concept of "borders" and to the ways it resonates in her writings. I make no claim that Clément or Kristeva (why leave out Moi?) invented the term. My stated focus is the significance of borderline phenomena, as complexly defined by Kristeva, for her challenge to Lacanian theory. To require clarification of who "first identified" the term and who did "original work . . . well in advance of Kristeva," as Glogowski does, even though the question is extraneous to my discussion, points to an underlying concern about copyright that emerges in his final paragraph. Nothing in her books suggests that Kristeva disregards the need for "careful differential diagnosis" in her clinical work. I trust—but perhaps I was delinquent in not looking for hard evidence—she refers her borderline cases to medical treatment when "biological dysfunction" appears. To say that "[t]he body is left out" and "escapes the author's [Kristeva's? my own?] notion of meaning," however, is grossly to misrepresent in yet another way. As I indicate through extensive quotation, Kristeva repeatedly emphasizes Freud's inclusion of kinesthetic elements in his definition of the sign. Whereas Lacan stresses the functions of speech and language, Kristeva cites the Freudian sign in support of her insistence on the need to pay attention to nonverbal phenomena in the analytic situation—that is, "gestures, laughter and tears, moments of acting out" (qtd. on 300). In Kristeva's theory, the body is let in.

"A more troublesome confusion," Glogowski says, is my description—in fact, Kristeva's—of the borderline patient as both possessing an unstable ego (hence some sense of individuality and alterity) and dwelling in a twilight realm where the mother is no longer differentially perceived (hence the fusional dyad). This is not a confusion, however, but a paradox: the paradox of the two-in-one condition, the being neither here nor there that characterizes borderline patients as well as certain works of art, according to Kristeva (see 295–96). Glogowski also clears up one final point of confusion endemic to the critical profession, "a common misunderstanding among literary critics": the relation between Saussure's linguistic model and Lacan's. That "simple inversion" does not constitute the only difference between these two models of the sign is an important observation and one, I believe, my argument does not belie. Had it seemed to me pertinent to expound on these relations, I would have referred the reader to several coherent accounts, such as Malcolm Bowie's "Jacques Lacan" (*Structuralism and Since: From Lévi-Strauss to Derrida*, ed. John Sturrock, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979, esp. 126–29) and Antoine Vergote's "From Freud's 'Other Scene' to Lacan's 'Other' " (*Interpreting Lacan*, ed. Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan, New Haven: Yale UP, 1983, esp. 195–201). But the details of these differences are irrelevant to analyzing the grounds for Kristeva's critique of the Lacanian model as opposed to the heterogeneous Freudian sign (sections 3–4 of my discussion).

In the last paragraph of Glogowski's response, the stakes become most evident: "the potential for clinical ineptitude among literary critics." If it is any comfort, I offer the assurance that I have no plans to set up a practice. His qualified denials notwithstanding ("the clinic need not be a privileged referent . . ."), Glogowski strongly implies that psychoanalytic theory should remain the privileged purview of the clinician. He would put up a sign at the portals of his club: "Literary critics not allowed!" Thus to preserve the clinic from the encroachments of the critic is to abrogate a fertile and ongoing tradition of interdisciplinary exchange, an exchange to which Freud, Lacan, and Kristeva (among many other analysts) have contributed. It would seem needless to say, and yet I reiterate, that both literary criticism and psychoanalysis have benefited greatly from the efforts of their practitioners to enter into and sustain a dialogue.

SHULI BARZILAI
Hebrew University

Toward a Global Community

To the Editor:

Although few thoughtful people would disagree with Betty Jean Craige about the general desirability of globalism, secularism, antifanaticism, antiabsolutism, mutual understanding, and tolerance of difference (Guest Column, "Literature in a Global Society," 106 [1991]: 395–401), I have doubts about "holism" as a magic elixir for bringing all this about. The censorship Craige anathematizes by reference to the Ayatollah Khomeini's death sentence on Salman Rushdie (for exhibiting these admirable qualities) has formal American counterparts in Stanley Fish's attempt to silence the National Association of Scholars, the University of Northern Colorado's disinviting of Linda Chavez as commencement speaker because she was the "wrong" sort of Hispanic, and the panacea of anti-free-speech laws at a large number of universities—measures that were all accompanied by professions of interest in "diversity." The academics behind this sort of censorship doubtless subscribe to Craige's holism (known in one guise as "multiculturalism"), but instead of enriching "the conversation of mankind," the American

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promulgation of this philosophy seems to welcome a return to Babel: separate graduation ceremonies, separate student centers, separate tables in cafeterias, separate dormitories, and so on for minorities who prefer to remain incommunicado. The results look less like Craige's honorifics—"hybridity, impurity, intermingling"—than an American incarnation of Slovenia-Croatia. In sum, just the kind of thing that Craige would seem to be opposed to.

Another problem with the ideology of holism is that while everything may indeed be "constructed" and in flux, with no divine sanction, wholes are not self-identifying phenomena, like pleasure and pain, but require—like "the will of God"—self-appointed or socially sanctioned priests to tell us just what these wholes consist of. Since wholes are not "natural" objects but, rather, hermeneutic acts, neither in practice nor in theory could any things be identified as wholes *in themselves*; they can only be constructions from someone's necessarily limited point of view. To sanction an interpreter to select the qualities and substances that might compose a given whole is to arrive not at the will of God but only at a particular politics of construction that is potentially open-ended. (The binary digital-analog, which now forms part of electronic "wholes," did not even exist a few years ago.) Even in ecology, the notion of ecosystems (a type of whole) is purely phantasmal, since ecosystems do not present themselves as integral entities experienced involuntarily. When Aldo Leopold tells us that "[a] thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community," he is telling us little about reality itself but mostly about a certain sort of personal and political aesthetic. When Betty Jean Craige tells us that "[c]ultural diversity is as natural as biodiversity" and that the whole "requires the well-being of all its components" (400), she sounds more magnanimous and disinterested than she can afford to be, since cockroaches and the AIDS virus might easily be seen as parts of any plausible "natural" whole. But our desire for their well-being appears to have definite limits.

Moreover, Craige's distinction between "traditionalism" (bad) and "globalism" (good) is very much like Wordsworth's distinction between eighteenth-century poetic diction and "the real language of men." Yet by the time Wordsworth got through with that language, there was not much left of it (assuming it could ever be identified in the first place), except what served the needs of a certain sort of early Romantic poetic politics. In Craige's version, there are changes "that traditionalists will resist" and changes "that holists will accept as natural" (399). Those changes that are "natural," like "integrity, stability, and beauty" and "the real language of men," are here rather arbitrarily called "holistic" or "global," that is to say, the right stuff. But every right stuff is *somebody's* right stuff, just as every will of God is *somebody's* will of God. George Bush's will of God was to kill a few hundred thousand Iraqis so American teenagers could cruise around in cars for the benefit of oil companies and fast-food chains. It certainly wasn't *my* will of God. (And all it took was a little bit of prayer to make Bush feel good about it. Prayer really *does* accomplish miracles.) Unfortunately, nobody has yet found a way to come up with *God's* will of God, even though priests of all sorts are falling out of the woodwork. Just announcing that the solution to this complex predicament is holism won't solve the problem, which has been around for millennia.

Further, the "leaking into one another" that global diversity is said to produce does not result in an escape from the reductiveness and limited viewpoints of finite existence in the world or from the reductiveness of language, from which there is no escape, for to exist in time and place is to exist as a particular, limited, interested (i.e., prejudiced) thing. In place of "limited," "pure," "monocultural" entities like Mexican or Jewish cuisine, for example, "leaking" gets us new finitudes, like Tex-Mex or oat-bran bagels, not the transcendent ambrosia of the gods. And like any other "leaked" hybrids, these fusions simply become new and limited particularities that take the place of the old ones. No transcendence has occurred. The old Adam still thrashes about. But if no transcendence has occurred, then the doctrine of holism is making a large claim for what amounts to little more than another set of ordinary point-of-view interests. For even if holists can claim "there is no transcendent ideal order governing either nature or culture" (400), they would seem to believe that holism itself is a form of transcendence that will lift us out of the depressing limitations of our mortal particularities. But we have already had "transcendences" enough, like Hydra's heads. What we need are not replacement heads but a dead Hydra.

All of this is to suggest not that social and ethical progress is impossible but that it won't be accomplished by a new repressive orthodoxy, no matter how benign it may sound to its priests. Holism, like every other Adam, wants to retain the exclusive privilege of naming the animals. One hears that desire again and again in Craige's rhetorical voice. "In the academy, cultural holists, among whom may be found feminists and leftist political activists, are abandoning the traditional ranking of literature over nonliterature and of Western culture over other cultures and appreciating instead the world's variety of human expression. The effect of

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their scholarship and teaching is to celebrate 'hybridity, impurity, intermingling' " (397).

Terrific! But it sounds like plebeian politics to me, not radically different from the pronouncements of Phyllis Schlafly, George Bush, Louis Farrakhan, except for the subtler music to which the new words have been set. And it's not *that* much subtler, if your Discman has a middling pair of wide-range earphones.

HAROLD FROMM
North Barrington, IL

To the Editor:

Although the overall implications of Betty Jean Craige's article "Literature in a Global Society" are certainly admirable ones with which few readers of *PMLA* will disagree, the use of the word *holism* gives one some pause. As Craige mentions, *holism* was coined by Jan Smuts in 1926 (400). What Craige does not mention is that he was none other than Jan Christian Smuts, the longtime prime minister of South Africa. Although Smuts disagreed with the ideology of apartheid, which was manufactured by his political opponents, he was a fierce champion of racial segregation and a vehement opponent of any effort to empower the Indian and African populations of his country. Thus his philosophy of "holism" is hardly an appropriate point of orientation for Craige's multicultural ideals. According to his most recent biographer, Kenneth Ingham, "Smuts's dream of a Whole, his philosophy of Holism, was really only a philosophy of the part, the white part of society, and even then only that part which adhered to the traditional culture of Western Europe" (*Jan Christian Smuts: The Conscience of a South African*, London: Weidenfeld, 1986, 250).

This leads to the other, more conceptual problem with holism. Its stress on the whole inevitably exercises a discursive constraint on the partial constituents it seeks to include. In its organicist emphasis on coherence and totality, it is bound to hypostatize some particular version of experience even when it claims to be integrating its parts into an overarching whole. A less unifying, more heterodox term (or terms) might be more apt in epitomizing the largely laudable goals that Craige advocates.

NICHOLAS BIRNS
New York University

Reply:

I thank both Harold Fromm and Nicholas Birns for their thoughtful observations.

I am aware that Smuts was a segregationist. However, the widespread use of the word *holism* by thinkers who do not share Smuts's political orientation—by many ecologists, for example—shows that the word was not contaminated by Smuts's racism. In criticizing his "holism" for not being adequately holistic, we in the late twentieth century need not discard the language he used in his 1926 attempt to relate matter, life, and mind to one another.

Holism, as I say (396), can be considered a model of reality, a methodology, and an ideology. *Holistic* is an adjective we would apply to individuals and approaches rather than to phenomena themselves. Fromm is right that "wholes are not self-identifying phenomena"; to think that they are would, of course, be dualistic, not holistic. A holist recognizes that all systems are open: a saltwater marsh, which an ecologist (whom few would call a "self-appointed or socially sanctioned priest") studies as an ecosystem, is not independent of the ocean or the adjacent landmass. Scholars of all kinds bracket areas for scrutiny, but holists distinguish themselves by attending primarily to the functioning of a system's components *in relation* to one another. The holistic model is nonatomistic: in ecology holists study the flow of energy through systems; in the humanities holists study the flow of ideas through texts.

Human beings have always been identifying wholes. Aldo Leopold begins the famous essay to which Fromm refers, "The Land Ethic," by pointing out that since the time of Odysseus, who hanged his slave girls for misbehaving during his absence, we have extended our ethics to encompass not only free men but, eventually, all persons. Leopold argues that we should further enlarge our moral community to include the "land," which he defines as "a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals." This is not the place to address Leopold's environmental holism, so I shall confine my remarks to the notion of our expanded human community. The West, for at least a hundred years, has recognized human beings as members of a single species (a few pre-Darwinian ethnologists thought of the various races as distinct species); we now consider the human race a whole. With recent civil rights legislation, the United States has expanded the moral community of those originally covered by the nation's declaration that "all men are created equal" to include individuals of both sexes and of all colors. Our current curriculum battles are awakening us to the revolutionary consequences, which we have only begun to experience, of regarding the global human community as a whole, a system.

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