the continuities of history. But in order to be this transcendent figure, Meridian must not be tied down too personally and she never fully aligns with the collective which ignores some of the underlying structural concerns of African Americans. For example, Truman and Lynne weave into her life but are never fully connected to her.

Alan Nadel contends that Walker “treats narrative as archeology and thus provides instructions for reading Meridian’s life as though it were inscribed on the archeological site of her body” (155). Meridian’s body allegorically relates to the body politic, and thus social conditions have caused her to be ill. The use of her body to protest is an attempt to cure herself and the society, but it is not until she understands the way she needs to bridge the past and the future that her body regains some of its strength. Nadel notes that as Meridian sheds more and more of herself (her property, the aborted fetus), she has more control and power to help others (161), once again helping her rise above the restraints of an entrenched race and class system that the movement failed to topple or at least revise.

However, before this realization of her true role happens, she almost dies. Even before she graduates from Saxon College, she stages individual rebellions, such as going to small towns “where blacks were not welcome on the sidewalks after dark and she would stand waiting, watching the sun go down.” She would also walk miles on the streets of Atlanta, causing her health to decline as she forgot to eat (122). She temporarily loses her sight for two days and loses feeling in her legs. When taking care of her, Anne-Marion looks at her head and sees around it “a full soft light, as if her head, the spikes of her natural, had learned to glow.” The religious symbolism is clear as Anne-Marion feels a prick in her post-Baptist memory, but it adds to the feeling that Meridian belongs to

multiple spaces in history and in human existence (123-4). In fact, she experiences ecstasy when in these states. This section of the novel is entitled “The Recurring Dream” and it opens with the repetition of a sentence three times: “She dreamed she was a character in a novel and that her existence presented an insoluble problem, one that would be solved only by her death at the end” (121). Her metafictional awareness reflects her recognition of the rhetorical frameworks of the movement that symbolize failure. She belongs nowhere and in no set time. She is a problem because her actions challenge the prescribed view of history that even prose representations sometimes fail to critique. This preoccupation with death reflects the imminent death of the movement unless she can figure out how to unite the gap between the movement and a new revolutionary force.

As her own death is contemplated many times in novel, Meridian extrapolates her experiences to the famous martyrs of history. These sections about the death of leaders bridge the gap between the experiences of the individual and the larger-than-life leaders who have become part of collective memory. Callahan points to a section that opens with capitalized names of people who died fighting such as “MEDGER EVERS/JOHN F. KENNEDY/MALCOLM X/MARTIN LUTHER KING/ROBERT KENNEDY...” and how “the slashes signify the political assassinations that open, close, and recapitulate the 1960s” because they are like sounds from an automatic rifle (225). These significant deaths and sacrifices to the movement loom over the life of Meridian who is not famous, yet they are integral to understanding the struggle she has to reconcile non-violence and violence, along with the relationship between the collectivity and individual action. These figures add to the narratives of freedom and survival that make up black history because of their ability to rise above oppression. However, the cutting short of their lives contributes to the uncertainty as to whether the movement changed anything after they died.

Meridian thinks that martyrdom is a waste because the figures who are advocating for something contribute to the violence that undoes any progress. She believes that Christ, King, and Malcolm should have refused, “all those characters in all those novels that require death to end the book should refuse. All saints should walk away. Do their bit, then – just walk away” (162). She feels that their deaths meant that the movement

could not go further. They became symbols and the harder work of economic equality was yet to be accomplished. However, the irony is that their status as saints may depend on their martyrdom. Again, the thin line between life and death and what that means for history is a line that *Meridian* examines. How do figures enter collective memory? How is the memory of the movement affected by those who died and did not become revolutionaries? *Meridian* is faced with the reality that the movement is becoming more revolutionary while she is trying to hold on to the hope that non-violent protest will still effect change.

While she wants to hold on to those that died by asking Truman whether “the basic questions raised by King and Malcolm and the rest still exist” (206), the community, however, seems to move on from death quickly. *Meridian* is present at Martin Luther King’s funeral (another case of personal history interacting with collective history) and she senses “a feeling of relief in the air, of liberation, that was repulsive.” A black boy tells a white couple that “We don’t go on over death the way whiteys don’t” and a black woman laughs behind her (203). Instead of using the martyr figures as an enlightening force or an inspiration, people seem to move on from the ideas they inspired. This idea is also expressed through the return of Lynne to the south; returning to the place that changed the course of her life. This return occurs in a dream (as signified by the use of italics), however it mirrors the real return of *Meridian* to the south as a haunting presence of a time that has passed. As Lynne examines her old house in the dream, she sees the protesters as spectres in the outhouse:

The posters had fallen away from the walls or rotted, but when she held her candle up to one she saw the grayed outline of hundreds of marching forms, though underneath this faded picture the words had been completely eroded away. It was as if the marchers moved through some ghostly, unreal place, specters themselves and not in the least afraid, apprehensive about what would happen when they floated off the picture, off the wall, into a place even more dead, more final. (195)

While these faded images of protesters reflect the fading memory of the values of the movement, Meridian fights against this death. She knows that she must use the fading values of non-violent protest but adapt it to a new world that is losing these values. She must use the past to create a better future for African Americans that does not cut the movement short.

Her motivation comes from the things she experienced during the movement; these scenes cement her desire to curb violence. She personally witnessed “small black children, with short, flashing black legs, being chased by grown men brandishing ax handles” and “old women dragged out of stores and beaten on the sidewalk” and “young black men of great spiritual beauty changed overnight into men who valued nothing” (95). These fragments of violence stay in her mind, contribute to her illness but also help her refuse to give up as Truman and Anne-Marion do. She would continue to “endanger life and limb” rather than give up (206). This realization about her ultimate purpose as a bridging figure between the monologic movement and the dialog present is not an easy one. Throughout she is both burdened and strengthened by the collective past but by the end of the novel she knows she must

walk behind the real revolutionaries – those who know they must spill blood in order to help the poor and the black and therefore go right ahead – and when they stop to wash off the blood and find their throats too choked with the smell of murdered flesh to sing, I will come forward and sing from memory songs they will need once more to hear. For it is the song of the people, transformed by the experiences of each generation, that holds them together, and if any part of it is lost the people suffer and are without soul. If I can only do that, my role will not have been a useless one after all. (221)

This use of the memory songs comes through several encounters with black history, especially the slave past.

The historical aspects of the novel go beyond references to contemporary figures such as King. There are also allusions to black history in general, especially slave history. One of the fragments of the novel depicts the story behind The Sojourner Tree, a central

landmark of Saxon College. This very large magnolia tree had stood on the former Saxon plantation and it had been planted by a slave named Louvinie. She came from an African story-telling family and the children of the plantation loved to hear tales of horror from her. With the children's encouragement she told a chilling tale about an old man who caught and buried children up to their necks and then draped their heads with eels dipped in honey. Unfortunately she did not know that the youngest Saxon child had a flimsy heart which gave out as he heard the story. Master Saxon cut out Louvinie's tongue, taking away her ability to tell stories. She planted the tongue under a scrawny magnolia tree that grew exponentially so that the other slaves believed it possessed magic, including being able to obscure a hiding slave (31-34). This story signifies the importance of language and speech as a form of power and a force that has to be conquered with violence. The Civil Rights Movement was a form of bringing these stories to the fore; it was a public declaration of the violence that has been committed against people like Louvinie. The magical power of the tree connects to the meta-slave narrative trope of using the supernatural to overcome oppression. It also testifies to the power of rhetoric and language in shaping the course of the movement. Meridian's knowledge of this story contributes to her belief that even if collective protest fades, a singular voice and body can still make a difference.

Her desire to use her voice to "sing from memory songs" and bridge the gap between non-violent protest and a new generation of revolutionaries comes from a transcendental experience in a black church where the minister imitates Martin Luther King Jr. and everyone is part of a kind of play to keep King's voice alive: "This startled Meridian; and the preacher's voice – not his own voice at all, but rather the voice of millions who could no longer speak – wound on and on along its now heated, now cool, track. God was not mentioned, except as a reference" (214). Language is a transcendental weapon that bridges the living and the dead and the lack of reference to God is a way to connect the church and the community. For Meridian, the church experience feels different than it did during her childhood. She realizes that it is the only place left where black people could congregate and express individual desire:

She was puzzled that the music was changed. Puzzled that everyone in the congregation had anticipated the play. Puzzled that young people in church nowadays did not fall asleep. Perhaps it was, after all, the only place left for black people to congregate, where the problems of life were not discussed fraudulently and the approach to the future was considered communally, and moral questions were taken seriously. (218)

She finds a place where bridging the collective and personal can occur. However, it is not a place where the oppressor is confronted or the political system is dismantled. The church is a place where African Americans can feel the love of their community and a place to air their grievances. It is another one of those in-between places that challenges the society after the movement, but fails to bring those narratives into a larger societal dialogue. However, it does allow for a connection between the personal and public history. This experience shows how she can continue with the fight by using music as a healing connector. Callahan points to the role of music as a “recuperative political act” and a healing balm that was used in the days of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement (Callahan 247). In this postresistance era, this is what survives along with language. The collective non-violent protests do not exist, and Meridian does not ultimately believe that the violent individual revolutionaries are the answer. Therefore, music is the one force that renders these dichotomies unstable and allows Meridian to link the past with the contemporary situation.

Meridian’s ultimate revelation may make it seem as if the narrative ends with a satisfactory conclusion of what her role going forward will be. However, in this period of postresistance everything is unsettled because of the impact of the movement. Meridian as a symbol of this conflict experiences the literal and metaphorical blowback. The form of the novel mimics this turbulence. Walker calls it a crazy quilt and Jodi Lynn Jones, describes the structure as a collage because of the combination of longer descriptive sections, short sketches, epigraphs, and poetic fragments (21). This use of varied narrative modes to tell an individual story adds to the layering effect of memory. The lack of clear chapters and a strict chronology makes it seem as if Meridian is situated outside both a fictional and narrative history. Evans comments that this lack of chronological and

narrative coherence forces the reader to construct meaning (116-7). Callahan points out that those of Meridian's generation were "living in fragments" so the narrative collage is guiding readers through these labyrinths but with a lack of traditional narrator, Walker is inviting the reader to "participate in a generation's unfinished personal and political work" (224-5). The fragmented narrative allows for the opportunity to consider the main concerns of African Americans without the framing force of collective rhetoric.

Meridian is a novel often overshadowed by *The Colour Purple* (1982) in Alice Walker's oeuvre. The text's complicated narrative, use of history, and challenging attitude towards the Civil Rights Movement makes it a more complex and, perhaps, less palpable text. Meridian is a character who both acts and is acted upon. This may not make for the tightest narrative but it allows for an exploration of the effects of civil resistance on an individual. Her journey in the novel traces the theoretical concerns of this project. She emerges from her life as a lost housewife in order to join the Civil Rights Movement at the height of its rhetorical power. This shift inevitably changes her mindset towards thinking about how she relates to her community and the group rhetoric on which the movement depended. The end of the movement signals another radical shift whereby Meridian is not ready to let go of the ultimate aims of freedom and equality for black society. The ripping away of a group foundation changes Meridian, most notably in the literal effects on her body. Meridian's desire to keep fighting for the disenfranchised shows her resistance to the short temporal moment of the movement. Her return to the church at the end and Truman's return to the struggle signal a replenishing of the movement but in a different form because the highly specific moment of resistance may never happen again and has been relegated to memory.

The individual's relationship to the rhetoric and action of the protest movement and how they change in novels is one level in examining the phenomenon of protest movements. This is theoretically important to understanding the role that social movements play in cultures and, further, how they get interpreted in the heightened reality of the novel. The unmasking of the protester leads to a consideration of the ways the movement frameworks subsumed individual desire. The next section of this chapter will look at Polish author Janusz Anderman's text *All the Time*. This novel offers a

comparative perspective to *Meridian* because it also deals with the repercussions of a protest movement on an individual. However, this individual does not believe in the value of a movement and only cares about his wellbeing. At a moment close to death when he is literally sitting suspended in time, he reconsiders his relationship to Solidarity.

4.2 Crashing into the Past: The ‘Noble’ Writer in Janusz Anderman’s *Cały Czas* [*All the Time*]

“Teraz, ten właśnie moment, jaki to czas?...Czy to, co się dzieje, łączy się w jakąś całość? Wpływa na siebie? Rozgrywa się według jakiegoś zamysłu czy jest chaosem?”
(Anderman 7)⁸²

Janusz Anderman’s 2006 novel, *Cały Czas* [*All the Time*]⁸³ is concerned with time, which leads to a critical consideration of the novel’s depiction of historical time in Poland. In the quote above, time has been upended and is no longer following the rules of cause and effect. The main character, named A.Z., is about to be hit by a transport truck and time becomes suspended in this moment. As this freezing of time happens, he contemplates the way time works when you are able to examine it up close. The narrative reflects the constructed nature of the movement past by having A.Z. relive his past in a frozen moment. Anderman’s postresistance narrative is able to encompass the narratives of Solidarity to examine how one particular person existed within that framework and did not fit into a monologic framework. The allusions to chaos in the quote above point to the messy political situation in Poland since the Second World War. This suspension in time allows A.Z. to look back on his life which largely took place in pre-1989 Poland,

⁸² “Now, this very moment, what time is it?...Does what is happening connect to some kind of whole? Does it flow in on itself? Does it play out according to a plan, or is it chaos?”(All Polish translations in this section are mine)

⁸³ The book has yet to be translated in English and the translation of the title *Cały Czas* shows the complexity of time in the novel, wherein I have seen the title translated as *All the Time* or *The Whole Time*. The former points to the repetitious nature of time in the narrative through the framing device, while the latter meaning may refer to duplicitous nature of the protagonist as “the whole time” he was supposed to be someone he is not. Both translations apply, but I will refer to the work as *All the Time*.

meaning that his philosophizing about time in this section spills over to the uncertain sense of time of Poland under communist rule. Just as Meridian bridges two historical periods, A.Z. sits suspended, forced to confront his own relationship to his national community and role in the Solidarity Movement. Anderman's novel challenges collective memory to convey the constructed nature of mythology and resistance.

The frame narrative takes place in contemporary Poland as a writer-figure is the passenger in a car that is about to crash into a transport truck on a Polish highway. The slowed-down sense of time in these scenes leads to flashbacks to his past as a writer during the communist period. The novel is focalized through the writer, only referred to as A.Z., as he faces this transport truck. We never learn the character's real name and his anonymity to the reader conveys both his everyman status (he could be anyone from A to Z who participated in the Solidarity Movement) and acts as a cover-up for his wrongdoings. This name also highlights the amnesia-inducing nature of collective memory because he stands in for those that just got through everyday existence, not necessarily embodying the noble Solidarity member mythology. Further, with respect to the 2011 *Time* cover with the bandana-covered protester mentioned above, the reader gets a profile of a specific figure, but this figure is still subsumed within a larger narrative of collective action. However, by forcing the narrator to reveal his past through the car crash, the narrative framework demands at least some level of unmasking his true intentions.

Every chapter begins in the ill-fated car as time has slowed down and the inevitability of death plays out in A.Z.'s mind. This gruesome end, however, is delayed as his mind drifts to remembering the events of his life until the chapters cut off mid-sentence, with no period signalling an end, and the next chapter brings us back to the imminent car accident. This cycle of cutting off the past through the ever-recurring nature of the present signals the way that the country's past is continuously returning in government and culture as an explanation for the present, yet the present always looms large ahead, divorced from this past. A.Z. is a character who undermines the romance of the brave opposition to communism. The reader learns from the flashbacks that A.Z. passes himself off as a dissident writer in literary circles but the stories from his past

reveal him to be a fraud that often used the work of others as his own. The novel also comments on the bleak contemporary period of Polish politics and these levels of deceit are “clearly meant as a provocative parable of Polish society” (Nagorski 82) because they reveal the layers of narrative that are supposed to hide the core issues of the society.

Before going into what the flashbacks show of Poland’s past and A.Z.’s indiscretions, it is important to note Janusz Anderman’s involvement in Solidarity. Like Walker, Anderman was part of the intellectual side of the Solidarity Movement, so his experiences have an impact on the narratives he writes, both in novels, short stories, and screenplays. Anderman was born in 1949 in Włoszczowa. He worked as a reporter for student newspapers and therefore he is known for his ability to reproduce the speech of the common man and woman on the street and for his sarcasm and mockery, which are addressed to such issues as “an obsessive state paranoia that imagines plots against the regime under every rock and behind every tree, literary and other forms of censorship, official sloganeering, and the ubiquitousness of the security police” (Segel, et al 195). In the 1970s and 80s he wrote several prose works including *Gra na zwłokę* (1979) [*Playing for Time*] (1981) (about a character’s obsessive sense of being followed by secret police) and *Kraj świata* (1988) [*The Edge of the World*] (about the introduction of Martial law in Poland). Therefore, his work has always been political and observational. I consider *All the Time* to be a postresistance novel because of Anderman’s ability to see the time period with some distance and it brings his observation of history to the fore.⁸⁴ He is also a screenwriter of films and *All the Time* has been turned into a film entitled *Mniejsze Zło* [*The Lesser Evil*] in 2009 and the screenplay was written by Anderman. The cinematic elements of the novel are present in the flashback format and depiction of the recent past. The review of the film on culture.pl, a site that aims to promote Polish culture throughout the world, says that “the most important thing in the film is the portrayal of Polish reality at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, showing the deep changes Polish mentality went through thanks to the emergence of Solidarity, but above all, painting an in-depth picture

⁸⁴ Other books Anderman has published since the end of communism in Poland include *Fotografie* (2002) [*Photographs*], *Nowe fotografie* (2007) [*New Photographs*] and *To Wszystko* (2008) [*That’s All*].

of Polish society in those times” (Zarębski). The movie brings this examination of the effects on Solidarity into another medium.

Anderman was an activist writer in the communist period. For example, he was one of the undersigned in a letter to the *New York Times Review of Books* when the Polish Writer’s Association was dissolved by a decree signed by the Mayor of the City of Warsaw in 1983. The letter makes clear the implications of communism and this ban in Poland:

It thus becomes clear that the authorities decided to take decisive steps toward the full enslavement of Polish culture by creating conditions in which writers and artists could exert their professions only in full dependence on the country’s administrative and political structure; by destroying independent publications and circles in Poland and cutting all ties with the Polish emigration; by isolating Polish culture from the West. (Anderman, et al. “An Appeal”)

Anderman’s understanding of the pressures of being an artist in this historical period of change allows this novel to offer a depiction of the period that is able to take into account collective memory. His writing is directly affected by oppression or lack of publishing opportunities. Therefore, the works that reflect on the effects of the movement have more weight because of the author’s personal experience in understanding the conflict between collective destiny and personal expression.

Anderman is an author seemingly not fully embraced by Polish literary criticism. He is usually cited at least once in a critical text on contemporary Polish literature, but not to any full extent. There is a fair amount of criticism on his pre-1989 works, *Poland under Black Light* (1986) and *The Edge of the World* (1988).⁸⁵ This is perhaps because these works point very obviously to the socialist state he is writing about and they give a historical account of the period in literary terms. In terms of his post-1989 writing, he is

⁸⁵ Examples of this criticism include Fischer (1997) who deals with the filmic adaptation of *The Edge of the World*. Another is S. Jones and N. Meesha (2011) where Anderman is discussed within a conversation about writing under a socialist state.

part of a general conversation among critics who write about Polish literature in the context of history and literature about pre-1989 Poland. This criticism focuses on the way the country has changed, and how works of literature use nostalgia and historical tradition. This critical conversation assumes a deep connection between artist and national history, a link that I have demonstrated in Chapter 2. Anderman is part of this conversation, but not as widely discussed as, for example, author Stefan Chwin (who I discuss in the previous chapter).⁸⁶ Therefore, there is a gap in the research here and I see his work as a bridge between the past and contemporary Polish concerns that needs fuller examination. His post-1989 work demonstrates the way that collective resistance allows for an examination of both national narratives and personal experience.

Przemysław Czapliński is a prolific critic of Polish literature from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries⁸⁷ and he is one of the few critics to refer to Anderman with any deeper analysis. Czapliński examines how Polish literature (especially prose fiction) engages with questions of memory and the Polish culture of narration. Czapliński, in his book *Polska do wymiany: późna nowoczesność i nasze wielkie narracje* [*The Poland To Replace: Late Modernity and Our Grand Narratives*] from 2009, asks the question of “...postanowiłem zapytać literaturę ostatnich dwudziestu lat (1986-2008), jak przedstawiają się narracje o społeczeństwie w momencie kryzysu wielkich narracji” (14).⁸⁸ He sees mistrust in grand narratives as a mistrust in ideology and everyday communication leading to a crisis of communication (17). He focuses on the fact that “Solidarity” is the central narrative of emancipation in post-war Poland. However, he

⁸⁶ For example, in a work by critic Przemysław Czapliński, *Polska do wymiany*, Anderman has ten index references to Stefan Chwin’s eighteen. Czapliński refers to him more than other critics so this is a large number of references for Anderman.

⁸⁷ Some of his other critical works include: *Literatura polska 1976-1998. Przewodnik po prozie i poezji* [*Polish Literature 1976-1998: Guide to prose and poetry*] (1999), *Mikrologi ze śmiercią: motywy tanatyczne we współczesnej literaturze polskiej* [*Micrology with Death: Thanatic Motives in Contemporary Polish Literature*] (2001), *Ruchome marginesy: szkice o literaturze lat 90* [*Moving the margins: Essays in Literature of the 90s*] (2002), and *Efekt bierności. Literatura w czasie normalnym* [*The Effect of Inertia: Literature in regular time*] (2004).

⁸⁸ “...I decided to ask how literature of the last twenty years (1986-2008) presents narratives about contemporary life in a moment of crisis for the great narrations of the nation.”

goes on to say that there is a current mistrust in the democratically elected government so the narrative has failed. He asks how we can build a new narrative if the concept of Solidarity cannot survive current conditions, arguing that a literary diagnosis of society needs to happen. He discusses changes in literature precipitated by 1989, including parody of the Solidarity Movement and absurdity (199-200). Anderman is part of this literary diagnosis of questioning the way the past has been constructed in collective memory. Therefore, the past and the present are still inextricably linked. Collective memory is also an important issue to Poles since memory of such events as Katyń, the massacre of Polish intellectuals by the Soviets, was erased from the public memory but now has returned through public monuments, film, and commemorations. How do memories that were erased return to the public consciousness?

Czapliński ties his analysis to historical events, specifically 1989 and the end of communism. For example, he discusses the new narratives created about the Second World War after communism. Poles were able to talk about events such as the Katyń massacre without censorship and this was reflected in the culture. There seemed to be a need to keep the war narrative in the cultural discourse in order to not “lose” the war yet again:

Prędzej czy później II wojnę światową trzeba było opowiedzieć jeszcze raz, aby wyznaczyć jej miejsce w nowym etapie modernizacji. Nowa narracja o tamtych wydarzeniach musiała powstać – czy to dla odgraniczenia czasów współczesnych od okupacyjnych, czy dla wciągnięcia wielkiego konfliktu z przeszłości w poczet sojuszników nowoczesności. Ale stworzenie nowych opowieści o wojnie oznaczało wypowiedzenie wojny. Już bez armat, czołgów, żołnierzy; nie na realnej ziemi, lecz na froncie symbolicznym – co nie znaczy, że bez ofiar. (63)⁸⁹

⁸⁹ “Sooner or later, the story of the Second World War had to be told once again to mark its place in the new stage of modernization. A new narrative about those events had to be created –whether to divide contemporary time from the time of occupation, or to bring the great conflict from the past to the allies of modernity. But the making of new stories about the war meant declaring a war. Now without weapons, tanks, soldiers; not on the real earth, but on the symbolic front – which does not mean it was without sacrifices” [translation mine].

His use of the word “symbolic” connects to my view that the political implications of civil resistance movements can be examined through postresistance literature. The symbolic aspects of the resistance movement can also be rewritten and literature contributes to this rewriting.

In a critical work on nostalgia in literature, Czapliński argues that nostalgia has become an important contemporary language of communication in Poland and one of the places this is evident is in contemporary literature (Czapliński *Wzniosłe tęsknoty* [*Elevated yearnings*] 5). He makes reference to Anderman in a section on finding the present through nostalgia. Czapliński shows that in the 1990s Anderman was part of a group of authors who returned to writing about the past and used nostalgia as an entry point for the reader. However, they also used it to comment on the present. I agree with Czapliński that Anderman is part of this interest in the past. What I find interesting in his twenty-first century work (especially *All the Time*) is his refusal to engage with nostalgia that idealizes the past, instead he challenges an idealization of the past. Czapliński’s criticism engages with these questions of the past in Polish literature and recognizes the importance of the 1989 transition, which is a key idea in Anderman’s novel.

Hanna Gosk is also an important critic in contemporary Polish prose and she has written and edited several critical works that focus on the interplay between history and literature in Polish prose. In *Zamiast końca historii* [*Instead of the End of History*] (2005), her questions include how authors in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries who are writing about their contemporary period understand the past and the meaning it has for them and what influence it has on them as they write about their own time (13). She is less interested in the accuracy of fiction depicting history and more interested in the way that prose shows the historical knowledge of the epoch. This idea is also the concern of this project: how does authors’ knowledge of the way the protest movements reconceived national narratives shape their contemporary writing? She also comments on prose set in the twentieth century and how the narrators and protagonists survive the events of history, a history interpreted in individual stories and assimilated in terms of permanent change and the fragmentation of reality (18). We see this happening in *All the Time*. A.Z. survives the period when the populace rises together but then cannot survive

the fragmentation that results from the change in government. He is facing a literal death that fragments time, his memory and eventually his body. Gosk interprets the changes in Polish prose published after 1989 as embodying a desire to rebuild the frames of memory and local history (173). The structure of the accident and its flashbacks give a fatalistic context to the memories of A.Z. but also provide a framing device to contain the collective and personal memories.

In her edited collection of essays about memory in Polish literature, Gosk writes in the introduction that the history of the previous age (which includes World War II and the events leading to 1989) brings associations of catastrophe and ruin. The collection is interested in the question of how authors use this discourse of history (*Teraźniejszość [The Present and the Memory of the Past]* 11). For example Czapliński in an essay takes on Francis Fukuyama's question about the end of history. He comments that Poles saw an end to a kind of history with the close of the communist period but a new one with a less definite shape has emerged (166). For A.Z., history does end as he is no longer able to ingratiate himself into a political movement that will make him famous. The car crash is the realization of that. While Czapliński and Gosk focus on how all of the historical changes after 1989 create a different kind of Polish prose, I argue that it is specifically the collective action of Solidarity that creates this rupture because of the decline of a myth-making collective. The transition from the collective engagement with national myth-making to a reconceptualization of the individual relationship to the nation is depicted in this novel. The foreboding car crash that is just around the corner symbolizes the uncertainty of A.Z. as he floats between time which has a shape and that which is unknown.

Mieczysław Orski also writes about "new" Polish prose and part of his title *Rozbite zwierciadło [The Broken Mirror]* (2006) refers to the way authors have to get used to a new era as well as returning to themes of the everyday. However, he does not discount the effect of nostalgia. He discusses a "strategy" of nostalgia on the part of authors and the importance of a journey into "that" past (46). He refers to Anderman once in the context of his 2002 novel *Fotografiach*. He suggests it is possible that a blinking, flashing or lightning kind of memory in the novel is important to transmit truth about

Poland and Poles from a previous period, rather than a diagnostic mode of literature (58-59). This analysis also fits in with *All the Time* and the flashes of memory that A.Z. gets throughout the narrative. The flashes give the reader snippets of the past yet also allow for space to consider this past within the context of the present, veering away from an immersed narrative of the past. This form rejects a narrative of progress that the collective memory of the movement endorses.

Agnieszka Czajkowska analyzes authors who search for the tragic subjects of history. Her analysis of Maurycy Mochnacki, Paweł Jasienica, and Zbigniew Herbert looks at how history is not simply told as a series of events but is retold in a tragic way by these authors. By looking at a Romantic nineteenth century author in addition to two twentieth century authors she shows the way Polish history and place have been transformed into tragic narratives (Czajkowska *Historia [History and “Tragic Subject”]* 7). Anderman’s text also has this tragic sensibility through the protagonist who tries to leave his mark in every important historical moment and believes he is a hero, but time and his moral failings leave him behind. He wants to think that he represented the collective by doing what he had to do in order to survive, but his personal narrative undercuts his integration among the collective.

The last critic I want to mention is Adam Michnik, a key public intellectual who was one of the strongest opponents of the communist regime: he was involved in KOR [*Komitet Obrony Robotników* or The Worker’s Defence Committee], he was imprisoned more than once and he played a role in the talks that led to democratic elections. In a review of the novel in the *Gazeta Wyborza*, a newspaper of which he was once editor-in-chief, he recognizes the way the novel describes his generation, yet also comments on contemporary Poland. He argues that contemporary Poland was born out of that past generation, from their emotions and determination. Michnik describes how Anderman’s novel reconstructs the climate of democratic opposition and its atmosphere of “heroism mixed with hopelessness” and how he shows the “art of slippage,” when communist era citizens’ struggle of everyday existence became one based on cunning and conformism, something that is never widely discussed in contemporary society.

This art of slippage is an idea I want to explore in the analysis of this narrative. The secondary literature about Polish prose after 1989 supports my argument about a change in narrative outlook, but I also want to show the importance of collective action as part of this change. Like Meridian, A.Z. laments the lack of a collectivity and the fact that it is hard to survive on his own after 1989. Unlike Meridian, however, he is not lamenting the loss of the collectivity for the sake of the nation going forward but for the sake of his own interests. The slippage here focuses on his both ability and inability to read the political mood of the country and figure out how to benefit from it. I wanted to highlight this novel to show another side to the effect of protest movements on the individual narrative in the postresistance era. Once again, the body is a site of protest and vulnerability under the weight of the “perfect narrative” of collective memory. The protagonist takes action to mould himself within the narrative yet also laments the heaviness of that task as he is about to be killed.

The central concern for A.Z. as he faces the transport truck is how he will be remembered as an individual. He is in the car with an actress who, although a has-been, has some name recognition and he worries that he will not even be recognized in the newspaper article about the accident. They had been together at a twenty-fifth anniversary commemoration of the birth of Solidarity in Gdańsk (signaling the importance of time and memory of the movement to the novel) where she had been asked to recite poetry. The newspaper article that will potentially be written about the crash will mean another moment of “living”, even if it is one more day due to the fleeting nature of the newspaper (Anderman *Cały* 8). However, this death seems ordinary to him; it is a death that could happen to anyone and he wants to stand out in some way, even in death: “To, co się dzieje w tym czasie, co nastąpiło teraz, nie jest czymś nadzwyczajnym i wyróżniającym – mogło się przydarzyć i się przydarzyło; banal” (5).⁹⁰ In the continuum of time he is nameless and not unique because he no longer has a connection to the national cause. In contrast to this banal moment in the past, he had created some

⁹⁰ “This, what is happening in this time, what happens now, is not something out of the ordinary and distinct – it could have happened and has happened; banal.”

significance for himself within the Solidarity Movement and this gap between fame and insignificance frightens him. He thought he had created a concrete reality for himself but this stoppage in time and the accident have made him consider his connection to the past in this moment.

This thought leads to the first of his flashbacks to the past, first to the reason he is in the car in the present time and then later further back into the past. The first flashback about how he came to be in the car describes the way A.Z. had pretended to have sympathy for the has-been actress at the commemorations, gets her drunk and then tries to bed her in an attempt to gain some connection to the film world through her. This first description of an encounter A.Z. has with a woman is not very flattering; however, it marks a pattern of encounters where A.Z. attempts to use a woman for his own ends. The disregard that A.Z. shows in this respect mimics the way that the female contribution to the Solidarity Movement has not always been included as part of Solidarity historiography and the collective memory of the movement focuses on a male heteronormative outlook of the nation, which denies a dialogic conversation about the movement. In Czapliński's *Polska do wymiany* [*The Poland to Replace*] (2009), his only extended analysis about *All the Time* focuses on the novel as a response to repeated xenophobia, homophobia, and paranoia in the twenty-first century. Despite the modernization of Poland, those who are suspected of collaborating with the communist government, those who are of undetermined race and those of "not proper" sexual preferences are not accepted (278). In a scene where A.Z. has to figure out a way to avoid being called into the army, he considers telling them that he is gay. But he knows that this knowledge will spread and it will ruin him for life so he instead says he is insane. Being insane is considered "better" than being a collaborator, a Jew, or a homosexual (Anderman *Caty* 102-103). These categories do not fit into the national narrative of resistance and they continue to be controversial. This is one of the ways this novel critiques these narratives through the flashbacks to the past.

The next flashbacks go back farther in A.Z.'s past. They show that A.Z. is a con artist in his relationships and a writer who plagiarizes all of his work. He adapts to the evolution of the resistance, not for any particular political conviction, but because he does

everything he can to survive and become famous. At first, he tries to be successful on his own by writing poetry but he soon finds that the poems he tries to glue together with words fall apart and are dry and banal (79). He soon gets into the habit of lying to cover up for his lack of talent. To avoid being called up by the army after his failure as a student, one of his lovers (that he lies to and cons, which is another instance of his use of women for his own ends) gets him committed to a psychiatric institution for a short stay. The doctor believes that he is part of the underground resistance and is coming to the hospital to avoid questioning by the authorities (104). By pretending to be part of a collective movement, A.Z. gets special treatment which furthers his belief that he can become something by using the movement. He pretends that he works with KOR and knows Jacek Kuroń (one of the founding members of KOR), thereby using the importance of writing in Polish culture to gain sympathy.

Lying is something he regularly does within the narrative. While in the hospital, his bed is beside a patient who has actually been mentally affected by the political situation and he is writing a work that he is afraid that the authorities will steal from him. The patient entrusts the manuscript to A.Z. when he is dying. The reader gets a short description of the work: “Szpital psychiatryczny stał się pretekstem do wzmocnienia opisu życia bohatera, który dusi się w atmosferze realnego socjalizmu, ale nie może się stąd wyrwać; jest uwięziony, pozbawiony możliwości otrzymania paszportu, jedynej drogi ucieczki” (143).⁹¹ A.Z. publishes it as his own work without changing a thing and he is transformed into a cult opposition literary figure. One review within the book describes the author: “Wyjątkowo młody prozaik, który w zdumiewająco dojrzały sposób potrafił uchwycić puls naszej epoki, pokazać w zwierciadle swej powieści gorzki bezsens naszego zamkniętego świata, sprowadzając go w celnej metaforze do szpitala dla

⁹¹ “The psychiatric hospital became the pretext to strengthen the description of the life of the hero, who is suffocating in the atmosphere of real socialism but cannot get himself out of it; he’s imprisoned; disallowed the ability to obtain a passport, the only road to escape.”

wariatów” (163).⁹² This perfectly healthy individual publishing the work of someone who has actually experienced mental violence imposed by the authorities further stretches the lies and untruths that permeated the period and punctures the image of the noble underground writers’ resistance that was in sync with the voice of the people. But it also shows that the work of opposition was done by ordinary people with human weakness, which has manifested itself in the contemporary period. This depiction of the writer who only cares about his own survival does violence to the Polish collective memory. When his fame from the novel fades he tries to maintain his reputation through stealing from another writer who has immigrated to Australia so the deception continues until publishers are no longer interested in serious political books.

A.Z. keeps trying to justify this life and all the memories he brings up get cut off through the abrupt ending of each chapter. For example, at the end of one chapter A.Z. says “Chciałem też dodać, że”⁹³ and the chapter ends with no period and cuts back to him in the car in the next section as contemplates his situation in time again (35). When the novel breaks with reality through these sequences, the reader is artificially jerked back into the confrontation between past and present. Time seems to flatten out and become a platform for him to understand the choices he has made. The concern with time marks these postresistance novels as they wrestle with the before and after of the movement. How the present faces him when he has to come up with new ways to navigate his life, where he is not able to be a hero of the resistance, is seen through his thoughts about the car crash. He reflects on the fact that he is not able to get close to people: “Poza tym gra, którą od lat uprawiał, wymagała działania w pojedynkę... Jak długo dałoby się ukryć, że A.Z. nic nie robi? Że nie pisze? Że jego życie, obudowane przez niego legendą, jest fikcją?” (256).⁹⁴ He connects the oncoming truck with how he reacted when communism

⁹² “An exceptionally young prose writer who, in a praise-worthy mature way, has managed to capture the pulse of our epoch; he has shown in his story the bitter senselessness of our closed world, demonstrating this in the apt metaphor of the hospital for the insane.”

⁹³ “I wanted to add that”

⁹⁴ “The game that for years he has played demanded only one player... How long would it be hidden that A.Z. does nothing? That he writes nothing? That his life, built up by his legend, is a fiction?”

fell: "...taka podwójna szyba odgradzała mnie od nowego świata po osiemdziesiątym dziewiątym roku, myśli, podwójna szyba, przez którą niewiele widziałem" (259).⁹⁵ He closed himself off after 1989 until he tries to sign on as a writer with any political parties that will have him, showing his conviction that the new generation of politicians is also phony in its defence of democratic principles. What role does he play in a fractured society that does not clamour for one kind of story? The monologic nature of the movement served as a benefit to him by hiding his egotistical nature.

A.Z. does not change in any way at the end of the novel as the car is about to hit. He can no longer see the difference between the years 1997 and 2002; they were only pieces that he was not able to pin to a concrete area of time (281). In contrast the pre-1989 period had a defined ethos in which he could survive. He still defends his malleability and lies in passing off the writing as his own: "W jakiś sposób je stworzyłem; nie wystarczy napisać; dzieło jest stworzone dopiero wówczas, kiedy pójdzie między ludzi. Jakoś sobie radziłem w tym skurwysyńskim świecie. Musiałem sobie radzić i tak, i jeszcze inaczej; to nie moja wina, że on jest w ten sposób urządzony. Gdyby był urządzony inaczej, działałbym inaczej. Musiałem się dostosować do reguł" (308).⁹⁶ The idea of puncturing mythology through a voice that was not one of the collective, but pretended to be is a violent act on the collective memory of most Poles. The rules were imposed from above and A.Z. had to work within them, rather than against them. This flawed character disrupts the symbolic character of cult opposition writer-figures during Solidarity and creates a provocative parable for Polish society to not buy into nostalgic and romantic collective memory.

Protesters and activist writers are often unknown people within a collective movement, elided by masks or pseudonyms to avoid reprisal. Their anonymity makes it

⁹⁵ "...such a double glass shielded me from the new world after 1989, he thinks, a double windshield through which I saw little"

⁹⁶ "In some fashion I created them; it's not enough to write, the work is created only when it goes out among the people. In some way I have managed in this motherfucking world. I had to manage this way and in other ways; it is not my fault that the world is run in this way. If it had been run another way, I would have acted differently. I had to get used to the rules."

easy for collective memory to smooth over remembering the complications and contradictions of a movement. Walker's novel holds up Meridian as literally a "highest point", one who continued beyond the movement and points out that the work of civil rights is hardly over. Solidarity and communism in Poland is one example where easy binaries are remembered in collective memory while novels such as Anderman's provide a more nuanced view that shows that malleability and choice are important in understanding how an individual becomes part of the collective. These characters have symbolic status yet they resist being pinned down into the collective whole by recognizing the constructed nature of rhetorical frameworks. Time and memory are major concerns the farther that we move away from the civil resistance period. How will the period be remembered and does a kind of rewriting through a new narrative template, that is not constrained by boundaries of time and place, have to be enacted in order for it to be recollected outside the bounds of collective memory and mass movements? This question is important as we move into an age of social protest, often the only means for people to voice their opposition against a stronghold of governments with corporate interests and despotic rulers who seek to curtail human rights. Movements such as the American Civil Rights Movement and Solidarity show us how easy it is to remember a certain version or narrative template of these highly politicized events. The novel is one form which gives us entry behind the mask of collective memory.

Conclusion

This project has argued that the intersection between collective civil resistance movements and literature, once those movements are over, produces fragmented narrative structures and dialogic responses to cohesive political frameworks. The development of civil resistance movements occurs when a large segment of citizens band together to overcome perceived oppression. In order to be as successful as possible, the people leading the movements look to the past and determine that a cohesive rhetorical framework, and on occasion non-violent action as part of this framework, is integral to gaining any momentum for the movement. This means that a cohesive narrative must develop across many segments of the population. This narrative is often based on the mythological underpinnings of the oppressed group: “The need for movements to cloak their mobilizing beliefs and practices with an aura of cultural or subcultural resonance and/or legitimacy often leads them to identify extant, but often forgotten or buried, cultural phenomenon” (Snow, et al 238). Necessarily, there is no opportunity for voices that question the use of these myths or voices that argue for different outcomes to be heard, nor for ones that do not fit the amnesiac tendencies of collective memory. A study of such movements as the American Civil Rights Movement and the Polish Solidarity Movement can result in many revelations about the nature of the collective and the tendencies of language and memory to cover over voices that do not fit into the collective. These movements can be very beneficial to an oppressed group and confirm the value of national mythologies and histories.

The totalizing phenomena of the civil resistance movement, however, should not be left unquestioned. Since these movements can play such a large role in society, I believe that they must be interrogated thoroughly so as not to remain uncomplicated narratives in collective memory. Literature is one avenue through which to explore this complexity because of the way that it can bring the reader closer to the event in an imagined realm, while also allowing distance from the monologic rhetoric of these movements. I have focused on the genre of the novel –often described as dialogic – in

this project in order to be able to build an analytic framework that hinges on the disruption of narrative coherence. These fictional depictions of civil resistance movements have not received enough attention in literary criticism. Through finding the buried dialogic voices within the historical archeology of a place and unmasking the motivations of the individual protester, I have shown that the interrogation of these movements allows for a richer conceptualization of the multitude of voices that are concealed by monologic narrative frameworks. Even though my examples were from movements that have already run their course, this is an increasingly relevant subject because civil resistance movements continue to be a viable mode of political action. How will literature written about contemporary movements participate in this postresistance approach of interrogating these collective tendencies? This area of study demands more attention and has the possibility to open up avenues for many other potential projects.

The novels I have focused on in this project were written by authors who lived through, and had a role in, their respective civil resistance movements. This methodological choice was made in order for it to be clear that the authors could recognize both the narrative frameworks of the movement, and the changes that came after the collective disbanded. By seeing both sides of this historical divide, the novels consciously disrupted movement narratives, even if they did not overtly write about the movements. But is it also possible to see patterns of the postresistance in novels written by authors that experienced the movement as young people and now write about their contemporary society? This question reveals a potential avenue for inquiry: the postresistance in novels about contemporary society after the movement. In these novels the effects of the respective movements are clearly felt within the text and the authors are self-reflexive about the impact of this history on the text. The lives of the characters comment on the repercussions of the movements, especially its failures. The narrative focus is the development of personal identity within the political framework. Again, this kind of narrative finds voices that resist the triumphant collective memory view of the movements.

Here I want to provide two examples of such novels, again using the case of the United States and Poland in order to build on the context of this project. Paul Beatty's

White Boy Shuffle (1996) is a novel that captures the experience of young African Americans in its mix of poetic and colloquial language and weaves the implications of the Civil Rights Movements into a contemporary setting. Like Ishmael Reed's use of the satiric and absurd to jump through time and present unbelievable situations, this narrative also has qualities removed from 'reality' and is self-reflexive about its absurdities. In the prologue, the reader hears from the protagonist who claims to be a messiah and a "negro demagogue" who has the "ear of the academic, the street denizens, and the political cabalists" (1). However, this claim to Martin Luther King Jr.'s place in the black community is undercut by the fact that he is the "Ebon Pied Piper": "In the quest for equality, black folks have tried everything. We've begged, revolted, entertained, intermarried, and are still treated like shit. Nothing works, so why suffer the slow deaths of toxic addiction and the American work ethic when the immediate gratification of suicide awaits?" His call for a mass suicide will be "the ultimate sit-in" (2). Like Ellison's *Invisible Man*, the protagonist tells the reader in the prologue that his call to action means a rejection of any attempt to appease a racist society. Reading the rest of the novel reveals how he comes to assume this role. The prologue again acts as a destabilizing force with regard to the rest of the story as the protagonist questions the perceived success of the Civil Rights Movement.

At the beginning of this perverted Bildungsroman, Beatty's protagonist, Gunnar Kaufman, is a boy living in Santa Monica, California and the only cool black guy at his "all-white multicultural school" (28). In this version of his life, "White Gunnar was a broken-stringed kite leaning into the sea breeze, expertly maneuvering in the gusty gales" (35) while his conception of being black was "a suffocating bully that tied my mind behind my back and shoved me into a walk-in closet" (36). When his mother wants to send her children to a black summer camp, the siblings say they do not want to go "because they're different than us" (37). Gunnar's shocked mother does not waste any time in moving her family to a black West Los Angeles neighbourhood called Hillside where life is very different for Gunnar. The history of African-American struggle is embedded in this place, as it is in Canada and Gdańsk: "In the late 1960s, after the bloody but little known I'm-Tired-of-the-White-Man-Fuckin'-with-Us-and-Whatnot riots, the city decided to pave over the neighboring mountainside, surrounding the community with

a great concrete wall that spans its entire perimeter” (45). In this environment Gunnar experiences life as a never-ending log-rolling contest: “You never asked why the log was rolling or who was rolling the log. You just spread your arms and kept your feet moving, doing your best not to fall off” (102). It is through these contrasting life experiences that Gunnar becomes aware of the caged nature of African Americans.

In his new school there are “Young Black Latino Men: Endangered Species” assemblies that attempt to brainwash the boys “into joining the sect of benevolent middle-class American normalcy” (112). The Rodney King verdict makes Gunnar feel worthless (130) and his contact with the black student union at Boston University is steeped in irony: “The black student union was originally called Umoja, but the name was changed because of the whites’ inability to pronounce the Swahili word for unity” (183). As his profile rises, first by being a star basketball player, and then by gaining fame for his “street poetry”, Gunnar becomes more overt in his call for resistance. He does not want to tolerate the complacency of post-Civil Rights African Americans and unwittingly becomes a saviour to black people. At a rally against apartheid in South Africa, Gunnar argues that people are not willing to die for the cause anymore. Unwittingly, he makes a suicide pact with himself: “I ain’t ready to die for anything, so I guess I’m just not fit to live. In other words, I’m just ready to die. I’m just ready to die” (200). This ironic turn inspires many suicides around the country, accompanied by death poems inspired by Gunnar. Even though Gunnar does not kill himself, his infamy opens up spaces of dialogic resistance. Because the LA Police Department now follows him everywhere with their helicopter spotlight, he creates an outdoor open mike in Hillside called the Black Bacchanalian MiseryFests where people in the neighbourhood get to perform and give voice to their personal expression. This contemporary narrative written by an author who was born in 1962 still provides avenues for the exploration of the consequences and failures of the movements on young individuals

In the case of Poland, Dawid Bieńkowski is an author that explores the impact of the movements on young people and contemporary society. In his novel *Jest [It Is]* (2001), the reader follows a group of young boys during the period of martial law in Poland. The political atmosphere they inhabit acts as the backdrop to their journey to

maturity. Despite the political situation, they are still boys who get into trouble, abuse alcohol, and test their boundaries. The individual lives in the foreground establish the fact that life proceeds even as the movement is unfolding. However, the political is still very much present and influences the boys' choices. They discuss politics as they drink on a camping trip (8) and the radio acts as a disrupting voice in the narrative by commenting on the larger political action (20, 24). The rhetoric of the movement also functions in the personal decisions of the characters. For example, Piotr does the unthinkable and stands up to his boring math teacher: "A matematyka...mnie nie interesuje. Mnie interesuje sprawiedliwość. Jeżeli pana profesera nie interesuje sprawiedliwość, to być może ona zainteresuje się panem. Nie wiem, czy pan zauważy że przyszły ostatnio czasy sprawiedliwości" (33).⁹⁷ Piotr brings the language of the movement into his own life, thereby bringing the rhetoric into a new context and removing it from the monologic language of the collective.

Bieńkowski's follow-up novel *Nic* [*Nothing*] (2005), takes place in the early 1990s and comments on the new socio-economic system. The characters at first are fascinated with capitalism but soon the world of consumption becomes empty. When the collective movement disbands, it is up to the individual to face the changes that the movement has created. In this context, the individual is vulnerable to the immense changes in the country and may be unprepared to deal with them. This kind of novel allows for the consideration of the way that participation in the movement does not always prepare the individual on how to react to gaining this freedom. The language of the movement is continuously reacting to a form of oppression and resistance, so it is unable to survive when this resistance withdraws. The characters must discover their own language to cope with these changes.

This exploration of postresistance literature has the potential for expansion, including the analysis of other cultures that have experienced civil resistance movements.

⁹⁷ "Math...does not interest me. I am interested in justice. If justice does not interest you, professor, then maybe it will take an interest in you. I do not know professor if you realized that the time for justice had recently arrived" [translation mine].

This project has focused on only two movements in order to more effectively highlight these phenomena. However, I believe that civil resistance movements have a widespread effect on various cultures and their literary output. Therefore, I hope in the future to be able to examine how civil resistance movements are depicted in the context of movements other than the Civil Rights Movement and Solidarity. Through finding the postresistance in civil resistance narratives, I will continue to uncover dialogic voices that bring more depth to understanding the reasons for individual resistance within the collective. For example, other twentieth-century civil resistance movements, like the ones in China and South Africa, would open up the framework to non-Western cultures. Novels like Lisa Zhang Wharton's *Last Kiss in Tiananmen Square* (2011) and Njabulo Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* (2004) would be potential starting points. Wharton's novel tells the story of a girl drawn into the pro-democracy movement in China and how this decision changes the course of her life. This kind of coming-of-age historical fiction opens up a space to discuss the intersection of the personal and political in these kinds of novels. In *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, four women in South Africa wait for their husbands who are involved in the apartheid movement, echoing the way Winnie waited for Nelson Mandela's release from prison. Novels such as this allow for analysis of characters who are not directly involved in resistance action but have personal stakes in the collective cause. Additionally, I am interested in continuing to follow the stories of contemporary movements like the Egyptian uprising and thinking about their cultural legacy. This is a valuable exercise in order to critically examine human behaviour within the collective and interrogate the rhetorical frameworks of its culture.

There are also some recent narratives that incorporate the generational effect of civil resistance movements and so present a kind of commentary on the long-term effects of civil resistance. A 2013 novel by Jonathan Lethem entitled *Dissident Gardens*, which depicts three generations of political activists in New York City, is a rich example of the intertwining of the personal and political in postresistance novels. The narrative explores individuals within various collective protest movements and how they navigate their personal relationships, political outlook and relationship to the collective movement. These three generations are involved in the Communist Party, the 1960s counterculture, and Occupy Wall Street. The setting of New York City unites the individual narratives

and provides a backdrop to this political activism. However, this novel resists a narrative of progress by constantly switching narrative viewpoints and time periods in a fragmented way. The characters are from the same family but their alienation from each other reflects their inability to truly belong within a collective political cause. While activism is in their blood, they must determine for themselves how their voices function in relation to the movements. For example, Miriam is the daughter of Rose, a Holocaust survivor who was a part of the Communist Party in America. Even though Miriam follows in the footsteps of her mother and becomes a political activist in the 1960s, she resents her mother's controlling nature. While Rose tries to make Miriam learn Spanish because it is New York City's second language, Miriam takes French in school instead:

This, a rebuke to Rose, for whom French is the second language of the aristocracy and also specifically of the Vichy collaborationist anti-Semite she suspects is hiding in any Frenchman, whereas the Spanish flavor of Fascism is properly tragic, commemorating noble remorse at the vanquishment of the Lincoln Brigade. Ironic, then, that the language-flavor of so many of Miriam's present and coming causes – Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua – is Spanish, too, so in her participation in bilingual meetings and protest demonstrations she is continually thrust against the awkwardness and embarrassment of her old resistance to that tongue. (Lethem 120)

This is just one example in which complex personal relationships have an impact on the way that the protesters perform resistance activities. This generational activism also comments on the disjunctions within the language of resistance movements and further questions monologic narrative frameworks.

Finally, the question of genre in relation to civil resistance movements would be another important avenue to explore. I have focused on novels in this project because they create a narrative that can both describe and question the civil resistance narrative. Novels allowed me to examine these narratives in a more detailed way, especially since I was concentrating on extended descriptions of place, myth and individual experience. However, the notion of the postresistance can be used to read other genres. Shorter genres

like songs and poems are often used during the movements because they have the potential to be crafted in a shorter amount of time and they allow for collective recitation and engagement.

A prospective project in this vein would examine the evolution of these forms throughout the movement and how they conform to or critique its narrative frameworks. For example, a protest song by Jacek Kaczmarski entitled *Mury (Walls)* (1978) became a kind of anthem during the later stages of the Polish Solidarity Movement, especially among workers. The words of the song can be seen as a rousing call to resistance against oppression, but Kaczmarski also meant it as a critique of social movements. He meant to show how the masses can easily appropriate a song or poem, despite the author's intentions and use it for a particular cause. Ironically, this phenomenon occurred with this song because masses ignored the contradictory meaning: “‘Mury’ napisałem w 1978 roku, to nie była pieśń ku czci ‘Solidarności’. Zawarłem w niej nieufność wobec wszystkich masowych ruchów. Później, po kilku latach, ludzie usłyszeli w tej piosence to, co chcieli usłyszeć, wpłynął na to kontekst polityczny”⁹⁸ (Kaczmarski). This example complements my discussion of the conflict between collective destiny and individual expression within an artist. This struggle is heightened when the collective needs a unified language in order to resist. In a more contemporary example, *The New York Times* recently profiled young Egyptian musicians who are tackling social issues after the protests in Tahrir Square. This “raucous” and “defiant” music is called “mahraganat” or Arabic for “festivals”. Musicians use the language of the protest movement in their lyrics but subvert it in some way. For example, they used the famous chant – “The people want the fall of the regime” – but transformed it into: “The people want five pounds cellphone credit” to address the slow economy (Hubbard). Again, the rhetorical frameworks of the movements are taken up in a dialogic context through artistic expressions like this one.

This project has laid the groundwork for an even more expansive study on literature and civil resistance movements. Reading postresistance literature can lead to

⁹⁸ “‘Walls’ was written in 1978, it was not a song in honour of ‘Solidarity’. I made the song wary of all mass movements. Later, after a few years, people heard in the song what they wanted to hear and that was influenced by the political context” [translation mine].

many fascinating findings about the nature of resistance movements, the role of the collective in perpetuating national myths and narratives, and the function of the individual in continuously critiquing these narratives. At a meta-level, these texts also question the role of the artist within the political realm and the ability of creative works to be in a dialogue with history and collective memory. Dialogic voices within the text show the vitality of a postresistance society that can continually interrogate the limits of the civil resistance struggle. Fictional depictions of protest movements, and the rhetorical frameworks that sustain them, illustrate discontinuities between collective rhetoric and individual desire.

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