

Truthiness, Collectivity, and Overlapping Subjectivities: Margaret Atwood's Take on Current Metamodern Trends in *The Heart Goes Last*

Michaela Weiss, Silesian University in Opava, Czech Republic

Abstract

*The paper analyses the metamodern concepts of truthiness, collectivity and multiple identities in Margaret Atwood's novel *The Heart Goes Last* (2015). The novel opens with a sweeping economic crisis that leaves most Americans without a job, home, and income. Academics and corporations have come up with a Positron Project that is designed to eliminate crime and unemployment by house and facilities sharing by two alternating families who spend one month in their home and the other as inmates in prison. The initially utopian project soon turns into a closely monitored dystopia, securing its income from selective euthanasia or illegal organ harvesting. The seeming safety and comfort of both the prison and the artificial community turn out to be fatal for interhuman relationships and the identity of the protagonists. Atwood, once again, voices her concern over the political and social manipulation that often stands behind communal utopian projects, especially the readiness of individuals to give up their freedom in exchange for a false security and their willingness to believe in the propaganda presented to them by those in power. The novel, similarly to other Atwood's works, reflects current social, political and ecological issues, and with her sense of humor and irony, uncovers human motivations (which are not always pleasant) behind the optimistic call for collectivity, truth, and responsibility. Without resorting to sarcasm or mockery, her novels are a reminder of human failings, which she presents as natural and unavoidable.*

Keywords: Margaret Atwood, metamodern sensibility, modern collectivity, dystopia

Current social and ecological concerns are interconnected with the rising popularity of sharing and collectivity. Yet, despite the new sense of optimism and hope, the most popular genre for both readers and writers is dystopia, besides dark Scandinavian crime novels. The online social networks create a global platform for spreading awareness of conflicting political desires, economic instabilities and ecological concerns that are no longer perceived on purely national, but rather on a global level. The new collective care and interest in world affairs, however, also allows for a collective or political response, which largely presents the above-mentioned struggles as challenges that can be tackled collectively and successfully. Online groups, politicians, or celebrities are using the power of the global network to advertise their social engagement, optimism, and authentic and sincere interest.

My university students are worried about the burning forests in Siberia or cry over stray dogs in Sri Lanka, yet at the same time show little or no interest in local history and politics. The new-coming generation has adopted a new sensibility, oscillating between often contradictory buzzwords including the worship of taken-for-granted individuality and the modern collectivity, sharing of flats, cars, gardens and personal financial independence, freedom of choice and decisions and state-provided safety, utopia characterized by stable economy and sustainable ecosystem, and the acute sense of dystopia, authenticity and the love of performance and staging, sincerity and irony, faith and lack of belief, all wrapped up in an authentic moderate optimism.

While artists from post-communist countries are generally less enthusiastic and trusting of the new collectivism due to their long-term experience with the prescribed sharing practice and its less pleasant sides, Western writers are only slowly beginning to voice their concern over the political or social manipulation that often stands behind communal utopian projects. One of the current critical or rather warning voices addressing the conflict between the communal optimism and (unchanging) human nature, belongs to Margaret Atwood (b. 1939). She has become widely famous for her dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985, the sequel *The Testaments* was published in 2019) that became popular after the Hulu's 2017 TV series adaptation. In her work, Atwood reflects current social, political and ecological issues and with her sense of humor and irony, uncovers the truly human motivations (which are not always pleasant) behind the optimistic call for collectivity and responsibility. Without resorting to sarcasm or mockery, her novels are a reminder of human failings, which she presents as natural and unavoidable.

Her novel *The Heart Goes Last* (2015) addresses all the above-mentioned metamodern sensibility clashes and hopes, picturing a new utopia, which gradually turns into a critical dystopia, and eventually, at the end, a satire with an open ending, leaving the protagonists to rely on their (often poor) choices once again. The story is set in a near-future after a sweeping economic crisis. The protagonists, a married couple Stan and Charmaine (without known surnames) decide to solve their financial struggles by joining a utopian, socio-economic project Positron that is based on communal sharing. Everyone is allocated a house and a job but every second month they have to serve as inmates in the local, private-owned prison. The seemingly stable and loving relationship of Stan and Charmaine, as well as their happiness, starts crumbling apart once their new life turns into a comfortable routine. One of the major concerns of the novel is, therefore, the conflicting desire between social and financial security on one side, and adventure, romance, and personal freedom on the other; showcasing the consequences of fear, self-deception, and desire that lead the protagonists into a willing surrender of their moral values and freedom.

Stan and Charmaine are presented as prototypes of an average, common couple. The sense of their familiarity and proximity to the reader, despite their specific situation, is reached by providing their first names only. They are not Mr. and Mrs., only Stan and Charmaine, the neighbors living just down the road. They have no supernatural power, no extraordinary inner or outer strength; they are just a common married couple facing a situation that is well beyond their imaginative powers.

In the opening of the novel, the couple lives in their car, feeling bewildered, angry, and helpless. As Stan observes:

[E]verything went to ratshit. Overnight, it felt like. Not just in his own personal life: the whole card castle, the whole system fell to pieces, trillions of dollars wiped off the balance sheets like fog off a window. . . There were hordes of two-bit experts on TV pretending to explain why it had happened – demographics, loss of confidence, gigantic Ponzi schemes – but that was all guesswork bullshit.

(Atwood 2015: 9)

Stan never questioned the logic or stability of the system, he simply followed the everyday routine, having a stable, though not a very exciting job, and equally dependable and not a very exciting marriage. His choice of Charmaine for a wife reflects his desire for a peace and quiet, as he saw her as an “escape from the many-layered, devious, ironic, hot-cold women he'd tangled himself up with until then; [...] Transparency, certainty, fidelity: his various

humiliations had taught him to value those. He liked the retro thing about Charmaine, the cookie-ad thing, her prissiness, the way she hardly ever swore” (Atwood 2015: 66). He chose Charmaine to be safe from his destructive desires, saving himself from any potential frustration, pain, and loneliness. The same can be said about Charmaine who admired her husband because she could depend on him. Yet her fragility and decency is only a part of her social mask, as she contemplates prostitution, trying to persuade herself that fulfilling her sexual desires and getting paid for it, would benefit her marriage, as she would increase her earnings in a secretly pleasurable way: “Though she’d had a tiny flash of excitement, like peering in through a window and seeing another version of herself inside, leading a second life; a more raucous and rewarding second life. At least more rewarding financially, and she’d be doing it for Stan, wouldn’t she?” (Atwood 2015: 26). Both protagonists thus from the very beginning display dissatisfaction with their lives and marriage, yet, dutifully foreground their socially acceptable selves.

Their disastrous living conditions are eventually solved after Charmaine persuades Stan to join a social-economic project Positron set in the town Consilience. Those who are chosen for the project shall receive housing and job, yet for each month in the town, they have to serve one month as inmates in the Positron prison.

After a night in a hotel with hot running water and fresh white fluffy towels, the visitors have to choose between returning to the harsh reality of living on the streets, jobless and fearful, or starting a new, though permanent life in Consilience. While Stan is doubtful, Charmaine is determined to stay, if only for the towels, as she says. They eventually decide to stay, out of fear, out of insecurity, willing to trade life choices for safety.

The project managers provide them with more than just fresh towels, they give them a story, a grand narrative of success, optimism, and collective comfort and security. What is more, they create a space and specifically choose their target group that would be willing to adhere to their old yet efficient manipulation. To keep their followers in line, they, in the name of safety, isolate them both physically and electronically from the outside world. While this strategy is far from new, the willingness to comply may be surprising in the globalized age. Such obvious ignorance and hopeful oblivion is just another aspect of the metamodern sensibility, that is, the desire to believe and act “as if” it all was true, despite the ever-present postmodern distrust and disbelief. Both Stan and Charmaine want to believe in the new system and the whole project, practicing what Vermeulen and van der Akker (2010: 4) call the metamodern “faith without belief” and adherence to “impossible possibility”:

Unemployment and crime solved in one fell swoop, with a new life for all those concerned – think about that! They themselves, the incoming Positron Planners – they’re heroic! They’ve chosen to risk themselves, to take a gamble on the brighter side of human nature, to chart unknown territories within the psyche. They’re like the early pioneers, blazing a trail, clearing a way to the future: a future that will be more secure, more prosperous, and just all-round better because of them! [...] “Stan has never heard so much bullshit in his life. On the other hand, he sort of wants to believe it.”

(Atwood 2015: 49–50)

The ideology behind the new utopia is therefore dependent on selection of people who are willing to believe it, like Stan and Charmaine. A comedian Stephen Colbert calls such fact-independent claims “truthiness”, that is “something that seems like truth – the truth we want to exist” (Sternbergh 2006). Vermeulen (2015) further develops and explains this concept as follows:

Colbert defines truthiness as the truth of the gut, unperturbed by empirical research or rational thought. It is a truth that feels true to me, or to you, but whose validity is not necessarily confirmed by science. . . “Truthiness” expresses the production of a “truth” according to emotion instead of empiricism; [...] Truthiness puts the truth into question; Truthiness abandons the reality of truth as a legitimate register of signification;

The protagonists thus voluntarily give up their freedom, social and political rights (and their mobile phones), in exchange for physical safety and financial security, all in the name of the greater good of the modern collectivity.

The social and political insecurity, economic instability, and ecological catastrophes in connection with the current trend of mass incarceration, all contribute to the rising concerns over safety and the extent of state control. As David Garland (2001: 194) argues, the

risky, insecure character of today’s social and economic relations is the social surface that gives rise to our newly emphatic, overreaching concern with control. . . . It is the source of the deep-seated anxieties that find expression in today’s crime control culture, in the commodification of security, and in a built environment designed to manage space and to separate people.

In Atwood’s novel, prisons turned out to be the only institution that remained profitable after the economic crisis. Because of the concentration of larger groups of people in minimum space working for no wages under supervision, prison has become the logical center of the new utopia but also the new reality, as inmate work is used for profit, especially in private institutions. The prison itself generates money by selling the products made by prisoners and it also creates jobs, as the inmates need clothes, food, cleaning, and medical services and many others. As Atwood observes in the novel:

Prisons used to be about punishment, and then reform and penitence, and then keeping dangerous offenders inside. Then, for quite a few decades, they were about crowd control – penning up the young, aggressive, marginalized guys to keep them off the streets. And then, when they started to be run as private businesses, they were about the profit margins for the prepackaged jail-meal suppliers, and the hired guards and so forth.

(Atwood 2015: 172)

Atwood makes a realistic, yet highly ironic point by placing the fair, utopian idea of a new self-sustaining community into a prison. If there was not a sufficient number of cooperating prisoners, the population would voluntarily take turns in their roles as seemingly free citizens and inmates. The prison is thus paradoxically upheld as a space enabling communal prosperity despite its original purpose. As Useem and Morrison Piehl observe:

[p]rison is the ultimate intrusion by the state into the lives of its citizens. Prisons impose on their residents’ near-complete deprivation of personal liberties, barren living conditions, control centers that regulate movement within the prison, exterior fences draped with concertina wire, lines painted on hallway floors that limit where inmates may walk, little and ill-paid work, and endless tedium.

(2008: 3)

Yet, the Positron prison is not a place for those who need punishment or who committed any crime against society but common, “middle of the road” citizens, like Stan and Charmaine. To make the project more attractive and desirable, the town was visually set in the 1950s to bring back nostalgia and a sense of domestic happiness, promising the newcomers “gainful employment, three wholesome meals a day, a lawn to tend, a hedge to trim, the assurance that you were contributing to the general good, and a toilet that flushed. In a word, or rather three words: A MEANINGFUL LIFE” (Atwood 2015: 56). While Stan is skeptical, he needs the narrative of hope and renewal, reflecting Seth Abramson’s claims that “metamodernism believes in reconstructing things that have been deconstructed with a view toward re-establishing hope and optimism in the midst of a period [the postmodern period] marked by irony, cynicism, and despair” (Abramson 2017).

Yet, for both Charmaine and Stan, this meaningful life is appealing only for their married personas and while they are out on the streets. Once they settled in their new home, they are not able to communicate to each other what their true desires are; instead, Stan resorts to erotic day-dreaming, and Charmaine to infidelity. On the example of Charmaine, Atwood demonstrates the metamodern concept of multiple or over-lapping impersonations, or personas driven by conflicting desires of the individual, showcasing Seth Abramson’s claim that metamodernism asks us to “overlap multiple subjectivities,” or in other words to “be many people at once without putting any one of them at the forefront” (Abramson 2017). The major desire shifted from the concept of “you can be, whatever you wish, if you work hard enough for it,” into a “create a list of things you want to be and be all of them at once.” Or, in Vermeulen’s (2012) words:

For us, the prefix meta indicates that a person can believe in one thing one day and believe in its opposite the next. Or maybe even at the same time. Indeed, if anything, meta intimates a constant repositioning: not a compromise, not a balance, but an at times vehemently moving back and forth, left and right. [...] without ever seeming reducible to any one of them.

Charmaine is a master of personas and switching of identities. While paradoxically it was her, who persuaded her husband to join the project to enjoy a quiet life together and start a family, after an initial settling in, it is her, who wishes to make the most of her new life. She enjoys the time in prison, which she views as her time off, time without decisions to make, without desires to follow, or problems to solve. She also understands her time as an inmate as her private personal punishment for an affair she started with a man, she and Stan, alternate their house with. “Everyone seems quite happy: having two lives means there’s always something different to look forward to. It’s like having a vacation every month. But which life is the vacation and which is the work? Charmaine hardly knows” (Atwood 2015: 68). She does not view the prison as a restriction but rather as a safe place, where she cannot act on her desire for danger and passion, or live her double life and is given a strict daily regime. There she feels she is not responsible for her action and enjoys the luxury of being a mere follower, no questions asked. Whenever she is caged, she appreciates the burden of decision-making taken off her shoulders.

Her stay in prison is contrasted with the time she spends with her lover who is a real estate agent and therefore has access to empty houses. There she acts on her instincts only, anything is permissible: Only there and with him, she is willing to be anything: “Anything

inside this non-house, inside this nothing space, a space that doesn't exist, between these two people with no real names. Oh anything. Already she's abject" (Atwood 2015: 80).

She constantly justifies herself by claiming what Stan would prefer, how her actions are eventually beneficial for him, or that he would consider it bad taste. "Stan would never put up with her wearing a garish hue like that – Purple Passion is its name, such bad taste. Which is why she bought it: that's how she thinks of her feelings toward Max. Purple. Passionate. Garish. And, yes, bad taste" (Atwood 2015: 74). Little does she know that Stan found her note to her lover with the lipstick kiss and since then he cannot stop obsessing about the mysterious woman who he thinks is their alternate wife. Charmaine, therefore, oscillates between her impersonation of a 1950s perfect sweet wife and a shameless lover, between her love of adventure and puritan morality, and between naiveté and worldliness. She fits into what Greg Dember (2018) marks as one of the major features of metamodern sensibility: "the double frame". This term was first used by Raoul Ehsleman, meaning that metamodern sensibility performs the belief in truth, beauty, morality, innocence, while understanding its ironical impossibility. Or rather, in Charmaine's case, giving up on turning these beliefs into action. Instead, she blames it on chemistry and instincts: "It wasn't Stan's fault, it was the fault of chemistry. People said *chemistry* when they meant something else, such as personality, but she does mean chemistry. Smells, textures, flavours, secret ingredients. She sees a lot of chemistry in her work, she knows what it can do. Chemistry can be like magic. It can be merciless" (Atwood 2015: 77).

The ability of Charmaine to create multiple identities and shift effortlessly among them is further demonstrated on her happiness over her new responsibility in the prison, where she was chosen to terminate those who do not fit:

It's not easy for them to find people willing to carry out the Procedure in an efficient yet caring way, they'd told her: dedicated people, sincere people. But someone has to do it, for the good of all. The first time she attempted the forehead kiss, there was a lunge of the head, an attempt at snapping. He'd drawn blood. She requested that a neck restraint be added. And it was. They listen to feedback, here at Positron.

(Atwood 2015: 94)

The original utopian vision of the project included criminals who were to be mixed with the part-time volunteers, and even they were allowed to go out every second month to either take up civilian work or serve as guards. Those who did not conform suddenly started disappearing, with the official version claiming they were removed to another wing. Only the project leaders and Charmaine know what is really happening. She provides them with love and care during their execution. She pats his arm, then turns her back so he can't see her sliding the needle into the vial and drawing up the contents. "Off we go," she says cheerfully. She finds the vein, slips in the needle" (Atwood 2015: 95).

This function makes her feel important and needed, moreover she always smiles at her clients as she calls them, "with her deceptive teeth. She hopes she appears to him like an angel, more specifically the "angel of mercy. Because isn't she one?" (Atwood 2015: 94). She wants to believe that she is doing the killing in the name of the greater good, or at least that is what she chooses to believe. Charmaine happily follows orders and feels useful, being proud of her high status in the prison. In rare moments when she wonders about organ-harvesting, or protein-enriched feeding, she prefers look away: "But whatever happens, it's bound to be useful, and that's all she needs to know. There are some things it's better not to think about" (Atwood 2015: 96). To Charmaine's way of thinking Atwood demonstrates the

power of truthiness. Despite their collective concerns and desire for safety, individuals still to a large degree remain (and maybe even more so) emotional and sexual creatures who seek to fulfill their desires regardless of social norms, rules or collective good. Charmaine follows the orders as they fit the complex set of self-images she created for herself, without being rational or even without thinking of potential consequences. She lives in the moment, with no regard to the future.

The only time she admits that her job is not in concord with general notions of morality is when she looks outside her small limited world. She realizes there is something wrong when she is taken off her position in prison and is not allowed to go home to her husband. Suddenly, she fears that the project might end and the whole world will know not only about her sexual recklessness but also her prison job. “She has a flash of herself, in a front-page photo, in her green smock, smiling eerily and holding a needle: DEATH ANGEL CLAIMS SHE SENT MEN TO HEAVEN. That would be horrible. She’d be the target of a lot of hate. But Ed won’t let the reporters get in here, and thank goodness for that” (Atwood 2015: 164).

Charmaine puts herself into her private prison of self-deception, constructing her own personal and social narratives, and switching smoothly among them. She is willing to give up anything for her comfort: she chose Stan to offer stability and safety, chose Positron project, and there she chose to look away from death and suffering of others. She uses the metamodern “as-if”, or Colbert’s concept of truthiness as her life strategy, while Atwood shows the destructive consequences of such attitude.

Charmaine does not miss her freedom, does not question the principles, she only, once again, misses her life stability and Stan, not realizing, she was chosen to be a part of Jocelyn’s plan to get Stan out of the Consilience town. Jocelyn and her husband count on Charmaine to follow orders, no matter what they are. When she is offered to be the angel of death again, she feels blessed and believes that she has outwitted the system “She smiles her I-am-a-good-person smile, the smile of an absent-minded angel with a childish lisp. That smile has seen her through many difficult places, or at least it has since she’s been grown up. It’s a Get Out of Jail Free card, it’s a rock concert wristband, it’s a universal security password, like being in a wheelchair” (Atwood 2015: 198). While she thinks, she is the one who determines her future by deceiving others, it is she who is being manipulated.

She does not know yet that it will be Stan into whose arm she shall inject her needle. Her determination to live comfortably and not to lose her privileges in prison is so strong that she does not hesitate and accepts the job, without knowing that she is not actually killing him, only putting him under strong sedatives. Only after her job is done, is she allowed back in the house under the supervision of other women, as she is expected to be a mourning widow who lost her husband in a fire: “She once felt so secure inside this house. Her and Stan’s house, their warm cocoon, their shelter from the dangerous outside world, nestled inside a larger cocoon. First the town wall, like an outside shell; then, Consilience, like the soft white part of an egg. And inside Consilience, Positron Prison: the core, the heart, the meaning of it all” (Atwood 2015: 258).

While Charmaine mourns her security and the limits imposed upon her by society, her marriage, and the Consilience/Positron project, Stan contemplates his attitude to life, his tendency to play everything safe, choose a stable job and a seemingly sweet retro wife not to be over-run by passion or danger:

Tiny threads of petty cares and small concerns, and fears he took seriously at the time. [...] He's been the puppet of his own constricted desires. He shouldn't have let himself be caged in here, walled off from freedom. But what does freedom mean any more? And who had caged him and walled him off? He'd done it himself. So many small choices.

(Atwood 2015: 205)

Stan seems more honest with himself, admitting that his caged life has been a direct result of his life choices that went against his true desires. For his honesty, stability, and unwillingness to fully submit to orders, the alternate wife Jocelyn chose him to act as a part of her larger plan to reveal all illegal activities that were going on within the project. Jocelyn's plan to have Stan killed by his wife, enabled her to smuggle him out of the Consilience town, back into the real world, where his major task was to contact the media to reveal all atrocities: Organ harvesting, prison abuse, sex slaves created by neurosurgery, violation of human rights. Jocelyn's final gift to Stan is not only his regained freedom and a house but also the transportation of Charmaine, who was to be operated to imprint on the project leader and uncritically adore him forever. Instead, it is Stan she imprints on, or so she believes. After the surgery Charmaine feels calm and happy: "The dark part of herself that was with her for so long seems to be completely gone. It's as if someone has taken an eraser and erased the pain of those memories" (Atwood 2015: 399). Suddenly, she is willing to do anything for Stan, both in kitchen and bedroom, fulfilling all his wishes and desires. Yet he cannot get over his doubts: "True, the routine has become slightly predictable, but it would be surly to complain. Like complaining that the food's too delicious" (Atwood 2015: 411). He cannot forget that she was cheating on him and was willing to kill him, this woman whom he considered safe and sweet turned in his eyes into an unreliable and whimsical creature he could no longer trust even after their baby is born, Stan cannot feel truly happy, as his every step is scrutinized and carefully watched by his imprinted loving wife.

Charmaine feels happy, exalted happy as she used to be in prison, as she knows that after the operation she cannot influence the course of her life or alter her feelings. Yet, she questions the authenticity and value of her emotions: "Does loving Stan really count if she can't help it? Is it right that the happiness of her married life should be due not to any special efforts on her part but to a brain operation she didn't even agree to have? No, it doesn't seem right. But it feels right. That's what she can't get over – how right it feels" (Atwood 2015: 402–403). Charmaine is once again, happily submitting to her self-constructed brain-prison, as she knows she has no freedom of choice.

Her idyllic happiness is shattered after Jocelyn tells her, there was no surgery and points out the possibilities that this freedom provides: "'Nothing is ever settled [...] [e]very day is different. Isn't it better to do something because you've decided to? Rather than because you have to?' 'No, it isn't,' says Charmaine. 'Love isn't like that. With love, you can't stop yourself.' She wants the helplessness, she wants [...]" (Atwood 2015: 416). After Stan and Charmaine founded their happy family, their future is, once again, uncertain. Atwood does not offer the readers a happy, romantic ending but a realistic conclusion. Her characters are no heroes and never have been, even when they want to believe in higher principles, their actions are predominantly selfish and childish, and above all, in concord with Colbert's concept of truthiness. The contradicting and oscillating desires of the protagonists are interlinked with their equally hope for a better future.

From a bleak dystopia, Atwood turns the story into a wild satire and parody of modern life and relationships, of utopias and the lasting human nature, be it the craving for

money and power, security, or passion, as the heart always goes last. As she shows here, the seemingly flawless restrictions and ideology are often thwarted precisely by human failings.

Moreover, Atwood addresses the situation in prisons as well, especially private ones which main role has turned from punishment to profit-making, and points out the political and official presence of slavery in the US constitution. She also metaphorically presents the level of self-deception and the variety of self-inflicted prisons people construct, in their search for order, security and safety, for which they are willing to give up their freedom, only to find themselves unhappy again.

Funding Acknowledgement: This paper is a result of the project SGS/4/2018, Silesian University in Opava internal grant “Analýza a interpretace textu” (Text Analysis and Interpretation).

References:

Abramson, Seth. 2017. What is Metamodernism? *Huffington Post* May 1, 2017. Accessed September 23, 2019. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/what-is-metamodernism_us_586e7075e4b0a5e600a788cd.

Colbert, Stephen. 2006. Stephen Colbert Roasts Bush at Whitehouse Correspondent’s Dinner. *YouTube*. Accessed September 1, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2X93u3anTco>.

Dember, Greg. 2018. After Postmodernism: Eleven Metamodern Methods in the Arts. Accessed September 17, 2019. <https://medium.com/what-is-metamodern/after-postmodernism-eleven-metamodern-methods-in-the-arts-767f7b646cae>.

Garland, David. 2001. *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sternbergh, Adam. 2006. Stephen Colbert Has America by the Ballots. *New York Magazine* October 16. Accessed September 1, 2019. <http://nymag.com/nymag/rss/politics/22322/index3.html>.

Useem, Bert, and Anne Morrison Piehl. 2008. *Prison State: The Challenge of Mass Incarceration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vermeulen, Timotheus interviewed by Cher Potter. 2012. Cher Potter talks to Timotheus Vermeulen. *Tank* 7, 4. <http://tankmagazine.com/issue-55/talk/timotheus-vermeulen/>.

Vermeulen, Timotheus. 2015. The New “Depthiness”. *e-flux* 61(1). <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/the-new-depthiness/>.

Vermeulen, Timotheus, and van den Akker, Robin. 2010. Notes on Metamodernism. *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture* 2: 1–14. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.3402/jac.v2i0.5677>.

Michaela Weiss
The Institute of Foreign Languages
Faculty of Philosophy and Science
Silesian University in Opava
Masarykova trida 343/37
7546 01 Opava
Czech Republic

E-mail: michaela.weiss@fpf.slu.cz

In SKASE Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies [online]. 2019, vol. 1, no. 2 [cit. 2019-12-12]. Available on web page http://www.skase.sk/Volumes/SJLCS02/pdf_doc/02.pdf. ISSN 2644-5506.