Cultural Relativism and "Our Way of Life": Patricia Highsmith's *The Tremor of Forgery*

Robert Lance SNYDER*

Abstract
Like Meursault in The Stranger *(1942) by Albert Camus, the 34-year-old protagonist of Patricia Highsmith's* The Tremor of Forgery *(1969) is almost certain of having killed an Arab in self-defence but feels no remorse for the deed except as it is judged by other Americans within his orbit of Western influence. While visiting Tunisia on what is apparently his first trip overseas, novelist Howard Ingham wrestles with the alterity of an Arab culture during the Six-Day War in the Middle East while at the same time criticizing the parochialism of a countryman who broadcasts propaganda about "Our Way of Life." Ingham soon embraces, albeit equivocally, a perspective of cultural relativism, but his doing so is largely the dodge of a doubly dispossessed stranger in a strange land.* Tremor *thus figures as one of Highsmith's "texts of exile," as Fiona Peters has called it, that ends with Ingham's anti-climactic return home to renew a relationship with his former wife.*

Keywords: *cultural relativism, American ethnocentrism, nationalistic chauvinism, Arab culture, moral fraudulence*

In addition to her "Ripliad" series set in Italy and France, five of Patricia Highsmith's other seventeen novels—*A Game for the Living* (1958), *The Two Faces of January* (1964), *Those Who Walk Away* (1967), *The Tremor of Forgery* (1969), and *Small g: A Summer Idyll* (1995)—take place outside the United States, and all involve American travellers who intend to return home after their time overseas. So does Howard Ingham, the 34-year-old protagonist of *Tremor*, but he differs from his fictional peers in wrestling with the radical alterity of an Arab culture during the Six-Day War in the Middle East. With three books to his credit titled *The Power of Negative Thinking*, *The Gathering Swine*, and *The Game of "If,"* Ingham has left Manhattan for Tunisia because, when the rights to a film adaptation of his most recent novel sold for $50,000, director John Castlewood persuaded him as the script writer that Africa's northernmost republic was a "simpler and more visual" milieu for a tale summarized as follows: "The young man who didn't get the girl married someone else, but wreaked vengeance on his successful rival in a most horrible way, first seducing his wife, then ruining the husband's business,

* University of West Georgia, USA, rsnyder7@bellsouth.net

then seeing that the husband was murdered." Apparently on his first trip abroad, Ingham supposes that "Such things could scarcely happen in America, […] but this was in Tunisia" (Highsmith 2011: 5). The reductionism of that outlook is self-evident. The rest of Highsmith's narrative is devoted to a parable about how this main character convinces himself that he subscribes, however equivocally, to a perspective of cultural relativism after recognizing the myopia of ethnocentric and nationalistic chauvinism [1].

Typifying the latter stance in *The Tremor of Forgery* is Francis J. Adams, a widower from Connecticut who befriends Ingham at a Tunisian seaside resort. Morality for this expatriate is Manichean, a matter of absolute good versus absolute evil. In this conviction, born of unquestioning faith in democracy, Adams considers himself "an unofficial ambassador for America" who "spread[s] goodwill . . . and the American way of life. Our way of life" (Highsmith 2011: 15). Because of his new acquaintance's fondness for the last phrase, Ingham privately dubs him "OWL." Later, when he learns that his neighbor at La Reine de Hammamet's bungalows receives a modest stipend from "a small group of anti-Communists behind the Iron Curtain" to broadcast tape-recorded propaganda (63), Ingham wonders whether Adams might possibly be a credulous dupe. Although Highsmith richly develops this character, Adams epitomizes a parochialism that elsewhere she indicts as a manifestation of "the American's everyday or garden variety of schizophrenia" (1990: 40), paraphrased by David Cochran as "the dark underside of post-World War II American culture" (1997: 157).

For his part, Ingham thinks that he is free of all such ideological blinders and ingrained traits, but in unacknowledged ways the novelist typifies his homeland. One has already been noted: underneath his fashionable skepticism, he cannot imagine that the revenge-driven plot of the film to be titled *Trio* could occur in his native land. He is, in other words, a dyed-in-the-wool believer in American exceptionalism by any other name. A second giveaway is that, after arriving in Tunisia by way of Paris pending Castlewood's joining him there, Ingham continues to be disconcerted by seeing "single young men or pairs of boys holding hands" in public (Highsmith 2011: 2). Although the director had cautioned him that "[h]omosexual relationships had no stigma here" (3), the supposedly tolerant but heteronormative writer still is challenged by adapting to a country with different mores than his own. A third and more revealing indicator of Ingham's acculturation is his fascination with the chicanery of white-collar crime. While awaiting Castlewood's delayed arrival, he is drafting a new novel, the working title of which is the same as Highsmith's [2], about a man named Dennison who embezzles vast sums from the bank

of which he is a director before giving most of the money away. As Ingham works on his manuscript, he thinks that "whatever was right and wrong […] was what people around you said it was" (172). The shallowness of this view is much like that of Sydney Bartleby in *A Suspension of Mercy* (1965) when he persuades himself that Mrs Grace Lilybanks' death from a heart attack, for which he is circumstantially responsible, is ultimately the result of "conditioning sets of attitudes" (Highsmith 2001: 135). This anti-hero decides that "Religions were attitudes, too, of course. It made things so much clearer to call these things attitudes rather than convictions, truths, or faiths. The whole world wagged by means of attitudes, which might as well be called illusions" (154-55). Howard Ingham in *Tremor* entertains a similarly convenient outlook that frees him from the difficulty of construing moral responsibility in terms of universal or transcendent values.

In the meantime, while plugging away at his new novel, Highsmith's transplanted American tries not to reflect on Charlotte Fleet, from whom he was divorced eighteen months ago, and the epistolary silence of Ina Pallant, a 28-year-old writer of television plays for CBS who, like Ingham, has been divorced and whom he is considering marrying. During this hiatus of contact with all that he left behind, Howard Ingham becomes increasingly subject to a diffuse anxiety. When not engaged in drafting his new book, he diverts himself for nearly a month by writing unanswered letters and conversing with OWL in the evenings over drinks. During that interim he also befriends an openly gay Danish painter of abstracts named Anders Jensen, through whom he begins to discover a tenuous new freedom from Western codes of morality. Shortly before then, however, Ingham receives news that film director John Castlewood committed suicide in, of all places, his own Manhattan apartment. The writer's professional plans now more than ever in limbo, he tries to readjust because "[s]uddenly, everything seemed so doubtful, so vague" (Highsmith 2011: 38). With that abrupt sense of indeterminacy, though, comes a cautious freedom from regimented expectations, a kind of Hegelian *Aufhebung*. In Adams's company Ingham makes the acquaintance of Jensen at a nearby restaurant called Chez Melik and later, after visiting the painter's spartan quarters, is shocked upon his departure to find the corpse of a Tunisian whose throat has been slashed. At the alley's far end Ingham then sees a figure whom he recognizes from a previous encounter, an "old humpbacked Arab in […] baggy trousers," standing near the partially open rear window of his car. The man escapes when Ingham yells at him, but a blood fury suddenly seizes the visiting American. "'Son of a bitch, I hope it *kills* you!' he shouted, so angry now that his face burnt. 'Bastard son of a bitch!'" (56).

The episode is pivotal because it anticipates Ingham's moral quandary during his time abroad. Writing plaintively to Ina that he is "horribly lonely" and realizing that "he had no real purpose in being in Tunisia—he could be writing his book anywhere" (Highsmith 2011: 58, 69), Ingham on the Fourth of July receives a letter from Pallant explaining that the 26-year-old Castlewood killed himself because he had fallen in love with Ina after a brief affair and felt guilty. The report of this imbroglio strikes Highsmith's overseas visitor as preposterous and not a little absurd. Its most immediate effect is a new slant on his novel-in-progress:

> His theme was an old one, via Raskolnikov, through Nietzsche's superman: had one the right to seize power under certain circumstances? That was all very interesting from a moral point of view. Ingham was somewhat more interested in the state of Dennison's mind, in his existence during the period in which he led two lives. He was interested in the fact that the double life at last fooled Dennison: that was what made Dennison a nearly perfect embezzler. Dennison was morally unaware that he was committing a felony, but he was aware that society and the law, for reasons that he did not even attempt to comprehend, did not approve of what he was doing. (76-77)

This realization of his plot's Dostoevskian and Nietzschean ramifications temporarily inspires Ingham, but his elation is checked when he again sees a "dead ringer" of Abdullah, "an old Arab in baggy red pants," near his quarters at Hammamet (77). Later that evening the writer discovers that his quarters have been burglarized, and he immediately suspects Abdullah as the perpetrator. Unable to verify the culprit, Ingham whiles away several more days, which include an unconsummated sexual tryst with nine-year-younger Kathryn Darby from Pennsylvania, before at midnight awakening to see a stooped figure entering his bungalow via an unlocked front door. Clumsily seizing his typewriter from a work table, Ingham heaves it against the interloper's turbaned head. "Ninety percent sure" that the victim is Abdullah (108), Ingham now faces an unwelcome trial of interrogation by Adams and Pallant, who insist on his need for accountability.

At this juncture, a third of the way into her narrative, Highsmith sets up a latent tension between two radically different codes of value. Arab culture, the text repeatedly suggests, does not value human life highly and, faced with many deprivations, condones cruelty toward animals. Anders Jensen emphasizes the last point when he explains to Ingham that his Tunisian neighbours deliberately dropped a large rock on his German shepherd from an overhead window, breaking the dog's leg, and later when

Hasso goes missing Ingham sympathizes with a distraught Jensen by denouncing all Arabs. When the protagonist reflects on the near certainty of his responsibility for Abdullah's death, the incident fades in importance, at least temporarily, when Mokta and the other local attendants at La Reine de Hammamet profess no awareness of or concern about the thief's disappearance. In sharp counterpoint is the reaction of Francis Adams and later Ina Pallant when they learn of the episode. While Ingham's typewriter is being repaired in Tunis, OWL presses his fellow American, who is entertaining the "un-Christian thought" that Abdullah was worth "next to nothing, probably" (Highsmith 2011: 116), about the incident. More guarded now in his exchanges with Adams, Ingham finds himself badgered to be accountable because in OWL's words "you can't throw off your American heritage just because you've spent a few weeks in Africa." Hearing Adams invoke his supposed birthright, the writer muses that "Jensen wouldn't take this load of crap" (156), but not long thereafter Ingham reflects that in Tunisia "the whole country" was "against his grain" (169). In the language of Exodus 2:22, this *Entfremdung* makes Howard Ingham a doubly dispossessed "stranger in a strange land," validating Fiona Peters' classifying *The Tremor of Forgery* as one of Highsmith's "texts of exile" (2011: 1).

During the interim before Ina Pallant's arrival, however, Ingham has undergone a subtle shift in orientation. It begins with a three-day camelback excursion he makes with Jensen to a desert oasis known as Gabes. On the eve of his departure Ingham remembers the following passage from Norman Douglas's *Fountains in the Sand* (1912) about an old Italian gardener whom Douglas had encountered in Tunisia: "He had travelled far in the Old and New Worlds; in him I recognized once again that simple mind of the sailor or wanderer who learns, as he goes along, to talk and think decently; who, instead of gathering fresh encumbrances on Life's journey, wisely discards even those he set out with" (Highsmith 2011: 130-31). Recalling the *aperçu*, Ingham muses that "It was strange, he couldn't explain it, to be floating like a foreign particle (which he was) in the vastness of Africa, but to be absolutely sure that Africa would enable him to bear things better" (131). The last phrase, as preceding sentences make explicit, refers to Ingham's concern about "any bad reaction" to his anticipated breaking off a relationship of convenience with Ina, one that is now beginning to seem riddled by mutual self-deception. While with Jensen in the arid desert, Ingham confesses one starlit night that he may have killed Abdullah and is reassured by the Dane's admonition to forget about the incident because "That particular Arab was a swine. I like to think you got him, because it makes up a little for my dog" (145). Gratified by this response, which tacitly

equates Abdullah's probable death with an injury to a dog, the American becomes increasingly receptive to dismissing the issue of his moral obligations under what he deems extenuating circumstances.

Since the original release of *The Tremor of Forgery* more than one scholarly study has noted its influence by such other existential novels set in North Africa as Albert Camus's *The Stranger* (1942), Paul Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky* (1949), and Albert Cossery's *Proud Beggars* (1955). Given its probing of Howard Ingham's first visit overseas, *Tremor* scouts the psychological terrain of relativism's appeal to the main character. Joanna Stolarek remarks that the novel analyses "the problem of self, identity, crime and ethics in the context of cultural shock, particularly the clash between the Western and Arab world" (2018: 151), but Highsmith in my judgment is going further by suggesting the shallowness, indeed the vacuity, of Ingham's pragmatic embrace of a foreign ethos. That disclosure occurs primarily through his interactions with Ina Pallant upon her arrival in Tunisia in mid-August. Before her visit Howard, upon returning from his desert expedition, finds the "neat blue and white cleanliness" of his seaside bungalow at Hammamet distasteful and makes tentative plans, as he tells Jensen, to rent "A couple of rooms. Something Arab. Something like you've got" (Highsmith 2011: 147, 159). At about the same time he drafts a letter to Ina in longhand on 28 July noting that a trip like the one he has taken to Gabes "changes one's thinking… {I]t makes people see things more clearly, or not so close up" (149). The clear implication is that Ingham feels that he has undergone a Blakean cleansing of perception, and shortly thereafter he moves into his new quarters. "It was as if he had shed, suddenly, his ideas about cleanliness, spotless cleanliness, anyway, and of comfort also" (164). Readers also learn that in his new residence Ingham occupies himself with writing while wearing a terrycloth robe soaked in cold water, prompting even the ascetic Jensen to ask kiddingly, "Are you going to buy yourself a jubbah next?" (171). Upon being invited to visit Ingham in his new rooms, Adams takes the liberty of saying to his host, "You seem to be punishing yourself with this—'going native,'" adding that "It's no way for a civilized man . . . to do penance" (168). But that is just the rub for Ingham: he no longer wishes to be deemed "civilized," with all the moral imperatives implied by that word. By adapting to the austere living conditions of Jensen, Ingham thinks that he is making a decisive break from the conventions of a world he has supposedly left behind.

The protagonist's reorientation just prior to Ina's arrival in Tunis on 13 August is reflected in yet another fresh take on his novel in progress. Whereas earlier he was intrigued by the Dostoevskian and Nietzschean

nuances of Dennison's "double life," Ingham now finds that his thoughts have taken a "better turn" (Highsmith 2011: 170). As he reflects on the story of Dennison's embezzlement of $750,000 over twenty years, the novelist decides that his working title is no longer apt. The manuscript thus undergoes a thematic swerve: "It was Ingham's idea to leave the reader morally doubtful as to Dennison's culpability. In view of the enormous good Dennison had done in the way of holding families together, starting or helping businesses, sending young people through college, not to mention contributions to charities—who could label Dennison a crook?" (170-71). This turn in Ingham's storyline is obviously a vicarious projection of his struggle with moral responsibility for Abdullah's death. After the above excerpt, for example, a lengthy passage makes clear the American writer's transformation while in Tunisia:

> Now and again Ingham caught a glimpse of his own stern face in the mirror he had hung on the wall by the kitchen door. His face was darker and thinner, different. He was at these moments conscious… of being alone, without friends, or a job, or any connection with anybody. …Then, being more than half Dennison at these moments, he experienced something like the unconscious flash of a question: "Who am I, anyway? Does one exist, or to what extent does one exist as an individual without friends, family, anybody to whom one can relate, to whom one's existence is of the least importance?" It was strangely like a religious experience. It was like becoming nothing and realizing that one was nothing anyway, ever. It was a basic truth. (171-72)

This Sartrean moment of self-reckoning [3], however, is almost immediately buffered by an express letter from Ina Pallant announcing her imminent arrival. Upon receiving the news, Ingham promptly arranges accommodations for her at the Reine de Hammamet and reverts automatically to his conventional American persona in interacting with Ina.

The reunion becomes the occasion for each one's recognizing the conditionality of their relationship, especially as it has been shaped by cultural norms. Initially, though, all goes well. Upon her arrival, Ina rushes into Howard's arms, and seeing stress lines under her eyes he is solicitous about Ina's younger brother Joey, wheelchair-bound by multiple sclerosis, for whom she has been a caretaker at their parents' home in Brooklyn Heights. That same evening, after she tells Howard that he has won the O. Henry Award for a short story titled "We Is All," they enjoy mutually fulfilling sex, prompting him to wonder "Why had he thought he didn't love her?" (Highsmith 2011: 183). Their harmony becomes strained, however,

when Ina visits Howard's primitive "Arab" quarters and meets his upstairs neighbor Jensen. Wholly unable to fathom Ingham's preference for these primitive living arrangements and critical of Jensen for being "queer," Pallant gravitates to the story of Abdullah's disappearance about which Adams has fully informed her. Still persuaded that Ina "was the woman he was going to marry… and live with for the rest of his life" (202), Howard finds his reservations mounting when she presses him to tell "the whole story about that night Abdullah was killed" (218). Unable to explain his unconcern about the man's fate in terms of the novel he is completing, which explores "whether a person makes his own personality and his own standards from within himself, or whether he and the standards are the creation of the society around him" (218-19), Ingham finds himself increasingly exasperated by Ina's cross-examination of his actions during the Abdullah incident. He also is quietly furious with OWL for reinforcing her sense, in Adams's words, of "the value of a clear conscience" (228). Even though Ingham asks Pallant to marry him and confesses to his actions involving the invasion of his bungalow, both seem wearily to recognize that their union would be ill-advised. Before he bids farewell to Ina at the Tunis airport, however, Ingham has begun to think of his former wife Lotte, with whom he "had never quarreled" because "they'd never talked about anything at all complex" (256).

If any further proof is needed that Highsmith's overseas traveller is a poor moralist who, after his exposure to cultural relativism, ends by subscribing to nothing more substantial than anomie leavened by nostalgic sentimentalism, the novel's denoue-ment drives the point home forcibly. Receiving a forwarded letter from Lotte explaining that her California marriage had foundered because of her second husband's infidelity, Howard plans to seek her out again in New York, hoping to rekindle their relationship and visit Jensen in Copenhagen after Christmas. Before this sardonic variation on Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) concludes, even Jensen's lost dog Hasso has miraculously reappeared and is being nursed back to health. The final page of *Tremor* has Ingham parting from Adams at the airport and saying, "You know—I think you saved my life here" ("It may have sounded a bit gushy," adds Highsmith's third-person narrator, "but Ingham meant it"), yet OWL's kindly dismissive response may be more to the point: "Nonsense, nonsense" (Highsmith 2011: 289). Shortly before his return to the United States, Ingham "had the awful feeling that in the months he had been here, his own character or principles had collapsed or disappeared. What was he?... Ingham now felt he couldn't think, if his life depended on it, of one principle by which he lived" (267).

Being a novelist prone to identifying with his protagonists, however, Ingham retitles his finished book *Dennison's Lights*, which ends as follows:

> Dennison was forty-five now. Prison had not changed him. His head was unbowed, not at all bloodied, just a trifle dazed by the ways of the world that was not his world. Dennison was going to find a job in another company, an insurance company, and start the same financial manoeuvrings all over again. Other people's hardships were intolerable to Dennison, if merely a little money could abolish them. (276)

In the course of his nearly three-month stay in Tunisia, it apparently does not occur to Ingham that the phrase "Other people's hardships" just might apply to Abdullah, but ethnocentrism however disguised from oneself has its blind spots. In short, the author of *Dennison's Lights* does not emerge in Highsmith's finale as a particularly enlightened or self-aware citizen of the world, Ingham's sole goal for the future being to resuscitate his former life with Lotte [4].

In *The Crime Novel: A Deviant Genre*, Tony Hilfer quotes Highsmith as saying during a 1983 interview: "I suppose the reason I write about crime is simply that it is very good for illustrating moral points of life. I am really interested in the behavior of people surrounding someone who has done something wrong, and also whether the person who has done it feels guilty about it, or just, 'so what'" (1990: 123). Like Meursault in *The Stranger* by Camus, Ingham in *Tremor* kills an Arab in self-defence but experiences no remorse for the deed except as it is judged by others within his orbit of Western influence. Highsmith's overseas visitor to Tunisia would fain dismiss his indifference to Abdullah's almost certain death at his hands as congruent with the response of indigenous employees like Mokta at La Reine de Hammamet, but at the end of his experiment in "going native," as OWL puts it, he yields to the compulsion to reinvent his life with Lotte in the United States where it went astray a year and a half ago. Hardly a consistent exemplar of cultural relativism, Howard Ingham reverts to the American habits that have shaped him. So interpreted, *The Tremor of Forgery* is wholly congruent with Hilfer's claim that "Highsmith rings the changes on her themes of the indeterminacy of guilt, the instability of identity, and above all the heavily compromised, even reversible binary opposition of deviance and the norm in all her novels" (124).

That observation goes far to explain why, when pigeonholed as an author of crime fiction, Highsmith eludes the genre's morphology and usual trajectory. As biographer Andrew Wilson con-tends, "Critics have wrestled

with Highsmith's place in modern literature since the 1960s, when book reviewers and editors first began to notice that her novels were rather different [from] the mass of pulp fiction being churned out by crime writers. Even today, trying to 'locate' her in a literary context or tradition is almost impossible" (2003: 4). Fiona Peters takes the case further. Regarding the common predilection for describing Highsmith as a crime novelist, Peters contends that "her texts are never 'about' solving a puzzle, feeding the reader with clues at apposite intervals or allowing a reader to engage in amateur detection. […] Highsmith is an enigma who deserves more than the dearth of critical material that her work has attracted" (2011: 1). Perhaps in part because of that very difficulty—the startlingly original, maverick, or contrarian streak in Highsmith's *oeuvre*—Mark Seltzer relies on her heavily as a subversive countervoice to the hegemonic primacy of what he calls the post-World War II "official world." Even a more or less conventional novel such as Highsmith's *The Cry of the Owl* (1962), set in Pennsylvania, bristles with systematic inversions of "normalcy" and "deviancy" (see Snyder). Because of her adroit exploration of this subject in the geopolitical context of the late 1960s, both Graham Greene and Terrence Rafferty have heralded *The Tremor of Forgery* as Highsmith's finest novel (Greene 2011: xi; Rafferty 1988: 75). The second of these critics observes that amid its "shimmery void" of inaction and irresolution *Tremor* figures as an ultimately "nihilistic" text, largely because of its protagonist's moral fraudulence (75, 74).

Subsequent analysts of Highsmith's *oeuvre* have noted its dialectic of period-specific alienation and often pathological engagement via a proxy agent, essentially the dynamic of her acclaimed first novel *Strangers on a Train* (1950). Writing in 2010, for example, John Dale argues that "Highsmith's rather unique contribution lies precisely in her complex and compelling portrayal of a central duality or ambivalence in the individual's attempt to interface with the world" (406). In the case of *Tremor*, which Dale considers "Highsmith's most eloquent exploration of this theme" (409), novelist Howard Ingham figures as a deeply confused, self-deceived dupe of his native America's boasted pride in "Our Way of Life," a carryover from the conformist 1950s, and its slowly emerging awareness of cultural relativism during the ensuing decade. In deciding to return to his homeland and renew his relationship with a former wife, Highsmith's protagonist is temporizing, but that is perhaps for him a safer alternative than striking out for a new freedom of self-definition.

Notes

[1] In speaking of *The Tremor of Forgery* as a parable, I am tacitly endorsing Don Adams's recent designation of the novel's genre, although as my conclusion makes clear I regard the work as a profoundly negative parable and cannot describe Howard Ingham as a "knight of faith who responds to his life traumas with an invigorated sense of existential possibility and a newfound appreciation of spiritual ideals" (2022: 97).

[2] The significance of Ingham's working title is explained as follows: "He had read somewhere, before he left America, that forgers' hands usually trembled very slightly at the beginning and end of their false signatures, sometimes so slightly the tremor could be seen only under a microscope. The tremor also expressed the ultimate crumbling of Dennison, the dual-personality, as his downfall grew imminent" (Highsmith 2011: 162). Significantly, Ingham later retitles his novel, which ends far otherwise than with its protagonist's "ultimate crumbling."

[3] The only one of Highsmith's three biographers who notes a link between Highsmith's fiction and Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist philosophy is Andrew Wilson. Revealing that she was familiar with Sartre's lecture "L'Existentialisme est un humanisme" (1945), published in English a year later, and had read his book *What Is Literature?* (1947), Wilson also implies that Highsmith was aware of the French philosopher's 1943 treatise *Being and Nothingness* (2003: 120-21). Basing his judgment primarily on a brief journal entry of 1949 by Highsmith, Don Adams says only that she was put off by "'Sartre's dreariness'" and found Søren Kierkegaard's thinking more stimulating (2022: 98).

[4] In a 1968 diary entry about her former lover Virginia Catherwood, as A. B. Emrys notes with credit to Wilson's biography (2014: 132), Highsmith wrote that "She is Lotte in *The Tremor of Forgery*—the woman whom my hero will always love, with his body, with his soul also." Emrys goes on to claim that "Lotte's physical hold over Ingham represents the choice of *jouissance* over mere *plaisir*" (93). I would submit that these constructions by both Highsmith and Emrys, given what little is revealed about Lotte in the novel itself, are unreliable.

References

Adams, D. (2022) 'Patricia Highsmith's Surprising Knight of Faith'. *Christianity & Literature* 71(1), 97-122.

Cochran, D. (1997) '"Some Torture That Perversely Eased": Patricia Highsmith and the Everyday Schizophrenia of American Life'. *Clues: A Journal of Detection* 18(2), 157-80.

Dale, J. (2010) 'Crossing the Road to Avoid Your Friends: Engagement, Alienation, and Patricia Highsmith'. *Midwest Quarterly* 51(4), 405-23.

Emrys, A. B. (2014) 'Strangers in Tunisia: Edgar Allan Poe's Confessional Imp and Patricia Highsmith's *The Tremor of Forgery*'. *Clues: A Journal of Detection* 33(2), 87-96.

Greene, G. (2011) Foreword. *Eleven*, by Patricia Highsmith, 1970. New York: Grove, ix-xii.

Highsmith, P. (1990) *Plotting and Writing Suspense Fiction*. 1966. New York: St. Martin's.
Highsmith, P. (2001) *A Suspension of Mercy*. 1965. New York: W. W. Norton.
Highsmith, P. (2011) *The Tremor of Forgery*. 1969. New York: Grove.
Hilfer, T. (1990) *The Crime Novel: A Deviant Genre*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
Peters, F. (2011) *Anxiety and Evil in the Writings of Patricia Highsmith*. London: Ashgate.
Rafferty, T. (1988) 'Fear and Trembling'. *The New Yorker*, 4 January, 74-76.
Seltzer, M. (2016) *The Official World*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Snyder, R. L. (2023) 'Framing "Normalcy": Windows, Liminality, and Crime in Patricia Highsmith's *The Cry of the Owl*'. Forthcoming in *Crime Fiction Studies* 4(2).
Stolarek, J. (2018) 'Fluid Identities and Social Dislocation in the Face of Crime, Guilt and Ethics in Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and *The Tremor of Forgery*'. *Brno Studies in English* 44(2), 145-56.
Wilson, A. (2003) *Beautiful Shadow: A Life of Patricia Highsmith*. London: Bloomsbury.